# Reciprocal Constructions in Biblical Hebrew

**BY JONATHAN JAY**

**ABSTRACT**

Reciprocal constructions of Biblical Hebrew are described and examined in light of the recent surge of scholarship that has expanded the understanding of reciprocals in the field of linguistics.  The study of Hebrew's *lexical reciprocals* has found them unified under a common semantic role suppressed in argument reduction, and has distinguished their semantic possibilities using the Mohanans' Conceptual Salience Condition.   The study of *syntactic reciprocals* maps the *co-indexing* and *anaphora* that the complex semantics of reciprocals have imposed on Hebrew syntax.  This analysis broadens the discussion of Biblical Hebrew reciprocals to include the idiomatic bipartite constructions that became grammaticalized in ancient times and only a trace of which remain in the reciprocals of Modern Hebrew.

## 1.  INTRODUCTION

Very few reference grammars even of major languages have devoted much attention to reciprocal constructions.  Only in the last two decades have these constructions found a more prominent place in theoretical discussions and in cross-linguistic studies (see König and Kokutani 2006).  Descriptive analyses of reciprocal constructions have been done in some individual languages (including Modern Hebrew, see Siloni 2005, Rubinstein 2007, etc.), but the unique reciprocal constructions of Biblical Hebrew have not been given much attention.

It is the goal of this paper to describe and briefly analyze the two primary methods of reciprocal construction in Biblical Hebrew.  The first method, presented in **Section 3**, uses LEXICAL RECIPROCALS.  The second method, presented in **Section 4**, uses SYNTACTIC RECIPROCALS, specifically, bipartite constructions employing a FLOATING QUANTIFIER.  In **Section 5,** I will compare these two methods using the hierarchy presented by König and Kokutani (2006).

## 2.  WHAT IS A RECIPROCAL?

To identify reciprocals in this paper, I will borrow Haspelmath's (2007) MUTUAL SITUATION**,** which he describes as

> a situation with two or more participants (A, B, ...) in which for at least two of the participants A and B, the relation between A and B is the same as the relation between B and A.[1]

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[1]  As Evans (to appear) notes, some languages express "less than completely symmetric situations" with standard reciprocal marking (e.g. "The students followed each other onto the stage").  This type of situation is not included in Haspelmath's MUTUAL SITUATION, which I have chosen to use, not having found an example of such clear asymmetry expressed in the Hebrew reciprocal constructions.

Sigrid Beck (2001) proposes four semantic readings of elementary reciprocal sentences: *strongly* reciprocal, *weakly* reciprocal, *situation-based weakly* reciprocal, and *collective.*  While his criteria would be useful in the analysis of Biblical Hebrew, it is not within the scope of this paper to analyze the semantic nuances of the reciprocal constructions in this data, but rather to focus on their syntactical and grammatical aspects.

I will use the term *mutual situation* to describe reciprocal events in this data. The following sections will describe and analyze several patterns of expressing these situations in Biblical Hebrew.

## 3. LEXICAL RECIPROCALS [2]

Two verbal stems in Biblical Hebrew carry the bulk of lexical reflexivity and reciprocity: the *Hithpa'el* and the *Niphal*. Both stems (also called *binyanim*[3]) have a broader semantic range and function, but they share a common grammatical component: a **reduction of arguments** of the verb's basic stem,[4] producing verbs that 'cannot govern an object' (Weingreen 1959:126). This decrease in valency encompasses the passive, middle, unaccusative, reflexive, and reciprocal functions. For the purposes of this **Sections 3.1** and **3.2,** I will limit the examples to *Hithpa'el* and *Niphal* verbs that carry a "double-status" (reflexive or reciprocal) meaning. As the examples show, both verbal stems demonstrate the capacity to turn the action of the verb back on its subject, and in the process, to suppress one argument (the subject or object) of the verb.

### 3.1. HITHPA'EL

We will first look at the *Hithpa'el* and begin with its most common function, the **reflexive**. Examples (1) and (3) are included to illustrate the transitive verbs (non-*Hithpa'el*) from which the *Hithpa'el* reflexive forms are derived in (2) and (4).

1. וַתְּצַדְּקִי אֶת־אֲחוֹתַיִךְ

wa-tə-ṣadəq-î        ʾet-ʾăḥôta-yik

and-2SG-justify\\**PIEL**-F    ACC-sister-2SG.F

You have **justified** your sisters (made your sisters [appear] righteous). (Ezek.16:51)

2. וּמַה־נִּצְטַדָּק

û-mah     niṣṭadaq

and-what   1PL\\**HITH**\\justify

'How shall we **justify ourselves** (make ourselves righteous)? (Genesis 44:16)

3. וְאֶת־אַהֲרֹן וְאֶת־בָּנָיו אֲקַדֵּשׁ לְכַהֵן לִי:

wəʾet—ʾahăron   wəʾet—banayw      ʾă-qadēš         lə-kahēn    lî.

and-ACC—Aaron  and-ACC—sons-3SG.M   1SG-consecrate\\**PIEL** to-priest    to.1SG

'And Aaron and his sons I will **consecrate** for priests to me.' (Exodus 29.44)

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[2] Haspelmath (2007) would call these *Grammatical Reciprocals,* preferring to reserve the term *Lexical Reciprocal* for verbs which 'express a mutual configuration by themselves, without necessary grammatical marking.' In this paper, however, I will use the term *Lexical Reciprocals*, following Reinhart and Siloni (2005), to describe the *Hithpa'el* and *Niphal* verbal forms, which are formed in the lexicon.

