

Biblical Hebrew Course 101  
– Boot Camp –  
*Learning to Read Biblical Hebrew*  
Lesson 8  
שְׁעוּר ח

**Developing our understanding of the Hebrew Aleph Bet:**  
Dagesh Chazak *plus* Vocal & Silent Sh'vas



*Children have fun learning Hebrew with the puppet 'Shalom'!*

“... and you are to teach them carefully to your children,” from the Shema Deut 6:7a CJB

- 8.01 Review dagesh kal
- 8.02 Introduce dagesh chazak
- 8.03 Practice reading words with dagesh kal & dagesh chazak
- 8.04 Introduce vocal & silent sh'vas
- 8.05 Level 1: vocal sh'va - sh'va at the beginning of the word is vocal
- 8.06 Level 2: vocal sh'va – 2 consecutive sh'vas
- 8.07 Practice levels 1 & 2 of the vocal sh'va
- 8.08 Answers to 8.07

Don't forget to bring your completed homework to class 😊

## 8.01 Review dagesh kal – dagesh means emphasis.

### Dagesh kal (דָּגֶשׁ קָל)

- The dagesh kal is found only in six letters. The acronym for remembering these letters is BeGeD KeFeT: בְּגֵד כְּפֹת.
- For this class, we're primarily focused with the 3 letters that can change their sounds. These are בּ to ב; from כּ to כ; from פּ to פ.
- **HINT:** dagesh kal only appears in the 1st letter of a word or when it opens a syllable.

**Grammar-made-simple: long vowels\*:** (The remaining vowels are short)

Long vowels are kamats (ָ); tsere (ֵ); & the 3 dots: cholam (ֹ); cholam vav (וֹ); & the shurek (וּ)

## 8.02 Introduce dagesh chazak

### Dagesh chazak (דָּגֶשׁ חָזָק)

- Both the dagesh chazak & the dagesh kal look the same: each has a “dagesh” inside the consonant.
- Neither dagesh may appear in any consonant except the 5 gutturals (aleph: א, hey: ה, chet: ח, ayin: ע, & sometimes resh: ר).
- A dagesh chazak is preceded by a short vowel. Note: short vowels are those that are not long.\*↑
- Dagesh chazak doubles the consonant in which it stands. Example: אַחַד = אֶחָד (aht-tah).

## 8.03 Practice reading words with dagesh kal & dagesh chazak

| Practice recognizing dagesh kal & dagesh chazak |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| Hebrew  | Translation  | Transliteration & identifying type of sh'vas<br>(please try to read before looking at transliteration)   |
| 1) דָּבַר                                       | he spoke (Lev 25:2)  | dahb- <b>behr</b><br>* Dagesh Kal ( <b>dalet</b> is part of בְּגֵד כְּפֹת & it does not follow a vowel.)<br>* Dagesh Chazak ( <b>bet</b> is doubled because this dagesh follows a vowel.)  |
| 2) בְּמִדְבָּר                                  | in the wilderness or desert (Dt 1:1)                             | bahm-meed- <b>bahr</b><br>* Dagesh Kal ( <b>bet</b> is part of בְּגֵד כְּפֹת & it does not follow a vowel)<br>* Dagesh Chazak ( <b>mem</b> is doubled because dagesh follows a vowel.)<br>* Dagesh Kal ( <b>bet</b> is part of בְּגֵד כְּפֹת & it does not follow a vowel) |
| 3) הַמַּיִם                                     | the water (Gen 1:2)  | hahm- <b>mi</b> -yeem<br>* Dagesh Chazak ( <b>mem</b> is doubled because the dagesh follows a vowel.)  |
| 4) לְמִטָּה                                     | of every tribe (Num 13:2)  | leh-maht- <b>teh</b><br>* Dagesh Chazak ( <b>tet</b> is doubled because the dagesh follows a vowel.)   |
| 5) הַגִּדָּה                                    | Haggadah (booklet that tells the story of the exodus from Egypt) | hahg-gah- <b>dah</b><br>* Dagesh Chazak ( <b>gimmel</b> is doubled because this dagesh follows a vowel.)   |
| 6) הַשָּׁמַיִם                                  | the heavens (Gen 1:1)  | hahsh-shah- <b>mi</b> -yeem<br>* Dagesh Chazak ( <b>sheen</b> is doubled because this dagesh follows a vowel.)   |
| 7) וַיַּבְדֵּל                                  | and he divided (Gen 1:7)   | vay-yahv- <b>dehl</b><br>* Dagesh Chazak ( <b>yud</b> is doubled because this dagesh follows a vowel.)<br>* Dagesh Kal ( <b>dalet</b> is part of בְּגֵד כְּפֹת & it does not follow a vowel)   |
| 8) יַמִּים                                      | seas (Gen 1:10)  | yahm-m- <b>mem</b><br>* Dagesh Chazak ( <b>mem</b> is doubled because this dagesh follows a vowel.)  |
| 9) וְלִהְבִּדֵּל                                | And to divide (Gen 1:18)   | oo-lah-hahv- <b>dee</b><br>* The dot in the vav makes up the shurek vowel & it not a dagesh<br>* Dagesh Kal ( <b>dalet</b> is part of בְּגֵד כְּפֹת & it does not follow a vowel)  |

