

The Philological Impact of Biblical Hebrew on the English Language

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Abstract

This study focuses on the extensive but unacknowledged influence of biblical Hebrew on Western languages, especially English. The critical argument herein is that biblical Hebrew has contributed towards molding the English language, enhancing it with added depth and complexity; it is hoped that this analysis will constitute an important contribution to diachronic linguistics. As a student of Hebrew and the Bible I have sought to detect the more precise and earlier source for words, expressions, and phrases that, rooted in the Bible, encompass inspiring historical, ideological, and philosophical concepts. In order to ensure accuracy and correctness, entries have been researched and substantiated with concordances, lexicons, the Koren Edition of The Jerusalem Bible, classical biblical commentaries and text analyses. Attention is also given to historical factors that have accounted for the influence of Hebrew on the Greek language, on the Latin language of Roman rule and on the languages of lands within the Roman Empire before and after the dispersion of the year 70. Samples of the findings are mostly arranged in categories that span our speech, ranging from the mundane to the sublime. The concluding section browses selected interrelated vocabulary of the Western languages and their corresponding biblical precedents.

Keywords: Hebrew diachronic linguistics, English, mobile, pan de molde, sphere, levitate, ruby, pizzazz, amazon, tannin, hail, migrant, tiara

Introduction

The aim of this study is to restore the recognition due to the Hebrew language for its philological contribution to Western languages, especially English. While the Hebrew Bible is generally recognized for its cultural and moral contribution to society, biblical Hebrew is not accorded commensurate credit. There are numerous words and expressions in English that appear to have connections to the Hebrew language, some of which can be called cognates. However, Greek and Latin are generally credited, although Hebrew preceded and contributed to the evolution of these languages.¹ True, the Land of Israel was only a province of the Greek Empire from 332-142 BCE, nevertheless there is a palpable influence of Hebrew on Greek, which in turn impacted the English language. Moreover, the fact that the Greek language had infiltrated and was spoken in the Land of Israel during the Second Temple Period as a result of Greek Rule reflects the natural reciprocity that caused Hebrew words to merge into the Greek language, and Greek words into Hebrew. Surprisingly, the Sages, although they were opposed to any infiltration of Hellenistic ideology, were tolerant of the Greek language because of its esthetic quality;² nor did they consider the language assimilatory. Indeed, Rabbi Judah the Prince, the first century Tanna and redactor of the Mishnah, put spoken Greek on a par with Hebrew, and Greek words were incorporated in his Mishnah.³ It is also justifiable to assume that Hebrew had influenced the Latin language of Roman Rule that ensued from 53 BCE until the destruction of 70 AD as well as the languages of the countries of the Roman Empire to which the Judeans were exiled, as is evidenced by this study.

Based on Obadiah 1: 20, the Hebrew language may very well have impacted Western countries centuries before Greek and Roman rule, from the time of the exile of the Ten Tribes in 722 BCE and the exile of Judah in 586 BCE. According to Rashi and Abarbanel on this verse, the exiles were in France, Germany, and Spain from that time. Obadiah 1:20 states: “*And this exiled host of the children of Yisra’el [ve-galut ha^hel mezeh] who are among the Kena’anim as far as Zarefat, and the exiles of Yerushalayim who are in Sefarad, shall occupy the cities of the Negev.*” Rashi claims that the *exiled* refers to “the exiled from the children of Israel that were from the Ten Tribes from the land of the *Kena’anim* until *Zarfath*,” while *the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sefarad* refer to “those that are from the children of Judah that were exiled to *Sefard*.” Rashi (1040-1105, leading commentator on the Bible and Talmud), Radak (Rabbi David Kimhi, 1160-1235, grammarian and exegete of Narbonne, Provence), and Abraham ibn Ezra (1089-1167, Spanish biblical commentator and philosopher) state that *Zarfath* is France, *Sefarad* is Spain, and the land of the *Kena’anim* is Germany. The Abarbanel (1437-1508; Spanish statesman, philosopher and leading biblical exegete) comments that England is not mentioned because it was originally part of France (*Zarefat*); and he interprets the word *ha^hel* not as hosts from the root *h.y.l*, but as *first or beginning* from the root *t.h.l.*: The implication is that these lands were inhabited by the early exiles of 722 BCE and 586 BCE and ipso facto were exposed to the Hebrew language from that early era.⁴ That being said, I have detected

¹ Aviram, J. (1974). “... the Proto-Canaanite script was the source of all alphabetic scripts which later spread throughout the entire world. From this script the Proto-Arabic script branched off in the course of the 13th century BCE. ... The main offshoot of the Proto-Canaanite script, however, is the Phoenician, from which the (ancient) Hebrew and Aramaic as well as the Greek alphabets evolved.”

² Goren, S. (1993).

³ Reiss, M. (2001).

⁴ Silverman, G. (1974). The movement known as British Israelism maintains that the people of the British Isles are genetically, racially, and linguistically the direct descendants of the exiled Ten Tribes. Although modern research has refuted these claims, British Israelite organizations have continued to be active. See Baer, Y. (1961).

what I believe is a considerable influence of biblical Hebrew on the English language, ranging from the mundane to the sublime. What follows are samples of my findings.

Words Derived from Letters of the Hebrew Alphabet

The evolution of alpha / alp from *aleph*; camel from *gimmel/gamal*; eye from *ayin* seems evident; the derivation of **cap** and **captain** from the letter *kaf* is less apparent but nevertheless tenable:

Cap reflects both the Hebrew letter *kaf* which is drawn as a curve and reflects that it is bent (*kafuf*), as well as its derivative word, *kaf*, which refers to a palm of a hand (*kaf yad*), the palm of a foot (*kaf regel*), the curved branch of the date palm tree (*kaf tamar*), a hip socket (*kaf yerekh*), or a spoon, – all of which are curved. The f and the p sounds are produced by the same letter, one with a *dagesh* (a dot) and the other without, and depending on the morphological structure of the word, they are interchangeable. In the plural, *kaf* becomes *kapot*.

The word *kippah* derives from the same root. In Modern Hebrew it is the term for skullcap. In Midrashic literature *kippah* refers to the domed arch of the heavens (*kippat harakia*). *Kippat* is the contracted form wherein the possessive pronoun is deleted, and the h of the noun becomes a t sound: *kippah of* becomes *kippat*. In the Bible the term *kippah* appears in Isaiah 9:13 and 9:15 in the context of kingship and rulership – *head and tail, palm top and rush [kippah v'agmon]*. Rashi's explanation for *kippah* in the above verses, as well as that of the Targum and Radak, is "the term for kings and rulers". The reprimand of Elifaz (Job 15:32), in his contentious proof of the conspicuous suffering of the wicked, contains the contracted form with the possessive pronoun *shelo* [his] – *v'kippato lo ra'ananah [and his branch shall not be green]*, *Kippato*, explains Rashi, is "the bending of his branches. All branches resemble a dome."

Cap and captain are ascribed to the Latin *capit* (head), which is basically *kippah shel = kippat* (the head/dome/branch of), which might conceivably be the earlier antecedent. The Italian *capo*, the Spanish *cabeza*, the French *chapeau* are likely derivatives of the word and letter, *kaf*.

