

B. Notes on Hebrew prepositions

A preposition is a word or suffix that governs or determines the role of other words in a sentence. In Hebrew there are two types of prepositions, essentially, and these are known as:

Independent prepositions...standing in the sentence just as any other word might do.

Inseparable prepositions...and these are joined to a word and do not stand independently.

Of course if it were really this simple there would be no fun to it at all so naturally there are a couple that can occur either way. Well, in time all will be made plain.

Of the independent prepositions, you must learn them as vocabulary words just as they come. They are useful but we cannot list them here in full and if you read any Hebrew at all 'you will soon become acquainted with some of them.

Of the inseparable prepositions, the following information is needed:

The major ones are:

- וּ "with" "in" "by" etc.
- כְּ "like, as, with," etc.
- לְ "to" "for" "of"

These letters are joined immediately to the front of a word (other than a regular inflected verbal form). If the word is definite by having the definite article, the preposition letter assumes the place of the ה and retains the pointing - patah and the dagesh forte in the following word. For example

הַבֵּן "the son"      לְבֵן "for the son"

If no article is involved the preposition is usually pointed with shewa.