

# HEBREW TEXT IN PRAXIS: SHAPING STORIES OF SIGNIFICANCE

Submitted by

Catherine Jean Teller BTheol MTheol (Hons)

A thesis submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of  
Master of Philosophy

National School of Theology  
Faculty of Theology and Philosophy

Australian Catholic University

29<sup>th</sup> December 2009

**Statement of sources**

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.



---

Catherine Teller  
29<sup>th</sup> December 2009

## ABSTRACT

The claim of this research, *Hebrew Text in Praxis: Shaping Stories of Significance*, is that textual narrative, discourse sentences or even single words disclose inner ideational sparks which shape stories of significance. This thesis will show, firstly that in keeping with the idea of Hebrew text in praxis, the entire act of carrying out modern *midrash* sits well within the traditions and history of the *midrashic* impulse, and secondly that for the *midrashist* the telling and retelling of Scripture is about perspective, the relativity of context, and above all an audience.

Chapter One, presents an historical and literary discussion of the relationship between Buber's dialogical hermeneutic and rabbinic *midrash*. It is the contention of this research that Buber was deeply influenced by *midrashic* thought and intimately understood the worldview of the Rabbis which led him to incorporate aspects of their hermeneutic treasury to his own reading of the Hebrew text.

Chapter Two, explores textual and scholarly evidence of the Hebrew text as an *aggadic* trope, focusing in the main on the way this process manifests in the methods of *parshanut* (interpretation) and *darshanut* (transvaluation). Two areas of concern are explored in this chapter: the origins of making *midrash aggada* in the Hebrew text itself, and a focus on the pinnacles of development in the extra biblical *midrashic* recordings of the Rabbis.

Chapter Three, attempts to show that the meeting of co-text and situation in equal partnership pact with the Hebrew text projects a cascade of meaning that drives the *midrashic* impulse and fulfils the *midrashic* moment. The purpose of this chapter is to contemporize traditional *midrashic* processes through two *midrash* models. The rabbinic *midrash* model and Buber's *leitwort* model, incorporate simple and complex ways that embrace the exegetical and imaginative aspects of *midrash*.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Shalom rav ve toda raba* – I wish to express my most sincere gratitude to:

**Dr. Laurence Woods**, the Principal Supervisor, for his professional guidance, critical advice, encouragement, immense patience, and above all, his superior ability to carry out the task of supervision whatever the circumstances, even more in the context of Christian-Jewish discourse, which my thesis necessarily imposed on him.

**Dr. Terry Veling**, the Co-Supervisor, for the valuable encouragement at the beginning of my enrolment as a research student and the ongoing professional support and sustained belief in my academic endeavour, coupled with a genuine interest in the subject matter which forms the core of this thesis.

**Carmen Ivers**, the Candidature & Thesis Officer, Research Higher Degrees, for providing the administrative backbone to my research and for tirelessly offering expertise to assist me towards meeting every deadline and requirement.

**Prof. Robert Gascoigne**, the Head of the National School of Theology, for the professional integrity shown in the making of sound and solid decisions pertaining to my thesis endeavours throughout the time of my enrolment as a research student.

## CONTENTS

	Page
Statement of sources	ii
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter One – The Relationship Between Buber’s Dialogical Hermeneutic and Rabbinic <i>Midrash</i>	6
Chapter Two – <i>Midrash Aggada: Word Begets World</i>	56
Chapter Three – Toward a Modern <i>Midrash: Renewing that Praxis</i>	123
Conclusion	169
Bibliography	176
Glossary	191

## INTRODUCTION

A belief endures within the heart of making *midrash*. It is the age old conviction that particular ethics and universal truths call out from the Scriptures. The first principle of *midrash* is that there is no single or correct way to hear the calling of Scripture. *Midrash* moves moment by moment across both text and time wearing a cape of creative enlightenment. The measure which empowers the delivery of *midrash* is its *aggadic* factor – the telling and retelling of “textual truths”. For the *midrashist* the telling and retelling of Scripture is about perspective, the relativity of context, the art of making *midrash* and above all an audience.

This leads to a second principle of *midrash* that Scripture was given for human interpretation. The *midrashic* habit of freely interpreting Scripture derives from a rabbinical view that all words and phrases of the text have multiplicity of meaning.<sup>1</sup> The many meanings of Scripture were not intended only for the cognoscenti, since the *midrashic* impulse, as Hillel instructed, must never be separated from the broad community.<sup>2</sup> Therefore appreciation of the interpretative modes of *midrash* rests with an audience. Accordingly *midrash* is comprehended through a reciprocal relationship between delivery and the audience who hears it.

Students of *midrash aggada* engage with a scriptural text which lends itself to a variety of hermeneutical methods. The unifying factor for analysis is human awareness in a current context. However, it is the contention of this thesis

that without awareness of past and current audiences the process of *midrash* and its various connections to the Divine cannot be fully experienced. The aim is not one where modern *midrash* needs to directly emulate rabbinical writings, or even for the modern *midrash* student to become a mirror image of a rabbinical *aggadist*. The aim is to encourage a review of the traditional methods for making *midrash* in order to recapture the intention, interpretative power and fascination of making *midrash* for an audience. In this way the modern student of *midrash* through the benefit of generational teachings may master the art of making *midrash* for current audiences.

The claim of this thesis *Hebrew Text in Praxis: Shaping Stories of Significance* is that the making of modern *midrash* continues to engage with the ancient calling (*ha-Mikra*) of Scripture through the situational awareness of the modern reader. In the words of Jacobson modern *midrash* is not only,

a continuation of the *midrashic* tradition of the rabbinic and medieval periods, but also a product of the revival of interest...that has spread throughout western culture (turning and returning) to the traditional narratives...as important sources of self-understanding.<sup>3</sup>

In general, the concern of the modern *midrashic* movement has been to respectfully lift the dynamic of *midrash* out of the rut of classical existence. Once set free the dynamics of making *midrash* were then rightfully directed into the present moment. Only in this way could *midrash* regain that rightful position as a process of contemporary renewal. But the matter of making

modern *midrash* is not just about setting *midrash* free to exist in a modern praxis. The making of modern *midrash* is largely dependent on process. In particular, it is the contention of this research that as *midrash* undergoes constant renewal in a modern context, so too must its very process be revised.

Alongside the call for constant renewal of the *midrashic* process, this thesis also acknowledges that the character of *midrash* carries with it certain processes which are embedded in the tradition. These processes aid the renewal of *midrash* via a generational continuum of *midrashic* awareness. The first chapter of this thesis identifies specific aspects of the work of Martin Buber that make a major contribution to a renewal of the rabbinical *midrash* process. It is the contention of this research that Buber was deeply influenced by *midrashic* thought and intimately understood the worldview of the Rabbis which led him to incorporate aspects of their hermeneutic treasury to his own reading of the Hebrew text.

While the notion and conventions of *midrash* have their roots in antiquity this thesis seeks to find a modern approach that respects the principles and methodology of traditional *midrash*. In fact, the *midrashic* impulse in the form of an *aggadic* trope is evidenced within Scripture itself. The second chapter of this thesis explores textual and scholarly evidence of the Hebrew text as an *aggadic* trope, focusing in the main on the way this process is discernible in the methods of *parshanut* (interpretation) and *darshanut*



(transvaluation). In particular two areas of concern to this thesis are explored, firstly the origins of making *midrash aggada* in the Hebrew text itself, and secondly a focus on the pinnacles of development in the extra biblical *midrashic* recordings of the Rabbis.

As much as the making of modern *midrash* has undergone constant renewal very little work has been done on offering any process outside of encouraging approaches to Scripture which follow the division of the text into *parashah* and *haftarah*.<sup>4</sup> To meet the demands of the modern world and the sharing of *midrash* with other faiths, modern *midrashists* may need to respectfully consider a more open approach to the Scriptures without the constraints of *parashah* and *haftarah* boundaries.<sup>5</sup> This research offers a revision of two traditional *midrashic* processes put forward in a new form without the constraints of the division of the text into *parashah* and *haftarah* portions.

Chapter three of this thesis puts forward these two models which are not dependent on liturgical divisions in the text. They are the "Rabbinic *Midrash* Model" and the "Buber *Leitwort* Model". Each process gives a consideration to the reader in their own time and space. Accordingly, examples of simple and complex ways of making modern *midrash* have been offered within each model. This research attempts to show that the meeting of co-text and situation in equal partnership pact with the Hebrew text projects a cascade of meaning that drives the *midrashic* impulse and fulfils the *midrashic* moment. The purpose of this section of the research is to contemporize traditional

*midrash* processes. The two *midrash* models incorporate simple and complex ways designed to embrace the exegetical and imaginative aspects of making modern *midrash*.

Finally the conclusion of this thesis will present an overview of the research along with raising significant points relevant to the research. A discussion involving the limitations of the research will be presented. The methodology applied to offset the limitations will be outlined. The practical implications of this research will be described with suggestions for further research. The final comments of this thesis will be a call for further research in the area of the making of modern *midrash*.

---

<sup>1</sup> See: *Pirke Avot* 2:25. "Turn the Torah, turn it again and again, for everything you want to know is found within it." See also: JT *Eruvin* 13b, where the words of different schools [of thought] are equally all the words of the living God, that is, "these and these are the words of the living God" allowing for multiple interpretations of Scripture.

<sup>2</sup> BT *Avot* 2:4

<sup>3</sup> Jacobson, David C. *Modern Midrash: The Retelling of Traditional Jewish Narratives by Twentieth Century Hebrew Writers*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987. 4.

<sup>4</sup> A fine example of dependence on the liturgical calendar of *parashah* and *haftarah* is the otherwise totally brilliant writing by Katz and Schwartz which gives lessons for everyday living, albeit that the modern *midrash* therein is bound and defined by the liturgical framework of the text. See: Katz, Michael, and, Gershon Schwartz. *Searching For Meaning In Midrash*. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society. 2002.

<sup>5</sup> The *parashah* (*parasha'ot* pl.) is a designated portion of the *Torah*. The *haftarah* (*haftarot* pl.) is a designated portion from the books of *Nevi'im*. The sequence of *parasha'ot* and *haftarot* are teamed and rotated in sequence by a yearly calendar. Typically, each *haftarah* is thematically linked to its designated *parashah* (*Torah* portion) which precedes it in the synagogue liturgy.

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BUBER'S DIALOGICAL HERMENEUTIC AND RABBINIC MIDRASH

This chapter presents an historical and literary discussion of the relationship between Buber's dialogical hermeneutic and rabbinic *midrash*. This has a twofold purpose, firstly to stimulate the discussion and secondly to give a human face to Buber and the Rabbis as the players who acted out their dialogical hermeneutic on the stage of Jewish life. Put another way, the hermeneutics of Buber and the Rabbis did not come into being within a vacuum; they came into being within the warp and weave of the lives of the living souls of the Jewish Diaspora and in this context they regenerated the Jewish ethos for their time.

The twentieth century Buber and the first century Rabbis were both witnesses in the history of the Hebrew text and the Jewish people. Early Rabbinical Judaism witnessed a departure from the Land, whilst Buber in his later life witnessed a return to the Land. This bracket in history spanning nineteen and a half centuries defines Jewish Diaspora as the time when biblical text was "homeland" and the catchcry on the lips of every Jew was "next year in Jerusalem". With the passing of Jewish Diaspora into history we now have a world Jewry with its focal point in a modern Israel.<sup>1</sup>

In our times of post-Modern Israel and a post-Holocaust world there is continuing academic and personal interest in the literature of the Rabbis and

Martin Buber. In general, Buber has become regarded as a great philosopher and the Rabbis have attained the status of Sages. It is the contention of this thesis that Buber was deeply influenced by *midrashic* thought and intimately understood the worldview of the Rabbis 'which led him to incorporate aspects of their hermeneutic treasury to his own reading of the *Tanakh*.<sup>2</sup> The aim of this chapter is to show the close relationship between Buber's dialogical hermeneutic and the *midrashic* dialogue of our Rabbis. In contradistinction to the modern hermeneutics of his time and onwards, Buber tied his methodology directly to the spoken word, in particular, the spoken word of the Hebrew text itself.

...Buber shows how central principles of his dialogical hermeneutics – mutuality, openness, listening, and relationship – find a ground and support in biblical notions of language. Although Gadamer shares many of Buber's dialogical principles, he has sought to ground his hermeneutics in Greek philosophy and Western Humanism. In *Truth and Method* Gadamer employs Plato's dialectic, Aristotle's *phronesis*, Heidegger's *aletheia*, and the Humanist's *Bildung* and tries to make these notions serviceable for his hermeneutics by stripping out the static metaphysics present in them. What Buber offers is an alternative, biblical linguistic foundation for hermeneutics that, from the beginning, situates the word in a concrete living and dynamic context and naturally gives rise to an open and moving hermeneutic system where the give and take of dialogue is of paramount value.<sup>3</sup>

Buber's *I and Thou* writings offer a "virtual readability"<sup>4</sup> of human dialogue, unveiling a literary portrait of existentialistic encounter, succinctly construed from deep reflection on his own childhood experiences as a series of "meetings and mismetings".<sup>5</sup> Hobart in his consideration of the problematic

of studying non-Western thought, which may be judged to reside ambivalently in a European context, outlines the way in which Buber's *I and Thou* writings in contrast to those of his European contemporaries 'offered a subtler analysis in terms of relationality'.<sup>6</sup> Buber's public persona and scholarly role as the twentieth century philosophizing scribe from Jewish Diaspora who held out his opened hand towards people everywhere including the wider European scholarly community is directly pertinent to understanding his own "cultural personality".<sup>7</sup> Buber had different political, social, and religious responsibilities from those of gentile scholars and as a consequence his work is of a different nature than theirs. It is by and large determined by social conditions and his "national" self awareness amidst the self definition of the Jews in European Diaspora – all these factors collectively intrinsic to the time and place in which Buber conceived his dialogical hermeneutic, philosophy, and writings.<sup>8</sup>

Therefore, it is not surprising that Buber may have unwittingly presented what appeared prima facie a nonsensical writing outside of the normative expectation of scholarly criticism set in the formal theoretical climate of the European groves of Academe. Within such a climate it is fair to say scholars from different backgrounds may literally talk past each other. Jürgen Habermas, from a different socio-religious background than Buber, put forward his own unique approach in a socio-linguistic theory of communicative ethics, a formal version of inter-subjectivity.<sup>9</sup> It follows Habermas may not have understood the cultural crux of Buber's thought nor

would he have appreciated Buber's Jewish deep consciousness, and therefore rightly or wrongly declared the writing *I and Thou* to be vague and somewhat obscure.

It is equally so that Buber's dialogical hermeneutic, philosophy, and, writings do require close reading and patient contemplation. When we give careful consideration to the *Hebraic-Yiddish* nature at the heart of Buber's writing<sup>10</sup> we are sensitized to the power of Buber's message. In the same way we learn to appreciate and savour through careful readings and patient contemplative study of *midrash aggada* the multi-vocal Hebraic language modes and moods quintessential to Rabbinic thought.

In our encounters with...*midrash* [*aggada*]...we find ourselves in a [*Hebraic*] literary universe...characterized by the dense, concise, figurative language [used] to convey the complex understandings...each of these [*Hebraic*] literary devices is misleadingly simple, a true appreciation of them requires careful consideration...the skills we use to analyse linear arguments are inadequate for the task of extracting the Rabbis' subtle, highly sophisticated messages from the figurative language in which they are clothed.<sup>11</sup>

When reading *midrash aggada* the multi-vocal voices of the Rabbis can be heard speaking not in theoretical jargon but in a precise mode of communication that has an ever-present audience in mind. Likewise, when reading Buber's literary works in his words can be heard the desire to speak to the ordinary human being. Through the intentioned use of figurative language Buber guides the reader towards the narrow ridge between self and otherness. The Buberian *I, Thou and It* writing is not an abstract proposition

it is a writing centred in dialogical relation. It is an invitation to concretely contemplate an encounter with existential reality – to enter into genuine dialogue with otherness whilst maintaining the sense of being an individual within everyday relationships.

...Buber's person of the narrow ridge, who lives with others yet never gives up one's personal responsibility nor allows one's commitment to the group to stand in the way of one's direct relationship to the Thou. Another product of the narrow ridge, one equally essential to the life of dialogue, is the realistic trust which recognizes the strength of the tendency toward seeming yet stands ready to deal with the other as a partner and to confirm her [him] in becoming her [his] real self. This open-eyed trust is at base a trust in existence itself despite the difficulties we encounter in making our human share of it authentic. It is the trust, in Buber's words, that the human being as human being is redeemable.<sup>12</sup>

In brief it can be said 'the crux of Buber's thought is his conception of two primary relationships: I-Thou and I-It'.<sup>13</sup> Put more fully, Buber's philosophy of I-It is established in experience gained from a tendency to treat something as an impersonal object governed by causal, social, or economic forces, whilst the philosophy of I-Thou is in the establishment of relationship characterized by openness, reciprocity, and a deep sense of personal involvement. In this way Buber's *I and Thou*, according to Hobart is best understood in the sense that an 'appreciation of another person is relational'.<sup>14</sup> Bakhtin,<sup>15</sup> in scholarly symmetry with Buber elaborates,

To be means to be for another and through the other for oneself. A person has no sovereign internal territory, he is wholly and always on the boundary: looking inside himself, he looks into the eyes of another or with the eyes of another.<sup>16</sup>

According to Friedman, 'through his dialogical philosophy [Buber] avoids not only the "objectivism" of the moral absolutists but also the "subjectivism" of the cultural relativists.'<sup>17</sup> The objectivistic approach which tends to split apart the nature and morality of humankind into sets of dualistic expression [good and bad, right and wrong], and the subjectivistic approach which denies external opinion and tends to reduce all values as based on the personal opinions of individuals and cultural groups, have no place in Buber's dialogical framework.

For Buber, the important factor was the narrow ridge between sets of dynamic and interacting relationships. The Rabbis allegorically express the necessity of a narrow line between dynamic, interacting relationships, keeping in mind the figurative proverb: 'R. Huna says: "When our love was strong, we could commune on the edge of a sword. Now that it has grown weak...sixty cubits wide is not wide enough for us"... as we have been taught, "The height of the Ark was nine-handbreadth. However, the thickness of the Ark cover [was only] one-handbreadth ...and God said, "There I will meet with thee I will commune with thee directly above the Ark cover (Exod. 25:22)".'<sup>18</sup>

Buber's narrow ridge overrides subjective identification and objective dissection and his philosophy of ethics 'radically shifts the whole ground of ethical discussion by moving from the universal to the concrete and from the past to the present in other words, from I-It to I-Thou'.<sup>19</sup> When faced with responding to the real life situations of otherness, the Rabbis responded to



the binding nature of higher ethics where they took the responsibility to move in favour of a relational affirmation of the human person: "Great is human dignity, since for its sake one may violate a binding precept of the *Torah*"<sup>20</sup> R. Joseph taught: In the verse "Thou shalt show them...the practice that they are to follow" (Exod 18:20), "the practice" refers to practice in keeping with the letter of the law, and "that they are to follow" refers to decisions [situations] that go beyond the letter of the law.<sup>21</sup> In like manner, Buberian thought does not strictly adhere to some external, absolutely valid ethical code which humankind is bound to apply as best as possible to each new situation.<sup>22</sup> In similar vein to that of the Rabbis, Buber's ethical stance marks the situation itself as the starting point.

The idea of responsibility is to be brought back from the province of specialized ethics, of an 'ought' that swings free in the air, into that of lived life. Genuine responsibility exists only where there is real responding.<sup>23</sup>

Buber moots the dialogical relationship as a concrete enactment, 'a genuinely reciprocal meeting in the fullness of life between one active existence and another'.<sup>24</sup> When we ignore issues of respect and dignity, we tend to treat otherness as detached, an object of contemplation or observation, genuine dialogue is not possible, nor will another yield the wholeness at the centre of their being without an elemental relationship.<sup>25</sup> However, when otherness becomes truly present for the self and there is real responding, Buber describes this dialogical "awareness" as the way of *personale Vergegenwärtigung* [making present the person of the other].<sup>26</sup> The Rabbis

elevate dialogical “awareness” as God’s Presence throughout the entire natural world: “No spot or thing on earth is devoid of the Presence”<sup>27</sup> further reminding us of their hermeneutic stance on God’s ontological ubiquity with a *midrashic* translation of the Scripture Deut 4:7: “The Lord our God is wheresoever we call upon [commune with] His Being”.<sup>28</sup>

For Buber dialogue is a very special form of communication – communication that employs facial expression, body language, and silence along with positive speech – in an effort to move persons into the realm of the I-Thou relationship...Buber was... comfortable with ontological designations. Thus, he refers to dialogue as the language of “Being” and “essence” and he speaks of I-Thou as the realm of “ontology”. The ontology of dialogue, it is crucial to note, undergirds relationships not only in the human world but in the natural world of plants, animals, and rocks as well.<sup>29</sup>

It must be reiterated that Buber’s dialogical hermeneutic is not a form of narrative inquiry or historical criticism, or even an attempt to promote language/linguistic theory - although at times his methodological processes, such as *leitwort*, and his three modalities of the spoken word, bring out historical and language/linguistic aspects in the biblical narrative. For Buber reading the text is like meeting Thou, evoking in the reader an experience of otherness. The realization of otherness should awaken in the reader ‘not only a different linguistic horizon but the reader’s own linguistic horizon...the logic of I-Thou thereby necessitates that the reader cannot remain in the initial state of the fantasy of presupposition-less-ness’.<sup>30</sup>

According to Kepnes there emerges within the reader's mind a set of pre-suppositions from the cultural traditions out of which the reader speaks and interprets.<sup>31</sup> Therefore 'the reader's response must include...a dialogue with [their] own language and culture – the question "Who is the text" elicits the question "Who am I".'<sup>32</sup> Boyarin states, 'all interpretation and historiography is representation of the past by the present...filtered through the cultural, socio-ideological matrix of readers...there is no such thing as value-free, true and objective rendering of documents'.<sup>33</sup> In scholarly agreement Booth says,

Realizing the complex nature of any time-tested text and the elaborate relationships between author, text, and reader we must expect and accept the fact that no one interpretation will bring about his desired goal of "critical understanding" of a text. Different interpreters will focus on different aspects of the text and different elements of the author-text-reader relationship. These interpretations are rightly "not reducible to each other". The goal of arriving at a single interpretation that is "true" for a particular community of inquiry may be not only elusive but, finally, stifling to the basic enterprise of a hermeneutics based on "conversation and dialogue".<sup>34</sup>

Kepnes points to Buber's dialogical hermeneutic which requires us to open ourselves to many interpretations, to have conversation with the validity, adequacy and "truths" within these interpretations.<sup>35</sup> Buber believes that whatever the theoretical meaning of the word truth may be in other domains, in the domain of inter-human dialogue truth means that people communicate themselves to one another as who and what they are, however paradoxical this may appear.<sup>36</sup> The meaning of the word truth is held in tension when a variety of interpretations are communicated. These interpretations may

adequately meet such criteria as validity and adequacy yet still display different meanings. Any number of "truth" interpretations as Booth points out cannot be rightly reduced to one another.<sup>37</sup> Clark has pointed out that Buber's dialogical stance of *I and Thou* is a reciprocal activity that 'transforms communicating people in the process of negotiating meanings they can truly share, meanings that do not embody the dominance of one'.<sup>38</sup> Accordingly Bruns calls to mind the analogy of the "seventy faces" of Torah,

Here, the community of interlocutors will have to accept the differences and conflicts of interpretations in the same way that two persons engaged in dialogue often have to accept their differences and conflicts. If, as the Rabbis say, a great text has "seventy faces", we should expect that it will take more than one interpretation to reflect the variety of countenances that a text exhibits.<sup>39</sup>

In like manner to the Rabbis, Buber does not seek one meaning in the quest for truth. The ultimate purpose of Buber's dialogical hermeneutic is to engage the reader/listener at the very depths of their own present humanity, a social/religious happening in the moment rather than a socio-religious truth theory. In this way modern people are touched by their own reality in reciprocity with otherness [*Thou*, the text] which can never be an abstract reality. Buber's existential precepts and the Rabbis' analogy of the "seventy faces" of *Torah* are designed to reach beyond the text into the social and natural realms of reality.

The Bible [*Torah*] always addresses itself to the time of interpretation; one cannot understand it except by appropriating

it anew...*Midrash* is not only responsive to the Scriptures as a way of coping with the text's wide-ranging formal problems; it is also responsive to the situations in which the Scriptures exert their claim upon human life. Think of *Midrash* as the medium in which this scriptural claim exerts itself.<sup>40</sup>

For over two thousand years the Jewish habit of flexing the *midrashic* creative intellect is recorded in a wealth of written and oral conclaves. It is in these conclaves that the role of the *midrashic* tradition with its claims of surfacing deep assumptions which lead to understanding from the very core of Torah has evolved and re-evolves in practical *situ* without a clear concise theoretical framework. The irony of *midrash* as a "method" of Torah interpretation and transvaluation is that it is well tried but not yet fully proven. This is because the tangible proof of *midrash* is evidenced in its practice, it seeks no theoretical method, and yet through its practice in all spheres of Jewish life one can always recognise its methodical "face". Fishbane alludes to this as perhaps the real paradox for certain fields of historical inquiry and language/linguistic theory 'precisely because the human [language/linguistic] instruction is received in the very process of historical/socio-religious inquiry... [however] if this is a paradox, it is so only in the manner of all known *midrashic* paradoxes'.<sup>41</sup>

In the manner of the Rabbis, Schwartz has stated, 'there is a great paradox and mystery at the core of rabbinic literature'.<sup>42</sup> Schwartz reasons that on the one hand the Rabbis firmly believed in the *Torah*, on the other hand in response to their own reality, they 'did not hesitate to embellish, retell, re-

imagine, or even radically change the stories of the *Torah*.<sup>43</sup> One answer to this paradox, according to Schwartz, is found in acknowledging the parallel existence of the “written” and the “oral” *Torah*, equally authoritative to the Rabbis. The Rabbis themselves said: “Thy cheeks are comely with circlets (*torim*)” (Song of Songs 1:10) – with two *Tora’ot*, the one in writing and the one by word of mouth”.<sup>44</sup> Neusner addresses the paradox by firmly defining the Rabbis’ *midrashic* style as literary extensions of a particular worldview.

A cogent and uniform worldview accompanied the sages [Rabbis] at hand when they approached the text...This worldview they systematically joined to that text, fusing the tale at hand with that larger context of imagination in which the tale was received and read. Accordingly when we follow the sages’ [Rabbis’] mode of interpreting the text, we find our way deep into their imaginative life. Scripture becomes the set of facts that demonstrate the truth of the syllogisms that encompassed and described the world, as sages [Rabbis] saw it.<sup>45</sup>

On many occasions the Rabbis’ *midrash* departs from the text and enters into such activities as “legend” making, ultimately defying any attempts at tagging *midrash* per se with a literary style, category or genre. Bonfil states we cannot consider *midrash* per se ‘as a literary genre or even as a form of expression, accent is placed rather on content, approach, and intention’.<sup>46</sup> According to Idel the Rabbis’ *midrashic* approach to the text may be considered a generic mode of interpretation.<sup>47</sup> Over time the Rabbis’ legends, such as, “The Witches of Ashkelon”,<sup>48</sup> “King David and the Giant”,<sup>49</sup> “King Solomon and Asmodeus”,<sup>50</sup> “The Beggar King”,<sup>51</sup> “Queen Esther”,<sup>52</sup> transcended the inner-textual account offering a parallel reality not unlike the

*Heikhalot* (mystical writings) which were 'projected [back] into the supernal realm identified with God or a divine entity'.<sup>53</sup>

However, the Rabbis adamantly defended the *Torah* as Holy Writ, as R. Lakish says: "The *Torah*...was written with black fire upon white fire, sealed with fire, and swathed with bands of fire",<sup>54</sup> at those times when the Rabbis seemingly nullify the *Torah*, R. Lakish says: "There are times when the nullifying of the *Torah* may lead to the establishing of it. Thus it is said, "Which (*asher*) thou didst break" (Ex 34:1, Deut 10:2), by which the Holy One meant: You did well (*yishar*) to break the Tablets".<sup>55</sup> In order to understand this seemingly ambivalent approach to the Holy text, we may need to give consideration to the Rabbis' *Mosaic* traditions.

Rabbi Akiba quotes Moses as the source of his teaching...there is a related rabbinic tradition that while Moses did receive all of the oral law at Mount Sinai, including all future interpretations of the *Torah*, he did not write all of it down, but left some of it to be discovered by the future generations. [*Drashot Beit ha-Levi*] This seems like a clear acknowledgment that the very essence of the rabbinic commentary on the *Torah* required a creative process of discovery.<sup>56</sup>

The Jewish people have always conceded the natural hierarchy of the Written *Torah* as One Word above all else. A visitor to any synagogue has only to view the centrality of the *Torah* Scroll. Across the history of Diaspora it has been the practice of Jewish people to turn first to the Written *Torah* for pure instruction in ethical and spiritual matters. In this way, the rightful place the Written *Torah* has at the centre of Jewish liturgy, ritual traditions, *midrash*

and commentaries is very clear and consistent. The presence of biblical themes in Jewish folklore and even Jewish contemporary literature has been examined critically and well documented.

However, there are existent practices where Oral *Torah* holds an equal place. Many strong vibrant traditions at the heart of the *minhag* (custom base) of Jewish community stem from Written in equal proportion to Oral *Torah*. A lesson from the Rabbis' *midrash* sums up the inter-relationship of the Written and Oral *Torah*: "Hananiah son of R. Joshua's brother said: "Just as in the sea there are ripples and wavelets between each major wave, so between each of the Ten Commandments there were *Torah's* unwritten minutiae, as well as all of *Torah's* letters" [that is, all the details of the Oral and Written Law, expounded in *ha-aggadot* (the "tellings") and expanded in the six hundred and thirteen *mitzvot* (precepts).] <sup>57</sup>

According to Levenson, Jewish thought from the earliest times harmonised inconsistencies within and between Written and Oral Torah resulting in a tradition supported by a timeless document, 'one that appears to speak to the present [beyond the historical setting]... all voices and all hands are absorbed into an eternal simultaneity.<sup>58</sup> Given this position, we may have somewhat underestimated the extent to which the Rabbis' influence has impacted upon every aspect of Jewish Diasporan society, most importantly the cultural psyche of interpretation. Certainly the wider subject of the rabbinic worldview and its historical and ongoing impact on Jewish society per se is



worthy of systematic study, albeit such an extensive research is outside the boundaries of this thesis. Rabbinical influence and social impact is not the object of this thesis, we rightly address only the aim towards making *midrash* in a modern age.

It is the contention of this thesis that the Rabbis' *midrash* is not merely an archaic archive from the Jewish past to which we make references, it is a wealth of relevant spokenness even in our current age. Hence, it can be said that the power of the Rabbis' *midrashic* thought that has permeated the everyday lives of Diasporan society, inclusive of Jewish folklore and contemporary literature, is beyond measure, subjectively pertinent to our thesis. Then, we may pause to ponder that the Rabbis themselves could not have envisaged how deeply their worldview over time would continue to impact upon generations of Jewish society.

How does *Midrash* speak to us today? *Midrash*...did not end with rabbinic Judaism, [nor] in the legal codes of the Middle Ages and the Hasidic homilies of the nineteenth century, *Midrash*...continues...What do we...moderns...see in the text?...To the rabbis there were no inconsistencies, no problems in transmission (as a modern biblical critic might say), there were only mysteries of meaning that needed to be unlocked...our lives must, in some profound sense, in some way beyond reason or logic, be meaningful...because God has chosen us for existence. Our existence supersedes debate and reason, even truth. And in that we are face to face with a great mystery...*Midrash*...is not merely an interesting explication of the biblical verse or an interesting insight into the way the rabbis thought. It is rather a statement about the nature of our existence that strikes home.<sup>59</sup>

Consider alone, the Book of Esther which has been paraphrased and reworked far beyond the textual witness and even beyond its ritual position in the annual *Purim* festival. Throughout the centuries, the Jewish versions and adaptations of Esther resulted in a professional development of “new” and “renewed” types of Esther texts which found their way into book print and on to the stage. Without exception all of the Jewish versions and adaptations of Esther incorporated material derived directly from the Rabbis’ *midrash*.

It is evident that there has been an unbroken tradition of Esther-related writings from the earliest stage [i.e. the biblical Book of Esther] onward. These texts belong to the specifically Jewish genre of *Targum* and *Midrash...Talmud Megillah*, [and later incorporated in to the folklore and contemporary literature of Jewish Diaspora]. The *Septuagint* itself may be described as a paraphrase [of Esther]. The oldest surviving [modern] example is the [Esther] paraphrase found in Codex Munich 347 CE...Yiddish prose and stage-play versions...printed in Cracow 1589...1698...more than 200 individual editions since the sixteenth century... [i.e.] Frankfurt 1718...Prague 1720...Amsterdam 1763...across Europe, 1774, 1776, 1828, 1854, 1890, 1928, 1936...New York, 1975, 1976, 1978, [all incorporating direct extracts from the *Midrashim*].<sup>60</sup>

The Rabbis’ empowering presence in Jewish folklore is on record. However, their presence in medieval and modern contemporary literature, albeit obvious, is edited and redacted through the minds of medieval and modern authors. On the other hand, Buber chose to personally take an editing and redacting position *vis-a-vis* the Jewish folklore and contemporary literature of his day. In 1901 Buber founded a monthly periodical, *Der Jude*.<sup>61</sup> The publication had direct connection to the Jewish theatres in Germany as well as outside the Weimar Republic to the Habima Hebrew theatre in Moscow,

the Moscow Yiddish theatre, and, the Eastern Cultural associations. It was issued free in Germany to the Eastern Jewish immigrants (*Sephardim*) and together with German Jewish subscribers (*Ashkenazim*) readers learnt more about the Jewish philosophy of life, culture and literature; social and political movements. Portions of the periodical were equally dedicated to anecdotes and humour alongside articles on religion and the spiritual world, the world of the Rabbis, *Hasidism*, and the Jewish Enlightenment movement (*Haskhalah*).<sup>62</sup>

Beside Esther as *midrashic* legend and Buber's monthly periodical *Der Jude*, alongside the entire watershed of rabbinical history (inclusive of the great Jewish commentaries), and, in addition Buber's dialogical hermeneutic – we must all as students of *midrash* take into consideration these contributions towards modern scholarly studies of *midrash*. In the wake of centuries of *midrashic* instruction,<sup>63</sup> this thesis is a call to those who read, speak and hear the Hebrew text to continue engaging in *midrashic* activity, in both its *aggadic* and *halakhic* aspects.

In this way we make *midrash* a vibrant application following the spirit and intention of the Rabbis and not merely an academic exercise. We take *midrash* beyond the academic realm of study and in doing so we bring the act of *midrash* to the everyday person, wherever they may be occupied. We give credence to the Rabbis who grappled with the enormity of their cultural dynamics, and, we are modernized under guidance from Buber's dialogical

hermeneutic, his works of *parshanut* (interpretation), *tirgum* (translation), and *darshanut* (transvaluation) of the Hebrew text. In our times of bridge building between the world's great religions, it is time to be mindful of the universal nature of *midrash*.

Despite the differences of understandings between the Religions and Faiths and despite the distinctions of races and environments, it is the right thing to *darash* (seek) to fully understand the different peoples and groups in order to know how to base universal love on practical foundations.<sup>64</sup>

This thesis hopes to show that the application of *midrash* is capable of embracing all aspects of every society and its practical design per se is not in itself a form of particularism. But as any elongated cultural method that has survived the ravages of history, *midrash* continues to exist because the cultural vehicle of its transmission has relied on a measure of particularism.

Lest you say, "I will read a difficult portion and set the easy one aside", Scripture declares, "It is no vain thing for you" (Deut 32:47). Lest you say, "I studied *halakhot* and that is enough for me", Scripture declares, "Ye shall be mindful of this entire instruction" (Deut 11:22). You are to study *midrash* of both *halakhot* and *aggadot*.<sup>65</sup>

In the way the Rabbis taught us, the nature of Jewish *midrash* requires us to adopt the entirety of the text in direct relation to our own circumstances. This was the historical idea of text study to the exclusion of all else, that is, full time textual study was held in the highest esteem. This research believes it is not necessary for people in our modern times to totally immerse their

time in the Hebrew text in order to be able to make *midrash*. Under the umbrella of Buber's dialogical hermeneutic, the aim of this thesis is to present both simple and complex ways of carrying out *parshanut* (interpretation) *tirgum* (translation) and *darshanut* (transvaluation) of the Hebrew text. The act of making *midrash* [by carrying out simple and complex *parshanut*, *tirgum*, and, *darshanut* from the Hebrew text] is an illuminating experience, a partnership comprised of 'understanding ourselves in its light even as our situation throws its light upon the text'.<sup>66</sup>

Let us now consider Buber who himself re-taught us and re-fashioned modes of *midrash* which 'engage the reader at the very depths of [their] humanity, and challenge [them] to draw ever-new distinctions between mere conscious being and true existence.'<sup>67</sup>

For the truth of *midrash* is not the truth of historical information or textual analysis. It is the truth of the power of scriptural words to draw a reader into an authentic relationship...to have taught us...is Buber's enduring legacy...the Bible for Martin Buber is the rescued and ever-hear-able speech of the living God. It is a Teaching which simply points out an ongoing way. This is also the teaching of *midrash*.<sup>68</sup>

There is a very real connection between the *midrashic* dialogue of rabbinical thought and Buber's dialogical hermeneutic [which he held in close accord with his relational theology].<sup>69</sup> Consider the *midrash*: "R. Hananiah, deputy high priest, said: He who takes words of *Torah* to heart will be relieved of anxieties about war, anxieties about famine, anxieties about foolish

preoccupations, anxieties about unchastity, anxieties about the impulse of evil, anxieties about craving another man's wife, anxieties about trifles, and anxieties about the yoke of flesh and blood",<sup>70</sup> and, Buber now says "anew":

The Bible has, in the form of a glorified memory, given vivid, decisive expression to an ever-recurrent happening. In the infinite language of events and situations, eternally changing, but plain to the truly attentive, transcendence speaks to our hearts at the essential moments of personal life...This fundamental interpretation of our existence we owe to the Hebrew Bible; and whenever we truly read it, our self understanding is renewed and deepened.<sup>71</sup>

With these words, Buber reveals his presupposition as a religious existentialist. Scholars who have critiqued Buber's earlier works often highlight his close connections with the communities of the twentieth century *Hasidei Ashkenaz* [the *Hasidim*]. This may be due to the fact Buber's earliest publications tend to centre only on the *Hasidic* strains in Jewish History. With regard to this thesis, it is worth noting the immense value of Buber's translations of *Hasidic* literature, the literary character of many *Hasidic* works can be typified as *darshanut* (transvaluation), mainly suitable for oral teaching.<sup>72</sup> However, this thesis places emphasis on the *midrashic* literary style of Buber as reflective of the writings of Classical *Midrash* and the later sophisticated development of Buber's thought as reflected in his dialogical hermeneutic and narrative theology. Buber believed Scripture was not just a writing of the creative imagination. Scripture for Buber is a gift of a commanding and loving Presence, written in the language of humankind.