The Tribal Names

Ruby

Aside from the relevance of the actual names of the twelve tribes, words that derive from these names have not been ascribed to their likely Hebrew source: **ruby**, **levitate**, **good** and **dean**. The association of ruby with Reuben relates to the fact that each tribe had a representative stone engraved on the breastplate of the High Priest (Ex. 28). Reuben's was the *odem*, which is a red stone, and in this case the stone's name is reflective of the name of tribe. The Spanish biblical commentator, Rabbeinu Bahya (1255–1340) states: "*Odem* is Reuben's stone, which is called rubin. Its color is red."⁵

Levitate

The concept of rising or causing to hover in the air, as in *levitate*, *lever*, or the French *lever* (to rise) may be associated with the Levites, the descendants of Levi who were chosen to serve in

⁵ Rabbeinu Bahya (1981 ed.) on Exodus 28. According to Rabbeinu Bahya, each stone served a function and correlated to the merit of said tribe. Since Yisakhar was born because of the mandrakes that Reuben had picked, the ruby aids in conception, and *odem* is written without the *vav* to intimate conception of *adam* [man].

the desert Sanctuary and later in the Temple. Numbers 8 describes the dedication ceremony of the Levites to God and to the service of the Sanctuary that specifically included the lifting and the waving of the Levites three times before God (Nu. 8:11, 13,15).

Good

The meaning of Gad is good luck, a distinct source for the word good. When Leah's handmaiden, Zilpah, gave birth to Gad, Leah stated, (Gen.30:11), *ba gad [Fortune came and she called him Gad]*. Rashi comments "*Ba mazal tov*" [good luck came to me]. Targum Yonatan on Genesis 30:11 writes: "She saw that he will have good luck since he will be the first to obtain a portion in the Land ... and therefore she called him Gad."

Dean

Leah did not say why she called her daughter Dinah, but when Rachel's handmaiden, Bilhah, bore a son, Rachel named the child Dan because, as she stated, *Danane Elokim [God judged me], and has also heard my voice, and He gave me a son.* (Gen. 30:7) Germanic origin is credited for dean/doyen and good; ruby and levitate/lever are assigned to Latin.

Food and Drink

Bread

The words for bread in French, Spanish, and Italian are much the same: pain in French, pan in Spanish, pane in Italian. It is conceivable that these hark back to the *Lehem Ha-Panim [the Showbread, or Bread of Display /Bread of Presence]*, the twelve loaves of bread changed every Sabbath and eaten by the priests at the time of the desert Tabernacle and later in the Temple. *Lehem* is bread and *panim* means face. According to Rashi on Exodus 25:30, it was called *bread with faces* because the bread had faces (surfaces) in both directions towards the sides of the Tabernacle and the Temple; while according to Nahmanides and Abraham ibn Ezra, because it was *lefani tamid [it is before Me always]*.⁶ The peculiar addition of the phrase **de molde** in the Spanish pan de molde reinforces the likely derivation from *lehem ha-panim*, since special molds [*kearot*] were used to fit the shape of the bread, both an iron mold and a golden mold. The *Lehem Ha-Panim* was originally baked in the iron mold, then placed on the golden one until the next day, the Sabbath, when it was arranged on the table and the mold was removed.

Consider also the parallels between *pas/piece*; *s.a.d./ sustain or sate*; *hittah/wheat*. *Pas* [a portion or a morsel] may be the antecedent of our English word *piece*, combined often with the word bread or cake: *pas lehem* [a piece of bread] . Abraham, in Genesis 18:5, beseeches his guests, *And I will take pas lehem [a morsel of bread] v'saa'du libkhem [and comfort/ sate your hearts]*; in Judges 19:5, the concubine's father urges his son-in-law, *refresh your heart with a morsel of bread [sa'ad libkha pas lehem]*. The adage of Proverbs 17:1 prioritizes the *pas harevah [a dry morsel]* with quietness to a house of feasting and strife. Daniel and his friends preferred eating seeds (Dan. 1:13,15) instead of *pas bag ha-melekh [a portion of the king's food]*. King David's prayer (Ps. 72:16) asks for an era of plenty when a handful of corn [*pisas bar*] will grow and rustle atop mountains.⁷

⁶ See also Exodus 35:13, TB Menahot 97a

⁷ Metzudat Tziyyon, *Mikra'ot Gedolot* (1974) translates *pisas* as an increase, similar to *pasah* in Leviticus 13. See also Psalms 104:15 for the root *s.ad.* [*to sate/sustain*], *Lehem l'vav enosh yisad [bread will sustain the heart of man]*.

Wheat

Wheat corresponds to *hittah*, the name applied to the two species of wheat grown in Israel. *Hittah* is the first of the seven species with which Israel is blessed (Deut. 8:8), but Germanic origin is assigned. Vine [*gefen*] and wine [*yayin*] are not attributed to the Bible. For that matter, neither is tannin (a key component in red wine and tea that lends astringency and dryness) identified with its namesake in the Bible, the poisonous *tannin* [crocodile or sea serpent] - the association of which we may find in Deuteronomy 32:33 [*hamat tanninim yaynam [their wine is the fierceness of tanninim]*].

Fruit

Fruit corresponds with *perot* [fruit, pl.]; the related word *porat* [fruitful and/or charming] corresponds to pretty. As noted, the p sound and the f sound are written with the same letter, and here the pronunciation becomes fricative with the insertion of a *dagesh kal (lene)*.⁸ Starting with Genesis 1:11 and antedating Middle English, *pri/ fri* [fruit, fruit of] and its variations abound in the Bible. Similarly, pretty is attributed to Old English and Dutch, but this too appears biblical, as in the classic blessing of Jacob to Joseph (Gen. 49:22): *Ben porat yosef, ben porat alei ayin ...*, timelessly appropriated by Jews of past and present. The Jerusalem Bible, based on Onkelos and Nahmanides, translates this verse as a comparison of Joseph to a fruitful bough by a well: *porat* as fruitful, and *ayin*, a well (*ayin* is synonymous for an eye or a well). Rashi translates *ben porat* as a son of charm or beauty that is projected on the eye [*ayin*] that beholds him; while the Kli Yakar (Rabbi Shlomo Efraim Luntshitz, Lublin, commentator, 16th-17th century) combines the two interpretations: *Porat* refers to fruitfulness and fertility. As such, he is *alei ayin*, he has the power to transcend the evil forces of the human eye.

In the animal kingdom, *teref* [an animal's food], with the connotation of specifically belonging and taken by the beast of prey, precedes the English **turf** (credited to Germanic origin from an Indo-European root) in the sense of someone's personal territory or sphere of activity. Earlier sources include Bil'am's (Num.23:24) comparison of Israel and its triumphs to the lion and its prey [*teref*]: *Behold, the people shall rise up as a great lion...he shall not lie down until he eats of the prey [‘ad yokhal teref]...*; Isaiah's comparison of God's defense of Mt. Zion (Isa. 31:4) to the lion and the young lion roaring on its prey [*tarpo*]; Amos's analogy of the impossibility of evil unwillingly by God befalling a city to the lion roaring if he has no prey (Am. 3:4): *Will a lion roar in the forest if he has no prey [v'teref ain lo]shall evil befall a city and the Lord has not done it?* Broader in scope but nonetheless referring to one's own sphere is King David's praise of God (Ps. 111:5) for giving *food [teref]* to those who fear him, as God has promised.

