§ 1
THE ALPHABET

1.1 The Hebrew alphabet consists of 22 letters, all consonants.

Letter	Name		Transcription	Remarks
א	’ā́lep	’ā́lef¹	’	
ב	bēṯ		b v	§1.3
ג	gīmel	gímel	g ḡ	§1.5
ד	dāleṯ	dā́let	d ḏ	§1.5
ה	hē		h	§1.5
ו	wāw	wāw (MH vāv)	w (MH v)	§1.5
ז	záyin		z	
ח	ḥēṯ	ḥēt	ḥ	§1.3
ט	ṭēṯ	ṭēt	ṭ	§1.4
י	yōḏ	yōd	y	
כ	kaf	kāf	k ḵ	§1.5
ל	lāmeḏ	lāmed	l	
מ	mēm	mēm	m	
נ	nūn	nūn	n	

1 Vowels are to be pronounced as in Spanish, Italian, or German; ε is the e in *set*, ă is the *a* in *arm* or the *o* in *soft*; see §2.5.

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Letter	Name		Transcription	Remarks
ס	sā́mek		s	§1.3
ע	‘áyin		‘	§1.3
פ	pē		p f	§1.4
צ	ṣāḏē	ṣáde	ṣ	§1.4
ק	qōf		q	§1.4
ר	rēš		r	trill or flip of tongue-point against back of upper gums, or of uvula [cf. §1.4 (ק)] against raised back of tongue
שׂ	śīn		ś	= s
שׁ	šīn		š	*sh* as in *shoe*
ת	tāw	tāw (MH tāv)	t ṯ	§1.5

1.2 Hebrew is written from right to left, hence the predominantly leftward orientation of the letters.

Final forms are employed for the letters צ, פ, נ, מ, כ when they stand at the end of a word. In the case of מ, פ, נ, כ the downstroke is carried beneath the line (ץ, ף, ן, ך) instead of terminating in a leftward horizontal leading into the next letter of the word. The two forms of mem are variant developments of the earliest form (see §1.7).

The laryngals

1.3 The consonants ע, ח, ה, א are produced in the larynx and are therefore called laryngals.

The *larynx* is the "voice box" visible externally as the Adam's apple.

א is a glottal stop, produced by closing the glottis momentarily and then letting it spring open under the pressure of the breath.

The *glottis* is the opening between the vocal cords. Its extreme positions are: wide open during ordinary breathing; firmly closed when one holds one's breath with the mouth open.

ה, like English *h*, is made by narrowing the glottis so as to make the outgoing breath produce a friction noise.

ח is a very strongly whispered ה produced by tightening the throat muscles.

ע is a voiced ח.

A *voiced* sound is one in which the vocal chords are set vibrating by the outgoing breath, producing the musical sound which we call the voice.

Nonoriental speakers of MH do not usually distinguish ח from spirantized כ (see § 1.5), or ע from א.

The emphatics

1.4 The emphatics, ק, צ, ט, are produced further back in the mouth than are their nonemphatic correspondents. Precisely how they were sounded in antiquity is not certain; speakers of MH who pronounce emphatics distinctively sound them like their Arabic correspondents.

ט is a nonaspirate *t* sound produced with the back of the tongue approaching the soft palate.

An *aspirate* is a sound followed by a puff of breath. The *t* of *stop* is not aspirate; the *t* of *top* is an

צ is an *s* sound produced with the back of the tongue raised toward the soft palate, the tip of the tongue not quite touching the back of the upper gums.

ק is a nonaspirate *k* sound produced with the back of the tongue touching the uvula.

The *uvula* is the fleshy lobe that hangs down in the center of the mouth at the back end of the soft palate.

Nonoriental speakers of MH do not usually distinguish ט from ת, or ק from כ. צ is sounded as *ts* in *pits*.

The letters běgaḏ kefaṯ

1.5 The letters ת, פ, כ, ד, ג, ב (mnemonic: *běgaḏ kefaṯ*[2]) each re‘present two sounds, a stop and a spirant.

A *stop* is produced when the outgoing breath is stopped momentarily by a closure of some part of the vocal organs. If the closure is effected by pressing the back of the tongue against the soft palate, the resultant stops are *k* or hard *g*; if by pressing the tip of the tongue against the back of the upper gums, the resultant stops are *t* or *d*; if by the closure of the lips, *p* or *b*. The first of each of these pairs (namely, *k, t, p*) are unvoiced stops; the second (namely, hard *g, d, b*) are voiced.

If, instead of completely stopping the exit of breath, the tongue and the lips leave it a very narrow passage, the outgoing breath produces a friction noise. This sound is called a *spirant*. Spirantized *t*, for example, is like the *th* of *thin*; spirantized *d*, like the *th* of *then*.

In writing, the stop sound is indicated by placing a dot, called in Hebrew *dāgēš qal* "gentle dagesh," within the letter: בּ *b*, גּ (hard) *g*, דּ *d*, כּ *k*, פּ *p*, תּ *t*. To indicate the spirant, the dagesh is left out: ב *v*, ג *ḡ* (unrolled French *r*), ד *ḏ* (*th* as in *then*), כ *ḵ* (German *ch* as in *ach*), פ *f*, ת *ṯ* (*th* as in *thin*).

Běgaḏ kefaṯ are primarily stops; they become spirants after a vowel [except when they are long consonants (§ 2.11)] or mobile *šěwāʾ*, a slurred vowel [§ 2.7 (b)]. Spirantization is the effect of the open position of the vocal organs in the pronunciation of the vowel being carried into the pronunciation of *běgaḏ kefaṯ*. Thus פ is a stop in the name of the letter אְפ *pe*, but it is spirantized in אָלֶף *ʾālef*, since here it follows upon a vowel.

In the pronunciation of MH ת, ד, ג are never spirantized, but are always pronounced as the stops (hard) *g, d, t*.

