PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions show the relationship of a noun or pronoun to another word in a sentence or clause. Specifically, they can locate a word in place and time.

In Aramaic, prepositions sometimes have simple forms and sometimes have forms compounded from nouns. Some are prefixed particles, and these may take the same pronominal suffixes [to show the object] as verbs [to show the direct object] and nouns [to show possession]. See the section on Pronouns.

The Zohar regularly uses about 21 prepositions. Here are included some notes on the syntax of certain prepositions, some of which have a characteristic usage in the Zohar. The most frequently used prepositions are listed separately.

A Note on Syntax
When a preposition occurs once with a separate word in proximity to pronouns, and once with a noun, the preposition is joined with the noun through apposition.

- יָבֵר (yavere) - gives honor to the King  III.188b Marg.
- בַּגָּדִי (bagedi) - behind, after  - a person should not pray behind his teacher  I.132a
- וֹרֶנ (voran) - except cmp.  - the Holy Name is not blessed through this blessing except by (saying) the summons  III.186b Marg.
- בֵּ- (be-) - as, in, with, through, across, at, about
  1. to show place  - לָאוֹ אֱלוֹקִים בְּהֵר (lav elokim bere) - and no one knew of them where they were  ZH 59c
  - into, inside  - לָאָרָכוֹ בַּהֲרָא (lavarako bhar) - and puts forth seed into her  I.1a
  - among  - בַּכּל בְּנֵי בֵּית (balk bein biet) - among all the Companions  I.96b
  2. to show time  - בְּהַמָּה (bemah) - at another time  III.71b
  3. to show means, instrument  - בְּהַפִּס (behis) - through this power  I.8a
  4. to show manner, circumstance

1. We follow Menahem Kaddari, Dikduk ha-Lashon ha-Aramit shel ha-Zohar  - p.100-108.
2. Some do not appear in our Glossary of the Hakdamah; others have a range of usage worth noting.
3. The Zohar seems to use a total of about 35 prepositions. This should be contrasted with English, which regularly uses about 70 from a total of 150; three are among the ten most common words in English. There are, however, over a million words in English; the Zohar’s vocabulary is probably 6,300 words. So it seems that the Zohar has a much greater proportion of prepositions [-.005% v. .00015%]. [More accurate figures for totals can be reached when we conclude work on our dictionary.]

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- that with this Torah I.96b
5- to show the reason
   - at the instigation of this serpent II.144b
6- to show association
   - when she went with Naomi III.190a Marg.
7- to show aspect
   - concerning the departure of Shabat I.14b
   - mighty in Torah, mighty over his inclinations III.191b Marg.
8- governing/required - ב - every rung ruling night I.8b
   - because of, on account of
   - because it is from the name of the blessed Holy One I.216b [Marg.]
   - by, by means of
   - yes, for example a wicked person by means of a righteous one III.36b
   - except cmp.  אָּלָקָה It is characteristic of the Zohar that this word usually stands alone, and is not joined with the noun by means of מ-ם,מ-מ,מ-מ
   - except for one day I.1b
   - except for the word at the end of the verse I.9b
   - in, for, facing, to, with, upon, by
     Usually with the addition of -ל
     - to this site I.2a
     - upon one land I.5a
     But sometimes not:
   - by, in the Torah I.3b
   - like, as
   - that Reuben is like this pattern? I.244b
   - - of, from, to

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1- to indicate reference to a place
    קִלְוַת הָבָה - to the Academy of R. Shimon I.4b
2- to join the direct object to the verb
    מָארָא לְ - who killed him I.210b
3- to show the dative/indirect object especially with verbs of speaking or giving
    לְ - and said to me I.1b
    בָּרוּ ברָו לְ - they gave him time I.4b
4- to show persuasion or making pleasant a kind of dative of instrument or benefit;
    Gesenius sec.119s
    בְּ - will be accorded life III.187b [Marg.]
5- to show necessity:
    בּ - a human being should I.1b
6- to show purpose, with the infinitive
    לְבָרְכָה לְ - to bless him I.1b
    לְמִסְפָּר לְ - to be generous to the poor I.13b
7- to show the possessive
    לְ - it has no share of this world I.3a
8- - by means of, with the passive form
    בֵּרִי לְ - blessed are you, my son, by the Ancient of Days III.129a IR
9- - upon
    לְ - He cast a deep sleep upon Ze’er Anpin III.142b IR
10- Before the second part of an expression in combination with
    מִ - what is the difference between them? III.188a [Marg.]
    מִ - from, of
1- to show distance from
    רֹאָיָן מַעֲשְׂעַת הוּא הַמַּעֲשָׂה - this mountain is far from civilization I.230a
2- to show negation of an action
3- to show the origin
    מָאָא - I heard from my father I.5b
4- to describe the reason
    בֵּית הָאָרֶבֶת - from His abundant love II.51a
5- to show partial results
    מִהְסָרָה לְ - some of them entering and emerging III.127b IR
6- to describe the point of origin in time
    מֵעֶקְפָּה - since ancient days I.1b
    מֵעֶקְפָּה מֵעֶקְפָּה - in the sense of "from before"
    מֵעֶקְפָּה מֵעֶקְפָּה - many years before I.244b
7- On - to express the comparative degree of adjectives, and מֵעֶקְפָּה to express

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the superlative, see our section on Adjectives.

8- as "by means of", usually with a passive form

מְתַעֲשֶׁר וּמְרַעַשׁ מִיֻּשֶׁר מְרַעַשׁ

is crowned by the heads of Adademies I.4b

9- Governing/required

מִסְחַפִּים וּמְרוּחָה יִכְנֶס

- we have been afraid since that day III.71a

עֵל - on, upon, over; concerning, because

1- to describe the place: "above something"

אֶזְרֹא דֵּא דֵּא־אַל אִינוּן עַלְּהָה

and this place called Zion above her III.65b

near, by, at

עֵל פֶּנָה - at the table III.60b

2- to describe the manner

נָבָר חֵל כָּל חָד עַל תְּפֻנִּית

and clarified for them each one perfectly II.102a SdM

3- about, concerning, in connection with

עֵל רָאָא - concerning this mystery I.2a

קָרַא דֵּא עֲלָי עָמָה תְּפֻנָּה אַפְרָמָה

this verse was said about the wave-offering of

a sheaf of barley III.188b [Marg.]

4- to describe the reason

עֵל הַהוֹמָא תְּפֻנָּה אַפְרָמָה

- because of the sin of striking I.6b

5- to express obligation

עֵל לָלֹּמְדָה - I must go III.188a [Marg.]

6- added to, together with

כָּכָה בִּישֵׁר עָלַי בִּישֵׁר

- how many afflictions upon afflictions I.179b

7- the independent preposition עֵל occurs as the prefix -א

אַפְרָמָה דְּרֵהַת קְדָשָׁה

- why is it mentioned a second time? I.1a

אַפְרָמָה דְּרֵהַת קְדָשָׁה

- by means of the holy spirit III.189b [Marg.]

עֵל פּוֹמ - by, according to

עֵל פּוֹמ שְׁאָלֵי צְוָאָה - in accord with questioning I.30a

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