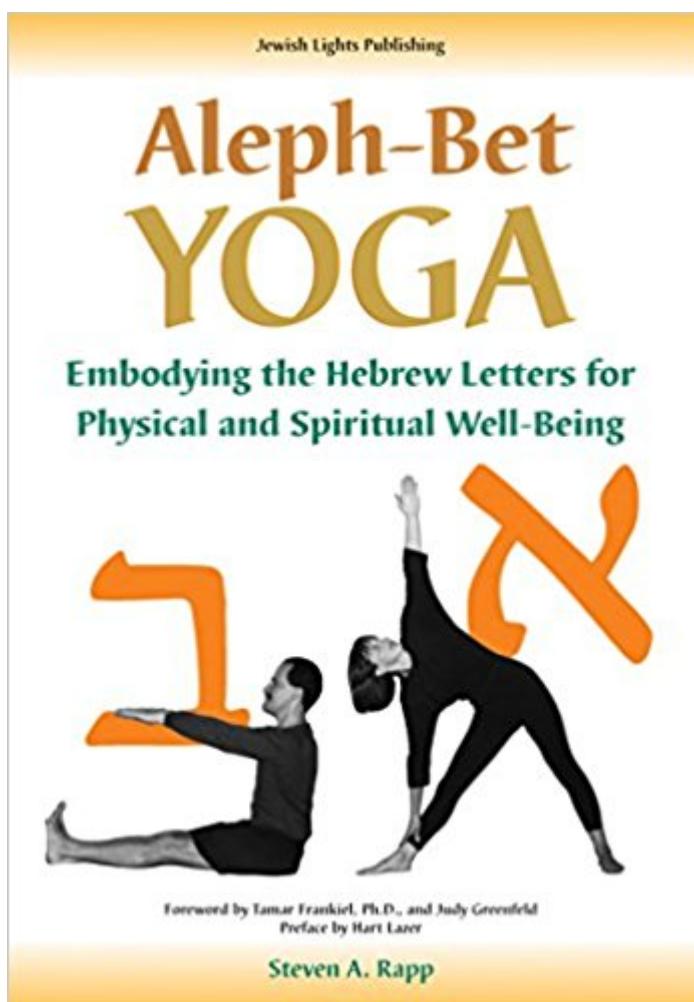


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# Aleph-Bet Yoga: Embodying The Hebrew Letters For Physical And Spiritual Well-Being



## Synopsis

Combine the ancient practice of hatha yoga with the shapes and mystical meanings of the Hebrew letters to enhance your physical health and deepen your spiritual life. This unique guide shows both the yoga enthusiast and the yoga novice how to use hatha yoga postures and techniques to physically connect with Jewish spirituality. "If you are curious about hatha yoga, Aleph-Bet Yoga provides a safe introduction to the basic yoga postures and techniques. If you are one of the tens of thousands of Jews who already practice hatha yoga, Aleph-Bet Yoga will connect your yoga to something explicitly Jewish. With its Jewish content and intent, Aleph-Bet Yoga will enhance rather than interfere with your religious identity." *From the Introduction* As we move our bodies through the Hebrew aleph-bet, turning toward the inner meaning of the letters, we can tap into the deep connections between our body, mind and spirit. Drawing on the sacred texts and mystical writings of Judaism, combined with the insights of yoga teacher Steven Rapp, Aleph-Bet Yoga is an East-meets-West experience for our whole selves. Aleph-Bet Yoga makes it easy for anyone to incorporate yoga into their life, and combines the physical and spiritual aspects of Judaism. It features step-by-step instructions, photographs clearly demonstrating each yoga pose, and insightful words to inspire and guide us in connecting the spiritual meaning of the Hebrew letters to our yoga practice.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In this refreshing manual, Lawrence Kushner's mystical Book of Letters meets B.K.S. Iyengar's

