

MBH21 01: Volitional and Gutturals

Unit 01 introduces forms that are used for persuasion in conversations between people. We also experiment with verb classes with vowel change.

The volitive system in Hebrew

- [1] **Once more the yiqtol.** In MBH1 08 the learner trained the morphology of *wayyiqtol* and *yiqtol*. It was pointed out that the former referred to past completed events, and that *yiqtol* is imperfective for incomplete events in reference to the present, future and sometimes past situations.
- [2] **The *yiqtol* as an irrealis.** While the *wayyiqtol* almost always is translated by a past time reference, the *yiqtol* almost always has the opposite reference and can be translated by future, present and past, but the 2nd and 3rd person also at times express a wish. In so far one might say that the common function of many *yiqtol* forms is to express some kind of non-realis, i.e. this grammatical form indicates that a certain situation or action has not happened when the speaker is using this particular verb form. This holds for the future and even present reference for *yiqtol*, and clearly when the speaker wishes something to happen. Languages may mark irrealis forms like hypotheticals, contra-factuals, optatives, conjunctives and so forth, but the irrealis mood in Biblical Hebrew as in Arabic deals with simple non-declarative references.
- [3] **Volitives: Imperative, Cohortative and Jussive.** In language theory we use volitive for expressions that refer to the desires, wishes or fears of the speaker. While English use modal verbs in expression like "Would that you were here!" or "May he live forever!" Hebrew and Arabic has a system for issuing orders, commands or exhortations called cohortative (1st person), imperative (2nd person) and jussive (3rd person). These specialized forms are used in direct discourse, or what in the ETCBC is called the Quote (in contrast to narrative).
- [4] **Imperative** is the form used for a direct command to the 2nd person. This form is found in most other languages and in Hebrew is used quite frequently in orders. This form is actually not too difficult to learn, because the learner only has to

	2M	Sg	כתב	Write!
<i>IMP Sg</i>	2F		כתבי	-
<i>Pl</i>	2M	Pl	כתבו	-
	2F		כתבנה	-
<i>COH Sg</i>	1C	Sg	אכתבה	Let me write
			נכתבה	Let us write
<i>As Yiqtol</i>	3M	Sg	יכתב	May he write
<i>2-3rd pers</i>			...	

remove the preformative prefix from the 2nd person *yiqtol* forms in order to get the *imperative* form. Note that there are a few Emphatic imperatives the תָּ ending like שְׁכַבְתָּ 'you must lay down' or שִׁפְטֵתָּ 'you must judge' that has unknown person, number and gender.

- [5] **Cohortative** is quite easy to recognize morphologically because it adds the תָּ ending to the 1st person in singular and plural. This form is used in order to express an admonishment as an intention on behalf of the speaker ("let me do X") or as an exhortation in an inclusive plural reference ("let us do X").
- [6] **Jussive** is the major challenge in Hebrew, because it is mostly not marked morphologically and therefore has exactly the same form as the *yiqtol* in reference to incomplete events. The 3rd or 2nd person wish-function, that "he/they/you may X", can only be determined on the clause level through syntactic analysis of the most likely function in a particular context. Nevertheless, there are two cases, where it is possible to interpret the *yiqtol* as an instruction in the morphological context: when the *yiqtol* follows the negation לֹא , the function of the verb is always jussive, i.e. 'could you please not X'. Furthermore, we can have an expressive adverb נָא 'please' tied intimately to the *yiqtol* verb, and in this case the function is also to indicate a polite request (but נָא can also be used with imperative). Both forms are used to avoid the positive and negative command. For the morphology we only train imperative and cohortative and leave jussive interpretation to the study of the texts.

Verb classes

- [7] **The verb classes.** When classifying verb, we use Roman I as a symbol for the 1st consonant of the root, II for the 2nd consonant, and III for the 3rd consonant. We

distinguish between the regular verbs (marked here in red) and guttural verbs that prefer sound change to /a/ or to add an /a/ sound, simply in order to ease the pronunciation of the gutturals ה , ח and ע (marked here in blue). The consonant ס is sometimes silent, and then the consonant under the preceding vowel is lengthened. When ח is 2nd consonant in a verb, this verb is a verb class II guttural, because ח cannot be doubled. A form can have vowel change under two consonants, so it can belong to both I and II or III at the same time. The other verbs are fully irregular in the sense that they deviate from the usual expression of the verb with three full consonants. They are not learned in this part of the course.

<input type="checkbox"/> Regular	<input type="checkbox"/> II guttural	<input type="checkbox"/> HJH/XJH
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> aleph	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I waw	<input type="checkbox"/> Geminate
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> guttural	<input type="checkbox"/> II yod	<input type="checkbox"/> Analog I nun
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> nun	<input type="checkbox"/> III aleph	<input type="checkbox"/> Analog I waw
<input type="checkbox"/> waw	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> II guttural	<input type="checkbox"/> Four consonants
<input type="checkbox"/> yod	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> II he	