

**THE CONCEPT OF  
TIME IN THE BIBLE  
AND THE DEAD SEA  
SCROLLS**

*Gershon Brin*

**BRILL**

THE CONCEPT OF TIME IN THE BIBLE  
AND THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

# STUDIES ON THE TEXTS OF THE DESERT OF JUDAH

EDITED BY

F. GARCÍA MARTÍNEZ

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

P.W. FLINT

VOLUME XXXIX



# THE CONCEPT OF TIME IN THE BIBLE AND THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

BY

GERSHON BRIN



BRILL  
LEIDEN · BOSTON · KÖLN  
2001

This book is printed on acid-free paper

### **Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Brin, Gershon.

The concept of time in the Bible and the Dead Sea scrolls / by Gershon Brin.

p. cm. — (Studies on the texts of the desert of Judah, ISSN 0169-9962 ; v. 39)

Includes bibliographical references and indexes.

ISBN 9004123148

1. Time in the Bible. 2. Bible. O.T.—Criticism, interpretation, etc. 3. Time—Religious aspects—Judaism. 4. Dead Sea scrolls—Criticism, interpretation, etc. I. Title. II. Series.

BS1199.T5 B75 2001

221.8'115—dc21

2001046479

### **Die Deutsche Bibliothek – CIP-Einheitsaufnahme**

Brin, Gershon:

The Concept of time in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls / by Gershon Brin.

– Leiden ; Boston ; Köln : Brill, 2001

(Studies on the texts of the desert of Judah ; Vol. 39)

ISBN 90-04-12314-8

ISSN 0169-9962

ISBN 90 04 12314 8

© Copyright 2001 by Koninklijke Brill NV, Leiden, The Netherlands  
All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without prior written permission from the publisher.

*Authorization to photocopy items for internal or personal use is granted by Brill provided that the appropriate fees are paid directly to The Copyright Clearance Center, 222 Rosewood Drive, Suite 910 Danvers MA 01923, USA. Fees are subject to change.*

## ERRATA

p. vi, lines 9–10 should read:

“הלשונות ‘לפנים’ בראשונה ודומיהם לתיאור ימי העבר במקרא”

p. 13, line 27 should read:

של"ם הקץ

p. 14, lines 26 and 34 should read:

x-עולם

x-עולמים

p. 19 n.1, line 3 should read:

המקראית

p. 35, line 13 should read:

IX. On the formulae ויהי אחר (אחרי) הדברים האלה; ויהי אחרי כן

p. 49, lines 28–29 should read:

x טרם

x לפני

p. 80 n.3, lines 7–8 should read:

x ימי חיי

ERRATA

p. 107, line 16 should read:

אז ... ועתה...

p. 109 n.19, line 1 should read:

מ...ומעלה/והלאה

p. 158 n.6, line 2 should read:

Botterweck-Ringgren

p. 231, lines 26–27 should read:

וידבר ה' אל משה לאמר

p. 254, line 17 should read:

דרורים

p. 269, line 24 should read:

של"מ

p. 270, line 10 should read:

של"מ קץ

p. 361, lines 33–34 should read:

אם יחרוש בבקרים

For Tommer & Maya

וראה בנים לבניך - שלום על ישראל

Psalms 128:6



## PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED MATERIAL

Certain chapters of this book or portions thereof have been previously published in various forums. The author wishes to thank the editors and publishers concerned for their gracious permission to republish the above chapters in the present book. In each case, the material has been reedited and in some cases specially translated for the present volume.

Chapter 1, Sub-Section 1 was published as “עיונים בלשונות לתיאור הזמן”  
“במקרא” in: *תעודה* [*Te'udah*] 4 (1986), 37-54.

Chapter 4 was published as “הלשונות 'לפנים,' בראשונה”  
”במקרא” in: *ספר זכרון לאליעזר רובינשטיין* in: *ימי העבר במקרא*  
[Eliezer Rubinstein Memorial Volume] = *תעודה* [*Te'udah*] 9 (1995), 7-17.

Chapter 5 was published as “The Formulae X-מי and X-יום: Some  
Characteristics of Historiographical Writing in Israel,” *Zeitschrift für die*  
*Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 93 (1981), 183-196.

Chapter 6 was published as “הנוסחאות המקראיות לתיאור משך הזמן”, in:  
מחקרים במקרא ובמזרח הקדמון, דברי הקונגרס העולמי השביעי למדעי היהדות,  
[Proceedings of the Seventh World Congress of Jewish Studies, 1977.  
Section on Bible and Ancient Near Eastern Studies] (Jerusalem, 1981),  
23-35.

Chapter 7 was published as “The Formulae ‘From... and Onward/  
Upward (מ.. והלאה/ומעלה),” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 99 (1980), 161-  
171.

## CONTENTS

Previously Published Material .....	vi
Foreword .....	ix
Note .....	xiii

Introduction: The Concept of Time in Ancient Literature: The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls .....	1
--	---

### PART ONE

#### TIME IN THE BIBLE

I. <i>Terms for Time in the Bible</i> .....	23
1. Terms Used to Indicate Time in the Bible .....	25
2. "Day" (יום) as a Term for Time in the Bible .....	52
3. On דור in the Bible .....	58
4. The Terms בראשונה and לפנים for Describing the Past in the Bible .....	65
5. The Formula "X-מי" (or "X-יום") in the Bible: Some Characteristics of Historiographical Writing in Israel ..	78
II. <i>Formulae of Time in the Bible</i> .....	93
6. Biblical Formulae for Depicting Duration of Time ....	95
7. The Phrase "From... and Onward/ Upward" (מ... ולמעלה / והלאה) in the Bible .....	114
8. On the Uses of the Term "Until This Day" (עד היום הזה) .....	125
III. <i>Units of Time in the Bible</i> .....	139
9. Depictions of Brief Time Intervals in the Bible .....	141
10. Terms Used for Long Time Periods in the Bible .....	147
11. Day and Daytime: Their Divisions and Order .....	153
12. Units of Time Greater than One Day .....	167

IV. <i>Direction of Time in the Bible</i> .....	175
13. Terms Used for the Past, Present and Future in the Bible .....	177
V. <i>Concepts of Time and Life Duration in the Bible</i> .....	189
14. אורך ימים and Similar Terms in the Bible .....	191
15. Duration of Life in Biblical Times .....	202
PART TWO	
TIME IN THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS	
16. Introduction: The Concept of Time in the Dead Sea Scrolls .....	219
VI. <i>Concepts of Time in the Scrolls</i> .....	223
17. God and Time .....	225
18. The Term דור in the Scrolls .....	247
19. The Term מועד in the Scrolls .....	253
20. The Term קץ in the Scrolls .....	264
21. The Term עולם in the Scrolls .....	277
22. The Term עת in the Scrolls .....	294
VII. יום and Its Variants in the Scrolls .....	309
23. The Term יום in the General Framework of Terms of Time .....	311
24. X-יום / X-ימי (Day X / Days of X) to Characterize Time .....	321
25. The Use of יום in the Scrolls .....	332
VIII. <i>Duration of Time and Life Span in the Approach of the Scrolls</i> ...	339
26. The Formula for Duration of Time “From... to...” (מ.. עד) Including the Formula “Until this Day” (עד היום הזה) and its like in the Scrolls .....	341
27. Life Duration in the Scrolls and the Apocrypha .....	350
28. The Phrase “He Shall not Do Such-and-such X-ביום” .....	360
Afterword: Time in the Bible and in Later Literature .....	368

Abbreviations .....	374
Bibliography .....	375
Indexes of Ancient Literature .....	381

## FOREWORD

This book was written over the course of several years, but it took shape primarily during the course of the academic year 1997-98, when it was my pleasure to serve as Harry Starr Fellow at Harvard University. I wish to express my thanks to the Center for Jewish Studies at Harvard University and its head, Prof. James Kugel, who graciously assisted me in my work during the course of my stay at Harvard.

Five of these studies (of the 28 chapters of the book) have been previously published (see above, “Previously Published Materials”), but all of these were revised, rewritten and incorporated within the framework of the present monograph.

This work is concerned with a variety of questions concerning time in early Jewish literature. The book’s 28 chapters are divided into two major parts: 1) Time in the Bible; and 2) Time in the Dead Sea Scrolls, which are in turn divided into eight sections. The five sections in the first part of the book deal with various aspects of time in the Bible, to wit: I. Terms for Time in the Bible; II. Formulae of Time in the Bible; III. Units of Time in the Bible; IV. Direction of Time in the Bible; V. Concepts of Time and Life Duration in the Bible. The second half of the work, concerned with Time in the Dead Sea Scrolls, is divided into three sections: VI. Concepts of Time in the Scrolls; VII. **יָמֵי** and Its Variants in the Scrolls; VIII. Duration of Time and Life Span in the Approach of the Scrolls.

The conjoining of these eight groups of chapters thus provides a comprehensive picture of the approach to time in ancient Hebrew literature, beginning with the Bible and concluding with the first century CE, the latest possible time frame for the Scrolls.

I wish to express my thanks to the directors of Keren Yaniv for awarding me a research grant for this work, to assist in the preparations for its publication in English. The task of translation was performed by Rabbi Jonathan Chipman with skill and proficiency, as is his wont these many years.

Prof. Sidnie White Crawford deserves my thanks for offering numerous important suggestions during the preparations of the final version of the manuscript.

Thanks are due to the editor of the Series, Prof. Florentino García

Martínez, for accepting the book for publication in STDJ and for the help he has extended to the author. My thanks also go to the staff of Brill Academic Publishers, in particular to Ms. Mattie Kuiper and Mr. Pim Rietbroek.

Gershon Brin  
Department of Bible, Tel-Aviv University  
January 2001

## NOTE

Except where otherwise noted, the English text for quotations from the Bible was taken from the Revised Standard Version (American, 1952, based upon the American Standard Version of 1881-85 and 1901). Quotations from the pseudepigraphic literature are taken from *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, ed. James H. Charlesworth, 2 vols. (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985); for those books not included in this collection, such as Ben Sira, use was made of R. H. Charles, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973 [1913]). The English translations for the passages quoted from the Dead Sea Scrolls are from *The Dead Sea Scrolls; Study Edition*, edited and translated by Florentino García Martínez & Eibert J. C. Tigchelaar, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997-98). In some cases, especially in reconstructed texts, I offer a different translation.

## INTRODUCTION

### THE CONCEPT OF TIME IN ANCIENT LITERATURE: THE BIBLE AND THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

The present work is concerned with the concept of time in the Bible and in later literature, primarily that of the Judaeen Desert sect. The book is divided into two parts: in the former we discuss the various aspects of the concept of time in the Bible, while in the second half of the book there is a parallel discussion in relation to the Dead Sea Scrolls literature. On occasion, as the subject may warrant, these boundaries are broken and discussion of a point relating to the Bible may appear in the second half, just as certain passages from the Scrolls may be cited in the discussion of biblical matters appearing in the first half—depending in either case upon the nature of the particular discussion.

By the term “concept of time” I refer to the entire complex of issues relating to time, as follows from our involvement in the writings of the corpus.

#### 1. *Time in the Bible*

The book opens with a discussion of the term **יום**, the central concept used by Biblical literature to express various ideas pertaining to time. This conclusion is confirmed by the quantitative data: the word **יום** (or **ימים**) appears more than 2,300 times in the Bible, making it the fifth most frequently used word in the entire Bible.

As matters relating to **יום** appear throughout the various chapters of the book, I found it appropriate in this introduction to survey, on the one hand, the manner in which discussions of the term **יום** are incorporated in the various parts of this work, as well as to make several basic statements relating to **יום** as a way of concretizing time-related matters in the Bible.

The extensive use of the word **יום** in the Bible created a situation whereby its use in and of itself does not adequately convey the specific significance sought by the author in his use of the term. Hence, the authors created a wide spectrum of other terms and phrases used in



addition to or instead of **וַי**. But the main task of the biblical authors was in fact the refinement of the term **וַי**, through means of its use in conjunction with an adjective or noun (in the latter case the adjective defines the nature of the particular time). Further on in the introduction I shall describe some of the stylistic solutions developed in order to overcome the problems that confronted the authors of the biblical literature.

Among the main tools relating to this subject are linguistic and philological explanations or definitions of the basic concepts of time. In order to provide complete definitions of these, it shall be necessary on occasion to conduct detailed exegetical discussions on the nature of the basic passages in which these terms are used.

Our discussion shall begin with a series of examinations of the manner of recording time in biblical literature. In lieu of a generally accepted means of identifying dates, several systems were developed to designate the time of a given action or event. In the chapter "Terms Used to Indicate Time in the Bible," we examine the various linguistic means of indicating time. There seem to have been three main approaches: 1) phrases for designating a date according to the time *following* a given act; 2) phrases indicative of a time *equivalent* to that of the act in question; 3) languages indicating the date *prior* to the particular act.

In each of these components, we discuss the use of the terms and verses in various different directions. It would appear that, notwithstanding the fundamental unity of the system, different terms are used for its execution. It should be noted that, despite the fact that the above discussion is designated "after a given event" or act (as it is in the two other sub-sections), this definition does not cover all the cases. The term **וַיִּחְיֶה** "of the life of so and-so," for example, is not connected to a particular "event," but refers to the age of the person designated, who was usually an important figure, a king or the like. It is thus clear that there is not necessarily a particular act or event following which the matter discussed in the verse took place. The statement as such, that such-and-such an event took place so-and-so much time after the point of comparison (whether that point be an act, a description of a certain situation, the age of a person, etc.), is adequate. The same statement holds true regarding the other two sub-sections of this discussion.

Alongside the abundance of techniques in which time is indicated on the basis of the distance following a given "event," there is also a

wide spectrum of terminology referring to equivalency in time, such as , בעת ההיא, אז, בימים ההם, and the like. It is clear that, when a verse states “אז יעלה” or the like, the author wished to draw a connection between two contexts of information: that given now, and that to be conveyed after invoking the formula in question. It is quite possible that at times the author had such a tradition at hand; it is nevertheless clear that, in other cases, the use of the formula in question did not convey any real information, so that the use of this formula only involves a technical context, without any substantive content.

Similar to the formulae “after x” or “together with x” (אז —“then”— and the like), there also exists a third formation, concerned with the time prior to the event (“two years before the earthquake”). During the course of our discussions, the techniques developed by the biblical authors to shape the recording of time in accordance with changing circumstances and contexts will become clear.

By tracing the uses of the expression “after these things” אחר הדברים האלה or “at that time” (ויהי בעת ההיא), one can clearly arrive at an understanding of the manner of development of terms relating to time. Thus, from the phrase in Gen 38:1, “Now at that time Judah went down...” etc., it follows that Judah’s marriage to the daughter of Shua, the birth of his sons, and all the other events that are interpolated between the sale of Joseph to the Ishmaelites (37:28, 36) and his arrival in Egypt immediately thereafter (39:1) are connected in a strange and inexplicable way with the phrase ויהי בעת ההיא (“now at that time”). It is clear to the readers that the integration of these two stories into a single complex is impossible. The best to be hoped for is that at one point in these parallel events the two stories might touch upon one another. But preferable to this is the option that these stories have nothing in common in terms of the time of their occurrence, and that the use of the phrase “now at that time” (38:1) is like other empty rhetorical linguistic phrases or formulae. That is, this combination of words had already been detached from the simple meaning of the words, and simply serves as a means of connection by the authors, redactors and editors between different portions of a work.

The same holds true with regard to “now after these things” (ויהי אחר הדברים האלה), as in Gen 22:20, where it would seem that some of the events reported in this text became known to Abraham after the Binding. It is nevertheless difficult to assume that the subject of this genealogical list is to inform us that “Now it was told to Abraham, ‘Behold, Milcah also has borne children to your brother Nahor,’” because

one is speaking here of news concerning a series of offspring, including Rebekah, who was the granddaughter of Milchah and Nahor. It is therefore clear that the phrase **אחרי הדברים האלה** is no more than a connective phrase without any real substance behind it.

In the next chapter we examine the status of the term **דור** in relation to the concept of time. The term **דור** is not among those terms discussed in the chapter that elaborate the methods of recording time, as it does not fulfill that function. It is unique in that it is used as a term to designate a span of years, rather than to describe a point in time. All uses of the term **דור**, as they appear in various biblical passages, are discussed here. The different traditions concerning the duration of a generation are likewise clarified according to the different approaches, as is the question of the relation of the term **דור** to other terms concerning time. One needs to take into account that the understanding of the duration of a generation changed during different periods distant from one another. It may be that there was in fact no uniform manner of perceiving a “generation.” That is, among certain circles of authors and thinkers the duration of one generation was fixed as being a certain number of years (20, for example), whereas among others it was fixed by another formula (25 years, or even more). But it may also be that there were those who thought that there was no fixity in the concept of a generation. It likewise follows from the texts, that there are sometimes phenomena that are reported both in terms of the number of years and by span of generations. Hence, one might think that a simple calculation would disclose to us the duration of a generation according to the approach of the author of the text. Yet it sometimes ensues that there is a gap between the two kinds of information, so that the one who wrote the number of generations was not the one who integrated this information, while the one who recorded the number of generations was not the one who incorporated the numerical information concerning the duration in years.

The discussion of time concepts is concluded in the following discussion, in which there are discussed two phrases: “in former times” (**לפנים**) and “at first” (**בראשונה**). These complement the phrases used in the second chapter, in that they serve to indicate distant past time in the Bible. Interpretation of the passages containing these phrases can teach us a great deal about basic phenomena in the history of Israel and of the surrounding peoples. Due to their attitude to the distant past, these authors chose to make use of these terms to indicate the antiquity of the phenomena and of the time. A unique place is occupied by two

verses in which there appears the phrase, “in former times in Israel” (לפנים בישראל). These verses refer to the archaic history of Israel and report phenomena that existed in olden times. One may inquire as to the relation in time between these comments by the authors who incorporated this phrase, and the other parts of the text.

This chapter completes, as we said, the discussion of concepts of time, in that it provides a series of studies concerning the range of expressions with whose help there are described more distant times in the past or, to be more precise, the beginnings of history. However, due to the relative character of some of these terms, it may be that “in former times” and even “at first” may be used to describe the more recent past.

The first section concludes with a chapter surveying a striking stylistic feature developed by the biblical authors: “the days of x” (x-ימי) and “the day of x” (x-יום), in which a personal name (generally that of a leader, especially a king) or of a type of leadership (judges, kings, etc.) appears as the *nomen rectum*. These two models evidently serve in different senses: the plural form, x-ימי, “the days of so-and-so,” is used to refer to a particular period in the history, while the singular form, “the day of so-and-so,” alludes to a point in time, a particular event. Generally speaking, this formula is used to refer to an impressive event, which had repercussions and exerted influence on the Israelite culture at a particular time. Thus, for example: “In the days when the judges ruled” (Ruth 1:1); “the days of the kings of Israel or of the kings of Judah” (2 Kgs 23:22); “the days of the Philistines” (Jdg 15:20).

Examination of the relevant texts indicates that the biblical authors took a major step in fashioning means of perceiving history and writing historiography. By creating these expressions, they found a simple way to define periods; this signified the beginning of the crystallization of an overall vision of sporadic events that are thereby organized into a perceptual whole. In order to characterize the events of the period that preceded the monarchic period under the general heading of the unique rulers of that time, the judges, by designating them “the days of the judges,” an individual from the monarchic period required a certain comprehensive perception. Thus, he needed to be an educated man with a certain scope of vision, capable of connecting the period of Ehud, on the one hand, with that of Samson, on the other, in order to bring them together as a general group belonging to a specific period.

In this chapter all the components of “the days of X” will be explained, and it will be seen that this is a method of characterizing a

historical period within the biblical age. On the other hand, alongside the characterization of periods there is also to be found the idiom used to refer to the individual, “the day of so-and-so,” which is entirely different from the plural form. Certain unique events within these periods have been characterized with the help of this linguistic expression. Hence, “the day of Midian” (Isa 9:3) and “the day of Jerusalem” (Ps 137:7) refer to one-time events that left their impression on history. “The day of Jerusalem” is doubtless a term for the fall of Jerusalem into the hand of the Chaldeans, the Destruction of the Temple, and the beginning of the end of the kingdom of Judah, constituting a linguistic expression for the end of the First Temple period (587/586 BCE).

A close examination of these two idioms allows us to suitably interpret all of the passages without exception; so much so that, if there is a passage such as “the days of Gibeah” (Hos 9:9; 10:9), it needs to be interpreted as intended to define an entire era within the framework of the days of the judges, one upon which the incident of Gibeah left its mark.

Whereas we have thus far explained specific linguistic terms and their usage in the biblical passages, the approach to time implied therein follows automatically from the exegetical discussion. Most of these phrases are oriented towards a specific point, with the exceptions of **רוך** and **x-ימי**, and to a certain extent also **לפנים** (“in former times”) and **בראשונה** (“at first”), which are concerned with periods at various levels of the past, going back to the most ancient period (**לפנים**). By contrast, the bloc of chapters that follows is concerned with *duration* of time, and not with *points* in time.

Within the framework of this discussion we have examined the techniques by which the biblical authors express the subject of duration of time. Most of the formulae of duration are built around the marking of two extremes: the *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem*. During the course of the chapter various points are examined that appear in the texts as the initial point (past, present and future), alongside those which are examined as marking the concluding point. In each case, the distance between the two *termini* creates the duration of time about which the text speaks.

During the course of our explanation certain further techniques for expressing duration of time were raised: for example, from a given event and prior to it. It will become clear that, whereas in all of the groups of the formula there are mentioned two poles, there is also another

technique, which I call “the abbreviated formula,” in which there appears only the opening formula. In our discussion, various different applications of the subject of duration of time, in the form of the abridged formula, are treated. In addition to all these there is a combination of the regular formula of continuity, מן...עד (from... until...), with the addition of a fourth group: “from a certain point and prior to it” The expression thereby created is a kind of double formula, which I have designated “the compound formula.”

In a separate chapter, I deal with a unique formula for duration of time. Here, instead of the *terminus ad quem* serving as the second pole in the formula, there appears a phrase expressing a general direction: והלאה והמעלה / (“and from then on”). This is an innovation developed by the biblical authors to express the idea of the uninterrupted existence of the phenomenon described in the Scripture. At the end of this discussion certain texts are brought dealing with the census of the people, the census of the Levites, the age of service of the Levites, and the law concerning the valuation of people arranged by age and gender.

The large number of appearances of the formula (עד היום (הזה) (“until [this] day”) and its appearance in certain specific contexts is very instructive for the nature of the use made of it by the biblical authors. It is valuable, for example, for clarifying the history of certain places in Israel, alongside the etiological status of the formula. The totality of phenomena connected with this important formula of time will be elucidated in the course of this discussion.

Among other things we will clarify the types of “institutions” that were noted by this formula: various objects represented, especially those involving sacred things; events in the history of Israel—historical, ethnic and geographical matters; customs in the history of Israel; and the like. All these constitute a secondary part of the main discussion. We will likewise conduct a special discussion on the element of time as used in this formula; through examination of the distribution of the texts over the various periods, it becomes clear that in practice the majority are concentrated around one specific period.

In summary, the biblical authors perfected various techniques for expressing duration of time. They did so both by expressing a duration in numbers of years—“these twenty years I have been with you” (Gen 31:38); “the time that the people of Israel dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years” (Exod 12:40), and many others; and by establishing two poles, מ...עד (“from... to...”). Alongside this, they were persistent in perfecting the methods they developed, so that one explicit

pole alone (the opening or conclusion) would suffice.

The height of abstraction was reached in their development of a formula of uninterrupted duration of time, whether this was done by means of the formula, **מעתה ועד עולם** (“from now on and forever”), or even more so by not mentioning the concluding pole. Alongside these, they created the appropriate picture by inventing the formula **מ...ומעלה/ והלאה** (“from... and onwards/upwards”).

The development of all of these formulae is indicative of the considerable thought invested by the biblical authors in order to master the difficult subject of the possibility of describing time spread over an extensive span, while it appears that they were more used to describing a specific point in time.

The following group of studies is devoted to an explanation of those matters concerning time that lies somewhere between specific time and reflection on the duration and extent of time. Various questions arise in this context in relation to the brief units of time in the Bible. A variety of terms were in fact developed in order to express brief units of time. In this context, we note that **רגע** and similar terms were developed for this purpose. We refer to the word **רגע** both by itself and in contrast to other terms. The word **יום** (“day”), which fulfills numerous functions with regard to the subject of time, also performs a certain function in terms of the description of short periods of time in certain contexts, such as in contrast to the word **חודש** (“month”) in Numbers 11, in which the latter serves to indicate a longer period of time, whereas **יום** serves to indicate a brief period of time. The image of the shadow also appears in a series of texts used to indicate brief and rootless periods of time.

Thereafter, those phrases used to describe extended time are discussed independently. Several of the discussions in this chapter are conducted by comparison to those phrases used to express brief periods of time. Thus, for example, **לא קרוב** (“not near”) is used to describe remote or distant time, and is simply the antithesis of the phrase used for near time: **קרוב** (“close”).

Within this framework we discuss such expressions as **אחרון** (“last”), **דור אחרון** (“last generation”), **יום אחרון** (“last day”), **ימים רבים** (“many days”), **עתים רחוקות** (“distant times”), **אחרית הימים** (“the end of days”), **עד**, **דור ודור**, **עולם** (“forever”), and the like. Each of these phrases is discussed separately, while explaining the meaning of crucial texts relating to this subject.

A new unit of discussion returns to the central term of the entire work—**יום**, “day.” This time, the perspective is focused on the subject of “Day, Daytime—Their Sections and Order,” which is concerned with clarifying the meanings of the term **יום**, whether it refers to the period of daylight or **יום** in the calendrical sense of a full day.

But the main part of the discussion is devoted to the ancient subject of the order of the day in biblical times. In the course of this chapter various proofs—both biblical and extra-biblical—are invoked to determine the manner in which the day was generally perceived during the biblical period. There is also an exegetical discussion of this issue, confronting the approaches proposed by the exegesis and research over the course of generations regarding the order implicit in the relevant sources.

A complementary aspect of this issue relates to the status of the Sabbath and the question of the order of the day; the division of the day into sections—that of the day and that of the night; and other similar questions.

Further on, questions are raised regarding units of time larger than the day: the week, the month, the year, the seven-year cycle and jubilee cycle.

The next chapter—Section IV—contains discussions concerning the order of time with respect to past, present and future.

The discussion concerning the past clarifies all those terms used by the biblical authors in regard to different levels of the past: **ראשונים** (“the first ones”), **ימים ראשונים**: (“the first days”), **ירחי קדם** (“months past”), **לפנים** (“in former times”), **אתמול** or **תמול** (“yesterday”), or **תמול שלשום** (“the day before yesterday”), **אז** (“then”). These phrases are elucidated in the course of discussions which interpret selected passages, based upon the same methods as used in the other parts of the work. Further on in the chapter there are explained those terms used to describe the more distant past, such as **ימי קדם** (“days past”) **ימי עולם** or **ימות עולם** (“days of yore”), **הימים הראשונים** (“the former days”), etc.

From here, we turn to discussion of means of depicting the present. There again emerges here the perennial function of the word **יום**, which we discuss in this context of such phrases as **היום** (“today”) or **היום הזה** (“this day”) and their like. In other words, use of the definite form of the word is sufficient to characterize the present tense, while **יום** taken by itself has no concrete meaning, due to the heavy burden imposed upon it.



It should also be emphasized that the phrase **היום הזה** fulfills an additional task, that of a language of oath. The connection between the language used in oaths and the description of the present is based upon the view that the present is the most clearly apprehended of all times; hence, if a person wishes to swear to the correctness of a given thing, or to confirm that he will indeed fulfill that which has been promised by him, he includes in his promise=oath the phrase **היום הזה** (“this day”) or **כיום הזה** (“like this day”)—that is, that the things will indeed be carried out as surely as today exists.

In the following, future points in time are discussed. It seems that there are not many phrases available in the Bible for expressing this time: **מחר** (“tomorrow”), **למחרת** or **ביום מחר** (“on the morrow” or “on the next day”), etc. The biblical authors used terminology bearing a different meaning, giving the connotation of future by the addition of an ordinal number—“and the fourth generation shall return here.”

The first part of the work concludes with a bloc of chapters—V—concerned with the question of human life in relation to the dimension of time.

A series of idioms, including **אורך ימים** (“length of days”), **מלוא ימים** (“fulness of days”), **ימי (ה)חיים** (“the days of life”) and the like, are used to describe the duration of life and other related subjects. During the course of this discussion, we survey those texts in which length of days are promised to the subject of the writing, while elsewhere these things appear in the explicit nominal form, **ארך ימים** (“length of days”), or in the verbal form, **והארכתני את ימך** (“and your days shall be long”). There are also treated here such questions as whether length of life is predestined from the beginning, and if so what is the meaning of the divine proclamation as to the length of days of a particular person, or that the number of his days “shall be filled”? Or, whether a person who honors his father and mother (of whom it is stated “that your days may be long”) will have years added to his life, or whether that which was predestined for him—if such is in fact the view—will be fulfilled by God? Or perhaps there is no predetermined edict concerning the length of a particular person’s life, and the length of days promised will indeed add years of life to the one to whom such things are promised.

In this context, we also discuss the number of years of a person’s life, and the question in principle of assuring the length of life, such as that stated in Genesis 6 stating that 120 years is the maximum—if such is indeed the meaning of the statement made there.

In the discussion on “Duration of Life in Biblical Times,” various scriptures are examined relating to lifespan during different periods within the framework of the biblical age; in these, according to what is reported in the texts, one may note the differing durations of life according to different periods. In this discussion I demonstrate that, according to the biblical testimony, there are four different periods in the Bible, for which there are reported differing spans of human life, up to the fourth period, from which there emerges a quite realistic picture of the human lifespan. In connection with this we also discuss matters of old age; note is also taken of this and other related subjects by examining the ranges of ages in various texts, such as the discussion of ages in the law of valuation (Lev 27), the ranges of ages in the census, etc. The chapter concludes with a discussion of passages implying protest against the brief period of life that God has allotted to his creatures.

## 2. *Time in the Scrolls (and in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha)*

The second part of this work elaborates the understanding of time as it follows from the Dead Sea Scrolls literature, with some testimony from the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha.

This section opens with a discussion of the connection between God and time, beginning with a survey of the relevant biblical texts. We find that the biblical view of this subject is quite simple: God is the master of time. “Thine is the day, thine also the night... Thou hast fixed all the bounds of the earth; thou hast made summer and winter” (Ps 74:16-17).

The idea of God’s domination over time as the creator of the luminaries, the most concrete and tangible organ of time, already follows from an examination of the Creation account. Regarding less all-encompassing elements as well, we find the attribution of matters of time to God—for example, in the chapter on the fixed festivals in Leviticus 23 we find the phrase *מִוֵּעֲדֵי ה'* (“the appointed feasts of the Lord”) and other similar languages pointing in this direction.

Concerning both this and other matters relating to time, the people of Qumran follow the path prepared by the Bible, but they also innovate beyond what is written there. They develop and extend the biblical idea of an eternal God, sanctifying new festivals as “the appointed feasts of the Lord.” They refer to God as the master of time, developing the idea that God does not need the mighty forces of nature, the luminaries

and the like, because he created everything for the benefit of man. God is the creator of time, in the sense that he creates the day, which is the basic unit in connection with time.

The main innovation of the sect's literature regarding the subject of God and time derives from its deterministic approach: God determined from the outset all of the times **לקציהם** (by their times)—i.e., according to their periods. He determined the place of each **קץ** within the order of appointed times and events, their compass and the nature of what is to happen therein. It is thus decreed that man must always walk in the path that has been prepared, not to anticipate the "times" or to delay them, nor to deviate from them to the left or to the right. All is decreed and everyone needs to behave according to the decree, whether regarding the contents or with regard to the timing and other divinely fixed components of time. Even if it seems to people that the "times" are taking too long, they may, not according to the sect's approach, change anything of them.

From this point on, the discussion within this group of studies is based upon an elucidation of the meaning and use of basic terms relating to time within the literature of the sect. Some of these are parallel to chapters found in the first part of the book devoted to the biblical corpus.

The discussion begins with an examination of the term **דור**. One must note from the outset that there is a great deal of overlap among the various terms used to refer to time in Qumran, to the point of identity; i.e., there is a connection between **דור**, **קץ**, **מועד** and the like. We mean by this that the overlap among the terms pertains to the common denominator among the meanings of the terms. However, with regard to other connotations, each of these terms has its own independent life, that is, those meanings which are specific to it separately.

The significance of the term **דור** is discussed in the chapter devoted to this term. A special discussion is devoted to the sectarian term **הדור האחרון** ("the final generation"), by which the sect designated the present generation: that is, the one preceding the time of redemption, the eschatological age. Further on, I explain the meaning of the terms **דורות הארץ** ("generations of the land") and **דורות עולמים** ("eternal generations") as they appear in the scrolls. One should note that, in addition to the general meanings of **דור**, it is also used in a personal sense, as in the phrase **קצי דורתי** ("the ends of my generation"), and the like.

The term **מועד** is extremely common in Qumran literature. On the

one hand, it is used to indicate all of the holy days, as an auxiliary term referring to holy days, that is, specific holidays, as well as a general term for all the holidays together. On the other hand, it serves as a general term for time, without any relation to holy days as such. In this framework, as a designation of time, it has a series of varied usages and meanings.

Whereas the word מועד is a biblical term that was continued and developed by the Qumran authors, this is not the case regarding קץ. Even though this term appears in the Bible, primarily in the sense of “end,” its principle unique use is in the literature of the sect. Most appearances of the term קץ in Qumran refer to a period of time. In this sense, קץ is parallel to such terms as מועד, עת, etc. Regarding קץ as with regard to the other terms, it is stated that all the קצים are fixed by God from the very beginning, and therefore one may not deviate from them, nor delay nor anticipate them. In texts of this type I do not see any difference among these terms, and they function quite simply as synonyms.

There are likewise discussed here various idioms in which קץ is used as the *nomen regens* in reference to various *nomen rectum*, such as קצי שלומם, קצי מלחמות, קץ הרשע. On the other hand, there are cases in which these idioms are composed of a noun (קץ) plus an adjective. In each of these idioms a picture is received of the nature of the קץ referred to; by tracing all of these phrases, one can learn a great deal about the understanding of the times (קצים), which are the result of divine plan, and the nature of their components and their contents.

In this context, a special discussion appears devoted to the phrase קץ מ(ה)קץ or של"מ אר"ך (ה)קץ and the like. The question arises here as to whether one is speaking of the sudden end of the period, or of its end at the appointed time which has now, according to the description, arrived. Such statements, as well as the statement that כי יאריך הקץ (Peshar Habakkuk) require us to consider whether there is a change in the present in relation to God's past decisions pertaining to the length of the times or the nature of what happens therein. Another question also arises—how it is that, notwithstanding the divine statement, repeated several times in the sectarian literature, that one may not alter the times, one nevertheless finds statements that, on the one hand, the days “hurry” and, on the other hand, the קץ is delayed, takes long, etc. It follows from the explanation that there are two separate uses of the idiom שלם הקץ. On the one hand, it refers to the idea just mentioned, that time

will soon come to a routine or forced קץ and, on the other hand, it is stated that “the קץ is completed” (in the sense that the time has reached the realization, or coming, of the new aeon). We thus find that there are two different, if not opposite, meanings for the idiom in question.

קץ is a term much liked by the Qumran authors, in that it expresses the ideology of the sect more than any other term. Various phrases were created in relation to the end—thus מקץ לקץ (“from time to time”), etc., whose sense is “always” or other similar idioms.

Following our discussion of מועד and קץ, we discuss the use of the term עולם in the Scrolls. It should be mentioned here that the term עולם has already been discussed in relation to its appearance in the Bible, in the chapters on duration of time, past and concepts of past, etc. In the present chapter, the picture is focused on the Qumran corpus.

First of all, it should be noted that, whereas in the Bible the term עולם functions exclusively in the time-sense, in the Scrolls (and in the Hebrew of the Sages), there also appears a sense of עולם as *place*. It should be noted, as will become clear during the course of the discussion, that the plural form עולמים developed alongside עולם. In a long list of contexts, it has been proven that there is no difference in practice between the two forms. Rather, once the meanings expressed by עולם became worn away by overuse, people went over to use the plural form (עולמים), whose appearances in the Bible are few and far between.

עולם as eternity appears in a natural way in relation to God; however, other entities, such as the sect and the totality of Israel (and more) are also subjects of the definition of עולם as eternity. Notwithstanding the fact that I define the form as x-עולם (and x-עולמים), where they are classified according to groups of meanings, it seems that that there are idioms belonging to more than one group. In other words, עולם (and עולמים) not only serve a variety of uses and meanings; at times, the same phrase itself appears in more than one meaning: not as an alternative meaning, but as a cumulative, additional meaning.

A place in itself—and this also continues the biblical phenomenon—is taken by the use of the superlative. While combinations of conjunctives of x-עולם or x-עולמים do, in fact, already appear in the Bible, they do so in far greater quantity in the Scrolls, in the superlative sense: the greatest, the oldest and the like. In those passages in which עולם serves in the sense of place (i.e., world), various aspects of the cosmogonic approach of the people of the sect also appear, whether their own or borrowed from other sources.

At the end of the discussion I note a statistical finding, according to which there are many places in the Scrolls in which the term עולם is used in concentrated fashion, such as Column ii of the *Community Rule*, in which the word עולם appears nine times. In other works of the sect, this concentration reaches the point in which it is used as a key word by which the authors expressed their thoughts.

The word עת, like the words קץ, מועד and עולם, also serves as a term used to refer to time in the Scrolls. It should again be mentioned that עת is a synonym for קץ and מועד, in the sense of the understanding of the concept of time in the Scrolls. In addition, it also has a range of specific usages unique to itself. Also עת, like the other terms, with the possible exception of קץ, is derived from the biblical use, although the sect used it in a manner characteristic of its own ideology. As in the case of קץ, so too the nature of the different periods defined as עת depends upon the *nomen rectum*: for example, עת הצדק.

At times the word עת is used as an exact parallel to מועד, in the sense of “holy days” and the like. Moreover, in an idiom such as מועדי עתיה (“the appointed times of her holidays”), it is מועד which serves specifically in the general sense of time, while עתיה refers to the appointed times, the holy days.

עת is also used to refer to eschatological matters. An example of this is אחרית העת, parallel to the familiar אחרית הימים.

All of these idioms derive from the basic sense of עת, and tend towards the specific characterization of different kinds of time, as follows from the passages in the Scrolls. A phrase such as היא העת (“it is the time”) enables the author to define this explanatory sentence. In this way, the use of עת is enriched, going beyond the limitations of a brief, clichéd phrase to a general explanatory sentence.

If we have thus far discussed phrases referring to time, in the next two chapters we turn, parallel to the first part of the book, to a discussion of the extension of time, and particularly to the final part of the formula used to indicate duration, e.g., עד היום הזה (“until this very day”). It would appear that the basic formula used to refer to duration in the Bible, מ...עד (“from... until...”) was also known to the sect authors, who use it in expert manner. Likewise the abbreviated form, namely, with the *terminus a quo* alone, also appears; thus, כִּי־אֵלֶּם מֵאִזְ יַעֲדָתָהּ לְךָ יוֹם קָרֵב is used to refer to knowledge since time immemorial, whose applicability is, of course, until the time of the author (and thereafter). It should be noted in general that the form מֵאִזְ was very popular in Qumran,

particularly in the *War Scroll*. They were also familiar with the specific formula, which I discuss in a separate chapter, “The Phrase /והלאה...ממעלה in the Bible.” In this formula there appears, instead of a definite closing pole, a formula such as: “and then on,” indicating a more abstract kind of thought.

A special place is devoted to those isolated cases in which there appears the formula “until this day” (which is relatively frequent in Bible). Alongside this, I noted one text, 4Q158 1-2 7-13, in which a more complex formula appears:

7 [ויברך אותו וכו'  
9 עד היום הזה ועד דורות עולם]ים

7 [And he bless]ed him right there...

9 Until this day and for everlasting generations [...]

The unique feature here is that the definition of the time referred to includes two *termini ad quem*. On the one hand, it stops in the present, but on the other it uses the idea of the formula “עד סוף כל הדורות” (“until the end of all generations”) (Gen. Rab. 84.20). The latter phrase thus constitutes a kind of parallel characterization for those phrases lacking the defining pole והלאה/ומעלה.

The next group of discussions deals with questions of life and its duration; this too is parallel to the discussions in corresponding chapters in the first part.

The first chapter in this unit concerns the duration of life as it appears in the Scrolls and in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. I have concentrated here particularly on the *Book of Jubilees*, examining the information given there concerning the life span of the heroes in the different periods. In addition, I have noted those passages in which principled questions appear concerning the changing life duration and the reason brought in the texts regarding this subject.

We have seen here, by way of comparison, the relationship between the apocryphal and pseudepigraphic testimonies as against the biblical testimonies regarding various personalities.

Our work began with a discussion of יום, which is the central term among the phrases referring to time; likewise in the second half of the book, that concerning the Scrolls, there is a comprehensive group of studies about all those things that are derived from this term. Hence, the discussion of this topic begins with a chapter on “Languages of יום in the General Framework of Languages of Time.” In the course of

this chapter, we examine the relationship between the central term **יום** and other terms regarding time.

We likewise discuss here various kinds of “holy days,” as well as the status of the phrase **יוםם ולילה** (“day and night”), and the difference in its use in comparison with its use in the Bible. Immediately thereafter there appears a chapter on the phrase **כל היום** (lit., “all the day”), etc. This phrase seems to appear in the sect literature in the sense of “always,” alongside which there appears the idiom **כל הימים**—which evidently took the place of the phrase **כל היום**, which had become hackneyed, among other reasons because **יום** is used excessively.

The next chapter relates to the phrase **ימי/יום-x**, in which I explain all of the phrases used to refer to holy days and other special days, characterized by the conjunctive (or adjective) in a definitive sense: thus, **ימי הבכורים** (“days of first fruits”), **יום מועד התירוש** (“the day of the new wine season”), **ימי קודש** (“holy days”), and the like.

We have already seen how, in the case of **עת**, **מועד** and **קץ**, there are various construct phrases, such as: **עת צרה** (“a time of trouble”) **קץ שלום** (“the time of peace”), **מועד צדקה** (“the season of righteousness”), and the like, in which only the entire phrase provides the complete sense of the description of the period of time referred to. The same holds true for the characterization of day, as discussed in the following parts of the chapter on **יום-x** (or **ימי-x**). I discuss here such phrases as **יום נקם** (“day of vengeance”), on the one hand, and **ביום אשר** (“on the day which...”), on the other, as well as such phrases as **הוא היום אשר** (“that is the day which”). All of these types, as well as others, each one of which has a function in itself, provides a quite varied picture of the types of “days” which the authors incorporated in the framework of their ideology. It should be noted that some of the phrases of the form “**יום(ים)-ימי-x**” are paralleled by other idioms using other nouns: thus, there are such phrases as **יום נקם** (“day of vengeance”), **עת נקם** (“time of vengeance”), **מועד נקם** (“period of vengeance”), and the like.

Moreover, something that we already concluded from our discussion of other terms follows from our discussion of **יום** namely, that on the underlying level of things there is an identity among the different terms, while each one of the terms—**יום** being no exception in this respect—there is an additional system of specific uses in relation to which there is no longer any overlap among the terms.

Through tracing the various phrases involving **יום-x** we learn of the sect’s approach to arrangements regarding time and the laws connected



with it. Thus, for example, **יום הפיר הברית** (“the day of violating the covenant”), or **ימי מואסו במשפטי אל** (“the days when he had contempt for the laws of God” preceded **יום צוקה** (“the day of trouble”) and **יום פחד** (“the day of fear”), which came as Divine punishment for the evildoers who violated the covenant. On the other hand, **יום הריב** (“the day of contention”) is the day when God will quarrel with the wicked.

Further on, I discuss the idiom **x-ימי** (“the days of so-and-so”) as an expression referring to historical periods. This may indicate that the sect knew of the biblical usage and continued, and possibly expanded it (see above in this introduction, and in the chapter “The Formula “**x-ימי**” (or “**x-יום**”) in the Bible: Some Characteristics of Historiographical Writing in Israel.” That is: an idiom such as **ימי עולם ודורות נצה** (“everlasting days and eternal generations”) was a term referring to history in general, both past and future, whereas in the Bible reference is only made to specific, less comprehensive periods.

Alongside this appears a brief chapter entitled “The Use of **יום** in the Scrolls.” Here I discuss those texts in which there appears the idiom **מיום ליום** (“from day to day”) and the like. It should be noted that there are parallels to this phrase regarding the month: thus **מחודש לחודש** (“from month to month”), and so on.

Even though there is no prophetic literature in Qumran, those terms peculiar to the prophets, such as **ביום ההוא** (“on that day”) and **בימים ההם** (“on those days”), which appear in the Bible in an eschatological sense, are nevertheless used in Qumran. One may examine their applicability, which is similar to that of their use in biblical prophetic literature. Related to this is the use of the phrase **אחרית הימים** (“the end of days”), which appears in Qumran literature, at times in different contexts from those found in the Bible. For example, certain biblical passages which do not have an eschatological coloration at all, such as the story of Amalek, Exodus 17, or the admonition at the end of Deuteronomy, appear in Qumran in such a way that, in the course of quoting the biblical usage which, as we mentioned, is free of eschatological connotation, this topic is introduced into their interpretation of biblical texts.

The book concludes with a chapter examining the formula, **לא x-יקטול איש ביום-x**. This refers to the fact that there appears in the Bible a formula prohibiting the performance of a given action on certain days or under certain circumstances. These biblical passages are at times formulated in ironic fashion, rather than in the form of a prohibition.

In Qumran too passages are found alluding to such a prohibition regarding various matters. This chapter contains a discussion of all the passages, both biblical and those in the Scrolls literature.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> On the importance of the concept of *time* in Bible, in comparison with the biblical authors' involvement in questions of *space*, see Saebo, s.v. יום, 580-581. Cf. Simon, U., תפיסת הזמן והחלל בחשיבה המקראית [Time and Space in Biblical Thinking], Unpublished Dissertation, (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1961).

PART ONE  
TIME IN THE BIBLE

I

TERMS FOR TIME IN THE BIBLE

## CHAPTER ONE

### TERMS USED TO INDICATE TIME IN THE BIBLE

The determination of the time when a given event or action took place is extremely important for understanding the situation described. During the biblical period, in the absence of a universal, generally accepted system for recording time, various other methods were used, most of which utilized “particular” designations.<sup>1</sup>

The norm for purposes of recording time was a method of relative designation: that is, a given event was recorded as taking place in relation to some other point in time whose date was known, and hence perceived as relatively fixed. The reference point in time was known either because of its special fame, or because it had already been mentioned earlier in the text. But there were other methods used for this purpose as well, based upon other wordings, whether absolute or relative. In the present chapter, I shall show that there are in principle several different ways of treating a specific point in time that serves as a basic time marker or reference point.

Most recording techniques describe time in terms of the reference point; some refer to something that is contemporaneous with it. A third form, rarely used, describes a time prior to the reference point. Our discussion shall survey the three basic types: events recorded as being later than the point of reference; that which is contemporaneous with it; and that which precedes it.

#### 1. *Phrases Indicating a Date According to the Time Following a Specific Deed or Matter*

We shall begin with a list of phrases to indicate time in terms of its following a particular action or matter.

---

<sup>1</sup> For more on this principle, see Tadmor, “Chronology.”

I. One method of recording time is by designating the age of the individual of whom the text is speaking at the time of the described occurrence; that is, time is determined in terms of its “distance” from the individual’s birth: in other words, x number of years have passed *since someone’s birth*. It is worth noting that this method is only used in reference to the most ancient periods. Other methods of recording later replaced this one. In Gen 7:11, we read in the description of the flood: “In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life... all the fountains of the great deep burst forth.” Later, in Gen 8:13, the reference to “Noah’s life” is missing (although it appears in the Septuagint). It is nonetheless clear that here too this is the principle used: “In the six hundred and first year, in the first month, the first day of the month, the waters were dried...”<sup>2</sup>

The beginning of the story is couched in a slightly different style, but here too (7:6) the same principle of dating is in evidence: “Noah was six hundred years old when the flood of waters came upon the earth”—that is, that was his age when the flood began. This is confirmed, as we mentioned previously, in 7:11. Compare the style in Exod 7:7: “Now Moses was eighty years old, and Aaron eighty-three years old, when they spoke to Pharaoh.”<sup>3</sup> We thus find that the formulae “of x’s life” or “x was such-and-such years old” are identical as examples of the technique of noting time according to the events in an individual’s life. The interchangeability of these formulae also explains such phrases as “When Seth had lived a hundred and five years, he became the father of Enosh” (Gen 5:6).<sup>4</sup> This is not to be confused with another usage (*ibid.*, v. 7), “Seth lived... eight hundred and seven years,” concerned with reckoning the years of Seth—that is, an indication of a life-span in general or of the time-interval until a given event.

<sup>2</sup> According to Cassutto (*Commentary to Genesis*, II: 57), the year is ordinarily counted according to the years of the royal reign. Hence, it was fitting to number the years in reference to Noah as he was the leader of humanity, as the other kings died at that time. It follows that Cassutto views this as a variant on the recording of time according to royal years, on which see more below.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Gen 12:4: “Abram was seventy-five years old when he departed Haran”; Gen 16:16: “And Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore Ishmael to Abram”; Gen 17:1: “When Abram was ninety-nine years old the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him...” And cf. 1 Chr 2:21: “Afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir the father of Gilead, whom he married when he was sixty years old; and she bore him Segub.” And see also in Gen 17:24, 25; 25:20; 26:34; etc.

<sup>4</sup> It bears mention that this method of recording time appears frequently in the Book of Genesis, and it seems that this is linked to the periods recorded therein. This stylistic feature should be added to the other characteristics of the book, such as those noted by Grintz, *The Book of Genesis*, 1-9.

This method of recording time may also be accompanied by synchronism, as in 11:10: “When Shem was a hundred years old, he became the father of Arpachshad, two years after the flood.” Thus, in this verse, we have a double or synchronistic type of notation: both according to the age of Shem, and according to the number of years since the flood, i.e., since humanity’s new beginning (see more on this below).<sup>5</sup>

II. The above-mentioned method of recording time is based, as we said, on determining its “distance” from the birth of an individual, as mentioned in the same passage. The Bible also contains another, opposite formula, in which the date of an event is reckoned relative to *the death of an individual*.

This sort of formula mostly appears at the openings of books, as an indication of the conclusion of one era and the start of a new one. Thus, the Book of Joshua begins as follows (1:1): “Now after the death of Moses the servant of the Lord, the Lord said to Joshua the son of Nun...” In other words, Joshua’s appointment came after the death of Moses. The same holds true for the beginning of the Book of Judges (1:1): “After the death of Joshua the people of Israel inquired of the Lord, ‘Who shall go up first for us...’” Here too, the event in question (i.e., the people’s inquiry to God regarding the settlement of the land occurs after Joshua’s demise, as until this juncture God had delivered his instructions and responses to the people via the leader Joshua. Such a usage of designation of time appears for later periods as well. Thus, in the opening of the Second Book of Samuel, we read: “After the death of Saul” (1:1); likewise, the Second Book of Kings (1:1) begins: “After the death of Ahab, Moab rebelled...”<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> It seems to me that during the period of the monarchy there was something of a continuation of this method of recording by indicating the age of the king when crowned (2 Kgs 15:2) as well as indicating the year of the reign of a particular king in Judah when his counterpart in Israel rises to power, and vice versa (2 Kgs 15:27). There are instances in biblical literature in which a particular matter is noted in terms of something that happened when a particular individual was a given age (e.g., in 2 Sam 4:4 concerning how Mephibosheth became lame when he was five years old). This phenomenon appears in different parts of the Bible without distinction between earlier and later texts. A characteristic of the earlier period is the dating of general matters (and not only private or personal ones) according to the age of the figure depicted.

<sup>6</sup> It should be noted that the opening of 1 Kings (Regnorum 3) in the Lucian recension is in 1 Kgs 2:12—that is, after the death of David (Emmanuel Tov offered this comment in a personal communication). This may be added to what I wrote on the principle of division of the books 2 Samuel and 2 Kings.

There are other indications of time according to this method as well, such as “Amaziah the son of Joash was king of Judah... after the death of Jehoash” (2 Kgs 14:17; and cf. 2 Chr 25:25).<sup>7</sup> I see the determination of time according to the year in which a particular king died as a similar formula. Examples include: “In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord...” (Isa 6:1); “In the year that King Ahaz died came this oracle” (Isa 14:28); and see further in Gen 25:11; Lev 16:1; 1 Chr 2:24.

III. A more usual method of recording time, not characteristic of any particular period, is one indicating the distance from an earlier event or occurrence. Thus in Gen 16:3 we read: “So Sarai, Abram’s wife, took Hagar the Egyptian... after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan.” That is, the giving of Hagar to Abram is defined according to its “distance” from a specific event known from an earlier story. The phrases used for this purpose are *מקצה* and *מקץ*, indicating a distance relative to something mentioned earlier. Ezekiel’s muteness, for instance, began seven days after his initiation as a prophet: “and at the end of seven days” (Ezek 3:16). Other matters are described similarly; “at the end of three days...” (Josh 9:16) or “at the end of seven years, when the woman returned from the land of the Philistines” (2 Kgs 8:3) are only two of many such cases. There are also additional phrases used to indicate the distance in time from a specific event, such as “after two full years” (i.e., after the incident of Amnon and Tamar; 2 Sam 13:23). The phrases *אחר*, etc., are used to serve this type.

IV. When the point of reference relates to a cosmic or universal event, the recording of time is likely to seem part of a general dating system that, as mentioned earlier, did not exist during the time of the Bible. For example, we find passages referring to the Flood, such as “sons were born to them after the flood” (Gen 10:1) or, as a designation of specific time, in Gen 11:10: “he [Shem] became the father of Arpachshad two years after the flood” and 9:28: “after the flood Noah lived three hundred fifty years.”

V. In passages concerning the people of Israel, various determinations of time are made according to the distance from the Exodus from Egypt. Thus, in Exod 16:1 we read “on the fifteenth day of the second month

---

<sup>7</sup> Such notes appear mostly in synchronistic form regarding the kings of the northern and southern kingdoms.



after they had departed from the land of Egypt” and in 19:1, “On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone forth out of the land of Egypt.” Likewise in Num 1:1; 9:1; 33:38, and compare also 1 Kgs 6:1: “In the four hundred and eightieth year after the people of Israel came out of the land of Egypt.”

VI. Similar to this is the method of indicating time by referring to an event in terms of the years of the currently reigning king.<sup>8</sup> In other words, for such purposes the year he ascended the throne is viewed as the starting point for the reckoning. Inherent in this system are the initial signs of a general system of dating, the fundamental difference being that, rather than a unified system of numbering years, there is a series of reckonings, each one beginning with the installation of a new monarch.<sup>9</sup>

In practice, this is not fundamentally different from the other passages mentioned here. However, rather than reckoning from the endpoint of a given act (using the terms *מִקֵּץ*, *אָחֵר*, or *...ל*), the time of the coronation is taken as the fixed point. The matter to be described is thus defined in terms of time according to its location in relation to the coronation. However, as the kings generally ruled one after another, the impression created is of a certain continuity of reckoning, even though it ends with the death (or deposition) of one king and resumes with the rise of the next monarch.

There are several examples of this manner of recording time:

1 Kgs 6:1: “in the fourth year... of Solomon’s reign over Israel”—a passage that also mentions synchronistically the number of years since the Exodus; Isa 36:1: “In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah, Sennacherib came up...”; Jer 1:2: “in the thirteenth year of his reign.” The designation of a certain number of years, as opposed to the marking of a specific year, may be indicated by the gap between two junctures in the reigns of two kings: “in the days of Josiah... in the thirteenth year of his reign... until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah the son of Josiah...” (ibid., v. 2-3). This corresponds to the span of time during which Jeremiah prophesied, on the basis of the opening verse of his

<sup>8</sup> The phrase *x-מִי* (“the days of x”; e.g., the king) as an indication of an entire period, as opposed to a specific year, is discussed below in Chapter 5, “The Formula *x-מִי* (or *x-מִי*) in the Bible.”

<sup>9</sup> This formula is too simplistic and does not go into all the problems of reckoning according to regnal years, co-regencies, and the like.

book (although he actually prophesied later as well, but this is not the venue for that discussion). Other passages use synchronism, in which time is described according to various methods. This is the case in 1 Kgs 6:1 (see above), and there may be a synchronistic indication of corresponding years in the reigns of two separate kings, as in Jer 32:1: “... in the tenth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, which was the eighteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar.”

The importance of the method of dating based upon the reign of a monarch is also manifest in such passages as “until the reign of Darius king of Persia” (Ezra 4:5), that is, a general mention of the reign of Darius as a date. The passage in 2 Chr 36:20, “until the establishment of the kingdom of Persia” uses an even more encompassing date—the dawn of the Persian period. These examples illustrate how deeply rooted the system of referring to the reign of a king or kings was as an element in marking time.

It is worth mentioning that there are no recognizable changes in manner of formulation at different stages of the monarchical period. In other words, I have not found any differences in the method of recording in terms of the reign of kings between the beginning of the monarchic period and thereafter.

VII. Another manner of indicating a particular time is based upon mentioning a specific deed or matter. In this case the reference, rather than to a precise length of time, is to less precise phrases.

In this framework use is made of such phrases as **אחר כן** or **אחרי כן** (“thereafter”). This necessarily involves an element of relativity—that is, the determination of the order of things; for example, that a given event took place following a previously-mentioned event, without specifically saying what that earlier act was. This is the case in 2 Chr 32:9: “After this (**אחר זה**) Sennacherib king of Assyria sent his servants to Jerusalem.” This presumably refers to the time mentioned earlier, describing the rise of Sennacherib and his encampment “against the fortified cities” and the military preparations Hezekiah had made against Assyria. A short version of this is **ואחר** (“[and] after”): Gen 10:18; 30:21; 33:7; Exod 5:1; or **ואחר כן** (“afterwards”): Lev 14:36; Deut 21:13; 1 Sam 10:5. A similar formula used to indicate time is **אחרי כן** (“afterwards”), used other than as an opening expression, as in 2 Sam 21:14: “And they buried the bones of Saul... and after that God heeded supplications for the land.”

There is another method in which the word **אחרי** comes in

conjunction with the mention of a prior matter, as in: “after he became the father of Seth” (Gen 5:4); “after Lot had separated from him” (13:14); “after the death of Abraham” (25:11); “after he had buried his father” (50:14); “after the death of the two sons of Aaron” (Lev 16:1).

As in §III above, here too the action or matter after which the new action comes is mentioned explicitly, but the amount of time separating the acts is not indicated.

In this method of description, the following phrases are used: **אחרי**, **אחר** (“after”), **בעוד** (“while”), **מקץ** (“at the end of”), etc. Each one of these phrases has its own distinct connotation. For example, **מקץ** is used to describe a precise time in the past, such as “at the end (**מקץ**) of three years” (1 Kgs 2:39). **בעוד** refers to a precise time in the future, as in “within (**בעוד**) two years” (Jer 28:3). Similar to this is the phrase **עוד**, as in “Yet (**עוד**) forty days, and Nineveh will be overthrown!” (Jonah 3:4). The phrase **עוד** however, is occasionally used in an imprecise way, as in “yet a very little while” (Isa 29:17). As a rule **עוד** is used to refer to the future, whereas **בעוד** is used thus exclusively. The phrase **אחר** is used to describe both exact time: “two years after the flood” (Gen 11:10) and inexact time: “after Nebuzaradan had left him go” (Jer 40:1). The same is true of the phrase **אחרי**, employed to describe both exact and inexact time. It seems to me that, for the most part, the phrases **אחר**, and especially **אחרי**, are used for inexact description and for the past.

VIII. In this context one should mention the phrases **אחר הדברים האלה** or **אחרי הדברים האלה** (“after these things”), used as standard formulae in opening phrases and elsewhere. The formula is eminently clear: it states that the matters described thereafter took place following certain prior events (**האלה**).

Yet we are unable to confirm in each example of this formula’s usage that the order of events was indeed such. In other words, while it is apparent that the events to be narrated in a given episode transpired after certain other events,<sup>10</sup> it does not follow that **האלה** necessarily refers to the text that precedes the phrase in question. The formula may relate to matters brought earlier in the text, but not necessarily those found in the text *immediately preceding* it; rather, it may refer to matters described in a passage appearing earlier in the text, so that the present arrangement in fact separates between texts that were once adjacent but are no longer

<sup>10</sup> I deliberately ignore the possibility that this phrase does not refer to any event in that it is merely an editorial mark. See more on this below.

so. It may also be that the events referred to as האלה do not appear at all in our sources. This is so, because the remark may refer to matters that originally appeared in an earlier collection prior to the material in the formula, whereas the extant collection only comprises a portion of the original texts. Thus, the link between adjacent portions was severed and some portions were never included in the present version at all. As a result, the formula may refer to a situation that no longer exists. The same applies to other opening formulae, such as ויהי אחרי כן (“and it happened thereafter”).

As stated, in some cases it may be proven that the phrases used to describe time, אחרי הדברים האלה and אחרי כן and the like, do not refer to the given order, but to other material from which the texts in the extant work were taken. At times there is even direct evidence for such a claim. In 2 Sam 21:18, we read: “After that (ויהי אחרי כן) there was again (עוד) war with the Philistines at Gob.” Both the phrases עוד and ויהי אחרי כן refer stylistically to earlier events—and indeed, v. 15 mentions another battle with the Philistines. The function of ויהי אחרי כן is thus clear in this context. But there is a parallel version of these passages in 1 Chr 20:4: “after this (ויהי אחרי כן) there arose war...,” which follows a description of a battle at Rabbah (ibid., vv. 1-3). It is thus clear that the author of the version in Chronicles copied it as is, including the relevant designation of time, without noticing that this designation of time had an entirely different function in the other location.

Another example is found in 2 Chr 32:1, where the formula אחרי האלה הדברים האלה is invoked in expanded form: “After these things and these acts of faithfulness (אחרי הדברים והאמת האלה) Sennacherib came...” This passage refers to Hezekiah’s reforms; it ensues that after the reform Sennacherib and his army besieged Jerusalem (compare the rare phrase, “these things and these acts of faithfulness” to the phrasing used earlier at the end of the account of the reform [31:20]: “and he [Hezekiah] did what was good and right and faithful,” etc.). It is interesting that the parallel text—2 Kgs 18:13—reads “In the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah Sennacherib came up” (without the introductory phrase). In other words, the phrase ויהי אחרי הדברים האלה is a purely platitudinous usage, which serves here simply as a standard opening formula. Further on (2 Chr 32:9) another phrase is used indicative of time, אחר זה (“after this”), referring to the dispatch of Sennacherib’s officers to Jerusalem after the completion of preparations for war—the mobilization of the people, stocking up on water in Jerusalem, and sealing the wells beyond the city walls. In the parallel text in 2 Kgs 18:17, we read: “and the king

of Assyria sent the Tartan,” etc., without any indication of time. But it bears emphasis that the question of strengthening the people does not appear at all in 2 Kings. On the contrary, this passage describes Hezekiah’s attempt to get rid of the Assyrian king’s emissaries by raising the tribute to Assyria. It would appear that the Chronicler wished to forge a closer connection between the events, using these two phrases to indicate time.

In some passages, the opening formula **אחר הדברים האלה** and the like became devoid of content.<sup>11</sup> Thus, we read in Ezra 7:1-5, “Now after this (**אחרי הדברים האלה**), in the reign of Artaxerxes king of Persia, Ezra the son of Seraiah... went up from Babylonia,” and so on.<sup>12</sup> However, the previous section concerns the observance of the Passover in the days of Darius, making it clear that 7:1 does not refer to the text that precedes it in the Book of Ezra. But neither does it refer to any of the other texts found in Chapters 1-6 of the Book of Ezra. This is so, because none of the events mentioned, in terms of the timing of events, is suitable to be the event referred to by 7:1 when it speaks of **הדברים האלה**. One is thus forced to the conclusion that, if this is not to be regarded as an empty phrase, the intention must be to indicate that in *another arrangement* of the material, 7:1 follows a particular text to which it serves as sequel.

Another example is Gen 15:1: “After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram, saying.” Which things? The chapter immediately preceding (Ch. 14) relates the battle of four kings against five, but as there is no evident connection between the contents of Ch. 15, the Covenant Between of the Pieces, and those of Ch. 14, we cannot decide which of the following possibilities is correct:

(1) The formula in fact refers to a matter that in fact appeared before the episode of the Covenant Between the Pieces: in other words, the order of events as given is deliberate.

(2) The term **הדברים האלה** refers to another episode, one that in fact preceded the Covenant of the Pieces in the original source, from which it was incorporated into the Book of Genesis.

(3) What we have here is a formula devoid of content, i.e., one whose meaning is not obvious. The same applies even more so to Gen 22:1,

<sup>11</sup> This is like the conventional stylistic opening in Arabic: *ama ba'd*, a kind of “and later on,” even though nothing concrete precedes it to connect with what follows (I thank M. E. Friedman for this comment).

<sup>12</sup> According to Kahana (*Commentary on Ezra*, to Ez 7), this is an indefinite phrase intended to connect the passage with what precedes it.

with which the story of the Binding of Isaac begins,<sup>13</sup> or to its continuation in v. 20, which reads: “Now after these things it was told to Abraham, ‘Behold, Milcah also has borne children ...’”, followed by a genealogical list of the descendents of Nahor. The genealogical list-type of course does not fit in with the tale-type. The statement that Abraham was told of the offspring of Milcah and so on seems exceedingly artificial. An attempt is made here to turn genealogy into narrative, the dry genealogical list-type being turned into a kind of message delivered to Abraham. A methodical analysis of the material raises numerous difficulties: e.g., was Abraham informed of all Nahor’s descendents at once? This is not ordinarily a matter for one-time transmission, as is the birth of an individual, about which it might well be said, “it was told to Abraham.” This analysis reveals that the use of the formula **אחר הדברים האלה** (“after these things”) in this location bears no relation to what comes, nor does it mean to say what it says (*vis-a-vis* what was told to Abraham). Hence, what we have here is a clichéd usage of a conventional narrative style.<sup>14</sup> The phrase was deliberately used, *inter alia*, to create narrative continuity in a place where a non-narrative section was added.

In Esther 3:1, we read: “After these things King Ahasuerus raised up Haman...” According to this narrative, it would appear that Haman’s rise began after the ousting of Vashti and the other events mentioned prior to this verse. The question is whether this is actually so (see more on this below). On the other hand, Est 2:1 reads: “After these things, when the anger of King Ahasuerus had abated...” The indication of time, “when his anger had abated,” helps to explain the designation **האלה** in this verse. Further on, it even states that: “he remembered Vashti and what she had done...” It is thus clear that **הדברים האלה** are the events mentioned in the verses preceding the formula. This passage may thus be viewed as a kind of “double version”: 1) **האלה**; 2) “when the king’s anger had abated... what Vashti had done.” This may be taken as proof of the formal nature of the phrase **אחר הדברים האלה**; seeing as the author was not satisfied with this formula, but wished to

<sup>13</sup> *B. Sanhedrin* 89b: “after the words of Satan.” See in this connection the matter of “and the child grew and was weaned” (Gen 21:19) or “after the words of Ishmael” (i.e., as given in the midrash). Cf. also *Gen. Rab.* 57.3 on Abraham’s reflections as to what would have ensued had Isaac died (this refers to Gen 22:20, with the intention of connecting the text to the events following the Binding of Isaac).

<sup>14</sup> See what Seeligmann has written on this, “Hebräische Erzählung,” 311, and cf. *ibid.*, 310-312 on the phrase **ויהי אחר כן**, and the like. And see on this Nahmanides to Genesis 22:20, s.v. *Milka*, and Hoffman, *The Book of Genesis*, ad loc.

clarify the matter, he added the phrase “when the anger of the king... had abated.” In the absence of an explanatory phrase in Esth 3:1, two possibilities exist: 1) that it refers to the items properly mentioned earlier; 2) that it is just an empty phrase.

On the other hand, there are definitely cases in which the formula clearly refers to events according to the given order of the passages. Thus in Gen 40:1, “Now after these things the butler of the king of Egypt offended...”—meaning, after Joseph’s arrest (39:20). So too in Gen 48:1: “After these things, Joseph was told, ‘Behold, your father is ill,’” referring to the situation following Joseph’s promise to his father to bury him in the land of Canaan; and likewise in Gen 39:7 and 1 Kgs 17:17.<sup>15</sup>

IX. On the formulae **ויהי אחרי(ה)דברים האלה**; **ויהי אחרי כן**.

At this point we need to distinguish between the phrases **ויהי אחרי הדברים האלה** and **אחרי הדברים האלה**. The former seems more appropriate as a ceremonial opening for a narrative, whereas the latter is better suited to serve as a connective phrase. Accordingly, even though all the possibilities raised above exist in connection with both these expressions, vis-a-vis the meaning of **האלה** and so on, the possibility of the phrase being used merely as a conventional opening phrase without relating to a prior event is not particularly likely in relation to **אחרי הדברים האלה**. There are some texts in which the link to the surroundings is clear. For example: “after this (**ויהי אחרי הדברים האלה**) the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill” (1 Kgs 17:17). On the basis of the wording and the sense of the passage, it is clear that this is a beginning of a new section within the same text, and that it refers to the material that appears in the passages prior to v. 17. But matters are not always so clear.

I will now summarize some of the data that emerged from analysis of these formulae:

1) These formulae are used extensively in sources relating to the beginnings of the Israelite people, such as those appearing in the Book of Genesis. The formulae in question appear six times in this book, while they only appear another five times in all the other biblical books together. The latter are scattered in the Book of Joshua (24:29); 1 Kings (17:17; 21:1); Esther (2:1; 3:1), and twice more in variant form in Ezra 7:1: **אחרי הדברים והאמת האלה** and in 2 Chr 32:1: **אחרי הדברים האלה**.

<sup>15</sup> On the question of the relationship between the phrase **אחרי הדברים האלה** and **אחרי הדברים האלה**, see below.

2) I found no distinction between **ויהי(אחר הדברים האלה** and **ויהי אחרי) הדברים האלה**.

3) I regard the phrase **ויהי אחרי כן** (“now after that”) as an idiom that replaced the formula **ויהי אחר הדברים האלה**. The phrase **ויהי אחרי כן** must be construed according to the same guidelines that I mentioned above regarding **ויהי אחר הדברים האלה**: that is, the same problematic applies to **כן** as it does to **האלה**, as already noted in this regard.

The phrase **ויהי אחרי כן** first appears in full in Jdg 16:4: “After this he loved a woman...” etc. The formula is commonly used in the Book of Samuel: 2 Sam 2:1; 8:1; and 13:1 are some examples. Just as the formula **ויהי אחרי הדברים האלה** has a shorter form, so too does **ויהי אחרי כן**.

The phrase **ויהי אחרי כן** is found, apart from the Books of Judges and Samuel, also in many texts in Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, and more (and I did not discover anything unique about specific sources that utilize this phrase). As for the short phrase **ו(אחרי כן** (without the introductory **(ויהי)**, I believe that, like **אחרי הדברים האלה**, it is not used strictly as an opening, but as a connecting phrase among different episodes of the narrative tale. It seems to me that there is an essential difference between **ויהי אחרי כן** and the more formulaic **ויהי אחרי כן**.

## 2. *Phrases Used to Indicate a Date Contemporaneous with the Time of a Given Action*

The second group of phrases is constructed according to the principle of identifying time by comparison with another known event; that is, the direction is one of identity of time.

I. The first of the terms in this group is **אז** (“then”).<sup>16</sup> In Gen 4:26, we read that : “To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh; at that time (**אז**) men began to call upon the name of the Lord.” It follows from this that the function of the word **אז** is to provide a point

<sup>16</sup> De Vries, *From Old Revelation to New*. The word **אז** functions in some places as a cyclical connection: thus in Mic 3:4: “Then they will cry to the Lord... because they have made their deeds evil.” To De Vries, this seems to be an editorial verse directed toward the future. According to Wilch (*Time and Event*, 52), **אז** (together with **יום**) serves to indicate historical time also in ancient poetic texts (as opposed to **עת**, that serves in non-poetic texts). Wilch also explains (ibid., 59), that **אז** serves to connect events, and is an innovation of the Hebrew author, as opposed to authors in the Ancient Near East.



of comparison in time with another point previously mentioned in the text.

The same is true of Josh 10:33: “Then (זא) Horam king of Gezer came up to help Lachish.” On the basis of the sequence of the material in Joshua 10, Horam’s coming is mentioned after the description of the battle at Lachish, its siege (ibid., v. 31), conquest, and the slaying of all its soldiers. It follows that, according to this, the visit of Gezer was close in time and in wake of the matter of Lachish. This simple interpretation is supported by the text itself, that further on reads “(he came up...) to help Lachish.” We find that Horam king of Gezer’s visit was in fact concerning the situation of the war in Lachish, and that in terms of time was connected with the attempt to save Lachish.

The phrase זא is used frequently, and the function of the synchronistic comparison is clear from them without doubt. The phrase זא even lent itself to a kind of chronistic writing, as in 2 Sam 23:13-17., which speaks of the coming of a band of Philistines in the valley of Rephaim, while thirty warriors went to the cave of Adullam: “David was then (זא) in the stronghold; and the garrison of the Philistines was then (זא) at Bethlehem.” The two uses of זא in this passage portray a situation of simultaneity in which David was waiting in the stronghold, on the one hand, and the Philistine forces were deployed in a certain way, on the other, and both together are shown in relation to the coming of the thirty warriors and the wish explicitly expressed by David: “O that some one would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem” (v. 15).

Similar languages of contemporaneity also appear in 2 Sam 5:24: “And when you hear the sound... then (זא) bestir yourself; for then (זא) the Lord has gone out before you....” Similar uses of זא...זא are found in Isa 35:5-6; 58:8-9; Ps 51:21.

An entire section from which one may learn about matters of time appears in 2 Sam 21:18-22: “After this there was again war with the Philistines at Gob; then (זא) Sibecai the Hushathite slew Saph...” It is clear that certain things are mentioned here in addition to the previously mentioned details; and indeed, the battle with the Philistines is already mentioned in verse 15. It is thus possible that the phrase אחר־כן refers to the previous details, and in particular to the phrase “again war” (עד מלחמה; vv. 15, 18), as well as to “Then (זא) David’s men abjured him... (v. 17) after this there was again war... (v. 18) Then (זא) Sibbecai ... slew”. On the basis of the wording of the summary in the book of Samuel, “these four were descended from the giants in Gath...” (v. 22), it is evident that the aim of the passage is to describe a sequence of

battles that were conducted close in time and one after another. (See above, § 1. VIII, on the situation of the parallel testimony to this in Chronicles).

The formula **וְ** is used in a series of parallel texts as a means of indicating an activity that is contemporary with one portrayed earlier using other phrases. This follows from a comparison of passages from the Book of Kings that also appear in Chronicles. In 2 Kings 12:18, it states: “then (**וְ**) Hazael went away.” It is clear from the context that this takes place after the removal of Athaliah and after the repair of the house in the days of Joash and the day of Jehoiada the priest. In the parallel in 2 Chronicles 24:23, we find: “At the end of the year the army of the Syrians came up against Joash.” According to this, the events took place after the death of Jehoiada and the murder of Zechariah son of Jehoiada. If the source in Chronicles is reliable, then the detail in Kings, “Then Hazael went away,” is using a cliched phrase without noting the consequences that ensue from it. If, on the other hand, the version in Kings is the correct one, then the author of Chronicles altered things by moving around the time of Hazael’s departure for his own reasons. Or else this context was not created deliberately, but only as a result of the insertion of the text concerning the murder of Zechariah son of Jehoiada, etc.

In 2 Kgs 14:8, it states: “Then (**וְ**) Amaziah sent messengers to Jehoash.” This detail appears after that concerning the smiting of Edom in the Valley of Salt. In the parallel to this it states “Then Amaziah king of Judah took counsel and sent to Joash...” (2 Chr 25:17). The absence of the word **וְ** does not change the principle of the element of time, because on the face of it the story that opens thus continues the material that comes before it, and in Chronicles as well it takes place after the battle at the Valley of Salt. We thus find that there are various ways of expressing the same picture of time, and other expressions that provide the same effect as the use of **וְ**.

An opposite situation, in which the text in Kings appears without **וְ**, which the parallel in Chronicles contains, is found in 2 Chr 8:12: “Then Solomon offered up burnt offerings to the Lord.” On the basis of the use of **וְ**, this took place after Pharaoh’s daughter established residence in the city of David. The parallel in 1 Kgs 9:24-25 does not contain the word **וְ**, apparently for two reasons:

1) It states in Kings that “Three times a year Solomon used to offer up burnt offerings and peace offerings upon the altar.” It follows that

one is not speaking here of the offering of sacrifices at a particular time, as opposed to Chronicles, in which one is speaking of a specific action: “then (אז) he offered up.” The offering of sacrifices in a regular manner is mentioned in Chronicles separately: “as the duty of each day required, offering according to the commandment of Moses... and the three annual feasts” (ibid., 8:13).

2) In 1 Kings 9 the matter of Pharaoh’s daughter and the offering of sacrifices appear together, in the formula “then (אז) he built the Milo” (ibid., v. 24). It seems to me that the author of Chronicles copied the word אז from the verse about the Milo to that concerning the daughter of Pharaoh, completely skipping the subject of the building of the Milo and turning directly to that of the sacrificial offerings.

It therefore follows that, whereas the author of Kings speaks of offering fixed sacrifices, in which context there is no room for the phrase אז, once the Chronicler added the word אז to the matter of sacrifices he was forced to speak of a one-time offering, and to then speak separately of the fixed offerings—to which he devoted a longer passage than that in Kings.

To summarize our examination of the term אז, one must take note of the use of the term מאז (“since then”), that serves the same function as אז—namely, for comparison of time and the like. But whereas אז refers to a point in time previously referred to in the texts, in the use of the term מאז the detailing of the picture of time appears immediately thereafter: “But since we left off burning incense...” (Jer 44:18); “From the time that he made him overseer...” (Gen 39:5); “since it became a nation” (Exod 9:24); and so on. In other words, there always appears a full description of the matter that serves as a point of reference in time.

It is worth mentioning that the difficulties we have noted regarding the earlier phrases אחריו (“thereafter”), אחרי הדברים האלה (“after these things”), and the like, also exist with regard to אז. This is because we have no certainty that the comparison of times, which is a result of the use of אז, in fact refers to the order of texts as given, for the reason cited above (albeit regarding מאז these difficulties do not exist). There clearly exists a possibility according to which אז (like אחריו and the like) sometimes only serves as a kind of stereotyped literary formula, without any real meaning.

II. A parallel to the phenomenon of “stopping of time,” included in the word אז, can be seen with regard to another phrase—בעת ההיא

(“at that time”).<sup>17</sup> Thus, for example, in Jdg 14:4: “His father and mother did not know that it was from the Lord: for he was seeking an occasion against the Philistines. At that time (בעת ההיא) the Philistines had dominion over Israel.” This verse either interrupts the flow of the story, in which the significance of Samson’s activity during the period of his wanderings is explained, or points towards parallel or additional events that were taking place at the same time, or else points toward some additional contemporaneous datum which is necessary for our understanding of what is related in the course of the narrative.

Similar to this is the usage in Numbers 22:4, in the framework of the story of Balaam. It states there: “And Balak the son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time.” This sentence is concerned with establishing a synchronistic fact, that is, with providing information concerning another matter that occurred simultaneously. It is clear that, unlike the use of ויהי בעת ההיא at the beginning of other texts (whose subject matter will be discussed below), the point of time cited here is identical with that in other parts of the description, without any reservations. We even find a double use of the idiom בעת ההיא in 1 Chr 21:28-29, to describe two different matters that occurred simultaneously.

The combination of the idiom אז and בעת ההיא, that is, a double idiom, appears in 2 Kgs 8:22: “Then (אז) Libneh revolted at the same time (or: “at that time”; בעת ההיא).” The aim of this idiom is to provide a picture of the time of Edom’s rebellion, which is indeed fixed on the basis of the word mentioned previously: אז.

It is not clear to me what purpose is served by the appearance here of the double formulation, but perhaps it seemed to the author that the meaning of אז was already so hackneyed that people no longer felt the comparative or synchronistic sense of this idiom. For that reason, it needed to be supplemented by use of the idiom בעת ההיא, that serves a similar purpose. Perhaps the double formulation in this place is a result of the combination of two alternative readings that existed during the course of the transmission of the text.

A similar kind of double technique can be seen in Esther 8:9: “the king’s scribes were called at that time (בעת ההיא), in the third month, which is the month of Sivan, on the twenty-third day.” The use of the formula “at that time” should have been adequate to designate the time of the act described here; however, it may be that attention was given

<sup>17</sup> Wilch, *ibid.*, 48. בעת ההיא “(at that time)” serves for historical usages and to indicate historical connections between people and events. *Ibid.*, 75-76, the formula בעת ההיא is marshalled to draw a contrast among events on various levels of time.

from the outset (or at a later stage in the history of the text) to the casual and non-explicitly defined nature of time here, so that certain details were added —“in the third month,” etc.—creating a kind of double version. What was stated earlier about **אחר הדברים האלה** holds true to a large extent regarding the phrase **בעת ההיא**. I refer to the issue of the degree of incorporation in a given context. Thus in Gen 21:22: “At that time (**ויהי בעת ההיא**) Abimelech and Phichol the commander of his army said to Abraham, ‘God is with you’...” It is clear that the wording “at that time,” is intended to refer to a point in time identical to that which precedes it. On the other hand, due to the relative nature of this formulation, it may refer to any text which it follows, whereas originally it was intended to compare the time of the text described with the time of a specific text prior to it. In the case under discussion, the making of a covenant between Abimelech and Abraham follows the story of Hagar and Ishmael in the desert. Hence, we have no proof that this phrase refers specifically to this source, or that the story of the covenant was originally incorporated after another story, and that hence **בעת ההיא** referred to the time of that story.

We find that the exegetical possibilities that I suggested regarding the formula, “now after these things” (**ויהי אחר הדברים האלה**) hold true here as well (and see also on this in the above discussion, and the sources brought in fn. 13, *supra*).

One needs to turn one’s attention to the relationship between two parallel texts—2 Kings 24:10: “At that time (**בעת ההיא**) the servants of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon came up to [*geri*] Jerusalem,” referring to the period of Jehoiachin being anointed as king (*ibid.* vv. 6-8). In the parallel in 2 Chr 36:10, dealing with the identical event and time period, we read, “And at the turn [RSV: in the spring] of the year King Nebuchadnezzar sent...”<sup>18</sup> We either find here a difference in the information given in the two passages; or, on the other hand, this indicates the artificial nature of the use of this formula. In any event, what prevented the authors of Chronicles from adhering to the extant wording and copying it as is? It seems strange since the Chronicler is familiar with this idiom and makes use of it. In 2 Chr 28:16 it states: “At that time (**בעת ההיא**) King Ahaz sent to the king of Assyria for help,” immediately after passage concerning capture of some Judahites by

<sup>18</sup> There is an identity in the method of marking time between 2 Sam 11:1 and 1 Chr 20:1, even though the formulation is different—“in the spring of the year (**לתשובת השנה**)” (Samuel); “at the time of the springtime of the year (**לעת תשובת השנה**)” (Chronicles).

the north. In the parallel in 2 Kings 16:7, we read: “And Ahaz sent” without mentioning the phrase “at that time,” but according to the context this happened in connection with the ascent of Rezin and the smiting by the Assyrians of Elath. It should be noted that the phrase **וַיְהִי בְעֵת הַהִיא** does appear in 2 Kgs 16:6 concerning Elath.

It is likewise difficult to interpret the verse in Gen 38:1: “It happened at that time (**וַיְהִי בְעֵת הַהִיא**) that Judah went down from his brothers, and turned in to a certain Adullamite,” as referring to that which was recounted earlier, since in any event the story in Genesis 38 refers to a long span of years, from the marriage of Judah until the birth of his sons and their marriages, etc. What period of time is referred to, then, by the phrase “It happened at that time” in the verse in question? In terms of the narrative flow, this formula seems intended to compare the opening point of the story, Judah’s marriage to the daughter of Shua, with that of the sale of Joseph (Gen 37). But there are many difficulties with this, about which a great deal has already been written over the course of the generations.

Spinoza made the following comments concerning the difficulty of this wording in his *Theological-Political Tractate*:

The time here mentioned must refer not to the passage that immediately precedes it in Genesis,<sup>19</sup> but to a quite different time of which it is the immediate continuation. For from the former time—that is, the time when Joseph was taken away to Egypt, until the time when the patriarch Jacob also set thither with all his household, we can reckon no more than twenty-two years. Joseph was seventeen years old when he was sold by his brothers, and he was thirty years old when he was summoned by Pharaoh from prison. If we add to this the seven years of plenty and the two years of famine, we arrive at a total of twenty-two years. Now nobody can conceive that in this space of time so many events could have taken place: that Judah begat three children one after another from the one wife whom he married at that time, that the eldest of these married Tamar when he was of age, that when he died the second son married her in turn, and also died, that some time after these events, Judah unwittingly had intercourse with his own daughter-in-law Tamar, that she bore him twins, of whom one also became a father within the aforesaid period. Thus since all these events cannot be accommodated within the time specified in Genesis, this refer-

<sup>19</sup> According to Abraham ibn Ezra on Gen 38:1: “This is not the time, when Joseph had been sold, but rather prior to his sale.” Cf. Spinoza, *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, Ch. 9 n. 13, pp. 302-303: “So those who believe that Judah’s long absence from home took place before Joseph was sold are seeking to delude themselves.” And cf. *Talqut Shim’oni*, I.144.

ence must be to some immediately preceding time in the narrative of a *different book*.<sup>20</sup>

It follows that the phrase “at that time” is quite properly interpreted by Spinoza as referring to another narrative of the material than that found in the formula in Genesis.

In 1 Kgs 11:29 we find the following formula at the beginning of the story of Jeroboam: “And at that time, when Jeroboam went out of Jerusalem, the prophet Ahijah the Shilonite found him on the road.” Now this story is told in the context of the adversaries that rose up against Solomon. Some of the passages concerning the opposition to Solomon continue over several years, such as the lengthy section concerning the events involving Hadad the Edomite (*ibid.*, v. 14-22). Hence, the question of what time is referred to in the beginning of the story of Jeroboam again arises. Here too it may be that it refers to earlier histories of the location of the story and its source.

Joshua 5:2 speaks of the circumcision of the Israelites “at that time” (בַּעַת הַהֵיאָ *ba'et ha-hai'a*). It is not clear from the context which events that preceded it are meant to be referred to by this comparative phrase. It is likewise stated regarding Joshua's oath against the builders of Jericho that it was “at that time” (6:26), which presumably refers to the conclusion of the conquest, mentioned in the biblical text immediately preceding it (6:24). There are many similar passages, such as Josh 11:21; Jdg 4:4; 1 Kgs 8:65; and others.

In a large group of texts from the Book of Deuteronomy we find use made, not surprisingly, of the formula, בַּעַת הַהֵיאָ. As is known, Deuteronomy is edited from the literary viewpoint as a kind of long speech, in which Moses surveys the entire complex of relationships between the people and its God and between the people and Moses himself. The phrase בַּעַת הַהֵיאָ allows one to tie together various different subjects and to strengthen the feeling of a single, unified context for all the fragmentary things. Because we are speaking in our case of a speech that is presented as contemporaneous with the events, the formula no longer carries such an “archival” flavor; that is, there is no great gap in time between the events and the speaker-narrator, whereas in its other uses there is a significant gap in time between the events and the one making the comment, as in the use of the formula, “and at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel” (Jdg 14:4). In this case the “distance” in time is very great; in any event it is clear that this historical

<sup>20</sup> Spinoza, *ibid.*, 174.

comment was written at a time when the Philistines were no longer ruling over Israel, and the same holds true for other writings.

In Deut 1:15 Moses' appointment of judges is mentioned.<sup>21</sup> In verse 16 we read: "and I charged your judges at that time: Hear the cases between your brethren, and judge righteously..." It seems clear that the judges were given these basic instructions close to the time of their appointment. Thus, the things really were "at that time," making the things so self evident that it is hardly necessary to even mention them. In my opinion, this also strengthens the tendency of the speaker to create continuity and coherence;<sup>22</sup> the same holds true for Deut 9:20. The superfluity in the use of a set formula is striking in a verse such as Deut 2:34: "and we captured all his cities at that time and utterly destroyed every city." It is clear that things happened at that time, because the entire passage there leads toward this subject: v. 32 mentions Sihon coming out against them, while v. 33 states, "and we defeated him and his sons and all his people." It follows that v. 34 repeats the report given in v. 33, adding the phrase "at that time." These are also roughly the tendencies and intentions in Deut 3:4, 8, 12, 18, 21, 23; 4:14; 5:5; 9:20; 10:1. As we said, the uses of the formula in Deuteronomy stand out particularly because of their incorporation in the context of a lengthy speech.<sup>23</sup>

In principle, apart from the specific development of the formula in the language of the address in Deuteronomy, I see the phrase **בעת ההיא** ("at that time") as a technique of chronological notes comparing times and events: that is, that such-and-such already happened then, at the time described in the text in question; or as an explanatory note locating the period or explaining the particular circumstances of the time, such as: "and at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel" (Judg 14:4) or "for the tabernacle of the Lord... was at that time in the high place at Gibeon" (1 Chr 21:29).

<sup>21</sup> Wilch, *Time and Event*, 60-61. The phrase appears 15 times in D, from which it follows that Deuteronomistic authors made use of it in their writings, including in the Book of Kings and so on. Cf. *ibid.*, 64, where he states that most appearances of **בעת ההיא** in Deuteronomy are connected with events involving basic matters, which the authors wished to reinforce.

<sup>22</sup> Marsh, *The Fullness of Time*, 47-48, notes the inappropriateness of the use of the formula **בעת ההיא** for the appointment of judges, comparing Exodus 18 and Deut 1. In his view, "at that time" is formulated from the perspective of a later author, according to whose approach all of the events from the Exodus from Egypt until the entrance into Canaan are as if one time. On p. 56 he comments that "at that time" is a sign of historical writing.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Löwenstamm, "The Formula **בעת ההיא** in Deuteronomy."



One should also note here that, due to the nature and significance of the formula “at that time,” it is unavoidable that it be used in relation to the future as well. For example, in Daniel 12:1: “At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time.” The formula in question appears here twice, and it is clear from the context and contents of the verse that one is speaking of the Eschaton, and certainly not of the past. We therefore find that, because of the relative nature of the phrase, one may use it for various different periods, but with one tendency—comparative description of time in relation to what was stated previously regarding the place of its incorporation in the text.<sup>24</sup>

III. Another phrase similar to **בַּעַת הַהֵיא** (“at that time”) is **בְּיוֹם הַהוּא** (“on that day”),<sup>25</sup> which likewise belongs to the group of phrases involving comparison of time. De Vries recently published his study of the use of the phrase **בְּיוֹם הַהוּא** as past, present and future, from which one can learn of the function of the idiom in various different texts.<sup>26</sup>

Our concern with this phrase is limited. It is sufficient to note that the function of this idiom is to indicate an identity in time with the other parts of the story in question. Thus Gen 33:16: “So Esau returned that day (**בְּיוֹם הַהוּא**) on his way...,” refers to the day of the encounter between Esau and Jacob while Jacob was returning from being with Laban. 1 Sam 3:2: “At that time (**בְּיוֹם הַהוּא**) Eli was lying down in his own place,” refers to the day when God revealed himself to Samuel. On the other hand, 1 Sam 3:12: “On that day I will fulfill against Eli” refers to the future, when God will punish the house of Eli. Thus, even in the same text there may appear a number of different combinations of the phrase “on that day,” referring (depending on the context) to different “days,” while nevertheless their formal function is identical, as we stated above.

<sup>24</sup> The phrase **בַּעַת הַזֹּאת** appears only once (Esther 4:14), and its sense seems different from the phrase **בַּעַת הַהֵיא** וְיֵהִי discussed here. The intention of the phrase in Esther is to indicate the present; moreover, the things are brought there in a direct quote within the sentence, unlike the uses of the other languages discussed in this chapter, which were brought in opening or editorial comments

<sup>25</sup> We are not concerned here with the phrases **הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה**, **הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה** or **וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה**, etc., all of which are means of indicating present time through the words of the speakers or the author. Rather, all of the phrases mentioned in this study are concerned with recording and abstract, archival notation and relation to time and its description, and not necessarily one of real involvement in events.

<sup>26</sup> De Vries, *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, 26.

IV. Another phrase similar to “at that time” and “on that day” is the idiom **בִּימֵי הַהֵם** (“in those days”).<sup>27</sup> This phrase is also used in the same contexts, and is also concerned with identity of time, lending an archival character to the things that are conveyed in order to give over details for clarification of the situation and the like. For example: “in those days [that is, at the time of the events involving the statue of Micah] there was no king in Israel” (Jdg 17:6, and cf. 19:1; 21:25). Compare also 18:1: “And in those days the tribe of the Danites was seeking for itself an inheritance to dwell in; for until then [that day] no inheritance among the tribes of Israel had fallen to them.” This statement is similar to “at that time (**בַּעַת הַהֵיא**) the Philistines had dominion over Israel” (Jdg 14:4). Due to the similarity in the use of the two idioms, **בִּימֵי הַהֵם** and **בַּעַת הַהֵיא** (“in those days” and “at that time”), one may conjecture that they reflect a product of different schools. According to this, there were those who were influenced by one phrase and made use of it, and those who used the other phrase.

We shall now enumerate a few examples of things which were said in this manner. In the same context of earlier writings it is stated of the time of the concubine in Gibeah: “for the ark of the covenant of the God was there in those days (**בִּימֵי הַהֵם**)” (Jdg 20:27). And slightly further on (v. 28): “And Phinehas the son of Eleazar, son of Aaron, ministered before it in those days (**בִּימֵי הַהֵם**).” By this means, the author wishes to convey to us the information known to him, with the intention that we thereby understand various turning points and changes that took place during the course of the events. The story of Saul’s last battle begins with the formula: “In those days the Philistines gathered their forces” (1 Sam 28:1). On the basis of the situations involving David and what happened to him with Achish, it is clear that the phrase **בִּימֵי הַהֵם** is intended to compare the time to what was stated previously. And indeed, 1 Samuel 27 is concerned with David’s dwelling with Achish. Hence, one may prove that this refers to the event mentioned in the previous text. It would seem that in the original position of the material as well there was a connection between these two texts. See further 1 Sam 3:1; 2 Kgs 10:32; Isa 38:1; Ezek 38:17 (which uses the parallel phrases **בִּימֵי קִדְמוֹנִים** [“in former days”] and **בִּימֵי הַהֵם** [“in those days”]); Est 1:2; 2:21; Dan 10:2.

<sup>27</sup> De Vries, *From Old Revelation to New*. In his opinion, both **בִּימֵי הַהֵם** and **בַּעַת הַהֵיא** serve as formulae to indicate extended editing. The editing in many cases seems to him like a principle of *vatic. ex eventum*.

Just as one of the usages of **בעת ההיא** is to draw a connection over a brief time interval, that is, without “archival” value, as, for example, in many texts in the opening speeches of Deuteronomy (see above), so too is **ההם בימים** used in similar fashion.

In Nehemiah 13:23 it states: “In those days (**בימים ההם**) also I saw the Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab.” The phrase “in those days” as used by Nehemiah refers to the description of the time period mentioned previously—namely, the removal of the traders on the Sabbath. Both events took place during the days of their narrator, Nehemiah, and this serves as the source for the nature of the mention of time in this text. The same does not hold true for other texts, in which the distant narrator draws connections among events that occurred close to one another, but at great distance from himself.

One should take note of the fact that the two formulae, **בעת ההיא** and **ההם בימים**, are mentioned here in close proximity to one another. Thus, in Neh 13:21: “From that time on (**מן העת ההיא**) they did not come on the Sabbath”; and v. 23: “In those days (**בימים ההם**) also I saw the Jews...” The use of the formulae in this place involves two common aspects: 1) the two formulae are intended to establish a kind of simultaneity; 2) the formulae refer to a short time range, in that both texts attribute the statements in question to Nehemiah himself (see above).

The proximity between these two formulae is manifested in the combination of both together in a kind of accumulation in a doubled version (and compare above on the use of **אז בעת ההיא**): “In those days and at that time (**בימים ההם ובעת ההיא**) I will cause a righteous Branch to spring forth for David” (Jer 33:15). And following that there is mentioned: “In those days Judah will be saved...” (ibid. v. 16). Likewise too in 50:4: “In those days and at that time, says the Lord, the people of Israel and the people of Judah shall come together...” (see also ibid. v. 20), and in Joel 4:1: “For behold, in those days and at that time, when I restore the fortunes of Judah and Jerusalem.” Perhaps one may speculate that a need was felt to give a double reading in order to express the distant eschatological future (on which see more below).

It is interesting that in Jer 33:16, when only one of these formulae is used, “In those days Judah will be saved,” this is directly following the double formula that appears in Jer 33:15: “In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch...” There is likewise a complex phrasing in Jer 3:16: “And when you have multiplied and increased in the land, in those days (**בימים ההם**), says the Lord...” But adjacent to

that the second half of the idiom is found: “At that time (בעת ההיא) Jerusalem shall be called the throne of the Lord” (v. 17). Thereafter he again summarizes (v. 18): “In those days the house of Judah shall join the house of Israel...” And perhaps the things are formulated here (in Jeremiah 3) in the manner of a *hendiadys*—that is, in some cases the phrase appears with both components and in other cases it is divided into its component parts, a different phrase being used in each one of the verses, as is customary in the breaking down of *hendiadys*.<sup>28</sup> בימים ההם (“in those days”) is also used in a future sense, but it seems to me that one needs to make a further distinction in this case. In Deut 17:9, regarding the law of the high court, it states: “And coming [or: you shall come] to the Levitical priests, and to the judge who is in office in those days (בימים ההם)”; similarly, it states in Deut 19:17, regarding the law of false witnesses: “then both parties to the dispute shall appear before... the priests and the judges who are in office in those days (בימים ההם).” Likewise in the mention of cities of refuge in Josh 20:6: “until the death of him who is high priest in those days (בימים ההם).” It follows from all of these things that the phrase “in those days” describes a point of time in the future, identical to that described in the text where it is mentioned, used deliberately in Deuteronomy to distinguish between the phrase בעת ההיא (“at that time”), which refers to the recent past, and בימים ההם (“in those days”), referring to the future.

As for those texts cited previously which make use of a double formulation, it seems to me that the double usage (...בימים... בעת) is intended to indicate a greater span of time, referring to a more distant, eschatological future or, possibly, the doubling is a stylistic technique characteristic of Jeremiah used to refer to the Eschaton. We therefore find that the formula “in those days” is used for a comparative fixing of a definite time in the past or future, and possibly also in the present. This may be inferred from one text, Zech 8:10: “For before those days (הימים ההם) there was no wage...” and the text that precedes it (v. 9): “in those days” (בימים האלה). These phrases are parallel (compare also “and now” in v. 11), but they differ from the phrase “as in the former days” (כימים הראשנים; v. 11), that clearly refers to the past.

<sup>28</sup> See Melamed, “Break Up Stereotype Phrases.”

### 3. *Phrases Indicating a Date According to the Time Prior to a Given Act*

The third means of indicating time is by describing the matter in question as being *prior* to a given point in time, chosen for purposes of comparison. That is, one determines that a given matter happened prior to another known event (whether known in general, or from its previous mention in the text). Whereas the main method for recording time (see §1 with all its sub-sections) is by noting that the event in question took place *after* a given fixed point (e.g., after the Israelites left Egypt, from the dwelling of Abraham in the land, etc.), here a certain point is fixed as a *final* marker of time, and the activity that took place previous to it is described in relation to it.

The importance of this model may be seen from the fact that it is used even in explicitly chronistic texts, such as the heading of the prophecy against the Philistines (Jer 47): "...concerning the Philistines, before Pharaoh smote Gaza" (47:1). We find that, for purposes of determining the date of Jeremiah's prophecy against the Philistines, the time of the conquest of Gaza by Pharaoh is taken as the marker for comparing times. An analogous use appears in the heading of the book of Amos: (1:1): "The words of Amos, who was among the shepherds of Tekoa...two years before the earthquake." The earthquake during the reign of Uzziah was well known during the days of Amos and the following period (see Zech 14:5). It is therefore clear that such an event would be chosen to serve as a fixed point, according to which the things were identified in a relative manner.

Likewise in the list of the kings of Edom the time of their reign is listed by the same principle: "These are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom, before any king reigned over the Israelites" (Gen 36:31).

We may thus follow the use of the terms טָרַם־x ("before x"), or לִפְנֵי־x ("prior to x"), and locate those passages that pertain to the model discussed here. One may mention the following texts that fit this model: "And Hebron was built seven years before Zoan in Egypt" (Num 13:22); the date of the birth of the sons of Joseph is expressed as being "before the years of famine came" (Gen 41:50); the period during which the Jordan valley was renowned for its fertility is described as: "before the Lord destroyed Sodom" (Gen 13:10); one of the occasions of God's revelation to Ezekiel was "before the man who had escaped came" (from defeated Jerusalem—Ezek 33:21-22; and note there also the exact date of his arrival).

As with regard to other languages, מֵאֵת־ ("at the end of") and the like,

which were discussed in §1, in which there appear exact (“ten years to...”; “seven years after...”) and inexact usages (“and there were sons born to them after the flood” without stating how long after the fixed point mentioned these things happened), so too with regard to such phrases as **לפני**, **טרם** (“before,” “prior”), etc., we find two kinds of usage, as I have already pointed out above. On the one hand there appear exact statements: “Seven years... before...” (Num 13:22) and on the other hand “before there reigned a king” (Gen 36:31), without stating how many years before the coronation this took place. To mention a few more verses in the area of “inexact” description: “before (**בטרם**) the sun went down” (Judges 14:1); “before (**מטרם**) a stone was placed upon a stone in the temple of the Lord” (Haggai 2:15); “before (**לפני**) those days” (Zech 8:10).