[3] Seven *binyanim* are the primary, or most common, verbal stems. They may be used and abbreviated as follows in the examples in this paper: *Qal* (QAL), *Niphal* (NIPH), *Piel* (PIEL), *Pual* (PUAL), *Hiphil* (HIPH), *Hophal* (HOPH), and *Hithpa'el* (HITH).

[4] Note: In the Bible, some Hitpa'el and Niphal forms are not derived from transitive verbs, e.g. *hit-halak* from *halak* 'to walk.' (c.f. Genesis… Psalm 58:7, etc.) These forms illustrate a function of the verbal templates broader than reflexive/reciprocal, and I have not included them in the discussion here.

**4.** וְגַם הַכֹּהֲנִים הַנִּגָּשִׁים אֶל־יְהוָה יִתְקַדָּשׁוּ פֶּן־יִפְרֹץ בָּהֶם יְהוָה:

wə-gam      ha-kohăn-îm   ha-nigaš-îm           ʾel-yəhwah    yit-qadaš-û

and-also   DET-priest-PL   DET-NIPH\approach-PL   to-Lord      3M\\**HITH**-consecrate-PL

'And also the priests, who approach the Lord, must **consecrate** themselves.'

    (Exodus 19:22)

Having illustrated the valency-reduction of the *Hithpaʾel* stem, I include below two of the rare examples of a plural *Hithpaʾel* with a **reciprocal** meaning. As noted in the gloss, (6) could be interpreted as either **plural reflexive** or **reciprocal**, based on the criteria I address in **section 3.3**.

**5.** וַיִּתְרֹצֲצוּ הַבָּנִים בְּקִרְבָּהּ

wa-yit-roṣăṣ-û               ha-banîm      bə-qirəba-h

and-3.M\HITH-struggled-PL    DET-son-PL    in-near-3SG.F

'And the children [twins] **struggled together** within her [Rebekah].' (Gen 25.22)

**6.** וַיִּתְחַזֵּק הָעָם אִישׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל

wa-yit-ḥazēq                  ha-ʿam         ʾîš      yišəraʾēl

va-3.M\HITH-strengthen-PL     DET-people     man      Israel

'And the people, the men of Israel, **strengthened themselves /**
**strengthened each other**.' (Judges 20.22)

### 3.2. NIPHAL

The *Niphal* stem is frequently referred to as the "passive of the *Qal*." It often carries a passive meaning in Biblical literature, but scholars such as Waltke and O'Connor (1990) believe that the "common denominator" of the range of the *Niphal* is the <u>middle voice</u>. One application of this general function in Biblical literature is the **reflexive** meaning (7, 8, 9), and, occasionally, the **reciprocal** (10, 11).

**7.** וְאִנָּקְמָה מֵאוֹיְבָי:

wə-ʾi-naqmah           mē-ʾôyəb-ay.

and-1SG-avenge\NIPH    from-enemies\PL-1SG

'I will **avenge myself** on my enemies.' (Isa 1:24)[5]

**8.** הִשָּׁמֶר־נָא בַּבֹּקֶר

hi-šamer                  = naʾ       ba-boqer

IMPV-guard\NIPH.M.SG= please    in-morning

'And now, **guard** yourself in the morning.' (1 Sam 19:2)[6]

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[5] See Joshua 10:13 for this verb in the Qal: 'And the sun and moon stood still until the nation **avenged his enemies**.'

[6] See Genesis 17:9 for this verb in the Qal: 'And you shall **keep my covenant**.'

**9.** יִסָּמֵךְ אִישׁ עָלָיו וּבָא בְכַפּוֹ וּנְקָבָה

yi-samēk    ʾîš    ʿal-ayw    û-baʾ    bə-kap-ô
3 SG.M-support\NIPH    man    on-3SG.M    and-enter    in-hand-3SG.M
   û-nəqab-ah
   and-pierce-3SG.M.OBJ
'If a man **supports himself** on it, it will come in and pierce his hand' (Isa 36.6)[7]

**10.** וְכִי־יִנָּצוּ אֲנָשִׁים :

wə-kî-    yi-naṣ-û    ʾănašîm
and-COND    3M-struggle\NIPH-PL    man\PL
'If men **struggle** (with each other)' (Exodus 21:22)

**11.** הֲיֵלְכוּ שְׁנַיִם יַחְדָּו בִּלְתִּי אִם־נוֹעָדוּ :

hă-yē-lək-û    šənayim    yaḥədaw    bilətî    ʾim-nôʿad-û.
Q-3M-walk-PL    two    together    without    COND-meet\NIPH-PL
'Do two walk together without **having met**?' (Amos 3:3, JPS[8])

### 3.3. ANALYSIS OF LEXICAL VERBS

What actually happens in the argument structure and semantic roles (agent and patient) of these verbal stems? More specifically, is it the *agent* or the *patient* that is not expressed, and how are the two linked to refer to one another in double-status (reflexive and reciprocal) constructions?

