

### 29.1 Forms/principal parts of the Hithpael

The Hithpael stem is often referred to as the “reflexive” stem, although that is only one of the semantic nuances of using this stem. It can also have reciprocal, iterative, and passive nuances. We first deal with the way the Hithpael is formed. NOTE: In the Hithpael stem, as in Piel/Pual, the form is characterized by doubling in R-2 (root 2); however, there is also a characteristic *taw* (ת) infix right before R-1.

For our paradigm verb פקד, the Hithpael means ‘to be mustered, counted’.

Forms	Hithpael
Pft 3ms	הִתְפַּקֵּד
Impf 3ms	יִתְפַּקֵּד
Wci(wayyiqtol) 3ms	וַיִּתְפַּקֵּד
Juss 3ms	יִתְפַּקֵּד
Coh 1cs	אֶתְפַּקֵּדָה
Impv 2ms	הִתְפַּקֵּד
Ptc ms	מִתְפַּקֵּד
Infc	הִתְפַּקֵּד
Infa	הִתְפַּקֵּד

Below, let’s fill in the vowel-pointing for the Hithpael stem.



## 29.2 Metathesis and assimilation in the Hithpael

Some problem areas exist for the formation of the Hithpael stem/binyan. In particular, the processes of metathesis and assimilation can affect the underlying form of a verb in the Hithpael, with the result that its surface form looks different from what is expected. Let's explain those two processes in general ways, and then see how they apply to forming the Hithpael stem in Biblical Hebrew.

**Metathesis:** occurs when two sounds (or consonants, in this case) switch places, often due to factors involving articulatory phonetics. Note that we have exx. of audible metathesis in English (even if the spelling does not reflect it!):

\*Brett Favre (pronounced *Farve* rather than the more proper French *Fav-re*)

\*My children metathesized (?) sounds in English words all the time:

“cramya” for *camera*

“Jophes” for *Joseph*

**Assimilation:** occurs when the sound of one consonant causes the consonant beside it to change its sound. [The Borg Problem: “resistance is futile, you will be assimilated....”]

**Full assimilation:** C-1 becomes identical to C-2.

“immobile” comes from *in-mobile* (not mobile, cf. inimitable)

**Partial Assimilation:** C-1 becomes like C-2 (in voicing, location of formation, emphatic character).

The [z] sound is added to the end of a verb to indicate it is 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular.

“lags” Final sound is [z], which is voiced, as expected.

“lacks” Final sound is [s], unvoiced, due to the preceding unvoiced [k]. The unvoiced [k] causes the underlying voiced [z] to partially assimilate, devoicing and becoming unvoiced [s].

The [d] sound is added to the end of a verb to indicate it is past tense.

“pegged” Final sound is [d], which is voiced, as expected.

“pecked” Final sound is [t], unvoiced, due to the preceding unvoiced [k]. The unvoiced [k] causes the underlying voiced [d] to partially assimilate, devoicing and becoming unvoiced [t].

**Metathesis + Assimilation:**

My kids performed double operations on some of their words, employing both metathesis *and* assimilation at the same time!

“spakctball” for *basketball* (metathesis: *sbakctball*; assimilation: *spakctball*)

“paskctti” for *spaghetti* (metathesis: *pasghctti*; assimilation: *paskctti*)

“jamamas” for *pajamas* (metathesis: *japamas*; assimilation: *jamamas*)

## AND NOW THE HITHPAEL...

The consonant changes involved in the hithpael are due to the law of the *hith-* prefix butting up against a R-1 consonant that is either dental or sibilant (formed close to the dental area). Why is this a problem? Because both R-1 and the law of the *hith-* are homorganic (formed in the same area). What are the types of changes that can occur?

### 1. Metathesis, with no assimilation (prefixed dental ת + UNVOICED R-1 sibilant [ש ס שׁ]).

a. □□ הַתְּ+שׁ → □□ הַשְּׁ+ת

So, שמר Hith. (to take heed to oneself): הַתְּשִׁמֵּר → הַשְּׁתִּמֵּר

b. □□ הַתְּ+ס → □□ הַסְּ+ת

So, סבל Hith. (to become burdensome): הַתְּסַבֵּל → הַסְּתַבֵּל

### 2. Metathesis, and partial assimilation (prefixed dental ת + VOICED/EMPHATIC R-1 sibilant [ז צ]).

a. □□ הַתְּ+צ → □□ הַצְּ+ת → □□ הַצְּ+ט

So, צדק Hith. (to justify oneself): הַתְּצַדֵּק → הַצְּתַדֵּק → הַצְּטַדֵּק

### 3. NO Metathesis, and full assimilation (prefixed dental ת + ANY R-1 dental [נ ט ד ת]).

a. □□ הַתְּ+ט → □□ הַטְּ+ת → □□ הַטְּ

So, טהר Hith. (to purify oneself): הַתְּטַהֵר → הַטְּתַהֵר → הַטְּהֵר

b. □□ הַתְּ+נ → □□ הַנְּ+ת → □□ הַנְּ

So, נבא Hith. (to prophesy): הַתְּנַבֵּא → הַנְּתַבֵּא → הַנְּבֵא

	Dentals	Sibilants
Unvoiced	ת/ת	ש ש ש
Voiced	ד/ד	ז
Emphatic	ט	צ
Nasal	נ	

### 29.3 Translating the Hithpael

1. Directly reflexive

2. Indirectly reflexive

3. Reciprocal

4. Iterative