מְזֻקָּנִים אֶתְבּוֹנָן כִּי פִקּוּדֶיךָ נָצָרְתִּי׃

A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew

FULL

Structure-Based Learning

Jonathan Cloud

Contents

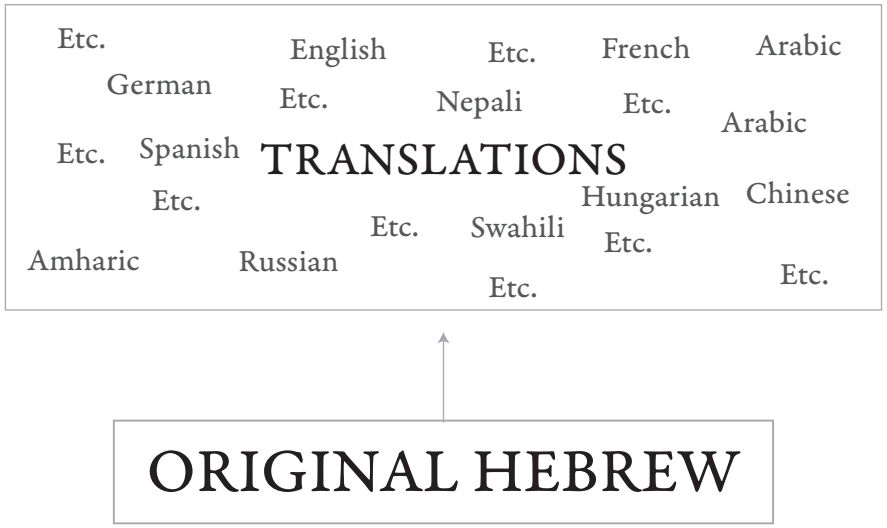
A § BACKGROUND TO THE ALPHABET

God Himself provided the wisdom that formed the Hebrew alphabet, the alphabet that preceded all other writing systems, unquestionably going back to the Adam himself and the pre-flood patriarchs, carried through the Flood and Babel with Noah, all the way to Christ, and continuing to this day.

By means of its curves and lines, God gave His perfect self-revelation, that is, the revelation of Himself, of who He is in His own nature and existence. By it, we understand God's Name, which takes in the entirety of His person. His Name, *YHWH* (יהוה), is a description of Himself, the God who exists, the One by whom all other things exist and for whom all other things exist, the One whose existence alone is independent of all else, whose existence is self-firm and self-real. This is the Name of the transcendent God, the NAME that takes in all of His Person. But this Name is derived from a Hebrew word and was understood and used for the living God long before Babel. As it is written concerning the times of Seth, "...then began men to call upon the Name of *YHWH*" - Gen. 4:26. This is a record of what occurred around the 3rd century of human history from the creation week, while Adam was still "young." How is it that the Hebrew Name of God, the Name He Himself revealed, was in use nearly 1500 years before Babel? It was in use because the Hebrew language was the language of Adam, given distinctly to him at his moment of creation.

More—much more—Biblical and historical information will be included concerning this in the pages to follow [in the future], but the certainty of this fact causes its firm statement here, at the beginning of this book.

All faithful translations of the Old Testament are translations of the Hebrew words and ideas expressed in the Hebrew alphabet, for God chose it as the foundation of all written knowledge of Himself throughout the world and throughout history. In other words, all faithful translations of the Old Testament in all languages go back to one Bible, the Hebrew Scriptures. The Hebrew Scriptures are not dependent upon anything but God for their truth.



All translations, then, are actually secondary communicators of the Old Testament, servants to the Word God gave using the Hebrew alphabet and language. The New Testament, as well, is based upon and dependent upon the Old Testament, for it is the fulfillment of it, not as being its end, but as being its embodiment and life. All that the Old Testament manifest is embodied in the New Testament. Nor did the Hebrew mindset and ground disappear at the coming of the New Testament but was the same mindset in which the New Testament message was communicated, by the sole design of the Creator to whom it belongs.

From its alphabet to its verbal nuances, the Hebrew language reveals the wisdom of God, as do all languages derived from it at Babel. Yet, God formed and utilized the Hebrew language for a highly significant role, that of giving the actual, foundational, personal, written revelation of His Spirit.

Thus, the distinct characteristics of the Hebrew language—and certainly its alphabet—are not to be viewed as mere coincidences of language or history but the precise oversight of God in preparing Hebrew to communicate His thoughts in full accord with His full intention and meaning. No aspect of it falls short of His intentions and purposes for it.

Welcome to the study of this incomparable writing system!

The Hebrew alphebet is the foundation of all alphabetic writing systems in the world,[1] not only facilitating communication from mind to mind and nation to nation but, above all, from God to man directly. Through the letters of that ancient alphabet, God gave His own Word concerning Himself and how man, through history, has related, should relate, and will relate to Him. Numerous scripts—such as the Greek, Roman, and Brahami ("the great mother-script of India"[2]), as well as Mongolian, Korean, Arabic, and Russian scripts[3]—were derivitives of the one alphabet, borrowed and modified from the Hebrew alphabet by people groups and nations for their individual use.

The English alphabet is, in fact, simply a derivative of the ancient Hebrew alphabet itself, a fact quite easily seen even from the surface. Understanding that ancient nations borrowed the writing system of the Hebrews makes it easy to understand that they borrowed more than just the writing system, "borrowing" also the foundational thoughts recorded in it, the truth of God's personal revelation, the wisdom of His mind, which He had delivered to the Hebrew people as a light to all nations. Thus, direct and indirect contact with the Israelites brought upon the world an influence of firmness from God. Thereby was fulfilled the words of God by Moses to Israel:

> 5 Behold, I have taught you statutes and judgments, even as the LORD my God commanded me, that ye should do so in the land whither ye go to possess it.
> 6 Keep therefore and do them; **for this is your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the nations, which shall hear all these statutes, and say, Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.** (Deut. 4:5-6)

Around 1060 B.C., the judge Eli died the same day his two sons died, beginning

1 "It was this alphabet which became the ancestor of all alphabetic scripts the world has known." *The Story of the Aleph Beth* by David Diringer, p. 39 published by Thomas Yoseloff 1960

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., Diringer adds, "...although it is practically impossible for a layman to see a real resemblance between them."

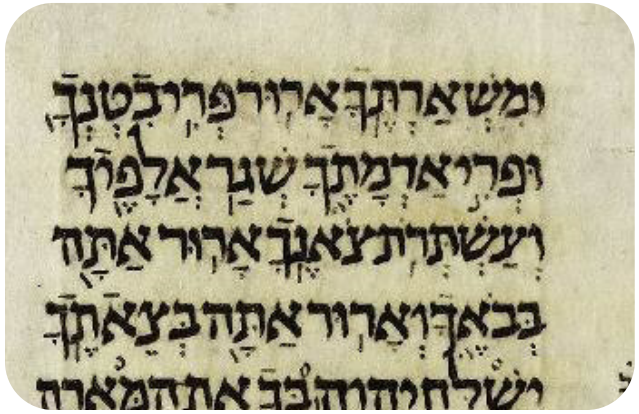
a new era in Israel's history. The ark was taken to Philistia, where God was preparing to leave a testimony of Himself. Much suffering and death accompanied the ark, all designed by God to turn the Philistines to Himself. Then, the following testimony, out of the mouths of the priests of the Philistines themselves, was recorded for all of history:

> "...ye shall give glory unto the God of Israel: peradventure he will lighten his hand from off you, and from off your gods, and from off your land. Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought wonderfully among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed?" (1 Sam. 6:5-6)

Aleppo Codex, c. A.D. 930

This page starts on Deuteronomy 28:18, which has become the tragic first words of the codex.

Nearly 400 years after the Exodus, these Canaanites over in Israel well remembered who God was and what He had done. Yet, they were not giving a lecture on all that they knew about the true God and His ways. They were simply chastising their own people for forgetting to recall the One with Whom they were dealing. Undoubtedly, any one of the Philistines could have quoted Genesis 1:1 verbatim from Hebrew (their language was, essentially, identical to Hebrew). They knew, incontestably that the God who exists, the One who carried "*Nuahk*" across the flood and spoke from Mount Sinai, was the God with whom they were dealing. He had ***not*** destroyed "*Rahkab*," one of their own, nor would He destroy them, if they would turn and believe Him with their whole heart. If these Canaanites remembered God's works from 400 years before and did so knowing that these works were, indeed, the works of the true God,



what else did they know? What else did the other nations know as a result of the Word of God among the Israelites?

Even 200 years later, under the most unGodly king to rule Israel up to that point, that is, under Ahab (around 860 B.C.), the kings of Israel were known to exercise "mercy" (1 Kings 20:31), that is, *ḥkesed* or the perfect design of God for relationships. Benhadad, the king of Syria, lost momentously against Israel's trivial army. His army was no longer an army but a handful of scattered, fugitive men. His servants that remained then wisely requested that he take the following course of action: go to King Ahab in humility because "we have heard that the kings of the house of Israel are merciful kings (lit. kings of *ḥkesed*)...." So, Israel, with the influence of the revelation of God in her hands and mouth, was ever giving testimony to the God who exists, even in her worst times. Even if her populace grew corrupt, the Creator God reserved a core of human beings firm to Himself, knowers and keepers of truth, salt in the midst of the corruption and light in the midst of the darkness. The influence of the Creator's absolutely firm truth upon the nations of the world through the Hebrew people cannot be measured but its influence can be perceived, and the alphabet is one such influence.

Concerning the names of the alphabet, whether they were originally called by these names or not is not known.

Some introductory points about the Hebrew alphabet:

◊ **The Hebrew alphabet is written from right to left:**

עֲשֵׂה צְדָקָה וּמִשְׁפָּט נִבְחָר לַיהוָה מִזָּבַח׃

Since this is the case, the beginning of a Hebrew Bible is what English speakers would think of as the back of the book.

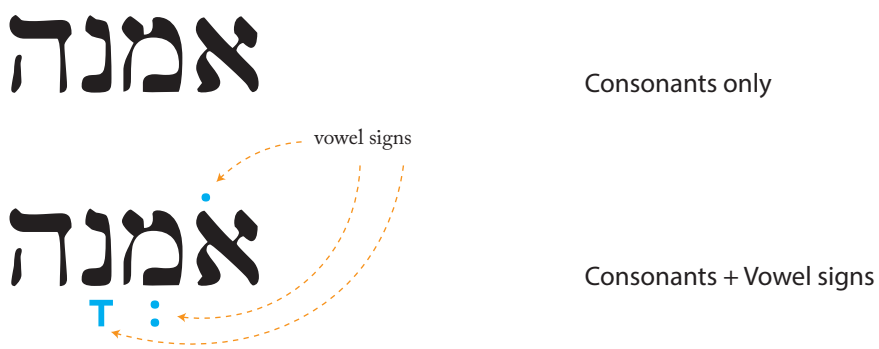
◊ **The ancient Hebrew alphabet has 22 consonants.**

The vowels are visualized in a system of points and lines added to the consonants – under, after, and above them.

(**Everything other than the consonants is called "pointing."**)

The following four letters form the word "righteousness" in Hebrew.

Another example of a word without vowels and then with vowels (from the word meaning "a pillar", pronounced Om'NAH, with a long "o" sound at the beginning):



◊ **Hebrew does not have capital letters and lowercase letters like English does, such as "A" and "a"**

◊ **All alphabetic writing in the world came from Hebrew. (!)** See the next point for illustrations of English from Hebrew

◊ **Hebrew font styles changed through time.**

A change in font or script does not equal a change in letters or meaning! Look at the following four sentences in English to see how the fonts change but not the alphabet or the meaning:

Adam died the day he ate but lived to be 930

Adam died the day he ate but lived to be 930

Adam died the day he ate but lived to be 930

Adam died the day he ate but lived to be 930

These four sentences are identical in letters and meaning, only the shapes of the letters changed (*SEE BELOW). Similarly, the form of the Hebrew letters has changed over time, but, ***importantly***, their meaning and identity has not changed one jot.

In its earliest form, the Hebrew letters were written in a script now often called "paleo-Hebrew," apparently used from Adam until sometime after the Israelites came back from the Babylonion captivity. At that point, they started using what

is called the "square script." Here is an Aleph (**the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet**) in paleo-Hebrew and in square script:

Paleo-Hebrew: 

Square-script Hebrew: 

Notice the Paleo-Hebrew shape is the basis of the English "A":

Consider how different the following four a's look from one another in English:

Each the same letter

To someone whose background is entirely foreign to English, these four different shapes all representing the exact same letter would be quite confusing. Yet, native English speakers are so used to the representation of letters in different font styles that hardly a thought is given to the notable differences between different representations of the same letters. How long does it take your mind to read the following words?

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."

As different as that font is from the one you are now reading, a literate English speaker can easily read both without thinking about it.

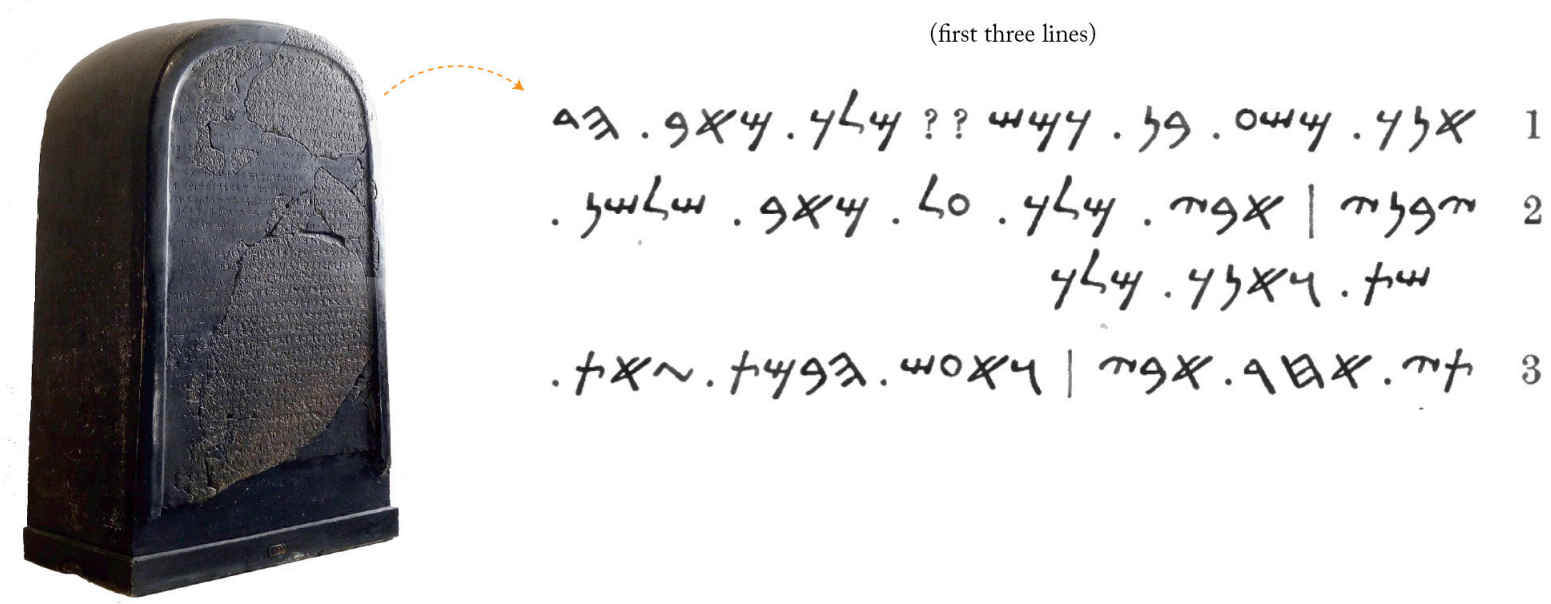
Often, Hebrew resources will use language that causes readers to think that "paleo-Hebrew" is a different alphabet than "square-script Hebrew" or "modern Hebrew," but the difference between them equal the difference between a change of font.

B § ENGLISH LETTERS 2,800 YEARS AGO

In 1868, a surprising discovery was made in the land of ancient Moab. (The Moabites were both relatives and geographic neighbors of the Israelites, though the relationship between these two nations was often marred by hostility.) **The discovery was an exquisitely preserved memorial stone, commissioned by one of the kings of Moab.** The name of this king? **King Mesha** (pronounced "Mae-shah"). **Elisha not only lived and served the God-who-exists in close proximity to this king but prophesied of his defeat:** King Jehoshaphat and his coalition would defeat the Moabites by God's power.(See 2 Kings chapter 3) They did, indeed, go on to fulfill every detail of the prophecy, including filling the best fields of Moab with rocks. They would have taken even the city in which King Mesha himself was taking refuge, but the wicked king took his firstborn son who was in line to be king after his father and, in the middle of the battle, sacrificed him on the fortification wall of the city, in sight of the Israeli enemy fighters. Upon this act, the Israelite coalition turned away and went home.

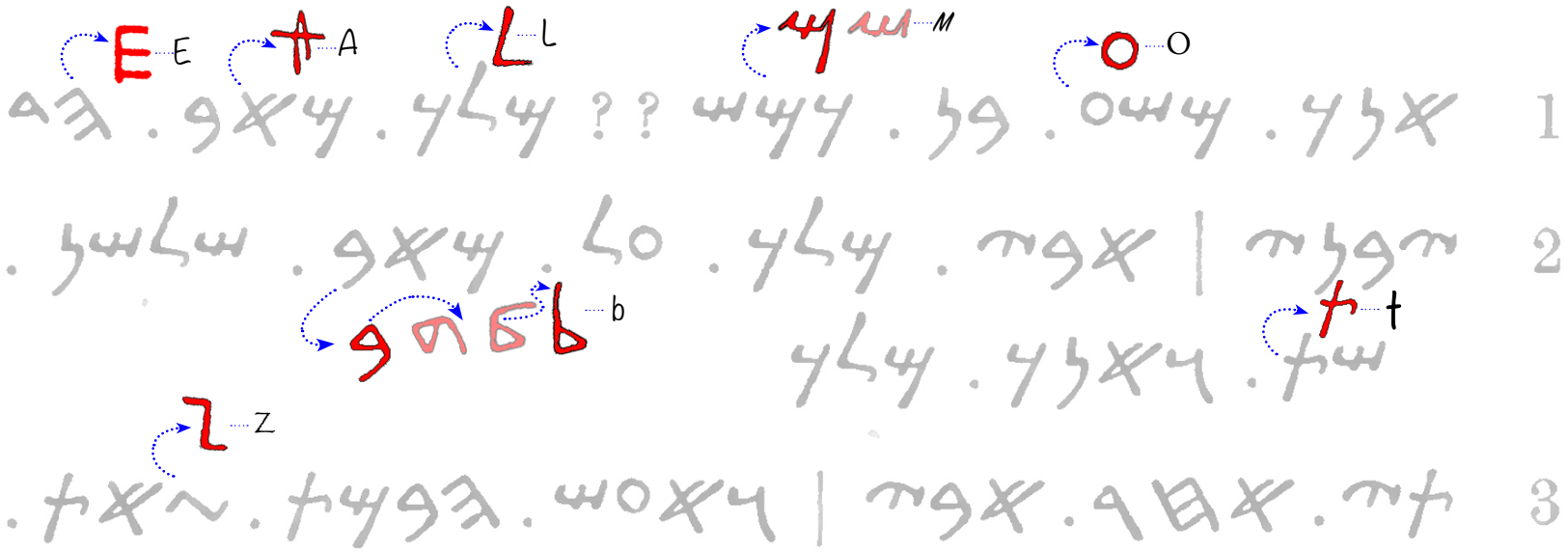
This stone became known "the Moabite Stone" as well as "the Mesha Stele,"

being commissioned by King *Mesha* himself. Not only was the discovered stone an external testimony to Biblical times and people but also to its language and writing. Though this stone is written in the Moabite language and letters, it is the same language as Hebrew and the same alphabet as Hebrew, for the Moabites spoke and wrote Hebrew, being relatives of Abraham, through Lot.



The Moabite Stone ("Mesha Stele")

The following illustration shows how a number of English letters are directly represented in just the first three lines of the Moabite Stone:

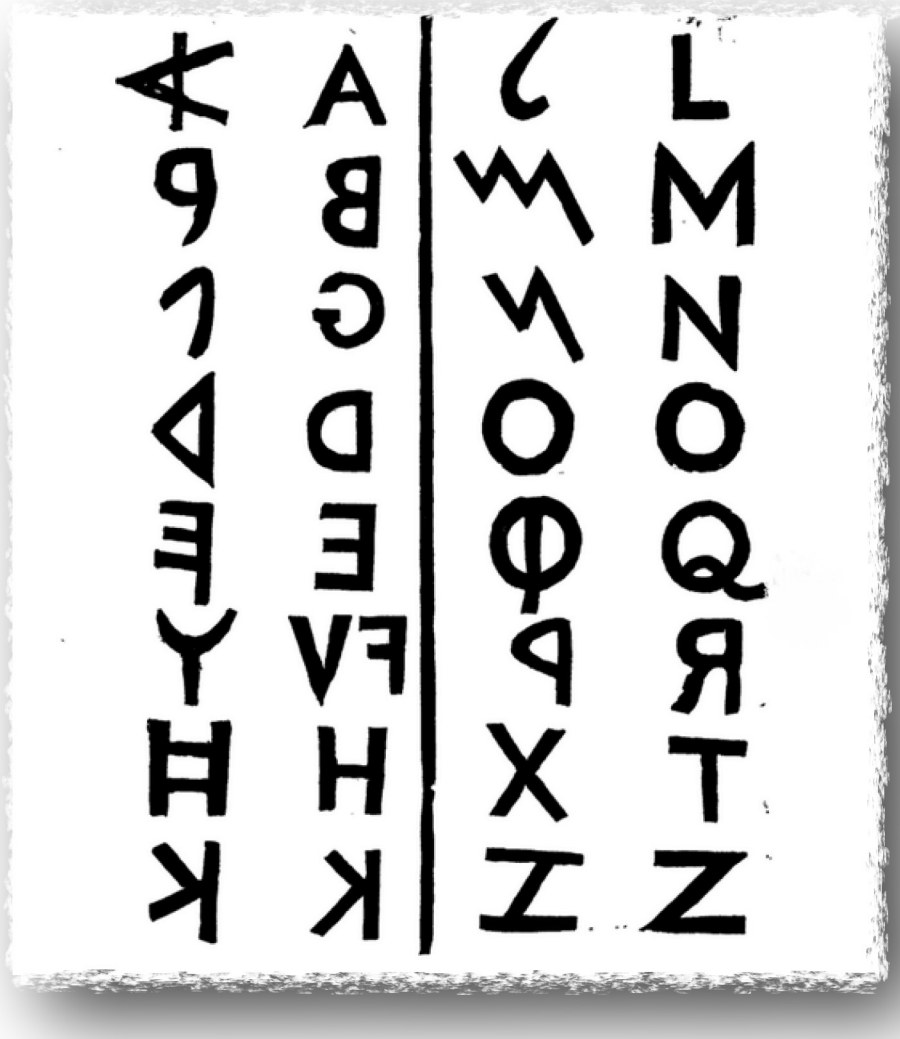


Note that even after 2800 years of tumultuous earth history and more than one change of language and geography, even the shapes of numerous English letters appear clearly in this ancient Hebrew/Moabite script. Yet, throughout the following 800 years after the Mesha Stele was engraved, the Hebrew script changed forms slightly. If other records are taken into account, most or all of the shapes of the English alphabet letters are clearly seen in the scripts of the Hebrew alphabet. To give one example of this, compare the square script Hebrew Q with the English Q in the following depiction:

Hebrew Q English Q

Hebrew reversed:

Further, the paleo-Hebrew Q was the source of the English capital Q (see the chart below for an example).[4]



* Comparison of Moabite and English from the book "The Moabite Stone" by Compston, 1919, p. 30

4 Later, the student will see that not only the shapes but the order of the English alphabet lines up neatly with Hebrew.

The Paleo-Leviticus Scroll

The following scroll was found in a Qumran cave (cave 11) in the 1956.[5] The scroll is around 3 feet long, containing sections of Leviticus 22-27.[6] In the latter half of the 20th century, it was assigned a date of around 100 B.C. through a comparison with Jewish scripts on ancient coins.[7] Thus, the scroll was copied down some 600 years after the Moabite Stone. Its script is that of the older, "paleo" Hebrew form.

[8]

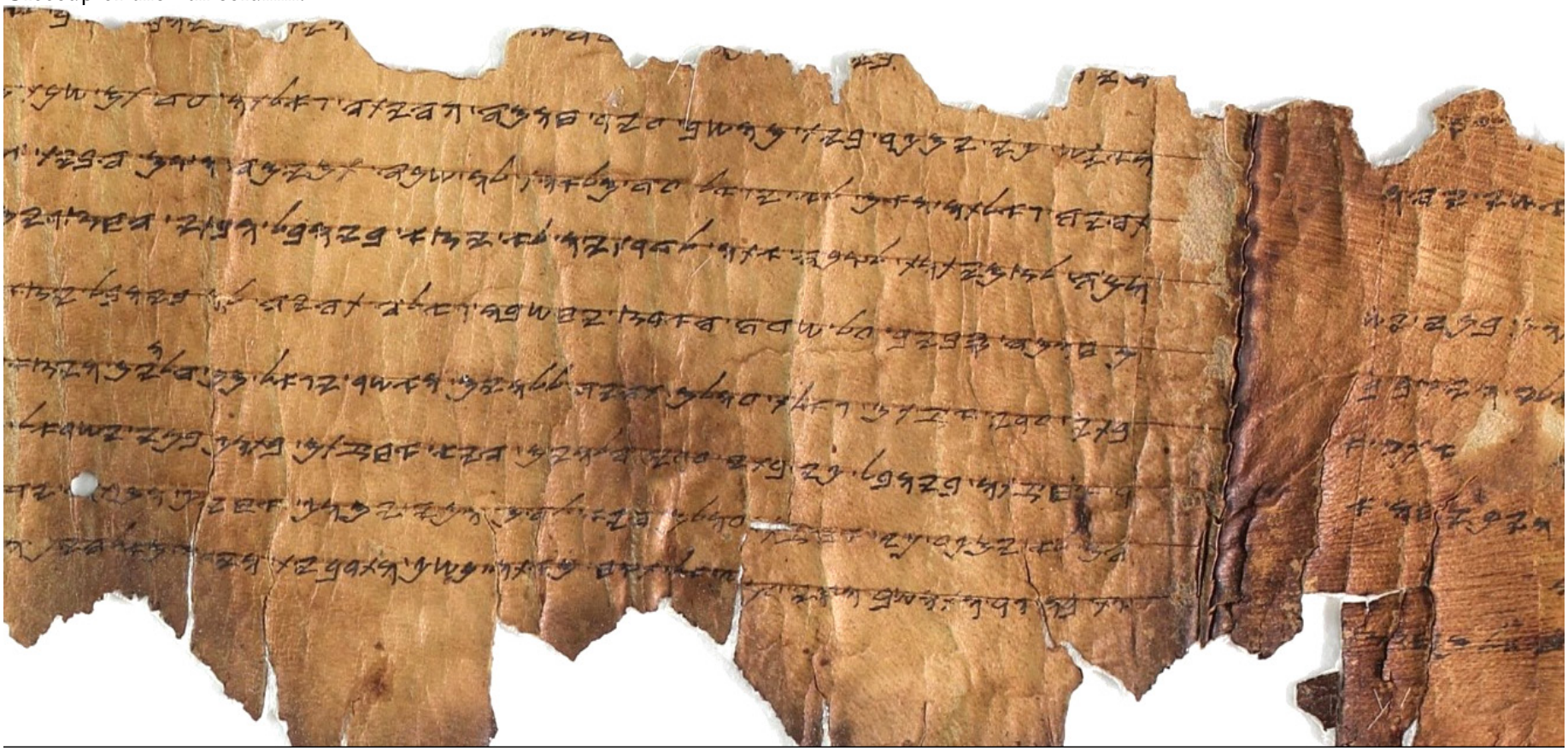
5 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paleo-Hebrew_Leviticus_scroll

6 MATHEWS, K. A. "The Leviticus Scroll (11QpaleoLev) and the Text of the Hebrew Bible." The Catholic Biblical Quarterly 48, no. 2 (1986): 171-207. Accessed June 27, 2020. www.jstor.org/stable/43717168.

7 Ibid.

8 CC0 Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International license - Permission for use given by Israel Antiquities Authority: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paleo-Hebrew_Leviticus_scroll#/media/File:11QpaleoLev_-_Qumran_Cave_11.jpg

Closeup of the 4th column:



Notice that the scribe inscribed straight lines across the leather. This was (and is) the common scribal practice. These were inscribed before writing the letters of the text, which "hang" from the line.

Origin of the Names of the Letters

Though the assumption is often repeated that the alphabet originated with the Phoenicians (i.e., Canaanites) and that through them the Hebrews obtained the alphabet, Biblical students should know firmly that such an idea is an *assumption*. This assumption does not rely upon the absolute truth of Scripture

as its foundation, does not account for the fact that the Hebrew language was used by Shem, Ham, and Japheth before Babel and, therefore, predated all other languages that were subsequently created from it (both S[h]emitic languages and non-Shemitic languages). Rather, it assumes a primitive origin of language and writing, not primitive in time but primitive in nature. Accordingly, this framework portrays the names of the Hebrew alphabet as representing an earlier, unsophisticated stage of development when each letter was not a letter but a crude picture. It is assumed, on the basis of this developmental framework, that the pictures were developed into letters over time.[9]

Many scholars today seek to promote the idea that the alphabet was developed out of pictographs, mirroring the simple-to-complex ascent of evolution. Not only is this idea in error, the error is further compounded by what people do with this error. (All ideas produce their own conclusions.) Many build on the error by seeking to convert each Hebrew letter into a basic pictographic meaning, as if each letter has a whole conceptual meaning that becomes part of the word that it spells. For example, the word שָׁלוֹם. What could its meaning be, if each letter is taken as an entire concept? In this case, the first letter is said to represent "teeth" which in turn represents "destroy"; the second letter is said to have represented a staff in pictographic writing, which in turn represents "authority"; the third letter to represent "nail," which gives birth to the idea of "attach," and the last letter represents "water," which yields the idea of "chaos.[10]" Using this exact through process the word שָׁלוֹם is interpreted as "destroying the authority attached to chaos" in one Hebrew grammar.[11] This erroneous definition is arrived at by building on the false assumption that each letter has

9 Of the resemblance of certain hieroglyphic letters with the Hebrew (S[h]emitic) alphabet, Diringer insightfully wrote, "On the whole it may be said that the Egyptian symbols were so numerous, 604 without the ligatures and numbers, and many of them had some variants, that accidental resemblances to some of them are to be expected." He then went on to add, "Apart from many other considerations, I am unable to believe that if the alphabet had originated in Egypt, the Egyptians would have continued to use—for so many centuries—their old and extremely complicated writing. Furthermore, even if we make all possible allowances for the conservatism of the Egyptians, we still cannot understand why they did not use their own alphabet when, centuries after the introduction of the alphabet, they found it necessary to simplify the hieroglyphic and hieratic scripts. They preferred to create the demotic script, which therefore had no special tradition to bolster it up as had the hieroglyphic and hieratic scripts." *The Alphabet, a key to the history of mankind* by David Diringer p. 196-197 Munshiram Manoharal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. New Dheli, 1996

10 More evolutionary ideas are seen in "water" being equated with "chaos." While God did identify the earliest state of the earth's existence as "waters," these "waters" were in no way "chaotic." Rather, all that God created then and later stood under the submissive order in which He created it.

11 *Hebrew With Joy!* by Joy Carroll, p. 23, 2019 SimkhaPress

a distinct concept that it pictographically inherited. This is akin to assigning a meaning to each of the letters in the English word "hope" and concluding that "hope" means "lying so low that nothing hurts you" in the English language. The subjective, humanistic foundation of this approach should be self-evident to all those who know God.

Even a researcher such as David Diringer stated concerning the letters of the S^{h}emitic alphabet, the parent of all alphabets: "...**there is no clear evidence that the symbols were originally pictographic, that the letter *aleph* was an 'ox's head on its side'; the *beth* a 'house', the *gimel* a 'camel', and so on." He then added, "The adoption of the names was, it seems, an artificial, mnemotechnic device,** similar to those of modern *ABC*-books for children, in which—of course, independently of the form of the letter—*A* stands for 'aoroplane' or 'acorn' or 'apple'; *B* for 'bunny' or 'bee' or 'butterfly'; *C* for 'cat' or 'coat' or 'candy.'"[12]

Since secularity displaced the Word of God as the interpretive framework for knowledge in much of western scholarship, the quest for the origins of the alphabet has been guided by a rejection of the Creator and a rejection of the ancient history of the world as He described it. This secular framework has taken on an appearance of being based strictly upon evidence while, in truth, being based strictly on *secularity*. It's one unchangeable truth is that the Bible is not to be relied upon as the Word of God. Producing ignorance that appears knowledgable is one of its normal outcomes. And the true "advances" of which it boasts are often facts that were known for thousands of years from the Biblical record.

