

In the fourth, Ezek. 36:37, Moffatt reads, "I will also let Israel ask this from me and have it done for them." RSV reads, "This also I will let the house of Israel ask me to do for them to increase their men like a flock." NEB says, "Yet again will I let the Israelites ask me to act in their behalf. I will make their men numerous as sheep."

Thus in every one of these cases the Lord declares either that He will receive and grant a petition or that He will refuse to receive a petition. In no case does it merely describe a state of mind on the part of the Lord. It may be seriously doubted that these are evidence of a niphal tolerativum at all, but, even if so taken, they do not give any real warrant for the translation of Is. 65:1 as "I was ready to be sought," instead of "I was sought" or "I permitted myself to be sought."

2. The second consideration is that the very existence of such a form as niphal tolerativum is highly questionable.

Years ago, when the writer was a student at the University of Berlin, he inquired about the possibility of writing a doctoral thesis on some matter of Hebrew grammar. Such a suggestion, however, was lightly brushed aside with the statement that Hebrew grammar had already been so thoroughly worked over that little remained to be done. As the years have gone on he has become more and more convinced that this was a completely false representation of the situation, as far as our knowledge of Hebrew grammar is concerned.

Most books on Hebrew today tend uncritically to repeat the statements made in the Hebrew grammars of a hundred years ago and sometimes these statements will not stand up under full investigation. Thus many Hebrew grammars say that the hithpael is only rarely passive, but careful examination shows that at least one-fourth of its occurrences must be interpreted as passive. It is generally said that the hithpael is reflexive or reciprocal. However, at most, not more than a third of its occurrences are reflexive, and extremely few can be interpreted as reciprocal. It