

LESSON 10 THE PERFECT

THE IMPERFECT primarily refers to the present or future, and the preterite explicitly narrates series of events. Both are “prefix” conjugations. The other main verbal paradigm of BH, the perfect, has an extremely broad set of functions that are both *temporal*—ranging from pluperfect (in, e.g., narrative flashbacks) to simple past, present, and even future—and *volitional* (especially as imperative). The main distinction in form between the imperfect and preterite, on the one hand, and the perfect, on the other, is that the perfect uses a unique set of PGN affixes—all of which are suffixes—so that it agrees with its subject.

The perfect is the most frequent conjugation in BH. More than one-quarter (28.4%) of all biblical verbs are perfects.

10.1 FORM

THE PERFECT¹ uses *suffixes* to agree with the person, gender, and number [PGN] of its subject.

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
1 st	Common	אָנִי - <i>I</i>	נִנְּנוּ - <i>we</i>
2 nd	Masc.	אַתָּה - <i>you</i>	אַתֶּם - <i>you</i>
	Fem.	אַתְּ - <i>you</i>	אַתֶּן - <i>you</i>
3 rd	Masc.	--- <i>he/it</i>	הֵן - <i>they</i>
	Fem.	הִיא - <i>she/it</i>	

1. The 3ms perfect has no ending; it is the lexical (or “vocabulary”) form of the verb.
2. Second person endings all consist of ת+vowel point, as does 1cs.
3. The *šewa* of the 2fs perfect ending is silent; this is the only time that a Hebrew word ends with two consonants (see “*Dageš, Šewa, & Syllables*”, Lesson 3): מָשַׁלְתְּ ≈ *mašalt*.
4. The 3fs (הִיא -) and 3cp (הֵן -) endings consist of a vowel.
5. The 2mp (אַתֶּם -) and 2fp (אַתֶּן -) endings consist of a closed syllable.
6. The third person plural (“they”) is called “common” (as are both first person forms) because the same suffix (הֵן -) is used for subjects of either gender.
7. These endings are used throughout the perfect of all verbs (the only difference is the loss of *dageš lene* in the ת-endings of some forms of the verb), and so *must be memorized*.

10.2 THE QAL PERFECT

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
1 st	Common	מָשַׁלְתִּי <i>I ruled/began ruling/came to rule</i>	מָשַׁלְנוּ <i>We ruled</i>
2 nd	Masc.	מָשַׁלְתָּ <i>You ruled</i>	מָשַׁלְתֶּם <i>You ruled</i>
	Fem.	מָשַׁלְתְּ <i>You ruled</i>	מָשַׁלְתֶּן <i>You ruled</i>
3 rd	Masc.	מָשַׁל <i>He ruled</i>	מָשַׁלוּ <i>They ruled</i>
	Fem.	מָשַׁלָּה <i>She ruled</i>	

The slight vocalic differences under the *radicals* of the verbal root reflect the nature of the ending and are fairly consistent throughout the entire verbal system, not just the *qal* perfect. You do not need to memorize these guidelines, although they may help you find your way around the verbal paradigms.

¹The perfect is also called “*qatal*” (= 3ms *qal* perfect of the traditional paradigm verb) or “suffix conjugation”.

1. If the PGN ending *begins with a consonant* (all except the third person forms), there is silent *šewa* after the third radical (i.e., before the ending), and the second radical’s vowel is *patah* (-ַ-).
2. If the ending is a *closed syllable* (2mp, 2fp), the second radical has *patah*, and the vowel after the first radical is a half-vowel (*šewa* [-ְ-]).
3. If the ending is a *vowel* (3fs, 3cp), the second radical has vocal *šewa* (-ְ-).
4. If the ending is a closed syllable (2mp, 2fp) or vowel (3fs, 3cp), it is accented; otherwise, the accent falls on the antepenultimate [next-to-last] syllable. This is part of the reason for the variations in the vowels within the verbal root.

מִשְׁלָּתִי	<i>mā · šal · tî</i>	מִשְׁלָּנוּ	<i>mā · šal · nû</i>
מִשְׁלָּתָּ	<i>mā · šal · tā</i>	מִשְׁלָּתֶם	<i>mē · šal · tem</i>
מִשְׁלָּתְךָ	<i>mā · šalt</i>	מִשְׁלָּתְךָ	<i>mē · šal · ten</i>
מִשְׁלָּ	<i>mā · šal</i>	מִשְׁלָּו	<i>mā · šē · lû</i>
מִשְׁלָּה	<i>mā · šē · lā</i>		

10.2.1 STATIVE VERBS

Some verbs have either *šere* or *holem* after the second radical in the 3ms *qal* perfect (the lexical form). The rest of their forms are like מִשְׁלָּ. These verbs describe a state or condition, and are called “stative” verbs (Lesson 15). The most common stative verbs in BH are:

גָּדַל	<i>be[come] large, great</i>	מָלָא	<i>be[come] full</i>
זָקַן	<i>be[come] old</i>	קָדַשׁ	<i>be[come] holy, set apart, reserved</i>
טָהַר	<i>be[come] ceremonially clean, pure, acceptable</i>	קָרַב	<i>be[come] near, close</i>
טָמֵא	<i>be[come] ceremonially unclean, impure, unacceptable</i>	רָחַק	<i>be[come] distant, far</i>
כָּבֵד	<i>be[come] heavy, important; wealthy</i>	שָׁלַם	<i>be[come] whole, complete, healthy, at peace</i>

10.2.2 III-ס VERBS

Verbs that end in **ס** (III-**ס** verbs) look slightly different because **ס** cannot close a syllable (cf. §6.2). Their forms differ from those of מִשְׁלָּ (above) and other strong verbs in three ways.

1. They lack silent *šewa* after the **ס**, which functions as a reminder of historical spelling (cf. the now-silent *e* in English, which was pronounced in Chaucer’s day).
2. Since the second syllable is thus open, they have *qames* after the second radical rather than *patah* (cf. Lesson 22).
3. Since the *qames* after the second radical therefore precedes the ending, the ך of the second person endings lacks *dageš lene* (and 2fs lacks the final silent *šewa*).

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
1 st	Common	מִצָּאתִי <i>I found</i>	מִצָּאתֵנוּ <i>We found</i>
2 nd	Masc.	מִצָּאתָּ <i>You found</i>	מִצָּאתֶם <i>You found</i>
	Fem.	מִצָּאתְךָ <i>You found</i>	מִצָּאתְכֶן <i>You found</i>
3 rd	Masc.	מִצָּאָ <i>He/It found</i>	מִצָּאוּ <i>They found</i>
	Fem.	מִצָּאָה <i>She/It found</i>	

4. In most other III-guttural verbal roots, 2fs *qal* perfect has two *patahs* (note the accent).

שָׁלַחַת *šā-la·hat* שָׁמַעַת *šā-ma·'at*
you sent *you heard*

10.3 FUNCTION

HBI §2.2.1

The function of the perfect is heavily contextual. It depends primarily on the *genre* or literary type of the discourse within which it occurs. Its function also reflects the content of its clause and its relationship to the surrounding context, as well as the action or state described by the verbal root itself. A primary factor in its temporal and modal function is syntactical—whether or not it occurs with the prefixed *waw* (וַ).²

1. *Without the conjunction*, the perfect nearly always refers to the *past* in narrative—either the simple past (“he saw”), continual past (“he was seeing”), perfect (“he has seen”) or pluperfect (“he had seen”). The function is controlled by the context. In narrative, the perfect tends to be preceded by another word, either a subordinating conjunction such as **כִּי**, the relative (**אֲשֶׁר**), or, in a disjunctive clause (§6.6, and below), by its subject, object (Gn 42.4), prepositional phrase (2 Sam 5.5), or a negative (**לֹא**).

<p>בְּחֶבְרוֹן מָלַךְ עַל־יְהוּדָה ... וּבִירוּשָׁלַם מָלַךְ ... עַל כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיְהוּדָה: וְאֶת־בְּנֵימִין אָחִי יוֹסֵף לֹא־שָׁלַח יַעֲקֹב</p> <p>וַהֲדָד שָׁמַע בְּמִצְרַיִם כִּי־שָׁכַב דָּוִד עִם־אֲבֹתָיו</p>	<p>In Hebron <i>he reigned</i> over Judah ..., and in Jerusalem <i>he reigned</i> over all Israel and Judah (2 Sam 5.5). (Joseph’s brothers went down [preterite] ...), but Benjamin, Joseph’s brother, Jacob <i>did not send</i> ... (Gn 42.4)</p> <p>Now Hadad <i>heard</i> in Egypt that David <i>slept</i> with his fathers ... (1 Kgs 11.21)</p>
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This function of the perfect is especially common in *disjunctive clauses* (§6.6, §6.10), which describe events that happened alongside or before the preceding preterite (a flashback), contrast or compare two events (Gn 1.5), or inject a non-event (i.e., with a negative) into a string of preterites (Jg 11.17).

<p>וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים לְאוֹר יוֹם וּלְחֹשֶׁךְ קָרָא לַיְלָה וְלֹא זָכְרוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶת־יְהוָה</p> <p>... וַיִּשְׁלַח יִשְׂרָאֵל מַלְאָכִים אֶל־מֶלֶךְ אֲדוֹם וְלֹא שָׁמַע מֶלֶךְ אֲדוֹם וְגַם אֶל־מֶלֶךְ מוֹאָב שָׁלַח וְלֹא אָבָה</p>	<p>God called [preterite] the light “Day”, and the darkness <i>he called</i> “Night” (Gn 1.5). but the sons of Israel <i>did not remember</i> YHWH ... (Jg 8.34)</p> <p>Israel sent [preterite] messengers to the king of Edom, ... but the king of Edom <i>did not listen</i>, and also to the king of Moab [they] <i>sent</i>, but he <i>did not agree</i> (Jg 11.17).</p>
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The disjunctive clause shows that the event that it describes is *not necessarily* the next event in the story. Its relationship to the storyline (simultaneous, overlapping, antecedent [flashback], proleptic, &c.) must be determined by the relationship of its *content* to its *cotext*.³ This is an especially common function of the perfect in biblical narrative.

This does *not* mean that events described in disjunctive clauses are insignificant or less important, but rather that they stand outside the main sequence (often like a “by the way” comment in English),

²This discussion refers primarily to narrative and instructional biblical prose.

³The terms “context” and “cotext” are often distinguished. “Cotext” refers to the surrounding *words*, and “context” to the entire sociological and conceptual “world” within which the discourse occurs (“context” in this sense can also be called the “universe of discourse”).

telling the reader something that he or she either will need to know in order to fully understand something that is going to be described in the narrative.

From another perspective, non-events (*irrealis*) are often just as important as events, so that we should always ask why the narrator is telling us that this or that *didn't* happen.

2. *Stative* verbs (§15.1) may describe either a *past* or *present* state, condition, or situation in the perfect, including verbs that describe an emotion, thought, perception, or condition. Their function is determined by the syntax and context; 2 Sam 7.22 is a direct quotation; Dt 34.9 is a disjunctive clause.

גְּדֹלַת אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה	<i>You are great, Lord YHWH (2 Sam 7.22)</i>
וַיְהִי־שֵׁשׁ בְּיָנוּן מְלֵא רוּחַ חָכְמָה	<i>Now Joshua ben Nun was full of a spirit of wisdom (Dt 34.9)</i>

3. Any *perfect* with a *prefixed* ו- begins a clause, and is often followed by its subject or object. This tends to occur in direct quotations (within either narrative or prophecy), where the perfect tends to refer to the present or future, and may function as a series of instructions (Lv 3.8), predictions, or commands (Ru 3.2). Again, the nuance depends heavily upon the literary genre and immediate context.

וְסָמַךְ אֶת־יָדוֹ עַל־רֹאשׁ ... וְשָׁחַט אֹתוֹ ...	<i>He shall lean his hand on [its] head, ... and slaughter it ..., and the sons of Aaron shall sprinkle its blood (Lv 3.8).</i>
וַיִּרְקַן בְּנֵי אֶהֱרָן אֶת־קִמּוֹ וַרְחֲצוּ וְסִכְּתוּ וְשָׂמַתְ שְׂמֶלְתֵיךָ עָלֶיךָ וַיִּרְדֹּת הַגִּבּוֹן	<i>Wash, perfume yourself, put on your robe, and go down to the threshing floor (Ru 3.2)</i>
כִּי יִמְלְאוּ יָמֶיךָ וְשָׁכַבְתָּ אֶת־אֲבוֹתֶיךָ	<i>When your days are full [complete], and you lie down with your fathers, ... (2 Sam 7.12).</i>

A disjunctive clause in a sequence of *waw* + perfect clauses may have an *imperfect* or *imperative* predicate. This often happens within a series of instructional or imperatival *w*+perfects, and reflects the non-instructional line of the disjunctive clause.

וְקָרְבוֹ וְקַרְעָיו יֶרְחַץ בַּמַּיִם	<i>And its inner part and legs he shall [must] wash with water (Lv 1.9)</i>
וְאֵשׁ הַמִּזְבֵּחַ תִּוְקַד בּוֹ	<i>And the fire of the altar shall [must] be kept burning on it (Lv 6.2 [ET 6.9])</i>

10.4 THE IMPERFECT, PRETERITE, & PERFECT

AS THIS CHART suggests, a verb's conjugation in BH narrative is primarily related to the function of its clause:

Imperfect	Present Future Modal (may/might, should, ought, &c.)
Preterite	Past Narrative (the main line of events)
Perfect	Disjunctive [ancillary] clauses in narrative
w + Perfect	Instruction or prophecy (the main line of events) Modal (imperative)

These functions reflect the type of material (literary genre) and the relation of the contents of the clause to the main line of that material.

