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“If this is a received tradition – we shall accept it”: Factual Historical Tradition in Ibn Ezra’s Commentaries on the Book of Exodus – Trends and Insights

Miriam Jacobs

The article examines Ibn Ezra’s attitude toward the historical traditions of the Talmudic Sages by comparing his two commentaries on the Book of Exodus. The analysis shows that, at least regarding this topic, one cannot accept the general approach adopted by certain scholars according to which in his short commentary Ibn Ezra demonstrates interpretive independence and open criticism of the Sages, whereas in his long commentary he exhibits submission and loyalty to their words, supposedly as mere ‘lip service’. In contrast, this article argues that with regard to the historical traditions of the Sages, Ibn Ezra’s interpretations in the long commentary reflect a renewed and straightforward exegetical engagement, rather than ‘lip service’. These interpretations primarily demonstrate his willingness to reassess and even revise his earlier conclusions, as well as his critical approach to traditional interpretations that do not meet standards of logical and exegetical plausibility. In his view, such interpretations are not binding traditions but rather exegetical opinions of the Sages, which one is not obligated to accept. At times, Ibn Ezra rejects a specific interpretation of the Sages in the short commentary, while in the long commentary he is willing to consider it as a binding tradition, even if that likelihood is slim. Conversely, there are cases where he accepts an interpretation of the Sages unquestioningly in the short commentary, but in the long commentary considers its authoritative status only as a possibility. In our opinion, even when Ibn Ezra repeatedly entertains the possibility that a difficult interpretation may nonetheless be a binding tradition, he does not do so to ward off accusations of heresy against the Sages, but rather based on the content itself or the belief that these traditions may indeed have a solid foundation.

[Key words: Ibn Ezra; The Rabbinic (Halal) Tradition; Historical Tradition; The Short Commentary; The Long Commentary; ‘Lip service’; Aharon Mondshine; Michael Friedlander]

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The Unique Midrashic Hermeneutics of Rabbi Moses Gabbai, Author of ‘Eved Shlomo’, a Supercommentary on Rashi, in Comparison with Other Commentators

Avichay Levy

This article presents the unique interpretative approach of Rabbi Moses Gabbai (RaMaG), a 15th-century Spanish scholar, in his work ‘Eved Shlomo’, a supercommentary on Rashi’s Torah commentary. Gabbai developed an original midrashic hermeneutics that reflects the tension between the Spanish and Franco-Ashkenazic interpretative traditions. Unlike other supercommentators on Rashi who attempted to prove that every midrash Rashi cites is based on the peshat (literal meaning), or conversely, those who rejected midrashic interpretations outright, Gabbai adopts a more complex approach. He clearly distinguishes between the “way of peshat” and the “way of derash” (homiletical interpretation) and emphasizes that these two interpretative methods can coexist. The article compares Gabbai’s approach to that of other supercommentators through case studies, demonstrating how Gabbai applies critical thinking to Rashi’s midrashic interpretations without undermining their authority. His approach reflects a unique balance between the Spanish-Andalusian tradition, which emphasized the importance of peshat, and the Franco-Ashkenazic tradition, which was more receptive to midrashic interpretations.

[Key words: Rashi; Rabbi Moses Gabbai; Eved Shlomo; Peshat and Derash; Midrashic Hermeneutics; Medieval Jewish Biblical Interpretation; Sephardic and Franco-Ashkenazic Traditions; Supercommentary; Jewish Exegesis; Rabbinic Interpretation]

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from a desire to maintain a rather succinct narrative (narrative economy). But some of the gaps, including some of the most significant ones, appear to result from creating dialogue scenes. This technique led the composers of the story to omit details from the dialogue centers. Thus, creating gaps is not necessarily not a poetic technique, but rather an indirect and even unintentional result of creating dialogue scenes. This study, further, provides a means of assessing the function of dialogue scenes and gaps in other biblical stories

