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, ה, ו) were added 1000 BC to AD 200.
- Masoretic Vowels (֑, ֒, 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.
  - בֶּ is be (not eb)
  - וּב is bû (not ūb)
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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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 ♀ ā is long a. father
  - Tsere ♂ ē is long e. they
  - Holem ♂ č ō 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 オープン a is short a.  father  (book says bat)
  - Seghol オープン e is short e.  better  (modern they)
  - Hireq オープン i is short i.  bitter  (modern machine)
  - Qamets Hatuf .OPEN e o is short o.  role  (book says botlle)
  - Qibbuts .OPEN 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 ֲ ā is Hateph a.  ámbuse
- Hateph Seghol ֱ ē is Hateph e.  méttallic
- Hateph Qamets Hatuf
  ֳ ŏ is Hateph o.  cómmitt

Pronounce all thee Hateph vowels as the A in Ámuse.

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
- What they are
- Three bases: Yod, Vav, and Hay
- Defective writing

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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 ב is written with the vowel Hireq and the consonant Yod.
  - E.g., Vowel letter Shureq ש 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 ה used to represent vowels
    - David דוֹד → דָוִד
  - Regular vowels added to them later
    - David דוֹד → דָוִד
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: \( \overline{וּ}, \overline{וֹ} \)
  - 3 Yod-based vowel letters: \( \overline{יִ}, \overline{יֵ}, \overline{יֶ} \)
  - 4 Hay-based vowel letters: \( \overline{הָ}, \overline{הֵ}, \overline{הֹ}, \overline{הֶ} \)

- **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 \( \overline{ה} \) drops off when a suffix is added
2 Vav-based Vowel Letters

- **Middle or End of word**

- **Unchangeable long vowels**

- **Holem Vav**
  - ֹ
  - ô
  - **role** (pronounce like Holem ֹ)

- **Shureq**
  - ּ
  - û
  - **ruler** (pronounce like Qibbuts ּ)
3 Yod-Based Vowel Letters

- **Middle or End of word**
- **Unchangeable long vowels**

**Tsere Yod**
- ñ (same as Tsere אֵי)

**Seghol Yod**
- ê (same as Seghol אֶי)

**Hireq Yod**
- î (same as Hireq אִי)
4 Hay-Based Vowel Letters

- Only at the end of a word
- The ה drops off when a suffix is added
- Qamets Hay – Long A
  - הָֽה father (same as Qamets ֮)
- Tsere Hay – Long E
  - הָֽו they (same as Tsere ֲ & Tsere Yod ֳ)
- Seghol Hay – Short E
  - הָֽה better (same as Seghol ֳ & Seghol Yod)
- Holem Hay – Long O
  - הָֽו o role (same as Holem ֳ & 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., מָעֵד → מֹעֵד

- Three vowel letters can be spelled defectively
  - Hireq Yod י → Hireq ֹ
  - Holem Vav ו → Holem ֹ
  - Shureq ש → Qibbuts ֻ
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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., הַתּוֹרָה = hattôrâ
  - 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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בראשית בבראשית אלוהים
אֵ֥ת הַשָּׁמַיִּ֥ם וְאֵ֥ת הָאָֽרֶץ׃

תֹּאָת הַשֵּׁמִים וְאוֹת הָאָרֶץ׃
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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)