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CHAPTER TWO

Words and Phrases

The poet uses the word. The speaker uses the word. The poet uses the word which the speaker uses. But the word of the poet is not the same as the word of the speaker.

We have already spoken about the difference.[1] It has already been noted that in the language of speech the word is only a means, the husk which holds the inner content, whereas in the language of poetry the word is not a means but a completion, not the husk but the fruit itself. In order to explain the difference, modern critics of poetry[2] say that spoken words are like spectacles through which one sees the world, they are signs that name the entity they represent. They show the way to the world. In the language of poetry the word is reality: we do not see the world *through* it, but rather the world is mirrored *in* it. It does not lead us to reality, rather, in it we experience reality. "The poetic word is a microcosm".[3]

There is another important and essential distinction between the poetic word and the word in common or scientific language. In the language of science the word has but one meaning, clearly and sharply defined. And while in the language of daily speech every word has many meanings — as modern semantics has sufficiently proved[4] — all the possible meanings

1. Above, p. 23. On the uniqueness of literary language, see also W. Nowothny, *The Language Poets Use*, London [1968]. Compare also L. Alonso Schökel, "Hermeneutics in the Light of Language and Literature", *CBQ*, XXV (1963), pp. 378-381.
2. E.g. J. -P. Sartre, *What is Literature?* (transl. by B. Frechtman), London [1950], pp. 5-8; J. Pfeiffer, *Umgang mit Dichtung*[7], Hamburg 1952, p. 12; H. Seidler, *Die Dichtung*, Stuttgart [1959], pp. 22-37.
3. Sartre, *op. cit.* (note 2, above), p. 8.
4. As stated, for example, by J. R. Firth: "The linguist studying the common tongue can declare that 'each word when used in a new context is a new word' " ("Modes of Meaning", in: *Essays and Studies of the English Association*, N.S., IV[1951], p. 118).

are generally known and agreed upon by convention. The speaker has one of these meanings in mind, and the hearer, in most cases, knows which meaning is intended.

In the language of poetry too the word has many meanings, but here the meanings are not all known or agreed upon. The word is a wild growth in the personal garden of the poet. At times it does not obey accepted and conventional linguistic norms, it does not follow its scientific etymology, but rather popular usage. Sometimes the poetic word pays no heed to its historic associations, but only to the personal association assigned to it by the poet. Sometimes there are emotional overtones, much more powerful than the conceptual meaning of the word. Sometimes the poet intends the word to be understood in several senses simultaneously. However, in these cases the different meanings do not proceed in one line of thought, but are rather like separate threads twisted together, each existing separately despite their close connection, alternately revealed and concealed. When we speak of ambiguity in poetry, we do not mean that the poet intended one meaning and the others are subordinate; rather, that there *is* no primary and no secondary meaning. The composition is polyphonic and all the voices are equal.[5]

According to R. Jakobson: "The variability of meanings, particularly their manifold and far-reaching figurative shifts, and an incalculable aptitude for multiple paraphrases are just those properties of national languages which induce its creativity and endow not only poetic but even scientific activities with a continuously inventive sweep. Here, indefiniteness and creative power appear to be wholly interrelated" (*Linguistics in Relation to Other Sciences*, New York-Evanston-San Francisco-London 1975, p. 21).

5. Ambiguity in poetry is one of the central tenets of New Criticism, and is associated with the name of I. A. Richards, who states, for example: "Often the whole utterance in which the co-operating meanings of the component words hang on one another is not itself stable in meaning. It utters not one meaning but a *movement* among meanings" (*The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, New York 1965, p. 48. — italics original). In fact it was his disciple W. Empson who became renowned for his studies of ambiguity (see especially: *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, New York 1966). In his most precise analyses of poetic passages differing in style and from different periods, Empson shows how the poetic experience is sustained and enriched by the double, triple, or otherwise multiple wealth of meanings of poetic language. See further below, pp. 192ff., notes 16-17. Compare also S. E. Hyman, *The Armed Vision*, New York 1955, pp. 237 ff; Nowothny, *op. cit.* (note 1, above), pp. 146-173. According to R. S. Crane: "The essence of poetic speech is not clarity but ambiguity in William Empson's sense of any verbal nuance .... which gives room for alternative reactions to the same piece of language" (*The Languages of*

Finally, the poet, combining words to make up a sentence, does not view them as inanimate symbols, but rather as living creatures, who maintain necessary relations of mutual attraction and repulsion. Aryeh Ludwig Strauss used to convey this idea to his students[6] by quoting the couplet of Samuel Hanagid:

> And there is a word beside another word that it hates, and a different one that loves its fellow. And all my words that I choose love to go coupled like a bride and groom.

Remote in time, space and culture we hear Sartre's definition: "The words-things are grouped by magical associations of fitness and incongruity, like colours and sounds. They attract, repel, and '*burn*' one another, and their association composes the veritable poetic unity which is the *phrase-object*".[7]

Anyone who wishes to interpret a poetic creation according to its true spirit, i.e. to understand that which makes it poetry, must take all this into account. He has to set before him the statement of Wellek and Warren: "The meaning of poetry is contextual: a word carries with it not only its dictionary meaning but an aura of synonyms and homonyms. Words not only have a meaning but evoke the meaning of words related either in sound, or in sense, or in derivation".[8]

It follows that to explain a word on the basis of its meaning as defined

Criticism and the Structure of Poetry, Toronto 1953, p. 101). B. Müller claims that the present-day semantic crisis in philosophy and science caused by the erosion of words which have become imprecise and ambiguous does not affect literature. For ambiguity, imprecision, suggestiveness and the close connection between sound and sense — all these are the unique features of literary language and the source of its creative power. There is neither need nor justification to waive them in the literature for the sake of "mathematical precision" ("Der Verlust der Sprache — Zur linguistische Krise in der Literatur", *GRM*, XVI [1966], pp. 225-243). This approach, however, has numerous opponents, most of whom disagree not with the principle of ambiguity, but only with its exaggerated application. Among recent treatments of ambiguity are H. Bloom, *A Map of Misreading*, New York 1975; Sh. Rimmon, *The Concept of Ambiguity — the Example of James*, Chicago 1977; S. Wittig, "A Theory of Multiple Meanings", *Semeia*, IX (1977), pp. 75-103. See also D. F. Payne, "OT Exegesis and the Problem of Ambiguity", *Annual of the Swedish Theological Institute*, V (1967), pp. 48-68.

6. Orally from Prof. Nechama Leibowitz.
7. *Op. cit.* (note 2, above), p. 8 (italics in original).
8. Wellek & Warren, p. 179.

in the dictionary is still not to explain the text. The true interpreter is one who knows how to explain the meaning of the specific word, of all the words and their combinations, of the linguistic and syntactic forms and their functions, that is to say, their functional value in *this* text and in *their* specific place in the text. The interpreter must therefore beware of interpreting in a schematic fashion. He must not forget the many meanings of each word, of every combination of words, even of idioms transmitted from generation to generation. He should know how to listen carefully and to distinguish between the timbre of a linguistic form as used by poet A from the tone-quality of the same form when used by poet B. Even in the writings of the same poet the flavour of a word is liable to vary with its context.

To be sure, this method of interpretation poses great difficulties for several reasons. The arbitrary and personal use of a word by the poet, which is sometimes remote from its dictionary meaning, may cause us to err in interpreting it. The more distant in time we are from the poet, the more difficult it becomes to perceive the flavour of the word correctly. If this is true of periods whose literary heritage is rich enough to provide parallels for every word, even the rare word used in an unusual personal sense — it is all the more difficult with Biblical literature, which is so limited in quantity. Words for which there is no parallel are admittedly rare, but even where there is a cognate, we have no guarantee that it is parallel not only formally and grammatically, but also in its meaning and overtones. After all, the question confronting the interpreter is not what is the meaning of the word, but what is the meaning of the word just *here*? The Biblical scholar who wishes to grasp the full meaning of the Biblical passages will frequently feel that he has reached the limit of what interpretation can do.

In the ensuing sections we will exemplify the proposed method of interpretation (A) with references to the individual word, and (B) with reference to phrases.

In (A) the individual word, the example we have chosen will be examined: 1) on the basis of the meaning *attributed* to its root (popular etymology); 2) on the basis of associations connected with it — its connotations.

A. Words

1

שָׁם אֳנִיּוֹת יִהַלֲכוּן לִוְיָתָן זֶה־יָצַרְתָּ לְשַׂחֶק־בּוֹ

There go the ships *liwyātān* that You formed *lĕśaḥēq-bō*.

(Psalm 104:26)

To determine the meaning of the verse, mediaeval and modern commentators alike have found it necessary to pose the following three questions, all relating to the second colon: [a] a semantic question — what is the precise meaning of the verb *lĕśaḥēq* in our verse and, depending on this, what is the meaning of the preposition *b-*? What is the meaning of the name *liwyātān* (Leviathan) in our psalm? [b] a syntatic question — what is the subject of *lĕśaḥēq* and to what does the suffix of the word *bō* refer? [c] the literary question — what is the logical connection between the second hemistich and the first?

In the Septuagint the second hemistich is translated: δράκων οὗτος, ὃν ἔπλασας ἐμπαίζειν αὐτῷ. Now the Greek translator identified the subject of *lĕśaḥēq* with that of "formed" (*yāṣartā*) — that is, "You", — and understood the word *bō* as referring to Leviathan. Hence the LORD formed the Leviathan in order *lĕśaḥēq bō* and the meaning of *lĕśaḥēq b-* is "to sport with" similar to its meaning in the verse: *"hătĕśaḥēq-bō* (Will you sport with him [the Leviathan]) as with a bird?!" (Job 40:29).

Rav too interpreted the verse[1] in this fashion, probably because he too perceived analogy to the verse quoted from Job.[2] Rav's words seem to suggest that he regarded *liwyātān* "Leviathan" as a mythological-aggadic creature.[3]

1. "Rabbi Yehuda said in the name of Rav, the day consists of twelve hours ... the last quarter [the Holy One, blessed be He] sits and plays with Leviathan, for it says 'Leviathan which You have formed to sport with it' " (*T. B. Avoda Zara* 3b; compare *Bava Batra* 74b).
2. So Rashi explained our verse.
3. For the legends of the Talmudic Sages on Leviathan see L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, I-VII, Philadelphia 1925-1938, index, s.v. "Leviathan". B. De-Vries disagrees with the accepted view that the legend about God's play with the Leviathan is only a Hebrew version of the Marduk's playing with Tiamat (See J. Heinemann, *Darkhe Haaggada*[2], Jerusalem 1954, p. 197, note 14). He holds "that the verses ... created the aggada and the mythical motifs are taken from a different world" ("Ofya Hasifruti shel Haaggada", *Sefer Neiger*, Jerusalem 1959, p. 307).
4. "This Leviathan You created to delight therewith the righteous at the blessed feast"; the tendentiousness of the Targum becomes even more obvious when we compare this translation of our verse to that of the Peshitta: "This Leviathan that You formed to mock". Ginzberg's view (*op. cit.* [note 3, above], V, p. 42, note 124) that the Targum reflects the view expressed in the aggada of *T.B. Avoda Zara* (cited above in note 1) is not quite correct.
5. Isaiah 27:1 — See U. Cassuto, *The Goddess Anath* (transl. by I. Abrahams), Jerusalem [1971], pp. 49-50.
6. Compare Midrash *Shoher Tov*, 104 (21): " 'Leviathan that you have formed *lĕśaḥēq bō*: whoever joins them [those who decree persecution upon the Jews] will be made a mockery". Compare also the Peshitta (note 4, above). Rav's aggadic interpretation cited above in note 1 about God's activities during the twelve hours of the day appears several times in *Seder Eliyahu Rabba* (chapters 14, 17, 18, and elsewhere), but always in a version according to which the day is only divided into three parts, and the sport with Leviathan is omitted. Ginzberg (*loc. cit.*, note 4, above) was again inaccurate when he wrote: "This Haggadah is allegorically explained in ER 2, 61-62, where Leviathan is taken symbolically to represent the power of the heathen".
7. Habakkuk 1:10; Psalms 2:4; 37:13; 59:9, etc.
8. E. E. Urbach (ed.), *Sefer Arugat Habosem*, I, Jerusalem 1939, p. 167, note 1. Professor Urbach brought this text to my attention.
9. Radak.

But it would seem that religious sensitivity prevented the Jewish commentators from pursuing the path of Rav in the interpretation of the verse. The Targum, which continued the tradition of this interpretation — taking God as the subject of *lĕśaḥēq* ("to sport") and giving *liwyātān* a mythological meaning — attributed a causative meaning to the verb *lĕśaḥēq*, that is to say, the Leviathan was created *in order that others* — the righteous in the world to Come – might sport with it.[4] But as early as the Midrashic literature, Leviathan was understood as a symbol for the powers of wickedness in the world (in this extended sense the word is already used in Scripture[5]), and the verb *lĕśaḥēq* is interpreted in the sense of *mock*[6] (which also has parallels in the Bible[7]).

Traditional exegesis, however, generally takes the view that the subject of *lĕśaḥēq* ("to sport") is not God but the Leviathan (Saadya Gaon, Ibn Ezra, Radak, Meiri; so too Rabbenu Tam's disciple, Rabbi Barukh ben Samuel of Mayence[8]). "Leviathan is the same great fish whose strength and might are described in the book of Job",[9] or it is "a name for every

th similar to that one".[10] "And the words *lĕśaḥēq-bō* mean with
aith the sea, that is to say, with all creatures of the sea he [the
n] sports, for all of them are like nothing against him, they are all
swer and he can quickly consume whatever he wishes . . . because
will mock and ridicule everything he despises".[11]
Hm is perhaps the only one of the traditional commentators who
rs with the general view and connects the word *bō* with *liwyātān*,
rding to his view the verb *śaḥēq* ("to sport") is used in the sense
ag war, as in the verse: "Let the young men arise and *wīśaḥăqū*
fore us" (II Samuel 2:14). As for the subject of *lĕśaḥēq*, Malbim
at it is the same as in the first hemistich of the verse: "'There go
' . . . to sport with the Leviathan . . . so that human beings may
strength against him". Malbim thus explains the semantic
hip between the two halves of the verse. But, even before him,
mmentators — Ibn Ezra and Radak — considered this question
e a response similar to that of Malbim.
ts mediaeval Jewish exegesis did not attain unanimity, so modern
ship has not succeeded in reaching agreement on the meaning of
ds of this verse; in fact the latter has not suggested an answer that
already been offered by the former. Only in order to explain the
ful link between the two halves of the verse have critical scholars
a method that was not acceptable to the Jewish commentators,
ressed doubts about the authenticity of the received text of the
nistich. They present three arguments:
nips" are not things that God has formed;
nips" cannot be referred to in the following verse (27) which
s: "All of them look for You, to give them their food when it is
e";
re is no parallelism between "ships" and Leviathan.[12]
rs, of course, are not content merely to point out the difficulties,
e also proposed various solutions to cope with them. In the last
n, some decided that the first hemistich is a later addition and
. Today the ruling opinion among scholars is that the word
s the result of an error. Most believe that the original reading was

gra.
i. For this sense of *śaḥēq*, see above, note 6.
l. Compare also Kittel, McCullough (*IB*).

'ēmōt ("Schrecknisse", "Seeungetüme", "the fearful things"[13]), which are — according to Köhler — sirens.[14] The word *'ēmōt* would thus be parallel to the noun Leviathan — both expressions indicate fearful sea creatures and they are almost synonymous, making the two halves of the verse parallel in a synonymous and complementary fashion; that is to say, what is said in the first hemistich about *'ēmōt* — that they "go there" — also refers to Leviathan in the second, and conversely, what is said about Leviathan in the second half "you formed [him] to sport therewith" applies also to the *'ēmōt* of the first hemistich.

In interpreting the second hemistich, scholars are unconsciously following the paths already trodden by the Jewish commentators. With reference to the syntactic construction of the words: "Leviathan that you have formed to sport therein", views are expressed which have already been propounded in Jewish literature. However, the number of those who believe that the subject of *lĕśaḥēq* is Leviathan and that *bō* refers to the sea is today diminishing and the view is gradually being accepted that it is God that sports with Leviathan.

Similarly, with reference to the meaning of *lĕśaḥēq* ("to sport") scholars disagree, interpreting in ways already suggested by Jewish exegetes. Some believe — on the basis of what is known about the relationship of God to Leviathan from the Bible in general and particularly from Psalm 74:14 — that the verb *śaḥēq* is used here as a sporting term for a competition, a duel (II Samuel 2:14).[15] This would be the meaning of the verse: "God formed the Leviathan for the specific purpose that He might have an antagonist for a duel whom He might smite hip and thigh". However, the verb *śaḥēq* is more often understood in its usual sense, and the meaning of the verse is that the role of this giant monster — Leviathan — is only to serve as a plaything in the hand of God, and that thus His greatness and glory may be manifested before all living

13. See *BH*. There we also find the proposed reading of *tannīnīm* ("sea monsters") for *'ŏniyyōt* ("ships").
14. See Ph. Reymond, *L'eau, sa vie et sa signification dans l'Ancien Testament (SVT*, VI), Leiden 1958, p. 183.
15. Ehrlich, *Randglossen*, p. 185; O. Eissfeldt, "Ein gescheiterter Versuch der Wiedervereinigung Israels", *La Nouvelle Clio*, III (1951), p. 120. This interpretation was already proposed by Malbim (see above). *Randglossen* refers also to II Samuel 2:14, already cited by Malbim.

creatures.[16] More recently the view has been put forward that the meaning of the verb *śaḥēq* here (and also in Psalms 2:4; 37:13; 59:9 and others) is "overcome". The verse would thus express the absolute dominion of God over the monster.[17]

What do critical scholars consider to be the meaning of *liwyātān* "Leviathan" in our verse?

Gunkel, in his dogged attempt to find throughout the Bible traces of the Babylonian myth (of the Ugaritic, of course, he had no knowledge) about the battle of one of the upper gods against the god of the sea, finds here too a reference to this myth and even uses our verse (together with Job 40:29 and Babylonian drawings of the god Adad) to reconstruct one of the Israelite versions of the myth.[18] But he emphasizes that in our psalm Leviathan is only a giant sea-monster, a creature like all the other creatures that God created to creep on the earth or swarm in the sea. The ancient Leviathan, who was once a mythological creature, a dragon of the primordial deep, has long been forgotten, and the mythological monster has been transformed into a strange animal, which the poet mentions only because God's greatness is made manifest in His choice of this giant creature for a plaything.[19] According to Kaufmann, the Leviathan of mythology was transformed in the Bible into a legendary creature as the result of "the unique evolution of Israel's pagan beliefs: hostile divine forces (Rahab, the dragon, etc.) who challenged the gods descended to the level of monstrous creatures".[20] Similarly Eissfeldt asserts that all those motifs that recall ancient Ugaritic mythologies, that tell of God's battle against primeval creatures — sea monsters — are mentioned in the Bible only in order to magnify the greatness of the Creator, the One whose

16. So Kraus.
17. S. Grill, *BZ*, III (1959), p. 102. According to Grill we should also so understand the translation of the verse in the Peshitta (see note 4, above).
18. *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit*², Göttingen 1921, p. 51. The god pulled Leviathan with a rope and caught it in a net, but did not kill it because the monster pleaded for mercy, wished to make a treaty with the god and offered to be his slave forever. The god then put a reed in its mouth, made a hole in its cheeks with a hook, and played with it as with a bird. See also: O. Kaiser, *Die mythische Bedeutung des Meeres in Ägypten, Ugarit und Israel* (*BZAW*, LXXVIII), Berlin 1959, pp. 140-152.
19. So also Kittel, Kraus, and others.
20. Greenberg-Kaufmann, p. 65 (see also pp. 62-63); I. L. Seeligmann, "Voraussetzungen der Midraschexegese", *SVT*, I (1953), p. 154, note 2. Compare also U. Cassuto, "The Israelite Epic", *op. cit.* (p. 71, note 83), II, 1975, pp. 69ff.

greatness cannot be fathomed. There is no mention in the Bible of Leviathan as a power that opposes Him and endangers His dominion, at last overcome through a mighty battle; there is no hint of this in the Scriptures. Leviathan is only one of the wonderful creations of the Universal Creator, created in order to rejoice in his life or to delight his Creator.[21] But some scholars do believe that Leviathan, in our psalm, is not merely a great sea-creature, but is indeed a mythological creature, mentioned so as to stress the greatness and omnipotence of God: "Now the face of the water has changed, it is not like the water of the days of creation. Ships bring life to the face of the water, and Leviathan is no longer the rival or antagonist of God but rather subject to the order of creation. Overcome, he lies like a footstool at the feet of God who sports with him".[22]

Now, in our days, as is well known, the myth-and-ritual approach to the Bible has brought forth a new concept, namely that chapters of the Bible, especially some of the Psalms,were libretti for performances of a "cultic-drama" for the seven-day "New Year" Festival, like the Babylonian *akītu*, which celebrated the ascent of God to the throne of kingship.[23]

21. O. Eissfeldt, "Gott und das Meer in der Bibel", *Studia Orientalia Johanni Pedersen dicata*, Hauniae 1953, p. 81; Kaiser, *op. cit.* (note 18, above), pp. 149, 151.
22. Schmidt; compare also Weiser.
23. See especially the work of S. Mowinckel: *PsSt* II; *Zum israelitischen Neujahr und zur Deutung der Thronbesteigungspsalmen*, Oslo 1952; "Drama, religionsgeschichtlich", *RGG*², I, pp. 2000-2002; *Religion und Kultus*, Göttingen 1953; *He That Cometh* (transl. by G. W. Anderson), Oxford 1956, pp. 80-88; *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (transl. by D. R. ap-Thomas), I, Oxford 1962, pp. 106-192 (Mowinckel had, in fact, been anticipated in part by P. Volz, *Das Neujahrsfest J's (Laubhüttenfest)*, Tübingen 1912). For the range of views regarding Mowinckel's hypothesis, see: A. R. Johnson, "The Psalms", in: H. H. Rowley (ed.), *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, pp. 190-195; idem. "Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship", in: S. H. Hooke (ed.), *Myth, Ritual and Kingship*, Oxford 1958, pp. 220-235; idem, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel*², Cardiff 1967; G. Widengren, *Sakrales Königtum im Alten Testament und im Judentum*, Stuttgart 1955, esp. pp. 62-79; Ch. Hauret, "L'interprétation des Psaumes selon l'école 'Myth and Ritual'", *Recherche de Science Religieuse*, XXXIII (1959), pp. 336-342; XXXIV (1960), pp. 1-34; Greenberg-Kaufmann, pp. 108-110; K. H. Bernhardt, *Das Problem der altorientalischen Königsideologie im AT* (*SVT*, VIII), Leiden 1961; J. Gray, "The Kingship of God in the Prophets and Psalms", *VT*, XI (1961), pp. 1-29; A. Szörényi, *Psalmen und Kult im Alten Testament*, Budapest 1961; H. Ringgren, *Israelitische Religion*, Stuttgart 1963, pp. 174-176; J. H. Kroeze, "Some Remarks on Recent Trends in the

Adherents of this approach have expressed the view that our psalm (including our verse) should not be viewed as a hymn of praise to the greatness of the Creator, but rather (like Genesis 1 "by which it was influenced") as a magical text the very recitation of which (literally) "enthrones" God, and, by describing His conquest of the rebels at the time of the Creation, renews His dominion over His work.[24]

Summarizing our survey of the views of early and late commentators, we can say that with all the differences among them, they practically all agree that in our verse God is praised for His greatness either of might or of spirit. Is this really the praise discernible in the verse? Is this really the meaning of the text? There is still room for clarification of the general meaning of the verse, despite the agreement of scholars on this matter, and there is certainly room for clarification of the details in the verse, which are in dispute among the commentators.

First of all, we are not satisfied with the proposal of most of the scholars to emend the traditional text in the first hemistich by substituting the

Exegesis of the Psalms", in: *Studies on the Psalms*, Potchefstroom 1963, pp. 40-47 (there also on Form Criticism in general); M. Buber, *Kingship of God* (transl. by R. Scheimann)[3], London 1967, pp. 126ff.; also S. Loewenstamm's review in *Kiryat Sefer*, XXXIX (1964), pp. 48-53.

24. P. Humbert, "La relation de Genèse et du Ps 104 avec la liturgie du Nouvel-An israélite", *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses*, XV (1935), p. 27. Compare G. Widengren, "Early Hebrew Myths and their Interpretation", in: *Myth, Ritual and Kingship* (note 23, above), p. 175. (As for the relation between Genesis 1 and Psalm 104, it has also been suggested that the author of Genesis was influenced by Psalm 104 [and not vice versa] and arranged what is described therein in a strict order. See A. van der Voort, "Genèse I.1 à II.4a et le psaume CIV", *RB*, LVIII [1951], pp. 321-347.)
Though Weiser rejects the mythological conception widely accepted under the influence of Mowinckel, he too sees the *Sitz im Leben* of our psalm in the ritual of the New Year. But in his view this festival was not mythological but historical, celebrating not the enthronement of God but the covenant between God and Israel. This festival, and its rituals, are the basis of our psalm, which is a theophany hymn. On this festival, as conjectured by Weiser, see H. Bückers, "Zur Verwertung der Sinaitraditionen in den Psalmen", *Biblica*, XXXII (1951), pp. 401-422. Compare R. Tournay, *RB*, LVIII (1951), pp. 257-258, 591-593. Against the theory of Weiser see also Szörényi (*op. cit.* [note 23, above]), pp. 214-222. On the hypotheses in recent scholarship about the place of ritual in ancient Israel, see also the lecture of A. S. Kapelrud, and the critical remarks on it by B. Vawter and H. G. May, in the collection, *The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, pp. 44-73.

reading *'ēmōt* ("fearful things") or a similar word, for *'ŏniyyōt* ("ships"). In addition to what was said above about textual criticism of the Bible,[25] the frequently cited parallel between our psalm and the hymn to the Egyptian sun god Aton, which, it is generally assumed, came to Israel through Canaanite or Phoenician channels,[26] testifies against emendation:

Psalm 104:26	Hymn to the Aton
There go the *ships*	The *ships* are sailing north and south as well.
	For every way is open at thy appearance.
Leviathan, which You formed *to sport therein*	The *fish* in the river *dart before they face;*
	Thy rays are in the midst of the great green sea[27]

Now, even though in our view the existence of "parallels" is not a decisive proof one way or the other, it is true that in the "source" as well as in our psalm ships appear as parallel to fish.[28] But it seems to us that an even better reason to oppose such an emendation is the structure of the

25. See above, pp. 68ff.
26. G. Nagel, "À propos des rapports du Psaume 104 avec les textes égyptiens", in: *Bertholet-Festschrift*, Tübingen [1950], pp. 395-403; M. Noth, *History of Israel*[2], New York-Evanston [1960], p. 39; W. F. Albright, *Recent Discoveries in Bible Lands*, New York 1955, pp. 14-15; O. Eissfeldt, "Alexander von Humboldts 'Kosmos' und der 104 Psalm", in: *Forschungen und Fortschritte*, XXXIII (1959), p. 117; Mowinckel, *The Psalms*, II, p. 153. H. Kruse believes, however, that the similarity between Psalm 104 and the hymn to the god Aton requires us to assume the existence of an Egyptian poem as an intermediate link from which all reference to the sun god have been omitted ("Archetypus Psalmi 104 /103/", *VD*, XXIX [1951], pp. 31-43). See R. J. Williams, "The Hymn to Aton", in: D. W. Thomas (ed.), *Documents from Old Testament Times*, London 1958, pp. 142-150. S. Morenz expresses doubts about this generally accepted view of the connection between the Biblical psalm and the Egyptian hymn ("Ägypten und die Bibel", *RGG*[3], I, 1957, p. 119).
27. J. A. Wilson's translation in: J. B. Pritchard (ed.), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*[2], Princeton, New Jersey 1955, p. 370. Two newer translations are those of R. O. Faulkner in: W. K. Simpson (ed.), *The Literature of Ancient Egypt*, New Haven 1972, p. 291; M. Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature*, Vol. II, Berkeley 1976, p. 97.
28. Compare Kraus.

section in which the sea and all that takes place therein is discussed (verses 25, 26):

25a There is the sea, vast and wide,
25b with its creatures beyond number,
25c living things, small and great.
26a There go the ships,
26b Leviathan which You formed to sport therein.