[**Key words:** Biblical Narrative; Elisha; Literary Gaps; Naaman; Prophetic Stories in the Bible]

Echoes of the Exodus Tradition in the Return-to-Zion Prophecies of Deutero-Isaiah

Maya Shmueli

The prophecies of Deutero-Isaiah are permeated with expressions of consolation and hope addressed to Israel, whose land had been conquered, whose Temple destroyed, and many of whose people exiled. At their core, stands the theme of redemption, one of whose principal signs is the departure from exile and the return to the ancestral land. The purpose of this article is to foreground the pragmatic orientation of Deutero-Isaiah, as manifested in the manner in which he employs motifs drawn from the Exodus narrative. The prophet selectively appropriates from his sources several typological motifs that serve to convey a message of hope, namely, that divine deliverance is both imminent and inevitable. At the same time, he suppresses or omits other motifs that lie at the heart of the original narrative. The modes of use of the selected motifs become intelligible against the backdrop of the lived reality of Jewish communities in the diaspora.

[**Key words:** Deutero-Isaiah's prophecies; the Exodus; Exile, Diaspora and Redemption; The Return to Zion; Israelites in Egypt and Babylonia; Pragmatism]

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From a Physical Gesture to an Emotional Expression: Examining the Phrases עין, נשא עין, כלה עין

Adi Marili

The literal meaning of the phrases עין כלה and עין נשא is a physiological description of the eye. עין כלה denotes the depletion of the eye's tear reservoir, עין נשא refers to lifting the eye or focusing the gaze. However, in Biblical Hebrew, these expressions also carry emotional meanings, particularly connoting anticipation or longing.

This article examines the semantic shift from physical meaning to emotional expression through a close analysis of these phrases in their biblical contexts, alongside additional rare phrases involving the noun עין, such as עין אל, עין דלל, עין, דלף עין, שבר עין.

I argue that the addition of the preposition אל to the verbs נשא, כלה, (דל"ל, דל"פ, שב"ר, רא"י) transforms the verbs (as well as for the related roots: עין אל, עין דלל, עין, דלף עין, שבר עין) into verbs of motion. As a result, the expressions shift from describing a physiological gesture to representing an affective movement directed toward a desired or hoped-for object. Examining the phrases in their various meanings reveals the semantic shifts that took place, and highlighting the intrinsic connection between embodied experience and emotions in Biblical Hebrew.

[**Key words:** The Eye in the Hebrew Bible; Body-Part Idioms; Embodiment and Emotion; Semitic Development; Cognitive Linguistics]

Dialogue Scenes and Narrative Gaps in 2 Kings 5

Tzvi Abusch and David Wright

The story about Naaman's healing in 2 Kings 5 is composed of a series of dialogue scenes (the cited words of the characters speech, what one character says to another) around which literary gaps occur. In this study, we identify the dialogue scenes, describe them, and explain the gaps that accompany them. We distinguish between significant and insignificant gaps that are associated with the scenes. We explain that some of the gaps arise

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Social Responsibility, Animal Care and Suicide Prevention: A Look at the Laws in Deuteronomy 22:1–8 and Some Thematic Parallels in Mesopotamian Literature

Nathan Wasserman and Yigal Bloch

This article focuses on the pericope Deut 22:1–8, in light of Moshe Weinfeld's proposal concerning Deuteronomy's connection to wisdom literature. We examine the laws in this pericope, most of which deal with animals, and point out some thematic parallels to those laws in Mesopotamian wisdom literature. With regard to the law in Deut 22:8, which requires a person to build a parapet around the roof of his house, we point to Mesopotamian parallels suggesting that the aim of this law is prevention of suicide. The principle of a person's responsibility for his fellow's life, expressed in this law, is thematically connected to the notions of one's responsibility for his fellow's property and for the preservation of nature's wild species, which underlie the other laws in the pericope under discussion.

[Key words: Deuteronomy; Wisdom Literature; Animals; Mother bird; Roof; Parapet, suicide prevention]