

## LESSON VIII

### 20. Adjectives: Gender and Number

**20.1** The function of an adjective is to describe or limit a noun. In comparison with other languages, Hebrew has relatively few adjectives. The most common masculine singular forms are these:

גָּדוֹל	(also גָּדֹל) great, large	עֹז	strong
זָקֵן	old (of persons only)	קָדוֹשׁ	(also קָדֹשׁ) holy
חָדָשׁ	new	קָטָן	small
חָזָק	strong	קָרוֹב	(also קָרִיב) near
חַי	living	קָשָׁה	hard, difficult, stubborn
חָכָם	wise	רַב	many, much, great
טוֹב	(also טָב) good	רָחוֹק	(also רָחֹק) far, distant
יָפֵה	beautiful, fair, handsome	רָע	evil
יָשָׁר	straight, right	תָּמִים	perfect, complete, whole
מָר	bitter		

**20.2** The adjectives listed above are all masculine singular forms and can only be used to describe or limit masculine singular nouns. Adjectives describing masculine plural nouns receive a יָם ending. Those describing feminine singular nouns receive a הָ ending. And those describing feminine plural nouns receive a וֹת ending. These adjective endings are consistent and uniform, even when the nouns they describe are irregular in their plural endings.

Examples:

אָב טוֹב	a good father
אָבוֹת טוֹבִים	good fathers (אָבוֹת is an irregular masculine plural)
אִשָּׁה טוֹבָה	a good woman
נָשִׁים טוֹבוֹת	good women (נָשִׁים is an irregular feminine plural)

**20.3** There are certain changes that take place in the vocalization and structure of masculine singular adjectives when gender and number endings are added. These changes depend in part upon whether the masculine singular form is monosyllabic or bisyllabic.

## VIII.20 ADJECTIVES: GENDER AND NUMBER

(1) *Rules for adding gender and number endings to masculine singular adjectives that are monosyllabic*

(a) Monosyllabic adjectives with unchangeably long vowels (ֵ, ִ, ֶ, or ֹ) retain these vowels when gender and number endings are added.

Examples:

	(ms)	(mp)	(fs)	(fp)
good	טוֹב	טוֹבִים	טוֹבָה	טוֹבוֹת
empty	רֵיק	רֵיקִים	רֵיקָה	רֵיקוֹת

(b) Monosyllabic adjectives that end in non-gutturals and have short vowels retain their short vowels when gender and number endings are added. Note, however, that when such endings are added, the final consonant of the masculine singular form of the adjective must be doubled (by the addition of dagesh forte).

Examples:

	(ms)	(mp)	(fs)	(fp)
living	חַי	חַיִּים	חַיָּה	חַיּוֹת
strong	עָז	עָזִים	עָזָה	עָזוֹת
many	רַב	רַבִּים	רַבָּה	רַבּוֹת

(c) Monosyllabic adjectives that end in gutturals and also have short vowels must have their short vowels lengthened to long vowels when gender and number endings are added. This is because gutturals refuse to be doubled.

Examples:

	(ms)	(mp)	(fs)	(fp)
bitter	מָר	מָרִים	מָרָה	מָרוֹת
evil	רָע	רָעִים	רָעָה	רָעוֹת

(2) *Rules for adding gender and number endings to masculine singular adjectives that are bisyllabic*

(a) All masculine singular adjectives that are bisyllabic will have a qameṣ in their initial syllable. When gender and number endings are added, this initial qameṣ is left two syllables before the tone (accented) syllable and therefore must be volatilized (reduced to a vocal sheva).

(i) If the initial consonant of the bisyllabic adjective is a non-guttural, the qameṣ that accompanies it will be reduced to a simple sheva (ְ).



Examples:

	(ms)	(mp)	(fs)	(fp)
great	גָּדוֹל	גָּדוֹלִים	גָּדוֹלָה	גָּדוֹלוֹת
old	זָקֵן	זָקֵנִים	זָקֵנָה	זָקֵנוֹת
right	יָשָׁר	יָשָׁרִים	יָשָׁרָה	יָשָׁרוֹת

(ii) However, if the initial consonant of the bisyllabic adjective is a guttural, then the qameṣ that accompanies this consonant must be reduced to a compound sheva (ֿֿ), since gutturals prefer compound shevas.

Examples:

	(ms)	(mp)	(fs)	(fp)
new	חָדָשׁ	חָדָשִׁים	חָדָשָׁה	חָדָשׁוֹת
strong	חָזָק	חָזָקִים	חָזָקָה	חָזָקוֹת
wise	חָכָם	חָכָמִים	חָכָמָה	חָכָמוֹת

(b) The bisyllabic adjective קָטָן, "small," behaves in an irregular manner. When gender and number endings are added, ḥolem is replaced by pataḥ, and a dagesh forte is placed in the nun.