As we see, the only one of the main clauses in which the predicate is a finite verb is the same clause which has as its subject not a living creature but an inanimate object, not a creation of God, but the handiwork of man. The difference in structure is connected with a difference in the nature of the subject. "Ships" is unique in the description, and therefore there is no parallel to the hemistich in which they are mentioned.[29] Hence argument c) adduced against the correctness of the MT has no validity. "Ships" and "Leviathan" are, indeed, not parallel to one another, but there is no reason for them to be. We see here a typical methodological error, which stems from failing to take into account the written text with all its irregularities and anomalies. Instead of paying attention to the obvious absence of parallelism between the two hemistichs

There go the *ships*	Leviathan *which You formed to sport therein*
(finite verb as predicate)	(subordinate clause instead of a predicate)

29. Compare the following:
The *earth* faints and fades away
The *world* fails and fades away
The lofty *people* of the earth do fail (Isaiah 24:4);
The *vine* fades,
The *new wine* fails,
All the *merry-hearted* do sigh (*Ibid.*, verse 7);
For the *heavens* shall vanish away like smoke,
And the *earth* shall wax old like a garment
And *they that dwell therein* shall die in like manner (*Ibid.*, 51.6).
It should be noted that in these verses, the inanimate world is presented in two parallel cola, and man — as an exception — in the third.

and considering the significance of this non-parallelism, scholars wish to emend the verse in order to create a conceptual parallelism and to ignore the formal non-parallelism. This irregularity of the strophe in the section, even for those fastidious about style, also refutes argument b) that what is written in verse 27 could not refer to "ships". "All" refers to all that was included in the previous verses, *except for* "ships", which were excluded from the generalization by the very special structure of the sentence in which they were mentioned.

Argument a) against the authenticity of the word "ships", since "ships" were not among the things created by God, could indeed be legitimate if the intention of the psalm were to praise the greatness and omnipotence of God by pointing to His creations — as all commentators assume. But the early commentators explain only this verse by itself, considering the immediate context, that is, the verses immediately preceding and following; their vision fails to encompass the entire poem. There is undoubtedly a methodological flaw in such an approach. Modern commentators do not actually ignore the text as a whole when they undertake to interpret a part of it, but they do misinterpret the passage, because they treat the details of the text frivolously, influenced by the prejudicial "scientific" postulates of Biblical criticism, whose characteristic common trait is schematism. Careful study of the psalm will demonstrate that here again this penchant for schematism has led scholars astray in determining the poet's intention.

The praise the psalmist wishes to offer God is stated explicitly in verse 24:

> How many are the things You have made, O LORD!
> You have made them all with wisdom;
> the earth is full of Your creations.

With reference to the colon "You made them all with wisdom" Gunkel thinks that its original place was at the end of verse 25, since thus verses 24 and 25 have an equal number of cola. On the "emended" verse 24 Gunkel notes: "compare 92:6". What this comparison will teach us he does not say. One thing such a comparison will show clearly is that the schematic approach is an obstacle to the proper understanding of a literary creation, since the difference is more important than similarity,[30]

30. I. A. Richards, *Practical Criticism*, New York 1929, p. 226.

and this difference is expressed not only in the "form", but also in the "content" (after all, as has already been said, in poetry "form" and "content" are an inseparable unity).

Psalm 104:24	Psalm 92:6
How many are the things You have made O LORD!	How great are Your works, O LORD!
You have made them all with wisdom;	Your thoughts are very deep.
the earth is full of Your creations.	

While the author of Psalm 104 exclaims in admiration: "How many", the author of Psalm 92 expresses his astonishment: "How great!". The parallel to "many" is "full"; to "great", "deep". The difference between the two verses is clearly a result of the difference between the theme of Psalm 104 and that of Psalm 92. Psalm 104 speaks of the great number of God's creations in nature, which were "all" made "in wisdom", whereas Psalm 92 muses over God's providence in history which is too "great" and too "deep" to be understood. Hence also the difference between "Your creations" and "Your thoughts".

Our psalm therefore means to say: the world and the fullness thereof are the creation of God, and all testify to the wisdom of their Creator. Where is this wisdom expressed? This too is not explicitly contained in the Psalm, but is rather clearly implicit in the structure of the verses.[31]

All the commentators refer to the relationship between our chapter and Genesis 1. Some of them mention that in general our psalm describes the phenomena of nature according to the order of their creation in Genesis 1, but that in some of the details the psalmist deviates from the order in Genesis. However, even the commentaries that point out this difference are satisfied with indicating it and do not clarify its meaning, although such a clarification is crucial to an understanding of the psalm.

Here are the differences in sequence of the creatures in the Psalm from the order in the chapter in Genesis:

31. About the decisive importance of the structure of the poem see pp. 272ff.

According to the order in Genesis:

Psalm 104		Genesis 1
2/a	the light	first day
2/b	the heavens	second day
5-10	the land, the sea, springs	third day
13-18	plants	third day
19-23	luminaries	fourth day
23-26	fish	fifth day

Contrary to the order in Genesis:

Psalm 104		Genesis 1
11	living creatures	sixth day
12	birds	fifth day
14/a	living creatures man	sixth day
15	man	sixth day
17	birds	fifth day
20-22	living creatures	sixth day
23	man	sixth day

Indeed, careful study of these deviations will reveal just what our poet sees when he looks at the phenomena of nature and what his intention is in praising their Creator. When he looks at the springs of water, he sees near them the beasts of the field since the streams provide their drink, and he also feels the presence of the birds and hears their voices among the branches of the trees which grow alongside the water. When he thinks of the plants, he remembers their usefulness to living creatures, to men and birds. Similarly, when he remembers the luminaries, by night and by day, he immediately recalls the function they fulfill for animals and human beings. Our poet does not, then, see the phenomena of nature in isolation from one another, but rather in their interrelationship. He sees in them what they serve to supply for other creatures, for the whole of creation. It has been well said of our psalm that it is like a symphony on the theme: "And God saw all that He had created and behold it was very good"

(Genesis 1:31).[32] Our psalm describes and exemplifies this "very good", which is the bond of mutual helpfulness between all creatures. Nature is a wonderful organism, formed and guided by the Divine wisdom. Every detail complements another, is beneficial to another. This mutual helpfulness in nature is the wisdom for which our poet praises the Creator.[33] When he comes to contemplate the sea, he sees in it too, above all, its usefulness which is integrated into the general usefulness of nature. What benefit does the sea supply? First the psalmist speaks of what he knows: the sea is the habitat of marine life. Then he mentions what he sees: the sea is a path which makes possible the movement of ships.

If we think of the general design of the psalm as revealed to us in its structure, and do not ignore its overall idea, then we shall certainly not object to the mention of "ships" in verse 26 by arguing that "ships" were not among the things created by God. Indeed they were not. But, "ships" *are* seen upon the face of the waters, just as beasts of the field and birds of the heavens are found near "springs", and these "ships" show the usefulness of the sea. The purpose of the whole psalm is to depict this usefulness, hence it must also be the purpose of this section.

But the third question still remains unanswered: what is the connection between Leviathan and the "ships"?

The different interpretations that have been proposed until now for the name Leviathan in our verse serve as an example of the occasionally detrimental influence of a literary association aroused in the mind of the reader by a specific expression or motif. Richards, writing about the disturbing influence of misleading association, has already pointed out this danger. Sometimes, Richards writes, as a result of what he has previously read, the reader recalls personal or literary images or events or feelings, evoking associations that have nothing to do with the text just read. It is not always possible to show which associations have enriched our understanding because they are really relevant to the given text. On the other hand, it is usually easy to ascertain where the reader has gone astray and has been diverted from the meaning of the poem, from its own atmosphere, by the intrusion of thoughts, memories and feelings alien to the poem.[34]

32. W. Staerk, *Lyrik (Psalmen, Hoheslied und Verwandtes)* [*Die Schriften des ATs*, 3/1]², Göttingen 1920, p. 81. See my article: "Barekhi Nafshi", *Maayanot*, VIII (1964), pp. 220-254.

33. Richter is certainly mistaken when he writes: "The contemplation of nature for its own sake is found in the Psalms only in a few verses in Psalm 104" ("Die Naturweisheit des ATs im Buche Hiob", *ZAW*, LXX [1958], p. 18). In our psalm, as elsewhere, the contemplation of nature appears not "for its own sake" but for God's sake, in order to express the Divine wisdom manifest in nature.

In the case before us, the erroneous comparison has led astray not only the commentators who saw here a reference to a mythological creature, but also those who understood Leviathan in our poem to mean a great fish. Both classes of commentators fell victim to an erroneous association, both those who believed that a common name indicates a common reality, and those who thought that a common name indicates only one common aspect, in this case an external one, namely, that element common to Leviathan here and the known Leviathan is that they are both great sea monsters. Both conceptions are based on an erroneous association, since neither of the two meanings assigned to the name Leviathan is appropriate either to the general intention of the psalm or to the intention of the section under discussion. It cannot be that the poet in mentioning Leviathan intended to express something which is not integral to the conceptions of the psalm as a whole. It cannot be that the association which caused him to mention Leviathan here was not identical with the spirit which is manifested throughout the whole psalm.

In verse 25c "living things, both small and great" are mentioned, whereas Leviathan, even though it is one of the "living things", is mentioned only in verse 26b; the mention of "ships" separates those connected elements, apparently against all logic and order. But the poet mentions Leviathan after "ships" just as he mentions "wild beasts" and "wild asses" (verse 11) after "springs in the valleys" (verse 10), and he mentions them together in succession because he perceives them next to each other, as we have said. Leviathan must therefore refer to something which is seen along with the "ships" that go on the sea and which comes to mind when a person thinks of "ships" and remembers what he has seen on the sea. The psalmist, when he speaks of Leviathan in conjunction with "ships", refers to a creature which accompanies ships on the sea. The true sense of the verse was apprehended by whoever noted on the margin of Meiri's commentary on our verse: "And *liwyātān* is the assemblage of

34. *Op. cit.* (note 30, above), pp. 13-14. Compare also pp. 9-10.

physical traits that are distributed among creatures which walk, swim and fly; it is analogous to 'he will be joined (*yillāweh*) unto me' (Genesis 29:34)".[35] Indeed, the only thing that the Leviathan of our psalm and the famous Leviathan have in common is the name, and this name is appropriate to this creature on the basis of its etymology. Etymology, as is well known, is a very important associative factor,[36] and not necessarily the scientific etymology, but sometimes even more so, the popular one. Likewise the Greeks called the tunny fish πομπίλος, i.e. companion, because it accompanies ships".[37]

Just as God's purpose in creating the trees was not only "Where the birds make their nests" (verse 17), but also in order that "they sing among the foliage" (verse 12), so too the sea exists also in order to serve as a "playground" for that creature which was created only "to sport therein".

35. See Meiri, p. 203, note 4.
36. See above, p. 76, the quotation from Wellek & Warren (p. 179): "Words not only have meaning but evoke the meanings of words related . . . in *derivation*" (my italics).
37. Compare Pliny's description of the tunnies: "They are also frequently seen from the stern of vessels proceeding under sail, accompanying them in a remarkably charming manner for periods of several hours and for a distance of some miles, not being frightened even by having a harpoon repeatedly thrown at them. Some people give the name of pilot-fish [in Greek: πομπίλα] to the creatures which do this (Pliny, *Natural History*, with an English translation by H. Rackham [*The Loeb Classical Library*], Cambridge, Mass. 1957, IX, 20, p. 197). Oppian of Anatolia, too, in his didactic poem "On fishing", tells about the *naucrates* (pilot fish), "which the sailors greatly admired and to which they gave the name naucrates because they *accompany* the ships and love to swim around the ships sailing on the seas" (S. Bodenheimer, *Haḥay Bearẓot Hamiqra*, I, Jerusalem 1950, p. 112 — my italics). According to S. Spinner, Psalm 74:14 refers to the tunny ("Die Verwendung von Synonymen im Alten Testament", *BZ*, XXIII [1935-36], p. 148). B. D. Eerdmans believes that Leviathan is the name of tunny fish and dolphins ("The Hebrew Book of Psalms", *OTS*, IV, 1947, pp. 470-71), whereas G. R. Driver identifies the Leviathan of the book of *Job* with a whale known in German as the *Walfisch*, on the basis of the etymology of the name, from the root: *lwh* (accompany) — but in his view it is so called because it is said to *accompany* its children" ("Mythical Monsters in Old Testament", in: *Studi Orientalistici in onore di G. L. Della Vida*, I, Rome 1956, p. 240). In the view of Y. Felix (*Haḥay shel Hatenakh*, Tel Aviv 1955, p. 51), our psalm also refers to that creature. In any case, the various detailed attempts to determine exactly which creature is meant by our poet do not seem to us scientifically reliable or valid. Surely our poet did not distinguish between these various sea creatures in a scientific manner, classifying them by genus and species.

"For it is the habit of Leviathan to gather water in its nostrils and then fling it high into the air, just like those water-fountains in gardens and orchards, which are made skillfully for enjoyment, similarly flinging their water upwards into the air" (Biur). We may thus assume that "to sport therein" also refers to the habit of these great fish to leap from the water one after the other in a long row.[38]

The wisdom of God would not have been manifested to the fullest effect in a world which is "very good" had the psalmist shown us nature — the creation of God — as providing only for physical and material needs. It is true that "He who gives life gives also food" (*T.B. Ta'anit* 8b), but not only "food". God created His world that there should also reign there joy – not only to cheer the heart of man (verse 15), but also that there should be joy for all creatures and in all creation. This is why God created the birds that "sing among the foliage" (verse 12), and here too is this Leviathan that He created "to sport therein" — in the sea.[39]

2

In Psalm 114:1b the people of Egypt are referred to as *'am lō'ēz*. The meaning of the word *lō'ēz* is clear even though it does not occur elsewhere in the Bible.[1] It indicates — as in Rabbinic Hebrew,[2] Aramaic, Syriac and Arabic[3] — one who speaks in a language not understood.[4] The

38. Eerdmans, *art. cit.* (note 37, above).
39. For an analogous use of *lēśaḥēq b-* "to sport therein" (in a place) compare "boys and girls sporting *in* the broad places thereof" (Zechariah 8:5). Comparison of this detail in our psalm with the parallel detail in the hymn to Aton may be instructive: the difference between the fish who dance before Aton and the Leviathan who sports in the sea is characteristic of the way the psalmist made use of the Egyptian hymn (if he used it), and it conforms, in general, to the differences between these two creations.
1. Some scholars believe that *lō'ēz* was the original reading in Isaiah 33:19, where MT has *nō'āz*; see *BH*, *BHS*. In any case, the reading in the First Isaiah Scroll from Qumran (1QIsa) agrees with the MT. According to Rashi (in Psalms and in Isaiah) the word *nō'āz* is identical with *lō'ēz*. For the view of Yellin see note 13, below.
2. See in E. Ben Yehuda's *Lexicon*, s.v. *lā'az* 1.2, *lō'ēz* (Vol. V, Jerusalem-Tel Aviv 1948). Compare Ibn Ezra, Radak.
3. See Koehler, *Lexicon*, s.v. *l'z*.
4. Compare the Septuagint: ἐκ λαοῦ βαρβάρου; the Targum: *mē'ammī barbarā'ē* (= "from a barbaric nation").

significance of calling the people of Egypt *'am lō'ēz* is also clear. It implies that "When Israel came forth out of Egypt" (verse 1a), they were liberated not only from "the iron furnace",[5] from physical enslavement, but also from spiritual suffering. For there is no greater spiritual suffering than to be enslaved to a nation with which you have no "common language", where the bridge between people, the bridge of speech, does not exist.[6]

However, why did the psalmist choose to mention just this aspect of the suffering in Egypt and only this aspect? We do not find anywhere else in the Bible that this aspect of the hardship of Egyptian enslavement is mentioned or even hinted at, and nowhere is Egypt referred to or described as the land whose language is foreign to a Hebrew.[7] Further "it is impossible that the children of Israel could not understand the Egyptians, having lived among them so many years" (Radak). Again, if Scripture wished to emphasize the foreignness of the language and the bitterness of enslavement among speakers of this foreign language — why did it choose this word *lō'ēz* which has no cognate in Scriptures?

To discover the psalmist's intention in all its range and depth, we must trace the associations of the word *lō'ēz*. For this purpose it is necessary to penetrate to the roots of the verse, to pay attention to the associations which were attached to the words and thoughts when the verse under consideration took shape.[8]

5. Deuteronomy 4:20; Jeremiah 11:4; see also I Kings 8:51.
6. Deuteronomy 28:49 (see Radak on our verse); Isaiah 33:19 (see Rashi on our verse); Jeremiah 5:15.
7. According to Ibn Ezra and Radak this is indeed the meaning of "A language I do not understand I hear" (Psalms 81:6 — In his note on verse 7, Ibn Ezra cites other interpretations of this sentence).
8. Compare Strauss' methodological note, in his analysis of Bialik's poem, "*Al Hasheḥita*" ("On the Slaughter"): "The poem can be fully understood in its plain sense, even without seeking Biblical references and allusions, . . . but if the reader seeks and finds Biblical sources he will see a much broader horizon, which adds a new background to many passages. The use of Biblical verses, with all the associations they contain, gives the poem a new being . . . broadening its scope . . . . The reader would do well not to be satisfied with understanding the separate Biblical references, but to regard them as a guide in his search for other linguistic associations in its Biblical context (the same chapter or the same subject occurring elsewhere in the Bible)" (*Bedarkhe Hasifrut*, Jerusalem 1959, p. 108). Such a reading of Bialik's poems, aided by the Biblical allusions they contain is, we believe, equally appropriate for the Bible itself. There, too, laying bare the hidden associations and linguistic allusions contained in the Biblical verse will imperceptibly enable us to comprehend its broader, deeper meaning, just as subterranean streams sustain and enrich the visible plant.
For the purpose of our discussion here and in the ensuing pages we assume, of course, that the psalmist was familiar both with the story of the revelation at Sinai as it appears in Exodus 19-20 and with the list of curses in Deuteronomy 28 in their present form. This assumption cannot be proved (nor can it, we believe, be disproved). While such a comment may appear superfluous, we consider it necessary in order to stress that all scholarly enquiry is conditional not upon the lack of any assumptions but upon *recognition* of them.

Ibn Ezra and Radak perceived that verse 2 is related to Exodus 19:6. A careful study of the words of the verse will show that not only from the standpoint of content is reference made to the verse in Exodus, but also from a linguistic perspective.

Psalm: Judah become His *holy* one, Israel His *dominion*
Exodus: And you shall [or: will] be unto Me a *kingdom* of priests and a *holy* nation

The parallelism between the two parts of verse 2 ("holy" ‖ "dominion") in our Psalm echoes the parallelism in Exodus ("kingdom" ‖ "holy").[9]

If we look at the corresponding section in Exodus, the "background" of our verse, more details of the psalm will become clear.

In verse 1 of Psalm 114 we read:

When *Israel* went forth from Egypt, the *house of Jacob*
from a people of strange speech

In Exodus 19:3:

Thus shall you say to the *house of Jacob*, and tell
the sons of *Israel*

Once again we hear an echo of that passage from the Torah.

While the psalmist does not, indeed, make use of the Torah text *verbatim*, it is not reasonable to assume that the correspondences are coincidental. In both passages we find the same change: the words of the verse from the Torah appear in the psalm in chiastic order, as M. Seidel has observed: "When an author uses the expressions of a verse which

9. Compare D. Yellin, *Ketavim Nivḥarim*, II, Jerusalem 1939, p. 24.

proven by a large number of examples.[11] Just a
one string to the beginning of the next, so the

10. "Maqbilot Ben Sefer Yeshaya Lesfer Tehillim", *Si*
(repr. in: M. Seidel, *Ḥiqre Miqra*, [Jerusalem 1978]

11. Seidel writes (*loc. cit.*) that in the parallels between Is
than a hundred and ten examples of chiasm. On the
too, have frequently noted this stylistic trait. On the d
ble as a structural device see further: R. Weiss, "
Mikra, XIII (1962), pp. 46-51 (there also bibliograph
qere Miqra, Jerusalem 1981, pp. 259-273); Y. T. Ra
Hamiqrai", *Beth Mikra*, XV (1964), pp. 48-72;
Linguistica Biblica, IX-X (1971), pp. 21-31; idem,
(1972), pp. 12-23; idem, "Chiasm in Joshua, Judg
XXVIII (1973), pp. 6-13; idem, "Chiasm in Kings",
W. L. Holladay, "Chiasmus, the Key to Hosea XII 3-
H. Ridderbos, *Die Psalmen* (*BZAW*, LXVII), Berlin
Lundbom, "Elijah's Chariot Ride", *JJS*, XXIV (1973
A Study in Ancient Hebrew Rhetoric, Missoula,
Dahood, "Chiasmus in Job — A Text-Critical and
Bream, A. Heim & C. Moore (eds.), *A Light unto M*
119-130; A. di Marco, "Der Chiasmus in der Bibel
Stilistik", *Linguistica Biblica*, XXXVI (1975), pp.
68; a. R. Ceresko, "The A:B :: B:A Word Pattern in
with Special Reference to the Book of Job", *Ugarit*
88; idem, "The Chiastic Word Pattern in Hebrew",
311; I. S. Kselman, "A Note on Numbers XII 6-8",
idem, "Semantic-Sonant Chiasmus in Biblical Poet
219-225; R. Sappan, "Hakhiazm Beshirat Hamiqra
pp. 534-539; Y. T. Radday & F. Welch, "Mivniugical Criterion", in: H.
XXIV (1979), pp. 180-187; Cooper, pp. 94-101. hiladelphia [1974], pp.
above, p. 43, note 49), Zakovitch shows not only th eitrag zur strukturellen
quently in the Samson narratives but also that it ser XXVII (1976), pp. 31-
tion but rather to advance and enhance the story a and Northwest Semitic
primarily literary investigations. A. Hurvitz deal gen, VII (1975), pp. 73-
linguistic phenomenon ("Khiazmus Diakhroni Baivr XVIII (1976), pp. 303-
[ed.], *Hamiqra Vetoledot Yisrael*, Tel Aviv 1972, pp VI (1976), pp. 500-504;
Sentence in Biblical Hebrew, The Hague and Paris lica, LVIII (1977), pp.
strictly grammatical functions of interclause ch *Mikra*, XXI (1975-76),
contrastive-distinctive construction in the sentence illat Rut", *Beth Mikra*,
116, note 9, below. *Ḥayye Shimshon* (cited
astic pattern occurs fre-
is rhetorical ornamenta-
ent. — These works are
hiasm as a diachronic
rait", in: B. Uffenheimer
5). F. I. Andersen in *The*
. 119-140 "examines the
as the realization of a
(p. 119). — See also p.

echoes in his mind, he uses them in reverse orde
pearing earlier and the earlier one later".[10] We c

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Psalms he found more
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Masm Bamiqra", *Beth*
panded version: *Meh-*
Al Hakhiasm Bisippur
Chiasm in Samuel",
2 in Tora", *ibid.*, XIX
thers", *ibid.*, XXVII-
XI (1974), pp. 52-67;
VI (1966), pp. 53-64;
ork 1972, pp. 56-62; I.
50; idem, *Jeremiah* —
1975, pp. 61-112; M.

something which has been said, does it by referring first to the latter part and then to the earlier part. When the psalmist uses expressions from the description of the revelation of Sinai in the reverse order, he shows thereby that his intention is to allude to that revelation.

A further sign that the psalmist had Exodus 19 in mind is the similarity between the beginnings of the two passages:

Psalm: When *Israel went forth from Egypt*
Exodus: In the third month after the children of *Israel went forth from* the land of *Egypt*

A further question about this verse will be explained by comparing the two openings. Though the Exodus from Egypt is, as is well known, one of the events of Israelite history which is repeatedly mentioned in the Psalms,[12] this passage is the only one in which the event is described without any mention of *God's* having brought it about. However, if we perceive in the background of our verse Exodus 19, which begins with the words: "In the third month after the children of Israel *went forth* from the land of Egypt", we find the answer to the question.[13]

Considering what we have just noted about the role of association and what we have said above about a poet's creative technique and his use of words and their combinations — about the "mutual attraction and repellence of words" — perhaps we shall be able to understand why the word *lō'ēz* was chosen in our psalm.

If the psalmist had in his mind's eye Exodus 19, one verse led on to an adjacent one. "And I bore you on *eagles'* wings" of verse 4 aroused a recollection of "the LORD will bring a nation against you . . . as the *eagle* sweeps down" (Deuteronomy 28:49). From here he was led to the end of the verse: "a nation whose tongue you will not understand". Now we said above that it was not mere inability to understand the Egyptian language that was the cause of the suffering, "since it is impossible that they could not understand it after having lived among the Egyptians so many years", but rather the fact that they had no "common language", even though they understood the speech of the Egyptians. The Israelites always regard-

12. Psalms 66:6; 77:16-21; 78:43-53; 81:6; 105:26-45; 106:7-12; 111:9; 135:8-9; 136:10-16. See Gunkel, *Introduction*, p. 63.
13. See further pp. 356-357 below.

ed the Egyptians as a strange and cruel nation, as they are described in Deuteronomy in the continuation of the quoted passage, in verse 50: *gōy 'az pānīm*, "a nation of stern countenance" etc. It was as a result of this series of associations that the thought arose, formulated in the expression of our psalm, *'am lō'ēz*.[14]

By following the poet's train of associations we came quite naturally to Exodus 19:6. And because we not only paid attention to the single resemblance, but also saw in it a guide to the psalmist's world of association, we were led to Deuteronomy 28, from which we could understand one of the terrors of an enslaving nation, perhaps the greatest of its terrors — that it is a *lō'ēz*. This word was chosen because it expresses (like the word "barbarian"[15],) just what the psalmist means to express.

