Participles

Participles are verb forms that share properties with nominals (nouns and other words that function as nouns), especially with adjectives. Each one of the Hebrew verb patterns has a set of participles with four forms: a masculine singular, a feminine singular, a masculine plural, and a feminine plural (see: Gender and Number). Some examples are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Masculine singular</th>
<th>Feminine singular</th>
<th>Masculine plural</th>
<th>Feminine plural</th>
<th>meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>זָקֵן</td>
<td>זְקֵנָה</td>
<td>זְקֵנִים</td>
<td>זְקֵנוֹת</td>
<td>Growing old, be old, an elder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>שׁוֹפֵט</td>
<td>שׁוֹפֶטֶת</td>
<td>שׁוֹפְטִים</td>
<td>שׁוֹפְטוֹת</td>
<td>Judging, a judge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>מְבַקֵּשׁ</td>
<td>מְבַקֶּשֶׁת</td>
<td>מְבַקְשִׁים</td>
<td>מְבַקְשׁוֹת</td>
<td>Seeking, a seeker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>תּוֹעֶה</td>
<td>תּוֹעֶה</td>
<td>תּוֹעִים</td>
<td>תּוֹעֹות</td>
<td>Wandering, a wanderer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The participle has many functions. Among others, it may indicate continuous action and describe a person by function or action.

וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל פְּנֵי תְהוֹם; וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל פְּנֵי הַםָיִם.

(Genesis 1:2)

Now the earth was nothingness and chaos, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

וְהוּא מְדַבֵּר עִמָם וְהִמֵה אִישׁ הַבֵנַיִם עֹלֶה גָלְיָת הַפְלִשְׁתִּי שְׁמוֹ מִגַת מִמַעְרְכוֹת פְלִשְׁתִּים; וַיְדַבֵּר כַדְבָרִים הָאֵלֶה; וַיְישַׁמֵּע דָוִד.

(I Samuel 17:23)

As he was talking with them, the champion came up, Goliath by name, from Gath, from the ranks of the Philistines, and spoke these words; and David heard.

דְבֹורָה אִשָּֽה נְבִיאָה אֵשֶּׁת לַפִידוֹת; הִיא שֹׁפְטָה אֶת-יִשְרָאֵל בָעֵת הַהִיא. מְמַעְרְכוֹת פְלִשְׁתִים וְיִצְרֵרִים נָאֲלָה; וַיִשְׁמֵע דָוִד.

(Judges 4:4-5)

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Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, judged Israel at that time. She used to sit under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the Israelites came to her for judgment.

לְפָנִים בְיִשְרָאֵל כֹה-אָמַר הָאִישׁ בְלֶכְתּוֹ לִדְרוֹשׁ אֱלֹהִים לְכוּ וְנֵלְכָה עַד הָרֹאֶה;
כִי לַמָבִיא הַיוֹם יִקָרֵא לְפָנִים הָרֹאֶה.
(I Samuel 9:9)

Formerly in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, he would say: "Come, let us go to the seer," for the prophet of today used to be called the seer.

The feminine singular participle is marked by the endings ח, ח, or ח. Participles associated with the verb patterns Pi’el, Pu’el, Hif’il, Hof’al, and Hitpa’el are marked with the prefix ח.

The Participle: Exercise