One example of such a fact is the use of the alphabet in Israel at the end of the second millennium (and before). Only after the Gezer calendar was discovered in 1908 in Israel (dated to the 11th or 10th centuries B.C.) did secular scholarship begin acknowledging the use of alphabetic writing in Israel at that time. Yet, the simple fact that David and others structured numerous psalms[13] around the alphabet would have saved the world the destructive years of doubt that it underwent concerning Israel's relationship to the alphabet at

12 *The Story of the Aleph Beth* by David Diringer, p. 39-40 published by Thomas Yoseloff 1960, emphasis added

13 Ps. 9, 10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, 145; Solomon also structured his the wisdom of the virtuous woman around the alphabet (Pro. 31:10-31). Jeremiah did so with his messages in Lamentations (1,2, 3, and 4).

that time, or previous times. It is not the discovery of the warn, untidy writing on this calendar that proves definitively that Israel had the alphabet at that time in history but the Word of God which does so. Yet, to the humanist, that is, to the one who trusts his own heart and mind, whatever he sees with his own eyes is reality, even if he is blind and sees nothing because of it. He refuses to validate what God has spoken. Even if he sees with his dim sight that God has, indeed, described reality as it is, he must find another source of validity for that accurate description. Otherwise, he gives God credit for reality, making God real, making himself dreadfully accountable for both denying Him the glory of His reality and of living in defiance of His design for life.

Of all the places in the world, from which one of them did the alphabet arise? David Diringer's words are worthy of careful attention:

> At any rate, it must be said that the great achievement of the invention [of the alphabet] was not the creation of the *signs*. It lies in the adoption of a purely alphabetic system, which, moreover, denoted each sound by one sign only. For this achievement, simple as it *now* seems to us, the inventor, or the inventors are to be ranked among the greatest benefactors of mankind. No other people in the world has been able to develop a true alphabetic writing. The more or less civilized peoples of Egypt, Mesopotamia, Crete, Asia Minor, Indus Valley, China, Central America, reached an advanced stage in the history of writing, but could not get beyond the transitional stage. A few people (the ancient Cypriotes, the Japanese and others), developed a syllabary. **But only the Syro-Palestinian Semites produced a genius who created the alphabetic writing, from which have descended all past and present alphabets.**
>
> Each civilization would modify its script and time might make its relation to some of its near relatives quite unrecognizable. **Thus, the Brahmi, the great mother-script of India, the Korean alphabet, the Mongolian scripts are derived from the same source as the Greek, the Latin, the Runic, the Hebrew, the Arabic, the Russian alphabets,** although it is practically impossible for a layman to see a real

resemblance between them.[14]

As seen in Diringer's statement, only one alphabet exists in the entire world; all other alphabets are derivations of this original alphabet. *A single original alphabet*. This is the foundational alphabet, the one that is the rock from which all other alphabetic writing has been chipped off. While each people group that adopted it ornamented it in unique ways, each of their writing systems was an adaptation of that original, singular, alphabetic writing system. *It was a gift that they received, yet neglecting to give credit to the Giver.*

While the origin of the alphabet undoubtedly leads back to Adam himself, it unquestionably circumvented the confusion of Babel by its presence among the Godly and faithful men who refused to rebel, such as Noah and Shem. They carried forward this bedrock of written communication, the original and primary alphabet. Even Diringer's finger was outstretched at Shem, stating that the alphabet's source is among the Semitic people. (He used the term "Semitic," which is actually an English spelling of "Shemitic," denoting Shem's lineage. Shem lived approximately 200 years of his life before the confusion of Babel, 200 years under global, Hebrew monolingualism.) Diringer also pointed out the land that God promised to the Hebrews as the source of the alphabet: "Syro-Palestinian."

Nothing is indicated in the account of Babel that God gave a writing system to any of the nations that lost the original language. This would have left the speakers of the new languages at Babel with only three options: go without an alphabet, borrow from the original one and adopt it to their new language, or invent a man-made system of writing (such as pictographic, syllabographic, logographic, etc.). These are the three events observed in the history of languages around the world.

A recent discovery reinforces the Creator's intent that all men might come to know Him through the written revelation of His Word, certainly an aspect of "the light that lighteth every man." It was discovered in late 2020 by researchers

14 *The Alphabet: a key to the history of mankind* by Diringer, p. 216-217, published 1996 by Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi. Bold emphasis mine.

at Ohio State University that an area of the brain is preconditioned, *at birth*, to recognize written letters. This area of the brain is called the "visual word form area" (VWFA). Researchers studied this area of the brain in infants and came to a remarkable discovery. One statement from the lead researcher, Zeynep Saygin, should be read with an emphasis on each word: ""**The VWFA is specialized to see words even before we're exposed to them.**"[15] It is *specialized*... to *see* words. The surprising fact in this case is not that the brain is preconditioned to use or understand words but to ***see*** them. The Creator who "specialized" this area of the brain is the One who gave His Word in written format. This is not a mark of evolution but the glory of the Creator's original design for man, a design unquestionably present from the beginning, from Adam, and present in His brain from his creation and present in the brain of his firstborn son, Cain (קַיִן), *from birth*.

In short, the human body itself unveils the Creator's desire for all men to read. It also intersects with the fact that the discoveries of alphabetic writing continue to push the date of its origin further and further back in human history. Is it any wonder that wherever His messangers go, reading and writing arise? Is it any wonder that "alphabet follows religion" is a epitaph of the history of the alphabet?[16]

How is it that believers have adopted such an upside down view of the history of writing, thinking along with the evolutionist that writing was a later development in history? Just as they have done with the Law of God, they have done with writing. The Law is viewed originating with Moses in the 15th century B.C., although Abraham was keeping God's Laws 500 years before Moses (Gen. 26:5). Even the Laws of clean and unclean animals were known from the most ancient times by God's people. For example, 1,000 years before Moses, Noah was told by God to take a different number of clean animals on the ark than unclean. Further, since even the Gentiles show the work of the Law written in their heart, the Law is part of man's nature, part of the image of God in which he was made.

15 *Humans are born with brains 'prewired' to see words* by Jeff Grabmeier Oct. 22, 2020 https://news.osu.edu/humans-are-born-with-brains-prewired-to-see-words/, accessed 2020-12-30

Thus, man's knowledge of the Law preceded Moses, going back to the original man Adam. Cain did not need Moses to know that killing his brother was wrong. God had given the knowledge of His great and perfect nature from the beginning and that knowledge was and is the Law.

Just as believers have assumed without searching that the Law came into existence with Moses, though it existed in nature from the beginning, so they have assumed that alphabetic writing came into existence at some later, unknown date—after Babel—over two thousand years after creation. Yet, similar to the Law, as far back as man can look, the alphabet is there, either outspoken or hinted at.

While many think of Adam as merely "the first man"—as in "the first of many"—this conception of him is not sufficiently accurate or weighty. God did not merely make Adam as a common human, a first of a series, as in an assembly-line sense. While all fathered humans took on the nature of Adam, none but Christ took on the *position* of Adam, for in creating Adam God gave Adam a position of authority, privilege, and responsibility unparalleled by his descendants, except, again, by Christ. If not for the fall, Adam would have been the human father-of-humanity, present in all subsequent generations, overseeing their development in the wisdom and design of God. Apart from the fall, he would have never taken credit or glory from God, but his dominion would have been one in perfect accord with the transcendent dominion of the Creator Himself. It was for this role of being the founding father of the world and its standing human educator and leader that God built Adam.

Thus, the ruin of Adam was the ruin of all, the loss of correct nature and correct leadership. He died and left the world in that shifting state of ever looking for a head, a guide, a leader to follow, and, to God's great praise, that place has been fulfilled in Christ, the great Head of all mankind!

With the words "let him have dominion over...." God invested in Adam the full privilege and responsibility of overseeing the world and its development under God. And with those words God blessed Adam with all the abilities he would need to fulfill that lofty role. This dominion was eternal until Adam violated God's design, losing his place and its power (Hebrews 2).

Not only was he built for this purpose physically but his intellect was fused with an accurate spiritual comprehension. Thus, God gifted to Adam all things that his role would require of him on earth. Unlike all subsequent generations, Adam's initial knowledge and mindset came from Christ directly, without input by Adam or any other human. His initial knowledge, then, was flawless, for what he knew he knew by God's direct gift.

Thus, Adam was given a role, a position, a function which no other human could fulfill, except truly *another* Adam. As patriarch of the nations, he would set their course, both by giving them his nature but also by giving them his knowledge.

By the time Adam died, among the industries established were metallurgy, animal husbandry, and musicology. Cities were built. Only one generation later, Noah would build a boat the size of a modern ocean-liner that would survive a year of tumultuous tsunamis and seas. Could men do all of these things...but not write? Immediately after Babel humans of all types were not only writing back and forth but had systems in place to translate the writings of other languages.

Concerning Adam, all subsequent humans who would need to be *raised* from helpless infancy to adulthood, but he was fully developed from inception. They would require parental guides and caretakers. They would require humans to minister the wisdom of God to them. Adam, on the other hand, was freely given the complete measure of wisdom he needed to fulfill every function God had committed to him on earth. Again, all that he knew initially, he knew accurately, because the entirety of his knowledge was given him by God.

Due to his singular role, Adam had a need to write in order to teach this skill to mankind accurately, as well as to disseminate the truth far and wide among humanity. (With or without the fall this need existed.) Even before the fall, that is, even in a perfect state, God designed man to need information, to need to be taught the truth. How much more after the fall?! (Such as to correct the errors of his son Cain and the unGodly civilization which he started.)

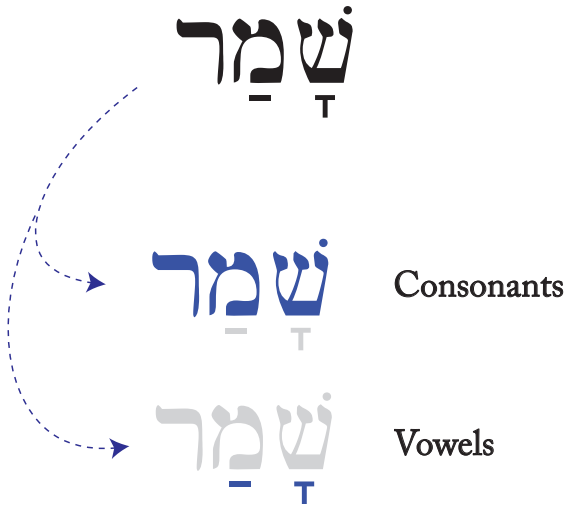
While many other points have been left out that show the early existence of the alphabet, the above points are sufficient for a brief introduction to this fact.

CHAPTER 1

Consonantal Alphabet and Vowels

Section Overview

- Consonantal Alphabet
- Vowels



1.1 § The Hebrew Alphabet

א	Aleph	אָלֶף	Always silent, sometimes a glottal stop, as “a” in “apple” can be
ב	Beth	בֵּת	English “b” or “v” (pronounced with the lips instead of the teeth)
ג	Gimel	גִּימֶל	English “g” or “gh” (light “g” sound)
ד	Daleth	דָּלֶת	English “d”
ה	Hey	הֵי	English “h”
ו	Waw	וָו	English “w” (not “v”)
ז	Zayin	זַיִן	English “z”
ח	Hketh	חֵית	Same as “ה” above, except the back of the tongue closes roughly and briefly
ט	Teth	טֵית	English “t”
י	Yod	יוֹד	English “y”
כ	Kaph	כָּף	English “k” or “kh” (softer “k”)
ך	Kaph final	כָּף	English “k” or “kh” (softer “k”)
ל	Lamed	לָמֶד	English “l”
מ	Mem	מֵם	English “m”
ם	Mem final	מֵם	English "m"
נ	Nun	נוּן	English "n"
ן	Nun final	נוּן	Engish "n"
ס	Samek	סָמֶךְ	English "s"
ע	Ayin	עַיִן	Slight closure of the throat, as in the "nc" sound in "unction" but slight further back
פ	Pe	פֵּא	English "p" and "ph"
ף	Pe final	פֵּא	English "p" and "ph"
צ	Tsade	צָדִי	English "ts" combination, as in "pits"
ץ	Tsade final	צָדִי	English "ts" combination, as in "pits"
ק	Qoph	קוֹף	Hard "q," as in "Iraq"
ר	Resh	רֵישׁ	Pronounced in the back of the mouth (upper throat), similar to a Russian "r"
שׁ	Sin	שִׁין	English "s"
שׂ	Shin	שִׂין	English "sh"
ת	Taw	תָּו	English "t" or "th"

* Letters in red are the final form, the shape the letter takes when at the end of a word

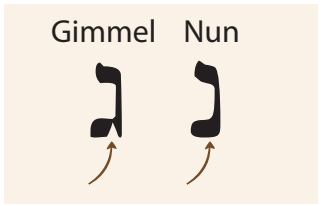
Proverbs 31:10-31

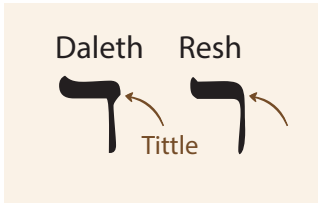
Alphabetic Structure in Hebrew

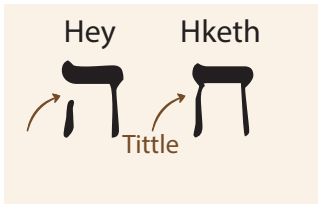
א	10	אֵשֶׁת־חַיִל מִי יִמְצָא וְרָחֹק מִפְּנִינִים מִכְרָהּ׃
ב	11	בָּטַח בָּהּ לֵב בַּעְלָהּ וְשָׁלָל לֹא יֶחְסָר׃
ג	12	גְּמָלַתְהוּ טוֹב וְלֹא־רָע כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיהָ׃
ד	13	דָּרְשָׁה צֶמֶר וּפִשְׁתִּים וַתַּעַשׂ בְּחֵפֶץ כַּפֶּיהָ׃
ה	14	הָיְתָה כָּאֳנִיּוֹת סוֹחֵר מִמֶּרְחָק תָּבִיא לַחְמָהּ׃
ו	15	וַתָּקָם	בְּעוֹד לַיְלָה וַתִּתֵּן טֶרֶף לְבֵיתָהּ וְחֹק לְנַעֲרֹתֶיהָ׃
ז	16	זָמְמָה שָׂדֶה וַתִּקָּחֵהוּ מִפְּרִי כַפֶּיהָ נָטַע [נָטְעָה] כָּרֶם׃
ח	17	חָגְרָה בְעוֹז מָתְנֶיהָ וַתְּאַמֵּץ זְרוֹעוֹתֶיהָ׃
ט	18	טָעֲמָה כִּי־טוֹב סַחְרָהּ לֹא־יִכְבֶּה בַלַּיְלָה [בַּ][לַּיְלָה] נֵרָהּ׃
י	19	יָדֶיהָ שִׁלְּחָה בַכִּישׁוֹר וְכַפֶּיהָ תָּמְכוּ פָלֶךְ׃
כ	20	כַּפָּהּ פָּרְשָׂה לֶעָנִי וְיָדֶיהָ שִׁלְּחָה לָאֶבְיוֹן׃
ל	21	לֹא־תִירָא לְבֵיתָהּ מִשָּׁלֶג כִּי כָל־בֵּיתָהּ לָבֻשׁ שָׁנִים׃
מ	22	מַרְבַדִּים עָשְׂתָה־לָּהּ שֵׁשׁ וְאַרְגָּמָן לְבוּשָׁהּ׃
נ	23	נוֹדָע בַּשְּׁעָרִים בַּעְלָהּ בְּשִׁבְתּוֹ עִם־זִקְנֵי־אָרֶץ׃
ס	24	סָדִין עָשְׂתָה וַתִּמְכֹּר וַחֲגוֹר נָתְנָה לַכְּנַעֲנִי׃
ע	25	עֹז־וְהָדָר לְבוּשָׁהּ וַתִּשְׂחַק לְיוֹם אַחֲרוֹן׃
פ	26	פִּיהָ פָּתְחָה בְחָכְמָה וְתוֹרַת־חֶסֶד עַל־לְשׁוֹנָהּ׃
צ	27	צוֹפִיָּה הֲלִיכוֹת בֵּיתָהּ וְלֶחֶם עַצְלוּת לֹא תֹאכֵל׃
ק	28	קָמוּ בָנֶיהָ וַיְאַשְּׁרוּהָ בַּעְלָהּ וַיְהַלְלָהּ׃
ר	29	רַבּוֹת בָּנוֹת עָשׂוּ חָיִל וְאַתְּ עָלִית עַל־כֻּלָּנָה׃
ש	30	שֶׁקֶר הַחֵן וְהֶבֶל הַיֹּפִי אִשָּׁה יִרְאַת־יְהוָה הִיא תִתְהַלָּל׃
ת	31	תְּנוּ־לָהּ מִפְּרִי יָדֶיהָ וִיהַלְלוּהָ בַשְּׁעָרִים מַעֲשֶׂיהָ׃

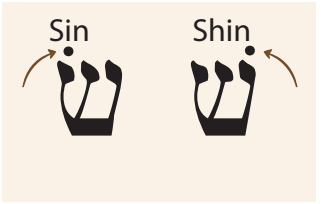
1.2 § Letters Easily Confused

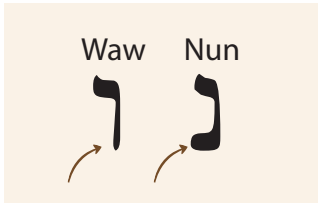
The following chart highlights letters that are often confused by beginning Hebrew students:

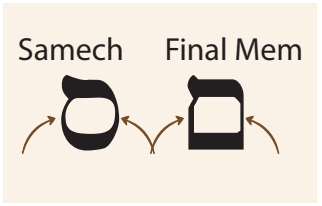


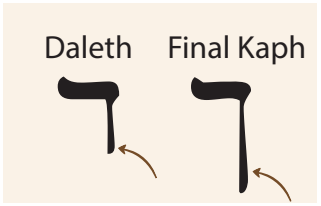


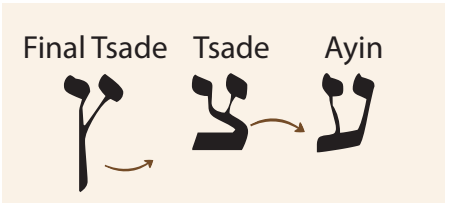












1.3 § Final Form Letters

Five Hebrew letters have a "final form." Their form changes when they are at the end of a word. For example, the letter נ becomes ן at the end of a word. Consider this Hebrew verb: נָתַן - both the first and last letters of this word are nun's. The Hebrew language contains the following 5 letters that take a final form at the end of a word:

mem	מ	⟶	ם
pe	פ	⟶	ף
tsade	צ	⟶	ץ
kaph	כ	⟶	ך
nun	נ	⟶	ן

All final forms

דזוהום

1.4 § בְּגַד כְּפַת Letters

Six letters, called the *begad kephath* בְּגַד כְּפַת letters, are grouped together, for they are unique, having both a soft and hard pronunciation. This group of letters is made up of beth, gimmel, daleth, kaph, pe, tau - ב ג ד כ פ ת. To remember and refer to these letters, they are simply read as if they were a single word: בְּגַד כְּפַת (pronounced *b'gad k'phath*). The בְּגַד כְּפַת letters with a dot in them, called a *daghesh* lene (דָּגֵשׁ קַל)[17] are hard. Thus, בּ would be pronounced as a "b" sound, while ב, without the *daghesh* lene (דָּגֵשׁ קַל), would be pronounced as a soft "b", basically becoming an English "v." Thus, the following letters are pronounced with the hard pronunciation: בּ גּ דּ כּ פּ תּ. These are the only letters that can take a *daghesh* lene (דָּגֵשׁ קַל), the effect of which is, again, to indicate that the letter is hard. The בְּגַד כְּפַת letters with their respective pronunciations:

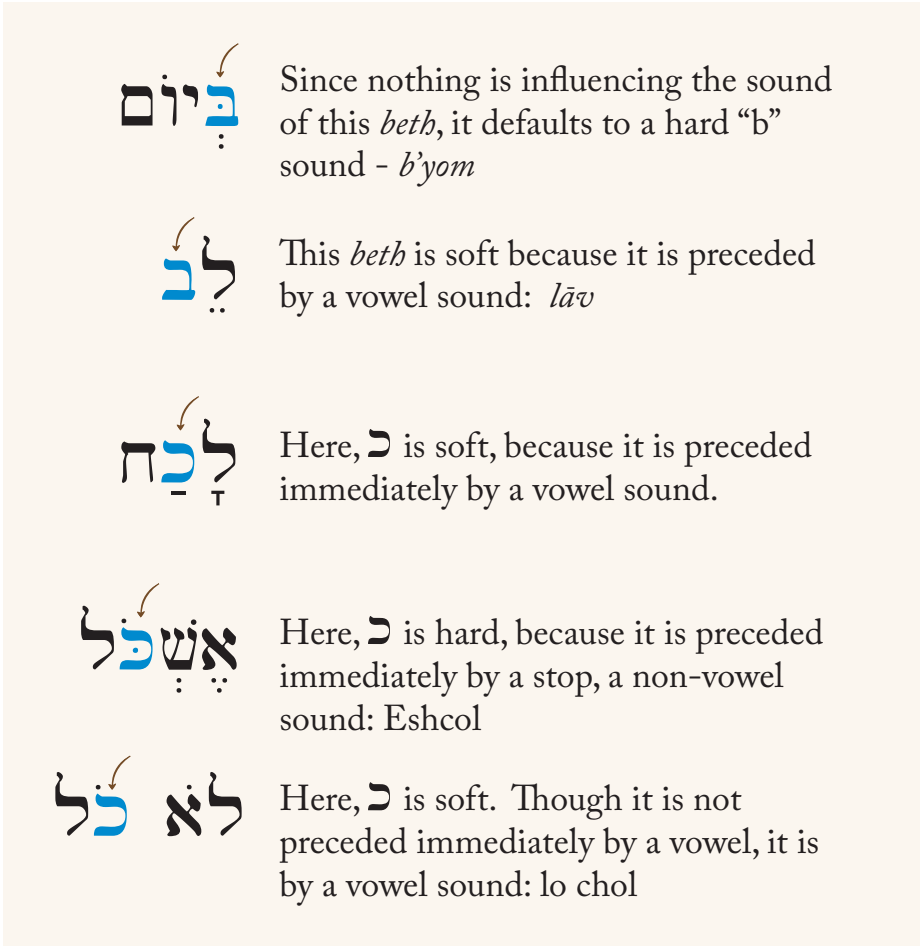
17 דָּגֵשׁ means "piercing" and דָּגֵשׁ קַל means "light [not heavy] piercing")

בּ	"b"	ב	"v"	Pronounced with the two lips
גּ	"g"	ג	"gh"	Pronounced as a "g" but with air allowed to flow, creating a soft "gh" sound
דּ	"d"	ד	"d"	Pronounced "dh," by slightly flattening the front of the tongue on the roof of the mouth just behind the front teeth
כּ	"k"	כ	"kh"	(a "k" that does not fully close)
פּ	"p"	פ	"ph"	English "ph" sound, but pronounced with both lips touching
תּ	"t"	ת	"th"	"th" as in the English word "the"

Rule for softening of a בְּגַד כְּפַת letter:

Now, the question comes, when is a בְּגַד כְּפַת letter hard and when is it soft? A letter is normally hard, unless it is affected by a preceding sound, namely, a vowel sound. If the last sound pronounced was a vowel sound (which is a soft sound), a בְּגַד כְּפַת letter will also be soft. **Thus, the בְּגַד כְּפַת letters have the characteristic of blending in with vowel sounds that immediately precede them.**[18]

18 The two vertical dots under the shin in the 4th example (Eschol) are called a "*sh'wa*" and will be learned in the following lessons



1.5 § The Hebrew Vowel System

Vowels in the Hebrew writing system were communicated by a designed set of points and lines situated around the consonants. None of the early manuscripts in existence (pre-A.D. 300) contain the vowel points, including the 3rd-5th century Ain Gedi Leviticus scroll with its astonishing story of recovery in recent

times. Yet, this fact by itself does not negate the existence of the presence of the written vowel points even from the earliest times. It is enough to say that the Jews and Christians all the way up until the 16th century unanimously held to the vowel points being original and not a later invention.

Israel, with its immense, golden temple complex around which Christ gave much of His revelation in word and deed as a man, was destroyed in a tumultuous war with the Romans, ending in 70 A.D. The hardened Jews were exiled from their promised land. (Money and humans captured in Jerusalem were used by the Romans to build the Roman Colosseum, which stands to this day as a testimony of what God said would happen to the Jews if they departed from His blessing and protection, e.g., Dt. 28-31)

Approximately two generations later, the Jews returned in ferocious anger, waging a war that became known as the "Bar Kokhba Revolt" (A.D. 132-136). Bar Kokhba exalted himself as the Messiah, the Christ, and led a haughty-headed rebellion against Rome in which the Jews expertly used complex tunnel systems to appear, strike, and disappear. The Romans faced unusual difficulty in overcoming them. Yet, without God's help, the courage, stamina, and military wisdom of the Jews only turned to their greater hurt, ending in 580,000 Jews being slaughtered (with untold numbers dying of starvation and disease) or enslaved and the nation entombed in an exile that would surpass all others. This tragedy sealed the beginning of 1800 years of fear and turmoil. Every word of God's solemn and gracious warnings in Leviticus 26:14-46 (1446 B.C.) and Deuteronomy 28-32 (1406 B.C.) were fulfilled in these intervening years after they rejected their Creator, beginning with the summary words in Deuteronomy, "Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out" (28:19 in Hebrew) and ending with the haunting announcement that they would not even be desired as slaves by the other nations: "...and no man

shall buy you" (28:68).

 [19]

View from Bar-Kokhba's Cave hideout

As the Jews plodded into hundreds of years of national exile and faced such unprecedented struggles for survival, the tongue of the Jews began to blend with the tongues of their host nations. The precious Hebrew language became a book-langauge, largely drying out from the mouths of the common speakers. In the midst of this, the Jews continued to firmly do one thing God had committed to them to do: ensure the reliable transfer of the text of the Old Testament to subsequent generations. During the second half of the first millinum, Jewish scribal masters—known as Massoretes, בעלי המסורה—documented with exacting precision both the consonants and the vowels of each word in the Text.

The following chart documents the vowel system that is the conventional system for faithfully preserving the vowels of the Text:

19 CC0 Attribution-ShareAlike International license: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Cave_of_Letters_(2).jpg

Vowel Signs

	Short				Long			
A class	בַ	pathaq	פַּתַח	*a* as "at"	בָ	qamets	קָמֵץ	*ä* as "all"
E class	בֶ	segol	סְגוֹל	*e* as "edit"	בֵ בֶי	sere/sere yod	צֵירֵי	*ā* as "eight"
I class	בִ	hiriq	חִירִיק	*i* as "it"	בִי	hireq yod	חִירִיק יוֹד	i and y blend to *ē* as "meet"
O class	בָ	qamets hatuph	קָמֵץ חָטוּף	"o" in "october"	בֹ בוֹ	holem waw (ו) holem	חוֹלֶם	*ō* as "october"
U class	בֻ	qabuts	קִבּוּץ	*ů* as "put"	בוּ	shuriq	שׁוּרֶק	*ü* as "chute"

Each of these basic vowels have a short and a long form. Some of these vowels become blended and, therefore, combined with consonants, such as *hireq yod* or *holem waw*, as seen above. Other vowel-consonant combinations often include *hey* and *yod* due to the weak sound of these consonants.

Vowel-Consonant Blends	Description
הָ | הֶ | הֵ | הִ	in each of these cases the *hey* is silent.

יִ | יֵ | יְ in each of these cases the *yod* becomes part of the sound of the vowel preceding it.

The pronunciation of each of the above blends essentially follows that of the vowel, with only slight influence—if any—coming from the consonant. The reason should be clear: *hey* is a weak letter that naturally blends with the vowel that precedes it, just as the "h" in the word "shah" in English loses its distinct sound and blends with the vowel that precedes it (same as the last "h" in "ooh" or "hah" or "hurrah").

Thus, ***whenever hey closes a syllable (see section on "Syllables"), it is silent.*** Likewise, *yod* is a weak letter whose sound naturally blends with the vowels that precede it. So, for example, the vowel *sere* (ֵ) and the vowel *sere-yod* (ֵי) give the same sound. The combination *hiriq-yod* (ִי), however, yields a long "e" sound, as in "feet."

Some of the vowel letters in the basic vowel chart above have a fuller form and a reduced form.[20] This is seen in the long "o" vowel, the *holem*. Several Hebrew long vowels could also be written in an abbreviated form (reduced form). For example, the reduced form of the *holem-waw* is the *holem*. At times the *holem* takes a *waw* (*holem-waw*) and at times it is written without the *waw*. In both cases, the value and pronunciation are the same. The following word is a Hebrew negator ("no" or "not") and illustrates the full and reduced forms of the *holem*: לֹוא and לֹא. In both cases it is pronounced "lō" and in both cases it means "no" or "not."

Long Vowels and Their Reduced Forms

20 The reduced form is mistermed "defective form" or "defective writing" in many grammars

וּ (*shuriq*) becomes ֻ (*qabbuts*)

וֹ (*holem waw*) becomes ֹ (*holem*)

יִ (*hiriq yod*) becomes ִ (*hiriq*)

Now, to avoid confusion, how is a וּ with a *dagesh* (וּ) distinguished from a *shuriq* (וּ)? They are identical in form. The difference will be known from the fact that **when this form is actually a *waw*, it will have its own vowel or a *sh'wa*** (see section on *sh'was*). When acting as a consonant, it will be pronounced with the regular *waw* pronunciation.

***Some examples of* waw *consonants that look like the vowel* shurriq**

צָוָּה - has its own vowel

קִוּוּ - has its own vowel (a *shurriq*)

יְעַוֵּת - has its own vowel

שַׁוְעִי - has a *sh'wa* (and the consonant before it has its own vowel)

שִׁוִּיתִי - has its own vowel

Now, another matter of confusion is the visually-identical *qamets* (long "a") and the *qamets hkatuph* (short "o") . How to distinguish between them will be learned in the section covering syllables.

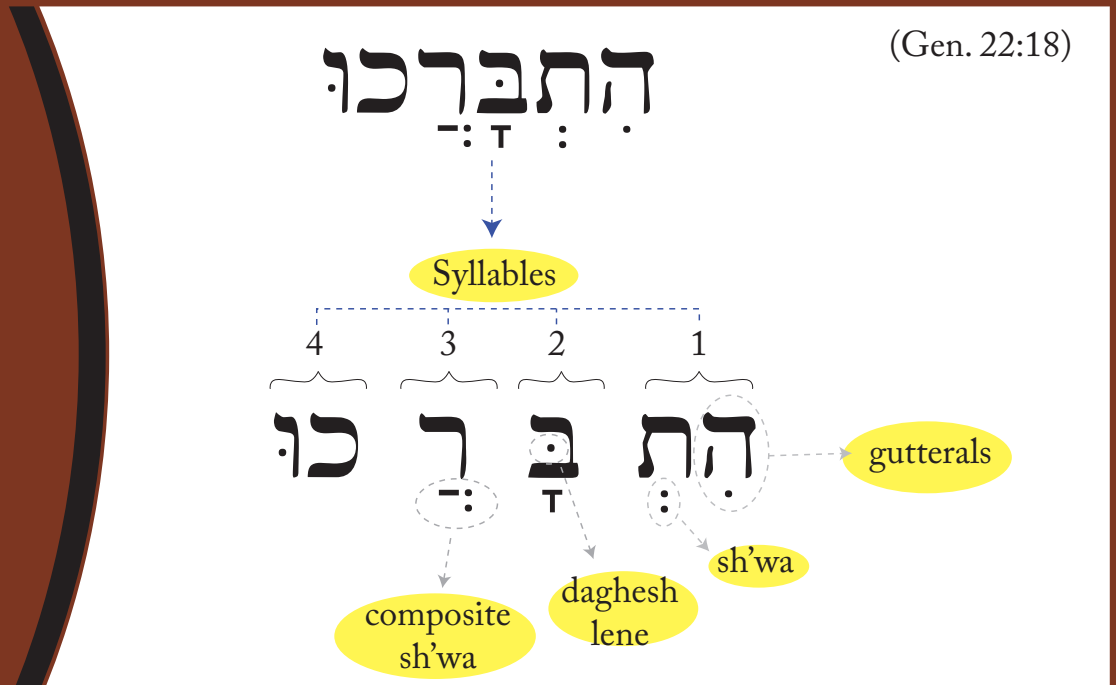
One other minor point: when *sin* is followed by a *holem*, the dot from the *sin* sometimes combines with the *holem*: שׂ = שׁ + ֹ

CHAPTER 2

Breaking Down Words

Section Overview

- Syllables
- Daghesh Forte
- Gutterals
- Sh'wa
- Composite Sh'wa



2.1 § Syllables

All of these are consonants

All of these are vowels

The combination of these in specific arrangements produces words

Each word is made up of syllables, specific groups of consonants and vowels

Each vowel marks a syllable. To count the syllables in a Hebrew word, simply count the vowels.