There are also cases in which where the **לפני** (or **לפנים**) is used to refer to the present of the author or narrator, in which case the formula only points in the direction of the distant past: Ps 102:26: “of old (**לפנים**) thou didst lay the foundation of the earth”; Deut 2:10: “the Emim formerly (**לפנים**) lived there”; Josh 14:15: “the name of Hebron formerly (**לפנים**) was Kiriath-arba” or “the name of the city was formerly Luz”; Josh 11:1: “for Hazor formerly was the head of all those kingdoms”; 1 Sam 9:9: Ruth 4:7: “in former times (**לפנים**) in Israel”; 1 Chr 9:20: “... was the ruler over them in time past; 2 Chr 9:11: “There never was seen the like of them before...”<sup>29</sup>

To this group may be added the phrases **בראשונה** (“in the beginning”) and **לראשונה** (“at first”), which are occasionally used in the same way as the idioms **לפני** or **לפנים**. Thus, for example, in Gen 28:19: “but the name of the city at first (**לראשונה**) was Luz”; Isa 52:4: “my people went down at the first into Egypt”; Jer 7:12: “where I made my name dwell at first”; Neh 7:5: “the book of the genealogy of those who came up at the first”; 1 Chr 17:9: “shall waste them no more, as at first.”

As in the case of the phrases **x-אחר**, so too regarding **בטרם** and **לפני** there are passages that relate to the beginning of the world. Thus in Ps 90:1-2: “Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations.

<sup>29</sup> In the parallel of this verse in 1 Kgs 10:12, it reads: “until this day” (**עד היום הזה**). The Chronicler deliberately changed this phrase to “in former times” (**לפנים**), thereby creating a clear and unequivocal formula—that is, until the days of Solomon such things had not been seen. On the other hand, the formulation in the Book of Kings opens room for two possibilities: 1) until the days of Solomon their like had not been seen; 2) thereafter as well, until the time of the author, such things had not been seen. See on this in detail in the chapter on the use of the phrases **לפנים**, etc., to depict olden times in the Bible.

Before (בטרם) the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world.” That is to say, the time described there is even before the creation; hence the point of comparison is the creation of the world, the period described having preceded it.

A similar picture of time is given in Proverbs 8:24-26: “When there were no depths I was brought forth... Before the mountains had been shaped, before the hills I was brought forth, before he had made the earth with its fields, or the first of the dust of the world.” And compare also Job 15:7: “Are you the first man that was born? Or were you brought forth before the hills?”

## CHAPTER TWO

### “DAY” (יֹום) AS A TERM FOR TIME IN THE BIBLE

In the present chapter we shall discuss the term יֹום (“day”) and the conceptions of time embodied therein. יֹום is quite probably the most important single term used to refer to time in the Bible. This is striking even from a quantitative viewpoint: according to the electronic concordance (acCordance), the noun appears 2317 times in the Bible. One should also note that the term יֹום is the fifth most frequently used word in the Bible altogether (see on this the entry יֹום in Botterweck & Ringgren’s *Theologisches Wörterbuch*, and compare the corresponding entry in Jenni & Westermann’s *Theologisches Handwörterbuch*). In addition to the present chapter, this issue is discussed in the following chapters in the second half of this book, (Section VII: יֹום and Its Variants in the Scrolls) concerned with the Dead Sea Scrolls (Chapters 23-25): “The Term יֹום in the General Framework of Terms of Time”; “x-יֹום / x-יִמִּי (Day x / Days of x) to Characterize Time”; “The Use of יֹום in the Scrolls”. In these chapters the following issues are dealt with: “The Idiom כָּל הַיּוֹם and כָּל הַיָּמִים and the Like”; “x-יֹום” and “x-יִמִּי”; “The Use of יֹום to Denote Passage of Time”; “The Phrases בְּיוֹם הַהוּא, בְּיָמַיִם and the Like.” Hence, within the framework of the present chapter we shall not discuss passages from the Dead Sea Scrolls.

It should also be noted that there are further discussions of the word יֹום in the Bible in the first section of this work. The following chapters in Part I contain discussions of the term יֹום in the Bible:

1) Chapter 1, “Terms Used to Indicate Time in the Bible”—and note there the discussions of the terms בְּיוֹם הַהוּא and בְּיָמַיִם הַהֵם; 2) chapter 4, “The Terms בְּרֵאשׁוֹנָה, לְפָנַיִם, for Describing the Past in the Bible”—and note there on the term עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה; 3) Chapter 5, “The Formula x-יִמִּי (or x-יֹום) in the Bible: Some Characteristics of Historiographical Writing in the Bible.” As indicated by its title, this chapter deals *entirely* with the term יֹום (and יִמִּי) and classifies all the appearances of יֹום and יִמִּי in the construct or genitive state, and particularly those in which the *nomen rectum* is the name of a person or a form of rule, and the like. 4) Questions related to the use of the term יֹום in relation to life-span, length of life, and the like appear in Chapter 14, entitled, “מִי חַיִּים, אֹרֶךְ יָמַיִם, and Similar Terms in the Bible.” That



chapter discusses the entire complex of manifestations of יום in the context of length of life and the like. 5) This section is completed by Chapter 15, concerning duration of life in biblical times. In all these discussions, the word יום, particularly in its plural form, play a role in the construction of the idioms for expressing these relevant ideas.

An important chapter, Chapter 6, concerning biblical formulae for depicting duration of time, includes all references to יום (both in the singular and in the plural) found either in the opening pole of a formula of continuity, or in its concluding pole. The following formulae are germane to this subject: למן היום אשר (“from the day that”); למן היום אשר יצאת ממצרים (“from the day that you went out of Egypt”); למן היום (“from that day”); or מימי-x (“from the days of so-and-so”); e.g. מימי השפטים: “from the days of the judges”; מימי ישוע בן נון: “from the days of Joshua son of Nun”); etc.

Various forms of יום are likewise used to describe the concluding pole (e.g. וועד היום: and unto this day”; וועד היום הזה: “and until this day”); and there are also cases in which the term יום is used, neither in the opening nor in the concluding pole, but in the central component. Thus: “and all the days of (ימי) (וכל ימי) of the kings of Israel and Judah” (which in this verse is placed in the center of the formulation, between the opening pole and the concluding one).

Material relevant to the term יום also appears in Chapter 7, “The Phrase ‘From... and Onwards/ Upwards’ (מ.. והלאה/ולמעלה) in the Bible.” Pertinent to this are such phrases as מן היום ההוא ומעלה (“from that day on”), etc. Chapter 8, “On the Uses of the Term ‘Until This Day’ (עד היום הזה) contains a full development of the appearances of the word יום within this unique formula.

Material concerning the word יום also appears in Chapter 9, “Depictions of Brief Time Intervals in the Bible,” such as יום used to describe an instant of time. By contrast, יום can also serve to refer to distant periods of time, as discussed in the chapter concerning this issue (Ch. 10), as in such phrases as אחרית הימים (“the End of Days”), and the like. An extensive discussion of יום appears in Chapter 11, entitled “Day and Daytime: Their Divisions and Order”; the chapter “Terms Used for the Past, Present and Future in the Bible” (13) discusses, among other things, the terms ימים ראשונים, ימים קדמונים, and the like for the past, and likewise, use is made of יום for the present. Thus, for example, the terms היום (“today”), היום הזה (“this day”), כיום הזה (“like this day”), and similar terms, serve as a component in a widespread technique in the Bible for expressing present, the present time, etc.

Thus, discussions of the terminological uses of **יום** are spread out throughout both parts of this work, not as repetition of the same discussion, but as complementary discussions, in such a way that the broad spectrum of usages of **יום** is treated, until there cumulatively emerges a picture of the totality of its uses. Nevertheless, in the present chapter I wish to raise several points which did not find their place in any of these other discussions.

The term **יום** carries an extremely broad span of meanings in the Bible.<sup>1</sup> On the most basic level, it refers to that part of the day when there is light in the sky; that is, as distinguished from the dark part of the day—the evening—**ערב**, **לילה**, (“evening,” “night”) and the like. Parallel to this there appears its calendrical usage: i.e., to indicate a day or date on the calendar, that is, an entire twenty-four hour period. The very great number of appearances of the term **יום** in the Bible (see above) indicates the primacy and centrality of the term for matters of time. On the spectrum of meanings of **יום** and **ימים**, see the entry **יום** in the lexicons of the Bible, and especially in the theological dictionaries of Botterweck-Ringgren and Jenni-Westerman mentioned above.

According to Jenni, the adverbial form plays a significant role in the use of the term **יום**, as it does also in relation to the terms **עולם** and **עת**—even more so than do the direct substantive form or the accusative. The singular form of **יום** competes with **עת** as an indicator of time. The plural form, with the addition of further words, serves to indicate past or future: **ימי עולם**, **ימי קדם**, **ימים מקדם**, **ימי עולם**, (“days of old,” “eternal days”, etc.) and the like. In ancient literature the term **ימים** was used to refer to a year.

The above two usages are the principal ones, from which all the other options developed. In an emphatic form, the phrase **היום הזה** (“this day”) is used to designate an important day, or an important event that occurred on that day. The order of the day is emphasized through use of the formula **יום ולילה** (“day and night”), but also in the reverse or inverted form: **לילה ויום** (on this issue, see the chapter on “Day, Daylight—Their Divisions and Order”).

---

<sup>1</sup> On the range of meanings of **יום** in the Bible, see the various authors under the entry **יום** in the Botterweck-Ringgren *Theologisches Wörterbuch*. On **יום** in Hebrew and in other Semitic languages, in the sense of a festive day, see *ibid.*, 561-562. At *ibid.*, 567, Saebo emphasizes that the plural form, **ימים**, generally speaking serves in the sense of “years.” Cf. *ibid.*, 569-570, on the plural form in the sense of a period, but there is also a less elevated meaning for this in the singular form. See *ibid.*, 563, on the form **יום יום** and its meanings. See *ibid.*, 571-572, on the use of the term **x-יום** in various senses, and also on **יום** in the sense of seasons of the years, holy days, and so on. Cf. Clines, s.v. **יום**.

יום is such a central and basic term for the system of time, that on its basis, in combination with a series of adjectives, one can arrive at a great variety of characteristics. Thus, we have the existence of the following terms: יום גדול (“a great day”), יום שמחה (“a joyous day”), יום משחה (“day of feasting”), יום טוב (“a good day, festival day”), יום מועד (“festival” or “appointed day”), יום קדוש (“holy day”). In similar fashion, and in contrast, there are: יום רע (“a bad day”), יום מנוסה (“a day of flight”), יום מגפה (“day of plague”), יום מהומה (“day of panic”), יום צרה (“day of trouble”), יום נקם, יום נקמה (“day of vengeance”). יום המעשה (“day of activity”) is evidently the opposite of יום מועד (“festive day”). יום קטנות (“day of small things”) is also connected to the gray, nondescript quality of a day lacking holiness or any special festiveness (or possibly it is the opposite of יום גדול—“the great day”).

In other words, all of the variety of adjectives, whether in the direction of joy or sadness, festivity or ordinariness, cruelty or compassion, etc., can be derived by use of a very simple linguistic device: the word יום + the particular adjective. In this respect there is no difference between יום and ימים (i.e., the plural form), in that both of them serve as the basis in these idioms. Thus, for example, ימות עניתנו (“the days of our affliction,” Ps 90:15) is not at all far in meaning from יום מגפה or יום צרה (“day of plague”; “day of trouble”). This is so, if one is in fact speaking here of a God who brings or will bring trouble, plague or a day of affliction against the speakers. Nevertheless, the word עניתנו includes within it the object *pronoun* (אותנו; “our”), and hence does not function as a purely abstract expression such as יום רע (“bad day”) or יום צרה (“day of distress”) and the like, which only by virtue of their context can express an idea, such as the evil that God has brought against us. There are also those cases in which the word יום may appear in conjunction with a noun or adjective combined with a pronoun (conjunctive or other), such as יום אידם.

There is nevertheless a certain distinctiveness to the plural form, in that the term connoted by it is more on the order of a more abstract concept: e.g., ימי בחורות, ימי נעורים (“days of youth”), etc. Hence, whereas x-יום (such as יום מצוקה) generally refers to a *moment*, that is, the definition received is focused upon a specific point, x ימי allows the descriptive adjectives to relate to an ongoing, continued *period of time*, and not only to one specific point.

The effect of denoting a specific point in time, which is close to the

basic sense of **יום**, is obtained in all the usages of **יום**. Thus, for example, **יום** + additional words allow us to describe the parts of the day: **נכון היום, נטות היום, ערב יום**.

By contrast, the plural form contributed greatly to shaping the historical /historiographic formulation, whereby **ימי-x** serves to indicate a historical *period*, as I have shown in the chapter “The Formula **ימי-x** (or **יום-x**) in the Bible: Some Characteristics of Historiographical Writing in the Bible.” This is the case, for example, in such phrases as **ימי אבותיו** (“the days of his fathers”), **ימות עולם** (“eternal days”), **ימי עמי** (“the days of my people”) and others. But the formula **x ימי** may also be used with regard to shorter periods of time, provided only that they are not specific: thus, for example, **ימי קציר** (“days of the harvest”), or **בימי קציר חטים** (“in the days of the wheat harvest”).

The idiom **x יום** allowed the author to speak of the parts of the day in relation to its entirety. **ימי-x**, by contrast, is set aside for matters pertaining to life in general: a person’s age, expected duration of life, and the like. Note, for example, the following idioms; **מדת ימיו, חצי ימיו, מספר ימיו, נמשכו ימיו, בא בימים, אורך ימים, ימי חיים (חיו, חיך)**.

In general, **ימים** serves as a general denotation for matters of time, more so than **שנה** or any other term.

The use of the term **יום** as the principal term for time led to its being used also beyond the realm of time, to serve in the sense of place or distance as well. This is the reason for such phrases as **דרך שלושת ימים** (“a three day journey”) or **מהלך יום אחד** (“one days journey”), and the like. An analysis of Judges 18:1 may serve to indicate the difference between the singular and the plural form of the term: “In those days (**בימים ההם**) there was no king in Israel; and in those days (**בימים ההם**) the tribe of the Danites was seeking for itself an inheritance to dwell in; for until then (**היום ההוא**) no inheritance among the tribes of Israel had fallen to them.” The plural form, **בימים ההם**, in the sense of a particular period, appears here twice. By contrast, the singular form **עד היום ההוא** connoted appears here only once. Even though the word **היום** does not appear here in the sense of a *particular day*, it is nevertheless intended to indicate a certain specific point and not a *span of time*; hence, the formula appears in the negative: “for until then there had not fallen to them... an inheritance.”

Again, in the passages adjacent to it the same distinction again appears: in Judges 18:30, “And the Danites set up the graven images for themselves; and Jonathan the son of Gershom, son of Manasseh, and his sons were priests to the tribes of the Danites until the day (**עד היום**)”

of the captivity of the land.” And in verse 31: “So they set up Micah’s graven image which he made, as long as (כל ימי) the house of God was at Shiloh.” Since the first passage speaks of the moment of cessation of the cultic institution of a graven image in the Temple, this moment is described by the words “until the day of the exile from the land.” In v. 31, on the other hand, the formula refers to the *continuity* of the existence of the cult (and not when it ceased), hence the formula is in the plural: “as long as (כל ימי) the house of God was at Shiloh.”

## CHAPTER THREE

### ON דוֹר IN THE BIBLE

The term דוֹר is used in the Bible in relation to various different usages related to time.<sup>1</sup> On the one hand, it is used in certain texts in the sense of eternity; thus in the idiom דוֹר ודוֹר, as in Exod 3:15, “this is my name for ever, and thus am I to be remembered throughout all generations (לדור דר)”; Isa 60:15 “majestic for ever, a joy from age to age (דוֹר ודוֹר).” On the other hand, in Deut 32:7 it is used in the sense of hoary antiquity: “Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations (שנות דור ודור)”; or Isa 61:4: “they shall renew... the devastations of many generations (דוֹר ודוֹר).”

However, the word דוֹר (or דוֹר ודוֹר) is not in itself sufficient, in that in and of itself it does not imply a specific orientation towards the past or the future; hence, the term suitable for description of the future is created with the help of an idiom such as הדור האחרון (“the latter generation”) or its like (Deut 29:21). Nevertheless, one still needs to examine more closely and carefully the exact “point” in the future to which the language in question refers. Is one speaking here of the immediate future, of one more distant, or of a very distant future, of a phrase alluding to “the End of Days,” etc?<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> See in extenso the various meanings of דוֹר in the Bible and Post-Biblical literature in Botterweck-Ringgren, s.v. דוֹר; and also in Köhler-Baumgartner, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*: under that entry: namely, “connection,” “circle,” “lifespan,” “gathering,” “period,” “occasion,” “eternity,” “offspring,” “cycle,” and the like. There is also a usage in Phoenician in which the term דוֹר = family; thus, כל דר בני אלים, means “the entire family of the gods.” Over time, the term דוֹר also came to be understood in the sense used in modern Hebrew: generation. The use of דוֹר in the eschatological sense is a subject unto itself.

Regarding the use of sources, Freedman-Lundblum (in the *Botterweck-Ringgren Dictionary*) observe the changing formulation of the use of דוֹר resulting from the different literary genres in the Bible. The main classification in this dictionary is based upon the analysis of the uses of דוֹר in connection with continuity regarding various subjects appearing in the Bible: cult, historiography, law, and the like. A few chapters in this discussion are concerned specifically with the lack of continuity in this subject. Thus, for example, the law concerning the bastard, who is not allowed to enter into the congregation forever, and that concerning the Moabites and Ammonites, are stated in parallel language: that they should not come in (even) until the tenth generation. See there also the discussion concerning the servant of the Lord, who carries the sins of all the members of that generation, and cf. Clines, s.v. דוֹר.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Chapter 10, on extended time periods in the Bible.

See, for example, Ps 78:6: “that the latter generation (דור אחרון) might know them”; or Ps 102:19: “Let this be recorded for a generation to come (דור אחרון).” The opposite of this is דור ראשון (“the first generation”), as in, “Inquire, I pray you, of bygone ages (לדר רישון) and consider what the fathers have found” (Job 8:8). On the basis of the parallel and the context, it is clear that this refers to a point of time in the distant past, but even regarding this term it seems to me that this does not refer to a fixed point in the past; that is, it is possible by means of the same idiom to express various degrees of the past.

But apart from these hyperbolic expressions, one can see that the word דור is understood in Scripture as referring to the population belonging to one stratum of time; that is to say, by means of this language the biblical authors express their attitude towards time, its continuity and its development. By the use of the phrase דור the author, so to speak, spreads out “pieces” or “slices” of history, and each “slice” or layer of time of this type is called a “generation.”<sup>3</sup>

There are many indications of this principle. We shall begin with the “quantitative” proof: we find a series of idioms built upon the word דור followed by a number, as in אלף דור (“a thousand generations”; Ps 105:8).<sup>4</sup> It is clear from the context that this refers to a very remote time in the future—similar to what we observed in terms of the use of the idioms דור ודור or הדור האחרון. Similarly, we find such usages as דור עשירי (“the tenth generation”; Deut 23:3-4); ודור רביעי (“the fourth generation”; Gen 15:16); דור שלישי (“the third generation”; Deut 23:9). An alternative phrase ארבעה דורות (“four generations”)—that is, using a cardinal number, and not only an ordinal number as in the previous examples—appears in Job 42:16: “And [Job] saw {*qeri*} his sons, and his son’s sons, four generations.”

The perception of דור as a designation for the population living at a particular time follows from various idioms. We learn this from the wording used in the Bible to describe the ethical characteristics (based upon other elements) of the members of the generation. To this group belong the following languages: דור עקש (“a crooked generation”; Deut 32:5); דור תהפוכות המה (“they are a perverse generation”; Deut 32:20);

<sup>3</sup> Pedersen, *Ancient Israel*, 490. The term used for an aeon is generation, דור; on the other hand, the term also has a meaning related to family, such as דור אבותיו (“the generation of his fathers”), דור ישרים (“generation of the upright”), and the like. In his opinion, history is in effect an overlay of generations. The collection of all the generations is עולם.

<sup>4</sup> Regarding the phrase לאלף דור (“to a thousand generations”), there is need to clarify whether or not this is in fact an ordinal number.

דור עברתו (“the generation of his wrath”; Jer 7:29); as well as opposite expressions, giving positive definitions: דור דרשיו (“the generation of those who seek him [qeri]”; Ps 24:6); דור ישרים יברך (“the generation of the upright will be blessed”; Ps 112:2).

From other expressions concerning various terms composed of the phrase דור plus an adjective, one may arrive at the same conclusion regarding the use of the term דור in the sense mentioned. Thus, for example, the idiom דור אבותיו (“the generation of his fathers”; Ps 49:20) is used in contrast to the present generation; note also the expression דור בניו בניך (“the generation of your children”; Ps 73:15).<sup>5</sup> That the change of the population as the result of natural mortality is known as the changing of the generations is explicitly implied in such an idiom as דור הולך ודור בא (“A generation goes, and a generation comes”; Eccles 1:4). [Similar to this is “one generation (דור לדור) shall laud thy acts to another” (Ps 145:4)].

In a similar sense there appears the expression, “Then Joseph died, and all his brothers, and all that generation (וכל הדור ההוא)” (Exod 1:6). This is likewise the sense of the idiom, עד תום כל הדור, “until all the generation... was consumed” (Num 32:13; Deut 2:14), and it stands to reason that this is complemented by the expression “and there arose another generation” (Jdg 2:10).

Having located all the various meanings and usages of the word דור in the Bible (and, as mentioned here, they are not numerous), and having discovered that its main usage is to view the population of a particular time frame as constituting a generation, it follows that the span of a generation is equivalent to the life time of the population of a particular layer of time, which in turn is ipso facto expressed in the life span of an individual. A legitimate question follows from this: namely, what is the Bible’s view of the period of time that is considered to be the framework of a generation? (I also discuss this matter in the chapter on human life.) In any event, perhaps we can learn from what was said about Job, “And he saw [qeri] his sons, and his son’s sons, four generations” (Job 42:16). This text views a generation as the period of time between a person’s birth until his maturity, that is, until the time that he himself begets offspring. We thus find that a generation encompasses about twenty years. On the other hand, it is stated in the verse that Job lived thereafter, that is, after he was saved from his troubles, “one hundred

<sup>5</sup> The subject of דור בניך (“generation of your sons”; Ps 73:15) does not refer to the generation of the sons in comparison to that of the fathers, but relates to the righteous as the sons of God, as what is said regarding Israel generally: “you are the sons of the Lord your God” (Deut 14:1).



forty years.” Hence, five generations (i.e., four generations plus that of Job himself) encompass 140 years, from which it follows that a generation equals about 28 years. This may serve as an indication, that the duration of one generation was different in different periods or among different thinkers.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, the statement in the passage relating to Joseph (Gen 50:22-23: **בני שלשים**: “the third generations”), and that Joseph lived 110 years, suggests that a generation is about 28 years.

1. **מבן עשרים שנה ומעלה**: “From Twenty Years and Upwards”—On the Understanding of the Length of a Generation in the Bible

In the formula, **מ... ומעלה** (“from... and upwards”) and particularly in the usage, **מבן x שנה ומעלה** (“from x years and upwards”), the number “twenty years” appears in most of the passages in the opening pole.<sup>7</sup> The obvious question is: what was the basis for the choice of the age of twenty years in these passages? In my opinion, an analysis of the wording of the biblical account of the episode of the spies may provide us with at least one aspect of the answer to this question.

In Num 14:29, we read, “your dead bodies shall fall in this wilderness; and of all your numbers, numbered from twenty years old and upwards...” According to this view, those who sinned shall be punished and will not enter into the land. This formulation of punishment is already a kind of Divine compromise, after He had initially wished to kill all the people, as implied in the words: “I will strike them with the pestilence and disinherit them” (ibid., v. 12), and in Moses’ response: “if thou dost kill this people as one man,” etc. (v. 15). After Moses pleads and reasons with Him, God says: “none of the men who have seen my glory and my signs which I wrought in Egypt and in the wilderness, and yet have put me to the proof these ten times and have not hearkened to my voice, shall see the land...” (ibid., vv. 22-23).

We find here the explanatory sentence justifying why those above the age of twenty years shall not enter into the land. Is it the intention

<sup>6</sup> See Botterweck-Ringgren, *ibid.*, and the various approaches there relating to the length of a generation, as in Gen 15, from which one might infer that a generation is a hundred years. According to the author, from the tenth century BCE on a generation was understood as the time from the birth of a person until the birth of his son. During the period of the desert a generation was between 20 and 60 years. An accepted interpretation of **דור** is concerned with those who are alive during the same generation. Cf. Köhler-Baumgartner, *Lexicon*, s.v. **דור**. On the subject of the length of a generation, see there on Greece, where it was 40 years; thereafter, at the time of Herodotus, it was changed to 33 1/3 years.

<sup>7</sup> See *infra* (passim).

of this verse to say that one who is not twenty years old is not subject to punishment, because he cannot stand judgment? Or, to use the wording of the verse (turning it around into a negative formulation): these—the youngsters from age twenty—did not see the glory of God; or, if they saw it, one cannot say of them that they tested God, because they were minors and therefore cannot be included in the category of “none of those who despised me shall see it” (Num 14:23). This may perhaps provide an answer to the issue of the ethical and legal responsibility of an individual, and by extension to the issue of the concept of a generation in the biblical period, and similar questions.

Support for this interpretation may be found in a parallel text, mentioning the words of God cited earlier. I refer to Numbers 32:11, which discusses the matter of the two and a half tribes, mentioning the Divine decree concerning the matter of the spies: “Surely none of the men who came up out of Egypt, from twenty years old and upward, shall see the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and to Jacob, because they have not wholly followed me.” We therefore find that those whose age is less than this are not to be accused that “they have not wholly followed me” (i.e., the commandments of the Lord). Compare to this v. 12, that praises Caleb and Joshua: “for they have wholly followed the Lord.” Moreover, it says further on that: “And the Lord’s anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the Lord was consumed.” That is, all those aged twenty and upward are considered to constitute one generation, while those below this age are seen as belonging to a different one.

The Septuagint’s translation of this verse, explaining the phrase “from twenty years and upward,” it reads: οἱ ἐπιστάμενοι τὸ κακὸν καὶ τὸ ἀγαθὸν—that is, those who know right from wrong. This may serve as an explanation for their being considered guilty. That is, according to the argument that we have brought here, one who is not yet twenty years old does not know right from wrong. Surprisingly, this interpretation also follows from the Masoretic reading of Deut 1:39, dealing with the same context as Numbers 32 in the formula of the LXX: “Moreover, your little ones, who you said would become a prey, and your children, who this day have no knowledge of good or evil, they shall go in there, and to them I will give it, and they shall possess it” (ibid., v. 35, mentions הַדּוֹר הַרַע הַזֶּה—“this evil generation”—as a term describing those who are more mature, but shall not enter the land; and see above). We find that the word טַף (“children” or “little

ones”) and the like are explicitly defined as referring to those who are not twenty years of age. The phrase “your children, who this day have no knowledge of good and evil,” was what led the LXX to Num 32:11, and also Isa 7:15-16, to introduce the phrase “knowledge of good and evil” in connection to issues of age.

This combination of age and knowledge of good and evil also appears in 1QSa [=1Q28] i 10-11: **ולוא י[קרב] אל אשה לדעתה למשכבי זכר כי אם** [ ] **לפי מולואת לו עש[ר]ים שנה בדעתו [טוב] ורע** (“he shall not [approach] a woman to know her through carnal intercourse, until he is fully twe[n]ty years, and when he knows [good] and evil”). This is similar to the approach noted above in Num 32 and in Deut 1, and in the exegesis of the LXX to Num 32.

The definition of ילד (“child”—and, by extension, whoever does not know right from wrong), occurs in the *Temple Scroll*, 11QT<sup>a</sup> [=11Q19] xxxix 7-8: **ולוא תבוא בה אשה וילד עד יום אשר.. [ ] נפשו לה'** [ ] **מחצית השקל חוק עולם לזכרון במושבותיהמה** (“No woman (shall enter it) nor any boy, until the day on which ...[...] to the Lord, half a shekel as a memorial in their villages [or: habitations],” etc.). In lines 10-11 it (“afterwards shall come **אחר יבואו מכן עשרים [שנה ולמעלה]** those of twenty [years] and older”).<sup>8</sup> This passage discusses the prohibition against a woman or child entering the Temple city prior to reaching the age of twenty years, and only after they have given their half shekel—which is treated in the sect as an eternal law, applying to all those aged twenty years or more, who are allowed to enter.<sup>9</sup>

It is interesting that the words of Barzilai the Gileadite (2 Sam 19:36): “I am this day eighty years old; can I discern between good and evil?” imply that knowledge of right and wrong is the prerogative of those between the age of twenty until a certain advanced age (such as sixty);<sup>10</sup> in any event, those aged eighty no longer know good from evil.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>8</sup> See Qimron, “The Text of the Temple Scroll,” 144.

<sup>9</sup> Yadin, *Temple Scroll*, II: 165-168; cf. I: 247-248.

<sup>10</sup> For different views of the concluding point in the formula, **מבן x שנה ומעלה**, see above.

<sup>11</sup> There is an extensive literature on the subject of the knowledge of “good and evil,” which in principle does not relate to our discussion. Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning a number of studies that have implications for our subject. Buchanan, 114-120, discusses the issue of the knowledge of right and wrong, concluding that the border line for knowledge of right and wrong is twenty years. In several of the texts I agree with his view, but not everything written about right and wrong pertains to our subject, nor can I agree with several of his conclusions. On the rejection of the

---

identification of twenty years, see Gordis, 124-138, esp. 136-138. On the other hand, Stern agrees with Buchanan concerning the age of twenty years. See Stern, 405-418; esp. *ibid.*, 415. Jensen has recently written about the question of age in connection with the knowledge of good and evil. He found a connection between knowledge of good and the age of puberty, but without relating to a specific age; compare Jensen, "The Age of Immanuel," 223-225.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE TERMS **לפנים** AND **בראשונה** FOR DESCRIBING THE PAST IN THE BIBLE

#### 1. *Uses of **לפנים** in the Bible*

Among the phrases used by the Bible in order to indicate the distant past, the word **לפנים** stands out. This phrase is used to indicate the gap in time between different periods; through its use, the authors/editors accentuated the difference between different periods with regard to various matters. Hence, the common denominator among all the texts that incorporate the word **לפנים** is the matter of relation of times, while the object of comparison of course changes from case to case.

The outstanding texts in this respect are “Formerly in Israel (**לפנים בישראל**), when a man went to inquire of God, he said, ‘Come, let us go to the seer’; for he who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer” (1 Sam 9:9); and “Now this was the custom in former times in Israel (**לפנים בישראל**) concerning redeeming and exchanging: to confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was the manner of attesting in Israel” (Ruth 4:7).

In both these verses the editors takes note of differences between the practices accepted in their own days and those from the distant past (“in former times”). Thus, for example, “now,” that is, in the days of the editor, the man of God is called a “prophet,” whereas in the story hearkening back to the age of Samuel and Saul, he was called a “seer.” The great distance between these two periods of time clearly follows from this.<sup>1</sup>

A similar phenomenon is implied in Ruth 4, where the editor takes

---

<sup>1</sup> See the words of R. Yosef Kara on 1 Sam 9:9: “That which is called today prophets in recent generations, was called by the earlier generations seer, as in the generation of Samuel, who asked the maidens that were going out... But once there increased the number of sinners who would go about in all the places and no man made judgment against them... they once more called them prophets... When he says that a prophet today was formerly called a seer. That is, what this generation calls a prophet was called by the former generations a seer. *You may infer from this, that when this book was written they had already returned to call a seer a prophet, implying that this book was not written in the days of Samuel. For when you review the entire Bible, you will not find that a prophet was called a seer except for here, where he says ‘Where is the house of the seer’ (v. 18). We thus learn that the generation of*

pains to explain to his readers a practice that was customary “in former times in Israel”: namely, removing a shoe and giving it to the other party as a sign confirming the transfer of inheritances or as a sign confirming any sort of exchange (“to confirm a transaction”—**כל דבר**), and the like. This explanation was put forward by him, because in his days the practice no longer existed; therefore, in order to enable the contemporary reader to understand the acts of his heroes mentioned thereafter (“he said ‘Buy it for yourself,’ and he drew off his sandal”—v. 8), the editor preceded this by an informative sentence explaining the ancient practice.

Chapter 2 of Deuteronomy contains a plethora of texts concerned with historical miscellanea. In three such verses the word **לפנים** is used to indicate the gap in time. Thus, in v. 10 it is stated regarding the ancient inhabitants of Moab before Israel entered the area: “the Emim formerly (**לפנים**) lived there, a people great and many, and tall as the Anakim.” Close to that (v. 12) there appears an additional nugget of historical information concerning the early inhabitants of Edom/Seir: “The Horites also lived in Seir formerly (**לפנים**), but the sons of Esau dispossessed them, and destroyed them from before them, and settled in their stead.” That is, the author/editor reports here an ancient reality, that was no longer in effect upon Israel’s arrival in this area of Transjordan. Moreover, from what is stated further on in the same verse, “as Israel did to the land of their possession,” it would seem that the distance in time is greater than that implied by what is usually understood as “formerly.” One is speaking here from the perspective of a reality within Israelite history (from the period of the monarchy, for example), from which point the author reflects upon early events that *preceded* the Israelite conquest of the land of Canaan, drawing an analogy between the conquest by Seir of its land from the Horites, the primordial inhabitants of the land, and the conquest of Canaan by the Israelites. The word **לפנים** thus enables the author to create a picture of the earliest

---

*Samuel is called, ‘in former times in Israel’ by a generation subsequent to Samuel, and concerning that same generation he says, ‘for a prophet today was called...’* And see on this in Brin, *Studies in R. Yosef Kara’s Commentary*, 106. From Kara’s words, one can see his effort to prove, that if one refers to the generation of Samuel as “former times in Israel,” we must conclude that the author was distant from Samuel. The lengthy formulation of things comes because of what is written at the end of his words: “And our Rabbis of blessed memory said that Samuel wrote his book, and may he who illuminates the earth change darkness to light and stumbling blocks to a straight path.” Note his cautious language in rejecting the view of the Sages. Elsewhere in my book (117, and n. 11 there), I show that in all cases of confrontation of this type he hoped for a Divine solution (“may he who illuminates the earth” and the like), and note other formulae there in the same direction.

time, relying upon the comparison **כאשר עשה** (“as did...”), etc..<sup>2</sup>

A very ancient picture also emerges from v. 20, which relates the history of the inheritance of the Ammonites “...that also is known as a land of Rephaim; Rephaim formerly (**לפנים**) lived there, but the Ammonites call them Zamzumim.” In terms of the use of the word **לפנים**, this verse is analogous to verse 10 concerning the Emim, the ancient inhabitants of Moab.

1 Chronicles 4:40 reports about the settling of the tribe of Simeon as far as the entrance of Gedor “where they found rich, good pasture, and the land was very broad, quiet and peaceful; for the former inhabitants there belonged to Ham.” The reality depicted here would seem to be similar to that in Transjordan: that is, just as the Emim and Rephaim were the ancient inhabitants, displaced by the Moabites and Seirites and other nations, and Israel already encountered these “newer” nations, here too, the people of Simeon conquer from the Meunim (v. 41) that area where the Hamites had dwelled in the distant past.<sup>3</sup>

In 1 Chronicles 9:20, the author mentions that the office responsible for certain tasks of the Levites was occupied in the distant past by Phinehas son of Eleazar: “And Phinehas the son of Eleazar was the ruler over them in time past (**לפנים**).” The Chronicler seems to have utilized this term in order to indicate the gap in time required by his description, in which the office in question was filled by members of the Korahite families during a much later period in time than it was by the appointed ruler, Phinehas son of Eleazar the priest.

Perhaps it is in the same spirit that one ought to understand the use in Judges 3:1-2: “Now these are the nations which the Lord left, to test Israel by them... that he might teach war to such as had not known it before.” The verse appears to be formulated from a later point in time in relation to the time of the settlement (and see the commentaries on this scripture).

It is interesting that the main use of the term **לפנים** appears in connection with geographical places, and the description of movements of people to them. We find this in relation to the status of the various peoples of the different areas in Transjordan, as well as in historical

<sup>2</sup> On the phrase **כאשר עשה** see below, in a separate discussion.

<sup>3</sup> The greatest distance in the direction of the past appears in the verse: “Of old (**לפנים**) thou didst lay the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands” (Ps 102:26), referring to the creation of the universe. One should also note, that this verse is also unusual in that it is not editorial writing, but an organic part of the poetic work as a whole in Psalm 102. On the subject of **לפנים** and **בראשונה** generally, see Simian-Yofre, s.v. “פנים” 658-59; Preuss, s.v. “ראשון”

reports to the effect that certain places were formerly called, during part of the biblical period, with different names: “Now the name of the city was formerly Luz” (Jdg 1:23); but compare “but the name of the city was Luz at the first (לראשונה)” (Gen 28:19); “Luz—that is, Bethel—which is in the land of Canaan” (Gen 35:6). Compare also “but the name of the city was Laish at the first” (Jdg 18:29); and “the name of Debir was formerly Kiriath-sepher” (Jdg 1:11); “Now the name of Hebron formerly was Kiriath-arba” (Josh 14:15; Jdg 1:10).

There is also a similar idiom in Joshua 11:10: “for Hazor formerly was the head of all these kingdoms,” adjacent to which there are mentioned the kings of Madon, of Shimron, of Achshaph, and the other kings who joined the coalition of Jabin king of Hazor (11:1-5).

According to what we have described, the picture is meant to correspond to the days of Joshua, but not of course to the subsequent period. When the editor thus includes in his historical report the word “formerly” (לפנים), it is clear that this is intended to fix his own time as being much later than that of the events described.

As opposed to what has been adduced above, the word לפנים may also relate to the *recent past*. Thus, for example, Job 42:11: “Then came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before (לפנים).” It is clear that this is not Israelite national history, or a depiction of the history of other peoples, but a chapter dealing with the biography of one person, Job of the past, before his catastrophe, as contrasted to Job following his deliverance.

Thus, the word לפנים can be used to describe different levels of past time, ranging from a brief period to an extended period of history. Compare also Nehemiah 13:5: “...where they had previously (לפנים) put the cereal offering,” etc. However, apart from these two verses,<sup>4</sup> one may state that most of the uses of לפנים are concerned with a great distance in history, and that other terms are used to indicate shorter spans of time.

It should also be noted that, from the manner in which things are formulated, it is clearly evident that most of the verses using the word לפנים are from the hands of the *editors*, who made use of these phrases to react from their distant perspective to early phenomena from the distant past. With the help of this phrase, the editor conveys an archaic detail related to the details of the text under discussion. I have already

---

<sup>4</sup> The subject of Job 17:6, ותפת לפני אהיה, is completely different (see the English rendering, “I am one before whom men spit”).



observed the limited group of local, ethnic and national subjects, concerning which the editors used לפנים.

Among those texts using this language, a special place is reserved for 1 Samuel 9:9 and Ruth 4:7 (already mentioned above), that use the expression לפנים בישראל—“formerly in Israel.” The reason for using this particular language is not clear. It may be related to the fact that most of the other editorial texts using the word לפנים deal with a *non-Israelite* reality—e.g., matters pertaining to the Horites, Seir, Moab, Rephaim, and the like—while these two verses speak of linguistic (1 Sam 9) and social (Ruth 4) phenomena that are internal-Israelite.

In one of these two texts (Ruth 4), the word “Israel” also appears within the body of the text and not only within the idiom mentioned (לפנים בישראל); thus, we read there, “Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging... and this was the manner of attesting in Israel.” Did the author/editor of Ruth 4, by repeating the word “Israel” twice, wish to indicate that one was speaking here of an inner-Israelite phenomenon, unparalleled in the Near East? Moreover, is the use of this precise turn of phrase also related to the fact that, even in Israel, the practice of removing the shoe had already become defunct at the time of the editor/author, as indicated by the fact that he needed to explain this custom to his readers?

Unique in this respect is 2 Chronicles 9:11, that reports on the alnum wood (in the parallel text in 1 Kings 10:12: almuḡ wood) from which were made various artifices for the house of the Lord: “there never was seen the like of them before (לפנים) in the land of Judah.” This comment explains the nature of the use of these trees and the innovation involved in their use. On the basis of the style here, it seems to me that these are the words of the Chronicler, and not those of the editor. Unique here is the use made by the author of a language having a more general character in a text bearing a specifically Israelite character.

Particular light may be shed on the meaning of לפנים from a comparison of this passage with the parallel in 1 Kings 10:12: “and the king made of the almuḡ wood supports for the house of the Lord, and for the king’s house, lyres also and harps for the singers; no such almuḡ wood has come or been seen, *to this day* (עד היום הזה).”<sup>5</sup> The phrase “to this day,” as is known, compares what is said in any given text regarding the past to the present. Here, too, the text states that the phenomenon under discussion did not occur until the time of Solomon, the subject

<sup>5</sup> Like the relationship between לפנים and היום in 1 Sam 9:9, so also in 1 Kgs 10:12 there is a parallel between the phrase “this day” (עד היום הזה) and the term “formerly” (לפנים).

of the description, and perhaps *also* until the date of the writing or speaking of these things; that is, even after the introduction of almuḡ wood as a material for construction in the context of the building of the Temple, it did not begin to be used as an everyday construction material. But since the author of Chronicles knew of the spread of the use of almuḡ wood in his day and even earlier, he used the term **לפנים** rather than **עד היום הזה** to make it clear that the statement regarding its non-use does not refer to his own period, but rather refers back to a situation that existed before the days of Solomon. Otherwise, one would be likely to receive the impression that even until his own days, and not only until the days of Solomon or those of the author of the text mentioned from the Book of Kings, it was not customary to use almuḡ for construction purposes.<sup>6</sup>

This change, which the Chronicler introduced into a source that he copied, is similar to other changes that he makes in early texts, that he copies while introducing actual elements: for example, the substitution of “darics” (**אדרכנים**) for “shekels” in the story of the gathering of money for the service of the house of the Lord in the days of David (1 Chr 29:7), and other similar changes.

It should be noted that in other cases the author of Chronicles is not in the habit of altering the formula **עד היום הזה** which he saw in other texts which he used. For example, in 1 Chr 13:11 use is made of the phrase **עד היום הזה** regarding the calling of the place Perez-uzza; in 5:26: “and he carried them away [i.e. Tiglath-pileser], namely, the Reubenites... and brought them to Halah, Habor, Hara and the river Gozan, to this day (**עד היום הזה**).” In both these texts there is no difficulty

<sup>6</sup> In the description of the history of the Ammonites in Deut 2:20-22, double use is made of **לפנים** and of the phrase **עד היום הזה**. Thus: “That also is known as a land of Rephaim; Rephaim formerly lived there, but the Ammonites called them Zamzumim... but the Lord destroyed them before them; and they dispossessed them, and settled in their stead; as he did for the sons of Esau, who live in Seir, when he destroyed the Horites before them, and they dispossessed them, and settled in their stead even to this day.” However, in Kings and in Chronicles these two phrases serve in a substitute status; that is, the Chronicler substituted the phrase **לפנים הזה** for **עד היום הזה** so that the verse would have a more reliable character, whereas in the verse cited here from Deut 2 both idioms are used *together*; the phrase **לפנים** is used to describe the ancient reality, while the other phrase, **עד היום הזה**, testifies to the later and more constant reality up to the time of the author. That is, the author knows of the persistence of the Seirites to dwell in their ancient land until the time of the writing of these things by the author of Deuteronomy 2. It is interesting that also in reference to the period of time when Seir replaced the nation that had originally dwelt in its land, the verse uses (in v. 12) the phrase **לפנים**. We find that the author takes care to formulate the distant past using the phrase **לפנים**, while when he comes to describe the new reality that came about in wake of the period know as “formerly” he uses the phrase **עד היום הזה**.

in the use by the Chronicler of this phrase, since the reality depicted therein really does hold true **עד היום הזה**, that is, until his time, literally.

On the other hand, other texts in which the Chronicler makes use of the formula mentioned are not completely suitable to his period, but nevertheless do not completely contradict the logic of the later reality.

The same holds true for 2 Chronicles 21:10: “So Edom revolted from the rule of Judah to this day.” True, the revolt of Edom was not continued [till then]; on the other hand, since Edom was not resubjected to the rule of Judah, it is possible to leave this formulation of the text even after its copying from the earlier source, since it does not give a picture that is opposed to reality.

However, there are other texts, concerning which one would expect the Chronicler to behave in the same manner as he did regarding the “almugim” text: namely, to substitute some other phrase (**לפנים**, “of old,” and the like) for **עד היום הזה**, as the use of the latter would be likely to be a disturbing element vis-a-vis the reality of the time of composition of the Book of Chronicles. Nevertheless, he did not behave in this way when he made use of them, but rather left the older statement, as if the things still held true even for his own days. Thus, in the following texts:

2 Chronicles 10:19: “So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day.” The author knows that Israel—that is, the northern kingdom—no longer exists. Why, then, does he formulate their status as having revolted against the house of David “to this day”? Perhaps he means to say that the result of their rebellion may be seen, among other things, in their punishment by exile that separated them permanently from their land. If so, this verse is similar to what is written in 21:10 regarding the rebellion of Edom.

2 Chronicles 8:8 states of “all the people that were left of the Hittites...” that “these Solomon made a forced levy and so they are to this day.” It is impossible to imagine that the subjugation of these people to Israel or to Judah continued in reality until the time of the author, as one cannot assume the existence of these peoples at that time at all, and certainly not their dwelling in the land and being subject to Israelite rule.

The same holds true regarding what is stated about the inhabitants of the entrance to Gedor, “These, registered by name, came in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah, and destroyed their tents... and exterminated them to this day” (1 Chr 4:41). Adjacent to this (4:43) other descendants of Simeon are mentioned: “and they destroyed the remnant of

Amalekites that had escaped, and they have dwelt there to this day.” This double report concerning the history of the families of Simeon does not under any circumstance reflect the reality at the time of the author of Chronicles, because in his days the tribal framework no longer existed, certainly not with regard to Simeon. Moreover, there is no way to assume at that time a reality, according to which the Israelites dwelt in Seir and the like.

Similarly, one should make note of the use of the idiom **עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה** in the vision of Nathan (2 Samuel 7), that is repeated in 1 Chronicles 17. This vision includes the use of the phrase in question: “For I have not dwelt in a house since the day I led up Israel to this day (**עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה**)” (17:5). It is clear that, while this statement is true regarding the period of David,<sup>7</sup> it does not apply to the period of the Chronicler, who knows well of the great house of God that stood in Jerusalem from the time of Solomon on; yet nevertheless, the author copied the verse as is, with the phrase in question. However, one should emphasize that in this verse the phrase in question appears in a *direct quotation*, hence there was no difficulty in its use in either the Book of Samuel or in Chronicles, since the things clearly refer to the time of David, during which Nathan’s vision took place.

Likewise the use of this formula in 2 Chronicles 5:9: “and the poles were so long... but they could not be seen from the outside; and they are there to this day,” prompts a similar conclusion regarding the inappropriateness of these things to the period of the Chronicler, because the accepted view in Biblical scholarship is that the Second Temple did not contain an ark at all. Thus, reference to one of the components of the ark, as if it still existed in the days of the author, cannot reflect the actual reality at the time of the Chronicler.<sup>8</sup>

One may thus summarize the use of the phrase **עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה** in the Book of Chronicles by saying that there is no consistency in the editor’s

<sup>7</sup> Likewise regarding this matter there is a difficulty regarding the Temples that were mentioned in the sources portraying the period of David and that which preceded him. It is a form of harmonistic explanation to say that these temples were not made of stone, unlike [Solomon’s] Temple; compare the statement of the Rabbis about the Temple at Shiloh: “When they came to Shiloh [the high places were prohibited]; it did not have a roof, but there was a building of stone underneath, and curtains above” (*m. Šebahim* 14.6); etc.

<sup>8</sup> On the absence of the ark at the time of the Second Temple, see *m. Yoma* 5.2; on the hidden ark, see *m. Šeqalim* 6.1-2. On Jer 3:16-17 as indicating the disappearance of the ark already at the time of the First Temple, see Haran, “The Disappearance of the Ark.”

manner of working.<sup>9</sup> In some cases, he updates the earlier sources while using them; in other cases, he does not alter the texts at all, not where there are striking differences between the reality described there and the situation in his own day. A similar, if not identical, picture follows from comparison of his use of other formulae or of other material. In other words: the author is not overly careful in the consistent application of his principles. Or one might say that, despite his care, things do not emerge uniformly from the care that he applies in editing the texts that he has at hand.

Another answer is also possible: it may be that the different ways of using the formula is a result of the hands of different editors. The one who dealt with the story of Solomon, for example, changed what was said regarding the almug wood, whereas other editors chose to leave the texts they dealt with as is, notwithstanding the fact that what is said does not always reflect the period of the copyist. And perhaps this was the author's intention: namely, to present things in a manner that would reflect their initial appearance—that is, the author/editor of Chronicles copied the comparison as manifested in the first appearance of things in Samuel or in Kings.

## *2. Use of the Term בראשונה to Describe Past Time in the Bible, Compared with That of לפנים*

In our above discussion of the word לפנים, we reached the conclusion that it is an explicit editorial idiom, and that most of its uses are concerning world-wide and historical matters, rather than Israelite-national matters, which are generally speaking the predominant subjects in the Bible. By contrast, the term בראשונה, while it is used in the same sense—that is, its normal use is to indicate a certain order of activities and the like, in which בראשונה indicates literally the beginning of the things (thus, for example, in 1 Chr 11:6, “Whoever shall smite the Jebusites first [בראשונה] shall be chief and commander... and Joab went up first...”)—it is also used to refer to a more distant past, such as to indicate prehistory and the like. Nevertheless, its primary usage is in reference to explicitly Israelite subjects.

Examination of the texts containing this usage reveals that one is not dealing here with the words of the editor, but with that of the initial

<sup>9</sup> On use of the formula *עד היום הזה* in the Bible and its relation to etiological matters, see I. A. Seeligmann, “Etiological Elements.”

narrator. That is, whereas **לפנים** is one of the signs of editing, and not the result of the regular writing of the text, the opposite is the case regarding **בראשונה**, which is hardly used at all for the work of the editors, but primarily by the authors of texts, and in most cases specifically for *poetic* works. Thus in 2 Samuel 7:10 = 1 Chronicles 17:9: “and violent men shall afflict them no more, as formerly (**כאשר בראשונה**)”; Isaiah 52:4: “My people went down at the first (**בראשונה**) into Egypt to sojourn there, and the Assyrian oppressed them for nothing”; Isaiah 1:26: “And I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning”; Jeremiah 33:11: “For I will restore the fortunes of the land as at first”; Jeremiah 7:12: “Go now to my place that was in Shiloh, where I made my name dwell at first.”

On one occasion, in Nehemiah 7:5, the word **בראשונה** is used in a prose text: “And I found the book of the genealogy of those who came up at the first, and I found written in it...,” following which there appears a list. The use of **בראשונה** in this text plays no editorial function, but is part of the biographical story of Nehemiah.

From our examination as a whole, it clearly follows that **בראשונה** serves as a parallel phrase to **לפנים**, with the main difference that **לפנים** is an explicitly editorial idiom, unlike the case regarding **בראשונה**.<sup>10</sup> One should also note that it is used on the whole to indicate things connected with Israel, unlike **לפנים**, which is generally used by the editors to designate non-Israelite events that occurred in the distant past.

### 3. *The Idiom **כאשר עשה** and the Like to Indicate Relation to the Past*

In addition to the above-mentioned phrases, the biblical authors refer to the description of past events with the help of a comparative sentence beginning with the idiom **כאשר עשה** and the like. It is clear that the time gap between the present description and that from the past depends upon the nature of the description. I shall bring below several cases involving this usage, especially those in which such a picture is attained by the use of the phrase **לפנים** or the like.

In Deuteronomy 2:12 we read: “The Horites also lived in the Seir formerly, but the sons of Esau dispossessed them, and destroyed them

<sup>10</sup> The verses in which the phrase **לראשונה** appears are: Gen 28:19: “but the name of the city was Luz at the first”; in Jdg 18:29: “but the name of the city was Laish at the first” is parallel to the use of **לפנים**, and may be described as editorial writing, as opposed to the passages that make use of the word **לראשונה**. Also the phrase **ראשונים** serves to describe the distant past; compare Lev 26:45; Deut 4:32; 19:14.

from before them, and settled in their stead; as Israel did (כאשר עשה) (ישראל) to the land of their possession...” As we explained above in our discussion of this text, there are two levels of the past here: on the one hand, it relates to the event of the conquest of the land of Canaan by Israel, which the author described with the help of the idiom כאשר עשה—“as did (Israel to the land of their possession)”; on the other hand, in the background there stands a more ancient stage of history, in which the territory of Edom was conquered by the sons of Esau from the Horites, the ancient inhabitants of the land, a stage that the author describes with the help of the language לפנים.

The same follows also from the description of the history of the Ammonites in Deut 2:20-22: “That also is known as a land of Rephaim; Rephaim formerly lived there, but the Ammonites called them Zamzumim... when he destroyed the Horites before them, and they dispossessed them, and settled in their stead; as he did (כאשר עשה) for the sons of Esau, who live in Seir, when he destroyed the Horites before them; and they dispossessed them, and settled in their stead even to this day.”

Here too there is portrayed a picture of the ancient history of Transjordan (לפנים; formerly”), only the comparison attained by the phrase כאשר עשה is not intended to draw any line between the ancient events (displacement of the Horites by the sons of Esau) and the events of Israel’s past history, as the subject of the comparison “as *he* did” is God and not Israel. The text states that God himself stands behind world events. From a comparison of these two acts of conquest one may also infer that, according to the view of the writer/author, the conquest by the Ammonites of their land from the Rephaim took place after the sons of Esau had conquered their land from the Horites. Or perhaps this is merely a result of the order in which the things were incorporated in the text in question, Deuteronomy 2. By this, I mean to say that, since the matter of Seir and its history was mentioned earlier, Ammon’s conquest of their land was compared to that of Seir, without necessarily reflecting the true historical order.

The phrase כאשר עשה and others related to it, such as אשר עשה, serve to describe the past on varying levels of distance from the present, and not only to describe a very distant past, as in the early writings concerning the ancient peoples who dwelled in the past in Transjordan.

Several examples of the use of expressions of this type appear in Deuteronomy 11, in Moses’ speech mentioning the acts of God in the context of the Exodus from Egypt. In verse 3, mention is made of the

signs and deeds “and what he did (וַאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה) to the army of Egypt, to their horses and to their chariots; how he made the water of the Red Sea overflow them... and how the Lord has destroyed them to this day.” Having said this, the way is now clear to portray later events: (v. 5): “and what he did (וַאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה) to you in the wilderness, until you came to this place”; v. 6: “and what he did (וַאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה) to Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliab, son of Reuben; how the earth opened its mouth and swallowed them up, with their households, their tents, and every living thing that followed them, in the midst of all Israel.”

The use of the phrase **וַאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה** thus makes it possible for the author to report in telegraphic fashion, in sequence, the central events of the Exodus and the wanderings in the wilderness.

A similar condensed list appears in the story of the Gibeonites in Joshua 9. In verse 9 the elders tell Joshua that “we have heard a report of him [i.e. the Lord your God], and all that he did (וְאֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה) in Egypt. And all that he did (וְאֵת כָּל אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה) to the two kings of the Amorites who were beyond the Jordan, Sihon the king of Heshbon, and Og king of Bashan, who dwell in Ashtaroth.” On the other hand, in the account of the incident it is related in v. 3 that, “But when the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had done to Jericho and to Ai...” According to the author, what led them to take the stand they did was the conquest of the cities of Cisjordan, while according to their own account what impressed them were the more distant events of the Exodus and the conquests in Transjordan. There seems no doubt that the reason for this change in the components mentioned lies in their claim that they are the inhabitants of a distant place; hence they cannot mention events involving the cities inside the country, with which they allegedly have no interest.

The series of victories of Joshua over the various kings of the land is surveyed in an identical manner by a parallel writer.

Joshua 10:1: “...how Joshua had taken Ai, and had utterly destroyed it, doing to Ai and its king as he had done (כַּאֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה) to Jericho and its king...” The continuation of the series of conquests by Joshua are described in a like manner: *ibid.*, v. 28: “and he did to the king of Makkedah as he had done to the king of Jericho.” Further on, in v. 30: “and the Lord gave it also [i.e., Libnah] and its king into the hand of Israel... and he did to its king as he had done to the king of Jericho”; v. 32: “and smote it [Lachish]... as he had done to Libnah”; v. 35: “and they took it [Eglon]... as he had done to Lachish”; v. 37: “and took it [Hebron]... as he had done to Eglon.”



A more detailed summary phrase appears in v. 39, “and he took it [Debir]... and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and utterly destroyed every person in it... as he had done (כאשר עשה) to Hebron and to Libnah and its king, so he did (וכאשר עשה) to Debir and to its king.” In this verse, the formula differs from that which preceded it because of the detail it contains, as well as its deviation from the accepted formula in this list. Whereas in the units that precede it the conquest of one city is only equated to the conquest of the one that preceded it, here, after the comparison to Hebron, which really was conquered before Debir, there is added the comparison “so he did to Debir and to its king,” and the further link, “as he had done to... Libnah and its king.” But since Libnah was mentioned three units earlier (before Lachish and Eglon), this is no more than the remnant of a different formula, according to which the description of the conquest of Debir appears adjacent to and following the conquest of Libnah.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> On a different attitude toward the past in biblical literature, see Peckham, “History and Time.”

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE FORMULA “X-ימי” (OR “X-יום”) IN THE BIBLE: SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF HISTORIOGRAPHICAL WRITING IN ISRAEL

In the Bible, the forms x-יום (“on the day of”) and x-ימי (“in the days of x”) are used to define time; these terms are of great importance for the study of the ways in which terms of historiographic writing crystallized in the Bible. We shall discuss below those writings in which these phrases appear and how they are used, as well as their function in the framework in which they appear.

#### 1. *Components of the Phrases*

First, we must differentiate between the singular form, “the day of x,” and the plural, “the days of x,” as well as between the various usages of the genitive in these formulae. Some of these phrases refer to the name of a person, whoever it happens to be; in other phrases, it refers to a king or some other leader. In this chapter, I shall attempt to show that this was a fixed stylistic custom for naming eras in biblical times.

There are also phrases in which the *nomen rectum* does not refer to an actual leader, but nevertheless, due to the importance of the figure, the period is attributed to him in the formula in question.

Sometimes the *nomen rectum* is a collective noun used for leaders of various types, such as “(in the days of) the judges,” “(in the time [days] of) the kings of Assyria.” Another type of genitive refers to the name of a country or a people. At this point we should note that the meaning yielded from a phrase such as this (the name of a country in the genitive) is not necessarily uniform, as it is contingent also on the construct (“the day of” or “the days of”). It seems likely to me that “the day of Midian” יום מדין and “the days of the Philistines” ימי פלשתים are not equivalent in meaning: “the day of Midian” probably refers to a specific event which happened only once, an event in which the Midianites figured in some form or another in the history of Israel, whereas “the days of the Philistines,” by contrast, refers to a period in which they ruled Israel, or to some similar situation.

In some cases, the genitive cited is a place name, a city or a region such as “from the days of Gibeah” or “the day of Jerusalem”; in others, it is a conception or a concept ימי קדם, ימי עולם, ימי (“days of old”) ימי שמים (“days of heaven”), and the like. There are also cases in which the genitive is expanded in order to offer an explanation in a complete sentence such as “when [Hebrew: ‘on the day that’] the Lord your God spoke to you at Horeb (Deut 4:15, etc.).

## 2. *The Meaning of the Phrases*

### I. *“In the days of x” (x-ימי)*

There are passages in the Bible in which the phrase “the days of x” is used in the personal sense: for example, in the quarrel between the servants of Isaac and the servants of Abimelech over the wells. Gen 26:15 states, “And the Philistines stopped up all the wells which his father’s servants had dug in the days of his father Abraham.” The meaning of the phrase is very clear; it is intended to point out that these things happened during the lifetime of Abraham, and it is clear that this is not a reference to an era.<sup>1</sup>

Another usage of “the days of x” is the designation of a person’s age or lifespan; for example, “After the birth of Seth, Adam lived (ימי אדם) 800 years... All the days that Adam lived (כל ימי אדם) came to 930 years; then he died” (Gen 5:4-5); the same holds true for the phrases “the days of Enosh” and “the days of Mahalalel,” etc.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, an examination of the general use of the phrase shows that the phrase “the days of x” serves to indicate historical periods.<sup>3</sup> The earliest period specified in this way is that of the settlement

<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of the narrative in Gen 26:1 a sort of general phrase occurs: “Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham (בימי אברהם) And Isaac went to... Abimelech...” But this is not an indication of a period, as we learn from the following: a) The phrase “in the days of Abraham *his father*” (Gen 26:15, 18) which is, as we have said, clearly a personal phrase; b) because of the mention of Isaac in the said passage; c) because Abraham had no status with relation to a period named for him. Therefore, the passage in Gen 26:1 (as in the two other passages, Gen 26: 15, 18) should be considered as a purely personal phrase.

<sup>2</sup> This is also the function of the phrases “the days of his life” and “all the days of his life” (1 Kgs 5:1 = English 4:21), “Solomon ruled over all the kingdom... they served Solomon all the days of his life.” About Abijam, 1 Kgs 15:5 says, “and [he] did not turn aside from anything that he [the Lord] commanded him all the days of his life,” etc., and the next verse (v. 6) says of Rehoboam: “Now there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all the days of his life.”

<sup>3</sup> In researching this issue, I examined the standard series of commentaries and the

of Canaan. The temporal character of the phrase “in the days of Joshua” may be seen from the fact that the passage quoted is not part of a narrative about Joshua as a person, or about a development of events in the framework of the narrative. Rather, the temporal character is evident from the passage which surveys the events with the aim of summarizing the history of a specific generation.

This phrase appears in Josh 24:31, “And Israel served the Lord all the days of Joshua and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua,” etc. (cf. Jdg 2:7). The author clearly lived in a period after the time of Joshua and the judges, and was describing the religious situation of the people with an indication of the period described by the formula “the days of someone” (with the “someone” being the name of the leader).

The same phrase also occurs in the passage in Neh 8:17, in the context of testimony regarding the celebration of the feast of Tabernacles during the period of Ezra. There it says that “from the days of Joshua the son of Nun to that day the people of Israel had not done so” [made booths]. The manner of formulation of the words in this passage are, in my opinion, more abstract than what was quoted earlier, because the phrase “the days of Joshua” in this case has no personal matter touching upon Joshua himself. Nor is there even a summary of his activities, but only an indication of the period, in which lies the significance of the passage.

The latter point in time (the period of the judges) appears in two passages. The first of these is at the beginning of the Book of Ruth: “In the days when the judges ruled...” The narrative deals with the life story of Elimelech and Naomi, but properly, the narrator does not attribute the period to them but rather to the type of leaders at that time.<sup>4</sup> More so than in other passages, the temporal character of the formula here is prominent. The appropriateness of the method of formulating “the days of x” as the designation for a period is also quite noticeable here. This fact is clearly felt with regard to the period in

---

individual commentaries on the specific books of the Bible for all the passages in which the phrases “the day of x” and “the days of x” occur. I also consulted dictionaries of Biblical Hebrew, such as Köhler, K. & W. Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the O.T.* Although these works described “the days of x” phrase as an indication of time, these reference works did not discern the importance of this phrase for the study of biblical descriptive methods. Likewise, the difference between the phrases “the days of x” and “the day of x” was not grasped, and see below. But see also note 9. On *x* **חיי** **מי**, see below, in a separate section devoted to this subject. On *x* **מי** **חיי** and other variants of *x-מי*, see Clines, s.v. “יום,” and Saebo, s.v. “יום,” 578-580.

<sup>4</sup> A faint echo of this may also be found in the phrase in Jos 24:31, “and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua,” which may perhaps refer to a name synonymous with the collective noun “judges.”

question; the need for a more skillful type of writing was strongly felt here, as one could no longer refer to a single individual who stood at the head of the people, as in, for example, “the days of Joshua.” Rather, there was need for a more general term to refer to leadership as a whole over a long period.

Hence, we must conclude that this phrase is used by a writer who stands at a considerable distance from the period of the judges, and knows the history of Israel well. He knows that Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson and others like them are viewed together as the leaders of a certain period in the framework of the history of Israel. It is important to note that an earlier scribe from the time of the judges would have lacked an overall view of the place which this period occupies in the history of Israel. It is not clear whether they perceived the special character of their own era, as such a perception is not possible when one is living in the midst of an ongoing period. Only when one period has been succeeded by another era is it possible to gain a proper perspective on the events. Hence, the very use of the phrase “the days of... the judges” contains important information regarding the history of Israel. It represents a fundamental approach to an evaluation of the various periods of the history of Israel, as well as demonstrating skill in the use of the formula under discussion.

2 Kgs 23:22 tells us that “no such passover had been kept since the days of the judges who judged Israel,” etc. As in the previous passage, here, too, the period is defined as “the days of the judges,”<sup>5</sup> in accordance with the characteristic formula. In this passage, a more precise use of the formula may be noted. Hence the period is defined according to the leaders (i.e., the judges) without an exact notation of the way in which they led (the judging of the judges) [although here there is an appositive relative clause, “who judged Israel.”]

Designation of the period (or portions thereof) by the names of certain personalities from among its rulers appears in such phrases as “In the days of Shamgar, son of Anath, in the days of Jael” (Jdg 5:6).<sup>6</sup> That is, the specific period is designated by the main ruler of the time. Likewise,

<sup>5</sup> The phrase “all the days of the judge” (Jdg 2:18) may also be another variation of the phrase in question. While it is true that “all the days of the judge” is viewed like the personal phrases “all the days of Adam,” “the days of Enosh,” etc. (see above, as well as in note 2), we may nonetheless also consider it to mean “the days of the judge,” i.e. the period of his office.

<sup>6</sup> On the problems raised in ascribing the period to Jael and Shamgar, see the various commentaries on *Judges*, e.g., Moore, *Judges*, 142-143; Y. Kaufmann, *The Book of Judges*, 134, and see the bibliography there.

the phrase “the days of Gideon” in Jdg 8:28 is based upon the same principle: “So Midian was subdued before the people of Israel... And the land had rest for forty years in the days of Gideon.” The phrase is found in a passage which adopts a temporal phrase summarizing all the activities of Gideon the judge, alongside what is written about the political and religious situation of the people “in the days of Gideon,” that is, during his era.<sup>7</sup>

Concerning the period of the monarchy, the Bible contains several phrases in accordance with the model which we have discussed. These phrases refer to various kings, as well as being a general designation for the era, as in 2 Kgs 23:22: “For no such passover had been kept since the days of the judges who judged Israel, or during all the days of the kings of Israel or of the kings of Judah.”<sup>8</sup> It is likely that the creation of an abstract definition in the phrase “the days of the judges” is greater than in the phrase “the days of the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah.” The form of government in the period of the monarchy is obvious to all; for that reason, the formula “the days of the kings of x” was created, a formula which occurs almost automatically to anyone attempting to define this period. On the other hand, the combination

---

<sup>7</sup> On other phrases from the period of the judges, such as “the days of Gibeah,” see also below.

<sup>8</sup> In the parallel version in 2 Chr 35:18, “the days of Samuel the prophet” are mentioned instead of “the days of the judges.” This represents a difference in terms of the information given as to the time from which the feast of Passover ceased to be observed. The rest of the passage also differs in terms of its relation to the parallel in 2 Kgs 23:22, for instead of the two data that such a passover was not celebrated in the days of the judges nor in the days of the kings of Israel and Judah, here it says “No passover... had been kept... since the days of Samuel.” And instead of the rest of the sentence, it says, “none of the kings of Israel had kept,” etc.; that is, a compound sentence instead of an inclusive sentence. Hence, in the description of this affair, the difference is not between the two passages, but in the way that the formula is used, for in 2 Chr 35:18 such a usage does not occur in the rest of the passage. It should also be noted that the very use of the phrase “the days of Samuel” raises the question of why the period is referred to him. It seems to me that this is a matter of preference: the Chronicler prefers men of God and spiritual leaders of Israel, such as Samuel, over other leaders. Compare also 2 Chr 26:5, which says of King Uzziah, “he set himself to seek God in the days of Zechariah, who instructed him in the fear of God.” Hence the phrase “the days of Zechariah” is, so to speak, a designation of the period, as it is in 2 Chr 24:2, which tells us that Joash the king of Judah “did what was right in the eyes of the Lord all the days of Jehoiada the priest.” Here, as we have said, are considerations of priority, for the author prefers men from certain circles. But in the case of Joash there is an additional factor, namely, the question of the dependence of King Joash (who was a minor) on Jehoiada, who raised him to power and supported him. See also 2 Kgs 12:3. Many commentators have written on the preferences of the author of Chronicles. See, e.g., Myers, *Chronicles* 1, lxxv On the phrase “the days of Samuel” cf. 1 Sam 7:13, where it is also used with the aim of increasing the prophet’s prestige.

of the various leaders of the period of the judges (who were strongly individualized personalities) with a comprehensive definition is a great achievement, in that it comprises, as we noted above, a vision summarizing the common denominator of all the components of this special period.

It is clear from the summarizing phrase “the days of the kings of Israel,” etc., that the author lived after this period—that is, sometime during the Babylonian exile and afterwards, when there was no longer a king over Israel. The phrase hence represents a summary of the history of the period of the monarchy. From the occurrence of both phrases in the passage “the days of the judges and the days of the kings of Israel... and Judah,” we may understand the inclusive point of view of the writer of the history of Israel.

But alongside these general phrases of the period of the monarchy there are others, referring to a shorter period, such as “the days of so-and-so (i.e., a king).” The first among these is “the days of Saul.” Regarding Jesse, in 1 Sam 17:12, it states, “Now David was the son of an Ephrathite... named Jesse, who had eight sons. In the days of Saul the man was already old and advanced in years.” Note that this passage makes no mention of Saul nor of any figure connected with Saul, nor is there any immediate or eventual need to mention Saul in terms of the narrative. Hence, the designation of a period according to its connection with the king who ruled during that time seems to have been a general rule.<sup>9</sup>

The period of Saul is described in other phrases in the same formula. Thus, in the official summarizing phrase of his reign in 1 Sam

<sup>9</sup> Wilch, *Time and Event*, 55, deals with a series of cases whose topic is “the days of someone”; among others, the phrase “in the days of Saul” which was mentioned here in the body of our study. In Wilch’s opinion, the phrase “the days of someone” should be considered an imprecise definition of time, and not a fixed designation of a period. Wilch arrives at this theory on the basis of conceptions of time in the Bible. Delling, *Zeit und Endzeit*, 22-23, writes on a long period of time expressed in the form “the days of x” and also as an indication of periods, and he refers to Neh 8:7; Luke 4:25; Matt 2:1. At any rate, the distinction between “the day of x” and “the days of x” is not absolute, nor are the other differences (according to the use of the genitive as I have shown). The most up-to-date work on this subject is DeVries, *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*. In his book (43-44), DeVries draws a precise distinction between the word “day” in the singular and the plural as an indication of an event or the duration of a period. The use of the plural form is explained also as an indication of several or many days, and a phrase for days and years alike. DeVries does not insist upon the difference between “the (days of the) years of someone”—x יָמֵי שָׁנָי—and the general use, as well as upon the clarification of the usages and function of the genitive in the phrase “the days of someone” (a personal name) as against, “the days of the judges,” etc.

14:52, following the list of his sons and daughters, the commander of his army, and others, comes the phrase, "There was hard fighting against the Philistines all the days of Saul," etc. The phrase recurs in the words of David to all the assembly of Israel (= 1 Chr 13:3): "for we neglected it in the days of Saul." The same phrase also appears in a genealogical list of the tribe of Reuben in 1 Chr 5:10: "And in the days of Saul the [sons of Reuben] made war on the Hagrites." Hence this phrase is of great importance because of the precise, official character of the text. We may conclude that it is a fixed and exact expression for defining periods in the biblical material.

A similar formula is also used regarding other kings from David on, as in, "the days of David" (2 Sam 21:1; 1 Chr 7:2), "the days of Solomon" (2 Chr 30:26), "in the days of Abihu" (2 Chr 13:20), "in the days of Asa" (1 Kgs 22:47), "in the days of Jeroboam" (Amos 1:1), "in the days of Josiah" (Jer 1:2), etc. We should note that these and similar phrases occur in different types of material, serving as evidence for the fact that this method of designating periods was quite common. Thus, for example, the above-mentioned phrases are found in the titles of the prophetic books (e.g. Amos and others); in genealogical lists, such as that regarding the sons of Simeon, "These, registered by name, came in the days of Hezekiah, king of Judah" (1 Chr 4:41); and in texts designating the time of a given action or specific activities, such as the speeches quoted during the trial of Jeremiah, "Micah of Moresheth prophesied in the days of Hezekiah" (Jer 26:18).

After the destruction of the Temple and the Exile in 586, it was no longer possible to designate a period according to the kings of Israel and Judah; thus, of necessity the method of referring to other leaders was copied. Henceforth, we find two forms of reference: one, to foreign kings (the kings of Persia), for which see below; and the other, to local leaders (such as the governor of Judah), who were in fact representatives of the foreign government. The high priests also had a sort of governmental status, and in certain passages they appear as parallel to these governors, and at times as superior to them. Thus it is not surprising that in some verses the period is attributed to them.

In Neh 12:47 we find the phrase, "and all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemiah gave the... portions," etc. This passage speaks of events during two periods: that of Zerubbabel the governor of Judah, and of Nehemiah, who was also governor of Judah. Nehemiah 12 quotes extensive material from various kinds of



lists, and contains a number of references to the different historical periods, such as various lists given according to the periods of the high priests: “These were the chiefs of the priests and of their brethren in the days of Jeshua” (Neh 12:7); “And in the days of Joiakim” (v. 12); “in the days of Eliashib” (v. 22); “until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib” (v. 23).

When the phrase, “the days of so-and-so,” is used in reference to foreign rulers (or to foreign countries and peoples), this is the consequence of the rule of foreign peoples over Israel (or to a similar state of affairs; see below). A phrase of this kind occurs in Ezra 4:2: “We have [*ketib*: not] been sacrificing [*qere*: to him] ever since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria who brought us here,” as well as in Ezra 4:4-5, “Then the people of the land discouraged the people of Judah... all the days of Cyrus... even until the reign of Darius,” etc. Note that the phrase “the days of someone” (“the days of Cyrus”; ימי כורש) is here replaced by the phrase “the reign of Darius” (מלכות דריוש); compare the parallel version in Neh 12:22: “until (על); MT עד) the reign of Darius the Persian.” The parallel between “the days of Cyrus” and “the reign of Darius” doubtless confirms our interpretation of the phrase, “the days of so-and-so” as a designation of a period<sup>10</sup> (cf. 2 Chr 36:20).<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Another phrase similar to the above occurs in Ezra 4:7, “and in the days of Artaxerxes, Bishlam... wrote,” etc. This passage indicates the actions of the enemies of Judah in the period of the Persian kings. A variant phrase occurs in an earlier accusation (Ezra 4:6): “and in the reign of Ahasuerus, in the beginning of his reign, they wrote an accusation,” etc. (A variation of “the days of someone,” as we said above, is “the reign of someone.” See above). Another parallel of the phrase “in the reign of Ahasuerus” (which was cited here) is found in the opening phrase of Esther (1:1): “in the days of Ahasuerus.” A special phrase occurs in Gen 14:1, “In the days of Amraphel,” etc. The intention is to give details on the earliest period in which foreign kings were involved. The period is described by attributing it to these kings, and in this way the description is separated from the preceding narrative of Genesis.

<sup>11</sup> Another construct phrase, “the days of someone,” is found also in Isa 54:9: “for this is like days of Noah to me.” But it seems probable that this phrase does not refer to an indication of time. The issue becomes clear on the basis of the continuation of the passage: “as I swore that the waters of Noah...” Hence the reference is clearly to the flood during the time of Noah and to the fact that God swore not to flood the earth again (Gen 9:11-16). That is, “like the days of Noah” (ימי נח) in fact refers to “the waters of Noah” (מי נח) which is a poetical designation for the flood. This explanation is based upon the reading of many translations, as well as upon Hebrew manuscripts which read “waters of Noah” rather than “like the days of Noah” in the Masoretic version; see *Biblia Hebraica*. Another phrase which seems to me to relate this to the topic of our research is in Joel 1:2. The prophet appeals to the aged men to recall whether there had ever been during their lifetime (“in your days”) or “in the days of your fathers” (i.e. in the previous generation),

Phrases of the type, “the days of x,” in which the genitive is not the name of a king or ruler, but that of a foreign kingdom, occur a number of times in the Bible. The earliest such occurrence is in Jdg 15:20, “And he [Samson] judged Israel in the days of the Philistines twenty years,”<sup>12</sup> while the phrase “the days of Cyrus” is explained by the historical fact that the rule of Cyrus occurred during a certain period in which Israel no longer had independent rulers, and the period was of necessity designated by this ruler. But how are we to explain the phrase “in the days of the Philistines” when at that time Israel was governed by independent rulers?

It seems to me that this phrase is to be explained as the designation of a period during which there were conflicts between Israel and the Philistines, or as one during most of which the Philistines ruled Israel, or something of the sort. The phrase seems to embody a comprehensive and abstract outlook, as it does not designate a specific moment in history, but rather draws quite a broad cross-section of history—this, because Israel’s contact with the Philistines continued over a rather long period in the history of Israel. This phrase is nicely explained, in my opinion, by the parenthetical phrase which occurs in Jdg 14:4: “His father and mother did not know that it was from the Lord; for he was seeking an occasion against the Philistines. At that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel.”

A similar phrase occurs in the historical survey in Nehemiah’s pact (9:32): “Now therefore, our God, the great God... let not all the hardship... that has come upon us... since the time (יָמֵי; lit., days) of the kings of Assyria until this day.” That is, the speaker wishes to designate a point in history to indicate the beginning of the great suffering of the people, to which end he thought it appropriate to cite the period of bondage to Assyria. Perhaps he meant by this the deportation of the Ten Tribes by Assyria. At any rate, the period was designated according to the kings of the empire which ruled at that time (“in the time [יָמֵי] of the kings of Assyria”). An additional phrase in which the genitive is the name of a people or country is “the day of Midian” (Isa 9:3), but this

---

such a plague of locusts as at present. I would also consider the phrase in Ezra 9:7, “from the days of our fathers,” as an indication of a period. Notice that in Joel 1 as well as in Ezra 9, the period of the forefathers is juxtaposed against the period of the present audience of the prophet, and this may also be the meaning in Mal 3:7.

<sup>12</sup> In principle I consider the phrases “the days of the Philistines” and “the days of the judges” to be parallel. In both, the writers made use of these phrases for an abstract evaluation and comprehensive viewpoint of the historical events. See what I have written about “the days of the judges,” above.

probably does not refer to a period of time, but rather to another matter which we shall discuss below.

We have thus far surveyed construct phrases consisting of “the days of x” in which the genitive is a name. In the majority of cases this refers to a given leader, or in certain cases to a *particular kind of leadership*: judges, kings, etc. We have also dealt at length with the pattern “the days of x” in which the genitive is the name of a *foreign* people or nation. It is obvious that the existence of such a phrase, with a very clear usage, is likely in turn to lead to the imitation of the formula in one way or another. And indeed, in various passages we find something similar to the formula in question (i.e. “the days of x”), but instead of a noun in the genitive there appears a *complete phrase*. The purpose and function of this phrase are identical, in my opinion, to what results from the use of the basic formula. For example, “as long as the house of God was at Shiloh” (ימי היות בית האלהים בשילה; Jdg 18:31), represents a precise historical framework consisting of the duration of the existence of the temple in Shiloh until its destruction in the time of Eli. The same applies to “as when [=in the days] you came out of the land of Egypt I will show them [Hebrew: him] marvelous things” (כימי צאתך מארץ מצרים; Mic 7:15). The phrase “the days of X” is here intended to describe the years of wandering in the desert.

I think that we should view the latter usage (“the days of + a defining phrase) as a borrowed idiom, and as additional proof of the crystallization of the formula “the days of x” as a designation for various periods in the Bible, so that it could be used metaphorically.

There are other phrases of the type, “the days of x,” in which the genitive is a general noun—e.g. youth, [days of] old, and the like. Some of these phrases are descriptive, for which reason they have a relative and not a definite meaning. The phrase “the days of her youth” (Hos 2:17), for example, refers to the youth of the people, but without any precise specification of the limits of the period. Moreover, it applies to phrases (= ימי עולם, ימי קדם “days of old”) which refer to the *distant* past, but there are certain differences among the passages in which this phrase occurs. “As in days of old” (ימי קדם) in Isa 51:9 refers to the time of the creation, but cf., by contrast, Isa 37:26, Jer 46:26, Mic 7:20 and Ps 42:2. The same applies to ימי עולם “as in days of old” (Isa 63:11, Am 9:11). In fact, various stages of the past are designated by these phrases.

## II. *x-לך* (“the day of x”)

The use of the phrase, “the day of x (*x-יום*)” may be defined first of all in a negative way: this phrase does not occur in the Bible with a personal name as the *nomen rectum*.<sup>13</sup> This creates a clear differentiation between the two terms. “In the days of so-and-so” (the king, judge, etc.) is used to designate a *period*, while the singular form, “the day of x (*x-יום*)” is not understood in this sense. The absence of the phrase “the day of so-and-so” (with a personal name) is also a proof of the specific function of the phrase “the days of someone” to designate a period, in addition to those which we have already adduced above.

There are cases in which “the day of x” appears, in which the *nomen rectum* is a proper noun, but not, as we have said, the name of a person. These phrases are “on the day of Jerusalem,” “on the day of Jezreel,” or the name of a people and its country, e.g. “on the day of Midian.”

Psalm 137:7 says: “Remember, O Lord, against the Edomites the day of Jerusalem. How they said, ‘Rase it, rase it! Down to its foundations!’” This psalm considers the situation of those who were deported to Babylon after Jerusalem fell to the foreign conquerors. Phrases with the word “Jerusalem” recur a number of times in the psalm: “If I forget you, o Jerusalem” (v. 5); “if I do not set Jerusalem above...” (v. 6), and, in a parallel phrase, Zion: “Sing us one of the songs of Zion!” (v. 3). The events referred to are generally clear, with the exception of the mention of Edom, which is problematic—but this is not our present concern. “The day of Jerusalem” probably refers to the height of the war during which Jerusalem fell, and those who hated her rejoiced over her misfortune and encouraged each other, “Rase it, rase it! Down to its foundations!” (v. 7). Hence, “the day of Jerusalem” is the day on which Jerusalem fell, referring to a *specific moment* rather than to a broad span of time. This forms the basis of the difference between the phrases “the days of someone” and “the day of x”: the

---

<sup>13</sup> “The day of the Lord” (Amos 5:18) and its parallels “the Lord... has a day” (Isa 2:12), etc. are a unique kind of term. Here the form occurs in the singular, and a name (but not, of course, the name of a person) is in the genitive. The subject matter of this phrase is unique in that it speaks of “a day = a time” which the Lord is going to bring about in the future. Hence the idiom is unique in form as well as meaning, if only with reference to the time it indicates. The reason is that, unlike the other phrases, this describes the future. On this phrase, see Von Rad, s.v. ἡμέρα. On various aspects of the phrase “the day of the Lord,” see Weiss, “The Origin of the ‘Day of the Lord’ Reconsidered.” On “the day of the Lord” in the context of the question of the concept of time in the Bible, see Wilch, *Time and Event*, 92-93.

plural indicates a *period*, while the phrase in the singular indicates a *moment* in its history.

The same holds true regarding the meaning of the phrase “the day of x” in Hos 2:1-2: “Yet the number of the people of Israel shall be... for great shall be the day of Jezreel,” used to indicate a great deliverance which is destined to come in the future, following disappointment and failure. “In the place where it was said to them, ‘You are not my people,’ it shall be said to them, ‘Sons of the living God’” (ibid.). The formulation seems to me to refer to a great and wonderful act of redemption and salvation.

Another phrase of this type is “the day of Midian” in Isa 9:3: “For the yoke of his burden, and the staff for his shoulder, the rod of his oppressor, thou hast broken as on the day of Midian.” The prophet speaks of the yoke which has been laid on the people in the present, and of the fact that it is destined to be redeemed from this yoke. In order to substantiate this, Isaiah compares their future deliverance to the great and famous salvation in the past. The phrase “the day of Midian” refers to the day of the great defeat of the Midianites. The description fits the material quoted in Judges, whose subject is Gideon’s struggle against the Midianites and the great deliverance that he achieved with his victory over them.<sup>14</sup>

The phrase “the day of Midian” may be compared to others which we have mentioned above, such as “the days of the judges” and “the time [Hebrew: days] of [the kings of ] Assyria,” and the like. Accordingly, if the phrase “the days of Midian” existed, its meaning would be different from “the day of Midian.” The former phrase would refer to the age of Midian, to a period in which there were regular connections between Midian and Israel, or in which the Midianites ruled (or greatly influenced) Israel.<sup>15</sup> On the other hand, “the day of Midian” (in the singular) refers, as we have said, to a moment in history<sup>16</sup> that is, to

<sup>14</sup> This victory is also mentioned also in Ps 83: “Do to them as thou didst to... Jabin and Sisera,” etc. “make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb,... all their princes like Zebah and Zalmunna” (v. 10-12).

<sup>15</sup> In light of what was said in the introduction to the Gideon narratives (Jdg 6:1-10), it was certainly likely that such a phrase (“the days of Midian”) should be found in some passages. Its absence should thus be attributed purely to chance. Compare v. 1, “And the Lord gave them into the hand of Midian seven years (2) and the hand of Midian prevailed over Israel; and because of Midian the people of Israel made themselves... (3) the Midianites and the Amalekites... would come up... (6) and Israel was brought very low because of Midian;... (7) when the people of Israel cried to the Lord on account of the Midianites.”

<sup>16</sup> Von Rad, s.v. ἡμέρα, 946.

Gideon's great victory over the Midianites, a victory which is prominent both in the narrative (Jdg 8) and in the summarizing phrase of the battle and of the period of Gideon as a whole: "So Midian was subdued before the people of Israel" (Jdg 8:28).<sup>17</sup>

There are other similar phrases in which the genitive is a term, a general noun, or the like. For example, "on the day of the assembly" (Deut 9:10; 10:4), depending upon the context into which it is fitted, clearly refers to the event of the giving of the law, which is well explained in the parallel phrase: "on the day that the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire" (4:15). Compare also what was said in the law of the prophet: "just as you desired... at Horeb on the day of the assembly" (Deut 18:16). Here we should emphasize that just as in phrases of "the days of x" we found the development of the genitive from one word to a complete phrase, the same phenomenon occurs in phrases of "the day of x" as we saw just now in Deut 4:15; and see also Deut 4:10, "on the day that you stood before the Lord your God at Horeb."

### 3. *Summary*

In this chapter, after thoroughly examining two terms connected with the word "day," it became evident that, because the subject of this phrase occurs in descriptions of time, it was used to create construct phrases ("the day of x") to be used by the historiographer to designate the time of singular events. The parallel phrase in the plural ("the days of x") was created for use in the case of a broader and deeper concept, namely the designation of a longer period.

The creation of these phrases is a proof of the brilliant way in which

---

<sup>17</sup> Compare the phrase "the days of Gibeah" in Hos 10:9: "From the days of Gibeah, you have sinned, O Israel; there they have continued. Shall not war overtake them in Gibeah"; Hos 9:9: "they have deeply corrupted themselves as in the days of Gibeah." This would seem to stand in contradiction to my ideas: the incident of the concubine in Gibeah is an event which is defined and enclosed in its own time, and the phrase should have been formulated "the day of Gibeah." Thus one of the following possibilities is correct: either the reading here is not exact, or it refers to a perspective which is not otherwise known to us, i.e., that in Hosea's opinion the incident of the concubine in Gibeah occupied a period in the history of Israel in the time of the judges. For example, the Gibeah incident left its mark on the history of Israel for a long time as if it had become a symbol of a period in the history of Israel, and therefore Hosea thought it right to refer to the period of Gibeah as a point of departure which symbolized great sin. In Hos 9:9 the prophet maintains that now they have returned to a sinfulness as great as in the days of Gibeah. In 10:6 Hosea states that from the time ("from the days of Gibeah") on, they have not ceased to sin ("from the days of Gibeah, you have sinned, O Israel").

the biblical writers invented their own tools for expressing exactly what they meant. Hence we may also draw important conclusions about the way in which biblical authors viewed the history of Israel.

#### APPENDIX

The phrase “the days of x” as a title of a period continues in use in Israel during the post-biblical period in connection both with phrases which appear in the Bible and with new phrases. The new phrases which I mention here refer to the biblical period and to later periods. We should note that in the post-biblical literature, the form x-ימות is used alongside x-ימי<sup>18</sup> and with the same meaning (“the days of x”). I have listed below a few of the many phrases of this type.

#### *Phrases referring to eras within the biblical period*

ימות משה	– <i>m. Nazir</i> 1.2; <i>m. Rosh Hashana</i> 2.9 = “the days of Moses”
ימי משה	– <i>b. Shabbat</i> 28a = the days of Moses
ימי בלעם	– <i>b. Berakhot</i> 7a = “the days of Balaam”
ימות יהושע	– <i>m. Arakhin</i> 9.6 = “the days of Joshua”
ימות נביאים ראשונים	– <i>t. Yoma</i> 3.1; <i>m. Yoma</i> 5.2 = “the days of the Former Prophets”
ימי שמואל	– <i>t. Sotah</i> 11.6 = “the days of Samuel”
ימי דוד	– <i>b. Shabbat</i> 113b = “the days of David”
ימי חזקיהו	– <i>b. Shabbat</i> 113b = “the days of Hezekiah”
ימי מרדכי ואסתר	– <i>b. Megilla</i> 11a = “the days of Mordechai and Esther”
ימי עזרא	– <i>t. Berakhot</i> 4a = “the days of Ezra”

#### *Phrases of “the days of x” x-ימי found also in connection with foreign Kings*

ימי נבוכדנצר	– <i>b. Megilla</i> 11a = “the days of Nebuchadnezzar”
ימי מלכות שבא	– <i>b. Bava Batra</i> 15b = “the days of the kingdom of Sheba”
ימי כשדים	– <i>b. Megilla</i> 11a = “the days of the Chaldeans”
ימי יוונים	– <i>b. Megilla</i> 11a = “the days of the Greeks”

<sup>18</sup> On the phrase x-ימות (“the days of x”), see what Kasovsky, *Thesaurus Thosephthae*, III: 485; idem, *Thesaurus Mishnae*, II: 838.

*Phrases referring to post-biblical periods*

ימי שמעון בן שטח	– <i>Sifra, Behuqotai</i> 1.1 = “the days of Simeon the son of Shattah”
ימי אבא שאול בן בטנית	– <i>m. Shabbat</i> 24.5 = “the days of Abba Shaul the son of Botnit”
ימי הורדוס	– <i>b. Ta’anit</i> 23a; <i>Sifra, Behuqotai</i> 26.4 = “the days of Herod”
ימי קלפטרא מלכתא	– <i>b. Avoda Zara</i> 8b = “the days of Cleopatra the queen”

See also in the Jewish Prayer Book—ימי מתתיהו כהן גדול—“the days of Mattathias the high priest”

The New Testament, too, contains phrases of this type, e. g. Matt 2:1: ἐν ἡμέραις Ἡρώδου τοῦ βασιλέως = “in the days of Herod the king.”<sup>19</sup>

In other Semitic languages we find “the days of x” phrases indicating a period, but I think that they did not develop a complete, skillful system like that in the Bible. Compare, ימת יחמלך ושנתו (H. Donner-W. Röllig, KAI, No. 4, line 5).<sup>20</sup> ימת שפטבעל ושנתו (ibid. No. 7, line 5); in the Mesha inscription: וישב בה ימה והצי ימי בנה (ibid. No. 181) = “And [Israel] had dwelt there in his time and half the time of his son (Ahab),” that is, “in his [Omri’s] days and in the days of his son [Ahab]...”

On the idioms in question in the Scrolls literature—x-ימי and x-יום—see below, Chapter 24.

<sup>19</sup> Delling correctly notes in *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum NT*, II: 953, that the use of the phrases in question (“the days of x”) in the Septuagint and New Testament is due to the influence of Biblical Hebrew (see the notes there, op. cit.).

<sup>20</sup> Donner-Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften*.



## II

### FORMULAE OF TIME IN THE BIBLE

*This page intentionally left blank*

## CHAPTER SIX

### BIBLICAL FORMULAE FOR DEPICTING DURATION OF TIME

The Bible utilizes a number of different ways to describe the duration of an activity or other subject. One of these is the explicit statement concerning the duration of time that a certain activity or matter took, as in Gen 31:38: “These twenty years I have been with you...” or Exod 16:35: “And the people of Israel ate the manna forty years, till they came to a habitable land.”<sup>1</sup>

Alongside this, the biblical material makes use of various other kinds of literary means: e.g., a statement concerning the beginning of an activity, alongside another statement concerning its end, the distance between these two time markers being meant to represent the duration of the activity in question. Thus, for example, we may gain a sense of the duration of the Flood by calculating the time between its beginning (Gen 7:11) and its end, or until “the face of the ground was dry” (8:13-14)—and likewise many similar examples. There are also cases in which the beginning and ending points occur in the same passage (see below).

Apart from these (and other) methods, one may also note a stylistic approach, according to which the duration and flow of time are conveyed by means of formulae unique to this situation. These formulae are constructed according to the model ...מ...עד(ו) (‘‘from... to...’’ or other similar idioms).<sup>2</sup>

The texts formulated in this manner may be divided into two groups. The one is concerned with a prosaic noting of the duration of time, through its formulation in the framework: מ... (‘‘from...’’—i.e., a given

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Dan 10:2: “In those days I, Daniel, was mourning for three weeks (שלושה שבועים ימים)” And cf. v. 3, where there is a parallel formulation: “I ate no... nor did I anoint myself at all, for the full three weeks”; and cf. Josh 14:10; 1 Sam 29:3, and many others.

<sup>2</sup> On the subject of מ...עד (‘‘from - to’’) to describe duration, see Gesenius-Buhl, s.v. עד, 563-564; and cf. Brockelmann, *Grundriss*, II: 417-419, §208. On עדי, עד, and the combination מ...עד for description of duration, cf. also Köhler-Baumgartner, s.v. מן, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*. On the meanings of the idiom מ...עד, see Noth, Könige, 180. Problems of duration of time are hardly discussed in the scholarly literature on the problem of time in the Bible: see De Vries, *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, especially 43-44, 82, 209, 253. According to Marsh, *The Fulness of Time*, passim, the Bible measures the distance of time between two activities and not in a routine ongoing count.

year, a particular event or act, etc.) ...**וְעַד**(**וְ**) (“until...”—a given year, etc.). Examples of these are the formulae used as headings of the various prophetic books. Thus, in Jeremiah 1:2-3: “in the thirteenth year of his reign... until the end of the eleventh year of Zedekiah...” The same approach appears in other passages. Thus, in Jer 36:2: “from the days of Josiah until today”; 25:3: “from the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon, king of Judah, to this day, for twenty-three years”; and Neh 5:14: “Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes the king, twelve years”; and many others.

The second group is composed of formulaic statements that describe a duration and span of time without stating an exact number of years. We shall see below the widespread use of this model, indicative of its great importance. It follows that the use of this formula may indicate an idea that the author wishes to express of a continuous and ongoing state of things—all this, in addition to the information concerning the length of time that the phenomena mentioned in the text continued. This is an element that exists in biblical prose writing without any accompanying conceptual elements. Thus, the non-prosaic formula has a function and has implications in the realm of style, formula, idea, etc.

In the present chapter I shall discuss the second model—the non-prosaic model of the formula.

Formulae of continuity and span are ubiquitous, and there are a number of executions of it. The differences among these variants relate to the direction of the description: 1) from a certain point onwards; 2) from a certain point and preceding it. But there are also secondary variants within each of these two basic groups, because the starting point in both groups may be in the past, present or future. Moreover, even the concluding point of the variants of the formula are not fixed. The reason for this is that, regarding this matter, as well as the starting point, there is variation. In some of the formulae the present serves as the concluding point, and one is speaking in principle of the conclusion of a phenomenon, of which it is stated that it existed (or was absent) from a certain point in the past until the time of its statement in the verse in question. In other formulae the point of conclusion is in the past: for example, in cases in which there are mentioned phenomena that are rooted entirely in the past. In yet other formulae the concluding point is in the future.

There are other secondary points in the execution of this formulae, which are created by the system of relationships between the starting

point and the concluding points, through which are derived various manners of execution of the formula. In addition, there exist variants in the meaning and in other matters that arise as a result of the use of these formulae in relation to different areas of description. There are those that deal with the description of a single figure, and others concerned with describing a general subject (national or world-wide).

The formula, with all of its variants, is used to illustrate a specific phenomenon, figure or matter in terms of its duration. That is, its function is to say from when and until when there existed (or did not exist) a certain phenomenon, and like questions. At times the use of the formula is intended to point out the great antiquity of a certain phenomenon and its persistence until the time of the author. In other cases the intent is to paint a picture of eternity—that is, to state that a certain phenomenon that has existed since then (or from now, or that shall begin in the future) will never cease for eternity.

Due to limitations of space I cannot discuss this in full, but will only discuss several of the main types; the others will only be mentioned briefly.

### 1. *From the Past on*

#### I. *To Individuals*

One of the formulae used to describe duration in relation to the individual is *מעודך (ו)עד היום הזה* or *מעודי עד עתה* (“as long as I (you) have lived until this day”). This formula refers to the duration of time from the birth of a person (*מעודך*—for as long as he exists) until the event (or time) in question, its function being to describe the persistence a certain situation throughout the lifetime of the person mentioned in the formula. In Gen 48:15, it states: “the God who has led me all my life long to this day (*מעודי עד היום הזה*).” The point of the usage here is to express the constant Divine providence enjoyed by Jacob. The formula appears in the second person in the she-ass’s words to Balaam (Num 22:30): “Am I not your ass, upon which you have ridden all your life long to this day (*מעודך עד היום הזה*)?” Here too, the purpose of the description is to indicate constancy and continuity. It is clear that, from a subject-factual viewpoint, the formula appears here in an exaggerated manner, as Balaam did not ride upon this ass from his birth. This lack of precision is, in my opinion, a further proof of the formulaic

nature of the idiom **מעורך עד היום הזה**, whose purpose is, as mentioned, to indicate constancy and ongoing continuity.<sup>3</sup>

A certain variation of this formula is **מנעורי עד עתה** (“from my youth until now”). In Gen 46:34, in Joseph’s instructions to his brothers, he states “You shall say [to Pharaoh], ‘Your servants have been keeper of cattle from our youth even until now (**מנעורינו ועד עתה**), both we and our fathers,” indicating persistence in the profession. Use of the same idiom in the first person appears in Ezekiel 4:14: “I have never eaten what died of itself or was torn by beasts, from my youth up until now.” In practice, there was no reason not to use the phrase **מעורי עד עתה** here, which would be even more exact. It would therefore seem that, notwithstanding the difference in the description between the two phrases, they are synonymous and serve the same purpose. The phrase “from my youth until this day” also appears in 1 Samuel 12:2, in Samuel’s farewell address, in which he attempts to summarize his life’s work. In 2 Sam 19:8, in Joab’s harsh words to David, the formula appears in the second person, “from your youth until now.”<sup>4</sup>

Another idiom similar to the formulae mentioned (and especially to the phrase **מעודי**) appears in the words used by Manoah’s wife in repeating the words of the angel of the Lord: “for the boy shall be a Nazirite to God from birth [lit., from the womb] to the day of his death (**מן הבטן עד יום מותו**)” (Jdg 13:7). Analysis of the story reveals that the starting point is found, in practice, in the future, for the woman is not yet pregnant (ibid., v. 3: “You shall conceive and bear a son”). But, in my opinion, this is not important, for what is used here is a stereotyped formula; hence it is no accident (and in fact required by the story—so that she should not drink wine during her pregnancy) that the phrase “from the womb” relates here to the near future. The phrase **מן הבטן** (“from the womb”) is equivalent to **מעודי** used elsewhere, albeit one

<sup>3</sup> In the LXX and the Peshitta, there also appears here the word **מנעורידך** (“from your youth”) rather than **מעורך** (“your life long”). Or perhaps this is because this formula is more non-committal, or that they were aware of the difficulties of formulation. On **מעודי** in the sense of “all my life,” see Köhler-Baumgarten, *Lexicon*, s.v. **עוד**. The idiom, **מעוד** plus a pronoun, as in the text mentioned, appears once more, but in this case time in first person, in Gen 48:15: “... the God who has led me all my life long (**מעודי**) to this day.” It is superfluous to add that, regarding divine providence over Jacob, there is no difficulty in this statement, the assumption being that God indeed guarded him and guards him his entire life, from his birth until this day.

<sup>4</sup> Even though this formula originally appears in the singular, it was also used in the plural. Thus Jer 3:25: “Let us lie down in our shame, and let our dishonor cover us; for we have sinned against the Lord our God, we and our fathers, from our youth even to this day”...

might perhaps make some fine distinctions between the two phrases.<sup>5</sup>

The point of conclusion, “to the day of his death,” is completely different from everything we have seen thus far, because it refers to a point in time not in the present (unlike such phrases as *עד היום הזה* or *עד עתה* —“until this day” or “until now” as found in the previous examples), but in the distant future: that is to say, throughout his entire life span. Hence this phrase is unique both in terms of its opening point as well as in relation to the definition of its end. It seems to me that the concluding formula here may be compared to the phrase *מעתה ועד עולם* and the like, it being clear that in regard to a person (and his life) the pole *עולם* (“forever”) is limited by his death. The idiom in general seems to me parallel to the phrase *מעולם ועד עולם*, almost always said in connection with God Himself—on which see more below.<sup>6</sup>

## II. Use of the Formula in Relation to the People

We have thus far discussed the use of this formulae in relation to the individual, his life and activities. However, one must add that this formula is also used in relation to the people as a whole. Since the most impressive

<sup>5</sup> For example, that the phrase *מן הבטן* (lit., “from the womb”) refers to the beginning of life and not to the period of gestation. Nevertheless, one needs to consider whether the meaning of *מן הבטן* is while he was in the womb, as a fetus, or from the time that he left the womb. If the latter is the case, then both phrases (*מן הבטן* / *מעודי מן הבטן*) are identical in meaning. Hosea 12:4 may likewise be explained in both ways: “In the womb (*בבטן*) he took his brother by the heel”: i.e., literally in the womb, during gestation, or from the womb, that is, at [or from] birth. Cf. A. Rofé. [Israelite Belief in Angels in the Pre-Exilic Period as Evidenced by Biblical Tradition] (Jerusalem: Unpublished Dissertation, Hebrew University, 1969), 242, where he interprets the verse in the superlative sense: i.e., that he was dishonest from the womb and from birth.

