

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

Lesson 8  
שְׁעוֹר ח

**Developing our understanding of the Hebrew Aleph Bet:**  
Reinforce these concepts: BeGeD KeFeT, dageshes, chatefs, diphthongs, & 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 Let’s reinforce these concepts
- 8.02 Exercise: identify these concepts
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Exercise: practice levels 1 & 2 of the vocal sh’va  
Exercise: practice levels 3 & 4 of the vocal sh’va

## 8.01 Let's reinforce these concepts ☺

- **Chatefs:** are a sh'va that is attached to a patach, segol, or kamats. The chatef vowels are only under guttural consonants. (Lesson 5)
  - The chatef patach is written **ֿ**. This chatef maintains the sound of the patach (as in **spa**).
  - The chatef segol is written **ֿ**. This chatef maintains the sound of the segol (as in **bed**).
  - The chatef kamats is written **ֿ**. This chatef does not maintain the sound of the kamats but it has a long “o” sound (as in **row**).
- **BeGeD KeFeT:** found only in 6 letters: **בְּגָד כֶּפֶת**. Only 3 change their sound when they have a dagesh (dot): **ב** to **בּ**; from **כ** to **כּ**; from **פ** to **פּ**. (Lesson 6)
- **Dagesh kal:** a dagesh kal is when a BeGeD KeFeT letter opens a word or a syllable. (Lesson 6)
- **Dagesh chazak:** the dagesh chazak follows a vowel. And its consonant is doubled.

Example: **הָתָא = הָתָּ+תָּא** (aht-**ta**). (Lesson 6)
- **Diphthong:** when a yud is added to a vowel, it becomes a new vowel with a different sound. (Lesson 7)
  - A patach or kamats plus a yud changes to an “I” sound (as in **isle**).
  - A segol or tsere plus a yud becomes “ay” (as in **stay**).
  - A chirek plus a yud becomes an “ee” (this “ee” is pronounced slightly longer than the chirek by itself; the chirek yud has the sound of the “ee” as in **sleep**).
- **Syllables:** every Hebrew syllable begins with a consonant & has a vowel – no syllable can begin with a vowel. An open syllable ends with a vowel. A closed syllable ends with a consonant.

## 8.02 Exercise: identify the concepts listed above

Identify chatefs, BeGeD KeFeT, dageshes, diphthongs, syllables, & sh'vas			
Hebrew	Translation	Identify the various concepts listed above	Transliteration
1) <b>בֵּין</b>	between	Bet has a <u>dagesh kal</u> because it is <u>BeGeD KeFeT</u> & <u>opens</u> the word. Tsere yud is a <u>diphthong</u> (sound is <u>ay</u> as in <u>stay</u> )	bayn (*“ay”: as in “stay”)
2) <b>אֱלֹהִים</b>	God (Elohim)	Under the aleph is a _____. Under the hay is a _____. (sound is _____ as in _____).	Eh-loh- <b>heem</b> הִים   ל   אֱ
3) <b>אֲדֹנָי</b>	My LORD (Ps 110:1)	Under the aleph is a _____. (sound is _____ as in _____). Under the nun is a _____. (sound is _____ as in _____).	Ah-doh- <b>nee</b> נַי   ל   אֲ
4) <b>אַהֲבָה</b>	love (noun)	Under the 1 <sup>st</sup> hay is a _____. (sound is _____ as in _____).	ah-hah- <b>vah</b> בָּה   ה   אַ
5) <b>אֲנִיָּה</b>	ship or boat. All types of sea-going vessels (Jonah 1:3)	Under the aleph is a _____. (sound is _____ as in _____). Under the noon is a _____. (sound is _____ as in _____). The yud has a _____, which doubles the yud.	oh-nee- <b>yah</b> יָה   נִי   אֲ