10.5 CONCEPTS

antecedent content context	cotext disjunctive clause flashback	genre instructional material narrative	perfect performative proleptic stative verb
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10.6 VOCABULARY

<i>rod, staff; tribe (m.)</i>	מִטָּה .139	<i>perish</i>	אָבַד .131
<i>people [group], nation</i>	עַם .140	<i>ear</i>	אָזֵן .132
<i>document⁴; text, writing(s)</i>	סֵפֶר .141	<i>cattle; animals</i>	בְּהֵמָה .133
<i>friend, companion</i>	רֵעַ .142	<i>master, owner, husband, Baal</i>	בַּעַל .134
<i>lip, language; edge, shore</i>	שִׁפְּהַ .143	<i>herd (large cattle, such as donkeys, camels, cows, horses)</i>	בָּקָר .135
<i>rod, staff; tribe</i>	שִׁבְטַ .144	<i>be, become (often ל introduces the result), happen, occur</i>	הָיָה .136
<i>swear [an oath] (N only)</i>	שָׁבַע .145	<i>palm of hand, sole of foot</i>	כַּף .137
<i>judge (v.)</i>	שָׁפַט .146	<i>command[ment], order</i>	מִצְוָה .138

10.7 EXERCISES

After learning the PGN subject endings of the perfect, please parse and gloss (using the simple past) these forms, and clauses.

i. נִקְרַב	e. שָׁכַבְתָּ	a. אָבַדְתִּי
j. אָשָׁמַע	f. תִּדְרָשִׁי	b. שָׂמְאַה
k. שָׁמַרְתָּן	g. קָרַבְנוּ	c. קָרַאתָ
l. שָׁאֵל	h. זָכַר	d. מִצְּאתָ
1 Kg 2.12; אָבִיו <i>his father</i> ; <i>Solomon, David</i>		a. וּשְׁלֹמֹה יָשַׁב עַל-כִּסֵּא הָיָה אָבִיו
Dt 28.47; הִי- <i>your (2ms)</i> ; <i>joy, rejoicing, happiness</i>		b. לֹא-עֲבַדְתָּ אֶת־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּשִׂמְחָה
2 Sam 19.12; David, Zadok, Abiathar		c. וְהַמֶּלֶךְ הָיָה שָׁלַח אֶל-צָדוֹק וְאֶל-אֲבִיתָר
Jg 6.10; י - <i>my (1cs)</i> ; <i>listen to the voice of (obey) ...</i>		d. וְלֹא שָׁמַעְתֶּם בְּקוֹלִי:

⁴“Book”—the traditional gloss for סֵפֶר—is profoundly misleading (codices, the forerunners of bound volumes—“books” as we know them—were not used until the second century AD). The archaeological record suggests that a סֵפֶר could be written on any available material suitable for writing (e.g., a broken piece (sherd) of pottery (making it an *ostrakon*), a piece of papyrus or parchment, a clay tablet) or inscribed on stone. מְגִלָּה (related to the verb גָּלַל, “to roll”) refers explicitly to a “scroll”, although it is relatively infrequent in BH (21x), especially compared to סֵפֶר (185x).

- Ps 47.9 (each line is a clause); קָדְשׁוֹ *his* [י- 3ms] holiness
- מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהִים עַל-גּוֹיִם .e
אֱלֹהִים יָשֵׁב עַל-כִּסֵּא קָדְשׁוֹ:
- 2 Chr 21.12; אָ- *your* (2ms); Jehoshaphat; Asa
- לֹא-הִלַּכְתָּ בְּדַרְכֵי יְהוֹשָׁפָט אָבִיךָ .f
וּבְדַרְכֵי אָסָא מֶלֶךְ-יְהוּדָה:
- 2 Sam 22.22; כִּי *for, that, because*; רָשָׁע *be wicked*; *act wickedly*; here מִן *against*; יְ- *my*
- כִּי שָׁמַרְתִּי דְרָכֵי יְהוָה .g
וְלֹא רָשַׁעְתִּי מֵאֱלֹהֵי:
- Ne 1.7; חֹק *statute, rule, regulation*
- וְלֹא-שָׁמַרְנוּ אֶת-הַמִּצְוֹת וְאֶת-הַחֻקִּים .h
- Ex 2.20; בְּנֹתָיו *his* [י- 3ms] *daughters*; זֶה לָמָּה *Why?*
- וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-בְּנֹתָיו לָמָּה זֶה עֲזַבְתֶּן אֶת-הָאִישׁ .i
- Ps 119.55; אָ- *your* (2ms); יְהוָה (vocative); ignore the final הְ- on וַאֲשַׁמְרָה
- זָכַרְתִּי בְלִילָה שְׁמֶךָ יְהוָה .j
וַאֲשַׁמְרָה תּוֹרָתְךָ:
- Dt 6.5; אָ- *your* (2ms); מְאֹד *strength, might, power*
- וְאִתְּבַתָּ אֵת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל-לִבְבְּךָ .k
וּבְכָל-נַפְשְׁךָ וּבְכָל-מְאֹדְךָ:
- Dt 31.12; לְמַעַן *so that, in order that*; לִמַּד *learn*; יִרָא *fear*; כֶּם- *your* (2mp); שִׁמְרוּ *here be careful*; לַעֲשׂוֹת *to do*; *by doing*
- לְמַעַן יִשְׁמְעוּ וְלִמְעַן יִלְמְדוּ .l
וַיִּרְאוּ אֶת-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם וַשְׁמְרוּ לַעֲשׂוֹת אֶת-כָּל-דְּבָרֵי הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת:

10.8 ENRICHMENT: PERFORMATIVES

One possible function of the perfect (not mentioned in the lesson above), is the perfect as *performative*. A performative is a verb that accomplishes or realizes the act that it describes, so that to say, e.g., “I promise that ...” is to make the promise—no further action is required (cf., e.g., “I declare ...”, “I announce ...”, “I claim ...”). A crude test of a performative is whether or not the word “hereby” can be inserted into the statement, as well as such functional tests as whether or not the speaker has the authority to accomplish the act that he or she is naming.

A common example of a performative in the prophetic literature is the formula “Thus says YHWH” (כֹּה אָמַר יְהוָה), so that although אָמַר is 3ms *qal* perfect, it refers to the following quotation, rather than to a past speech.

The performative function may also explain statements with a perfect as predicate, especially divine pronouncements, such as the promise of the land to Abram [sic]:

לְזַרְעֶךָ נָתַתִּי אֶת-הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת To your seed I [hereby] give this land (Gn 15.18)

Why does this statement use the perfect, since the former promises (Gn 12.7; 13.15, 17), use the imperfect to refer to a clearly future event (Abram does not yet have any heirs to whom the land might be given)? One explanation is that the performative function is better suited to the divine self-malediction in the covenantal ratification ceremony (Gn 15.17).

In Gn 17.5, two verbal clauses—with a imperfect (אֵינְךָ) and *waw*+perfect (וְהָיָה)—referring to the future, precede a perfect (נִתְּתִיךָ). The content and context of the divine promise suggest that this is a performative, especially since Abram [now Abraham] was not yet a “multitude of nations”, and would not even be a father for some time (the v. is divided into clauses).

<p>וְלֹא־יִקְרָא עוֹד אֶת־שְׁמֶךָ אַבְרָם וְהָיָה שְׁמֶךָ אַבְרָהָם כִּי אֲבִרְהַמּוֹן גּוֹיִם נִתְּתִיךָ</p>	<p>“And your name shall no longer be called ‘Abram’, but your name shall be ‘Abraham’, because I [hereby] <i>make</i> you a father of a multitude of nations” (Gn 17.5).</p>
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The possibility of performative functions here and in other places again cautions us against assuming a simple relationship or equation between verbal conjugations—or verbal function—in BH and other languages.

LESSON 11 NOMINAL MODIFICATION (IV)

BIBLICAL HEBREW uses prepositions to show a noun’s syntagmatic function (Lesson 7). It limits or modifies the range of a noun’s reference by means of the article (§4.3), construct chain (Lesson 9), relative particle אֲשֶׁר (§11.2), or adjectives (cf. the examples in §4.3).

11.1 ADJECTIVES

11.1.1 FORM

Adjectives in Hebrew use the same endings as the noun. The lexical form of the adjective is masculine singular. The endings are added to the lexical form, unless it ends in הַ -, in which case the gender-number endings replace הַ -; e.g., יָפָה). Endings often affect the word’s vocalization.

Gender	Singular	Plural	
Masc.	טוֹב	טוֹבִים	<i>good</i>
Fem.	טוֹבָה	טוֹבוֹת	
Masc.	גָּדוֹל	גָּדוֹלִים	<i>large, great</i>
Fem.	גָּדוֹלָה	גָּדוֹלוֹת	
Masc.	יָפָה	יָפִים	<i>handsome, attractive;</i> <i>beautiful</i>
Fem.	יָפָה	יָפוֹת	

Adjectives use the endings that agree with the *grammatical gender* of the word that they modify, so that their endings do *not* always match the ending of the noun that they modify. This is especially true for feminine nouns that do not end in ה-, ת-, or וֹת- (plural). When an adjective modifies a collective noun (e.g., צֵאֵן), it may agree with its grammatical number (and be singular), or with the noun’s collective sense (and be plural).

אִשָּׁה יָפָה	<i>a beautiful woman</i>	Both nouns have the usual ending of their genders, so the adjectives and nouns have the same endings.
סוּסִים טוֹבִים	<i>good horses</i>	
עָרִים גָּדוֹלוֹת	<i>great cities</i>	All three nouns are feminine (despite their endings); so the adjectives have the feminine ending.
יָד חֲזָקָה	<i>a strong hand</i>	
נָשִׁים יָפוֹת	<i>beautiful women</i>	
עַם גָּדוֹל	<i>a great people [nation]</i>	Both adjectives agree with the noun, one with its grammatical form, the second with its collective sense.
הָעָם הַהֹלְכִים	<i>the people who walk (Is 9.1)</i>	

11.1.2 FUNCTION

Adjectives in BH have three functions, which are indicated by (1) whether or not the adjective and its substantive agree in *definiteness*; (2) the *word order* of the adjective and substantive; and (3) the immediate *syntax*. Their three functions may be called *attributive*, *predicate*, and *substantive*.

1. An *attributive* adjective and noun agree in definiteness—both are either definite or indefinite—and form a noun phrase. It sounds like an adjective when rendered into English, coming between the article and its noun:

הַמֶּלֶךְ הַגָּדוֹל the *great* king
 בְּחֵיל כָּבֵד מְאֹד ... with a very *heavy* [i.e., lavish] retinue (1 Kg 10.2)

2. A *predicate* (or “verbal”) adjective and its noun form a non-verbal clause, glossed using a form of “to

be”.⁵ The adjective is usually indefinite, the noun definite. [Both are often indefinite in poetry.] The adjective, which *predicates* something about the noun, may precede or follow it.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| הַמֶּלֶךְ הַגָּדוֹל | The king <i>is</i> [was] <i>great</i> . |
| גָּדוֹל הַמֶּלֶךְ | |
| טוֹב הַדָּבָר | The word <i>is good</i> (1 Kgs 2.38). |
| כִּי כָבֵד הָרָעֵב בְּאֶרֶץ | for the famine <i>was heavy</i> [i.e., harsh, severe] in the land (Gn 12.10). |
| כָּל־הַדְּרָכַי־אִישׁ יָדָּ בְעֵינָיו | All a man’s ways are clean in his eyes (Pr 16.2). |

3. When there is an adjective but no noun, the adjective “becomes” a noun—it is *substantive* (or “nominal”), and may function as a noun or as a relative clause. Indefinite substantive adjectives occur much more frequently in poetry than prose. Some adjectives occur so frequently as substantives that they can be considered nouns (e.g., more than 90% of the occurrences of זָקֵן are substantive). Whenever an adjective occurs in the construct (within a construct chain), it is substantive (Pr 15.28; Ex 12.21).

- | | |
|--|--|
| הַגָּדוֹל | <i>the great onel</i> ; <i>he who is great</i> |
| לֵב צַדִּיק יַהֲגֶה לְעֲנוּת | The heart of <i>the righteous</i> ponders in order to answer (Pr 15.28); this could also be attributive: “A righteous heart ...” |
| וַיִּקְרָא מֹשֶׁה לְכָל־זְקֵנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל | Moses summoned all of <i>the elders</i> of Israel ... (Ex 12.21) |

4. When both noun and adjective are indefinite (as is fairly common in poetry), the adjective’s function must be determined from its context. For example, when the modified noun is the subject or object of a clause or sentence (“*The great king* went to war”), or object of a preposition (“for *the great king*”), then the adjective is attributive. When the noun and adjective form their own clause (“The king *is great*”), the adjective is predicate.

Adjective with Noun		
	Indefinite Noun	Definite Noun
Predicate	טוֹב מֶלֶךְ טוֹב מֶלֶךְ* ⁶	טוֹב הַמֶּלֶךְ
	<i>A king is good.*</i> <i>a good king*</i>	<i>The king is good.</i>
Attributive	מֶלֶכֶה טוֹבָה מֶלֶכֶה טוֹבָה*	הַמֶּלֶכֶה הַטוֹבָה
	<i>a good queen*</i> <i>A queen is good.*</i>	<i>the good queen</i>

*When an anarthrous adjective follows an indefinite noun, the context—the clausal syntax—determines whether the adjective is predicate or attributive.

⁵It may seem that we are *adding* “is”, “was”, &c. to the text. Not so. The predicate translation renders the Hebrew text according to the requirements of English syntax and grammar. Some translations (e.g., KJV, NKJV, NAS) italicize words to show that there is no form in the Hebrew text that directly corresponds to that English term. It is unfortunate that this practice gives the appearance of “adding to” to the text.

Adjective without Noun		
	טוב	הטוב
	<i>a good person/man</i>	<i>the good person/man</i>
Substantive	<i>he who is good / whoever is good / [the/any] one who is good</i>	
	טובה	הטובות
	<i>a good woman</i>	<i>the good women</i>
	<i>she who is good</i>	<i>the women who are good</i>

5. There is *no comparative* form in BH. In order to compare two things Hebrew uses the preposition מן to introduce the thing *to which* something is being compared (the word introduced by “than” in English comparison). Comparative adjectives are always predicate. The “comparative *min*” also occurs with stative verbs, where the subject of the verb is compared to someone/thing else (1 Kgs 10.23).

