

## The Name

Jewish tradition teaches that the name of God be given respect. More traditional Jews will not print a Hebrew name of God except in holy books like the Bible or the prayerbook, nor will they say a Hebrew name of God except in prayer or perhaps in religious study.

This book prints some of the Hebrew names of God, allowing you to see the prayers as they appear in prayerbooks. The Hebrew names of God are used in this book only when prayers are quoted. The Hebrew names of God are never used in exercises or in explanations of grammar.

This book does not print the holiest of the names of God, the Tetragrammaton ( יהוה and יהוה and יהוה and יהוה). The prayers in this book follow the convention of most prayerbooks, in which יהוה appears in place of the Tetragrammaton. One never pronounces either the Tetragrammaton or the name יהוה. In prayer, יהוה should be read as if it were the name אֲדֹנָי, translated “Lord”. When not praying, more traditional Jews read יהוה or אֲדֹנָי as הַשֵּׁם (“the name”). Also, though the words אֵל and אֱלֹהִים sometimes refer to pagan gods, more often they are names of the God of Israel. More traditional Jews, when not praying, pronounce these names קַל and אֱלֹקִים.

These are the names of God you will find in this book:

יְיָ אֵל אֱלֹהִים אֲדֹנָי שְׁדַי

# The Noun Sentence

Every language has its own way of saying things. As you begin to study Hebrew, you need to be aware that it is different from English in many ways. It is not enough to be able to translate individual words from Hebrew into English. You must also understand how these words are arranged in sentences. A sentence that makes sense in Hebrew may not make sense when translated literally into English. This book will teach you both: the English meanings of individual Hebrew words, and the ways the Hebrew words are arranged to make proper Hebrew sentences. This book will show time after time how the same thought is expressed one way in Hebrew and a different way in English.

When you begin using this book, you should already be able to read simple Hebrew words. If you cannot read simple Hebrew words, or if you can only read with great difficulty, you will need to learn or review the Hebrew alphabet and vowels before you begin this book.

### Vocabulary

father .....	אָב
one .....	אֶחָד
I .....	אֲנִי
you .....	אַתָּה
he, it .....	הוא
this .....	זֶה
Israel .....	יִשְׂרָאֵל
king .....	מֶלֶךְ
Moses .....	מֹשֶׁה
nation, people .....	עַם

In each chapter, we will introduce no more than ten new vocabulary words. These words need to be learned.

### The Noun Sentence

In this chapter you will learn about the simplest type of sentence in Hebrew: the noun sentence. The noun sentence is a very good example of how Hebrew and English are different. Look at the following simple English sentences.

You are a king.      I am a father.      Moses is a king.

In English each of these sentences is three or four words long. In Hebrew, each of these sentences would use only two words. Remember that Hebrew sentences are read from right to left.

You are a king.      אַתָּה מֶלֶךְ.

I am a father.      אֲנִי אָב.

Moses is a king.      מֹשֶׁה מֶלֶךְ.

These are complete Hebrew sentences. As you can see, they contain no word for is, am, or are. These words do not exist in Hebrew and must be added in an English translation.

You will also notice that the word a does not appear in the Hebrew sentences. In Hebrew there is no word for a or an. These words, too, must be added in an English translation.

You are a father.      אַתָּה אָב.

I am a king.      אֲנִי מֶלֶךְ.

Israel is a people.      יִשְׂרָאֵל עַם.

This is Moses.      זֶה מֹשֶׁה.

This is all you need to know to be able to form simple Hebrew sentences. Many of the sentences in your prayerbook are noun sentences.

## Exercises

1. Translate these Hebrew noun sentences into English.

- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| מֹשֶׁה מֶלֶךְ. 7  | אֲנִי מֹשֶׁה. 1   |
| אֲנִי אָב. 8      | אַתָּה מֶלֶךְ. 2  |
| זֶה יִשְׂרָאֵל. 9 | הוּא אָב. 3       |
| הוּא מֶלֶךְ. 10   | זֶה עַם. 4        |
| זֶה מֹשֶׁה. 11    | הוּא אֶחָד. 5     |
| אַתָּה אָב. 12    | יִשְׂרָאֵל עַם. 6 |

2. Translate these English noun sentences into Hebrew.

- |                        |                     |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. You are a father.   | 5. This is Moses.   |
| 2. This is a people.   | 6. Moses is a king. |
| 3. I am a king.        | 7. A nation is one. |
| 4. Israel is a nation. | 8. I am he.         |

3. Fill in the blanks to make your own noun sentences.

- |                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| אָב. 4         | אֲנִי _____ 1 |
| _____ אַתָּה 5 | _____ עַם. 2  |
| _____ זֶה 6    | _____ הוּא 3  |

4. See how many Chapter One vocabulary words you can find in your prayerbook.

## The Shema

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ, יְיָ אֶחָד.  
hear our God

The Shema is the most well-known prayer in the prayerbook. It is also a good example of the Hebrew noun sentence. Notice the last two words of the Shema. These words form a noun sentence. They are translated the Lord is one. Notice the third and fourth words. These words can be translated as a noun sentence, the Lord is our God, or as a phrase, the Lord our God. Both are correct. This prayer shows how a Hebrew sentence or phrase can be translated into English in more than one way.

“Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is One.”  
*Sabbath and Festival Prayerbook*, Rabbinical Assembly, 1946, p. 92

“Hear, O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One.”  
*Daily Prayer Book*, Birnbaum, 1977, p. 76