Personal or Physical Attributes

Amazon/ Amitz

The Oxford English Dictionary claims that *amazon* derives from an "unknown foreign word." That unknown entity may be identified with the Hebrew root *a.m.tz* - to be strong or bold [*le'emotz*], and in the intensive *pi'el* verb action, to encourage or adopt [*le'ametz*]. The popular biblical phrase of encouragement (Deut. 31:7), *hazak ve-ematz [Be strong and of good courage]* were Moses's words of support to Joshua who would lead the newborn nation into the Promised Land; Moses's farewell to Israel (Deut. 31:6) on the day of his demise urges the Israelites *Be strong and of good courage [hizku v'imtzu], fear not* Isaiah uses this term (Isa.

⁸ While the *dagesh forte* doubles the pronunciation of the letter, the *dagesh kal*, (the *lene dagesh*) is inserted only in the letters *bait, gimmel, daled, kaf, pay, tav* either at the beginning of a word or syllable.

40:26) to describe the power of the Holy One over the celestial spheres: *Lift up your eye on high and behold who has created these things ...that brings our their host by number, because of the greatness of His might, [me-rov onim v'amitz koah]*. His comforting prophecy (Isa. 41:10) stresses that God will strengthen his people: *for I am your God, I will strengthen you [imatztikha], I will help you, I will uphold you* Deuteronomy 15:7 cautions, *If there be among you a poor man... you shall not harden [lo te'ametz] your heart*, and the Woman of Valor (Prov. 31:16), is endowed with strength of loins and arms: *She girds her loins with strength and she makes her arms strong [vateametz zroroteha]*. Was the CEO of Amazon aware of these inspirational references? Perhaps.

Pizzazz

The Oxford English Dictionary tells us that Pizzazz is said to have been invented by Diana Vreeland, fashion editor of Harper's Bazaar, in the 1930's. Yet, *le-fazez* [to dance], from the root *p.z.z.*, describes King David dancing with the masses in celebration of the repossession of the Holy Ark from the Philistines. 2 Samuel 6:16 relates: *Saul's daughter looked through a window and saw king David dancing [mefazez] and leaping before the Lord...* The same root also connotes being covered in gold [*paz*], as Joseph is described in Genesis 49:2, *Vyafozu zroei yadav ... [and his arms were covered in gold]*. Indeed, the fashion editor's conception of pizzazz, knowingly or unknowingly, agreed with the connotation of glitter and dance of the Hebrew verb.⁹ The lexicographers, perhaps unaware of Job 41:14, or, for that matter, the Jewish wedding ceremony¹⁰, also place **ditzzy** in the 1970's, with an unknown origin. Topsy is placed in the sixteenth century, ignoring Psalm 119:70 and its description of the hearts of the *zaidim* [*the wicked*], covered like fat in stupidity [*Tafash ka-helev Lebam*].¹⁰ Another epithet claimed to have an "unknown origin" is **hazy**, much similar to the Hebrew verb root *h.z.h.* [to dream, to be sleepy] and its noun, *hozeh*, as Isaiah 56:10 describes the incompetent leaders as *hozim, shokhvim, ohavim la-num* [*dreaming, lying down, loving to slumber*]. Even the term evil, despite its Hebrew equivalent with all its biblical references (e.g., Ps. 107:17, Prov. 12:15, Job 5:3) is attributed to Germanic origin.

Frumpy

The opposite of pizzazz is **frumpy**, and here the Oxford English Dictionary does not assign any origin. Both adjective and verb from the root *f.r.m* appear in Leviticus in three instances reflecting disheveled tattered clothing: Leviticus 13:45 commands that the clothes of the leper are to be *perumim* [*torn*]; Leviticus 21:10 forbids the High Priest to rend his clothes [*ubegadav lo yifrom*]; following the tragedy of the demise of Nadav and Avihu, Moses cautions Aaron's remaining sons, Elazar and Itamar, ... *neither rend your clothes [uvigdeikhem lo tifromu], lest you die...* (Lev. 10:6).

Hail/Hayyil

The origin of **hail** is claimed to be Middle English: "from the obsolete adjective hail 'healthy'" (occurring in greetings and toasts...), from Old Norse heill, related to hale and whole." Perhaps a more accurate source is the Hebrew *hayyil* [strength or valor, also a soldier]. The Bible abounds in its references to *anshei hayyil* [*men of strength*] as in Genesis 47:6,

⁹ Another biblical verb for dancing is the verb root *r.k.d.*, perhaps the origin of the term arcade, connoting dancing in a circle, similar to a bowed arch, rather than the 17th century French source to which it is attributed.

¹⁰ In the Jewish wedding ceremony the couple is blessed with seven forms of happiness, one of which is *ditzah*. Although *ditzah* appears only once in the Bible, it appears in early sources, almost two millennia previous to the 1970's: Targum Isaiah XXXII,13 (second century), Targum Job III:22 (second century), Canticles Rabbah I,4 (no later than the eighth century). So too, *tipesh*: although found only once in the Bible, it appears in later Hebraic sources: TB Taanit 7:1, Sifre Deut. 309, Targum I Samuel xxvi:21.

gibborei hayyil, [heroes of strength], or as in I Sam. 14:52, *hayyil* in the sense of successes and valor (Deut. 8:18) and praise, epitomized by the *eshet hayyil*, [the woman of valor] of Proverbs 31. *Hail* as a greeting is also found in the Bible (Ps. 84:8), specifically the blessing to go *mehayil el hayyil* [from strength to strength]. Here also, the salutations and acclamations in the lyrics of the United States Presidential Anthem (Hail to the Chief) agree with the biblical concepts of *hayyil*.

Migrant or Immigrant

Migrant or immigrant and its variations in Spanish, Italian, and French, although attributed to the Latin *immigrare*, nevertheless recalls the Hebrew *gur* [to dwell, sojourn, reside], vs. settling – for which the verb *y.sh.v.* is used.¹¹ Joseph's brothers tell Pharaoh (Gen. 47:4): *To sojourn [lagur] in the land we come...*; God promises Abraham (Gen. 17:8,) *I will give to you and to your seed after you, the land in which they sojourn [erezt megurekha]*; the same is promised to Isaac in Genesis 28:4. When Pharaoh asks Jacob his age, he sadly responds with the term *megurim*, *the days of the years of my sojourning [yemei shnei megurai] are one hundred and thirty years*. The enduring dichotomy between immigrant [*ger*] and native is encapsulated in the ruling of Numbers 9: one ordinance for both.

