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TE'UDA

XI

STUDIES IN THE AGGADIC MIDRASHIM

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THE CHAIM ROSENBERG SCHOOL
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XI

STUDIES IN THE AGGADIC MIDRASHIM
IN MEMORY OF ZVI MEIR RABINOWITZ

Edited by

M.A. FRIEDMAN M.B. LERNER

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TE'UDA

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Moshe Dorf

(June 2, 1907 — October 5, 1987)

Moshe Dorf was born in Poland and emigrated to Belgium at an early age. Together with his brother, he founded a diamond processing enterprise.

The personality of Moshe Dorf reflects the embodiment of initiative and action which received their concrete expression in the industrial enterprise that he established and continued to cultivate throughout his life. Concurrently, he possessed an intense spiritual wealth as well as an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and wisdom from the rich sources of the Jewish heritage. He was an active participant in various study groups and conferences devoted to Jewish Studies, especially in the field of biblical research, an avid member of the Israeli Society for Biblical Research as well as the World Jewish Society for the Study of Bible.

Moshe Dorf will be remembered by friends and relations for his congeniality and amiability, his unstinted devotion to his family, and his munificent philanthropy to numerous cultural and charitable institutions in the State of Israel.

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EXPLANATIONS OF SOME DIFFICULT PASSAGES IN GENESIS RABBA

by Moshe Assis

This article deals with novel interpretations of various words which elucidate three different passages in Genesis Rabba (henceforth: GR).

1) GR 16:3, Theodor-Albeck, pp. 145–6: פרת שמפריד והולך עד שכלה במגריפה.

The word מגריפה has been understood to mean “spade.” After analyzing the difficulties of this interpretation, the author suggests that here מגריפה denotes one of the musical instruments used in the Second Temple, mentioned, *inter alia*, in m. Tamid 3:8. Accordingly, the reading should be: כמגריפה (with a כ”ף), and this is indeed the reading found in the Oxford manuscripts of GR. The sentence should thus be taken to mean: *Perat* (= the Euphrates) is so called because it continues its flow, while branching off into channels until it finally terminates — much like the musical sounds of the *magrefa*.

2) GR 71:7, pp. 948: טיטריון.

This word has been subjected to a wide variety of interpretations. The author suggests to emend it to: טוטריון = τὸ ἄθρονον meaning domestic animals, namely lambs.

3) GR 91:11, p. 1135: מזמרין.

The sentence has been explained in the passive voice: things about which people sing in the world. The author suggests that it be understood in the active voice, namely, things “which sing” in the world, which denotes, in popular expression, an expensive fruit or plant.

GENESIS RABBA MS VATICAN 60 AND ITS PARALLELS

by Menahem Kahana

J. Theodor and Ch. Albeck, the editors of the critical edition of Genesis Rabba (henceforth: GR), did not utilize MS Vatican 60 in their critical apparatus, and seem to have been unaware of it. This manuscript was discovered anew by U. Cassuto, and M. Sokoloff systematically analyzed it in his dissertation: *The Geniza Fragments of Genesis Rabba and Ms. Vat. Ebr. 60 of Genesis Rabba*. Sokoloff examined the linguistic quality of MS Vatican 60 and also described some characteristic aspects of its textual version. The important discovery of Sokoloff relates to some 45 passages deriving from the first half of the Vatican manuscript. He showed that these versions are similar to the parallels found in various midrashic works (Lev. Rabba, Pesiqta de Rav Kahana, The Midrash on the Ten Commandments in Pesiqta Rabbati, Qohelet Rabba, Canticles Rabba and Midrash Samuel). On the basis of this data, Sokoloff assumed that the first part of MS Vatican 60 represents an additional ancient recension of GR that was available to the editors of the parallels in the above-mentioned midrashic works.

