

Biblical Hebrew Course 101

– Boot Camp –

Lesson 6

שְׁעָרָן

Developing our understanding of the Hebrew Aleph Bet: Look-a-Likes, BeGeD KeFeT, & Dagesh Kal



Fellowshipping!

“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!”
Psalm 133:1 ESV

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6.01 Let's compare the consonants that are look-a-likes

Notice the differences between each of these look-a-like consonants:		
Letter	Pronounce The Name of Each Letter. Note Their Differences	Print
ב	Vet (note: the flat bottom horizontal bar)	
כ	Chaf: (note: this letter is rounded; similar to a backward “C”)	
ג	Gimmel (note: foot or heel on the lower left)	
נ	Nun (note: top & bottom horizontal bars are both short)	
ד	Dalet (note: top bar is straight & side bar extends a bit to the right)	
ר	Resh (resh is similar to a backwards “r” in English or to ְ; however, top bar doesn’t extend to the right)	
ְ	Chaf sofit (similar to ְ, only tail hangs below the line; this letter only appears as the last letter of a word.)	
ו	Vav (note: similar to ְ; only top horizontal bar is short)	
ׂ	Nun sofit (note: similar to ׂ, only tail hangs below the line; this letter only appears as the last letter of a word.)	
ׁ	Zayin (note: similar to ׁ, only top bar is slanted)	
ׂ	Hey (opening on the upper left... an opening for the hay to go through)	
ׁ	Chet (there is no opening on the top left)	
ׁ	Tav (looks like ׁ, only it has foot (or a toe) on the bottom left)	
ׁ	Ayin (this letter is rounded on the bottom)	
ׁ	Tsade (this letter has a straight bottom & the cross line is also straight)	
ׁ	Samech (how this letter is rounded; similar to a “O”)	
ׁ	Mem sofit (this letter has a flat bottom & a flat right side; it only appears as the last letter of a word.)	

6.02 Did you know in English there are words that are written the same but pronounced differently?

1. bass (as in a “bass fish”) & bass (as in a ‘bass guitar;’ this bass is pronounced as though it was spelled base).
2. read (as in “read a book”) & read (as in “Yesterday, I read a book.”)

6.03 The “o” & “oo” vowels

The “o” & “oo” vowels are placed next to the consonant, unlike other vowels which are below the consonant.

1. There are three different ways to write the long “o” in Hebrew:

- Cholam vav** is written with a dot on top of the vav: ḥ. It is important to note that this vav is no longer a consonant; it is now a part of the cholam vav vowel. This vav is silent. The sound of the cholam vav has is “o” as in “row.” For example: טוב (tov, meaning “good”)
- Cholam** is similar to the cholam vav. This is written with only the dot (the cholam) without the vav. The cholam has the same sound as the cholam vav: “o” as in “row.” For example: בָּקָר (bo-kehr, meaning “morning”) Note: the cholam (dot) is slightly to the left side of the “bet.”)
- Chatef kamats** is written with a sh’va & a kamats. This has a long “o” sound as in “row” and can be under a guttural consonant. For example: עֲנָנִי (oh-nee, meaning “poor”).

2. There are two different ways to write the “oo” in Hebrew:

- Shurek** is written with a vav and a dot in the middle of the vav, ḥ. As with the cholam vav, this vav is also silent; again this vav is no longer a consonant, but part of the vowel. The sound of the shurek is “oo” as in “pool.” For example: שָׁבּוּעַ (shah-voo-ah, meaning “week”).
- Kibbutz** is written with 3 slanted or descending dots under the consonant. ḥ. For example: הַעֲדָה (hah-eh-doot, meaning “the testimony”)

6.04 Fun way to remember the cholam vav (ḥ) and the shurek (ḥ)

- What if I tapped you on top of your head, you’d say “Oh!”; the sound of the cholam vav (ḥ) & cholam (ḥ).
- What if I tapped you in the tummy, you’d say “oo” (as in pool); the sound of the shurek (ḥ) & kibbutz (ḥ).

