Inner-Midrashic Introductions to the Interpretation of Individual Biblical Books
and Their Influence on the Form and Themes of Introductions
to Medieval Rabbinic Bible Commentaries

by

Michel Distefano

Department of Jewish Studies
McGill University, Montreal
December 2007

A thesis submitted to McGill University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Canada

To my wife and children

ABSTRACT

The opening sections of some exegetical Midrashim deal with the issues of

authorship and inspiration, time of composition, historical setting, genre, methods of

interpretation, themes, and literary forms and unity of their biblical book. This is the

same type of material that is found in the introductions to medieval rabbinic Bible

commentaries (written in Hebrew). In the Midrashim, this phenomenon occurs within the

midrashic comments on 1:1, as opposed to outside the scriptural verse order in a separate

introduction like the commentaries. Therefore, I have designated it by the phrase "Inner-

Midrashic Introduction."

Goldberg's form analysis of rabbinic literature is applied to these opening

sections of the Midrashim. It establishes criteria for isolating propositions that contribute

to thematic discourse, and criteria for controlling what appear to be unthematic elements.

The analysis reveals the new prototypical form "Inner-Midrashic Introduction" as a

thematic discourse on introductory issues to biblical books. It is found in Midrashim on

the Torah, i.e., in *Sifra* on Leviticus and *Leviticus Rabbah*, and on the Writings, i.e., in

Song of Songs Rabbah, *Lamentations Rabbah*, *Midrash Psalms*, and *Midrash Mishle*.

These provide the basis for describing the prototypical form "Inner-Midrashic

Introduction," and they also supply specific examples of its literary realizations.

In order to corroborate the existence of the Inner-Midrashic Introduction as an introductory form, a select number of medieval rabbinic commentary introductions are analyzed in terms of their formal, thematic, and material characteristics, revealing that a certain degree of continuity exists between them and the Inner-Midrashic Introductions. This analysis also reveals the new form the "Inner-Commentary Introduction." Since the origin of introductions to medieval rabbinic Bible commentaries has been traced to non-Jewish models from the Muslim and Christian spheres, i.e., to the *ṣadr*, *muḳaddima*, and the *prooemium* and its scholastic counterpart the *accessus ad auctores*, the prior existence of the Inner-Midrashic Introduction and its continuity in Inner-Commentary Introductions and separate introductions are important discoveries for the history of Bible interpretation in general, and of Jewish Bible interpretation in particular. Now the Inner-Midrashic Introduction can take its rightful place in that history.

RÉSUMÉ

Les sections débutantes de quelques midrachim exégétiques traitent les questions de la paternité et l'inspiration, de la datation, du contexte historique, du genre, des méthodes d'interprétation, des thèmes, et des formes littéraires et de l'unité de leur livre biblique. C'est le même genre de sujet trouvé dans les introductions aux commentaires médiévals rabbiniques bibliques (ce qui est écrit en hébreu). Dans les midrachim ce phénomène se produit à l'intérieur des remarques midrachiques sur 1:1, et non pas à l'extérieur de l'ordre des versets bibliques dans une introduction séparée comme les commentaires. Pour cette raison, je l'ai désigné avec la locution <<L'Introduction Midrachique Intérieure.>>

L'analyse de Goldberg de la forme de la littérature rabbinique est appliquée aux sections débutantes des midrachim. Cette analyse établit les critères pour isoler les propositions contribuant au discours thématiques et les critères pour controller les éléments non-thématiques. L'analyse révèle la nouvelle forme archétype <<L'Introduction Midrachique Intérieure>> comme un discours thématique des questions préliminaires concernant les livres bibliques. Cette forme est trouvée dans les Midrachim de la Torah, c'est-à-dire, dans le Sifra de Lévitique et le Lévitique Rabba, et aussi dans les Midrachim des Écrits, c'est-à-dire, dans le Cantique des Cantiques Rabba, les Lamentations Rabba, le Midrach Psaumes, et le Midrach Michle. Les textes ci-dessus

pourvoient la base de la description de la forme archétype <<L'Introduction Midrachique Intérieure>> et fournissent les exemples précis de leurs réalisations littéraires.

Afin de corroborer l'existence de <<L'Introduction Midrachique Intérieure>> comme une forme d'introduction, un nombre choisi des introductions des commentaires médiévals rabbiniques sont analysées en fonction de leurs caractéristiques des formes, des thèmes, et des matières, révélant qu'un certain degré de continuité existe entre celles-ci et <<L'Introduction Midrachique Intérieure>>. Puisque la trace de l'origine des introductions aux commentaires médiévals rabbiniques bibliques a été suivie aux modèles non-juif des sphères musulmanes et chrétiennes, c'est-à-dire, *ṣadr*, *muḳaddima*, et le *prooemium* et sa contrepartie scolastique *accessus ad auctores*, l'existence antérieure de <<L'Introduction Midrachique Intérieure>> et sa continuité dans les <<Introductions Commentaires Intérieures>> et introductions séparées, sont des découvertes importantes pour l'histoire de l'interprétation de la Bible en général, et pour l'interprétation de la Bible juive en particulier. Maintenant <<L'Introduction Midrachique Intérieure>> pourrait prendre sa place légitime dans cette histoire.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank all my colleagues and friends who helped me in many ways, including those who were in or who had been in similar situations. Just to mention a few, Jon and Jean, Colin and Josée, Kyle and Ruth, Dean, and John. I also thank my parents and brother and sisters, who all contributed in many ways to my education. I apologize if I have forgotten anyone.

Finally, even though words can not adequately express it, I would like to publicly thank my wife and children for their love, help, and support. Because of their dedication, I dedicate this work to them.

CONTENTS

       Midrashim, Medieval Rabbinic Bible Commentaries,
         and Their Introductions

       Overview of a Form-Analytical Method for Unveiling the IMI

       Goldberg's Form-Analytical Method Applied to the IMI

       The Influence of the Inner-Midrashic Introduction
         on Introductions to Medieval Rabbinic Bible Commentaries

       The Plan of the Work

**PART ONE: INNER-MIDRASHIC INTRODUCTIONS TO INDIVIDUAL
BIBLICAL BOOKS**

Chapter

       Textual Analysis of *Sifra* on Leviticus

       Initial Remarks about the Lemmatization of the IMI

       Introductory Material in Stereotypical Discourse

       Introductory Material in Midrash Sentences

       Summary of the IMI in *Sifra* on Leviticus

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Form Analysis

D	Dictum (a proposition about L)
ICI	Inner-Commentary Introduction
IMI	Inner-Midrashic Introduction
L	Lemma (of Scripture)
MS	Midrash Sentence (L O → D)
O	Hermeneutical Operation (whether implicit or explicit)
PS	*Petirah* Sentence (L O [deixis] → D [L])

Manuscripts

Ms(s)	Manuscript(s)
Ms Oxford	Ms Oxford, Bodleian 164
Ms Vatican	Ms Vatican, Ms Ebr. 76
Ms Parma	Ms Parma, 3122 (formerly De Rossi 1240)

Journals

BJRL	*Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*
FJB	*Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge*
JJS	*Journal of Jewish Studies*
JSJ	*Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman Periods*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JQR	*The Jewish Quarterly Review*

Biblical Books

Amos	Amos
Chr	Chronicles (1, 2)
Dan	Daniel
Deut	Deuteronomy

Eccl	Ecclesiastes
Exod	Exodus
Ezek	Ezekiel
Gen	Genesis
Hab	Habakkuk
Hos	Hosea
Isa	Isaiah
Jer	Jeremiah
Kgs	Kings (1, 2)
Lam	Lamentations
Lev	Leviticus
Mal	Malachi
Mic	Micah
Neh	Nehemiah
Num	Numbers
Ps/Pss	Psalm/s
Prov	Proverbs
Sam	Samuel (1, 2)
Song	Song of Songs (Song of Solomon)
Zech	Zechariah
Zeph	Zephaniah

Rabbinic Works

b.	Babylonian Talmud
B. Bat.	*Baba Batra*
yad.	*Yadayim*
m.	Mishnah
Menaḥ.	*Menaḥot*
Meg.	*Megillah*
Mid.	Midrash
Pesaḥ.	*Pesaḥim*
R.	Rabbi
Rab.	*Rabbah*
Šabb.	*Šabbat*
Sanh.	*Sanhedrin*
Šebu.	*Šebu'ot*
Šeqal.	*Šeqalim*
S.	*Seder*
t.	Tosefta
y.	Yerushalmi

INTRODUCTION AND METHOD OF STUDY

Midrashim, Medieval Rabbinic Bible
Commentaries, and Their Introductions

The term *midrash* denotes a process of interpretation or the writings produced

using that process, either a single midrash or a collection of them. Therefore, the term is

commonly used in three senses: i) as a method of interpretation; ii) as a short text

produced by an application of midrashic hermeneutics, i.e., a midrash (small "m"); and,

iii) as a substantial collection of midrashim, i.e., a Midrash (capital "M").[1] The semantic

range of the term *exegesis* overlaps to a large extent with the first two senses of *midrash*

and may be an adequate translation of it. Neusner states:

> It is difficult to specify what the word "Midrash" in Hebrew expresses that the word
> "exegesis" in English does not . . . The two words then end up covering much of the
> same ground. "Midrash" stands for a perfectly respectable, rule-bound, rational,
> scholarly treatment of the text, as much as does "exegesis." But the words intersect
> over such a broad area that we are hardly required to use a foreign word when a
> native one serves perfectly well . . . The word "Midrash" bears no more, or less,
> meaning than the word "exegesis".[2]

---

[1] See Jacob Neusner, *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature* (New York: Doubleday, 1994), 223-225;
cf. Alexander, who describes midrash as "a process and as an artefact" (Philip S. Alexander, "Midrash," in
A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation, ed. R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden [London: SCM Press, 1990],
453); and Goldberg, who also describes these three senses (Arnold Goldberg, "Midrashsatz; Vorschläge für
die descriptive Terminologie der Formanalyse rabbinischer Texte," *FJB* 17 [1989]: 45). Individual
midrashim occur in all works of rabbinic literature, i.e., in the Midrashim as well as in the Mishnah,
Tosefta, Talmuds, Targums, and medieval commentaries. As exegesis of verses or even parts thereof,
individual midrashim are usually sentences or short paragraphs; collections of these midrashim in large
compilations can be as long as a modern book.
[2] Neusner, *Introduction,* 224-225. Arnold Goldberg calls Neusner's use of "exegesis" for "midrash" an
improvement (Goldberg, "Midrashsatz," 45); cf. Kugel, "*Midrash* is a Hebrew term meaning interpretation
or exegesis" (James L. Kugel, *The Bible as It Was* [1997], third printing [Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1998],
591). Alexander notes that exegesis describes midrash within the rabbinic tradition; outside of that
tradition, e.g., in the modern academy, midrash is often described as eisegesis (Alexander, "Midrash," 457).

However, even though *exegesis* overlaps in meaning with the first two senses of *midrash*, it does not continue to do so with the third sense in common usage; a better English term for *midrash*, in the sense of a compilation of individual midrashim forming a Midrash, would be *commentary*.[3] It is now commonplace to refer to the Midrashim as (biblical or scriptural) commentaries.[4] In particular, the exegetical Midrashim and many medieval rabbinic Bible commentaries share the formal characteristic of commenting on a large percentage of an entire biblical book (or section of one) in its verse order.[5]

Another formal characteristic of some medieval commentaries is that they contain introductions that are separated from the body of commentary. By scholarly consensus, an introduction is recognized by its position outside of the consecutive verse order, i.e., before the comments that begin on 1:1. Lawee states that the same themes found in separate introductions can also be found in the body of some commentaries beginning with 1:1(ff.). However, he makes a formal distinction between the two;

Neusner and Goldberg make a similar point: "The word 'Midrash' bears no more, or less, meaning than the word 'exegesis' or, some may prefer, *eisegesis*" (Neusner, *Introduction*, 225), and, the term "exegesis" is sometimes used pejoratively of rabbinic interpretation (Goldberg, "Midrashsatz," 45).

[3] I.e., commentary as "a treatise consisting of a systematic series of comments or annotations on the text of a literary work; an expository treatise following the order of the work explained," or, "anything that serves for exposition or illustration; a comment, remark; *a running commentary*" (*Oxford English Dictionary Online*, s.v. "Commentary," n., 3ab, http://dictionary.oed.com/ [accessed August 20, 2004]). Alexander states that "a midrashic text may range from the exegesis of a single word, phrase or verse of scripture to a whole biblical book" (Alexander, "Midrash," 453). However, such a book is composed of individual exegeses of its biblical verses in their order.

[4] See the literature cited below in nn. 6, 9 below; cf. Neusner, *Introduction*, xxi, 10, 56; Philip S. Alexander, "The Rabbinic Hermeneutical Rules and the Problem of the Definition of Midrash," *Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association* 8 (1984): 116, n. 1; Steven D. Fraade, "Literary Composition and Oral Performance in Early Midrashim," *Oral Tradition* 14 (1999): 33.

[5] Compare Steven Fraade, "The Turn to Commentary in Ancient Judaism: The Case of *Sifre* Deuteronomy," in *The Return to Scripture in Judaism and Christianity: Essays in Postcritical Scriptural Interpretation*, ed. Peter Ochs (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 143; and Marc Saperstein, "The Method of Doubts: Problematizing the Bible in Late Medieval Jewish Exegesis," in *With Reverence for the Word: Medieval Scriptural Exegesis in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Barry D. Walfish, and Joseph W. Goering (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 133. More precisely, the exegetical Midrashim comment on individual Bible verses or parts thereof, even to the smallest level of the grapheme; see below, pp. 20-21, and n. 71 regarding the parts of Scripture that midrash lemmatizes.

introductory themes lemmatized under 1:1(ff.) are not introductions.[6] The scholarly

consensus (or presumption) has been that the exegetical Midrashim do not contain

introductions. For example, C. Sirat states:

> Jewish biblical commentaries can be classified into two types, according to the
> presence or absence of an introduction. The commentaries that lack introductions are
> first the Midrashim, and secondly the commentaries of Rashi and his successors.
> These commentaries begin with the first verse of the book and continue, verse by
> verse, until the end. The explanation may concern a single word or expression or the
> whole verse, but it follows faithfully the order of the text. General remarks, when
> they exist, are tied to the more particular ones.[7]

On a similar note, E. Lawee states that "premodern Jewish writers periodically explored

questions surrounding the formation, authorship, literary genre, and (less frequently)

original historical setting of individual biblical books, at times with great subtlety,

originality, and thoroughness."[8] In a number of articles that discuss the genre of

introduction and its historical development, Lawee does not consider the possibility that

---

[6] Eric Lawee, "Introducing Scripture: The *Accessus ad auctores* in Hebrew Exegetical Literature from the Thirteenth through the Fifteenth Centuries," in *With Reverence for the Word: Medieval Scriptural Exegesis in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, ed. Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Barry D. Walfish, and Joseph W. Goering (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 158. I have found only two exceptions to this consensus. Marcus states, "If we consider introductions to be any general remarks that Rashi makes about the work as a whole prior to his first comment on the first verse of a book, I think it is correct to say that he wrote three" (Ivan Marcus, "Rashi's Historiosophy in the Introductions to His Bible Commentaries," *Revue des études juives* 157 [1998]: 48). Rashi has separate introductions to Song of Songs and Zechariah; he also makes general remarks about Genesis in Gen 1:1. Lawee notes that there is a growing trend to view Rashi's comments in Gen 1:1 as an introduction (Lawee, "Introducing Scripture," 159; cf. Mayer I. Gruber, *Rashi's Commentary on Psalms* [Leiden: Brill, 2004], 9; however, see chap. 8, p. 200). Gruber says Rashi also has an introduction to his Psalms commentary, even though it appears after a citation of אשרי האיש, the first two words of Psalms. He says that these words function as the Hebrew title to the book of Psalms (Gruber, *Rashi's Commentary on Psalms*, 165, n. 1).

[7] Colette Sirat, "Biblical Commentaries and Christian Influence: The Case of Gersonides," in *Hebrew Scholarship and the Medieval World*, ed. Nicholas De Lange (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 210-211. There are exceptions to her statement, e.g., Rashi has two separate introductions; see n. 6 above.

[8] Eric Lawee, "Don Isaac Abarbanel: Who Wrote the Books of the Bible?" *Tradition* 30 (1996): 65.

these premodern Jewish writers may have included the authors and editors of the

Midrashim.[9] In one of these he states:

> The history of the introduction as a "genre" of Jewish literature, in terms both of
> internal structural and substantive developments and Arabic and Latin precursors and
> counterparts, made a claim to attention. Evidence of the influence of Arabic and
> Latin exegetical techniques and hermeneutic outlooks on Jewish exegetical habits
> and aims in disciplines beyond scriptural commentary (rabbinic exegesis,
> philosophic commentaries, and so forth) would provide important points of reference
> . . . The advent of the preface in medieval Jewish literature mainly reflects the
> stimulus of a generic form developed by Christian and Muslim writers working in the
> Muslim world.[10]

Since the Midrashim do not have separate introductions, research on the genre of

introduction in medieval Jewish literature does not even consider them. However, if

introductory material were to exist in the Midrashim, it would formally require

lemmatization within the body of the commentary, i.e., under 1:1.[11] The functional form

"midrash" requires a biblical lemma; otherwise it would not be midrash.[12]

In fact, careful examination of the opening sections of many of the Midrashim

(on the Torah and the Writings) reveals the presence of extensive introductory material

embedded within the midrashic interpretations of the first verse (with one exception).[13]

Taken together, this material deals with questions regarding authorship and inspiration,

time of composition, historical setting, genre, methods of interpretation, themes, and

literary forms and unity. Since this material is placed within the consecutive verse order,

---

[9] Compare Eric Lawee, "Introducing Scripture," 157-179; idem., "On the Threshold of the
Renaissance: New Methods and Sensibilities in the Biblical Commentaries of Isaac Abarbanel," *Viator* 26
(1995): 283-319; and idem., "Isaac Abarbanel's Intellectual Achievement and Literary Legacy in Modern
Scholarship: A Retrospective and Opportunity," in *Studies in Medieval History and Literature, III*, ed.
Isadore Twersky and Jay M. Harris (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 213-247.

[10] Eric Lawee, "Introducing Scripture," 158.

[11] Or it would require the functional equivalent of lemmatization; see below, pp. 21-22.

[12] See below, pp. 12-13.

[13] *Midrash Mishle* treats the first nine verses in Proverbs as an introduction *within* the book of
Proverbs itself; see pp. 157-158.

i.e., in sections that begin with a citation of the first verse of the book, as opposed to outside of the verse order in a separate introduction, I have designated it by the phrase "Inner-Midrashic Introduction" (hereafter, IMI). The nature of the IMI as an embedded introduction has kept it hidden from view. This is one of the reasons why there is no secondary literature that deals with midrashic introduction.[14]

The discoursive nature of the exegetical Midrashim has also kept the IMI hidden from view. The introductory sections of these Midrashim are discoursive in three senses. They are discoursive in the (first) sense that at times they "pass from one subject to another," i.e., they "deal with a wide range of subjects;" therefore they seem to be "rambling, or digressive."[15] This trait is especially evident in the exegetical Midrashim in composite *petihtaot*.[16] They are discoursive in the (second) sense that they contain discourses, i.e., dialogues.[17] The introductory sections are also discoursive in the (third) sense that they "pertain to 'discourse,'"[18] i.e., they contain "written treatment of a subject, in which it is handled or discussed at length; a dissertation, treatise, homily, sermon."[19] I will argue that the IMI is a discourse in this third sense; it is a coherent and thematic treatment of introductory subjects. At first glance, the discoursive nature of the

---

[14] In English, Hebrew, German, and French, to the best of my knowledge.

[15] *Oxford English Dictionary Online,* s.v. "Discoursive," adj. 2; "Discursive," adj. 2, http://dictionary.oed.com/ (accessed August 20, 2004).

[16] I will qualify this statement regarding their discoursive (digressive) nature; see n. 22 below.

[17] *Oxford English Dictionary Online,* s.v. "Discoursive," adj. 3b, http://dictionary.oed.com/ (accessed August 20, 2004). Rabbinic discourses are also dialectic; in this sense they overlap in meaning with a fourth sense of discoursive, i.e., "proceeding by reasoning, argumentative" (*Oxford English Dictionary Online,* s.v. "Discoursive," adj. 1b, http://dictionary.oed.com/ [accessed August 20, 2004]); cf. Neusner's "dispute form" (Neusner, *Introduction,* 32), and Goldberg's "Stereotypical Discourse" (Arnold Goldberg, "Stereotype Diskurse in den frühen Auslegungsmidraschim," *FJB* 16 [1988]: 23-51).

[18] *Oxford English Dictionary Online,* s.v. "Discoursive, adj. 1, http://dictionary.oed.com/ (accessed August 20, 2004).

[19] *Oxford English Dictionary Online,* s.v. "Discourse," n. 5, http://dictionary.oed.com/ (accessed August 20, 2004). Little research exists on the discoursive nature of the Midrashim in this sense. For what does exist, see p. 246, n. 3.

Midrashim as "rambling or digressive" would seem to work against any possibility of

their sustaining coherent and thematic discourses.[20] This appears to be especially true if

we compare the characteristic forms of discourse in the Midrashim and in medieval Bible

commentaries. Since the commentaries are not as discoursive (first sense) as the

Midrashim, their introductions are clearly observable.[21] However, the discoursive nature

of Midrash (in the first sense) causes discourse (in the third sense) on any subject to

appear digressive.[22] Since the requirement of biblical lemmatization and the discoursive

nature of midrash have worked in tandem to hide the IMI from view, the unveiling of the

form IMI will be an important discovery that is relevant for the history of biblical

interpretation.

Overview of A Form-Analytical Method for Unveiling the IMI

Given the mixed discoursive nature of the Midrashim, several questions must be

addressed before I attempt to isolate propositions from them that contribute to thematic

---

[20] I am most interested in these first and third senses of "discoursive" as they pertain to the appearance of non-thematic versus thematic discourse. If an IMI contains discourse in the second sense, i.e., dialogues or dialectical arguments, it could either be discoursive in the first or third sense depending on whether it treats introductory themes.

[21] Anonymous and attributed midrashim were distributed according to different organizing principles in the various Midrashim; in all these cases their redactors are anonymous and "they obliterate all marks of individual authorship" (Neusner, *Introduction*, xxiv). In contrast, the mode of discourse in the medieval commentaries is that of an individual author. Therefore, they appear less discoursive (digressive) than the Midrashim. Many other differences between the Midrashim and medieval rabbinic commentaries could be mentioned, some of which are related to their characteristic forms of discourse. The commentators were faced with traditional hermeneutics and exegesis and with new learning in the sciences and philosophy. Notably, the traditional dominance of midrashic exegesis was challenged in varying degrees by grammatical philological exegesis (more in the Sephardic tradition than the Ashkenazi). As we shall see, the use of the Midrashim as sources in the new discoursive context of the commentaries usually involved the dissolution of the functional form midrash; dicta from the midrashim were cited or alluded to without their accompanying hermeneutical operations (see below, p. 28, and n. 88).

[22] Digressions are actually a controlled rhetorical feature of midrash. They often occur within composite *petiḥtaot* as part of the rhetoric of those forms. They do not present an alternate discoursive subject, but they operate within certain parameters to delay the exposition of the real subject (see below, pp. 17-20).

discourses. First, what is a proposition in a rabbinic form?[23] Second, what are the criteria

for isolating propositions within a form? Third, what are the criteria for identifying

discoursive themes? And, finally, how much of the discoursive material, in the sense of

"rambling or digressive," needs to be explained?

Form analysis of rabbinic literature supplies answers to these questions by

establishing formal criteria for separating discoursive elements (in the different senses)

from each other and for identifying which discrete propositions may contribute to

thematic discourse. It also describes the type of discourse in which the Midrashim

engage. I have already stated that the functional form "midrash" requires biblical

lemmatization; we will see that it also requires an explicit or implicit hermeneutical

operation to form dicta (propositions about the content of a lemma).[24] Analysis of this

ground form suggests that the Midrashim adhere to formal rules in their discourse.

Discrete propositions from midrash sentences[25] are the building blocks of thematic

discourse in the Midrashim, either in a series of midrash sentences, in the microforms

(e.g., *petiḥtah*), or in the macroform homily.[26] Form-analytical criteria will also confirm

that discoursive (digressive) elements are subordinate to higher forms; these forms limit

the ability of those elements to detract from an overall thematic discourse. Therefore, the

method also provides an adequate explanation for the formally discoursive (digressive)

sections that have helped to keep the IMI hidden from view. Finally, form analysis

describes the actual discourses in the Midrashim. It regards the medium of scriptural

---

[23] See below, Table 1, p. 9, for a taxonomy of rabbinic forms.
[24] See below, p. 13.
[25] See below, p. 14.
[26] See below, Table 1, p. 9, "Taxonomy of Rabbinic Forms in the Midrashim."

citations as contributing to the message itself. As a constituent of the functional form

midrash, scriptural citations contribute to meaning, and their dicta can not be isolated

from the form without changing that meaning.[27] In contrast, the medieval commentaries

can cite discrete propositions from the Midrashim in their new discoursive contexts.

Form analysis acts as a safeguard against equating the characteristic forms of discourse in

the Midrashim and the commentaries. In short, a form-analytical method will allow us to

explain how a midrashist could exploit rabbinic forms to create a discourse such as the

IMI.

Form analysis has been applied to rabbinic literature in a hierarchic taxonomy to

the level of homily by Arnold Goldberg (1928-1991) and his students, and to the level of

its works (documents) by Jacob Neusner.[28] A taxonomy of forms occurring in the

Midrashim and treated by both men in their form analyses is illustrated in Table 1.[29]

---

[27] Arnold Goldberg, "Die funktionale Form Midrasch," *FJB* 10 (1982): 40, n. 3; cf. Doris Lenhard, *Die rabbinische Homilie: Ein formanalytischer Index* (Frankfurt am Main: Gesellschaft zur Förderung Judaistischer Studien, 1998), 14.

[28] Compare Stemberger, "A systematic application of this method [form history] has only been achieved since about 1970, for halakhic texts especially by J. Neusner and his students, for midrashic material especially by A. Goldberg and his students, and for liturgical texts by J. Heinemann" (Günter Stemberger and H. L. Strack, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash, [Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch {1982}]*, ed. and trans. Markus Bockmuehl, second printing with emendations and updates [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996], 50). However, it should be pointed out that Goldberg's method is not "form history proper, which is concerned with the origin and transformation of forms in the course of history" (ibid., 49). Goldberg says his form analysis should be distinguished from form- or genre-historical methods. Comparing his method to OT form criticism, Goldberg argues it can not make inquiries about the *Sitz im Leben* of rabbinic forms, but only the *Sitz in der Literatur* (Arnold Goldberg, "Entwurf einer formanalytischen Methode für die Exegese der rabbinischen Traditionsliteratur," *FJB* 5 [1977]: 2). However, he does not rule out that his method could eventually be applied to form-history; see p. 250, n. 19.

[29] The taxonomy is based on Lenhard's (Doris Lenhard, "Document or Individual Homily? A Critical Evaluation of Neusner's Methodology in Light of the Results of Form Analysis," trans. Alexander Samely, *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 4 [1997]: 345); I have adjusted it slightly. Lenhard used it to ask, "Which level of abstraction is the appropriate starting point for analysis?"; later she states, "The differences between the approach of Neusner and that of form analysis in the study of the rabbinic homily can be reduced to the question: which is the taxonomically primary category?" (ibid., 355). In Goldberg's analysis there is a hierarchy. The ground form is a constituent of the microforms, and the microforms *Yelamdenu, Petiḥa, Semikha*, Exegesis of the `*Inyan (seder)* verse, and *Ḥatimah* are constituents of the homily. Neusner's

Table 1. Taxonomy of Rabbinic Forms in the Midrashim

	Goldberg	Neusner
Rabbinic Literature	Canon	Canon
Work	Work - A Distributive Form	Document - A Coherent Discourse
Macroform	Homily	Chapter (*Parashah*)
Microforms	*Yelamdenu* *Petiḥtah* *Semikhah* Exegesis of the `*Inyan* (`*Inyan* = *seder* verse) *Ḥatimah* Stereotypical Discourse *Mashal, Ma'aseh*	Base Verse/Intersecting Verse (= *Petiḥtah*) Propositional Forms Dispute / Dialectical Forms Parable, Sayings
Ground Form	Midrash Sentence *Petirah* Sentence - discrete proposition	Exegetical Form - discrete proposition

method also establishes a hierarchy. He calls the exegetical form a building block (Neusner, *Introduction*, 32); he also speaks of the logic of authors of composites in contrast to the logic of compilers of documents (ibid., 21ff.). Neusner does not give definitions for forms in relation to each other. Given Neusner's focus on how these forms cohere in discourse and on their topical and propositional program in their document, one would not expect him to do so; his analysis of the smaller units is secondary to his overall objective. Therefore, this proposed taxonomy for Neusner's form analysis and its correlation to Goldberg's is necessarily probative, and is only meant to serve a hermetic purpose for this thesis. On the whole issue of whether Goldberg's and Neusner's methods can be usefully compared see Lenhard, "Document or Individual Homily?" 349, n. 59; cf. below, n. 33. Unless Neusner engages directly with Goldberg's school of form analysis we can not be sure of the compatibilities of both methods at the level of homily and below.

Goldberg begins with the ground form midrash and explains its use as a building block

for larger discoursive microforms and eventually the macroform homily.[30] Neusner's

analysis begins with the work or document characterized by its rhetoric, logic of coherent

discourse, and topical or propositional program.[31] However, his analysis of rhetoric or

formal conventions, i.e., his analysis of forms below the level of work, is secondary to his

analysis of how their propositions contribute to coherent discourse.[32] Since the IMI

occurs at or near the same level as the macroform homily, my method for isolating it will

rely heavily on Goldberg's method of form analysis applied to that level in the hierarchy

of rabbinic forms. However, since Neusner's analysis of these sections treats the same

forms (albeit from a different perspective), I would expect parts of it to be compatible

---

[30] For Goldberg's hierarchy see Arnold Goldberg, "Distributive und kompositive Formen; Vorschläge für die descriptive Terminologie der Formanalyse rabbinischer Texte," *FJB* 12 (1984): 150-151; and idem., "Form Analysis of Midrashic Literature as a Method of Description," *JJS* 36 (1985): 164-165. In Goldberg's school the highest unit of discourse is the homily, which is not taxonomically or hierarchically part of a higher form "Work." The function of a work is distributive, i.e., it arranges micro- and macroforms according to different ordering principles; the largest units of discourse in a work are not related thematically. Below the level of homily there are hierarchical, paradigmatic, and syntagmatic relations; above the level of homily are only distributive relationships (cf. Goldberg, "Distributive und kompositive Formen," 151, n. 2; and Lenhard, "Document or Individual Homily?", 349; cf. also pp. 15-17, 20-23 regarding these relationships). Lenhard states, "The homily, not the work, corresponds to the genus (and thus takes priority in the analysis)" (ibid.).

[31] Neusner's hierarchy was derived from his *Introduction*, xiii-xxxi, 3-72.

[32] Neusner states, "The rhetoric or formal preference of a piece of writing dictates, without respect to meaning, how sentences will be composed" (Neusner, *Introduction*, 30). However, his form-analytical method focuses on the "logics of coherent discourse," i.e., propositional logic (syllogistic, teleological or narrative, and metapropositional or methodological-analytical logic), on non-propositional logic (of fixed association), and on the topical and propositional programs of works. Lenhard gives a similar assessment of Neusner's method as it pertains to smaller forms: "Any classification of textual units below the level of work (individual propositions or microforms such as *Yelamdenu* and *Petiḥah*) is at best irrelevant and usually misleading" (Doris Lenhard, "Document or Individual Homily?", 343); cf. Teugels: "The smaller forms are not very relevant in his approach, because they are ruled entirely by the overarching system" (Lieve Teugels, review of *Die rabbinische Homilie. Ein formanalytischer Index*, by Doris Lenhard, and of *Rabbinische Texte als Gegenstand der Auslegung*, by Arnold Goldberg, *JSJ* 31 [2000]: 102).

with Goldberg's analysis.[33] Therefore I will consult Neusner's form-analytical translation and his analysis of the discourse in the sections that contain IMIs.

Goldberg's Form-Analytical Method Applied to the IMI

Goldberg first considers other attempts at form analysis of rabbinic literature.[34]

He states:

> Everything can be described by the category of form, except we do not quite manage to determine what constitutes a form. This is no less true for determining the forms of biblical literature than for the forms of rabbinic literature. It is the fact of repetition which leads us to assume the existence of forms, but one ought to ask oneself *how* something is repeated and *what* exactly is being repeated. Usually, it is supposed that it is the imitation of a pattern, a scheme. But what is being imitated? Syntactic relations? Phonetic relations? Rhythmic relations? All these are found to be elements of form.[35]

Goldberg also discusses how a form could be discovered. If scholarly tradition assumes the existence of a form such as the homily, then a form can be determined through induction and deduction, "by hermeneutic circular logic. The starting-point of this circular logic is a preconceived judgement that can always be reviewed."[36] However, in

---

[33] Since Neusner's analysis focuses on documentary coherence, he criticizes approaches that view the Midrashim as collections of discrete propositions on verses (e.g., that of James Kugel, "Two Introductions to Midrash," *Prooftexts* 3 [1983]: 145). Goldberg's approach would not fall under his criticism. Both approaches (Neusner's and Goldberg's) emphasize that discourse takes place on higher levels (homily or work). The crucial question is how discourse is carried out. Different answers to this question lead to divergent conclusions about the largest possible unit of discourse; see below, n. 67.

[34] For the history and reception of Goldberg's method, see the Appendix, The History and Reception of Goldberg's Form Analysis of Rabbinic Literature, pp. 245-251.

[35] Goldberg, "Form Analysis," 160. Goldberg pointed out that in Neusner's definition of form, "that which is repeated constitutes a pattern, and it would seem that pattern and form are to be equated," and that the definition "marks considerable progress" (ibid.). Goldberg and his students refer to the definition in Jacob Neusner, *A History of the Mishnaic Law of Purities, Part Three. Kelim: Literary and Historical Problems* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), 192ff. (Goldberg, "Form Analysis," 160, n. 2; Lenhard, *Die Rabbinische Homilie*, 13, n. 48).

[36] Goldberg, " Form Analysis," 163-164; cf. Lenhard, "Document or Individual Homily?", 341; idem., *Die Rabbinische Homilie*, 17-18.

the case of the IMI there is no preconceived scholarly judgment about it. Therefore, I

must use an inductive approach to identify and verify it.

Goldberg defines form in terms of a deep "relational structure" that serves as an

abstraction or matrix for the development of varying literary surface realizations. He

states:

> I understand form as a relational structure. Form resembles the relation between the
> elements that are its constituents, the way in which they are realized in a text. This
> definition is insufficient, however, without an explanation of those constituents . . .
> Once the functional form has been determined, it is possible to describe texts as
> realizations of such functional forms. However, this is obviously a formal
> description of the text. It tells us nothing about its contents or why the text was
> composed. A text can be, or even has to be, analyzed in quite different ways."[37]

For his form analysis, Goldberg borrows the concept of deep and surface analysis from

the field of transformational grammar.[38] The functional form is a deep (relational)

structure and the literary form is a surface realization of it. Deep structure corresponds to

the syntax of the elements constituting rabbinic forms; Goldberg names the relation

between the constituents of a form a "syntagma."[39] These constituents can be described

independently of their contents.[40] For example, the constituents of the functional form

---

[37] Goldberg, "Form Analysis," 161.

[38] In transformational grammar, "The rules of the syntactic component generate the sentences of the language and assign to each not one but two structural analyses: a deep structure analysis as represented by the underlying phrase marker, and a surface structure analysis, as represented by the final derived phrase marker" ("Linguistics: Transformational-Generative Grammar," in *Britannica 2001 Deluxe Edition CD-ROM* [Britannica.com Inc., 1994-2001]). It should be noted that Goldberg stresses he is not competent to apply text-linguistics to rabbinic texts (Arnold Goldberg, "Versuch über die hermeneutische Präsupposition und Struktur der Petiha," *FJB* 8 (1980): 59 [cf. 18]). He also warns that his terms, even if borrowed from linguistics, should only be understood in the way he uses them (Goldberg, "Versuch" 18; "Die funktionale Form Midrasch," 4). Therefore, even if he borrowed a term from transformational grammar (e.g., "deep structure," in "Midrashsatz," 46, 49, and "Paraphrasierende Midrashsätze," *FJB* 18 [1990]: 2-3), we should define it according to *his* usage.

[39] Goldberg, "Die funktionale Form Midrasch," 4.

[40] Goldberg, "Form Analysis," 163. Goldberg stated that a functional formal analysis "tells us nothing about its contents" (ibid., 161; cf. 167; "Versuch," 2, 51; cf. Lenhard, *Die Rabbinische Homilie,* 10). Neusner makes a similar statement about form: "The formal aspects of Mishnaic rhetoric are empty of content. This is proved by the fact that pretty much all themes and conceptions can be reduced to the same

midrash are Lemma (L), Hermeneutical Operation (O), and Dictum (D).[41] These

constituents belong to different text-classes, i.e., L, O, and D are separate text-classes.

Goldberg uses the concept of paradigmatic relationships to describe the possible

exchanges in text-classes.[42] The paradigm for L in the functional form midrash is

Scripture.[43] Any part of Scripture can be substituted in the position of L in the syntagma;

non-Scripture belongs to a different paradigm, and therefore can not be substituted in that

position.[44] The paradigm for O is exegetical rules or norms that interpret L; these rules

are not limited to the seven, thirteen, or thirty-two *middot*.[45] The paradigm for D is a

proposition derived from L.[46]

Paradigms or text-classes joined in a syntagma create functional forms in a

hierarchical structure. Smaller forms can join in certain relational structures to create

larger ones. The functional form midrash is the smallest unit in the hierarchic taxonomy

of forms of rabbinic literature. Goldberg defines the functional form midrash:

> Als funktionale Form sei nun ein System von Relationen bezeichnet, ein Syntagma,
> welches die Beziehung zwischen den einzelnen Teilen des Textes bestimmt, also ein
> relationales Verhältnis zwischen einzelnen Teilen des Textes der Sorte "Midrasch."[47]

---

few formal patterns. These patterns are established by syntactical recurrences . . . the arrangement of the
words as a grammatical pattern, not their substance, is indicative of pattern" (Neusner, *Introduction*, 38).

[41] See below, p. 14.

[42] "The sum of all possible units of a text-class is designated a paradigm" (Goldberg, "Die funktionale
Form Midrasch," 4).

[43] Goldberg, "Die funktionale Form Midrasch," 6.

[44] Ibid., 4.

[45] Ibid., 9-10; idem., "Versuch," 3. The thirteen *middot* are translated on pp. 34-35.