In the present article, the author reopens the discussion concerning the nature of MS Vatican 60. The conclusion advanced herein is that MS Vatican 60 does not represent another ancient recension of GR; it is actually a secondary revision based on the parallel midrashic texts. This revision was performed by later-day sages and scribes who most likely alluded to this aspect of their activity in the colophon at the end of the manuscript. As proof positive for this conclusion the author focuses on certain errors and duplications in MS Vatican 60, which undoubtedly emanate from the process of emendating the original text of GR according to its midrashic parallels. In other cases, it is shown that the version found in the Vatican manuscript is more suitable to the parallels than to GR, both in contents and literary style.

The phenomenon discussed above, viz. the emendation of GR based on parallels in midrashic literature, is reflected in other manuscripts as well, primarily MS London Add. 27169. In this manuscript, parallel versions

were copied on the margins and some of them even penetrated into the main text. Nevertheless, these are usually accompanied by explicit titles indicating their original source.

An important conclusion arising from the present study is that all the versions of GR represent one basic tradition. This original tradition was altered during the course of time owing to the influence of parallel midrashic texts.

THE REDACTION OF GENESIS RABBA AND LEVITICUS RABBA

by Ofra Meir

The expositional midrash Genesis Rabba (=GR) contains some 90 texts which have parallels in the homiletical midrash Leviticus Rabba (=LR). Twenty-seven of these parallel texts (representing 8% of LR) are structural compositions which contain at least three literary units. Ten are also found in the Palestinian Talmud (=PT). Since the redaction of PT preceded the redaction of the above-mentioned midrashim, one may assume that these ten texts are indispensable for understanding the redaction of GR and LR.

The present study of the parallel texts is designed to compare the modes of redaction in GR and LR. This comparison is based on the conclusions of Josef Heinemann in his article: "The Art of Composition in Leviticus Rabba" (1971). Accordingly, this comparison aims to examine three questions: (1) Does the evidence of LR support Heinemann's claim that the redactor of this midrash drew his material from a variety of sermons originally delivered orally in the synagogue? (2) To what extent was the redactor involved in formulating the traditions, or did he only arrange and organize them? (3) Does the difference between the redactional modes (expositional vis-à-vis homiletical) of the two works imply that the material in GR is just a hodgepodge of disjointed aggadot, devoid of any shape or form as claimed by Heinemann?

An analysis of the parallel texts leads to the following conclusions: (1) The editor of LR drew at least part of his material from earlier redacted sources — PT and GR — and not from oral traditions. Much like the editor of GR, the editor of LR was involved in formulating and shaping the material at his disposal. (2) Without ignoring the difference between redactional modes of the two different types of midrash (expositional and homiletical), one can conclude that the art of composition is not limited to the homiletical midrash, and that it is not the innovation of the editor of LR, who, however, clearly deserves credit for organizing the material according to 37 selected biblical texts.

It should be stressed that three of the characteristics which, according to the thesis advanced by Heinemann, bear the “imprint of the personality and work” of the editor of LR are shown to have already been employed by the earlier editor of GR. He was the first to divide his midrash into chapters (*parashiyyot*), to use proems at the beginning of these chapters, and, more significantly, to shape traditions drawn from different sources and contexts into a novel literary unity.

NUMBERS RABBA: ITS DATE, LOCATION AND CIRCULATION

by Hananel Mack

Midrash Numbers Rabba (henceforth: NR) is composed of two disparate segments: part II which encompasses the overwhelming majority of the biblical text dealt with in this midrash — Num. 8–36 — is actually, with minor differences, midrash Tanḥuma to these very same chapters, while part I, which relates to the first two *parashiyyot* of Numbers (= Num. 1–7) only, comprises 73% of NR. Part I contains almost all of the contents of Tanḥuma Bemidbar and Naso, although this material has been virtually assimilated into numerous additional homilies of a diversified nature from various sources. Most of the midrashic material derives from various works of talmudic-midrashic literature, although parts of the non-extant midrash of R. Moses ha-Darshan are also evident.