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[2] A raised ᵉ indicates a hurried vowel, like the *e* of *stupefy*.

The development of the alphabet

1.6 The Hebrew alphabet, like the language, is Canaanite. It represents the crowning achievement of a long history of writing in the ancient Near East; the traces that remain of its development suggest that its Syro-Palestinian inventors were inspired by both Egyptian and Mesopotamian methods of writing.

Writing began in the 4th millennium B.C.E. both in Egypt and in Sumer. In both lands, pictographs gradually gave way to syllabic and logographic symbols that were numbered in the hundreds at any given time and so demanded long training to master. Some time in the first part of the 2nd millennium B.C.E., an anonymous genius living in Syria-Palestine—the crossroads of Egypt and Mesopotamia — hit upon the idea of reducing the number of symbols to the number of consonants in his language. The idea may have been stimulated by the development in Egyptian hieroglyphics of signs used purely as consonants, though in Egypt itself this never led to alphabetization.

Starting from the first half of the 2nd millennium, the glimmerings of alphabetic writing appear in Palestine in short inscriptions on tablets, potsherds, and household objects. Related to these are other inscriptions found at ancient Egyptian copper mines in the Sinai peninsula, dating from the 16th–14th centuries B.C.E. and commonly believed to be Canaanite.

Solid evidence for the achievement of an alphabet are the alphabetic texts from the ancient Syrian town of Ugarit (modern Ras Shamra) from the 15th–14th centuries B.C.E. Here in a simplified cuneiform script (showing Mesopotamian influence) the Canaanite dialect of Ugaritic is represented in hundreds of literary, religious and administrative texts. Even the present order of the letters was known at Ugarit — and all

signs point to the fact that the Ugaritic alphabet was not an original invention. By the 15th century, then, the Canaanites had already a long history of alphabetic experimentation behind them.

1.7 The direct ancestor of the Hebrew alphabet is the Phoenician, used by the Canaanites, the Israelites, and such neighbors of Israel as the Arameans and Moabites. This script, along with the Canaanite names and order of the letters, passed to the Greeks, probably through the agency of traders, in about the 9th century B.C.E.

As time went on the Phoenician script was gradually modified by the Arameans in the direction of simplicity and greater cursiveness. By the 6th century it had assumed a shape in which the present Hebrew letters can easily be recognized. During the 6th-4th centuries Hebrew scribes adopted the Aramaic "square letters," as they are called, abandoning the old Phoenician script for good [save in the case of some sectaries and for sporadic nationalistic purposes (e.g., for inscriptions on Jewish coins)].

The following specimens show the relationship of these scripts to one another.

Phoenician—Old Hebrew	Greek	Aramaic	Hebrew
𐤀	A	𐡀	א
𐤃	Δ	𐡃	ד
𐤄	E	𐡄	ה
𐤈	⊗	𐡈	ט
𐤋	K	𐡋	כ ל
𐤌	M	𐡌	מ
𐤕	T	𐡕	ת ת

Assignment :

1. Learn the names of the letters in their proper order. Know how to read and write the names in Hebrew.

2. For each occurrence of the *beḡaḏ kefaṭ* letters in the names, determine why it is a stop or spirant, as the case may be.

§ 2

VOCALIZATION

2.1 The chief bearers of meaning in Hebrew, as in the other Semitic languages, are the consonants; the vowels serve merely to specify more particularly the meaning conveyed by the consonants. For example, the consonant group אכל carries the general sense of *eating*. Vowels particularize the meaning as follows: *'ōḵel* "food," *'āḵal* "he ate," *'āḵĕlā* "eating." Because of this the inventors of the alphabet ignored the vowels, relying on the native reader of the language to determine from the context which of these possibilities best fit the situation.

The vowel letters

2.2 To keep the possibilities within a reasonable range, however, it was desirable to limit their number as far as possible. If, in addition to the three words above, *'āḵĕlā* "she ate," *'āḵĕlū* "they ate," *'iḵlī* "eat!" (k), *'ōḵēl* "eater" are also candidates for the proper reading of the group אכל, the variables become too many to be handled with ease. Some method for indicating vowels — at least the major, long vowels — was early felt to be needed. From the 9th century B.C.E., Hebrew writing began to indicate final long vowels by the signs for consonants which

were formed with the same vocal organs as the vowel sound: **י** for final *i* (and later *e*), **ו** for final *u* (and later *o*), and **ה** for final *ā* and other vowels. This usage soon became consistent and standard.

Some centuries later the use of vowel letters to indicate long vowels within the body of a word came into vogue: **י** stood for *i* and certain *e*'s, **ו** for *u* and certain *o*'s. This stage is reflected in biblical spelling, but while the usage of vowel letters to indicate final vowels was standardized early, there is no consistency in the use of internal vowel letters in the Bible.

The abovementioned forms of **אכל** appear in biblical spelling as follows:

1. '*ōkel* "food"   **אכל**
2. '*ākal* "he ate"   **אכל**
3. '*ākْlā* "eating"   **אכלה** or **אכלה**

4. '*ākْlā* "she ate"   **אכלה**
5. '*ākْlu* "they ate"   **אכלו**
6. '*ikْli* "eat!" (fs)   **אכלי**
7. '*ōkēl* "eater"   **אכל** or **אכל**

2.3 Where the vowel letters appear, the writing is said to be *full*. When the vowel letters are absent in words in which they may be expected to appear, the writing is said to be *defective*. In the above words, the alternative spellings of 3 and 7 are defective.

As a rule, the later a text the fuller the spelling. In Rabbinic Hebrew texts vowel letters are often used even for short vowels.

