

Our English translations, on hundreds of occasions, attempt no interpretation of two letters appearing within the Hebrew Tanakh.

The Tanakh is the Jewish canon consisting of the Books of Moses (Torah), the Nevi'im (Prophets), and the Ketuvim (Writings). [thus TaNaKh]

Although some titles, arrangements and combinations differ from the Christian Old Testament canon; the two are basically the same.

So, both the Tanakh and the O.T. canon have the same response to the two untranslated letters appearing with great regularity within their texts.

The first appearance of the untranslated letters is in the first verse of the Bible...

הָאָרֶץ:	וְאֵת	הַשָּׁמַיִם	אֵת	אֱלֹהִים	בָּרָא	בְּרֵאשִׁית
the earth.	and	the Heaven		God	created	In the beginning
<u>776</u>	<u>853</u>	<u>8064</u>	<u>853</u>	<u>430</u>	<u>1254</u>	<u>7225</u>
haa'aarets	w ^a 'eet	hashaamayim	'eet	'Elohiym	baaraa'	B ^a ree'shiyt

These two letters are the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet – Aleph, and the last letter – Tav. Notice how there is no English translation appearing in this Interlinear graphic of the text.

There is a second appearance of the Aleph/Tav in this verse which is translated.

הָאָרֶץ:	וְאֵת	הַשָּׁמַיִם	אֵת	אֱלֹהִים	בָּרָא	בְּרֵאשִׁית
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וְאֵת	הַשָּׁמַיִם	אֵת
and	the Heaven	
<u>853</u>	<u>8064</u>	<u>853</u>
w ^a 'eet	hashaamayim	'eet

Here these two normally untranslated letters are coupled with the sixth letter of the Hebrew alphabet – Vav.

The letter “vav” means a “hook”, “spear”, or “tent peg.” The name and shape of the letter are directly connected to this meaning.

So, when Vav (ו) is attached to Aleph/Tav (א) it will appear in translation usually rendered as “and” – anchoring or conjoining two words or thoughts.

Lone appearances of אָ by book:

Gen. 44	1Chrn. 12	Dan. 6
Ex. 61	2Chrn. 24	Amo. 3
Lev. 30	Neh. 7	Obed. 2
Num. 42	Est. 13	Mic. 2
Deut. 38	Job 1	Zeph. 2
Josh. 21	Ps. 6	Hag. 1
Judg. 19	Prov. 2	Zec. 3
Ruth 7	Song 5	Mal. 3
1Sam. 39	Isa. 22	
2Sam. 29	Jer. 58	Total 634
1Kng. 35	Lam. 1	
2Kng. 30	Eze. 39	

The logical question arriving from what we have seen thus far is:

Why does the appearance of Aleph/Tav (אָ) go without a rendering or translation in so many appearances?

Our answer begins with some Jewish history.

Jewish rabbis and scholars have struggled with the lone appearances of אָ for years. There have been numerous and contradictory thoughts and conclusions.

Some rabbis have suggested that Aleph/Tav are merely symbols representing a form of Hebrew grammar which functioned as a “object pointer” within the text.

They say the appearances are simply pointing attention to a specific object within the sentence and nothing more.

Those who disagree with the “pointer theory” offer several reasons for doing so:

- Why are they not always present in sentence structure?
- While אָ is in every book there are entire chapters where it does not occur.
- In fact, by volume only 26% of the O.T. text contains the אָ.

These and other truths have led many Jewish authorities to reject the grammatical explanation for Aleph/Tav.

Going all the way back to the first century we find Rabbinical thoughts offer a different explanation.

Three noted rabbis: Nahum, Simeon, and Akiva wrote extensively about אָ.

In agreement they:

- Saw it as a special “mark.”
- Wrote of it being a “sign.”
- They saw it as a mark or sign holding “amplification.”
- Viewed it as an invitation to see the sign of a Divine intention for some other secret or unwritten meaning.

Rabbi Nahum

Examined every occurrence of אָ and concluded that each is meant to indicate “the presence of the Divine hand.”

Rabbi Simeon

Refused to even process or comment on Aleph/Tav seeing the imagery of the letters too holy and supreme for any human interjection.

Rabbi Akiva

Saw that the term was the accurate definition of Elohim and thus did have purposeful explanation which he saw as a “silent secret code” of Elohim which embraced the totality of all His creative abilities and powers.

From these and other Jewish authorities most conclude that the Aleph/Tav of Scripture is not a grammatical pointer...

...but a unique sign pointing to the supernal power of the Divine. A sign elevating Deity to a place beyond written expression.

It should be noted that some of these authorities even go as far as to say the addition of the Vav does not negate the hallowed nature of the Aleph/Tav.

Rather it just “anchors” or puts a “tent peg” on the “sign” which intensifies its majestic connection.

