

**ELEMENTS OF
HEBREW BY AN
INDUCTIVE METHOD**

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Elements of Hebrew by an Inductive Method by William Rainey Harper & J. M. Powis Smith

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WILLIAM R. HARPER'S
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ELEMENTS OF HEBREW

BY

AN INDUCTIVE METHOD

NEW AND REVISED EDITION

BY

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CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

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PREFACE

The sixth edition of Harper's *ELEMENTS OF HEBREW* appeared in 1885. Since that time it has served the needs of large numbers of students beginning the study of Hebrew, and has gained for itself a secure position among elementary text-books. But during the past thirty-five years much progress has been made in the study of Hebrew grammar, of which Harper's *ELEMENTS* remained unaware. The late President Harper himself was, of course, fully conscious of this, and frequently expressed his eagerness to bring out a new edition of the *ELEMENTS*. The pressure of official duties, however, and his premature death denied him this privilege.

The value of the Harper manner of approach to the study of Hebrew has been so clearly demonstrated in the experience of successive generations of students that the perpetuation of the text-books in which it is embodied seems called for. To this end the present revision has been undertaken. Effort has been made to preserve the form and method of the original as far as possible. The changes incorporated in the new edition are only such as seem demanded by the present status of our knowledge of Hebrew and Semitic grammar. The more important of these changes may be noted here.

(1) The half-open syllable has been eliminated, as was suggested by Sievers (*Metrische Studien*, vol. I, p. 22), and approved by Gesenius-Kautzsch (*Hebr. Grammatik*, 28th ed., 1909). (2) A beginning has been made along the line of bringing Hebrew grammar into accord with the results of the modern study of phonetics. This involves some marked changes in the treatment of the Hebrew vowel-system; but it seems well to make this departure, even in a book for beginners, since beginners are entitled to protection from known errors; and further because many students in our best colleges are learning the newer phonetic principles and will welcome them as old friends when they find them in this new field. (3) A frank acceptance has been accorded the biliteral explanation of the so-called $\text{y}^{\prime}\text{y}$ and $\text{y}^{\prime}\text{y}$

verbs and nouns. This point of view seems more nearly in accordance with the facts, and likewise makes the study of these forms simpler for beginners. The biliteral hypothesis has not been carried as far here as it might well be in a more advanced grammar, its application being confined to the more apparent cases, for the sake of simplicity.

It remains to express my sense of obligation to two of my colleagues. Professor Ira Maurice Price has read the work both in manuscript and in proof, and has done much to insure accuracy in printing. To Professor Martin Sprengling, who read the book in manuscript, I am especially grateful for numerous and valuable suggestions, the acceptance of which will, I trust, greatly increase the worth of the book. Its errors are my own; I cannot hope to have escaped error in the presentation of a subject beset with so much that is problematical. "To err is human; to forgive, divine!" I can hope only that the present edition may give a new lease of life to this work of my greatest teacher.

J. M. POWIS SMITH.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO, JAN. 1, 1921.

PREFACE TO THE SIXTH EDITION

The first edition of the *ELEMENTS* was issued in July, 1881; the second, in October, 1882; the third, in February, 1883; the fourth, in November, 1883; the fifth, in November, 1884. All these editions, the first excepted, were printed from one set of plates, with only such changes and additions, from time to time, as the use of the same plates would permit. The peculiar circumstances of publication explained, although they could not excuse, the incomplete, and often imperfect, treatment accorded in these editions to very many of the subjects. While the present edition lays no claim to completeness, or to freedom from error, it will certainly be found more nearly complete and perfect than preceding editions. The author can only regret that regular and special duties of a most exacting nature, have not permitted him to give that amount of time, or that attention to the preparation of the book, which justice to the subject, to those who may use the book, and to himself, demanded.

The present edition, which contains nearly one hundred additional pages, and is entirely re-written, differs considerably from the former editions, and radically from other grammars now in common use. Some of the distinguishing features of the grammar deserve, perhaps, special mention:

- 1) For the purpose, not of aiding the beginner to pronounce, but of teaching the exact force and value of the several consonant- and vowel-sounds, a minute system of transliteration has been employed, by which the attention of the student is directed from the very beginning to the details of the vowel-system. Too little, by far, is made in Hebrew study, of the vowel-system, without a correct knowledge of which all effort is merely groping in darkness.

