Chapter 2 – The Hebrew Vowels

Preliminary Issues

- Vowels that aren’t vowel letters
- Vowel Letters
- Dagesh Forte
- Practice Reading Genesis 1:1
- Assignment & Study Plan

Vowels Were Added in Two Stages

- Early parts of the Hebrew Bible were originally written without vowels.
- Vowel letters (י, י, ת) were added 1000 BC to AD 200.
- Masoretic Vowels (א, ח, etc.) were added AD 500-1000.
  - Consonantal text left unchanged.
  - Vowel marks in and around the consonants.
  - Added Dagesh, accents, and other marks and notes.
  - Based on oral tradition of how to read the text.

Say Vowel AFTER the Associated Consonant

- Each vowel is written under, over, or to the left of the consonant that it is pronounced after.
- When writing a vowel, I use a dotted circle ◦ as a placeholder for the associated consonant.
  - E.g., ◦ just means the vowel Seghol ◦
- Say the vowel AFTER saying the associated consonant.
  - ◦ is be (not eb)
  - ◦ is bu (not ub)

Vowels Have Type and Class

- Vowels come in 3 types:
  - Long, Short, Reduced
  - You don’t necessarily take more time to say a long vowel than a short vowel.
- Vowels come in 5 classes:
  - a, e, i, o, u
  - The sounds aren’t always what you would expect.
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- Short Vowels
- Reduced Vowels

Vowel Letters

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Three (Changeable) Long Vowels

- Transliterate long vowels with a line over the class.
  - ā, ē, ō
- Sometimes called ‘changeable long vowels’
  - They can reduce when you add a suffix, etc.
- There are three (changeable) long vowels
  - Qamets ◌ ◌ ◌ ◌ is long a. father
  - Tsere ◌ ◌ ◌ ◌ is long e. they
  - Holem ◌ ◌ ◌ ◌ is long o. role

Five Short Vowels

- Transliterate short vowels with the class name.
  - a, e, i, o, u
- Short vowels can reduce when you add a suffix, etc.
- There are five short vowels
  - Pathach ◌ a is short a. father (book says bat)
  - Seghol ◌ e is short e. better (modern they)
  - Hireq ◌ i is short i. bitter (modern machine)
  - Qamets Hatuf ◌ o is short o. role (book says bottle)
  - Qibbuts ◌ u is short u. ruler

Four Reduced Vowels

- Reduced Vowels = Hateph Vowels + Vocal Shewa
  - Hateph Pathach ◌
  - Hateph Seghol ◌
  - Hateph Qamets Hatuf ◌
  - Vocal Shewa ◌
Three Hateph Vowels

- Transliterate Hateph vowels with a ‘u’ (‘breve’) on top.
  - ā, ē, ŏ
- There are three Hateph vowels
  - Hateph Pathach ◌  ◌  ◌  ◌ ֲ ֲ ֲ ֲ ă
  - Hateph Seghol ◌  ◌  ◌  ◌ ֱ ֱ ֱ ֱ ĕ
  - Hateph Qamets Hatuf ◌  ◌  ◌  ◌ ֳ ֳ ֳ ֳ ŏ
- Pronounce all thee Hateph vowels as the A in Amuse.
- Hateph vowels are reduced vowels

Two Kinds of Shewa

- Vocal Shewa
  - A ‘reduced’ vowel
  - Transliterate ə
  - Sounds like ‘a’ in Amuse (same as  ❀
- Silent Shewa
  - Not a vowel
  - Not transliterated
  - No sound. It marks the end of a syllable.
- Both types of Shewa are written as ❀

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Vowel Letters Are Vowels Written with a Consonant

- Vowel letters are vowels
  - Pronounce as vowels
  - Transliterate as vowels
- Vowel letters are written as consonant-vowel combo
  - E.g., The vowel letter Hireq-Yod ◌ is written with the vowel Hireq and the consonant Yod.
  - E.g., Vowel letter Shureq ו is written with the consonant Vav and a Dagesh inside
  - In vowel letters, the ‘consonant’ (Yod, Waw, or He) is part of the vowel letter. It is NOT a consonant.
Vowel Letters Were the First Written Vowels

- Vowel letters are not original
  - First system of written vowels.
  - Invented and added to the text in 1000 BC – AD 200
- Before regular vowels were invented
- Regular vowels were added to them later.

