

Biblical Hebrew Course 101

Learning to Read Biblical Hebrew

Lesson 5

שְׁעוֹר הַ

Chataf Vowels



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

Continue learning Hebrew vowels

- 5.01 Introduce the guttural consonants (letters)
- 5.02 Introduce the chataf vowels
- 5.03 Grammar-Made-Simple: chataf vowels
- 5.04 Practice reading and writing the chataf vowels
- 5.05 More practice reading
- 5.06 Let's read Joshua 1:9 in Hebrew
- 5.07 Introduce emphasis marks (aka accent or cantillation marks)

5.01 Introduce the Hebrew guttural letters (consonants)

- 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 chataf vowels

1. Chataf vowels are a combination of a sheva (◌ְ) plus a patach (◌ַ), segol (◌ֿ), or a kamats (◌ֹ).
2. The chataf vowels are half or reduced vowels. They have a quicker sound than their corresponding single vowel.
3. The chataf patach has the sound of the patach (ah as in “spa”); the chataf segol has the sound of the segol (eh as in “bed”). These chataf vowels generally appear under guttural letters.
4. The chataf kamats is different – it does not have the sound of “ah”, as in “spa”; instead, its sound is a long O (as in “row”).

Chataf (also written as chatef) vowels				
Chataf Vowel	Name of vowel	Sound of vowel	Block vowel with aleph	Write each chataf
	חֵטף פַּתַּח chataf patach	ah as in “spa”; same sound as patach; generally appear under gutturals	אֶ	
	חֵטף סֶגוּל chataf segol	eh as in “bed”; same sound as S segol; generally appear under gutturals.	אֵ	
	חֵטף קָמָץ chataf kamats	o as in row. Chataf kamats can appear with <u>any letter</u> – unlike the other chatafs which can be used <u>only</u> with gutturals. Its sound is long O as in “row”.	אֹ	

5.03 Grammar-Made-Simple: Chataf/Chatef Vowels

- Chataf patach (◌ְַ) & chataf 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”).
- Chataf kamats (◌ְֹ)
 1. Can be used with any consonant.
 2. Sound is a long O (as in “row”).

5.04 Practice reading and writing the chataf vowels below

א	aleph	silent	א	
אֶ	aleph with chataf segol	eh as in bed	אֶ	
אִ	aleph with chataf patach	ah as in spa	אִ	
אֹ	aleph with chataf kamats	oh (long O, as in row)	אֹ	
ה	hay	silent (as in hi)	ה	
הֶ	hay with chataf segol	heh as in hello	הֶ	
הִ	hay with chataf patach	hah as in ha	הִ	
הֹ	hay with chataf kamats	hoh (long O, as in hold)	הֹ	
ח	chet	ch as in Bach	ח	
חֶ	chet with chataf segol	cheh as in chet	חֶ	
חִ	chet with chataf patach	chah as is chataf	חִ	
חֹ	chet with chataf kamats	choh (long O, as in row)	חֹ	
אָ	ayin	silent	אָ	
אֶָ	ayin with chataf segol	eh as in bed	אֶָ	
אִָ	ayin with chataf patach	ah as in spa	אִָ	
אָֹ	ayin with chataf kamats	o (long O, as in over)	אָֹ	

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

5.05 Now, we are going to practice putting these sounds together!

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

Read & Write words below			
Hebrew	Translation	Transliteration (please, try to read before looking at transliteration)	Practice writing each word (use block print)
אהבה	love (noun)	ah-hah- vah	
אדמה	earth, ground	ah-dah- mah	
האדמה	the earth (Gen 12:3)	hah-ah-dah- mah	
חטא	sinner	chah- tah	
אשר	who, which, where, that	ah- shehr	
חטף	chataf (also, pronounced chatef) is a half or reduced vowel. (eg, the vowels we studied in this lesson)	chah- tahf	
יעשה	he will do, make (Num 9:14)	yah-ah- seh	
אמת * Tip below	truth	eh- meht	
חזק	strong (imperative or command)	chah- zakh	
ואמץ * Tip below	& courage (& courageous)	veh-eh- mahtz	
חזק ואמץ	“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	
שרשים	roots (as in the “root” of a word). Note singular form of שָׁרֵשׁ (shoresh) has a cholam instead of a chataf kamats.	shoh-rah- sheem	
צפורים	birds Note singular form of צִפּוֹר (bird) has a cholam vav instead of a chataf kamats.	tsee-poh- reem	
אֲרְנִים	pinus Note singular form of אֲרֶן (pine tree) has a cholam instead of a chataf kamats.	oh-rah- neem	
The following 2 words incorporate both the kamats katan & the chataf kamats. The kamats katan has the sound of long O as in “row.”			
מחרתים	day after tomorrow	mo-cho-rah- tay -yeem	
צהרים	noon, lunch, afternoon	tso-ho- ray -yeem	

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

Examples: אמת & ואמץ: neither of these two words has two segols; each word has a chataf segol (a half or reduced vowel) & only segol, so the accent remains on the final syllable.

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



Words for Joshua 1:9		
Hebrew	Translation	Transliteration
צוֹיְתִיךָ	I [YHVH] have commanded you. Note: י is <u>not</u> a shurek; it is a <u>vav</u> that is doubled. (We shall study the doubling of a consonant in a future lesson.)	tseev-vee- tee -chah
חֹזֵק	be strong	chah- zakh
וְאַמֵּץ	& courag <u>ו</u> urageous) ↓ Vav	veh-eh- mahtz

צוֹיְתִיךָ חֹזֵק וְאַמֵּץ

↑ Patach
↓ Vav

“I have commanded you to be strong & of good courage,” Joshua 1:9a

5.07 Brief explanation of cantillation marks

In the 600s AD, the Masoretes added vowels and other markings to the Hebrew letters in order to ensure accurate pronunciation. (Today, these markings are found in Biblical writings.)

The Masoretic text includes cantillation/accents markings. These special marks are placed on accented syllables. These marks are placed either above or below the consonantal letters (the consonants).

The verse below includes these extra marks (aka cantillation marks, accents, tropes).

Explanation and example of these marks:

- In the first word below, there are 2. (One is *above* the tav; the other is *above* the chaf sofit)
- In the 2nd word, the mark looks like a backwards “L” and is *below* the zayin.
- And in the 3rd word, *above* the mem is a mark that resembles a colon.

צוֹיְתִיךָ חֹזֵק וְאַמֵּץ

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