The Essential Modern

# HEBREW

Genealogy Glossary

# Modern Hebrew - A little history about it

Before we dive directly into the essential Hebrew Genealogy Glossary, I thought it would be nice to include a little about the language itself; its origins, alphabet, phonology, etc

**<u>However, if you are already familiar with that or just want to get to the glossary quickly, just skip these pages and jump straight into the glossary list that follow them.</u>**

(Hebrew: עברית חדשה, ʿivrít ḥadašá(h), (ivˈʁitχadaˈʃa), lit. "Modern Hebrew" or "New Hebrew"), also known as Israeli Hebrew or Israeli, and generally referred to by speakers simply as Hebrew (עברית Ivrit), is the standard form of the Hebrew language spoken today.

Spoken in ancient times, Ancient Hebrew, a member of the Canaanite branch of the Semitic language family, was supplanted as the Jewish vernacular by the western dialect of Aramaic beginning in the third century BCE, though it continued to be used as a liturgical and literary language.

It was revived as a spoken language in the 19th and 20th centuries and is the official language of Israel. Of the Canaanite languages, Modern Hebrew is the only language spoken today.

Modern Hebrew is spoken by about nine million people, counting native, fluent and non-fluent speakers. Most speakers are citizens of Israel: about five million are Israelis who speak Modern Hebrew as their native language, 1.5 million are immigrants to Israel, 1.5 million are Arab citizens of Israel, whose first language is usually Arabic and half a million are expatriate Israelis or diaspora Jews living outside Israel.

The organization that officially directs the development of the Modern Hebrew language, under the law of the State of Israel, is the Academy of the Hebrew Language.

## Classification

Modern Hebrew is classified as an <u>Afroasiatic language</u> of the Semitic family, the Canaanite branch of the Northwest Semitic subgroup, and a naturalistic planned language. While Modern Hebrew is largely based on Mishnaic and Biblical Hebrew as well as Sephardi and Ashkenazi liturgical and literary tradition from the Medieval and Haskalah eras and retains its Semitic character in its morphology and in much of its syntax, the consensus among scholars is that Modern Hebrew represents a fundamentally new linguistic system, not directly continuing any previous linguistic state.

Modern Hebrew is considered to be a koiné language based on historical layers of Hebrew that incorporates foreign elements, mainly those introduced during the most critical revival period between 1880 and 1920, as well as new elements created by speakers through natural linguistic evolution.

A minority of scholars argue that the revived language had been so influenced by various substrate languages that it is genealogically a hybrid with Indo-European.

Those theories have not been met with general acceptance, and the consensus among a majority of scholars is that Modern Hebrew, despite its non-Semitic influences, can correctly be classified as a Semitic language.

Although European languages have had an impact on Modern Hebrew, the impact may often be overstated: Although Modern Hebrew has more of the features attributed to Standard Average European than Biblical Hebrew, it is still quite distant, and has fewer such features than Modern Standard Arabic.

## Alphabet

Modern Hebrew is written from right to left using the Hebrew alphabet, which is an abjad, or consonant-only script of 22 letters based on the "square" letter form, known as *Ashurit* (Assyrian), which was developed from the Aramaic script.

A <u>cursive</u> script is used in handwriting. When necessary, vowels are indicated by diacritic marks above or below the letters known as *Nikkud*, or by use of *Matres lectionis*, which are consonantal letters used as vowels.

Further diacritics like Dagesh and Sin and Shin dots are used to indicate variations in the pronunciation of the consonants (e.g. *bet/vet*, *shin/sin*). The letters "צ", "ג", "ז", each modified with a Geresh, represent the consonants (tʃ), (dʒ), (ʒ). (tʃ) may also be written as "תש" and "טש". (w) is represented interchangeably by a simple vav "ו", non-standard double vav "וו" and sometimes by non-standard geresh modified vav "ו'".

At the end on this glossary, you will find a table with the alphabet listed and "translated".

# Phonology

Modern Hebrew has fewer phonemes than Biblical Hebrew but it has developed its own phonological complexity. Israeli Hebrew has 25 to 27 consonants, depending on whether the speaker has pharyngeals. It has 5 to 10 vowels, depending on whether diphthongs and long and short vowels are counted, varying with the speaker and the analysis.