<sup>6</sup> The personal formulation is used in many other passages. I will exemplify this with one example which is rather distinctive: in the framework of the story of David’s stay with Achish king of Gath, the personal formulation appears in three variants, whose purpose is to define the period of time that David was found there. In Achish’s words to the commanders, the beginning point is referred to, “and since he deserted me [the word *אל* appears here in the Targumim; see BH]... to this day” (1 Sam 29:3). In Achish’s words to David: “from the day of your coming to me to this day” (v. 6), while David himself says, “from the day I entered your service (*מיום אשר הייתי לפניך*) until now” (v. 8). In this case there is a difference among the manners of definition of the starting point. The difference among the wordings of the opening formulations in our case is a matter of differing psychology and interests of the parties. Thus, David is interested in stressing the manner in which he serves Achish, and hence uses the phrase *היה לפני*, that is cognate to *עמד לפני* in the sense of official service. On the idiom *את פניו עמד לפני*, see Malamat, “Organs of Statecraft,” 34-35. On the other hand, Achish uses a simple non-committal phrase for the tendency of David’s appearance: “from the day of your coming”; but I cannot elaborate upon this point here. I have not found anyone among the commentators who discusses the presence in this story of three variants of the starting point.

event in the history of the people was the Exodus, this event became a point of departure in relation to various subjects relating to the people. In a series of different descriptions, whose subject matter is the history of the people, its relationship to God, God's relation to it, and similar subjects, use is made of a formula of duration and continuity, as whose starting point there appears the event of the Exodus. Thus, for example, it is stated in the historiographic summary of the reign of Manasseh, that the Israelites behaved badly poorly for as long as they were a people, "since the day their fathers came out of Egypt, even to this day" (2 Kgs 21:15).<sup>7</sup> Compare also the phrase appearing in the story of the concubine at Gibeah (Jdg 19:30) and in the chapter of the seeking of a king in the days of Saul (1 Sam 8:8); and also God's words in the vision of Nathan: "I have not dwelt in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been moving about in a tent for my dwelling" (2 Sam 7:6).

A passage in the Book of Deuteronomy (9:7) states: "Remember and do not forget.... From the day you came out of the land of Egypt, until you came to this place..." etc. It is not our concern here to determine the time of composition of this verse. The things are in any event cited as Moses' words to the people at the end of the forty years of wandering, and the text summarizes the rebelliousness involved in the people's behavior toward God throughout the years of their wanderings. A much shorter period defined in relation to the same starting point is depicted in Numbers 14:19: "Pardon the iniquity of this people, I pray thee, according to the greatness of thy steadfast love, and according as thou hast forgiven this people, from Egypt until now."<sup>8</sup> The reference here is to the second year after the Exodus, the phrase **עַד הַנּוֹכַח** ("until now") in

<sup>7</sup> The phrase **עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה** is used in many Scriptural passages (some of which I have already cited above) as the concluding pole in formulae of duration. This phrase has been extensively discussed in research literature, and is connected with etiological and other approaches. See Childs, "A Study of the Formula 'Until this Day.'" On the uses of **עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה**, see also the comprehensive article by Seeligmann, "Etiological Elements in Biblical Historiography," esp. 21 ff. In terms of our concerns, particular importance is attached to the concluding point of time expressed in this phrase. On the possibilities that, on the one hand, this formula refers to the time of the author, as follows from the sense of the language; and, on the other hand, as follows from other passages, that this refers to a point of time in the past, in which there occurred the phenomenon depicted, and which is preferred to **עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה**, and not the time of the author, see Noth, *Könige*, *ibid.* (n. 2, above); Cf. in extenso below, Chapter 8.

<sup>8</sup> The phrase **עַד הַנּוֹכַח** appears elsewhere to indicate the concluding pole; thus, in Gen 44:28, when Jacob says that Joseph "left me... and I have never seen him since (עַד הַנּוֹכַח)," this is a unique use of the idiom **מֵאָז וְעַד עַתָּה** or the like; and cf. below, n. 19.



this verse being a variant upon the phrases *וְעַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה* or *וְעַד עַתָּה* mentioned above.<sup>9</sup>

Other historical events in addition to the Exodus serve as starting points for formulae of continuity concerned with the people and its history. Tracing the passages that include this formula will enable us to observe the significance of the subjects which make use of it. One can thereby learn about central subjects pertaining to the people, its history, its faith, and the like. Due to lack of space, I shall only mention briefly a few examples of this type, without discussing the details of the passages in question. Thus, for example, the fixing of a period of time for the non-observance of the festival of booths: “from the days of Jeshua the son of Nun... to that day” (Neh 8:17). Two similar verses define the period of time during which the festival of passover had not been observed: “since the days of the judges... during all the days of the kings of Israel or of the kings of Judah; but in the eighteenth year of King Josiah...” (2 Kgs 23:22-23). The phrase, “all the days of the kings of Israel or of the kings of Judah,” is a bit awkward, but the meaning is nevertheless clear. One finds here a certain change in the wording of the formula, which does not merely contain a starting point and an ending point, but also mentions one of the intermediate periods included within the period of time included in the formula.<sup>10</sup>

But there is also a difference here with regard to the closing pole: it does not say “until this day” or the like, but gives a specific date: “but in the eighteenth year of King Josiah.” The reason for this is that the concluding point is not during the lifetime of the author (as may be seen from the other uses of the formula), but many years earlier; hence the author is unable to use the usual version of the formula. A parallel passage regarding the non-celebration of Passover appears in 2 Chronicles 35:18, where different use is made of the formula.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Those passages that begin with the Exodus as a starting point for the use of the formula are not limited to those mentioned above. Cf., for example, the great admonition in Jer 7:24-25, summarizing the people’s rebellion against God throughout its history, “from the day that your fathers came out of the land of Egypt to this day,” etc. The use of the formula gives here a picture of continuity of time in a double sense: 1) the duration of the rebellion, “but they walked in their own counsel and the stubbornness of their evil hearts” (v. 24); 2) the length of time for testing God to guide them on the right path, by the fact that he persisted in sending them prophets throughout, “from the day that your fathers went out... I have persistently sent all my servants the prophets to them.” Other passages use this formula in national descriptions.

<sup>10</sup> This phrase is defined by Montgomery as secondary and as dependent in 2 Chr 35:18. See Montgomery, *Kings*, 541.

<sup>11</sup> Montgomery, *ibid.*, 536, thinks that the expression, “but in the eighteenth year” is

Nehemiah 9:32 describes the duration of the hardships that befell Israel as being “since the time of the kings of Assyria until this day.” There are also other biblical passages with similar usages, giving different starting points in the history of Israel in order to point out things that happened in the course of different periods in the history of the people.

The formula of continuation is also used in relation to other peoples, and not only in reference to Israel. Thus, we find in reference to the plague of hail: “very heavy hail, such as never has been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now” (Exod 9:18). Similarly, regarding the plague of locusts: “as neither your fathers nor your grandfathers have seen, from the day they came on the earth to this day” (Exod 10:6). In both of these passages the formula of duration of time is given in relation to the land of Egypt (hail) or of its people (locusts). For a general passage in relation to all the nations see Daniel 12:1: “At that time... there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time.”

### III. *Use of the Formula in Relation to God*

The formula relating to continuity and duration also appears in a general, world-wide context. In such descriptions, the expression serving as a point of departure is **מעולם**,<sup>12</sup> and it is clear that the only factor that may be described as existing at so ancient a starting point (referring here to the original meaning of the phrase **מעולם**) is God himself.

The formula used in this context is **מעולם ועד עולם**. Thus, in Psalm 103:17: “But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting” (**מעולם ועד עולם**)—that is, God is He who manifests steadfast love from the beginning of time until its end. Hence, due to the nature of the opening and closing phrases (which are identical in the case under discussion), the formula, whose purpose, as mentioned, is to depict a certain span of time; serves to depict eternity. Thus in Psalm 90:2: “from everlasting to everlasting thou art God.” Here, even more so than in the previously mentioned passage, the meaning of eternity is called for,

---

secondary, and its purpose is to identify the starting date with the Josianic reform. On the problems of time expressed in the concluding point of the formula of continuity, see Noth, *op cit.*, n. 2.

<sup>12</sup> On **עולם**, see further in the chapter on long time periods (Ch. 10), in that on past and terms used for past (Ch. 13); and on the term **עולם** in the Scrolls (Ch. 21); and cf. Preuss, s.v. **עולם**. There, among other things, within the range of meanings and uses, **עולם** also appears not in the sense of eternity. Cf. *ibid.* on **מי עולם** as referring to the days of David.

as one is not speaking here of the qualities of God or of His acts in relation to people (which are in principle liable to change over the course of time), but of His very essence.<sup>13</sup>

There are also phrases of blessing of God that utilize a formula for duration of time: “Blessed art thou, O Lord, the God of Israel our father, for ever and ever (1 Chr 29:10). A similar phrase is **מהעולם ועד העולם**, used in the phrase of blessing of God that appears in Psalm 41:14 and parallel passages.

It is true that the expression **מעולם** is used in a natural way, as we have said, to refer to God, but we have also found, surprisingly, that the formula **מעולם ועד עולם** also appears on two occasions not in relation to God. In Jer 7:7, Israel is told that, “then I will let you dwell in this place, in the land that I gave of old to your fathers for ever” (Jer 7:7). Likewise, in Jer 25:5: “and dwell upon the land which the Lord has given to you and your fathers from of old and for ever (**מן עולם ועד עולם**).” It is clear that what is written in these passages is not to be understood in a literal sense; otherwise, it would follow that God established the Land of Israel as the land of the Israelite people already from the beginning of the world. This is clearly an exaggeration, intended to say that the land was fixed as the inheritance of Israel from the distant past (without stating exactly when that was) and till the end of all generations. Possibly the phrase **עולם** is used because God himself, whose being is ancient, is involved in this matter as the one who causes the people of Israel to dwell on their land. On the other hand, with regard to the concluding pole (**עד עולם**), this may be accepted in its simple meaning without difficulty, as referring to the regular meaning of the word, connoting a commitment to sustain the people in its land forever.

<sup>13</sup> The same idea appears in Hab 1:12 (where there is a *tiqqun soferim*). In the original version it was correctly written there: “Art thou not from everlasting (**מקדם**) O Lord my God, my Holy One? You shall not die.” (MT: “we shall not die”). Hence, by establishing His antiquity, and by the statement about the eternity of His being, which will never cease for ever (**לא תמות**; “you shall not die”), there is acquired the complete idea of the divine eternity. It follows from this that the prophet made use of a formula of duration, as discussed here, and by it formulated the theological idea of the eternity of God. I would also like to comment that one may clearly distinguish the “corrected” nature of the text as given by the peculiar picture that follows from it. In the beginning it is stated that God is “from everlasting”; how, then, does the second half of the verse, “we shall not die,” complete the idea, since human beings are mortal! On the definition of this verse as a *tiqqun soferim*, see *Sifrei, Bamidbar* on Num 10:35; *Mekhilta* to Exod 15:7; and cf. Segal, *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*, 860, and bibliography there.

## 2. *From the Present on*

Among those things that we have discussed thus far were various types of formulae of continuity in relation to the individual and to the people and the like, based upon the past as a pole of beginning in the description. As I already stated above, there is also a use of the formula in which the opening pole is depicted as a point in the present. While it is true that such a usage is rare, appearing in only a few passages, it should be mentioned because it belongs to the system described here. One of the well-known usages in the direction mentioned (from the present on) is the legal formula, **מעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם** (“from this time and forevermore”).

One can infer from the wording of the phrase **מעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם** that its purpose is to make a statement concerning the ongoing nature of a certain matter, that the parties are doing right now. The somewhat nebulous nature of this idiom made it possible to use it in a secondary manner (i.e., outside of its principle use in legal texts): in prophecies and hymns, in eschatological promises and in similar contexts. The membership of the formula in question to the category of duration may be seen in the fact that its purpose is to express a long and uninterrupted duration. In terms of its formal nature as well, its belonging to the model in question may be seen by the very existence of the opening point (**מעַתָּה**) and its conclusion (**וְעַד עוֹלָם**).

The phrase **מעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם** appears three times in prophecies. In Isaiah 9:6, it is stated about the future king, who will reign under the aegis of God: “Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David... from this time forth and for evermore (**מעַתָּה וְעַד עוֹלָם**).” Later in the same book, in 59:21, Israel is assured that the covenant with the Lord and His words to them “shall not depart out of your mouth, or out of the mouth of your children... from this time forth and for evermore.” In Micah 4:7, God promises that the deliverance of Israel shall be accompanied by God’s reign over them “from this time forth and for evermore.” I will not enter into the difficulties raised by the use of the formula of duration in the case in question for, offhand, it would seem to imply that God’s reign over them previously was not stable, or did not exist at all.

The other manifestations of the expression in the Bible are all in the Book of Psalms: 113:2; 115:18; 121:8; 125:2; 131:3. In all of these cases, the formula is connected with the blessing of God, and here too

there are problems involved in its use, even more serious than those mentioned earlier. For example, in Ps 113:2, it is stated that God is to be blessed “from now on and forevermore.” This is strange: is God to be blessed only from now? Perhaps it is for this reason that the *Peshitta* reads here מעולם ועד עולם, a conventional formula for describing God, his milieu and his essence (see above).

The phrase מעתה ועד עולם has parallels in legal and other texts both from Israel and from outside. As Loewenstamm has already noted,<sup>14</sup> the phrase מעתה ועד עולם is a conflation of the verbal formula (still reflected in contracts) מן היום (“from this day”; i.e., without specifying a date) and its parallels ištu ūmi annîm and לימי הנד, (in Ugaritic) with the concluding formula עד עולם (“forever”) and its parallels (adi dāri, עד עלמ, and the like).

The Bible also contains an additional usage in the formula from the present onwards in the language used in Haggai 2:15: מן היום הזה ולמעלה (“from this day onward”; the formula appears a number of times in this verse [compare *ibid.*, v. 19]); however, this is not the usual direction of the use of the formula, on which see below in the chapter on shortened formulae.

### 3. *From the Future on*

Due to the nature and purpose of the formula of duration, the type “from the future on” is very scanty; I have found it used in only one passage in the entire Bible. In the vision of Gog (Ezek 39:22), it states: “The house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord their God from that day forward” (מן היום ההוא והלאה) That is, within a description referring generally to an eschatological future, there is a certain point of change, from which point on certain phenomena shall exist and continue. Yet in principle, there is no difference in this usage as compared to the usages מהיום ההוא (// הזה) ומעלה (“from this [/that] day on”), as cited above in connection with uses from the past on or from the present on.

<sup>14</sup> On the formula מעתה ועד עולם, see Löwenstamm, “The Formula בעת ההיא in Deuteronomy.”

#### 4. *From a Given Event and Prior to It*

The primary formula used to describe duration of time in all its variations is one that begins from a certain point onwards. But there also exists in the biblical text a formula whose description goes in the opposite direction. I refer to those descriptions based upon the duration of time from a particular event and prior to it, going back to a specific time in the past.

The manner of emergence of this model is clear: it is based upon an everyday pattern of thought involved in describing certain phenomenon in human language—that is, that prior to a certain time there occurred (or did not occur) a certain phenomenon (or subject), as opposed to the present situation. Every description of this type is based upon the duration of time that the phenomenon continued. This is so, for example, in Jeremiah’s speech to Hananiah: “The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient times” (Jer 28:8). The starting point in this formula is the time of Jeremiah, from which he turns backwards, to “ancient times” (מן העולם). Thus, in a “practical” sense, this formula is analogous to *מן העולם ועד העולם* or its like. I shall not go into detail here regarding the subject matter of this model, on which see further below on the compound formula.

#### 5. *The Abbreviated Formula*

In several passages the formula of continuity appears in an abbreviated formula—that is, with only the first of the two components. Thus, in 1 Kings 18:12, Obadiah declares: “although I your servant have revered the Lord from my youth.” It is clear that this refers not only to the beginning of the phenomenon, but that he wishes to say that from that time until the present he has consistently followed this path. He also doubtless includes in this his final act of saving the prophets, that clearly exemplifies his fear of the Lord. One may thus express continuity and persistence from a certain time in the past through the time given in the actual description even by using *part* of the formula, without mentioning the second pole.

That the abbreviated formula is a variant of the complete formula may be demonstrated by comparison of different passages relating to the same subject. Thus, regarding the plague of hail, it states: “There was hail... very heavy hail, such as had never been in all the land of Egypt since it became a nation” (Exod 9:24). We find here an abbreviated

version, which states the starting point (“since it was a nation”) without giving any explicit closing point. Nevertheless it is clear from the use of the phrase **כְּמֹדוֹ** (“such as”)<sup>15</sup> and from the mention of the plague that this refers to the time since it became a nation and until the bringing of the plague. And in fact in the parallel formula (*ibid.*, v. 18) in the Divine announcement of the coming of this plague, it states: “Behold, tomorrow about this time I will cause very heavy hail to fall, such as has never been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now.”

For another example of this phenomenon, note the words of the angel in the story of Manoah and his wife (Jdg 13:5): “the boy shall be a Nazirite to the Lord God from birth,” while in citing his words his mother says, “the boy shall be Nazirite to God from birth to the day of his death” (v. 7).<sup>16</sup>

One means of expression of the abbreviated formula uses the word **מֵאָז** as the starting point for the formula of duration. It is clear that such phrases as **מֵאָז .. וְעַתָּה ..** (“from then... and now...”) serve as models for expressing duration of time, in accordance with the formulae of continuity cited above. Thus in Joshua 14:10: “these forty-five years since the time that the Lord spoke this word to Moses... and now....” This description of the duration of time is distinguished, in this case, in a number of ways: a) by noting the “distance” between the beginning (“since ... that the Lord spoke...”) and the end (“and now....”); b) by an explicit prose notation: “these forty-five years”; c) it may also be inferred from the explicit mention of his age then: “I was forty years old when Moses sent....” as against “and now, lo, I am this day eighty-five years old.”

Regarding the idiom **אֵז .....** **וְעַתָּה**, see 2 Samuel 15:34; Isa 16:13-14; 48:7; and others.<sup>17</sup> Hence the use of the word **מֵאָז** is understood as a starting point in the abbreviated formula of duration, its meaning being the same as in the complete formula: **מֵאָז וְעַד עֵתָהּ** (that is: until the time of the author or the speaker). Compare Genesis 39:5: “From the time

<sup>15</sup> On the importance of the word **כְּמֹדוֹ** (“like him”), see especially below, on the double formula.

<sup>16</sup> For an analysis of the formula, **מִן הַבֶּטֶן וְעַד יוֹם מוֹתוֹ**, see above, and cf. Kaufmann, *The Book of Judges*, 247, who asserts that the phrase **עַד יוֹם מוֹתוֹ** is implied in the first verse (v. 5), even though it is not explicitly stated there. A similar solution was already suggested by Nowack, *Richter*, 118; that is, that this is a kind of internal interpretation in the spirit of the verse as a whole. Budde thinks, in the spirit of Gen 3:3, that it was the woman who added **עַד יוֹם מוֹתוֹ**. See Budde, *Richter*, ad loc. Nowack thinks that the phrase **מִן הַבֶּטֶן** in v. 5 is an additional phrase, whose aim is to identify a certain type of Nazirite as holy from birth. See *ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>17</sup> On **וְעַתָּה**, see Köhler-Baumgartner, *Lexicon*, s.v. **אֵז**.

that he made him overseer... the blessing of the Lord was upon all that he had.”

Even in texts addressed to the people, the abbreviated formula may be used rather than the full formula. Thus in Deuteronomy 9:24: “You have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you.” The formula is abbreviated, in that it does not explicitly fix the concluding pole—but this is nevertheless clear from the very manner of the use of the formula. By this Moses indicates their having been rebellious from the time he began to know them, close to the time of the Exodus, until now. In the Samaritan version and the Septuagint there appears here the word **דעתו** (“... he knew you”). The starting point here is very early, in that it refers to the time of the election of Israel by God.

Similarly in the description of the celebration of Passover in the days of Hezekiah the abbreviated formula is mentioned: “So there was great joy in Jerusalem, for since the time of Solomon the son of David king of Israel there had been nothing [the word **היתה** is added in the Targumim and in various Hebrew manuscripts] like this<sup>18</sup> in Jerusalem” (2 Chr 30:26). On the basis of the use of the word **כזאת**, “like this,” it is clear that this is referring to the Passover that was made in the days of Hezekiah; what is not clear, however, is whether the text is stating that the festival of Passover had not been celebrated at all prior to then, or whether joy of this type had not been seen previously.

In Hosea 10:9, it is stated: “From the days of Gibeah, you have sinned, O Israel.” The prophet accuses them of having begun to sin from that time, and that they have not ceased sinning until his own day. The abbreviated formula also appears in Isaiah 7:17; Ezra 4:2; Nehemiah 4:10; 13:21; and many other places.

Also regarding other usages, as in those texts that speak of God, whose like have already been cited above, there is an abbreviated variant. Thus: “and thy steadfast love, for they have been from of old” (Ps 25:6). The concern here is the antiquity and constancy of God’s steadfast love. In Psalm 93:2 it states “thy throne is established from of old (**מאז**),” which is to be seen as an alternative version of **מעולם עד עולם אתה אל** (“from eternity to eternity you are God”), and so on.

In practice, one may say that each of the main uses of the formula of continuity and duration has an alternative abbreviated form.

From the totality of the uses of the abbreviated version, it follows

<sup>18</sup> The use of the word **כזאת** is like that of **כמורה**. See above, on the short formula, and also in the discussion of the double formula.



that they often express a more complete picture than does the complete version, as in the former there is no fixed limitation or boundary to the conclusion of the phenomenon, so that it continues forever.

A similar effect is attained in another way, which may be seen as a parallel model to the abbreviated version. I refer to a series of texts where, instead of the concluding pole of the formula, it states *ומעלה* (“and upward”), *והלאה* (“and onwards”), and the like. Thus, there is declaratively no end to the subject, activity and so forth that began since then (or from now on, etc.).

Thus, for example, in 1 Samuel 18:9: “And Saul hated [*qeri*] [RSV: eyed] David from that day on (*מהיום ההוא והלאה*).” It is clear that the point here is to say that Saul’s enmity never ceased (until his death). Or in 1 Samuel 16:13: “and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward (*מהיום ההוא ומעלה*).” There are also verses in which the image of *והלאה* or *ומעלה* is one that never ceases forever, such as in Ezekiel 43:27 which, in referring to the dedication of the future altar, says: “then from the eighth day onward the priests shall offer upon the altar...” That is, from the time of its dedication on, it shall be used forever. Similarly, in Ezek 39:22, “The house of Israel shall know that I am the Lord your God, from that day forward (*מן היום והלאה*)”; similarly in Haggai 2:15; Num 15:22-23; etc.<sup>19</sup>

We may conclude that there are three forms of executing of the formula of duration. The first—the full formula, with all its combinations; the second—the abbreviated formula, which seemingly establishes a beginning for a certain description, matter, phenomenon, etc., without noting any end to it; the third—a statement of the type “and onwards,” and the like, which [in practice] serves as a kind of “concluding” pole, even though its contents establish an uninterrupted continuity.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> On the passages using the phrase *מ...מעלה/והלאה* (“from... up to [and onward]”) in general, see the next chapter.

<sup>20</sup> In this chapter I spoke of the abbreviated formula, that is, one which does not have a concluding pole. However, it should be remembered that in the Bible there also appear passages containing a formula of duration without a pole of beginning, such as Gen 44:28, in Jacob’s words: “One left me... and I have never seen him since (*ולא ראיתיו עד הנה*).” This appears instead of *ועד הנה* [מצרים] (“from [Egypt] and even until now”) or *ועד עתה* and the like (see Num 14:19). Again, in Jdg 16:13: “until now you have mocked me” (without stating from precisely what point in time this refers). Thus one is to interpret also the phrases *עד עולם* or *לעולם* that appear without any beginning pole. For example, in David’s curse: “So shall their blood come back upon the head of Joab and upon the head of his descendants forever; but to David, and to his descendants, and to his house, and to his throne, there shall be peace from the Lord forevermore” (1

6. *The Compound Version*

There is yet another unique form of the formula of duration, which may be designated as the double or compound formula. This type is in effect composed of a combination of the two main approaches that have been exemplified thus far; namely, from the past on (or: (עד)ו. “until...”; ), and from a certain point in the description backwards. In this case, there is a common point of departure used for the two parts of the formula, that is, for the two directions of viewing, forwards and backwards, and this point of time is the present moment of the speech.

In Exodus 10:14, it states: “and the locust came up over all the land of Egypt, and settled in the whole country of Egypt, such a dense swarm of locusts as had never been seen before, nor ever shall be seen again.” This description begins from a point in the past, determining by way of a backwards-looking comparison that prior to this there had never been a comparable swarm of locusts. The absence of the concluding pole of the comparison creates an image of totality, as does the abbreviated formula—namely, that there had never been locusts like this.<sup>21</sup> The phrase “and thereafter there will not be its like” forms the second part of the compound version. Here the direction is again from the same point (which is, as mentioned, the point shared in common by the two parts of the formula) onwards. But this phrase is also part of the order of the abbreviated formula, in that there is no concluding formula set for it. This creates, as said, a sense of totality: “nor ever shall be seen again.” It is stated here, that the things will never again be repeated. Thus, the double formula can determine that a certain matter never took place before (like it) and shall never again be repeated.<sup>22</sup>

The uniqueness of the day of the Lord in the book of Joel is likewise determined by use of the same formula: “Their like has never been

---

Kgs 2:33). This clearly means that from this point on the house of David shall be blessed and that of Joab and his seed cursed.

<sup>21</sup> This should be compared with what is said in the description of the planning of bringing the plague, from which it is clear that the starting point (which is not mentioned here explicitly) is “from the day they came on earth” (Exod 10:6).

<sup>22</sup> A parallel occurrence appears in Exod 11:6, in the plague of the first born: “And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as [במִדְבָּר] in the Samaritan; [בְּמִדְבָּר] there has never been, nor ever shall be again.” First of all, it should be noted that in the execution of the plague this formula is not mentioned, apart from what we have mentioned in the plagues of locust and hail. Moreover, it is not stated here from what point such a thing has not taken place. But it is clear that from the definitive language that its meaning is: never, or, to be more precise, from the time the Egyptian people have dwelt on their land.

from of old (לא נהיה מן העולם), nor will be again after them, through the years of all generations (ואחריו לא יוסיף עד שני דור דור) (Joel 2:2). Analysis of its contents reveals that in this respect we have a substitute for the phrase מעולם ועד עולם, with the difference that the compound formula always entails definition by means of negation. Moreover: the unique formulation of the compound formula brings about a situation in which there exists a certain pause, that constitutes a focus in reference to both of its parts.

A third phenomenon of nature is also described in this manner, again in a negative manner. On the standing of the sun and moon in the middle of the sky in the days of Joshua, it states; “There has been no day like it before or since (לא היה כיום ההוא לפניו ואחריו), when the Lord hearkened to the voice of a man” (Josh 10:14). One should give one’s attention to the variety in this formula by the use of the phrase לפניו and אחריו, and in comparison to the matter of כיום ההוא, by which the author made his statement. In two further passages the formula appears in relation to evaluating the figures of the kings. In 2 Kings 18:5, it states of Hezekiah, “He trusted in the Lord the God of Israel; so that there was none like him among all the kings of Judah after him, nor among those who were before him.” It should be observed that the order in which the components of the formula are cited is different from that found in the above texts (i.e., from the present on, and only thereafter from that point backwards to what precedes it). It is likewise said of Josiah in 2 Kings 23:25: “nor did any like him arise after him.”<sup>23</sup>

Mention should be made of an element common to all five passages—the use of the word כמוהו (or כן; “like it” or “the like”; only in Josh 10:14 does there appear instead the phrase כיום ההוא). We have already mentioned that the double formula serves for description by way of negation. There is thus a desire here to point toward a certain phenomenon or matter or unique figure, insofar as they may be defined in a negative matter, that their like never existed (and will never be again forever).<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> In Neh 13:26, it says of Solomon, that “there was no king like him, and he was beloved by his God.” In effect, this is a variant formulation of what is stated in the passages about Hezekiah and Josiah, namely, that there was never a king like him before him or after him. Another verse that gives a variant of the compound formula, appears in Jeremiah 30:7, which states concerning the day of the Lord: “that day is so great, there is none like it” (מאין כמוהו). The phrase מאין כמוהו refers to the fact that there never was a day like it. Presumably, these things are meant to say that even in the continuity of history such a day shall not return. Compare the full use of the formula in Joel 2:3.

<sup>24</sup> In the New Testament we likewise find use of this complex formula. See Matthew

One may also take note of the time of the author in each of the uses of the compound formula, on the basis of tracing its second half (“nor ever shall be seen again” and the like). It is obvious that the author is not writing at the time of the phenomenon, but afterwards. Insofar as the pole of the past is concerned, he relies upon knowledge and tradition, in which he is expert, formulating things “as had never been seen before” and the like. But with regard to the second pole, how can he state “nor ever shall be seen again”? One might answer by saying that, due to the uniqueness of the phenomenon in question, whose like had never before taken place, his opinion is strengthened that he is dealing with a unique, one-time phenomenon—or at least he wishes to depict it thus, in order to bring out its uniqueness, and to attain an additional impressive effect beyond its description per se. I likewise think that, in all such passages, the author is later than the time of the phenomenon. Hence, when he states that “nor shall it ever be seen again,” or the like, he also has additional historical experience, for in the meantime more time has passed between the occurrence of the phenomenon and until the time of the author, and he has already seen that in the meantime the phenomenon did not repeat itself. For that reason, he has reason to believe that it will never again repeat itself.

A unique execution of the compound formula may be seen in Psalm 71:17-18: “O God, from my youth thou hast taught me, and I still proclaim thy wondrous deeds. So even to old age and gray hairs, O God, do not forsake me, till I proclaim thy might to a generation, to all that come.”<sup>25</sup> In effect, one finds here a series of combinations of continuities or durations. First, מנעורי ועד הנה (“from my youth... and I still”). This formula becomes in turn the pole of a new beginning, whose conclusion is “even to old age and gray hairs.” A distant echo of an additional continuity may be heard in the words “till I proclaim thy might to a generation, to all that come.” This phrase may be similar to עד עולם, so that we find here an additional continuation, of the kind “from my youth... and forever,” with two intermediate steps: 1) till now; 2) to old age and gray hairs.<sup>26</sup>

---

24:21: “For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be.” Here the phrase “until now” appears as the intermediate point that explicitly connects between the two halves of the formula, while it exists in a non-explicit form in the verses we discussed in the body of this chapter. Cf. Rev 16:18.

<sup>25</sup> In Peshitta: דור יבוא ; in the LXX: לכל דור יבוא.

<sup>26</sup> On the interpretation of this text, see Kraus, *Psalmen*, 491, who claims that the verse expresses the providence of God over the poet from childhood until old age. Cf.

In all those cases using the formula of continuity discussed up to now, the focus of the picture and its contents are identical for all of its parts. In this case there is a change regarding the subject of the statement: once the poet, and once God himself. But this does not create a defect; to the contrary, it serves as testimony to the wisdom of the author, who incorporated his idea within an existing formula, while introducing the changes he needed.

---

Duhm, *Psalmen*, on this verse, who states that the description in this verse relates to past, present and future; and cf. Baethgen, *Psalmen*, on the verses in question.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE PHRASE “FROM . . . AND ONWARD/UPWARD (מ...והלאה/ומעלה) IN THE BIBLE

#### 1. *Uses of the Formula in General*

The expressions **והלאה** “and onward” and **ומעלה** “and upward” have two basic usages.<sup>1</sup> The first has a *locational* or *geographical* meaning, as for example in **גש הלאה**, “stand back” (Gen 19:9); in **מעבר לירדן והלאה** (“on the other side of the Jordan and beyond”; Num 32:19). The same holds true for **ומעלה**, as in **מהסלע ומעלה**, “from Sela and upward” (Judg 1:36).

The second usage has a *temporal* meaning, as in the expression **מהיום והלאה**, “from that day on” (1 Sam 18:9), or **מהיום ההוא ומעלה** “from that day forward” (1 Sam 16:13). Examination of the usages of these two idioms indicates that the locational one is the original.

Both usages—the locational and the temporal—convey the idea of an unlimited continuation of the thing described. Thus, for example, “from Sela and upward” does not indicate in the passage any limiting point, and theoretically may extend forward without any limit, provided only that it fit the textual context. The lack of limitation stands out more clearly, in my opinion, in the temporal usage than in the geographical one. We thus find that the use of time represents a higher level of abstraction.<sup>2</sup>

The formula **מ...ומעלה** appears, for example, in the story about David’s decree concerning the division of the spoils, where it is said: “For as his share is who goes down into the battle so shall his share be who stays by the baggage... and from that day forward (**ויהי מהיום ההוא ומעלה**) he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day” (1 Sam 30:24-25). The sense of the formula in this passage is that, from

---

<sup>1</sup> I have not mentioned here other usages not connected with the main ones, such as Deut 28:13: “and you shall tend upward only” **והיית רק למעלה**; 2 Kgs 3:21: “from the youngest to the oldest” (= literally, “everyone who wears a girdle and upward”) **מכל חוגר חגורה ומעלה**.

<sup>2</sup> See above, Chapter 6, on “The Biblical Formulae for Depicting Duration of Time.” Here I deal with one of these formulae. In practice, it seems that this kind is relatively rare in relation to the other formulae.

that time on—i.e., from the time of its establishment in David’s days—the rule continues to be in effect, albeit it may be rescinded at some point in the distant future. Thus, the words “from that day forward he made it a statute and an ordinance for Israel to this day,” confirm the fact that the Davidic statute continued to be in effect through the author’s period,<sup>3</sup> and even now there is no sign of it being discontinued. That is to say, that even if we assume that at some time this ordinance was changed and superseded, at the time when these things were written it was still in effect and its cancellation was not in sight. Thus, we have here a unique use of the formula *מ...והלאה/ומעלה*. Unlike the usual usage, based upon the polarity of *מ...ומעלה*,<sup>4</sup> here it is even presented as being *in the present* (*עד היום הזה*; “until this day”). The unique aspect of this usage is that the phrase *ומעלה*, as an undefined closing point, appears here as a variant to the phrase *עד היום הזה*, which constitutes a definite pole. Perhaps this double formulation (of the conclusion) developed from the desire to give a more concrete dating than a general, undefined statement (*ומעלה*), or perhaps the phenomenon may be understood as a “double version.”<sup>5</sup>

Another example from the legal realm. In Numbers 15:22-23, it states: “But if you err, and do not observe all these commandments which the Lord has spoken to Moses, all that the Lord has commanded you by Moses, from the day that the Lord gave commandment, and inward (*מן והלאה*) throughout your generations.”<sup>6</sup> The above phrase is based upon the principle of the formulaic *מן היום ההוא והלאה*. Thus, Scripture is referring to some time in the future, when Israel may come to violate the laws of the Torah. The description of time is built in a very abstract way, its aim being to include all of the periods from the giving of the ruling (“from the day that the Lord gave the commandment [i.e., to Moses]”) until the end of all generations (*והלאה*). It seems to me that this verse contains the most comprehensive use of the verses used in the formula.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> It is quite far from David’s time, for the author stresses that the usage has continued “until this day.” This assertion would make no sense unless the author were temporally distant from these events.

<sup>4</sup> This usage may also be found in Lev 22:27; 1 Sam 16:13; Ezek 39:22; 43:27; Hag 2:18.

<sup>5</sup> On this term and examples of its use, see Talmon, “Double Reading.”

<sup>6</sup> The wording of these two verses seems somewhat confused, possibly reflecting the conflation of a number of different versions. Note the following versions: 1) *את כל משה*; *את כל אשר צוה ה' אליכם ביד משה* 2) *המצות האלה אשר דבר ה' אל משה*. The latter is clearly a duplication of the former; and compare further, *ה' אשר צוה ה'* (v. 23), etc.

<sup>7</sup> On this verse see Brin, “Num XV, 22-23.”

## 2. *The Usage of the Formula in Texts Dealing with a Census*

We shall now discuss the formula “from x and upward,” as used in texts dealing with a census: first, in texts concerning the census of all Israel, and then in those concerning the census of the Levites. On the one hand, due to the non-specific nature of the term *ומעלה*, there is no limit on the use of the formula in the concluding direction; on the other hand, there are uses of the formula in which the term *ומעלה* is used in a specific sense, analogous to the use of the formula *מ.. ועד*, i.e., to a certain limit and no further. Due to the nature of the discussion, we shall bring here all of the biblical passages of censuses (of the Israelites and of Levites) that include this formula. During the course of our discussion we shall also refer to other formulae, such as *יוצא צבא* (“fit for war” or “who are able to go forth to war”).

### I. *In Censuses of Israel as a Whole*

A special variation in the use of this formula is its use with regard to counting people of different ages for purposes of census or similar numbering.

In various texts this formula is used to indicate that the census will apply to those who are “from x years and upward” (*ומעלה*). In other words, the phrase is intended to include all those numbered in the census, from a given age upward without limit. Thus, the law concerning the giving of the half shekel stipulates that “everyone who is numbered in the census from twenty years old and upward shall give the Lord’s offering” (Exod 30:14) so that “there be no plague among them when you number them” (v. 12). A report of this census appears in Exod 38:26, where it again specifies the range of ages: *מבן עשרים שנה ומעלה* (“from twenty years old and upward”).

In the census list in Numbers 1, the detail of the ages of those counted is repeated stereotypically. Already in the initial command we read, “Take a census of all the congregation . . . from twenty years old and upward, all in Israel who are able to go forth to war” (*כל יוצא צבא*; Num 1:2-3). In describing the execution, the text states that “they assemble the whole congregation together, who registered themselves by families by fathers’ houses, according to the number of names from twenty years old and upward head by head.” It should be noted that v. 18 does not state that those “who are able to go forth to war” (*יוצאי צבא*) specifically are counted. In any event, examination of Exodus 30, 38 and Numbers



1:18 reveals that the principle is to number all those who are over twenty years old.<sup>8</sup> It follows that Numbers 1:2-3 and other passages which repeat the same details while also mentioning **וּיִצְאֵי צְבָא**<sup>9</sup> refer to the same picture.<sup>10</sup>

Another example of such a use of our formula appears in the chapter of “valuations” (**עֲרֻכָּה**; Lev 27). In this chapter there are four age ranges. Three of them are worded: (i) “from a month old up to five years old” (27:6); (ii) “from five years old up to twenty years old” (27:5); and (iii) “from twenty years old up to sixty years old” (27:3). The fourth link is expressed through means of the formula dealt with in our study: “sixty years old and upward” (27:7). Hence, we may conclude that the author

<sup>8</sup> The question of whether all or only a part of the people were numbered is a very old one. Löwenstamm points to the *Mekhilta* which deals with the same question, according to which the number “600,000 men on foot, besides children” (Exod 12:37) is to be taken as excluding women, children, and the elderly. See also Philo, *De Vita Mosi* 1.27; compare Josephus, *Ant.* 2.15.1 §317; and cf. Löwenstamm, “Muster.” Löwenstamm (*The Evolution of the Exodus Tradition*, 96-97), like many other commentators, draws our attention to the fact that this number parallels the number of those who go to the army mentioned in Num 1:46 and 26:51. He therefore concludes that the census was connected only with **וּיִצְאֵי צְבָא**, opposing on this point Albright (“The Administrative Divisions”) who thinks that the censuses were of the entire people and not only of those fit for the army. Mendenhall (“The Census Lists,” 60) explains the lists as intended for military purposes and not for any wider purpose. On the other hand, according to Liver, “The Half Shekel Offering,” the census in Exod 30:11 refers to all the people (see 174-177 and n. 7). Note his opinion that Exod 38 and Num 1 are two different traditions of the same Israelite census in the desert (*ibid.*, p. 195-196 and n. 61 there, also concerning Num 1 and 26 as variant traditions). Löwenstamm’s main argument is against any interpretation which sees this as a general census, as in his opinion such a census was unknown both in Israel and in the entire ancient Near East. I should add that the entire discussion concerns the reality expressed in the census, but none of the opinions mentioned is concerned with the significance of the term **וּיִצְאֵי צְבָא**, which is our main subject here

<sup>9</sup> As will become clear below, it is possible that the term **וּיִצְאֵי צְבָא** may refer to a limited range of ages, let us say from twenty to fifty. Thus, the use of the formula “from twenty years and upward” refers to a certain range of ages even without saying so explicitly. But even if this interpretation is correct, the above-mentioned expression might still be used in certain texts with a meaning other than the usual one. Thus, in those instances the texts may say **וּיִצְאֵי צְבָא** but the census may nevertheless refer to every man twenty years old and upward without any age limitation. However, in the absence of any verse stating a definite *terminus ad quem*, I think that the interpretation that the census includes all men over age twenty, without any age limitation, is correct (but see further below about this).

<sup>10</sup> Even in the census at the end of the wandering in the desert (Num 26:2) we encounter the same phrase: “from twenty years old and upward by their fathers’ houses, all in Israel who are able to go forth to war” (**כָּל יִצְאֵי צְבָא בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל**). The same is repeated in v. 4. Unlike the case in the previous chapter (Numbers 1), here we find no repetition (in the numbering of each tribe) of references to the range of ages being numbered, nor of the term **וּיִצְאֵי צְבָא**.

chose this wording deliberately; even though he could have used a formula with a *definite* closing pole (such as appears in the first three links), he chooses to use an *indefinite* pole. This is with the definite intention to incorporate all possible ages from sixty and upward. Hence we cannot argue that the phrase *ומעלה* is used fortuitously or that it refers to a specific concluding pole, which varies from one subject to another.

A negative-supplementary use of the formula *מבן..ומעלה* is found in 1 Chr 27:23, in connection with David's census of the people: "David did not number those below twenty years of age (*למבן עשרים שנה*) (ולמטה)." From this, we may infer the opposite—that is, as in the censuses in the book of Numbers, David also numbered all those above the age of twenty. 1 Chr 27:23 tells us why he did not count those below twenty: "for the Lord had promised to make Israel as many as the stars of heaven." Evidently, refraining from numbering them would help ward off the evil eye.

It is worthy of note that, although the range of ages here, from twenty years upward, is identical to that in the census in Numbers, here they are not described as *יוצאי צבא*. This suggests that *יוצאי צבא* was a vague expression and that *ומעלה*, "and upward," means the total number without age limits.

The term *יוצאי צבא* is repeated in the numbering of Amaziah's army: "twenty years old and upward, fit for war (*יוצאי צבא*), also able to handle spear and shield" (2 Chr 25:5). This is clearly an attempt by the author to employ the language of Numbers 1. On the other hand, on the basis of the definition utilized here (*בחור יוצא צבא*), it is clear that there was an upper limit to the counting, although this limit was not defined in terms of age, even if it was known and conventional.

Temple Scroll lvii 3-5 says: *ביום אשר ימליכו און[תו] יפקודו א[ת] בני ישראל: מבן עשרים ועד בן ששים שנה לדגליהמה ופקדו[ן] בראשיהמה שרי אלפים...* ("... in the day when the sons of Israel will make h[im] king they will be numbered from twenty years of age till sixty years divided into their camps, and [they] will appoint at their heads officers of the thousands..."). This refers to the new royal guard to be appointed on the day when the king will be crowned, who are to be aged between twenty to sixty. The lower age, twenty, is obviously based upon the biblical sources, but we do not know the textual basis for the higher age of sixty. Perhaps we may surmise that the biblical passages also intended to give a certain maximum age, but did not state so explicitly, and sufficed with the vague *ומעלה* ("and upward"). Yadin claims that the age range

here is taken from Leviticus 27.<sup>11</sup> I cannot agree with this supposition. Leviticus 27 contains several age groups, beginning with the age of one month and upward, the fourth group alone referring to ages sixty and upward. It is not clear how the Qumran sect interpreted the issue of “valuations” with reference to **וּצְאֵי צִבְאָה**. Nor is the issue of the Levites’ ages germane to our subject, because the range differs from the one mentioned above (i.e., 25 to 50 or 30 to 50). Perhaps the practice mentioned was based upon a custom known in one or another biblical period, without being mentioned in any explicit text.<sup>12</sup>

The significance and meaning of the phrase “from twenty years old and upward” in relation to Israel as a whole also appears in connection with the episode of the spies. Numbers 14:29 states: “Your dead bodies shall fall in the wilderness and of all your number numbered from twenty years old and upward....” According to this conception, those who sinned would be punished and not enter the promised land. It is clear here beyond a doubt that this idiom refers to the entirety of the people above twenty, without any age limit. Further on in the book of Numbers, again in connection with the spies, we read, “And the Lord’s anger was kindled against Israel, and he made them wander in the wilderness forty years, until all the generation that had done evil in the sight of the Lord was consumed” (Num 32:13). It follows from this that the dividing line between the generations is at age twenty, and those who were not yet twenty years of age were considered as belonging to the next generation.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Yadin, *The Temple Scroll*, II: 254-256.

<sup>12</sup> The expression “from twenty years and upward” appears also in other texts, such as *11QTemple Scroll* xvii 8: “from twent[y] years and upward they will do it [i.e., the passover] and eat it at night.” That is, according to the Qumran sect, only one over the age of twenty may participate in the passover sacrifice. In this text there is no *terminus ad quem* to the formula, similar to the biblical passages cited here, but the Dead Sea Scrolls contain a series of texts which do give a definite *terminus ad quem* using this formula, as in the above-mentioned example of the royal guard. For other instances, see Licht, *The Rule Scroll*, 255, including a table, and cf. Liver, “The Half Shekel Offering,” 197 n. 63.

<sup>13</sup> On the issue of the mention of age twenty at the beginning of the formula, and the perception of the scope of a generation in the biblical period, see above, “From Twenty Years and Upwards,” at the end of Chapter 3 above, “On **וּדָר** in the Bible.”

## II. *In the Census of the Levites*

The Levites were numbered in two types of census.

1) In the former (Numbers 3), there were numbered all the males in the tribe “from a month old and upward” (Num 3:15, 25, 28, 34, 39), in order to redeem Israel’s first-born. To this end the first-born of Israel were also numbered “from one month old and upward” (*ibid.*, vv. 40, 43). Because the redemption of all the first-born was against all the Levites, it is clear why this age range was chosen.

The starting-point “from one month old” is used, because only from this age is the child considered a living person (similarly, the lowest age mentioned in the valuations in Leviticus 27 is one month). Since the conclusion of this phrase is “and upward,” *ומעלה*, we find that all were numbered, as *all* those mentioned must redeem and be redeemed. The same rule applies to the redemption of the first-born in subsequent generations. This is alluded to in Num 3:44, and especially in Num 18:15-16: “Everything that opens the womb of all flesh. . . nevertheless the first-born of man you shall redeem... And their redemption price (at a month old you shall redeem them) you shall fix at five shekels in silver according to the shekels of the sanctuary which is twenty gerah.”

From the wording of the one-time redemption in the desert (“from one month old and upward”; *מבן חדש ומעלה*—Num 3:40), it is clear that this is intended to define the totality of the first-born and all the Levites. By contrast, in the regular law of redemption of the first-born the phrase *ומעלה* does not appear, because the law does not refer to a gamut of ages, but to those of a certain age. The sense is that at the age of one month the child’s redemption is to be arranged. On the other hand, the expression *מבן חדש* (literally, “from one month old”; Num 18:16) is strange, as it should have been formulated *בן חדש* (“when he is one month old”). It seems to me that this phrase is the result of borrowing from such formulae as: *מבן x שנים ומעלה* (“from x years (or: days) and upward”) or “till x years” (*ועד x שנים*), in imitation of the wording found in the census of the first-born in the desert and their redemption by the Levites, where it was logical to use the expression “from one month old and upward,” as mentioned above.

2) The other type of census in which the Levites appear is related to their work as servants of the tabernacle. There are three traditions concerning this matter.

i. According to the first (Num 8:24), “from twenty- five years old and upward they shall go in to perform the work in the service of the tent of meeting.” We have seen above that the term *ומעלה* is used in formulae

to indicate an undefined upper limit, while here it states in the following verse (v. 25), “and from<sup>14</sup> the age of fifty years (ומבן חמשים שנה) they shall withdraw from the work of the service and serve no more.” Thus, the phrase ומעלה serves here as a supplement to the starting point rather than as the concluding point, as is usual in this formula.<sup>15</sup>

From the phrase in the verse referring to the beginning of service at age 25 (לצבא צבא) or its conclusion (ישוב מצבא העבודה); “they shall withdraw from the work of the service and serve no more”), we may assume that active service ended at the age of fifty. At that point, the text adds, the Levites began another type of work; namely, to “minister to their brethren in the tent of meeting to keep the charge and they shall do no service” (ibid., v. 26).<sup>16</sup> The tradition of the age range of twenty-five to fifty years appears only here in the Masoretic Text; however, in the LXX version of many verses in Numbers 4, the reading is “twenty-five years” rather than “thirty years” (see below concerning this tradition).

ii. In Num 4:3, 23, 30, 35, 39, 43 there is another tradition concerning the range of ages of those in Levitical service: “from thirty years old up to fifty years old all who can enter the service to do the work in the tent of meeting” (Num 4:3); “all who can enter to do the work in the tent of meeting” (v. 23); or “everyone that could enter to do the work of service and the work of bearing burdens in the tent of meeting” (v. 47). Thus, the various types of service which are mentioned in Chapter 8 are

<sup>14</sup> The phrase ומבן seems difficult. I think that, as in the case of the compound form מבן חדש (see above), here too this is a reflection of the perspective of the author himself, who saw himself as dealing with the starting-point rather than the end-point of the formula.

<sup>15</sup> Num 8:24 attempts to define a certain situation during the period in the desert. Namely, when the Levites' service began, some would be aged twenty-five, while others would begin their service at age 30 or 40, as prior to that time the Levites did not serve in the tabernacle, according to the plain evidence of the Pentateuch.

<sup>16</sup> One must take into account that the effect of the general direction of time and the total conception which we have found in the formula “from . . . and upward” can be expressed even without any end point, not even an indefinite one like ומעלה. This is reflected in the status of the Levites who “from the age of fifty years shall withdraw from the work of the service... but minister to their brethren” (Num 8:24). There is no mention there of an upper limit for this second type of service, which begins at the age of fifty; hence, the expression “and from the age of fifty years they shall . . . minister . . . to keep the charge,” etc., is tantamount to the formula: “and from the age of fifty years and upward” (ומעלה). I discuss this type of the “shorter” formula concerning temporal description which does not contain any stipulation about the end (definite or indefinite) above, in Chapter 6, on “The Biblical Formulae for Depicting Duration of Time.”

repeated here, albeit with a variant tradition regarding the age range.<sup>17</sup> It would seem that the LXX rendered all the various items in this chapter as “from twenty-five years old” in order to harmonize the two separate traditions of Numbers 4 and 8.

The phrase **ומעלה** appears in Numbers 4 with the same sense as we identified in Numbers 8. That is, here too **ומעלה** is not used as the *concluding point* of the formula, but determines the direction of flow of time *at the beginning point*. Nevertheless, one cannot argue that **ומעלה** is not used here in its usual sense, and that we have here a term that has “waned” and changed its usual sense; rather, it continues to perform the regular function of indicating the direction of time, but is incorporated in the opening element rather than in the concluding one.

A special variant appears in 1 Chr 23:3 concerning the Levitical census in the time of David: “The Levites, thirty years old and upward, were numbered,” without setting any upper limit (such as “up to fifty years” as in Numbers 4 & 8). Perhaps this wording is intended to include all the Levites without distinction of their tasks, or the author may have used the formula as in Numbers 4 without thinking about the different role which it plays here.

iii. A third tradition concerning the Levitical census is found in several texts from the time of the Second Commonwealth. In Ezra 3:8 the Levites of Zerubbabel’s time were numbered: “They appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward to have the oversight of the work of the house of the Lord.” Because of the absence of a tradition of a Levitical census in this scheme, I should think that this is an imitation of the style and formula used in the general census of the **יוצא צבא** (Numbers 1; 26).<sup>18</sup> Alternatively, there may have been a tradition which paralleled the previous two traditions, but by chance no parallel material found its way into the Pentateuch. The same holds true of the Levitical census of David’s time described in 1 Chr 23:24: “These were the sons of Levi... as they were registered according to the number of the names of the individuals from twenty years old and upward who were to do the work for the service of the house of the Lord” (compare the description of their duties with those mentioned in Numbers 4).

<sup>17</sup> See *b. Hul.* 24a for an attempt to resolve the contradiction among the various traditions concerning the ages for Levitical service.

<sup>18</sup> Is the use here of **ומעלה** as an end-point intentional, while in both traditions of the Levitical census (Numbers 4; 8) it is used as a point of completion of the starting-point? Or is it merely fortuitous? That is to say, here there is a similarity to the usage of the general censuses (Num 1; 26) not only in the range of the ages, but also in reference to the status of **ומעלה**.

In verse 27 of that chapter, the matter of ages is repeated: “For by the last words of David these were the number of the Levites from twenty years old and upward.”<sup>19</sup> Further along (vv. 28-32) their particular tasks are described in detail in connection with the duties of the Aaronide priests. It is worth noting the contradiction in the method of census described in this chapter: on the one hand, the age range is given (twice) as twenty years and upward (vv. 24, 27); on the other hand, at the beginning of the chapter (v. 3) it ranges from thirty upward, as in the system in Numbers 8 (MT). I believe that this passage may be considered a reflection of two separate traditions known to the author (see also below).

In 2 Chronicles the tradition of a Levitical census again appears, and here too it is “from twenty and upward” (2 Chr 31:17). There too their “pedigree” is mentioned: “the priests according to their father’s houses; that of the Levites (LXX: by their divisions) from twenty years old and upward according to their offices.” We may therefore conclude that in sources of the Second Commonwealth period (Ezra and Chronicles) a third tradition of Levitical (and priestly: 2 Chr 31:17) census was introduced, numbering those from twenty years upwards, unlike the systems of either Numbers 4 or 8.<sup>20</sup>

In the Levitical census at the time of Hezekiah, we find another

<sup>19</sup> The form *וּלְמַעְלָה* rather than *וּמֵעַלָּה* appears only in Chronicles (here and in 2 Chr 31:16-17), and cf. Hurvitz, “The Evidence of Language,” 36. One should note that the numbering of the Levites for the purpose of service as starting from twenty years and onward is explained by the verse by the fact that they no longer bear the burden of carrying the tabernacle, as they did during the period of wanderings in the desert (1 Chr 23:26-27). That is, there is no longer any need to start service at the age of thirty because now even Levites of twenty can manage it; but we may still ask about the contradiction between this tradition (of v. 3) with that of vv. 4 and 27.

<sup>20</sup> The difference between the Chronicler’s and the other sources referring to the Levitical census has been explained as reflecting the differing status of the tribe and the different tasks imposed upon the Levites. See Rudolph, *Chronikbücher*, 156; Kittel, *Die Bücher der Chronik*, 85-87. On the small number of Levites during the Second Commonwealth, see Myers, *1 Chronicles*, 160-61; Rothstein-Hänel, *Kommentar zum ersten Buch der Chronik*, 419-20. The tradition of the Chronicler is of those who are twenty and upward; hence the text in 1 Chr 23:3 concerning those who are thirty years and onward is defined by Rudolph (*Chronikbücher*, 153, 155) as an independent tradition which differs from that of the Chronicler’s. On the difference between the age of the Levites serving in the Second Commonwealth as against their age during the First Temple period, see Liver, *Chapters in the History of the Priests and Levites*, 31. On the relation between the ages in the several censuses and the Levitical census in the Second Commonwealth period, see Rothstein-Hänel, *Kommentar*, 411. On the reduction in the number of Levites during the Second Commonwealth and the consequent decline in the starting age in order to fill the ranks of men needed to serve, see Wolff, “Problems Between the Generations,” 81.

range of ages. 2 Chr 31:16 states that: “except those enrolled by genealogy, males from three years old (שלוש שנים ולמעלה) and upwards, all who entered the house of the Lord as the duty of each day required for their service according to their offices by their divisions.” Perhaps this is a mistake and the author in fact intended to speak of “thirty” as in the tradition of Numbers 8. But if this reading is in fact correct, then it is not clear what is meant, for of what use would a census be of those who are three years old<sup>21</sup> among “all who entered the house of the Lord”?<sup>22</sup> And what is the relation between the system of this census and the systems of other Levitical censuses?<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>21</sup> Rudolph (*Chronikbücher*, 309) thinks that the Levitical lists of three-year-olds refers to those who were due to serve, while the service was actually (according to the system mentioned there) from twenty years and onward. Cf. Myers, *II Chronicles*, 81-82 who amends the reading to שלושים, “thirty,” as has been suggested by other commentators.

<sup>22</sup> This differs from the Levitical census which begins at one month of age and whose aim is to give their total number; see above.

<sup>23</sup> On the formula מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמֵעֵלָה and the perception of the scope of a generation, see above, Chapter 6.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### ON THE USES OF THE TERM “UNTIL THIS DAY” (עד היום הזה)

The formula **עד היום הזה** (“until this day”) appears a total of 84 times in the Bible (plus another 12 times in the form **עד היום**). This formula is used to indicate that a given phenomenon (or its results), which found, at the time depicted in the text in which the formula is brought, has existed from the time the things were written, and that it continues to exist.

This comment would seem to indicate that the time of writing of the things is a significant distance from the time at which the events took place. Otherwise, what does the statement that the phenomenon still exists contribute, if it took place or was established or the like just now, or not long ago? The use of the formula elicits various questions; we shall begin by classifying the information that emerges from use of the formula.

#### 1. *Kinds of Use*

##### I. *Place Names*

A series of texts incorporating this formula are concerned with pointing out the history of a given place and elucidating the time at which its name was fixed. The earliest description belonging to this group is one concerning the calling of the name Beer-sheba. In Genesis 26:33 we read, in connection with the covenant made between Abraham and Abimelech: “He called it Shibah (**שבעה**); therefore the name of the city is Beer-sheba (**באר-שבע**) to this day.”

Only with regard to the generation of the Exodus does the second name involving this use appear. **חות יאיר**—Deut 3:14, which mentions the activity of Yair son of Manasseh in the Argob district, also refers to his activity in the Bashan: “and called the villages after his own name, Havvoth-Jair, as it is to this day.” This detail again appears in the book of Judges (10:14); if it in fact alludes to the same place, the tradition of this verse associates the name with the judge Yair the Gileadite.

If the first version is correct, then the giving of the name was done

during the generation of the settlement, in wake of the Exodus from Egypt; if the second version—then the name was only fixed during the period of the judges. It follows from this, that if the stories refer to the same place, we have here traditions that conflict with one another.

But perhaps things can also be resolved on the basis of the conjecture that both texts refer in practice to the same tradition.<sup>1</sup>

It is stated with regard to a series of places that their names were fixed during the period of settlement. Thus Gilgal, Joshua 5:9, which according to the etiological story is connected with the circumcision of the Israelites upon the crossing of the Jordan, according to the divine statement, “This day I have rolled away the reproach of Egypt from you. And so the name of that place is called Gilgal (גלגל) to this day.”

The name עמק עכור (“Valley of Achor”) is also connected with this period, in that the story connects the creation of the name with the trespass committed by Achan (Josh 7:26). At the beginning of the Book of Judges (Ch. 1) a report appears about a man who went to the land of the Hittites and built a city “and called its name Luz; that is its name to this day” (1:26). Further on during the period of the judges we likewise find two names to which there is attached the formula “until this day.” One is connected with Samson: “therefore the name of it was called En-hakore; it is at Lehi to this day” (Jdg 15:19). The name “the camp of Dan” also belongs to the period of the judges; the calling of this name relates to the stages of the ascent of the tribe of Dan northwards: “and went up and encamped at Kiriath-jeraim in Judah. On this account that place is called Mahaneh-dan to this day; behold, it is west of Kiriath-jearim” (Jdg 18:12).

From the period of the monarchy there are three passages that utilize this formula to indicate place names which were preserved “until this day.” Thus “Perez-uzzah” (2 Sam 6:8), which is called this for an incident involved in the bringing of the ark of the covenant up to Jerusalem. “The land of Cabul” (1 Kgs 9:13) relates to the connections between Solomon and Hiram. There is also mentioned the giving of the name Joktheel during the reign of Amaziah: “He killed ten thousand Edomites

---

<sup>1</sup> See the commentaries to the passages in question, especially Seeligmann, “Etiological Elements”; Childs, “A Study of the Formula ‘To This Day,’” and the bibliography cited in both. There is also a great deal of literature cited in the scientific exegesis of the central passages, such as those discussed in the present chapter. On the formula, עד היום הזה, see: Saebø, s.v. יום, 570; Köhler-Baumgarten, *Lexicon*, II: 399-401; Clines, s.v. יום, *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, IV: 167-185; Long, *The Problems of Etiological Narrative*, 6-8, 90-93.

in the Valley of Salt and took Sela by storm, and called it Joktheel, which is its name to this day” (2 Kgs 14:7).

In summary, we may say that this use of place names, about which it is stated that their name was given them at a certain time and that it has been in use since then up to the time of their being mentioned in writing, is infrequent. All told, there are ten places in the entire Bible of which it is stated that their name is associated with a specific event or matter, and that they have continued since then. This despite the fact that there are numerous places mentioned in the Bible without any mention of this formula—a phenomenon deserving of our attention.

## II. *Objects, Especially Holy Ones*

Another group of statements of the type “until this day” is connected with the existence of various kinds of objects, of which people relate the manner of their formation from a certain point in the past until the present of the narrator.

The earliest items mentioned in such a manner are the twelve stones placed in the Jordan River upon which, according to what is related (Josh 4:9), the feet of the priests stood during the crossing of the Jordan. In the stories of settlement there are three passages relating to objects that exist “until this day.” Thus, there is mentioned the heap of stones in the Valley of Achor (7:26). Another great heap of stones is mentioned in the story of the ruins of Ai, which is explained by the fact that these were the stones placed over the body of the king of Ai. It is likewise mentioned in that same story that the ruins of Ai as such, created in the days of Joshua, remained as they were until the time of the narrator (8:28-29).

At the time of composition of the Book of Samuel people were still able to point out the monument in the Valley of the King and connect it to what befell Absalom (2 Sam 18:18).

It is quite natural that a special place is occupied by objects that are close to sanctity; hence, it is not surprising that objects having a certain holiness are connected with specific stories concerning the manner of their creation, as these are matters that lie in the center of the life of the simple person, who has a sense of awe and respect for the holy. It therefore should not be surprising that a tradition is found concerning the altar of the Lord in Ophrah, which was created under certain circumstances in the days of Gideon and is called “The Lord is Peace” (ה' שלום) which is its name “until this day” (Judg 6:24). In the stories of

the bringing up of the ark of the Lord a tradition is preserved of “a great meadow (or: stone), beside which they set down the ark of the Lord” (1 Sam 6:18).

Concerning the ark of the covenant placed in the house of the Lord in Solomon’s Temple, it is stated that the long poles of the ark were not seen from outside “and they are there to this day” (1 Kgs 8:8).

The expression “until this day” appears one more time in connection with the holy things.<sup>2</sup> I refer to 1 Kgs 10:12, in which there appears a negative formulation regarding the beauty of the building of the Temple of the Lord (in the days of Solomon), the like of which had never been seen “until this day.”<sup>3</sup> From the middle of the period of the monarchy the expression is used in the chapter on the spring of water that was healed by Elisha: “so the water has been wholesome to this day” (2 Kgs 2:22).

### III. *Phenomena in Israelite History—Historical, Ethnic and Geographic Matters*

An additional group of texts includes phenomena from the history of Israel, whose consequences, signs and traces remained until a later period. In this way, the phenomenon of the presence of foreign families in Israel is explained in terms of a particular matter that took place in past history: thus with regard to the family of Rahab (Josh 6:25), in the context of the assimilation of Canaanite tribes within the inheritance of Israel, there exists a number of traditions explaining the situation that could still be observed at the time of the narrator. Similarly the presence of Canaanites within the tribe of Ephraim (Josh 16:10); of Geshur and Maachah among Israel (13:13); the dwelling of the Jebusites in Benjamin (Jdg 1:21), who, according to a parallel version, dwelt in Judah.

In a different line, there appear details concerning the dwelling of Simeon instead of the Hammites, whom they conquered and expelled, and similarly the expulsion of the Meunim and others by Simeon and their settling in their place (1 Chr 4:41). There is also depicted a reverse situation (similar to that in the early texts) of the unique status of the

<sup>2</sup> This is in addition to the subject of the heap of stones, the altar of the Lord (in Ophrah), the poles of the ark which were located in the inner sanctum of the First Temple, and other elements of the holy.

<sup>3</sup> See the discussion of this verse above, in the chapter on the use of the terms לפנים לבראשונה to describe past time in the Bible.

Gibeonites in Israel, who by means of trickery acquired a status of immunity from conquest and expulsion, and who performed various functions of service to the congregation and the altar of the Lord “to this day” (Josh 9:27). That is, the contemporary reality of the presence of a foreign ethnic element in various servile capacities is explained by means of a treaty that was made in the distant past of the people and whose implications were known until the period of the Return.

In the account of various events in the history of Israel from which there were drawn various statements and situations, a formula is mentioned, such that there was preserved from the period of the settlement the story that explains the settlement of the Calebites in Hebron, a matter pertaining to the head of the family, to whom Joshua fulfilled his earlier promise (still from the days of Moses) concerning his inheritance.

From the beginning of the monarchical period we find a number of passages in which this formula is used. Thus, concerning the rule relating to those who stay by the baggage, it states that it was established by David, and that it has been maintained “to this day” (1 Sam 30:25).

From the time of Solomon a report is preserved concerning the Amorites and Perizzites who provided a levy of forced labor in the days of Solomon (1 Kgs 9:21). From a later period there are mentioned the Arameans (Edomites) who dwell in Elath (2 Kgs 16:6); regarding other foreigners, it states that they continue to observe their original customs and religion (2 Kgs 17:34).

In a narrower context there is mentioned the revolt of Edom (and of Libnah) against Israel, whose results continued “to this day” (2 Kgs 8:22).

There is also found in the writings a completely “foreign” report, one whose details do not directly pertain to Israel at all. In Deut 2:22, there is given a very ancient report concerning the dwelling of the Seirites in the land of the Horites, who lived in that area previously.

Completely foreign reports, with no connection whatsoever to Israel, appear in the Book of Genesis with regard to the “exemption” of the lands of the priests from confiscation by Pharaoh, while the rest of the lands in Egypt were subject to a fixed percentage [of the produce] (20%) as tribute to Pharaoh (Gen 47:24). There likewise appears a detail concerning the practice of the priests of Dagon to skip over the threshold of the house “to this day” (1 Sam 5:5), explained in terms of events related to the history of Israel; even in the days of King Josiah (and the prophet Zephaniah) they still remembered the Philistine custom of the

priests of Dagon skipping over the threshold of their Temple (Zeph 1:9).

#### IV. *Institutions and Customs in Israel*

Close to the matters mentioned in the previous section, there appears a detail concerning the status of the Beerothites in relation to the Gittaim “to this day” (2 Sam 4:3). Even prior to this it is mentioned that, because of the connection between David and Achish, “therefore Ziklag has belonged to the kings of Judah to this day” (1 Sam 27:6). It is a question as to what the precise meaning of this information is. Does it mean that it belonged to the inheritance of Judah, or to that of the royal house? I prefer the latter interpretation, as it seems pointless to say that a particular place belonged to the inheritance of Judah, as the kingdom of Judah incorporates numerous places. The situation is different if this refers to the royal inheritance, which is more unique. Even the language used by the verse “belonged (הִיְתָה)—i.e., the past tense) to the kings of Judah” supports this interpretation.

A general-Israelite historical reality is expressed with the help of this formula. This is also the usage appearing in the very latest writings that use this formula—namely, those passages referring to the exile of the northern kingdom to Media and to the River Gozan, etc. (thus in 2 Kgs 17:23; 1 Chr 5:26).

Moses’ speeches in the Book of Deuteronomy contain two further statements using the phrase “to this day.” The one refers to the destruction of the Egyptians (11:4) “to this day”—that is, that there is no trace left of them even in the days of the speaker. Because of the literary device attributing these words to Moses, it follows that the term הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה is used here, *unlike the usual manner of use of the formula*, in the context of a very brief period of time, about forty years, the period of the wandering. This is so, because Moses’ lengthy address in the book is ascribed to the fortieth year.

Such an anomaly is also present in another statement (10:8), which states that, at the time of the wandering, “the Lord set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister to him and to bless in his name, to this day.” Here too the use of the formula is surprising, for what is added by stating that a certain matter, which was instituted not long since, is still extant? It would seem that the very use of this formula is indicative that the literary “stance” (namely, that we have here a speech of Moses) does not express

the real date of composition (sometime in the period of the monarchy). One may also infer from this the extent to which things are formulaic; that is, their use is routine in the literary sense, so much so that their authors did not feel the roughness created as the result of its use in certain contexts. In terms of the substance of the thing, it is clear that it is not the author's intent to inform us that the Levites served in the holy place till his day, as this was something known and accepted. Rather, he wishes to identify a well-known and wide-spread phenomenon—the sacred service of the Levites—with a project dating back to the time of Moses. In other words: in both of these cases, the main purpose of using the formula is to indicate the *beginning* of a given phenomenon and its establishment, and not the fact that it continued and persisted “to this day.”

We also find the formula used with regard to a much earlier period, in the days of Jacob. In the story of the struggle with the angel, it is stated: “Therefore the Israelites do not eat the sinew of the hip which is upon the hollow of the thigh to this day” (Gen 32:33). It is clear that this is an etiological story, meant to explain an existing custom, which was attached to a certain matter involving one of the founding fathers of the nation.<sup>4</sup>

Another tradition relating to a holy matter is that found in Ezekiel 20 concerning the origin of the name Bamah (“high place”): “I said to them, What is the high place to which you go? So its name is called Bamah to this day” (v. 29). This is a strange tradition, in that it is clear that we have here an etiological attempt to explain the name Bamah. But what is surprising is the very use of the formula, for what importance is there to the fact that a particular name exists to this day? Presumably, the main point is the statement that the phenomenon *began* from a certain event or period, and not that it continued until the time of writing—similar to what I noted above concerning the passages from Deuteronomy.

## 2. *The Element of Time in the Formula עד היום הזה (“Till Today”)*

Analysis of the question of the time of the formula indicates that one needs to distinguish between two subjects: a) the time of the events, in which the formula is incorporated—that is, from what time did the

<sup>4</sup> For material on the etiological approach to the use of the formula, as well as regarding its regular historical use, see Saebø, יום, 570.

phenomenon begin, the object come into existence, etc.; b) the time of composition of the formula. In other words: what is the present, that is, the היום הזה, “this day,” referred to by the formula in a given passage? While the former matter may be located easily and with great exactitude, this is not so regarding the other matter. I shall explain my remarks:

Underlying the use of the formula lies the identification of the time of the story as a whole. Thus, for example, the conquest of Ai and its destruction and being made into a heap of ruins is coupled with the announcement that this act (that is, its destruction and preservation in that state) persisted until the time of the author. The same holds true for the act of Amaziah in the conquest of Sela from the Edomites and the calling of the place Jokhtheel, which was done immediately upon its conquest.

The time of the activity, or the matter, the calling of the name, and the like, are a direct result of the events described in the other parts of the text. Generally speaking, there is no difficulty in determining the time that the work *speaks about* or portrays.

As for the second element—the time of the narrator—here things are more difficult, and often impossible to discover. Generally speaking, we are unable to know the *duration of time* that the phenomenon persisted, that is, until what time period at least it persisted. Nevertheless, this does not mean that it is impossible to locate the present.

At times, it is possible to identify the time of a biblical text if we have at hand sufficient evidence (from the realm of language, history, or of other areas). It is therefore inevitable that, at times, we are able to identify the time of a text that includes the formula in question.

Moreover, it is possible to locate the present time, which is alluded to in the phrase “to this time,” on the basis of the principle of *terminus ad quem*. This assumes that we know that a given phenomenon, institution, or subject or their like ceased to exist at a certain time period. It is therefore clear that the text incorporating the statement that the matter still exists is *prior* to this time. Hence a statement such as that in 1 Kings 12:19: “So Israel has been in rebellion against the house of David to this day,” which is a result of the split in the time of Rehoboam, was written *no later than* prior to the destruction of Samaria—assuming that the phrase is to be taken literally. An author writing later than this time, if he intended what he wrote, must have been aware that the (northern) kingdom of Israel no longer existed at all.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> It is possible that a Judaite author might have expressed himself thus even after



It is in this manner, perhaps, that one may explain that the changing of the name Sela, which Amaziah conquered from Seir, to Jokhtheel (2 Kgs 14:7) was no longer in effect after these territories were returned to Edom, or to another realm—that of the Assyrians, for example. Hence this statement is suitable for the period that it was still in the hands of Judah. The same holds true regarding the mention of the ark in the Temple (1 Kgs 8:8),<sup>6</sup> which if understood literally must have been made at a time prior to Josiah, for as is known at that time the ark disappeared (Jer 3:16), [on this issue see the discussion further].

An interesting example of locating the “present” layer, referred to in the formula as “this day,” may be seen in 1 Kgs 10:12, where it states: “And the king made of the almug wood supports for the house of the Lord, and for the king’s house, lyres also and harps for the singers; no such almug wood has come or been seen, to this day.” The parallel text in 2 Chr 9:11 reads: “And the king made of the algum wood steps for the house of the Lord and for the king’s house, lyres also and harps for the singers; there never was seen the like of them *before in the land of Judah* (לפנים בארץ יהודה).” Here it is acknowledged that the present time depicted in the words “to this day” in 1 Kgs 10:12 must have been very early in order to suit what is said here. This is so, because the direct testimony of the author of Chronicles is that what is stated in the original verse had already changed, making him unable to repeat verbatim the formula, because were he to do so he would not be writing the truth. This, presumably, because in *his days* there was already comparable beauty in the building, so that what is said in Kings no longer adds anything. Hence he changed the usage in the formula in such a way as to refer to *the past only*: “there never was seen the like of them before in the land of Judah.” (See further our discussion in Chapter 4 on the use of the terms לפנים and בראשונה in the Bible.)

Similarly, what is said concerning the law dividing the spoils between those who go to war and those who sit with the baggage, which according to the testimony of 1 Samuel 30 was continued “to this day,” must have

---

the destruction of Samaria. The use of the formula may be, on the one hand, the result of a formulaic saying, without taking into consideration their application vis-à-vis the existence or disappearance of the northern kingdom, or the author may have deliberately expressed his view of the fact that, indeed, “to this day” the destiny of the people of Israel had been negatively influenced by the sin of the northern rebellion against the house of David.

<sup>6</sup> On this matter, see the remarks by Noth, *Könige*, 180, and there, *ibid.*, on the etiological character of this passage.

been made prior to the exile; that is, it can only have been made so long as there existed a sovereign Judah, with an army that went out to war. The same holds true regarding the text that speaks of the poles of the ark in the Temple of Solomon: it is stated there that the long poles of the ark were not seen from outside “and they are there to this day” (1 Kgs 8:8). It seems clear that if the things fit the time of the author and he clearly meant the testimony that he gave, then the text cannot be later than that of the disappearance of the ark (which, as is known, no longer existed in the days of Jeremiah—see Chapter 3 in his book), or at least so long as the Temple existed—that is, prior to its destruction by Nebuchadnezzar in 587/86 BCE. All this, as we said, assumes that this is not a rhetorical staying, without taking into consideration the accuracy of the historical data at the time of the author. For he is in the habit of using linguistic formulae which at times entered the language as habitual phrases, without thinking about each use of them in terms of their conformity with historical truth.

### *3. Distribution of the Findings over Various Periods*

As noted above, the earliest time depicted with regard to the use of this formula is the days of Isaac (regarding the calling of the name Beer-sheba). On the other hand, the latest use of the formula is in connection with the exile of the Reubenites: “So the God of Israel stirred up the spirit of Pul king of Assyria, the spirit of Tiglath-pilneser king of Assyria, and he carried them away, namely, the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh, and brought them to Halah, Habor, Hara, and the river Gozan, to this day” (1 Chr 5:26; cf. 2 Kgs 17:23). In parallel, in relation to that same time, material is found regarding those exiled from these places to Samaria, stating that they continued to maintain their religious customs until the time of the narrator; see 2 Kgs 17:34.

Despite the extensive “distribution,” even a superficial examination reveals that in practice this is very narrow, with only three passages concerning the period of the patriarchs, the Exodus and the desert wanderings. The most extensive use of the formula appears in reference to events and subjects dating from the period of the settlement—17 times; and from that of the monarchy—18 times.

Thus, the great majority of texts refer to the period of settlement and to that of the monarchy. In my opinion, there is no reason for surprise regarding the period of settlement, as this period is filled with

acts of conquest and settlement, which often involved changing of names in order to concretize the settler's ownership of the land. Various acts of conquest also lead to the discovery of various objects, which remained as symbols in the landscape, and about whose history stories were written. Thus, the distribution of the use of this formula indicates that there are very few passages from the earliest periods using the formula in question, and that the quantity is similar also in relation to those periods that are later than that of taking possession and settlement.

In my opinion, the total number of appearances of the formula in relation to the period of settlement is relatively low. As I have just argued, the period of settlement and those close to it provided appropriate opportunities for numerous declarations as to the preservation “to this day” of objects, places and institutions of various kinds. The limited use therefore calls for explanation, and we need to turn our attention to resolving this puzzle.

One might argue, for example, that we have here a style of writing of certain specific authors, so that the absence of additional use regarding other places or objects is not due to a lack of suitable opportunities, but because the stories do not derive from those circles which were in the habit of expressing themselves, among other things, by use of the formula in question. According to this explanation, those texts lacking in this formula found other solutions for formulating this idea. Otherwise, how can it be explained that it is only regarding some of the places that we find the use of the formula, given that other places were also established and called by name, and the like. In cases where the formula in question is not used, there appears another formula: ...**על כן קרא שמו** (“therefore they called its name..”), or its like.

In Gen 21:31 it states: “Therefore that place is called Beer-sheba; because there both of them swore an oath.” One might well ask why there doesn't appear here the concluding phrase **עד היום הזה**, “until this day.” In another verse, also concerning Beer-sheba, we in fact find that selfsame formula used close to the opening, as follows: “therefore the name of the city is Beer-sheba to this day” (**עד היום הזה**; Gen 26:33).

But one may answer the question regarding the lack of use of this formula in another way: perhaps those passages in which the formula is not used indicate a different significance of the situation and matter. However, as we are unable to otherwise distinguish between those texts whose main difference is the presence or absence of this formula, I prefer the previously mentioned solution.

The distribution of passages as mentioned may be exemplified also

by means of the findings according to the books of the Bible: Genesis – 3 times; Deuteronomy 3 (4) times; Joshua-Judges – 6 times; Kings – 11 times; 1 Chronicles – 8 times. In practice, despite the smaller number of appearances of the formula in Joshua and in Kings, its use in the Book of Joshua is relatively speaking several times greater than in the other books, because the number of verses in the Book of Joshua is about half (to be exact, 42.8%) that of the book of Kings. It follows that our conclusion that the main use of the formula is regarding the period of the Settlement is confirmed by this finding as well.

Perhaps this may also be noted in support of the former of the two conjectures mentioned above regarding the reason for the absence of the formula in an identical context (calling of names, objects in the landscape, etc.) to that of the texts in which the formula appears: namely, that this is a matter of stylistic-literary tendencies. While this is also related to appropriate opportunities for use of the formula, the opportunity as such does not “guarantee” the use of the formula, because not all of the writers behaved thus.

#### *4. Further Characteristics of the Use of the Formula “To This Day”*

In addition to the characteristic points mentioned above, let us attempt to classify the texts here by other criteria. First of all, many passages which include this formula deal with various kinds of historical information. (These include issues of the dwelling of foreigners in Israel, and the opposite—the dwelling of Israelites among aliens.) To this latter group belong the testimonies concerning the exiles of Israelites to Assyria (2 Kgs 17:23) and against them the statements pertaining to those exiled from those places (river Gozan and the like) to Samaria and to other places (*ibid.*, vv. 34 and 41). The information about the status of the Gibeonites in relation to the community congregation of Israel belongs here (Josh 9:27). In other words: the great majority of passages of this type deal with the relation between Israel and foreign tribes and peoples.

Another group of texts are concerned with portraying the history of the aliens, in cases where the subject of the story has no direct relation to Israel. For example, the immunity of the lands of the Egyptian priest from Pharaoh’s taxes (Gen 47:26). In practice, all of these texts are of the order of survivals. These fragments are brought in the Scriptures because they have some bearing upon what is being said about the history of Israel. That is to say, their authors or redactors saw fit to include these details in order to explain by their help various movements

in the history of Israel, because they had a tendency toward giving details of history connected directly to strangers.

A long series of texts are concerned with providing a reason for the existence of certain objects. The function of the formula as it is incorporated in the various types of stories of this type is to connect an object that was existing until that time with certain historical events which were rooted in the people (such as not eating the sinew of the hip muscle) and are described thus.

As for the place names, we already noted above that a considerable part of the texts which involve the use of this formula do not appear in the case of the story of the founding of a place whose name is well known. The only exception to this is the story of Beer-sheba.

It therefore seems to me that one may conjecture, as I have already mentioned, that the subject of the use of the name Beer-sheba appears because there were two traditions concerning the source of the circumstances of calling its name.

If we do not explain the use of the formula in the way we have done, it will be very difficult for us to provide an answer to a number of basic questions involved. First of all, why is it necessary at all to state that the name is called thus to this day. What does this add, since everyone knows this? It would therefore seem that the main concern in such passages is to connect the calling of the name of an unknown place to a certain narrative tradition, or to connect a well-known narrative tradition to an unimportant place name.

In concluding this chapter, it should be mentioned that there are three appearances in the Bible of a variant version of the above: **עד עצם היום הזה** (“to this very day”)—Lev 23:14; Josh 10:27; Ezek 2:3. Yet two of these three appearances have no connection to what we have discussed relating to the systematic formula, **עד היום הזה**, and only Josh 10:27 is relevant to our discussion, as it says there: “But at the time of the going down of the sun, Joshua commanded, and they took them down from the trees, and threw them into the caves where they had hidden themselves, and they set great stones against the mouth of the cave, which remain to this very day.” It seems clear that the function of the formula here is identical to its regular use, as we have discussed it in this chapter. Its concern is to point out the great stones that have rested for centuries on the opening of the cave in Makedah, so that people might become accustomed to asking as to its nature and character.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> For further discussion of the subject raised in this chapter, see above, Chapter 7,

---

“The Phrase ‘From . . . and Onward/Upward (מ... והלאה / ומעלה) in the Bible.” Among other things, I compare the Chronicler’s use of the formula to that of those passages that he repeats from Samuel and Kings, as well as his own independent use of the formula.

### III

## UNITS OF TIME IN THE BIBLE

*This page intentionally left blank*



## CHAPTER NINE

### DEPICTIONS OF BRIEF TIME INTERVALS IN THE BIBLE

The Bible does not contain terms defining precise units of time, particularly with regard to brief intervals. Hence, use was made of other terms or phrases for this purpose. Since, in general, the Bible makes use of the principle of relativity in relation to different statements concerning the subject of time, this is also done in relation to the definition of brief time intervals.

In order to describe brief units of time, the Bible uses various phrases whose basic sense is a moment, day, night, or equivalent terms—i.e., words describing “quantity” of time—as well as terms relating to the speed of activity and its description. One of the basic terms used to refer to a brief time interval is רגע, in its various combinations. The essential use of this term is to describe a brief period of time, but this tendency stands out more clearly in the combination of רגע with other words.

Thus, in Exodus 33:5: “If for a single moment (רגע אחד) I should go up among you, I would consume you.” The use of the term emphasizes the sense of a minimal amount of time, the point here being: a momentary appearance of God is sufficient to bring about ruin and destruction. There is no doubt that the term רגע suffices in itself to express that same idea, but once combined with the word אחד, the combined phrase taken together, “a single moment,” expresses an even more fleeting interval of time. A similar effect is attained by the phrase רגע קטן, particularly in contrast to the antithetical use of רחמים גדולים: “For a brief moment I forsook you, but with great compassion I will gather you” (Isa 54:7).

A similar effect is obtained by use of the idiom, “hide yourself for a little while (כמעט רגע) until the wrath is past” (Isa 26:20): if רגע is a brief period of time, then כמעט רגע is even briefer.<sup>1</sup>

The same expression reappears in Ezra 9:8: “But for a brief moment

---

<sup>1</sup> There is a problem here, as to from whom they need to hide themselves from. If the appearance of God in v. 20 is connected with saving them, then it is clear why it is “a little while,” as God’s deliverance is like the blink of an eye; but if they are hiding from God, what is the function of the wording “a little while”?

(כמעט רגע) favor has been shown by the Lord our God,” albeit there its connotation is slightly different. Here too the meaning is of a very brief period of time, only in this specific context the sense is: did not such a thing happen very recently? Proof of this is the use of the word ועתה (“but now”), that serves as a kind of counter-foil to the mention of “a brief moment” in the text. Similar to this is the use in Job 20:5: “that the exulting of the wicked is short, and the joy of the godless but for a moment (עדי רגע),” meaning: just recently.

That the word רגע denotes a brief period of time may also be inferred from the contrasting words used with it: in Isa 54:8: חסד עולם—רגע; in Ps 30:6: רגע—חיים; and note also Job 21:13: (ימיהם.. רגע).

From the use of the word רגע to denote a brief time interval, there emerges an additional use of the same term to express suddenness and abruptness, as in Jer 4:20: “Suddenly my tents are destroyed, my curtains in a moment (רגע).” Compare also Num 16:21; 17:10: “that I may consume them in a moment”—that is, quickly, all at once; thus also, “How they are destroyed in a moment” (Ps 73:19). The phrase כרגע to denote speed appears adjacent or parallel to other expressions of speed and of brief time, such as מן בלהות (“by terrors,” *ibid.*), and כחלום מהקיץ (“like a dream when one awakes”; v. 20); etc.

Another use of the word רגע is in the plural. Thus, in Isa 27:3 it states “every moment I water it” (לרגעים אשקנה); or in Ezek 26:16; 32:10: “and tremble every moment (וחרדו לרגעים); similarly, Job 7:17: “and test him every moment” (לרגעים תבחננו). In my opinion, in all of these cases רגע is used in the sense of a brief interval of time, while the plural is used in the sense of a very short time interval; that is, regularly, without interruption, etc.

The word יום (“day”) and descriptions of the day are used in various contexts, including to distinguish between the daylight portion of the diurnal period (יום) as opposed to the hours of darkness (לילה; “night”), and is used in a similar manner to indicate brief time intervals. A simple example of this appears in the description in Num 11:19-20, when God says that the people shall eat meat “not one day or two days, or five days, or ten days, or twenty days, but a whole month...” As the phrase used to indicate the shortest period of time in the above “catalogue” there is mentioned the phrase יום אחד (“one day”), while the pole of discussion chosen to indicate the lengthy period of time is the phrase “a whole month” (*ibid.*, v. 20).

In Isaiah 48 the prophet comforts the people with the news: “from this time forth I make you hear new things” (v. 6), and thereafter he

states “they are created now, not long ago; before today (ולפני יום) you have never heard of them” (v. 7). The phrases “now” (עתה) and “before today” (ולפני יום) indicate the recent past, that is, that which took place but a short time ago; their opposite is מאז, meaning “a long time ago.”

There are other phrases indicating duration of time that are used to depict brief periods of time. Thus in Isa 38:12, “from day to night (מיום לילה עד לילה) thou dost bring me up to an end”—that is, the duration of one day is utilized here to indicate a brief time,<sup>2</sup> which suffices for God to carry out His plan and to kill him.<sup>3</sup> Similar to this is the following, built upon the same length of time using different words: “Between morning and evening they are destroyed: they perish for ever without my regarding it. If their tent-cord is plucked up without them, do they not die, and that without wisdom?” (Job 4:20-21).

That is, the brevity of the time period discussed is recognized here on the basis of the contents of the image, as well as according to the parallel phrases used: מבלי משים (“without regarding it”) and ולא בחכמה (“without wisdom”), which provide the same description in a different direction and with different tools.<sup>4</sup> Compare also Ben Sira 18:26: “From morning until evening the time changeth, and all things haste on before the Lord” (found only in the Greek version).

According to the principle of noting the shorter measure, expressed by the word יום (יום לפני יום, ולא מאז) as mentioned above in Isa 48, and the like), there may be found similar usages, as in 2 Sam 15:20, “You came only yesterday, and shall I today make you wander about?” The distance in time between “yesterday” and “today” is very short; hence it is reasonable to state that one who has arrived not long ago (תמול) should not be employed and put to trouble after such a short time.

Thus, by mentioning the terms for closely spaced days (היום..ועתה) a picture is drawn of brief time intervals.<sup>5</sup> It is the same with other idioms

<sup>2</sup> The relativity of all the material concerned with the issue of time is implied by comparison of the idiom, “from morning until evening,” mentioned above to its use in Exod 18:14, “When Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he was doing for the people, he said, ‘What is this that you are doing... Why do you sit alone, and all the people stand about you from morning till evening?’” It is clear that in this case the idiom is intended to indicate a protracted period of time, not a brief one.

<sup>3</sup> On the description of time based upon the same principle, see below.

<sup>4</sup> “Without regarding it” (מבלי משים)—i.e., so briefly and quickly that before a person even notices what has happened, such and such a happening is likely to take place. The sense of “without wisdom” (ולא בחכמה) is: before he manages to arrive at the wisdom of the thing, that is, before he can understand what is being spoken about.

<sup>5</sup> Compare Ezra 9:7-8, “to this day... as at this day. But now for a brief moment favor has been shown by the Lord our God,” etc.

in this same spirit, such as **תמול... והיום**; compare Job 8:9: “for we are but of yesterday (**כי תמול אנהנו**) and know nothing; for our days on earth are a shadow.” The word **תמול** is an abbreviated expression, whose full sense is **תמול.. והיום** (“yesterday... and today”), but one may forego the second half because of the contents that speak of “we,” that is, of present life. The sense of this description is to say that human beings, because they are in the world for only a short time period (i.e., only since “yesterday”) have not sufficient life experience, and therefore require the experience of “the former generations”: “Will they not teach you, and tell you, and utter words out of their understanding” (ibid., v. 10).

That is: in order to describe that same interval of time the author invokes the image of the shadow **צל** (“our days on earth are a shadow”), which is clearly an image of something extremely brief. The phrase in Psalm 90:4, “but as yesterday” (**כיום אתמול**), is used in a similar way, comparing human life to the eternity of God, in such a manner that it is considered in relation to God “but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night”—that is, again, an extremely brief period of time.

The phrase **תמול שלשום** is likewise used to serve the same function. Thus in Ruth 2:11: “that you did not know before [**תמול שלשום**; lit., yesterday or the day before],” implies, until not long ago. But one needs to take care in interpreting this idiom, because it is also used in the opposite sense—that is, to denote a lengthy period of time. Thus in 2 Chr 11:2: “In times past (**גם תמול גם שלשום**), even when Saul was king, it was you that led and brought in Israel”—that is, even quite some time ago David was the leader in practice. Thus also in Gen 31:2, 5; Exod 4:10; Josh 4:18; and many other passages. It seems to me, albeit without entering into a detailed examination, that most uses of the phrase **תמול שלשום** are intended to describe a lengthy interval of time, that is, of a thing that has become routine.

The word **יום** is used in the plural in different contexts to create a picture of a brief time period. Thus, in the description of the period that Jacob worked in the house of Laban, the years that Jacob worked for Rachel are described as follows: “and they seemed to him but a few days (**כימים אחדים**) because of the love he had for her” (Gen 29:20). It is clear that **ימים אחדים** is understood here as a brief period in comparison to the period of seven (or fourteen) years that he worked in actuality. Likewise in Daniel 11:20, concerning the battle of the king of the north with the king of the south . “Then shall arise in his place one who shall

send an exactor of tribute through the glory of the kingdom; but within a few days he shall be broken (ובימים אחדים ישבר), neither in anger nor in battle”—that is, his downfall shall come about quickly.

The same idiom also appears in Ben Sira 37:25: חיי איש מספר ימים [ראש מספר] (“A man’s life is but a few days, and the life of the people Israel [is without number]” MS. B); or חיי אנוש ימים מספר וחיי ישרון ימי אין מספר (“Man’s life is a few days and the life of Jeshurun is without number”; Ibid, MS. D). That is, the phrase “a number of days” (ימי מספר) functions in the same way as ימים אחדים, that is, to indicate a brief time period.

The term לילה (“night”) is used to paint the same picture. Hence those idioms that are concerned with describing the duration of nighttime serve to describe a brief time period (see above, on the duration of the day in this sense). Thus in Isa 17:14: “At evening time (לעת ערב), behold, terror! Before morning, they are no more!” That is, during the course of the night their lot is turned from bad to good. Similar to this is the image “which came into being in a night (שבן לילה) (היה), and perished in a night” (Jonah 4:10). The difference between the two expressions mentioned is that here two separate nights are depicted: during the course of the first the gourd came into being, and during the second it disappeared. The two halves of the description paint the same picture of an extremely brief period of time, during which a turn in the destiny of things takes place.

The phrase מחר (“tomorrow” or “the morrow”) also belongs to the set of expressions discussed here (יום, לילה, תמול) that are used to describe brief time periods. It is in this manner that one should understand the use of the word מחר in Exod 8. After Pharaoh implores, “Make entreaty for me” (v. 24), Moses replies, ‘Behold, I am going out from you and I will pray to the Lord that the swarms of flies may depart from Pharaoh, from his servants, and from his people, tomorrow’ (v. 25). That is, מחר (“tomorrow”) is used here to indicate the very near future. Similarly in Isa 22:13: “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.” The widespread use of the language of oath and promise כעת מחר (“at this time tomorrow”: 1 Kgs 19:2; 20:6; 2 Kgs 7:1, 18; 10:6) may serve to indicate the rapid realization of the promise.

The phrase קרוב, whose subject matter is identical to that stated above, also belongs to the same semantic field. Therefore the sense of the phrase “for the day of their calamity is at hand” (קרוב יום אידם; Deut 32:35) is: the day of their calamity shall come about in the very

near future.<sup>6</sup> The opposite is the case in the phrase “I see him, but not now” (אֲשׁוּרֵנוּ וְלֹא קָרוֹב; Num 24:17)<sup>7</sup> or, more explicitly, “... of times far off” (לְעֵתִים רְחוֹקוֹת; Ezek 12:27).

A very precise phrase, in which a double idiom is used for the description of a brief time period, appears in Isa 13:22: “its time is close at hand (וְקָרוֹב לְבוֹא עֵתָהּ), and its days will not be prolonged.” In the same sense there is also used the idiom “in a very little while” (עוֹד מְעַט מְזַעֵר; Isa 10:25; 29:17).

The phrase קָרוֹב is taken from measures of *distance*,<sup>8</sup> while the phrase מְעַט is based upon elements of *quantity*. Thus, “If there remain but a few years (מְעַט.. בְּשָׁנִים; Lev 25:52); and “yet a little while (עוֹד מְעַט) the time of her harvest will come” (Jer 51:33).

In order to depict brief time intervals phrases from other areas of description than those mentioned here are also used. Thus, for example, a person’s activities may be used in this context. It is in this manner that I suggest interpreting the phrase, “nor let me alone till I swallowed my spittle” (Job 7:19); or “without any regarding it” (4:20); “when one awakes” (בִּבְהֵירָא; Ps 73:20). Even the phrase מְהֵרָה (“quickly”) may be used in this context; compare Num 17:11; Deut 11:17; Josh 8:19; “like a sigh” (כְּמוֹ הַגָּה) in Ps 90:9; etc.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>6</sup> “For the day of the Lord is near” (Isa 13:6).

<sup>7</sup> “The time is not near to build houses” (Ezek 11:3).

<sup>8</sup> Among the elements of distance that are used to refer to brief intervals of time is the expression, **עַד כֹּה וְעַד כֹּה** (lit., “till here and till here”) that applies a spatial description to the sense of a brief time. Thus in 1 Kings 18:45: “And in a little while (**עַד כֹּה וְעַד כֹּה**) the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain.” See especially the preceding verse, to which the phrase **עַד כֹּה וְעַד כֹּה** refers.

<sup>9</sup> For purposes of comparison, see the relevant entries: **בְּקֵר**, **תְּמוֹל**, **הַיּוֹם**, **קָרוֹב**, **רְגַע**, **עָרַב**, and the like in the Köhler-Baumgarten *Lexicon*, and in Botterweck-Ringgren’s *Wörterbuch*, and in those volumes of Clines’ *Dictionary* that have already been published.

## CHAPTER TEN

### TERMS USED FOR LONG TIME PERIODS IN THE BIBLE

As we said above regarding short time intervals, so too with regard to long periods of time, it must be stated explicitly that the Bible does not provide any absolute or exact definitions regarding this matter. Rather, everything is based upon relative and arbitrary descriptions so as to attain the effect of ongoing, continuous time.

The simplest description of a long period of time is **לא קרוב** (“not near”) or, in its positive formulation, **רחוק** (“far” or “distant”). These phrases need to be compared to the use of **קרוב** and like expressions used to indicate brief intervals of time (see the previous chapter).

This is the function of the expression found in Balaam’s words (Num 24:17): “I behold him, but not nigh (**ולא קרוב**)”—that is, that the things will occur in a distant period. In the chapter concerning those phrases used to indicate brief time intervals, we saw among other things the proximity of the phrase **עתה** (“now”) to terms used for brief time intervals. In that passage, in which the terms **לא קרוב**—**רחוק** are used to designate time, it states in the parallel: “I see him, but not now (**ולא עתה**).” That is to say, from the use of negation of languages used for brief time intervals—“not nigh” and “not now”—one may infer that lengthy periods of time are being spoken of.

In the popular folk saying cited in Ezekiel 12:27, it says: “The vision that he says is for many days hence, and he prophesies of time far off (**לעתים רחוקות**).” The phrase **לעתים רחוקות** depicts a distant time, as it is the intention of the speakers to say that the realization of the vision will be postponed to a long time after the present. The same holds true regarding **ימים רבים** (“many days hence”), which involves a detailed description relating to numerous days between now and the time referred to.

The term **רחוק** is also paralleled, in my opinion, by the word **אחרון** (“the last” or “the latter”), used to refer to particularly distant times. In Psalm 78:4, 6, those things related in the psalm as a whole are justified by the statement, “that the next [better: last] generation (**דור אחרון**) might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children” (v. 6). The phrase **דור אחרון** is parallel here to **בנים יולדו**, “children yet unborn”; hence it is clear that one is not speaking here of

the last generation *literally* (as may be seen by the subsequent phrase, “[they] will arise and tell them to *their* children”), but to a generation in the distant future. This is a kind of technique for expressing a lengthy interval of time by the use of exaggerated language without it being directly understood in the literal sense.

Verse 4 here again mentions “We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation (דור אחרון) the glorious deeds of the Lord,” etc. Again, there appears here in parallel the phrase דור אחרון and בניהם (“their sons”), the meaning being identical. This idiom appears again in Deut 29:21, and there too a parallel is drawn between דור (ה) אחרון (“the generation to come”) and בני ילדו (“your children who arise up after you”). It is clear from the context that the statement here refers to a long period of time, that is, to a generation that shall arise at some point in the future. In other words: a distant time, as in our language here.

The question of telling things to the latter generation reappears in Ps 48:14-15: “that you may tell the next generation (לדור אחרון) that this is God,” etc. Here too it clearly follows that one is describing a time in the distant future. The same is true for Psalm 102:19, “Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet unborn (עם נברא) may praise the Lord.” We find that there too there appears language of making known, informing and writing down for a future generation. The use here of the phrase עם נברא (lit., “a people to be created”) is parallel to the use of בני יולדו and בנים that we found in Psalm 78.

The phrase “X אחרון” also appears in Isa 30:8, in the idiom יום אחרון: “And now, go, write it before them on a tablet, and inscribe it in a book, that it may be for the time to come (ליום אחרון) as a witness for ever.” The phrase יום אחרון (lit., “the latter day”) here, in addition to serving to indicate a time in the distant future (which in this respect is similar in principle to the other uses of אחרון), may also bear the sense of an even more distant future. The proof: the phrase that immediately follows, לעד עד עולם (“as a witness<sup>1</sup> for ever”; see further below). The phrase יום אחרון also appears in the poem to the Woman of Valor: “Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come (ליום אחרון)” (Prv 31:25). On the one hand, the sense here may be similar to the previous usages; on the other hand, it may refer to “the last day,” literally—i.e., the day of death, the sense being that, thanks to the

<sup>1</sup> Thus the RSV translation reads לעד (“as witness”); hence the word עד is concerned with words alluding to the future.



wisdom and diligence of the woman of valor, her affairs are properly arranged up to her death.

Another phrase utilizing the same root (אח"ר) is the well known expression אחרית הימים (often translated "the end of days"; in Biblical Aramaic, באחרית יומיא, Dan 2:28). This idiom appears in many biblical passages, and has at least two main meanings. One use is that in Gen 49:1: "what shall befall you in days to come (באחרית הימים)"; or in Deut 4:30: "When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days (באחרית הימים)."<sup>2</sup> Analysis reveals that the idiom אחרית הימים refers here to a distant historical future. On the other hand, the use of this idiom in the prophetic literature has the effect of a far more distant future, and refers in practice to an eschatological future. Thus, in Isa 2:2: "It shall come to pass in the latter days (באחרית הימים) that the mountain of the house of the Lord..."; or in Jer 23:20: "In the latter days you will understand it clearly."