Systems of vocalization

2.4 Needless to say, the use of vowel letters was not a final answer to the problem of representing the vowels. The ambiguity of each vowel letter, the frequency of defective spelling, and the complete lack of representation of the short vowels made it desirable to invent another,

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more exact method of vocalization. The need became acute after Hebrew ceased as a vernacular and the tradition of the correct pronunciation of the sacred text of the Bible became more and more removed from life.

Several systems of diacritical marks were gradually developed to indicate the vowels with greater exactitude. Three main systems are known, of which the Tiberian — developed by the 10th century in the city of Tiberias in Palestine — finally prevailed, to become the standard vocalization of Hebrew.

The vocalization marks do not replace the old vowel letters, which had been fixed in the biblical text centuries before and were regarded as sacrosanct by the vocalizers. They merely add precision to them. Accordingly, the vocalizers never changed the spelling of any word, but rather added their diacritical marks above, below, and inside of the letters. Thus the present biblical text displays two systems of vocalization: the primitive vowel letters (normally representing only long vowels), and the new, Tiberian vocalization marks superimposed upon them.

The Tiberian vocalization

2.5 The Tiberian vocalization consists of the following signs:

Sign	Name[1]	Transcription	Quality
־	*qāmeṣ*	ā	*a* as in *arm*
־	*qāmeṣ*		
־	*qāmeṣ ḥāṭuf*[2]	ŏ	*o* as in *soft*

The *Ashkenazic* (central and east European) pronunciation of both *qāmeṣ*'s is as *o* in *soft*. That the Tiberian vocalizers also pronounced both alike is indicated by their failure to distinguish them graphically. Their pronunciation was probably similar to the Ashkenazic.

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[1] Variant pronunciations of each of these names exist; e.g., *qāmeṣ, qāmāṣ; seḡōl; ḥiriq.*

[2] Called also **קמץ, קמץ** *qāmeṣ qāṭān.*

The *Sephardic* (Spanish-Portuguese) pronunciation of *qā́meṣ* differs from that of *qā́meṣ ḥāṭŭf* as indicated above. MH pronunciation is in this case patterned after the Sephardic, and thus does not distinguish *qā́meṣ* from *páṭaḥ* (see the next sign).

Qā́meṣ ḥāṭŭf is a phonetic variant of *qibbuṣ* (see below). As distinguished from *qā́meṣ*, it occurs only in syllables that are closed [§ 2.7 (a), § 25.2 (b)] and unstressed; e.g., אָזְנַ֫יִם *ŏz-náyim*. (See further § 28.2².)

Sign	Name		Transcription	Quality
ַ	חֹתֵם	*páṭaḥ*	a	a as in arm
ֶ	סֶגֹל	*sĕgōl*	ɛ	e as in set
ֵ	צֵרֵי	*ṣērē*	e	e as in grey (MH *ṣērē* often = *sĕgōl*)
ִ	חִירֶק	*ḥîreq*	i	i as in siesta
ֹ	חֹלֶם	*ḥōlem*	o	o as in mold
וּ	שׁוּרֶק	*šûreq*	u	u as in rule
ֻ	קִבּוּץ	*qibbuṣ*	u	u as in rule

(a) All the vowel signs, except *ḥōlem* and *šûreq*, are sublinear. *Ḥōlem* is placed above and to the left of its consonant, as in כֹּל *kōl* "all," or directly over an already present vowel letter ו, as in חֹלֶם. *Šûreq* is a dot placed within an already present vowel letter ו to designate it as *u*, as in שׁוּרֶק.

Vowels are pronounced after the consonant beneath which (in the case of *ḥōlem*, above which) they are written; see the names of the vowels for examples.

(b) The laryngals ע, ח, ה when they are final³ cannot be preceded by any but an *a* vowel. Should another vowel precede them, a brief *a* sound glides in between the laryngal and that vowel. This *a* is indicated by *páṭaḥ* written beneath, but pronounced before, the laryngal; e.g., רוּחַ

³ When final ה is consonantal it is marked with a dot called *mappîq* to distinguish it from final ה as a vowel letter: תָּמַהּ *tā́mah* "he was astonished."

rûaḥ "spirit," שׁוֹמֵעַ *šômḗaʿ* "(one who) hears." Such a *páṭaḥ* is called a "furtive *páṭaḥ*."

2.6 The vowel signs were designed to indicate the quality (sound) of the vowels, not their quantity (the length of time taken to utter the sound). Most of the signs are, in fact, ambiguous as to quantity, representing sounds that are now long, now short. The determinants of the quantity of vowels will be discussed later (§ 25). For the present it may be noted that ָ, ֶ, and ‒ represent vowels that are often a lengthened modification of short *a*, *i*, *u* (represented by ַ, ִ, ֻ), respectively.

Distinctions of length are not observed in the pronunciation of MH, but they are significant for understanding various grammatical phenomena.

The šĕwā

2.7 To mark a consonant that has no full vowel the Tiberian system uses a special sign ְ called *šĕwā*.

(a) The *šĕwā* indicating complete vowellessness is called *quiescent šĕwā*. It occurs at the end of a syllable and closes the syllable; e.g., שִׁמְעוֹן *šim-ʿôn* "Simeon," יִשְׁמֹר *yiš-mōr* "he will guard."

(b) The *šĕwā* pronounced as a slurred vowel — like the *e* of English *stupefy* — is called *mobile šĕwā*. Mobile *šĕwā* derives from a full vowel that has become slurred owing to a shift in the word stress. For example, the feminine of גָּדוֹל *gāḏōl* "big" is גְּדוֹלָה *gĕḏōlā*, in which the mobile *šĕwā* represents a slurred *a*-vowel. Again, the plural of שָׁמַר *šāmar* "he guarded" is שָׁמְרוּ *šā-mĕrû* (syllabified: *šā-mĕrû*) "they guarded," in which the mobile *šĕwā* represents the slurred *páṭaḥ*. Every *šĕwā* at the beginning of a word (or a syllable) is a mobile *šĕwā*.