My own belief...does not mean that I believe that finished statements about God were handed down from Heaven to earth, but rather it means that the human substance is melted by the spiritual fire which visits it and there now breaks forth from it a word, a statement which is human in its meaning and form and yet witnesses to Him who stimulated (inspired) it and to His will. We are revealed to ourselves and cannot express it otherwise than as something revealed.<sup>73</sup>

Scripture demanded a personal response from Buber [as it did of the Rabbis] and Buber and the Rabbis believed in the sacredness of not only the written text but every human personality in dialogical relation with an Eternal Thou. Through *midrash* and its search for meaning we continue to question textual reality, what is concrete and what is a figment of our imagination. Ultimately what answers our questions is the interpretation of the word which gives us an interpretation of our life. As we explore the relationship of Buber's modern thought to the age old art of the Rabbis' *midrash* it is worth noting Buber's early childhood development under the guidance of his grandfather, Solomon Buber. A *midrashic* scholar and published author of some repute, Solomon Buber had a real influence upon Buber's tentative and early developmental years.<sup>74</sup>

Those of us who have been raised in a Jewish home as Buber was raised in his grandfather's house know the legacy of early familial influence to be beyond measure, the foundation on which we build much of our adult Jewish understandings. To be fully fashioned as a Jew is to have had the pleasure of such a Jewish childhood. Buber himself said, 'my own way to the Bible was [unique]...I grew up in my grandfather's house, and as a child had known the

original [Hebrew] text for years before I ever saw a [foreign/German] translation'.<sup>75</sup>

Kepnes has pointed out the importance of Buber's later translation of the Hebrew Bible into German.<sup>76</sup> Buber was certain previous German translations had been superimposed on an already effaced and silent text, and he deemed it was time to return to the Hebrew as an "auditory" text and re-translate it into German anew.<sup>77</sup> Buber insisted the translator of Hebrew 'must elicit from the letter of the Hebrew text its actual auditory form'.<sup>78</sup> In the *Midrash*<sup>79</sup> the role of the translator is defined to be an "auditory" function: 'the rabbi spoke Hebrew to the interpreter, who translated the rabbi's words into Aramaic'.<sup>80</sup>

Buber emphasised the significance of hearing the text, this spokenness of the text being the actual reality of the Bible. It was important the new Buber-Rosenzweig German translation reflect the auditory nature of the text.<sup>81</sup> In translation partnership with Franz Rosenzweig, Buber documented his auditory conception as apparent in the 'formal secret of biblical style'.<sup>82</sup>

Martin Buber has [re]discovered this secret of biblical style in translating...and has taught us how to reproduce it in translation...biblical narrative [in Hebrew and now in translation] contains stimulus and point in itself, and each point can become the stimulus for the point to follow...it transforms distant hearers into collaborators, in a conversation [spokenness] that beneath the shell of its epic past extends itself to them in full anecdotal presence.<sup>83</sup>



Buber defined an important aspect of the formal secret of biblical style encased in the literary/auditory phenomenon of what he termed *Leitwort* (leading word). In keeping with the importance of sight, sense, and, sound he utilized *Leitwort* as a translation tool. Buber expressed *Leitwort* to be inclusive of such phenomena as “leading words” and “key words”, “repetitions” and “rhyming words” as well as *paronomasia* (“word plays and puns”). The theory and process of *Leitwort* was clarified in his articles, “*Leitwort* and Discourse Type: an example”,<sup>84</sup> and, “*Leitwort* Style in Pentateuch Narrative”.<sup>85</sup>

A *Leitwort* is a word or a word-root that recurs significantly in a text, in a continuum of texts, or in a configuration of texts: by following these repetitions, one is able to decipher or grasp a meaning of the text, or at any rate, the meaning will be revealed more strikingly. The repetition, as we have said, need not be merely of the word itself but also of the word-root; in fact, the very difference of words can often intensify the dynamic action of the repetition. I call it “dynamic” because between combinations of sounds related to one another in this manner a kind of movement takes place: if one imagines the entire text deployed before him, one can sense waves moving back and forth between the words. The measured repetition that matches the inner rhythm of the text, or rather, that wells up from it, is one of the most powerful means for conveying meaning without expressing it.<sup>86</sup>

The Rabbis too measured repetition as a means of *parshanut* (interpretation) of the text, at times, extending their explanations into *darshanut* (transvaluation) of the text. Within the *Midrash Agur*, otherwise known as the *Midrash of the Thirty Two Middot*, the tenth rule states: ‘Repetition is used for interpretation’.<sup>87</sup> Throughout the Rabbis’ *midrash* there are many examples

which pertain to the application of the tenth rule of interpretation, Stemberger draws our attention to one instance in M.Sanh which could be said to be proto-*Leitwort* in the way it uses repetition as an aid to a legal (*halakhic*) interpretation and application.

M.Sanh 1.6 uses the repetition of [*ha-edam*] 'the congregation' in Num 35:24-25 to prove that a small court must have 23 members: 'congregation' = 10, as deduced from Num 14:27, where 'the congregation' is understood as the twelve spies without Joshua and Caleb. (To the twice ten are added three additional members required for other reasons.)<sup>88</sup>

The repetition of numerals in the Hebrew text is not always about the face value of the actual number. Often a number is utilised as a rhetorical tool, as in the case of the Pharaoh's dream (Gen 41:2-39) where the number seven is repeated throughout the narrative producing a hyperbolic sense. In the biblical (*aggadic*) account of Joseph before Pharaoh Gen 41:2-39 repetition of the word *sheva* (seven) is noticed by the Rabbis as a key word [*Leitwörter*, as termed by Buber] from which they ascertain the length of the famine in Egypt. *Yehudah b. Ilai* said: "There were actually supposed to be 14 years of famine (v3,6) seven lean cows, seven lean ears of grain." *Nehemyah* answered: "Actually, twenty eight years were appointed: Pharaoh saw fourteen (in his dream), and told Joseph about them, thereby repeating the number, and, because Joseph again repeats Pharaoh's words, [we] think there ought to have been 42 years".<sup>89</sup> It is interesting to note between Gen 41:2, "And behold...seven cows", and, Gen 41:39. "...they left off numbering", there are exactly twenty eight occurrences of the word *sheva* (seven).

Within Scripture itself, there are many textual units which incorporate a key word (*Leitwort*) creating a link between verses. A key word may have a wider significance beyond the textual unit itself. According to Fokkelman the key word for the entire Book of Genesis is *toledot* (generations).

The characteristic contribution of Genesis to the Torah and to subsequent books is indicated by its own key word *toledot*, literally, "begettings" [generations], from the root *yld*, which is used for mothers (*yaldah*, "she gave birth"), fathers [*holid*, "he begot"], and children [*nolad*, "he was born"]. The begettings provide a solid framework that supports and meticulously articulates the various sections of Genesis.<sup>90</sup>

When *parshanut* (interpretation) is applied to a textual unit from Genesis [Gen 25: 19-26, a story of Isaac and Rebekah], a fine example of the workings of *toledot* as a thematic key word (*Leiworte*) is revealed. It is to be noted in the centre of the textual unit there is a call to *darash* (seek) the Lord. This may serve towards a *darshanut* (transvaluation) which reminds the reader of the Eternal immediacy between God and the *toledot* (generations) of Genesis.

The Rabbis directed their *darshanut* (transvaluation) of this textual unit towards the realm of personality (rather than the realm of biology) reminding us of our humanness: we often take *mazal tov* (good fortune) for granted only seeking God in troubled times. Accordingly, God loved the supplications of the biblical matriarchs who conceived beyond a time of inner-barrenness in the sure knowledge of God the Source of All Life.<sup>91</sup>

Keeping Buber's *Leitwort* methodology in mind, the key words in the text (in this case, *toledot* and its grammatical variances) are perceived by sight, related by sound, and, understood by sense. As follows, a brief of the textual unit is set out in Hebrew phrases with literal translation, and is self-explanatory.

Gen 25:19a: ואלה תולדת יצחק [and these are the generations (*toledot*) of Isaac]

v19b: אברהם הוליד את יצחק [Abraham fathered (*holid*) Isaac]

v21b, v22b: ותהר רבקה אשתו...ותלך לדרש אתיהוה [and she conceived, Rebekhah his wife...and she went to seek (*li-darash*) the Lord]

v24b: וימלאו ימיה ללדת והנה תומם [and were fulfilled her days to give birth (*la-ledet*) behold twins]

v26b: ויצחק בן־ששים שנה בלדת אתם [and Isaac was sixty years old when she bore (*b'-ledet*) them]

According to Fishbane stylistic conventions such as the thematic *Leitwort* generations (*toledot*) facilitate the spokenness of the text on its own terms, in its own way.<sup>92</sup> The reader who is conscious of the presence of *Leitwort* in the text experiences a 'disciplined freedom: spontaneity within necessity'.<sup>93</sup> In this way *Leitwort* serves as the mediator between being and becoming: 'being read/heard and becoming a demonstration toward meaning'.<sup>94</sup>

The Rabbis' ability to demonstrate meaning was such they easily reflected words over against each other. The *paronomasia* ("pun", "word play") employed by the Rabbis is reminiscent of the *paranomastic* compositions

evident in the Hebrew text. Buber himself regards the largest pattern of *paronomastic* composition evident in the Hebrew bible, which appears in the textual account of Abraham to be part of the wider *Leitwortic* phenomenon. One such instance, outlined by Buber, is derived from the root verb “appear, to be seen” (*ra’ah*) apparent in the textual narrative of the early days of Abram [Abraham], Gen 12:7: ‘[And] “revealed” (*vayera*) God to Abram’, [but only when Abram builds an altar to God will God let himself be “seen”] ‘God “appeared” (*hanireh*) to him [Abram]’.<sup>95</sup>

In a similar way, the Rabbis fashioned unique types of *darshanut* (transvaluation) using Hebrew words akin to the *Leitwortic paronomasia* style present in the Hebrew text. They did this by simply linking a pair of words or phrases: “The word *dasha* (entrance) is a prompt for *derekh sham* (there is the way)...*darga* (stairs) is an acronym for *derekh gag* (the way to the roof)...*metukhilta* (a relish) is a portmanteau word for *matai tikleh da* (when will this end?)...*livne* (bricks) implies *li-vene vanim* (to last for one’s children’s children)...*gelima* (a cloak) is so called because in it one looks like a *golem* (a shapeless mass)...*puria* (bed) is so called because in it human beings *parin ve-rabbin* (procreate)...*sudra* (turban) is an acronym for *sod adonai li-re’av* (the secret of the Lord is revealed to those that fear Him)...*apadna* (royal palace) is an acronym for *apit’ha din* (the door to which all come for judgment)”.<sup>96</sup>

The use of *paronomasia* in the Hebrew text and the Rabbis' writings is dependent on sight, sound and sense factors, although *tirgum* (translation) of the Hebrew alters the sight and sound it is sufficient towards understanding if the sense factor is retained. During the translation process retention of the sense factor ensures the sense performance of language can play out the *paronomasic* meanings intended. In addition an attempt should be made to somehow transport the rhythm and mood of sights and sounds into the new vernacular reflecting a whole world view, a specific cultural heritage existent to Hebrew thought. Glatzer states that Buber's biblical writings [in the German vernacular] discern the existential meaning of the Hebrew language [in translation], focusing on *midrashic* type meanings/messages for contemporary human situations. It was Buber's aim to faithfully preserve the contextual meaning and mood of the Hebrew text throughout the process of *tirgum* (translation).

Here the text is seen as a subject [theme] capable of "addressing" the interpreter as an involved, listening subject. Here the interpreter must approach the text with an attitude of ignorance (the Socratic *docta ignorantia*), or as Buber puts it, with an attitude of "receptiveness". Gadamer asserts that this attitude allows the "truth" of a text to be disclosed...However, like Buber, Gadamer does not expect that the interpreter, once addressed will remain silent. The interpreter responds by being taken up into the back and forth movement of the subject matter of the text. The interpreter responds, Gadamer says, by engaging the text in "dialogue", by having a "conversation with the text".<sup>97</sup>

Buber considered his methods of *tirgum* (translation) made possible a Hebrew meaning encased in the vernacular, which not only preserved better the textual intentions, but most assuredly enhanced the Bible's relevance for the

present day reader.<sup>98</sup> Fishbane in particular states Buber's writings are 'modern *midrash* which transforms the text into sources of power for the renewal of personal and interpersonal life'.<sup>99</sup>

...as I [Buber] was in the middle of speaking a chapter [Hebrew text] aloud it seemed to me that the chapter was being spoken for the first time, that it had not yet ever been written down, that it did not at all need to be written down. The book lay before me, but the book was melting in the voice...In the quiet...I read the Scriptures all over again, in order, not skipping a single verse...I let no obsolete word go without thinking of its original power, I took no abstract word as merely abstract, but tried to trace the physicality at its root, and then...its change of meaning...and with the aid of my assisting voice I presented to my ears and my wondering heart that rhythm in which alone the biblical message could attain complete expression...it, brought me from a timeless...sphere into the sphere of the moment...answering in a language appropriate to the situation.<sup>100</sup>

Uffenheimer observed that Buber read the Bible 'to bring out those episodes capable of illuminating the paths of our generation in its perplexity'.<sup>101</sup> Buber spoke of a generational perplexity directly resultant from the abyss between the text and people of his time.<sup>102</sup> He argued restoration of religious faith involved a renewal of the peoples' ruptured bond with God.<sup>103</sup> According to Buber's view, religion can only be effective by a return to reality, that is, the reality of the reader.<sup>104</sup>

The chief document of this reality...is Scripture...in the isolated space between God and the individual...the word goes...to the people, which then must hear and realize it...Holiness enters into history without disenfranchising it...we have to visualize clearly the abyss that lies between Scripture and people today.<sup>105</sup>

In the times after the destruction of the Temple (70 CE), no one understood the abyss between the text and people of that time as did the Rabbis. The loss of context [Land] had a direct effect on readings of the biblical text [Torah]. It is recorded Rabbi Judah I [the Patriarch] at the time of the Temple's destruction was clasping the Scroll of Lamentations while reading it aloud. When he came to the verse, "He hath cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel (Lam 2:1)", the scroll reputedly fell from his hand and he cried out, "from a vault so high to a pit so deep".<sup>106</sup> Even so, the loss of Land and Temple was not without precedent. Israel had previously experienced the Babylonian Exile and the Rabbis now generally held the people responsible for their own fate.

"If she be a wall, we will build upon her a turret of silver, and if she be a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar" (Song of Songs 8:9). If, in the days of Ezra, you had made yourselves solid like a wall and all of you had come up together in solid unity, you would have been likened to silver, which no rot can affect. But since you came up like doors, you are like cedarwood, which succumbs to rot.<sup>107</sup>

At the same time the Rabbis were equally adamant that God would not forsake His people forever. Despite the severe gravity of their situation they continued to cling to the Word of God.

We have been taught that R. Simeon ben Yohai said: Pause and consider how beloved are Israel in the sight of God. Wherever they were exiled, the Presence was with them..."Did I not reveal Myself to thy forebear [Aaron's] house when they were in Egypt?" (1 Sam 2:27)..."For your sake I had Myself sent to Babylon." (Isa 43:14)..."The Lord thy God will return with thy



captivity." (Deut 30:3)...it says "Return", proving that the Holy One will return with them out of the several exiles...<sup>108</sup>

Cast away from Land and Temple the Rabbis fearlessly met the challenge of the historical rupture between text and situation. Their own hermeneutical predicament is fully realised in the *midrashic* aspects of their collective literature.<sup>109</sup> Amidst ideological and political struggles between the post-70CE *Talmudic* schools of Jerusalem and Babylonia we find the statement: "In Babylonia we have made [the] Land of Israel",<sup>110</sup> effectively initiating an era of Jewish spiritual ambivalence, caught between an abstract view of the Land and the once familiar physical reality of the Land.

By the end of the rabbinic Period, [the] Land of Israel, in the eyes of most Jews, becomes a place that is not of this world. This attitude is widespread throughout most of Jewish history [Diaspora]...A Messianic era and the miraculous return of the Jews to Israel is discussed throughout the Babylonian Talmud, for example: "When Jerusalem is miraculously rebuilt, King David will arrive...and sacrifices will be re-established in the Temple (BT *Megillah* 18a). Eventually [after almost two thousand years] the connection to the physical Land, as taught by the rabbis of the early Tannaim prevailed, leading to the modern return to the Land of Israel."<sup>111</sup>

Despite the Roman ruling prohibiting Jews from residing in Jerusalem after the Jewish rebellions of 135CE, a small number of Jews, known as "the holy community" somehow continued to exist in Jerusalem.<sup>112</sup> Rabbi Judah ben Eliakim testified in the name of the holy community of Jerusalem: "He who brings together [in the Land] the *Geullah* and the *Tefillah* [at the instant the sun rises]<sup>113</sup> will suffer no harm throughout the day".<sup>114</sup>

The achievement of the rabbis in the aftermath...was to respond to their crises on the political, social, and religious planes by remaking Judaism. In part, they did this by turning Judaism into a portable possession. They re-centred Judaism...to a complex of newly important institutions - the synagogue, Torah study, communal worship...Even more crucially, however, the Rabbis offered a re-interpretation [*parshanut*] - a transvaluation [*darshanut*]...of the entire temporal and spatial framework in which the success and failure of Jewish existence had previously been gauged.<sup>115</sup>

It was on the back of centuries of Jewish existence that Buber gauged his religious and philosophical views. Buber reasons the entire text, event and word, took place within a people, within their history, within God's created world. For Buber, the practical task of the modern reader is to speak aloud the text so that it may be heard and realized, revitalizing the events anew in the hearts and minds of the people.

Accordingly, in the creative sphere of the reader's, speaker's and hearer's religious praxis the chief document of reality remains the Holy text. The Rabbis considered the Holy text [*Torah*] to be so important, surely it pre-empted the creation of the world?

I was in the mind of the Holy One, says the *Torah*...The Holy One looked into the *Torah* as He created the world [Gen R. 1:1].<sup>116</sup>

Within the rabbinic worldview, the Holy text is a unique member of God's creation, linking the creation of the world towards present and future time.

Buber described rabbinic *midrash* as 'forming a second Bible...scattered in innumerable writings, around the nucleus of Scripture'.<sup>117</sup> In close similarity to the Rabbis before him, the modern *midrashic* literary style of Buber<sup>118</sup> is a transposition from out of the text, a merger of *parshanut* (interpretation) and *darshanut* (transvaluation).

What can it mean to us that God created the world in six days?...Where then is the opening to the way into the reality of creation?...With every birth the first person enters the world, because every person is unique. In our own lives...we learn that origin is [word] – that creation is [reality].<sup>119</sup>

Buber's dialogical approach to the God of the created world, the God of the Hebrew text, is founded in the spirit of a relational theology.<sup>120</sup> It is a relationship with oneself, God, and other [viz: I, Thou and It].<sup>121</sup> From this approach when we enter into an absolute relation, nothing is isolated, neither objects nor subjects, nor heaven apart from earth, everything is gathered up in relationship.<sup>122</sup> In the original German language version of *I and Thou*, Buber says: "*lauten heist umlauten*," which may be rendered as "to relate means to translate".<sup>123</sup> As Fishbane so aptly said, 'Buber considered it a hermeneutical imperative to hear the words of ancient texts and transform them through the power of a personal and engaged receptivity'.<sup>124</sup>

This living moment of a personal and engaged receptivity for Buber is truth-existence flowing to and fro between creation and redemption.<sup>125</sup> In this way, according to Buber, creation and redemption are a truth built on a

premise of revelation as a present experience.<sup>126</sup> Buber taught about God the Creator who renews His creation every day for the person who opens himself truly to the origins of life.<sup>127</sup> The Rabbis considered well the question of seeking the relational truth of origin and existence.

The wise man his eyes are at the beginning (Ecc 2:14) - he is one who inquires from the world's beginning, from the six days of creation and thereafter [the world we live in].<sup>128</sup>

For Buber, the Word of God renews creation and the moment of "beginning" viz, the creative moment re-emerges in the sequence of time, recurring in the realm of redemption 'in which God grants and demands that God's action should incomprehensibly enclose the action of the human person'.<sup>129</sup>

I [Buber] begin to understand that when I ask about my origin or my end I am asking about something other than myself and something other than the world, but precisely in this manner I begin to understand the origin and the goal of the world.<sup>130</sup>

In this way, God's Word and God's Book are synonymous with Voice, and this spokenness of the text is in the facilitating care of *parshanut* (interpretation) and *darshanut* (transvaluation). For Buber, 'the extended lines of relations meet in the eternal Thou. Every particular Thou is a glimpse through to the eternal Thou'.<sup>131</sup> According to Kepnes, Buber's focus on text as the vehicle to the self is motivated [by his relational theology] ...through each true meeting with the text [viz the voice of the text], [is] the sure foundation of the self, [is] the eternal other, God'.<sup>132</sup> Buber taught us 'a human ear which the voice

reaches from any passage of Scripture [will] be able to receive that voice more easily and more clearly'.<sup>133</sup>

Do we mean a book? We mean the voice. Do we mean that people should learn to read it? We mean that people should learn to hear it...We want to go straight through to the spokenness, to the being-spoken of the word.<sup>134</sup>

In similar vein, the affirmation of God and *Torah* is the premise of the Rabbis' *midrash aggada* (the telling and re-telling of Scriptural concepts). The unification of God and *Torah*, Stern refers to as the basic axiom of *midrashic* hermeneutics, explained in two ways, firstly a belief that the *Torah* is omniscient in all the meaningfulness of every word, letter, and scribal embellishment,<sup>135</sup> and secondly, the rabbinic claim of the unity of Scripture as the voice of the One Divine Will.<sup>136</sup> The Rabbis' hermeneutic ensured a fertile ground in which the atomization of Scripture flourished. Scripture could be explained with Scripture and even unrelated passages could be brought together, so that inter-textuality was elevated to the level of normative *parshanut* (interpretation).

Rabbi Shimon ben Gamilel says: "Come and see how beloved is Israel before Him-Who-Spoke-and-the-World-Was, for as they are beloved, He reversed the act of creation. He made the low into the high and the high into the low. Formerly, bread came up from the land, and dew came down from heaven, as it says, 'A land of grain and wine, and His heavens drip dew' (Deut 33:28). But now the state of affairs is reversed. Bread began to come down from heaven and dew to go up from the land, as it says, 'Behold I rain down for you bread from heaven (Ex 16:4) – And the layer of dew went up' (Ex 16:14).<sup>137</sup>

In this *midrash* from *Mekilta* to Exodus, Rabbi Shim'on revolves his *midrash* on the juxtaposition of *parshanut* (interpretation) interlaced with a *darshanutic* style (transvaluation mode). The semantic likeness between the textual passages is related and reversed in a dialogical fashion. Each text quoted individually contributes to a combined contextual meaning for the *midrash* as a whole. Rabbi Shim'on has caused the verses of Scripture, otherwise unrelated, to speak to each other,<sup>138</sup> and in speaking to each other they are together the Unified Word of God.

The atomization of Scripture is a frequent act of *midrashic* fervour amidst the Rabbis. Continuation of this hermeneutical multiplicity, according to Elman, is apparent in Jewish medieval literature and is witnessed in the deeper currents of Jewish textual interpretations which apportion a meaning to every element.<sup>139</sup> The medieval writings of the *Maharal* of Prague [Rabbi Judah Leow], being *talmudic*-style, mystical, philosophical, and biblical exegesis [in particular *Gur Aryeh al Ha-Torah* – the supercommentary on Rashi's *Torah*] are typified by Elbaum.

...the strange episodes, the far-fetched statements, the details and stylistic usage which appear as no more than ornamentation are all intended to convey deeper meanings. Nothing, not even the seemingly most trivial detail, is mentioned in vain.<sup>140</sup>

The necessity to convey deeper meanings, to leave no word unattended in the course of serving our contextual understandings, is where the relationship between Buber's dialogical hermeneutic and the Rabbis' *midrash*

simultaneously begins and ends, and paradoxically re-awakens every time we approach the text *midrashically*. We keep in mind the Rabbis' and Buber's conviction of a unified and univocal text from out of which the Living Word speaks to every generation. Their paramount concern is to facilitate *ha-midrash agada* (the telling and retelling of Scriptural concepts) from *ha-'avar ha-kadosh* (the set apart "there and then") into *ha-ma'aseh b'hoveh* (the set in action "here and now").

When we moderns return to the Rabbis' *midrash* we may notice, according to Stern, the Rabbis unpack points of significance from out of the text and interpret each word or phrase as an independent hermeneutical item.<sup>141</sup> Put together in sequence the chain of atomization presents to the reader a unified or univocal Scripture, neatly avoiding any sense of polysemy. Any polysemous discretion or anomaly that arose as a result of a chain of atomization was resolved by using Scripture to interpret Scripture.

Rabbi Hoshaya began: "I was with Him as an *amon* ["a confidant", "a master craftsman", "blue-print"], a source of delight every day, rejoicing before Him at all times" (Prov 8:30). The word *amon* means a tutor. *Amon* means "covered". *Amon* means "hidden". And some say it means "great" [Each of these interpretations is based on a phonetic pun between the word *amon* and another, similar-sounding word, verses from Scripture to support each interpretation are then cited for all four opinions.] Another interpretation: *amon* means an artisan. The *Torah* declares: I was the instrument that the Holy One, blessed be He, used when He practiced His craft. It is customary that when a king of flesh and blood builds a palace, he doesn't build it himself but he hires an architect, even the architect doesn't build it solely from his head, but he uses plans and blueprints in order to know how to lay the rooms and to arrange the doors. So, too, the Holy One, blessed be He, looked into the *Torah* and

created the world. And so the *Torah* said: "By means of [*be-*, a particle conventionally translated as "in"] the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth", and the word "beginning" always alludes to the *Torah*, as Scripture says, "The Lord created me at the beginning of His course" (Prov 8:22).<sup>142</sup>

The word *amon* [Prov 8:30] is a *hapex legomenon*, in true *midrashic* fashion the Rabbis show us that one word may have many meanings. It may be hermeneutically stated that the Rabbis are associating *amon* with *Torah* the instrument God used to create the world. Put simply, for the Rabbis the *Torah* [text] is the "blueprint" which they consult in the creation of *midrash*.

The *amonic* "blueprint" for Buber is the sight, sound and sense in the text directed from the Ultimate Thou. The text can never become an It, that is merely surface and meaningless symbols. In this way, for Buber existential reality arises between people (I) and God (Thou) in a dialogical encounter which transforms both text and reader/hearer. God is reached not by an inference from the text but by a willingness to dialogically respond with the text and in so doing experience the reality of the Divine Presence. 'In a word, reality is dialogical'.<sup>143</sup>

In summary and conclusion, this thesis chapter has demonstrated a close relationship between Buber's dialogical hermeneutic and rabbinic *midrash*. Both approaches play complementary roles in upholding the visions and values of the Jewish religious traditions [the way it should be] and the state of reality [the way it is]. This complementarity forms a methodological basis



for the thesis that follows. The following outline gives an overview of the hermeneutical nature of, firstly, Buber's dialogical hermeneutic, and secondly, rabbinic *midrash* [hereafter referred to as Hebrew hermeneutic praxis].

#### Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutic:

- Buber explained [meaning] and reconstructed [message] by involving his wholeness and presence to imagine the reality of the text [as interpreted] thereby making it a present event.<sup>144</sup>
- Buber said: I have received it and told it anew. I have not transcribed it like some piece of literature, I have not elaborated like some fabulous material. I have told it anew as one who was born later. I bear in me the blood and spirit of those who created it, and out of my blood and spirit it has become new. I stand in the chain of narrators, a link between links, I tell once again the old stories, and if they sound new, it is because the new already lay dormant in them when they were told for the first time.<sup>145</sup>
- Buber aimed to facilitate the interpreter's reception of the Hebrew text as "Eternal Voice" [Eternal Thou]. Accordingly, Buber's "Eternal Dialogue" [I-Thou] paradigm is at work in his dialogical hermeneutics. In this way textual explanations are combined with dialogical approaches.<sup>146</sup>
- Buber designates three modalities of language as it pertains to the spoken word: present continuance (*präsenster Bestand*), potential possession (*potentialer Besitz*), and actual occurrence (*Begebnis*). These terms form the basis of a Buberian theory of language, text, and interpretation.<sup>147</sup>
- Buber shows it is important to explain meanings from the text and construct a message that "speaks" to current situations. For Buber, meaning and message are always conditioned by the significance of situation, background and bias.
- Buber's general hermeneutic follows four steps. The first step calls for treating the text as a Thou and with the passive attitude of receptive waiting. This quickly moves the reader to a more active give-and-take dialogue. The interpreter moves into the second stage of interpretation when the otherness of the text brings to consciousness the interpreter's own individual and cultural presuppositions and the interpreter wins a distance on these presuppositions which allows him or her to see the world of the text more clearly. The third stage of

interpretation begins when the interpreter exercises critical distance and employs methods of explanation to analyse the structure and rhetoric of the text. The fourth stage is gained as the interpreter reflects on the author, who serves as a reminder to reconnect the text to life. The application of message of the text to the interpreter's life entails sharing the interpretation of the message with a community of inquiry which will challenge and refine the interpretation through a common dialogue.<sup>148</sup>

- Buber's dialogical hermeneutic is seen in the context of contemporary hermeneutical studies...his work can be recognized as the beginning of...the modern Jewish revival of the "*midrashic* imagination".<sup>149</sup>

#### Hebrew Hermeneutic Praxis:

- Hebrew hermeneutic praxis is defined as an alternative to the "logocentric" hermeneutical traditions (such as, *allegoresis*). Hebrew hermeneutic praxis informs and orientates a hermeneutic [methodology] which embodies Otherness.<sup>150</sup>
- Hebrew hermeneutic praxis seeks to facilitate the process of *parshanut* (interpretation) *tirgum* (translation) and *darshanut* (transvaluation) as an action of *chariza* [the adjoining of links into a chain] extending from the first reading/hearing of the words [from the Hebrew text] to the present moment [in the life of the reader/listener].
- Meanings gathered from the text are explained by the *parshanut* (interpretation) creating a dialectical function with *darshanut* (transvaluation) which constructs a significant message in praxis.
- The Hebrew hermeneutic praxis which mediates between the Hebrew text and situation is not a purely analytical task – meanings and message must be situated. Thus the task is never merely reproductive it is always productive of new understanding. It seeks to keep the Hebrew text open to the histories of those who answer its claims.<sup>151</sup>
- Hebrew hermeneutic praxis mediates the "Voice" of the Hebrew text into the "Dialogue" of the present, by adopting meanings from the *parshanut* (interpretation) and adapting messages from the *darshanut* (transvaluation) for every day life and situations.
- The "Eternal Voice" of the text is preserved in written form and from itself neither acknowledges nor responds to the external interpretations [old and new] which address it.<sup>152</sup> The text "speaks" through the voice of its reading/oration [sight, sound and sense] crossing the historical

gap mediating between text and praxis. Put simply, the text is internally inscribed, the interpreter repeatedly describes and praxis eternally subscribes.

---

NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Neusner, Jacob. *Judaism in Modern Times*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1995. vii.

<sup>2</sup> I owe this insight to my supervisor, Dr Laurence Woods.

<sup>3</sup> Kepnes, Steven. *The Text As Thou. Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 59-60.

<sup>4</sup> I coin here my own term of convenience "virtual readality" to encompass the effect on the relationship between a form of creative writing [such as *midrash aggada*] or an accent mark [such as the *teamim* markings above and below the consonants of the Hebrew text] and the reader/hearer. The creative writing and/or the *ta'am* [pl. *te'amim*] seeks to facilitate and encourage the reader/hearer's multi-dimensional construal of the meaning of words as a "world", rather than abandoning the everyday reader's understanding of words at the expense of abstract language structures and "linguistic data". A "virtual readality", where "word" becomes "world" unveiled and simulated in the creative sphere of interaction between the reader/hearer and the text.

<sup>5</sup> See: Part 1: "Beginnings 1878-1901", Chapter 1: "Meeting and Mismeeting: Buber's Childhood and Youth", in, Friedman, Maurice. *Martin Buber's Life and Work*. Volume 1. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988. 3-25.

<sup>6</sup> Hobart, Mark. *The Subject of the Subject. Philosophical Background to a Critical Reconsideration of the Problems in Studying Non-Western Media*. SOAS: Media Research Group, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1997. 3.

<sup>7</sup> For an explanation of the term "cultural personality" see: Kantor, Jacob Robert, "Cultural Personality the Product of Socialization: Cultural Personality as Human Nature", in, Jacob Robert Kantor. *An Outline of Social Psychology*. Chicago: Follett Publishing. The Mead Project, 2007. 291: "Cultural personality we may call human nature in its cultural aspects. Human nature as a psychological fact consists of the entire behaviour equipment of a given individual. From a psychological standpoint therefore human nature is synonymous with personality. But human nature is of course not only cultural, but idiosyncratic as well. As cultural, human nature comprises only the sum of the intellectual, aesthetic, custom and other reactions which the person has acquired through the various socialization processes of which he is a product. Cultural personality therefore is a single though the largest phase of human nature."

<sup>8</sup> I owe this invaluable insight into the world of Jewish scholarship in the midst of European academia during the first half of the twentieth century to Christopher Hutton, see: Hutton, Christopher. "Noyakh Prilutski: Philosopher of Language", in, Dov-Ber Kerler. ed. *History of Yiddish Studies*. Winter Studies in Yiddish. Volume 3. Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies. Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers. 1991. 15-23.

<sup>9</sup> See Hobart, Mark. *The Subject of the Subject. Philosophical Background to a Critical Reconsideration of the Problems in Studying Non-Western Media*. SOAS: Media Research Group, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1997. 4: "[Habermas'] validity claims...presuppose a world that is identical for all possible observers, or a world inter-subjectively shared by members, and they do so in an abstract form freed of all specific content (Habermas 1984:50)...this is problematic, [a] world being identical to all observers (note the familiar visualism) excludes the possibility of learning, change...the contemplation of words abstracted from practices,

---

with no consideration of the critical practices of the people concerned, nor even if they have any.”

<sup>10</sup> “Although Buber preferred to speak German rather than Yiddish, and spoke a pure, classical German rather than any form of dialect, his early fondness for the color and warmth of Yiddish [and the early internalization of the Hebrew text language and rabbinic *midrash*] never left him and did, indeed, influence his style and with it his way of thinking”, see: Friedman, Maurice. *Martin Buber's Life and Work*. Volume 1. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988. 10.

<sup>11</sup> Peters Simi. *Learning to Read Midrash*. Jerusalem: Urim Publications, 2004. 18.

<sup>12</sup> Friedman, Maurice. “My Dialogue with Dialogue”, in, Banathy, Bela H., and, Patrick M. Jenlink. eds. *Dialogue as a Means of Collective Communication*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2005. 137-58: 146-7.

<sup>13</sup> Seeskin, Kenneth. “Buber, Martin. 1878-1965”, in, Robert Audi. ed. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*. Second Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 104a.

<sup>14</sup> Hobart, Mark. *The Subject of the Subject. Philosophical Background to a Critical Reconsideration of the Problems in Studying Non-Western Media*. SOAS: Media Research Group, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1997. 3.

<sup>15</sup> On the scholarly symmetry between Buber and Bakhtin, see: Friedman, Maurice. “Martin Buber and Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogue of Voices and The Word That Is Spoken”, in, Banathy, Bela H., and, Patrick M. Jenlink. eds. *Dialogue as a Means of Collective Communication*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2005. 29-39.

<sup>16</sup> Bakhtin, M.M. “Toward a reworking of the Dostoevsky book,” Appendix 2, in, C. Emerson. ed., and, trans., *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984. 267.

<sup>17</sup> Friedman, Maurice. *Martin Buber. The Life of Dialogue*. New York: Harper Brothers, 1960. 202.

<sup>18</sup> BT. *Sanhedrin*. 7a.

<sup>19</sup> Friedman, Maurice. *Martin Buber. The Life of Dialogue*. New York: Harper Brothers, 1960. 204.

<sup>20</sup> BT. *Berakhot*. 19b.

<sup>21</sup> BT. *Bava Metzia*. 30b.

<sup>22</sup> Friedman, Maurice. *Martin Buber. The Life of Dialogue*. New York: Harper Brothers, 1960. 203-4.

<sup>23</sup> Buber, Martin. [trans. Ronald Gregor Smith.] *Between Man and Man*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1947. 16.

<sup>24</sup> Buber, Martin. [trans. Maurice S. Friedman.] *Eclipse of God. Studies in the Relation between Religion and Philosophy*. New York: Harper Torchbook, 1957. 46.

<sup>25</sup> Friedman, Maurice. *Martin Buber. The Life of Dialogue*. New York: Harper Brothers, 1960. 171.

- 
- <sup>26</sup> Buber, Martin. "Elements of the Interhuman", in, Martin Buber. [trans. Maurice Friedman, and, Ronald Gregor Smith.] *The Knowledge of Man*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1965. 72-78. 109.
- <sup>27</sup> Numbers *Rabbah*. 12:4.
- <sup>28</sup> JT. *Berakhot*. 9:1, 13b.
- <sup>29</sup> Kepnes, Steven. *The Text As Thou. Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 63.
- <sup>30</sup> Kepnes, Steven. *The Text As Thou. Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 72.
- <sup>31</sup> Kepnes, Steven. *The Text As Thou. Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 73.
- <sup>32</sup> Kepnes, Steven. *The Text As Thou. Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 73.
- <sup>33</sup> Boyarin, Daniel. *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 12.
- <sup>34</sup> Booth Wayne. *Critical Understanding. The Powers and Limits of Pluralism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979. 219,226,237.
- <sup>35</sup> Kepnes, Steven. *The Text As Thou. Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 78.
- <sup>36</sup> Buber, Martin. "Elements of the Interhuman", in, Martin Buber. [trans. Maurice Friedman, and, Ronald Gregor Smith.] *The Knowledge of Man*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1965. 72-78. 77.
- <sup>37</sup> Booth Wayne. *Critical Understanding. The Powers and Limits of Pluralism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979. 226.
- <sup>38</sup> Clark, Gregory. *Dialogue, Dialectic, and Conversation: A Social Perspective on the Function of Writing*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990. 3.
- <sup>39</sup> Kepnes, Steven. *The Text As Thou. Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 78.
- <sup>40</sup> Bruns, Gerald L. "Midrash and Allegory: The Beginnings of Scriptural Interpretation", in, Frank Kermode and Robert Alter. eds. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 627,629.
- <sup>41</sup> Fishbane, Michael. *The Garments of Torah. Essays in Biblical Hermeneutics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 98.
- <sup>42</sup> Schwartz, Howard. *Reimagining the Bible. The Storytelling of the Rabbis*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. 3.
- <sup>43</sup> Schwartz, Howard. *Reimagining the Bible. The Storytelling of the Rabbis*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. 3.
- <sup>44</sup> Song of Songs *Rabbah*. 1:10.
- <sup>45</sup> Neusner, Jacob. *A Midrash Reader*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990. 81.

---

<sup>46</sup> Bonfil, Robert. "Can Medieval Storytelling Help Understanding Midrash? The Story of Paltiel: A Preliminary Study on History and Midrash", in, Michael Fishbane. ed. *The Midrashic Imagination. Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993. 244.

<sup>47</sup> Idel, Moshe. "Midrashic versus Other Forms of Jewish Hermeneutics: Some Comparative Reflections", in, Michael Fishbane. ed. *The Midrashic Imagination. Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993. 45.

<sup>48</sup> JT. *Hagigah*. 77d-78a.

<sup>49</sup> BT. *Sanhedrin*. 95a.

<sup>50</sup> BT *Gittin*. 68b.

<sup>51</sup> BT *Gitten*. 9b.

<sup>52</sup> *Targum Rishon* [to Esther], *Targum Sheni* [to Esther].

<sup>53</sup> Idel, Moshe. "Midrashic versus Other Forms of Jewish Hermeneutics: Some Comparative Reflections", in, Michael Fishbane. ed. *The Midrashic Imagination. Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993. 47.

<sup>54</sup> JT. *Shekalim*. 6:1, 49d; *Yalkut Berakhah*. 951.

<sup>55</sup> BT *Menahot*. 99a,b.

<sup>56</sup> Schwartz, Howard. *Reimagining the Bible. The Storytelling of the Rabbis*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. 8.

<sup>57</sup> JT *Shekalim*. 6:1, 49d.

<sup>58</sup> Levenson, Jon D. *The Hebrew Bible, The Old Testament, and Historical Criticism. Jews and Christians in Biblical Studies*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993. 3.

<sup>59</sup> Holtz, Barry W. "Midrash", in, Barry W. Holtz. ed. *Back To The Sources. Reading The Classic Jewish Texts*. New York: Summit Books, 1984. 177-211.[excerpts from pages] 186-94.

<sup>60</sup> Baum, Jutta. "Queen Esther", in, Dov-Ber Kerler. ed. *History of Yiddish Studies. Winter Studies in Yiddish. Volume 3*. Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies. Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991. 71-79.

<sup>61</sup> See: Gidal, Nachum T. *Jews in Germany. From Roman Times to the Weimar Republic*. Koln: Konemann, 1998. 320.

<sup>62</sup> Gidal, Nachum T. *Jews in Germany. From Roman Times to the Weimar Republic*. Koln: Konemann, 1998. 320-1. 320-21.

<sup>63</sup> See: Note 109.

<sup>64</sup> Rabbi Abraham Kook, quoted in Rosen, David. *Judaism & Universal Morality – Reflections on Jewish Texts*. [Available May 2009] <http://www.rabbiavidrosen.net/Articles/Judaism/> See: Yaron, Zvi. [trans. Avner Tomaschoff.] *The Philosophy of Rabbi Kook*. Israel: WZO, 1981. 96.

<sup>65</sup> *Sifre Devarim*:48.

