

# HEBREW AT *ROSH PINAH*

## *ALEPH BET — SHALAV &*

Ron Wilson 2017

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## **This Course – Organization & Features**

### A Radically Different Approach Proposed for Fall 2017

- Each student will work at his/her own chosen rate, related to the student's ability and preference. Most successful students will be expected to help one or two other students of lower levels and will be helped by other students who have successfully mastered the Part being worked on.
- All exercises by all students will be marked by the instructor or by an assisting student. Corrections on exercises are to be made before the quiz or test on that material is attempted.
- Diagnostic quizzes are plentiful and often – for most lessons, most given on Fridays at Rosh Pinah between 5:00 and 6:15 p.m. and marked by me. Success on each quiz will normally be required before each next lesson attempted.
- Tests will be given at the end of each Part (1,2,3)
- “Helping” sessions can happen in 2's and 3's at Rosh Pinah between 5:00 – 6:15. I will meet at least briefly with every student.
- Contacts between me and students and contacts between students and other students would not be limited to this time and place just mentioned. Contact by telephone and internet will be encouraged where needed. Contact with me might include sending and receiving exercises and quizzes for those not attending Friday sessions.
- Prayer strongly encouraged for each other, primarily, but not only, for problems in individual's learning process. Other areas include spiritual aspects of Hebrew roots and personal matters that affect learning.
- Files containing each Part will be posted on my website:

[http://www.becruciform.com/rosh\\_pinah\\_hebrew](http://www.becruciform.com/rosh_pinah_hebrew)

- Contact Ron Wilson:

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PLEASE NOTE: A number of vowel marks are shifted a little to the left of where they should be, which is directly in the middle under the consonant. This happened in the export to a PDF file.

# INTRODUCTION to *ALEPH BET* – *SHALAV* א

## Hebrew Language

The English word "alphabet" is derived from the first two letters of the Greek Alphabet – Alpha and Beta. Hebrew, on the other hand, uses the words *Aleph Bet* – from the first two letters. We will look at these two consonants in our first lesson.

The Hebrew *Aleph Bet* consists of 22 letters. All can be used as consonants and almost all are used only as consonants. Vowels are mainly dots and dashes added above and/or below the consonants.

Unlike English, which is read from left to right, Hebrew is read from right to left, just like many other Semitic languages, including Aramaic and Arabic. This direction may be difficult at first, but in a very short time students will get used to it.

It is important to know clearly the meaning of the words “consonant” and “vowel”. Vowels are made by the free flow of breath through an open mouth and throat; Consonants are formed by the various ways that the mouth or the throat is fully or partially closed. Check the meanings of “consonant” and “vowel” in a dictionary or in Wikipedia and be ready to explain their meanings on a quiz. Further, a student should be able to explain what part of the mouth effects a closure or constriction for all English or Hebrew consonants.

The pronunciations of some of the consonants and vowels have changed over the centuries. Modern Hebrew pronunciation is divided into two parts, Ashkenazi and Sephardic. Since Sephardic is the pronunciation adopted by the modern State of Israel, we will use this pronunciation.

Students must be sure of the meaning of a “syllable”, being clear that a syllable must contain one vowel sound and one only. Note that in English two vowel letters often make one vowel sound: “ie” makes a long “e” sound; “ay”, a long “a” sound. In English, a syllable may start with a vowel; however, a Hebrew syllable always begins with a consonant, never a vowel.

The word *Shalav*, used on page 1 means “level” or “step”; thus this course, *Aleph Bet* – *Shalav* א is mainly about the *Aleph Bet* and is the first level of study. Future courses – *Shalav* ב (level 2) and *Shalav* ג (level 3), etc. – will deal with topics of Hebrew grammar and other features of Hebrew.