These questions are addressed by Mohanan and Mohanan (1998). They make their observations on the *Hithpa'el* in Modern Hebrew, but these observations hold true for both the *Niphal* in and the *Hithpa'el* Biblical Hebrew as well. The Mohanans suggest that the creation of lexical reflexives requires two mechanisms of meaning-argument linking: 1) **co-indexing**, to indicate identity of reference, 2) **suppression**, to make a semantic participant unavailable for syntactic expression. In Hebrew, they observe, both mechanisms apply to create reflexives and reciprocals. So in (2) and (9) above, for example, the agent and patient are **co-indexed**, and then one of them is **suppressed** so as not to appear in the syntax.

Further observation reveals that co-indexing does not always apply to these stems (e.g. in the passive, unaccusative, etc.), and these occurrences actually clarify which semantic role is being suppressed. Consider the following examples, which may be interpreted without co-indexing.

*Hithpa'el*
  **12.** Dan  hit-gile'ax. [9]                      [Modern Hebrew]
    Dan  [HITH] shaved.
    **'Dan shaved himself / got himself shaved** (by another).

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[7] See Genesis 27:37 for this verb in the Qal: 'With grain and wine I have **supported him.**'

[8] The New JPS Translation, Second Edition. The Jewish Publication Society: Philadelphia, 1999.

[9] Example from Modern Hebrew (Mohanan & Mohanan, 1998). I found it difficult to find an example in the Biblical data of a *Hithpa'el* stem with no co-indexing, that is, with no reflexive connotations. This stem is consistently co-indexed to involve the SUBJECT in both receiving and initiating the action.

### *Niphal*

**13.** וַתִּמָּלֵא הָאָרֶץ חָמָס׃

| wa-ti-malē<sup></sup> | ha-<sup></sup>areṣ | ḥamas. |
|---|---|---|
| And-3SG.FEM-fill\NIPH | DET-earth | violence |

'The earth **was filled** with violence.' (Gen. 6:11)

**14.** וַתִּכָּנַע מוֹאָב בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא תַּחַת יַד יִשְׂרָאֵל

| wa-ti-kana‘ | mô<sup></sup>ab | ba-yôm | ha-hû<sup></sup> | taḥat | yad | yišəra<sup></sup>ēl |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| And-3SG.F.-subdue\niph | Moab | in-day | DET-that | under | hand | Israel. |

'And Moab **was subdued** that day under the hand of Israel.' (Judges 3:30)

In the above examples, it is clear that the agent is suppressed (as normally happens with passive constructions) and that the patient appears as subject. This **agent-suppression** seems to be the general pattern for all *Hithpa'el* and *Niphal* stems; the grammatical subject is the semantic patient, which may be co-indexed to the agent to form a reflexive or reciprocal construction.

Having discussed the functional distinctions between double-status and passive constructions, we still face the ambiguity between **plural reflexive** and **reciprocal** constructions. With plural subjects the *Niphal* and *Hithpa'el* stems may carry either meaning. As the Mohanans have formulated the question, Why must some verbs have only the option of plural reflexivity (e.g. 'shave'), and others only the option of reciprocity (e.g. 'kiss')? This question could be extended to the entire semantic range of the *Niphal* and *Hithpa'el*: Why must some verbs have only the option of passivity (or middle voice, or unaccusative subject, etc.)?

The Mohanans have proposed the concept of '**conceptual salience**' to help explain this constraint on verb meanings. That is, a verb can only carry a meaning that is a "salient concept" in the known world of its speakers. For example, two people kissing one another is a salient concept, but kissing themselves is not a salient concept (at least, not kissing oneself on the lips). The Mohanans have formulated a **Conceptual Salience Condition**:

> The semantic structure of a word must correspond to a salient concept
> in the known world.[10]

How could we apply the **Conceptual Salience Condition** to the Biblical examples above? In (10), for example, we understand that it is not a salient concept that two men would 'struggle with themselves' or that two men would each 'meet themselves' before walking together (11).

Judges 20:22 (6 above) is ambiguous, for both interpretations are salient concepts on the battlefield of that context. Each soldier may have "strengthened himself" for the following day, or the soldiers may have "strengthened each other." Again, the ultimate point must be that, by whatever agent, the soldiers <u>were strengthened</u>, which is further evidence that it is the *patient,* not the *agent*, that is the expressed subject.

Of course, this ambiguity of the identity of the agent makes some Biblical verbal constructions controversial, and English translations differ over their interpretation. A prime example is the *Hithpa'el* of *barak* 'bless' in Genesis 22:18, below.

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[10] Mohanan and Mohanan stress that although this condition represents a common pattern, it is not an inviolable constraint. Rather, it is a "preference" constraint.

**15.** וְהִתְבָּרֲכוּ בְזַרְעֲךָ כֹּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ

wə-hitə-barăk-û          bə-zarʿă-ka          kol     gôyê     ha-ʾareṣ
And-3M.HITH-bless-PL  in-offspring-2SG  all     nations  DET-earth
'in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth **be blessed / bless themselves**.'
          (Genesis 22:18 ESV/JPS[11])

The difference between the Christian (ESV: *passive*) and Jewish (JPS: *reflexive or reciprocal*) translations may also be explained by the Conceptual Salience Condition.

