

L Vowels

- 1 A closed unaccented syllable must have a short vowel.
- 2 Short vowels prefer either closed unaccented syllables or open accented syllables. Long vowels prefer either closed accented syllables or open pretonic syllables. Sheva vowels prefer open pretonic syllables.
- 3 When the accent is moved, an open pretonic vowel may be reduced to sheva, גְּדוּלָה to גְּדוּלָהּ.
- 4 When the accent is moved, an open pretonic vowel may be lengthened, זָכַר to זָכַרְנִי *he remembered me* (sometimes it is reduced, שֹׁפֵט to שֹׁפְטִים *judges* [ptc]).
- 5 When the accent is moved, a long vowel in an unaccented closed syllable may be shortened, דָּבַר to דְּבַרְכֶם.

M Gutturals

- 1 Guttural letters א ה ח ע, and ר cannot be doubled (take a dagesh forte).
- 2 An inflection that normally causes doubling of a consonant will, in the case of a guttural letter or resh, cause the vowel preceding the guttural letter to lengthen in compensation.
- 3 Gutturals take composite shevas—e.g., the imperative of שָׁבַר is שִׁבְרָה *break* and the imperative of עָבַר is עֲבַר *cross over*.
- 4 A composite sheva under a guttural will attract a full vowel, corresponding to the composite sheva, to the position before the guttural, לְחַכְמִים *to/for wise men*.
- 5 Most gutturals prefer patach before and/or under them. Gutturals attract furtive patach after a full vowel (compare סוּס and רוּחַ). א prefers segol ם or ם, especially as the first root letter.

N Weak Consonants

- 1 In addition to vowels changes there are many consonantal changes, chiefly these seven י ו ת י נ מ א ה (see Joüon, 34a). The name יוֹנָה *Jonah* is a device for the letters that often assimilate or drop out.
- 2 י ו ה א are weak and under certain circumstances lose their consonantal character (sometimes called **quiescent letters** because they *quiesce*—go silent). י and ו may merge with vowels and become hireq-yod יִ or holem-vav וּ, and ה and א may become silent and simply retained in the written text.
- 3 The vav ו and yod י function as consonants and vowels and as semi-vowels depending on how they are used. When ו or י begin a syllable they function as a consonant; when they end a syllable they combine with the vowel and create a diphthong, some of which act as vowels (like יִ) and some as semi-vowels (like וּ). This dual functioning is akin to the English letters w and y.
- 4 (a) A נ at the end of a syllable will often be assimilated into the next consonant via a dagesh forte, יִתֵּן *he will give* (from יָתַן). (b) A נ will not assimilate if it is the third root letter, זָקַנְתִּי *I grew old*. (c) A נ will not assimilate if it is followed by a guttural or a resh.
- 5 One exception to the weak letter rules is perfect and imperfect verb forms. No part of the pf or impf forms themselves will ever assimilate.

O **Attached Words**—*article, prepositions, conjunction* (הם וְ לְ בִּבְּ הֵם)

- 1 When the **article** attaches to the front of a word the first letter is doubled הַם (הַמֶּלֶךְ), except for gutturals and resh. In the case of the weaker gutturals א ע and ר the patach is normally lengthened in compensation הָ (הָאֵשׁ, הָעֵינַן, הָאֹר). Before harsh gutturals ה ח it is הֶ (הֶהֱיָבֵל). Before unaccented הָ עָ הָ it is הֶ (הֶהָר) and before accented הָ עָ its is הֶ (הֶהָר). (The following charts adapted from *Hebrew Tutor* materials.)

Article			
Normal	הַם	מֶלֶךְ	הַמֶּלֶךְ <i>the king</i>
Before ה or ח	הָ	חֹסֵד	הַחֹסֵד <i>the faithful-love</i>
Before א ע ר	הָ	אִישׁ	הָאִישׁ <i>the man</i>
Before הָ or unaccented הָ or עָ	הֶ	הָר (accented)	הֶהָר <i>the hill</i>
		הָרִים (unaccented)	הֶהָרִים <i>the hills</i>
Often before מְ or יֵ	הֶ	יְלָדִים	הֶיְלָדִים <i>the children</i>

