

## 2. Purpose of the Vowel Letters

The vowel letters were used to help standardize the public reading of the Old Testament Scriptures in the synagogues.

### C. Vowel Points were added to the Hebrew Text about 900 A.D.

The system of vowel points that was used was the system invented by the Masoretes of Tiberius in Palestine. This system of vowel points was superimposed on the consonants and vowel letters that were already in the Hebrew Text, and it represents the pronunciation of Hebrew vowels current in Palestine from the end of the 8th century A.D. onwards.

## III. Reading of the Hebrew Text

- A. The Hebrew Text is not read from the front to the back, but it is read from the back to the front.
- B. The Hebrew page is not read from left to right, but it is read from right to left.

## IV. Hebrew Alphabet

NAME OF THE LETTER	PRINTED FORM OF THE LETTER	WRITTEN FORM OF THE LETTER	TRANSLITERATION OF THE LETTER	ENGLISH EQUIVALENT SOUND OF THE LETTER
Aleph (the "a" is like the "a" in "father," and the "e" is like the "e" in "met")	א	א	ʾ	When the aleph has a vowel after it, the aleph is a consonant and takes the sound of the vowel that follows it. When the aleph does not have a vowel after it, the aleph is a vowel letter and is silent. <u>NOTE:</u> The aleph has a sound of its own, but because it is very difficult to pronounce, we will not use it.
Beth (the "e" is like the "e" in "they")	ב	ב	b	With the dot, the beth is a stop (hard) like the "b" in "boy."
	ב	ב	<u>b</u> or bh	Without the dot, the beth is a fricative (soft) like the "v" in "vest."