In the Jewish worldview, Abraham and his offspring (the Jewish nation) are the topics of a "blessing formula" used by "all the nations of the earth" (the agent). The use of blessing formulas (e.g. "May the Lord bless you like He blessed _____") is a salient concept to Jewish people, and also fits well with the view that the Jewish people are the model of blessing for others to pattern.

In the Christian worldview, this passage points to one "offspring," namely Jesus Christ (see Galatians 3:16, Acts 3:25-26), the Agent that will bless all nations. The extension of blessing to all nations is a salient concept to Christians, many of whom are not of Jewish descent, while the use of a "blessing formula" is not a familiar concept.

Both salient concepts share a common semantic role; the patient, not the agent, is the subject of the verb. The views differ on the identity of the suppressed role, the agent. The nations will be blessed, yes … but *by whom*?

## 4.  SYNTACTIC RECIPROCALS

The preferred[12] reciprocal construction in Biblical Hebrew uses idiomatic reciprocal anaphors in a construction that Evans (to appear) calls a *bipartite quantifier*.[13] These appear consistently after plural verbs as a pair of singular pronouns (e.g. *ze…ze* 'this…that'), a pair of numerals (e.g.

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[11] *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. Wheaton: Standard Bible Society, 2001. *The New JPS Translation* Second Edition. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1999, in which the entire phrase reads, "All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants."

[12] I obtained the majority of this data by searching English translations for the words 'each other' and 'one another,' using Logos Bible Software. The New Living Translation produced the most results on this search, of which 75 are MUTUAL SITUATIONS explicit in the Hebrew. Of these, 68 (91%) employ the syntactic, bipartite construction, with *Hithpaʾel* or *Niphal* used in the other nine percent.

[13] The term *bipartite quantifier* is adapted from König and Kokutani's (2006) *Quantificational Strategy*. Haspelmath (2007) objects to this term, illustrating with Lezgian what may seem true in Hebrew as well: a *non-quantifier bipartite expression*. Haspelmath points out that a quantificational anaphor need not be bipartite (e.g. Finnish *toinen*). He prefers the term *anaphoric reciprocal construction,* or alternatively, *argumental reciprocal constructions*, which is a term based on the fact that these anaphors behave like arguments of the verb.

Evans (to appear) mentions that the representative phrase *ʾîš el ʾaḥîw,* 'a man to his brother', is "on road to grammaticalization as bipartite quantifier, since it is also used in situations where 'brother' is not literally appropriate, e.g. curtains in tabernacle" (see Exodus 26:5).

Evans also uses the term *bipartite quantifier* (or *binomial quantifier* in Evans et al 2007) to describe Italian's *l'uno il altro*, Spanish's *(prep.) los unos (prep.) los otros,* Russian's *drug druga*, etc., as well as English's *each other* and Biblical Hebrew's *ʾîš el ʾaḥîw*. Other terms have also be used to describe or modify such constructions, such as *nominal reciprocal* (see Evans, et al 2007), or *quanitifier-like* (Dimitriadis 2004).

*exad…šeni* 'one…the second') or, most often, a pair of generic, singular, common nouns (e.g. *ʾîš…ʾaḥîw* 'a man…his brother'[14]).

As the data in this paper will illustrate, this bipartite construction uses a variety of common nouns (see footnote 14 below), as well as accepted *quantifiers*. I have chosen to use the term *quantifier* in this paper to describe these bipartite constructions, and will operate under a definition borrowed from Floor (2004), to describe words whose meaning "always indicates that the referent to which they refer is an addition or limitation of another referent."

The variety of uses and broad range of antecedents for this construction show that it was more than just an idiom in Biblical Hebrew; it was becoming a grammaticalized construction. Prototypical examples are (16) and (17) below. This construction could be used to describe non-human participants (19), and even inanimate objects (18).

**16.** לֹא־רָאוּ אִישׁ אֶת־אָחִיו

loʾ-raʾ-û      ʾîš     ʾet-ʾaḥ-îw
NEG-see-3M.PL   man     ACC-brother-3M.SG
'They did not see **one another**.' (Exodus 10:23)

**17.** וְלֹא־קָרַב זֶה אֶל־זֶה כָּל־הַלָּיְלָה׃

 wə-loʾ-qarab           **zeh**    **ʾel-zeh**     kal-ha-laylah.
and-NEG-draw_near\3SG.M    this     to-this        all-the-night
'They did not come near **one another** all night.' (Exodus 14:20)

**18.** חֲמֵשׁ הַיְרִיעֹת תִּהְיֶיןָ חֹבְרֹת אִשָּׁה אֶל־אֲחֹתָהּ

ḥămēš   ha-yərîʿ-ot          ti-hyey-na    ḥobər-ot      **ʾišah**     **ʾel-ʾăḥot-ah**
five      DET-curtain-PL.F    F-be-PL     coupled-PL.F   woman   to-sister-3F.SG
"Five curtains shall be coupled **to one another**." (Exodus 26:3)

**19.** וַיִּקַּח־לוֹ אֶת־כָּל־אֵלֶּה וַיְבַתֵּר אֹתָם בַּתָּוֶךְ

wa-yi-qaḥ-lô             ʾet-kal-ʾēleh    wa-yə-batēr       ʾot-am       ba-tawek
and-3M-take-to\3M.SG   ACC-all-these   and-3M-divide\SG   ACC-3M.PL    in-middle