- 2) A tolerably exhaustive treatment, more complete perhaps than any that has yet appeared in English, is given of the various vowel-sounds. Each sound is treated separately, the laws which regulate its occurrence and the grammatical forms in which it appears being carefully noted.

3) Certain important distinctions, not heretofore generally recognized by American teachers, are indicated throughout the grammar; *e. g.*, (a) the tone-long ϵ (ֿ), heightened from \ddot{a} , which is seen in Segholates, in קִי־ל Imperfects and Participles, and elsewhere; (b) the naturally long e (ֿֿֿ) contracted from ay , which occurs in plural nouns before the pronominal suffixes ָ , ֵ , and in certain Imperfects before ֿֿ ; (c) the δ obscured from \hat{a} , as distinguished from the $\delta = au$.

4) Instead of adopting a new Paradigm-word for each class of weak verbs, the verb קטל is retained, with such variation as the particular weak verb under consideration demanded; *e. g.*, עטל for the פ guttural verb, קטט for the ע״ע verb, קול for the י״ע verb. There can be no objection to this method. Many grammarians have adopted it in the treatment of noun-formation. Experience has shown that, in this way, men learn the verb more rapidly and more thoroughly.

5) In the treatment of the strong verb, the student is referred, in every case, to the primary form or ground-form from which the form in use has arisen in accordance with the phonetic laws of the language. That treatment which starts with stems having the form which occurs in the Perf. 3 m. sg., or Impf. 3 m. sg., is, at the same time, unscientific and unsatisfactory. The bugbear of Hebrew grammar is the weak verb. Nor will it be otherwise so long as the effort is made to explain the forms of weak verbs from those of the strong verb. How absurd, for example, to derive יקום from a form like יקטל ; but how simple to derive it from a form like יקטל , the ground-form of יקטל . Together with the form in use, the student should learn also the primary form from which the usual form is derived. This method will furnish a knowledge of the language, which will be not only more scientific, but also more lasting.

6) Particular attention is given to the subject of noun-formation, and on this is based the treatment of noun-inflection. The same method which would teach the primary forms of verbal stems, will also teach the primary forms of noun-stems.

7) That fiction of Hebrew grammarians, the connecting-vowel, has

been practically discarded. The Hebrew has no connecting-vowels. The vowels incorrectly called connecting-vowels are the relics of old case- or stem-endings. These case- or stem-endings, summarily disposed of in current grammars under the head of "paragogic" vowels, are restored to the position which their existence and occurrence demand.

But it is asked, What has a beginner to do with all this? Why should a grammar which proposes only to consider the "elements" of the language, take up these subjects? While this may do for specialists, of what service is it to him who studies Hebrew only for exegetical purposes? Our reply is this:—

1) The experiment of teaching men something about Hebrew grammar, of giving them only a superficial knowledge, has been tried for half a century; and it has failed. Men instructed in this manner take no interest in the study, learn little or nothing of the language, and forget, almost before it is learned, the little that they may have acquired. If for no other reason, the adoption of a new system is justified by the lamentable failure of the old to furnish any practical results.

2) Those who take up the study of Hebrew are men, not children. Why should they not learn, as they proceed, the explanation of this or that fact? Why should the student be told that the Infinitive Construct (לְעָשׂוֹת) is formed from the Absolute (לַעֲשׂוֹת) by rejecting the pretonic qāmēç? Is it not better that he should learn at once that the \bar{o} of the Construct is from \ddot{u} , while the \hat{o} of the Absolute is from \hat{a} , and thus be enabled to grasp all the more firmly those two great phonetic laws of the language, *heightening* and *obscuration*?

3) The best way, *always*, to learn a thing is the right way, even if, at first, it is more difficult. If there is a difference between the \bar{o} of the Imperfect, Imperative and Infinitive Construct on the one hand, and the \hat{o} of the Infinitive Absolute and Participles on the other, what is gained by passing over it in silence?

4) In order to learn any subject, the student must be interested in that subject. Is he not more likely to be interested in an accurate, scientific treatment, than in an arbitrary, superficial treatment?

The treatment adopted in the ELEMENTS is an inductive one, so