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Table of Contents

continuation of previous stages of the language; it does not, for instance, make use of the biblical concessive גם כי *gam ki* 'although' (cf. Joüon and Muraoka 2006:601–602). Rather, it is a mixture of elements carried over from these earlier incarnations, borrowings from the native languages of the first generation of speakers—Russian and Yiddish—and internal developments which have taken place over the past 100 years or so.

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Conditional Clause: Biblical Hebrew

A conditional clause indicates circumstances under which another clause is true or occurs. It is the 'if' part of an 'if-then' statement.

For example, consider the sentence, "If you study, then you will learn". The 'if' part, "if you study", is the conditional clause (also called the *protasis*). The 'then' part, "then you will learn", is called the *apodosis*. It is worth noting that the entire 'if-then' sentence is called a 'conditional *sentence*', which is not to be confused with the 'conditional *clause*' (which consists of the 'if' part alone).

Conditional clauses can be classified as either real or unreal. A 'real conditional clause' is one that presents the condition as one that has been or could be fulfilled. Many real conditional clauses refer to the future, such as, "If it is still sunny an hour from now...". It is possible, however, to have a real conditional clause that refers to the past, such as, "If David finished last night...". These are real conditional clauses because they imply that it is possible that the condition will be fulfilled (i.e., it might be sunny an hour from now) or may have been fulfilled (i.e., perhaps David finished last night). It does not matter if the speaker is actually mistaken (e.g., he is unaware of an impending storm) or even misleading (e.g., he knows that David actually did not finish, but he is pretending not to know). The key to distinguishing a real conditional clause from an unreal one is that a real conditional clause describes the condition as an actual possibility.

An 'unreal (or irreal) conditional clause' is one that presents the condition as one that has not been or cannot be fulfilled. Many unreal conditional clauses refer to past time, such as, "If only I had studied for the test...". It is possible, however, to have an unreal conditional clause that refers to the present or the future,

such as, "If only I could sprout wings and fly…". These examples are unreal conditional clauses because they describe the conditions in such a way as to imply that they have not been fulfilled (i.e., I did not study for the test) or could not be fulfilled (i.e., I cannot sprout wings and fly).

In Biblical Hebrew, real conditional clauses and unreal conditional clauses often begin differently, although there is some overlap. Real conditions can begin with ־ו *waw* followed by the subject (1) or the predicate (2). Alternately, a real conditional clause can begin with אִם *ʾim* (3), כִּי *kī* (4), or rarely אֲשֶׁר *ʾăšer* (5). Occasionally, a clause that begins with הֵן *hēn* may have a conditional meaning (6), but the conditionality is signaled by the context rather than by הֵן *hēn* itself (Stec 1987:478–486; see also Garr 2004: 336–339). A negative real conditional clause ('if not') typically begins with אִם לֹא *ʾim lō* (7).

(1) וְשֵׂעָר בַּנֶּגַע הָפַךְ לָבָן... נֶגַע צָרַעַת הוּא
wə-śēʿār ban-negaʿ hāp̄ak lāḇān…negaʿ ṣāraʿat hū
and-hair in.the-infection it.turned white… infection.of skin.disease it
'*If the hair in the mark has turned white…*, it is an infection of skin disease' (Lev. 13.3).

(2) וְעָזַב אֶת־אָבִיו וָמֵת
wə-ʿāzaḇ ʾet-ʾāḇīw wā-mēt
and-he.will.leave ACC his.father and-he.will. die
'*If he leaves his father*, he will die' (Gen. 44.22).

(3) אִם־הַשְּׂמֹאל וְאֵימִנָה
ʾim-haś-śəmōl wə-ʾēmīnā
if the-left and-I.shall.go.right
'*If [you go to] the left*, then I will go to the right' (Gen. 13.9).

(4) כִּי שִׁבְעָתַיִם יֻקַּם־קָיִן וְלֶמֶךְ שִׁבְעִים וְשִׁבְעָה
kī šiḇʿātayim yuqqam-qāyin wə-lemek šiḇʿīm wə-šiḇʿā
that sevenfold he.is.avenged Cain and-Lamech seventy and-seven
'*If Cain is avenged sevenfold*, then Lamech seventy-sevenfold' (Gen. 4.24).

