
CHUMASH FUNDAMENTALS FOR ADULTS

Glossary

A reference sheet from the book.

Glossary

Every term used in this book, in one place.

shoresh שֹׁרֶשׁ

A root: three consonants carrying an area of meaning. Written with connectors between the letters, and with no final-form letters, because it is an abstraction rather than a pronounceable word.

milah מְלָאָה

A word in its own right, not built on a three-letter root. Learned as it stands. In this book, a breakdown that says *milah* rather than *shoresh* is telling you there is nothing to take apart.

prefix

A letter glued to the front of a word, carrying its own meaning. Hebrew has six: *and, the, to/for, in/with/by, from, like/as*.

suffix

An ending glued to the back of a word. The possessive endings mean *my, your, his, her, their*; the directional hei means *toward*.

nikud נִקּוּד

The vowel points: the dots and dashes under, inside and over the letters. Every Hebrew word in this book carries them.

te'amim טְעָמִים

The cantillation marks: the small hooks and wedges that indicate how a verse is chanted and where it breaks. Printed on the full pasuk in this book, stripped from every word breakdown.

dagesh דָּגֵשׁ

A dot inside a letter. Among other things, it marks the place where a nun has been absorbed, and it is the signature of the Piel mold.

maqqef מְקַף

A small high dash joining two words so that they are read as one unit. In this book a word joined forward by a maqqef is marked with a dash after it.

binyan בִּנְיָן

Literally a building: one of the molds a shresh is poured into to become a verb. The mold decides whether the action is simple, intensive, causative or passive.

Qal קַל

The simple binyan. The plain form of the action, and the commonest.

Piel פִּעֵל

The intensive binyan, marked by a dagesh in the middle letter of the shresh.

Hifil הִפְעִיל

The causative binyan, usually marked by a hei in front. It turns *to see* into *to show*.

Nifal נִפְעַל

The passive and reflexive binyan, usually marked by a nun in front. It turns *to see* into *to be seen*, which of Hashem is rendered *appeared*.

Qal passive

A passive counterpart of the simple binyan, rare enough that many grammars fold it into Nifal. It appears once in this perek, in pasuk 15.

perfect

A verb form presenting an action as completed. Usually rendered as English past.

imperfect

A verb form presenting an action as not completed. Usually rendered as English future, sometimes as an intention or a wish.

wayyiqtol

The narrative form: a vav on the front of an imperfect, which flips it into the past and advances the story one step. The engine of biblical narrative and by far the commonest verb form in this perek.

imperative

A command form.

infinitive construct

The *to do* form of a verb. It takes prefixes and endings, which is how Hebrew packs a whole clause into a single word.

infinitive absolute

A bare, emphatic verb form, frequently doubled with another verb to convey emphasis or continuousness.

participle

The *doing* or *one who does* form, sitting between a verb and an adjective.

construct state

The form a noun takes when it is bound to a following noun, *house of* rather than *house*. Marked in this book's grammatical labels.

absolute state

The ordinary, unbound form of a noun.

pasuk פסוק

A verse.

perek פרק

A chapter.

parsha פרשה

The weekly Torah portion. This book covers the opening perek of Parshas Lech Lecha.

Rashi רש"י

Rabbi Shlomo Yitzchaki (1040–1105), whose commentary is the standard first companion to the Chumash. Quoted here in English only.

Metsudah

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