(c) Mobile šᵉwâ retains enough of the force of its original vowel to cause a following beḡaḏ keᶠaṯ to be spirantized. Thus, for example, when the particle לְ le "to" is prefixed to בֵּן ben "son," the result is לְבֵן leᵛen "to a son."

The distinction between quiescent and mobile šᵉwâ is fundamental for understanding the vocalization. In the pronunciation of MH, however, mobile šᵉwâ tends to be elided; the two examples of (b) are normally sounded as gdôlâ, šâmru.

2.8 Vowellessness at the end of a word is not marked by a šᵉwâ; thus בַּיִת bayiṯ "house." Chief exceptions to this rule are (a) final kaf, which, when vowelless, bears in it a šᵉwâ in order to distinguish it from final nun; thus הָלַךְ hālak "he went"; and (b) final tāw of 2 fs pronominal elements; e.g., אַתְּ 'att "you" (fs), שָׁמַרְתְּ šāmart "you (fs) guarded."

2.9 With the laryngals (ע, ח, ה, א), and occasionally with other consonants, šᵉwâ may be combined with paṯaḥ, seḡôl, or qāmeṣ ḥāṭûf to form the composites ֲ ḥaṭåf paṯaḥ, ֱ ḥaṭåf seḡôl, and ֳ ḥaṭåf qāmeṣ. The purpose of the ḥaṭåfs is chiefly to facilitate the articulation of the laryngals: יַעֲקֹב Ya'aqov "Jacob," אֱלֹהִים 'elôhim "God," צָהֳרַיִם ṣŏhŏrayim "noon."

The dāḡēš

2.10 To mark certain peculiarities in consonants, the Tiberian vocalization places a dot, called דָּגֵשׁ dāḡēš, inside the letters.

(a) To indicate that beḡaḏ keᶠaṯ are to be pronounced as stops, a dot called דָּגֵשׁ קַל dāḡēš qal, "gentle dāḡēš," is placed within them (§1.5).

(b) Long (doubled) consonants are indicated by a dot called דָּגֵשׁ חָזָק dāḡēš ḥāzāq "strong dāḡēš." Consonants are long:

1. as a result of the juncture of two identical consonants, the

first of which ends its syllable; the two are fused into one long consonant: נָתַנְנוּ* > נָתַנּוּ nāṭannu "we gave";

2. as a result of the assimilation of one consonant to another: מִן זֶ min ze "from this" combines as מִזֶּה mizze, with nun having assimilated to zayin, and zayin, therefore, long;

3. as a characteristic of the form: the article הַ ha- "the" requires that the following consonant be long: הַבֵּן habben "the son."

2.11 When beḡaḏ keᶠaṯ are long (i.e., bear within them a strong dāḡēš), they are pronounced as stops even though they follow a vowel (as in the case of הַבֵּן). The strong dāḡēš thus serves the function of the gentle dāḡēš when it appears in beḡaḏ keᶠaṯ.

Assignment

Learn the names of the vowels and other diacritical marks. Know their functions.

§ 3
THE NOUN SENTENCE

3.1 A sentence (or clause) in which the subject is a noun and the predicate is a noun or adjective is called a noun sentence (or clause). Its simplest form consists of two nouns, or a noun and an adjective, juxtaposed. The tense of a noun sentence is determined by its context; when there is no context, the present tense is understood.

Examples, using יוֹסֵף "Joseph," גָּדוֹל "big," נַעַר "(a)¹ lad":

יוֹסֵף גָּדוֹל "Joseph is big"; יוֹסֵף נַעַר "Joseph is a lad."

3.2 The normal order is subject—predicate. If the predicate is to be emphasized, it is placed first; e.g., נַעַר יוֹסֵף "Joseph is (only) a lad."

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big	גָּדוֹל
small	קָטֹן
brother	אָח

Joseph	יוֹסֵף
lad	נַעַר
Benjamin	בִּנְיָמִין

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1 Hebrew has no element equivalent to the English indefinite article ("a[n]").

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what?	מַה²
who?	מִי

Jacob	יַעֲקֹב
man	אִישׁ

Read and translate:

‏.1 יוֹסֵף נַעַר. 2. יַעֲקֹב גָּדוֹל. 3. יוֹסֵף גְּדֹלָה. 4. גָּדוֹל יוֹסֵף.
‏.5 קָטֹן בִּנְיָמִין. 6. אָח יוֹסֵף. 7. אִישׁ יַעֲקֹב. 8. יַעֲקֹב אִישׁ.
‏.9 קָטֹן בִּנְיָמִין. 10. אִישׁ יַעֲקֹב.

Render your translation back into Hebrew, without referring to the above. Answer in Hebrew:

‏.1 מִי קָטֹן? 2. מַה אָח? 3. מִי נַעַר? 4. מִי גָּדוֹל?
‏.5 מִי גָּדוֹל? 6. מַה יַעֲקֹב? 7. מִי אִישׁ? 8. מַה בִּנְיָמִין?

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2 See § 5.3 for vocalization of מַה.

§ 4
ON THE
STRUCTURE
OF THE NOUN

4.1 Hebrew recognizes two genders: masculine and feminine, and all nouns are either the one or the other according to their form. The masculine has no distinguishing sign; the feminine is distinguished by the ending ה‍ָ— or ת—. Thus עֶלֶם "lad," אָח "brother," and אִישׁ "man" are masculine; פָּרָה "cow," אִשָּׁה "woman," כֻּתֹּנֶת "tunic" are feminine.

Some nouns are feminine though they lack the characteristic feminine ending. Among these are אֶרֶץ "land," עִיר "city," פַּעַם "a time"; paired organs of the body, such as יָד "hand," עַיִן "eye," אֹזֶן "ear," רֶגֶל "foot"; and words denoting females, such as אֵם "mother," אָתוֹן "she-donkey."