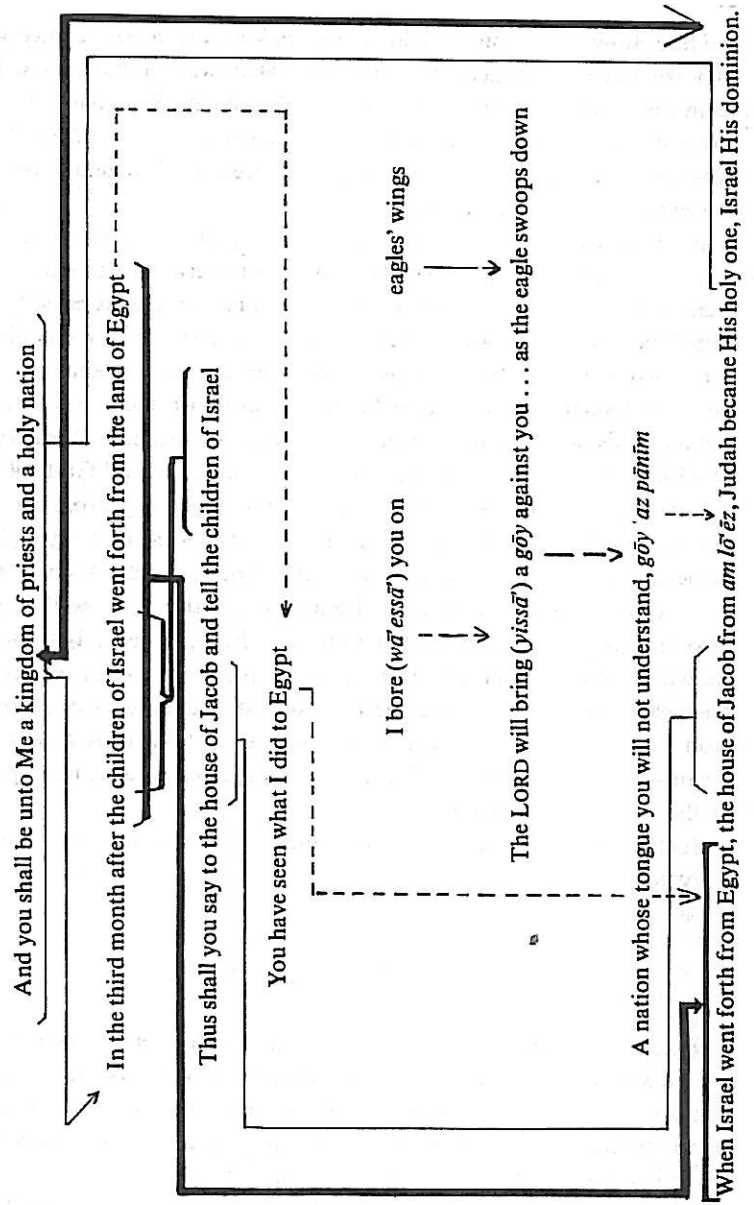
We cannot determine precisely how our psalm was written. We do not know whether the words, verse-structure and syntax of our psalm were chosen purposefully or whether perhaps all this was woven in the poet's subconscious. But, if we are right in assuming that the verse "you shall [or will] be" etc. (Exodus 19:6), in which the purpose of the Exodus from Egypt is expressed, was in the mind of our psalmist when he set out to speak of the exodus from Egypt and that as a result associations with other verses in that chapter 19 were subsequently aroused, then we can illustrate these associations by the following diagram:

14. D. Yellin writes in connection with Isaiah 33:19: "In this verse we find three words purposely in reversed order in order to imitate the stammerers about whom he speaks, who have difficulty pronouncing the words correctly and interchange the letters: *'am nō'āz* instead of *'am lō'ēz* — a strange nation, on the basis of the house of Jacob from *'am lō'ēz* (Psalms 114:1)". Further on Yellin shows that even the "reversed" words that imitate the stammerers are not meaningless, but have a sense appropriate to their context. So he explains the word *nō'āz* : "and he [the prophet] changed it to *nō'āz* to show their *strength, daring and arrogance* in daring to attack Jerusalem" (*Ḥiqre Miqra, Yeshayahu*, Jerusalem 1939, p. 34 – italics in original). I believe it is more reasonable to assume that the prophet alludes not to Psalm 114, but rather to Deuteronomy 28:49-50. After all, he is describing the situation before the redemption, as is Deuteronomy, hence the stylistic connection between them:

Isaiah	*Deuteronomy*
a *nō'āz* nation you will not see,	A nation whose language
a nation whose language you	you will not *understand*,
cannot *understand*	a nation of *'az* face

The chiastic parallelism shows that the prophet alludes to the verse in Deuteronomy.

15. See the translation in the Septuagint and the Targum (note 4, above).



from the consciousness of the psalmist, the secret of the path of associations through which his mind passed – but how can this help us in understanding the verse? Has this discovery deepened our understanding of the verse itself, of the meaning?

It seems to us that we can answer this question in the affirmative.

The connection perceived by our poet between Exodus 19 and Deuteronomy 28 reveals that he views the solidarity expressed in the verse "and I bore you on eagles' wings" as antithetical to the divine punishment expressed in the verse "the LORD will bring a nation against you . . . as the eagle sweeps down". According to the psalmist, God's favours began "when Israel went forth from Egypt", just as according to Deuteronomy 28 God's favours will end when verse 68 is fulfilled "and God will return you to Egypt". Both involve the sudden extreme change from one condition to the other. Great is the punishment that comes suddenly, and great is the miracle of the salvation that comes unexpectedly. If the former is like the star fallen from heaven (Isaiah 14:12), the latter is like the man who "has gone from prison to the throne" (Ecclesiastes 4:14). The grace shown by God to Israel when He bore them on eagles' wings is the greatest of His favours, and the punishment that Israel will suffer when God brings a nation against them "as the eagle sweeps down" is the greatest of punishments; both are directed against what is most precious to the nation — its soul.

Such are the associations of meaning revealed by investigation of the word *lō'ēz*.

B. Phrases

The absolute demand voiced by Total Interpretation — not to disregard any word — means that sometimes a word must be disregarded. The discovery of the true meaning of the word in a specific verse may involve limiting, or even abrogating its original meaning, if the situation and the context demand. This is the case especially when the individual word is only part of an expression, i.e. a phrase or an idiom, because here the genius of the language is particularly realized. Therefore, sometimes it

Here, however, a methodological question may arise: it may well be that we have succeeded in uncovering what was perhaps even hidden

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bout one who interprets a verse in its literal meaning what : "Whoever translates a verse literally is a liar" (*T.B. Qid-*specially one who does not know the language from its liv-t draws his knowledge from secondary and tertiary sources when he encounters an idiom or phrase which is foreign to age yet native and authentic in the language of the text. This een a stumbling-block to eminent Biblical critics to whom lebrew was foreign.[1]

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dic Sages also frequently failed to perceive a phrase as an n each constituent has lost its original meaning. They main-ependence of the individual word, without taking into con-context, because of their pious assumption that the riptures is essentially different from that of human docu-ough the opinion was also expressed that "the Torah used nguage".[3]

ix sections we shall probe deeply into verses from which in-widely deviant) conclusions have been drawn both by ish commentators and modern critics who explained them ause they did not take into consideration – for quite dif-as indicated above — that these verses are manifest ex-he dynamic spirit and impulsive character of Hebrew

1. J. Rei
(1930
the re
"Den
miyye
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16, nc
2. Heine
3. *T. B.* Present State of Textual Criticism of the Old Testament", *HUCA*, VII
Tradi-315. Compare, for example, the reason Duhm gives for assuming that
4. Th. B
[1960
the Septuagint in Isaiah 1:12 is authentic and not the Masoretic text:
te ein halbsweg guter Schriftsteller, geschweige der klassiker Jes. das
t *rĕmōs* verbinden können: *von der Hand fordern, dass die Füsse zer-*
— my italics). On this comment of Duhm see L. G. Ringnell, *Studia*
(1957-1958), p. 148. So Urbach also affirms: "It is impossible that the
the Hebrew attributed to them by Volz" (*MGWJ*, LXXXII, 1938, p.

. *cit.* (above, p. 78, note 3), p. 96, 117-122.
0b. — See W. Bacher, *'Die exegetische Terminologie der jüdischen*
tur, I-II, Leipzig 1905, s.v. *hăba'y* (I, p. 29; II, pp. 23-24).
brew Thought Compared With Greek (transl. by I. L. Moreau), London
Compare Gunkel's complaint, above, p. 47.

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CHAPTER THREE

Images

In the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, imagery was viewed as "ornament, mere decoration" of the poem "like cherries tastefully arranged on a cake". Aristotle's theory of metaphor had been forgotten, and until the Romantic Movement few if any realized that "imagery is at the core of the poem".[1]

This conception of the image has been expressed most fully and adequately by modern literary scholarship, which is vigorously opposed not only to viewing the image as "a grace or ornament or *added* power of language"[2] but equally to seeing it as solely a didactic device, which clarifies the subject matter of the work.[3] "Metaphor is one of the best means of bringing out the meaning of the text. At the same time it will become clear through a profound understanding of metaphor that it not only assists understanding, but it can also activate all kinds of emotional and conceptual overtones."[4]

1. C. Day Lewis, *The Poetic Image*, London [1965, repr. 1966], p. 18.
2. I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, New York [1965], p. 90 (italics in the original).
3. W. K. Wimsatt & C. Brooks, *Literary Criticism*, New York 1957, p. 644.
4. Kayser, p. 125.See also C. Brooke-Rose, *A Grammar of Metaphor*, London 1958, *passim*; W. Emrich, "Das Problem der Symbolinterpretation im Hinblick auf Goethes 'Wanderjahre' ", *Protest and Verheissung*, Frankfurt/M. – Bonn 1960, pp. 48-66 (= *Die Werkinterpretation*, pp. 169-197); C. Lewis, "Blusfeld and Flalansfers", in: M. Black (ed.), *The Importance of Language* [New Jersey 1962], pp. 36-50; O. Barfield, "Poetic Diction and Legal Fiction," *ibid.*, pp. 51-71; M. Black, *Models and Metaphors*, New York 1962, esp. pp. 25-47; H. Weinrich, "Semantik der kühnen Metapher", *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, XXXVII (1963), pp. 324-344; C. Brooks, "Metaphor, Paradox and Stereotype", *British Journal of Aesthetics*, V (1965), pp. 315-328; H. Khatchadourian, "Metaphor", *ibid.*, VIII (1968), pp. 227-243. From the extensive literature on the subject of metapor and related topics generally in the last years we note for example: S. J. Brown, *The World of Imagery*, New York 1966; W. Nowothny, *The Language Poets Use*, London [1968], pp. 48-49; N. Frie[dman], "Imagery", in: *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics*, (see above, p. 1, note 2), pp. 363-370; G. W[halley], "Metaphor", *ibid.*, pp. 490-495; idem, "Simile", *ibid.*, pp. 767-769; W. Abraham, *A Linguistic Approach to Metaphor*, Lisse 1975; T. Hawkes, *Metaphor*, London 1977; P. Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, Toronto [c. 1977].

Brooks & Warren exemplify the function of image with the simile of Ecclesiastes 7:6: "For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool". This comparison — they write — uses the sound of the crackling of dry thorns when they catch fire to describe the laughter of the fool. Now it cannot be denied that there is real acoustic similarity between the sound of thorns under the pot and that of the fool's vain laughter (the similarity is even more pronounced in the English translation of the verse, which was all that these scholars knew, than in the original). However, this image has a powerful effect apart from its phonetic descriptiveness. It also pronounces judgment upon such laughter as hollow, empty and meaningless. The image "as the crackling of thorns under a pot" asserts: the thorns have no value, they are consumed and perish in smoke, only to be carried away by the wind. The image, in effect, justifies what is said at the end of the verse: "This also is vanity". Even more to the point: the image is not only an illustration of the "vanity", it is itself the vanity. Vanity is embodied in it: the light of the flame is bright and clear, the explosive crackling deafens the ears — but within there is but emptiness; it is essentially nothing.[5]

That is to say: the image expresses what would not be expressed, because it could not have been expressed, without it. "Metaphor is the

5. C. Brooks & R. P. Warren, *Fundamentals of Good Writing*, London 1952, p. 376. Compare also the analysis of the simile in Numbers 22:4, "as the ox licks up the grass of the field", by the author of *Aqedat Yiẓḥaq*, Rabbi Yiẓḥaq Arama: "All my life I wondered at this comparison till I saw cows pasturing in the field and understood its meaning. It is the habit of the ox to stick out its tongue from the side and stretch it out far, and with its long sharpness — like a sickle — to tear up all the grass and bring it to its mouth so that the point where the ox's mouth is located is his centre of activity, and from which he wreaks havoc all around. This is the meaning of the verse — that even if [the Midianites] are certain that [the Israelites] will not make war upon them, they still fear that the land about their place of settlement will share the fate of the land about the mouth of the ox" (Taken from N. Leibowitz, *Studies in the Weekly Sidra*, "Balak", 1942).

matter may change almost out of recognition: but metaphor remains, the life-principle of poetry, the poet's chief tool and glory" (*op. cit.* [note 1, above], p. 17).

10. See above pp. 24f.; 74ff. For extensive research on the *topos* see O. Pöggeler, "Dichtungstheorie and Toposforschung", *Jahrbuch für Ästhetik und allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*, V(1960), pp. 89-201; W. Weit, "Toposforschung", *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, XXXVII (1963), pp. 120-163.
11. See below pp. 150 f.

greatest power available to man; it borders on magic; it is like a creative tool left by God in the minds of His creatures".[6] If the word itself is the medium whereby man subdues the objective external world,[7] in metaphor he creates out of words the reality of his inner world. Hence it follows that delving into the meaning of metaphor reveals something of the writer's inner world. Metaphor is therefore of the very essence of poetry. "It is a completely adequate expression in language of a writer's mode of feeling".[8] "In his images — the trivial as well as the important — we encounter the poet as a poet and receive from him what he, as a poet, has to give us".[9]

At the same time, however, it is well known that the world of representations, forms and linguistic expressions in poetry is not a world created *ex nihilo*. Poetry is created out of forms that have been fixed and stabilized from early times. It uses images and combinations of ideas which are taken from the world of external reality and from the store of human expressions which are a part of man's universal heritage, in part the heritage of the cultural traditions of generations. But even those ideas, linguistic expressions and "rhetorical tropes" which are not the original creation of the poet, but are part of his heritage, nevertheless take on an original meaning in the new context of the individual poetic creation. This has been said about all linguistic expressions,[10] about *topoi*, symbols, motifs, and even about the actual subject-matter of the poem.[11] Thus even with regard to the modern poem, which, as opposed to the

6. José Ortega y Gasset (cited by H. Friedrich, *Die Struktur der modernen Lyrik*, Hamburg [1961], p. 151).
7. Compare H. Seidler, *Allgemeine Stilistik*, Göttingen 1953, pp. 14ff; idem, *Die Dichtung*, Stuttgart 1959, pp. 22ff.
8. J. M. Murry, *The Problem of Style*, London–New York–Toronto 1952, p. 13.
9. H. O. Burger, *GRM*, XXXII (1950-51), p. 56. Compare also Day Lewis: "Trends come and go, diction alters, metrical fashions change, even the elemental subject-

the Bible in Alonso Schök
273-277) the following sho
Limmudim, Section 8; S. I
Metafora Aḥat Bamiqra",
idem, "Methodologisches
ThZ, XXIII (1967), pp.
jesaja", *Ev. Theol.*, XXV (

quity, or even in the Middle Ages, is not
ion or by social mores, it is stated that
ceptacle for seizing and storing up num-
s, which remain there until the particles
compound are present together. If you
passages of the greatest poetry you see
ypes of combination ... it is not the
emotions, the components, but the inten-
pressure, so to speak, under which the fu-
[2] Coleridge maintains: "Images, however
lves characterize the poet. They become
s far as they are modified by a predomi-
houghts or images awakened by that pas-
cal conclusion formulated by Kayser: "It
crutinize in each case what is the effect of
has been rendered vivid by it in the con-
s presented and what is its functional

creations of literary art
conditioned by a literar
"The poet's mind is in f
berless feelings, phrases
which can unite to forr
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beautiful ... do not of
proofs of original geniu
nant passion; or by asso
sion".[13] Hence the meth
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The different types
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However, Yellin's wor

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of the Bible".[15]
he much more scholarly study of König[16]

al Talent — Selected Essays, New York 1950, p.
9, above), p. 87; H. Bloom, *The Anxiety of In-*
ew York 1973.
bove), p. 19.

39, p. 41. See also R. Gordis, "Lisegulot Hameliza
idel, Jerusalem 1962, pp. 253-267.
evaluation of this work of König see L. Alonso
o the bibliography of research on the metaphor in
on Hebrew Poetics (*op. cit.* [p. 40, note 42], pp.
ded: Ramḥal (R. Moshe Ḥaim Luzzatto), *Leshon*
Meliẓat Yeshurun, Metaphor; M. Weiss, "Beiqve
XXXIV (1965), pp. 107-128, 211-233, 303-318;
Behandlung der Metapher dargelegt an Am. 1.2",
Hessler, "Die Struktur der Bilder bei Deutero-
. 349-369; E. M. Good, "Ezekiel's Ship — Some

12. T. S. Eliot, *Tradition and*
8. Compare Burger, *art.*
fluence — A Theory of P
13. C. Day Lewis, *op. cit.* (n
14. Kayser, pp. 122-123.
15. *Ketavim Nivḥarim*, II, Jeru
Bekhitve Haqodesh", in:
16. König, *Stil*, pp. 77-110.
Schökel, *SKT*, VII (1960)

which preceded it, serve only as classified lists of the images which occur in the Bible.[17] In addition to this statistical research, there have been comparative studies of the image, attempting to discover influences, to determine the dates of composition, etc. This is another manifestation of the dominant trend in modern Biblical scholarship, of looking for remains of earlier worlds beneath the upper layers of the text. Until now, however, Biblical imagery, like the literary, poetic aspect of the Bible in general, has not been investigated according to the principles of Total Interpretation. It is true that in Alonso Schökel's *Estudios de Poética Hebrea*, which (as already noted) aims to apply the methods of *Werkinterpretation* and New Criticism to the literature of the Bible, the eighth chapter is devoted to imagery and contains a theoretical discussion, along the lines of these schools, of imagery in general and of water-imagery in particular. He discusses water and mountain imagery in Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel and deals also with the fusion of images; fire; tension of images; instruments and inversion of images; the "stumbling-block". At the same time, the images are not subjected to a thorough analysis. Moreover, the analysis of each metaphor treats it in isolation; in not one instance is its style and structure considered in the light of its mutual relation with the passage as a whole.[18]

Extended Metaphors in the Old Testament", *Semitics*, I (1970), pp. 79-103; D. F. Payne, "A Perspective on the Use of Simile in the Old Testament", *ibid.*, pp. 111-125; I.K. Crenshaw, "'Vedorekh al Bamote Arez'", *CBQ*, XXXIV (1972), pp. 39-53; R. Lack, *La Symbolique du livre d'Isaie*, Rome 1973; D. Rosner, "The Simile and its Use in the Old Testament", *Semitics*, IV (1974), pp. 37-46.

17. About this type of research into images Day Lewis writes of a "scientific" work, in which an American professor "pins down, classifies, and christens some two dozen varieties of image found in Elizabethan poetry": "That sort of performance is too like an anatomy lesson: if the subject is not a cadaver before you start dissecting, it soon becomes one. The imagery of a poem is part of a living growth; even decorative or conventional images can hardly be detached for examination, without losing some of their sparkle. Moreover, it is in practice impossible to lay down categories to one of which any given image will conform ... when we try to go below the surface, equipped with notions of the intellectual and the sensuous, say, or the decorative and the functional, we find the images eluding us. Images are invented, after all, to compose poems, and not for the convenience of American professors" (*op. cit.* [note 1, above], p. 40).
18. Pp. 269-307.

In attempting to illustrate adequately the application of the method of Total Interpretation to Biblical poetic imagery, we shall begin by examining Psalm 1:2-4, considering first, in the light of the requirements of modern literary theory, what recent scholars and critics have said about the similes these verses contain and the conclusions they have drawn from them. Then we shall attempt to re-examine the similes and to discover, again according to modern literary methods, the true meaning they convey. Next we shall apply the same method to the images in Job, chapters 4,5. Thirdly we shall consider Amos 8:12, an example of a metaphor with double meaning. And finally we shall follow up one metaphor which appears thrice in prophetic literature — Amos 1:2, Joel 4:16; Jeremiah 25:30 — and clarify its meaning, while discussing also the opinions of commentators and scholars on each of three passages.

I

וְהָיָה כְּעֵץ שָׁתוּל עַל־פַּלְגֵי מָיִם
אֲשֶׁר פִּרְיוֹ יִתֵּן בְּעִתּוֹ וְעָלֵהוּ לֹא־יִבּוֹל
וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר־יַעֲשֶׂה יַצְלִיחַ.
לֹא־כֵן הָרְשָׁעִים כִּי אִם כַּמֹּץ אֲשֶׁר תִּדְּפֶנּוּ רוּחַ

He is like a tree planted beside streams of water,
that gives its fruit in its season, and its foliage does not fade,
wĕkol 'ăser-ya'ăśeh yaṣlī^{a}ḥ.
Not so the wicked; rather, they are like chaff that wind blows away.
(Psalm 1:3-4)

Images from the plant world are among the most common Biblical images. "We find", Yellin writes, "about two hundred and fifty of this type; that is to say, a quarter".[1]

The understanding of our psalm depends to a large extent on the correct interpretation of the images. They are the key to the psalm by which its conceptual and its aesthetic world can be opened. Most scholars

1. *Op. cit.* (p. 133, note 15), p. 55.

also believe that the images enable them to determine when our psalm was written, and some even believe that with the help of the images they will succeed in discovering the origin, "source" of the psalm.

On the basis of its images, our psalm is apprehended as a didactic poem,[2] the purpose of which is to teach us something about recompense[3] or the way of life a person should choose.[4]

The images are also used as a criterion by which the psalm is evaluated. For example, Gunkel asserts: "This psalm is a creation of but little value: both the idea and the style follow the beaten path. The central idea of the psalm — the fate of the righteous and the fate of the wicked — is expressed in the Bible in many places, and also the images, the green tree and the driven chaff, are frequent and hackneyed. The psalm is most analogous to the prophecy in Jeremiah 17:5-8 ... but how superior Jeremiah is in beauty! In contrast to the righteous who trust in God Jeremiah sets the wicked who trust in their own might, and in contrast to the tree planted by the waters, the tamarisk in the desert. The psalmist, however, has not successfully developed the contrasting aspects of the image. He compares the fate of the wicked to chaff "which the wind blows away" — a common image in the Bible, but not an appropriate

2. An exceptional view is that of I. Engnell (see below). W. H. Brownlee feels that Psalm 1 was initially a didactic poem (see below) but was later combined with Psalm 2 for the occasion of the coronation of one of the later, post-Deuteronomic kings of Judea ("Psalm 1-2 — A Coronation Liturgy", *Biblica*, LII [1971], pp. 328-336).
3. This is the aggadic interpretation (*Shoher Tov, ad loc.*), followed by the mediaeval Jewish commentators, e.g. Ibn Ezra, as also the *Biur*. Of modern scholars: Chajes, Gunkel, Kittel, Kaufmann (II/2, p. 705), P. Auvray ("Le psaume I. — Notes de grammaire et d'exégèse", *RB*, LIII [1946], pp. 365-371), G. J. Botterweck ("Ein Lied vom glückseligen Menschen, Ps. 1.", *Tübinger Theologische Quartalschrift*, 1958, pp. 129-151), Kraus, Dahood and others.
4. Rashi, Meiri, Malbim, Schmidt, Weiser, M. Buber ("The Ways", *Right and Wrong — An Interpretation of Some Psalms* [transl. by R. G. Smith], London [1952], pp. 53-62), R. Lack ("Le psaume 1 — Une analyse structurale", *Biblica*, LVII [1976], pp. 154-167). Against Lack, see W. Vogels ("A Structural Analysis of Ps 1", *Biblica*, LX [1979], pp. 410-416), R. P. Merendino ("Sprachkunst in Psalm I", *VT*, XXIX [1979], pp. 45-60), etc. A somewhat intermediate position between these two conceptions is adopted by Radak and König, and apparently by Nic. H. Ridderbos (*Die Psalmen — Stilistische Verfahren und Aufbau —Mit besonderer Berücksichtigung von Ps 1-41* [*BZAW*, CXVII], Berlin–New York 1972, pp. 120-121).

contrast to "the tree planted beside streams of water".[5] Auvray, twenty years after Gunkel, adapts this same method of comparing the images in the psalm to those of Jeremiah 17, and reaches the same conclusion.[6] More recently, Merendino, discussing Gunkel's negative evaluation, admits that "Psalm 1 may still be considered a true work of literary art, as the artistic character of a text is not expressed only in singularity of thought, message, expression and imagery, but also in the manner in which the separate elements combine into a meaningful, unified whole ... Compositionally Psalm 1 is an artistic creation ..., the form of [which] is appropriate to its thought and intent".

Again on the basis of the images, a whole generation of scholars established the origin and date of the psalm. Baethgen still speaks cautiously: "It is difficult to decide whether the psalmist used the words of the prophet, or, on the contrary, the prophet used the words of the psalmist. The differences tend to support the hypothesis that Jeremiah drew upon the psalm". Gunkel asserts quite positively, on the basis of his previously mentioned conclusions: "There is no doubt that the psalmist imitated the prophet, but his imitation cannot be compared with the work of the prophet who served as his source". Merendino believes that it was not the psalmist who was influenced by the verses in Jeremiah but rather an interpolator, who added verses 1b, 3aαγ-b to the psalm.[8]

Even though Gunkel admits that it is not possible to determine the exact time of composition of our psalm, he voices the opinion that the psalm's dependence on Jeremiah proves its late date. H. W. Wolff discusses possible references to conditions under the Ptolemaic Empire in

5. Gunkel notes of the whole psalm: "The poet has also disturbed the balance of the parallel sections by not describing the actions of the wicked. It can further be noted in Jeremiah's favour that he emphasized and set forth in a parallel fashion blessing and curse, whereas the psalmist retained only the blessing, and there is no trace of the curse in his psalm".
6. "Sa banalité lui valut être placé, tel un portique de stuc à l'entrée d'un riche musée, comme préface à tout le psautier", *art. cit.* (note 3, above), p. 371.
7. *Art. cit.* (note 4, above), p. 45. That the psalm is artistically a whole is evident both from Lack's structural analysis (note 4, above), and P. Auffert's semantic and metric study ("Essai sur la structure littéraire du psaume 1", *BZ*, NF, XXII [1978], pp. 27-45).
8. *Art. cit.* (note 4, above).

the 3rd century B.C.E.[9] According to Kraus, "considering the tendency of the Psalm as a whole we might assign to it a post-exilic date".

