

## Chapter 9

# Hebrew Pronominal Suffixes

- 9.1 Introduction.** In the last chapter, we studied the *subjective* (he, she, we) independent personal pronouns. In this chapter, we will study pronouns that can be either *possessive* (his, her, our) or *objective* (him, her, us). In Hebrew, these possessive and objective pronouns appear as *suffixes* on nouns, prepositions, and the definite direct object marker. For this reason, they are called *pronominal suffixes*. When appearing on nouns, they are possessive as in "his book" or "her wisdom." When appearing on prepositions or the definite direct object marker, they are objective as in "to them," "for them," or "them."
- 9.2 The Pronominal Suffixes.** In Hebrew, there are two sets of pronominal suffixes to be learned, Type 1 and Type 2. Both types have the same possessive and objective translation values. As suffixes, these pronouns are attached to the end of a word.

	Type 1 Suffixes	Type 2 Suffixes	Translation Possessive/Objective
1cs	יְ	יִ	my / me
2ms	כֶּ	יְךָ	your / you
2fs	כֶּ	יְךָ	your / you
3ms	וֹ	יּוֹ	his (its) / him (it)
3fs	הָ	יָהּ	her (its) / her (it)
1cp	נוּ	יְנוּ	our / us
2mp	כֶּם	יְכֶם	your / you
2fp	כֶּן	יְכֶן	your / you
3mp	הֶם	יָהֶם	their / them
3fp	הֵן	יָהֵן	their / them

**9.3 Notes on the Pronominal Suffixes.** The chart with Type 1 and Type 2 suffixes constitutes the essence of this chapter. The remainder of the chapter simply illustrates *how* these pronominal suffixes appear on different words.

1. With few exceptions, Type 1 suffixes occur with singular nouns and Type 2 suffixes occur with plural nouns.
2. All pronominal suffixes have person, gender, and number. Gender is distinguished in all second and third person forms, both singular and plural. The first person singular and plural forms are common, meaning not inflected for gender.
3. In general, there are many similarities in form between Type 1 and Type 2 suffixes, especially in the plural. All Type 2 suffixes have ' as part of their spelling. It is the presence of this ' that will enable you to distinguish between the two types.
4. Note the dot in the ך of the Type 1 3fs suffix (ך). This is not a Daghesh Lene or a Daghesh Forte. The Daghesh Lene occurs only in a *begadkephat* consonant and the Daghesh Forte cannot occur in the gutturals or ך. This dot in a final ך is called *Mappiq* and frequently marks the 3fs suffix.
5. A few alternate forms exist for the Type 1 pronominal suffixes. They should not give you too much trouble but are important forms to memorize. You will encounter these alternate forms on selected nouns and prepositions below.

	Type 1 Suffix		Alternate Form
1cs	י	➤	ני
3ms	ו	➤	הו
3fs	ה ך	➤	ה ך
3mp	ה ך ך	➤	ם ך
3fp	ה ך ך	➤	ן ך

- 9.4 Masculine Nouns with Pronominal Suffixes.**<sup>1</sup> It has already been explained that pronominal suffixes on nouns express possession (9.1). Singular nouns use Type 1 suffixes and plural nouns use Type 2 suffixes. The following paradigms use the masculine noun סוס (horse) to illustrate how masculine nouns receive their pronominal suffixes.

Type 1 Suffixes			Type 2 Suffixes		
	Noun ms	Translation		Noun mp	Translation
1cs	סוֹסִי	my horse		סוֹסִים	my horses
2ms	סוֹסְךָ	your horse		סוֹסֵיךָ	your horses
2fs	סוֹסְךָ	your horse		סוֹסֵיךָ	your horses
3ms	סוֹסוֹ	his horse		סוֹסֵיוֹ	his horses
3fs	סוֹסֶיהָ	her horse		סוֹסֵיהָ	her horses
1cp	סוֹסֵינוּ	our horse		סוֹסֵינוּ	our horses
2mp	סוֹסְכֶם	your horse		סוֹסֵיכֶם	your horses
2fp	סוֹסְכֶן	your horse		סוֹסֵיכֶן	your horses
3mp	סוֹסָם	their horse		סוֹסֵיהֶם	their horses
3fp	סוֹסָן	their horse		סוֹסֵיהֶן	their horses