---

<sup>66</sup> Bruns, Gerald L. "Midrash and Allegory: The Beginnings of Scriptural Interpretation", in, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode. eds. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press. 629.

<sup>67</sup> Fishbane, Michael. *The Garments of Torah. Essays in Biblical Hermeneutics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 98.

<sup>68</sup> Fishbane, Michael. *The Garments of Torah. Essays in Biblical Hermeneutics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 98.

<sup>69</sup> I owe the reference to Buber's theology as "relational" to Rebecca Alpert, see: Alpert, Rebecca T. "Another Perspective on Theological Directions for the Jewish Future", in, Elliot N. Dorff and Louis E. Newman. eds. *Contemporary Jewish Theology. A Reader*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. 494

<sup>70</sup> BT *Avot de-Rabbi Natan*. 20.

<sup>71</sup> Buber Martin, "The Dialogue Between Heaven and Earth", in, Martin Buber. *At The Turning. Three Addresses In Judaism*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Young, 1952. 49.

<sup>72</sup> Meyerowitz, Yisrael. *Hasidic Primary Works in English Translation*. Proceedings of the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries. Brooklyn, New York, June 20-23, 2004. 1.

<sup>73</sup> Buber, Martin. *Eclipse of God*. New York: Harper, 1952. 135

<sup>74</sup> See: Note 118.

<sup>75</sup> Buber, Martin. "The How and Why of Our Bible Translation", in, Buber, Martin, and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 207.

<sup>76</sup> Kepnes, Steven. *The Text As Thou. Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 41.

<sup>77</sup> Buber, Martin. "On Word Choice In Translating The Bible: In Memoriam Franz Rosenzweig", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald.] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 73-89. 73.

<sup>78</sup> Buber, Martin. "On Word Choice In Translating The Bible: In Memoriam Franz Rosenzweig", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald.] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 75.

<sup>79</sup> BT *Yoma* 20b.

<sup>80</sup> Bialik, Hayim Nahman and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky. eds. [trans. William G. Braude.] *The Book of Legends. Sefer Ha-Aggadah. Legends from the Talmud and Midrash*. New York: Schocken Books, 1992. 296 n11.

<sup>81</sup> Buber, Martin. "On Word Choice in Translating the Bible: In Memoriam Franz Rosenzweig", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald.] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 76.

<sup>82</sup> Buber, Martin. "From The Beginnings Of Our Bible Translation", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald.] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 180.

- 
- <sup>83</sup> Rosenzweig, Franz. "The Secret of Biblical Narrative Form", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald.] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 131,135,142.
- <sup>84</sup> Buber, Martin. "Leitwort and Discourse Type", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald.] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 143-50.
- <sup>85</sup> Buber, Martin. "Leitwort Style in Pentateuch Narrative", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald.] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indian University Press, 1994. 114-28.
- <sup>86</sup> Buber's description of *Leitwort* (trans. Robert Alter), see: Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. New York: Basic Books, 1981. 93.
- <sup>87</sup> Stemmerger, Gunter. [trans. Markus Bockmuehl.] *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*. Second Edition. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996. 24.
- <sup>88</sup> Stemmerger, Gunter. [trans. Markus Bockmuehl.] *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*. Second Edition. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996. 24,25.
- <sup>89</sup> Genesis *Rabbah*. 89:9.
- <sup>90</sup> Fokkelman, J.P. "Genesis", in, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode. eds. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 68
- <sup>91</sup> Zohar *Toledot*. 136a-137b. [reflected from an earlier homiletic text in *Midrash Tanhuma* (Yelammendu).]
- <sup>92</sup> Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical Text and Texture. A literary Reading of Selected Texts*. Oxford: Oneworld, 1998. xii.
- <sup>93</sup> Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical Text and Texture. A literary Reading of Selected Texts*. Oxford: Oneworld, 1998. xiii.
- <sup>94</sup> Bar-Efrat, Shimon. *Narrative Art in the Bible*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997. 10.
- <sup>95</sup> Buber Martin. "Leitwort Style in Pentateuch Narrative", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald]. *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 123.
- <sup>96</sup> BT *Shabbat* 77b.
- <sup>97</sup> Kepnes, Steven. *The Text As Thou. Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 28.
- <sup>98</sup> Glatzer, Nahum. "Buber as an Interpreter of the Bible", in, P. Schilpp and M. Friedman. eds. *The Philosophy of Martin Buber*. La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 1967. 366.
- <sup>99</sup> Fishbane, Michael. "Introduction", in, Martin Buber. *Moses*. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1987. xv.
- <sup>100</sup> Buber, Martin. "The How and Why of Our Bible Translation", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald.] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 210-11.
- <sup>101</sup> Uffenheimer, Benyamin. "Buber and Modern Biblical Scholarship", in, H. Gordon and J. Bloch. eds. *Martin Buber: A Centenary Volume*. New York: KTAV, 1984. 163.



---

<sup>102</sup> Buber, Martin. "People Today and the Jewish Bible", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 8.

<sup>103</sup> Buber Martin. "Interpreting Hasidism". *Commentary*. 40 (September, 1963). 218-225. 218.

<sup>104</sup> Buber, Martin. "People Today and the Jewish Bible", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 12.

<sup>105</sup> Buber, Martin. "People Today And The Jewish Bible: From A Lecture Series", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Laurence Rosenwald.] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 6,8.

<sup>106</sup> BT *Hagigah* 5b.

<sup>107</sup> BT *Yoma* 9b.

<sup>108</sup> BT *Megillah* 29a.

<sup>109</sup> The rabbinical *Midrash(im)* in its earliest form began before the destruction of the Temple 70CE. The earliest forms can be traced back to 300BCE and extend to 1200CE. *Midrash* comes from the Hebrew *shoresh* (verbal root) *darash*, which means to "to search out, to investigate." Thus, this is a Jewish method of exegesis which sought to discover deeper meanings in the text beyond the literal one. *Midrash* is used with the legal portions of the *Torah* (*halacha*) and it is used with the non-legal portions (*aggadah*), such as stories about the main protagonists in the Bible. There are many different collections of *Midrash*. The largest collection is called *Midrash Rabbah* (The Great Midrash). Other collections include *Pesikta* (Divisions), *Mechilta* (Treatise), *Sifra* (Book), *Sifre* (Books). The material of the *Midrash* is mostly from the time of the *Amoraim*, the Rabbis of the *Gemara* or Talmud (200-500CE), but some of the *Midrash* (particularly *Mechilta*, *Sifra*, and *Sifre*) can be traced back to the *Tannaim*, the Rabbis of the *Mishna* (400BCE-200Ce). Different *Midrashim* were written down at different times, over a period of almost a thousand years. The compilers of the different collections of *Midrash* are generally unknown, although it is known that many of the Rabbis delivered or debated *midrash* orally and they or their scribes made notes or records of *midrashim*. See: "Resources" DC Beit *Midrash*, House of Study. Washington: Washington DC Jewish Community Centre, 2004. Available at: DCBeitMidrash.org (2004).

<sup>110</sup> BT *Gitten* 6a.

<sup>111</sup> Snitkoff, Rabbi E. "Always Live in the Land of Israel: In Rabbinic Literature the Land Was Of Primary Importance", in, *Land of Israel. Biblical & Rabbinical : Rabbinic Literature*. New York: My Jewish Learning Inc, 2002. 3.

<sup>112</sup> From the time of the Bar Kochba rebellion (135CE) till the time of Zionism (1897) there was no universal Jewish effort to regain the Land of Israel as a Jewish homeland. However over the centuries, individual Jews and even sometimes substantial groups of Jews found their way back to live in Israel and in this way maintained a constant presence in the Land, known as 'the holy community of Jerusalem'. But these Jews were always living under foreign masters - Byzantines, Crusaders, Arabs, Mamelukes, Ottomans and British, to name some. For reference to "the holy community of Jerusalem" see: Bialik, Hayim Nahman and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky. eds. [trans. William G. Braude.] *The Book of Legends. Sefer Ha-Aggadah. Legends from the Talmud and Midrash*. New York: Schocken Books, 1992. 294 n7.

<sup>113</sup> The practice refers to the precise timing for the recital of the morning *Shema* (Deut 6:4-9). The *Shema* is recited in that moment just before dawn, when the world is neither in night or day, and one must say, at the conclusion of the *Shema*, the *Geullah* benediction which begins ["Blessed art Thou, O Lord, who has redeemed Israel"] and it must be said precisely at the very instant the sun begins to rise over the horizon, and then the very moment when the sun's

rays reach the place you stand the *Tefillah* [the *Shemoneh Esreh*, or, Eighteen Benedictions] is begun. This all takes many mornings of practice, until the natural instinct is finely tuned into the turning of the world and the timing required.

<sup>114</sup> JT *Berakhot* 1:1, and, BT *Berakhot* 9b.

<sup>115</sup> Bialik, Hayim Nahman Bialik, and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky. eds. [trans. William G. Braude] *The Book of Legends. Sefer Ha-Aggadah. Legends From The Talmud And Midrash*. New York: Schocken Books, 1992. xx.

<sup>116</sup> Bialik, Hayim Nahman Bialik, and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky. eds. [trans. William G. Braude.] *The Book of Legends. Sefer Ha-Aggadah. Legends From The Talmud And Midrash*. New York: Schocken Books, 1992. 7:10: Gen R. 1:1. See, also: Idel, Moshe. "Midrash vs. Other Jewish Hermeneutics", in, Michael Fishbane. ed. *The Midrashic Imagination. Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993. 46: "In *midrashic* sources, the biblical text is conceived of as being inscribed on the arm or the forehead of God, whose skin serves as the substratum of the primordial Torah, which preexisted the creation of the world".

<sup>117</sup> Buber, Martin. *On Judaism*. New York: Schocken Books, 1972. 106.

<sup>118</sup> Although Buber is renowned for the influence that the movement of *Hasidei Ashkenaz* had on his philosophical writings, it is none the less important and pertinent to point out the connection between Buber's *midrashic* literary style and his grandfather Solomon Buber, the mentor and teacher during his early formative years. Buber himself stated that he grew up in his grandfather's house. See: Buber, Martin. "The How and Why of our Bible Translation", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 207. Also see: Trepp, Leo. *A History Of The Jewish Experience. Eternal Faith, Eternal People*. New Jersey: Behrman House Inc, 1973, 356: "[Buber] found in his grandfather the understanding mentor of his youth. Solomon Buber was a modern Jew and a scholar who devoted his life to the exploration of the Midrash." As well, see: Hyamson, Albert M, and A. M. Silbermann. eds. *Vallentine's Jewish Encyclopaedia*. London: Shapiro, Vallentine & Co, 1938. 116b: "Buber, Solomon...published several critical editions of the *Midrashim* with detailed scientific introductions...and edited many valuable rabbinical and exegetical works."

<sup>119</sup> Buber, Martin. "People Today and the Jewish Bible", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 11.

<sup>120</sup> Alpert, Rebecca T. "Another Perspective on Theological Directions for the Jewish Future", in, Elliot N. Dorff and Louis E. Newman. eds. *Contemporary Jewish Theology. A Reader*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. 494.

<sup>121</sup> Buber, Martin. [trans. Ronald Gregor Smith.] *I and Thou*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1958.

<sup>122</sup> Buber, Martin. [trans. Ronald Gregor Smith.] *I and Thou*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1958. 80.

<sup>123</sup> Scholem, Gersom. *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis*. New York: Schocken Books, 1976. 159.

<sup>124</sup> Fishbane, Michael. *The Garments of Torah. Essays in Biblical Hermeneutics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 81.

<sup>125</sup> Glatzer, N. ed. *The Way of Response. Martin Buber. Selections from his Writings*. New York: Schocken Books, 1972. 146.

- 
- <sup>126</sup> Glatzer, N. ed. *The Way of Response. Martin Buber. Selections from his Writings*. New York: Schocken Books, 1972. 144.
- <sup>127</sup> Fishbane, Michael. *The Garments of Torah. Essays in Biblical Hermeneutics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 86.
- <sup>128</sup> Bialik, Hayim Nahman Bialik, and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky. eds. [trans. William G. Braude.] *The Book of Legends. Sefer Ha-Aggadah. Legends From The Talmud And Midrash*. New York: Schocken Books, 1992.6:3. See also: Margulies, Mordecai. ed. *Midrash ha-Gadol on the Pentateuch: Genesis*. Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1967. 7-8.
- <sup>129</sup> Glatzer, N. ed. *The Way of Response. Martin Buber. Selections from his Writings*. New York: Schocken Books, 1972. 146.
- <sup>130</sup> Buber, Martin, "People Today and the Jewish Bible", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 11.
- <sup>131</sup> Buber, Martin. [trans. Ronald Gregor Smith.] *I and Thou*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1958. 75.
- <sup>132</sup> Kepnes, Steven. *The Text As Thou. Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 115.
- <sup>133</sup> Buber, Martin. "The How and Why of Our Bible Translation", in, Buber, Martin, and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 219.
- <sup>134</sup> Buber, Martin, "People Today and the Jewish Bible", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 21.
- <sup>135</sup> Stern, David. *Midrash and Theory. Ancient Jewish Exegesis and Contemporary Literary Studies*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1996. 29.
- <sup>136</sup> Stern, David. *Midrash and Theory. Ancient Jewish Exegesis and Contemporary Literary Studies*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1996. 29.
- <sup>137</sup> *Mekilta* to Exodus. 16:4,14. See also: Boyarin Daniel. *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 31.
- <sup>138</sup> See: Boyarin Daniel. *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 32.
- <sup>139</sup> Elman, Yaakov. "The Rebirth of Omnisignificant Biblical Exegesis in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries", in, JSIJ [Jewish Studies, Internet Journal]. Israel: Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan. 2 (2003). 217.
- <sup>140</sup> Elbaum, Jacob. "Rabbi Judah Leow of Prague and his Attitude to the Aggadah", in, Joseph Heinemann and Dov Noy. eds. *Studies in Aggadah and Folk-Literature*. Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1971. 39.
- <sup>141</sup> Stern, David. *Midrash and Theory. Ancient Jewish Exegesis and Contemporary Literary Studies*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1996. 20.
- <sup>142</sup> *Genesis Rabbah*, 1:1-2. Note: comments within quote from: Stern, David. *Midrash and Theory. Ancient Jewish Exegesis and Contemporary Literary Studies*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1996. 27.

- 
- <sup>143</sup> Seeskin, Kenneth. "Buber, Martin. 1878-1965", in, Robert Audi. ed. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*. Second Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.104.
- <sup>144</sup> Cartwright, Andrea M.S. *Martin Buber: Poet of the Synapse*. Conference on Values in Higher Education, Knoxville: The University of Tennessee, 1997. [Available May 2008] <http://web.utk.edu/~unistudy/values/proc1997/ac.htm>
- <sup>145</sup> Buber spoke in German, this translation in English from: Kepnes, Steven. *The Text As Thou: Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 10.
- <sup>146</sup> Kepnes, Steven. *The Text As Thou: Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 5.
- <sup>147</sup> Kepnes, Steven. *The Text As Thou. Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 64.
- <sup>148</sup> Kepnes, Steven. *The Text As Thou. Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 78.
- <sup>149</sup> Mendes-Flohr, Paul. "Buber and Post-Traditional Judaism", in, *European Judaism*. 12:2, 1987:118.
- <sup>150</sup> Stern, David. *Midrash And Theory. Ancient Jewish Exegesis and Contemporary Literary Studies*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1996. 15.
- <sup>151</sup> Bruns, Gerald L. "Midrash and Allegory: The Beginnings of Scriptural Interpretation", in, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode. eds. *The Literary Guide To The Bible*. Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 625-46. 629.
- <sup>152</sup> Fishbane, Michael. *The Garments Of Torah. Essays in Biblical Hermeneutics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 113.

## MIDRASH AGGADA: WORD BEGETS WORLD

According to Karff *midrash aggada* is the language of Jewish particularity – the words and stories by which a Jew symbolizes their identity.<sup>1</sup> Weiss avers the *midrash aggada* of the Jewish people is personal, inflected and contextual.<sup>2</sup> It captivates and compels and is sculpted with nuances from a great coalition of individual minds. The flames of its faithology are set down deeply in the souls and memories of consecutive Jewish communities. The founding exemplary document of Jewish faithology is the Hebrew text our Holy *Tanakh* – *Torah*, *Nevi'im* and *Kethuvim* spoken of by the Rabbis as, *eish shachor al gabei eish lavan* – black fire on white fire.<sup>3</sup> The black fire is the letters and markings of the text. The white fire is the spaces around and between. On the level of *midrash aggada* the black fire represents *parshanut*, the interpretations, applications and expansions of the text. On this same level the white fire represents *darshanut* the process of transvaluation which catapults *midrash aggada* into the realms of limitless messages through story, parable, poetry, conversation and silent thought.

In our current world of multi-faith systems the symbolic power of *midrash aggada* perhaps now more than ever faces its most crucial test. On the stage of theological enterprise amidst all the world religions *midrash aggada* seeks its place as a valid faithological process. It must remain for each student of

modern *midrash* to define how in accordance to their own faith they 'cross over via *midrashic* exegesis into the enterable world'<sup>4</sup> of Hebrew Scripture.

Meanwhile, the Hebrew Scriptures continue to be 'a set of texts in restless dialogue with one another',<sup>5</sup> a whole spectrum of *aggadic* happenings in which a persistent set of images are simultaneously a persistent vision of reality.<sup>6</sup> At the heart of Scripture is a creative process which combines words and ideas enfolded within former texts and reuses these words and ideas thereby unfolding itself into later texts across the entire canon. Fishbane explains,

An overview of the reuses to which the traditions have been put in *aggadic* exegesis points to the remarkable fact that most instances are the result of a metaphrastic shift, a decisive movement from one genre or style to another in conjunction with the movement from one speaker or teacher to another. Rules and regulations formulated in a casuistic style by a legislator, for example, reappear as metaphors, similes, and descriptions (cf. Jer 2:3, 2:26, 34, 5:21-4); rules presented apodictically reappear with motivational exhortations (cf. Exod. 20:5-7); liturgies recited solemnly by priests are caustically recited by prophets (Mal. 1:9-2:6); *theologoumena* disclosed by the deity become the basis of prayers of petition and praise (Mic. 7:18-20; Pss. 103, 109); narratives recited anonymously in one place are recast as personified prophetic critiques or as oracles (Hos. 12; Isa. 19:19-25); and so forth. What appeared, therefore, as an instruction or a ceremony to one generation is frequently decontextualized in *aggadic traditio* and presented to a later group in a very different form for very different reasons.<sup>7</sup>

Inner textual *aggadic* exegesis is a constant flow towards textual form. Throughout the Hebrew text scribal techniques and procedures are manifested in overt, covert and creative ways. Put simply, scribal intention

revaluates older traditions and evolves them with new appreciation. Hence the inner textual *aggadic* exegetical activity is a restless exercise continually relating between the old and the new. Scribal purpose is a re-inspiration through re-description. The constant challenge for the modern exegete is to enter into the ancient world of Scripture wrestling with the restless dialogue of the inner-biblical text whilst faithfully facilitating the text into *midrashic* modernity.

The art of *midrash* (to seek understanding, make inquiry) in partnership with *aggada* (telling and retelling) is a matter of Jewish *emunah*, that is, Jewish faithology. *Midrash aggada* sources not only its core material and themes but also its origins from the Hebrew text which itself clearly displays an inner-biblical "*midrash aggadic* exegesis". Put another way, the origins of *midrash aggada* as found in the Hebrew text are 'accentuated by a broad spectrum of genres...by a double shift...in historical and literary context'.<sup>8</sup> In this way the making of *midrash aggada* requires an understanding of process, and here we put forward the traditional modes of *parshanut* (interpretation) and *darshanut* (transvaluation) as the key facilitators in the making of *midrash aggada*.

This chapter explores textual and scholarly evidence of the Hebrew text as an *aggadic* trope, focusing in the main on the way this process manifests in the methods of *parshanut* and *darshanut* and onward towards the rabbinic tradition of making *midrash aggada*. Hence, it is the contention of this

thesis that *parshanut* is in realising the “Spoken Word” of the text in concert with *darshanut* which restates the “Living Word” in praxis. The Rabbis look upon the Hebrew text as an exemplary document, a Holy Scripture which was given through humankind for human situations. Therefore, it is also the contention of this thesis that the Rabbis believed the Scriptures to be a “Spoken Word” which must be restated as a “Living Word” for each generation. In keeping with the contentions of this thesis two areas of concern will be explored in this chapter: the origins of making *midrash aggada* in the Hebrew text itself, and a focus on the pinnacles of development in the extra biblical *midrashic* recordings of the Rabbis.

Let us now explore the textual and scholarly evidence of the Hebrew text as an *aggadic* trope. A number of modern scholarly writings affirm that the earliest origins of *midrash aggada* as a hermeneutic are clearly found within the Hebrew text itself. Bruns, Alter, Ackroyd, Fishbane, Fox, Waldberg, Stemberger, Seeligmann, Peters, Boyarin, Sommer and others agree the biblical text narrative clearly follows a *midrashic* formula. Stemberger states, the beginnings of a *midrashic* exegesis of earlier Scripture texts were already contained “within the Bible”.<sup>9</sup> Seeligmann in his article, *Voraussetzungen der Midrashexegese* [Prerequisite of *Midrash*-exegesis] says, ‘the oldest *midrashic* exegesis developed organically out of the distinctive character of the Biblical literature’.<sup>10</sup> As Gruenwald has pointed out, ‘Waldberg shows, inter alia, that many of the forms of *midrashic* exposition are already well represented in Scripture itself’.<sup>11</sup>



The distinctive character of biblical *midrashic* exegesis is facilitated by an inner-textual modus operandi which this thesis denotes through use of the terminology of *parshanut* and *darshanut*. In the same fashion Fishbane unpacks the Hebrew text, through use of an alternative terminology of *tradtum* and *tradtio*, the two conjoint terms which he adapted and modified from Knight's writings.<sup>12</sup> 'At each stage in the *tradtio* [*darshanutic* reflex] the *tradtum* [*parshanutic* context] was adapted, transformed, or reinterpreted'.<sup>13</sup> In this way, according to Fohrer, the earlier textual context was detribalized and nationalized, depolytheized and monotheized, re-organized and re-conceptualized.<sup>14</sup> Hence the origins of *midrash aggada* is interdependent upon the working methods of *parshanut* and *darshanut* which in turn are derived from and have their prerequisite forms within the Scriptures themselves. Put simply, the making of Scripture was largely dependent upon its *midrashic* style.

Manifestly a composite construction,<sup>15</sup> inner-biblical *parshanut* and *darshanut* are governed by a *midrashic* premise. The perpetuation of *aggada* is postulated by way of thematic links between one text and another, expressed in explicit and implicit ways. According to Fishbane, this involves a combination of scriptural traditions and scribal talent, 'where the tradition sets the agenda of problems which must be creatively resolved or determines the received language which may be imaginatively reworked'.<sup>16</sup> Sommer has outlined the various ways in which inner-textual *parshanut* and *darshanut* contribute to intra-literary workings and re-workings of *midrash aggada*

throughout the Hebrew text.<sup>17</sup> The explicit introduction *kakativ* (“as it is written”) is common throughout the Hebrew text, such an example being II Kings 14:5-6 which uses direct quotations from Deut 24:16. Other texts, such as, I Kings 2:3, Ezra 3:2, and, II Chr 23:18 use the introduction *kakativ* followed by direct reference to the themes of earlier texts.<sup>18</sup> However, by and large the biblical text connects and reconnects by an implicit interchange of imagery.

Images are transported in the form of words and phrases. Earlier texts are re-interpreted and transvaluated within later texts. In a reworked form the earlier content arrives in the later texts often in the form of a literary allusion. In the following example the *darshanutic* journey through several texts begins in the *parshanutic* re-interpretation of Gen 1:2, “Now the earth was waste and void (*tohu va vohu*), and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the wind/breath/spirit of God hovered/palpitated (*merachefet*, the motion of an eagles wings over her young) upon the face of the waters”.

The *darshanutic* journey continues by traversing an implicit trace in Ex 19: 3-4, “...the Lord called...say to Jacob and tell the children of Israel...you have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and I bore you on eagle’s (*nesher*) wings and brought you unto Myself”. Next our *darshanutic* traveler arrives with full explicit force in Deut 32:9-11 “For the portion of the Lord is His people, Jacob the lot of His inheritance. He found him in a desert land, and in the waste (*tohu*) a howling wilderness, He compassed him about, He cared for him...As

an eagle (*nesher*) stirs up her nest hovering/palpitating (*y'rachef*) over her young, takes them, bearing them on her pinions".

Moving on, the *darshanutic* traveler converses thematically into a time of darkness in Jeremiah. It is foreboding times and the physical reverse of Creation seems imminent. God recalls the Exodus from Egypt with a premonition of the future return of the Exiles from Babylon. It is a time of impending doom for Jeremiah although God offers a glimmer of hope, Jer 23:7-9: "...God speaks: In days to come they will no longer say, The Lord lives who brought the sons of Israel [Jacob] up out of the land of Egypt...(they will say) The Lord lives who brought up and led the seed of the house of Israel [Jacob] out of the land of [the] north (Babylon)...and they shall dwell on their own land [once again].

In despondent mood Jeremiah speaks condemning the false prophets who have misled the people into the present darkness, "my heart within me is broken concerning the prophets, all my bones shake/vibrate (*rachaf*) but I am like a drunken man." It is literary allusion at its best but has a negative implication for Jeremiah. Jeremiah's bones shake and palpitate but he cannot be risen up. It illustrates Alter's description whereby, 'allusion...presupposes the temporal priority of one text to another...a given story evokes some moment in an antecedent story...for the narrative purposes at hand'.<sup>19</sup> Across the text the metaphorical action of the eagle's wing goes on a *darshanutic* journey from Creation to Jeremiah. *merachefet*, *y'rachef*, and *rachaf*. The

imagery of the eagle's wings that stirred up the waters of creation, and carried Jacob from the wilderness is suddenly bankrupted in the shaking palpitating bones of Jeremiah. However, the currency of God's prediction promises a future return to the Land. Thus literary allusion pervades textual situations shifting and reporting whole contexts or moments in time with differing shades of nuance, as Alter explains,

Allusion is pervasive in the Bible...on the evidence of the texts themselves, a traditional culture that encouraged a high degree of verbatim retention of its own classical texts...Again and again, a revelation of a shift in attitude, perspective, or situation is introduced through the alteration of a single word, the deletion of a phrase, the addition of a word, a switch in the order of items, as statements are repeated...the marker for the allusion may be as economical as a single unusual or strategically placed word...The infant Moses is placed in an "ark" (*tevah*) and set among the bulrushes, to be saved from the decree of drowning (Ex 2:3)...The solitary term *tevah* recalls the ark in which Noah and his family and the specimens of the sundry species were saved from the universal drowning...and the Noah story, which itself involved the renewal of the first creations...thus, the Exodus [Moses] story is marked as a new beginning.<sup>20</sup>

Similarly allusions are apparent in the book of Isaiah. These allusions which are in the form of reflexive reflection are more than likely part of a redaction process. The text of chapter 51:3-6, reworks words and phrases from the texts of its earlier chapter 2:24 which in turn mirrors the virtually identical texts of Micah 4:1-4 and Isaiah 2:24. The textual reworkings of Isaiah do not rely on literary allusion alone, in addition progressive punning playing on words with similar sight and sound is apparent, such as, the word *chorvoteha* ("her ruins") from the earlier text in Isaiah is converted in the later texts in Isaiah and Micah to *charvotam* ("their swords"). This use of *paronomasia* is a

frequent player in the *midrash aggada* process, as in the punning of *shoreshim* (root verbs), Num 21:9, "*nehash nehoshet*, brazen serpent", and, Jer 23:2 "*ha-roim ha-raim*, the evil shepherds".

In Gen 40:13, and 19, Joseph predicts the fate, at the hands of the Pharaoh of Egypt, of a cupbearer and a baker. By a literary *paronomasic* collusion between the two verses with the added trick of literary expansion, the first prediction dramatically contrasts the second. Of the cupbearer, Joseph predicts, "in another three days Pharaoh will lift up your head, whereas, of the baker, Joseph predicts, "in another three days Pharaoh will lift up your head from off you". By artful repetition of the same initial phrasing between two closely related verses, the double take of Joseph's prediction, according to Fox, 'is able to heighten the impact of "from off you" on both audience and victim'.<sup>21</sup> The second Joseph text artfully reworks the previous one. There is no citation formula to show that the second text depends on the first. However the repetition of words and the sharing of theme indicate the close relationship between the two verses. Sommer has demonstrated that a great many biblical texts are utilized in this same way.<sup>22</sup>

Fishbane has shown how this process in which 'narrative transcends its original focus, and becomes the basis of a new configuration of meaning'<sup>23</sup> is at the very heart of 'the received canon of Scripture, as a form of instruction...quintessentially an *aggadic* trope.'<sup>24</sup> The *midrashic* exegesis [*parshanut* and *darshanut*] at the heart of Scripture cannot be described as

scribal latitude, nor is it carried out for the sake of *halakhic* (legal) aspects in the text, neither is its starting point found in the prophetic agenda.<sup>25</sup> The *midrash aggada* of the Hebrew text is centered on “virtual” and “implicit” perpetuation of *parshanut emunah b'-Elohim* (interpretation of belief in God, viz., faithology), and, *darshanut-ham'latzah* (transvaluative exhortation, viz., homiletics). To achieve the perpetuating nature of a virtual and implicit expansion in *midrash* exegesis ‘a shift in the literary content’<sup>26</sup> from one text to another is required. Fishbane as set out in a lengthy quote below outlines the re-interpretation and re-transvaluation of Ps 8:5-7 by Job 7:17-18 as centered on faithological and homiletic concerns, showing the perpetuating power of *midrash* exegesis.

[Ps 8:v5] “What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? And the son of man, that Thou thinkest of him? [v6] Yet Thou has made him but a little lower than the angels, And hast crowned him with glory and honour. [v7] Thou hast made him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands, Thou hast put all things under his feet.”<sup>27</sup>

[Job 7:v17] What is man, that Thou shouldest magnify him, And that Thou shouldest set Thy heart upon him, [v18] And that Thou shouldest remember him every morning, And try him every moment?<sup>28</sup>

The exegetical revision of Ps 8:5-7 by Job 7:17-18 is sharp and clear. Whereas the Psalmist exalts the human species to near-divine status, and regards this exaltation as a sign of divine favour, Job inverts the liturgical teaching and mocks it; for he implies that God’s providence is less than beneficial for humankind. In fact, he uses the psalm’s language to state that God is attentive to humans in order to exact an account of them for their actions. This scrupulous divine presence is a burden, Job suggests, and inappropriate – for, indeed, just what is humankind after all, is it really so exalted? Thus Job has hooked his argument on the latent ambiguity in the question “What is man?”, and transformed it from a remark which

marvels how mere humankind could be so exalted by divinity into a sarcastic, contentious sneer. The older question is thus inverted: What, after all, is mankind that you God, exact such a toll? Indeed, it is precisely because this rebuttal by Job is not composed of neutral terms, but rather utilizes the vocabulary of a paean of praise, that his words are charged with theological irony.

The hermeneutical tension between the positive liturgy of the psalmist and the caustic diatribe of Job marks the space between their two religious attitudes, and delineates the abyss out of which the *traditum* is stripped of its piety and unexamined pretence. By playing on the inherent ambiguity of the psalmist's question, Job has disclosed the dark side of the liturgical paean – a dark side corresponding to the obliqueness of his religious spirit. Indeed, so poignant is the inversion, and so strident, that later Eliphaz, in a perceptible allusion to it, asks “What (*mah*) is man.... that (*ki*) he could be innocent, or the offspring of woman that he should be righteous? (Job 15:14). And he answers: “For, truly, [God] has no trust in his angels, and [even] the [host of] heaven are impure in his eyes” (v 15). With this remark Eliphaz has completed the *aggadic* inversion of Job who, as noted, first sensed the ambiguity latent in the question “What is man?” Indeed, he both sensed it and allowed it to be the springboard of his accusation of divine oppression. Eliphaz further plays upon the ambiguity of the question, though he, in turn, redirects the argument against Job. Just who does Job think himself to be, asks this interlocutor, that he should account himself innocent? Is he not but a man? So how should he imagine himself just before God? With this stroke Eliphaz has deflated Job's contention, inverted it, and even, in some measure ironically re-established the original *traditum*. For his argument indirectly answers the question of the psalm and exalts God who, though mankind be an imperfect being, nevertheless raises this species to glory and honour.<sup>29</sup>

Let us return to the opening chapters of Job where many *parshanutic* and *darshanutic* techniques are applied in addition to those outlined by Fishbane above. An important technique apparent in Job as it is throughout the Hebrew text is the use of a selection of key words which set the scene giving literal “colour” to the contextual mood. The example put forward here

involves the first three chapters of the book of Job. The narrator initially employs the key word "day" to artfully build up the scene and mood in the first two chapters.<sup>30</sup> However, in the third chapter the narrator skilfully twists the key word and Job's already tragic circumstances suddenly plummet into darkness.

From the beginning of the narrative the key word "day" is used in frequent succession which sets the scene around Job's daily life, "each one upon his day" (Job 1:4), "the days" (1:5), "upon a day" (1:6), "and it fell on a day" (1:13); as the narrative progresses, we are kept informed. Each time Job is cursed and cursed again as a result of a supercilious discourse between the Adversary and God. Silently the narrative slips downward "again it fell upon a day" (2:1). But, the harsh reality does not strike home until the key word is shifted from the milieu and placed in the mouth of the main character. Job has suffered severe torment and grief and when he cries out in anguish we hear the contra-use of the key word "day"..."opened Job his mouth, and cursed his day" (3:1). Instantly the mood and scene of the narrative which pivots on the use of the key word "day" plummets that key word into the depths of great despair..."let the day perish" (3:3)... "let that day be darkness" (3:4)... "let darkness claim it" (3:5); now we hear an antonymic play off between day and darkness, and then the synonyms of "darkness" and "night" swallow up Job's world. Ultimately it is "blackness" which saturates the narrative of chapter three, "let all that makes black the day terrify it" (3:6); doom for Job has become apparent, "why did I not perish at birth?" (3:13).



The first three chapters of Job implicitly rework Genesis 1:1-5 reversing the thematic order of the creation of the first "day". The narrator's device of reversing keywords from Gen 1:1-5 uses imagery which symbolizes Job's mental condition. The day (*yom*) plummets down through the night (*laylah*) in to the darkness (*choshek*). The *midrashic* turn-around of key words from Gen 1:1-5 delivers an *aggadic* portrait of Job's reality. The story of Job as Greenberg points out, 'allows multiple possibilities of interpretation, corresponding to the open, unresolved tensions in the vision of reality'.<sup>31</sup> The mode of inner-textual *midrashic* revision between texts, in this instance the contra-revision of Creation themes in Job, 'is a beautifully appropriate vehicle for one bent on compelling us to see things in new ways'.<sup>32</sup>

No single scholar drew our attention towards the Hebrew text as did Buber with his "discovery" of the scribal technique of utilizing a key [leading] word or words which he named *Leitwort[er]*. Buber understood and described *Leitwort* as a key word/word phrase meaningfully repeated within a text, sequence or complex of texts.<sup>33</sup> The narrative of Abraham in Genesis is densely populated with the phenomenon of *Leitwortic* techniques. Giving examples from the story of the first Patriarch, Buber noted, 'repetition, corresponding to the inner rhythm of the text – or rather issuing from it – is probably the strongest of all techniques for making meaning available without articulating it explicitly.'<sup>34</sup> Thus Buber outlines that *Leitwort*,

...involves *paronomasia* in the strict sense, occurring within an individual syntactic context, it may involve *paronomasia* more

generally, including alliteration and assonance, but it may also involve the sort of *paronomasia*: [that is] *paronomasia at a distance*, working not in immediate juxtaposition but over an extended stretch of text. In all these cases, such repetition can achieve not only aesthetic value...but also a special and irreplaceable value of statement.<sup>35</sup>

One such statement par excellence, threaded with *Leitwort-paronomasic* sights, sounds and senses is Job's story. Here the stylistic body of the narrative is a compositional sewing of Aramaic sequins on to the Hebrew fabric of the verses. According to Greenstein the Aramaic forms in Job are part of the narrator's technique,<sup>36</sup> each word serving an intended poetic or literary function and should not be collectively viewed as evidence that the narrative was written in a foreign context. At times the Hebrew and Aramaic forms of a commonly shared verb are interchanged, for example, מלה (*milah*, utterance, word) found in Hebrew plural form מלים (*milim*) in such passages as Job 6:26, 8:10, 23:5, 32:18, and, in Aramaic plural form, מלין (*milin*) in such passages as Job 12:11, 26:4, 32:14, 38:2. At other times Hebrew and Aramaic words sharing the same sense (but with different sight and sound) appear within a single verse, shown here with the Hebrew form followed by the Aramaic, Job 3:25 בא and אחה (come); Job 4:2 דבר and מלין (word[s]); Job 16:19 עד and שהד (witness); Job 39:5 פרא and ערוד (wild donkey); Job 40:18 עצם and גרם (bone).

