

## Ross Lesson 2 Hebrew Syllables

1. **One vowel = one syllable.** Every Hebrew syllable has at least one vowel, so, the number of vowels = the number of syllables.

דָּבָר (word) has 2 vowels, and so 2 syllables.

הָאָרֶץ (the land) has 3 vowels, and so 3 syllables.

2. Every Hebrew syllable has at least one consonant (to lead the vowel). [Every vowel needs a consonant!] Thus, **every syllable has at least one consonant plus one vowel.**

Let “c” = consonant; “v” = vowel.

a. **Open syllable:** has only one cons. and one vowel: cv

לוּ מִי גְלוּ

b. **Closed syllable:** has a cons., a vowel, and a cons.: cvc

The last syllable in מֵת בֵּשׂוּם דָּבָר

Notice: historically long vowels (vowel point plus the mater) constitute a complete vowel; do not confuse the mater as a consonant. Thus, מִי consists of one cons (מ) + one vowel (י).

3. **Important rule: every Hebrew consonant has a corresponding vowel or shewa (more about those in Lesson 3) unless the consonant is the final letter!** For ex.,

a. בֵּית (*bêṭ* = “house of”) Is the י here a vowel (mater) or a consonant? Well, does it have a vowel point or a shewa below/beside it? If not, then it’s a vowel, forming part of the historically long vowel called *ṣērê-yôḏ*. Vowels (maters) don’t have vowels under them!

b. יָלֵד (*yêled* = “boy, youth”) Is the י here a vowel (mater) or a consonant? Well, does it have a vowel point or a shewa below/beside it? Yes! Therefore, it’s a consonant, not a mater. Only consonants can take vowels under them!

4. **Accent:** Standard accent (or tone) in BH (Biblical Hebrew) is on the **final syllable**. Therefore, if a word’s accent is on the final syllable, for purposes of our beginning study, it’s unmarked. If the accent is on a non-final syllable, accent/tone is indicated as follows:

a. BH textbooks place the symbol ˘ over the cons. that begins the stressed syllable:

דָּבָר / דָּבָר

b. English transliteration will place the symbol ˘ over the stressed vowel:

ré / keb ˘ é / reṣ