#### 9.5 Notes on Masculine Nouns with Pronominal Suffixes.

1. It is important to understand that singular nouns can take both singular and plural pronominal suffixes. In the same way, plural nouns can take both singular and plural pronominal suffixes. For example, the singular noun סוס can take both a singular suffix as in סוֹסִי (*my* horse) or a plural suffix as in סוֹסֵינוּ (*our* horse). In these two examples, the noun is singular in both instances but the pronominal suffix is singular in the first example and plural in the second example.
2. When pronominal suffixes are added to masculine plural nouns, the masculine plural ending (ים) is dropped. With the absence of this ending, a masculine noun is often recognizable as plural only by the use of Type 2 pronominal suffixes.
3. If a feminine noun takes a masculine plural ending (4.7), then it will also follow the masculine plural pattern above. For example, the feminine noun עִיר (city) takes the masculine plural ending,



עָרִים (cities). When a pronominal suffix is added, this feminine noun continues to act like a masculine noun, עָרֵיכֶם (your cities).

4. Be careful to note the important distinction between the 1cs suffixes on singular and plural nouns: סוּסִי (my horse) and סוּסֵי (my horses). With the singular noun, the suffix is Hireq Yod. With the plural noun, the suffix is Pathach Yod.
5. In the masculine singular noun paradigm above, the alternate endings appear in the forms סוּסֶם (with 3mp suffix) and סוּסָן (with 3fp suffix). Once again, it is important to memorize the Type 1 alternate suffixes.
6. Nouns ending in הַּ will frequently drop this ending before adding pronominal suffixes. For example, שָׂדֶה (field) becomes שְׂדֵךְ (your field) or שְׂדֵי (my field). In order to locate these nouns in a lexicon, you must be able to recognize that the הַּ ending has been dropped.

**9.6 Feminine Nouns with Pronominal Suffixes.**<sup>2</sup> Feminine nouns also take Type 1 suffixes in the singular and Type 2 suffixes in the plural. The following chart uses the feminine noun תּוֹרָה (law) to illustrate how feminine nouns ending in הַּ receive their pronominal suffixes.

	Type 1 Suffixes		Type 2 Suffixes	
	Noun fs	Translation	Noun fp	Translation
1cs	תּוֹרָתִי	my law	תּוֹרוֹתִי	my laws
2ms	תּוֹרָתְךָ	your law	תּוֹרוֹתֶיךָ	your laws
2fs	תּוֹרָתְךָ	your law	תּוֹרוֹתֶיךָ	your laws
3ms	תּוֹרָתוֹ	his law	תּוֹרוֹתָיו	his laws
3fs	תּוֹרָתָהּ	her law	תּוֹרוֹתֶיהָ	her laws
1cp	תּוֹרָתֵנוּ	our law	תּוֹרוֹתֵינוּ	our laws
2mp	תּוֹרָתְכֶם	your law	תּוֹרוֹתֵיכֶם	your laws
2fp	תּוֹרָתְכֶן	your law	תּוֹרוֹתֵיכֶן	your laws
3mp	תּוֹרָתָם	their law	תּוֹרוֹתֵיהֶם	their laws
3fp	תּוֹרָתָן	their law	תּוֹרוֹתֵיהֶן	their laws

<sup>1</sup> Endless feminine singular nouns are also included in this category.

<sup>2</sup> This category covers feminine singular nouns that end in הַּ.

**9.9 Monosyllabic Nouns with Pronominal Suffixes.** There are a number of high-frequency monosyllabic nouns that will add ך to their stem before a pronominal suffix. This occurs only when the noun is singular. As you will observe from the following paradigms, the addition of this ך to singular nouns with Type 1 suffixes may cause them to be confused with plural nouns having Type 2 suffixes. With regard to consonants, both paradigms are identical. The singular noun paradigm, however, has Hireq Yod throughout (אָחִיךָ, your brother). The plural noun paradigm varies its vowel but never has Hireq Yod (אֶחָיֶךָ, your brothers). Recognizing this distinction now will prevent confusion later. The singular noun אָח (brother) and its plural אֶחָיִם (brothers) are presented below with Type 1 and Type 2 suffixes.