## Lesson 1 *Aleph, Beyt*

### Consonants

|                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <i>Aleph</i> is the first letter of the Hebrew <i>Aleph Bet</i> . This consonant is silent.                                                                            |                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                |
|  | The second letter of the Hebrew <i>Aleph Bet</i> is <i>Beyt</i> . When a <i>daghesh</i> (dot) is in the middle of this letter it is pronounced like the “b” in “ball”. |  | When there is no <i>daghesh</i> in this letter, it sounds like the letter “v” in “visit”. Sometimes it is called <i>Veyt</i> . |

### Vowels

|                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|   | The vowel called a <i>Qamats</i> appears as a little “T” under a consonant. The <i>qamats</i> sounds like a long version of the sound “ah” in father. As the <i>aleph</i> is silent, this vowel sound is all that you pronounce.   |
|  | This second vowel, called a <i>Patach</i> , is a dash under a consonant. The <i>patach</i> is also pronounced as the “ah” in father, but some Hebrew speakers make it a slightly shorter sound. Again, the <i>aleph</i> is silent. |

Note that the letters *aleph* and *beyt* above are shown the way they appear in books, such as the Bible. When you print these letters, you will use simpler patterns, such as the ones below:

ב א

**Practice** (Either do your practice work on this paper or else on your own lined paper.)

1 (a) Print a row of about seven *alephs* as shown below using the two lines as guides. Note that you read and write Hebrew from right to left. As you print each one, say out loud the name “*aleph*”. Remember that *aleph* is silent.

----- א -----  
-----

1 (b) Now go back and add a *qamats* under each *aleph* above. As you add each *qamats*, say distinctly out loud its name (“*qamats*”) and then the sound of this open syllable: “ah”.

2 (a) Starting at the right, print a row of four pairs of *beyts* below, one with a dot; the other, without. Say out loud the sound of each letter as you make it, either “b” or “v”.

----- בּ ב -----  
-----

2 (b) Now go back and add a *patach* under each letter you have made. Each time, say the sound of the syllable, either “bah” or “vah”.

3 Note that the syllable below is a combination of two consonants and a vowel, and it makes the Hebrew word for “father”. Print this word five times, each time saying the word out loud in Hebrew (“ahv”) and the English meaning.



4. Note that the two consonants and vowel below make the Hebrew word for “came” or “He came”. (This variation in meaning will be discussed later.), You should pronounce each syllable after you print it as “bah”. Also say its meaning as “came” each time.



### Syllables

In Hebrew, syllables must contain one vowel, and only one. Every syllable must start with a consonant – never a vowel. If a syllable ends with the vowel, it is considered an “open” syllable; if a second consonant follows the vowel, it is considered a “closed” syllable. The patterns can be shown like this: “open” = CV or “closed” = CVC. NEVER VC. Pronounce each syllable below and write beside it “open – CV” or “closed – CVC”.

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| אָב |  |
| אָ  |  |

|      |  |
|------|--|
| בָּא |  |
| בָּא |  |

### Vocabulary and Sentence

Combining the two words you have practised, you have the following sentence:

Father came.

אָב בָּא

Proceeding from right to left, copy this sentence four times in the guidelines below, reading it out loud in Hebrew each time and also say the English translation:



## The Aleph Bet

As you go through the lessons, you will be guided in the memorization of the *Alef Bet* in its normal order. The order of the letters that we study in this course is NOT based on this normal order, but mostly on the order of the frequency of their common use. However, you will see that the two letters we study in this lesson are also the first two letters of the *Alef Bet*.

Two versions of each letter are given. The one of the left is the style you will find in books, such as the Hebrew scriptures; the one on the right, a style close to the way you will print them.

| Ordinal Number  | Name of Letter | Letter |   | Numerical Value |
|-----------------|----------------|--------|---|-----------------|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> | <i>aleph</i>   | א      | א | 1               |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> | beyt           | ב      | ב | 2               |

You will see for each letter a “numerical value”. In Bible times, our common numerals were not used by any nation. The Hebrew used, instead, the letters of their *Alef Bet* to represent numbers. Thus, this chapter 1 would be (chapter) א. The number of letters studied in this lesson is ב.

