

THE  
*Beginner's*  
*Dictionary*  
OF  
PRAYERBOOK HEBREW

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# *How To Use This Dictionary*

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## *Why Is This Dictionary Different From All Other Hebrew Dictionaries?*

Most Hebrew dictionaries list the words alphabetically by their root forms. If you do not know the root, you are unable to locate the word. In this dictionary the words are listed in the same grammatical forms as they appear in the prayerbook. Therefore you do not need to know any Hebrew grammar in order to find the words you want. *The Beginner's Dictionary of Prayerbook Hebrew* was designed specifically to be easy to use.

## *How Did We Choose These Words?*

We actually counted every Hebrew word in *The Daily Prayer Book* (Philip Birnbaum, 1977); *Gates of Prayer* (Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1975); and the center 400 pages of *Mahzor for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur* (The Rabbinical Assembly, 1978). Any word that appeared over 50 times in our count is entered in this dictionary in the form in which it appears in the prayerbook. We then reviewed the most often used prayers in all three of the above books. Any words used in these prayers that were not already in our list were added. We also included common synagogue words and the names of all the festivals.

## *The Limits of This Dictionary*

This dictionary is not meant to be a complete dictionary, or an exhaustive study of prayerbook Hebrew. We have only included those words that are necessary for familiarity with prayer and synagogue vocabulary. However, anyone who knows all the words included in this dictionary will be at home in any Jewish service anywhere.

## *The Names of God*

In accordance with Jewish tradition we are treating the names of God with special respect. In this dictionary they are listed on a separate page and not in the general part of the dictionary.

## *How Did We Choose These Translations?*

In order to find the clearest, most accurate translation, we researched every entry in this dictionary. We consulted dictionaries, concordances, Bibles, and prayerbooks. (See Bibliography.)

To define a word, we first checked for a Biblical reference. Then we consulted several English translations for that reference. We also referred to various prayerbook translations and double checked with Hebrew and English dictionaries. We always chose an English word or phrase that would be easily understood by people of all ages.

### *How to Translate a Prayer*

Good Hebrew is not good English. Therefore a word for word translation will not necessarily sound natural to you. But by actually translating, you can get closer to the meaning of the prayer.

You may need to change the word order. For example, adjectives come after nouns in Hebrew. You may need to add the words **is**, **am**, or **are** to make sense in English. If a word seems to be missing from the dictionary, remember to look in "The Names of God". Be sure to add the ׀ (meaning **and**) when you translate. Compare your translation with an English translation in a prayerbook.

Remember that this is a beginning dictionary, and not *every* word in the prayerbook is listed.

Examples:

loving-kindness	and	grace	blessing	and	goodness	peace	put	← 1
חַסְדִּים	וְ	חַן	בְּרָכָה	וְ	טוֹבָה	שְׁלוֹם	שִׁים	
your people	Israel	all of	on	and	on us	compassion	and	
עַמֵּךְ	יִשְׂרָאֵל	כָּל	עַל	וְ	עָלֵינוּ	רַחֲמִים	וְ	

before	Moses	put	that	the Torah	is	this	and	← 2
לִפְנֵי	מֹשֶׁה	שָׂם	אֲשֶׁר	הַתּוֹרָה	הִיא	זֹאת	וְ	
	Israel	the children of						
	יִשְׂרָאֵל	בְּנֵי						

### *Aramaic*

Although this is a Hebrew dictionary, we have listed the Aramaic of the most popular prayers, including the Kaddish. Aramaic words are shown by the word (*Aramaic*).

### *Idioms*

An idiom, or a group of words peculiar to a language, is shown by the word (*Idiom*). We have also added certain common phrases and called them idioms.

### *Repeat Listings*

Many words in this dictionary are listed more than once. Some words start with the preposition ׀ meaning **in** or **with**, the preposition ׁ meaning **as**, the preposition ׀ meaning **to** or **for**, or the preposition ׃ meaning **from**. These words are listed once independently with the preposition attached, and also sublisted under the word to which they are attached. For example: The word בְּשָׁלוֹם will appear as a main listing in the ׁ section, and again as a sublisting under the word שְׁלוֹם. All the words which start with הִ meaning **the**, are listed under הִ and sublisted under the word to which they are attached. In this way, the dictionary can be used both to find the meanings of prayerbook words and to learn something about how the Hebrew language works.

### *The Treatment of the ׀*

The ׀ meaning **and** is the only prefix that is not given complete repeat listings. According to the instructions at the bottom of the page, we ask the readers to disregard the ׀ entirely when looking for a word. However, we do give repeat listings to all verbs that start with a reversible ׀; that is, a verb which reverses its tense when a ׀ is attached to it. For example the word **וְאַהֲבֵתְּ** meaning **and you shall love**, is listed in the ׀ section and sublisted under the word **אַהֲבֵתְּ** meaning **you have loved**. Other than these verbs, no other words are listed with the ׀ prefix.

### *The Dagesh*

We have entered every word in the dictionary as if it stands alone, and we have continually followed the classical rules for the dagesh (the dot in the center of the letters). However, in the prayerbook many words appear with a ׀ prefix and therefore without a dagesh. To avoid confusion, we ask the reader to disregard the dagesh.

### *Reading Hebrew*

For those of you who need a little help reading Hebrew we have included three reading aids. First, at the beginning of the dictionary is a complete Hebrew alphabet chart, which shows you the letters and vowels, and tells you how to pronounce them. Second, at the top of each page you will find a Hebrew alphabet to help you with word order. Third, at the end of the book is a pronunciation guide which lists each word and its pronunciation in English letters.

