The Basics of Hebrew Nouns and Adjectives

I. Nouns appear in two genders and two numbers\(^1\) and two states:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Singular</th>
<th>Plural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Masculine</td>
<td>absolute: דָּבֵר</td>
<td>construct: דַּבֵּר</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td>absolute: תֹוָרוֹת</td>
<td>construct: תֹוַרְתָּן</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. Construct chains consist of one, two, or more nouns in the construct state followed by one (or rarely two) nouns in the absolute state. Construct chains may be definite or indefinite. If the chain is definite, every noun should be preceded by the article “the.” A construct chain is definite if the word in the absolute is definite. Absolute nouns are definite if:

- They have the definite article: דָּבֵר the word of the woman
- They are a proper noun: דַּבֵּר Yahweh
- They have a possessive suffix דַּבֵּר my the word of my law

III. Adjectives can appear in the attributive position (a good word) or in the predicate position (a word is good).\(^2\) An adjective in the attributive position will agree with its noun in gender, number, and definiteness. It will also follow the noun.

The good word or דָּבֵר a good word
The good words or דְּבָּרִים good words
The words are good
The good law or תֹוָרוֹה a good law
The good laws or תוֹרֹות good laws
The laws are good

The comparative use of adjectives is normally expressed by adjective + מִן + noun that is surpassed. מִן קַחְבּ more + noun

IV. The definite article consists of a ה prefixed to a noun or adjective. The standard vocalization is ה + patah + dagesh forte. Before gutturals there will be compensative lengthening or virtual doubling (examples in Seow, p. 54).

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\(^1\) A dual also rarely occurs. It is used primarily with parts of the body that appear in pairs.

\(^2\) Demonstrative adjectives follow the same rules.
V. **Prepositions** may be prefixes or separate words. If the noun lacks the definite article the prefixed preposition will be pointed with a vocal Shewa. יִבְדֶּר in a word. If the noun has the definite article the same rules for vocalization apply as in paragraph IV. יִבְדֶּר in the word.

VI. Possession is normally expressed by adding **suffixes to nouns**.

For singular nouns, suffixes of Type A (Seow, pp. 97-98) are used. They resemble very closely the suffixes used with the preposition ל (p. 94).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>מְלָא</th>
<th>מְלָאָה</th>
<th>מְלָאָך</th>
<th>מְלָאָנָה</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>יִבְדֶּר</td>
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For plural nouns, suffixes of Type C (pp. 97-98) are used. They resemble very closely the suffixes used with the preposition עֵל (p. 97). Note that the יִדּ between the noun and the suffix indicates that the noun is plural. For feminine nouns the יִדּ ending also indicates that the noun is plural.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>מוֹלָא</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>זָלַת</td>
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