HEBREW GRAMMAR

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649375981

Hebrew Grammar by Alexander Meyrowitz

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תורת לשון עברי

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BY

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PUBLISHED AT THE UNIVERSITY, COLUMBIA, MISSOURI.

NEW YORK:

PRINTED AT INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL, HEBREW ORPHAN ASYLUM,

76TH STREET, NEAR THIRD AVENUE.

1877.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1877,
By Alexander Meyrowitz,
in the Office of the Librarian of Congress at Washington.

PREFACE.

The number of Hebrew Grammars already published would seem to exceed the scholars studying this language. And yet there are but few which are of real use. Some, like Gesenius, are too large, and are written rather for the scholar than for the student. Others are too meagre to satisfy even the beginner. After having been a teacher of Hebrew for more than thirty years, I believe I have found the middle way. I have omitted the Guttural verbs in my Tables, their deviation being but in the vocalization; but I have added, besides the double anomalous verbs, (*e. g.* פ"נ and ל"ה) the verbs הָיָה, יָשַׁב, לָקַח, הָלַךְ, etc., as it will be seen by glancing at the Tables. And though this work will not be the last, and critics may find fault with this as I have found with others, I believe nevertheless that it will be of great use to the student, even for self-instruction, and facilitate the comprehension of the Word of God revealed for the salvation of men, which is my greatest aim and desire. There are three systems of pronunciation of the Hebrew, viz., Polish, German, and Portuguese. I follow the Polish, because it is the most common among the Jews.

It gives me pleasure to acknowledge that the appearance of this work before the public is chiefly owing to the munificence of the Rev. S. S. Laws, LL.D., President of the State University of Missouri.

ALEXR. MEYROWITZ.

COLUMBIA, MO., 28th April, 1877.

§ I.—LETTERS.

1. The Hebrew letters in present use are the square Chaldee, derived from the Palmyrene alphabet, adopted by Ezra. The original Hebrew letters are the Phœnician, found on monuments and the Maccabean coins.

2. All the letters are consonants, except א and ע, also ו at the beginning of a word, where they serve to express a vowel syllable, *e. g.*, אַהֲרֹן Aharon, אֲדֹם Odom, עֲמֹד omod, עָפָר ophor, וְבֵן uvain, וּמִפְרִי umipri; the vowels are expressed by lines and dots above, below, or within the letters.

N.B.—Hebrew was originally written without vowels, like Arabic and Syriac.

Letters.	Finals.	Number.	Hebrew Pronunciation.	English Pronunciation.	Meaning.
א		1	אָלֶף	Olaph.	An ox.
ב		2	בֵּית	Baith.	A house.
ג		3	גָּמָל	Gamal.	A camel.
ד		4	דָּלֶת	Deleth.	A door.
ה		5	הֵא	Hai.	(Doubtful.)
ו		6	וָו	Vav.	A hook.
ז		7	זַיִן	Zayin.	A weapon.
ח		8	חֵית	Chaith.	A hedge.
ט		9	טֵית	Taith.	A serpent.
י		10	יָד	Yod.	A hand.
כ	ך 500	20	כַּף	Kaph.	A palm, paw.
ל		30	לָמֶד	Lomaid.	A goad.
מ	ם 600	40	מַיִם	Maim.	Water.
נ	ן 700	50	נוּן	Nun.	A fish.
ס		60	סָמֶךְ	Somech.	A support.
ע		70	עַיִן	Ayin.	An eye.
פ	ף 800	80	פֵּה	Peh.	A mouth.
צ	ץ 900	90	צָדֵי	Tsodai.	A fish hook.
ק		100	קוּף	Kuph.	A monkey.
ר		200	ראשׁ	Rosh.	A head.
ש		300	שִׁן	Shain.	A tooth.
ת		400	תָּיו	Thav.	A sign, cross.

3. It will be seen in the above table that five letters assume a different form when at the end of a word, wherefore they are called *finals*. They owe their origin to the time when writing was still done without dividing the words, and to mark the end of a word, *final letters* were introduced. When in process of time the words were divided from one another, all the *finals* were dropped except the five, because they served as numerals for 500. 600, etc.

4. The whole alphabet is primarily divided into two parts: *a*. Radicals, *b*. Serviles.

a. ***Radicals*** are those letters which are used only for the formation of nouns and verbs, consisting chiefly of three letters, which form the *root* of a noun or verb.

b. ***Serviles*** are those letters which, besides being used in the formation of nouns and verbs, are also used as prefixes or suffixes to nouns and verbs, to express other parts of speech. These serviles include half the alphabet, and are:

א, when prefixed to a verb in the future tense, denotes the personal pronoun, nominative 1st singular common.

ב prefixed to any word, denotes the prepositions *in*, *by*, or *with*.

ה with a pathach under it (הַ), when prefixed to a noun with a daghesh (*i. e.*, a point) in its first letter, *e. g.*, הַמֶּלֶךְ [or, if the first letter of the noun is one of the Gutturals, א, ה, ח, ע, which cannot take a daghesh,* the prefixed ה is with komats הָ instead of pathach הַ] it denotes the definite article. ה suffixed to the imperative, denotes the precative, *e. g.*, לְכָה, *age*, come now! ה prefixed to the participle of the verb denotes the relative pron. *who*, *that*. ה suffixed to the future 1st sing. or pl. com. denotes the future *optative*. ה profixed to any word with Chatuf Pathach הֲ denotes an *interrogation*, *e. g.*, הֲשֹׁמֵר whether keeping? (Gen. iv. 9), הֲמִן whether from? ה with a Mappik (הּ) suffixed to a noun denotes the posses-

* The effect of a Daghesh in the middle of a word is to double the letter, but the Gutturals cannot be doubled.