(5) וַאֲשֶׁר לֹא צָדָה... וְשַׂמְתִּי לְךָ מָקוֹם
wa-ʾăšer lō ṣādā…wə-śamtī ləkā māqōm
and-which NEG he.lay.in.wait…and-I.will. appoint for.you place
'*If he did not lie in wait…*I will appoint a place for you' (Exod. 21.13).

(6) הֵן אֶעֱצֹר הַשָּׁמַיִם
hēn ʾeʿĕṣōr haš-šāmayim
behold I.will.shut the-sky
'*If I shut up the sky…*' or 'When I shut up the sky…' (2 Chron. 7.13).

(7) וְאִם־לֹא אֵדָעָה
wə-ʾim-lō ʾēdāʿā
and-if NEG I.shall.know
'*And if not*, then I will know' (Gen. 18.21).

Unreal conditional clauses typically begin with *lū*, which may be spelled לוּ (8), לוּא (9), or defectively as לֻא (10). Negative unreal conditional clauses often begin with *lūlē*, which may be spelled לוּלֵא (11) or לוּלֵי (12). An unreal conditional clause that carries a concessive sense ('even if') (→ Concessive Clause) can begin with other particles. In particular, the word אִלּוּ *ʾillū* is used twice in the Hebrew Bible (in material widely considered late), both times for an unreal conditional clause that functions concessively (13, 14). There are also clauses that begin with אִם *ʾim* (15, 16) or כִּי *kī* (17) that could be classified as either unreal concessive clauses or as concessive clauses (Williams and Beckman 2007:157, 160).

(8) לוּ חָכְמוּ יַשְׂכִּילוּ זֹאת
lū ḥākmū yaśkīlū zōt
if.only they.were.wise they.would.under-stand this
'*If only they were wise*, then they would understand this' (Deut. 32.29).

(9) לוּא הִקְשַׁבְתָּ... וַיְהִי כַנָּהָר שְׁלוֹמֶךָ
lū hiqšaḇtā…wa-yhī kan-nāhār šəlōmekā
if.only you.paid.attention…and-it.was like.the-river your.peace
'*If only you had paid attention…*, then your peace would have been like the river' (Isa. 48.18).

(10) לֻא אַבְשָׁלוֹם חַי... כִּי־אָז יָשָׁר בְּעֵינֶיךָ
lū ʾaḇšālōm ḥay…kī-ʾāz yāšār bə-ʿēnekā
if.only Absalom alive…then right in-your.eyes
'*If Absalom were alive…*, then you would be pleased' (2 Sam. 19.7 [ketiv])

(11) לוּלֵא חֲרַשְׁתֶּם בְּעֶגְלָתִי
lūlē ḥăraštem bə-ʿeḡlātī
if.not you.plowed with-my.heifer
'*If you had not plowed with my heifer…*' (Judg. 14.18).

(12) לוּלֵ֣י ת֭וֹרָתְךָ שַׁעֲשֻׁעָ֑י

lūlē ṯōrāṯḵå ša'ăšu'åy

if.not your.teaching my.delight

'*If your teaching had not been my delight*…' (Ps. 119.92).

(13) וְאִלּ֧וּ לַעֲבָדִ֛ים… נִמְכַּ֖רְנוּ הֶחֱרַ֑שְׁתִּי

wə-'illū la-'ăḇåḏīm…nimkarnū heḥĕraštī

and-even.if to-slaves…we.were.sold I.was.silent

'*If we had only been sold as slaves*…, I would have kept silent' (Esth. 7.4).

(14) וְאִלּ֣וּ חָיָ֗ה אֶ֤לֶף שָׁנִים֙ פַּעֲמַ֔יִם

wə-'illū ḥåyå 'eleᵱ šånīm pa'ămayim

and-even.if he.lived thousand years two.times

'*Even if he lives a thousand years twice over*,…' (Qoh. 6.6).

