

Biblical Hebrew Course 101

Learning to Read Biblical Hebrew

Lesson 8

שְׁעוֹר ח

Dagesh Chazak *plus* Vocal & Silent Shevas



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

Begin learning the dagesh chazak plus the vocal & silent shevas

- 8.01 Review dagesh kal
- 8.02 Introduce dagesh chazak
- 8.03 Practice reading words with dagesh kal & dagesh chazak
- 8.04 Introduce vocal & silent shevas
- 8.05 Level 1: vocal sheva – sheva is at the beginning of the word is vocal
- 8.06 Level 2: vocal sheva – 2 consecutive shevas
- 8.07 Practice levels 1 & 2 of the vocal sheva
- 8.08 Answers to 8.04

8.01 Review dagesh kal – dagesh means emphasis.

Dagesh kal (דגש קל) is also called dagesh lene (or a weak dagesh)

- 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 concerned with the 3 letters that can change their sounds. These are כּ to כ; from כּ to כ; from פּ to פ
- It is important to remember that the dagesh kal never follows a vowel
- And that it only appears in the 1st letter of a word or when it opens a syllable

8.02 Introduce dagesh chazak

Dagesh chazak (דגש חזק) is also called dagesh forte (or strong dagesh)

- Both the dagesh chazak & the dagesh kal look the same: both have “dots” inside a consonant.
- A dagesh chazak is immediately preceded by a full vowel (note: a sheva is a half vowel & not a full vowel).
- A dagesh chazak may appear in any consonant except the 5 gutturals (aleph: א, hey: ה, chet: ח, ayin: ע, & sometimes resh: ר).
- This dagesh doubles the consonant in which it stands. Example: אַהֲתָּהּ = אַהֲתָּ + אַהֲתָּהּ (aht-tah).

8.03 Practice reading words with dagesh kal & dagesh chazak

Practice recognizing dagesh kal & dagesh chazak		
* Note: the rule for each dagesh is named below		
Hebrew	Translation	Transliteration (please try to read before looking at transliteration)
דָּבַר	he spoke (Lev 25:2)	dahb- behr * Dagesh Kal (dalet is part of כֶּפֶת בְּגֵד & does not follow a full vowel) * Dagesh Chazak (bet is doubled because dagesh follows a vowel.)
בַּמְדְּבָר	in the wilderness or desert (Dt 1:1)	bahm-meed- bahr * Dagesh Kal (bet is part of כֶּפֶת בְּגֵד & does not follow a full vowel) * Dagesh Chazak (mem is doubled because the dagesh follows a full vowel.) * Dagesh Kal (bet is part of כֶּפֶת בְּגֵד & does not follow a full vowel)
הַמַּיִם	the water (Gen 1:2)	hahm- may -yeem * Dagesh Chazak (mem is doubled because the dagesh follows a vowel.)
לְמִטָּה	of every tribe (Num 13:2)	leh-maht- teh * Dagesh Chazak (tet is doubled because the dagesh follows a vowel.)
הַגִּדָּה	Haggadah (booklet that tells the story of the exodus from Egypt)	hahg-gah- dah * Dagesh Chazak (gimmel is doubled because the dagesh follows a vowel.)
הַשָּׁמַיִם	the heavens (Gen 1:1)	hahsh-shah- may -yeem * Dagesh Chazak (sheen is doubled because the dagesh follows a vowel.)
וַיַּבְדֵּל	and he divided (Gen 1:7)	vay-yahv- dehl * Dagesh Chazak (yud is doubled because the dagesh follows a vowel.) * Dagesh Kal (dalet is part of כֶּפֶת בְּגֵד & does not follow a full vowel)
יַמִּים	seas (Gen 1:10)	yahm- meem * Dagesh Chazak (mem is doubled because the dagesh follows a vowel.)
וַיִּלְחַדְדֵּל	And to divide (Gen 1:18)	oo-lah-hahv- deel * The dot in the vav makes up the shurek vowel & it not a dagesh * Dagesh Kal (dalet is part of כֶּפֶת בְּגֵד & does not follow a full vowel)

8.04 Introduce vocal & silent shevas

The sheva can be either vocal or it can be silent. The vocal sheva is pronounced with a very quick and almost indistinguishable “eh” sound.

There are various rules which determine whether the sheva is vocal (“eh”) or silent which we will discuss in this lesson.

8.05 Level 1: vocal sheva – when sheva is at the beginning of a word

When the sheva is <u>under the first letter of a word it is vocal</u> . It is a sheva na (עָ נָ וְאֵ). This sheva 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.
שְׁמָע	Shema	sheh- mah (commonly pronounced: sh' mah)
שְׁוָא	sheva: one of the vowels in Hebrew	sheh- vah (commonly pronounced: sh' vah)
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 sheva – when 2 shevas are consecutive (in other words, are in a row)

When 2 Shevas are consecutive, <u>the 1st is silent</u> (הָאֵ וְאֵ) & <u>2nd is vocal</u> (עָ וְאֵ). 1. The first of two consecutive shevas closes the syllable. The first sheva is silent (הָאֵ וְאֵ) 2. The second of 2 consecutive shevas is vocal (עָ וְאֵ) and has a quick “eh” sound.		
Word	Meaning	Transliteration
יִשְׂרְצּוּ	they (3 rd person, masculine, plural) will swarm, teem, or bring forth abundantly (Gen 1:20)	yeesh-reh- tsoo
וַיִּשְׁמְרוּךָ	and he (3 rd person, masculine, singular) will guard or keep you. (From the Aaronic Blessing) NOTE: The ך is a vocal sheva (עָ וְאֵ) & does not count as one of the 2 consecutive shevas	veh-yeesh-meh- reh -chah
יִשְׁמְרוּ	they will guard or keep	yeesh-meh- roo