**Corrections:** Before proceeding to Lesson 2,

- (1) Have your work on Pages 4 & 5 marked.
- (2) Correct any mistakes on Pages 4 & 5.

### Quiz #1

Review the content of the Introduction and Lesson 1 until you are confident of success on this quiz. Quizzes can be obtained from Ron Wilson or an assisting student. There will be also an oral quiz on the first two letters of the alphabet and the two words of the vocabulary.

Websites that you may find helpful and interesting:

[www.cartoonhebrew.com](http://www.cartoonhebrew.com) Very good for learning alphabet and vowels.

[www.jewfaq.org/alephbet.htm](http://www.jewfaq.org/alephbet.htm) Advanced teaching on the alphabet.

[www.aish.com/jl/heb/hl/48965091.html](http://www.aish.com/jl/heb/hl/48965091.html) Note the Ashkenazic pronunciations.

## Lesson 2 Mem, Yud

### Consonants

|                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                   |                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | The <i>Mem</i> is pronounced like the “m” in “mother”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |  | The <i>Final Mem</i> is used only when it is at the end of a word. The pronunciation is the same as the regular <i>Mem</i> . |
|  | <p>(a) <i>Yud</i> (or <i>Yod</i>) used as a consonant is pronounced like the “y” in “yes”.</p> <p>(b) When the <i>Yud</i> is used along with a vowel, it is silent, much like the “h” in “Oh” or the “w” in “snow”. This use will be explained below under “Vowels”. Recall the reference to “jot” in Matthew 5:18 (“jot” = <i>yud</i>).</p> |                                                                                   |                                                                                                                              |

### Vowels

Note that the four *aleph*'s below are silent and are only used here as examples to show the position under and beside any consonant of the following new vowel symbols.

|                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | <p>The <i>Chireq</i> is a single dot under a consonant. It is pronounced like “ee” in “bee”.</p> <p>Examples:  would be pronounced as “bee”;  as “mee”; , as “yee”</p>                                       |
|  | <p>The “<i>tsere</i>” is a pair of horizontal dots under a consonant, pronounced like “ay” in “May” or like “ey” in “grey”.</p> <p>Examples:  would be pronounced as “yea”;  as “May”; , as “bay”.</p> |

### Vowels with Yud

|                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <p>When a <i>Yud</i> follows directly after a <i>chireq</i>, we call this combination a <i>chireq yud</i>. The <i>yud</i> is silent and does not change the vowel sound.</p> <p>Examples:  would be pronounced as “bee”; , as “vee”; , as “mee”.</p> <p>A <i>chireq yud</i> at the end of a word often is a suffix that means “my”. You will find an example of this in the vocabulary below.</p> |
|  | <p>Similarly, the <i>tsere yud</i> is pronounced just the same as a <i>tsere</i> itself, like “ay” in “May” or like “ey” in “grey”.</p> <p>Examples:  would be pronounced as “May”; , as “bay”.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

### Practice

1 (a) Print a row of seven *mem*'s across between the guidelines at the top of the next page, leaving spaces between them. Say the name of each letter after you print it, emphasizing the “m” sound.

-----  
-----  
מ

1 (b) Now go back and add a *chireq* under each *mem* above, saying the names of the letters *mem* and *chireq* and then pronouncing each open syllable clearly out loud as “mee”.

1 (c) Now add a *yud* to the left of each *mem*, saying the name of the letters – *mem*, *chireq yud*, and then pronouncing each open syllable again as “mee”.

2 (a) Spacing evenly, write a line of seven *beyt's*, each with a *tsere yud*. Say the names of the consonant and vowel in each syllable and then (b) pronounce each open syllable as “bay”.