[46] Goldberg, "Die funktionale Form Midrasch," 9.

[47] Ibid., 2. "A system of relations is now referred to as a functional form, a syntagma, which
determines the relation between the individual elements of the text, thus a relational relationship between
individual elements of the genre 'Midrash'" (I translate "relationales Verhältnis" as "relational relationship,"
a phrase Goldberg himself used [Goldberg, "Form Analysis," 164]).

Goldberg then identifies the essential elements of the functional form Midrash as Lemma,

Hermeneutical Operation, and Dictum:

> Untersucht man nun Texte der Sorte Midrasch, d.h. Texte, die mittels der Form-M
> hergestellt wurden, dann finden sich – eher selbstverständlich – ein lemmatisierter
> Teil der Offenbarungsschrift, ein Aussage darüber und ein hermeneutische
> Operation, die es ermöglicht, zu dieser Aussage zu gelangen. Diese Teile oder
> Konstituenten des Textes seien mit Lemma ("L"), Operation (:o: oder ":o:" fur die
> textlich ausgeführte Operation) und Dictum ("D") bezeichnet.[48]

He stated that the constituents of the functional form midrash correspond to the

"Syntagma eines Satzes."[49] He made this point particularly clear in a later article:

> Da diese Texte der "Form Midrash" die Tiefenstruktur eines Satzes haben schlage ich
> vor, Texteinheiten, die die "funktionale Form Midrash" realisieren, also faktische
> jede einzelne Schriftauslegung, wie sie in der rabbinischen Literatur vorkommt,
> "Midrashsatz" zu nennen.[50]

The functional form midrash always generates the sentence, "The lemma X is (or the

meaning is) Y (with the addition: as long as certain exegetical operations are used)."[51]

A midrash sentence (hereafter, MS) can be represented by the symbols: L O → D.[52]

---

[48] Goldberg, "Die funktionale Form Midrasch," 4-5. "If we now investigate texts of the genre Midrash, i.e., texts that were produced with the functional form midrash, then we would find, rather obviously, a lemmatized part of Scripture, a proposition about it, and a hermeneutical operation that makes it possible to arrive at that proposition. These elements or constituents of the text are designated as Lemma ('L'), Operation (:o: [for an implicit hermeneutical operation] or ':o:' for an operation realized [explicitly] in the text), and Dictum ('D')" (for :o: as an implicit hermeneutical operation, see ibid., 4, 9). Alexander defined the fundamental or base-form midrash as biblical lemma + comment, which allows for the presentation of an explicit exegetical argument (Alexander, "Midrash," 456). Since an exegetical argument is not always explicit, he prefers the term "comment," and distinguishes between interpretations that are always explicit and exegetical arguments that may not be. However, since an interpretation always requires an implicit or explicit hermeneutical operation, Goldberg's analysis is more precise (cf. Holger Zellentin, "Reading the Rabbis Reading the Bible: Arnold Goldberg's Formal Description of Midrash" [Doctoraalscriptie, Universiteit van Amsterdam: Juda Palache Instituut voor Hebreeuws, Aramees en Joodse Studies, 2001]," 23). I will use the symbol "O" for both an implicit and an explicit hermeneutical operation.

[49] Goldberg, "Die funktionale Form Midrasch," 4, 15-16.

[50] Goldberg, "Midrashsatz," 46. "Since these texts of the form 'Midrash' [L O D] have the deep structure of a sentence, I propose to call units of text that realize the 'functional form midrash' - thus, virtually every single scriptural interpretation as it occurs in rabbinic literature - a 'midrash sentence.'"

[51] Goldberg, "Form Analysis," 162; cf. idem., "Midrashsatz," 2.

[52] Goldberg, "Die funktionale Form Midrasch," 15.

A *petirah* is a particular type of MS, with the same constituents (L O D) forming

a syntagma.[53] The paradigm for L in a *petirah* is Scripture. However, the paradigm for O

and D are more restrictive than for a normal MS. The paradigm for O is the specific

hermeneutical operation deixis, in which undetermined referents in L are specified by

scriptural examples, i.e., by biblical persons, places, events, or topics. Deixis is signaled

by the deictic demonstratives זה or אלה.[54] Thus, the paradigm for D in a *petirah* is a new

scriptural referent. Goldberg states:

> In dem zu deutenden Text verlieren die Wortsymbole ihr eigentliches or
> ursprüngliches Zeigfeld (für diesen bestimmten Fall) und beziechnen als Worte, als
> Symbole, etwas in einem anderen nun genannten Zeigfeld . . . Das Demonstrativum
> זה verweist auf das neue, andere Zeigfeld, wenn auch auf ein für uns wunderliche
> Weise . . . Das Demonstrativum hat also in diesem Satz deiktische Funktion, wenn
> auch eine sehr eigentümlich, weil ja die Regeln, die hinsichtlich der Beziehungen
> zwischen Symbol und Zeigfeld der Sprache gelten sollten, verändert werden.[55]

The functional form *petirah* always generates the sentence, "The lemma X means or

speaks about lemma Y (with the addition: as long as the specific exegetical operation

deixis is used)."[56] A *petirah* sentence (hereafter, PS) can be represented by the symbols:

L O [deixis] → D [L].

A midrash (or *petirah*) sentence may exist as an isolated sentence in the scriptural

distributive order of the Midrashim. However, it is also the ground form used to build

---

[53] The introductory formula ר׳ פלוני פתר קריא ב is not essential for the functional form, just as the
formula ר׳ פלוני פתח is not essential for the functional form *petiḥtah* (Goldberg, "Versuch," 19, 21).

[54] Goldberg, "Versuch," 18-27; Lenhard, *Die Rabbinische Homilie*, 33, n. 127.

[55] Goldberg, "Versuch," 24. "In the text to be interpreted the word signs lose their actual or original
field of reference (for this specific case) and they signify as words, as symbols, something in another
referential field just designated . . . The demonstrative זה refers to the new, other referential field, even if it
does so in a way that is strange to us . . . Thus, the demonstrative has in this [type of] sentence a deictic
function, even if it is a very peculiar one, since the rules that should apply in regard to the relations between
symbol and referential field of the language are changed."

[56] This is not a direct quote of Goldberg. His discussion of the *petirah*, however, lends itself to it. This
sentence is built on Goldberg's *petirah* sentence, "'x' meint, ist gesagt über 'y'", his observation that it
corresponds to a MS ("Versuch," 26), and his similar definitions of the functional forms midrash and
petirah ("Die funktionale Form Midrasch," 2; "Versuch," 18). See pp. 58-59 for some examples.

compositions in the Midrashim. Goldberg identifies the ways in which individual

midrashim can become part of larger compositional units:

> Der einzelne Midrasch, der Satz, ist in der Regel Teil einer größeren, komplexeren
> Texteinheit, Teil einer anderen Form, Element (Konstituente?) einer komplexeren
> Form. Er kann in bestimmten Kompositionsformen verwendet werden (*Petiḥa,
> Semikha, Ḥatima*), er kann Satz in einem Diskurs ohne bestimmte (literarische) Form
> sein.[57]

Compositions are formed by establishing relations between midrash sentences. Thus,

Goldberg categorizes forms according to their relational structures in progressively larger

compositional units:

> I identify literary texts as "supra-summary (übersummative) Gestalten [forms]".
> The whole of the literary object is always more than the sum total of its constituents.
> A completely new object develops once the parts are joined, without having to
> change the parts as such; they can continue to exist as literary entities and be
> understood in isolation. Moreover, what creates the Gestalt is the composition, the
> establishment of relations between the entities, in text production as well as in text
> processing.[58]

Using an analogy, a midrash sentence is used to build a paragraph, which is used to build

a chapter.[59]

The most prominent compositional unit larger than a midrash or *petirah* sentence

is the *petiḥtah*. The functional form *petiḥtah* describes the relation between the dictum of

---

[57] Goldberg, "Die funktionale Form Midrasch," 34. "The individual midrash, the sentence, is as a rule
part of a larger, more complex text-unit, part of another form, an element (constituent?) of a more complex
form. It can be used in specific compositional forms (*Petiḥah, Semikha, Ḥatimah*); or it can be a sentence in
a discourse that does not have a specific (literary) form."

[58] Goldberg, "Form Analysis," 160-161. Regarding the rabbinic homily, Goldberg speaks of a
"hierarchy of forms." He states, "Midrash is indeed the proper form of most propositions found in the
rabbinic homily . . . ; each Midrash can be described as realizing a functional form . . . We find a number of
secondary units within the rabbinic homily: *Yelamdenu, Petiḥah, Semikhah* . . . and exegesis of the `*Inyan*;
and finally a *Ḥatimah* . . . These will be defined as the possible elements or constituents of the homily
form" (ibid., 162, 165).

[59] Neusner makes a similar point: "The exegetical form [citation of Scripture or Mishnah followed by
paraphrase or explanation] commonly defines the smallest whole unit of thought ('sentence') in a larger
composition or composite ('paragraph,' 'chapter,' respectively)" (Neusner, *Introduction*, 32).

a midrash or *petirah* sentence and its interpretation of a *seder* verse, i.e., its *petiḥtah*

function. In a simple *petiḥtah* the relation between D and its interpretation of the *seder*

verse is revealed quickly. This type of *petiḥtah* can be represented as follows:

L (*Petiḥtah* Verse) - O - D

$\downarrow$ *Petiḥtah* Function

D $\longleftarrow$ L (*Seder* Verse).[60]
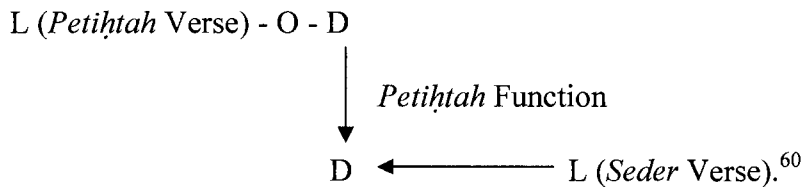
However, the majority of *petiḥtaot* are composite ones whose *petiḥtah* functions are

delayed until the very end. Albeck states:

> Composite *petiḥtaot* can be divided into two types: a) those that contain citations,
> interpretations, and dispute forms, or tales and proverbs in the body of the *petiḥtah*;
> b) those in which the *petiḥtah* verse is interpreted in various ways until finally it is
> interpreted - introduced by דבר אחר or sometimes not - in a way that relates to the
> [*seder*] verse of the *parashah*; this [final] interpretation is the main point of the
> *petiḥtah*.[61]

This type of *petiḥtah* can be represented as follows:

L (*Petiḥtah* Verse) - O - D_1

L (*Petiḥtah* Verse) - O - $D_{2,3,...#}$

L (*Petiḥtah* Verse) - O - $D_#$

$\downarrow$ *Petiḥtah* Function

$D_#$ $\longleftarrow$ L (*Seder* Verse).[62]

---
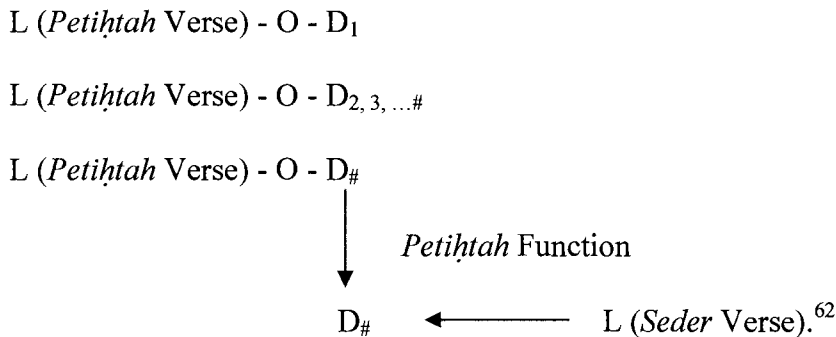
[60] Lenhard, *Die Rabbinische Homilie*, 32.

[61] הפתיחות המורכבות נחלקות לשני פנים: א) שבתוך הפתיחה מובאות דרשות ופלוגתות שונות, או גם
סיפורים ומשלים; ב) שהפסוק שהובא ליסוד הפתיחה נדרש בדרכים שונים, ולבסוף הוא נדרש - בהצעת ׳דבר
אחר׳ או גם בלי זה - באופן שמוסב על הפסוק שבפרשה, ודרש זה הוא עיקר הפתיחה (Ch. Albeck, "Einleitung
und Register zum Bereschit Rabba," in *Midrasch Bereschit Rabba mit kritischem Apparat und Kommentar*,
by J. Theodor and Ch. Albeck [Berlin, 1903-1929], second printing with additional corrections by
Ch. Albeck, 3 vols. [Jerusalem: Wahrmann Books, 1965], vol. 3 [1931-1936], 17). J. Theodor, Ph. Bloch,
and S. Maybaum were the first to use the phrase *zusammengesetzen Petiḥtahot* (הפתיחות המורכבות); see
Goldberg, "Versuch," 51, n. 71 and Lenhard, *Die Rabbinische Homilie*, 35, n. 130 for references.

Midrash and *petirah* sentences are used as ground forms in composite *petiḥtaot* of both

types listed by Albeck. Corresponding to Albeck's first type, Goldberg and his students

have described an amplified *petiḥtah* (*erweiterte Petiḥtah*), in which midrash sentences,

petirot, and other subordinate forms lengthen it considerably.[63] These other forms are the

mashal (parable), *ma'aseh*,[64] and dialogue between Rabbis. Corresponding to Albeck's

second type, Goldberg and his students have described a strophic *petiḥtah* in which the

petiḥtah verse is applied to various biblical persons and events in a series of *petirot*; only

the last *petirah* interprets the *seder* verse.[65]

Without a knowledge of their functional form, i.e., the relations between the

constituents, composite *petiḥtaot* appear discoursive (digressive). The choice of *petiḥtah*

verse itself may contribute to the appearance of a discoursive (digressive) nature.

Petiḥtaot take on a game-like quality in which the best players (authors) pick what appear

to be the most obscure and irrelevant *petiḥtah* verses that could possibly interpret their

seder verses. The more obscure the *petiḥtah* verse is, the more the reader is intrigued by

the suggestion of an exegetical connection until it is finally expounded. The longer the

author can delay this exposition, the more tension he can create for his readers. This often

involves presenting a series of unrelated interpretations of the *petiḥtah* verse (and other

---

[62] Lenhard, *Die Rabbinische Homilie*, 32.

[63] Goldberg, "Versuch," 53; Lenhard, *Die Rabbinische Homilie*, 35, n. 130.

[64] A *ma'aseh* is "an example, or a short narration of some event where an authority quotes a verse from Scripture concerning an event and thereby expounds it" (Goldberg, "Form Analysis," 168).

[65] Goldberg, "Versuch," 52-53; Lenhard, *Die Rabbinische Homilie*, 34, n. 129. Heinemann calls a strophic *petiḥtah* a composite one, "where a verse from Proverbs, for instance, is applied to a number of biblical figures, one after the other, and only at the end to the one mentioned in the lesson to which the proem relates" (Joseph Heinemann, "The Proem in the Aggadic Midrashim: A Form-Critical Study," *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 22 (1971): 102, cf. 108). Heinemann cites Albeck; however, he equates the broadest category הפתיחות המורכבות or *zusammengesetzen Petiḥtahot* ("composite *petiḥtaot*") with one of its types. Sarason calls a strophic *petiḥtah* a complex one (Richard S. Sarason, "*The Petiḥtot* in Leviticus Rabba: 'Oral Homilies' or Redactional Constructions?," *JJS* 33 [1982]: 562).

verses mentioned in them) before its exegetical connection with the *seder* verse is revealed. Lenhard states:

> Die beiden Lemmata haben einen unterschiedlichen propositionalen Gehalt; durch ihr Nebeneinanderstehen entsteht ein Spannung, die erst in der Hinführung auf LIn [Lemma `Inyan`] am Schluß der Petiḥa aufgelöst wird. Hierbei ist ein Überraschungsmoment konstitutiv (wobei formal die doppelte Funktionalität des Abschlußzitates - als Beweistext der letzten Proposition *und* als LIn - die Point ausmacht).[66]

Thus, the blend of discoursive elements (digressive and thematic) is part of the rhetoric of the form.[67] A digressive appearance does not affect its functional form; it only delays the presentation of the *petiḥtah* function that lies at the heart of a *petiḥtah*. Moreover, this exegetical function is the same as that of the individual midrash and *petirah* sentences, and their subordinate exegetical forms.[68]

---

[66] Lenhard, *Die Rabbinische Homilie*, 31. "Both lemmas [the *seder* and *petiḥtah* verses] have a different propositional content. Because they exist side by side, a tension develops that is only released in the leading to the LIn [*seder* verse] at the conclusion of the *petiḥtah*. In this regard a surprise moment is constitutive (whereby the double function of the concluding citation - as proof-text for the last proposition and as LIn - formally makes the point)."

[67] Goldberg and Neusner disagree about the highest level at which coherent and thematic discourse can be achieved. Now I am in a position to discuss the methodological basis for their different approaches. Goldberg's form-analytical method "is firstly a way by means of which forms of rabbinic literature can be recognized and described for the purpose of making the peculiarities of this literature comprehensible. In the final analysis, therefore, this method serves a hermeneutic purpose" ("Form Analysis," 159). In other words, it is impossible to understand a rabbinic work if one does not understand the meaning of the formal units below the level of "work." This approach does not simply categorize discoursive elements in the two opposing senses; it also attempts to explain the presence of all elements that seem to oppose each other and hinder text communication. Therefore, Goldberg's form analysis proceeds from the parts to the whole. He and his students have concluded that thematic discourse occurs at the highest level of homily. Neusner's analysis proceeds from the whole to the parts. However, in his analysis thematic considerations override form-critical ones. For example, in sections that contain IMIs he often concludes that thematic discourse is absent. Underlying his analysis is the notion that parts of these sections are discoursive (digressive). At times he changes the order of the texts to achieve more coherence, or suggests additions that would have contributed to a more coherent presentation. Therefore, his analysis of these sections does not take into account the formal framework in which discoursive elements (in opposing senses) occur simultaneously but are subordinate to functional forms that link various constituents in a coherent way.

[68] A MS that renders a propositional content of L can be called a MS with exegetical-propositional function (Goldberg, "Midrashsatz," 50-51). Goldberg discusses the function of the *petiḥtaot* in the exegetical midrashim, i.e., their function when they are not constituents of a rabbinic homily: "[Die Petiḥot] stehen am Anfang einer Reihe von Auslegungen in der Abfolge des Textes, nicht am Anfang von Homilien. Längere Ausführungen zu einem Predigtthema wären hier gewiß fehl am Platze, denn die Petiḥot haben bereits ein ähnliche Funktion erhalten wie die übrigen Auslegungen zum Text" -

I stated that at first glance the sections that contain introductory material appear to be digressive, and their nature as such would seem to work against the possibility of their sustaining coherent and thematic discourses.[69] Their apparent discoursive nature has even managed to hide the IMI from view. However, the functional forms MS, PS, and *petiḥtah*, and the relations that exist between them separate discoursive (thematic) elements from discoursive (digressive) elements. These functional forms require a biblical lemma. Their hermeneutical operations render dicta, or propositional contents about a lemma. The interplay between what is lemmatized in Scripture and propositions about it carries out a thematic discourse in the midst of discoursive (digressive) texts, i.e., the dicta about a lemma in the distributive scriptural order carry out a discourse on it. In order to establish my thesis that a thematic discourse on introductory themes is carried out in the Midrashim under 1:1 of a biblical book, I must proceed according to the strict determination of the constituents L and D, and describe their formal contribution to such a thematic and coherent discourse.[70]

The identification of "L" is not straightforward in the Midrashim. First, several different levels of the biblical text can be lemmatized by the Midrashim. Alexander Samely has described these levels as:

"[The *petiḥtaot*] are found at the beginning of a series of interpretations [exegeses] in the sequence of the text, not at the beginning of homilies. Longer expositions on a theme of a sermon [homily] would be entirely out of place here, since the *petiḥtaot* have only preserved a function similar to the rest of the interpretations [exegeses] of the text" (Goldberg, "Versuch," 51-52; cf. Lenhard, *Die Rabbinische Homilie*, 15). Thus, a *petiḥtah* always preserves its exegetical function. Goldberg later stated that "outside the rabbinic homily, the *Petiḥah* appears to have no function. Its usage outside the rabbinic homily is irrelevant for the taxonomy of the homily form" ("Form Analysis," 165; cf. "Distributive und kompositive Formen," 152). Goldberg meant that a *petiḥtah* is not a constituent of a larger form in the exegetical midrashim. I believe that the IMI forms an exception to his statement.

[69] See above, pp. 5-6.

[70] See below, p. 26, regarding my description of O.

(a) individual letters or groups of letters whose morphemic
    or lexemic identity is suspended or open
(b) morphemes or words
(c) clauses or sentences
(d) larger textual units (mainly narrative or legal units).[71]

Second, lemmatization can be achieved explicitly as well as functionally in the exegetical

Midrashim. In lieu of explicit lemmatization, functional lemmatization also occurs, i.e.,

other formal devices point to a specific lemma.[72] One device is the use of the phrase

וגומר, "and so on," which extends a scriptural citation for an undetermined text amount;

the lemmatized portion is often found in the extension.[73] Other devices include standard

phrases that introduce additional interpretations of a lemma, e.g., דבר אחר, or that

introduce subordinate exegetical forms, e.g., a *mashal* (parable), *ma'aseh*, or a dialogue

between rabbis.[74] Functional lemmatization can also be achieved simply by placement of

---

[71] Alexander Samely, "Between Scripture and its Rewording: Towards a Classification of Rabbinic Exegesis," *JJS* 42 (1991): 41. Samely describes the features of a letter that may be lemmatized and may hold meaning: "(i) the *shape* of the letter; (ii) the meaning of its *name*; (iii) its *numerical* value; (iv) its *alphabetical* position; (v) its *acronym* value; (vi) its *representative* value in a secondary alphabet; (vii) its *sound* value" (ibid.). Compare Goldberg, "Das Lemma kann ein Wort, Lexem, Morphem, ein Satzteil, ein Teil des Textes in Relation zu einem anderen Teil des Textes oder ein graphisches Zeichen sein" - "The lemma can be a word, lexeme, morpheme, part of a sentence, part of a text in relation to another part of a text, or a graphic sign" ("Die funktionale Form Midrasch," 6; cf. Arnold Goldberg, "Die Schrift der rabbinischen Schriftausleger," *FJB* 15 [1987]: 1-15, trans. Alexander Samely, "The Rabbinic View of Scripture," in *A Tribute to Geza Vermes: Essays on Jewish and Christian Literature and History*, ed. Philip R. Davies and Richard T. White [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990], 156, 160).

[72] The functional forms midrash sentence, *petirah* sentence, and *petiḥtah* play a role in functional lemmatization. Since the functional form describes the relation between constituents, we can always surmise what the lemma is based on the dicta derived from it.

[73] Even though this may complicate matters, the functional forms help to determine the lemmatized portion by working backwards from their dicta; see above, n. 72.

[74] Compare, "Die Zitatform segmentiert die Abfolge der einzelnen Auslegungen, und dies ist besonders wichtig, wenn mehrere Auslegungen zum gleichen Lemma aufeinander folgen. Aber es gab auch noch die Möglichkeit, zwei Sätze durch die neue Einleitung 'eine andere Auslegung' (ד״א) zu trennen . . . Solche Formen sind vorfindlich, aber sie haben keinen Einfluß auf die Form-M, sie ordnen lediglich den Text (und die Form) noch einmal einer anderern Form unter" - "The citation form divides the succession of separate interpretations into segments, and this is particularly important when several interpretations to the same lemma follow one after the other. However, there was also the possibility to separate two compositions by means of the new introduction, 'another interpretation' (ד״א) . . . Such forms are found. However, they have no influence on the functional form midrash; they merely arrange the text (and the form) once more under another form" (Goldberg, "Die funktionale Form Midrasch," 30-31).

forms within a distributional order. The exegetical Midrashim distribute their forms according to the sequence of the verses of a biblical book.[75] Since the IMI is always found at the beginning of such a distribution, it lemmatizes the first verse in it.

After the scriptural lemma has been identified, the next step is to determine what is signified by it. This is also more complicated than it appears. What is signified by a lemma only becomes clear in relation to a dictum derived from it. Goldberg states:

> Was das Lemma ist, ist keineswegs am Schriftzitat zu erkennen, wie es in den MR vorfindlich ist, sondern nur an der Frage und der Antwort, die in jedem Midrasch enthalten sind. Das Lemma is also nicht einfach ein Segment der Offenbarungsschrift, sondern ein lemmatisiertes, in Frage gestelltes Segment.[76]

Posing questions about a lemma considerably increases the number of possible subjects of discourse in the Midrashim. Such discourse is carried out as a dialogue between questions posed about L and their answers given in D, i.e., dicta form a syntagma of propositions with L. Therefore, L and D contribute to thematic discourse based on formal criteria. First, the lemmatized part of Scripture signifies a discoursive subject; in some cases a paraphrase of L identifies its subject. Second, the dicta connect in a sustained treatment of that subject. Consequently, the paradigm for L remains the same. Third, the dicta on the discoursive subject proceed in a successive and uninterrupted fashion. For instance, the exegetical midrashim present several *petihtaot* on a *seder* verse before they present individual midrash or *petirah* sentences on it. Dicta from the *petihtaot* on a discoursive theme should connect immediately with dicta from the other forms that follow. Finally, rows of midrash or *petirah* sentences in a composite

---

[75] Stemberger and Strack, *Introduction*, 240; Goldberg, "Distributive und kompositive Formen," 148.

[76] Goldberg, "Die funktionale Form Midrasch," 6. "The lemma is by no means to be identified by the scriptural citation as it is found in the midrashic realization, but only by the question and the answer that are contained in each midrash. The lemma is thus not simply a segment of Scripture, but a lemmatized segment that poses a question." For example, a hidden dialogical question may lie dormant in a lemma.

petiḥtah usually prove the validity of certain classes or cases before they are applied to the exegesis of the *seder* verse,[77] which serves a rhetorical function to treat the larger discoursive subject. The same applies to dicta from subordinate exegetical forms.

The constituents L and D in this type of thematic discourse have a functional form, i.e., they join in a relational structure. Goldberg calls a large compositional unit with a relational structure an *idealtypische Form*:

> A comparison of many such forms of individual texts makes it possible to differentiate between constants and variables until finally an ideal-typical model, an "idealtypische Form", can be determined which in turn enables us to determine the forms . . . The ideal-typical model is not a form which can be proved as such, i.e., as a form that must exist. It is rather a supposed form which can be discovered empirically in the individual text. The model makes it possible to differentiate in each concrete instance between form and style or between constants and variables. The model which is the ideal-typical form must represent function first, as far as this is possible. The purpose is to represent a functional form that is in accordance with the relational relations obtaining between the elements of the form and a certain function, as can be shown in each text.[78]

Lenhard prefers the term *prototypische Form* or *Standardform* over Goldberg's *idealtypische Form*. She states that Goldberg's term does not correspond to the method used to derive it; *idealtypische Form* leaves the impression of having been derived from the objective method of classification. This method is appropriate for categorizing digitally defined elements, e.g., mathematical sets, where all elements of a category have the same characteristics. *Idealtypische Form* implies that deviant forms are automatically excluded from the class. In contrast, the prototypical method is more appropriate for

---

[77] Cf. Goldberg, "Versuch," 52.

[78] Goldberg, "Form Analysis," 164. Goldberg's remarks that an ideal-typical form "represents a functional form," and it "must represent function first," make it unclear whether he differentiates between a functional form and an ideal-typical form. Since he is referring to the macroform homily as an *idealtypische Form*, it remains unclear whether he would use this term for the microforms or functional forms midrash or *petiḥtah*. Lenhard uses her corresponding term, *prototypische Form* (see below), for the microforms and the macroform homily. The largest unit designated by the *idealtypische* or *prototypische Form* in their analysis is the homily.

categorization of elements that can not be digitally defined: "Vielmehr stehen die

Elemente in *unterschiedlichen* Verhältnis und Nähe zu einem oder mehreren

Prototypen."[79] Lenhard explains the advantages of using her term over Goldberg's:

> Die durch den Prototypbegriff (gegenüber dem Idealtyp-Modell) gewonnene größere
> Flexibilität ermöglicht es, auch untypische, verderbte oder fragmentrische
> Texteinheiten noch in ihrer Relation zu dem Prototyp 'rabbinische Homilie' zu
> beschreiben, soweit sie eben noch eine Verwandtschaft zu diesem aufweisen.[80]

Since one of the main points of Goldberg's form analysis is that the functional form

remains the same even when some surface elements are missing (e.g., we recognize

corrupt forms even if some surface elements are missing), and Lenhard's terms seem to

highlight this point, I will use her term "*prototypische Form*" when I describe the IMI.

I am now in a position to make some preliminary observations about the IMI as a

prototypical form. The prototypical form IMI is its functional form, which describes the

IMI as a deep relational structure in opposition to its surface or literary realization. Its

constituents are made up of the microforms midrash sentences, *petirah* sentences,

petiḥtaot, and their subordinate exegetical forms. The constituents of the macroform IMI

can be described in terms of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations within and among its

microforms. Its paradigms are the text-classes L and D that join in a syntagma, or a

dialogical discourse on the questions posed in L and the answers given in D. The IMI

follows the same formal criteria that the functional form thematic discourse follows in the

Midrashim. First, the paradigm for L is the verse 1:1 of a biblical book, or, in the case of

---

[79] "Rather the elements exist in varying relationship with and proximity to one or more prototypes" (Lenhard, *Die rabbinische Homilie*, 17).

[80] "The greater flexibility gained by the prototypical concept (in contrast to the ideal-typical model) makes it possible to describe atypical, corrupt or fragmentary text units as well in their relation to the prototype 'rabbinic homily,' as far as they just even have a relationship to it" (ibid., 18; see 16-19 for her entire discussion).

Midrash Mishle, its first nine verses.[81] The paradigm for D is the propositional content of 1:1. These dicta relate to introductory issues as I have defined them, i.e., questions regarding authorship and inspiration, time of composition, historical setting, genre, methods of interpretation, themes, and literary forms and unity. Since the paradigm for L, i.e., 1:1 of a biblical book, usually contains the title of a biblical book, the authors / editors of the Midrashim exploited that lemma to pose introductory questions about entire books. By widening the discoursive subject in this way, the IMI presents dicta that pertain to introductory issues. In certain cases the paradigm for L is even paraphrased so that its discoursive subject of "Introduction" to biblical books can not be overlooked.

Second, the dicta that are derived from 1:1 carry on a sustained treatment of introductory issues. The paradigm for L remains 1:1 until they have been treated fully, which results in the presentation of a large amount of material for a book's opening lemma. Third, the dicta about introductory issues are presented successively without major interruption. Most of the IMIs follow the same pattern. Several *petiḥtaot* on the *seder* verse 1:1 present dicta on introductory issues followed by midrash sentences and/or *petirah* sentences and subordinate exegetical forms that present more dicta on the same issues. These forms follow the *petiḥtaot* without any intervening material (that treats a completely discoursive [digressive] subject). Fourth, the *petiḥtaot* and the forms that follow them often contain series of midrash or *petirah* sentences or subordinate exegetical forms that serve to establish the validity of certain classes or cases before they are applied to the interpretation of 1:1, i.e., they also contribute to the overall discoursive subject of "Introduction."

---

[81] For *Midrash Mishle* as an exception, see pp. 157-158.

Finally, I have explained the prototypical form IMI as a dialogical discourse of L and D on "Introduction." My discussion assumes that O (a hermeneutical operation) has guided the exegesis in typical midrashic fashion. However, it is not essential to explain every hermeneutical operation in order to uncover the thematic discourse. Every one of these is simply a means to an end, a means to establish a discoursive proposition. In my description of the IMIs in chapters 1-6, I will not explain every hermeneutic device employed to arrive at the various dicta.

An examination of the entire Midrashic corpus reveals that IMIs are found in Midrashim on the Torah, i.e., in *Sifra* on Leviticus and *Leviticus Rabbah*, and on the Writings, i.e., in *Song of Songs Rabbah*, *Lamentations Rabbah*, *Midrash Psalms*, and *Midrash Proverbs*. After I have described these six IMIs, I will further clarify the prototypical form IMI and discuss specific examples of its literary realizations. In the final analysis, the prototypical form IMI allows us to recognize and comprehend the texts that were used to extract it.[82] "This conscious recognition is a mode of reflective, as opposed to intuitive, comprehension."[83] I am particularly interested in the themes they treat so I can compare them to the themes treated in introductions to medieval rabbinic commentaries. The prototypical form will be described under the heading "Formal Dimensions," and its literary realizations under the heading "Thematic Dimensions."

---

[82] Goldberg, "Form Analysis," 159.
[83] Ibid., 171.

The Influence of the Inner Midrashic Introduction on
Introductions to Medieval Rabbinic Bible Commentaries

Once I have successfully isolated the IMI, I will demonstrate that it influenced

the form, themes, and material contents of some early introductions to medieval rabbinic

Bible commentaries (written in Hebrew).[84] This demonstration will corroborate the

existence of the IMI as an introductory form, and will establish that a degree of continuity

exists between it and the commentary introductions.

Many rabbinic commentaries have separate introductions (hereafter הקדמות)

positioned before their body of comments that begin on 1:1. Since they are formally

separated from the comments within the biblical verse order, I designate them as

הקדמות, even if they do not begin with the title הקדמה.[85] However, a הקדמה was never

a formal requirement in medieval rabbinic Bible commentaries. We only need to recall

Sirat's remark that "Jewish biblical commentaries can be classified according to the

presence or absence of an introduction [separated from the body of commentary]."[86] On

closer inspection, some authors continued to place introductory material among their

comments on 1:1 of a biblical book well after the separate introduction appeared in

---

[84] My analysis of the IMIs does not offer any new evidence to challenge the scholarly consensus about the dating of the Midrashim. Therefore I accept it, specifically as represented by Stemberger and Strack (Stemberger and Strack, *Introduction*, 261-263 [*Sifra*], 291 [*Lev Rab.*], 286 [*Lam Rab.*], 315 [*Song Rab.*], 322-323 [*Midrash Psalms*], 324 [*Midrash Mishle*]; cf. Neusner's relative chronology of the Midrashim of late antiquity [Neusner, *Introduction*, 13-14]). Since I am only concerned with Hebrew commentators and not Judeo-Arabic ones, and all of the commentators mentioned in chapters 8 to 12 cite or allude to the IMIs, the direction of influence is clear: the IMIs influenced the Hebrew commentary introductions. Most, if not all, of the IMIs also predate the Ge'onim and the Judeo-Arabic commentators. The only ones that *may* have postdated some of them are *Midrash Psalms* and *Midrash Mishle*. Even if they did, the IMIs in *Sifra, Lev Rab., Song Rab.*, and *Lam Rab.* (including at least part of the *petihtaot* section) supply the prototypical form IMI and excellent examples of its literary realizations, including its best example in *Song Rab.* Therefore, based on our present state of knowledge, the IMI as a form of introduction preceded commentary introductions in general, and the Hebrew ones in particular.

[85] Compare Marcus' statement regarding introductions in n. 6 above, that we could consider an introduction to be "any general remarks about the work as a whole prior to the first comment on the first verse of a book . . . "

[86] See above, p. 3, and n. 7.

rabbinic Judaism.[87] This form of introduction, which places its material within the body

of the commentary, i.e., under 1:1ff., appears to be an adaptation of the IMI; therefore, I

have designated it by the phrase, "Inner-Commentary Introduction" (hereafter, ICI).

Thus, there are two forms of introduction found in the medieval rabbinic Bible

commentaries, the ICI and the הקדמה (separate introduction).

In addition to the formal characteristic of placing introductory material in an ICI

or a הקדמה, these Bible commentary introductions also share certain thematic and

material characteristics, i.e., their choice of certain themes for discussion, and their

material content that treats them. Based on the correspondence of formal, thematic, and

material characteristics, the following four criteria would show that an IMI influenced an

ICI or a הקדמה. First, an ICI or הקדמה addresses many of the same themes as an IMI,

i.e., authorship and inspiration, time of composition, historical setting, genre, methods of

interpretation, themes, and literary forms and unity. Second, while exploring these same

themes an ICI or הקדמה cites or alludes to one or more IMIs.[88] This criterion of

influence would be particularly compelling if the ICI or הקדמה cites or alludes to the

---

[87] For the appearance of the הקדמה in Rashi, see n. 6 above. For examples of Inner-Commentary Introductions over a century after Rashi, see chapters 10 and 12.

[88] In cases of citation or allusion, we would expect the functional forms of the IMI, i.e., midrash and *petirah* sentences and *petihtaot*, to be deconstructed, i.e., their lemmas would be supplied by the new discoursive commentary context (following the scriptural verse order), and only their dicta would appear. What Goldberg described in a theoretical discussion about the decomposition of the functional form midrash actually occurs in the commentary form: "From the point of view of form analysis, each Midrash can be described as realizing a functional form, and in such a way that sentences are always generated which can be described thus: 'The lemma X is (or the meaning is) Y' (with the addition: as long as certain exegetical operations are used). Such sentences cannot be decomposed without destroying the text. But if this is done for the purpose of analysis, the meta-linguistic sentences are decomposed. Sentences of the pattern 'Lemma X means Y', or 'This is so because it says . . . ', are not formed. Instead, there is only a succession of propositions contained in the meta-linguistic propositions, and which, strung together, can produce the *content* . . . e.g., as an object-linguistic narration about something said to have happened" (Goldberg, "Form Analysis," 162; cf. Lenhard, *Die rabbinische Homilie*, 14). Elsewhere, Goldberg states that biblical commentary explains the events in Scripture, i.e., what happened (Goldberg, "Die funktionale Form Midrasch," 29). Thus, dicta from the deconstructed forms of the IMIs are placed in a new type of thematic discourse about introductory issues in the commentary introductions.

IMI to the same book. Third, the presentation of introductory material within comments on 1:1, demonstrated by the first criterion above, and the use of an IMI as a source for it, demonstrated by the second criterion, shows that a commentator adopted the form of an IMI. And fourth, if a commentator displays no familiarity with non-Jewish models of introduction, it is more reasonable to presume the influence of an internal Jewish model such as an IMI, or another Jewish commentary introduction (see below).