Very little is known concerning the biography of R. Moses ha-Darshan (henceforth: RMH) who lived in Narbonne (and Toulouse?) in Southern France (Provence) during the eleventh century. He composed a midrash on the Pentateuch and possibly on some additional biblical books, but these are no longer extant. Information concerning his writings and their contents is mainly available from the commentary of Rashi to the Pentateuch and to a lesser extent from other Jewish writings, most of them dating from later periods. Some excerpts from the writings of RMH are also quoted in various Christian works which postdate Rashi. The contribution of RMH to NR, especially to part I, is also unclear. Some scholars have raised the theory that R. Moses was the editor of this midrash, but this supposition is untenable. It is reasonable to assume that the editor of NR Part I was familiar with the midrash of RMH and copied complete units from it while adapting other segments according to the needs of NR. It is possible that traces of other Provençal compositions of the medieval period are also extant in NR.

On the basis of the extensive use of both Talmuds by the editor of NR, especially in the sections attributed to RMH, and the limited usage of additional post-talmudic tracts, it is possible to conclude with some caution that NR was composed after the second half of the eleventh century. Indeed, this midrash was found to contain various allusions to the martyrdom of German Jewry during the First Crusade (1096). On the other hand, the *terminus ad quem* of NR should not be fixed much beyond that date since the earliest evidence of complete copies of NR already dates from the beginning of the thirteenth century, and those who quote from this midrash relate to it as if it were an ancient rabbinic composition. It may thus be assumed that the redaction of NR ended at least several decades earlier, and its initial circulation was no later than the middle of the twelfth century. During that period — and perhaps one generation earlier — both parts of the midrash were integrated into a single entity, although this subject needs additional clarification.

Among the first known authorities to make use of NR, mention should be made of R. Judah b. Yaqar, the mentor of R. Moses b. Naḥman and the author of a commentary on the prayer book, and the Kabbalists R. Ezra and R. Azriel of Gerona. All of the above flourished in Catalonia, located in north-eastern Spain, at the beginning of the thirteenth century. R.

Judah b. Yaqar lived previously in France, and it is quite possible that he was of Ashkenazic origin. There are signs that the above-mentioned commentary was already composed close to 1204, and it is logical to assume that R. Judah b. Yaqar was still alive in 1223.

A survey of available information concerning the circulation of NR in various Jewish communities indicates that during the thirteenth century knowledge of this midrash was strictly limited to two adjacent areas: Catalonia and Provence. The clear-cut testimonia stemming from Provence indicate that the work was received there somewhat later than in Catalonia. NR was gradually disseminated in other areas of Spain and later reached other locations, especially countries bordering on the Mediterranean. Even at the beginning of the fifteenth century, it is most difficult to find traces of NR outside this perimeter. Only towards the second half of the fifteenth century, which witnessed the waves of migration of Ashkenazic Jewry and the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, and especially after the *editio princeps* of Midrash Rabba to the Pentateuch (1512), was NR widely circulated among other Jewish communities.

Taken all together, the widespread use of the teachings of RMH, the prevalence of this midrash in Provence at a relatively early period and the fact that Provence served as a center for midrashic teaching and mystical investigation, numerical calculations (*gematriot*), etc. — subjects amply represented in NR — enable the almost certain conclusion that Provence served as the cradle of NR.

NEW LIGHT ON THE SPANISH RECENSION
OF DEUTERONOMY RABBA
[1] THE EVOLUTION OF ED. LIEBERMAN

by M.B. Lerner

Scholars in the nineteenth century were aware of an alternate recension of the printed version of midrash Deuteronomy Rabba (henceforth: DRP) which led to the publications of this midrash by R. N. N. Rabinovicz (1868) and S. Buber (1885) based on MS Munich 229 (henceforth: DRL).

The complete version of this recension was edited and published by S. Lieberman (1940) in a superb edition based on MS Oxford 147, which due to World War II, was the only complete manuscript available in Jerusalem at the time.

In the present article, the author reviews all identified materials bearing on the contents and chronological developments of DRL: manuscripts, citations by early authorities and collectanea, including one non-Jewish source. On the basis of these materials, an attempt is made to reconstruct the various stages of development of DRL during a period of approximately 400 years.

It appears that a fragmentary copy of DRP reached Spain at the beginning of the thirteenth century. Scholarly scribes endeavored to complete the missing portions, apparently by including various passages from an unknown midrash to Deut. which they added to the final weekly portion (נצבים) of the fragmentary copy.