(15) כִּ֤י אִם־הִכִּיתֶם֙ כָּל־חֵ֣יל כַּשְׂדִּ֔ים

kī 'im-hikkīṯem kål-ḥēl kaśdīm

for if you.defeated all.of army.of Babylonians

'For *even if you were to defeat the whole Babylonian army*…' (Jer. 37.10).

(16) אִם־אֶ֭רְעַב לֹא־אֹ֣מַר לָ֑ךְ

'im-'er'aḇ lō-'ōmar låk

if I.will.be.hungry NEG I.will.say to.you

'*Even if I were hungry*, I would not tell you' (Ps. 50.12).

(17) כִּ֤י אָמַ֙רְתִּי֙ יֶשׁ־לִ֣י תִקְוָ֔ה

kī 'åmartī yeš-lī ṯiqwå

if I.said there.is for.me hope

'*Even if I were to say that I have hope*…' (Ruth 1.12).

If multiple conditional clauses occur in the same context, each conditional clause may begin with the same introductory particle (18), or different particles may be used (19).

(18) אִם־הַשְּׂמֹ֣אל וְאֵימִ֔נָה וְאִם־הַיָּמִ֖ין וְאַשְׂמְאִֽילָה

'im-haś-śəmōl wə-'ēminå wə-'im-hay-yåmīn wə-'aśmə'īlå

if the-left and-I.shall.go.right and-if the-right and-I.shall.go.left

'*If [you go to] the left*, then I will go to the right. *If [you go to] the right*, then I will go to the left' (Gen. 13.9).

(19) אִם־אֶסַּ֣ק שָׁ֭מַיִם שָׁ֣ם אָ֑תָּה וְאַצִּ֖יעָה שְּׁא֣וֹל הִנֶּֽךָּ

'im-'essaq šåmayim šåm 'åttå wa-'assī'å ššə'ōl hinnekkå

if I.will.climb heavens there you and.I.shall.make.my.bed Sheol behold.you

'*If I ascend to heaven*, you are there. *If I make my bed in Sheol*, you are there' (Ps. 139.8).

A conditional clause is usually accompanied by an apodosis (the 'then' clause of an 'if-then' sentence). The apodosis can, however, be omitted in a conditional clause that implies an oath or curse (20) (but see Joüon and Muraoka 2006:584) or that is an optative exclamation (21). The apodosis usually begins with ו- *waw* (called the 'resumptive *waw*', the '*waw* of apodosis', or the 'conditional *waw*') (18), but it can begin without a conjunction (19) or with אָז *'åz* 'then' (22). Very rarely, the apodosis following an unreal condition can begin with כִּי אָז *kī 'åz* (10). The apodosis typically follows the conditional clause (22), but it may precede it (23).

(20) וַיִּשָּׁבַ֣ע לֵאמֹ֑ר אִם־יִרְאֶ֣ה אִישׁ֒… אֵ֚ת הָאָ֣רֶץ הַטּוֹבָ֔ה

way-yiššåḇa' lēmōr 'im-yir'ɛ 'īš…'ēṯ hå-'åreṣ håṭ-ṭōḇå

and-he.swore to-say if he.will.see man…ACC the-land the-good

'He vowed: *No man will see*…*the good land*' (Deut. 1.34–35).

(21) לוּ־מַ֙תְנוּ֙ בְּאֶ֣רֶץ מִצְרַ֔יִם

lū-maṯnū bə-'ɛreṣ miṣrayim

if.only we.died in-land.of Egypt

'*Would that we had died in the land of Egypt*'! (Num. 14.2).

(22) אִם־תָּשִׁ֤יב מִשַּׁבָּת֙ רַגְלֶ֔ךָ… אָ֚ז תִּתְעַנַּ֣ג עַל־יְהוָ֑ה

'im-tåšīḇ miš-šabbåṯ ragleḵå…'åz tiṯ'annaḡ 'al-YHWH

if you.turn.back from-Sabbath your.foot…then you.will.delight regarding YHWH

'*If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath*…then you will take delight in YHWH' (Isa. 58.13–14).