These criteria work best for biblical books that contain corresponding IMIs for a limited number of early commentators. As soon as the IMI directly and exclusively influenced some commentary introductions, they in turn become models of introduction themselves, e.g., as soon as the IMIs influenced Rashi's introductions there were two Jewish models of introduction available, the IMIs and his introductions. Within a century and a quarter of Rashi, Ibn Ezra and Ibn Tibbon adapted and adopted the generic *ṣadr* and *muḳaddima* and the *prooemium* (prologue to philosophical commentaries), and introduced them into the medieval rabbinic Hebrew commentary tradition.[89] The availability of a growing number of models of introduction as time goes on, including the scholastic counterpart of the *prooemium* the *accessus ad auctores* and the Aristotelian prologue,[90] along with the increased difficulty in determining each commentator's sources, makes it difficult to untangle the influences on the choice and/or treatment of themes in Jewish ICIs and הקדמות. Lawee's description of the Jewish exegetical tradition also makes it clear that these influences cannot be traced in a linear fashion. He states:

---

[89] See pp. 201-204 regarding Ibn Ezra, and pp. 214-217 regarding Ibn Tibbon.

[90] For the *accessus ad auctores* as the scholastic counterpart of the *prooemium*, see p. 215, n. 15. The *accessus* may have exerted an influence from the 12th century on, and the Aristotelian prologue from the 13th century on (Lawee, "Introducing Scripture," 159-160). I discuss the entry of the *prooemium* into the medieval rabbinic commentary tradition, but not the history of its or the *accessus's* influence in that tradition; see n. 89 above.

Chronologically, the existence of a sophisticated early and high medieval Judeo-Arabic stratum grounded in a multifaceted oriental scriptural hermeneutic means that linear depictions of the totality of the medieval Jewish exegetical tradition, and certainly "progressive" ones, fail. No specific exordial formats were invoked *en bloc* by all or even most high or late medieval Jewish exegetes in any given scholarly center, in part because there were no institutionalized contexts of instruction, like the university or cathedral school, which could propagate uniform approaches that would increase attention to biblical authorship or style.[91]

My analysis of the influence of the IMIs on the introductions in chapters 8 to 12 takes into account all the models of introduction available to each commentator in order to determine the extent of the influence of the IMI. If it was the only model available, its influence was direct and exclusive. If other models of introduction were available, including other Jewish commentary introductions or the non-Jewish models mentioned above, the IMIs influence could be either direct and exclusive if a commentator ignored the others, or shared with other models if a commentator took note of them.

Based on the difficulties of establishing the later influence of the IMIs on the הקדמות (when it becomes difficult to untangle the influences of sources and other models of introduction), and based on the discovery of the Inner-Commentary Introduction that widens the potential area of research to every medieval Jewish commentary, an exhaustive study of the IMI's influence lies beyond the scope of the thesis. Returning to my objectives for the demonstration of the IMI's influence, i.e., to corroborate its existence and to establish its continuity with the early commentary introductions, I will limit my investigation to the following early important commentators who wrote in Hebrew: Rashi (1040-1105, NE France), Ibn Ezra (1089-1165, Spain), Samuel Ibn Tibbon (1160-1232, Provence), Radak (1160-1235, Provence), and Ramban (1194-1270, Spain). I will also limit my investigation of their introductions. Since it is

---

[91] Lawee, "Introducing Scripture," 167-168.

most likely that the IMIs to Leviticus, Song of Songs, Lamentations, Psalms, and Proverbs would influence the commentary introductions to those same books, I begin my search for the IMI's influence in them. Then I will consider whether the IMI played a role in the development of the genre in general, in relation to commentary introductions to biblical books where corresponding IMIs do not exist, i.e., to Ecclesiastes, Genesis, and to the rest of the Torah. My analysis of their introductions will demonstrate that the IMI had an early, direct, and continuing influence on medieval rabbinic commentaries with both forms of introduction, the ICI and the הקדמה.

The Plan of the Work

In Part One, "Inner-Midrashic Introductions to Individual Biblical Books," I perform a detailed analysis of the opening verse(s) of six Midrashim and isolate their IMIs. Their order of presentation reflects a compromise between the accepted relative dating of those Midrashim and the themes shared by their IMIs.[92] Since *Sifra on Leviticus* is the earliest Midrashim (of the six), its IMI is presented in chapter 1. Based on shared themes with *Sifra*, the IMI in *Leviticus Rabbah* is presented in chapter 2. The IMI to *Song of Songs Rabbah* is presented in chapter 3. Given the difficulties dating the entire opening section of *petihtaot* in *Lamentations Rabbah*, I delay the presentation of its IMI until chapter 4. The IMI to *Midrash Psalms* is presented in chapter 5, and the one to *Midrash Mishle* in chapter 6. In the last chapter (7) of Part One, "The Inner-Midrashic Introduction: Formal and Thematic Dimensions," I compare these six IMIs in detail to evaluate their formal and thematic dimensions.

---

[92] See n. 84 above regarding the date of these Midrashim.

In Part Two,"The Influence of the Inner-Midrashic Introductions on the Form, Themes, and Material Content of Introductions to Medieval Rabbinic Bible Commentaries," I analyze selected Inner-Commentary Introductions and הקדמות in terms of their formal, thematic, and material characteristics to determine whether the IMI influenced them. My analysis in chapters 8 to 12 of selected introductions of Rashi (8), Ibn Ezra (9), Ibn Tibbon (10), Radak (11), and Ramban (12) demonstrates that the IMIs influenced them in terms of their formal characteristics when they presented as ICIs, in terms of their thematic characteristics when they treated the same themes as the IMIs, and in terms of their material characteristics when they cited and/or alluded to the content of the IMIs. I summarize my main findings in the Conclusion, including the discovery of the two new forms the Inner-Midrashic and Inner-Commentary Introductions; I also point out areas for further research.

CHAPTER ONE

THE INNER-MIDRASHIC INTRODUCTION IN
SIFRA on LEVITICUS

Textual Analysis of *Sifra* on Leviticus

A critical edition of *Sifra Leviticus* was prepared by Finkelstein.[1] He presents a

diplomatic text based on Vatican Ms Assemani 66, dated the 9th or 10th century.[2] I cite

Sifra in its original language from Finkelstein's edition and provide an English

translation.[3] I also cite the masoretic text (with vocalization and cantillation) in a footnote

so readers can compare it to its midrashic interpretation.

---

[1] Louis Finkelstein, ספרא דבי רב והוא ספר תורת כהנים ע״פ כת״י רומי (אסמני מספר 66) ושנויי
נוסחאות משאר כתה״י, קטעי הגניזה ודפוסים ראשונים וגם מהבאות אצל הראשונים בצירוף מסורת הספרא
ופירושים [English title added: *Sifra on Leviticus According to Vatican Manuscript Assemani 66 with
Variants from the Other Manuscripts, Genizah Fragments, Early Editions, and Quotations by Medieval
Authorities and with References to Parallel Passages and Commentaries*], 5 vols. (New York: The Jewish
Theological Seminary of America, 1983-91).

[2] In a diplomatic edition, "an existing manuscript is used as the basic text for collating other relevant
manuscripts" (Johann Cook, "New Horizons in Textual Criticism," in *Text and Context: Old Testament and
Semitic Studies for F. C. Fensham,* ed. W. Claassen, JSOT Supplement Series 48 [Sheffield: JSOT Press,
1988], 54). A truly diplomatic edition consists of an exact transcription of a manuscript, including obvious
errors. Collation of variants from other witnesses are noted separately in an apparatus; these variances may
suggest corrections, additions, or deletions from the base manuscript towards the goal of establishing an
archetype.

[3] Finkelstein, ספרא [*Sifra on Leviticus*], 2:3-11. Unless otherwise noted, I translate *Sifra* myself in
consultation with Neusner's and Porton's translations (Jacob Neusner, *Sifra: An Analytical Translation,*
vol. 1, *Introduction, Vayyiqra Dibura Denedabah and Vayyiqra Dibura Dehobah* [Atlanta: Scholars Press,
1988], 67-75; Gary G. Porton, trans., "Prologue: Beraita DeRabbi Ishmael," in *Sifra: An Analytical
Translation,* vol. 1, *Introduction, Vayyiqra Dibura Denedabah and Vayyiqra Dibura Dehobah,* by Jacob
Neusner, 55-63 [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988]).

Initial Remarks about the Lemmatization of the IMI

Sifra on Leviticus does not begin with midrash sentences on Lev 1:1, but with

stereotypical discourse, in which propositions are placed in question and then proved by

midrash sentences.[4] The first propositions deal with how Torah in general, including

Leviticus, should be interpreted. This is followed by individual midrash sentences on

Lev 1:1.

Introductory Material in Stereotypical Discourse

The opening section of *Sifra* introduces the thirteen *middot* of Rabbi Ishmael

about how to interpret the Torah. First the rules are given without scriptural examples.

These *middot* are then applied to Torah texts, including some from the book of Leviticus.

For my purposes it will suffice to give the rules in English translation, and point out in

brackets which ones are applied to Leviticus in the next section.[5]

> Rabbi Ishmael says: "By thirteen methods the Torah is interpreted." [It is
> interpreted] by means of an *a fortiori* argument, by means of an analogy (gzrh swh),
> by means of a prototype based on one passage, by means of a prototype based on two
> passages, by means of a general statement and a specific statement (Lev 1:2), by
> means of a specific statement and a general statement, by means of a general
> statement and a specific statement and a general statement (you decide only
> according to the subject of the specific statement), by means of a general statement
> which requires the specific statement, and by means of a specific statement which
> requires the general statement. Anything which is included in the general statement
> and which is specific in order to teach [something] teaches not only about itself but
> also teaches about everything included in the general statement (Lev 7:20, 37).
> Anything that is included in the general statement and which is specific as a
> requirement concerning another requirement which is in keeping with the general
> statement is specified in order to make [the second requirement] less stringent and
> not more stringent (Lev 13:18, 24). Anything that is included in the general
> statement and which is specified as a requirement in the general statement and which

---

[4] Goldberg, "Stereotype Diskurse," 24. Neusner calls this form "dialectical" (Neusner, *Sifra: An Analytical Translation*, 24).

[5] For further information on these *middot* see Stemberger and Strack, *Introduction*, 20-22, and literature cited there.

is specified as a requirement concerning another requirement which is not in keeping with the general statement is specified either to make less or more stringent (Lev 13:29). Anything that is included in the general statement and which is excepted from it by an entirely new [provision], you may not return it to [the provisions] of its [original] general statement unless Scripture expressly indicates that you may do so (Lev 14:13-14). A thing is to be explained from its context (Lev 13:40, 42), a thing is to be explained from what follows it (Lev 14:34, 45). And thus two passages which contradict each other [cannot be reconciled] unless a third passage comes and decides between them.[6]

The implication of this discursive section is that we are to interpret the book of Leviticus by these rules.

Introductory Material in Midrash Sentences

The first midrash sentences explore Moses' call, with dicta derived from ויקרא

אל משה וידבר יהוה אליו[7] (Lev 1:1). The first dictum is that "He sent a call in advance of

the speech"[8] (הקדים קרייה לדיבר).[9] This is supported by two other proof-texts besides

Lev 1:1, i.e., Exod 3:4 and Exod 19:3, when God called to Moses from the bush and from

Sinai. These verses have in common that "whenever the speech from the mouth of the

Holy One addressed itself to Moses, He sent a call in advance of the speech" (כל שהוא

דיבר ומפי קודש למשה [ו]הקדים בו קרייה לדיבר).

However, new sections in Leviticus do not begin with either the words "He

called" or "He spoke."[10] These sections allowed Moses to pause so he could reflect on

each *parashah* and subject (ליתן רווח למשה להיתבונן בין פרשה לפרשה ובין עניין לעניין).

If Moses, the one who heard words from the mouth of the Holy One, and who spoke

---

[6] Porton, "Prologue: Beraita DeRabbi Ishmael," 57ff.; cf. Finkelstein, ספרא [*Sifra on Leviticus*], 2:3-11.

[7] וַיִּקְרָא אֶל מֹשֶׁה וַיְדַבֵּר יְהֹוָה אֵלָיו.

[8] Marcus Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, The Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (Brooklyn: P. Shalom Pub., 1967), s.v. קרייה.

[9] Citations of midrash sentences are from Finkelstein, ספרא [*Sifra on Leviticus*], 2:11ff.

[10] For example, Lev 1:10ff. (ibid., 2:12).

(as a prophet) by the רוח הקודש found it necessary to reflect between *parashiyot* and subjects, how much more should a common person take time to reflect! (מה אם מי שהוא שומע מפי הקדוש ומדבר ברוח הקודש צריך להתבונן בין פרשה לפרשה ובין עינין לעינין על אחת כמה וכמה הידיוט מיהידיוט). This implies that the *parashiyot* in Leviticus should be studied deliberately and methodically.

Another midrash sentence stresses that God called to Moses and spoke *to him* (Lev 1:1). The explicit mention of "to him" excludes Aaron (למעט את אהרן) from the Divine Speech. Thirteen proof-texts, of which Lev 1:1 is one, show that on these occasions God spoke to Moses to the exclusion of Aaron. Lev 1:1 also shows that Aaron was excluded from the Divine Speeches that emanated from the tent of meeting (מיעט את אהרן מידיברות אהל מועד). All other candidates were also excluded from meeting with God in the tent (and from hearing the Divine Speech), including the Israelites, the elders, and Aaron's sons. The Israelites were excluded because they were not fit to go up the mountain (אוציא את ישראל שלא כשרו לעלות בהר).

Exod 29:43, [11] ונעדתי שמה לבני ישראל ונקדש בכבדי, does not prove an exception; נעדתי could be translated either as "meet with" or "appear." This verse was fulfilled when fire from the Lord consumed the burnt offering on the altar, and the people *saw*, shouted, and fell on their faces (Lev 9:24). Therefore, its proper translation is עתיד אני להיועד להם ולהיתקדש בהם - "And I will appear there [at the tent of meeting] before the sons of Israel, and I will be sanctified among them by My glory."

Exod 29:43 promises an appearance to Israel, not a meeting in the tent. Only Moses was promised a physical meeting in the tent: ונעדתי לך שם - "And I will meet with

---

[11] וְנֹעַדְתִּי שָׁמָּה לִבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנִקְדַּשׁ בִּכְבֹדִי.

you there" (Exod 25:22). Even though the elders were permitted to go up the mountain, they were never present with Moses during a Divine Speech act (שלוא נראו בדיב
ר עים משה); therefore, they were also excluded from a meeting. On the other hand, Aaron (אִוָּעֵד לָכֶם שָׁמָּה, Exod 29:42; Num 17:19) and his sons (Num 26:1) were present with Moses during speech acts from God. However, since God specified He would meet only with Moses (אִוָּעֵד לְךָ - "I will meet with you," Exod 30:6), they were excluded from speeches in the tent: "You [Moses] will have a meeting, but no one else will have a meeting" (לך היתה יעידה ולא היתה יעידה לכולם). Therefore, Moses heard the Divine Speech exclusively, in a private meeting with God in the tent of meeting.

The next midrash sentences explore whether the Divine Speech (הדיברות) or its sound could be heard outside the tent of meeting by Israel, the elders, or Aaron and his sons. The same proof-texts show that they did not hear the Divine Speech: ודברתי אתך - "And I will speak with you" (Exod 25:22), and לדבר אליך - "To speak with you" (Exod 29:42), i.e., "A speech act will take place with you; a speech act will not take place with any other (עימך היה הדביר לא היה הדביר עם כולם). Furthermore, no one heard the sound (קול) of the Divine Speech beyond the tent. Only Moses heard the voice (קול) speaking with him in the tent (ובבא משה אל אהל מועד לדבר אתו וישמע את הקול מדבר אליו, Num 7:89). In fact, by the same argument, even the ministering angels did not hear the voice of God as Moses did! In conclusion, only Moses heard the voice/sound of God speaking, and none of the other candidates (משה היה שומע את הקול ואין כל אילו שומעים את הקול).

The next midrash sentence, based on מאהל מועד with partitive מן (that expresses

separation), confirms that the sound of God's voice did not travel beyond the tent of

meeting (ולא היה יוצא חוץ לאוהל).[12] Since Moses could hear the voice/sound

(Num 7:89) that is so loud and powerful that it affects all of nature (Ps 29:4-7), the verse

needed to specify (with מן) that the voice/sound stayed within the tent. Another dictum is

proposed that the voice originated from over the cover of the ark: ובבא משה אל אהל

מועד לדבר אתו וישמע את הקול מדבר אליו מעל הכפרת אשר על ארן העדת מבין שני

הכרבים וידבר אליו - "When Moses entered the tent of meeting to speak with Him, he

heard the voice speaking to him from above the cover that was on the ark of the

testimony, from between the two cherubim, and He spoke to him" (Num 7:89).

Therefore, the sound of the voice did not even fill the whole tabernacle, but only

resonated above the cover between the cherubim.

A new dictum based on Num 7:89 is proposed: "Observe how beloved Israel is,

to the extent that it caused this vast glory [of God that fills heaven and earth] to appear

compressed and to be speaking over the cover between the two cherubim" (ראה חיבתן

שלישראל עד איכן גרמה לכבוד הזה המרובה כלידחק ליראות מדבר מעל הכפורת מבין שני

הכרובים). This is followed by a digression about whether Moses saw God and lived.[13]

Finally, two dicta are proposed about "saying" (לאמר) in Lev 1:1. The first is, צא

ואמור להם דברי כבושים בישבילכם נדבר עימי - "Go and speak words of reproof to them,

i.e., 'It is for your sake He held speech with me.'" When God did not hold speech with

Moses for thirty-eight years, a generation of Israel wandered and died in the wilderness

---

[12] In this dictum, חוץ ל is the opposite of מן.

[13] Moses is not mentioned specifically, but only he could have seen the appearance of the glory of God between the cherubim.

(Deut 2:16-17). Therefore, "For their sake" means "For their life and prosperity." God's words bring life to Israel. The second dictum is that "saying" is short for two speech acts by Moses: transmitting God's word to the Israelites (Exod 34:34), and bringing back their reply to Him (Exod 19:8). The reply that Moses brought back was כל אשר דבר יהוה נעשה - "All that the Lord has spoken we will do" (Exod 19:8). Thus, Israel bound themselves to obey the laws in Leviticus.

Summary of the IMI in *Sifra* on Leviticus

i) Authorship and Inspiration

The IMI discusses aspects of Moses' uniqueness as a prophet and lawgiver. At the burning bush, Sinai, and the tent of meeting, God called Moses to speak to him. God also called Moses from among Israel, the elders, and Aaron and his sons to an exclusive meeting in the tent to listen to the Divine Speech. Furthermore, the sound of God's voice did not travel beyond the tent. Moses alone heard the Divine Speech in a physical meeting with God. Thus, Moses was a prophet whom God spoke with exclusively in the tent, and who spoke by the רוח הקודש to Israel.

The implication of Moses' incomparability as a prophet and lawgiver is that the book of Leviticus is also incomparable. It is a record of the Divine Speech that Moses heard in the presence of God, in the tabernacle, within the Holy of Holies, from over the cover of the ark. Thus, Leviticus enjoys the highest status as inspired Scripture.

ii) Time of Composition; Historical Setting

Since the sound of the voice did not travel beyond the tent of meeting, Moses had to repeat the Divine Speech to Israel. The book of Leviticus is a record of the Divine Speech that occurred shortly after the tabernacle was set up and that was reported to Israel straight away (before the incident of the spies; God did not hold speech with Moses after that incident for thirty-eight years).

iii) Genre

Leviticus is a written record of Divine Speeches (not visions!) that Moses heard exclusively from God. There is a further note that Moses was instructed to make a persuasive argument for Israel to obey them, i.e., that these commands meant life for them. These dicta imply that Leviticus is composed of Divine Speeches of law and persuasive arguments to ensure compliance. Persuasive sections of Leviticus include the incidents of fire coming from the Lord and consuming the burnt offering (Lev 9:23-24), and the death of Nadab and Abihu (Lev 10).

iv) Methods of Interpretation

The opening part of the IMI is concerned with the proper rules to interpret the Torah and Leviticus, i.e., the thirteen *middot* of Rabbi Ishmael and a short notice about the seven *middot* of Hillel.[14] The rules that are applied to Leviticus deal especially with general and specific cases of halakhah. Thus, an important introductory issue about Leviticus is its proper hermeneutics.

---

[14] It was not necessary to mention this until now. They appear after the application of the thirteen rules to verses in the Torah.

Another concern is that one should spend much time and care in studying the sections of Leviticus. Based on an *a fortiori* argument, if Moses needed to pause and collect his thoughts between sections, how much more should we study it deliberately and methodically.

v) Themes of Leviticus

Since the genre of the book of Leviticus is Torah, i.e., what Israel must do, it is concerned with halakhah. The thirteen *middot* that apply to Leviticus deal with how to derive halakah, e.g., how to derive general and specific cases. As Israel's leader, Moses must also persuade them to follow this Torah.

vi) Literary Forms and Unity

The unity of Leviticus is implied by its very nature as a collection of Divine Speeches given shortly after the tent of meeting was set up. All of the arguments that apply to ויקרא יהוה אליו מאהל מועד לאמר (Lev 1:1) as a Divine Speech act also apply to the repeated heading of sections: וידבר יהוה אל משה לאמר (Lev 4:1; 5:14, 20; 6:1, 12, 17; 7:22, 28; 8:1; 12:1; 14:1; 17:1; 18:1; 19:1; 20:1; 21:16; 22:1, 17, 26; 23:1, 9, 23, 26, 33; 24:1, 13; 25:1; 27:1).

Since introductory issues about Lev 1:1 also apply to all of its sections, the lemma Lev 1:1 addresses questions about the whole book. I would suggest that since Lev 1:1 contains the title of the book, ויקרא, it broadened the scope of the verse to the whole book so that introductory questions could be asked about it.

CHAPTER TWO

THE INNER-MIDRASHIC INTRODUCTION IN
LEVITICUS RABBAH

Textual Analysis of *Leviticus Rabbah*

The critical edition of *Leviticus Rabbah* was prepared by Margulies.[1] He presents

a diplomatic text based on Ms British Museum Add. 27169 (Catalogue no. 340), whose

exemplar dates before 1000.[2] I cite *Lev Rab.* in its original language from Margulies'

edition and provide an English translation.[3] I also cite the masoretic text (with

vocalization and cantillation) in a footnote so readers can compare it to its midrashic

interpretation.

---

[1] Mordecai Margulies, מדרש ויקרא רבה יוצא לאור על־פי כתבי־יד ושרידי הגניזה עם חילופי נוסחאות
הערות וביאורים [English title added: *Midrash Wayyikra Rabbah: A Critical Edition Based on Manuscripts and Genizah Fragments with Variants and Notes*], 5 vols. (Jerusalem: Louis M. and Minnie Epstein Fund of the American Academy for Jewish Research, 1953-60).

[2] Ibid., 1:XXXIV.

[3] Ibid., 1:לג-א. Unless otherwise noted, I translate *Lev Rab.* myself in consultation with Neusner's and Israelstam's and Slotki's translations (Jacob Neusner, *Judaism and Scripture: The Evidence of Leviticus Rabbah* [Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986], 141-160; J. Israelstam and Judah J. Slotki, trans., *Leviticus Rabbah*, in *The Soncino Midrash Rabbah [© 1983 The Soncino Press, Ltd.]: Davka Corporation's Judaic Classics Library II*, by David Kantrowitz [Institute for Computers in Jewish Life {Chicago}, Davka Corporation {Chicago} and Judaica Press Inc. {Brooklyn}, 1991-1999], CD-ROM. Print ed. Freedman, H. and Maurice Simon, eds., *Midrash Rabbah: Translated into English with Notes, Glossary and Indices*, 3rd ed., 10 vols., vol. 4, *Leviticus Rabbah*, translated by J. Israelstam and Judah J. Slotki [Soncino Press, London and New York, 1983]). Occasionally I furnish Neusner's translations with alternate or additional ones in square brackets.

Initial Remarks about the Lemmatization of the IMI

Lev 1:1 is the *seder* verse of the opening *petiḥtaot* in *Leviticus Rabbah*. These

petiḥtaot are followed by midrash and *petirah* sentences on Lev 1:1.

Introductory Material in the Opening *Petiḥtaot*

I stated in the Introduction that the IMI is a form that binds dicta on the first verse

of a biblical book in a thematic and sustained presentation of introductory issues. Such a

presentation enables the reader to keep in mind related dicta in the midst of other

discoursive (digressive) matters. These dicta are extracted from the main forms midrash

sentences, *petirah* sentences, and *petiḥtaot*, accompanied by proof-texts and illustrations

(parables, *ma'asot*, disputes, etc.) that support them. The following analysis of the

opening *petiḥtaot* in *Lev Rab.* demonstrates that their dicta interpret Lev 1:1 in terms of

introductory issues, and that they sustain that discussion before it is continued in midrash

and *petirah* sentences.

Petiḥtah 1

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Ps 103:20: ברכו י"י מלאכיו גיבורי כח עושי דברו לשמי קול

[4] דברו - "Bless the Lord, you his messengers, you mighty in strength, carrying out his

word, obeying his word."[5] A question is asked about the lemma מלאכיו: "Who is the

Scripture referring to?" (במה הכתי מדבר). A general dictum is proposed: "Prophets are

called messengers" (נקראו הנביאים מלאכים), accompanied by many proof-texts. A

classic definition of a prophet is offered: in essence they are messengers (מבית אב שלהן

---

[4] בָּרְכוּ יְהוָה מַלְאָכָיו גִּבֹּרֵי כֹחַ עֹשֵׂי דְבָרוֹ לִשְׁמֹעַ בְּקוֹל דְּבָרוֹ.

[5] Neusner, *Judaism and Scripture: The Evidence of Leviticus Rabbah*, 141.

נקראו הנביאים מלאכים). In particular Moses is called a messenger (Num 20:16),

therefore Moses is a prophet.

The same question is addressed to the lemma עושי דברו לשמ׳. It refers generally

to Israel, for they promised to obey God's word before they heard it (Exod 24:7, כל אשר

דבר ייי נעשה ונשמע). However, they were not able to listen to God's word; in contrast,

only Moses was able to (Deut 5:22ff.):

> Under ordinary circumstances a burden which is too heavy for one person is light for
> two, or too heavy for two is light for four. But is it possible to suppose that a burden
> that is too weighty for six hundred thousand can be light for a single individual?
> Now the entire people of Israel were standing before Mount Sinai and saying, "If we
> hear the voice of the Lord our God any more, then we shall die" [Deut 5:22]. But,
> [for his part], Moses heard the sound of the [Divine] word himself and lived.[6]

More proof that Moses was able to listen to God's word is given in the *seder* verse

Lev 1:1, "And the Lord called Moses." In fact, out of all of them, the Divine Speech

called Moses only (שמכולם לא קרא הדיבור אלא למשה).

This *petiḥtah* introduces positive aspects of Moses' biography that relate to his

status as a prophet, and his uniqueness among the prophets. These issues will be

addressed throughout the opening *petiḥtaot* and in the midrash sentences that follow. The

implication is that the book of Leviticus is the Divine Speech that Moses heard and

transmitted to Israel.

Petiḥtah 2

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Hos 14:8: ישובו יושבי בצילו יחיו דגן ויפרחו כגפן זכרו כיין

לבנון[7] - "Those who sit under its shade will revive; they will grow grain and sprout like

---

the vine; its fame will be like the wine of Lebanon." יושבי בצילו are identified as

proselytes - "These are the ones who come and seek refuge under the protection of the

Holy One, Blessed be He" (אילו הגרים שהן באין וחוסין בצילו שלהקב״ה). A dictum is

proposed about זכרו כיין לבנון - "The Holy One, Blessed Be He, said, 'The names of

proselytes are as dear to me as a libation of wine offered on the altar before Me'" (אמ׳

הקי חביב עלי שמותן שלגרים כיין נסך שקרב על גבי המזבח לפניי). Up to this point, the

petiḥtah relation between Hos 14:8 and Lev 1:1 has not been revealed. It will be revealed

after a series of midrash sentences on another lemma, 1 Chr 4:18: ואשתו היהודיה ילדה

את ירד אבי גדור ואת חבר אבי סוכו ואת יקותיאל אבי זנוח אלה בני בתיה בת פרעה אשר

לקח מרד[8] - "And his Judahite wife bore Yered the father of Gedor, and Heber the father

of Soco, and Yequthiel the father of Zanoah. These were the sons of Bithyah the daughter

of Pharaoh, whom Mared married." Since the books of Chronicles were given to be

interpreted midrashically (לא ניתן ספר דברי הימים אלא לידרש), the names in the verse

are interpreted midrashically as referring to Moses' mother Jochebed (= היהודיה) and six

of Moses' names (see below). This is followed by a list of three more of Moses' names

based on three other verses (see below). All of Moses' names address aspects of Moses'

biography that distinguish him above his countrymen. He also had a tenth name, his name

Moses given by Bithyah the daughter of Pharaoh. Returning to the *petiḥtah* lemma

Hos 14:8, and the dictum that God holds dear the names of proselytes, God chose to call

Moses by the name Bithyah the proselyte gave him; therefore, "God called to Moses"

(Lev 1:1, ויקרא אל משה).

---

[8] וְאִשְׁתּוֹ הַיְהֻדִיָּה יָלְדָה אֶת יֶרֶד אֲבִי גְדוֹר וְאֶת חֶבֶר אֲבִי שׂוֹכוֹ וְאֶת יְקוּתִיאֵל אֲבִי זָנוֹחַ וְאֵלֶּה בְּנֵי בִתְיָה בַת
פַּרְעֹה אֲשֶׁר לָקַח מָרֶד.

This *petiḥtah* continues to address positive aspects of Moses' biography through midrashic sentences on his names and their significance: ירד (1 Chr 4:18), for he brought down (הוריד) the Torah and the *Shekinah* from heaven to earth (מלמעלה למטה); אבי גדור (1 Chr 4:18), for he was the father of fence makers (גודרים);[9] חבר (1 Chr 4:18), for he united (חיבר) sons to their father in heaven; אבי סוכו (1 Chr 4:18), for he was the father of all the prophets who (fore)see by the holy spirit (סוכין ברוח הקודש); יקותיאל (1 Chr 4:18), for he caused sons to hope (מקוין) in their father in heaven; אבי זנוח (1 Chr 4:18), for he cleansed (הזניחן) the sin of the golden calf; טוביה (Tobiah, Exod 2:2), for he was good; שמעיה (Shemayah, 1 Chr 24:6), for God heard his prayer; לוי (Levi, Exod 4:14), after his ancestor; and, Moses (Exod 2:10). Moses' biography relates to his unique status as a prophet, lawgiver, and intercessor, and addresses how he alone merited the reward of writing the book of Leviticus.

Petiḥtah 3

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Ps 89:20: אז דברת בחזון לחסידיך ותאמר שויתי עזר על גבור הרימי בחור מעם[10] - "Of old [alternative translation, "Then"] you spoke in a vision to your faithful ones, saying, 'I have set the crown upon one who is mighty, I have exalted one chosen from the people.'"[11] This *petiḥtah* is a strophic one in which the *petiḥtah* lemma is applied to various biblical persons and events in a series of *petirot*; only the last *petirah* interprets the *seder* verse.[12] The lemma is divided into four parts; all four are applied to Abraham and then to David with proof-texts: דברת בחזון is applied to

---

[9] As a guard against sin; cf. Margulies, מדרש ויקרא רבה [Midrash Wayyikra Rabbah], 1:ט.

[10] אָז דִּבַּרְתָּ בְחָזוֹן לַחֲסִידֶיךָ וַתֹּאמֶר שִׁוִּיתִי עֵזֶר עַל גִּבּוֹר הֲרִימוֹתִי בָחוּר מֵעָם.

[11] Neusner, *Judaism and Scripture: The Evidence of Leviticus Rabbah*, 148.

[12] See p. 18.

Abraham (Gen 15:1) and David (2 Sam 7:17); לחסידיך is applied to Abraham (Mic 7:20)

and David (Ps 86:2); שויתי עזר על גיבור is applied to Abraham (Gen 14:15) and David

(his wars); and, הרימ׳ בחור מעם is applied to Abraham (Neh 9:7) and David (Ps 78:70).

Finally, the four parts are applied to Moses and interpret the *seder* verse. דברת בחזון is

proven by Num 12:8: פה אל פה אדבר בו ומראה - "I speak mouth to mouth with him, and

[in a] vision;" לחסידיך is proven by Deut 33:8: תומיך ואוריך לאיש חסידיך - "Your Urim

and Thummim belong to your faithful ones" (i.e., to the Levites, to which Moses

belonged); and, שויתי עזר על גבור refers to Moses' ability to carry the burden that six

hundred thousand could not - he was able to hear the word of God and live, as is shown

in the *seder* verse, ויקרא אל משה.

This *petiḥtah* relates to Moses' status as a prophet, and his uniqueness among

them. Moses was God's faithful and mighty one, unique among his peers, whom God

spoke with mouth to mouth. Therefore, what Moses spoke as the book of Leviticus was

received directly from God, in a unique manner among the prophets. As such, the book

enjoys the highest prophetic status.

Petiḥtah 4

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Prov 25:7: כי טוב אמר לך עלה הנה מהשפילך לפני נדיב

אשר ראו עיניך[13] - "For it is better to be told 'Come up here,' than to be put lower in the

presence of the prince'"[14] "so that they can see you."[15] A dictum is proposed that the

lemma לך should be understood as the preposition ל with a masculine suffix, meaning "to

---

[13] כִּי טוֹב אֲמָר לְךָ עֲלֵה הֵנָּה מֵהַשְׁפִּילְךָ לִפְנֵי נָדִיב אֲשֶׁר רָאוּ עֵינֶיךָ.

[14] Neusner, *Judaism and Scripture: The Evidence of Leviticus Rabbah*, 150.

[15] This translation is based on Ps 113:5-6, הַמַּגְבִּיהִי לָשֶׁבֶת הַמַּשְׁפִּילִי לִרְאוֹת - "Raising the humble to a higher seat [in order] to be seen," which *Lev Rab.* discusses in the context of Prov 25:7.

you" (instead of an imperative [of הלך]). By using this lemma, God commanded Moses

and no one else: "You I am sending to Pharaoh" (Exod 3:10, לכה ואשלחך אל פרעה).

Proof-texts follow that demonstrate God commanded Moses and no one else: "You, raise

your staff and stretch out your hand" (Exod 14:16, אתה הרם את מטך ונטה את ידך); and

"Come up to the Lord, you with Aaron" (Exod 24:1, עלה אל ייי אתה ואהרן).

This *petiḥtah* makes the concurrent point that Moses was humble and stood to the

side when God spoke with him on those occasions. Since Moses was so humble, God

designated Moses by precise use of language, לך and אתה. In the same way, when Moses

set up the tabernacle, he stood at the side, and God spoke to him: "How long will you

abase yourself? Time waits for no one but you" (מתי אתה משפיל עצמך ואין השעה מצפה

אלא לך). This is demonstrated by the *seder* lemma: "The Divine Speech did not call to

any one of them except Moses, as it is written, 'And it called to Moses'" (שמכולם לא קרא

הדיבור אלא למשה דכתיב ויקרא אל משה).

This *petiḥtah* continues to address the question of Moses' uniqueness as a prophet

whom God raised up.

Petiḥtah 5

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Prov 20:15: יש זהב ורב פנינים וכלי יקר שפתי דעת[16] -

"There are gold and a multitude of rubies, but lips [that speak] knowledge are the [most]

valuable ornament."[17] Gold and rubies refer to the offering of gold (Exod 25:3) and

precious stones (Exod 35:27) for the tabernacle; "Lips that speak knowledge" refer to

Moses' words of instruction for building the tabernacle. In his humility Moses was

---

[16] יֵשׁ זָהָב וְרָב פְּנִינִים וּכְלִי יְקָר שִׂפְתֵי דָעַת.
[17] Neusner, *Judaism and Scripture: The Evidence of Leviticus Rabbah*, 151.

grieved that he had not brought an offering; however, God said Moses' instructions were more dear to Him than all of the offerings. Proof of this is provided by the *seder* lemma - on the basis of his merit, God called only to Moses.

This *petiḥtah* continues to address positive aspects of Moses' biography. He was deeply humble and self-effacing, yet the most meritorious of men. Because of Moses' merit, God called only to him.

Introductory Material in Midrash Sentences

Midrash sentences continue to explore different aspects of Moses' biography by which he gained merit, and his uniqueness as a prophet and lawgiver. All of these relate to introductory issues about the book of Leviticus.

The first midrash sentences explore why only Moses was called (invited) to an audience with God. The answer is that he gained merit in building the tabernacle. In the *parashah* about the building of the tabernacle, the phrase "Just as the Lord commanded Moses" (כאשר צוה יי"י את משה) is repeated (nineteen times). This is interpreted according to a parable in which a king's servant who was commanded to build him a palace inscribed the king's name on all of its parts. In the same way, Moses built the tabernacle and inscribed the words כאשר צוה יי"י את משה on all of its parts. When God was inside the tabernacle He saw these inscriptions and thought, "'Moses has honoured Me with this, yet I am inside and he is outside.' He was called into His presence, as it says, 'And God called Moses'" (כל הכבוד הזה עשה לי משה ואני מבפנים והוא מבחוץ קראו לו שיכנס לפנים לכך נאמ' ויקרא אל משה). These dicta about Moses' inscriptions, the honour he ascribed to God, and God's invitation all address the issue of Moses' merit.

Two other dicta about God calling Moses are proposed and illustrated by parables. In the first one, we know which person in a king's entourage is his favourite by noticing which one he addresses himself to. In the same way Moses, Aaron, Nadab, Abihu, and the seventy elders surrounded the tabernacle after it was built. Since God called to Moses, we know he was God's favourite. In the second parable, when a king visits a province he speaks first to the market-commissioner who occupies himself with the life of the province. In the same way, God called first to Moses who occupied himself with the life of Israel, e.g., with the dietary laws (Lev 11).

Next, Moses is compared to Adam, Noah, and Abraham. A dictum is proposed that God either called (ויקרא) or spoke (וידבר) to the latter three, but did not call and speak to them as He did to Moses. God called Adam (Gen 3:9), but did not speak (דבר) to him; God spoke to Noah (Gen 8:15), but did not call (קרא) to him; God called Abraham (Gen 22:15), but did not speak (דבר) to him; and God spoke to Abraham (Gen 17:3), but did not call (קרא) him. The logic of the argument requires that "calling" (קרא) and "speaking" (דבר) must be mentioned on the same occasion. However, God called and spoke to Moses in the *seder* verse Lev 1:1. In another interpretation of Gen 22:15, the angel of the Lord called (קרא), and the Divine Speech spoke (אמר); but in Lev 1:1, God calls, and God speaks. This dictum points to the uniqueness of God's speech act to Moses. Therefore, this act as recorded in the book of Leviticus has a special status.

A dictum is proposed based on the lemma אהל מועד, with מועד pointed as מוּעָד, i.e., "forewarned:" even though the law had been given earlier at Sinai, Israel became liable to its sanctions only after it was repeated in the "tent of [Israel's being] forewarned"

(עד שנשנת להן באהל מועד).[18] The implication is that the book of Leviticus is a repetition

of the law given at Sinai. The next dictum based on מאהל מועד with partitive מן (that

expresses separation) is that God's voice did not travel beyond the tent of meeting (ולא

היה יוצא חוץ לאהל מועד).[19] When Israel obeys (שמע) this voice of Divine Speech (קול

הדיבור), they live (Deut 5:23; 4:33). If the voice would travel beyond the tent, the nations

of the world would hear but not obey; therefore, that word would bring death to them.