Vowel letters are vowels

- Consonants י ו וי ו וי ו וי ו ה used to represent vowels
- David דוד דוד דוד דוד
- Regular vowels added to them later
- David דָּוִיד דָּוִיד דָּוִיד דָּוִיד

Vav, Yod, and Hay Vowel Letters

- Vowel letters use a consonant to write a vowel
  - Vav, Yod, or Hay
- 3 Categories of vowel letters
  - 2 Vav-based vowel letters: א א א א
  - 3 Yod-based vowel letters: ב ב ב ב
  - 4 Hay-based vowel letters: ג ג ג ג
- Vav-based and Yod-based
  - Can occur in middle or end of word
  - Unchangeable long vowels (Irreducible)
- He-based
  - Only occur at the end of a word
  - Can be short or long
  - The ה drops off when a suffix is added

2 Vav-based Vowel Letters

- Middle or End of word
- Unchangeable long vowels
- Holem Vav
  - א א א א
  - א א א א
  - role (pronounce like Holem א)
- Shureq
  - י י י י
  - י י י י
  - ruler (pronounce like Qibbutz י)

3 Yod-Based Vowel Letters

- Middle or End of word
- Unchangeable long vowels
- Tsere Yod
  - א אנ א אנ
  - א אנ א אנ
  - they (same as Tsere א)
- Seghol Yod
  - ב ב ב ב
  - ב ב ב ב
  - better (same as Seghol ב)
- Hireq Yod
  - ז ז ז ז
  - ז ז ז ז
  - machine
4 Hay-Based Vowel Letters

- Only at the end of a word
- The \( \dddot{h} \) drops off when a suffix is added
- Qamets Hay – Long A
  - \( \dddot{h} \) \( \dddot{a} \) father (same as Qamets \( \dddot{a} \))
- Tsere Hay – Long E
  - \( \dddot{h} \) \( \dddot{e} \) they (same as Tsere \( \dddot{e} \) & Tsere Yod \( \dddot{e} \))
- Seghol Hay – Short E
  - \( \dddot{h} \) \( \dddot{e} \) better (same as Seghol \( \dddot{e} \) & Seghol Yod)
- Holem Hay – Long O
  - \( \dddot{h} \) \( \dddot{e} \) role (same as Holem \( \dddot{e} \) & Holem Waw)

Defective Writing

- Using vowel letters is called ‘full writing’ or ‘plene spelling’
- Sometimes a word that normally has a vowel letter is written with a regular vowel instead.
  - This is called ‘defective’ writing/spelling
  - E.g., \( \text{תִּפְּלָל} \rightarrow \text{תִּפְלָל} \)
- Three vowel letters can be spelled defectively
  - Hireq Yod \( \dddot{v} \) \( \rightarrow \) Hireq \( \dddot{v} \)
  - Holem Yav \( \dddot{o} \) \( \rightarrow \) Holem \( \dddot{o} \)
  - Shureq \( \dddot{u} \) \( \rightarrow \) Qibbuts \( \dddot{u} \)

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Dagesh Forte Doubles the Consonant

- A doubled consonant ends one syllable & starts the next
- English writes doubled consonants twice
  - E.g., better, allow, chopper
- Hebrew writes the consonant once with a dot in it
  - E.g., \( \text{חֵטְרוֹן} \rightarrow \text{חֵטְר} \)
  - The dot is a Dagesh Forte
  - Dagesh Forte looks exactly like Dagesh Lene
- A consonant with a Dagesh Forte is doubled
  - The consonant ends one syllable and begins the next
  - E.g., English bet | ter
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Assignment & Study Plan

- Read chapter 2 in the textbook
  - Read the textbook supplement along with each section of the textbook as you go along.
- Memorize the study guide.
- Practice taking quiz 1 for chapter 2 (PDF on website)
  - You may be given either page 1 or page 2 as the quiz.
  - The answer key is page 3.
- Practice taking quiz 2 for chapter 2 (PDF on website)
  - The answer key is page 2.
  - Quiz 1 and Quiz 2 are both fair game.
- Do chapter 2 in the workbook (answer key on course website)
- Practice reading Hebrew out loud (links on course website)
  - Genesis 1:1
  - Links to online reading practice (University of Texas)