Both senses of the phrase אחרית הימים that we have mentioned here share a reference to the distant future. The latter of the two usages is paralleled by the idiom קץ הימין ("the end of days"; Dan 12:13), which also portrays a far distant, even eschatological time.<sup>3</sup>

Distant time may also be expressed in a quantitative manner, as in a passage such as "the word that he commanded for a thousand generations" (Ps 105:8). In general, the word דור is used in a variety of different contexts to refer to distant time, as in Isa 13:20, "It will never be inhabited or dwelt in for all generations." Note that the phrase here, דור ודור is parallel to נצח, which is explicitly used to refer to a lengthy span of time, thereby helping to confirm our claim regarding דור ודור. The idiom דור ודור is interpreted as if it embodied a "quantitative" idea, namely, that of many generations.

<sup>2</sup> As a contrast there appears the idiom ימים ראשונים ("the former days"), which refers to the distant past. In general, אחרונים and ראשונים, "the first" and "the last," are used in contrasting combination in the context of the things mentioned here. See Job 18:20: "they of the latter (אחרונים) are appalled at his day, and horror seizes them of the former" (קדמונים). "The latter" refers here to those who will live in "the last generation" in the sense discussed in this chapter. The phrase ראשונים is synonymous with קדמונים; cf. Eccles 1:11: "There is no remembrance of former things (or "former generation" ראשונים); nor will there be any remembrance of later things yet to happen (or: "the latter generations yet to be"; לאחרונים שיהיו) among those who come after." I would also interpret the phrase אחרית in the same sense; it is interesting that the contrasting phrase ראשית also appears adjacent to this phrase. Compare Isa 46:10, "declaring the end from the beginning" (מגיד מראשית אחרית).

<sup>3</sup> There is also the rare idiom באחרית השנים ("in the latter years"), and I do not see any difference in meaning among the various usages of באחרית הימים ("in the latter days"); see above.

This idiom has many uses, but one needs to add that it is two-directional: that is, whereas all the phrases mentioned thus far relate to the future, the phrase **דור ודור** is also used in relation to the distant past. Thus in Deut 32:7-8: “Remember the days of old (**ימות עולם**) consider the years of many generation (**שנות דור ודור**); ask your father and he will show you.... When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance.....” That is, the phrases “days of old” and “years of many generations” refer in this context to the creation of the world (and see above, in the chapter on the term **דור**).<sup>4</sup>

The phrase most commonly used to describe lengthy periods of time is **לעולם** or **לעד**, in various combinations. It may be that some of the idioms using **לעולם** reflect variants in the meaning of the different combinations, but this is not our concern in the present context.

Examples of **עד עולם** appear in the context of Divine promises of the eternity of a given phenomenon, subject, etc. Thus, in 2 Sam 7:13: “and I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever”; compare also the parallel, “and I will establish his throne for ever” (1 Chr 17:12).

In Nathan’s vision, David is assured the duration of the good relations between God and the heir of his house—i.e., the eternity of the Davidic line. In the Torah, the Levites are promised that they will hold their holy office forever, a promise that is even repeated by the Chronicler. Thus, in 1 Chr 15:2: “... but the Levites, for the Lord chose them to carry the ark of the Lord and to minister to Him for ever” (**עד עולם**).

Various kinds of prohibitions may also be formulated with the help of such phrases. Thus, in Neh 13:1, there is a quotation from what is stated in the Torah: “that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever (**עד עולם**) enter the assembly of God.” Compare Deut 23:3: “No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation none belonging to them shall enter the assembly of the Lord for ever.” The prophet of comfort assures Israel that they will not be put to shame or confounded “to all eternity”, **עד עולמי עד**, but that “Israel is saved by the Lord with everlasting salvation” (**תשועת עולמים**; Isa 45:17). We therefore find that the phrase **תשועת עולמים** is parallel to the phrase **עד עולמי עד** in the second half of the parallelism.<sup>5</sup>

A similar idiom is **חיי עולם** (“everlasting” or “eternal life”), used in

<sup>4</sup> On distant days in relation to both directions (distant past and future), see Von Soden, s.v. **יום**, in Botterweck-Ringgren, 563.

<sup>5</sup> Even though the idiom **תשועת עולמים** (“everlasting salvation”) may be interpreted as hyperbole, as one of the forms of superlative expression in the biblical lexicon—i.e., as a great deliverance—perhaps the sense is as I have suggested above.

Daniel 12:2 in relation to part of the people, who will rise to “everlasting life.” This is synonymous to the phrase **עד עולם** mentioned previously. For other combinations of **עד עולם**, see Gen 13:15.

The idiom **עד עולם** is constructed according to one of the principles for expressing lengthy time intervals. Some of these reflect an approach of going until a *particular* end, while others use languages referring to an *endless time*. It seems to me that in the wording **עד עולם**, the latter technique is used.<sup>6</sup>

There are some passages in which the phrase **עד עולם** is combined with other phrases, which are also concerned with depicting time. Thus, such an idiom as **ליום אחרון לעד עד עולם** (“that it may be for the time to come as a witness for ever”; Isa 30:8) includes in effect three expressions, all of which refer to lengthy time periods.

All of the combinations of **עד עולם** (and similar expressions) adduced here are built according to the model of mentioning the concluding pole; that is to say, it is stated therein until when the given phenomenon or Divine promise will take place.<sup>7</sup>

But there is also a bloc of texts in which the phrase **עד עולם** (and the like) appears in a more complete combination. In this model the statements include the opening pole alongside the concluding pole, thereby creating a picture of continuity of time.

A well-known idiom of this sort is **מעתה ועד עולם** (“from this time forth and for evermore”; Isa 59:21) or **מעולם ועד עולם** (“from everlasting to everlasting”; Ps 90:2); **למן עולם ועד עולם** (Jer 7:7); etc. Compare also the separate discussion of these idioms in Chapter 6, on biblical formulae depicting duration of time.

A certain group of phrases creates a picture of lengthy duration of time by relying upon images taken from natural phenomena. These things are formulated in a negative manner: i.e., “till the moon be no more” (Ps 72:7), which is a reality that contradicts the existing nature of the world; hence this expression is tantamount to **עד עולם** (“forever”). Similarly, “till the heavens are no more he will not awake” (Job 14:12), or, in a positive formulation, “while the earth remains” (**עד כל ימי הארץ**; Gen 8:22).

In addition to the phrases mentioned here we must also mention

<sup>6</sup> A similar phrase is **עד עולמי עד** (“to all eternity”; Isa 45:17); **לעד** (Zeph 3:8); **עד העולם** (Ps 28:9); **לעלמא**—in Biblical Aramaic (Dan 2:44); **לעלמין** (Dan 2:4); **עד עלמא**; **עד עלמא ועד עלם עלמא** (Dan 7:18); **דורות עולמים** (Isa 51:9); **יזנה אדני** (Ps 77:8).

<sup>7</sup> On the opening and concluding poles, see Chapter 6 above on duration of time in the Bible.

other idioms, which were mentioned in passing in the chapter on brief intervals of time. I refer to such phrases as **מאז** (that is, a lengthy period of time in the past); **תמול שלשום** (for some of the uses of this idiom, see the chapter on brief time intervals), etc.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> On the terms discussed in this chapter **לעד**, **דור אחרון**, **עולם**, **רחוק**—and the like, see the lexicons, and especially Preuss, s.v. **עולם**, 1154-59. On **עולם** in the sense of a superlative, see Brin, “The Superlative in the Hebrew Bible.”

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### DAY AND DAYTIME: THEIR DIVISIONS AND ORDER

The word **יום** has numerous meanings. We shall attempt here to take note of the gamut of these meanings, in an attempt to define the biblical world-view relating to the understanding of the main components of the principle of time.

A widely accepted interpretation holds that the word **יום** is used in the Bible to refer to the daylight hours, and that on the other hand it is used in the sense of the entire diurnal period.<sup>1</sup> In addition to these two basic meanings, the word **יום** has further meanings in the Bible. We shall attempt to take note of the most important of these.

Different things have been said regarding the perception of the order of the day during the biblical period. There are those who have asserted that the day begins with the morning, and others who thought that it began in the evening. Examination of the relevant scriptural passages indicates that matters are not simple, and that it is theoretically possible that there were several different approaches practiced regarding this matter; this being the case, the matter is presumably dependent upon the meaning and significance of the matter with regard to the particular circle spoken of in the text. For example, a different system of time may exist in the area of cult than that practiced among agriculturists. I am however unable to arrive at any fixed rules regarding this matter, and one may certainly reach the conclusion that one system was used by all of them, and that the differences that seem to exist between them, on the face of it, are a matter of emphases of formulation and no more.

The means of determining the order of the day are generally connected with the manner of enumerating the portions of the day and the like. But a person needs to be cautious regarding this subject, as in a given text the order mentioned may be peculiar to the unique nature and characteristics of that text—for example, that a given action begins in the evening, in which case it will be depicted as continuing

---

<sup>1</sup> The phrase **מעַת עַד עַת** (lit., “from time to time,” i.e., “once a day”; Ezek 4:10), or **מעַת אֶל עַת** (1 Chr 9:25) is also used to describe the day. For a description of the uses of **יום**, see the various lexicons, and Clines, s.v. **יום**, in his Dictionary, IV: 166-185.

from evening till morning—whereas the opposite will be the case in a text describing something that happened in the morning, in which case the order will be from morning till evening.

I nevertheless consider it possible to offer various proofs that the order of the day in biblical times was from the morning on. I will enumerate the proofs that exist regarding this matter.

### 1. *The Words מחר and מחרת*

In a series of texts using the words מחר or מחרת, a clear picture is drawn of the order of perception of the day during the biblical period. Thus, for example, from the verb שכ"מ ("to rise early") one may infer that the morning belongs to the next day, and is not a continuation of the previous evening, which belongs to the previous day. Thus, in Judges 19:9, we read "lodge here... and tomorrow you shall rise early (והשכמתם) ..."—that is, the night they lodged in the home of the father-in-law was considered the conclusion of the previous day, while their rising in the morning was part of the next day. Similar, there are other cases in which phrases relating to השכמה ("rising early") appear together with the words מחר or מחרת, as in Jdg 21:4: "And on the morrow the people rise early"; Exod 32:6: "And they rose up early on the morrow, and offered burnt offerings.."; and cf. 1 Sam 5:3. From the use there of the phrase, "and when... [they] rise early the next day" (without the word בוקר, "morning"), and in v. 4, "But when they rose early in the next morning," one may reach a similar conclusion regarding the order of the day. Thus also in Jdg 6:38: "When he rose early next morning and squeezed the fleece," where the passage verse speaks of a fleece of wool that was moistened by the morning dew.

In the account of the incident of the quail we read, "And the people rose (ויקם העם) all that day, and all night, and all the next day, and gathered the quails" (Num 11:32). We learn from this that "that day" appears here in the sense of the daylight hours of that day, as the nighttime (of that same day) is mentioned separately, and only thereafter does it speak of "the next day." Thus that day began with the morning. Likewise in Gen 19:33-34: "So they made their father drink wine that night... and on the next day..." It seems to me that the same conclusion may be reached regarding the phrases שחר ("dawn") and עלות השחר ("the rising of dawn"); thus in Jonah 4:7: "when dawn came up the next day."

One may also derive insight as to the perception of the unit of the

day from those phrases that see the evening (and the night that follows it) as the end of the unit of the day. Thus in Judges 20:26: “[they] fasted that day until evening (עַד הָעֶרֶב),” where the phrase “until evening” relates to “that day.” Those chapters dealing with purity and contamination express the view that a person is considered contaminated for one day; the customary use in this connection is “shall be unclean until the evening” (Lev 11:24), and many similar verses. The same holds true of the verse “all the people stand about you from morning till evening” (Exod 18:14). And so forth.

Comparison of the different phrases used within one story may yield the same conclusions. Thus, when Saul imposes an oath upon the people before the battle with the Philistines, he says “Cursed be the man who eats food until evening” (1 Sam 14:24). Later, one of the people warns Jonathan, “Your father strictly charged the people with an oath, saying, ‘Cursed be the man who eats food this day’” (ibid., v. 28). The interesting thing in this phrase is that we have here two versions of the oath given by Saul to the people, and that in practice there is no difference between them, except for the stylistic difference relating to the boundary of the prohibition of eating: “until evening” and “this day.” There is thus no doubt these were synonyms. It is again shown that the evening belongs to the day that precedes it.

## 2. *Order of Nature*

Genesis 1 reflects the official biblical version of the order of creation; the account of the creation of the first day already mentions how God separated the light and darkness: “and God separated the light from the darkness” (Gen 1:4) The identification of light with the day and of darkness with the night is then repeated in the same order: “God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night” (v. 5). It follows from this that, in explaining the concept of the diurnal unit, it is composed of day and night, the next morning constituting the beginning of a new day.

Parallel passages to this include Psalm 74:16: “Thine is the day, thine also the night,” which states that God is the master of times, and from which we likewise infer the order of the sections of the day. A similar approach appears at the end of the chapter on the Flood, where God promised to sustain eternally the arrangements of nature: “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter,

day and night,<sup>2</sup> shall not cease” (Gen 8:22). It is reasonable to assume that the order of these pairs is not accidental, but reflects the original biblical understanding of the unit of the day.<sup>3</sup>

This presents a certain difficulty regarding the formulation of the significant text with which we opened the present section—namely, that following the separation of light and darkness and the identification of day and night, there is a stereotypic formula that is repeated throughout the creation chapter, “and there was evening and there was morning, one (a second.. third.. etc.) day” (Gen 1:5-31). There are those who have attempted to interpret this phrase as reflecting an approach according to which the order of the day begins from the evening on. This is, however, incorrect: a) because in the preceding verse the order of light-darkness day-night is mentioned twice, suggesting that this was the order that seemed correct to the author; b) as follows cumulatively from all the evidence in this chapter, there is only one approach followed: from morning until the end of the night, and no other. One therefore needs to resolve the question of order. It seems to me that one may adopt the exegetical solution<sup>4</sup> according to which, when the verse says **ויהי ערב** (“and there was evening”) is speaking of the evening as being the *end* of the day, which is the subject of the description. When it then says **ויהי בקר** (“and there was morning”), this indicates the *beginning* of the next day: by the time of the new morning, the present day is completed. The morning mentioned thus opens the new day, contrary to the view of the medieval and some modern commentators who think that “evening” refers to the starting point of the day, while “morning” refers to the continuation of that same day, so that, in their view, the day begins with the evening. I would further argue against this approach that, according to this view, no coherent picture of the day is created at all. This is so, because according to this explanation the description is “stopped” with the morning of each day, while it should have stopped somewhere closer to the evening. We thus find that, even if we assume that the evening referred to by the phrase “and there was evening” refers to the evening that *precedes the morning*, the description concludes with only half a day. This is opposed to the conclusion of the verse: “(and there was evening and there was morning), *one day* (**יום אחד**).”

<sup>2</sup> The Vulgate here uses the order “night and day,” and I don’t know the reason for this.

<sup>3</sup> The large number of passages that are clearly formulated according to this approach, as clearly follows also from the present chapter, is a significant proof of this.

<sup>4</sup> As suggested in Hartom-Licht, s.v. **יום ולילה**, 601; and see the summary there for a survey of the various exegetical opinions on this matter.



Moreover, while the word יום (“day”) has a number of meanings (the daylight hours, the day as a whole, and other similar meanings), this is not so for the term בקר (“morning”), which cannot under any circumstances be understood as referring to the entire day up to the twilight hours. Moreover, in terms of the subject matter of the first day, this interpretation may be criticized from yet another angle: namely, according to the description of the creation done on the first day, God first created the light and then separated it from the darkness, and so on. Yet if the phrase ויהי ערב is taken as referring to the preceding evening, that “evening” is unlimited, spreading without limit to encompass the chaos that *preceded the Creation*. But according to this interpretation, it was only from the combination of the (previous) evening and the (following) morning that the day is created. Hence, by any possible approach one may not accept the interpretation that the count is figured from the evening on, but only from the morning on.<sup>5</sup>

### 3. *Order of Portions of the Day*

The way in which the ancients arranged the day is also discernible from the order in which they enumerated the principal parts of the day. What do I mean by this? Let us assume that a given text speaks about a certain act or speech taking place during the noon hour. The author, wishing to describe the results of this act or its impact upon other acts,

---

<sup>5</sup> On Ibn Ezra’s approach to interpreting the phrase ויהי ערב ויהי בקר (“then it was evening and it was morning”), see the detailed survey by Simon, “The Exegetic Method.” He demonstrates that only in the *Iggeret ha-Shabbat* does Ibn Ezra arrive at the traditional interpretation, i.e., that the day begins with the evening, and see there in comparison to other exegetes. S. Talmon has recently returned to the subject of the order of the day. In his opinion, in Qumran the system followed was one in which the day began in the morning and the year was solar. The sages, by contrast, lived in a framework in which the day began with the evening, and their year was lunar. The two biblical passages concerning Passover and the Day of Atonement which speak of “from evening till evening” (Lev 23:32; cf. Exod 12:18), are innovations of the Holiness School, which introduced the lunar calendar and the reckoning of the day from evening. In this respect, Qumran, which separated itself from the mainstream of the Jewish people, continued following the biblical practice prior to the change of the Holiness School. See Talmon, “The Reckoning of the Day.” On the other hand, Baumgarten, “Some Notes on 4Q408,” thinks that the Sabbath was observed in Qumran from Friday evening (CD x 14; 4Q 503). He believes that the reference to the light prior to darkness in 4Q408 is not indicative of the order of the day, but of the order of man’s labor, which is from morning till evening. Baumgarten in this argument continues his approach regarding the *Book of Jubilees* (“The Beginning of the Day,” 355-360), in which the day is figured from the evening, in his opinion. His arguments there were attacked by Zeitlin (“The Beginning of the Day”), and cf. Baumgarten’s response in “A Reply to Zeitlin.”

will enumerate the other parts of the day from the time of that act onward, that is, noon, evening (night), and morning. This does not indicate that he saw this as the order of the day in general. He is enumerating, as mentioned, the order of the portions of the day in a chronological manner, but this does not indicate anything as to his understanding of the day and its internal order, when the new day begins, etc.

An examination of the normal order of time in the Bible indicates, in my opinion, an approach to the day that begins with the morning and concludes at night, as I have already mentioned above.<sup>6</sup> This follows clearly from such verses as Exod 24:18; 34:28; 1 Kgs 19:8: “forty days and forty nights”: that is, when the text wishes to define forty days, it does so by combining day and night, in that order. We clearly see that, in elucidating the order of the day, the day precedes the night. Thus, in 1 Sam 30:12: “for three days and three nights”; and compare Jonah 2:1; Job 2:13, and many other passages. So also Job 3:3: “the day perish... and the night which said, ‘A man-child is conceived.’” Concerning the luminaries, it states that among their functions is “to rule over the day and the night” (Gen 1:18). When Jacob described what befell him while guarding Laban’s flock, he states that “by day the heat consumed me, and the cold by night” (Gen 31:40); and similarly whenever a person *speaks in an ordinary, simple manner*. Thus, Elijah was fed by the ravens with “bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening” (1 Kgs 17:6). From this word order we learn that the combination of morning and evening complement our perception concerning the order of the day, and this should be placed alongside linguistic proofs from phrases referring to day and night (יום-לילה). Thus in Lev 6:13: “half of it in the morning and half in the evening”; and likewise Ps 65:9.

A further variant of the combinations of the portions of the day is בוקר-לילה (“morning-night”; this, in addition to the idioms יום-לילה and יום-ערב). Thus in Ps 92:3: “... in the morning... by night”; or in Isa 21:12: “Morning comes, and also the night.” Another idiom involves the use of verbal forms that embody the order of the day; thus 1 Sam 17:16: “the Philistine came forward... morning and evening (השכם והערב)”; and also Gen 31:39; Exod 13:22; Josh 1:8; Isa 4:5; 38:12; Ps 19:3; Eccles 8:16; Ezra 3:3; 1 Chr 23:30; 16:40; 2 Chr 2:3; 13:11.

<sup>6</sup> On the day beginning from morning in ancient Egypt, see Bergman, s.v. יום, 563-564, in Botterweck-Rintgen. For more material on the day beginning from the morning, see Peckham, “History and Time,” 299-313.

“Day and night” is likewise the order in which things are presented in terms of routine occurrences of the order of time in nature; thus in Isa 28:19; Hosea 4:5. In Numbers 11:32, there appears the phrase: **כל הלילה והיום ההוא וכל הלילה** (“all that day, and all night”). Offhand, the phrase **היום ההוא** (“all that day”) ought to refer to the entire day, but it would seem that the intention is to refer to the daylight hours alone while the rest is defined as night, as stated in the verse. The continuation is then defined as the following day: “and all the next day” (ibid.). Note above, in the chapter on the counting of the present day and the relation to it of **מחר**; compare the similar use in Exod 10:13; 1 Sam 19:24; Isa 62:6.

Notwithstanding all that has been said above, there are a number of passages in which the day is mentioned in a different manner—that is, in which words meaning “night” and their like appear before the word “day.” Offhand, these passages would seem to prove the existence in Israel of a school of thinkers and authors who thought that the order of the day was from evening until the late afternoon hours of the next day, unlike the approach that I have presented here. However, I believe that the proofs I have brought thus far suffice to prove that the customary system was to begin from the morning on, and not according to any other system of counting.

Let us now enumerate most of the passages in which the other combinations appear. Thus, in the admonition in Deut 28:66: “Your life shall hang in doubt before you: night and day you shall be in dread.” Here the night appears before the day, but, in my opinion, here and elsewhere the change is the result, not of a different perception of the order of the day, but of the *contents and idea* expressed in the passage. In this verse, the night is placed before the day because it speaks about the emotion of *dread*. There is a natural association between fear and nighttime, that imposes fear through its darkness, more so than it would be connected associatively with daytime. In addition to this argument, this may also be shown by various biblical passages. There is indeed an explicit association of this kind, as in Ps 91:5: “You will not fear the terror of the night”; Prv 3:24: “If you lie down [i.e., during the nighttime hours] you will not be afraid”; or Cant 3:8: “each with his sword at his thigh, against alarms by night.” It thus follows from the context, and so as not to spoil the picture he has created, that the author of Deuteronomy 28 switched the usual order of the day, placing night before day so as to create the associative connection that exists specifically between fear and night.

I explain the departure from the usual order in Deut 1:32-33 in a

similar manner: "...you do not believe in the Lord your God who went before you in the way to seek you out a place to pitch your tents, in fire by night, to show you by what way you should go, and in the cloud by day." The reference to pitching camp is associated with nighttime and rest; hence the night was here mentioned before the day.

One of the young men of Nabal the Carmelite reports to Abigail concerning David and his men, that "they were a wall to us both by night and by day" (1 Sam 25:16). Here too there is a reason for switching the order, in the contents of the picture. The image "wall" is connected figuratively to guarding. It seems to me that the association of wall and *protection* is more logically connected conceptually to night than it is to day.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps the language used in Zech 2:9, "For I will be to her a wall of fire round about," is also related to our subject. In Jer 14:17 we read, "Let my eyes run down with tears night and day." Perhaps here the reason for the change in order is the idiom of mourning and weeping, which connects specifically to night, which is a time of mourning. So too in Isa 34:10 it says: "night and day it shall not be quenched."

Solomon's prayer in 1 Kings 8:29 states: "that thy eyes may be open night and day toward this house." I do not know the reason for the change here from the usual order; perhaps the sense of the image is that it is well-guarded and overseen, and we have already seen that guarding is primarily required at night, for which reason it preceded the day. It should be noted that the Septuagint (BL) and the Peshitta here give a reading that is the opposite to that of the Masoretic text, i.e., "day and night." The same holds true for the MT in 2 Chr 6:20, which is parallel to this.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps we may conclude from this that the Masoretic version of 1 Kings 8:29 is indeed the correct reading, and that the later sources altered the language of the verses to conform to the more usual language of the Bible. It thus follows that, according to the usual manner of understanding of the day, this passage deviates from the usual scheme, and that 1 Kings 8 is to be seen as a difficult, and therefore preferable reading.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. the wording in Isaiah 27:3, לילה ויום אצרנה ("I guard it night and day"), which connects guarding with a reversal of the order of the day, for the same reason, and also Ps 130:6, "My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, watchmen for the morning (שמרים לבקר)." That is, they wait during the night and anticipate the coming of day; and similarly, "Watchman, what of the night?..." (שמר מה מלילה; Isa 21:11).

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that at the end of 1 Kgs 8:29, the LXX adds the phrase, "(that your servant shall pray to this place) day and night," in full conformity with the beginning of the verse.

It is nevertheless difficult to explain the significance of the order in Esther “fast on my behalf for three days, night and day” (4:16). One should note that there are many scriptural passages that count days, exemplifying this by means of the order of day and night, as mentioned above. Hence this passage is to be seen as an exception. Possibly the difference here derives from the contents of the picture. That is, the fast which Esther was asked to observe, perhaps like certain other cultic observances, was to be performed from the nighttime on. Or perhaps the author wished to separate the words **מִיָּמִים** and **וְיָמִים** from one another; that is, the change in order here is a matter of stylistic variation.

Another passage following a different order is Ps 55:18: “Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he will hear my voice.” In principle, here too this is not a matter of evidence of a different system of counting. As I noted in the introduction to the present chapter, we may infer the existence of a different order from a specific text if, according to the contents of the image, such as that a given event or matter take place at a given time, the author counts time from that event on; but here there is no matter of a different system. We have interpreted those few passages that mention night and day, etc., in a similar spirit; that is, in which for purposes of the literary description a different order is stressed therein. For example, when the poet’s description of fear seems more appropriately associated with the night rather than with the day, the night was placed before day, as mentioned above. Likewise in Psalm 55:18 there is presumably some reason for mentioning evening first, perhaps again because the evening and night time are more suitable for exemplifying the author’s fear and his anticipation of redemption. The phrases “morning” and “noon” do not create an image of twilight, darkness and so on, which are conditions for creating a somewhat apprehensive atmosphere, that may more clearly explain the poet’s tendency, his fear and anticipation of redemption. Moreover, the placing of morning and noon at the conclusion are also appropriate in their place, i.e., immediately before “and he will hear my voice. He will deliver my soul in safety ...” (ibid., vv. 18-19). Morning and noon and the picture of light connected with them are a suitable and acceptable picture for describing deliverance. Thus, even from the viewpoint of “lighting” the transition from darkness to daylight serves as a suitable parallel to the change in feeling from anxiety and sadness to deliverance and salvation. One might also mention in this context Psalm 30:6, “Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.” This is also a suitable parallel to

indicate the improvement in condition in the mode of the poet, connected with the order in which the portions of the day are mentioned. Just as one cannot argue that Psalm 30 reflects a different understanding of the order of the day, because the order therein is a “specific” one based upon what occurs in the text, as stated above, the same holds true as well with regard to Psalm 55.

One must also not lose sight of the proportions of division of the passages concerning the order of the day. As against those dozens of passages that follow the order “day and night,” it seems to me that there are only a few passages in which the order is different.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, an analysis of these images shows that one is speaking, as we said, of “specific” cases that use the night as their starting point for specific reasons related to the text in question, and not because of some ideology concerning a different system of counting.

We may now turn to a series of passages concerned with the matter of the appointed times. Thus, Leviticus 23:32, in speaking of the Day of Atonement, says, “You shall afflict yourselves; on the ninth day of the month beginning at evening (בתשעה לחודש בערב),<sup>10</sup> from evening to evening shall you keep your sabbath.” From this passage, it would appear, offhand, that the approach of the text is to enumerate the unit of the day as starting from the evening. But this is not the case. To the contrary! From the fact that the verse takes the trouble to define the point at which the fast begins as “the ninth day... at evening,” it explicitly states that the evening does not open the following day (i.e., the tenth of the month) but closes the previous day. According to the other system, which certain exegetes believe to have existed, what reason would there be to emphasize “in the ninth day *in the evening*”? According to their approach, the date was already the beginning of the tenth of the month. The same holds true for the festival of passover and unleavened bread: “In the first month, on the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread, and so until the twenty-first day of the month at evening (Exod 12:18). That is, the legislator saw a need to stress this date, that is, that the festival already begins on the fourteenth at evening, and not on the fifteenth day. Again, if this were routine, what reason would there be to identify it specifically in the spirit of that approach

<sup>9</sup> And how do advocates of the view that the system of counting the day is from the evening on explain the extensive evidence against their view?

<sup>10</sup> This is missing in one Hebrew manuscript, as well as in the LXX and the Vulgate, and compare BH.

that enumerates the day from morning on? Compare also Josh 5:10: “they kept the passover on the fourteenth day of the month at evening”—i.e., similar to the wording of the law of passover in Exodus 12. Moreover, one may add here a further proof from the subsequent verse: “and on the morrow after the passover (ממחרת הפסח),<sup>11</sup> on that very day, they ate of the produce of the land, unleavened cakes and parched grain.” From what seems to be implied from the law of unleavened bread being eaten from the fifteenth of the month, the fifteenth of the month is defined here as “the morrow after the passover.” But since passover is fixed on the fourteenth of the month at evening, we have here a proof that it is not considered part of the fifteenth, as it would be according to the system of dates that I have here refuted.<sup>12</sup>

#### 4. *The Status of the Sabbath and the Issue of the Order of the Day*

From what has been said above, there ensues the question of the time of the Sabbath. According to the approach in which the day begins with the morning, Friday evening, contrary to the practice of normative Judaism, does not need to be sanctified; the opposite is the case with regard to Saturday night, which under the customary approach is not sanctified, whereas it would be under that approach by which the day runs from the morning on. And indeed, we find this opinion referred to in various sources by way of negative polemic, together with testimony that certain isolated sects and circles were accustomed to sanctifying their Sabbath thus, a fact which constituted part of the background for their polemic with normative Judaism.

Now, in the course of our examination we have seen that the legislator saw fit to note regarding the festival of unleavened bread and the Day of Atonement that they begin on the evening of the preceding day: “from evening to evening shall you keep your sabbath” (Lev 23:32). It is therefore possible to formulate a general rule stating that, in the realm of sanctity and appointed festivals there may have perhaps continued an earlier system, according to which the day begins with the evening. Or, perhaps, because of certain specific reasons a different system was used in the realm of the holy and of appointed times than that observed in ordinary life, whereas the above-mentioned formulae used a system

<sup>11</sup> This phrase is absent in LXX.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Lev 23:5; Num 9:3, 5, 11.

of dating for the festivals based upon the starting point of an uncoordinated system of counting, that is, from the morning on.

### 5. *Parts of the Day*

Many names appear in the Bible for parts of the day, which may indicate something of the biblical person's apprehension of the element of time. It is evident that the division of the day into two parts—day and night—was insufficient to express smaller portions within this lengthy unit. Division into hours did not exist, while on the other hand the two major divisions of the day—day and night—are too large to make it clear to the listener that point in time to which the speaker is referring. A way was therefore found to divide the day and the night into different portions, based upon three different perspectives: i) quantitative; ii) fixed terms for parts of the day (unrelated to any activity); iii) according to a natural order, based upon comparison to various activities suitable to one or another part of the day.

#### I. *Quantitative Division*

The primary division of the daylight hours is into two, in keeping with which they noted the midpoint as **מהצית היום** (“midday”; Neh 8:3). The same division appears also in relation to night: **חצי הלילה** (“midnight”; Exod 12:29), **כחצות הלילה** (“about midnight”; Exod 11:4). Concomitantly, there is also a further division into **רביעית היום** (“a fourth of the day”; Neh 9:3).

The division into watches also relates to this quantitative division. In this connection we find such phrases as **אשמרת הבקר** (“the morning watch”: Exod 14:24); **האשמרת התיכונה** (“the middle watch”; Jdg 7:19). Both these idioms refer to the first watch, or the beginning of a particular watch, the former possibility seeming preferable.

#### II. *Fixed Designations for Parts of the Day*

There are fixed names for the three parts of the day: **בוקר** (“morning”), **צהרים** (“noon”), and **ערב** (“evening”). In accordance with this there are also various nuances expressed by the addition to these names of various adjectives. Thus, **מוצאי בקר וערב** (“the outgoings of the morning and the evening”; Ps 65:9); **בטרם בקר** (“before morning”; Isa 17:14); **לפנות בקר** (“when the morning appeared”; Exod 14:27); **לפנות הבקר** (“as



morning appeared”; Jdg 19:26); **בעת צהרים** (“at noon”; Jer 20:16); **עד עת הערב** (“until evening”; Josh 8:29). One may also note certain other passages that give a picture of such terms as very early: **בבקר בבקר** (“morning by morning”; Exod 16:21).

### III. *Terms Based Upon Natural Order*

A series of terms describe the parts of the day in terms of various natural aspects: i.e., the situation of the light, the sun, and the like.

The phrases in question are connected first of all with the situation of the light: **מן האור** (“from early morning”; Neh 8:3); **אור הבקר** (“the light of the morning”; Jdg 16:2); **הולך ואור** (“which shines brighter and brighter”; Prv 4:18); **ביום אור** (“in broad daylight”: Amos 8:9);<sup>13</sup> and, in a poetic phrase **עפעפי שחר** (“the eyelids of the dawn”: Job 41:10).

Another phrase refers to the conditions of heat: **בהם השמש** (“the time the sun is hot”: 1 Sam 11:9). This factor of heat complements that of light in describing the compass of the day, that is, the hours of light. Thus, **היום גדול** (“high day”), that is, when the light is most intense (Gen 29:7). Similar languages are **נכון היום** (“full day”; Prv 4:18) **חנות היום** (“the day has waned”; Jdg 19:9).

A similar phrase, but from a different perspective, is **בעוד היום** (“while it was yet day”; 2 Sam 3:35). A phrase that expresses a later image is **והיום רד מאד** (“the day was far spent”; Jdg 19:11). Similar to this is **בערב יום** (“in the twilight”; Prv 7:9). A phrase referring to the beginning of first light is **שיפוח היום** (“until the day breathes”; Cant 2:17).<sup>14</sup>

The night or its beginning is depicted in the phrase **בא השמש** (“the going down of the sun”; Exod 17:12) or **לעת בוא השמש** (“at the time of the going down of the sun”: Josh 10:27). And close to this is **צאת הכוכבים** (“till the stars came out”; Neh 4:15).

Another phrase similar to these is the compound phrase **בנשף בערב** **יום** (“in the twilight, in the evening...”; Prv 7:9), although it is possible that what is described here is in fact a point in time late at night. **ערב יום**

<sup>13</sup> A separate issue is the meaning of the phrase **ערב בקר** (Dan 8:14), and see the Targumim and the various exegeses to this verse. Generally speaking this is understood in the sense of **ערב ובקר**, i.e., a [full] “day.” If this is the case, then this may be an indication that at a later period, at the time of the composition of the Book of Daniel, as mentioned here, the day was figured from the evening. On the other hand, here too it is possible to adopt an interpretation analogous to that followed in “and there was evening and there was morning, one day” in Genesis 1. But it is also possible that, even if the text in Daniel is not corrupt, it may refer to something entirely different, and not to the totalities of days, evening and morning.

<sup>14</sup> However, this idiom may refer to a different part of the day.

does not refer to the evening, but to that point after evening has come and it has become night, or possibly even late at night.<sup>15</sup>

Other phrases refer to fixed activities, such as **לעת האכל** (“at meal-time”; Ruth 2:14); **עת מועד** (“the appointed time”; 2 Sam 24:15), which is not clear; various suggestions have been made for amending the reading, such as **עת סעוד** and **עת המנחה** (see, for example, in BH). In any event, it is clear that one is speaking of some part of the day, as it is written there **מן הבקר עד עת מועד** (“from the morning until the appointed time”), implying that this phrase refers to some point in time later than the morning of the same day.

Regarding the phrase **לעת צאת השאבת** (“the time when women go out to draw water”; Gen 24:11), the question has been asked as to whether this is a fixed term designating a particular point in time, or whether it is a simply a chance term.

---

<sup>15</sup> I mention this phrase here separately from that of **ערב**, evening. The phrases of morning, noon, and evening were discussed here separately in Section II of the present chapter, because in my opinion the language **ערב** appears here, not in the sense of a fixed term for the last part of the day, but as a natural description, like the last examples in the present group.

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### UNITS OF TIME GREATER THAN ONE DAY

In the previous chapter we discussed terms used for designating various units of time, focusing upon those phrases used to refer to brief periods of time, that is, within the limits of the day and the terms used to designate its parts. A comprehensive examination of the names and terms used for units of time in the Bible reveals a wealth of special terms for various matters connected with time.

#### 1. שבת, שבוע

The words used to refer to the shortest period of time beyond the unit of the day<sup>1</sup> are **שבת** and **שבוע**. This unit is based upon an arbitrary grouping of days, because it has no relation to any natural phenomenon of time.

The word **שבוע** (“week”; in the singular) or **שבועות** (“weeks,” in the plural) is used for a unit of time of seven days, as in “you shall count seven weeks” (Deut 16:9). The term **שבועות** is also used as the fixed name of one of the pilgrimage festivals: “and you shall observe the feast of weeks (**והג שבעת**)” (Exod 34:22).

In Gen 29:27-28, the word **שבוע** is used as a term for a unit of seven *years*. The same term appears in certain texts in the Book of Daniel in the framework of the calculation of times. There the use of the terms “one week” (**שבוע**), “half the week” (**חצי שבוע**), “seventy weeks” (**שבעים שבועים**), and the like (9:24, 25, 27, etc.), serve to indicate groups of years (seven, seventy, and the like). Regarding the calculation of the week (whether of days or years), it should be made clear that this does not refer to a unit having a definite beginning or end. Rather, the unit of the week as a whole is created by a *continuous* group of seven (days, for example), wherever it may begin.

The same unit of time is obtained by examining the term **שבת** (“sabbath”), which is far more widely used than the term **שבוע**. The

---

<sup>1</sup> On the form **אם יום או יומים יעמד** (“but if [he] survives a day or two”; Exod 21:21), see what I wrote in my *Studies*, in the chapter on “The Uses of **או** in Biblical Legal Texts,” 90-103, esp. at 96.

term **שבת** is ordinarily used to refer to the seventh day as the holy day of rest; however, because it closes a unit of seven days, a secondary usage developed, in which the term itself serves as a parallel designation for the concept of the week. Thus the plural form **שבע שבתות תמימות** (“seven full weeks shall they be”; Lev 23:15); “and you shall count seven weeks of years” (**שבתות שנים**; Lev 25:8); etc.

Among the well-known difficulties in the Bible, the term **שבת** is connected with the idiom **ממחרת השבת** (“the morrow after the sabbath”; Lev 23:15), referring to the date of the weaving of the sheaf [of first grain], and by extension to fixing the date of the festival of weeks. We have here a very complicated passage, which has been the subject of constant debate over the generations.<sup>2</sup> In any event, in connection with the passage in question, the term **שבת** *also* serves in the sense of a week (vv. 15-16).

## 2. *The Month (חודש)*

A more comprehensive unit than that of the week is the unit of the month. In a certain sense, the unit of the month is similar to that of the day, in that both terms are designations for units of time based upon natural apperception. In this respect, it differs from the week, which by its nature seems to be a clear result of an arbitrary decision of the Israelite sages, who arrived at this manner of counting on their own, or through the influence of the environment.

The units of the day and the month<sup>3</sup> are, as mentioned, natural units, based upon a natural, time-related phenomenon. The month spans a period of twenty-nine days plus part of an additional day, based upon the revolution of the moon around the earth. It is concretely felt by every observer, by means of the different phases of the moon during the different stages of the month, until its total disappearance from the eyes of the observer and its reappearance upon the new moon. The terms **ירח** or **ירח ימים** have the same meaning.

The existence of a system of time based upon the natural cycle of the moon finds expression in the existence of specific names for the months of the year. This is an explicit indication of the existence of a

<sup>2</sup> See the extensive literature cited by Hoffmann, *Das Buch Leviticus*, in his interpretation of Lev 23:11; and likewise all the exegetes of Leviticus, ancient and later; and cf. *EncBib*, s.v. **ממחרת השבת, שבת**, VII: 517-521.

<sup>3</sup> And in practice also the unit of the year. On this issue, see later in section 4.

system of counting time on the basis of months. There are three systems of names for the months.

One system, presumably the earliest, most ancient one, designates the months by means of ancient names, related to the Canaanite names known to us from the Gezer calendar and the like. Thus, **ירח בול**, **ירח זיו**, **ירח איתנים** (the month of Bul, Ziv, Eitanim). In this connection we should also recall the name **אביב** (“the month of Abib”; Deut 16:1), that belongs to the same type. However, it should be noted, that “Abib” is described there by the word **חודש** rather than by the word **ירח**, as in the previous expressions.

One should note that these names designate lunar months, which further strengthens the view as to the archaic and alien (and “international”) nature of these names. In the Gezer calendar there appear two forms of this word, **ירח** and **ירחו**, the latter being interpreted by scholars as referring to a span of two months—that is, **ירחו** is used to indicate the pair form of **ירח**.

The second system is that of designating the months by an ordinal number: “the second month” (**החודש השני**; 1 Kgs 6:1); “the tenth month” (**החודש העשירי**); etc.

The third system of names appears primarily in the later books of the Bible, in which the Babylonian names for the months are used: **שבט** (“Shebat”: Zech 1:7); **אדר** (“Adar”: Est 3:7); etc. It is clear that we find here the first signs of influence upon the Babylonian exiles from the ongoing confrontation with Mesopotamian civilization.

### 3. *Parts of the Year*

Continuing in ascending order, we arrive at *parts of the year*. Indeed, we find in the Bible an approach in which the year is subdivided on the basis of the seasons of the year. Thus, already in God’s oath after the Flood (Gen 8:22): “While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night, shall not cease.” **זרע וקציר** (“seedtime and harvest”) are names for seasons of the year based upon the principle agricultural labors performed at those times, but these names also appear on the Gezer calendar, which is concerned with clarifying the division of agricultural time. **קור וחום** (“cold and heat”) are terms describing seasons on the basis of their characteristic temperatures. The terms **קיץ וחורף** (“summer and winter”) are standard terms for various parts of the year, and parallel the earlier names. Thus, we have here a series of parallel terms, such that there appear in this

verse three pairs of parallel terms for the portions of the year. According to this interpretation, it would seem<sup>4</sup> that the Israelite year was divided into only two seasons. As for the terms אביב (“spring”) and סתו (conventionally translated “autumn”): the former appears six times, in the fixed idiom חֹדֶשׁ הָאֲבִיב (“the month of Abib”: Exod 13:4; 23:15; 34:18; Deut 16:1; etc.). Twice the term אביב appears in the Bible as a designation for the growth of certain crops or for the state of their growth. It is thus possible that the term חֹדֶשׁ הָאֲבִיב may be connected in some way with the period of the ripening of the crops. In any event, it becomes clear that there does not appear in the Bible a clear usage according to which the phrase אביב appears in the sense of a season of the year, like its use in later Hebrew.

The word סתו (in *qeri*) or סתיו (in *ketib*) appears only once in the entire Bible, in Canticles 2:11: כִּי הִנֵּה הַסְתּוֹ עָבַר (“for lo, the winter [RSV] is passed, the rain is over and gone”), but it is not absolutely clear that it in fact refers to a specific season of the year. One should take note of the fact that the word הַסְתּוֹ is parallel here to the word גֶּשֶׁם: that is, the time or season of the rain. Hence, the connotation of the word סתו is identical to that of חורף (“winter”). Alternatively, one may say that the verse uses cumulative language: 1) the autumn has passed; 2) the time for the rains has also passed—a solution that I find rather improbable.<sup>5</sup>

It follows from this that what was said in the divine oath following the flood—Genesis 9 (see above)—is not by chance, but reflects an apprehension of the year as containing two parts or seasons, for which reason there are mentioned there (and in general in the different parts of the Bible) only two terms for the parts of the year.

The division of the year into two parts—winter and summer—is implied by Psalm 74:17: “thou hast made summer and winter” (קִיץ וְחֹרֶף); in this verse, too, these parts of the year alone are mentioned. And note that here too, as in Genesis 9, alongside the division into brief periods of time (i.e., within the realm of the day), there are also mentioned the larger units of time (within the realm of the year). Similarly in Zech 14:8: “On that day living waters shall flow out... it

<sup>4</sup> For other exegetical possibilities regarding this verse, see the various Jewish and Christian exegetes *ad loc.*

<sup>5</sup> According to Mandelkern, *Concordance*, s.v. סתו, this refers to “the days of winter,” and he notes that it appears thus also in Aramaic, Syriac and Arabic—and it stands to reason. Compare also Ben-Yehudah, *Dictionary*, VIII: 4231-4236. It was only in the modern period of Hebrew that the term סתו emerged as designating a season in its own right, that which precedes winter [i.e., autumn].

shall continue in summer as in winter (בקיץ ובחורף),” supporting the two parts of the year as mentioned.

Similarly in Prv 20:4 (although there the word קציר, “harvest,” is used rather than קיץ) and in Amos 3:15 (“I will smite the winter house with the summer house”). There can be no doubt that the same division also follows from Isa 18:6, albeit there it takes the form of verbs rather than nouns: וקץ עליו העיט וכל בהמת הארץ עליו תחרף (“and the birds of prey will summer upon them, and all the beasts of the earth will winter upon them”).

#### 4. *The Year*

The element of the year was well known in Israel. The year is a very large unit of time, but it is nevertheless one that may be comprehended. This is so because the changes of the seasons in a fixed cycle seem clear to everyone, from the simple person through to the farmer and the urban merchant. The cycle of the year moves from winter to summer (or from summer to winter) and back again, including within itself all other seasonal changes. The fixed nature of the changes of season brings about a perception of the year as a complete unit, albeit without any connection to a particular starting point. The entire annual cycle may be perceived from any point in time during the course of the year until its return in the following year. This is the basis for such statements as that in Genesis 17:21, “at this season next year,” which reflect the element of fixity of the return of all parts of the cycle, when the circle turns around once more.

The image of the fixed cycle may also be seen, in my opinion, from such phrases as ויהי לתשובת השנה (“at the spring [lit., turn] of the year”; 2 Sam 11:1; 1 Kgs 20:26). I also think that it is possible to state that if this does not refer to the beginning of the year (or to its end),<sup>6</sup> then the language serves an even more abstract function regarding the perception of the cyclical element in the annual time period. On the other hand, such phrases as בצאת השנה (“at the end of the year”; lit., “when the year goes out”: Exod 23:16), תקופת השנה (“at the year’s end”; lit., “the period of the year”: Exod 34:22), or ותתם השנה ההיא (“when that year was ended”; Gen 47:18), and מרשית שנה ועד אחרית שנה (“from the beginning of the year to the end of the year”; Deut 11:12),<sup>7</sup> confirm

<sup>6</sup> The phrase שנה תמימה (“a full year”; Lev 25:30) comes to indicate the complete circle of the year from beginning to end, such as that portrayed in Deut 11:12.

<sup>7</sup> As agreed among the commentaries on this verse.

the element of circularity, albeit the picture that emerges from them is of a fixed year in terms of the order of the seasons,<sup>8</sup> rather than of a perception of an annual cycle that begins at any point and returns to the same point the following year.

### 5. Units Larger than a Year

The year is not the most comprehensive unit of time. We also find in the Bible a perception of units of time that are greater than the year. The first of these is the *שנת השמטה* (“year of release”; Deut 15:9), alongside which there is also *שנת המעשר* (“the year of tithing”; Deut 26:12), which is the third year in the Deuteronomic system. It should be noted that the existence of these idioms may indicate that this count was in fact well-known. From our analysis of the laws concerning the sabbatical year, the year of tithing, and the jubilee year, one may arrive at certain well-grounded statements concerning the concrete existence of this system of counting, but I do not intend to discuss this issue in the present work.

Initially, there were found in the scriptures exact agricultural instructions regarding prohibited and permissible things connected with the manner of tilling the land, which are understood as real details, not imaginary details (see Exod 23:10-11; and compare also the main details in this law in Lev 25:3-7.)

A very interesting perspective emerges from the law of release of debts in Deut 15:1-11. This law begins with the instruction to make a sabbatical year of release every seven years, mentioning as the most pertinent regulation the cancellation of debts. From the discussion found in the body of this law one may clearly see that when the legislator says, “Take heed lest there be a base thought in your heart, and you say, ‘The seventh year, the year of release is near,’ and your eye be hostile to your poor brother,” he is dealing with a real problem. From the very fact that the legislator turns his attention to such practical problems, involving the attempt to avoid carrying out the details of the law, one may clearly infer the *practical* considerations involved in the subject.

The unit of seven years is the basis for a more comprehensive calculation of time, namely, the counting of jubilee years. The jubilee

---

<sup>8</sup> Compare also the phrase *ראש השנה* (“the beginning of the year”; Ezek 40:1), and the other phrases I have cited in this chapter, such as “from the beginning of the year to the end of the year” (Deut 11:12); *בצאת השנה* (“the end of the year”; Exod 23:16); etc.



underlies the counting of the sabbatical year, as it says in Lev 25:8-10: “And you shall count seven weeks of years, seven times seven years, so that the time of the seven weeks of years shall be to you forty-nine years... And you shall hallow the fiftieth year.” That is, the relation between the counting of the sabbatical year and that of the jubilee year is clearly stated in terms of the system of (seven) multiples of units of sabbatical years.

An important question in its own right is whether the counting of years in order to observe the jubilee year was ever carried out in practice. There are signs regarding this both one way and the other. Among other things in support of there being such a counting, one needs to take into consideration the law of the dwelling house in a walled city (Lev 25:29-30): “If a man sells a dwelling house in a walled city, he may redeem it within a whole year after its sale... If it is not redeemed within a full year, then the house that is in the walled city shall be made sure in perpetuity to him who bought it, throughout his generations; it shall not be released in the jubilee.”<sup>9</sup>

The very existence of this law is a proof that the jubilee was observed in reality, as this law is an attempt to overcome difficulties that arise from the very existence of such a law. Since the law of returning property in the jubilee was treated very seriously and strictly, the institution of a rule regarding transactions involving residences within cities was an attempt to live in peace with the sanctified law of the return of land during the jubilee. This law is intended, on the one hand, to establish the possibility of returning houses, but on the other hand limits it to one year only (during which it is possible, as noted, to back out of the sale), so that thereafter the property will pass over permanently. As we said, the rule of the “dwelling house in a walled city” is to be seen as attempt to adjust the strict law of the jubilee to the framework of ordinary life, and there is no doubt that such an attempt at rational adjustment only make sense on the assumption that the system of counting jubilees was in fact observed in practice.<sup>10</sup>

The jubilee year is referred to in the sources by another term as well, **שנת הדרור** (“the year of liberty”; Ezek 46:17). However, it should be noted that the utopian law of Ezekiel (in Chapters 40-48 of his book)

<sup>9</sup> On this matter see Urbach, “Laws of Slaves,” esp. 180-182, etc.

<sup>10</sup> I mentioned above something similar regarding considerations concerning the sabbatical year with regard to quoting the thoughts of a certain person, who will think that “‘the seventh year, the year of release is near’ and your eye be hostile to your poor brother” (Deut 15:9). There too I noted that one may infer the reality of the system of counting from this passage.

incorporates a codex concerning the inheritance of the prince and their being returned in the year of liberty. We may therefore conclude, from the fact that Ezekiel saw fit to incorporate in his approach a matter pertaining to the jubilee year that we have here a practical element to which people related and made use.

The parallels that have been demonstrated regarding this matter from the literature of the Ancient Near East may also be of assistance for these questions. While I cannot go into detail here, it is sufficient to note that the system of thought that understands periods of time in units of fixed number of years is indicative of a system that was observed in practice.<sup>11</sup>

---

<sup>11</sup> On the various terms discussed in this chapter: שנה, ירה, חודש, etc., see the various lexicons, such as Köhler-Baumgartner, Clines, etc., and see especially Stendebach, s.v. שנה.

IV

DIRECTION OF TIME IN THE BIBLE

*This page intentionally left blank*

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### TERMS USED FOR THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE IN THE BIBLE

#### 1. *Past and Terms Used for Past in the Bible*

In the first section of the chapter we shall discuss various terms used by the biblical authors to refer to the past. One of the most widely used terms of this type is ראשון or ראשונים, at times used in conjunction with various nouns. Thus, in identifying the site of Luz, an archival definition is given: “but the name of the city was Luz at first (לראשנה)” (Gen 28:19). Similarly, regarding Laish-Leshem, we read: “but the name of the city was Laish at first” (לראשנה; Jdg 18:29)—that is, before, in the past, when the city was founded, it was called differently, as testified to by the text. Thus also in Joshua 8:6: “they are fleeing from us, as before (בראשנה)”; and in Jdg 20:32: “they are routed before us, as at the first (כבראשנה).” We therefore find that the word לראשונה may relate to different levels of distance *in the past*.

The term ראשון also appears as a distinct idiom, ימים ראשונים (“the former days”): “But now... not as in the former days” (Zech 8:11), but we cannot infer from this that it refers to a more distant past. In the present case, for example, this phrase refers to the first days of the Return to Zion, rather than to a more distant past. It follows that ימים ראשנים refers to that which precedes the time referred to in the text; thus, in the case mentioned, it refers to the beginning of the settlement of the land during the period of Zerubbabel and Joshua son of Jehozadak. A contrasting phrase appears in the immediately preceding verse: “for before those days (הימים ההם),” used to allude to the present. In Deut 10:10, the phrase ימים ראשונים refers to the very recent past: “I stayed on the mountain, as at the first time (כימים הראשונים), forty days..”

Even the usage in Eccles 7:10, “Say not, ‘Why were the former days (שהימים הראשנים) better than these?’” suggests that this does not refer to the very distant past. On the other hand there are cases where ימים ראשונים refers to extremely ancient periods of time. Thus in Deut 4:32, “For ask now of the days that are past (לימים ראשנים) which were before you, since the day that God created man upon the earth,” etc. We thus find that the phrase ימים ראשונים refers here to the earliest days in the

literal sense, when man was first created upon the earth. The word **ראשונים**, even without **ימים**, can be used to describe olden times, as in “you shall not remove your neighbor’s landmark, which the men of old (**אשר גבלו ראשנים**) have set” (Deut 19:14), and compare Prv 22:28; 23:10. Compare also Isa 46:9: “remember the former things (**ראשנות**) of old,” or Job 15:7: “Are you the first man that was born? (**הראשון אדם תולד**).”

A parallel idiom is **לפנים**, as in 1 Sam 9:9: “Formerly in Israel (**לפנים בישראל**), when a man went to inquire of God, he said, ‘Come, let us go to the seer, ’for he who is now called a prophet was formerly called a seer.” We infer from this that the phrases **לפנים בישראל**, **לפנים**, and the like relate to the *distant* past, and that they are used to describe a reality that has long been forgotten and is no longer clear to those listening to the words. Moreover, the present situation (**היום**; today) is compared with this past reality, meaning that the archival detail is invoked in order to explain a situation that has changed, so that the reader will be expert in the reality or manners of formulation that have changed. Thus, most uses of **לפנים** are in effect of an archaic nature, that is, they report a reality different from that of the present, or it explains the circumstances that led to the present reality.<sup>1</sup>

Some simple terms used to refer to the past are those that clearly refer to the past by means of terms and expressions whose sense is explicit, such as **תמול שלשום**, **תמול**, **אתמול**, **אמש**, **תמול**, and the like. A poetic phrase of this type is **ירחי קדם** (“months of old”; Job 29:2); but, despite the imagery, it does not refer to a distant past, but to only a few years earlier, during the period of Job’s greatness (see the verse). Other phrases concerning the past are: **אז**, **אזי**, **בעת ההיא**, **ולפני מזה**. These phrases are intended to portray a point in the past. Thus, for example, the picture in Gen 4:26: “To Seth also a son was born, and he called his name Enosh. At that time (**אז**) men began to call upon the name of the Lord.”

The word **אז** as such does not provide any picture of the past, but is a sign of “stopping” time and its comparison with the time that was pictured previously in the text. In the present case, one is speaking of the generation of Enosh, the later author pointing toward the period when men began to call upon the name of the Lord as in the days of Enosh. The same holds true for the other uses of **אז**, for **בעת ההיא**, and the like.<sup>2</sup> There are also other idioms which, on the basis of the picture

<sup>1</sup> A detailed discussion of **לפנים** and **בראשונה** appears above in Chapter 4, which deals with these phrases.

<sup>2</sup> See on this above, Chapter 1, concerning the terms used to indicate time in the Bible.

depicted thereby, refer to the past; thus, לפני מזה (“Now before this, Eliashib the priest...”; Neh 13:4), and other similar cases.

### *Very Distant Past*

The Bible preserves various idioms for depicting the distant past. Regarding several of these, see the chapter on terms used to describe duration of time (Chapter 6). Here I shall again mention them together with others, in order to present a complete picture of terms pertaining to the past.

We shall mention these terms by order, beginning with those alluding to the most distant past. The earliest time mentioned is that of the reality prior to the Creation. Thus, in Ps 90:2: “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world...” The poet requires a description of this pole in time for his subsequent statement declaring that “from everlasting to everlasting thou art God” (ibid.). That is, in order to emphasize that God has existed since time immemorial (and will continue to do so into the far future), he uses the idiom, “before the mountains were brought forth” as parallel to the phrase מעולם. That is, God has existed forever, even before there was time, even during the reality that existed before the introduction of order into chaos. These descriptions repeat themselves in other passages, such as Proverbs 8:22, where there are a series of verses relating to the creation of the world and to the time that preceded it. Here too, the most ancient period is depicted through negative phrases (as in Ps 90:2, “before (בטרם) the mountains were brought forth”: etc.): i.e., Proverbs 8:24, “When there were no depths (באין תהמות) I was brought forth, when there were no springs abounding with water.”<sup>3</sup> Note that the description given here has no parallel in the regular descriptions of the Creation. Genesis 1, for example, reflects the view according to which the world was immersed in chaos prior to the creation, “The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep” (v. 2), and the like. In Proverbs 8, by contrast, the situation prior to the creation is described as if even the depths and the springs did not yet exist. The sequel to this description is constructed in a manner parallel to that in Psalm 90. What is stated there in the words, “before the mountains (בטרם הרים) were brought forth,” is expressed here in, “Before

<sup>3</sup> In practice, even the Akkadian epic is built upon such phrases concerning time: thus in the opening title of Enūma eliš: “When on high...,” etc.

the mountains had been shaped (בטרם הרים הטבעו), before the hills, I was brought forth (לפני גבעות חוללתי); before he had made the earth (עד לא עשה ארץ) with its fields, or the first of the dust of the world” (vv. 25-26).

A description of that same point in time, albeit formulated as a question, appears in effect in Eliphaz’s attack in Job 15:7: “Are you the first man (הראישון אדם) that was born? Or were you brought forth before the hills (לפני גבעות)? Again, there is created here a different picture of the Creation from that given by Genesis 1. We mean to say by this that, if there is a synonymous relation between the two halves of the verse, the hypothetical possibility is raised here that Adam was created even before the hills. But it is also possible that we have here two different questions, between which there is no synonymous relation, or indeed any chronological relation at all: that is, that we have here two independent pictures of the subject matter of the Creation.

Positive formulations related to the time of the creation appear in Isa 51:9, which speaks in terms affected by the epics that were current in the Ancient Near East: namely, of the battle conducted by the gods against the great sea creatures that, according to Babylonian myth, disturbed God in the act of Creation—the cutting of Rahab in pieces, the piercing of the dragon, etc. The time defined in this passage is ימי קדם — דורות עולמים (“the generations of long ago”). Were it not for these details, it would be impossible, on the basis of the contents of the description, to say clearly that the phrases referring to time, דורות עולמים ימי קדם do in fact refer to such hoary antiquity. True, one might conjecture that the phrase ימי קדם is meant to be interpreted thus, but since these phrases are also used in other contexts in relation to the past, albeit not necessarily in reference to extreme antiquity, matters are not unequivocal. On the other hand, the description in Deut 11:21, “as long as the heavens are above the earth,” would seem to refer to the absolute point of time of Creation.

Even the relative phrase לפני is at times used in the sense of very distant time. Thus, for example, in Psalm 102:26, “Of old (לפנים) thou didst lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands.” The same time period is referred to in Job 20:4, “Do you know this from of old (מני עד), since man was placed upon the earth,” as it is also in the previously-cited verse quoting the words of Eliphaz (15:7).

A slightly later point in past time is referred to in the description of the beginnings of the nations. Thus, in the general language in Daniel



12:1: “At that time (ובעת ההיא) shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time.” Concerning a specific nation, Egypt, we find the phrase “such as has never been in Egypt from the day it was founded until now” (Exod 9:18; and similar expressions are found in 10:6: “from the day they came on earth to this day”; and in 9:24: “since it became a nation”). The founding of Egypt is mentioned here. If this refers to the creation of the *soil of Egypt*, then the point of time referred to here is the beginning of Creation, and particularly of the soil of each nation (see below). The term עולם and מעולם cited above refers to different points in the past. According to the contents of the picture, this past is distant, but of course the language allows a great “tension” of differences of time, all of which are in the past.

We have already demonstrated the use of the phrase מעולם in relation to the reality prior to the Creation. The Bible contains descriptions whose subject matter is the beginning of the world, which are likewise formulated in this manner. Genesis 6:1-4 speaks of the relations between “the sons of God and the daughters of men, and they bore children to them. These were the mighty men that were of old, the men of renown” (v. 4). The phrase הגברים אשר מעולם (“the mighty men that were of old”) refers to certain well-known heroes from the beginning of humankind. This is approximately the same period as referred to by the idioms ימי עולם and ימות עולם, but regarding these as well there is a certain tension of time. That is, there are those among them that are very early, and others that refer to a later time, provided only that all of them refer, evidently, to the earliest possible time.

This is well exemplified by Deut 32:7-8, “Remember the days of old (ימות עולם) consider the years of many generations (שנות דור ודור) ... When the Most High gave to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of men, he fixed the bounds of the peoples,” etc. That is, the time defined as ימות עולם refers to the time of Creation and the establishing of the nations by their ethnic boundaries. Similar to this is the use of time in the vague wording ימי קדם, thus in Isa 51:9, which we discussed above. On the other hand, Isa 63:11 utilizes a similar expression to refer to a later time period: “Then he remembered the days of old (ימות עולם) of Moses his servant. Where is he who brought up out of the sea the shepherds of his flock.” This verse does not speak of the creation of the world, but of the period of the Exodus. Compare also Amos 9:11; Micah 7:14; and Malachi 3:4, in which ימי עולם refers

to the past of the people, but it is unlikely that this latter refers to absolute beginnings, such as the period of the Exodus or the like.

### *The Uses of the Historical Past*

Later points in the history of the nation may also be referred to by the same term. Thus, for example, it states in Micah 5:1 regarding the House of David: “But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah.... From you shall come forth for me one who is to be a ruler in Israel, whose origin is from of old, from ancient days (מקדם מימי עולם).” It would seem, therefore, that the origin of the Davidic House is referred to by the prophet as מימי עולם, which is the term used for a time period later than the Creation of the world and even than the Exodus.

There is likewise great chronological tension with regard to the idiom ימי קדם. While it functions in a manner similar to ימי עולם as a description for the origins of the world, in Jer 46:26 we find this same idiom used in reference to the beginnings of Egyptian history. Thus, it states regarding Tyre, “whose origin is from days of old” (מימי קדם קדמתה; Isa 23:7). The same language is used to refer to Israel in Ps 78:2: חידות מני קדם (“dark sayings from of old”), in reference to the past history of the people, and likewise in Lam 1:7; 2:17; etc. In Ps 44:2 as well this idiom is deliberately used to refer to the origins of the people, as follows clearly from clarification of the contents of this psalm that surveys the history of Israel.

An interesting stage in this may be seen in the use of the phrase ימים קדמונים (“ancient days”), that makes a very archaic impression. But examination of Ezek 38:17, where it states concerning Gog: “Are you he of whom I spoke in former days (בימים קדמונים) by my servants the prophets of Israel...” According to the context of this verse, which refers to a period of time in which the Israelite prophets already operated, it seems clear that the time referred to here as ימים קדמונים does not refer to the beginning of mankind, unlike the usual use of this idiom.

The attrition in the meaning of the word קדם in the above idiom becomes greater when we turn to *the life of an individual*. What can be the meaning of ימי קדם and similar phrases regarding the individual? This may at best refer to his youth, and no more. A group of years may also be referred to by this impressive idiom, which was originally intended to allude to the earliest days of Creation. Thus, in Job’s words, “O, that I were as in the months of old (כירחי קדם), as in the days when God watched over me” (29:2); or in Psalm 143:5: “I remember the days

of old (ימים מקדם), I meditate on all that thou hast done; I muse on what thy hands have wrought,” which refers to the worshipper’s personal past. However, one cannot categorically reject the interpretation that this refers to the beginning of the world—that is, that the worshipper reflects upon the acts of God’s creation as a whole.

Other phrases, such as דור ודור (“generation to generation”), refer to great antiquity, as follows from the context and from the parallel expressions. In Deut 32:7, we find: “Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations (שנות דר ודר).” Based upon the description that follows, this refers to a time close to the creation of the world. That דר ודר is an extraordinary phrase follows also from Isa 13:20: “or dwelt in for all generations,” where it refers to the opposite pole, that of eternity. The usage of the idiom דור ודור is therefore similar to that of the phrase עולם in that it is used in both directions—for great antiquity and, on the other hand, to refer to eternity (i.e., in the future). Note also, for example, the idiom מהעולם ועד עולם (“from everlasting to everlasting”; Ps 41:14 and elsewhere; or “but the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting”—מעולם ועד עולם; Ps 103:17), used to describe God as master over all the times, in that he is the earliest, and also eternal.

Exact descriptions of the past appear in the phrases x-יום and x-ימי, which relate to different periods or important events in the past (concerning all these see Chapter 5: “The Formula ‘x-ימי’ [or ‘x-יום’] in the Bible: Some Characteristics of Historiographical Writing in Israel”). Such phrases as זה (מספר) ימים / שנים (“these (x) days / years”; זה x פעמים (“these x times”); זה ימים רבים (“these many days”; Josh 22:3), and the like, even though their subject is duration of time (cf. Chapter 6, on formulae of duration), may also be seen as definite expressions of description of the past.

Likewise the idioms connected with לפני, לפניך, and the like, whose subject is not description of place, is an additional way to describe the past, such as לפניו לא היה כן (“as had never been before”; Exod 10:14); “the former kings who were before you” (אשר היו לפניך; Jer 34:5), and others. Even the term ראשונים and the like is used in contexts similar to this (and see also the passages cited above, at the beginning of this chapter.)<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> On the terms surveyed in the course of the discussion in this chapter: ראשון, ראשונים, לפני, לפניך, לפניו, לפניו לא היה כן, etc., see the relevant entries in the lexicons of Köhler-Baumgartner, Clines, Botterweck-Ringgren, etc.

## 2. *Present and Terms for Present in the Bible*

### I

The term היום is one of the outstanding words used for expressing present time. We have already seen in the section on terms used for the past that the word היום is used in explicit contrast to such terms for the past as לפני (בישראל) to express the present time. Such phrases also appear in other, non-contrasting contexts. Thus in Gen 22:14, “as it is said to this day (אשר יאמר היום), ‘On the mount of the Lord it shall be provided (RSV: or: “He shall make himself seen”),” which provides a concrete geographical terminology for the events at the place where the ancient story occurred. The same holds true for the formulation of the chief butler: “I remember my faults today” (היום; Gen 41:9). He relates *today* his failures of some time ago, prior to his imprisonment. In the verse, “and behold, the youngest is this day with our father” (Gen 42:13) the brothers define the present location of their brother Benjamin.

In one of the verses in which the term היום appears, it is possible to distinguish the extent to which this word explicitly serves to distinguish the present from that which is not the present. It is stated in Deut 29:14 that the covenant is made both with those who are present and with those generations that are to come afterwards: “but with him who is not here with us this day as well as with him who stands here with us this day.” We thus find that the word היום clearly serves to denote the present.

The awareness of the present point, formulated as such, led to the creation of a formula used for oaths and verifications of various matters: היום הזה, כיום הזה, כהיום הזה and the like. The creation of this model is to be understood as a way of confirming the truth of things: just as, within the entire system of time, the present is the clearest of all, in that it exists in actuality during the time spoken of, one may speak with confidence, or faithfully promise the stability of a given phenomenon or ones confidence in its persistence by attaching it to the subject of time.

The certainty implied in relying upon things in the present, whose truth may be clearly seen, led to a situation in which the phrase היום or היום הזה, used to describe a reality in the present, became a kind of “magical” language that may assure certainty. The quasi-magical nature of this language brought about a situation in which the phrases, היום הזה, היום כיום and the like served in a seemingly superfluous formula

whose function is to concretize the certainty of the phenomenon: “and hast made thee a name, as at this day” (Jer 32:20). That is, so great and stable and certain is this thing, that it is clear that one is not only speaking of the fact that *today* God will make Himself a name, but that this is a language implying certainty—namely, that God’s name is renowned and stable like the unchallenged existence of the present day.

These phrases also serve to indicate a precise moment in time, and particularly to remember a date in history: “on that day (ביום הזה) they came into the wilderness of Sinai” (Exod 19:1). This is done in order to celebrate it again in future years, similar to things appearing in further passages. Hence, such emphases as, “for on this day shall atonement be made for you” (Lev 16:30) appear in order to indicate the importance of this date, i.e., that only ביום הזה, “on this day,” is God ready to atone for the sins of his people. The language in 1 Samuel 11:13, “Not a man shall be out to death this day,” is intended to particularly emphasize this important day on which Israel merited victory over its enemies. Compare also “Write (*ketib*: כתוב; *qeri*: כתב) down the name of this day, this very day” (Ezek 24:2), whose concern is to clearly fix the fate of the present day.

## II

Additional phrases used to express the present are: בעת הזאת (“at that time”); בימים האלה (“in these days”); עתה (“now”); הפעם (“this time”).

**בעת הזאת**: This phrase appears in Esther 4:14: “For if you keep silent at such a time as this” (בעת הזאת). This idiom appears only once in the Bible, specifically, as one perhaps needs to emphasize, in a late book, the Scroll of Esther. The other passage in which this image is found, Joshua 11:6: “tomorrow at this time (מחר כעת הזאת),” does not pertain to the present subject.

**הימים האלה**: The phrase הימים האלה is to be seen as parallel to the phrase commonly used for the present—, היום הזה the difference being that the uses of the combination הימים האלה are more limited. As in the case of the previously mentioned phrase (בעת הזאת) one should note that the idiom הימים האלה only appears in late writings (Zechariah, etc.). Thus, in Zech 8:9: “you who in these days have been hearing these words”; *ibid.*, v. 15: “so again have I proposed in these days...” The idiom also appears three times in the Book of Esther (likewise a later book), but it is not used there in the sense of the present.

**הפעם**: A word clearly used to serve for the present is הפעם (“this

time”). It is interesting that all of the previously mentioned terms are late, while **הפעם** appears in relation to the earliest periods. In Gen 29:35: “this time (**הפעם**) I will praise the Lord”; 30:20: “now (**הפעם**) my husband will honor me,” and many others. A sentence in which there is a doubled usage appears in Gen 29:34: “this time (**עתה הפעם**) my husband will be joined to me,” where both **הפעם** and **עתה** are clearly used to refer to the present (see further on this point below).

Within this framework, one may also see the idiom **הפעם הזה** as a phrase used for emphasis, as in Jdg 16:28. But, to be more precise, one should note that in its original use **הפעם** does not necessarily refer automatically to the present. Some of its uses, particularly **הפעם הזה**, serve to indicate that originally the word **הפעם** does not serve for a definite basis in time. It should be noted that the phrase **הפעם ההיא** is definitely used to refer to the past; see, e.g., Deut 9:19; 10:10.

**עתה**: The word **עתה** is explicitly a word for describing the present. This term appears on all levels of biblical usage. Compare Hosea 2:9: “for it was better with me then than now (**אז מעתה**),” a phrase that includes two separate words concerning time: **אז** (“then”: i.e., past tense) and **עתה** (“now”; i.e., present). See also, “now I know that the Lord will help [or: save] his anointed” (Ps 20:7).

Among the formulae of duration the word **עתה** is found in various combinations: in the opening words of formulae of continuation: **מעתה ועד עולם** (“from now on and forever”), and in their conclusion: “from our youth even until now” (**מנעורינו ועד עתה**; Gen 46:34); “from the day she left the land until now” (2 Kgs 8:6). In all these cases the word **עתה** is clearly used to indicate the present time.

**עד הנה**: The word **הנה** is ordinarily used to describe place. The combination **עד הנה** is used in certain passages to indicate time in addition to describing place. In all these the phrase **עד הנה** is used to indicate the present. Thus, “for the iniquity of the Amorite is not yet (**עד הנה**) complete” (Gen 15:16); “and I have not seen him until now” (**עד הנה**; Gen 44:28); “Until now (**עד הנה**) you have mocked me” (Jdg 16:13); etc. One should note that the phrase **עד הנה** in the sense of time only appears in a very limited number of biblical passages.

### III

But it is also possible to find specific individual formulae used to indicate the present. For example, in Ecclesiastes 7:10: “Why were the former days better than these?” The phrase **ימים ראשונים** refers, as we have

seen, to the past, while **מאלה** is used here as a “specific” designation for the present. Likewise the words **לפני, לפניך** may be used to indicate relation to the present. Thus Jer 28:8: “the prophets who preceded you and me (**אשר היו לפני ולפניך**) from ancient times” (RSV here reverses the sequence of the terms “me” and “you”). We find that the words **לפני ולפניך** refer to the past by way of comparison to the discussants in the verse (Jeremiah and Hananiah), who are like points in the present. Cf. Eccles 2:7: “more than any who had been before me (**לפני**) in Jerusalem”; Deut 4:32: “For ask now of the days that are past, which were before you (**לפניך**)”. In all these passages, the generation of the speakers constitutes the present time, who relate to their predecessors as to the past.

#### IV

The phrase **עד היום הזה** (“until this day”) enjoys a place unto itself in the framework of expressions used to describe the present. This expression is relative, and is conditional upon the chronological status of the texts described. Thus, in 2 Kings 17:34, it states: “To this day (**עד היום הזה**) they do according to the former manner; they do not fear the Lord...” Similarly, vv. 40-41 in that same chapter speaks of generations of Gentiles: “However, they [the nations] would not listen” (v. 40), as against “their children likewise, and their childrens’ children” (v. 41). We find that it is possible to distinguish different nuances of present time by comparison of the phrases used in these two passages. On this phrase in particular, see Chapter 8: “On the Uses of the Term ‘Until this Day’ (**עד היום הזה**)”.<sup>5</sup>

### 3. *Terms for the Future in the Bible*

Words to designate future are very few, and we shall enumerate them one by one.

The simplest designation for the subject is the group of phrases, **מחר, ביום מחר, למחרת**, and the like (all usually translated “tomorrow”).

Several of the phrases were mentioned in connection with the subject of **הדור האחרון** (“the last generation”—see Chapter 3, above) and others

<sup>5</sup> Cf. in the lexicons of Köhler-Baumgartner, Botterweck-Ringgren, Clines, etc., on the terms etc. **היום, הימים (האלה), עתה, הפעם, העת (הזאת), הנה**.

that indicate future; hence, these need to be taken into consideration here.

Likewise the word דור (“generation”) as used in conjunction with ordinal numbers is used in this context as well. Thus, “and they shall come back here in the fourth generation” (Gen 15:16), clearly alludes to the future. Similarly such parallel phrases as לדור לכל יבוא (“to a generation, to all that come”; Ps 71:18); or “A generation goes, and a generation comes” (דור הולך ודור בא; Eccles 1:4). Another phrase used in a similar manner is כעת מחר (“tomorrow about this time”; Exod 9:18).

Even when Scripture speaks of הדור האחרון and the like to indicate the future, there is room to find an even more distant future in the complete phrase, as in “and the generation to come (ואמר הדור האחרון), your children who rise up after you” (Deut 29:21). Thus the Bible speaks, not only of a point in the future, but also of an even more distant stage of time than that.



V

CONCEPTS OF TIME AND LIFE DURATION IN THE  
BIBLE

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### אורך ימים AND SIMILAR TERMS IN THE BIBLE

The subject of length of days appears in the Bible quite a few times. In the Ten Commandments length of days is promised to one who honors his father and mother (Exod 20:12; Deut 5:16). Already at the outset it is worth posing the question as to whether what is stated there concerning this matter, למען יאריך ימך (“that your days may be long”), is meant to imply that one will receive added years of life beyond what had been allotted, or whether the sense is that good deeds such as these will fix the length of one’s life, which is not ordinarily fixed in advance.

In Moses’ speech in Deut 6:2, the observance of the statutes is connected with the promise of length of days: “that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son’s son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life; and that your days may be prolonged.” Even though the things are stated there in a national context, they are to be understood as a personal promise to each and every individual who fulfills the law.

Just as in the above text Scripture relates to the observance of the law in general, length of days is also promised regarding those that fulfill a specific law (that of sending away the mother bird): “You shall let the mother go, but the young you may take to yourself; that it may go well with you, and that you may live long” (והארכת ימים; Deut 22:7). A similar promise appears in the law of proper weights and measures: “You shall not have in your bag two kinds of weights, a large and a small. You shall not have in your house two kinds of measure, a large and a small. A full and just weight you shall have, a full and just measure you shall have; that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you” (25:13-15; see below on the issue of length of days *on the land*).

We also find a promise of longevity in the law of the king: “that his heart may not be lifted up above his brethren, and that he not turn aside from the commandment, neither to the right hand or to the left; so that he may continue long in his kingdom, he and his children, in Israel” (Deut 17:20). What is referred to here is not length of days in the absolute sense, as in the passage about honoring one’s parents, etc.,

but a lengthy reign as king. The extensive use of this motif in the realm of law seems to me yet another characteristic of the Deuteronomic law.

The nature of the promise of length of days to the king who walks in the path of God and of His laws appears also in God's words in Solomon's dream at Gibeon: "and if you will walk in my ways, keeping my statutes and commandments, as your father David walked, then I will lengthen your days" (1 Kgs 3:14). It seems to me that the style of things here is influenced by the Deuteronomistic source, of which this is characteristic.

Alongside the phrases referring to length of days as a reward for those fulfilling the laws in general, or specific laws, there is a particular idiom that is characteristic of the Deuteronomistic source. I refer to the expression, "long days on the land which the Lord your God has given you," and the like. This phrase appears both as a promise of reward to those who fulfill the word of the Lord and his statutes, and in the negative sense, as punishment for those who do not follow in the ways of the Lord and his statutes. Thus, in the introductory address of the book we find the warning: "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that you will soon utterly perish from the land... you will not live long upon it (לֹא תֵאָרִיכֶן יָמִים עֲלֶיהָ), but you will be utterly destroyed" (Deut 4:26). One should note that, as the appeal here is to the people and not to the individual, one does not find here the subject of length of days in the "pure" sense, that is, as the lifespan of a particular individual.

To the phrase אֹרֶךְ יָמִים ("length of days") used here there is added the element of it being "upon it" (that is, upon the land). That is, notwithstanding the similarity of the language to what was discussed above, to the point of identity, the intention here is that the people will be punished by not continuing to live here on the land, "but you will be utterly destroyed." As is known, God's giving the land to the people is conditional upon their fulfillment of God's commandments; hence, their non-performance will bring about the destruction of Israel, that is, their removal from the land. Compare this to the chapter of admonition at the end of the book (30:17-18): "But if your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I declare to you this day, that you shall perish; you shall not live long in the land which you are going over the Jordan to enter and possess." And on the positive side, in Deut 4:40: "Therefore you shall keep his statutes and his commandments, which I command you this day, that it may go well with you, and with your children after you, and that you

may prolong your days in the land which the Lord your God gives you for ever." Even though this last passage is formulated in the singular and not in the plural, there is no doubt that the appeal is addressed to the people as a whole. Moreover, the length of days promised here is *upon the land* that God gave to the people. Thus the intention of the text is to say that they will dwell upon the land continually and not be exiled from it, or that they will not be destroyed by an enemy that God will send against them. The use of the formula in the positive sense implies that the people as a people will continue to live here "forever" (כל הימים; lit., "all the days"). Towards the end of the introductory section of the book (Chs. 1-11), we again find (11:8-9): "You shall therefore keep all the commandments... that you may live long in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to give to them and their descendants, a land flowing with milk and honey." Here the idea that the length of days promised is to the people *in its land* is felt even more strongly, and there is no promise here pertaining to the longevity of the individual.

At the close of the chapter of blessings and curses at the end of the book, the same motif is repeated: "loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice, and cleaving to him; for that means life to you and length of days, that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them" (30:20). "Life to you and length of days" is conditional here upon obeying the voice of the Lord. Here too, the rewards are connected with dwelling upon the land that was promised to the patriarchs.

In 4 Maccabees 18:19 it stated: "I kill and I make alive, for this is your life and the length of your days." This is essentially a conflation of Deut 32:39: "I kill and I make alive; I wound and I heal" with 30:20, "loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice, and cleaving to him; for that means life to you and length of days," phrasing things in the plural, as it refers here to the people as a whole.

Similar things appear in Moses' words following the Song of Moses: "For it is no trifle for you, but it is your life, and thereby you shall live long in the land which you are going over the Jordan to possess" (Deut 32:47). The issue of length of days upon the land also appears in the story of the Rechabites, "that you may live many days in the land where you sojourn" (Jer 35:7). It seems to me that this verse was written under clear Deuteronomistic influence, in this case referring to fulfilling the commandments of their forebearer that substitute for the commandments of God. The phrase, "You shall not build a house; you shall not sow seed; you shall not plant or have a vineyard; but you shall live in

tents all your days” (ibid.), is an assurance of length of days upon the land. We find a similar use in the New Testament as well: “that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth” (Eph 6:3).

Length of days in the sense mentioned previously, namely, regarding the individual and his destiny, appears also in the wisdom literature and in the Psalms. Thus, it states in the royal psalms regarding the king, “He asked life of thee; thou gavest it to him, length of days (נַתַּתָּ לוֹ) (אָרַךְ יָמִים) for ever and ever” (Ps 21:5). It seems to me that here the phrase referring to length of days has been removed from the realm of the individual and his lot to that of the royal dynasty; compare above regarding the law of the king. That is, this king, who is supported by God, will merit that the chain of his rule (that is, he and his descendants after him) will not be truncated, but will enjoy a long reign.

Even the pious worshipper appeals to God in the hope that his request will be answered. Among other things he says: “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever” (לְאָרַךְ יָמִים; Ps 23:6). The phrase “for ever” is parallel to “all the days of my life.” Thus, the author hopes that he will be found deserving to “dwell in the house of the Lord”—to be considered a righteous man who is close to the Lord—all the days of his life. There is no statement here that he expects his life to be extended, but rather that God will turn his heart to his welfare and all the days of his life will be considered as close to the Lord (similar to, “O Lord, who shall sojourn in thy tent”; Ps 15:1) and not as distant from Him (analogous to the statement in Ps 73:27: “for lo, those who are far from thee shall perish”).

In the 91st Psalm, which begins with the phrase “He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High” (analogous to “I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever”; 23:6), that we shall now discuss, there is a change of speakers: the righteous man, the poet, and the words of God Himself. At the end of the psalm God declares: “Because he cleaves to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name. When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will rescue him and honor him” (91:14-15). In the concluding verse, God promises regarding the righteous, “With long life I will satisfy him (אָרַךְ יָמִים אֲשַׁבֵּיעֵהוּ), and show him my salvation” (ibid., v. 16). That is, He promises that the righteous man will be saved from the trouble in which he finds himself and He shall show him His salvation, a statement parallel to that stating that he will satisfy him with length of days, a phrase comparable to “I shall not die, but I shall live, and recount the

deeds of the Lord” (Ps 118:17). That is, one who was liable to be harmed, or even to die, is delivered by God; in other words, he merits “length of days.”

We encounter similar language in Wisdom Literature, in a context reminiscent of the demand made in the speeches in the first bloc of Deuteronomy: “My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments; for length of days and years of life and abundant welfare will they give you” (Prv 3:1-2). Here too long life is associated with obeying the commandments of the sage (in Deuteronomy: the commandments and statutes of God). The phrase *יִסִּיפוּ לָךְ* (“will they give you”; lit, “thy will add to you”), appearing at the end of the verse, may be interpreted in a double manner—either as referring to an addition, literally, in which case the length of days is over and beyond what has been allotted to this person, or as alluding to the fact that this he will be saved from troubles, and hence will not die, which so to speak entails an increase of days.

In the same chapter it is said concerning wisdom: “Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor” (Prv 3:16). Things may be interpreted here that one who prepares himself with wisdom is saved from troubles, and hence it is as if years had been added to his life, as it makes no sense to say that wise men, specifically, will enjoy an addition to their life span.

In Proverbs 28:16 we find a similar idea: “He who hates unjust gain will prolong his days.” In this case the one enjoying length of days is not he who hearkens to the advice of the sage, but the one who follows advice based upon the spirit of the laws of the Torah. In a negative formulation, we find the following statement in the Book of Ecclesiastes directed against the evil-doer: “but it will not be well with the wicked, neither will he prolong his days” (Eccles 8:13).

### *1. Length of Days in Post-Biblical Literature*

Let us now turn to examine the uses of the term “length of days” in post-biblical literature—the Apocrypha and Pseudepigraphic literature and in the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The same developments found in biblical Wisdom literature regarding the subject of length of days are also found in the Book of Ben Sira. It states there that “to fear the Lord is the root of wisdom, and her branches are length of days” (Sir 1:20—Greek). It also states there, v. 12, that: “The fear of the Lord delights the heart, and gives gladness, and joy,

and length of days.” Under the influence of the wording of the Ten Commandments, Ben Sira says that “He that gives glory to his father shall have length of days, and *he that gives rest to his mother* (מַכְבֵּד אִמּוֹ) shall receive reward from God” (3:6; the emphasized words are from the Hebrew version of MS. A; the rest is taken from the Greek Version).

In Wisdom of Solomon 4, the author raises the idea that there is no particular advantage in longevity as such, because there are cases where the righteous person dies: (7) “though he die before his time, he shall be at rest.... (10) Being found well pleasing unto God, he was beloved of him, and while living among sinners he was translated (i.e., to God) (11) He was caught away, lest wickedness should change his understanding, or guile deceive his soul... (13) [14] for his soul was pleasing unto the Lord, therefore he hastened to take him out of the midst of wickedness... (15) for mercy and compassion to his chosen ones... (16) But a righteous man that is dead shall condemn the ungodly that are living, and youth that is quickly perfected the many years of an unrighteous man’s age. (17) For they will see the wise man’s end, and not understand what the Lord proposed concerning him, and for what he safely kept him.”

Subsequently it is described how evildoers will weep on the Day of Judgment. Note the gap in image between “he whom aforesaid we had in derision, and made a byword by reproach...” and “How was he numbered among the sons of God! And how is his lot among saints!” (5:3-5), and the like.

We may thus infer that, according to the approach of the poet, the brief life span of the righteous may be an advantage, because he is thereby destined to spend less time in the company of evil-doers. Moreover, his recompense from God will already start at an earlier time. Hence, one may understand his tolerant view that accepts the fact that the evildoers enjoy a longer life, but that life is full of sin and they shall be punished on the day of judgement.

But there is no reason to reach this conclusion only by way of elimination, for things are stated explicitly (Wis Sol 3:16-19): “But children of adulterers [and other evil-doers mentioned previously] shall not come to maturity, and the seed of an unlawful union shall perish. (17) For if they live long they shall be held in no account, and at the last their old age shall be without honour. (18) And if they die early, they shall have no hope, nor in the day of decision shall they have consolation. For the end of an unrighteous generation is always grievous.” That is, there are cases where the evildoers are gotten rid of quickly, but there are others among them who live long, but such an old age “shall be

considered as naught... and will not return at the end of days.” The opposite is the case of the righteous man who dies before his time, “For honorable old age is not that which stands in length of time, nor is its measure given by number of years, but understanding is grey hairs unto men, and an unspotted life is ripe old age” (4:8-9). According to the author’s outlook, the evaluation of longevity is changed in such a manner that true old age is not expressed in biological age, but that true age is understanding and a blameless life. Only such an “old age” should be respected and honored, and not chronological old age, which in itself is not considered as true length of days. It seems to me that verse 13, “being made perfect in a little while, he fulfilled long years” refers to the fact that, during the years that the righteous man “spent” in the world before God “hastened him (his soul) out of the midst of wickedness” it is as if he had already “fulfilled” many times over the quota of time decreed for him to live in the world. Again, one may recognize here the gap and difference between *physical* time and *spiritual* time, which is the only time that it is properly measured.

Menahem Stein<sup>1</sup> states that the phrase “for if they live long” (3:17; i.e., referring to evildoers), may be an allusion to Eccles 7:15, “and there is a wicked man who prolongs his life in his evil-doing.” It should be remarked that Qohelet likewise mentions that there are cases in which the righteous man dies and his days are few despite his righteousness, while the evil doer lives long despite his evil. But Ecclesiastes mentions this in the framework of his nihilistic and sceptical outlook, that is, that this was done by God without allowing man to understand the meaning of this anomaly. The author of *Wisdom of Solomon*, by contrast, who may have arrived at his subject and its presentation via the influence of Qohelet, has a clear explanation for the divine plan to “transfer” the righteous to him, thereby truncating their stay in this world of falseness and, on the other hand, the tendency to specifically prolong the life of the evildoers in the framework of that same “plan.”

In 1 Enoch 5:7-9 we read, “But to the elect there shall be light, joy, and peace... but they shall complete the [designated] number of the days of their life... And peace shall increase their lives and the years of their happiness shall be multiplied forever.” A similar collection of blessings to the devotees of the sect is found in the Dead Sea Scrolls. Thus, for example, in the *Community Rule*, 1QS iv 7, we read: ורוב שלום

<sup>1</sup> In his commentary on *Wisdom of Solomon* in the Hebrew translation of the Apocrypha edited by Abraham Kahana (Tel Aviv: Masada: 1959), I: 479.



באורך ימים ופרות זרע עם כול ברכות עד (“plentiful peace in a long life, fruitful offspring with all everlasting blessings”). Further on, in the *War Scroll*, 1QM i 9, ואורך ימים לכול בני אור (“and length of days for all the sons of light”); 1QH v 22-24: רק בטובך יצדק איש... ותמש[ילהו על ר]וב (“Only by your goodness is man acquitted... you install [him over an abun]dance of pleasure, with everlasting peace and length of days.”)

In 416 2 iii 19 we find the idiom למען חייכה ואורך ימיכה (“for the sake of your life and the length of your days”).

The opposite appears further on in this same passage, in lines 19-21:

(19) ואם רש אתה כשה [ ] (20) [ ] vacat אשה לקחתה ברישכה  
קח מולדי [.....] (21) מרז נהיה בהתחברכה יחד התהלך עם עזר בשרכה [ ]

(19) And if you are poor... (20) [...] without law. *Blank* If you take a wife in your poverty, take the offspring [...] (21) from the mystery of existence. When you are joined together, walk with the help of your flesh [...].

And in 4QInstruction (4Q418 137 2-5):

2 חכמת ידים יוסף לכה [ ]  
3 [ ] צדק במשכרתכה כול עבודתכה]  
4 ואורך ימיכה ירבו מודה ושכ] [ ]  
5 [ ] פעלתכה יום תר.] [ ]

And in 4Q426 1 i 1-4:

1 כב]וד ומדת דעת ואורך ימים  
2 שו]מרי כול מצותיו זרע רשעים  
3 vacat [ ]  
4 [ ] נתן אל בלבבי דעה ובינה

- 1 [... (of) glo]ry and a portion of knowledge and length of days
- 2 [...who ke]ep all his commandments. And the seed of the wicked ones
- 3 [...] *Blank*
- 4 [...] God has given in my heart knowledge and insight

In *Jubilees* 23:12, we find a statement indicating that the question of length of days is, in practice, relative: “and in those days, if a man live a jubilee and a-half of years, they shall say regarding him, ‘He has lived long.’” We find that this is no absolute statement about longevity, and that which in one period might be considered a few years, once the accepted life span grew shorter (as during the period after the flood), then one who lives a shorter span (relative to the previous period) is

considered as if he lived a long time; and the opposite is also the case: “and there is none who is old, and none full of years,” despite the fact that their days approached to a thousand years and even more than this (23: 28-29).<sup>2</sup>

## 2. *Fulness of Days* (מלא ימים)

In Exodus 23:26, it states: “None shall cast her young or be barren in your land; I will fulfill the number of your days.” On the one hand, the point of departure in the wording מלא ימים is the view that the quota of years fixed for a given person to live will be realized by virtue of God’s kindly eye directed towards him; on the other hand, there may be here a certain nuance involving an argument as to the type of “length of days.” That is to say that the good deeds of the individual involved in his obeying God’s laws and commandments will bring about a situation in which God will lengthen his days, that is, *add* to his days. On the basis of the language, it seems that it refers to the first interpretation, namely, that one who walks in the good path will merit to live the full number of years days that were predetermined for him *from the beginning*.

It is in this manner that I interpret the text in 4Q385a 13 ii 2: דוד כסא דוד וישלמו ימיו וישב שלמה [על כסא דוד] (“and the days (of David) were completed, and Solomon sat [upon the throne of David]”), whose intention is to say that David’s days were fulfilled—that is, that he attained old age (as was allotted to him) and died.

In Ben Sira 26:2, we find the phrase “fulness of days” used in an interesting sense: “a worthy wife cherishes her husband, and he fills the years of his life in peace” (ושנותיו ימלא בשלום). It follows from this that a person’s life span is predetermined by God. The happy person is one who lives the full number of days that were allotted to him, and whose life passes by in peace and contentment—all this thanks to his wife, the woman of valor. This saying of Ben-Sira parallels another one that appears immediately preceding it: “A good wife—blessed is her husband, the number of his days is doubled” (26:1). In my opinion, this verse is tantamount to what is stated in the adjacent verse; the phrase “he fills

<sup>2</sup> On the connection between the term יום and length of days, אריכות ימים and the like, see Von Soden, s.v. יום, in the Botterweck-Ringgren *Lexicon*, 9. On אריכות ימים, see Malamet, “Longevity”; on length of days in archaeological findings, see the ostrakon from Kuntillet Ajrud, ארך יום (no. 175), published by Z. Meshel in the *Catalogue of the Israel Museum* (Jerusalem, 1978); and cf. Clines, *Dictionary*, I: 380-381; on אורך ימים and the like, see Harris, s.v. “Old Age”; Von Zoden., s.v. יום, 562-563.

the years of his life in peace” is equivalent to “his days shall be doubled”: that is, since he will live in goodness and peace by virtue of his good wife, it is *as if* he has doubled his years.

Another use of “fulness of days” appears in 4Q270 6 iv 13-14: א[שר] [על הפקודים] לא מלאו ימו לעבור (“wh[ich] did not fulfill his days to pass [over the musters]”). The intention here is to say that he had not yet reached the opening age within the range of ages mentioned in that same ceremony—regarding a witness whose testimony one is allowed to hear, or whose testimony it is forbidden to accept. We find that one of whom it is said that he has filled his days (or did not fill his days) does not necessarily refer to the end of that person’s lifetime, but may also refer to the “*inner*” range of ages (in keeping with what is discussed in the text) within the framework of life. (Compare here also 4Q271 2 ii 13: וכל נער אשר לו[א] מלאו ימיו לעבור על ה[פקודים] אל יזה) (“and every youth whose days shall not be filled to pass before [the musters shall not sprinkle]”); the same formula also appears in 4Q269 8 ii 6.

To return to the biblical discussion: in a text which speaks in all innocence and involves a technical formulation, such as God’s words to David, it states: “When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers” (2 Sam 7:12), the formula indicates that מלא ימים is a synonym for old age. This, as follows from Jer 6:11: “both husband and wife shall be taken, the old folk and the very aged (זקן עם מלא ימים).” On the other hand, from what is stated in Lam 4:18, “Our end drew near; our days were numbered (מלאו ימינו); for our end had come,” it would seem that one whose days have been filled is close to his end. The unique aspect here is that the drawing close of the end is a result of the terrible war. Thus, the use here of the idiom מלאו ימינו refers to the fact that they were close to death, not by dint of advanced age, but because of the terrors of war; nevertheless, the verse makes use of the idiom מלאו ימינו. It is in this spirit that one also needs to understand what is written in Jer 25:34: “for the days of your slaughter (כי מלאו) and dispersion have come.” Here too the sense is that “your death draws near” and thereby your days are filled, not in a framework that is determined in advance.

We find, in my opinion, an analogous usage in the Dead Sea Scrolls, in 4Q416 2 iv 5-6. This passage, in referring to one who has relations with a married woman, states: “for she is the flesh of [your] nak[edness.] And who(ever) wants to have dominion over her, apart from you, has displaced the boundary of his life (הסיג גבול חייהו).” That is to say, such a person shall die—as if to say, his days have been filled, or, in the

language used here, **הסיג גבול חייהו**. It is quite possible that the idiom in Job 15:32, **בלא יומו תמלא** (“it will be paid in full before his time”), refers to a similar picture—that is, that the quota of a certain person’s life will be filled not at his time. In other words: because of his evil he transgressed the boundary of his life *before his time*, that is, before the allotted number of his days had been truly filled. Compare CD x 7-10, concerning the limitations on the age of the judges: “and no-one over sixty years shall hold the office of judging the congregation, for on account of man’s unfaithfulness his days were shortened (**מעטו ימו**), and because of God’s wrath against the inhabitants of the earth, he ordered <to remove> their knowledge before they complete their days (**עד אשר לא ישלימו את (ימיהם)**).” Note also the parallel formula in 4Q270 6 iv 18-19 and in 4Q266 8 iii 7-9.

It is meant to say here that human beings will not complete the number of days that have been dictated for them, or that the life-span of human beings generally has *declined* in comparison to past generations, and then “their days shall not be completed”? (Compare *Jubilees* 23, concerning the generations following the Flood, after which their days were diminished.)

It is worth commenting that the phrase **מל"א ימים** also appears in the Bible in a different sense. Thus, for example, Gen 25:24, “When her days to be delivered were fulfilled (**וימלאו ימיה ללדת**)” or in Gen 29:21 **כי מלאו ימי** (“for my time is completed”). These phrases are concerned with the conclusion of an “internal” period in the life of these heroes, that is, the conclusion of the days of pregnancy, or the conclusion of the period of labor by Jacob specified in his obligation (and see above on this issue). It follows from this that the meaning of the phrase **מלא ימים** depends upon the context, and there are cases where it does not refer to length of life at all.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> On the subject of **מל"א ימים**, see Clines, s.v. **יום**; and Köhler-Baumgartner, s.v. **מלא**.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### DURATION OF LIFE IN BIBLICAL TIMES

The issue of duration of life may be examined from several different perspectives: 1. In terms of what is said regarding the actual life duration of people during the biblical period; 2. from various passing remarks made about individuals at different ages, indicating the attitude toward the subject at hand; 3. from passages that declare in principle the appropriate or accepted life span. The picture that emerges from all these things will teach us how the subject of human life, its span and nature, were understood by biblical person.

#### 1. *Actual Life Duration*

Let us begin with the first aspect of this subject.

If one makes a comparative table of the life span of people during the biblical period, one finds a clear and striking difference between the life span of the first generations of humankind, from Adam to Abraham, and all subsequent generations. This difference is clearly expressed in the extraordinarily large number of years that the people of the earliest generations lived. But even among those generations, there is a striking difference between two groups in terms of life span. The first group is described as living for many centuries (most of them 900 years or more; only two of them living less than 900 years).<sup>1</sup> By contrast, members of the second group, from Noah to Abraham, lived between 148 years (Nahor) and 464 years (Eber).<sup>2</sup> Some five members of these generations live about 200 years. There was thus a “drop” in the life expectancy of human beings during this period by up to nearly two-thirds of their life span.<sup>3</sup>

How is one to explain this change? Perhaps the Flood constituted a

---

<sup>1</sup> Enoch is the exception within this group, in that he lived only 365 years.

<sup>2</sup> The only one among the generations of Group II (from Noah to Abraham) who lives longer than the others is Shem, who lived 600 years. That is, he is the only one to live more than 464 years, which was otherwise the maximum in this group. Perhaps this is because Shem is the first one in the group, and is thus a kind of transitional link between the two groups.

<sup>3</sup> This, when one considers an average of all the generations in each group.

watershed between the legendary aeon of the fathers of the world and a later period. In this, as in many other matters, there is a more realistic approach to life. One must nevertheless note that the average age of members of these generations was still about three hundred years—that is to say, far greater than the actual life span of men in any biblical period.

From the time of the patriarchs on a yet closer drastic drop occurs in the duration of life, signifying a further approximation to the actual human life span. In my opinion, the life span of people from Abraham until the last figure whose life span may in practice be divided into *two* further periods (Periods 3 and 4).

In the first of these groups I would include the generations between Abraham and Joshua; in the second—all other biblical figures whose life span is mentioned in the text. The reason for this is that a far greater life span is attributed to the former group than to the latter.

The duration of life of those mentioned in the third group is more than one hundred years: i.e., Abraham 175 years; Sarah 127; Isaac 160; Ishmael 137; Jacob 147; Joseph 110; Levi and Amram 137; Kohath 133; Moses 120; Aaron 123; Joshua 110. Thus, the average duration of life was 140 years. But even here an almost constant downward movement in life span may be observed, so that towards the end of the period the number becomes fixed at slightly more than one hundred years.<sup>4</sup>

The fourth group includes a list of the kings of Judah, whose age at death is either given to us explicitly, or may be inferred by combining the details of their age at the time they ascended the throne with the information as to the length of their reign. It would thus seem that there was again a significant drop in the life span of the members of this group, which moves between the ages of 36 (Ahaz) and up to 68 years (Uzziah). One can calculate the average age at death of the kings of Judah at 53 years.

Exceptionally, there is mentioned in this group one person, Jehoiada, of whom it is stated that he was very old at his death (2 Chr 24:15), and whose age at death (130) was similar to that of the people in Group III.