The concluding midrash sentences present dicta on Lev 1:1 based on God

speaking to His prophet in the tent of meeting. These all address the issue of the history

of prophecy among the nations and Israel.

First, after the tabernacle was set up prophecy among the nations ceased. This is

proven by a *petirah* sentence on Song 3:4: מצאתי את שאהבה נפשי אחזתיו ולא ארפנו עד

שהביאתיו אל בית אמי ואל חדר הורתי - "I found the one my soul loves; I held it and

would not let go until I brought it into the house of my mother and to the inner chamber

of her that conceived me." In this verse, בית אמי is the בית עמי, i.e., the tabernacle; חדר

is the Holy of Holies in the tabernacle; הורתי is the *Shekinah*, who conceived the רוח

הקודש; and את שאהבה נפשי is the רוח הקודש. Since the רוח הקודש resides in the Holy

of Holies in the tabernacle, prophecy is now limited to Israel. Since Balaam prophesied

about the welfare of Israel, his prophecies do not form an exception to the rule.

Second, the differences between Israelite prophets and those of the nations are

explored: i) God reveals Himself in full Divine Speech to Israelite prophets, e.g., ויקרא

אל משה (Lev 1:1) and in half-speech to prophets of the nations, e.g., ויקר אלהים אל

---

[18] מועד also suggests another play on words, "witnessed," and refers to the law established from precedent.
[19] In this dictum, חוץ ל is the opposite of מן.

בלעם (Num 23:4);[20] ii) God declares Israelite prophets clean when He addresses them.

יקרא in Lev 1:1, from the root קרא, is a word that denotes holiness, cleanness, and purity

(בלשון קדושה בלשון טהרה בלשון ברור); it is even the word the ministering angels use to

call to one another (Isa 6:3). In contrast, God declares prophets of the nations unclean.

יקר in Num 23:4 is interpreted as from the root קרה, and means "declare unclean"

(proof-text Deut 23:11); iii) Israelite prophets are righteous, but prophets of the nations

are wicked (Prov 15:29); iv) God appears to Israelite prophets from a nearby place

(Gen 18:1), but to the prophets of the nations from a distant land (Isa 39:3); and

v) God appears to Israelite prophets during the day (Gen 18:1; Exod 6:28; Lev 7:38;

Num 3:1), but to the prophets of the nations at night (Job 4:12-13; Gen 20:3; 31:24;

Num 22:20).

Third, the difference between Moses and all the [Israelite] prophets is explored.

All the prophets saw through nine glass lenses (ראו מתוך תשע איספקלריות), as proven

by Ezek 43:3, where Ezekiel the prophet describes his vision with nine occurrences of the

root ראה, i.e., ראיתי (three times) and מראה (five times in the singular, once in the

plural)."[21] In another interpretation, all the prophets saw through a muddied glass lens

(ודברתי על הנביאים ואנכי חזון הרביתי[22] :איספקלריה מלוכלכת), as proven by Hos 12:11:

- "And I spoke to the prophets, and I frequently gave [the same] vision."[23] In contrast,

---

[20] The midrash sentence interprets ויקר from the root קרא. Since it lacks the א, it announces that only partial Divine Speech will be given to Balaam.

[21] וּכְמַרְאֵה הַמַּרְאֶה אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתִי כַּמַּרְאֶה אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתִי בְּבֹאִי לְשַׁחֵת אֶת הָעִיר וּמַרְאוֹת כַּמַּרְאֶה אֲשֶׁר רָאִיתִי אֶל נְהַר כְּבָר וָאֶפֹּל אֶל פָּנָי - "And the appearance of the vision which I saw was like the vision that I saw when I came to destroy the city; and the visions were like the vision that I saw by the River Chebar, and I fell on my face" (Neusner, *Judaism and Scripture: The Evidence of Leviticus Rabbah*, 159-160).

[22] וְדִבַּרְתִּי עַל הַנְּבִיאִים וְאָנֹכִי חָזוֹן הִרְבֵּיתִי.

[23] If the vision had been clear, it would not have needed to be repeated.

Moses saw through a clear, polished glass lens (איספקלריה מצוחצחת), as proven by

Num 12:8: [24]ותמונת ייי יביט - "The image of the Lord he looked on."

The implication of this section on prophecy is that Israelite prophets are

incomparably greater than prophets of the nations, and that Moses is incomparable

among Israelite prophets. The mention of Num 12:8 and Moses' uniqueness forms a link

with its mention in *petiḥtah* 3, and shows how well the *petiḥtaot* and midrashic sentences

are able to sustain a discussion on a few select issues. The implication of the uniqueness

of Moses as a prophet derived from Num 12:8 relates to the status of the book of

Leviticus as a clear prophetic word from God.

Summary of the IMI in *Leviticus Rabbah*

After a detailed analysis of the *petiḥtaot* and the midrash and *petirah* sentences

that follow them, I was able to establish that dicta from both parts of the IMI to Leviticus

contribute to a sustained thematic treatment of the following introductory issues about

that book:

i) Authorship and Inspiration

Most of the IMI discusses positive aspects of Moses' biography that set him apart

as an incomparable prophet and lawgiver. After he is introduced as a prophet in the first

petiḥtah he is compared to the nation of Israel, Adam, Noah, Abraham, and all Israelite

prophets. He is called the father of all the prophets, whom God spoke with mouth to

---

[24] וּתְמֻנַת יְהֹוָה יַבִּיט.

mouth, so that Moses even looked on God's form. Thus, Moses received God's Divine Speech in full clarity.

God also chose Moses on the basis of his merit. He was mighty in strength to listen to and carry out God's word, as evidenced in his role as representative of the people at Sinai (listening to God's word for them), as intercessor for Israel during the episode of the golden calf, as overseer of the building and setting up of the tabernacle, and as leader responsible for the life of Israel. Even though Moses was the most meritorious among men, he was so humble and self-effacing that God had to designate him by precise language to approach the tabernacle to hear the Divine Speech. Moses was also God's favourite. These other aspects of Moses' biography confirm that it is appropriate to view Moses as utterly unique and incomparable.

The implication of Moses' incomparability among the prophets is that the book of Leviticus is also incomparable. It is a transcript of a Divine Speech that Moses heard clearly in the very presence of God, in the tabernacle, from the רוח הקודש within the Holy of Holies. The status of Leviticus as inspired Scripture is established beyond doubt. Another implication of Mosaic prophetic authorship is that its degree of inspiration is higher than the books authored by the prophets who did not hear the word of God with the same degree of clarity as Moses did. This reinforces the view that the Torah enjoys a higher revelatory status than the Writings.

ii) Time of Composition; Historical Setting

The book of Leviticus is a transcript of a Divine Speech that occurred shortly after the tabernacle was set up.

iii) Genre

At Sinai and in the tabernacle the Divine Speech (not a vision!) transmitted the Torah to Moses, who heard it in full clarity and recorded it. Thus, the book of Leviticus is a transcript of Torah that Moses heard from God and transmitted to Israel. As reflected in one of Moses' names, he brought the Torah from heaven to earth. Thus, in Leviticus Moses transmitted Torah to Israel. If Israel obeys the Torah, they will live. This Torah is for Israel, and not for the nations.

iv) Methods of Interpretation

The Divine Speech that is the book of Leviticus repeats the law that had been given earlier at Sinai. Thus, Israel became liable to its sanctions from that point on.

v) Themes of Leviticus

Since the genre of the book of Leviticus is Torah, i.e., what Israel must do, it is concerned with halakhah. As Israel's leader responsible for its life, Moses occupied himself with the dietary laws (Lev 11), i.e., with halakhah. We can assume he also occupied himself with the other laws in Leviticus. If Israel obeys the Torah, they will live.

vi) Literary Forms and Unity

The unity of Leviticus is implied by its very nature as a Divine Speech given on a specific occasion to Moses.

CHAPTER THREE

THE INNER-MIDRASHIC INTRODUCTION IN
SONG OF SONGS RABBAH

Textual Analysis of *Song of Songs Rabbah*

The *editio princeps* of *Song of Songs Rabbah* was either Constantinople 1514

(reprinted 1520) or Pesaro 1519.[1] There is no critical edition for *Song Rab.* Two of them

are in preparation by Girón Blanc and by Steller and Steller-Kalff.[2] Steller has discussed

the manuscript relationships in a preliminary study.[3] The *editiones principes* are based on

a manuscript close to Ms Vatican, Ms Ebr. 76, dated 1379, and form a part of one family

---

[1] M.B. Lerner argued that the first edition was Constantinople 1514, and he has won some adherents
(M. B. Lerner, הדפוס הראשון של 'מדרש חמש מגילות': עיונים בדרכי פעולתם של המדפיסים העבריים
בקושטא ובפיזארו [The *editio princeps* of "Midrash on the Five Scrolls:" Studies in the Methods and
Procedures of the Hebrew Printers in Constantinople and Pesaro], in יד להימן: קובץ מחקרים לזכר א"מ
הברמן [English title added: The A. M. Habermann Memorial Volume], ed. Zvi Malachi [Lod: Habermann
Institute for Literary Research, 1983], 289-311; cf. H. E. Steller, "Preliminary Remarks to a New Edition of
Shir Hashirim Rabbah," in *Rashi 1040 – 1990; Hommage à Ephraïm E. Urbach*, ed. Gabrielle Sed-Rajna
[Paris: Cerf, 1993], 309-310; idem, "Shir HaShirim Rabbah 5.2-8: Towards a Reconstruction of a
Midrashic Block," in *Variety of Forms: Dutch Studies in Midrash*, ed. A. Kuyt, E. G. L. Schrijver and
N. A. van Uchelen [Amsterdam: Juda Palache Institute, 1990], 113, n. 5; and Paul Mandel, "Between
Byzantium and Islam: The Transmission of a Jewish Book in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods," in
Transmitting Jewish Traditions: Orality, Textuality, and Cultural Diffusion, ed. Yaakov Elman and Israel
Gershoni [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000], 101, n. 9). However, since the Constantinople and
Pesaro editions are nearly identical (see Lerner, 'הדפוס הראשון של 'מדרש חמש מגילות [The *editio
princeps* of "Midrash on the Five Scrolls"], 290; Steller, "Preliminary Remarks," 310; and idem, "Shir
HaShirim," 113, n. 5), and since form analysis of the IMI is not affected by minor variants (for more on
this, see p. 250, n. 19), I will cite the more accessible Pesaro 1519 edition when necessary (מדרש חמש
מגלות: דפוס פיזרו רע"ט [Midrash on the Five Scrolls: Pesaro 1519], a facsimile of the first edition [Berlin:
Hotsa'ot 'Sefarim,' 1926]).

[2] Stemberger and Strack, *Introduction*, 316; Steller, "Shir HaShirim," 110; idem, "Preliminary
Remarks," 301.

[3] Steller, "Preliminary Remarks."

56

of witnesses; Ms Oxford, Bodleian 164, dated 1513, represents a second family of

witnesses.[4] Both these families were copied from the same codex or similar codices. Ms

Parma, 3122 (formerly De Rossi 1240), dated 1270, is related to the main redaction of

Song Rab., but it underwent an independent transmission and redaction history.[5] I cite

Song Rab. in its original language from Ms Vatican, Ms Ebr. 76, the base text that Steller

is planning to use for his edition, and provide an English translation;[6] I also consult Mss

Oxford and Parma.[7] In addition I cite the masoretic text (with vocalization and

cantillation) in a footnote so readers can compare it to its midrashic interpretation.

Initial Remarks about the Lemmatization of the IMI

The first distributive unit in *Song of Songs Rabbah* is Song of Songs 1:1. At the

beginning of *Song Rab.* שיר השירים אשר לשלמה is cited from the *seder* verse Song 1:1

of the opening *petiḥtah*, followed by the transition phrase זה שאמר הכתוב. Functional

lemmatization is achieved in the second and third *petiḥtaot* by the transition phrases הדא

הוא דכתיב - "This is what is written in Scripture," and זה שאמר הכתוב - "This is what

---

[4] Ibid., 301-302.

[5] Ibid., 302, 305. Steller states, "This MS provides a poor and defective text of Shir Rabbah, with innumerable corruptions and gaps, but at the same time it preserves important readings, diverging from the main MSS" (Steller, "Shir HaShirim," 110, n. 1). For Ms Parma, I consult N. Goldstein, "מדרש שיר השירים רבה בכתב יד פרמה 1240" [Midrash Song of Songs Rabbah in Manuscript Parma 1240], *Qôbeṣ ʿal Yad* 9 (1979): 1-24.

[6] I translate myself, but I consulted Jacob Neusner, *Song of Songs Rabbah. An Analytical Translation*, vol. 1, *Song of Songs Rabbah to Song Chapters One Through Three* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989); and Maurice Simon, trans., *Song of Songs Rabbah*, in *The Soncino Midrash Rabbah* (© 1983 The Soncino Press, Ltd.): *Davka Corporation's Judaic Classics Library II*, by David Kantrowitz (Institute for Computers in Jewish Life [Chicago], Davka Corporation [Chicago] and Judaica Press Inc. [Brooklyn], 1991-1999), CD-ROM. Print ed. H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, eds., *Midrash Rabbah: Translated into English with Notes, Glossary and Indices*, 3rd ed., 10 vols., vol. 9, *Song of Songs Rabbah*, translated by Maurice Simon (Soncino Press: London and New York, 1983). Neusner acknowledges that he follows Simon's translation closely (Neusner, *Song of Songs Rabbah. An Analytical Translation*, 3). Since the printed editions are very similar to Ms Vatican, Neusner's and Simon's translations of them are helpful for translating the Ms.

[7] S. T. Lachs, "The Proems of Canticles Rabba," *JQR* 56 (1966): 225-239 is also useful for textual criticism of the opening *petiḥtaot*.

the Scripture says." These phrases lead from the implied *seder* verse to a *petiḥtah*

lemma.[8] The fourth and fifth *petiḥtaot* are not introduced by the *seder* verse or a

transition phrase (although the fifth one is introduced by a standard formula). However,

the *seder* verse Song 1:1 appears at their ends. These five *petiḥtaot* are followed by

individual midrashic realizations of parts of the lemma Song 1:1. I will now discuss the

petiḥtaot, midrash sentences, *petirah* sentences, and other exegeses lemmatized under

Song 1:1. As I progress through these, I will isolate their dicta and identify the questions

and answers that lay hidden beneath the surface of Song 1:1.

Introductory Material in the Opening *Petiḥtaot*

Petiḥtah 1

The first *petiḥtah* is a strophic one in which the *petiḥtah* lemma is applied to

various biblical persons and events in a series of *petirot*; only the last *petirah* interprets

the *seder* verse.[9] The *petiḥtah* lemma, Prov 22:29, is divided into three parts: i) חזית איש

מהיר במלאכתו (ii ;לפני מלכים יתיצב and iii) [10]חשוכים לפני יתיצב בל - i) "Do you see a

man diligent in his work?;" ii) "Before kings he will stand;" and iii) "He will not stand

---

[8] Compare Heinemann's "transition-formula" (Heinemann, "The Proem," 103). *Petiḥtaot* as original oral performances probably began with citation of the *petiḥtah* lemma, i.e., they were introductionless (cf. Heinemann, "The Proem," 103-104). A written account of such a performance is indicated by the formula ר' פלוני פתח. During the historical development of the *petiḥtah* into a literary genre, the formula was often dropped in favor of the *seder* verse followed by a transition phrase to the *petiḥtah* lemma (הה"ד, or זש"ה, or simply כתיב [Goldberg, "Versuch," 38, 44]); this served to orient the reader to the verse under discussion. Heinemann states, "The frequent openings with the pericope text in our Midrashim must be considered the work of editors or copyists. For in a written work, which constitutes a compilation of homilies on an entire biblical book or on a series of selected chapters, it was necessary to indicate to which pericope each section relates, by quoting the first verse as a kind of chapter-heading at the beginning" (Heinemann, "The Proem," 104). In terms of form analysis, the transition phrase announces that a relation exists between the *petiḥtah* lemma and the *seder* verse that will be revealed as a relation between a dictum about the *petiḥtah* lemma and its interpretation of the *seder* verse, i.e., the *petiḥtah*-function.

[9] See p. 18.

[10] חָזִיתָ אִישׁ מָהִיר בִּמְלַאכְתּוֹ לִפְנֵי מְלָכִים יִתְיַצָּב בַּל יִתְיַצֵּב לִפְנֵי חֲשֻׁכִּים.

before darkened/ignorant men." These parts are applied to Joseph, Moses, the righteous,

of whom R. Ḥanina is an outstanding example (units one to three), and to Solomon (unit

four). The ground form of the exegeses is the *petirah* sentence. The three sections of

Prov 22:29 speak about these biblical persons based on the demonstratives זה and אלו

(i.e., ‏זה יוסף‎ . . . , ‏זה משה‎ . . . , ‏אלו הצדיקים‎ . . . , ‏זה ר׳ חנינא‎ . . .). These demonstratives

point to specific cases in Scripture that prove the general case of Prov 22:29. After the

validity of the general rule has been confirmed, it is applied to the specific case of

Solomon (‏זה שלמה‎ . . .). The application to Solomon constitutes the *petiḥtah* function

and will interpret the *seder* verse Song 1:1.

In the first three units, ‏חזית איש מהיר במלאכתו‎ is applied to three outstanding

cases of industrious work: Joseph's working alone when the other men attended a festival

or theatre performance, Moses' work on the sanctuary, and the righteous' occupation with

God's work[11] (followed by the outstanding example of R. Ḥanina who helped carry a

heavy stone to Jerusalem as an offering).[12] The second and third parts of Prov 22:29 are

applied to rewards for industrious work. ‏לפני מלכים יתיצב‎ is applied to Joseph standing

before Pharaoh, Moses standing before Pharaoh, or, in another interpretation, before the

King of the King of Kings, ‏הקב״ה‎, and to the righteous standing before the kings of the

---

[11] The Torah is God's work, written with His finger (Exod 31:18); the righteous are occupied with the study of the Torah. See Simon, *Song of Songs Rabbah*, 2.

[12] R. Ḥanina vowed to offer a polished and painted stone in Jerusalem. After he unsuccessfully tried to hire workers to carry the stone to Jerusalem, five angels disguised as men offered to take it there for a small price on the condition the Rabbi helped them carry it. R. Ḥanina agreed, and when they reached Jerusalem the angels disappeared. The incident was heard in Chamber of Hewn Stone where it was decided that ministering angels carried R. Ḥanina's stone for him. The Rabbi then gave the price of hire to the sages. Therefore, reading ‏לפני מלאכים‎, he stood before angels. This story is called a *ma ʿaseh* in *Eccl Rab.* 1:1; there it explicitly states: ‏לפני מלכים יתיצב אל תקרי לפני מלכים אלא לפני מלאכים‎ (Marc G. Hirshman, "Midrash Qohelet Rabbah: Chapters 1-4. Commentary [CH. 1] and Introduction" [PhD diss., The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1983], Part III, 5).

Torah (בי מלכים ימלוכו, Prov 8:15).[13] בל יתיצב לפני חשוכים is applied to Joseph not

standing before Potiphar, and Moses not standing before Jethro, or, in another

interpretation, before Pharaoh. My analysis of the three-part lemma Prov 22:29 and its

dicta demonstrates that a preliminary thematic discourse is carried out on the rewards

gained for diligent work, both in terms of a general case in Prov 22:29 and in terms of

specific cases in other scriptural verses (or referential fields). This discourse proceeds to

the specific case of Solomon's diligent work and rewards.

Since the interpretation of the *petiḥtah* lemma as it applies to Solomon will

interpret the *seder* verse Song 1:1 and discuss introductory material, I will begin by citing

the entire fourth unit of the *petiḥtah* in Hebrew, followed by an English translation:

דא' חזית איש מהיר במלאכתו זה שלמה שנזדרז בבנין בית המקדש ההד' ויבנהו שבע שנים

[מלכים א'/ ו לח] והכת' ואת ביתו בנה שלמה שלש עשרה שנה [מלכים א'/ ז א] נמצא מרובה

ומיופה בנין שלמ' מבנין בית המקדש אלא כך אמרו בבנין ביתו נתעצל ובבנין בית המקדש

נזדרז ולא נתעצל ר'חנינא בשם רב יוסף הכל מסייעין את המלך והכל מסייעין בשביל כבוד

המלך אשר הוא מלך מלכי המלכים ואפלו רוחות ואפלו שידים ואפלו מלאכי השרת אמ'

יצחק בריה דר' יהודה בר' יחזקאל כת' בנה בניתי בית זבול לך [מלכים א'/ ח יג] בנין בנוי בניתי

ר'ברכיה אמ' והבית אשר היו בונין אין כתוב כאן אלא והבית בהבנותו [מלכים א'/ ו ז] מאיליו

היה נבנה אבן שלמה מסע בנו אין כת' כאן אלא נבנה [מלכים א'/ ו ז] מלמד שהיתה האבן

נושאת עצמה וניתנה על גבי הדימוס אמ' אבהו ואל תתמה על דא ראה מה כת' על להלן

והיתית אבן חדא ושומת על פום גובא [דניאל ו יח] וכי יש אבנים בבבל אלא מארץ ישראל

פרחה לשעה ובאת ישבה לה על פי הבור ר' הונא בשם ר' יוסף מלאך ירד בדמות ארי של אבן

ויישב לה על פי הבור ההד' אלהי שלח מלאכיה וסגר פום אריותא [דניאל ו כג] ואל תתמה אם

בכבוד בשר ודם צדיק וכתֹ והתית אבן חדא בכבודו של מלך מלכי המלכים הקֹבֹהֹ על אחת

כמה וכמה לפני מלכים יתיצב לפני מלכי התורה יתיצב בל יתיצב לפני חשוכים זו חבורה של

רשעים אמֹר יהושע בן לוי בשעה שמנו וגמרו שלשה מלכים וארבעה הדיוטות אין להם חלק

לעולם הבא בקשו לצרף שלמה עמהם יצתה בת קול ואמרה להם אל תגעו במשיחי [תהלים קה

טו] אמֹר יהודה בר שמעון ולא עוד אלא שנתיחש ראש לשלשת יחשים שנֹ ובן שלמה רחבעם

וכוֹ [מלכים אי יד כא] אמֹר יודן ולא עוד אלא ששרתה עליו רוה הקדש ואמֹ שלשה ספרים הללו

משלי קהלת ושיר השירים.[14]

Another interpretation. "Do you see a man diligent in his work?" This refers to

Solomon who was zealous in the construction of the temple. This is what is written in

Scripture: "He [spent] seven years building it" [1 Kgs 6:38]. But [compare] the verse,

"And Solomon took thirteen years to construct his palace" [1 Kgs 7:1]. Does it follow

then that Solomon's [palace] building was grander[15] and lovelier than the temple

building? On the contrary, they interpreted in this way: In the construction of his palace

he was lazy, but in the construction of the temple he was zealous, and not lazy.

R. Ḥanina in the name of R. Yoseph: "Everyone assists the king, and everyone

assists for the sake of the glory of the King who is the King of the King of Kings, even

spirits, demons, and ministering angels." R. Yiṣḥak son of R. Yehudah son of

R. Yeḥekiel[16] said, "It is written, 'I have surely built a lofty temple for you' [1 Kgs 8:13],

[i.e.,] 'An [already] constructed building I have built.'" R. Berekiah said, "'The temple that

they were building' is not written here, but, 'The temple, by its being built' [1 Kgs 6:7],

---

[14] Ms Vatican 183a.
[15] Simon and Neusner translate מרובה as "elaborate" (Simon, *Song of Songs Rabbah*, 3; Neusner, *Song of Songs Rabbah. An Analytical Translation*, 39).
[16] Ms Vatican reads בר יחזקאל; Ms Oxford 262a and Pesaro 1519 read בר יחזקאל.

[i.e.,] 'By itself it was built;' 'A finished quarry stone they built' is not written, but, 'Was built' [1 Kgs 6:7], teaching that a stone lifted itself and placed itself on a row."

R. Abihu said, "Do not wonder about this; see what is written there, 'And a stone was brought and placed on the mouth of the (lion-) pit' [Dan 6:18]. Really, are there any stones in Babylon? Rather, it [a stone] flew in a moment's time from the land of Israel and came and seated itself on the mouth of the pit." R. Huna in the name of R. Yoseph: "An angel descended in the appearance of a stone lion, and seated itself on the mouth of the pit. This is what is written in Scripture: 'My God sent an angel and shut the mouth of the lions' [Dan 6:23]. Now, do not wonder [about this]. If it is written, 'A stone was brought' to bestow honor on flesh and blood, a righteous man, how much more [is 'was built' (1 Kgs 6:7) written] to bestow honor on the King of the King of Kings, The Holy One, Blessed Be He."

"Before kings he will stand" [Prov 22:29]. Before the kings of the Torah he will stand. "He will not stand before darkened/ignorant men" [Prov 22:29]. This refers to the company of the wicked. R. Yehoshua b. Levi said, "When they counted votes and determined that three kings and four commoners had no portion in the world to come [*m. Sanh.* 10:2], they sought to include Solomon with them. A divine voice went out and said to them, 'Do not touch my annointed ones'" [Ps 105:15]. R. Yehudah b. Shimon said, "And not only this, but his name was recorded at the head of a genealogical chain[17] as it is said, 'And the son of Solomon, Rehoboam'" [1 Kgs 14:21]. R. Yudan said, "And not

---

[17] Oxford 262b reads לשלשת יחסין (cf. Pesaro 1519, לשלשת ייחסין) for לשלשת יחשים. For שְׁלָשֶׁת = לשלשת יחשים. For שַׁלְשֶׁלֶת, "chain," see Jastrow, *Dictionary*, s.v. שלשת, v. שלשלת.

only this, but the Holy Spirit rested on him, and he composed these three books - Proverbs, Qohelet, and Song of Songs."

In this unit חזית איש מהיר במלאכתו is applied to Solomon. The discourse is based on questions posed by איש מהיר במלאכתו about Solomon's industry and their answers given in dicta that follow. Following the pattern of the last three units, לפני מלכים יתיצב and בל יתיצב לפני חשוכים are cited near the end of the unit with dicta relating to Solomon's rewards.

שנזדרז בבנין בית המקדש ההד׳ ויבנהו שבע שנים. Just as with Joseph, Moses, and the righteous, Solomon's outstanding work is brought into view: he spent seven years constructing the temple (1 Kgs 6:38). Immediately an objection is raised: the next verse of Scripture says Solomon spent thirteen years constructing his own palace (1 Kgs 7:1); therefore, should it be concluded that Solomon's palace was lovelier and grander than God's temple? They concluded rather that Solomon was lazy when building his own palace, but not when building the temple. The following midrash sentences propose that compared to building his own palace, building the temple was different in qualitative terms and not in quantitative ones; in reality it took him seven years to build a temple already being built by unseen spirits. First, R. Ḥanina proposes that just as everybody assisted King Solomon (המלך) in the building of his palace, so everyone assisted the King of the King of Kings, הקב״ה, in the building of His temple, even spirits, demons, and ministering angels.

Second, R. Yiṣḥak proposes that בנה בניתי בית זבול לך [18] (1 Kgs 8:13) means בנין

בנוי בניתי[19], i.e., Solomon constructed the temple (בניתי) that was already built (בנוי).

Third, R. Berekiah proposes that אבן שלמה מסע נבנה and הבית בהבנותו (1 Kgs 6:7)

implies the temple was being built by itself.[20] The miracle of the temple appearing to be

built by itself, but really being built by unseen spirits, is pursued further. R. Abihu said an

analogous miraculous situation is found in והיתית אבן חדא ושומת על פום גובא (Dan

6:18). There were no stones in Babylon that could have been brought to the lion-pit;

rather, a stone from Israel flew by itself and seated itself on the mouth of the pit. This is

analogous to the temple stones laying themselves. In another interpretation, God sent an

angel in the form of a stone lion that covered the mouth of the pit (Dan 6:23). If Daniel's

honor merited that stones move by themselves or angels assist him, how much more

should God's honor merit the same treatment in the building of His temple. Therefore,

based on 1 Kgs 6:38; 7:1, one should not conclude that Solomon was lazy in building

God's temple and diligent in building his own palace. The qualitative differences between

---

[18] בָּנֹה בָנִיתִי בֵּית זְבֻל לָךְ.

[19] Ms Oxford 262a and Pesaro 1519 also read this. The hermeneutical operation interprets both verbs separately, and בנה is understood as its passive participle בָּנוּי. The reading of the MT, i.e., infinitive followed by finite verb, would have implied Solomon built what others were in the process of building. This would have advanced the discourse about the temple already being built by others besides Solomon. However, the passive participle was chosen to introduce discourse about the temple built already; see next note.

[20] The *Nif'al* can have a reflexive sense in Rabbinic Hebrew (Miguel Pérez Fernández, *An Introductory Grammar of Rabbinic Hebrew*, trans. J. Elwolde [Leiden: Brill, 1999], 98; cf. Simon, *Song of Songs Rabbah*, 4, n. 3); therefore בהבנותו and נבנה imply מאיליו היה נבנה and האבן נושאת עצמה. The contrast between אבן שלמה מסע נבנה and hypothetical מסע בנוי אבן שלמה is between the temple in the process of being built (נבנה) and already built (בנוי). Fernández states, "In practice, the particle of the *Qal* passive, קָטוּל, and that of the *Nif'al,* נִקְטָל, are not always distinguished, although analysis of a good number of texts suggests a certain regularity, namely, that קָטוּל signifies the present result of a past action whereas נִקְטָל indicates the activity itself in process, as seen clearly in SNm 61, which says that God showed Moses מנורה עשויה ונעשית 'the lampstand made and being made', that is, not just the finished product but also the process whereby it was made" (Pérez Fernández, *Introductory Grammar of Rabbinic Hebrew*, 134).

both construction projects far outweighed any quantitative difference in the time it took to finish them.

The unit now continues with the second and third parts of the *petiḥtah* lemma that identify the reward for skilled work. לפני מלכים יתיצב is applied to Solomon's standing before the kings of the Torah, i.e., those occupied with the work of studying the Torah. This is the same reward of the righteous in the preceding unit, of which R. Ḥanina was an outstanding example. Solomon also stood before angels (who moved the stones), and therefore was a righteous man like R. Ḥanina. בל יתיצב לפני חשוכים is applied to Solomon's not standing in the company of the wicked, i.e., in the company of the שלשה מלכים וארבעה הדיוטות אין להם חלק לעולם הבא (*m. Sanh.* 10:2; cf. *y. Sanh.* 10:2 [9:27b]). The three kings are Jeroboam, Ahab, and Manasseh; *t. Sanh.* 12:11 adds Ahaz to the list; *b. Sanh.* 103b adds all the kings of Israel about whom it is said they did evil in the sight of the Lord, as well as Absalom, Ahaziah, Amon, and Jehoiakim.[21] They wanted to include Solomon on the list because he did evil in the sight of the Lord (1 Kgs 11:4-6).

The IMI in *Song Rab.* later addresses the issue of Solomon's sins from 1 Kgs 10:27-11:1 that were in direct violation of Deut 17:16-17 (he multiplied horses, wives, and silver).[22] Those sins may also be in view here.[23] However, when they wanted

---

[21] Others argue that all of these kings were exonerated: Manasseh (*m. Sanh.* 10:2; *t. Sanh.* 12:11; *y. Sanh.* 10:2 [9:27b; 29b]; *b. Sanh.* 104a, b); Ahab and Jeroboam (*y. Sanh.* 10:2 [9:29b]; *b. Sanh.* 104b); Jehoiakim (*b. Sanh.* 103b, 104a); and Ahaz and Amon (*b. Sanh.* 104a). Ahaziah and Absalom are included in the word "all" (*b. Sanh.* 104b). See Sid Z. Leiman, "The Canonization of Hebrew Scripture: The Talmudic and Midrashic Evidence," *Transactions* 47 (1976): 178, n. 339; and Saul Lieberman, "הערות לפרק א של קהלת רבה" [Notes on Chapter One of Qohelet Rabbah], in *Studies in Mysticism and Religion Presented to Gershom G. Scholem on His Seventieth Birthday*, ed. E. E. Urbach, R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, and Ch. Wirszubski (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1967), קסג – קע, for further parallels and references.

[22] See below, p. 87.

[23] See below, pp. 66-68 regarding *Seder 'Olam Rabbah* as a source for this section.

to include Solomon in this company of wicked men a בת קול said, אל תגעו במשיחי.[24]

Significantly, the scriptural verse continues, ולנביאי אל תרעו - "And do not harm My

prophets" (Ps 105:15). As God's anointed one and as one of His prophets, Solomon was

not numbered with the wicked kings who have no share in the world to come. The

underlying concern of the lemma Prov 22:29 as it applies to Solomon is negative aspects

of his biography that raise concerns about his fitness to write Song of Songs as an

inspired book.[25] In this entire fourth unit Solomon's work and rewards are shown to be

similar to those in the units that preceded. חזית איש מהיר במלאכתו - like Moses who

built the משכן, he built the temple; לפני מלכים יתיצב - like the righteous, he stood before

kings of the Torah; like R Ḥanina, he stood before מלאכים who lifted stones; בל יתיצב

לפני חשוכים - like Joseph, he served his master worthily, and went out to freedom (in his

case, from the company of the wicked to which he was in danger of being assigned).

Thus, the four units of the first *petiḥtah* form a surprisingly coherent discourse that

ultimately addresses Solomon's outstanding work, rewards, and equal standing with

particularly righteous men.

Finally, the *petiḥtah* ends with a description of Solomon's other reward, ולא עוד

אלא ששרתה עליו רוח הקדש ואמ' שלשה ספרים הללו משלי קהלת ושיר השירים, part of a

citation from *Seder ʿOlam Rabbah* chapter 15: אבל לעת זקנת שלמה סמוק למיתתו שרת

עליו רוח הקדש ואמר שלשה ספרים הללו משלות שיר השירים וקהלת - "But at the time of

---

[24] A בת קול also said, יצאה בת קול ואמרה להם חזית איש מהיר במלאכתו לפני מלכים יתיצב בל יתיצב
לפני חשכים מי שהקדים ביתי לביתו ולא עוד אלא שביתי בנה בשבע שנים וביתו בנה בשלש עשרה שנה לפני
חשכים מלכים יתיצב [בל יתיצב] לפני חשכים - "A Divine voice went out and said to them, 'Do you see a man
diligent in his work? Before kings he will stand. He will not stand before darkened/ignorant men.' He that
gave My temple precedence over his own palace, and who also built My temple in seven years and his own
palace in thirteen years, 'Before kings he will stand; he will not stand before darkened/ignorant men'"
(*b. Sanh.* 104b). In fact, this may be the source of the first *petiḥtah* (cf. *y. Sanh.* 10:2 [9:29b]).
[25] The issue is inspiration, not canonization; see below, n. 64.

Solomon's old age, close to his death, the Holy Spirit rested upon him and he recited

these three books: Proverbs, Canticles, and Qohelet."[26] Lachs argues (against Ratner) that

the redactor of *Song Rab.* did not borrow directly from *S. ʿOlam Rab.* He states, "Ratner's

theory of direct borrowing fails because there are much closer similarities between Cant.

R. passages and sources other than SOR."[27] Even though he acknowledges this passage in

Song of Songs does not have any early (tannaitic) parallel, he states, "We may,

nevertheless, on the basis of other passages and their probable sources assume that this

too entered Cant. R. through a source other than SOR."[28]

However, there are many points in favor of the view that *Song Rab.* is citing

S. ʿOlam Rab. here. First, in some of the witnesses the order of books in the first *petiḥtah*

is משלות שיר השירים וקהלת (reading right to left) as in *S. ʿOlam Rab.*;[29] every other time

these books are cited in the opening *petiḥtaot* the order is משלות קהלת ושיר השירים,

which reflects an editorial change so that the *petiḥtaot* end with part of the *seder* verse

(שיר השירים).[30] Second, there are other parallels between *S. ʿOlam Rab.* 15 and the

opening *petiḥtaot* in *Song Rab.* that show the author/editor of *Song Rab.* was familiar

with it: *S. ʿOlam Rab.* mentions Solomon building the temple and his own palace, and

cites 1 Kgs 6:37-7:1 (cited in the first *petiḥtah*); *S. ʿOlam Rab.* mentions the רוח הקודש

rested on Solomon in his old age, which is cited in the midrashim following the *petiḥtaot*:

תני ר׳ חייא רבה רק לעת זקנת שלמה שרת עליו רוח הקדש ואמ׳ ג׳ ספרים משלי קהלת ושיר

---

[26] Chaim Milikowsky, "Seder Olam: A Rabbinic Chronography," 2 vols. (PhD diss., Yale University, 1981), 310-311 (Heb.), 492 (Eng.).

[27] S. T. Lachs, "Prolegomena to Canticles Rabba," *JQR* 55 (1965): 252.

[28] Ibid., 253.

[29] Ms Oxford 262b; Pesaro 1519.

[30] Ms Vatican cites the order as משלות קהלת ושיר השירים at the end of all five *petiḥtaot*; Ms Oxford cites the same order (as Ms Vatican) in *petiḥtaot* 2-4. This same order is also cited in the section that follows the *petiḥtaot* (in Mss Vatican and Oxford).

השירים - "R. Ḥiyya the Elder taught: 'Only in Solomon's old age did the רוח הקדש rest

on him, and he composed three [scriptural] books: Proverbs, Qohelet, and Song of

Songs;"[31] and *S. ʿOlam Rab.* 15 mentions Solomon's sins from 1 Kgs 10:27-11:1, parts of

which are cited in the section of individual midrashim, beginning with שלש עבירות עבר

הרבה לו סוסים הרבה לו נשים הרבה לו כסף וזהב - "He committed three transgressions:

he multiplied for himself horses, wives, and silver and gold."[32]

Even if *S. ʿOlam Rab.* and *Song Rab.* only share a common source, the important

thing is that the citation functions as a paraphrase of our *seder* verse Song 1:1, which

widens the subject of discourse considerably. The paradigm for L in the prototypical form

IMI is the verse 1:1 of a biblical book. The IMI in *Song Rab.* is one of the cases where

the paradigm for L is paraphrased so that its discoursive subject (introductory issues) is

apparent. In this case the unexpected paraphrase is particularly striking; it widens the

discoursive subject to include the status of three canonical books in relation to each other.

The paradigm for D in the prototypical form IMI is the propositional content of 1:1. As

we look back on the dicta derived from the *petiḥtah* lemma Prov 22:29 in terms of

general and specific cases of reward for diligent work, we see that their application to

Solomon addresses the following concern: given the negative aspects of Solomon's

biography, how could he have authored Song of Songs as an inspired book of Scripture?