Concomitantly, or soon afterwards, the opening portion (דברים) was appended from the same (or from some other) unknown midrash. This stage is evinced by MS Munich 229 and by citations in Yalqut ha-Makhiri to the Prophets and the Hagiographia. It is also quite possible that the commentaries of R. Moses b. Nahman and R. Baḥya b. Asher reflect this stage of the midrash, whose *terminus ad quem* should be fixed ca. 1300. During the first half of the fourteenth century, the fragmentary midrash was expanded to include the second weekly portion of Deut. (ואתחנן), as well as an additional midrash to the first few passages of עקב, which most likely derived from the same source. This development is evident in the citations of R. Jacob b. Ḥananel Siqily in his (unpublished) Yalqut Talmud Torah to Deut. It is also postulated that a parallel endeavor to fill in the missing portions of DRL (MS Munich) took place on Italian soil. In this recension, apparently evinced by MS Roma-Angelica 61, the three missing portions (וזאת הברכה, האזינו, ואתחנן) were copied from the regular edition of midrash Tanḥuma. It is estimated that the two final portions of the Italian recension were soon appended to the incomplete Spanish version.

At a later stage, a short midrash representing the sub-portion of וילך, taken from an unknown version of Tanḥuma, was also introduced into the Spanish recension. This stage is reflected in a manuscript formerly in the

possession of Abraham Epstein which disappeared during the course of World War II.

The final development in this ongoing process of the evolution of DRL was the insertion of *Tanḥuma* ואתחנן, an addition apparently deriving from the Italian recension. Clear evidence for this interpolation is offered by ed. Lieberman. An inverted development can be inferred from the commentary of R. Vidal Zarphati to Midrash Deut. Rabba (*Imre Yosher*). The manuscript utilized by R. Vidal was composed of DRL with additions from the printed Ashkenazic version of DRP.

It is thus quite evident that DRL is a hybrid midrash that developed in Spain during the 13th–16th centuries. Its sources are heterogeneous and not all of them are extant. These include: (1) the Ashkenazic version DRP (נצבים-עקב). (2) *Tanḥuma* (ואתחנן, האזינו, וזאת הברכה). (3) *Yelamdenu* (? (דברים, ואתחנן, עקב). (4) An unknown version of *Tanḥuma* (וילך).

Appendix I is a tabular summary of all available data from manuscripts and commentaries concerning the composition and contents of DRL. Appendix II summarizes in graphic form the various developments discussed in the article.

“THERE WERE NO HAPPIER DAYS FOR ISRAEL
THAN THE FIFTEENTH OF AV AND THE DAY OF ATONEMENT”
ON THE FINAL MISHNA OF TRACTATE TA’ANIT
AND ITS TRANSMISSION

by Paul Mandel

Ta’anit 4:8 records the particularly joyous nature of the 15th of Av and the Day of Atonement as described by Rabban Simeon b. Gamaliel (henceforth: RaShbaG): “the youths of Jerusalem would go out in borrowed white garments . . . and the maidens of Jerusalem would go out and dance in the vineyards” (section A). This is followed by a description of what apparently went on at these dances, viz. the maidens would invite the lads

to choose their spouses (Section B). The mishna concludes with a verse from Cant. 3:11 midrashically expounded as a reference to the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai and the rebuilding of the Temple (Section C). The inter-relationship of these sections has been discussed by scholars. While it seems natural to read Section B in the context of the dances described in Section A, thus providing the reason for the joyful aspect of the 15th of Av (as indeed assumed by most scholars), such behavior is most surprising in the context of the Day of Atonement. On the other hand, it is unclear whether the biblical verse in Section C is to be understood literally as an allusion to the dances, or is merely cited in an associative context; in either case, its relation to Sections A and B is strained at best.