Type 1 Suffixes			Type 2 Suffixes		
	Noun ms	Translation		Noun mp	Translation
1cs	אָחִי	my brother		אֶחָי	my brothers
2ms	אָחִיךָ	your brother		אֶחָיֶךָ	your brothers
2fs	אָחִיךָ	your brother		אֶחָיֶיךָ	your brothers
3ms	אָחָיו <sup>4</sup>	his brother		אֶחָיו	his brothers
3fs	אָחִיהָ	her brother		אֶחָיהָ	her brothers
1cp	אָחֵינוּ	our brother		אֶחָינוּ	our brothers
2mp	אָחֵיכֶם	your brother		אֶחָיֶכֶם	your brothers
2fp	אָחֵיכֶן	your brother		אֶחָיֶכֶן	your brothers
3mp	אָחֵיהֶם	their brother		אֶחָיהֶם	their brothers
3fp	אָחֵיהֶן	their brother		אֶחָיהֶן	their brothers

**9.10 Prepositions with Pronominal Suffixes.** In Hebrew, prepositions also take pronominal suffixes. When doing so, the pronominal suffixes are objective rather than possessive. In other words, they function as the object of the preposition as in "to him," "for her," "with me," etc. Some prepositions take Type 1 suffixes and others take Type 2. You need not concern yourself with a preposition's suffix preference. On prepositions, the translation value is the same for both types. The following charts illustrate how certain prepositions receive their pronominal suffixes.

<sup>4</sup> This form also occurs with the alternate 3ms ending אָחִיהוּ (his brother).

The inseparable preposition לְ (to, for) takes Type 1 suffixes. The preposition עַל (on, upon) takes Type 2 suffixes.

	Type 1	Translation	Type 2	Translation
1cs	לִי	to me	עָלַי	on me
2ms	לְךָ	to you	עָלֶיךָ	on you
2fs	לְךָ	to you	עָלֶיךָ	on you
3ms	לוֹ	to him (it)	עָלָיו	on him (it)
3fs	לָהּ	to her (it)	עָלֶיהָ	on her (it)
1cp	לָנוּ	to us	עָלֵינוּ	on us
2mp	לָכֶם	to you	עָלֵיכֶם	on you
2fp	לָכֶן	to you	עָלֵיכֶן	on you
3mp	לָהֶם	to them	עָלֵיהֶם	on them
3fp	לָהֶן	to them	עָלֵיהֶן	on them

### 9.11 Notes on Prepositions with Pronominal Suffixes.

1. The presentation of prepositions with pronominal suffixes is straightforward. Some variation in the spelling of the pronominal suffixes will be observed with certain prepositions. With relatively few exceptions, however, these variations should not occasion much difficulty in terms of recognizing the person, gender, and number of the suffix. The emphasis must be on recognition and not on the ability to produce these forms in Hebrew.
2. Once again, some prepositions will take Type 1 suffixes. The prepositions לְ (to, for), בְּ (in, on), עִם (with), and אִתְּ (with) all take Type 1 suffixes. Prepositions that take Type 2 suffixes include: עַל (on, upon), אֶל (to, for), תַּחַת (under), and אַחֲרַי (after). With regard to translation, a preposition's suffix preference is of little importance. You should be comfortable identifying prepositions with either type of pronominal suffix.



**9.12 The Prepositions כְּ and מִן with Pronominal Suffixes.** These two prepositions are spelled differently when pronominal suffixes are added.