Even more fundamentally, how could the רוח הקודש have rested on Solomon in the first

place?

---

[31] See below, p. 86.
[32] See below, p. 87.

The basis for linking Solomon's diligence in work, righteousness, and rewards with the reception of the רוח הקודש is that industry in work is the first step in the advancement towards piety that enables one to receive the רוח הקודש: זריזות מביאה לידי נקיות ונקיות מביאה לידי טהרה וטהרה מביאה לידי פרישות ופרישות מביאה לידי קדושה וקדושה מביאה לידי ענוה וענוה מביאה לידי יראת חטא ויראת חטא מביאה לידי חסידות וחסידות מביאה לידי רוח הקדש - "Industry leads to cleanliness, cleanliness leads to purity, purity leads to self-control, self-control leads to holiness, holiness leads to humility, humility leads to fear of sin, fear of sin leads to piety, and piety leads to the רוח הקודש" (*m. Soṭah* 9:15). Furthermore, the רוח הקודש rests on the prophets because of their work: חביבה היא המלאכה שכל הנביאים נתעסקו בה ביעקב אבינו הוא אומר [בראשית ל לא] אשובה ארעה צאנך אשמור במשה הוא אומר [שמות ג א] ומשה היה רעה: בדוד הוא אומר [תהלים עח ע] ויקחהו ממלכאות צאן בעמוס הוא אומר [עמוס ז יד] כי בוקר אנכי ובולס שקמים: ויקחני ה׳ מאחרי הצאן [עמוס ז טו] חביבה היא המלאכה שלא שרת רוח הקדש על אלישע בן שפט אלא מתוך המלאכה[33] - "Work has great value, for all the prophets engaged in [some form of] it, including: Jacob our father, [as] it says, 'I will shepherd your flock again and keep it' [Gen 30:31]; Moses, [as] it says, 'And Moses was shepherding' [Exod 3:1]; David, [as] it says, 'And He took him from the sheep-pens' [Ps 78:70]; and Amos, [as] it says, 'For I am a herdsman and sycamore fig tender' [Amos 7:14], and, 'The Lord took me away from the flock' [Amos 7:15]. Work has great value, for the Holy Spirit rested on Elisha the son of Shapat because of work" (*Mid. Tannaim* 5:14). Parzen states:

---

[33] David Hoffmann, מדרש תנאים לספר דברים [German title added: *Midrasch Tannaïm zum Deuteronomium*], 2 vols (Berlin: H. Itzkowski, 1909), 1:22.

The early Rabbinic practice to earn a livelihood by means of some handicraft or business and not from scholarship, is highly extolled. Thus the Ruaḥ Hakodesh "rests on Elisha only because of work . . ." [*Mid. Tannaim*, 5:14]. This concept mitigates and modifies the austere, ascetic tendency of the first statement [*m. Soṭah* 9:15]. By godliness is not meant mere other-worldliness. Work, too, is a prerequisite for the saint. Thus these two haggadic dicta complement and supplement each other.[34]

In the fifth *petiḥtah* a citation from the Talmud makes this link between diligence in work, piety, and reception of the רוח הקודש explicit.[35]

The opening *petiḥtah* about reward for diligent work begins to address the issue of Solomon's fitness to write inspired Scripture from the perspective of positive aspects of his biography, suggesting that he merited the רוח הקודש rest on him. The paraphrase of Song 1:1 addresses this concern in the larger context of the inspiration of his other two canonical works so that all three are treated as a whole, i.e., משלי, קהלת, and שיר השירים. This concern is the leitmotif in the following *petiḥtaot*; they present Solomon's life and work in a positive light to show that he did not disqualify himself from writing inspired Scripture.

The following *petiḥtaot* continue to treat the discoursive subject supplied by the paraphrase of Song 1:1, while the midrash sentences that follow them treat the discoursive subject of introduction under the title *Song of Songs* supplied by Song 1:1. The paradigm for L in this prototypical IMI, Song 1:1, remains unchanged until these issues have been exhausted.

---

[34] H. Parzen, "The Ruaḥ Hakodesh in Tannaitic Literature," *JQR New Series* 20 (1929-1930): 51-52.

[35] See below, p. 84.

Petiḥtah 2

The second *petiḥtah* lemma, Ps 45:17, is introduced by the transition phrase

ההד.[36] This phrase signifies a relation between two verses; in Goldberg's form analysis, it

lemmatizes a previously cited verse in order to expound it in relation to another one.

In particular, הה״ד or זש״ה mark the transition from the *seder* to the *petiḥtah* lemma.[37] If

the *seder* verse is not explicitly re-lemmatized, these phrases function to re-lemmatize it,

i.e., they introduce new *petiḥtaot*. Just as זש״ה marked the transition from the *seder* verse

Song 1:1 to the *petiḥtah* lemma Prov 22:29 in the first *petiḥtah*, הה״ד marks a transition

from the *seder* verse Song 1:1 to the *petiḥtah* lemma Ps 45:17 in the second one. The

scribe of Ms Parma was aware of the relation between Song 1:1 and Ps 45:17; it reads

ד״יא שיר השירים אשר לשלמה תחת אבותיך.[38]

The *petiḥtah* lemma is תחת אבותיך יהיו בניך - "In the place of your fathers will

be your sons" (Ps 45:17) followed by four dicta based on it: a righteous man can beget a

righteous son, a wicked man a wicked son, a righteous man a wicked son, and a wicked

man a righteous son, followed by scriptural proof-texts and proverbs. The proof-text for

the first case is the *petiḥtah* lemma. After all four cases have been proven, the case of a

righteous man begetting a righteous son is applied to the specific case of David and

Solomon: [39] שלמה מלך בן מלך חכם בן חכם צדיק בן צדיק איווגיניס בן איווגיניס -

---

[36] "All [MSS] with the exception of MS פ [Parma] start [the second proem] with הה״ד" (Lachs, "The Proems," 232; cf. Goldstein, "מדרש שיר השירים" [Midrash Song of Songs], 7).

[37] See above, pp. 57-58.

[38] Lachs, "The Proems," 232. Lachs says the use of ד״יא in Ms Parma is incorrect (ibid.). However, the scribe explicitly marked the relation between Ps 45:17 and Song 1:1 with it.

[39] Ms Vatican, 183b. For איווגיניס see Marcus Jastrow, *Dictionary*, s.v. אֲבָגִינוֹס. Ms Oxford 262b reads איוגיניס; Ms Parma reads אאוגניס (Goldstein, "מדרש שיר השירים" [Midrash Song of Songs], 8). These are examples of correct Palestinian orthography for εὐγενής, versus the incorrect reading in Pesaro 1519, אנטיגנוס.

"Solomon was a king, son of a king, a wise man, son of a wise man, a righteous man, son of a righteous man, and a nobleman, son of a nobleman." However, the comparisons between David and Solomon extend well beyond their righteousness: את מוצא כל שכת בזה כת בזה - "You find that everything that is written about this one is also written about that one." Near the end of the *petiḥtah* the point is made that the comparisons touch all aspects of their lives: ... הואיל ואת מקישו מקישו מכל צד מה אביו ... אף זה כיוצא בו - "Since you are comparing him, keep comparing him in every aspect: just as his father . . . also that one likewise . . ."

The most significant comparisons for the IMI involve David and Solomon's writings; these comparisons lead to the paraphrased *seder* verse - שרת עליו רוח הקדש ואמ' שלשה ספרים משלי קהלת ושיר השירים - "The Holy Spirit rested on him, and he composed three books: Proverbs, Qohelet, and Song of Songs." Just as the dicta to Ps 45:17 are followed by their proof-texts, the dictum that "everything that is written about this one is also written about that one" is followed by specific comparisons and scriptural proof-texts for them.[40] Table 2 outlines the comparisons and proof-texts that relate to the issue of Solomon's authorship of Song of Songs, in the order that they appear (A corresponds to A$_1$, etc.).[41] In order to keep the corresponding comparisons with proof-texts on the same page, a translation of Table 2 appears separately.

---

[40] Other comparisons occur before and amidst the ones that relate to David and Solomon's writings, i.e., they both reigned forty years over Israel and Judah, both built parts of the temple, both reigned from one end of the world to the other, both built an altar, both offered sacrifices, and both brought up the ark. These comparisons confirm the general case in order to verify the specific case of the comparability of their writings.

[41] Neusner reorders the text in his translation (Neusner, *Song of Songs Rabbah. An Analytical Translation*, 43). However, the order of the text as it stands can be explained form-critically; see below, p. 75.

Table 2. Comparison of David's and Solomon's Inspired Writings

	Comparisons Between David and Solomon Related to their Writings
A	זה [דוד] כתב ספרים זה [שלמה] אמ׳ ספרים וזה כתב ספרים[42]
B	וזה [דוד] אמ׳ שירים וזה [[שלמה] אמ׳ שירים
C	זה [דוד] אמ׳ דברים וזה [שלמה] אמ׳ דברים[43]
D	זה [דוד] אמ׳ הבלים וזה [שלמה] אמ׳ הבלים
E	זה [דוד] אמ׳ משלים וזה [שלמה] אמ׳ משלים
	(Other Intervening Comparisons)
	The Same Comparisons with Scriptural Proof-Texts
C₁	דוד אמ׳ דברים אלה דברי דוד [שמואל ב' כג א] וזה אמ׳ דברים אלה דברי קהלת [קהלת א א]
D₁	דוד אמ׳ הבלים אך הבל בני אדם [תהלים לט ו] וזה אמ׳ הבלים הבל הבלים אמר קהלת [קהלת א ב]
E₁	דוד אמ׳ משלים כאשר יאמר משל הקדמוני [שמואל א' כד יד] וזה אמ׳ משלים משלי שלמה בן דוד [משלי א א]
A₁	דוד אמ׳ ספרים דתהלים שנכתב על שמו וזה אמ׳ ספרי משלי קהלת שיר השירים
	(Other Intervening Comparisons)
B₁	דוד אמ׳ שירים וידבר דוד ליייַ את דברי השירה הזאת [שמואל ב' כב א] וזה אמ׳ שיר השירים

---

[42] This comparison occurs as the first and last item in a chiasm - זה כתב ספרים וזה אמ׳ שירים וזה אמ׳ וזה אמ׳ שירים, however; שירים; however, וזה אמ׳ שירים occurs before זה כתב ספרים וזה אמ׳ ספרים, just as in the following section (of the same comparisons with scriptural proof-texts).

[43] This comparison is missing in Ms Vatican. However, since the comparison with its proof-text occurs in the next section (see C₁), the scribe must have skipped from the זה in זה אמ׳ דברים וזה אמ׳ דברים to the זה in the following comparison (omission by homoioteleuton). Ms Oxford 262b has the reading; Ms Oxford 262b, 263a also has all the remaining comparisons in the Table in the same order as Ms Vatican.

Translation of Table 2: Comparison of David's and Solomon's Inspired Writings

	Comparisons Between David and Solomon Related to their Writings
A	This one [David] wrote books; that one [Solomon] composed and wrote books
B	And this one [David] composed songs, and that one [Solomon] composed songs
C	This one [David] composed words, and that one [Solomon] composed words
D	This one [David] composed "vanities," and that one [Solomon] composed "vanities"
E	This one [David] said proverbs, and that one [Solomon] composed proverbs
	(Other Intervening Comparisons)
	The Same Comparisons with Scriptural Proof-Texts
C_1	David composed words, "These are the words of David" [2 Sam 23:1], and that one composed words, These are "the words of Qohelet" [Eccl 1:1]
D_1	David composed "vanities," "Surely the sons of men are a mere breath" [Ps 39:6], and that one composed "vanities," "'Vanity of Vanities,' said Qohelet" [Eccl 1:2]
E_1	David said proverbs, [for example] when he quoted an ancient proverb [in 1 Sam 24:14], and that one composed proverbs, "The proverbs of Solomon, son of David" [Prov 1:1]
A_1	David composed the books of psalms that are attributed to him, and that one composed the books of Proverbs, Qohelet, and Song of Songs
	(Other Intervening Comparisons)
B_1	David composed songs, "And David spoke the words of this song to the Lord" [2 Sam 22:1], and that one composed Song of Songs

It is significant that the order of the comparisons accompanied by their proof-texts (C₁, D₁, E₁, A₁, and B₁) is different than their order without them (A - E). In the re-ordering, Solomon's speaking דברים (C₁) and הבלים (D₁) and their proof-texts Eccl 1:1, 2 occur first, followed by Solomon's speaking משלים and its proof-text Prov 1:1 (E₁). After this, the comparison וזה [שלמה] אמׄ ספרי משלי קהלת שיר השירים (A₁) occurs; however, the dictum וזה [שלמה] אמׄ שיר השירים (B₁) does not occur until almost the end of the *petiḥtah*. The *petiḥtah* function that lies at the heart of this *petiḥah* is the relation between the dictum that David's and Solomon's lives may be compared in every aspect, especially their writings, and the interpretation of Song 1:1.[44] The redactor of this unit transposed the comparison between David's and Solomon's songs near to the paraphrased *seder* verse to highlight the relation between David's inspired authorship of a song and Solomon's inspired authorship of the Song of Songs.[45]

Just as in the first *petiḥtah*, a short midrash is inserted near the end of this second one that addresses the question of Solomon's sins, and by implication, his possible disqualification from writing under the inspiration of the רוח הקודש. To deal with this issue the midrash proposes that comparisons between David and Solomon touch every aspect of their lives; therefore, the comparisons between them should even extend to the forgiveness of their sins. Just as David's sins were forgiven (here, regarding Uriah and Bathsheba), Solomon's sins were also forgiven. After this problematic issue is dealt with, the relation between the *petiḥtah* lemma תחת אבותיך יהיו בניך (Ps 45:17), the dictum that David's and Solomon's writings are comparable, and the paraphrased *seder* verse שרת

---

[44] See pp. 16-17 for the *petiḥtah* function.

[45] Neusner reaches a similar conclusion: "The goal is to end with the three books written by Solomon, and that is the main point" (Neusner, *Song of Songs Rabbah. An Analytical Translation*, 43-44).

עליו רוח הקדש ואמ' שלשה ספרים משלי קהלת ושיר השירים becomes clear: just as his

father David wrote inspired Scripture, Solomon wrote inspired Scripture, including

Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs. Thus, the second *petiḥtah* continues to

expound on the leitmotif of the inspired status of Song of Songs in light of negative

aspects of Solomon's biography that may have rendered him unfit to write inspired

works. The second *petiḥtah* addresses this concern from the perspective of positive

aspects of his biography that are comparable to his father's, including a covering for some

negative aspects of it.[46]

Petiḥtah 3

The third *petiḥtah* is introduced by the transition phrase זה שאמ' הכת'; the

petiḥtah lemma is Prov 16:23, [47]לב חכם ישכיל פיהו ועל שפתיו יסיף לקח - "The heart of

the wise man directs his mouth, and on his lips he adds teaching." Since the paraphrased

seder verse appears in the middle and end of this *petiḥtah*, it deviates from a prototypical

one. In spite of this, we can determine the relation between the *petiḥtah* lemma and the

paraphrased *seder* verse. Prov 16:23 is divided into two parts: לב חכם ישכיל פיהו, and

ועל שפתיו יסיף לקח. The hermeneutical operations and dicta on the first part are difficult

to decipher.[48] However, the main point is clear: a wise man's heart is full of wisdom; this

wisdom is the source of his speaking wisely.

---

[46] Neusner reaches a similar conclusion: "Since the main point is to establish the legitimacy of Solomon's authorship by appeal to David, and the comparability of Song of Songs and Psalms, we must say that the entire, sustained and beautifully composed essay has served the compiler's program. This is a kind of writing, fully exposed and redactionally cogent to the documentary setting, to which we simply cannot point in the earlier Midrash compilations" (Neusner, *Song of Songs Rabbah. An Analytical Translation*, 44).

[47] לֵב חָכָם יַשְׂכִּיל פִּיהוּ וְעַל שְׂפָתָיו יֹסִיף לֶקַח.

[48] The unit reads: זה שאמ' הכת' לב חכם ישכיל פיהו [משלי טז כג] לבו שלחכם מלא חכמה משכיל עליו מי - "This is what Scripture says: 'The heart of the wise man directs his mouth' [Prov 16:23]. [לב חכם ישכיל means] 'The heart of the wise man is full of wisdom, מחכים עליו פיהו פומיה מורה עלוי פומי[ה] מחכים עליו

The midrash sentences on ועל שפתיו יסיף לקח are much clearer. לקח is identified

as דברי תורה; therefore ועל שפתיו יסיף לקח means that the wise man adds to the teaching

of Torah (לקחה של תורה). This general case is applied to Solomon: כך לבו של שלמה מלא

חכמה היה ולא היה אדם יודע מה בתוכו כיון ששרת עליו רוח הקודש ואמ' שלשה ספרים ידעו

הכל חכמתו - "Even so, Solomon's heart was full of wisdom, and no one knew what was

inside of it. When the רוח הקודש rested on him and he composed three books everyone

knew his wisdom." The identification of wisdom in the heart of the wise man with דברי

תורה implies that the books that sprung from Solomon's heart are also דברי תורה, i.e.,

Song of Songs, Qohelet, and Proverbs are דברי תורה. This is the first description of the

genre of Song of Songs - it is wisdom identified as דברי תורה.[49]

After this, another midrash sentence on ועל שפתיו יסיף לקח is presented: לקח

שהוסיף על דברי תורה עילהו - "'Teaching' [Prov. 16:23]: Since he added to words of

Torah, He exalted him." Again, לקח is identified as דברי תורה. This general case is

applied to Solomon in light of Eccl 1:13, ונתתי את לבי לדרוש ולתור בחכמה - "And I set

my heart to inquire and to investigate with wisdom," and Num 13:21, ויתורו את ארץ כנען

- "And they spied out the land of Canaan." Solomon went throughout the land as a spy in

search of wisdom, i.e., דברי תורה: מן דתני טבאוות ניזל לגביה מן דקרא טבאוות ניזל

לגביה - "Whoever read Scripture well would cause water to flow into his [Solomon's]

well; whoever taught Mishnah well would cause water to flow into his well." The image

of a well filling with water corresponds to the image of Solomon adding to the wisdom in

his heart. The metaphor suggests Solomon's heart was like a well full of Scripture and

---

directing him within.' Who makes him wise within? [The Scripture says] 'His mouth,' [meaning], 'His
mouth instructs him, making him wise.'"

[49] See below, pp. 81-82 for other aspects of its genre.

Mishnah, i.e., דברי תורה. Now the relation between the *petiḥtah* lemma Prov 16:23 as it applies to Solomon and the paraphrased *seder* verse becomes clear. Solomon's heart was full of wisdom, i.e., דברי תורה; he also made it a habit of adding to the wisdom in his heart. As a result of Solomon's spying out דברי תורה, he received the reward of the רוח הקודש resting on him. This immediately leads to the paraphrased *seder* verse: מיד שרת עליו רוח הקדש ואמ׳ שלשה ספרים הללו משלי קהלת שיר השירים. The leitmotif in the IMI continues to be the inspired status of Song of Songs in light of relevant aspects of Solomon's biography. This *petiḥtah* stresses positive aspects of his biography that merited the reward of the reception of the רוח הקודש. It also begins to address the question of the genre of Song of Songs as wisdom and Torah.

Petiḥtah 4

The fourth *petiḥtah* lemma is Eccl 12:9, ויותר שהיה קהלת חכם עוד למד דעת את העם ואזן וחקר תקן משלים הרבה[50] - "Besides being a wise man, Qohelet taught the people knowledge, and weighed carefully, investigated, and ordered a great number of proverbs." Since this *petiḥtah* is not introduced by a transition phrase, we must wait until its end to see that its *seder* verse is Song 1:1.[51] The previous *petiḥtah* briefly addressed the question of the genre of Song of Songs as wisdom and דברי תורה. This *petiḥtah* will deal with Solomon's משלים, their hermeneutics that enable understanding the Torah, and the genre of Song of Songs as a משל on the Torah.

---

[50] וְיֹתֵר שֶׁהָיָה קֹהֶלֶת חָכָם עוֹד לִמַּד דַּעַת אֶת הָעָם וְאִזֵּן וְחִקֵּר תִּקֵּן מְשָׁלִים הַרְבֵּה.

[51] *Petiḥtaot* as original oral performances probably began by citing their *petiḥtah* lemmas, i.e., they were introductionless, and ended by citing their *seder* verses; see above, n. 8.

First, the lemma יותר ש is interpreted: even more should someone listen to

Solomon's משלים (illustrations, examples, figures, similes, parables, proverbs, wise

sayings)[52] because he was wise, and he did not speak them by his own understanding; he

spoke them by the רוח הקודש. Next, the lemma למד דעת את העם alludes to Solomon's

public teaching. Midrash sentences lemmatize אזן and חקר (from Eccl 12:9) and supply

new direct objects for them: Solomon weighed carefully and investigated דברי תורה. The

remaining dicta from Eccl 12:9 address the relationship between Solomon's משלים and

דברי תורה. The first one is that Solomon made handles (אזנים) for the Torah. Boyarin

states, "The word for 'handles' and the word 'proved' [my "weighed carefully"] come from

the same root [אזן] in Hebrew. 'Handles' is being used in a sense very similar to that of

the modern English phrase, 'I can't get a handle on that idea', i.e., a place of access."[53]

Solomon was the first person to make handles for the Torah; before him, no one could get

a handle on it.

The *petiḥtah* presents six משלים to illustrate how Solomon used משלים for his

own comprehension and teaching of דברי תורה. The first two משלים relate to finding

one's way in a palace of many doors and in a reed marsh; a smart person (פיקח) figured

out a way to navigate through these, suspending a rope in the palace and cutting a path in

the marsh so everyone could find their way in and out. In the same way, Solomon's

משלים helped everyone to navigate the Torah so that they could understand it: כך עד שלא

עמד שלמה לא היה אדם יכול ולהשכיל דברי תורה וכיון שעמד שלמה התחילו הכל סוברין

---

[52] See Jastrow, *Dictionary*, s.v. מָשָׁל.

[53] Daniel Boyarin, "The Song of Songs: Lock or Key? Intertextuality, Allegory and Midrash," in *The Book and the Text: The Bible and Literary Theory*, ed. Regina M. Schwartz (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 227, n.2.

תורה - "Similarly, before Solomon appeared no one was able to understand words of Torah; but when Solomon appeared everyone began to comprehend Torah." The next two משלים are about moving a large basket full of fruit and a large jug full of foaming (boiling) water; a smart person made handles for them so people could move them. In the same way, Solomon made handles for the Torah, so that everyone could understand it. כך עד שלא עמד שלמה לא היה אדם יכול ולהשכיל דברי תורה וכיון שעמד שלמה התחילו הכל סוברין תורה is repeated.

The first four משלים portray Solomon teaching Torah in public and making it comprehensible with the help of משלים (Eccl 12:9, למד דעת את העם). The next two משלים portray Solomon composing books on the Torah. The first one treats the book of Proverbs: אמ' חנינא לבאר עמוקה מלאה מים והיו מימיה צונין ומתוקי' ויפים ולא הית' בריה יכולה לשתות ממנה בא אחד וספק לה חבל בחבל משיחה במשיחה ודלה ממנה ושתה התחילו הכל דולין ושותין כך מדבר לדבר וממשל למשל עמד שלמה על סודה של תורה הה"ד משלי [משלי א א] שלמה בן דוד - "R. Ḥanina said, '[It may be compared] to a deep well full of water, whose waters were cold, sweet, and pleasant, but no one was able to drink from it. Someone came and joined rope to rope and cord to cord, and drew from it and drank; [then] everybody began drawing and drinking [from it]. Similarly, from word to word and from proverb to proverb, Solomon understood the secret of the Torah. This is what is written in Scripture, "The proverbs of Solomon son of David"'" [Prov 1:1]. Just as someone ties ropes and cords to lower a bucket to draw water from a deep well, Solomon joined words and משלים to draw out the secrets of the Torah. Therefore, the book of

Proverbs is a collection of משלים that facilitate understanding the Torah; they provide

hermeneutic keys to unlock its deep meaning.[54] Boyarin states:

> The *mashal* is a story whose meaning by itself is perfectly clear and simple, and
> because of its simplicity enables one to interpret by analogy a more complex,
> difficult or hermetic text . . . The *mashal* is not a text which is itself enigmatic; it is
> a text whose declared function is to interpret.[55]

The fifth משל in this *petiḥtah* uses the term משל to describe the genre and special

hermeneutic of the book of Proverbs. The sixth one identifies *Song of Songs* as a משל on

the Torah as well, i.e., *המשל הזה* refers to the Song of Songs. Just as for Proverbs, this

identification of the genre of Song of Songs also provides the hermeneutic key for its

interpretation: ורבנן אמ' אל יהי המשל הזה קל בעיניך שעל ידי המשל הזה אדם יכול לעמוד

בדברי תורה משל למלך שאבד מביתו זהוב או מרגלית טובה לא על ידי פתילה ואיסר הוא

מוצא אותה כך המשל הזה לא יהיה קל בעיניך שעל ידי המשל אדם עומד על דברי תורה ותדע

לך שהוא כן שהרי שלמה על ידי המשל הזה עמד על דקדוקיה של תורה - "And the rabbis

say: 'Do not regard *this mashal* as insignificant, for by means of *this mashal* a man is able

to understand words of Torah. [It may be compared] to a king who lost a gold coin or fine

pearl in his palace. Is it not by means of a wick [worth] an Issar [1/24 of a Denar] that he

finds it? Similarly, you should not regard *this mashal* as insignificant, for by means of a

mashal a man understands words of Torah. You may know for certain that this is true, for

behold, Solomon by means of *this mashal* understood the details of the Torah." If a king

uses a wick worth practically nothing to find lost gold or pearls, it is reasonable that

something as simple as a משל enables one to understand דברי תורה. We know this is true

because Solomon understood the details of the Torah by means of המשל הזה, i.e., by

---

[54] Compare Boyarin, "The Song of Songs," 214.
[55] Ibid., 216.

means of the Song of Songs (which is a משל).[56] This genre identification addresses an

underlying concern the rabbis had in interpreting Song of Songs literally as an erotic love

poem. Reading it as a משל on the Torah will help us to understand the Torah as it helped

Solomon to understand it.

At the end of the *petiḥtah* the relation between the *petiḥtah* lemma and *seder*

verse is explained. Returning to the lemma ויותר ש (Eccl 12:9),[57] R. Yudan explains the

relation between Solomon's use of משלים in his public teaching and in his writings: אמ'

יודן ללמדך שכל האומר דברי תורה ברבים זוכה שתשרה עליו רוח הקדש של שכינה וממי את

למד משלמה שעל ידי שאמ' דברי תורה ברבים זכה ששרתה עליו רוח הקודש ואמ' ג ספרים

משלי קהלת שיר השירים - "R. Yudan said, 'In order to teach you that everyone who

speaks words of Torah in public merits that the רוח הקודש of the *Shekinah* rest on him.

And from whom do you learn [this]? From Solomon, for since he spoke words of Torah

in public he merited that the רוח הקודש rest on him, and he composed three [scriptural]

books: Proverbs, Qohelet, and Song of Songs.'" The IMI continues to address the inspired

status of Song of Songs in relation to positive aspects of Solomon's biography that

merited the reward of the רוח הקודש resting on him. This fourth *petiḥtah* also establishes

another leitmotif, the identification of a genre and hermeneutical key for understanding

and interpreting Song of Songs that is compatible with its inspiration by the רוח הקודש.

---

[56] The last section of the IMI explains some of the משלים in Song of Songs; see below, pp. 88-89. Boyarin gives an example of a משל from the body of *Song Rab.* ("My dove in the clefts of the rock, let me hear thy voice" [Song of Songs 2:14]) (Boyarin, "The Song of Songs," 218).

[57] Compare Simon, *Song of Songs Rabbah*, 10, n. 4; Neusner, *Song of Songs Rabbah. An Analytical Translation*, 47; and Dunsky, מדרש חזית / שיר השירים : מדרש רבה [Midrash Rabbah: Song of Songs/Midrash Ḥazit] (Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: Devir, 1980), ו, n. 9 (to section ח).

Petiḥtah 5

The first three *petiḥtaot* in this IMI are introduced with the *seder* verse and/or a

transition formula from it to their *petiḥtah* lemmas. The fifth *petiḥtah* is introduced by

ר' פנחס בן יאיר פתח followed by the *petiḥtah* lemma Prov 2:4, 5; we must wait until its

end to see that its *seder* verse is Eccl 12:9.[58] Then, dicta about Eccl 12:9 are applied to

the paraphrased *seder* verse Song 1:1.[59]

The *petiḥtah* lemma reads: אם תבקשנה ככסף וכמטמונים תחפשנה אז תבין יראת

יהוה ודעת אלהים תמצא[60] - "If you seek it as silver and search for it as treasure, then you

will understand the fear of the Lord, and the knowledge of God you will acquire." The

first midrash sentence identifies the lemma "it" (in "if you seek it"), i.e., חכמה and its

---

[58] A written account of an oral performance of a *petiḥtah* is indicated by ר'פלוני פתח, followed by citation of the *petiḥtah* lemma. Citation of the *seder* occurs at its end; see above, n. 8.

[59] Lachs argues that the conclusion to this fifth *petiḥtah* is more suitable as a conclusion to the fourth one, i.e., אמ' יודן ללמדך שכל מי שהוא מלמד תורה ברבים זוכה ששורה עליו רוח הקדש שכן עשה שלמה ולימד ושרת עליו רוח הקדש ואמ' ג' ספרים משלי קהלת ושיר השירים (translated below on page 85) is more suited to conclude the fourth *petiḥtah* than אמ' יודן ללמדך שכל האומר דברי תורה ברבים זוכה שתשרה עליו רוח הקדש של שכינה וממי את למד משלמה שעל ידי שאמ' דברי תורה ברבים זכה ששרתה עליו רוח הקדש ואמ' ג' ספרים משלי קהלת שיר השירים (translated above on page 82). Therefore, this fifth *petiḥtah* was inserted after the original redaction of the first four (Lachs, "The Proems," 237-238). However, his argument is unconvincing. First, the content of these endings is almost identical. Second, the references to דברי תורה in the conclusion to the fourth *petiḥtah* suit that *petiḥtah* more than the fifth one. Third, Lachs does not explain why a redactor would duplicate the ending of a *petiḥtah*, but why he would not excise the formula ר' פלוני פתח (that begins the fifth *petiḥtah*) in favor of one of the transition phrases to the *petiḥtah* lemmas used in the first three *petiḥtaot*, i.e., give the appearance of a more uniform redaction. Beit-Arié distinguishes between (hired) scribes and (scholar) copyists; the former regarded copying as merely duplicating, the latter regarded it as critical editing (Malachi Beit-Arié, "Transmission of Texts by Scribes and Copyists: Unconscious and Critical Interferences," *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 75 [1993]: 39ff.; see also idem, "Publication and Reproduction of Literary Texts in Medieval Jewish Civilization: Jewish Scribality and Its Impact on the Texts Transmitted," in *Transmitting Jewish Traditions: Orality, Textuality, and Cultural Diffusion*, ed. Yaakov Elman and Israel Gershoni [New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000], 230ff.). In this stage of the textual criticism of *Song Rab.* it is impossible to know whether this fifth *petiḥtah* was part of the original redaction with the first four and all five were copied without further editing, or whether the fifth *petiḥtah* was added later and then copied without further editing. Functional form analysis recognizes diachronic influences on the Midrashim, e.g., editing during transmission; it is also able to deal with different versions of a similar text by analyzing each one separately (cf. Lenhard's statement on p. 250, n. 19). In this case, Mss Vatican and Oxford have this fifth *petiḥtah*. Therefore, I analyze it in terms of its functional form and await further evidence that would enable a diachronic analysis.

[60] אִם תְּבַקְשֶׁנָּה כַכָּסֶף וְכַמַּטְמוֹנִים תַּחְפְּשֶׂנָּה : אָז תָּבִין יִרְאַת יְהֹוָה וְדַעַת אֱלֹהִים תִּמְצָא.

synonyms, as דברי תורה. Then a dictum is proposed: אם אתה מחפש אחד דברי תורה

"If you search for one of the words of Torah as for - כמטמונים הללו אין הבֹה מקפח שכרך

these treasures, the Holy One, Blessed be He, will not withhold your reward." A parable

and *maʿaseh* interpret this dictum in terms of diligence in work, followed by a citation

from the Talmud that describes industry as the first step in the advancement towards piety

that leads to the reception of the רוח הקודש: זריזות מביאה לידי נקיות נקיות לידי טהרה

טהרה לידי קדושה קדושה לידי ענוה ענוה לידי יראת חטא יראת חטא לידי חסידות חסידות

לידי רוח הקדש - "Industry leads to cleanliness, cleanliness to purity, purity to holiness,

holiness to humility, humility to fear of sin, fear of sin to piety, piety to the רוח הקודש"

(*y. Šabb* 1:3c; *y. Šeqal.* 47c; cf. *m. Soṭah* 9:15).[61] Now a relation is established between

the dictum אם אתה מחפש אחד דברי תורה כמטמונים הללו אין הבֹה מקפח שכרך, the

citation from the Talmud, and the *petiḥtah* lemma אז תבין יראת יהוה ודעת אלהים תמצא.

The latter is proof that diligently seeking דברי תורה or חכמה leads to the יראת יהוה,

which leads to דעת אלהים, i.e., the רוח הקודש (זו רוח הקדש) just as in the Talmudic

citation.[62]

This general case is then applied to Solomon who sought wisdom (1 Kgs 3:5-15)

as one seeks for silver and treasure (ככסף וכמטמונים). As illustrated by a parable,

Solomon thought that if he asked for silver, gold, precious gemstones, and pearls he

would receive them; however, if he asked for wisdom he would receive them and

everything else. When he asked for wisdom (1 Kgs 3:9), הקב״ה gave him wisdom and

knowledge and riches besides (1 Kgs 3:12-15). Solomon's wisdom was apparent

---

[61] The citation continues: רוח הקדש לידי תחיית המתים תחיית המתים לידי אליהו - "And the רוח
הקודש to the resurrection of the dead, the resurrection of the dead to the days of Elijah."
[62] Compare *y. Šabb* 1:3c.

immediately: when a donkey brayed or a bird chirped he knew what they meant. He also

taught Torah concluded by a feast (1 Kgs 3:15). This application of Prov 2:4-5 to

Solomon, i.e., that he was diligent in seeking wisdom or דברי תורה, and that he

progressed to the fear of God and received the reward of רוח הקודש is tied in to

Eccl 12:9: ויותר שהיה קהלת חכם עוד למד דעת את העם ואזן וחקר תקן משלים הרבה.

Solomon was wise, but even more than that, Solomon taught דברי תורה by means of

משלים. This is the basis for the similar endings of the fourth and fifth *petiḥtaot*. Here, the

ending is: אמ' יודן ללמדך שכל מי שהוא מלמד תורה ברבים זוכה ששורה עליו רוח הקדש

- שכן עשה שלמה ולימד ושרת עליו רוח הקדש ואמ' ג ספרים משלי קהלת ושיר השירים

"R. Yudan said, 'In order to teach you that everyone who teaches Torah in public merits

that the רוח הקדש rest on him, for Solomon taught in public and the רוח הקדש rested on

him, and he composed three [scriptural] books: Proverbs, Qohelet, and Song of Songs.'"

The IMI continues to address the inspired status of Song of Songs in relation to

positive aspects of Solomon's biography that merited the reward of the רוח הקודש resting

on him. It also solidifies the theme of Solomon's diligence in work, particularly in regard

to his seeking and teaching דברי תורה, his reward of the רוח הקודש resting on him, and

his writing inspired biblical books.

Introductory Material in Midrash Sentences

The dicta of the individual midrashim continue to address the lemma Song 1:1 in

light of the inspiration of the book and its hermeneutics.[63] First שיר השירים is

lemmatized followed by a dictum, "Song" equals one song, and "Songs" equals two

---

[63] Ms Vatican 185a - 186a.

songs, three in all, i.e., Song of Songs is one of three songs that Solomon composed

(besides Psalms 30 and 127). One of the themes of the IMI, the comparison of Solomon's

and David's Scriptures, is briefly alluded to here: besides Proverbs, Qohelet and Song of

Songs, Solomon also wrote two Psalms. The dictum that Song of Songs is one of three

songs is a specific case of a general rule: everything that happened to Solomon occurred

in sets of three. Other cases and scriptural proof-texts that confirm this rule are: Solomon

had three ascents and three descents in his rule; he had three life stages (king, commoner,

king; sage, fool, sage; and rich, poor, rich); he committed three transgressions; he had

three adversaries in war; he composed three sets of Proverbs (Prov 1:1ff.; 10:1ff.;

25:1ff.); he spoke three vanities (Eccl 1:2); he composed three songs (Song 1:1); and, he

had three names (ידידיה, שלמה, קהלת).

Finally, the case that bears the most consequence for the IMI is presented:

Solomon's writings also appeared as a set of three books, Proverbs, Qohelet, and Song of

Songs. This case provides the opportunity to raise the question about what order these

books were written in. R. Ḥiyya the Elder has two opinions attributed to him. The first

one (derived from 1 Kgs 5:12) is that Solomon wrote them separately in the order

Proverbs, Song of Songs, and Qohelet. The second one is that he wrote all three at the

same time in his old age - רק לעת זקנת שלמה שרת עליו רוח הקדש ואמ' ג ספרים משלי

קהלת ושיר השירים. R. Jonathan argued from the natural life-cycle: a young man

composes songs, a mature man composes proverbs, and an old man speaks about

vanities; this yields the order Song of Songs, Proverbs, and Qohelet. R. Yannai said

everyone acknowledges that Qohelet was written last. R. Ḥiyya's opinions demonstrate

that the question about the order of composition of Solomon's books is related to the

question of their inspiration (אמר ברוח הקדש). The first stage of Solomon's life was

characterized by outstanding industry and piety; the רוח הקודש may have rested on him

during those years and he could have written Song of Songs and Proverbs. The next stage

in his life was characterized by his three sins. As the section on Solomon's three names

Agur, Yakeh, and Lemuel show, his sin of accumulating horses, wives, and silver and

gold made him forget the Torah; during that stage of his life the רוח הקודש could not

have rested on him. The latter stage of his life was characterized by forgiveness; the רוח

הקודש may have rested on him then and he could have written Qohelet or all three books.

A leitmotif of the IMI continues to be the inspiration of the book of Song of Songs in

light of Solomon's biography.