- 2 If an **inseparable preposition**, is placed onto a word beginning with a sheva, the prefixed sheva will lengthen to hireq, לְשִׁמוֹאֵל + לְ = לְשִׁמוֹאֵל.
- 3 When an inseparable preposition (לְ, בִּ, בְּ) is prefixed to a word with an article, the ה tends to disappear and give its vowel to the preposition, בְּמִדְבָּר to הַמִּדְבָּר.
- 4 If an inseparable preposition is prefixed to a word beginning with יֵ, the יֵ looses its consonantal character, לְיֵהוּדָה = לְ + יֵהוּדָה.
- 5 If an inseparable preposition is prefixed to a word beginning with a guttural and a composite sheva, the vowel under the preposition will become the corresponding short vowel, בְּאֵרִי + בִּ = בְּאֵרִי *in a lion*. אֱלֹהִים is an exception as the א looses its consonantal character and becomes silent, בְּאֱלֹהִים = בִּ + אֱלֹהִים *as God*.
- 6 Inseparable prepositions attach to the divine name according to the qere; thus, from יהוה read as אֲדֹנָי to לְיְהוָה read as לְאֲדֹנָי *to the Lord*.
- 7 Sometimes when attached to the accented syllable, the inseparable takes a qames, e.g., לְמַיִם *to/for water* and לְשֹׁבֵת *to rest*.
- 8 Inseparable preposition and vav conjunctions affect pronunciation similarly, though not identically. Inseparable prepositions are not affected by labials and vav conjunctions are not affected by the article. How does the **conjunctive vav** attach? וְ before most consonants (e.g., וְאִשָּׁה); וְ before ב מ פ (bump rule—e.g., וְרִבִּית); וְ before sheva (e.g., וְשִׁמוֹאֵל); וְ before יֵ (e.g., וְיִירוּשָׁלַיִם); corresponding vowel before composite sheva (e.g., וְאֵנִי except before אֱלֹהִים → וְאֱלֹהִים); וְ before accent syllable (e.g., וְלָחֶם).

Inseparable Preposition (לְ כִּי בְּ) and Vav Conjunction (וְ)

	לְ כִּי בְּ	וְ	
Normal	אָדָם לְאָדָם	וְאָדָם	<i>like a human, and a human</i>
Before sheva	שְׂמוּאֵל לְשְׂמוּאֵל	וְשְׂמוּאֵל	<i>to Samuel, and Samuel</i>
Before composite sheva	אֲדָמָה לְאֲדָמָה	וְאֲדָמָה	<i>to ground, and ground</i>
Before labials (בּ מּ פּ)	מֶלֶךְ כְּמֶלֶךְ (normal)	וּמֶלֶךְ (dagesh often drops from בּ or פּ)	<i>like a king, and a king</i>
Before quiescents ' א ו י	יְהוּדָה בִּיהוּדָה	וְיְהוּדָה	<i>in Judah, and Judah</i>
Before accent syllable	רַע / מַיִם לְמַיִם	טוֹב וְרַע	<i>to water, good and evil</i>
Before article	הָאָרֶץ בְּהָאָרֶץ	וְהָאָרֶץ	<i>in the land, and the land</i>

- 9 **Min** can stand independently from the word it modifies (מִן or מִן־), or it can be attached to it. When מִן is prefixed to “normal” words the ן is often assimilated into the first root letter as a dagesh forte, e.g., מִשְׂאוּל. Since gutturals and resh cannot be doubled (take a dagesh forte), the preceding vowel may lengthen in compensation, מִן + אִישׁ = מִיִּישׁ *from a man*. When מִן is prefixed to a word with article the article remains intact, e.g., מִהַמֶּלֶךְ.
- 10 All attached words—מִן לְ כִּי בְּ וְ הֵם—often cause internal changes in words by moving the accent, and such.

Min

Normal separate	הַמֶּלֶךְ מִן הַמֶּלֶךְ	<i>from the king</i>
Normal attached	מִמֶּלֶךְ	<i>from a king</i>
Before gutturals	מִיִּישׁ	<i>from a man</i>
Before article	הַמֶּלֶךְ מִהַמֶּלֶךְ	<i>from the king</i>
Before ך	יְהוּדָה מִיְהוּדָה	<i>from Judah</i>