Kittel saw in the image of the "tree planted" a hint of the place where our psalm was composed: "The comparison of the righteous to a 'tree planted beside streams of water' shows that the psalm was created in Babylonia, a land of streams, rich in canals. It is not reasonable to believe that the psalm was created in the land of Israel, a hilly country, poor in water and with few streams". This theory of a Babylonian origin for the psalm has not been echoed in scholarship; instead, many scholars are of the opinion that the image in our psalm is of Egyptian origin. The similarity between the image of the "tree planted" in our psalm and the image of the tree in the proverbs of Amen-em-opet[10] has supported the view that the Egyptian wisdom literature influenced the Wisdom literature of the Bible.[11] Gressmann, comparing the image in Egyptian literature to the image in Psalms and Jeremiah, reaches the conclusion that "despite the differences between the three poems, we cannot deny that there is an historical connection between them, because the similarity is so great. In addition, the wisdom of Amen-em-opet was familiar to the Israelites. However, while Jeremiah has completely adapted the image to his religious needs and ideals, in Psalm 1 the Egyptian origin is still quite palpable. Above all, the idea of the judgment of the dead[12] ... is a reference to Egypt, as is almost certainly the image of the tree which 'is planted beside streams of water' or the canals".[13]

9. "Psalm I", *Ev. Theol.*, IX (1949-50), pp. 385-394.
10. IV. 1-12 (*ANET*, p. 422 a,b).
11. J. Hempel, *Die althebräische Literatur und ihr hellenistisch-jüdisches Nachleben*, Wildpark-Potsdam [1930], pp. 50-51.
12. So Gressman comprehends, it would seem the word *bammišpāt* in verse 5. This interpretation of the word is already discernible in the Septuagint and the Vulgate as they translate *yāqūmū*: ἀναστήσονται, *resurgunt* ("resurgent") (see Botterweck, *art. cit.* [note 2, above], pp. 148-149); compare also Ibn Ezra: "It refers to the Day of Judgement for all or to each person at his death". According to Dahood, who adduces parallels to these images taken from Ugaritic literature, when the psalmist compares the righteous to "a tree planted beside streams of water" he has in mind "the story of the streams of Eden, the land of bliss" with the intention to say that the just's lot is immortality. While in comparing the wicked to "chaff that wind blows away" he means that the wicked will be driven into the nether world.
13. H. Gressman, *Israels Spruchweisheit im Zusammenhang der Weltliteratur*, Berlin 1925, p. 32.

A changed conception is evident in the view of Brownlee: "The alleged similarities between Jer 17:5-8 and Ps 1 do not necessarily prove dependence in either direction, for the differences are as great as the similarities, and the similarities are sufficiently general as to point to a common source. We may even know the common source as Chapter IV of the Instruction of *Amenem-opet*".[14] Similarly Botterweck argues: "Though the assumption that the psalmist borrowed the two-fold comparison from Jeremiah is widespread, this assumption should be viewed with great reservation. In both cases we are dealing with images borrowed from the store of Israel's Wisdom literature. The great difference between the two similar passages rather testifies to the degree of independence with which the authors controlled the traditions and idioms of the Wisdom literature".[15] And B. D. Eerdmans writes: "In an oriental country like Palestine, where the summer heat dries up vegetation, the comparison is so self-evident that we cannot conclude from the likeness literary dependence".[16] As for the parallels between the proverbs of Amen-em-opet and the image of the tree, Botterweck claims that we can learn from them how analogous or similar linguistic forms which are found in different spheres of life may well have different meanings and independent origins.[17]

Engnell[18] has adopted a completely different and unprecedented approach. He believes that the image of the "tree planted" in our psalm serves as a "king's witness" to his theory. Since Engnell is the standard-bearer of the "Scandinavian school" or the "Uppsala school" of *Ritual-pattern-Forschung*, whose starting-point, Gunkel's *Gattungsforschung*,[19] is the basis of Biblical scholarship even today, in this chapter which deals with imagery we shall devote our attention to his theories which are con-

14. *Art. cit.* (note 2, above), p. 326.
15. *Art. cit.* (note 3 above), p. 147.
16. "The Hebrew Book of Psalms", *OTS*, IV (1947), p. 93.
17. *Art. cit.* (note 2, above), pp. 147-148.
18. I. Engnell, "'Planted by the Streams of the Water' — Some remarks on the problem of the interpretation of the psalms as illustrated by a detail in ps. 1", in: *Studia Orientalia Joanni Pedersen Dicata*, Hauniae MCMLIII, pp. 85-96. Compare A. R. Johnson, "Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship", in: S. H. Hooke (ed.), *Myth, Ritual and Kingship*, Oxford 1958, p. 232, note 3. On Engnell's methodology in general see his paper: "Methodological Aspects of OT Study", *SVT* VIII (1960), pp. 13-30.
19. See above, pp. 54ff.

cerned particularly with the central topic of poetics — imagery. Even though many in the Uppsala camp itself do not agree with Engnell's extreme positions, we have not refrained from disputing with him at length, because his extremism points up this approach as would a microscope.

In the programmatic introduction with which Engnell prefaces his commentary on Psalm 1:3, he expresses his view that "it is no doubt true that many psalms have been understood and interpreted in a didactic way by the final collectors and editors and, not least, by the Masoretes. But this is one thing; quite another is what the single psalms, thus also the so-called 'didactic' ones, have been from the beginning, in their original *Sitz im Leben*. To take them as products of a laity piousness, disengaged from the cult and of the 'conventicle' type is a horrible modern anachronism, a manifestation of a solid unfamiliarity with the world in which old Israel belonged". Engell asserts positively: "there are no 'wisdom psalms' at all in the Psalter. Even those psalms that are considered to be the most typical specimens, Ps. I, CXII, and CXXVII". In order to establish this uncompromising verdict, Engnell argues: "The fact that later on, not too long after the time in which the most radical scholars of the literary-critical school place the psalms of the Psalter, the need was felt of imitating this type of poetry, is the best proof that these so-called 'Wisdom psalms', too, must have been connected with the temple and its cult".

According to his view, this psalm was intended from the beginning for a specific cultic occasion. This is shown by a number of characteristic expressions and cultic idioms as also by its ideological content. Psalm 1 belongs to the type which is called "*tora*-liturgy", "and as such originally linked to the person of the sacral king" as shown by the expression "like a tree, planted beside streams of water", if the original significance of the image is correctly interpreted. The widespread opinion that Psalm 1 is influenced by Jeremiah 17 "is an instance of the usual conception of the relation between the prophets and the psalms, based on the *a priori* Kuenen-Wellhausen view of Israel's religion and its historical development". In Engnell's opinion: "Jer. XVII:5-8 is by no means the model of Ps. I, but on the contrary a secondary prophetic paraphrase in comparison with our psalm, though perhaps not directly dependent or founded on exactly this specimen".

In order to clarify the original meaning of the image Engnell argues: "It ought to be a well-known fact by now that a very close connexion existed

in the Ancient Near East between the 'Tammuz' god, the king, and the tree of life, reflecting an ideology spread over the whole Near East and based in its turn upon cult practices, according to which the sacral king was conceived of, and represented as, the corporeal 'Tammuz' god (the 'young' god, the dying and rising god), and with the tree of life, planted at the spring with the water of life, as the intermedium between the two". Thus it is said of the king Shulgi of the first dynasty of Ur: "Shulgi, the king the graceful lord, is a date-palm, /planted by the water-ditch". And Engnell emphasizes: "We need not doubt that these words mirror ideological and cultic realities, and are not to be judged as pure metaphors".

As an "other perhaps still more interesting parallel" to the image of our psalm, Engnell cites "an oft-quoted 'Tammuz-liturgy'", in which, from the negative point of view, it is said of Tammuz during his "withering-away" aspect:

> A tamarisk that does not drink water in the garden . . .
> a sapling that does not thrive at the water-ditch,
> a sapling whose root is torn away,
> a plant that drinks not water in the garden.

If we transpose this into the positive we have a very telling background to Ps. 1:3, where it is said of the righteous who has his delight in Y' . . . 's tora, "reciting it day and night". Hence the psalmist is not comparing the fate of the righteous to "a tree planted beside streams of water" but rather the king, and the tree is the tree of life. Engnell admits that the psalm does indeed speak about the righteous, but, just as he says with respect to Psalm 92:13, it speaks of course, about the king as well. " 'The righteous' in the Psalms is not seldom a qualified royal term." Engnell emphasizes the fact that the word for "planted" is the Hebrew *šātūl* and not *nāṭūᵃ*. The verb *nāṭa'* is, in his view, "a specific Canaanite-Israelite word", whereas the verb *šātal* represents "a common Semitic" one and "has evidently had a rather specific meaning and use in the O.T.". This precise meaning of *šātal*, he believes, can be understood from its use in Ezekiel 17:8-10. "In this text satiated with the ideology and terminology of 'the tree of life' the verb *štl* is used in vv. 8 and 10 about the king as the tree of life, to wit, as a vine."

At the conclusion of his study Engnell writes: " . . . after the confronta-

tion with the comparative material . . . , and after the internal investigation of the term *šatūl* in its whole occurence in the O.T., in texts, as we have seen, loaded with a royal tree of life ideology, have we not the right to ask, already on this basis: is it really certain that the usual, not to say unanimous, opinion of Ps. I as a late and trite product of a reflective-didactic type, belonging in a quite another situation than the cult is justified? Have we not on the contrary to admit that there are criteria speaking in favour of a cultic, even a — of course primarily — royal-sacral interpretation also of this psalm?"[20]

After this survey of the interpretations that have been given to the images of Psalm 1, it seems to us that an examination of their accuracy from a methodological standpoint is the first step towards clarifying their actual meaning. We will begin by the interpretation with which we concluded the survey, that of Engnell.[21]

Engnell, like his "Patternist" colleagues, attempts to "deal with the psalm in a manner analogous to the ultra-violet treatment of a palimpsest, in order to reveal the early writing hidden beneath the visible later

20. Engnell, *art. cit.* (note 18, above), pp. 90, 91, note 20; pp. 92, 93, 95-96 (italics in the original). Though our view of Engnell's interpretation and generally of his approach will be discussed further on (pp. 143ff.), we cannot refrain from bringing our reader's attention to the scholarly method he employs (this method, in the final analysis, is the one adopted today by all Biblical scholars, including opponents of Engnell and his colleagues, despite their attempts to attain goals other than those of the "Scandinavian School"). *A priori* Engnell assumes the existence of the "*tōrā*-liturgy" (what is the proof of its existence?), then he asserts that our psalm belongs to this genre, a genre created *ad hoc* at the same time (the term "*tōrā*-liturgy" is indeed Mowinckel's, but Engnell uses it in a new sense, see his study, p. 91, note 19). And thence he deduces that since our psalm belongs to this "type it [is] as such originally linked to the person of the sacral king" (p. 91).

21. Most Biblical scholars, including members of his school, disagree both with Engnell's interpretation of our psalm and with the basis of his interpretation which he sets out prior to it. The attacks are directed against three aspects of his study: (a) against his apprehension of the image literally and not as a metaphor (H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods*, Chicago [1948], p. 408, note 67; J. Gray, "Canaanite Kingship in Theory and Practice", *VT*, II [1952], p. 194; A. R. Johnson, "Hebrew Conceptions of Kingship", in: Hooke, *op. cit.* [note 18, above], p. 232, note 3. Compare J. A. Soggin, "Zum ersten Psalm", *ThZ*, XXIII [1967], pp. 90-92. Soggin agrees with Engnell that the metaphor originates in Sumero-Akkadian myth; however, he says, as the context shows, the original, mythic sense is no longer present in the psalm); (b) against his attribution of the image to the ideology of the god Tammuz (S. Mowinckel, *He That Cometh*, Oxford 1956, p. 454); (c) against his attributing sacral significance to the verb *šātal* (Botterweck, art. cit. [note 3, above], p. 144).
In fact the criticism directed against "patternism" (see below, pp. 421ff.) is valid also as a refutation of the view of Engnell. All the novel suggestions propounded by Engnell, however (including his new theory about the date of composition of the psalm), are based on two presuppositions: (1) our psalm — as is true of the psalms generally — was connected with the Temple cult; (2) the ideology of "sacral kingship" prevailed in Israel, as in neighbouring cultures. These assumptions are, as is well known, accepted as basic axioms in Engnell's school (H. H. Schrey, "Die alttestamentliche Forschung der sogenannten Uppsala-Schule", *ThZ*, VII [1951], pp. 321-341; A. Bentzen, "Skandinavische Literatur zum Alten Testament", *ThR*, XVII [1948-49], pp. 273-328; J. de Fraine, *L'aspect religieux de la royauté israélite*, [*Analecta Bibl.* III], Roma 1954, pp. 26-54; idem, "Les implications du 'patternism'", *Biblica*, XXXVII [1956], pp. 59ff. See also above p. 83, note 23; especially Bernhardt's work cited there, particularly pp. 51-66). See further Appendix IV, pp. 421ff.

script".[22] But in a palimpsest the later writing merely covers the original, without changing it. The elements that might have served as the "raw materials" for the psalm, on the other hand, are utterly transformed by the poet's expressive vision. Instead of comparing the psalm to a palimpsest, perhaps we should think of an intricately woven cloth, made in part with older threads, but in a new and original pattern. Even if the pattern into which these old threads had originally been woven could be recovered — which is doubtful enough — that reconstructed cloth would hardly enhance our appreciation of the new one. The act of recovery, in fact, might necessitate the destruction or obliteration of the new design.

A careful examination of Engnell's method of interpretation will show that it does not come from the text itself, but rather from associations aroused in him by his reading of the text. His argument that, because these associations have their basis in the text, the interpretation too has a basis in the text, is only plausible if one accept Engnell's own verdict: "After Mowinckel's *Psalmenstudien* it is simply out of the question *in principle* to apply any other interpretation method than the cultic",[23] that is to say, it must be assumed *a priori* that it is impossible to find in the text anything that is not linked to the cult, which is, in turn, itself defined

22. Fraine, *art. cit.* (note 21, above), p. 70.

23. *Art. cit.* (note 18, above), p. 86.

and limited *a priori*. In other words: before Engnell even reads the text, he determines as a matter of principle what it may contain and what we are "forbidden" to find in it.

It seems obvious to us that in principle anything can be found in the text, so that clearly — despite Mowinckel's Law — the one method that in principle *must* be used to explain a literary work is the method which derives from categories related to the nature of the poem, not from categories connected with something external to it. We must therefore argue first and foremost against Engnell that his approach does not meet the demand for exact and careful close reading — it does not meet the demand for any reading, for any consideration of what is actually written.

We will add to this argument what we argued above against interpretation based on the historical background of the passage:[24] even if the theories of patternism were incontrovertibly proved (as Engnell holds), even if we had decisive proof that the *Sitz im Leben* of all the psalms — including Psalm 1 — was the cult; even if it were beyond any doubt that the "sacral kingship" existed in Israel — even the knowledge of these facts would not release us from the obligation to explain the images of the psalm in accordance with what is written in the psalm, and only on the basis of what is written. And since nowhere in the psalm itself — neither in its "content" nor in its "form" — is there any indication of its connection with the cult or to the sacral king, we must conclude that it was not the intention of the psalmist to express any such connection, even if we agree that it was composed to serve as a text in a ritual at which the sacral king officiated. The use of the psalm is one thing; what it says may be — and in this case is — quite another.

Engnell's opinion "that the cultic interpretation alone is able to solve in a satisfactory way all the problems of content, form, and language with which we are faced in the Psalter", according to his argument, "is confirmed by the cultic allusions and the cultically saturated language that is actually found in so many psalms".[25] However, what are the cultic expressions and "the cultic allusions" which he finds in Psalm 1?

(1) The image of the "tree planted" — if it is "properly" interpreted, that is, not figuratively;

24. p. 52.
25. *Loc. cit.* (note 23, above).

(2) the verb *šātal* — in its "original" sense.

These "cultic symbols" are certainly no symbols at all. Why, even adherents of the "patternism" school emphasize that assigning a creation to a certain "pattern" must be based on an expression or motif which is characteristic, integral in the passage and which leaves its impress on its whole structure. An individual word or motif does not establish a family relationship in the world of "patterns".[26]

Moreover, how does Engnell know that the image in our psalm cannot be "properly interpreted" unless it is explained "not figuratively"? In his view the function that the "sacral kingship" filled in the ancient Near East and also in Israel is already determined and proven, and, therefore, he rules out any interpretation which assumes the existence of metaphors in the psalm. "It is a doubtful expedient" — he asserts — "to get rid of intricate problems by referring to 'poetic usage and imagery' ". Our knowledge of the cultic situation allows us to understand the expressions literally, and the burden of proof is upon anyone who wishes to deprive them of a "living content"[27] — that is, to pervert their meaning by apprehending them as metaphors.

However, first of all, the content of a literary work, particularly one of a composite nature such as the book of Psalms, cannot be determined in advance of the detailed examination of the work. It cannot, therefore, be asserted *a priori* that any interpretation which assumes the existence of figurative language in the book of Psalms, must be rejected out of hand. Nothing may be asserted *a priori*.

Secondly, the vitality of an expression does not rule out the possibility that it is used figuratively. On the contrary, the living image is the clearest sign of the vitality, the freshness, the ebullient energy of the idea expressed. The originator of the idea does not conceive it in abstract terms, but rather sees it in concrete images. All theories of imagery from the earliest scholarship to the most recent have proved this.

Above all: even if we had much more material containing mythical narratives and more adequate knowledge of the cultic ceremonies of an-

26. J. Lindblom, "Einige Grundfragen der alttestamentlichen Wissenschaft", in: *Bertholet-Festschrift*, Tübingen [1950], pp. 331f. See also below p. 421ff.
27. *Art. cit.* (note 18, above), p. 88, note 10.

cient days — who could say that the expressions borrowed from them still bear all their ancient, original, cultic meaning?

To this day, for example, the Englishman calls the first day of the week Sunday — viz. day of the sun. That day is for that Englishman the Lord's Day. Does anyone imagine that we can conclude from the name of the Lord's Day that the Englishman still worships the sun as his god? Can anyone imagine that the name Sunday still retains that ancient, original, idolatrous meaning?[28] Moreover, is it possible to determine in the course of the transformations of meaning of an expression just when the original, cultic meaning disappeared completely and gave way to the spiritual, symbolic meaning, the transferred sense, the metaphor?

Therefore, the remarks of E. Bevan are very sensible: "No doubt the process by which what was once understood literally came to be understood symbolically was a gradual one". In the realm of ideas change is always slow. "It is impossible to trace the process by which the cruder anthropological conception gave place to a more spiritual conception in the Hebrew writers, because the old anthropologic language continued to be used as symbolic imagery long after the belief in its literal truth had disappeared, and the change in idea took place invisibly below the apparent uniformity of the language".[29] However, it is difficult from a scholarly standpoint to accept Bevan's decisive affirmation: "We can be pretty sure that the Hebrew who first put into writing the story of Babel, how Y' came down from heaven to see the city and the tower which the children of man had builded, or the story of Sodom, how Y' said: 'I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me; and if not, I will know', understood it quite literally, and the later Hebrew who incorporated these old documents in the book of Genesis understood them as figures".[30] Whence this absolute certainty? Is there no ground at all for assuming the possibility that even "the Hebrew who first put into writing" the anthropomorphic expressions understood them not literally but metaphorically? After all "the use of metaphorical speech has been customary among human beings since the most ancient times, even the primitive stages of development. Almost

28. M. H. Farbridge, *Studies in Biblical and Semitic Symbolism*, London 1923, p. 18.
29. *Symbolism and Belief*, Boston [1957], pp. 45, 44f.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

always you will find at the root of a word a poetic image that has been effaced. All speech is originally poetic".[31] J. Pedersen has argued rightly: "If one sees in anthropomorphism a proof of the antiquity of a Hebrew book, the Talmud is more ancient than any book among the books of the Bible".[32]

If we cannot determine just when the literal meaning was displaced by the metaphorical sense, what is then the objective means by which the commentator can ascertain whether the literal or metaphorical meaning of a given expression in the work is intended, whether it is mythological or symbolic? The only means we have is the general rule we have mentioned more than once: understand every expression — even the commonest — only on the basis of the context. Consider it not in isolation, divorced from its context, but rather in its interaction with all the structural details of the passage.

This principle is also valid in relation to the second "proof" that Engnell cited to support his claim that the psalm is a cultic one: the "original" meaning of the verb *šātal*. Even if Engnell had proved decisively that the "tree of life" of the myth was the source of the image "tree planted" in the psalm, and even if he had proved that the original sense of the verb *šātal* was connected with ritual, he would still not have accomplished anything towards an understanding of the image in our psalm, because he would not have clarified whether the psalmist used his "source" in the original sense or in a new sense. This clarification, as J. Wellhausen[33] emphasized long ago, is the first task of the commentator

31. F. Torm, *Hermeneutik des Neuen Testaments*, Göttingen 1930, p. 109. Compare F. Vonessen, "Die ontologische Struktur der Metapher", *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung*, XIII (1959), pp. 397-416.
32. *ZAW*, XLIX (1913), p. 178.
33. In connection with Gunkel's early studies of apocalyptic literature, Wellhausen wrote: "Gunkel attributes a Babylonian origin to passages whether possible or not. His main error is that he assigns excessive importance to the question of origin. From a methodological standpoint it is important to know that the apocalyptic literature contains material which was not quite grasped by the author's conception, and even more frequently remains obscure to the commentator. But the origin of this material is methodologically speaking quite irrelevant. The authors of the apocalypses themselves certainly did not draw their material from the primary sources, nor were they interested in their original meaning, but rather they imbued it with their own spirit to the best of their ability. And it is this meaning, which they imparted, that we must try

and it is precisely this task that Engnell has not executed.[34]

Engnell addressed himself to the interpretation of the image "a tree planted", in the light of prior assumptions, the well-known assumptions of "patternism", which guided him in looking at the text and listening to what the psalm has to say. It would thus seem that the Talmudic dictum that "a person is only shown his own thoughts" (said of dreams in the Talmud), applies to philological study as well. In literary research, only he who seeks the kingdom finds the kingdom, not one who seeks asses. Engnell sought in the image of a "tree planted" the "tree of life" — supposedly identical with the sacral king — and found it, but he did not find the meaning of the verse.

But is the alternative with which Engnell confronts the commentator on Psalm 1 accurate, either to follow his footsteps and accept a cultic interpretation of the psalm, or else to accept the usual banal, didactic interpretation, which sees in the psalm an epigonic creation without depth, imagination or originality?

to understand. Gunkel is trying ... to restore the original meaning, a matter of interest to the antiquarian perhaps, but quite irrelevant to the task of the theologian or the commentator" (*Skizzen und Vorarbeiten*, VI, Berlin 1899, p. 23. Compare A. Bentzen, *Messias, Moses redivivus, Menschensohn*, Zürich 1948, p. 24). Compare also pp. 421ff.

34. Engnell behaves like those philologists about whom Chiron said to Faust:

    Ich seh' die Philologen,
    Sie haben dich so wie sich selbst betrogen.
    Ganz eigen ist's mit *mythologischer* Frau:
    Der Dichter bringt sie, *wie er's braucht*, zur Schau.

(*Faust*, II, 2, 7427-7430. Compare W. Emrich, "Symbolinterpretation und Mythenforschung", *Euphorion*, XLVII [1957], pp. 38-57). There is an instructive parallel to Engnell's methodological error in attributing to the expressions in our psalm their original, sacred significance, in M. Galpert's article: "Hanima Hadatit Basifrut Haivrit Haḥadasha" when he writes: "Religion and Hebrew Literature, these two expressions religion and Hebrew are in fact one and the same ... Whoever examines Hebrew writing must perceive the religious currents running through it" (*CCAR Yearbook*, LX [1950], p. 390). Galpert "proves" this view about the religiosity of modern Hebrew literature with expressions, locutions and motifs which are derived from the Bible and the religious literature of Judaism. But it is clear to everyone who understands modern Hebrew literature that all these are only expressions and motifs that have been drained of their original significance (See the article by my late son, R. Weiss, "Miqodesh Leḥol", *Beshut Lashon*, Jerusalem [1982], pp. 161-174).

We believe, as we said at the beginning of our study of Psalm 1:3-4, that the key to the understanding of the psalm and its evaluation is in the images it contains.

He is like a tree planted beside streams of water,
that gives its fruit in its season, and its foliage does not fade,
wĕkol 'ăšer ya'ăśeh yaṣli^{a}ḥ.
Not so the wicked; rather, they are like chaff that wind blows away.

What is the meaning of these images?

The two basic assumptions generally accepted about the teaching intended by this didactic psalm[35] rest upon different conceptions of the images employed by the psalmist.

According to one opinion the tree and the chaff represent reward and punishment respectively; according to the other opinion they represent the nature and character of the righteous and the wicked. The former view is based on (a) the last clause of verse 3: *wĕkol 'ăšer ya'ăśeh yaṣli^{a}ḥ*, where *hā'īš* ("the man") mentioned in verse 1 is taken as the subject and the sentence is translated: "and whatever he does, he prospers";[36] (b) the frequent use of the verdant, fruitful tree in the Bible as an image of human success and prosperity;[37] (c) the well-attested use of chaff that the wind blows to represent the punishment of the wicked.[38]

The second interpretation is favoured by only a few scholars; of these only Weiser gives his reason: "The image of the tree does not speak here of the reward which the God-fearing man will receive by way of the recompense to which he can look forward ... but it speaks of the meaning and the value of life which the goodly man discovers by living his life in obedience to God". Why is the first, the generally accepted interpretation, incorrect? To this question Weiser replies in the parenthetic clause: "it would be altogether unsuitable for conveying such a meaning". This

35. See above, pp. 24f.; 74ff.
36. Those who see the phrase as an interpolation (see below) agree that the interpolator understood the image correctly.
37. Jeremiah 17:8; Psalms 52:10; 92:13; Job 8:16; 29:19 and others. For an analysis of the psalm see my article: "Darka shel Hatora Bemizmor 'Ashre Haish'", *Maayanot*, VI (1957), pp. 187-210. See further *SVT*, XXII (1972), pp. 106-112.
38. E.g. Hosea 13:3; Zephaniah 2:2; Isaiah 29:5; Psalm 35:5.

he says without futher explanation. But the reason he regards his own interpretation of the tree-image as the correct one can be inferred from his explanation of the psalm. Is it correct according to the principle of Total Interpretation? Is it not refuted by the mere fact that he translates the sentence *wĕkol 'ăšer ya'ăśeh yaṣli^{a}ḥ:* "in all that he [the godly man] does, he prospers", i.e. just like the adherents of the view which he dismisses as "unsuitable"?[39] Explaining this sentence, he observes: "We are confronted with a strong faith which optimistically assumes that the God-fearing man cannot fail to be successful in all that he undertakes". But even if this sentence does express such a belief, can one indeed call this suitable in the psalm that "speaks of the meaning and the value of life which the godly man discovers by living his life in obedience to God"? Or does the "value of life" according to the psalm include the "strong faith . . . that the God-fearing man cannot fail to be successful in all that he undertakes"?