After a brief digression (on 1 Kgs 5:12) the issue of the inspiration of Song of

Songs is addressed head on by a citation of *m. Yad.* 3:5: אמר עקיבא חס ושלום לא נחלק

אדם מישראל על שיר השירים שלא תטמא את הידים שאין כל העולם כולו כדאי כיום

שנתנה שיר השירים למה שכל הכתובים קדש וזה קדש קדשים ועל מה נחלקו על קהלת -

"R. Akiva said, 'God forbid! No one in Israel disputed about whether Song of Songs

defiled the hands, for the whole world is not as worthy as the day on which Song of

Songs was given. Why? Because all of the Writings are sacred, but this [book] is the most

sacred [of them]. But about which [book] did they dispute? About Qohelet.'" R. Akiva's

statement is part of a debate about whether Song of Songs and Qohelet defile the hands,

i.e., it addresses the issue of their inspiration, not their canonicity.[64] This citation is

---

[64] Leiman states, "The notion of books defiling the hands and the notion of canonicity are not to be confused. As we have seen, books which do not defile the hands may in fact be canonical . . . If the rabbis were discussing the sacred character of a book (i.e., whether or not it defiled the hands), its canonicity was certain. It would appear that all the biblical books were canonical prior to the earliest discussions of books defiling the hands" (Leiman, "The Canonization," 119). Compare *t. Yad.* 2:14, "The Song of Songs defiles

followed by a parable: שהוליך סאה של חטים אצל הנחתום אמ' לו הוצא לי ממנה קמח סלת הוצא לי ממנה קלוסקין וסלת אחת כך אחד כל חכמתיה דשלמה לא סילת אלא שיר השירים - "Someone took a seah of wheat to the baker and said to him, 'Extract the finest sifted flour and use it to prepare delicate pastries and one most delicate pastry for me.' In the same way, out of all of Solomon's wisdom he did not prepare as fine a flour pastry as Song of Songs." The "wisdom of Solomon" refers to his three scriptural books.[65] Out of these three, Song of Songs is the finest. This dictum returns us to the lemma שיר השירים and its superlative meaning: it is the most excellent of songs. Since the IMI in *Song Rab.* consistently argues that all three of Solomon's books are inspired, it sides with R. Akiva on the question of the inspiration of Song of Songs. R. Akiva's statement that Song of Songs is the most sacred book in the Writings also places it on a higher level of inspiration than Solomon's other two books.

The last section of the IMI deals with the hermeneutics of Song of Songs. Since it is a משל on the Torah, the IMI explains some of its figures and similes. שיר השירים implies that it is a song (שיר) composed of two praise songs (השירים): בכל השירים או הוא מקלסן או הן מקלסין אותו . . . ברם הכא הן מקלסין והוא מקלסן הוא מקלסן הנך יפה - "רעיתי והן מקלסין הנך יפה דודי אף נעים ר' שמעון בשם ר' חנין דצפורין אמ' שיר כפול In every song either He [הקב"ה] praises them [Israel] or they praise Him . . . But here [in Song of Songs] they praise [Him] and He praises them. He praises them: 'You are really beautiful my beloved' (Song 1:15). And they praise [Him]: 'You are really beautiful my beloved, truly lovely' (Song 1:16). R. Simeon in the name of R. Ḥanin of Sepphoris said,

---

the hands because it was composed under divine inspiration" (Leiman's translation, ibid., 106; ר' שמעון בן (מנסיא אומר שיר השירים מטמא את הידים מפני שנאמרה ברוח הקדש).

[65] See Leiman, "The Canonization," 72, 173, n. 317.

'Song [of Songs] is a double song.'"[66] Therefore, the lovers in the song are identified as

הקב"ה and Israel. An explicit rule explains other figures and similes in Song of Songs:

אמר' יודן ור' לוי בשם ר' יוחנן כל מקום שנאמר במגלה זו במלך שלמה במלך שלמה

הכתו' מדבר במלך סתם בנקבות הכתו' מדבר ורבנן אמרי' במלך שלמה במלך שהשלום שלו

הכת' מדבר במלך סתם בכנסת ישראל הכתו' מדב' - "R. Yudan and R. Levi in the name of

R. Yoḥanan said: 'Every place in this scroll where "King Solomon" is written, the

Scripture refers to King Solomon; "King" written without further specification refers to

the feminine gender.' But the rabbis say, '[Every place] where "King Solomon" is written,

the Scripture refers to The King of Peace; where "King" is written without further

specification, the Scripture refers to the congregation of Israel.'" As soon as *Song Rab.*

lemmatizes Song 1:2 the IMI has concluded, and midrash sentences on 1:2ff. begin.

Summary of the IMI in *Song of Songs Rabbah*

After a detailed analysis of the opening *petiḥtaot* and the midrash sentences that

follow them, I was able to establish that dicta from both of these parts of the IMI to Song

of Songs contribute to a sustained thematic treatment of the following introductory

issues:

i) Authorship and Inspiration

The underlying concern in the IMI is Solomon's fitness to receive the רוח הקדש,

and therefore whether Song of Songs was composed under its inspiration, i.e., whether it

is inspired Scripture. Positive aspects of Solomon's biography show that he was fit to

---

[66] The dictum that the song is a double song (of praise) is also derived from Song 4:1, הנך יפה רעיתי הנך יפה (Simon, *Song of Songs Rabbah*, 19, n. 4; Dunsky, מדרש רבה: שיר השירים / מדרש חזית [Midrash Rabbah: Song of Songs/Midrash Ḥazit], י"א, n. 16.).

receive the רוח הקדש. These include his diligence in building the temple and his search

for wisdom, i.e., for דברי תורה. These and other positive aspects merited certain rewards.

Diligence in work is the first step in the advancement towards piety that leads to the

reception of the רוח הקודש. In another interpretation, seeking wisdom or דברי תורה is

also a step in the advancement towards the fear of God and reception of the רוח הקודש.

Another facet of his life that merited the reward of the רוח הקודש was that he taught דברי

תורה in public.

When the רוח הקודש rested on him, Solomon composed three scriptural books:

Proverbs, Qohelet, and Song of Songs. His authorship of these compares favorably with

David's authorship of inspired Scriptures. Solomon even wrote Psalms as his father David

did. Comparisons of Solomon's and David's lives and Scriptures show that Song of Songs

enjoys the same status of inspiration as the book of Psalms (and parts of Samuel).

Solomon's books are expressions of דברי תורה that he accumulated in his heart.

Negative aspects of Solomon's biography that raise concerns about his fitness to

write Song of Songs as an inspired book are dealt with head on. During the period of his

life characterized by his sins, the רוח הקדש could not have rested on or remained with

him. However, during periods of his life when he was qualified to receive the רוח הקדש,

i.e., during his early adult or late aged years, he could have written Proverbs, Song of

Songs, and Qohelet. Therefore, Solomon's time of transgressions did not prevent him

from writing Song of Songs at another time under the inspiration of the רוח הקדש.

The paraphrase of Song 1:1, "The רוח הקדש rested on him, and he composed

these three books - Proverbs, Qohelet, and Song of Songs," addresses the concern about

the inspiration of Song of Songs in the larger context of the inspiration of two other

canonical works, so that all three are treated as a whole. This issue is also met head on

with a citation of *m. Yad.* 3:5: "R. Akiva said, 'God forbid! No one in Israel disputed

about whether Song of Songs defiled the hands, for the whole world is not as worthy as

the day on which Song of Songs was given. Why? Because all of the Writings are sacred,

but this [book] is the most sacred [of them]. But about which [book] did they dispute?

About Qohelet.'" R. Akiva's statement is part of a dispute about whether Song of Songs

and Ecclesiastes defile the hands, i.e., it addresses the issue of their inspiration, not their

canonicity. The IMI in *Song Rab.* consistently sides with R. Akiva on the question of the

inspiration of Song of Songs. R. Akiva adds that all the Writings are sacred, but Song of

Songs is the most sacred book of the Writings.

ii) Time of Composition; Historical Setting

      The IMI discusses the order of the composition of Proverbs, Qohelet, and Song

of Songs in relation to stages in his life when he was qualified to receive and retain the

רוח הקדש. Rabbinic opinion demonstrates that their time of composition is related to the

question of their inspiration. During the first stage of Solomon's life characterized by

outstanding industry, piety, and advancement in righteousness, the רוח הקודש may have

rested on him and he could have written Song of Songs and Proverbs. The next stage in

his life was characterized by his three sins and his forgetting דברי תורה; during that stage

the רוח הקודש could not have rested on or remained with him. The latter stage of his life

was characterized by forgiveness; the רוח הקודש may have rested on him then and he

could have written Qohelet or all three books.

iii) Genre

Solomon used משלים to investigate and weigh carefully דברי תורה. He also used

משלים to teach דברי תורה in public so Israel could comprehend it. Solomon kept on

adding to the דברי תורה in his heart until it was like a deep well full of water. When the

רוח הקדש rested on him he composed books on the Torah. Just as the book of Proverbs is

a collection of משלים that enable understanding of the Torah, Song of Songs is a משל

that enables one to understand it. This genre identification addresses an underlying

concern the rabbis had in interpreting Song of Songs literally. Reading the Song as a משל

on the Torah disavows reading it as an erotic love poem. Since Solomon himself

understood the details of the Torah with this משל, this genre identification is compatible

with its inspiration by the רוח הקודש.

iv) Methods of Interpretation

Since Song of Songs interprets the Torah, its figures and metaphors should be

compared to verses in the Torah, and inferences derived from the comparisons should

relate to דברי תורה. The last section of the IMI deals with the hermeneutics of Song of

Songs. Since it is a משל on the Torah, the IMI explains some of its figures and similes,

e.g., its references to the lovers הקב״ה and Israel.

v) Themes of Song of Songs

Solomon's advancement in דברי תורה allowed him to progress towards piety, the

fear of God, and receiving the רוח הקש. By studying Song of Songs as a משל on the

Torah, we too can advance towards piety and the fear of God.

vi) Literary Forms and Unity

The paradigm for L in the prototypical form IMI is chapter 1, verse 1 of a biblical

book. The IMI in *Song Rab.* presents one of the cases where the paradigm for L is

paraphrased so that its discoursive subject (introductory issues) is apparent. This

paraphrase is, "The רוח הקדש rested on him, and he composed these three books -

Proverbs, Qohelet, and Song of Songs." This unexpected paraphrase is particularly

striking; it widens the discoursive subject to include the status of three canonical books in

relation to each other. Since the dicta in the IMI discuss all of the introductory issues

mentioned above to Song of Songs, I would propose that from the very start the lemma

Song of Songs, i.e., the title of the book, served to broaden the scope of inquiry to the

entire book. In that case, the title unifies the book as a single composition.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE INNER-MIDRASHIC INTRODUCTION IN
LAMENTATIONS RABBAH

Textual Analysis of *Lamentations Rabbah*

The *Wissenschaft* edition of Buber is the only scholarly edition available for

Lamentations Rabbah.[1] It is based on MS J. I. 4 of the Biblioteca Casanta in Rome, dated

1378. However, that manuscript lacked the opening section of thirty-four *petiḥtaot*, for

which he used Cod. 27089 of the British Museum, dated 1504.[2] There are two recensions

of *Lam Rab.*, an Ashkenzi one represented by Buber's edition and a Sephardic one

represented by the printed edition of Pesaro 1519.[3] The existence of these two recensions

---

[1] Salomon Buber, מדרש איכה רבה על פי כתב יד הגנוז באוצר הספרים ברומי, והפתיחות ע״י השואה עם כתב יד בבריטיש מוזעאום בלאנדאן. ערוך עם ציונים מתנ״ך, וגם הערות ותקונים ומראה מקומות, ובאור המלות הזרות הבאות בתוכו ועם מבוא גדול המפיץ אור על המדרש בכלל ובפרט [German title added: *Midrasch Echa Rabbati: Sammlung agadischer Auslegungen der Klagelieder. Herausgegen nach einer Handschrift aus der Bibliothek zu Rom cod. J. I.4, und einer Handschrift des British Museum cod. 27089. Kritish bearbeitet, kommentiert und mit einer Einleitung versehen*] (Vilna 1899), photostatic reprint (Hildesheim: G. Olms, 1967). There is a critical edition in preparation by Paul Mandel (Stemberger and Strack, *Introduction*, 285; cf. Mandel, "Between Byzantium and Islam," 78-81, 92-100).

[2] Buber, מדרש איכה רבה [*Midrasch Echa Rabbati*], "מבוא," לז״ב (73 Eng.); re Rome-Casantense (3112) - Cat. no. 63.2, see David Stern, "Hebrew Texts of the *Meshalim* from *Eikhah Rabbah*," in *Parables in Midrash: Narrative and Exegesis in Rabbinic Literature*, by David Stern (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991), 251.

[3] For a discussion of the two recensions see: A. Marx, "Midrasch Echa Rabbati," *Orientalistische Litteratur-Zeitung* 7 (1902): 293-294; David Stern, "Hebrew Texts of the Meshalim from Eikhah Rabbah," 247-251; and Paul Mandel, "Between Byzantium and Islam," 78-80. In the past scholars unanimously referred to Pesaro 1519 as the *editio princeps* of *Lam Rab.* (דפוס פיזרו רע״ט) מדרש חמש מגלות: [Midrash Five Scrolls: Pesaro 1519]). Recently M.B. Lerner argued that the first edition was Constantinople 1514, and his position has won adherents (see p. 56, n. 1). However, since the Constantinople and Pesaro editions are nearly identical, and since form analysis of the IMI is not affected by minor variants, I will use the more accessible Pesaro 1519 edition (besides the references in p. 56, n. 1, see Buber, מדרש איכה רבה [Midrasch Echa Rabbati], כא״ב [41 Eng.]; he says these editions are *identical* for *Lamentations Rabbah*). The Pesaro

will not affect my conclusions about the IMI in the *petiḥtaot* and 1:1. The opening

petiḥtaot are almost identical in Buber's edition and the printed editions.[4] Moreover, the

differences between the two recensions in the body of the commentary at 1:1 are very

minor; they are limited to a few changes in order, and a few minor additions or

substitutions.[5] There are also some published Geniza fragments of the opening *petiḥtaot*

that date from the 10th or 11th centuries.[6] They appear in the order: 23, 16, 19, 18, 17, 24,

and 25 (25 is incomplete); all except 17 and 25 have the same ending.[7] Since these

petiḥtaot exhibit early Palestinian orthography,[8] they bear witness to a much earlier form

of the text than the Ashkenzi and Sephardic recensions.[9]

I cite *Lam Rab.* in its original language from Buber's edition and provide an

English translation.[10] I also cite the masoretic text (with vocalization and cantillation) in a

footnote so readers can compare it to its midrashic interpretation.

1519 edition may have been based on Munich Codex Hev. 229.1, dated 1295 (Stemberger and Strack, *Introduction*, 284; Z. M. Rabinovitz, "מדרש איכה רבה בקטעי הגניזה" ["Midrash Eikhah Rabbah in the Geniza Fragments"], *World Congress of Jewish Studies* 6, 3 [1977]: 437).

[4] I checked this myself, comparing Buber's edition to Pesaro 1519; cf. Stern: "The several meshalim taken from the *petiḥtaot* to Eikh. R. are represented with a single text since I did not find any difference between the two recensions" (Stern, "Hebrew Texts of the *Meshalim* from *Eikhah Rabbah*," 248).

[5] I also checked this myself; cf. Mandel: "Nonetheless, a comparison between the two manuscript traditions of LR demonstrates that they constitute exactly the same work. Almost all passages found in one recension are found in the other, in *similar* language, and in *approximately* the same order, but with no discernible reason for the variations" (Mandel, "Between Byzantium and Islam," 80).

[6] Rabinovitz, "מדרש איכה רבה בקטעי הגניזה" ["Midrash Eikhah Rabbah in the Geniza Fragments"], 437; Mandel, "Between Byzantium and Islam," 79.

[7] See below, n. 19. Compared to Buber's and the printed edition there are also a few omissions, additions, or substitutions in them. For some examples, see Rabinovitz, "מדרש איכה רבה בקטעי הגניזה" ["Midrash Eikhah Rabbah in the Geniza Fragments"], 437-439, and Mandel, "Between Byzantium and Islam, 94-95.

[8] Rabinovitz, "מדרש איכה רבה בקטעי הגניזה" ["Midrash Eikhah Rabbah in the Geniza Fragments"], 437-439.

[9] Compare Stemberger, "The Geniza fragments are valuable witnesses of a very early stage of development of the midrash" (Stemberger and Strack, *Introduction*, 285). Mandel states, "Lamentations Rabbati is indeed one text, and was edited, in Palestine, in one linguistic form" ("Between Byzantium and Islam," 93).

[10] I cite Neusner's translation of the *petiḥtah* lemma, occasionally with my own alternate translations in square brackets (Jacob Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah: An Analytical Translation* [Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989]). Unless otherwise noted, I translate the rest myself in consultation with his translation.

Initial Remarks about the Lemmatization of the IMI

The first distributive unit in *Lamentations Rabbah* is Lam 1:1, which functions as

the *seder* verse of the opening thirty-six *petiḥtaot*.[11] These *petiḥtaot* are followed by

midrash sentences Lam 1:1. As I discuss these and their subordinate exegetical forms

lemmatized under Lam 1:1, I will isolate their dicta and identify the questions and

answers that lay hidden beneath the surface of Lam 1:1.

Introductory Material in the Opening *Petiḥtaot*

I stated in the Introduction that the IMI is a form that binds dicta on 1:1 of a

biblical book as a sustained and thematic treatment of introductory issues. Such a

presentation enables the reader to keep related dicta in mind in the midst of other

discoursive (digressive) matters. These dicta are extracted from *petiḥtaot* and midrash

and *petirah* sentences, accompanied by proof-texts and illustrations (parables, *ma'asot*,

disputes, etc.) that support the dicta in the main forms. Therefore, the question about

whether the opening thirty-six *petiḥtaot* are part of the IMI to *Lam Rab.* revolves around

the issue of whether they present dicta that interpret Lam 1:1 in terms of introductory

issues, and whether these dicta present a sustained theme.

We have come to expect there to be a relatively small number of *petiḥtaot* at the

beginning of an IMI.[12] We have seen that the IMIs in *Leviticus* and *Song of Songs*

Rabbah have five *petiḥtaot* each; we will see that the one in *Midrash Psalms* has six.

Furthermore, the earliest IMI in *Sifra on Leviticus* has none, and the latest one in *Midrash*

---

[11] There are thirty-four *petiḥtaot* according to their standard numbering in Buber's and the printed editions. Since there are two *petiḥtaot* in numbers two and thirty-one, there are actually thirty-six *petiḥtaot*, corresponding to the numerical value of the word איכה. From this point on I will refer to them as a group of thirty-six, but cite them according to the standard numbering.

[12] Just as we expect a small number of *petiḥtaot* at the beginning of a *parashah*.

Mishle has one. Such a small number allows the reader to keep the number of dicta to a manageable limit, and enables a sustained discussion on certain themes. Therefore, the thirty-six *petiḥtaot* that begin *Lam Rab.* are highly anomalous. In fact, they take up approximately one quarter of the length of the entire Midrash. The extreme length of this opening section presents a challenge to the formal structure of a potential IMI, i.e., its length may predispose it to a discoursive (digressive) nature, and dicta that relate to introductory issues would be lost sight of amidst extraneous material. However, the editor of this section of thirty-six *petiḥtaot* focused attention on introductory issues by:

i) understanding and taking advantage of the formal structure of the *petiḥtah*; ii) repeating key dicta; and, iii) paraphrasing the *seder* verse. I will treat each of these in order.

i) Understanding and taking advantage of the formal structure of the *petiḥtah*. Some of the *petiḥtaot* are very short[13] and the relation between their dicta and the interpretation of the *seder* verse Lam 1:1 is revealed quickly.[14] In these *petiḥtaot* it is easy to identify dicta about introductory issues. Other *petiḥtaot* are much longer, and the relation between their dicta and the interpretation of the *seder* verse Lam 1:1 may be delayed.[15] Some of the longer *petiḥtaot* sustain a discussion about introductory issues from beginning to end. Others present digressions near their beginnings. However, even these digressions do not affect their functional form; they always preserve their *petiḥtah* function, i.e., the exegetical connections between their *petiḥtah* lemmas and *seder* verses, nearer to their end than their beginnings.[16] Even if a longer *petiḥtah* has some

---

[13] See below, n. 101.
[14] See p. 17.
[15] See below, n. 98.
[16] See p. 17.

digressions, it is easy to identify its dicta about introductory issues as we work our way through it.

ii) Repeating key dicta. The dicta presented in the opening *petihtaot* describe a cycle of covenantal obligations, covenantal infractions, the punishment of the exile, and lament for it. Covenantal obligations include listening to Torah and prophecy, and performance of good deeds. Covenantal violations include disobeying or disregarding Torah and/or prophecy, and non-performance of required deeds. The punishment of exile is described in its historical context; lament for this punishment completes the cycle. Every *petihtah* presents dicta that fit somewhere into this cycle. How these dicta function as part of the IMI and the issues that they address will be discussed below.[17]

iii) The paraphrase of the *seder* verse. In a few cases the *seder* verse is cited verbatim; however, in most cases it is paraphrased. The most common paraphrase is וכיוון שגלו התחיל ירמיה מקונן עליהם ואו' איכה ישבה בדד - "When/as soon as they were exiled, Jeremiah began lamenting for them and saying, 'How lonely she sits.'"[18] This paraphrase appears in the earliest witnesses to *Lam Rab.*, i.e., in the published Geniza fragments mentioned earlier.[19] The phrase כיון שחטאו - "When they sinned" is frequently prefaced to it in Buber's edition and Pesaro 1519. Other variations of the paraphrase also occur.[20] As I mentioned in the Introduction, the lemmatized part of Scripture in the IMI

---

[17] See below, p. 133ff.

[18] כיון ש- is a temporal conjunction with the sense of "as soon as" or "when" (Pérez Fernández, *An Introductory Grammar of Rabbinic Hebrew*, 209).

[19] This paraphrase appears in *petihtah* 23 (Z. M. Rabinovitz, גנזי מדרש לצורתם של מדרשי חז"ל לפני כתבי יד מן הגניזה [English title added: *Ginzé Midrash: The Oldest Forms of Rabbinic Midrashim According to Geniza Manuscripts*] [Tel Aviv: The Chaim Rosenberg School For Jewish Studies, 1976], 121, lines 16-17), *petihtah* 16 (ibid., 122, lines 12-13), *petihtah* 19 (ibid., 122, lines 18-19), *petihtah* 18 (ibid., 122, lines 4-5), and *petihtah* 24 (ibid., 127, line 16). *Petihtah* 17 has איכה ישבה בדד (ibid., 123, line 15), and *petihtah* 25 is incomplete.

[20] See below, Table 3, p. 132, "Paraphrases of the *Seder* Verse Lam 1:1."

signifies a discoursive subject; in some cases, a paraphrase of L is used to identify that subject.[21] The paraphrases of Lam 1:1 force us to interpret it in terms of the covenant cycle of covenantal obligations, infractions, punishments, and lament. One dictum about the lemma איכה (in some of the paraphrases) is that it is the opening word for a קינה, i.e., a lament. Significantly, the paraphrase states התחיל ירמיה מקונן עליהם, i.e., Lam 1:1 is the beginning of Jeremiah's lament that continues beyond Lam 1:1. Later I will show that the whole book of Lamentations is lemmatized by the word איכה, and that it serves as a title of the book.[22] Thus, the paraphrases force us to read the book in the context of the covenant God made to Israel, and in the specific historical context of Jeremiah's lament for them after Nebuchadnezzar carried them off to exile.

Given that the editor used the above strategies to focus attention on introductory issues, I can summarize each of the thirty-six *petiḥtaot* in *Lam Rab.* in terms of their functional form. As stated in the Introduction, "The functional form *petiḥtah* describes the relation between the dictum of a midrash or *petirah* sentence and its interpretation of a *seder* verse, i.e., its *petiḥtah* function."[23] I also represented the form using the following diagram:[24]

---

[21] See p. 22.
[22] See below, pp. 136, 138-140, 143.
[23] See pp. 16-17.
[24] See p. 17. L = Lemma (of Scripture); O = Hermeneutical Operation (whether implicit or explicit); D = Dictum (a proposition about L).

L (*Petiḥtah* Verse) - O - D$_1$

L (*Petiḥtah* Verse) - O - D$_{2,3,\ldots\#}$

L (*Petiḥtah* Verse) - O - D$_\#$

$\downarrow$ *Petiḥtah* Function
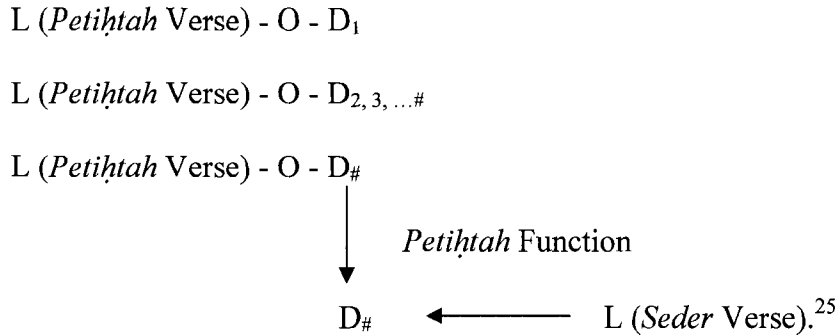
D$_\#$ $\longleftarrow$ L (*Seder* Verse).[25]

I will describe each *petiḥtah* using the terms in this diagram. The diagram explains that

various dicta are proposed about the *petiḥtah* verse or lemma. Some or all of these dicta

are then applied to the *seder* verse to interpret it. Since the lemma of the "*petiḥtah* verse"

often extends beyond one verse, I will use the term *petiḥtah* lemma for it. Since the

lemma of the *seder* verse is always a part or all of Lam 1:1, I will use the term *seder*

verse for it. At key points I will summarize how the dicta relate to introductory issues.

After describing the thirty-six *petiḥtaot* I will summarize their dicta and paraphrases of

the *seder* verse, and explain their cumulative effect as a sustained thematic treatment of

introductory issues to the book of Lamentations, i.e., as part of the IMI to Lamentations.

Petiḥtah 1

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Isa 10:30: [26] צהלי קולך בת גלים הקשיבי לישה עניה ענתות -

"Cry with a shrill voice, O daughter of Gallim. Hearken, Laishah! Take up the cry,

Anathoth!"[27] First, various dicta about בת גלים (בַּת גַּלִּים, "daughter of Gallim") are

presented, reading daughters of waves (בַּת גַּלִּים) or daughters of exiles (בַּת גּוֹלִים,

daughters of the patriarchs who also lived outside the land). Next, dicta are presented that

---

[25] See pp. 16ff. for a review of this form.

[26] צַהֲלִי קוֹלֵךְ בַּת גַּלִּים הַקְשִׁיבִי לַיְשָׁה עֲנִיָּה עֲנָתוֹת. Neusner emends עֲנִיָּה to עֲנִיָּה ("answer, reply to her").

[27] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 11.

describe a cycle of covenantal obligations, covenantal infractions, the punishment of the exile (of the southern kingdom), and lament for that punishment. הקשיבי ("Hearken") is supplied with objects related to covenantal obligations, i.e., מצות ("commandments"), דברי תורה ("teachings of the Torah"), דברי נבואה ("teachings of prophecy"), and צדקות ומעשים טובים ("righteousness and good deeds"). לישה, reading לַיְשָׁה, "the lion" is interpreted as a warning: if they do not hearken, the lion Nebuchadnezzar will rise up against them (proof-text, Jer 4:7). עניה, reading עֲנִיָּה, "impoverished" is an accusation that they were impoverished of hearkening to the things they should have. ענתות, reading עֲנָתוֹת (as in Isa 10:30) refers to the Anathothite (ענתותא) who prophesied against them, i.e., Jeremiah (proof-text, Jer 1:1). Finally, the *seder* verse Lam 1:1 is paraphrased to express the cycle of disobedience, punishment, and lament as a discoursive subject: כיון שבאו הפורענות קונן עליהם איכה ישבה בדד - "When the punishment came, he [Jeremiah] began lamenting for them, 'How lonely she sits!'" This is the first of a number of paraphrases of Lam 1:1 that places the book in the historical context of the causes and effects of the exile. The interpretation of Lam 1:1 by dicta derived from Isa 10:30 is that punishment came for covenantal infractions followed by Jeremiah's lament for the city.

The following introductory issues about the book of Lamentation are addressed in this *petiḥtah*: authorship - Jeremiah is the man from Anathoth, who lamented; historical context, including a general cycle of covenantal obligations, infractions, and punishments, and a specific historical context, the exile of the southern kingdom by Nebuchadnezzar; and prophetic warning about punishment for violations. The idea for this cycle could have been suggested by the lemma איכה, i.e., how did this happen (a focus on the causes of the catastrophe of the exile). Since איכה is the usual way to begin

a lament, the paraphrase also identifies the genre of Lamentations as a קינה (lament).

Since there will be an alternative genre proposed for Lamentations, it is important to note

that whenever a paraphrase of Lam 1:1 states Jeremiah קונן עליהם, it identifies the book

as a lament.

Petiḥtah 2

This is the second *petiḥtah* according to the standard numbering; however, this

section contains two *petiḥtaot* with different *petiḥtah* lemmas, and similar paraphrases of

the *seder* verse beginning with וכיון ש and ending with התחיל ירמיה מקונן עליהם

איכה.[28] The first *petiḥtah* lemma is Jer 9:11: מי האיש החכם ויבן את זאת ואשר דבר פי ה׳

מי ויגדה על מה אבדה הארץ נצתה כמדבר מבלי עובר[29] - "What man is so wise that he אליו

understands this? To whom has the Lord's mouth spoken, so that he can explain it: why is

the land in ruins, laid waste like a wilderness, with none passing through?"[30] The next

verse in Jeremiah answers this question: על עזבם את תורתי - "Because they forsook the

(*sic*) Torah."[31] Next, dicta are presented that describe that infraction, the Gentile empire

overcoming Israel, and lament for the punishment of exile. Forsaking Torah is explained

as not paying the salary of scribes and teachers (בשכר סופרים ובשכר משנים), the

guardians of a city (נטורי קרתא). Forsaking Torah is even worse than idolatry, incest,

and murder (עבודה זרה, גילוי עריות, שפיכות דמים). Whenever Israel throws teachings of

Torah to the ground, the Gentile empire can overcome Israel (כל זמן שישראל משליכין

דברי תורה לארץ המלכות היא גוזרת ומוצלחת). That empire overcame Israel in the exile.

---

[28] Buber, מדרש איכה רבה [*Midrasch Echa Rabbati*], "מבוא," ג׳׳א (4 Eng.), in his notes section.

[29] מִי הָאִישׁ הֶחָכָם וְיָבֵן אֶת זֹאת וַאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר פִּי יְהֹוָה אֵלָיו וְיַגִּדָהּ עַל מָה אָבְדָה הָאָרֶץ נִצְּתָה כַמִּדְבָּר מִבְּלִי עֹבֵר.

[30] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 13.

[31] Ibid.

Finally, the *seder* verse Lam 1:1 is paraphrased: וכיון שהשליכו דברי תורה לארץ התחיל

ירמיה מקונן עליהם איכה - "When they threw teachings of Torah to the ground, Jeremiah

began lamenting for them, 'How?'" This paraphrase incorporates a dictum from the

petiḥtah lemma directly into Lam 1:1. This dictum that "Israel threw teachings of Torah

to the ground" fits well into the cycle introduced in *petiḥtah* 1, i.e., it identifies a specific

covenantal infraction. The paraphrase also continues to identify Lamentations as a

lament.

The second *petiḥtah* lemma is Jer 9:16: כה אמר ה' צבאות התבוננו וקראו

למקוננות ותבואינה[32] - "Thus says the Lord of hosts: 'Summon the dirge-singers, let them

come.'"[33] When the ten tribes went into exile, the Holy One, Blessed be He, lamented

over them. When the two southern tribes Benjamin and Judah went into exile, it is as if

He lost his strength to lament and summoned dirge-singers to lament for Him. In a

parable, the Holy One, Blessed be He, is compared to a king who had twelve sons

representing the twelve tribes. The end of this parable paraphrases the *seder* verse: וכיון

שמתו כולם התחיל מקונן עליהם איכה ישבה בדד - "When they all died, He began

lamenting for them, 'How lonely she sits!'"

Petiḥtah 3

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Jer 15:17: לא ישבתי בסוד משחקים ואעלוז מפני ידך בדד

ישבתי[34] - "I did not sit in the assembly of those who celebrate nor did I rejoice. I dwelled

alone because of your hand."[35] A dictum about מפני ידך in Jer 15:17 is that it means נגעה

---

[32] כֹּה אָמַר יְהֹוָה צְבָאוֹת הִתְבּוֹנְנוּ וְקִרְאוּ לַמְקוֹנְנוֹת וּתְבוֹאֶינָה.
[33] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 16.
[34] לֹא יָשַׁבְתִּי בְסוֹד מְשַׂחֲקִים וָאֶעְלֹז מִפְּנֵי יָדְךָ בָּדָד יָשַׁבְתִּי.
[35] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 19.

בי ידך ("your hand struck me"). This meaning is presented in a paraphrase of the *seder*

verse Lam 1:1: וכיון שנגעה בי ידך בדד ישבתי איכה ישבה בדד - "But when your hand

struck me I dwelled alone, [just as it says], 'How lonely she sits.'" This paraphrase also

incorporates a dictum from the *petiḥtah* lemma directly into Lam 1:1. The *petiḥtah*

confirms the idea that the exile is a punishment from God.

Petiḥtah 4

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Hos 6:7: והמה כאדם עברו ברית[36] - "But they are like a

man, they have transgressed the covenant."[37] Based on the identification of אדם as

Adam, the first man, the *petiḥtah* supplies proof-texts from Gen 2 and 3 that demonstrate

Adam lived under the terms of a covenant. Adam was brought to the garden of Eden and

given a command (Gen 2:16-17); after he violated that command (Gen 3:11) and he was

driven from the garden (Gen 3:24), God lamented for him, saying וקוננתי עליו) איכה

איכה, Gen 3:9 [אַיֶּכָּה {"Where are you?"} is repointed אֵיכָה {"How!"} as in Lam 1:1]).

Thus, the first man experienced the cycle of covenantal obligations, covenantal

infractions, the punishment of the exile, and lament for that punishment. His descendants

experienced the same cycle: they were given the land of Israel and commandments; after

they violated the commandments they were sent into exile, and God lamented for them,

איכה ישבה בדד.

The clauses ודנתי אותם בשילוחין ("I judged them with exile") and וקוננתי עליהם

איכה ישבה בדד ("And I lamented for them, 'How lonely she sits'")[38] function as a

---

[36] וְהֵמָּה כְּאָדָם עָבְרוּ בְרִית.

[37] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 20.

[38] There is an intervening proof-text, Jer 15:1.

paraphrase of the *seder* verse. In all cases where a paraphrase or its equivalent occurs, it does so in the context of a cycle of covenantal obligations, infractions, punishment, and lament. Thus, the book of Lamentations is placed in the specific historical context of the exile and the events that led to it.

Petiḥtah 5

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Ezek 24:6: אוי עיר הדמים[39] - "Woe to the bloody city," i.e., the city in which they shed blood. A dictum is proposed about לנתחיה לנתחיה הוציאה[40] ("take it out piece by piece," same verse): "they were exiled district by district" (מטליות מטליות היו גולים), followed by a discussion about what order the tribes were exiled in. Then a question is introduced (by The Holy One, Blessed be He), "Why did you go into exile?" (ואתם למה גליתם). The answer is provided by a proof-text: for its shed blood is still in its midst (Ezek 24:7, כי דמה בתוכה היה). This general statement is illustrated by the specific case of Israel killing Zechariah in the temple court, and not disposing of his blood properly. The *seder* verse is paraphrased as: כיון שחטאו גלו וכיון שגלו התחיל ירמי׳ מקונן עליהם איכה ישבה בדד - "When they sinned they were exiled, and when they were exiled, Jeremiah began lamenting for them, 'How lonely she sits.'" This paraphrase incorporates a dictum about their sins into Lam 1:1. The paraphrase enables the reader to keep the covenant cycle in view, i.e., the cycle of violation of the covenant, punishment, and lament. It also identifies the book of Lamentations as a lament.

---

[39] אוֹי עִיר הַדָּמִים.

[40] לִנְתָחֶיהָ לִנְתָחֶיהָ הוֹצִיאָהּ.

Petiḥtah 6

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Hos 5:9: [41]אפרים לשמה תהיה ביום תוכחה - "Ephraim shall become a desolation in the day of punishment [alternate translation: "rebuke"]."[42] The "day of rebuke" refers to the day that God rebuked the ten tribes. They had accused Him of favouritism in exiling them but not Judah and Benjamin. God replied that Judah and Benjamin had not been exiled because they had not yet sinned. But when they sinned, He did exile them. This is followed by a paraphrase of the *seder* verse, כיון שחטאו גלו וכיון שגלו התחיל ירמי׳ מקונן עליהם איכה.

Petiḥtah 7

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Isa 3:26: [43]ואנו ואבלו פתחיה ונקתה לארץ תשב - "And her gates shall lament and mourn, ravaged, she shall sit upon the ground."[44] Various dicta are proposed: פתחיה ("her gates," plural) refers to the destruction of the first and second temple; and נקתה, read as an infinitive from the root נקי, meaning "her being free, exempt from, bereft," describes Zion as נְקִיָה, bereft of teachings of Torah, words of prophecy, the righteous, commandments, and good deeds. As a punishment for this she sits on the ground, which leads to the *seder* verse איכה ישבה בדד.[45] While the verse is not paraphrased, the *petiḥtah* still refers to the cycle of covenantal obligations, punishment, and lament.

---

[41] אֶפְרַיִם לְשַׁמָּה תִהְיֶה בְּיוֹם תּוֹכֵחָה.
[42] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 25
[43] וְאָנוּ וְאָבְלוּ פְּתָחֶיהָ וְנִקָּתָה לָאָרֶץ תֵּשֵׁב.
[44] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 27.
[45] The *seder* verse is missing in Pesaro 1519.

Petiḥtah 8

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Jer 9:18: כי קול נהי נשמע מציון איך שודדנו בושנו מאד כי עזבנו ארץ[46] - "For a sound of wailing is heard from Zion: How we are ruined! We are utterly ashamed, because we have left the land."[47] Dicta about "the land" are proposed. First, it refers to the land of Israel. In another interpretation, it refers to teachings of Torah (proof-text, Job 11:9, "Its [Torah's] measure is longer than the land"). If "land" is "teachings of Torah," then they have abandoned (עזב) the land, i.e., abandoned Torah. In another interpretation, "land" refers to the sanctuary, which they have also abandoned. The *seder* verse is then paraphrased: כיון שחטאו גלו וכיון שגלו התחיל ירמיי מקונן עליהם איכה ישבה בדד. All of the covenant cycle is present in this *petiḥtah* - Torah obligations, violation, punishment, and lament.