An analysis of the manuscript traditions of the mishna and of the relevant talmudic *sugyot* demonstrates that, while all three sections are intact in the Palestinian textual tradition of the mishna, early and authoritative Babylonian manuscripts (containing both Mishna and Talmud) do not include sections B or C as part of the Mishna. A baraita in BT which allegedly refers to Section B should be seen as a separate, parallel version derived from the tradition of PT on this mishna. It is thus posited that these sections were appended to the original statement of RaShbaG in a later (Palestinian) elaboration of the mishna. Sections B (in various forms) and C make their appearance in BT manuscripts only gradually, attesting to the fact that originally they were not cited there as mishna, but were integrated as *baraitot* into the talmudic *sugya*. The extraneous character of these sections is also evident in the transmission history of an introductory poem to Lamentations 1:1 (Lamentations Rabba, *petiḥa* 33), which quotes this mishna and the relevant *sugya* of PT. In a secondary transmission of the midrash, one that is clearly influenced by the parallel Babylonian *sugya*, sections B and C appear in the context of that *sugya*, but are not directly connected to Section A.

The statement of RaShbaG which is thus coterminous with Section A only, may now be interpreted according to its simple meaning. The dances of the maidens are not the *raison d'être* for the jubilant nature of these days, but rather — along with the white garments of the young men — tangible signs of a popular celebration, devoid of any specific romantic overtones, and the *result* of these joyous celebrations. The reasons for such ecstatic joy on these days were well-known to the audience of

RaShbaG: the divine service of the Day of Atonement performed by the High Priest in the Temple marked the atonement of all sins, while the 15th of Av witnessed the popular festival of the Wood Offering, well-attested in early sources as the unique celebration of that day. These two festivals were thus intimately connected with the Temple in Jerusalem and expressed the love and admiration of the masses for the Temple service. It is thus postulated that a recollection of these joyous celebrations was designed to serve as a fitting conclusion to the previous *mishnayot* of tractate Ta'anit, which highlight days of fasting commemorating the destruction of the Temple. Section B should thus be seen as a late addition of no real historical value, while the midrashic exposition of Section C, emphasizing joy over the re-consecration of the Temple, is an appropriate midrashic response to the message of RaShbaG.

THE MANIPULATION OF SOURCES BY THE EDITOR(S?) OF QOHELET RABBA

by Menachem Hirshman

An analysis of midrash Qohelet Rabba (henceforth: QR) 3:2 yields the following conclusions:

1. As already noted by J. Theodor, QR draws heavily on early Palestinian sources. In this specific case, the midrash is dependent on PT, Lev. Rabba, and Tosefta.

2. Since textual transmission evinces only one basic family of manuscripts for QR, possible influences of the Babylonian Talmud are more difficult to gauge (comparison is made with one manuscript family of Lev. Rabba which evinces more influence of BT than others). Nevertheless, it is argued that there is no basis for the claim of a wholesale assimilation of BT in QR, as found in late midrashim. In one of the footnotes, the author shows that some supposed proofs for the influence of BT on QR are not conclusive.

3. The central point of this article is the highlighting of the editor's (or editors') compositional techniques. QR artistically arranges assorted

material under exegetical comments, turning these comments into titles for “entries” on various subjects. In the excerpt dealt with herein the subject is “life and death.” In a separate article, the author has termed this editorial style an “encyclopedic” tendency.

THE DIVISION OF ESTHER RABBA INTO *PARASHIYYOT*

by Joseph Tabory

The standard printed editions of Esther Rabba (henceforth: ER) are divided into ten sections (*parashiyyot*), which coincide with the number of chapters in the biblical Book of Esther. Nevertheless, there is a large discrepancy between the text dealt with in each section of the midrash and the equivalently numbered chapter of Esther: the first six sections of ER treat only the first two chapters of Esther, while the final four sections parallel the concluding eight chapters. A statistical analysis of the relationship between the midrash and the biblical Book of Esther supports the claim of scholars that ER is actually a combination of two midrashim: the final four sections derive from a secondary midrash which lacks internal division.