Both this question and the main question as to the intention of the psalm's use of these images can be answered by examining the two aforementioned views in the light of the method of Total Interpretation. Let us begin with the first opinion, which is now, as already indicated, the one more generally accepted. First of all, we shall consider the method employed by the proponents of this opinion. According to this method a figurative expression is explained by reference to some other passage, which is assumed to be the "key text",[40] as if by reference to a dictionary which lists the exact, universally valid equivalent of each and every metaphor in the broadest sense of the word. It is alleged that "as long as the 'image' is not recognized as belonging to a particular type, all doors to its interpretation are laid open",[41] i.e. full license is given to every interpretation. Against this view, we have repeatedly brought up the incisive principle of modern literary theory: the fact that an expression generally conveys one idea in most places does not mean that the expression has become a stereotyped formula, a linguistic counter that can convey only

39. Merendino, who explains the image as referring to the righteous life (see note 4, above), views the clause as an interpolation.
40. Compare E. Hessler, *art. cit.* (above, p. 133, note 16).
41. *Ibid.*, p. 369. Compare Engnell's plan for elucidating Psalm 1: "The first task is . . . to work out and register the specific types, modes of expression, ideological contents, details of language etc. of these psalms in order then to confront and compare them with also less pronouncedly royal psalms" (*art. cit.* [note 18, above], p. 89).

this one idea. There is always the possibility that in a specific context the poet might use a common expression in a different sense from the usual, with a completely new intention.[42] Only rigorous adherence to this principle will prevent fundamental errors in the explanation of figurative expressions. In living speech, of course, metaphors do not just happen — they always form part of a context. Yet, by definition, "A metaphor . . . is a word in a context by which it is so conditioned as to convey an intention different from its normal meaning".[43] Since this is how metaphor works, it is impossible to interpret it otherwise, even if " 'the image' is recognized as belonging to a particular type". It is totally unacceptable to assert that by explaining a figurative expression in the light of a single context "all doors to its interpretation are laid open". After all, Total Interpretation ensures that only one door is opened, the one that leads to the precise understanding of what the image is meant to convey in this specific context.

Having once more established this methodological principle, let us examine the two basic opinions on the intention of the images of this psalm by elucidating their precise meaning, considering them strictly in context. We shall first compare them with their parallels in what appears to be the nearest parallel passage, Jeremiah 17:5-8. Let us compare these two passages, which, according to most scholars exhibit a literary connexion, studying each one by viewing it against the background of the other (See next page.)

Both the psalmist and Jeremiah compare the righteous to a tree planted, but they do not both compare the wicked to the same image. In Psalm 1 — the wicked are "like chaff that wind blows away", whereas in Jeremiah "like a tamarisk in the desert".

Is this difference only fortuitous? From the standpoint of literary theory such an assumption is certainly invalid. The choice of an image is never fortuitous. Every image clarifies one quality, one characteristic, one aspect of the object (like a flashlight which illuminates one point in the darkness and brings it into prominence for the observer). The choice of the image is always determined by what had seemed to the author at that moment to be characteristic of the object, to be its main characteristic. But it is also possible that the image was chosen in accordance with the

42. Compare Y. Blau, "Hashibuẓ Shone Hahoraa Beshirat Hamiqra", in: *Sefer Biram*, Jerusalem 1956, pp. 181-188.
43. Weinrich, *art. cit.* (above p. 130, note 4), p. 340.

Psalm 1	Jeremiah 17
The image of the righteous	
He is like a tree	He is like a tree
planted beside streams of water	planted by the waters,
	sending forth its roots by a stream:
	it does not sense the coming of heat,
	and its foliage is luxuriant.
that gives its fruit in its season	And is not anxious in the year of drought,
and its foliage does not fade	and does not cease from bringing forth fruit.
The image of the wicked	
they are like chaff that wind blows away	He is like a tamarisk in the desert,
	and does not see when good comes;
	and dwells in the parched places of the wilderness,
	in a salt land and not inhabited.

poet's didactic intention, to show his readers the object in a specific light, to emphasize a certain trait, to awaken in their minds, by means of the poem, the desired impression. Since in poetry the main function of the word is not to be informative, but to arouse an emotional response, the poet will choose that image which is most likely to arouse such a response. The difference between the description of the wicked in the psalm and in Jeremiah must, therefore, be explained.

What is the meaning of the contrast between the pair of images in Jeremiah? The contrast cannot be confined to the fact that one tree is fruit-bearing and the other is barren. Had the prophet intended this, he would have set in contrast to "and does not cease from bringing forth fruit" the tamarisk, which never brings forth fruit. But that is not what is said. The contrast between them is different: one plant does not suffer from a lack of water even in "the year of drought", whereas the other plant has insufficient water even in the rainy season. That this is the intention of the prophet in the two contrasted images is shown by the common predicate of the two descriptions:

And *does not see* when good comes (verse 6)
And *does not see* when heat comes (verse 8)

that is to say, the tamarisk never enjoys the good that comes to the world, whereas the tree planted by the waters does not suffer from any affliction.

What, however, is the contrast between the two images in our psalm?

Let us begin with the image of the chaff. Let us assume that the idea here expressed — as usual with this image in the Bible — is that the wicked will quickly and easily disappear from the world like the chaff "that a wind blows away". Had this been the intention of the psalmist, he should have cited as the contrast to it a tree which is firmly rooted in the earth. So, indeed, did the Talmudic Sages interpret the image in verse 3, when they said about the words "like a tree planted": "It does not say *nāṭū*^{a}*'* but *šātūl* to teach you that even if all the winds in the world were to come and blow on it, they would not move it from its place" (Yalqut). The Midrash would correspond to the intended meaning of the image if there were a linguistic basis for its assumption that the difference between *nāṭū*^{a}*'* and *šātūl* is that *šātūl* refers to a tree whose roots are deep. But this assumption has no linguistic basis. Moreover, were the intention of the image to suggest that the righteous are firmly rooted, the yielding of fruit and luxuriance of foliage would be at most secondary details in the image, whereas in the verse they are the main point.

If the stability of the happy man is not the object of comparison, perhaps the image refers to another reward?

Let us continue to compare the image of the tree in our psalm to that in Jeremiah as far as the other parallel details are concerned:

Psalms	Jeremiah
that gives its *fruit* in its season,	and its *foliage is luxuriant.*
and its *foliage does not fade*	and does not cease from bringing forth *fruit.*

Though the same elements are present, there are still differences in the mode of expression:

(a) The order is reversed. In the psalm the fruit is mentioned first

age afterwards, whereas in Jeremiah the reverse is

says *piryō yittēn* ("*gives* its fruit"), whereas in find *mēʿāśōt perī* ("*bringing forth* fruit");

the psalmist: the tree gives "*its* fruit"; according to the tree will not cease from bringing forth "fruit";

an in the psalm is compared to a tree that "gives its *eason*" only, whereas "the man that trusts in God" is like a tree that "does not cease from bringing that is to say, it *always* brings forth fruit.

the foliage "does not fade";[44] in Jeremiah it "is lux-

ides would say, "this requires subtle penetration to

āh pĕrī ("brings forth fruit") is familiar to us from ringing forth fruit" (Genesis 1:11-12). In an applied ah's words to Hezekiah: "And the remnant that is of Judah shall again take root downward and bring ngs 19:30; Isaiah 37:31). Whereas the expression t") appears in threats and promises, for example "If es . . . the earth will give its fruit and the tree of the (Leviticus 26:3-4); "If you do not obey me . . . the ot give its fruit" (Leviticus 26:14, 20); "and the tree ts fruit" (Ezekiel 34:27); "for as the seed of peace, ruit" (Zechariah 8:12). That is to say, when the tree lly, from a botanical or biological standpoint, as in ed as *ʿōśeh pĕrī* ("bringing forth fruit") whereas tree from the perspective of its blessing to man, *ēn pĕrī* ("tree giving fruit"). The giving of fruit it.

ompares the righteous to a tree that *gives* fruit, he the *fate* of the tree, which would symbolize the s, but rather the fulfillment of its function: it gives

ase as an interpolation influenced by Jeremiah 8:13 (*art. cit.*

44. Merendino s
[note 4, abo

its fruit in its season. Jeremiah, on the contrary, since he is speaking of the *reward* of the man who trusts in God, uses the expression "bringing forth fruit".

The image of the tree in the psalm is not intended, therefore, to describe the fate of the righteous, his reward, but rather his essential nature.[45] It is not a symbol of his lot, but rather of his actual being. This will account for the other differences in the way the image is expressed in the Psalms and in Jeremiah. The tree *gives* its fruit, its blessing to man, only in *its season* (Psalms); but intrinsically, when it is blessed with favourable conditions of growth, "it does not cease *bringing forth* fruit" (Jeremiah), for there is no season for the bringing forth of fruit, it is an incessant activity as long as the tree lives. The tree gives "*its* fruit", its own. When the tree *brings forth*, it brings forth for itself, and what it brings forth is called simply "*fruit*". Only when the tree *gives* for others is what it gives called "*its* fruit".[46]

Further, the tree's blessed, good fate is described according to the order of the time of blossoming and ripening: first its foliage and then its fruit. That is the order in Jeremiah. The psalmist, however, speaks of the tree's providing its blessing for man, so he praises the tree's virtues in the order of their importance to man: first the fruit and then the foliage which gives shade. (With this difference in the order one can compare Ezekiel 47:12. The first half of the verse says: "And on the banks . . . there will grow all kinds of trees for food; their *foliage* will not fade, their *fruit* will not fail". First: foliage, then: fruit, since this part of the verse speaks of the tree with regard to the botanical order. On the other hand, the second half continues: "their *fruit* will be for food and their *foliage* for healing". Here we have a description of the benefits conferred upon man by the tree.) Finally, Jeremiah, speaking about the blessing of the tree, says: "its foliage is luxuriant" because *for the tree* it is not enough that the "foliage does not fade", whereas concerning the tree's gift *to man*, the main thing is that the "foliage does not fade".

45. According to this view, the image is fused with the idea conveyed by the psalm and is more deeply rooted in its wording than according to Weiser's view; the latter holds that the subject of the psalm is "the meaning and the value of life which the godly man discovers".
46. Ehrlich *ad loc.*

gathers his sheaves into the granary, threshes the grain, and
nels remain mixed with the chaff, he winnows them with a w
to the wind. The heavy grain kernels fall to the ground and t
which contains no grain and is merely worthless straw, flies
comparable to the life of the wicked. Life without Torah is
eyes of the poet, to beaten chaff, with no grain, without any
tent — "like chaff that wind blows away".[47]

From here it follows that the main force of imagery is th
assists the understanding, but it also activates and stimulate
emotional overtones and ancillary ideas. The function of the
only to clarify the meaning; it says what is not said, becaus
be said, without it. We might be able to express in prose se
the psalm's images signify; for example: the man who is w
to Torah lives a life of value for the world, since he fulfills h
the proper time, without giving way to external circumstar
the wicked man's life has no value for the world. But when w
idea of the images in these sentences, we have not only omi
embellishment, but we have also destroyed the vitality and
extent the very essence of the text. For example, the image

47. Compare Weiser, whose view is similar to one of Radak's two exp
will get no profit from the wicked nor from their favours, but they
only harm them ... like the chaff ... from which people derive no a
wind drives it quickly away; it harms passers-by in their faces and t
[the wind] drives it into houses and gardens, where it does harm"

The image of the tree in our psalm, therefore, is intended
idea that just as the nature and value of the tree are determi
and green foliage, for that is its function as established by
too the nature and value of the righteous man in his fulfillm
of his Creator. Verse 3 is thus the direct continuation of ver
who meditates "on the Torah of God day and night" is not
if all the slings and arrows of fortune smite him. He fulfill
and always gives his fruit in its season.

"Not so the wicked" (verse 4) means, as Radak exp
will have no benefit from them or from their goodness". "Ra
like chaff that wind blows away". Here again, it is not the p
the wicked that is intended, but rather the image of the

also conveys the idea that the sources from which the righteous man draws his sustenance will never run dry, because they are "streams of water", with all their refreshing associations. It also includes an expression of the fresh green colour which delights the eye and indicates the freshness in contrast to any sense of withering and wilting ("does not fade"). What was expressed here is not mere utility but also that which refreshes and delights the eye. Where is all this in our prose version?

Furthermore, what the psalm has to say is expressed not only through the "content" of the images, but also through their "form". First we note that only the righteous — and the LORD — are active; only they, and never the wicked, are subjects of transitive verbs.[48] The description of the righteous extends to twelve words, the description of the wicked is limited to four,[49] so that an evaluation of the lives of the two types about which the psalm speaks is expressed through this literary means as well. Twelve — a round number; four, unlike three or five — an incomplete number. Twelve — many. Four — a few. The life of the wicked is not like the life of the righteous. It is imperfect, incomplete, and this is why the psalmist need not waste words on it,[50] not only because the wicked are not the main theme of the psalm.[51]

48. Lack, *art. cit.* (note 4, above), p. 159: "Les impies ne réalisent rien, leur vie ne débouche sur rien, ils ne sont sujets d'aucun verbe transitif".
49. Words connected by a *maqef* (hyphen) are considered as one word. Merendino sees the disproportion as the result of interpolations (*art. cit.* [note 4, above], pp. 46-49).
50. Yellin notes the striking difference between the length of the descriptions, but his explanation is based on the widespread conception that the images are a description of retribution. Yellin writes. "The number of words devoted to each of the comparisons corresponds to what the author wished to express: the image of the righteous, whose good fortune will be long and continuous is detailed at length. In contrast to this, the image of the wicked, whose success is transient, and vanishes quickly, is presented briefly and disposed of with one short statement ... as though this wind drove the wicked away in a moment and he is no more to be spoken of" (*op. cit.* [p. 133, note 15], p. 52). Certainly it might be asked: if there is so great a difference between Yellin's interpretation and ours, is this not a proof that such conclusions or those similar to them, deduced from stylistic aspects, are no more than subjective effusions? Is this not a proof that this method leads to interpretations which are simply the product of the commentator's imagination?! What proof is there that our interpretation of the difference between the description of the righteous and the description of the wicked is the valid one and not Yellin's? Are we at all permitted to assume that this difference expresses a specific intention? To such questions we respond with the

Thus it follows from the stylistic and structural characteristics of the tree-image that this psalm depicts not the destiny but the lifestyle of the righteous and the wicked. But is not this view disproved by the continuation of the image in verse 3bβ: *wĕkol 'ăšer ya'ăśeh yaṣlī[a]ḥ*? It is indeed if *yaṣlī[a]ḥ* is taken as a transitive verb with *kol* as its direct object, or if *yaṣlī[a]ḥ* is taken as intransitive and *kol* as dative, i.e. if we translate (with most modern scholars[52]): "Whatever he does he [the man] prospers", or (with most earlier commentators[53]): "Whatever it [the tree] does, it brings to a successful issue", or: "In all that he (or: it) does, he (or: it) prospers". In fact, however, the whole context demands and indicates a different syntactical construction. *Kol* is the subject of the main clause and its predicate *yaṣlī[a]ḥ* is intransitive; the subject of the relative clause is *hā'īš*.

words of Staiger: "The first conception of the text that arises in the mind of the interpreter and the testing of this interpretation — they constitute the hermeneutic circle .... Let us assume that my conception is invalid, suddenly my interpretation confronts an obstacle, till here and no further. I cannot adjust the verse to the motif, the structure of the sentence, the image to the verse .... If I proceed on the right path, if my first conception has not led me astray, then wherever I turn I shall succeed in finding the proper relationship of the parts. Everything fits together; from all directions there is agreement. Each detail that comes into view confirms what is already known. The interpretation is certain" (Staiger, pp. 18-19 [= *Die Werkinterpretation*, p. 155]).

51. As we indicated above (note 5), Gunkel finds fault with the fact that the psalmist, in contrast to Jeremiah, refrains from describing the acts of the wicked and omits any explicit expression of the curse. But the psalmist does not intend to speak in a symmetrical fashion about the righteous and wicked; he rather wishes to speak of the righteous and of his happiness. The wicked is mentioned only as the antithesis, to serve as a dark background for the sake of emphasis, in conformity with the psalmist's didactic purpose. According to J. Hempel, the characteristic tendency of the didactic psalms and of the wisdom literature in general is the black-and-white technique (*Das Ethos des Alten Testaments* [*BZAW* LXVII]², Berlin [1964], p. 92). Jeremiah, on the other hand, intended explicitly to describe both the curse of the wicked and the blessing of the righteous.
52. Dahood writes *ad loc.*: "Though ancient and modern versions assume that the subject changes from 'tree' to 'the just man' the shift is abrupt and unnecessary". Among Jewish exegetes Ibn Ezra mentions, *inter alia*, that this sentence refers to man, who is compared to a tree.
53. The Targum makes "its foliage" the subject of the sentence. This view is also mentioned by Ibn Ezra and is the explanation given by Malbim. Ibn Ezra also mentions: "Some say" that the sentence in verse 3b refers to the tree.

Thus we should translate: "Whatever he does is successful" — it is not the man but whatever he does that succeeds. Verse 3 is a direct continuation of verse 2: he who "meditates on His Torah day and night, he is like a tree planted beside streams of water, that yields its fruits ... and whatever he does is successful".

According to this view there is no place for the suggestion that the words at the end of verse 3 are an interpolation from Joshua 1:8 and should be erased.[54] Gunkel indeed believes that these words are a "redundant and prosaic interpretation of the image", but as we have seen, this sentence is not at all a "redundant interpretation" of the images and still less is it "prosaic". Without it we might have taken the comparison to mean that just as the tree planted by streams of water brings forth fruit whose goodness is easily visible, so will the righteous succeed in performing actions the goodness of which is immediately visible to everyone. But this is not the case. "Whatever he does is successful", all that the righteous does — all, including his failures and even his downfall.[55] It is sometimes the case that the righteous man is unsuccessful, but in the end it becomes clear that even his downfall, even his failure, is actually success and victory. If, indeed, the psalmist has used here the words of Joshua 1:8 (as is asserted by the scholars who regard verse 3bβ as an interpolation) — where undoubtedly the verb *taṣlī[a]ḥ* has a different meaning — he has used it only as raw material, for he has infused it with a new content and idea, which is not at all "prosaic".

Careful consideration of the exact wording of the images in the psalm has shown us that they do not deal with the fate of the righteous and the wicked, nor do they speak of retribution, and that commentators who thought they did were misled by associations with Jeremiah 17. Such associations, as has been said,[56] constitute a great danger to the commentators, which they would certainly have escaped if they had treated

54. E.g. Gunkel, Kittel, Kraus, and Merendino, who feels that the interpolator refers to such verses as Jeremiah 2:37; 32:5; perhaps also 5:28, 12:1 and even II Chronicles 31:21; 33:30 (*art. cit.* [note 4, above], p. 49). See also *BH*.
55. Compare Buber: "However cruel and contrary this destiny might appear when viewed apart from intercourse with God, when it is irradiated by His 'knowing' it is 'success', just as every action of this man, his disappointments and even his failures are success" (*art cit.* [above, p. 136, note 4], p. 59).
56. See above, pp. 90-91.

seriously not only the "content" of the images but also their "form", paid attention not only to what they have in common but also — above all — to the differences between them.

Further support for our interpretation is supplied by the next verse: "Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment" (verse 5).

If the common interpretation of verses 3 and 4, that they describe the *fate* of the righteous as a "tree planted" and the wicked as "chaff", is correct — what then is the meaning of the continuation "therefore . . ."?

The mediaeval Jewish commentators saw in verses 3-4 a description of the fate of the righteous in this world, and in verse 5 a description of retribution in the world to come (Ibn Ezra, Radak). Critics who accept the traditional text and do not omit the conjunction "therefore" at the beginning of the verse[57] see in verse 4 either the description of the condition of the wicked which causes further consequences as described in verse 5: since the fate of the wicked is "like chaff which wind blows away", therefore (also) the wicked shall not stand in the "judgment" (Gunkel); or else they understand what is described in verse 4 as the cause of what is described in verse 5: "Since the wicked are like chaff which wind blows away, therefore the wicked . . . " (Kraus); "and so the wicked shall not stand . . . " (Dahood).

But these interpretations are extremely forced. If it is agreed that the images do not represent the reward of the righteous or the retribution of the wicked but rather their essential character, then the connexion between verses 3-4 and verse 5 is perfectly clear and requires no further explanation. Since the nature of the wicked is as described in verse 4, their fate will be as described in verse 5.

Thus we see that an incorrect interpretation of the images leads to an unjustified evaluation of the whole psalm. At the root of the error, some

57. Duhm states simply — without explaining — "Verse 5 is the explanation of verse 4; hence the connecting word 'therefore' in the Masoretic Text is not at all appropriate." But Chajes, who reaches the same conclusion, explains his view: "And I am inclined to say that the original form of our verse was 'the wicked shall not stand' etc. 'Therefore' comes from verse 3, which is its proper place, while we should here read *lō kēn* ('not so')." (Let it be noted: the text, the objective datum, is not the basis for the interpretation, but rather the contrary: there is an interpretation — whose validity has not been at all established — and according to this subjective interpretation the "correct" text is determined.)

claim, is antisemitic prejudice,[58] while others assert that it was dogmatic theological assumptions that blinded the commentators,[59] and yet others say — just as we heard from Engnell — that historical views and general attitudes which have dominated Biblical research perverted the critical opinions of the psalm. It is indeed highly probable that all these factors exerted some influence in perverting judgment on our psalm. After all, it is true that absolute objectivity in interpretation is not possible and it is impossible to free oneself entirely from preconceptions, but it is equally true that careful scrutiny of the text is a safeguard against such errors.

Now that an understanding of the exact meaning of the "tree planted" image in the speech of the prophet and the poem of the psalmist has been

58. M. Steckelmacher, "Die Psalmen in der Beleuchtung einiger ihrer aelteren und neuen Interpreten", in: *Judaica – Herrmann Cohen–Festschrift*, Berlin 1912, pp. 49-73; especially p. 62 for Gunkel's view of Psalm 1.

59. A. Kaminka ("Hashegagot Vehazedonot Beviure Kitve Haqodesh", *Sinai*, III [1938-39], pp. 201-206, 401-448; about Kittel's view of our chapter see p. 448) speaks of "errors due to faith which become deliberate misinterpretations". Just as attitudes in Protestant theology — and most Biblical scholars are Protestants — are reflected, as we said above (p. 32) in Biblical scholarship in general, so are they mirrored in the religious evaluation of Psalm 1. According to Duhm: "This ideal of piety, which corresponds to that of the Pharisees in the New Testament, prevents us from unconditionally accepting the content of Psalm 1". According to Gunkel: "The righteous spends all his days in the study of the Torah with perfect joy in order to know more and more the will of God: this is a description characteristic of the piety of Judaism." According to Kittel: "The psalm changes the saying of the prophet in the spirit of Torah Judaism. We have no doubt with which of the two views about the behaviour pleasing to God Jesus and Paul would have agreed." Whereas Weiser's opinion is: " . . . this rigid one-sidedness of the psalmist's view must be understood in the light of the faith which inspires the psalm and also in the light of its educational purpose which presses for a decision. There is therefore no need to regard the psalmist's one-sided view as the utterance of a religious arrogance bearing the stamp of the Pharisaic attitude." And according to Kraus: "The 'Pharisee' . . . is not the embodiment of this image of the righteous in the psalm. The New Testament teaches us that it was Jesus who embodied the figure imagined by the psalmist." (In the history of the commentary on our psalm, Kraus' conception is not altogether new. Several of the church fathers [Origen, Eusebius, Augustine, and at first also Jerome] identified the righteous with Jesus. See R. Loewe, "The Jewish Midrashim and Patristic and Scholastic Exegesis of the Bible", in: *Studia Patristica*, I, Berlin [1957], p. 500.) And so, for some proponents of historical-critical research, the righteous in Psalm 1 and Jesus are direct opposites, whereas, for others the latter is the incarnation of the former.

arrived at, the Egyptian analogue can serve the Biblical scholar as material for comparison. It can make him aware of changes in the use of this image, which is the concern of research in the field of the history of literature and culture.[60] It can also make him aware of changes in the conception of the ideal man, which is the concern of the history of religion. So I. L. Seeligmann perceives the use of the images in these three places (the Amen-em-opet proverbs, Jeremiah, and Psalms) as an expression of the changes in the ideal, as a mirror of different world-views. The Egyptian sees as the object of comparison the self-controlled, reserved individual, Jeremiah the man who trusts in God, while the psalmist, in consequence of a development in religion, views the tree as symbolizing the man who meditates on God's Law.[61]

However, this conclusion which Seeligmann draws from the differences in the use of the image does not seem to us irrefutable. Even if Psalm 1 is later than Jeremiah 17 (which is what Seeligmann assumes, though it can be neither proved nor refuted), it is impossible to determine scientifically that our psalm mirrors a change of the ideal of the righteous as the result of religious development. It is not necessary to say that he who trusts in God is a different religious type from the one who meditates on the Torah of God. It is more reasonable to say that both he who trusts in God and he who meditates on the Torah of God are representations of the *ṣaddîq* ("righteous"), who is described in two places in two different aspects. Typologically, it is only reasonable that the two traits should belong to the same character. Furthermore, we can now see the reason for the different traits of the righteous man in the two passages.

Since we have shown that the prophet speaks of the fate of the righteous and wishes to illustrate with his image that the righteous does not suffer even in the most difficult times, it is natural that he should speak of the righteous as one who trusts in God, emphasizing by the metaphor just that trust in God.[62] The psalmist, on the other hand,

60. Compare, for example, the uses of Homer's imagery in the latter literature. See E. R. Curtius, *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (transl. by W. R. Trask), London [1953], p. 186.
61. "Voraussetzungen der Midraschexegese", *SVT*, I (1953), pp. 168f.
62. According to R. Davidson the section in Jeremiah 17;5-8 is "a prophetic warning against the policy which led to [the disaster in] Megiddo .... To Jeremiah the interests of true religion could not have been advanced by this type of political adventure". Davidson goes on to say that this is why the text here deals with "the man who trusts in God" ("The Interpretation of Jeremia XVII: 5-8", *VT*, IX [1959], p. 205).

wishing to illustrate the lifestyle and value of the righteous man, speaks of his meditation on the Torah of God.

