Learning Hebrew: Pronouns

PRONOUNS
In Hebrew pronouns function like pronouns in English, that is, a word that replaces a noun. The pronoun refers back to a noun that is called the antecedent.

INDEPENDENT PERSONAL PRONOUNS
Personal pronouns can be first, second, or third person and either singular or plural.

First person pronouns refer to the person speaking. These pronouns are common because they are not gender-based.

I – אני, אֵנִי
We – אנחנו

Second person pronouns refer to the person being spoken to. These pronouns are gender-based.

You (masculine) אֲתָה (singular) אֲתֵם (plural)
You (feminine) אֲתָ (singular) אֲתֵנָ (plural)

Third person pronouns refer to the person or thing being spoken of. These pronouns are gender-based.

He/It (masculine) הוא They הם, הם
She/It (feminine) היא Theyهي, היא

DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS AND ADJECTIVES
Demonstratives increase a word’s specificity (example: a woman becomes the woman). Hebrew demonstratives work just like English demonstratives.

Masculine. This זה (singular) These אלה (plural)
Feminine. This זו (singular) These אלה (plural)
Masculine. That הוא (singular) Those הם, הם (plural)
Feminine. That היא (singular) Those הם, הם (plural)

When a demonstrative is used as an adjective, it follows the modified noun and agrees in gender, number, and definite article with the noun (Example: המן של אישה).

When a demonstrative is used as a pronoun, it precedes the modified noun and agrees in gender and number, but not the definite articles (Example: המן של אישה).
The modifying adjective is placed between the modified noun and the adjective. It agrees in gender, number, and definite article with the noun (Example: הָּהֵּם הַטּוֹבִם הָּאֲנָּשִׁם).

RELATIVE PRONOUN
A relative pronoun (who, that which) introduces a relative clause that modifies a noun. This pronoun (אֲשׁר) appears after the noun (Example: הַגָּן בְּתוֹךְ אֲשׁר הָּעֵּץ).

INTERROGATIVE PRONOUN
These pronouns are used to ask a question. The main pronouns are מִי (who) and מָּה or מֶּה (what).

מִי - אֲשֶׁר
מָּה - אֲשֶׁר
מֶּה - אֲשֶׁר

INTERROGATIVE PARTICLE
The interrogative particle is prefixed to the first word of the sentence to indicate a question (Example: הַנָּבִים אֶת הַמֶּלֶּךְ הֲשָּׁלַח).

This particle is spelled three ways:

Prefixed to most consonants: ה
Prefixed to a guttural consonant or consonant with a sheva: ה
Prefixed to a guttural consonant followed by a kamets: ה

Sources:
The First Hebrew Primer, Third Edition by Simon, Resnikoff, and Motzkin
Basics of Biblical Hebrew Grammar by Pratico and Van Pelt

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