<p>וְכַעַס אֵוִיל כָּבֵד מִשְׁנֵיהֶם וְטוֹב־רָשׁ מֵאִישׁ כְּזָב: גְּדוֹל יְהוָה מִכָּל־הָאֱלֹהִים כִּי חֲזָק הוּא מִמֶּנּוּ וַיִּגְדַּל הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה מִכָּל מְלָכֵי הָאָרֶץ</p>	<p>... but a fool’s wrath <i>is heavier than</i> both (Pr 27.3) ... and a poor [man] <i>is better than</i> a man of a lie [liar] (Pr 19.22) YHWH <i>is greater than</i> all gods. (Ex 18.11) ... for [they—i.e., the people] are <i>stronger than</i> we (Nu 13.31) And King Solomon <i>was greater than</i> all the kings of the land ... (1 Kgs 10.23)</p>
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6. The word כל, *all*, is a *noun* in Hebrew; it therefore does *not* agree with the noun that it modifies, but usually occurs in construct with it as כָּל, *all of, each of, every ...* (more than 4000xx). With pronominal suffixes (Lesson 14) it is written כֹּל- (c. 200xx). When it [occasionally] occurs with the article, it refers to “everything” (i.e., “the whole”; 2 Sa 19.31).

<p>כָּכֹל הַתּוֹרָה הַזֹּאת וַיִּתֵּר כָּל הַדְּבָרֵי אָסָא מִנֶּרֶת זָהָב כְּלָהּ וַיֹּאמֶר מִפִּיבֹשֶׁת אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ גַּם אֶת־הַכֹּל יִקַּח</p>	<p>according to <i>all [of]</i> this teaching/instruction (Dt 4.8) Now the rest of <i>all [of]</i> the words of Asa (1 Kgs 15.23) a lampstand <i>entirely</i> [all of it] of gold (Zc 4.2) And Mephiboshet said to the king, “Let him take <i>everything ...</i>” (2 Sa 19.31).</p>
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7. The word מאד, *very, much*, can strengthen adjectives and verbs, and so is often called an “adverb”. It comes at the end of the phrase or clause, following the word that it modifies. [NB: מאד is strengthened by repetition (Nu 14.7).]

<p>קָרוֹב אֵלַיךְ תִּדְבָּר מְאֹד טוֹבָה הָאָרֶץ מְאֹד מְאֹד: יָפָה הִיא מְאֹד אִישׁ בָּרִיא מְאֹד</p>	<p>... the word is <i>very near</i> to you (Dt 30.14) The land is <i>very, very good</i> (Nu 14.7) ... she was <i>very beautiful</i> (Gn 12.14). ... a <i>very fat</i> man (Jg 3.17).</p>
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8. Adjectives follow construct chains; they do not interrupt them.

כָּל-מַעֲשֵׂה יְהוָה הַגָּדֹל all of the *great* work of YHWH (Dt 11.7 || Jg 2.7)
 וְאַלֶּה דְבָרֵי הַיּוֹד הָאַחֲרֹנִים These are the *last* words of David (2 Sam 23.1)

11.1.3 THE MOST COMMON ADJECTIVES

This lists all adjectives used 50 times or more in BH (* indicates those which occur often or primarily as substantives).

אָביוֹן	* <i>poor</i> (61x)	מָלֵא	<i>full</i> (67xx)
אֲחֵר	<i>another, other</i> (166xx)	מְעַט	<i>few</i> ; subst.: <i>a little</i> (96xx)
אֲחֵרוֹן	<i>behind, last</i> (50x)	מֵת	<i>dead</i> (72xx)
זָקֵן	* <i>old</i> (187xx); <i>elder</i>	עָנִי	* <i>afflicted, distressed, poor</i> (76xx)
זָר	<i>strange, different, illicit</i> (71xx)	צַדִּיק	<i>just, innocent, righteous</i> (206xx)
חָדָשׁ	<i>new</i> (53x)	קָדוֹשׁ	<i>holy, set apart</i> (115xx)
חָזָק	<i>hard, strong</i> (56x)	קָטוֹן	<i>small, little, insignificant</i> (54x)
חָכָם	<i>wise, skilled</i> (138xx)	קָרוֹב	<i>near</i> (78xx)
חָלָל	<i>dead, killed</i> (94xx); subst.: <i>the dead</i>	רַב	<i>much, many</i> (475xx)
טָהוֹר	<i>clean, pure</i> (94xx)	רְחוֹק	<i>far, distant</i> (85xx)
טוֹב	<i>good, pleasant; happy</i> [of the heart] (612xx)	רָע	<i>bad, evil, disastrous</i> (661xx); fem. as subst.: <i>disaster, tragedy, evil, wickedness</i>
טָמֵא	[ceremonially] <i>unclean, impure</i> (88x)	רָעָה	<i>worthless</i> (52x); <i>in vain</i> (adverb); subst.: <i>worthlessness</i>
כְּסִיל	* <i>stupid, dull, insolent</i> (70xx); <i>fool</i>	שׂוֹא	<i>whole, complete, entire, blameless</i> (91xx)

11.2 THE RELATIVE PARTICLE

A RELATIVE CLAUSE modifies a noun or substantive by *relating* something about it. In English relative clauses are introduced by a relative pronoun (“who”, “which”) and follow the word that they modify—“the prophet *who said*”. Hebrew relative clauses are introduced by the relative אֲשֶׁר (more than 5500 times in BH).

1. Like the relative pronoun in English, אֲשֶׁר normally follows the word that it modifies:

עָנִי עַמִּי אֲשֶׁר בְּמִצְרַיִם	... the affliction of my people <i>who are in Egypt</i> (Ex 3.7)
הַמְּלָכִים אֲשֶׁר מִצְפוֹן בְּהָר	... the kings <i>who were on the north in the hill country</i> (Jos 11.2)
בְּעַז אֲשֶׁר מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת אֵלִימֶלֶךְ:	... Boaz, <i>who was from Elimelek's clan</i> (Ru 2.3)
עִם-יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר עִם-שָׂאוּל וַיּוֹנְתָן:	... with [the] Israel[ites] <i>who were with Saul and Jonathan</i> (1 Sam 14.21)

N.B. English allows “implicit” relative clauses—i.e., those that do not begin with a relative pronoun, such as “the kings from the north” instead of “the kings *who were* from the north”. In biblical narrative, however, relative clauses are nearly always explicit (written with אֲשֶׁר).

2. When a relative clause modifying a “locative noun” ends with שָׁם (“there”) the combination שָׁם ... אֲשֶׁר often functions as a relative locative adverb (שָׁם ... אֲשֶׁר ≈ “where”). When this type of relative clause

describes a person, group, or thing, it is usually predicate (“who/which was/were/is/&c. there”, as in Nu 21.32):

בְּאֶרֶץ גֹּשֶׁן אֲשֶׁר-שָׂם בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל	... in the land of Goshen, <i>where the sons of Israel</i> [were], ... (Ex 9.26)
מִן-הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-אַתָּה שָׂם	“... from the place <i>where</i> you are ...” (Gn 13.14)
אֶת-הָאֱמֹרִי אֲשֶׁר-שָׂם:	... the Amorites <i>who were there</i> (Nu 21.32)
בְּהֵיכַל יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר שָׂם אֲרוֹן	... in YHWH’s temple, <i>where</i> the ark ... was (1 Sa 3.3)

3. The compound form כַּאֲשֶׁר (אֲשֶׁר + כּ) is a comparative particle, “[just] as” that often precedes a verb (especially verbs of command, instruction, &c.); following the introductory particle וַיְהִי it is often temporal in the sense of “when”:

וַעֲשֵׂה יְהוָה לָהֶם כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה	YHWH shall do to them <i>just as</i> he did ... (Dt 31.4)
כַּאֲשֶׁר יֹאמֵר מִשַּׁל הַקְּדָמִי	As the proverb of the ancients says, (1 Sam 24.14)
וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר זָקֵן שְׁמוּאֵל	Now <i>when</i> Samuel was old, ... (1 Sam 8.1)

N.B. BH has three syntagms that correspond roughly to the relative clause in English: (1) clauses introduced by the particle אֲשֶׁר; (2) clauses formed by a substantive adjective (§11.1.2); and (3) clauses formed by a substantive participle (§12.2). Although these sound the same when represented in English, the אֲשֶׁר clause modifies a noun; the substantival adjective and participle have no noun to modify.

11.3 NON-VERBAL CLAUSES

A CLAUSE IS A GROUP OF WORDS that makes a *comment* (the predicate) about a *topic* (the subject). Although the word “predicate” is often used casually to refer to verbs, a predicate can be nearly any part of speech or syntagm. A clause can be a sentence, or merely part of a sentence (cf., e.g., relative clauses, above). In these two examples, David is the subject, and the rest of the clause tells us something about David:

- a. David *wrote many songs*. ascribes an action to David (something that he did)
 b. David *was a mighty warrior*. explains who/what David was (what kind of warrior he was)

Clauses in BH like “a” are *verbal* clauses (a verb is the main part of the predicate), but clauses like “b” tend to be *non-verbal*, with either a predicate adjective (Ex 9.27), noun, prepositional phrase, or adverb as the predicate. We will consider a clause non-verbal when it lacks an imperfect, preterite, perfect, imperative, predicate participle (Lesson 12), or infinitive (Lesson 16). We will also consider the more specific word in a non-verbal clause to be the subject, with (1) proper names and definite nouns more specific than generic nouns; (2) personal pronouns more specific than proper names and definite nouns; and (3) demonstratives more definite than personal pronouns.

יְהוָה הַצְדִּיק	YHWH is the righteous one (Ex 9.27)
אֲנִי יְהוָה	I am YHWH (Ex 6.2); pronoun as subject
אָחִי הוּא	he is my brother (Gn 20.5); pronoun as subject
וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֵיהֶם אֵלִישָׁע	Elisha said to them, “ <i>This</i> is not the way, nor is <i>this</i> the city. ...” (1 Kgs 6.19)
לֹא זֶה הַדֶּרֶךְ וְלֹא זֶה הָעִיר	

A clause is either *syndetic* (linked to its preceding context by a conjunction) or *asyndetic* (lacking a conjunction; these are relatively infrequent in biblical narrative). Disjunctive and preterite clauses are by

definition syndetic, as is any clause beginning with *waw*. Other types of clauses are also syndetic, such as those that begin with subordinating particles, such as *כִּי*, *אֲשֶׁר*, *לְמַעַן*, &c. It is not the first word or form that determines that a concatenation of words is a clause, but the presence of a topic and a comment.

11.4 NOMINAL APPPOSITION

NOUNS can also be modified by other nouns. In *apposition* one noun follows another, but they do not form a construct chain (since the first noun is usually definite, it cannot be in construct). If the first noun is a generic term (e.g., “the king”), the apposed noun is usually a personal name. If the first noun is a personal name, the second usually identifies him or her by office, position, or relationship (i.e., the aspect of that person that is contextually appropriate). A major clue to the presence of apposition is that proper names and definite nouns cannot be in construct:

- | | | |
|-----|---------------------------------------|---|
| (a) | הַמֶּלֶךְ דָּוִד | <i>King David</i> (2 Sa 3.31; Samuel-Kings uses this syntagm) |
| (b) | דָּוִד הַמֶּלֶךְ | <i>King David</i> (1 Ch 26.26; Chronicles uses this syntagm) |
| (c) | יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן-נֹון | <i>Joshua son of Nun</i> (Ex 33.11) |
| (d) | שָׂרַי אִשְׁתְּ אַבְרָהָם | <i>Sarai, Abram’s wife</i> (Gn 16.1) |
| (e) | דָּוִד עֶבֶד יְהוָה | <i>David, the servant of YHWH</i> (Ps 36.1) |
| (g) | רוּת הַמּוֹאֲבִיָּה אִשְׁתְּ מַחֲלֹון | <i>Ruth, the Moabitess, Mahlon’s wife</i> (Ru 4.10) |
| (f) | בָּרוּךְ בֶּן נְרִיָּהוּ הַסֹּפֵר | <i>Baruch, son of Neriah, the scribe</i> (Jr 36.32) |

In (c) – (e), a construct chain is apposed to the proper name; in (f), a second apposition (“the scribe”) further describes Baruch; in (g), a second apposition, which is also a construct chain describes Ruth as “Mahlon’s wife”. Understanding this requires reading the string of words to see how they are related to each other, as well as general knowledge of biblical context. These examples also illustrate the frequent interdependence of construct chains and apposition.

