







state construct

Summary

The construct state is a modified form of a word (noun, adjective, participle, or infinitive) in contrast to the standard form called the absolute state. The construct state is used when a word takes a suffix or is connected to another term in a construct chain.

Article

Nouns, adjectives, participles and infinitives can appear in either the absolute state or the construct state. The construct state ending is shorter than the absolute state ending and can take an attached suffix. Nouns, adjectives and participles can appear in either the absolute state or the construct state for both masculine and feminine terms in both singular and plural forms. Because infinitives do not change form for either gender or number, there is usually only one infinitive construct form and one infinitive absolute form of a verb in Biblical Hebrew.

Note

Many masculine singular nouns appear exactly alike in both the absolute state and the construct state. The construct state serves a unique function in Biblical Hebrew to grammatically link a word to the following word(s), making a single grammatical unit called a construct chain. Words in a construct chain are often translated into English with the word “of” between them. Construct chains can consist of two words (for example, “the king of Israel”) or more than two words (for example, “the son of the king of Israel”).

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State Absolute

Summary

The absolute state is the standard form of a word (noun, adjective, participle, or infinitive) in contrast to a modified form called the construct state. A word in the absolute state can take a prefix but not a suffix.

Nouns, adjectives, participles and infinitives can appear in either the absolute state or the construct state. The absolute state is the standard form and consists of a longer ending as opposed to the shorter construct ending. The most fundamental difference between the two forms is that the construct form can take an attached suffix, but the absolute form cannot. Nouns, adjectives and participles can appear in either the absolute or the construct state for both masculine and feminine terms in both singular and plural forms. Because infinitives do not change form for either gender or number, there is usually only one infinitive construct form and one infinitive absolute form of a verb in Biblical Hebrew.

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Torah Portion First reading — Genesis 1:1–2:3

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1 * IN A BEGINNING HE
CREATED ELOHEM NAMELY
THE SPACE AND NAMELY THE
MATTER:

2 AND THE MATTER SHE WAS
FORMLESS AND VOID AND
DARK ON THE SURFACE OF THE
LOUD ELEMENTAL
SEDIMENTARY FILLED SURGING
MASS OF WATER AND THE
COSMIC WINDS OF ELOHEM
SHE PUSHES UPON THE
SURFACE OF THE WATERS:

3 1 AND HE SAID E'LOHEM
LET THERE BE LIGHT AND
THERE WAS LIGHT:

4 AND HE SAW E'LOHEM
NAMELY THE LIGHT THAT IT
WAS GOOD AND HE
DIFFERENTIATED E'LOHEM
BETWEEN THE LIGHT AND
BETWEEN THE DARKNESS:

5 AND HE CALLED E'LOHEM
TO THE LIGHT YOM AND FOR
THE DARKNESS HE CALLED
LAYLAH AND THERE WAS A
FADING OF THE LIGHT AND
THERE WAS A DAWNING OF
THE LIGHT HEAT PERIOD ONE: