

## **A standardised braille code for Yiddish proposed by Vivian Aldridge**

(last amended 11th December 2000)

Based on the Hebrew braille code as expounded in "ספר הבראיל" by Rivka Rosenzweig, published (1995) by the Central Library for the Blind, Visually Impaired and Handicapped, Netanya, Israel.

### **Background**

As Yiddish is written using the Hebrew alphabet, it is logical to use the Hebrew braille code as the basis for a Yiddish braille code. However, Yiddish does not always use the alphabet in exactly the same way as in Hebrew. Great variations are encountered in Yiddish orthography, depending on the date and place of printing, the type of publication and so on. For instance, older texts may show German influence in the spelling, books from the Soviet Union may be written entirely phonetically and publications of religiously orthodox circles may show full Hebrew pointing.

Within Yiddish itself the alphabet is also used in two fundamentally different ways:

- words borrowed from Hebrew and Aramaic are usually written as is customary for these languages
- words of other origin (Germanic, Slavic, Romantic etc.) are written more or less phonetically using a modified form of the Hebrew alphabet.

A Yiddish braille code must conform to the Hebrew code and at the same time allow for all orthographic variations without becoming excessively complicated.

### **Rules for the writing of Yiddish**

The letters have all been taken from the Hebrew braille code.

- If the print letter can be rendered by various braille signs according to its pronunciation, then the most suitable must be chosen in Yiddish, e.g. khof (and not kof) in the word ikh (אִיךְ), beyz and not veyz in the word hobn (האָבן)
- The letters of the pairs beyz and veyz (בּ, בֿ), khof and kof (כּ, כֿ), pey and fey (פּ, פֿ), shin and sin (שׂ, שׁ) are always to be written with the appropriate braille signs, no matter how - or even whether - they are distinguished from one another in the print.

