

*TE'UDA*

XXIV

NEW FACES AND DIRECTIONS  
IN CONTEMPORARY JEWISH STUDIES



***TE'UDA***

THE CHAIM ROSENBERG SCHOOL  
OF JEWISH STUDIES RESEARCH SERIES

XXIV

NEW FACES AND DIRECTIONS  
IN CONTEMPORARY JEWISH STUDIES

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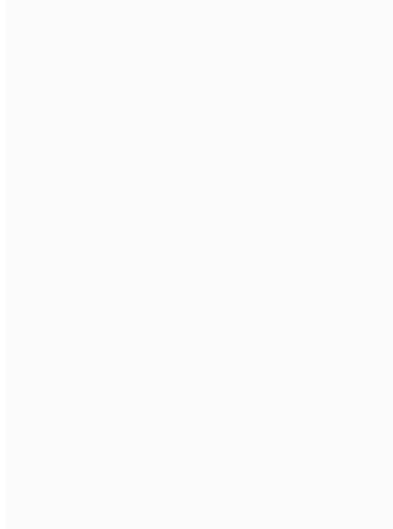
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**Moshe Dorf**

(June 2, 1907 – October 3, 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, and 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 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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## Editor's Introduction

The 24<sup>th</sup> volume of *Te'uda* joins his 23 older brothers. As stated in its title, the volume introduces new as well as known faces of Jewish Studies' scholars, and displays a variety of methodologies and attitudes for coping with issues concerning Jewish and Israeli culture, spirit, and reality. The volume opens with the book of Job, passes through historical times to the Talmud, and goes through grammatical and historical studies concerning Jews in medieval times under the influence of the Arabs, through early enlightenment thinkers and linguists. It arrives in its last section to our time, to works and ideas of Herzl and Bialik in times of the emergence of Zionism. The last chapters deal with literary works of poets such as Alterman and Ratosh, with propaganda films and with popular translations in early statehood.

There is quite a distance between the book of Job, medieval grammarians, and immigrant women in early Israeli propaganda films and peripheral translated literature of the fifties. However, they all expose the many faces and the wide range of subjects of Modern Jewish Studies - the constant effort to find meaning in the old and the new, in life and language, in words, pictures, ideas and texts.

I wish to thank the authors for their contributions, and to Mrs. Esther Stone and the Dorf foundation for their support in publishing this volume. I send thanks to the present head of Tel Aviv Rosenberg School of Jewish Studies, Dr. Chaim E. Cohen, who has also contributed to this volume, and to the former head of the school, Professor Yaron Zur. The devoted secretary of the Rosenberg school, Ms. Sara Vered, and the talented language editor, Ms. Aviva Feldman, helped bringing this volume to life.

Tamar Sovran

Tel Aviv, November 2011

# ABSTRACTS

**Nechamit Peri**

## **Conceptual Metaphors in the Book of Job**

Several recent studies and interpretations of the Book of Job have been written from a synchronic point of view that emphasizes the idea of a reciprocal relation between Job and his friends. The current study shares this view and provides further confirmation through linguistic, semantic as well as pragmatic methods. The paper analyses conceptual infrastructure metaphors in the Book of Job in an effort to reveal their function in forming an implicit dialogue between Job and his friends.

Conceptual metaphors in the text hint at an implicit conversational process which on a surface level appears to be a dialogue at cross purposes. The main question is to what extent Job uses, elaborates and changes metaphorical patterns that appear in his friends' speeches in an effort to convince them or reject their claims, and to what extent they do the same when "answering" him. The analysis of these metaphors is based primarily on contemporary cognitive semantic theories, in particular Mark Johnson and George Lakoff's (1980, 1993) conceptual metaphor theory. Contrary to traditional theories that have treated metaphors as mere literary ornaments, they consider metaphors to be a crucial cognitive mechanism by which language shapes the mind's understanding of the world. I examine several metaphors such as "anger is an enemy", "suffering is too heavy a load to bear", "anger is the result of enormous suffering", "God is an enemy", "Friendship is like water of fountains and rivers," etc. I show how some of these conceptual metaphorical patterns create implicit connections between the speeches of Job and his friends and reveal an implicit argumentative dialogue between them.

**Ronit Shoshany**

**People Suspected of Violating the Sabbatical Laws (*Bavli Sanhedrin 26a*): A Study of the Story and the Attitude of the Babylonian Talmud to *Resh Lakish***

This paper presents a close reading of the story of *Resh Lakish* and people suspected of violating the agricultural Sabbatical laws (*Bavli Sanhedrin 26a*). I argue that the story denounces *Resh Lakish* for not judging the suspected wrongdoers charitably. I then discuss additional stories with a negative attitude toward *Resh Lakish* or to *R. Yohanan*. In the final part of the paper I suggest why such critical stories were written. I argue that both *Resh Lakish* and *R. Yohanan* had a positive attitude toward Babylonian immigrants, and that the negative stories cannot be explained by the claim that they were hostile to them. Rather, these stories directed against the two leading *Amoraim* of *Eretz-Israel* were designed to undermine the status of the Jerusalem Talmud and to strengthen the status of the Babylonian Talmud.

