

Biblical Hebrew Course 101
– Boot Camp –
Learning to Read Biblical Hebrew

Lesson 8

שְׁעוֹר 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
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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 כֶּפֶת.
- 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.

8.02 Introduce dagesh chazak

Dagesh chazak (דָּגֶשׁ חֲזָק)

- The dagesh chazak looks like the dagesh kal with a dot (dagesh) in the letter.
- No dagesh can have a guttural: aleph: א, hey: ה, chet: ח, ayin: ע, & sometimes resh: ר.
- Dagesh chazak doubles the consonant in which it stands. Example: אָחָה = אָח + אָה (aht-tah).
- Dagesh chazak is preceded by a vowel – any vowel except a sh'va.

8.03 Practice reading words with dagesh kal & dagesh chazak

<i>Before looking at the Transliteration column, try to recognize dagesh kal & dagesh chazak</i>		
Hebrew	Translation	Transliteration & identifying type of sh'vas (please try to read before looking at transliteration)
1) דָּבַר	he spoke (Lev 25:2)	dahb-behr * Dagesh Kal (dalet is part of בְּגֵד כֶּפֶת & it does not follow a vowel.) * Dagesh Chazak (bet is doubled because this dagesh follows a vowel.)
2) בַּמִּדְבָּר	in the wilderness or desert (Dt 1:1)	bahm-meed-bahr * Dagesh Kal (bet is part of בְּגֵד כֶּפֶת & it does not follow a vowel) * Dagesh Chazak (mem is doubled because dagesh follows a vowel.) * Dagesh Kal (bet is part of בְּגֵד כֶּפֶת & bet does not follow a vowel)
3) הַמַּיִם	the water (Gen 1:2)	hahm-mi-yeem * Dagesh Chazak (mem is doubled because the dagesh follows a vowel.)
4) לְמִטָּה	of every tribe (Num 13:2)	leh-maht-teh * Dagesh Chazak (tet is doubled because the dagesh follows a vowel.)
5) הַגִּדָּה	Haggadah (booklet that tells the story of the exodus from Egypt)	hahg-gah-dah * Dagesh Chazak (gimmel is doubled because this dagesh follows a vowel.)
6) הַשָּׁמַיִם	the heavens (Gen 1:1)	hahsh-shah-mi-yeem * Dagesh Chazak (sheen is doubled because this dagesh follows a vowel.)
7) וַיַּבְדֵּל	and he divided (Gen 1:7)	vay-yahv-dehl * Dagesh Chazak (yud is doubled because this dagesh follows a vowel.) * Dagesh Kal (dalet is part of בְּגֵד כֶּפֶת & it does not follow a vowel)
8) יַמִּים	seas (Gen 1:10)	yahm-meem * Dagesh Chazak (mem is doubled because this dagesh follows 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 has the same “eh” sound as a segol or tsere, only the vocal sh'va sound is quicker.

The 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

Level 1: When the sh'va is under the first letter of a word it is vocal.

This sh'va generally has a quick and an almost indistinguishable sound: "eh".

Word	Meaning	Transliteration
		Explanation: 1. The small "eh" signifies the quick & almost indistinguishable "eh" sound. 2. The bolded, highlighted syllable is accented.
1) שְׁמָעָה	Shema	sheh-mah (commonly pronounced: sh'mah)
2) שְׁוָא	sh'va: one of the vowels in Hebrew	sheh-vah (commonly pronounced: sh'vah)
3) בְּרֵאשִׁית	Genesis (literally: in the head or beginning)	beh-reh-sheet (note: the "eh" in the 1 st syllable is very quick and written with a small font. (commonly pronounced: b'reh-sheet))

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

Level 2: When 2 sh'vas are consecutive, the 1st is silent & 2nd is vocal. (Note: these sh'vas must be in a row) The **first** of two consecutive sh'vas closes the syllable. The **second** of 2 consecutives sh'vas is vocal and has a quick "eh" sound.

Word	Meaning	Transliteration
1) יִשְׂרָצוּ	they (3 rd person, masculine, plural) will swarm, teem, or bring forth abundantly (Gen 1:20)	yeesh-reh-tsoo
2) וַיִּשְׁמְרֵךְ	and he (3 rd person, masculine, singular) will guard or keep you. (from the Aaronic Blessing) The ך is a vocal sh'va & does not count as one of the 2 consecutives sh'vas.	veh-yeesh-meh-reh-chah
3) יִשְׁמְרוּ	they will guard or keep	yeesh-meh-roo

8.07 Practice Levels 1 & 2 of the sh'va (answers on 8.08)

Level 1: when a sh'va is under the first letter of a word, it is vocal. This sh'va generally has a quick and an almost indistinguishable sound: "eh".

Level 2: when 2 sh'vas are consecutive (in a row), the 1st is silent. The 2nd is vocal.

