Rules for Analyzing Hebrew Verbs

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Note 1: Please call any errors or unclarities to my attention.
Note 2: When a root is called “pē wāw” in this document, the dictionary form is, of course, written with an initial yôd.

1. Learn thoroughly Qal Perfect and Imperfect so that you can write and recite them and so that you can recognize instantaneously that a suffix like ְֶּת indicates 2mp Perfect. The PGN (person, gender, number) of any Perfect or Imperfect verb form in any Pattern can be identified by knowledge of the Qal Paradigm. In every Pattern there are two stems: The Perfect Stem and the Imperfect Stem (usually the Imperative, Infinitive Construct and Infinitive Absolute, and Participle are based on the Imperfect Stem). In the Qal and Niphal the Infinitive Absolute and Participle are not based on this stem and must be memorized).

2. Begin analysis of any verb form by marking off the prefixes and suffixes.

3. For the Perfects of the Derived Patterns (everything but Qal), let the name of the Pattern be your guide (that is, the 3ms will sound like the
name of the Pattern). Niphal begins with nun, Piel and Pual have a dāgēš Forte in their middle character and can be distinguished by their vowel sequence (i-e for Piel, or u-a for Pual); Hiphil, Hophal, and Hithpael begin with Hi-, Ho- (qāmeṣ ḥātûp) and Hith- respectively.

4. If an Imperfect has a yod prefix, it is a 3m form (singular or plural); if it has a tāw prefix, it is a 3f or 2m-2f form (singular or plural); if it has an aleph or nun prefix it is a 1st person form (singular and plural respectively).

5. Identify the Pattern of Imperfects and other forms based on the Imperfect Stem by the recognition points.

**Qal:** ֵַיוַצ, etc.

**Niphal:** Niphal triangle ִֵוֶהןקט (formed by ֵַיוַצ--dāgēš forte--qāmeṣ)

With a Guttural ִֵוֶמן (Compensative lengthening instead of dāgēš forte)

Pe Wāw ְֵרֵב (Note the Niphal triangle)

(With a Hollow Verb ְֵַיוַצ The dāgēš results from the assimilation of the Nun of the Niphal)

**Piel** and **Pual:** A dāgēš forte will be in the middle letter and a vocal šēwāʼ under the prefix consonant; one can distinguish Piel from Pual by the sound of the vowels (a Pual will have a qībūṣ under the first root consonant). The dāgēš sometimes disappears when there is a šēwāʼ under the letter (Seow, p. 59).
Note: By definition a hollow verb cannot double its middle letter. Instead we have **Polel** (רִחְמְל) and **Polal** (רֵחֲמֵל). That is, the final letter of the root is doubled. These patterns also have Perfect tenses.

**Hiphil:** Note the pataḥ under the prefix יְָכַּהִלּ.

[Sometimes a patah will show up in the Qal before verbs beginning with a guttural רָכָּחַל].

**Hophal:** Note the qāmeṣ ḫātūp under the prefix followed by a silent šēwāַהִלּ.

A qāmeṣ ḫātūp is a short vowel and appears only in a closed, unaccented syllable. Before dāgēš forte, the qāmeṣ ḫātūp is replaced by a qibbūṣ. שָּׁבֵּנְּו Hophal Perfect from דנֶּךַל.

**Hithpael:** yith-, tith-, ʕeth-, or nith- prefix יְָלַח, יְָלַח, יְָלַח, יְָלַח. There will also be a dāgēš forte in the middle letter of the root.

Note: By definition a hollow verb cannot double its middle letter. Instead we have **Hithpolel** (רְחָפָל). That is, the final letter of the root is doubled. This pattern also has a Perfect tense.

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6. In Piel through Hithpael the Participles begin with a mēm and are based on the imperfect stem.

In the Qal and Niphal the participles are not based on the imperfect stem and must be memorized:
7. The Jussive is distinguished from the Imperfect in the Strong Verb only in the Hiphil. The vowel is shortened in the second syllable. In all other Patterns the forms can be either Imperfect or Jussive.

Hiphil Imperfect יֹּ֣שֶׁבָּלָלֹּקִט Hiphil Jussive יֹּ֣שֶׁבָּלֹּקִט

(In the weak verbs, the Jussive is distinguished from the imperfect by a shortening of the stem vowel)

8. The imperative is formed in the Qal and Piel by removing the prefix from the 2nd person imperfect forms and making necessary vowel changes for other genders and numbers (see Rule of šēwā‘, Seow, p. 56). In the Niphal, Hiphil, and Hithpael, a hê replaces the tāw of the imperfect prefix, and in the Hiphil 2ms a šērē also replaces the ḫíreq as the stem vowel.

