

Title: Proposal to change the provisional code point allocations for proposed characters HEBREW POINT HOLAM HASER FOR VAV and HEBREW POINT QAMATS QATAN

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Action: For consideration by the UTC

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The June 2004 UTC meeting provisionally allocated code point 05BA to HEBREW POINT QAMATS QATAN (originally HEBREW POINT QAMATS FORM2). The August 2004 UTC meeting has provisionally allocated code point 05C7 to HEBREW POINT HOLAM HASER FOR VAV. Code point 05BA represents a single gap in an otherwise continuous block of Hebrew vowel points, adjacent to the existing HOLAM but not to the existing QAMATS, whereas 05C7 is in an area remote from other vowel points.

I would like to propose that these two code points be reversed, so that 05BA is HEBREW POINT HOLAM HASER FOR VAV and 05C7 is HEBREW POINT QAMATS QATAN. There are various reasons for this:

1. HEBREW POINT HOLAM HASER FOR VAV is an integral part of the traditional Hebrew (Tiberian) pointing system, whereas HEBREW POINT QAMATS QATAN is a rarely used recent innovation. Since only one of these characters can be positioned contiguously with the already encoded vowel points, it is sensible that the commonly used character should be allocated there, and the innovation should be moved elsewhere.
2. The gap at code point 05BA was left because it was originally intended for a character very like HEBREW POINT HOLAM HASER FOR VAV, which was proposed in the early days of Unicode on the basis of a legacy encoding. It would make sense to maintain a closer compatibility with this legacy encoding by using code point 05BA for a variant HOLAM character.
3. This provisionally encoded character did in fact find its way into some fonts which are now widely distributed, including Tahoma and some versions of Times New Roman and Arial which are distributed with the Windows operating system. The form and position of this character, when used with the base character VAV, is suitable (at least as a first approximation) for HEBREW POINT HOLAM HASER FOR VAV. It would significantly reduce the backward incompatibilities caused by the new character HEBREW POINT HOLAM HASER FOR VAV if it is allocated to a code point at which such a character is already implemented.

NOTE: I continue to oppose encoding HEBREW POINT HOLAM HASER FOR VAV, and will push for an alternative, possibly a simple HEBREW POINT HOLAM HASER for use with every base character. But that is a matter for a separate submission to the UTC.