

Exodus 7:1-25 (English 7:1-8:4)

(7:1)

נְבִיא = “spokesman, speaker, prophet under BDB 611b. Root נבא = “sound, announce; call, proclaim, name”.

(7:2)

אֶצְנֶנָּה - According to Robert Hetzron we can see a “heavy” suffix such as צָנָה after (1) prefixed indicated aka imperfect (2) cohortative and never after (3) wayyiqtol or (4) jussive or (5) imperative forms.

שלח I = “send”, Piel “send off, away; send away, dismiss; let go, set free; shoot forth; let down; shoot” under BDB 1018a. Arm שלח. Arm *saraḥa* (*r = l*) = “send forth, drive (cattle to pasture)”. Akk probably *šalû* = “send, hurl?” whence *tešlitu* = “command”.

ושלח<sup>1</sup>

(7:3)

קשה = “be hard, severe, fierce”, Hiphil “make difficult, make severe, make hard” under BDB 904a.

רבה = Hiphil “make much, many” under BDB 915b.

אות = “sign” under BDB 16b.

מוֹפֶת = “wonder, sign, portent” under BDB 68b. Root אפת. Arb *ʿiftu(n)* “calamity, wonder, portent”.

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<sup>1</sup> “Cairo וישלח”.

וַאֲנִי אֶקְשֶׁה אֶת־לֵב פַּרְעֹה - Such statements in the Exodus story have bothered Jewish and Christian readers for centuries. It seems unfair that Yhwh would then inflict Egypt with the ten plagues especially the death of the firstborn if Yhwh is chiefly responsible for pharaoh's intransigence. I took one of those three week courses in seminary on the book of Exodus with Dean McBride in which he addressed this concern by saying, Pharaoh didn't do anything pharaoh didn't already want to do. Perhaps another way of saying this is that Yhwh got out of the way of pharaoh, and "harden his heart" might be a way of saying "let him be as stubborn and resistant as he wants to be". Although it does not entirely solve the problem, I made a [chart of the ten plagues](#) (for a Bible study series on Exodus) and was surprised to notice that Yhwh does not harden pharaoh's heart until the 6<sup>th</sup> plague. Before that pharaoh hardens his own heart. Although there are references to Yhwh hardening his heart before the plagues begin.

### **Grammatical note = *Stem. Hiphil (The H Stem)***

The Hiphil is a "causative active" stem, with agency nuance (see appendixes for type and voice definitions). Unlike the Piel causative, where the focus is on the bringing about of a state or condition, the Hiphil causative expresses the cause of an action. The Piel causative tends to focus on the outcome of the action, though with a patiency nuance (the object is transposed passively into a new state or condition). The subject of a Piel causative changes the object into the state or condition (see Piel *factitive* and *resultative* in Sections 3.1.3, a). By contrast, the Hiphil causative generally has to do with the causing of an event, this time with an agency nuance. In the Hiphil causation, the object participates in the event denoted by the verbal root.

Generally, the fundamental causative nuance of a Hiphil will be determined by the specific type of verbal root used, and often by the meaning of that root in the Qal and whether it is transitive or intransitive in the Qal. The following semantic categories are helpful in classifying verbs in the Hiphil.

(a.2) Qal and Niphal intransitives become singly transitive in the Hiphil; that is, they take one object. Most common in this category is a large group of Qal intransitive fientive verbs designating motion...

Verbal roots that are specifically stative in Qal tend also to become singly transitive in the Hiphil. Here the term *factitive* may be used to indicate the intransitivizing nature of the Hiphil, as in the Piel usage: אָנִי אֶקְשֶׁה אֶת־לֵב פַּרְעֹה ‘I will harden Pharaoh’s heart’ (Exodus 7:3). See Arnold and Choi, Section 3.1.2, 3.1.2, a.2, 59, 60-61.

(7:4)

צָבָא = “army, war, warfare” under BDB 838b. Root צבא = “wage war, serve”.