וַיִּתֵּן אִישׁ־בִּתְרוֹ לִקְרַאת רֵעֵהוּ

wa-yi-tēn           **ʾîš-bitər-ô**      **li-qəraʾt**    rēʿēh-û
and-3M-give\SG   man-half-3M.SG   INF-meet     neighbor-3M.SG
"And he brought him all these [animals], cut them in half,
and laid **each half over against the other**." (Genesis 15:10)[15]

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[14] In Biblical Hebrew, the options for common nouns are actually quite extensive: *ma'arach li-qrat ma'arach* '**army** to meet **army**' (1 Sam 17:21), *gibor b-gibor* '**warrior** on **warrior**' (Jeremiah 46:12), *mošel 'al-mošel* '**ruler** against **ruler**' (Jeremiah 51:46), *ʾîš ba-ʿamiyto* 'man to his **neighbor**' (*amiyt* Leviticus 19:11), *adam b-adam* '**man** on **man**' [lit. 'male on male'] (Ecclesiastes 8:9), *atiyq el-pney-atiyq* '**gallery** against **gallery**' (Ezekiel 42:3). Determiners are also used: *elleh* '**these**' (1 Kings 20:29) and *ze* '**this**' (Isaiah 6:3).

Today the bipartite construction in Modern Hebrew, as it is discussed in linguistics, is primarily limited to forms of *ze…ze* 'this…that' and *exad…šeni* 'one…second'. These have been termed *reciprocal pronouns* by Siloni (2005), but that term is too narrow to encompass their predecessors, the creative idioms that transformed common nouns like *ʾîš* 'man' and *gibor* 'warrior' into *quantificational reciprocals*.

[15] See also Genesis 7:2, where *ʾîš v-ʾîšto* is used for the animals entering the ark, 'a male and its mate.'

As König and Kokutani (2006) say, expressions like these should be analyzed as *anaphors*, that is, as *variables* that are bound to their governing category. For clarity, I adopt the term MUTUANT (see Haspelmath, 2007) to refer to a given participant in these mutual situations; *mutuant A* indicates the referent of the first variable in the bipartite construction (e.g. *ʾîš* 'man'), while *mutuant B* indicates the referent of the second variable (e.g. *ʾaḥîw* 'his brother').

The primary questions on which this section of the paper will focus are these:

> How are the mutuants **co-indexed** to yield a cohesive reciprocal meaning?
> What are the **grammatical relation(s)** and **syntactic category(s)** of this construction in a sentence?

## 4.1. RECIPROCAL CO-INDEXING

Consider (20) below, which contains an explicit plural subject, unlike the *pro-drop* (omission of subject) that often occurs in Biblical Hebrew. Example (21) also has an explicit plural antecedent, although this time it is the clause's object, not subject.

**20.** וַיֹּאמְרוּ הָעָם שָׂרֵי גִלְעָד אִישׁ אֶל־רֵעֵהוּ

| wa-y-oʾmər-û | ha-ʿam | šar-ê | gilʿad | ʾîš | ʾel-rēʿēh-û |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| and-M-say-PL | DET-people, | leader-PL | Gilead, | man | to-neighbor-3M.SG |

'And the people, the leaders of Gilead, said **one to another** …' (Judges 10:18)

**21.** וְנִפַּצְתִּים אִישׁ אֶל־אָחִיו

| wə-nipaṣ-ətî-**m** | ʾîš | ʾel-ʾaḥ-îw |
|---|---|---|
| and-dash-1SG-3M.PL.OBJ | man | to-brother-3M.SG. |

'I will dash **them**, **one against the other**…' (Jeremiah 13:14)

The English glosses of (20) and (21) could be indexed as illustrated below. This co-indexing shows that the mutuants are members of group (x,y), that mutuant B is linked by possession to mutuant A, and that mutuant A and mutuant B cannot have the same identity.

and-M-say-PL [DET-people]$_{(x,y)}$, [leader-PL Gilead]$_{(x,y)}$, [man]$_{(x)}$ to-[neighbor]$_{(y)}$-[3M.SG]$_{(x)}$

and-dash-1SG-[3M.PL.OBJ]$_{(x,y)}$   [man]$_{(x)}$  to-[brother]$_{(y)}$-[3M.SG.]$_{(x)}$

Of course, both of the mutuant positions in the idiom may refer to *any* and *all* of the members of the plural subject, to communicate that virtually *any* or *each* of the members may fill the role of *either* mutuant. However, the *nonidentity requirement* of reciprocals must apply to this construction (see Dalrymple, Mchombo, and Peters, 1994), such that the entity linked to the filler of the first argument (e.g. *ʾîš* 'man') cannot simultaneously be the entity linked to the filler of the second argument (e.g. *ʾaḥîw* 'his brother'). In other words, this *reciprocal* construction cannot be construed as a *reflexive* construction.

## 4.2. SYNTACTIC CATEGORIES and GRAMMATICAL RELATIONS

Next we examine the **grammatical relations** and **syntactic categories** of this anaphoric reciprocal construction. Evans et al (2007) point out that, unlike the lexical reciprocals above, this construction does not affect valency in any way. Rather, the construction supplies the reciprocal expression (i.e. mutuant B) to fill the lower argument slot (e.g. the object or oblique).