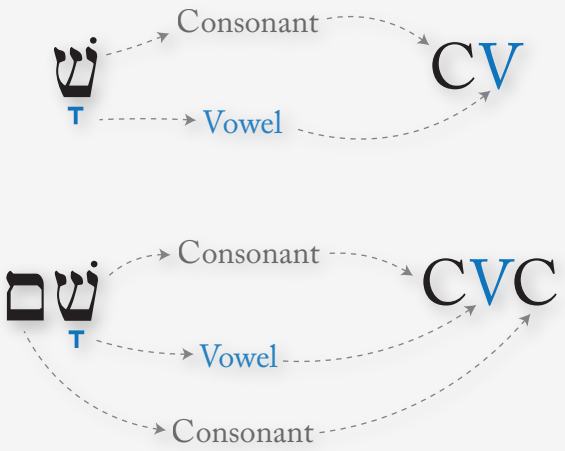
The first syllable is an open syllable

The second syllable is a closed syllable because the mem closes it.

A word does not have to end in a consonant (closed syllable). It can end in a vowel (open syllable).

Now, when the consonants are represented by the letter **C** and vowels by the letter **V**, the Hebrew consonant-vowel pattern can be represented by the following two groupings: CV or CVC

Examples



In summary

1. **There are only as many syllables in a word as there are vowels and vocal *sh'was*** (See "The Simple

Sh'wa" below)

2. **Two syllable options:** *Open* **and** *Closed*

3. **Every syllable begins with a consonant**

4. **If a syllable *ends* in a consonant, it is *closed*.**
   If a syllable *ends* in a vowel, it is *open*.

These syllables are represented as CVC or CV. (C stands for consonant and V for vowel.) Thus, CVC represents a closed syallable and CV represents an open syllable.

5. **A closed, unaccented syllable must have a short vowel**

This last rule explains how to tell the difference between a *qamets* and a *qamets hkatuph*. Only a *qamets hkatuph* (short vowel) can stand in closed, unaccented syllable. So, in the following case, the *qamets* under the *aleph* is a *qamets hkatuph*: אָכְלָה (the first syllable of the word is closed and unaccented).

6. Finer rules that are not necessary to learn at this time are included in the footnote below.[21]

2.2 § Daghesh Forte (דָּגֵשׁ חָזָק)

To review, the *daghesh* lene (דָּגֵשׁ קַל) only occurs in a בְּגַד כְּפַת letter. Its function is to show that the pronunciation of its letter is hard (its default state), such as the *beth* in בַּעַל (the word meaning "owner" or "husband" and the

21 A word may end in an open or closed syllable, as represented by these two words: שָׁם ("there") and שִׁמְךָ ("the Name of you" Ps. 83:19 in Hebrew)
A closed, accented syllable may have either a long or short vowel but ***prefers*** a long vowel
An *open* syllable *immediately before* the accented syllable ***requires*** a long vowel
In other cases, an *open, accented* syllable ***prefers*** a short vowel

name of the false god "Baal").

Another *daghesh* (דָּגֵשׁ) also exists in Hebrew and appears identical to the *daghesh* lene (דָּגֵשׁ קַל). The other *daghesh* (דָּגֵשׁ) is a *daghesh* forte (דָּגֵשׁ חָזָק). This *daghesh* doubles the letter in which it is found.

Daghesh lene (דָּגֵשׁ קַל)	- hardens
Daghesh forte (דָּגֵשׁ חָזָק)	- doubles

How are they distinguished, since they look identical? By the following two rules:

- A *daghesh* lene (דָּגֵשׁ קַל) only occurs in a בְּגַד כְּפַת letter.
- If a *daghesh* (דָּגֵשׁ) follows a vowel or vowel sound, it must be a *daghesh* forte (דָּגֵשׁ חָזָק).

A *daghesh* forte (דָּגֵשׁ חָזָק) can occur in a בְּגַד כְּפַת letter, so the first rule is not sufficient by itself to determine whether a *daghesh* is lene or forte. The second rule helps identify a *daghesh* forte (דָּגֵשׁ חָזָק) when it occurs in a בְּגַד כְּפַת letter.

NOTE: The student should take a *daghesh* as a *lene* unless it is not in a בְּגַד כְּפַת letter or it is in one but preceded by a vowel or vowel sound.

Consider the following example. How can you be certain that this *daghesh* is not the *daghesh* lene (דָּגֵשׁ קַל)?

לְ

The daghesh in the *lamed* is not a *daghesh* lene (דָּגֵשׁ קַל) because the *daghesh* lene (דָּגֵשׁ קַל) only occurs in בְּגַד כְּפַת letters. *Lamed* is **not** one of the בְּגַד כְּפַת letters.

The letter לּ, with a *daghesh* forte (דָּגֵשׁ חָזָק), is, in fact, two letters: לל.

לּ = לל

Again, this *daghesh* cannot be a *daghesh lene* (דָּגֵשׁ קַל), because it is not in a בְּגַד כְּפַת letter. **Yet, a *daghesh* forte (דָּגֵשׁ חָזָק) can occur in a בְּגַד כְּפַת letter.** In that case, how is the difference between them known? By the simple rule of the בְּגַד כְּפַת letters: ***daghesh lene*** (דָּגֵשׁ קַל) **will not follow a soft (vowel) sound.** Consider the *daghesh* in the following word:

יְקַדֵּשׁ

The *daghesh* must be a *daghesh* forte (דָּגֵשׁ חָזָק), although it is in a בְּגַד כְּפַת letter (i.e., a *daleth*), for it follows the soft sound of the *pathaq*. *Dagesh lene's* (דָּגֵשׁ קַל) do not follow soft (vowel) sounds.

2.3 § Gutturals

A guttural is a consonant that is pronounced toward or in the throat. Due to the way they are pronounced, the gutturals introduce a large number of alterations to normal vowel patterns. These alterations will be learned along the way.

Four gutturals exist in Hebrew (א ה ח ע - *aleph, hey, hketh, ayen*). One other

consonant (ר - *resh*) regularly takes on characteristics like a guttural.[22]

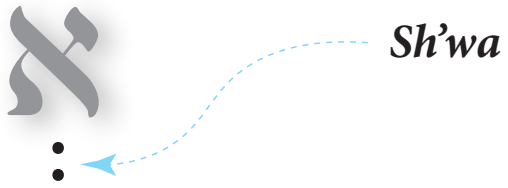
Gutterals

ר + אהחע

Characteristics of the gutturals

- Cannot take a דָּגֵשׁ (forte or lene)
- Prefer *pathaq* under and before them
- Cannot take a simple vocal *sh'wa* (see next section); rather, they take composite *sh'was* (see below) when a vocal *sh'wa* is needed.

2.4 § The Simple *Sh'wa*



22 This is due to the way the *resh* is formed in the mouth, tending to have guttural characteristics by involving the back of the tongue in pronunciation, rather than the front of the tongue as the English "r" does.

The *sh'wa* « אְ is the symbol under the above *aleph*: two vertically-placed dots below a consonant.

There are two uses of this *sh'wa* (אְ):

1. **Vocal**
2. **Silent**

The vocal *sh'wa* has vowel characteristics and is classified as a vowel in syllabification (since it phonetically functions as one).

The following rules distinguish when a *sh'wa* is silent and when it is vocal.

1. **If a *sh'wa* is preceded by a long vowel...or preceded by no vowel at all, it will always be vocal.**
2. **Thus, the *sh'wa* is always vocal when starting a syllable, e.g., לְסוּס ("*lᵉsūs*")**
3. **The *sh'wa* is always silent when closing a syllable, e.g., בִּלְ ("*bil*")**

Summary rule for distinguishing vocal and silent sh'was:

The only case in which the *sh'wa* (אְ) is silent is
when it is immediately preceded by a short vowel.

Otherwise, it is always vocal.

Concerning vocal *sh'was*, this is a foundational rule:

Two vocal *sh'was* (אְ) cannot stand together (see the following point for

details)

The resolution for two vocal *sh'was* (שְׁוָא) standing together is the following: the first vocal *sh'wa* becomes a *hiriq*.

So, in a situation such as this one—בְּדְגָה—the first vocal *sh'wa* resolves to the nearest short vowel (in this case a *hiriq*), forming this: בִּדְגָה

2.5 § The Composite *Sh'wa*

A composite שְׁוָא is a composite of a short vowel and a vocal שְׁוָא. Composite *sh'was* are also called *hkateph* vowels. The word *Hkateph* (חָטֵף) was associated with snatching away and, by derivation, hurrying away; the composite *sh'was* are hurried versions of their respective vowels. The three types of composite *sh'wa's* are:

Composite *Sh'was*

hkateph pathaq

hkateph seghol

hkateph qamets

The composite *sh'was* are, on the one hand, *sh'was* and, on the other, hurried

vowels.

While gutturals (אהחע) can take a regular silent *sh'wa*, they cannot take a simple vocal *sh'wa*. When they need a vocal *sh'wa* they replace a vocal *sh'wa* with a composite *sh'wa*. So, any time a vocal *sh'wa* falls under a guttural, it becomes a composite *sh'wa*. **Thus, the composite *sh'was* are the vocal *sh'was* for the gutturals.**

Note: composite *sh'was* are most often used with gutturals, but they are not limited to gutturals.

EXAMPLES

אִשָּׁר - Notice that the simple *sh'wa* under the *aleph* is a vocal *sh'wa*, because it is not preceded by a short vowel. Since it is a vocal *sh'wa* on a guttural (אהחע), the word would be אַשָּׁר instead, with a composite *sh'wa* instead of a simple one.

Likewise, in the word אֱלֹהִים, the first letter is a guttural. Since the *sh'wa* is starting a syllable, it is a vocal *sh'wa* and must convert to a composite *sh'wa*: אֱלֹהִים

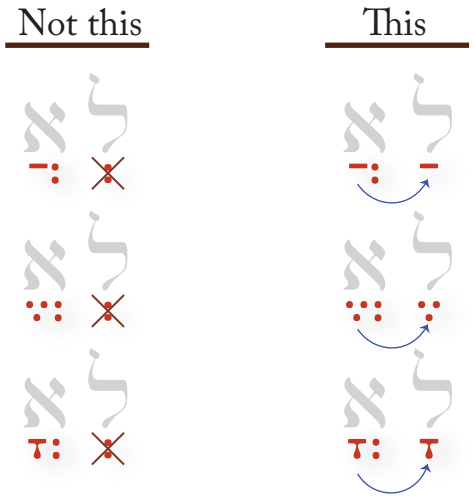
Now, an easy rule exists for the situation when a composite *sh'wa* is next to a vocal *sh'wa*. (Back to the rule "two vocal *sh'was* cannot stand together")

A vocal *sh'wa* followed by a composite *sh'wa* falls under the rule that "two vocal *sh'was* cannot stand together."

לֶאֱמֶת

two vocal sh'was standing together

The simple *sh'wa* followed by a composite *sh'wa*. This situation is the equivalent of two vocal sh'was standing together. **The resolution is that the first *sh'wa* mirrors the vowel of the second *sh'wa*.** For example:



The rule "two vocal *sh'was* cannot stand together" worked out in an actual word:

The word אֱמֶת is the Hebrew word for *that which is firm* (often translated with the English word "truth"). Notice that the pointing of the *aleph* is a composite *sh'wa* (*hkateph segholl*). When a *waw* conjunction is joined to it, the word takes on the following form: וֶאֱמֶת Since two vocal *sh'was* are standing together, the first

one takes on the corresponding short vowel to the composite *sh'wa*, which is *seghol* in this case. The word then become וֶאֱמֶת

Noteworthy "exceptions" and additional information to the *sh'wa* rules:

A. לְאֱלֹהִים to לֵאלֹהִים etc.

The word אֱלֹהִים begins with a composite *sh'wa* (which is also a vocal *sh'wa*). When a prefixed preposition, such as *lamed* (לְ) is joined to it, two vocal *sh'was* stand together, like this:

The normal resolution would produce the following: לֶאֱלֹהִים But this does not occur in this case. Rather, this form resolves to this: לֵאלֹהִים (*lelohim*). This is due to the presence of the *aleph* (a "quiescent" letter) which is a letter that loses its voiced (phonetic) value entirely at times by losing its vowel. This causes the preceding syllable to compensate for this loss by lengthening from a *seghol* (short "E class" vowel) to *sere* (long "E class" vowel). So, this is not an "exception" to the above rules but an interplay of several rules (normal "exception").

The same applies to אֱלֹהִים with the other prepositions in Hebrew that attach to the word.

לֵאלֹהִים ← לְ
בֵּאלֹהִים ← בְּ
כֵּאלֹהִים ← כְּ

B. לִירִיחוֹ to לִירִיחוֹ

When the *lamed* preposition is added to the word יְרִיחוֹ ("Jericho"), it becomes לִיְרִיחוֹ but instead of resolving to the expected לִירִיחוֹ it resolves to לִירִיחוֹ. (Another common example is יְהוּדָה ("Judah") which becomes לִיהוּדָה and בִּיהוּדָה etc.) The same applies to the *min* preposition (מִן - "from") when it is attached to a word that begins with a *yod*, such as יְרִיחוֹ. It becomes מִירִיחוֹ. This is easily understandable due to the attraction of the *hiriq* and *yod* (forming the long vowel *hiriq-yod*). This is the case whenever two *sh'was* stand together and the second *sh'wa* is accompanied by a *yod*, like this:

C. The LORD's Name (יְהוָה), instead of לִיְהוָה or לִיהוָה becomes לַיהוָה

|| READING PRACTICE

First, attempt to carefully read each of the following words from the list; then click the icon next to the arrow to hear each word pronounced. All words are accented on the last syllable, unless indicated otherwise by the following sign: ֯

סוּס	1	רוּץ	11
הַסּוּס	2	אֱמוּנָה	12
כּוֹל	3	שֵׁשׁ	13
מִן כּוֹל	4	טוֹב	14
בֵּן	5	אֶֽרֶץ	15
בֶּן	6	אוֹר	16
מֶֽלֶךְ	7	הָיָה	17
הַמֶּֽלֶךְ	8	כְּפַר	18
לֵב	9		
הַלֵּב	10		

2.6 § Accents[23]

The majority of Hebrew words are accented (stressed) toward the end of the

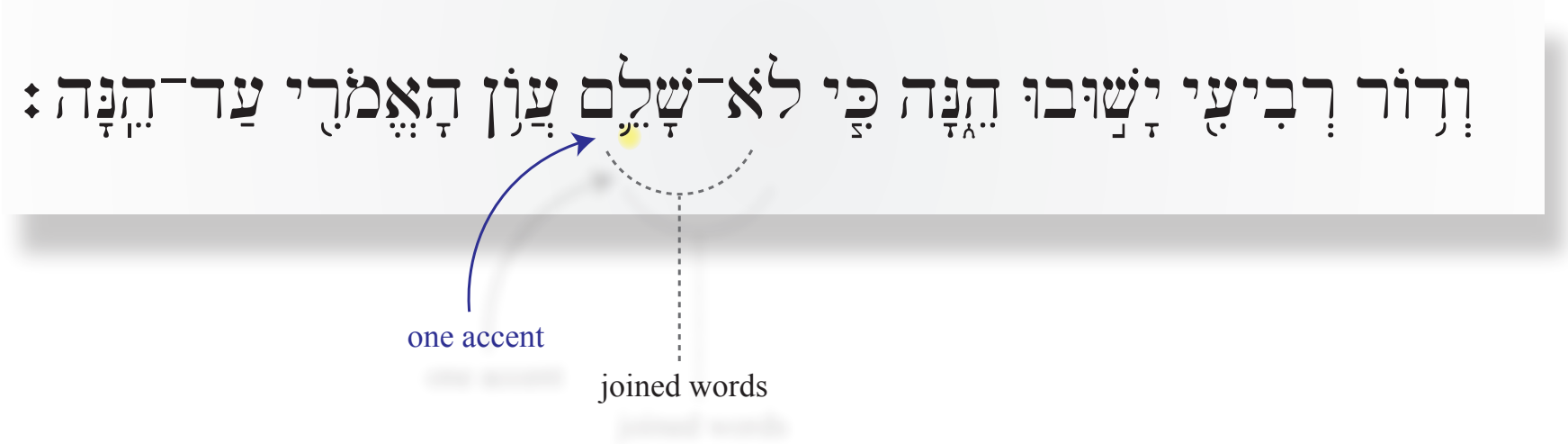
23 Accents are either טְעָמִים (lit. "tastes") or נְגִינוֹת (lit. "melodies," potentially "melodies for strings") in Hebrew

word. The accent of each word is marked in Hebrew by a series of varying marks that will be identified by the beginning student simply by their non-vowel shapes.

Accent marks of Genesis 15:16 highlighted:

וְדוֹר רְבִיעִי יָשֻׁבוּ הֵנָּה כִּי לֹא־שָׁלֵם עֲוֹן הָאֱמֹרִי עַד־הֵנָּה׃

Each word will have at least one main accent or stress mark indicating where the voice is to place the main stress while reading it. (A longer word may have secondary accents as well.) Note that joined words only have one major accent; therefore, not each word in the joined series will have an accent mark, as seen here:



Accent marks in Hebrew have more meaning than merely marking the accent, as each type of accent contributes analytical information to the text, marking syntactical relationships in accord with how the Jews understood and interpreted the text traditionally. The important accents for the beginner to understand are the *athnaq*, *siluq*, and *sof-pasuq*.

Athnaq: The *athnaq* divides the sentence at its **logical** middle and is shaped like a small, upside down "v," as seen here: ֢

Siluq: the *siluq* is a small vertical line (֥) marking the last word of the sentence.

Sof-pasuq: The *sof-pasuq* (׃) marks the end of the sentence. *Sof* equals "end," just as the shape of letters when they end a word ("final form") are called סוֹפִית.

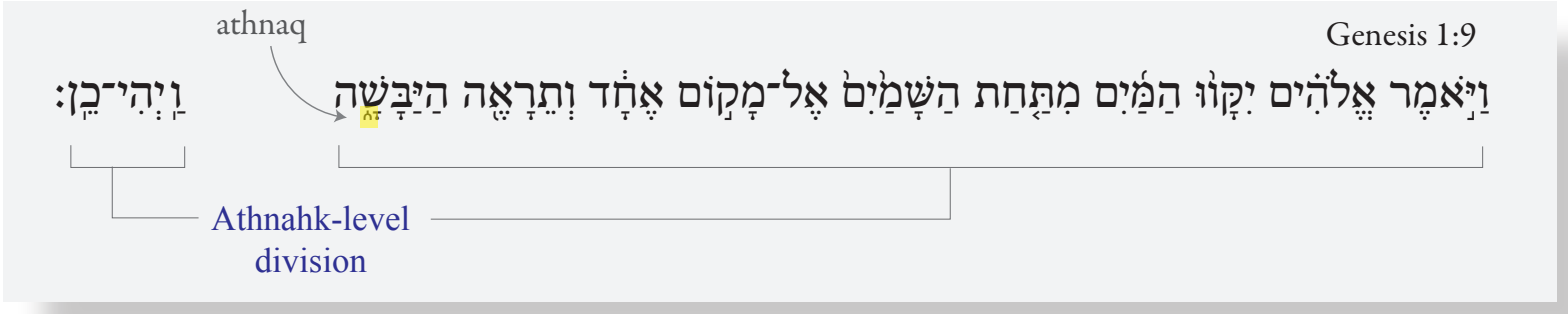
An aid to memory is that **A**thnaq comes before **S**iluq in the sentence, just as **A** comes before **S** in English.

The position of stress can distinguish certain words one from another, such as בָּנֽוּ and בָּנוּ. The first (בָּנֽוּ) means "they built" (from בָּנָה) and the second (בָּנוּ) means "in us," though such distinctions are fairly rare.

The various accent marks are broken into two groupings: *disjunctive* and *conjunctive*, either indicating a conjunction in grammar or a break in it. For example, the *athnaq* is a disjunctive accent, breaking the sentence at its logical middle.

The three positions an accent may fall into are the following: **tonic ("tone-ic"), pretonic (before the tone), and propretonic (before the syllable that is before the tone).** Since Hebrew words are normally accented on the last syllable, the tonic syllable is the last syllable.

As seen in Genesis 1:9, the logical middle (marked by the *athnaq*) can be far from the *actual* middle of the verse:



Vowels in Pause

Accents have a large affect on vowels, changing short vowels to long vowels and long vowels to short vowels, ***but almost always according to known patterns***. The

major accent marks place their syllable in "pause," which simply means that the vowel is held out ("stressed"). That is, by accenting that syllable, the vowel of the syllable is lengthened in pronunciation and, therefore, changed to a long vowel in writing. **When a short vowel is in "pause," as a rule, it becomes long.**[24] Examples: מַ֫יִם ("water"[25]) becomes מָ֫יִם in pause; לַ֫יְלָה ("night") becomes לָ֫יְלָה in pause, הֶ֫בֶל ("Abel") becomes הָ֫בֶל in pause, etc.

Introduction to Biblical Vocabulary: the theology of vocabulary

Learning Biblical vocabulary is an opportunity to take on the thinking of God, in accord with the way He revealed Himself. The faithful Hebrews—such as Abraham, David, and Daniel—built their understanding and their lives upon this foundational revelation of the God-who-exists, for unto them, the Hebrews, it was committed. Thus, this thinking, with its mindset, is also called "faithful, ancient Hebrew thinking," becoming fully identified with the Hebrews by God's choice, though pre-dating them in time. It predates them in time, for it was not formulated by them. They did not "come up" with this faithful, ancient thinking, for it was already ancient when they received it, being given by the Creator God Himself through revelation to the entirety of His creation but especially committed to faithful men from the beginning and incrementally clarified through time in the form of verbal revelation. This was handed from person to person and copied from generation to generation until it reached the Hebrews and, as the Spirit of God in Paul put it, "they [the Jews] were made

24 See Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, section 29, *The Tone, Its Changes and Pause,* for an in-depth analyses of the changes caused by pause.

25 מַ֫יִם has a dual ending

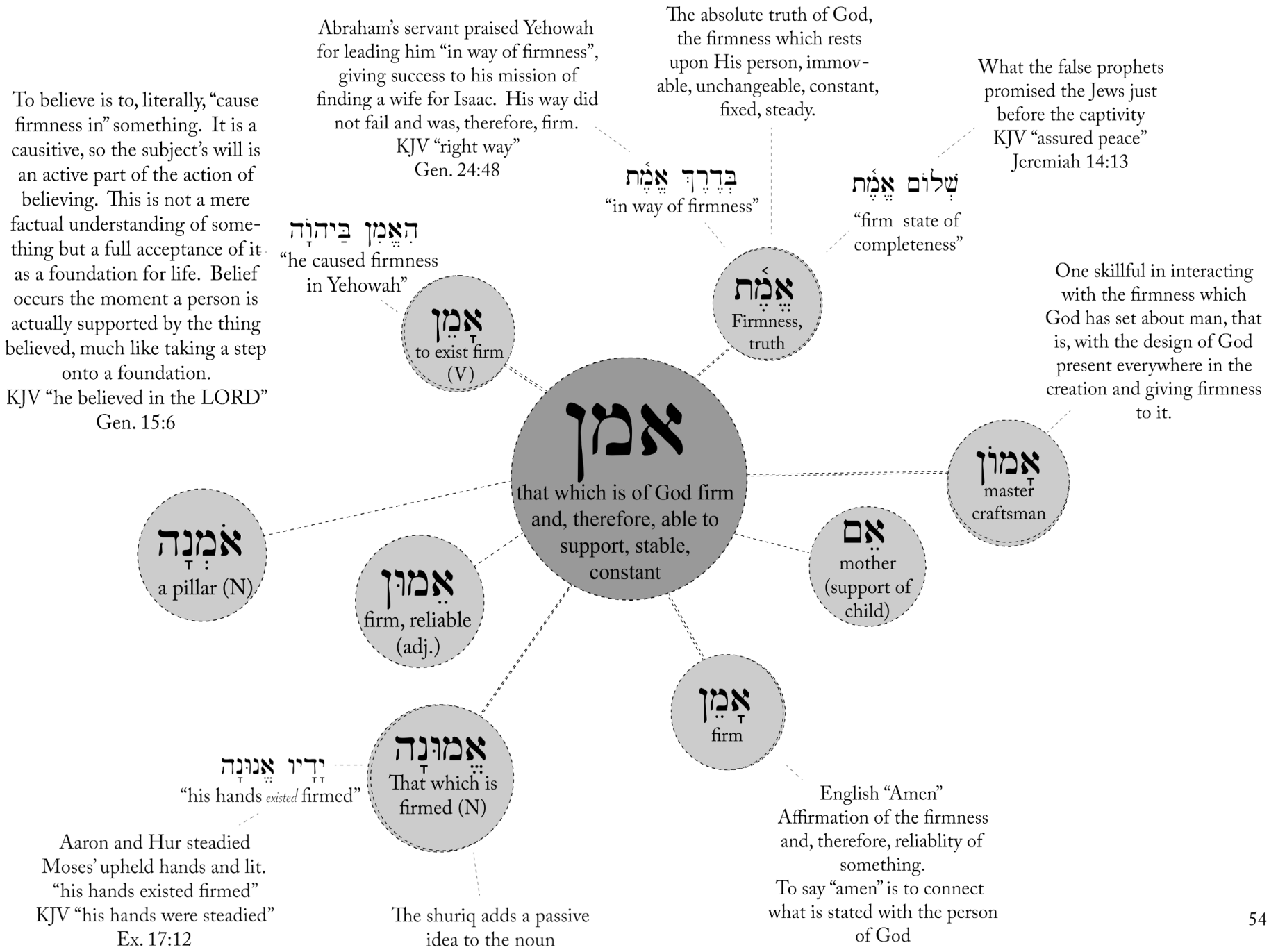
firm the sayings."[26] Thus, the thinking of the faithful, ancient Hebrews was pre-Hebrew, reaching back through the patriarchs to the beginning of God's creation of Adam in ancient history. When in their pure form, these were the thoughts which were truly *God's* thoughts, communicated by His Spirit in order for them to be man's thoughts as well. They bore the full weight of His person, the full authority of His will, the full effect of His wisdom.

Thus, Biblical vocabulary is derived from God's own mind and, therefore, bears a perfect, working relationship with the entire creation which He formed with His word and which exists in Him. Thus, all concepts which give success in the physical world are inherently related to the concepts contained in Biblical vocabulary. They aid man's mind in clarifying, solidifying, and synthesizing all the basic relationships in the creation. In this way, proper word concepts and word definitions shed bright light on an individual's view of the surrounding world. The understanding gained from studying Biblical vocabulary in a Biblical manner enables insights that far transcend this physical world.

Learning vocabulary is a lifelong process, as the learner must come to personally grasp and integrate the concepts into his own life until their ideas become the structure of his own ideas. Thus, the student must not consider that he knows a word simply because he has memorized a vocabulary definition. Rather, the definition is to be viewed as a starting point for understanding that word, much like identifying a tool is the first step to learning how to use it. So, unless the learner integrates the new ideas gained through vocabulary research into the thinking of his heart, he will be denying the work of the Spirit of God, to which all concepts of God and life are to be fastened. The learner's seeming knowledge will, in truth, be ignorance. Thus, the learner *himself* must adopt and

26 literal rendering of Romans 3:2 "committed" - ἐπιστεύθησαν τὰ λόγια τοῦ Θεοῦ. - "they were firmed the statements of God"

Interactitve Chart



develop the integral concepts of the Hebrew words he learns in an ever growing comprehension of GOD's mind and heart.

Through this process of seeking, as the Spirit of God ministers a growing awareness (finding!) of His thoughts, the learner is given an increasing ability to function pleasingly toward God, including an affective ability to minister the knowledge of God to others.

Thus, truly learning Biblical vocabulary does far more than merely add information to a person's memory; it alters the mind's basic viewpoints, viewpoints that will carry beyond the classroom into every facet of life. So, not by merely memorizing succinct definitions but by intently analyzing the words of Scripture and integrating all that is learned actively into the thoughts of his heart before God will the student understand the vocabulary words. (See Proverbs 1:23 for the key to understanding God's Words.)

CHAPTER 3

Hebrew Grammar Bird's Eye View

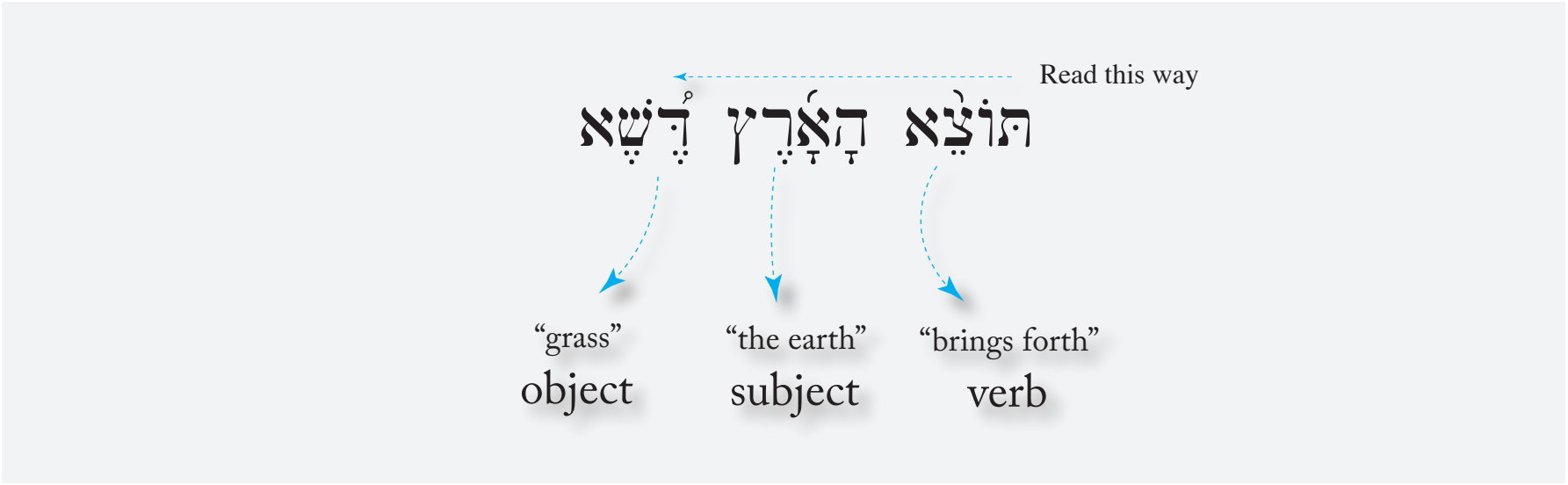
Section Overview

- Hebrew Sentence Introduction
- Hebrew Word Roots
- Hebrew Weak Letters
- Hebrew Definite Article
- Hebrew Nouns & Adjectives

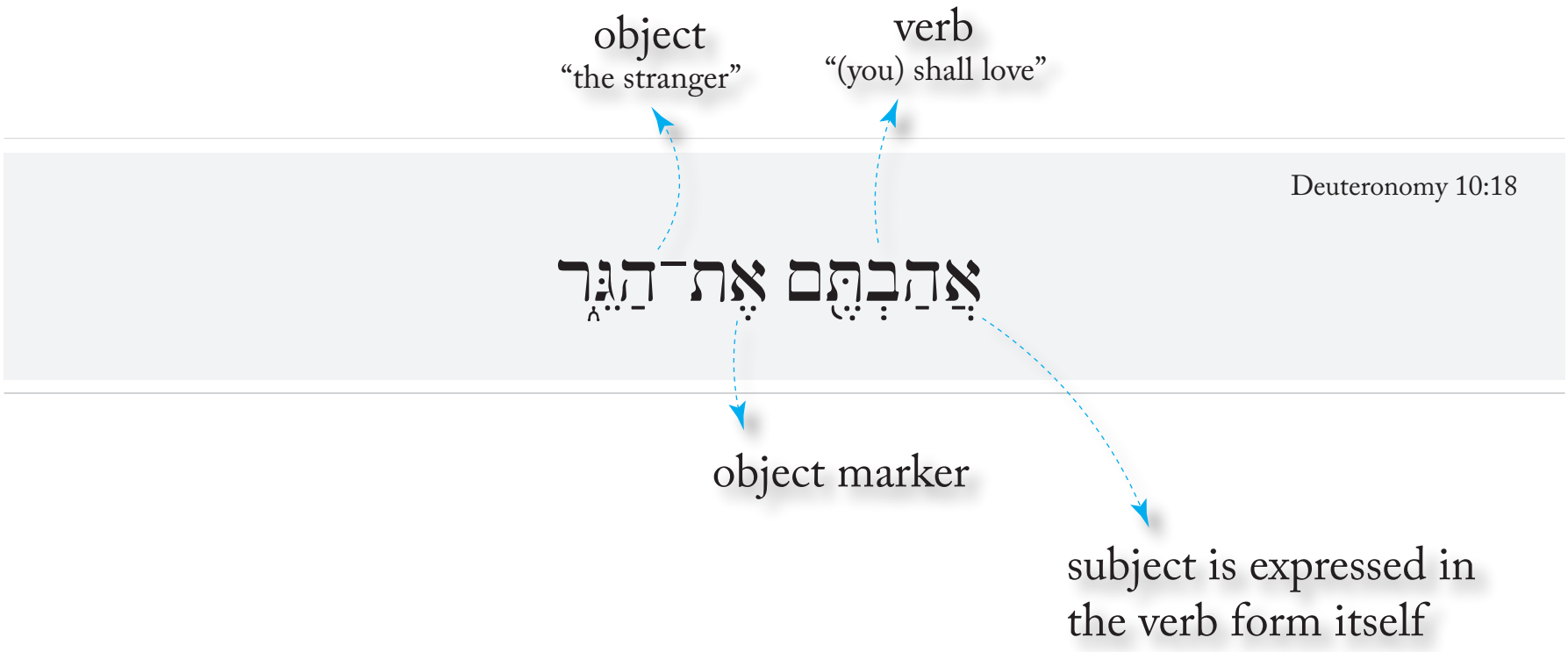
3.1 § THE HEBREW SENTENCE - BASIC CONCEPTS OF SYNTAX

Hebrew is a "head first" language, which means that the verb comes first in a Hebrew sentence. So, typically, the verb will be first or close to first in a Hebrew clause. The typical English sentence follows this order: ***subject - verb - object***. Typical Hebrew sentence will follow this pattern: ***verb - subject - object.*** Often, the subject of a Hebrew sentence will be embedded in the verb, so that the sentence visually appears as ***verb - object.***

VERB - SUBJECT - OBJECT order:



Verb – object order, with embedded subject:



The learner should immediately begin using the above information to predict words encountered in any Hebrew sentence.

