

## BBH Workbook p. 76 #6

### (Gen 3:1)

וְהַנָּחַשׁ הָיָה עָרוֹם מִכָּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה  
אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים

### וְהַנָּחַשׁ

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וְהַנָּחַשׁ, “and (or, now) the serpent,” consists of

- the conjunction Waw
- the definite article
- the masculine singular noun נָחַשׁ

#### TRANSLATION

וְ, often translated “and,” can sometimes be translated with the English conjunctions “now” and “but.” For example,

וַיִּמָּלֵט וַיִּרְוֹד בְּרַח וַיִּמָּלֵט      **Now** David fled and escaped.  
(1 Sam 19:18)

וַהֲאֲנָשִׁים יִנְחָשׁוּ      **Now** the men took this as an omen.  
(1 Kgs 20:33)

וַיִּנְחַח מִצָּא חֵן  
בְּעֵינֵי יְהוָה      **But** Noah found favor  
in the eyes of the Lord.  
(Gen 6:8)

Which translation is best can usually be determined through an analysis of syntax and context.

Note that the conjunction “now” is to be distinguished from the adverb “now,” which means “at the present time.” For example,

וְעַתָּה כְּרַתוּ-לָנוּ  
בְרִית  
And **now**, make (lit. cut) with us  
a covenant.  
(Josh 9:6)

הָיָה

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הָיָה, “(he, it) was,” is the Qal Perfect 3ms of הָיָה.

#### MORPHOLOGY

The final He in the Qal Perfect 3ms of III-ה verbs (e.g., הָיָה) is a vowel letter (*mater lectionis*), not a root consonant. Thus, הָיָה consists of two **consonants** and two **vowels**:

הָיָה

עָרוּם

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The (masculine singular) adjective עָרוֹם means “crafty.”

עָרוֹם agrees with הַנָּחָשׁ in gender (masc.) and number (sing.), but not in definiteness. Moreover, the two are linked by the verb הָיָה. עָרוֹם is therefore a predicate adjective modifying הַנָּחָשׁ.

עָרוֹם	הָיָה	הַנָּחָשׁ
PREDICATE ADJECTIVE	LINKING VERB	NOUN
crafty	was	the serpent

**Summary:** הַנָּחָשׁ הָיָה עָרוֹם:

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*Now the serpent was crafty.*

מִכֹּל

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מִכֹּל consists of

- the preposition מִן
- the adjective כֹּל, “all, every, any”

MORPHOLOGY

The Nun of מִן has assimilated into the Kaf of כל as a Daghesh Forte.

#### GRAMMAR

English often expresses comparison by means of comparative adjectives and the word "than." For example,

The people are bigger and taller (Deut 1:28)  
than we.

I am holier than you. (Isa 65:5)

leaders more numerous and  
more distinguished than the former (Num 22:15)

Hebrew usually expresses comparison by means of adjectives and the preposition מִן. For example,

עִם גָּדוֹל וְרַם מִמֶּנּוּ (Deut 1:28)

שָׂרִים רַבִּים וְנֹכְבָדִים מֵאֵלֶּה (Num 22:15)

וְהִנְחַשׁ הָיָה עֲרוֹם מִכֹּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה (Gen 3:1)

#### חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה

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The construct chain חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה, "beast(s) of the field," consists of

- תַּיִת, the construct form of תַּיָּה, “animal(s), beast(s)”
- הַשָּׂדֶה, which is made up of the definite article and the masculine noun שָׂדֶה, “field”

#### TRANSLATION

תַּיָּה sometimes refers to an individual beast or animal, but it may also be used collectively with the meaning “beasts” or “animals.”

#### MORPHOLOGY

When a feminine noun ending in הָ enters the construct state, the הָ suffix becomes תָּ. For example,

שִׁפְחָה	→	שִׁפְחַת
קִרְיָה	→	קִרְיַת
תַּיָּה	→	תַּיִת

### Summary: כָּל תַּיִת הַשָּׂדֶה

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*all the beasts of the field*

or

*every beast of the field*

or

*any beast of the field*

## אֲשֶׁר

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אֲשֶׁר, here “that” or “which,” is Hebrew’s principal relative pronoun.

### GRAMMAR

In both Hebrew and English, **relative pronouns** always directly follow the **noun** (or noun phrase) they modify. For example,

הָאֲנָשִׁים אֲשֶׁר-שָׁלַח מֹשֶׁה      the men whom Moses sent  
(Num 13:16)

הַמַּרְאֵה אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתִי      the vision that I had seen  
(Ezek 11:24)

הָעָרִים אֲשֶׁר עַל-      the cities that are on  
יְדֵי אַרְנוֹן      the banks of the Arnon  
(Judg 11:26)

The relative pronoun אֲשֶׁר is not inflected (that is, its form never varies, even though its function does). English relative pronouns, on the other hand, are inflected for case

(or, function in their relative clause) and whether they refer to persons or non-persons:

	PERSONS	NON-PERSONS
SUBJECTIVE	who	that, which
OBJECTIVE	whom	that, which
POSSESSIVE	whose	whose

In Gen 3:1, אֲשֶׁר refers back to the noun phrase כָּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה, "every beast of the field," which denotes non-persons. A glance at the words following אֲשֶׁר makes it clear that it is functioning as the object of its relative clause. Accordingly, אֲשֶׁר here may be translated "that" or "which."

## עָשָׂה

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עָשָׂה, "he (had) made," is the Qal Perfect 3ms of עָשָׂה.

### MORPHOLOGY

The final He in the Qal Perfect 3ms of III-ה verbs (e.g., עָשָׂה) is a vowel letter (*mater lectionis*), not a root consonant. Thus, עָשָׂה consists of two consonants and two vowels:

עָ|שָׂה

## יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים

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The divine epithet **יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים**, “the Lord God,” occurs frequently in the early chapters of Genesis.

## Summary: אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים

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*which the Lord God had made*

### GRAMMAR

The relative clause **אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים** contains the following parts:

יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים

SUBJECT

עָשָׂה

VERB

אֲשֶׁר

OBJECT

## Final Translation

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*Now the serpent was more crafty than all the beasts of the field which the Lord God had made.*