Finally, let us pay attention to the full harmony of all the details, both in the words of the prophet and in those of the psalmist. In both passages, the correspondence between the whole and the parts is complete and definite. This is expressed also by the frame of the images. Jeremiah speaks unambiguously about punishment and reward, for which reason he begins with *'ārūr* ("cursed") and *bārūk* ("blessed"). Our psalm describes the nature of the two types, and for this reason the psalmist exclaims: *'ašrē* ("happy"). Moreover, since Jeremiah teaches retribution, he represents the man who trusts in God as untroubled, even to the extent that he is spared pain in the worst times. The psalmist teaches the right way to live, and so he shows us the man who meditates on God's Torah day and night and how he then gives the fruit of his "meditation" — "*his* fruit" — to his fellow man. Hence also, certainly, the use of the word *geber* (root of *gibbōr* — "hero") in Jeremiah as the prophet depicts the lot of the man who trusts in God and the use of the word *'îš* ("man" in general) in the psalm, as the psalm acclaims the one who delights in God's Torah.

We conclude that the scholar who uses our psalm as a document illustrating a religious outlook will not draw accurate conclusions unless he interprets the psalm according to the method of Total Interpretation. Only in this way is it possible to understand the meaning of the psalm, to evaluate it and to draw logical historical conclusions.

2

K. Fullerton has demonstrated the special artistry in the composition of the first speech of Eliphaz (Job 4-5).[1] Indeed, as H. H. Rowley has said, "the speech of Eliphaz is one of the masterpieces of the book".[2]

However, when we attempt to base our evaluation not on a general im-

1. "Double Entendre in the First Speech of Eliphaz", *JBL*, XLIX (1930), pp. 320-374; see also the recent sequel, Y. Hoffman, "The Use of Equivocal Words in the First Speech of Eliphaz (Job IV-V)", *VT*, LXX (1980), pp. 114-119.
2. "The Book of Job and Its Meaning", *BJRL*, XLI (1958), p. 199, note 1.

from view is lifted, and the "crier" is identified, in a moment of bitter mockery, as — Israel! Immediately, while the name is still ringing in our ears, the prophet continues (8:3): "Israel has spurned good; the enemy shall pursue him."

2

Psalm 1:6 is another verse that "breaks the rules":

כִּי־יוֹדֵעַ ה' דֶּרֶךְ צַדִּיקִים וְדֶרֶךְ רְשָׁעִים תֹּאבֵד

For the LORD knows the way of the righteous
But the way of the wicked perishes

This verse lacks the usual parallelism which characterises Biblical poetic style. The word *derek* ("way"), which is found in both cola of the verse, serves in the first as the object, and in the second as the subject. In the first colon the predicate, "knows", is a transitive verb, whereas in the second the predicate, "perishes", is intransitive, making this part of the verse appear passive.

Commentators who have noted this peculiarity have failed to understand it, and have explained it as the result of textual corruption.[1] Even those who have not tampered with the traditional text, whether they have interpreted it or not, have not penetrated the non-parallelism.[2] All have

1. Gunkel offers the following suggestions: (a) Delete *derek* ("way") from the first hemistich, (b) Read *yĕ'abbēd* ("destroys"? "lays waste"?) or *yĕ'awwēt* ("makes crooked") instead of *tō'bēd* ("perishes"); (c) Read *tiqwat* ("hope") instead of *derek* ("way") in the second hemistich. So *BH; BHS* omits the suggested emendations. Most extreme of all is A. Bruno: he posits an "orignal" version in which the last verse of the psalm consisted of the first half of our verse 6, the last stich of verse 3, and the second half of verse 6 in its "original" version. According to him this was the text of the verse: *kī yōdēª' YHWH derek ṣaddīq wĕkōl 'ăšer ya'ăśeh yaṣlīª ḥ mī derek rāšā 'yāsit 'ābad.* (*Die Psalmen – Eine rhythmische und textkritische Untersuchung*, Stockholm 1954, pp. 11, 232).
2. König believes that we have here a case of brachylogy: The poet omitted two links in his chain of thought; in the first half he omitted the effect; in the second, the cause. He interprets: "The LORD knows the way of the righteous [therefore they will prosper]; but [since the LORD knows not the way of the wicked] the way of the wicked is perished" (*Stil.*, p. 222). — About the meaning of the repeated word *derek* in verse 6 see M. Buber, *Right and Wrong* (transl. by R. G. Smith), London [1952], p. 54.

failed to notice the fact that the stylistic peculiarities of Psalm 1:6 recur a number of times in Biblical poetry, precisely in comparable passages which contrast the wicked and the righteous. For example:

Let lying lips be stilled.	[Contrast]	How abundant is Your good, that You have in store for those who fear You, that You did for those who take refuge in You. You hide them, . . . You shelter them, etc. (Psalm 31:19-21).
Many are the misfortunes of the righteous, but the LORD will save him.	[Contrast]	Misfortune will kill the wicked (Psalm 34:20, 22).
For the arms of the wicked shall be broken	[Contrast]	But the LORD is the support of the righteous(Psalm37:17).
And transgressors shall be utterly destroyed; the future of the wicked shall be cut off.	[Contrast]	And the deliverance of the righteous is from the LORD. . . The LORD helps them and rescues them (Psalm 37:38-40).

And the verse which is most similar to our verse:

He will watch over the feet of His faithful ones	[Contrast]	But the wicked shall be put to silence in darkness (I Samuel 2:9).

These are a few of the verses that exhibit a lack of parallelism similar to that in Psalm 1:6. What do they have in common? In all of them the fate of the righteous is contrasted to that of the wicked. Speaking of the righteous, the sentence is active, whereas the statements about the wicked are generally passive, or else the predicate is an intransitive verb. In the

sentences which speak of the wicked, the subject is always "the wicked" or their actions; in the statements about the righteous, "the righteous" or their actions are the object, while the subject is always God.

There are, of course, comparable verses which do not manifest any irregularity in their parallelism. For example:

> The LORD watches over all who love Him, and all the wicked He will destroy (Psalm 145:20).
>
> The LORD watches over the strangers . . . but makes the way of the wicked tortuous (Psalm 146:9).

These very exceptions prove that we should not consider the construction of Psalm 1:6 and related texts to be accidental, but rather carefully planned. The author's style, after all, mirrors his thoughts and feelings. The strange parallelism is not merely a literary embellishment, or a means of avoiding monotony. The absence of formal parallelism marks an absence of parallelism of content.

Traditional commentators have shown that the emotions of Biblical characters are not conveyed exclusively in their direct speech. In addition, when the Bible speaks *about* the protagonists, it embodies their spiritual world, their state of mind, through the structure and style of the description. It is as if at that moment the Biblical author identifies with the actors in the story and speaks from their hearts and minds — not in their words, but in his own.

In Psalm 12, for example, the name of God is mentioned in every verse, except for verses 3 and 5, which describe the smooth, deceitful tongue. "This is a linguistic indication that people of deceitful tongue are forgetful of God."[3] Similarly, in the description of the Egyptian enslavement (Exodus 1:8-2:22), God is not mentioned, except in 1:17, 20-21, in the story of the midwives — apparently Egyptians, to judge by the context (especially verses 16-17).[4] The description is presented in a style that con-

3. Strauss, *Bedarkhe Hasifrut*, Jerusalem 1959, p. 91. This stylistic phenomenon, in which a poet or narrator speaks according to the mind and ideas of the person spoken about, is analogous to the stylistic device known variously as "Interior Monologue", "Style Indirect Libre", "Erlebte Rede", etc. On this phenomenon in Biblical narratives see my article in *VT*, XIII (1963), pp. 456-475.

4. This is the understanding of the Septuagint, Philo, Josephus, *Midrash Tadshe* (Ginsberg, *Legends*, V, p. 393, note 17).

forms to the perceptions and feelings of the suffering slaves. They did not see the hand of God in their suffering, and they failed to comprehend God's intervention in the course of events.

So, too, in Psalm 1:6: the two cola speak in different languages, one in the language of the righteous and the other in the language of the wicked. There is, therefore, no parallelism, not even antithetical parallelism. One who is righteous experiences the presence and providence of God in every aspect of his life. He feels that God is the subject of his life: God acts, leads, directs, and man can only be the object of this divine activity. The wicked man, in contrast, does not perceive the discerning eye and the guiding hand of God; in his view, he acts independently, and any evil that befalls him, he believes, happens of its own accord. Therefore, as the poet expresses it: "For the LORD knows the way of the righteous; but the way of the wicked perishes."

3

הוֹי גּוֹי חֹטֵא עַם כֶּבֶד עָוֹן
זֶרַע מְרֵעִים בָּנִים מַשְׁחִיתִים
עָזְבוּ אֶת־ה׳ נִאֲצוּ אֶת־קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל
נָזֹרוּ אָחוֹר

Ah, sinful nation; people laden with iniquity; seed of evildoers; destructive sons! They have forsaken the LORD, they have despised the Holy One of Israel; they have turned away backwards.

(Isaiah 1:4)

The last sentence — "they have turned away backwards" — lacks any formal parallel.[1] Indeed, there are still some scholars who delete these last

1. K. Budde suggests that instead of *'āḥōr* ("backwards") we must read *mē'aḥărāyw* ("from behind Him") ("Zu Jesaia 1-5", *ZAW*, XLIX [1931], p. 21). A. Bruno augments and emends the sentence with the help of the first vocables of verse 5 (MT *'al meh*). Thus, the "original" form of verse 4: *nāzōr wĕ'āḥōr yē'ālēm*, "He [God] became estranged, he considered himself hidden in the background" (*Jesaia — Eine rhythmische und textkritische Untersuchung*, Stockholm 1953, pp. 243, 53). N. H. Tur-Sinai proposes to read *yaḥad* or *kĕ'eḥād* instead of *āḥōr* and to translate the sentence, "They have become estranged altogether" ("A Contribution to the Understanding of Isaiah I-XII," *Scripta Hierosolymitana*, VIII [1961], pp. 155f).

the medium of the mythical stylization of the creation history".[10] Other scholars,[11] however, present the traditional interpretation,[12] according to which the passage refers only to the miracles in Egypt and at the Red Sea.

The structure of the psalm as we see it now helps us, by enabling us to reconstruct the train of thought embodied in it, to grasp the real meaning of this strophe. The psalmist, having described the enemy's present violence and sacrilege, continues — according to the order of topics in the introductory strophe — by recalling the effects of God's omnipotence in the past. He mentions God's *yĕšū'ōt* (verse 12) referring not, as is generally assumed by most early commentators and some moderns as well, to His acts of grace mentioned in verse 2 (the corresponding passage in the introduction), i.e., towards Israel, but rather, as recognized by most scholars today, to God's mighty deeds at Creation, those *yĕšū'ōt* which secured the existence and order of the cosmos. The psalm's structure, its train of thought, is what insists that only these, and not other *yĕšū'ōt* are

our psalm is "a lament of the profaned sanctuary" in the context of the cult drama of the New Year Festival. On the basis of Near Eastern parallels, Willesen suggests that before the victory of the god over the forces of chaos was dramatically reenacted — that is, before the ritual purification of the Temple — a ceremony of the profanation of the Temple was performed ("The Cultic Situation of Psalm LXXIV", *VT*, II [1952], pp. 289-306). H. Ringgren avers that the *Sitz im Leben* of this lament was a Temple renewal. "The reference to Creation should indicate the necessary basis for a restoration of the Temple" ("Die Funktion des Schöpfungsmythus in Jes. 51", in: *Schalom — A. Jepsen-Festschrift*, Berlin 1971, p. 39). As far as we know, Yosef ibn Yaḥya (16th century) is the only mediaeval Jewish commentator who associates the psalm with Creation. According to his interpretation of verse 14 — "it was You who smashed the heads of the monsters in the waters" — "while the waters gathered, the heads of the monsters. . . were smashed by the waters' rush to fulfill the will of their Creator" (*Miqdash Me'at*, II, Warsaw 1893, *ad loc.*).

10. Weiser; see also O. Kaiser, *Die mythische Bedeutung des Meeres in Aegypten, Ugarit und Israel* (*BZAW*, LXXVIII), Berlin 1959, pp. 146ff.; Kraus; Zirker, *op. cit.* (p. 276, note 2), p. 138, note 295; and others.
11. For example, E. Hertlein, "Rahab", *ZAW*, XXXVIII (1919-20), pp. 147ff.; König; K. Galling, *Die Erwählungstraditionen Israels* (*BZAW*, XLVIII), Giessen 1928, p. 25; O. Eissfeldt, *Baal Zaphon — Zeus Kasios und der Durchzug der Israeliten durchs Meer*, Halle 1932, pp. 29-30 (otherwise in "Gott und das Meer in der Bibel", in. *Studia Orientalia Joanni Pedersen dictata*, Hauniae 1953, p. 88 [=*Kleine Schriften*, III, Tübingen 1966, p. 260]); Herkenne.
12. So already *Mekhilta ad* Exodus 14:16; Targum, *ad loc.*

intended (such as the deliverance from Egypt, God's choice of Israel, etc.), not even in metaphorical representation. The first strophe testifies that what causes the psalmist's present distress is not what the offender has done to Israel but what has happened to God's Sanctuary, and, as a result, to His name. When the psalmist calls for God's help out of his present straits, mentioning as he does so God's past acts, he can have in mind only those *yĕšū'ōt* which are required again *now*. The last statement of his opening plaint "Till when, O God, will the foe blaspheme, will the enemy forever revile Your name?" (verse 10) makes this clear: it is God's might in shattering those who rebelled against Him, namely, His *yĕšū'ōt* at Creation, which the psalmist recalls and re-calls.

The third strophe (verses 18-23) does not simply call upon God to intervene for the sake of His Name, like the final lament of the first strophe:

Till when O God, will the foe *blaspheme*,
will the enemy forever *revile Your name*? (verse 10)
Remember this, how the enemy *blasphemes* the LORD,
how base people *revile Your name* (verse 18).

Here, all the thoughts expressed in the three parts of the introduction fuse in a single cry for help.

The unity of the introduction to Psalm 74, revealed and elucidated by its structure, clarifies the sequence of thoughts embodied in the main part of the psalm.

C. The Whole Unit

The subject of Psalm 8 is expressed in the verse that occurs at the beginning of the psalm, and is repeated at the end (verses 2a, 10): amazement[1] at the majesty of God's name as it is manifested throughout the world. The psalm's intention is to address God with a hymn of praise[2] to His

1. According to Ridderbos, the word *māh* ("how", "what"), which appears three times (verses 2, 5, 10), is the key word of the psalm (*Die Psalmen*, p. 138).
2. H. Graf Reventlow disagrees with the generally accepted form-critical designation of Psalm 8 as a "Hymn". Reventlow, whose general view of poetic analysis differs somewhat from Gunkel's (see Appendix II, pp. 411ff.), asserts that the characteristic structural elements of the Hymn are lacking in Psalm 8. He claims that the psalm is a

"name", to His glorious manifestation in the world. Each verse of the psalm is intended to illustrate this majesty, and for this reason, each verse mentions aspects of nature surrounding man and perceptible to his senses. We may thus understand how majestic is the LORD's name "throughout the world".

The exact interpretation of certain details of this psalm is, however, debatable. Some regard the phenomena mentioned by the psalmist simply as examples of God's greatness, as it is revealed on earth, in the heavens, and in man as infant and adult.[3] Others consider these details to be the background for one instance: man, testifying — both in his nothingness and as supreme created being — to the majestic name of God, the source of all.[4]

"Thanksgiving Song", on the basis of both form and content. In Reventlow's analysis, the psalmist is the "little man" who thanks God for His help, "which is too wonderful for him to be able to grasp" ("Der Psalm 8", *Poetica*, I [1967], pp. 309-332).

3. For example, Kittel, Weiser, W. A. Taylor (*IB*), Kissane, Ridderbos (*loc. cit.* [note 1, above]). According to P. A. H. de Boer our psalm deals with "Jahu's Ordination of Heaven and Earth"; that is, the mighty heavenly bodies which were at the time of creation God's foes, "enemy and avenger" (verse 3) were conquered by God. They are now appointed to the heavens and man is appointed to the earth (*OTS*, II [1943], pp. 175-193; compare Schedl's view in note 4). Dahood sees in the psalm "A hymn celebrating God's infinite majesty (vv. 2-5) and the dignity and power to which God has raised man (vv. 6-10)".

4. For example, Delitzsch, Chajes, Briggs, Buttenwieser, H. Schmidt, F. Lindblom ("Bemerkungen zu den Psalmen I", *ZAW*, LIX [1942/43], pp. 1-7), F. Morgenstern ("Psalms 8 and 19A", *HUCA*, XIX [1945/46], pp. 490-506), S. Mowinckel ("Metrischer Aufbau und Textkritik an Ps. 8 illustriert", in: *Studia Orientalia Joanni Pedersen dicata*, Hauniae 1953, pp. 250-262), Kraus, C. Schedl ("Psalm 8 in ugaritischer Licht", *Forschungen und Fortschritte*, XXXVIII [1964], pp. 183-185), W. H. Schmidt ("Gott und Mensch in Ps. 8 — Form- und überlieferungsgeschichtliche Erwägungen", *ThZ*, XXV [1969], pp. 1-15). H. Schmidt writes in his commentary on Psalms: "The Hymns usually have the majesty of the God of Creation as their subject. The great beauty of *this* little poem lies in the fact that in the totality of everything created, an individual is singled out, just like a romping child. Precisely in his smallness, which is brought so palpably to mind by contrast with the shining heavens, the stars and the moon, there is a declaration of the miraculous power of God. The poet must surely have been the father of a small child himself. As he composed his song of praise, it was nighttime: he saw the starry heavens above him and dreamt of the music of the spheres, but in his heart he heard the dear cry of his little child at home — in that place of repose that surpasses anything in the night." Schedl, inspired by Ugaritic literature, takes "infants" and "sucklings" to be mythological beings. They are

We may decide between these two approaches on the basis of the structure of the psalm. The assumption more firmly grounded in the wording of the psalm — and therefore the likelier of the two — is that the psalm, enclosed as it is within a recurring refrain (verses 2a, 10), falls into two parts: a) verses 2b-3; b) verses 4-9. By juxtaposing the two parts of the psalm, we can clarify its meaning (See Chart C, p. 296).

related to the "sons of God", heavenly beings who rejoice at God's triumph over the forces of primordial chaos (compare de Boer's opinion, note 3 above). Against this background, the greatness with which the Creator has endowed man becomes evident (*art. cit.*, p. 185). According to M.Z. Segal, who, *inter alia*, sees verses 2b-3 as an addition, the psalm in its original form was meant to praise God for making man great in the world ("Hapizmon Bashira Hamiqrait", *Tarbiz*, VI [1935], pp. 126-127). E. Baumann would emend *mippī ʿōlēlīm wēyōnēqīm* ("from the mouths of infants and sucklings" [verse 3]) to either *mēʾōlām miqqedem* ("of yore"), or *mippāʿōlē yādeykā* ("from the works of Your hands"). In his view, the subject of the first part of the poem is God's victory over man's arrogance, and of the second part the victory of man, as God's representative, over the animals ("Struktur-Untersuchungen im Psalter I", *ZAW*, LXI [1945/46], pp. 125-126). W. Beyerlin finds discrepancies in the text of Psalm 8, which attest to the fact that "the literary unit . . . is a complex of the traditio-historical sort . . . . In a very late milieu, poetic fragments stemming from different periods and situations were united". The oldest part of the psalm is verses 2b-3, which are remnants of a hymn which asserted "the exaltation of the divine king Y' over the heavens, for one thing, and his earthly might, 'fixed' in the royal Zion Temple, for another". Then a new historical situation imposed itself on verses 2b-3: the old traditional hymn was actualised after the cultic center of God's might on earth, the Temple, lay in ruins. The psalm fragment now maintained that God's "manifestation on the earth occurs . . . for the abandoned children of the bereaved widow Zion — more precisely, in what comes forth out of their mouths in their testimony to Y'". This conception, which came about in the context of the exilic lament for Zion, was developed further in the milieu of post-exilic Wisdom, in the perspective of the Wisdom question about human existence. Thus, the second part of Psalm 8, verses 4-9. In the frame, verses 2a and 10, God is *ʾădōnēnū*, "*our* Lord". According to Beyerlin, this title belongs to the post-exilic cultic community that professed in the we-style; the frame verses, then, date from a relatively later phase of the post-exilic period ("Psalm 8 — Chancen der Überlieferungskritik", *ZThK*, LXXIII [1976], pp. 1-22, esp. pp. 14, 16, 20-21). Against Beyerlin's hypothesis, O. Loretz identifies three stages in the growth of Psalm 8: 1) the question about the status of man (verses 5-9) is framed by verses 2a, 10, and thereby prepared for liturgical use; 2) verse 4 (or 2b) is added to the frame; 3) verse 3 is inserted: at the same time or subsequently, verse 2b is altered so that it becomes a plea for divine aid for Israel — *tēnāh*, "give" ("Die Psalmen 8 und 67 — Psalmenstudien V", *UF*, VIII [1976], p. 120).

CHART C

Second Part	First Part
	2a ה׳ אֲדֹנֵינוּ מָה־אַדִּיר שִׁמְךָ בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ
4 כִּי אֶרְאֶה שָׁמֶיךָ מַעֲשֵׂה אֶצְבְּעֹתֶיךָ וגו׳	2b אֲשֶׁר־תְּנָה הוֹדְךָ עַל־הַשָּׁמָיִם
5 מָה־אֱנוֹשׁ כִּי־תִזְכְּרֶנּוּ וגו׳	3 מִפִּי עוֹלְלִים וְיוֹנְקִים יִסַּדְתָּ עֹז וגו׳
6 וַתְּחַסְּרֵהוּ מְעַט מֵאֱלֹהִים וגו׳ 7-9 תַּמְשִׁילֵהוּ בְּמַעֲשֵׂי יָדֶיךָ וגו׳ 10 ה׳ אֲדֹנֵינוּ מָה־אַדִּיר שִׁמְךָ בְּכָל־הָאָרֶץ	

First Part	Second Part
2a O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Your Name throughout the earth.	
2b (You) who have set Your glory above the *heavens*!	4 When I behold Your *heavens*, etc.,
3 From the mouths of *infants* and *sucklings* You have founded strength, etc.	5 what is *man* that You have been mindful of him, etc.,
	6 that You have made him little less than divine, etc. 7 9 You have made him master over your handiwork, etc. 10 O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is Your name throughout the earth!

The two parts display a remarkable harmony of literary form and content. In each part, the psalmist speaks of the heavens (verses 2, 4) and of man (verses 3, 5-9), emphasizing both his smallness and his greatness: "From the mouth of infants and sucklings You have founded strength" (verse 3); "What is man that You have been mindful of him", "You have made him little less than divine", "You have made him master over Your handiwork" (verses 5-9). Moreover, all the comments about the heavens are contained in dependent clauses, not only in the first part of the psalm ("*who* have set Your glory above the heavens", verse 2), but also in the second ("*when* I behold Your heavens", verse 4). the heavens' testimony to God's greatness is mentioned only incidentally, while the main emphasis is placed on the revelation of God's majesty through man.

The prophet Habakkuk uses a compound sentence to describe God's sovereignty as it is revealed in the heavens and on earth: "His glory covers the heavens, and the earth is full of His praise" (3:3). The author of Psalm 148 glorifies God's greatness in a single independent clause: "His glory is over the earth and heavens" (verse 13). When our poet praises God, however, he refers to His glory in the heavens only in passing. Instead, his hymn is centered on his amazement at the revelation of God through man's existence on earth. He begins, "O LORD, how majestic is Your name throughout the earth", and he continues in the same vein, "From the mouths of infants and sucklings You have founded strength" (verse 3). After proceeding, in verses 5-9, to marvel at the exalted status that God has bestowed upon man, he concludes, "O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name throughout the earth!" (verse 10).

From the structure of Psalm 8, then, it is evident that the poem is intended to glorify the name of God "throughout the earth" by pointing to man's nature and his place in the world.[5]

5. See further my article, "Al Arbaa Mizmorim Besefer Tehillim", *Maayanot*, V (1956), pp. 88-107.

The *earth* change
wrought desolati
throughout the

The following ana
correct application
the inadequate, inco
pose we shall begin b
Strauss, who, as we
closely resembling th
sent our own analysis
that of Strauss, ost
demonstrate the uniq

מֵעַם לֹעֵז.
מְשָׁלוֹתָיו.
לְאָחוֹר.
כִּבְנֵי־צֹאן.
לְאָחוֹר.
כִּבְנֵי־צֹאן.
לְיוֹסֵף יַעֲקֹב.
מַעְיְנוֹ־מָיִם.

123. According to Kelly, t
pression to the psalm
center [or much of t
organically related,
psalm . . . makes part
cosmos at the micro
306, 309).

word), and in all fi

These guiding wo
psalm:

Nations rage —
Mountains *collap*
collapse

it is at the end of the strophe.[123]
bine to form an outline of the content of the

preme over the *nations*
ngdoms *collapse* — [God's city] will not

aises His voice, the *earth* melts — He has
earth — He makes an end of wars
I am supreme over the *earth.*

3
Psalm 114

Psalm 114 is designed to demonstrate the
hod of Total Interpretation in contrast to
cation of a similar method. For this pur-
interpretation of the psalm offered by A.L.
d,[1] invoked principles of literary criticism
Swiss-German school. We shall then pre-
salm. The comparison of our analysis with
ased on similar principles, will clearly
our method.

.1 בְּצֵאת יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרָיִם
.2 הָיְתָה יְהוּדָה לְקָדְשׁוֹ
.3 הַיָּם רָאָה וַיָּנֹס
.4 הֶהָרִים רָקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים
.5 מַה־לְּךָ הַיָּם כִּי תָנוּס
.6 הֶהָרִים תִּרְקְדוּ כְּאֵילִים
.7 מִלִּפְנֵי אָדוֹן חוּלִי אָרֶץ
.8 הַהֹפְכִי הַצּוּר אֲגַם־מָיִם

ereṣ ("land") is also used as a *leitmotiv* and "gives ex-
lism". He believes: "the Zion motif concerning the
], and the *'ereṣ* motif, concerning the universe, are
use of the same term, *'ereṣ*, throughout the
id the central theme: the transition from chaos to
ter of the universe" (*art. cit.* [note 10, above], pp.