This table lists the consonant phonemes of Israeli Hebrew in IPA transcription:

| | | Labial | | Alveolar | | Palato-alveolar | | Palatal | Velar | | Uvular | Glottal |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Obstru-ents | Stop | p | b | t | d | | | | k | ɡ | | ʔ² |
| | Affricate | | | t͡s | | (t͡ʃ)⁵ | (d͡ʒ)⁴ | | | | | |
| | Fricative | f | v | s | z | ʃ | (ʒ)⁴ | | x~χ¹ | | ɣ~ʁ³ | h² |
| Nasal | | | m | | n | | | | | | | |
| Approximant | | | | | l | | | j | (w)⁴ | | | |

¹ In modern Hebrew /ħ/ for ח has been absorbed by /x~χ/ that was traditionally only for fricative כ, but some (mainly older) Mizrahi speakers still separate them.[44]

² The glottal consonants are elided in most unstressed syllables and sometimes also in stressed syllables, but they are pronounced in careful or formal speech. In modern Hebrew, /ʕ/ for ע has merged with /ʔ/ (א), but some speakers (particularly older Mizrahi speakers) still separate them.[44]

³ Commonly transcribed /r/. This is usually pronounced as a uvular fricative or approximant (ʁ) or velar fricative (ɣ), and sometimes as a uvular (ʀ) or alveolar trill (r) or alveolar flap (ɾ), depending on the background of the speaker.[44]

⁴ The phonemes /w, dʒ, ʒ/ were introduced through borrowings.

⁵ The phoneme /t͡ʃ/ צ was introduced through borrowings,[45] but it can appear in native words as a sequence of /t/ ת and /ʃ/ שׁ as in תְּשׁוּקָה /tʃuˈka/.

Obstruents often assimilate in voicing: voiceless obstruents (/p t ts tʃ k, f s ʃ x/) become voiced ((b d dz dʒ g, v z ʒ ɣ)) when they appear immediately before voiced obstruents, and vice versa.

Hebrew has five basic vowel phonemes:

Long vowels occur unpredictably if two identical vowels were historically separated by a pharyngeal or glottal consonant, and the first was stressed.

Any of the five short vowels may be realized as a schwa (ə) when it is far from lexical stress.

| | front | central | back |
|---|---|---|---|
| high | i | | u |
| mid | e | | o |
| low | | a | |

There are two diphthongs, /aj/ and /ej/.[2]

Most lexical words have lexical stress on one of the last two syllables, the last syllable being more frequent in formal speech. Loanwords may have stress on the antepenultimate syllable or even earlier.

## Pronunciation

While the pronunciation of Modern Hebrew is based on Sephardi Hebrew, the pronunciation has been affected by the immigrant communities that have settled in Israel in the past century and there has been a general coalescing of speech patterns.

The pharyngeal (ħ) for the phoneme *chet* (ח) of Sephardi Hebrew has merged into (χ) which Sephardi Hebrew only used for fricative *chaf* (כ). The pronunciation of the phoneme *ayin* (ע) has merged with the pronunciation of *aleph* (א), which is either (ʔ) or unrealized (Ø) and has come to dominate Modern Hebrew, but in many variations of liturgical Sephardi Hebrew, it is (ʕ), a voiced pharyngeal fricative.

The letter *vav* (ו) is realized as (v), which is the standard for both Ashkenazi and most variations of Sephardi Hebrew. The Jews of Iraq, Aleppo, Yemen and some parts of North Africa pronounced *vav* as (w). Yemenite Jews, during their liturgical readings in the synagogues, still use the latter, older pronunciation. The pronunciation of the letter *resh* (ר) has also largely shifted from Sephardi (r) to either (ɣ) or (ʁ).

## Morphology

Modern Hebrew morphology (formation, structure, and interrelationship of words in a language) is essentially Biblical. Modern Hebrew showcases much of the inflectional morphology of the classical upon which it was based. In the formation of new words, all verbs and the majority of nouns and adjectives are formed by the classically Semitic devices of triconsonantal roots (*shoresh*) with affixed patterns (*mishkal*). Mishnaic attributive patterns are often used to create nouns, and Classical patterns are often used to create adjectives. Blended words are created by merging two bound stems or parts of words.

