

Biblical Hebrew Course 101  
– Boot Camp –  
*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

- 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 (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 כְּפֹת.
- For this class, we're concerned with the 3 letters that can change their sounds. These are כּ to כֹּ; from כּ to כֹּ; from פּ to פֹּ.
- It is important to remember that the dagesh kal never follows a full vowel. (It can follow a sheva)
- 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. (Remember 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).
- Dagesh Chazak doubles the consonant in which it stands. Example: אַהֲתָּהּ = אֶהָ + תָּהּ (aht-tah).

### 8.03 Practice reading words with dagesh kal & dagesh chazak

| Practice recognizing dagesh kal & dagesh chazak (Remember: a sheva is not a full vowel; it is a half vowel.) |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| Hebrew   | Translation  | Transliteration & identifying type of shevas<br>(please try to read before looking at transliteration)  |
| 1) דָּבַר  | he spoke (Lev 25:2)  | dahb- <b>behr</b><br>* Dagesh Kal ( <b>dalet</b> is part of כְּפֹת בְּגֵד & does not follow a full vowel)<br>* Dagesh Chazak ( <b>bet</b> is doubled because dagesh follows a full vowel.)  |
| 2) בְּמִדְבָּר   | in the wilderness or desert (Dt 1:1)                             | bahm-meed- <b>bahr</b><br>* Dagesh Kal ( <b>bet</b> is part of כְּפֹת בְּגֵד & does not follow a full vowel)<br>* Dagesh Chazak ( <b>mem</b> is doubled because dagesh follows a full vowel.)<br>* Dagesh Kal ( <b>bet</b> is part of כְּפֹת בְּגֵד & does not follow a full vowel) |
| 3) הַמַּיִם  | the water (Gen 1:2)  | hahm- <b>may</b> -yeem<br>* Dagesh Chazak ( <b>mem</b> is doubled because dagesh follows a full vowel.)   |
| 4) לְמִטָּה  | of every tribe (Num 13:2)  | leh-maht- <b>teh</b><br>* Dagesh Chazak ( <b>tet</b> is doubled because the dagesh follows a full vowel.)   |
| 5) הַגִּדָּה   | Haggadah (booklet that tells the story of the exodus from Egypt) | hahg-gah- <b>dah</b><br>* Dagesh Chazak ( <b>gimmel</b> is doubled because dagesh follows a full vowel.)  |
| 6) הַשָּׁמַיִם   | the heavens (Gen 1:1)  | hahsh-shah- <b>may</b> -yeem<br>* Dagesh Chazak ( <b>sheen</b> is doubled because dagesh follows a full vowel.)   |
| 7) וַיִּבְדֵּל   | and he divided (Gen 1:7)   | vay-yahv- <b>dehl</b><br>* Dagesh Chazak ( <b>yud</b> is doubled because dagesh follows a full vowel.)<br>* Dagesh Kal ( <b>dalet</b> is part of כְּפֹת בְּגֵד & does not follow a full vowel)  |
| 8) יַמִּים   | seas (Gen 1:10)  | yahm- <b>meem</b><br>* Dagesh Chazak ( <b>mem</b> is doubled because dagesh follows a full vowel.)  |
| 9) וַיִּלְבְּדֵהוּ   | And to divide (Gen 1:18)   | oo-lah-hahv- <b>deel</b><br>* The dot in the vav makes up the shurek vowel & it not a dagesh<br>* Dagesh Kal ( <b>dalet</b> is part of כְּפֹת 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><br>This sheva generally has a quick and an almost indistinguishable sound: “eh”. |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Word  | Meaning                                       | Transliteration   |
| 1) שְׁמָע   | Shema   | Explanation:<br>1. The small “eh” signifies the quick & almost indistinguishable “eh” sound.<br>2. The bolded, highlighted syllable is accented.<br>sheh- <b>mah</b> (commonly pronounced: sh' <b>mah</b> ) |
| 2) שְׁוֵא   | sheva: 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 very quick and written with a small font. (commonly pronounced: b'reh- <b>sheet</b> )  |

### 8.06 Level 2: Vocal Sheva – When 2 Shevas Are Consecutive (in other words, are in a row)

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

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

1. Level 1: If the sheva is under the 1<sup>st</sup> consonant of the word, it is vocal.
2. Level 2: If there are 2 shevas 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).

