

to, towards : אֶל־	day : יוֹם
God : אֱלֹהִים	days (irreg. pl.) : יָמִים
who, which (relative pronoun) : אֲשֶׁר	Israel : יִשְׂרָאֵל
marker of definite, direct object : אֶת־	all : כָּל
he goes, comes (part.) : בָּא	all of (construct form) : כָּל־
she goes, comes (part.) : בָּאָה	altar : מִזְבֵּחַ
son, child : בֶּן	he does, makes : עָשָׂה
sons, children (irreg. pl.) : בָּנִים	she does, makes : עָשָׂה
Yahwah (usually read “LORD”) : יְהוָה	

Chapter 4: Adjectives, the object marker אֶת־, the relative , and prepositions (cont.)

In this chapter the student will learn the last few basics that are needed to begin to read larger selections of Hebrew prose. The adjective can be used in a variety of ways and is critical for understanding Hebrew sentences. Likewise, the object marker אֶת־, and further study of the prefixed prepositions introduced in earlier chapters is crucial for the mastery of even elementary Hebrew.

The following is a list of the essential items that must be learned in this chapter:

1. The form of the adjective
2. The uses of the adjective (predicate and attributive)
3. The use of object marker אֶת־.
4. Vowel changes associated with prefixed prepositions
5. The preposition מִן and its usages.

One: The adjective

The adjective is like the active participle and has four forms (masculine singular and plural and feminine singular and plural). When adjective modify nouns, they must agree in gender and number. Unlike nouns, which are sometime irregular in terms of gender and number, the adjective is very regular and follows a set pattern. The forms of the adjective are very similar to the active participle and must be memorized (**this is one of the critical paradigms with an audio file on the website and on the CD**).

Plural	Singular	
טוֹבִים	טוֹב	Masculine
טוֹבוֹת	טוֹבָה	Feminine

Vowel reductions: Just as was the case for plural nouns, the same rules of vowel reduction apply for derived conjugations of the adjective (see chapter 3, part one):

Translation	fp	mp	fs	ms
good	טוֹבוֹת	טוֹבִים	טוֹבָה	טוֹב
big, great	גְּדוֹלִים	גְּדוֹלִים	גְּדוֹלָה	גְּדוֹל
wise	חֲכָמוֹת	חֲכָמוֹם	חֲכָמָה	חֲכָם
beautiful	יְפוֹת	יְפִים	יְפָה	יְפֵה
hard, difficult	קְשׁוֹת	קְשׁוֹם	קְשָׁה	קְשֵׁה

Two: Uses of the adjective (predicative and attributive)

In English adjective are normally thought of as *attributive*—they modify or describe a noun. For example, in the phrase “the big dog,” the word *big* is an adjective that describes the noun “dog.” In this case, the adjective is *attributive*. Likewise, Hebrew has attributive adjectives, but unlike English the adjective normally follows the noun that it modifies. Another difference from English is that Hebrew attributive adjectives must agree in gender, number, and definiteness with the noun that it modifies. For example, the Hebrew equivalent of “the big dog” would be “the dog, the big.” The following examples illustrate this principle:

“the big dog” = הַכֶּלֶב הַגָּדוֹל
(attributive: noun is definite, and adjective is definite)

“a big dog” or “a dog is big” = כֶּלֶב גָּדוֹל
(attributive is possible because agrees in definite and adj. follows noun)
(predicative is possible because both are indefinite)
(attributive slightly preferred because adj. follows noun, but both possible)

Fortunately, there are normally some indicators that allow the student to distinguish between an *attributive* adjective and *predicate* adjective in Hebrew. First, if the Hebrew adjective does not agree in definiteness with the noun, then the adjective is predicative and functions as a verb. Second, if the adjective precedes the noun, then the adjective is normally predicative and functions as a verb. The following phrases illustrates these possibilities:

“the men are good” = הָאֲנָשִׁים טוֹבִים
(predicative: noun is definite, but adjective is not definite)

“the good men” = הָאֲנָשִׁים הַטוֹבִים
(attributive: noun and adjective are definite; adjective follows noun)

“good men” or “men are good” = אַנְּשִׁים טוֹבִים
 (attributive and predicative possible because noun and adj. are indefinite)
 (slight preference for attributive option because adjective follows noun)

“men are good” = טוֹבִים אַנְּשִׁים
 (predicate adjective because adjective precedes noun)