## Syntax

The syntax of Modern Hebrew is mainly Mishnaic but also shows the influence of different contact languages to which its speakers have been exposed during the revival period and over the past century.

# Word order

The word order of Modern Hebrew is predominately SVO (subject-verb-object). Biblical Hebrew was originally verb-subject-object (VSO), but drifted into SVO. Modern Hebrew maintains classical syntactic properties associated with VSO languages: it is prepositional, rather than postpositional, in making case and adverbial relations, auxiliary verbs precede main verbs; main verbs precede their complements, and noun modifiers (adjectives, determiners other than the definite article -ה, and noun adjuncts) follow the head noun; and in genitive constructions, the possessee noun precedes the possessor. Moreover, Modern Hebrew allows and sometimes requires sentences with a predicate initial.

# Lexicon

Modern Hebrew has expanded its vocabulary effectively to meet the needs of casual vernacular, of science and technology, of journalism and belles-lettres. According to Ghil'ad Zuckermann:

The number of attested Biblical Hebrew words is 8198, of which some 2000 are hapax legomena (the number of Biblical Hebrew roots, on which many of these words are based, is 2099). The number of attested Rabbinic Hebrew words is less than 20,000, of which (i) 7879 are Rabbinic par excellence, i.e. they did not appear in the Old Testament (the number of new Rabbinic Hebrew roots is 805); (ii) around 6000 are a subset of Biblical Hebrew; and (iii) several thousand are Aramaic words which can have a Hebrew form.

Medieval Hebrew added 6421 words to (Modern) Hebrew. The approximate number of new lexical items in Israeli is 17,000 (cf. 14,762 in Even-Shoshan 1970). With the inclusion of foreign and technical terms (...), the total number of Israeli words, including words of biblical, rabbinic and medieval descent, is more than 60,000.

# Loanwords

Modern Hebrew has loanwords from Arabic (both from the local Levantine dialect and from the dialects of Jewish immigrants from Arab countries), Aramaic, Yiddish, Judaeo-Spanish, German, Polish, Russian, English and other languages.

Simultaneously, Israeli Hebrew makes use of words that were originally loanwords from the languages of surrounding nations from ancient times: Canaanite languages as well as Akkadian.

Mishnaic Hebrew borrowed many nouns from Aramaic (including Persian words borrowed by Aramaic), as well as from Greek and to a lesser extent Latin.(49) In the Middle Ages, Hebrew made heavy semantic borrowing from Arabic, especially in the fields of science and philosophy.

Here are typical examples of Hebrew loanwords:

| loanword | | | derivatives | | | origin | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hebrew | IPA | meaning | Hebrew | IPA | meaning | language | spelling | meaning |
| ביי | /baj/ | goodbye | | | | English | bye | |
| אגזוז | /egˈzoz/ | exhaust system | | | | | exhaust system | |
| דיג׳יי | /ˈdidʒej/ | DJ | דיג׳ה | /diˈdʒe/ | to DJ | | to DJ | |
| ואללה | /ˈwala/ | really!? | | | | Arabic | والله | really!? |
| כיף | /kef/ | fun | כייף | /kiˈjef/ | to have fun[w 1] | | كيف | pleasure |
| תאריך | /taʔaˈriχ/ | date | תארך | /teʔeˈreχ/ | to date | | تاريخ | date, history |
| חנון | /χnun/ | geek, wimp, nerd, "square" | | | | Moroccan Arabic | خنونة | snot |
| אבא | /ˈaba/ | dad | | | | Aramaic | אבא | the father/my father |
| דוגרי | /ˈdugri/ | forthright | | | | Ottoman Turkish | طوغرى doğrı | correct |
| פרדס | /parˈdes/ | orchard | | | | Avestan | 𐬀𐬀·𐬀𐬀𐬀𐬀 𐬀𐬀𐬀 | garden |
| אלכסון | /alaχˈson/ | diagonal | | | | Greek | λοξός | slope |
| וילון | /viˈlon/ | curtain | | | | Latin | vēlum | veil, curtain |