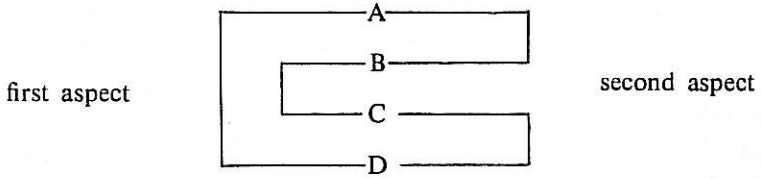
1. Above, p. 38.

1. When Israel went forth from Egypt,
   the house of Jacob from a people of strange speech,
2. Judah became His holy one,
   Israel His dominion.
3. The sea saw and fled,
   Jordan ran backward,
4. mountains skipped like rams,
   hills like sheep?
5. What ails you, O sea, that you flee,
   Jordan, that you run backward,
6. mountains that you skip like rams,
   hills like sheep?
7. *millipĕnē 'ādōn ḥūlī 'āreṣ*
   millipĕnē 'ĕlōªh ya'ăqōv,
8. Who turns the rock into a pool of water,
   the flint into a fountain of water.

I. Strauss' analysis:[2]

The poem tells of the relationship between God's dominion in history and His dominion in nature. There are four stanzas, each of two verses. In the first, God's action in history is described; the two central stanzas deal with nature's response to this action; the last stanza returns to the realm of history and connects it with the realm of nature.

This division indicates only one aspect of the structure of the poem. The composition has two aspects. In addition to the connection of stanzas one and four and two and three, which resembles the rhyme-scheme of the first quatrains in a sonnet, the first two stanzas form one pair and the latter two make a pair, according to the following scheme:



2. *Bedarkhe Hasifrut*, Jerusalem 1959, pp. 71-73.

In the latter aspect the first half seems to tell of Divine revelation in the history of the Jewish people and nature's reaction to it. This narrative portion is followed by the meditative portion in the form of question and answer.

The subject-matter of the second stanza appears in the very same language as the subject of the questions in stanza three; and the fourth and last stanza answers, this time not in the words of the first stanza, but by combining the motifs of this stanza with those of stanzas two and three.

This, then, is the logical procedure in the psalm in its four stanzas: first, the historical and natural phenomena are narrated in such a fashion that the action and its result are related consecutively without indicating the causal link between them. Afterwards there is the question about the cause of the second phenomenon, and finally the former is revealed as the cause of the latter. The way of the narrator leads from the action to the result, the way of the thinker is the opposite — hence the symmetrical composition, which reverses the direction of movement in the middle of the poem. But the return to the beginning with which the poem concludes is actually on a higher level than the beginning itself; we have a rising spiral rather than a circle. The point of origin is revealed, when it recurs, as the source of its results, and so it unites the two realms of Divine dominion into one great kingdom. The sign of this change of realms is the fact that, in the first stanza, God is referred to by the possessives ("His sanctuary", "His dominion"), whereas in the last stanza He is called "LORD" and "God".

The images of the reaction of nature are borrowed in part from the story of the exodus from Egypt, except that the epic aspect of the actions has been converted into a lyrical utterance expressing amazement: "The sea saw and fled". The miracle of the dividing of the Red Sea, which in the narrative account was a means to the goal of saving the nation, has here become a mode of cosmic reaction to the revelation of God in bringing forth His people from the house of bondage. Similarly in the description: "Jordan ran backward . . . " — these two reactions are not differentiated from those of the mountains and hills, which, as they serve no practical purpose, have no source in the narrative account of the exodus. The reply in the last stanza declares explicitly that this is how the dominion of the God of history, the God of Jacob, extends throughout the cosmos.

The cosmos exists prior to history, but, in the eyes of our poet, God reveals Himself first in history and only afterwards in the cosmos. If a recent historical theory is correct, then this order is in accordance with the order of the Israelite experience: first, a wandering nation apprehended God mainly in historical processes as a Divine leader, and only after it had become a nation settled in its own land did it apprehend Him as the God of both nature and history.

We find as well that the images display a pattern of internal correspondence: in the second stanza, broad comprehensive images alternate with more restricted ones: the sea — Jordan; mountains — hills; rams — sheep.

The same applies to the verbs: fled — ran backward. This principle determines also the order of the images in the last stanza and there the reason for it becomes clear.

Corresponding to this striving for a gradual diminution of the images, there can be discerned a striving to limit the number of words. The poet attains this through the type of parallelism chosen in each of the stanzas of the poem: the second line in each couplet always depends on the previous one, which enables much to be expressed with brevity. Occasionally the second couplet of a two-couplet stanza depends upon the first, so that in each stanza the number of words to be supplied by the reader's imagination increases as the number of written words decreases. This is the case in the third stanza:

What ails you, O sea, that you flee,
[what ails you] Jordan [that] you run backward,
[what ails you] mountains [that] you skip like rams,
[what ails you] hills [that you skip] like sheep?

Thus the number of words uttered has diminished in relation to the number left to be understood, but with this limitation greater intensity of statement has been attained. Is there a similar increase of intensity through the smaller, more restricted scale of the images?

As the poem presents a panorama comprising two phenomena, sea and dry land, so also the images of the last stanza ("Who turns the rock into a pool of water, the flint into a fountain of water"), where the larger again precedes the smaller: the rock and the pool — the flint and the fountain.

However here it becomes clear that the transition from large to small is

Hebrew ver
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first stress.
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II. Our ar

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Interpretati
of this psal

3. Above, pp

diminution, but rather a concentration and profound
ots of the phenomena. The psalm, which began with
e sea, concludes with the fountain — thus turns to
the image and in the inner process.
n nature is symbolized by the turning of a rock into
motionless into the flowing stream. The spirit of
e realm of nature and transforms the inanimate to the

veloping structure is clothed in a highly appropriate
as of four lines each, each line containing three
is one of the few in the Bible which resemble modern
ing a unified metre and rhythm and uniform stanzas.
y, rhythmical variety, normally a feature of ancient
crificed, so that we find almost everywhere in the
hythm resembling the metrical structure of modern
and anapaests. This means that scarcely anywhere
n two unstressed syllables between two stresses or
nse character of the verse suits the movements ex-
renzied dance of the elements. Only in stanza I (once)
a feminine ending occur. In the middle stanzas every
ending, i.e. there are no unstressed syllables after the
den, harsh effect symbolizes the recoil of the element
movement, and the amazement of the questioner at
recoil and at the miracle of the skipping mountains.
ension in the last stanza comes the gentle conclusion,
curred only in the first stanza of the poem: thus the
verts, in respect to rhythm also, to its beginning.

not a weak
penetration
the broad
the source,

God's do
water, the
history pene
animate.

This clea
rhythm: fo
stresses. Th
lyrical poet
To achieve

n a previous chapter, the special threads which make
e opening verses (1-2) reveal the influence of suc-
voked by the language of the narrative in Exodus 19
on of Israel.[3] As will be shown by the psalm's Total
is — Israel's election by God — which is the topic
the psalm and the account in Exodus begin with a

reference to the exodus from Egypt not as the work of God on behalf of Israel but as an act of Israel:

Compare:

> When *Israel went forth* from Egypt (Psalm 114:1)
> In the third month after the children of *Israel*
> *went forth* from the land of Egypt (Exodus 19:1)

This absence of any theocentric interpretation of the historical event (which is viewed by a narrator-"chronicler" as intelligible and even as of fairly frequent occurrence) is surprising in the case of the psalmist, not only because such an anthropocentric account of the exodus from Egypt has no parallel in the Book of Psalms but also because the wording of the following verse implies some expression descriptive of the Deity as having appeared in the present verse. Verse 2 tells us: "Judah became *His* holy one, Israel *His* dominion". From the context it is evident that the possessive ("His") refers to God.[4] This surprising stylistic feature is a rhetorical and psychological means of delay, heightening tension and so intensifying the effect. This is evident from the fact that God is not mentioned until the end of the psalm, in reply to the psalmist's question (verse 7).[5]

The significant verbal connection with Exodus 19 is also noticeable, as has already been indicated, in verse 2 of the psalm. This verse bears the stamp of Exodus 19:6, where we read: "And you shall [or: will] be unto Me a *kingdom* of priests and a *holy* nation". Compare with this the

4. According to B. Renaud, this "difficulty" caused the translator of the Septuagint to transfer the word *hallelujah* ("praise God") from the end of Psalm 113 to the beginning of Psalm 114 ("Les deux lectures du ps 114", *Revue des Sciences Religieuses*, LII [1978], p. 16). A few commentators (e.g. Kirkpatrick, Duhm, Bertholet — Renaud's remark that this is also Gunkel's opinion is mistaken —) have taken the view that this was the original reading. According to Ehrlich, the absence of any mention of God, although He is referred to in verse 2, "is explained by the fact that the present psalm together with the preceding one forms a part of the psalm-cycle known as *hallel*". Kirkpatrick's view is similar. M. Mannati in his commentary on Psalms assumes the loss of a clause containing the name of God before verse 1 (quoted by Renaud, *loc. cit.*, note 5).

5. See, for example, Gunkel, Weiser. Compare also Renaud, *art. cit.* (note 4, above), p. 19; P. Auffret, "Notes conjointes sur la structure littéraire", *Estudios Biblicos*, XXXVII (1978), p. 103.

psalmist's words: "Judah became His *holy* one, Israel His *dominion*". The poet's intention in using this verbal link can be fully understood by observing the discrepancies between the two passages. We must take special note of the fact that, while in Exodus God tells Israel what he is obligated (or is destined) to become in the future, the psalmist tells what the people has become in the past, "When Israel went forth from Egypt", etc. The predicate in verse 2 of the psalm is a verb of feminine form (*hāyĕtāh*), showing that "Judah" and "Israel", which serve as subjects of the sentence, are used to indicate the land.[6] But from the context it is clear that when the verse speaks of "Judah" and "Israel" it means the *people* of Judah and Israel: it was the *people* that became "His holy one", "His dominion", when they went forth from Egypt. To express this idea the psalmist employs a metonymy, since not only is *'ereṣ* ("land", "earth") mentioned in verse 7 and verse 1 ("from Egypt"), but also, as we shall see later, the earth (as a term for the cosmos) is the image in which the main thought of the poem is embodied. It therefore seems reasonable to assume that the land is here called "Judah" and "Israel", not as denoting political entities located in the land, as most scholars believe,[7] but on account of the double character of its uniqueness, in consequence of what happened

6. *GK*, §122i.
7. Some critical commentators hold that this mode of designating the land is meant to express the supremacy of Judah, since Judah is mentioned first and designated God's "*holy* one", i.e. sanctuary, a reference to the Temple, while Israel is described only as "His *dominion*" (e.g. Gunkel, Kittel, Oesterley, also: S. I. L. Norin, *Er spaltete das Meer — Die Auszugsüberlieferung in Psalmen und Kult des alten Israel* [transl. by Ch. B. Stöberg], [Lund 1977], pp. 127-128. — The view that verse 2 refers to the prerogative of Judah, i.e. to the central Sanctuary in Jerusalem, is, according to Kraus, one possibility. Other commentators hold, however, that there is no essential difference between the two terms used in this verse. According to Kirkpatrick: "The division of the lines is rhythmical and not logical. Israel became J's sanctuary and dominion. No contrast is intended between Judah and Israel [. . .], but for the sake of the parallelism the whole nation is designated by its two principal divisions in later times". Similarly Weiser: "The author wants to emphasize that the rule of God holds sway in both these states, and therefore, more particularly, that the spiritual unity of the two brother kingdoms is both given and demanded". Dahood maintains that "the parallel pair *qodšō* and *mamšĕlōtāw* expresses one composite idea, 'sanctuary dominion', and separation of the component elements in the parallel cola creates the poetic figure known as the breakup of composite phrases". This explanation of Dahood is accepted by Renaud (*art. cit.* [note 4, above], p. 19, note 10). From the precedence given to

to the people "When Israel went forth from Egypt" and "became His holy one, ... His dominion". This idea is expressed both by the name *Yhwdh* ("Judah") on the basis of an auditory association with the Tetragrammaton: *Yḥwdḥ*/*YHWH*[8] — hence "*Judah* . . . His *holy* one" — and also by the name *Yśr'l*, ("Israel") through an internal and etymological association with the words: *śārār* ("to rule", "to dominate"), *śār* ("ruler"), *miśrāh* ("dominion", "ruler") — hence "*Israel* His *dominion*".[9] So, according to the verses with which the psalm begins, Israel experienced a double sense of elation — religious and political — when it was liberated from bondage,[10] not only from physical oppression but also from spiritual subjection.[11] "When Israel went forth from Egypt" there was a complete reversal of their condition.

"Judah" over "Israel" both Gunkel and Kittel conclude that the psalmist was a man of Judah.

Finally, it should be noted that the mention of "Judah" is used by some commentators also as a means to determine the period at which the psalm was written. Gunkel, for example, holds that the wording of verse 2 indicates a post-Deuteronomic date "when only the Sanctuary at Jerusalem was authorised and Judah appeared as the spiritual kingdom". Kraus, who, as mentioned above, assumes as one of the possibilities that the verse refers to the supremacy of Judah, disagrees with Gunkel and maintains that the psalm could also be "pre-exilic". This was also Kittel's opinion. Weiser argues: "Since the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel are mentioned side by side . . . and so are probably thought of as being still in existence, the psalm seems to date back to the time before the downfall of the northern kingdom (720 BC)". Similarly Dahood: "The designation in vs. 2 . . . suggests a ninth-eighth century date of composition". According to Oesterley "the date of the psalm is likely to have been the early Greek period, some time during the third century B.C". Norin's view that the psalm stresses the prior claim of the kingdom of Judah enables him to date its composition from David's reign, or possibly from the time of Josiah, hence the emphasis laid on the primacy of Judah and the attempt once more to make the whole of Israel recognize Jerusalem as its spiritual centre (*loc. cit.*).

8. Compare: "Hear, *YHWH*, the voice of *Yḥwdḥ*' (Deuteronomy 33:7).
9. This is a *midrash* of the name "Israel" by a synonymous word from the same root. See Y. Zakovitch, "Maamadam Shel Hamila Hanirdefet Vehashem Hanirdaf Bizirat Midreshe Shemot", *Shnaton Lamiqra uleḥeqer Hamizraḥ Haqadum*, II (1977), p. 104.
10. There is no basis for Dahood's view that *be*, the prefix of *beṣe't*, has the meaning "after". This argument — "It was *after* the Exodus of Egypt that Palestine became the abode of Y'" — is irrelevant.
11. See pp. 97f., above.

Verses 1-2 of the psalm therefore describe a historical-metahistorical event. The following verses depict natural phenomena (verses 3-6) and give the theological explanation for them (verses 7-8). What is the connexion between the natural phenomena and the historical-metahistorical event?

The first natural phenomena: "The sea saw and fled, Jordan ran backward" (verse 3). This verse (as also verse 5) refers to the division of the Red Sea (Exodus 14) and to the cutting off of the Jordan (Joshua 3-4). The Red Sea is indeed not explicitly mentioned, but that it is referred to in the word *hayyām* ("the sea"), is obvious[12] from "Jordan", the parallel expression in the second hemistich,[13] and no less from the two preceding

12. Dahood objects to the identification of "the sea" with the Red Sea and therefore also to the conclusion drawn from this identification, "that the poet fused into a single event two different incidents occurring at different times". His thesis is that the two parallel hemistichs in verses 1-2 refer to a single event. "This indicates that the parallel cola of vs. 3 likewise allude to a single historical event, the entry into Canaan across the Jordan River. Hence *hayyām* should designate the Salt or Dead Sea, which is explicitly mentioned in the biblical account of entry into Canaan in Josh III 14-16". — Even if we were to accept Dahood's contention, which is not based on the plain sense of the verses, we could not agree with his conclusion about verse 3. See also below.

13. These two events are compared in Joshua's speech to the people: "... the LORD your God dried up the waters of the *Jordan* for you ..., as the LORD your God did to the *Red Sea* ..." (Joshua 4:23). A reference to the division of the Red Sea and the cutting off of the Jordan in two parallel clauses occurs (apart from this verse in Psalm 114) also in Psalm 66:6: "He turned *the sea* into dry land; they crossed *the river* on foot". (Although neither the Red Sea nor the Jordan is specifically mentioned here, there can be no doubt that these two historical events are intended.) According to S. E. Loewenstamm, an echo of the tradition which viewed the division of the Red Sea and the cutting off of the Jordan as two parts of one event is to be found also in Isaiah 11:15-16, although in this verse Loewenstamm holds that "the river" refers to the Euphrates (*Massoret Yeziat Mizrayim Behishtalsheluta*, Jerusalem 1965, p. 105). — Gunkel in his commentary on this verse observes that "Events remote from one another according to the tradition are conjoined in the imagination of the poet. The similarity of these two miracles is the very reason for their association. Our study of saga-history has proved that they are merely variations on the same theme". Zirker is not the first and not the last to argue that the combination and juxtaposition of remote events cannot be explained either as an expression of poetic licence or as the result of psychological excitement, but that they must rather be understood through the Weltanschauung of the cultic world, that is, as an expression of the faith that the

verses[14] which speak of the exodus from Egypt. These phenomena in nature are also historical events. In order to clarify the psalmist's intention in mentioning them here we should compare their descriptions in the psalm with those in the Biblical "historiography".

The division of the Red Sea is described in the Torah as follows:

> ... and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided (Exodus 14:21).

The cutting off of the Jordan is thus described in the Book of Joshua:

> and when those who bore the ark had come to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were dipped in the brink of the water ... the waters coming down from above stood, rose up in a heap (3:15-16).

Our psalm describes both these events:

> The sea saw and fled, Jordan ran backward.

unique event in the past carries a power of revelation every time it is mentioned in the ritual (*op. cit.* [p. 313, note 23], p. 106). Kraus explains the linking of the Red Sea tradition with the Jordan crossing on the basis of Joshua 4:23, more exactly, of Joshua 3-5, by positing an early cultic ceremony at Gilgal, probably on Passover, in which the exodus-conquest traditions were actualized by a repetition of the Jordan crossing. He regards this psalm and Psalm 66 as hymns to to be sung at this ceremony. (See also his article: "Gilgal — Ein Beitrag zur Kultusgeschichte Israels", *VT*, I [1951], pp. 181-199). Kraus' view was adopted, *inter alia*, by G. von Rad (*Old Testament Theology*, II [transl. by D. M. G. Stalker], Edinburgh and London [1965], p. 105, note 11, p. 106). B. S. Childs finds that both this reconstruction and the similar one by F. M. Cross ("The Song of the Sea and Canaanite Myth", *Journal for Theology and the Church*, V [1968] pp. 11ff) "are highly questionable". He does believe, however, that "it does seem reasonable to suppose that some sort of cultic rite did succeed in joining elements of the Jordan crossing with the Red Sea tradition" ("A Traditio-Historical Study of the Red Sea Tradition", *VT*, XX [1970], p. 415); see also Norin *op. cit.* [note 7], p. 13); compare Dahood's opinion in note 12. On the intent of the reference to these two sea events in the present psalm, see below.

14. For Dahood's argument see note 12, above. — It may be mentioned in passing that "the event at the Red Sea has been proved to be one of the favourite historical motives in the Book of Psalms" (A. Lauha, *Geschichtsmotive in den alttestamentlichen Psalmen*, Helsinki 1946, p. 53. Compare idem, "Das Schilfmeermotiv im Alten Testament", *SVT*, IX [1963], p. 41).

The main difference in the description is that in the "historiography" the happenings at the Red Sea and at the Jordan are passive: the sea was divided and the water of Jordan cut off under duress, by God's decree, whereas according to the description in the psalm the sea and Jordan were active, performing deeds of their own volition as a result of their excitement. This conception of the division of the Red Sea as an actively willed deed is not peculiar to Psalm 114; it is expressed in a similar manner also in Psalm 77:17: "The waters saw You, O God, the waters saw You and were convulsed". Here too the event is described as an active response of the sea. What then is the intention uttered by the difference in the descriptions? Does it indicate a difference in the conception of the purpose underlying these events? If so, what is the difference?

According to the Torah, the Red Sea was divided in order that the Israelites might pass through it on dry land and thus escape Pharaoh. According to Psalm 77 the independent action of the water served as the means whereby God delivered His people (verse 16). This action of the water in itself was not, however, a *decision*, but fear inspired by the sight of God. This means that the action of the sea was the same phenomenon that is clearly recognisable in Biblical descriptions of the theophany: the shock of nature at the sight of God; the upheaval throughout all the foundations of the universe caused by His awesome revelation.[15] This reaction is especially attributed to water, to the sea and rivers in general and to the Red Sea in particular, through the influence of the ancient Near Eastern myth about God's war against the sea and His victory over it.[16] In support of this mythological background for the description of the sea and the Jordan in Psalm 114, we can cite the opinion that "the passages which combine the division of the Red Sea with the cutting off of the Jordan are

15. S. E. Loewenstamm, "Readat Hateva Bisheat, Hofaat Y'", *Oz Ledavid*, Jerusalem 1964, pp. 508-520; J. Jeremias, *Theophanie — Die Geschichte einer alttestamentlichen Gattung*, Neukirchen—Vluyn 1965.
16. See, for example, Ph. Reymond, *L'eau, sa vie, et sa signification dans l'Ancien Testament* (*SVT*, VI), Leiden 1958, pp. 181ff, esp. pp. 193-194; O. Kaiser, *Die mythische Bedeutung des Meeres in Ägypten, Ugarit und Israel* (*BZAW*, LXXVIII), Berlin 1959, pp. 140-159; A. Lauha, *SVT*, IX (1963), pp. 38-46; Loewenstamm, *Massoret Yeẓiat Miẓrayim*, pp. 102-109; Jeremias, *op. cit.* (note 15, above), pp. 90-97. — See also the view held by some scholars on the meaning of Psalm 74: 13-15 above, pp. 291 f., note 9.

probably an echo of the Canaanite epos about the war of Baal (i.e. Hadad)". According to this epos the enemy against whom Baal fought is given a double name: *zbl ym* ("the Prince of the Sea") and *tpt nhr* ("the Judge of the River").[17] Can we find in the verse itself any support for the view that the action of the sea and of the Jordan is their reaction of dread at the Divine revelation? Here too, as in Psalm 77, the verb "saw" appears as one of the predicates. In Psalm 77 the object of vision is explicitly stated: "the waters saw *You, O God*", whereas here we are told only "the sea saw", no object being specified. But can we not draw an analogy with Psalm 77 and supply God as the object of "saw" (as most of the commentators do)?[18] Even the possessive suffixes of the words in the previous verse are undefined — "His holy one", "His dominion" — although their meaning is understood. This is so obvious that any direct mention of God appears to the psalmist to be quite superfluous. We can therefore say that in this verse also the psalmist feels no need to indicate that the object of "saw" is God. If he were to add an object, he would impair the force of the description in this verse. Furthermore, those commentators who explain this verse by assuming that the object of "saw" is God cite also verse 7, in which God is explicitly mentioned. Moreover, the other two predicates in our verse: "fled", "ran backward", indicate actions which clearly express fear; they manifest the emotion which, according to Psalm 77:17, was aroused in the waters when they saw God, "and were convulsed" with fear. Yet the prevailing opinion is that this verse views the division of the Red Sea and the cutting off of Jordan as a flight, a retreat before the terrible majesty of God, thus reflecting the motif of the war against Chaos.[19]

17. Loewenstamm, *op. cit.* (note 16, above), p. 105. See also Jeremias, *op. cit.* above), p. 93.
18. For example, Briggs, Gunkel, Kittel, Oesterley, Kraus, Weiser, Renaud (*art. cit.* [note 4, above], p. 18), Auffret (*art. cit.* [note 5, above], p. 105), etc. Dahood cites the Peshitta in which the verb *rā'āh* is translated with an object suffix claiming that this was the original reading and that the suffix refers to God "or to the ark of the covenant which contained his presence". On the other hand, even if the Peshitta does represent the original form of the word and the *wāw*-suffix has dropped out by haplography, since the next word (*wayyānos*) begins with *wāw*, it is still not certain that the object intended here is God. See the comment of Chajes, who also cites the Peshitta ("saw Israel at the Exodus, or saw God").
19. See note 16, above; also Kraus' interpretation of this verse.

On the other hand, a close examination of this verse in its context must arouse misgivings. Is the object of the verb "saw" here really to be explained as in Psalm 77:17? Does this fit the real meaning of the verse? Is it probable that the phenomena in nature mentioned here are indeed a reaction to the revelation of God? As a confirmation of this view the commentators point to the reply given in verses 7-8. But a profounder study of these verses shows clearly that this is not the meaning intended. Verses 7-8 reply to the questions posed in verses 5-6: "What ails you, O sea, that you flee", etc.? Our psalmist does not ask about the vision; he asks the reason for the recoil and flight. The reply to the question about the object of vision is given in the juxtaposition of verse 3 to verse 1-2, i.e. "the sea saw" that "When Israel went forth from Egypt" etc., "Judah became His holy one, Israel His dominion". The same applies to Jordan;[20] it also saw what happened "when Israel went forth from Egypt", etc. From the syntactical structure of verse 4 it is evident what the "mountains" and "hills" saw.

By clarifying the object of vision we have also thrown light on the structure of the whole psalm and explained the connection between the historical-metahistorical event related in verses 1-2 and the convulsions in nature described in verses 3-6. The latter were simply a reaction to the former.

The reaction of the sea and Jordan was flight, retreat. Such a reaction is easily understood as accompanying a vision of God. But since it was actually a reaction to the sight of the event that happened to Judah and Israel "When Israel went forth from Egypt" — this requires explanation.[21] Why, according to our psalmist, did the sea turn in flight and Jordan retreat at that time? It would appear that the answer to this question is to be found in the concept of creation expressed in Psalm 104:6-9: "... the waters stood above the mountains. They *fled* at Your rebuke ... up the mountains, down the valleys to the place You established for

20. This is how the object of "saw" was taken by *Mezudat David* among the early commentaries, and among the later ones by Ehrlich (see note 21, below). Chajes also regards such a view as tenable (see note 18, above).