Mobile

The adjective for the ability to move was appropriately adopted by the Mobil Oil Corporation to signify travel and transportation. The identical word is found in Hebrew: *movil* [transporting, or moving, hauling, carrying] conjugated from the root *y.b.l* in the *hif'il* [causative] verb action. Ramban associates this verb with the naming of the Jubilee year, *yoveil*, described in Leviticus 25:8-12 in the sense of “sending forth”: that *yoveil* indicates bringing everyone back to his possession and family, since property reverts to its original owner and slaves are freed. *Yoveil hee* means that it is a year (*hee*/she referring to year, which is a feminine noun) in which every man is transported back to his family and home. Ramban supports his view with biblical sources wherein this verb refers to conveying or bringing, including Isaiah 18:7: [*Yuval*] *there shall be brought a present unto the Eternal*; and Isaiah 30:25, *streams and [yivlei mayim] channels in which water is conveyed*.¹²

Words of Emotion

...Tzarah v'yagon emtza u've-shem Hashem ekra [...I found trouble and sorrow. Then I called upon the name of the Lord...]. Three of these six words of Psalms 116:3-4 have filtered into the English and Western vocabulary, demonstrating the extent to which the Bible has molded our language: *tzarah* / sorrow; *yagon* / agony; *ekra* / cry, from the root letters *k.r.a.* [call, read or cry out]. Nevertheless, sorrow is said to have a Germanic origin; Latin is credited with agony and with cry. The term, **calamity** is also attributed to Latin, despite its prominence in Psalms, the Prophets and Hagiographa. Psalms 44:16 reads, *My disgrace [kelimati] is before me all day*. *Kelimati* (i.e., calamity) is the possessive contraction of *kelimah sheli*;¹³ so too in Psalms 69:20, *atah yadata herpati uvoshti u-khelimati [You know my reproach, and my shame, and*

¹¹ Rabbi Bahya ben Asher (1981 ed.) on Genesis 47:8 explains that although Pharaoh asked him, *how long are you living*, using the word *hayyim*, Jacob answered with the noun *megurim*, since the righteous consider themselves only as *gerim* [temporary sojourners] in this temporal world.

¹² See Ramban, in C. Chavel, tr. (1974) regarding his disagreement with Rashi, according to whom the fiftieth year is named *yoveil* – which literally means a ram's horn, on account of the blowing the horn of a ram (a shofar) to herald this year.

¹³ In this contraction of the possessive pronoun and noun, the *hay* of the noun becomes a *tav* (t sound), and the letters *shin* and *lamed* (sh and l sounds) of *sheli* are deleted. *Kelimah sheli* = *kelimati* = calamity.

my dishonor]. *Boshti*, a contraction of *bosh sheli* (the shame of mine) from the root *bosh* [shame], is the likely forerunner for *bash/bashful*. Although Germanic origin is assigned for **answering**, we often find King David imploring God to answer him, as in Psalms 102:3, *b'yom ekra maher aneni* [in the day when I call answer me speedily]. The root “to answer” [a.n.h.] belongs to the verb group that ends in *hay*, which becomes an s/t in the infinitive and in the past tense, as in Exodus 32:18, *It is not a voice of those responding [anos] to strength, and it is not a voice responding [anos] to weakness*.

The word **wail** is more likely to have originated from Hebrew than Middle English or Norse. *Yelalah* is a wail, lament, or a howl [yell?] (Ezek. 21:7, Isa.16:7). **Hailil** means he wept/wailed. *Yelal yeshimon* (Deut. 32:10) is the howling of the wilderness. **Groan** corresponds to the biblical *garon* [a throat], as King David cries, *I am weary with my crying; my throat [gronie] is dry* (Ps. 69:4). Rage is in the Bible, in the verb root *r.g.z.* and its noun *rogez*, as in the prayer of Habakkuk (Hab. 3:2) beseeching God, *b'rogez rahem tizkor* [in wrath, remember mercy]. Perhaps the most intense expression of emotion is silence [*demamah*]: the mute (dumb) silence of Aaron's reaction to the demise of his sons Nadav and Avihu (Lev.10:3), *Vayidom Aharon*, or the advice of Jeremiah to the bereft: *Let him sit alone and keep silence [ve-yidom]*. We do find rejoicing [*gil/glee*] in the Bible, as in Psalms 2:11, *and rejoice [vegelu] with trembling* or Zechariah 9:9, *Rejoice greatly [gelee meod] the daughter of Zion*. None of these terms are attributed to Hebrew.

Expressions of Killing, Loss of Life, Violence, Curses

Adonee Moshe, k'la-em, was Joshua's reaction to the unwarranted prophecy of Eldad and Midad in Numbers 28. Translations vary: My Lord, Moses, terminate them from this world; restrain them; or imprison them.¹⁴ *K'laem* is a contraction of the objective pronoun *otam* and the Hebrew root *k.l.a.* [to restrain or confine] and/or *k.l.h.* [to be destroyed entirely, perished, ended], approximating the English, to kill. See also Psalms 71:12, *Let them be confounded and consumed the enemies of my soul [yavoshu yikhlu sonei nafshee]*, or Jeremiah 4:27, ... *The whole land will be desolate, yet a full end [kalah] I will not make*.

The alleged unknown origin for the meaning of “peter” as gradually decreasing and fading points to the Hebrew root *p.t.r.* In the *nif'al* [passive] verb action it is used euphemistically for dying. In other verb constructions it assumes the meaning of dismissing, discharging, releasing. I Chronicles 9:33 speaks of the singers in the Temple who were *p'tirim* [free from other duties]; I Samuel 19:10 relates that David *slipped away from Saul's presence [va'yiftar mipnei Shaul]*.¹⁵

Abort and abdicate are reflective of the Hebrew noun *avadon* [loss] from the root *a.b.d.* and the verb in its intensive form *abed* [to lose or destroy], prominent in the message of Ecclesiastes 3:6 that there is *A time to seek and a time to lose [l'abed]* ... The affinity of a **hearse** to Hebrew verb root *h.r.s.* [to destroy] and its noun *heres* [destruction] is obvious. The “unknown ultimate origin” of **rive** (tear, break) suggests the Hebrew *riv*, [a quarrel, conflict, or antagonism], also used in verbal form. Jeremiah 25:31 states ... *for the Lord has riv [controversy] with the nations...*; Psalms 55:10 claims... *for I have seen violence and strife [riv] in the city*. **Nudge**

¹⁴ See Rashi, Sifte Hakhmim, and Onkelos on Numbers 11:28.

¹⁵ Another meaning of the root *p.t.r.* is to open, which also connotes the idea of freeing and letting go, as *peter rehem* [the first born who opens the womb], and hence the name Peter. The usage of *p.t.r.* in the sense of opening is found in the Bible, as in Exodus 13:2,12,13,15; 34:19, Numbers 3:12,8:16, 18;15, I Kings 6:18, 29,32. Proverbs 17:14, I Kings:18,29,32.

and noogie both mirror the dual meanings of the Hebrew root *n.g.a.* [to touch or to smite]. Such is God’s message in Exodus 20:6 to Avimelekh: ... *therefore I did not permit you to touch her [lingao eleha]*; or in the sense of plaguing or hurting in Exodus 12:1, *And God plagued [va-yenaga] Pharaoh with great plagues because of Saray.*

Slew (as in vast amount)/**Slay/Snipe**: In addition to the manna that the Israelites ate in the desert in the morning, the Bible describes the *slav* [quail] that they ate in the evening. Exodus 16:12-13 informs us *they covered the camp*. Numbers 11:31-32 describes the vast amount of the *slav* that initially descended into the desert *about a day’s journey on this side and about a day’s journey on the other side, round about the camp...* It seems logical to attribute the word **slew** to the biblical *slav* rather than to mid nineteenth century Irish slough, especially since the *vov* is used for the *shuruk* (oo) vowel and without vocalization *slav* can mistakenly be read as *slew*.