For emphasis, word order could be altered. Without forming the habit of applying the above information concerning the usual Hebrew word-order, the learner will miss emphasis and subtleties of changed order.

Object Marker אֵת

The Hebrew object marker (אֵת) is a functional word whose work was to mark

the objects, thereby distinguishing them from the subjects.

The subject and object often fell right next to each other and, due to emphasis, their order could be reversed. The object marker was the word אֵת (shortened to אֶת when in construct (see section 3.8 section 3). Construct state is often signaled by an upper line (*maqqeph*) joining two words, as seen in the two words אֶת־הַגֵּר in the Dt. 10:18 example above. Though אֵת was not used on every object, when used it drew distinct attention to the object, whether to emphasize it or to distinguish it from the subject.[27]

Also, nouns come before their adjectives in normal Hebrew ordering. So, instead of "good man," the Hebrews wrote "man good." From the following examples, identify the Hebrew word meaning "good":

אִישׁ טוֹב - "man good" for "good man"

סוּס טוֹב - "horse good" for "good horse"

בֵּן טוֹב - "son good" for "good son"

3.2 § Introducing Grammar as the Structure of Meaning

Since language is eternal[28], grammar is also eternal, for it is the structure of language. Without grammar, language is without structure and, therefore, without meaning. A proper understanding of grammar from this perspective yields tremendous insight into God's Word.

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27 An apparent example of the object marker used to mark the object of a preposition: Jeremiah 16:5 מֵאֵת הָעָם

28 Language was not created, but, rather, the world was created by it. That is, when God spoke the world into existence, He did so by means of grammatical language, as seen in Genesis 1:3.

For example, the Hebrew word כִּי *kiy* (pronounced "key"), seen as a part of the word structure of the Hebrew language, expresses the "ground or reason" that underlies a statement or event. Thus, seen as a structure, כִּי *kiy* gives the foundation that underlies another thing. This opens up meaning in Proverbs 22:6, for the word כִּי *kiy* is in the verse.

> Train up a child in the way he should go:
> and **when** he is old, he will not depart from it.

חֲנֹךְ לַנַּעַר עַל־פִּי דַרְכּוֹ
גַּם כִּי־יַזְקִין לֹא־יָסוּר מִמֶּנָּה׃

(Notice that the division of lines signified by the *athnaq*.)

The word כִּי is the word behind the English word "when" and draws the conclusion that a child's aging ("when he is old") and the associated independence that comes with it will not be the "ground or reason" for his departing from the way. Translated literally, line two states, "Also/even because he matures [causes aging] he will not turn from it." Age brings independence. Since independence will not be the ground or reason for a child's departing from the way, God made clear that the child will hold to the way even when the freedom and opportunity to depart from it arrives. The tremendous power of God's design, overseen by His direct attention, results in an influence on the child's life that simultaneously establishes the child's lifelong direction while not violating the child's will.

Seeing Proverbs 22:6 in light of its structure clarifies the meaning significantly. So it is with all of Scripture. Thus, language is undergirded by grammar, which is its structure.

Introduction to Structural Words

Even in the earliest stages, a learner should begin analyzing texts of Hebrew Scripture. Patterns will begin forming in the mind as the mind analyzes the patterns built into the language. As a help to beginning analyses, the following words must be learned. They act as critical structural components of the Hebrew sentence and its meaning:

כִּי	gives the ground or reason underlying an action, often following the clause that it modifies. Seeing this word should cause the learner's mind to perceive the foundational nature of the words it introduces. (subordinate conjunction)
אִם	a word communicating the existence of a condition (either actual or potential).
וְ	(basic conjunction - "and"/"but"), joins two or more things (can take the form of וְ or וּ); *always joined to a word and always at the beginning of the word to which it is joined.*

Exercise to Identify Structures

Scan the following texts and identify each instance of the three structural componants listed above, as well as any object markers.

Genesis 18:20

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה זַעֲקַת סְדֹם וַעֲמֹרָה כִּי־רָבָּה וְחַטָּאתָם
כִּי כָבְדָה מְאֹד׃

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה זַעֲקַת סְדֹם וַעֲמֹרָה כִּי־רָבָּה וְחַטָּאתָם
כִּי כָבְדָה מְאֹד׃

Pro. 1:8-9

שְׁמַע בְּנִי מוּסַר אָבִיךָ וְאַל־תִּטֹּשׁ תּוֹרַת אִמֶּךָ׃
כִּי | לְוִיַת חֵן הֵם לְרֹאשֶׁךָ וַעֲנָקִים לְגַרְגְּרֹתֶיךָ׃

שְׁמַע בְּנִי מוּסַר אָבִיךָ וְאַל־תִּטֹּשׁ תּוֹרַת אִמֶּךָ׃
כִּי | לְוִיַת חֵן הֵם לְרֹאשֶׁךָ וַעֲנָקִים לְגַרְגְּרֹתֶיךָ׃

Gen. 19:13

כִּי־מַשְׁחִתִים אֲנַחְנוּ אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה כִּי־גָדְלָה
צַעֲקָתָם אֶת־פְּנֵי יְהוָה וַיְשַׁלְּחֵנוּ יְהוָה לְשַׁחֲתָהּ׃

כִּי־מַשְׁחִתִים אֲנַחְנוּ אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה כִּי־גָדְלָה
צַעֲקָתָם אֶת־פְּנֵי יְהוָה וַיְשַׁלְּחֵנוּ יְהוָה לְשַׁחֲתָהּ׃

Did you see the one object marker that was not highlighted in that last passage? It stands as the second word of the second line.

3.3 § 3-Letter Roots and Word Clusters

God built the Hebrew verbal system with *simplified complexity*. Though the Hebrew language is a complex system, being an entire language system, it makes the deep, articulate thinking of God readily expressible to man... even simple. Could it do any less, when God Himself was its Designer and when He designed it for the explicit purpose of revealing Himself in His written revelation?

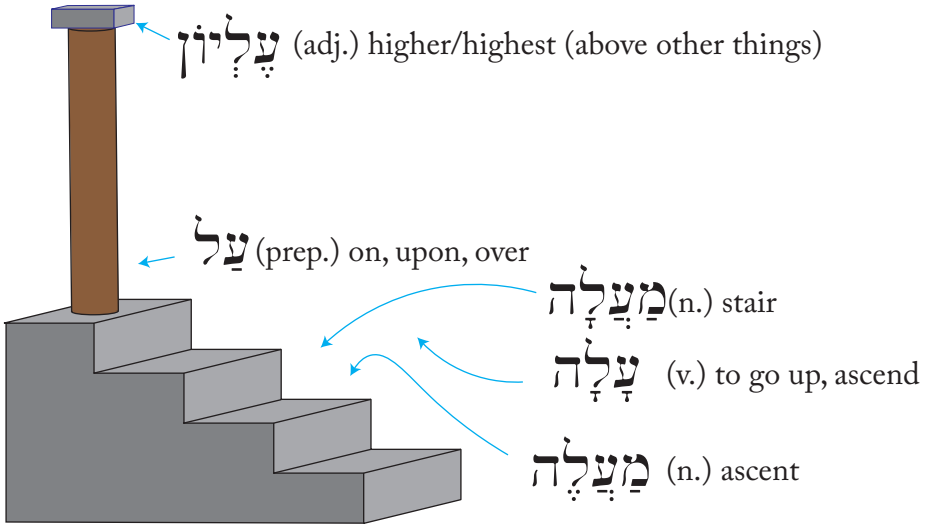
This section will give an introduction to the root structure of Hebrew words. The simplicity of the entire system is seen in such core ideas as the 3-letter root, for the main center of the Hebrew verbs revolved around a 3-letter root system. These 3-letter roots were made up of consonants, which is why they are called **tri-consonantal roots**.

As already introduced, the tri-consonantal roots can be seen in the verbs שָׁלַם and קָלַל. When seen with only their consonants, these verbs become שׁלם and קלל. Countless other examples could be given of this 3-letter-root pattern.

As with verbs, most Hebrew nouns are triconsonantal and even the ones considered biconsonantal are usually (or always) related derivatives of a triconsonantal root. God designed Hebrew—as He did the languages derived from it at Babel—with clusters of words related to one another by the same root. These clusters form a solid substructure of meaning within the language that causes that meaning to be greater than any individual speaker of the language. Thus, quite a number of diverse parts of speech (nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs,

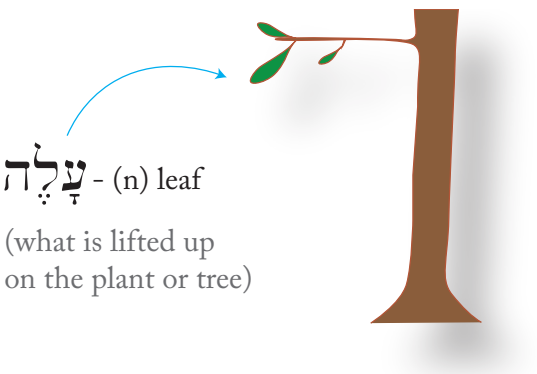
etc.) are clustered around single roots. (Consider the אמן cluster displayed representatively in the earlier section.) Waltke-O'Conner affirm that "Only the pronouns and some particles fall entirely outside of the root system."[29] *Yet, it is possible that even these are rooted in the general 3-letter root system.*

The following illustration gives a sample of a root cluster, all built off of the עָלָה (often shortened to עַל) root. Notice the mixture of verbs, prepositions, and nouns:



Likewise, the following words could be added to the picture:

29 An Introduction To Biblical Hebrew Syntax, Waltke-O'Conner, p. 83 (hard copy 1990). The same root pattern carries through all S[h]emitic languages: "In Semitic languages, substantives are, in general, formed from the same set of root morphemes as verbs." Joseph H. Greenberg (1950) The Patterning of Root Morphemes in Semitic,WORD, 6:2, p. 167, DOI: 10.1080/00437956.1950.11659378



עָלֶה - (n) leaf (what is lifted up on the plant or tree)
עֹלָה - (n.) burnt offering (something directed upward to God)
עֲלִיָּה - (n.) roof chamber (uppermost part of the house)
עֶלְיוֹן - (adj.) the Most High (the Creator's title of transcendence)
מַעֲלָה - thoughts (what comes up)

3.4 § Weak Letters

Certain letters are classified as "weak letters" for their tendency to alter the normal patterns of words. This is mainly due to the mechanics of how the human mouth handles them. The weak letters are the gutturals (אהחע), plus *yod* (י), *waw* (ו), and *nun* (נ).

נוי + אהחע

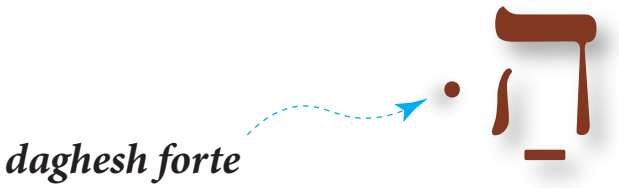
3.5 § The Definite Article

Hebrew has no **indefinite** article,[30] but it does have a **definite** article. The

30 Humans should avoid using the indefinite article in relation to the *God-who-exists* in a way that insinuates that He is not ***the only and absolute God***. Though a "time and place" exists to use the indefinite article when referring to the true God, care must be taken to prevent the listeners from misunderstanding such a use. Hebrew and Greek did not

function of the definite article is to specify. In doing so, it also distinguishes that which it is specifying.[31] Thus, ***specificity and distinction*** are critical aspects of the definite article.

The article in Hebrew is simply the letter ה attached to the beginning of the word it modified, taking the following basic form:



Thus, the basic article in Hebrew is *hey* with a *pathaq*, followed by a *daghesh* forte, as the following examples show:

טוֹב	"good"	הַטּוֹב	"the good"
שָׁמַיִם	"heavens" (dual ending)	הַשָּׁמַיִם	"the heavens"
כֹּהֵן	"priest"	הַכֹּהֵן	"the priest"
יוֹם	"day"	הַיּוֹם	"the day"

have an *indefinite* article. The modern indefinite article tends to place God in an indefinite category. Rather than communicating about God as "a God," (as in such statements as "He is a merciful God!" or "He is a good God!" or "He is an omnipotent God") the people of God should purpose to speak of Him faithfully as "God" or "the God." Though the King James Version adds the indefinite article at times when speaking of God (such as when Moses called God "*a God of truth*" in Deut. 32:4), such translation is an "Englishization" of the Hebrew, which used no indefinite article. (Moses, for example, called God literally "God of truth.")

31 The definite article takes up 12% of all the words in Haggai and only 2% in the book of Proverbs. The books of Job, Psalms (3%), ... but understandably much more in

Gutturals reject *daghesh* fortes: Since gutturals reject the *daghesh* forte, if the article precedes a guttural or *resh*, the *daghesh* forte will be rejected by that guttural and the vowel will lengthen. So, the short "a" becomes a long "a" (*pathaq* to *qamets*).

אֶרֶץ with the article becomes [32]הָאֶרֶץ rather than הַאֶרֶץ due to the rejection of the *daghesh* forte that normally follows the definite article (this is called "compensatory lengthening").

Examples:

הָעִיר "the city"

הָרֹאשׁ "the head"

In certain cases, the *daghesh* forte will not be present and very rarely, the article will take the *seghol* vowel (הֶ), but these will be learned in the future.

The article with inseparable prepositions

Inseparable prepositions are all formed from a single consonant (either בּ ,כּ, or לּ). The article in Hebrew is also formed from a single consonant (ה). When an inseparable preposition is joined to a word that begins with an article, the preposition simply takes the place of the article while assuming its pointing (*pathaq* followed by a *daghesh* forte). For example, when the word יוֹם ("day") takes the definite article, it becomes הַיּוֹם "the day." When the לּ preposition is added to the beginning of the word, instead of the expected form לְהַיּוֹם it

Ecclesiastes and Song of Solomon, where the specifics of life (Ecclesiastes) and a highly specific relationship (Song of Solomon) are the focus.

32 אָֽרֶץ becomes אָ֫רֶץ in the presence of the definite article.

takes the form לַיּוֹם which means "to the day."

Examples:

לַכֶּסֶף = לְ + הַכֶּסֶף

בַּכֶּסֶף = בְּ + הַכֶּסֶף

כַּכֶּסֶף = כְּ + הַכֶּסֶף

Some unique Hebrew ways of using the specifying function of the article (differing from English):

1. הַיּוֹם is literally "*the day*" but was understood in the sense of "*today*," that is, "the day" being currently lived out (e.g., Gen. 41:9, where Pharaoh's chief butler said that he remembered his sins הַיּוֹם "the day," meaning, "the day" present, *today*).

2. Some grammars indicate that the article could be used as a superlative marker. For example:

הַקָּטֹן -"the youngest" literally "the little" (Gen 42:13)

כְּיֵין הַטּוֹב -"like the best of wine" literally "like wine of the good" (Sol 7:9 in English but verse 10 in Hebrew)

Yet, the article is functioning in its ordinary (distinguishing) sense in these cases. In such cases, the superlative translation does not derive from the sense of the article but from the sense of the context combined with the article. The same is true for superlative translations of nouns without an article, such as the following:

לְמִקָּטֹן וְעַד־גָּדוֹל translated correctly in the King James as "from the least to the greatest" yet lacking any articles.

דַּלַּת עַם־הָאָרֶץ translated correctly in the King James as "the poorest sort of people of the land" (Ki 24:14) but, again, the superlative idea is not based upon the article or its lack but on the context.

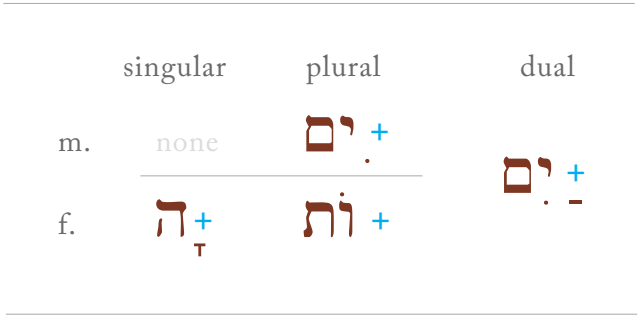
3.6 § Hebrew Nouns and Adjectives Overview

1. Nouns and Gender

Nouns in Hebrew have two genders - **masculine and feminine**. These genders are normally indicated by the ending of the word. Concerning the correspondence between physical gender and grammatical gender, the grammatical genders typically correspond to physical genders (e.g., the word "girl" in Hebrew has a feminine ending), but another aspect of Hebrew nouns is that their gender is often not physical but merely grammatical. That is, for words which have no intrinsic gender, the gender of those words is merely grammatical, not physical. The word "book" (סֵפֶר) in Hebrew illustrates this. It is a masculine noun, but not because books are masculine objects. It is merely a grammatical feature that enables clear reference to words, for adjectives and pronouns will take the corresponding gender to their referent noun. So, the word סֵפֶר will take masculine pronouns and masculine adjectives, because it is a masculine noun. The word for "wisdom" (חָכְמָה) is feminine in Hebrew; yet, its grammatical gender does not make its concept feminine. Said simply, the idea of wisdom is not feminine just because the word is grammatically feminine. (Consider the English custom of referring to ships with a feminine pronoun.) Its grammatical gender shows up clearly in Proverbs 8, where the translators translated the Hebrew gender into English, e.g., "**Wisdom** crieth without; **she** uttereth her voice in the streets" (Prov. 1:20).

2. Nouns singular, plural, and dual

The basic Hebrew noun endings:



Notice that the masculine singular has no ending. ***Thus, most endingless nouns are masculine singular.***

Examples of noun endings, using the word "horse" (סוּס) in Hebrew:

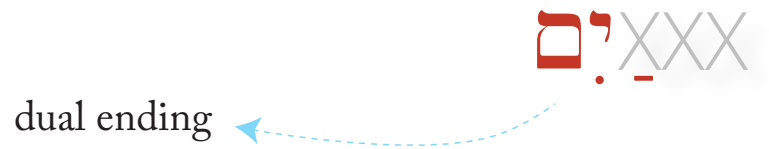
סוּס

סוּסָה

סוּסִים

סוּסוֹת

Unlike English, which has two numbers (singular and plural), Hebrew has three numbers: **singular, plural, and dual**. The dual ending is a distinct ending in Hebrew that indicates that two of the objects referred to exist and, understandably, the dual was used frequently for body parts that come in pairs, such as eyes, ears, and legs.



Thus, a dual ending on the word "day" would look like this:

A dual ending on the word "hand" would look like this:

Unlike the singular and plural, the dual is not gender specific. Both feminine and masculine nouns take the same dual ending.

The Plural Singular

In the beginning, God revealed Himself to His creation, manifesting to the world that He exists plural in the singleness and indivisibleness of His person. One way He revealed the plurality of His single person is by using the plural form of "God" (אֱלֹהִים) with a verb in the singular form. In other words, even though the word for "God" is plural in Genesis chapter 1, the verbs and pronouns associated with the plural word are often singular, as in Genesis 1:1 where the word "God" (אֱלֹהִים) is plural but the verb "created" (בָּרָא) is singular.

While secular scholarship is not able to see the spiritual reality of this revelation, it is absolute revelation nonetheless, revelation coming from outside the bounds of time, space, and matter to be known and loved within those precious bounds of life.

This singular plural is seen throughout God's written revelation of Himself. While God's people from Adam on have always understood this aspect of God's person, those who rejected God and His hand of loving authority over them have misconstrued His person, as they do His design for life. This is seen in the Philistines and their own words spoken about the living God recorded in the account of 1 Samuel 4:8.

> Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness.

אוֹי לָנוּ מִי יַצִּילֵנוּ מִיַּד הָאֱלֹהִים הָאַדִּירִים הָאֵלֶּה אֵלֶּה הֵם

הָאֱלֹהִים הַמַּכִּים אֶת־מִצְרַיִם בְּכָל־מַכָּה בַּמִּדְבָּר׃

The Philistines not only used the plural word for God but also used plural modifiers showing that they thought of the living God as a collection of "gods." Their knowledge was a mixture of truth and error. While they did at times refer to Him in the singular (1 Sam. 4:7), they conceived of the God of Israel as a collection of gods and showed this by using plural modifiers.

This use of a plural word with singular modifiers was, by extension, used of other creatures that manifest a "god-likeness" in their power or superior abilities. The animal *behemoth* (בְּהֵמוֹת) is an example of this, taking a plural ending but being a single creature and being modified by words in the singular. Yet, it must be clear that this is a secondary use of this grammatical structure. Its primary use and the use that gives rise to the others is that God's nature is "pluraly singular."

3. Noun Chains: *Construct-Absolutes*

English Noun Chains

In English, the phrase "man of prayer" is built from the two nouns "man" and "prayer," and the preposition "of" establishes the relationship between them. Without the preposition in English, the relationship between these two words would be unclear: "man prayer."

Accordingly, "man" is the main word and "prayer" is set in a modifying relationship to it. When the order is reversed in "prayer of man," the word "man" becomes descriptive of "prayer," and "prayer" is the main word. In the phrase "prayer of a man," the word "man" is simply a modifier, describing and defining prayer.

In English, the preposition "of" enables a noun to function as a modifier of another noun. But, in Hebrew, the preposition "of" was unnecessary to express such noun-noun relationships. Rather, a noun chain was formed, which, in English, could be represented like this: "man-prayer," with the word following understood to be modifying the first word.

The first word in the chain was the main word and was constructed together with the word that followed it and modified it. This first word was, then, always **in construct** (the significance being that it shows that what followed it was placed in a modifying relationship with itself). The noun endings above changed to **construct endings** when joined to construct chains to indicate the relationship between the words.

The word which ended the chain is the **absolute.** *The absolute will take the normal noun endings, for nothing follows it.* **Thus, the basic noun endings are also the absolute noun endings. The constructs, on the other hand, take unique "construct" endings which indicate that the word following is constructed together with them.** (These endings and their rules are introduced below.)

So, each word in the chain, except the last one, was placed in the construct form. Thus, in a chain composed of two words, the first word would be in the construct form and the last word would be in the absolute, but in a three-noun chain, the first two words would be in construct and the last would be the absolute:

Noun-Noun (construct-absolute)

Noun-Noun-Noun (construct-construct-absolute)

A Hebrew noun chain could go on at length, e.g., noun-noun-noun-noun. **Each noun modified the noun immediately before it,** such as in the phrase "man-Bethlehem-Ephratha" (which would be translated "the man of Bethlehem of Ephratha"). The word "Bethlehem" modifies the word "man" and the word "Ephratha" modifies "Bethlehem."

Further, nothing but nouns (or words acting as nouns, that is, substantives) could be in the chain, so under normal conditions the chain was not interrupted by any words such as adverbs, adjectives, or conjunctions.

These chains had the effect of functionally making the combined words into one word. Thus, like normal words, the entire chain would only have one major accent and would only take one article and was either definite or indefinite all together. So**, the entire noun chain was either definite or indefinite** and this was determined by **the last word in the chain**, that is, **by the absolute**. If the last word in the chain was definite, the entire chain was definite. If indefinite, the entire chain was indefinite.

Summary and key facts concerning construct-absolute chains:

- **Any number of nouns (including substantives, that is, other words acting as nouns) may be added to this chain as modifiers** and each will be a construct, except the very last word of the chain. So, only the last word of a chain will be in the **absolute form**. Judges 9:1 contains a 6-word construct-absolute chain: *noun-noun-noun-noun-noun-noun*!

  אֶל־כָּל־מִשְׁפַּחַת בֵּית־אֲבִי אִמּוֹ

  "to the entirety of the tribe of the house of the father of the mother of him"

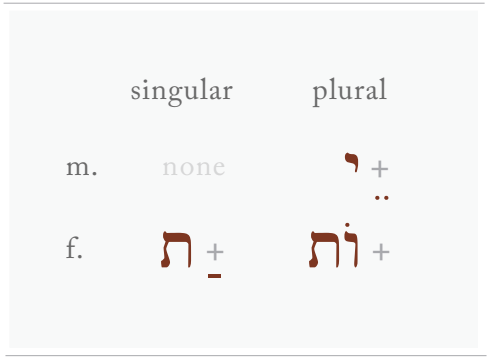
- **The construct-absolute chain is a noun chain.** As such, only nouns or words acting as nouns will be in the chain (essentially). Since this chain will not be broken by the presence of any other part of speech—such as an adverb, adjective, or conjunction—adjectives that modify a word in construct will come after the construct-absolute chain.

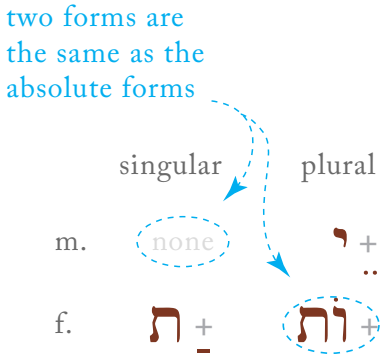
- **The entire chain is either definite or indefinite *together* and this definite or indefinite state is indicated by the absolute.** So, if the absolute is definite, the entire chain is definite, and vis-versa.

- In many cases in the Masoretic Text, the construct-absolute chain is joined by a maqqeph (־), though maqqephs are not limited to construct-absolute chains. See the example from Judges 9:1 above.

- Since Hebrew prefers the accent on the end of words and since the chain binds two or more words together into a single unit, construct-absolute chains will typically have only one accent and that will fall on the absolute. This means that when the main word is placed in construct, that word loses its accentuation to the absolute. This usually brings on a change in the vocalization of the word or words in construct.

Basic construct endings:





Examples:

Construct-Absolute Chains	Parsing[33]	Translation
בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל	*mpc*	("the sons of Israel")
פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם	*mpc*	("the faces of the waters")

33 msc = masculine, plural construct; fsc = feminine, singular construct; etc.

קִדְמַת אַשּׁוּר	*fsc*	("the east of Asher" Gen. 2:14)
בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים	*msc*	("in *the* image of God" Gen. 1:27)
דְּגַת הַיָּם	*fsc*	("fish of the sea" Gen. 1:28)
פְּנֵי כָל־הָאָרֶץ	*mpc*	("the faces of the entirety of the earth" Gen. 1:29)
תּוֹלְדֹת אָדָם	*fpc*	("the origins of Adam" Gen. 5:1)
בְּנוֹת הָאָדָם	*fpc*	("the daughters of the mankind" Gen. 6:2)

4. Doubling-for-emphasis

One form of strong emphasis in Hebrew was that of repeating something to amplify its *meaning*, *significance*, or *certainty*. This is similar to the English usage in "No, no!" and other doubling (or tripling!) constructions.

Examples:

1 Samuel 2:3
part of Hannah's prayer about human pride: גְּבֹהָה גְּבֹהָה

"exceeding proudly" KJV

"exalted exalted" literal

Numbers 14:7
"an exceeding good land" מְאֹד מְאֹד

"exceedingly" KJV

"very very" literal

Ezekiel 16:6
"and then I said to you in your blood, 'live'
and then I said to you in your blood, 'live.'"

וָאֹמַר לָךְ בְּדָמַיִךְ חֲיִי
וָאֹמַר לָךְ בְּדָמַיִךְ חֲיִי

entire clause doubled

Isaiah 26:3
"Thou wilt keep him in **perfect peace**..."[34]

שָׁלֹ֥ום׀ שָׁלֹ֑ום

"perfect peace" KJV

"complete complete" or
"complete completeness" literal

Note, the vertical line (׀) between שָׁלֹ֥ום׀ שָׁלֹ֑ום *was called a paseq* (פָּסֵק) *and was inserted by the Masoretes into the text of Scripture for various purposes, all of which seem to have been for the goal of assuring unmistaken copying. If a word or sequence could easily be mistaken by a following scribe as a mistake but was, in fact, part of the text, a scribe could insert a paseq to indicate to future scribes that what could be construed as a mistake was purposeful copying of the text. In the case of* שָׁלֹ֥ום׀ שָׁלֹ֑ום*, the paseq indicated to future scribes that the word was not doubled by an accident of copying. The care and accuracy of the Masoretes reflects the work of the Spirit of God to preserve all that He revealed to man in His writings.*

As a concept, the idea of doubling was clearly understood in the minds of ancient Hebrews—received from God Himself—as a means of expressing the certainty or confidence of a statement. This is evident from Joseph's testimony, given before

34 The other instances of the doubling of *shalom* can be found in 1 Chronicles 12:19 (12:18 in English), Is. 57:19, Jeremiah 6:14, and Jeremiah 8:11. Other examples of doubling in general: Ezekiel 17:7, Jeremiah 24:3, 2 Kings 10:4, Psalm 62:11. Also see the ***Infinitive Absolute*** below.

Pharaoh (and all subsequent history).

> "And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is **because the thing is established by God,** and God will shortly bring it to pass."
> (Gen. 41:32)

וְעַל הִשָּׁנוֹת הַחֲלוֹם אֶל־פַּרְעֹה פַּעֲמָיִם כִּי־נָכוֹן הַדָּבָר מֵעִם
הָאֱלֹהִים וּמְמַהֵר הָאֱלֹהִים לַעֲשֹׂתוֹ׃

Another example: מוֹסָד מוּסָּד "a sure foundation" (Is. 28:16), literally "a foundation foundation"

5. Adjectives

Two basic uses of the adjective existed in Hebrew, the *attributive* and the *predicate*. The following simple illustrations from English clarify these two uses:

"the good boy" ***attributive***

"the boy *is* good" ***predicate***

Word order: As with verbs, in Hebrew the word order is opposite from English. Hebrew adjectives normally *follow* the word that they modify.
Endings: The adjective endings are the same as the singular and plural absolute noun endings.

A. Attributive ("AAA")

Remember AAA = Attributive comes After and Agrees.

The adjective will agree with the word it modifies in gender, number, and

definiteness (also called "determination").

Four main ways of making a noun definite exist in Hebrew:

1. Proper Name
2. Pronoun[35]
3. Definite Article
4. By Absolute (in a noun chain)

Examples

הַמָּאוֹר הַגָּדֹל	**"the light the great"** = "the great light" (Gen. 1:16 of the created sun)
הַמָּאוֹר הַקָּטֹן	**"the light the little"** = "the little light" (Gen. 1:16 of the created moon)
עֻגָה קְטַנָּה	**"a loaf a little"** = "a little loaf" (note the feminine singular endings) (1 Ki. 17:13)
חַיּוֹת קְטַנּוֹת	**"creatures small"** = "small creatures" (feminine plural endings) (Ps. 104:25)
הַדָּבָר הַקָּטֹן	**"the matter the little"** = "the little matter" (Ex. 18:22 judges judging "the least matter")
שָׂרִים רַבִּים	**"princes many"** = "many princes" (Num. 22:15)

The normal order can also be reversed for emphasis, e.g., טוֹב־אִישׁ ("a *good* man" Ps. 112:5)

B. Predicate ("PPP")

Remember PPP = Predicate Prefers to Precede

35 Pronouns are always definite. When they attach to a noun, they make that noun definite.

A predicate adjective is an adjective that is making a direct statement about the word it modifies, such as "The car is green" (predicate adjective) verses "The green car" (attributive adjective).

One important point to know: ***a predicate adjective does* not *take the article.***

In a *predicate* adjective construction, the adjective is not only modifying a noun but becomes a focus of that noun. In the *attributive* adjective construction, the adjective tends to take a sideline place in the communication. For example, in the sentence "A green car drove by the house" the adjective "green" is not given

nearly as strong a focus as it is in the sentence "The car is green." In this last sentence, the entire focus of the entire sentence is on the car being ***green***. The first sentence demonstrates an attributive adjective, while the last demonstrates a predicate adjective. Note, this does not mean that an attributive adjective will not be used emphatically, for, indeed, an attributive adjective can be emphatic but this emphasis comes from context, not the grammatical structure.

Most frequently, the verb of existence (the "being" verbs in English, such as am, is, are, was, etc., are more than "linking" verbs, each expressing existence) is not written in the Hebrew text but is understood by the mind in reading. This understood verb will be in the present tense (incomplete state, that is, imperfect aspect) by default and should only be understood in the past tense (completed state, that is, perfect aspect) when context indicates it to be so.