It seems to me that, among all these groups, the age of the members

---

<sup>4</sup> If we stretch the border line of the end of the time period of Group III, we can also include therein Eli, who lived less than one hundred years, being 98 at his death. But from the account in 1 Samuel 3 we may understand that one is not speaking here of a natural death, and that hence he otherwise could have presumably lived longer. Compare Wolff, "Problems."

of the fourth group is closest to reality. Thus, not only the people as a whole, but even its kings, whose life conditions were better, lived no more than this.

From examination of these data, we find that the boundary line between Group III and Group IV, whose members lived the fewest number of years, is on the eve of the monarchy, somewhere around the time of Samuel. Since the boundary lines we have reconstructed are quite clear, it may be possible to use it as an exegetical tool, by whose means we may state that all those passages depicting an actual life span of a maximum of about 60 years, together with other scriptures related to this subject that share the same outlook, date, at earliest, from the period of the monarchy.

## 2. *Description of Old Age*

Alongside noting the age of a person age at his death, Scripture contains several descriptions of the old age of people and the length of their lives.

Thus, for example, one may see in what is said regarding Haran, who died before Terah his father (Gen 11:28)—that is, who died very young—a kind of acting out of the curse, “And there shall not be an old man in your house for ever... and all the increase of your house shall die as men [i.e., in the middle of life]” (1 Sam 2:32-33).

An opposite kind of example is the passage regarding Joseph, of whom it is said that he “saw Ephraim’s children of the third generation; the children also of Machir son of Manasseh were born upon Joseph’s knees” (Gen 50:23). Roughly the same is said of Job, who died 140 years after he was delivered from his suffering: “And saw (וִירָאָה; *qeri*) his sons, and his son’s sons, four generations.” (Job 42:16).<sup>5</sup> It likewise says of him: “And Job died, an old man, and full of days” (זָקֵן וְשָׁבַע יָמִים; *ibid.*, 17).

This notation suggests that this was not a common phenomenon. We may conclude from this that perhaps this involves a parallel and different tradition from that reporting the life span of such-and-such a person. Thus, the detail concerning the life span of Joseph, 110 years, is a matter unto itself, parallel to which there is given the report concerning him seeing children of the third generation. If we calculate

<sup>5</sup> If we do not accept these fine distinctions, perhaps we can use the subject of Job’s age as a tool for determining that, in terms of age, he belongs to Group III. This is then an additional means of determining the age of the work itself.

a generation to be twenty-five years, then we have here a parallel claim—but perhaps those who saw fit to note the matter of the third generation did not know of the simple tradition concerning the life span of Joseph. In any event, in relation to his period there is nothing special in a life span of that length. That is, if members of Group III (see above) lived even more than the 110 years mentioned regarding Joseph, what reason was there for the narrator to be astonished by Joseph's living to see the third generation?

It may be that the person who wrote this was unaware of the usual life span of that period. For example, if this author belonged to the fourth period, when the life span was 40–50 years, one who lived to see a third generation was unusual. This may be suggested by the optimistic passage from the Book of Psalms: “May you see your children's children” (Ps 128:6), implying that a person may consider himself as blessed if he lives to see his own grandchildren. This precisely fits the fourth period. Thus, if he merited to see a third generation that is a truly great thing. See further below, Ps 90:10, “The years of our life are threescore and ten (lit., ‘seventy’), or even by reason of strength fourscore (lit., ‘eighty’).”

Such a gap reflects, as mentioned, that between the period of writing and the period of description. We know various examples of such gaps in Biblical studies, such as comments of the type, “for he who is now (היום) called a prophet was formerly (לפנים) called a seer (רואה)” (1 Sam 9:9). Since, in the body of the story, the terms used are early (רואה and the like), it seems clear that the date of the comment (at least; and possibly the description as a whole, albeit care is taken not to mix the testimony of each period to itself),<sup>6</sup> is much later than the “formerly in Israel” (לפנים בישראל) of the actual period of Samuel and Saul.

<sup>6</sup> Compare the analysis of Blenkinsopp, “Life Expectancy.” In his opinion, the patriarchs lived between one hundred and two hundred years, the declared maximum being 120 years (Gen 6:3). In Sumer they speak of 60 x 2, so that it seems that this was a tradition throughout the Ancient Near East. Ben Sira speaks of a maximum human life span of one hundred years, while Psalm 90 speaks of the age of eighty as the maximum. The law does not impose any age limitation on various activities. In Assyria, by contrast, we do find one restriction: a bridegroom may not marry before the age of ten years. The Bible does not give any age for those making the pilgrimage on festivals among the males. In the *Damascus Covenant* the maximum age for judging is given as 60 years. From comparative examination it follows that the average of the kings was 53.2 years. One must remember that one is speaking here of a negligible percentage of the population, and particularly from among those whose health was cared for. Examination of bodies found in the Judaeian desert from the Hellenistic period reveals an average age of 44.2 years for males, and 34.7 years for women—higher than that in the Roman and Byzantine period. On the other hand, at an earlier time the life duration was shorter than that. See also Malamat, “Longevity”; Harris, “Old Age.”



*The Terms זקן, זקנה, and the Like*

In light of what is said above, it is interesting to observe this subject from a different angle; namely, that of linguistic examination of the terms having to do with old age—זקן, זקנה, and the like. According to what has been said in the previous sections, the life duration of members of the various generations differed in accordance with an individual's belonging to one of the various generational groupings (see above). If we now examine the use of the words זקן and the like, it seems reasonable that they will be attributed to members of different age groups in accordance with the period to which they belong.

The first person of whom it is said that he died “old and full of days” (זקן ושבע ימים), and even that he died in “advanced old age” (בשיבה טובה) is Abraham. All this appears alongside the information (in the same passage) that he was 175 years old at his death (Gen 25:7). In the covenant between the pieces there is likewise mentioned the promise: “you shall be buried in a good old age” (Gen 15:15). Abraham's advanced age is mentioned in other contexts in the Bible: “Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years (זקן בא בימים; Gen 24:1); the same formula is also used regarding Abraham and Sarai (18:11). Isaac is described at his death (at the age of 180 years) as “old and full of days” (35:29). It is likewise stated of Joshua that he was זקן בא בימים (“old and well advanced in years”: Josh 23:1), in both the words of the people (13:1) and in his own words (23:2). Adjacent to this it is stated that he died at the age of 110 years.

Similar wording, of his being old and of advanced years, and that he died in good old age, are said of David (1 Chr 23:1; and cf. 29:28), and it is even said that he was “very old” (1 Kgs 1:15). But we do not know to what age this refers. We also find such language used regarding Eli (1 Sam 2:22) when he was 98 years old (close to his death),<sup>7</sup> and the same is said of Barzillai the Gileadite, who was eighty years old (2 Sam 19:33).

All those mentioned earlier belong to the third group in terms of duration of life, only David belonging to the fourth group.<sup>8</sup>

There is only one person apart from David, belonging to the fourth

<sup>7</sup> Regarding Job it also states: “and Job died, an old man and full of days” (Job 42:16-17), and it is stated there that he lived 140 years, apart from the many years that he lived until the troubles that befell him. It clearly follows from this, as I said above, that he is to be included within the third period.

<sup>8</sup> It is also said of Gideon that he died in a “good old age” (בשיבה טובה; Jdg 8:32), but we do not know how many years he lived.

group (see above), of whom it is said that he was old and full of days, namely, Jehoiada, of whom it was said that he lived 130 years. From all this one may state that the biblical authors do not use the language **שבע ימים** except to speak of one who is extremely old, at least one hundred years. In the case of an ordinary old man they refrain from defining him as being full of days.<sup>9</sup> In this respect, apart from slight differences, there is no difference between members of the different “periods.” That is, there is a kind of general agreement regarding the usages in question.

As for the term **זקן מאד** (“very old”), I see in it a precise way of direction intended to express extreme old age in a special way, as opposed to ordinary and widespread old age. The phrase **זקן מאד** may be exchanged with its parallels, **זקן ושבע ימים**, **זקן טובה**, **שיבה טובה**, all of which allude to the same thing. Similarly the combination of **זקן + שבע ימים**, which is a substitute for **זקן מאד**, may be used in the same way.

As mentioned above, it is stated of Abraham and Sarai that they were old, “advanced in age” (**באים בימים**; Gen 18:11); from 21:5, we learn that one year thereafter Abraham was one hundred years old. It follows that one who has reached the age of one hundred years is properly called **בא בימים**; all the more so the use of the phrase, said of Abraham before his death, that he was “old, well advanced in years” (Gen 24:1). In this case, we have exact information (25:8) that we are speaking here of the extraordinary age of 175 years of life. In the story of Abraham’s death there appears the phrases **זקן, זקן ושבע ימים**, as well as the statement that he died **בשיבה טובה** (Gen 25:7-8). It is likewise said of Isaac (Gen 35:28-29) and of Joshua that they were **זקן בא בימים** (Josh 13:1; 23:1; 24:29). Eli was “very old” (98 years old) at his death (1 Sam 2:22); David was “old” (**זקן**),<sup>10</sup> “advanced in years”<sup>11</sup> (**בא בימים**; 1 Kgs 1:1),<sup>12</sup> “very old” **זקן מאד** ; 1:15); “old and full of days” (**זקן ושבע ימים**; 1 Chr 23:1).

<sup>9</sup> A similar phrase is **זקן עם מלא ימים** (“old folk and the very aged”; Jer 6:11); this phrase is to be interpreted as a hendiadys. An opposite description to this phrase appears in Job 14:1 in which there is a deliberate word-play: “Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.” The word play derives from the fact that the passage uses the word **קצר** (“short”) in relation to life expectancy, and **שבע** (“full”) pertaining to the suffering in life (**שבע רוגז**).

<sup>10</sup> In the Lucianic Recension there is added the word “very,” that is, that thought that one who was old and advanced in years was also “very old,” as it interprets it.

<sup>11</sup> Concerning Jesse, who, at the time of David’s anointment by Samuel, was “old and advanced in years” (**זקן ובה באנשים**; 1 Sam 17:12). The unique idiom **בא באנשים** is evidently intended as a parallel to **בא בימים**.

<sup>12</sup> The definition of Samuel as old appears three times: “When Samuel became old” (**זקן**; 1 Sam 8:1); “behold, you are old” (**הנה אתה זקנת**; 1 Sam 8:5); and in Samuel’s

Now it may be proven that the definition of old age may change, in accordance with the accepted life span. It therefore should not be surprising that at the beginning of the period of the monarchy (from which point on—Period IV—there was a drastic drop in life expectancy; see above) we find “and Barzillai was a very aged man, eighty years old” (2 Sam 19:33). It is clear that this was so because life expectancy at that time was shorter, so that the age of eighty years was quite great. This statement would not have been formulated thus had Barzillai lived during one of the earlier “periods.”

To this same category belongs also, evidently, the passage in 1 Chr 2:21: “Afterward Hezron went in to the daughter of Machir the father of Gilead, whom he married when he was sixty years old; and she bore him Segub.” The noting of Hezron’s age, in the declarative formula that he was “sixty years old,” is a sign that the author wished to emphasize his age. What is unique here is not the longer or shorter life span, as we do not have here a summation of his life as a whole; i.e., a summarizing formula of his life enterprise or the regular formula pertaining to his death. We thus find that the author is aware that siring a child at age sixty was an unusual phenomenon, which he wished to emphasize. One should note that Hezron was a figure from Period III whom, as we have seen, lived an average of 130 years or more. Thus, their reproductive activity is presumably also later than that of people from Period IV. In this light, there should not have been any need for the declarative statement drawing the reader’s attention to Hezron’s age at the birth of his son from the daughter of Machir. The surprise expressed by the author of the genealogies suggests that he does not know the tradition of the ages of people from the different periods, and that perhaps he had other traditions concerning the life span of people from the third period.

Another curious passage to be mentioned in this connection is that in Isa 65:20: “for the child shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner a hundred years old shall be accursed.” The implication is that it is a great surprise when they say that a person died young, because the youngest person will not die before reaching the age of one hundred

---

mouth himself: “And I am old and gray” (וְאֲנִי זָקֵנִי וְשֹׁבֵתִי; 1 Sam 12:2). However, we do not know how many years he lived, and in any event it seems by way of analogy that one is speaking of advanced old age. Note also his figure in the story of the necromancer: “an old man is coming up (אִישׁ זָקֵן עֹלֶה)... and Saul knew that it was Samuel” (1 Sam 28:14). A similar use to this is found in 2 Chr 24:15: “But Jehoida grew old and full of days,” albeit there it states explicitly that his age was 130 years, which were most of his years.

years. It is also mentioned that the sinner is punished by dying at the age of one hundred years—that is, that at that time one hundred years of life will be considered very few years. As we have already seen, the period of the Eschaton is built upon the principle of return to the period of the Beginning, e.g., with regard to the subject of eating grass and plants, or the prohibition of eating animal flesh (Isa 11:6-10 || Gen 1:29). It is in this manner that one ought to interpret, in my opinion, the subject of Isaiah 65: one hundred years was considered a very short life span during Period III, during which most people lived 150, 170, or 180 years. Compare Jacob's words: "few and evil have been the days of my life" (Gen 47:9), made when he was 137 years old (47:28). It is unnecessary to add that, regarding Periods I and II (above), one hundred years of life was considered extremely little, as people lived nine hundred years and more. And if the Beginning, for purposes of the comparison in question, is taken from these periods, than certainly one hundred years would be considered very few years of life. The prophet thus wishes to say that the human life span will be so great, that one hundred years will be considered a very short life. We find, therefore, that the words of comfort of Second Isaiah are built upon an expected duration of life based, not upon his own period, but upon a return to a picture of life that had already left the world ages earlier.

### 3. *The Range of Ages for Various Tasks Mentioned in the Bible*

An additional source for our knowledge concerning actual life duration and the life-span of biblical people is found, in my opinion, in various lists containing explicit statements bearing upon certain ranges of ages in connection with one or another task and similar related matters.

From this source it follows, in my opinion, that all of the lists in question belong to some stage of the fourth period mentioned above—that is, that they are at earliest from the period of the monarchy and not prior to it. I arrive at this conclusion because the maximum age mentioned therein (sixty years or thereabouts) corresponds to the maximum age mentioned as the actual life-span of members of those generations.

In Leviticus 27 we find a list of "valuations" of different groups of people classified by age and sex. The order of the list is as follows: males from twenty to sixty years of age; females of the same age range; males from five to twenty, followed by females in that range; males from

the age of one month to five years, and females likewise; and males from sixty years up, followed by females.

From an analysis of this list one may derive a number of conclusions: 1) regarding the *order* of ages included in the list; 2) regarding the *starting* point, as chosen by the authors; 3) regarding the *concluding* point of the list; 4) on the question of the different *valuations* of members of different age groups (and varied according to their sexes).

We find that the order is rather strange, in that it does not clearly follow either an ascending nor a descending order:

20 - 60 years

5 - 20 years

1 month - 5 years

60 years on

In principle, the units are arranged in *descending* order (apart from the closing link, on which see below), but the order of numbers to indicate the ages within each link is in *ascending* order. That is, it does not say "from 60 years to 20" and the like, but the opposite: "from 20 to 60," and thereafter "from 5 to 20," and so on. In other words, the *opening* point in each given link is the *concluding* point of the subsequent link. Thus too regarding the third link: from one month to five years. The exception to this is the order of components in the fourth link,<sup>13</sup> which does not continue in *descending order*, but returns in practice to the beginning of the list, as it brings here the valuations for those aged sixty on. On the face of it, one might argue that we have here a gloss intended to complete the order of ages, but this argument must be rejected, as there is no logic in assuming that there once existed a list that gave a picture up to sixty years. Even if we assume that, according to the approach of the author of this list, this was the range of life expectancy for the period in question, one would expect to find a clause regarding those who live beyond the "boundary line." This need is filled by the fourth link. On the other hand, the very existence of this link is important evidence in an entirely different direction.

Let us now examine the data connected with the fourth link. First of all, we have already explained the reason for the location of the link in question (see above); second, from the existence of a boundary line of sixty years *and on*, without any additional stopping point (whereas

---

<sup>13</sup> The absence of any mention of one less than one month old in the law of valuations in Leviticus 27 evidently means that one who did not reach the age of one month was not yet considered a viable person.

regarding the previous links things were formulated in a formula of “from year x to year y”), it would seem that, according to the author’s approach, this is a group at the end of life. But it seems to me that, according to him, the life expectancy of a person in his days was closer to the starting point of the formula (sixty years) than to many years beyond it.

Moreover, the value of the sums given as valuations proves what we said earlier regarding the life expectancy:

	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
20 - 60 years:	50 shekel	30 shekels
5 - 20 years:	20 shekels	10 shekels
1 month–5 years:	5 shekels	3 shekels
60 years up:	15 shekels	10 shekels

Thus, the valuation of an adult above 60 years is less than that of a child between the ages of 5 and 20, indicating the attitude toward him as labor force, and in terms of the anticipation of life expectancy, which he is still expected to live in the world.

#### 4. *Range of Life in Censuses*

In the law of the half shekel (Exod 30:13) it is stated that, at the time of the census of the people, one is to give a half shekel for each one counted: “that there be no plague among them when you number them” (ibid. v. 12). Only further on (v. 14) is it stated “Every one who is numbered in the census, from twenty years old and upwards, shall give the Lord’s offering.”<sup>14</sup> It follows from this that a man from the age of twenty years and up (without limitation) is seen as one who has entered into the census. The application of this law appears in Exod 38:26, where the range of ages is given in the same form, “from twenty years old and upward.” From what is stated in the census list in Numbers 1, we find that the detail about the age of those counted in the census is stereotypically repeated throughout the length of the chapter. Already in the initial command to count the people it states (Num 1:2-3): “Take

<sup>14</sup> The formulation is somewhat misleading, in that one might infer from it as though everyone was numbered in the census, and those among them who were twenty years old and more were to give the half shekel. But from the parallels and from the instructions about the census in Numbers 1, from the total amount of money, as well as from the reason given, “that there shall not be among them a plague” (Exod 30:12), it seems clear that one is speaking of all those who participated in the census, and not only of specific age groups.

a census... head by head; from twenty years old and upwards, all in Israel who are able to go forth to war (כל יצא צבא).” And in verse 18 it says: “and on the first day of the second month, they assembled the whole congregation together, who registered themselves by families, by father’s houses, according to the number of names from twenty years old and upward, head by head.” No mention is made here of those who “go forth to war” (יוצאי צבא), and in any event here too the range of ages is mentioned with the formula: מ.. ולמעלה (“from... and upwards”—i.e., without an upper limit). This is surprising, because the age during which one goes out to war is limited by one’s physical capability, and an elderly man is not appropriately described as one who “goes forth to war” (יוצא צבא). This would seem to be proof that the phrase יוצא צבא is not intended to be taken literally, and the range of ages mentioned (twenty years *and up*) is what matters here. It should be mentioned that, in detailing the numbers according to each tribe, there appears the formula: “from twenty years old and upward, all who were able to go forth to war” (Num 1:20, 22, 24, 26, etc.). In the concluding phrase, in 1:45, the same phrases appear.

The same language appears even in the command concerning the second census (Num 26:2): “Take a census of all the congregation of the people of Israel, from twenty years old and upward, by their fathers’ houses, all in Israel who are able to go forth to war.” In verse 4 its states: “from twenty years old and upward, as the Lord commanded Moses.” But, unlike Numbers 1, there does not appear here any detailed elaboration concerning each tribe and its number, nor a repetition of the formula as to the ages counted and their designations (“who go forth to war”) and the like.

Concerning the range of ages of those counted in 1 Chr 27:23 one reads: “David did not number those below twenty years of age.” That is, David’s census again relates to the ages of twenty years *and upwards*, as in the censuses in the Book of Numbers. The continuation of that same verse gives the reason for the non-counting of people below the age of twenty: “for the Lord had promised to make Israel as many as the stars of heaven.” Off hand, it would appear that one does not count so that the numerous populace of Israel not be harmed by the evil eye, while the command regarding those aged twenty or more refers to them as “those who go forth to war” (יוצאי צבא), which is evidently the reason for counting them only from a given age.

2 Chronicles 25:5 states that Amaziah gathered together Judah and mustered those “twenty years old and upward, and found that they

were three hundred thousand picked men, fit for war.” It is reasonable to assume that this is a conscious attempt to use the language of Numbers 1 and 26. There again arises the question of the concluding pole of the phrase *ומעלה* (“and upward”). How is it that this has no limit, as one is speaking only of ages that are suitable to the activity of waging war? This even follows explicitly from what is stated: “and found that they were three hundred thousand picked men, fit for war, able to handle spear and shield.” It follows that the phrase “and upward” was a non-committal phrase, which was known during the biblical period to both writers and musterers. That is, the phrase *יוצא צבא* had a well-known meaning, while *ומעלה* was not taken literally. This is particularly so in light of the concluding phrase, which refers to “three hundred fifty men who go out to war, handling spear and shield.” One is forced to the conclusion, that one who was picked and goes out to war and handles a spear, is limited to that age which is suitable for such activities. Even if this is not stated explicitly, this was the upper limit of those who go out to war.

### 5. *Claims Regarding Duration of Life*

Alongside the objective counting of the years of a person’s life, we find various passages in the Bible in which there is subjective relation to the same subject. From these passages there follow various statements about the brevity of human life and its misfortunes.

In Psalm 90, for example, we find pessimistic reflections about man’s life in the world, after the regular duration of human life is stated (seventy years): “The years of our life are threescore and ten, or even by reason of strength fourscore” (Ps 90:10). Even if we assume that this verse may be explained differently (on which see below), the pessimistic atmosphere is in any event tangibly felt, as the sequel to this verse is “yet their pride (*וריהבם*; in Targumim: *ורובם*: span) is but toil and trouble; they are soon gone, and we fly away.” We find here a two-fold claim: 1) that life is not a rose garden, but is experienced by humans as filled with toil and trouble; 2) that life passes quickly. That is, the claim made here is not regarding the length of life in the *absolute* sense, but on *human feeling*, connected with the rapid passage of life. The psalm raises by way of comparison the eternity of Divine life contrasted with the brevity of man’s days. The eternity of God is expressed here in a double manner: directly, and by way of comparison. The direct statement is expressed by the formulaic statement, “from everlasting to everlasting thou art



God” (וּמַעֲוֹלָם עַד עוֹלָם אַתָּה אֵל; v. 2). By way of comparison there is given, interestingly, not the life span of God, whose life is without limit, but His way of relating to a huge span of time: “For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night” (90:4). There is no need to state explicitly how, by contrast, man perceives such periods of time. After the poet has achieved the effect of *concretizing* the idea of God’s eternity (by showing his supercilious attitude to huge lengths of time), he turns to deal with the description of man’s attitude to the issue of duration of life. The phrases used in this connection are intended to point out that human life quickly ends and disappears:<sup>15</sup> “(5) they are like a dream, like grass which is renewed in the morning: (6) in the morning it flourishes and is renewed; in the evening it fades and withers... (9) our years come to an end like a sigh... (10) they are soon gone, and we fly away.”

The poets’ solution is (v. 12): “So teach us the number of our days (עֲדַבְרֵנוּ לְמִנּוֹת יָמֵינוּ כֵּן הוֹדַע) RSV: to number our days), that we may get a heart of wisdom.” That is, not a request to lengthen our life span, nor to remove suffering from them, because they are few, but a request that God make known to his creatures the length of their life, so that they may manage them wisely. The duration of human life, both regular and exceptional, is, as we said, mentioned in this psalm (v. 10). The troubles which disturb the poet are not connected to the question of knowledge of the length of life, but to their passing quickly. What, then, will be the solution, if man is made to know the length of his life? Perhaps this will enable him to conduct them and to organize them such that each moment will be exploited properly?<sup>16</sup>

If this is indeed his request, how will this answer his claims about life passing by quickly (“they are soon gone, and we fly away”)? In a simple way, we can say, that if a person at least knows his life span, he may be able to properly evaluate the value of a portion of his life, without seeing it as a *rapid* flow towards the unknown, for he already knows exactly when it will end.

<sup>15</sup> There is a certain tension involved in the approach that man’s life is filled with “toil and trouble,” that is, suffering and burdens and the like. If such is human life, then it is better that it pass by quickly. But the texts do not deal with the questions that derive from this tension.

<sup>16</sup> For a detailed discussion of the understanding of duration of life in this hymn, see Seybold, “Zu den Zeitvorstellungen”; and cf. Clifford, “What Does the Psalmist ask for in Ps 39:5 and 90:12,” 63-66. In his opinion, this psalm does not entail a request for God to inform him of his anticipated length of life, but rather the length of the Divine retribution to be expected by the psalmist and his community. See there, and other commentaries on this psalm.

Arguments such as those found in Psalm 90, regarding the passage of the allotted life time with astonishing speed, also appear in other sources in the Bible. Thus, for example, in Job's arguments (9:24-25): "My days are swifter than a runner; they flee away, they see no food. They go by like skiffs of reed, like an eagle swooping on the prey." Here, three or four images of speed are used to indicate the flow of life. In the following speech Job returns to the same argument, but this time in a principled, and not a personal, formula regarding man: "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He comes forth like a flower, and withers; he flees like a shadow, and continues not" (14:1-2). Some of these phrases remind us of the images in Psalm 90, which we cited above (לְיָמָיו יִמְוָלוּ).

Another comparison regarding the lack of proportion between God's eternal life and the brevity of human life emerges from the following passage in Psalm 102:25-28: "Take me not hence in the midst of my days, thou whose years endure throughout all generations. Of old thou didst lay the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They will perish... like a garment. Thou changest them like a raiment, and they pass away; but thou art the same, and thy years have no end."<sup>17</sup>

The image of life as a passing shadow is also found in Psalm 102:12: "My days are like an evening shadow; I wither away like grass"; and in Ps 144:4: "Man is like a breath, his days are like a passing shadow"; 1 Chr 29:15: "For we are strangers before thee... our days on the earth are like a shadow."<sup>18</sup> The image in Job 8:9: "For we are but of yesterday, and know nothing, for our days on earth are like a shadow" seemingly deals with the same picture, but a deeper examination of this passage reveals that its main sense is to say that human beings are creatures who have come upon the earth not long ago: "We are from yesterday

<sup>17</sup> The approach of the relativity of time may appear even in contexts unrelated to human life. It states of Jacob that he worked for Rachel seven years, "and they seemed to him but a few days because of the love he had for her" (Gen 29:20). See Dinkler, "Early Christianity," 200, on the relativity of time according to 2 Peter 3:8: "with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." Perhaps this happened because the hopes for redemption had not yet been realized.

<sup>18</sup> Eccles 6:12: "For who knows what is good for man while he lives the few days of his vain life, which he passes like a shadow." It does not seem that there are expressed here the same ideas as in the other writings, yet nevertheless they were understood thus by Qohelet / Ecclesiastes Rabbah on this verse: "Said Rab Pinhas, Since man's days are vanity, and their number is like a shadow, what pleasure has he in life." A. Kahana also interpreted them thus (Commentary on Qohelet), as opposed to H. L. Ginzberg, Qohelet.

(תמול אנהנו),” that is, it is only since yesterday that we are here. The parallel phrase, “for our days on earth are like a shadow,” indicates that our very remaining here is like the appearance of a shadow. Evidently, it is not the intention here to refer to the brevity of human life span (כצל). Proof of this may be seen in the intention given in the previous verse for the bringing of this image: since human beings are guests who have come not long ago, they need to turn to “history” so as to rely upon the burden of memories concerning each matter (ibid., v. 8): “For inquire, I pray you, of bygone ages, and consider what the fathers have found.” The justifying sentence is “We are from yesterday,” and its continuation is “Will not they teach you and say to you, and from their heart shall go forth words.” That is, only the appeal to the fathers can provide the members of that generation with the results of historical experience, which they themselves are lacking, “we are from yesterday... our days on earth are like a shadow.”

Other images that appear in Psalm 90 (see above) reappear in other places. Thus the image of the dry grass—a symbol of the brevity of human life and that their time disappears quite quickly—reappears in Ps 103:15-16: “As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more.” As in Psalm 90, here too (v. 17) a comparison is drawn between man’s brief life and the elements of eternity in God’s relation to his creatures. Compare also Ps 102:12-13: “My days are like an evening shadow; I wither away like grass. But thou, O Lord, art enthroned for ever; thy name endures to all generations.”

PART TWO

TIME IN THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### INTRODUCTION: THE CONCEPT OF TIME IN THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

The phrases used to designate time in the Dead Sea Scrolls are generally speaking the same ones that are familiar to us from their use in the Bible. However, on the one hand their use is expanded in directions which do not exist in the Bible, such as the use of the term **עולם** in a geographical sense; on the other hand, there are terms whose use is more constricted in the Scrolls in comparison to that in the Bible, while yet others are extended in directions which the Bible did not imagine. Such is the case with the widespread term in the writings of the sect: **קץ**.

The opening chapter of this part of the book deals with the relation between God and time. Based upon the biblical approach, in which God was related to time through the connection to the creation of the heavenly luminaries which serve as the basis for determining time—from the unit of the day, through years and jubilees of years and even beyond that—this idea was developed even further by the sect.

The sect also elevated to the realm of practical thought the biblical understanding of the sacred festivals as **מועדי ה'** (“the appointed times of the Lord”), attaching importance to all of the festivals, or to specific festivals which were mentioned as such. This held true even of newly sanctified festivals, such as **מועד קורבן העצים** (“time of the wood offering”), found only among them, which is also mentioned among the **מועדי ה'**.

The subject of the determination by God of all the **קצים** (“periods” or “ages”) since the beginning of time occupies a place in its own right in the thought of the sect. All the “periods”: **קצים, מועדים, עתים**, were fixed and recorded by God in **ספר מחלקות העתים** (“the Book of the divisions of the periods”). Thus God determined from the very beginning of time the duration of each time unit (**קץ**). Thus, while people’s wish to pass quickly from a bad time to a better time is understandable, nevertheless, one of the instructions that repeats itself regularly in the literature of the sect states that they must not “stray from any one of all of God’s orders concerning the appointed times” (**ולוא לצעוד בכול אחד מכול דברי אל בקציהם**) or to “advance their appointed

times nor to retard any one of their feasts; they shall not veer from his reliable precepts in order to go either to the right or to the left” (ולוא לקדם עתיהם ולוא להתאחר מכול מועדיהם ולוא לסור מחוקי אמתו ימין ושמאול). That is, one is not to engage in any activity to either hasten or slow down the times in a way other than what has already been fixed for them, according to the deterministic approach which is the basis of the sect’s philosophy.

It is important to note that a certain overlap may be noted among the various terms used to refer to time, and that in certain respects the term *מועד* is synonymous with *קץ*, *עת*, and the like. This statement is made clear by the fact that certain idioms are likely to appear in the same text or in different texts concerning the same ideas, once using one term and once another term, without there being any change in the sense. Nevertheless, this does not mean that these terms concerning time are identical regarding the entire range of meanings. That is, they may coalesce regarding a certain part of the subject, but diverge from one another in the case of other usages that are unique to each one of them.

If in the case of the terms *דור* and *מועד* there is a continuity with the biblical usages, whether in the identical sense or with certain new emphases, in that of the term *קץ* we are dealing with one of the characteristic terms used in the Scrolls to refer to the subject of time. The use of the term in the Bible is extremely sparse, its usage being developed only in the sectarian literature. One may find early signs of the later use of this term in the Book of Daniel, for example. We thus find that the sect here continues a use that took shape in the later books of the Bible.

The term *עת* is used alongside *קץ* to cover the same semantic field. In this respect, despite the existence of this term in the Bible in a much broader sense (as opposed to *קץ*, which developed almost independently as an explicit vehicle for expressing the sectarian philosophy), its use in the Scrolls is unique and different from its biblical one, and is more similar to such cognate terms as *קץ*, *דור*, and the like.

One of the richest terms used for time is *יום*, whose usage also derives from that in biblical literature. *יום* is used alongside other terms to describe time in very general terms, alongside its basic meaning to describe a calendrical day, and alongside that “half” of a day—that is, daytime. In addition to these *יום* serves in various contexts; thus, for example, the terms *כל היום* or *כל הימים* are used to express constancy.

In this respect, the term *יום* is similar in usage to other terms for

time, in which there also exists the combination of **יום** used in the construct state to form a compound noun, where the *nomen rectum* (or adjective) gives the specific nature of the period of time referred to: e.g., **יום ריב** (“day of dispute”); **יום אנחה** (“day of moaning”); **יום נקם** (“day of vengeance”). There also appear some identifying sentences, which also serve as a way of defining the nature of the specific time referred to: **..הוא היום אשר..** (“it is the day that...”), in such a way that the sequel may also explain the nature of the period mentioned.

VI

CONCEPTS OF TIME IN THE SCROLLS



## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### GOD AND TIME

God's relation to the subject of time is described in Scripture in a totally clear manner. Already in the account of the creation of the luminaries in Genesis 1 things are formulated quite explicitly. The luminaries were formed by him—"and they were for signs and times and for days and for years" (1:14): that is, the creations of God, the luminaries, were appointed by Him for the function of fixing time and its arrangements.

In the hymn to God in Psalm 74, when the poet mentions the greatness of God in ancient days (in contrast to his lack of activity, in the people's difficult hour) he says, among other things: "Thine is the day, thine also the night; thou hast established the luminaries and the sun. Thou hast fixed all the bounds of the earth; thou hast made summer and winter" (Ps 74:16-17). We should mention at the outset that the context in which these things are discussed is in continuation of the opening: "Yet God my King is from of old" (v. 12), and that in fact the poet returns to the very earliest days of the world, to the Creation with all that entails: "Thou didst divide the sea by thy might; thou didst break the heads of the dragons on the waters... thou didst dry up overflowing streams" (vv. 13-15). He refers here to God's struggle with the great water creatures who disturbed Him in the labor of creation, parallel to a legend that was widespread in ancient Near Eastern literature, remnants of which were preserved in the Bible (albeit not, of course, in Genesis, which only retains the official version of the Creation). Thus, according to the version appearing in Psalm 74, the subject of time ("Thine is the day...") is an integral part of the creation of the cosmos.

In other words, this section of the psalm is a kind of parallel to the subject of the creation of the luminaries and the fixing of their tasks ("thou hast established the luminaries and the sun"). Day and night are thus creations of God, he established them, and there is a connection between "luminaries and sun" (i.e., the creation of the luminaries) and the arrangements of day and night, as is also stated in the chapter of the creation: "and they shall be... and days").

In the chapter concerning the appointed times we likewise find, at the opening of the chapter (Lev 23:2), the statement: "Say to the people

of Israel, the appointed feasts (מוֹעֲדֵי ה') of the Lord which you shall proclaim as holy convocations, my appointed feasts (מוֹעֲדֵי), are these.” The conclusion of this chapter uses identical terminology: “These are the appointed feasts (מוֹעֲדֵי ה') of the Lord.... besides the sabbaths of the Lord (שַׁבְּתַת ה')...” (vv. 37-38). From the designations of the festivals as מוֹעֲדֵי ה' and מוֹעֲדֵי (in the latter, God is speaking in the first person), and as שַׁבְּתַת ה', we may infer that the entire system of sanctified times, as discussed by this chapter, are understood as acts of God, as belonging to him, and the like.

The system of times at Qumran and the organization of matters regarding this subject begins with the identical point of departure as that of the Bible. But they did not suffice with that, but augmented the subject of divine involvement down the entire line. According to the sect's approach, God fixed the קְצִים, the periods, including their compass of time, their contents and everything connected with them.

We shall now survey the writings from Qumran bearing upon this subject.

First of all, the Qumran authors greatly augment the biblical idea of אֵל עוֹלָם (“the eternal God”). God is ancient and eternal (“from everlasting to everlasting thou art God”; Ps 90:2), parallel to the Qumran verse, כִּי אֵל עוֹלָם אַתָּה (“For you are an eternal God”; 1QH xv 31).

One must add to this that עוֹלָם acquired other meanings in the Scrolls in addition to its biblical usage, namely, of the cosmos. Thus the term עוֹלָם, as it appears in the Scrolls, may be interpreted in both senses, the temporal and the spatial.<sup>1</sup>

The subject of the luminaries, from Genesis 1, also appears in the scrolls in 4Q216 vi 6-8 (| | *Jub.* 2:8-9):

וְלַמְשָׁל בַּיּוֹם וּבַלַּיְלָה וּלְהַבְדִּיל בֵּין אֹרֶר לַחֹשֶׁךְ וּיְתֵן הַשֶּׁמֶשׁ לְאוֹת גְּדוּל [עַל הָאָרֶץ] לַיָּמִים [וּלְשַׁבְּתוֹת וּלְחֻדְשִׁים] [וּלְמוֹעֲדִים וּלְשָׁנִים וּלְשַׁבְּעוֹת הַשָּׁנִים] [“to regulate day and night and to separ[ate] [light and darkness. And he placed the sun as a gre]at [sign above the earth] for the day[s], the [sa]bbaths, the [months], [the feasts, the years, the weeks of years and the jubi]lees and for all the cyc[les of the years.”]

We have here an approach that, in effect, combines together the principle of Genesis 1 with such passages as Leviticus 23. Whereas in Genesis 1 matters are formulated with great brevity, here mention is made of the fixing of the day and night (i.e., the full diurnal period),

<sup>1</sup> See my two papers, “The Eternal God is the Lord,” and “The Superlative in the Hebrew Bible.”

the days, the weeks, the months, etc. That is, we find here the festival days that are found within the bounds of the year as fixed by God. But the system of Qumran (and of the Pseudepigraphical literature) was not satisfied with that, and even mentioned the larger time frameworks: the sabbatical years (שבועות השנים), the jubilees, and even the cycles of years. Since the order adduced here is an ascending order, beginning with individual days (or even the portion of daylight), through to the jubilee, it seems to me that the expression mentioned after the jubilees, ולכל תקופות השנים, is to be interpreted as referring to an even larger unit than that of the jubilees (cf. on this Chapter 19 below, “The Term מועד in the Scrolls”). Regarding the description of the festivals mentioned here, compare the phrase תכן למועדי שנה [ומ]משלת יחד (“according to the feasts of the year, [and] the communal [do]minion”; 4Q511 2 i 9).

In another passage, 4Q216 ii 7-8 (= *Jub.* 1:10), the subject of time again appears in brief: [כי עזבו את] חקותי ואת [מצותי ואת מועדי] בריתי [ואת שבתותי ואת קדש] (“for [they have forsaken] my laws and [my statutes, the festival]s of my covenant [and my sabbaths and my holy things]”). It would seem that, according to this view, the system of time including the various sorts of festivals as part of the covenant between God and Israel.

In another work, designated by the editors as *Works of God* (4Q392 1 3-9), there are many points connecting God with the subject of time:<sup>2</sup>

- 3 ובבריתו תדבק נפשם ול[דר]וש דברי פיה[ו] כי אדו[נ]י אלהי[ם] ב[שמים]  
 4 ממעל ולחקר דרכי בני האדם [ו]אין סתר מלפנו הוא ברא חשך [וא]ור לו  
 5 ובמעונתו אור אורתם וכל אפלה לפנו נחה ואין עמו להבדיל בין האור  
 6 לחשך כי לבני [אד]ם הבדילם לא[ור] יומם ובשמש לילה ירח וכוכבים  
 7 ועמו אור לאין חקר ואין לדעת[ו] קץ ה[וא] כי פלא[י]ם כל מעשי אל אנחנו  
 8 בשר הלוא נשכיל כמה עמנו לע[שות] נפ[לאות] ומפתים לאין מספר  
 9 [כי ב]מרומם [עשה ר]וחות וברקים [מלאכיו ומ]שרתי דב[י]ר[ך] מלפנו יצאים  
 המא[ורות]

- 3 and to his covenant their soul shall adhere and to [stu]dy the words  
 of h[is] mouth[...] Go[d in] the heavens  
 4 above and to examine the paths of the sons of man, and there is

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of this passage see Falk, apud Nitzan et alii, DJD XXIX, 27-32, and cf. there on the parallels to portions of this work in biblical and pseudepigraphical sources. Thus, for example, on p. 30 he mentions that Ben Sira 42:15 and 13:33 are parallel to portions of l. 4, and on p. 31 on Ben Sira 42:17 and on the angels relating the wonders of God. And similarly regarding the parallels in Psalms to the image in l. 9, and on l. 6 in connection to the picture of Jer 31:35.

- no place to hide from before him. He created darkness [and l]ight for himself;
- 5 and in his dwelling the perfect light shines, and all the shades rest before him; and he does not need to separate light
- 6 from darkness, because for the sons of [ma]n he separated them as the li[ght] at daytime and with the sun, at night the moon and stars.
- 7 And with him there is an unsearchable and unknowable [and time-less] light... for all the works of God are wonderful. We
- 8 are flesh; do we not understand what is with us to [...won]ders and p[o]rtents without number
- 9 [for on] high [he made wi]nds and lightnings [and the ser]vants of the holy of ho[lies]. From his presence go forth the lu[minaries]

One should noted that the passage opens by referring to **ובבריתו** (“and to his covenant”—1. 3). As we have already seen above, the Qumran authors draw a connection between the subject of time and the covenant with God. The God of heaven above knows all the ways of human beings (3-4); He created all, including fixing the boundaries of light and darkness. The phrase **אלהים ב[שמים]** (“G[od in] the heavens”), assuming its sense is “God of heaven,” may reflect Persian influence; nevertheless, it seems to me that this term was chosen because the author wished to emphasize here the aspect of God’s divinity as creator of the sun in the heavens. He also created the darkness, “[and l]ight for himself” (**ואור לו**)<sup>3</sup>—that is, both are his creations.

From this point on, the author develops his overall ideas connected with the day (he does not go beyond this unit). He even states the idea, to which there is no parallel in any other place, that God does not need to distinguish between light and darkness for His own needs, because “in his dwelling the perfect light (**אור אורתם**)<sup>4</sup> shines, and all the shades rest before him; and he does not need to separate light.” All this—the separation of the light from the darkness—he does only “because for the sons of [ma]n he separated them” so as to fix the boundaries of time, on the one hand, “as the li[ght] at daytime and with the sun” (**לאורן יומם ובשמש**) and, on the other, “at night, the moon and stars.” As for God Himself, the author again summarizes, that just as God’s mind is deep and “unknowable and timeless,” **ואין לדעתו קץ**, so is there found with Him light that is “unsearchable” light (**לאין חקר**).

Another work, *Morning and Evening Prayer* (4Q408 3 8-11), again speaks of God in the context of the creation of the basic unit of time, the day.

<sup>3</sup> Falk, *ibid.*, 29, explains **ואור לו** as meaning—for him, that is, for God Himself.

<sup>4</sup> Falk, 30, speculates that perhaps **אור אורתם** should be read in the sense of perfected light.

Essentially, one has here a poetic description of what was stated in Genesis 1 about the creation of the luminaries, in terms of both contents and terminology: (10) [חושך] (8) להופיע ממשלת (חושך) (10) ממשלת אור לגבול יומם (8) (“the dominion of light for the area of day... the appearance of the dominion of [darkness...]”).

But the author is not satisfied with describing the “boundary” of day and night, but speaks about the nature of the Creation and the fact that human beings who enjoy it need לברך את שם קדשך בראתם כי טוב האור (“to bless your holy name when they see that the light is good”).<sup>5</sup> Here too we find the influence of Genesis 1, by way of allusion to the creation of light on the first day: “and God saw that the light was good” (Gen 1:4). In my opinion, the poet here also refers to the complex subject of the existence of light independent of the existence of the luminaries. Moreover, further on he describes the creation of the evening for “the dominion of [darkness]” (לממשלת [חושך]), and in this context he also calls: [ ] לברך את שם קדשך בראתם [כי ] . That is to say, people are obligated to bless for the dominion of the darkness, the nighttime, parallel to their blessing for the light. One should take note that on line 9, following the instruction “to bless your holy name” for the matter of light, the author adds the justification or invitation בראתם כי טוב האור (“when they see that the light is good”). This is also the reason given on line 11: [ ] בראתם [כי ] (“to bless [your holy name when] they see [th]at [ ]”).<sup>6</sup> Perhaps the missing word here is טוב or טובה, from which it follows that טוב כי was said also with regard to darkness, for which one also needs to bless God. If this is the case, then this passage is different from the approach of the Torah, according to which this phrase is only said regarding the light, and not the darkness.<sup>7</sup>

The smallest unit of the day—the day or the daylight period—is also noted in *Thanksgiving Scroll*, 1QH xx 4-8:

<sup>5</sup> See the discussion of this document in Falk, “Daily, Sabbath and Festival Prayer,” 96-98, who interprets the passage as referring to daily prayer, morning and evening. Cf the discussion in Steudel, “The End of Days”; and cf. Steudel, apud Pfann et alii, DJD XXXVI, 304-308.

<sup>6</sup> The following is my suggested restoration of the text; however, there are other suggested readings, and see the literature. Thus, for example, Steudel, *ibid.*, 305, 308, who reads here: [כ]י [ט]ב [י]ם [כ]ו [ל] [כ]ו [כ]י. As for my suggestion see the discussion on this text below, chapter 23.

<sup>7</sup> However, Isaiah 45:7 may refelec such idea: יוצר אור ובורא חושך עשה שלום ובורא רע אני ה' עשה כל אלה I form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe, I am the LORD, who do all these things”.

- 4 ותפלה ליהתנפל והתחנן תמיד מקץ לקץ עם מבוא אור  
 5 לממש[לתו] בתקופות יום לתכונו לחוקות מאור גדול בפנות ערב ומוצא  
 6 אור ברשית ממשלת חושך למועד לילה בתקופתו ל<sup>ב</sup>נות בוקר ובקץ  
 7 האספו אל מ<sup>ו</sup>נתו מפני אור למוצא לילה ומבוא יומם תמיד בכול  
 8 מולדי עת יסודי קץ ותקופת מועדים בתכונם
- 4 prayer, to bow down and entreat always, from period to period:  
 when the light comes  
 5 to [its] domini[on] through the course of the day, according to its  
 regulation, in accordance with the laws of the great luminary; at  
 the return of the evening, at the departure of  
 6 light, when the dominion of the darkness begins; at the appointed  
 moment of the night; through its course towards the turn of dawn,  
 at the moment  
 7 when it withdraws to its quarter before the light; at the departure  
 of night and the coming of day; continually, at all  
 8 the births of time, the foundations of the period, and the course of  
 seasons in their order

The same text is also found in truncated form in 4Q427 3 ii 6-9. But in this text it is not explicitly stated that God makes all these, even though the things are self-evident. This also follows from the existence of parallels in this work to other places, first of all to Genesis 1: e.g., the references to **מאור גדול** (“great luminaries”), **ממשלת חושך** (“dominion of the darkness”), etc. The fuller text found in the *Thanksgiving Scroll* takes careful note of the components of the day, declaring that it intends to thank God perpetually, for all his deeds in the organizing of time.<sup>8</sup> A parallel work to *Hodayot* xx appears in 4Q256 8 ii 1-6; and in 4Q257 4 i 1-6.

A similar text is found in 4Q503 iii 1-6 1-15:

- 1 ובצאת [השמש]  
 6 בערב יברכו  
 7 לפניו בכול מפלג כבודו והלילה]  
 10 אור היוםם ש[לום עלי]כה ישראל  
 12 [ובצאת השמש...] להאיר על הארץ יברכו  
 13 לחגי שמחה ומועדי כ[בוד]

<sup>8</sup> For a discussion of 1QH xx, see Licht, *The Thanksgiving Scroll*, 170-171. He sees this as a hymn concerning the enumeration of the times, and as parallel to the text in 1QS x. Both passages invoke the idea of the harmony in the order of times created by God, and of the eternity of the arrangements of the world. On p. 172 Licht discusses the idiom **מקץ לקץ**, raising among other things the possibility that this parallels the Rabbinic idiom **לעת לעת** in the sense of a full day (e.g. as in m. *Niddah* 1.1), but I do not think that this is correct.

## 15 מועדי כבוד [ בגורלות לילה

- 1 And when [the sun] ascends  
 6 in the ev]ening, they shall bless  
 7 before him in each unit of his glory. And that night [  
 10 the light of the day. P[each be upon] you, Israel.  
 12 [And when the sun ascends...] to illuminate the earth, they shall bless.  
 13 for the festivals of joy and the ceremonies of gl[ory].  
 15 [Appointed times of glory] in the divisions of the night

See also *War Scroll*, 1QM xiv 13-14: [תמיד בכל מולדין] ובגבורתכה נרוממה תמ[יד בכל מולדין]: עתים ומועדי תעודות עולמים עם מ[בן]א יומם ולילה ומוצאי ערב ובוקר כי גדולה מ[לכות כבוד]דכה (“for your mighty deeds we will extol [your] spl[en-  
 dour, at every] moment and at the times indicated by your eternal edicts, at the on[se]t of day and at night at the fall of evening and at dawn. For great is the p[lan of] your [glo]ry”).<sup>9</sup> And compare also 4Q491 8-10 i 11-12.

(Concerning the organization of time on the level of the day, the week, the month, and the holy days—that is, the annual festivals—see below, Chapter 24, “Day / Days of x”.)

As in the Bible, the holy times are considered to belong to God, as we noted above. Hence, when the author of 4Q365 23 3-5 constructs a section concerning new festivals, such as the occasion of the wood offering, that are not mentioned in Scripture, the direction is “anti-quarian”—that is, things are formulated in such a manner that the author uses a biblical formula: וידבר מושה את מועדי ה' אל בני ישראל (“Thus Moses declared the appointed feasts of the Lord to the children of Israel”). Following another biblical opening formula (ה' אל מושה) (לאמר ויבר), he continues in the first person with God’s words to Moses in a text whose subject is, as mentioned, the law concerning the new festival. All this, notwithstanding the fact that there is no such occasion in the Bible.<sup>10</sup>

The author constructs his words with great sophistication, exploiting the *concluding* verse of the section of the appointed feasts in Lev 23:44 to serve as the *opening* formula of his law. Thus, in the Scrolls we read: וידבר מושה את מועדי ה' אל בני ישראל – at the beginning of the law; in the Bible: וידבר משה את מעדי ה' אל בני ישראל – at its end.

It was important to the author to make use of this verse because of

<sup>9</sup> See the discussion of these terms for time in Yadin, *War Scroll*, 329.

<sup>10</sup> See E. Tov, and S. White, in VanderKam, DJD XIII, 293. In their opinion, the text discussed may be related to the *Temple Scroll*. See there also on the new appointed time mentioned in l. 9: מ[ועד היצהר], referring to the new oil festival.

the appearance there of the phrase **מעדי ה'**. This phrase implies that, just as the entire system of time is God's, all the more so that the sanctified times are His and are for Him.<sup>11</sup>

In the text of *Pseudo-Moses*, 4Q390 1 8-9, the author attacks Israel who **ישכחו חוק ומועד ושבת וברית ויפרו הכל ויעשו הרע בעיני** ("will forget the law, the festival, the sabbath and the covenant; and they will disobey everything and will do what is evil in my eyes"). It is clear that non-observance of the sanctified times, which as mentioned were God's, is considered as a violation of his covenant, since the appointed times are **מעדי ה'**.<sup>12</sup>

Another fragment of the same work, fr. 2 i 9-10, states that: **את מקדשי יטמאו [ואת שבתותי יחללו ו]את [מו]עדי יש[כחו] ובבני [יה]ללו [א]ת [זר]עם** ("they will defile my temple... [they will defile my sabbaths, and] they will f[orget] my [fest]ivals and with the sons of [foreigners they will de]base their off[spring;] their priests will act violently").<sup>13</sup>

The connection between the festivals and God led to the creation of certain terminology in relation to the nature of the festivals: **במועדי טוהר** ("periods of purification"; 4Q414 7 6 = *Ritual of Purification*). Further on, in line 8, the term **בטהרת [י]שראל** is mentioned. In fragment 2 i, Israel (?) is called **טהורי מועדו** ("the pure ones of the periods..."). In general, a parallel is drawn in this document between Israel and the pure festivals.<sup>14</sup>

God is asked in prayer (2 i 3-4): **ולכפר לנו... [והיות] טהורים לפניכה** ("to atone for us ...to be] pure in your presence"). The appointed times are pure—thus in 7 6, **מועדי טוהר** ("periods of purification")—because they belong to God and are connected with his activities, that sustain them; in 7 8, **בטהרת [י]שראל** ("during the purifications of [I]srael"); in 13 7, we read **מטהר עמו במימי רוחץ** ("purifying his people with the water which washes"). Israel is **לכה לעם טה[ור]** ("for you, to a pu[re] people"; 7 3), and is deserving **להטהר רצו[נ]כה לפניכה** ("your wil[I], to purify

<sup>11</sup> See Saebo. s.v. **יום**, in Botterweck-Ringgren, *Wörterbuch*, 580, on the subject of God and time. Cf. there on **ימי האל** = holy days, 581-582.

<sup>12</sup> Compare Dimant, "New Light from Qumran," 414, 424, 433, on the connection between the list of terms here and the texts from the Bible: Isa 24:7; Lam 2:6; etc. Identical accusations appear in CD iii 13-16, in 4QpHos<sup>a</sup> ii 16, and in *Jub.* 1:14, etc. In her opinion, the text discussed refers to an attack on the calendar, and the meaning of the term **מועד** is festival time.

<sup>13</sup> See Dimant, *ibid.*, 415, 430.

<sup>14</sup> See Eshel in Baumgarten, DJD XXXV, 144. It is worthy noting that Eshel does not interpret **מועדי טוהר** there as I have here, but in the sense of those times that have been appointed for acts of purification.



oneself before [you..."; 13 2); ולהיות בטהרת צדק] ("And to be in [ust] purity"; 13 4); while God Himself engages in purifying Israel: thus 13 9: אשׁר טהרתה בכבודכה] ("[...]your puri[fica]tion in your glory").<sup>15</sup>

Is the appeal in the *Thanksgiving Scroll* (1QH xv 25) **כי אתה לי למאור**, **עוֹלָם** ("For you are my [ever]lasting luminary") connected with the subject of God and time? It would appear that the answer to this is positive: God is the creator of light (and of the luminaries), everything flows from him, and He is the supreme, eternal God, and similar adjectives. Or perhaps it also refers to his eternity (**אל עולם**), and not in the superlative sense), as it says shortly thereafter: **וכול דרכיכה יכוננו לנצח** **[נצח]ים** ("and all your paths remain from eternity [to e]ter[nity]"; xv 31-32). In any event, it is worthwhile mentioning that the subject of light is of central importance in this text: against **אנשי מלחמה ובעלי רבי** ("those who fight me, and those who bring a complaint" note: the translation reflect the reading: **[בעלי ריב]**; *ibid.*, 22-23), he states that God lifts up his horn: **והופעתי באור] שבעתים באור אשר הכינותה לכבודכה** ("I am radiant with sevenfold li[ght,] in the li[ght which] you prepare for your glory"; vii 24). That is, God, who is the poet's **מאור עולם**, and is the God who created a special light for the pious man;<sup>16</sup> nevertheless, the light created is to the glory of God Himself. Or perhaps the sense of the word **לכבודכה** is to the light of the seven days.

It is clear that such statements as 4Q200 6 4-6 (the version of Tobit from Qumran): **וכתוב תהלה בתשבוחת ואמור] [ברוך אלהים] חי אשר לכול העולמים היאה מלכותו אשר הואה [מכה] [והואה] מרחם מוריד עד שאולנה] [and wrote a hymn with praise and s[aid:] [ <<Blessed be the] living [God], whose kingdom is for all the centuries; he is the one who [punishes ... a] and he is the one who] has pity, he brings down to the deepest Sheol and brings up from the abyss"), are also relevant to the definition of God as eternal: **חי אשר לכול העולמים** ("living ...for all the centuries"). That is, at all times mortal people turn to him as their fixed staff and protector.**

But the main connection between God and time is, in my opinion, related to the subject of the **קצים** ("ages"). God fixed all the times and cycles, be it with regard to their location in the order of times, to the compass of each cycle, or to the nature of the events in each and every

<sup>15</sup> Eshel, *ibid.*, 135-154. For a similar picture, see Text 512, published by Baillet in DJD VII, 262-286.

<sup>16</sup> According to Licht, *Thanksgiving Scroll*, 127 n. 24. Perhaps the sense is to the hidden light of the seven days.

time. This is the essence of the deterministic approach of Qumran concerning the subject of time.<sup>17</sup>

One of the central texts regarding this subject is Ages of Creation, as Allegro calls it, (4Q180 1 1-4):

1 פשר על הקצים אשר עשה אל קץ להתם [כול הויה]  
 2 ונהיה בטרם בראם הכין פעולות[יהם בכול סרך הקצים]  
 3 קץ לקצו והוא חרות על לחות [השמים לבני אדם]  
 4 [ל] [ל] קצי ממשלותם זה סרך בני נוח משם לאברהם]

- 1 Interpretation concerning the ages which God has made: An age to conclude [all that there is]
- 2 and all that will be. Before creating them he determined [their] operations [according to the precise sequence of the ages,]
- 3 one age after another age. And this is engraved on the [heavenly] tablets [for the sons of men,]
- 4 [for] / [a]ll/ the ages of their dominion. This is the sequence of the son[s of Noah, from Shem to Abraham]

We may infer from this the connection of God with the various periods of time: He created them, and fixed the various kinds of time and “before creating them he determined [their] operations.” Each age will come at its proper time (קצו/מועדו), as recorded before God (on the tablets). There follows from this the unequivocal statement that everything is decided by God: the order of times and events, the kinds of time, their duration and the like. There is also a kind of Divine “guarantee” that everything will take place as planned. As for the texts or tablets upon which the things are inscribed, this may refer to the *Book of the divisions of the periods*, or a similar work.<sup>18</sup>

Another document that states that all of God’s decisions concerning the order of the ages and their nature are recorded in writing appears in 4Q177 (4Q Catena A) 3 10-13:

10 ... .. ימ לאו קציהם  
 11 [ ת אבותם ] [ במספר שמותם ] מפורשים בשמות לאיש ואיש .]

<sup>17</sup> See Licht, “Time and Eschatology.” According to the sect, there are four ages: the past, up until the appearance of the sect; the present—the time of the reign of evil; the future—the period of the war against the children of darkness; and the age of peace. The latter is parallel to “the World to Come” in Rabbinic thought, i.e., the Eschaton. There are thus many times, and its is incumbent upon the individual and the public to behave in accordance with time and its peregrinations. Parallels to these ideas in the books of the sect appear in the apocalyptic literature—*Syriac Baruch*, *Enoch*, and the like.

<sup>18</sup> Allegro, DJD V, 77-78.

ש[נותיהם וקץ מעמדם י] [ל] לשונם  
 12 [א] את צאצא[אי] ו[עתה הנה הכול כתוב בלוחות אשר [חרט] אל וידיעהו את  
 מספר [כול הדורות] וינח[ילהו]  
 13 [ל] ולזרעו [עד] עולם. ... ..

10 ... .. [will fill] the[ir] periods

11 [...] of their fathers. According to the number of [their names. According to the precise list of their names, of each man individually [...] their [y]ears and the period of their service and [...] their tongues

12 [...] the des[cen]dants [ And] now, see, everything has been written on the tablets which God [inscribed (*my reconstruction* – GB)] and he made him known the number of [all the generation]s, and gave [him] on inher[itance]

13 to [him] and to his seed [for]ever ... ..<sup>19</sup>

*Note:* The reconstruction of the word חרות on line 12 is my suggestion. In the *Study Edition* (eds.: García Martínez-Tigheelaar) the version of l. 12 is צאצא[אי] יהודה: “the des[cen]dants of Judah.”

The issue of the writing upon the tablets in connection with קצים may possibly be alluded to in 4Q512 1-3 4 as well, in the phrase בלוחות עולם (“eternal tablets”). This may refer to the ceremonies of purification, mentioned in this document (in practice, throughout it), referring to the tablets written by God at the beginning of days. This seems to refer to those same primordial tablets on which are written the history of the ages, the order of life, and the like.

In this context we should mention several texts for whom this is their main concern.

In the *Community Rule*, 1QS iv 25-26: והואה ידע פעולת מעשיהן (25) [מועדם] (26) לכול קצי (“He knows the result of their deeds for all the periods of [appointed times]”). That is, God knows all the activities of men that were fixed for each period עד מועד משפט נחרצה (“until the time appointed for the judgment decided”; iv 19-20). Compare also the *War Scroll*, IQM i 8-9: עולמים קצי גודלו לכול רום גודלו לכול רום גודלו לכול רום (“and in the time of God, his exalted greatness will shine for all the et[ernal] times”). Regarding קצי עולמים, see 1QS iv 16-17, but there it states: קי אחרון (“For God has sorted them into equal parts until the last time”), and compare what is written further on, *ibid.*, line 25: כי בד בבד שמן אל עד קץ נחרצה (“For God has sorted them into equal parts until the appointed end”).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Allegro, *ibid.*, 67-68, and compare to CD ii 9; iv 5.

<sup>20</sup> See Licht, *The Rule Scroll*, 99-100, on the deterministic approach that emerges

The same principle also emerges from the prayer in the *Thanksgiving Scroll*, 1QH ix 23-25: הכול חקוק לפניכה בחרת זכרון לכול קצי נצח ותקופות מספר חקוק שני עולם בכול מועדיהם ולוא נסתר ולא נעדרו מלפניכה (“Everything has been engraved before you with the stylus of remembrance for all the incessant periods and the cycles of the number of everlasting years in all their predetermined times, and they will not be hidden and will not be lacking from before you”). Everything has been fixed and inscribed by the “stylus of remembrance,” which records all the ages through eternity, and the nature of all the cycles and all the appointed times within the ken of human life.<sup>21</sup>

The evildoers are inscribed in the books of the divine ages: לשחת עולמים .. לזעות נצח וחרפת עד עם כלמת כלה באש מחשכים, וכול קציהם עולמים: (“for eternal damnation ...for permanent terror and shame without end with the humiliation of destruction by the fire of the dark regions. And all the ages of their generations (they shall spend) in bitter weeping”; IQS iv 12-13). Compare also 1QH v 16: כי אתה: (“for you have established them before the centuries”)—albeit there the “establishing” refers among other things to the new creation which will be established by God in the future.

In general, I must say that many of the appearances of עולם and עולמים in the Scrolls are instructive for matters pertaining to God and time; that is, that the fixing of time and of the destinies from the beginning and for eternity is performed by God (cf. on this subject Chapters 19 and 21, on the use of the terms מועד and עולם).

A similar picture emerges from the following passage in the *Thanksgiving Scroll* (1QH ix 14-18):<sup>22</sup>

כול אשר במ תכנתה לרצונכ[ה] ותתנם לממשלה]  
 לרוח אדם אשר יצרת בתבל לכול ימי עולם ודורות  
 נצח למ[עשיהם] בקציהם פלגתה עבודתם בכול דוריהם  
 ומשפ[ט] במועדיה לממשל[תם] תכנתה [ו]דר[כיהם] הכינותה לדור ודור  
 ופקודת שלומם עם כול נגיעיהם [לקציהם תכנתה]  
 ותפלגה לכול צאצאיהם  
 למספר דורות עולם  
 ולכול שני נצח  
 ו[מעשיהם ידעתה]  
 ובחכמת דעתכה הכי[נותה] תעודתם בטרם היותם

from this statement: everything is predetermined, and God knows all that will happen in the future, since He determined it.

<sup>21</sup> See on this Licht, *Thanksgiving Scroll*, 56, 61.

<sup>22</sup> Licht, *ibid.*, 55-56.

ועל פי ד[ברכה נה]יה כול  
ומבלעדיך לא יעשה

...everything which is in them you have determined according to your will. [...] for the spirit of man which you created on earth for all days everlasting and unceasing generations, according [to their deeds] and in their seasons. You have shared out their tasks in all their generations and the regulation at its predetermined times to rule [...] you established generation after generation and the visitation of their retribution with <with> all their afflictions [...] and you will share it out among all their offspring according to the number of their eternal generations and for all years continuously [...] You knew all their deed[s], and in the wisdom of your knowledge you have determined their course before they came to exist. And in accordance with [your] wi[ll] everything happens, and without you nothing occurs.<sup>23</sup>

That is, all of the acts of human beings, who are creations of God, were fixed by him throughout history, classified according to the times and generations. That is, God fixed for every created thing the order of its events and their contents according to their time.

It is not surprising, therefore, that in 4Q215a 1 ii 8-10, the author states that: **כי הוא [ידע] (9) פעולתם בטרם הבראם ועבודת הצדק פלג (8) גבולותם [ ] (10) בדורותם היא בא ממשל {הצדק} \* הטוב וירם כסא ה[מלך]** (“For he [knows] their actions before they were created, and (for) the service of justice he has divided their territories [ ] in their generations. For the dominion {of justice} of goodness has arrived, and he will raise the throne of [the king]”); (\*correction by the copyist of the manuscript) and compare CD vii 4-7 and 1QH xvii 33-35. I have already cited a similar reading to this from 1QS iv 25-26 **כי בד בבד שמן אל עד (קץ נחרצה**), and compare also my comments above on iv 16-17.<sup>24</sup>

Apocryphon A (= *Prayer of Enosh*) likewise speaks of the inscribing of all events by God. In 4Q369 1 i 4-6 we read:

4 כול מ[ועדי]הם בקציהם  
5 ק [ץ פלאכה כי מאז חקקתה למו  
6 [משפטו עד קץ משפט נחרצה

(4) ... all their fes[tivals] in their periods

(5) the peri[od] of your wondrous [...] for from of old you engraved for them

<sup>23</sup> I have inserted here some slight additions into García Martínez's translation of this text.

<sup>24</sup> See Chazon-Stone, apud Pfann, DJD XXXVI, 179-181.

(6) [...] his judgment, until the ordained time of judgment.<sup>25</sup>

An explicit statement about God's fixing the times, with all their components, appears in *Pesher Habakkuk*, 1QpHab vii 12-14: **כִּיָּא כּוֹל** **קִיצִי אֵל יבּוֹאוּ לְתַכּוֹנֵם כֹּאשֶׁר חִקַּק לָהֶם בְּרִזִי עֲרַמְתּוֹ** ("because all the ages of God will come at the right time, as he established for them in the mysteries of his prudence"—that is, God has fixed the proper measure of each period).

One needs to take note, first of all, of an important detail: that the **קִיצִים**, the ages or cycles of the world, are referred to as **קִיצִי אֵל** ("the ages of God"). Compare this with the biblical idiom, **מוֹעֲדֵי ה'**, "appointed times of the Lord" (see what I wrote on that above).

All of the ages will take place in their time and with all of their components, as was fixed for them in **רִזִי עֲרַמְתּוֹ**, the "secrets of his craftiness"; these are the act of God rather than of man, and as such are hidden from human beings. Compare also **קוֹדֶשׁוֹ מוֹעֲדֵי כְבוֹדוֹ**, which refer to the sabbaths, including all of the holy days, which their author attributes to God himself: **קִדְשׁוֹ, כְּבוֹדוֹ**.

We find the same principle of connection between God and time applied even with regard to specific depictions, and not only with regard to comprehensive periods. Thus, in the *War Scroll* (1QM xvii 5-6) we read **הַיּוֹם מוֹעֵדוֹ לְהַכְנִיעַ וּלְהַשְׁפִּיל שֶׁר מִמְשַׁלֵּת רַשְׁעָה** ("Today is his appointed time to humiliate and abase the prince of the dominion of evil"). Now that the day has come, the thing takes place. Thus also *ibid.*, i 10, **כִּי הוּאֵה יוֹם יַעֲוֹד לוֹ מֵאֵז לְמַלְחַמַת כֹּלָה** ("for this will be the day determined by him since ancient times for the war of extermination").<sup>26</sup> It would seem that the use here of the term **מֵאֵז** alludes to the time fixed for the destinies—ages and everything related to them, at the beginning of time. Likewise in 4Q266 3 iii 25-26, **הוּא הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִפְקְדוּ [אֵל], כֹּאשֶׁר [דְּבַר] הַיּוֹ שְׂרֵי [יְהוּדָה]** ("This is the day which [God] will appoint, as [he says:] <<[The princes (of Judah)] were," etc.); and cf. CD viii 2-3. The conclusion that the identifying phrase (**הוּא הַיּוֹם**; "this is the day") is intended to refer to the words **כֹּאשֶׁר [דְּבַר]** is unavoidable. This is a different way of thinking that relates to a particular word of God that was said in the past. What is referred to here is the "great speech"

<sup>25</sup> This passage is discussed by Attridge-Strugnell in VanderKam, DJD XIII, 356; and see *ibid.*, the comparison to *Pesher Habakkuk*, 1QpHab vii 6, and regarding the festivals before the giving of the Torah in *Jub.* 2:17-18; 16:9. Cf. *Jub.* 3:10; 1 *Enoch* 81:2; 93:1; *Test. Levi* 5:21.

<sup>26</sup> Compare Yadin, *War Scroll*, on xv 12; xvii 5, and also on xv 1. Cf. *ibid.*, 330-331, on the relationship among the terms for time: **מֵעַד, מוֹעֵד, עֵת, תְּעוּדוֹת, X-יְמֵי** etc.

of the occasion of fixing all the ages, and the like, bearing a certain parallel to the fixing of destinies and ages by God.

Far more suitable to this are the passages including the verb root יע"ד ("to determine"), such as those mentioned above, like כִּי אֵל מֵאָז יֵעֲדֶה לַיּוֹם הַגָּדוֹל קִרְבָּה ("Since ancient time you determined the day of the great battle"; 1QM xiii 14). As I noted there, I see the phrase מֵאָז as referring to the time of the cardinal Divine decision regarding the matter of the ages and the like. One should add to this, as mentioned, the term יֵעֲדֶה, which refers to the Divine design that encompasses all periods and all events. Similarly, the phrase כִּי אֵל מוֹעֵד יוֹם \*מִלְחָמָה הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה מֵ[אֵל] ("for today is the {day} /time/ of war [by] God"; 1QM xv 12-13), (\*The first appearance of the word יוֹם is erased by the scribe) which also includes יע"ד (in the noun form מוֹעֵד) is intended to express the same idea—namely, that this day, in the framework of the designated age, is God's destined aim of the war. The phrase יוֹם יְעוֹד is equivalent to כִּי מוֹעֵד (מִלְחָמָה) הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה.<sup>27</sup>

With regard to sins against the system of sacred times fixed by God, we find the statement in CD [=4Q269 2] iii 12-16:

12 ובמחזיקים במצות אל  
13 אשר נותרו מהם הקים אל את בריתו לישראל עד עולם לגלות  
14 להם נסתרות אשר תעו במ כל ישראל vacat שבתות קדשו ומועדי  
15 כבודו עידות צדקו ודרכי אמתו והפצי רצונו אשר יעשה  
16 האדם וחייה בהם

- 12 But with those who remained steadfast in God's precepts,  
13 with those who were left from among them, God established his covenant with Israel forever, revealing to  
14 them hidden matters, in which all Israel had gone astray: [Blank] his holy sabbaths and his glorious  
15 feasts, his just stipulations and his truthful paths, and the wishes of his will which man must do  
16 in order to live by them.

God has fixed all of these holy days, and for that reason they are His (קדשו, כבודו). Hence their desecration is (also) an assault upon Him; and note what I wrote above about מוֹעֵד ה'.

God's advantage over man and over the peoples emerges as a corollary of the subject of God and time. We have already encountered the argument that human beings as individuals, and the people Israel as a collective, do not know what is to be anticipated in the system of [fu-

<sup>27</sup> Yadin, *ibid.*, 335, on concepts of time and their relationship to one another, discussing xvi 1.

ture] times, whereas God, who established the times and the cycles, knows well the events and what will happen.

Let us now mention several passages that deal with the subject from this point of view. In CD ii 9-10 we read: וידע את שני מעמד ומספר ופרוש ("And he knew the years of existence, and the number and detail of their ages, of all those who exist over the centuries, and of those who will exist, until it occurs in their ages throughout all the everlasting years").

In xvi 2-4: ופרוש קציהם לעורון ישראל ("And the exact interpretation of their ages about the blindness of Israel"), the sense here being that from their perspective they are blind regarding what may be expected to happen subsequently in the present age and in future ages).<sup>28</sup> It continues, מכל אלה הנה הוא מדוקדק על ספר מחלקות העתים ליובליהם, ובשבועותיהם ("in all these matters, behold, it is defined in The book of the divisions of the periods according to their jubilees and their weeks").

In iv 4-6, we read: הנה פרוש שמותיהם לתולדותם וקץ מעמדם ומספר ("Here is the detailed list of their names, according to their genealogies and the age of their standing and the number of their miseries and the years of their residence, and the detailed list of their deeds.")<sup>29</sup>

In 1QH v 26: ו[בכול] קציד מועדי [עו]לם [ב]רורים לחפציהם: ("and a[ll] your periods are <sup>30</sup>appoin[ted eter]nal [times ...pu]rified for their affairs").

And in 1QS x 1: תקופתו: אור עם תקופתו ("during the periods which he decreed: at the commencement of the dominion of light, during its rotation...").

At times God informs the "blind" people of that which is hidden from them; thus in 1QH xxv 11 (fr. 5 11): וקץ תעודה השכלתה לב[שר] ("and you have made known the time of the testimony to the fle[sh]").

In CD xiii 8-9, we read: \*ויספר להם נהיות עולם בפרתיה [בפ]תרניה ("And recount to them the eternal events with <their explanations>. He shall have pity on them like a father on his sons"). \* Reading from parallel version in Cave 4. Compare also 4Q267 9 iv 5, and against that CD ii 7-10, and the formula from Cave 4: 4Q266 2 ii 6-9; and see our discussion of the divisions of times in the chapter on the term מועד. The *Book of the divisions of the periods* is a work

<sup>28</sup> See Davies, *The Damascus Covenant*, 100-102.

<sup>29</sup> See Rabin, 74-75, on the similarity between these sections and the prologue to the *Book of Jubilees*.

<sup>30</sup> My translation.



in which God's decisions and statements regarding the contents of the times and the ages, their pace and order, are recorded.

Thus in 4Q228 1 i 2-10, we read:<sup>3</sup> **2. אותם [במחלק[ו]ת העתים** **3. ליובליהם ובשבוועותיהם ואגיד]ה לכמה אשר תדעו 4. ואספ[ר] לפנו מחלקת עתו [העתים]** **5. וכל 9. [ח]י נצח כי כן כתוב במחלקות 10. [העתים]** **3 [.....according to their jubilees and their weeks] And I shall tell] you, that you know 4 [I shall te]ll before him the division of his time, and all 9 [life] everlasting. For thus is it written in the divisions 10 [of the times ...]**". (On these terms see below, in chapter 22.)

It is an accepted conjecture that the *Book of the divisions of the periods* refers to the *Book of Jubilees*.

### 1. On the Pace of Time and Its Changes

As God has written everything before him in relation to all the times, it is clear how important it was not to deviate from anything recorded in these "books of the times," since the times were fixed by God himself: **ולוא לצעוד בכול אחד מכול דברי אל בקציהם ולוא לקדם עתיהם ולוא להתאחר** **1. מכול מועדיהם ולוא לסור מחוקי אמתו ימין ושמאול** ("They shall not stray from any one of all of God's orders concerning their appointed times; they shall not advance their appointed times nor shall they retard any one of their feasts. They shall not veer from his reliable precepts in order to go either to the right or to the left"; 1QS i 13-15).

It is forbidden (or better: it is impossible) to stray from any of God's orders concerning their appointed times. The meaning of the phrase **ולוא לצעוד בכל אחד** ("to stray from any one") is: it is forbidden that one would walk in a way *other* than that fixed in the books of the times.<sup>31</sup>

Everything said thereafter: **ולוא לקדם עתיהם ולוא להתאחר מכול** **2. מועדיהם ולוא לסור מחוקי אמתו ימין ושמאול** ("they shall not advance their appointed times nor shall they retard any one of their feasts. They shall not veer from his reliable precepts in order to go either to the right or to the left") is, in effect, an exemplification of what is stated in the open-

<sup>31</sup> Licht interprets **ולוא לצעוד**, etc., as to turn aside. See *Rule Scroll*, 62, and cf. *ibid.*, 40-41, on the interpretation of the entire passage as a warning not to deviate from the calendrical system of the sect. It is also interpreted thus by Yadin, *War Scroll*, Introduction to Chapter 8, § 3 (4), 204-206, on the calendar dispute. Even though I have no quarrel with this interpretation, I still adhere to my interpretation that takes a broader view: that one is not to deviate from any of the divine statements regarding the ages and appointed times, whether regarding their timing, their extent, etc.

ing sentence: **ולוא לצעוד**, etc. It is forbidden to distance oneself from that which has been predetermined, whether it be to hasten the times or to delay them. The author then summarizes by saying **ולוא לסור** (“and not to turn astray”).

According to this, the structure of the passage is as follows: 1) a general statement: “they shall not stray”; 2) two examples: “they shall not advance ....nor shall they retard”; 3) a general summary: “they shall not veer ...to the right or to the left.”

This being the case, I believe that the phrase **ולוא לסור מחוקי אמתו** and **ולוא לשמאול**, ought to be interpreted, not in relation to God’s laws in general, but specifically to the fixing by Him of the times and periods.

The formulation of the document in 4Q255 2 7 reads: **ואין לצעד על** [ואין לצעד על] (“nor infr[inge] even one [of all his words]”).<sup>32</sup> It should be noted that we do not have hear an explicit statement regarding *matters of time*, because this sentence appears after the phrase **כאשר** [כאשר] (“a[s he has decreed]”) concerning the appointed times of his assemblies. [He should not turn aside,] (either) right or l[eft]”; ll. 5-7). It is therefore no longer necessary to note that this “straying” and “turning” is related to the subject of time, as is stated explicitly in 1QS i 13-15: **ואין לצעוד.. בקציהם ולוא** [ואין לצעוד.. בקציהם ולוא] (“They shall not stray from ... their appointed times; they shall not advance their appointed times ...any one of their feasts”); and compare also 4Q257 1 iii 13-14.

The same idea is repeated elsewhere. The subject of the prohibition against deviating from God’s decision regarding the times, which He has already established “in the mysteries of his prudence” (**ברזי ערמתו**), is repeated elsewhere in identical terminology **לא חרין לעם ולא להתאחר לקדם**, indicating the power of this idea in the sect’s literature.

In 4Q266 2 i 2-3, a fragment of the *Damascus Document* found in Cave 4, we read: **כי אין [להתקדם] ולהתאחר ממועדיהם** [כי אין [להתקדם] ולהתאחר ממועדיהם] (“for there is no [advanc]ing or delaying their festivals [...] ... There is determined a moment of wrath for a nation that does not know him”).<sup>33</sup>

The appointed time and ages (**מועד, קץ**) are fixed and inscribed by God; one may not change their speed, their order, or duration, and certainly not their contents. In the framework of this general statement, the author adds that the times of anger against the people are

<sup>32</sup> Compare 1QS iii 7-12. The section is given according to Alexander-Vermes, DJD XXVI, 33-35. For a similar version see 1QS i 13-15.

<sup>33</sup> See Baumgarten, DJD XVIII, 34, and compare there CD i 1-21.

also inscribed, even if they, the people (still) do not know it.

Again, in a somewhat different formula, in 4Q268 1 4: ואין לקדם [וא]ל[א]חר ממועדיה[מה] (“... or there is n]o before [or] after in th[eir] festivals [...]”).<sup>34</sup> It should be noted that the verbs “קד” and “אח” sometimes appear in the *hithpa’el* construction, sometimes in *qal*, and sometimes mixed.

I also relate to this subject the statements regarding the phrase של”מ (הימים) and the like (see on this Chapter 20, “The Term קץ in the Scrolls”). I mean by this that if, for example, there appears the phrase שע הרשע של”מ קץ (“the age of evil is completed”), this means that their time is about to end in accordance with what has been predetermined by God; it does not mean that it has been decided, for one or another reason, to advance (or postpone) the conclusion of the days in accordance with the warnings that were discussed here. In other words, one is not to confuse the meaning of the instruction to human beings in general, or to Israel in particular, “not to stray from the laws of God” and from his determination of the times—that is, not to hasten or delay them—and that of שלמו הימים or שלם קץ-x, which evidently refers to the original period as fixed in the books of the times.

Another aspect of the subject under discussion emerges from the work known as *Pseudo-Ezekiel* (4Q385 3 2-7):<sup>35</sup>

2 ימה {הומה} or: את נפשי ויתבהלו הימים מהר עד אשר יאמרו [כל בני]  
 3 האדם הלא ממהרים הימים למען יירשו בני ישראל [את ארצם]  
 4 ויאמר ה' אלי לא אש[נ]ב פניך יחזקאל ה[נה] א[מ]דד [העת וקצרת]  
 5 את הימים ואת השנים] [ל]  
 6 מצער כאשר אמרת ל]  
 7 כי פ[י] ה' דבר אלה ]

2 [... and my heart] [dis]turbs my soul. And the days will pass rapidly until [all the sons of]

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 119-120, where he compares the text to CD i 15.

<sup>35</sup> See Strugnell-Dimant, “4Q Second Ezekiel,” esp. 51, 54, 55, and the bibliography there to the pseudepigraphical literature for the phenomenon of days that hasten quickly, as mentioned in this document: Dan 9:24-27; 11-12; 1 *Enoch* 84-90; 91:12-17; 93:1-10; *Test Levi* 17; *Asc. Moses* 2-10; 4 *Ezra* 45:41-55; 2 *Baruch* 53-69. In my opinion, of all these only 2 *Baruch* 54:1-2 contains an explicit statement concerning the hastening of the times. It reads there: “You alone, O Lord, knew the heights of the world beforehand and that which will happen in the times which you bring about by your word. And against the works of the inhabitants of the earth you hasten the beginnings of the times. And the ends of the periods you alone know.” But it seems to me, that even though the words say that God hastens the beginnings of the times, that is not the sense or image that appears in *Second Ezekiel* and in the other sources that I discussed above.

- 3 man say: Are not the days hastening on so that the children of Israel can inherit [their land?]
- 4 And YHWH said to me: I will not sh[u]n your face, Ezekiel; s[ec], I measure [time and shorten]
- 5 the days and the years [...]
- 6 a little, as you said to [...]
- 7 For the mou]th of YHWH has said these things [...]

We have now learned that, according to the sect's teaching, one is not to advance nor to delay the times. If so, how are we to explain the statement in this text, "and the days will pass rapidly," as well as what human beings are supposed to say, "Are not the days hastening on?" It seems to me that this "inconsistency" may be explained by saying that one is speaking here of subjective perception and not of *objective* seeing: that is, that it *seems to people* that the days hasten and that they "pass rapidly." This explanation may also be stated another way namely, that the specific present age is nearing its predetermined end, and that therefore from the viewpoint of man's thought (l. 3) the days hasten, that they so to speak become shorter or longer, or any other change that supposedly occurs in their pace. Compare also 1QpHab vii 7: פשרו הקץ אשר יארוך הקץ ("Its interpretation; the final age will be extended"). That is, it becomes longer in human eyes, but not in terms of its true length; in terms of subjective, but not objective perception. (But see below concerning God, who is not bound by his own decisions; and cf. another interpretation of this passage).

In any event, the prohibition against changing the pace or timing of the ages applies *to people*, whereas *God*, as the master of times, rules over all. This includes his power and authority to change that which he himself fixed in days past. Therefore, the meaning of "the days hastening on" may be that *God Himself* is not subject to his own decree regarding the times, so that when people suddenly become aware of a change in the pace, when there suddenly is manifested another age with other circumstances, it is as if it were ordered now by God. The change referred to here is evidently for the better, for people say, "Are not the days hastening on so that the children of Israel can inherit?" That is, from the national perspective, the speed of the flow of time has indeed been changed *by God*, and all this for a positive goal: למען ירשו בני ישראל את ארצם. (Concerning the change in the pace of time by God, we read in Matt 24:22, in the description of the horrors: "And if those days had not been shortened, no human being would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be shortened." It is not stated here who shortened the times, but the answer is self-evident. In any event,

the version in Mark 13:20 states explicitly: “And if the Lord had not shortened the days, no human being would be saved; but for the sake of the elect, whom he chose, he shortened the days.”)

According to these two works it would appear that God is able (and liable) to change the times that He established in ancient times, and that he does this in order to save the chosen ones so that they will not continue to suffer during a difficult time (thus Matthew and Mark), or in order to hasten the deliverance of Israel.

In the text mentioned above from 1QpHab vii 5 פשרו אשר יארוך, it may be that the word יארוך should be interpreted as *hif'il* (יתר על כול אשר דברו (= יאריך)); that is, that God will extend the End: הנביאים כיא רזי אל להפלה (“and go beyond all that the prophets say, because the mysteries of God are wonderful”; *ibid.*, 7-8). The first version is supported by the following *Pesher*: פשרו על אנשי האמת עושי התורה אשר לוא ירפו ידיהם מעבודת האמת בהמשך עליהם הקץ האחרון כיא כול קיצי אשר לוא יבואו לתכונם כאשר חקק להם ברזי ערמתו (“Its interpretation concerns the men of truth, those who observe the law, whose hands will not desert the service of truth when the final age is extended beyond them, because all the ages of God will come at the right time, as he established for them in the mysteries of his prudence”; *ibid.*, vv. 10-14). The formula, בהמשך עליהם הקץ האחרון, “when the final age is extended beyond them,” again suggests that one is speaking of the subjective feeling of people, and not necessarily of a true departure from the pre-determined age. This is so because close to this it says: כיא כול קיצי אל יבואו לתכונם (“because all the ages to God will come at the right time”). That is, they shall take place according to their measure (this, despite man’s thoughts about them).<sup>36</sup>

Let us now return to our discussion of *Pseudo-Ezekiel*: God addresses Ezekiel, evidently referring to Ezekiel’s request of God on behalf of his people. Moreover, God mentions Ezekiel’s request, in response to which he says:

4 ויאמר ה' אלי לא אשיב פניך יחזקאל ה[נה] א[מ]דד [העת וקצרת]	
5 את הימים ואת השנים]	[ ל ]
6 מצער כאשר אמרת ל]	
7 כי פני ה' דבר אלה ]	

According to this passage, God confirms that Ezekiel’s words are the command of God (“for the mou]th of YHWH has said these things”).

<sup>36</sup> See Nitzan, *Pesher Habakkuk*, 173, on the two interpretations, and Brin, *Issues*, 156-157.

In addition to conveying God's words, it seems that Ezekiel first turned to God and prayed for his people. Regarding all these God answers with these words: "I will not sh[u]n your face, Ezekiel"—that is, your request shall be fulfilled, in that the bad days for the people will be cut short, until people will recognize that God changes the pace of times in order to advance and to save his people.

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### THE TERM דור IN THE SCROLLS

The term דור serves explicitly as a term for time in the sectarian writings from Qumran. Below I shall survey a number of passages using the term דור in the Scrolls.

The term is generally used to indicate a period of time. In such passages as 4Q387a 3 ii 5: ובתם הדור ההוא א[ושיע] את הממלכה (“and at the completion of that generation I [will liberate] the kingdom”; cf. 4Q385a 44 2), it follows that when one generation finishes the time for a new one begins. The present generation may thus be designated, off hand, as הדור הזה, and viewed in retrospect the author says: ויתקרע ישראל בדור ההוא] להלחם [אי]ש ברעהו (“And Israel will be split apart in th[at] generation, waging war against one another”; 4Q387a 2 7; cf. 4Q176a,b 19-20 2).

דור serves as a secondary unit within the more comprehensive unit of the יובל (“jubilee”). This follows, for example, from *vacat* הדור ומתום הדור (“and ever since that generation *Blank* has been completed, in the seventh jubilee”; 4Q390 1 7).

The reason for recording the genealogy, ומהללאל בנ[ו] ומהללאל דור [ומהללאל בנ[ו] ומהללאל דור] (“[And Mahalalel] his [son] and Mahalalel was the fifth generation [and Jared his son and Jared was the sixth generation and] his son Enoch, the seven[th] generation”; 4Q369 1 i 9-10—Apocryphon A) is that each component (“son”) within the genealogy constitutes a generation unto itself. See also 4Q226 7 3-4: ויולד את י[עקב] [ויעקב הוליד את] לוי דור של[ישי] (“And he begot J[acob, and Jacob begot] Levi, a th[ird] generation”); and 4Q225 2 ii 10-11: הוליד את יעקב] [וב] ויעקב הוליד את לוי דו[ר] שליש[י].

Similarly the term הדור האחרון, which is a central term in the thought of the sect, came into existence, in my opinion, through considerations of genealogical writing (among other things) that were mentioned above: If there is a first, second... etc. generation, then there also needs to be a term to designate the present generation, and the term דור אחרון seemed most suitable for this purpose. This is in addition to the element required by the belief system of Qumran: that is, since they thought that the present generation is the border line after which there begins the escha-

tological age (אחרית הימים), it seemed fitting that it be designated by the term הדור האחרון.<sup>1</sup>

The phrase הדור האחרון is commonly used, as mentioned, in the sectarian literature. Thus in *Genesis Peshar*, 4Q254a 3 4-5, we read: העו[רב] ויצא יצוא וישוב להודיע לדורות הא[חרונים] לפניו כי העו[רב] יצוא יצא וישוב (“the ra]ven and it went out, and returned, to show to the la[st] generations. [...]... before him, for the ra[ven] had gone out. And ret[urned ...]”). Similarly, in 4Q273 1 1: אלה .. בדור האחרון ל[עשות] (“and these] in the last generation to [do]”), which is on the face of it a collection of regulations for members of the sect in the present generation.

A very important text for the use of the term הדור האחרון appears in CD i 11-13: וידוע לדורות אחרונים את אשר עשה בדור אחרון בעדת בוגדים (“and he shall make known to the latter generations that which He will do in the last generation to the congregation of traitors, who depart from the path... this is the time about which it is written”; note also the parallel text in 4Q266 2 i 15-17). The unique thing about this text is that there are three separate phrases used to refer to the matter at hand: a) דורות האחרונים—plural; b) דור אחרון—singular; c) היא העת—singular. The former usage shows that there is a difference between the use of דור in the singular and in the plural: whereas the singular form is evidently intended to refer to the present generation, the plural is directed toward the totality of the coming generations, and perhaps even those that are distant, in the eschatological sense. The third phrase היא העת אשר היה כתוב עליה follows the phrase הדור האחרון, and from its contents seems to allude to the ethical nature of the difficult present generation.

As for the difficult phrase [דורות?!] אחרונות that appears in 4Q268 1 1, latter [generations?!], should they not surely come?), the sense here seems to be that that which is promised in the eschatological vision will in fact come to pass.

According to Baumgarten, the form אחרונות is a substantive form, and is not to be interpreted like דורות אחרונים (this is one of the reasons why he does not reconstruct the word דורות in the lacunum) in CD i 12. Hence, Baumgarten<sup>2</sup> compares the word אחרונות here to what is found in another document: עושה ראי[שונות] לעתותיהם ואחרונות (“He does the fi[rst] things [in their right times and the final things]; 4Q402 4 13).

In the *Psalms Peshar*, 4Q171 iii 1-2, writing on Psalm 37, one may

<sup>1</sup> On the term הדור האחרון see Nitzan, *Peshar Habakkuk*, 12, 14, etc.

<sup>2</sup> DJD XVIII, 120.



find an identification between אלף דוֹר (“a thousand generations”) and the eschatological phrase עד עולם (“for ever”). It states there: שבי המדבר (“those who have returned from the wilderness, who will live for a thousand generations, in salva[tio]n; for them there is all the inheritance of Adam, and for their descendants for ever”). That is, just as there are a first and second generation, and the like, to conclude the line there appears a phrase that is tantamount to הדור האחרון, one can also find an idiom that includes all the generations in general. Thus in 4Q413 1-2 4: חסד אל [ ] רי־שונים ובינו בשני ד[וֹר ודוֹר] כאשר גלה אל (“kindness [...] the former ones, and consider the years of ea[ch] generation as God has revealed”; (the word אל is written here in ancient script). In 4Q418 68 1-2 it states: דוֹר ודוֹר [ ] העת ובפקודת. It seems to me that this is reminiscent of the similar idea stated in the Passover Haggadah: בכל דוֹר ודוֹר חייב אדם לראות את עצמו כאילו הוא יצא ממצרים (“in each generation a person must see himself as if he has gone out of Egypt”). The phrase בינו שני ד[וֹר ודוֹר] (“consider the years of ea[ch] generation”), as well the earlier, more truncated idiom: דוֹר ודוֹר, seems to me to be referring to the totality of all the generations, i.e., to history in general. Compare also the phrase ובהבינכם במעשי דוֹר ודוֹר (“and in your understanding of the deeds of each generation”; 4Q270 2 ii 21). I find a parallel to דוֹר ודוֹר in the phrase in 4Q504 1-2 iii 7, בשני דורותינו (“in the years of our generations”)—that is, throughout all our history.

Qumran thought seems to have had a tendency to return repeatedly to the instruction, or advice, to learn from the acts of the generations and from history and to draw appropriate lessons.

As I have already commented,<sup>3</sup> in the phrase שתבין בספר מושה [ו]בספרי הנביאים ובדוֹר [במעשי] דוֹר ודוֹר (“that you must understand the book of Moses [and] the book[s of the pr]ophets and Dav[id...] [the annals of] each generation”; 4Q397 14-21 10-11), the term מעשי/ דוֹר ודוֹר serves to allude to the historical books of the Bible (this, alongside other parts of the Bible mentioned there, such as “the book of Moses” [i.e., the Pentateuch] and other terms). In this, we again find the connection between the verb בִּיַן and דוֹר ודוֹר (מעשי), meaning “examination of the course of history in order to derive lessons, in order to reward appropriate behavior in the present and prepare properly for the needs of the future”.

Regarding the idiom דוֹר ודוֹר, note also in *Prayers for the Festivals*,

<sup>3</sup> In my review, “Qimron & Strugnell, *Miqsat Ma’ase Ha-Torah*,” 341-342.

4Q509i 3 7 [ואנו נספרה נ]פלא[ן]תיכה לדור ודור ("[And we, we will sing of] your [w]onders from generation to generat[ion...]"), where the sense is that we shall praise you *constantly*. On the phrase יום יום (or its like, such as חודש חודש), see below, in the chapter on phrases used to describe the pace of time, in connection with the term יום.

An alternative phrase to this is שני קדם ("years of old"). Thus in 4Q436 l i 3: בעלילותיכה אשר עשיתה בשני קדם שני דור ודור ("your deeds which you did in the years of old, in the years of generation after generation"). From the parallel, שני דור ודור || שני קדם, there emerges an example of a kind of synonymous parallelism. Since, without doubt, שני קדם refers to days past, the same holds true for שני דור ודור—that is, the events of history from ancient times to the present.

The phrase יד"ע דור appears in a different sense in 4Q216 i 12-13: הדב[רים] אשר אנכי מגיד לך [בהר הזה וכתוב אותם בספר למען יד]עו דורותם כי לא עזבתם ("all the wo]rds which I tell you [on this mountain and write them in a book so that] their generations [may kn]ow that I have not forsaken them"). What is referred to here is not the knowledge of the community of those hearing (the deeds of) past generations, but rather that throughout the course of history the various generations were those who knew and understood the presence of the Divine hand within the events, and that a fixed aspect of His activity is non-desertion of the people.

Another phrase used to refer to all the generations throughout the course of history or at a particular point in history is דורותם ("their generations"), דורות הארץ ("the generations of the land"), and the like. Thus in 4Q215a l ii 7-9: כיא הואה [ידע] פעולתם בטרם הבראם ועבודת \*הצדק] הטוב וירם כסא הצדק פלג גבולותם [הגביל] בדורותם כיא בא ממשל [הצדק] הטוב וירם כסא [המלך].

In 4Q219 ii, we read:

29 ותצלח בכול וברככה בכול מעשיכה ו[הקים]  
 30 [ממכה מטעת ה]אמת בארץ לכול דורות הארץ ולו ישבית [שמי]  
 31 ושמכה מתח[ת] השמים בכול היימים vacat היישר בני בשל[ום] יחזק  
 32 אתכה אל [ע]ליון אלוהי ואלו[ה]יכה לעשות רצונוה ול[ברך את זרעכה]  
 33 ואת [שאר זר]עכה לכול דורות עולמים בכול ברכו[ת] האמת להיותכה]  
 34 לברכה [בכול הא]רץ vacat ויצא מאתוה שמח vacat

29 and you will be successful in everything. He will bless you in all your works, and [will raise]

30 [from you a plant of] truth in the earth for all the generations of the earth. And he will not bring to an end [my name]

- 31 [and your name from benea]th the sky for all the days. *Blank* Be upright, my son, in pea[ce. May he strengthen]  
 32 [you, the God Mo]st High, my God and your God, to perform his will and to [bless your offspring]  
 33 and the [remnant of] your [offsp]ring for all the eternal generations with all blessings [of truth so that you might become]  
 34 a blessing [in all the ea]rth. *Blank* and he went out from him rejoicing. *Blank* [...]

For a variant version, see 4Q221 1 8-9 = *Jub.* 21:23-25).

Two idioms appear in this passage: 1) דורות הארץ 2) דורות עולמים. While the phrase דורות עולמים refers to that which is eternal, forever—that is, that *constantly*, throughout all time, Israel shall be blessed by God (and see there, adjacent to this, the parallel phrase (בכול הימים), the former phrase דורות הארץ refers possibly to the whole of history, to that which is past and that which is future. Thus, the phrase דורות הארץ may in a given passage overlap with the use of דורות עולמים—that is, in relation to the direction of the future. However, it seems not to refer to the most distant, eschatological future, but it has nuances bringing it closer to such idioms as דור ודור (מעשי), and the like. The phrase דורות עולמים also appears in the *pap Hodayot-like text* (4Q339 2 6): פארה לדורות עולמים (‘‘branches for eternal generations, and to produce frui[t...].’’).

The linguistic double of the phrase דורות עולמים is דורות עולם, and I see no difference between the two.<sup>4</sup> Thus, in *Genesis Peshar* (4Q252 v 3-5), we read:

3 ואל[פי ישראל המה הדגלים vacat עד בוא משיח הצדק צמח  
 4 דויד כי לו ולזרעו נתנה ברית מלכות עמו עד דורות עולם אשר  
 5 שמר ]

- 3 [and the thou]sands of Israel are the standards. *Blank* Until the messiah of righteousness comes, the branch  
 4 of David. For to him and to his descendants has been given the covenant of the kingship of his people for everlasting generations, which  
 5 he observed [...]

The coming of the Messiah and the covenantal expression עד דורות עולם (‘‘for everlasting generations’’), are parallel expressions, the intention of both being to indicate eternity and perpetuity.

While the phrase דורות עולם and the like refer to eternal history,

<sup>4</sup> On the exchange of עולם and עולמים with one another, see below, Chapter 21, ‘‘The Term עולם in the Scrolls.’’

another idiom, **קצי דורות**, is used to refer to *individual destiny*. The meaning of the phrase **דורות** is: “all my periods, all my generations” = i.e., all the days of my life. Thus, in 4Q511 35 6: **ואני מירא אל בקצי דורותי** (“and as for me, I spread the fear of God in the ages of my generations”); and compare **לדורותם לזמניהם** (“and all their times in their generations”; 1QS iv 13).<sup>5</sup>

The Qumran authors created another alternative expression to indicate future generations, namely, **לכול דור** (“for each generation”; 4Q525 29 4), and compare *papHodLike* 3 11 **לדור ודור**; on which see above, at the beginning of the chapter.

As for the use of the parallel terms **קץ** and **מועד**, the forms **x-מועד** and **x-קץ** are widespread (see the chapters on these terms below), where in the genitive (or in the adjective) there appears the definition of the season or period in question. Such a use is rare with regard to **דור**, but one should nevertheless note that there are a few isolated examples of this type. Thus, **ד[ורות] אשמתי** (“[... the ge]nerations of my guilt”; 4Q511 42 5), presumably referring to the duration of the sin, or the phrase **דור הפקודה** (“generation of visitation,” in *Hosea Peshet*, 4Q166 i 10), used to designate the time when God will remember and visit the evildoers. It should be noted that there also exist parallels to this idiom, such as: **מועד (ה)פקודה** (“the appointed time of visitation”; 1QS iv 18-19); **בקץ פקודה** (CD xix 10); and see the chapters on the terms **קץ** and **מועד**. Parallels to the above may also be seen in the idiom **x-יום**, such as **יום קרב** (“the day of battle”; 1QM xiii 14), where the word **יום** refers to the age of God’s battle (against the wicked).

One may also point out that in the above text, 4Q166 i, there appears three idioms, **קץ מועלם** (line 9, “the era of their disloyalty”), that is, the period of the sin; **הם דור פקודה** (“the generation of the visitation”; *ibid.* 10), that is, the generation which God shall visit in the future, to punish them; **נ[אסף] בקצי חרון** (“[... has be] taken away in the ages of wrath”; l. 12), which is evidently also parallel to the matter subject of **דור הפקודה**, because God will visit them with his anger.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> See Licht, *Rule Scroll*, 98.

<sup>6</sup> See also on the term **דור** in the lexicons: Clines; Köhler-Baumgarten; and s.v. **דור** in Botterweck-Ringgren, 181-194.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### THE TERM מועד IN THE SCROLLS

The main use of the term מועד<sup>1</sup> in the Bible is, on the one hand, with regard to matters of time in general and, on the other, in reference to sanctified times, festivals and the like.<sup>2</sup>

An example of its use in the general sense is in Num 9:13: “because he did not offer the Lord’s offering at the appointed time (במועד).” In the other sense, of festival days, compare Num 10:10: “On the day of your gladness also, and at your appointed feasts, and at the beginnings of your months (וביום שמחתכם ובמועדיכם ובראשי חדשיכם), you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings....” Here מועד is mentioned as an overall term for the other holy days. Compare also Ezek 45:17: “at the feasts, the new moons, and the sabbaths, all the appointed feasts of the house of Israel (בכל מועדי בית ישראל);” and in Hosea 12:10: “I will again make you dwell in tents, as in the days of the appointed feast (כימי מועד).” As in the case of קץ (see the following chapter regarding this term), so too is the term מועד used in a different sense in the Book of Daniel: “for the end is yet to be at the appointed time” (כי עוד קץ) (למועד; Dan 11:27), and compare also 12:7, כי למועד מועדים וחצי (“that it would be for a time, two times, and half a time”), where it is used in the sense of an age, a fixed period of time, and the like. It should not be surprising, therefore, that its use in the late Book of Daniel is found in the literature of the Scrolls.