Numbers 11 also relates that God acquiesced to the complaints of the Israelites who lusted for meat but in His wrath God smote them with a deadly plague. Noteworthy is the etymological connection between **slew** (a vast amount) with its homonym **slew** (murdered), clarified by Numbers 11.

The verb **snipe**, to shoot or attack from a hiding place, although attributed to Scandinavian origin, suggests the biblical root *z.n.v.* (Deut. 25:17-19) with reference to the tactics of the ancient Amalekites and their unwarranted surprise attacks against the weakest amongst the fledgling nation that had just escaped bondage. **Zanav** [a tail] and its verb [*vayzanev*] connote the pursuit and destruction of the stragglers attacked from behind, also reflected in Joshua’s command (Josh.10:19) to pursue the enemies and *smite the hindmost of them [v’zinavtem otam]*.

As per curses, one may infer that the terms to “**put the kibosh on,**” **damnify**, and the word **curse** evolved from the Bible: The unknown origin for the phrase “put the kibosh on” may be identified with the Hebrew verb root *k.b.h.* [to curse] in regard to the episode concerning Bilaam (Nu. 23:8,11) hired by Balak, King of Moab, to curse the Israelites: *V’kaboso lee mesham [And curse them for me from there]*. The word, curse, may be the actual Hebrew word *kares* [to cut off or to die prematurely by divine punishment], as in Leviticus 17:4,9. The Hebrew **dam** [blood] corresponds to the adverb *damning*, which suggests guilt, including the spilling of blood. The plural form, *damim*, refers to loss of blood and money, often owed for compensation, and corresponds with the English, **damnify**, to cause loss or damage. King David (Ps. 51:16) implores God: *Hatzileinee me-damim [deliver me from blood guiltiness]*. Cities of refuge were established (Deut. 19:10) to avoid spilling of *dam* [blood], so that *damim* [the guilt of more murder] not be incurred. Conversely, indemnify is to free from loss or damage, i.e., to free from *damim*.

Mystical Terminology

Sapphire is the Hebrew *sappir*; **sphere** is the Hebrew *sefirah*. Although the Oxford English Dictionary relates sapphire to Old French, via Latin and Greek, Exodus 24:10 describes the Throne of God in appearance as a brilliant illuminating sapphire stone: “... *and under His feet was like a pavement of sapphire, like the essence of heaven in clarity*” (Ex. 24:10). Exodus 28:18 enumerates the *sappir* as one of the stones of the High Priest’s breastplate. Isaiah prophesizes that God will lay the foundations of Israel with *sappirim* (Isa. 54:11), and Ezekiel

describes that *above the firmament... was the likeness of a throne [k'mereh even sappir] in appearance like a sapphire stone* (Ezek. 1:26).

In the Hebrew language the terms *sefirah* (singular) and *sefirot* (plural) occur in relation to the kabbalistic doctrine of the *Sefirot* [Spheres], discussed in the Zohar, in *The Bahir*,¹⁶ and in *Sefer Yezirah*. As Gershom Scholem explains, *Sefirot* “denotes the ten stages of emanation that emerged from the *Ein Sof* and from the realm of God’s manifestation in His various attributes. Every single *sefirah* [sphere] points to an aspect of God in His capacity as Creator, forming at the same time a whole world of divine light in the chain of being.”¹⁷ The term is derived or related to the word *sappir* [sapphire], especially with its association with the Divine Throne; to the biblical Hebrew root *safor* [to count], since the *Sefirot* allude to stages and to primordial numbers; to the biblical word *sefer* [book], as the *Sefirot* are associated with the linguistic elements of the twenty-two letters of the Hebrew alphabet; or, according to *The Bahir*, that which expresses God’s power and glory, from the verb *saper* [to tell].¹⁸

As sapphire is associated with the Throne of God, so are the terms *ma'on* and *aravot*. *Ma'on* [a dwelling] is in the Bible often in connection with the dwelling of God, as in Deuteronomy 26:15, *Look down from your holy habitation [me-meon kadshekha], from heaven, and bless your people, Yisrael....*; or Psalms 26:8, *God, I love the habitation [meon] of your house, and the place where you glory dwells... The Talmud in Hagiga 12b teaches that ma'on is the fifth of the seven firmaments and aravot is the seventh, a mystical dwelling “in which there are Right and Judgment..., the souls of the righteous and the spirits and souls which are yet to be born, and dew wherewith the Holy One Blessed Be He will revive the dead [...] and the Throne of God.”* While a variety of origins is offered for **moon**, including Dutch, German, Indo-European, the Hebrew *ma'on* is excluded. Thus far, there has been no linguistic assignment for the origin of **arable** to the Hebrew *aravah/aravot*, neither to its mystical association [the seventh heaven] nor to its agricultural significance as a willow, one of the Four Species taken on the festival of Sukkot, specifically known to take root and to thrive very readily,¹⁹ nor to its biblical association, *Sing to God, sing praises to his name, extol him who rides upon the aravot* (Ps. 68:5).

Medicine and Anatomy

The term **therapy**, previous to Greek, more likely originated from the Hebrew verb of healing (*r.f.a.*), with its numerous biblical references, notably Jeremiah 8:22, *Is there no balm in Gil'ad, is there no physician [rofai] there?* or Moses’s prayer for Miriam (Deut. 12:13), *Kel na rfa na lah [Heal her now O god, I pray thee]*. **Psoriasis** is akin to the Hebrew *tzaraat* [leprosy], its manifestations and treatment described at length in Leviticus. **Pasah** (Lev. 13:5,6) refers to the spreading of the infection and approximates the word **pus**, *...and the plague spread not [v'lo pasah] in his skin*. The term **cyst**, a sac or a pocket of fluid, corresponds to the biblical word for

¹⁶*The Bahir* is one of the oldest classical works of the Kabbalah, attributed by most Kabbalists to Rabbi Nehuniah ben Hakaneh, a tanna of the first century, and a leading kabbalist of the Land of Israel. According to Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan, his teachings were preserved by the kabbalistic schools until the final redaction in the fourth century by the later sages of the Talmud, followed by oral transmission to only a small closed group, and its publication in 1176 by the Provence school of Kabbalists. Until the publication of *The Zohar* approximately in 1295, *The Bahir* was the most important kabbalistic text. The fourth section of *The Bahir* contains the discussion of the *Sefirot*, which is the earliest source that deals with divine attributes, and it adopts the view of *Sefer Yezirah* that there are ten *sefirot* [spheres]. See *The Bahir*, Kaplan A., Ed. (1979).

¹⁷ Scholem G. (1973)

¹⁸ Scholem, G. (1974); Kaplan A. (1979).

¹⁹ Pollack. G. (1997).

pocket [*kis*] prominent in Micah's rebuke of *kis avnei mirmah* [a bag of deceitful weights], in Micah 5:11-12. One would assume that the medical symbol of the caduceus would be associated with the brass snake [*nehash ha-nehoshet*] and its healing powers as recorded in Numbers 21.²⁰ Instead, Geek mythology is accredited.

