

Some Highlights of Contemporary Hebrew Dictionaries and Lexicography

This feature highlights the main monolingual dictionaries of Hebrew in Israel today – *Milon Ariel* (Maya Fruchtman), *Milon Even-Shoshan* (Moshe Azar), *Milon ha-Hoveh* (Mordechai Mishor), *Milon Sapir* (Yitzhak Shlesinger), *Rav-Milim* (Yaacov Choueka) and its online version (Yoni Ne'eman, Rachel Finkel) – with an overall cross-review (Ora R. Schwarzwald), as well as the **Historical Dictionary of the Hebrew Language of the Academy of the Hebrew Language** along with a glossary and notes (Doron Rubinstein).

The roots of Hebrew lexicography are traced to **Rav Saadia Gaon**, who worked mostly in Babylonia in the early 10th century CE. His *Egron* (902 CE) contained nearly 1,000 Hebrew entries, and *Kitab al-sab'in lafZa al-Mufrada* had 70 (actually 90) entries translated into Arabic. In addition, he was the first to write an Arabic translation of the Bible.

The initiative for this focus has been generated by what is considered to be the first major monolingual Hebrew dictionary, the *Mahberet* by **Menahem ben-Saruq**, which appeared in Spain around 950 CE.

Issue Number 13, July 2005, will feature an article on the *Mahberet* by Aharon Maman, articles on modern Hebrew/Arabic dictionaries, and highlights of Arabic dictionaries and lexicography.



Modern Hebrew Dictionaries

Ora (Rodrigue) Schwarzwald

Ora (Rodrigue) Schwarzwald teaches Hebrew at Bar Ilan University and part time at Talpiot Teachers College. She has a BA in Hebrew and Psychology and an MA in Hebrew from BIU, and a PhD in Linguistics from the University of Texas at Austin. Professor Schwarzwald has vast experience as a teacher and teacher trainer, is a member of several advisory committees on language policy of the Ministry of Education, and presides over the Israel Linguistic Society. Her publications include books on Hebrew and Judeo-Spanish (Ladino), *Dictionary of Linguistics and Philology* (with Michael Sokoloff, Reches, 1992), and numerous articles, particularly concerning Modern Hebrew. She was on the advisory board of *Rav-Milim* and a consultant for *Milon Sapir*.
oschwarz@mail.biu.ac.il

The past decade has seen the appearance of a great number of monolingual modern Hebrew dictionaries, each with a different linguistic approach and editorial aims.

Besides these, there are dictionaries of proverbs and idioms (e.g. *Lashon Rishon* [First Tongue], 2000; *Nivon Ariel* [Ariel Dictionary of Idioms], 2001), clichés (*Medabrim bi-Klisha'ot* [Talking in Clichés], 2002), a thesaurus (*Mila be-Mila* [Word in/by Word], 2000), rhymes (*Haruzim le-Khol 'Et* [Rhymes for all Times], 2001), loan words (*Leksikon Lo'azi- Ivri* [Foreign-Hebrew Lexicon], 2000), lost words (*Milon ha-Milim ha-'Ovdot* [Dictionary of Lost Words], 1996), slang (*Sleng Tsva'i* [Military Slang], 1994; *Leksikon Shotrim ve-Ganavim* [Cops and Robbers Lexicon], 1997; *Sleng ve-Humor* [Slang and Humor], 2003) and professional dictionaries, all published within the past ten years.

The following nine dictionaries will be the focus of our discussion, listed here chronologically with their abbreviations – first the five general dictionaries, followed by the four junior ones.

General Dictionaries

- *Milon ha-Hoveh* [Dictionary of Contemporary Hebrew, literally: Dictionary of the Present/Participle] by

Shoshana Bahat and Mordechai Moshor. Jerusalem: Maariv and Eitav, 1995. 815 pages; henceforth *H*.

- *Rav-Milim* [A Comprehensive Dictionary of Modern Hebrew, literally: Master-Words] by Yaacov Choueka and the Rav-Milim team. Tel Aviv: C.E.T, Miskal and Steimatzky, 1997. 6 volumes, 16+1955 pages; CD-ROM for Windows 98; online: <http://www.ravmilim.co.il>; *RM*.

- *Milon Sapir ha-Merukaz* [The Concise Sapphire Dictionary] by Eitan Avneyon. Tel Aviv: Hed Artzi and Eitav, 1997. 1126 pages; also CD-ROM; *SM*.

