

A Miraculous Sign - The Revival of the Hebrew Language

May 12, 2014 | [Debbie Smith](#)

Many miracles have been associated with the rebirth of the nation of Israel. Perhaps one of the least appreciated of these miracles is the revival of the Hebrew language, the language of the Jews.

The Hebrew language was spoken by the Jewish people from the second millennium BC until the fall of Jerusalem and the subsequent deportation of the Israelites to Babylon, in 587 BC. For the next 1500 years, the Jews spoke Aramaic. Hebrew continued to be used liturgically but was not used widely outside of religious and cultural institutions. It was its use during religious observances that allowed some of the language to survive its disuse during most of the Diaspora. This is one reason for the Jewish expression, "The Torah has kept Israel more than Israel has kept the Torah."

According to figures by the Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel, 9 million people worldwide speak Hebrew. Nearly a million and a half Israelis do not speak Hebrew as a first language, thus complicating their religious and civil lives, according to a report in [Israel Today](#).

The revival of the Hebrew language began in the late 1800's with the Zionist movement, as Jews from over 80 countries began to emigrate from Europe to Palestine. The leader of the movement to revive and reestablish Hebrew as the primary spoken language of the Jews was Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, a lexicographer and Zionist. Ben Yehuda saw Hebrew as a necessary component of Zionism and a means to unite the various Jewish communities migrating to Palestine, who spoke an assortment of European languages and Yiddish, the vernacular language of most European Jews prior to the 2nd World War. He began an advocacy movement in 1886 for Jewish parents, encouraging them to teach their children Hebrew and for schools and universities to teach classes in Hebrew. On November 29, 1922, Hebrew was officially recognized, by the British mandate Authority of Palestine, as the official language of the Jewish people in Palestine.

Modern day Hebrew is made up of Biblical Hebrew, and 80% modern day Hebrew and 20% of new Hebrew words that have been created over the last 130 years. Ben Yehuda put together the first Hebrew dictionary for Modern Hebrew.

Throughout the ensuing years, historic 1948 when Israel became the Jewish State, and onward, through her rocky history, the Hebrew language has been seen as a uniting influence among the Jews returning to their ancestral homeland. The account of how Hebrew was revived for modern usage is an evidence of how Bible prophecy is being fulfilled in the present day.

Jeremiah, an ancient Jewish prophet wrote 2500 years ago that when the Jews returned to the land of their forefathers, detailed in Jeremiah 31:8-17, the Lord would give them back the language of their forefathers, and they would use that language to bless the Lord, (Jeremiah 31:23). Another Jewish prophet, Zephaniah, also predicted that the "pure language" of Hebrew would be revived in the last days, when the Jews once again lived in Israel. (Zephaniah 3:9).

The Bible also predicted that Israel's enemies would surround and seek to destroy the re-born nation. Of late, the enemies of Israel have sought to use the "pure language" of Hebrew against the Jewish Nation. Islamist Hamas authorities are expanding Hebrew-language classes in the Gaza Strip's high schools to help Palestinians comprehend the enemy in times of conflict with Israel. Hamas's promotion of Hebrew learning in the Israeli-blockaded Gaza Strip seeks to make linguistic skills a useful weapon in the dispute against the Jewish state. The ability to understand and speak Hebrew is seen as a strategic advantage in the ongoing struggle between Hamas and Israel. Twenty years ago, many of Gaza's 1.5 million Palestinians could speak and understand Hebrew, today that figure is only about 50,000, who retain some knowledge of the language.

Conversely, the Hebrew language is seen as a means to unite Jews and to maintain the Jewish heritage in an ever increasing globalized society. Last year...

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