(23) לֹ֣א אֶֽעֱשֶׂ֔ה אִם־אֶמְצָ֥א שָׁ֖ם שְׁלֹשִֽׁים

lō 'e'ĕśɛ 'im-'emṣå šåm šəlōšīm

NEG I.will.do if I.will.find there thirty

'I will not do it, *if I find thirty there*' (Gen. 18.30).

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Conditional Clause: Rabbinic Hebrew

A conditional clause is a subordinate clause which expresses a condition upon whose fulfillment what is expressed in the main (consequent) clause depends. The particle אם *'im* 'if' is the usual word which introduces a conditional clause. It introduces a factual conditional clause, meaning that what is described in the *'im*-clause is fulfilled or can be fulfilled and, consequently, what is described in the main clause is, will be, or should be fulfilled, too.

When the condition has already been fulfilled or is regarded as fulfilled, the *'im*-clause employs the perfect, and the consequent clause may take any tense: the perfect to indicate that the consequence has been fulfilled too, e.g., אם קול שופר שמע, יצא *'im qol šopar šamaʿ, yaṣa* 'if he

has heard the sound of the *shofar*, he has discharged his duty' (Mishna Rosh ha-Shana 3.7); the participle to indicate its present or future fulfillment, e.g., אם רצא להוסיף, מוסיף משלו *'im raṣa lehosip̄, mosip̄ miš-šel-lo* 'if he were of a mind to add more (money), he could add more at his own expense' (Mishna Yoma 3.7); the imperfect or imperative to indicate a command, e.g., אם מת, יניחוהו *'im met, yanniḥuhu* 'If dead, they must leave him' (Mishna Yoma 8.7).

When the condition has not been fulfilled, but is able to be fulfilled, the *'im*-clause may employ any tense: the perfect to indicate the future perfect, i.e., representing a conditions that might be fulfilled in the future as having already been fulfilled, e.g., אם אחרתי, צאו ושחטו עלי *'im 'eḥarti, ṣe'u we-šaḥaṭu ʿalay* 'if I am delayed, go forth and slay for me' (Mishna Pesaḥim 9.9); the participle, e.g., אם אינו יכול לירד, יחזיר את פניו *'im 'eno yak̄ol lered, yaḥazir 'et panaw* 'If he cannot go down, he should turn his face' (Mishna Berakhot 4.5); the imperfect (less frequently), e.g., אם ירצה העליון ליקח את עפרו, אין כאן ירק *'im yirṣe ha-ʿelyon liqqaḥ 'et ʿap̄aro, 'en kan yaraq* 'If the one above were of a mind to collect his earth, there would be no vegetables' (Mishna Bava Metziʿa 10.6).

Both the *'im*-clause and the consequent clause can consist of a nominal (non-verbal) clause, e.g., אם יש אב, הנכסים של האב *'im yeš 'ab̄, han-nek̄asim šel ha-'ab̄* 'If there is a father, the assets belong to the father' (Mishna Yevamot 4.7). ואם לאו *we-'im law* 'but if not' expresses an alternative condition in the negative, e.g., אם כיוון לבו, יצא, ואם לאו, לא יצא *'im kiwwen libbo yaṣa, we-'im law, lo yaṣa* 'If he directed his heart, he has discharged his duty, but if not, he has not discharged his duty' (Mishna Rosh ha-Shana 3.7). The consequent clause is sometimes introduced by הרי *hare* 'lo, behold' followed by a demonstrative, e.g., ואם מתחשב הוא, הרי זה לא ירחוץ *we-'im mitḥaššeb̄ hu, hare ze lo yirḥoṣ* 'and if he claims importance, lo, this one shall not wash' (Mishna Sheviʿit 8.2).

Usually, the *'im*-clause precedes the main clause. Only very rarely can it be found at the end of the sentence, e.g., חתן פטור מקריית שמע בלילה הראשון ועד מוצאי שבת אם לא עשה מעשה *ḥatan paṭur miq-qeriyat šemaʿ bal-layla ha-rišon 'im lo ʿaśa maʿaśe* 'A bridegroom is exempt from the recitation of the Shema on the first night [after the wedding] if he did not consummate [the marriage]' (Mishna Berakhot 2.5).