	כְּ	Translation	מִן	Translation
1cs	כְּמֹנִי	like me	מִמֶּנִּי	from me
2ms	כְּמוֹךָ	like you	מִמְּךָ	from you
2fs	כְּמוֹךְ	like you	מִמֶּךָ	from you
3ms	כְּמוֹהוּ	like him (it)	מִמֶּנּוּ	from him (it)
3fs	כְּמוֹהָ	like her (it)	מִמֶּנָּה	from her (it)
1cp	כְּמוֹנוּ	like us	מִמֶּנּוּ	from us
2mp	כְּכֶם	like you	מִכֶּם	from you
2fp	כְּכֻן	like you	מִכֻּן	from you
3mp	כְּהֶם	like them	מִהֶם	from them
3fp	כְּהֵן	like them	<sup>5</sup> מִהֵן	from them

**9.13 Notes on כְּ and מִן with Pronominal Suffixes.**

1. With the preposition כְּ, the forms with singular and 1cp suffixes exhibit a longer, alternate spelling of the preposition, כְּמֹ. In the forms with second and third person plural suffixes, the spelling of the preposition exhibits the shorter form. Note the presence of the alternate endings in the forms with 1cs (כְּמֹנִי), 3ms (כְּמוֹהוּ), and 3fs (כְּמוֹהָ) suffixes.
2. With the preposition מִן, the forms with singular and 1cp suffixes also exhibit a longer, alternate spelling of the preposition. In the forms with second and third person plural suffixes, the spelling of the preposition has the shorter form. Note the presence of alternate endings throughout the paradigm. Special attention should be given to the forms with 3ms (מִמֶּנּוּ) and 1cp (מִמֶּנּוּ) suffixes since they are identical. When confronted by this form, context should enable you to make the correct choice.

**9.14 The Definite Direct Object Marker and the Preposition אֶת/את־ with Pronominal Suffixes.** The object marker אֶת/את־ takes Type 1 pronominal suffixes. The combination of the object marker and a pronominal

<sup>5</sup> The 3fp suffix on מִן may also be written as מִהֵנָּה (3 times). It occurs only two times in the form written above in the paradigm.

suffix is translated as a personal pronoun in the objective or accusative case. Be careful not to confuse the object marker with the preposition **אֶת/את** meaning “with.” While sharing the same lexical form, these two words can be distinguished by their vowels after pronominal suffixes have been added. The object marker is distinguished by a Holem vowel after the initial consonant (**אֹתִי**). It is Seghol in the 2mp and 2fp forms (**אֹתְכֶם**). The preposition is distinguished by the presence of a Hireq vowel under the initial consonant (**אֵתִי**). The preposition also has a Daghesch Forte in the **אֵת**. These are important distinctions to remember. Both paradigms are listed below for comparison.

	<i>Object</i>		<i>Preposition</i>	
	<i>Marker</i>	<i>Translation</i>	<i>Marker</i>	<i>Translation</i>
1cs	<b>אֹתִי</b>	me	<b>אֵתִי</b>	with me
2ms	<b>אֹתְךָ</b>	you	<b>אֵתְךָ</b>	with you
2fs	<b>אֹתְךָ</b>	you	<b>אֵתְךָ</b>	with you
3ms	<b>אֹתּוֹ</b>	him (it)	<b>אֵתּוֹ</b>	with him (it)
3fs	<b>אֹתָהּ</b>	her (it)	<b>אֵתָהּ</b>	with her (it)
1cp	<b>אֹתָנוּ</b>	us	<b>אֵתָנוּ</b>	with us
2mp	<b>אֹתְכֶם</b>	you	<b>אֵתְכֶם</b>	with you
2fp	<b>אֹתְכֶן</b>	you	<b>אֵתְכֶן</b>	with you
3mp	<b>אֹתָם</b>	them	<b>אֵתָם</b>	with them
3fp	<b>אֹתָן</b>	them	<b>אֵתָן</b>	with them

- 9.15 עַם and עִם with Pronominal Suffixes.** The preposition **עִם** (with)<sup>6</sup> and the noun **עַם** (people) with pronominal suffixes can be easily confused. Both are listed below for comparison. The most significant difference between the two words is the vowel that appears under the first consonant. The preposition has Hireq (**עִמִּי**, with me) and the noun has Pathach (**עַמִּי**, my people). Both words take a Daghesch Forte in the **עַם** when pronominal suffixes are added.