Grammar-made-simple: Levels 1 & 2 of the vocal sheva:

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

8.07 Practice levels 1 & 2 of the sheva

When the sheva that is <u>under the first letter of a word sheva</u> , it is <u>vocal & is called a sheva na</u> (עָ וְאֵ). This sheva generally has a quick and an almost indistinguishable sound: “eh”.			
When 2 Shevas are consecutive (in a row), <u>the 1st is silent</u> (אֵ וְאֵ) & <u>2nd is vocal</u> (עָ וְאֵ).			
Word	Meaning	Transliteration	Name Level of sheva & why (Answers are on 8.09)
יִשְׂרָעוּ ¹	they (3 rd person, masculine, plural) swarm, teem, or bring forth abundantly (Gen 1:20)	yeesh-reh- tsoo	Level 2: 2 shevas in a row; the 1 st sheva is silent & the 2 nd is vocal
שְׁמַע ²	Shema	sheh- mah (commonly pronounced: sh' mah)	*Level 1: when a sheva is under the first consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal
בְּנֵי ³	sons of	beh- nay (commonly pronounced: b' nay)	* (refer to explanation above)
יִשְׁמְרוּ ⁴	they will guard or keep	yeesh-meh- roo	
שְׁוָא ⁵	sheva (one of the vowels in Hebrew)	sheh- vah (commonly pronounced: sh' vah)	
קְדוֹשִׁים ⁶	holy (verb, masculine plural)	keh-do- sheem (commonly pronounced: k'do- sheem)	
בְּרֵאשִׁית ⁷	Genesis (literally: in the head or beginning)	beh-reh- sheet (note: the “eh” in the 1 st syllable is very quick and written here with a small font)	
וַיִּשְׁמְרֶךָ ⁸	and you (2 nd person, masculine, singular) will guard or keep. (From the Aaronic Blessing, Nu 6:24-26.)	veh-yeesh-meh- reh -chah	
רְאוּבֵן ⁹	Reuben (Ex 1:2)	reh-oo- vehn	
וְאַהֲרֹן ¹⁰	and Aaron (Ex 5:1)	veh-ah-hah- ron	
נַפְשְׁכֶם ¹¹	your soul (Is 55:2)	nahf-sheh- chehm	

8.09 ANSWERS to “Practice levels 1 & 2”

When the sheva is under the first letter of a word it is **vocal** and is called a **sheva na** (שְׁוָא נָע). This sheva generally has a quick and an almost indistinguishable sound: “eh”.

When 2 Shevas are consecutive

(in a row), **the 1st is silent** (שְׁוָא נָח) & **2nd is vocal** (שְׁוָא נָע).

Word	Meaning	Transliteration	Level of sheva & why
1 יִשְׂרָעֵל	they (3 rd person, masculine, plural) swarm, teem, or bring forth abundantly (Gen 1:20)	yeesh-reh- tsoo	Level 2: 2 shevas in a row; the 1 st sheva is silent & the 2 nd is vocal
2 שְׁמַע	Shema	sheh- mah (commonly pronounced: sh' mah)	Level 1: when a sheva is under the first consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal
3 בְּנֵי	sons of	beh- nay (commonly pronounced: b'ney)	Level 1: when a sheva 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: 2 shevas in a row; the 1 st sheva is silent & the 2 nd is vocal
5 שְׁוָא	sheva (one of the vowels in Hebrew)	sheh- vah (commonly pronounced: sh' vah)	Level 1: when a sheva 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: when a sheva is under the first consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal
7 בְּרֵאשִׁית	Genesis (literally: in the head or beginning)	beh-reh- sheet (note: the “eh” in the 1 st syllable is very quick and written here with a small font)	Level 1: when a sheva is under the first consonant, it is vocal
8 וְיִשְׁמְרוּךָ	and you (2 nd person, masculine, singular) will guard or keep. (From the Aaronic Blessing, Nu 6:24-26.)	veh-yeesh-meh- reh -chah	The וְ is a vocal sheva (Level 1), because it is under the 1 st consonant & does not have a vowel preceding it Level 2: 2 shevas in a row; the 1 st sheva is silent & the 2 nd is vocal
9 רְאוּבֵן	Reuben (Ex 1:2)	reh-oo- vehn	Level 1: when a sheva is under the first consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal
10 וְאַהֲרֹן	and Aaron (Ex 5:1)	veh-ah-hah- ron	Level 1: sheva is under 1 st consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal (Also, the chatef patach sheva does not count as a sheva. Because it is a chatef patach) (The markings above the “resh” are a cholam & a cantillation mark)
11 נַפְשְׁכֶם	your soul (Is 55:2)	nahf-sheh- chehm	Level 2: 2 shevas in a row; the 1 st sheva is silent & the 2 nd is vocal

“By studying Hebrew, we are able to get the treasures out the Word,” DH