-----  
-----  
ב

For each of the 10 Hebrew syllables below, choose the correct pronunciation from the “random pronunciations” in the last column and copy it into the column beside the syllable.

|    | <u>Hebrew</u><br><u>Script</u> | <u>Correct</u><br><u>Pronunciation</u> |  | <u>Random</u><br><u>Pronunciations</u> |
|----|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------------|
| 1  | מֵי                            | _____                                  |  | bee                                    |
| 2  | מֵי                            | _____                                  |  | bah                                    |
| 3  | מֵי                            | _____                                  |  | mee                                    |
| 4  | מֵי                            | _____                                  |  | ay                                     |
| 5  | מֵי                            | _____                                  |  | aym                                    |
| 6  | מֵי                            | _____                                  |  | bay                                    |
| 7  | מֵי                            | _____                                  |  | ah                                     |
| 8  | מֵי                            | _____                                  |  | vee                                    |
| 9  | מֵי                            | _____                                  |  | ah                                     |
| 10 | מֵי                            | _____                                  |  | may                                    |

## Vocabulary (Memorize!)

|                                                        |           |       |   |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-----------|-------|---|
| Note the final form of the <i>Mem</i>                  | Mother    | אִם   | 1 |
| Note the <i>chireq yud</i>                             | Who?      | מִי   | 2 |
| The <i>chireq yud</i> changes “father” to “my father”. | my father | אָבִי | 3 |
| <b>Vocabulary – Review (Memorize!)</b>                 | Father    | אָב   | 4 |
|                                                        | (He) came | בָּא  | 5 |

Test your memory of the above vocabulary by (1) covering up the Hebrew and translate the English into Hebrew; (2) covering up the English and translate the Hebrew into English.

**Sentences:** Write the translation of these two following sentences in Hebrew.

|   |                 |  |
|---|-----------------|--|
| 1 | Who came?       |  |
| 2 | My father came. |  |

## The Aleph Bet

The two letters to memorize for this lesson are not the next two in the normal order of the *Aleph Bet*, but letters that will be studied later .

| Ordinal Number  | Name of Letter | Letter |   | Numerical Value |
|-----------------|----------------|--------|---|-----------------|
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> | <i>gimel</i>   | ג      | ג | 3               |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> | <i>dalet</i>   | ד      | ד | 4               |

Review the two letters of the *Aleph Bet* from Lesson 1 and memorize then the names of the first four letters of the *Aleph Bet*:

ד ג ב א ←

**Corrections:** (1) Have Pages 8 & 9 marked; (2) Correct any mistakes

**Quiz #2:** Before proceeding to Lesson 3, review the content of this lesson until you are confident of success on this quiz. Quizzes can be obtained from Ron Wilson or an assistant. There will be an oral quiz on the first four letters of the alphabet and some of the words in the vocabulary.

## Lesson 3 *Nun, Hey*

### Consonants

|                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                   |                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <p><i>Nun</i> is pronounced like the “n” in “no”.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |  | <p>The <i>Final Nun</i> is used only at the end of a word. The pronunciation is the same as the regular <i>Nun</i>.</p> |
|  | <p><i>Hey</i> is pronounced like the “h” in “hello” when it comes first in a syllable. When it comes at the end of a word or syllable, it is usually silent, becoming linked to the preceding vowel. It is unlike all other consonants in that it is a burst of air and no part of the mouth is closed as with other consonants.</p> |                                                                                   |                                                                                                                         |

### Practice

1 (a) Say the names of the consonants and vowels for each item below.

1 (b) To the left of every syllable below, write and say the English phonetical spelling of the sound made by each syllable:. The answer for the first one is “nee”.







2 (a) & (b). Do similar exercises with the consonant *hey*, (a) saying the names of the consonants and vowels, and then (b) writing the phonetical spelling and saying the sound of each syllable.







3 (a) Note below English phonetical spellings of four Hebrew final syllables. Using silent *aleph*'s, correct vowels and final *nun*'s, print the Hebrew letters for the other three final syllables (use 3 different vowels). Do not include yud's. The first one is done for you.






4. As stated above, when *hey* is at the end of a syllable, it is silent. The syllable is still considered “closed”. Print the missing Hebrew for the two phonetical spellings using (1) an *aleph*, (2) the correct vowel, and (3) a final *hey*. The first one is done for you.





