

Transliteration

As a Semitic language, Hebrew has a consonantal alphabet with vowels implied or added on as diacritical marks. Most consonants have equivalents in European languages.

Hebrew vowels are the equivalents of **ah**, **eh**, **ee**, **oh**, and **oo**. Their transliteration is **a**, **e**, **i**, **o**, and **u**. For each sound there are between two and five different diacritical marks, representing a historical differentiation between short and long vowels. In addition, there is a special diacritic, the *shva*, which is either silent or vocal, pronounced like a very brief *eh*. In this book, the spelling of the *shva* follows current Israeli pronunciation.

Hebrew does not distinguish between nuances of the five pure sounds, such as between “a” as in “bar” and in “bat.” Some letters (א, י) serve both as consonants (y=י, v=ו) and as vowels (ee=י, oh=ו, oo=ו). Some Hebrew letters have two modes of pronunciation, aspirated (v=בּ, kh=כּ, f/ph=פּ) and non-aspirated (b=ב, k=כ, p=פ).

Also, some consonants are represented by more than one letter, as a relic of the distant past, when they were differently pronounced. The transliteration for the k-sounding letters is k=כ and q=ק. For t-sounding letters the transliteration here is t=ת and ṭ=ט.

While the letters ת and כ have the same pronunciation in Modern Hebrew, their differentiation among some people originating in Arab and Mediterranean countries is in the process of disappearing. Their pronunciation is similar to “ch” in the German “acht” or English “loch,” and their transliteration is kh=כ and ḥ=ח.

Hebrew has letters for consonants that are “invisible” in European languages: the air stoppage in syllables that seem to begin with a vowel. Like ה and ח, their differentiation is disappearing in Modern Hebrew, but transliteration maintains the distinction between them as ‘ before the vowel for א and ‘ before the vowel for ע. Thus, for example, the word עיר (city) will be transliterated as “‘ir” and the word אור will be transliterated as “‘or.”

The consonants א and ה are mostly silent when in the terminal position. In order to distinguish between the letters that create the “ah” sound, the terminal א will not be transliterated, while an “h” will be appended to words ending in ה.

Doubling of consonants in the transliteration occurs when the Hebrew original contains a *dagesh ḥazaq* (literally “strong dot,” often referred to as “geminating dagesh,” or “dagesh forte”). The *dagesh ḥazaq* is a diacritic vocalisation mark that may occur in most letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In transliteration, the dagesh doubles the letter in which it appears.

Some Hebrew prepositions (ב, ל, מ, כ) and particles, including the definite article (ה) and conjunctive vav (ו) are not discrete words but prefixes. Their transliteration will appear in lowercase letters followed by a part of speech begin-

ning with an upper case letter. For example, the word מֶלֶךְ (the king) will appear, unhyphenated, as *haMelekh*.

For some Hebrew terms there are accepted conventions in modern scholarship. This study will follow those conventions rather than adhere to the described transcription rules.

The transliteration rules applied in this work do not relate to Hebrew words that appear in citations from other sources. In this case, the original orthography remains unaltered.

Transliteration Table

| Consonants | | | | Vowels | |
|--------------|--------------|--------|-------|----------|------------------|
| Name | Notation | Letter | Sound | Notation | with א or Letter |
| 'Aleph | ‘ | א | bar | <i>a</i> | א, א, א |
| | | | get | <i>e</i> | (א), א, א, א |
| Bet (dagesh) | <i>B b</i> | ב | | | |
| Vet | <i>V v</i> | ב | | | |
| Gimel | <i>G g</i> | ג | go | | |
| Dalet | <i>D d</i> | ד | | | |
| He | <i>H h</i> | ה | | | |
| Vav | <i>V v</i> | ו | zoo | <i>u</i> | א, א |
| | | | loch | <i>o</i> | א, א, א, א |
| Zayin | <i>Z z</i> | ז | | | |
| Het | <i>H h</i> | ח | loch | | |
| Tet | <i>T t</i> | ט | | | |
| Yod | <i>Y y</i> | י | see | <i>i</i> | א, א |
| Kaf | <i>K k</i> | כ, כּ | | | |
| Khaf | <i>KH kh</i> | ך, כּ | loch | | |
| Lamed | <i>L l</i> | ל | | | |
| Mem | <i>M m</i> | מ, מּ | | | |
| Nun | <i>N n</i> | נ, נּ | | | |

| | | | |
|---------------|--------------|-----|--------|
| <i>Samekh</i> | S s | ס | |
| <i>'Ayin</i> | ' | ע | Deep א |
| <i>Peh</i> | P p | פ,ף | |
| <i>Pheh</i> | F f | פ,ף | |
| <i>Ẓadi</i> | Ẑ ẑ | צ,ץ | bits |
| <i>Qof</i> | Q q | ק | |
| <i>Resh</i> | R r | ר | |
| <i>Shin</i> | SH sh | ש | |
| <i>Sin</i> | S s | ש | |
| <i>Tav</i> | T t | ת | |