The predicate adjective will still agree with the noun in gender and number ***but not in definiteness*** *(unless both are indefinite).*

Any time the noun is definite and the adjective is indefinite the adjective is a predicate adjective.[36]

In the following examples, this disagreement in definiteness makes it clear that the relationship is a predicate relationship:

הָאִישׁ גָּדוֹל "the man great" = "the man *existed* great" (1 Sam. 25:2 Nabal's financial status)

הָאִישׁ קָשֶׁה "the man hard" = "the man *existed* hard" (1 Sam. 25:3 Nabal's life)

36 Examples of Predicate Adjectives that have the article do rarely exist and are clarified by context. Exodus 9:21 Aaron said "the LORD *exists* righteous" but, literally, "the LORD *exists* the righteous one" יְהוָה הַצַּדִּיק

טוֹב הָעֵץ "good the tree" = "the tree *existed* good" (Gen. 3:6 "the tree *existed* good to eat" - Eve's view of the tree)

יָשָׁר דְּבַר־יְהוָה **"straight the word of the LORD"** = "the Word of the LORD *exists* straight" (Ps. 33:4)

In the rare case in which both the noun and the adjective are both indefinite and yet stand in a predicate relationship, context will clarify whether the relationship is a predicate or attributive one.

Here is an example of a predicate adjective modifying a word that is part of a construct-absolute chain:

אַנְשֵׁי סְדֹם רָעִים "the men of Sodom existed wicked"

אַנְשֵׁי סְדֹם - "the men of Sodom" (construct chain)

רָעִים - plural of the word "wicked" or "evil"

C. Substantives (substitutes for nouns)

When functioning as a substantive, the adjective will usually have the definite article.

הַקָּטֹן (combination of "the little (one)" Isaiah 60:22

הַגְּדוֹלִים "the great (men)" 2 Sam. 7:9

הַגְּדֹלָה "the great (daughter)" Gen. 29:16 (understood meaning: Leah was the elder daugher of Laban)

3.7 § PRONOUNS

Pronouns are words used in place of nouns. In Hebrew, the pronouns are all short words, which fits their use as words that make communication more efficient. These pronouns can stand alone, as independent words, or attach to another word as a suffix.

A mnemonic

מִי is "who" and הוּא is "he" and הִיא is "she"

Independent Personal Pronouns

The independent pronouns in Hebrew are the pronouns that stand alone. The independent pronouns do not function as objects. The attached pronouns ("pronominal suffixes") are the ones that function as objects when needed. The following is the list of independent pronouns.

	Singular		Plural	
3rdm	הוּא	he, it	הֵמָּה / הֵם	they
3rdf	הִיא	she, it	הֵנָּה / הֵן	they
2ndm	אַתָּה	you	אַתֶּם	you
2ndf	אַתְּ	you	אַתֶּן	you
1stc	אֲנִי / אָנֹכִי	I	אֲנַחְנוּ	we

Since Hebrew uses gender for objects as well as for people, the 3rd person pronouns can also refer to objects. So, הוּא and הִיא can also refer to objects and, therefore, stand for "it" in English.

Each group (1st person, 2nd person, 3rd person) is begins with the following letters:

	Singular		Plural			
3m	הוּא	he, it	הֵמָּה / הֵם	they	ה	All 3rd person forms begin with ה
3f	הִיא	she, it	הֵנָּה / הֵן	they		
2m	אַתָּה	you	אַתֶּם	you	אַת	All 2nd person forms begin with אַת. Think of looking "at" person you speaking to
2f	אַתְּ	you	אַתֶּן	you		
1c	אֲנִי / אָנֹכִי	I	אֲנַחְנוּ	we	אנ	All 1st person forms begin with אנ

Examples

יִמְשָׁל הוּא "he shall rule" Genesis 3:16

אֵם הָיְתָה הִוא[37] "she existed mother" Genesis 3:20

37 In the early chapters of Scripture, the word for "he" and the word for "she" had the same consonantal form (הוּא and הוּא), though different pronunciations. This undoubtedly came about due to the close relationship between male and female, the one being the source of the other, both being "Adam" in original fact and thought.

הֵם לֹא יָדְעוּ "they knew not" Judges 20:34

Suffixed Pronouns (Pronominal Suffixes)

Pronominal Suffixes

		Type 1	Type 2
Singular	3ms	וֹ	יו־
	3fs	הּ־	יָהּ־
	2ms	ךָ (אָ)	יךָ
	2fs	ךְ	יךְ־ (וֹ)
	1cs	י	י־ (וֹ)
Plural	3mp	הֶם	יהֶם
	3fp	הֶן	יהֶן
	2mp	כֶם	יכֶם
	2fp	כֶן	יכֶן
	1cp	נוּ	ינוּ

Pronominal suffixes are attached to the end of other words.[38] In the great majority of cases, Type 1 suffixes are attached to singular nouns/substantives and Type 2 suffixes are attached to plural nouns/substantives.

Compare the combination of בֵּן ("son") and ךָ (second masc. sing. "of you")[39]

בִּנְךָ "the son of you"

בְּנֶיךָ "the sons of you.

The main difference to note is the *yod* between the noun and suffix. This *yod* is what indicates that בֵּן is plural.

As discernible from the above translations, **the combination of a pronominal suffix with a noun or substantive forms a construct-absolute chain**, with the suffix functioning as the absolute. Since pronouns are always definite, their **constructs will also be definite.**

The following two points map the Hebrew pronominal suffixes to their English counterparts:

If attached to *nouns*, the pronouns are ***possessive***
(of him, of her, of me = his, her, mine)

If attached to *verbs*, *prepositions*, or *particles*, the pronouns are ***objective***
(him, her, me)

38 The dot in the 3fs pronoun (הָ) is called a *mappiq* and is not a *daghesh* forte or lene. The effect of a *mappiq* in a *hey* is to give it a slight raspy, breathing sound... created by just a slight closure of the back of the tongue.

39 2nd masculine singular

This means that the **possessive** pronouns and the **objective** pronouns are mostly identical to each other in form in Hebrew, except for the 1cs ־י which has an objective form ־נִי.

As pronouns, the pronominal suffixes connect to something in the context (the antecedent) of the communication. The pronouns will agree with the word they link to in gender and number under normal conditions.

Certain suffixes can take an alternate form or multiple alternate forms. These are shown in the chart below.

Type 1 alternate

			alternate
Singular	3ms	וֹ	הוּ, ו , הֹ
	3fs	ָהּ	ָהּ
	2ms	ְךָ	(ֶ֫) ָךְ *
	2fs	ֵךְ	כִי
	1cs	ִי	נִי
Plural	3mp	הֶם	ָם , ָמוֹ **
	3fp	הֶן	ָן
	2mp	ְכֶם	
	2fp	ְכֶן	
	1cp	ֵנוּ	

* found in pause (i.e., under major accent)
** found in parallelism

Type 1 & 2 Illustrated

		Masculine Noun בֵּן		Feminine Noun תּוֹרָה	
		Type 1	Type 2	Type 1	Type 2
Singular	3ms	בְּנוֹ	בָּנָיו	תּוֹרָתוֹ	תּוֹרוֹתָיו
	3fs	בְּנָהּ	בָּנֶיהָ	תּוֹרָתָהּ	תּוֹרוֹתֶיהָ
	2ms	בִּנְךָ	בָּנֶיךָ	תּוֹרָתְךָ	תּוֹרוֹתֶיךָ
	2fs	בִּנֵךְ	בָּנַיִךְ	תּוֹרָתֵךְ	תּוֹרֹתַיִךְ
	1cs	בְּנִי	בָּנַי	תּוֹרָתִי	תּוֹרוֹתַי
Plural	3mp	בְּנָם	בְּנֵיהֶם	תּוֹרָתָם	תּוֹרוֹתֵיהֶם
	3fp	בְּנָן	בְּנֵיהֶן	תּוֹרָתָן	תּוֹרוֹתֵיהֶן
	2mp	בִּנְכֶם	בְּנֵיכֶם	תּוֹרַתְכֶם	תּוֹרוֹתֵיכֶם
	2fp	בִּנְכֶן	בְּנֵיכֶן	תּוֹרַתְכֶן	תּוֹרוֹתֵיכֶן
	1cp	בְּנֵנוּ	בָּנֵינוּ	תּוֹרָתֵנוּ	תּוֹרָתֵינוּ

* gray forms are not found in Scripture

Pronominal suffixes will attach to verbs and other parts of speech as well, such as prepositions, with slight changes.

Pronominal Suffixes on לְ preposition

(Identical for suffixes on בְּ as well)

Singular	3ms	לוֹ
	3fs	לָהּ
	2ms	לְךָ*
	2fs	לָךְ
	1cs	לִי
Plural	3mp	לָהֶם
	3fp	לָהֶן
	2mp	לָכֶם
	2fp	לָכֶן
	1cp	לָנוּ

* also לָךְ in pause *(2ms and 2fs difference understood from context)*

Other than some monosyllabic nouns, some prepositions and certain particles take type 2 suffixes. For example, the preposition עַל ("upon") + ךָ becomes עָלֶיךָ = upon you.

The pronouns are frequently used as genitives ("of"). Along with the genitive function and often part of it, the pronouns also function in the following ways:

As the subject of the action of an infinitive

Example:

אֲכָלְכֶם (infinitive + 2mp pronoun) = "eating of you all" = "your action of eating"

As the direct object of an action

On a noun of action
חֲמָסִי - literally "the violence of me" with the sense of "the violence done to me"

Directly attached to a verb

עֲבַדְתִּיךְ - "I have served you"

On the object marker

אֹתוֹ	him	אֹתָם	them (masc)
אֹתָהּ	her	אֹתָן	them (fem)
אֹתְךָ	Thee (2ms objective case of "you")	אֶתְכֶם	Thee (2ms objective case of "you")
אֹתָךְ	Thee (2fs objective case of "you")	אֶתְכֶן	Thee (2fs objective case of "you")
אֹתִי	me	אֹתָנוּ	us

As objects of prepositions

Example

מִכֶּם - "from you all" (masculine plural)

Note: *lamed* preposition + pronoun is often used to express possession in Hebrew (with the existence/being verb):

לִי (which is לְ + י) = "to/for me" = "belonging to me"

Translate these phrases:

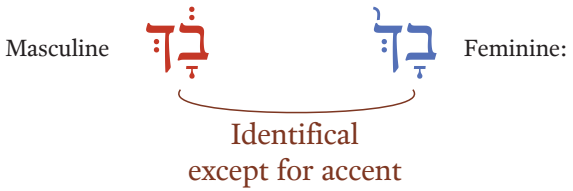
דַּיָּם (דַּי = sufficiency, Ex. 36:7)

וּבָנֶיךָ וּבְנֵי בָנֶיךָ Gen. 45:10

When in pause (major accent), the 2nd masculine singular pronoun can appear identical in form to the 2nd feminine singular.

Example on לְ preposition:

Example on בְּ preposition:



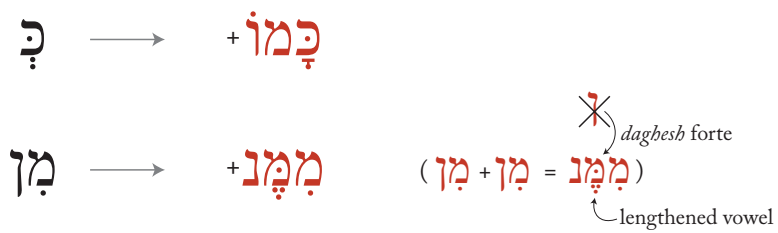
In the last example above, notice that the 2nd masculine singular (2MS) ending is on a major accent (*zaqeph*), while the feminine is not. While the 2FS ending can also fall on a major accent (pause), this form of the 2MS ending appears to *only* occur on a major accent.

Both of these are 2MS pronominal suffixes:

וַאַגִּ֥ד לְךָ֖ וּבַ֣יִת יִבְנֶה־לְּךָ֑ יְהוָֽה׃[40]

40 1 Chronicles 17:10

These two prepositions often take alternate forms when a pronominal suffix is attached:



מִן Examples:

מִמְּךָ - "from you" (2MS), note that the *nun* was assimilated into the *kaph* suffix (yet, sometimes the *daghesh* drops out: מִמָּךְ)

מִמֶּנָּה - "from her," this is a 3FS pronoun from the alternate form נָּה (*gamets* shifted back to the *nun*)

מִמֶּנִּי - "from me"

Common forms of מִן preposition

מִן	independent form	מִן־הַדָּבָר	"from the word"
מִ֫	prefixed	מִקָּרֵב	מִן with object marker
מִי	prefixed to yod	מִיּוֹם	"from a day"
מֵ	prefixed to guttural	מֵאֶת	"from midst"
מִמֶּנּוּ	prefixed to pro. suffix	מִמֶּנּוּ	"from him"

When attached to a **heavy pronominal suffix**, the מִן is not doubled but follows its regular changes (מִכֶּם, מִהֶן, מֵהֶם, etc.)

גָּדוֹל עֲוֹנִי מִנְּשֹׂא
וְהַנָּחָשׁ הָיָה עָרוּם מִכֹּל
הַדָּבָר הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה
אֶרֶץ רְחוֹקָה

כְּ Examples:

כָּמֹנוּ - "as we" 1CP

כָּמוֹךָ - "as you" 2MS

כָּמֹנִי - "as me" 1CS

כָּמֹהוּ - "as him" 3MS

CHAPTER 4

VERBS

4.1 § Hebrew Verb Stems

The Creator formed the Hebrew language with a verbal system congruent with every facet of His purpose to reveal Himself to His creation. Being the perfect medium for the foundational truth contained in the Old Testament, the ancient Hebrew verbal system was exactly prepared by God to give every facet and nuance of the thoughts He intended to communicate.

He built this now-ancient Hebrew verbal system around various "stems" (בִּנְיָנִים) that communicate various nuances of meaning concerning a given action. The stems added remarkable depth and precision to the communication.

These stems (בִּנְיָנִים) provided the ability of the speakers or writers to intensify an action or to turn the action into a cause of another action, among many other things.

Hebrew had 1 basic stem (בִּנְיָן) and 6 stems (בִּנְיָנִים) deriving ("stemming") from it.[41]

The **basic stem is called the "Qal" (קַל) stem,** because it is the "light" stem; it is not weighed down with any extra sense other than the basic one. So, it is the basic stem, unencumbered in both form and meaning. The other stems build off of the *Qal* (קַל) stem to form their meaning. So, the other stems are called the **derived stems,** because they derive their basic meaning from the *Qal*.

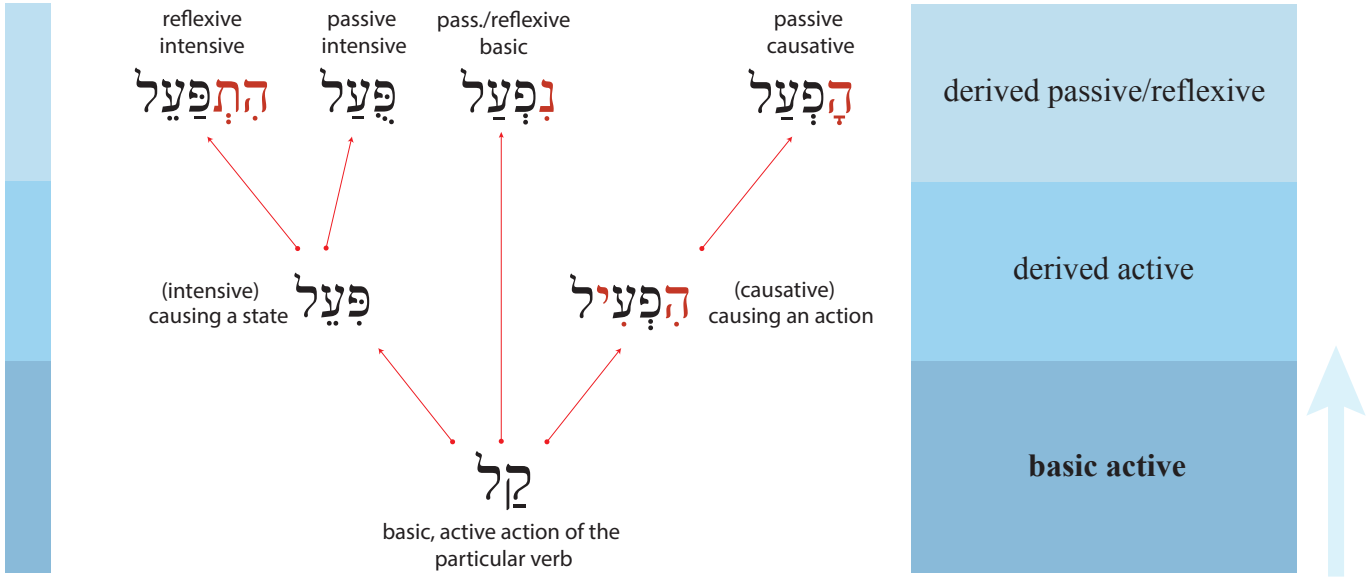
41 The derived stems basically modify the basic action communicated in the first stem

For example, the verb שָׁחַת would mean "to corrupt" in the קַל. This would be its basic meaning. The נִפְעַל is the reflexive/passive of the קַל, so in the נִפְעַל the verb שָׁחַת means "to be corrupt," used of Jeremiah's girdle that had been in the ground for many days when he dug it back up. The הִפְעִיל adds the idea of "causation," giving it the meaning "to cause to corrupt," used to describe what a person who commits adultery does to his soul: causes it to become corrupted. In the פִּעֵל the basic idea of "corruption" is intensified to mean "to bring about total corruption," to the point of something becoming totally corrupt and, therefore, destroyed. God used the פִּעֵל when describing what He did to Sodom and Gomorrah.

Summary of the meaning of the verb שָׁחַת in different stems (בִּנְיָנִים)

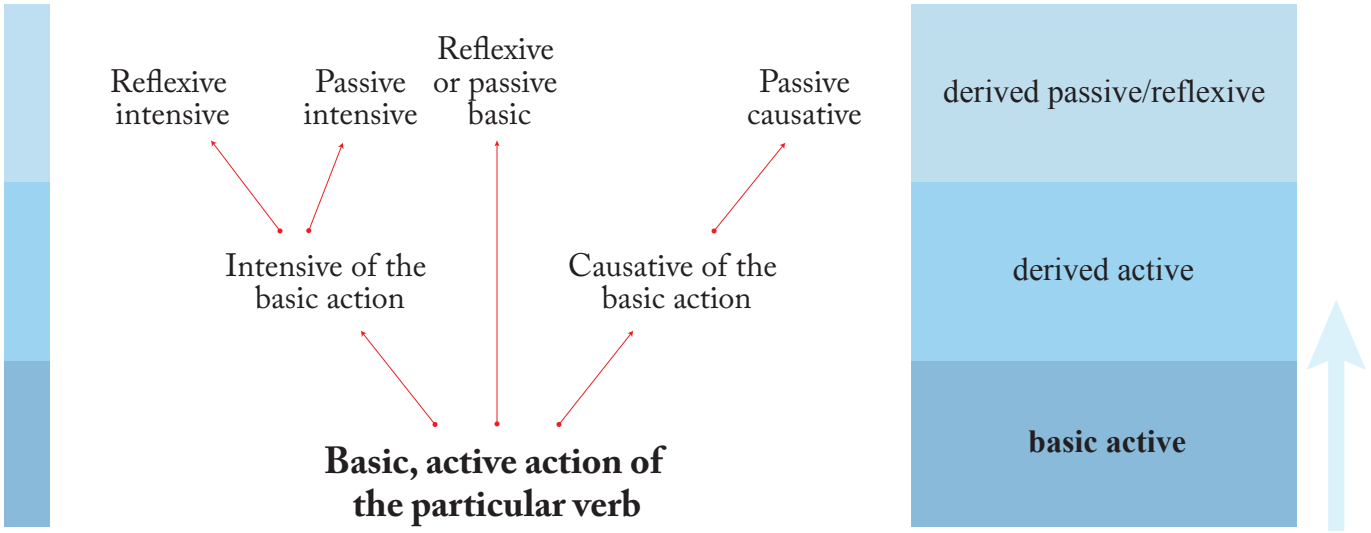
קַל	"to corrupt"	the basic, undecorated meaning of the verb
נִפְעַל	"to be corrupt"	used of Jeremiah's girdle that had been in the ground for many days when he dug it back up—no corrupting agent is expressed (passive)
הִפְעִיל	"to cause to corrupt"	used to describe what a person who commits adultery does to his soul: causes it to become corrupted—corrupting agent is highlighted
פִּעֵל	"to bring about total destruction" (intensified state of corruption)	used when describing what God did to Sodom and Gomorrah, the earth during the Flood (הַמַּבּוּל), etc.

Verb Stems



As seen in the above chart, the *Piel* (פִּעֵל) [a] and the Hiphil (הִפְעִיל) [a] are the two main derived stems. In turn, two stems derive from the *Piel* and another stems from the *Hiphil*. The *Niphal* directly corresponds to the *Qal*, but does not, itself, have any deriving stems.

The following chart provides a highly simplified (starting point) diagram of the meaning of each stem:



The chart above begins at the bottom and visually displays the relationship between each stem. Like a plant, each "stem" can be traced back to one basic root, the קַל (Qal) stem that rests alone at the bottom of the above chart. The following chart explains the basic meaning of each stem. Pay attention to the Hebrew spelling of the stems, because the Hebrew spellings actually give clues as to how each stem is identified.

Qal	קַל	*Basic action*
Niphal	נִפְעַל	*Passive of Qal*
Piel	פִּעֵל	*Intensive, causing a state*
Pual	פֻּעַל	*Passive of Piel*
Hithpael	הִתְפַּעֵל	*Reflexive of the Piel*
Hiphil	הִפְעִיל	*Causative of the Qal*
Hophal	הָפְעַל	*Passive of the Hiphil*

The names of these stems represent the basic identifying form of each stem. In other words, the names give identifying features of each stem. This will be dealt with in detail later but to give a brief example, the *hithpael* (reflexive of the *Piel*) stem begins with a "*hith*" (הִת) prefix, which is an identifying marker of that particular stem. To illustrate, the verb הָלַךְ means "he walked." In the *hithpael*, the form of the verb becomes הִתְהַלֵּךְ and it communicates the following intensive, reflexive understanding: "he (intensively) walked (himself)."

Each stem name, then, represents diagnostic features of that particular form. These diagnostic features are specifically in the perfect aspect (see below) and each is in the 3rd masculine singular. In other words (as an example), the word נִפְעַל actually means "he (or it) was made"; the name itself is a 3rd masculine singular conjugated verb.

Of the seven stems, the main stem is the *Qal*. Secondary to it are the two derived stems *Piel* and *Hiphil*. **These three form the core of the stem system: *Qal*, *Piel*, and *Hiphil*.** All other stems are derived from one of these. In short,

all stems other than the Qal are derived stems but main among the derived stems are the *Piel* and *Hiphil*. The *Piel* and *Hiphil* are branches of the *Qal*, while everything else is a branch of one of these three.

Aspect

The **stem** (בִּנְיָן) of a verb communicates the action's intensity, causation, passivity, or reflexivity (or combination of these), while the verb's **aspect** communicates the verb's *completedness* in the mind of the speaker. (This answers the question of whether an action is viewed as completed or not complete.) Aspect communicates whether the communicator was viewing the action as *incomplete* (not finished) or *complete* (finished). The two common words to describe these two aspects are "**perfect**" and "**imperfect**."

These two aspects are the only ones to exist in Hebrew:[42]

Perfect (action viewed as finished)

Imperfect (action viewed as unfinished)

The *perfect* aspect represents an action which is completed in the portrayal of the speaker. Whether it is so in the past, present, or future is a matter of context. **The imperfect aspect represents an action which has <u>not</u> been finished** (therefore, incomplete or unfinished) **in the portrayal of the speaker.** Naturally, English tense ideas such as present, future, and imperative usually fall under the imperfect aspect, since any action that is occurring (present) or has not yet occurred (e.g., future and imperative) has not been completed yet. Tense

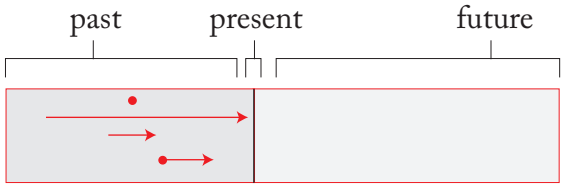
42 Other forms, such as the imperative form, exist as well, but they are simply subcategories of either the perfect or the imperfect. The imperative expresses an action that has not yet been accomplished and is, therefore, "imperfect aspect."

ideas such as past and perfect usually fall under the Hebrew perfect (completed) aspect, due to their normally completed nature at the time of communication.

The following illustration visualizes some of the possible relationships the perfect and imperfect share in relation to the present:

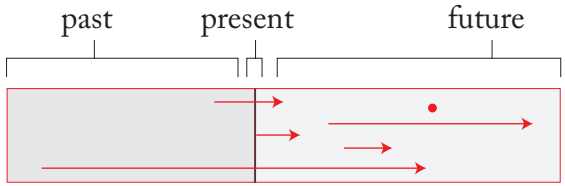
Perfect

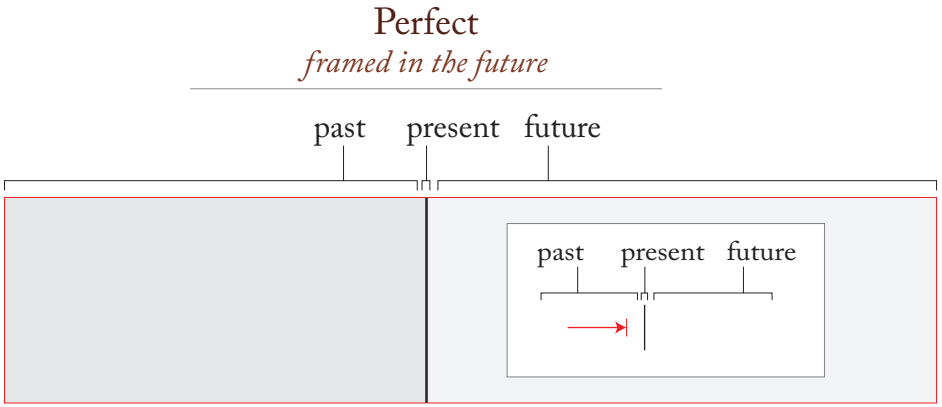
Takes in any action finished before the present

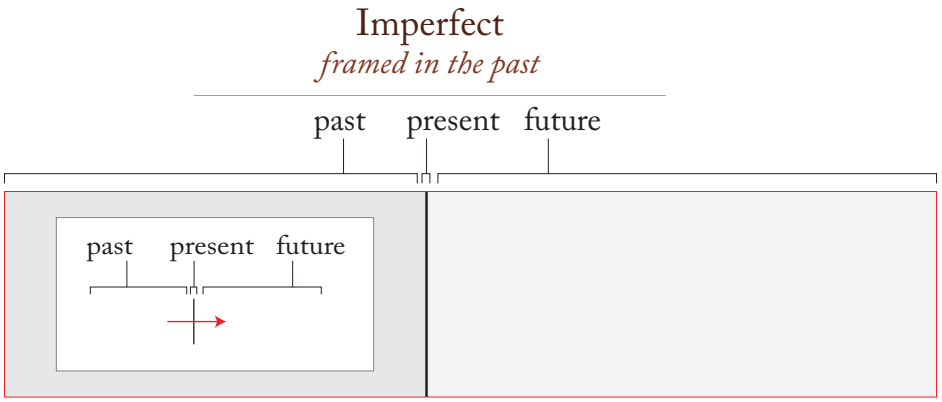


Imperfect

Takes in any action not finished before the present







43

The communicator could frame an imperfect action as taking place in the past or a perfect action as taking place in the future. This is similar to what an English speaker does when he is telling a story about an event in the past and uses the present tense to tell it, "And here I **come**, walking along without a care in the world...." Though "come" is present tense, a speaker can use it to speak of a past action as if it were taking place at the moment he is speaking, giving it

43 Example of imperfect used in the past to express ongoing activity at that time: 1 Kings 5:7 (Hebrew verse number)

the aspect of ongoing action.

The names of the stems learned above are actually *perfect 3rd masculine singular* verb forms. In other words, each stem name (such as *piel, pual, hithapel*) is actually a verb that is given the unique identifiers for its stem.[44] For example, the stem name *piel* פִּעֵל in Hebrew says "he intensively worked," while the *niphal* נִפְעַל says "he was worked," and the *hithpael* הִתְפַּעֵל says "he worked himself." So, the names of the stems are actually forms of the word "he worked" changed into the perfect 3ms form of each stem.

Name		Translation
קַל	*Qal*	"light" (not heavy)
נִפְעַל	*Niphal*	"he was made" or "he made himself"
פִּעֵל	*Piel*	"he intensively made"
פֻּעַל	*Pual*	"he was intensively made"
הִתְפַּעֵל	*Hithpael*	"he made himself intensively"
הִפְעִיל	*Hiphil*	"he caused to make"
הָפְעַל	*Hophal*	"he was caused to make"

Each of the 7 stems will have two charts, one for the perfect aspect and one for the imperfect aspect. Thus, the *Qal* can be expressed as completed action or incomplete action. Likewise, the *Niphal* can be expressed as completed action or incomplete action, as can each of the other stems.

44 In other words, the names of the stems (except for *Qal*) are taken from verb root פעל by simply adding each unique stem identifier.

Qal Perfect

	Singular	Plural
3m	שָׁמַר	שָׁמְרוּ
3f	שָׁמְרָה	"
2m	שָׁמַרְתָּ	שְׁמַרְתֶּם
2f	שָׁמַרְתְּ	שְׁמַרְתֶּן
1c	שָׁמַרְתִּי	שָׁמַרְנוּ

All except the 1st person and 3rd plural forms distinguish masculine and feminine forms.

	Singular	Plural
3m		וּ-
3f	ה-	וּ-
2m	תָּ-	תֶּם-
2f	תְּ-/ת-	תֶּן-
1c	תִּי-	נוּ-

The student should train himself to look at the beginning and ending of verbs (looking for prefixes and suffixes). All of these person, gender, and number markers for the perfect aspect will be found at the end of the verb form as suffixes.

3rd person only has two distinct forms:

3m		וּ
3f	ה-	"

2nd person forms all begin with תּ. Also, the singular forms have only one consonant, while the plural forms have two consonants (think "single letter" for singular):

2m	תְּ	תֶּם
2f	תְּ	תֶּן

1st person forms are both common (used for both male and female), with the singular form ending in a *hiriq yod*, just as do the 1st common singular pronominal suffix (ִי) and the end of the 1st common singular independent pronoun (אֲנִי - "I"). The 1st common plural independent pronoun is אֲנַחְנוּ. Notice that the ending is the same on the 1st common plural independent pronoun and the ending on the 1st common singular perfect verbs: אֲנַחְנוּ and -נוּ.