Petiḥtah 9

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Jer 51:51: בושנו כי שמענו חרפה כסתה כלימה פנינו כי באו זרים על מקדשי בית ה'[48] - "We are put to shame, for we have heard reproach; dishonour has covered our face, for aliens have come into the holy places of the Lord's house."[49] Dicta are proposed that relate shame and dishonour to the destruction of both temples: "We are put to shame, for we have heard reproach" (בושנו כי שמענו חרפה) refers to the seventeenth of Tammuz; "Dishonor has covered our face, for aliens have come into the holy places of the Lord's house" (כי באו זרים על מקדשי בית ה') refers to the ninth of Ab; and, "The holy places" (מקדשי בית ה') refers to the destructions of the first and second

---

[46] כִּי קוֹל נְהִי נִשְׁמַע מִצִּיּוֹן אֵיךְ שֻׁדָּדְנוּ בֹּשְׁנוּ מְאֹד כִּי עָזַבְנוּ אָרֶץ.
[47] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 28.
[48] בֹּשְׁנוּ כִּי שָׁמַעְנוּ חֶרְפָּה כִּסְּתָה כְלִמָּה פָּנֵינוּ כִּי בָּאוּ זָרִים עַל מִקְדְּשֵׁי בֵּית יְהוָה.
[49] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 30.

temples. The paraphrase of the *seder* verse follows: כיון שחטאו גלו וכיון שגלו התחיל ירמי׳

מקונן עליהם איכה.[50] In terms of the covenant cycle described so far, this *petiḥtah* focuses

on one aspect of the punishment in exile.

<div align="center">

Petiḥtah 10

</div>

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Isa 43:22:[51] ולא אותי קראת יעקב כי יגעת בי ישראל - "But

you have not worshipped Me, O Jacob, that you should be weary of Me, O Israel."[52]

Dicta with accompanying proof-texts follow about Israel practicing idolatry. They would

not even worship God along with idols. Other dicta follow based on Isa 43:23-24: "You

have not brought me your sheep for burnt-offerings, nor honored me with your sacrifices.

I have not burdened you with meal-offerings, nor wearied you about frankincense. You

have not bought me fragrant reed with money, nor sated me with the fat of your

sacrifices."[53] Instead, Israel had burdened God with their sins and iniquities (Isa 43:24).[54]

This is followed by a paraphrase of the *seder* verse: ראו מה גרמו לי עונותיכם לשרוף את

ביתי ולחרוב את עירי ולהגלות את בני בין אומות העולם ולישב לי לבדי איכה ישבה בדד -

"See what your sins caused Me to do: [they caused Me] to burn down My temple, to

destroy My city, to send My sons into exile among the nations of the world, and to dwell

alone all by Myself, 'How she dwells alone.'" This *petiḥtah* mentions all of the elements

of the covenant cycle - obligation to worship God alone, in the temple, violation of this,

punishment, and lament.

---

[50] The paraphrase of the *seder* verse occurs twice, once after a digression about aliens entering the Holy of Holies, and once after the dictum about the destruction of both temples.

[51] וְלֹא אֹתִי קָרָאתָ יַעֲקֹב כִּי יָגַעְתָּ בִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל.

[52] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 32.

[53] Ibid.

[54] A re-division of the consonants in this verse yields: אכה עבדתני בחטאותיך הוגעתני בעונותיך - "How you have burdened me with your sins, you have wearied me with your iniquities!"

Petiḥtah 11

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Deut 28:47, 48: תחת אשר לא עבדת את יהוה אלהיך

בשמחה ובטוב לבב מרוב כל ועבדת את אויביך ועבדת את איביך אשר ישלחנו יהוה בך ברעב

ובצמא ובעירם ובחסר כל[55] - "Because you would not serve [alternate translation: "instead

of serving"] the Lord your God in joy and gladness over the abundance of everything,

you shall have to serve in hunger and thirst, naked and lacking everything, the enemies

whom the Lord will let loose against you."[56] A dictum is derived from the lemma תחת -

if they had merit (אלו זכיתם הייתם), they would have had an abundance of everything.

Twenty-two proof-texts from the Tanakh are presented to confirm this dictum. Every text

is also accompanied by the opposite dictum - since they did not have merit (ועכשיו שלא

זכיתם), they lacked everything. The twenty-two verses in Lamentations 1 are presented

in reverse order to confirm it. Finally, the *seder* verse, Lam 1:1 is presented as proof of

the dictum: "But since you did not have the merit, 'How lonely sits [the city once great

with people].'"[57] This sentence serves as another paraphrase of the *seder* verse. All the

elements of the covenant cycle are present in this *petiḥtah*: they were obligated to serve

God, but they were in violation of this; therefore, God punished them. Every verse in

Lamentation 1 serves as proof-text of that punishment.

All of the remaining *petiḥtaot* continue to present dicta that relate to part or all of

the covenant cycle.[58] The only differences among them are their *petiḥtah* lemmas and

their specific midrashic hermeneutics used to derive their dicta. As we stated earlier, the

---

[55] תַּחַת אֲשֶׁר לֹא עָבַדְתָּ אֶת יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּשִׂמְחָה וּבְטוּב לֵבָב מֵרֹב כֹּל: וְעָבַדְתָּ אֶת אֹיְבֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר יְשַׁלְּחֶנּוּ יְהֹוָה
בָּךְ בְּרָעָב וּבְצָמָא וּבְעֵירֹם וּבְחֹסֶר כֹּל.
[56] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 35.
[57] Ibid., 37.
[58] Even *petiḥtah* 31a contributes to the first half of the cycle, i.e., to obligation and violation.

IMI is a form that binds dicta on 1:1 of a biblical book as a thematic and sustained presentation of introductory issues. Such a presentation enables the reader to keep these related dicta in mind, i.e., in the midst of other discoursive (digressive) matters. Therefore, for the remaining *petiḥtaot* I will simply list their *petiḥtah* lemmas, dicta that relate to the cycle, some of their proof-texts, and any paraphrases of the *seder* verse.

Petiḥtah 12

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Prov 25:20: מעדה בגד ביום קרה חומץ על נתר ושר בשירים על לב רע[59] - "Disrobing on a chilly day, like vinegar on natron, is one who sings songs to a sorrowful soul."[60] The following dicta that relate to the covenant cycle are presented: Nebuchadnezzar took away the garments of the priesthood and kingship; ביום קרה refers to the day they worshipped the golden calf (Exod 32:4), or to the day God called but they would not listen (Zech 7:13); and חומץ על נתר refers to dissolving the teachings of Torah, and mocking God's messengers, the prophets (2 Chr 36:17). A specific example of this was they denied prophecies of the punishment of the exile (Ezek 12:27). Because they denied it, God brought it immediately (Ezek 12:25; 2 Chr 36:17). The *seder* verse is paraphrased: כיון שחטאו גלו וכיון שגלו התחיל ירמיי מקונן עליהם איכה. Here the cycle includes prophetic warning, as in *petiḥtah* 1.

Petiḥtah 13

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Prov 25:18-19: מפיץ וחרב וחץ שנון איש עונה ברעהו עד שקר שן רועה ורגל מועדת מבטח בוגד ביום צרה[61] - "Like a scatterer, a sword, a sharpened

---

[59] מַעֲדָה בֶּגֶד בְּיוֹם קָרָה חֹמֶץ עַל נָתֶר וְשָׁר בַּשִּׁרִים עַל לֵב רָע.

[60] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 38.

[61] מֵפִיץ וְחֶרֶב וְחֵץ שָׁנוּן אִישׁ עֹנֶה בְרֵעֵהוּ עֵד שָׁקֶר : שֵׁן רֹעָה וְרֶגֶל מוּעָדֶת מִבְטָח בּוֹגֵד בְּיוֹם צָרָה.

arrow, is a man who testifies falsely against his fellow. Like a loose tooth and an

unsteady leg is a treacherous support in time of trouble."[62] איש עונה ברעהו עד שקר is

מבטח, who worshipped the golden calf, saying, אלה אלהיך ישראל (Exod 32:8).

בוגד refers to Israel's unfaithfulness. The Israelites apply the metaphor of a tooth and foot

to their captors and ask: "Why now does an evil tooth consume us and foot trod on us?

Because we placed our trust in idolatry."[63] The scatterer, sword, and sharpened arrow all

refer to punishments of exile (Deut 28:64; Lev 26:33; Ezek 5:16). In another

interpretation, Israel is like a loose tooth and unsteady leg. God commanded Israel to lose

faith in their idols and trust Him (בגדו בע״ז ובטחו בי); instead, they lost faith in God and

trusted in idols (והן לא עשו כן אלא בגדו בי ובטחו בע״ז). The paraphrase of the *seder*

verse follows: כיון שחטאו גלו וכיון שגלו התחיל ירמי׳ מקונן עליהם איכה.

Petiḥtah 14

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Prov 29:9: איש חכם נשפט את איש אויל ורגז ושחק ואין

נחת[64] - "If a wise man is judged with a foolish man, whether he be angry or laugh, there

will be no rest."[65] The wise man refers to God, the foolish man to Israel. God was angry

when [In the days of Amaziah], "The other ten thousand did the children of Judah carry

away alive and brought them into the top of the rock and cast them down; and every one

burst open" (2 Chr 25:12).[66] The printed edition explains why this was a sin: "At that

time said the Holy One, Blessed be He, 'I decreed only death by the sword for the

children of Noah, but these have brought them into the top of the rock and cast them

---

[62] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 41.
[63] Ibid.
[64] אִישׁ חָכָם נִשְׁפָּט אֶת אִישׁ אֱוִיל וְרָגַז וְשָׂחַק וְאֵין נָחַת.
[65] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 43.
[66] Ibid., 43-44.

down.'"[67] The paraphrase of the *seder* appears at the end: כיון שחטאו גלו וכיון שגלו התחיל

ירמי׳ מקונן עליהם איכה.

Petiḥtah 15

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Prov 9:7: [68] יוסר לץ לוקח לו קלון ומוכיח לרשע מומו -

"He who corrects a scorner gets shame for himself, and he who reproves a wicked man, it

becomes a blot to him."[69] God corrected the Israelites (scorners) in the exile. However,

this brought God shame and dishonour among the nations. From their perspective, He

lacked the power to keep them in their land and to punish the Babylonian king like He

had punished Pharaoh, Sisera, and Sennacherib. In another interpretation, Jeremiah was

the one who corrected a generation of scorners; this brought him shame when the people

cursed him (Jer 15:20). He also reproved Israel. A paraphrase of the *seder* verse follows:

שהיה מוכיח לישראל ואומר להם איכה - "For he used to reprove Israel, saying to them,

'How.'" This paraphrase omits the phrase ירמי׳ מקונן עליהם and proposes an alternative

genre for the book of Lamentations - it is a prophetic rebuke. This genre identification

will be taken up again in *petiḥtah* 28, and in the section of midrash sentences following

the *petiḥtaot*.[70]

Petiḥtah 16

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Jer 4:18: דרכך ומעלליך עשו אלה לך זאת רעתך כי מר כי נגע

עד לבך[71] - "Your conduct and your acts have brought this upon you; this is your bitter

---

[67] Pesaro 1519; translation by Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 44.

[68] יֹסֵר לֵץ לֹקֵחַ לֹו קָלֹון וּמֹוכִיחַ לְרָשָׁע מוּמֹו.

[69] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 45.

[70] See below, pp. 123, 137-138.

[71] דַּרְכֵּךְ וּמַעֲלָלַיִךְ עָשֹו אֵלֶּה לָךְ זֹאת רָעָתֵךְ כִּי מָר כִּי נָגַע עַד לִבֵּךְ.

punishment; it pierces your very heart."[72] Verses from Lamentations and counter texts

from other parts of the Tanakh describe their punishments in exile in a settled region, in

contrast to their propitious state in the Sinai wilderness. Their conduct and acts caused

their exile. A paraphrase of the *seder* verse does not occur in Buber's edition or Pesaro

1519. However, it does occur in a Geniza fragment: וכיוון שגלו התחיל ירמיה מקונן

עליהם ואו' איכה ישבה בדד.[73]

Petiḥtah 17

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Ps 69:13: ישיחו בי יושבי שער ונגינות שותי שכר[74] - "Those

who sit in the gate gossip about me and I am the song of drunkards."[75] The *petiḥtah* first

describes the nations mocking some Jewish practises, the Sabbath and Sabbatical Year, in

light of their poverty. In another interpretation, Israel sits in the בתי כנסיות and בתי

מדרשות and eat and drink before the ninth of Ab. They become the drunkards who recite

laments and dirges (קינין ונהי), and איכה. i.e., איכה is recited along with other laments.[76]

Presumably, both the mockery and lament take place while the Jews are living in exile.

Therefore, in terms of the covenant cycle, the *petiḥtah* mentions punishment, i.e., exile,

poverty, and reproach, and lament over these.

Petiḥtah 18

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Lam 3:15: השבעני במרורים הרוני לענה[77] - "He has filled

me with bitterness, sated me with wormwood."[78] "Bitterness" refers to the bitter herbs on

---

[72] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 47.

[73] Rabinovitz, גנזי מדרש [Ginzé Midrash], 122.

[74] יָשִׂיחוּ בִי יֹשְׁבֵי שָׁעַר וּנְגִינוֹת שׁוֹתֵי שֵׁכָר.

[75] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 49.

[76] A Geniza fragment reads: מאחר שהן משתכרים מסעודת [ט באב] הן יושבין ומקוננין ואומרין איכה
ישבה בדד (Rabinovitz, גנזי מדרש [Ginzé Midrash], 123).

[77] הִשְׂבִּיעַנִי בַמְּרוֹרִים הִרְוַנִי לַעֲנָה.

the first night of Passover, and "wormwood" refers to the ninth of Ab. A paraphrase of

the *seder* verse follows: ועל זה היה מקונן ירמיה איכה ישבה בדד - "And because of this

Jeremiah used to lament for them, 'How lonely she sits.'" Jeremiah lamented because of

the bitterness of exile, just as the first night of Passover recalled the bitterness of slavery

in Egypt. A Geniza fragment cites the more common paraphrase: וכיוון שגלו התחיל

ירמ[יהו] מקונן עלי' ואו' איכה ישבה בדד.[79]

Petiḥtah 19

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Dan 2:21: [80]והוא מהשנא עדניא וזמניא - "And He changes

the times and the seasons."[81] If they had merit, they would have been living in Jerusalem,

enjoying the waters of Shiloah, and singing songs and Psalms to God. Since they did not

have merit, God changed the times and seasons. Now they were exiled to Babylon,

drinking the waters of the Euphrates and reciting laments and dirges. The *seder* verse is

cited, but not paraphrased: איכה ישבה בדד. A Geniza fragment cites the more common

paraphrase: וכיוון שגלו התחיל יר[מיה מקונן עליהם ואו'] איכה ישבה בדד.[82]

Petiḥtah 20

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Ps 102:8: [83]שקדתי ואהיה כצפור בודד על גג - "I watch and

become like a sparrow that is alone on the roof."[84] In the second half of the *petiḥtah* God

is compared to a bird. Just as a bird dwells alone after its chicks have been taken away

---

[78] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 51.
[79] Rabinovitz, גנזי מדרש [Ginzé Midrash], 122.
[80] וְהוּא מְהַשְׁנֵא עִדָּנַיָּא וְזִמְנַיָּא.
[81] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 52.
[82] Rabinovitz, גנזי מדרש [Ginzé Midrash], 122. This fragment mentions only one merit/no merit pairing: drinking from the waters of Shiloah, and reciting laments and dirges.
[83] שָׁקַדְתִּי וָאֶהְיֶה כְּצִפּוֹר בּוֹדֵד עַל גָּג.
[84] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 54.

from it, God burned His temple, destroyed His city, exiled His children among the nations of the world, and dwelt alone. The *seder* verse is cited without paraphrase: איכה ישבה בדד. The dictum about the *seder* verse is that the *Shekinah*, mentioned earlier in the *petiḥtah*, now dwells alone.[85]

Petiḥtah 21

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Lev 13:45-46: והצרוע אשר בו הנגע בגדיו יהיו פרמים וראשו יהיה פרוע ועל שפם יעטה וטמא טמא יקרא כל ימי אשר הנגע בו יטמא טמא הוא בדד ישב[86] - "As for the person with a leprous infection, his clothes shall be rent, his head shall be left bare, and he shall cover over his upper lip; and he shall call out, 'Unclean! Unclean!' He shall be unclean as long as the disease is on him. Being unclean, he shall dwell apart."[87] הצרוע אשר בו הנגע refers to the temple infected by idolatry and made unclean, like the person afflicted with a skin disease. בגדיו יהיו פרמים refers to the priest's garments (torn as a sign of mourning). וראשו יהיה פרוע refers to the day the covering of Judah was bared (יגל, Isa 22:8). ועל שפם יעטה refers to the Israelites exiled among the nations and not being able to pronounce a word from the Torah. וטמא טמא refers to the destruction of the first and second temples. Proof-texts are offered about Israel worshipping idols, and God punishing them for it. כל ימי אשר הנגע בו יטמא טמא הוא בדד ישב refers to the length of time the temple was infected by idolatry, and the length of time Israel would be punished (measure for measure) in exile. Since they are

---

[85] שקדתי אני להשרות שכינתי בבית המקדש לעולם: "I intended that My *Shekinah* dwell in the temple forever."

[86] וְהַצָּרוּעַ אֲשֶׁר בּוֹ הַנֶּגַע בְּגָדָיו יִהְיוּ פְרֻמִים וְרֹאשׁוֹ יִהְיֶה פָרוּעַ וְעַל שָׂפָם יַעְטֶה וְטָמֵא טָמֵא יִקְרָא: כָּל יְמֵי אֲשֶׁר הַנֶּגַע בּוֹ יִטְמָא טָמֵא הוּא בָּדָד יֵשֵׁב.

[87] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 56.

being punished, the temple sits alone. The *seder* verse immediately follows this dictum:

.איכה ישבה בדד

Petiḥtah 22

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Isa 5:8-9: הוי מגיעי בית בבית שדה בשדה יקריבו עד אפס

מקום והושבתם לבדכם בקרב הארץ באזני יהוה צבאות אם לא בתים רבים לשמה יהיו

גדלים וטובים מאין יושב[88] - "Ah! those who add house to house and join field to field, till

there is room for none but you to dwell in the land! In My hearing said the Lord of Hosts:

'Surely great houses shall lie forlorn, spacious and splendid ones without occupants.'"[89]

God asks sarcastically if they alone hope to possess the land (לבדכם יורשין את הארץ). In

fact, houses will lie desolate without inhabitants because He will punish them. עד אפס

מקום is interpreted as מי גרם למקום ליחרב על שלא הניחו מקום שלא עבדו ע״ז - "What is

it that caused the place to be destroyed? It is because they left no place in which they had

not worshipped idolatry."[90] A long list of proof-texts follow that show how they first

worshipped idols in secret in the dark, in their inner chambers, and progressed to worship

them behind their doors, on their roofs, in their gardens, on the mountain tops and hills, in

the fields, at crossroads, in public squares, in cities, in streets, and even in the Holy of

Holies in the temple. The common paraphrase of the *seder* verse follows: כיון שחטאו גלו

.וכיון שגלו התחיל ירמי׳ מקונן עליהם איכה

---

[88] הוֹי מַגִּיעֵי בַיִת בְּבַיִת שָׂדֶה בְשָׂדֶה יַקְרִיבוּ עַד אֶפֶס מָקוֹם וְהוּשַׁבְתֶּם לְבַדְּכֶם בְּקֶרֶב הָאָרֶץ: בְּאָזְנֵי יְהֹוָה צְבָאוֹת אִם לֹא בָּתִּים רַבִּים לְשַׁמָּה יִהְיוּ גְּדֹלִים וְטוֹבִים מֵאֵין יוֹשֵׁב.

[89] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 58.

[90] Ibid.

Petiḥtah 23

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Eccl 12:1-8, which makes this a very long *petiḥtah*. The cycle of youth and old age described in the lemma supplies dicta for the covenant cycle as we have described it. All of its dicta sustain a discussion about this cycle; however, since it is so long I will highlight only some of them. First, זכר את בוראיך בימי בחורתיך[91] (12:1, "Remember your Creator in the days of your youth") means זכרו את בוראכם עד שבחרותיכם קיימות ("Remember your Creator while [God's] choice of you endures/remains valid").[92] Israel's election made them the beneficiaries of many covenants: the covenant of priesthood (ברית כהונה), the covenant of the Levites (הברית לויה), the covenant of the Davidic monarchy (ברית מלכות בית דוד), the covenant of Jerusalem (ברית ירושלים), and the covenant of the temple (ברית בית המקדש). They are exhorted to "Remember their Creator" while they are beneficiaries of God's covenants, before the bad days come (12:1, עד אשר לא יבאו ימי הרעה), i.e., the days in exile (אלו ימי הגלות). The sun, the light, the moon, and the stars darkening (12:2, תחשך השמש והאור והירח והכוכבים) refer to the house of David, the light of Torah, the Sanhedrin, and the rabbis; these will all be extinguished in the exile. A general statement follows about prophecy and fulfillment: את מוצא שכל הנבואות הקשות והרעות שנתנבא עליהם ירמי' לא באו עליהם אלא לאחר חורבן בית המקדש - "You find that all of the severe and catastrophic prophecies that Jeremiah prophesied about them were not fulfilled until after the destruction of the temple." The implication in context is that once the covenant of the

---

[91] זְכֹר אֶת בּוֹרְאֶיךָ בִּימֵי בְּחוּרֹתֶיךָ.

[92] בחורתיך and בחרותיכם can mean "youth" or "chosenness."

temple was invalidated (the last one in the sequence), then punishment came for

covenantal violations.

The rest of the *petiḥtah* proposes many dicta that relate to the cycle of covenantal

obligation, violation, punishment, and lament. I will list some of these in the order they

appear: not one of them was able to remember his teaching in exile (לא היה אחד מהם

יכול לזכור את תלמודו)[93]; this was because they did not occupy themselves with words of

Torah (על ידי שלא נתעסקו בדברי תורה); God sent Nebuchadnezzar to punish Israel for

covenant violations: חרב ביתה דמרך דבניה לא שמעין ליה - "Destroy your Lord's temple,

for His sons do not obey Him;" "terrors on the highway" (12:5, חתחתים בדרך) refers to

Nebuchadnezzar using divination to proceed to Jerusalem; there are references to their

not having merit, and to their sin and guilt; the Israelites committed seven sins when they

killed Zechariah in the temple court and did not dispose of his blood properly (they

murdered a priest, a prophet, a judge, they shed innocent blood, they profaned the Name,

they defiled the temple court, all on a sabbath that also happened to be the Day of

Atonement); Zechariah had angered them by prophesying that the Israelites transgressed

God's commands, and since they had abandoned Him, He would abandon them

(2 Chr 24:20); "and the almond tree blossom" (12:5, וינאץ השקד) is a reference to the

prophecy of Jeremiah, and to God's watching His pronouncements to bring them to pass

(Jer 1:11-12); "and the רוח returns to God who gave it" (12:7, והרוח תשוב אל האלהים

אשר נתנה) refers to the רוח הקודש - once it departed, they were exiled. This is followed

by a paraphrase of the *seder* verse: וכיון שגלו היה ירמיה מקונן עליהם איכה ישבה בדד.[94]

---

[93] Buber's text reads תלמידו; Pesaro 1519 reads תלמודו; the printed edition makes more sense here.
[94] In Buber, Pesaro 1519, and a Geniza fragment.

Petiḥtah 24

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Isa 22:12: ויקרא ה׳ אלהים צבאות ביום ההוא לבכי

ולמספד[95] - "The Lord God of Hosts summoned on that day to weeping and lamenting."[96]

Isa 22:1-11 provides a historical context for the destruction of the temple and the

punishment of the exile. On that day God called for weeping and lament. A Geniza

fragment contains a paraphrase of the *seder* verse: וכיון שגלו התחיל ירמיה מקו׳ עלי׳ ואו׳

איכה ישבה בדד. At this point a Geniza fragment begins *petiḥtah* 25.[97]

In Buber's edition and Pesaro 1519 this short *petiḥtah* is followed by a very long

narrative, based on ויקרא ה׳ אלהים צבאות ביום ההוא לבכי ולמספד, about God directing

Jeremiah to summon Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses from their graves to weep for

their children and for Israel, and Abraham's, Isaac's, Jacob's, Moses', and Rachel's

subsequent intercession for them. This makes *petiḥtah* 24 in these editions the longest

one by far.[98] However, it is suspected of being a later addition for the following reasons:

i) it does not occur in an earlier Geniza fragment; ii) it imitates the style of *Midrash*

Tanḥuma;[99] iii) its style differs dramatically from the other *petiḥtaot*;[100] and, iv) it is the

only *petiḥtah* with such a long and sustained digression.[101] Therefore, I will not treat it as

part of the IMI.

---

[95] וַיִּקְרָא אֲדֹנָי יְהֹוָה צְבָאוֹת בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא לִבְכִי וּלְמִסְפֵּד.

[96] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 69.

[97] Rabinovitz, גנזי מדרש [Ginzé Midrash], 127.

[98] With the addition it is approximately two thirds longer than the next longest *petiḥtah* (23), two to five times longer than the next longest ones (2, 5, 11, 22, 25, 33, 34), and many more times longer than the rest.

[99] Rabinovitz, "מדרש איכה רבה בקטעי הגניזה" [Midrash Eikhah Rabbah in the Geniza Fragments], 437.

[100] According to Neusner it is a "completely different kind of writing altogether . . . I cannot point in Midrash compilations that reached closure prior to this one to a passage of the narrative ambition and power of Samuel bar Nahman's. We are in a completely different literary situation when we come to so long and so carefully formed a story as this one" (Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 79).

[101] Without the addition it is about one third as long as *petiḥtah* 23, and compares favorably to the rest.

Petiḥtah 25

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Jer 13:16-17: תנו ליהוה אלהיכם כבוד בטרם יחשך ובטרם

יתנגפו רגליכם על הרי נשף וקויתם לאור ושמה לצלמות ושית לערפל ואם לא תשמעוה

"Give [102] במסתרים תבכה נפשי מפני גוה ודמע תדמע ותרד עיני דמעה כי נשבה עדר יהוה -

glory to the Lord your God before He brings darkness, before your feet stumble on the

twilight mountains, and while you look for light, He turns it into gloom and makes it deep

darkness. But if you will not listen, my soul will weep in secret for your pride; my eyes

will weep bitterly and run down with tears, because the Lord's flock has been taken

captive."[103] A question about the lemma is raised: "When was this verse fulfilled for

them?" (אימתי נתקיים להם המקרא הזה). After a short digression about Hezekiah, there

is a description of the ten stages by which the *Shekinah* left Israel. The *Shekinah* stayed

three and a half years at the last stage, the Mount of Olives, and a בת קול cried out,

"Repent, O rebellious sons" (Jer 3:14, שובו בנים שובבים), and "Return to Me and I will

return to you" (Mal 3:7, שובו אלי ואשובה אליכם). But when they did not repent, the

Shekinah said, "I will return to My place until they confess their guilt and seek My face;

in their distress they will seek Me earnestly" (Hos 5:15). It was at that moment that

Jeremiah spoke the *petiḥtah* lemma: "before He brings darkness" means "before He

withholds [or, 'obscures'] teachings of Torah (בטרם יחשיך לכם מדברי תורה) or words of

prophecy;"[104] "while you look for light" refers to living in the gloom of Babylon, Media,

Greece, and Edom; "my eyes will weep bitterly and run down with tears, because the

---

[102] תְּנוּ לַיהֹוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם כָּבוֹד בְּטֶרֶם יַחְשִׁךְ וּבְטֶרֶם יִתְנַגְּפוּ רַגְלֵיכֶם עַל הָרֵי נָשֶׁף וְקִוִּיתֶם לְאוֹר וְשָׂמָהּ לְצַלְמָוֶת
וְשִׁית לַעֲרָפֶל: וְאִם לֹא תִשְׁמָעוּהָ בְּמִסְתָּרִים תִּבְכֶּה נַפְשִׁי מִפְּנֵי גֵוָה וְדָמֹעַ תִּדְמַע וְתֵרַד עֵינִי דִּמְעָה כִּי נִשְׁבָּה עֵדֶר
יְהֹוָה.
[103] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 80.
[104] יחשיך can mean "withhold" (חשׁך) or "darken, obscure" (חשׁך).

Lord's flock has been taken captive" refers to Israel as a single flock in captivity, i.e., the

priests, Levites, and Israelites form one flock in exile. Since the phrase for the separate

flocks is עדרי ישראל לבד, etc., "לבד" could easily have tied into the *seder* verse, איכה

ישבה בדד. However, neither the *seder* verse nor a paraphrase of it occurs in Buber's

edition or Pesaro 1519. A Geniza fragment of *petiḥtah* 25 is incomplete; we do not know

if it ended with the usual paraphrase of the Geniza *petiḥtaot*.[105]

Petiḥtah 26

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Isa 29:1-2: הוי אריאל אריאל קרית חנה דוד ספו שנה על

שנה חגים ינקפו: והציקותי לאריאל והיתה תאניה ואניה והיתה לי כאריאל[106] - "Ah, Ariel,

Ariel, City where David camped! Add year to year, Let festivals come in their cycles!

And I will harass Ariel, And there shall be sorrow and sighing. She shall be to Me like

Ariel."[107] אריאל is divided into two words, ארי אל, meaning a strong lion, the city where

David camped with his army. The Israelites were obligated to celebrate pilgrim festivals

(חגים) there, but since they did not do this, the roads sprouted prickly shrubs (היגים).

God would punish them for this. In another interpretation of והיתה לי כאריאל, the

consonants are re-divided to yield ליכא אריאל - "There is no temple,"[108] followed by the

explanation, כחורבן ראשון חורבן שני - "As in the case of the destruction of the first and

of the second temples."[109] This is followed by a paraphrase of the *seder* verse: כיון

שחטאו גלו וכיון שגלו התחיל ירמיי מקונן עליהם איכה.

---

[105] Rabinovitz, גנזי מדרש [Ginzé Midrash], 129.

[106] הוֹי אֲרִיאֵל אֲרִיאֵל קִרְיַת חָנָה דָוִד סְפוּ שָׁנָה עַל שָׁנָה חַגִּים יִנְקֹפוּ: וַהֲצִיקוֹתִי לַאֲרִיאֵל וְהָיְתָה תַאֲנִיָּה וַאֲנִיָּה וְהָיְתָה לִּי כַאֲרִיאֵל.

[107] *The JPS Hebrew-English Tanakh*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1999/2000), 839.

[108] לֵיכָא אֲרִיאֵל.

[109] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 84.

Petiḥtah 27

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Lev 26:18: ואם עד אלה לא תשמעו לי ויספתי ליסרה אתכם

שבע על חטאתיכם[110] - "And if in spite of this you will not obey Me, then I will chastise

you again sevenfold for your sins."[111] "And if in spite of this" (ואם עד אלה) shows that

God only punishes Israel after first testifying against them; "then I will chastise you again

sevenfold for your sins" (ויספתי ליסרה אתכם שבע על חטאתכם) means the Israelites

have sinned seven times. As a result, "Jeremiah is coming to lament over you with

laments composed of seven alphabetic acrostics" (הרי ירמי' בא מקונן עליכם קינות שהוא

שבע אלפא ביתן). This dictum is then tied into the *seder* verse, איכה, and addresses the

very significant introductory issue that the book of Lamentations is composed of

alphabetic acrostics. The verses in chapters 1, 2, and 4 each begin with the letters of the

alphabet in sequence; the verses in chapter 3 begin with three stanzas of each letter.

Together these count as six acrostics. Chapter 5 is not an acrostic, but based on an

analogy to one it is divided into twenty-two verses. Therefore, the midrash can propose

there are seven acrostics. This *petiḥtah* mentions all parts of the cycle: an obligation to

keep (שמע) the commands, warning of punishment for violation, punishment, and lament.

It also lemmatizes איכה as the title of Lamentations, and proposes a dictum about its

literary structure. It also hints at one purpose of the acrostics - since their sins and

punishment were exhaustive ("sevenfold"), so is the lament for punishment (seven

alphabetic acrostics).

---

[110] וְאִם עַד אֵלֶּה לֹא תִשְׁמְעוּ לִי וְיָסַפְתִּי לְיַסְרָה אֶתְכֶם שֶׁבַע עַל חַטֹּאתֵיכֶם.
[111] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 85.

Petiḥtah 28

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Jer 36:32: וירמיהו לקח מגלה אחרת ויתנה אל ברוך בן

נריהו הספר ויכתב עליה מפי ירמיהו את כל דברי הספר אשר שרף יהויקים מלך יהודה באש

ועוד נוסף עליהם דברים רבים כהמה[112] - "Then Jeremiah took another scroll and gave it to

Baruch the scribe, the son of Neriah, who wrote on it at the dictation of Jeremiah all the

words of the scroll which Jehoiakim, the king of Judah, had burned in the fire; and many

similar words were added to them."[113] According to R. Ḥama bar Ḥanina, הספר is

Lamentations 1; ועוד נוסף עליהם refers to Lamentations 2 (זה איכה יעיב, Lam 2:1);

דברים refers to Lamentations 4 (זה איכה יועם, Lam 4:1); רבים refers to Lamentations 3

(זה אני הגבר, Lam 3:1); and כהמה refers to Lamentations 5 (זכור ה', Lam 5:1). The

rabbis agree with R. Ḥama's identifications for Lam 1, 2, 4, but disagree for Lam 3 and 5;

they say רבים refers to Lam 5 and כהמה refers to Lam 3. The implications of this

petiḥtah are striking. It addresses the following introductory issues: time of composition

and recitation of the book, and literary form and unity. Its composition and recitation

during Jehoiakim's reign before the exile (Jer 36) implies it is a prophetic rebuke or

warning of impending punishment. R. Ḥama's opinion that כהמה refers to Lam 5 implies

that its twenty-two verses function like the other acrostics (כהמה), and ties in with the

dictum of the previous *petiḥtah* that there are seven acrostic laments in Lamentations.

The acrostic structure formally unites each individual chapter, and their shared theme

unites them as a book. The *seder* verse is not cited in Buber or Pesaro 1519. However, the

---

[112] וַיִּרְמְיָהוּ לָקַח מְגִלָּה אַחֶרֶת וַיִּתְּנָהּ אֶל בָּרוּךְ בֶּן נֵרִיָּהוּ הַסֹּפֵר וַיִּכְתֹּב עָלֶיהָ מִפִּי יִרְמְיָהוּ אֵת כָּל דִּבְרֵי הַסֵּפֶר
אֲשֶׁר שָׂרַף יְהוֹיָקִים מֶלֶךְ יְהוּדָה בָּאֵשׁ וְעוֹד נוֹסַף עֲלֵיהֶם דְּבָרִים רַבִּים כָּהֵמָּה.
[113] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 56.

relation between the dictum that Lam 2-5 are acrostics like Lam 1, and the interpretation

of איכה in Lam 1:1 is obvious.

Petiḥtah 29

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Ps 68:7: אלהים מושיב יחידים ביתה מוציא אסירים

בכושרות אך סוררים שכנו צחיחה[114] - "God gives the desolate a home to dwell in, He leads

out the prisoners to prosperity, but the rebellious dwell in a parched land."[115] This lemma

is interpreted as an historical summary of when God and the Israelites dwelt apart or

together. At first they dwelt apart, and then together when He redeemed them from

Egypt. When Israel went into exile in a parched land, the *Shekinah* and Israel dwelt apart

again. The *seder* verse is cited: איכה ישבה בדד - i.e., Israel and the *Shekinah*.

Petiḥtah 30

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Lam 4:12-13: לא האמינו מלכי ארץ כל ישבי תבל כי יבא צר

The[116]ואויב בשערי ירושלם : מחטאת נביאיה עונות כהניה השפכים בקרבה דם צדיקים - "The

kings of the earth did not believe, or any of the inhabitants of the world, that foe or

enemy could enter the gates of Jerusalem. This was for the sins of her prophets and the

iniquities of her priests, who shed in the midst of her the blood of the righteous."[117]

Instances of war against David, Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Hezekiah demonstrate how the

kings of the world fared against the kings of Jerusalem in battle. With the help of God as

warrior, no king of the earth could win military victory against them. Given the military

---

[114] אֱלֹהִים מוֹשִׁיב יְחִידִים בַּיְתָה מוֹצִיא אֲסִירִים בַּכּוֹשָׁרוֹת אַךְ סוֹרֲרִים שָׁכְנוּ צְחִיחָה.

[115] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 88.

[116] לֹא הֶאֱמִינוּ מַלְכֵי אֶרֶץ כֹּל יֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל כִּי יָבֹא צַר וְאוֹיֵב בְּשַׁעֲרֵי יְרוּשָׁלָם : מֵחַטֹּאת נְבִיאֶיהָ עֲוֺנֹת כֹּהֲנֶיהָ הַשֹּׁפְכִים בְּקִרְבָּהּ דַּם צַדִּיקִים.

[117] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 89.

history of Jerusalem, Nebuchadnezzar suspected God was setting him up for defeat when

He told him to destroy the temple. Therefore, Nebuchadnezzar sent Nebuzaradan to

besiege the city for three and a half years, who was unable to conquer it during that time.

This convinced Nebuchadnezzar even more of the inviolability of Jerusalem. However,

when God put it in Nebuzaradan's heart to start measuring the wall, he found it was

sinking each day by two and a half handbreadths. After the wall had completely sunk, the

enemy entered Jerusalem. It was at that moment that the first half of the *petiḥtah* lemma

was fulfilled. This is followed by a paraphrase of the *seder* verse: כיון שחטאו גלו וכיון

שגלו התחיל ירמיי מקונן עליהם איכה. Their sin was mentioned in the second half of the

petiḥtah lemma.

Petiḥtah 31

There are two *petiḥtaot* in this thirty-first *petiḥtah* (according to the standard

numbering). Both have separate *petiḥtah* lemmas and both end with a paraphrase of the

seder verse.