## 8.07 Practice Levels 1 & 2 Of The Sheva

When the sheva that is under the first letter of a word sheva, it is vocal. This sheva generally has a quick and an almost indistinguishable sound: “eh”.

When 2 Shevas are consecutive (in a row), the 1st is silent.

| Word           | Meaning  | Transliteration   | Name Level of Sheva & Why (answers 8.08)   |
|----------------|--|---|--|
| 1) יִשְׂרָצוּ: | they (3 <sup>rd</sup> person, masculine, plural) swarm, teem, or bring forth abundantly (Gen 1:20) | yeesh-reh- <b>tsoo</b>  | Level 2: 2 shevas in a row; the 1 <sup>st</sup> sheva is silent & the 2 <sup>nd</sup> is vocal     |
| 2) שְׁמַע      | Shema  | sheh- <b>mah</b> (commonly pronounced: sh' <b>mah</b> )         | *Level 1: when a sheva is under the first consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal. |
| 3) בְּנֵי      | sons of  | beh- <b>nay</b> (commonly pronounced: b' <b>nay</b> )           | * (refer to explanation above)   |
| 4) יִשְׁמְרוּ: | they will guard or keep  | yeesh-meh- <b>roo</b>   |  |
| 5) שְׁוֹא      | sheva (one of the vowels in Hebrew)  | sheh- <b>vah</b> (commonly pronounced: sh' <b>vah</b> )         |  |
| 6) קְדוֹשִׁים  | holy (verb, masculine plural)  | keh-do- <b>sheem</b> (commonly pronounced: k'do- <b>sheem</b> ) |  |
| 7) רְאוּבֵן:   | Reuben (Ex 1:2)  | reh-oo- <b>vehn</b>   |  |
| 8) וְאַהֲרֹן:  | and Aaron (Ex 5:1)   | veh-ah-hah- <b>ron</b>  |  |
| 9) נַפְשְׁכֶם  | your soul (Is 55:2)  | nahf-sheh- <b>chehm</b>   |  |

## 8.08 ANSWERS to “Practice levels 1 & 2”

| Answers To 8.07 |  |   |   |
|-----------------|--|---|---|
| Word            | Meaning  | Transliteration   | Level of Sheva & Why (Answers to 8.07)  |
| 1) יִשְׂרָצוּ:  | they (3 <sup>rd</sup> person, masculine, plural) swarm, teem, or bring forth abundantly (Gen 1:20) | yeesh-reh- <b>tsoo</b>                                  | Level 2: 2 shevas in a row; the 1 <sup>st</sup> sheva is silent & the 2 <sup>nd</sup> is vocal.   |
| 2) שְׁמַע       | Shema  | sheh- <b>mah</b> (commonly pronounced: sh' <b>mah</b> ) | Level 1: when a sheva is under the first consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal. |
| 3) בְּנֵי       | sons of  | beh- <b>nay</b> (commonly pronounced: b' <b>nay</b> )   | 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- <b>roo</b>                                   | Level 2: 2 shevas in a row; the 1 <sup>st</sup> sheva is silent & the 2 <sup>nd</sup> is vocal.   |

|               |                                     |  |  |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|--|--|
| 5) שְׁוָא     | sheva (one of the vowels in Hebrew) | sheh- <b>vah</b> (commonly pronounced: sh' <b>vah</b> )            | Level 1: when a sheva is under the first consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal.  |
| 6) קְדוּשִׁים | holy (verb, masculine plural)       | keh-do- <b>sheem</b><br>(commonly pronounced: k'do- <b>sheem</b> ) | Level 1: when a sheva is under the first consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal.  |
| 7) רְאוּבֵן   | Reuben (Ex 1:2)                     | reh-oo- <b>vehn</b>  | Level 1: when a sheva is under the first consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal.  |
| 8) וְאַהֲרֹן  | and Aaron (Ex 5:1)                  | veh-ah-hah- <b>ron</b>   | Level 1: sheva is under 1st consonant & there is no vowel preceding it, it is vocal.<br>(Also, the chatef patach does not count as a sheva.)<br>(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”.) |
| 9) נַפְשְׁכֶם | your soul (Is 55:2)                 | nahf-sheh- <b>chehm</b>  | Level 2: 2 shevas in a row; the 1 <sup>st</sup> sheva is silent & the 2 <sup>nd</sup> is vocal.  |

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

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