Amah [the lower **arm**] is also the biblical term for a measurement (a cubit), the approximate length of the forearm, from the elbow to the middle finger. Referring to the daughter of Pharaoh when she rescued Moses from the river, Exodus 2:5 records: *Va'tishlah et amatah* (a contraction of *amah shelah*). Rashi and Onkelos maintain that the correct translation is that "she stretched out her **arm**," rejecting the alternative translation of sending her maid, synonymous with *amah*.

The Bible antedates medieval Latin with the verb root **n.z.l.** [the flowing of a liquid] that evolved into nose, nasal, nozzle; Devorah in her Song (Judg. 5:5) speaks of the mountains that melted [*nazlu*] at the time of the Revelation at Sinai; King David (Ps. 78:16), elaborates on God's miracles in the desert, including bringing *streams of water out of a rock* [*nozlim misela*].

To spout, to speak one's views or as a lip of a container, are both analogous to the Hebrew word **sfatayim** [lips, pl.]. The singular is *safah* [a language, a border, or the shore of body of water], as in *sfat yam* [the seashore]. *Sfat* is a possessive contraction of *safah shel*: hence *sfat* and spout are basically identical, especially since the f and p sounds are produced by the same letter. *Va'ani aral sfatayim*: Moses claims that Pharaoh would not heed his arguments (Ex. 6:12) because he is *of uncircumcised lips*. And Psalms 120:2 conveys the prayer to the Almighty to *deliver our souls from lying lips* [*me-s'fat sheker*]. The Hebrew equivalent of **lick** [*l.h.kh*] also appears several times in the Bible as in 1 Kings 18:38, *And the fire of the Lord ... licked up* [*lihekkha*] *the water that was in the trench*, or Numbers 22:4.

The extent to which Hebrew has molded our language may be reflected in the word to **regulate**. Embedded within it is the Hebrew *regel*, a leg, also one of the three festivals that are pilgrimages to Jerusalem. As a verb, the intensive action is *le-ragel* [to spy], the reflexive is to habituate [*le-hitragel*], the causative action is *le-hargil* [to regulate]. So too, the Hebrew *ozen* [ear], with its functions of hearing and equilibrium, is embedded within the word **liaison**. A liaison weighs and balances, which is the exact meaning of the verb root *a.z.n.* in the intensive action, *le-azen*: In this capacity *Kohelet also taught the people knowledge, for he weighed* [*ezain*] *and sought out...*(Eccl.12:9).

Wealth, Clothing, Majesty

The biblical word for **treasure** is *otzar*, related to the verb *a.tz.r.*[to gather]. **Money**, may have originated in the verb root *m.n.h.* [to count] and the related noun, *manah* [portion]. Leviticus 7:33 describes the *manah* given to the priest, and Psalms 147:4 is in praise of the Lord who *counts* [*moneh*] *the number of the stars...* Within **conglomerate** is the Hebrew word **golem** [folding, or shapeless, amorphous matter], as in *Psalms 139*, [*Galmee*] *my unshaped flesh Your eye did see*. As the embryo is unshapedmatter, the conglomerate is a number of parts that are

²⁰ See Ramban (1974). In his commentary on Exodus 15:25 *Vayorehu Hashem eitz* [*And the Lord showed him a tree*] in reference to the miracle performed by Moses in sweetening the bitter waters. Ramban explains that the term *vayorehu* actually means "and God instructed him," whereas *va-yarehu* means God showed him. Thus God instructed him that he heals the bitter with the bitter. Such was the case with Elisha who cast something that spoils water (salt) into water that was spoiled in order to cure, which in essence was the miracle that he performed. Contemplating the brass snake was the method of healing; illness healed by the cause of illness.

put together to form a whole. The term *golem* per se became popularized in the 16th century by the narrative involving Rabbi Judah ben Bezalel of Prague and the *Golem* that he created to protect the Jews from persecution. The Oxford English Dictionary enters the word *golem* as a 19th century term borrowed from the Yiddish; yet it preceded Yiddish for about three thousand years.

Our English, **lavish** mirrors the Hebrew root *l.b.sh.* [to wear, to dress] and its noun form *levush* [dress, garment], often associated with luxurious dress. See Esther 6:8-11 regarding the *levush malkhut* [royal apparel] prepared for Mordechai; Psalms 45:14 for the *levush* of the king's daughter embroidered with gold, Proverbs 31 for the dress of the Woman of Valor who wears fine linen and purple [*levushah shesh v'argaman*] and whose household is *clothed in scarlet* [*lavush shanim*]. In his tribute to the Woman of Valor King Solomon also praises her enterprising ability and talents for design: **Sadin** *astah va'timkor...* [*She makes garments and sells them*]. Samson's prize for the winner of his riddle included thirty **sadinim** (Judg. 13:12,13); Isaiah counts *sadinim* as part of the wardrobe of the Israelite woman (Isa.3:23) It appears that in biblical times *sadin* was an article of clothing, a more likely source for suit rather than the Latin *sequi*. **Tiara** is biblical: *Atarah* is a crown or diadem; from the verb root *a.t.r* [to encompass, encircle with a diadem], as in Proverbs 12:4, *a woman of valor is a crown* [*aterett*] *to her husband*. Song of Songs 3: 11 links *atarah* with one's wedding day: *...behold King Solomon with the crown with which his mother crowned him on the day of his wedding....*[*ba-atarah she-itrah lo imo*]. *Keren* is ray, a beam, or a horn. In its figurative sense of kingship, strength, and power it corresponds to **crown**. But as a verb it connotes radiating or shining. Thus Exodus 34 relates that *...when Moses came down from the mount Sinai ... Moses knew not that the skin of his face shone....* [*ki karan or panav*], which recalls the offensive translation of the Vulgate that caused Michelangelo to portray Moses with actual horns. **Scepter** is rooted in *shevet*, literally a staff but generally referring to the scepter of royalty, as in Genesis 49:10, Psalms 45:7, or Isaiah 14:5. The Greek **skeptron** (to lean on) corresponds to the literal Hebrew meaning of staff, from which it had plausibly derived.

Schooling

School, école, scuola, escuela bespeak the Hebrew **sekhel** [reason]. *Le-haskil* is to gain reason or understanding and also has the connotation of succeeding. Genesis 3:6 describes the forbidden fruit: *V'tov ha-etz le-haskil ...* [*and a tree ...to make one wise*]; Deuteronomy 29:8 urges to keep the words of the covenant, *that you may succeed* [*taskilu*] *in all that you do*; Proverbs 3:4 advises the pursuit of kindness and truth, *so you shall find grace and good understanding* [*sekhel tov*] *in the eyes of God and man*. The opposite of the *maskil* is the **boor** [*ba'ar*]. King David (Ps. 33:22) laments his (temporary) inability to understand the good lot of the wicked, *And I am foolish* [*ba'ar*] *and ignorant, lacking comprehension like a beast before you*. He proclaims, *A brutish man* [*ba'ar*] *does not know, nor does he understand the great works of God* (Ps.92:7).