- *Milon Sapir* [Encyclopedic Sapphire Dictionary] by Eitan Avneyon. Tel Aviv: Hed Artzi and Eitav, 1998. 7 volumes, 2926 pages; 3 volumes, 2002; *S*.

- *Milon Even-Shoshan Mehudash u-Me'udkan li-Shnot ha-'Alpayim* [Even Shoshan's Dictionary – Renewed and Updated for the 2000s], edited by Moshe Azar and a team. Tel Aviv: Am Oved, Kineret, Zmora-Bitan, Dvir and Yediot Aharonot, 2003. 6 volumes, 2200 pages; *ES*.

Junior Dictionaries

- *Rav-Milim ha-Tsa'ir* [Young Rav-Milim: An Annotated and Illustrated Dictionary of Contemporary Hebrew for the Young] by Yaacov Choueka and the Rav-Milim team.

Tel Aviv: C.E.T, Miskal and Steimatzky, 1996. 2 volumes, 8+1022 pages; also CD-ROM; *RMH*.

● *Milon ha-Hoveh: Milon Kis Shimushi la-Lomed* [*Practical Pocket Learner's Dictionary of Contemporary Hebrew*] by Haya Gil. Tel Aviv: Maariv and Eitav, 1996. 512 pages; *HK*.

● *Milon Sapir le-Bet ha-Sefer* [*Sapphire School Dictionary*] by Haya Gil and Orna Ben-Natan, chief editor Eitan Avneyon. Tel Aviv: Hed Arzi and Eitav, 1999. 624 pages; *SB*.

● *Milon-Kis Ariel* [*Ariel Pocket Dictionary*] by Maya Fruchtmann. Qiryat Gat: Korim, 2001. 1030 pages; *A*.

Except for *ES*, all these dictionaries are entirely new. *ES* is a revised version of *ha-Milon he-Hadash* [*The New Dictionary*], written by Avraham Even-Shoshan and first published in 1948, revised in the 70s by Even-Shoshan, updated in the 80s, and now revised by Moshe Azar and a team.

H and its followers – *SM*, *S*, *HK* and *SB* – form one group of dictionaries based on their verb representation system, whereas *RM*, *ES*, *RMH* and *A* form another. From here on *S* refers to *SM*, *S* and *SB*, and *H* to *H* and *HK*, unless otherwise stated. All the dictionaries attempt to present the most up-to-date list of the vocabulary of contemporary Hebrew; they vary, though, in a number of ways. In the following sections the special features of the dictionaries will be discussed. The idiosyncrasies of some of them will be described at the end.

Entry Form

S is the only dictionary that presents each of the meanings on a new line; all the other dictionaries, including *SM* and *SB*, have all the meanings assembled together within one paragraph. *H* includes in this paragraph derived words, such as *dati* [*religious*] in *dat* [*religion*], as well as sub-entries; in the other dictionaries, derivatives appear as independent lexical items, except for *RMH* which lists only gerunds as a sub-entry of the verb; other sub-entries appear separately, following the explanations (see discussion below).

Roots and Verbs

Until recently, there was a clear difference in Hebrew dictionaries between the representation of verbs and all other words. The verbs were listed as sub-entries of the (tri)consonantal root, whereas other words were listed in their alphabetical order. Among the new dictionaries, *ES* continues the old practice, whereas *H* started a revolution in listing all the

verb forms alphabetically like any other word, and all the other dictionaries (except *ES*) use this system. Thus, for example, *ES* has under the root *TBL*, in the letter *Tet* [*T*], the following verbs: *taval* [*immersed, dipped*], *nitbal* [*was dipped*], *tibel* [*dipped* – especially food in liquid (*Mishnaic* use)], *tubal* [*was dipped*], *hitbil* [*dipped; baptized*], *hutbal* [*was dipped; was baptized*], and also *tovley shaharit* [*Essenes; morning bathers* (*Talmudic* use)], and *tovel ve-sherets be-yado* [*religious hypocrite*]. *H* and the other dictionaries list the verb entries alphabetically, though there is a difference in their listing, as will be described in the Tenses section. Hence, the above verbs appear under the letter *Tet*, as *tovel* or *taval*, including *tovel ve-sherets be-yado* (but not *tovley shaharit*); *nitbal* under the letter *Nun* [*N*]; no *metabel*, nor *tibel* and *metubal*, nor *tubal* (because they represent archaic use); *matbil* and *mutbal* under the letter *Mem* [*M*], *hitbil* and *hutbal* under the letter *He* [*H*].