At the close of the Hebrew canon, the books of I & II Chronicles go beyond the obvious, by openly and explicitly appropriating whole sections from such

earlier books as I & II Samuels, I & II Kings, and, Genesis. However, it becomes apparent on a careful reading, or rather, a second or third reading of Chronicles that this narrative action is not merely a reworking of former narratives. The perspective of Chronicles clearly written at a later time is quite different from the books of Samuel, Kings and Genesis. The chronicler looks at his “stained-glass” window<sup>37</sup> sorting whole narratives, re-sorting life cycles, subtracting lines and multiplying facts, the agenda is a visionary re-coloring of past textual events. According to Slotki, ‘the dominant feature of Chronicles is a presentation of the “historical events” from a “religious angle” in the form of a *Midrash*, a homiletical or didactic work’.<sup>38</sup> In this way, the Chronicler is an exhortative reporter, “O give thanks unto the Lord, call upon His name, make known His doings among the peoples” (I Chr 16:8). Jacobs examines the chronicler’s thematic revision,

A particularly instructive example of the revision is the Chronicler’s substitution (I Chr 21:1) of Satan as the being who enticed David to count the people of Israel, instead of God as in the same narrative in the book of Samuel (II Sam 24:1), this appears to be due to the Chronicler’s reluctance to ascribe this enticement directly to God.<sup>39</sup>

In effect Chronicles offers a religiously progressive *midrashic* commentary on the earlier events of Samuel and Kings as well as Genesis. According to Fishbane, the narrative of Chronicles addresses the then “present” generation, ‘in the twilight of classical prophecy, with a [new] “prophetic” voice’.<sup>40</sup> At times throughout the narrative with the new generation in mind the Chronicler’s didactic agenda requires that the old religious history be

brought up to date, as in the revision I Chr 13:1-14 of II Sam 6:1-11, whilst at other times, the narrative strives to perceive the old traditions in a new light, reaffirming the lineage of David by innovative new themes as in I Chr 22:1-8, unknown in the earlier texts of Samuel and Kings. In fact the chronicler's thematic revisions are so condensed that the whole narrative of I and II Chronicles is indeed thematically at odds with many of the other Books of the Hebrew Canon, as Dorsey explains,

It has long been recognized that the Book of Chronicles exhibits numerous lexical peculiarities which distinguish it from the earlier books...Curtis has observed, 'Many old words are made to do service in new ways either rare or unknown in the older language, and new words...appear frequently'.<sup>41</sup> Curtis lists 116 such words.<sup>42</sup> One term omitted in Curtis's list but certainly belonging there is **מסלה**. Outside of Chronicles **מסלה** designates a highway [that is] a main public road in open country. In the Book of Chronicles...the word in all three of its occurrences (I Chr 26:16, 18, II Chr 9:11) seems to denote not a highway but rather some kind of architectural structure.<sup>43</sup>

However, the general literary style of Chronicles is similar to Ezra and Nehemiah, containing Aramaic loan words already well established in the Late Hebrew vocabulary, interspersed with new verb forms. The Chronicles narrative which employs and expands historical and prophetic sources whilst utilizing Hebrew and Aramaic forms is 'characterized by this influx of rare and altogether new words as well as by the use of old terms with new meanings'.<sup>44</sup> Zimmerman observes there is no other book in the Hebrew Bible which presents such variegated markings in idiom, syntax and word usage.<sup>45</sup> In effect, the Chronicler performs a scribal work on a literary junction between two worlds. On one hand is the background of the Bible

canon and on the other hand is the frontier of a new world which reaches beyond the canon, as Rothstein avers,

Chronicles affords us evidence of the ways in which biblical authors utilized, interpreted, supplemented, and reformulated earlier source materials, evidence which has far-reaching implications for...inner biblical exegesis...the scope of views common to Chronicles and earlier biblical works places it squarely within the biblical matrix...some scholars have described Chronicles as a bridge between the "classical period" of the Bible and later rabbinic society.<sup>46</sup>

The altogether innovative and sophisticated *midrashic* process of revising the earlier texts in Chronicles takes the form of an amplified rewriting, forming a reflexive inner textual relationship between the earlier and the later texts. In the same *midrashic* manner that the book of Deuteronomy (*Sefer Devarim*, lit. "Scroll of [the] Words") serves as the grand finale for the *Torah* of Moses, the books of Chronicles (*Divrey Hayyamim*, lit. "Words of [the] Days") recapitulates the whole sacred history of *Tanakh* and serves as the grand encore for the entire Hebrew text canon.<sup>47</sup> In scholarly support with Rothstein, Talmon purports,

...the Chronicler's...type of biblical "narrative *midrash*" may be considered a forerunner of the rabbinic *midrash aggada*...just as the apparent examples of "legal *midrash*" in Ezra-Nehemiah may be seen to foreshadow the rabbinic *midrash halakhah*.<sup>48</sup>

In this way the Hebrew text moves forward in time, delivered and transmitted in an authoritative manner without resting upon any one solitary authorial

signature. However, with certainty it may be claimed the literary signature of the Hebrew text is a self-glossing Word, where one portion of the text illuminates another. If we are to attribute the final redaction of Scriptures before canonization to post-exilic times, then Ezra is essentially a hermeneutical character.<sup>49</sup> As Bruns states,

The main point about Ezra...is that he produced the *texts* of the sacred Scriptures and not just the interpretation of them. Ezra is called "the second Moses". He is authoritative for what is in the texts without being authorial in the manner of (the first) Moses or the prophets. We can take him to signify that in the post-Exilic period the Scriptures were already so extensively revised and edited that a distinction between original authorship and secondary hermeneutics can no longer be made.<sup>50</sup>

According to Fishbane, 'Ezra and his *levitical* colleagues...appear after the exile with a whole exegetical tradition ready to hand...there is no incontrovertible reason to doubt that the evidence of inner-biblical exegesis...reflects...a culturally integrated'<sup>51</sup> ancient/pre-exilic 'spectrum of exegetical proliferation and development.'<sup>52</sup> During the times of Ezra, Bruns in accord with Ackroyd states, 'the making of the Scriptures was already a hermeneutical process...earlier biblical materials were rewritten...to make them intelligible and applicable to later situations'.<sup>53</sup> Fishbane avers,

Within ancient Israel, as long as the textual corpus remained open, Revelation and Tradition were thickly interwoven and interdependent, and the received Hebrew Bible is itself, therefore, the product of an interpretation tradition...With the closing of the corpus of Scripture, however, there was a tendency to forget the exegetical dimensions of Scripture and to see Scripture solely as the source and foundation of later

interpretation...The most characteristic feature of the Jewish imagination...*midrash aggada*...thus has its origin in...*aggadic* exegesis...embedded in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>54</sup>

Peters, believes the *aggadic* language of the Hebrew text is best understood within the *midrashic* process of *parshanut* (interpretation) and *darshanut* (transvaluation) in that 'across the linguistic surface of the Hebrew text the scribal practice of an inner-*midrashic* style is apparent'.<sup>55</sup> Peters is in agreement with other scholars in saying that the purpose of the *midrashic* process is to transport thematic properties and traditional stories thereby creating a narrative expansion going beyond original time and place, re-emerging in later texts.<sup>56</sup> In symmetry Bruns states,

The whole orientation of Scripture is toward its future, not toward its past. The Bible is prophetic rather than expressive in its structure. This is perhaps why the Bible has proved such a stumbling block to historical criticism and the doctrine of romantic hermeneutics which says that understanding a text means understanding it as well as and even better than its author did. For what is at issue with respect to the Scriptures is not what lies behind the text in the form of an original meaning but what lies in front of it where the interpreter stands. The Bible always addresses itself to the time of interpretation; one cannot understand it except by appropriating it anew. Revelation is never something over and done with or gone for good or in danger of slipping away into the past, it is ongoing, and its medium is *midrash*.<sup>57</sup>

In this way, many modern Jewish scholars have returned full circle to the rabbinical approach where the Hebrew text is viewed through *midrash aggadic* lenses. However there continues within Jewish community other scholarly realms where the strict *peshat* (plain sense) of Scripture is

advocated. However the misconception at the very heart of this particular *peshat* exegetical enterprise where the “plain sense” of the Hebrew text is upheld as a rigid, static *peshat* effectively perpetuates a denial of the clear *midrashic* style evidenced across the length and breadth of the textual narrative. Within a liturgical setting the word for word reading of the lectionary *Torah* portion by the *parshatan* is still referred to as “*peshat*”.<sup>58</sup> However with regard to textual studies a continuing misconception that *peshat* is “plain sense” is perhaps due to a popular medieval ideology of *peshat* as synonymous with text. With reference to interpretation of the text and the problematic of adhering to *peshat*, Peters explains,

Interpretation is a complex matter...focusing on the distinction between interpretations allows us to avoid the knotty problem of actually defining that slippery term [*peshat*] “*peshuto shel mikra*” (the plain sense of the text) so often mistakenly perceived as the opposite of the *midrashic* reading. Just how difficult it is accurately to define “the plain sense of the text” becomes clear through a comparison of readings offered by commentators on almost any given biblical verse...rarely are two readings alike. We can only conclude that an absolute, completely objective “plain sense of the text” does not exist (or that if it exists it is not accessible to us, which amounts to the same thing)...whereas *parshanut* and *darshanut* are modes of text study and, as such, can be understood as descriptions of authorial intent.<sup>59</sup>

Let us now seek a clarification between the words *parshanut* and *peshat*. The noun *parshanut* (interpretation) is a Hebrew word from the *shoresh* (root verb) *parash* (explain, make distinct, expound) evidenced throughout the Hebrew text, for example, Lev 24:12 “to declare distinctly to them”, Num 15:34 “been declared”, Neh 8:8 “they read...clearly...they gave the sense...to



understand the reading". It is interesting to note that in Job 26:9, the Hebrew words *parash* and *paraz* (open country) are combined in a mixed form *par'shez* (spreading out).

Related to the Hebrew verb *parash* are two Aramaic cognates, *peshar* and *p'rash*. In the canonical Aramaic of Daniel, for example, Dan 4:3 "the dream's meaning", 5:12 "interpreting dreams", 5:16 "to interpret meanings", 5:26 "this meaning", 7:16 "and the meaning", the Aramaic word *peshar* is used in relation to dreams, equally as a verb "interpret [a dream]" and as a noun "[dream] interpretation". In the Imperial Aramaic of Ezra 4:18 "the letter which you sent...has been explained" the use of the Aramaic verb *p'rash* (make distinct, explain) carries the same connotation as the Hebrew verb *parash* (explain, make distinct, expound).

Whereas, the noun *peshat* derives from the Aramaic root verb *pashat* (extension, make clear) which appears in the Hebrew text as a loan word from the Aramaic, that is, NH (New Hebrew), or, more accurately LH (Late Hebrew) adopted into the classical Hebrew at a later date. The LH use of the word *pashat* differs slightly from its Aramaic counterpart, that is, the adopted verb displays a different nuance: I Sam 19:24 "And he stripped off his garments", or, to make a dash or raid: Job 1:17 "made a dash on the camels", I Sam 30:14 "we raided the south".

Medieval times marked the introduction into Jewish Diaspora of a popular socio-religious concept of *peshat* as “plain sense”, under widespread influence from Arab/Islamic ideology.<sup>60</sup> It is interesting to note that the classical Arabic language cognate verb *pasat* means “make plain”.<sup>61</sup> Peltonen outlines the historical situation that presupposed the Jewish partial but significant adoption of *peshat* as “plain sense”.

Commencement of the medieval era in the Jewish history also led to the implementation of new ideas and concepts of how the sacred writings...should be interpreted. It was only predictable that the coexistence of three monotheistic religions – Judaism, Islam and Christianity – resulted in mutual suspicions and clashes. Under these circumstances, all quarters naturally tried to prove the superiority of their own religious tradition over the others...it was realized that an interpretation which was understandable only to the small inner circle of one’s own tradition could no longer satisfy all the requirements that emerged with the new religious and cultural conditions. Especially in the face of the progress of Islam during this period the Jewish *midrashic* tradition fell into a certain crisis. The *midrashic* and homiletic study gradually had to make way for *peshat* (simple, plain sense)...at least intrinsically aspiring after an ‘objective’ interpretation of a particular text...It is clear, of course, that the *midrashic* tradition did not lose its whole significance...in the Christian Europe of the Middle Ages, Judaism (*Ashenazic*) lived for a long time more or less in isolation from its cultural context...it was considerably more closely bound up with old traditions than the branch of Judaism (*Sephardic*) which had come into contact with Islam and lived under its influence.<sup>62</sup>

Many secondary medieval commentaries on Jewish exegesis and certain other echelons of Jewish thought followed the Arab/Islamic idea of a “plain sense” *peshat*. However, on studying the major medieval commentaries it can be ascertained that certain great medieval scholars did not adhere unreservedly to the popular nuance for *peshat* as “plain sense”. According to Greenstein,

the medieval commentator Ibn Ezra based his understanding of *peshat* on "context",<sup>63</sup> that is, a word cannot be explained outside of its context and therefore a word has different shades of meaning according to the context in which it is placed. Rashi the prominent medieval commentator entertained the popular concept of *peshat* as "plain sense", however his serious exegetical works in the Hebrew text display a clear reversal in favor of a return to the *parshanutic* (interpretative) approach.<sup>64</sup>

Rashbam the grandson of Rashi was considered a *peshat* practitioner par excellence and he explained the Aramaic-LH word *peshat* as "contextual meaning". In reference to Ex 13:9, 'It shall be as a sign on your arm', Rashbam said: "In accordance to the actual *peshat* sense of the verse this means it shall be a constant remembrance to you "as though" it were written on your arm. It is like the allegorical verse Song of Songs 8:6 'Place me like a seal upon your heart',"<sup>65</sup> that is, a sense of the entire phrase surrounding the word must be sought in order to reach an understanding of the meaning of a word. According to Diamond, the philosopher Maimonides also a prominent medieval commentator supported a hermeneutics of concealment which held that even isolated texts reverberate to and from other texts and this referential intentionality Maimonides deciphered as a parabolic signal to the reader that there is something else, something more between textual meanings than what is apparent by a simple surface reading.<sup>66</sup>

During the tenth century the *kabbalistic* tradition, which was written down in Aramaic, defined "*peshat*" as "literal", however in the exegetical practices a deeply subtle "literal-contextual" nuance for the *peshatic* realm of the PARDES<sup>67</sup> exegetical system is apparent in the commentaries of the *Zohar*. In effect *peshat* offers a "literal-contextual" reading involving an accepted traditional interpretation that goes beyond rigid literalism. This thesis puts forward a clear understanding of the subtle difference in usage and nuance of the "literal-contextual" *peshat* of the Zoharic system over against the popular medieval adherence to the Arab/Islamic ideology of a "plain sense" *peshat*. The *peshat* technique used by Rashi in his commentary was based on text and context.

There are many examples in the *Zohar* of the subtle use of *peshat* as literal-contextual, for example, *Zohar Yitro (Shemot)* 80b [as translated from the Aramaic] which proposes: What do "eagles' wings" denote? According to R. Judah, the "eagles" are a symbol of mercy, as it says: "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the Lord...(Deut 32:11)...As the eagle watches lovingly over its own young...so does the Holy One manifest His loving mercy to Israel.... Take heed: Gen 1:3, And the *ruah* (wind, breath, spirit) of Elohim *merakefet* (hovered, palpitated as the wings of an eagle) upon the waters R. Eleazar replied: "...the expression, 'the way of an eagle in the heavens' is thus to be taken literally in the same way loving mercy is contextual in the centre of heaven".<sup>68</sup> The agenda of *zoharic* exegesis is to produce a "new *midrash*".

In effect this places the *zoharic* commentary at the opposite pole to the Arab/Islamic ideology of *peshat* as a plain, simple meaning. The *zoharic* exegetical approaches to the biblical text concentrate on a search for secret meanings hidden in the semiotics of the text, as Green explains,

The main body of the *Zohar* [written in Aramaic] takes the form of *Midrash*: a collection of homiletical explications of the biblical text. The *Zohar* enters fully into *Midrash*, as a literary genre...Its authors were especially learned in *aggada*...showing the reader that the entire *Torah* is alive with *kabbalistic* secrets and veiled mysteries to the "mystery of faith"...in this sense the *Zohar* may be seen as an attempt to create a new *Midrash*...the authors..."open" the scriptural verse itself, remove its outer shell, and find its secret meaning...the real purpose of *Zoharic* exegesis.<sup>69</sup>

Halivni's systematic research into the *talmudic* and *midrashic* modes of *peshat* reveals agreement with the *Zoharic-kabbalistic* mode of *peshat* as "literal-contextual", all three systems showing close connections to the Aramaic meaning of the verbal root *pashat* (extension). Therefore, it may be said that the *Zoharic* nuance of *peshat* as "literal-contextual" is clearly not purchased from the medieval Arab/Islamic concept of a "plain sense" *peshat*. The *peshat* of *Zoharic* exegesis shows a direct lineal descent/etymological link back to the earlier *talmudic* and *midrashic* interpretation of *peshat* as "contextual meaning", beyond into the Hebrew text itself. In his research Halivni has clearly demonstrated,

...the standard meaning of the [Aramaic] root *p-sh-t* (extension) carries the additional connotation of "context". This meaning satisfies all the places in *talmudic*...*midrashic*...literature where

that noun appears in the sense of an interpretive mode...Indeed, *peshat* in the sense of plain, simple meaning is entirely the invention of the medieval exegetes. It has no basis in the *Talmud...Midrash*.<sup>70</sup>

To retain the traditional understandings (Aramaic and LH) of the word *peshat* as literal-contextual, in relation to the modern world of biblical text exegesis, we must look to research into the nuance of *peshat*, such as that carried out by Halivni, Gruenwald, Bacher,<sup>71</sup> and, Loewe.<sup>72</sup> Greenstein states, 'the *peshat* method bases itself on context...linguistic context compels the commentator [exegete] to determine the meaning of a word or grammatical form from the way it is used in the Bible and according to the rules of biblical Hebrew'.<sup>73</sup> It is interesting to note that there is now sufficient scholarly evidence beyond the Jewish realm which adheres to the precept that all *biblical* meaning is "contextual".<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, Jewish biblical and rabbinical traditions give equal credence to the fields of *parshanutic* exegesis (interpretation) and *darshanutic* homiletics (transvaluative exhortation). Throughout the recordings of *midrash aggada* the Rabbis are comfortable with a natural merger of the two neighboring enquiries. However, misconceptions of the use of "*peshat*" still remain in Jewish communities. Therefore, in the opinion of this thesis the term *peshat* because of its jagged history is now a problematic term for the modern *midrash aggadist*. Hence this thesis is in full agreement with Peters in saying,

...that there is value in framing our discussion in terms of *parshanut* (interpretation) and *darshanut* (homiletics) rather than the more commonly used *peshat* and *derash*. This is because "the plain sense of the text" is commonly assumed to

be a property of the biblical text, with each text having only one "plain sense". Interpretation and homiletics, in contrast, are modes of text study...Jewish tradition accords legitimacy both to interpretation of the *Tanakh* and to homiletical teachings based on the *Tanakh*. Both styles of study are hallowed forms of *talmud Torah*, and each fills a niche within *Torah* scholarship...and...continues to coexist and thrive in Jewish communities where *Torah* study is taken seriously, as they have throughout Jewish history.

In their *midrash aggadic* endeavors the Rabbis freely demonstrated the inner structure of the Hebrew text to be *parshanutic*, that is, self interpreting or able to be interpreted. Their endeavor was also simultaneously and equally a call to a *darshanutic* approach which pursues and unfolds messages from the text. The Rabbis methodically went about the task of relating scripture with scripture by recognizing, grouping and linking words and phrases, according to their contextual meaning from within the text itself. Therefore, it may be claimed the Rabbis fully comprehended the *aggadic* trope of the Hebrew text and this profound understanding flows through into their own *midrashic* literature. Put another way, the Rabbis regarded the Unity of Scripture as a relationship eternally held between individual texts and scripture as a whole. In acknowledgment of their holistic approach towards the text, the Rabbis state: "All words of *Torah* need one another, for what one word closes, another opens".<sup>75</sup> This was the Rabbis' assumption that Scripture presents countless levels of meaning and it was the role of the *midrash agadist* to derive and present the maximal amount of teachings.<sup>76</sup> Individual words or entire passages that seemingly presented little beyond a meager description were regarded as important. From this perspective the Rabbis taught

according to the principle of *R. Nehemiah*: "She is like the merchant ships, she bringeth her food from afar (Prov 31:14). Even words of *Torah* that are meagerly expressed in one passage are illumined by a related passage in which their meaning is richly set forth." <sup>77</sup> Bialik comments on a "meagerly expressed" passage,

The verse: "And the Lord spoke unto Moses and unto Aaron, and gave them charge unto the children of Israel (Ex 7:13) is "meager", because the nature of the charge is not indicated. But this verse, it should be noted, follows another in which Moses is commanded to tell Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go out of servitude. The rich meaning of the "meagerly expressed" passage becomes clear when it is read together with the account of the Judeans who, despite a solemn covenant, brought back into servitude the slaves they had freed (Jer 34:8-12). This "covenant" is taken to refer to the "charge unto the children of Israel" given to Moses. Thus a "meager" passage is illumined by a related passage "rich" in import. <sup>78</sup>

By the same token the Rabbis gave moral equivalence to simple and complex actions, "Let an easy precept be as dear to you as a difficult precept". <sup>79</sup> In this regard, R. Abba bar Kahana said: "Scripture puts the easiest of commandments on the same level as the most difficult of observances. The easiest of commandments – letting a mother bird go (Deut 22:6-7) and the most difficult commandment – honoring father and mother. And with regard to each, it is written, 'That your days will be long'." <sup>80</sup>

At the very heart of this moral code the rabbinical approach to *parshanut* and *darshanut* is a hermeneutic precept of an holistic approach to all Scripture, the Rabbis interpreted the verse, "Man knows not the order thereof (Job 28:13)", with the understanding as R. Eleazar taught: "The sections in



Scripture are not given in sequential order".<sup>81</sup> Accordingly, Bruns discerns that the Rabbis clearly understood that textual portions, sometimes whole narratives, co-exist in holistic and reflexive relationship.<sup>82</sup> The *Midrash* commentary *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* records,

Ben Azzai said: "...I was sitting and stringing words of *Torah* [Pentateuch] with one another, and words of *Torah* with words of the *Nevi'im* [Prophets], and words of the *Nevi'im* with words of the *Kethuvim* [Writings], and the words were as full of joy as when they were given at Sinai, as sweet as at the time of their first utterance...".<sup>83</sup>

The overarching hermeneutical activity of the Rabbis was to superimpose a Unity of Scripture, by entwining the teachings of *Torah* in a literary "to and fro" motion with the sayings of the *Nevi'im* and the verses of *Kethuvim*. In their *midrashic* enterprises, the Rabbis were both ready to preserve Scripture and equally ready to accept inevitable social change. Hasan-Roken has demonstrated that from the earliest times of Jewish Diaspora the traditions and practices of the Rabbis intense *midrashic* concerns often broadcast in the synagogue sermon were influential exhortations. These exhortations stressed such values as public education and oral artistic communication.<sup>84</sup>

Accordingly *midrash aggada* as a media/public broadcast dynamic was open to a wide range of 'socializing institutions, above all, the family, rural and urban public places, and the political, commercial, and artistic discourse of the time'.<sup>85</sup> It is interesting here to note Hasan-Roken's in depth research into the early rabbinical work *Echah*<sup>86</sup> *Rabbah* which 'weaves a rich and varied

web of ordinary life, both beautiful and poignant<sup>87</sup> around the biblical writing of Lamentations and 'conveys experiences of loss...destruction...but also...love between men and women, parents and children...details of everyday life...food, trades, pastimes'.<sup>88</sup> Therefore, it is not surprising that with regard to the conscientious study of *Torah* and its precepts, Hillel taught: "Do not separate yourself from the community".<sup>89</sup> Heinemann avers,

...while the rabbinic creators of the *Aggada* looked back into Scripture to uncover the full latent meaning of the Bible and its wording, at the same time they looked forward into the present and the future. They sought to give direction to their own generation, to resolve their religious problems, to answer their theological questions, and to guide them out of their spiritual perplexities...The *aggadists* do not mean so much to clarify difficult passages in the biblical texts as to take a stand on the burning questions of the day, to guide the people and to strengthen their faith.<sup>90</sup>

The personal passion needed to drive a normative Jewish religion in the abnormal circumstances of Diaspora, entailed an extraordinary shift in mental praxis for the rabbinic intellect. As it was written it was also acknowledged "The *Torah* uses the ordinary language of men",<sup>91</sup> and even more, study of *Torah* must be fulfilled by action, "Not study, but action, is the essence of the matter".<sup>92</sup> Hence, although to look into *Torah* and study it was but the beginning of human purpose, "That you may look upon it [*Torah*], and remember (Num 15:38)", real human purpose was a chain reaction, thus: looking leads to remembering, and remembering leads to doing, as is said, "That you may remember and do (Num 15:40)".<sup>93</sup> The rabbinical *midrash* is

an applied method which may not conform to our modern senses or any modern theory of interpretation, as Stemberger points out,

*Midrash* is not 'objective' professional exegesis ...*Midrash* is primarily a religious activity...*Midrash* arises out of Israel's consciousness of an inalienable solidarity with its Bible...*Midrash* therefore, is always...realization, and must discover ever afresh the present significance of the text or of biblical history...the ultimate concern is always to let the Bible be the intellectual and religious milieu in which the Jew lives.<sup>94</sup>

The Scripture although a writing of the highest value, was never expounded as an "academic" work, it was regarded as containing an immanent awareness of practical and physical realities: "Verily, the word is very near to you, when it is in your mouth and in your heart to do it (Deut 30:14)." R. Isaac said: When is it very near to you? It is near you when readiness to do it is in your mouth as well as in your heart".<sup>95</sup> Scripture was known for its practical usefulness, the Hebrew texts were seen as God's Word, a blessed beacon in the midst of the mundane world. R. Yohanan ben Zakkai used to say: "Do not give yourself airs of intellectual complexity if you have learned much *Torah*, because for this simple purpose you were created".<sup>96</sup> The lesson was simple, R. Abba bar Kahana said in the name of R. Levi, "He who sets himself head-on full of pride against a wave is swept away by it, but he who does not set himself head-on bows with humility against the wave and is not swept away".<sup>97</sup> Put another way, the Rabbis pronounce: "He who walks...with a haughty bearing is as though he had pushed aside the feet of the Presence, against what is written, 'The whole earth is full of His glory' (Isa

36:12).”<sup>98</sup> The Rabbis were against pride and haughty behavior and in this way they came out in favor of the common people, as Elman explains,

On the whole, the rabbinic collections of *aggadic* material were directed at the common people, and reflect their interests and concerns. Judging from this huge literature, theosophic and mystical concerns were then, as later, esoteric and limited to small numbers of adepts. Thus, the problems of interpreting the Bible as an Omnisignificant text...were shaped by yet another concern: making the Bible relevant not only to rabbinic disciples but also to the non-scholarly audience who heard the *Torah* in synagogue rather than studying it in the *bet midrash*...typical rabbinic *midrash* was intended to attract people and inculcate moral, ethical and religious values...(in the process) a good deal of folkloric material was incorporated.<sup>99</sup>

According to Hasan-Rokem the *midrash aggada* of the rabbinic era of Late Antiquity, understood in Jewish intra-cultural circles as the period of the *Mishnah*, *Talmud*, and *Midrash* is resplendent with the presence of folk literature and folk culture. The Rabbis ‘shaped cultural patterns...sustained up to our own times...it was during this period that Jewish Diaspora began its complex cultural negotiation with the world’.<sup>100</sup> Let us now look at the inclusion of folkloric material and related rhetorical paradigms into the Rabbis’ compositions of *midrash aggada*.

The rabbinic folk tale paradigm is evidenced in a unique aspect of *midrash aggada* known as the *mashal* which deals with the whole meaning of life, from the mundane to prophetic visions. The Hebrew word *mashal* is commonly translated into the English language as “parable”. However the *mashal* is more accurately a figurative discourse, an instructive comparison,

representing a window of interpretation. It is effectively a paradigmatic by-word, a refashioning of the text itself. However, this thesis has opted to support a translation of *mashal* as parable. After all, the nature of the *mashal* is the contrast and comparison of texts and themes, a literary tool for teaching a moral or ethical lesson. The framework of the *mashal* is outlined by Peters,

A *mashal* is generally made up of two parts, though many *meshalim* contain other elements as well. The only indispensable part of the *mashal*-type *midrash* is the *mashal* itself, which is introduced by phrases like, "*le-ma hadavar domeh*", (to what may this thing be compared?) or "*mashal-le...*" (this may be compared to...). A *Midrash* of the *mashal* type usually also contains a *nimshal* (explanation of the *mashal*), introduced by the word "*kakh*" (thus). Often the *nimshal* is considerably less detailed than the *mashal* and in some cases there is no *nimshal*, but most *midrashim* of the *mashal* genre are made up of at least these two parts at a minimum.<sup>101</sup>

From the viewpoint of process the *mashal* may be viewed as a gap-filler where the text is seen to be short on detail. Scripture includes many elliptical passages 'which lack what we think of as "connecting thoughts".'<sup>102</sup> In the case of the brief biblical verse in the story of Cain and Abel: "And Cain said to his brother Abel, and it was when they were in the field that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him (Gen 4:8)". We are left wondering what was it that Cain said to Abel? In the *mashal* set out below the Rabbis offer some answers,

"And Cain said to Abel his brother" (Gen 4:8a). What Cain said to Abel was: 'Come and let us divide the world between us...You take chattel and I will take land'. Nevertheless when Abel proceeded to graze the flock, Cain said: 'The land you are standing on is mine. Abel replied: 'The wool you are wearing is mine'. At that, "Cain rose up against Abel his brother..." (Gen 4:8b). Abel fled and Cain proceeded to chase Abel...until he caught him and the two grappled. Abel overcame Cain, so that Cain fell underneath Abel. Cain, aware how badly it was going with him, began to plead aloud: 'Abel my brother, there are only two of us in the world. What are you going to tell our father?' Abel filled with compassion for his brother, let him go. At once "Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him" (Gen 4:8b).<sup>103</sup>

Within its own parabolic paradigm this rabbinic *mashal* extrapolates the verse Gen 4:8 by the inference of further information adeptly drawn from the narrative content of preceding verses (Gen 4:2b-5): "...Abel was a keeper of sheep...Cain was a tiller of the ground...And in process of time...Cain brought of the fruit of the ground and offering unto the Lord. And Abel...brought of the firstlings of his flock...And the Lord had respect unto Abel...but unto Cain...he had no respect...And Cain was very angry and his face fell" (Gen 4:2b-5). Scripture may not tell us what Cain said, nor do the Rabbis attempt to reverse the actions of Cain or alter Abel's fate. In light of the narrative in Gen 4:2b-5 the Rabbis rightly surmise Cain could conceivably be so blind with anger and loss of face that he may take matters into his own hands.<sup>104</sup> However, to give real content to their conjecture of what Cain said to Abel (Gen 4:8a) the Rabbis utilize information from within the text itself. The text itself, as Sternberg has extensively argued, is regarded by the Rabbis as a historically accurate account, a true story.<sup>105</sup> Marin has demonstrated, the

*mashal* is not merely an abstraction from this "true story",<sup>106</sup> the *mashal* as an element of *midrash aggada* is illustrative rhetoric.

Stern has pointed out, the Hebrew noun *mashal* 'is derived from a *shoresh* (verbal root) 'related to the ideas of likeness and similarity that later comes to designate stories that draw lines of resemblance'.<sup>107</sup> Within its own parabolic paradigm the rabbinic *mashal* infers previously unmentioned values adeptly drawn from the known narrative of the text. The text itself, as Sternberg has extensively argued, is regarded by the Rabbis as a historically accurate account, a true story.<sup>108</sup> Marin has demonstrated, the *mashal* is not merely an abstraction from this "true story",<sup>109</sup> the *mashal* as an element of *midrash agada* is illustrative rhetoric. So, the *mashal* as a rabbinical resource evolves and enhances the text for its audience. Steinbach explains the unique function of the *mashal*,

The parable (*masha*) in Jewish literature is *sui generis*. Its function extends somewhat beyond the dictionary definition: "A short, allegorical story, designed to convey some truth or moral lesson." The added component converts the *mashal* into an ideational as well as moral aid, analogous to book illustrations that serve as visual aids for a graphic understanding of the textual material. Another comparable example is the poet's recourse to imagery and symbolism in order to illumine a truth he seeks to articulate.<sup>110</sup>

Boyarin defines *mashal* as a 'metalinguistic statement about another story',<sup>111</sup> that other "story" being a particular biblical text, or texts. Certainly as Boyarin has pointed out, 'the *mashal* is the matrix or code out of which the *Torah* [*Tanakh*] is generated'.<sup>112</sup> The Rabbis attributed the origins of *mashal*

to the Proverbs of Solomon, which speaks of the *Torah* in parabolic-proverbial terms: “when you walk, it shall lead you, when you lie down, it will watch over you, and when you wake, it shall talk with you. (Prov 6:22).” The Rabbis say: “Prior to the time of Solomon, the *Torah* was like a basket without handles,<sup>113</sup> but when Solomon came, he affixed the necessary handles”.<sup>114</sup> The Rabbis continued and developed the function of the biblical *mashal* in their own use of the *mashal*. Under the “inspirational hand” of God, as Diamond points out, ‘Solomon is clearly portrayed as the inventor of parabolic proverbs’.<sup>115</sup> Boyarin explains,

It follows then that God must be understood as the implied author of the *Torah*. This is not a theological or dogmatic claim but a semiotic one. That is to say that it does not matter...if the inscribing of God as author of the *Torah* is a product of human work...or an effect of actual divine authority. If God is the implied author of the Bible, then the gaps, repetitions, contradictions, and heterogeneity of the biblical text must be *read*, as a central part of the system of meaning production of that text. In *midrash* the Rabbis respond to this invitation and challenge. God, the implied author of the narrative of the *Torah*, has willingly, as it were, encoded into His text the very kinds of dialogue that all of His epigones were destined...to encode into theirs. As with all literature, so with the *Torah*, it is precisely the fault lines in the text, the gaps that its author has left, which enable reading...*midrash* enters into these interstices by exploring the ways in which the Bible can read itself...There is...a...rabbinic saying for this quality of the text: ‘this verse cries out, “interpret me”’.<sup>116</sup>

Let us explore such a text, Ex 12:37, “And the children of Israel journeyed led by Moses from Rameses from out of Egypt...six hundred thousand (Hebrew) men on foot, beside children”. When read beside an earlier text just prior to the birth of Moses, (Ex 1:22), “And Pharaoh charged all his people, saying:



Every (Hebrew) son that is born you shall cast into the river...”, Pearl has pointed out that ‘taking the biblical account of the drowning of the Hebrew children as historically true, the Rabbis had a problem – if every male (Hebrew) child born was drowned, how is it possible at the time of the Exodus, say eighty years later, that the same true story then records that six hundred thousand (Hebrew) men left bondage from Egypt’.<sup>117</sup> In order to reconcile the two texts, there could be several solutions here, the extermination by drowning babies was very short term, the Egyptians only carried out the extermination in a limited area, or, those directly in charge of slave labor contravened the Pharaoh’s orders because they knew such an action would seriously deplete the next generation of slave labor. One set of facts we do know from the biblical text Ex 2:2-5, is that Moses was successfully hidden for three months by his mother before his sister Miriam intentionally floated him on the river in the sight of the Pharaoh’s daughter.

However, the Rabbis did not opt for any of the above solutions, rather they chose to reconcile the two texts from Exodus (12:37, 1:22) with their own particular style of *mashal*, “At that time the Holy One said to the ministering angels: Descend from My Presence and look at the children of My beloved Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob being thrown into the river. The ministering angels rushed headlong down from His Presence and, standing up to their knees in the water, caught the children of Israel in their arms and set them upon rocks. Then out of each rock the Holy One brought forth nipples, which

suckled the Hebrew children.”<sup>118</sup> On a close reading of the Rabbis’ *mashal*, Pearl observes,

...the probability is that the *midrashic* authors are not interested in answering questions of history. They are more interested in theology and their story is rooted in the doctrine of divine providence...God loves Israel despite the grim realities of Jewish life under Rome. If their story of the miraculous survival of the Hebrew infants symbolized the subsequent survival of the Jewish people per se, then it served the Rabbis of the *Midrash*.<sup>119</sup>

At other times in the *midrash aggada* the rabbinic *mashal* is headed by an introductory phrase: *mashal le-melekh*, meaning, “It is comparable to a king”. This parabolic phrase effectively juxtaposes God *Melekh Ha-Olam*, King of the Universe and an earthly king. Before rabbinical times the motif of a king as denoting God, in the form of an Israelite metaphor, is evidenced in a number of biblical texts, Ex 15:18, Isa 24:23, Ps 93:1, and I Chr 16:31.<sup>120</sup> The biblical symbol of “God is King” was directly transposed into the liturgical blessing: *Barukh Atah Adonay, Melekh Ha-Olam*, translated as: Blessed are You Lord, King of the Universe. A significant number of Rabbis believed that a blessing which did not designate God as king of the universe was not a valid blessing.<sup>121</sup> The *Talmud* says: ‘In the name of Rav, “Any blessing which does not mention God’s Name the Holy four-letter tetragramaton, to which we say “Adonay” is not a blessing”. To this Ravi Yochanan adds, “Any blessing which does not contain mention of God’s kingship of the universe is not a blessing”.<sup>122</sup> However, the use of a king as the protagonist in the Rabbis’ *midrashic mashal le-melekh* is in a unique parallel contrast with text and

liturgy. The king-*mashal* is not directly drawn from the same idea of “God is King” as it is in the text and blessings, Stern explains,

...the king portrayed in the king-*mashal* is far from being the stock image of biblical and post-biblical tradition...the features of the king portrayed in the king-*mashal* are modeled upon those of the Roman emperor – or if not upon the emperor himself, then upon his procurator, and later proconsul...the *meshalim* are filled with the lived realities and material details of the Greco-Roman world and its imperial courts. The king-*mashal*'s language is suffused with terms borrowed from Greek and Latin...many allude to the political and social facts of the Greco-Roman world...The *meshalim* are fictional narratives that do not make even a rhetorical claim to be historically true. But the many references in the *meshalim* to the larger world in which the Rabbis lived certainly show how profoundly familiar the sages were with that world and its culture and how creatively they were able to turn that knowledge into material for their imaginative narrative compositions.<sup>123</sup>

The theme of the rabbinical king-*mashal* may not be strictly biblical however the idea of teaching through a *mashal* is based on biblical practice, as in the following example which concludes with two self explanatory biblical references. R. Abba bar Kahana said: “It is like a king who married a woman and wrote her a large marriage-settlement...Then he left her for many years and journeyed to the provinces. Her neighbours used to...say to her: Hasn't your husband abandoned you? Go? Marry another man...Many years...later the king returned. He said to her: I am amazed that you have waited for me all these years! She replied: My master, O king! If not for the large wedding-settlement you wrote me, my neighbours long ago would have led me astray.” That is what is written, “Were not your teaching my delight, I would

have perished in my affliction" (Ps 119:92). Therefore it says: "This I call to my mind, therefore I have hope" (Lam 3:21).<sup>124</sup>

Albeit the majority of the themes in the king-*meshalim* were based on the Greco-Roman world, the Rabbis designed its parabolic format to be an important interpretative tool towards understanding the *Torah*. It stood alongside all the types of rabbinic *meshalim* as an important means of elucidation. R. Hanina says, "Let not the *mashal* be lightly esteemed in thine eyes, since by its means one can master the whole of the words of the *Torah*...by means of it a man arrives at the true meaning of the words of the *Torah*".<sup>125</sup> As Stern has pointed out, the rabbinic *mashal* represents one moment in the history of Hebrew literature from the Bible to the modern period.<sup>126</sup> In its own moment in time the king-*mashal* was a rabbinical transvaluation which met the ideological and cultural needs of a particular generation. In modern times the king-*mashal* becomes 'a kind of touchstone, an occasion for returning to the equation between fiction and truth',<sup>127</sup> between king-*mashal* (protagonist-parable) and *nimshal* (explanation). Therefore, the '*midrashic* king-*mashal* holds a crucially influential position in the history of Hebrew literature'<sup>128</sup> and Jewish cultural traditions.

Rabinowitz outlines the most frequent motifs of the king-*mashal* as, "the king as ruler with mankind as his subjects", "the king as father, with Israel as a wayward but beloved son", "the king as the husband and Israel as the wife", and "the king and his subjects of whom Israel is the favourite".<sup>129</sup> Over time

as parabolic themes were repeated in later *midrashic* versions, the earlier *meshalim* that used an alternative protagonist, for instance "adam" (man), were revisited and revised into king-*meshalim*. At times the idea of *ha-gibor ve ha-pachdan* (the strong and the weak), that is, the protagonist as a hero and the antagonist as a villain were inverted by the Rabbis into a villain-protagonist *mashal*. The premise of these *meshalim* was to overcome evildoers and vindicate God, whilst the aim was to encourage people not to imitate the bad behavior of the villain-protagonist. In the lengthy villain-*mashal* of Titus and the Gnat,<sup>130</sup> the *mashal* sets out to describe the punishment of Titus the arch villain of the Jewish people. Titus is dealt with in the harshest possible terms when a gnat becomes implanted in his brain. As Yuval has pointed out,

...the legend of Titus and the gnat is designed to describe the punishment of the "villain" of the Destruction. This is neither Nero, who...refrained from attacking Jerusalem, nor Vespasian, who graciously granted a "partial salvation" to the Jewish leadership after the Destruction, but Titus, the destroyer of the Temple.<sup>131</sup>

Apart from the dominant king-*mashal* there were parables devised from the animal kingdom. In particular the fox fables which *Talmudic* sources frequently refer to as *mishle shualim* (fox parables) were designed for ethical teachings.<sup>132</sup> Bar Kappara, while speaking of the three hundred fox parables present in *Bereishit Rabbah* jokingly adds that the fox himself knows three hundred more about the lion.<sup>133</sup> Other *meshalim* drew themes from the natural world and plants were given a special place, Rav said to R. Hamnuna:

“Human beings are like the herbs of the field – some may be blossoming at the time others are wilting”,<sup>134</sup> and “When the trees that bear fruit were asked ‘Why is your voice not very audible?’ they replied ‘We have no need – our fruits bear witness for us’.<sup>135</sup> At other times the Rabbis introduced a pedagogical character for the *mashal*, commonly referred to as the teacher-*mashal*. In these *meshalim* the “teacher” is not the protagonist like the king, or even necessarily a character in the story, rather the “teacher” fulfils a facilitating function.

Elisha ben Avuyah used to say: When a man learns *Torah* while young, the words of *Torah* are absorbed into his very blood and issue from his mouth in explicit form. But when a man learns *Torah* in his old age, the words of *Torah* are not absorbed into his blood and do not issue from his mouth in explicit form. Hence the proverb: If you did not long for them in your youth, how do you expect to attain them in your old age? He also used to say: When a man learns *Torah* in his youth, what may he be compared to? To ink written on a clean sheet. When a man learns in his old age? To ink written on a sheet from which the original writing has been erased.<sup>136</sup>

A second aspect of the Rabbis’ folklore is the rabbinic riddle which finds its origins in the biblical text itself. Such an example is evidenced in Samson’s riddle to the Philistines, “And Samson said...Let me put forth a riddle (*hidah*) to you....” (Judges 14: 12-17). In I Kgs 10:1 the Queen of Sheba comes to prove Solomon with hard sayings (*hidot*). At other times in the biblical text occurrences of the *hidah* (riddle) and the *mashal* (parable) are juxtaposed, for example, in Ezek 17:2 God comes to Ezekiel saying: “Son of man, put forth a riddle, and speak a parable unto the house of Israel”, in Hab 2:6: “Shall not all these take up a parable against him, and a taunting riddle against him”, in

Ps 49:5: "I will incline mine ear to a parable, I will open my dark riddle upon the harp", in Ps 78:2: "I will open my mouth with a parable, I will utter dark riddles concerning days of old", and Prov 1:6: "To understand a parable and a metaphor, the words of the wise and their dark riddles".