4.2 The regular plural ending of masculines is ים—; e.g., עֲלָמִים "lads," אַחִים "brothers."

The regular plural ending of feminines is וֹת—; e.g., פָּרוֹת "cows." But the plural form is not always indicative of the gender of a word. The plural of אָב "father" is אָבוֹת, of אִשָּׁה "woman" is נָשִׁים. Hence the singular

is a better guide to gender — but see §4.1. The only sure index of gender, when it is available, is the form of an associated adjective or verb, which must agree with the noun in gender.

4.3 Hebrew also has a dual number, indicated by the termination ◌ַיִם—, which serves to indicate two-ness in certain nouns; e.g., expressions of time: פַּעַם "one time," פַּעֲמַיִם "twice." In objects that come normally in pairs, the dual termination is used for the plural: יָדַיִם "hands," אָזְנַיִם (ʾoz-) "ears," רַגְלַיִם "feet," עֵינַיִם "eyes."

Thus "seven eyes" is שֶׁבַע עֵינַיִם (this does *not* mean "seven pairs of eyes"). To say "two eyes," the word for "two" must be used: שְׁתֵּי עֵינַיִם.

4.4 The main stress generally falls on the final syllable; e.g., יוֹסֵף Yoséf, נְעָרִים neʿārím.

In certain vowel patterns, however, the stress always falls on the first of a pair of vowels, resulting in penultimate (next-to-last-syllable) stress. Such vowel patterns are ◌ֵ◌ֶ (הִין), ◌ָ◌ֳ (אָזְנֹהֶם), ◌ַ◌ַ (דְּבַר), and in the dual termination; e.g., ◌ַיִם. There are other exceptions to the rule of final stress; they will be marked with ◌́ as they occur.

4.5 When a noun is inflected in the plural or dual, or an adjective receives the feminine ה‍ָ—, these plural, dual, and feminine terminations attract the stress to themselves, away from the beginning of the word. Consequently, the beginning of the word is pronounced hurriedly, with the result that vowels there may be shortened or slurred, or such sequences as -ayi- contracted into single vowels. For example: the ḥōlem of אֹזֶן is shortened to qāmeṣ ḥāṭûf in the dual אָזְנַיִם (ʾoz-); the qāmeṣ of דָּבָר is slurred to mobile šĕwâ in the feminine דְּבָרִים and the plural דְּבָרִים, דְּבָרוֹת; the sequence -ayi- in עַיִן contracts to e in the dual עֵינַיִם.

These vowel changes due to the shift in the place of the stress follow regular rules, but discussion of them must be deferred till later. For the present it is enough to note that when in the course of inflection the stress of a word shifts forward (to the end), vowel changes — shortening or slurring — may be expected to occur at the beginning of the word.

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The words of the previous lesson are inflected thus:

		and (*see below for vocalization*)		lad		brother		man
big	fpl גְּדוֹלוֹת, mpl גְּדוֹלִים, fs גְּדוֹלָה,	ms גָּדוֹל		pl נְעָרִים, נַעַר		pl אַחִים, אָח		pl אֲנָשִׁים, אִישׁ
small	fpl קְטַנּוֹת, mpl קְטַנִּים, fs קְטַנָּה,	ms קָטֹן						

New words:

Leah		לֵאָה
to, for (*see below for vocalization*)	לְ־	
hand	f (du יָדַיִם) יָד	Reuben רְאוּבֵן
eye	f (du עֵינַיִם) עַיִן	Rachel רָחֵל
		woman, wife אִשָּׁה (pl נָשִׁים)
and (*see below for vocalization*)	וְ־	

Vocalization of וְ*:* Normally וְ; וּ before labials (בּ, מ, פ) and *šewâ* (e.g. וּרְאוּבֵן, וּבְנְיָמִן); before *ḥaṭāf*, vocalized with the vowel component of the *ḥaṭāf* (e.g. וַאֲנָשִׁים).

Vocalization of לְ*:* Normally לְ; לִ before *šewâ* (e.g. לִרְאוּבֵן); before *ḥaṭāf*, vocalized with the vowel component of the *ḥaṭāf* (e.g. לַאֲנָשִׁים).

"Have" is expressed thus: לְיוֹסֵף אָח "Joseph has a brother" (lit., "to Joseph [is] a brother"). (לְיוֹסֵף אָח can mean the same, but when the phrase is in the predicate it means only "a brother to/of Joseph"; e.g., בִּנְיָמִן אָח לְיוֹסֵף "Benjamin is a brother to/of Joseph).")

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1   This and the following forms are based on an alternative base קָטָן.

Read and translate:

1. הַנַּעַר נוֹתֵן סֵפֶר לָאִישׁ. 2. הָאֲנָשִׁים. 3. וּרְאוּבֵן. 4. יוֹסֵף נוֹתֵן סֵפֶר לִרְאוּבֵן וּלְבִנְיָמִן הַנַּעַר. 5. יוֹסֵף וּרְאוּבֵן נוֹתְנִים סֵפֶר לָאֲנָשִׁים. 6. רְאוּבֵן וּבִנְיָמִן אַנְשֵׁי הַמִּשְׁפָּחוֹת. 7. אִישׁ נוֹתֵן סֵפֶר. 8. הַמִּשְׁפָּחוֹת הַגְּדוֹלוֹת וְהַקְּטַנּוֹת. 9. הָעַיִן. 10. הַיָּד גְּדוֹלָה וְהָעַיִן קְטַנָּה. 11. הַיָּד. 12. הַנַּעַר קָטֹן וְהָאִישׁ גָּדוֹל. 13. לְקָטֹן. 14. הַיָּד הַגְּדוֹלָה וְהָעַיִן הַקְּטַנָּה. 15. לַנַּעַר הַגָּדוֹל. 16. לַיָּד הַגְּדוֹלָה. 17. עֵינֵי הָאֲנָשִׁים. 18. לַלֵּאָה. 19. לַאֲנָשִׁים הַקְּטַנִּים. 20. וְהָעֵינַיִם. 21. לְרָחֵל. 22. לַאֲנָשִׁים הַגְּדוֹלִים וְהַקְּטַנִּים.

