

BBH Workbook p. 23 #3
(Ex 14:20)

הָעֶנָן וְהַחֹשֶׁךְ

הָעֶנָן

הָעֶנָן, “the cloud,” consists of

- the definite article
- the masculine noun עֶנָן, “cloud”

MORPHOLOGY

Why doesn't the article have the form הֵּ here?

We know that the gutturals (of which ע is one) and ר cannot be doubled. We are also aware that when a guttural rejects a Daghesh Forte, the vowel before it often lengthens in compensation for the loss of the Daghesh.

Thus, for example, we see the following:

עֵין + הֵּ	→	הָעֵין
אִישׁ + הֵּ	→	הָאִישׁ
רֹאשׁ + הֵּ	→	הָרֹאשׁ

However, when a noun begins with unaccented ע or ה , or either accented or unaccented ח , the article becomes ה .

For example:

$\text{הַרְרִים} + \text{ה־} \rightarrow \text{הַהַרְרִים}$

$\text{חַכְכֵּם} + \text{ה־} \rightarrow \text{הַחַכְכֵּם}$

$\text{עֲנֹן} + \text{ה־} \rightarrow \text{הָעֲנֹן}$

וְהַחֹשֶׁךְ

וְהַחֹשֶׁךְ, “and the darkness,” consists of three elements:

- the conjunction Waw
- the definite article (the Daghesh Forte of which has been rejected by the following ח)
- the masculine noun חֹשֶׁךְ , “darkness”

MORPHOLOGY

Why doesn't the Pathach of the article lengthen to Qamets in compensation for following ח 's rejection of the Daghesh Forte?

When the definite article is prefixed to a word beginning with ה or ח , the Pathach of the article does not usually lengthen

to compensate for the rejection of the Daghesh. Instead, it remains a Pathach (or, as we saw earlier in our present discussion, the Pathach becomes Seghol if the word to which the article is prefixed begins with unaccented אַ or אָ or accented or unaccented אֲ).

Grammarians refer to the phenomenon whereby the Daghesh of the article is rejected but the preceding Pathach does not lengthen in compensation as “virtual doubling.” It is as if the אַ or אָ had actually doubled, and so the Pathach does not lengthen.

Final Translation

the cloud and the darkness