| Hebrew | IPA | Meaning | Hebrew | IPA | Meaning | Source language | Source word | Source meaning |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| חלטורה | /χalˈtura/ | shoddy job | חלטר | /χilˈteʁ/ | to moonlight | <u>Russian</u> | <u>халтура</u> | shoddy work[w 2] |
| בלגן | /balaˈgan/ | mess | בלגן | /bilˈgen/ | to make a mess | | <u>балаган</u> | chaos[w 2] |
| תכל׳ס | /ˈtaχles/ | directly / essentially | | | | <u>Yiddish</u> | תכלית | goal (Hebrew word, only pronunciation is Yiddish) |
| חרופ | /χʁop/ | deep sleep | חרפ | /χaˈʁap/ | to sleep deeply | | כראָפ | snore |
| שפכטל | /ˈʃpaχtel/ | <u>putty knife</u> | | | | <u>German</u> | Spachtel | putty knife |
| גומי | /ˈgumi/ | <u>rubber</u> | גומיה | /gumiˈja/ | rubber band | | Gummi | rubber |
| גזוז | /gaˈzoz/ | carbonated beverage | | | | <u>Turkish from French</u> | gazoz[w 3] from <u>eau gazeuse</u> | carbonated beverage |
| פוסטמה | /pusˈtema/ | stupid woman | | | | <u>Ladino</u> | פּוֹשְׂטֵימַה postema | inflamed wound[w 4] |
| אדריכל | /adʁiˈχal/ | <u>architect</u> | אדריכלות | /adʁiχaˈlut/ | <u>architecture</u> | <u>Akkadian</u> | 𒀭𒉣𒈫 | temple servant[w 5] |
| צי | /t͡si/ | fleet | | | | <u>Ancient Egyptian</u> | ḏꜣy | ship |

# GENEALOGY GLOSSARY

I decided to list the words in alphabetical order, to enable English speakers like myself to find the Hebrew equivalent quicker.

| ENGLISH | HEBREW | PRONOUNCED |
|---|---|---|
| address | מַעַן | ma'an |
| adoption | אִמּוּץ | eemoots |
| ancestor | אָב קַדְמוֹן | av kadmon |
| April | אַפְּרִיל | april |
| August | אוֹגוּסְט | ohgoost |
| aunt | דּוֹדָה | doda |
| birth | לֵידָה | laeda |
| birth certificate | תְּעוּדַת לֵידָה | teudat laeda |
| birth city | עִיר לֵידָה | eer laeda |
| birthday | יוֹם הוּלֶדֶת | yom huledet |
| brother | אָח | akh |
| brother of brother/sister-in-law | גִּיסָן | geesan |
| brother-in-law | גִּיס | gees |
| burial | קְבוּרָה | kivurah |
| burial license | רִשָׁיוֹן קְבוּרָה | rishayon kivurah |
| burial shroud | תַּכְרִיךְ | takhreekh |
| burial society | חֶבְרָה קַדִּישָׁא | khevra kadisha |
| cemetery | בֵּית עָלְמִין, בֵּית קְבָרוֹת | beit almin, beit kvarot |
| census | מִפְקָד | meefkad |
| circumcision | בְּרִית מִילָה | brit milah |
| citizenship | אֶזְרָחוּת | ezrakhute |

| ENGLISH | HEBREW | PRONOUNCED |
|---|---|---|
| city | עִיר | eer |
| country of birth | אֶרֶץ לִידָה | eretz laeda |
| county | מָחוֹז | makhoz |
| dad | אַבָּא | abba |
| date | תַּאֲרִיךְ | ta'areech |
| date of birth | תַּאֲרִיךְ לֵידָה | ta'areech laeda |
| date of death | תַּאֲרִיךְ פְּטִירָה | ta'areech petira |
| daughter | בַּת | baht |
| daughter-in-law/bride | כַּלָּה | kalla |
| day | יוֹם | yome |
| death | מָוֶת | mavet |
| death certificate | תְּעוּדַת פְּטִירָה | teudat petirah |
| December | דֶּצֶמְבֶּר | detsember |
| descendant | צֶאֱצָא | tse'etsa |
| distant cousin | בֶּן דּוֹד רָחוֹק | ben dode rakhoke |
| divorce | גֵּרוּשִׁין | gaerushin |
| divorce certificate | תְּעוּדַת גֵּרוּשִׁין | teudat gaerushin |
| emigrant from Israel | יוֹרֵד | yored |
| engagement | אֵרוּסִין | erusin |
| estate | עִזָּבוֹן | eezabon |
| eulogy | הֶסְפֵּד | hesped |