## 8.04 Introduce vocal & silent sh'vas

The sh'va can be either vocal or it can be silent. The vocal sh'va is pronounced with a very quick and almost indistinguishable “eh” sound.

There are various rules which determine whether the sh'va is vocal (“eh”) or silent which we will discuss in this lesson.

### 8.05 Level 1 vocal sh'va: this sh'va is at the beginning of a word

| When the sh'va is <u>under the first letter of a word</u> it is vocal.<br>This sh'va generally has a quick and an almost indistinguishable sound: “eh”. |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Word  | Meaning                                       | Transliteration   |
| 1) שְׁמָעַ  | Shema   | Explanation:<br>1. The small “eh” signifies the quick & almost indistinguishable “eh” sound.<br>2. The bolded, highlighted syllable is accented.<br>sheh- <b>mah</b> (commonly pronounced: sh' <b>mah</b> ) |
| 2) שְׁוָא   | sh'va: one of the vowels in Hebrew            | sheh- <b>vah</b> (commonly pronounced: sh' <b>vah</b> )   |
| 3) בְּרֵאשִׁית  | Genesis (literally: in the head or beginning) | beh-reh- <b>sheet</b> (note: the “eh” in the 1 <sup>st</sup> syllable is very quick and written with a small font. (commonly pronounced: b'reh- <b>sheet</b> )  |

### 8.06 Level 2 vocal sh'va: 2 sh'vas are consecutive (in other words, are in a row)

| When 2 sh'vas are consecutive, the 1st is silent & 2nd is vocal. (Note: these sh'vas must be in a row)<br>The first of two consecutive sh'vas closes the syllable. The second of 2 consecutive sh'vas is vocal and has a quick “eh” sound. |   |                                 |
|--|---|---------------------------------|
| Word   | Meaning   | Transliteration                 |
| 1) יִשְׂרְצּוּ   | they (3 <sup>rd</sup> person, masculine, plural) will swarm, teem, or bring forth abundantly (Gen 1:20)   | yeesh-reh- <b>tsou</b>          |
| 2) וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ  | and he (3 <sup>rd</sup> person, masculine, singular) will guard or keep you. (from the Aaronic Blessing)<br>The ך is a vocal sh'va & does not count as one of the 2 consecutive sh'vas. | veh-yeesh-meh- <b>reh</b> -chah |
| 3) יִשְׁמְרוּ  | they will guard or keep   | yeesh-meh- <b>roo</b>           |

#### Grammar-made-simple: Levels 1 & 2 of the vocal sh'va:

1. Level 1: If the sh'va is under the 1<sup>st</sup> consonant of the word, it is vocal.
2. Level 2: If there are 2 sh'vas in a row (consecutive), the 1<sup>st</sup> is silent (it closes the syllable) & the 2<sup>nd</sup> is vocal (& it opens the syllable).