If you cannot read Hebrew at all, one easy way to learn is by using *Teach Yourself to Read Hebrew*, also published by EKS.

### *For the Classroom*

Here are some ideas for using this dictionary to teach either adults or children in a classroom situation.

#### I. Translating Prayers

- A. Give students a Hebrew prayer *without* English translation. Have students use the dictionary to translate the prayer. Be sure to remind them to add **is** and **are**, and to use the "Names of God" section.
- B. Let students compare their translations with the prayerbook. Use more than one prayerbook if available.

#### II. Learning About Prefixes in Hebrew

- A. Have students look up **שְׁלוֹם**.
  1. Ask students to translate the following words into Hebrew: with peace, the peace, for peace.
  2. Ask students to define **לְ**, **הַ**, **כִּי**, **בְ**.
  3. Have students find words with their prefixes listed alphabetically.
- B. Have students find other examples of words with prefixes.

There are many other ways to teach Hebrew with this dictionary. Even the cover can be used as a teaching tool. We encourage you to be creative. We may publish a teacher's guide at a future date, and we would be interested in hearing about your teaching experiences with this book.

## Alphabet Chart

### Vowels

<b>X</b> <b>X</b> a as in yacht
<b>X</b> <b>אי</b> ee as in bee
<b>X</b> <b>אי</b> ay as in hay
<b>X</b> e as in bed
<b>X</b> <b>או</b> o as in low
<b>X</b> <b>או</b> oo as in zoo
<b>אי</b> ai as in aisle
<b>אי</b> oi as in boil
<b>X</b> silent

### Consonants

	Book Print	Block	Script	
Silent letter	א	א	א	1
B as in Boy	ב	ב	ב	
V as in Vine	ב	ב	ב	2
G as in Girl	ג	ג	ג	3
D as in Door	ד	ד	ד	4
H as in House	ה	ה	ה	5
V as in Vine	ו	ו	ו	6
Z as in Zebra	ז	ז	ז	7
CH as in BaCH	ח	ח	ח	8
T as in Tall	ט	ט	ט	9
Y as in Yes	י	י	י	10
K as in Kitty	כ	כ	כ	
CH as in BaCH	כ	כ	כ	20
L as in Look	ל	ל	ל	30
M as in Mother	מ	מ	מ	40
N as in Now	נ	נ	נ	50
S as in Sun	ס	ס	ס	60
Silent letter	ע	ע	ע	70
P as in People	פ	פ	פ	
F as in Food	פ	פ	פ	80
TS as in NuTS	צ	צ	צ	90
K as in Kitty	ק	ק	ק	100
R as in Robin	ר	ר	ר	200
SH as in SHape	ש	ש	ש	
S as in Sun	ש	ש	ש	300
T as in Tall	ת	ת	ת	400

## א ב ג ד ה ו ז ח ט י כ ל מ נ ס ע פ צ ק ר ש ת

ground, earth . . . . .	אָדָמָה
the ground, the earth . . . . .	הָאָדָמָה
love . . . . .	אַהֲבָה
with love . . . . .	בְּאַהֲבָה
the love . . . . .	הָאַהֲבָה
that love which . . . . .	שֶׂאֱהָבָה
you loved . . . . .	אֲהַבְתָּ
may you love, you shall love . . . . .	וְאֲהַבְתָּ
that you have loved . . . . .	שֶׂאֱהַבְתָּ
the love of . . . . .	אַהֲבַת
eat . . . . .	אוֹכֵלִין
say, (one) who says . . . . .	אוֹמֵר, אֹמֵר
the one who says . . . . .	הַאוֹמֵר
(they) say . . . . .	אוֹמְרִים
light, the light of . . . . .	אוֹר
in the light of . . . . .	בְּאוֹר
as the light of . . . . .	כְּאוֹר
sign, mark, the sign of . . . . .	אוֹת
as a sign, as the sign of . . . . .	לְאוֹת
him, it . . . . .	אוֹתוֹ, אֹתוֹ
us . . . . .	אוֹתָנוּ

## א

father, the father of . . . . .	אָב, אֲב
the father . . . . .	הָאָב
as a father . . . . .	כְּאָב
fathers, ancestors . . . . .	אָבוֹת, אֲבוֹת
our fathers, . . . . .	אֲבוֹתֵינוּ, אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
our ancestors . . . . .	לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ
to our fathers, ancestors, . . . . .	לְאֲבוֹתֵינוּ
for our fathers, ancestors . . . . .	
our father . . . . .	אָבִינוּ
Abraham . . . . .	אַבְרָהָם
to Abraham . . . . .	לְאַבְרָהָם
master . . . . .	אֲדוֹן
the master of . . . . .	אֲדוֹן
to the master of . . . . .	לְאֲדוֹן
powerful, majestic . . . . .	אֲדִיר
our majestic one, our powerful one . . . . .	אֲדִירֵנוּ
man . . . . .	אָדָם
in man . . . . .	בְּאָדָם
the man . . . . .	הָאָדָם
as man . . . . .	כְּאָדָם
to man . . . . .	לְאָדָם
from man . . . . .	מֵאָדָם

## To find a word:

- Disregard ך, ך, ך, ך, ך or ך (meaning and) at the beginning of a word.
- Disregard the dot in the center of letters.
- Check "The Names of God" which are listed separately beginning on page 75.
- Insert **am, is, are** wherever needed to make sense of a sentence in English.

