

Chapter 14

Weak Verbs in the Piel *binyan*

Vocabulary:

or (conj.): אוּ

surely; but, however (adv): אַךְ

to burn (tr. or intr.): בָּעַר

to burn (tr.); consume: בִּעַר

to bless: בֵּרַךְ

a blessing: בְּרָכָה

to seek: בִּקַּשׁ

to praise: הִלֵּל

Hallelujah (impv + Yah): הַלְלוּיָהּ

to cover: כָּסָה

to atone: כִּפֶּר

to teach: לָמַד

to refuse: מָאֵן

to spurn: מָאֵץ

to oppress: עָנָה

to belittle; curse: קָלַל

to drive away: גָּרַשׁ

to stretch out: שָׁלַח

to expel, send forth, let go: שָׁלַח

to serve, administer: שָׂרָת

Orthography of the Piel for weak verbs and roots with gutturals

The student is already familiar with the concept of changes that take place in the various inflections for verbal roots with weak consonants or gutturals. The Piel *binyan* is no exception—the same patterns are found, but certain vowel and consonant changes take place depending on which letter in the root is a guttural or “weak.” The following sections summarize the main changes that are encountered.

Verbal roots that are not “weak” in the Piel *binyan*

1. I-Nun verbs: Unlike the Qal *binyan* where the nun assimilates into the following consonant in the imperfect inflection, the *nun* is retained in the Piel *binyan* (Qal: $\sqrt{\text{ע-ג-נ}}$ (נ-ג-ע) but Piel: $\sqrt{\text{ע-ג-נ}}$ (נ-ג-ע)).
2. Middle weak verbs: Whereas the middle weak consonant drops out in the Qal *binyan* (קם “he rose”), the middle weak consonant is usually retained if the root occurs in the Piel because the middle consonant is “doubled.” However, most middle weak verbal roots that commonly occur in the Qal are *not* attested in the Piel—they normally occur in what is called the Polel *binyan* (that is, the mater preserves the middle weak radical, and the third consonant is duplicated as well— e.g., $\sqrt{\text{ת-ר-ב}}$ (ב-ר-ת, ב-ר-ב-ת)).
3. I-Yod verbs: Unlike the Qal *binyan* where the I-yod is often assimilated into the preformative, roots with a I-yod retain that consonant in the imperfect because the I-yod starts a syllable and follows an open syllable—this is because the preformative takes a vocal *sewa* for a vowel (e.g., $\sqrt{\text{י-ש-ר}}$ “he will smooth over”).
- 4.

Summary of changes in Piel weak verbs and verbs with gutturals

The following table summarizes the changes that take place. These changes will be described in detail below:

Geminate	III-ה	III-א	III-ע or ה	II-ע, ה, or ה	II-א or ר	
הִלֵּל	כָּלָה	מָלָא	שָׁלַח	בָּעַר	בָּרַךְ	3ms perf
הִלְלִיתִי	כָּלִיתִי	מָלֵאתִי	שָׁלַחְתִּי	בָּעַרְתִּי	בָּרַכְתִּי	1cs perf
יְהַלֵּל	יְכַלֵּה	יְמַלֵּא	יְשַׁלַּח	יְבַעַר	יְבָרֵךְ	3ms impf
אֶהַלֵּל	אֶכַּלֵּה	אֶמַּלֵּא	אֶשַׁלַּח	אֶבַעַר	אֶבָרֵךְ	1cs impf

II-Guttural Verbs

As described in the previous chapter, the tell-tale sign of the Piel *binyan* is the doubling of the middle letter of the verb root. Since gutturals and *resh* do not accept a *dagesh*, some sort of compensatory lengthening often takes place. Verbal roots with a II-א or ר lengthen the preceding vowel, but there is no lengthening found in verbal root with a II-ע, ה, or ה.¹

Therefore, the student will be able to recognize a verb with a II-א or ר because of the lengthened preceding vowel, but verbal roots with a II-ע, ה, or ה will need to be identified from other features exhibited in the Piel *binyan*. (see table below for a summary):

¹ As the student will learn with more exposure to Hebrew, doubling of a consonant has more to do with how long the speaker dwells on a particular phoneme than actual doubling. It seems that ancient speakers of Hebrew needed to compensate the length of the vowel before a II-א or ר, but they did not dwell as long on a II-ע, ה, or ה. Therefore, it is sometimes said that these roots exhibit “virtual doubling.”

