

Chapter 24 — Semantic Function Sorting

BBH Chapter 24 · Niphal Strong Verbs

Classify each Niphal verb as P (Passive), R (Reflexive), RC (Reciprocal), or SA (Simple Action). Write your answer in the Function column. Answer key is on the last page.

P = Passive (subject receives the action) | R = Reflexive (subject acts on/for itself) | RC = Reciprocal (subjects act on one another) | SA = Simple Action (Niphal-only root; no distinct Qal meaning)

#	Hebrew	Conjugation	Ref	Contextual Gloss	Function
1	וַיִּמָּכֶר	Wayyiqtol 3ms	Gen 37:36	"and Joseph was sold into Egypt"	<input type="text"/>
2	נִצְבָּה	Perfect 3fs	Gen 37:7	"my sheaf stood upright"	<input type="text"/>
3	וַיִּנָּחֵם	Wayyiqtol 3ms	Gen 6:6	"the LORD regretted"	<input type="text"/>
4	יֵאָכֵל	Imperfect 3ms	Exo 12:46	"it shall be eaten"	<input type="text"/>
5	הִשְׁמְרוּ	Imperative 2mp	Exo 19:12	"take heed for yourselves!"	<input type="text"/>
6	נִשְׁמַע	Perfect 3ms	Gen 45:16	"the report was heard"	<input type="text"/>
7	הִשְׁבַּעַה	Imperative 2ms	Gen 47:31	"swear to me!"	<input type="text"/>
8	הַנִּמְצָא	Participle ms	Gen 47:14	"the silver that was found"	<input type="text"/>
9	וְנִכְרְתָהּ	Weqatal 3fs	Exo 12:15	"that person will be cut off"	<input type="text"/>
10	נִצְבִּים	Participle mp	Exo 5:20	"standing before Pharaoh"	<input type="text"/>
11	אֶעֱד	Imperfect 1cs	Exo 29:42	"I will meet with you there"	<input type="text"/>
12	וַיִּשְׁבַּע	Wayyiqtol 3ms	Gen 47:31	"and he swore to him"	<input type="text"/>
13	וַיִּאָּסֶף	Wayyiqtol 3ms	Gen 49:33	"and he was gathered to his people"	<input type="text"/>
14	יִלָּחֵם	Imperfect 3ms	Exo 14:14	"the LORD will fight for you"	<input type="text"/>
15	נִשְׁבָּעוּ	Weqatal 3mp	Gen 21:31	"both of them swore"	<input type="text"/>
16	תִּכָּרֵת	Imperfect 3fs	Gen 41:36	"the land will not be cut off"	<input type="text"/>
17	נִלָּחֵם	Participle ms	Exo 14:25	"the LORD is fighting for them"	<input type="text"/>
18	הִאָּסַפּוּ	Imperative 2mp	Gen 49:1	"gather yourselves!"	<input type="text"/>
19	וְנִוָּעְדוּ	Weqatal 3mp	Num 10:3	"all the congregation shall assemble"	<input type="text"/>
20	נִחַמְתִּי	Weqatal 1cs	Gen 6:7	"I regret that I made them"	<input type="text"/>
21	נִמְלֶתֶם	Weqatal 2mp	Gen 17:11	"you shall be circumcised"	<input type="text"/>
22	נִצַּבְתָּ	Perfect 2ms	Exo 7:15	"station yourself to meet him"	<input type="text"/>
23	לְהִלָּחֵם	Inf. Construct	Exo 17:10	"to fight against Amalek"	<input type="text"/>
24	יִמָּצָא	Imperfect 3ms	Gen 44:9	"whoever is found [with the cup]"	<input type="text"/>
25	הִמָּצָא יִמָּצָא	Inf. Abs. + Impl	Exo 22:3	"if it is actually found in his possession"	<input type="text"/>

Reflection Questions

1. Items 3, 14, 17, 20, and 23 are all Simple Action (■■■■■ and ■■■■■). What is the practical difference between a Niphal-only root and a root that simply lacks a Qal in the OT corpus?
2. Compare items 7 and 12 (both ■■■■■). The imperative and wayyiqtol appear in the same verse (Gen 47:31). How does the sequential narrative create a scene of formal oath-taking?
3. Item 18 (■■■■■■■■■■) is Passive, yet it is an imperative. Explain how a Niphal imperative can be both a command and passive in force.

Answer Key

#	Hebrew	Ref	Fn	Explanation
1	יִמְכַר	Gen 37:36	P	Joseph receives the action of being sold
2	נָצְבָה	Gen 37:7	R	Sheaf stations itself (acts on itself)
3	וַיִּנָּחֵם	Gen 6:6	SA	Niphal-only: no standard Qal; to regret/relent
4	יֹאכֵל	Exo 12:46	P	Passover lamb receives the action of eating
5	הִשְׁמָרוּ	Exo 19:12	R	Guard yourself — subject directs action back on self
6	נִשְׁמָע	Gen 45:16	P	Report receives the hearing — it becomes audible
7	הִשְׁבַּעַה	Gen 47:31	R	Bind yourself by oath (reflexive oath-taking)
8	הִנָּמְצָא	Gen 47:14	P	Silver was discovered (received the finding action)
9	וַיִּנְכַּרְתֶּה	Exo 12:15	P	Person receives covenant-exclusion penalty
10	נָצְבִים	Exo 5:20	R	Overseers have stationed themselves before Pharaoh
11	אָוָּעַד	Exo 29:42	RC	God and Israel meet one another at the tent
12	וַיִּשְׁבַּע	Gen 47:31	R	Jacob binds himself by oath at Joseph's request
13	וַיֵּאָסֶף	Gen 49:33	P	Jacob is gathered in (brought to ancestors — die)
14	לָחֵם	Exo 14:14	SA	Niphal-only: to fight is the base meaning
15	נִשְׁבָּעוּ	Gen 21:31	R	Each binds himself individually — reflexive, not reciprocal
16	תִּכָּרַת	Gen 41:36	P	Land receives the action of being cut off (depleted)
17	נָלָחֵם	Exo 14:25	SA	Niphal-only: the LORD fights (no Qal to contrast)
18	הִאָּסְפוּ	Gen 49:1	P	Passive imperative: be gathered (assemble)
19	וַיִּנְוָעֻדוּ	Num 10:3	RC	Congregation assembles mutually together
20	נִחַמְתִּי	Gen 6:7	SA	Niphal-only: I regret is the base meaning
21	נִמְלְתָם	Gen 17:11	P	Males receive the action of circumcision
22	נִצְבָתָהּ	Exo 7:15	R	Moses positions himself at the Nile
23	לָהֵלֵחַם	Exo 17:10	SA	Niphal-only: to fight — the inf. construct form
24	יִמָּצָא	Gen 44:9	P	Person discovered with cup — receives the finding
25	הִמָּצָא יִמָּצָא	Exo 22:3	P	Emphatic passive; doubling stresses the discovery