Summary of “o” & “oo” vowels				
Book Print	Name Of Vowel	Sound Of Vowel	Block	Write Each Letter
o-type vowels				
וָ	Note: this vowel is always written with the vav & is called <u>cholam vav</u> חֹלֶם וָוָ	o as in row	וָ	
וָ	Note: the cholam can be written with most consonants. It is called <u>cholam</u> חֹלֶם וָוָ	o as in row	וָ	
וָ	The vowel is called a <u>chatef kamats</u> צָהָפָךְ קָמָטָן. It can be under any consonant.	o as in row	וָ	
oo-type vowels				
וָ	Note: this vowel is always written with a vav & is called <u>shurek</u> שָׁוּרֶק וָוָ	oo as in pool	וָ	
וָ	Note: this vowel is called a kibbutz. It is written below the consonant. קְבֻּצָּן וָוָ	oo as in pool	וָ	

6.05 Practice reading words with “o” & “oo” vowels

Read common Hebrew words & phrases below (note: accented syllables are in bold & highlighted)			
Hebrew	Translation	Transliteration	Print Words
¹⁾ כָּוֹן	right or correct	nah- chon (long “O”)	
²⁾ כָּבוֹד **	glory, honor, or splendor		
³⁾ פָּלָל כָּבוֹד **	All the honor; congratulations.	kol hahk-kah- vod	
⁴⁾ אַרְוֹן הַקָּדְשָׁה	The Holy Ark (storage cabinet for the Sefer Torah, Torah Scroll; 2Chron 35:3.)	ah- ron hahk-ko- dehsh	
⁵⁾ לְאָמֵר	to say (or “saying”, as it is in many verses in the Torah; for example: Lev 23:1: “And YHVH said to Moses, <u>saying</u> .”)	leh- mor (long “O”)	
⁶⁾ סָופִּת	end or close (the word for a final letter סָופִּת, comes from סָוִף)	sof (long “O”)	
⁷⁾ סָופִּת	suffix or ending (as in ‘mem sofit’ סָופִּת (this word comes from סָוִף))	so- feet	
⁸⁾ הַעֲדָה	the testimony	hah-eh- doot	
⁹⁾ עַד-עֲזָלָם *	forever (2Sam 7:16; literally until forever). *Note under the lamed הַ there are both a kamats & an accent mark.	ahd-o- lahm	
¹⁰⁾ שָׁבַת שְׁלֹום	Have a good Shabbat!	shahb- baht shah- lom	
¹¹⁾ טוֹב	Good	tov	
¹²⁾ בְּקָר טֹב **	Good morning!	bo -kehr tov	
¹³⁾ עַרְבָּה טֹבָה	Good evening!	eh -rehv tov (Tip: when 2 segols appear in a 3 or 4-letter word, the 1st gets the accent)	
¹⁴⁾ שְׁבֻוּעָה טֹבָה	Have a good week	shah- voo -ah tov	
¹⁵⁾ תֹּזֶה רְבָה **	Thanks a lot! Thank you very much!	to- dah rahb- bah	
¹⁶⁾ עַזְזֵל פָּעָם **	one more time; again	od pah -ahm	

6.06 BeGeD KeFeT letters: בְּגָדְכָּאָת & Dagesh Kal **

When the bet (בָּ); gimel (גָּ); dalet (דָּ); kaf (כָּ); pay (פָּ); & tav (תָּ) start a word, a dot is added to that letter. (This dot is called a dagesh kal**.) If the dot (dagesh kal) appears in any of these three בְּ, גָּ, דָּ, there is a change in pronunciation. The בְּ (vet) becomes a בָּ (bet); the גָּ (chaf) becomes a גָּ (kaf); and the דָּ (fay) becomes a דָּ (pay). However, if the dagesh kal is in the remaining three letters: כָּ, נָ, תָּ there is no change in the pronunciation.

An easy way to remember these 6 letters is by the acronym BeGeD KeFeT.

* Refer to Lesson 5.07 for Brief Information on accent marks.

** The dagesh is used in conjunction with BeGeD KeFeT letters is a Dagesh Kal. In Lessons 7- 9, we will study the dageshes in more detail. It is important to learn the dageshes, so we can pronounce words correctly.