## 8.02 Exercise: identify the concepts, continued

Identify BeGeD KeFeT, chatefs, dageshes, & diphthongs			
Hebrew	Translation	Identify the various concepts listed above	Transliteration
בָּרוּךְ <sup>6</sup>	blessed or praise	BeGeD KeFeT (the <b>bet</b> opens the syllable)	bah-rooch בָּ   רוּךְ
דִּבֶּר <sup>7</sup>	he spoke (Lev 25:2)	* Dagesh Kal ( <b>dalet</b> is part of בָּגֵד כָּפֶת & it opens a syllable.) * Dagesh Chazak ( <b>bet</b> is doubled because this dagesh follows a vowel.)	dahb-behr דָּב   בֶּר
בַּמְדְּבָר <sup>8</sup>	in the wilderness or desert (Deut 1:1)	* Dagesh Kal (the first <b>bet</b> is part of בָּגֵד כָּפֶת & it opens a syllable) * Dagesh Chazak ( <b>mem</b> is doubled because dagesh follows a vowel.) * Dagesh Kal (both <b>bets</b> are part of בָּגֵד כָּפֶת & open the syllable)	bahm-meed-bahr בָּ   מְ   דְ   בָּר
הַמַּיִם <sup>9</sup>	the water (Gen 1:2)	* Dagesh Chazak ( <b>mem</b> is doubled because the dagesh follows a vowel.)	hahm-mi-yeem הַ   מַּי   יִם
לְמִטָּה <sup>10</sup>	of every tribe (Num 13:2)	* Dagesh Chazak ( <b>tet</b> is doubled because the dagesh follows a vowel .)	leh-maht-teh לְ   מִ   טָ   הַ
וַיַּדְּלֵל <sup>11</sup>	and he divided (Gen 1:7)	* Dagesh Chazak ( <b>yud</b> is doubled because this dagesh follows a vowel.) * Dagesh Kal ( <b>dalet</b> is part of בָּגֵד כָּפֶת & it does not follow a vowel)	vi-yahv-dehl וַי   יַ   דְּ   לֵל

## 8.03 Reinforce dagesh chazak

### Dagesh chazak (דָּגֵשׁ חָזָק)

- The dagesh chazak looks like the dagesh kal in that they both have a dot (dagesh) in the letter.
- Gutturals don't take dageshes. (Gutturals are: aleph: א, hey: ה, chet: ח, ayin: ע, & sometimes resh: ר)
- **Dagesh chazak is preceded by a vowel – any vowel.**
- Dagesh chazak doubles the consonant in which it stands. Example: אַהֲתָה = אַהֲ + תָה (aht-tah).

<u>Examples of dagesh kal and dagesh chazak</u>		
Hebrew	Translation	Transliteration & identify the type of dagesh
בַּמְדְּבָר <sup>1</sup>	in the wilderness or desert (Dt 1:1)	bahm-meed-bahr * Dagesh Kal ( <b>bet</b> is part of בָּגֵד כָּפֶת & it does not follow a vowel) * Dagesh Chazak ( <b>mem</b> is doubled because dagesh follows a vowel.) * Dagesh Kal ( <b>bet</b> is part of בָּגֵד כָּפֶת & <b>bet</b> opens a syllable)
הַמַּיִם <sup>2</sup>	the water (Gen 1:2)	hahm-mi-yeem * Dagesh Chazak ( <b>mem</b> is doubled because the dagesh follows a vowel.)
הַגִּדָּה <sup>3</sup>	Haggadah (booklet that tells the story of the exodus from Egypt)	hahg-gah-dah * Dagesh Chazak ( <b>gimmel</b> is doubled because this dagesh follows a vowel.)

### 8.04 Reinforce vocal & silent sh'vas: levels 1-4

The vocal sh'va has the same “eh” sound as a segol or tsere, only the vocal sh'va sound is slightly quicker.

In this lesson, we will discuss some of the main rules which determine whether the sh'va is vocal (“eh”) or silent.

#### ➤ **Level 1 vocal sh'va: when the sh'va is under the first consonant of the word**

<b>Level 1: When the sh'va is <u>under the first letter of a word</u> it is vocal.</b>		
This sh'va generally has a quick and an almost indistinguishable sound: “eh”.		
<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Transliteration</b>
		Explanation: 1. The small “eh” signifies the quick & almost indistinguishable “eh” sound. 2. The bolded, highlighted syllable is accented.
1) שְׁמַע	Shema	sheh- <b>mah</b> (commonly pronounced: sh' <b>mah</b> )
2) שְׁוֹא	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 a quick “eh”. (often pronounced: b'reh- <b>sheet</b> )