21. According to Ehrlich, as already mentioned (in note 20), the object of vision is the event related in the two preceding verses. "Nature saw the preference shown to Israel, and this was what terrified her, since it meant that against a nation thus preferred her laws must surely submit". Is such an explanation reasonable?

them. You set bounds they must not pass, so that they never again cover the earth". As has been repeatedly pointed out by scholars, we find here also an echo of the myth of the war between God and the waters of Chaos at the time of the Creation. In the beginning God rebuked the waters which covered the mountains, causing them to flee, whereby Chaos became Cosmos, i.e. the world was created. As mentioned above, traces of the myth of the war against Chaos are observable also in the verse from Psalm 114. Just as the sea and the river are juxtaposed in that passage, so here they appear in parallelism with the difference that the river is represented by Jordan while the Red Sea is indicated by "the sea". The action referred to in this verse, like that portrayed in the verses quoted from Psalm 104, is thus connected with the Creation. The absence here of any reference to God's rebuke, which is mentioned in Psalm 104, is explained by the tendency in our psalm, which is — as already noted — to describe nature's reactions as self-willed and independent. The action of the water is described in both passages as a retreat (one of the two verbs used in both places is even identical: *nws*), which is a visible result of fear. From the fact that our psalmist, unlike the author of Psalm 77.17, refrains from mentioning this emotional stimulus, we can infer that in those cases which he describes fear was only "unconscious collective" fear. The conscious action of the water was its flight, which had been the reaction of the waters at the time of Creation. So the idea expressed in this verse is that when "the sea" and Jordan saw that "When Israel went forth from Egypt" etc. "Judah became His holy one, Israel His dominion", they fled and retreated from the places assigned to them at Creation, whence a new creation of world should ensue.

For our assumption that this is indeed the intention expressed by the flight of the sea and the retreat of Jordan we have, of course, to find corroboration in the psalm in its totality, first and foremost in the behaviour of the "mountains" and the "hills" described in verse 4. For both acted as they did in reaction to the same event, which is explicitly defined in verses 1-2.

We are told about the mountains and hills:

Mountains skipped like rams, hills like sheep.

22. Radak, *Mezudat David*. According to Meiri this is one of the two possible interpretations (see note 25, below).

According to some of the early commentators[22] and also most of the later ones,[23] this verse is a poetical description of the trembling of Mount Sinai at the revelation of God (Exodus 19:18;[24] Judges 5:5; Psalm 68:9). This explanation is, however, rendered difficult by the fact that the natural phenomena mentioned in this verse and the previous one are not represented as accompanying a theophany but as reactions to the choice of Israel. Furthermore, this explanation does not by any means fit the wording of the verse. Not only is the name Sinai not mentioned here, but the psalm does not speak of *one* mountain.[25] The subjects of the sentence are "the mountains" and "hills", i.e. the foundation of the natural world which appeared first when the cosmos was formed.[26] When the verse speaks of these, of the foundations considered the firmest, most solid elements in the whole of creation, it does not use any of the verbs normally employed to describe the tremor of the mountains at the presence of God such as *ḥrd* (Exodus 19:18); *r'd* (Psalm 104:32); *r'š, mgg* (Nahum 1:5); *pzz, šwḥ* (Habakkuk 3:6); *mśś* (Psalm 97:5); *mwš* (Isaiah 54:10); *ḥyl* (Habakkuk 3:10; Psalm 97:4); etc. Instead it depicts the action of the mountains by the verb *rqd* and a simile as also in Psalm 29:6, where we read:

> He makes Lebanon skip (*wayyarqīdēm*) like a calf, Sirion, like a young wild ox.

23. E.g. Delitzsch, Chajes (?), Briggs, Gunkel, Kittel, Oesterley, Weiser, etc.
24. A view accepted by some scholars is that in the original text of Exodus 19:18 the reading was not *wayyeḥĕrad kol hāhār* ("and the whole *mountain* quaked") but *wayyeḥĕrad kol hā'ām* ("and the whole *people* quaked"). This is the reading in verse 16, in some MSS of MT, and represents the translation in the Septuagint (see *BHS*).
25. Of the exegetes who regard this as a reference to Mount Sinai, Radak states that the verse is worded in the plural "because perhaps other mountains near to Mount Sinai quaked and trembled, so too the hills in the vicinity". Gunkel argues that the psalmist uses hyperbole in saying that many mountains and hills quaked at that time. This "difficulty" causes Meiri to propose a second interpretation, according to which there is a reference to the cleaving of rocks in the desert as mentioned in Psalm 78:15, 20. According to Dahood, "The fact . . . that the only other predication of *rāqad*, 'to leap' of mountains is predicated of Lebanon and Sirion in Ps XXIX 6 leads one to think that the mountains and hills in our verse are located in Canaan or Palestine, not in the Sinai Peninsula".
26. See, for example, Psalm 90:2; 104:6-8.

Here we find:

> Mountains skipped (*rāqedū*) like rams, hills like sheep.

Indeed the same verb *rqd* is used in both the verses which refer to the mountains, except that, whereas in Psalm 29 it appears in the *hiph'il* conjugation, with the meaning: "caused to skip", in the present passage it is used in the *qal* meaning: "to skip". In Psalm 29 the mountains (Lebanon and Sirion) are the grammatical objects of the sentence; here "mountains" and "hills" are the subjects. This means that in Psalm 29 God's voice causes Lebanon and Sirion to skip. The skipping is not willed but is the spontaneous, automatic result of fear and panic. The idea expressed there is: "Though the everlasting gigantic mountains of Lebanon and Sirion . . . are firmly established in the depths of the earth since primitive times, their foundations shake at the appearance of God so that they skip like a calf or a young wild ox which romps on the pasture and leaps clumsily".[27] Here, on the other hand, we are told that the mountains and hills skipped *of their own accord*, easily and quickly like rams and sheep when they saw that "When Israel went forth from Egypt" etc., "Judah became His holy one" etc.[28] Was their skipping an expression of fear or awe? This verse in its context requires us to view this skipping of the mountains and hills as indicating a change in their nature from what it was when they were originally created — a modification of their stability, an alteration of the existing world-order to make way for a new one. Thus the natural phenomena described in verses 3-4 as reactions to the occurrences related in verses 1-2 are transformations in the normally existing world of nature which came about as a result of the transformation in history "When Israel went forth from Egypt", etc.

Support for this view of the connection between verses 3-4 and 1-2 can be found in the thematic parallelism between verse 3 and verse 1 and between verse 4 and verse 2. Verses 1 and 3 describe a change of place, verses 2 and 4 a change of state:

27. Weiser.
28. Compare the note in the *Biur*: "as if to say that the heaviest and most stable things in the creation became light as rams".

verse 1: When Israel went forth from Egypt, the house of Jacob
from a people of strange speech,
verse 2: Judah became His holy one, Israel His dominion.
verse 3: The sea saw and fled, Jordan ran backward,
verse 4: mountains skipped like rams, hills like sheep.

The events that transpired hundreds of years before our psalmist's time have become, through his description, as though they were vivid events occurring before his very eyes.[29] There are no more boundaries either in time or in space. The psalmist stands face to face with the sea and Jordan, the mountains and hills, and he can turn to them and ask them:

What ails you, O sea, that you flee,
Jordan, that you run backward,
mountains that you skip like rams,
hills like sheep? (verses 5-6)

These questions do not "exhibit a real touch of humour and irony"[30] nor are they "a prophetic manner of speech".[31] They are an expression of excitement, amazement. This affects the form of the description. The number of words used is gradually reduced in proportion to those which are left to the reader's imagination. The psalmist finds it difficult to believe his own eyes. He finds it difficult to understand why these foundations of the natural world, when they saw what happened "When Israel went forth from Egypt", behaved in a manner contrary to the function assigned to them at the time of the Creation. Therefore his question repeats, word for word, the very description he has just given. Perhaps the verbatim repetition, this stereotyped reliving of the events, expresses as well the wish — conscious or unconscious — not to allow this wonderful vision to disappear. Here is the answer:

29. According to Weiser, "This original stylistic form is not only the fruit of an exuberantly flourishing poetical imagination; at the root of it is rather the peculiar character of the Old Testament religious interpretation of history which has arisen out of ideas associated with the cultus. While centuries of history are skipped, events long past are experienced in the representation of the *Heilsgeschichte* in the ritual as having an immediate actual significance. To the eye of faith history is not something dead but something alive and dynamic." See also Renaud, *art. cit.* (note 4), pp. 20-21.

30. Weiser. 31. Gunkel, Kraus.

millipĕnē 'ādōn ḥūlī āreṣ,
millipĕnē 'ĕlō^{a}h ya'ăqov (verse 7).
Who turns the rock into a pool of water,
the flint into a fountain of water. (verse 8)

Verse 7 is difficult. The word *ḥūlī* comes from the root *ḥwl* or *ḥyl* meaning "to writhe", "to tremble". Its form is the usual one for *qal* imperative feminine second person. The opinion current among the later commentators is that we have here the verb-form used in its normal sense,[32] so that the meaning of the verse is. "At the presence of the Lord tremble, O earth, at the presence of the God of Jacob!" According to these commentators, the psalmist asks a question in verses 5-6, while in verses 7-8 he gives a command to those he has asked, who are here designated by the word *'ereṣ* ("earth"), bidding them to tremble. "Thus he gives his answer: Nature will surely have good reason to be terrified at the appearing of Him who is the Lord".[33] Among those who regard *ḥūlī* as an imperative are a few who assign to this form the function of the imperfect.[34] This means that in reply to the psalmist's question he answers: "The earth trembles at the presence of the LORD". This is how the sense of the verse is understood also by the minority who take *ḥūlī* as an infinitive with suffix.[35] Among the early commentators are

32. For example, Delitzsch, Duhm, Gunkel, Kittel, Oesterley, Weiser, Dahood, H. Lubsczyk ("Einheit und heilsgeschichtliche Bedeutung von Ps 114/115(113)", *BZ*, XI [1967], p. 166), Norin (*op. cit.* [note 7, above], pp. 126-127). For Renaud's opinion see note 37, below. Among the mediaeval Jewish commentators Ibn Ezra suggested this view as a second explanation. 33. Weiser.

34. This is one of the two explanations of the word given by Radak in *Sefer Hashorashim* (s.v. *ḥwl*). Meiri also explains the word in the same manner. See also the next note.

35. This is Ibn Ezra's view in his first explanation. According to Radak (in his commentary on our verse the single explanation, in his *Sefer Hashorashim* [*loc. cit.*, note 34, above] the second one) *ḥūlī* is infinitive, but the suffix, contrary to Ibn Ezra's view, is not otiose. It is a first person possessive; the sentence is therefore the reply of the "earth" to the psalmist's question: "*My* fear and *my* trembling, *my* skipping and *my* drawing back are from before the LORD". In the ancient translations there is a verb similar to *ḥwl* in the past tense: ἐσακεύθη (in the Septuagint), *z'ṭ* (in the Peshitta), *mota est* (in the Vulgate). Graetz and Chajes assume that these versions preserve the original reading; according to Graetz: *tāḥīl*, according to Chajes: *tāḥūl*. According to Briggs the verb was originally, apparently, *ḥālū* (third person plural perfect) which has been inserted into this verse from verse 4b (so also from verse 6b) where there was a parallel with *rāqĕdū*.

some who regard the verb as a *pa'lel* ("form", "bring forth in travail"), explaining the form as a participle with suffix and the word *'ereṣ* as meaning "world".[36] So *'ādōn ḥūlī 'āreṣ* will be interpreted to mean: The Lord, creator of the world. Again, there is an opinion, quite widely accepted in critical circles, according to which the original text was not *'ādōn ḥūlī 'āreṣ* but *'ădōn kol hā'āreṣ* ("the Lord of the whole world").[37]

This last view is quite unacceptable, both because the reasons adduced for it are unconvincing[38] and also because we cannot assume that such a common word as *kōl* was replaced by the rare word *ḥūlī*.[39] The various explanations which take the word *ḥūlī* as a *qal* form are likewise improbable. Especially doubtful is the interpretation, based entirely on formal grammatical considerations, that the verse contains a command. The explanation that the natural phenomena mentioned here are caused by fear at God's presence is also forced, and, as we will see, according to it the connection of the verse with the preceding verses and with the following verse is quite inappropriate.

On the basis of the structure of the verse (*'ādōn ḥūlī 'āreṣ* || *'ĕlō^{a}h ya'ăqov*) and on the basis of the structure of the first hemistich of the

36. So Ibn Janaḥ (*Kitâb al-Moustalḥiḳ*, in: J. and H. Derenbourg, *Opuscules et traités* d'Abou 'l-Walid Merwan ibn Djanâh de Cordoue, Paris 1880 [repr. Amsterdam 1969], p. 78), Rashi.
37. See *BHS*. This argument was anticipated by Ehrlich. Among the later commentators this is the view of Kraus. Also according to Renaud (*art. cit.* [note 4, above], pp. 21-28) and Auffret (*art. cit.* [note 5, above], p. 106) the reading *'ādōn kol hā'āreṣ* is the original. But Renaud's opinion is that *ḥūlī 'āreṣ* in the MT is not an error, but a deliberate rereading of the original text in a new setting. He believes that this reading has eschatological import. The psalm reviews divine acts of the past and looks forward to deliverance, to a new Exodus. The same universality was present in the original setting, but it is made more explicit in a postexilic context. Lubsczyk, who accepts the MT as trustworthy, hears in the words *'ādōn ḥūlī 'āreṣ* an intentional echo of the cult-phrase: *'ădōn kol hā-'āreṣ* (*loc. cit.* [note 32, above]).
38. Ehrlich's main argument and Kraus' only one against the MT text is that *'ādōn* without any article or further determinant cannot be a name of God. Ehrlich gives no reasons for his suggested reading. Kraus mentions that in Joshua 3-5, which, according to his view (see note 13, above), is connected with the present psalm, the phrase *'ădōn kol hā'āreṣ* is used (3:11, 13) as a designation of God.
39. This argument is irrelevant according to Renaud's hypothesis about the origin of the phrase *ḥūlī 'āreṣ* (see note 37, above).

next verse which is like that of the present verse (*'ādōn ḥūlī 'āreṣ* || *hahōpĕkī haṣṣūr*), it seems to us that the most reasonable explanation (notwithstanding all the grammatical difficulties it involves) is that *ḥūlī* equals *mĕḥōlēl*, so that the phrase *ḥūlī 'āreṣ* means: Creator of the world.

But even if we adopt this interpretation of *ḥūlī*, we cannot accept the explanation of *millipĕnē* as meaning "from before", "at the presence of", which is generally combined with this and other interpretations of *ḥūlī*. Our analysis has shown that the natural phenomena described in verses 3-4, which are the subject of the questions in verses 5-6, are reactions to the historical-metahistorical event related in verses 1-2. The object of their vision, the cause of their behaviour, is *not* God but rather the events which they witnessed. And yet the psalmist's question about the cause of the natural phenomena is answered by the words. "*millipĕnē* the Lord, Creator of the world", etc. If we are told that the sea fled *because* it saw that "When Israel went forth from Egypt ... Judah became His holy one", etc., and this is followed by the question: "*why* does the sea flee? — is it possible to answer "*from before* the Lord, Creator of the world"? (This is the refutation of all interpretations of this verse which give the word *millipĕnē* the meaning "from before".)

Our argument against the commonly accepted interpretation of *millipĕnē* is based on the assumption that God is not the object of "saw" in verse 3. This assumption appears indeed to be well founded on the wording and structure of verses 1-6, but it is yet possible to argue against it. Since the word *millipĕnē* in its usual sense does not fit, does this not mean that our view of the intention of the whole psalm is, after all, untenable? Does not the principle of the hermeneutic circle, already repeatedly mentioned, oblige us to re-interpret the psalm in such a manner that the word *millipĕnē* fits it appropriately? But to change our view, according to which the natural phenomena are not caused by God — as the word *millipĕnē* is commonly understood to imply — would not only mean disregarding the content of verses 1-4 in their totality but would also make the reasoning implied by the descriptions of God in verse 8 hardly appropriate. The sea fled, the mountains skipped *millipĕnē* God "who turns the *rock* into a pool of water, the *flint* into a fountain of water". Such a description of God's boundless, awe-inspiring power is appropriate as a reason why the *mountains* and *hills* skipped before Him;

ange of rock into a pool or fountain of water is a change
ich emerged from chaos. The rock and the flint, which
e utility, are changed into sources of blessing. In this act
:ribed as the Creator of the world and "the God of
ne Who chose Israel for whose sake the foundations of
; they did when they saw that "When Israel went forth

:ed that when the answer is given that it was on account
:a fled and the mountains skipped, the act of creation is
: verb *ḥwl, ḥyl,* which evokes the identical (or
ɔt meaning "to tremble", "to dance". It follows that,
nnection between the answer and the question, i.e. be-
nd verses 5-6, there is a connection between the allusion
ses 3,5, on the one hand, and the connotations of *ḥūlī* in
scriptions in verses 3-4, 5-6, on the other. Can we also
of link between "rock" and "flint" on the one side and
"hills" on the other, likewise between "pool of water"
vater" on the one side and "the sea" and "Jordan" on

ɔf the end of the psalm (verses 7-8) there are a few
nect it with the opening (verses 1-2). The phrase "God
7 is perhaps an echo of "the house of Jacob" in verse 1,
is said in verse 2. In particular what connects the end
, what indeed unites the whole psalm, is the idea ex-
the idea of transformation, of a new creation, which is
in verses 1-2.[41] This idea, which is indirectly expressed
estations of the foundations of the natural world, is in-
verbs used in verses 2 and 8 — *hāyětāh* ("became"),
urns into") — both of which actually contain the idea

ṣṣūr . . . māyim in verse 8 appear the consonants of the

the two opening and the two concluding verses deal with the same
iastic order:

change of situation + covenant
covenant + change of situation

ɔovel, p. 107).

word *miṣrayim* [*ṣr mym — mṣrym*] and similarly in the word *ḥallāmīš* we find three consonants [*lmš*] which are also in the word *mamšĕlōtāw*. Is it too bold to take this fact into consideration and to assume a sound-link between the last verse, and the beginning of verse 1 and the end of verse 2?)[42]

After our close study of Psalm 114 using the method of Total Interpretation, we have arrived at a conclusion which differs from that generally accepted among modern scholars:[43] the psalm is not a hymn of praise to God Who revealed Himself in the exodus from Egypt by choosing Israel; it rather expresses the idea that the choice of Israel was a revolution in Creation, or, more exactly, a new Creation.

Strauss' analysis deals mainly with the structure of the psalm, considering separately its composition and its metre. Such an analysis, in Strauss' own words, "is an attempt to evaluate a Biblical poem in the same way as one is accustomed to evaluate any other poetry". He therefore asks "What is [the psalm's] artistic structure? What is the relation between the thought and the shape which makes up its linguistic body?"[44] The business of analysis is for Strauss a matter of aesthetic appreciation, not a matter of understanding what the psalm expresses, which is a necessary precondition for aesthetic evaluation. From the last of his questions: "What is the relation between the thought and the shape which makes up [the psalm's] linguistic body?" — we can understand his conception of how one can comprehend poetry in general and our psalm in particular; an idea which he has repeatedly and explicitly enunciated, apart from his words quoted above,[45] e.g.: "When the content is translated into other words, it is no longer the same as it was before. Hence any attempt to express in other words the content of an artistic literary work robs the content of its vitality and beauty."[46] So, as we have observed,[47] and as Strauss also agrees, it is impossible to grasp the subject-matter of the

42. Auffret, seeing a connection between phonological elements and the structure of the psalm, argues that the first two verses contain "sound-plays" which recur throughout the whole psalm (*art. cit.* [note 5, above], pp. 104-105).
43. For example, Gunkel, Kittel, Weiser, Kraus.
44. *Op. cit.* (note 2, above), p. 66.
45. P. 38.
46. *Op. cit.* (note 2, above), p. 16.
47. Pp. 2ff.

psalm, like that of any other poem, without taking careful note of the interaction of form and content, paying meticulous attention to the method of Total Interpretation.

Does Strauss, in analysing our psalm, put his professed theory into practice?

His description of the "artistic structure" of the psalm certainly evokes admiration for the acute vision of the critic who formulated such a description, but the explanation of the description must undoubtedly call his method into question because his explanation proves that he looks merely at the outward appearance of the structure. The first stanza (verses 1-2) is indeed connected with the last (verses 7-8), but a close look at the wording of stanza one does not reveal that it describes "*God's* action in history"[48] as does the last. Similarly "the expansion of the dominion of the God of history, the God of Jacob, over the cosmos", which according to Strauss is the answer "explicitly given in the last stanza",[49] not only does not account for its connection with verses 7-8 but does not even account for the wording of these verses. The description of the natural phenomena as independent, self-willed activity in verses 3-6 is surprising, according to the interpretation that the idea intended to be conveyed by the description is the dominion of God in nature. Thus the subject of the psalm is defined by Strauss as the sum of its different components, which are, however, explained without the requisite consideration of the unique manner of their expression, of their latent suggestions and connections. The meaning Strauss attributes to the psalm explains a number of formal elements — the reduction in the description and the "speech", and the metre — but in view of the way he determines the subject of the psalm, his conclusions are doubtful.

Strauss finds it necessary to decide why God's dominion in history is mentioned at the beginning of the psalm and only afterwards His rule in the cosmos.[50] But in the case of this psalm there is surely no need for such an explanation, even according to Strauss' view of the subject of the psalm, much less according to what we have found to be expressed in it, i.e. the election of Israel. Similarly, it is a methodological error to imagine

48. *Op. cit.* (note 2, above), p. 71 (= Above, p. 353). — our italics).
49. *Op. cit.* (note 2, above), p. 72 (= Above, p. 354).
50. *Loc. cit.* (note 49, above).

that the difference between the description of natural phenomena in Psalm 114 and that contained in Biblical "historiography" can be explained only as a function of the difference between lyrical expression and epic narrative.[51] Since the meaning of each description is determined as well by its context and its unique wording, the two descriptions cannot be identical in meaning.

Finally, Strauss finds "that the transition from large to small [the sea — Jordan; mountains — hills; rams — sheep] is not a weakening and diminution, but rather a concentration and profound penetration to the roots of the phenomena. The psalm, which began with the broad vista of the sea, concludes with the fountain — turns thus to the source, both in the image and in the inner process".[52] Even if the subject of the psalm were really "the relationship between God's dominion in history and His dominion in nature",[53] there would be no basis for this idea except in words detached from their context.

Strauss' analysis of Psalm 114 is thus an inadequate application of the method of interpretation laid down by Strauss himself. In contrast to Strauss' analysis we have presented our own. This analysis differs from an earlier proposal[54] which once appeared to us to embody an accurate and consistent application of the method of Total Interpretation; the analysis presented above now appears to us to be more correct.

According to our earlier analysis, the psalm describes how nature participates in the process of history. The wonders of Creation are God's co-partners in later acts. The physical world plays its part in enabling the metaphysical world to manifest itself. This is the world of "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation". The starting-point for this view, as also for that set forth in our present analysis, was the assumption that verse 2 speaks of the *Land* of Judah and Israel. Formerly, however, we failed to understand that the wording of this verse is a metonymy, and for this reason we explained that at the time that "Israel went forth from Egypt ..." the Land of Canaan simultaneously became the Land of Destiny,

51. *Op. cit.* (note 2, above), pp. 71-72 (= Above, p. 354).
52. *Op. cit.* (note 2, above), p. 72 (= Above, p. 354).
53. *Op. cit.* (note 2, above), p. 71 (= Above, p. 353).
54. In the Hebrew edition of the present volume (*Hamiqra Kidemuto*[2], Jerusalem 1967), pp. 181-188.

i.e. when the people of Israel were liberated from the land of their physical and spiritual bondage, the Land of physical and spiritual freedom was already waiting for them to fulfill their mission: "You shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation". For this view we found support in verse 3, which mentions the division of the Red Sea and the cutting off of Jordan, as we regarded the Red Sea as the first impediment and the Jordan as the last on the way between the exodus from the land of slavery and the entry into the Land of Destiny, explaining the flight of the Red Sea and the retreat of Jordan, each of which changed its normal course so as to remove an obstacle from the path of the People of Destiny and enable them to reach the Land of Destiny. Thus we interpreted the skipping of the mountains and hills in verse 4 as expressing their readiness to hasten and remove themselves from Israel's path so as to clear the way before the people. When we explained the reaction of natural phenomena in this way, the basic error in our entire analysis was that we failed to carry out the hermeneutic rule of close reading. We did not pay due attention to the fact that this explanation does not account for any of the verbs used to indicate the action of the natural phenomena. For this reason the interpretation of verse 2 was equally incorrect, as also that of verses 7-8 which was based on that of verses 2-6.

In the new analysis presented here we have kept the principles of Total Interpretation constantly in view. We have endeavoured to adhere consistently and meticulously to the method of close reading, taking due note of parallels in wording and subject-matter in the Bible and in the relevant texts in ancient Near Eastern literature. It is hoped that this time we have succeeded in making fully adequate use of the method of interpretation we have set down for the correct understanding of Biblical literature, and that we have now found the precise meaning of Psalm 114, insofar, of course, as this is at all possible.

From the very nature of poetry W. Emrich concludes that "all interpretation of poetry ... resembles the labour of Sisyphus. It rolls uphill a stone which, by inner necessity, rolls down again from the peak it had reached — but it already waits to be seized and carried up anew. It aims at making possible what is essentially impossible, but it neither can nor should relax in its untiring effort to do so".[55] Indeed, from the very nature

55. W. Emrich, "Das Problem der Symbolinterpretation im Hinblick auf Goethes 'Wanderjahre'", in: *Die Werkinterpretation*, p. 171.

of poetry it seems probable that to reveal the whole intention of a poem is the business to which the critic must unremittingly devote himself. Nevertheless, the critic of poetry resembles not Sisyphus but rather a mountaineer who aspires to reach the summit of the mountain; whenever he arrives at what he thought was the summit he sees a higher peak revealed. So, although he does not cease to climb, he has never set foot on the summit.

ADDENDUM

The Tale of Naboth's Vineyard
I Kings 21*

1. The Placement of the Tale in the Bible

In the Masoretic Text the story of Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21) follows the account of Ahab's conflict with the Arameans under Ben-Hadad (Chapter 20). The order of the two narratives is reversed in the Septuagint, and this reversal reflects an entirely different conception of the nature and intent of the tale.

The following table provides the sequence of events in the Masoretic Text:

Chapters 17-18	Elijah's oath to Ahab, Elijah at Wadi Cherith, Elijah at Zarephath, Elijah at Mount Carmel
Chapter 19	Elijah at Horeb
Chapter 20	Ahab and Aram
Chapter 21	Naboth's vineyard, Elijah's prophecy to Ahab
Chapter 22	Ahab's war with Aram, Ahab's demise

By reversing the order of Chapters 20 and 21, the Septuagint places the tale of the vineyard, in which Elijah foretells Ahab's demise, in immediate proximity to Chapters 17-19, thus clustering together those chapters which deal specifically with Elijah while at the same time placing together the two chapters which deal with the Aramean wars (20, 22). A further explanation for the Septuagint arrangement suggests itself: Ahab's sin, repentance, and the subsequent "stay of execution" are recounted in Chapter 21. Elijah proclaims that the LORD "will bring the evil in his son's time upon his house" (verse 29). As a sequel to this, the Septuagint continues with Chapter 20, in which, according to this arrangement, Ahab *sins again*, and is told by the prophet "Thus said the LORD: Because you have set free the man whom I doomed [= the king of Aram],

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