Examples:

	(ms)	(mp)	(fs)	(fp)
small	קָטָן	קָטָנִים	קָטָנָה	קָטָנוֹת

(c) Bisyllabic adjectives ending in הֿֿ will drop the הֿֿ whenever gender and number endings are added.

Examples:

	(ms)	(mp)	(fs)	(fp)
beautiful	יָפָה	יָפִים	יָפָה	יָפוֹת
difficult	קָשָׁה	קָשִׁים	קָשָׁה	קָשׁוֹת

## 21. Adjectives: Attributive Usage

**21.1** An attributive adjective is one that directly describes a noun. Attributive adjectives usually stand after the nouns they describe, although this order may be reversed if the adjective is to be emphasized.

Examples:

אִישׁ טוֹב	a good man	הָאִישׁ הַטוֹב	the good man
אִשָּׁה טוֹבָה	a good woman	הָאִשָּׁה הַטוֹבָה	the good woman

**21.2** An attributive adjective must agree in gender, number, and definiteness with the noun it describes. To agree in definiteness means that when the noun is definite, the attributive adjective must also be definite; when the noun is indefinite, the attributive adjective must also remain indefinite.

Examples:

מֶלֶךְ גָּדוֹל	a great king (indefinite)	הַמֶּלֶךְ הַגָּדוֹל	the great king (definite)
מְלָכִים גָּדוֹלִים	great kings (indefinite)	הַמְּלָכִים הַגָּדוֹלִים	the great kings (definite)
עִיר גָּדוֹלָה	a great city (indefinite)	הָעִיר הַגָּדוֹלָה	the great city (definite)
עָרִים גָּדוֹלוֹת	great cities (indefinite)	הָעָרִים הַגָּדוֹלוֹת	the great cities (definite)

## 22. Adjectives: Predicative Usage

**22.1** Hebrew often makes use of simple sentences consisting of a noun, which functions as subject, and an adjective, which functions as predicate. These are verbless sentences, since the verb "to be" is not written but only implied. It must be supplied in translation.

**22.2** A predicate adjective usually stands before its subject noun, but occasionally will stand after it.

**22.3** A predicate adjective will agree with its subject noun in gender and number, but will never take the article, even though the subject noun is definite.

Examples:

טוֹב הַדָּבָר	The word (is) good. (1 Kgs. 2:38)
כִּי הַמָּקוֹם קֹדֶשׁ	For the place (is) holy. (Ezek. 42:13)
כִּי־קֹדֶשׁ הַיּוֹם	For the day (is) holy. (Neh. 8:10)
וְהַנַּעֲרָה יָפָה עַד־מְאֹד	And the maiden (was) exceedingly beautiful. (1 Kgs. 1:4)
טוֹבָה הָאָרֶץ מְאֹד מְאֹד	The land (was) exceedingly good. (Num. 14:7)
טוֹב לְיִשְׂרָאֵל אֱלֹהִים	God (is) good to Israel. (Ps. 73:1)
וְהַמֶּלֶךְ זָקֵן מְאֹד	And the king (was) very old. (1 Kgs. 1:15)
וְהָאֲנָשִׁים טָבִים לָנוּ מְאֹד	And the men were very good to us. (1 Sam. 25:15)

**22.4** Two predicate adjectives are sometimes used to describe one subject noun.

Examples:

טוֹב-וְיָשָׁר יְהוָה good and upright (is) the LORD (Ps. 25:8)  
 כִּי־זָקֵן הָאִישׁ וְכָבֵד for the man (was) old and heavy (1 Sam. 4:18)

## EXERCISES

1. Each of the following entries contains an adjective. In the space marked (a) indicate whether the adjective is used attributively (A) or predicatively (P). In the space marked (b) give the gender of the adjective, and in (c) give its number.

Example:

מֵאַרְצֵי רְחוֹקָה from a distant land (Josh. 9:6)

(a) A (b) fem. (c) sing.

(1) נַעֲרָה קְטָנָה a little maid (2 Kgs. 5:2)

(a) \_\_\_\_\_ (b) \_\_\_\_\_ (c) \_\_\_\_\_

(2) בְּדֶרֶךְ יֵשָׁרָה by a straight way (Ps. 107:7)

(a) \_\_\_\_\_ (b) \_\_\_\_\_ (c) \_\_\_\_\_

(3) אֶבֶן גְּדוֹלָה a great stone (Josh. 24:26)

(a) \_\_\_\_\_ (b) \_\_\_\_\_ (c) \_\_\_\_\_

(4) בֵּית חָדָשׁ a new house (Deut. 22:8)

(a) \_\_\_\_\_ (b) \_\_\_\_\_ (c) \_\_\_\_\_

(5) עִיר גְּדוֹלָה a great city (Josh. 10:2)