שָׁפַט - “judgement” under BDB 1048a. Root שפט = “judge, govern”.

<sup>2</sup>בשפטים

<sup>3</sup>מארץ מחרים

(7:5)

נָטָה = “stretch out, spread out, extend, incline, bend” under BDB 639b.  
Arb *n-t-w* “stretch out”.

<sup>4</sup>וידעו

<sup>5</sup>-בני-

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<sup>2</sup> “SamPent במקשף” which is more what we would expect.

<sup>3</sup> Cairo ‘ממ’.

<sup>4</sup> “SamPent, Septuagint add כל”.

<sup>5</sup> “SamPent add עמי”.

(7:6)

וַיַּעַשׂ - By this point you should be ready to recognize the waayiqtol form of a 3<sup>rd</sup> ה verb. The final syllable drops off.

וַיַּעַשׂ מִשֶּׁה וְאַהֲרֹן כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתָם כִּן עָשׂוּ - Such expressions are characteristic of the Priestly writer. The people did as Yhwh commanded.

**Grammatical note = כַּאֲשֶׁר for comparison (just... so).** The compound כַּאֲשֶׁר (often followed by כִּן) can be used in a comparison.

- כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֹתָם כִּן עָשׂוּ  
they did *so* them YHWH commanded *just as* Exodus 7:6  
*Just as* YHWH commanded them, *so* they did.

See Williams, §264.

(7:7)

(7:8)

וַיֹּאמֶר<sup>6</sup>

(7:9)

מִטָּה = “staff, rod, shaft; branch; tribe” (here = “supply”?) under BDB 641b. Root נטה.

שַׁלַּךְ = Hiphil “throw, fling, cast”. Ph שלך (PN meaning dubious). Arb *salaka* “travel (or cause to travel) along a road, cause to enter”.

תַּנִּינָא = “serpent, dragon, sea-monster” under BDB 1072b. Arm תַּנִּינָא.

לַכֶּם<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> “SamPent וידבר also 14<sup>a</sup>”.

יְהִי<sup>8</sup>

(7:10)

אֶל־פַּרְעֹה<sup>9</sup>

וַיַּעַשׂוּ<sup>10</sup>

**Grammatical note = *Other Verb Formations with Prefixed waw.***  
Wayyiqtol (*Past Narrative*)

The *wayyiqtol* (past narrative, sometimes less accurately called imperfect with *waw* consecutive) has been called the workhorse of Biblical Hebrew narratives. It most often connotes a similar aspect of the simple perfect (Section 3.2.1), which will sometimes precede it in the previous clause. Because it occurs so frequently in a string of verbal clauses, the *wayyiqtol* generally serves as a substitute for the perfect aspect, appearing to add the idea of succession. However, the *wayyiqtol* may also follow a clause with an imperfect, a participle, a nominal clause, or may even begin a new paragraph on its own. The following nuances will be helpful in interpreting the *wayyiqtol* conjugation.

**(a) *Sequential*** - expresses temporal sequence, describing an action or situation subsequent to a previous action or situation... וַיָּבֹאוּ מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן “So Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh, *and then they did* just as YHWH commanded” (Exodus 7:10). See Arnold and Choi, Section 3.5.1, 3.1.5, a, 97-98.

(7:11)

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<sup>7</sup> “Septuagint ἦμῶν, Syriac *lj* - SamPent, Septuagint add אוּ”.

<sup>8</sup> “SamPent, Septuagint, Syriac, Vulgate וַיַּעַשׂוּ compare verse 10”.

<sup>9</sup> “SamPent, Septuagint וַיַּעַשׂוּ compare verse 9”.

<sup>10</sup> “Thus Leningrad, many manuscripts, editions וַיַּעַשׂוּ. Ah just a small difference in vowel pointing.

כַּשַׁף - Piel “practice sorcery” under BDB 506b. Akk *kasāpu*.  
Denominative.

