

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
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- 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
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8.01 Review dagesh kal – dagesh means emphasis.

Dagesh kal (דָּגֶשׁ קַל) 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 כְּפֶת
- For this class, we're concerned with the 3 letters that can change their sounds. These are כּ to כ; פּ to פ; טּ to ט
- It is important to remember that the dagesh kal never follows a full vowel. (Note the sheva is not a full vowel.)
- HINT: dagesh kal only appears in the 1st letter of a word or when it opens a syllable.

8.02 Introduce dagesh chazak

Dagesh chazak (דָּגֶשׁ חָזָק) 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).
- 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 = אַהֲ + תָּהּ (aht-tah).
- HINT: If dagesh is preceded by a full vowel, it is a dagesh chazak.

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) |
| 1. דָּבַר | he spoke (Lev 25:2) | dahb-behr * Dagesh Kal (dalet is part of בְּגֵד כְּפֶת – the dalet is the 1 st letter of the word & does not follow a full vowel) * Dagesh Chazak (bet is doubled because dagesh follows a full vowel.) |
| 2. בְּמִדְבָּר | in the wilderness or desert (Dt 1:1) | bahm-meed-bahr * Dagesh Kal (bet is part of בְּגֵד כְּפֶת & does not follow a full vowel) * Dagesh Chazak (mem is doubled because the dagesh follows a full vowel.) * Dagesh Kal (the 2 nd bet is also part of בְּגֵד כְּפֶת & opens the syllable & does not follow a full vowel – remember the sheva is not a full vowel.) |
| 3. הַמַּיִם | the water (Gen 1:2) | hahm-mi-yeem * Dagesh Chazak (mem is doubled because the dagesh follows a full vowel.) |
| 4. לְמִטָּה | of every tribe (Num 13:2) | leh-maht-teh * Dagesh Chazak (tet is doubled because the dagesh follows a full vowel.) |
| 5. 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.) |
| 6. הַשָּׁמַיִם | the heavens (Gen 1:1) | hahsh-shah-mi-yeem * Dagesh Chazak (sheen is doubled because the dagesh follows a full vowel.) |
| 7. וַיַּבְדֵּל | and he divided (Gen 1:7) | viy-yahv-dehl * Dagesh Chazak (yud is doubled because the dagesh follows a vowel.) * Dagesh Kal (dalet is part of בְּגֵד כְּפֶת & does not follow a full vowel) |
| 8. יָמִים | seas (Gen 1:10) | yahm-meem * Dagesh Chazak (mem is doubled because the dagesh follows 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 (שְׁוָא נָע). 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> (שְׁוָא נָע) & <u>2nd is vocal</u> (שְׁוָא נָע). 1. The first of two consecutive shevas closes the syllable. The first sheva is silent (שְׁוָא נָע) 2. The second of 2 consecutive shevas is vocal (שְׁוָא נָע) 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 |
| וַיִּשְׁמְרוּ | and he (3 rd person, masculine, singular) will guard or keep you. (From the Aaronic Blessing) NOTE: The ך is a vocal sheva (שְׁוָא נָע) & 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

| <p>When the sheva that is <u>under the first letter of a word</u> sheva, it is <u>vocal</u> & is called a <u>sheva na</u> (שְׁוָא נָע). This sheva generally has a quick and an almost indistinguishable sound: “eh”.</p> <p>When 2 Shevas are consecutive (in a row), <u>the 1st is silent</u> (שְׁוָא נָח) & <u>2nd is vocal</u> (שְׁוָא נָע).</p> | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Word | Meaning | Transliteration | Name Level of sheva & why (Answers are on 8.09) |
| יִשְׂרָאֵל 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 |
| שְׁמָעָ 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) | |
| קִדְשִׁים 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 | |

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

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 (Answers to 8.07) |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|
| יִשְׂרָעֵל 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 |
| שְׁמָעָ 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' ney) | Level 1: when a sheva is under the first consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal |
| יִשְׁמְרוּ ⁴ | 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 |
| שְׁוָא ⁵ | 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 |
| קִדְשִׁים ⁶ | 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 |
| 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) | Level 1: when a sheva is under the first consonant, it is vocal |
| וְיִשְׁמְרְךָ 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 | 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 |
| רְאוּבֵן ⁹ | 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 |
| וְאַהֲרֹן ¹⁰ | 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 does not count as a sheva.) (Reminder: the dot above the “resh” is a cholam. Cholams tend to float to the right, rather than correctly appearing between the 2 consonants; in this case, the cholam should be between the “resh” and the “nun sofit”.) |
| נַפְשְׁכֶם ¹¹ | 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 |