

## THE SECRET OF THE PAUSAL FORMS

by Yosef Ofer

Israel Ben-David, *Contextual and Pausal Forms in Biblical Hebrew: Syntax and Accentuation*, Jerusalem (The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University) 1995, [15] + 376 + xiii pp. (in Hebrew)

Ben-David's book examines the phenomenon of contextual and pausal forms in biblical Hebrew, i.e., words in which the vocalization or the stressed syllable is changed when they appear at a pause in the verse (e.g., עֲבֹד-עֲבָד, שְׁמֵרָה-שְׁמֵרָה, וַיֹּאמֶר-וַיֹּאמֶר). The factors which influence the pausal form are the masoretic accents and the syntactic structure of the verse which determine the degree of pause existing in each word of the text, and the grammatical pattern of the word itself which determines its 'sensitivity' and its ability to change its contextual form to the pausal one. The author sorted all the words in the Bible precisely, in order to determine the influence of the above factors statistically. He also discovered other minor factors affecting the transformation into the pausal form, such as the assimilation of a vowel to a consonant, a prefix added to the word, and the reciprocal influence of similar verses in the Bible.