

BeGeD KeFeT letters: ת פ כ ד ג ב

There are 6 letters in the Hebrew aleph bet which can be written with or without a dagesh. They are called the BeGeD KeFeT letters. This term is simply a device for the easy memorization of these 6 letters.

These 6 consonants are: bet (ב); gimmel (ג); dalet (ד); kaf (כ); pay (פ); and tav (ת).

However, only three of the six letters actually change their sound, depending upon whether there is a dagesh in the letter or not. These are bet (ב); kaf (כ); pay (פ). (The blue-highlighted letters below show how the sound changes with these three letters.)

BeGeD KeFeT	Name of letter	Sound	Example	Explanation
ב	with dot: bet	as in b all	רַבָּה (rahb-bah)	NOTE: the bet and vet are pronounced differently
ב	without dot: vet	as in v ice	שֶׁבֶת (sheh-veht)	
ג	with dot: gimmel	as in g et	גַּם (gahm)	Note: the gimmel is pronounced the same with and without the dagesh
ג	without dot: gimmel	as in g et	חָג (chahg)	
ד	with dot: dalet	as in d og	דָּג (dahg)	Note: the dalet is pronounced the same with and without the dagesh
ד	without dot: dalet	as in d og	עוֹד (od)	
כ	with dot: kaf	as in k ee p	כֶּן (kehn)	NOTE: the kaf and chaf are pronounced differently
כ	without dot: chaf	as in Bach	נָכוֹן (nah-chon)	
פ	with dot: pay	as in p et	פַּעַם (pah-ahm)	NOTE: the pay and fay are pronounced differently
פ	without dot: fay	as in f ar	סוֹפֵת (so-feet)	
ת	with dot: tav	as in t ell	תּוֹדָה (to-dah)	Note: the tav is pronounced the same with and without the dagesh
ת	without dot: tav	as in t ell	שֶׁבֶת (shahb-bat)	

DIPHTHONG (דוֹ-תֵּה-נוּ-אָה : doo-teh-noo-ah)

Standard Sound of Hebrew vowels:

אֵ ("ee") אֶ ("eh") אִ ("eh") אָ ("ah") אָ ("ah")

With the addition of a yod, the vowel becomes a diphthong & the sound changes

“ee” as in sleep “ey” as in they “ey” as in they “I” as in isle “I” as in isle

אֵי אֶי אִי אָי אָי

Chirek Yod *Tsere Yod* *Segol Yod* *Kamats Yod* *Patach Yod*

חִירְק יוֹד צִירֵי יוֹד סְגוֹל יוֹד קָמָץ יוֹד פָּתַח יוֹד

NOTE:

- There are only 3 diphthong sounds to remember: “I” (as in isle); “ey” (as in they); and “ee” (as in sleep).
- Diphthongs are long vowels.

Remember: when a long vowel is followed by a yod; the vowel becomes a diphthong.		
Hebrew	Translation	Transliteration
מַיִם	water	mi-yeem
שָׁמַיִם	heaven	shah-mi-yeem
אֲדֹנָינוּ	our Lord (1Sam 16:16) Used to refer to leaders, eg King David (1Sam 25:14, 17; 1Ki 1:43, 47; Neh 10:30; Ps 8:2,10)	Ah-doh-ney*-noo (*“ey”: as in “they”)
הָיָה	he was	hiy-yah
חַגִּי	Haggai, as in the book of <i>Haggai</i>	chahg-gi* (*“i” as in “isle”)
בֵּין	between	beyn (*“ey”: as in “they”)
אֵיפֹה	where? (interrogative or question word)	ay-foh
סִינַי	Sinai	See-ni
אֱלֹהִים	God (Elohim)	Eh-loh-heem
וַיְחַנֵּךְ	and He will be gracious to you, will give you favor (from the Aaronic blessing [aka Birkat Kohanim or Priestly Blessing], Num 6:26)	vee-choon-neh-chah
הִיא	she	hee
חַי	live	chi
לְחַיִּים	to life! (a common Hebrew toast)	leh-chiy-yeem
אֵלֶיךָ	to you or upon you (this word is also in the Aaronic blessing [aka Birkat Kohanim or Priestly Blessing], Num 6:25)	eh-ley*-chah (*“ey”: as in “they”)

VOCAL SHEVAS

Level 1 of the vocal sheva

- When the sheva is under the first letter of a word it is vocal, the sheva is a sheva na (שְׁוָא נָע). This sheva generally has a quick and almost indistinguishable sound: “eh”

Level 1- Sheva that is under the first letter of a word is vocal (quick or short “eh”). This sheva generally has a quick and almost indistinguishable sound: “eh”.		
Word	Meaning	Transliteration
קָדוֹשׁ	holy, sacred (Is 1:4, the holy one; construct)	keh- dosh (commonly pronounced k’dosh)
בְּרָכָה	blessing (noun; Gen 12:2)	beh-rah- chah (commonly pronounced brachah)
מְאֹד	very	meh- od
שְׁמָע	Shema (refer to page 42 for more details)	sheh- mah (commonly pronounced sh’mah)
כְּתָב	writing, text, decree, registration of the text (noun, masculine; Esther 4:8)	keh- tahv
שְׁאוֹל	Sheol, hell, or grave (noun)	Sheh- ol
שְׁלֹשׁ - רְגָלִים	3 annual pilgrimage festivals (Ex 23:14 - noun)	sheh- losh reh-gah- leem
שְׁוָא	one of the vowels in Hebrew	sheh- vah (commonly pronounced sh’vah)