An analysis of the basic midrash (ER 1–6) based on its proems, shows that in general the beginning of each section coincides with the beginning of a pericope of Esther according to the massoretic division of the biblical book. The only exception to this rule is the second section of the midrash, which begins with a single proem introducing Esther 1:4. It is important to note that this passage is not found in the internal division of the massoretic text. An analysis of this proem shows that its structure is atypical to the other proems. The author attempts to show that this proem has undergone a complex transmission and that it is actually based on a homily which has parallels in midrashic texts relating to Exodus. The structure of this homily which bears resemblance to a proem was mistakenly considered to be just that, and so copyists viewed it as the beginning of a chapter.

It is thus concluded that the basic midrash on Esther actually consists of five *parashiyyot* which coincide with the traditional internal division of the Book of Esther in the massoretic text.

THE ROYAL ERA (ἸΠΑΤΕΙΑ) IN LEGAL DOCUMENTS
AND IN THE MIDRASH
LITERARY EXPRESSIONS OF ANCIENT REALITY

by Mordechai A. Friedman

I. In antiquity, legal documents were commonly dated according to the ὑπατεία (= the consulship of Rome). Examples of such dating appear in Greek and Aramaic papyri from the early second century C.E. found in the Judaeian Desert and others written during the Byzantine period in Egypt, e.g., the recently discovered early fifth-century Jewish marriage contract from Antinoopolis.

II. Dating the consular year was so widespread in Eretz Israel that the technical Hebraized term אִיפְטִיָּה came to refer to dating based on any royally promulgated era. It appears exclusively in this sense in talmudic sources.

III. Various midrashim reflect the practice, known from classical sources, of declaring a new era in order to commemorate an event of national significance.

IV. An early midrash associates the date formula in Esther 2:16 with the אִיפְטִיָּה of the *ketubba*. This midrash stresses that Esther was the only woman to be granted a marriage contract by King Ahasuerus who thus expressed his admiration for her; his other wives were married and divorced without any deed.

V. This midrashic theme seems to have undergone various literary adaptations in *Pesiqta de Rav Kahana* and in later compilations, where it became associated with Ex. 12:2: God singled out Israel from among all the nations, to receive the calculations of the lunar calendar. (Later

versions expanded this to include the intercalation of months and [the reckoning of] the Sabbath day.)

VI. In a secondary literary adaptation, appearing in the Tanḥuma genre, the homilist associated the above-mentioned midrashic theme with the dating formula in Nu. 1:1(-2).

VII. The midrashic comment that less-favored wives did not receive marriage deeds or bills of divorce (IV) seems to reflect the realities of the Greek papyri and other classical sources: Marriage deeds were written for upper-class women only. Roman law did not require bills of divorce until 439 C.E.; presumably, before that date their issuance depended on social status.

VIII. The Tanḥuma adaptation of the midrash on Esther 2:16 cites a dating formula of the *ketubba* commencing with the Sabbatical cycle followed by smaller units of time in descending order. The only extant document containing such a formula is the marriage contract from Antinoopolis (417 or 418 C.E.). Palestinian-type marriage contracts from the tenth and eleventh centuries found in the Geniza contain only vestiges of this formula. The Tanḥuma midrashim were presumably edited in the ninth or tenth century, but it may be demonstrated that they contain older materials as well.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TARGUM PSEUDO JONATHAN AND MIDRASH PIRQE DE-RABBI ELIEZER

by Avigdor Shinan

This article is devoted to an examination of the various thematic relationships between Targum Ps. Jonathan, an Aramaic targum to the Pentateuch, and Pirque de-Rabbi Eliezer, a unique midrashic compilation whose aim is to retell the history of biblical times from the Creation onward, according to the explanations and expansions of rabbinic traditions. Comparative reading of these texts — which are believed to originate in

the same period (the 7th or 8th century) — reveals numerous similarities and many cases in which both convey unique aggadic traditions unparalleled in other ancient sources.

The article surveys the various theories offered by modern scholarship from the time of Leopold Zunz through the present period, regarding the relationship between the two texts, and subjects them to a critical analysis in connection with specific parallels, e.g., the targum to Genesis 13:14 and chapter 14 in the midrash (pp. 33b–34a in the edition of R. David Luria). Assuming that both texts are not dependent upon a third unknown source, one must determine whether the targum is dependent on the midrash (as suggested by most scholars) or vice versa. A systematic analysis proves the first assumption to be much more convincing.