Answer in Hebrew:

1. מִי נוֹתֵן סֵפֶר לִרְאוּבֵן? 2. מִי הָאֲנָשִׁים? 3. מִי הַנְּעָרִים? 4. מִי הָאִישׁ? 5. מִי הָאֲנָשִׁים? 6. מִי הָאִשָּׁה? 7. מִי רָחֵל? 8. מִי הָאֲנָשִׁים? 9. מִי הַגְּדוֹלִים? 10. מִי הָעֵינַיִם? 11. מִי הָאִישׁ? 12. מִי הַנְּעָרִים? 13. לְמִי נוֹתֵן? 14. לְמִי הָעֵינַיִם?

§ 5
THE ARTICLE
AND THE ADJECTIVE

The article

5.1 The article is ־הַ; i.e., prepositive הַ followed by a long consonant (one bearing within it a strong *dāḡeš*): הַיֶּלֶד "the lad."

5.2 Laryngals (ע,ח,ה,א) and ר are not normally susceptible to lengthening and hence do not normally bear strong *dāḡeš* in them. When the article is prefixed to a word beginning with a laryngal it is vocalized thus:

(a) If the initial consonant is א or ר, the ־ of the article is lengthened to ־ (§2.6) by way of compensation: הָאִישׁ "the man," הָרֶגֶל "the foot." This usually occurs with initial ע as well: הָעַיִן "the eye."

(b) If the initial consonant is ה or ח, the article remains הַ, though the laryngal does not take *dāḡeš*: thus הַהֵיכָל "the animal."

(c) But if the initial consonant is ה or ע, the article is vocalized הֶ : הֶעָרִים "the cities," הֶחָכָם "the wise man."

5.3 The vocalization of מַה "what?" is similar. Generally מַה is closely attached to the following word and is vocalized ־מַה; e.g., מַה זֶּאת "What

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is this (f)?" (In the biblical text a hyphen connects מַה with the next word, making the two words a single grammatical unit.) When the initial consonant of the following word is a laryngal or ר: the *pátah* of מַה is lengthened to *qámes*; e.g., מָה רָאָה "what did he see?"

(a) If it is א or ר, the vocalization is מָה; e.g., מָה רָאָה "what was...?"

(b) If it is ה, ח, the vocalization is מֶה.

(c) If it is ע, ח, ה, ה, with other vowels, the vocalization varies, except that before the article it is regularly מַה.

5.4 When the article is preceded by the prepositions ־לְ "to, for," ־בְ "in," ־כְ "like," the ה is elided and its vowel is thrown back to the preposition; thus לַיֶּלֶד (< לְ + הַיֶּלֶד) "to the lad," כָאִישׁ (< כְ + הָאִישׁ) "like the man," בֶּעָרִים (< בְ + הֶעָרִים) "in the cities."

The adjective

5.5 In Hebrew, attributive adjectives follow their noun and agree with it in number and gender; moreover, if the noun has the article, the attributive must have it too.

An attributive adjective is one that, in English, stands before the noun it qualifies to denote the qualification as assumed rather than predicated. In *the big man* the adjective *big* is an attributive, as distinguished from *the man is big*, where it is a predicate adjective.

Examples of the attributive:

"a big man"	אִישׁ גָּדוֹל	"a big woman"	אִשָּׁה גְדוֹלָה
"the big man"	הָאִישׁ הַגָּדוֹל	"the big woman"	הָאִשָּׁה הַגְּדוֹלָה
"big men"	אֲנָשִׁים גְּדוֹלִים	"big women"	נָשִׁים גְּדוֹלוֹת
"the big men"	הָאֲנָשִׁים הַגְּדוֹלִים	"the big women"	הַנָּשִׁים הַגְּדוֹלוֹת

The explanation for this thoroughgoing agreement is that the attributive adjective is really in apposition to its noun. The adjective is actually a substantive (a noun equivalent), and the phrase אִישׁ גָּדוֹל is thus literally "a man, a big one," while הָאִישׁ הַגָּדוֹל is literally "the man, the big one."

5.6 Predicate adjectives also agree with their nouns in number and gender, but they do not take the article (except where they would in English).

Examples of the predicate adjective:

"the woman is big" הָאִשָּׁה גְדוֹלָה | "the man is big" הָאִישׁ גָּדוֹל
"the women are big" הַנָּשִׁים גְדוֹלוֹת | "the men are big" הָאֲנָשִׁים גְּדוֹלִים
[but רְאוּבֵן הַגָּדוֹל "(it is) Reuben (who) is the big one"]

Ambiguities do remain. By itself אִישׁ גָּדוֹל can mean both "a big man" and "a man is big"; and while הָאִישׁ הַגָּדוֹל would normally be taken as "the big man," it may also mean "(it is) the man (who) is the big one." Such theoretical ambiguities are almost always resolved by the context.