1c	תִּי	נוּ

A comparison of the independent pronouns and the perfect endings (1st and 2nd person only)

SINGULAR

	pronoun	verb
2m	אַתָּה	תָּ
2f	אַתְּ	תְּ
1c	אֲנִי	תִּי

PLURAL

	pronoun	verb
2m	אַתֶּם	תֶּם
2f	אַתֶּן	תֶּן
1c	אֲנַחְנוּ	נוּ

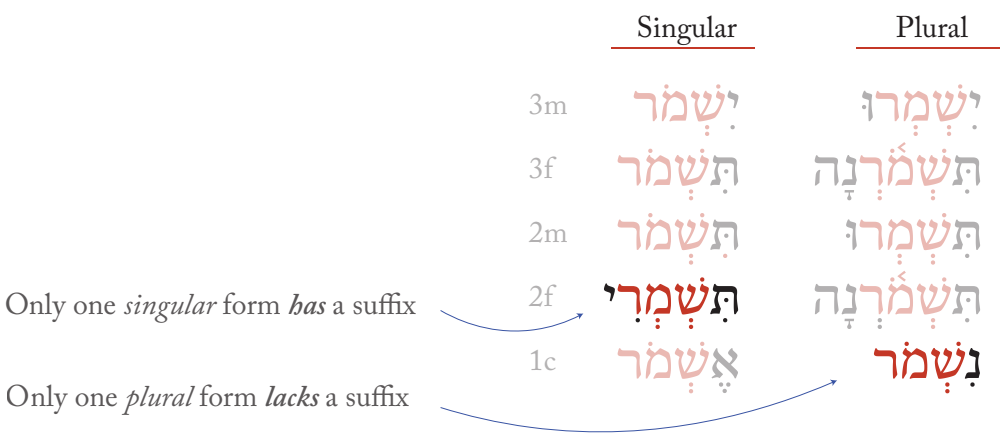
Qal Imperfect

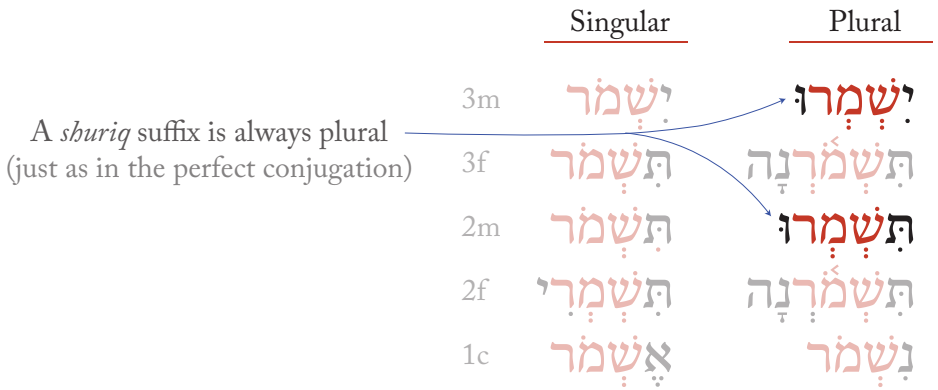
	Singular	Plural
3m	יִשְׁמֹר	יִשְׁמְרוּ
3f	תִּשְׁמֹר	תִּשְׁמֹּרְנָה
2m	תִּשְׁמֹר	תִּשְׁמְרוּ
2f	תִּשְׁמְרִי	תִּשְׁמֹּרְנָה
1c	אֶשְׁמֹר	נִשְׁמֹר

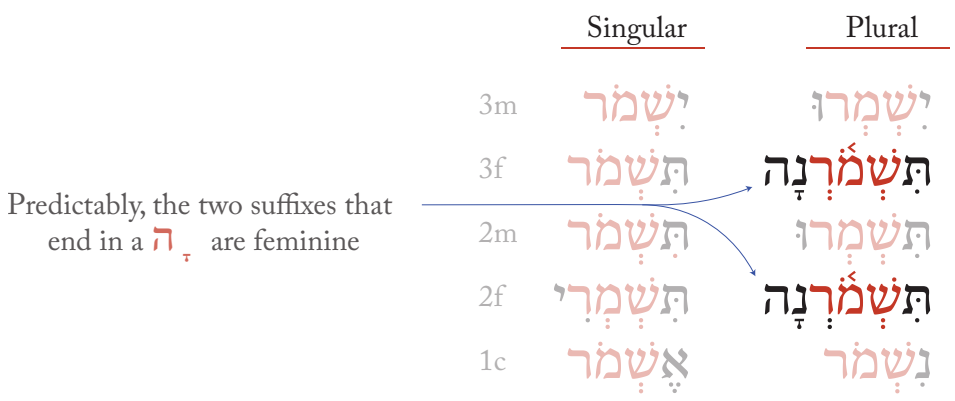
Imperfect Prefixes

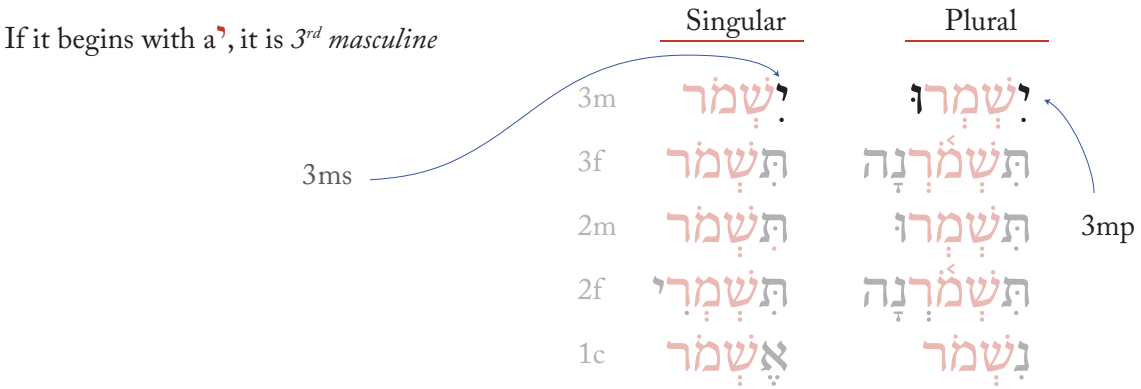
	Singular	Plural
3m	י	י
3f	ת	ת
2m	ת	ת
2f	ת	ת
1c	א	נ

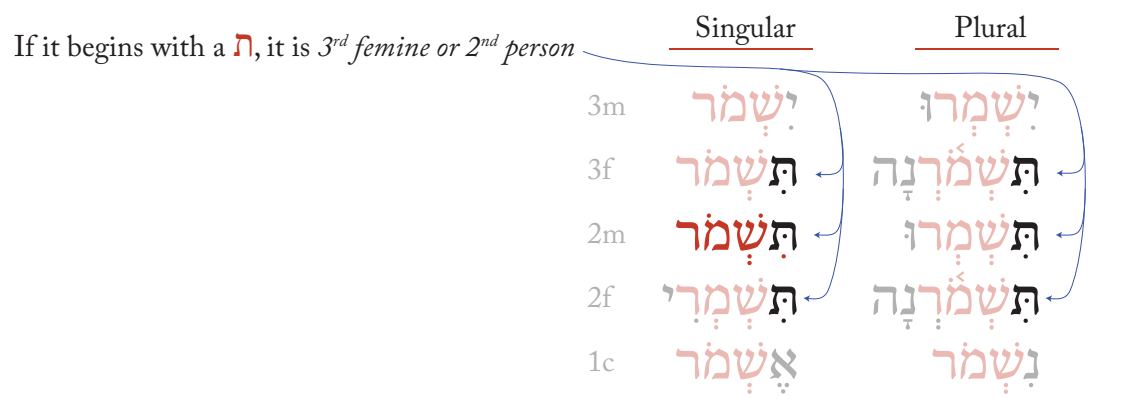
Notes on the suffixes (endings):


Singular
Plural
3m יִשְׁמֹר יִשְׁמְרוּ
3f תִּשְׁמֹר תִּשְׁמֹרְנָה
2m תִּשְׁמֹר תִּשְׁמְרוּ
2f תִּשְׁמְרִי תִּשְׁמֹרְנָה
1c אֶשְׁמֹר נִשְׁמֹר
Only one *singular* form ***has*** a suffix
Only one *plural* form ***lacks*** a suffix


Singular
Plural
3m יִשְׁמֹר יִשְׁמְרוּ
3f תִּשְׁמֹר תִּשְׁמֹרְנָה
2m תִּשְׁמֹר תִּשְׁמְרוּ
2f תִּשְׁמְרִי תִּשְׁמֹרְנָה
1c אֶשְׁמֹר נִשְׁמֹר
A *shuriq* suffix is always plural
(just as in the perfect conjugation)


Singular
Plural
3m יִשְׁמֹר יִשְׁמְרוּ
3f תִּשְׁמֹר תִּשְׁמֹרְנָה
2m תִּשְׁמֹר תִּשְׁמְרוּ
2f תִּשְׁמְרִי תִּשְׁמֹרְנָה
1c אֶשְׁמֹר נִשְׁמֹר
Predictably, the two suffixes that end in a ה ָ are feminine

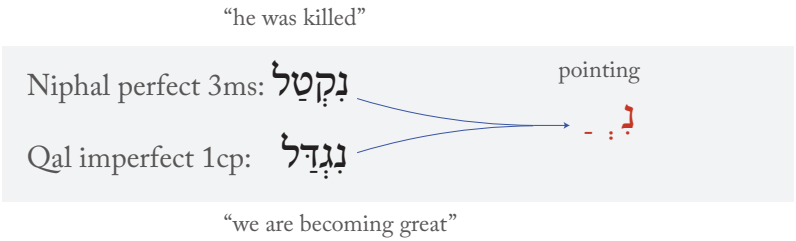

If it begins with a י, it is 3rd masculine
Singular
Plural
3m יִשְׁמֹר יִשְׁמְרוּ
3f תִּשְׁמֹר תִּשְׁמֹרְנָה
2m תִּשְׁמֹר תִּשְׁמְרוּ
2f תִּשְׁמְרִי תִּשְׁמֹרְנָה
1c אֶשְׁמֹר נִשְׁמֹר
3ms
3mp



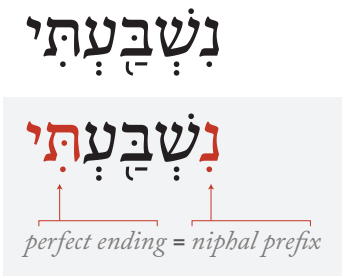
Notes on the prefixes:

א	always **1st common singular.**
י	always **3rd masculine**. If followed by a וּ suffix (ending), it is 3rd masculine **plural**, otherwise it is singular.
ת	**All 2nd persons begin with a *tau* suffix.**
נ	always **1st common plural**.

The Niphal perfect and the Qal imperfect 1cs both take a prefixed *nun*. This can cause confusion, because the pointing for the Niphal perfect 3ms and the Qal imperfect 1cp can be identical.



Remember, the 3ms is the only perfect form that does **not** take a suffix. That means that the other forms of the perfect will easily distinguish themselves from the imperfects by their suffixes. For example, the *nun* on the following verb must be the *nun* of the *Niphal*, not of the imperfect 1cp, because of the ending:



Remember that the names of the stems are actually the 3ms forms of these stems:

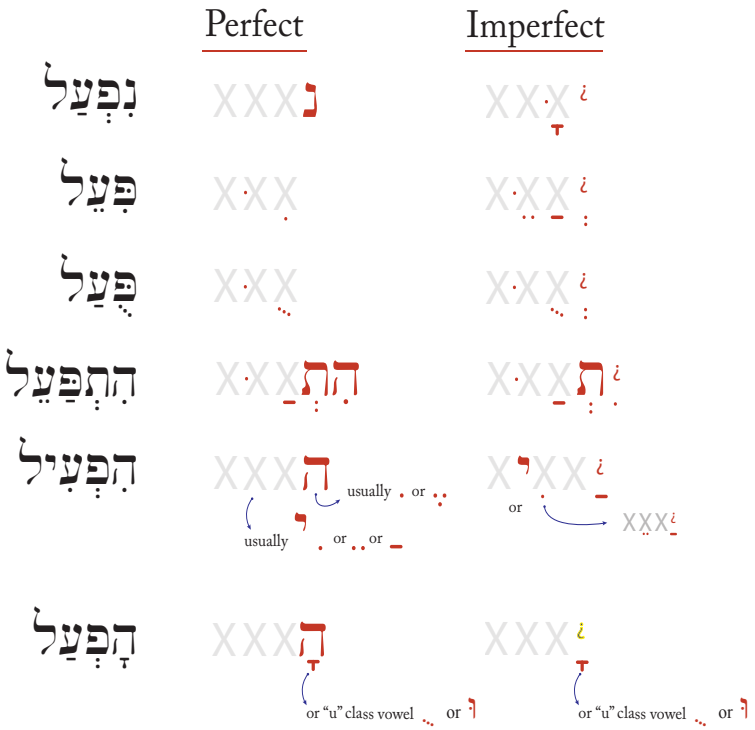
קַל נִפְעַל פִּעֵל פֻּעַל הִתְפַּעֵל הִפְעִיל הָפְעַל

4.2 § The Derived Stem Diagnostic Chart

The following chart is a diagnostic chart that greatly simplifies identifying most verb stems in Hebrew. This chart will be referred to throughout the following sections.

The ◌ִ mark on the imperfect forms below is a placeholder. It symbolizes the imperfect prefixes. In other words, the imperfect prefixes can each go where the ◌ִ mark goes. (These four letters are the imperfect prefixes: אֵיתָנ)

Derived Stem Diagnostic Chart



45

45 Adapted from

Strong Verbs		Qal	Niphal	Piel	Pual	Hiphil	Hophal	Hithpael
Perf	3ms	קָטַל	נִקְטַל	קִטֵּל/קִטַּל	קֻטַּל	הִקְטִיל	הָקְטַל	הִתְקַטֵּל
	3fs	קָטְלָה	נִקְטְלָה	קִטְּלָה	קֻטְּלָה	הִקְטִילָה	הָקְטְלָה	הִתְקַטְּלָה
	2ms	קָטַלְתָּ	נִקְטַלְתָּ	קִטַּלְתָּ	קֻטַּלְתָּ	הִקְטַלְתָּ	הָקְטַלְתָּ	הִתְקַטַּלְתָּ
	2fs	קָטַלְתְּ	נִקְטַלְתְּ	קִטַּלְתְּ	קֻטַּלְתְּ	הִקְטַלְתְּ	הָקְטַלְתְּ	הִתְקַטַּלְתְּ
	1cs	קָטַלְתִּי	נִקְטַלְתִּי	קִטַּלְתִּי	קֻטַּלְתִּי	הִקְטַלְתִּי	הָקְטַלְתִּי	הִתְקַטַּלְתִּי
	3cp	קָטְלוּ	נִקְטְלוּ	קִטְּלוּ	קֻטְּלוּ	הִקְטִילוּ	הָקְטְלוּ	הִתְקַטְּלוּ
	2mp	קְטַלְתֶּם	נִקְטַלְתֶּם	קִטַּלְתֶּם	קֻטַּלְתֶּם	הִקְטַלְתֶּם	הָקְטַלְתֶּם	הִתְקַטַּלְתֶּם
	2fp	קְטַלְתֶּן	נִקְטַלְתֶּן	קִטַּלְתֶּן	קֻטַּלְתֶּן	הִקְטַלְתֶּן	הָקְטַלְתֶּן	הִתְקַטַּלְתֶּן
	1cp	קָטַלְנוּ	נִקְטַלְנוּ	קִטַּלְנוּ	קֻטַּלְנוּ	הִקְטַלְנוּ	הָקְטַלְנוּ	הִתְקַטַּלְנוּ
Impf	3ms	יִקְטֹל	יִקָּטֵל	יְקַטֵּל	יְקֻטַּל	יַקְטִיל	יָקְטַל	יִתְקַטֵּל
	3fs	תִּקְטֹל	תִּקָּטֵל	תְּקַטֵּל	תְּקֻטַּל	תַּקְטִיל	תָּקְטַל	תִּתְקַטֵּל
	2ms	תִּקְטֹל	תִּקָּטֵל	תְּקַטֵּל	תְּקֻטַּל	תַּקְטִיל	תָּקְטַל	תִּתְקַטֵּל
	2fs	תִּקְטְלִי	תִּקָּטְלִי	תְּקַטְּלִי	תְּקֻטְּלִי	תַּקְטִילִי	תָּקְטְלִי	תִּתְקַטְּלִי
	1cs	אֶקְטֹל	אֶקָּטֵל	אֲקַטֵּל	אֲקֻטַּל	אַקְטִיל	אָקְטַל	אֶתְקַטֵּל
	3mp	יִקְטְלוּ	יִקָּטְלוּ	יְקַטְּלוּ	יְקֻטְּלוּ	יַקְטִילוּ	יָקְטְלוּ	יִתְקַטְּלוּ
	3fp	תִּקְטֹלְנָה	תִּקָּטַלְנָה	תְּקַטֵּלְנָה	תְּקֻטַּלְנָה	תַּקְטֵלְנָה	תָּקְטַלְנָה	תִּתְקַטֵּלְנָה
	2mp	תִּקְטְלוּ	תִּקָּטְלוּ	תְּקַטְּלוּ	תְּקֻטְּלוּ	תַּקְטִילוּ	תָּקְטְלוּ	תִּתְקַטְּלוּ
	2fp	תִּקְטֹלְנָה	תִּקָּטַלְנָה	תְּקַטֵּלְנָה	תְּקֻטַּלְנָה	תַּקְטֵלְנָה	תָּקְטַלְנָה	תִּתְקַטֵּלְנָה
	1cp	נִקְטֹל	נִקָּטֵל	נְקַטֵּל	נְקֻטַּל	נַקְטִיל	נָקְטַל	נִתְקַטֵּל
Impv	ms	קְטֹל	הִקָּטֵל	קַטֵּל		הַקְטֵל		הִתְקַטֵּל
	fs	קִטְלִי	הִקָּטְלִי	קַטְּלִי		הַקְטִילִי		הִתְקַטְּלִי
	mp	קִטְלוּ	הִקָּטְלוּ	קַטְּלוּ		הַקְטִילוּ		הִתְקַטְּלוּ
	fp	קְטֹלְנָה	הִקָּטַלְנָה	קַטֵּלְנָה		הַקְטֵלְנָה		הִתְקַטֵּלְנָה
Inf	Cons	קְטֹל	הִקָּטֵל	קַטֵּל		הַקְטִיל		הִתְקַטֵּל
Inf	Abs	קָטוֹל	נִקְטֹל/הִקָּטֵל	קַטֵּל/קַטֹּל	קָטֹל	הַקְטֵל	הָקְטַל	הִתְקַטֵּל
Ptc Act	ms	קֹטֵל		מְקַטֵּל		מַקְטִיל		מִתְקַטֵּל
Ptc Pas	ms	קָטוּל	נִקְטָל		מְקֻטָּל		מֻקְטָל	
W-Impf	3ms	וַיִּקְטֹל	וַיִּקָּטֵל	וַיְקַטֵּל	וַיְקֻטַּל	וַיַּקְטֵל	וַיָּקְטַל	וַיִּתְקַטֵּל
Juss		יִקְטֹל	יִקָּטֵל	יְקַטֵּל	יְקֻטַּל	יַקְטֵל	יָקְטַל	יִתְקַטֵּל
Cohort	1cs	אֶקְטְלָה	אֶקָּטְלָה	אֲקַטְּלָה	אֲקֻטְּלָה	אַקְטִילָה	אָקְטְלָה	אֶתְקַטְּלָה

46

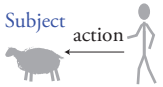
46 Logos chart, https://www.logos.com/images/products/6338/6x9.pdf

4.3 § The *Niphal* נִפְעַל stem

The *Niphal* stem acts as the passive/reflexive of the *Qal* stem.

Simply put, "passive" means the subject is receiving the action of the verb. So, if the *qal* meaning is "He loved the Law," then the *niphal* meaning would be "The Law was loved by him." Likewise, if the *qal* meaning is "He sought the LORD," in the *niphal* the meaning would be "The LORD was sought by him."

1. **Passive: "The offering is killed"**[47]

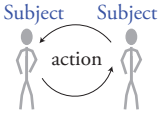


Passive = an action done to the subject

2. **Reflexive: "I hid myself**[48]**"**

Reflexive = an action done by the subject to himself

3. **Reciprocal: "Men strive together**[49]**"**



Reciprocal = an action done back and forth

47 Leviticus 6:25 תִּשָּׁחֵט הָעֹלָה

48 Genesis 3:10 אֵחָבֵא

49 Exodus 21:22 "If men strive, and hurt a woman with child" וְכִי־יִנָּצוּ אֲנָשִׁים וְנָגְפוּ אִשָּׁה הָרָה

In this case, both subjects are "receiving" the action (a passive sense)

Characteristic נ

Characteristically, the *niphal* takes a *nun* prefix in both the perfect and imperfect conjugations.

NIPHAL PERFECT

Perfect endings on the *Niphal* stem

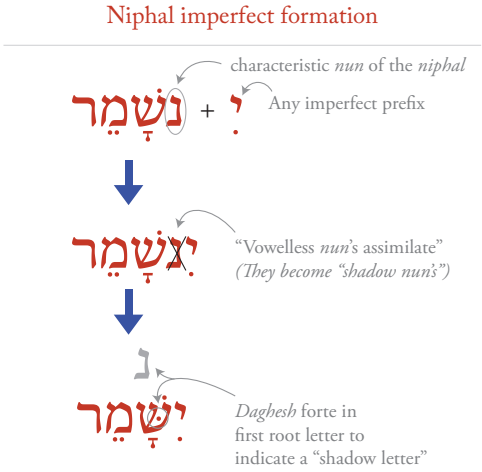
	Perfect Endings	Niphal Perfect	
3m		נִשְׁמַר	
3f	ה	נִשְׁמְרָה	Singular
2m	תָּ	נִשְׁמַרְתָּ	
2f	תְּ	נִשְׁמַרְתְּ	
1c	תִּי	נִשְׁמַרְתִּי	
3c	וּ	נִשְׁמְרוּ	
2m	תֶּם	נִשְׁמַרְתֶּם	Plural
2f	תֶּן	נִשְׁמַרְתֶּן	
1c	נוּ	נִשְׁמַרְנוּ	

Examples

Niphal Perfects	Translation	Passage
וְנִפְקְחוּ עֵינֵיכֶם	"your eyes **shall be opened**"	Genesis 3:5
נִפְלְגָה הָאָרֶץ	"the earth **was divided**"	Genesis 10:25
הֲלֹוא נָכְרִיּוֹת נֶחְשַׁבְנוּ לוֹ כִּי מְכָרָנוּ	"Are we not **counted** of him strangers? for he hath sold us"	Genesis 31:15
וַאֲנִי מְתֵי מִסְפָּר וְנֶאֶסְפוּ עָלַי ... וְנִשְׁמַדְתִּי	"and I being few in number, **they shall gather themselves together** against me...and **I shall be destroyed**"	Genesis 34:30

שֵׁ֣ם יְהוָ֔ה נִקְרָ֖א עָלֶ֑יךָ "thou **art called** by the name of the LORD" Deuteronomy 28:10

NIPHAL IMPERFECT



Niphal Imperfect

שָׁמַר

	Singular	Singular
3m	יִשָּׁמֵר	יִשָּׁמֵר
3f	תִּשָּׁמֵר	תִּשָּׁמֵר
2m	תִּשָּׁמֵר	תִּשָּׁמֵר
2f	תִּשָּׁמְרִי	תִּשָּׁמְרִי
1c	אֶשָּׁמֵר	אֶשָּׁמֵר

	Plural	Plural
3m	יִשָּׁמְרוּ	יִשָּׁמְרוּ
3f	תִּשָּׁמַרְנָה	תִּשָּׁמַרְנָה
2m	תִּשָּׁמְרוּ	תִּשָּׁמְרוּ
2f	תִּשָּׁמַרְנָה	תִּשָּׁמַרְנָה
1c	נִשָּׁמֵר	נִשָּׁמֵר

Examples

Niphal Imperfects	Translation	Passage
וַיֹּ֣אמֶר אֵצֵ֔א כְּפַ֥עַם בְּפַ֖עַם וְאִנָּעֵ֑ר	"and [Samson] said, I will go out as at other times before, and **shake myself.**"	Judges 16:20
לֹֽא־יִקָּרֵ֨א שִׁמְךָ֤ עוֹד֙ יַעֲקֹ֔ב	"thy name **shall** not **be called** any more Jacob"	Genesis 35:10

בְּזֹאת תִּבָּחֲנוּ	"Hereby ye shall be proved"	Genesis 42:15
בְּטֶרֶם אֶלָּקַח מֵעִמָּךְ	"before I be taken away from thee"	2 Kings 2:9
וְעַתָּה ׀ אַל־תֵּעָצְבוּ	"Now therefore be not grieved" literally "and now do not pain yourselves"	Genesis 45:5
וְהַשּׁוֹר יִסָּקֵל	"and the ox shall be stoned"	Exodus 21:32

Waw-consecutives on *Niphals*

waw-consecutive on a *niphal* imperfect

וַיִּשָּׁמֵר

"And then he was kept"

waw-consecutive on a *niphal* perfect

וְנִשְׁמַר

"And then will be kept"

Waw-consecutive on a niphal imperfect

Exodus 1:7
and the sons of Israel **bore fruit**...and then the land **was filled** with them

וּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל פָּרָ֤ו ... וַתִּמָּלֵ֥א הָאָ֖רֶץ אֹתָֽם׃

Waw-consecutive on a niphal perfect

Exodus 22:8
if the thief **is** not **found**, then the owner of the house **shall be brought near** to the gods [judges]

אִם־לֹ֣א יִמָּצֵ֣א הַגַּנָּ֔ב וְנִקְרַ֥ב בַּעַל־הַבַּ֖יִת אֶל־הָאֱלֹהִֽים

Niphals Imperatives

Imperatives are "commands," statements that having a binding force on the one to whom they are directed. Since all compliance to a command comes from the will, it was suitable for an inferior to use an imperative to a superior, for it was understood that the superior would only comply if he "willed" to. Thus, when used by an inferior to a superior, this binding force included an understanding that the superior was free to disregard the command if he so desired.

Imperatives Hebrew are in the 2nd person.

The *Niphal* imperative is formed by simply exchanging the imperfect prefix with a *hey*.

***Niphal* imperfect conjugation**

Niphal Imperative	
	Singular
2m	הִשָּׁמֵר
2f	הִשָּׁמְרִי
	Plural
2m	הִשָּׁמְרוּ
2f	הִשָּׁמַרְנָה

Example

Proverbs 6:5

"**Deliver thyself** as a roe from the hand of the hunter,

and [deliver thyself] as a bird from the hand of the fowler."

הֲנָצֵל כִּצְבִי מִיָּד
וּכְצִפּוֹר מִיַּד יָקוּשׁ׃ פ

ἵνα σῴζῃ ὥσπερ δορκὰς ἐκ βρόχων

καὶ ὥσπερ ὄρνεον ἐκ παγίδος

1 Kings 18:1

"**shew thyself** unto Ahab"

הֵרָאֵה אֶל־אַחְאָב

ὄφθητι τῷ Αχααβ

4.4 § The *Piel* פִּעֵל stem

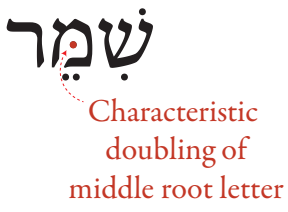
The *piel* stem expresses the following action: action of increased intensity that tends to result in a consequent action or state.

The perfect endings on the *Piel* stem

Piel alternate stem vowels

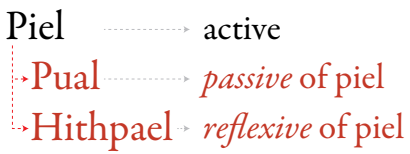
The *piel* characteristically doubles the middle root letter of its form:

Piel Characteristic



This is characteristic of all the *piel*-related stems (which includes *pual* and *hithpael*).

The three stems of "intensity" and "increased consequence" are the following:



Piel Imperfect

שָׁמַר

singular	singular
יְשַׁמֵּר	יְשַׁמֵּר
תְּשַׁמֵּר	תְּשַׁמֵּר
תְּשַׁמֵּר	תְּשַׁמֵּר
תְּשַׁמְּרִי	תְּשַׁמְּרִי
אֲשַׁמֵּר	אֲשַׁמֵּר

plural	plural
יְשַׁמְּרוּ	יְשַׁמְּרוּ
תְּשַׁמֵּרְנָה	תְּשַׁמֵּרְנָה
תְּשַׁמְּרוּ	תְּשַׁמְּרוּ
תְּשַׁמֵּרְנָה	תְּשַׁמֵּרְנָה
נְשַׁמֵּר	נְשַׁמֵּר

Intensive Stem Imperfect Forms

X·XX	*Piel*
X·XX	*Pual*
X·XX	*Hithpael*

Basic sense of the *Piel*

Tersely stated, the *piel's* basic sense is that of **"an intensified action often with a resultant state."** Slightly broadened, the basic sense of the *piel* is that of intensifying or amplifying an action, often causing it to endure in ongoing fashion in one way or another.

Thus, the *piel* is the stem of "extra" action, action of extra dimension, extra depth, doubled or multiplied in some way, "extra" strength, often bringing about a secondary (therefore "extra") consequence. It is used to embody an action or "substance" an action in some way by causing the action to persist in the form of the results it achieves. In other words, it often is used in the sense of bringing about a state that reflects the action. Basically, it communicates extra activity, especially that affects the state of something.

The *piel* often signifies a greater involvement of the actor and receiver in the action. Thus, it is used of those actions where the subject takes on the nature of the action, such as "to make a request" חָלָה in the *piel*.

Thus, the *piel* expresses an intensification or amplification of an action. Some basic ideas and uses derive from the *piel's* main idea. The following ideas are closely associated with intensity and implitude, yet these are not to be taken as categories of the *piel* but simply aids to begin processing what intensification of an action can actually mean in its many nuances:

Repetition is an intensification or amplification of an action

Distribution, likewise, is an amplification of an action

Transfer of action (the root action-idea is transferred into some state)

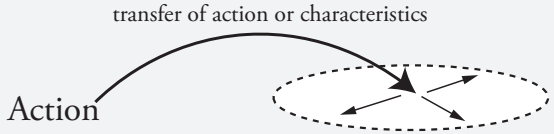
Thoroughness (distribution throughout, becoming then part of the state)

Emphasis (derived from intensity, also related to **finality**)

Sustained activity (intensification through duration, *an action in holding*, whether the author of the action was holding it out or causing it to be held out, such as by bringing it into a state)

Exertion, the amount of work or effort needed to accomplish the action.

Intentionality or purposefulness, the *piel* can highlight the intentionality of an action.



An action or characteristics of it distributed throughout an object, person, or situation
Thus, intensified
Thus, amplified
Thus, the action endures in a state of permeation, becoming characteristic in some way of the object, person, or situation

Examples

אַל־תְּיַגַּע־שָׁמָּה אֶת־כָּל־הָעָם כִּי מְעַט הֵמָּה

"do not labor the people there-ward, because they are few"

(Josh. 7:3)

יָרֵא means "to fear" but in the *piel* it can mean "to cause the effect of fear" (e.g., 2 Sam. 14:15)

יָסַר means "to instruct" but in the *piel* means "to chastise," an intensified type of instruction that leaves a deeper effect on the one instructed.

קָדַשׁ in the *qal* means "to be holy," while in the *piel* it means to cause the effect of this action, that is, "to make holy" or "to sanctify."

צָחַק in the *qal* means "to laugh," while in the *piel* it means to cause the effect of laughing (which can, thus, be used for the ideas of "mocking" or any activity that results in or causes another to laugh. This is what the Philistines used Samson for, Judges 16:25)

מָלֵא means "to be full" (an active state) but in the *piel* "to fill" (to bring about that state of being full).

As a causative, it almost always includes a greater involvement of the subject in the action itself. **Thus, the *piel* can express an increased intensity or involvement of the subject (and object) in the action, which, in turn, intensifies the action.** The *hithpael* form יִתְאַפַּק found in the account in Genesis 43:31 in which Joseph restrained his crying gives an example. The lexical form of this word is אָפַק and carries the basic idea of "to contain" or "restrain." Used in the *piel* reflexive form (the *hithpael*), it means "to restrain or contain one's self." This is what Joseph did after his emotional outbreak – he contained himself, before going back to see his brothers.

Now, since the *hithpael* is a reflexive of intensive stem, the intensive appears to signify in this case the effort involved in Joseph's act of restraining himself (and all other uses of this verb), highlighting the personal exertion needed to accomplish the action.

Very similarly, **extra exertion is required in a purposeful or intentional action, therefore the *piel* and its sub-forms (*pual* and *hithpael*) were capable of communicating that extra effort that is required while acting intentionally.** When the Philistine kings balked at king Achish's desire to bring David and his band along to fight Isreal, they reasoned with him that turning on the Philistines in battle was a perfect way for David to reconcile himself to his former master (Saul). They used the word יִתְרַצֶּה, a *hithpael* form of the word רָצָה "to please," reasoning that David would "please himself to the master of him" (יִתְרַצֶּה זֶה אֶל־אֲדֹנָיו - First Samuel 29:4). In this case, the intensive, reflexive does not mean that David would "please himself" but that he would "make himself pleasing," bringing out an inherent function of the *piel*, namely, that of bringing about the action of the verb as a standing condition or state. The Philistines feared that David would do to himself (first action) whatever was necessary to bring about the resultant action (extra action) of pleasing Saul. He would not "please himself," per say, but act on himself to bring himself into a pleasing state in relation to King Saul.

So, the intensifying nature of the *piel* could draw from its inherent meaning to communicate such ideas as the following:

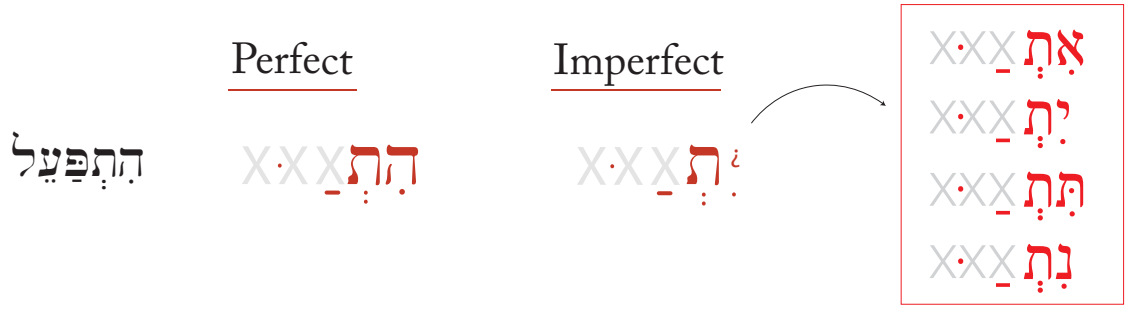
- the effect of the action on the object
- the effort of the subject to accomplish the action

- the magnitude of the action
- the spread of the action
- the repetition of the action
- the finality of the action (causing it to endure in a state)
- the involving nature of the action

4.5 § Pual

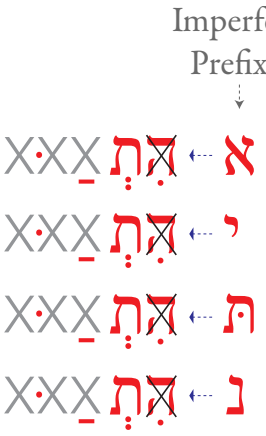
4.6 § The *Hithpael* הִתְפַּעֵל Stem

The *hithpael* is the reflexive of the *piel*. A reflexive action is one done by the subject to himself. **This may be direct, as in "he hit himself" or it may be indirect, as in "he did something that consequently came back to him." Further, the *hithpael* can be used to communicate the purposefulness or personal effort involved in an action, like when someone makes himself do something.**



The *hithpael* in the perfect retains the heavy suffix *hith-* (-הִתְ) unaltered throughout its forms. So, by knowing the perfect endings and by identifying the *hithpael* prefix the learner can fully identify most *hithpael* perfects.

In the imperfect, as seen in the charts above and below, the imperfect prefixes (אֵיתָנ) simply substitute for the *hey* in the heavy *hithpael* prefix.



The meaning of the הִתְפַּעֵל stem is that of a reflexive of the *piel*. Consider the following examples:

Verbal phrases	Translation	Parsing[50]
וַיִּתְחַבֵּא הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ	"Adam and his wife hid themselves" Gen. 3:8	*Hithpael perfect 3ms*
הִתְעַנִּי תַּחַת יָדֶיהָ	"submit thyself under her hands." Gen. 16:9	*Hithpael imperfect 3fs*
וַתִּקַּח הַצָּעִיף וַתִּתְכָּס׃	"she took a vail and covered herself" Gen. 24:65	*Hithpael impefect 3fs*

50 msc = masculine, plural construct; fsc = feminine, singular construct; etc.

וַיִּתְעַצֵּב אֶל־לִבּוֹ׃ then He grieved Himself to His heart Gen. 6:6 *Hithpael perfect 3ms*

לָמָּה תִתְרָאוּ " Why do ye look one upon another?" Gen. 42:1 *Hithpael imperfect 2mp*

Reciprocal (Indirect) Use of the *Hithpael*

The *hithpael* can be used to express reciprocal action (action done by one to another and then returned by the other, or back and forth action).

Consider the example below of Esau and Jacob in the womb.

וַיִּתְרֹצְצוּ הַבָּנִים "the sons *crushed* themselves" (in the womb) Genesis 25:22

Esau and Jacob were doing this activity to each other and, in turn, having it done to themselves. So, this is an extended use of the reflexive, for an action is done by one person to another, and as a consequence, the other does the action in return. So, these verbs could be expressed as a passive (e.g., "Jacob was crushed by Esau") but that only communicates part of the information. Jacob was, indeed, crushed by Esau in the womb...but Jacob was also crushing Esau in the womb. Their actions were coming back to themselves as responses from the other. The *hithpael* communicates all of this at once.

Another example of a reflexive that is indirect is found in Proverbs 31:30.

הִיא תִתְהַלָּל "she shall praise herself" Proverbs 31:30

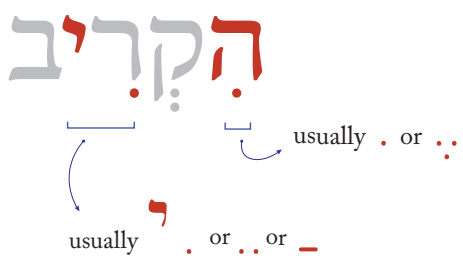
As the Authorized Version correctly noted, this woman is not praising herself

(i.e., boasting), though, indeed, she *is* praising herself. Her praise of herself is indirect, not produced by her own mouth or opinion, though *it is produced by herself*. She praises herself by producing a life that is in agreement with God and His design and this returns praise to her. The validity of her right choices are *totally* be confirmed by God Himself. *She shall be praised*.

4.7 § The *Hiphil* הִפְעִיל Stem

The *hiphil* is the causative active of the *Qal*.

Hiphil Perfect



Perfect Endings	*Hiphil* Perfect	
	הִקְרִיב	
ה	הִקְרִיבָה	Singular
תָּ	הִקְרַבְתָּ	
תְּ	הִקְרַבְתְּ	
תִּי	הִקְרַבְתִּי	
וּ	הִקְרִיבוּ	
תֶּם	הִקְרַבְתֶּם	Plural
תֶּן	הִקְרַבְתֶּן	
נוּ	הִקְרַבְנוּ	

Hiphil Perfect

הִקְרִיב	Singular
הִקְרִיבָה	
הִקְרַבְתָּ	
הִקְרַבְתְּ	
הִקְרַבְתִּי	
הִקְרִיבוּ	Plural
הִקְרַבְתֶּם	
הִקְרַבְתֶּן	
הִקְרַבְנוּ	

Hey Prefix Pattern *

הַ	Strong Verb	כָּבַד	הִכְבִּיד
הָ	Hollow verbs	קוּם	הֲקִמֹתִי
הַ	Geminite Verbs	חָלַל	הֵחֵל
הוֹ	I-yod verbs	יָלַד	הוֹלִיד
הַ/הֶ **	I-guttural verbs	אָמַן	הֶאֱמִין
הוֹ	I-ה	הָלַךְ	הוֹלִיךְ

* based on a personal study of nearly all 2,678 hiphil perfect forms found in Scripture

** copies the vowel of the composite *sh'wa* that follows it or defaults to a *seghol* if no composite *sh'wa*

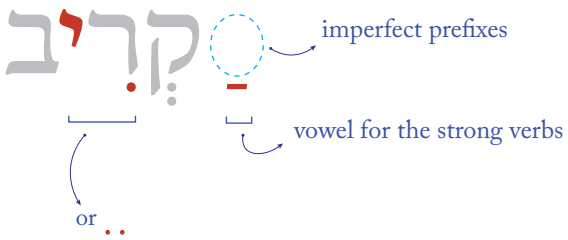
Examples

Niphal Imperfects	Translation	Passage
וַיַּבְדֵּל אֱלֹהִים בֵּין הָאוֹר וּבֵין הַחֹשֶׁךְ׃	"...and God **divided** the light from the darkness."	Genesis 1:4
כִּי לֹא הִמְטִיר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים עַל־הָאָרֶץ	"for the LORD God had not **caused it to rain** upon the earth"	Genesis 35:10

וַיִּפָּג לִבּוֹ כִּי לֹא־הֶאֱמִין לָהֶם׃ "And Jacob's heart fainted, for **he believed** them not" [literally "because he did not cause firmness to them" in his mind] Genesis 45:26

Hiphil Imperfects

Hiphil Imperfect Diagnostics



Hiphil Imperfect

יַקְרִיב	
תַּקְרִיב	
תַּקְרִיב	Singular
תַּקְרִיבִי	
אַקְרִיב	
יַקְרִיבוּ	
תַּקְרֵיבְנָה	
תַּקְרִיבוּ	Plural
תַּקְרֵיבְנָה	
נַקְרִיב	

4.8 § The *waw* conjunction and *waw* consecutive

The *waw*-consecutive is a unique conjunction that expresses the idea of sequential action or thought. Now, the *waw*-consecutive only attaches to a verb.

The *waw*-consecutives in Hebrew express one basic concept: **sequential relationship**, one action following another action either in time or in thought.

So, this one basic concept of *sequential relationship* has two basic uses:

1. temporal sequence

2. logical sequence

Temporal sequences are most common, found prolifically throughout the historical accounts (narrative portions) of Scripture. Logical sequences are less common but still common. In parallelism structures (aka "poetry") the *waw*-consecutive is rare, not because of "stylistic reasons," but because of the parallel structure and purpose of these portions of Scripture.

So, the *waw* consecutive communicates a temporal sequence ("and then...") of the actions and events it introduces. When dealing with thoughts, it introduces a logical sequence (such as "therefore" or "so then").

It is possible that all or nearly all the *waw*-consecutives can be summarized by the two English phrases "and then" (temporal sequence, *subsequence*) and "so then" (logical sequence, *consequence*).

Main points concerning the *waw* consecutive:

- Generally, each sequence starts with **a main verb that establishes the timing and context** of the sequence (the starting point).[51]
- **This main verb of the sequence does not have a *waw* consecutive attached**. This establishing verb is then followed by a verb or a chain of verbs governed by *waw* consecutives.
- The verbs that are governed by a *waw* consecutive are all in the **opposite aspect** (perfect or imperfect) of the establishing verb.

Here is a schematic of a description of a past event and the sequence of actions within it:

51 Some *waw*-consecutives do not go back to an individual establishing verb, such as those that start books of Scripture. These go back to the accounts of Scripture preceding them.

Perfect

- *waw consec.* on **imperfect**
- *waw consec.* on **imperfect**
- *waw consec.* on **imperfect**
- *waw consec.* on **imperfect**

Example

Psalm 40:1-3
(English verse numbers)

Here is a schematic of a description of a present or future event and the sequence of actions within it:

Imperfect

- *waw consec.* on **perfect**
- *waw consec.* on **perfect**
- *waw consec.* on **perfect**
- *waw consec.* on **perfect**

Morphology

In the perfect, the *form* of the conjunction is no different than a regular *waw* conjunction. So, when used on a perfect verb, the consecutive is identified by its distinct change of tense from the establishing verb, as demonstrated above.

In the imperfect, the *waw*-consecutive has a unique form that clearly identifies it. Likewise, it can be identified from its change of aspect (perfect to imperfect), so that a *waw*-consecutive on an imperfect is sequenced off of a verb in the perfect. That is, a past-tense sequence will be carried forward by imperfect aspect verbs.

On an imperfect verb, the pointing of the *waw* changes to וְ followed by a *dagesh* forte.

On a perfect verb, the pointing of the *waw* **does not change**: וְ.

Range of Meaning

Some possible translations that seek to capture in English the consecutive

nature of *waw*-consecutive verbs:

Temporal
(subsequence)

- **"then"**
- "and then"
- "afterward" Job 42:16
- "subsequently"
- "subsequent to that"

Logical
(consequence)

- **"so"** 2 Sam. 14:5
- "and so"
- "therefore" Psalm 143:4, Ps. 28:7(8 in Hebrew)
- "thus" Psalm 38:14
- "consequently" Ps. 69:20 Hebrew verse
- "that means"
- "for" Jonah 2:3, 3:6

Examples

Deuteronomy 4:6 *waw*-consecutive on a perfect (with imperfect establishing verb)

Genesis 24:8 *waw*-consecutive on a perfect (with imperfect establishing verb)

Genesis 9:14 *waw*-consecutive on a perfect (preceded by an infinitive, which expresses the imperfect idea)

Ps. 143:3-4 *waw*-consecutive on an imperfect

Two situations that can cause confusion:

יְהוָה + וְ

A regular *waw* conjunction on the LORD's Name will appear to the learner as a *waw* consecutive, but it is not a *waw* consecutive (which only occurs on verbs). It lacks the *dagesh* forte and it is not on a verb. A regular *waw* conjunction on the LORD's Name takes the following form: וַיהוָה

Guttural + וַ֥ = וָ

A *waw* consecutive on an imperfect verb that begins with a guttural letter will take an altered form of the imperfect *waw* consecutive (וַ֥). The guttural rejects the *daghesh* forte and the *waw* lengthens to a *qamets*.

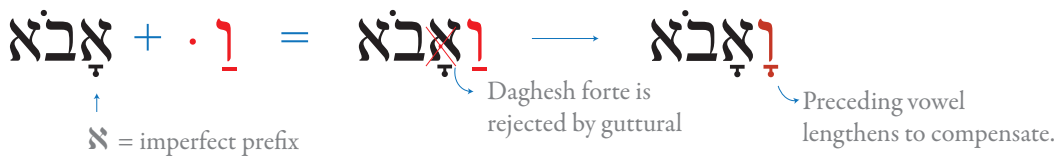


Illustration:
(All three are *waw* consecutives)

52

4.9 § Hebrew Participles

The English participle can be identified by the distinct "-ing" ending, such as in the words "running" or "printing." Participles are verbals, being derived from verbs but acting as adjectives (and as nouns when used substantively). Thus, participles are verbal adjectives. In the sentence "I print books," the word *print* is the finite verb of the clause but the participle of it, *printing*, can function as an adjective (e.g., "printing machine"), but it can also function substantively as a subject, as in "printing makes copying easy." In this way, actions (verbs) can be used descriptively.

Key points concerning the Qal active participle:

- **The Qal active participles all begin with a *holem*** (as seen in the chart below)
- Except for the alternate feminine singular form, **the endings are identical to the absolute noun endings**
- Like nouns, the participles can also be placed in construct-absolute relationships, taking the same construct endings as nouns when doing so.[53]
- Further, each of the various "stems" have their own participial form.

52 Genesis 24:47, see the appendix on *waw*-consecutives for an explanation of how "I asked and (then) I said" can be sequential

53 The feminine singular segholet form (תXXX) is the feminine singular construct form, though also functioning as the main feminine singular absolute form.

- The Hebrews often used the participle as a substantive, replacing a noun entirely by a descriptive participle. Just as with adjectives, when the participle is acting as a substantive, it will often take the article, such as הַסֹּבֵב, "the encircling (one)" (Gen. 2:11).

Qal Active Participle Chart

	singular	plural
masculine	xxx	xxים
feminine	xxה xxת	xxות

Illustrated using the root verb קטל ("to kill"):

	singular		plural	
masc.	קֹטֵל	"killing" (he/it)	קֹטְלִים	"killing" (they masc.)
fem.	קֹטֶלֶת	"killing" (she/it)	קֹטְלוֹת	"killing" (they fem.)
	קֹטְלֶת	"killing" (she/it)		

EXAMPLES IN SCRIPTURE

Participles	Parsing[54]	Translation	
וְשָׂרָה שֹׁמַעַת[55]	*fs*	"and Sarah (was) hearing"	Gen. 18:10
כָּל־הַשֹּׁמֵעַ	*ms*	"the entirety of the (one) hearing"	Gen. 26:6
הָרֹמֶשֶׂת	*fs*	the living creature "the (one) moving"	Gen. 1:21
כָּל־אֹכֵל	*Qal ms*	"every (one) eating"	Gen. 12:19
יוֹדֵעַ יְהוָה	*ms*	"the LORD (exists) knowing"	Psalm 1:6
מִי־הָאִישׁ ... אֹהֵב יָמִים	*ms*	"who (exists) the man ... loving days"[56]	Psalm 34:12 (13 in Hebrew)
הַיֹּצְאִים מִן־הַתֵּבָה	*mp*	"the (ones) going out from the ark"	Genesis 9:18
הַלְּבָרוֹת	*fp*	lips "the (ones) speaking"	Psalm 31:19
הַצַּר הַצֹּרֵר אֶתְכֶם	*ms*	the oppressor, the (one) oppressing you[57]	Numbers 10:9

54 msc = masculine, singular construct; fsc = feminine, singular construct; etc.

55 Remember the rule seen earlier in the grammar: "gutturals prefer *pathaqs* under and before them." Due to the *ayen*, the *seghols* changed to *pathaqs*.

56 Something in his days makes them highly pleasing to him, fully acceptive of them, desirous to have them. This is indicative of an entire life, a silent description of all that makes up his life with its desires, progressions, and arrivals, pointing out a life that is not only successful but one that is successful at the right things.

57 As seen in this example, the participle, even when acting as a substantive, can take an object.

1. Final gutturals and the Qal active participle

Final ה

For verbs ending in *hey*, the *sere* of the middle root letter changes to a *seghol* in the masculine singular: XXֵX + עשׂה = עֹשֶׂה (not עֹשֵׂה)

Further, except in the masculine singular, the hey drops out in all other genders and numbers, as seen here:

	singular	plural
m	עֹשֶׂה	עֹשִׂים
f	עֹשָׂה	עֹשׂוֹת

Final ע and ח

שָׁמַע becomes שֹׁמַעַת

פָּרַח becomes פֹּרַחַת

As stated under the gutturals section, "gutturals prefer *pathaq's* under and before them." Thus, the Qal active feminine singular participle of שָׁמַע is שֹׁמַעַת instead of שֹׁמֶעֶת. This pattern is consistent for verbs which end in *ayin* as well *hketh*.

Final א

יָצָא becomes יֹצֵאת

For the verbs ending in *aleph* the pointing is *holem-sere* for the feminine singular. Since *aleph*, due to its quiescent nature, loses its vowel and becomes entirely unvoiced, that is, *quiescent*, the preceding vowel to lengthen from a *seghol* (short E Class vowel) to a *sere* (long E Class vowel). For example, the verb יָצָא becomes יֹצֵאת in the Qal active feminine singular participle.

Derived Stem Participles

Except for *Niphal*, all derived stem participles begin with a מ. This is the derived stem equivolant to the "-ing" ending in English.

The derived stem participles are each easily identified by the same diagnostics as the imperfect verb. This is understandable, for the imperfect verbs express incomplete action and participles by their very nature express incomplete action ("durative" or ongoing).

Diagnostics

(Strong Verb)

מְXַXּX	Piel
מְXֻXּXָ	Pual
מִתְXַXּX	Hithpael
מַXXִיX	Hiphil
נִXXָX	Niphal

Examples

Participles	**Parsing**[58]	**Translation**

58 msc = masculine, singular construct; fsc = feminine, singular construct; etc.

וִיהִי מַבְדִּיל	*Hiphil ms*	"and it will exist causing division"	Gen. 1:6
הַמַּקְרִיב אֶת־זֶבַח	*Hiphil ms*	"the (one) causing to draw near a sacrifice" sense: the one who is causing a sacrifice to draw near	Lev. 7:29
כִּמְצַחֵק	*Piel ms*	"as mocking"	Gen. 19:14
לַהַט הַחֶרֶב הַמִּתְהַפֶּכֶת	*Hithpael fs*	"the flame of the sword, the (one) turning itself intensively"[59]	Gen. 3:24
הַמַּאֲמִין לֹא יָחִישׁ	*Hiphil fs*	"the one causing firmness will not make haste"	Isaiah 28:16

4.10 § Hebrew Infinitives

Unlike finite (limited) verbs, infinitives (infinite, not-limited) express more general action that is not limited by such things as person, gender, number, or aspect (perfect and imperfect).[60] Thus, they tend to express action more abstractly, lifting the action out from the limitations of the finite verb to look at it in the bare sense of the action.

Note, though, **that the Hebrew infinitives do express stem information** (e.g., piel, hiphil, etc.).

The Hebrew infinitives share a feature of language that is unique to three closely related Hebrew languages,[61] namely, that of having two distinct infinitives. **They are the *infinitive absolute* and the *infinitive construct*.** These two infinitives

59 The clause here states, "And then He caused to dwell...the flame of the sword, the one turning itself intensively." The verb establishes that both the Cherubim and the sword were not temporarily situated at the entrance of the Garden but would have been there until the Flood destroyed it and prevented once and for all man re-entering the Garden.

60 Except very rarely

61 **Hebrew, Phoenician, and Ammonite** - Waltke-O'Conner 1990 p. 580. The two languages Phoenician and Ammonite were nearly identical to Hebrew, the Ammonite language having come from Lot, Abraham's close relationship (Gen. 19:37-38).

function in ways distinct from each other. Unlike the terms used for the nouns, when "absolute" and "construct" are applied to infinitives, they communicate something different (see below). For example, unlike absolute-construct noun forms, the infinitive absolute is not the "normal" form and the infinitive construct a "modified" form used to form a chain idea. The infinitive construct can, indeed, be used in a construct-absolute phrase but it is by no means limited to such phrases.

Infinitive Constructs

Basic form:

The infinitive construct is the only infinitive that can take a pronominal suffix (forming a construct-absolute chain with the pronominal suffix acting as the absolute). It is the one most like the English infinitive (e.g., "to go," "to walk," "to run" or even stretching into the English participle territory in "going," "running," "walking") and is often joined to a *lamed* preposition to express purpose (much like the English structure "to + *verb*," as "to run" or "to sit").

The infinitive construct brings out more of the nominal (noun) side of the infinitive; whereas the infinitive absolute brings out more of the verbal side of the infinitive. In other words, the infinitive construct tends to function more as a noun, while the infinitive absolute tends to function more as a verb.

Some of the common noun-functions of the infinitive construct:

- **Object of the preposition** (*very* frequent!)
  (Genesis 9:16 לִזְכֹּר "to remember")
  One common use of the infinitive construct with the preposition: **to fulfill the action of a finite verb, such as giving its purpose** (much like the English infinitive in the clause "he works to earn money"). Importantly, the action expressed in the infinitive in such cases is an aspect of the action contained in the finite verb.

- **In a construct-absolute phrase** (Gen. 2:4)
  The regular form of the infinitive construct, which is שְׁמֹר **(*sh'wa* + *holem*), can become** שְׁמָר **(*sh'wa* + *short o*) in construct.**
  Example: The phrase נְתֹן־זֶרַע is a construct-absolute phrase. It contains an infinitive construct (נְתֹן from נָתַן "he gave") combined with a noun functioning as the absolute, namely, זֶרַע ("seed"). Yet, due to the accent moving from the construct to the absolute, the final syllable of the infinitive construct (תֹּן) becomes a closed, unaccented syllable. Therefore, the vowel reduces to a short "o" (*qamets hkatuph*) as seen in Genesis 38:9: נָתָן־זֶרַע ("giving of seed").

- **Subject of a verb**

- **Etc.**

Infinitive Absolute

Basic form:

Emphasis: The main use of the infinitive absolute is that of adverbially intensifying the action of a finite (regular) verb. Usually, it will take the same root as the verb it is intensifying. This is another manifestation of the Hebrew *doubling-for-emphasis*.

Examples:

אָכֹל תֹּאכֵל, "eating you will eat" (KJV "thou mayest eat freely" Gen. 2:16). Here the finite verb is תֹּאכֵל and the infinitive absolute is אָכֹל, both coming from the same root אָכַל (eat). Thus, in some of the very earliest communication between God and man, the Creator spoke in such a way as to greatly intensify the beauty and freedom that the first humans had in accessing the pleasures of His garden. [62]

מוֹת תָּמוּת, "dying you will die" (KJV "thou shalt surely die" Gen. 2:17). (This verb is a weak verb, so the infinitive does not have the full pointing of a normal infinitive absolute.)
These two words are forms of the basic Hebrew verb מוּת, meaning "to die." This yields more clarity into the earliest language, as this is an actual quote of what the Creator told Adam (as stated clearly by the use of לֵאמֹר and יְצַו in verse 16). The Creator did not speak incomprehensible words and structures to Adam. Therefore, Adam comprehended the meaning of the Creator's words, **already able**

62 This is another manifestation of the fact that He does not withhold anything good from those who walk according to His design, for, to provide what is good for man is the intent of His perfect design for life, the will that He wills for the entire creation as it operates under the light of His person.

to mentally "parse" the meaning of a Hebrew infinitive absolute joined to a finite verb of the same root, on the first day of his life.

Specificity: Sometimes the infinitive absolute adds specificity to the action of the main verb (see Genesis 12:9)

Duration: One of the intensifying functions of the infinitive absolute in ancient Hebrew was that of prolonging the action of the main verb. That is, it indicated that the action of the main verb did not occur and then stop but occurred in an ongoing manner. It *endured*. "**The Infinitive Absolute expresses emphasis when it immediately precedes the finite verb, and duration when it immediately follows it**."[63]

> Example: וַיֵּצֵ֥א יָצוֹא, of the raven which Noah sent out "going out it went out" (KJV "which went forth to and fro" Gen. 8:7). The sense of this seems to be that the raven kept going out searching and though the waters still covered the land, it continued to go out until the time came when the waters dried up sufficiently for it to find food and shelter on the dry land. Notice that the infinitive absolute, in this case, *followed* the finite verb.

Standing as a verb: the infinitive absolute may stand as a substitute for a verb.

[1 Sam. 2:16 infinitive absolute in the *piel* paired with *hiphil* finite verb of the same root]

63 Weingreen p. 79. Note: though Weingreen makes this statement without qualification, it should be understood with reservation. The infinitive absolutes do not exclusively abide by this "rule."

4.11 §Demonstrative Pronouns (*this, that*)

English has two basic demonstrative pronouns: "this" (near) and "that" (far).

While Hebrew overwhelmingly uses one demonstrative, which functions like the English "near" demonstrative, it does have a structure to express a distinctly "far demonstrative" idea.

Near Demonstrative

The following set of demonstrative pronouns function as near demonstratives.

singular "this"		plural "these"
זֶה	זֹאת	אֵלֶּה
m	f	m/f

64

A Hebrew demonstrative pronoun has **gender** and **number** and agrees with its antecedent in both.

The following two points are foundational for the demonstrative pronoun:

> **1. The demonstratives could modify nouns adjectivally** (called a "demonstrative adjective," as in "this person") **or they could stand in a predicate position** (e.g., "this *is* a person").
>
> 2. As for structure, the demonstrative pronouns were structured in the same manner as adjectives, following the

64 The feminine singular has two variant forms: זֹה (ten times) & זוֹ (twice) - Walkte & O'Conner's Hebrew Syntax, Eisenbrauns, 1990, Accordance edition.

same rules for both the attributive construction and the predicate construction.

Attributive Position

Thus, precisely like the attributive adjective, a demonstrative adjective *followed* the noun that it modified and took the article, as seen here:

	Demonstrative Pro.		Adjective	
singular	הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה	*this man*	הָאִישׁ הַטּוֹב	*the good man*
	הָאִשָּׁה הַזֹּאת	*this woman*	הָאִשָּׁה הַטּוֹבָה	*the good woman*
plural	הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה	*these men*	הָאֲנָשִׁים הַטּוֹבִים	*the good men*
	הַנָּשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה	*these women*	הַנָּשִׁים הַטּוֹבוֹת	*the good women*

Further Examples

סֵפֶר הַבְּרִית הַזֶּה	*"The Book of this covenant"*	2 Kings 23:21	*That is, in the book of the Law found in the Temple under Josiah*

Predicate Position

When in the predicate position, the demonstrative did not take the article.

Predicate and Attributive Positions Compared	
זֶה הַדֶּרֶךְ	this (is) the way
זֹאת הָעִיר	this (is) the city[65]
הַדֶּרֶךְ הַזֶּה	this way
הָעִיר הַזֹּאת	this city

The following example is an example of a ***predicate*** use of אֵלֶּה. **Notice that the demonstrative pronoun does not have the article, while the noun does**. Also notice that they agree in number (both plural).

וְאֵלֶּה הַמִּשְׁפָּטִים

lit. "and these *exist* the standards of evaluation" (Ex. 21:1)

Exodus 3:15 has two examples of the predicate use of זֶה in a parallel construction: זֶה־שְּׁמִי לְעֹלָם and וְזֶה זִכְרִי לְדֹר דֹּר. These two clauses (with understood verbs) are words spoken directly by the Creator to Moses, defining His Name אֶהְיֶה ("I Exist"). Here the Hebrew and a literal translation of it are laid out to demonstrate the parallelism between the lines.

65 2 Kings 6:19

Hebrew parallelism

זֶה־ שְׁמִי לְעֹלָם

וְזֶה זִכְרִי לְדֹר דֹּר

Literal Translation

this *exists*	the Name of Me	to unlimited time
and this *exists*	the Memorial of Me	to generation-generation

Another example is found in Genesis 12:12, where the demonstrative pronoun follows the noun. Notice that the noun is definite (by absolute, that is, by the pronominal suffix), while the demonstrative pronoun does not have the article.

אִשְׁתְּךָ זֹאת

"this *exists* the woman of him"

Far Demonstrative

Hebrew was built to employ the *regular pronouns* at those times when a distinctly "far demonstrative" idea was desired. These were joined with the definite article, as seen in the chart here.

	singular "that"	plural "those"
m	הַהוּא	הַהֵֽמָּה (הֵם)
f	הַהִיא	הַהֵֽנָּה (הֵן)

Attributive Position

Using the regular pronouns as "far" demonstratives appeared mainly in the attributive position.

Far Demonstrative Examples	
הָאִישׁ הַהוּא	"that man" - Lev. 17:4
הָאֲנָשִׁים הָהֵֽמָּה	"those men" - Num. 9:7
בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם	"in those days" - Gen. 6:4
הִוא מַצֵּבָת	"that *is* the pillar" - Gen. 35:20

4.12 § Relative Pronoun אֲשֶׁר

All of the English relative pronouns (e.g., who, whom, which, etc.) are taken in by the indeclinable[66] word אֲשֶׁר.

As seen here, the relative pronoun is the same when modifying singular and plural nouns. It only has one form and does not decline (change form to agree).

Singular noun	Plural noun
הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר	הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר
"the man which"	"the words which"

Further, this relative pronoun had a broader use in Hebrew which caused it to border on being a conjunction. This broader usage is easy to understand in light of the etymology of אֲשֶׁר. [See Gesenius Hebrew Lexicon for "conjunctive" uses of אֲשֶׁר]

This relative pronoun could be *attached* to words as well.[67] It underwent the following changes:

66 "Indeclinable" means that it does not change form for person, gender, and number. One form is used for all.

67 The Spirit moved Solomon to use this form of the word more than any other writier.

4.13 §Interrogative *Hey* ה (the question marker)

The following two passages both record a question but only one included the question marker. So, the question was abbreviated, just as often done in English. ("Did you eat yet?" can be shorted to "You eat yet?" and understood in spoken language, even though no question mark accompanies this clause in spoken language.)

1 Kings 2:13 הֲשָׁלוֹם בֹּאֶךָ

1 Samuel 16:14 שָׁלֹם בּוֹאֶךָ

4.14 §Adverb of Entreaty נָא

This little Hebrew word, the word נָא, is a remarkable word. It was akin to our English word "please."

The word נָא marked that something was being requested for special care by the recipient, especially *relationally*. It showed deference to the will of the recipient,

inviting the person to comply willingly with what was commanded or requested. (It did *not* signal a lack of urgency, however.) Rather than basing compliance with the command exculsively on the authority of the one issuing it, it moved the focus to the relationship that they shared and the wisdom of complying. Thus, the word נָא was used to soften resistance to a request or command by showing personal deference to the recipient.

It could be called an "adverb of entreaty," a term that emphasized that the one issuing the command was lowering himself, either in order to acknowledge the greater authority of the other (as when man used it with God) or, if his own authority was greater, due to the care the authority had for the one addressed (as when God used it with man).

4.15 §Directional *Hey* (ה ָ) (aka "locative *hey*")

The directional *hey* is a *qamets-hey* ending that is placed on the end of words to indicate direction *toward* or arrival *at*[68] that location after moving toward it. It can be placed on the ends of adverbs (to show direction toward the adverbial idea[69]) but most often it is found on nouns that indicate a location.

This is a common element of the Hebrew language, found over 1,000 times in the Old Testament.

Genesis 19:1 *Abraham to Lot*

68 1Kings 20:43
And the king of Israel...came to Samaria
מֶ֣לֶךְ־יִשְׂרָאֵ֔ל ...וַיָּבֹ֖א שֹׁמְרוֹנָֽה׃

69 Genesis 6:16 מִלְמַ֫עְלָה, Genesis 19:20 שָׁמָּה (literally, "there-ward")

וַיִּשְׁתַּחוּ אַפַּיִם אָרְצָה

" and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground"

Genesis 18:22 *Angels toward Sodom*

וַיֵּלְכוּ סְדֹמָה

"and went toward Sodom"

Jonah 1:3 *Jonah fleeing*

וַיָּקָם יוֹנָה לִבְרֹחַ תַּרְשִׁישָׁה

"But Jonah rose up to flee unto Tarshish"

2 Kings 20:20 *Hezekiah excavates a water tunnel*

וַיָּבֵא אֶת־הַמַּיִם הָעִירָה

"and brought water into the city"

Weak Verbs Overview

5.1 § Introduction to Weak Verbs

The weak verbs are those verbs which have a consonant that causes their forms to deviate from the standard forms. The guttural consonants (אהחע) are prominent among the weak verbs. So are י and ב. Weak verbs are no different than the normal verbs in meaning. Slight differences in form are the only difference.

Keeping in mind previous rules concerning vowel changes will be essential for understanding the weak letters, such as the rules that gutturals cannot take a *daghesh* forte and gutturals cannot take a simple vocal *sh'wa*.

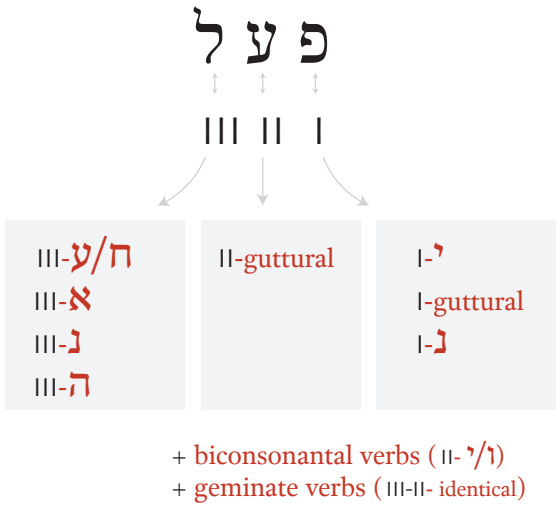
The three weak positions: פעל

Historically, the three letters of the Hebrew verb פָּעַל have been used to identify the location of the weak letter in a weak verb. For example, if the first letter of a verb was a guttural, then it was called a פ-guttural verb. If the second letter was a guttural, then it was called an ע-guttural. If the third letter was a guttural then the word was called a ל-guttural. Some grammars still use this older system, so both are introduced here.

Most newer grammars use roman numerals (I, II, III) to refer to the three positions of the three root letters. So, I-א refers to a verb root that begins with an א, such as אָכַל ("to eat"). Whereas III-ה stands for all the verb roots that end in ה, such as עָשָׂה.

In the chart below, you will find the main categories of "weak verbs," followed

by introductory "pointers" concerning some of the most common changes of each category.