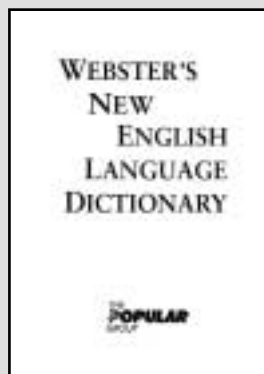
Tenses

Contrary to the traditional way of listing verbs in their past tense forms, *H* was the pioneer in positing the present (participle) forms as the main lexical entry for all the verbs. Mordechai Mishor, one of its editors, presented the theoretical background for this system in an article published in *Hebrew Computational Linguistics* 24 (1987, see also in this issue). One of the arguments was that because every verb in its present tense form can potentially become a noun or an adjective, it is more economical for a dictionary to list the present form and catch both the nominal and the verbal functions at the same time. *S* follows the same system. *RM*, *ES*, *RMH* and *A* continue the old tradition of bringing the past tense singular form as the base form. The latter system has an advantage for the user, because it shows instantaneously the verb pattern in which the verb is conjugated (the *binyan*). Hence, if we pursue the previous example, *taval* is conjugated in *pa'al*, *nitbal* in *nif'al*, *hitbil* in *hif'il*, and *hutbal* in *huf'al*. Existing nouns and adjectives from the same roots are listed separately. For example, the verb *hidrich* [*guided; directed; instructed, coached*] is listed under *He*, whereas the noun *madrich* [*a guide; instructor, counselor; manual*] under *Mem*. *H* and its followers have one entry, *madrich*, for both functions. However, contrary to expectation, the phrase *bi-zman hoveh* [*in the present tense*] precedes the nominal meaning in *H* and *HK*.

The present tense system caused a change in the distribution of the letters: traditionally the letter *Mem* covered about

A NOTE ON THE TRANSCRIPTION

According to the transcription rules of the Academy of the Hebrew Language, every *dagesh forte* has to be transliterated by doubling the letter; however, in this issue, this rule is applied only in the article and glossary by Doron Rubinstein. According to the above-mentioned rules, the symbol <^> is used for the letter א (*Aleph*) and the symbol <'> for the letter א (*Ayin*); however, in this issue, <^> is used to indicate either letter. Moreover, this and other Academy rules are not applied systematically in this issue, especially concerning words and names that are used commonly in other languages, e.g. Avraham – not 'Avraham [*Abraham*], Gaon/Geonim – not Ga'on/Ge'onim [*Sage(s)*], etc.



WEBSTER'S NEW

English Language
Dictionary

THE POPULAR GROUP

New York, USA

June 2004

ISBN 1-59027-077-0

Paperback, 254 pages

175 x 120 mm.

[http://kdictionaries.com/
products/us/enen.html](http://kdictionaries.com/products/us/enen.html)

Published by arrangement with
K DICTIONARIES

13% of the headwords in a dictionary, whereas in *H* and *S* it covers about 30% of them.

Vocabulary

1. Although most of the dictionaries claim to be contemporary, they do include obsolete items. Some of them give the old meaning rather than the contemporary one.

The example *tovley shaharit* above appears only in *ES* and the detailed *S*; the other dictionaries do not include it at all. The phrase *me'et le'et* appears in all the dictionaries; however, most of them give just the old meaning [*24 hours*], which is still used in orthodox circles for a religious *Halachic* term, while the current more widely-spread secular use [*from time to time*] is only represented in *RM*, *RMH*, *ES* and *A*.

ES describes all the sources used for compiling the dictionary, and it states explicitly that even rare words are included, for two reasons: anybody may encounter them in literature and should be able to find them in the dictionary; and, even if a word looks like dead wood, it can potentially become alive. The words *porfan* [*a tool to help buttoning or pinning*], *potahat* [(*Mishnaic*) *a key or lock*], *pizul* [*crossed-eyes*], *pazaz* [*was gold-like*], and many more, occur only in *ES* and the complete *S*, but not in the other dictionaries. *RM* and the junior dictionaries largely avoid ancient and too literary words, because they reflect no current use, literary or colloquial.