#### ➤ **Level 2 vocal sh'va: when 2 sh'vas are consecutive (in other words, they are in a row)**

<b>Level 2: When <u>2 sh'vas are consecutive</u>, the 1st sh'va is silent &amp; 2nd is vocal.</b> (Note: these sh'vas must be in a row) The <b>first</b> of two consecutive sh'vas closes the syllable. The <b>second</b> of 2 consecutive sh'vas is vocal and has a quick “eh” sound.		
<b>Word</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Syllables &amp; Pronunciation</b>
1) יִשְׂרְצּוּ	they (3 <sup>rd</sup> person, masculine, plural) will swarm, teem, or bring forth abundantly (Gen 1:20)	יִשְׂ   רְ - צּוּ – draw a line between the 2 sh'vas. yeesh-reh- <b>tsoo</b>
2) וַיִּשְׁמְרְךָ	and he (3 <sup>rd</sup> person, masculine, singular) will guard or keep you. (from the Aaronic Blessing) The ךָּ is a vocal sh'va & does not count as one of the 2 consecutive sh'vas.	וַיִּשְׂ   מְ - רְךָ – remember for Level 2, the 2 sh'vas must be consecutive veh-yeesh-meh- <b>reh</b> -chah
3) יִשְׁמְרוּ	they will guard or keep	יִשְׂ   מְ - רוּ 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).

➤ **Level 3: when a sh'va is under a dagesh chazak\*, it is vocal.** (\*Dagesh chazak explanation below ↓.)

**\*Dagesh chazak: TIP: If a vowel is in front of a dagesh, it is a dagesh chazak.**

- The dagesh chazak doubles the consonant it is in.
- This example shows how a dagesh chazak doubles the consonant it is in. כָּלְךָם = כָּם + לְךָ | כָּלְךָם
  - Note, the לְ has a dagesh chazak. Why? It follows a vowel (כָּ).
  - Because of the dagesh chazak, the לְ is doubled: כָּם + לְ | כָּלְךָם
  - The 1st sh'va is silent; the 2nd is vocal: cool-leh-**chehm**. (Yes, this is similar to Level 2.)

Word	Meaning	Transliteration
		Explanation: 1. The small "eh" signifies the quick & almost indistinguishable "eh" sound. 2. The bolded, highlighted syllable is accented.
1) כָּלְךָם	all of you (2 <sup>nd</sup> person: you: masculine, plural) כָּם + לְךָ   כָּלְךָם	cool-leh- <b>chehm</b> (The lamed with the 1st sh'va is silent; the 2 <sup>nd</sup> lamed is vocal)
2) הַשְּׁבִיעִי	the seventh הַשְּׁ   שְׁבִיעִי + הַשְּׁ	hahsh-sheh-vee- <b>ee</b> (commonly pronounced hahsh-shvee- <b>ee</b> ) (The sheen with the 1st sh'va is silent; the 2 <sup>nd</sup> sheen is vocal)
3) טַפְּכֶם	your (2 <sup>nd</sup> person: you: masculine, plural) children (Dt 29:11) טַפְּ   כֶּם + טַפְּ	tahp-peh- <b>chehm</b>

➤ **Level 4: when a sh'va follows a long vowel\*, it is vocal.** (\*Long vowels are listed below ↓.)

**When a sh'va follows a long vowel\*, it is vocal.**

**\*Long vowels:** (This is an introduction to long vowels)  
 kamats קָמֶץ (ֶ) // tseré צִירֵי (ִ) // cholam חוֹלָם (ֹ) // cholam vav וּ חוֹלָם וּ // shurek שׁוּרֶק (וּ)

**For example:** הִיְתָה (The sh'va immediately follows the kamats, a long vowel; therefore, the sh'va is vocal. הִיְתָה is pronounced: hi-yeh-**tah**)

Word	Meaning	Transliteration
1) הִיְתָה	it was (3 <sup>rd</sup> person: feminine, singular) הִיְ   תָה	hi-yeh- <b>tah</b> (commonly pronounced hi-yee- <b>tah</b> )
2) לִבְבְּךָ	your heart (from the V'ahavta from the Shema, Dt 6:5) לִבְבְּ   כָּךָ	leh-vah- <b>veh</b> -chah (commonly pronounced leh- <b>vahv</b> -chah)
3) כָּתְבוּם	write (masculine, plural) כָּתְ   בּוּם	koh-teh- <b>veem</b> (commonly pronounced koht- <b>veem</b> )

**Grammar-made-simple:**

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

- \*Dagesh chazak is easily recognizable because the dagesh chazak follows any vowel.
- The consonant with the dagesh chazak is doubled. כָּלְךָם = כָּם + לְךָ | כָּלְךָם

**Level 4 is when the sh'va follows a long vowel:**

If the sh'va follows a long vowel, it is vocal.  
 The long vowels are:

- kamats קָמֶץ (ֶ) // tseré צִירֵי (ִ) //
- 3 dots: cholam חוֹלָם (ֹ) // cholam vav וּ חוֹלָם וּ // shurek שׁוּרֶק (וּ)
- & the 5 diphthongs