6.07 CHART of BeGeD KeFeT & Dagesh Kal

The chart shows how a dagesh kal impacts the BeGeD KeFeT letters. The letters whose sound changes with the dagesh kal are the lines highlighted in grey.				
BeGeD KeFeT	Name of letter	Sound	Example	Explanation
בּ	with dagesh kal: bet	as in ball	בָּרוּךְ (bah-rooch)	NOTE: the bet and vet are pronounced differently
בּ	without dagesh kal: vet	as in vice	שְׁבָעָה (sheh-veht)	
גּ	with dagesh kal: gimel	as in get	גָּהָם (gahm)	Note: the gimel is pronounced the same with & without the dagesh kal
גּ	without dagesh kal: gimel	as in get	גָּהָגּ (chahg)	
דּ	with dagesh kal: dalet	as in dog	דָּהָגּ (dahg)	Note: the dalet is pronounced the same with or without the dagesh kal
דּ	without dagesh kal: dalet	as in dog	עֹדָה (od)	
כּ	with dagesh kal: kaf	as in keep	כָּהָן (kehn)	NOTE: the kaf and chaf are pronounced differently
כּ	without dagesh kal: chaf	as in Bach	נָחָן (nah-chon)	
פּ	with dagesh kal: pay	as in pet	פָּעָם (pah-ahm)	NOTE: the pay and fay are pronounced differently
פּ	without dagesh kal: fay	as in far	סֹפֶת (so-feet)	
תּ	with dagesh kal: tav	as in tell	תּוֹדָה (to-dah)	Note: the tav is pronounced the same with & without the dagesh kal
תּ	without dagesh kal: tav	as in tell	שָׁבָת (shahb-baht)	

6.08 Words with BeGeD KeFeT letters & Dagesh Kal

When a word begins with one of the BeGeD KeFeT letters, a dagesh kal is added.		
Hebrew	Translation	Transliteration
1) בָּרוּךְ	blessed or praise	bah-rooch
2) דָּהָגּ	fish	dahg
3) כָּהָם	When, because, or like (Ex 1:2)	kee
4) גָּהָם	also or moreover	gahm
5) פָּרָעָה	Pharaoh (Gen 47:10)	pahr-oh
6) תּוֹרָה	Torah (Ex 12:49)	To-rah

Grammar-Made-Simple – BeGeD KeFeT: & Dagesh Kal (the dot within a BeGeD KeFeT)

1. The BeGeD KeFeT letters are: bet (בּ); gimel (גּ); dalet (דּ); kaf (כּ); pay (פּ); & tav (תּ).
2. The BeGeD KeFeT letters are written with a dagesh kal (dot within the letter) start a word.
3. A dagesh kal in BeGeD - KeFeT changes the pronunciation in only 3 of the letters (בּ, גּ, פּ).

6.09 Let's read Psalm 133:1 ... in Hebrew!

(We encourage you to read this verse – not to sing it ... remember we are developing our reading skills.)

Vocabulary for Psalm 133:1 (note: accented syllables are in bold & highlighted)		
Hebrew	Translation	Transliteration
¹⁾ הִנֵּה *	behold	heen-neh
²⁾ מָה	what or how	mah
³⁾ טֹב	good	tov (long “O”)
⁴⁾ וּמָה	and what or how	oo-mah
⁵⁾ נָעָם	pleasant, nice, or delightful	nah-eem
⁶⁾ וּמָה-נָעָם *	and how pleasant, nice, or delightful (the dash or maqqef (־) functions similarly to a dash or hyphen in English. Note: with a maqqef, the accent shifts from the 1 st word to the 2 nd .)	oo-mah nah-eem
⁷⁾ שָׁבַת	sit, dwell, or remain, or abide (Tip: when 2 segols appear in a 3 or 4-letter word, the 1 st gets the accent)	sheh-veht
⁸⁾ אֶחָד	brothers	ah-cheem
⁹⁾ גַּם	also or moreover	gahm
¹⁰⁾ יְחִיד	one, as in together or in unity	yah-chad
¹¹⁾ גַּם-יְחִיד	also or moreover, as one	gahm yah-chad

הִנֵּה מָה-טֹב וּמָה-נָעָם שָׁבַת אֶחָד גַּם-יְחִיד:

Shurek →

Cholam vav →

“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!” Psalm 133:1 ESV

* Refer to Lesson 5.07 on Brief Information on accent marks.