

## Forms of ו Prefixes

### The general use of the ו prefix

The ו prefix, which normally means *and*, often has ו as the vowel. For example,

וְלֹא הָלְכוּ אֶל־הַנָּבִיא: *And they did not go to the prophet.*

However, there are several cases where a different form is used.

1. Before the consonants כּ פּ and מּ, the form is וּ. This is the *BMP rule*.

וּ + וּבְכָל	>	וּבְכָל	<i>And with all ... (the כּ loses its dagesh, as do initial beged kefet letters in other examples)</i>
וּ + וּפְקָדוֹן	>	וּפְקָדוֹן	<i>And a pledge ...</i>
וּ + וּמְלָקוֹשׁ	>	וּמְלָקוֹשׁ	<i>And late rain ...</i>

2. Before a word beginning with י, the ו and the first syllable of the word contract to וי :

וּ + וַיְמִי	>	וַיְמִי	<i>And days of ...</i>
וּ + וַיהוּדָה	>	וַיהוּדָה	<i>And Judah ...</i>
וּ + וַיְדַעְתֶּם	>	וַיְדַעְתֶּם	<i>And you-all knew ...</i>

3. Before a word starting with any consonant besides י with the ו vowel, the conjunction is וְ:

וּ + וְכָתַבְתֶּם	>	וְכָתַבְתֶּם	<i>And write them ...</i>
וּ + וְשְׁמוֹ	>	וְשְׁמוֹ	<i>And His name ...</i>
וּ + וְדְבָרִים	>	וְדְבָרִים	<i>And words ...</i>

4. Before a word which starts with guttural with a hurried vowel ( אָ, אִ, אֵ, אֶ ), the ו takes the corresponding full form of the vowel:

וּ + וְאֲנָשִׁים	>	וְאֲנָשִׁים	<i>And men ...</i>
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וּאֲמוּנָתוֹ + ו	>	וּאֲמוּנָתוֹ	<i>And His faithfulness ...</i>
וּאֲנִי + ו	>	וּאֲנִי	<i>And a fleet ...</i>

5. As with preposition prefixes, the vowel under a prefix ו before the words אֱלֹהִים and אֲדֹנָי are irregular:

וּאֱלֹהִים + ו	>	וּאֱלֹהִים	<i>And God ...</i>
וּאֲדֹנָי + ו	>	וּאֲדֹנָי	<i>And my Lord ...</i>

### The use of the ו before verbs

As we will study in chapter 17, the ו has an important use before perfect and imperfect verb forms.

#### 1. The perfect

Before a perfect verb, the vowel under a ו prefix is determined by the rules above. However, based on context, the ו may indicate that the verb is converted to an imperfect.

וְהָיוּ      Either *And they were* or *And they will be*.

#### 2. The imperfect

Before an imperfect verb, the ו may convert the verb to the sense of a perfect conjugation.

Unlike the case of a ו before a perfect, there is a change in the vowel under the ו when conversion takes place. When there is no conversion, the vowel under the ו is the usual one determined by the rules above. When conversion takes place, the vowel is a \_ and the following letter is doubled.

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה:	<i>And Hashem will say to Moses...</i>
וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה:	<i>And Hashem said to Moses...</i>