Qal לֹּקִט Niphal לֹּקִט Piel לֹּקִט Hiphil לֹּקִט Hithpael לֹּקִט

9. The infinitive construct is formed the same way as the imperative 2ms in Qal, Niphal, Piel, and Hithpael. In the Hiphil, the infinitive construct is לֹּקִט.

A final tāw (ה) indicates a Qal Infinitive construct in

Pe Yod: יֹּ֣שֶׁבָּלָלֹּקִט from יּּשְׁבָּלָל (Note the loss of the initial yôd)

With suffix: יֹּ֣שֶׁבָּלֹּקִט. Cf. הָלֹּקִט from הָלֶכָּל.
Rules for Verb Analysis (5)

Pe Nun: הָנָשׁ from נָשׁ . (Note the loss of the initial nun)
With suffix הָנָשׁ. Cf. הָנָה from נָה. With suffix הָנָה.

A final חַ is the sign of an Infinitive Construct in all Patterns for לָאָמָד הֶוֶרֶז.
Qal חַּּוַּה from בָּנָה Piel חַּּוַּל from נָלָה.

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10. The infinitive absolute, from Piel to Hithpael, has similar recognition points to those of the Imperfect.

Piel חֹּט from חֹט, Pual חֹּט (dagesh forte in the middle letter of the root), Hiphil חֹּט (pathah in the prefix), Hophal חֹּט (qames hataup in the prefix), and Hithpael חֹּט (hith- prefix and dagesh forte in the middle letter of the root).

In the Qal and Niphal the infinitive absolutes are not based on the imperfect stem. The Qal should be memorized.

Qal חַּּוַּל Niphal חַּּוַּל or חַּּוַּל Both Niphal forms are rare.

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11. If only two root consonants appear in a verb form, the following rules will help discover the third consonant.

a. If there are only two root consonants, and the first is pointed with dagesh forte, the word is Pe Nun.

לָאָמ from נָש . Cf. לָאָמ from הָנָה.
Pe Nunn verbs tend to have the first letter of the root assimilated (dageš forte appears in the following consonant). They act like the Strong Verbs in Piel and Pual.

Niphal Perfect נַּהַןְ from *ןַּהַנְ
Hiphil Perfect הַנַּהַןְ from *ןַּהַנְ
Hophal Perfect (qibbûṣ replaces qâmeš hâṭûp before a dageš forte) וַּהֲנַּהַן from *וַּהֲהַַנְ
Hophal Imperfect 1cs נַּהַן from the root נַהַן.

b. If there are only two root consonants, and the prefix and the first two root consonants (that is, up to the second consonant, but not beneath it) are pointed like the Strong Verb, the word is lâmed hê.

Qal Imperfect, 2mp, from נַהַן
Piel Perfect, 2ms, from נַהַן

The Jussives of Lâmed Hê Verbs are apocopated (shortened):

Qal Imperfect נַּהַן Qal Jussive נַּהַן
Qal waw consecutive with imperfect נַּהַן נַּהַן
Piel Imperfect נַּהַן Piel Jussive נַּהַן
cf. wâw consecutive with the imperfect נַּהַן נַּהַן instead of נַּהַן
Hiphil Imperfect נַּהַן Hiphil Jussive נַּהַן.

c. If there are only two root consonants, and they are separated by a long vowel, the word may be Hollow ‘Ayin Wâw or ‘Ayin Yôd). Note rules “c” and “d” belong together.

Qal Imperfect נַּהַן and Qal Jussive נַּהַן
and נַּהַן and

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d. If there are only two root consonants, and the prefix of the imperfect is pointed with a qāmēš in an open syllable, the verb is Hollow and the pattern is Qal or Hiphil.

Qal Imperfect וִֵהֶמת or וִֵרִׁת
Qal Jussive וִכחת or וִןרׁת derived from וִֵהֶמת
Qal Imperfect with Waw Consecutive וֻמוֶּוהת or וֻמוְִֶרׁת derived from וִֵהֶמת
Hiphil Imperfect וִֵהִת or וִֵרִׁת derived from וִֵהֶמת
Hiphil Jussive וִןהת or וִןרׁת derived from וִֵהֶמת
Hiphil Imperfect with Waw Consecutive וֻמוְִֶהת or וֻמוְִֶרׁת derived from וִֵהֶמת

Note: the Qal and Hiphil Imperfects of ‘Ayin Yôd verbs are identical.

Q וִֵרִׁת is Qal or Hiphil Imperfect 3ms from וִֵרִׁת.

e. If there are only two root consonants, and the prefix is pointed with a Naturally Long vowel [a vowel usually written with a vowel letter], the word is Pê Wāw, Pê Yôd, or Hollow.

