

Biblical Hebrew Course 101

– Boot Camp –

Lesson 5

שְׁעוֹר הַ

Developing our understanding of the Hebrew Aleph Bet: Gutturals, Chatef Vowels, Syllables, & Accent Marks



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

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- 5.02 **Introduce:** the chatef vowels
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5.01 Introduce: the guttural consonants (letters)

- 1 The guttural letters are: aleph (א), hay (ה), chet (ח), ayin (ע), and sometimes resh (ר).
- 2 Hebrew guttural letters are pronounced in the back of the throat. Today, however, many Westerners have difficulty correctly pronouncing the ayin & the resh.
- 3 Gutturals cannot take a dagesh within the letter; meaning, they cannot be doubled.

5.02 Introduce: the chatef vowels

1. Chatef vowels are a combination of a sh'va (◌ְ) plus a patach (◌ַ), or a segol (◌ֶ), or a kamats (◌ֹ).
2. The chatef vowels are half or reduced vowels. The only difference is that the chatefs have a shorter or quicker sound.
3. The chatef patach maintains the sound of the patach (ah as in “spa”); and the chatef segol still has the sound of the segol (eh as in “bed”).
4. The chatef patach & chatef segol vowels generally appear under guttural letters.
5. **The chatef kamats is different** – it does not have the sound of “ah”, as in “spa”; instead, its sound is **always an O as in “row”**.

| Chatef vowels | | | | |
|---------------|------------------------------|---|------------------------|-------------------|
| Chatef Vowel | Name of vowel | Sound of vowel | Block vowel with aleph | Write each chatef |
| | חֵטף פָּתַח chatef patach | ah as in “spa”. (The chatef patach has the same sound as the patach.) It generally appears under gutturals. | אֶ | |
| | חֵטף סֶגוּל chatef segol | eh as in “bed.” (The chatef segol has the same sound as the segol.) It generally appears under gutturals. | אֵ | |
| | חֵטף קָמָץ chatef kamats | o as in “row”. Its sound is <u>always</u> an O as in “row”. | אֹ | |

5.03 Practice reading and writing the chataf vowels below

| | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|----|--|
| | aleph | silent | א | |
| | aleph with chatef segol | eh as in bed | אֵ | |
| | aleph with chatef patach | ah as in spa | אֶ | |
| | aleph with chatef kamats | oh (long O, as in row) | אֹ | |

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

| | | | | |
|----|-------------------------|--------------------------|----|--|
| ה | hay | h (as in hi) | ה | |
| הֶ | hay with chatef segol | heh as in hello | הֶ | |
| הַ | hay with chatef patach | hah as in ha | הַ | |
| הָ | hay with chatef kamats | hoh (long O, as in hold) | הָ | |
| ח | chet | ch as in Bach | ח | |
| חֶ | chet with chatef segol | cheh as in chet | חֶ | |
| חַ | chet with chatef patach | chah as is chatef | חַ | |
| חָ | chet with chatef kamats | choh (long O, as in row) | חָ | |
| ע | ayin | silent | ע | |
| עֶ | ayin with chatef segol | eh as in bed | עֶ | |
| עַ | ayin with chatef patach | ah as in spa | עַ | |
| עָ | ayin with chatef kamats | o (long O, as in over) | עָ | |

5.04 Grammar-Made-Simple: Chatef Vowels

- Chatef patach (◌ַ) & chatef segol (◌ֶ) vowels:
 1. Generally appear under guttural consonants א (aleph), ה (hay), ח (chet), ע (ayin), & sometimes ר (resh).
 2. Are pronounced quicker & shorter than the regular patach (as in “spa”) & segol (as in “bed”).
- Chatef kamats (◌ָ)
 1. Can be used under any consonant.
 2. Sound is a long O (as in “row”).

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

5.05 More practice reading

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

| Read & Print words below | | | |
|--------------------------|---|--|--|
| Hebrew | Translation | Transliteration (please, try to read before looking at transliteration) | Practice printing each word (use block letters) |
| 1) אַהֲבָה | love (noun) | ah-hah- vah | |
| 2) אֲדָמָה | earth, ground | ah-dah- mah | |
| 3) הָאֲדָמָה | the earth (Gen 12:3) | hah-ah-dah- mah | |
| 4) חַטָּא | sinner | chah- tah | |
| 5) אֲשֶׁר | who, which, where, that | ah- shehr | |
| 6) חֲטֵף | chatef is a half or reduced vowel. | chah- tehf | |
| 7) יַעֲשֶׂה | he will do, make (Num 9:14) | yah-ah- seh | |
| 8) אֱמֶת * Tip below | truth | eh- meht | |
| 9) חֲזַק | strong (imperative or command) | chah- zakh | |
| 10) וַאֲמִץ * Tip below | & courage (& courageous) | veh-eh- mahtz | |
| 11) חֲזַק וַאֲמִץ | “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- zakh veh-eh- mahtz | |

* **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 chatef segol and a segol, the accent remains on the final syllable; it does not move to the first.

Examples: אֱמֶת & וַאֲמִץ: neither of these two words has two segols; each word has a chatef segol (a half or reduced vowel) & only one full segol, so the accent remains on the final syllable.

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(Order used; ours was published in 1970! Sometimes it takes several weeks to arrive 😊).

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Staples: 10302 E. 71st St/Tulsa, OK – 918-294-8823. Mary in the Copy Center.

