

# Biblical Hebrew 101

## *Learning to Read Biblical Hebrew*

### Lesson 5

### שְׁעוֹר ה

## Chataf Vowels



*All ages (from youngsters through seniors) have fun learning God's holy Word*

### ***Continue learning Hebrew vowels***

- 5.01 Introduce the chataf vowels
- 5.02 Fact: the Torah is the foundation of the Bible
- 5.03 Practice reading and writing the chataf vowels
- 5.04 More practice reading
- 5.05 Let's read Joshua 1:9 in Hebrew
- 5.06 Introduce emphasis marks (aka accent or cantillation marks)

## In this lesson, we will learn the *chataf\** vowels:

\*"Chataf" is also pronounced "chatef".

חָ - chataf patach; חֶ - chataf segol; and חֻ - chataf kamats.

### 5.01 Introduce the chataf vowels

1. Chataf vowels are a combination of a sheva (◌ְ) plus a patach (◌ַ), segol (◌ֶ), or a kamats (◌ֹ).
2. The chataf vowels are half or reduced vowels. They have a quicker sound than their corresponding single vowel.
3. The chataf patach has the sound of the patach (ah as in spa); the chataf segol has the sound of the Segol (eh as in bed). The chataf kamats is different – it's sound is a ling O (as in row)
4. Chataf vowels only appear under guttural letters.

The guttural letters are: aleph (א), hay (ה), chet (ח), ayin (ע), and sometimes resh (ר).

Chataf Vowel	Name of vowel	Sound of vowel	Block vowel with aleph	Write each chataf
◌ְַ	חֵטף פתח chataf patach	ah as in spa; same sound as patach	אֵ	
◌ְֶ	חֵטף סגול chataf segol	eh as in bed; same sound as segol	אֵי	
◌ְֹ	חֵטף קמץ chataf kamats	o as in row. Chataf kamats can appear with <u>any letter</u> – unlike the other chatafs which can be used <u>only</u> with gutturals. Its sound is long O as in row.	אִי	

### 5.02 *FACT: the Torah is the foundation of the Bible*

Today many evangelical Christians discount much of the Old Testament (the TaNaKh), with the exception of Psalms and Proverbs. As a general rule, the Old Testament [TaNaKh] is studied for historical information, or as a metaphor or as an aid to understanding Jews. To these Christians, the New Testament is the Scripture with greatest importance.

Interesting fact: did you know that every book of the Bible has its foundation in the Torah?

Let us consider:

1. What Scripture did Yeshua Himself study? The Torah (the first 5 books of the Bible).
2. What Scripture did Paul and the early believers study? The Torah.
3. How do we know? Because the Apostolic Scriptures had not yet been written.

We are living in a very special time – God has chosen *US* to live at this time and is allowing us the opportunity to help restore that which was lost in understanding and in study of the Scripture.

**If** our goal is to live and to walk as our Messiah did, don't we think we ought to do the things He did, including studying and applying the Scripture He studied and walked according to?

### 5.03 Practice reading and writing the chataf vowels below

Chataf Vowels				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chataf patach (◌ִֿ) &amp; chataf segol (◌ִֿֿ) vowels:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Appear only under guttural consonants א (aleph), ה (hay), כ (chet), ע (ayin), &amp; sometimes ר (resh).</li> <li>Are pronounced quicker &amp; shorter than the regular patach (as in “spa”) &amp; segol (as in “hello”).</li> </ol> </li> <li>Chataf kamats (◌ֻֿ) is also pronounced chatef kamats               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can be used with any consonant.</li> <li>In Israel, the pronunciation is a long O (as in “row”)</li> <li>In the US, the pronunciation is often “ah” (as in “spa”)</li> </ol> </li> </ul>				
Letter	Name	Sound	Block	Write letter & vowel
א	aleph	silent	א	
אֿ	aleph with chataf segol	eh as in bed	אֿ	
אִ	aleph with chataf patach	ah as in spa	אִ	
אֻ	aleph with chataf kamats	o (long O, as in row)	אֻ	
ה	hay	silent (as in hi)	ה	
הֿ	hay with chataf segol	heh as in hello	הֿ	
הִ	hay with chataf patach	hah as in ha	הִ	
הֻ	hay with chataf kamats	ho (long O, as in hold)	הֻ	
כ	chet	ch as in Bach	כ	
כֿ	chet with chataf segol	cheh as in chet	כֿ	
כִ	chet with chataf patach	cha as in chataf	כִ	
כֻ	chet with chataf kamats	cho (long O, as in row)	כֻ	
ע	ayin	silent	ע	
עֿ	ayin with chataf segol	eh as in bed	עֿ	

