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The Syntax and the Unity of the Hebrew Language

In spite of all the syntactic innovations which have been introduced in the course of time into the Hebrew language, these did not damage the unity of the language. Besides the fact that the new patterns of phrases and sentences did not drive out the old ones but lived together side by side, syntax, by its very nature, has nearly nothing to do with the elements of the language, but only with its "spirit" and its style. The great ages of the Hebrew language — the Bible, the Mishnah, the Golden Age in Spain, the age of the translations, the Enlightenment Age, the Revival Age and contemporary Hebrew — are characterized above all by their special spirit and style.

As concerns the division of the Hebrew language history into periods, two kinds of division are possible: 1) according to the objective needs of historical linguistic researches, based primarily on the spoken language of the Hebrew writers (Prof. Ben-Hayyim's method); 2) based upon the literary accomplishments constituting an historical reality in the people's consciousness and having its own spirit and style (Prof. Rabin's method).