

HOW TO DETERMINE A VERB STEM IN BIBLICAL HEBREW

EACH CONSONANT OF A ROOT / STEM / VOCABLE IS CALLED A RADICAL.
THE RADICALS HAVE NAMES BASED UPON THE WORD **פִּעַל** “TO MAKE.”

פ IS THE POSITION OF THE FIRST RADICAL (THE ONE ON THE RIGHT)

ע IS THE POSITION OF THE SECOND (USUALLY IN THE MIDDLE)

ל IS THE POSITION OF THE THIRD RADICAL (THE ONE ON THE LEFT)

GRAMMARIANS USE THE FOLLOWING DESIGNATIONS:

פ"ן פ"י פ"ו פ"א ל"ה ל"א ע"י ע"ו ע"ע

1. Remove all prefixes and suffixes

תת : the root is נתן “to give” (Nathan = he gave)

2. If the remaining radicals are:

לך : prefix a ה for הלך “to walk”

קח : prefix a ל for לקח “to take”

3. If one radical remains prefix a ך or ך and affix a ה or ן

4. If two radicals remain, and

A. if the first radical has a dagesh

1. prefix ך or ך (for a ך"פ or a ך"י verb)

2. double the second radical (for an ע"ע verb)

B. if the second has a dagesh (and it is a non-begadkept letter) double it

C. if neither radical has a dagesh

1. insert ך or ך between the radicals (for a ך"ע or ע"י “hollow” verb)

2. prefix ך or ך (for a ך"י verb) OR prefix a ך (for a ך"פ verb)

3. add a final ה (for a ך"ל verb)

4. double the second radical (for an ע"ע verb)

D. if a ך precedes the first radical, change it to a ך (for a ך"י verb)

E. if the second radical is a ך or ך change it to a ה (for a ך"ל verb)

AND go back to 4. A.