## Vocabulary

|                                                                              |                     |        |   |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------|---|
| Note the silent <i>aleph</i> at the end.                                     | she                 | היא    | 1 |
| Note this word as a syllable in proper nouns as “Benjamin” and “Reuben”.     | son                 | בן     | 2 |
| Note the <i>chireq yud</i> at the end = “my”.                                | my son              | בני    | 3 |
| Many verb forms reflect gender – masculine or feminine.                      | came (f.), She came | בָּאָה | 4 |
| Second word in Psalm 133:1, a verse we sing: “Behold how good . . .”         | what?, how!         | מָה    | 5 |
| Verb forms often show gender. This is the masculine form.                    | was (m), He was     | הָיָה  | 6 |
| As in <i>Hallelu-jah</i> and in many proper names, such as Elijah, Jeremiah. | God (Yah)           | יָה    | 7 |

## Vocabulary – Definite Article (“The”)

In Hebrew, the definite article is formed by attaching the letter *hey* – ה – to the beginning of a word as a prefix. The vowel under it will be either a patach or a qamets. We will study the rules for this choice later; it depends on the type of letter following the *hey*.

Note that there is no Hebrew equivalent for the indefinite English article “a” (an). Further, sometimes a definite article is assumed. Such situations will be studied later.

|            |    |                |     |
|------------|----|----------------|-----|
| “son” =    | בן | “the son” =    | הבן |
| “father” = | אב | “the father” = | האב |
| “mother” = | אם | “the mother” = | האם |

## Syllables and Accent

Hebrew words of more than one syllable are usually accented or stressed on the last syllable. Exceptions will be covered later. For now follow this basic rule.

## Review Vocabulary

Write in the Hebrew translation of these words found in previous lessons. Look back to check if needed. Make sure you memorize these Hebrew words with their meanings.

|           |       |          |       |
|-----------|-------|----------|-------|
| father    | _____ | came (m) | _____ |
| my father | _____ | Who?     | _____ |
| Mother    | _____ |          |       |

**Sentences:** Translate the English sentences below into Hebrew.

|    | <b><u>English</u></b> | <b><u>Hebrew</u></b> |
|----|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1  | My father came.       |                      |
| 2  | Mother came (f).      |                      |
| 3  | My son came.          |                      |
| 4  | Who came?             |                      |
| 5  | What came?            |                      |
| 6  | She (is) the mother.  |                      |
| 7  | Who was the father?   |                      |
| 8  | He was my father.     |                      |
| 9  | He came.              |                      |
| 10 | She came.             |                      |

After you have your work marked and are sure you have the correct translations for the 10 sentences above, then memorize these sentences thoroughly, both (a) from English to Hebrew and (b) from Hebrew to English. The following method is strongly recommended:

Cover up the English column as you write out the translation of the Hebrew back to English. Check each one. Then test your ability to translate the English to Hebrew by writing out the Hebrew on scrap paper and then checking each one by uncovering the Hebrew translation given.

Your test on each Part will include translating Hebrew sentences to English, not English to Hebrew. However, practising both types of translation will be helpful in learning to read Hebrew.

### The Aleph Bet

One of the three letters to memorize for this lesson has just been studied. The other two will be studied later .

| Ordinal Number  | Name of Letter | Letter |   | Numerical Value |
|-----------------|----------------|--------|---|-----------------|
| 5 <sup>th</sup> | hey            | ה      | ה | 5               |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> | vav            | ו      | ו | 6               |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> | zayin          | ז      | ז | 7               |

Review the four letters of the *Alef Bet* from Lessons 1 and 2. Memorize then in order the names of the first seven letters of the *Aleph Bet*:

ז ו ה ד ג ב א ←

**Corrections:** (1) Have Pages 10-12 marked (2) Correct any mistakes.

### Test for Part 1

Before proceeding to Lesson 4, review the content of the Introduction and of Lessons 1-3 until you are confident of success on this test. Tests will be administered and marked by Ron Wilson. There will also be an oral quiz on the first seven letters of the *Aleph Bet* and oral reading of Hebrew words and sentences.