11.5 CONCEPTS

adjective	attributive	comment	relative	substantive
apposition/apposed	clause	predicate	subject	topic

11.6 VOCABULARY

<i>copper, bronze</i>	נְחֹשֶׁת .156	<i>other, another</i> (adj.)	אַחֵר .147
<i>service, servitude, labour, work</i>	עֲבוּדָה .157	<i>who, which, what, that; when</i>	אֲשֶׁר .148
<i>mouth</i>	פֶּה .158	[just] <i>like, as; when</i>	כַּאֲשֶׁר
<i>mouth of (construct)</i>	פִּי	<i>large, big, great</i> (adj.); <i>be/become large, great</i> (st. vb.)	גָּדוֹל .149
<i>holiness, “apartness”</i>	קִדְּשׁ .159	<i>old; elder</i> (adj.); <i>be/become old</i> (st. vb.)	זָקֵן .150
<i>holy, sacred</i> (adj.) ⁷	קָדוֹשׁ	<i>good</i> (adj.); <i>be/become good</i> (st. vb.)	טוֹב .151
<i>much, many</i> (adj.)	רַב .160	<i>honest, upright, right</i> (adj.); <i>thus, so</i> (adv.)	כֵּן .152
<i>bad, disastrous; evil, wicked</i> (adj.)	רַע .161	<i>before</i> (temporal & locative), <i>in the presence of, in front of</i>	לְפָנַי .153
<i>bad, disastrous, evil, wicked</i> (adj.)	רָשָׁע .162	<i>wadi</i> (temporary stream or its valley; rarely perennial stream, e.g., Jabbok)	נַחַל .154
<i>gate</i> (of a city)	שַׁעַר .163	<i>horse, stallion</i> (m.)	סוּס .155
		<i>mare</i>	סוּסָה

11.7 EXERCISES

- After studying the forms of טוב, גדול, יפה (§11.1.1), please gloss these phrases and clauses, parsing any verbal forms. Be prepared to explain their structure and the function of the adjectives.

a. האיש הטוב	d. גדול האלהים	g. הבקר בשדה
b. האשה יפה	e. הערים על-ההרים	h. העיר במדבר
c. האיש אשר בפית	f. הבקר אשר על-ההרים	i. זקן אב הפתח

- Gloss these phrases and clauses, parsing the verbs.

Ps 145.9; כל is a substantive in BH

a. טוב יהוה לכל

Jon 1.10; ירא *fear, be afraid*; יראָה *fear* (noun); an object from the same root as its verb is called a “cognate accusative”; a common syntgm in BH

b. וייראו האנשים יראָה גדלה

Is 6.3; זה *this* [one]; צבָא *host, army*; מלא *fulness, that which fills* (n.m.); ה־, *his* [Your gloss will probably differ from most English versions.]

c. וקרא זה אל-זה ואמר
קדוש קדוש קדוש יהוה צבאות
מלא כל-הארץ כבודו:

Jg 19.20; the last word is a quotation

d. ויאמר האיש תזקן שלום

2 Kg 18.28; Assyria

e. ויאמר שמעו דבר-המלך הגדול מלך אשור

⁷English “holy” and “sacred”, &c. differ historically (“holy” < German *Heilig*; “sacred” < Latin *sacra*), not functionally.

<p>2 Sam 4.11; <i>kill</i>; <i>his house</i>; <i>on his bed</i></p>	<p>.f אֲנָשִׁים רָשָׁעִים הָרְגוּ אֶת־אִישׁ־צְדִיק בְּבֵיתוֹ עַל־מִשְׁכְּבוֹ</p>
<p>1 Kgs 8.3; <i>they</i> [m.p.] <i>went</i>; <i>they</i> <i>carried</i>; <i>ark/box/chest</i></p>	<p>.g וַיָּבֵאוּ כָּל זִקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּשְׂאוּ הַכֹּהֲנִים אֶת־הָאָרוֹן:</p>
<p>Pr 14.19; <i>they bow</i> (down); <i>in the presence of</i>; <i>bad, evil, wicked</i>; the verb is elided from the second line</p>	<p>.h שָׁחוּ רַעִים לְפָנָי טוֹבִים וּרְשָׁעִים עַל־שַׁעְרֵי צְדִיק:</p>
<p>Lv 11.45; <i>and you</i> [m.p.] <i>shall be</i></p>	<p>.i וְהָיִיתֶם קְדוֹשִׁים כִּי קְדוֹשׁ אֲנִי:</p>
<p>Jr 7.9; <i>after</i></p>	<p>.j וְהִלַּכְתֶּם אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים אַחֲרַיִם אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִדְעֶתֶם:</p>
<p>2 Chr 2.4; <i>I</i>; <i>building</i> (a participle functioning as a predicate adjective); <i>our</i></p>	<p>.k וְהַבַּיִת אֲשֶׁר־אֲנִי בּוֹנֶה גָדוֹל כִּי־גָדוֹל אֱלֹהֵינוּ מִכָּל־הָאֱלֹהִים:</p>
<p>2 Chr 18.30; Aram; <i>commanded</i>; <i>chariot</i>; <i>saying</i>; <i>Do not fight</i>; <i>but</i>; <i>only</i> (him alone)</p>	<p>.l וּמִלֶּךְ אָרָם צִוָּה אֶת־שָׂרֵי הָרֶכֶב לֵאמֹר לֹא תִלָּחֲמוּ אֶת־הַגָּדוֹל כִּי אִם־אֶת־מֶלֶךְ יִשְׂרָאֵל לְבַדּוֹ:</p>
<p>[Josh 10.2]; <i>one of</i>; <i>kingdom</i>; <i>she, it</i>; <i>her, its</i>; <i>warrior</i>; Gibeon, Ai</p>	<p>.m עִיר גְּדוֹלָה גִּבְעוֹן כְּאַחַת עָרֵי הַמְּמַלְכָּה וְהִיא גְּדוֹלָה מִן־הָעִי וְכָל־אֲנָשֶׁיהָ גִּבְרִים:</p>

11.8 ENRICHMENT: *BULLA*

This is a greatly enlarged drawing of a *bulla* (the clay impression of a seal).



לברכיהו
בן נריהו
הספר

*Belonging to Berechyahu
son of Neryahu
the scribe*

or (using more familiar forms of the names):

***Belonging to [Property of] Baruch
son of Neriah
the scribe***
(cf. Jr 36.32)

This is a typical bulla (the lump of clay that was stamped with a seal, as wax might be today), with an inscription consisting of the owner's name (with *lamed* of possession), followed by "son of", his father's name, and his occupation. The appositions between "Baruch" and "son of Neriaiah" on the one hand and "the scribe" on the other, identify both men by their fathers' names and their occupation or position in society. The *bulla* is thus the owner's "signature".

1. Both names end in *-yahu*, a variant of *-yah* that occurs in BH (Jeremiah's name has both forms: יְרֵמְיָהוּ (8xx; only in Jr 27.1-29.1) and יְרֵמְיָהוּ (>110xx; in the rest of the book; never in 27.1-29.1).
2. Since the names of the father and son, as well as the occupation, match the biblical references, this particular bulla most probably records the personal seal of the scribe named Baruch ben Neriaiah who worked for Jeremiah, and would have been affixed to documents (long since deteriorated) that he wrote, transcribed, or witnessed.
3. The same form of personal identification was in use long before the Israelite monarchy and the period of the canonical prophets. In Js 1.1 Joshua is identified as יְהֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־נֹון מֹשֶׁה מַשְׁרָת מוֹשֶׁה, *Joshua son of Nun, servant of Moses*; Joshua—not his father—was Moses' assistant; Baruch was a scribe, according to the information on this bulla.
4. This bulla appeared on the antiquities market without any reference to its provenance. This means that its interpretation lacks the controls that its discovery *in situ* (in place) would have provided, such as depth, occupational or destruction layer, &c.

LESSON 12 THE PARTICIPLE

THE VERBAL SYSTEM of BH includes forms that are called both “participles” and “verbal adjectives”, since they are based on verbal roots and functionally identical to adjectives. Unlike English participles (forms that end in “-ing”), Hebrew participles can be identified by their vowels, a prefixed **מ-** (in most verbal stems), and the syntax in which they occur. More than one-tenth (about **13%**) of all verbal forms in BH are participles. They are especially common in biblical poetry.

12.1 FORM

ALL PARTICIPLES are inflected for gender and number in order to agree with the word that they modify. They use the same endings as adjectives and nouns. Like adjectives, participles agree with the *true* gender of the word that they modify. The *qal* has two participles—active and passive.

		Qal Active Participle		Qal Passive Participle	
		Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Masc.	abs.	מִשְׁל	מְשָׁלִים	מְשׁוּל	מְשׁוּלִים
	const.		מְשָׁלֵי	מְשׁוּל	מְשׁוּלֵי
Fem.	abs.	מְשַׁלֶּת מְשַׁלָּה	מְשַׁלּוֹת	מְשׁוּלָּה	מְשׁוּלוֹת
	const. ⁸			מְשׁוּלָּת	

1. The *qal active* participle always has an *o*-vowel (*holem* or *holem-waw*) after the *first* radical.
2. The *qal passive* participle always has a *u*-vowel (*šureq*, rarely *qibbus*) after the *second* radical.
3. Unlike the other verbal conjugations, participles can be articular. Like the infinitive construct, they can occur with prepositions and pronominal suffixes (Lesson 14).

12.2 FUNCTION

HBI §2.2.5

THE PARTICIPLE in BH is an adjective, with the same functions as the adjective—attributive, predicate, and substantive. The rules for identifying participial function are the same as for the adjective (§11.1.2).

1. *Attributive*, or *adjectival* participles usually follow, and agree in definiteness with the word that they modify. Although they are attributive, their verbal nature means that they can be glossed in several ways, often as relative clauses (cf. Pr 8.34; Dt 1.38); e.g., Is 40.3 could also be rendered “a voice which was calling, ...” Their temporal reference (past, present, future) is entirely contextual:

אֲשֶׁרִי אֶדָּם שְׂמֵעַ לִי	How happy is the man <i>who listens</i> to me, ... (Pr 8.34)
קוֹל קוֹרָא בַּמִּדְבָּר	A voice <i>calling</i> , “In the wilderness ...” (Is 40.3)
יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן־נֹון הָעֹמֵד לְפָנַיךָ	Joshua son of Nun, <i>who stands</i> before you (Dt 1.38)
מִשְׁפָּט כָּתוּב	judgment <i>that is written</i> (Ps 149.9)

⁸There are about thirty-five feminine construct *qal* participles in BH; few of these are strong verbal roots. The most frequent occurs in the phrase וְרָבַשׁ וְרָבַשׁ וְרָבַשׁ, “*flowing* with milk and honey” (20x; always fsc Q Ptc from the weak verb רָבַשׁ).

(cont'd.)

שָׁלַם ... שֹׁמֵר הַבְּגָדִים Shallum ..., *the keeper of [the one who keeps] the garments* (2 Kgs 22.14)
וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת־הָעָם נֹשְׂאֵי הַמִּנְחָה: He sent away the people *who had carried* the tribute (Jg 3.18)

2. *Predicate*, or *verbal* participles may precede or follow the word that they modify; the words *disagree* in definiteness. In narrative, predicate participles tend to occur in disjunctive clauses, where they function much like finite verbs. A predicate participle is technically “tenseless”—its temporal reference depends on the context, as does its nature as simple or continuous action. The last five examples occur in disjunctive clauses (§6.6):

אֱלֹהִים מִשַּׁל בְּיַעֲקֹב God *rules* in Jacob (Ps 59.14)
צְדִקְתּוֹ עֹמְדָת לְעֶד His righteousness endures for ever (Ps 112.9)
וְהֵם לֹא יָדְעוּ כִּי שָׁמַע יוֹסֵף But they did not know that Joseph *was listening* (Gn 42.23)
וַעֲתָלְיָה מַלְכֶת עַל־הָאָרֶץ: Now Athaliah *was ruling* over the land (2 Kg 11.3)
וּפְלִשְׁתִּים עֹמְדִים אֶל־הַהַר מִזֶּה Now the Philistines *were standing* on the hill on this side (1 Sam 17.3)
שָׁבָא שָׁמְעַת אֶת־שִׁמְעֵי שְׁלֹמֹה Now the queen of Sheba *heard* the report of Solomon ... (1 Kgs 10.1)
וּמִלְכַת
וְהִיא יֹשֶׁבֶת בִּירוּשָׁלַם Now she *lived* in Jerusalem (2 Kgs 22.14)

Depending on the context, and the semantic *load* of the verbal root, a predicate participle following הִנֵּה or הִנְנֶה may suggest the speaker’s sense of immediacy:

כִּי־הִנְנִי בּוֹרֵא שָׁמַיִם חֲדָשִׁים For I am *about to create [creating]* a new heaven and a new earth (Is 65.17)
וְאֶרֶץ חֲדָשָׁה
הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי עֹשֶׂה דָבָר בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל I am *doing [about to do]* a thing in Israel (1 Sa 3.11)
וְהִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי יֹרֵד אֵלֶיךָ I am *going to come down [coming]* to you (1 Sa 10.8)

3. When there is no substantive for the participle to modify, it is “its own noun”, and thus *substantival* (nominal), glossed by a pronominal relative clause (“he who”, “the one who”, “whoever”, &c.). As Jos 2.24 suggests, all participles in construct chains are substantive.

הוֹלֵךְ בְּיִשְׁרוֹ יִרָא יְהוָה *Whoever walks* in his honesty fears YHWH (Pr 14.2)
יְהוָה שֹׁמְרֶךָ YHWH is *the one who watches* you [= “your watcher”] (Ps 121.5)
כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ All the *inhabitants* of the land (Jos 2.24)

4. Some verbs occur primarily as substantive participles (e.g., the verbal root אִיב occurs 281 times; all but two are substantive participles). Words listed as nouns that have the vowel pattern *o-e* (i.e., *holem - sere*) are *qal* participles that were used primarily as substantives (e.g., שֹׁפֵט, *judge*; סֹפֵר, *scribe*).

הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי נֹתֵן אֶת־אִיבְךָ בְּיָדְךָ I am about to give [predicate ptc.] *your enemy* into your hand (1 Sam 24.4)

5. Since they are *verbal* adjectives, participles can govern direct and indirect objects. They also occur with pronominal suffixes (Lesson 14); the suffix may indicate pronominal possession or it may identify the [pronominal] direct object of the action described by the participle:

שְׁמֹרֶךָ: ... שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל: *He who watches you ... he who watches Israel* (Ps 121.3b, 4b)
 אֲנִי יְהוָה רִפְּאֵךְ I am YHWH, [he] *who heals you* (Ex 15.26); or *your healer*

12.3 CONCEPTS

active	nominal	participle	predicate	verbal
adjectival	attributive	passive	substantive	

12.4 VOCABULARY

<i>there is/are</i> (opposite of אֵין/אִין)	יֵשׁ .173	<i>ram</i>	אֵיל .164
<i>death; מוֹת, death of</i>	מָוֶת .174	<i>choose</i> (בְּ often introduces its object)	בָּחַר .165
<i>in front of, before, opposite</i>	נֶגֶד .175	<i>mighty man, warrior</i>	גִּבּוֹר .166
<i>work, occupation</i>	מְלָאכָה .176	<i>generation, life-span</i>	דּוֹר .167
<i>count; write, record</i>	סָפַר .177	<i>seek, inquire</i> (cf. מִדְרָשׁ)	דָּרַשׁ .168
<i>scribe, secretary, recorder</i> (ms Q Ptc)	סֹפֵר	<i>kill</i>	הָרַג .169
<i>opening, entrance</i>	פֶּתַח .178	<i>sacrifice</i> (n.)	זָבַח .170
<i>ask [for], request</i>	שָׁאַל .179	<i>outside</i> (noun and prep.); <i>street</i>	חוּץ .171
<i>oil</i> (usually olive oil)	שֶׁמֶן .180	<i>wisdom, skill</i>	חֲכָמָה .172

12.5 EXERCISES

After learning the forms of the *qal* participle, please *gloss* these clauses, *parsing* the verbs, and *identifying* each participle's function as either attributive, predicate, or substantive.

2 Chr 22.12; Athaliah

1. וַעֲתָלְיָה מְלֹכֶת עַל־הָאָרֶץ:

Is 9.1; רָאוּ *they saw* (3cp Q P);
 צִלְמוֹת *death-shadow*; נָגַהּ *shine*;
 עַל -הֶם < עֲלֵיהֶם (their/them) +

2. הָעַם הַהֲלֹכִים בְּחֹשֶׁךְ רָאוּ אֹרֶךְ יָמֵיהֶם
 יֹשְׁבֵי בְּאֶרֶץ צִלְמוֹת אֹרֶךְ יָמֵיהֶם

Ps 59.14b; אָפַס *end*; Jacob

3. וַיִּדְעוּ כִּי־אֱלֹהִים מִשַּׁל בְּיַעֲקֹב לְאַפְסֵי הָאָרֶץ

1 Sam 3.3; הֵיכַל *temple*; אֲרוֹן *ark*; Samuel

4. וַשְׁמוּאֵל שָׁכַב בְּהֵיכַל יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם אֲרוֹן אֱלֹהִים:

Ps 147.3; רָפָא *heal*

5. הָרָפָא לְשִׁבוּרֵי לֵב

Ec 7.15; הִ-, *his*

6. יֵשׁ צַדִּיק אֲבָד בְּצַדִּיקוֹ

Ps 58.12

7. יִשְׂאֲלֵהֶם שִׁפְטִים בְּאֶרֶץ:

Gn 25.28; you should be able to recognize the names: **וַיֵּאָהֵב יִצְחָק אֶת־עֵשָׂו... וַרְבֵּקָה אֶהָבֵת אֶת־יַעֲקֹב:** .8

Ps 75.8 **כִּי־אֱלֹהִים שִׁפְט** .9

Ps 106.3; **אֲשֶׁרִי שְׂמֵרִי מִשִּׁפְט** .10
happy (trad., blessed); עֲשֵׂה do; צְדָקָה righteousness, innocence; עַת time
עֲשֵׂה צְדָקָה בְּכָל־עַת:

1 Sam 18.16; **בוא** *he; ms Q Ptc < בא* **וְכָל־יִשְׂרָאֵל וַיהוּדָה אֶהָב אֶת־דָּוִד** .11
come/go in; לפניהם before them; David
כִּי־הוּא יוֹצֵא וְבָא לִפְנֵיהֶם:

Jg 4.4; **היא** *she; that;* Deborah, Lapidot **וַדְּבוּרָה אִשָּׁה נְבִיאָה אִשְׁת־לְפִידוֹת** .12
היא שִׁפְטָה אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּעַת הַהִיא:

Jr 22.11; **הוא** *his; Shallum; Josiah;* Judah **כֹּה אָמַר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי־שָׁלֹם בֶּן־יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה** .13
הַמֶּלֶךְ תַּחַת יֹאשִׁיָּהוּ אָבִיו

Lv 14.47; **וְהִשְׁכַּב בַּבַּיִת יִכַּבֵּס אֶת־בְּגָדָיו** .14
he will wash; יוֹ - his (suffixed to a plural noun; cf. #6)
וְהֵאָכַל בַּבַּיִת יִכַּבֵּס אֶת־בְּגָדָיו:

1 Sam 17.3; **וּפְלִשְׁתִּים עִמָּדִים אֶל־הָהָר מִזֶּה** .15
on one [this] side (זה + מן) Philistines
וַיִּשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּדִים אֶל־הָהָר מִזֶּה

Jr 23.2; **לָכֵן כֹּה־אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** .16
therefore (ל + כן); על concerning; both participles are from the root *shepherd, tend* (the mp ending “replaces” the final ה- of the root)
עַל־הָרָעִים הָרָעִים אֶת־עַמִּי

12.6 ENRICHMENT: PARTICIPIAL COMPRESSION

Participles are especially common in the book of Proverbs, probably because they allow highly compressed syntax, perhaps also to impart a “timeless” and “universal” air to the sayings. In Pr 17.9, for example, the use of four participles allows the proverb to be compressed into only eight words:

מְכַסֵּה־פֶשַׁע מִבְּקֵשׁ אֶהָבָה *Whoever conceals a transgression seeks love;*
וְשֹׁנֵה בְדָבָר מִפְּרִיד אֶלֹּף: *And whoever repeats a matter separates a friend [friends] (Pr 17.9)*

At times, however, compression can be confusing. How should we read these lines? Which is primary—seeking or concealing, repeating or separating? Since our experience suggests that talking about offenses can destroy relationships, but that this is not the only reason for relationships to fail, we would probably read Pr 17.9b as suggested above (rather than “Whoever separates friends repeats a matter”).

In 17.9a, however, either participle could be read as the subject, so that an alternative interpretation (and translation) would be “Whoever seeks love conceals a transgression”. This line may even be deliberately ambiguous, written in order to allow or even encourage both understandings. The decision to gloss it in one way or the other, however, is essentially arbitrary, since either participle can be predicate or substantive.

Word order is not always a reliable guide to syntax or function, especially in biblical poetry, so that

we must reflect on the content of the proverb in order to translate it appropriately.

In Pr 12.1a, however, the parallelism helps us determine that the first participle is the subject (substantive) and the second the predicate, since the predicate is elided from the second line, and since “loves discipline” parallels “hates correction”, we follow the first reading:

אִהַב מוֹסֵר אִהַב דָּעַת
וְשִׂנְא תוֹכַחַת בְּעֵר:
Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge;
and whoever hates correction [loves] stupidity (Pr 12.1)

It may seem that we have merely read the Hebrew as though it uses English word-order, but our interpretation (and therefore translation) is actually based on the parallels between the two lines. The general principle here is the frequent omission [elision] of the predicate from the second of two parallel lines of biblical poetry.

Two passive participles (Lesson 19) allow even greater compression in Pr 27.5—only five words:

טוֹבָה תוֹכַחַת מְגֹלָה מֵאַהֲבָה מְסֻתָּרַת:
Uncovered rebuke is better than concealed love (Pr 27.5)

This could also be rendered so that the English syntax corresponds to the Hebrew:

Better a rebuke uncovered than love concealed.

Nothing is gained beyond (perhaps) a certain “poetic” feel; both renderings are as compressed as English allows. Or, if we wanted to add a poetic structure that is not present in the Hebrew sentence, we could invert the order of the last two words so that we read *noun – adjective ... adjective – noun*, but this may be cleverness for its own sake.

Better a *rebuke uncovered* than *concealed love*.

LESSON 13 PRONOMINALS (I)

PRONOUNS are a *cohesive* device (§6), one of the linguistic functions by which an utterance is “held together”. English, for example, prefers to track clausal subjects pronominally (e.g., “Then *he* went ...” or “After *she* had taken ...”), rather than by repeating the subject’s name. Pronouns thus tend to be “anaphoric” (Greek *ana*, “above”), since they usually refer *back* to someone or something previously mentioned (traditionally called the “antecedent”).⁹

BH has two sets of pronouns—*independent pronouns* and *suffixed pronouns* (called “pronominal suffixes” [§14]). Both sets are inflected for person, gender, and number.

Independent personal pronouns identify the subject of the clause; *demonstratives* usually modify nouns. Independent (or “subject”) pronouns in BH, however, are not merely cohesive—they also function on the level of discourse, a “higher-level” function that explains why BH has independent subject pronouns alongside the PGN of the finite verb.¹⁰ (§13.1.2).

Pronominal suffixes show pronominal possession (“my”, “her”, “their”), indicate the pronominal objects of verbs and prepositions, and the pronominal subjects of the infinitive construct (§16.1.1).

13.1 INDEPENDENT PRONOMINALS

All pronominal forms in BH have person, gender, and number. Most independent pronouns identify the subject of their clause; about 20% of all independent personal pronouns occur as the first element in disjunctive clauses (*w* + pronoun).

13.1.1 FORM

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
1 st	common	אֲנִי אַנְכִי I	נַחְנוּ אֲנַחְנוּ we
2 nd	masc.	אַתָּה you	אַתֶּם you
	fem.	אַתְּ you	אַתֶּן you
3 rd	masc.	הוּא he, it	הֵם they
	fem.	הִיא she, it	הֵנָּה they

- The form is distinct for each person; gender and number is distinguished by the end of the form:

Person	Form
1 st	- אֲנִי I, we
2 nd	- אַתָּה you
3 rd	- הוּא he, she, it, they

- The “double forms” differ primarily in frequency and distribution, as these illustrative statistics show.
 - אֲנִי (1cs) is far more frequent (803x) than אַנְכִי (c. 350x), but in some biblical books one form dominates, e.g.,

⁹Pronouns can be *cataphoric*, referring to something that follows (“*He* awoke early, but John ...”); this function is rare in BH.

¹⁰Apart from commands, English sentences have explicit subjects, either nominal or pronominal (English also uses a “dummy” subject, as in “*It’s* raining” and “*There’s* one in here”). Independent subject pronouns in BH often “sound” redundant (or “emphatic”) to English readers when they occur alongside a verbal form that indicates the PGN of its subject. They are not actually redundant, because: (1) all communication is as efficient as possible (superfluity is only apparent, never real); and (2) their function is related to the larger context in which they occur, including the genre and the relationship of their clause to the preceding clause. This will become more clear as you begin to read the biblical text.

	אָנְכִי	אֲנִי
Dt	55x	6x
Ezk	1x	155x

- b. אָנְכִי (1cp) occurs about 115 times in BH, but אֲנִי only six times.
 c. The longer form of 3mp (הֵמָּה) is slightly more frequent (c. 55%) than הֵם; as with 1cs (אֲנִי/אָנְכִי), they are not distributed evenly:¹¹

	הֵמָּה	הֵם
Gn	4x	17x
Ex	5x	17x
Lv	1x	18x
Ps	25x	3x
Ezk	57x	8x ¹²

- d. הוּא (3fs written with -w-) occurs in the Torah, הִיא in the rest of the Bible (הִיא—with *yod*—occurs ten times in the Torah out of more than 150 occurrences in those books).

13.1.2 FUNCTION

HBI §1.5.1

1. An independent pronoun *always* means that you are looking at a *clause*, whether or not the pronoun comes first in the clause.
2. Independent personal pronouns usually identify the *subject* of a verbal or non-verbal clause (“I”, “she”, “we”). They do *not* show pronominal possession (e.g., “my”, “your”) or the pronominal objects of verbs or prepositions (e.g., “him”, “for them”). The examples illustrate its use with various types of predicates—a noun (Gn 3.19; Ex 6.2), adjective (Ezk 42.14), finite verb (Gn 41.15), and participle (Nu 33.51):

כִּי־עָפָר אַתָּה	For you are dust, ... (Gn 3.19)
אֲנִי יְהוָה	I am YHWH (Ex 6.2).
כִּי־קָדָשׁ הֵנָּה	For they [fp] are holy (Ezk 42.14).
וְאֲנִי שָׁמַעְתִּי עֲלֶיךָ	I heard about you ... (Gn 41.15)
כִּי אַתֶּם עֹבְרִים אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן	When you cross the Jordan ... (Nu 33.51)

3. Independent pronouns also occur in non-verbal clauses, apparently signaling the non-verbal predication:

יְהוָה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים	YHWH [—he] is [the] God (1 Kg 18.39).
כִּי־טוֹב כָּל־אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם לְכֶם הוּא:	For the goodness of all of the land of Egypt [it] is yours (Gn 45.20).

4. Independent pronouns often occur with the conjunction -וְ, creating a disjunctive clause (§6.6). Gn 42.23 explains why Joseph’s brothers thought that they were secure in talking in front of him. The added information of Jg 11.39 makes the virginity of Jephthah’s daughter explicit.

וְהֵם לֹא יָדְעוּ כִּי שָׁמַע יוֹסֵף	Now they did not know that Joseph could understand
כִּי הַמְּלִיץ בֵּינְתֶם:	[participle] them, because the interpreter was between
וְהִיא לֹא־יָדְעָה אִישׁ	... (now she had not known a man) ... (Jg 11.39)

¹¹When two 3mp pronouns occur in the same v., both forms may be used (7x), although both are repeated in some vv. (הֵמָּה (17x) or הֵם (7x)).

¹²In Ezekiel, the clause כִּי בֵּית מְרִי הֵמָּה/הֵם, for they are a rebellious house, occurs seven times, six times with הֵמָּה as the subject, once with הֵם.

The change of subject that is often signalled by an independent pronoun may also imply a contrast between the events or actions described by two clauses, especially when a disjunctive clause begins with *w* + pronoun (cf. 2 Chr 13.11 (Exercise #16)). The contrast is thus appropriately signalled in English by rendering the conjunction as, e.g., “but”, “now”, “but as for her”.