The grammatical relations of mutuant B are quite evident from its case marking or preposition, and it stands as a noun phrase and argument of the verb. However, the relation of mutuant A presents more difficulty. As may be seen in the above examples, this first element of the construction seems to fill the upper argument slot, for example, the subject (20) or object (21). However, this upper argument is already (usually) filled by a plural constituent, either explicit or implicit (through *pro-drop*). In addition, we find a lack of agreement between the *singular* constituent of mutuant A and the *plural* verb that normally accompanies it. Consider the following examples.

22. וַאֲנַחְנוּ נִפְרָדִים עַל־הַחוֹמָה רְחוֹקִים אִישׁ מֵאָחִיו (נחמיה 4:13)

wa-ʾănaḥănû niprad-îm ʿal-ha-ḥômah rəḥôq-îm ʾîš **mē-ʾaḥ-îw.**

and-1PL separate.PTC-M.PL on-DET-wall far-M.PL man from-brother-3M.SG

'**We** are separated on the wall **from one another**.' (Nehemiah 4:19)

23. בְּנֵי עַמְּךָ דִּבֶּר־חַד אֶת־אַחַד אִישׁ אֶת־אָחִיו

bən-ê ʿamə-ka… diber **-ḥad** **ʾet-ʾaḥad** ʾîš ʾet-ʾaḥ-îw

son-PL people-2SG say\3M.SG -one\M ACC-one\M, man ACC-brother-3M.SG

'The sons of your people… say to **one another**, **each to his brother**…'
     (Ezekiel 33:30)[16]

24. וְאִישׁ בְּרֵעֵהוּ יְהָתֵלּוּ (ירמיה 9:4)

wə-ʾîš **bə-rēʿēh-û** yə-hatēl-û

and-man on-neighbor-3M.SG 3SG-deceive-PL

'**Everyone** deceives his neighbor.' (Jeremiah 9:5)

25. וְלַמֵּדְנָה בְנוֹתֵיכֶם נֶהִי וְאִשָּׁה רְעוּתָהּ קִינָה (ירמיה 9:19)

wə-lamēd-ənah bənôt-êkem nehî

and-teach\IMPV-F.PL daughter.PL-2M.PL lament

     wə-išah rəû-tah qînah.

     and-woman neighbor-3F.SG dirge

'(**You**) teach your daughters a lament,

     and **each (to) her neighbor** a dirge.' (Jeremiah 9:20) [17]

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[16] This verse presents problems on several accounts: Although it contains a plural subject (bən-ê 'sons'), and two parallel bipartite constructions, the verb is singular. At this point, I can only propose that the verb's number may be influenced by ʿamə-ka 'your people.' This collective noun, when it is a subject, often occurs with a singular verb.

[17] Jeremiah 9:20 (example 25). The group under this imperative is understood to include the women and their neighbors, but not their daughters. That is, the daughters will be taught a lament, and the women will teach one another a dirge.

**26.** וְקָרָא זֶה אֶל־זֶה וְאָמַר קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ קָדוֹשׁ יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת

| wə-qaraʾ | **zeh ʾel-zeh** | wə-ʾamar | qadôš qadôš qadôš | yəhwah | ṣəbaʾ-ôt |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| and-call\3M.SG | this to-this | and-say\3M.SG | Holy holy holy | LORD [18] | host-PL |

And **one** called **to another** and said: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts…"

    (Isaiah 6:3)

**27.** אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ יַעְזֹרוּ וּלְאָחִיו יֹאמַר חֲזָק

| ʾîš | **ʾet-rēʿēh-û** | ya-ʿəzor-û | **û-lə-ʾaḥ-îw** | yo-ʾmar | ḥăzaq. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| man | ACC-neighbor-3M.SG | 3M-help-PL | and-to-brother-3M.SG | 3M-say\SG | Strong |

'They help **every one his neighbor**, and (each) says **to his brother**, "Be strong!"'

    (Isaiah 41:6 [Darby, ESV])

Although the nominal components of the idiom must agree with the verbal subject-agreement in *gender* (compare 27 and 25 above), they do not generally agree in *number* (see 16, 22, 23, 25, etc.) or *person* (22, 25).[19] Each mutuant must be understood as coreferential with members of an explicit or understood plural group.[20] The antecedent group is usually the subject of the clause (see 20), but may be the object (21, 32).[21]

In other words, the verb's underlying upper argument does not agree in number with mutuant A of the construction, yet the verb selects mutuant B as its lower argument. For example, (27) includes two verbs, each of which selects a different grammatical relation for mutuant B to complete its argument structure. Yaʿəzorû 'help' selects an *accusative* object, while yo-ʾmar 'say' selects an *oblique* argument with the preposition lə- 'to'.

The syntactic category of mutuant A can best be understood as a FLOATING QUANTIFIER, much like 'each' in the English *bipartite quantifier* 'each other.' (see 28 below) The quantifier has 'floated' from its position as a class noun modifying the plural group, and has become a possessor of the lower argument (mutuant B).[22]

It is not strange that what seems to be a "common noun" should function in this role as a QUANTIFIER. David Stein (2008) shows that the term אִישׁ (traditionally glossed 'man') is used in

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[18] This verse involves the sacred 'tetragrammaton' name of God, often transliterated into English as 'Jehovah.' It is usually glossed and pronounced *adonai* 'LORD' in Jewish circles, as an act of reverence.

