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Hebrew

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There are two main pronunciations in Modern native Israeli Hebrew: Oriental and Non-Oriental. The Oriental pronunciation is usually spoken by people with a Near Eastern origin, who have some sort of Arabic or Aramaic in their own or their parents' background. These speakers may have been born in Israel, and by now most of them do not know any Arabic or Aramaic. The Non-Oriental pronunciation is spoken by the rest of the population. It should be noted that, for various reasons, there are 'Oriental Israelis' who use the Non-Oriental pronunciation, and 'Non-Orientials' who use the Oriental pronunciation.

The Oriental pronunciation was chosen by the 'Va'ad Hallashon' (the committee preceding the Academy of the Hebrew Language) to be the representative and the prestigious speech in Israel. This pronunciation was selected to be the preferred one for the official broadcasting services. However, this decision is not always followed nowadays.

The recordings for this illustration were taken from two Israeli-born informants, whose education was in Hebrew. The Oriental informant was a 61-year-old woman whose parents were also born in Israel. The Non-Oriental informant was a 49-year-old man born to parents of East European origin; Hebrew and Yiddish were spoken at their home.

The main difference between these pronunciations is in the consonants; the Oriental pronunciation has two pharyngeal phonemes, which the Non-Oriental lacks. In the Non-Oriental pronunciation, /ʕ/ merges with /ʔ/ and /ħ/ with /χ/.

Consonants

| | Bilabial | Lab-dent. | Alveolar | Postalv. | Palatal | Velar | Uvular | Pharyng. | Glottal |
|-------------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|---------|-------|--------|----------|---------|
| Plosive | p b | | t d | | | k g | | | ʔ |
| Nasal | m | | n | | | | | | |
| Trill | | | r | | | | χ | | |
| Fricative | | f v | s z | ʃ ʒ | | | | ħ | h |
| Approximant | | | | | j | | | ʕ | |
| Lateral | | | l | | | | | | |

The phonemes /ħ/ and /ʕ/ occur only in the Oriental pronunciation.

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|------|----------|---|--------|------------|---|--------|----------------|
| p | par | 'bull' | t | tar | 'tours' | k | kar | 'cold' |
| b | bar | 'wild' | d | dar | 'dwelt' | g | gar | 'lives, lived' |
| | | | | | | ʔ | ʔor | 'light' |
| m | gam | 'also' | n | gan | 'garden' | ʃ | ʃar | 'sings, sang' |
| f | tsaf | 'floats' | s | sar | 'minister' | h | har | 'mountain' |
| | | | ʁ | ma'ʁar | 'sold' | ʒ | ʒa'ket | 'jacket' |
| v | tsav | 'turtle' | z | zar | 'stranger' | j | jam | 'sea' |
| r | ram | 'high' | l | gal | 'wave' | | | |

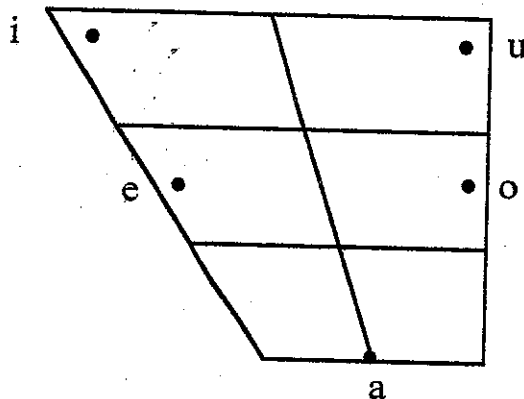
Oriental pronunciation only

| | | | | | |
|---|--------|------------|---|-----|--------|
| h | ma'har | 'tomorrow' | ʕ | ʕor | 'skin' |
|---|--------|------------|---|-----|--------|

Affricates might be regarded as phonological units, but they can be treated as sequences of stops followed by homorganic fricatives: /ts/ as in /tsar/ 'narrow'; /tʃ/ as in /tʃips/ 'chips' and /dʒ/ as in /dʒip/ 'jeep'.

Vowels

| | | |
|---|-----|------------------|
| i | hil | 'fear' |
| e | hel | 'army of' |
| a | hal | 'occurred' |
| o | hol | 'sand, workaday' |
| u | hul | 'abroad' |



Diphthongs can be treated as sequences of vowels. If one of the vowels in such a sequence is an /i/ it can be interpreted as /j/. Thus, [ei] can be interpreted as /ej/.

Stress

Stress is distinctive

| | |
|----------|---------------|
| /ˈberex/ | 'knee' |
| /beˈrex/ | 'he blessed'. |

Differences between the Oriental and the Non-Oriental pronunciations

The Oriental pronunciation has the two pharyngeals /h, ʕ/. Some of the Oriental speakers, especially in liturgical reading, have also pharyngealized sounds [sʕ, tʕ, kʕ]. Most of the speakers of the Oriental pronunciation have gemination, especially in careful and slow pronunciation (/danu/ 'they discussed' vs. /dannu/ 'we discussed'). They also preserve the traditional 'mobile schwa' more than the Non-Oriental speakers. Usually the Oriental-Hebrew speakers pronounce /r/ as an alveolar trill (or tap [ɾ]), and in the Non-Oriental

pronunciation it is usually a uvular approximant [ʁ] (still, some Non-Oriental speakers pronounce it as a trill). Some occurrences of the front-mid vowel /e/ are diphthongized by Non-Orientials as [ei], but most of the Oriental speakers retain a monophthong [e]. Years ago this distinction marked a distinct difference between these two pronunciations: while the Non-Orientials differentiated between pairs like [mo're 'dexe] 'guide' vs. [mo'rei 'dexe] 'guides', the Orientals produced both as [mo're 'dexe]. It seems that this difference is gradually disappearing, as more and more Oriental speakers acquire the diphthong [ei] in specific words.