Although the contrasting clause—“every great matter they shall bring to you”—is left out of Exercise #6 (Ex 18.22), the disjunctive clause that ends the sentence again signals a contrast, here by beginning the clause with the object (*waw* + non-verb) rather than the subject.

- The only affix that can be attached to the independent personal pronouns is the conjunction -וְ .

13.2 DEMONSTRATIVES

DEMONSTRATIVES *POINT out* or *to* a person or object (“this”, “that”, “these”, “those”), and can be thought of as making an articular word even more definite or specific (contrast “this scroll” with “the scroll”).

13.2.1 FORM

	Gender	Singular	Plural
“Far”	masc.	זֶה	this
	fem.	זֹאת	these
“Near”	masc.	הוּא	הֵמָּה
	fem.	הִיא	הֵנָּה

The paradigm of the demonstratives overlaps the paradigm of the personal pronouns (above). The “far” demonstratives are the same as the third person personal pronouns. They are demonstrative primarily when they are attributive (#3, below).¹³

13.2.2 FUNCTION

HBI §1.5.2

- Since demonstratives are essentially adjectives, they can be either predicate or attributive. Unlike adjectives, they are not substantive.
- Like adjectives, demonstratives agree with the gender and number of the word that they modify.
- When they are *predicate*, demonstratives (1) are *anarthrous*; (2) tend to *precede* the word that they modify; and (3) are usually the *subject* of the clause (זֶה, the second demonstrative in 1 Kgs 6.19, occurs eleven times in BH):

זֹאת הָאָרֶץ	This is the land (Nu 34.2)
הִיא הָעִיר הַגְּדֹלָה	That [it] is the great city (Gn 10.12)
אֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת	These are the names (Ex 1.1)
וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלֵיהֶם אֱלִישָׁע לֹא זֶה הַדֶּרֶךְ וְלֹא זֶה הָעִיר	Elisha said to them, “This is not the way, nor is this the city. ...” (2 Kgs 6.19)

¹³There is little functional difference between “That is the king” and “He is the king”.

1. *Attributive* demonstratives *follow* the word that they modify, and are *articular*:

הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה *this* place (Gn 28.17)
 בְּעִיר הַהִיא *in that* city (Js 20.6)
 כָּל-הַיּוֹם הַהוּא *all that* day (Nu 11.32)

2. An articular “third person pronoun” is therefore actually an attributive demonstrative:

בְּיָמֵי הַהֵמָּה *in those* days (Jr 3.16)¹⁴
 בְּעֵת הַהוּא *at that* time (Nu 22.4)
 הָעִיר הַזֹּאת *this* city (Gn 19.20)

3. Usually the demonstrative immediately follows the noun that it modifies. If the noun is modified by an adjective (or is in construct), the attributive demonstrative follows the entire phrase, after any adjectives, or after the final word of the construct chain, or both. In Gn 2.12, the predicate adjective follows the attributive demonstrative:

הַדָּבָר הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה *this* great thing (1 Sa 12.16)
 הַרְעָה הַגָּדוֹלָה הַזֹּאת *this* great evil (Gn 39.9)
 כַּאֲשֶׁר הֵבֵאתִי אֶל-הָעָם הַזֶּה *Just as I brought upon this* people all *this* great disaster
 אֵת כָּל-הַרְעָה הַגָּדוֹלָה הַזֹּאת (Jr 32.42)
 וַיִּהְיֶה הָאָרֶץ הַהוּא טוֹב *and the gold of that* land is good (Gn 2.12)

13.3 INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS

BH uses two uninflected interrogative pronouns to ask questions about persons (“who?”, “whom?”) and things (“what?” “how?”). Both are normally “fronted”—they begin their clause.

13.3.1 THE INTERROGATIVE מִי

The interrogative מִי, “who”, is always *definite*, and always asks about a *person*.

1. If there is no verb, מִי is usually the subject of a non-verbal clause (but cf. Ru 2.5, #3, below):

וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה מִי יְהוָה *Pharaoh said, “Who* is YHWH, ...?” (Ex 5.2)
 מִי אַתָּם *“Who* are you (m.p.)?” (Jos 9.8)
 מִי הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה *Who* are these men ...?” (Nu 22.9)
 בְּתַמִּי אֵת *“Whose* daughter are you?” (Gn 24.23)
 מִי עָשָׂה הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה *“Who* did this thing?” (Jg 6.29; cf. Jg 15.6)
 מִי־שָׁמַע כְּזֹאת מִי רָאָה כְּאֵלֶּה *Who* has heard [such a thing] as this? *Who* has seen [such things] as these? (Is 66.8)

¹⁴The phrase “[in] those days” accounts for nearly three-quarters of all occurrences of the 3mp demonstrative.

2. Since it is always definite, **מי** has the sign of the object when it is the object of the verb, but still heads the question:

אֶת־מִי תַעֲבֹדוּן “Whom will you serve?” (Jos 24.15)
 אֶת־מִי אֲשַׁלַּח וּמִי יֵלֶךְ־לָנוּ “Whom shall I send, and who shall go for us?” (Is 6.8)

3. **מי** also functions as the object of prepositions (in Ru 2.5, the **ל** shows possession):

אֲחֵרֵי מִי יֵצֵא מִלְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל After *whom* has the king of Israel gone out? (1 Sam 24.15)
 לְמִי הַנְּעֻרָה הַזֹּאת: To *whom* does this young woman *belong*?” (Ru 2.5)

13.3.2 THE INTERROGATIVE **מָה**

The interrogative **מָה**, “what”, is always *indefinite*, and does *not* refer to persons. If there is no verb, **מָה** is the subject of a non-verbal clause.

וְאָמְרוּ־לִי מָה־שְּׁמוֹ מָה אָמַר אֲלֵהֶם “... and they say to me, ‘*What is his name?*’, *what* shall I say to them?” (Ex 3.13)
 מָה־עָשָׂה לְךָ הָעָם הַזֶּה “*What* did this people do to you?” (Ex 32.21)
 וּמִי־יֹאמַר־אֵלָיו מָה־תַּעֲשֶׂה: And who says to him, ‘*What* are you doing?’” (Qo 8.4)
 מָה הַחֲלוֹם הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר חָלַמְתָּ “*What is* this dream which you dreamed?” (Gn 37.10)

1. **מָה** also occurs in indirect questions:

לֹא יָדְעוּ מָה־הוּא They did not know *what* it [was] (Ex 16.15)

2. **מָה** may also ask “why”, often in combination with **ל** (לְמָה or לְמַה, “for what?”):

מָה אֲנַחֲנוּ יֹשְׁבִים פֹּה “*Why* are we sitting here ...?” (2 Kgs 17.3)
 לְמָה לֹא־הֵלַכְתָּ אֵלָי “*Why* didn’t you come to me?” (Nu 22.37)
 וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד לְשָׂאוּל לְמָה תִשְׁמַע אֶת־דְּבָרֵי אָדָם David said to Saul, “*Why* do you listen to men’s words, ...?” (1 Sam 24.10)

3. **מָה** is spelled with three different vowels, depending on the first letter of the following word; there is no difference in function:

מָה What?
 מַה־ What?
 מֶה What?

13.4 FREQUENCY There are 8,629 independent pronominal forms in BH:

Personal (subject)	5,001
Demonstratives	2,651
Interrogative	977 (מָה (554x), מִי (423x))

13.5 CONCEPTS

antecedent	independent pronoun	pronominal subject
cohesion	interrogative	pronoun
demonstrative		

13.6 VOCABULARY¹⁵

<i>they</i> (3mp pers. pron.); <i>those</i> (mp dem.)	הֵם .188 הֵמָּה	<i>I</i> (1cs pers. pron.)	אֲנִי .181 אֲנִי
<i>they</i> (3fp pers. pron.); <i>those</i> (fp dem.)	הֵן .189 הֵנָּה	<i>you</i> (2ms pers. pron.)	אַתָּה .182
<i>this</i> (ms dem. pron.)	זֶה .190	<i>you</i> (2fs pers. pron.)	אַתְּ .183
<i>this</i> (fs dem. pron.)	זֹאת .191	<i>he</i> (3ms pers. pron.); <i>that</i> (ms dem.)	הוּא .184
<i>these</i> (cp dem. pron.)	אֵלֶּה .192	<i>she</i> (3fs pers. pron.); <i>that</i> (dem. pron.) [the second form occurs primarily in the Torah]	הִיא .185 הִוא
<i>What?</i> [always indefinite]; <i>How?</i>	מָה־מָה .193 מָה	<i>we</i> (1cp pers. pron.)	אֲנַחְנוּ .186 נַחְנוּ
<i>Who?</i> [always definite]	מִי .194	<i>you</i> (2mp pers. pron.); the 2fp forms (אַתְּנָה, אַתְּן) occur 5x in BH, 4x in Ezekiel.	אַתֶּם .187

13.7 EXERCISES

After learning the personal and interrogative pronouns, and the demonstratives, please gloss these clauses, parsing any verbal forms.

- Ex 6.8
1. אֲנִי יְהוָה
- Gn 29.4; Haran; the last two words are a quotation
2. וַיֹּאמְרוּ מִחֶרֶן אֲנַחְנוּ:
- 1 Sam 4.18; אַרְבָּעִים; 40
3. וְהוּא שָׁפֵט אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה:
- Ps 110.4; *order of*; מִלְכִּי־צְדָק; Melchizedek
4. אַתָּה־כִּהֵן לְעוֹלָם עַל־דְּבָרְתִי מִלְכִּי־צְדָק;
- Jr 29.20
5. וְאַתֶּם שָׁמְעוּ דְבַר־יְהוָה
- Gn 42.23; Joseph
6. וְהֵם לֹא יָדְעוּ כִּי שָׁמַע יוֹסֵף
- Ex 18.22; *time* (in the sense of measured, or passing time) [cf. §13.1.2(4)]
7. וְשָׁפְטוּ אֶת־הָעָם בְּכָל־עֵת
... וְכָל־הַדְּבָר הַקָּטָן יִשְׁפָטוּ־לָהֶם
- Ru 3.9; Ruth; נֹאֵל *redeemer* (ms Q Ptc < נֹאֵל, *redeem*)
8. וַיֹּאמֶר מִי־אַתְּ וַתֹּאמֶר אֲנִי רוּת
... כִּי נֹאֵל אֶתָּה:
- Ps 115.18; בָּרַךְ *bless*; הַלֵּל *praise* (D); Yah
9. וְאַנְחֵנוּ נִבְרַךְ יְיָ מֵעַתָּה וְעַד־עוֹלָם
הַלְלוּ־יְיָ:
- Is 14.13; דְּ- *your* (m.s.); הַשָּׁמַיִם assumes "to"; *go up, ascend*; מִמַּעַל *above*
10. וְאַתָּה אָמַרְתָּ בְלִבְבְּךָ הַשָּׁמַיִם אֵעֲלֶה מִמַּעַל

¹⁵The personal pronouns are listed paradigmatically.

- 1 Chr 17.16; יהוה אלהים is vocative; ביתי *my house* .11
 וַיֹּאמֶר מִי־אֲנִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים וּמִי בֵּיתִי
- Dt 10.10 .12
 וְאַנְכִי עִמָּדְתִּי בְּהָר
- 2 Chr 13.11; מִשְׁמֶרֶת *observance* (cognate accusative); נוּ *our*; אֹתוֹ *him* (direct object) [cf. §13.1.2(4)]¹⁶ .13
 וְאַתֶּם עֲזַבְתֶּם אֹתוֹ: שְׁמֵרִים אֲנַחְנוּ אֶת־מִשְׁמֶרֶת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ
- Jg 8.23; אֲלֵהֶם *to them* (m.p.); Gideon; בָּכֶם *over you*; בְּנִי *my son* .14
 וַיֹּאמֶר אֲלֵהֶם גִּדְעוּן לֹא־אֶמְשַׁל בְּכֶם וְלֹא־יִמְשַׁל בְּנִי בָכֶם יְהוָה יִמְשַׁל בְּכֶם:
- Ho 2.10; נָתַתִּי *I gave*; לָהּ *to her*; חִטִּין *grain*; תֵּירוֹשׁ *new wine* .15
 וְהִיא לֹא יָדְעָה כִּי אֲנֹכִי נָתַתִּי לָהּ הַחִטָּן וְהַתֵּירוֹשׁ
- 1 Kgs 2.22; וַיַּעַן *and he answered* (3ms Q Pr < *ענה answer*); Solomon; Abishag; Shunamite; Adonijah; מְלֹכָה *kingship, kingdom*; מִמֶּנִּי *than I* (comparative use of *מן*) .16
 וַיַּעַן הַמֶּלֶךְ שְׁלֹמֹה וַיֹּאמֶר לְאָמוֹ וְלִמָּה אַתְּ שֹׂאֵלֶת אֶת־אֲבִישַׁג הַשֻּׁנְמִית לְאֲדֹנָיָהּ וּשְׂאֵלֶי־לוֹ אֶת־הַמְּלֹכָה כִּי הוּא אַחִי הַגָּדוֹל מִמֶּנִּי

13.8 ENRICHMENT: DISJUNCTIVES IN POETRY

The discussion of disjunctive clauses (§6.6) is generally limited to biblical prose, but it also applies to biblical poetry. A standard poetic signal of a shift in perspective is a line beginning with *waw* + an independent pronoun, especially 1cs (referring to the poet) and 2ms (referring to YHWH). Note the contrasts in the following verses (participants are in **bold**; *w* + pronoun is in *italics*):

יהוה מִה־רָבוּ צָרָי	YHWH, how my enemies have increased;
רַבִּים קָמוּ עָלַי:	Many rise against me;
רַבִּים אֹמְרִים לְנַפְשִׁי	Many say about me,
אֵין יְשׁוּעָתָה לֹו בְּאֱלֹהִים	'He has no salvation in God'.
וְאַתָּה יְהוָה מָגֵן בְּעַדִּי	<i>But you, YHWH</i> , are a shield on my behalf—
כְּבוֹדִי מְרִים רֵאשִׁי:	My glory , and the one who raises my head (Ps 3.2-4).
פֶּן־יֹאמֶר אֹיְבִי יִכְלָתִיו	Lest my enemy say, 'I have overcome him!'
צָרִי יִגִּילוּ כִּי אָמוּט:	My foes exult when I fall.
וְאֲנִי בַחֲסֶדְךָ בְּטַחְתִּי	<i>But I</i> trust in your love;
יִגַּל לִבִּי בִישׁוּעָתְךָ	My heart exults in your salvation;
אֲשִׁירָה לִיהוָה כִּי גָמַל עָלַי:	I will sing to YHWH, for he has done good for me (Ps 13.5-6).
נַפְשֵׁנוּ כַּצֶּפְוֹר נִמְלְטָה מִפֶּחַ יוֹקְשִׁים	Our soul like a bird has been delivered from the birders' snare ;
הַפֶּחַח נִשְׁבַּר וְאֲנַחְנוּ נִמְלְטָנוּ:	The snare is broken, <i>but we</i> are delivered (Ps 124.7).