[19] König and Kokutani (2006) predict that in some languages, these anaphors may inflect for person, number, case, etc. Our data show that in the case of Biblical Hebrew, these anaphors inflect for GENDER, though not for PERSON or NUMBER.

[20] A handful of data emerges using this idiom with a singular verb. These references include Exodus 14:20 (see 17), 1 Samuel 14:20 (see 33), Isaiah 6:3, Jeremiah 46:16, Jeremiah 9:20 (see 25), and Ezekiel 38:21.

[21] The fact that Hebrew can create *non-subject* reciprocals with this bipartite construction agrees with Evans, Gaby, and Nordlinger (2007), who say, "It is generally the case that the possibility of both arguments being non-subjects is limited to languages that do not encode the reciprocal relation on the verb, but use free expressions." Our data illustrate that Biblical Hebrew does in fact produce reciprocals in both ways, but as Evans et al predict, non-subject reciprocity occurs only in the bipartite construction (never in lexical reciprocals).

[22] It is not within the scope of this paper to determine or conjecture about the motion or direction of the 'float' of the quantifier. This has been the primary focus of recent scholarship on floating quantifiers, particularly within the Minimalist Program and Relational Grammar frameworks.

Biblical literature[23] to speak of a *participant member of the group in question*. Stein's work builds on the research of Alison Grant (1977), who tabulated all Biblical references to אִישׁ. She found only 20% to refer to a specific (male) individual, while at least 74% of occurrences referred to "any or each member of a defined group or class."

We find, then, in the data what we should expect: the plural group or class is only explicitly stated when necessary. When the group is understood (or intentionally underspecified to embrace humanity: see example 24), the bipartite quantifier works on its own, whether its verb is plural or singular.

Several aspects of the English *floating quantifier* in (28) below are analogous to the 'floating' mutuant A in Hebrew.

> **28.** a. ***Each*** child is hitting-**SG** the other.
> b. ***Each*** is hitting-**SG** the other.
> c. The children ***each*** are hitting-**PL** other.
> d. The children are hitting-**PL** *each* other.

In Hebrew, as in English, the verb referring to a mutual situation can be either singular (17, 23, 28a,b) or plural (20, 24, 25, 28c,d). The quantifier may 'float' independent of either its plural group (22, 23, 28d) or its fellow-MUTUANT(S) (27, 28a, 32). The quantifier may modify its antecedent group (22, 23, 28a), or stand itself as an argument of the verb (26, 28b).[24]

The flexibility of this *floating quantifier* (mutuant A) and its companion (mutuant B) should not mask the semantic stability that it conveys. The quantifier always functions as a variable, a singular representative of a plural group.

### 4.3. ADDITIONAL FEATURES

When referring to an antecedent of only two individuals, this *bipartite quantifier* construction is inherently symmetrical. That is, both members of the group participate *equally* in both semantic roles as mutuants. Deviation from this norm requires additional specification to indicate otherwise. An example of such a specification is seen in example (29).

> **29.** וַיִּשְּׁקוּ אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ וַיִּבְכּוּ אִישׁ אֶת־רֵעֵהוּ עַד־דָּוִד הִגְדִּיל:
>
> wa-yi-šǝq-û      ʾîš      ʾet-rēʿēh-û
> and-3M-kiss-PL    man    ACC-friend-3M.SG
>
>     wa-yi-bǝk-û      ʾîš      ʾet-rēʿēh-û      ʿad    dawid     hi-gǝdîl
>     and-3M-weep-PL   man    ACC-friend-3M.SG   until   David     HIPH-great\3M.SG
>
> 'and they kissed one another and they cried (with) one another, **but David more.'**
>     (1 Samuel 20:41)

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[23] While I speak of אִישׁ here, I do not forget the other common nouns that are found in this bipartite construction (see footnote 14). In each of those contexts, the singular noun is used, like אִישׁ, as a representative, or limitation, of another referent (the group). According to the definition used in this paper, then, they also are *quantifiers*.

[24] It is rare in the Biblical data to find an instance where MUTUANT A is a term argument (SUBJ or OBJ), but (33) is a likely example. Two conditions are met: 1) the verb agreement is singular, and 2) there is no other explicit term argument as its antecedent in the sentence.

Occasionally, the bipartite construction demonstrates an interesting capacity. Here the reciprocal relationship is not between two members of the group directly, but between a member and a part or tool of another member. These could be compared with the English example in (30).