In a number of the verses in the Book of Proverbs parabolic type riddles are apparent, for example, Prov 30:15a: "The horseleech has two daughters: 'Give, give'," 15b-16: "There are three things that are never satisfied, Yes four that say not 'Enough': The grave, and the barren womb, the earth that is not satisfied with water, and the fire that says not 'Enough'," 18-19: "There are three things which are too wonderful for me, Yes four which I know not: The way of an eagle in the air; The way of a serpent upon a rock; The way of a ship in the midst of the sea; And the way of a man with a young woman."

However, in the *midrash aggada* the rabbinic riddle (*hidah*) is uniquely different a separate entity from the rabbinic parable (*masha*). David Kimchi the medieval exegete says, 'a *hidah* is an obscure saying from which something else is to be understood, while a *masha* is a likening of one matter to another'.<sup>137</sup> Dowling explains while there is no surface structure difference between a parable (*masha*) and a riddle (*hidah*), the riddle's referent must be guessed by the listener, while the proverb provides the listener with a referent.<sup>138</sup> Hasan-Rokem points out that these riddles appear in different ways,

...we may distinguish between “riddling narratives” in which we may find within the narrative itself the riddler, the riddle and the solution, and “riddle narratives” that include only the riddle, while the riddler is the narrator and the riddle is a character external to the story (as is the riddler himself)...The solution is to become evident from within the narrative or from information external to it.<sup>139</sup>

Perhaps the best known “riddling narrative” is found in the rabbinic *midrash* versions which are concerned with the Queen of Sheba and Solomon.<sup>140</sup> These *midrashim* elaborate on the biblical story (I Kgs 10:1-13, II Chr 9:1-12) with a series of explicit riddles.<sup>141</sup> The Rabbis attempt to remove the obscurity of the biblical phrase: “to prove [Solomon] with hard questions” (I Kgs 10:1b) and to this end the Rabbis set up a series of riddling exchanges between Sheba and Solomon. The Rabbis enter into an *aggadic* tradition which closes narrative gaps in the text. In this way with the Rabbis help we are not left wondering what is enigmatically meant by the biblical text which says, after Sheba comprehends Solomon’s great wisdom: “there was no more spirit (left) in her (I Kgs 10:5)”. The information provided from the Rabbis’ riddles put into the mouth of Sheba and conversely by the answers put into the mouth of Solomon encourages us to understand what “truly” transpired between the two royal leaders. Stein elaborates on the “riddling narrative” of Sheba and Solomon,

The Queen of Sheba is a foreign woman who comes to test his (Solomon’s) wisdom...The biblical narrative presents erotic hints in the description of the encounter...It even creates a matrimonial background (the exchanged presents as dowry)...The biblical story declares Solomon’s superiority, although it is impossible – just as the *Midrash* points out – to



overlook the tensions that arise in the (biblical) story itself...the biblical story is necessary co-text for understanding the text in the *Midrash*...it leads to an understanding of the riddling situation and of the riddles themselves.<sup>142</sup>

In the case of the rabbinical "riddle narratives" that center on a riddle situation, the riddle answers may or may not be included. In the following rabbinical tale the answers are included. An Athenian master cannot accept that his one eyed slave is savvy to the ways of desert travel so he poses riddles to test the validity of his slave's natural knowing of the desert and all who traverse the arid expanse. For his part in the "riddle narrative" the one eyed slave simply solves his master's riddles by decoding the physical signs he perceives before him.<sup>143</sup> The one-eyed slave riddle is part of a group of similar rabbinic riddles involving an Athenian character. In order to appreciate the historical context in which these riddles were created 'it is necessary to cultivate an acquaintance with that of its alliances and dependencies',<sup>144</sup> that is, Athens the ally of Rome and the Jewish Diaspora dependent on the good will of the Roman Empire. As follows, the "riddle narrative" of the "Athenian and his one eyed slave" from the *Midrash of Lamentations Rabbah*,

The one-eyed slave of an Athenian master made a prediction: "There is a she-camel in front of us which is blind in one eye. It has twins in its womb, and is carrying two skin-bottles, one containing wine and the other vinegar. It is four miles ahead of us." (The master could not accept such superior knowledge from a slave so he questioned him in the manner of riddles) "With one eye, how do you know the camel is blind in one eye?" (The slave replied) "I notice that one side of the path has been grazed [by the camel] and not the other." (The master asked) "And how do you know that there are twins in its womb?" (The

slave replied) "It lay down and I noticed the trace of two of them." (The master said) "And how do you know that it is carrying two skin bottles, one containing wine and the other vinegar?" (The slave answered) "From the drippings, those of wine are absorbed in the ground but those of vinegar ferment." (So finally the master asked) "And how do you know that the camel is four miles ahead?" (The slave answered) "Up to four miles the trail of the camel's hoof remains perceptible but not beyond that distance." (The Athenian admired the sagacity of his slave and thenceforth treated him with great respect.)<sup>145</sup>

At other times the "riddle narrative" gives no clear answer and is compounded by a reply which is a further riddle, the Talmud records: "The Elders brought two eggs, and asked Rabbi Yehoshua, 'Which of these eggs comes from a black hen and which from a white hen?' Rabbi Yehoshua brought them two cheeses, and retorted, 'Which of these cheeses comes from a black goat and which from a white goat!'"<sup>146</sup> Kornfeld claims we can surmise that the focus of the compound riddle of the eggs and cheeses is based in an historical tension between the Jewish people and the people of other nations, in particular the Roman Empire.<sup>147</sup> Feldman explains further,

The *Talmudic* account of these debates presents them in the form of tersely worded riddles which the Elders [of Athens] and Rabbi Yehoshua hurled back and forth at each other. (Whether they actually debated in riddles, or whether this is merely the concise medium by which the Sages chose to record them is not clear)...these debates were not mere exercises in intellectual one-upmanship. The riddles which the Elders of Athens presented to Rabbi Yehoshua had a central theme...The debates were over the essential value of Roman and Jewish cultures, and, most of all, over which of them deserves to be followed by mankind. The Elders attempted to demonstrate that Roman culture was superior to the Jewish Torah...For the Jews the question of which culture is superior meant which culture best answers God's expectations of man.<sup>148</sup>

The "riddle narrative" of the "two eggs" and "two cheeses" is recorded in the *Talmud* in its original cryptic form without explanations. To uncover deeper insights portrayed in this "riddle narrative" that go beyond a battle of cultures we must search further for explanatory answers. For any modern student of *midrash aggada* the question remains: what does the Elder's cryptic riddle of the "two eggs" demonstrate and how it was that Rabbi Yehoshua was not only able to avoid answering the riddle, but that he further chose to refute the Elder's riddle with his own riddle of the "two cheeses"? As stated previously, we may be fairly certain that the context in which this riddle was composed is the Roman era and it is written with the benefit of hindsight on the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple.<sup>149</sup> As Stein explains,

It seems that the riddle represents a subversive nonconforming, and aggressive stance. Yet by virtue of the very same qualities the riddle may function as a liberating force and thus support the authority of its own culture...the riddle...gains power by creating confusion while making use of the wit proper to this term. In this case, readers are not presented with a riddle they have to solve but with a riddle that is embedded in another discourse, in a plot.<sup>150</sup>

To return to our quest for answers to the riddles here Kornfeld in light of the context in which the riddles were written gives a feasible explanation that the riddles can only be rationalized from an understanding of the then cultural significance of the symbolic uses of "eggs" and "cheeses"<sup>151</sup> The Elders by the use of the symbol "eggs" were impressing on the Rabbi that Jews are not to be thought of as special. Like all the peoples of all the nations, Jews too are subject to the powers of good and evil, victory and defeat. Therefore, the

"two eggs" may be viewed as symbols of justice each coming from a different power, the egg from the "white hen" symbolic of a good inclination and the egg from the "black hen" symbolic of an evil and destructive inclination. The Rabbi however does not accept that the situation is so simple, Jewish life in Diaspora centred on the Torah is surely more complex than the Elders present it to be.

In the interests of the then new Diasporan society, Rabbi Yehoshua throws a rebuttal answer to the Athenian Elders' riddle under disguise of his own riddle. Perhaps he intends to also throw a covert hint that the "two eggs" are symbols of two different powers, Rome and the God of Israel, one of holiness and kindness the other of barrenness and destruction, which now must be somehow subtly appeased. However, in the main Rabbi Yehoshua takes a precise stance that only God's mercy can render the necessary atonement. Accordingly "cheese" is the symbol that represents the potential for merciful atonement which is utilized in the form of the combative riddle. Simultaneous to his "riddling" rebuttal, the Rabbi enters into the irony of the situation, the "black goat" brings us atonement just as the "white goat" does, and in the quest for a return of God's atoning mercy into the midst of the wounded Jewish community, we recall the scapegoat we sent into the wilderness. Whether this goat was white or black is beside the point because any "two goats" whether white or black produce identical "white cheeses". In the same way as the trick riddle of his Athenian "opponents" fails to force an answer the Rabbi's combative riddle delivers no clear answer. From out of the mouth

of Rabbi Yehoshua there are no simple answers to the riddle of life's good and bad experiences, only ever ending philosophical questions of existence.

Feldman explains,

In the course of Rabbi Yehoshua's rebuttals we are introduced to many of the basic concepts of Jewish philosophy. Why were the Jews given the Torah? Why must they suffer? What is the essential difference between Jewish and non-Jewish culture? What is the destiny of the Jewish people? How will the End of Days come about? Why do righteous people suffer?<sup>152</sup>

When it came to dealing with any apparent moral downfall on the part of biblical heroes, the Rabbis turned their *aggadic* efforts away from the king-*mashal* and the riddle (*hidah*) preferring to address the problem with ironic parody. As Alter has shown any competent author of ironic parody raises a mirror reflecting the cultural and traditional premise at the heart of the matter.<sup>153</sup> It is certain the basic premise underlying the rabbinic ironic parody is founded on codes of conduct within the rabbinical community and therefore we may assume the wider Jewish communities of the time were similarly intra-cultured. Hence the ironic parody is a teaching tool, as is the *mashal* alongside other literary devices employed in the biblical and rabbinical writings.

Diamond has demonstrated that a common rabbinic strategy when dealing with the specific problem of biblical heroes whose conduct is below par is to recast the "hero" in an acceptable rabbinic-moralistic mold.<sup>154</sup> The resulting ironic parody, a type of ritual profanation consciously engages in the

traditions of the text. However, the rabbinic creator of the ironic parody knows just what moral code is to be upheld and knows exactly which moral codes have been broken. In *Perek Shirah* an ironic parody says: "It is reported of King David that when he finished the book of Psalms, he became complacent, saying to the Holy One: Master of the Universe is there a creature You created in Your world who utters songs and paeans of praise more than I? In that instant a frog confronted him and said: David, do not be so complacent – I utter more songs and more paeans than you."<sup>155</sup>

The language of ironic parody is employed in order to state what is morally wrong or forbidden in effect what the Rabbis find "distasteful". Usually the ironic parody artfully imitates and exaggerates the original textual version: "For twenty two years the holy spirit was taken away from David, king of Israel (II Sam 11:2-7, 12: 15-23, I Chron 3:5), and in his grief he shed a cupful of tears every day and ate his bread sprinkled with ashes."<sup>156</sup> This involves the use of irony and satire which presents disapproval under the clever guise of apparent approval. The Rabbis deliberately allude to aspects of the character's actions which in turn send a signal to the reader by way of a 'covert ironic subversion of the patent meaning'.<sup>157</sup>

Here in the following *talmudic midrash*, which is self-interpreting, an ironic parody is delivered with a subtle touch of sarcasm on the consequences of David's unwillingness and compromising attitude towards dealing with a false report: "R. Judah said in the name of Rav: When David told Mephibosheth,

'Thou and Ziba divide the land (II Sam 19:30)', a divine voice came forth and said to him: Rehoboam and Jeroboam will divide the kingdom. R. Judah went on to say in the name of Rav: Had David not heeded the calumny against Mephibosheth, the kingdom of the house of David would not have been divided, Israel in the north would not have served idols, and we would not have been banished from our Land."<sup>158</sup>

According to Diamond the *midrashic* ironic parody, effectively a rabbinization of the King David texts effaces those biblical texts and drives the reader back again into the text to examine, that is, perceive and judge David's character by the rigorous standards of rabbinic morality.<sup>159</sup> In this way King David remains linguistically intact in the biblical account but neither is he rescued from his own biblical persona via rabbinic reflection. We have been taught a rabbinic moral lesson, the text has been effaced, but not erased – it is for each successive generation to return again to the text and decide on appropriate human behavior. In every text mentioning David the Rabbis saw him as a human king who sometimes needed chastising, at other times to be attributed as *ha-gibor* (the hero, the strong one).

According to Bruns, the *midrashic* collections of the Rabbis have come down to us as structured conversations rather than systematic expositions.<sup>160</sup> As Bruns points out the *midrashic* multiform is seemingly extravagant. However, it is entirely a holistic social practice in that no solitary rabbinic voice is an authority; the act of *midrash aggada* per se goes on in the name of God,

*Torah* and Moses.<sup>161</sup> In itself *midrash aggada* is undergirded by currents of social understanding, a hermeneutic praxis. The word *Torah* which means “teaching/instruction” is concerned with the “taught/instructed” and the lines between the teaching and the taught, the layers between the instruction and the instructed are both reflexive and reciprocal. Most importantly, as Bruns so aptly defines, ‘the task of *midrash* is to keep open the mutual belonging of the text and those who hear it...the text still bears upon us, still speaks to us and exerts its claim upon us even though our situation is different from anything that has gone before’.<sup>162</sup>

As it is written in *Sifre Devarim*, “Those who look for Scripture’s inherent meaning say: If you wish to know Him by whose word the world came into being, study Scripture’s homiletical interpretations in the *Aggada*, you will thereby come to know the Holy One, blessed be He, and hold fast to His ways’.<sup>163</sup> For the Rabbis, “The world endures because of three activities: study of *Torah*, divine worship, and deeds of loving-kindness”.<sup>164</sup> Rojzman expounds on the precepts of rabbinic faithology,

The God of *Midrash* is a God close to people’s expectations, sensitive to experience and memory, who brings about, through His intervention in history, the “recognition” of His kindness...To adopt Buber’s terms, this God in the modality of revelation is a God to whom one says Thou.<sup>165</sup>

R Hananiah ben Teradion said: “When two sit together and no words of *Torah* are spoken between them, theirs is a session of scorners. But when the two



sit together and words of *Torah* are spoken between them, the Presence abides with them".<sup>166</sup> R Simeon said: "And how do we know that the same is true even of one? From the verse: In every place where I hear My Name mentioned, I will come to thee and bless thee (Ex 20:24)".<sup>167</sup> The Rabbis' *midrash aggada* encapsulates the "Living God" as synonymous with the "written word", the One validates the other.

The Rabbis quote scripture and repeatedly make clear the meanings which impact on their *darshanutic* message of a tangible blessing from God. In this way the people can expect to receive a blessing of the Presence wheresoever they gather to speak aloud and bring to life the written word. Importantly these *midrash aggadot* as representative of the Rabbis overall compositions show exactly how they link text to text to release biblical meanings into a message in praxis. The *parshanutic* aspects which interpret scriptural quotations within these *midrash aggadot* determine the "talking *Torah*" theme. At stake here is the importance of capturing the thematic aspects as opposed to clarifying literary hermeneutics. The essential moments of *midrash aggada* are best construed in its thematic "string of pedagogical pearls" threaded together from pieces and parts of text coupled with praxis.

Even more the language of *midrash aggada* expresses perhaps the single most important aspect of the rabbinic movement. The communication ethos discernable at the heart of the *midrashic* compositions reveals the deep and binding connection between the Rabbis' *midrash aggada* and the written words of *Torah*. The Rabbis have no hesitation in applying *Torah* to everyday

situations. They see the Hebrew text as a series of real moments and events that have exemplary force.<sup>168</sup> It is said: "Great is *Torah*",<sup>169</sup> "Turn to it, and turn to it again, for everything is in it. Pore over it...Do not budge from it. You can have no better guide for living than it".<sup>170</sup> Unless we give serious consideration to the Rabbis' notion of exemplarity their compilations of *midrash aggada* may be misunderstood as just another collection of complex cultural documents suitable only for literary analysis.

Hence, in keeping with the Rabbis' notion of exemplarity it is better understood as Rabbi Zalman said in support of the communication ethos at the heart of the renewal of the *midrashic* and *talmudic* traditions in the Hasidic movement of the eighteenth century: "The starting point...was not simply an event in the past...In the form of a flow of 'words and letters' the divine continues to give existence...If the words and letters were to disappear for a moment...and return to their source, all the earth and heaven would be absolutely naught as if they had never existed."<sup>171</sup> Simply, word begets world.

...as Adin Steinsaltz helps us to realize: "Beyond our creations, words are also our creators...The soul is full of words."...in each and every letter there are worlds and souls and divine powers that both interconnect and join together...the Hebrew alphabet possesses three creative powers known as...*koach* "energy"...*chiyut* "life", and *or* "light", corresponding to physical matter, organic matter, and soul respectively. The Hebrew letters, says Rabbi Ginsburgh, function as "the energy building-blocks of all reality; as the manifestation of the inner life-pulse permeating the universe as a whole and each of its individual creatures...and as the channels which direct the influx of Divine revelation into created consciousness...The creative power of the letters...arises not only in the beginning but also makes every

hour a beginning – the beginning of material reality and spiritual meaning.<sup>172</sup>

According to Rosenzweig the word as a set of linguistic signs is a solemn declaration of reality recorded from the lived moment.<sup>173</sup> This lived moment is persistently and continually renewing itself in the present tense. Rosenzweig argued that the linguistic sign reaffirms the world of lived experience: 'The world is never without the word. Indeed, it only exists in the world, and without the word there would be no world'.<sup>174</sup>

The evidence of God's created world is in biblical dialogue. The reader is able to read and *parshanut* the word, hear and *darshanut* the word, and respond to the *midrashic* tendencies within the biblical text which bespeak a present world. By situating the act of *midrash aggada* within the sphere of reader situation, the role of *midrash aggada* is placed 'in the cycle of eternal return – a continual recycling of the old to create anew, which is the divine gift'.<sup>175</sup> In keeping with the traditions of the rabbinical tendency to *midrash aggada* the modern *midrashist* therefore experiences the urgency of the biblical word as a moment of *midrashic* revelation.

In summary and conclusion this chapter has firstly demonstrated that the origins of making *midrash aggada* are in the Hebrew text itself. Scholarly evidence has been put forward which supports the notion of an inner biblical *midrashic* exegesis and this chapter clearly shows that the Rabbis' *midrash aggada* is a progeny of the inner-textual style of the Hebrew text. This

chapter has shown that many rabbinic forms of exposition, such as, parable, homily, riddles, parody, paronomasia, word puns and pedagogical instruction are already represented in the Scripture itself. Furthermore, it is the contention of this thesis that the Rabbis' *midrash aggada* and the Hebrew text invite their depths to be plumbed by the hermeneutical process of *parshanut* and *darshanut*, the inner-textual modus operandi that permeates both bodies of composition. In the following working chapters *parshanut* and *darshanut* will be utilized as a process toward making modern *midrash*.

Secondly this chapter has focused on the pinnacles of development in the extra biblical *midrashic* tradition of the Rabbis. This focus has shown that the communication ethos of the Rabbis' *midrash aggada* does not begin and end with the Hebrew text. Neither is it bound by the borders of its own time. Rather it flows back and forth in time. The hermeneutical genius of the Rabbis' *midrashic* enterprise is that it draws a new and rich world of meaning from the Hebrew text. This is the real significance of the Rabbis' *midrash aggada* and its exemplary dimensions. The following working chapter of this thesis illustrates the importance of retaining the Rabbis' notion of exemplarity as a basis in the making of modern *midrash*.

---

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Karff, Samuel E. *Agada: The Language of Jewish Faith*. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1979. 143.
- <sup>2</sup> Weiss, Avraham. "Black Fire on White Fire: The Power of Story", in, Peninnah Schram. ed. *Chosen Tales. Stories Told By Jewish Storytellers*. Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc, 1995. xv-xxxiii. xv.
- <sup>3</sup> JT *Shekalim* 6:1.
- <sup>4</sup> Kugel, James. "Two Introductions to Midrash", in, Hartman, Geoffrey H., and Sanford Budick. eds. *Midrash and Literature*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986. 90.
- <sup>5</sup> Alter, Robert. "Introduction to the Old Testament", in, Alter, Robert, and, Frank Kermode. eds. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 11-35. 31.
- <sup>6</sup> Alter, Robert. "Introduction to the Old Testament", in, Alter, Robert, and, Frank Kermode. eds. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 11-35. 32.
- <sup>7</sup> Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical Interpretation In Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988. 425.
- <sup>8</sup> Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical Interpretation In Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988. 408.
- <sup>9</sup> Stemberger, Gunter. [trans. Markus Bockmuehl.] *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*. Second Edition. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996, 235.
- <sup>10</sup> Seeligmann, I.L. *Voraussetzungen der Midrashexegese*. [Prerequisite of *Midrash* exegesis.] VTSup 1. (Leiden 1953). 150-81, 151.
- <sup>11</sup> See: Gruenwald, Ithamar. "Midrash & The 'Midrashic Condition': Preliminary Considerations", in, Michael Fishbane. ed. *The Midrashic Imagination. Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1993. 6-22. 19 n7, refers to: Waldberg, Shmuel. *Sefer Darkhey Ha-Shinuyim*. Lemberg: Menkes, 1870, [reprinted, Jerusalem; Makor, 1970.]
- <sup>12</sup> Knight, D. *Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel*. SBLDS [Society Biblical Literature Dissertation Series] 9. Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975. 5. Fishbane says: "I am indebted to D. Knight for this terminological distinction. Knight has used it primarily with respect to oral materials (cf pp. 5-20)... I shall adapt these terms, with necessary modifications, to written sources. (see: Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical Interpretation In Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988. 6 n17.)
- <sup>13</sup> Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical Interpretation In Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988. 6.
- <sup>14</sup> See journal article: Fohrer, G. "Tradition and Interpretation *Im Alten Testament*," in, ZAW [*Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*] 73, 1961. 1-30. [Available May 2008] (in English): [www.degruyter.de/rs/261\\_5248\\_ENU\\_h.htm](http://www.degruyter.de/rs/261_5248_ENU_h.htm)
- <sup>15</sup> Alter, Robert. *The Five Books of Moses. A Translation With Commentary*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004. xiv.

- 
- <sup>16</sup> Fishbane, Michael. *The Garments Of Torah. Essays in Biblical Hermeneutics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 16.
- <sup>17</sup> Sommer, Benjamin D. "Inner-biblical Interpretation", in, Adele Berlin and Zvi Brettler. eds. *The Jewish Study Bible. Tanakh Translation*. Jewish Publication Society. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. 1829-1835.
- <sup>18</sup> Sommer, Benjamin D. "Inner-biblical Interpretation", in, Adele Berlin and Zvi Brettler. eds. *The Jewish Study Bible. Tanakh Translation*. Jewish Publication Society. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. 1829: "[The] formula (*kakatuv* or *kemo shekatuv*) is also used to introduce quotations from Scripture in rabbinic literature, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and (in Greek translation) the New Testament."
- <sup>19</sup> Alter, Robert. *The World of Biblical Literature*. New York: Basic Books, 1992. 112,114.
- <sup>20</sup> Alter, Robert. *The World of Biblical Literature*. New York: Basic Books, 1992. 113,111.
- <sup>21</sup> Fox, Everett. *The Five Books of Moses. A New Translation With Introductions, Commentary, and Notes*. New York: Schocken Books, 1997. xviii.
- <sup>22</sup> Sommer, Benjamin D. "Inner-biblical Interpretation", in, Adele Berlin and Zvi Brettler. eds. *The Jewish Study Bible. Tanakh Translation*. Jewish Publication Society. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. 1829-1835. 1830b.
- <sup>23</sup> Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical Interpretation In Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, and, Clarendon Press, 1988. 283.
- <sup>24</sup> Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical Interpretation In Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, and, Clarendon Press, 1988. 440.
- <sup>25</sup> Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical Interpretation In Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, and, Clarendon Press, 1988. 414.
- <sup>26</sup> Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical Interpretation In Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, and Clarendon Press, 1988. 414.
- <sup>27</sup> Cohen, A. "The Psalms" Volume 9. A. Cohen. ed. *Soncino Books Of The Bible*. Jewish Publication Society of America. New York: The Soncino Press, 1985. 19.
- <sup>28</sup> Reichert, Victor E. [rev. A.J. Rosenberg.] "Job". Volume 11. A. Cohen. ed. *Soncino Books Of The Bible*. Jewish Publication Society of America. New York: The Soncino Press, 1985. 32.
- <sup>29</sup> Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical Interpretation In Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, and Clarendon Press, 1988. 285-6
- <sup>30</sup> Job 1:4, 5, 6, 13; 2:1, 13.
- <sup>31</sup> Greenberg, Moshe. "Job", in, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode. eds. *The Literary Guide To The Bible*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 283-304. 303.
- <sup>32</sup> Greenberg, Moshe. "Job", in, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode. eds. *The Literary Guide To The Bible*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 283-304. 303.
- <sup>33</sup> Buber, Martin. "Leitwort Style In Pentateuch Narrative", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald.] *Scripture And Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 114-128. 114.

- 
- <sup>34</sup> Buber, Martin. "Leitwort Style In Pentateuch Narrative", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald.] *Scripture And Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 114-128. 114.
- <sup>35</sup> Buber, Martin. "Leitwort Style In Pentateuch Narrative", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald.] *Scripture And Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 114-128. 114.
- <sup>36</sup> See: Greenstein, Edward L. "The Language of Job and Its Poetic Function", in, *Journal of Biblical Literature*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 122:2003. 651-66.
- <sup>37</sup> With regard to the chronicler, I owe the imagery of the "stain glass window" to Hebert Tarr. See: Tarr, Hebert. "Chronicles", in, Rosenberg, David. *Congregation. Contemporary Writers Read The Jewish Bible*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1987. 497-511.
- <sup>38</sup> Slotki I.W. "Chronicles". Volume 14. Cohen A, ed. *Soncino Books Of The Bible*. Hebrew Text and English Translation. Jewish Publication Society of America. New York: The Soncino Press, 1985.xi, xii.
- <sup>39</sup> Jacobs, Louis. *The Jewish Religion. A Companion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. 80.
- <sup>40</sup> Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical Interpretation In Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988. 392.
- <sup>41</sup> Curtis, E.L. and A.A. Madsen. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Chronicles*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1910. 27.
- <sup>42</sup> Curtis, E.L. and A.A. Madsen. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Chronicles*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1910. 28-34.
- <sup>43</sup> Dorsey, David. "Another Peculiar Term In The Book of Chronicles: בַּסְלָה, 'Highway'?", in, *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, New Series, Volume 75: No 4 (April 1985). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 385.
- <sup>44</sup> Slotki I.W. "Chronicles". Volume 14. Cohen A, ed. *Soncino Books Of The Bible*. Hebrew Text and English Translation. Jewish Publication Society of America. New York: The Soncino Press, 1985. xii.
- <sup>45</sup> Zimmerman, Frank. "Chronicles As A Partially Translated Book", in, *The Jewish Quarterly Review*. New Series. Volume 42. No 3 (Jan 1952). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. 265-282. 265.
- <sup>46</sup> Rothstein, David. "Chronicles", in, Adele Berlin and Zvi Brettler. eds. *The Jewish Study Bible. Tanakh Translation*. Jewish Publication Society. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. 1714,1716.
- <sup>47</sup> Talmon, Shemaryahu. "1 and 2 Chronicles", in, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode. eds. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 365-372. 371.
- <sup>48</sup> Talmon, Shemaryahu. "1 and 2 Chronicles", in, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode. eds. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 365-372. 370.
- <sup>49</sup> Bruns, Gerald L. "Midrash and Allegory", in, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode. eds. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 625-646. 626.

- 
- <sup>50</sup> Bruns, Gerald L. "Midrash and Allegory", in, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode. eds. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 625-646. 626.
- <sup>51</sup> Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical Interpretation In Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.526.
- <sup>52</sup> Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical Interpretation In Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.527.
- <sup>53</sup> Bruns, Gerald L. "Midrash and Allegory", in, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode. eds. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 625-646. 626.
- <sup>54</sup> Fishbane, Michael. *The Garments Of Torah. Essays in Biblical Hermeneutics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 18.
- <sup>55</sup> Peters, Simi. *Learning to Read Midrash*. Jerusalem: Urim Publications, 2004. 19.
- <sup>56</sup> Peters, Simi. *Learning to Read Midrash*. Jerusalem: Urim Publications, 2004. 19.
- <sup>57</sup> Bruns, Gerald L. "Midrash and Allegory", in, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode. eds. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 625-646. 627-8.
- <sup>58</sup> *parshatan* = Synagogue member who orally recites [more often by *trop* (cantillation)] the *parashah* [portion of *Torah* scripture in Hebrew] at weekly and other services.
- <sup>59</sup> Peters, Simi. *Learning to Read Midrash*. Jerusalem: Urim Publications, 2004. 14,15.
- <sup>60</sup> See: Rabinowitz, Louis Issac. "Peshat", in, *Encyclopedia Judaica* [CD-ROM] Keter Publishing House. Judaica Multimedia (Israel Ltd), 2002.
- <sup>61</sup> Brown, Francis, S.R. Driver, and, Charles A. Briggs. eds. *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew And English Lexicon [With An Appendix Containing The Biblical Aramaic]*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979. 832b.
- <sup>62</sup> Peltonen, Kai. *History Debated. The Historical Reliability of Chronicles in Pre-Critical and Critical Research*. Volume I. The Finnish Exegetical Society in Helsinki. Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996. 22.
- <sup>63</sup> Greenstein, Edward L. "Medieval Bible Commentaries", in, Barry W. Holtz. ed. *Back To The Sources. Reading The Classic Jewish Texts*. New York: Summit Books, 1984. 213-259. 219.
- <sup>64</sup> Rashi. [Rabbi Shlomo ben Issac.] *Torah (Hamishe Humshe)*. Bologna, 1482, and, Lisbon, 1491. Yale: Yale University Library. Incunabula No: Zi +6557, and, Zi +9835.
- <sup>65</sup> Greenstein, Edward L. "Medieval Bible Commentaries", in, Barry W. Holtz. ed. *Back To The Sources. Reading The Classic Jewish Texts*. New York: Summit Books, 1984. 213-259. 220.
- <sup>66</sup> Diamond, James Arthur. *Maimonides and the Hermeneutics of Concealment. Deciphering Scripture and Midrash in The Guide of the Perplexed*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002. 40.
- <sup>67</sup> PARDES, an acronym for the four levels of *Zoharic* exegesis: *peshat* (literal-contextual aspect), *remez* (symbolic aspect), *darash* (allegorical aspect) *sod* (mystical aspect). See: Schwartz, Howard. *Reimagining the Bible. The Storytelling of the Rabbis*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. 233.



<sup>68</sup> Sperling, Harry, Maurice Simon and Paul P. Levertoff. eds. *The Zohar. An English Translation*. Volume III. Second Edition. New York: The Soncino Press, 1984.240-1.

<sup>69</sup> Green, Arthur. *A Guide To The Zohar*. Stanford, California. Stanford University Press, 2004. 64-5.

<sup>70</sup> Halivni, David Weiss. *Peshat & Derash. Plain and Applied Meaning in Rabbinic Exegesis*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991. 52-3.

<sup>71</sup> See: Gruenwald, Ithamar. "Midrash & The 'Midrashic Condition': Preliminary Considerations", in, Michael Fishbane. ed. *The Midrashic Imagination. Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1993. 6-22. 13: ...such distinctions as *peshat* and *derash* (the plain and the evocative senses of Scripture, respectively) are often redundant. The 'real *peshat*' for one side may look like 'bizarre *derash*' for another. 20 n14: It is worth considering the material adduced by W. Bacher (*Die exegetisch Terminologie der Jüdischen Traditionsliteratur*. Part II, pp 170-73. s.v. *Peshat*. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrich, 1905. [Reprinted: Darmstadt 1965]. The material clearly shows that the verbal form *pashat* in Amoraic usage simply signified the exposition of Scripture. In Tannaic usage, the term had no interpretative application...Halivni has pointed out [there is only one recorded instance which distinguishes between] the interpretative categories of *peshat* and *derash* [as opposites] in Amoraic literature (BT *Sanhedrin* 100b).

<sup>72</sup> Loewe, Raphael. "The 'Plain' Meaning of Scripture in Early Jewish Exegesis", in, *Papers of the Institute of Jewish Studies*. London: University College London. Bulletin and Papers I (1964) 140-185. According to Loewe's study the term *peshat* in early rabbinic literature means only "authoritative interpretation".

<sup>73</sup> Greenstein, Edward L. "Medieval Bible Commentaries", in, Barry W. Holtz. ed. *Back To The Sources. Reading The Classic Jewish Texts*. New York: Summit Books, 1984. 213-259. 219,218.

<sup>74</sup> Barr, James. *The Semantics of Biblical Language*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2004, 218-9.

<sup>75</sup> *Tanhuma B [Hukkat 52]* see: Buber, Solomon. ed. [trans. John T. Townsend.] *Midrash Tanhuma*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Ktav, 1997.

<sup>76</sup> Peters, Simi. *Learning to Read Midrash*. Jerusalem: Urim Publications, 2004.16

<sup>77</sup> JT *Rosh ha-Shanah* 3:5.

<sup>78</sup> Bialik, Hayim Nahman Bialik, and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky. eds. [trans. William G. Braude] *The Book of Legends. Sefer Ha-Aggadah. Legends From The Talmud And Midrash*. New York : Schocken Books, 1992. 422 n15.

<sup>79</sup> *Sifre Devarim [Deut 79, 115]*. See: Finkelstein, Louis. ed. *Sifre on Deuteronomy*. New York: Ktav Pub Inc, 1969.

<sup>80</sup> JT *Peah*. 1:1 14d.

<sup>81</sup> *Midrash Tehillim* 3:2. see: Buber, Solomon. ed. [trans. William G. Braude] *Midrash on Psalms [Midrash Tehillim]*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.

<sup>82</sup> Bruns, Gerald L. "Midrash and Allegory", in, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode. eds. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 625-646. 627.

<sup>83</sup> *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 1:10 see: Bialik, Hayim Nahman Bialik, and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky. eds. [trans. William G. Braude] *The Book of Legends. Sefer Ha-Aggadah. Legends*

---

*From The Talmud And Midrash*. New York : Schocken Books, 1992. 412:95. See also: Neusner, Jacob. ed. *Song of Songs Rabbah*. Volume 1. Florida: South Florida University Press, 1989-90.

<sup>84</sup> Hasan-Roken, Galit. ed. [trans. Batya Stein.] *Web of Life: Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000. xi.

<sup>85</sup> Hasan-Roken, Galit. ed. [trans. Batya Stein.] *Web of Life: Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000. xii

<sup>86</sup> *Echah* = Lamentations, the third of the Five Scrolls (*Megilloth*) in the Hebrew Bible. Its Hebrew title, *Echah*, is derived from the initial word of the book, but its contents are best indicated by the name by which it is known in Rabbinic literature, *kinot* = lamentations, or, elegies. See: Cohen, A. "The Megillot". Volume 12. A. Cohen. ed. *Soncino Books Of The Bible*. Jewish Publication Society of America. New York: The Soncino Press, 1983. 68.

<sup>87</sup> Hasan-Roken, Galit. ed. [trans. Batya Stein.] *Web of Life: Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000. xi.

<sup>88</sup> Hasan-Roken, Galit. ed. [trans. Batya Stein.] *Web of Life: Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000. xi.

<sup>89</sup> BT *Avot* 2:4.

<sup>90</sup> Heinemann, Joseph. [trans. Marc Bregman.] "The Nature of the Aggadah", in, Geoffrey Hartman and Sanford Budick. eds. *Midrash and Literature*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986. 48-9.

<sup>91</sup> BT *Berakhot* 31b.

<sup>92</sup> BT *Avot* 1:17.

<sup>93</sup> *Tanhuma* B [*Shelah* 30] see: Buber, Solomon. ed. [trans. John T. Townsend.] *Midrash Tanhuma*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Ktav, 1997.

<sup>94</sup> Stemberger, Gunter. [trans. Markus Bockmuehi.] *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*. Second Edition. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1996. 237.

<sup>95</sup> BT *Eruvin* 54a.

<sup>96</sup> BT *Avot* 2:8.

<sup>97</sup> MGen R. 344:15.

<sup>98</sup> BT *Berakhot* 43b.

<sup>99</sup> Elman, Yaakov. "Classical Rabbinic Interpretation", in, Adele Berlin and Zvi Brettler. eds. *The Jewish Study Bible. Tanakh Translation*. Jewish Publication Society. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. 1858-1859.

<sup>100</sup> Hasan-Roken, Galit. ed. [trans. Batya Stein.] *Web of Life: Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000. 1.

<sup>101</sup> Peters, Simi. *Learning to Read Midrash*. Jerusalem: Urim Publications, 2004. 25.

<sup>102</sup> Weiss, Avraham. "Black Fire on White Fire: The Power of Story", in, Peninnah Schram. ed. *Chosen Tales. Stories Told By Jewish Storytellers*. Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc, 1995. xxii.

- 
- <sup>103</sup> Genesis *Rabbah*. 22:7.
- <sup>104</sup> Bialik, Hayim Nahman Bialik, and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky. eds. [trans. William G. Braude] *The Book of Legends. Sefer Ha-Aggadah. Legends From The Talmud And Midrash*. New York : Schocken Books, 1992. 23.
- <sup>105</sup> Sternberg, Meir. *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987. 31.
- <sup>106</sup> Marin, Louis. "On the Interpretation of Ordinary Language: A Parable of Pascal", in, Josue V. Harari. ed. *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structural Criticism*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1979. 245.
- <sup>107</sup> Stern, David. *Parables In Midrash. Narrative And Exegesis In Rabbinic Literature*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994. 10.
- <sup>108</sup> Sternberg, Meir. *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987. 31.
- <sup>109</sup> Marin, Louis. "On the Interpretation of Ordinary Language: A Parable of Pascal", in, Josue V. Harari. ed. *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structural Criticism*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1979. 245.
- <sup>110</sup> Steinbach, Alexander Alan. "Rosh Hashanah Parables", in, Philip Goodman. ed. *The Rosh Hashanah Anthology*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1992. 122-136. 122.
- <sup>111</sup> Boyarin, Daniel. *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 88.
- <sup>112</sup> Boyarin, Daniel. *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 88.
- <sup>113</sup> For an understanding of what the Rabbis meant by their use of the word "handles", see: Boyarin, Daniel. *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 149 n12: "The word for "handles" and the word "proved" come from the same root in Hebrew. "Handles" is being used in a sense very similar to that of the modern English colloquial phrase, "I can't get a handle on that idea," [that is] a place of access."
- <sup>114</sup> BT *Eruvin* 21b.
- <sup>115</sup> Diamond, James Arthur. *Maimonides and the Hermeneutics of Concealment. Deciphering Scripture and Midrash in The Guide of the Perplexed*. New York: State University of New York Press, 2002. 14.
- <sup>116</sup> Boyarin, Daniel. *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 40, 41.
- <sup>117</sup> Pearl, Chaim. *Theology In Rabbinic Stories*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997. 46.
- <sup>118</sup> *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah*. 2:15. see: Neusner, Jacob. ed. *Song of Songs Rabbah*. 2 Volumes. Florida: South Florida University Press, 1989-90.
- <sup>119</sup> Pearl, Chaim. *Theology In Rabbinic Stories*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997. 46.
- <sup>120</sup> For further discussion see: Brettler, Marc Z. *God is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor*. JSOT Supplement. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989.

---

<sup>121</sup> Stern, David. *Parables In Midrash. Narrative And Exegesis In Rabbinic Literature*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994. 19. cf. Joseph Heinemann. [trans. R. Sarason.] *Prayer in the Talmud. Forms and Patterns*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1977.

<sup>122</sup> BT *Berakhot* 40b.

<sup>123</sup> Stern, David. *Parables In Midrash. Narrative And Exegesis In Rabbinic Literature*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994. 21, 22.

