

## LESSON III

### 4. Măqqéf (מֶקֶף)

Măqqéf is a short horizontal stroke used to join together two or more words within a verse. Words so joined are pronounced as one speech unit, the primary accent falling on the final word in the unit. Another way of stating this is that all words that are not final in such a unit lose their primary accents. They may undergo certain vowel changes on this account. For example, כָּל, "all," becomes כֹּל (with qāmēṣ-ḥāṭûf) when placed before a măqqéf, as in כֹּל־הַיּוֹם (Gen. 6:5). Likewise מַה, "what," becomes מֶה when joined to the following word by a măqqéf, as in מֶה־יִקְרָא־לוֹ (Gen. 2:19).

Most of the occurrences of măqqéf will be with monosyllabic words such as the following:

- |               |              |                |
|---------------|--------------|----------------|
| (1) אֶל unto  | (5) לֹא not  | (9) עַד unto   |
| (2) אִם if    | (6) מַה what | (10) עַל upon  |
| (3) גַּם also | (7) מִי who  | (11) עִם with  |
| (4) כָּל all  | (8) מִן from | (12) כֵּן lest |

### 5. Sign of the Direct Object אֶת

A direct object is a word representing a person or thing upon which the action of a verb is performed. The direct object may be either definite or indefinite. If definite, it is usually preceded by the particle אֶת. The particle serves merely as the sign of the direct object and is therefore not to be translated. אֶת may be written alone, or it may be joined by a măqqéf to the following word. In the latter case šērê is shortened to sêgôl. Thus we find אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם in Genesis 1:1, but אֶת־הָאָדָם in Genesis 1:4.

### 6. Dagesh Forte

We studied earlier that dagesh lene is a dot which may be placed in six consonants (ב, ג, ד, כ, פ, ת) in order to indicate when they are to be given a hard pronunciation. Dagesh forte is identical in appearance to dagesh lene, but serves an entirely different purpose. It is a dot that indicates the doubling of the consonant in which it stands. It may be placed in any consonant except the five gutturals (א, ה, ח, ע, ר).

There are three basic rules to follow in distinguishing dagesh lene from dagesh forte.



(1) A dot in any letter other than a BeGaD KeFaT letter is a dagesh forte and indicates the doubling of that letter.

(2) A dot in a BeGaD KeFaT letter will be a dagesh lene whenever that letter *is not* immediately preceded by a vowel.

(3) A dot in a BeGaD KeFaT letter will be a dagesh forte whenever that letter *is* immediately preceded by a vowel.

Another way of stating these last two rules is that dagesh lene *never* stands after a vowel, whereas dagesh forte *always* stands immediately after a vowel.

It should also be noted with regard to the six BeGaD KeFaT letters that dagesh forte has the same effect as dagesh lene in hardening their pronunciation.

Thus the dagesh in the word בְּרִית is a dagesh lene (no vowel precedes it), and the pronunciation is hard (*berîṭ*). On the other hand, the dagesh in הֶבֶן is a dagesh forte (a vowel immediately precedes it), and the pronunciation is also hard (*hăb/bĕn*).

## 7. Silent Sheva

In an earlier study (II.3, pp. 8f.), we learned that Hebrew makes use of semi-vowels, or half-vowels, known as vocal shevas. We learned that there are simple vocal shevas (ְ, ױ) and compound vocal shevas (ֵ, ז, ף, ץ).

Hebrew also makes use of the silent sheva, written exactly like the simple vocal sheva (ְ), but serving an entirely different purpose. A vocal sheva, whether simple or compound, will only stand beneath a consonant that *begins* a syllable. The silent sheva, on the other hand, only stands beneath a consonant that *ends* a syllable. The silent sheva, therefore, may also be referred to as a *syllable divider*.

Whenever two shevas stand under adjacent consonants within a word, the first will always be silent and the second will be vocal. In other words, the first marks the end of a syllable, whereas the second stands at the beginning of a new syllable. In יְמֻשְׁלוֹ (*yġm-šĕlû*), for example, the first sheva (ְ) is silent, whereas the second (ֹ) is vocal.

