<div align="center">The Hebrew verb: an overview by Naama Zahav-Ely</div>

Every form of verb in Hebrew has to have a 3-consonant **root** (rarely 4 consonant). The root is the only form of the verb that appears in lexicons of Biblical Hebrew and most lexicons of modern Hebrew, so it is very important to learn to identify it. Quite often, one of the three root letters will be missing when you encounter the verb in a text, but there are only a few possible letters that can disappear so, and they leave behind telltale marks that can help you figure out what the missing letter is and where in the root it should be placed.

Every verb in Hebrew has a **stem** ("**binyan**" בניין in Hebrew) which modifies the basic meaning of the root in a predictable way. The stems are Qal (="simple," also called Pa'al), Nif'al, Pi'el, Pu'al, Hif'il, Hof'al, and Hitpa'el. The stem names other than Qal are formed according to the affix verb form in 3ms of the root פעל = "do, make". Not all roots appear in all stems. To translate a verb correctly, you must identify its binyan (stem) correctly. Often the English equivalent for the same root in different stems is different. When it is the same, there is still a difference between the two Hebrew root/stem combination (for example, transitive versus intransitive). The stems are as follows:

- **Qal** is the straightforward meaning of the root. It can be transitive (=with direct object) or intransitive (without a direct object, affecting the subject), but not both in the same root. For example, in the sentence "I dropped the glass and broke it" you would use שבר in Qal; if you say "the glass broke" you would use שבר in Nif'al.

- **Nif'al** is used for simple intransitive actions or states and also functions as the passive of Qal.

- **Pi'el** is traditionally called "intensive." It is practically always transitive and usually intentional.

- **Pu'al** is the passive of Pi'el.

- **Hif'il** is causative -- to make somebody else do the action.

- **Hof'al** is the passive of Hif'il.

- **Hitpa'el** is reflexive -- doing an action that affects oneself. It is related to Pi'el and Pu'al.

Every verb in Hebrew has a **form** (which is the nearest thing to an English tense). The terminology of Hebrew verb forms in English isn't uniform, and you'll find different terms used in various textbooks, lexicons, and grammar books. The forms are as follows:

- **Prefix** form, with or without vav conversive. Also called "**Imperfect**", "**Preterite**", and "**Yiktol / wayiktol**." It is the form that serves for future tense (**atid**) in modern Hebrew. Prefix form has person, number, and gender. The Prefix form has variants -- a shortened form and a lengthened form. It is the most common form in Biblical Hebrew.

- **Affix** form. Also called "**Perfect**" or "**Qatal**", and is the form that serves for past tense (**avar**) in modern Hebrew. Affix form has person, number, and gender. It is also very common.

- **Participle** (verbal adjective). Has no person, only number and gender (like any adjective in Hebrew). It is the form that serves for present tense in modern Hebrew.

- **Infinitive** (verbal noun). Has no person, number or gender.

- **Imperative** -- has person, number and gender, but only appears in 2nd person.

Any verb in Hebrew (or preposition or noun, for that matter) can take a **pronominal suffix**, which has person, number and gender -- that's a suffix that indicates the direct object in the case of a verb or a preposition, the owner in the case of a noun. With infinitives, the pronominal suffix can indicate either subject or object.

Other handouts: see http://www.hebrew-tools.com
Hebrew Verb Summary Tables
Hebrew Verb Missing Letter Guide
Hebrew Verb Stem (Binyan) Guide for all root groups