**30.** 'They kissed **one another's cheek**.'

**31.** אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִשְׁמְעוּ אִישׁ שְׂפַת רֵעֵהוּ…

…ʾăšer     loʾ     yi-šəmə‘-û     ʾîš     **šəpat     rēʿēh-û.**
…that     NEG     3M-hear-PL     man     lip     neighbor-3M.SG
'…that they may not understand **one another's speech**.' (Genesis 11:7)

**32.** וַיָּשֶׂם יְהוָה אֶת חֶרֶב אִישׁ בְּרֵעֵהוּ וּבְכָל־הַמַּחֲנֶה

wa-ya-šem     yəhwah     ʾēt     ḥereb     ʾîš     bə-rēʿēh-û
and-3M-set\SG 'Lord'     ACC     sword     man     on-neighbor-3M.SG
**û-bə-kal-     ha-maḥăneh**
and-on-all     DET-camp.
'and the LORD set **every man's sword against his neighbor**
and **against the whole camp**.' (Judges 7:22)

**33.** הָיְתָה חֶרֶב אִישׁ בְּרֵעֵהוּ

hay-tah     ḥereb     **ʾîš     bə-rēʿēh-û**
be-3F.SG     sword     man     on-neighbor-3M.SG
'The **sword of every man** was against his brother.' (1 Samuel 14:20)

**34.** וְהַנִּשְׁאָרוֹת תֹּאכַלְנָה אִשָּׁה אֶת־בְּשַׂר רְעוּתָהּ

wə-ha-nišəʾar-ôt     t-oʾkal-nah     **ʾišah     ʾet-bə-šar     rəʿû-tah.**
and-DET-one_left-PL     F-eat-3.PL     woman     ACC-on-flesh     neighbor-3F.SG
'And let those [sheep] who are left devour **the flesh of one another.**'
(Zechariah 11:9)

Example (32) also illustrates a rare phenomenon; *mutuant B* (here an oblique argument: 'on his neighbor') occupies a coordinate structure with a similar prepositional phrase ('on the whole army'). However, unlike (27) above, the second phrase may not be a mutuant. It is not part of the *mutual situation* in the same way that is 'his neighbor', for 'the whole camp' (as a group) seems to participate more as a *recipient* than as an individual *agent*.[25]

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[25] This analysis could be called into question by defining *maḥăneh* 'camp' as itself a group of individuals, and perhaps as a co-indexed source of participating mutuants. Such an interpretation could yield a third dimension to the disaster of this event, for if the 'camp' is a *symmetric* participant in this MUTUAL SITUATION, then each member (*ʾîš*) found himself not only *attacking* 1) his neighbor and 2) the whole camp, but also *being attacked* by both.

### 5.  COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

In their typology of reciprocal constructions (2006), König and Kokutani classify into four strategies the methods of reciprocal construction in the languages of the world:

1)  The **Affixal Strategy** derives reciprocal verbs from more basic verbal stems.

2)  The **Pronominal Strategy** uses primarily reflexive pronouns.

3)  The **Deverbal Strategy** uses a verb or verbal derivative.  This strategy includes serial verbs, reduplication, and reciprocal markers derived from a symmetric predicate.

4)  The **Quantificational Strategy** uses NP-like constituents to form *reciprocal anaphors* (c.f. Hebrew *bipartite quantifier* above).  Unlike the other strategies, this strategy does *not* decrease the valency of a transitive verb.[26]

Using these four categories, König and Kokutani draw a hierarchy of reciprocal constructions (below) and make certain observations about characteristics along the spectrum.[27]

**derivational (I) < pronominal (II) < deverbal (III) < quantificational (IV)**

When one compares Hebrew's lexical reciprocals (e.g. *Hithpa'el* and *Niphal*) on one side with the syntactic reciprocals (the *bipartite quantifiers*, e.g. *ʾîš ...ʾaḥîw*) on the other, our data support König and Kokutani's distinctive predictions.

On the left, as they predict, we find that Hebrew's *lexical reciprocals* exhibit inherently symmetric predicates, a loss of independence, and a higher range of meanings and polysemy (producing ambiguity between reflexive and reciprocal).  On the right, the hierarchy describes strategies (including Hebrew's *bipartite quantifiers*) that are more emphatic, less economical, less restricted, and less ambiguous.  The constructions in Strategy IV are said to demonstrate more semantic substance and manifest an NP-like behaviour.  It is perhaps this clarity, versatility, and semantic capacity that pushed the quantificational strategy to the fore in the *mutual situations* of Biblical Hebrew.

### 6.  CONCLUSION

The goal of this paper was to describe the reciprocal constructions of Biblical Hebrew and to examine them in light of the recent surge of scholarship that has expanded the understanding of reciprocals in the field of linguistics.  The study of Hebrew's *lexical reciprocals* has found them unified under a common semantic role suppressed in argument reduction, and has distinguished their semantic possibilities using the Mohanans' Conceptual Salience Condition.  In the study of *syntactic reciprocals*, I have attempted to map the *co-indexing* and *anaphora* that the complex semantics of reciprocals have imposed on Hebrew syntax.

In the world of Biblical Hebrew scholarship, this analysis also broadens the discussion of Biblical Hebrew reciprocals to include the idiomatic bipartite constructions that became

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[26] A possible exception to the valency reduction of the first three strategies is the **Pronominal Strategy**.  It is debated whether reciprocal pronouns (which usually also function as reflexive pronouns with singular verbs) reduce the valency ( -arity) of their transitive predicates.

[27] Some languages have more than one strategy, although König and Kokutani say strategies I and II are mutually exclusive.  Hebrew uses strategies I and IV, as do Russian, Hungarian, Finnish, and Greek.  French, German, and Italian use strategies II and IV, Japanese uses strategies III and IV, while Modern English uses only strategy IV.

grammaticalized in ancient times and only a trace of which remain in the reciprocals of Modern Hebrew.[28]


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[28] See footnote 14.