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house(hold) m (pl בָּתִּים) בַּיִת	cow (pl פָּרוֹת) פָּרָה	
field m (pl שָׂדוֹת) שָׂדֶה	good טוֹב	
father אָב	shepherd (pl רֹעִים) רֹעֶה	
is not אֵין	beautiful, handsome (fpl יָפוֹת, mpl יָפִים, f יָפָה) יָפֶה	
where? אֵיפֹה	in בְּ	

Read and translate :

1. הַשָּׂדֶה הַגָּדוֹל טוֹב. 2. אֵין אָב לְיַעֲקֹב. 3. הַבָּתִּים הַגְּדוֹלִים טוֹבִים. 4. הַנָּעֲרָה טוֹבָה. 5. הָאִשָּׁה יָפָה מְאֹד. 6. הָרֹעֶה הַטּוֹב בַּשָּׂדֶה. 7. הָאֲנָשִׁים הַגְּדוֹלִים רֹעִים. 8. הָאִישׁ הַגָּדוֹל טוֹב. 9. הַפָּרוֹת טוֹבוֹת. 10. אֵין אָב טוֹב לַנַּעַר. 11. הַיָּפֶה בַּבַּיִת. 12. הַנָּעֳרוֹת יָפוֹת מְאֹד. 13. אֵין אָח לָאִשָּׁה. 14. הָרֹעֶה הַטּוֹב. 15. הַיָּפִים בַּבָּתִּים. 16. הַנָּשִׁים הַיָּפוֹת. 17. הַפָּרָה הַטּוֹבָה. 18. אֵין בַּיִת לָאָב.

19. אֵין רֹעֶה לַפָּרוֹת. 20. הָאֲנָשִׁים הַגְּדוֹלִים בַּבָּתִּים. 21. אֵין אָב לַנַּעֲרָה הַיָּפָה.

Answer in Hebrew :

1. מִי הָרֹעֶה? 2. מִי הַגָּדוֹל? 3. מִי הָאִישׁ הַטּוֹב? 4. מִי בַּבָּתִּים? 5. מִי הָרֹעֶה לַפָּרָה? 6. מִי לַנַּעַר? 7. מִי הַנָּשִׁים? 8. מִי בַּשָּׂדֶה? 9. אֵין אָב לְיַעֲקֹב. 10. אֵין אָח לָאִישׁ. 11. מִי הָאֲנָשִׁים הַגְּדוֹלִים? 12. מִי הָאֲנָשִׁים? 13. מִי לַנַּעֲרָה? 14. מִי הָרֹעֶה הַטּוֹב?

Translate :

1. The good shepherd is in a field.   2. Jacob has a beautiful house.   3. In the big house are a man and a woman.   4. The wife is good to Jacob.   5. The big man is a shepherd.   6. The small brother is good.   7. The handsome lad is in the house.   8. The shepherd has a beautiful wife.

Rewrite the preceding exercise, pluralizing all nouns and adjectives.

6.1 Two nouns may be combined so that the second defines or otherwise particularizes the first (e.g., through indicating its possessor). Thus יָד "hand" may be defined by הַנַּעַר "the lad" in the combination יַד הַנַּעַר "the lad's hand." The first noun, יָד, is said to govern the second, and to be in *construction* (i.e., combination; Lat. *construere* "bring together") with it. Phonetically the two are considered one word: the first, or governing, noun loses its main stress (retaining, at best, a secondary stress), which now falls on the second, or governed, noun. Consequently, the governing noun often undergoes vowel reduction or loss. Note how the qāmeṣ of יָד shortens to *páṭaḥ* in construction. Again, when בַּיִת "the man's house," the sequence *ayi* contracts to *e* as in בֵּית הָאִישׁ "the man's house," the sequence *ayi* contracts to *e*.

6.2 The governing noun, which often undergoes change, is said to be in the *construct state*; the governed noun, unchanged, is said to be in the *absolute state*. The various internal vowel changes that nouns in the

construct state undergo will be treated later; here we shall note certain regular changes that occur at the end of such nouns.

(a) The feminine termination ־ָה becomes ־ַת.

Example: פָּרָה "cow," פָּרַת יַעֲקֹב "Jacob's cow."

The explanation of this change is as follows: The feminine termination was originally *-aṭ*. When in final position, the *ṭ* dropped off, and the vowel was compensatorily lengthened to *ā*. This final, long *ā* was represented by the vowel-letter ה, later by the preceding qāmeṣ. Thus פָּרָה < *páraṭ*. Now, the condition of the loss of the *ṭ* was that it be the final consonant. When *páraṭ* was in the construct state, it was that it be the final part of a compound word; the *ṭ*, now internal, was not dropped, and thus the original *-aṭ* termination reappears in the feminine singular construct state.

(b) The dual ־ַיִם and the — usually masculine — plural ־ִים terminations become ־ֵי. Examples: עֵינַיִם "eyes," עֵינֵי הָאִישׁ "the man's eyes"; אַחִים "brothers," אֲחֵי יוֹסֵף "Joseph's brothers."

No change occurs in the termination of masculine singular and the — usually feminine — plural termination ־וֹת.

6.3 A noun in the construct state does not take the definite article, because it is already defined by the noun it governs. The governed noun, on the other hand, may take the article. These, then, are the possibilities: בֵּית אִישׁ "a man's house"; בֵּית הָאִישׁ "the man's house" ("the house of the man," but also "a house of the man").

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Henceforth, for nouns in which there is some irregularity, the following data will be given in parentheses and in this order: singular construct state, plural, plural construct state. Construct state forms will be followed by a hyphen.

Irregular forms of some nouns so far met with:

man	אִישׁ (אֱנוֹשׁ, אֲנָשִׁים)		father	אָב (אָבִי-, אָבוֹת) אֲבִי אֶת
woman	אִשָּׁה (אִשְׁתִּי, נָשִׁים)		brother	אָח (אָחִי-, אַחִים)
			house(hold)	בַּיִת (בֵּית-, בָּתִּים, בֵּיתִי)

New words

land	f (w art הָאָרֶץ) אֶרֶץ		these	אֵלֶּה
Canaan	כְּנַעַן		son	בֵּן (בֶּן-, בָּנִים)
Judah	יְהוּדָה		he	הוּא
sheep (more exactly:	f צֹאן		they	f הֵן m הֵם
small cattle — sheep, goats)				

The 3 pers pronoun is frequently used as a binder between the subject and predicate of a noun sentence; e.g., יַעֲקֹב הוּא אִישׁ "Jacob is a man."