III-guttural verbs

Each of the III-guttural verbs has some slight variations from the forms exhibited of Piel verbs of strong roots. These differences can be divided into three categories:

1. III-ע or ח: Verbs that end in either *ayin* or *het* normally exhibit an /a/ vowel between the second and third root letter instead of an /i/ class vowel. Thus, one finds קָטַל, but שָׁחַח with a final ע or ח.
2. III-א: Verbs that end in *aleph* exhibit differences from strong roots because the aleph is quiescent when it is found at the end of a syllable. Thus, the preceding vowel is often lengthened, and the /i/ class vowel is retained because the KITKAT → KATKAT rule does not come into play. E.g., one finds קָטַלְתִּי, but the 1cs perfect form of a III-א root is מָלְאֲתִי.
3. III-ה: Verbs that end in *he* are very similar to III-ח verbs in the Qal *binyan*. The *he* drops out in the 1st and 2nd person forms of the perfect as well as the 3cp perfect form. In the imperfect, the *he* retained, but the /i/ class vowel is a *segol*. E.g., the 1cs perfect is כָּבַדְתִּי, while the 3ms imperfect is יִכְבְּדֶה.
4. Geminate roots: Verbal roots with the same 2nd and 3rd consonants (geminate) typically function like strong roots with the duplication of both consonants of the root letter *and* the doubling with a *dagesh* of the second root letter. E.g., the 3ms perfect form is הִזְלִיל, and the 1cs perfect form is הִזְלִילְתִּי. Likewise the 3ms imperfect form is יִזְלִיל.

						ms impv
						fs impv
						mp impv
						fs impv
						inf. constr
						inf. (suff)
						inf. abs.
						ms part
						fs part
						mp part
						fp part

Drill Exercises for the Piel:

1. Complete the Piel forms drill sheet.
2. Complete the Piel parsing drill sheet.

Translation from Deut 4:1–

1. ועתה ישראל שמע אל-החקים ואל-המשפטים אשר אנכי מלמד אתכם לעשות למען תחיו ובאתם וירשתם את-הארץ אשר יהנה אלהי אבותיכם נתן לכם:
2. לא תספו¹ על-הדבר אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם ולא תגרעו² ממנו לשמור את-מצות יהנה אלהיכם אשר אנכי מצוה אתכם:
3. עיניכם הראת את אשר-עשה יהנה בבבל פעור כי כל-האיש אשר הלך אחרי בעל-פעור השמידו³ יהנה אלהיך מקרבך:
4. ואתם תדבקו⁴ ביהנה אלהיכם תנים בלכם תיום:
5. ראה! למדתי אתכם חקים ומשפטים כאשר צוני יהנה אלהי לעשות כן בקרב הארץ אשר אתם באים שמה לרשתה:
6. ושמתם ועשיתם כי הוא חכמתכם ובינתכם⁵ לעיני העמים אשר ישמעון את כל-החקים האלה ואמרו רק עם-תכם ונבון הגוי הגדול תזה:
7. כי מי-גוי גדול אשר-לו אלהים קרבים אליו ביהנה אלהינו בכל-קראנו אליו:
8. ומי גוי גדול אשר-לו חקים ומשפטים צדיקים ככל התורה הזאת אשר אנכי נתן לפניכם תיום:
9. רק השמר⁶ לך ושמר נפשך מאד פן-תשכח את-הדברים אשר-ראו עיניך ופן-יסורו מלבבך כל ימי חייך והודעתם⁷ לבניך ולבני בניך:

1 = Hiphil “to add”; 2 = “to take away”; 3 = “to exterminate”; 4 = “clinging” (adj); 5 = your understanding; 6 =

Niphal “be guarded”