5.06 Let's read Joshua 1:9b ... in Hebrew!

| Words for Joshua 1:9b | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| Hebrew | Translation | Transliteration |
| חִזְק | be strong | chah- zahnk |
| וְאַמִּץ | & courage (courageous) | veh-eh- mahtz |

Can you recognize the chatef patach & the chatef segol in the verse below?

חִזְק וְאַמִּץ

5.07 Introduce: Hebrew syllables

- Every Hebrew syllable begins with a consonant and has one vowel. (Note: in Hebrew, syllables cannot begin with a vowel/nikkud.)
- Hebrew has two types of syllables: open and closed.
 - Open syllables begin with a consonant and end with a vowel.
 - Closed syllables begin & end with a consonant & have a vowel between the consonants.
 - Example:

חֵהב has two syllables.

The first syllable is חֵ. It is open because it ends with the vowel kamats.

The second syllable is הב. It is closed because it ends with a consonant.

- Easy way to identify how many syllables are in a word – count the number of vowels.
 - The number of vowels in the word equals the number of syllables.
 - A simple way to indicate the type of syllables:
 - “O” = an open syllable
 - “C” = a closed syllable

5.08 Exercise: identify the Hebrew syllables (answers on 5.09)

| Below identify the syllables & whether they are closed or open | | | | | |
|--|-------------|--|---------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| Hebrew | Translation | Transliteration <small>Read before looking at transliteration</small> | Number of syllables | Write each word with syllables | Indicate type of syllables <small>C = closed syllable, ends with a consonant O = open syllable, ends with a vowel</small> |
| 1) יָד | hand | yahd | 1 | יָד | C (syllable is closed, because it ends with a consonant) |
| 2) אָח | brother | ach | 1 | אָח | C |
| 3) גַּג | roof | gahg | | | |
| 4) אָב | father | ahv | | | |

| | | | | | |
|-----------|--|-------------------|---|----------|---|
| 5) אָהַב | he loved | ah- hahv | 2 | אָ - הַב | O (1 st syllable: “אָ”) C (2 nd syllable: “הַב” The 2 nd syllable is closed, because it ends with a consonant) |
| 6) אָבַד | he was lost or perished | ah- vahd | 2 | אָ - בַד | O (1 st syllable: “אָ”) C (2 nd syllable: “בַד” The 2 nd syllable is closed, because it ends with a consonant)) |
| 7) חָגַג | celebrated (verb, as in ‘he made or kept a festival’) | chah- gahg | | | |
| 8) דָּבָר | word or thing (noun) | dah- vahr | | | |

5.09 Answers to Exercise 5.08:

| Hebrew | Translation | Transliteration <small>Read before looking at transliteration</small> | Number of syllables | Write each word with syllables | Indicate type of syllables <small>C = closed syllable, ends with a consonant O = open syllable, ends with a vowel</small> |
|-----------|--|--|---------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| 1) יָד | hand | yahd | 1 | יָד | C (syllable is closed, because it ends with a consonant) |
| 2) אָח | brother | ach | 1 | אָח | C (syllable is closed, because it ends with a consonant) |
| 3) גַּג | roof | gahg | 1 | גַּג | C (syllable is closed, because it ends with a consonant) |
| 4) אָב | father | ahv | 1 | אָב | C (syllable is closed, because it ends with a consonant) |
| 5) אָהַב | he loved | ah- hahv | 2 | אָ - הַב | O (1 st syllable: “אָ”. This syllable is open because it ends with a vowel) C (2 nd syllable: “הַב” . The 2 nd syllable is closed, because it ends with a consonant) |
| 6) אָבַד | he was lost or perished | ah- vahd | 2 | אָ - בַד | O (1 st syllable: “אָ” This syllable is open because it ends with a vowel) C (2 nd syllable: “בַד” The 2 nd syllable is closed, because it ends with a consonant) |
| 7) חָגַג | celebrated (verb, as in he made or kept a festival) | chah- gahg | 2 | חָ - גַג | O (1 st syllable: “חָ” This syllable is open because it ends with a vowel) C (2 nd syllable: “גַג” The 2 nd syllable is closed, because it ends with a consonant) |
| 8) דָּבָר | word or thing (noun) | dah- vahr | 2 | דָּ - בָר | O (1 st syllable: “דָּ” This syllable is open because it ends with a vowel) C (2 nd syllable: “בָר” The 2 nd syllable is closed, because it ends with a consonant) |

5.10 *Brief introduction to accent marks¹ (aka cantillation marks)*

The Masoretic text is regarded as the authoritative text of the Hebrew canon of the TaNaKh (Old Testament). In the 600s AD and later, the Masoretic scribes added vowels and other marks to the Hebrew letters to ensure accurate pronunciation.

The Masoretes added dots and dashes above or below a consonant to indicate it was to be stressed or accented. These marks serve many functions and go by various names; however, for this course's purpose of learning to read the Torah, we shall refer to them as accent marks.

In this brief introduction to accent marks, our goal is for you to be able to differentiate between vowels & accent marks¹.

The verse below includes these accent marks:

- In the first word, the accent mark looks like a backwards “L” and is *below* the zayin.
 - And in the 2nd word, the accent mark is *above* the mem and resembles a colon.
- Anytime you see a mark above or below a letter that you do not recognize, it is an accent mark!** It is not a vowel.

תִּקְוֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל



¹ In future lessons, we will continue to expand our understanding of these accent marks and their usages.