<sup>124</sup> Lamentations *Rabbah* 3:21.

<sup>125</sup> *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah*. 1:1 (8).

<sup>126</sup> Stern, David. *Parables In Midrash. Narrative And Exegesis In Rabbinic Literature*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994. 185.

<sup>127</sup> Stern, David. *Parables In Midrash. Narrative And Exegesis In Rabbinic Literature*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994. 185.

<sup>128</sup> Stern, David. *Parables In Midrash. Narrative And Exegesis In Rabbinic Literature*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994. 185.

<sup>129</sup> For Rabinowitz's overview of the king-*mashal* see: Rabinowitz, Louis Isaac. "Parable in Talmud and Midrash", in, Jacob Neusner. et al. *Encyclopedia of Midrash: Biblical Interpretation in formative Judaism*. Leiden, Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004. 72-77.

<sup>130</sup> For a full version of the lengthy villain-*mashal* "Titus and the Gnat", see: BT *Gittin* 56b.

<sup>131</sup> Yuval, Israel Jacob. [Barbara Harshav and Jonathan Chipman. trans.] *Two Nations In Your Womb. Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006. 55.

<sup>132</sup> For documentation pertaining to *mishle shualim* see: Friedman, Shamma. "The Talmudic Proverb In Its Cultural Setting", in, James L. Kugel. ed. *Jewish Studies An Internet Journal*. JSIJ2. Faculty of Jewish Studies, Ramat Gan, Israel: Bar Ilan University, 2003.

<sup>133</sup> BT *Sukkah* 28a.

<sup>134</sup> BT *Eruvin* 54a.

<sup>135</sup> Genesis *Rabbah*. 16:3.

<sup>136</sup> BT *Avot* 4:20.

<sup>137</sup> Kimhi, David. [Commentary] *Nevi'im Ahronim* [Later Prophets]. Lombardy, Italy: Joshua Solomon Soncino, 1486. Exe. 17:2. I owe the English translation quoted here to: Diamond, James Arthur. *Maimonides and the Hermeneutics of Concealment. Deciphering Scripture and Midrash in The Guide of the Perplexed*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002. 18.

<sup>138</sup> Dowling, Jennifer. "Riddle and Riddle Parodies", in, Dov-Ber Kerler. ed. *History of Yiddish Studies*. Winter Studies in Yiddish. Volume 3. Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies. Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991. 81-92. 88.

<sup>139</sup> Hasan-Rokem, Galit. "Hebrew Riddles: 'Who Am I and What is My Name' Defining Genre", in, Galit Hasan-Rokem and David Shulman. eds. *Untying The Knot: On Riddles and Other Enigmatic Modes*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. 109-124. 114.

<sup>140</sup> For a collation of the Sheba and Solomon riddle versions see: Bialik, Hayim Nahman Bialik, and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky. eds. [trans. William G. Braude] *The Book of Legends. Sefer Ha-Aggadah. Legends From The Talmud And Midrash*. New York : Schocken Books, 1992. 127:119.

<sup>141</sup> For a full translation of the Midrash of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba riddle text, see: Bialik, Hayim Nahman Bialik, and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky. eds. [trans. William G. Braude] *The Book of Legends. Sefer Ha-Aggadah. Legends From The Talmud And Midrash*. New York : Schocken Books, 1992. 127:119.

<sup>142</sup> Stein, Dina. "A King, a Queen, and the Riddle Between: Riddles and Interpretation in a Late Midrashic Text", in, Galit Hasan-Rokem and David Shulman. eds. *Untying The Knot: On Riddles and Other Enigmatic Modes*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. 125-149. 130,131.

<sup>143</sup> Hasan-Rokem, Galit. ed. [trans. Batya Stein.] *Web of Life: Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000. 70.

<sup>144</sup> Urban, Sylvanus. *The Gentleman's Magazine And Historical Chronicle*. January-June 1826. Volume XCVI. London: John Nichols and Son, 1826. 532.

<sup>145</sup> Lamentations *Rabbah* 1:1.12.

<sup>146</sup> BT *Bekhorot* 8b.

<sup>147</sup> Kornfeld, Mordecai. *The Fast Of The 9<sup>th</sup> Av (Parashat Devarim) 5757*. No I: "The Great Debate". Jerusalem: Har Nof, Judaica Print, 1997. 1.

<sup>148</sup> Feldman, Aharon. *The Juggler And The King: An Elaboration of Vilna Gaon's Interpretations of the Hidden Wisdom of the Sages*. Spring Valley, New York: Philipp Feldheim Inc, 1991. 84.

<sup>149</sup> See: BT *Gemara Ta'anit* 28b.

<sup>150</sup> Stein, Dina. "A King, a Queen, and the Riddle Between: Riddles and Interpretation in a Late Midrashic Text", in, Galit Hasan-Rokem and David Shulman. eds. *Untying The Knot: On Riddles and Other Enigmatic Modes*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. 125-149. 129.

<sup>151</sup> For full parashah expounding on the riddle of the eggs and cheeses see: Kornfeld, Mordecai. *The Fast Of The 9<sup>th</sup> Av (Parashat Devarim) 5757*. No I: "The Great Debate". No II: "A Time For Victory, A Time For Defeat". No III: "Every Defeat Can Become A Victory". Jerusalem: Har Nof, Judaica Print, 1997.

<sup>152</sup> Feldman, Aharon. *The Juggler And The King: An Elaboration of Vilna Gaon's Interpretations of the Hidden Wisdom of the Sages*. Spring Valley, New York: Philipp Feldheim Inc, 1991. 85.

<sup>153</sup> See. Alter, Robert. *Partial Magic: The Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1975.

<sup>154</sup> Diamond, James A. "King David of the Sages: Rabbinic Rehabilitation or Ironic Parody?", in, *Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History*. Volume 27. No 3. [Fall 2007]. 323-426. 323.

<sup>155</sup> *Perek Shirah* [cited in *Yalkut Psalms*, 889] see: Bialik, Hayim Nahman Bialik, and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky. eds. [trans. William G. Braude] *The Book of Legends. Sefer Ha-Aggadah. Legends From The Talmud And Midrash*. New York : Schocken Books, 1992. 484:135.

<sup>156</sup> *Yalkut Shimoni*. II Sam. See: Bialik, Hayim Nahman Bialik, and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky. eds. [trans. William G. Braude] *The Book of Legends. Sefer Ha-Aggadah. Legends From The Talmud And Midrash*. New York : Schocken Books, 1992. 119:89.

<sup>157</sup> Diamond, James A. "King David of the Sages: Rabbinic Rehabilitation or Ironic Parody?", in, *Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History*. Volume 27. No 3. [Fall 2007]. 323-426. 323.

<sup>158</sup> *Midrash Exodus Rabbah*. 1:30.

<sup>159</sup> Diamond, James A. "King David of the Sages: Rabbinic Rehabilitation or Ironic Parody?", in, *Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History*. Volume 27. No 3. [Fall 2007] 323-426. 323.

<sup>160</sup> Bruns, Gerald L. "Midrash and Allegory", in, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode. eds. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 625-646. 630.

<sup>161</sup> Bruns, Gerald L. "Midrash and Allegory", in, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode. eds. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 625-646. 632.

<sup>162</sup> Bruns, Gerald L. "Midrash and Allegory", in, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode. eds. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 625-646. 634.

<sup>163</sup> *Sifre Devarim* [Deut 49].

<sup>164</sup> BT *Avot* 1:2.

<sup>165</sup> Rojtman, Betty. [trans. Steven Rendall.] *Black Fire On White Fire. An Essay on Jewish Hermeneutics, from Midrash to Kabbalah*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998. 44.

<sup>166</sup> BT *Avot* 3:2.

<sup>167</sup> BT *Avot* 3:6.

<sup>168</sup> Boyarin, Daniel. *Sparks of the Logos. Essays in Rabbinic Hermeneutics*. Massachusetts: Brill Academic Publishers, 2003. ix.

<sup>169</sup> BT *Avot* 6:6.

<sup>170</sup> BT *Avot* 5:25.

<sup>171</sup> Loewenthal, Naftali. "Hebrew and the Habad Communication Ethos", in, Lewis Glinert. ed. *Hebrew in Ashkenaz. A Language in Exile*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. 167

<sup>172</sup> Patterson, David. *Hebrew Language and Jewish Thought*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2005. 8,9.

<sup>173</sup> Sax, Benjamin. *Language and Jewish Identity: Franz Rosenzweig's "New Thinking" and the Revalorization of Biblical Speech*. Blacksburg: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2009. 13.

---

<sup>174</sup> Rosenzweig, Franz. [trans. William W. Hallo] *The Star of Redemption*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985. 42.

<sup>175</sup> Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Essays and Poems*. New York: New York Library of America, 1996. 1042.

## TOWARD A MODERN MIDRASH: RENEWING THAT PRAXIS

This research cannot offer a convenient visual image of praxis. Praxis is an invisible space. However, praxis is a powerful facilitator of process. Often that facilitation of process involves established customs or habitual practices such as the making of *midrash*. The Jewish *midrashic* impulse, dating from antiquity, brings together the Hebrew text and its contexts for the specific purposes of making *midrash*. It is that praxis which holds the interest of this research.

Ochs has defined the Jewish *midrashic* impulse, inclusive of the question of semiotics and praxis, through the lens of a philosophical understanding,

Natural speech communities, meaning those whose origins are either unknown or referred to an indefinite past, are characterized by inherent semiotic norms; rules for transforming elements of the natural world into meaningful signs (morphology), for determining relations among those signs (syntax), for determining relations between signs and intended objects (semantics) and for determining relations between signs and the actual behaviour which they recommend [viz., pragmatics]. For the traditional Jew, these norms are collected in what is called *Torah*: God's speech to [Ancient] Israel and the literary and behavioural history of... attempts to interpret what that speech means...dislocation from the speech community of [Ancient] Israel would imply dislocation from *Torah*, and, thereby, from the possibility of meaningful speech...Jewish philosophy is the attempt to find means of reintegrating dislocated persons into appropriate speech communities.<sup>1</sup>

Many periods in history are witness to the Jewish *midrashic* impulse. Rabbinical times are synonymous with the era of Classical *Midrash*. The *midrashic* commentary of medieval times was supported by the Masoretic text



with its apparatus of vowel points, accents and para-textual elements. In modern times Buber introduced biblical scholarship to *Leitwort* style in the text. In his dialogical work he utilized *Leitwörter* as a means of creating *midrashic* comments on the Bible.

The Jewish *midrashic* impulse emanates from the *aggadic* continuum.<sup>2</sup> The making of modern *midrash* is today's outpouring. The history of *midrash* making is diverse, there are equally as many strict exegetical readings as there are free creative and imaginary translations. At other times *midrash* has presented itself as a comfortable merger of serious exegesis and vivid imagination.

In the areas of *limmud torah* (*Torah* study) there are many modes of *lishmor ve'laasot* (keeping and enacting *Torah*) which entail the makers of *midrash* to add, clarify, and expound anew in each generation. With respect to the historical perspective the making of *midrash* engages with *ha-shivim panim la Torah* (the seventy faces of *Torah*) upholding the text as Holy Scripture. The making of modern *midrash* brings *ha-avar ha-kadosh* (the set apart "there and then") into *ha-ma'aseh be'hoveh* (the set in action "here and now").

We may co-text our modern *midrash* from contemporary sources, or we may springboard our modern *midrash* through the prism of ancient *midrash* and medieval commentaries. *Midrash*, ancient, medieval or modern, is about artfully manufacturing *aggadic* meaning from clues found in the text. This

research offers two models based around Rabbinical *Midrash* and Buber's *Leitwort* as valid ways towards the making of modern *midrash*.

The reader brings their own "bent" to the Hebrew text according to their own *lefi kocham* (capacity and personality). A major factor which impacts upon reader "bent" is prior knowledge. Most certainly prior knowledge is subject to bias and pre-supposition inclusive of factual or non-factual beliefs. It may be a mixture of universal and local/cultural understandings. Furthermore levels of literacy and language acquisition are contributing factors towards reader "bent". Many readers are reliant on the biblical translations. Even a common word wrongly nuanced from the Hebrew text can result in a differentiation of meaning for people across time, such as the Hebrew word *tachat* (commonly translated "for") in Ex 21:24-25,<sup>3</sup> importantly language acquisition 'can also involve misinterpretation, even simple misreading'.<sup>4</sup> That is why there is a real need for guiding models which facilitate acquisition of the Hebrew text towards the making of modern *midrash* for the everyday person. The models put forward by this research constitute two Hebraic approaches, ancient and modern, which can be applied in simple and complex ways.

These models promote, firstly the "Hebrew text" inclusive of, secondly a "co-text" and thirdly the "situation" of the reader. These three factors constitute Hebrew text in praxis and are themselves the primary resources in the search for contextual meanings. For the purposes of this research the inner-text is the "Hebrew text" here utilized in the form of the *Tanakh* canon, the *Torah*,

the Masoretic Text, and a Hebrew/English Interlinear Bible. This research regards "co-text" to be a textual context involving a discourse, such as Classical *Midrash* and *Leitwort* methodology. The "situation" is always the context of the reader.

This research holds that the Hebrew text in praxis with its co-text and situation are factors held within each model by an equal partnership pact. It is the contention of this research that excluding or minimizing any one of these praxis factors deprives the *midrashic* impulse of its world of meanings. Without co-text and situation the Hebrew text has no external *midrashic* power. Put differently, without the Hebrew text a co-text and situation has no base of impulse.

The aim of this chapter is to reveal that the meeting of co-text and situation in equal partnership pact with the Hebrew text projects a cascade of meaning that drives the *midrashic* impulse and fulfils the *midrashic* moment. This research purports that textual narrative, discourse sentences or even single words disclose inner ideational sparks which shape stories of significance. This research will show that in keeping with the idea of Hebrew text in praxis, the entire act of carrying out modern *midrash* sits well within the traditions and history of the *midrashic* impulse.

The purpose of this chapter is to display models that embrace both the exegetical and the imaginative aspects of *midrash*. At times the final form of

a *midrash* combines or completely merges exegesis (subjectivism) and eisogesis (objectivism) into a single *midrash*. The traditional Hebraic equivalent of exegesis and eisogesis, that is, *parshanut* (interpretation) and *darshanut* (transvaluation) is used within the models outlined below. With *chiddush* (interpretation as re-creation, the transvaluating rediscovery of an eternal reality) at the heart of each model, this research attempts to recapitulate, revise and renew two traditional and historical impulses:

- Rabbinical *Midrash* Model
- Buber's *Leitwort* Model

The two models are set out below as organizing paradigms with an explanation of terms. Each model is followed by a working example from the Hebrew text. The working examples utilize the particular entities of each model through *tirgum* (translation), *parshanut* (translation) and *darshanut* (transvaluation). The *tirgum*, *parshanut*, and *darshanut* within the working examples are based in the traditional methods whilst being infused with post-biblical philosophy, as well as modern linguistic, socio-political and scientific insight.

- **RABBINICAL *MIDRASH* MODEL**

## PRAXIS



1. HEBREW TEXT  
*Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim*  
 Holy Scripture  
 Human Significance



## CONTEXT

2. CO-TEXT  
 Classical *Midrash*  
*Parshanut and Darshanut*  
*Midrash Aggada*

3. SITUATION  
 Reader/Receiver  
*Parshanut ha-Mikra*  
 Modern *Midrash*

### EXPLANATION OF TERMS:

#### 1. HEBREW TEXT

*i. Torah, Nevi'im, Ketuvim*

The three sections of the Hebrew Bible are *Torah* ("Teaching or Instruction" - The Five Books of Moses), *Nevi'im* (The Prophets), *Ketuvim* (The Writings). In rabbinical times the acronym *Tanakh* was not used as a collective title for the three sections. The Rabbis used the collective term *ha-Mikra* ("the Calling"). When referring to the Hebrew Bible, the two terms *ha-Mikra* and *Tanakh* are both used in modern times.

*ii.* Holy Scripture:

The broad consensus is that the Rabbis held with the doctrine that Holy Scripture could be endlessly interpreted and their dogma was that everything to be known is contained within Holy Scripture.

*iii.* Human Significance:

For the Rabbis the human body is the location of human significance. Human corporeality is central to rabbinic thought. The rabbinic traditions involving sexuality, procreation, ethnicity, historical memory and interpretation of scripture all stem from the rabbinic understanding of human corporeality.

## 2. CO-TEXT

*i.* Classical *Midrash*

The Classical *Midrash* is a collection of rabbinical writings which set out to explain and transvaluate Scripture. There are two basic types of *midrash* being *midrash halakhah* (legal aspects) and *midrash aggada* (narrative aspects). The rabbinic *midrash aggada* may be best understood as seeking out the fullness of Scripture in relation to the world of the time. The Rabbis often delivered their *midrashic* understandings in the form of moral lessons.

*ii.* *Parshanut and Darshanut*

In simple terms, *parshanut* (interpretation) is in realising the “Spoken Word” of the text in concert with *darshanut* (transvaluation) which restates the “Living Word” in praxis. The Rabbis used the process of *parshanut* and

*darshanut* to illuminate the dialectical relationship between Scripture and those who stand (and understand themselves) in its Light.

iii. *Midrash Aggada*

The Rabbis' *midrash aggada* is any type of *midrashic* exposition (except *midrash halakhah*) which interprets and/or transvaluates Scripture. *Midrash aggada* per se deals with ethics, theology and everyday life, generally in the form of statements, homilies and parables.

Within the rabbinical process the relational understandings gleaned between individual Rabbis and the text itself is authorial in the making of their *midrash*. *Aggadic* authorship displays an open hermeneutic of interpretation towards *midrash* as opposed to the hermeneutical *middot* (rules) of *midrash halakhah*. Hence rabbinical *midrash aggada* may or may not have openly stated connections with the text itself.

### 3. SITUATION

i. Reader/Receiver

It is quite naïve to expect the reader to approach Scripture and commentary such as the Classical *Midrash* in a completely neutral way. Neither can the reader afford to be totally subsumed by Scripture and commentary. The ideal balance required for carrying out *parshanut ha-mikra* and the making of modern *midrash* requires the "reader, text and commentary" to be in an equal three-dimensional pact.

ii. *Parshanut ha-Mikra*

*Parshanut ha-Mikra* (interpretation of the Calling) involves studying the Holy Scriptures in conjunction with various commentaries that have been written about the text. Central to the practice of *parshanut ha-Mikra* is a willingness to explore, compare and contrast the various commentaries in order to appreciate the way there are similar and different approaches. An understanding of the time, place and praxis of each commentary and its author or authors is critical to carrying out *parshanut ha-mikra*.

iii. Modern *Midrash*

The making of modern *midrash* under the Rabbinical *Midrash* Model involves using knowledge gained from the *parshanut ha-mikra* process. In this way the modern *midrash* combines the understandings gained from the activity of *parshanut ha-mikra* with the act of seeing Scripture through the personal (modern) lenses of the reader/receiver. Modern *midrash* may take interpretation and transvaluation of Scripture in new directions, or it may reapply and/or update established knowledge.

## WORKING EXAMPLE – RABBINICAL *MIDRASH* MODEL

1. The simple way of doing *Parshanut ha-Mikra* based in *parshanut* and *darshanut*.



The *Parshanut ha-Mikra* of the rabbinical *midrash* is shown in its most simple form in the following diagram. The position of *mashal*, plus *nimshal* is shown in the communication process between sender and receiver.

Sender >>>      *Mashal*  
                          +      = Rhetorical Message >>> Receiver  
                          *Nimshal*

It is to be noted that in the majority of occurrences in rabbinical literature, there is a creative tension between *mashal* and *nimshal*: An example from Deut.R. 5:12:

What is implied in the verse: “Dominion and fear are with Him; He makes peace in His high places” (**Job 25:2**)...

[***mashal***]: Not one of the planets that travels through the sky ever sees the planet in front of it, only the one behind it, much like a man who goes down a ladder with his face turned backward. This is done in order that each and every planet might say, “I am the first”. In such ways, “He makes peace in His high places”.

[***nimshal***]: The firmament [sky] is water, and the stars [planets] are fire, yet they dwell with each other and do no harm one to the other, as is written, “Dominion and fear are with Him, He makes peace in His high places”.

A deeper survey of the above example reveals not only the creative tension, but also the two distinct meanings in the content of the *mashal* and the *nimshal*, loading the literary piece with ambiguity. This is a common rabbinical literary intention, which sets out to construct a plurality of meaning. In this way, *mashal* plus *nimshal* serves the rabbinical enterprise, where the construction of meaning, although designated a literary limit is suddenly set free by the congruence of ambiguity. Quite simply, the Rabbis found that the *mashal-nimshal* format served their *darshanutic* agenda, in that it was

seemingly without internal control or regulation. Through the power of parable, the imagination of the receiver is made open and re-opened to further curiosity and questions, ad infinitum.<sup>5</sup>

As may be seen by the example above, the *nimshal* takes the authoritative position of citation of the complete proof-text of the *mashal*. This gives *nimshal* its *parshanutic* edge, or exegetical authority. The sophistication and consistency of the *nimshal* by medieval times is an indication of how important it was to retain the position of the Hebrew text [*Torah*] viz a viz the Rabbinic *darshanut* (transvaluation). Hence the continuing and abiding belief that all primary knowledge was accessible within the *Torah*, as it was said: “Turn it and turn it over [again]. For everything is in it [*Torah*]. M. Avot: 5:25.

The making of a simple modern *midrash* which follows the rabbinical *parshanut ha-Mikra* model requires constructing a creative tension. The creative tension is set down between the “myth making” of the *mashal* and the “social action” of the *nimshal*. There is no one way in which to create the necessary tension. In this way a *midrashic* venture will ultimately display its own variation according to the artful choices of its composer. Variations in the ways of constructing a creative tension are set down as they function in a current context, opening new cultural windows in the making of a modern *midrash*.

...a variation is brilliant not because it transcends...not because it reaches to some higher realm beyond...not because it demonstrates our capacity to ascend or escape into a world elsewhere...but just the opposite. It is brilliant

insofar as the variation leads us to a deeper understanding...In this sense the variation...is a model for understanding the cultural work of literature.<sup>6</sup>

- A SIMPLE PARADIGM OF A *PARSHANUT HA-MIKRA* OF GENESIS 1:3 REVEALING THE "MYTH MAKING" OF THE *MASHAL* IN CREATIVE TENSION WITH THE "SOCIAL ACTION" OF THE *NIMSHAL*

The first step towards following the paradigm is to gain a comprehension of the Hebrew text by simply reading the text itself, aloud or to oneself, in Hebrew or in translation (usually the vernacular, in our case English). An example: Gen 1:3 = וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים יְהִי אוֹר וַיְהִי אוֹר = *Va-yomer Elohim y'hiy 'or va y'hiy 'or* = And God said, "Let there be Light", and there was Light.

Throughout the paradigm a series of *meshalim* are played off over against *nimshalim* creating a tension between the two approaches. When sufficient variation of thematic material pertaining to the "Light" is presented a concluding fact, known as *ha-gufa* (viz. "the fact of the matter") is attached. The *ha-gufa* serves to bring yet another layer of thought to the *midrash ha-Mikra*, opening another door to understanding. In this case the *midrash ha-mikra*, as directed by the final *ha-gufa*, seeks a pathway which allows both "myth" and "reality" to exist on the same plane of reason. The mind of the reader is encouraged towards a plurality of thought, set to equally stimulate both the left and right hemisphere of the brain.

And God said, "Let there be Light", and there was Light. (Gen 1:3)

*MASHAL*: On the first day of Creation, God wrapped Himself in a garment of Light, and the radiance of His majesty illuminated the World. That was the Light of the first day, a primordial Light, distinct from the light of the fourth day, when God created the sun, the moon, and the stars... (BT *Hagigah* 12a)

*MASHAL*: In that Light Adam was able to see from one end of the universe to the other... (*Midrash GenR* 3:4)

*NIMSHAL*: That sacred Light pervaded the World until the very moment that Adam and Eve tasted the forbidden fruit. Then the first thing they lost was that precious Light, for that was one of the punishments of the Fall... (BT *Middot* 104:4)

*NIMSHAL*: Without it, the World grew dark around them, for the sun shone like a candle in comparison. Never again did they see the World in the splendor of that Light, and that was the most painful punishment of all... (*Midrash GenR* 3:6)

*MASHAL*: As for the fate of the primordial Light, some say that God brought it back into Paradise, where it awaits the righteous in the World to come... (*Midrash ExodR* 42:3)

*NIMSHAL*: Others say that God hid that Light in the *Torah*, in the mysteries hidden there, waiting to be discovered... (*Zohar* I:31b-32a)

*NIMSHAL*: And when it is, the hidden Light of the *Torah* will be revealed, in all its splendor... (*Zohar* I:31b-32a)

*MASHAL*: So too, it is said that God hid a small bit of that Light inside a glowing stone and gave it to Adam and Eve when they were expelled from the Garden, as a reminder of all that they had lost... (*Zohar* I:31b-32a)

*NIMSHAL*: At the End of Days, when the footsteps of the Messiah will be heard in the World, that sacred Light will be restored. Then everyone will see for themselves the true Glory of God's Creation... (*Zohar* I:31b-32a)

*MASHAL*: And for whom did God secrete the Light? For the righteous in the time-to-come, just like a king who has a goodly treasure and sets it aside for his successor. (Gen R. 3:6).

*NIMSHAL*: Thus the Messianic Hope, the *Torah* and the commandments have become familiar topics, topics of conversation among the inhabitants of the far isles and many peoples...God said, Let there be Light - and what is the Light of God? It is the soul of humankind...<sup>7</sup>

*NIMSHAL*: The idea of a conflict between spiritual light and darkness...In today's world, so many people of goodwill are arrayed against each other, each believing that he or she alone has seen the Light and is in full possession of the Truth...<sup>8</sup>

*NIMSHAL*: God said, "Let there be Light" [Gen 1:3a.]...into the arena of biblical exegesis...exegesis provides an answer, but without removing the question...and how better to further that process, than by working with each other in the same spirit...when the Schools of Hillel and Shammai disagreed...a heavenly voice proclaimed: *ellu ve ellu dibre Elohim Hayyim* - Both these and these are the Words of the Living God.<sup>9</sup>

*HA-GUFA* (the fact of the matter): Says the author of *mashal* to the author of *nimshal*: "Either way it is better than speaking only to ourselves for, after all, it is not good for the human - or the Bible - to be alone..."<sup>10</sup>

A MODERN *MIDRASH*: "GOD SAID LET THERE BE LIGHT....SO WHERE IS THE LIGHT?"

The *midrash ha-mikra* gives us a plurality of reasons for the removal of the supernal, non-solar Light of Creation from our physical world. Throughout the ages people have yearned for the Light, many have searched for the Light whilst others have pursued the Light. Generations of people have held the memory of the Light in their lives, after all, the bible challenges us "in Your Light do we see Light" (Ps 36:10b). How, therefore do we proceed to experience the intent of Creation as presupposed in the giving of Light?

Many community rituals are connected to the lighting of candles. It is said that in the old days of Lithuania that a pious man called the Chafetz Chayyim campaigned against the local house of worship from being wired for electricity.<sup>11</sup> Chayyim was deeply grieved that the congregation may, God

forbid cease to use candles even for the lighting of the *Shabbat* candles. Even more, they may cease from gifting candles to the office of the Rabbi, who always read and studied the *Torah* by candlelight.

Chayyim equated the light of a candle with the Light of Creation – he could not foresee that in time all the houses of worship would install a small red electric light above the altar, and this would be the modern symbol for the perpetual Light of God. Chayyim was blinded by his desire to strive for the victory of light over darkness. Chayyim's vision of candles as the only symbol of God's Light was distorted because he had not yet seen the wonder of electricity as a form of light.

However, despite Chayyim's short sightedness, Chayyim was a pious man, a person of goodwill. And so it is today in our time, according to Jacob,

...people of goodwill are arrayed against each other, each believing that he or she alone has seen the Light and is in full possession of the truth...Yet if we are to see the truth, we are obliged, so far as this is humanly possible, not to allow moral judgements to be clouded by self-interest and personal desires.<sup>12</sup>

The most important considerations, according to Ribner,<sup>13</sup> which pertain to the quest for God's Light are, "Am I open to receive and radiate God's Light?", "Am I the proper vessel to receive God's Light?", "How do I bring God's Light into all the vessels that compose my life?", "How do I bring God's Light into places of darkness in this world that call out for light?"

2. The complex way of doing Modern *Midrash* based in the *Midrash Aggada* of the Classical *Petihta*.

The *midrashic* literary form of *petihta* (a sign that opens something) with its strictly conventional structure may be classified as a proem. The quintessential nature of the *petihta* is better known by its unconventional approach to the text and reversal of interpretative rationale. Its central intrinsic aspect is in creating an aura of mystery that holds the audience's attention until its true interpretative intentions are revealed.

It may be helpful to regard the *petihta* as a conceptual schema that takes two specifics (the lectionary verse and the *petihta* verse) designed to portray "two words", "two meanings", and tacitly combines the two – thereby, artfully uniting the "truth statements" of Scripture. Put simply, the *petihta* is a practical application of scripture which uses one verse to interpret another verse.<sup>14</sup> In this way the *petihta* is based in the fundamental tenet of *davar aber* (the other word, or opinion) even as it exists within the text itself.

In this way the *petihta* deals with the ambiguities in the text by showing us likeness is not a matter of sameness and difference is not a matter of separation. Every word in the text, in all its diversity, exists coterminous within the premise of an Eternal Unity of Scripture and may be brought into praxis in countless ways. Scripture is never exhausted of meaning.

The following paradigm of a classical *petihta* was designed to be heard in different times than we now inhabit. The content and its inner-workings are indicative of the understandings of the time. The Rabbis quoted may have been well known and had authoritative positions within the community of their time. For many modern readers their names may have faded into history. However, the modern reader and *midrashist* will find there is no better way to learn the art of *petihta* composition than by the direct approach – reading and studying and emulating the classical *petihta* itself.

Aside from clarifying its rhetorical function, the structure of the *petihta* exemplifies a fundamental tendency to *midrash*, the urge to unite diverse parts of Scripture into a single and seamless whole reflecting the unity of God's will. *Harizah* – stringing verses together as though they were pearls on a necklace – is perhaps the most striking of all Rabbinic exegetical acts. And though it is a tendency that is manifest throughout *midrash* – at every place two otherwise unconnected verses are joined in order to reveal new nexuses of meaning – the *petihta* is undoubtedly its most sophisticated literary expression.<sup>15</sup>

#### A PARADIGM OF THE CLASSICAL *PETIHTA* (*Midrash LevR 1.1*):

*PETIHTA* VERSE: “Bless the Lord, you messengers (*malakhav*) of His, you mighty in strength that fulfil His word, hearkening unto the voice of His word” (Ps 103:20).

- A) “Bless the Lord, you messengers of His” – Of what sort of *malakhav* does Scripture speak?
1. If Scripture speaks of those who are above (*ha'elyonim*), does it not also say, “Bless the Lord, all you hosts of His? (Ps 103:21). And if Scripture speaks of those who are below (*hatahtonim*) does it not say, “Bless the Lord, you angels (literally, messengers) of His? (Ps 103:20).



2. It must therefore be that (*ela*) because those above are [all] able to execute the charges of the Holy One, blessed be He, Scripture says, "Bless the Lord, all you hosts of His". Because those below cannot [all] execute the charges of the Holy One, blessed be He, Scripture says about them, "Bless the Lord, you messengers of His", not, "all you messengers of His".
3. Another opinion: Prophets are called *malakhim* (angels). This is what is written, "And He sent a *malakh* and brought us forth out of Egypt..." (Num 20:16). But was it a *malakh* – an angel? Was it not Moses? Why is He called a *malakh*? But from this source [we learn] that prophets are called *malakh*. Similarly, "And the *malakh* of the Lord came up from Gilgal to Bokhim" (Judg 2:1). But was it a *malakh*? Rabbi Simon explained: The face of Pinchas, when the holy spirit rested upon him, flamed like a torch (thus appearing like an angel's face). The Rabbis said: What did Manoah's wife say to her husband – "A man of God came to me, and his countenance was like the countenance of a *malakh* of God" (Judg 13:6). She must have thought he was a prophet when he was really an angel? Rabbi Yohanan said: The prophets are called *malakhim* because of their source in Scripture [*mibet av shelaben*]. This is what is written: "Then spoke Haggai, the Lord's *malakh*, in the Lord's messengership [*malakhu*] to the nation, saying..." (Hag 1:13). By necessity you must conclude that because of their origins prophets are called *malakhim*.

B) "You mighty in strength that fulfil His word" – Of whom does Scripture speak?

Rabbi Isaac said: Scripture speaks of those who observe the sabbatical year. It is common in the world for a man to perform a precept for a day, or a week, or a month. But for a whole year? And yet this man sees his field untilled, he sees his vineyard untilled, he gives up his living and still he says nothing! Is there a hero greater than this man?

And if you should argue this verse does not speak about the observers of the sabbatical year, the proof that it does is that our verse says, "that fulfil His word [*devaro*], and later it says, "And this is the matter [*davar*] of the sabbatical year's release" (Deut 15:2). Just as in the latter verse Scripture uses the word *davar* to speak about the observers of the sabbatical year, so in our verse Scripture

uses the word *davar* to speak about the observers of the sabbatical year.

- C) "...you...that fulfil His word, hearkening": Rabbi Huna said in the name of Rabbi Aha. Scripture speaks about the Israelites who stood before Mount Sinai and undertook to "obey and hearken" (Exod 24:7).
- D) "Hearkening unto the voice of His word": Rabbi Tanhum ben Hanilai said: Normally a burden that is heavy for one is light for two. Or if it is heavy for two it is light for four. But is a burden that is too heavy for sixty myriads ever an easy load for a single person? Now all of the Israelites were standing before Mount Sinai, and they said, "If we hear the voice of the Lord our God any longer, then we shall die" (Deut 5:22). And yet Moses heard the voice of the Lord himself and he lived. Know that his is so: For out of all of them, the Voice called to Moses alone.

There it is said: "He called unto Moses" (Lev 1:1).

#### THE FRAMEWORK OF THE *PETIHTA*

The first task is to divide the *petihta* into a framework of working parts, more accurately into "scenes" that constitute a "play on scripture". In our example this has been done by the use of A), B), C), and D). Scene A, seeks to clarify: "What kind of messenger is this?" in Ps 103:20a, "Bless the Lord you messengers". Scene B, asks the question: "Who is the mighty in strength?" in Ps 103:20b, "You mighty in strength". Scene C, brackets Ps 103:20b to 103:20c and brings a new insight which claims the giving of the *Shema* at Mount Sinai as the meaning of "His word", in Ps 103:20c, "that fulfil His word". Scene D, takes up the claim of Scene C, and interprets Ps 103:20d "hearkening unto the voice of His word" to lay down a claim that on Mount Sinai the Voice called to Moses alone, as it says: "He called unto Moses" (Lev 1:1).

The verse of Ps 103:20 is brought into the *petihita* setting, divided into four main parts and interspersed with commentary. Through the setting of scenes, manipulation of scripture and the meaning of words, the writer of the *petihita* has put forward an entertaining argument. In the presence of his audience, the writer has shifted the cause and effect of one verse for another. This juxtaposition of cause and effect from out of the original context of Ps 103:20 is seemingly justified by the grand finale of "He called unto Moses" (Lev 1:1). The writer knows his audience, that is, their religious and political leaning they are likely to accept the important association of Moses to the Voice.

The religious leaning of the *petihita* is based in the premise that the gift of hearing the Voice entails the passing on of Divine message. Therefore, Lev 1:1 is the proper finale to the political intentions of the *petihita* which supports the claim of Moses as messenger/prophet. Not all messengers hearken to the Voice or are allowed to hear, however, Lev 1:1 affirms Moses is one who hears the Voice, hearkens and delivers the Divine message to the people.

However, on the face of a first reading Ps 103:20 and Lev 1:1 are clearly unrelated in the *parshanutic* sense. Yet when *parshanut* is melded with a *darshanutic* twist the two verses, Ps 103:20 and Lev 1:1, form a dependent relationship. The commentary and other scriptural quotes which are interspersed throughout the scenes fill in the gaps giving corresponding parallels to the entire *petihita*. The purpose of the *petihita* is not to prove the

meaning of scripture beyond all doubt. Its purpose is to present itself in its own terms. The satisfaction for the audience is in understanding the simple sense of the two *petihta* verses, Ps 103:20 and Lev 1:1, whilst simultaneously grasping the significance of their combined use in the *petihta*.

#### A MODERN *MIDRASH*: AN ARGUMENT OR TWO FOR A RENEWED *PETIHTA*

According to Stemberger whether the classical *petihta* (or at least the majority of them) derive from ancient synagogue sermons is of no consequence in the present context [of our times].<sup>16</sup> What matters for us is how we utilize the form of the *petihta* in accordance with the search for meaning in our present praxis. Scripture read in the prism of the *petihta* transforms the first Light of the Word into a spectrum of colours. Our interpretations are not black and white as words on a page, but rather they are filled with colour – the sky on interpretation becomes “blue”, or, “azure” and both colours are valid; the hills on retrospect are often “green”, or “hazy”; the sun is truly “yellow”, or, “gold”, and so on. From the Creation of Light to the present moment is filled with a history of colourful events often turning the world of meaning on its head. The form of the *petihta* recapitulates Scripture in an entertaining way. Its upside down fashion creates a matrix of literary and exegetical mirrors worthy of preservation in our homiletic toolbox.

The structure of the *petihta* offers an opportunity for the modern *midrashist* to combine an exegesis and literary expression in a homiletic fashion. In this

way the utilization of *petihtha* as an inter-textual generator may form the base of a modern literary homily or sermon. In the example above a thematic message is created from the bringing together of exegesis and literary homily.

The theme of the *petihtha* subtly supports the religious and political importance of relationships between God and certain characters in the biblical narrative. In keeping with the rabbinic norm, the writer of the *petihtha* engages in an open consultation with a variety of scriptures; Ps 103:21, Num 20:16, Judg 2:1, 13:6, Hag 1:13, Deut 15:2, Ex 24:7, Deut 5:22; encased between the two *petihtha* verses Ps 103:20 and Lev 1:1. According to Sharkansky,

Religion and politics cannot be separated...Politics and religion are often mixed, as when political ideas carry religious messages...If the essence of politics is persuasion, it comes close to the rabbinical norm that it is desirable to engage in consultation in order to seek God's will and not one's own.<sup>17</sup>

The concluding relationship between God and Moses indicates the importance that the Rabbis placed on reinforcing the role of prophet and message, thereby fulfilling a continuing expectation to renew the Moses narrative. This they did in the subtle movement of the *petihtha* which begins in a seemingly disconnected fashion but ends directly at its intentional conclusion. In keeping with the underlying tenet of the rabbinical *midrashic* impulse it is worth noting that the *petihtha* like all *midrashic* venture starts with Scripture and ends in community.<sup>18</sup>

The challenge for the modern *midrashist* is not merely in the linking together of two seemingly unconnected verses, rather it is according to Orr, 'the enabling of an opening of meaning previously unavailable in either'.<sup>19</sup> Our example set out above, the *petihta* (Lev R. 1:1), provides an opening of renewed meaning, as Neusner explains,

In this document the authorship at hand chose...an isolated verse here, an odd phrase there. These then presented the pretext for propositional discourse commonly quite out of phase with the cited passage. The verses that are quoted ordinarily shift from the meanings they convey to the implications they contain, speaking about something, anything, other than what they seem to be saying. So the *as-if* frame of mind brought to Scripture precipitates renewal of Scripture, requiring the seeing of everything with fresh eyes.<sup>20</sup>

### • BUBER'S *LEITWORT* MODEL

## PRAXIS

1. HEBREW TEXT  
Interlinear Bible  
Narrative Discourse  
Discourse Premise

## CONTEXT

2. CO-TEXT  
*Leitwort* Style  
Between the Texts  
Moral/Ethical Themes

3. SITUATION  
Reader/Receiver  
Meaningful Units  
Beyond the Verse

## EXPLANATION OF TERMS:

### 1. HEBREW TEXT

#### i. Interlinear Bible

An interlinear Bible has the Hebrew text with a literal English translation located directly under each word. In a side column on each page the English version of the text is incorporated. The Hebrew text underscored with English word translations runs in approximate order with the English version on each page. The interlinear text offers better opportunities for readers with partial fluency in the Hebrew to understand and interpret Hebrew text more effectively.