“the good men are big” = גְּדוֹלִים הָאֲנָשִׁים הַטוֹבִים
 (הַטוֹבִים modifies הָאֲנָשִׁים because both definite and adj. follows noun)
 (גְּדוֹלִים is predicative because it precedes noun and is indefinite)

As the above example illustrate, there are some helpful rules for distinguishing between attributive and predicative adjectives, but much is left up to the context. The following table summarizes the above possibilities that must be further clarified by context:

Possible translation (not preferred)	translation	Hebrew phrase
a man is good	a good man	אִישׁ טוֹב
n/a	a man is good	טוֹב אִישׁ
men are good	good men	אַנְּשִׁים טוֹבִים
n/a	men are good	טוֹבִים אַנְּשִׁים
n/a	the men are good	הָאֲנָשִׁים טוֹבִים
n/a	the men are good	טוֹבִים הָאֲנָשִׁים
n/a	the good men	הָאֲנָשִׁים הַטוֹבִים

Three: the definite direct object marker ׀תֵּ

Hebrew sentences typically have a particle that marks a definite, direct object. The particle (׀תֵּ [with a *maqeph*] or less frequently תֵּ [without a *maqeph*]) is not translated but simply identifies the direct object of the sentence. If the direct object is not definite (does not have a definite article or is a proper name), then there is no particle to mark the object. The following examples illustrate that usage of this particle:

“The king loves the people” תֵּמֶלֶךְ אֶהֱבֵ אֶת־הָעָם

“The king loves Bathsheba” תֵּמֶלֶךְ אֶהֱבֵ אֶת־בַּת־שֶׁבַע

If there are multiple direct objects that are definite, then the particle may be repeated for each object.

“The king loves Bathsheba & the people” תֵּמֶלֶךְ אֶהֱבֵ אֶת־בַּת־שֶׁבַע וְאֶת־הָעָם

Four: Prefixed prepositions (cont.)

As discussed above in Chapter 2, the prefixed prepositions (׀ “like, as,” לֵ “to, towards,” and ׀ “in, on”) are simply added to indefinite nouns, and the vowel underneath the prefixed preposition is a *šewā* (ְ). However, there is an exception to this rule if the noun that the prefixed preposition is attached to begins with a vocal *šewā* (ְ). In these instances, the **rule of *šewā*** (ְ) comes into play.

The Rule of *šewā* (ְ): this rule simply states that two vocal *šewā* (ְ)

are not tolerated in Hebrew. If a situation arises where there would be two

vocal *šewā* (ְ) without an intervening consonant, then the first vocal *šewā* (ְ) becomes a *hîreq* (ֿ) and the second *šewā* (ְ) becomes a silent *šewā* (ְ) and marks the end of the syllable.

The following examples illustrate how the **The Rule of *šewā*** (ְ) functions with the prefixed prepositions:

Combination	Noun starting with <i>šewā</i> ²	Preposition
“to places” לְמִקְוֹמוֹת	“places” מִקְוֹמוֹת	לְ
“like kings” כְּמֶלְכִים	“kings” מֶלְכִים	כְּ
“in paths” בְּדַרְכִים	“paths” דַּרְכִים	בְּ
“To Samuel” לְשָׁמוּאֵל	“Samuel” שָׁמוּאֵל	לְ

*Exceptions to the Rule of *šewā** (ְ).

There are two exceptions to the above rule. First, if the second vocal *šewā* (ְ) is found below the consonant yod, then second *šewā* (ְ) is dropped. For example, לְ (to) + the noun יְהוּדָה “Judah” = לְיְהוּדָה “to Judah.” Second, if the first consonant of the noun is a guttural, then the guttural will take a composite *šewā*². In these cases, the prefixed preposition will take a vowel that corresponds to the composite *šewā*². For example, בְּ

(in) + תָּלוֹם “a dream” = בְּתָלוֹם “in a dream.” The following chart illustrates these

exceptions to the above rule:

Combination	Noun starting with <i>šewā</i> ³	Preposition
“to Judah” לְיְהוּדָה	“Judah” יְהוּדָה	לְ
“to Jerusalem” לְיְרוּשָׁלַם	“Jerusalem” יְרוּשָׁלַם	לְ
“in a dream” בְּתָלוֹם	“a dream” תָּלוֹם	בְּ
“in truth” בְּאֵמֶת	“truth” אֵמֶת	בְּ