| ENGLISH | HEBREW | PRONOUNCED |
|---|---|---|
| family | מִשְׁפָּחָה | mishpakha |
| family member | בֶּן מִשְׁפָּחָה | ben mishpakha |
| family tree | אִילָן יֻחֲסִין | ilan yukhasin |
| father | אָב | av |
| father-in-law (father of the husband) | חָם | khaam |
| father-in-law (father of the wife) | חוֹתֵן | khotain |
| February | פֶבְּרוּאָר | februar |
| female cousin | בַּת דּוֹדָה | baat doda |
| foreign (Gregorian) date of birth | תַּאֲרִיךְ לֵידָה לוֹעֲזִי | ta'areech laeda loazi |
| gazeteer | שֵׁמוֹן גֵאוֹגְרָפִי | shaemon geografi |
| genealogy | גֵנֵאָלוֹגְיָה | genelogya |
| given name | שֵׁם פְּרָטִי | shem prati |
| granddaughter | נֶכְדָּה | nekhda |
| grandfather | סַבָּא | saba |
| grandmother | סָבְתָא | savta |
| grandson | נֶכֶד | nekhed |
| grave | קֶבֶר | kever |
| great-aunt | דּוֹדָה רַבְּתָא | doda rabta |
| great-granddaughter | נִינָה | nina |
| great-grandmother | סַבָּא רַבָּא | saba raba |

| ENGLISH | HEBREW | PRONOUNCED |
|---|---|---|
| great-grandmother | סָבְתָא רַבְּתָא | savta raba |
| great-grandson | נִין | nin |
| great-great-granddaughter | בַּת נִין | bat nin |
| great-great-grandfather | סַבָּא רַבָּא רַבָּא | saba raba raba |
| great-great-grandmother | סָבְתָא רַבְּתָא רַבְּתָא | savta rabta rabta |
| great-great-grandson | בֶּן נִין | ben nin |
| great-uncle | דּוֹד רַבָּא | dode raba |
| half-brother | אָח לְמֶחֱצָה | akh limekhetza |
| half-sister | אָחוֹת לְמֶחֱצָה | akhot limekhetza |
| Hebrew date of birth | תַּאֲרִיךְ לֵידָה עִבְרִי | ta'areech laeda ivri |
| husband | בַּעַל | baal |
| immigrant to Israel | עוֹלֶה | oleh |
| immigrant/emigrant | מְהַגֵּר | mihagare |
| immigration/emigration | הֲגִירָה | hagirah |
| inheritance, legacy | יְרוּשָׁה | yerusha |
| January | יָנוּאָר | yanuar |
| Jewish divorce certificate | גֵּט | get |
| Jewish marriage contract | כְּתֻבָּה | ketubah |
| July | יוּלִי | yuli |
| June | יוּנִי | yuni |
| land/country | אֶרֶץ | eretz |

| ENGLISH | HEBREW | PRONOUNCED |
|---|---|---|
| maiden name | שֵׁם הַנְּעוּרִים | shem haniurim |
| male cousin, cousin | בֶּן דּוֹד | ben dode |
| March | מֶרְץ | maerts |
| marriage | נִשׂוּאִין | nisuin |
| marriage ceremony | קִדּוּשִׁין | kedushin |
| marriage certificate | תְּעוּדַת נִשׂוּאִים | teudat nisuin |
| maternal/matrilineal | מִצַּד הָאֵם | mitsad ha'aim |
| May | מַאי | mai |
| microfiche | מִיקְרוֹפִיש | meekrofeesh |
| microfilm | מִיקְרוֹפִילם | meekrofilm |
| mom | אִמָּא | eema |
| month | חֹדֶשׁ | khodesh |
| mother | אֵם | aim |
| mother-in-law (mother of the husband) | חָמוֹת | khaamot |
| mother-in-law (mother of the wife) | חוֹתֶנֶת | khotenet |
| naturalization | הִתְאַזְרְחוּת | hitazrikhute |
| nephew | אַחְיָן | akhyan |
| newspaper | עִתּוֹן | eetone |
| niece | אַחְיָנִית | akhyanit |
| November | נוֹבֶמְבֶּר | november |