The term מועד is among the most widespread terms for describing time in the Qumran literature. In our discussion, we shall clarify the spread of uses for this term by the members of the sect, paying special attention to the meanings implied by these usages. We shall likewise take note of the relation between the term מועד and other terms relating to time in this literature.

Let us begin with a text from 4Q286 1 ii 9-13 (Blessings):

---

<sup>1</sup> See in extenso in Koch, s.v. מועד.

<sup>2</sup> Wilch, *Time and Event*, 31, emphasizes that by means of the מועד, like עת (and unlike יום), the sectarian texts refer to periods and times fixed and planned by God in the past.

- 9 ושבועי קודש בתכונמה ודגלי חודשים ]  
 10 ראשי שנים בתקופותמה ומועדי כבוד בתעודותמה  
 11 ושבטות ארץ במחל[קותמה ומן] עדי דר[ור  
 12 [...] רורי נצה ו[ ]ל[...]  
 13 [אור וחשך]

- 9 and the holy weeks in their measures, and the signs of the months [...]  
 10 [the commencement of the ye]ars in their periods<sup>3</sup>, and the glorious festivals in [their] appointed times [...]  
 11 and the sabbaths of the earth in their divi[sions and the fix]ed times of relea[se ...]  
 12 perpetual [re]leases and [...]  
 13 [...] light and dark[ness...]

This text from *Blessings*<sup>4</sup> is specifically concerned with noting a varied system of times. The following words for time are mentioned there: שבועות (weeks), חודשים (months), שבתות (sabbaths), מועדים (times), מועדי (times of release), דרור (fixed times of release), (דרור ים) (jubilees), אור וחשך (light and darkness.) It is worth mentioning here that almost all of these phrases appear in the construct state, when in several cases מועד serves as the *nomen regens*. I shall exemplify below what is the *nomen rectum* in all these idioms.

We shall begin with those combinations in which the terms for time serve as conjunctives: דגלי חודשים (signs of the months), מועדי דרור (times of release). Compare those phrases similar to it in subject: שבועי קודש (holy weeks), דרורי נצה (perpetual releases) and יובלי עולם (eternal jubilees).

A place by itself is occupied by the idiom מועדי דרור mentioned above, in which both parts of this construct phrase are terms referring to time. This is not the case regarding other idioms, in which the words used in connection with the time word are not such, such as קודש, ארץ, כבוד, and their like. I think that this unusual linguistic combination may be explained with the simple argument that here מועד serves not in the sense of “appointed time” (i.e., “festival”), but as a general expression for time.

The order of appearance of matters of time in the text of Blessings under discussion here expands from the closest and most immediate (sabbath) to more distant appointed times (from the month, through to the jubilee). We thus have:

<sup>3</sup> My translation.

<sup>4</sup> Nitzan, in Newsom, DJD XI, 12-17.

weeks, months, appointed times  
 sabbaths of the land  
 times of release  
 perpetual release  
 eternal jubilees  
 light and darkness

It follows from this that, if the final term—אור וחשןך—in fact refers to one day, then its location here deviates from the order here. A further difficulty is that since the unit of the day does not contain within it any element of the holy, whereas this list includes only holy times, the phrase “light and dark” does not seem to allude to the day in the ordinary sense. Thus, it may be that this phrase in fact refers to some different unit or, alternatively, one may argue that the term in question is meant to refer in some sense to the totality of expressions used in the text prior to it.

According to this, one gains the impression that the order of holy days in the text is as follows:

In the first group: sabbaths, (new) moons, festival times—that is, the festivals of the year. These are days that are sanctified on the annual level.

The second group includes: sabbaths of the land: the sabbatical year and the times of release, namely, the jubilee year. This is a more comprehensive level, of groups of fifty year periods.

The final group: perpetual releases, and eternal jubilees. The terms נצח and עולם are used to indicate eschatological time. That is, according to this exegetical option, this is the most distant level of time, including two synonymous designations for eschatological time. Alternatively, even though these two terms refer to an eschatological future, one may conjecture that there is a difference between them—that is, that they refer to two different points in the future. In terms of the structure and dynamic of this literary unit, the order moves from units that are close in time: “holy weeks” (i.e., the weekly sabbath), to the more distant and most distant ones. יובלי עולם would seem to refer to a time that is even more remote than דרורי נצח (“perpetual releases”).

Another text close to this appears in the *Community Rule*, 1QS x 3-8,<sup>5</sup> and,<sup>6</sup> in substantially identical form, in 4Q256 8 ii 2-6 and in 4Q258 2 iii 13 – iv 1-5. The text reads:

<sup>5</sup> Nitzan, *ibid.*, 17, reads here אור וחשןבוני [ וחשןבוני ]. According to this reading,

- 3 עם האספם למעון כבוד במבוא מועדים לימי חודש יחד תקופותם עם  
 4 מסרותם זה לזה בהתחדשם יום גדול לקודש קודשים ואות vacat למפתח  
 חסדיו עולם לראשי  
 5 מועדים בכול קץ נהיה vacat ברשית ירחים למועדיהם וימי קודש בתכונם  
 לזכרון במועדיהם  
 6 תרומת שפתים הברכנו כחוק חרות לעד בראשי שנים ובתקופת מועדיהם  
 בהשלם חוק  
 7 תכונם יום משפטו זה לזה מועד קציר לקיץ ומועד זרע למועד דשא מועדי  
 שנים לשבועיהם  
 8 וברוש שבועיהם למועד דרור<sup>7</sup>
- 3 when they retire to the abode of glory. At the entry of the seasons  
 in the days of the new moon together with their rotations during  
 4 their stations renewing each other. It is a great day for the holy of  
 holies, and a sign *Blank* of the opening of his everlasting mercies  
 for the beginnings of  
 5 the seasons in every future age. *Blank* At the commencement of the  
 months in their seasons, and of the holy days in their sequence, as  
 a reminder in their seasons.  
 6 With the offerings of lips I shall bless him, in accordance with the  
 decree recorded for ever. At the commencement of the years and  
 in the turning of their seasons, when the decree of  
 7 their disposition is carried out, on its prescribed day, one after an-  
 other; the season of the harvest up to summer, the season of seed-  
 time up to the season of the grass, the seasons of the years up to  
 their seven-year periods.  
 8 At the commencement of the seven-year periods up to the moment  
 decided for deliverance.

In this text there appear a series of times, including several in which use is made of the term **מועד**:

מבוא מועדים || ימי חודש  
 ראשי מועדים || ראשית ירחים למועדיהם  
 (לזכרון) במועדיהם || ימי קודש  
 תקופות מועדים || ראשי שנים  
 מועד דשא || מועד זרע  
 מועדי שנים לשבועיהם || מועדי דרור

the idiom deals with astronomic calculations. In her opinion, the reading אור וחושך is possible if it alludes to the praise of God.

<sup>6</sup> See Licht, *Rule Scroll*, 204-208, who designates this text, “on the counting of the times.”

<sup>7</sup> A detailed interpretation of this text (especially of the terms relating to time) appears in Licht, *Rule Scroll*, 208-211.



In principle, it follows from this that מועד appears in various linguistic contexts related to time, but we need to examine the nature of the use of the term in this context.

Thus, for example, the expression מבוא מועדים is parallel to ימי חודש in the sense of new moons. Hence the meaning of the term מועדים here is not so much as a marker of time as such, but of sacred times. This is also the use of בראשי שנים ובתקופות מועדים. One may assume that this alludes to the time of one of the most sanctified occasions during the year—the new year festival. The parallel of ימי קודש || (זכרון) במועדיהם doubtless refers to מועדים in the sense of days of the festival, and the like.

To conclude, the text under discussion includes a system of times from the boundary of the day (i.e., the daylight hours) and the night, through to the various festival times of the year. However, the use of מועד, the subject of discussion in this chapter, only begins with the new moons: במבוא מועדים לימי חודש (“at the entry of the seasons in the days of the new moon”; x 3).

One should also note that, after his discussion of the annual festivals days, the author mentions מועד, which is a synonym for a period or season: מועד קציר (season of harvest), מועד זרע (season of seed-time), or מועד דשא (season of grass).

In brief, there follows from our analysis of the use of the term מועד in this text its absence on the level of the day, in comparison to the use of מועד in the sense of holy days, as appears throughout the length of the text. Towards the end, however, there is a transition toward the use of מועד in the sense of season, period and the like.

In 1QH xx 3-15, when describing the origin of the light and the dominion of darkness, there appears the phrase תקופת מועדים (“the course of the seasons”; xx 8), whose concern is evidently the precise system of festivals of the year, that is, ימי (ה)קודש (=4Q427 3 ii 9). However, the idiom למועד לילה in this text (xx 6) refers to the time of the night, as there is no character of holiness on the level of the ordinary day or its parts.

It is interesting, that in this document the term מועד *on the level of the day* behaves differently than its use in other parts of the description, just as in the text from the *Community Rule*, cited above, the term מועד is not used on the level of the day, so here too its use is in the general sense of time, rather than in that of holiness, whereas further on in the work it appears in the sense of holy days.

Compare also כול מועדי חושך (1QM i 8); (למועדי [...] חושך) (“... [...]

darkness”; 4Q215 2 4); [בכול] מועדי לילה שלום עליכה [ישראל]; 4Q503 51-55 10); a version close to this also appears in 4Q503 41 i.

In a sapiential passage, 4Q423 5 5-7, it states:<sup>8</sup>

5 |אם אתה א[י]ש אדמה<sup>9</sup> פקוד מועדי הקיץ ואסוף תבואתכה בעתה ותקופת  
6 |הקציר למועדו ה[תבונן בכל תבואתכה ובעבודתכה השכ[ל בכל ה]טוב עם הרע  
7 |א[י]ש שכל את בעל אולת ה[ ]ל[ ]ש[י]ם כן איש

- 5 [If you are a m]an of the earth, observe the appointed times of the summer, and gather your produce at its time, and the season of  
6 [of harvest in the appointed time. Medi]tate on all your crops, and in your work give attentio[n] to the knowledge of [\*everything the] good with the evil  
7 [...ma]n of insight with the man of folly...Thus, a man of  
\* my suggestion.

The term מועדי הקיץ<sup>10</sup> seems to refer to the different times of the summer, such as the different appropriate agricultural activities, an indication of which is in the wording used further on, ואסוף תבואתכה בעתה, “gather your produce *at its time*.” I would not understand the word מועד here in the sense of festivals, appointed holy days, or the like.

In a large group of texts, the word מועד is used in the sense of holiday (and not to indicate time in general), such as that which we noted above following the phrase מבוא מועדים, and in 4Q286 1 ii 10 (מועדי כבוד), in continuation with the biblical use, as in Leviticus 23 and elsewhere.

In the *Calendrical Document* (4Q320 4 iii 1), we read השנה הרישונה מועדיה, where it is clear that the phrase מועדיה alludes to the festivals of the year. Similarly in line 11, “The second (year). Its festivals”; likewise its use in 4 iv, concerned with the festivals of the third through sixth years. Thus, l. 6, “The third, its festivals,” and compare l. 9; 4 v 9: “[The fifth]. Its festivals”; 4 vi 4 “The sixth. Its festivals.”

In a parallel calendrical text, 4Q329 1 2-5, mention is made of מעדיה of the second to fifth years. This usage of מועד also appears to refer specifically to the *name* of a מועד, i.e., the specific festival, such as

<sup>8</sup> T. Elgvin, in Strugnell, DJD XXXIV, 518-522. Part of the translation of the text is according to Elgvin, *ibid*.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 423, for the parallel passage used for this reconstruction, 4Q423 5a 2: אם א[י]ש אדמה אתה.

<sup>10</sup> Elgvin, *ibid.*, 552. If the reading [הקציר למועדו] is correct, then it is to be compared to 1QS x 7: מועד קציר לקיץ.

מועד ש[עורים] (“the festival of b[arley”]; l. 4); מועד השמן (“the festival of oil”); 4Q327 l ii 4-5).

In *Blessings* (4Q287 l 3), the idiom בכל מועדי (“in all the festivals of”) is evidently used in this sense, notwithstanding the truncated nature of the text. This is likewise the case in the phrase קודשים בכל מועדי (“the holy ones in all the festival[s...]”; *ibid.* 2 7), and compare 1QM x 15-16, מועדי קודש ותקופות שנים וקצי עד (“of the sacred seasons, of the cycle of the years and the ages of eternity”). מועדי קודש refers to holy days, festivals, and the like.<sup>11</sup>

In general, it should be noted that the text includes a complex system of varied terms for time: holy times, seasons of the year, eschatological ages. It seems to me that, like the other texts exemplified above, in a brief formulation the author of the *War Scroll* included a system of times that is in an order progressively more remote: from the realm of the annual holy days, through the periods of years (this evidently refers to the sabbatical and jubilees cycles), to the קצי עד (“ages of eternity”), which points in a distant eschatological direction.

Another text that brings a list of holy days appears in *Hosea Pesher* (4Q166 ii 15-17):<sup>12</sup>

15 ח[גה חד]שה ושבתה וכול מועדיה פשרו אשר  
 16 כול המו[עדות] יוליכו במועדי הגואים ו.  
 17 שמחה] נהפכה להם לאבל

- 15 her fea[st, her new] moon and her sabbath and all her celebrations.  
 Its interpretation:  
 16 they fix [all cele]brations in agreement with the celebrations of the nations, but a[l]  
 17 [joy] will be changed into mourning for them.

In this case, the author used a text of lists of holy days appearing in the biblical text of Hosea, which he refers to as מועדי הגואים (“times of the Gentiles”), which he says will be transformed into days of mourning.

Using the same exegetical principle, we find in CD iii 14-15 the formula שבתות קודשו ומועדי כבודו (“his holy sabbaths and his glorious feasts”), as well as in 4Q271 5 i 19 (=CD xii 3-4): וכול אשר יתעה לחלל:

<sup>11</sup> See Yadin, *War Scroll*, on x 15-16, p. 321. Yadin compares this passage to Ben Sira 43:6-8. In his comments on 1QM xv 1, p. 330, Yadin discusses the relationship among the terms תעודות, עת, מועד, and others. In his discussion of xv 12 and xvii 5-6, Yadin deals with מועד in the sense of appointment or the like. He also notes that in xv 12, the scribe erased the phrase מי מלחמה and wrote in its stead the phrase מועד מלחמה. This may again indicate the relationship of מועד to other terms for time: for example, the connection between יום and מועד.

<sup>12</sup> Allegro, DJD V, 30-31.

[את השבת ואת המו[עדות] (“but every one who goes astray, defiling the sabbath and the fes[tivals]”), by the term מו[עדות] referring to the holy days = festivals.

In 4Q365 23 there is a text that imitates the opening of the calendar of festivals of Leviticus 23. In line 3 it states: וידבר מושה את מועדי ה' אל בני ישראל (“And Moses spoke the appointed times of the Lord to the Israelites”), repeating word for word the formula of Lev 23:44. However, as the author in Qumran wishes to bring his new material as Moses’ words, he chose the closing formula from the Bible as his *opening formula*, after which he deals with a new “festival,” the festival of wood sacrifice. That is, the author attaches to the term מועדים the same meaning—namely, holy days, festivals, and the like—as in the biblical text which he imitates and expands.<sup>13</sup>

Likewise in the *Prayer of Enosh*, 4Q369 1 i 4, כול מוועדיהם בקציהם (“all their fes[tivals] in their periods”). Notwithstanding the extremely fragmented nature of this text, it is clear from its continuation, in which קציהם serves in the sense of general time, that מועדיהם appears in the sense of holy days, that is, those festivals that were fixed in their exact times.

Similar to this is evidently *Pseudo-Ezekiel* (4Q385 45 5-6): שבת (5) מועדי ברית ותק[ופות] (6) (“(5) sabbath [...] (6) [...] festivals of my covenant and the cy[cles]”), which contains the idiom מועדי (ה)ברית taken from the realm of the year, referring, evidently, to the holy days, as we have seen in the previous texts.

In *Pseudo-Moses* 4Q390 1, it states:<sup>14</sup>

7 ומתום הדור vacat ההוא ביובל השביעי  
8 לחרבן הארץ ישכחו חוק ומועד ושבת וברית ויפרו הכל ויעשו  
9 הרע בעיני<sup>15</sup>

Here the order of things is reversed: מועד in the sense of the festivals of the year appears prior to “sabbath,” which is more frequent. Compare *ibid.* 2 i 9-10:

9 את מקדשי יטמאו  
10 ואת שבתותי יחללו ואת [מועדי יש]כחו וובבני [נכר יח]ללו ואת זר[ע]ם

<sup>13</sup> See the discussion above in Chapter 17, “God and Time.”

<sup>14</sup> Dimant, “New Light,” 414-417.

<sup>15</sup> On the various combinations in the text and the references in Qumran literature to the parallels to them, see Dimant, *ibid.*, 424-430. On this text see also in chapters 17 and 24.

- 9 They will defile my temple,  
 10 [they will defile my sabbaths, and] they will f[orget] my [fest]ivals  
 and with the sons of [foreigners they will de]base their offs[pring];]

One may infer something about the system of time dominant in the world from the definition based upon two synonymous terms: מקץ לקץ (‘‘[and from age to age] they announce and from determined time to determined time...’’; 4Q427 3 i 3 = 1QH vii 6 (fr. 10 6): מועד ומועד למועד [‘‘[and from age] to age they announce, and from appoi[nted time ]’’].<sup>16</sup>

A similar style, used to indicate the connection between different terms for time, appears in 1QS i 13-15:

- ולוא לצעוד בכול אחד מכול דברי אל בקציהם 13  
 ולוא לקדם עתיהם 14  
 ולוא להתאחר מכול מועדיהם 15  
 ולוא לסור מחוקי אמתו ימין ושמאל

- 13 They shall not stray  
 14 from any one of all God’s orders concerning their appointed times;  
 they shall not advance their appointed times nor shall they retard  
 15 any one of their feasts. They shall not veer from his reliable pre-  
 cepts in order to go either to the right or to the left.<sup>17</sup>

Here קץ and מועד again appear in parallelism to one another (but in addition to these also appears the term עת), but this passage also expresses an idea, for which there are certain parallels, some of which were discussed above in Chapter 17, ‘‘God and Time.’’ In all these sources the principle is repeated that we ought not to advance or postpone any of the מועדים, the term being used here to refer to the times and periods and their incorporation, as these have been established by God. Hence the term מועד(ים) is used here in the sense of time in the general sense.

In principle, one may conclude here that in the Scroll documents there are frequent interchanges between the term מועד in the general sense, used in conjunction with other terms for time, that serve as designations for holy days, as well as the opposite: מועד as a holy day by means of the use of other designations for time, such as עת and קץ that are used in the sense of time in general.

<sup>16</sup> See Licht, *Thanksgiving Scroll*, 49, 233. It follows from this passage that the public function of the sect was to offer praises to God.

<sup>17</sup> According to Licht, *Rule Scroll*, 58, the dispute between the sect and the rest of Jewry, as implied by this text and others like it, concerns the issue of the annual calendar. See on the entire subject above, Ch. 17, where I noted that my interpretation of these texts is different.

In the *Community Rule*, in *Thanksgiving Hymns*, and in the *War Scroll*, we find the term מועד used in the sense of the time that has been fixed for specific activities. Hence, הנגלות למועדי תעודותם (“revealed things concerning the regulated times of their stipulations”) in IQS i 9 alludes to those commandments known and intended for fixed times. Compare also iii 10, כאשר צוה למועדי תעודותיו (“as he has decreed concerning the appointed times of his assemblies”).<sup>18</sup> Note also the use of the phrase מועדי צרותם (“their periods of grief”; iii 23)—that is, the time preordained for their punishment through the troubles or grief that God will send them. We also find the idiom מועד תענית (“appointed time of fasting”), possibly referring to a difficult period of beseeching and pleasing with God, accompanied with fasting. This phrase appears in *Psalms Peshet*, to Psalm 37 (4QpPsa = 4Q171 1-2 ii 10-11): עדת האביונים: אשר יקבלו את מועד התענית ונצלו מכול פחי בליעל ואחר יתענגו כול יור[שי] הארץ (“the congregation of the poor who will tough out the period of distress and will be rescued from all the snares of Belial. Afterwards, all who shall possess the land will enjoy...”). And compare *ibid.*, iii 2-3: [אשר] יחיים ברעב במועד [תענית] ורבים יובדו ברעב ובדבר ותקימ[ם] עלינו 3: 2 מועד תענית חוק עולם [eter[nal] law [...)].<sup>19</sup>

The expression מועד פקודה (“the moment of his visitation,” similar to פקודה and יום פקודה) appears in IQS iii 18, where the phrase is מועד פקודתו; in iv 18-19 the phrase מועד פקודה appears as such, where it is identical to מועד משפט נחרצה (“the time appointed for the judgment decided”; iv 20). The meaning here is directed toward the time or period that was fixed for the visitation of God—that is, for him to punish wrongdoers. Compare *ibid.*, 25 קץ נחרצה (“the appointed time”); *ibid.*, 26, לפי רוחו ב...[עד מועד] הפקודה (“according to his spirit in [... until the time of] the visitation”). It is possible that the lacunum is to be completed as ב[עת] or ב[מועד].

The language used in 1QM xv 6, והתהלך הכוהן החרוץ למועד נקם (“and the priest assigned for the time of vengeance” is similar to מועד גבורה (“time of courage”) or the like.<sup>20</sup> The same idea is also formulated

<sup>18</sup> On the relationship between i 9 and iii 10, see Licht, *Rule Scroll*, 80.

<sup>19</sup> See Allegro, 43-44, albeit in the first two of these texts he reads מועד התענות. See Baillet, DJD VII, 179, for the correction of Allegro's reading on the basis of the clear reading in 4Q508; he also refers to CD vi 19: ואת יום התענית.

<sup>20</sup> Yadin, *War Scroll*, 291, 332, and cf. vii 5, יום נקם, and Yadin's interpretation there.

somewhat differently: ובידכה המלחמה ואין [.....] ליכה ומועדים לרצונכה (“and in your hands is the battle, and there is no [...] your [wo]n[der]s and the determined moments according to your will”; 1QM xviii 13-14). That is to say, as accepted in sectarian thought, God determines all the times, including those for war against the enemies of various types. Similar to this is מ[ועד] גבורת ידכה (“the appoin]ted time of the power of your hand”; *ibid.*, xi 11).

The common denominator of all these expressions is the time that was fixed by God for various activities. It is therefore fitting that one see in the idiom מועד אל a general term to refer to the time fixed by God for one or another activity, as is mentioned in these writings. That is, whereas מועד גבורתו or מועד פעולתו are specific phrases, מועד אל is more general. If, however, one sees that too as a specific term, the meaning of the idiom is then similar to that of the well-known biblical phrase יום ה' in prophetic literature. Compare i 8-9: ובמועד אל יאיר רום גודלו לכול קצי עו[למים] (“and in the time of God, his exalted greatness will shine for all the et[ernal] times”).<sup>21</sup>

In this context there are usages of מועד which in a specific combination function in the sense of eternity and the like. It is in this manner that I interpret הכל חקוק לפניכה.. לכל קצי נצה ותקופת מספר שני עולם בכל מועדיהם (1QH ix 23-24).

It should be noted that, despite the similarity of meaning between מועד and קץ, עת, and דור, the idiom מועד x (to indicate different kinds of periods and times) appears less frequently than the others.

<sup>21</sup> Yadin, *War Scroll*, 259-260.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

### THE TERM קָץ IN THE SCROLLS

The term קָץ usually appears in the Bible in the sense of “end” in relation to various matters, including the use of time in general. In some passages, particularly those that are relatively late within the biblical context, the meaning is increasingly that of a unit of time, in the sense of “end” combined with a nuance of time. Thus, for example, in Ezekiel 7:2: “And you, O son of man, thus says the Lord God to the land of Israel: An end! The end has come upon the four corners of the land! (קָץ בא הקץ על ארבע כנפות הארץ). And in *ibid.*, verse 6: “An end has come, the end has come; it was awakened against you. Behold, it comes” (קָץ בא בא הקץ אליך הנה באה); or “And you, O unhallowed wicked one, prince of Israel, whose day has come, the time of your final punishment:” (בא יומו בעת עון קָץ); Ezek 21:30).

A central text in the development of this usage is Habakkuk 2:3: “For still the vision awaits its time [or, according to the accepted correction, already suggested by S. D. Luzzatto: “For the vision is a witness to its time,” reading here *כי עַד חֲזוֹן לְמוֹעֵד* rather than *כי עוֹד חֲזוֹן לְמוֹעֵד*; it hastens to the end—it will not lie (ויפח לקץ ולא יכזב). If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not delay.” The term *מוֹעֵד* is used here as a synonym of קָץ, thereby making it clear that one is dealing here with a unit of time, such as a period or the like. But it is in the late book of Daniel that we consistently find the use of קָץ in connection with time. Thus, Daniel 8:17: *לעת קץ החזון* (“the vision is for the time of the end”); *למועד קץ* (“the appointed time of the end”; 8:19). The usage of the type that we have found in the Book of Daniel has a clear sequel and development in post-biblical literature and in the Scroll literature.<sup>1</sup>

The word קָץ is one of the terms that is constantly used in the Qumran

---

<sup>1</sup> See the discussion in Talmon, s.v. קָץ, in which there are noted two meanings of קָץ: end and time. In Qumran the second meaning is primarily used, in relation to other terms of time. In Biblical texts the eschatological meaning of קָץ appears, as it does in Qumran. In Qumran alone does the term קָץ appear in the plural form, as a system of time. In the sense of “duration of life,” קָץ is parallel to *דוּר*. קָץ in the eschatological sense is extremely rare. 4Q180 contains a Peshar on *קצים* in the eschatological sense, as there does also in the *Melchizedek Text* (11QMelch).



literature with reference to the subject of time, and is used with various connotations pertaining to time. There are those cases where it is used as the *nomen regens* as a term referring to time in general, where only the *nomen rectum* provides the concrete meaning in each specific case. Hence, קָז שלום refers to the period, time, age, or aeon of peace, in 4Q418 161 9, קָזי שלום (1QH xxi 15). This is also the sense of ולפקודת נגועיהם עם (“and concerning the visitation of their punishments and the times of their reward”; 1QS iii 14-15). However, here one is not speaking of a time of peace in general, but is referring to the peace or trouble of the individual or of the group—that is, that this is what God has fixed for him. Compare also קָזי נגועי [עוונות] (“the guil]ty periods of those defiled [by sins”]; 4Q511 10 4-6).

The opposite of קָזי מלחמות is קָז שלום (“the ti[m]es of] the wars”; 1QM xi 8). One should also compare here the idiom קָז מלחמה (Dan 9:26). It is in the same spirit that one must also interpret the phrases קָז אור and קָז חושך (“time of light” and “time of darkness”), in the sense of periods of redemption as opposed to periods of calamity. Compare also 4Q462 1 9-10:

9 [ומ]ל[ו]ן את הממשלה לבדו עמו היה האור עמהם ועלינו היה ]  
10 עבר ק[ז] החושך וקָז האור בא ומשלו לעולם על כן יואמר]

9 [...] and the ful]ness of the kingdom, is with him alone; the light was with them and over us there was[...]

10 [...] sthe peri]od of darkness [has gone] and the period of light has arrived. And they will rule for ever. Therefore [t]he[y] will say:[...]

A synonym to קָז האור appears in the following text:<sup>2</sup> מש]פטה וכל עולה (“And all injustice will end again, and the time of tru[th] will be complete [...]”; 4Q416 1 13).<sup>3</sup> Note also the sequel: [ו]ן ומקדם שני [ו]ן (“In all periods of eternity, for he is the God of truth and from ancient times (are) [his] years”; *ibid.*, 14).<sup>4</sup> The designation of God as אל אמת explains the reference to the period as קָז האמת, because he will rule over all flesh and the truth will emerge victorious.<sup>5</sup>

In CD vi 14-15, we read: אם לא ישמרו לעשות כפרוש התורה לקָז הרשע

<sup>2</sup> Strugnell, DJD XXXIV, 81-82.

<sup>3</sup> Strugnell, *ibid.*, 82, has a discussion of the phrase קָז האמת in reference to the possibility of reading here קָז האב[ו]ן as parallel to the phrase וכל עולה תתם.

<sup>4</sup> Strugnell, *ibid.*, 87, on the possibility of another reading: The idiom ומקדם שני [ו]ן is seen by Strugnell as parallel to that in 1QSa v 18, עם כול קָזי עולם. That is to say, the idiom regularly used in the Scrolls is קָזי עולם.

<sup>5</sup> The same idioms appear in a parallel text, 4Q418 2 5-6; see *ibid.*, 225-227

השחת ולהבדל מבני השחת (“they should take care to act in accordance with the exact interpretation of the law for the age of wickedness: to keep apart from the sons of the pit”). And note also 4Q269 8 ii 4-5: **כי אם הוּזוּ כַּמְשַׁפֵּט** [הַטְהָרָה בְּמֵי הַנְּדָה בְּקֶזֶז הַרְשָׁע] (“unless they were sprinkled according to the re[gulation] [of purification with lustral water during] the age of wicked[ness]”), and compare also in 4Q271 2 12.

The phrase **קֶזֶז הַרְשָׁע** is paralleled by that of **קֶזֶז הַחֹשֶׁךְ**, cited previously, which is intended to describe a period during which evil is dominant. Compare also the expression **בְּמִשְׁפֵּט קֶזֶז עוֹלָה** (“in the judgment of the times of injustice”; 4Q265 7 ii 10).

The opposite to **קֶזֶז חֹשֶׁךְ/הַרְשָׁע** appears in 1QM i 5: **וְהִיא עֵת יְשׁוּעָה** (“and th[is] is a time of salvation for the nation of God and a period of rule for all the men of his lot, and of everlasting destruction for all the lot of Belial”).<sup>6</sup> The period described is a time of salvation for the pious, and the phrase is parallel to the idiom **קֶזֶז שְׁלוֹם** and the like. Corresponding to **עֵת יְשׁוּעָה** there appears the phrase **קֶזֶז מְמַשֵּׁל לְכוֹל אֲנָשֵׁי גּוֹרְלוֹ**—that is, that it is the **קֶזֶז**, the period during which the pious will rule over all their opponents. Another phrase similar to this is **וְכָלֵת עוֹלָמִים לְכוֹל גּוֹרֵל בְּלִיעֵל**. It follows from this passage that the destruction of the lot of Belial is irreversible, and hence it is couched in the unusual expression **כָּלֵת עוֹלָמִים**, “everlasting destruction.” Compare to this **וְקֶזֶז חֲרוֹן לְכוֹל** (“and the period of anger against any Belial”; 1QH xi 28) and **בְּקֶזֶז חֲרוֹן** in 4Q166 i 12. The full text of this passage from *Hosea Peshet* from line 9 on indicates the principles that guided the author’s thoughts:<sup>7</sup>

9 וְקֶזֶז מוֹעֵלָם לּוֹא

10 כִּי־אֵם הֵם דּוֹר הַפְּקוּדָה<sup>8</sup>

12 נִאֲסַף בְּקֶזֶז חֲרוֹן

9 and the era of their disloyalty not

10 [... for] they are the generation of the visitation

12 [...] taken away in the ages of wrath.<sup>9</sup>

That is, it was an age, or period, of disloyalty of the people to God;

<sup>6</sup> Yadin, *War Scroll*, 258-259, and *ibid.*, on the difference between i 5, **עֵת יְשׁוּעָה**, and **לְעַם פְּדוּת אֵל עֵת צָרָה עוֹזָה** (“a time of [intense] suffering for the nation redeemed by God”; *ibid.*, 11-12), which is a description of the present.

<sup>7</sup> Allegro, DJD V, 31; this is parallel to the text in CD xx 23, **קֶזֶז מַעַל יִשְׂרָאֵל** (“the age of Israel’s unfaithfulness”).

<sup>8</sup> See Allegro, *ibid.*, 31, on the parallel in 1QS iii 18, **מוֹעֵד פְּקוּדָתוֹ** (“the moment of his visitation”); and in CD xix 10, **קֶזֶז פְּקוּדָה**.

<sup>9</sup> Allegro cites the parallel in 1QH xxii 8 (fr. 1 5).

therefore they are called דּוֹר הַפְּקוּדָה, because God visited them, punished them, during the “period of anger.”

In the document in 4Q215a 1 ii 3-6, we read:

3 בעבור חס[ד]יו כיא שלם קָז הרשע וכול עולה ת[עבו]ר [כיא]  
 4 באה עת הצדק ומלאה הארץ דעה ותהלת אל בימ[י]  
 5 בא קָז השלום וחוקי האמת ותעודת [ה]צדק להשכיל [כול אנוש]  
 6 בדרכי אל [ו]בגבורות מעשיו [יתיסרו ע]ד עולמי עד כול ב[ריאה]

- 3 on account of his pio[us] ones; for the age of wickedness is fulfilled and all injustice will [pass a]way. [For]
- 4 the time of justice has arrived, and the earth is filled with knowledge and the praise of God. In the da[ys of ...]
- 5 the age of peace has arrived, and the laws of truth, and the testimony of justice, to instruct [all]
- 6 in God's paths [and] in the mighty acts of his deeds [...]for eternal centuries. Every t[ongue]...

It is clear here that the “age of wickedness” took place previously, and that now there has come the age of peace (קָז השלום). The phrase שלם קָז הרשע is to be interpreted as indicating that the allotted period of time for the end of wickedness has been completed. On this idiom, compare the following texts: CD vi 14: לקָז הרשע (“the age of wickedness”), and compare 4Q266 3 ii 20; 4Q269 8 ii 5: ב[קָז הרשע] (“during] the age of wicked[ness]”); 4Q271 2 12: במי[ן] הנדה בקָז הרשע (“with lustral [water] during the age of wickedness”); 1QpHab v 7-8: בהקָז הרשעה (“the era of wickedness”).

Let us now return to the text of 4Q215a, which we cited above. In light of the statement in line 3: כיא שלם קָז הרשע וכול עולה ת[עבו]ר (“for the age of wickedness is fulfilled and all injustice will [pass a]way”), it continues in ll. 4-5, “the time of justice has arrived... the age of peace has arrived.” The sect thereby expressed the idea of the changing of the ages. Furthermore, it should be noted that it is stated concerning the age of wickedness that its days were *fulfilled*—that is, that as comprehensive and all encompassing it was, it is nevertheless limited in time.<sup>10</sup> Not so with regard to the age of peace: concerning it, it is said that its coming is “[...]for eternal centuries” (*ibid.*, 6)—that is, that it

<sup>10</sup> On שלם in the context of קָז and the like, Strugnell (*ibid.*, 86-87) thinks that in 4Q416, [ת]האמת ושלם קָז האמת (see the discussion above) this term is subject to two alternative interpretations: “it shall conclude” (i.e., not at the time planned from the outset) or that the sense is that it *will* be completed (in accordance with the pace and timing determined by God from the outset).

will be unending and unchanging, and that in practice it is the eschatological End.

From the combination of the phrases, באה עת הצדק.. בא קץ השלום, it follows that God divided times in a non-uniform way in *The Book of the divisions of the periods*, and that in any event the period referred to as "the age of peace" will guide life forever—implying, of course, a certain eschatological direction. Moreover, if we consider other texts, then the age of wickedness, whose days are now completed, is perhaps the final period, the present generation, and after its days are (or will be) completed, the eschatological age of peace will begin.

One may infer from this two more things: that the phrase צדק is equivalent to שלום; and that in certain contexts עת and קץ are synonyms.

In CD xii 22-23, it states: וזה סרך מושב המ[חננו]ת המתהלכים באלה בקץ ("And this is the rule of the assembly of the cam[ps]. Those who walk in them, in the time of wickedness until there arises the messiah of Aaron").<sup>11</sup> That is, the sect is organized according to rules for the age of the rule of wickedness. Further on in the same work, there appears a similar phrase: וכן המשפט בכל קץ הרשע לכל השב ("And such is the regulation, throughout all the age of wickedness, for whoever reverts from his path of corruption. On the day when he talks to the Inspector"; *ibid.* xv 6-8); and in 1QpHab v 7-8: אשר לו זנו אחר עיניהם בקץ הרשעה ("they have not run after the desire of their eyes in the era of wickedness"); and CD xx 23: קץ מעל ישראל ("the age of Israel's unfaithfulness"). Compare also [ב]קץ ממשלת הרשע ("[in] the era of the rule of wickedness"; 4Q511 10 3=4Q510 1 6-7); and [ת]ימ[ת] הרשעה (4Q509 205 2; "the [t]ime of wickedness"); and, in the plural, [ר]שעותה ("[...]the pe[ri]ods of her wickedness"; 4Q511 3 3). And note also CD vi 14: לקץ הרשע ("the age of wickedness"); and *ibid.*, vi 10: בכל קץ הרשיע ("the whole age of wickedness"). An alternative to the phrase קץ הרשעה may also be קץ מועלם ("the era of their disloyalty"; 4Q166 i 9).

It seems to me that the combination קץ (הרשע), when it appears adjacent to מכל קצי החרון, "all the ages of wrath," indicates a similarity between the two terms, which continue the ideas of one another. It may be that קץ החרון indicates the age during which the divine wrath was set against the wicked, and it is a means of subduing the evildoers. Compare also הו[א] חקוק קץ חרון לעם לא ידעהו [והוא הכין מועדי רצון (לדור]שי מצוותו ("[He] determined a moment of wrath for a nation that

<sup>11</sup> See in Rabin, *The Zadokite Document*, 63, who compares this passage to CD vi 10.

does not know him, [and he has established times of favor for those who exa]mine his precepts ..."; 4Q266 2 i 3); קְצִי חַרְוֹן לְעַם לֹא יָדְעוּהוּ] ("the moments of wr[ath for a nation that does not know him]"; 4Q268 1 5-6); וְקָז חַרְוֹן לְכָל בְּלִיעֵל ("the period of anger against any Belial"; 1QH xi 28); and נִאֲסַף בְּקְצֵי חַרְוֹן ("has been] taken away in the ages of wrath"; 4Q166 i 12).

In 4Q369 1 i 4-6, we read:

4 כּוֹל מְוֵעֵדִי הֵם בְּקִצֵּיהֶם  
5 קָז פְּלֹאכָה כִּי מֵאִז חֻקְתָּהּ לְמוֹ  
6 ] 6 מִשְׁפָּטוֹ עַד קָז מִשְׁפָּט נַחֲרָצָה<sup>12</sup>

Compare to this the statement regarding God, who has fixed all of the ages, in 4Q180 1 1-4, which we discussed above in the chapter on "God and Time" (Ch. 17).

The expression קָז מִשְׁפָּט נַחֲרָצָה used in the phrase מִשְׁפָּטוֹ עַד קָז מִשְׁפָּט נַחֲרָצָה, refers to God's judgment as opposed to the rule of wickedness in the age of darkness. See also 1QH xiv 29: וְאִז תַּחֲשִׁי חֶרֶב אֶל בְּקָז מִשְׁפָּט ("then the sword of God will pounce in the era of judgment"). Likewise the harsh event of the destruction of the Temple and the city, that led to the exile and the land being laid to waste, prompted the description of the period as קָז חֹרְבֵן הָאָרֶץ, as in וּבְקָז חֹרְבֵן הָאָרֶץ עֲמְדוֹ מְסִיגֵי הַגְּבוּל ("and in the age of devastation of the land there arose those who shifted the boundary and made Israel stray"; CD v 20). This formula also appears in 4Q267 2 4.

### 1. *Combinations of Idioms of the Type של "מ קז"*

We have already seen above that, just as one may speak of a given עַת and its replacement by another one, so too are there statements that a particular time is "completed" (נִשְׁלְמָה)<sup>13</sup>. We shall now enlarge upon this point somewhat.

The subject of של"מ קָז appears in additional texts. Thus, in 4Q416 1 13-14:

13 מִשְׁפָּטָה וְכָל עוֹלָה תִּתֵּן עוֹד וְשִׁלְמָה קָז אִמְן  
14 בְּכָל קְצֵי עַד כִּי אֵל אִמְתָּ הוּא וּמִקְדָּם שְׁנִינִן

<sup>12</sup> On the basis of Attridge, in VanderKam, DJD XIII, 354-356, where מְוֵעֵדִים is interpreted as referring to the festivals of the Gentiles. Attridge sees the end of the passage, ,קָז מִשְׁפָּט נַחֲרָצָה, as having an eschatological character.

<sup>13</sup> See note 10 above.

For the translation see *supra*. It also appears in a parallel text in 4Q418 2 5-6.<sup>14</sup>

From this text, a question arises regarding the exact meaning of the idiom של"מ קץ, because it states that "injustice will end," meaning that it will no longer exist, and the way is thereby paved for a new period. Further on, it stated: ושלם קץ אמנת. This alludes to the fact that, when injustice will end, there will ensue an age (קץ) of "truth." It follows from this that there is also a use of the term של"מ קץ in the sense of its being ready to appear, rather than in that of it being concluded and gone. Thus, של"מ קץ may serve in a double sense: 1) as the end of a period (that is, its disappearance or departure; as we have just seen in discussing 215a lii 3-4: 3. כיא שלם קץ הרשע וכול עולה ת[עב]ור: 4. באה עת הצדק [כיא]), or: 2) its *appearance*, the *beginning* of a period, when it is ripe and ready to come. But only one of the two may be correct in any given case.

In order to eliminate doubt, I should comment here that I do not intend to say that the two meanings are used simultaneously, but that there are cases in which the former use appears (for the conclusion of a period), and there are others in which the latter meaning (for the beginning of a period) is the one meant.

An alternative term for the verb של"מ in this context, used in the sense of conclusion or end of a period, is found in 4Q301 3 8, where the phrase כל"ה is used: בכול[ת] קץ רשעה ועשות] ("At the fulfil[ment] of the period of wickedness and the doing (of) [...]"; and compare also the use of הל"ת רשעה ("to exterminate wickedness"; 4Q 511 35 1).

The phrase של"מ קץ (without specifying its nature) is referred to in CD iv 8-12 (=4Q266 3 i 2-3): לעשות כפרוש התורה אשר התוסרו בו הראשנים עד שלום הקץ השנים האלה כברית אשר הקים אל לראשנים לכפר על עונותיהם כן יכפר אל בעדם ובשלום הקץ למספר השנים האלה אין עוד להשתפח לבית יהודה כי אם לעמוד איש על מצודו ("in order to act according to the exact interpretation of the law in which the forefathers were instructed until the period of these years is complete. According to the covenant which God established with the forefathers, to atone for their iniquities, so will God atone for them. But when the period corresponding to the number of these years is complete, there will no longer be any joining with the house of Judah but rather each one standing upon his watchtower").<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See above, in the discussion of these documents.

<sup>15</sup> See Rabin, 15. The formula שלום is based on Qimron's reading, in Broshi, *The Damascus Document Reconsidered*, who reconstructs thus on the basis of line 10; Rabin, however, reads both places as שלים.

It would seem that for the particular time referred to here (and perhaps every time period in the framework of life) there was fixed a certain number of years, and these now reach their end. It clearly follows from this that *שְׁלִי"מ קָץ* functions here in the sense of the conclusion of a period. In this respect, the opposite of this phrase is *אֲרִי"ך קָץ* (“to lengthen a period”). Thus, in the *Habakkuk Peshar* (1QpHab vii 7): *פִּשְׂרוֹ אֲשֶׁר יֵאָרֹךְ הַקָּץ הָאֲחֵרֹן* (“Its interpretation: the final age will be extended”); *ibid.*, lines 10-12: *פִּשְׂרוֹ עַל אֲנָשֵׁי הָאֲמַת עוֹשֵׂי הַתּוֹרָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא יִרְפוּ יְדֵיהֶם מֵעֲבוּדַת הָאֲמַת בְּהַמְשֵׁךְ עֲלֵיהֶם הַקָּץ הָאֲחֵרֹן* (“Its interpretation concerns the men of truth, those who observe the Law, whose hands will not desert the service of truth when the final age is extended beyond them”).

In 1QpHab vii 2, it reads: *וְאֵת גְּמַר הַקָּץ לֹא הוֹדְעוּ* (“but he did not let him know the consummation of the era”). This passage may be explained in one of two ways: on the one hand, the time in which it will be completed, finished, and pass away: that is, that the meaning of the text in *Peshar Habakkuk* is that God will not inform the prophet when the period described in his prophecy will be *completed*. That is, the prophet is not informed as to the extent and duration of the period. On the other hand, the phrase *גְּמַר הַקָּץ* may mean, when it will be *ready to begin*. From the context, it makes more sense to relate it to the second meaning: the coming of the period, its arrival and appearance.<sup>16</sup> See also our discussion of the days that *hasten to come*, etc., in the chapter 17: “God and Time.”

A formula similar to *שְׁלִי"מ קָץ* appears in *4Q Catena A* (4Q177) 3 10.<sup>17</sup> In the context of the promise there concerning Divine redemption and deliverance, it states: *וְנִסְלוּ (=וְנִסְלַח) לָהֶם לְעוֹלָם* (“And they will be forgiven for ever”) and *לְעוֹלָם יִבְרַכְם*. Thereafter it explains, *יִמְלֵאוּ קִצֵּיהֶם* (“[th]eir periods shall be filled”). Further on, this passage reads:

10 ... .. יִמְלֵאוּ קִצֵּיהֶם  
 11 [ת. אבותם] [במספר שמותם] מפורשים בשמות לאיש ואיש ה...  
 [שנותיהם וקץ מעמדם י] [ו לשונם]  
 12 ..א את צאצאיו ועתה הנה הכול כתוב בלוחות אשר [חרט] אל וידעוהו את  
 מספר [כול הדורות] וינח[ילהו]  
 13 .....ל[ו] ולזרעו [עד] עולם... ..<sup>18</sup>

I see in this a parallel text regarding the subject of *שְׁלִי"מ קָץ*; hence, the

<sup>16</sup> See on this Nitzan, *Peshar Habakkuk*, 171-174; and Brin, *Issues*, 156-157.

<sup>17</sup> Based upon Allegro, *ibid.*, 67-68.

<sup>18</sup> On this text see also above in chapter 17.

idiom **ימלאו קצים** means: “they shall complete their periods,” like the corresponding Biblical expressions. (See further in the first part of this book, in the discussion on the phrase **מלא ימים** (Chapter 14).

In any event, we find here, more so than in the Bible, or differently from the Bible (see on this Ch. 17, on “God and Time,” and Ch. 19, “The Term **מועד** in the Scrolls”), that there is a deterministic approach: that God fixed in advance, in the “Book of division of the times and the periods,” the destiny of each individual as well as the destiny of the public. It should be noted that it does not state to whom God revealed the number of his days, nor what and to whom he gave to him and his seed for ever.

4Q181 1 ii 5-6 may also belong to this complex:<sup>19</sup>

5 [מ]לאו איש לפי גורלו אשר הפניל [ ] [ל]ו... ]  
6 [ לחיי ע[ו]ל[ו]ם ]<sup>20</sup>

5 [Comp]lete each man according to his lot which he as[sig]ned to [him...]

6 [...] for et[e]rn[al] life [...]

Perhaps the sense here is that each person shall live according to the destiny (time, period) that has been determined for him in the book inscribed by God since time immemorial.

We have already seen in the chapter on the use of the term **דור** (above, Ch. 18) the importance of the term **הדור האחרון** in the belief system of the sect, and also regarding the term **קץ** it is possible to find a parallel expression in conjunction with **הקץ האחרון**. It seems to me that regarding this idiom as well, there apply the two uses that I pointed out earlier; the period of the present as opposed to the eschatological period.

The phrase **הקץ האחרון** appears in 1QpHab vii 12: **פשרו על אנשי** (“Its interpretation concerns the men of truth.... When the final age is extended beyond them”); as well as in line 7 **הקץ האחרון** **אשר יארוך**; and in line 2: **ואת גמר הקץ לא הודיעו**. In 1QS iv 16-17, we read: **כי אל שמן בד בוד עד קץ אחרון** (“For God has sorded them into equal parts until the last time”).<sup>21</sup> One should take note that in line 25, where there appears the reading, **כי בד בוד שמן אל**, **עד קץ נחרצה ועשות חדשה והואה ידע פעולת מעשיהן לכול קצי** (עולמי]ם

<sup>19</sup> Allegro, 79-80.

<sup>20</sup> Allegro, 80, compares the phrase **לחיי עולם** (l. 6) with the following passages: Dan 12:2; Ben Sira 37:26; CD iii 20 (**חיי נצח**).

<sup>21</sup> Licht, *Rule Scroll*, 102; and compare regarding the subject of **הדור האחרון** above, in the chapter on the term **דור**.



expression קָז עד קָז אחרון serves as an alternative to קָז אחרון and קָז [עולמי].

The phrase קָז האחרון is also used in 4Q169 3-4 iv 3: פשרו על מנשה [לא] לקָז האחרון אשר תשפל מלכותו ביש[ראל] (“Its interpretation concerns Manasseh, in the last time, in which his dominion over Is[rael] will weaken”). An alternative phrase to קָז האחרון is קָז אחרית הקָז. Thus in *Nahum Pesher*: קָז אחרית הקָז אשר דורשי החלקות אשר ב[א]חרית הקָז (“Its interpretation concerns those looking for easy interpretations, (who) in the final time”; 4QpNah [4Q169] 3-4 iii 3). Similarly, in the *Psalms Pesher*, to Psalm 127 (4Q173 1 4-5):

4 [ע]תרות מורה הצדק [ ]  
5 [כ]ו[ה]ן לאחרית הקָז

4 the pe]titions of the teacher of righteousness [...]  
5 [...pri]est in the final e[ra]

I believe that a synonym to קָז אחרון appears in the phrase קָז עולמים. Thus: בעבור תבינו בקָז עולמות ובקָז [מ]וניות תבינו לדעת (“in order that you understand the end of ages, and that you examine the for[m]er things, to know”; 4Q298 iii 9-10). As is usual in the Sect literature, the term עולם appears as an alternative to the *nomen rectum* עולמים. Thus, we read בכול דרכיהם עם פקודתם לכול קצי עולם ופקודת עד (“in all their paths together with their visitations for all eternal periods, and eternal visitation”; 4Q417 2 i 7-8). In the synonym, פקודת עד, the distant eschatological nature of the phrase קצי עולם is on the one hand quite clear. On the other hand since, next to the phrase בקָז עולמים, which was quoted previously, there appears the phrase קדמוניות (“days of old”), one needs to ask whether these are in fact synonymous terms, in which case קָז עולמים refers specifically to the distant past, or whether the text is dealing with two different directions of time, such as מעולם ועד עולם. If this latter interpretation is correct, then the *terminus ad quem*, קָז עולמים, appears here before the *terminus a quo*, קדמוניות.<sup>22</sup>

In another text, we read בכל קצי עד (“in all periods of eternity”; 4Q416 1 14); the same expression also appears in the parallel fragment: 4Q418 2 i 5. It seems to me that this a synonym to קצי עולמים. On the phrase קצי עולם see above 4Q417 2 i 7-8; and [ ] ישב

<sup>22</sup> M. Kister, apud Fitzmyer, DJD XX, 25-28, compares 4Q298 3-4 ii 9-10: בעבור תבינו בקָז עולמות ובקָז [מ]וניות תבינו לדעת (“in order that you understand the end of ages, and that you examine the for[m]er things, to know”) to Isa 43:18; where there is also a purview looking from the historical past to the eschatological future (קָז עולמות). Compare CD i 1- ii 1; ii 14- iii 11.; and cf. T. Elgvin in Fitzmyer, DJD XX, 28.

תבואות לכול קצי עולם (“and from his storeroom he will...[...] harvest for all eternal periods”; 4Q419 8 ii 6); and compare also 4Q427 7 ii 5-6:<sup>23</sup>

5 הופיע שלום שבת פחד נפתח מקור לב[רכת עד]  
6 ומרפא בכול קצי עולם כלה עוון שבת נגע לאין מחלה[נאספה]<sup>24</sup>

- 5 Peace will appear, terror cease, the fount of [perpetual] bl[essing] will be opened.
- 6 There will be healing for all the eternal periods; wickedness will end, plague(s) cease so that there will be no illne[ss; ... is eliminated]”

### *Others Uses of קץ*

In 4Q285 3 2 (*Serek hamilhama*), we encounter the expression עד[ת קץ] (“until] the time of the קץ”). Since two different words pertaining to time appear here, it seems to me that the word קץ must be interpreted as referring to a time destined, a period, or the like (of which we have spoken), while the term עד serves in the sense of time in general; the meaning of the idiom is thus the matter or destiny of such and such a person until the time—עד—of that subject; the period, age, or destiny [that has been decided upon]. It is possible that the passage concerning Joseph also involves a usage of this type: אכלים את כחו ושברים את כל עצמיו עד עת קץ לו (“who consumed his strength and broke all his bones up to the time of his end”; 4Q372 1 15). On the one hand, it is possible that the sense here is until the time that had been intended for him. However, because of the idiom עד עת קץ לו (to the time of *his* end”) it seems to lead toward the possibility of an interpretation according to which קץ is used in the sense of his (i.e., Joseph’s) *end* or *death*, as it is stated there that they broke his bones; the natural continuation is thus the end, or death, of Joseph at the hands of those who are beating him. Thus, the intention is not to refer to קץ as indicating a period of time.

Similarly the statement in 1QS iii 23, לפי רזי אל עד קצו (“in compliance with the mysteries of God, until his moment”; cf. *ibid.*, 18: להתהלך בם עד מועד פקודתו) is concerned with קצו (i.e., the end) of the period of evil, until he will fall into God’s hands and be exchanged for another.

<sup>23</sup> Schuller, *apud* Nitzan, DJD XXIX, 97-105.

<sup>24</sup> Schuller, *ibid.*, 105, notes that the subject of healing is typical of eschatological descriptions.

The element of the time that has been established for the individual and for the public, and for various matters, finds expression in the form of קָק + a suffixed pronoun, which relates in each case to the person referred to in the verse.<sup>25</sup> Thus, we read **ובקצו יצא בחמה גדולה להלחם** (1QM i 4) (“And in his time, and in his great anger he set forth to make war against the kings of the north”)<sup>26</sup>—that is, at the time fixed for this; and compare this to the phrase **ק[צי] מלחמות** (1QM xi 8).

The importance of the word קָק is also seen in a phrase widely used among the men of the sect: **מקץ לקץ**. This idiom alludes to the fact that everything in the world—from the past to the present, and into the distant future—is fixed and classified according to their times. Thus: **מ[קץ] לקץ לקץ תשת[ע]שע נפשי בהמון רחמיכה** (“from one moment to the next my soul delights in the abundance of your compassion”; 1QH xvii 7-8); compare the variant expression: **ל[ה]תנׁל והתחנן**: **אורך לדור [דור] ודור ותפלה**; **ל[ה]תנׁל והתחנן**: **אורך לדור [דור] ודור ותפלה**; **תמיד מקץ לקץ** “I will praise you for generation] to generation, and prayer, to bow down and entreat always, from period to period”; *ibid.* xii 4). From this point on, the text enumerates the various times of prayer, from daybreak on. The intention here is to say that, at all times, always, my soul is pleased. We may infer from this that the term קָק may serve both to indicate great and extended periods, on the one hand, as well as to designate the extremely non-comprehensive changes of times within the lifetime of an individual, one or the other. The formulation **מקץ לקץ** may thus be seen, on the basis of the explanation that I have offered, as a kind of tautology: **מקץ לקץ** (also) serves as a kind of inclusive term, following which there appears a detailing of the parts of the day (and afterwards of the parts of the year), in all of which he prays to God. **מקץ [לקץ] ישמיעו** (“from age] to age they announce”; 1QH vii 6 (fr. 10 5) means that it is incumbent upon every individual to utter fixed praises to God. See also **מקץ לקץ ולהתיצב במעמד]** (“to recount these things from period to period, and to stand in position [...]”; 4Q427 7 ii 17). Compare also the term **לקצים**, whose sense is from age to age, time to time, on occasion. Or: **כחמת תנינים פורחת לקצים** (1QH xiii 27 “like vipers’ venom that spreads to the extremities”). That is, the evil of the opponents spreads out, breaks out *from time to time*, or it appears at fixed intervals, which are intended for such by supreme edict.<sup>27</sup> Another use of this term is **להתם כוח לקצים ולכלות בשר עד מועדים** (“devouring

<sup>25</sup> See on this the interpretation of Licht, *Rule Scroll*, 92.

<sup>26</sup> Yadin, *War Scroll*, 258.

<sup>27</sup> Licht, *Thanksgiving Scroll*, 105.

(my) strength by periods, and destroying (my) flesh by seasons”; *ibid.* viii 31), referring to limited times, which were intended from the outset for destruction. Finally, compare **עַד קֵץ הַגְּלוּת יִשְׁעֶכָּה לִי כִּי בַצַּרְתָּ נַפְשִׁי לֹא עֲזַבְתָּנִי** (“[un]til the moment of revealing your salvation to me. For in the distress of my soul you did not desert me”; *ibid.* v 11-12).

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

### THE TERM עולם IN THE SCROLLS

I have already discussed extensively the meaning and use of the term עולם<sup>1</sup> in the Bible in the following chapters: 6. “Biblical Formulae for Depicting Duration of Time”; 10. “Terms Used for Long Time Periods in the Bible”;<sup>2</sup> 13 “Terms Used for the Past, Present and Future in the Bible”; and note also what I have written about the superlative nature of the term.<sup>3</sup>

The term עולם appears in numerous Scrolls documents, and one may say that, without any doubt, it is one of the most important terms for determining the beliefs and world-view implicit in this literature. It is clear that this is not a new term, coined independently by the authors of the Scrolls, of which we have several examples in the sectarian literature, as this is a biblical term. However, notwithstanding the fact that the term עולם appears numerous times in the Bible, once the Dead Sea sect began to use this term it continued, on the one hand, its biblical significance but, alongside that, it appeared in a wide variety of additional meanings.

The term עולם is used in the Bible primarily in the aspect of time, and by extension is frequently used in the sense of eternity.<sup>4</sup> In addition

---

<sup>1</sup> Muilenburg, “The Biblical View of Time,” 248-249, holds that the word עולם is derived from the root עִלֵּם, i.e., “to hide”; today, however, it is seen more as derived from the Akkadian *ullānu*, i.e., “to be distant.” In his monograph *Das Wort Olam in AT* (349 n. 31), Jenni states that the etymology of the term is not clear, albeit comparison to its extra-biblical uses leads one to think of a meaning such as “the most distant time.” Such a distance applies both to the past and to the present. According to Wheeler Robinson, *Inspiration and Revelation*, 117-118, during the course of time the use of עולם was transferred from the sense of “distance” to that of “eternity”; viz. Dan 12:2-3. According to Marsh, *The Fulness of Time*, 29, the term for eternity is עולם, but it nevertheless serves also to indicate various levels of time.

<sup>2</sup> On the importance of עולם in P to express the eternity of the laws and the covenant, note such terms as חוקת עולם, ברית עולם, etc.; see Preuss, s.v. עולם.

<sup>3</sup> In my article, “The Superlative”; and in my article “אלהי עולם”, 286-287.

<sup>4</sup> See Jenni, s.v. “Time.” In his opinion, עולם is not a distinct and absolute term, as shown by the fact that it always appears in connection with prepositions. Only in the expression עולם עד מעולם does it express eternity. Only in late Biblical Hebrew and in Mishnaic Hebrew does עולם signify “period.” עד appears together with עולם, but is less commonly used. The use of עולם as “cosmos” began with the period of the New Testament. העולם הזה and העולם הבא appear in Rabbinic literature.

to this, as I wrote in my study (see note 3), **עולם** also appears in a superlative sense. Such usages also appear in the Scrolls, and they may even be the primary uses but, as mentioned, the Scroll authors did not stop with this and extended the range of meanings considerably.

In this chapter we shall deal extensively with the various combinations of the terms **עולם/עולמים** in the literature of the Judean Desert sect.

We shall begin with the issue of the relationship between the terms **עולם** and **עולמים**. Examination of the uses of these two terms indicates, in my opinion, that there is no significant difference between them (but see below in the analysis of the various specific idioms). It therefore seems to me that, as a working assumption, applicable as well to some of the appearances of **עולמים** in the Bible itself, that the form **עולמים** came into existence as a result of overuse of the term **עולם**, and as a result of the feeling of the authors that there was need for a specific expression to express distance in time; moreover, **עולמים** began to be used extensively to express the element of eternity, on the one hand, and for superlative usages, on the other, especially as the *nomen rectum* or as an adjective.

In any event, it does not seem to me that there is any concrete difference in meaning between, for example, **נהי עולמים** and **נהיות עולם** (“eternal beings”), and that both of them express the “eternally existent” features of the world, and compare also the phrase **הווי עולמים**.

But just as a certain attrition took place in the use of **עולם**, so too **עולמים** underwent a certain attrition, so that when an author wished to praise God he doubled these words. Thus: **שם קוד[ש] שכה הנכבד לעולמי** (in García-Martínez’s reading: **לעולמי ע[ד]**; “your [hol]y [name], which is honoured for ever and ev[er...]”; 4Q293 1 2). Compare also *Pseudo-Jubilees* (4Q226 1 6-7): **קדש [ב]ע[ו]לם עולמים** (“holy a[n]gels [in eter]nity of eternities”; cf. below, note 5).

We shall now survey various idioms in the Scroll literature, beginning with the term **עולם**. In the course of our discussion we shall clarify the nature of the various idioms of the type **עולם-x** in the Scrolls, as well as those using **עולמים-x**.

In the following idioms **עולם** is used in the sense of time: **אחוזת עולם**: as in the passage **והם אחוזת עולם ינחלו הלא ראתם** (“but they will inherit an eternal property. Have you not seen”; 4Q418 55 12) **אחוזת עולמים** : **אחוזת עולמים וכו[ן]** (“and your glory will appear there to [...] for his seed according to their generations an eternal possession and al[...]; 4Q369 1 ii 3-4). In both these cases, **עולם** and **עולמים** are used in the sense of a very long period of time,

possibly even in an eschatological sense. In practice, uses such as these of עולם as the *nomen rectum* in the construct state is a direct continuation of the biblical use.

Another idiom that continues this line of use, but in its own unique way, is ימי עולם, as in לכול ימי עולם ודורות נצח (“for all days everlasting and unceasing generations”; 1QH ix 15-16). Compare also למספר דורות נצח (“to the number of their eternal generations and for all years continuously”; *ibid.* 18-19; according to Licht, the term is used here in the sense of “forever”), in which the time element stands out by virtue of the double formula, which is entirely concerned with time. However, one also needs to inquire regarding the direction of time described in this phrase. We should emphasize that there are two possibilities here (with a tendency in principle towards the former: one is either speaking of the days of the remote past, such as the Creation of the World or the Exodus from Egypt and the like; or else one is speaking in the opposite direction, of the End of Days, that is, an explicitly eschatological direction).

On the other hand, the phrase מקדם עולם (e.g., as in כי לא בחר אל בהם מקדם עולם; “For God did not chose them at the beginning of the world”; 4Q266 2 ii 6-7), in which there are also two time-related phrases, is unequivocal in terms of the direction of time referred, in that it *clearly* deals with ancient time, with the distant past.

What we have said concerning ימי עולם and קדם עולם also holds true for another linguistic idiom: דורות עולם (as in למספר דורות עולם, 1QH ix 18. It is clear here that even the direction of perception is identical (here and above)—i.e., depiction of the past. Nevertheless, we do not mean to say that one is speaking here of synonyms, as one idiom might relate to a *point* in the past, whereas another will relate to *duration* of time, and not to a point. דורות עולם is a linguistic idiom used to refer to a lengthy, extended period of time in the distant past.

To the same extent, an expression such as מועדי עולמים may serve as an idiom referring to periods in the past: למלוך [ ] בכול מועדי עולמים (“in order to rule [...] during all times eternal”; 1QM xii 3);<sup>5</sup> and compare also ברית [כ]רתה לאבותינו ותקימה לזרעם למועד[י] עולמים (“you [est]ablished a covenant with our fathers and ratified it with their offspring for tim[e]s eternal”; *ibid.*, xiii 7-8). It would therefore seem that מועד is used as a term for time in general (see Chapter 19, “The Term מועד in the Scrolls”). One is therefore speaking here of distant future periods; I

<sup>5</sup> See Yadin, *War Scroll*, 315.

therefore tend to interpret this passage in such a manner that it refers to the realization in *the future* of the oath that God made to the patriarchs.

One also needs to raise here the question of the meaning of the phrase **גורל עולם**, as in **ותפל לאיש גורל עולם** (“You cast eternal destiny for man”; 1QH xi 22. According to Licht, the sense is: “You have allotted him an eternal inheritance. You have given him a gift which he will always enjoy”).<sup>6</sup> It seems to me that the sect’s thinkers saw before their eyes the times as these were fixed in their various periods, with all that implies (cf. Chapter 20, “The Term **קץ** in the Scrolls”).

The term **גורל עולם** may also refer to a term that is parallel to and synonymous with **קץ**, belonging to the specific system of thought of the sect, regarding both the individual and the people, according to which everything is predetermined through the basis of division into periods or ages, with the direction and contents that are decreed for each person.

A time-related expression whose origins are doubtless biblical is **מעולם ועד עולם**, as in **ורחמי חסדו גמל עלינו מעולם ועד עולם** (“but he has showed on us his merciful favour for ever and ever”; 1QS ii 1). In the biblical context (as in Psalm 90:2: **והמעולם עד עולם אתה אל**), the sense of this expression is to portray God in terms of His constant presence, which exists from the past, before anything yet existed, until the (infinite) end of all times. *Ipsa facto*, this carries implications for God’s activity in relation to human beings, as in the passage from the *Community Rule* (1QS ii 1) that we cited above, or in Psalm 103:17: “But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting (**והחסד ה' מעולם ועד עולם**) upon those who fear him, and his righteousness to children’s children.” On the development of this idiom, compare also the *Blessings* text: **הלליה מעולם ולעולמי 5. [עד] כול גדול אתה: 4. (“(4) [...] praise from eternity to eternity. (5) [...] everything. Great are you [...]”]; 4Q291 3 4-5).**

Alongside the compound idiom, **מעולם ועד עולם**, we also find a usage in which it is broken down to its components, so that **מעולם** (4Q299 8 8) is used to indicate a distant point in the past, from which point on there occurred a certain matter or phenomenon of which the author speaks. It is not surprising that, alongside the texts using **מעולם** (to note indicate great antiquity), there are other terms that use it to indicate destiny: **עולם**. This is the case regarding the text (clearly written under the influence of Second Isaiah) in *Beatitudes* (4Q525) 23 ii 4-7:

<sup>6</sup> Licht, *Thanksgiving Scroll*, 84.



- 4 ביתי בית [תפלה]  
 5 ביתי שוכן ב [ ]  
 6 עולם וצעדו ]  
 7 אוספיו וקבוצו

4 my house is a house of [prayer] 5 my house dwells in [...] 6 for ever; and they step [...] 7 they will collect their harvest

Compare here also “[...]and blessed be his holy name for] ete[r]nal centuries”; 4Q285 8 3).

In 4Q464 3 i 7 we read: “עד עולם כיא הוא” (“for ever, for he [...]”); a promise to Abraham, such as that in Gen 13:15: “ועד לעלמיה זכור” (“and until its ages remember [...]”); or CD iii 12-13: “במחזיקים במצות אל אשר נותרו מהם הקים אל את בריתו לישראל עד עולם.”

It seems to me that, just as the formula לעולם may be attributed to God, and by way of extension also to the cosmos, so are there presumably other “bodies,” such as the Temple, of which this may be said. It is explicitly said regarding the heavens, as part of the cosmos: “שמים אשר חיים עולם נחלתם” (“the heavens, whose inheritance is eternal life”; 4Q418 69 ii 13); or “האמור יאמרו יגענו בפעולות אמת ויעפ[נו] 14” (“(13) Would they really say: We have toiled for the works of truth, and [we] have tired (ourselves) (14) in all times? Do [t]he[y] not wal[k] in eternal light”; *ibid.*, 13-14).

This may perhaps also be said regarding another “body”—the people Israel. Thus, “והיתה לה' המלוכה וישראל למלוך עולמים” (“[And the kingship shall be the Lord's and] Israel to reign for ever”; 1QM xii 15); and compare also “וישראל למלכות עולמים” (“and Israel to reign for ever”; *ibid.*, xix 8).<sup>7</sup> Similarly, in CD iii 13: “הקים אל את בריתו לישראל עד עולם” (“God established his covenant with Israel for ever”). In my opinion, it was possible for the authors to relate in such a manner to Israel, as they did to the cosmos and the Temple. And just as they were liable to say of Israel, that they were wholly righteous, they could certainly do so regarding the Yahad (Community): “והיתה לו לברית 9. [יהד עולמים]” (“(8) [and for him it will be the covenant of] (9) [an] everlasting [Community. *Blank*]”; 4Q255 2 8-9); or “לברית יחד עולמים” (“the covenant of an everlasting Community”; 1QS iii 11-12).<sup>8</sup> And note also “ליסד מוסד אמת לישראל ליחד ברית עולם” (“to lay a foundation of truth for

<sup>7</sup> Yadin, *War Scroll*, 319. There one also finds a discussion of 1QM xii 3: “למלוך [עליהם] בכול מועדי עולמים.”

<sup>8</sup> Licht, *Rule Scroll*, 11-12.

Israel, for the community of the eternal covenant”; *ibid.* v 5-8).

Alongside an idiom such as [הל]ליה מעולם ולעולמי [עד] (4Q291 3 4) (see above) and the like, there is also an interesting idiom in 4Q377 1 ii 12: מעולם ולעד {ל} לוא נבראו (“which were never created before or afterwards...”), which states in the negative manner that such a thing never existed and never will be forever. Concerning negative usages of this type, see what I wrote above in the chapter on “Biblical Formulae for Depicting Duration of Time” (Ch. 6). VanderKam rejects the reconstruction in 4Q226 1 7,<sup>9</sup> because if the formula were בע[ו]לם עולמים (“[in eter]nity of eternities”), this would be a rare phenomenon, whose like exists neither in the Masoretic text nor in any other passage in the Qumran texts. He therefore suggests the alternative reading of: כי קודש יהיה(הוא) לך עולמים (“for it will be holy to you forever”). But it seems to me that VanderKam’s puzzlement is based upon an error, as we clearly know of documents in which God is referred to in this way. Thus, for example, in 4Q293 1 3: שם קודשכה הנכבד לעולמי [עד] (“your [hol]ly [name], which is honoured for ever and ev[er]...”; and in 4Q491 26 1: עולמי עולמים.

An example of the use of the term עד עולם or לעולם in reference to human beings appears in 4Q171 iii 1-2: (*Psalms Pesher*, to Ps 37), where it states that the captives of the desert, members of the sect, יהיו אלף דור בישו[ע]ה (“will live for a thousand generations, in salva[tio]n”). It also states there that ולהם כול נחלת אדם ולזרעם עד עולם (“and to them every inheritance of man, and to their seed for ever”). It follows from this that the expressions דור אלף and עד עולם relate to the same image. It follows from this that (even) certain groups of people may enjoy the promise of life עד עולם, and that this does not contradict the person (as an individual) being mortal.

Compare to this also the following: אשר כרת עם יעקב להיות עמו עד: עלמי ע[ד] (“which he made with Jacob, to be with him for all eterni[ty]”; 4Q372 3 9); וברוך שם קודשו ל[ע]ו[ל]מי עד (“and blessed be his holy name for [et]e[r]nal centuries”; 4Q285 1 2); [...] הוא כי קדש הוא (6) היובל הזה כי קדש הוא [...] (7) (“(6) this jubilee, for it is holy [...] (7) [...] holy a[n]gels [in eter]nity of eternities”; *Pseudo Jubilees* [4Q226] 1 6-7).

The term לעולמים or עולמים must be interpreted, as noted above, as a development of לעולם, the subject being that the subject or person mentioned in the document shall live or continue to act forever. In this

<sup>9</sup> DJD XIII, 160.

sense both לעולם and לעולמים function in the same way as עד עולם mentioned above. Similar to this is the sense of the combination עד-x, as discussed above regarding the subject of עדולמי עד. Compare also the use of these phrases in 4Q417 2 i 7-8: בכול דרכיהם עם פקודתם לכול קצי עולם ופקודת עד (see the translation of this text and the discussion above, chapter 20).

Another question that needs to be asked is what is the precise meaning of עולם in the last phrase; that is, to what direction of flow of time does the idiom refer. This point depends upon the interpretation of the specific text referred to. On the one hand, it may refer to times and ages *in the very beginning of history*; on the other hand, it may allude to an *eschatological significance*.

The idiom עולמות דורות can in principle designate both directions of time, but in a passage such as 4Q158 1-2 9, the future direction of time is clear on the basis of the language and the subject matter:<sup>10</sup>

9 עד היום הזה ועד דורות עולמים] <sup>11</sup>

9 until this day and for everlasting generations [...]

From the use of the word עד it is clear that the direction is toward the future, since the author opened with a formula from the past (ויברך אותם שם) (7) and stopped in the present, with the phrase עד היום הזה (9) In order to show that the blessing remains and will remain in force, the author used the formula ועד דורות עולמים, it being clear from the formula that this phrase refers to the eschatological future. Compare, similarly, in the *Words of the Luminaries (Dibre hamme'oroth)* 4Q504 5 i 2-4:

2 עשיתה

3 [שם עולם ולראות]

4 גב[ורתכה לדורות עולם]

2 [...] you have made

3 [...] eternal name, and to see

4 [...] your [mi]ght for [everlasting] generations.

Likewise, in *ibid.* 7 3-4:

3 [לספר דורות עולם]

4 מעשי ידיכה

3 so that the everlasting generations can tell

4 [...] the works of your hands

<sup>10</sup> Allegro, DJD V, 1-2.

<sup>11</sup> My reconstruction.

And in *ibid.* 8 recto ii 11, we read **לדורות עולם** (“for everlasting generations”), and cf. 4Q507 3 3.

An extremely interesting text appears in 4Q504 1-2 vi 9-12:

9 ולמען נספר גבורתכה לדורות  
 10 עולם אנא אדוני כעשותכה נפלאות מעולם ועד  
 11 עולם ישוב נא אפכה וחמתכה ממנו וראה ע[ונינו]  
 12 ועמלנו ולחצנו והצילה את עמכה ישר[אל]

- 9 so that we can recount your mighty works to everlasting generations  
 10 O Lord, since you do wonders from eternity to  
 11 eternity, may then your wrath and rage withdraw from us. Look  
 at [our] d[istress,]  
 12 our labour and our affliction, and free your people Isra[el]...

This text should also be compared to 4Q504 1-2 recto ii.

It is interesting to note the double use: on the one hand, **לדורות עולם**; that is, to all generations; and on the other hand **מעולם ועד עולם**, in which God is depicted as doing miracles in every generation—from absolute antiquity till the end of time.

It is worth noting that the uses of **עולם** and **עולמים** that I enumerate here, based upon groups of meanings, sometimes belong simultaneously to more than one meaning; hence, in some of the studies that follow, I may repeat certain linguistic usages more than once. I shall also note that in practice the boundary-line of the meanings among the various usages are far from being unequivocal, but are extremely ambiguous, and that some of them overlap and are interchangeable with one another. Hence, in any given case the decision as to the specific interpretation is extremely subjective.

### 1. *עולם in the Sense of Eternity*

From this area—that is, **עולם** and **עולמים** as terms for time in general—I turn to the meaning of **עולם** or **עולמים** as *eternity*, *eternal* and the like. It is clear that this meaning is not too distant from those discussed thus far.

It should be noted that this use is manifested in a long series of idioms in which the terms **עולם** or **עולמים** are used as the *nomen rectum* in various conjunctions. As I have already cited in earlier studies, this is one of the means used by Hebrew writers in ancient times to formulate a *superlative*

(see note 3). Thus, for example, the appearances of שלום עולמים in the formulation וישא פני חסדיו לכה לשלום עולמים (“May he lift upon you the countenance of his favour for eternal peace”; 1QS ii 4); or in ואמתכה ושלום עולם תופיע לכבוד עד ושלום עולם (“But your truth will be displayed for endless glory and eternal peace”; 1QH xix 26-27); and compare also 4Q428 8 i 3 or 1QH v 23-24: ותמש[ילהו על ר]וב עדנים עם שלום עולם ואורך ימים (“And you made him to rule over many ages aeons in eternal peace and length of days”). The sense of this idiom is to express, on the one hand, that the peace spoken of there is eternal. On the other hand, it may bear a different connotation: the “unique peace” or the “great peace,” as is accepted in the use of the term עולם or עולמים in the construct state; that is, as intended to increase and to adorn the object mentioned in the *nomen regens*.

It is in this way that I also see the phrase אור עולמים; e.g., in ומשפטיכה .5 אור עולמים בררתה לו [...] באור עולמים .6 ותשימהו לכה בן בכור] and your good judgments you explained to him to [...] in eternal light, (6) and you made him for you a first-bo[rn] son [...]”; 4Q369 1 ii 5-6; or [תופיע ב]הדר כבודכה לאור [עולם] (“you shall appear in[the glory of your splendor in eter[nal] light”; 1QH xx 14); where the meaning is: splendid light. Compare also הלוא באור עולם יתהלכו; 4Q418 69 ii 14). This matter stands out even more in the expression לאור [אש]ר לאור נפלאות אל [אש]ר לאור עולם ושמי טוהר (“ the wonderful deeds of God whi[ch...][...] for eternal light and the heaven of bright[ness...]; 4Q303 1 3-4). Here there are in practice two synonymous terms. The one: אור עולם, in which עולם is used as a kind of hyperbole, alongside which there appears the synonym: שמי טוהר, whose meaning is quite similar.

See also 4QDibHama [4Q504 8] recto 2-3:

2 ואתה חי עול[מים]

3 נפלאות מקדם ונוראות [ ]

2 And you, who lives for ev[er, ...]

3 [...] the marvels of old and the portents [...]"

Compare also [עול]מ לי למאור (“For you are my [ever]lasting luminary”; 1QH xv 25), and prior to that (*Hodayot*) it states: ותרם קרני למעלה והופעתי בא[ור]ן שבעתים ב[אור] אשר הכי[נותה לכבודכה] ואתה הכי[נותה לכבודכה] (and lifted my horn up high. I am radiant with sevenfold [light], in the li[ght which] you prepared for your glory”; 1QH xv 23-24). See on this above, chapter 17).

A possibility of double interpretation of the idioms also follows from such phrases as ליחד ברית (“for eternal truth”; 4Q258 2 4);

עולם (“for the Community of the eternal covenant”; 1QS v 5-6); לחוק עולם (“as an eternal law”; CD xv 5); להקם ברית לחיית עולם (“in order to establish [...] a covenant in compliance with the everlasting decrees”; 1QS viii 10); ברית עולם (“an eternal covenant”; 1Q28b i 3; ii 25); איבת עולם (“an everlasting loathing”; 1QS iv 17); גבורת עולם (“everlasting fortitude”; 1Q28b v 25).

Each of these expressions may be interpreted in two ways. According to the first interpretation, these phrases are meant to express eternity, an interpretation suitable to עולם חוקות or ברית עולם, whose concern is to determine the eternity of the word of God and His instructions.

But the phrases גבורות עולם or איבת עולם may also bear a like significance: in the latter case, that of eternal enmity, while גבורות עולם may refer to the power of God that shall obviously remain in force and power eternally. By the same measure, עולם may be used here to refer to the opposite direction in time: namely, the enmity that existed long ago, in the distant past. Thus, the phrase may refer to the great power of God demonstrated in the creation of the universe, in the battles against the evildoers, and the like.

On the other hand, these things allow for the possibility of a second interpretation: namely, that each of these expressions is essentially used in a simple superlative sense, in which case the idiom איבת עולם refers to a great and tremendous hostility or enmity. Certainly, in relation to the idiom גבורות עולם, the superlative sense is suitable—i.e., extraordinary, tremendous powers. While such a meaning is also possible with regard to ברית עולם or חוקות עולם, but there it is less appropriate, less fitting, than it is in the case of איבת עולם or גבורות עולם.

## 2. *עולם as a Superlative*

What I said above concerning these four idioms was only by way of example, and we may now expand our purview to include additional idioms.

This is the case with the following expressions: אמת עולם (1QS ix 3-4: “in truth eternal”); שנאת עולם (ibid., ix 21: “everlasting hatred”); שמחת עולמים (ibid. iv 7: “eternal joy”); שמחת עולם (“eternal joy”; 1QH xxiii 15); אש עולמים (1QS ii 8: “everlasting fire”); עצי עולם (1QH xvi 12: “the everlasting trees”); רום עולם (1QH xi 20: “an everlasting height”); שחת עולם (4Q418 162 4: “for eternal damnation”); ל[for] שחת עולמים (“for] the everlasting pit”: 1QS iv 12, 4Q286 7 ii 5); כלות עולם (4Q427 7 ii 8); its synonym is כלת עולמים (1QS ii 15: “everlasting destruction”); פדות

עולמים (1QM xv 1: “everlasting redemption”); כבוד עולם (1QH v 12: “everlasting glory”).

It is clear that what we said about איבת עולם also applies, on the one hand, to its synonym, שנאת עולם, and on the other to such opposites as שמחות עולמים and שמחת עולם. But such expressions as אמת עולם, עצי עולם, or עולמים are also suitable to this context, and this regarding the double option of the meanings. Examination of the things in depth may indicate in each case just which of the meanings is preferable to the others and most suitable to the relevant text. Such a clarification will also indicate whether there is room for understanding the double meaning—that is, that at one and the same time the idiom may be interpreted in both ways together in the same passage.

Thus, for example, the phrase עצי עולמים is a classic example of a *superlative*, used to indicate the tremendous dimensions of these unique trees (compare the phrase in Psalm 104:16, “The trees of the Lord (עצי ה') are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon which he planted,” in which the phrase עצי ה' serves as a superlative: i.e., very large, gigantic trees). But in addition there may also be here a connotation of trees that stand for ever. Similarly, כבוד עולם or פדות עולמים may refer to the greatness of the deliverance or glory described—i.e., the superlative meaning—but simultaneously the use may also indicate the duration of the deliverance, i.e., that it shall persist for ever. כלת עולם and שחת עולם may similarly refer to the dimension or intensity of the damnation or destruction in question—the deep pit into which they will fall: i.e., the superlative sense; or it may refer to their *history*, that is, that these are kept in God's hands from time immemorial or that they shall serve as eternal punishment to the evil-doers. And in the opposite direction, the phrase פדות עולמים may indicate a great redemption, or a redemption that will remain in force forever.

The same holds true for the expression מוקדי עולם (“eternal fire”): עולם (הרשעה, הזונה) באהלי דומה בתוך מוקדי עולם (“and [she, i.e., the wicked woman] camps in the tents of silence, in the midst of eternal fire”; 4Q184 1 7). It is clear that one is speaking here of a great, tremendous fire in which she will be consumed, and the author stresses in a contrasting formula: ואין נחלתה בתוך בכל מאזרי נוגה (“and her inheritance is not in the midst of all the shining lights”)—that is, the great light is for burning, destruction, and not a sign of divine light. (Compare the idiom מוקדי עולם as referring to God himself in Isaiah 33:13: “Who among us can dwell with the devouring fire? Who among us can dwell with everlasting burnings (מוקדי עולם)?”

It seems clear to me that some of the cases in which the words **עולם** or **עולמים** are used, including those already mentioned above, can only be interpreted in one way, which is the predominant one in their case, such as for example the physical-superlative meaning. Thus, for example, regarding **עולם צבא** (here translated, “eternal host”), as in **רוממו יחד בצבא עולם הבו גדול לאלנו וכבוד למלכנו** (“[e]xalt together with the eternal host, ascribe greatness to our God and glory to our King”: 4Q427 7 i 15), it may be that the entire sense of the usage is to indicate its great and extraordinary power. The same is true of the idiom **רום עולם** (*ibid.*), which is intended to indicate a great and tremendous height.

The term **עם עולמים** and its synonym, **עם עולם**, are concerned with the element of time—that is, their concern is to suggest the eternity of the people, or its great antiquity. And perhaps there was a way according to which, when the Qumran authors chose this idiom, they intended to express both directions of time simultaneously. Similarly, by the phrase **מטעת עולם** (“to be an everlasting plantation”; 1QS viii 5) as a term designating the people (or the community of the Yahad) and its status, the intent was to serve in the sense of time—that is, the eternal people or the ancient people.<sup>12</sup>

### 3. *עולם in Relation to God*

A considerable number of those cases in which **עולם** or **עולמים** appears as the *nomen rectum* in various idioms relate to God, some of which we have discussed above. We shall now mention several idioms using **עולם** that explicitly refer to the Godhead, beginning with **אל עולם**. As I have already noted,<sup>13</sup> **עולם** is not used in the Bible in the sense of place. Thus, Yehoshua Amir was mistaken, in my opinion,<sup>14</sup> when he interpreted the above idiom in Deutero-Isaiah in the sense of cosmos, as **עולם** is not used in the Bible in this sense. It is clear that, over the course of the history of the Hebrew language, this meaning did penetrate into the word **עולם** and it also acquired the sense of *place*. Indeed, in the Scrolls the idiom **אל עולם** is already used in this sense. Note, for example, **אל עולם אתה** (1QH xv 31).

Some of the phrases, concerning which we pondered whether they were superlative or whether they referred to elements of time, now need to be discussed anew, because in the final analysis they are

<sup>12</sup> See what Licht has written on this idiom in his book *Rule Scroll*, 174.

<sup>13</sup> Brin, “אלהי עולם ה”.

<sup>14</sup> Amir, “אלהי עולם ה” Brin, “אלהי עולם ה”, 286-287.



concerned with God. Indeed, the use of the term עולם is always appropriate in relation to God, be it in relation to his eternity or to his greatness. We may begin by noting such terms as גבורת עולם (1Q28b v 25: “everlasting fortitude”); צבא עולם (“eternal hosts”: 4Q427 7 i 13); עזר עולמים (1QM xvii 6: “everlasting aid”); מאור [עו]לם (1QH xv 25: “eternal light”); and טוב עולמים (1QS iv 3: “eternal goodness”).

Each of these phrases depicts a different aspect of Divine dominion. Thus גבורות עולמים is appropriate to describe His power and actions; similarly, צבא עולם. It is likewise appropriate that God, who in his great goodness helps his creatures, be referred to as עזר עולמים, “everlasting aid.” Hence the idiom טוב עולמים is also suitable. He also illuminates with his mercies the faces of all those who seek him and turn to him, so he may rightly be called מאור עולם. The term עולם thus serves to indicate eternity and greatness simultaneously. In this context one should also mention additional terms, which involve the description of God. Thus, in the system of planning times, we find גורל עולם and alongside that the phrase קצי עולם used for the same purpose, namely, God’s decisions in relation to one or another period. The nature of the Divine decision is also expressed in such a phrase as ומועדי תעודות עולמים (4Q491 8-10 i 11: “at the times indicated by your eternal edicts”). So too, in all the references to God’s creation, which is eternal and tremendous, we find an entire series of idioms incorporating the terms עולם or עולמים. Thus: הוי עולמים (CD ii 10: “those who exist over the centuries”); נהיי עולמים (1QM xvii 5); and its synonym, נהיות עולם (CD xiii 8: “the eternal events”; and cf. 4Q267 9 iv 5; we find here an exchange between עולם and עולמים, to which we have already referred in this chapter). Alongside this there appear two more interchangeable terms; נהיי and נהיות. It would appear that all three of these terms: נהיי, הוי, and נהיות, allude to one thing: the portrayal of the eternal creation (=עולם) as the creation of God. Again, it is possible that this idiom may refer to the great works of God’s hands, “the sun... the moon and the stars” (4Q392 1 4-7).

#### 4. *עולם as Place*

I shall now list some additional idioms in which the words עולם or עולמים appear in construct state referring to descriptions of place, objects, creation, or the like. Here we turn to a connotation of this word that does not exist in the Bible but is a development in later Hebrew—first of all in the corpus discussed here, the Dead Sea Scrolls.

The following are some of the phrases used in this context: בריחי

עולם (1QH xi 18); שערי עולם (1QH xiv 31); עולם (=אחזת) (1QS xi 7); רום עולם (1QH iii 19); מכון עולם (1QH xxi 14); גבהות עולם (CD i 15); מעמד עולמים (1QM xiii 16).

It is clear that, in order to express the same idea, the author could have spoken of עולם without using these various constructions. But when one isolates these phrases into various linguistic groups of “place” and the like, it nevertheless becomes clear that in the broad sense one needs to include also those that belong in one or another degree to the descriptions of God.

It is not impossible that in one form or another a change took place in the use of the word עולם, such that it began by being used to refer to a particular place, and only later acquired the significance of cosmos, as is accepted in post-biblical Hebrew. It is unclear to me whether this change had already taken place in the Scrolls, but it does seem that a movement in that direction had certainly already taken place there. This, in addition to those terms for place that we have just exemplified, such as those mentioned earlier, i.e., שערי עולם (1QH xiv 31), בריחי עולם (1QH xi 18), and even גבהות עולם (CD i 15). Is there not here also a non-superlative meaning? That is, that these do not refer to enormous gates or certain known gates, but to a certain cosmic view, according to which it is clear that one is speaking of the gates of the world and its bars. It is not impossible that terms from other areas as well, which are not explicit terms of place, such as מאור [עו]לם (1QH xv 25), may also belong here.

According to Ben-Yehudah,<sup>15</sup> Ben Sira already knew this usage, and it is also common, of course, in Rabbinic literature (compare the phrase ברוך שכוחו וגבורתו מלא עולם, “whose strength and might fill the *world*”: *m. Ber.* 9.2; and בעשרה מאמרות נברא העולם, “with ten sayings the *world* was created”; *m. Abot* 5.1). In light of this, it is clear that there is no problem regarding the use of עולם in a *cosmic* sense in the Scrolls.

The term שחת עולם appears in *Sapiential Document*, 4Q418 69 ii 5-6:<sup>16</sup>

5 [ומה] השקט ללא היה משפט ללוא נוסד ומה יאנחו מתים על כל יומ]ם<sup>17</sup>  
6 אתם [ ] ל נוצרתם ולשחת עולם תשובתכם כי תקיץ... [ ] חטאכמ]

5 [And what is] rest to who has not come into being? And what is righteousness to who has not been founded, and how should the dead groan over [their own death]

<sup>15</sup> Ben-Yehudah, s.v. עולם, *Dictionary*, IX: 4369-71.

<sup>16</sup> Strugnell, DJD XXXIV, 281-285. Part of the following translation is according to Stugnell, *ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Another reading is: על מ[ות]ם.

- 6 You[ ] were created [...], and your return will be to the eternal pit, for it (=the pit) shall awaken[...] your [s]in.

It appears that שחת עולם may also serve in the superlative sense, of tremendously large pits or holes<sup>18</sup> or, to be more exact, of a great abyss, or the like. On the other hand, there may be a nuance here reflecting a certain mythological view, involved in their understanding of the cosmos—that is, in the direction of the sense of *place*. According to this one is speaking of the pit, the abyss, of the world, i.e., as a euphemism for the grave—that is, the pit of the world, to which you shall be “returned” after your deaths. [See also Genesis 3:19 and Job 1:21.] Perhaps there is a development here of later biblical language (that appears in Ecclesiastes 12:5 “because man goes to his eternal home (אל עולמו בית, and the mourners go about the street”). Compare 4Q418 162 4: לכם כבוד; [ל]שחת עולם והיה [ל] (“[to] the eternal pit, and it shall be for you as glo[ry]”).<sup>19</sup>

This is clearly the meaning of the term עולם, i.e., as cosmos, in 1QH xiv 31: ולמרחב אין קץ ושערי עולם להוציא כלי מלחמות (“into an endless broad place, (He will open) the everlasting gates to take out weapons of war”).

A unique use of עולם is the following: [ 5. ברוך אלהים] חי אשר לכול העולמים היאה מלכותו אשר הוא [מכה] (6) [והוא]ה מרחם מוריד עד שאולה [ם] 4Q200 6 5-6),<sup>20</sup> which corresponds to the short and long version of Tobit 13:2. The phrase כול העולמים may refer to the world as a whole, to the cosmos and to “all its hosts,” and thus may relate to a significance that is considerably developed among the Sages, regarding two worlds: this world and the next. By this, I do not mean to say that it is the same view, but it is definitely possible that there is more here than merely description of the world-cosmos.

Here I wish to take note of another idiom: ידעי עולמים (“those who know eternal things”; *Blessings* 4Q286 7 i 6), and it is worth noting the context in which it appears: והנשא מלכותכה בתוך עולמי עד סוד אלי טוהר עם כול ידעי עולמים [ולברך]ך להל[ל] את שם כבודכה בכול [קצי עו]ל[מים] אמן [and to ble]ss your glorious name for all [et]er[nal ages.] Amen. Amen”:

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 283.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 385-386, there were presented two interpretations of the idiom שחת עולם: 1) pits; 2) destruction and ruin.

<sup>20</sup> See Fitzmyer apud Broshi, DJD XIX, 70-72. See also above, chapter 17.

ibid., 5-7). We find here the term ידעים, “those who know,” that reappears in other contexts (ועם ידעים ביחד רנה), “and with those who know in a community of jubilation”: 1QH xix 14; and cf. 1Q28a i 28), which evidently refers to those sages who know the secrets of the world. That is, they study the nature of the world and its order. It seems clear to me that עולמים is used here in the sense of the *cosmos* and its order in the broadest possible sense, and that this combination does not involve an element of time, or of any related matter.

To conclude this chapter, I shall exemplify the way in which the term עולם is used in the literature of the sect; as stated earlier, this is one of the basic terms used by them to express their beliefs and principles. This finds expression in the abundance of its uses throughout the writings of the Yahad Community. It is manifested, first of all, in the simple quantitative sense. Thus, for example, in the *Community Rule* there is hardly a single column in which the term עולם (or עולמים) does not appear in various idioms and combinations. In column ii, for example, מעולם עד עולם, בעלי ברית לעולם, בדעת עולמים, אש עולמים, לשלום עולמים, ארורי עולמים, עצת עולמים, כלת עולמים, and the same holds more or less throughout the length of this scroll, and is also true for other Qumran works.

At times, the abundance of use reaches such a high level of quantity and ubiquity that עולם serves as a kind of “leitmotif.” Thus, in 4Q427 7 i:

15 [ו]וממו יחד בצבא עולם הבו גדול לאלנו וכבוד למלכנו  
 17 [בכ]ול קצים השמיעו הגידנה הביעו בשמחות עולמים ואי  
 20 ..... ולהשפיל נועדות רום גאים עולם

- 15 [c]xalt together with the eternal host ascribe greatness to our God and Glory to our King  
 17 [in a]ll periods, cause the sound of the shout to be heard, rejoice with everlasting happiness and un-  
 20 .....and lowering the exalted meetings of the eternally proud

Another example is provided by 4Q418 (4QInstruction) 69 ii:

6 אתם [ ] אל נוצרתם ולשחת עולם תשובתכם כי תקיץ... [ ] חטאכמה  
 7 וכול נהיה עולם דורשי אמת יעורו למשפטכם  
 12 ולא עוף בכל [נ]שני עולם הלוא באמת ישעשע לעד  
 13 שמים אשר חיים עולם נחלתם  
 14 כול קצים הלוא באור עולם יתהלכו

- 6 You[ ] were created [...], and your return will be to the eternal pit, for it (=the pit) shall awaken[...] your [s]in.

- 7 and all who exist for ever, who seek the truth will arise to judge  
 y[ou]  
 12 and does not tire in all years of eternity; does he not take delight in  
 truth forever  
 13 heaven whose inheritance is eternal life  
 14 in all times. Do [t]he[y] not wal[k] in eternal light?

Finally, in *Thanksgiving Scroll* (1QH vi 14-15):

- [...ויהיו שריכה בגור[ל עולם...]] ... 14  
 .... פרח כצי[ן] השדה ע[ד] עולם לג'ל נצר לעיפי מטעת עולם... 15
- 14 ... ..and they will be your princes in the \*[eternal] lo[t  
 15 will sprout like a flo[wer of the field f]or ever, to make a shoot grow  
 in branches of the everlasting plantation... ..
- \* my translation.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

### THE TERM עת IN THE SCROLLS

#### 1. *The Term עת as a Term for Time in the Scrolls*

The term עת is one used in the Bible explicitly to refer to time, as I have already discussed extensively in the set of chapters grouped under the heading “Terms Used to Indicate Time in the Bible” (Chapter 1: note there in detail on the formula incorporating עת, such as ויהי בעת ההיא and others), as well as in the chapters on duration of time in the Bible and elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

The term עת appears nearly three hundred times in the Bible, and is thus one of the basic terms used for describing time. It has numerous uses: for example, to indicate time in the generic sense, where it is used as a *nomen regens* in the construct state: thus בעת יחם הצאן (“in the mating season of the flock”; Gen 31:10); בעת קציר (“in time of harvest”; Jer

---

<sup>1</sup> On עת, see Kronholm, s.v. עת, esp. col. 482. Marsh, *The Fulness of Time*, notes that עת is the most comprehensive term for time, in which time is perceived, not in a chronological manner, but according to events. Cf. idem., s. v. “Time, Season”; and cf. Kronholm, op. cit., on various idioms connected to עת, and on the use of עת to divide time into small or large units. In Ben Sira and in the Scrolls the meaning of the term is as in the Bible, albeit in the Scrolls there is the added idea that God fixed the times. According to Pedersen, *Israel*, III-IV: 187-188, time is the substance, the development of all events. The verse in Eccles 3:1, “a time (עת) for every matter under heaven,” implies that each activity has its own time and essence. There is also a connection between nature and destiny.

Wilch, *Time and Event*, 30, emphasizes that, as opposed to יום, the term עת refers to a time that had been fixed and decided upon. Thus also ibid., 31, regarding the term מועד. He also states (ibid., 45), that עת serves as a marker for a *particular event*, as opposed to כל ימי, that serves to describe continuity of time. One should add, in terms of the relationship among the terms, that according to Wilch, ibid., 52, עת (and יום and אז) are markers of historical time. As opposed to the other two, עת is not used in ancient poetic texts.

According to Wilch, 46, the word עת as used in Est 4:14 is a singular usage, referring not to a point but to a duration of time—three days. Cf. ibid., 115, on עת in the sense of death. He also thinks, ibid., 102, that עת refers only to events in the past. It follows from this that, in his opinion, ibid., 105, the use of the term עת to refer to the future, to the final destiny, is a much later usage than its predecessor, used primarily in prophecy. Even though the principle use of עת is in reference to the group, to the people, there are cases where it is also used with regard to the time of the individual (ibid., 33). On the theological meaning of the term עת, see ibid., 171. He points out that עת is used in the Scrolls (9 times), to serve to indicate a unique or specific point in time (ibid., 147).

50:16). It may also be used in conjunction with an adjective as an accepted idiom for such uses; thus, for example, בעת רעה (Jer 15:11); בעת ההיא (Jer 33:15). In order to express the concept of תמיד, constancy, the term בכל עת (Exod 18:22) is used. In fixing the time of a given activity, such as the rainy season, we find the form בעתו (Deut 11:14) or בעתם (Lev 26:4). Compare also “a word in season (דבר בעתו), how good it is!” (Prov 15:23), which takes as its point of departure the logical connection or the result of a divine decision drawing a connection between a given activity or subject and its times.

A particularly interesting text appears in Isa 60:22, in which there is found the divine word in connection with the subject of redemption: אני ה' בעתה אחישנה (“I am the Lord; in its time I will hasten it”), that contains, on the one hand, the realization of the redemption בעתה, in its exact preordained time, and on the other hand the notion of speed, of hastening the matter: אחישנה. Or the simple sense of the thing may be that, behold, the time of redemption is approaching, so that, in terms of the subjective perception of his listeners, it was as if God had decided to advance the redemption for the good of his people. This is no more than a psychological consideration. Compare the Rabbinic midrash on this verse: “Said Rabbi Alexandri... It is written ‘in its time,’ and it is written: I shall hasten it. If they merited—I shall hasten it. If they did not—[I shall bring it] in its time (*b. Sanhedrin* 98a).

The term עת also serves as one of the principle terms used in the Scrolls to refer to time; even though it is a biblical term, it is, like many other terms, also used extensively in the Scrolls. The following are the principle uses of עת in the material in question.

The connection between עת and various parallel terms is felt strongly in 1QS i 13-15. In the instructions given there to members of the sect, it states there regarding the pious man that: לוא לצעוד בכול אחד מכול לוא לקדם עתיהם ולוא להתאחר מכול מועדיהם (“They shall not stray from any one of all God’s orders concerning their appointed times; they shall not advance their appointed times nor shall they retard any one of their feasts”), etc.<sup>2</sup> According to the opinion of the author of these instructions in the *Community Rule*, all things need to take place, to be fulfilled, at the proper time fixed by God. In order to depict the proper “times” of the various activities performed in their proper times and seasons, the author makes use of the terms קץ, עת, and מועד. The passage has a certain poetic feel, in that it repeats the

<sup>2</sup> Licht, *Rule Scroll*, 62. See the discussion of this point above, in Chapter 17, “God and Time,” and the bibliography mentioned there.

idea three times. Common to all of these is the idea that God fixes for every thing its proper times, and therefore “thou shall not stray from it”—that is, to advance it or delay it. In its use of the term קָץ, the wording לַצֵּעוֹד בְּכוֹל אֶחָד מִכוֹל דְּבָרֵי אֵל בְּקִצֵּיהֶם is formulated in an unusual manner, such that a superficial reading of the idiom might be interpreted, unlike the intention of the author, as referring to a deviation from the path that had been fixed by God. Hence the other words מוֹעֵד—and—עַת appear as well, to explain the conceptual context: that “they shall not advance their appointed times nor retard any one of their feasts.” That is, it is forbidden to change the period of their execution, but one must carry that which has been fixed in its proper season. Turning to the third term, that which is discussed in this chapter, עַת: וְלֹא לִקְדָּם עֲתֵיהֶם:—“they shall not advance their appointed times.” It would seem that there is no substantive difference between this instruction and the prohibition against delaying it. The only difference lies in the direction of the deviation: that is, the prohibition against performing the thing other than in the proper time that was fixed for it in advance: that is, not to advance it (and not only not to delay it).