The pervasiveness of the words **ami**, **amiable**, **amigo**, **amico**, **amicable** correlates with *am* [nation] and **amie**, the contraction of *am shelie* [the nation of mine], connoting oneness and friendship. Amongst the numerous biblical references is in the description of the world previous to the Tower of Babel (Gen.11:6),²¹ *Behold the people* [*am*] *is one, and they all have one language*; or Exodus 3:10, *And take my nation* [*amie*] *out of Egypt*.

²¹ The actual term babble is reflective of its probable biblical origin: punishment for the rebellion of that generation, as is stipulated in Genesis 11:10, *Therefore the name of it is called Babel because the Lord did confound* [*balal*] *the language of all earth*.

Lad or **child** may be rooted in the Hebrew *yeled* [child]. **Staff** has its counterpart in *tzava*, an army or a host, especially in reference to God, the Lord of the Hosts [tzvaot]. As a verb *tz.v.a.* refers to joining or following, or to follow in war, as in Isaiah 29:7,8.

Savoir, to know in French, the noun **savant**, the Spanish verb **saber** and the Italian **sapere** (to know) recall the Hebrew verb *sover* [to inspect, expect, or to know]. In Psalms 119:116 King David beseeches God to uphold his promise that he may live: *and that I not be ashamed of my hope [me-sivrie]*; Esther 9:1 celebrates the victory of Persian Jewry *on the day the enemies of the Jews thought [sibru] to have power over them*. Nehemiah reports that he viewed [va-ehet sover] the broken walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 2:13) - *sover* in the sense of viewing and inspecting. Later, in the Targum and Talmud this verb was used more popularly as a logical argument or reasoning, or a deduction, as in the term *sevara*.

Tziyyon [Zion] is not excluded from the English language. Initially one would hardly notice the connection between scion and Zion other than the pronunciation. Scion relates to the concept of rooting, while Zion refers to Jerusalem or to the Land of Israel. Even so, the Bible attests that grafting and rooting are indeed in consonance with Zion/Tziyyon often compared to a tree of life (Prv. 3:18), as the *shoresh* [the source and root] of wisdom, of our world, and of our language. ... *for out of Tziyyon shall go forth the Torah, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem* (Isa. 2:3).

In the year 70 Rome destroyed the Second Temple and exiled the Judeans to all lands of the Roman Empire, including Italy, France, Germany, and Spain. The impact of Hebrew on the languages of these countries would be a natural consequence. Consider the following:

Macabre suggests a combination of the two Hebrew words *min hakever* [from the grave]. Indeed, the word **kever** [grave] and the verb **likbor** [to bury] resemble the English *cover*, or the French *couvrir*. (Note that the b and v sounds are produced by the same letter, and easily interchangeable). *Maison*, house in French, parallels the Hebrew **mazon** [food], while *abode* is a variation of **bayit**. *Morte*, death in French, approximates the Hebrew **mot** or **mavet**, and one must realize that the *vov* (the v sound, or, if used as a *holam mele*, the long o vowel) can easily be confused with the r sound of the *raish*. The French word **tort** parallels the Hebrew **ta'ut** [error], from the verb *t.a.h.*: here too, if the *vov* used for the oo vowel (the *shuruk*) is mistakenly read as an r, the result is tort. *La tour*, tower in French, was preceded before Greek and Latin by the Hebrew *tirah* (plural, *tiros*), referring to a palace or an encampment. Genesis 25:16 enumerates the sons of Yishmael by their names, towns, and *tirosam* [their encampments]. Ezekiel's prophecy (Ez. 25:4) against Ammon predicts that they will be occupied by the *men of the east who will set their palaces [tiroseihem]* within them. The French and English verb **to tour** and the Hebrew **tur** are actual cognates.

Ohr in Hebrew means light, often in the Bible, as early as Genesis 1:3, *And God said, [yehee ohr] let there be light*; the French *aurora* (dawn) and the English *aura* appear as derivatives. *Air* in French and English, the Italian *aria*, the Spanish *aire*, are composed of the *alef* and the *raish* sounds in **ohr**. *Pore* in English and French and *poro* in Spanish and Italian, as the actual English verb *to bore*, parallel the biblical Hebrew **bor** [an opening or a pit] as well as the verb *to dig* [*h.p.r.*]. The Hebrew **esh** [fire] is strikingly similar to *ashes*. The “unknown ultimate origin” of the word *boot* (*bota* in Spanish), is probably Hebrew: Although the noun as footwear is not biblical, the verb is: namely, the root *b.o.t.* [kicking and rebelling]. Moses in his farewell address (Deut.32:15) admonishes his nation, *But Yeshurun grew fat and kicked [va-yiv'at]*; and Eli is censured (I Sam.2:29), *Wherefore do you kick [tivatu] at my sacrifice...?*

The Hebrew word **moom** [blemish or mutilation] plausibly influenced the French *maine* and the English equivalent. For example, Leviticus 21:21 states: *No man...that has a [moom] a blemish may offer the offerings of the Lord*. Alimony, *alimenti* in Italian, and *alimenticia* in Spanish correspond to the Hebrew **almanah** [a widow]. *Miroir*, which is mirror in French, the English mirror, and the Spanish verb *mirar* (to look) parallel the Hebrew **mar'eh** [a vision or a mirror] from the Hebrew verb of seeing [*r.a.h.*]: *Daniel was astonished at the [mar'eh] vision that he saw* (Dan.8:27); the communication of Moses with God (Nu. 12:18) *was apparent and not in riddles [u'mareh v'lo behidot]*; the visions [*mar'ot*] of Ezekiel (Ez.43:3), whose were similar to those he saw on the River Kevar.

Halo, considered a derivative from the Latin and Greek *halos*, has its counterpart in the Bible: the biblical Hebrew root **h.l.l.** [shining], used also to connote glorifying or praising, possibly impacting the French *jolie* (pretty). We find that Job used this verb in reminiscing about the time previous to his afflictions (Job 29:2), when God's *candle shone upon my head [b'hilo nero alai]*; also in his lengthy defense (Job 31:26) wherein he claims to have never attributed godliness to the sun **kee yahel** [*when it shone*]. So too Isaiah prophecies (Isa. 31:10) that on the day of the fall of Babylon *the stars of heaven and their constellations [lo yahelu oram] shall not give their light*. Related to the same root is the word **hillulim**, which refers to words of praise and festivities (Lev. 19:24, Judges 9:27).

Interestingly, the negative term of **hollelut** [arrogance, folly] with its noun and verb variations (*hollel, hollelim*) also derives from this root. King David is envious of the prosperous lot of the *hollelim* (Ps. 73:3), and Kohelet ranks the *hollelim* with wickedness, folly, and foolishness (Eccl. 7:25). This may be the “uncertain origin” of **hallion**. Anyhow, the analogy is remarkable: Halo is to hallion as *hillulim* is to *hollelim*.

Stymie, similar in French and Italian, recalls the Hebrew *satum* [closed] and its verb *s.t.m* in Sfarad pronunciation or *s.s.m* in Ashkenaz pronunciation. The origin of “open sesame,” the magical phrase in “Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves” used to open a cave with a hidden treasure has been debated by scholars, but the obvious explanation eluded them. Psalms 51:8, may have directly inspired the author: *... u-ba-sasum hakhmah todienee [...teach me wisdom in the inmost heart]*. **Scope**, or the Italian *scopo*, is the same as the verb to look, *sh.k.f.* For example, in Psalms 85:12 King David foresees the time when *righteousness is [nishkaf] seen from heaven*; in Genesis 19:28 Abraham *looked [va'yashkef] towards Sdom. Va'yahkef [and he looked]* is at times followed by the verb *va'yar* [and he saw], as in 2 Samuel 24:20.