Pe Wāw (the examples cited are from של, תנש and נשת).
Niphal וֹנֶשׁ perfect. The imperfect is regular: וֹנֶשׁ (Niphal Triangle)
Niphal infinitive construct וֹנֶשׁ (Niphal Triangle)
Hiphil Perfect וֹלַד
Hiphil Imperfect וֹלַד
Hophal וֹלַד and וֹלַד Imperfect and Perfect from וֹלַד.
Pè Yòd (true pè yòd)
Hiphil יֵשְׁב from

Hollow
Hophal והוה and Imperfect and Perfect from קָם.

Note: Pè Wāw and Hollow roots have the same kind of Hophal forms. Theoretically, קָם or וָאָמַר could come from either קָם or וָאָמַר.

The Hiphil perfect of Hollow verbs is קָמַה (3ms) and קָמֵה (2ms; note vowel reduction in the propretone). Though these forms do not have a naturally long vowel in the prefix and therefore do not fit this rule, the hê prefix is a tipoff that they are Hiphil. The Hiphil participle of Hollow verbs is קָמִים.

f. If there are only two root consonants, and the prefix of the Qal Imperfect is pointed with a šērê, the word is Pè Wāw.

יְשַׁבֵּה Qal imperfect 3mp from יִשְׁבַּה. cf. יִלָּך from יָלָךְ.

g. If there are only two root consonants, and none of the above rules applies, the word may be ‘Ayin ‘Ayin.

טֵבָע, טָפְסֵב, טָפָע, טָפָס are all from טַבּוּ (Qal Perfect 1cs, Hiphil Perfect 3ms, and Hiphil Imperfect with waw consecutive 3ms respectively).

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12. Guttural verbs differ from Strong verbs in the following ways:
Rules for Verb Analysis (9)

\[ F = \text{no dāgēš forte; } S = \text{ Silent šēwā' replaced by ħāṭēp vowel; } V = \text{Vocal šēwā' replaced by ħāṭēp vowel; } A = \text{Preference for “a-class” vowels. The letter } rēș \text{ also does not take dāgēš forte.} \]

Piel perfect ֤ with compensative lengthening
ֵ with virtual doubling
ֵ No dāgēš forte in the rēș

Qal imperfect ֤ ُ with ħāṭēp vowel for silent šēwā’ and preference for “a” vowel

Qal imperative ֥ ُ with ħāṭēp vowel for vocal šēwā’

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Procedure for Analyzing Hebrew Verbs

13. Examine words to see whether they show any suffixes of the Perfect or any prefixes (and suffixes) of the Imperfect. These clues will give you the tense and the Person, Number, and Gender.

- A verb is an infinitive construct if it has a preposition in front of it (ט, ב, כ), or if it has possessive suffixes like those used on a noun. Other recognition points of the Imperfect also apply.

לֵּטֶהוֹן, לֶשֶׁבֶת, לֶהֶמֶשֶׁל, בָּנָחַת, בָּנָדוּת, לֶחֶמֶל (From left to right: Qal infinitive construct from a strong verb; Qal infinitive construct with a preposition from a lāmed hē verb; Qal infinitive construct with a 3ms suffix from נש; Piel infinitive construct; Niphal infinitive construct; Qal infinitive construct from Pēyôd with a 3ms suffix; Hiphil infinitive construct from a pē nûn verb).
Rules for Verb Analysis (10)

Infinitive constructs for Lāmed Hē verbs end in הַ נַּהוּ.
Infinitive constructs for Pē Yōd and Pē Nūn verbs end in הַ נַּהוּ.

- A verb is an infinitive absolute if it is used immediately before or immediately after a finite verb of the same root.

  Qal = הַ נַּהוּ. In other patterns, standard recognition forms for the Imperfect apply.

- A verb is a participle if it is הַ נַּהוּ שָׁלֹה and הַ נַּהוּ הַ שָּׁלֹה in the Qal (active and passive respectively), הַ נַּהוּ הַ שָּׁלֹה in the Niphal, or has a ה prefix in Piel--Hithpael (other Imperfect recognition points apply).

- A verb is probably an imperative if an imperative is used in an English translation. Imperatives are formed by removing the ה prefix of the Imperfect in Qal or Piel, or by replacing it with a ה (in Niphal, Hiphil, and Hithpael; other Imperfect recognition points apply).