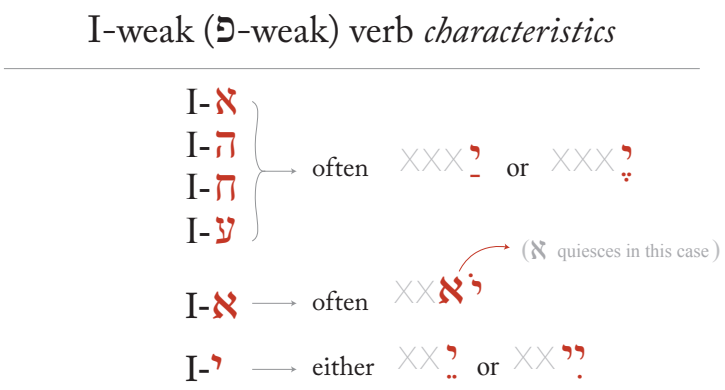
Read "Weak Verb Traits" in *Learning Biblical Hebrew: Reading for Comprehension: An Introductory Grammar* by Kutz, Josburger

Trait 1: vowelless nun likes to assimilate

Trait 2: Gutturals do not double, prefer a-class vowels, and often take composite shewa.

Trait 3: Aleph likes to quiesce

Trait 4: Waw and yod like to drop or coalesce

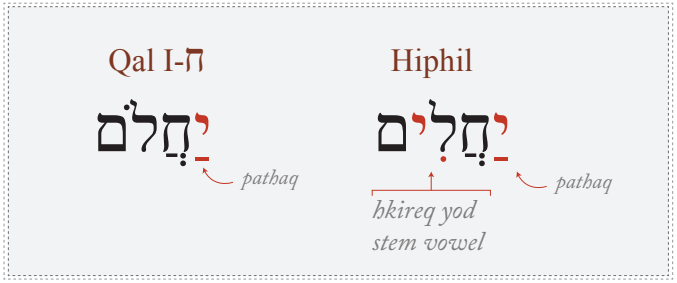


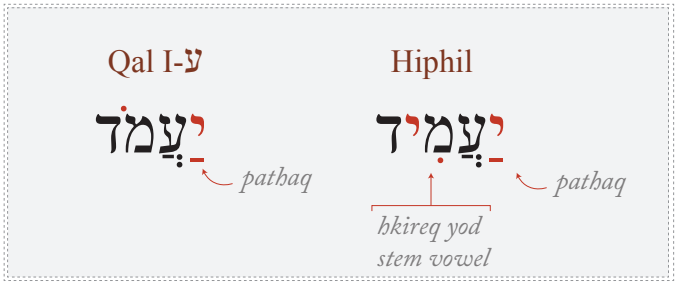
5.2 § I-gutturals

The I-gutturals frequently take a *pathaq* or *seghol* under their imperfect prefixes, as seen in the following four forms:

יַחְתּוֹם - יַחְמוֹל - יַחְמֹד - תַּחְשְׁבוּ

The *pathaq* arising from the I-guttural must be distinguished from the *pathaq* that is characteristic (diagnostic) of the *hiphil* imperfect prefix. The following illustrations show the relationship and distinction between the two:





I-א

Though I-א can take a *seghol* prefix-vowel, it regularly takes a *holem* prefix-vowel. When it does, the א loses all of its pointing (becomes "quiescent"), as seen in the following three examples:

תֹּאמַר - יֹאמְרוּ - יֹאמַר

The normal pointing of the *hiphil* perfect is הִפְעִיל with a *hiriq* under the *hey*. Yet, as seen in Ez. 32:13, when *aleph* was the first letter, the *aleph* took a composite *sh'wa*, and the *hey* mirrored it: הַאֲבַדְתִּי

The five I-א Hebrew verbs[70] are listed below, with a mnemonic for memory:

He said he willed to *eat* what *he baked*
even if *he was destroyed*

אָמַר he said
אָבָה he willed
אָכַל he ate

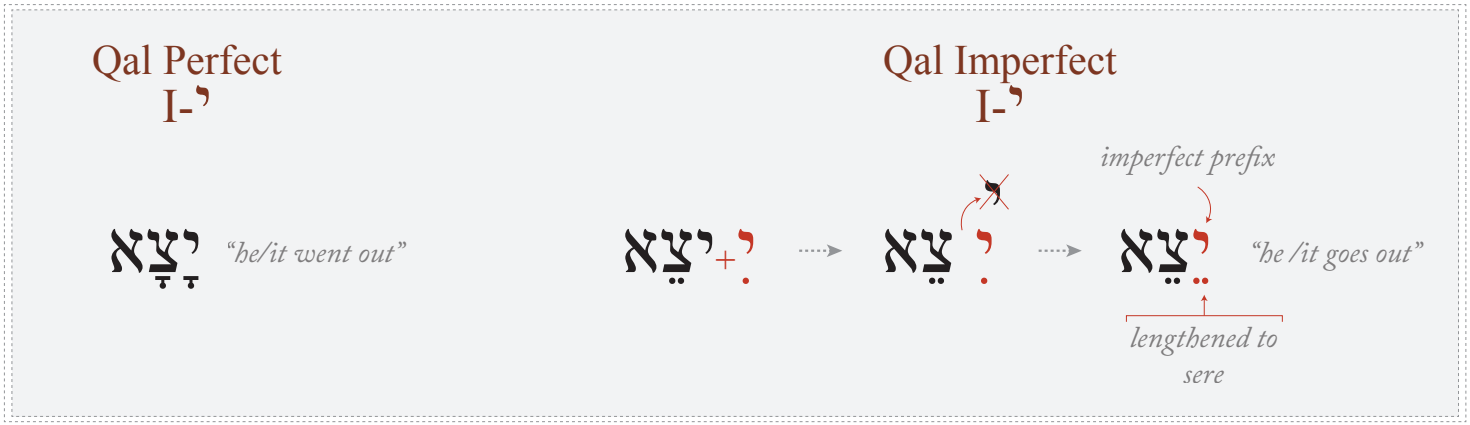
70 Cook & Homstedt, *Beginning Biblical Hebrew,* Baker, 2013, page a-26

אָפָה he baked

אָבַד he destroyed

I-י

The two characteristic changes of a I-י imperfect prefix is that either the י of the verb root drops out, resulting in lengthening the prefix-vowel (i.e., יֵ) or the י of the verb root coalesces with the prefixed *hiriq* to become a *hiriq yod* (i.e., יִי).



נֵרְדָה - יִיטַב - תִּירָא - יֵצֵא[71]

הָלַךְ

Interestingly, the verb הָלַךְ follows the pattern of I-י. Thus...

Instead of תְּהַלֵּךְ the form becomes תֵּלֵךְ

Instead of תְּהַלְכִי the form becomes תֵּלְכִי

Instead of אֶהַלֵּךְ the form becomes אֵלֵךְ

Instead of יְהַלְכוּ the form becomes יֵלְכוּ

Only on rare occasions is the ה retained, such as in Psalm 91:6 יַהֲלֹךְ "the pestilence that **walketh** in darkness"

71 From the verb יָרַד (to descend), with the 1st common plural נ imperfect prefix

III-ה

Main changes to remember:

PERFECT

IMPERFECT

בָּנָה - *to build*

PERFECT

Singular

			what replaces the hey:
3m	בָּנָה		
3f	בָּנְתָה	ה dropped	ת
2m	בָּנִיתָ	ה dropped	י.
2f	בָּנִית	ה dropped	י.
1c	בָּנִיתִי	ה dropped	י.

Plural

3m	בָּנוּ	ה dropped	
3f	בָּנוּ	ה dropped	
2m	בְּנִיתֶם	ה dropped	י.
2f	בְּנִיתֶן	ה dropped	י.
1c	בָּנִינוּ	ה dropped	י.

RULE

The ה drops out in every case that an ending is added
(that is, in all forms but the 3ms)

IMPERFECT

Singular

3m	יִבְנֶה	
3f	תִּבְנֶה	
2m	תִּבְנֶה	
2f	תִּבְנִי	ה dropped
1c	אֶבְנֶה	

Plural

3m	יִבְנוּ	ה dropped
3f	תִּבְנֶינָה	ה dropped
2m	תִּבְנוּ	ה dropped
2f	תִּבְנֶינָה	ה dropped
1c	נִבְנֶה	

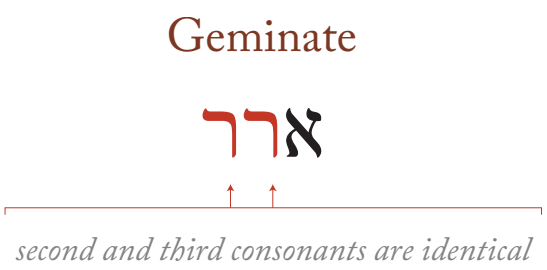
RULE

Either the ה receives a *seghol* before it
or it drops out

In both perfect and imperfect, whenever an ending (suffix) is added to the verb, the *hey* drops out.

5.3 § GEMINATE VERBS (letters II & III are Identical)

Geminate verbs are verbs whose last two root-letters are identical.



The meaning of the geminate verbs is no different than other verbs, but the two identical letters do cause numerous changes. These will be learned at a more advanced level.

In the imperfect, one of the two identical letters drops out, leaving the remaining two letters.[72]

Examples

תִּסֹּב numbers 36:7 from the verb סָבַב

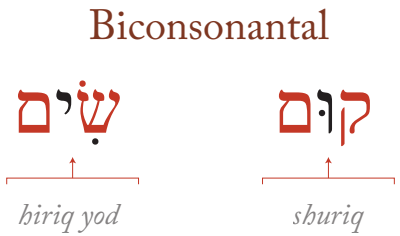
5.4 § BI-CONSONANTAL VERBS: II-ו/י

Bi-consonantal verbs are verbs built around what appears to be a two-letter root.[73] The lexical for (vocabulary form) of a biconsonantal verb takes a middle ו or

72 A rare case in which the second radical (i.e., root letter) is not dropped in the imperfect: Jeremiah 31:22

73 In fact, these roots are three-letter roots with one letter understood. Example: a third consonant appears in מוּת "to die" in its other forms, as in Piel (Polel) participle

י. These are also called "hollow verbs" because the middle vowel drops out in a number of forms so that they become "hollow."[74]



This is the form of the word learned in the vocabulary, such as שִׂים and מוּת and קוּם. Yet, in the perfect verb conjugation, these appear with only their two consonants as the root, such as שׂם and מת and קם. In the imperfect, it appears in its full form.

סוּר

רוּם

כּוּן

שׁוּב

מְמוֹתֶתֶת. Likewise, in the verb כּוּן ("to establish") appears a third consonant in such forms as the *hiphil*: הֲכִינֹנוּ

74 "The middle waw or yod drops out in the Qal perfect and active participle, all the Hophal, and the waw consecutive imperfects and jussives of both the Qal and Hiphil." Barrett, M. P. V., & Bell, R. D. (2007). Bob Jones University Seminary Hebrew Handbook (M. Schleifer, Ed.; Sixth Edition, p. 47). Bob Jones University Press.

Qal Imperfect קוּם

	Singular
3m	יָקוּם
3f	תָּקוּם
2m	תָּקוּם
2f	תָּקוֻמִי
1c	אָקוּם

	Plural
3m	יָקוֻמוּ
3f	תְּקוּמְנָה
2m	תָּקוֻמוּ
2f	תְּקוּמְנָה
1c	נָקוּם

Qal Perfect קוּם

	Singular
3m	קָם
3f	קָֽמָה
2m	קַמְתָּ
2f	קַמְתְּ
1c	קַמְתִּי

	Plural
3m	קָמוּ
3f	קָֽמוּ
2m	קַמְתֶּם
2f	קַמְתֶּן
1c	קַמְנוּ

Imperfect Weak Verb Examples

III-ה verbs

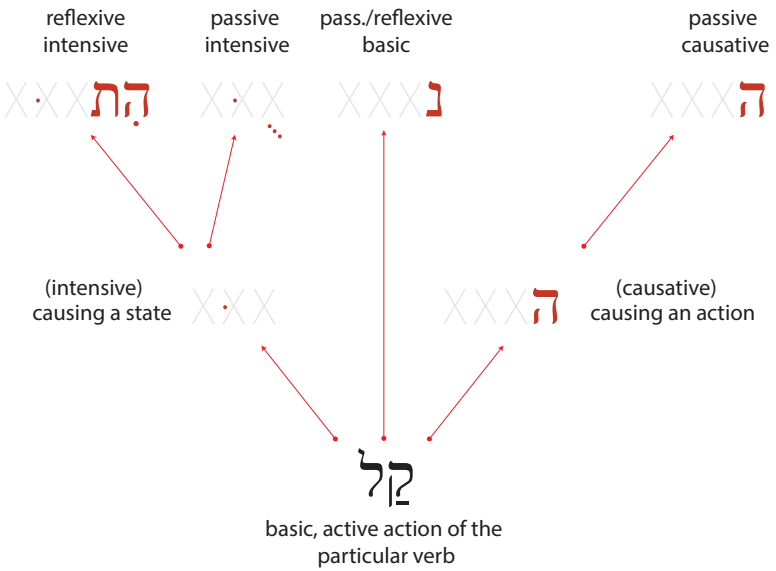
בָּנָה Conjugation

	Singular
3m	יִבְנֶה
3f	תִּבְנֶה
2m	תִּבְנֶה
2f	תִּבְנִי
1c	אֶבְנֶה

	Plural
3m	יִבְנוּ
3f	תִּבְנֶינָה
2m	תִּבְנוּ
2f	תִּבְנֶינָה
1c	נִבְנֶה

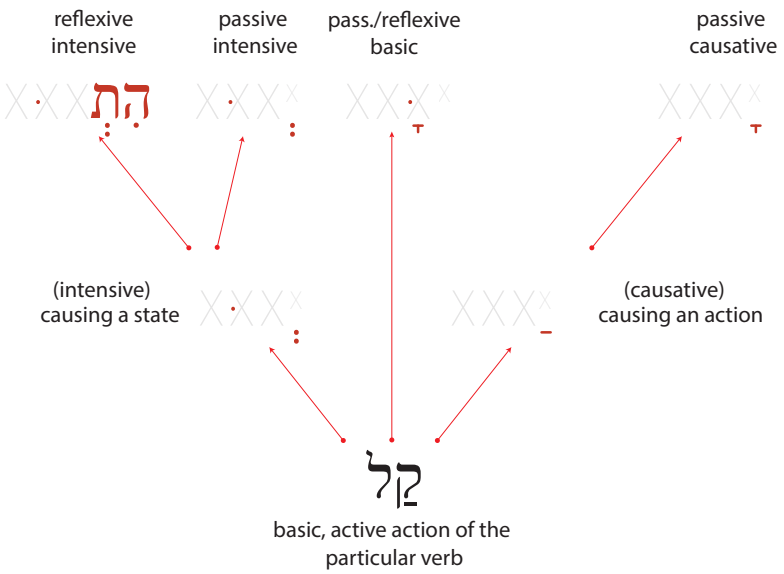
Most Basic Stem Diagnostics

- PERFECT ASPECT -



Most Basic Stem Diagnostics

- IMPERFECT ASPECT -



Imperative Verbs Overview

6.1 § Introduction To Imperative Verbs

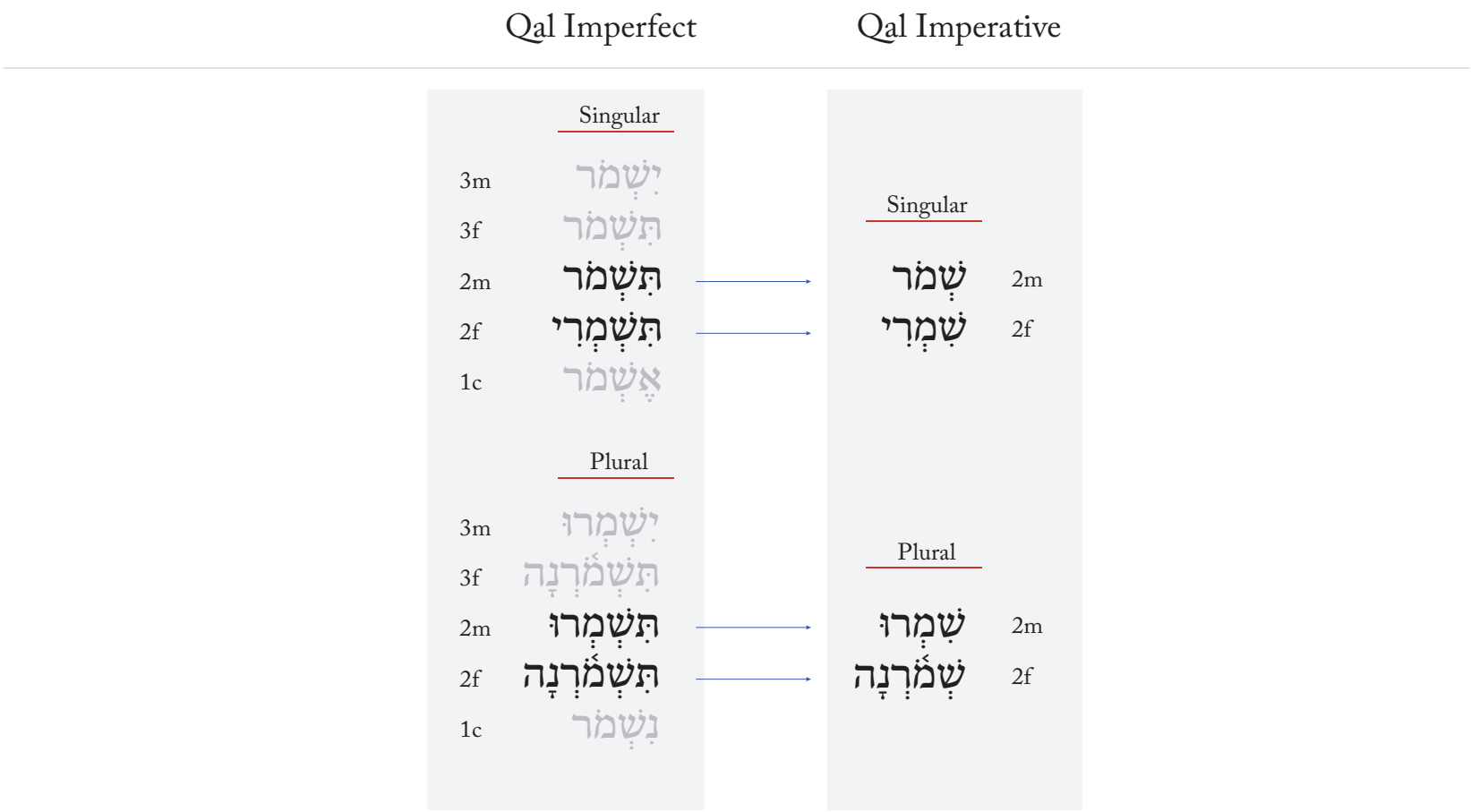
An "**imperative**" is a form of verb that communicates the will or volition of the speaker to a recipient in order to bring about that will in the recipient. *Note this definition carefully.*

The Hebrew imperative is basically the same as a "command," but functions slightly broader than the English idea of a command. It simply takes in those situations in which the speaker is strongly (emphatically) expressing his will for the recipient but it does not necessarily mean that the speaker is taking authority over the recipient. This fact explains why this form was used by a subject to his king or even by faithful Hebrews when speaking to God Himself. Though they used the imperative form, they were ***not*** demanding that God follow their will or "commanding" Him to do so, as such, though they were expressing their will for Him. Their use of such a form indicates the confident trust that they had in His person and their knowledge that what they willed Him to do was not contrary to His will. This use of the imperative was similar to what a child does in excitedly calling "Come here!" to his parents in order to show them some little discovery he made. If the relationship is arranged under God's design, the child will not be taking authority over his parents by this call. Rather, he is using the imperative form to communicate the fact that he is persuaded that his will is their will as well, based on his knowledge of them and the marvel of sharing his discovery with them.

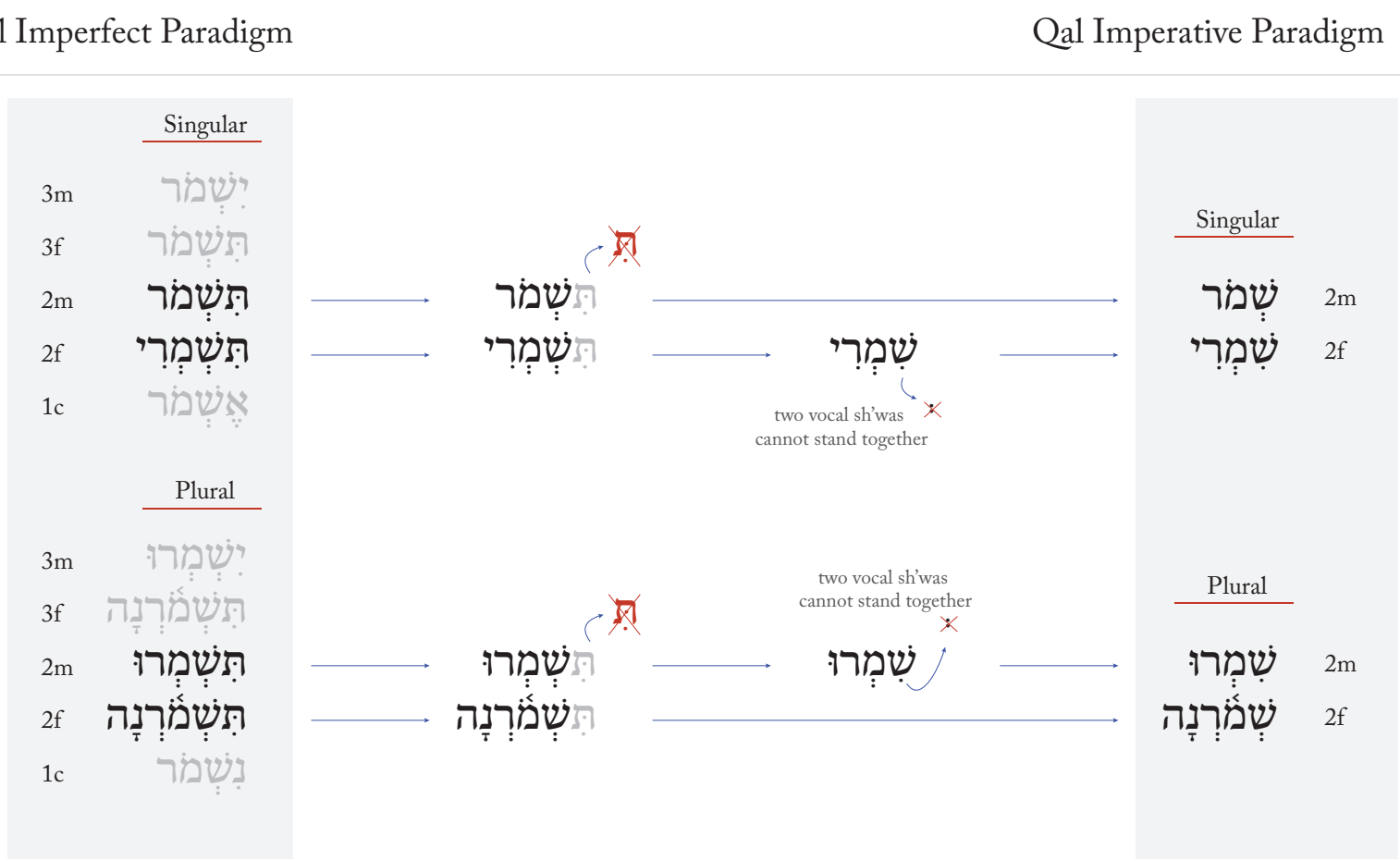
This is not to say that the Hebrew imperative was less forceful or authoritative than a command. Its force and authority depended not merely on the

grammatical form but on the speaker, for the speaker's authority and position, it was clearly understood, defined the authority of the command.

The following chart gives a comparison between the *qal* imperfect chart and the *qal* imperative chart.



The following chart gives a comparison between the *qal* imperfect chart and the *qal* imperative chart while detailing the changes that take place to form the imperative.



Hebrew imperatives are only stated in the positive. That is, they do not take the negative אַל. To state a negative command, another form of the verb was used (called a *jussive*).

6.2 § The Qal Imperative

Imperatives are simple to form, for the most part. The imperfect prefix is removed from the 2nd person verb and an imperative is formed.

Imperatives were simply formed by taking the 2nd person imperfect forms of the verb and removing the *tau* imperfect prefix.

Statement	תִּשְׁמֹר	"You^{ms} are keeping."
Command	שְׁמֹר	"keep!"

The imperatives were built on the imperfects because they are a subcategory of the imperfects. (Imperatives, like imperfects, express action that is not yet complete.)

The Qal Imperative chart:

Qal Imperative

	Singular	Plural
2m	שְׁמֹר	שִׁמְרוּ
2f	שִׁמְרִי	שְׁמֹרְנָה

6.3 § Bi-Consonantal Imperatives

The imperative form of the bi-consonantal verb קוּם (and similar verbs) is formed in the identical way as the regular verb: simply remove the imperfect prefix (except for the feminine plural, which looses the *yod*+vowel, returning to the normal imperative feminine plural ending: נָה).

Qal Imperative of biconsonantal

	Singular		Plural	
2m	קוּם	"rise!" (to a masculine, singular subject)	קֻמוּ	"rise!" (to a masculine, plural subject)
2f	קוּמִי	"rise!" (to a feminine, singular subject)	קֹמְנָה	"rise!" (to a feminine, plural subject)

The imperative accents are the same as they are in the imperfect.

THE VOLITIONAL EMPHATICS

7.1 § Introduction To Volitional Emphatics

Before speaking of the ***emphatics***, there are three volitionals in general to speak of in ancient Hebrew.[75] Since they present statements about what someone is determined to do or may determine to do (i.e., expression of inward choice, not a statement of what has been outwardly done), the actions they present are not completed at the time of communication. Thus, it is logical that **all three of these forms in Hebrew build off of the imperfect Hebrew verb forms.**

Imperative	An "**imperative**" is a form of verb that communicates the will or volition of the speaker to a recipient in order to bring about that will in the recipient (such as by authority, influence, relationship, etc.).
Cohortative	The cohortative expresses the firm determination of the subject to accomplish an action or, if seeking permission, expresses an indirect request to do so.
Jussive	Expresses a will for another indirectly, that is, by means of the 3rd person

7.2 § The "Cohortative"

Accurately Understanding Cohortatives

What modern Hebrew grammars often leave hazy about the cohortative is the

75 from the Latin root "vol" meaning "will" as in "volunteer" (one *willingly* and freely taking part in a task)

fact that it is an ***emphatic form***, making a strong statement of the will and certainty of the speaker. Indeed, the cohortative is highly emphatic, a 1st person emphatic form (for both 1st person singular and plural), used to express **strong intentions**[76] (such as resolve, certainty, confidence, etc.).

Futato, in his grammar book, gives a typical modern description of the cohortative: "volitive of the first person, for example, 'Let me listen!'"[77] While his exclamation point does help give emphasis, the idea of "let" in modern English gives the sense of a request. **The focus of Hebrew cohortatives was not on making requests but expressing the resolute firmness of someone's will to accomplish what was expressed.** (See footnote [78] for another common mis-expression of this strong Hebrew verbal structure.)

For example, was God making any kind of request when He stated to Moses, "I will get me honour upon Pharaoh"? (Ex. 14:17 וְאִכָּבְדָה בְּפַרְעֹה) Far from it! He was stating the firmness of that which He was about to do, the resoluteness of His will, which is backed by His entire existence. Or when He stated to Abraham 500 years earlier "I will bless them that bless you" (Gen. 12:3 וַאֲבָרְכָה מְבָרְכֶיךָ), was He making any kind of request? By no means. He was revealing to mankind the *absoluteness of His will* to accomplish the blessing of Abraham's true descendants.

Further, the "cohortative" was used of past events, to emphasize them in some

76 One grammar that correctly noted this stated: "...the meaning "cohortative—A first-person expression of **a strong intention** (let us, I will)." Andersen, F. I., & Forbes, A. D. (2012). Biblical Hebrew Grammar Visualized. (M. O'Connor, C. L. Miller-Naudé, & J. A. Naudé, Eds.) (p. 360). Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns.

77 Futato, M. D. (2003). Beginning Biblical Hebrew (p. 148). Eisenbrauns.

78 "The jussive/cohortative usually conveys a request for someone to allow something to happen—e.g., 'let him go' and 'let her go.' When making a request for yourself, you would use a cohortative in the same manner—e.g., 'let me go' or 'may I go.' You can usually use the English equivalents 'may' or 'let' when translating jussives and cohortatives."

Kutz, K. V., & Josberger, R. L. (2018). Learning Biblical Hebrew: Reading for Comprehension: An Introductory Grammar (p. 194). Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.

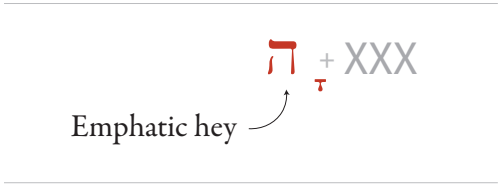
way, not to form any kind of request. This shows that the cohortative was not a cohortative, as only expressing desire or potential, but an *emphatic*.

David abandoned his palace and fled with his small, loyal band over the Mount of Olives and then down, down into the Dead Sea Valley for over 10 miles. When he reached the bottom of this descent, he was at the lowest point on earth and perhaps at the lowest point in his life as well. His band reached the middle of the Dead Sea Valley, in sight of the northern section of the Dead Sea itself, and stopped before crossing over the Jordan River. Night had fallen. Though completely exhausted, normal human emotions and fears would not allow sleep. The fear of a pursuing army and eminent death...a deposed king, deposed by his own son, would not be able to sleep. But David wrote the following record of that night:

Ps. 3:5 (6 in Hebrew) shows that the "paragogic hey" is emphatic and can be used to emphasize the reality of events that took place, not only to emphasize desires.

Cohortative Forms *(morphology)*

The emphatic-*hey* forms add a *qamets* hey to the end of the verb:



Qal Imperfect 1cs	אֶדַע	→ "I will know"
Qal Imperfect 1cs	אֶדְעָה	→ "I **WILL** know"

Emphatic hey

Cohortative Forms

1st Person

	Singular	Plural
Cohortative	אֶכְתְּבָה	נִכְתְּבָה
Regular	אֶכְתֹּב	נִכְתֹּב

Cohortative Examples

Genesis 13:9 *Abraham to Lot*

אִם־הַשְּׂמֹאל וְאֵימְנָה

"if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right;

וְאִם־הַיָּמִין וְאַשְׂמְאִילָה׃

or if thou depart to the right hand, then **I will go to the left**."

1 Samuel 17:44 *Goliath to David*

And the Philistine said to David,

וַיֹּאמֶר הַפְּלִשְׁתִּי אֶל־דָּוִד

Come to me, and **I will give** thy flesh unto the fowls of the air,

לְכָה אֵלַי וְאֶתְּנָה אֶת־בְּשָׂרְךָ

Genesis 22:5 *Abraham to his young men*

וַאֲנִי וְהַנַּעַר

and I and the lad

נֵלְכָה עַד־כֹּה

will go yonder

וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה

and **worship**,

וְנָשׁוּבָה אֲלֵיכֶם

and **come again** to you.

In this last example, consider the weight of the fact that Abraham used emphatics to state to his young men that not only he would return from offering his son, but that his son would also come down from the mountain with him: "[we] WILL return to you." Due to the prior 2,000 years of revelation, Abraham knew Christ

and knew the details of the Gospel and knew that God was forming a picture of Christ through the sacrifice of his own son that day on Mount Moriah. Yes, these things are as firm as the rock upon which the cities of the world are built.

7.3 § The "Jussive"

Simply put, the "jussives" are 3rd person commands or requests.[79]

Shall/must	⟶	commands
May/Let	⟶	requests

[80]

The forms of the jussives are usually identical to the regular imperfects. The main exception to this is the verb הָיָה which shortens in the jussive.

Jussives are negated by the adverb אַל.

Examples

יְהִי אוֹר	"let there be light" (or "light shall exist")	Genesis 1:3

The regular form of the 3rd person masculine of הָיָה is יִהְיֶה. As a jussive it shortens to יְהִי.

79 While some classify jussives as "mostly 3rd person but some 2nd person," the 2nd person instances are merely imperfect verbs used as negative commands.

80 Note: in English translations, commands are often translated as "let"

תְּהִי אִשָּׁה לִבֶן־אֲדֹנֶיךָ	"let her exist woman to the son of your master"	Genesis 24:51

אִישׁ אַל־יוֹתֵר מִמֶּנּוּ עַד־בֹּקֶר	"Let no man leave of it till the morning"[KJV]	Exodus 16:19

Exodus 23:13 for a 2nd person imperfect used as a command

7.4 § The "Paragogic" Letters

In Hebrew grammar termonology, certain letters that appear at the end of a verb are called "paragogic letters."[81]

The "paragogic" letters are ן, ה and י. They are added to the end of verbs (suffixed), and ***are always emphatic, or intensive***.

ה is suffixed to the following forms:

- The second person masculine singular perfect Exodus 21:23
- The first person singular future ("cohortative")
- The first person plural future ("cohortative")
- The second person masculine singular imperative.

ן is suffixed to the following forms:

- To the third person plural perfect
- To the second person feminine singular future
- To the second and third persons masculine plural future

י is suffixed to the following forms

- To the feminine singular of the participle

81 What follows is adapted from Beeston, 1843, A Grammar of the Sacred Language Hebrew p. 33

- To feminine plural nouns (sometimes)
- Between two nouns that are in construct