<sup>6</sup> The Hebrew prepositions **עִם** and **אֶת/את** are both translated “with.”



	Preposition	Translation	Noun	Translation
1cs	עִמִּי	with me	עַמִּי	my people
2ms	עִמָּךְ	with you	עַמָּךְ	your people
2fs	עִמְּךָ	with you	עַמְּךָ	your people
3ms	עִמּוֹ	with him (it)	עַמּוֹ	his people
3fs	עִמָּהּ	with her (it)	עַמָּהּ	her people
1cp	עִמָּנוּ	with us	עַמָּנוּ	our people
2mp	עִמָּכֶם	with you	עַמָּכֶם	your people
2fp	עִמָּכֶן	with you	עַמָּכֶן	your people
3mp	עִמָּם	with them	עַמָּם	their people
3fp	עִמָּן	with them	עַמָּן	their people

### 9.16 Summary.

1. Pronominal suffixes are *possessive* (my, his, her) when appearing on nouns and *objective* (me, him, her) when appearing on prepositions.
2. All pronominal suffixes have person, gender, and number.
3. There are two sets of pronominal suffixes to be learned, Type 1 (for singular nouns and selected prepositions) and Type 2 (for plural nouns and selected prepositions). Both types have the same possessive and objective translation values. As a general observation, Type 2 suffixes are distinguished by the presence of ' throughout their spelling.
4. The dot in the Type 1 3fs suffix is called *Mappiq* (מֶ). It is neither the Daghash Forte nor the Daghash Lene.
5. Singular nouns can take both singular and plural pronominal suffixes. Plural nouns can also take both singular and plural pronominal suffixes.
6. Singular nouns take Type 1 pronominal suffixes; plural nouns take Type 2.
7. With masculine plural nouns, the plural ending (ים) is lost when pronominal suffixes are added (סוּסֵי, my horses). Feminine nouns retain their plural inflectional ending (תּוֹרֹתַי, my laws).
8. When a feminine singular noun ending in הָ (תּוֹרָה) receives a pronominal suffix, the הָ is replaced by תּ (תּוֹרָתִי, my law).

9. When a noun ending in הָ (שָׂדֶה) receives a pronominal suffix, the final הָ simply drops off and is *not* replaced by ת (שְׂדִי, my field).
10. Certain singular monosyllabic nouns will add י (appears as Hireq Yod with Type 1 suffixes) to their stem before a pronominal suffix (אָח, “brother” becomes אָחִיךָ, “your brother”).
11. Prepositions may take either Type 1 or Type 2 pronominal suffixes. Which type of suffix a preposition prefers is of little significance because the translation value is the same for both types.
12. With the addition of pronominal suffixes, the prepositions כִּי (like, as, according to) and מִן (from) exhibit longer, alternate spellings in all forms with singular and 1cp suffixes (כִּי־וְ and מִן־וְ).
13. The object marker אֹת/את־ takes Type 1 pronominal suffixes. It is translated as a personal pronoun in the objective or accusative case. Be careful not to confuse the object marker with the preposition אִתְּ/את־ meaning “with.”
14. The Type 1 and Type 2 pronominal suffix paradigms are presented below. The alternate Type 1 suffixes are also included and must be memorized.

	Type 1 Suffixes	Type 1 Alternate	Type 2 Suffixes	Translation
1cs	י	נִי	י־	my/me
2ms	ךָ		יְךָ־	your/you
2fs	ךָ		יְךָ־	your/you
3ms	וֹ	הוּ	יוֹ־	his (its)/him (it)
3fs	הָ־	הָ	יָ־	her (its)/her (it)
1cp	נוּ		ינוּ־	our/us
2mp	כֶּם		יְכֶם־	your/you
2fp	כֶּן		יְכֶן־	your/you
3mp	הֶם	ם־	יהֶם־	their/them
3fp	הֶן	ן־	יהֶן־	their/them

**9.19 Advanced Information.** The following prepositions occur frequently with pronominal suffixes. You should not have any trouble identifying these forms but they are listed for your reference.