Some examples which illustrate the imposing nature of Aleph/Tav... Ex. 20:18

הַשֹּׁפָר	קוֹל	וְאֵת	הַלְפִידִם	וְאֵת	הַקּוֹלֹת	אֵת	רְאִים	הָעָם	וְכָל
the trumpet,	the noise of	and	the lightnings,	and	the thunderings,		saw	the people	And all
7782	6963	853	3940	853	6963	853	7200	5971	3605
hashopaar	qowl	w ^a *eet	halapiydim	w ^a *et-	haqowlot	'et-	ro'iyim	haa'aam	W ^a kaal-
מֵרַחֵק:	וַיַּעֲמִדוּ	וַיִּנְעוּ	הָעָם	וַיֵּרָא	עָשָׁן	הַהָר	וְאֵת		
afar off.	and stood	and they removed,	the people	it,	when saw	smoking:	the mountain	and	
7350	5975	5128	5971	9999	7200	6226	2022	853	
meeraachok	Waya'amduw	wayaanu'uw	haa'aam	Wayir'uw	'aasheen	haahaar	w ^a *et-		

Some examples which illustrate the imposing nature of Aleph/Tav... Deut. 5:24

וְאֵת	גְּדֻלּוֹ	וְאֵת	כְּבוֹדוֹ	אֵת	אֱלֹהֵינוּ	יְהוָה	הֵרְאָנוּ	הֵן	וַתֹּאמְרוּ
and	his greatness,	and	his glory		our God	the Lord	hath shewed us	Behold,	And ye said,
853	1433	853	3519	853	430	3068	7200	2005	559
w ^a *et-	gaad'low	w ^a *et-	k ^a 'bodow	'et-	'Eloheeynuw	Yahweh	her'aanuw	Heen	Wato'm'ruw
אֱלֹהִים	יְדַבֵּר	כִּי	רָאִינוּ	הַזֶּה	הַיּוֹם	הָאֵשׁ	מִתּוֹךְ	שָׁמָעְנוּ	קוֹלוֹ
God	doth talk	that	we have seen	this	day	the fire:	out of the midst of	we have heard	his voice
430	1696	3588	7200	2088	3117	784	8432	8085	6963
'Elohiym	y ^a 'dabeer	kiy-	raa'iyenuw	hazeh	Hayowm	haa'eesh	mitowk	shaama'a'nuw	qolow

Some examples which illustrate the imposing nature of Aleph/Tav... Ex. 20:8

לְקַדְּשׁוּ	הַשַּׁבָּת	יוֹם	אֵת	זְכוֹר
to keep it holy.	the sabbath	day,		Remember
<u>6942</u>	<u>7676</u>	<u>3117</u>	<u>853</u>	<u>2142</u>
I ^a qad ^a show	hashabaat	yowm	'et-	Zaakowr

Throughout the O.T. we find Aleph/Tav being tied to themes of:

- Creation
- Covenants
- Atonements
- Judgments
- Blessings
- Events, people, places, things

A video summary of its appearances

So the O.T. contains in multiple locations a sign of Deity's unique power and authority by the use of Aleph/Tav. The Jews did not translate the word and seem to have understood it as a "divine pointer" elevating the sovereignty ability of Deity.

Zech 12:10

9 On that day I will set out to destroy אֵת all the nations that come against Jerusalem.

10 "Then I will pour out a spirit of grace and prayer on the house of David and the residents of Jerusalem, and they will look at Me אֵת whom they pierced. They will mourn for Him as one mourns for an only child and weep bitterly for Him as one weeps for a firstborn.

Luke 24:27

Then beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted for them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures.

John 5:46-47

46 For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, because he wrote about Me.

47 But if you don't believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

John 1:1-3

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2 He was with God in the beginning.

3 All things were created through Him, and apart from Him not one thing was created that has been created.

Rev 1:8

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "the One who is, who was, and who is coming, the Almighty."

Rev 21:6

6 And He said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.

Rev 22:13

13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.

Jesus identifies Himself as the Alpha (1st letter of Greek alphabet) and the Omega (last letter of Greek alphabet). The first and the last.

While John was probably recording the Revelation in Greek is not the message still the same? Jesus is saying I am the first letter of the alphabet (aleph) and the last (tav).

Jesus is the "unknown sign pointing" to Deity. He is the unique character of God unknown in the O.T. but revealed in the N.T.

Revealing Himself as such enables Him to specifically identify His presence in the writings of Moses and the Prophets.

Revealing Himself as such becomes an identification of the "mystery" hidden but now made known.

1 Cor 2:7-8

7 No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.

8 None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

What a unique possibility that the silence of God's glory in the Old Testament...

...is completely revealed by the incarnate appearance of His glory within the person of Jesus – the one who is the first and the last!

The truth of Jesus' presence and hidden activity within the O.T. is something we have studied and found revealed in many ways.

But the possibilities of Jesus revealing Himself as the Aleph/Tav (mysterious word exalting the ability and power of God) opens even a deeper appreciation for the wonders of God's plan.

This helps explain to me, why Jesus may have been so disgusted with the refusal among the Jews to accept Him.

Now we have the complete revelation of Jesus as God's Son. Proclaimed to be so by the resurrection from the dead.

And still some refuse to believe!

Do you believe today?

Will you allow your belief to change the direction your life is going?

Will you put to death the person who loves sinning?

And bury that person with Jesus in an aquatic grave?

From which you rise to a walk a new life!

Will you accept today the Jesus that you may have considered hidden from your understanding.

Will you allow Him to become your "first" and travel with Him until your "last?"