1. Please take note of the fact that I differ from Ross in that I do not consider vocal shewa to be a *vowel*, and therefore vocal shewa does not constitute a syllable (since Heb. syllables, by definition, always consist of at least one vowel [V] with a leading consonant [C]). Consider on p.44 Ross’ example for the word “Samuel”:

 š'e/mû/'ēl

Acc. to Ross = 3 divisions, 3 vowels, and so 3 syllables. His division of the Heb word would look like this: šemû/ēl.

2. I will have you treat a C with vocal shewa as part of a consonant cluster that *always* piggybacks onto the *following full syllable*.

 š'mû / 'ēl 2 divisions, 2 vowels, and so only 2 syllables
šô / p’tim 2 divisions, 2 vowels, and so only 2 syllables
kar / m’ti 2 divisions, 2 vowels, and so only 2 syllables

3. Why do I not consider vocal shewa to constitute a syllable?
   a. Because only *real vowels* can form a syllable, and VS is not a full vowel.
   b. Because only *real vowels* can form an accented syllable (take the tone), and VS is never accented in Hebrew.
   c. Because if you treat VS as a vowel and as a separate syllable, then the 4 syllable rules you have learned would be broken all the time. In other words, the 4 rules hold up only if you treat VS as I’m suggesting.

4. Dividing syllables. Our strategy for dividing syllable is as follows:
   a. Begin at the *front (far right) of the word* and identify the consonant (C) and its vowel (V). Often, the CV will form an open syllable, and you’d draw a line to the left. But,
   b. First check to the left of that CV and see what’s under the next C. If there’s a V, then the first syllable is Open; go ahead and draw a line to the Left of the initial CV.

   Examples:

   רָחֵל
   רְמָאר

   c. However, if there’s a shewa under that next C, don’t divide yet! First determine whether it’s SS or VS by looking back to the V to the Right. If it’s short, the shewa is SS. The C is closing the syllable, so divide to the Left of that C with SS. (A SS in the middle of a word *always* marks a closed syllable!)
d. If it’s long, the shewa is VS. The C is NOT closing the syllable, but beginning to open a new syllable, so divide to the Right of that C with VS.

e. Next, continue reading toward the left for the next C with its V, and repeat steps a–d until you’re all the way at the end (the word will end with a V creating an open syll., or with a C creating a closed syll.).

f. REMEMBER: Always divide to the Left of a SS, and to the Right of a VS.

Examples:

רָשַׁרַל

כֹּהֶלוֹת

מִדְבָּר

יִקְטְלוּ