חָרַטַם = “engraver, writer > astrologer, magician” under BDB 355a. One of the first papers I wrote in graduate school was on “foreign” loanwords in Biblical Hebrew. This was one of the words. Cannot recall at the moment where it comes from.

לֵאט - לָאט לְטָ = “secrecy, mystery” under BDB 532a. Not sure how לָאט became לֵאט. Root לוּט = “wrap closely, tightly, enwrap, envelop”.

(7:12)

בלע = swallow down, swallow up” under BDB 118b.

(7:13)

חָזַק = “be or grow firm, strong, strengthen”, Hiphil “make strong; take or keep hold of, seize, grasp” under BDB 304a. Arm חֲזַק “bind on or about, gird on”. Arb *hazaqa* “bind, squeeze”.

וַיַּחֲזֶק לֵב פַּרְעֹה - Ah now this is interesting. Pharaoh did not harden קָשָׁה his heart he hardened/strengthened חָזַק his heart. Is there a difference? We should be careful to note which Hebrew verb is being translated as “harden”.

כָּבֵד לֵב פַּרְעֹה - Oh come on. Now instead of חָזַק we have כָּבֵד. Now pharaoh’s heart is heavy???

(7:14)

מָאָן = Piel “refuse” under BDB 549a. Arb *ma’ana* “sustain, maintain”.

ויאמר<sup>11</sup>

(7:15)

נצב = Niphal “take one’s stand, stand” under BDB 662a. Ph (Pun) נצב and other forms “monument”. Nab Palm נצב “set up”. Zinj נצב “statue”. Palm מצבא “image”. Akk (perhaps) *naṣābu* (Amarna). Arm נַצַּב. Arb *naṣaba* “set up, erect”. Sab נצב “cippus”.

קרא II = “encounter, befall” (parallel form of קרה) under BDB 896b. Arb *qara’a* “put part to part”.

שִׁפָּה = “lip, speech, edge” under BDB 973b.

יָאֵר “stream of the Nile, stream, canal” under BDB 384a. I recall addressing the etymology of the Hebrew word for the Nile in either the first paper I wrote in graduate school (above) or less likely in my bachelor’s thesis on the historical background of Isaiah 1-39.

הנה<sup>12</sup>

**Grammatical note = ל of product (into, for).** The object of the preposition ל may be a state or condition that is the result of another action. When the verb היה means ‘become’, it is often followed by a ל of product.

- והמטה אשרנהפך לנחש and the staff which was turned *into* a snake  
*into* snake was turned which and the staff Exodus 7:15

See Williams §278.

(7:16)

<sup>11</sup> “Compare verse 8<sup>a</sup>”.

<sup>12</sup> “SamPent, Septuagint add הנה”.

שָׁלַח אֶת־עַמִּי וְיַעֲבֹדֵנִי בְּמִדְבָּר - Samuel Balentine my Old Testament professor in seminary made a point of correcting the common mistake that Moses did not say “thus says the Lord God, let my people go” but “let my people go so they may serve/worship me”.

**Grammatical note = *Adverbs*.** כֹּה

**(b) *Demonstrative/locative*** - points demonstratively to the place of action or discourse...

Rarely, this locative sense refers to a temporal period: וְהִנֵּה לֹא־הִמַּעַתָּ עַד־כֹּה: “Indeed, you have not listened until now” (Exodus 7:16). See Arnold and Choi, Section 4.2.8, b, 147.

(7:17)

נָכַח = Niphal “be smitten” under BDB 645a. Here Hiphil so “smite, strike”.

הִפְּךָ = “turn, overturn” under BDB 245a. Arm הִפְּךָ. Arb *ʿapaka*. Akk *abāku, apālu*.

(7:18)

דָּגָה = “fish” under BDB 185b. Root דגה = “multiply, increase”.

בֹּאֵשׁ - “have a bad smell, stink” under BDB 92b. Arb *biʿsa* = “be evil”. Arm בֹּאֵשׁ = “be evil”. Akk *bīšu*.