**Ishay Rozen-Zvi**

**Secularizing the Talmud**

This short essay reflects on modern Jewish studies from a specific angle: the ways in which it secularizes its object, namely classic Jewish texts. Using secularization in the Weberian sense of disenchantment with the world, this essay presents the various tools with which Jewish studies "translate" ancient texts into modern contexts. Taking the Talmud as its case study, it concentrates on two such methods: assimilation and nationalism. These two topics were examined by Gershon Sholem in his reflections on Jewish studies, who noted that: "After one bias: that of assimilation came yet another one: that of national bragging". However, unlike Sholem who saw these two trends as expression of a lack of scholarship, I see them as the organizing principles of Jewish studies that continue to exist in various forms, even today.

**Raaya Hazon**

### **The Grammatical Term *Mesukan***

The term *mesukan* (מסוכן) appears in the book of Responses to Saadia Gaon, written by Adoniyya at the end of the tenth century. The term occurs in the responses that deal with 'weak' or irregular Hebrew roots, i.e. roots containing one of the consonants h, w, y, which tend to be deleted in several derived verbs and nouns derived from such roots. The meaning of the term is 'weak' (חלש), which is a translation from the Arabic *sākin*, a term often used by medieval grammarians starting with Judah Hayyuj, the founder of the tri-consonant root theory. The term thus means a 'weak' root – a root with a 'weak' consonant. The origin of the term is not clear. In this paper I argue that מסוכן is Adoniyya's innovation, and like other inventions of his, it is a loan translation relying on sound similarity to the Arabic adjective *sākin* ("weak").

**Elinoar Bareket**

### **The Social Status of the Jews in Fatimid Egypt during the 11<sup>th</sup> Century according to their First Names**

An examination of roughly 3000 first names taken from about 1000 Geniza documents such as letters and court bills serves to characterize Jewish society in Fatimid Egypt during the 11<sup>th</sup> century, and its social status within the general population. Most of the people whose names are mentioned in these documents are also referred to using the names of their fathers, and often the names of their grandfathers. Thus this analysis provides a glimpse not of only one generation but rather the family traditions of several generations.

The most common names are Biblical names, but in the form used in the Koran. Thus Jewish tradition did not determine the way these names were chosen or the fact they were so commonly used. This multi-usage of Biblical names should not be attributed to a wish to return to the origins of history, but rather to the influence of the Arab culture in

which the Jews lived. A similar phenomenon was also observed in both Eastern and Western Christian countries, where Jews adopted names from the society in which they lived, apart from names of typical Christian saints, just as the Jews in Arab countries did not use classical Arab names such as Mohammad.

It is interesting to compare the name-giving patterns that the Jews adopted for themselves in a Muslim culture to those adopted by Christians who converted to Islam in the Middle East. A systematic review of their name-giving patterns shows that they gave their children specific names from two main categories: classic Muslim names with religious connotations, such as Mohammad, and Biblical names as they are mentioned in the Koran, such as Ibrahim. This pattern was especially common in the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries, and it parallels trends among the Jews as shown in the Geniza documents. The difference is that the Jews did not use this name-giving system to become Muslims, but rather as an attempt to become integrated, at least partially, in the daily life of the society in which they lived. Even though the Jews could not mesh entirely into Muslim society, analysis of their first names reflects their attempts in this direction.

**Chaim E. Cohen**

### **The Grammatical Notes in Solomon Geiger's *Divre Qehillot***

Solomon Zalman Geiger's major work, *Divre Qehillot* (1862), documents in painstaking detail the customs of the Frankfurt am Main community and is replete with both extensive and abbreviated grammatical comments, which are intended to record the correct version of the liturgy as it was performed in Frankfurt for many years. These comments help infer the extent to which the Frankfurt community preserved a tradition of good reading of many forms of the liturgy that had been 'corrected' by Ashkenazi grammarians in the three hundred years that preceded Geiger.

The present study presents a few of these forms in light of debates by both grammarians and halachic authorities. The forms discussed include *בְּצִיצִית/בְּצִיצִית* in the blessing recited when wrapping a prayer shawl; the form *עָשָׂנִי/עָשָׂנִי* in the *שלא עשני* (who hast not made me) the series of blessings; *דְּכָר/דְּכָר* in the phrase *תגיד ליעקב דבר חק ומשפט* and others. The study also discusses Geiger's animadversions to Wolf Heidenheim's emendations in his *siddur* and *maḥzorim* that began to appear in the early nineteenth century and influenced all subsequent publications of *siddurim*.

