

## **Why study Hebrew?**

What is language? How does a sequence of sounds produced in one's throat get translated into information, ideas, poetry, and prose? How does language evolve? How have different languages changed over time? When did Hebrew come into existence? Are Biblical Hebrew and Modern Hebrew the same language? How are new words created? How does their meaning change?

Language is arguably the most compelling and remarkable creation of humankind. The general study of language, and the study of the Hebrew language in particular, is a captivating journey into deciphering and understanding this amazing mechanism, into the history of the Hebrew language, and into the place it occupies in our lives. Hebrew is a vibrant living language, deeply rooted in a unique history in the past. Since language is tightly bound to the culture in which it is spoken, the study of language constitutes a window towards understanding the culture and society of the people who use it.

## **What do we study in the Department of Hebrew Language?**

In our department, Hebrew is studied from numerous angles: the study of meaning (semantics), of phrases and sentences (syntax), of the sounds of language (phonology), of the structure of words (morphology). We are also engaged in the study of discourse (discourse analysis) with special emphasis on spoken Hebrew discourse, and in the study of language usage (pragmatics). Students in our department immerse themselves also in the study of the various historical stages of the Hebrew language: Biblical Hebrew, Mishnaic Hebrew, Medieval Hebrew, and Modern Hebrew. This historical perspective is enriched by courses dealing with other Semitic languages and with the place occupied by Hebrew in the family of Semitic languages. Hebrew is approached from multidisciplinary perspectives in a variety of courses exploring language as a basic means of communication and the interface of language with several disciplines: e.g., language and communication, language and society, language and the law.

Our department grants degrees at the B.A, M.A., and Ph.D. levels. At the M.A. level, the student may select one of a variety of programs: a program for experienced teachers of Hebrew in which all courses are offered during a single day of the week; a program allowing completion of the M.A. within one academic year (including the summer semester), a personal interdisciplinary program specially tailored to the student's interests, and a program in language editing (pending registration of a minimum of ten students).

## **Why study Hebrew at the Department of Hebrew Language in Haifa?**

The Department of Hebrew Language at the University of Haifa is home to a unique combination of researchers studying a variety of subfields in the discipline. Several faculty members study Hebrew at its various historical stages,

while others focus on contemporary Hebrew as it is used today, emphasizing especially its use in the spoken medium. Some of our faculty members have quite distinctive fields of specialization: the study of Hebrew and Yiddish among the Ultra-Orthodox, the study of silence, the study of sign languages in deaf communities, and the study of language and the law. Our faculty have active research grants which fund projects involving the participation of student research assistants. Furthermore, we encourage third-year honors B.A. students to participate in faculty members' research projects, thereby granting them an opportunity to learn about academic research early on in their career. Those students often participate in the writing and publication of articles in journals and scientific books. The department is an active and dynamic one, holding annual conferences and workshops, a colloquium series, field trips, and departmental evenings. We run an active and updated website, as well as an active Facebook site, publishing messages, photos, articles, and links relating to the Hebrew language. The department is known for its warm atmosphere and individual attention given to each and every student.

The Higher Education Committee established for the evaluation of all Hebrew Language departments in Israel noted the excellence of research conducted in the department, the level of teaching, as well as the good atmosphere around the department.

### **Can one get a job in the field?**

Absolutely yes!

There is a variety of occupations requiring broad and deep knowledge of the Hebrew Language:

- \* Teaching at elementary, junior high, and high school levels in Israel and abroad. Teaching in schools for students of Hebrew as a second language at language schools (Ulpanim), colleges, and universities in Israel and abroad.
- \*Academic research at institutions of higher education and at the Hebrew Language Academy.
- \*Language editing (of written texts, of electronic media, etc...) requires sound knowledge of the Hebrew language.
- \*The field of translation requires an excellent knowledge of the language.
- \*Hi-Tech companies dealing with language and communication or computational linguistics often need Hebrew language specialists.

Combining studies in the Department of Hebrew Language with another department at the university opens further possibilities: combining Hebrew Language with Special Education or Psychology is a good basis for graduate studies in Learning Disorders; combining Hebrew Language with Communication provides a good background for journalistic writing and for newspaper language editing; combining Hebrew Language with Computer Science constitutes a sound background for Computational Linguistics; combining Hebrew Language with Literature is beneficial for those planning to take on a career in editing and literary translation, etc...

Finally, one may always study Hebrew Language just for the sake of interest!