2. Not all the dictionaries include sub-standard, colloquial and slang words. *H* claims to be a normative dictionary, therefore such words are avoided; so are the junior dictionaries, for educational reasons. For instance, the word *tafran* [(*slang*) *down-and-out*] appears in the general dictionaries, but only in *A* of the junior ones. The popular expression *haval 'al ha-zman* (also pronounced as the acronym *havlaz*) [(*colloquial*) *a waste of time; (slang) extraordinary*] is explained on the web version of *RM*, but does not appear in any other dictionary.

3. Encyclopedic information appears in detail only in *S* and *SM*; they include names of countries (*Peru*), rivers (*Danuba*), cities (*Teheran*), etc, with a comprehensive explanation. Only wide-ranging information terms are brought in the other general dictionaries, e.g. *pahmeman* [*hydrocarbon*], *petunia*; however, this encyclopedic information is one of the causes for the wider volume of *S* and *SM*.

Historical Information

Only *SM*, *S* and *ES* indicate for each word and meaning when it was first used: in the Bible (unmarked in *ES*, <*tm*> in *S*, *SM* and *SB*), in *Mishnaic* Hebrew (<*t*> in *ES*, <*tm*> or <*r*> in the others), in Medieval Hebrew (<*b*> in *ES*, <*yb*> in the others), and in Modern Hebrew (<*h*> in *ES*, <*'h*> in the others). New loan words are marked as well: <*l*> in *ES*, <*ms*> in the others, but not old loan words that became part of Hebrew, e.g. *pardes* [*orchard (modern); fruit tree ground (Biblical)*]; (cf. *paradise*). The information about the first appearance of a word or a meaning is totally unnecessary for the layman, but relevant for researchers and for people who are interested in the history of words.

Etymology

Only *ES* marks the word etymology consistently. This information appears in parentheses next to the entry indicating: (1) parallel words in other Semitic languages, i.e. Acadian, Aramaic, Arabic; (2) a related root of the same word; and, (3) the source language of loan words and their original form. This is semi-scientific information that resembles *Webster* or *Oxford* dictionaries. *RM* and *RMH* indicate the language of origin only in loan words, e.g. *profil* [*profile*] from Italian. All the other dictionaries do not have it.

Sub-entries

Sub-entries include phrases and commonly used idioms that the lexical item shares with other words. Except for *H*, all the other dictionaries list sub-entries following the basic meanings of the item. *H* has the sub-entries in the same paragraph with the meanings and derived words. All the sub-entries are listed consecutively in one new paragraph after the explanations in *SM*, *HK* and *A*. However, *RM*, *S*, *ES* and *RMH* have each sub-entry in a separate line. As stated above, *ES* has all the verb forms as sub-entries to the root.

Examples

H, *SM* and *A* do not incorporate any examples after the definitions. *ES* brings citations from the listed sources after each meaning in the same font size as that of the meaning, and only the reference is marked by a smaller font. At times, especially with new words, examples are given with no indication of the source. *RM*, *RMH*, *S*, *SB* and *HK* bring invented examples in either a smaller font or italics, though sometimes citations and references are brought in *SB*. *RM* and *RMH* in particular have examples for the sub-entries as well, whereas the other dictionaries give them only occasionally.

Illustrations

H, *S* and *ES* do not have illustrations. The junior dictionaries *HK*, *RMH* and *A* include pictures to exemplify some of the lexical items, and *RMH* has them in color. *RM* has a few illustrations as well, in black-and-white.

Orthography and Vocalization

Two spelling systems are used in Hebrew, vocalized (*ktiv haser*) and 'plene' spelling (*ktiv male*, *ktiv hasar nikud*). In vocalized spelling it is not necessary to add the vowel letters *Yod* [Y] and *Vav* [V] in word medial position, whereas in plene spelling their addition is imperative. *ES* and *A* are the only dictionaries that use full vocalized spelling. However, *ES* brings the plene spelling after the vocalized word, whereas *A* lists plene spelling in an index at the end of the dictionary. All the other dictionaries use plene spelling. If there is no difference between the two spellings, the vowels are added to the entry; if they are different, the vocalized form is written immediately after the plene spelling. For instance, *tigun* [frying] is written in vocalized dictionaries as <tgwn> טגון, whereas in the others it is written <tygwn> טיגון followed by <tgwn> טגון; *netiya* – as <ntyh> נטייה or as <ntyya> נטייה followed by <ntyh> נטייה. *HK* and *SB* add the script writing of the word following the vocalized form, e.g. טגון, טיגון.

