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The Notation of *šewā* at the End of a Word in the Tiberian Vocalization System

In the Tiberian Vocalization System *šewā* is noted at the end of a word under the letter ך and in words such as מִשְׁפָּחָךְ, וְיִשְׁבְּבָךְ, וְיִחַדְךָ, אֵלֶיךָ, וְיִשְׁקָךְ. It seems that originally *šewā* was noted only in the feminine second person morpheme ך, ךָ, in order to distinguish it from the parallel masculine morpheme ך, ךָ. Later, the noting of *šewā* in ך was increased to include every appearance of the letter *kaph* at the end of a word, while the noting of *šewā* in ךָ led to another phenomenon (because of the frequency of words ending with *taw*): every unvocalized letter with *dagesh* at the end of a word was noted by *šewā*. This includes words ending with a consonant cluster, e.g. מִשְׁפָּחָךְ, דָּרְךָ, but also words like אֵלֶיךָ, תַּתְּךָ, תַּדְּךָ, וְיִחַדְךָ. In the final phase *šewā* was noted – as a result of analogy – in the 8 words in the Bible which end with consonant clusters but do not have a *dagesh* in their final letter, e.g. וְיִשְׁבְּבָךְ, וְיִשְׁקָךְ. Evidence for that phase is found in a group of Bible MSS. of the Masoretes, in which *šewā* is not noted in words of this type.