¹⁶The contrast in this v. is *not* signalled by the use of different conjugations. Instead, the *waw* + non-verb (in this case, the independent pronoun) makes this a disjunctive clause, to which the choice of conjugation is subordinate. Contrast is a function of the difference in *content* between the clauses.

LESSON 14 PRONOMINALS (II): SUFFIXES

INDPENDENT SUBJECT PRONOUNS indicate the subject of their clause. In order to show pronominal possession, and verbal and prepositional objects, BH attaches “pieces” of the independent pronouns to substantive and verbal forms. Like the independent pronouns, these suffixes are also inflected to agree with the person, gender, and number of their antecedent. There are **45,590** pronominal suffixes in BH (*versus* about **8,629** independent pronominal forms).

14.1 FORM

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
1 st	com.	י - <i>my, me</i>	נוּ - <i>our, us</i>
2 nd	masc.	ךָ - <i>your, you</i>	כֶּם - <i>your, you</i>
	fem.	כִּי -	
3 rd	masc.	הּ -	הֶם -
		הוּ - <i>his, him, its</i>	
	[מוּ - poetic]	הֵם - <i>their, them</i>	
fem.	הָ - <i>her, its</i>	הֵן -	
		הֶן -	

- There are no *cases* in BH (unlike, e.g., Greek Latin, German), so that the form of the suffix is the same regardless of its function, which is determined entirely from its context.
- There is no difference in function between different forms (i.e., all forms listed under 3ms refer to “he”, “him”, or “his”).
- מוּ- (3ms) occurs only in poetry; נוּ - (3ms) occurs on verbs.
- Pronominal suffixes are added to nouns as follows:
 - Suffixes are added directly to *masculine* and *feminine singular* nouns, sometimes with a helping vowel. When a feminine noun ends in ה-, the ה- is replaced by ת- (the feminine singular construct ending), and the suffixes are added to the form with ת - (תּוֹרָה > תּוֹרָתִי, *my teaching*).

	Absolute	Construct	Construct + suffix
<i>son</i>	בֶּן	בֵּן	בְּנִי <i>my son</i> (2 Sam 19.1)
			בְּנֶךָ <i>your (fs) son</i> (2 Kgs 6.28)
			בְּנֶהָ <i>her son</i> (2 Kgs 4.6)
<i>city</i>	עִיר	עִיר	עִירוֹ <i>his city</i> (2 Sam 17.23)
<i>land</i>	אֶרֶץ	אֶרֶץ	אֶרְצֵנוּ <i>our land</i> (Jos 9.11)
<i>maid/servant</i>	שִׁפְחָה	שִׁפְחָת	שִׁפְחָתְךָ <i>your maid/servant</i> (1 Sam 1.18)
<i>teaching</i>	תּוֹרָה	תּוֹרַת	תּוֹרָתִי <i>my teaching</i> (Is 51.7)
<i>mistress/lady</i>	גְּבִירָה	גְּבִירַת	גְּבִירַתָּהּ <i>her mistress</i> (Ps 123.2)

- When suffixes are added to *plural* nouns, there is a ך- between the noun and the suffix; some forms are found only on plural nouns:

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
1 st	com.	יְ - <i>my, me</i>	יְנֵי - <i>our, us</i>
2 nd	masc.	יָךְ -	יְכֵם - <i>your, you</i>
	fem.	יָךְ -	
3 rd	masc.	יָו - <i>his, him, its</i>	יְהֵם - <i>their, them</i>
	fem.	יָהּ - <i>her, its</i>	

- 1) *Masculine plural* nouns drop the final ם- of their ending and add the suffixes after the יְ of the plural.
- 2) *Feminine plural* nouns add -י- after their plural (ות-) ending, and before the suffix (בנות > בנותיכם, *your [masc pl] daughters*). The exception to this are the third plural suffixes ם, - and ן, - , which are added directly to words.

<i>words</i>	דְּבָרִים	דְּבַר	דְּבָרֶיךָ	<i>your (ms) words (Josh 1.8)</i>
<i>sons</i>	בָּנִים	בֶּן	בָּנֶיךָ	<i>her sons (Is 66.8)</i>
<i>days</i>	יָמִים	יָמִי	יָמָיו	<i>his days (Jb 14.5)</i>
<i>garments</i>	בְּגָדִים	בְּגָדִי	בְּגָדֶיךָ	<i>your garments (1 Kg 22.30)</i>
<i>lands</i>	אֲרָצוֹת	אֲרָצוֹת	בְּאֲרָצוֹתָם	<i>in their (mp) lands (Gn 10.5)</i>
<i>daughters</i>	בָּנוֹת	בָּנוֹת	בְּנוֹתֵיכֶם	<i>your (mp) daughters (Ezr 9.12)</i>

- c. The 1cs suffix (יְ-) is added to plural nouns with the vowel *patah*, which is the only difference between “my” used with singular and plural nouns.

	Absolute	Construct + Suffix	
<i>horse</i>	סוּס	סוּסִי	<i>my horse</i>
<i>horses</i>	סוּסִים	סוּסֵי	<i>my horses</i>
<i>son</i>	בֶּן	בְּנִי	<i>my son (Pr 3.1)</i>
<i>sons</i>	בָּנִים	בָּנָי	<i>my sons (1 Sam 12.2)</i>
<i>daughter</i>	בַּת	בָּתִּי	<i>my daughter (Ru 3.16)</i>
<i>daughters</i>	בָּנוֹת	בְּנוֹתֵי	<i>my daughters (Ru 1.11)</i>

- d. Since suffixes are added to the *construct* form of the noun we may say that a noun with a pronominal suffix is in construct *to the suffix*, and that the pronominal suffix is the last “element” or “member” of the construct chain (even if it is a chain of only one “word”).
5. Pronominal suffixes are also used to show the pronominal object of a *preposition*. They are combined with prepositions in one of three ways:
 - a. The suffixes are added *directly* to בָּ and לְ (their paradigms are identical, apart from the preposition; different glosses illustrate the variety of the prepositions’ function):

1 st	בִּי	by me	לָנוּ	to us
2 nd	m.	לְךָ	בְּכֶם	with you (mp)
	f.	בְּךָ	לָכֶן	for you (fp)
3 rd	m.	לוֹ	בָּהֶם	in them (mp)
	f.	בָּהּ	לָהֶן	to them (fp)

- b. The singular suffixes and 1cp are added to כִּי¹⁷ and to some forms of מִן and עִם with a “helping” syllable:

1 st	כְּמוֹנִי	like me	כְּמוֹנוּ	like us
2 nd	כְּמוֹךָ	like you (ms)	כְּכֶם	like you (mp) ¹⁸
3 rd	כְּמוֹהוּ	like him	כְּהֶם	like them (mp)
	כְּמוֹהָ	like her	כְּהֵן	like them (fp)
1 st	מִמֶּנִּי	from me	מִמֶּנּוּ	from us ⁹⁵
2 nd	מִמֶּךָ	from you (ms)	מִכֶּם	from you (mp)
	מִמֶּךָ	from you (fs)	מִכֶּן	from you (fp)
3 rd	מִמֶּנּוּ	from him ¹⁹	מִהֶם	from them (mp)
	מִמֶּנָּה	from her	מִהֵן	from them (fp)
1 st	עִמָּדִי ²⁰	with me	עִמָּנוּ ²¹	with us
	עִמִּי			
2 nd	עִמָּךָ	with you (ms)	עִמָּכֶם	with you (mp) ²²
	עִמָּךָ	with you (fs)		
3 rd	עִמּוֹ	with him	עִמָּם	with them (mp)
	עִמָּהּ	with her	עִמָּהֶם	

6. Most prepositions add suffixes by means of a *yod* between the preposition and suffix, so that the suffixes look like those added to plural nouns (each line uses a different preposition, and glosses of the prepositions are varied to show use):

¹⁷The preposition כִּי does not occur with 2nd person feminine suffixes.

¹⁸כְּמוֹכֶם occurs once (Jb 12.3).

¹⁹The 3ms and 1cp suffixes with מִן (both are מִמֶּנּוּ) can be distinguished only by context.

²⁰Be careful not to confuse this with forms of the verbal root עָמַד *stand*.

²¹Cf. עִמָּנוּ־אֱלֹהִים *God [is] with us* (“Immanuel” (with and without *maqef*; e.g., Is 7.14; 8.8, 10).

²²The preposition עִם does not occur with 2nd person feminine plural suffixes.

1 st	לְפָנַי	<i>in my presence</i>	לְפָנֵינוּ	<i>before us</i>
2 nd	אֵלֶיךָ	<i>to you (ms)</i>	אֵלֵיכֶם	<i>to you (mp)</i>
	עָלֶיךָ	<i>against you (fs)</i>	עָלֵיכֶן	<i>concerning you (fp)</i>
3 rd	אַחֲרָיו	<i>after him</i>	אַחֲרֵיהֶם	<i>after them (mp)</i>
	תַּחְתֵּיהָ	<i>under her/it</i>	תַּחְתֵּיהֶן	<i>under them (fp)</i>

N.B. The noun אֵל, *god/God* occurs only with the 1cs suffix (אֵלַי, *my God*); all other suffixes are added to the construct of אֱלֹהִים (e.g., אֱלֹהֶיךָ, *your God*). The preposition אֵל/אֶל uses *patah* to link the 1cs suffix (אֵלַי, *to me*), all other forms have *yod*, as in the paradigm.

The key to analyzing a compound form is to know the pronominal suffixes and the vocabulary (which will let you identify the central lexeme (content word)).

וּבְבֵיתִי		<i>and in my house (Is 3.7)</i>			
1cs suffix	-י		-בַּיִת-	-בְּ-	-וְ-
			noun	prep.	cj.
כְּדְבָרֶיךָ		<i>according to your words (1 Kg 3.12)</i>			
2ms suffix	-ךָ	plural	-דְּבַר-	-כְּ-	
			noun	prep.	
בְּבָנֵינוּ		<i>with our sons (Ex 10.9)</i>			
1cp suffix	-נוּ	plural	(supply the final <i>nun</i>) -בְּנֵי-	-בְּ-	
			noun	prep.	
וּבְבָנוֹתֵינוּ		<i>and with our daughters (Ex 10.9)</i>			
1cp suffix	-נוּ	plural	-בָּנוֹת-	-בְּ-	-וְ-
			noun	prep.	cj.
מִמְקוֹצוֹתֵיהֶם		<i>from their troubles (Ps 107.6, 13, 19, 28)</i>			
3mp suffix	-הֶם	plural	-מְקוֹצוֹת-	-מִן-	
			noun	prep.	

14.2 FUNCTION

HBI §1.5.1b

1. Pronominal suffixes are added to nouns with all of the nuances of the construct chain (possession, relationship, &c. [cf. also above]):

דְּבָרֶיךָ	<i>your (ms) words (Josh 1.8)</i>	source: words spoken by “you”
בָּנֵיהָ	<i>her sons (Is 66.8)</i>	relationship: sons born to her
יָמָיו	<i>his days (Jb 14.5)</i>	days during which he lived
בְּגָדֶיךָ	<i>your (ms) garments (1 Kg 22.30)</i>	ownership: garments owned by “you”
בְּאַרְצוֹתָם	<i>in their lands (Gn 10.5)</i>	ownership: lands lived in by “them”

2. Because pronouns are definite, pronominal suffixes make the word to which they are suffixed definite as well, and end the construct chain. Every word with a pronominal suffix is therefore both *construct* and

definite. In 1 Sam 26.19, עֲבָרָי is construct to עָבַר, which is construct to the 3ms suffix:

יִשְׁמַעֲנָא אֲדָנִי הַמֶּלֶךְ
 אֶת דְּבָרֵי עָבָדוֹ
 יָדָיו וְרַגְלָיו
 בְּיָמֶיכֶם

“..., may my master the king hear *the* words of *his* servant
 (1 Sam 26.19)
his hands and *his* feet (Jg 1.6); two construct chains
 in *your* days (Jl 1.2)

3. Pronominal suffixes indicate the *object* of prepositions:

וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם
 וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו
 שְׁלַח אֵלַי לְנָשָׁי וּלְבָנָי
 וּלְכֶסֶפִּי וּלְזָהָבִי וְלֹא מָנַעְתִּי מִמֶּנּוּ:
 אֲשֶׁר נֹתְרוּ אַחֲרֵיהֶם בְּאֶרֶץ
 וַעֲמָשָׂא בָּא לְפָנֵיהֶם

He said *to them*, ... (Gn 9.1)
 And you shall say *to him* ... (Ex 9.13)
 He sent *to me* for my wives and for my sons and for my silver and for my gold; and I have not withheld [anything] from *him* (1 Kgs 20.7).
 who were left *behind them* in the land ... (2 Ch 8.8)
 And Amasa went in *before them* (2 Sa 20.8)

4. Pronominal suffixes indicate the *object of a verb*, either by being suffixed directly to the verbal form, or by being suffixed to the sign of the object. The form of the sign of the object often changes to **את** when a pronominal suffix is added.