**Rivka Shemesh**

**"In the beginning I came to investigate and expound the definitions of nouns, particles, and verbs, which appear in the Holy Scriptures" – On the Semantic Approach of the Malbim in his Book *Ya'ir Or***

The biblical exegesis of the Malbim (Rabbi Meir Loeb b. Yehiel Michael, 1809–1879) is based upon three principles, the first two of which form the basis of his semantic approach: there is no repetition in different words in biblical text ('repetition of the same idea in different words'), and each word in a verse appears there according to the rules of the language. His approach led him to investigate the meanings of words and the differences between synonymous words.

In his book *Ya'ir Or* (1892) he deals with 662 synonymous nouns and verbs. This article is devoted to the sections of this book which deal with groups of verbs. Part 2 describes the basic components of these sections: the definition of the meaning of the verb, the common factor of the group of verbs, the differences between the verbs, and the exegesis of meanings and differences through quotations from the Bible, as well as the additional components of the sections. Section 3 of part 2 examines the way in which the verbs are differentiated by classification of their semantic differences into the following types: the nature of the

action indicated by the verb, the circumstances of the action, its recipient, its aim, its cause, its consequence, and the force of the action.

**Dalia Gavrieli Nuri and Nirit Topol**

**"You can't cross a chasm in two small jumps" - On the Absence of Reconciliation Processes in Herzl's *Altneuland***

Using contemporary reconciliation theories, this article attempts a critical analysis of Herzl's view on Jewish-Arab relationships as it appears in his utopian novel: *Altneuland* (1902). The main claim is that the harmonious Jewish-Arab relationships depicted in the novel were based on an unrealistic belief that national conflicts can be resolved in one step. It is shown that the lack of long-term peace and reconciliation processes and poor understanding of their importance is a repetitive 'missing link' in Zionist thought as well as in current Israeli policy including its diplomacy.

The contribution of the article is twofold: on the one hand, it seeks to shed light on a definitive document in the history of Zionism from a new perspective; on the other, it uses *Altneuland* to create a unique approach to examining trends in contemporary peace-making processes.

**Ziva Shamir**

**Mother Tongue and Father Tongue - Bialik as a Bilingual Poet**

Bialik's early literary career was marked by an antagonistic attitude towards Yiddish as a literary language. He devoted all his energy and talent to Hebrew, as advocated by Achad-Ha'am. Nevertheless, at the turn of the century, he composed several Yiddish poems, after Y. Ch. Ravnitsky, a devout Zionist, founded a new Yiddish magazine and was looking for new material. Both the editor and the poet knew that Achad Ha'am's influence was on the decline, due to Herzl's enormous popular

appeal, and decided to regain the support of the Yiddish speaking masses through Yiddish writings.

Bialik knew how to take advantage of the dual nature of the Yiddish as a national language using Hebrew letters and Hebrew terms, as well as an international language based on German morphology and syntax. Thus, Yiddish addressed the simple working classes and uneducated women, and simultaneously was aimed at intellectuals who were looking for modern, revolutionary innovations. In his Yiddish version of "In the City of Slaughter", Bialik knew how to capture both reading publics: he included sentimental motifs for the simple reader, together with allusions to classical and modern European literature for the intellectual reader. After the Czernowitz Conference, Bialik stopped writing Yiddish poems, since Yiddish had turned into an instrument in the hands of anti-Zionists circles to weaken the status of Hebrew and the status of Eretz Israel. His nursery rhyme "In the Vegetable Garden" may manifest his conflicts as a newcomer who has recently joined a new community, and lacks the linguistic skills of the experienced old timers. The last two stanzas of this poem, which contain a comic self-portrait of the old poet, are written in Ashkenazi pronunciation, representing Bialik's linguistic conflicts upon his late arrival to an old-new land.

**Tamar Sovran**

**"*Ve-Ay Li Lanu Lexulanu*" – A Semantic-poetic Journey  
between Sounds and Words**

This paper focuses on the sound L. It follows Hrushovski's (Harshav) inquiry into whether sounds have meaning and whether they are expressive as such. Hrushivski's paper is entitled "Do sounds have meanings" and explores the issue of sound patterns in poetry. Tzur examines what makes sound patterns expressive. He provides a complex answer that deals with the poetic mode of speech-perception, namely what the ear tells the mind, and how the mind interprets sounds especially in poetic contexts. Roman Jakobson described the early stages