Yoga. For the thousands of Jews who have discovered yoga, Boston-based yoga teacher Rapp marries traditional Jewish wisdom with classic hatha positions. Rapp's 20-page introduction reassures the skeptical, explaining that although Eastern religions have traditionally paid more attention to the body than Western traditions, Jews and other Westerners can usefully (and faithfully) adopt spiritual practices that focus on the corporeal. Rapp matches one yoga position with each of 29 Hebrew letters (the standard 22, plus the final consonants and the patach and kamatz vowels). Each pose looks remarkably like the letter it is paired with; for the letter Aleph, Rapp offers a triangle pose, for Lamed a traditional lightning position and so forth. He nimbly walks readers through each posture, explaining in clear prose how to form the pose. Sharp photographs illustrate his instructions. Rapp also offers a Hebrew verse and an English reflection to meditate upon once readers have gotten into position. The book concludes with helpful instructions about mixing these poses for "a balanced yoga practice session" and a bibliography of books and videos on both yoga and Judaism. The lay-flat binding makes the book both handsome and practical. While it is perhaps best suited to a Jewish audience, lifelong practitioners and yoga tyros alike will find this guide inspiring. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

"Beautifully synthesized yoga and Judaism in understandable and poetic ways. A testament to the power of yoga as a way of life to enhance any faith." ª Marsha Wenig, creator of YogaKids" At last, a whole-bodied approach to Hebrew that not only informs the mind but opens the soul. This is not your Bubbe's aleph-bet book, but it should have been" ª Rabbi Rami Shapiro, translator/annotator of The Hebrew Prophets: Selections Annotated and Explained and Hasidic Tales: Annotated and Explained" An intriguing, interesting and innovative concept. Using Hebrew letters as parallels to ancient yogic asanas opens exciting possibilities of integration." ª Aruni Nan Futuronsky, director of Retreat and Renewal, Kripalu Center for Yoga and Health" Reader-friendly, poetic, and insightful ª an excellent beginning guide for those who want to view yoga through a Jewish Lens." ª Alan Reder, contributing editor to Yoga Journal; coauthor of The Whole Parenting Guide

I am enjoying the book and it meets up fine with the description in my opinion. There are unfortunate format issues involving the Hebrew pointings on a Kindle (DX or PC for sure) and this is, for me, a serious flaw. On the plus side is that the main table of contents (indicating major chapters) is properly hyperlinked for the Kindle. On the negative side, however, is that the book employs content pages at the start of each chapter and these aren't hyperlinked. :(

The postures and letters didn't match the cross over, in my opinion. I prefer the meaning of the letter combined with the pose, a blending of the physical action to the spiritual meaning. I find if I set my Kavanah prior to the yoga I get this blend throughout. So I found this book a bit lacking, not a bad book but I enjoyed the Torah Yoga better. The meditations within are much more helpful to me personally.

I have mild MS and can't move very strenuously. I wanted to try yoga but had some reservations about getting into eastern spiritual practices. My husband who is not at all into exercise found this to be a great way to start. The pictures of the poses make it easy and by describing a workout in specifics. It's easy to put together a routine even without a teacher. I would however prefer a video of the poses because it is hard to try to read instructions from a book as you're trying to do the poses. This book however, is overall what I was looking for. Just an instruction manual not necessarily one that got into all the philosophy as does "Torah Yoga." That is a good companion for "Aleph-Bet Yoga" but Aleph-Bet is for those who are looking for a workout first and foremost.

Presumably aimed at an audience of observant Jews afraid that hatha yoga is the pork of exercise, which will steal their souls from Yahweh and deliver them to Shiva and Shakti, this Romper Room approach tries to coax reluctant couch latkes onto the mat by showing just how much the yoga poses resemble Hebrew letters. (Look Ma! I made an Aleph!) One can practice hatha yoga without adopting the beliefs of Vedanta or Hinduism, just as a Hindu can eat a piece of gefilte fish without feeling an overwhelming urge to put on tefillin. Anyone who wants to try to learn hatha yoga from a book instead of a class would be well advised to buy one of the texts written by a specialist. Any of the Iyengar books, for example, or Donna Farhi's excellent work, or Erich Schiffman's. There are also superb DVDs that will help one learn in the privacy of one's shtetl.

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