The author confirms this assumption by focusing on examples in which the targum cannot be understood without knowledge of the midrashic tradition which it has adopted (e.g., the targum to Genesis 18:21 and chapter 25 of the midrash [pp. 68a–b]). The conjecture that the midrash is trying to explain and expand an obscure targumic tradition is less convincing than the assumption that the meturgeman of Ps. Jonathan relies on a well-known aggadic tradition which, due to the limitations of the targumic medium, could be alluded to only briefly.

MESSIANISM IN PIRQE DE-RABBI ELIEZER APOCALYPSE AND MIDRASH

by Jacob Elbaum

Messianism is a prominent theme which is given comprehensive treatment in *Pirqe de-Rabbi Eliezer* (henceforth: PdRE), a midrash of comparatively late composition. The inclusive picture of the End of Days attempted by the author of PdRE — in the opinion of the present writer, the work clearly has an author, rather than only a redactor — and the sense he projects of its imminence indicate a phenomenological affinity to the genre of apocalyptic literature known as מדרשי גאולה (midrashim of

redemption). To be sure, he does not neglect the legacy of classical midrash, and the attempt to reshape established midrashic traditions in the wake of a new and changing reality, which was described by contemporary writers as bearing the signs of redemption, gives rise to a palpable tension.

Like other late midrashim, this work tries to synthesize different approaches derived from ancient tradition. Yet the author of PdRE pursues his own objectives, according to his own approach and outlook, wherever he is unable to achieve such a synthesis. Evidence for this is found in his treatment of many points related to the theme of messianism.

Special attention is devoted to the author's attempts to deal with the midrashic scenario based on the Book of Daniel, viz. Israel is to be ruled by "four kingdoms," in the face of the fact that in his own day, it was apparently ruled by a fifth kingdom: Ishmael. His solution of this problem is characterized by two methodological approaches: (a) emending the homily from Gen. Rabba 44:18 (on Gen. 16:9) by substituting Ishmael for Babylon in his "version" of the enumeration of the four kingdoms; and (b) embellishing the homily from Gen. Rabba 44:17 (on Gen. 16:12) by adding Ishmael to the familiar scheme, though taking care not to refer to him as a "kingdom." All this occurs in chapter 28 of PdRE in a passage not found in the censored edition of R. David Luria. One way or the other, the author sees the appearance of Ishmael on the stage of history as proof of the imminence of redemption. The suffering and tortures endured by Israel at the hands of the Ishmaelites are a prelude to this redemption, a thesis mainly advanced in chapter 30 (also excluded from the Luria edition).

A careful examination of the sources reveals that the events referred to in PdRE are similar to those described in the *מדרשי גאולה*. It may therefore be concluded that there is a close connection between the redemption midrashim and PdRE not only on a general scale but also in regard to various particulars. To be sure, in keeping with true midrashic fashion, the author of PdRE, unlike the authors of the *מדרשי גאולה*, does not allude to concrete historical personages. It seems that he deliberately blurred the particulars, so as to establish a general picture not contingent on actual events, even though the latter echo clearly from his words. In his attempt to discern the reality behind PdRE the present writer confirms the

observation of B. Lewis on its similarity to various descriptions in נסתרות רשב"י (The Mysteries of R. Shimeon bar Yoḥai), מדרש עשרת המלכים (The Midrash of the Ten Kings) and תפילת רשב"י (The Prayer of R. Shimeon bar Yoḥai).

However, it should be stressed that such identifications stand in direct contradiction to the policy of the author of PdRE himself.

The outstanding feature of PdRE is its effort, on the one hand, to shape problematic midrashic models which arose due to contemporary events and to anchor them anew in Scripture; and, on the other hand, to provide a scriptural basis for newly established concepts. The underlying thesis is that everything is to be found in holy writ, including the course of history from its beginning through the present and the future as well. Clear examples of this approach are evident from other aspects of redemption in PdRE, a subject discussed in great detail in many additional contexts throughout this midrashic work.

תקצירים באנגלית