of natural sound utterances in infants which gradually become meaningful, communicative and expressive. I discuss the sound L with its alleged softness and lulling effect. I point to its presence in folk songs and songs for and about children composed by Bialik in Hebrew and in Yiddish. The noticeable presence of this sound in the A. Lord Tennyson's famous poem "The Lady of Shalott" explains why listeners enjoy it so much. I deal with the etymology of the verb "to lull" and its Germanic origins in comforting and putting to sleep as seen in the English noun "lullaby". I examine Yiddish and Hebrew diminutive morphemes with the L sound, and follow their transition from the Yiddish *I li lu li* to the Hebrew acoustically close sounds of *Numi Numi* (sleep 2<sup>nd</sup> person feminine). I show that language is neither entirely arbitrary or conventional nor entirely biological and governed by neurons and perception but rather exhibits a harmonious compromise between these two poles: the sound L and its cognates M and N are consequent and periodical; namely, they are cyclical and hence create no hidden surprises in the listener. This helps account for their presence in lullabies and in soft and sweet contexts. Hebrew, through its close contacts with Yiddish, has inherited some of the Germanic features of this lulling L sound which coincide with its grammatical function as an element in the possessive pronouns – something related to being close and intimate. Creative poets such as Bialik, Alterman, and Lea Goldberg use the lulling quality directly and indirectly to evoke a sense of comfort, pleasure and innocence or at times their ironic parallels.

**Idit Einat-Nov**

**The Poetic Function and how it Operates in a Poem: A Close Reading of Two Poems by Yonatan Ratosh**

This paper discusses two poems by Yonatan Ratosh in light of Roman Jakobson's theory on the centrality of the poetic function (the projection of equivalence from the similarity axis to the continuity axis) in the language of poetry. The paper presents this theoretical distinction as a

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convenient starting point for interpreting a poetic text. The paper also examines the operation of the poetic function and its effects on the process of reading the text. I show how analogical patterns in poems create expectations and lead to surprises when these expectations are not fulfilled. The first Ratosh poem "*Met*" (dead) confronts the wailing women with beastly animals. This opposition is reversed when points of resemblance between them emerge toward the end of the poem. In the second poem "*Lex*"(go) the concept of "voice" or its absence is the leading motif. The initial silence of the beloved woman is echoed by negative terms in an ongoing process of deterioration and decay. It is emphasized by repeating the word *efes* (zero) and other words from the semantic field of despair and disorientation. The analysis points at comparisons and analogies as organizing principles of poems. They are shown to be the poet's tools for creating diversions and surprises geared to intensify the poetic effect.

**Orit Rozin**

### **Womanhood and Nation-Building: The Image of Mizrahi Immigrant Women in Israeli Propaganda Films during the Early Years of the State**

This paper studies representations of Mizrahi immigrant women in Israeli propaganda films produced in the late 1940s and early 1950s. A handful of these films concentrate on the role of Mizrahi women in immigrant society, with a particular focus on immigrant families. Analysis of these films shows that these women are presented as particularly suited to facilitating the unification of the nascent State. Previous studies have shown that while the motivation for producing these propaganda films was to construct and consolidate the social fabric of the nation, these same films concurrently created and reflected social dichotomies. These dichotomies expressed power relations and manifested social hierarchies demarcating veteran and immigrant Jews, especially Ashkenazi and Mizrahi Jews. While these studies discuss the

dark side of the Zionist project - namely, the colonial relations between European Jews and those who hailed from Moslem countries - I would like to spotlight the national aspect, the presentation of immigrants as those who build the country alongside the veteran population. In contrast to Mizrahi men and Ashkenazi women, I argue that Mizrahi women are portrayed in propaganda films as the ones best suited to bridge the social gaps and overcome the hardships of immigration, by drawing on their deep feminine wisdom and malleability. Although immigrant men often express their connection to Israel through Jewish religious rites, Mizrahi women embody Jewish identity through their sexuality and their vital physical force. Because they were married, this sexuality is perceived to be dignified rather than demeaning, and represents or symbolizes Jewish vitality, Jewish continuity and Jewish fate. Beyond the sentiments and motivation of a newborn nation is the crowning image of the great-mother archetype, with roots in the Middle East, which has a direct physical link to a common ancient past.

**Nitsa Ben-Ari**

### **Subversive Translators**

Following the sociological turn in translation studies that has turned the focus of interest to the person, the translator or translation agent (editor, publisher, hitherto considered “transparent”), the paper focuses on the thriving industry of cheap peripheral popular literature in the state's first decades. Recently the literary translator has become subject to semiotic investigation with special interest in the conditions, norms, beliefs, preferences that he or she have acquired and internalized from childhood, to the point of calling them their “personal” taste. With Bourdieu's "habitus" theory in mind, this paper examines the connection between the agents' political affiliation (extreme right and left wing) and their performance in the field. It sheds light on the role of three groups of political “dissidents” in the popular literature industry in Israel of the 1950's-1960's. The paper specifies the conditions that lead to the

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creation of a thriving industry of cheap popular literature in the periphery, and will try to determine why political dissidents found their place there, and to what extent ideological factors have determined their behavior in this field.