Level 2 of the vocal sheva

- When 2 Shevas are consecutive (in a row), the 1st is silent (שְׁוָא נָח) & 2nd is vocal (שְׁוָא נָע).
 - If a sheva is under the 1st letter of the word, it is vocal & does not count as one of 2 consecutive shevas.
 - The first of two consecutive shevas closes the syllable and this sheva is silent (שְׁוָא נָח)
 - The second of 2 consecutive shevas is vocal (שְׁוָא נָע) and has a quick “eh” sound.

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1. The first of two consecutive shevas closes the syllable. The first sheva is silent (שְׁוָא נָח)		
2. The second of 2 consecutive shevas is vocal (שְׁוָא נָע) and has a quick “eh” sound.		
Word	Meaning	Transliteration
יִשְׂרָצוּ	they (3 rd person, masculine, plural) will swarm, teem, or bring forth abundantly (Gen 1:20)	yeesh-reh- tsoo
וַיִּשְׁמְרוּךָ	& he (3 rd person, masculine, singular) will keep or guard you. (From the Aaronic Blessing) NOTE: The וַיִּ is a vocal sheva (שְׁוָא נָע) & does not count as one of the 2 consecutive shevas	veh-yeesh-meh- reh -chah
יִשְׁמְרוּ	they will guard or keep	yeesh-meh- roo

Grammar-made-simple: Levels 1 & 2 of the vocal sheva:

- Level 1: If the sheva is under the 1st letter of the word, it is vocal.
- Level 2: If there are 2 shevas in a row (consecutive), the 1st is silent (it closes the syllable) & the 2nd is vocal.

Level 3: when sheva is under a dagesh chazak, it is vocal

(Review Lesson 9.01: a dagesh chazak follows either a long or short vowel)

When a <u>sheva is</u> under a dagesh chazak (דָּגֶשׁ חֲזָק), the sheva is vocal (שְׁוָא נָע).		
For example: עַמְּךָ = עַמְּ + מְּ + ךָּ = pronounced: ahm-meh- chah		
Word	Meaning	Transliteration
כֻּלְּכֶם	all of you (2 nd person: you: masculine, plural) Eg: כֻּלְּכֶם = כֶּם + לְ + כֶּם	cool-leh- chehm
עַמְּךָ	your (2 nd person: you: masculine, singular) people (2Sam 7:24)	ahm-meh- chah
הַשְּׁבִיעִי	the seventh	hahsh-sheh-vee- ee (commonly pronounced hahsh-shvee- ee)
הַדְּבָרִים	the words or things	hahd-deh-vah- reem (commonly pronounced hahd-d'vah- reem)
דְּבָרִים	literally “words” (or “things”) Also this is the Hebrew name for the book of Deuteronomy	deh-vah- reem (commonly pronounced d'vah- reem)
טַפְּכֶם	your (2 nd person: you: masculine, plural) children (Dt 29:11)	tahp-peh- chehm
קִדְּשָׁנוּ	sanctifies us (from Festival Candle Blessing)	keed-deh- shah -noo

Level 4: when sheva follows a long vowel, it is vocal

When <u>Sheva follows a long vowel*</u> , it is vocal (שְׁוָא נָע).		
*Long vowels: kamats קָמֶץ (ֹ) // tserē צִירֵי (ִי) // cholam חוֹלָם (וֹ) // cholam vav חוֹלָם שְׁוָא (וֹ) // shurek שׁוּרֶק (וֹ)		
PLUS, all diphthongs are long.		
For example: הִיְתָה (In this word, note: the sheva immediately follows the chamatz, which is a long vowel. Therefore, the sheva is vocal. הִיְתָה is pronounced: hi-yeh- tah)		
Word	Meaning	Transliteration
הִיְתָה	it was (3 rd person: feminine, singular)	hi-yeh- tah (commonly pronounced hi-yee- tah)
לְבָבְךָ	your heart (from the V'ahavta from the Shema, Dt 6:5)	leh-vah- veh -chah (commonly pronounced leh- vahv -chah)
וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ	and with all your soul (from the V'ahavta from the Shema, Dt 6:5)	oo-veh-chol nahf-sheh- chah
כֹּתְבִים	write (masculine, plural)	koh-teh- veem (commonly pronounced koht- veem)
וּבְאֹתוֹ	and his oath	oo-veh-ah-lah- toh

Grammar-made-simple: Levels 3 & 4 of the vocal sheva:

1. Level 3: If the sheva is under a dagesh chazak, it is vocal.
2. Level 4: If the sheva follows a long vowel, it is vocal.
 - a. kamats קָמֶץ (ֹ) // tserē צִירֵי (ִי) // cholam חוֹלָם (וֹ) // cholam vav חוֹלָם שְׁוָא (וֹ) // shurek שׁוּרֶק (וֹ)