Word	Meaning	Transliteration	Identifying the level of sh'va (Answers on 8.08)
1) יִשְׂרָצוּ	they (3 rd person, masculine, plural) swarm, teem, or bring forth abundantly (Gen 1:20)	yeesh-reh-tsoo	Level 2: there are 2 sh'vas in a row; the 1 st sh'va is silent & the 2 nd is vocal
2) שְׁמָעָה	Shema	sheh-mah (commonly pronounced: sh'mah)	*Level 1: when a sh'va is under the first consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal.

Word	Meaning	Transliteration	Identify the level of the sh'va
3) בְּנֵי	sons of	beh- nay (commonly pronounced: b'nay)	* (refer to explanation above)
4) יִשְׁמְרוּ	they will guard or keep	yeesh-meh- roo	
5) וָאָה	sh'va (one of the vowels in Hebrew)	sheh- vah (commonly pronounced: sh' vah)	
6) קְדוֹשִׁים	holy (verb, masculine plural)	keh-do- sheem (commonly pronounced: k'do- sheem)	
7) רְאוּבֵן	Reuben (Ex 1:2)	reh-oo- vehn	
8) נַפְשְׁכֶם	your soul (Is 55:2)	nahf-sheh- chehm	

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

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

8.08 ANSWERS: (answers from 8.07)

Word	Meaning	Transliteration	Identify the level of sh'va
1) יִשְׂרָצוּ	they (3 rd person, masculine, plural) swarm, teem, or bring forth abundantly (Gen 1:20)	yeesh-reh- tsou	Level 2: there are 2 sh'vas in a row; the 1 st sh'va is silent & the 2 nd is vocal.
2) שְׁמַע	Shema	sheh- mah (commonly pronounced: sh' mah)	Level 1: the sh'va is under the first consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal.
3) בְּנֵי	sons of	beh- nay (commonly pronounced: b'nay)	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- roo	Level 2: there are 2 sh'vas in a row; the 1 st sh'va is silent & the 2 nd is vocal.
5) וָאָה	sh'va (one of the vowels in Hebrew)	sheh- vah (commonly pronounced: sh' vah)	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- sheem (commonly pronounced: k'do- sheem)	Level 1: the sh'va is under the first consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal.
7) רְאוּבֵן	Reuben (Ex 1:2)	reh-oo- vehn	Level 1: the sh'va is under the first consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal.
8) נַפְשְׁכֶם	your soul (Is 55:2)	nahf-sheh- chehm	Level 2: there are 2 sh'vas in a row; the 1 st sh'va is silent & the 2 nd is vocal.

8.09 Brief intro to sh'va level 3

Level 3: when a sh'va is under a dagesh chazak*, it is vocal.

***Note:** When a dagesh follows any vowel (except a sh'va), that dagesh is a dagesh chazak. The dagesh chazak doubles the consonant in which it is located.

Level 3: The 1 st doubled consonant is silent & the 2 nd is vocal. Sound familiar? Yes, it's similar to Level 2!		
Word	Dagesh chazak is noted in red	Pronunciation/Transliteration
1) כֹּלְכֶם	all of you (2 nd person: you: masculine, plural) כֹּלְכֶם = כֹּל + לְ + כֶּם	cool-leh- chehm
2) הַשְּׁבִיעִי	the seventh הַשְּׁבִיעִי = הַשְּׁ + בִּי + עִי	hahsh-sheh-vee- ee (commonly pronounced hahsh-shvee- ee)
3) טַפְּכֶם	your (2 nd person: you: masculine, plural) children (Dt 29:11) טַפְּכֶם = טַפְּ + כֶּם	tahp-peh- chehm

This time, you try & figure out how to divide these words into syllables!			
Word	Practice dividing the word into syllables, as they are in the examples above	Answer	Transliteration
1) עִמָּךְ	with you (Gen 21:22: 2 nd person: masculine, singular) עִמָּךְ = _____	עִ + מָּ + כְּ	ahm- meh -chah
3) בַּמְּלָאכָה	You shall not do any work (Ex 31:3-5; 20:10) בַּמְּלָאכָה = _____	בַּ + מְ + לָ + אָ + חָ	bahm-meh-lah- chah
3) הַדְּבָרִים	the words or things הַדְּבָרִים = _____	הַ + דְּ + בָּ + רִים	hahd-deh-vah- reem (commonly pronounced hahd-d'vah- reem)

8.10 Brief intro to sh'va level 4 (in Lesson 9, we will study level 4 in more detail.)

Level 4: when a sh'va follows a long vowel*, it is vocal.

Grammar-made-simple: an easy way to learn which vowels are long:

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

Tip: Learn the long vowels, then all the rest of the vowels are short 😊

Level 4: When a sh'va follows a long vowel, it is vocal		
1) לְבָבְךָ	your heart (from the V'ahavta from the Shema, Dt 6:5)	leh-vah- veh -chah (commonly pronounced leh- vahv -chah)
2) כָּתְבִים	write (masculine, plural)	koh-teh- veem (commonly pronounced koht- veem)
3) וּבְאֶלְתּוֹ	and his oath	oo-veh-ah-lah- toh