

The Separation of the Tiberian Punctuation and Cantillation Systems

Instituted in seventh- or eighth-century Tiberias to express the reading tradition of the Bible, the masoretic vocalization system expresses mainly the vowels, whereas the accentuation system indicates melody and punctuation. There is reciprocity between the two systems and the links between them are governed by fixed rules.

If the use of the vocalization signs has expanded over time to various sacred texts, children's literature, texts and newspapers in easy Hebrew, grammars, contemporary Hebrew poetry, and editions of early poetic and paytanic works, the accentuation system has remained almost entirely limited to the biblical context. Based upon various studies and representative samples, the article describes how the connections between the two systems changed as a result of their separation. It makes a diachronic survey of the work of punctuators through the generations, and examines the normative rules of contemporary Hebrew, paying particular attention to the rulings of the Academy of the Hebrew Language in this sphere.

Four main connections between the vocalization and accentuation systems are treated in the context of their separation: (1) the marking of

the stressed syllable using the accents and by alternate means; (2) the influence of a preceding conjunctive accent on the letters **בגדכפ"ת**, which makes them weak (*rafe*); (3) the acquisition of a pausal form and changed vocalization when words or structures have a "strong" accent; and (4) the influence of hyphenation on vocalization.