Learning Hebrew: Pronominal Suffixes

PRONOMINAL SUFFIXES
In Hebrew, pronominal suffixes are possessive and objective pronouns that are suffixes on nouns, prepositions, and the definite direct object marker.

When appearing on nouns, they are possessive, as in .her locker. When appearing on prepositions or the definite direct object marker, they are objective as in .to him.

There are two sets of pronominal suffixes to be learned. Type 1 (occur with singular nouns) and Type 2 (occur with plural nouns).

Singular

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Type 1</th>
<th>Type 2</th>
<th>Possessive</th>
<th>Objective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Person</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Common</strong></td>
<td>יִהְוָה</td>
<td>יִהְוָה</td>
<td>My</td>
<td>Me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Second Person</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Masculine</strong></td>
<td>יָהַת</td>
<td>יָהַת</td>
<td>Your</td>
<td>You</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feminine</strong></td>
<td>יָהַת</td>
<td>יָהַת</td>
<td>Your</td>
<td>You</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Third Person</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Masculine</strong></td>
<td>יָהַת</td>
<td>יָהַת</td>
<td>His/Its</td>
<td>Him/It</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Feminine</strong></td>
<td>יָהַת</td>
<td>יָהַת</td>
<td>Her/Its</td>
<td>Her/It</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are four rules that need to be learned about pronominal suffixes.

1. All pronominal suffixes have person, gender, and number.

2. All Type 2 suffixes have a 'י which will help you to distinguish between Type 1 and Type 2 suffixes.

3. The dot in the letter hey in the third person female singular suffix is a Mappiq and not a dagesh lene or dagesh forte.

4. There are alternate forms for the Type 1 suffixes and should be memorized.
MASCULINE NOUNS WITH PRONOMINAL SUFFIXES
All pronominal suffixes have person, gender, and number. Type 1 suffixes occur with singular nouns (such as בָּסָּס and תּוֹרָתָן) and Type 2 suffixes occur with plural nouns (such as בָּסִים and תּוֹרוֹת).

When pronominal suffixes are added to masculine plural nouns, the masculine plural ending (ים) is dropped.

If a feminine noun takes a masculine plural ending it will follow the masculine plural pattern. This also applies when a pronominal suffix is added.

עִירֵיכֶם - עַרְיֵים - עָרִי

FEMININE NOUNS WITH PRONOMINAL SUFFIXES
When a feminine singular noun ends in הָ (as in תּוֹרָה) receives a pronominal suffix, the ה is replaced by ת (תרה).

Unlike masculine plural nouns, feminine plural nouns retain their plural ending (ות).

SINGLE SYLLABLE NOUNS WITH PRONOMINAL SUFFIXES
The singular noun that ends with י has a hiriq yod (יָאָחִיו). The plural noun that ends with י never has a hiriq yod (יָאָחַי).
PREPOSITIONS WITH PRONOMINAL SUFFIXES

In Hebrew, prepositions also take pronominal suffixes. These suffixes are objective rather than possessive.

Prepositions that take Type 1 suffixes:

לְ (to, for)

לְ (in, on)

עִם (with)

אֵת (with)

Prepositions that take Type 2 suffixes:

עַ (on, upon)

עֶ (to, for)

תַּחַת (under)

אַחֲרֵי (after)

PREPOSITIONS לְ AND מִן WITH PRONOMINAL SUFFIXES

With the preposition לְ, the forms with singular and first person common plural suffixes are spelled with a longer, alternate ending (וֹ). With the preposition מִן, the forms with singular and first person common plural suffixes are spelled with a longer, alternate ending (נּ).

DEFINITE DIRECT OBJECT MARKER AND THE PREPOSITIONS אֵת/אֶת WITH PRONOMINAL SUFFIXES

The definite direct object marker אֵת/אֶת takes Type 1 pronominal suffixes. It is translated as a personal pronoun in the accusative and objective case.
Sources:
*The First Hebrew Primer, Third Edition* by Simon, Resnikoff, and Motzkin
*Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar* by Pratico and Van Pelt

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