לָאָה = “be weary, impatient”, Hiphil “make weary, exhausted” under BDB 521a. Arb *laʿa(y)* “be slow, hesitating”. Arm לָאָה.

שָׁתָה = “drink” under BDB 1059a. Akk *šatû*. Oarm שָׁתָה. Arm שָׁתָה. Sab שָׁתָה.



<sup>13</sup>הַיָּאֵר

(7:19)

נָהָר = “stream, river” under BDB 625b.

אָגַם - “troubled pool under BDB 8a. Arm. Akk *agammu*. Root אגם = “troubled, sad; marshy jungle(?)”.

מִקְוָה = II “collection, collected mass” (P) under BDB 876b.

<sup>14</sup>עַל־נְהַרְתֶּם

<sup>15</sup>וְהָיָה דָם

**Grammatical note = Appositional genitive.** Also called a **genitive of proper noun, genitive of apposition, or genitive of association**, an appositional genitive is an individual member of the class given by the construct term. The construction has the sense of, for example ‘the river, that is, I mean specifically the Euphrates’. This is sometimes grouped with the **explicative genitive** (§43).

- ארץ מצרים the land *Egypt*  
*Egypt* land of Exodus 7:19

See Williams, §42a. What surprises me is English speakers are so used to “the land of Egypt” or “the land of Israel” that we do not stop and realize that such a construction is apparently not typical of English...?

(7:20)

רום = “be high, exalted, rise”, Polel “raise, exalt” under BDB 926b. Here Hiphil so “raise, lift high”.

<sup>13</sup> “SamPent adds addition”. Wait - what? That’s what the text critical note says.

<sup>14</sup> “Septuagint, Vulgate pr cop”.

<sup>15</sup> “SamPent וְהָיָה דָם”.

<sup>16</sup>במטה ויָרָם

**Grammatical note = לְ of transitivity (*untranslated*).** Some verbs take a prepositional phrase beginning with לְ where English would use a direct object.

- ויָרָם במטה He lifted the staff.
- (ב) the staff he lifted Exodus 7:20
  - In the Hiphil the verb רוּם ‘to lift up’ typically takes a direct object. For examples Number 20:11 states ויָרָם מֹשֶׁה אֶת־יָדוֹ ‘Moses lifted his hand’ with אֶת־ used to mark the direct object ‘his hand’. In Exodus 7:20 however the preposition לְ in במטה seems to mark the direct object ‘the staff’.

See Williams, §244.

(7:21)

יָכַל = “be able, have power” under BDB 407a.

(7:22)

לָט - See above verse 11.

<sup>17</sup>בלטיהם

וַיִּחְזַק לְבַב־פְּרָעָה - Sigh. Who is the actor/agent of חזק?

(7:23)

פָּנָה = “turn” under BDB 815a. Arb *fani(y)* “pass away, banish”. Sab פנת. Akk *pānu* “face”. Ph פנם.

נָשָׂא = “put, set” under BDB 1011a.

<sup>16</sup> “SamPent, Septuagint במטה compare Syriac”.

<sup>17</sup> “SamPent בלהטיהם and 8:3<sup>a</sup>, 14<sup>a</sup>”. Yeah we have a couple different text traditions for this word.

### Grammatical note = *Adverbs*. גַּם

... In general, גַּם may modify either a word or clause, in which case it also associates its clause (one that follows it) with a preceding clause.

(a) *Addition* - often used to point out an additional participant or party within the discourse... When the additional event or statement is unexpected or illogical, “even” may be the best translation: וַיִּפֶן וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל-בֵּיתוֹ וְלֹא-שָׁתָ לְבֹו גַם-לְזָאת “Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he did not take *even* this to heart” (Exodus 7:23). See Arnold and Choi, Section 4.2.5, 4.2.5, a, 144.

(7:24)

חָפַר I = “dig, search for” under BDB 343b. Arb *ḥafara*. Arm חֲפַר.

(7:25)

מָלֵא = “be full, fill” under BDB 569b. Here Niphal so “be filled”.

