**Irregularities in Hitpael** with compliments from Graham Thomason, 15th February 2013

In the descriptions below, verbs are given in their *dictionary-entry* form (third person singular of the past tense).

*Rule 1*

If the preformative הִתְ־ stands before a **sibilant** (hissing sound) – זסצשׁשׂ –, the ת and sibilant change places (metathesis). NB: צ was originally a sibilant (a pharyngealized s).

(1a 1b 1c)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| סָגַר | *to shut* | הִסְתַּגֵּר | *to shut oneself up* |
| שָׁכַח | *to forget* | הִשְׁתַּכֵּחַ | *to be forgotten* |
| שָׂרַר | *to prevail* | הִשְׂתָּרֵר | *to prevail* |

But after the metathesis,

(1d) הִצְתּ־ becomes הִצְט־

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| צָבַע | *to paint* | הִצְטַבֵּעַ | *to paint oneself* |

This is for pharyngeal assonance (צ and ט were originally both pharyngealized).

(1e) הִזְתּ־ becomes הִזְדּ־

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| זָקֵן | *old*; also *to grow old* | הִזְדַּקֵּן | *to age* |

This is for assonance of voicing (זת is voiced + voiceless, whereas זד are both voiced).

Compare English at-tribute, ad-join (Latin ad = to).

*Rule 2*

If the preformative הִתְ־ stands before a **dental** (a sound made using the teeth) – דטת –, the ת of הִתְ־ is lost (assimilated into the next letter), and the next letter acquires a dagesh in compensation. In the cases of ד and ט, the remaining הִ is written with the vowel-letter yud, as הִי.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| דַּל | *meagre* | הִידַּלְדֵּל | *to become meagre* |
| טָהַר | *to be cleansed* | הִיטָּהֵר | *to cleanse oneself* |
| תָּם | *naive, innocent* | הִתַּמֵּם | *to pretend innocence* |

Beware of confusing these third-person-past-tense forms with Nifal infinitives.