Read and translate :

Hebrew reading exercises, sentences 1–22 (in Hebrew)

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1 Note that מִי > מִי.

2 Not a tautology: רֹעֶה (cs רֹעֶה) means "one who pastures" ("pastor" in the original sense); standing alone it is understood to refer to צֹאן, but the full expression is רֹעֶה צֹאן.

Answer in Hebrew :

Hebrew questions, numbered 1–15 (in Hebrew)

Translate :

1. Who is he? He is Joseph's father.   2. Who are they? They are Joseph's big brothers.   3. The beautiful land is the land of Canaan.   4. Judah's wife has small sons.   5. These are men of Canaan.   6. Jacob's wives have sheep.   7. The sheep of Judah's son are in the field.   8. Jacob's sons have good wives.

§ 7

PRONOUNS AND DEMONSTRATIVES

7.1 The independent personal pronouns are:

singular

I	אָנִי, אָנֹכִי	1c
thou	אַתָּה	2m
thou	אַתְּ	2f
he	הוּא	3m
she	הִיא	3f

plural

we	אֲנַחְנוּ, נַחְנוּ (אֲנוּ)	1c
you	אַתֶּם	2m
you	אַתֵּנָה, אַתֶּן (אַתֵּנָה)	2f
they	הֵם, הֵמָּה	3m
they	הֵנָּה (הֵן)	3f

הִוא is written הוּא throughout the Pentateuch in all but eleven occurrences; the reason for this is uncertain.

Forms in parentheses are found in Postbiblical Hebrew.

The independent pronouns may be used only as subjects (or in agreement with subjects); they cannot be used as objects or with prepositions.

7.2 In addition to the independent pronouns there are pronominal suffixes, which may be attached to nouns to indicate possession or to

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prepositions or verbs to indicate their object. For example, the 3ms suffix וֹ- may be attached to nouns, as in צֹאנוֹ "his sheep"; to prepositions, as in לוֹ "to him," or to verbs, as in שְׁמָרוֹ "he guarded (שָׁמַר) him."

The pronominal suffixes will be set forth in detail later.

7.3 The demonstratives are:

singular

this	זֶה m
	זֹאת f

plural

these	אֵלֶּה c

The demonstratives for far objects — "that," "those" — are the 3 pers independent pronouns: הוּא, הִיא, הֵם, הֵמָּה.

The demonstratives may be used as pronouns or as adjectives.

(a) As pronouns: זֶה אִישׁ "this is a man," זֹאת אִשָּׁה "this is a woman," אֵלֶּה אֲנָשִׁים "these are men," הוּא הָאִישׁ "that is the man."

(b) As adjectives: הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה "this man," הָאִישׁ הַהוּא "that man," הָאֲנָשִׁים הָהֵם "those men" (note the *qāmeṣ* of הָהֵם). The demonstrative, as well as the noun, takes the article.

7.4 When a noun is qualified both by an attributive and a demonstrative adjective, the order is attributive–demonstrative; e.g., הָאִישׁ הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה "this great man."

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Read and translate:

.1 אַתֶּם הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר רְאִיתֶם אֶת הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה וְאַתֶּן הַנָּשִׁים אֲשֶׁר .2 מִי הָאִישׁ הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר יֹשֵׁב .3 זֶה דָּוִד וְזֶה .4 וְאַתֶּם יֹשְׁבִים .5 בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא .6 יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת

מִי הַמְּלָצִים 9. הֵם מַלְאֲכֵי אֱלֹהִים הַיֹּשְׁבִים בַּשָּׁמַיִם 8. אֵלֶּה אַנְשֵׁי הָאָרֶץ הַיֹּשְׁבִים עַל הָאָרֶץ 10. הַנֶּפֶשׁ אֲשֶׁר בַּשֹּׁר הוּא הַדָּם 11. לְמִי הַסּוּס הַזֶּה הַטּוֹב הַזֶּה? אֵיךָ לֹא יָדַעְתָּ? 12. אֵלֶּה בְּנֵי הָאִישׁ הַהוּא 13. לְמִי הַשָּׂדֶה הַזֶּה הַטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר בֵּין הַבַּיִת וּבֵין הַמַּיִם.

Translate:

1. What are you? I am a shepherd.   2. Whose son is that? That is Jacob's son.   3. Reuben's beautiful wife is in this house.   4. The houses of the sons are in this land.   5. Those are the hands of a man, and these are the eyes of a woman.   6. Reuben has a large hand.   7. This house is not small.   8. Those sheep belong to those men.   9. That field is good for the cows.   10. Those cows have big eyes.   11. Whose cow is this? She belongs to Jacob's men.

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§ 8

THE VERB

Roots

8.1 One of the chief characteristics of the Semitic languages is that roots of three consonants, expressing some general idea, are the basis of most words. By means of fixed vowel patterns and formative elements the root is embodied in words particularizing aspects and nuances of the root idea. (In the language itself of course we meet only the words from which the root is a grammatical abstraction.)

Thus the root פָּתַח "opening" is embodied in the words פָּתַח "he opened," פֻּתַּח "he (it) was opened," פֶּתַח "doorway."

The root שָׁקַל "weight" is embodied in the words שָׁקַל "he weighed," שֻׁקַל "he was weighed," שֶׁקֶל "a *shekel* weight," מִשְׁקָל "weight."

The root שָׁמַר "guarding" is embodied in the words שָׁמַר "he guarded," שֻׁמַר "he was guarded, he guarded himself," מִשְׁמָר "guardhouse, jail."

8.2 There is also a large number of biconsonantal roots, from which are derived the "hollow" verbs (§ 17) — verbs having a long vowel between their two root consonants. These roots exhibit the same patterning; e.g.,

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