I stated above that these things tend towards poetry, because the same idea is repeated three times without explanation. I do not attach any significance to the fact that, in the case of מוֹעֵד the verb אָחַז”ר was used, that regarding עַת it refers to קָד”מ, while regarding קָץ it speaks of צֵע”ד. The poet varied his words in the course of repeating the idea, so that, while he repeats the idea, each of the components of the text also contributes in a cumulative way to the idea in question. Thus, the basic idea was already formulated in the opening—“They shall not stray from any one of all God’s orders concerning their appointed times”—and thereafter the prohibition is formulated exactly by citing the prohibition against advancing or delaying the activities that were fixed, each one in its proper time and place.

On the other hand, I do not think one may infer from this that the three terms used here in parallelism—מוֹעֵד, קָץ, and עַת—are completely synonymous to the point of identity, but it is questionable as to whether we may succeed in identifying the exact meaning of each one of them. Concerning the above passage from the *Community Rule* and the parallels to this idea, see also the discussion above in the chapter on “The Term מוֹעֵד in the Scrolls” (Ch. 19).

Another example of a text containing a system of compound terminology of this type appears in 4Q215a 1 ii 3-6.

Analysis of this text indicates that we have here a series of terms



relating to time: עת הצדק (“the time of justice”); קץ הרשע (“the age of wickedness”); קץ השלום (“the age of peace”). It seems clear to me that in each of these three phrases the tendency is to provide synonyms. Hence, both עת and קץ serve as landmarks for periods (in a manner such that the character of the age is particularly fixed by the *nomen rectum* in the construct state: in this case הצדק, הרשע, and השלום). Again, I do not intend to argue here that קץ and עת (or מועד) are completely identical terms, but that is not the issue at present.

In any event, apart from the identity of the terms used as *nomen regens*, one ought to take note of an additional overlap between the two, a result of the fact that both appear in a clear parallel regarding the nature of the period that is approaching: באה עת הצדק || בא קץ השלום (the time of justice has arrived || the age of peace has arrived). Likewise in terms of the *contrasting* parallelism between these usages, in relation to the expression כי שלם קץ הרשע, the picture is quite clear.

According to 4Q215a, God behaves mercifully, and the time has come for a turn in events. The age of wickedness is “complete” (on the idiom קץ של”מ קץ see above, Ch. 20, on the term קץ), and as a side effect of this evil will withdraw and completely disappear. It follows that God has determined, not only the existence of the periods as such, that is, the times and ages (קצים, עתים), but that he has also determined the nature of each one (peace, war, etc.), and thereby their extent and “location” in the “historical” system of that period. Hence, the turnabout is expected soon: the age of wickedness shall be completed, evil will pass away, and the age shall be changed qualitatively into an age of justice and peace. The duration of the latter is formulated as עד עולמי עד (“for eternal centuries”). Will there indeed no longer be any change in the ages of the world because of the persistence of the new age for ever? It seems that in our case the age of peace refers to the eschatological age that will continue for ever, to eternity.

Just as the “age of wickedness” is characterized by the evil that dominates it, which shall now finally pass from the world, so too is the new age, the age of justice (and of peace), symbolized by the fact that “the earth is filled with knowledge.” The author is clearly repeating here the words of Isaiah 11:9: “for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea” (and cf. Hab 2:14). Thus, the characteristic of the age of justice is that “knowledge of the Lord” shall rule the earth. Compare also the words of Hosea: “there is no faithfulness or kindness, and no knowledge of God in the land” (Hos 4:1). One may therefore say that, to use the terms of the Scrolls (and of

the Apocrypha), Hosea is speaking of “the age of wickedness,” in which there is neither truth nor knowledge of God. However, when, according to the Scrolls, the “age of righteousness,” which is also “the age of peace,” shall come, the land shall be filled with knowledge (of the Lord), and this will be a period of eternal peace (עד עולמי עד; “for eternal centuries”). An end will thereby come to the changes of the times, and people will no longer say that such and such a time has been completed. The coming age of justice and peace will therefore be the final age in the history of mankind.

In terms of the proximity or similarity among the various terms for time, it is interesting to note the following idiom: מועדי עתיה, which appears in the phrase כולל מועדי עתיה (“[... all] the periods of her times” in the *Purification Liturgy*, 4Q284 3 1). It seems to me that, despite the existence of a seemingly double formula of time in these words, these phrases need not be interpreted as a true duplication, because we find that in this case the expression מועדי does not function as a term for a specific time—festivals or holy days, for example—but as a general term for time. Hence, the meaning of the term מועדי עתיה is “the time(s) (מועדי) that have been fixed for their periods (עתיה).”

Another encounter between different terms for time appears in the phrase עד עת קץ. Thus in 4Q372 1 15: אכלים את כחו ושברים את כל: עד עת קץ. (“who consumed his strength and broke all his bones up to the time of his end”).<sup>3</sup> There are two possible interpretations of this sentence: 1) that of division into periods; 2) in the sense of the “end” and the like—that is, until the end, the death of the one who was beaten (Joseph?). The latter interpretation seems to me more appropriate to the context of the document in question.<sup>4</sup>

A close connection between עת and other terms for time appears in the *Thanksgiving Scroll*: בכול מולדי עת יסודי קץ ותקופת מועדים בתכונם (“at all the births of time, the foundations of the period, and the course of seasons in their order”; 1QH xx 7-8). The author wishes to praise God at all the important seasons.<sup>5</sup> In terms of the terminology, עת appears here in connection with the מולד, the “birth” or time of appearance of the new moon. There is thus a connection between the *times* (עתים), which refer here to the sanctified occasions, and the appearance of the new moon. The terms for time used here are מולדי עת (“the births of

<sup>3</sup> Schuller, “A Text About Joseph,” 352. On this text see above, chapter 20.

<sup>4</sup> Schuller, *ibid.*, 362. In her opinion, the meaning of the idiom is not “end,” but is similar to the idiom in Daniel, עד עת ישועה, “until the time of salvation.” On קץ עת, see Dan 8:17; 11:35, 40.

<sup>5</sup> Licht, *Thanksgiving Scroll*, 173-174.

time”) and יסודי קץ (“foundations of the period”). The terms עת and קץ thus appear in almost synonymous parallelism. The order of periods parallel to the birth times are thus תקופת מועדים בתכונם (“the course of seasons in their orders”). We thus find, on the one hand, exact words for defining time, such as: קץ, עת, and מועד (as in the texts given above) and, on the other, words that are combined with these. In our case, these appear as *nomen regens* to the *nomen rectum*, while elsewhere they serve as *nomen regens* that determine the direction of the nature of the events, such as: מולדי (עת), יסודי (קץ), or תקופת (מועדים). To the latter idiom one must add the phrase בתכונם which may belong, in practice, to each one of the three phrases, and not only to the latter (it should be emphasized that 1QH xx includes a large collection of times).

The idioms mentioned in the above document (1QH xx 7-8), such as מולדי עת, are evidently directed towards determining the period and time, while יסודי הקץ (“the foundations of the period”) refers to the foundations of the unit of time, whereas the idiom ותקופת מועדים בתכונם alludes to the appointed times, the ages, “in their orders,” i.e., as has been fixed.<sup>6</sup>

Concerning the term בתכנם, compare 1QS viii 4, ובתכון העת (“and the regulation of the time”), that is, when the time (occasion) referred to shall take place, or the period with its order and nature that have been fixed for it.<sup>7</sup>

A similar phrase appears in *Pesher Habakkuk*: כי כול ק<י>צי אל יבואו לתכונם כאשר חקק להם ברזי ערמתו (1QpHab vii 12-14). This time the phrase תוכן appears in conjunction with קץ, thereby proving the correctness of the second interpretation mentioned above, namely, that the term בתכנם in 1QH xx 8 refers to all three terms, and not only to the third (ותקופת מועדים) after which it appears. In the above passage from *Pesher Habakkuk*, the author informs us that all the ages of God will occur as planned by him: both in terms of the exact time of appearance of the קצים (or the עתים, as in 1QS viii 4), and in terms of the contents and nature of each one of these periods.

Similar idioms appear also in 1QS ix 18: איש כרוחו כתכון העת להנחותם בדעה וכן להשכילם ברזי פלא ואמת (“each one according to his spirit,

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 173.

<sup>7</sup> Licht, *Rule Scroll*, 179: when the measure of time, predetermined by the Divine fiat, shall be full. See the discussion in Licht, *ibid.*, 191. Licht deals there with the main opening of the section: תכון עת ועת ולמשקל איש ואיש (“These are the regulations for the Inspector by which he shall walk with every living being in compliance with the regulation of every period and in compliance with the worth of each man”; ix 12) In his words: “each time has its own laws of behavior.”

according to the regulation of the time. He should lead them with knowledge and in this way teach them the mysteries of wonder and of truth”); see the parallels in 4Q256 3 i 1, and cf. 4Q259 1 iii 16-19. What is stated here concerns the divine decision regarding the nature and character of time regarding the destiny of the individual: “according to his spirit, according to the regulation of the time.”

Another phrase indicating the connection between the two time-related terms **עת** and **קץ** may be seen in the phrase in Serek *ha-Milhamah* (4Q285 3 2): **עד [עת קץ ל]ו** (“until] the time of the age to[“) but, unlike the passage about Joseph (see above), here **קץ** serves in the sense of time generally. The sense of the expression is: until there arrives the time of the specific age. It follows that **עת** is used in the Scrolls in a double sense: on the one hand, as a term for an age, a unit of time or the like, and on the other as an indicator of time in general, which can only be defined more exactly in conjunction with a *nomen rectum* or an adjective (see Chapter 19 above, on the term **מועד**, where I pointed out the dual use of that term). Only one of them—the general designation of time—is identical to that of **עת**.

In the *Damascus Document* there appears a double usage pertaining to the complex of **עת**. The opening, which refers to the *Book of the division of the times* (**ספר מחלקות העתים**; CD xvi 3), is a general term, concerned with the “book” dividing time into various ages and periods.<sup>8</sup> It is sufficient to state here that **עת** functions here in the same fashion as the phrase **עד עת קץ**, that is, in the general sense of time. Further on in this same text, in line 4, we read **ליובליהם בשבועותיהם** (“according to their jubilees and their weeks”), implying that in “the Book of the division of times” there are recorded all of the times, classified according to their subdivisions. Two of them are mentioned explicitly: jubilees and weeks (i.e., of years). This formula also appears in 4Q228 1 i 2-10 (take special note of lines 2, 4, 7, 9, and 10).<sup>9</sup>

- 2 [אות]ם [במחל]ק[ו]ת העתים  
 3 [ליובליהם ובשבועותיהם ואגיד]ה לכמה אשר תדעו  
 4 ואספ[ר] לפנו מחלקת עתו וכל  
 5 מע[ן] [בה במשפט עתי עולה  
 6 אש בוערת אוכלת בסוד רשעה  
 7 במחלקת עתה ימצאנה  
 8 [מקשי שחת ומלאך שלומו

<sup>8</sup> VanderKam-Milik, DJD XIII, 181.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 178-179. On this text see above, in chapter 17.

9 ח'י נצח כי כן כתוב<sup>10</sup> במחלקת  
10 [העתים]

Another idiom relating to the divisions of times appears in 4Q216 i 11-12: [ואת אשר יבוא הגיד לו את מ]חלקות [ה]עתים לתור[ה] ולתעודה: (“... And he showed him the di]visions [of the per]iods for the La[w] [and for the testimony]”). On this matter, compare the wording used in *Jubilees* 1:26: “in all the divisions of the days which are in the law and the testimony, and in their weeks of years and jubilees for ever.” It would seem that we have here a secondary classification of the division of times (which is, as mentioned, a general expression of the periods of the times), based upon their *contents*: law and testimony, rather than according to other kinds of divisions of time into its periods. VanderKam-Milik refer to<sup>11</sup> the passage mentioning “Law” and “testimony” in Isaiah 8:16, 20. Here, the phrase refers to Divine reliability regarding the classification into periods (cf. Ch. 17, “God and Time”); or it refers to the characteristics of these times, such as involvement in Torah or realization of what is stated therein regarding certain subjects.

VanderKam thinks, as mentioned,<sup>12</sup> that the *Book of the division of times* refers to *Jubilees*; see *Jub.* 1:4 and 6:34.<sup>13</sup> CD xvi 3-4 likewise designates *Jubilees* by the same term, in connection with the covenant: “Behold, it is defined in The book of the divisions of the periods according to their jubilees and their weeks.”

In the *Community Rule*, we find the statement by the sage: אחלקה חוק בקו עתים (“I shall share out the regulation with the cord of the ages”; 1QS x 25-26).<sup>14</sup> The idea here is that the sage learned the regulation or statute according to the measure fixed for each and every time. Since God has fixed the appropriate boundaries and contents of each age, *ipso facto* the laws governing each age are different and made to suit each different time. Therefore, Licht offers the interpretation,<sup>15</sup> regarding the basic idea of meticulousness as to times and ages, that the author declares that he will carry out each of the seasons at their proper time; similarly, he will teach the statutes according to their fixed measure for each and every time. Similar to this is the idea expressed in the state-

<sup>10</sup> See VanderKam-Milik, *ibid.*, 182-183: כי כן כתוב (“for thus is it written”)—as the formula of quotation from a binding source.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> DJD XIX, 145.

<sup>14</sup> Licht, *Rule Scroll*, 222.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 40, and cf. *ibid.*, 62.

ment discussed earlier: “they shall not advance their appointed times nor shall they retard any one of their feasts” (see the discussion above, and in greater detail in Chapter 19, “The Term מועד in the Scrolls”).

A central text concerning the fixing of the times and the obligation to fulfill that which is stated regarding them is, in my opinion, 4Q418 103 ii 4-5.<sup>16</sup>

4 יְשׁוּה עַת בַּעַת דּוֹרְשָׁם

5 כִּי כֹלָם יִדְרְשׁוּ לַעֲתָם וְאִישׁ כְּפִי הַפְּצֹן

4 he places from time to time, seek them...

5 for all of them seek according to their time, and everyone according to [his] desire.

It would seem that that which is stated concerning the divisions of the times—namely, the classification of the various ages and that which is decreed upon human beings in each of them, and even, as stated above, the belief in the existence of a *Book of the divisions of the periods*—brought about a situation in which people in various periods expounded the subject of the times; that is, they discussed the “divisions of the periods.” “For all of them seek according to their time”: that is, they search them out in order to see what is stated therein regarding their destiny, what is commanded them, and the like. In this connection, I interpret the phrase בַּעַת דּוֹרְשָׁם as referring to the time of the seeking, or the seeking out of the *subject or matter of time*.

Another relationship among terms relating to time follows, in my opinion, from the idiom הַעֲתָ בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים, that is clearly a substitute for אַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים. In *Miqsat Ma'aseh haTorah*, we read: בְּשֵׁל שֶׁתִּשְׂמַח בְּאַחֲרִית הַעֲתָ בְּמִצָּאךָ דְּבָרֵינוּ כֵּן (‘‘so that at the end of time, you may rejoice in finding that some of our words are true’’; 4Q398 14-17 ii 6).

Similar things that are said in the *Sapiential Text*, 4Q423 5 5-7:<sup>17</sup>

5 [אִם אַתָּה אִישׁ אֲדָמָה פְּקוּד מוֹעֲדֵי הַקִּיץ וְאֶסּוּף תְּבוֹאֲתָכָה בַּעֲתָהּ וְתִקּוּפָהּ

6 [הַקִּצִּיר לְמוֹעֲדוֹ] הַתְּבוֹנוֹן בְּכֹל תְּבוֹאֲתָכָה וּבַעֲבוּדָתָכָה הַשֶּׁכַּל בְּכֹל הַטּוֹב עִם הָרַע

7 [אִישׁ שֶׁכֵּל אֶת בַּעַל אוֹלַת הַ] [ל] [שִׁים כֵּן אִישׁ]<sup>18</sup>

Statements of this kind continue in the spirit of such biblical expressions as “to give them their food in due season (בַּעֲתוֹ)” (Ps 104:27) or “the rain for your land in its season (מֵטֶר אֶרְצְכֶם בַּעֲתוֹ), the early rain and the

<sup>16</sup> Strugnell. DJD XXXIV, 329.

<sup>17</sup> Elgvin, apud Strugnell, DJD XXXIV, 518.

<sup>18</sup> As for the English translation of this text, see above in chapter 19. See also there the discussion on the issue of מוֹעֲדֵי הַקִּיץ.

later rain” (Deut 11:14), and the like. However, it seems to me that these expressions, as used in the Scrolls, *also* have a connotation related to the perception of the times, ages and seasons. That is, just as the term עת implies limitations of time, content and nature, within this framework is also included the gathering of grain produce and the like.

Compare this to what is said in *Serek hamilhamah* (4Q285 1 4-5):

- 4 [להוריד גשמי]  
5 [ברכה טל ו]מטר יו[ר]ה ומלקו[ש] בעתו ולתת [לכם פרי תנובות דגן]
- 4 [to cause to fall down showers of  
5 [blessing, dew and] rain, ea[r]ly and lat[e] rains in their season, and to give [you fruit, the harvests of wheat]

The following statement in the *Community Rule* gives us another perspective on the perception of time: הנמצא לפי העתים ואת חוק העת להבדיל ולשקול בני הצדוק (/הצדק) לפי רוחם (/ר[ו]חמה) ובבחירי העת (חוק העת) “that has been gained according to the periods and the decree of the period; he should separate and weigh the sons of Zadok [or: righteousness] *Blank* according to their spirits; he should keep hold of the chosen ones of the period according to his will”; 1QS ix 13-15; the alternative readings cited are based on 4Q259 1 iii 10). According to this, there are “the decree of the period” (חוק העת) and “the chosen ones of the period” (בחירי העת); that is, God decides the compass of the period, its character and contents—this is evidently the meaning of the term חוק העת—so that ipso facto all events and situations are predetermined. Similarly the nature of society and of its “chosen ones” are also the result of the Divine decree regarding a particular period. The nature of these chosen ones, what is incumbent upon them, and whether they are able to exert influence upon the time—all this is not stated here.

This type of “chosen ones” is mentioned in connection with their appointment as judges:<sup>19</sup> וזה סרך לשופטי העדה [עד] עשרה אנשים ברורי[ם] מן העדה לפי העת (And this is the rule of the judges of the congregation. Ten men in number, chosen [from among the con]gregation, for a period”; 4Q270 6 iv 15-16). We see a connection between the phrase בחירי העת (above, on 1QS ix 13-15) and ברורים, both of which refer to the consequence of the divine choice of them, through a process of selection from others. In the nounal terminology, בחירי העת, the *nomen regens* determines that they are the choicest ones, the selected men of

<sup>19</sup> Baumgarten, DJD XVIII, 159.

that period; compare also 4Q270 iv 16; 4Q266 8 iii 4.<sup>20</sup>

Baumgarten connects the choice of the judges with their seniority, or the limitations of their term of office, or perhaps to an advanced approach to the matters of law with which they are involved, as alluded to in 20-21: *ואלה החקים למשכיל להתהלך בהם עם כל חי למשפט עת ועת* (“And these are the ordinances for the Instructor, so that he walks in them with every living thing, according to the regulation for every time”).

## 2. *x עת, ההיא, העת, היא העת, and Similar Terms*

As in other expressions pertaining to time, the term *עת* may also be combined with a *nomen regens* or *nomen rectum* that defines it, while the meanings of the definition, as in the case of *מועד*, *קץ*, *יום*, and others, may be determined on the basis of a noun (i.e., *עת*) and an adjective.

Let us now examine several of these idioms and see the nature of the definition of time on the basis of this classification.

The phrase *ובעת חום יעצור מעין* (“and in the time of heat it retains its vitality” (another reading is *מעוץ* instead of *מעין*), or: “its spring”; 1QH xvi 23-24), alludes to the warm and dry part of the year, the summertime. In two adjacent passages in the *War Scroll* we find the phrase *והיא עת* (*והיא* [היא] *עת* “And th[is] is a time of salvation for the nation of God”; 1QM i 5), referring to a description that appears there (cf. the parallel in 4Q496 i 3 4).<sup>21</sup> A few lines later, the opposite picture is given: *והיא עת* (“It will be a time of suffering fo[r all] the nations redeemed by God”; *ibid.* 11-12; and note the context there).

The definition of the time as one of suffering also appears in *ibid.*, xv 1: *כי היא עת צרה לישראל* (“for this will be a time of suffering for Isra[el]”; compare to i 5, discussed above, and to i 10: *כיא הואה יום יעוד*; “for this will be a day determined by him since ancient times for the war of extermination”). There is thus a connection between *עת מלחמה/עת צרה* and the term *מועד מלחמה*, and compare the chapters on the terms *קץ*, *מועד*, *יום*, etc., for the relations among the various terms used to refer to time.

In 4Q460 1 11 we read *כי עת צרה* (“... for the time of distr[ess...]”).

<sup>20</sup> Baumgarten, *ibid.*, 66-67. He presents the question as to whether *לפי העת* indicates that their offices are limited to a certain time period, or whether one is speaking of their seniority at a certain time; or whether perhaps the term refers to their degree of understanding of the law. In his opinion, CD xiii 21, *ולמשפט עת ועת*, may be seen as a kind of parallel to what is discussed here.

<sup>21</sup> Baillet, 58.



In *4QBeatitudes* there appears: ולוא יטושנה בעוני מצר[יו/פיו] ובעת צוקה: פחד (and does not forsake her in the hardship of [his] wrong[s,] and in the time of anguish does not abandon her, and does not forget her [in the days of] terror"; 4Q525 2 ii+3 5).<sup>22</sup> Note that the term עת צוקה (time of anguish) finds here a parallel in the term יום פחד (day of terror).

Another phrase is תתברך בעת מוטך תמצא מ[שען] ("you will congratulate yourself. At the time of your staggering you will find [...]; ibid. 14 ii 7).<sup>23</sup> Thus far, the nature of the time period has been referred to in a general way as פחד, צוקה, צרה, and the like; in this last text, the definition is personal: בעת מוטך, that is, when *you* stagger, or are close to it, then such and such a thing will happen.

But generally speaking the term עת is used for a positive subject: עת צדק (or שלום, and the like), while קץ is more multi-faceted, its nature being determined by the *nomen rectum* in conjunction with which it is used (see above, Chapter 20, on the term קץ). Nevertheless, there are also idioms in which עת is used bearing a negative connotation, such as we have seen above—עת צרה and the like.

Such is the case of עת המצרף (which is parallel to ימי מצרפותיו, and see Chapter 25 on the term יום in the Scrolls). This term is concerned with the subject of the divine "smelting" or refining, that is, the period of punishment and testing in order to uncover all the evildoers and their punishment.

In *4QFlorilegium*, in the course of elucidating certain verses in Daniel, we read: היאה עת המצרף ה[באה] י[הודה] להתם (It is the time of trial which co[m]mes ... Judah to complete"; 4Q174 1-3 ii 1). And in 4Q177 5-6 2-3:<sup>24</sup>

2 הנ[ביא] אכול השנה שפ[יח] פשר הדב[ר] השפיה הו[א]ה  
3 [ רה עד עת המצרף הבאה ו] אחרי כן יעמוד

- 2 the pro]phet: [*Isa 37:30*] "This year what gro[ws of itself] will be eaten, [and the following year the self-seeded yield." *Blank* and what it sa]ys: "what grows of itself," i[s]  
3 [...]... until the period of the tri[al which comes upon ...] After this [...]will arise

And in *Psalms Peshet* (4Q171 ii), it states:<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Puech, DJD XXV, 122-125.

<sup>23</sup> Puech, *ibid.*, 145-149. He notes the parallels in Deut 32:35; Ben Sira 3:31, ובעת, מוטו ימצא משען.

<sup>24</sup> Allegro, DJD V, 68-69.

<sup>25</sup> Allegro, 43-44.

לשלוה יד 17  
 בכוהן ובאנשי עצתו בעת המצרף הבאה עליהם ואל יפדם 18  
 מידם 19

17 to lay hands

18 on the priest and the members of his council in the period of testing which will come upon to them. However, God will save them

19 from their hands

Similarly, the idiom **עת רעב** (“the time of hunger”) appears in 4Q172 1 2.<sup>26</sup>

Another idiom that is not distant from this is **עת פקודת הארץ** in 4Q162 ii 1-2.<sup>27</sup>

... .. 1  
 בעת פקודת הארץ הוי משכימי בבקר 2

1 ... ..this will happen

2 at the time of the visitation of the land. Woe to those who rise early...

The term **עת ענות** appears in 4Q177 12+13 i 8:<sup>28</sup> **ולפור[ם] בארץ ציה** (“to scatter [them] in a dry and bleak land. This is the period of distress”).

In addition to those cases in which the meaning of the term is defined through the use of the construct state and the like, there is another group of passages in which the nature of the **עת** referred to is done by means of an identifying sentence: **היא העת אשר** (“this is the time that...”), and the like. I shall demonstrate several examples of this type:

In the *Community Rule*, we read: **היאה עת פנות הדרך (20) למדבר** (19) **ולפזר[ם] בארץ ציה** (“(19) This is the time for making ready the path (20) to the desert and he will teach them about all that has been discovered so that they can carry it out in this moment”; 1QS ix 19-20);<sup>29</sup> and immediately preceding it: **דרכ איש כרוחו כתכון העת**: **להנחותם** (ibid. 18). Thus, if we identify these two uses of **עת** in lines 18 and 19 with one another, in that of line 18 there appears a broad and extensive definition, while in line 19 the definition is referring to that of 18. Compare also 4Q258 3 iii 2-4, and 4Q259 1 iii 19.

Another formulation based upon identifying phrases appears in the *Damascus Document*: **היא העת אשר היה כתוב עליה כפרה סורירה** (“This is the time about which it has been written: ‘Like a stray heifer...’ [Hos

<sup>26</sup> Allegro, 50, and the references there to parallels.

<sup>27</sup> Allegro, 15-16.

<sup>28</sup> Allegro, 71-72.

<sup>29</sup> Licht, *Rule Scroll*, 197, on the idiom **בעת הזואת**.

4:16]”; CD i 13). Presumably, this identifying phrase refers to what goes immediately before: את אשר עשה בדור אחרון בעדת בוגדים הם סרי מדרך (“what he had done for the last generation, the congregation of traitors. These are the ones who strayed from the path”; *ibid.*, 12-13). And see also 4Q174 4 3-4:

3 [ היאה העת אשר יפתח בליעל  
4 ע]ל בית יהודה קשות לשוטמם

- 3 [...] This (refers) to the time when Belial will open  
4 [...]up] on the house of Judah difficulties to persecute them.

A variant of the above is בעת אשר כ[ל]ה יש[וע] לה[לל]. Thus, בעת אשר כ[ל]ה יש[וע] לה[לל] (“At the moment when Josh[ua] fi[nis]hed pra[ising and giving] thanks”; 4Q379 22 ii 7).

Yet another formulation of identification is בעת ההיא (or בעתים האלה), that is clearly parallel to ביום ההוא, and compare what I have written on this in the chapter on the term יום. In any event, both these idioms appear together in one text, 4Q470 1 3-6:

3 יב[וא] צדקיהו ביום [הה]וא בבר[י]ת  
4 לעשות ולהעשות את כל התורה  
5 ב[ע]ת ההיא יאמר מ[יכ]אל אל צדקיה  
6 [ו]אכרתה עמך [בר]ית לעיני הקהל<sup>30</sup>

- 3 [...] Zedekiah [will en]ter on [th]at day in the cove[n]ant  
4 [...] to perform, and to let perform, the whole Law  
5 [...] [...at] that time, and M[icha]el will say to Zedekiah  
6 [...] and ] I will conclude with you [a covenant] before the congregation

Compare also בעת ההיא יבדילו אנשי היחד בית קודש לאהרון (“At that moment the men of the Community shall set apart a holy house for Aaron”; 1QS ix 5-6). It is clear that this refers to the period described previously. And indeed, in lines 3-5. the period is described in extenso: בהיות אלה בישראל ככול התכונים האלה ליסוד רוח קודש לאמת (“when these exist in Israel in accordance with these rules in order to establish the spirit of holiness in truth”; *ibid.* 3); thereafter it is referred to in a brief formula, by the words בעת ההיא. Similarly, in the *War Scroll*: בעת ההיא יריעו הכוהנים (“on that moment, the priests shall blow...”; 1QM xviii 3);

<sup>30</sup> Larson et alii, apud DJD XIX, 239-257 and cf. there, 238, on the interpretation of the time idioms , בעת ההיא and ביום ההוא. In his opinion, these two idioms are used for both past and future tenses. Cf. there in the note on the identification of “Daniel” with the Teacher of Righteousness, alongside other proposed identifications, discussed there.

and in 4Q285 4 7: **ועתה ישוב אל היבשה בעת ההיא** (“[... and they will flee] from Israel at that time”); and *ibid.* 9: **ועתה ישוב אל היבשה בעת ההיא** (“they shall return to dry land at th[at] time”).

A different phrase used in relation to the present is **בעת הזאת** (“at this time”). Thus: **ועתה הזאת** (“[that has been discovered so that they can carry it out] in th[is] moment”; 4Q259 1 iv 1), and in 1QS ix 19-20: **ועתה הזאת**. In practice, what we find here is a technique for formulating the identification of the period. Hence, **בעת הזאת** is to be interpreted in the last reference as the time of clearing the path in the desert, and compare above in our discussion of this text.

In several places the plural of this combination is also preserved: **ועתה האלה**. Thus in 1QS ix 21: **ועתה האלה** (“and these are the regulations of behaviour for the Inspector in these times”), and compare 4Q258 3 ii 5-6. It should be noted that this sentence appears immediately after ix 20, where there appears the idiom **בעת הזאת**. Compare also my discussion above, on line 19.

We therefore find that the wording **ועתה האלה** is a metaphor used to vary the overused term, so as to emphasize even further the description of the present, or the period portrayed in the text previous to it. Moreover, one should compare what is said in ix 19 with 1QS ix 12: **ועתה האלה**. It seems to me that the expression **ועתה האלה** is to be interpreted in the sense of totality: “at each and every time”—i.e., the totality of times, including the present time. Compare also 1QS viii 13-14: **ועתה האלה**. And compare also: **ועתה האלה** (4) **ועתה האלה** (5) (4Q418 103 ii 4-5).<sup>31</sup> Compare also CD xii 20-21: **ועתה האלה** (“...according to the regulation for every time”). This is likewise the meaning of **ועתה האלה** (“at all times”) in 4Q417 1 i 1.

<sup>31</sup> See Strugnell, DJD XXXIV, 329-331, and the discussion there of **ועתה האלה** and **ועתה האלה**.

VII

יָוֵם AND ITS VARIANTS IN THE SCROLLS

*This page intentionally left blank*

## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

### THE TERM יום IN THE GENERAL FRAMEWORK OF TERMS OF TIME

In various texts in the Scrolls the term יום is used in connection with other terms pertaining to time.<sup>1</sup> We shall begin with a text appearing in the *War Scroll*: וראשי משמרותם עם פקודיהם יתיצבו למועדיהם לחודשיהם (“And the chiefs of the divisions with their enlisted shall have charge at their feasts, their new moons, the sabbaths and all the days of the years—those of fifty years and upwards”; 1QM ii 4).<sup>2</sup>

The phrase כל ימי השנה (“all the (other) days of the year”) was added so as to include the other days that were not mentioned previously. Take note of the order in which the things appear here, in order of ascending frequency, beginning with the annual festivals (such as Passover and the like), which occur only once a year; through the new moons, of which there are twelve during the course of the year; to the sabbaths, of which there are some fifty-odd in a year; and concluding with “all the (other) days of the year”, which are, of course, more numerous than all the other groups combined.

The term יום is also used in the Scrolls in the general sense of time in the life of a person, and is a substitute for the term גיל, “age,” which appears in later biblical literature, as in Daniel 1:10, אשר כגילכם (“who are of your own age”), and in Rabbinic literature, בן גילו, “contemporary,” as in *b. Yevamot* 120a. The author of the *Rule of the Congregation* (IQ28a i 7), uses the term יום for that same purpose: ילמדהו בספר ההגי (“[they shall educate] him in the book of HAGY, and according to his age, instruct him in the precept[s of] [according to his intellect]”).<sup>3</sup> That is, the depth of learning

<sup>1</sup> On use of the term יום in the Bible, see the discussions in the first part of this work, in Chapter 1, “Terms Used to Indicate Time in the Bible,” Chapter 2, “Day’ (יום) as a Term for Time in the Bible,” and elsewhere. Cf. in the standard lexicons under the entry יום, e.g. in Clines, s.v. יום, *Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, IV: 166-185.

<sup>2</sup> On the considerations involved in the order of the terms used for the festival days as given here in comparison with their arrangement in the Bible, see Yadin, *War Scroll*, 264.

<sup>3</sup> According to Baumgarten, DJD XXXV, 124-125. In his opinion, the listing here of sabbaths, new moons, and festivals constitutes a calendar for purposes of

study is in accordance with the person's comprehension, that is, according to his mental age as well as taking into account his biological age.

Another text that uses an idiom with the word יום in the framework of the system of times, also in the context of special days, is the *Purification Liturgy* (4Q284 1 i 3-5),<sup>4</sup> where there appears the idiom ימי שבת ("the days of sabbath").

3 כול ימי שבת לכול [שב]ועי

4 [השנה ו]שנים עשר חודשיה

5 [וארבעה מו]עדי השנה בימי

3 [... all the sa]bbath [days, and] all [the wee]ks

4 [of the year... and] its twelve months

5 [... the four appoin]ted times of the year, in the days of

Compare also *ibid.*, 3 1-2:

1 כול מועדי עתיה ]

2 [ בבוא שמש היום ]השביעי<sup>4</sup>

1 [...al]l the periods of her times [...]

2 [...] at the sunset of the [seventh] day

The framework here is that of the level of the special days, the holy days ranked on the level of the unit of the week. Thus the document mentions כל ימי שבת, alongside all the weeks of the year, and at the end of each one of which come the sabbaths, which were mentioned previously. Thereafter come the twelve months of the year; it seems to me that in the truncated line—line 4 or the one following—there are mentioned, by the same principle that we have seen regarding the sabbaths, also all of the new moons (12 in number), accompanied by

purification ceremonies. He also points out that the text is parallel to 4Q512 33 iv 1-3:

1. ולמועד שבת בש[בתו]ת לכול שבועי

2. ו[מוע]ד [ו]ארבעת מועדי

3. ו[מועד ק]ציר יק<sup>7</sup> [ור]אש [ח]ודש

("(1) [...] and for the feast of the sabbath, on the sa[bbath]s of all the weeks of [...] (2) [...] fea[st ... and] four feasts of (3) [...] the feast of the ha[rv]est /and of summer/ and (the feast) of the s[ta]rt of mo[n]th"). On the meeting point between sabbath and purification, cf. CD x 14, and compare 2 Macc 12:38. On the parallel in 4Q512 33 iv 1-3, see Baillet, DJD VII, 264-265. He also refers, regarding line 3, to 1QS x 7: מועד קציר ("the season of the harvest up to summer, the season of seed-time up to the season of the grass").

<sup>4</sup> Baumgarten, *ibid.*, 127. He compares the text to the *Temple Scroll* (11QT<sup>a</sup> Temple xlix 20 - 14, 15, which contains imagery reminiscent of the institution of the *tebul yom*.



the phrase “its twelve months.” In line 5 there appears “[the appoin]ted times of the year.” That is, in this text the order ascends from the unit of the days of the week through the unit of the month, and from there, evidently, to the unit of the year. The beginning of this passage is, as mentioned, the phrase **מו[ארבעה] ווארבעה** (“the four appoin]ted times of the year” (ibid., 5).

In the *Community Rule* (1QS x 3-7) there appears the phrase **ימי קודש** (l. 5; likewise also in 4Q258 iv 1-3). On the other hand, in 1QS x 3, we find the phrase **ימי חודש** (days of the new moon); and compare also 4Q256 8 ii 1, which is a clear expression of the sanctified time of the new months: **במבוא מועדים לימי חודש יחד תקופתם עם מסרותם זה זה** (“at the entry of the seasons in the days of the new moon together with their rotations during their stations, renewing each other”; 1QS x 3-4; 4Q256 8 ii 1-2; a similar picture emerges in 4Q260 1 ii 1-3).

In connection with the subject of the seasons of days and night just mentioned, there also appears the phrase **יום גדול** (“great day”). Thus in 1QS x 4-5: **בהתחדשם יום גדול לקודש קודשים ואות למפתח חסדי עולם**; **לראשי מועדים בכול קץ נהיה ברשית ירחים למועדיהם וימי קודש בתכונם לזכרון במועדיהם** (“renewing each other. It is a great day for the holy of holies, and a sign *Blank* of the opening of his everlasting mercies for the beginnings of the seasons in every future age. *Blank* At the commencement of the months in their seasons, and of the holy days in their sequence, as a reminder in their seasons”).<sup>5</sup> Similar formulations also appear in 4Q258 2 iv 1 and in 4Q256 3 ii 2-3.

The expression **יום גדול** appears in conjunction with **ימי קודש**, and thereafter the summarizing phrase **לזכרון במועדיהם**; compare also the phrase **יום ולילה מו[ארבעה]** below in Document 422. It therefore seems to me that **יום גדול** serves as a synonym of **יום (ימי) קודש** and the like.

The division of times based upon its small units, that is, not within the framework of the year, also appears in the *Sapiential Text*,<sup>6</sup> 4Q422 ii 2-6 6-12:

6 אשר בחר בה א[ל] [ארובות השמים] נפ[ת]חו ח.ה. [קו על הארץ]  
7 תחת כל השמים [ל]עלות מים על הארץ [ארבעים] יום וארבעים  
8 לילה היה ה[גשם] [הארץ המים] גב[רון] על [הארץ]

<sup>5</sup> See Licht, *Rule Scroll*, 209-210. On **יום גדול**: when the seasons are renewed, there occurs the **יום האות**, the great and holy day of renewal.

<sup>6</sup> According to Elgvin, apud VanderKam, DJD XIII, 424-427.

- 9 דעת כבוד על[יון] את[ ] הגיש לפניו  
 10 ויאר על [ה]שמ[ים] הא[רצ] וא[ ] ל[ ] מח[ר] אות לדור[ת]  
 11 עולם לחרא [ ] ולוא עוד[ ] היות מבול [לשחת הארץ]  
 12 [מו]עדי יום ולילה . [ ] מאורות להאיר ע[ל] שמים ואר[ץ]<sup>7</sup>
- 6 which G[od] had chosen [...] the sluices of heaven were op[en]ed  
 ...[...] ... on the earth  
 7 under all the heaven[s... to] raise water upon the ear[th... forty] days  
 and for[ty]  
 8 nights there was [rain] /up[on/ the earth... the water]s were  
 migh[ty] upon [the earthi...] ... and so that  
 9 one would know the glory of the Mo[st High...] ... [...] he placed  
 before him  
 10 and it illuminated [the] heav[en ... the ea]rth and [...] ... a sign for  
 the generat[ion[s of]  
 11 eternity, to ...[ ... and no more] will there be a flood [to destroy  
 the earth...]  
 12 [the fixed ti]mes of day and night [... luminaries to illuminate]  
 heaven and ear[th...]

It should be noted that the phrase דורות עולם (10-11) appears in the Bible in Gen 9:12 alone.<sup>8</sup> The text at hand deals with the subject of the Flood. The author mentions the idiom מועדי יום ולילה, “fixed times of day and night”; l. 12), referring to two separate passages: that of the Flood and that of creation of the luminaries. Genesis 8:22 states “day and night shall not cease” (ויום ולילה לא ישבתו), which is part of the commitment of God after the Flood not to bring another flood upon the earth, and never again to change any of the orders of times. The second chapter to which this document refers is Genesis 1—the creation of the luminaries. It states that the luminaries will serve לאותות ולמועדים ושנים, “for signs and for seasons and for days and years” (1:14). Thus, the author intends to state that God’s promise not to bring a flood also includes his commitment to sustain all the functions of the luminaries for organizing the times. By the term מועד he refers here not to the sanctified times, but to time in general.

On the two different uses of the term מועד see above, Chapter 19, on this term.

<sup>7</sup> Elgvin-Tov, *ibid.*, observe the relationship of this passage to various biblical passages, particularly those of the Flood. Thus, for example line 6 is compared to Gen 7:11; line 7 to Job 28:24 and to Gen 7:21; line 8 to Gen 7:18, 19, 24; line 10 to Gen 9:12; and line 12 to Gen 1:14-18 and 8:22.

<sup>8</sup> On the other phrases used—דורות עולם, ימי עולם, and דורות נצח—see the references in VanderKam, *DJD XIII*, 427.

The organization of time after the Flood is likewise discussed in 4Q299 5 2-4.<sup>9</sup>

2 [גב] ורות רזי אור ודרכי חוש[ך] ...]

3 [...] ... בדין מועדי חום עם קצ[ו]

4 [מבוא יום] ומוצא לילה

2 [might]y mysteries of light and ways of dark[ness...]

3 [...] ... periods of heat as well as period[s of]

4 [the coming of the day] and the going out of night

Hence, both of these texts dealing with the organization of time anew after the flood mention the systems of the day: the coming of the day and the going out of night, alongside more comprehensive (annual?) systems: “periods of heat with times of...” For the phrase *דרכי חושך*, see Prov 2:13. The idiom also appears in 1QS iii 21; iv 11. For *מועדי חום* compare Gen 8:22. It seems clear that in this document, 4Q299, the term *יום* is used in reference to the daylight period alone.

In *Jubilees* 2:9 (and its parallels in 4Q216 vi 6-7), it states: “And the Lord set the sun as a great sign upon the earth for days, sabbaths, months, feast (days), years, sabbaths of years, jubilees, and for all of the (appointed) times of the years.” This is clearly referring to the classification of times in ascending order, from “days,” in the sense of diurnal units, through weeks and through “cycles of the years,” which is evidently a larger unit than that of the jubilee.

On the other hand, the phrase *אור* [בין] [דיל] *ביום* ובלילה ולהב[ין] (“to regulate day and night and to separ[ate] [light and darkness...”]; *ibid.* 6-7) has a different meaning, its concern being to describe the great and small luminaries and their functions in governing over the day and the night. Thus, here the two terms are used in their literal sense of indicating the two parts of the day. That is, here *יום* is used in the sense of the daylight period, whereas in the previous passage it indicates the day as a whole.

In 4Q392 1 4-7, in a work referred to by the redactors as *Works of God* (*ה' יוצר אור וחושך*), the author discusses the limits of the light and darkness, both of which are creations of God:<sup>10</sup>

According to the author (line 6): “(only) for the sons of [ma]n he separated them as the li[ght] at daytime and with the sun, at night the

<sup>9</sup> Schiffman, apud Fitzmyer, DJD XX, 44-45. Part of the translation given below is according to Schiffman, *ibid.*

<sup>10</sup> For a discussion of this passage, see Falk apud Nitzan et alii, DJD XXIX, 27-32. See there for parallels to parts of this work in biblical and pseudepigraphic works.

moon and the stars”—that is, they were created for human purposes. Only by virtue of them does man know how to organize the times—the light of day with its activities, the light of the moon and stars as a sign of the dominion of the night. It should be noted that the author had a unique idea, namely, that God does not require this separation between light and darkness, and that the entire purpose of their creation is for the purposes of man alone: “and he does not need to separate light from darkness, because (only) for the sons of [ma]n he separated them as the li[ght] at daytime” (5-6).

Compare also 4Q408 1 8-11:<sup>11</sup>

8 אשר ברתה את הבקר אות להפיע ממשלת אור לגבול יומם ברן  
 9 לעבדתם לברך את שם קדשך בראתם כי טוב האור ובן [ כי בכול ]  
 10 [אשר ברן]תה את הערב אות להופיע ממשלת [חושך  
 11 [י מעמל לברך [את שם קדשך ב]ראתם [כי טוב החושך]<sup>12</sup> ]

- 8 as you created the morning as a sign of the appearance of the dominion of light for the area of day at [...]  
 9 for their work, to bless your holy name when they see that the light is good and [...] for in all [...]  
 10 [...] ... as [you] created the evening as a sign of the appearance of the dominion of [darkness...]  
 11 [...] from work, to bless [your holy name when] they see [th]at [the sta]rs \* [...] [the darkness is good\*] (*my translation—GB*)

This prayer also contains a similar idea to that mentioned in the previous text concerning the creation of the light: “as a sign of the appearance of the dominion of light for the area of day” [to which I would add, in the spirit of 4Q392: “for man”]. This idea is completed in line 10 [also parallel to 4Q392]: “as [you] created the evening as a sign of the appearance of the dominion of [darkness.” Further on in the work, the creation of the luminaries is shown to be for the purposes of man. Thus, in line 11: “from work, to bless [your holy name when] they see [th]at [the darkness is good].”

Once the author has fixed a certain point in time in the framework

<sup>11</sup> See the discussion of this document in Falk, *Daily, Sabbath and Festival Prayer*, 96-98, where he interprets this passage as referring to daily song, morning and evening. Cf. also the discussion in Steudel, “4Q408: A Liturgy.”

<sup>12</sup> This is my restoration, while Steudel reads: here: [כני טו]בים [כול] [כוכבים], cf. Steudel, apud Pfann et alii, DJD XXXVI, 305, 308, On this see the discussion, above in chapter 17.

of his description, he makes use of the relevant terms pertaining to time. Thus in the *Genesis Peshet*, 4Q252 ii, we read:<sup>13</sup>

1 באחת ושש מאות שנה לחיי נוח ובשבעה עשר יום לחודש השני  
 2 יבשה הארץ באחד בשבת ביום ההוא יצא נוח מן התבה לקץ שנה  
 3 תמימה לימים שלוש מאות ששים וארבעה באחד בשבת בשבעה  
 4 vacat אחת ושש vacat נוח מן התיבה למועד שנה  
 5 תמימה

- 1 in the year six-hundred and one of Noah's life. On the seventeenth day of the second month
- 2 the land dried up, on the first (day) of the week. On that day, Noah went out of the ark, at the end of a complete
- 3 year of three-hundred and sixty-four days, on the first (day) of the week. On the seventh
- 4 *Blank* one and six *Blank* Noah (went out?) from the ark, at the appointed time of a complete
- 5 year.

It would appear that the phrase **לקץ שנה תמימה** means: at the end of the quota of days of an entire year. An indication of this is found in the parallel passage in lines 4-5, where it says: **למועד שנה תמימה**. It follows from this that the idiom **לקץ שנה תמימה** (ll. 2-3) is identical to that of **למועד שנה תמימה**. (We have already noted in the previous chapters the relationship between the terms used for times, **קץ**, **מועד**, etc.)

An interesting phrase used in Qumran literature is **יום (יומם) ולילה**. One may infer from its usage both the connections in terms of contents among the various words for time, as discussed in this chapter, and the meanings that were created by these different idioms.

In 4Q417 1 i 21-22, it states:<sup>14</sup>

21 אם הון אנש[ים] תלוה למחסורכה אל [דומי לכ]ה  
 22 יומם ולילה ואל מנוח לנפשכה

- 21 If you borrowed money of men for your need, do not [slee]p
- 22 day or night and let there be no rest for your soul

It seems that here, as in the Bible, the idiom **יומם ולילה** appears in several texts; the meaning of the idiom is: *constantly*, in all parts of their diurnal cycle, or the like. Compare further also the discussion in the section of this chapter on the phrases **כל הימים / כל היום**..

<sup>13</sup> Brooke, apud VanderKam, DJD XXII, 198-200.

<sup>14</sup> Strugnell-Harrington, DJD XXXIV, 173, 177.

1. *The Term כל הימים, כל היום and the Like*

In the idiomatic phrase כל היום, the sect used the term היום to express fixity. Hence we find statements such as that in 1QS x 16, ועל הסדיו אשען כול היום (“and shall rely on his compassion the whole day”). These words may be interpreted offhand as referring to the daylight hours, but it seems more likely that כול היום means *always*, the sense of the idiom being: at every moment of time the worshipper relies upon God’s compassion.

The term כל היום is clearly used in the sense of constancy in 4Q418 127 1-2:<sup>15</sup>

1 ודאבה נפשכה מכול טוב למות [            ]  
2 [צפה כול היום ואותה נפשכה כי תבוא בפתחיה וקברת וכסת]ה

1 and your soul languishes for want of all good things. To death [...]

2 [...]looks the whole day, and your soul will want to come in its gates, and being buried, it shall cov[er]...

And compare also what I wrote in the previous chapter on יומם ולילה.

Another way of expressing this or a similar idea appears in the *Thanksgiving Scroll*: למוצא לילה ומבוא יומם תמיד (“at the departure of night and the coming of day; continually”; 1QH xx 7), and there is also an alternative way to express the same idea: תתעטף נפשי יומם ולילה לאין מנוח (“my soul languishes day and night, without rest”; *ibid.* xvi 30). This usage also appears in 1QS vi 6, where the term יומם ולילה is used to express fixity, constancy. In this manner the author portrayed both parts of the day, in order to create a synthetic picture of כל היום in the sense of “constantly.”

It seems to me that alongside כל היום, the Qumran authors also made use of the plural form כל הימים to express the same idea. Thus, in 1QH vii 12: [יא]הבו אותך כול הימים (“[they shall lo]ve you all the days”). Perhaps the author felt that כל היום is not sufficiently strong to express constancy, because one might possibly understand it to be referring to the daylight hours and the like (as opposed to the hours of darkness and night). In other words: due to the great pressure upon יום with its numerous uses and meanings, the author chose a more unequivocal expression to express the desired direction, one also less burdened with other meanings. For a similar phenomenon, see what I wrote in Chapter

<sup>15</sup> Strugnell-Harrington, DJD XXXIV, 357-359.

21, “The Term עולם in the Scrolls,” concerning the relation between עולם and עולמים.

The phrase כל הימים serves the same purpose of indicating time in general. In the Qumran version of *Jubilees* we find the following: [והקים] [ממכה מטעת ה] אמת בארץ לכול דורות הארץ ולו ישבית [שמי] [ושמכה מתח] ת [השמים בכול הימים] (“...for all the generations of the earth....for all the days”; 4Q219 ii 29-31). A parallel appears in 4Q221 1 7-9.

The phrases בכול הימים and לכול הימים parallel another idiom of time: לכל דורות הארץ and, in a variant reading, לכל דורות עולמים. Thus, the phrase כל הימים functions in the sense of “always,” throughout all history.

In 4Q216 vii 11-15 (= *Jubilees* 2:20-22), it is stated:<sup>16</sup>

- 11 ובחר בזרע יעקוב ב[כל מאשר ראיתי וכתבתי אתו לי לבן בכור וקדשתי אתו  
[לי]  
12 לעולם ועד ואת היום ה[שביעי] אגיד להם לשובתם בו מכל אשר ברכם וקדשם  
לו עם סגולה]  
13 מכל הגויים ולהיות יחד [עמנו שבתים ויעל את מצוותיו ריה ניהוח אשר ירצה  
[לפניו]  
[ ] vacat כל הימים 14

- 11 And he chose the descendants of Jacob among [all those I saw. And I registered them for me as the first-born son and consecrated them to me]  
12 for ever and ever. The [seventh] day [I will teach them so that they keep the sabbath on it above all. For I blessed them and consecrated them as an exceptional people]  
13 among all the peoples so that together [with us] they keep [the sabbath. And he lifted up his statutes like a pleasant perfume which is acceptable in his presence]  
14 every day. *Blank* [ ]

It would appear that כל הימים refers to the eternity of the Sabbath, which was chosen as the holiest of all the days. Parallel to this, the phrase לעולם ועד refers to Israel, who was chosen from among all the people. Thus the two phrases, לעולם ועד and כל הימים, serve as synonyms.

The eternal nature of the law proscribing adultery is spoken of in 4Q221 7 7-9 (= *Jubilees* 39:6-7): [והחטא יעלה עלו בלוחות העולם] [בכנ] [ל]: [ה] [לשכ] [ב עמה] (“And the sin is written (on high) concerning him in the eternal books always

<sup>16</sup> VanderKam, DJD XIII, 13.

before the Lord. And Joseph remembered these words and he did not want to lie with her).<sup>17</sup>

Similarly in a series of sapiential fragments (4Q418 126 ii 9-10)<sup>18</sup> the phrase **כל היום** is used in the same sense:

9 ורוב כבודו עם טובו [ ]  
10 ובאמונתו ישיחו כול היום תמיד יהללו שמו

- 9 and his abundant glory with his goodness [...]  
10 and on his loyalty they will ponder all the day, continuously they will praise his name.

As one is speaking here of a formula of prayer of the believer, it is clear that **כל היום** is used in the sense of “always,” a fact that stands out particularly in light of the explicit parallelism: **תמיד יהללו שמו** (“continuously they will praise his name”).

It is also worth comparing another fragment of the same work discussed above (4Q418 127 1-2). The context here is not sufficiently clear, but it seems to me that the primary meaning of **כל היום** is “always, in which sense it is used here as well. And compare also 4Q415 2 ii 2-3:<sup>19</sup>

2 אל תמישי בלבבך <sup>ב</sup> וען  
3 כול היום ובחוקי ברית

- 2 you shall not remove. In your heart ... [...]  
3 all the day, and in the regulations of the cov[enant ...]

<sup>17</sup> VanderKam, DJD XIII, 79-80.

<sup>18</sup> Strugnell- Harrington, DJD XXXIV, 350, 355.

<sup>19</sup> Idem., 47.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

### X-יום / X-ימי (DAY X / DAYS OF X) TO CHARACTERIZE TIME\*

#### 1. *Day / Days of X*

The term **יום** appears throughout ancient literature, both biblical and post-biblical. In what follows, I shall discuss the use of this term in the material discovered at Qumran.

The appearances of the word **יום** shall be classified into various different groupings according to the type of use.

We shall begin with the combination of **יום** with a noun. In the Dead Sea Scrolls we find the following usages:

**יום הזכרון** (“the day of remembrance”): 4Q320 4 iii 6; *ibid.* 4 v 5; and 4Q321 2 ii 2: **הואה יום הזכרון**.

**יום הכפורים** (“the day of atonement”): 4Q320 4 v 6; 4Q321 2 ii 2; 4Q320 4 iv 3: **יום הכפורים**.

**יום השבת** (“the Sabbath day”): 11QT<sup>a</sup> (Temple Scroll) xliii 2; 4Q265 7 i 3, 5, 6, 7, 9; 4Q251 1 6; 4Q270 6 v 17; *ibid.* 7 ii 1.

**יום הבכורים** (“the day of first fruits”): 4Q251 5 4, and *cf. ibid.* 6, **עד יום**; **יום חג הבכורים**; **יום חג הבכורים**; **בא לחם הבכורים**; 11QT<sup>a</sup> xliiii 6: **חג הבכורים**; 11QT<sup>a</sup> xliiii 7: **יום חג הבכורים**; 11QT<sup>a</sup> xliiii 3: **יום הבכורים**.

**יום הקרב שמן** (“the day of oil offering”): 11QT<sup>a</sup> xliiii 10.

**יום מועד** (“the appointed day”): 11QT<sup>a</sup> xliiii 7-8: **יום מועד התירוש**; 11QT<sup>a</sup> xliiii 15: **בימי המועדים**.

**ימי קודש** (“holy days”): 11QT<sup>a</sup> xliiii 17; and compare the opposing term:—**בימי המעשה** 11QT<sup>a</sup> xliiii 16.

**ימי קודש** is a general expression for describing the sanctified days during the year. In other words, it is a substitute for the biblical term **מועדי(ם)**. In 1QS x 3-7, mention is made of **לראשי חודש**.. **בראשי מועדים**.. **ברשית ירחים למועדיהם** וימי קודש בתכונם לזכרון במועדיהם.. **למועד דשא**<sup>1</sup>; and similarly in 4Q256 8 ii 1-6.

\* (In which x is used to indicate an adjective, verb, adverb, etc.)

<sup>1</sup> Licht, *Rule Scroll*, 204-211. See there the discussion of this text, described by Licht

One has here a collection of names and terms for special, sanctified days of the years. In the middle of the survey there appears the declaration: “and of the holy days in their sequence, as a reminder in their seasons” (וימי קודש בתכונם לזכרון במועדיהם). It seems clear to me that we have here double phrases, in which ימי קודש is used by the author as a substitute expression for מועדיהם. It should be noted that in this important text the word מועדיהם has two meanings: מועדים in the sense of holy days, and מועדים in the sense of times in general. On this point, see further in Chapter 19 on “The Term מועד in the Scrolls.”

## 2. X-יום / X-ימי (Day X / Days of X) to Characterize Time

One of the ways of characterizing the nature of the term יום in the Scrolls literature (continuing the stylistic practice of the Bible) is by means of a construct form in which יום appears as the *nomen regens*, while as the *nomen rectum* there appears a noun that defines it. A variation of this occurs when the word יום appears in combination with an adjective, the combination being used to define the nature of the day in question. I include within the ken of the present chapter also those cases in which the gerund (or the like) is used in conjunction with יום to describe the day in question.

We shall exemplify below all of the idioms of these types, and take note of the types of days that follow from them. The author of one of the Qumran versions of the *Book of Jubilees*, in describing the beginning of the world, uses the phrase עד יום הבריאה [החדשה] (“until the [new] creation”; 4Q225 1 7). It is interesting that shortly thereafter he turns to a different technique for describing “day x”; namely, *ibid.*, line 9, וביום אשר (“and on the day that”). We shall discuss this different formula further on. יום הבריאה as a phrase for the time of creation of the world is constructed in a manner similar to such parallel expressions as יום השבת, יום הכפורים, and the like. The author thus knew how to formulate an identification of a period using the formula x-יום, where adjacent to it there appears an abstract noun.

At times the description appears in the form of an identifying phrase, as in הוא היום אשר יפקד אל (CD viii 2-3); and compare *ibid.* xix 15, and 4Q266 3 iii 25.

The sect’s understanding of the “periods” (קצים) was formulated in

---

as “praise of the Creator concerning the enumeration of the times.” A translation of this text is given above in chapter 19.



It is worthwhile mentioning here the phrase **ימי כבודכה** (“the days of your glory”; 4Q512 1-6 xii 11). Baillet compares this idiom to **קץ כבודכה** (“the era of your glory”; 1QH xx 22);<sup>6</sup> **מועדי כבודו** (“his glorious feasts”; CD iii 14-15); and to the phrase **תעודות כבודכה** (“the edicts of your glory”; 1QM xiii 8).<sup>7</sup> All these refer to the periods during which the glory of God will be revealed in his actions, such as when he sets out against the evildoers, and so forth. We have already seen in the various chapters [above] the relation to various terms relating to time.

There are a great variety of formations of **x-יום**. We have seen idioms composed of **יום** in conjunction with a noun (with or without the object pronoun); **יום** combined with the addition of a passive verb (such as **יום יעוד**; “the destined day”); a formula of an identifying sentence or phrase: **הוא היום**; and many others. In 1QM xvii 5-6 we find the same picture as previously in the formulation of a *casus pendens*, thus: **היום מועדו להכניע ולהשפיל שר ממשלת רשעה** (“Today is his appointed time to humiliate and abase the prince of the dominion of evil”). And similar to this is what is written in 1QM i 10, and see above in that group of texts.<sup>8</sup>

In 1QS ix 13 = 4Q258 3 iii 7, it states: **ועתו ליום נקם** (And for its time [i.e., the time for its activity], for the day of revenge).<sup>9</sup> The sense here is presumably that the people of the sect need to be prepared for the day of vengeance, that is, for the time fixed for them to take vengeance against the evildoers, whereas **יום נקם** mentioned earlier refers to the time of God’s vengeance against the evildoers, upon the arrival of “the day determined by him since ancient times.” A formula similar to this is: **וכל אשר פרצו את גבול התורה מבאי הברית בהופע כבוד אל לישראל יכרתו רב המחנה ועמהם כל מרשיעי יהודה בימי מצרפותיו** (“And all, among those who entered the covenant, transgressing the limits of the law, when the glory of God is manifested to Israel, shall be cut off from amongst the camp, and with them all who acted wickedly against Judah in the days of its chastenings”; CD xx 25-27). The passage describes the appearance of the Divine glory to Israel so as to punish the sinners.

---

another”; 1QS x 7) is concerned with a totally different matter, namely, the subject of the periods, and that term refers to the concluding day of the year, which, so to speak, “gives over” its function to the following day, which opens the new year. See Licht, *Rule Scroll*, 206-208, 210; it is even designated as **יום גדול** and **יום קדוש**.

<sup>6</sup> Licht, *Thanksgiving Scroll*, 50-51, 126.

<sup>7</sup> Yadin, *War Scroll*, 322, and the discussion there on the parallel phrases to this in the sect’s thought.

<sup>8</sup> Yadin, *ibid.*, 341.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. Licht, *Rule Scroll*, 198.

בימי מצרפותיו (“in the days of its chastenings”) is a term for the act of divine refining, that is, the day of punishment that will come in wake of the discovery of all those who violate the covenant; in those days המחזיקים במשפטים האלה (27) ויתודו לפני אל: חטאנו (28) רשענו גם אנחנו (34) וכפר אל בעדם וראו בישועתו ... גם אבותינו (“but all those who remain steadfast in these regulations ...and confess before God: ‘Assuredly have we sinned, both we and our fathers...’ And God will atone for them, and they shall see his salvation”; *ibid.*, 27-34).

During the rule of the evildoers they were the source of trouble, mischief, and other negative things, but also caused the righteous to be afraid of them. It was not for nought that the author of 4Q525 2 ii 1-13 5 says:<sup>10</sup> ולוא ישושנה בעוני מצר[יו/פן] ובעת צוקה לוא יעוזבנה ולא ישכחנה [בימי/ביום] פחד. Three idioms appear here, at least two of which are concerned with time: “in the time of anguish” (בעת צרה) and “in the days/day of terror” (בימי/ביום פחד). The sense of this passage is that the righteous person spoken of here will not abandon his principles of walking in the straight path during the time of trouble and travail that existed during the age of the reign of evil.

At this point I should mention that there is a certain connection among the various terms relating to time. For our purposes, the terms x-יום, x-עת, and x-מועד are essentially interchangeable. I am not dealing here only with a general perception of these things, but with literally synonymous idioms, with the *nomen regens* יום and עת and their like being exchanged.

In the context with which we are dealing, the term x-יום refers, not only to the time of trouble during the rule of evil or to the days of vengeance (human and divine) against them, but may also, in practice, be intended to describe the factor leading to the punitive rule of the evildoers. Thus, for example in *Pseudo-Moses*,<sup>11</sup> it states: וי[ח]ל[ן] להריב אלה באלה שנים שבעים מיום הפר [האלה וה] ברית אשר יפרו ונתתים [ביד מל]אכי המשטמות ומשלו בהם (“and [t]he[y] will [be]gin to argue with one another for seventy years, from the day on which they break the [vow and the] covenant which they shall break. And I shall deliver them [to the hands of the an]gels of destruction and they will rule over them”; 4Q390 2 i 6-7). That is, the point of departure for which God turned them over to the hands of the wicked is their violation of the covenant. The chronological boundary line is indicated in this passage by the phrase, “from the day on which they break the [vow and the] cove-

<sup>10</sup> Puech, DJD XXV, 127-128. On this text see also above, chapter 22.

<sup>11</sup> Dimant, “New Light from Qumran,” 414-415, 428-429, 442.

nant” (ibid.). Compare also 1QS iii 5-6: כול יומי מואסו במשפטי אל (“all the days he spurns the decrees of God”), and 4Q262 1 3-4. The days of spurning God’s decrees are the days of violating the covenant mentioned above, and this refers to the sins of Israel and/or the members of the sect, in whose wake God sent against them his arrows and turned them over to the hands of the wicked.

A similar combination of יום with a noun or gerund also appears in 4Q300 9 1-2: סודות לא השיגוהו [ ] [ (2) ] כיא בו יום הריב, which presumably alludes to the day when God will quarrel with the evildoers. The term ריב evidently appears here in the sense of judgment, and is the continuation of such a use in the Bible. As a result of their being punished by God they will disappear. In another text, there appears an important day in the sectarian ideology: הנה בא יום אבדן גוים (“See, the day of the destruction of the nations is coming”; 4Q385 1 2). It seems to me that the sectarian authors drew this expression from the poems concerning the Day of the Lord that appear in the Bible in the classical prophetic literature. It follows that, in a certain manner, the sect associated the fall from rule of the evildoers with their punishment by God with the fall of the Gentile nations. These two falls will bring it about that, on the one hand, Israel will no longer be forced to stand up to the pressure of oppressors and that, on the other hand, the righteous element within Israel, i.e., the people of the sect, will lift up their heads with the decline of their enemies.

In the *Thanksgiving Scroll*, we read: במרורי יום [א]נחות[ת] ויגון יסובבוני (‘‘by the bitterness of the day. Agony and pain surround me, shame covers my face, my bread has turned into quarrel’’; 1QH xiii 34-35. In the parallel to this in the *Thanksgiving Scroll* from Cave 4, there appears the reading יום אנחה; 4Q429 1 iv 8). I associate this idiom, יום אנחה/אנחות ויגון, with other idioms used to describe the travail of the righteous man—יום פחד and the like.

But the phrase x-מי is not reserved for description of the troubles that accompany the reign of evil, the battle with it, and the day of victory that will bring about the domination of the pious ones of the sect. It has a multitude of uses, and the authors made use of it to describe various time-related circumstances as they wished, whether referring to circumstances of the nation as a whole, or personal background. Thus in CD xvi 4-6:

4 וביום אשר יקום האיש על נפשו לשוב  
5 אל תורת משה יסור מלאך המשטמה מאחריו אם יקים את דבריו  
6 על כן נימול אברהם ביום דעתו vacat

- 4 And on the day on which one has imposed upon himself to return
- 5 to the law of Moses, the angel Mastema will turn aside  
from following him, should he keep his words.
- 6 This is why Abraham circumcised himself on the day of his knowl-  
edge. *Blank*

In line 6 there is a formula involving a relative clause explaining the nature of the “day,” the sense being that when a turnabout will take place in the life of the sinner such that he will decide to return to the good path, then his destiny shall change and the destroying angel will leave him.

In the adjacent explanatory phrase, another idiom appears: **ביום דעתו**, “on the day of his knowledge.” Perhaps the intention here is that when Abraham knew God and the religious intention of the commandment to circumcise his flesh, only then was he circumcised, and this was “the day of his knowledge,” the day of his coming into Divine consciousness. The same text also appears in the parallel in Cave 4: 4Q271 4 ii 6-7.

Similar to the idiom mentioned above (“on the day on which one has imposed”), so too do we find a similar idiom in CD xx 3-5: **בהופע** **מעשיו ישלח מעדה.. עד יום ישוב לעמד במעמד אנשי תמים קודש** (“When his deeds are evident, he shall be expelled from the congregation... until the day when he returns to take his place in the sessions of the men of perfect holiness”). Here too, as in the previous text, there is formulated a situation of the return of the person to his prior status of membership in the sect: **יום ישוב לעמוד** (“the day when he returns to take his place”). It should be noted, that the person who was permitted to return was previously expelled (temporarily) from the sect (“shall be expelled from the congregation”).<sup>12</sup>

A different situation in which this formula is used is the following: **מיום האסף {...} מורה היחיד עד עמוד משיה מאהרן ומישראל** (“from the day of the gathering in {...} of the unique teacher until there arises the messiah out of Aaron and Israel”; CD xix 35 - xx 1).

The same formula is also used in the words of God Himself, here clearly pertaining to the people, in 4Q387a:

ועזבתי] 3  
 4 את הארץ ביד מלאכי המשטמות והסתרתי [את פני]  
 5 מיש]ראל וזה להם האות ביום עזבי את הארץ [ ]

<sup>12</sup> Brin, “Divorce at Qumran,” 241-242.

- 3 And I will abandon]  
 4 the country in the hand of the angels of enmity. And I will hide  
 [my face]  
 5 [from Is]rael. And this will be the sign for them in the day when I  
 abandon the country [...]  
 (4Q387a 3 iii 3-5; and cf. 4Q388a 1 ii 6-7).

### 3. *Formulae of x ימי and Other Idioms to Indicate Periods of Time*

Historical definitions of the type of **בימי שפוט השפטים** (“in the days when the judges ruled”; Ruth 1:1), which I discussed at length in Chapter 5, “The Formula x-ימי (or x-יום) in the Bible: Some Characteristics of Historiographical Writing in Israel,” also appear in material from Qumran. In my opinion, this is a particular group of idioms of the form, x-ימי/יום, which we shall discuss in this chapter. While in those idioms we have discussed thus far the *nomen rectum* (or adjective) is a noun, a gerund, or on occasion a verb, in the group to be discussed now, x is a proper noun or something similar (see further below), so that the (x=proper name) x-ימי/יום is an idiom used by the biblical authors with the aim of characterizing an event or period in history and describing them. In this manner various combinations were created in the Bible, some of them specific and some used to describe longer periods (see the above-mentioned chapter). This came to the authors of the Scroll literature ready-made, and they continued to use it without any special innovation.

I shall now list the relevant terms of the form x-ימי as they appear in the Qumran literature.

An extremely interesting general idiom appears in 1QH ix 15-16: לרוח אדם אשר יצרת בתבל לכול ימי עולם ודורות נצח למ[עשיהם] ובקציהם פלגתה עבודתם בכול דוריהם. It seems to me that the phrase ימי עולם is the phrase used by the sect to describe the totality of history, past and future. Regarding the future element, this source contains a substitute-synonymous expression: דורות נצח.<sup>13</sup> It should be noted that it was a tremendous accomplishment, in terms of formulation, for the sect to invent a general term of this type for history.

In the *Thanksgiving Scroll* we find the passage: למספר דורות עולם ולכול ימי עולם ודורות נצח (1QH ix 18-19), which is parallel to ימי עולם ודורות נצח mentioned previously. If דורות נצח is parallel to שני נצח, then the phrase עולם למספר דורות עולם may be seen as parallel to that of ימי עולם. One should

<sup>13</sup> On these parallel expressions, see Licht, *Thanksgiving Scroll*, 59.



note that the *nomen regens* דורות changed place between the above form and the present one. According to Licht,<sup>14</sup> the definition is: for ever, for eternity, etc. Everything is recorded with the Creator, both eternal generations and the continuous years. In another interpretation, while the term ימי עולם refers to both past and future, the applicability of מספר דורות עולם still requires examination.

In 1QH ix 16, one finds the phrase בכל דוריהם (“in all their generations”) which is, in my opinion, another term for world history, this time without using ימי as the *nomen regens*; the following line reads ודר[כיהם הכינותה לדור ודור, “and you prepared their w[a]ys generation after generation” (ibid., 17).

A briefer formula, such as that which relates to the “interstices” of world history, appears in 1QS ii 19: ככה יעשו שנה בשנה כול יומי ממשלת בליעל (“They shall act in this way year after year, all the days of Belial’s dominion”).<sup>15</sup> The phrase יומי ממשלת בליעל (“the days of Belial’s dominion”) is, in my opinion, an alternative form of x-ימי, of the type that is customarily used in the type of idioms discussed here. However, rather than the personal name of a king or ruler, there appears here the general noun, בליעל (ממשלת), referring to the period of the rule of evil. Similar to this is the use in *Pseudo-Moses*, בימי ממלכתו (“in the days of its kingdom”). The complete passage reads as follows (4Q390 1):

4 ויעשו גם הם את הרע בעיני ככל אשר עשו ישראל  
 5 בימי ממלכתו הרישונים מלבד העולים רישונה מארץ שבים לבנות...  
 8 ישכחו חוק ומועד ושבת וברית ויפרו הכל ויעשו  
 9 הרע בעיני והסתרתני פני מהמה ונתתים ביד איביהם והסגרתים  
 11 ומשלו בהמה מלאכי המש[ט]מות

- 4 And they too will do what is evil in my eyes, like everything that Israel did  
 5 in the first days of its kingdom, apart from those who will be the first to go up from the land of captivity in order to build...  
 8 they will forget the law, the festival, the sabbath and the covenant; and they will disobey everything and will  
 9 do what is evil in my eyes. And I will hide my face from them and deliver them to the hands of their enemies and abandon [them]  
 11 And over them will rule the angels of destruction.

<sup>14</sup> In his commentary to 1QH ix 19.

<sup>15</sup> Licht, *Rule Scroll*, 72, sees this as a parallel to the expression used in CD xv 6-7: וכן המשפט בכול קץ הרשע (“And such is the regulation, throughout all the age of wickedness”).

Compare also the above usage in another passage: 4Q390 2 i 6-7.<sup>16</sup>

In the case at hand, the expression, “the first days of its (Israel’s) kingdom” refers, as mentioned above, to the period of the First Temple. The phrase “those who will be the first to go up” (העולים ברישונה) is taken from Nehemiah 7:5; that is, our author compares the period in question, of doing evil in the eyes of God during the time of the sect, as parallel to what happened during the age of the First Temple and the Return to Zion. The duration of the dispute depicted is seventy years, so that the phrase, “from the day on which they break the [vow and the] covenant,” is seen as alluding to the sin of the people committed during the period spoken of in the text (compare above regarding x-ימים as referring to a specific description in history, in light of the *nomen rectum* used in these idioms).

#### 4. The Usage of x-ימי.

We shall now mention several explicit passages involving the (proper name) x-ימי.

In 4Q225 2 ii 12: ימי אברהם וישחק ויעקוב ולוי (“the days of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Lev[i...]”);<sup>17</sup>

4Q398 11-13 1: בימי שלומה בן דויד (“in the days of Solomon the son of David”);

Ibid., 2: ש[ב]או בימי [יר]ובעם בן נבט ועד גל[ו]ת ירושלם וצדקיה מלך יהודה (“[which] came in the days of [Jer]oboam son of Nebat and up to the ex[i]le of Jerusalem and of Zedekiah, king of Juda[h]”).

Note should be taken of the chronological historical writing concerning the period of Solomon and the days that followed thereafter.

The phrase [x] ימי, “the days of Solomon,” that is, the period of his reign, appears in *Pseudo-Ezekiel*, 4Q386 1 ii 7-8:

7 כאשר יאמרו היה השלום והשדך ואמרו תש[כ]ו]ן הארץ  
8 כאשר היתה בימי [כ...כימי] קדם

7 Thus, as they say ‘There was peace and order,’ they will say ‘the land r[es]ts’,

8 as there was in the days [so- and so as in the days] of old’

The term x-ימי is given here as a point of comparison to the period during which the land was quiet and peaceful. See above, 4Q390 1 3-5,

<sup>16</sup> See Dimant, *ibid.*, 414-415.

<sup>17</sup> VanderKam, *DJD XIII*, 149.

for the use of the First Temple period as a point of comparison for fraternal strife, violation of the covenant, and being given over to their enemies.

The phrase **בכול ימי ממשלתו** (“during all the days of its dominion”), in 4Q440 1 4,<sup>18</sup> is not concerned with “such and such days” as a ruler and king. The word **ממשלתו** (“his dominion”) in this document is an echo of God’s words about the luminaries in Genesis 1: “the greater light to rule the day (**לממשלת היום**), and the lesser light to rule the night (**לממשלת הלילה**)” (1:16). It seems to me that the phrase **מאור גדול בממשלת** (“the large luminary in the domi[nion of... ”) in line 1 should be reconstructed as **[היום]** while in line 4, **בכול ימי ממשלתו** (“during all the days of its dominion”) evidently continues to deal with the luminaries. Hence, we are not dealing here with an idiom of the type **ימי-x** such as found regarding the rule of kings or the like.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Schuller, apud Nitzan et alii, DJD XXIX, 249-251, where the question is raised as to whether the term refers to Belial or to the sun.

<sup>19</sup> See above, Chapter 5, “The Formula “**ימי-x**” (or “**יום-x**”) in the Bible: Some Characteristics of Historiographical Writing in Israel”; and Saebø, s.v. **יום**, esp. 570-573, 586.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

### THE USE OF יום IN THE SCROLLS

#### 1. *The Use of the Term יום to Indicate the Pace of the Progression of Time*

In 4Q306 2 we find the verse, כי יעברו [מיום] ליום ומחדש לחדש] (“for they pass on [from day] to day, and from month to mon[th....]”) In 4Q394 3-7i 12-13 (*Miqsat Ma’aseh Hatorah*), it states: מנחת זבח] השל[מים] שמניחים אותה מיום ואפ [כתוב] שהמנחה נאכלת] על החלבים והבשר ביום זב[חם] (“the sacrifice of] the pea[ce-offerings], which they leave over from one day to another, and also [...] that the cere[al-offering should be eaten] with the fats and the meat on the day of [their] sacrifice”). It is not clear whether the intention of this verse is to refer to the time span required for the eating of the sacrifice, or whether to its pace and continuity: that is, that “from one day to another” or “every day” they ate the flesh of the peace-offerings.

Regarding a similar idiom, see 4Q385b 16 ii 7-9:

7 בני ישראל ואל בני יהודה ובנימין]  
8 יום יום דרשו את חקותי ואת מצותי שמ]רו  
9 אחרי פסילי הגוים אשר הל[כו אחריהם]

- 7 the children of Israel and to the children of Judah and Benjamin  
[...]  
8 day after day investigate my laws, and ke[ep] my precepts [...]  
9 after the idols of the nations, after which they f[ollowed...]

It would appear that the wording here serves as an expression whose concern is the pace of time for the activities and acts that were mentioned in the text in question.

In the version of the *Damascus Covenant* from Cave 4, we read:<sup>1</sup> ואין כתוב כי אם נוקם הוא לצרו]ו נוטר<sup>ה</sup> לאויבו אם החריש לו מיום ליום ובחר]ת אפו (“[Is it not perhaps written that on]ly ‘he (God) avenges himself on [his foes and] bears resentment against his enemies’? If he kept silent about him from one day to the other, and then, when he was angry”; 4Q270 6 iii 19); and compare also<sup>2</sup> מיום ליום ו]מחודש לחודש (“[from

<sup>1</sup> Baumgarten, DJD XVIII, 158.

<sup>2</sup> Baumgarten, *ibid.*, 106.

day to day and] from one month to the other"; 4Q267 9 i 1). This addition appears neither in the *Damascus Document* nor in 4Q270 6 iii 19 cited above. According to Qimron, the idiom **מחודש לחודש** is an alternative formula and not a real addition. In any event, it would seem from this that it was a known characteristic of the Qumran authors that they indicated the flow of time and the changes of time periods by using a formula of time that repeats itself; we thus have **מחודש לחודש** and **מיום ליום** and their like. A similar formula appears in the *Blessings Scroll*, 4Q286 6 2: **[לחודש] במועדימה ומחודש** ("in their festivals, and from month [to month]").<sup>3</sup>

But even regarding other terms we find repetitions of terms used in this way; thus **מקץ לקץ** and the like. However, it should be noted that on occasion repetition of a certain term has a different meaning, unconnected with matters of pace, speed and flow of time. Thus, for example, **מקץ לקץ** also means (in addition to the subject of pace) "always," "every day," and the like (see above, Chapter 23, on use of the terms **כל היום** and **כל הימים** to express fixity in time).

In the *Community Rule* the formula of pace appears in connection with the year: **ול להיות פוקדם את רוחם ומעשיהם שנה בשנה להעלות איש לפי שכלו ותום דרכו ולאחרו כנעויתו** ("and their spirit and their deeds must be tested, year after year, in order to upgrade each one to the extent of his insight and the perfection of his path, or to demote him according to his failings"; 1QS v 23-24).<sup>4</sup>

The text deals with the times for examining the righteous by God (for the judgment of the evil one is conducted later). These will be taken care of in the proper time: **שנה בשנה**, that is, every year: year after year, and the like.

## 2. *The Terms ביום ההוא, בימים ההם, and the Like*

The terms **ביום ההוא** ("on that day"), **בימים ההם** (or **בימים ההמה** and the like) are used in the Bible when mentioning a given time that had previously been mentioned in the text. There are those cases, such as in the prophetic literature, in which these terms are used in explicitly prophetic contexts, as in relation to **יום ה'** (= **ביום ההוא**), and the two expressions are used extensively in eschatological contexts.

<sup>3</sup> Nitzan, apud Newsom, DJD XI, 24-25.

<sup>4</sup> Licht, *Rule Scroll*, 135, on the ways of examining new members of the sect.

I shall now mention these terms, as they appear in the Scrolls:

In 4Q387a it states: 7. וממלכת ישראל תאבד בימים 8. ההמה (“and the kingdom of Israel will perish in (8) those days”; 4Q387a 3 ii 7-8). Because of the truncated nature of this text it is impossible to trace the exact relation referred to. But in any event **בימים ההמה** serves in the sense of relation to time that was mentioned previously in the text.

In fragment 3 iii 1-5, I find similar usages. Thus, in line 1: **את ישראל ל[אשבר את ממלכת מצרים]** (“[Isra]el without people. In his day[s] /I will destroy/ the kingdom of [Egypt...]”). In *ibid.*, 5, we read: **[מישראל וזה להם האות ביום עזבי את הארץ]** (“[from Is]rael. And this will be the sign for them in the day when I abandon the country [...]”). Compare *supra* also the chapter on the term **ביום-x**. In *ibid.*, 5 4, it says: **[על כן יללו ביום]** (“therefore they wailed on the day [of [...]”). Perhaps this should be completed as **ביום ההוא**, the sense being: on the day I left the country.

The formula, **הלל וברך בימים האלה** (“[... Praise and bless] in these days”; 4Q409 1 9), which is a similar formula, appears in the above-mentioned liturgical passage just after the phrase **הלל וברך ביום זכרון תרועה** (“[... praise and bless] in the day of remembrance, acclamation”; *ibid.*, 5).

### 3. *The Term באחרית הימים*

The phrase **באחרית הימים** appears in various contexts in the documents. Thus, for example, in 4Q266 1 a-b 2-3, it states:<sup>5</sup> **עד תום מועד פקודה** (“until the completion of the appointed time of visitation [...] God [will destroy] all its deeds, bringing destruction”). The term **באחרית הימים** is quite widespread in sectarian literature, and use was made of it for various purposes, among others as an exegesis of certain texts in the Bible (see below).

In the *Genesis Peshar* (4Q252 iv 2-3)<sup>6</sup> there is a quotation from the biblical passage concerning the war with Amalek: **כאשר דבר למושה**: “As he said to Moses: ‘in the last days you will erase the memory of Amalek from under the heavens.’”). But the original text in Exod 17:14-16 does not at all mention the phrase “the last days.” It seems to me that the Qumran author used the phrase **באחרית הימים** in order to make what was stated in the Torah

<sup>5</sup> Baumgarten, *ibid.*, 31-32, compares this text to 1QS iv 19.

<sup>6</sup> Brooke, *apud* VanderKam, DJD XXII, 203-204.

text apply to the final period, because of his own ideological needs—presumably, in order to identify Amalek with (one of) the contemporary enemies of the sect, or the like. An alternative interpretation (possibly in addition to the previous one) is that, by formulating things in this manner, he enabled the term *מדור לדור* to allude to the final days, a possibility that biblical Hebrew may also support; cf. our discussion of the term *דור*.

The same phenomenon is repeated in *Miqṣat Ma'aseh haTorah*: 12 וכת[וב והיא] 13 . [כי יבוא עליכה כו]ל הדבר[ים האלה בא]חרית הימים הבר[כה ו]הקללה 14 . [והשיבותה אל לבב]כה ושבת[ה]ה אלו בכ[ל לבבכה וב]כ[ו]ל נפש[כה] באחרית [העת] 15 . [וכתוב בספר] מושה ובס[פרי הנביאי]ם שיבואו [...] של (“(12) And it is writ[ten: (13) and it shall happen] [when a]ll [these] thing[s shall befall you at the e]nd of days, the bles[sing and] the curse (14) [then you shall take it to] your [heart] and will turn [to him with a]ll [your heart and with [a]ll [your] soul at the end [of time]. (15) [And it is written in the book] of Moses and in the b[ook of the prophet]s, that there will come [...] ... [...]”; 4Q397 14-21 12-16).

In Deuteronomy 30:1-3, from which the author took this passage, the term באחרית הימים does not appear. By incorporating this term, there is created the author's interpretation, that what is said in the chapter of the admonition in fact applies to the End of Days, exactly as does the interpretation of the battle with Amalek mentioned previously.

In two places in this text of *Miqṣat Ma'aseh haTorah* the author interpolates the phrase באחרית הימים. The first of these is after the words “when a]ll [these] thing[s shall befall you,” as formulated in Deut 30:1. The author inserted these words between האלה and הברכה, making it so that Moses alluded in his words to the End of Days. Whereas in the original admonition the word עליך (“upon you”) is intended to refer to the speaker Moses' listeners, so to speak, in the Scrolls there is a double address: עליך is also understood as referring to those who had not heard the things, i.e., in the Latter Days.

In the second case, the author incorporated the words באחרית הימים after quoting in abridged form from verse 2 of that same chapter; .. ושבת. בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך. Verse 3 begins, .. ושב ה' . However, the author added at the end of verse 2 the words באחרית הימים, implying that both the sin (v. 1) and the repentance refer, in his view, to the Eschaton.

In 4Q398 11-13 3-5 we read: [ואנחנו מכירים שבאו מקצת הברכות והקללות] 4 . שכתוב בס[פר] מושה וזה הוא אחרית הימים שישבו בישראל 5 . [לת]מיד [...] [ולוא ישוב אחור] והרשעים ירשעו [And we are aware that part of the blessings and curses have occurred that are written in the

b[ook of Mos]es. And this is the end of days, when they will return in Israel fo[rever\*...] and not turn bac[k] and the wicked will act wick[edly]”).

[\* Strugnell-Qimton's reconstruction.] This text is a paraphrase, repeating the contents of Deut 30:2. As I have already written above, whereas the biblical text does not mention any specific time for the repentance referred to in the Torah, in these two passages of *Miqṣat Ma'aseh haTorah* (4Q397; 4Q398) there appears an exegetical addition of this sort, in which the things are made actual by interpreting what is said about the End of Days as referring to the present time of the sect.

In 4Q398 14-17 i 5-8 there is again a reworking of Deut 30:1, where it states that the blessing and curse will take place at the End of Days.

5 כתוב שתסור מהדרך וקר[תך] (הרע)ה וכתוב והיא כי  
6 יבו[א] עליך (כול הדברים) האלה באחרית[ת] הימים הברכה  
7 (וה)קללא (והשיבות)ה אל ל[בבך]ך ושבתה אלו בכל לבבך  
8 ובכול נפש[ך] באחרית[ת] העת

- 5 [it is writ]ten that you [shall stray from the path and evil will en-  
counter] you. And it is written: and it shall happen when  
6 [all] these [things shall befa]ll you at the en[d] of days, the bless-  
ing  
7 [and the] curse, [then you shall take] it to [your] he[art] and will  
turn to him with all your heart  
8 [and with al]l [your] soul [at the en]d [of time]

Other usages of אחרית הימים appear in the following texts: 4Q161 5-6 10: פתגם לאחרית הימים לבוא (“the word concerns the final days”; *Isaiah Peshet*, on Isa 10:28-32); and 4Q162 ii 1 פשר הדבר לאחרית הימים (“The interpretation of the word concerns the last days”; in a *Peshet* on Isa 5:11-14). Again, in 4Q163 13 3-4:

3 לאחרית הימים על  
4 [ ביום ה[הו]אה יבק[שו]

- 3 at the en]d of days on  
4 ] t[ha]t day they will se[ek]

In one place there appears the idiom באחרית העת, in 4Q398 14-17 ii 6-7:

6 בשל שתשמח באחרית העת במצאך מקצת דברינו כן  
7 ונחשבה לך לצדקה

- 6 so that at the end of time, you may rejoice in finding that some of our words are true.





the final days"; 4Q28a i 1). It would therefore seem, that they had specific instructions regarding the arrangements of life at that time.

According to Licht,<sup>9</sup> אחרית הימים is used to designate the period following that transformation, while the period during which the Yahad functioned was seen as adjacent but prior to אחרית הימים, and is called הקץ האחרון. That is, the sect anticipated that the period of the Final Days would come in wake of the generation during which they were living.

The *Damascus Document* speaks of the leaders who will be in the last End of Days: קריאי השם העמדים באחרית הימים ("the men of renown, who stand (to serve) at the end of days"; CD iv 4). Another aspect of the leadership of that generation follows from their words: עד עמד יורה הצדק באחרית הימים ("until there arises he who teaches justice at the end of days"; *ibid.*, vi 10-11).

We learn something of the transition between the periods from *Pesher Habakkuk*: כוהני ירושלים האחרונים אשר יקבוצו הון ובצע משלל העמים...ולאחרית הימים ינתן הונם עם שללם... ("the last priests of Jerusalem, who will accumulate riches and loot from plundering the nations. However, in the last days their riches and their loot will be given..."; 1QpHab ix 4-6). The picture gained from this suggests that "the last priests of Jerusalem" refers to the priests of the "last generation" (הקץ האחרון), i.e., the present generation of the sect. These evil priests will accumulate "riches and loot from plundering the nations." However, all their wealth will be given at the End of Days to the Kittim (see also Licht's remarks, cited above). Indeed, the author subsequently mentions the ascent of the Kittim (*ibid.*, 7), which is for him an event of the End of Days.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 251.

<sup>10</sup> See the summation of Seebass, s.v. אחרית, and also Steudel, "אחרית הימים" in the *Texts from Qumran*."

## VIII

### DURATION OF TIME AND LIFE SPAN IN THE APPROACH OF THE SCROLLS

*This page intentionally left blank*

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

### THE FORMULA FOR DURATION OF TIME “FROM... TO...” (מ.. עד) INCLUDING THE FORMULA “UNTIL THIS DAY” (עד היום הזה) AND ITS LIKE IN THE SCROLLS

In earlier discussions on the subject of duration of time in the Bible, I took note of the importance of the formula מ.. עד (or ומעלה, with its various developments). (See on this, in Part One of this work, Chapter 6, “Biblical Formulae for Depicting Duration of Time” and Chapter 7, “The Phrase “From... and Onwards/ Upwards” (מ.. ולמעלה/ והלאה) in the Bible.”) In what follows, I shall discuss the appearance of these and similar expressions in the Scrolls.

We shall begin with the use of the phrases מ...עד) in the Scrolls. A formula of this type appears, for example, in the *War Scroll*, כי הוֹאֵה יוֹם, מֵאֲזַל לְמַלְחַמַת כְּלָהּ יֵעוֹד לוֹ מֵאֲזַל לְמַלְחַמַת כְּלָהּ (1QM i 10).<sup>1</sup> The word מֵאֲזַל, when not explained by an adjacent text, refers to the beginning of time, or to the earliest possible time. This also fits the sect’s thought regarding destiny and ages, which were fixed by God from the beginning for each and every time (see above, Chapter 17 “God and Time”). Among these things certain events were fixed—I refer here to the day of battle against the sons of darkness—which were decided in advance by God. In God’s decision it is stated that there was also fixed a certain conclusion for the war, which shall of course be realized in the future, as described in the scroll in concrete terms. The same idea is repeated further on in the scroll, in xiii 14: כִּי־אֵל מֵאֲזַל יַעֲדָתָהּ לַךְ יוֹם קָרֵב: (“Since ancient time you determined the day of the great battle”).<sup>2</sup>

An alternative form of expression, which does not use the formula מ.. עד, is found in CD viii 2-3: הוֹאֵה הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִפְקֹד אֵל: (“This is the day when God will make a visitation”). (See our discussion of the comparative formula הוֹאֵה הַיּוֹם and the like, as in the previous chapter, Ch. 25, “The Use of יוֹם in the Scrolls,” and Ch. 22, The Term עֵת in the Scrolls,” on the term הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה). In any event, comparison between the statement in this passage with the other usages indicates that, while those phrases indicate that this is the very day, with all its occurrences, that was decided

<sup>1</sup> See Yadin, *War Scroll*, 260.

<sup>2</sup> Yadin, *ibid.*, 323.

about long ago, **מאז**, and has now arrived, in the present passage there is only a comparative formula. There is nevertheless no doubt that, in the consciousness of the author, this is what has been decided upon long ago, even though he does not say so explicitly.

A use of the formula **מאז** similar to that referred to here also appears in 1QM x 2: וילמדנו מאז לדורותינו לאמר (“and he taught us from ancient times for our generations saying...”).<sup>3</sup> It seems clear to me that the word **מאז** constitutes the *terminus a quo* for the Divine act of teaching, which continues throughout the generations (לדורותינו), and this is perhaps a variant nuance of the phrase והלאה, implying that it may even persist forever. Hence, this text ought to be seen as an alternative to the wording, ...מ.. (היום הזה) עד (ו)עד (מ)... ומעלה/והלאה, for which there is no real *terminus ad quem*, in that /ומעלה/ והלאה expresses the direction of time *without interruption*.

It is worth taking note of Yadin’s observation (ibid.) that the formula **מאז..** is quite commonly used in the *War Scroll*. He further notes that the term לדורותינו reflects the influence of (biblical) legal literature on our author.

I have already demonstrated in the chapter concerning formulations of duration of time that one may even arrive at a total designation of time through the use of the other *terminus (a quo)* without even mentioning the *terminus ad quem*, a conclusion that, as we shall see, also applies to the material from Qumran. This is the case in the description of the wicked in the *Thanksgiving Scroll*: ורשעים בראתה ל[קצי חר]ונכה ומרחם הקדשתם: ליום הרגה; 1QH vii 20. That is, as is generally accepted in the sect’s deterministic philosophy, the destiny of the evildoer on the day of slaughter was already predetermined by God, even before he was formed in his mother’s womb. Nevertheless, the formula is a comprehensive one, of the type ..מ: (עד) ..מ: i.e., from the womb until now, or, more exactly, until the day of his death, i.e., יום הרגה.<sup>4</sup> The wicked person thus walks about while the divine decision to put him to death is already in force and waiting for him.<sup>5</sup>

The formula, ..מ: ומעלה, as it appears in the Bible in the chapter of

<sup>3</sup> Yadin, *ibid.*, 304. On **מאז** as a typical term, see the commentary there and in the parallels, and on pp. 260-261; and cf. *ibid.*, on לדורותינו, which appears in the Bible in relation to the applicability of the observance of the commandments.

<sup>4</sup> See in Licht, *Thanksgiving Scroll*, 197.

<sup>5</sup> See the contrasting comparison there to the righteous, 1QH vii 17-19: רק אתה [ברא]תה צדיק ומרחם הכינתו למועד רצון... לישועת עולם ושלום עד [created] the just man, and from the womb you determined him for the period of approval... to eternal salvation and endless peace”.

valuations (Leviticus 27) and elsewhere (see above, Chapter 7, “The Phrase “From... and Onwards/ Upwards” (מ.. ולמעלה / והלאה) in the Bible”), is also used in the Scrolls. Thus, in CD x 7-8: ואל יתיצב עוד מבן ששים שנה ומעלה לשפוט את העדה (“and no-one over sixty years should hold the office of judging the congregation, for on account of man’s unfaithfulness his days were shortened,”); and likewise in 4Q266 8 iii 6-9; 4Q270 6 iv 18-19.

That is, a judge may not continue to serve beyond the age of sixty, because from that point on he is considered to be not mentally competent. Regarding the use of the formula, we find here an application of the formula מ.. ומעלה to express uninterrupted continuity. One should note that passages utilizing the formula מ.. ומעלה x מבן already appear in the *Damascus Document* and in the *War Scroll*.

It should be noted here, also, that an opening formula of the type מ.. without the *terminus ad quem* appears in the text known as *Pseudo-Moses: הווי השביעי* [ההוא ביובל השביעי] מתום הדור (“And ever since that generation *Blank* has been completed, in the seventh jubilee”; 4Q390 1 7). Due to the truncated nature of this text, I am unable to determine whether the author made use of the formula מ.. עד for any purpose whatsoever.

On the other hand, there are a group of texts in which one finds the concluding part of this formula. Thus, in 4Q223 2 iv 32-33: להעלות מס ליעקוב ולבניו כול הימים והיו מעלים מס ליעקוב עד יום יורדם [למצרים] (“to pay tribute to Jacob and his sons always, and they continued paying tribute to Jacob until [the da]y they went down [to Egypt]”). This text is parallel to *Jubilees* 38:13-14, which states that the children of Esau paid tribute to Jacob and to his sons from the death of Abraham, because of their defeat in battle by the sons of Jacob, and “until the day that he went down to Egypt... the children of Esau have not ceased from the yoke of servitude... until this day.” In effect, we have here two formulae of continuity: from the day they were defeated in battle with the sons of Jacob “until the day that he went down to Egypt” (v. 13), and from then, that is, from the time of that battle, until now, the present time: “the children of Esau have not ceased from the yoke of servitude... until this day” (v. 14).

In a fragment called *Works of God*, we read: [באתות ובמפתים]. 2. ל. ממלכה עד היום הזה [3] (“(2) with signs and with portents [...] (3) [...] every kingdom up to this day”; 4Q392 2 2-3). The context in which these things are mentioned is not clear, and due to the truncated nature of the text it is impossible to say whether or not there was a *terminus a*

*quo* in the formula, but what is extant here speaks of activities involving signs and portents similar to the plagues of Egypt. In any event, there is clearly at least a possibility that the *terminus ad quem* is sufficient to give a character of fixity to the description of the activities of God.

The *Damascus Document* mentions one who does not walk in the ways of the sect: בְּהוֹפֵעַ מַעֲשָׂיו יִשְׁלַח מַעֲדָהּ.. עַד יוֹם יִשׁוּב לַעֲמֵד בְּמַעֲמַד אֲנָשֵׁי תַמִּים; בהופע מעשיו יִשְׁלַח מַעֲדָהּ.. עד יום ישוב לעמד במעמד אנשי תמים (CD xx 3-5).<sup>6</sup> Here, the phrase “when his deeds are evident” (בהופע) implies a kind of *terminus a quo*, analogous to the formula ..מ: that is, as soon as his deeds become known he shall be expelled, and this expulsion shall remain in force “until the day when he returns,” etc.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, regarding the prohibition against eating new wheat, it states: אַל יֵאָכַל אֶת הַחִטִּים הַחֲדָשִׁים (“No-o[n]e is to eat the new wheat [...]”), and continues [ ] עַד יוֹם בָּא לַחֵם הַבְּכוֹרִים אֵל [ ] (“until the day of the bread from the first fruits arrives”; 4Q251 5 5-6). It is clear that in cases of this type there is no need for a *terminus a quo*, since the formula itself takes the negative form of a prohibition, and its entire purpose is to provide the *terminus ad quem*, the moment when the prohibition is negated.

Let us now turn to several explicit examples of formulae of continuity in those cases in which both *terminii* are stated explicitly.

In CD xix 33 - xx 1, mention is made of those people who entered into the new covenant in the land of Damascus and who then turned about to betray it and to abandon the well of living waters. Hence, because of their betrayal: לֹא יִחֲשָׁבוּ בְּסוּד עִם בְּכַתְּבָם לֹא יִכְתְּבוּ מִיּוֹם הָאֶסֶף; {יור מורה מיום} מורה היחיד עד עמוד משיח מאהרן ומישראל (35) ... (“... shall not be counted in the assembly of the people, they shall not be inscribed in their lists, from the day of the gathering {of the teacher} (1) {...} of the unique teacher until there arises the messiah out of Aaron and Israel”). That is, the period of their suspension from the sect is clearly defined through use of the formula עד מ. It is not our task to explain the reason why the period of their punishment was defined in this way; it is sufficient for our purposes to note that the punishment is defined according to the clear framework of a formula of continuity: from the death (“gathering”) of the leader until the coming of the Messiah of Aaron and Israel.

Use of the two poles while noting the formula in full appears in the words of the pious worshiper in 1QH xvii 29-34:

<sup>6</sup> On this text, see above in chapter 24.

<sup>7</sup> See Brin, “Divorce in Qumran,” 241-242



- 29 ... ... כִּי אֶתָּה מֵאֲבִי  
 30 יָדַעְתָּנִי וּמְרָחֵם [שִׁמְרָתָנִי וּמִבֶּטֶן] אִמִּי גַמְלָתָה עָלַי וּמִשְׁדֵּי הָרֹתִי רַחֲמִים  
 31 לִי וּבְחִיק אֹמְנָתִי [תִּשְׁעֶשְׁעֵנִי בַחֲסֶדְךָ] וּמִנְעוּרֵי הוֹפְעָתָה לִּי בְשֶׁכֶל מִשְׁפָּטָה  
 32 וּבֵאֵמֶת נִכּוֹן סִמְכָתָנִי וּבְרוּחַ קוֹדֶשְׁכָּה תִשְׁעֶשְׁעֵנִי וְעַד הַיּוֹם [פִּתַּחְתָּ]... הַ לְ[פִ]י  
 ... 33  
 34 וְעַד שִׁיבָה אֶתָּה תִּכְלַלְנִי

- 29 ... ...For you have known me more than my father,  
 30 from the womb [you kept me, and from the belly of] my mother  
 you have rendered good to me, from the breasts of her who con-  
 ceived me your compassion  
 31 has been upon me, on the lap of my wet-nurse [you have delighted  
 me with yo]ur mercy from my youth you have  
 shown yourself to me in the intelligence of your judgment,  
 32 and with certain truth you have supported me. You have delighted  
 me with your holy spirit, and until this very day [you opened] m[y]  
 [mouth]  
 33 ...  
 34 ... until old age you take care of me.<sup>8</sup>

The unique thing about this passage is: a) that it incorporates the formula, with both of its poles; b) that there are several *terminii a quo* and several *terminii ad quem*; c) that the entire purpose of this complicated structure is to claim that God always watches over him and guards him: “from the womb [...,... of] my mother you have rendered good to me, from the breasts of her who conceived me.” By this series of statements he takes note of the beginning of God’s providence over him; he states that this already happened when he was a fetus in his mother’s womb. By means of the phrase, “from my youth you have shown yourself to me in the intelligence of your judgment,” he establishes a new, later *terminus a quo* than the previous one.

One should also note that in lines 29-30, “For you have known me since my father;” there is yet another starting point, that may serve as a kind of parallel to the language “from the womb,” etc., found in this line. However, in practice, notwithstanding the use of the letter *mem* in the word **מֵאֲבִי**, this is not a *terminus a quo*, but is evidently a comparative *mem*: that is, it states that God knew him (i.e., guarded over him) more than his father did.

As for the *terminus ad quem*, it is split: on the one hand, **עַד הַיּוֹם**, “until this very day”—i.e., the time of the pietist author; on the other hand: **וְעַד שִׁיבָה אֶתָּה תִּכְלַלְנִי**, “until old age you take care of me”—that is, he

<sup>8</sup> Part of this translation is mine.

states that God will continue to protect him until advanced old age.