But not only are the lexical entries either vocalized or not – explanations follow suit. In *ES* and *A* the whole text is vocalized, even the originally unvocalized citations are vocalized in *ES*. The other dictionaries avoid systematic vocalization in the explanations and examples. Vowel signs are added sporadically to facilitate reading, e.g. a *dagesh* [= dot stressing a consonant] is inserted to indicate a stop or fricative p, b, k – such as פּ p or פּ f.

Grammatical Information

1. Parts of speech are indicated in all the dictionaries. *H* and *HK* do not have an abbreviation for verbs (that appear in their present form), but the conjugation (feminine; past, future, infinitive) that immediately follows the main entry indicates it is a verb. Because only in nouns one finds gender distinctions, they are marked only for gender (<z> for masculine; <n> for feminine). Like verbs, adjectives are not marked at all, and if they do not belong to the participle forms, only the feminine form is inflected, e.g. *yahir* (*yehira*) [arrogant]. Other parts of speech are marked.

Parts of speech are marked in the other dictionaries. *S* and its followers distinguish in their dictionaries between verbal and

nominal uses of the participle forms, and the words are listed as separate lexical items, one as a verb, and the other as a noun or an adjective. *RM* and *RMH* mark the entries for Noun (<š>) and gender, Verb (<p>) and verb pattern (*binyan*), and other parts of speech. *ES* and *A* indicate a verb by <p> but nouns only by the gender; other parts of speech are marked, too.

2. Conjugations and inflections are brought immediately after the main entry in *H*, *S* and *A*, whereas they are placed after the definition (and examples) in *RM*, *RMH* and *ES*. *A* demonstrates verb conjugation and noun inflection, but not adjectives, before listing the meanings.

3. All the dictionaries except *A* bring the consonantal roots of the word (if there is one). *ES* brings it as part of the etymological information at the beginning of the lexical entry, whereas the others bring it at the end. *RM* and *RMH* are unique in that they bring the root with a list of other words derived from it, in *RMH* in the margins next to the entry, which provides important information about word families.

4. Prepositions required by the verbs are given in *RM*, *S*, *SM* and *ES* – in the first three at the beginning of the entry next to the relevant meaning, and in *ES* at the end of the entry before the inflections. They are implied from the examples in the other dictionaries.

5. Phonetic information is given through the vocalized words. Ultimate stress is unmarked; other stresses are marked in *RM*, *RMH*, *S* and *ES*.

Register Information

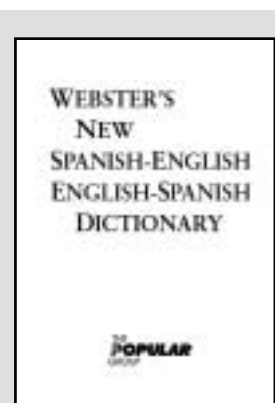
The general dictionaries and *RMH* indicate registers by assignment of phrases like *bi-lshon ha-dibur* [colloquial], *slang*, 'aga [jargon], *sifrutit* (literary), *mahshevim* [computers], *refu'a* [medicine]. This information is missing in the other junior dictionaries, which provide just normative practical vocabulary.

Sources

Only *ES* and *SB* record in the beginning of the dictionary all the literary sources that served in compiling the entries, with the abbreviations. Most of their examples are based on these sources.

Homonyms

All the dictionaries list homonyms as independent lexical entries. However, *H* and *HK* are the only ones that include verbs and nominal forms in the same present tense form, while all the other dictionaries use parts of speech as well as sense variations to distinguish between



WEBSTER'S NEW

Spanish-English English-Spanish Dictionary

THE POPULAR GROUP

New York, USA

June 2004

Editor: Juan José García Pañero

ISBN 1-59027-079-7

Paperback, 254 pages

175 x 120 mm.