וַעֲבַדְתֶּם אֹתָנוּ:
 וְאַתֶּם עֲזַבְתֶּם אוֹתִי
 אֶל־הַמֶּלֶךְ אֲשֶׁר־שָׁלַח אֹתְכֶם

... then you shall serve *us* (1 Sam 17.9).
 ..., but you have deserted *me*, ... (Jg 10.13)
 ... to the king who sent *you* (2 Kgs 1.6)

5. As with nouns (§7.1), the preposition ל can show pronominal *possession* and *indirect objects* (verbs of speaking occur with both ל and אל).

כִּי־לִי כָל־הָאָרֶץ:
 וַתֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אָבִי
 וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם שְׁמֹשׁוֹן

“... for all the earth is *mine*” (Ex 19.5).
 She said *to him* “Father, ...” (Jg 11.36)
 Samson said *to them* ... (Jg 14.12)

6. Prepositions rarely occur with the relative (אֲשֶׁר).²³ Instead, the preposition that functions with אֲשֶׁר falls at or toward the end of the relative clause, with a pronominal suffix that agrees in person, gender, and number with the word being modified by the אֲשֶׁר-clause. [The suffix will be, e.g., fp when the referent is *cities* (Gn 19.29), ms when it is *man* (Gn 41.38; Jos 8.24).] In a similar way, when אֲשֶׁר refers to a place, שָׁם, *there*, comes at the end of the clause (Jg 19.26).

אֶת־הָעָרִים אֲשֶׁר־יָשַׁב בָּהֶן לוֹט:
 אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר רוּחַ אֱלֹהִים בּוֹ:
 בַּמִּדְבָּר אֲשֶׁר רָדְפוּם בּוֹ

... the cities *in which* Lot lived (Gn 19.29)
 ... a man *in whom* is a divine spirit” (Gn 41.38)
 ... in the wilderness *into which* they had pursued them (Jos 8.24)

²³Contrast the routine and common use of relative pronouns as the objects of prepositions in English.

(cont'd.)

וַתִּפֹּל בַּדֶּלֶת בֵּית־הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־אֲדוֹנֶיהָ שָׁם וְעַמַּדְתִּי לְיַד־אָבִי בַּשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר אַתָּה שָׁם	She fell at the door of the man's house <i>where</i> her master was (Jg 19.26) And I will stand beside my father in the field <i>where</i> you are (1 Sam 19.3)
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14.3 DEFINITENESS

Comparing the article, construct, and pronominal suffixes reveals that BH has three ways to indicate that a substantive is definite:

1. *Proper nouns* [names] and *pronominals* are definite, since they refer to a specific person or place:

דָּוִד	David	הוא	he, it, that (when articular)
אַבְרָהָם	Abraham	חֶבְרוֹן	Hebron
מִי	Who?	הֵם	they, those (when articular)

2. *Articular common substantives* are definite:

הַבַּיִת	the house	לְכֹהֵן	to/for the priest
הַחֵג	the feast	אַחֲרֵי־הַמִּלְחָמָה	after the battle

3. Words in *construct* to something that is *definite*, i.e. when the construct chain ends in:

- a) a proper noun:

בֵּית אַבְרָהָם	Abraham's household (Gn 17.23)
בֶּן־דָּוִד	David's son (2 Sam 13.1)
אֲנָשֵׁי יְהוּדָה	the men of Judah (2 Sam 2.4)

- b) an articular substantive:

כָּל־כְּלֵי הַמִּשְׁכָּן	all the utensils of the Tabernacle (Ex 27.19)
מֵעֵינֵי הַקְּהָל	from the eyes of the assembly (Lv 4.13)
דְּבַר אִישׁ־הָאֱלֹהִים	the word of the man of God (1 Kg 13.4)

- c) a pronominal suffix or *מי*:

שֹׁמֵרְךָ	he who watches over you (Ps 121.5) [your watcher]
בֵּיתִי וְחֲצֹרוֹתַי	my house and my courts (1 Chr 28.6)
הַר קֹדְשִׁי	my holy mountain (the mountain of my holiness; Ps 2.6)
דְּבָרֵי פִיךָ	the words of your mouth (Ps 138.4)
וּמִיַּד־מִי לָקַחְתִּי כֶּפֶר	... and from whose hand have I taken a ransom (1 Sa 12.3)

N.B. A word with a pronominal suffix is both *construct* and *definite*, and the suffix ends a construct chain and makes the entire chain definite. A substantive plus pronominal suffix is thus a miniature construct chain of two elements contained in one form.

14.4 VERBS WITH PRONOMINAL OBJECTS

BH indicates pronominal objects either by suffixing the pronominal to the object marker (§14.2.4), or by attaching the suffix directly to the verbal form itself.

14.4.1 FORM

- The pronominal suffixes that are attached to verbs are much like those used on prepositions, nouns, infinitives construct, participles, and the sign of the object (above), and can be suffixed to any conjugation except the infinitive absolute (Lesson 16). Like most Hebrew pronouns, they are inflected for person, gender, and number. The variation in some forms depends on whether the verb ends in a consonant or vowel (e.g., 3fs).

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
1 st	common	נִי - <i>me, to me</i>	נֵנוּ - <i>us, to us</i>
		יְ -	
2 nd	masc.	ךָ - <i>you, to you</i>	כֶּם - <i>you, to you</i>
	fem.	כִּי -	כֶּן ²⁴ -
3 rd	masc.	הוּ - <i>him, to him</i>	ם -
		וּ -	םָ - <i>them, to them</i>
	fem.	הִי -	ן -
		הִי -	ן -

- A few pronominal suffixes have an alternate form, with *nun*—which is often assimilated—between the suffix and the verbal form. This paradigm lists all the forms of this type of suffix that occur in BH. In this form, the 3ms and 1cp suffixes are identical, and can be distinguished only by the context.

Person	Gender	Singular	Plural
1 st	common	נִיְ -	נֵנוּ -
2 nd	masc.	ךִיְ -	
3 rd	masc.	הוּיְ -	
	fem.	הִיְ -	

- The combination of a pronominal suffix and verbal form means that any form that ends with *-uhû* (either *-והוּ* or *-הוּ -*) is a masculine plural verbal form (the first *-u-*) with a 3ms suffix (*-hû*):

וְאִם־תִּדְרֹשׁוּ וְיִמְצָא לָכֶם If you seek *him*, he will be found by you,
 וְאִם־תִּעְזְבוּהוּ יַעֲזֹב אֶתְכֶם: but if you abandon *him*, he will abandon you (2 Ch 15.2).
 יִבְלַעְהוּ They will swallow *him* (Ho 8.7)

14.4.2 FUNCTION

- Pronominal suffixes identify the *pronominal object* of the verb:

וּמִשַּׁחְתָּ אֹתוֹ: "... and you shall anoint *him*" (Ex 29.7)
 פֶּן־נִשְׂרֹף אֹתְךָ "... lest we burn *you* ..." (Jg 14.15)

²⁴This form (2fp) occurs only on participles.

(cont'd.)

וַיִּשְׁלַחְהוּ מֵעֵמֶק חֶבְרוֹן	... and he sent <i>him</i> from the valley of Hebron (Gn 37.14)
וְלֹא הָרְגוּם:	and they did not kill <i>them</i> (Josh 9.26)
שִׁפְטֵנִי יְהוָה כְּצַדִּיקִי	Judge <i>me</i> , YHWH, according to my innocence (Ps 7.9b)

2. When *parsing* a verb with a pronominal suffix, these are identified in the “suffix” column by person, gender, and number (e.g., 3fp):

Lemma	Lexical Form	Gloss	PGN	Stem	Conj.	Suffix
שִׁפְטֵנִי	שִׁפַּט	judge	2ms	Q	V	1cs
הָרְגוּם	הָרַג	kill	3cp	Q	P	3mp

14.5 CONCEPTS

definiteness pronominal possession
 pronominal object pronominal suffix

14.6 VOCABULARY

<i>cherub</i> (perhaps a winged bull with human head)	כְּרוּב .203	<i>door</i> [way]	דֶּלֶת .195
<i>other side; region beyond</i> [sthg.]	עֵבֶר .204	<i>knowledge, understanding</i>	דַּעַת .196
<i>power, strength</i>	עֵז עֵז .205	<i>slaughter; sacrifice</i>	זָבַח .197
<i>rebellion, revolt; transgression</i>	פְּשָׁע .206	<i>tumult, uproar; crowd, multitude</i>	הַמּוֹן .198
<i>be satisfied, satiated</i>	שָׂבַע .207	<i>arm, forearm; strength</i>	זְרוּעַ .199
<i>in this way/manner, thus, so</i>	כֵּן .208	<i>fat</i>	חֵלֶב .200
<i>in front, east; eastward</i>	קִדְמָה קִדְמָה .209	<i>be pleased</i> [with], <i>delight</i> [in] (st. vb.)	חָפֵץ .201
<i>bull, young bull; steer</i>	שׁוֹר .210	<i>male offspring/child</i>	יָלֵד .202
		<i>female offspring/child</i>	יָלְדָה

14.7 EXERCISES

1. After learning the pronominal suffixes, gloss these clauses, and be prepared to explain their structure and function.

היא אשתו .g	יהוה מִלְךָ עָמוּ .d	אתה האיש .a
למי הפסך הזה .h	הוא אישה .e	מי הוא .b
אני יהוה אלהיך .i	מי האנשים .f	מה זאת .c

2. Before glossing these phrases and clauses, circle or mark the pronominal suffixes, and identify their person, gender, and number.

Gn 31.44; נִכְרְתָהּ is cohortative; עֵד
testimony, witness

a. נִכְרְתָהּ בְרִית אֲנִי וְאַתָּה
 וְהָיָה לְעֵד בֵּינִי וּבֵינְךָ:

- 2 Sam 5.7; David .b היא עיר הַיָּוֶד:
- Jos 5.2; *עת* time; Joshua .c בַּעַת הַהִיא אָמַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּשֶׁע
- 1 Kgs 13.26 .d וַיֹּאמֶר אִישׁ הָאֱלֹהִים הוּא
- Gn 29.4; Haran (place name) .e וַיֹּאמְרוּ מִחֶרֶן אֲנַחְנוּ:
- 2 Kgs 10.13; Jehu, Ahaziah; Judah .f וַיְהוּא מָצָא אֶת־אֲחִי אֲחַזְיָהוּ מִלְּךְ־יְהוּדָה
וַיֹּאמֶר מִי אַתֶּם וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֲחִי אֲחַזְיָהוּ אֲנַחְנוּ
- Jg 2.2; *יָשֵׁב* inhabitant .g וַיֹּאמֶר ... [לָהֶם]
וְאַתֶּם לֹא־תִכְרְתוּ בְרִית לְיוֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת
וְלֹא־שָׁמַעְתֶּם בְּקִלִּי
- Jg 19.12; Israel, Gibeah .h לֹא־מִבְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל הִנֵּה וְעַבְרָנוּ עַד־גִּבְעָה:
- Gn 27.32; *בְּכֹר* first-born; Isaac, Esau .i וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ יִצְחָק אָבִיו מִי־אַתָּה
וַיֹּאמֶר אָנִי בְּנֶדֶךָ בְּכֹרֶךָ עָשׂוּ:
- Ps 22.7; *תּוֹלַעַת* worm .j וְאַנְכִי תּוֹלַעַת וְלֹא־אִישׁ
- Jos 20.6 .k וַיָּשֶׁב בְּעִיר הַהִיא
- Gn 11.31; *בְּלָה* daughter-in-law (the people identified by the three proper names] are direct objects of “Terah took ...”); Abram, Lot, Haran .l ... אֶת־אַבְרָם בְּנוֹ וְאֶת־לוֹט בֶּן־הָרֶן בֶּן־בְּנוֹ
וְאֵת שְׂרֵי כְלָתוֹ אִשְׁתֵּי אַבְרָם בְּנוֹ
- Dt 5.5 .m אָנֹכִי עֹמֵד בֵּין־יְהוָה וּבֵינֵיכֶם בַּעַת הַהִיא

14.8 ENRICHMENT: RUTH 3.16

IN RUTH 3.7, Ruth, in obedience to Naomi, went to the threshing floor, and, after he fell asleep, lay down at Boaz's feet. When he awoke in the middle of the night,

וַיֹּאמֶר מִי אַתָּה *He said, "Who are you?"* (Ru 3.9)

Boaz knew that the person lying beside him was female (and therefore used the fs pronoun), but could not identify her.

After Ruth made her request known to Boaz, she slept, but he awakened her early in the morning so that she could get back to the privacy of Naomi's home without anyone knowing that a woman had been at the threshing floor (3.14). Ruth left the threshing floor while it was still dark enough that the two of them could not recognize each other (3.14).

When she arrived at Naomi's house in Bethlehem, Naomi asked:

מִי־אַתְּ בְּתוּרִי *"Who are you, my daughter?"* (Ru 3.16)

This is often glossed with a question that asks about their plan's success, e.g., "How did it go, my daughter" (NAS, NIV; cf. ESV). The question, however, shows that even Naomi—who was certainly expecting Ruth, and who would have recognized her better than anyone else in Bethlehem—could only tell that it was a younger female (hence "my daughter"), not that she was Ruth.

The parallel between Naomi's question and Boaz's (3.9) implies that when Ruth arrived home it was still [nearly] as dark as midnight. The author recorded this question in order to assure readers that Boaz's plan had succeeded—that Ruth's visit to the threshing floor remained secret, since she arrived at Naomi's house while it was still too dark for anyone to identify her (cf. 3.14), even if they had recognized that she was a woman.