Conventions

/k/ is aspirated and /p, t/ are slightly aspirated. /b, d, g/ are voiced throughout. In a normal style of speech /ʕ/ is a pharyngeal approximant. /ʔ/, especially in unstressed syllables, can be elided. /r/ in the Oriental dialect is usually an alveolar trill [r], but it is usually a uvular approximant [ʁ] for Non-Orientials. /χ/ is usually a voiceless uvular fricative trill. /m/ is usually [ŋ] before a velar plosive, and [ɲ] before /j/. Especially in unstressed syllables, the glottal stop, the glottal fricative and the pharyngeal approximant /ʔ, h, ʕ/ may be omitted (though their frequencies seem to depend on the personality, on the style and on the rapidity of speech). When intervocalic /h/ is pronounced, it is voiced [ɦ]. Vowels and consonants are long in stressed syllables. They are even longer at the end of sense groups. Vowels are centralized and shorter if they are unstressed.

Phonemic transcriptions of recorded passages

1 *Oriental Hebrew*

'ruah hattsa'fon, vehaf'semeʃ, hitvake'hu bene'hem, 'mi me'hem ha'zak jo'ter. game'ru, ki ʔet hannitsa'hon, jin'hal, 'mi sejjats'lijah lif'ʃot me'ʕal ʕo'ver ʔorah ʔet bega'dav. pa'tah 'ruah hattsa'fon vena'ʃav behozka. hid'dek haʔa'dam ʔet bega'dav ʔel gu'fo. ʔaz, hista'ʕer ʕa'lav ha'ruah, be'jeter ʕoz, ʔax haʔa'dam, miʃʕe'ho'sif hak'kor leʕanno'to, la'vaʃ me'ʕil ʕel'jon ʕal bega'dav. no'ʔaʃ mim'mennu ha'ruah, umesa'ro bi'de haf'semeʃ. tehil'la, za'rah ʕa'lav haf'semeʃ berak'kut. vahaʔa'dam he'sir ʔet big'do haf'el'jon meʕa'lav. hig'bir haf'semeʃ ʔet hum'mo, ʕad ʕel'lo ja'χol haʔa'dam laʕa'mod bif'ne haʃʕa'raʕ, ufa'ʃat ʔet bega'dav, veniχ'nas le'toχ hanna'har, ʕeha'ja bekir'vat ma'kom, ke'dei lir'hots bemei'mav.

2 *Non-Oriental Hebrew*

'ruax hatsa'fon, vеха'ʃemeʃ, hitvak'xu beine'hem, 'mi me'hem χa'zak jo'ter. gam'ru, ki ʔet hanitsa'χon, jin'χal, 'mi sejjats'liax lif'ʃot me'ʔal ʔo'ver ʔoraχ ʔet bega'dav. pa'taχ 'ruax hatsa'fon, vena'ʃav beχoz'ka. hi'dek haʔa'dam ʔet bega'dav ʔel gu'fo. ʔaz, hista'ʔer ʔa'lav ha'ruax, be'jeter ʔoz, ʔax haʔa'dam, miʃe'ho'sif ha'kor leʔanno'to, la'vaʃ me'ʔil ʔel'jon ʔal bega'dav. no'ʔaʃ mi'menu ha'ruax, umsa'ro bi'j'dei ha'ʃemeʃ. teχi'la, za'raχ ʔa'lav ha'ʃemeʃ

bera'kut, vohaʔa'dam, he'sir ʔet big'do haʔel'jon meʔa'lav. hig'bir ha'femeʃ
ʔet ɣu'mo, ʔad se'lo ja'ɣol haʔa'dam laʔa'mod bif'nei haʃarav, ufa'fat ʔet
bega'dav, veniɣ'nas le'toɣ hana'har, seha'ja bekir'vat ma'kom, kedei lir'ɣots
bemei'mav.

Orthographic version

רויח-הַצֶּפוֹן וְהַשֶּׁמֶשׁ הַתּוֹכְחוּ בִּינֵיהֶם מִי מָהֶם תּוֹק יוֹתֵר. גָּמְרוּ, כִּי אֵת הַנְּצַחֹן יִגְחַל מִי
שִׁיִּצְלִיחַ לִפְשֵׁט מֵעַל עוֹבֵר-אֶרֶח אֵת בְּגָדָיו. פָּתַח רוּיח-הַצֶּפוֹן וְנָשַׁב בְּתוֹקָה. הִדִּיק
הָאָדָם אֵת בְּגָדָיו אֶל גּוֹפּוֹ. אִזּוּ הִסְתַּעַר עָלָיו הָרוּיחַ בִּיתֵר עוֹז, אֶךְ הָאָדָם, מִשְׁהוֹסִיף
הַקּוֹר לְעֻנּוֹתָו, לְבֶשׂ מְעִיל עָלָיוֹן עַל בְּגָדָיו. נוֹאֵשׁ מִמֶּנּוּ הָרוּיחַ וּמָסְרוּ בְיַדֵּי הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ.
תַּחֲלָה זָרַח עָלָיו הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ בְּרִכּוֹת, וְהָאָדָם הִסִּיר אֵת בְּגָדוֹ הָעָלָיוֹן מְעָלָיו. הִגְבִּיר הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ
אֵת חֲמוֹ, עַד שֶׁלֹּא יִכַּל הָאָדָם לְעַמֵּד בְּפָנָי הַשָּׂרֵב, וּפִשֵּׁט אֵת בְּגָדָיו וְנִכְנַס לְתוֹךְ הַנְּהַר,
שֶׁהָיָה בְּקִרְבַּת מְקוֹם, כְּדֵי לְרַחֵץ בְּמִימָיו.