

Parsing Imperfects

Piel and Pual

If the prefix has a shewa (◌ְ) it is a Piel or Pual (except for the special case of Qal II-yod, III-he verbs, converted and feminine forms, such as יִיְהִי).

The basic Piel form has an ‘a-e’ stem vowel pattern: ◌◌◌ְ◌ִ , ◌◌◌ֵ◌ִ

While the Pual has a ‘u-a’ or ‘o-a’ stem vowel pattern: ◌◌◌ֹ◌ִ , ◌◌◌ֶ◌ִ

Niphal

If all three root letters are visible, and there is no shewa, the verb is Niphal. The standard form is:

◌◌◌ִ regular; first stem vowel is doubled

◌◌◌ֵ I-guttural, notice lengthening of prefix vowel to accommodate nun-assimilation (i.e. no doubling of first stem vowel)

Hophal

Hophal has an ‘o’ or ‘u’ sounds (◌ֹ, ◌ֶ, ◌ֵ) in the prefix (do not confuse with Hiphil I-yod יִ); the stem vowel is always an ‘a’ sound.

Hithpael

Basic form: ◌◌◌ִתִּ. Watch for metathesis (swapping with the ת) with sibilants (ס ז ש צ). Sometimes after metathesis with ז, the ת changes to ד, and with צ the ת changes to ט. (i.e. זכר → דְּכַר → טְדַר)

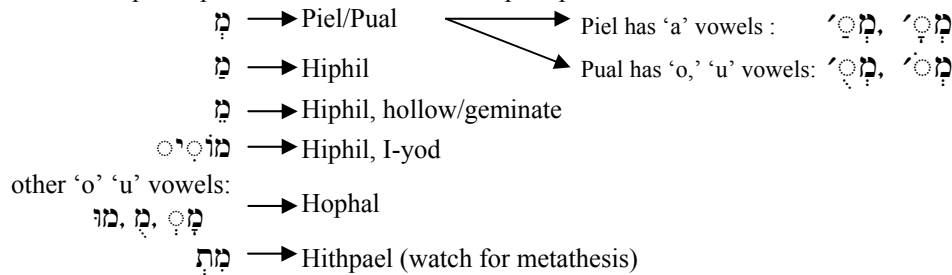
Hiphil and Qal distinctions

Qal and Hiphil verbs are mostly likely to be most confused.

- In general, the Qal prefix has a ‘i’ or ‘e’ sound (◌ִ, ◌ֵ, ◌ֶ) and an ‘o’ or ‘a’ vowel in the stem (◌ֹ, ◌ֶ)
- A special prefix vowel is ‘o’ in I-aleph (אִ)
- The Hiphil prefix generally takes an ‘a’ sound in the prefix (◌ֵ, ◌ֶ) with a ‘i’ or ‘e’ vowel in the stem (◌ִ, ◌ֵ)
- With I-guttural verbs, the prefix will take on the vowel of the following compound shewa, so look for the stem vowel to identify:
 - ◌◌◌ִ Qal / ◌ֵ◌◌ִ Hiphil
 - ◌◌◌ֵ Qal / ◌◌ִ Hiphil (jussive)
- Exceptions occur with
 - ◌ I-yod verbs:
 - ◌◌ִ some Qal I-yod verbs (others are identified by prefix יִ); a verb beginning with יִ is always Hiphil I-yod
 - ◌ Hiphil III-he, converted
 - ◌◌ִ similar to Qal I-yod, but prefix and stem vowels are ◌
 - ◌ Hiphil III-guttural
 - ◌◌ִ the stem vowel takes an ‘a’ sound rather than expected ‘e’
 - ◌ Qal hollow
 - ◌◌ִ the prefix takes ◌ and the stem shows either a ◌ or ◌ depending on the original stem vowel (Hiphil hollow prefix also takes a ◌, but doesn’t show the ‘hollow’ vowel: ◌◌ִ)
 - ◌◌ִ the converted form of some Qal hollow verbs is identified by the ‘a’ sound in the stem, rather than an ‘e’ sound of the Hiphil (see Ambiguous forms below)
 - ◌ Ambiguous forms (known only by context)
 - ◌◌ִ Qal OR Hiphil I-guttural, III-he, converted
 - ◌◌ִ Qal hollow OR Hiphil hollow/geminate, converted

Imperfect suffixal elements that begin with a vowel, ◌ֹ-, ◌ֶ-, reduce the stem vowel to ◌ which may interfere with identification. These rules apply, however, to the other suffixal elements including the f.p. הִּי- and rare יִי-.

Indicates a participle in all derived forms except Niphal



Imperative & Infinitive construct

- Qal and Piel are derived from the imperfect. See Hiphil section for more info on other forms.

Qal: פָּ, פָּ (III-he); imperative usu. is פָּ

Piel: פָּ

- The infinitive construct usually can be differentiated from the imperative by its pronominal suffixes.
- With Qal imperatives, if פָּ or פָּ- suffixes are added, the first vowel often changes to פָּ, whereas the pronominal suffixes of the infinitive construct the first vowel changes to פָּ
- I-nun and I-yod exceptions:

| | | |
|------------|------------|----------------|
| | imperative | inf. construct |
| some I-nun | פָּ | פָּ |
| some I-yod | פָּ | פָּ |

| Imv. suffixes | | |
|---------------|------|------|
| m. | | פָּ |
| f. | פָּ- | פָּ- |

Infinitive Absolute

Infinitive absolutes are most easily identified by context. Basic forms:

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|
| פָּ or פָּ final vowel | פָּ final vowel | |
| פָּ Qal | פָּ Hiphil | Hiphil (form same as imperative) |
| פָּ Niphal | פָּ Hophal | Hophal (perfect has פָּ) |
| פָּ Piel | פָּ Hithpael | Hithpael |
| פָּ Pual | | |

Exceptions include:

in II guttural, Piel inf. absolute vowel is פָּ;

Passive participle

פָּ III-he as a yod on the end פָּ

Hiphil

פָּ or פָּ usually indicates perfect (trilateral, no shewa, פָּ or פָּ is Niphal imperative or inf. construct)

- פָּ → infinitive construct
- פָּ → imperative or infinitive absolute

Niphal

Niphal participle is distinguished from the Niphal perfect by a long vowel:

פָּ perfect פָּ participle

Hithpael

פָּ can be perfect, imperative, or infinitive construct

General observations

- with I-guttural verbs, the prefix takes on the vowel of the compound shewa
- I-yod Niphal and Hiphil verbs often become I-vav: פָּ
- In III-he infinitive constructs, the פָּ becomes פָּ-