

**שיעורים בעברית
שלב ב**

**Lessons
in
Modern
Hebrew**

Edna Amir Coffin

Level II

Ann Arbor The University of Michigan Press

PREFACE

Lessons in Modern Hebrew, Level II, constitutes the second volume in a sequence of a comprehensive course in Modern Hebrew. The two levels correspond to the introductory and the intermediate stages of instruction designed for college level courses. They include an extensive presentation of the basic structural features of Modern Hebrew as well as an introduction to a basic core of vocabulary (approximately 2500 words). Since Level II is the second stage of the course, it assumes full mastery by the student of the grammatical and lexical content of Level I.

While similar to Level I in its philosophy and in its format, Level II has its own distinct objectives and techniques. There is a shift from a more audio-lingual approach of learning structures to a greater reliance on the cognitive approach. There are very few mechanical drills which usually accompany audio-lingual language texts. The vocabulary included in Level II is much more extensive than that included in Level I, the exercises stress the creative effort on the part of the student, and the reading selections are longer and more sophisticated in both style and content. The language of the text reflects the literary written medium rather than the more informal spoken style, often the basis for Level I texts. The student's role is a much more active one, as not everything is fully presented to him. The student is encouraged to learn to use the dictionary, as well as learn to use previous grammatical and lexical information to interpret new texts.

Objectives: The main objective is to develop the student's skills so that at the end of the course (both Level I and Level II) he can approach Hebrew prose, fiction and non-fiction, with the necessary tools to comprehend the materials on his own. The aural comprehension and aural expression are also considered equally important in Level II. There are accompanying tapes,

suggested classroom activities, as well as assignments which go along with each of the lessons in the book. These activities are designed to enhance the productive and receptive skills alike. At the completion of the course, the student should be able to express himself both in speech and in writing in an acceptable, clear and somewhat sophisticated manner. The greater emphasis on vocabulary acquisition in Level II is aimed at providing the student with vocabulary which will not only allow him to express himself about his immediate environment and daily functions, but will also allow him to discuss social, cultural and political aspects of life.

The following features are included in Level II to enhance vocabulary acquisition:

(1) Active vocabulary of each lesson is included in a list at the beginning of each lesson. Nouns are presented with a notation of gender, as well as the inclusion, in many cases, of the construct form and the form of the plural. Both vocalized as well as unvocalized forms are included. Verbs are introduced in the third person masculine singular form, with the past, present, and future tenses, included, as well as infinitive. A notation of the conjugation form as well as the root of the verb are presented as well. Adjectives and animate nouns are presented in masculine and feminine singular forms.

(2) The new items of the basic vocabulary are presented in preparatory sentences or preparatory passages. These sentences or passages introduce the items previously listed in isolation, in a context, similar to the one in which they will appear in the reading passage. All the Hebrew sentences translated into English so that they can be fully understood in their context. The students are exposed to the new vocabulary for the second time, and gain a greater familiarity with their actual use in a sentence. Preparatory sentences are sometimes fully presented in Hebrew, and other times are used as fill-in exercises to be completed by the new vocabulary items.

(3) The active vocabulary of the lesson is once more used in the basic text of the lesson.

(4) Many of the vocabulary items which are new, are included in the

grammatical exercises as well, thus affording the student with another opportunity to encounter them in use.

(5) Passive vocabulary is included in the extensive readings at the end of the lesson. These vocabulary items are not designed to be fully mastered and actively controlled by the student. However, when encountered more than once they tend to become part of the active vocabulary of the student.

(6) Dictionary exercises are often included with the extensive readings. Rather than being presented with the English equivalents of the passive vocabulary, the student is instructed in how to use the dictionary and is encouraged to look for their meanings on his own.

There are sixteen lessons in Lessons in Modern Hebrew, Level II. They consist of the following sections: active vocabulary, preparatory sentences, basic texts, grammar and exercises, and additional activities. The basic texts were selected and composed with the idea of introducing the student to various aspects of life in Israel and to some of the aspects of Jewish tradition. While the style of Hebrew used is for the most part that of non-fiction prose, there are other styles of Hebrew in the book. The last three lessons in the book contain folk tales and Chassidic tales as well as passages from the Bible. Some Israeli slang is included in the section which deals with interjections and vocatives.

The grammatical discussions and exercises cover new materials and include a review of the major points of grammar covered in Level I. The seven verb conjugations and the major root classifications are presented in detail along with exercises. Many syntactic constructions are covered, including simple clauses, coordinate and compound sentences. All grammar points are explained in English, and each point is followed by examples as well as by drills and exercises designed to reinforce learning. While Levels I and II do not cover all points of grammar, they do include a thorough discussion of all major points of grammar, and as such, can be also used as a reference grammar.

The extensive readings are for the most part designed to enhance the student's ability to deal with unfamiliar texts, for which he had not been specifically prepared. It is very worthwhile to let the students attempt to decipher and interpret the new texts by themselves without first using a dictionary. They can follow such an attempt by checking the correctness of their interpretation with a dictionary, or in class with the help of the instructor.

The use of recorded tapes is as important in Level II as it is in the first textbook. Students internalize the materials to a much greater degree if they listen to tapes habitually. Listening should be encouraged both with open books and with closed books. The tapes also aid the students in correct reading of unvocalized materials. Experiments conducted at the University of Michigan, Division of Modern Hebrew, have proved that students who use tapes along with the book have a much better success in learning the language correctly, in all of its aspects, than the ones who do not use the tapes for the same lessons. Reading, writing, audio and visual comprehension as well as speaking are all improved when tapes are used regularly.

The various materials included in the book as well as the teaching techniques have all been tested at the University of Michigan. Students' comments have provided an invaluable guide and a very informative critique concerning the degree of interest that various texts had for the students, the clarity of grammatical explanations, and the effectiveness of exercises and drills. The instructional staff of the Hebrew division was also very helpful in providing suggestions and critical comments. Special thanks are due to Oded Borowski who actively participated in the preparation of both volumes of Lessons in Modern Hebrew and whose contributions were invaluable. Additional thanks are due to Debbie Lanyi who helped in the typing of the materials. Special thanks are due to the Department of Near Eastern Studies and the Center for Near Eastern and North African Studies at the University of Michigan for moral and material support, and to Professor Arnold Band of the Department of Near Eastern Studies at UCLA for his encouragement and professional support.