A sheva that stands beneath a doubled consonant (one that has a dagesh forte) will always be vocal. In קִטְלֹו (*qġṭ-ṭĕlû*), for example, where ט is pointed with a dagesh forte, the sheva that follows it (ֹ) must be classified as a vocal sheva.

A particularity of the final kāf (ך) is that it is normally pointed with a raised silent sheva (ֿ). This is perhaps to distinguish it from other letters that have final forms.

Examples: לֶךְ, *lĕkh*; מֶלֶךְ, *mĕ-lĕkh*.

## EXERCISES

1. There are BeGaD KeFaT letters in all the words listed below. Add a dagesh lene wherever it belongs in one of these letters. Please note that the shevas are all silent.

- |              |              |                |                |
|--------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| (1) אָכַתָּב | (5) דָּבַר   | (9) מִשְׁכָּב  | (13) פָּנִים   |
| (2) בָּגָד   | (6) יָגִדְל  | (10) קָדוֹשׁ   | (14) נֶפֶשׁ    |
| (3) בֵּית    | (7) כֶּסֶף   | (11) מִשְׁפָּט | (15) תּוֹרָה   |
| (4) גָּדוֹל  | (8) מִדְּבָר | (12) נָבִיא    | (16) תִּכְתֵּב |

2. Underscore the words in the following list which contain a dagesh forte.

- |             |              |               |                |
|-------------|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| (1) אֶתָּה  | (4) הִנֵּה   | (7) פֶּסֶא    | (10) שְׁשִׁי   |
| (2) גָּבוֹר | (5) חִיָּה   | (8) מִשְׁפָּט | (11) תְּמוּנָה |
| (3) דְּבַר  | (6) יִרְדֵּן | (9) שֶׁבֶר    | (12) תְּפִלָּה |

3. Transliterate the words listed above and practice pronouncing them.

4. Exodus 3:1 is reproduced here.

וּמֹשֶׁה הָיָה רֹעֵה אֶת־צֹאן יִתְרוֹ חֹתָנוּ  
כַּתֵּן מִדְּיָן וַיִּנְהֹג אֶת־הַצֹּאן אַחֵר  
הַמִּדְבָּר וַיָּבֹא אֶל־הַר הָאֱלֹהִים חֲרִבָּה:

- (1) Copy the three words in which all the letters are gutturals.
  - (2) Copy the three pairs of words linked together by māqqéfs.
  - (3) Copy the word that has both a dagesh lene and a dagesh forte, indicating which is which.
  - (4) Copy the word that contains a compound sheva.
5. Genesis 2:3 is reproduced here.

וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי  
וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת מְכֻלָּה  
מִלַּאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר־בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת:

- (1) Copy the two words that contain both a silent sheva and a vocal sheva.



- (2) Copy the word that is marked as the direct object of the verb.
- (3) Copy the three words that contain dagesh fortes.
- (4) Copy the four words that contain compound shevas.
- (5) Copy the three words that contain BeGaD KeFaT letters with dagesh lenes.

## VOCABULARY

All nouns listed in this and subsequent vocabulary lists will be masculine unless otherwise indicated. All feminine nouns will be indicated by an (f) written beside them.

- |                                   |                                     |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| (1) אָב (ʾāv) father, ancestor    | (10) בַּת (bāt) (f) daughter        |
| (2) אָח (ʾāḥ) brother             | (11) יִשְׂרָאֵל (yīś-rā-ʾēl) Israel |
| (3) אָחוֹת (ʾā-ḥôt) (f) sister    | (12) לֵב (lēv) heart                |
| (4) אִישׁ (ʾīš) man               | (13) עִיר (ʾīr) (f) city            |
| (5) אִשָּׁה (ʾīś-šāh) (f) woman   | (14) עוֹף (ʾôf) bird(s)             |
| (6) אִם (ʾēm) (f) mother          | (15) עַם (ʾām) people               |
| (7) אָדָם (ʾā-dām) man, humankind | (16) קוֹל (qôl) voice               |
| (8) אֱלֹהִים (ʾēlō-hîm) God       | (17) רֹאשׁ (rôš) head               |
| (9) בֶּן (bēn) son                | (18) שֵׁם (šēm) name                |