The Spanish **mitigar**, and the English mitigate, plausibly derived from the Hebrew **l'hamtik** [to sweeten], to lessen severity. **Matok** is the adjective for sweet; and there exists the rabbinic concept of *hamtakat hadin* [lessening the severity of judgment]. Of the biblical references see, for example, Samson's riddle (Judg. 14:14): *Out of the eater came forth food, and out of the strong came forth sweetness [matok]*; Proverbs 16:25: *Pleasant words are like a honeycomb, sweet [matok] to the soul and health to the bones*.

The French **adorer**, the Spanish **adorar**, and the English adore, to love and respect, conceivably derives from the Hebrew root **h.d.r.** The infinitive is **le-hader** [to honor, esteem, show deference]. The noun *hiddur* or *haddar* refers to splendor, beauty, and glory. Thus Exodus 23:3 commands, *v'dal lo tehadar be-rivo [neither shall you favor a poor man in his cause]* and Leviticus 19:32 instructs to honor [*v'hadarta*] an old person. Leviticus 23:40 commands to take the fruit of *the eitz hadar [the tree hadar]* as one of the Four Species taken

on the festival of Sukkot.²² Nahmanides translates this to mean the fruit of *the tree of splendor*. Psalms 8:6 praises God for being *mindful of man, crowning him with honor and glory* [*v'khavod v'hadar t'atrehu*].

Un couple in French and the word **couple** in English (said to have derived from the French) corresponds to the biblical word *kefel*, [double], especially since the f and p sound in Hebrew are the same letter. See Job 41:5: ... *who can come within his double bridle* [*b'khefel risno me yavo*]? Reflective of the fact that the f and p sounds are the same letter in Hebrew (hardly distinguishable if a diacritical mark is not inserted) is the similarity also between the biblical word *pesel* [a carved image or sculpture] and **fossil** in English, *fósil* in Spanish, *fossile* in Italian and French. These most plausibly evolved from the Hebrew *pesel* in its connotation as a powerless, petrified molded form. See, for instance, Genesis 20:4, the second commandment, ... *you shall not make for yourself any carved idol* [*pesel*]; or, Deut. 12:13, ...*and you shall hew down the carvings of their gods* [*feselai elohaihem*].

The French **partir**, the Spanish **partir**, the Latin **partire**, and the English **to part** parallel the Hebrew root *p.r.d.*, the verb for dividing or separating. See Genesis 2:10 referring to the river in Eden: *And from thence it was parted* [*yipared*] *and branched into four streams*. Genesis 13 narrates the parting of Lot from Abraham, and this verb appears here three times: Genesis 13:9, *Hipared na me'alai* [*Separate yourself... from me*]; Genesis 13:11, ...*and they separated* [*va-yipardu*] *themselves one from the other*; Genesis 13:14, *And the Lord spoke to Abram after Lot separated from him* [*aharei hipared lot me'imo*].

The French **melée**, as the English *melee*, referring to a confused fight or crowd compares with the Hebrew verb root *m.l.l.*, with its usage as stirring or crushing, and also in its context of Proverbs 6:13 wherein the wicked person is said to deliberately cause trouble by his crooked mouth, the winks of his eyes, the pointing of his fingers, and *the scraping of his feet* [*molel b'raglo*]. It may also relate to the Hebrew *malei* [full or complete]. Of the many references, see, for instance, Genesis 6:13 which stipulates the justification for the flood *for the earth is filled* [*mal'ah*] *with violence*, and Isaiah's prediction (Isa. 11:9) for the messianic era ... *for the earth shall be full* [*ki emal'ah*] *of the knowledge of the Lord*.

The English word **salve**, said to be of Germanic origin, or the word *salvation*, said to have derived from old French, as well as the Italian *salvezza* (salvation), the French *salut*, the Spanish *salvación* reflect the Hebrew word *shalvah* [tranquility and calmness], from the root *sh.l.v.* Since the s and sh sounds are the same letter, as are the v sound and the oo vowel (the *shuruk*), the two can easily be confused if read without vowel symbols. Moreover, in Hebrew grammar the past tense of this verb becomes *shalu* [they were tranquil]. And so, Jeremiah wants to know (Jeremiah 12:1) *Madua shalu kal bogdei vaged* [*why are they happy all that deal treacherously*]? King David in Psalms 122:6-7 prays for the peace and *shalvah* [tranquility] of Jerusalem: *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, those who love you shall prosper* [*yishlayu ohavayikh*]. *Let there be peace within your walls, tranquility in your palaces* [*shalvah b'armenotayikh*].

Masque (Fr.), **maschera** (It.), **máscara** (Spa.), and the English **mask** were preceded by the Hebrew *mesekh* [curtain, screen, or covering], found repeatedly in Exodus referring to the covering of the ark and the curtains at the entrance of the Tabernacle and the court gate (Ex.

²² The consensus amongst the commentators is that this is the citron tree.

35:12, 39:34,40,21; Num. 4:5). See also Ezekiel 28:13, [...] *every precious stone was your covering* [*mesukhatekh*].

The Spanish **seducir**, the French **séduire**, the Italian **sedurre**, the English **seduce** were preceded by the Hebrew **l'stos** [stray or to be unfaithful], as in Numbers 5 and the *Ishah Sotah*. And the English **mystery**, the French **mystère**, the Italian **mistero** and the Spanish **misterio** were all preceded by the biblical Hebrew **mister** [secret], based on the verb root *s.t.r.* [to hide]. See for example Psalms 10:9, wherein King David likens the wicked who prey on the poor to a lion who lies in wait *secretly* [*ba-mistar*], or the prophecy of Isaiah 45:3 concerning Cyrus, to whom God will give *treasures of darkness*[*matmunei mistarim*].

The French and English **antique**, the Italian **antico** and the Spanish **antiguo** as well as the Latin root *ante* were preceded by the Hebrew *atikim* in I Chronicles 4:22: *v'hadevarim atikim* [*and the records are ancient*]. Even the preposition **über** in German and **over** in English were preceded by and may have derived from the Hebrew **over**, which means going across, passing or traveling. Abraham is described in Genesis 14:13 as *Avraham Ha-Ivri* because he came to Canaan from across the Euphrates River, *me'ever lanahar*, and hence the name of the language.²³ **Ever Hayarden** refers to Trans-Jordan, the lands over, i.e., east of the Jordan River. *Pâques* (Fr., with the circumflex showing the absence of an s), *Pascua* (Spa.), and *Pasqua* (It.) are all derived from the Hebrew **Pesah** [Passover]. These are all biblical Hebrew words that preceded Greek, Latin, French, German, Italian or Middle English. Hopefully recognition will be given to their true origin; which, is the actual meaning of etymology: allegedly from the Greek *etumos*, meaning true, but really from the Hebrew **emet**, which is truth.

²³ See Rashi on Genesis 14;13.

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