(a) \_\_\_\_\_ (b) \_\_\_\_\_ (c) \_\_\_\_\_

(6) קָרוֹב הַיּוֹם The day is near. (Ezek. 7:7)

(a) \_\_\_\_\_ (b) \_\_\_\_\_ (c) \_\_\_\_\_

(7) בְּרִית חֲדָשָׁה a new covenant (Jer. 31:31)

(a) \_\_\_\_\_ (b) \_\_\_\_\_ (c) \_\_\_\_\_



# VIII EXERCISES

- (8) נָשִׁים רַבּוֹת many women (Ezek. 16:41)  
(a) \_\_\_\_\_ (b) \_\_\_\_\_ (c) \_\_\_\_\_
- (9) אֲבָנִים גְּדוֹלוֹת great stones (Josh. 10:18)  
(a) \_\_\_\_\_ (b) \_\_\_\_\_ (c) \_\_\_\_\_
- (10) וְרוּחַ גְּדוֹלָה and a great wind (1 Kgs. 19:11)  
(a) \_\_\_\_\_ (b) \_\_\_\_\_ (c) \_\_\_\_\_
- (11) טוֹבָה הָאָרֶץ מְאֹד מְאֹד The land was exceedingly good. (Num. 14:7)  
(a) \_\_\_\_\_ (b) \_\_\_\_\_ (c) \_\_\_\_\_
- (12) הַדֶּרֶךְ הַטוֹבָה the good way (2 Chr. 6:27)  
(a) \_\_\_\_\_ (b) \_\_\_\_\_ (c) \_\_\_\_\_

2. Underscore the correct adjectival form in each of the following entries.

- (1) מֶלֶךְ (חֲדָשָׁה , חֲדָשׁ) עַל־מִצְרַיִם a new king over Egypt (Exod. 1:8)
- (2) כִּי אֵל (גְּדוֹלָה , גְּדוֹל) יְהוָה For the LORD is a great God. (Ps. 95:3)
- (3) בְּיָד (חֲזָקָה , חֲזָק) with a strong hand (Deut. 26:8)
- (4) רוּחַ־ (גְּדוֹלָה , גְּדוֹל) a great wind (Jon. 1:4)
- (5) עִיר־ (גְּדוֹלָה , גְּדוֹל) a great city (Jon. 3:3)
- (6) אִישׁ (חֲכָמָה , חָכֵם) מְאֹד an exceedingly wise man (2 Sam. 13:3)
- (7) לֵב (חֲכָמָה , חָכֵם) a wise heart (1 Kgs. 3:12)
- (8) אִשָּׁה (חֲכָמָה , חָכֵם) a wise woman (2 Sam. 14:2)
- (9) אַנְשֵׁים (חֲכָמִים , חֲכָמוֹת) wise men (Deut. 1:13)
- (10) נָשִׁים (רַבּוֹת , רַבִּים) many women (Judg. 8:30)
- (11) עָרִים (רַבּוֹת , רַבִּים) many cities (Zech. 8:20)
- (12) בָּנוֹת (רַבּוֹת , רַבִּים) many daughters (Prov. 31:29)

## 3. Match the following:

- |                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
| (1) ( ) מְלָכִים גְּדוֹלִים  | (A) And the stone was great. (Gen. 29:2)       |
| (2) ( ) יָמִים רַבִּים       | (B) a small city (Eccl. 9:14)                  |
| (3) ( ) רָעָה רַבָּה         | (C) many lands (Jer. 28:8)                     |
| (4) ( ) אִבְנֵי גְדוֹלָה     | (D) And the maiden was beautiful. (1 Kgs. 1:4) |
| (5) ( ) אֶרֶץ רַחוּקָה       | (E) many days (Gen. 21:34)                     |
| (6) ( ) בָּנִים רַבִּים      | (F) a beautiful woman (Prov. 11:22)            |
| (7) ( ) הָעִיר הַקְּרֵבָה    | (G) a new spirit (Ezek. 11:19)                 |
| (8) ( ) אֲבֵנִים גְּדוֹלוֹת  | (H) a great evil (Eccl. 2:21)                  |
| (9) ( ) עִיר קְטַנָּה        | (I) great kings (Jer. 25:14)                   |
| (10) ( ) אֲרָצוֹת רַבּוֹת    | (J) an evil spirit (Judg. 9:23)                |
| (11) ( ) וְהָאִבְנֵי גְדֹלָה | (K) many years (Neh. 9:30)                     |
| (12) ( ) נֶעְרָה יְפָה       | (L) a full (whole) year (Lev. 25:30)           |
| (13) ( ) אִשָּׁה יְפָה       | (M) the near city (Deut. 21:3)                 |
| (14) ( ) רוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה      | (N) large stones (Josh. 10:18)                 |
| (15) ( ) רוּחַ רָעָה         | (O) a beautiful maiden (1 Kgs. 1:3)            |
| (16) ( ) שָׁנָה תְּמִימָה    | (P) many children (1 Chr. 4:27)                |
| (17) ( ) וְהַנֶּעְרָה יְפָה  | (Q) a distant land (2 Chr. 6:36)               |
| (18) ( ) שָׁנִים רַבּוֹת     | (R) a great stone (Josh. 24:26)                |

