

Ross Lesson 34: I-Nun Weak Verbs LECTURE NOTES

REVIEW: What is “weak” about the consonant (C) נ (nun)? It suffers from the “Borg Problem”—the problem of *assimilation*. That is, whenever a nun closes a syllable AND butts up against an adjacent C following nun, it assimilates to that C. Once that happens, the duplicate C is written once with a DF. Thus, DF represents the assimilated nun.

Ex.1: “from a king” מִן־מֶלֶךְ, written with assimilation: מִמֶּלֶךְ (< מִמְּלֶךְ).

Ex.2: “I gave” נָתַתִּי (< *נָתַתִּי* < *נָתַתִּי*) [NOTE: “<” means “is derived from”.]

QUESTION: Where in the strong verb principal parts will this assimilation problem with R1-nun occur? Wherever some prefix consonant (either the stem-prefixes ה/נ or the NUTTY-prefixes נתיא) tries to close a syllable with R1-nun, it will assimilate to the next C, the R2 letter right behind it. Let’s look at the Principal Parts Chart handout to get an overview of where these situations happen. Then we’ll look at a few examples.

Note: throughout the lesson, we will make use of the following I-nun verbs (the meaning is for the Qal stem unless specified otherwise):

נָפַל ‘to fall’	נָשָׂא ‘to lift up’
נִגַּשׁ ‘to approach’	נָתַן ‘to give’
נָסַע ‘to travel’	נִגַּד Hi ‘to tell, declare’

1. The *pervasive problem* of R1-nun assimilating to R2 when some prefix C closes the syllable with R1. (See Ross 34.2.1; 34.3; 34.4; 34.5.)

Stem/conj	PG#	Form	Assimilation process	English gloss
Qal Impf	3ms	יִפֹּל	יִפְּפֹל > יִפֹּל	he will fall
		יִסֵּעַ	יִסְּסֵעַ > יִסֵּעַ	he will travel
		יִשָּׂא	יִשְּׂשָׂא > יִשָּׂא	he will lift up
		יִתֵּן	יִתְּתֵן > יִתֵּן	he will give

	3fs	תָּפַל	תִּנְפַל	she will fall
		תִּסַּע	תִּנְסַע	she will travel
		תִּשָּׂא	תִּנְשָׂא	she will lift up
		תִּתֵּן	תִּנְתֵּן	she will give
Niph Pft	3ms	נָתַן	נִתְּנָהּ > נִתְּנָהּ	he/it was given
Niph Ptc	ms	נָתַן	נִתְּנָהּ > נִתְּנָהּ	given
Hiph Pft	3ms	הִגִּיד	הִנְגִיד > הִגִּיד	he told
Hiph Impf	3ms	יִגִּיד	יִנְגִיד > יִגִּיד	he will tell
Hiph WCI	3ms	וַיִּגִּד	וַיִּנְגִד > וַיִּגִּד	and he told
Hoph Pft	3ms	הִגָּד	הִנְגָּד > הִגָּד	he/it was told
Hoph Impf	3ms	יִגָּד	יִנְגָּד > יִגָּד	he/it will be told
Hoph WCI	3ms	וַיִּגָּד	וַיִּנְגָּד > וַיִּגָּד	and he/it was told

2. Potential problems in Qal Impv and Qal Infrc: apheresis of R1-nun. (See Ross 34.2.2 and 34.2.3.)

I-nun verbs in the Qal Impv and Qal Infrc can follow a strong pattern (like the strong verb פָּקַד) or a weak pattern.

2.1 STRONG PATTERN: Generally, if the I-nun verb has a Qal Impf form with theme-vowel *holem*, then the Qal Impv/Infrc follows the normal, strong pattern.

Qal Pft	3ms	פָּקַד	נָפַל	he fell
Qal Impf	3ms	יִפְקֹד	יִפֹּל	he will fall
Qal Impv	2ms	פָּקַד	נָפַל	fall!
Qal Infrc		פָּקַד	נָפַל	to fall/the act of falling

2.2 WEAK PATTERN: If the I-nun verb has a Qal Impf form with theme-vowel NON-*holem*, then the Qal Impv/Infrc follows the weak pattern with APHERESIS of R1-nun. In

apheresis, the R1-nun “falls into Sheol.” It goes missing completely and is not visible anywhere. Thus, the nun is not assimilated (otherwise we would see a DF); it is now AWOL! [Remember: this weak pattern occurs only in Q-Imprv/Inf. Memorize the acronym QIIC and think, “Quick, get me a doctor ’cause these verbs are sick!”]

2.2.1 Qal Imprv: Start with Impf, and remove the NUTTY prefix (chop off the head!). Do not re-insert the R1-nun; let it fall into Sheol!

Root	Qal Impf 3ms	Qal Imprv 2ms	
	נגש	יגש	גש
			(What would the Imprv 2fs, 2mp, and 2fp look like?)

2.2.2 Qal Inf: Drop R1-nun, leave R2 and R3. Add a final tav (ת) after R3 (the bonus ת!!), and then apply a segolate vowel pattern to the letters where possible.

Root	Qal Impf 3ms	Qal Inf (add which vowels?)
	נגש	יגשת

Below is a chart with a sampling of I-nun forms.

Qal Pft 3ms	Gloss	Qal Impf 3ms	Impf theme vowel holem?	Qal Imprv 2ms	Qal Imprv 2ms (alt)	Qal Inf	Qal Inf + 3ms sfx
נָפַל	fall	יִפֹּל	yes	נָפַל	נִפְּלָה	נָפַל	נִפְּלוּ
נִגַּשׁ	approach	יִגַּשׁ	no	גַּשׁ	גִּשָּׂה	גִּשְׁתָּ	גִּשְׁתוּ
נִסַּע	travel	יִסַּע	no	סַע	סִעָה	סִעַתָּ	סִעַתוּ
נִשָּׂא	lift up	יִשָּׂא	no	שָׂא	שִׂאָה	שִׂאָתָּ שִׂאָתָּ נִשָּׂא	שִׂאָתוּ נִשָּׂאוּ
נָתַן	give	יִתֵּן	no	תֵּן	תִּנָּה	תִּתָּ	תִּתוּ

3. The verb **לָקַח** ('to take'): a verb with multiple personalities!

This verb is clearly I-lamed, but it behaves in the Qal stem like it's I-nun! (It's normal in any other stem!)

Qal Pft	3ms	לָקַח	he took
Qal Impf	3ms	יִקַּח	he will take
Qal Impv	2ms	קַח	take!
Qal Inf		קַחַת	to take/the act of taking