אֵי	ayin with chataf patach	ah as in spa	אֵי	
אִי	ayin with chataf kamats	o (long O, as in over)	אִי	

### 5.04 Now, we are going to practice putting these sounds together!

Our objective is to become familiar with the letters and their sounds .... not to memorize words.

*Always remember read: right to left and top to bottom.*

Read & Write words below			
Hebrew	Translation	Transliteration (please, try to read before looking at transliteration)	Practice writing each word (use block print)
אהבה	love (noun)	ah-hah- <b>vah</b>	
אדמה	earth, ground	ah-dah- <b>mah</b>	
האדמה	the earth (Gen 12:3)	hah-ah-dah- <b>mah</b>	
חטא	sinner	chah- <b>tah</b>	
אשר	who, which, where, that	ah- <b>shehr</b>	
חטף	chataf (also, pronounced chatef) is a half or reduced vowel. (eg, the vowels we studied in this lesson)	chah- <b>tahf</b>	
יעשה	he will do, make (Num 9:14)	yah-ah- <b>seh</b>	
אמת	truth	eh- <b>meht</b>	
חזק	strong (imperative or command)	chah- <b>zahk</b>	
ואמץ	& courage (& courageous)	veh-eh- <b>mahtz</b>	
חזק ואמץ	“Be strong and of good courage” Congratulations said to Torah service participants at the end of Torah service. (Deut 31:6, 7, 23; Josh 1:6, 7, 9, 18, 10:25; 2Sam 10:12; 1Chron 19:13, 22:13, 28:20; 2Chron 32:7)	chah- <b>zahk</b> veh-eh- <b>mahtz</b>	

\* **Tip** Normally when there are 2 segols in a 3-4 letter word, the accent is on the first segol. However, when a word has a chataf segol and a segol, the accent remains on the final syllable; it does not move to the first.

Examples: אִמָּת & וְאִמָּץ: neither of these two words has two segols; each word has a chataf segol (a half or reduced vowel) & only segol, so the accent remains on the final syllable.

At work, I'm starting to count using the Hebrew alpha-numeric numerals! BO

## 5.05 Let's read Joshua 1:9 ... in Hebrew!



Words for Joshua 1:9		
Hebrew	Translation	Transliteration
צִוִּיתִיךָ	I [YHVH] have commanded you. Note: ך is <u>not</u> a shurek; it is a <u>vav</u> that is doubled. (We shall study the doubling of a consonant in a future lesson.)	tseev-vee- <b>tee</b> -chah
חֲזַק	be strong	chah- <b>zakh</b>
וְאַמֵּץ	& courage (courageous)	veh-eh- <b>mahtz</b>

↓ Vav

צִוִּיתִיךָ חֲזַק וְאַמֵּץ

↑ Patach

“I have commanded you to be strong & of good courage,” Joshua 1:9a

## 5.06 Brief explanation of cantillation marks

In the 600s AD, the Masoretes added vowels and other markings to the Hebrew letters in order to ensure accurate pronunciation. (Today, these markings are found in Biblical writings.)

The Masoretic text includes cantillation/accents. These special marks are placed on accented syllables. These marks are placed either above or below the consonantal letters (the consonants).

The verse below includes these extra marks (aka cantillation marks, accents, tropes).

Explanation and example of these marks:

- In the first word below, there are 2. (One is *above* the tav; the other is *above* the chaf sofit)
- In the 2<sup>nd</sup> word, the mark looks like a backwards “L” and is *below* the zayin.
- And in the 3<sup>rd</sup> word, *above* the mem is a mark that resembles a colon.

צִוִּיתִיךָ חֲזַק וְאַמֵּץ

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