#### ii. Narrative Discourse

Narrative discourse is an account of people and events, in the case of biblical text the discourse is set in the past. Generally, narrative discourse involves genealogical data, geographical settings, stirring moments, conflict or tension, suspense, climatic events, final resolves, and conclusions.

#### iii. Discourse Premise

A discourse premise is a reason or objection put forward as a narrative claim. The claim is given in the form of a statement which the narrative purports to be true. The narrative uses the discourse premise for the purposes of arguments towards a conclusion. The reader interprets the soundness of the truth claim on the accuracy embedded in the narrative conclusion. However not all narrative truth claims are explicitly stated, they are often ambiguously

hinted at for emphasis or stylistic reasons. At these times it is left to the reader to decide on the accuracy of the narrative truth claim.

## 2. CO-TEXT

### i. *Leitwort* Style

Buber's own definition: "By *Leitwort* I understand a word or word root that is meaningfully repeated within a text or sequence of texts or complex of texts...what takes place between the verbal configurations is...a movement...beating back and forth. Such measured repetition, corresponding to the inner rhythm of the text – or rather issuing from it – is probably the strongest of all techniques for making a meaning available without articulating it explicitly."<sup>21</sup>

### ii. Between the Texts

Buber's own definition: [The search for meaning between texts] may involve paronomasia in the strict sense, occurring within an individual syntactic context, it may involve paronomasia more generally, including alliteration and assonance, but it may also involve...paronomasia *at a distance*, working not in immediate juxtaposition but over an extended stretch of text...such repetition can achieve...aesthetic value...also a special and irreplaceable value of *statement*."<sup>22</sup>

### iii Moral/Ethical Themes

Hebrew narrative themes, events and actions are a dynamic catalyst which stirs up moral and ethical questions concerning such issues as, good and evil,



power and weakness, dominance and disempowerment, duty and freedom, pride and humility, violence and protection, responsibility and providence, universal and particular, rightness and wrongness, honesty and dishonesty.

### 3. SITUATION

#### i. Reader/Receiver

When the reader meets with the text it is an experience of otherness. The experience may commence in a passive way. As the reader engages with the text the words may begin to challenge the reader to respond, to dialogue actively about the text or thoughtfully meditate the text. 'Here the reader becomes caught up in a conversation with characters, with notions and concepts, symbols and metaphors, and with the threads connecting the plot...In moving to develop an interpretation of the meaning of the text and apply it to one's life with other human beings, the interpreter arrives at the moment...of application.'<sup>23</sup> The text produces "meanings" which relate to the reader's existence.

#### ii. Meaningful Units

The storyline of textual narratives consist of a series of meaningful units. A realization of conceptual meaning in the storyline is important towards a deeper understanding of narrative. The reader seeks understanding of a narrative by evaluating themes and meanings within units of the text. However, at times the conceptual gaps between units of a narrative may halter the quest for deeper meaning. Filling the conceptual gaps between units of a narrative involves making sense of repetitions of *Leitwörter* (key

words), proposition statements, character actions, themes and narrative scenes. When the conceptual gaps between textual units are linked even obscure words and difficult phrases may become coherent.

### iii. Beyond the Verse

The reader understands the text and the text transforms the reader. Hebrew text in praxis shapes stories of significance. Ricoeur describes appropriation of the text to be the understanding of significance, he says, "Significance is the moment when the reader takes over the meaning, that is to say: the activation of the meaning in the existence of the reader."<sup>24</sup> When this moment of significance occurs 'ever new possibilities of meaning are opened for scripture and its new setting of meaning'.<sup>25</sup> The *midrashic* power of scripture is in its eternal energy to project itself beyond the verse.

## WORKING EXAMPLE – BUBER'S *LEITWORT* MODEL

1. The simple way of reflecting between the texts mirrored in meaningful units.

This working example looks at a simple *Leitwort* exegesis across the scriptures seeking an understanding of revelation and the renewal of faith. The process of *Leitwort* occupies a dimension beyond ordinary forms of exegesis, such as critical explanation or analysis. The first task in pursuing a *Leitwortic* understanding of the text is for the reader to allow the text to flood the senses as it is read aloud time after time. In this way the spoken-

ness of the text reveals a sense of the various implications of keywords and phrases.

The working example cites a selection of verses from the narratives of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Job, and a psalm of David. The keyword *ra'ah* ("see", "appear") as it is set within the narrative context is traced through a selection of verses. Where the word *ra'ah* is presented in the *qal* (active voice) form of the verb there is a notion of "see" more especially "perceive". Whereas when the word *ra'ah* is presented in the *nifal* (passive voice) form there is the effect of "show" or "appear" the characters in the narrative are permitted to "see".

The repetitive spoken-ness of *ra'ah* and its notion of "seeing and being seen" must be allowed to vibrate deep into the senses of the reader. Only in this way can a new and transformative effect be delivered on the reader than is conveyed by mere semantics. The presence of *Leitwörter* characterized in the text through repetition and rhythm builds up a co-text that indicates there are more ways of "seeing and being seen" than with the physical eye or the human spirit alone. If the reader can sound out the text with their whole being, listening and feeling the repetitive rhythm, then foundations of a deeper relationship with the text is assured. This relationship is at once deeper and more profound than the normative "seeing and being seen" of a spectator or observer. The word *ra'ah* in the Hebrew text goes beyond our ocular ability it demands empathy and emotional feelings attached to the

“seeing and being seen” of God. And yet, its application can be as simple as one small word across a series of texts, set within the narrative and revealed in the spoken-ness of the reader’s own situation.<sup>26</sup>

Under the simple paradigm set out below each scriptural quote is defined through *parshanut* (interpretation) and *darshanut* (transvaluation). In this way this simple exegesis of scripture is a way of utilizing the *Leitwort* methodology across the wider narrative. The reader is able to link the thematic repetition of the keyword *ra’ah* to the wider narrative experience understood as the “seeing and being seen” of God.<sup>27</sup> A modern *midrash* which follows discusses inner-separation and intuitive-seeing as being pertinent to revelation and the renewal of a “seeing” faith.

- A SIMPLE PARADIGM OF SCRIPTURAL CONTEXT INCLUDING A *PARSHANUT* AND *DARSHANUT*.

Gen 12:7	“The Lord appeared...the Lord who had appeared to him”.
<i>parshanut</i>	“appeared” from the Hebrew, רָאָה <i>ra’ah</i> , interpreted as “appear, be seen” in the <i>nifal</i> sense.
<i>darshanut</i>	In our own situation, we hear the story of God’s appearance to Abraham. We believe from the story that God-self is immanently near in “sight” of Abraham. We know from sighting and hearing the text that the form of the verb <i>ra’ah</i> is in the <i>nifal</i> sense
Gen 18:1	“The Lord appeared to him”.
<i>parshanut</i>	“appeared” from the Hebrew, רָאָה <i>ra’ah</i> , interpreted as “appear, be seen” in the <i>nifal</i> sense (cf v2, in the embodiment of three messengers).
<i>darshanut</i>	In our rendering of the narrative we perceive that the “appearance” of the Lord is embodied in three physical messengers, as Abraham refers to himself as “your

servant" (v3b) and the messengers as "My lords" (v3a). We have discovered another way of how God is physically "seen" within the biblical narrative, "shown" through God-messenger.

- Gen 26:2, 24 "The Lord had appeared to him", "That night the Lord appeared to him...".  
*parshanut* "appeared" from the Hebrew, ראה *ra'ah*, interpreted as "appear, be seen" in the *nifal* sense.  
*darshanut* Here God appears to Isaac and speaks to him (cf v 2b, 24b). We perceive it is a direct and personally delivered confirmation of God's promise to Isaac's father Abraham, which is now assigned to Isaac and verified by the "appearance" of God Himself, "shown" in the *nifal* sense.
- Gen 32:31 "I have seen a divine being face to face, yet my life has been preserved".  
*parshanut* "seen" from the Hebrew, ראה *ra'ah*, interpreted as "see, perceive" in the *qal* sense.  
*darshanut* We note this echoes the experience of Abraham and the three messengers (Gen 18:1), here Jacob encounters and struggles with a physical form (v32:25b) which he refers to as a divine being (v31a). Jacob witnesses to an awesome wonderment and respect for a God who is "seen" face to face.
- Gen 35:9, 10 "God appeared again to Jacob...and He blessed him...God said [spoke] to him".  
*parshanut* "appeared" from the Hebrew, ראה *ra'ah*, interpreted as "appear, be seen" in the *nifal* sense.  
*darshanut* God "appears" and Jacob is re-named "Israel" by God which echoes the re-naming of Jacob to "Israel" by the divine being (cf 32:29a). Here we perceive that God reiterates and repeats blessings, at times directly of God-self whilst at other times through a divine messenger.
- Ex 3:16b "...the Lord, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, has appeared to me".  
*parshanut* "appeared" from the Hebrew, ראה *ra'ah*, interpreted as "appear, be seen" in the *nifal* sense.  
*darshanut* Here we perceive that the presence of God continues to "appear", this time to Moses. It is conceivable to state that the "appearance" of God is a natural occurrence to certain characters in the times and context of these scriptures and certainly Moses "sees" God several times throughout his narrative exploits.
- Job 42:5a "I have heard of You by the hearing of (the) ear, but now

	my eye has seen You".
<i>parshanut</i>	"seen" from the Hebrew, ראה <i>ra'ah</i> , interpreted as "see, perceive" in the <i>qal</i> sense.
<i>darshanut</i>	Job struggles with his separation from God and his former "blindness" to a true knowing of God as giver of all things (cf 42:2,3). Now Job has overcome and he actively "perceives" by hearing and "sees" God.
Ps 63:3	"Therefore I have seen You in the Holy Place, seeing your Power and Your Glory".
<i>parshanut</i>	"seen" from the Hebrew, חזו <i>chazah</i> , interpreted as "see, behold" in the <i>qal</i> sense – note that: <i>chazah</i> is the poetical form of <i>ra'ah</i> . "seeing" from the Hebrew, ראה <i>ra'ah</i> , interpreted as "see, perceive" in the <i>qal</i> sense.
<i>darshanut</i>	In this Psalm of David [when he was separated in the Wilderness of Judah (cf Ps 63 title gloss)] it is interesting to note that scripture incorporates into one verse a poetical and a narrative expression for the act of "seeing" – <i>chaza</i> the poetical term and <i>ra'ah</i> the narrative term are held together in parallel – we can perceive that David is expressing his "seeing" knowledge of God through wonderment poetry and witness report.

It is to be noted that it is clear from the textual narrative that the characters of Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David and Job are bathed in the sense of *ra'ah* to the extent that God allows. Prior to the "seeing or being seen" a relationship has been established where each character understands the "seeing or being seen" of God is an encounter with the Divine. Therefore the spoken-ness and rhythm of the word *ra'ah* implies a relationship with God. The alternating use of the *qal* and *nifal* forms of the verb *ra'ah* shows the flowing back and forth between a person and God which constitutes a two-way relationship. The reader who speaks the text shares in the elevating results of the "seeing and being seen" of God as a result of the *ra'ah* relationship between God and the biblical characters.<sup>28</sup>

- A MODERN *MIDRASH*: INNER-SEPARATION AND INTUITIVE-SEEING – REVELATION AND THE RENEWAL OF A “SEEING” FAITH

Prior to the composition of a modern *midrash* about inner-separation and intuitive seeing many questions may arise, such as, “How may the making of modern *midrash* assist us to separate from a *blind* faith towards a renewal of a *seeing* faith?”; “What is the meaning of inner-separation and intuitive-seeing in our modern religious life?”; “How do modern people separate themselves from their current circumstances and see the world in a new light?”.

The sense of sight as recorded in the Abrahamic witness issues forth a thematic keyword which forms the genesis of the biblical “seeing” God narratives. The “seeing” of God is synonymous with the “presence” of God whether it is in “seeing” the God-self or “seeing” a God-messenger. What is relevant to both forms of “seeing” is that they are set over against a notion of inner-separation from God. The lesson seems to be that a humanity which follows its own loyalty risks an inner-separation from deity and is lost to the sight of God. As a consequence the concept of inner-separation is woven through the “seeing” events. The biblical narrative mirrors itself across the texts, creating a narrative tension which highlights the imperative of “seeing” the God of Abraham, whether that is God-self or God-messenger.

To Buber, seeing is the keyword of the Abraham story...Through seeing, Abraham discovers God, and God discovers Abraham. Other commentators suggest separation is the key concept...Is Abraham willing to separate himself from his past and from all human ties for the sake of his

loyalty to God?...Perhaps...one must be separated from the past before seeing the world in a new light...through worship comes seeing...a God of mercy and loving kindness.<sup>29</sup>

The lessons that the characters in the “seeing” narratives learn are those that impact on their real life and context. The “seeing” of God is not something “foreign” to the biblical characters, nor is it outside the boundaries of their religious faith. They all give a situational importance to God “seeing” them and their “seeing” of God. Each character weaves this situational importance into their present surroundings and daily physical lives. Each of their stories is recorded in the text as an eternal witness.

The aim of modern *midrash* is to perceive the narrative witness of a “seen” and “seeing” God as an eternal message. The making of modern *midrash* helps us to process the text and speak out that message beyond the verse into our own context. Our modern *midrash* confirms and reveals the eternal promises which in turn gifts us with a renewal of faith resplendent with knowledge and ensuing lessons for all generations.

The goal of making a modern *midrash* from out of the experience of the characters in the biblical narrative is that the lessons from these “seeing” narratives which impacted on those former times may become equally life-changing in our time. The first simple step in “seeing” God through experiencing the biblical narrative is to find the intro-retrospective “seeing” which is not limited by our thoughts.



...what we are seeking here is the place of inner truth that transcends limiting and judgemental thoughts and categories. It is not really about affirming personal deity but of affirming the unity of all being. It has been said that there is no proof of God, only witnesses.<sup>30</sup>

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Job and David do not give a traceable proof of God's existence there is only their narrative witness of "seeing" a God who "sees" them. Perhaps, our own *parshanut* (interpretation) and *darshanut* (transvaluation) of the narrative will inevitably lead us into an inner "seeing" an inner-knowing of the presence of a "seeing" God in our lives.

To Abraham, God's witness is pre-empted in the instruction of "*lech lecha*", commonly translated as "Go forth" (Gen 12:1). However, a *darshanutic* translation of *lech lecha* as "go to you" or in lucid English, "go into yourself", or, "go within" is a valid way towards addressing a modern *midrash*. It is an instruction to be intro-retrospective, to "see" intuitively. Put another way, the "seeing" of God is through the intuitive heart, not through the thinking mind. The "seeing" of God does not arrive via mental ascension, but by a sensory based awareness.

In this way, the instruction "*lech lecha*" implies *midrashically* that a person must go within and bring forth a sensory based conscious awareness. The "seeing" of God is anchored in our sensory experience. Throughout the "seeing" God narratives the "seeing" events in each story that constitute God's "seeing" or being "seen" are a unifying force for the characters involved.

Regardless of the form in which God chooses to speak to us, we are meant to understand. It is in this moment that the last miracle of prayer takes place. God gifts us with an incredible thing. Our eyes and God's, for the briefest second, become one.<sup>31</sup>

Entering in to a unity with God is the essence of Buber's *I and Thou* philosophy which finds its underpinnings in biblical narrative such as that of Job. We have learnt that Job's return to a relationship with God is preceded by a time drenched in darkness. The dark night of Job's soul drove Job into deep questions of faith, does Job retain faith for fear of punishment or does Job wait with hope for the light to return to his soul. For Job it is neither, his time of deep suffering has taken him far beyond all previous conceptions of God. Job has no questions answered he does not solve his problems. Something greater is revealed to Job. Job "sees" God and as never before he perceives his Creator in a new light. The *Leitwort ra'ah* which has resounded across the text from Abraham, Jacob and Moses has enabled the reader to grasp the divine dimensions of the human-God relationship (*I and Thou*) across the entire textual witness.

In the search for the divine *I and Thou* relationship the first task of the reader is to commit to an intro-retrospective journey between the texts. The reader simply reads the texts as they are written, reflecting on the meaningful units which emerge. The *Leitwortic*

rhythm emulates spoken-ness best received through an oral rendition of the “seeing” God narratives. As the reader speaks the scriptures (aloud) the journey towards a modern *midrash* begins in the heart of the reader. Slowly but surely the narrative’s thematic witness will emerge and the reader is then equipped in their heart to carry out a biblical *midrash* beyond the verse. For Buber reader reception is dependent on the heart, as Avnon states,

Buber spoke of the “opening of the text” as commensurate with the “opening of the reader’s heart” – a realization of the oneness which undergirds biblical reality. For Buber the heart is the point of reader reception. It is where the reader experiences a sensation of presence which is all at once different from mere reality. Buber expects the reader to listen with the heart and accept the impressions directly from the text, without prior mediation of the intellect. The keywords in the text guide the reader. Buber makes this assumption that this ‘extra effort is required of the reader – to recognize the repetitive use of verb-stems and to contemplate its significance. In the sharing of significance the reader’s senses are enhanced and this creates the possibility in turn for the text to “open up” the heart of the reader.<sup>32</sup>

In this way a small word such as *ra’ah*, carries great significance for the reader of the text. Buber regarded these small connecting words across texts as linking correspondences.<sup>33</sup> Through reader selection, these correspondences belong to a series of *I and Thou* relationships shaped by the occurrence of *ra’ah* across different texts ‘as if the *paronomastic* shaping of the story had taken place at the same time as the *paronomastic* linking of it to other stories’.<sup>34</sup> In this way the letter symbols of *ra’ah* repeated across the textual narratives speak to the knowing of the heart, as Avnon says ‘enabling

the reader to participate in an ongoing dialogue that originated in previous generations and will continue throughout [the reader's life] and thereafter'.<sup>35</sup>

2. The complex way of developing moral/ethical themes from out of the text directed beyond the verse.

When addressing global questions the application of Buber's *Leitwort* methodology may require more than a simple or a singular reading of the biblical text. Although we begin with a word read in the context of its own verse we keep in mind that Buber spoke of the interconnectedness of the Bible as the 'circulatory system of a great text',<sup>36</sup>

...a unity...a real organic unity...a synoptic view of the various parts...relations between this excerpt and that, between this book and that...revealed fundamental notions through passage upon passage...an action only dimly visible in one story and revealed fully in another...the Bible itself...a work of selection and coordination aimed at creating bible unity...What matters is to sharpen our sense of these correspondences and linkages.<sup>37</sup>

We enter into the greater text by reading a verse in its own context. Giving close attention to a certain verse and even closer attention to its *milah manchah* (keyword) is a certain way of reaching out to the larger aspects of biblical messages. Tracking a *milah manchah* across the entire text and testing the nuance over against a selected central verse is a reliable way of ascertaining the proper sense of biblical statements. This rigorous testing of one text to another text releases greater understandings of the nuance of a

*milah manchah*. With careful attention the Hebrew of the *milah manchah* and its surrounding text can be interpreted into the vernacular.

One such *milah manchah* is the Hebrew term *tachat* (תחת) often mistakenly interpreted as meaning "for". In Exodus 21:23 the Hebrew says: "*ayin tachat ayin*" (עין תחת עין) and for hundreds of years it has been interpreted in the literal sense as "an eye for an eye". This has led to the understanding that the bible is giving an instruction for a person who damages another person's eye to have their eye damaged accordingly. It is probably one of the most misaligned meanings given to a Hebrew phrase in the history of bible translation. The general concept of "an eye for an eye" implies a literal meaning from the Hebrew, but however on a closer reading of the Hebrew "*ayin tachat ayin*" along with a perusal of other occurrences of *tachat* across the wider text reveals that the word *tachat* literally does not mean "for". A more accurate literal interpretation of *tachat* in the context of the phrase "*eyin tachat eyin*" would be "an eye's worth for an eye", or put differently "the worth of an eye in place of an eye".

In this way *tachat* is often the undergirding preposition which acts for the sake of a clemency solution. At other times the text uses *tachat* as a situational phrase, *tachat me* (why?) Jer 5:19, and compare to the ironic reversal '*al-meh* (why not?); '*el-tachat* (towards down under); Jer 3:6; *tachat asher* (inasmuch) Deut 28:47, or, *tachat ki* (inasmuch as) Prov 1:29; *tachat le* (underneath, in relation to) Ezra 10:2. All these situational phrases bear a

relation to the general concept of mediating on behalf of the base of something. The following complex paradigm will show that the Hebrew word *tachat* is not intended to indicate a direct exchange of like for like. Rather, *tachat* is an agency word between one action and another. The first action is the damage done and the second is an action of compensation. The positioning of the word *tachat* as the mediating middle word resonates the seeking of restorative fairness, rather than a statement of strict justice.

- LEXICAL ITEMS AND BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE: A COMPLEX PARADIGM OF *TACHAT* IN THE SCRIPTURAL CONTEXT

In Exodus 21:23 "*eyin tachat eyin*" we are looking at *tachat* as a preposition in the transferred sense. Therefore we may look at a series of passages across the wider text which use *tachat* within the same prepositional transferral of sense. In this way a picture of the preposition *tachat* will emerge through a straightforward and systematic approach. We will demonstrate the nature of the Hebrew language as it is used in Exodus 21:23 from scanning across the entire text and engathering a useful nuance of *tachat* for our modern *midrash*.

The word *tachat* is not a preposition in the literal sense, it is a preposition in the transferred sense. We believe that the language of the Hebrew understands the transferred meaning. Transferred sense commonly occurs in all languages but cannot be taken for granted, it has to be understood not as a stated meaning but as a transferred meaning. On first reading we may

accept the narrow meaning of "an eye for an eye" - and then there's the connotation that an eye for an eye has taken on outside of the context of the text, simply because the reader has heard it related this way before as a direct exchange of an actual eye for another actual eye. The saying "an eye for an eye" has almost become an archaism.

The Bible does not say, "an eye for an eye". It says, "an eye instead of an eye" or "in place of an eye". "Instead of, in place of" – *tachat* in the Hebrew – connotes not identical substitution, not an eye for an eye, but one item substituted for a different item. After Abraham, his sword ready to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Moriah, was suddenly told by the angel of God not to sacrifice Isaac, "Abraham went and took the ram and brought it up for a burnt offering instead of (*tachat*) his son" (Gen 22:13). In full context and under accurate translation, the Bible now reads...the injurer must give the victim something else...not an eye...in compensation.<sup>38</sup>

A workable system of determining the nuance of *tachat* in all the following paradigmmed utterances does not contain an exhaustive list of all the utterances which include *tachat* in the Hebrew text, but it does contain a high percentage of those times *tachat* is used as a preposition in the transferred sense. Each occasion or event in the utterance examples contains the preposition *tachat* that has been assigned by the text to some feature of the story line. Throughout the workings of the paradigm the focus will be on the word *tachat* and not necessarily on the particular features of the story line. The emphasis is always on the question: what does *eyin tachat eyin* signal to the reader when taken in comparison with other occurrences of *tachat* in the transferred sense? Another important question is: In the semantical network

what grammatical meaning does the utterance *eyin tachat eyin* convey in addition to its lexical content?

...in the semantic network associated with a preposition...such an analysis has great potential in offering a more teachable account of the multiple interpretations assigned...with a minimum of technical jargon or grammatical explanation...can provide more coherent, insightful explanations of various meanings...and thus move beyond instruction...<sup>39</sup>

The following paradigm attempts to present the texts in a straightforward and systematic way. The purpose of the paradigm content is to demonstrate insights into the use of *tachat* across the text and how these insights may be used in the making of a modern *midrash*. This paradigm provides short utterances and background knowledge from the wider text which aids towards inferring an interpretation. The content of the paradigm follows a basic assumption about the nature of textual language which suggests the interpretation of *tachat* as an utterance of empathic understanding towards compensation and/or restorative justice.

- A PARADIGM OF *TACHAT* IN THE POSITION OF A PREPOSITION OF TRANSFERRING SENSE IN A VARIETY OF TEXT-SCENES

Ex 21:24a עין תחת עין "an eye for an eye"

Gen 4:25 אחד תחת הבל "another in place of Abel" (Seth and Abel)

22:13b לעלה תחת בנו "an offering instead of his son" (Abraham and Isaac)

44:33 עבדך תחת הנעדר "your servant instead of the youth"

2 Sam 19:1 מותי אני תחתך "had died I instead of you" (David and Absalom)



- Job 16:4      נפשכם תחת נפשי "your soul in the place of my soul" (Job seeks empathy from his friends)
- Isaiah 61:3   פאר תחת אפר "beauty instead of ashes"  
ששון תחת אבל "joy instead of mourning"
- I Kgs 20:39   נפשך תחת נפשו "your life for his life" (unless you weigh out a talent of silver)
- Gen 44:4      למה שלמתם רעה תחת טידה "why have you repaid evil for good" (Joseph asks one to ask another)
- II Sam 16:12   תובה תחת קללתו "good for his cursing" (David asks God for Good from God in place of his son's cursing, "God will look upon my affliction")
- Prov 17:13    משב דהע תחת טובה "He who returns evil instead of good" (shall not depart evil from his house)

Our *midrashic* argument is that the fuller interpretation and sense of *tachat* involves viewing *tachat* as a preposition which transfers two otherwise separated lexical items towards the undergirding of restorative justice at the base of God's covenantal law. Interpretation of the utterance of *tachat* involves inference and background knowledge. The word *tachat* cannot be inferred from a dictionary definition alone, such as, *tachat* is a preposition in the transferring sense. The text-scene of each short utterance must be more fully equated over against *tachat* as a preposition in the transferring sense. In this way the interpretation of the *tachat*-utterance comes from integrating the lexical *shoresh* (root) meaning of *tachat* (underneath, that which undergirds, the base of something) in its appearance as a preposition (in the transferring sense) within the knowledge of a variety of textual text-scenes.

- A MODERN MIDRASH: "IF EVERYONE LIVED BY 'AN EYE FOR AN EYE AND A TOOTH FOR A TOOTH' THE WORLD WOULD BE BLIND AND TOOTHLESS"

When we consider that Michelangelo painted two horns on the head of Moses because the Latin Vulgate Bible mistranslated the Hebrew text of Exodus 34:29 as "Moses had horns" instead of "Moses' face shone",<sup>40</sup> it is not beyond our comprehension that other passages such as Exodus 21:24-25 may also have been subjected to a similar mistranslation. When Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*, says: "if everyone lived by 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth' the world would be blind and toothless",<sup>41</sup> he philosophically summarizes the problematic of literal interpretation.

Furthermore, we might consider that the physical attributes that we have, such as eyes and teeth are gifts from God and come under our covenantal relationship with God.<sup>42</sup> The loss of sight or even the loss of teeth has not only physical and mental consequences but also financial costs. Therefore, if a person has caused damage to another then conceivably that person should be made responsible for making a monetary compensation to the injured person.

The *Torah* tells us to be fair, just, and giving, even to our enemy...The *Torah* states: "When you encounter your enemy's ox or ass wandering you must take it back to him. When you see the ass of your enemy lying under its burden and would refrain from raising it, you must, nevertheless, raise it with him" [Exodus 23:4-5]. Just as we are responsible when we damage our neighbour's eye or arm or tooth, we are also responsible when we cause or are accessories to the performance of that damage.<sup>43</sup>

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Ochs, Peter. "Torah, Language and Philosophy: A Jewish Critique", in, *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*. 18:115-122 (1985).115.

<sup>2</sup> I owe this insight to Nathaniel Helfgot, see his article: Beyond Parshanut: Using Midrash to Enhance the Teaching of Values. *Ten Da'at. A Journal of Jewish Education*. Vol XI, Sivan, 5758 – Spring 1998.

<sup>3</sup> Probably no Biblical verses are more famous, or infamous, than..."an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a hand for a hand, a foot for a foot, a burn for a burn, a wound for a wound, a bruise for a bruise" (Ex 21:24-25). See: Hillel Goldberg, *Mishpatim*. JNR Thought. February 19, 1998/ 23 Shevat, 5758: "The [Hebrew] Bible does not say, "an eye for an eye". It says, "an eye instead of an eye" or "in place of an eye." Instead of, in place of – *tachat* in the Hebrew – connotes not identical substitution, not an eye for an eye, but one item substituted for a different item. After Abraham, his sword read to sacrifice Isaac on Mount Moriah, was suddenly told by the angel of G-d not to sacrifice Isaac, "Abraham went and took the ram and brought it up for a burnt offering instead of (*tachat*) his son" (Gen 22:13). In full context and under accurate translation, the Bible now reads: If a person accidentally blinds someone, the injurer must give the victim something else – not an eye – in compensation for having accidentally wasted the victim's eye...An eye for an eye means to give something in place of the lost eye, that being monetary compensation.

<sup>4</sup> Rapaport, William J. *In Defense of Contextual Vocabulary Acquisition: How to do Things with Words in Context*. Buffalo, New York: State University of New York at Buffalo, 2000. 3. See also: Hillel Goldberg, *Mishpatim*. JNR Thought. February 19, 1998/ 23 Shevat, 5758: "Michelangelo's Moses has two horns on his head because Michelangelo's Bible, the Latin Vulgate, mistranslated Exodus 34:29 as "Moses had horns" instead of "Moses' face shone".

<sup>5</sup> Stern David. *Midrash And Theory. Ancient Jewish Exegesis and Contemporary Studies*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1996. 52.

<sup>6</sup> Bercovitch, Saevan. "A Model of Cultural Transvaluation: Puritanism, Modernity, and New World Rhetoric". *Harvard University Conference Papers*. 1-2 [Available May 2008] <http://web.gc.cuny.edu/dept/reuai/conf/Papers/Keynote/Bercovit.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Rosenzweig, Franz. [trans. William W. Hallo.] *The Star of Redemption*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985. 111,336.

<sup>8</sup> Jacobs, Louis. *Jewish Preaching. Homilies and Sermons*. Portland: Vallentine Mitchell, 2004. 28.

<sup>9</sup> Magonet, Jonathan. *The Biblical Roots of Jewish Identity: Exploring the Relativity of Exegesis*. JSOT 54 (1992) 3-24: 23,24.

<sup>10</sup> Eskenazi, Tamara C. "Perspectives from Jewish Exegesis", in, Daniel Smith-Christopher. ed. *Text & Experience. Towards a Cultural Exegesis of the Bible*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995. 82-103.103.

<sup>11</sup> For the Chafetz Chayim's position on the use of electricity, candles, and other important life matters see: Chayim, Chafetz. *The Concise Book of Mitzvoth*. New York: Feldheim Publishers, 1990.

<sup>12</sup> Jacobs, Louis. *Jewish Preaching. Homilies and Sermons*. Portland: Vallentine Mitchell, 2004. 30, 31.

- 
- <sup>13</sup> Ribner, Melinda. *New Age Judaism. Ancient Wisdom For The Modern World*. Deerfield Beach, Florida: Simcha Press, 2000. 33.
- <sup>14</sup> Peters, Simi. *Learning To Read Midrash*. Jerusalem: Urim Publications, 2004. 37.
- <sup>15</sup> Stern, David. *Midrash And Theory. Ancient Jewish Exegesis And Contemporary Literary Studies*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1996. 58.
- <sup>16</sup> Stemmerger, Gunter. [trans. Markus Bockmuehl.] *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*. Second Edition. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996.
- <sup>17</sup> Sharkansky, Ira. *The Politics of Religion and the Religion of Politics*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2002. 15.
- <sup>18</sup> Neusner, Jacob. *The Classics of Judaism. A Textbook and Reader*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995. 96.
- <sup>19</sup> Orr, Mary. *Intertextuality: Debates and Contexts*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2003. 150.
- <sup>20</sup> Neusner, Jacob. *A Theological Commentary to the Midrash. Volume Four. Leviticus Rabbah*. Studies in Ancient Judaism. Lanham: University Press of America, 2001. xxxiv.
- <sup>21</sup> Buber, Martin. "Leitwort Style In Pentateuch Narrative", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald.] *Scripture And Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 114-128. 114.
- <sup>22</sup> Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald.] *Scripture And Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 114-128. 114.
- <sup>23</sup> Kepnes, Steven. *The Text As Thou. Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992. 72,75,76.
- <sup>24</sup> P. Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*, quoted in: Waaijman, Kees. *Spirituality: Forms, Foundations, Methods* (Studies in Spirituality, Supplement 18). Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2003. 768.
- <sup>25</sup> Gruenwald, Ithamar. "Midrash & 'The Midrashic Condition': Preliminary Considerations", in, Michael Fishbane. ed. *The Midrashic Imagination. Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1993. 6-22. 19.
- <sup>26</sup> I owe these insights to my research supervisor, Dr. Laurence Woods.
- <sup>27</sup> See: Wolfson, Elliot R. *Through A Speculum That Shines. Vision And Imagination In Medieval Jewish Mysticism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994. 327.
- <sup>28</sup> I wish to acknowledge my research supervisor, Dr Laurence Woods, who raised these points of discussion.
- <sup>29</sup> Berman, Louis A. *The Akedah: The Binding of Isaac*. New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 1997. 38.
- <sup>30</sup> Michels, Jordan. *Daven'n (Prayer) with a Jewish Heart*. [Available September 2008] <http://adolam.org/Daven.pdf>
- <sup>31</sup> Michels, Jordan. *Daven'n (Prayer) with a Jewish Heart*. [Available September 2008] <http://adolam.org/Daven.pdf>

- 
- <sup>32</sup> Avnon, Dan. *Martin Buber. The Hidden Dialogue*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Incorporated, 1998. 57.
- <sup>33</sup> Buber, Martin. "Leitwort Style In Pentateuch Narrative", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald.] *Scripture And Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 114-128. 124.
- <sup>34</sup> Buber, Martin. "Leitwort Style In Pentateuch Narrative", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald.] *Scripture And Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 114-128. 122.
- <sup>35</sup> Avnon, Dan. *Martin Buber. The Hidden Dialogue*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Incorporated, 1998. 66.
- <sup>36</sup> Buber, Martin. "Leitwort and Discourse Type", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald.] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 150.
- <sup>37</sup> Buber, Martin. "A Suggestion For Bible Courses", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald.] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 174-5.
- <sup>38</sup> Goldberg, Hillel. "Eye for an Eye – Jewish Justice?", in, *JWR Thought*. February 19, 1998/ 23 Shevat 5758. 2.
- <sup>39</sup> Achard, Michael, and, Susanne Niemeier. *Cognitive Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition, and Foreign Language Teaching*. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004, 276.
- <sup>40</sup> See: Stanton, Mary and Albert Hyma. *Streams of Civilization*. Volume I. Arlington Heights: Christian Liberty Press, 1992. 364.
- <sup>41</sup> See: Templeton, John. *Agape Love. A Tradition Found In Eight World Languages*. Pennsylvania: Templeton Press, 1999.99.
- <sup>42</sup> See: Cohen, Norman A. "Parashat Mishpatim, Exodus 21:1-24:18". *Living Torah, Torat Hayim*. Vol. 7, no. 18. February 1, 2003 (1). 1-3.
- <sup>43</sup> Cohen, Norman. "Love Your Enemy? No Way? Treat Him Fairly. Way?", in, *Living Torah. Torat Hayim*. Vol. 7, no. 18. February 1, 2003.

## CONCLUSION

The concluding statement of this thesis is outlined as follows, 1) an overview of the research is presented and significant points are noted, 2) the limitations of the research are discussed and the methodology applied to offset the limitations are outlined, 3) the practical implications of this research are described with suggestions for further research.

### 1. OVERVIEW AND SIGNIFICANT POINTS

The thesis consists of three chapters. The first chapter presented an historical and literary discussion of the relationship between Buber's dialogical hermeneutic and rabbinic *midrash*. This chapter revealed that rabbinic *midrash* and Buber's dialogical hermeneutic are closely connected. One of the significant points of the exercise of comparison was in the confirmation that the Rabbis and Buber shared an identical conviction of a unified and univocal text from out of which the Living Word speaks to every generation.

Another significant point was in disclosing Buber's acknowledgement of rabbinic *midrash* as 'forming a second bible, scattered in innumerable writings, around the nucleus of Scripture'.<sup>1</sup> This statement by Buber directly informs the thesis of this research that Buber's dialogical approach to the God of the created world, the God of the Hebrew text, is founded in the spirit of a relational theology. From this it can be asserted that the premise of Buber's major writing, *I and Thou* exists on the same plane as the rabbinical hermeneutic praxis which mediates the "Voice" of the Hebrew text into the "Dialogue" of the present.

The second chapter explored textual and scholarly evidence of the Hebrew text as an *aggadic* trope, focusing on the way this process manifests in the methods of *parshanut* and *darshanut* and onward towards the rabbinic tradition of making *midrash aggada*. The textual evidence of the Hebrew text as an *aggadic* trope was revealed by showing how images are transported across the text in the form of words and phrases. A significant point was made by this research through the example of the root verb *rachaf* which implies a metaphorical action of the eagle's wing. The imagery of the eagle's wings were shown as an important *aggadic* trope which goes on a *darshanutic* journey from Creation to Jeremiah, stirring up the waters of creation, carrying Jacob from the wilderness and emerging in the shaking palpitating bones of Jeremiah.

Another significant point was made by unlocking the history of the use of the term *peshat* as having only "one sense" or a "plain sense". This research gives in depth reasons that reveal the jagged history of the term *peshat* and why it is now a problematic term for the modern *midrash aggadist*. The research shows the importance of framing textual and *midrashic* studies with the terms of *parshanut* (interpretation) and *darshanut* (transvaluation). Furthermore, this research draws out the point that the Rabbis freely demonstrated the inner structure of the Hebrew text to be *parshanutic*, that is, self interpreting or able to be interpreted.

This chapter makes a further significant point that the Rabbis have no hesitation in applying Scripture to everyday situations. The Rabbis see the Hebrew text as a series of real moments and events that have exemplary force.<sup>2</sup> The research is a call to give serious consideration to the Rabbis notion of exemplarity in order that

their compilations of *midrash aggada* not be misunderstood as just another collection of complex cultural documents suitable only for literary analysis. This research shows that the real significance of the Rabbi's *midrash aggada* is in its hermeneutical genius which draws a new and rich world of meaning from the Hebrew text.

The third chapter puts forward two models, the "Rabbinical *Midrash* Model" and "Buber's *Leitwort* Model". The two models are complementary in arriving at a modern *midrashic* process in that the combining of these models allows for a *midrash* that has living application for the modern reader. At the same time the two models respect the principles and intentions of traditional rabbinic *midrash*. In this way the two models constitute Hebraic approaches, ancient and modern, with application examples in simple and complex ways. The research makes a significant point by holding the Hebrew text in praxis with its co-text and situation as factors held within each model by an equal partnership pact. The research makes a firm contention that excluding or minimizing any one of these praxis factors deprives the *midrashic* impulse of its world of meanings. Put simply, without co-text and situation the Hebrew text has no external *midrashic* power. Equally, without the Hebrew text both co-text and situation have no base on which to build an authentic and vibrant interpretation.

Another significant point is raised in the contention of this chapter that *parshanut* (interpretation) is in realising the "Spoken Word" of the text in concert with *darshanut* (transvaluation) which restates the "Living Word" in praxis. Interpretations of the Hebrew text are not undertaken as an exercise of mere



literary analysis, rather they are informed articulations of a textual response to our current situation. For the Rabbis the human body is the location of human significance and human corporeality is central to rabbinic thought. This human significance for Buber extended to the reader being caught up in a conversation with the characters of the text from which meaning is extracted and applied to the reader's life with other human beings.

This chapter makes another significant point that the making of modern *midrash* may take *parshanut* and *darshanut* of Scripture in new directions, or it may reapply and/or update established knowledge. This chapter has also highlighted the fact that the *midrashic* power of any scriptural text has the kind of eternal energy that allows it to project itself beyond the verse in which it is embedded. This thesis affirms that the reader understands the text and the text transforms the reader. In this way this research rests on its main theme, premise and title that the Hebrew text in praxis shapes stories of significance. This is supported by the Ricoeur's notion which describes appropriation of the text to be the understanding of significance.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. LIMITATIONS AND METHODOLOGY APPLIED

Although the methods provided in chapter three of the research were devised without the boundaries of *parashah* and *haftarah*, it is acknowledged that the *midrashic* impulse itself is largely, at least historically, a Jewish enterprise. However the methodology applied throughout chapter three of this thesis makes an assumption that all faiths may follow the course of the *midrashic* process within their

own faith belief. In particular the "Explanation of Terms" supplied with each model were specifically designed to apply to all faiths and those genuinely interested in the making of modern *midrash*. A decision was taken to utilise modern grammatical, semantic, syntactic and pragmatic understandings within the body of these explanations. This was an attempt at modernising methodological approaches towards the making of *midrash* whilst maintaining harmony with rabbinical thought, Hebrew hermeneutics, and Buber's dialogical hermeneutic.