14. Object Suffixes
### Suffixes with the Perfect Tense

Note: In certain cases the computer forced me to use the letters of the paradigm word in order to express the Hebrew of the suffix accurately.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normal perfect ending</th>
<th>Perfect ending before suffixes</th>
<th>PGN of object suffix</th>
<th>Possible suffixes</th>
<th>Translation of suffix</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3ms 0</td>
<td></td>
<td>1cs</td>
<td>נֵר נֵי נֵי</td>
<td>me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3fs ת&quot;ז</td>
<td>ת&quot;ז</td>
<td>2ms</td>
<td>קַפָּלֵב קַפָּלָב קַפָּלָב</td>
<td>you (m.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2ms ת&quot;ז</td>
<td>ת&quot;ז</td>
<td>2fs</td>
<td>קַפָּלֵב קַפָּלָב קַפָּלָב</td>
<td>you (f.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2fs ת&quot;ז</td>
<td>ת&quot;ז</td>
<td>3ms</td>
<td>נָר נָה נָה</td>
<td>him or it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1cs ת&quot;ז</td>
<td>ת&quot;ז</td>
<td>3fs</td>
<td>קַפָּלֵת קַפָּלָת קַפָּלָת</td>
<td>her or it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3cp ת&quot;ז</td>
<td>ת&quot;ז</td>
<td>1cp</td>
<td>קַפָּלָנָה נ</td>
<td>us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2mp ת&quot;ז</td>
<td>ת&quot;ז</td>
<td>2mp</td>
<td>כֵם</td>
<td>you (pl., m.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2fp ת&quot;ז</td>
<td>ת&quot;ז</td>
<td>2fp</td>
<td>never appears</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1cp ת&quot;ז</td>
<td>ת&quot;ז</td>
<td>3mp</td>
<td>קַפָּלָה קַפָּלָה קַפָּלָה</td>
<td>them (men)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3fp</td>
<td>קַפָּלָה קַפָּלָה</td>
<td>them (women)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Suffixes with the Imperfect and Imperative

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Normal imperfect prefixes and suffixes</th>
<th>Normal imperative suffixes</th>
<th>Suffixes with imperfect or imperative</th>
<th>Suffixes with nun energetic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3ms ה</td>
<td>3ms קצלוח</td>
<td>3ms קצלוח</td>
<td>him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3fs ת</td>
<td>3fs קצלוח</td>
<td>3fs קצלוח</td>
<td>her</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2ms ת</td>
<td>2ms 0</td>
<td>2ms קצלוח</td>
<td>you m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2fs ... ת</td>
<td>2fs קצלוח</td>
<td>2fs קצלוח</td>
<td>you f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1cs א</td>
<td>1cs קצלוח</td>
<td>1cs קצלוח</td>
<td>me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3mp ... ו</td>
<td>3mp קצלוח</td>
<td></td>
<td>the m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3fp ... ת</td>
<td>3fp קצלוח</td>
<td></td>
<td>the m. f.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2mp ... ת</td>
<td>2mp קצלוח</td>
<td></td>
<td>you m. pl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2fp ... ת</td>
<td>2fp קצלוח</td>
<td>2fp not attested</td>
<td>you f. pl.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1cp י</td>
<td>1cp קצלוח</td>
<td>1cp קצלוח</td>
<td>us</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: The 3fp and 2fp imperfect and 2fp imperative forms are not attested; they are replaced by their corresponding mp forms. (ū instead of nā). Also note: If the imperfect or imperative form ends in a vowel (2fs, 2mp, 3mp), the connecting vowel between the verb and the suffix is omitted.

15. Identify the root letters in the form--usually two or three will be present. Choose the third letter. See #11 above for a list of rules on how to determine the third root consonant.

16. Determine the Pattern of the verb:
   A. If the verb (according to #13 above) is Perfect, the recognition points are the following:
      Qal--no prefixes, no dāğēšes
      Niphal--N prefix
      Piel-Pual--dāğēš forte in middle letter. (Look for the “u” vowel in the Pual)
      Hiphil--ה prefix (ה [strong verbs], ר [pē wāw].ה or ר [hollow], ר [gutturals])
      Hophal--ך [pē wāw or hollow], פ [pē nun])
      Hithpael--ך,
   
   B. If the verb (according to #13 above) is Imperfect, the recognition points are the following:
      Qal--ך, ק, ע, י for Pē Yôd; etc. for Hollow
      Niphal--ך=N (Niphal triangle). ק with initial guttural
      Piel-Pual--ךךך (Note šēwā' under the prefix and dāğēš forte in the middle letter)
      Hiphil--ךךך (ך Pē wāw; י Pē yôd, י Hollow)
      Hophal--ךךך (ך for Hollow or Pē Yôd; י for Pē Nun)
      Hithpael--ךךך, etc.