תוכן עניינים

מחקרים

ספרים וכתבי עת חדשים במדעי היהדות

חלק אנגלי

ABSTRACTS

AN EXISTENTIAL VIEW OF RETURN AND ALIENATION: EXEGETIC EXAMINATION OF THE BOOK OF RUTH

Maya Shemuelli

The terms "return" and "alienation" are rooted in existential discourse. "Return" and its derivatives are prevalent and widespread in the Bible, but only textual context can elucidate accurately its meaning and its signifieds. Within the spatial dimension, return signifies a tracking backwards; in the temporal dimension, it means a return to a previous, preferred state; both dimensions converge to an act of reconstruction and restoration. The tern "alienation" and its biblical denotations of "stranger" and "strange land" express a sense of otherness, foreignness, exclusion, and a distancing that the subject—single or a group—experiences from its surroundings. The term's meaning is firm—the hierarchy of feelings and the power it expresses vary as the subject and his reality vary.

The book of Ruth is a textual field that has been ploughed, interpreted, expounded over generations, and that yielded a harvest of rich research using diverse tools from various disciplines. A discourse of "return" is one of the book's encompassing philological and thematical leitmotifs. "Return" in the narrative is the platform for personal, particular occurrences. The return "home" of the book's heroines signifies a re-starting point that bears hope for a better future, based on a past memory of fullness in time and space. To a lesser extent, though no less powerfully, the book deals with alienation as a dominant presence against the background of return.

An existential viewpoint constructs this essay, considering the phases, meanings and orientation of "return" and "alienation" as terms that are inherent to human existence. I examine the following issues: the essence of "return" and its signifieds in various contexts in the Book of Ruth; the link between alienation and return; and the free-will dimension in realizing a course of return. I show that in the book of Ruth, populated by figures that appear in their concrete existence, a conscious and physical journey of return takes place, during which the wanderer undergoes transformation. Alongside this journey, or as a motivating factor, is the heroines' fixed yearning to overcome the sense of alienation in a reality of inexplicable, incomprehensible widowhood and bereavement.

THE MEDIEVAL HEBREW TRANSLATIONS OF EUCLID'S *ELEMENTS*

Ofer Elior

The paper presents an updated survey of the medieval Hebrew translations of Euclid's *Elements*: the translation ascribed to Rabbi Jacob, the translation by Moses Ibn Tibbon, the translation by Jacob Ben Makhir, and the anonymous translations found in MS Magliabechiano III 137 and in MS BnF héb. 1011. An introductory section briefly discusses the relevance of the Arabic and Latin transmissions of the *Elements* to the study of the Hebrew translations, and the challenges which these transmissions pose for understanding the sources of the Hebrew transmission.

DEHIYYA, HALIFA, AND IBBUR: SEFIROTIC NOTIONS OF METEMPSYCHOSIS IN EARLY KABBALISTIC LITERATURE AND SOME OF THEIR REVERBERATIONS

Judith Weiss

Gershom Scholem and his followers described the theme of Gilgul (metempsychosis) as a characteristic of early Kabbalistic literature, and identified it with the secret of Ibbur (impregnation), which is alluded to by various Kabbalists in that period. Refuting Scholem's assumption, Moshe Idel argued that Ibbur was erroneously understood by scholars as referring to metempsychosis; in fact, he claims, no existing evidence corroborates Scholem's hypothesis that early Kabbalists, active earlier or independently from Nachmanides, discussed the concept of metempsychosis. In light of this debate, I evoke here early Kabbalistic traditions that describe a certain sefirotic type of metempsychosis; I thereby show that such ideas were indeed extant among Kabbalists in that period. In the first part of the article, I discuss early

traditions describing this specific type of metempsychosis: two versions of a Provençal tradition, probably contemporaneous with Isaac the Blind; a tradition attributed to the Kabbalist Ben Belimah; and a short tradition attributed to Yehudah bar Yakkar. In the second part of the article, I show that these early traditions and similar ones still circulated in the early fourteenth century, as can be inferred from the writings of Joseph Ashkenazi, from Sefer HaTemunah, and from the Zohar.

ANGELS, DEMONS, AND WARLOCKS: THE MYTH OF THE SONS OF GOD AND THE DAUGHTERS OF MEN IN THE ZOHAR AS AN ETIOLOGY OF EVIL

Ayelet Walfish-Fraenkel

This article deals with an important myth that has not yet been thoroughly discussed in the study of the Zohar, namely, the myth of the sons of God and the daughters of men. Throughout the article I seek to understand the ways in which this myth has been presented and shaped in the Zoharic literature, and to show that there is a split in the mythical story into two different plots. Each of them has its own conceptual and theosophical context which revolves around a different major sin: one is the sin of witchcraft, and the other the sin of the desecration of the covenant, represented in this myth mainly through its result—the birth of demons. Witchcraft and the birth of demons also embody in the Zoharic literature the two most important sources of the Sitra Achra (the "Other Side," give a half-sentence definition linking with evil), which is one of the focal points of the Zohar. The connection between the myth and these two sins exemplifies the interface between mythical and ethical space, namely, the effects of myth on the human world and the sin that results from it. This interface is intrinsic to the Zoharic literature and expresses a complex and unique conception of the theory of evil and how to grapple with it.

Aside from the appearance of these two sins in the myth of the fallen angels in the Zohar, they are found in one more source—the Ethiopic book of Enoch,

which is most responsible for the centrality of this myth in many ancient cultures. Besides the mention of these two sins in both works, I have pointed to other connections between them, both philological and phenomenological. In doing so, I have shown that the Zoharic myth of the sons of God and the daughters of man is one of the most important manifestations of the Enoch tradition, spanning the period of late antiquity until the composition of the Zohar in the thirteenth century.

"22 LETTERS FOR CURSING": SWEARING AND INSULTS IN URI ZVI GREENBERG'S POETIC LANGUAGE

Neta Dan

The poet Uri Zvi Greenberg (1896–1981) was known for his thunderous poetry and his turbulent nature. Many of his poems dealt with pressing national issues, offering stances that were extreme and uncompromising. From the very outset of his career as an artist in Israel, Greenberg positioned himself as poet who cursed and was cursed. He would engage in verbal sparring with his opponents in the media, and was very conscious of the type of vulgar discourse used by his rivals.

This article deals with the use of swearing and profanity in Greenberg's poems, from the 1920's to the 1950's, in linguistic and rhetorical contexts. I study the manner in which the poet's position of cursed and curser is expressed in his poems, most elaborately in the "Book of Indictment and Faith" from 1937, in which curses play a central role. In the book, Greenberg aimed his insults and curses towards various groups in the Jewish population in Israel, at the same time creating new linguistic phrases in this type of discourse. The tendency to use such language created a mode of expression that was crude, sometimes downright rude, the goal of which was to reprimand people and affect the political and military reality of the time.

ABSTRACTS

In this study I examine the major semantic fields used by Greenberg in creating his original curses, using cognitive theories for the analysis of semantic fields. I analyze Greenberg's invective in relation to the seemingly contradictory principle expressed in in his book Streets of the River, according to which there is no point in cursing the gentiles despite their unforgivable deeds. I present the linguistic atrocities in Greenberg's poetry as comprising a unique and provocative linguistic style and rhetorical tool, which places readers in a complex position of repulsion and opposition simultaneously with profound emotional engagement.