	בְּ	Translation	אֶל	Translation
1cs	בִּי	in me	אֵלַי	to me
2ms	בְּךָ	in you	אֵלֶיךָ	to you
2fs	בְּךָ	in you	אֵלֶיךָ	to you
3ms	בוֹ	in him (it)	אֵלָיו	to him (it)
3fs	בָּהּ	in her (it)	אֵלֶיהָ	to her (it)
1cp	בָּנוּ	in us	אֵלֵינוּ	to us
2mp	בְּכֶם	in you	אֵלֵיכֶם	to you
2fp	בְּכֶן	in you	אֵלֵיכֶן	to you
3mp	בָּהֶם	in them	אֵלֵיהֶם	to them
3fp	בָּהֶן	in them	אֵלֵיהֶן	to them
	תַּחַת	Translation	אַחֲרַי	Translation
1cs	תַּחְתִּי	under me	אַחֲרַי	after me
2ms	תַּחְתֶּיךָ	under you	אַחֲרֶיךָ	after you
2fs	תַּחְתֶּיךָ	under you	אַחֲרֶיךָ	after you
3ms	תַּחְתָּיו	under him (it)	אַחֲרָיו	after him (it)
3fs	תַּחְתֶּיהָ	under her (it)	אַחֲרֶיהָ	after her (it)
1cp	תַּחְתֵּינוּ	under us	אַחֲרֵינוּ	after us
2mp	תַּחְתֵּיכֶם	under you	אַחֲרֵיכֶם	after you
2fp	תַּחְתֵּיכֶן	under you	אַחֲרֵיכֶן	after you
3mp	תַּחְתֵּיהֶם	under them	אַחֲרֵיהֶם	after them
3fp	תַּחְתֵּיהֶן	under them	אַחֲרֵיהֶן	after them



As revealed in Ex 3:13-15 and 6:2-8, there is only one personal name for God in the Old Testament. That name is יהוה (“Yahweh” or “LORD”), a form composed of four consonants and called the *tetragrammaton*. The name יהוה is also the covenant name for God in the faith of ancient Israel.<sup>8</sup> This name is also attested in shortened forms that are commonly used in the formation of personal names such as Elijah (אֵלִיָּהוּ or אֵלִיָּה), which translates “(My) God is Yahweh.”

But one of the most cherished names of God in the Old Testament is אֱמָנוּאֵל (“Immanuel” or “Emmanuel”). Most readers will be familiar with the name and its meaning but now you can understand its etymology in Hebrew. It is composed of two words in its three occurrences in Isaiah (7:14; 8:8, 10). The name is composed of the preposition עִם (with) to which has been affixed the 1cp pronominal suffix (us).<sup>9</sup> The divine name אֱלֹהִים comes at the end of the form. The name אֱמָנוּאֵל means “God (is) with us.” The etymology is easy; the theology of the name is profound. The name is cherished because it bespeaks the depth of God’s grace and mercy that he gives his presence, and even himself (Matt 1:23), to his human creation. Beyond its specific context in Isa 7:14, the name אֱמָנוּאֵל has come to symbolize and summarize the story of biblical revelation. It is a narrative through time that documents the promise of divine presence and the relentless movement of redemption, by divine initiative, from heaven to earth. This is sometimes called the “Immanuel theme” in covenant theology. The theme begins in Eden with the intimate and unhindered fellowship between God and his human creation, and it concludes with the restoration of that fellowship in the events of Rev 21:1-4.

Behold, the dwelling of God is with men.  
He will dwell with them,  
and they shall be his people,  
and God himself will be with them.  
(Rev 21:3)

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<sup>8</sup> The name יהוה occurs 6,828 times in the Hebrew Bible. Given that this is God’s covenant name, it is instructive that it occurs with the greatest frequency in Jeremiah (726 times), Psalms (695 times), and Deuteronomy (550 times).

<sup>9</sup> You learned this form (אֱמָנוּאֵל) in section 9.15 of this lesson.