### 3. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The work presented in the body of chapter three shows that it is possible to combine modern modes of literary understandings with ancient applications. This thesis has attempted to show that it is possible to combine models for the making of modern *midrash* without dissolving the links to ancient hermeneutics.

The thesis combined the Rabbinic and Buber models in order to promote the making of modern *midrash* in a current praxis. Keeping in mind the word limit of a Masters research thesis and the need to develop a background to the methodology chapter, two models were specifically selected. However, although the present thesis involved only the rabbinic and Buber models it is felt that other models would be worth investigating. Therefore it is suggested that the two models could be replicated with different *midrash* models, such as Zoharic or Masoretic styles of biblical interpretation.

The background chapters (one and two) were necessary towards searching out the intricate development of rabbinic thought and Buber's hermeneutic. It was deemed necessary to thoroughly search out the relationship between Buber and the Rabbis, and, the origins of the *aggadic* trope in the bible itself so apparent in the later rabbinical *midrashic* enterprise. It is the contention of this thesis that without this prior research the methodological approach of chapter three would have lacked substance in its application.

The culturally sensitive factors in this research are in themselves important aspects towards promoting understanding of the origins of the making of *midrash*. It is important to share this history with other cultures and faiths in order that parallels may be drawn from within these other cultures and faiths, in particular with regard to the writings of the New Testament. With the aforementioned practical implications in mind this research puts forward a strong suggestion for further shared research in the areas of making modern *midrash* between Jewish and Christian communities.

#### 4. FINAL COMMENTS

This research has been a study which has explored the effectiveness of modernising the approaches and improving ways of making modern *midrash*. This research was an attempt to understand and demonstrate the relationship between text and audience via the eternal gift of *midrash aggada*. The unique features of this study were firstly, the weaving together of the methodological approaches of rabbinical

thought/Hebrew hermeneutic and Buber's dialogical hermeneutic, and secondly, the presentation of two working paradigm models for the making of modern *midrash*.

Finally this thesis reiterates that the teachings of Scripture and *midrash* are intended for the reality of human situations, practical and spiritual. It has taken and will continue to take many lifetimes to explore the significance of the meanings of Scripture. We each have our own lifetime to explore the significance of meaning for ourselves. Together we have the opportunity to apply Scripture for ourselves and for those who share our lives. With this in mind this study encourages *midrashists* wherever they may be to continue delivering modern *midrashim* to audiences everywhere. It is hoped that the findings of this research hold a special interest for students and avid makers of modern *midrash*.

---

<sup>1</sup> Buber, Martin. *On Judaism*. New York: Schocken Books, 1972. 106.

<sup>2</sup> Boyarin, Daniel. *Sparks of the Logos. Essays in Rabbinic Hermeneutics*. Massachusetts: Brill Academic Publishers, 2003. ix.

<sup>3</sup> P. Ricoeur, *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning*, quoted in: Waaijman, Kees. *Spirituality: Forms, Foundations, Methods* (Studies in Spirituality, Supplement 18). Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2003. 768.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Achard, Michael, and, Susanne Niemeier. *Cognitive Linguistics, Second Language Acquisition, and Foreign Language Teaching*. New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004.

Ackroyd, P.R. "The Old Testament in the Making [From the Beginnings to Jerome]", in, P.R. Ackroyd and C.F. Evans. eds. *The Cambridge History of the Bible: Volume 1, From the Beginnings to Jerome*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970. 67-112.

Alpert, Rebecca T. "Another Perspective on Theological Directions for the Jewish Future", in, Elliot N. Dorff and Louis E. Newman. eds. *Contemporary Jewish Theology. A Reader*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. 494-7.

Alter, Robert. "Introduction to the Old Testament", in, Alter, Robert, and, Frank Kermode. eds. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 11-35.

Alter, Robert. *Partial Magic: The Novel as a Self-Conscious Genre*. Berkeley, University of California Press, 1975.

Alter, Robert. *The Art of Biblical Narrative*. New York: Basic Books, 1981.

Alter, Robert. *The Five Books of Moses. A Translation With Commentary*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2004.

Avnon, Dan. *Martin Buber. The Hidden Dialogue*. Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers Incorporated, 1998.

Bacher, W. *Die Exegetische Terminologie der Jüdischen Traditionsliteratur*. Leipzig: J.C. Hinrich, 1905. [reprinted, Darmstadt, 1965.]

Bakhtin, M.M. "Toward a reworking of the Dostoevsky book," Appendix 2, in, C. Emerson. ed., and, trans., *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.

Bar-Efrat, Shimon. *Narrative Art in the Bible*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997.

Barr, James. *The Semantics of Biblical Language*. Eugene, Oregon: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2004.

Baum, Jutta. "Queen Esther", in, Dov-Ber Kerler. ed. *History of Yiddish Studies*. Winter Studies in Yiddish. Volume 3. Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies. Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991. 71-79.

Bayfield, Tony. "Making Theological Space", in, Bayfield, Tony, and Marcus Braybrooke. eds. *Dialogue With A Difference*. London: SCM Press Ltd, 1992. 15-28.

Bercovitch, Saevan. "A Model of Cultural Transvaluation: Puritanism, Modernity, and New World Rhetoric". *Harvard University Conference Papers*. 1-2. [Available May 2008]  
<http://web.gc.cuny.edu/dept/renai/conf/Papers/Keynote/Bercovit.htm>

Beuer, Edward. "Post-medieval Jewish Interpretation", in, Adele Berlin and Zvi Brettler. eds. *The Jewish Study Bible. Tanakh Translation*. Jewish Publication Society. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. 1900-1908.

Bialik, Hayim Nahman Bialik, and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky. eds. [trans. William G. Braude] *The Book of Legends. Sefer Ha-Aggadah. Legends From The Talmud And Midrash*. New York : Schocken Books, 1992.

Bonfil, Robert. "Can Medieval Storytelling Help Understanding Midrash? The Story of Paltiel: A Preliminary Study on History and Midrash", in, Michael Fishbane. ed. *The Midrashic Imagination. Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993. 228-254.

Booth Wayne. *Critical Understanding. The Powers and Limits of Pluralism*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979.

Boyarin, Daniel. *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Boyarin, Daniel. *Sparks of the Logos. Essays in Rabbinic Hermeneutics*. Massachusetts: Brill Academic Publishers, 2003.

Brettler, Marc Z. *God is King: Understanding an Israelite Metaphor*. JSOT Supplement. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1989.

Brown, Francis, S.R. Driver, and, Charles A. Briggs. eds. *The New Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius Hebrew And English Lexicon [With An Appendix Containing The Biblical Aramaic]*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1979.

Bruns, Gerald L. "Midrash and Allegory", in, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode. eds. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 625-646.

Buber, Martin. "A Suggestion For Bible Courses", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald.] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 172-5.

Buber, Martin. [trans. Ronald Gregor Smith.] *Between Man and Man*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1947.

Buber, Martin. [trans. Maurice S. Friedman.] *Eclipse of God. Studies in the Relation between Religion and Philosophy*. New York: Harper Torchbook, 1957.

Buber, Martin. "Elements of the Interhuman", in, Martin Buber. [trans. Maurice Friedman, and, Ronald Gregor Smith.] *The Knowledge of Man*. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1965.

Buber, Martin. "From The Beginnings Of Our Bible Translation", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald.] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Buber, Martin. [trans. Ronald Gregor Smith.] *I and Thou*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1958.

Buber Martin. "Interpreting Hasidism", in, *Commentary*. 40 (September, 1963). 218-225.

Buber, Martin. "*Leitwort* and Discourse Type", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald.] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Buber, Martin. "*Leitwort* Style In Pentateuch Narrative", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald.] *Scripture And Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 114-128.

Buber, Martin. *On Judaism*. New York: Schocken Books, 1972.

Buber, Martin. "On Translating the Praisings", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 90-98

Buber, Martin. "On Word Choice in Translating the Bible: In Memoriam Franz Rosenzweig", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 73-89.

Buber, Martin. "People Today and the Jewish Bible", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 4-21.

Buber Martin, "The Dialogue Between Heaven and Earth", in, Martin Buber. *At The Turning. Three Addresses In Judaism*. New York: Farrar, Straus & Young, 1952.

Buber, Martin. "The How and Why of Our Bible Translation", in, Buber, Martin, and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994. 205-19.

Buber, Solomon. ed. [trans. William G. Braude.] *Midrash on Psalms (Midrash Tehillim)*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.

Buber, Solomon. ed. [trans. John T. Townsend.] *Midrash Tanhuma*. Hoboken, New Jersey: Ktav, 1997.

Cartwright, Andrea M. S. *Martin Buber: Poet of the Synapse*. Conference on Values in Higher Education. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee, 1997. [Available May 2008] <http://web.utk.edu/~unistudy/values/proc1997/ac.htm>

Chayim, Chafetz. *The Concise Book of Mitzvoth*. New York: Feldheim Publishers, 1990.

Clark, Gregory. *Dialogue, Dialectic, and Conversation: A Social Perspective on the Function of Writing*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1990.

Cohen, A. "The Megillot". Volume 12. A. Cohen. ed. *Soncino Books Of The Bible*. Jewish Publication Society of America. New York: The Soncino Press, 1983.

Cohen, A. "The Psalms". Volume 9. A. Cohen. ed. *Soncino Books Of The Bible*. Jewish Publication Society of America. New York: The Soncino Press, 1985.

Cohen, A. *The Soncino Chumash. The Five Books of Moses*. The Soncino Books Of The Bible. London: The Soncino Press, 1983.

Cohen, Norman. "Love Your Enemy? No Way? Treat Him Fairly. Way?", in, *Living Torah. Torat Hayim*. Vol. 7, no. 18. February 1, 2003.

Cohen, Norman. "Parashat Mishpatim, Exodus 21:1-24:18", in, *Living Torah, Torat Hayim*. Vol. 7, no. 18. February 1, 2003 (1). 1-3.

Cooper, David. *God Is A Verb. Kabbalah and the practice of mystical Judaism*. New York: Riverhead Books, 1997.

Curtis, E.L. and A.A. Madsen. *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Chronicles*. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1910.

Diamond, James A. "King David of the Sages: Rabbinic Rehabilitation or Ironic Parody?", in, *Prooftexts: A Journal of Jewish Literary History*. Volume 27. No 3. [Fall 2007]. 323-426.



Diamond, James Arthur. *Maimonides and the Hermeneutics of Concealment. Deciphering Scripture and Midrash in The Guide of the Perplexed*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2002.

Dorsey, David. "Another Peculiar Term In The Book of Chronicles: מסלה, 'Highway'?", in, *The Jewish Quarterly Review*, New Series, Volume 75: No 4 (April 1985). 385-391.

Dotan, Aron. *Biblia Hebraica Leningradensia*. Prepared according to the Vocalization, Accents, and Masora of Aaron ben Moses Asher in the Leningrad Codex. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 2001.

Dowling, Jennifer. "Riddle and Riddle Parodies", in, Dov-Ber Kerler. ed. *History of Yiddish Studies*. Winter Studies in Yiddish. Volume 3. Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies. Chur, Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991. 81-92.

Elbaum, Jacob. "Rabbi Judah Leow of Prague and his Attitude to the Aggadah", in, Joseph Heinemann and Dov Noy. eds. *Studies in Aggadah and Folk-Literature*. Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1971. 28-47. 39.

Elman, Yaakov. "Classical Rabbinic Interpretation", in, Adele Berlin and Zvi Brettler. eds. *The Jewish Study Bible. Tanakh Translation*. Jewish Publication Society. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. 1844-1863.

Elman, Yaakov. "The Rebirth of Omnisignificant Biblical Exegesis in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries", in, JSIJ [Jewish Studies, Internet Journal] Israel: Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan, 2 (2003). 199-249. [Available September 2008] <http://www.biu.ac.il/JS/JSIJ/2-2003/Elman.pdf>

Emerson, Ralph Waldo. *Essays and Poems*. New York: New York Library of America, 1996.

Epstein, Isidore. ed. *Babylonian Talmud [Soncino Talmud]*. 18 volumes. New York: Soncino Press, 1990.

Eskenazi, Tamara C. "Perspectives from Jewish Exegesis", in, Daniel Smith-Christopher. ed. *Text & Experience. Towards a Cultural Exegesis of the Bible*. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995. 82-103.

Feldman, Aharon. *The Juggler And The King: An Elaboration of Vilna Gaon's Interpretations of the Hidden Wisdom of the Sages*. Spring Valley, New York: Philipp Feldheim Inc, 1991.

Fine, Lawrence. "Kabbalistic Texts", in, Barry W. Holtz. ed. *Back To The Sources. Reading The Classic Jewish Texts*. New York: Summit Books, 1984. 305-359.

- Finkelstein, Louis. ed. *Sifre on Deuteronomy*. New York: Ktav Pub Inc, 1969.
- Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.
- Fishbane, Michael. *Biblical Text and Texture. A literary Reading of Selected Texts*. Oxford: Oneworld, 1998.
- Fishbane, Michael. "Introduction", in, Martin Buber. *Moses*. New Jersey: Humanities Press, 1987.
- Fishbane, Michael. *The Exegetical Imagination. On Jewish Thought and Theology*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Fishbane, Michael. *The Garments of Torah. Essays in Biblical Hermeneutics*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.
- Fishbane, Michael. ed. *The Midrashic Imagination. Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993.
- Fohrer, G. "Tradition and Interpretation *Im Alten Testament*," in, ZAW [*Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*] 73, 1961. 1-30. [Available May 2008] [www.degruyter.de/rs/261\\_5248\\_ENU\\_h.htm](http://www.degruyter.de/rs/261_5248_ENU_h.htm)
- Fokkelman, J.P. "Genesis", in, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode. eds. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 68.
- Fox, Everett. *The Five Books of Moses. A New Translation With Introductions, Commentary, and Notes*. New York: Schocken Books, 1997.
- Freedman, H., and Maurice Simon. eds. [trans. S.M. Lehrman.] *Midrash Rabbah*. Volume 3. *Exodus*. New York: Soncino Press, 1951.
- Freedman H. and Maurice Simon. eds. [trans. S.M. Lehrman.] *Midrash Rabbah*. Volume 1. *Genesis*. London: Soncino Press, 1961.
- Friedman, Asher. *Imitate The Rambam, Not The Professors. An Interview with Rabbi Shalom Carmy*. The Lookstein Center: *Hamevaser*. Vol. 38. No 1. 1-5. 4. [Available April 2006]: [http://www.lookstein.org/articles/imitate\\_ramban.htm](http://www.lookstein.org/articles/imitate_ramban.htm)
- Friedman, Maurice. "Martin Buber and Mikhail Bakhtin: The Dialogue of Voices and The Word That Is Spoken", in, Banathy, Bela H., and, Patrick M. Jenlink. eds. *Dialogue as a Means of Collective Communication*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2005. 29-147.
- Friedman, Maurice. *Martin Buber's Life and Work*. 3 Volumes. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988.

Friedman, Maurice. *Martin Buber. The Life of Dialogue*. New York: Harper Brothers, 1960.

Friedman, Maurice. "My Dialogue with Dialogue", in, Banathy, Bela H., and, Patrick M. Jenlink. eds. *Dialogue as a Means of Collective Communication*. New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2005. 137-58.

Friedman, Shamma. "The Talmudic Proverb In Its Cultural Setting", in, James L. Kugel. ed. *Jewish Studies An Internet Journal*. JSIJ2. Faculty of Jewish Studies, Ramat Gan, Israel: Bar Ilan University, 2003.

Gidal, Nachum T. *Jews in Germany. From Roman Times to the Weimar Republic*. Koln: Konemann, 1998.

Glatzer, Nahum. "Buber as an Interpreter of the Bible", in, P. Schilpp and M. Friedman. eds. *The Philosophy of Martin Buber*. La Salle, Illinois: Open Court Publishing, 1967.

Glatzer, N. ed. *The Way of Response. Martin Buber. Selections from his Writings*. New York: Schocken Books, 1972.

Goldberg, Hillel. *Mishpatim*. JWR Thought. February 19, 1998/ 23 Shevat, 5758.

Goldenberg, Robert. "Talmud", in, Barry W. Holtz. ed. *Back To The Sources. Reading The Classic Jewish Texts*. New York: Summit Books, 1984. 129-175.

Green, Arthur. *A Guide To The Zohar*. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2004.

Greenberg, Moshe. "Job", in, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode. eds. *The Literary Guide To The Bible*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 283-304.

Greenstein, Edward L. "Medieval Bible Commentaries", in, Barry W. Holtz. ed. *Back To The Sources. Reading The Classic Jewish Texts*. New York: Summit Books, 1984. 213-259.

Greenstein, Edward L. "The Language of Job and Its Poetic Function", in, *Journal of Biblical Literature*. 122:2003. 651-66.

Grossfeld, Bernard. [trans.] *The Two Targums of Esther (Aramaic Bible)*. Colledgeville: Michael Glazier Books, The Liturgical Press, 1991.

Gruenwald, Ithamar. "Midrash & The 'Midrashic Condition': Preliminary Considerations", in, Michael Fishbane. ed. *The Midrashic Imagination. Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History*. New York: State University of New York Press, 1993. 6-22.

Guggenheimer, Heinrich W. ed. *The Jerusalem Talmud*. 3 volumes. Berlin: Gruyter, 2000.

Halivni, David Weiss. *Peshat & Derash. Plain and Applied Meaning in Rabbinic Exegesis*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Hammer, Reuven. ed. *The Classic Midrash. Tannaitic Commentaries On The Bible*. New York: Paulist Press, 1995.

Hasan-Rokem, Galit. "Hebrew Riddles: 'Who Am I and What is My Name' Defining Genre", in, Galit Hasan-Rokem and David Shulman. eds. *Untying The Knot: On Riddles and Other Enigmatic Modes*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. 109-124.

Hasan-Rokem, Galit. ed. [trans. Batya Stein.] *Web of Life: Folklore and Midrash in Rabbinic Literature*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000.

Heinemann, Joseph. [trans. R. Sarason.] *Prayer in the Talmud. Forms and Patterns*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1977.

Heinemann, Joseph. [trans. Marc Bregman.] "The Nature of the Aggadah", in, Geoffrey Hartman and Sanford Budick. eds. *Midrash and Literature*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.

Hobart, Mark. *The Subject of the Subject. Philosophical Background to a Critical Reconsideration of the Problems in Studying Non-Western Media*. [SOAS] School of Oriental and African Studies. [Media Research Group.] London: University of London, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1997. [Available September 2008] <http://www.criticalia.org/Articles/>

Holladay, William L. ed. *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*. (Based Upon The Lexical Work of Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner). Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988.

Holtz, Barry W. "Midrash", in, Barry W. Holtz. ed. *Back To The Sources. Reading The Classic Jewish Texts*. New York: Summit Books, 1984. 177-211.

Hutton, Christopher. "Noyakh Prilutski: Philosopher of Language", in, Dov-Ber Kerler. ed. *History of Yiddish Studies*. Winter Studies in Yiddish. Volume 3. Oxford Centre for Postgraduate Hebrew Studies. Switzerland: Harwood Academic Publishers. 1991.

Hyamson, Albert M, and A. M. Silbermann. eds. *Vallentine's Jewish Encyclopaedia*. London: Shapiro, Vallentine & Co, 1938.

Idel, Moshe. "Midrashic versus Other Forms of Jewish Hermeneutics: Some Comparative Reflections", in, Michael Fishbane. ed. *The Midrashic*

*Imagination. Jewish Exegesis, Thought, and History.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993. 45-58.

Jacobs, Louis. *Jewish Preaching. Homilies and Sermons.* Portland: Vallentine Mitchell, 2004.

Jacobs, Louis. *The Jewish Religion. A Companion.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

Jacobson, David C. *Modern Midrash: The Retelling of Traditional Jewish Narratives by Twentieth Century Hebrew Writers.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987.

Judaica Press Complete Tanach with Rashi. Chabad.Org Library. [Available February 2009] [http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/63255/jewish/The-Bible-with-Rashi.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/63255/jewish/The-Bible-with-Rashi.htm)

Kantor, Jacob Robert, "Cultural Personality the Product of Socialization: Cultural Personality as Human Nature", in, Jacob Robert Kantor. *An Outline of Social Psychology.* Chicago: Follett Publishing. The Mead Project, 2007.

Karff, Samuel E. *Agada: The Language of Jewish Faith.* Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1979.

Katz, Michael, and, Gershon Schwartz. *Searching For Meaning In Midrash.* Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society. 2002.

Kepnes, Steven. *The Text As Thou. Martin Buber's Dialogical Hermeneutics and Narrative Theology.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.

Kimhi, David. [Commentary] *Nevi'im Ahronim* [Later Prophets]. Lombardy, Italy: Joshua Solomon Soncino, 1486.

Knight, D. *Rediscovering the Traditions of Israel.* SBLDS [Society Biblical Literature Dissertation Series] 9. Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975.

Kolatch, Yonatan. *Masters of the Word. Traditional Jewish Bible Commentary From the First Through Tenth Centuries. Volume I.* New York: Ktav Publishing House, 2006.

Kornfeld, Mordecai. *The Fast Of The 9<sup>th</sup> Av (Parashat Devarim) 5757.* No I: "The Great Debate". No II: "A Time For Victory, A Time For Defeat". No III: "Every Defeat Can Become A Victory". Jerusalem: Har Nof, Judaica Print, 1997.

Kugel, James. "Two Introductions to Midrash", in, Hartman, Geoffrey H., and Sanford Budick. eds. *Midrash and Literature.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986.

Lauterbach, Jacob. ed. *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*. 3 volumes. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1933-1935.

Levenson, Jon D. *The Hebrew Bible, The Old Testament, and Historical Criticism. Jews and Christians in Biblical Studies*. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993.

Loewe, Raphael. "The 'Plain' Meaning of Scripture in Early Jewish Exegesis", in, *Papers of the Institute of Jewish Studies*. London: University College London. Bulletin and Papers I, 1964. 140-185.

Loewenthal, Naftali. "Hebrew and the Habad Communication Ethos", in, Lewis Glinert. ed. *Hebrew in Ashkenaz. A Language in Exile*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1993. 167-192.

Maimonides, Moses. [trans. Schlomo Pines]. *The Guide of the Perplexed*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963.

Magonet, Jonathan. *The Biblical Roots of Jewish Identity. Exploring the Relativity of Exegesis*. JSOT 54 (1992) 3-24.

Margulies, Mordecai. ed. *Midrash ha-Gadol on the Pentateuch: Genesis*. Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1967.

Marin, Louis. "On the Interpretation of Ordinary Language: A Parable of Pascal", in, Josue V. Harari. ed. *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structural Criticism*. Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1979.

Mendes-Flohr, Paul. "Buber and Post-Traditional Judaism", in, *European Judaism*. 12:2, 1987:118.

Meyerowitz, Yisrael. *Hasidic Primary Works in English Translation*. Proceedings of the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Convention of the Association of Jewish Libraries. Brooklyn, New York, June 20-23, 2004. 1. [Available May 2008] <http://www.jewishlibraries.org/ajlweb/publications/proceedings/proceedings2004/meyerowitz.pdf>

Michels, Jordan. *Daven'n (Prayer) with a Jewish Heart*. [Available September 2008] <http://adolam.org/Daven.pdf>

Neusner, Jacob. *A Midrash Reader*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990.

Neusner, Jacob. *A Theological Commentary to the Midrash. Volume Four. Leviticus Rabbah*. Studies in Ancient Judaism. Lanham: University Press of America, 2001.

Neusner, Jacob. *Judaism in Modern Times*. Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 1995.

Neusner, Jacob. ed. *Song of Songs Rabbah*. 2 Volumes. Florida: South Florida University Press, 1989-90.

Neusner, Jacob. *The Classics of Judaism. A Textbook and Reader*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995.

Ochs, Peter. "Torah, Language and Philosophy: A Jewish Critique", in, *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*. 18:115-122 (1985).115.

Orlinsky, Harry M. Editor-in-Chief. *The Jewish Bible. TANAKH. THE HOLY SCRIPTURES*. The New JPS Translation According To The Traditional Hebrew Text. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1985.

Orr, Mary. *Intertextuality: Debates and Contexts*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2003.

Patterson, David. *Hebrew Language and Jewish Thought*. Abingdon: Routledge, 2005.

Pearl, Chaim. *Theology In Rabbinic Stories*. Peabody, Massachusetts: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997.

Peltonen, Kai. *History Debated. The Historical Reliability of Chronicles in Pre-Critical and Critical Research*. Volume I. The Finnish Exegetical Society in Helsinki. Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996.

Peters, Simi. *Learning to Read Midrash*. Jerusalem: Urim Publications, 2004.

Rabinowitz, Louis Isaac. "Parable in Talmud and Midrash", in, Jacob Neusner. et al. *Encyclopedia of Midrash: Biblical Interpretation in formative Judaism*. Leiden, Boston: Brill Academic Publishers, 2004. 72-77.

Rabinowitz, Louis Issac. "Peshat", in, *Encyclopedia Judaica* [CD-ROM] Keter Publishing House. Judaica Multimedia (Israel Ltd), 2002.

Rapaport, William J. *In Defense of Contextual Vocabulary Acquisition: How to do Things with Words in Context*. Buffalo, New York: State University of New York at Buffalo, 2000.

Rashi. [Rabbi Shlomo ben Issac.] *Torah (Hamishe Humshe)*. Bologna, 1482, and, Lisbon, 1491. Yale: Yale University Library. Incunabula No: Zi +6557, and, Zi +9835.

Reichert, Victor E. [rev. A.J. Rosenberg.] "Job". Volume 11. A. Cohen. ed. *Soncino Books Of The Bible*. Jewish Publication Society of America. New York: The Soncino Press, 1985.

Ribner, Melinda. *New Age Judaism. Ancient Wisdom For The Modern World*. Deerfield Beach, Florida: Simcha Press, 2000. 33.

Rojtman, Betty. [trans. Steven Rendall.] *Black Fire On White Fire. An Essay on Jewish Hermeneutics, from Midrash to Kabbalah*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998.

Rosen, David. *Judaism & Universal Morality – Reflections on Jewish Texts*. [Available May 2009] <http://www.rabbidavidrosen.net/Articles/Judaism/>

Rosenzweig, Franz. "The Secret of Biblical Narrative Form", in, Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig. [trans. Lawrence Rosenwald.] *Scripture and Translation*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994.

Rosenzweig, Franz. [trans. William W. Hallo] *The Star of Redemption*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1985.

Rothstein, David. "Chronicles", in, Adele Berlin and Zvi Brettler. eds. *The Jewish Study Bible. Tanakh Translation*. Jewish Publication Society. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Samuelson, Norbert M. *The First Seven Days. A Philosophical Commentary on the Creation of Genesis*. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1992.

Sarna, N. *Studies in Biblical Interpretation*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 2000.

Sax, Benjamin. *Language and Jewish Identity: Franz Rosenzweig's "New Thinking" and the Revalorization of Biblical Speech*. Blacksburg: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, 2009. 13.

Scholem, Gersom. *On Jews and Judaism in Crisis*. New York: Schocken Books, 1976.

Schwartz, Howard. *Reimagining the Bible. The Storytelling of the Rabbis*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1998. 233.

Schwartz, Howard. *Tree of Souls: The Mythology of Judaism*. New York, Oxford University Press, 2004.

Seeligmann, I.L. *Voraussetzungen der Midrashexegese*. [Prerequisite of *Midrash* exegesis.] VTSup 1. (Leiden 1953). 150-81.

Seeskin, Kenneth. "Buber, Martin. 1878-1965", in, Robert Audi. ed. *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*. Second Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 104a.



Sharkansky, Ira. *The Politics of Religion and the Religion of Politics*. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2002. 15.

Signer, Michael. *Rashi as Narrator*. S. 103-110. Paris-Louvain: E. Peeters, 1997. 4,5. [Available March 2009] <http://www.aroumah.net/agora/signer01-rashi.php>

Simon, Maurice and S.M. Lehrman. eds. [trans. H. Freedman.] *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*. Volumes 1, 2 & 3. New York: Soncino Press, 1951.

Slotki I.W. "Chronicles". Volume 14. Cohen A. ed. *Soncino Books Of The Bible*. Hebrew Text and English Translation. Jewish Publication Society of America. New York: The Soncino Press, 1985.

Snitkoff, Rabbi E. "Always Live in the Land of Israel: In Rabbinic Literature the Land Was Of Primary Importance", in, *Land of Israel. Biblical & Rabbinical : Rabbinic Literature*. New York: My Jewish Learning Inc, 2002. [Available March 2009] <http://myjewishlearning.com/aboutus/abindex.htm>

Sommer, Benjamin D. "Inner-biblical Interpretation", in, Adele Berlin and Zvi Brettler. eds. *The Jewish Study Bible. Tanakh Translation*. Jewish Publication Society. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. 1829-1835.

Sperling, David. "Modern Jewish Interpretation", in, Adele Berlin and Zvi Brettler. eds. *The Jewish Study Bible. Tanakh Translation*. Jewish Publication Society. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. 1908-1919.

Sperling, Harry and Maurice Simon [trans.] eds. *The Zohar. An English Translation*. Volume I. Second Edition. New York: The Soncino Press, 1984.

Sperling, Harry, Maurice Simon and Paul P. Levertoff.[trans.] eds. *The Zohar. An English Translation*. Volume III. Second Edition. New York: The Soncino Press, 1984.

Stanton, Mary and Albert Hyma. *Streams of Civilization*. Volume I. Arlington Heights: Christian Liberty Press, 1992. 364.

Stein, Dina. "A King, a Queen, and the Riddle Between: Riddles and Interpretation in a Late Midrashic Text", in, Galit Hasan-Rokem and David Shulman. eds. *Untying The Knot: On Riddles and Other Enigmatic Modes*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996. 125-149.

Steinbach and Alexander Alan. "Rosh Hashanah Parables", in, Philip Goodman. ed. *The Rosh Hashanah Anthology*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1992. 122-136.

Steiner, Richard C. "Ancient Hebrew", in, Robert Hetzron. ed. *The Semitic Languages*. London: Routledge, 1997.

Stemberger, Gunter. [trans. Markus Bockmuehl.] *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*. Second Edition. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1996.

Stern, David. "Introduction", in, Hayim Nahman Bialik and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky. eds. [trans. William G. Braude.] *The Book Of Legends. Sefer Ha-Aggadah*. Legends From The Talmud And Midrash. New York: Schocken Books, 1992. xvii-xxii.

Stern, David. "Midrash and Jewish Interpretation", in, Adele Berlin and Zvi Brettler. eds. *The Jewish Study Bible. Tanakh Translation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. 1863-1875.

Stern, David. *Midrash And Theory. Ancient Jewish Exegesis and Contemporary Literary Studies*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 1996.

Stern, David. *Parables In Midrash. Narrative And Exegesis In Rabbinic Literature*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1994.

Sternberg, Meir. *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987.

Talmon, Shemaryahu. "1 and 2 Chronicles", in, Robert Alter and Frank Kermode. eds. *The Literary Guide to the Bible*. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987. 365-372.

Tarr, Hebert. "Chronicles", in, Rosenberg, David. *Congregation. Contemporary Writers Read The Jewish Bible*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1987. 497-511.

Templeton, John. *Agape Love. A Tradition Found In Eight World Languages*. Pennsylvania: Templeton Press, 1999.

Tregelles, Samuel Prideaux. ed. *Gesenius's Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures*. London: Samuel Bagster & Sons Limited, 1884.

Trepp, Leo. *A History Of The Jewish Experience. Eternal Faith, Eternal People*. New Jersey: Behrman House Inc, 1973.

Uffenheimer, Benyamin. "Buber and Modern Biblical Scholarship", in, H. Gordon and J. Bloch. eds. *Martin Buber: A Centenary Volume*. New York: KTAV, 1984.

Urban, Sylvanus. *The Gentleman's Magazine: And Historical Chronicle*. January-June 1826. Volume XCVI. London: John Nichols and Son, 1826.

Waaijman, Kees. *Spirituality: Forms, Foundations, Methods* (Studies in Spirituality, Supplement 18). Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2003.

Waldberg, Shmuel. *Sefer Darkhey Ha-Shinuyim*. Lemberg: Menkes, 1870. [reprinted, Jerusalem: Makor, 1970.]

Walfish, Barry D. "Medieval Jewish Interpretation", in, Adele Berlin and Zvi Brettler. eds. *The Jewish Study Bible. Tanakh Translation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. 1876-1900.

Weiss, Avraham. "Black Fire on White Fire: The Power of Story", in, Peninnah Schram. ed. *Chosen Tales. Stories Told By Jewish Storytellers*. Northvale, New Jersey: Jason Aronson Inc, 1995.

Wolfson, Elliot R. "From Sealed Book to Open Text: Time, Memory, and Narrativity in Kabbalistic Hermeneutics", in, Kepnes, Steven. *Interpreting Judaism In A Postmodern Age*. Albany: New York University Press, 1996. 145-178.

Wolfson, Elliot R. *Through A Speculum That Shines. Vision And Imagination In Medieval Jewish Mysticism*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1994.

Yaron, Zvi. [trans. Avner Tomaschoff.] *The Philosophy of Rabbi Kook*. Israel: WZO, 1981.

Yuval, Israel Jacob. [trans. Barbara Harshav and Jonathan Chipman.] *Two Nations In Your Womb. Perceptions of Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006.

Zimmerman, Frank. "Chronicles As A Partially Translated Book", in, *The Jewish Quarterly Review*. New Series. Volume 42. No 3 (Jan 1952). 265-282.

## GLOSSARY

<i>aggada</i>	telling and retelling
<i>aggadot</i> pl.	"tellings", <i>ha-aggadot</i> = the "tellings"
<i>alefbet</i>	alphabet
<i>al tiqre</i>	similar words, and/or cognates
<i>Ashkenazim</i>	the <i>Ashkenazic</i> Jews, descended from the Medieval Jewish communities of the Rhineland (West Germany) and Northern France
<i>biur</i>	commentary
<i>chariza</i>	adjoining links into a chain
<i>chiddush</i>	participation in creation [exegesis as re-creation, the rediscovery of an eternal reality]
<i>darash</i>	seek, inquire
<i>darshan</i>	homilist
<i>darshanut</i>	transvaluation
<i>darshanut ha-derek murkav</i>	complex transvaluation
<i>darshanut ha-derek rishoni</i>	simple transvaluation
<i>darshanut-ham'latzah</i>	transvaluative exhortation, homiletics
<i>doresh</i>	metaphoric explanation
<i>ein mikra yotze midei p'shuto</i>	grasp words in relation to context
<i>emunah</i>	faithology
<i>Gemara</i>	the sections of the <i>Talmud</i> that contain Rabbinical commentaries and analysis of the <i>Mishnah</i>
<i>ha-avar ha-kadosh</i>	the set apart "there and then"
<i>ha-ma'aseh be'hoveh</i>	the set in action "here and now"

<i>ha-gibor</i>	the hero, the strong one
<i>ha-gufa</i>	the matter itself
<i>halakha</i>	legal aspects
<i>hameivin yavin</i>	the one who understands will understand
<i>ha-pachdan</i>	the weak one
<i>ha-shivim panim laTorah</i>	the seventy faces of <i>Torah</i>
<i>Hasidei Ashkenaz</i>	literally "the Pious of Germany" a Jewish movement founded by Rabbi Judah the Pious (12 <sup>th</sup> Century)
<i>Hasidism</i>	the practice of Hasidic Judaism, a pious orthodox movement.
<i>Haskhalah</i>	The Jewish Enlightenment
<i>Heikhalot</i>	mystical writings
<i>hidah</i>	riddle
<i>hidot</i> pl.	riddles
<i>hitchadshut</i>	comprehension
<i>kakatuv / kemo shekatuv</i>	what is written, as is written
<i>Kethuvim</i>	The Writings, the third section of the Jewish Bible ( <i>Tanakh</i> )
<i>ketib</i>	(as is) written
<i>lefi kocham</i>	according to one's capacity and personality
<i>Leitwort</i>	leading word, key word
<i>Leitwörter</i> pl.	leading words, key words
<i>limmud torah</i>	<i>Torah</i> study
<i>lishmor ve'laasot</i>	keeping and enacting <i>Torah</i> [adding...clarifying...and expounding anew in each generation]

<i>machloket</i>	disagreement, the right to disagree
<i>magihim</i>	correctors, revisers
<i>mai nafkah minah?</i>	What is the practical application of this principal?
<i>ma'aseh</i>	action statement, good deed tale
<i>ma'asot</i> pl.	action statements, good deed tales
<i>mashal</i>	example, parable
<i>masoret / masorah</i>	tradition
<i>megillah</i>	book
<i>megillot</i> pl.	books
<i>meshalim</i> pl.	examples, parables
<i>midah</i>	(exegetical) rule, principal
<i>middot</i>	(exegetical) rules, principals
<i>midrash, Midrash</i>	transvaluative commentary, The Classical rabbinical commentary
<i>midrashim, Midrashim</i> pl.	(Classical) commentaries (collection of)
<i>milah manchah</i>	"keyword", Hebrew for <i>Leitwort</i>
<i>minhag</i>	custom base
<i>mishle shualim</i>	fox parables
<i>Mishnah</i>	the Classical written redaction codex of Jewish oral traditions dating from 536 BCE - 70CE, also known as <i>Shas</i> (an acronym of <i>Shisha Sedarim</i> , the "six orders")
<i>mitzvah</i>	precept
<i>mitzvot</i> pl.	precepts
<i>mussar</i>	ethical lesson
<i>nequdot</i> pl.	vowels

<i>Nevi'im</i>	The Prophets, the second section of the Jewish Bible ( <i>Tanakh</i> )
<i>nifal</i>	The "passive voice" form of a Hebrew verb
<i>nimshal</i>	comparison
<i>niqqud</i>	vowel
<i>oti</i>	consonant
<i>otiot</i> pl.	consonants
<i>paronomasia</i>	pun, word play
<i>parash</i>	explain, make distinct, expound
<i>parashah</i>	section of <i>Torah</i> (read on Shabbat)
<i>parashot</i> pl.	sections of <i>Torah</i>
<i>parshanut</i>	interpretation
<i>parshanut emunah b'-Elohim</i>	interpretation of belief in God, faithology
<i>parshanut ha-Mikra</i>	literally, "interpretation of the Calling", studying the Scriptures alongside biblical commentaries.
<i>parshanut rishoni</i>	primary interpretation
<i>parshanut sh'ni</i>	secondary interpretation
<i>parshtan</i>	reader of Scripture
<i>pasuq</i>	verse
<i>peshat</i>	literal-contextual, contextual meaning
<i>petitha</i>	literally, "a sign that opens something", a literary piece after the form of a poem
<i>Purim</i>	Jewish festival which celebrates the deliverance of the Jewish people as told in the Book of Esther

<i>qal</i>	The "active voice" form of a Hebrew verb
<i>qere</i>	(what is) read
<i>sedarim</i>	divisions of Scripture
<i>sefer mugah</i>	corrected scroll
<i>sefer se'eno mugah</i>	a scroll that is not corrected
<i>Sephardim</i>	Jews of Diaspora from the Iberian Peninsula and North Africa
<i>sha'ashua</i>	reveling in <i>Torah</i>
<i>shoresh</i>	root verb
<i>sofer</i>	scribe
<i>soferim</i> pl.	scribes
<i>ta'am</i>	accentuation mark
<i>talmidei chakhamim</i>	learned in <i>Torah/ Talmud</i> , scholars
<i>Talmud</i>	the Classical record of rabbinic discussions pertaining to Jewish law, ethics, customs and history. Comprised of commentaries on the <i>Mishnah</i> redacted as the <i>Gemara</i>
<i>TANAKH, Tanakh</i>	acronym from <i>Torah, Nevi'im, Kethuvim</i> , the three sections of the Jewish Bible
<i>te'amim</i>	accentuation marks
<i>tirgum</i>	translation
<i>ti'teq</i>	transliterate
<i>toledot</i>	generations
<i>Torah</i>	The first section of the Jewish Bible



(Tanakh), often called The Five Books of Moses/Pentateuch, *Torah* sometimes refers to the entire Bible.

*Tora'ot* pl.

The two *Torah*: the "written" *Torah* and the "oral" *Torah*

*Zohar*

a group of books which include interpretation of scripture, together a mystical commentary on the *Torah* written in medieval Aramaic, considered to be the work of *Kabbalists* (esoteric commentators)