(Compare above the quotation from *Jubilees* 38, for the double *terminus ad quem* given there: “until the day that [Jacob] went down to Egypt... until this day”)

A full version of this formula also appears in the *Prayer of Enoch*, 4Q369 1 i 5-6:<sup>9</sup>

5 ק]ץ פלאכה כי מאז חקקתה למו  
6 משפטו עד קץ משפט נחרצה

According to Attridge and Strugnell,<sup>10</sup> the word חקקתה here may refer to inscription upon the tablets of heaven; thus also in *Jub.* 3:10, etc.; 1 *Enoch* 81:2; 93:2; 103:2; 106:19; *T. Levi* 5:4. Regarding line 6, “until the ordained time of judgment”: in their opinion, this is a phrase carrying eschatological significance, which is relevant, in their opinion, in light of their interpretation of column ii of the text under question (on which, see in their above-cited work).

At this point we encounter the opening formula מאז, used in reference to the giving of the laws or to the establishment of their destinies by God, as performed by means of a divine command (“you engraved for them”). These things are intended to ripen until “the ordained time of judgment”: i.e., the judgment to be passed concerning the matter of these people, in which there will be realized the divine decision, until it comes at the time destined for the severe judgment.

In 4Q225 1 7 we find the phrase [עד יום הבריאה] [החדשה] (“until the [new] creation [...]”).<sup>11</sup> The new creation is also mentioned in *Jubilees* 4:26; and cf. 4Q217 2 1-3:

1 [מחלקות העתים לתורה ול]תעודה  
2 [לכל ש[ני] העולם מן הברי[אה]  
3 [ם וכל [הנ]ברא עד היום

- 1 [...] the divisions of the times, for the law and for [the testimony...]  
2 [...] for all the y[ears of] eternity, from the crea[tion...]  
3 [...] and all [that is] created until the day [...] <sup>12</sup>

Compare also *Jubilees* 1:27, where Moses is told everything that will occur from the Creation until the construction of the Temple of the

<sup>9</sup> On this text and its issues see above in chapters 17 and 20.

<sup>10</sup> Attridge-Strugnell, apud DJD XIII, 354-356.

<sup>11</sup> VanderKam-Milik, DJD XIII, 145, and the interpretation there of הבריאה [החדשה].

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 25-27.

Lord at the End of Days: “And he said to the angel of presence, ‘Write for Moses from the first creation until my sanctuary is built in their midst forever and ever...’ And the angel of the presence... took the tablets of the division of years from the time of the creation of the law and testimony according to their weeks (of years), according to the jubilees... from [the day of creation until]<sup>13</sup> the day of the new creation when the heaven and earth and all of their creatures shall be renewed... until the sanctuary of the Lord is created in Jerusalem upon Mount Zion... that it might be thus from that day and unto all the days of the earth.”

An interesting formula appears in 4Q370 1 ii 4-6:

4 רעתם בדעתם בין טוב לרע כי הנה כחציר]  
 5 יצמחו וכצל ימיהם ע[ל הארץ ועתה שמעו נא עמי והשכילו לי פתאים כי מעולם]  
 6 ועד עולם הוא ירחם... ..

- 4 their evil, with their knowledge o[f good and evil... like grass]  
 5 they sprout, and like a shadow are their days o[n the earth, and now listen my people, pay attention to me, simpletons, as from eternity]  
 6 to eternity he will have compassion ..... ..

part of this translation is according to Allegro, DJD V 4Q185.

God’s quality of compassion is shown in comparison to the shortsightedness and lowly status of human beings. This unfortunate status is in turn related to the shortness of their lives: “like a shadow are their days on the earth.” But despite all this, or perhaps because of it, it is said of God that: “[from eternity] to eternity he will have compassion.” Here too, one may say that the formula incorporates within itself a statement of his ongoing compassion, in the past, present and future, something on the order of: “Yet he, being compassionate, forgave their iniquity, and did not destroy them; he restrained his anger often, and did not stir up all his wrath” (Ps 78:38).<sup>14</sup>

The above text from 4Q370 is, according to its scholarly editors, influenced by another text from Cave 4: 4Q185.<sup>15</sup> Regarding the formula of continuity, **ועד עולם הוא ירחם כי מעולם**, one should also note the influence of Psalm 103 on 4Q185, and via that text indirectly on 4Q370.

<sup>13</sup> The restoration of this phrase is based upon M. Stone, as cited in Charlesworth’s *OT Pseudepigrapha*, II: 54, n. 1.

<sup>14</sup> Newsom, DJD XIX, 96-97, and see there on the influence on the author of Psalm 103.

<sup>15</sup> See the discussion in VanderKam et alii, DJD XIX, 89-90.

One of the well-known motifs in Psalm 103 is מעולם עד עולם (v. 17) used as a description of God. Similarly in our document—4Q370—a certain use was made of this description of the Divine. Compare also 4Q300 9 3: מעולם הוא ועד עולם (“He is from eternity and t[o] eternity”).

The formula, עד היום הזה, “until this (very) day,” appears a number of times in the Scrolls, but the full formula appears only infrequently in the Scrolls.

It should be noted that, due to the truncated nature of the following texts, there is no explicit proof of the full use of the formula therein. In 4Q449 1 2: תיני ועד היום הזה (“[...] our ... [...] and until this day”); 4Q392 2 3: ממלכה עד היום הזה (“kingdom up to this day”); 4Q223-224 2 i 54: [גרע ממנו מאומה] (“[And since he came from Haran until] this day he has not been [depriving us of anything]” = *Jub.* 35:12). Yet despite the fragmentary nature of these texts, it is nevertheless possible to infer from them the existence of the full formula. In the case of the last example, thanks to the existence of the full formula in the *Book of Jubilees*, it is possible to state that both poles of the formula are extant.

Note also 4Q221 3 1-4:

- 1 [ב]חיו <sup>[עד]</sup> אשר ה[וא]
- 2 [זקן מפני הרעה וישבע ימו וכול הדורות אשר יקומו מע]תה עד י[ו]ם
- 3 [המשפט הגדול יזקנו במהרה ( ) בטרם ישלימו שני]ם יובלים
- 4 [ותעזבם דעתם משיבתם ותאבד כול דעתם ובימי]ם ההם<sup>16</sup>

- 1 [in] his life /until/ h[e] grew
- 2 [old in the presence of evil (and) his days were full. And all the generations which will arise hence]forth and until the d[a]y of
- 3 [the great judgment will grow old quickly ( ) before they complete tw]o jubilees,
- 4 [and their knowledge will forsake them because of their old age. And all of their knowledge will be removed. And in] those [day]s

In the text corresponding to the above in *Jubilees* 23:11, it states “and all the generations which will arise henceforth and until the day of the great judgment,” etc. The formula is therefore intended to establish a point in the present, from which a line of continuity is drawn into the eschatological future (“the great day of judgment”).

An almost complete version of this formula appears in 4Q158 1-2 7-13:

<sup>16</sup> VanderKam-Milik, *DJD* XIII, 70-72.

- 7 ויברך אותו שם ויאמר לו יפרכה יהוה וירב] כה ]  
 8 [ד]עת ובינה ויצילכה מכול חמס ו]  
 9 עד היום הזה ועד דורות עולמ[ים]  
 10 וילך לדרכו בברכו אותו שם וי[קרא  
 13 על שתי כפות הירך עד ה[יום הזה
- 7 [And he bless]ed him right there. And he said to him: May YH[WH] make you fertile and [make] you [numerous... May he fill you with]  
 8 [know]ledge and intelligence; may he free you from all violence and [...]  
 9 until this day and for everlasting generations [...]  
 10 And he walked on his way after having blessed him there. And he [name]d...  
 13 above the two joints of the thigh until the [present day....]<sup>17</sup>

In this text the present point is mentioned twice: “[And he bless]ed him *right there*” (7); “And he walked on his way after having blessed him *there*” (10). That is, the blessing will be in effect “from now on” (שם refers to place, but is used here in the sense of the present time)—“until the present day” (עד היום הזה). This is a strange formula, in that it essentially says “from today until today.” Thus, the effective formula is ועד דורות [עולמ]ים, “and for everlasting generations”—that is, this is a formula comparable to מעתה ועד עולם. Two conclusions follow from this: a) עד היום הזה is a slip of the pen of the author, possibly due to habitual use of the formula מ..עד היום הזה; b) this may have been influenced by the biblical passage speaking of the prohibition against eating the sinew of the hip עד היום הזה, which the author in fact quoted in line 13. See also above, concerning עד היום הזה in *Jubilees* 38:12, in the section on the children of Jacob and of Esau.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Allegro, DJD V, 1-2.

<sup>18</sup> To complete the picture, see also above, Part I, Chapter 6, “Biblical Formulae for Depicting Duration of Time,” etc.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

### LIFE DURATION IN THE SCROLLS AND THE APOCRYPHA

#### 1. *Duration of Life in the Book of Jubilees*<sup>1</sup>

The subject of life duration appears in various forms in the Dead Sea Scrolls (and in the pseudepigraphic literature discovered at Qumran). We shall discuss below several manifestations of this subject.

In Chapter 23 of the *Book of Jubilees*, in the description of Abraham's death, it is stated that Abraham lived three jubilees and four weeks of years, all told 175 years: "being old and full of days" (v. 8). The author then indicates that the life span of the ancients was 19 jubilees: "And after the Flood they began to be less than nineteen jubilees and to grow old quickly and to shorten the days of their lives due to much suffering and through the evil of their ways—except Abraham." Even though Abraham was an exception, by virtue of his being perfect in all his ways and thoroughly righteous throughout his life, he nevertheless did not live four full jubilees, but "grew old in the presence of evil (and) his days were full" (*ibid.*, 10). Moreover,

(11) all of the generations which will arise henceforth and until the day of the great judgment will grow old quickly before they complete two jubilees, and their knowledge will forsake them because of their old age. And all of their knowledge will be removed (12) And in those days if a man will live a jubilee and a half they will say about him, "He prolonged his life, but the majority of his days were suffering and anxiety and affliction. (13) And there was no peace, because plague came upon plague, and wound upon wound..." (14) And all of this will come in the evil generation which sins in the land. Pollution and fornication and contamination and abomination are their deeds. (15) Then they will say, "The days of the ancients were as many as one thousand years and good. But behold, (as for) the days of our lives, if a man should extend his life seventy years or if he is strong (for) eighty

---

<sup>1</sup> The material quoted in this chapter from the *Book of Jubilees* is taken from the Charlesworth edition of *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, as explained in the Foreword to this book. Sections from the relevant documents from the Qumran literature (4Q221 3; 4Q223 2 i), are based upon DJD XIII: 70-72, 101-104. Compare also the material discussed above, Part I, Chapter 15, "Duration of Life in Biblical Times."

years, then these are evil. And there is not any peace in the days of this evil generation.” (16) And in this generation children will reproach their parents and their elders on account of sin, and on account of injustice, and on account of the words of their mouth, and on account of great evil which they will do, and on account of their forsaking the covenant which the Lord made between them and himself so that they might be careful and observe all of his commandments and his ordinances and all of his law without turning aside to the right or left. (17) For they all did evil and every mouth speaks of sin... (19) concerning the Law and the Covenant because they have forgotten the commandments and covenant and festivals and months and sabbaths and jubilees and all the judgment. (20) ... until much blood is shed upon the earth by each (group)... (23) And he will rouse up against them the sinners of the nations who have no mercy or grace for them and who have no regard for any persons old or young... (24) In those days, they will cry out and call and pray to be saved from the hand of the sinners, the gentiles, but there will be none who will be saved, (25) and the heads of children will be white with gray hairs, and an infant three weeks old will look aged like one whose years (are) one hundred, and their stature will be destroyed by affliction and torment. (26) And in those days, children will begin to search the law, and to search the commandments, and to return to the way of righteousness. (27) And the days will begin to increase and grow longer among those sons of men, generation by generation, and year by year, until their days approach a thousand years, and to a greater number of years than days. (28) And there (will be) no old men and none who is full of days. Because all of them will be infants and children. (29) And all of their days they will be complete and live in peace and rejoicing and there will be no Satan and no evil (one) who will destroy, because all of their days will be days of blessing and healing. (30) And then the Lord will heal his servants, and they will rise up and see great peace, and they will drive out their enemies, and the righteous ones will see and give praise, and rejoice forever and ever with joy; and they will see all of their judgments and all of their curses among their enemies. (31) And their bones will rest in the earth, and their spirits will increase joy, and they will know that the Lord is an executor of judgment; but he will show mercy to hundreds and thousands, to all who love him. (32) And you, Moses, write these words because thus it is written and set upon the heavenly tablets as a testimony for eternal generations.

*(Jubilees 23:11-32)*

The above source deals, on the one hand, with the extraordinarily long lifetime of the ante deluvian generations (nearly one thousand years) and, on the other, with the brief lifetime of men during the generations following the flood—seventy or eighty years (along the lines of what is

said in Psalm 90). The passage goes on to discuss Abraham, an exceptional individual, who lived 175 years “and was filled with days.” The chapter concludes with the message that humankind shall in the End of Days once more live as they did in the early generations, that is, one thousand years. Thus, there are four age-periods in this chapter.

We have learned that, according to the author, human life span is a consequence of the Divine edict issued over the members of various generations. From the incident of Abraham we also learn that, at times, there is a certain taking into account of the destiny of the individual in light of his righteousness.

Moreover, according to the author the terms “old” and “full of days” are relative: concerning the people of the generations following the Flood it is stated that their life span began to be shortened in terms of the jubilees, “and to grow old quickly and to shorten the days of their lives” (*Jub.* 23:9). But concerning Abraham it says that he was “old.. and full of days,” even though he had lived only a tenth of the life span usual during the period of the beginning of humanity. Similarly, regarding the other people of the generation following the flood, it states that they “will grow old quickly before they complete two jubilees” (*ibid.*, 11). It is further said that, if a person lives a jubilee and a half, “they will say about him, ‘He prolonged his life’” (*ibid.*, 12).

We thus find that the concepts of old age, length of days, and the like are relative and not absolute, and that they alter in accordance with the circumstances of the generations as a whole. There also stands out the statement concerning these generations that, because of their evil behavior, “the heads of children will be white with gray hairs, and an infant three weeks old will look aged like one whose years (are) one hundred, and their stature will be destroyed by affliction and torment” (*ibid.*, 25). That is, it is not biological age that determines age, but rather the appearance—the white hairs and bent posture—that gives the child the likeness of an elderly man. The opposite situation will occur in the last generation, about which it is said even of those who are a thousand years old, “and there (will be) no old men and none who is full of days, because all of them will be infants and children” (*ibid.*, 28). On this passage, compare also 4Q221 3.

A similar claim appears in *Jubilees* 21:1-2, this time from the mouth of Abraham himself: “I am old and I do not know the day of my death and I am filled with days. Behold, I am one hundred and seventy-five years old.” Here, too, Abraham is described as old and full of years, even though of course no explicit comparison is made between the



system of the generations before the Flood and those that followed; see also the fragment of *Jubilees* in 4Q219 1 i 11-13.

Rebecca's words to her son Jacob (*Jub.* 35) convey other ideas related to the matter of *life duration*. There, Rebecca says: "But I will rightly tell you, my son, (that) I shall die within this year, and I shall not pass through this year alive because I have seen in a dream the day of my death, that I shall not live more than one hundred and fifty-five years. And behold, I have completed all of the days of my life which I will live" (35:6). Jacob laughs upon hearing these things, as his mother does not at all look like an old woman whose death is imminent, because "her strength was in her. And she was not suffering loss of strength, because she was coming and going and seeing (clearly), and her teeth were sound, and no disease had touched her all the days of her life. And Jacob said, 'I (would be) happy, mother, if my days approached the days of your life and my powers were thus in me as your powers. And you will not die because you have spoken to me (in) idle jest concerning your death'" (*ibid.*, 7-8). Compare to this 4Q223-224 2 1 45-46.

Notwithstanding what is said in the passage about Abraham concerning the life span in the generation after the Flood, which is limited to seventy (or at most eighty) years, and that Abraham alone lived three jubilees and four "weeks" of years—i.e., 175 years—Rebecca is also aware that she will live 155 years and that in the present year of her life she will die. It would seem to follow from this that, according to the author, the edict upon an individual's life span did not apply to the family of the patriarchs: "And all of the generations which will arise henceforth and until the day of the great judgment will grow old quickly before they complete two jubilees, and their knowledge will forsake them because of their old age. And all of their knowledge will be removed" (23:11). And even before then, "And after the Flood they began to be less... except Abraham" (v. 9).

Thus, our author is not consistent in his claim, or else one is dealing here with two different sources: that which appears in the section concerning Abraham in Chapter 21, and that which was incorporated in the story of Rebecca (Ch. 35). On the other hand, it may be that the phrase, "except Abraham" is meant to be interpreted in a broad sense, as referring to the entire family of Abraham, including his descendants (Isaac and his wife, Jacob, etc.).

The same holds true of the passage concerning the death of Isaac: "And [Isaac] died at the age of one hundred and eighty years. He completed twenty-five weeks and five years. And his two sons, Esau

and Jacob, buried him” (36:18). It should be noted that here the contradiction with the chapter of Abraham is even greater, as Isaac lived 180 years, while Abraham lived 175. Thus, the statement “except Abraham” is contradicted even more sharply in this case. In Abraham’s own words to God we also find testimony to his age at his death: “Behold, I am one hundred and seventy-five years old, and fulfilled in days. And all of my days were peaceful for me” (22:7).

It should be noted that in 45:13 it states concerning Jacob that “all the days which he lived were three jubilees, one hundred and forty-seven years” (45:13). Of Joseph it says: “And Joseph died at one hundred and ten years of age” (46:3). As I have already written above, even concerning these details there is a contradiction with the statements in Chapter 21, and see above for my proposals for resolving these contradictions.

It is also worth noting that in the *Damascus Document* it states: ואל יתיצב עוד מבן ששים שנה ומעלה לשפוט את העדה כי במעל האדם מעטו ימו ובחרון אף אל ביושבי הארץ אמר לסור את דעתם עד לא ישלימו את ימיהם (“And no-one over sixty years should hold their office of judging the congregation, for on account of man’s unfaithfulness his days were shortened, and because of God’s wrath against the inhabitants of the earth, he ordered to remove their knowledge before they completed their days”; CD x 7-10); and see also 4Q266 8 iii 6-9, and 4Q270 6 iv 18-19.

It follows from this that one may find a connection between the decline in human longevity and in human wisdom, to the extent that one who is sixty years old is considered as lacking in clarity of thought and close to death, because “on account of man’s unfaithfulness his days were shortened.”<sup>2</sup>

## 2. *The Number of Man’s Years in Comparison with God*

Several sources relate to the brevity of man’s years in comparison with other entities, as we shall survey below.

Ben Sira, for example, compares human life to the life of the people, stating that: חיי איש מספר ימים וחיי עם ישראל [ימי אין מספר] (“A man’s life is but a few days, and the life of the people Israel [is without number]”; Ben Sira 37:25, MS. B), or חיי אנוש ימים מספר וחיי ישרון ימי

<sup>2</sup> To complete the picture, see above, Chapter 15: “Duration of Life in Biblical Times.”

אין מספר (“Man’s life is a few days and the life of Jeshurun is without number”; Ibid., MS. D). Man is mortal, in that his days are a fixed number, and when these are filled, he dies. The life of the nation, by contrast, is unlimited, since the nation is immortal.

Another comparison is the following: טובת חי ימי מספר וטובת שם ימי אין מספר (“The goodness of life is a few days, and the goodness of a name is days without number”; Sir 41:13). Ben Sira also compares human life to the days of eternity, arriving at the conclusion regarding the nullity of human life: “The number of man’s days if many are a hundred years, like a drop of water in the sea or a grain of sand, so are his days few in the days of eternity” (Sir 18:9-10— from the Greek).

“Therefor God has held his anger against them and will pour upon them his mercies, and shall see and know their end, for it is evil; therefore he has multiplied his forgiveness. Man’s mercies are on his neighbor, and God’s mercies are upon all flesh” (ibid., 11-13). Since man’s life is brief in comparison with the days of God’s world, God practices forgiveness towards his creatures, for the brevity of days is sufficient punishment. Perhaps he had in his mind’s eye the image of Psalm 90, in which the poet requests that, due to the brevity and difficulty of man’s days, למנות ימינו כן הודע ונבא לבב חכמה.. שבענו בבקר הסדך ונרננה, (“Teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom... Satisfy us in the morning with thy steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days”; Ps 90:12, 14). The psalmist knows that there is no way to extend man’s fixed lifetime, therefore he should at least be able to take comfort that he shall live well.

An additional parallel to the picture in Psalm 90 may be seen in the vision of 1 Baruch 48:5: “Only you (i.e., God) know the length of generations, and you do not reveal your secrets to many.” This text is formulated on the basis of the accepted interpretation of Ps 90:12: למנות ימינו כן הודע ונבא לבב חכמה—“Teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom”: that is, the quota of years that has been decreed upon each man is fixed by God from the beginning, and He alone knows them.

Further on in the *Apocalypse of Baruch*, ibid., 15, it says: “For we are born in a short time, and in a short time we return”: that is, the duration of human life is fixed and limited, but “with you, however, the hours are like times, and the days like generations.” This is like a variant of the metaphor in Ps 90:4: “For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, or as a watch in the night.”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Cf. in the discussion of the various verses of Psalm 90 in Chapter 15, above.

A picture of the relativity that follows from a comparison between human life and the Divine life is implied by 4Q370 ii 4-7: [כי הנה כחציר] יצמחו וכצל ימיהם ע[ל הארץ.. מעולם] ועד עולם הוא ירחם [גבורת ה' זכרו נפל[אותיו ("for behold like grass] they sprout, and like a shadow are their days o[n the earth... from eternity] to eternity he will have compassion [...] the strength of YHWH, remember the mar[vels...").<sup>4</sup> There stands out here in particular the idea of the comparison between the brevity of human days to the eternity of the Divine life, "from eternity to eternity." Compare also 4Q185 1-2 i 13-14:

13 והוא כצל ימיו על הא[רץ] ועתה שמעו נא עמי והשכילו  
14 לי פתאים וחכמו מן [ג]בורת אלהינו וזכרו נפלאות עשה

- 13 as for him, his days are like a shadow on the ea[rth.] And now, please, hear me, my people! Pay attention  
14 to me, simpletons! Draw wisdom from the [p]ower of our God, remember the miracles he performed.<sup>5</sup>

The subject of God's eternity admittedly only appears indirectly, as it does not state here explicitly that He is eternal, but only that "from eternity to eternity he will have compassion." The mention of God's compassion is incorporated indirectly in the definition of his eternity.

### 3. ימי חיים and the Lake

In a large group of sources from the Scrolls, one finds phrases or idioms whose sense is כל החיים ("all of life") or כל ימי החיים ("all the days of life"), or the like, in which it is stated that a particular person will perform a certain act, or refrain from a certain act, or enjoy the protection of God, etc., throughout all the days of his life. We shall now survey those sources in the Scrolls containing such a usage, one after another.

The poet announces that ארננה בכל ימני ("I [w]ill sing (to the Lord) all my da[ys]"; 4Q372 15 3): that is, he has a feeling of obligation to praise God for his deeds towards him.

In the Qumran version of the Book of Tobit (4Q200 2 3-5 = Tob 4:5) we find the following instructions of a father to his son:<sup>6</sup>

3 vacat וכול ימיכה <sup>ב</sup> לאלהים ה[י]ה[ז] כר  
4 [ ] מאמרו vacat אמת היה [עושה כ]ול ימי ח[ייכה]

<sup>4</sup> Newsom, DJD XIX, 96-97, and see the discussion above, chapter 26.

<sup>5</sup> Newsom, *ibid.*, 90. For another reading, see Allegro, DJD V, 85-86.

<sup>6</sup> Fitzmyer, *apud* VanderKam, DJD XIX, 65-66.

5 [בדרכי שקר כי בעשות האמת יהיה עמך ] [

- 3 [...] *Blank* And all your days /my son/ [re]member God [...]  
 4 his command. *Blank* [Act] truthfully [a]ll the days of [your] li[fe ]  
 5 [on path]s of deceit, for by acting [truthfully success will b]e with  
 you ...[...]

The instructions are total, meant for all the days of the son's future life. According to these instructions, he must always walk in the ways of God and refrain from falsehood.

A personal declaration concerning the totality of life in this formula is found in the Qumran version of *Jubilees* (4Q219 1 12-14 = *Jub.* 21:1-2):

12 ויצוהו לאמור אני זק[נתי ולוא ידעתי יום מותי כי אני שבע]  
 13 ימי והנא אני בן שתים [ושבעים ומאת שנה ובכול ימי חיי זכרתי]  
 14 תמי[ד את א]לוהינו ודרש[תי אותה בכול לבי]

- 12 and commanded him saying: [I am] ol[d and I do not know the  
 day of my death, for I have completed]  
 13 my days. Behold, I am [one hundred and seventy-] two [years and  
 throughout all the days of my life I have been remembering]  
 14 our [G]od always and [I] sought [him with all my heart...]

It is similarly said of Leah: [עמו לוא] [ימי חייה] ("all the d]ays of her life [with him she did not"; 4Q223 2 iii 19 = *Jub.* 36:23).

But there are other cases in which כל הימים is used in a broader sense. Thus, in 4Q216 vii 11-17 (= *Jub.* 2:20-24), it is used in speaking about the choice of the Sabbath as parallel to the election of Israel. Regarding Israel, the seed of Jacob, it says:<sup>7</sup>

11 ובחר בזרע יעקוב... 12 לעולם... 14 כל הימים vacat

See the discussion on this text above, chapter 23.

By the same token, this idiom may refer to an extremely brief period of time, depending, as we said, upon the content and formulation of the particular passage in question, including that idiom.

Expressions referring to ימי חיי-x, the days of the life of such-and-such a person, appear in the following texts:

ימי חייהם ("days of their life"; 4Q385 34 2); כול ימי בגן החיים ("all my days in the garden of life"; 4Q385 9 ii 2). A formula in which a person declares that he will refrain from performing a certain act

<sup>7</sup> VanderKam-Milik, DJD XIII, 21-22.

throughout his life appears in the promise made by Jacob to his mother in the *Book of Jubilees*, in a passage also extant in a fragment from Cave 4: כולל ימי חיה לא [אקה לי אשה מכול בנות כנען] (“[all] the days of my life I will] not [take for myself a wife from the daughters of Canaan”]; 4Q222 1 1 = *Jub.* 25:9.<sup>8</sup> In another conversation Jacob says אמ [תקרבנה שני] (“if my [years approach] the years of [your] life”; 4Q223 2 i 46). This is the Scroll’s formulation of the text in *Jubilees* 35:8: “if my days approached the days of your life, for you have spoken to me in idle jest concerning your death.”<sup>9</sup>

In Sapiential Text, 4Q417 2 ii 7, there is the following piece of advice about life: .... כולל חייכה בו... (to your credit in favour of your neighbour... all [your] l[ife is in it.]). Compare also the parallel formula in 4Q416 2 ii 5-6 and 4Q418 8 4-5.

In these wisdom texts, the phrase חייכה is used in the sense of “all the days of your life” (כל ימי חייך). See above regarding the forms כולל ימי and ימי חייכה.

Another piece of sapiential advice appears in 4Q417 2 i 10-11:<sup>10</sup> כיה מה צעיר מרש ואל תשמ" באבלכה פן תעמל בחיכה הבט ברז] (11) נהיה וקח מולדי ישע ודע מי נוחל כבוד וע[מ]ל (“For what is more trivial than a poor man? Do not rejoice when you should mourn, lest you toil in your life. [Consider the mystery of] that is to come and comprehend the birth time of salvation. And know who is to inherit glory and t[oi]l”). Compare here also 4Q416 2 i 5; and 4Q416 2 ii 20-21:

פן תבוז חייכה וגם אל תקל כלי [ח]יקכה vacat

“lest *Blank* you shame your life and also do not make light of the vessel of you [b]osom”.<sup>11</sup>

An alternative idiom used to indicate all the days of life appears in the same document, 4Q418 7b 4-6: [ואל תוסף עוד פן תק]ציר חייכה [אם הון] אנשים תלוה למחסורכה אל דומי לכה יומם ול[ילה] ואל מנוח [לנפשכה עד] (“(4) and do not take any more, lest you sh]orten your life. (5) [If you borrow money of men for your need, do not sleep day or n]ight and let there be no rest (6) [for your soul until you have returned to the one who has lent to you. Do not lie to him. Why should you] carry guilt?”). Compare this to the formula in

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 89-91.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 102-104.

<sup>10</sup> Strugnell et alii, DJD XXXIV, 173. Part of the translation given below is according to Strugnell’s. For the discussion of this text see *ibid.*, 172-182.

<sup>11</sup> Strugnell et alii, DJD XXXIV, 181.

another document: **יומם וליילה ואל מנוח לנפשכה [עד] השיבכה** (“day or night and let there be no rest for your soul [until] you have returned”; 4Q417 1 i 22). And in 4Q418 88 1-2 we read: **[ ] תכין לכ[ול] הפציקה** [ ] (“(1) you will prepare for a[ll] what you need [...] (2) during your life, and your peace for an abundance of year[s...]”).

Further on, in fragment 103 ii, following the subject of wearing mixed garments, it states: **וג[ם] הונכה עם בשרכה [ ] חייכה יתמו יחד ובחייכה לוא תמצא** (“also] your wealth together with your flesh [...of] your life will end together, and during your life you shall not find”; *ibid.* 9). It seems that **חייכה** is used here merely in the sense of life. The last phrase (**ובחייכה**) is meant to say that throughout the course of your life you shall not find deliverance, rest, or the like.

However, as in the Bible, the form **בחי** (i.e., preceded by the preposition **ב**) is used in a slightly variant sense: i.e., “so long as I am alive.” See Psalm 104:33: “I will sing to the Lord as long as I live **אשירה** (אשירה) **בחי** (לה) **בחי** (בעודי)”; here, **בחי** clearly means “while I am alive”; cf. Ps 63:5. Similarly, in 4Q437 2 i 4: **על כל זאת אברך שמך בחי אשר הצלתני מקוש גויי[ם]** (“[For all this] ... I shall bless your name during my life because you have delivered me from ... [the traps] of the nations[s]”), a parallel to which appears in 4Q434 2 1-2.

In addition, the word **חיים** is also used in the sense of vital energy. Thus explicitly in the above-mentioned *Sapiential Text*, 4Q418 126 ii 7-9:<sup>12</sup> **[ ] ולהרים ראוש דלים [ ] בכבוד עולם ושלום עד ורוח חיים להבדיל [ ] כול בני חוה ובכוח אל ורוב כבודו עם טובו [ ]** (“and to lift the head of poor ones [...] with eternal glory and everlasting peace and a living spirit to separate [...] all the sons of Eve, and through the strength of God and his abundant glory with his goodness”). **רוח חיים** is a gift from God that he implants within each one of his creatures.

<sup>12</sup> Strugnell, *ibid.*, 350. On **רוח חיים**, see *ibid.*, 354.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

### THE PHRASE “HE SHALL NOT DO SUCH-AND-SUCH X-ביום”

In the Bible, one finds a number of texts connecting certain activities to certain parts of the day. This seems to have led to the creation of the formula, x לא יקטול איש ביום (“a person shall not do such-and-such an act on day...”), even though there are some texts which formulate this idea through means of a positive formulation.

Thus, for example, in the portrayal of the order of the world in Psalm 104, we find: “Thou makest darkness, and it is night, when all the beasts of the forest creep forth. The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God” (vv. 20-21). That is, night is the time of activity for the beasts of the forest, including the young lions. Immediately thereafter it states, “When the sun rises, they get them away and lie down in their dens” (v. 22), followed by “Man goes forth to his work, and to his labour until the evening” (v. 23). Verse 22a determines the new framework of time under discussion, while v. 22b states that this marks the end of the period of activity of the wild beasts, while verse 23 indicates that the daylight hours are the time for the labor and activity of man.

For an analogous positive formulation—without using the word יום—see the *Sapiential Text* 4Q423 5:<sup>1</sup>

- 5 [If you are a m]an of the earth, observe the appointed times of the  
summer, and gather your produce at its time, and the season of  
6 [of harvest in the appointed time. Medi]tate on all your crops, and  
in your work give attentio]n to the knowledge of [\*everything the]  
good with the evil  
7 [...ma]n of insight with the man of folly...Thus, a man of  
\* my suggestion.

That is to say, one ought to act within the framework of time fixed for a particular activity. One who does not reap and gather produce at the proper time shall in the end find that his produce is ruined and has rotted from rain and cold, and the like. There is no great innovation

---

<sup>1</sup> T. Elgvin, apud Strugnell et alii, DJD XXXIV, 518-522. On this text see above in chapters 19 and 22. Part of the translation of the text is according to Elgvin, *ibid*.



involved in this idea, as the Bible itself states: “and I will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain” (Deut 11:14). The granting of the good is not absolute but, among other factors for its success, depends upon the factor of time (בעתו, “in its season”), which is seen as an extremely important component.

In the Book of Ruth, Naomi tells her daughters-in-law: “Turn back, my daughters, go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night (גם הייתי הלילה לאיש) and should bear sons” (Ruth 1:12). This phrase includes a clear allusion to the accepted practice of engaging in sexual relations specifically at night (and compare below on a new document from the Scrolls that pertains to this subject).

In Ecclesiastes 10:16, the author bemoans: “Woe to you, O land, when your king is a child, and your princes feast (אכלו; literally: eat) in the morning!” The complaints relate both to the inappropriateness of the attempt at rule by a child-king, and to that of activities performed at the wrong time; presumably, there was a view, unfamiliar to us, according to which it is unsuitable to dine during the morning hours. By contrast, in the following verse we read: “Happy are you, O land, when your king is the son of free men, and your princes feast at the proper time, for strength, and not for drunkenness!” (v. 17).

Against the child-king, there is counterpoised here a king who is a free man, whatever may be the nature of the contrast implied here, such as that as a mature person he is free to arrive at correct decisions, and therefore is not subject to the misleading advice of various advisors and courtiers. In contrast with the inappropriate feasting of the morning, it states that “your princes feast at the proper time (בעת),” i.e., the opposite of dining at the inappropriate time, in the morning. As for the concluding phrase, “for strength and not for drunkenness,” see the commentaries as to whether this is a continuation of the subject of feasting at the proper time, or refers to some additional aspect.

As for doubts concerning actions taken in the morning, see Amos 6:12: “Do horses run upon rocks? Does one plow in the morning [אם חרוש בבקרמים?] But you have turned justice into poison, and the fruit of righteousness into wormwood.”

As is known, the term בקר serves as the collective noun for both the singular and the plural; hence there is no separate plural form for בקר. The only place in Scripture where something of the sort does exist is in the verse ואת בכורי בקרינו וצאנינו (“and the firstlings of our herd and of our flocks”; Neh 10:37). It therefore seems to me that בקרים in the

above-mentioned verse from Amos is the plural form of **בָּקָר**, i.e., morning.

If this is indeed the case, then plowing in the morning (i.e., during the pre-dawn hour) is seen as something strange and inappropriate, comparable to racing one's horses on the rocks, where they will ultimately break their legs, their heads, or even their entire bodies.

(If, on the other hand, **בְּקָרִים** is in fact the plural of **בָּקָר** in the sense of cattle, the sense of the verse is that one who attempts to plow the rocks with cattle likewise endangers the well-being of his cattle, just like one who races his horses on the rocks, and in the end the job itself—plowing—will not be accomplished. Anyway, why should a person wish to plow rocks?! It seems clear that, if this reading is correct, we have here an incomplete parallelism, in which the object **(ב)סֹלֶעַ** serves both strophes. On the other hand, one needs to bear in mind a textual correction that has long since been suggested—compare also BH—reading **בְּבָקָרִים** as **בָּקָר יָם**. The sense here is that one who runs his horses over the rocks is equally ridiculous as one who tries to plow the sea with his oxen, and this is also like Israel, who has turned righteousness into wormwood (this latter reading is that adopted by the RSV).

Let us return to the exegetical option connecting **בְּקָרִים** with **בָּקָר**. In point of fact, the act of plowing in the morning was perceived by the Arab agrarian society in Palestine at the beginning of the twentieth century as an irrational activity. The peasant preferred to go out to plow later, after the sun had already risen and the dampness of the earth had somewhat dissipated, as otherwise the large, sticky clods of earth interfered with the work of plowing, making it almost impossible, and possibly even causing damage to the plow.

We have thus seen here that there exists in the Bible an approach, according to which there is an appropriate time for various sorts of activities. It would seem that the people of Qumran absorbed this idea, like many others, from the Bible and continued it.

It seems to me that one may also say that these things suited their principled approach regarding the fixity of time and destiny: that is, that there is a system of times with all the events and activities that are suitable therein. The *Community Rule* even states that one is not to advance or to delay those times beyond what was fixed by God at the very beginning.

Hence, as a logical consequence of this and of the influence of the biblical approach on the other hand, we find texts written in the spirit of the prohibition to do so certain activities at certain times, to the

extent that things on occasion reached the level of formulaic writing.<sup>2</sup> For example, in 4Q251 9 5-6, it stated:

5 אל יאכל א[י]ש חטים חדשים ]  
6 עד יום בא לחם הבכורים אל ]

- 5 No-o[n]e is to eat the new wheat [...]  
6 until the day of the bread from the first fruits arrives. Not [...]

Here there is no reference to the portions of the day, but to the fact that “the day that the bread from the first fruits arrives” to the Temple permits the eating consumption of new wheat, that is, the day of arrival of the bread from the first fruits nullifies the prohibition, “No-o[n]e is to eat the new wheat.”

In *Miqṣat Maaseh Hatorah* (4Q394 3-7i 12-15), it states that: 12. ואף על מנחת זבח] 13. השל[מים] שמניחים אותה מיום ליום ואפ [כתוב] 14. שהמנחה נאכלת] על החלבים והבשר ביום זב[חם כי לבני] 15. הכוהנים] ראוי להזויר [היו] [And concerning the cereal offering of the sacrifice of] (13) the pea[ce-offerings], which they leave over from one day to another, and also [...] (14) that the cere[al-offering should be eaten] with the fats and the meat on the day of [their] sacri[ifice, for] (15) the priest[s] should oversee in this matter in such a way that [they] d[o] not”). It needs to be clarified here whether the sense is that those who eat the peace-offerings sin in that they eat over and beyond the number of days allotted,” from one day to another, “to which the text limits them.

Another prohibition appears elsewhere in this work: 1. שאינם שוחטים 2. ועל העברות אנחנו חושבים שאין לזבוח א]ת האם ואת הולד ביום במקדש (1) [...] they do [no]t slaughter in the temple (2) [and concerning pregnant animals: we think that one should not sacrifice t]he mother and the fetus on the same day”; 4Q396 1-2 i 1-2). In practice, this rule continues an idea that appears in the Bible, “And whether the mother is cow or a ewe, you shall not kill both her and her young (אוחו ואת בנו) in one day” (Lev 22:28). Note also the discussion of the reworking of this passage in the *Temple Scroll*.<sup>3</sup> In any event, both in the Bible and in the two works in the Scrolls, the unit of “the day” is perceived as one, within whose framework it is impossible that one should perform the activities

<sup>2</sup> On the connection between performing or refraining from performing a certain act, and certain days, see Von Soden, s.v. יום, 9. Cf. Bergman, *ibid.*, 11, on parallel material from ancient Egypt.

<sup>3</sup> See the chapter, “The Bible in the Temple Scroll,” in Brin, *Issues*, 172-221.

of slaughtering both the mother and its young (in the formula of the Scrolls) or “it and its son” (biblical formulation).

A passage carrying a positive implication connected with time appears in 1QS v 26 - vi 1: **וְיִכְיָחְנוּ וְלוֹא יִשָּׂא עֲלָיו עוֹוֹן** (“but instead reproach him that day so as not to incur a sin because of him”).<sup>4</sup> The emphasis in the biblical text is on the prohibition against secretly harboring a grudge that is liable to lead to hidden hatred. The positive act stemming from this prohibition is found in the imperative, “You shall surely rebuke [RSV: reason with] your neighbor” (Lev 19:17), “lest you bear sin because of him.” That is, you will be punished because of him, since failure to rebuke will cause the sinner, or the one whom you need to rebuke, to be punished because he did not correct his actions, perhaps because he was not made aware of their wrongness by the one who ought to have rebuked him. In Qumran, and in other circles, this instruction was interpreted in a meticulous way, and they inferred that the rebuke must come immediately: “but reproach him that day.” That is, once a person becomes aware of the wrongful acts of omission or commission of the other, he needs to rebuke him that very day.

Instructions taking the form of **אֵל יֹאכֵל אִישׁ** (“A person should not eat...”) and the like, such as the one concerning the new wheat mentioned above, appear in the *Damascus Document*. Thus, for example, it states, **אֵל יֹאכֵל אִישׁ בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת כִּי אִם הַמוֹכֵן** (“No-one is to eat on the sabbath day except what has been prepared”; CD x 22). One may infer from this that preparation of food is forbidden on the sabbath day, and that one may only eat what has been prepared in advance, before the sabbath.

There are many other prohibitions relating to the **יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת** or **שַׁבָּת** (“sabbath day” or “sabbath”), as they appear in columns x-xi of the *Damascus Document*. Compare CD x 15-19; xi 6-8; and also in the version from Cave 4: 4Q270 6 v 16-17; 4Q271 5 i 7-8.

In the *Sapiential Text*, we find the following truncated lines (4Q425 6 2-5):<sup>5</sup>

וְאֵל יִדְבַר ]	2
] אֵל יִשְׁפֹּט בְּיוֹם ]	3
] יַעֲוֶה וּבִלְשׁוֹנו ]	4
] רִשְׁעָה ]	5

<sup>4</sup> See Licht, *Rule Scroll*, 136.

<sup>5</sup> See Steudel, apud Fitzmyer et alii, DJD XX, 209-210. Part of the following translation is according to Steudel, *ibid*.

- 2 ] and let him not spe[ak  
 3 he should not] judge on the day [  
 4 he commits iniquity and with his tongue [  
 5 ] evil the [

It is possible that we have here instructions in the form of prohibitions “thou shalt not,” similar to those in 4Q424 1 10: **איש רע עין אל תמשל** [בהו]נך (“Do not entrust [your] weal[th] to a man with an evil eye”); or *ibid.*, 3 3: **איש שוע עינים אל תשלח לחזות לישרים** (“You should not send a dim-sighted man to observe the upright”); and many others. It may be that the *Sapiential Text* of 4Q425 1+3 also included instructions of this sort; see line 7, **איש שוע עינים**, which is a clear parallel to 4Q424 3 3; and particularly the parallel between line 6 there, **ובמ[ש]קל לוא י[עשה]**, that repeats 4Q424 3 1.

The prohibitions in 4Q425 6 are of the type **אל ידבר** (“he should not spea[k”]; 1. 2), and the like. Particularly important for our subject is **אל ישפט ביום** (“he should not judge on the day”), albeit we do not know for certain the nature of the particular day prohibited for “judging.” It would seem that this refers to a counsel against an *immediate* ruling, that is, one given on the same day.

As there is a connection between 4Q424 and 4Q425, one may perhaps surmise that there is a kind of parallel to what is said in 4Q424 3 1-2: **איש שופט בטרם ידרוש ומאמין בטרם [יבחן] אל תמשילהו ברודפי דעת** (“And a man who judges before investigating, or<sup>6</sup> who believes before [examining] , Do not let him govern those who pursue knowledge”). Perhaps this is said in reference to the text under discussion, 4Q425 6 3: **אל ישפוט ביום [שומעו את המשפט]** (“let not a man] judge on the day [he hears the judgment”) or the like. In other words, this is a maxim counselling against hasty decisions in judgment (and in society generally): **בטרם ידרוש.. בטרם [יבחן]**. As a consequence of this, it is forbidden that the decision fall on the same day one hears the case, as the judge cannot sufficiently search out and examine it. It is clear that, to the same extent, the meaning may be that it was forbidden to judge on a particular day, such as “the sabbath day.” However, the sapiential and non-religious nature of this text to my mind eliminates this possibility. Schiffman does hesitantly suggest the reconstruction<sup>7</sup> **על השבת**, comparing it to CD x 18, where it is used regarding profit and wealth. He also compares it to line 2, concerning the prohibition of speaking, and compare it also to 1QS v 25; vi 10-11; x 17-18: **וביום השבת אל ידבר איש דבר נבל ורק**

<sup>6</sup> My translation.

<sup>7</sup> Schiffman, *apud* Fitzmyer et alii, DJD XX, 210.

(“and on the sabbath day a person should not speak vulgar and empty words”).

One text which is somewhat reminiscent of that mentioned in the Book of Ruth (“even if I should have a husband this night”), is 4Q270 2 i 18: ] או יק[רב אל אשתו ביום (“[... or who app]roaches his wife on the day of [ ]”). It seems to me that the full text read something like אל ישכב [השבת] איש עם אשתו ביום, as suggested by Baumgarten. That is, there are “days,” i.e., times, when it is prohibited to engage in intercourse. It should be noted that, whereas Rabbinic halakhah prohibits sexual intercourse only on the Day of Atonement (*m. Yoma* 8.1), here the scope is perhaps extended. However, as we do not have the continuation of this text, it may reasonably be argued that one is dealing here with the same prohibition as in mainstream Rabbinic halakhah, and that the text should be reconstructed as [הכפורים] ביום. In either event, the prohibition applies to a specific day, whether one that is more frequent—the Sabbath; or less frequent—Yom Kippur. On the prohibition against sexual relations on the sabbath, compare *Jub.* 50:8: “Every man who will profane this day, who will lie with his wife.”

One might also argue that this refers to the prohibition against sexual relations on the day of the woman’s menses (although in that case the use of the word יום is difficult, and in the case of menstruation should have been ימי). If that is the case, then it is very close to the biblical view of the prohibition of sexual relations during a particular period. In any event, it should be noted that we find here use of the formula אל יקטול איש ביום פלוני regarding this unique case, whether or not the case itself is similar to or different from what is stated in the Scripture.

On the other hand, it is also possible that this refers to the prohibition against lying together ביום, that is, during the daylight hours. This would conform with the Rabbinic statements in *Gen. Rab.* 64.5: “Is it possible that Hilkiyahu was a righteous man and would engage in intercourse during the day?”; in *b. Megillah* 13a, commenting on the verse “in the evening she went, and in the morning she came back” (*Est* 2:14), that “From the condemnation of that evil man (i.e., Ahasuerus), we learn his praise, that he did not engage in intercourse during the daytime”; and in *b. Sanh.* 107a: “that he turned the intercourse of nighttime to that of daytime, and forgot the halakhah.”

On this matter, compare also 4Q266 12 5-6:

אל [י]קרב 5

אל [ישכב א]יש עם [אשה] 6

- 5 ] let him not draw [cl]ose  
 6 Let not] a m[an] lie wi[th a woman]

Baumgarten compares this to 4Q270 7i 12-13: **ואשר יקר[ב] לזנות לאשתו** (“... And whoever approach[es] to have illegal sex w[ith] his wife, not in accordance with the regulation”).<sup>8</sup> But in *ibid.* 2 i 16-18, mentioned above,<sup>9</sup> the prohibition applies to **יום** and not a general prohibition as in 4Q270. One should note that the prohibition against a man having relations with his wife on a certain day comes immediately after and adjacent to the statement:

או אשר עליה שם רע בבתוליה בבית 16  
 [אביה או אלמנה אשר] ישכב אחר עמה 17

- 16 [...]or who had a bad reputation during] her maidenhood in the house of  
 17 [her father or a widow] with whom some one else sleeps

A fuller formulation of this appears in 4Q271 3 13-15:

אשר עליה ש[ם רע בבתוליה בבית אביה אל יקחה איש כי אם 13  
 [בראות נשים] נאמנות וידעות ברורות ממאמר המבקר אשר על 14  
 [הרבים ואח]ר יקחנה ובלוקחו אותה יעשה כמשפ[ט] ולוא יגיד עלי[ה] 15

- 13 [woman who has had] a bad [reput]ation during her maidenhood in her father’s house, no one should take her, unless  
 14 [on inspection by] trustworthy and knowledgeable [women], selected by the command of the Inspector who is over  
 15 [the Many; then] he may take her and if he takes her, he should proceed in accordance with the regulati[on]. And he should not] announce about her.<sup>10</sup>

Compare also 4Q269 9 6-8.

To conclude, in this last case we have a formula of the type **אל יקטול איש**, but the present prohibition is absolute and therefore not of the type mentioned above regarding a prohibition connected with matters of a particular day.

<sup>8</sup> DJD XVIII, 144.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 78, 144.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

## AFTERWORD

### TIME IN THE BIBLE AND IN LATER LITERATURE

In the present work we have clarified a variety of issues relating to the subject of time. The discussion was divided into two main parts: 1) the Bible; 2) the Dead Sea Scrolls Literature. In the second part of the work we also discussed selected sources from the Apocryphal and Pseudepigraphic literature.

The clear division of the work into two separate parts does not imply, however, that in the first part there were not incorporated material relating to post-biblical literature nor that, in the second part—that concerning post-biblical literature—we did not refrain from mentioning biblical writings, which served to enrich and provide roots for the discussion there.

The discussions in the first, biblical part, were subdivided into five blocs of chapters, while the second, post-biblical part was divided into three such sections. Thus, the eight sections, or blocs of chapters, covered the totality of components of the discussion on the subject of time.

The work discusses issues of terminology, substance and ideology that arise from the totality of texts dealing with the subject of time.

At the beginning of the first group of discussions, we dealt with the importance of the term “day” (יום), that is the most comprehensive of all the terms used in regard to time. Through the use of this term, biblical authors were able to present a picture of both a specific point in time, and of an extended duration of time. Thus, the term יום functions in a series of formulae used to describe both long and short durations of time.

Moreover, in Chapter 5 we noted a literary technique developed by the biblical authors to indicate an event while utilizing the formula “such-and-such a day” alongside the use of the similar formula *x-ימי* with the aim of indicating a specific period within the biblical age. The length of such a period may extend over decades or even over centuries. The authors were well aware how to set aside, for example, the pre-monarchic period, which they designated “the days (when there judged) the judges” (ימי שפוט השופטים), a clear allusion to the perspective whereby a period



of time is characterized on the basis of the system of rule customary therein.

It is clear that this may only be done after a certain suitable distance of time has been created, and only once the form of government has changed completely, and there are no longer judges in Israel. Hence, these things must have been formulated in this manner sometime in the middle of the biblical period, or even later, during the period of the Babylonian exile or that of the Return to Zion.

In a similar manner, the biblical authors described the periods of Israel's subjugation to foreign powers, using the same formula of periods: "in the days of the Philistines" (בִּימֵי פְּלִשְׁתִּים), or by citing a date for the reign of foreign kings, after the Israelite monarchy had been abrogated during the period of the Exile and the following period. This is the sense of the phrase, "ever since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria" (Ezra 4:2) or "all the days of Cyrus... until the reign of Darius," (ibid., 5) etc. Note that here the phrase, "the *days* of so-and-so" (ימֵי-x) is replaced by "the reign of Darius" (מַלְכוּת דָּרְיוֹשׁ), and note also the usage, "until the reign of... king of Persia." This may even be seen as a kind of internal biblical interpretation, affirming the system of recording time on the basis of the periods during which foreigners ruled over Israel.

In addition to all the variations of—יּוֹם whether used alone or in conjunction with other terms, whether to describe "moments" or entire aeons, whether in simple use or used in compound formulaic use—other terms are used that fulfill the functions of describing time in the Bible.

One of these is עֵת, which is used very extensively in the Scripture. It seems to me that one may say that עֵת is used more in formulaic idioms than in simple use. That is, such an idiom as בַּעַת הַהֵיאָ is more reflective of the technique of use of this term by the writers than its use by itself.

The idioms used to designate time, וַיְהִי בַעַת הַהֵיאָ and the like, came to be used as literary formulae for connecting among things, even to create a false, theoretical connection among various components within a literary work, and at times even among works that differ from one another. This may indicate to us something of the way in which root of these formulae that were used for dating of time took root, and at times became, as mentioned, a formula empty of actual designation of time.

In the present work other formulae are presented that were created through varied uses of terms for time. One of them indicates a high level of sophistication by pointing towards the horizon of uninterrupted time. I refer to the use of the formula, גַּמְ. וּמַעֲלָה/וְהַלָּאָה, which allowed

the biblical authors to refer to a range of ages of human beings, or a period of time of activity or of a period. This formula was used when the author wished to say that the phenomenon continued from a certain point in time and was never interrupted, at least not until the days of the author.

This interesting formula is discussed extensively in Chapter 7, after which there are explained the formulae of continuity of time in the Bible generally. It seems that the formula regarding uninterrupted time is one of the developments of the formulae of continuity of time, of which there are a great variety. Thus, for example, alongside the formulae marking both the *terminus a quo* of the duration of time described and the *terminus ad quem*, between which there is drawn the phenomenon in question (i.e., the full, complete formula). There is also a development of a variant formula of duration of time, according to which the author “skips” the *terminus a quo*, specifying only the *terminus ad quem*. There is also an abbreviated formula in the opposite direction: namely, one in which there is only a *terminus a quo* without any indication of a *terminus ad quem*. All these matters are discussed in Chapter 6, alongside the meanings derived from the use of these formulae.

One need not add that each of these involves secondary developments, including the emergence of formulae that went beyond simply describing duration of time, in a totally different direction. Thus, for example, one of the abbreviated developments of the formula is the well-know idiom, **עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה**, which went beyond the rubric of mere formulae of duration to serve as a literary formula indicating etiological elements. This was used both in regard to customs that developed during a particular period, or to indicate the existence of a sacred site which was preserved in wake of an event in the distant past and that had continued from then until the days of the author. Through use of the formula **עַד הַיּוֹם הַזֶּה**, the author identifies the event in whose wake the custom was created, the place was founded, etc.

In Section III, I dealt with issues of semantic clarifications. I first explained, in two adjacent chapters, 9 and 10, the means that were developed by the biblical authors to portray the relation to an event that took place during an extremely brief time period. The authors had a wide variety of literary means available to them for this purpose. They did so with the assistance of such terms as **יּוֹם**, as in the idiom **יּוֹם אֶחָד**, or in expressions which involve subtle, unconscious psychological distinctions, and the like. Against these one needs to place the tools used by the biblical authors to portray lengthy periods of time. Again,

the word **יום** is used in this context as well, albeit in other idioms, such as **לימים רבים, יארכו הימים**, and the like.

This group of chapters is concluded by an extensive study of the well-known problem of the order of the day in biblical period. According to Rabbinic sources, the day begins in the evening and concludes the following evening. However, a deeper examination of the texts, including that text which most seems to unequivocally support this interpretation, namely, **ויהי ערב ויהי בקר יום אחד**, indicates that the regular order in biblical times was from the morning until the end of the night. There are strong proofs for this, including several which have never been discussed hitherto, despite the intensive involvement in this issue over the generations.

To complete this discussion, I clarified the main data involved in the issue which is the sequel to this: how the Bible defined periods of time that encompassed more than one day.

Two additional blocs of chapters (Sections IV-V) conclude the first part of this book. In this sections there are discussed the means used by the Bible to deal with the present time, which includes that which is already concluded—whether just now or long ago—and that which is to come in the future. In this chapter I did not discuss the grammatical aspects, but addressed myself more to their literary stylistic form, on the one hand, and to the contents and ideological aspect of the subject, on the other. In this way attention was called both to the problems that confronted the authors in shaping these subjects, and to the rich and varied means that they developed in order to overcome all these questions, in such a way that there is derived an impressive picture of how, for example, they gave shape to the past. The Biblical authors found ways to point to the depth of the past—on the one hand, to the extremely recent past and, on the other, to use unique expressions that were devoted to describing ancient times, in the deep, remote historical past.

Following this subject, we turned to present the rich system of involvement in the issue of duration of life. A deep examination in new directions clarifies those periods into which the Bible divides the varied life-spans. Thus, among other achievements, texts that are seemingly out of place can be given a clear interpretation after their correct incorporation according to the actual and correct periods from which they stem.

Moreover, regarding the system by which the differing durations of life described in the Bible was identified, this datum may be exploited

as a new criterion for dating entire texts, or for identifying glossarial comments or statements by redactors and editors in the margins of earlier texts.

Having established these boundaries, we completed this discussion by a literary-ideological examination of such blessings and felicitations as *למען יאריכון ימיו* and the like, notwithstanding the complaints of worshippers and others that their life time is not sufficiently long, but is in fact quite short. In this context we discussed various texts using such phrases as length of days (*אורך ימים*), fulness of days (*מלא ימים*) and the like. It becomes clear from the discussion who is considered an old man (*זקן*), for example, one who may be described as filled with days (*שבע ימים*), and the like. It follows that there is a correlation between these terms and the system of life span which, of course, varies in accordance with the periods of the Bible. It thus follows, that one who may have been described as full of days or old, might not have been described thus had he lived in an earlier or later period. In other words: the matter of old age, fulness of days, and the like are relative matters, changing in accordance with the period during which a person lives.

The second part of this work deals, as we said, with the subject of time, as it emerges in post-biblical texts, and in the Dead Sea Scrolls, both in the sectarian literature found in the Scrolls and in the apocryphal materials.

From all these discussions it follows that the Qumran literature utilized all of the linguistic attainments of biblical literature in this area, but that they did not stop with this. Rather, they quite naturally extended their scope to new uses, according to the advance of time and in consonance with their sectarian ideology.

In the sixth and seventh blocs of chapters of this work, I conducted separate discussions of each of the central terms for time used in the literature of the sect: *עת*, *עולם*, *קץ*, *מועד*, *דור*, as well as an entire set of chapters relating to various aspects of the comprehensive term *יום*.

From these discussions, it emerged that each one of these terms has, on the one hand, a specific characteristic usage, by which the terms *קץ*, *דור*, and *עולם*, for example, are distinguished from one another. However, alongside these distinct uses, with regard to part of their meanings there is a quite extensive common denominator among these terms for time, so that they effectively constitute synonyms.

It likewise follows from these chapters that, on the basis of the deterministic spirit of the sect, all times, that is, the ages that shall be in the future, have already been determined by God in advance, from the

beginning of time. This statement relates both to the sequence of the ages, to their extent and duration, as well as to the substance and events occurring during these ages: whether they are times of peace or times of war, and the like. Hence, people ought not attempt to alter in any way, in any respect, either the *pace of the coming of the times*, such as the desire to hasten the coming of a particular age, nor the *contents and nature of the age*.

Another question discussed in these chapters is whether God himself can change those things which he has already fixed, being in this respect subject to the decisions that he himself made in the distant past, or whether he is sovereign in his decisions and may change the times in each one of their components.

Indeed, in the chapter that opens the entire second part of the book, dealing with the Scrolls, I discuss in detail the issue of God and time. In this chapter there are discussed all the sources, including some biblical sources, pertaining to the subject at hand. In this manner the connection of God to the changing of the days, the years and the generations of eternity becomes clear. There likewise becomes clear the place of God in the concept of time.

## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AFO</i>	<i>Archiv für Orientforschung</i>
AT (=A.T.)	Alte Testament
<i>BA</i>	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
<i>BH</i>	<i>Biblia Hebraica</i>
BK	Biblischer Kommentar
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
DJD	Discoveries in the Judaean Desert
DOB	Dictionary of the Bible
<i>EncBib</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia Biblica</i> (in Hebrew)
GHAT	Handkommentar zum A.T., Göttingen
HAT	Handbuch zum A.T.
<i>HUCA</i>	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HKAT	see GHAT
ICC	International Critical Commentary
<i>IEJ</i>	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JNWSL</i>	<i>Journal of Northwest Semitic Languages</i>
<i>JPOS</i>	<i>Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JSOTS	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplement Series.
<i>JSS</i>	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
KAT	Kommentar zum A.T.
KHAT	Kurzer Hand-Kommentar zum A.T.
OT (=O.T.)	Old Testament
OTL	O. T. Library
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue Biblique</i>
<i>RQ</i>	<i>Revue de Qumran</i>
<i>SJOT</i>	<i>Scandinavian Journal of Old Testament</i>
<i>STDJ</i>	<i>Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah</i>
<i>ThZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>VT</i>	<i>Vetus Testamentum</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Albright, W. F., "The Administrative Division of Israel and Judah," *JPOS* 5 (1925), 20-25.
- Alexander, P. S. & G. Vermes, *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, Vol. XXVI (DJD XXVI; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
- Allegro, J. M., *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert of Jordan*, Vol. V (DJD V; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968).
- Amir, Y., "אלהי עולם ה'" ("The Eternal God is the Lord" [Hebrew]), *Beth Miqra* 149 (1997), 97-103.
- Baethgen, K., *Psalmen* (GHAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1904).
- Baillet, M., *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, Vol. VII (DJD VII; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982).
- Baumgarten, J. M., *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, Vol. XVIII (DJD XVIII; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
- , *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, Vol. XXXV (DJD XXXV; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
- , "The Beginning of the Day in the Calendar of Jubilees," *JBL* 77 (1958), 355-364.
- , "A Reply to Zeitlin," *JBL* 78 (1959), 157.
- , "Some Notes on 4Q408," *RQ* 69 (1997), 143-144.
- Ben Yehudah, E., *גליון דלישון העברית הישנה והחדשה* [Dictionary of the Old and New Hebrew Language], 16 vols. (Jerusalem: Hotša'at Ben-Yehudah, 1948-1959).
- Bergman, J., s.v. "יום", apud G.J. Botterweck & H. Ringgren [with H. J. Fabry], *Theologisches Wörterbuch* III (1982), 563-566.
- Blenkinsopp, J., "Life Expectancy in Ancient Palestine," *SJOT* 11 (1997), 44-55.
- Botterweck, G. J., s.v. "דור", apud G. J. Botterweck & H. Ringgren [with H. J. Fabry], *Theologisches Wörterbuch* (1977), II: 181-185.
- Botterweck, G. J. & H. Ringgren [with H. J. Fabry], *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum AT*, vols. i-viii, x (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1973-1999).
- Brin, G., *מחקרים בפירושו של ר' יוסף קרא* [Studies in the Biblical Exegesis of R. Joseph Qara] (Tel Aviv: Mifalim Universitai im, 1990).
- , *Studies in Biblical Law; From the Hebrew Bible to the Dead Sea Scrolls* (JSOTS 176; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).
- , *סוגיות במקרא ובמגילות ים המלח* [Issues in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls] (Tel Aviv: Ha-Kibbutz Ha-Me'uhad, 1994).
- , "Num XV, 22-23 and the Question of the Composition of the Pentateuch," *VT* 30 (1980), 351-354.
- , "The Superlative in the Hebrew Bible—Additional Cases," *VT* 42 (1992), 115-118.
- , "Review: Elisha Qimron and John Strugnell, Qumran Cave 4, V: Miqsat Ma'ase Ha-Torah," *JSS* 40 (1995), 334-342.
- , "אלהי עולם ה'" ("The Eternal God is the Lord" [Hebrew]), *Beth Miqra* 150 (1997), 286-287.
- , "Divorce at Qumran," *Legal Texts and Legal Issues; Festschrift for Joseph M. Baumgarten* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 231-244.
- Brockelmann, C., *Grundriss der vergleichenden Grammatik der semitischen Sprachen*, 2 vols. (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1961).

- Broshi, M., *The Damascus Document Reconsidered* (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1992).
- Buchanan, G. W., "The O. T. Meaning of the Knowledge of Good and Evil," *JBL* 75 (1956), 114-120.
- Budde, G., *Richter* (KHAT; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1897).
- Burrows, M., "Ancient Israel," in R. C. Dentan (ed.), *The Idea of History in the Ancient Near East* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1955), 99-131.
- Cassuto, U. M. D., *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis*, 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961-1964).
- Charles, R. H., *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973 [1913]).
- Charlesworth, J. H., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1983-1985).
- Childs, B. S., "A Study of the Formula 'Until This Day,'" *JBL* 82 (1963), 279-292.
- Clifford, R. J., "What does the Psalmist ask for in Ps. 39:5 and 90:12," *JBL* 119 (2000), 59-66.
- Clines, D. J. A., *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew*, 4 vols. (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993-1998).
- Davies, P. R., *The Damascus Covenant* (JSOTS 25; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1983).
- Delling, G., *Zeit und Endzeit* (Biblische Studien 58; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1970).
- , s.v. ἡμέρα, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum NT*, II: 953-956.
- De Vries, S. J., *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow; Time and History in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: W. B. Eerdmans, 1975).
- , *From Old Testament to New: Tradition-Historical and Redaction-Critical Study of Temporal Transitions in Prophetic Prediction* (Grands Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans, 1995).
- Dimant, D., "New Light from Qumran on the Jewish Pseudepigrapha—4Q390," in J. Trebolle Barrera & L. Vegas Montaner (eds.), *The Madrid Qumran Congress—Proceedings of the International Congress on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 11; Leiden: Brill, 1992), II: 405-448.
- Dinkler, E., "Early Christianity," in R. C. Dentan (ed.), *The Idea of History in the Ancient Near East* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1955), 169-214.
- , *From Old Revelation to New: A Tradition-Historical and Relation-Critical Study of Temporal Transitions in Prophetic Prediction* (Grands Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans, 1995).
- Donner, H. & W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1962).
- Duhm, B., *Psalmen* (KHAT; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1922).
- Eissfeldt, O., *The Old Testament—An Introduction* (London: Blackwell, 1963).
- Falk, D. K., *Daily, Sabbath and Festival Prayer in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (STDJ 27; Leiden: Brill, 1998).
- Fitzmyer, J. A. et alii, *Discoveries in the Judean Desert*, Vol. XX (DJD XX; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997).
- Fox, M. V., "Time in Qohelet's 'Catalogue of Times,'" *JNWSL* 24 (1998), 25-39.
- Freedman, D. N. & J. Lundblum, s.v. "דור" apud G. J. Botterweck—H. Ringgren [with H. J. Fabry], *Theologisches Wörterbuch* (1977), vol. II: 185-194.
- García Martínez, F. & E. J. C. Tigchelaar (eds.), *The Dead Sea Scrolls; Study Edition*, 2 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1997-1998).
- Gesenius, W. & F. Buhl, *Hebräisches und aramäisches Handwörterbuch über das A.T.* (Berlin: Springer Verlag, 1915-17).
- Ginsberg, H. L., *ךלךלךלך* [Kohleleth] (Tel Aviv-Jerusalem: Newman, 1961).



- Gordis, R., "The Knowledge of Good and Evil in the O.T. and in the Qumran Scrolls," *JBL* 76 (1957), 123-138.
- Grintz, Y. M., *ידו וקדמותו של ספר בראשית* [The Book of Genesis—Its Uniqueness and Antiquity] (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1983).
- Haran, M., "The Disappearance of the Ark," *IEJ* 13 (1963), 46-58.  
 ———, "עמקת השבת: שבת," *EncBib* VII: 517-521.
- Harris, J. G., s.v. "Old Age," *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, V: 10-12.  
 ———, *Biblical Perspectives on Aging: God and the Elderly* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).
- Hartom, A. S. & J. Licht, s.v. "יום וליילה" "Day and Night," *EncBib* III: 600-603.
- Hoffmann, D. Z., *Das Buch Leviticus*, 2 vols. (Berlin: M. Poppelauer, 1905-06).  
 ———, *ספר בראשית* [The Book of Genesis] 2 vols. (B'nei Berak: Nezah, 1969-1971).
- Hurvitz, A., "The Evidence of Language in Dating the Priestly Code," *RB* 81 (1974), 24-56.
- Jenni, E. & C. Westermann, *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum A.T.*, 2 vols. (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag—Zürich: Theologischer Verlag, 1971-1976). English Translation: E. Jenni & C. Westermann, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*, 3 vols. (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997).
- Jenni, E., *Das Wort 'olam in AT* [diss., Basel, 1953] = *ZAW* 64 (1952), 197-248; 65 (1953), 1-35.  
 ———, s.v. "Time," *Interpreter's DOB*, IV: 642-649.
- Jensen, J., "The Age of Immanuel," *CBQ* 41 (1979), 220-239.
- Kahana, A., *פרוש לספר קהלת* [Commentary on Qohelet] (Tel Aviv: Meqorot, 1930).  
 ———, *פרוש לספר עזרא* [Commentary on Ezra] (Tel Aviv: Meqorot, 1930).
- Kasovsky, C. Y., *אוצר לשון התוספתא* [Thesaurus Thosephthae] vol. 3 (Jerusalem: Dephus Haivri, 1942).  
 ———, *אוצר לשון המשנה* [Thesaurus Mishnae] (Jerusalem: Masadah, 1957).
- Kaufmann, Y., *ספר שופטים* [The Book of Judges] (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher, 1962).
- Kittel, R., *Die Bücher der Chronik* (HKAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1902).
- Koch, K., s.v. "מיועד," apud G. J. Botterweck-H. Ringgren [with H. J. Fabry], *Theologisches Wörterbuch*, Vol. IV (1984), 744-750.
- Köhler, K. & W. Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the O.T.*, 4 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 1994-1996).
- Kraus, H. J., *Psalmen* (BK; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1966).
- Kronholm, T., s.v. "עת" apud G. J. Botterweck-H. Ringgren [with H. J. Fabry], *Theologisches Wörterbuch* (1989), VI: 463-482.
- Licht, J., *עגילת ההודיות* [The Thanksgiving Scroll] (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1957).  
 ———, *עגילת הסרטים* [The Rule Scroll] (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1965).  
 ———, "Time and Eschatology in Apocalyptic Literature and in Qumran," *JJS* 16 (1965), 177-182.
- Liver, J., "The Half-Shekel Offering in Biblical and Post-Biblical Literature," *HTR* 56 (1963), 173-198.  
 ———, *פרקים בתולדות הכהונה והלווייה* [Chapters in the History of the Priests and Levites] (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1968).
- Long, B. O., *The Problem of Etiological Narrative in the O. T.*, (BZAW 108; Berlin: A Töpelmann, 1968).
- Löwenstamm, S. E., "עפק" [Muster of the people], *EncBib* V: 218-221.  
 ———, "The Formula בעת ההיא in Deuteronomy" [Hebrew], *Tarbiz* 38 (1969), 99-104.  
 ———, "The Formula me'ata w'ad olam," in *Comparative Studies in Biblical and Ancient Oriental Literature* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980), 166-170.

- , *The Evolution of the Exodus Tradition* (Jerusalem: Magnes 1992).
- Malamat, A., “Organs of Statecraft in the Israelite Monarchy,” *BA* 28 (1965), 34-65.
- , “Longevity: Biblical Concepts and Some Ancient Near Eastern Parallels,” *AFO Beihefte* 19 (1982), 215-224.
- Mandelkern, S., *Veteris Testamenti Concordantiae Hebraicae Atque Chaldaicae*, 2 vols. (Tel Aviv and Jerusalem: Schocken, 1959).
- Marsh, J., s.v. “Time, Season,” in A. Richardson, *A Theological Word Book of the Bible* (A. Richardson, ed.; London: SCM Press, 1950), 258-267.
- , *The Fulness of Time* (London: Harper, 1952).
- Melamed, E. Z., “Break-Up Stereotype Phrases as an Artistic Device in Biblical Poetry,” *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 8 (Jerusalem, 1961), 115-153.
- Mendenhall, G. E., “The Census Lists of Numbers 1 and 26,” *JBL* 77 (1958), 52-66.
- Montgomery, J. A., *Kings* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1951).
- Moore, G. F., *Judges* (ICC; Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1895).
- Muilenburg, J., “The Biblical View of Time,” *HTR* 54 (1961), 225-252.
- Myers, J. M., *I-II Chronicles*, 2 vols. (Anchor Bible; Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday, 1965).
- Newsom, C. et alii, *Discoveries in the Judean Desert*, Vol. XI (DJD XI; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
- Nitzan, B., *מגילת פֶּשֶׁר חֲבַקּוּק* [Peshet Habakkuk] (Jerusalem: Bialik Institute, 1986).
- , *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry* (STDJ 12; Leiden: Brill, 1994).
- Nitzan, B. et alii, *Discoveries in the Judean Desert*, Vol. XXIX (DJD XXIX; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999).
- North, R., s.v. “777” apud G.J. Botterweck-H. Ringgren [with H. J. Fabry], *Theologisches Wörterbuch* (1977), II: 283-287.
- , s.v. “יובל” *Theologisches Wörterbuch* (1982) III: 554-559.
- Noth, M., *Könige* (BK; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1968).
- Nowack, W., *Richter* (GHAT [=HKAT]; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1902).
- Paul, S., “Expressions for Premature Death in Semitic Languages” [Hebrew], in *Sara Kamin Memorial Volume* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1994), 575-586.
- Peckham, B., “History and Time,” in R. Chazan et alii, eds., *Ki Baruch Hu; B. A. Levine Jubilee Volume* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 295-314.
- Pedersen, J., *Israel*, vols. 3-4 (London: Oxford University Press, 1954).
- Pfann, S. J. et alii, *Discoveries in the Judean Desert*, vol. XXXVI (DJD XXXVI; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000).
- Preuss, H. D., s.v. “עולות” apud G.J. Botterweck-H. Ringgren [with H. J. Fabry], *Theologisches Wörterbuch*, Vol. V (1986), 1144-1159.
- Ibid., s.v. “ראשון” *Theologisches Wörterbuch*, VII (1993), 287-291.
- Puech, E., *Discoveries in the Judean Desert*, vol. XXV (DJD XXV; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
- Qimron E. – Strugnell J., *Discoveries in the Judean Desert*, vol. X (DJD X; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).
- Qimron, E., “The Text of the Temple Scroll” [Hebrew], *Leshonenu* 42 (1978), 136-145.
- Rabin, H., *The Zadokite Document* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954).
- Robinson, T. Wheeler, *Inspiration and Revelation in the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1950).
- Rothstein, J. W. & J. Hänel, *Kommentar zum erster Buch der Chronik* (KAT; Leipzig: 1927).
- Rudolph, W., *Chronikbücher* (HAT; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1955).
- Saebo, M., s.v. “יום” apud G.J. Botterweck-H. Ringgren [with H. J. Fabry], *Theologisches Wörterbuch*, Vol. III (1982), 566-586.
- Schuller, E. M., “4Q372 1: ‘A Text about Joseph,’” *RQ* 14 (1990), 349-376.

- Seebass, H., s.v. "אחרית" apud G. J. Botterweck-H. Ringgren [with H. J. Fabry], *Theologisches Wörterbuch*, vol. I (1973), 224-228.
- Seeligmann, I. L., "Hebräische Erzählung und biblische Geschichtsschreibung," *ThZ* 18 (1962) 305-325.
- , "Etiological Elements in Biblical Historiography" [Hebrew], in *מחקרים בספרות אברהם* [Studies in Biblical Literature] (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1992), 11-45.
- Segal, M. Z., *עברית* [Introduction to the Hebrew Bible] (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher, 1960).
- Seybold, K., "Zu den Zeitvorstellungen in Ps. 90," *ThZ* 53 (1997) 1-2 [=E. Jenni Festschrift], 97-108.
- Simian-Yofre, H., s.v. "פנים" apud G. J. Botterweck-H. Ringgren [with H. J. Fabry], *Theologisches Wörterbuch*, Vol. V (1986), 629-659.
- Simon, U., "The Exegetic Method of Abraham Ibn Ezra, as Revealed in Three Interpretations of a Biblical Passage" [Hebrew], *Bar Ilan* 3 (1965), 92-137.
- Spinoza, B., *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (*Gebhardt Edition*, 1925), trans. S. Shirley (Leiden: Brill, 1989).
- Stendebach, F. J., s.v. "שנה" apud G. J. Botterweck-H. Ringgren [with H. J. Fabry], *Theologisches Wörterbuch*, Vol. VIII (1995), 324-340.
- Stern, H. S., "The Knowledge of Good and Evil," *VT* 8 (1958), 405-418.
- Studel, A., "אהרית הימים" in the Texts from Qumran," *RQ* 16 (1994), 225-246.
- , "4Q408: A Liturgy on Morning and Evening Prayer. Preliminary Edition," *RQ* 16 (1994), 313-334.
- Strugnell, J. & D. Dimant, "4Q Second Ezekiel," *RQ* 13 (1988), 45-58.
- Strugnell, J. et alii, *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, Vol. XXXIV (DJD XXXIV; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999).
- Tadmor, H., "כרונולוגיה" [Chronology], *EncBib* IV: 245-310.
- Talmon, S., "Double Readings in the Massoretic Text," *Textus* 1 (1960), 144-184.
- , s.v. "קץ" apud G. J. Botterweck-H. Ringgren [with H. J. Fabry], *Theologisches Wörterbuch*, Vol. VII (1990), 84-92.
- , "The Reckoning of the Day in the Biblical and Early Post-Biblical Periods: From the Morning or From the Evening?" [Hebrew], in *Sara Kamin Memorial Volume* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1994), 109-129.
- Urbach, E. E., "Halakhot Regarding Slavery as a Source of for the Social History of the Second Temple and the Talmudic Periods" [Hebrew], in *מעולמות של חכמים* [The World of the Sages—Collected Studies] (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1988) I: 179-228.
- VanderKam, J. et al, *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, vol. XIII (DJD XIII; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).
- , *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, vol. XIX (DJD XIX; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).
- , et alii, *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert*, vol. XXII (DJD XXII; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996).
- G. Von Rad, s.v. ἡμέρα *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, vol. 2, p. 945-949
- Von Zoden, W., s.v. "יום" apud G. J. Botterweck-H. Ringgren [with H. J. Fabry], *Theologisches Wörterbuch*, Vol. III (1982), 559-563.
- Wacholder, B. Z. - M. G. Abegg [eds.], *A Preliminary Edition of the Unpublished Dead Sea Scrolls*, Vols. i-iv (Washington, D.C.: Biblical Archaeology Society, 1991-1996)
- Weinfeld, M., "... at Seventy for Grey Hairs, at Eighty for Special Strength"—A Mesopotamian Parallel" [Hebrew], *Ben Yehuda Jubilee Volume* (Jerusalem: Kiryat Sepher, 1981), 312-317.

- Weiss, M., "The Origin of the 'Day of the Lord' Reconsidered," *HUCA* 37 (1966), 29-60.
- Westermann, C., *Prophetische Heilsworte in AT* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1987).
- Wilch, J. R., *Time and Event* (Leiden: Brill, 1969).
- Wolff, H. W., "Problems between the Generations," apud J. L. Crenshaw & J. T. Willis (eds.), *Essays in Old Testament Ethics: J. Philip Hyatt—In Memoriam* (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1974), 77-95.
- , *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974).
- Yadin, Y., *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962).
- , *The Temple Scroll*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1983).
- Zeitlin, S., "The Beginning of the Day of Jubilees," *JBL* 78 (1959), 153-156.

## INDEXES OF ANCIENT LITERATURE

### A. Hebrew Bible

Genesis		21:21	167
		30:11	117
1	155, 179, 225, 226, 229	30:12	211
1:5	156, 157, 371	30:14	116
1:14	225, 314	33:5	141
1:16	331	38:26	211
1:29	209		
4:26	36, 178	Leviticus	
7:6	26		
8:22	151, 156, 169, 314	19:17	364
9:11-16	85	22:28	363
9:12	314	23:2	225
13:10	49	23:32	157, 162
14:1	85	23:44	231, 260
15:1	33	25:8-10	173
15:15	206	25:29-30	173
18:11	206	27	117, 119, 209, 210
19:33-34	154	27:7	117
21:5	207		
21:31	135	Numbers	
22:20	34		
26:1	79	1	211
26:15	79	1:2-3	116, 211
26:33	125, 135	1:18	116
29:20	144	1:46	117
32:33	131	3:40	120
38:1	3, 42	4	121, 122
44:28	100, 109, 186	8	122, 123
47:28	209	8:24-26	120, 121
48:15	97	11:19-20	142
50:23	204	11:32	154
		14:29	61, 119
Exodus		15:22-23	115
		18:15-16	120
1:6	60	18:16	120
9:18	102, 181	22:4	40
9:24	106, 181	22:30	97
10:6	102, 110, 181	24:17	147
10:14	110, 183	26	117
11:6	110	26:2	117, 212
12:18	157, 162	32:11	62, 63
12:40	7	32:13	60, 119

Deuteronomy		5:6	81
		6:1-10	89
1:15	44	8:28	82, 90
1:39	62	13:5	107
2:12	74	13:7	98
2:20-22	70, 75	14:4	40, 86
2:22	129	15:19	126
2:32-34	44	15:20	86
3:14	125	18:1	46, 56
4:32	177, 187	18:31	57, 87
9:24	108	19:9	154
10:8	130	20:26	155
10:10	177		
11:4	130	1 Samuel	
11:14	303		
11:21	180	3:12	44
15:1-11	172	5:3-4	154
15:9	172	9:9	50, 65, 66, 178
17:20	191	12:2	208
19:14	178	14:52	84
26:12	172	16:13	109
26:51	117	17:12	83, 207
29:14	184	18:9	109, 114
29:21	58, 148, 188	27:6	130
30:1	335	29:3	99
30:2	335	30:24-25	114
30:20	193		
32:7-8	181	2 Samuel	
32:35	145		
32:39	193	4:4	27
32:47	193	5:24	37
		15:20	143
Joshua		17:5	72
		19:36	63
5:2	43	21:18	32, 37
5:9	126	23:13-17	37
5:10	163	24:15	166
8:28-29	127		
9:27	129	1 Kings	
10:14	111		
10:27	137	2:12	27
11:1-5	68	2:33	110
14:10	110	5:1	79
20:6	48	8:8	128, 133, 134
24:31	80	8:29	160
		9:24-25	38
Judges		10:12	50, 69, 128, 133
		12:19	132
2:18	81	17:17	35
3:1-2	67		

18:12	106	25:34	200
20:26	171	26:18	84
		28:8	106, 187
		30:7	111
2 Kings		32:20	185
		33:15-16	47
8:22	40, 129	35:7	193
12:18	38	46:26	182
14:7	127, 133	47:1	49
14:17	28		
15:2	27		
15:27	27	Ezekiel	
16:7	42		
17:23	136	4:10	153
17:34	187	4:14	98
18:5	111	7:2	264
18:13	32	12:27	147
18:17	32	20:29	131
21:15	100	38:17	182
23:22	81, 82	39:22	105, 109
23:22-23	101	43:27	109
24:10	41	46:17	173
Isaiah		Hosea	
7:15-16	63	2:1-2	89
8:16	301	2:17	87
9:3	86, 89	2:9	186
11:9	297	4:1	297
13:20	149, 183	9:9	90
17:14	145	10:9	90, 108
18:6	171	12:4	99
22:13	145		
26:20	141		
30:8	148, 151	Joel	
45:17	150		
51:9	180	1:2	85
60:22	295	2:2	111
63:11	181	4:1	47
65:20	208		
		Amos	
Jeremiah			
1:2	29	1:1	49
1:2-3	29, 96	6:12	361
3:16-17	72		
6:11	200	Micah	
7:7	103		
7:24	101	3:4	36
25:5	103	4:7	104

5:1	182	73:15	60
7:15	87	73:19-20	142
		74:16	155
Habakkuk		74:16-17	225
		74:17	170
1:12	103	78:4	148
2:3	264	78:6	59
		90:1-2	50
		90:2	102, 179
		90:4	144, 215, 355
Jonah		90:10	205, 213
		90:12	214, 355
4:10	145	91	194
		91:5	159
		91:14-15	194
Zephaniah		102:19	59, 148
		102:25-28	215
1:9	129	102:26	67
		103:17	183, 280
		104:16	287
Haggai		104:22-23	360
		104:33	359
2:15	105	105:8	59, 149
		113:2	104
		137:7	88
Zechariah		143:5	182
8:10	48		
8:11	178	Proverbs	
14:5	49		
14:8	170	2:13	315
		3:1-2	195
		3:16	195
Malachi		3:24	159
		8:22	179
3:7	86	8:24	51, 179
3:4	181	20:4	171
		28:16	195
		31:25	148
Psalms			
15:1	194	Job	
21:5	194		
23:6	194	4:20-21	143
25:6	108	7:19	146
30:6	142, 161	8:8	59
44:2	182	8:9	144, 215
48:14-15	148	9:24-25	215
49:20	60	14:1	207
55:18	161	14:12	151
71:17-18	112	15:7	178, 180
72:7	151	15:32	201



18:20 149  
 20:5 142  
 29:2 178, 182  
 42:11 68  
 42:16 60, 204  
 42:16-17 206

## Song of Songs (=Canticles)

2:11 170  
 3:8 159

## Ruth

1:1 80  
 1:12 361  
 2:11 144  
 4:7 65, 69

## Esther

1:1 85  
 2:1 34  
 3:1 34  
 4:14 45, 185  
 4:16 161  
 8:9 40

## Qohelet (=Ecclesiasties)

1:11 149  
 3:1 294  
 6:12 215  
 7:10 177, 186  
 7:15 197  
 8:13 195  
 10:16-17 361

## Daniel

8:14 165  
 8:17 264  
 8:19 264  
 9:24-27 167, 243  
 9:26 265  
 10:2 95  
 11-12 243

11:20 144  
 12:1 45, 102, 181  
 12:2 151, 272  
 12:13 149

## Ezra

3:8 122  
 4:2 85, 369  
 4:4-5 85  
 4:5 30  
 7:1-5 33  
 9:7 86  
 9:8 141

## Nehemiah

7:5 74, 330  
 8:17 80, 101  
 9:32 86, 102  
 12 84  
 12:22 85  
 12:47 84  
 13:5 68  
 13:21 47  
 13:23 47  
 13:26 111

## 1 Chronicles

2:21 26, 208  
 4:40 67  
 4:41-43 71, 84, 128  
 5:10 84  
 5:26 70, 134  
 15:2 150  
 17:12 150  
 20:4 32  
 21:28-29 40  
 23:3 122, 123  
 23:24 122  
 23:26-27 123  
 27:23 118, 212  
 29:10 103  
 29:15 215

2 Chronicles		24:23	38
		25:5	118, 212
5:9	72	25:17	38
8:8	71	28:16	41
8:12-13	38, 39	30:26	108
9:11	69, 133	31:16-17	123
10:19	71	32:1	32
11:2	144	32:9	30, 32
13:3	84	36:10	41
21:10	71	36:20	30
24:2	82		
24:15	203, 208		

## B. Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

Ben Sira		4 Maccabees	
1:12	195	18:19	193
1:20	195		
3:6	196	1 Enoch	
13:33	227	5:7-9	197
18:9-10	355	84-90	243
18:11-13	355		
18:26	143	Jubilees	
26:1-2	199	1:4	301
37:25	354	1:10	227
41:13	355	1:14	232
42:15	227	1:26	301
43:6-8	259	1:27	346
		2:8-9	226
1 Baruch		2:9	315
48:5	355	2:20-24	357
48:15	355	3:10	346
		4:26	346
2 Baruch		6:34	301
53-69	243	21	353
54:1-2	243	21:1-2	352, 357
		22:7	354
2 Maccabees		23	201, 350
12:38	312	23:9	352
		23:11	348, 352, 353
		23:11-32	351
		23:12	198, 352
		23: 28-29	199
		25:9	358
		35	353

35:6	353	46:3	354
35:8	358	50:8	366
35:12	348		
36:18	354		
36:23	357		
38:13-14	343		
39:6-7	319		
45:13	354		
		Wisdom Solomon	
		3-4	196, 197
		3:17	197

### C. Qumran Texts

#### Damascus Covenant (=CD)

i 11-13	248
i 12	248
i 13	307
ii 7-10	240
ii 9-10	240
iii 12-13	281
iii 12-16	232, 239
iii 13	281
iii 14-15	259
iv 4	338
iv 8-12	270
v 20	269
vi 14-15	265
viii 2-3	341
x 7-8	343
x 7-10	201, 354
x 14	312
x 17-18	365
x 22	364
xii 3-4	259
xii 22-23	268
xiii 8-9	240
xvi 3	300
xvi 3-4	301
xvi 4-6	326
xix 35 - xx 1	327, 344
xx 3-5	327, 344
xx 25-27	324

#### Hodayot (=1QH)

v 16	236
v 22-24	198
v 23-24	285
v 26	240
vi 4	323

vi 14-15	265
vii 20	323, 342
ix 14-18	236
ix 15-16	328
ix 16	329
ix 18	279
ix 18-19	328
ix 23-25	236
xi 22	280
xiii†27	275
xiii 34-35	326
xiv 29	269
xiv 31	290
xv 23-24	285
xv 25	285
xvii 7-8	275
xvii 29-34	344
xx	230, 299
xx 3-15	257
xx 4-8	229
xx 7-8	298
xx 14	285
xxv 11	240

#### War Scroll (=1QM)

i 5	266, 304
i 8-9	235, 263
i 10	238, 323, 341
i 11-12	323
ii 4	311
x 2	342
x 15-16	259
xi 8	265
xii 3	279
xii 15	281
xiii 7-8	279
xiii 14	239

xiv 13-14	231	vii 5	245
xv 1	304	vii 7	244, 271
xv 6	262	vii 12-14	238, 272, 299
xv 12-13	239	ix 4-6	338
xvii 5-6	238, 324		
xviii 13-14	263		
		4Q158 1-2	283, 348
		4Q166 i	252, 268
		4Q166 ii	259
		4Q169 3-4	273, 337
		4Q171 ii	305
		4Q171 iii	248, 282
		4Q171 1-2ii	262
		4Q173 1	273
		4Q174 1-3	305
		4Q174 4	307
		4Q177 3	234, 271
		4Q177 5-6	305
		4Q180	264
		4Q180 1	234
		4Q181 lii	272
		4Q184 1	287
		4Q185 2	347
		4Q200 2	356
		4Q200 6	233, 291
		4Q215a lii	237, 267, 268, 297
		4Q216 i	250, 301
		4Q216 ii	227
		4Q216 vii	319, 357
		4Q217 2	346
		4Q219 1	357
		4Q219 ii	250
		4Q221 3	348
		4Q221 7	319
		4Q222 1	358
		4Q223 2iv	343
		4Q223-224 2i	348
		4Q226 1	282
		4Q228 li	241, 300
		4Q251 5	344
		4Q251 9	363
		4Q252 ii	317, 363
		4Q252 iv	334
		4Q252 v	251
		4Q255 2	242, 281
		4Q256 8ii	313
		4Q258 2 iii	255
		4Q258 3 iii	324
		4Q259 1 iii	303
		4Q266 1	334
		4Q266 2i	269
		4Q266 2ii	279
		4Q266 3i	270
		4Q266 12	366
Community Rule (=1QS)			
i 9	262		
i 13-15	241, 261, 295		
ii 1	280		
ii 19	329		
iii 14-15	265		
iii 18	262		
iii 23	262, 274		
iv 7	197		
iv 12-13	236		
iv 16-17	272		
iv 25-26	235		
v 23-24 333			
v 26 - vi 1	364		
viii 4	299		
viii 13-14	308		
ix 3-5	307		
ix 5-6	307		
ix 9	307		
ix 12	299		
ix 13	324		
ix 13-15	303		
ix 18	299		
ix 19-20	306, 308		
ix 21	308		
x	230		
x 1	240		
x 3	257		
x 3-7	321		
x 3-8	255		
x 4-5	313		
x 19	323		
x 25-26	301		
Rule of the Congregation (=1QSa)			
i 1	338		
i 7	311		
i 10-11	63		
Peshet Habakkuk (=1QpHab)			
vii 2	271		

4Q268 1	243	4Q416 1	265, 269
4Q269 8ii	266	4Q416 2ii	358
4Q270 2i	366	4Q416 2iii	337
4Q270 6iii	333	4Q416 2iv	200
4Q270 6iv	200, 303	4Q417 1i	317
4Q270 7i	367	4Q417 2i	273, 283, 358
4Q271 2ii	200	4Q417 2ii	358
4Q271 3	367	4Q418 7b	358
4Q271 5i	259	4Q418 55	278
4Q284 1i	312	4Q418 68	249
4Q284 3	298	4Q418 69ii	281, 290, 292
4Q285 1	303	4Q418 103ii	302, 308
4Q285 3	300	4Q418 126ii	320, 359
4Q285 4	308	4Q418 127	318
4Q285 8	281	4Q418 137	198
4Q286 1ii	253	4Q418 162	291
4Q286 7i	291	4Q422 ii	313
4Q291 3	280	4Q423 5	258, 302
4Q293 1	282	4Q424 1	365
4Q298 iii	273	4Q424 3	365
4Q298 3-4ii	273	4Q425 6	365
4Q299 5	315	4Q426 1 i	198
4Q300 9	326	4Q427 3i	261
4Q301 3	270	4Q427 3ii	230
4Q306 2	332	4Q427 7i	288, 292
4Q365 23	231, 260	4Q427 7ii	274, 275
4Q369 1i	237, 260, 269	4Q437 2	359
4Q369 1ii	278, 285	4Q440 1	331
4Q370 ii	356	4Q449 1	348
4Q370 1ii	347	4Q462 1	265
4Q372 1	274, 298	4Q464 3i	281
4Q377 1ii	282	4Q470 1	307
4Q385 1	326	4Q491 8-10	289
4Q385 3	243	4Q496 i	304
4Q385 9	357	4Q503 iii	230
4Q385 45	260	4Q504 1-2vi	284
4Q385a 44	247	4Q504 5i	283
4Q385b 16 ii	332	4Q508 2	262
4Q386 1ii	330	4Q511 35	252
4Q387a 3 ii	247, 327, 334	4Q511 42	252
4Q390 1	232, 260, 329	4Q512 1-3	235
4Q390 2i	325	4Q512 33iv	312
4Q392 1	227, 315	4Q525 2ii	305, 325
4Q394 3-7i	332, 363	4Q525 23ii	280
4Q396 1-2	363		
4Q397 14-21	249, 335		
4Q398 11-13	335	11QTemple Scroll [11Q19]	
4Q398 14-17i	336	xvii 8	119
4Q398 14-17ii	302, 336		
4Q408 1	316	xxxix 7-8	63
4Q408 3	228	xxxix 10-11	63
4Q409 1	334	lvii 3-5	118
4Q413 1-2	249		
4Q414 7	232, 233		

# STUDIES ON THE TEXTS OF THE DESERT OF JUDAH

1. Wernberg Möller, P. *The Manual of Discipline*. Translated and Annotated, with an Introduction. 1957. ISBN 90 04 02195 7
2. Ploeg, J. van der. *Le rouleau de la guerre*. Traduit et annoté, avec une introduction. 1959. ISBN 90 04 02196 5
3. Mansoor, M. *The Thanksgiving Hymns*. Translated and Annotated with an Introduction. 1961. ISBN 90 04 02197 3
5. Koffmahn, E. *Die Doppelurkunden aus der Wüste Juda*. Recht und Praxis der jüdischen Papyri des 1. und 2. Jahrhunderts n. Chr. samt Übertragung der Texte und Deutscher Übersetzung. 1968. ISBN 90 04 03148 0
6. Kutscher, E.Y. *The Language and linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll (1 QIsa<sup>a</sup>)*. Transl. from the first (1959) Hebrew ed. With an obituary by H.B. Rosén. 1974. ISBN 90 04 04019 6
- 6a. Kutscher, E.Y. *The Language and Linguistic Background of the Isaiah Scroll (1 QIsa<sup>a</sup>)*. Indices and Corrections by E. Qimron. Introduction by S. Morag. 1979. ISBN 90 04 05974 1
7. Jongeling, B. *A Classified Bibliography of the Finds in the Desert of Judah, 1958-1969*. 1971. ISBN 90 04 02200 7
8. Merrill, E.H. *Qumran and Predestination*. A Theological Study of the Thanksgiving Hymns. 1975. ISBN 90 04 04265 2
9. García Martínez, F. *Qumran and Apocalyptic*. Studies on the Aramaic Texts from Qumran. 1992. ISBN 90 04 09586 1
10. Dimant, D. & U. Rappaport (eds.). *The Dead Sea Scrolls*. Forty Years of Research. 1992. ISBN 90 04 09679 5
11. Treballe Barrera, J. & L. Vegas Montaner (eds.). *The Madrid Qumran Congress*. Proceedings of the International Congress on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Madrid 18-21 March 1991. 2 vols. 1993. ISBN 90 04 09771 6 set
12. Nitzan, B. *Qumran Prayer and Religious Poetry* 1994. ISBN 90 04 09658 2
13. Steudel, A. *Der Midrasch zur Eschatologie aus der Qumrangemeinde (4QMidrEschat<sup>a,b</sup>)*. Materielle Rekonstruktion, Textbestand, Gattung und traditions geschichtliche Einordnung des durch 4Q174 („Florilegium“) und 4Q177 („Catena A“) repräsentierten Werkes aus den Qumranfunden. 1994. ISBN 90 04 09763 5
14. Swanson, D.D. *The Temple Scroll and the Bible*. The Methodology of 11QT. 1995. ISBN 90 04 09849 6
15. Brooke, G.J. (ed.). *New Qumran Texts and Studies*. Proceedings of the First Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Paris 1992. With F. García Martínez. 1994. ISBN 90 04 10093 8
16. Dimant, D. & L.H. Schiffman. *Time to Prepare the Way in the Wilderness*. Papers on the Qumran Scrolls by Fellows of the Institute for Advanced Studies of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 1989-1990. 1995. ISBN 90 04 10225 6
17. Flint, P.W. *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms*. 1997. ISBN 90 04 10341 4
18. Lange, A. *Weisheit und Prädestination*. Weisheitliche Urordnung und Prädestination in den Textfunden von Qumran. 1995. ISBN 90 04 10432 1
19. García Martínez, F. & D.W. Parry. *A Bibliography of the Finds in the Desert of Judah 1970-95*. Arranged by Author with Citation and Subject Indexes. 1996. ISBN 90 04 10588 3

20. Parry, D.W. & S.D. Ricks (eds.). *Current Research and Technological Developments on the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Conference on the Texts from the Judean Desert, Jerusalem, 30 April 1995. 1996. ISBN 90 04 10662 6
21. Metso, S. *The Textual Development of the Qumran Community Rule*. 1997. ISBN 90 04 10683 9
22. Herbert, E.D. *Reconstructing Biblical Dead Sea Scrolls*. A New Method applied to the Reconstruction of 4QSam<sup>a</sup>. 1997. ISBN 90 04 10684 7
23. Bernstein, M., F. García Martínez & J. Kampen (eds.). *Legal texts and Legal Issues*. Proceedings of the Second Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Cambridge 1995. Published in honour of Joseph M. Baumgarten. 1997. ISBN 90 04 10829 7
25. Lefkovits, J.K. *The Copper Scroll – 3Q15: A Reevaluation*. A new Reading, Translation, and Commentary. ISBN 90 04 10685 5
26. Muraoka, T. & J.F. Elwolde (eds.). *The Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls & Ben Sira*. Proceedings of a Symposium held at Leiden University, 11-14 December 1995. 1997. ISBN 90 04 10820 3
27. Falk, D.K. *Daily, Sabbath, and Festival Prayers in the Dead Sea Scrolls*. 1998. ISBN 90 04 10817 3
28. Stone, M.E. & E.G. Chazon (eds.). *Biblical Perspectives: Early Use and Interpretation of the Bible in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Proceedings of the First International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 12-14 May, 1996. 1998. ISBN 90 04 10939 0
29. Hempel, C. *The Laws of the Damascus Document*. Sources, Tradition and Redaction. 1998. ISBN 90 04 11150 6
30. Parry, D.W. & E. Ulrich (eds.) *The Provo International Conference on the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Technological Innovations, New Texts, and Reformulated Issues. 1998. ISBN 90 04 11155 7
31. Chazon, E.G. & M. Stone (eds.) *Pseudepigraphic Perspectives*. The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls. Proceedings of the International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 12-14 January, 1997. 1998. ISBN 90 04 11164 6
32. Parry, D.W. & E. Qimron (eds.) *The Great Isaiah Scroll (1QIsa<sup>a</sup>)*. A New Edition. 1998. ISBN 90 04 11277 4
33. Muraoka, T. & Elwolde, J.F. (eds.) *Sirach, Scrolls, and Sages*. Proceedings of a Second International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls, Ben Sira, and the Mishnah, held at Leiden University, 15-17 December 1997. 1999. ISBN 90 04 11553 6
34. Baumgarten, J.M. & E.G. Chazon & A. Punnick (eds.) *The Damascus Document: A Centennial of Discovery*. Proceedings of the Third International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 4-8 February, 1998. 1999. ISBN 90 04 11462 9
35. Falk, D.K., F. García Martínez & E.M. Schuller, *Sapiential, Liturgical and Poetical Texts from Qumran*. Proceedings of the Third Meeting of the International Organization for Qumran Studies, Oslo 1998. Published in Memory of Maurice Baillet. 2000. ISBN 90 04 11684 2
36. Muraoka, T. & J.F. Elwolde (eds.), *Diggers at the Well*. Proceedings of a Third International Symposium on the Hebrew of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Ben Sira. 2000. ISBN 90 04 12002 5

37. Goodblatt, D., A. Pinnick & D.R. Schwartz (eds.), *Historical Perspectives: From the Hasmoneans to Bar Kokhba in Light of the Dead Sea Scrolls*. Proceedings of the Fourth International Symposium of the Orion Center for the Study of the Dead Sea Scrolls and Associated Literature, 27-31 January. 2001. ISBN 90 04 12007 6
38. Elgvin, T. *Wisdom and Apocalyptic in 4QInstruction*. ISBN 90 04 11424 6  
(in preparation)
39. Brin, G. *The Concept of Time in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*. 2001.  
ISBN 90 04 12314 8
40. Murphy, C.M. *Wealth in the Dead Sea Scrolls and in the Qumran Community*. 2001.  
ISBN 90 0411934 5
41. Pinnick, A. *The Orion Center Bibliography of the Dead Sea Scrolls (1995-2000)*. 2001.  
ISBN 90 04 12366 0
42. Fletcher-Louis, C.H.T. *All the Glory of Adam*. Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls. 2001. ISBN 90 04 12326 1
43. Fincke, A. *The Samuel Scroll from Qumran*. 4QSam<sup>a</sup> restored and compared to the Septuagint and 4QSam<sup>c</sup>. 2001. ISBN 90 04 123709