<http://kdictionaries.com/products/us/spen.html>

Published by arrangement with K DICTIONARIES



GLOBALDIX

Multilingual Dictionary

Version 2.0

(MOT Dictionaries)

KIELIKONE

Helsinki, 2004

DVD and Online

ISBN 952-9865-09-0

- Arabic · Chinese · Danish
- Dutch · English
- Finnish (WSOY)
- French · German
- Hungarian (NTK)
- Icelandic (EDDA)
- Indonesian (Kesaint Blanc)
- Italian · Japanese
- Korean (YBM)
- Latvian (Zvaigzne)
- Lithuanian (Alma Littera)
- Norwegian (Aschehoug)
- Polish · Portuguese,
- Brazil (Martins Fontes)
- Portuguese, Portugal
- Russian (Rusky Yazyk)
- Slovak (SPN) · Spanish
- Swedish (Studentlitteratur)
- Turkish

<http://kdictionaries.com/products/multi/gd2.html>

Published by arrangement with
K DICTIONARIES

homonyms, e.g. *tsedek*¹ [justice; rightness], *tsedek*² [Jupiter (the planet)]; *moreh*¹ [a teacher], *moreh*² [teaches, instructs] (the latter is one entry in *H* and *HK*).

Appendices

H has three appendices: 1. rules of plene spelling; 2. past, future and infinitive verb forms, referring the reader to the lexical entries; 3. a list of roots, and the words that are derived from them.

S has five appendices: 1. rules of plene spelling; 2. new rules of punctuation; 3. Hebrew letters as numbers, e.g. =2, <k>=20, <r>=200; 4. Roman letters and their values; 5. Greek letters and their names.

ES has the largest number of appendices: 1. proper names; 2. a list of roots and their derivatives; 3. *hapax legomena* – single words that are not new loans, yet they cannot be analyzed as derived from a root and a pattern, e.g. *shuliya* [apprentice]; 4. fused words, e.g. *mashehu* [something]; 5. a brief summary of Hebrew grammar; 6. a table of patterns and their conjugations (verbs and nouns); 7. new rules of punctuation; 8. rules of plene spelling.

SM and *HK* have only the rules of plene spelling at the end. *RM* has a list of English and Greek letters, vowel and punctuation signs, Biblical cantillation and music notes, mathematical signs and geometric shapes, all with their Hebrew names.

RMH lists infinitive forms in the appendix, e.g. *ladug* > *dag* [fish], while *A* lists the plene spelling of the words in the dictionary, e.g. <bwhn> > <BHN> [examine], both intended to enable users to find the proper words in the dictionary. *SB* has no appendix.

Cross References

S, *SM*, *SB* and *HB* refer the user from the past tense form to the present form. All the dictionaries in groups *H* and *S*, as well as *RM* and *RMH*, refer the user from vocalized spelling to plene spelling, and from either loan or non-normative words to the Hebrew normative one. *RM* refers vocalized spelling to plene spelling by the use of smaller letters in the lower margin of the page. *RMH* refers gerund forms to the verb in which they are listed as sub-entries. *ES* has cross references either for weak verbs, where the root is unclear, e.g. *hipil* [dropped] <NPL>, and for *hitpa'el* verbs where the first radical precedes the *t*, e.g. *histalek* [gone] <SLK>, or when there is an equivalent proper Hebrew word for a sub-standard or loan word. *A* has no cross references at all.

Computerized Devices

As mentioned above, *RM* and *RMH* have

CD-ROMs that include all the information presented in the hard copy and much more: there are games and puzzles in the CD version of *RMH*, as well as audiovisual devices. The CD version of *RM*, which operates only on Windows 98, includes synonyms, inflections, phrases, lists of words derived in the same syllabic structure, ways to analyze each word, etc. The online version enables the user to access the most updated information about the words, including their translation into English, in addition to all the features mentioned for the CD.

The CD-ROM that accompanies *SM* offers no more information than the book whatsoever.

Other Idiosyncrasies

The junior dictionaries aim at school children, and all except *RMH* are published in a relatively small format to enable users to easily carry the books to school. *RMH* is the most detailed dictionary, which gives exhaustive grammatical information on roots, word families, pattern formation, meaning of patterns, and some general information in boxes outside the regular listing, e.g. the source of *demokratya* [democracy], or *ha-giben mi-noterdam* [the Hunchback of Notre Dame]. As mentioned above, the CD has auditory options, games, and a lot of additional information about the history of words and their use.

In Sum

H is the most compact, handy and practical dictionary, in spite of its awkward use of present tense entries. Its normative system and definitions are good. *RMH* is the best junior dictionary, though for school purposes *A* could be recommended due to its handiness. *RM* is the most updated and thorough dictionary of contemporary Hebrew, especially because of its computerized devices. *ES* remains the most reliable dictionary for scientific purposes, particularly for those who need historical information or those who like to rely on the authentic sources from which the word derives.