## 4. Fill in the blanks with the correct translation of the adjectives in the following examples.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| (1) בָּתִּים רַבִּים גְּדוֹלִים וְטוֹבִים | many houses _____ and _____<br>(Isa. 5:9)        |
| (2) אִישׁ זָקֵן                           | an _____ man (Judg. 19:16)                       |
| (3) בְּדֶרֶךְ הַטּוֹבָה וְהַיְשָׁרָה      | in the _____ and the _____ way<br>(1 Sam. 12:23) |
| (4) בְּדֶרֶךְ רָעָה                       | into an _____ way (Prov. 28:10)                  |

# VIII EXERCISES

- (5) בִּיד חֲזָקָה by a \_\_\_\_\_ hand (Exod. 3:19)
- (6) מֶלֶךְ חָכָם a \_\_\_\_\_ king (Prov. 20:26)
- (7) שְׁלוֹם רַב \_\_\_\_\_ peace (Ps. 119:165)
- (8) עַם גָּדוֹל וְרַב a people \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Deut. 2:10)
- (9) בָּנִים רַבִּים \_\_\_\_\_ children (1 Chr. 4:27)
- (10) כְּיוֹם מָר as a \_\_\_\_\_ day (Amos 8:10)
- (11) נָשִׁים יְפוֹת \_\_\_\_\_ women (Job 42:15)
- (12) אִשָּׁה חֲדָשָׁה a \_\_\_\_\_ wife (Deut. 24:5)

5. Practice pronouncing the Hebrew in the following examples. Cover the English translation and practice translating the Hebrew from sight.

- (1) מֵאָדָם רָע from an evil man (Ps. 140:2; Eng. 140:1)
- (2) הָאִישׁ מֹשֶׁה גָּדוֹל מְאֹד The man Moses was very great.  
(Exod. 11:3)
- (3) מִי־אֵל גָּדוֹל כְּאֱלֹהִים Who is a great god like God?  
(Ps. 77:14; Eng. 77:13)
- (4) כִּי אֵל גָּדוֹל יְהוָה For the LORD (is) a great God,  
וּמֶלֶךְ גָּדוֹל עַל־כָּל־ and a great King above (over) all  
אֱלֹהִים gods. (Ps. 95:3)
- (5) דְּבָרִים רַבִּים many words (Jer. 36:32)
- (6) עַמִּים רַבִּים many peoples (Isa. 2:3)
- (7) אִישׁ־יָפֶה a handsome man (2 Sam. 14:25)
- (8) כְּיוֹם תָּמִים as a whole day (Josh. 10:13)
- (9) הַשָּׁמַיִם הַחֲדָשִׁים וְהָאָרֶץ the new heavens and the new earth  
הַחֲדָשָׁה (Isa. 66:22)
- (10) לֵב חָדָשׁ וְרוּחַ חֲדָשָׁה a new heart and a new spirit (Ezek. 18:31)
- (11) טוֹב־וְיָשָׁר יְהוָה Good and upright is the LORD. (Ps. 25:8)



- (12) וְדָוִד זָקֵן And David was old. (1 Chr. 23:1)
- (13) רִיחַ-רָעָה מֵאֵת יְהוָה an evil spirit from the LORD  
(1 Sam. 16:14)
- (14) שֵׁם רָע an evil name (Deut. 22:14)
- (15) דְּבָרִים רָעִים wicked things (2 Kgs. 17:11)

## VOCABULARY

- |                                     |                                       |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| (1) גָּדוֹל (גָּדַל) great, large   | (10) קָדוֹשׁ (קָדַשׁ) holy            |
| (2) זָקֵן old (of persons only)     | (11) קָטָן small                      |
| (3) חָדָשׁ new                      | (12) קָרֹב (קָרַב) near               |
| (4) חָזָק strong                    | (13) קָשָׁה hard, difficult           |
| (5) חַי living                      | (14) רַב many, much, great            |
| (6) חָכָם wise                      | (15) רָחוֹק (רָחַק) far, distant      |
| (7) יָפָה beautiful, fair, handsome | (16) רָע evil, bad                    |
| (8) יָשָׁר straight, right, upright | (17) רָעָה (f) (an) evil              |
| (9) מָר bitter                      | (18) תָּמִים perfect, complete, whole |