| ENGLISH | HEBREW | PRONOUNCED |
|---|---|---|
| obituary | מוֹדַעַת אֵבֶל | moda'at avel |
| October | אוֹקְטוֹבֶּר | october |
| orphan | יָתוֹם | yatom |
| parent | הוֹרֶה | horeh |
| partner (female) | בַּת זוּג | baht zoog |
| partner (male) | בֶּן זוּג | ben zoog |
| passenger list | רְשִׁימַת נוֹסְעִים | rishimat nosim |
| paternal/patrilineal | מִצַּד הָאָב | mitsad ha'av |
| pedigree | יִחוּס | yikhus |
| place of birth | מָקוֹם לֵידָה | makom laeda |
| place of death | מָקוֹם פְּטִירָה | makom petira |
| posthumous | שֶׁלְּאַחַר הַמָּוֶת | shel'akhar hamavet |
| probate | אִשּׁוּר צַוָּאָה | ishur tsava'a |
| register | רְשִׁימָה | rishima |
| related by marriage | מְחֻתָּנִים | makhutanim |
| religious name (literally holy name/hebrew name) | שֵׁם קָדוֹשׁ/שֵׁם עִבְרִי | shem kodesh/shem ivri |
| residence | מְגוּרִים | migurim |
| secular name/nickname | כִּנּוּי | kinnui |
| September | סֶפְּטֶמְבֶּר | september |
| sibling | אַחַאי | akhai |
| sister | אָחוֹת | akhot |

| ENGLISH | HEBREW | PRONOUNCED |
|---|---|---|
| sister of brother/sister-in-law | גִּיסָנִית | geesanit |
| sister-in-law | גִּיסָה | geesa |
| son | בֵּן | ben |
| son-in-law/groom | חָתָן | khatan |
| state/country | מְדִינָה | medinah |
| step-brother | אָח חוֹרֵג | akh khoreg |
| step-daughter | בַּת חוֹרֶגֶת | baat khoreget |
| step-sister | אָחוֹת חוֹרֶגֶת | akhot khoreget |
| step-son, step-child | בֵּן חוֹרֵג | ben khoreg |
| stepfather | אָב חוֹרֵג | av khoreg |
| stepmother | אֵם חוֹרֶגֶת | aim khoreget |
| surname | שֵׁם מִשְׁפָּחָה | shem mishpacha |
| tombstone | מַצֵּבָה | matzevah |
| uncle | דּוֹד | dode |
| village | כְּפָר | kfar |
| vital records | רְשׁוּמוֹת חִיּוּנִי | rishumot khiuni |
| wedding | חֲתוּנָה | khatuna |
| wedding date | תַּאֲרִיךְ נִשׂוּאִין | ta'areech nisuin |
| wife | אִשָּׁה | isha |
| will | רָצוֹן | ratson |
| year | שָׁנָה | shana |

# Modern Hebrew Alphabet

| Name | Printed letter | Cursive letter | Pronunciation | Transliteration |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tav | ת | | (t̪) | t |
| Shin | שׁ | | (ʃ), (s̪) | sh, s |
| Resh | ר | | (ʁ)~(ʀ) | r |
| Kof | ק | | (k) | k |
| Tzadi | צ | | (t͡s) | tz |
| Pe | פ | | (p), (f) | p, f |
| Ayin | ע | | (ʔ), ∅ | ey,ay,' |
| Samech | ס | | (s̪) | s |
| Nun | נ | | (n̪) | n |
| Mem | מ | | (m) | m |
| Lamed | ל | | (l̪) | l |
| Kaf | כ | | (k), (x)~(χ) | k, ch |
| Yod | י | | (j) | y |
| Tet | ט | | (t̪) | t |
| Chet | ח | | (x)~(χ) | ch |
| Zayin | ז | | (z) | z |
| Vav | ו | | (v) | v |
| He | ה | | (h) | h |
| Dalet | ד | | (d̪) | d |
| Gimel | ג | | (g) | g |
| Bet | ב | | (b), (v) | b, v |
| Alef | א | | (ʔ), ∅ | a,' |