## 8.07 Practice Levels 1 & 2 of the sh'va

| <b>REMINDER:</b><br>When a sh'va is <u>under the first letter of a word, it is vocal</u> . This sh'va generally has a quick and an almost indistinguishable sound: "eh".<br>When 2 sh'vas are consecutive (in a row), <u>the 1st is silent</u> . The 2 <sup>nd</sup> is vocal. |  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
| Word   | Meaning  | Transliteration   | Practice identifying the level of the sh'va; & tell why (Answers on 8.08)                                |
| 1) יִשְׂרָצוּ  | they (3 <sup>rd</sup> person, masculine, plural) swarm, teem, or bring forth abundantly (Gen 1:20) | yeesh-reh- <b>tsoo</b>  | Level 2: there are 2 sh'vas in a row; the 1 <sup>st</sup> sh'va is silent & the 2 <sup>nd</sup> is vocal |
| 2) שְׁמַע  | Shema  | sheh- <b>mah</b> (commonly pronounced: sh' <b>mah</b> )         | *Level 1: when a sh'va is under the first consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal.       |
| 3) בְּנֵי  | sons of  | beh- <b>nay</b> (commonly pronounced: b' <b>nay</b> )           | * (refer to explanation above)   |
| 4) יִשְׁמְרוּ  | they will guard or keep  | yeesh-meh- <b>roo</b>   |  |
| 5) שְׁוָא  | Sh'va (one of the vowels in Hebrew)  | sheh- <b>vah</b> (commonly pronounced: sh' <b>vah</b> )         |  |
| 6) קְדוֹשִׁים  | holy (verb, masculine plural)  | keh-do- <b>sheem</b> (commonly pronounced: k'do- <b>sheem</b> ) |  |
| 7) רְאוּבֵן  | Reuben (Ex 1:2)  | reh-oo- <b>vehn</b>   |  |
| 8) וְאַהֲרֹן   | and Aaron (Ex 5:1)   | veh-ah-hah- <b>ron</b>  |  |
| 9) נַפְשְׁכֶם  | your soul (Is 55:2)  | nahf-sheh- <b>chehm</b>   |  |

## 8.08 ANSWERS: Practice levels 1 & 2

| Word          | Meaning  | Transliteration   | Practice identifying the level of the sh'va; & tell why (Answers to 8.07)                                 |
|---------------|--|---|---|
| 1) יִשְׂרָצוּ | they (3 <sup>rd</sup> person, masculine, plural) swarm, teem, or bring forth abundantly (Gen 1:20) | yeesh-reh- <b>tsoo</b>  | Level 2: there are 2 sh'vas in a row; the 1 <sup>st</sup> sh'va is silent & the 2 <sup>nd</sup> is vocal. |
| 2) שְׁמַע     | Shema  | sheh- <b>mah</b> (commonly pronounced: sh' <b>mah</b> )         | Level 1: the sh'va is under the first consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal.            |
| 3) בְּנֵי     | sons of  | beh- <b>nay</b> (commonly pronounced: b' <b>nay</b> )           | Level 1: the sh'va is under the first consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal.            |
| 4) יִשְׁמְרוּ | they will guard or keep  | yeesh-meh- <b>roo</b>   | Level 2: there are 2 sh'vas in a row; the 1 <sup>st</sup> sh'va is silent & the 2 <sup>nd</sup> is vocal. |
| 5) שְׁוָא     | sh'va (one of the vowels in Hebrew)  | sheh- <b>vah</b> (commonly pronounced: sh' <b>vah</b> )         | Level 1: the sh'va is under the first consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal.            |
| 6) קְדוֹשִׁים | holy (verb, masculine plural)  | keh-do- <b>sheem</b> (commonly pronounced: k'do- <b>sheem</b> ) | Level 1: the sh'va is under the first consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal.            |

|               |                     |                         |   |
|---------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---|
| 7) רֵאֲוִיבֶן | Reuben (Ex 1:2)     | reh-oo- <b>vehn</b>     | Level 1: the sh'va is under the first consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal.  |
| 8) וְאַהֲרֹן  | and Aaron (Ex 5:1)  | veh-ah-hah- <b>ron</b>  | Level 1: the sh'va is under 1st consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal.<br>(Also, the chatef patach does not count as a sh'va.)<br>(Reminder: the dot above the “resh” is a cholam. Cholams tend to float to the right, rather than correctly appearing between the 2 consonants; in this case, the cholam should be between the “resh” and the “noon sofit”.) |
| 9) נַפְשְׁכֶם | your soul (Is 55:2) | nahf-sheh- <b>chehm</b> | Level 2: there are 2 sh'vas in a row; the 1 <sup>st</sup> sh'va is silent & the 2 <sup>nd</sup> is vocal.   |

“By studying Hebrew, we are able to get the treasures out the Word,” DH