<sup>18</sup>יִמְלֵא

### Grammatical note = *Nonfinites*

(b.4) The preposition אַחֲרַי plus the infinitive (Section 4.1.1, b) connotes that the action of the finite verb occurs *subsequent* to the action of the infinitive, and may be translated “after”: וַיִּמְלֵא שִׁבְעַת יָמִים אַחֲרַי הַכּוֹת־יְהוָה אֶת-הַיָּרְדֵן “seven days passed *after* Yhwh *has struck* the Nile” (Exodus 7:25). See Arnold and Choi, Section 3.4.1, b.4, 83.

### Grammatical note = *Subordinate Clauses*. *Temporal Clause*

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<sup>18</sup> “SamPent, versions יִמְלֵא”.

The subordinate *temporal clause* expresses the time frame of an action or situation, and how it relates to the idea of the main clause. A primary means of expressing temporal clauses is the infinitive with the prepositions *בְּ*, *כִּי*, *אַחֵר*, *אַחֲרַי*, or *מִן*; but other prepositions are used as well. As demonstrated by the variety of temporal clauses that follow, so the infinitive can express a simultaneous, preceding, or succeeding action (see Section 3.4.1, b): *וַיִּמְלֵא שִׁבְעַת יָמִים אַחֲרַי* “seven days passed *after* Yhwh *had struck* the Nile” (Exodus 7:25). See Arnold and Choi, Section 5.2.4, 189.

(7:26) (English 8:1)

Huh. Repetitive?

(7:27)

נגף = “strike, smite” under BDB 619b.

צָפַרְדֵּעַ - “frog” under BDB 862b. Arb *ḏifdi’u(n)*. Arm אורדעא עורדעניא.

Root צפר V = “leap”.

גְּבוּל = “border, boundary, territory” under BDB 147b. Punic *gululim*.

Root גבל = “twist, wind -> bound, mix, knead”. Something to do with a rope that marks a boundary?

(7:28)

שָׂרָץ = “swarm, teem” under BDB 1056b. Arm שָׂרָץ so שָׂרָץ (rare).

חֶדֶר = “chamber, room” under BDB 293b. Root חדר = “surround, enclose”.

מִשְׁכָּב = “place of lying, couch” under BDB 1012b.

מִטָּה = “couch, bed” under BDB 641b. How would you figure out the root? We have feminine ending הַ. We have what might be a typical מ- noun preformative. That leaves ט. Note strong dagesh. Maybe נ assimilated into the ט? What is the third root letter. Maybe ה that disappears with feminine ending? Sure enough נטה. Very similar to מִטָּה which also appears in this pericope.

תַּנּוּר = “portable stove or fire-pot” under BDB 1072a. LW from Akk *tinûru*? Some argue from Persian *tanûra*.

מִשְׁאֵרָת - “a household vessel” under BDB 602a. Does not appear to be listed under a particular root.

<sup>19</sup> בביתָּ

<sup>20</sup> ובאו בביתָּ

<sup>21</sup> מטתָּ ובבית

<sup>22</sup> ובעמיתָּ

(7:29)

וּבְכָה - I found the orthography interesting. Rather than וּבְכָה.

<sup>23</sup> ובעמיתָּ ובכל-עבדיָּ

<sup>24</sup> הצפרדעים

<sup>19</sup> “Septuagint has plural”. Probably means the noun. Otherwise the note would specify “2 plural”.

<sup>20</sup> “SamPent, Septuagint וּבְכָה רִי וּבְכָה רִי”. Huh.

<sup>21</sup> SamPent, Septuagint וּבְכָה רִי וּבְכָה רִי”.

<sup>22</sup> “Septuagint omits ב”.

<sup>23</sup> “Septuagint inverts and without כל, Syriac *wbklh* ‘mk = ובכל-עם”.

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<sup>24</sup> “SamPent adds addition(?)”. That’s the second time I’ve seen “+ add” in the text critical notes. Not sure what it represents.