The first *petiḥtah* lemma is Prov 20:14: [118] רע רע יאמר הקונה ואוזל לו אז יתהלל -

"'It is bad, it is bad,' says the buyer; but when he goes away, then he boasts."[119] Before

Israel went into exile, God called them bad because they refused to obey His words

(Jer 13:10). This dictum applies to the cycle of Torah obligations and violations described

in the usual paraphrase כיון שחטאו גלו. Next the lemma "when he goes away, then he

boasts" is applied to God's boast about Israel after they went into exile (וכיון שגלו התחיל

משבחן). This dictum relates to Lam 1:1 as part of a paraphrase of it. One of the usual

[118] רַע רַע יֹאמַר הַקּוֹנֶה וְאֹזֵל לוֹ אָז יִתְהַלָּל.
[119] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 92.

paraphrases of the *seder* verse, כיון שחטאו גלו וכיון שגלו התחיל ירמיה מקונן עליהם

איכה, is cited and extended to איכה ישבה and read איכה ישבח - "How He praised!"[120]

Since the dictum that God boasted about Israel in exile is difficult to understand in terms

of the cycle of punishment and lament, it is probably meant to be a short digression

before returning to the usual point of the paraphrases, i.e., to the covenant cycle.[121] Thus,

the two *petiḥtaot* that form one unit in Buber's edition and Pesaro 1519 begin as many

individual *petiḥtaot* do, with a short digression that leaves us wondering how the *seder*

verse will be interpreted. Even though a new *petiḥtah* verse will be introduced, the whole

functions like a normal *petiḥtah*.[122]

The second *petiḥtah* lemma is Zeph 3:1-2: הוי מראה ונגאלה העיר היונה: לא

שמעה בקול לא לקחה מוסר[123] - "Woe to her that is rebellious and defiled, the oppressing

city! She listens to no voice, she accepts not correction."[124] העיר היונה is interpreted as

"city of the dove," referring to "the nation that God adorned with commandments and

good deeds like a dove" (אומה שציינתי אותה במצות ומעשים טובים כיונה). However, she

would "listen to no voice, accept no correction." "Woe to her that is rebellious"

(הוי מראה) is interpreted as "Woe to the foolish woman" (מוראה, from the Greek, μωρα).

She is defiled because she did not obey Torah teachings and because of the priesthood, as

it says in Zeph 3:4: כהניה חללו קדש חמסו תורה - "Her priests profane what is sacred,

---

[120] Interchange of ה and ח is common in midrashic interpretation. Compare *petiḥtah* 26 above, p. 121: the Israelites were obligated to celebrate pilgrim festivals (חגים), but since they did not the roads sprouted prickly shrubs (היגים). The root שבח also appears in the clause וכיון שגלו התחיל משבחן.

[121] Compare Neusner: "How it [the intersecting verse = *petiḥtah* verse] regains access to Lam. 1:1 is not self-evident to me, since what we have after they went into exile is lament, not praise" (Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 92).

[122] See pp. 18-19.

[123] הוֹי מֹרְאָה וְנִגְאָלָה הָעִיר הַיּוֹנָה: לֹא שָׁמְעָה בְּקוֹל לֹא לָקְחָה מוּסָר.

[124] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 92.

they do violence to the law."[125] This is followed by a comparison of prophetic warnings

to Jonah's city (העיר היונה), Ninevah, and warnings to Jerusalem. Ninevah repented at the

warning of one prophet, but Jerusalem would not repent at the warnings of many

prophets. Two proof-texts follow: 2 Kgs 17:13, ויעד ה׳ בישראל וביהודה ביד כל נביאי כל

חוזה לאמר שובו מדרכיכם הרעים ושמרו מצותי חקותי - "Yet the Lord forewarned Israel

and Judah by the hand of every prophet and seer, saying, 'Turn from your evil ways, and

keep my commandments and my statutes;'" and Jer 7:25, ואשלח אליכם את כל עבדי

הנביאים יום השכם ושלח - "And though I sent to you all my servants the prophets,

sending them daily and early." [126] Yet, "She listens to no voice, she accepts not

correction." A paraphrase of the *seder* verse follows: כיון שלא שמעו גלו וכיון שגלו התחיל

ירמיה מקונן עליהם איכה ישבה בדד - "When they did not listen they were exiled, and

when they were exiled, Jeremiah began lamenting for them, 'How lonely she sits.'" In this

paraphrase, כיון שלא שמעו גלו is substituted for the more common כיון שחטאו גלו, to

make it conform to the *petiḥtah* lemma.

Petiḥtah 32

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Jer 8:18-19: מבליגיתי עלי יגון עלי לבי דוי הנה קול שועת בת

עמי מארץ מרחקים היהוה אין בציון אם מלכה אין בה[127] - "My grief is beyond healing, My

heart is sick within Me. Hark, the cry of the daughter of My people, from the length and

breadth of the land: 'Is the Lord not in Zion? Is her King not in her?'"[128] "Without" (מבלי)

is interpreted as without those who meditate on the Torah (מבלי הוגין) to fulfill

---

[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid., 93.

[127] מַבְלִיגִיתִי עֲלֵי יָגוֹן עָלַי לִבִּי דַוָּי ׃ הִנֵּה קוֹל שַׁוְעַת בַּת עַמִּי מֵאֶרֶץ מַרְחַקִּים הַיהֹוָה אֵין בְּצִיּוֹן אִם מַלְכָּהּ אֵין בָּהּ.

[128] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 94.

commandments and good deeds; גיתי is interpreted as "My wine press," referring to the

temple as a wine press. Therefore God's heart is faint within for His temple. "The cry of

the daughter of My people" implies that God is not in Zion, for if He was they would not

have gone into exile. A paraphrase of the *seder* verse follows: וכיון שחטאו גלו וכיון שגלו

התחיל ירמי׳ מקונן עליהם איכה ישבה בדד.

Petiḥtah 33

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Job 30:31: [129] ויהי לאבל כנורי ועוגבי לקול בוכים "My lyre

is turned to mourning, and my pipe to the voice of those who weep."[130] A relatively long

section describes festive days associated with the fifteenth of Ab, including (among

others) the day Hoshea King of Israel finally allowed the northern tribes to make

pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the day the tribes were allowed to intermarry, the day Benjamin

was allowed to enter the congregation, and the day on which the tribes celebrated the

fulfillment of the decree that the whole generation die in the wilderness. Then there is a

short explanation of how their sins turned the ninth of Ab into a day of mourning: "But

their sins brought it about that the day [the ninth of Ab] turned into mourning in this

world, with the destruction of the Temple two times"[131] (וגרמו עונותיהם ונעשה אבל

בעולם הזה בחורבן הבית פעמים). The *petiḥtah* lemma summarizes the change in

circumstances for the month of Ab. This is followed by a paraphrase of the *seder* verse:

וכיון שחטאו גלו וכיון שגלו התחיל ירמי׳ מקונן עליהם איכה ישבה בדד.

---

[129] וַיְהִי לְאֵבֶל כִּנֹּרִי וְעֻגָבִי לְקוֹל בֹּכִים.
[130] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 96.
[131] Ibid., 98.

Petiḥtah 34

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Jer 9:9-10: על ההרים אשא בכי ונהי ועל נאות מדבר קינה כי

נצתו מבלי איש עבר ולא שמעו קול מקנה מעוף השמים ועד בהמה נדדו הלכו: ונתתי את

ירושלם לגלים מעון תנים ואת ערי יהודה אתן שממה מבלי יושב[132] - "Take up weeping and

wailing for the mountains, and a lamentation for the pastures of the wilderness, because

they are laid waste so that no one passes through, and the lowing of cattle is not heard,

both the birds of the air and the beasts have fled and are gone. I will make Jerusalem a

heap of ruins, a lair of jackals, and I will make the cities of Judah a desolation, without

inhabitant."[133] A relatively long section describes Jeremiah's preferential treatment by

Nebuchadnezzar, and his being set free by Nebuzaradan at Ramah. "Take up weeping and

wailing for the mountains, and a lamentation for the pastures of the wilderness" refers to

Jeremiah's warning in Jer 13:16-17: "Give glory to the Lord your God before He brings

darkness, before your feet stumble on the twilight mountains, and while you look for

light, He turns it into gloom and makes it deep darkness. But if you will not listen, my

soul will weep in secret for your pride; my eyes will weep bitterly and run down with

tears, because the Lord's flock has been taken captive."[134] "And the lowing of cattle is not

heard" (ולא שמעו קול מקנה) is interpreted as, "And they did not obey the voice of the

Creator" (ולא שמעו קול מְקַנֶּה), "for they did not obey the voice of Torah teaching or

prophecy." Instead, they listened to the voice of the one who provoked to jealousy (לקול

דבר הַמְקַנֵּא) with teachings of idolatry. "Both the birds of the air and the beasts have fled

---

[132] עַל הֶהָרִים אֶשָּׂא בְכִי וָנֶהִי וְעַל נְאוֹת מִדְבָּר קִינָה כִּי נִצְּתוּ מִבְּלִי אִישׁ עֹבֵר וְלֹא שָׁמְעוּ קוֹל מִקְנֶה מֵעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וְעַד בְּהֵמָה נָדְדוּ הָלָכוּ: וְנָתַתִּי אֶת יְרוּשָׁלַם לְגַלִּים מְעוֹן תַּנִּים וְאֶת עָרֵי יְהוּדָה אֶתֵּן שְׁמָמָה מִבְּלִי יוֹשֵׁב.
[133] Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 100.
[134] Ibid., 101.

and are gone" implies they went into exile with Israel to Babylon. Thus, the city of

Jerusalem and the cities of Judah were (hyper-literally) without inhabitants - human or

animal (מבלי יושב). A paraphrase of the *seder* verse does not follow, but the lemma

Lam 1:1, איכה ישבה בדד functions as the *seder* verse of the last *petihtah* and the lemma

of the first midrash sentence in the IMI.

How the *Petihtaot* Function as Part of the IMI

Now that I have described the dicta related to the *seder* verse and its different

paraphrases, I will discuss how the *petihtaot* function as part of the IMI. Since the

petihtaot are so lengthy, this discussion must begin with summaries of the dicta and

paraphrases.

Summary of the Key Dicta

The *petihtaot* repeat dicta that relate to the covenant cycle of obligations,

prophetic warnings, violations, punishments, and lament. The concept of the covenant is

described in *petihtaot* 4 and 23. The covenant obligates Israel to obey commandments

(*petihtaot* 1, 4, 7, 31b), teachings of the Torah (*petihtaot* 1, 2, 7, 8, 31b) and teachings of

prophecy (*petihtaot* 1, 7), to perform righteousness and good deeds (*petihtaot* 1, 7, 31b),

and to worship God alone (*petihtaot* 10, 11). Whenever they keep the covenant they have

merit (*petihtaot* 11, 19). When Israel violates the covenant they are accused of general

infractions including: disobeying or disregarding commandments (*petihtaot* 1, 4, 7, 23,

32), teachings of the Torah (*petihtaot* 1, 7, 8, 12, 23, 31b, 32, 34), and teachings of

prophecy (*petihtaot* 1, 7, 12, 34); non-performance of righteousness and good deeds

(*petihtaot* 1, 7, 32); not listening or obeying (*petihtaot* 12, 23, 25, 27, 31b, 34); rebellion

(*petiḥtaot* 25, 29, 31b); and idolatry (*petiḥtaot* 10, 12, 13, 21, 22, 34). They are also accused of specific covenantal infractions, including killing Zechariah and not disposing of his blood properly (*petiḥtaot* 5, 23), and using an inappropriate method of execution, i.e., casting a large group alive off a cliff (*petiḥtah* 14). Whenever they violate the covenant they do not have merit (*petiḥtaot* 11, 19, 23). God sends prophetic warning of punishment for violations (*petiḥtaot* 1, 12, 15, 23, 25, 27, 31b, 34). The book of Lamentations is also interpreted along this line as a prophetic rebuke (*petiḥtaot* 15, 28, 31b?). The descriptions of the punishment of exile include: Nebuchadnezzar's military victory (*petiḥtaot* 1, 9, 12, 23, 30, 34); the land/city lying in ruins (*petiḥtaot* 2, 7, 22, 20, 22, 34); the destruction of the temple (*petiḥtaot* 7, 9, 10, 17, 18, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 32, 33); God's presence leaving the temple (*petiḥtaot* 20, 23, 25, 29, 32); and Israel's inability to pronounce or remember Torah (*petiḥtaot* 21, 23, 25).

Summary of Paraphrases of the *Seder* Verse

In terms of form analysis, a paraphrase of a lemma enables us to identify its discoursive subject.[135] All of the *petiḥtaot* except 7, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 25, 27, 28, 29 in Buber's edition and Pesaro 1519 have paraphrases for the *seder* verse Lam 1:1; Geniza fragments have a paraphrase for *petiḥtaot* 16 and 19. Therefore, twenty-eight of the thirty-six *petiḥtaot* paraphrase Lam 1:1. The following Table summarizes them. A discussion of their discoursive subjects follows the Table.

---

[135]

Table 3. Paraphrases of the *Seder* Verse Lam 1:1

Petiḥtaot	Paraphrases of the *Seder* Verse	Translation
1	כיון שבאו הפורענות קונן עליהם איכה ישבה בדד	When the punishment came, he began lamenting for them, "How lonely she sits!"
2a	וכיון שהשליכו דברי תורה לארץ התחיל ירמיה מקונן עליהם איכה	When they threw teachings of Torah to the ground, Jeremiah began lamenting for them, "How."
2b	וכיון שמתו כולם התחיל מקונן עליהם איכה ישבה בדד	When they all died, he began lamenting for them, "How lonely she sits!"
3	וכיון שנגעה בי ידך, בדד ישבתי, איכה ישבה בדד	When your hand struck me I dwelled alone, [just as it says], "How lonely she sits."
4	ודנתי אותם בשילוחין וקוננתי עליהם איכה ישבה בדד	I judged them with exile; and I lamented for them, "How lonely she sits."
5, 6, 8, 9 (x2), 12, 13, 14, 22, 26, 30, 31a, 32, 33	כיון שחטאו גלו וכיון שגלו התחיל ירמי' מקונן עליהם איכה (ישבה בדד)	When they sinned they were exiled, and when they were exiled, Jeremiah began lamenting for them, "How lonely she sits."
31b	כיון שלא שמעו גלו וכיון שגלו התחיל ירמיה מקונן עליהם איכה ישבה בדד	When they did not listen they were exiled, and when they were exiled, Jeremiah began lamenting for them, "How lonely she sits."
16, 18, 19, 24 (all in G), 23 (G, B, P)[136]	וכיוון שגלו התחיל ירמיה מקונן עליהם ואו' איכה ישבה בדד	When they were exiled, Jeremiah began lamenting for them and saying, "How lonely she sits."
10	ראו מה גרמו לי עונותיכם לשרוף את ביתי ולחרוב את עירי ולהגלות את בני בין אומות העולם ולישב לי לבדי איכה ישבה בדד	See what your sins caused me to do: [they caused Me] to burn down My temple, to destroy My city, to send My sons into exile among the nations of the world, and to dwell alone all by Myself, "How she dwells alone."
11	ועכשיו שלא זכיתם הרי אתם קוראים איכה ישבה בדד	But now that you do not have merit, you are reading, "How lonely she sits."
15	שהיה מוכיח לישראל ואומר להם איכה	For he used to reprove Israel, saying to them, "How."
18	ועל זה היה מקונן ירמיה איכה ישבה בדד	And because of this Jeremiah used to lament for them, "How lonely she sits."

---

[136] B = Buber's Edition; P = Pesaro 1519; G = Geniza Fragment.

How the Dicta and Paraphrases Function as Part of the IMI

The IMI is a form that binds together dicta about introductory issues on the first verse of a biblical book.[137] In some cases the verse is paraphrased to help identify its dicoursive subject, i.e., introduction. The *petiḥtaot* repeat dicta that describe a covenant cycle of obligation, violation, warning, punishment, and lament. Some of these dicta are incorporated into the paraphrases of Lam 1:1. General violations are paraphrased as "They sinned," or "They did not listen." A specific violation is also incorporated into a paraphrase: "They threw teachings of Torah to the ground." Another general paraphrase states that their violations resulted in loss of merit. Warning of punishment is paraphrased as "He [Jeremiah] used to reprove Israel." The general punishment of exile occurs as part of the most common paraphrases. Specific punishments are also mentioned in other paraphrases: "They all died," and God "burned down His temple, destroyed His city, sent His sons into exile among the nations of the world, and dwelled alone." Therefore, the dicta and paraphrases unite in the *petiḥtaot* to describe the same covenant cycle. Since Lam 1:1 is paraphrased, it identifies its discoursive subject, i.e., the questions posed to the lemma itself. The cumulative effect of all this is that the *petiḥtaot* treat the following introductory issues to the book of Lamentations:

i) Authorship and Inspiration

Jeremiah is identified as the author of Lamentations in the paraphrases, and in *petiḥtaot* 15 and 28. The repeated mention of his prophecies (from the book of Jeremiah)

---

[137] Introductory issues as we have defined them, i.e., authorship and inspiration, time of composition, historical setting, genre, methods of interpretation, themes, and literary forms and unity (see p. 4).

and their fulfillment verifies that he was a true prophet.[138] According to *petiḥtaot* 8, 9, 16, 25, 28, 32, and 34, the punishments and laments of Lam 1:1ff. are a fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecies. Since he is a prophet, the book was composed under prophetic inspiration, i.e., by the inspiration of the רוח הקודש.

ii) Time of Composition; Historical Setting

Most of the paraphrases state that Jeremiah recited his lament after the exile. If it was recited then, it must have been composed as a lament for punishment. On the other hand *petiḥtah* 28 proposes that Jeremiah dictated Lamentations to Baruch and recited it to Jehoiakim during his reign, i.e., before the exile. If it was recited before the exile, it must have been composed as a prophetic rebuke.

The dicta related to Lam 1:1 and its paraphrases also broaden the discoursive subject to the book of Lamentations in its historical context of events that led to the exile of the southern kingdom, and its disastrous consequences.

iii) Genre

The most frequently employed paraphrases identify the genre of Lamentations as a lament. On the other hand, *petiḥtaot* 15 and 28 classify it as a prophetic rebuke that anticipates their punishment if they do not repent.

iv) Methods of Interpretation

Petiḥtah 27 proposes that the book of Lamentations was composed of seven individual laments. Since their sins and punishment were exhaustive ("sevenfold"), so

---

[138] In *petiḥtaot* 1, 2a, 2b, 4, 9, 16, 19, 21, 22, 23, 25, 28, 31a, 32, and 34.

was the number of laments (seven alphabetic acrostics). Therefore, even though Lam 5 is not an acrostic in form, its twenty-two verses function like one and it is to be interpreted the same way as the other ones.

v) Themes of Lamentations

The dicta and paraphrases about covenantal violations, punishment, and lament in the *petihtaot* correspond to themes in the book of Lamentations. Covenantal violations in Lamentations are described in general as sins (1:5, 8, 14, 22; 2:14; 3:39; 4:6; 5:7, 16) or rebellion (1:18, 20). As we have seen, the *petihtaot* are very sensitive to this theme and treat it as part of the cycle of covenantal obligation and violation.[139] Punishment for sin in Lamentations includes exile or captivity (1:3; 2:14; 4:22), desolation and destruction (1:4; 2:8; 4:11; 5:18), destruction of the temple (2:6-7), and absence of law (2:9). The *petihtaot* are also sensitive to these themes and treat them as part of the cycle of punishment and lament.[140] Various other punishments described in Lamentations also find a counterpart in the *petihtaot*, e.g., gates sunken into the ground (Lam 2:9; cf. *petihtah* 30, walls sunken into the ground), mocking (Lam 3:14, 63; cf. *petihtah* 17), and drinking wormwood (Lam 3:15, 19; cf. *petihtah* 18). Thus, the close correspondence between the themes in Lamentations and the *petihtaot* betrays a sensitive interpretation of that book.

vi) Literary Forms and Unity

The formal and thematic unity of Lamentations is demonstrated in several ways. First, *petihtaot* 27 and 28 propose that the seven acrostics in Lamentations formally bind

---

[139] See above, p. 133; cf. pp. 130-131.
[140] Ibid.

each individual chapter, and their shared theme binds them together as a book. Second,

verses from every chapter of Lamentations serve either as *petiḥtah* lemmas or proof-texts

that interpret the *seder* verse Lam 1:1.[141] Finally, the most frequent paraphrase of the

seder lemma states that "Jeremiah began lamenting for them." This implies his lament

continues beyond Lam 1:1. Lamentations chapter two and four also begin with איכה,

confirming the thematic unity of its chapters.

The book's unity is also implied by what the *seder* verse [איכה]ישבה בדד

signifies. We have seen how its paraphrases and interpretations correspond to themes in

the book of Lamentations. The *petiḥtaot* also employ lemmas from all chapters of

Lamentations to interpret the entire book. Finally, there is a close correlation between the

book of Jeremiah and the book of Lamentations, both in terms of prophetic warning of

punishment and its fulfillment, and in terms of the broad discourse about the causes and

effects of the exile. Since the dicta about the *seder* verse and its paraphrases widen the

discoursive (thematic) subject to introductory issues about the entire book of

Lamentations, what is signified by it is the title of the book. איכה has functioned all

along as the title of the book, and not simply as an abbreviation of the single verse

Lam 1:1. Thus, Lamentations is unified in terms of its title, literary structure, and subject

matter.

---

[141] See Lam 1:1-22 (*petiḥtah* 11); 2:1; 3:1; 4:1; 5:1 (*petiḥtah* 28); 1:10 (*petiḥtah* 9); 2:10 (*petiḥtah* 7); 3:15 (P_L, *petiḥtah* 18); 4:4 (*petiḥtah* 16); 4:12-13 (P_L, *petiḥtah* 30); and, 5:17 (*petiḥtah* 32). The thematic unity of Lam 1 is demonstrated in the same way in *petiḥtah* 11.

Introductory Material in Midrash Sentences

I will now discuss the midrash sentences and other exegeses to the lemma

Lam 1:1 that follow the section of the *petiḥtaot*. As I progress through these I will isolate

their dicta and identify the questions and answers that lay hidden beneath the surface of

the midrashic treatment of Lam 1:1. In many ways these dicta re-address key points made

in the *petiḥtah* section of the IMI.

This new section begins with a dictum about שלשה נביאים נבאו בלשון איכה:

איכה ואלו הם משה ישעיה וירמיה - "Three prophets prophesied using the expression

איכה: Moses, Isaiah, and Jeremiah." Moses said, איכה אשא לבדי טרחכם (Deut 1:12,

"How can I lift your burden by myself"); Isaiah said, איכה היתה לזונה קריה נאמנה

(Isa 1:21, "How the faithful city has become a harlot"); and Jeremiah said, איכה ישבה

בדד העיר (Lam 1:1, "How lonely the city sits"). These verses are linked on the basis of

shared or synonymous vocabulary including איכה, בדד / לבדי, and עיר / קריה. These

verses are also linked as parts of the covenant cycle: they reflect Israel living in states of

covenantal fidelity and security, infidelity and violation, and punishment and disgrace.

This dictum also enhances the status of Lamentations as a book composed under

prophetic inspiration. Its opening words are on equal footing with the prophecies of

Moses and Isaiah.

Next, dicta are proposed for the meaning of איכה. R. Nehemiah's dictum is: אין

לשון איכה אלא לשון קינה - "The expression איכה refers to a 'lament.'" He classifies the

book of Lamentations as a lament, taking איכה as a rhetorical question indicating despair,

which is the normal way to open one. On the other hand, R. Judah's dictum proposes an

alternate definition of איכה: אין לשון איכה אלא לשון תוכחה - "The expression איכה

refers to a 'rebuke'" as it does in Jer 8:8: איכה תאמרו חכמים אנחנו - "How can you say,

'We are wise'?" Since איכה is also the way to begin a rebuke, Lamentations can also be

characterized as a prophetic rebuke. Both of these dicta are proposals for the genre of

Lamentation.

The very next dictum is a response to a question about the book of Lamentations:

שאלו את בן עזאי אמרו לו אמר לנו דבר אחד ממגילת קינות - "They asked b. Azzai,

'Comment for us on the Scroll of Lamentations.'" Since the question posed to a lemma

signifies its discoursive subject, the lemma איכה in this instance is the title of the book,

paraphrased as מגילת קינות.

The dictum that b. Azzai offers is related to the covenant cycle of sin and

punishment. He comments on when Israel went into exile, an obvious parallel to the

paraphrases in the *petiḥtaot*, כיוון שגלו. He explains that they did not go into exile until

they sinned. Their sins are based on a gematria of איכה: they denied the unity of God (א),

the ten commandments (י), circumcision given to the twentieth generation (כ), and the

five books of the Torah (ה). In another gematria, R. Levi suggests that they violated

thirty-six covenantal obligations from the Torah (כפרו בשלשים ושש כריתות שבתורה מנין

איכ"ה; א [1] + י [10] + כ [20] + ה [5] = 36). The next short section provides another

gematria, this time based on בדד (ב [2] + ד [4] + ד [4] = 10): they forsook their

occupation with the ten commandments, for they abandoned them (בדד על עסקי עשרת

הדברות שעזבתם). Finally, a short section not found in Pesaro 1519 repeats the key

covenantal concepts of obeying God's will and enjoying security, and violating His will

and suffering exile as a punishment.

Another short section not found in Pesaro 1519 poses a question about איכה in

terms of מגילת קינות, i.e., as the title of the book: למה נאמרה מגילת קינות באל"ף בי"ת

כדי שיהיו נגרסין בפי המקוננים ד"א אני אמרתי לברכם מאל"ף ועד תי"ו דכתיב אם בחקותי

תלכו עד קוממיות והם סרחו ולקו מאל"ף ועד תי"ו - "Why is the scroll of Lamentations

recited with acrostics? So that those reciting the lament can commit it to memory.

Another interpretation: 'I said I would bless them from 'aleph to tav,' as it is written, "If

you walk in My laws" [Lev 26:3, i.e., from the 'aleph that begins the word אם], to the

word "erect" [Lev 26:13, i.e., to the tav that ends the word קוממיות]. But they sinned, so

they were punished from 'aleph to tav.'" The first dictum recognizes the acrostic structure

of Lamentations. The second one discusses the purpose of the acrostics - they are

structures that allow a comprehensive treatment of a subject. The acrostic laments in

Lamentations allow Jeremiah a way to treat the punishment of the exile in a

comprehensive way. Given the emotional impact of that catastrophe, it also provided an

arbitrary formal structure to begin to deal with it.

Another question is asked about איכה as the title of the book: אימתי נאמרה

מגילת קינות :ר' יהודה אומר בימי "When was the scroll of Lamentations recited?"

יהויקים נאמרה א"ר ברכיה וכי בוכין על המת עד שלא ימות אלא נכתבה בימי יהויקים

ונאמרה אחר חרבן בית המקדש - "R. Judah said it was recited during the reign of

Jehoiakim. R. Berekiah objected: 'Do they weep for the dead before they have passed

away? It was written during the reign of Jehoiakim, but recited after the destruction of the

temple.'" These dicta correlate with those in the *petiḥtaot* regarding the time of

composition of Lamentations (*petiḥtah* 28) and its recitation as either a prophetic rebuke

(*petiḥtaot* 15, 28) or a lament (most of the other *petiḥtaot*).

After a few digressions - about the population of Jerusalem, Jerusalem as a

widow, and Jerusalem's great learning (which is the longest and most digressive) - the

same sort of midrash sentences appear as at the beginning of this section.[142] למס היתה -

"She has become a forced laborer" (Lam 1:1) is a description of punishment in exile.

They ask when this occurred. Based on gematria, one dictum is that it was when Israel

violated a stipulation of the Sinai covenant (סיני ;כיון שעברו ישראל על תנאי שקבלו בסיני

and למס both add up to 130). Based on rearranging the letters of למס, another dictum is

that it was when Israel served idols (סמל). These dicta illustrate the covenant cycle of

obligation, violation, and punishment.

Finally, the section of midrashic sentences returns to the lemma איכה as the title,

paraphrased as מגילת קינות, and inquires about its acrostics again. Again, there is a

correspondence between Israel's complete violation of the Torah from ʾaleph to tav, and

an exhaustive lament for their punishment in acrostics.

Summary of the IMI in Lamentations Rabbah

The IMI is a form that binds together dicta about introductory issues as

interpretations of the first verse of a biblical book.[143] In some cases this verse is

paraphrased to help identify its dicoursive subject, i.e., introductory issues. The first word

---

[142] The style of the narratives about Jerusalem's great learning is much different than the rest of the section. Compare Neusner: "How all this [section about Jerusalem's great learning] serves the interests of our document is not self-evident to me; it seems to me the compilers' attention has wandered from their purpose. It is hard to imagine a more pointless insertion into a document that, to this point, has clearly set forth its goals and chosen forms . . . I cannot speculate on why someone has so grossly violated the norms of the framers of Lamentations Rabbah or what was intended in doing so" (Neusner, *Lamentations Rabbah*, 124). This digression may be a later addition; if it is omitted, the style of the midrash sentences on 1:1 is homogeneous and focused on introductory issues to Lamentations. However, we do not have to address this question for the IMI. We only need to see a relation between the dicta of the midrash sentences before and after the section.

[143] I.e., introductory issues as we have defined them; see above, n. 137.

of the first verse also contains the title of a book; as a title it lemmatizes the whole book as its discoursive subject. The IMI in *Lam Rab.* is composed of a lengthy section of thirty-six *petiḥtaot* whose *seder* verse is Lam 1:1, followed by a shorter section of midrash sentences on 1:1. After a detailed analysis of the *petiḥtah* lemmas, their dicta, and various paraphrases of the *seder* verse, and of the midrash sentences that follow the *petiḥtaot*, I was able to establish that both parts of the IMI to Lamentations carry out a sustained thematic treatment of the following introductory issues about that book:

i) Authorship and Inspiration

The opening dictum of the midrash sentences identifies Jeremiah as the author of Lamentations; this correlates with the identification in the *petiḥtaot*. Jeremiah's words are also given as high a status as Moses' and Isaiah's prophecies. This correlates with the notion that he was a true prophet like them.[144] Since he is a prophet, the implication is that the book was composed under prophetic inspiration, i.e., by the רוח הקודש.

ii) Time of Composition; Historical Setting

Dicta from the section of midrash sentences correlate with those proposed in the *petiḥtaot* that the book was composed during the time of Jehoiakim. The midrash sentences also distinguish between time of composition and time of recitation. Logically, these proposals relate to genre identifications. If Lamentations was recited during Jehoiakim's reign before the destruction of the temple, it is a prophetic rebuke; if it was recited after that event, it is a lament.

---

[144] See above, n. 138.

Other dicta about the book of Lamentations place it in the historical context of Israel's covenantal obligations, violations, and punishments. Their sins or violations of the Torah, etc. became so egregious that God punished them with exile.

iii) Genre

In the section of midrash sentences R. Nehemiah's and R. Judah's dicta about the meaning of the term איכה address the issue of the genre of lamentations, and their proposals match the two given in the *petihtaot*, i.e., it is either a lament or a prophetic rebuke.

iv) Methods of Interpretation

Petihtah 27 proposed that since Israel's sins and punishment were exhaustive ("sevenfold"), so were the seven laments of the book of Lamentations. The section of midrash sentences proposes that the acrostics facilitate a comprehensive treatment of the subject of their punishment.

v) Themes of Lamentations

Dicta and paraphrases about covenantal violations, punishment, and lament occur in the *petihtaot*. Dicta in the midrash sentence section also treat these themes, e.g., violations of the Torah and the Sinai covenant, idolatry, the punishment of exile, destruction of the temple, and forced labour. Together these sections treat themes that are found in the book of Lamentations.[145]

---

[145] Compare above, p. 135.

vi) Literary Forms and Unity

In the section of midrash sentences, questions are posed about the lemma איכה

that relate to the scroll of Lamentations (מגילת קינות [four times in the section of

midrash sentences in Buber's edition]). Since the two sections of the IMI correspond

closely (see below), this paraphrase corroborates the finding from the *petiḥtaot* that the

title איכה lemmatizes the entire book of Lamentations. The paraphrase איכה as מגילת

קינות is found in sections dealing with Lamentations as a composite of acrostics, and in a

section dealing with the cycle of sin and punishment. Therefore, it also corroborates the

finding from the *petiḥtaot* that the acrostics bind the book together in a formal and

thematic unity, and that dicta about the covenant cycle relate to the book of

Lamentations.[146]

In conclusion, when we compare the introductory issues treated in the opening

petiḥtaot and in the section of midrash sentences, we see an obvious correlation; they

treat the same issues with similar or identical dicta.[147] Together they carry out a

sustained, thematic treatment of introductory issues to the book of Lamentations. This

observation lends support to my proposal that the editor of the section of thirty-six

petiḥtaot focused attention on introductory issues by: i) understanding and taking

advantage of the formal structure of the *petiḥtah*; ii) repeating key dicta; and, iii)

paraphrasing the *seder* verse.[148] The extreme length of the opening section of *petiḥtaot*

did not present a challenge to the formal structure of a potential IMI, i.e., its length did

---

[146] See above, pp. 135-136.

[147] See above, pp. 133-136 and 140-143.

[148] See above, pp. 97-99.

not predispose it to a discoursive (digressive) nature, and dicta that relate to introductory

issues were not lost sight of amidst extraneous material.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE INNER-MIDRASHIC INTRODUCTION IN
MIDRASH PSALMS

Textual Analysis of *Midrash Psalms*

The *Wissenschaft* edition of Buber is the only scholarly edition available for

Midrash Psalms.[1] I cite *Midrash Psalms* in its original language from his edition and

provide an English translation.[2] I also cite the masoretic text (with vocalization and

cantillation) in a footnote so readers can compare it to its midrashic interpretation.

---

[1] Salomon Buber, ועייי, מדרש תהלים המכונה שוחר טוב . . . על פי כתב יד שבאוצר הספרים בפארמא
שהגיה את המדרש עייפ ששה כתבי יד שהיו לפניו ונשארו הגהותיו בכתובים בכתב ידו יותר משלש מאות שנה:
השואה עם שבעה כתבי יד אחרים . . . ומתוקן גם עייפ הגהות הרופא הייר אברהם בייר דוד פריוויוצאלי זייל
ערוך ומסודר עם סימנים באותיות להפריד בין מאמר למאמר, וציונים מתנייך בגוף הספר, ועם הרבה הוספות
עייפ כתבי יד האחרים, וגם הערות ותקונים ומראה מקומות, ובאר להבנת דבריו, וגם פירוש המלות הזרות
הבאים בתוכו ועם מבוא גדול המפיץ אור על המדרש בכלל ובפרט ובפרט [Midrash Tehillim (Also) Called Shoḥer
Tov . . . According to a Manuscript Stored in the Library in Parma, and in Comparison with Seven Other
Manuscripts . . . And Also Corrected According to Emendations by Doctor and Rabbi Abraham ben David
Provençal (May His Memory Be Blessed) Who Emended the Midrash According to Six Manuscripts in His
Possession, and (Whose) Emendations Survived in Writings in His Own Hand for More Than Three
Hundred Years. Annotated and Arranged by Letters of the Alphabet to Divide Each Section, with Notes
from the Tanakh in the Main Part of the Book, and with Many Additions According to Other Manuscripts,
and with Comments, Emendations, References, Elucidation of its Words, and Also Explanations of Foreign
Words Cited in It. And with an Extensive Introduction That Sheds Light on the Midrash in General and in
Particular] (Vilna 1891), reprint (New York: Om Publishing Company, 1947).

[2] Unless otherwise noted, I translate *Midrash Psalms* myself, in consultation with Braude's translation
(William G. Braude, *The Midrash on Psalms. Translated from the Hebrew and Aramaic*, 2 vols. [New
Haven: Yale University Press, 1959]).

Initial Remarks about the Lemmatization of the IMI

Ps 1:1 is the first distributive unit in *Midrash Psalms*. It is usually followed by

the transition phrase זהו שאמר הכתוב - "These words are to be considered in the light of

what Scripture says elsewhere."[3] This phrase explains the transition from the *seder* verse

to its explanation by the *petiḥtah* lemma. In Goldberg's terms, the phrase describes the

petiḥtah function.[4] Therefore, the unit begins with alternate literary realizations of

petiḥtaot, compared to ones that open with ר׳ פלוני פתח.[5] These *petiḥtaot* are followed by

individual midrash sentences on Ps 1:1.

Introductory Material in the Opening *Petiḥtaot*

I stated in the Introduction that the IMI is a form that binds dicta on 1:1 of a

biblical book as a sustained thematic presentation of introductory issues. Such a

presentation enables the reader to keep related dicta in mind in the midst of other

discoursive (digressive) matters. These dicta are extracted from *petiḥtaot*, midrash

sentences, and *petirah* sentences, accompanied by proof-texts and illustrations (parables,

ma'asot, disputes, etc.) that support the dicta in the main forms. The following analysis of

the opening *petiḥtaot* in *Midrash Psalms* demonstrates that their dicta interpret Ps 1:1 in

terms of introductory issues to the whole book, before a short section of midrash

sentences does the same.

---

[3] Braude, *The Midrash on Psalms*, 1:Introduction, xxix.
[4] See pp. 16-17.
[5] The formula ר׳ פלוני פתח is not essential for the functional form *petiḥtah* (Goldberg, "Versuch," 19, 21; cf. p. 58, n. 8).

Petiḥtah 1

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Prov 11:27: [6] שוחר טוב יבקש רצון - "He who is intent on doing good procures favour." A *petirah* sentence follows: זה דוד מלך ישראל - "This is David, King of Israel." He was intent on doing good for Israel by establishing the twenty-four divisions of the priesthood and Levites. Therefore, he procured favour: שהיה מבקש רחמים שתשרה עליו רוח הקודש כדי לברך את ישראל - "For he sought the favour that the רוח הקודש would rest on him, so that he could bless Israel," which he does in the first words of Ps 1, i.e., אשרי האיש.[7] This *petiḥtah* addresses the issue of the authorship of the Psalms and its inspiration by the רוח הקודש, which David received on the basis of merit. It also introduces his biography and fitness to receive the רוח הקודש.

Petiḥtah 2

The *petiḥtah* lemma is 2 Sam 7:18-19. Verse 18 is a point of departure for a digression on David sitting before the Lord. Part of verse 19 serves as lemma to interpret the *seder* verse Ps 1:1:[8] וזאת תורת האדם ה׳ אלהים - "And this is the Torah of the man, O Lord God." Two *petirah* sentences propose separate dicta: "This [man] is Moses," and, "This [man] is David." Then Moses and David are compared: את מוצא כל מה שעשה משה עשה דוד - "You find that everything Moses did, David [also] did." The following comparisons with accompanying proof-texts are given: they both led Israel out of slavery (to Egypt, Goliath), they both waged war, they both reigned as king over Israel and Judah, they both divided a body of water (the Red Sea, river of Aram), they both built

---

[6] שֹׁחֵר טוֹב יְבַקֵּשׁ רָצוֹן.

[7] This *petiḥtah* reminds us of Solomon receiving the רוח הקודש for his diligent work in *Song Rab.*, pp. 63-66.

[8] וְזֹאת תּוֹרַת הָאָדָם אֲדֹנָי יְהוִה.

altars, and they both offered sacrifices. Then, a comparison is given that deals with their

writings, i.e., the "Torah" of each man (וזאת תורת האדם: משה נתן חמשה חומשי תורה)

"Moses gave five books of the Torah - לישראל ודוד נתן חמשה ספרים שבתהלים לישראל

to Israel, and David gave five scrolls in the Psalms (תהלים) to Israel." This refers to the

division of Psalms into five books (1-41; 42-72; 73-89; 90-106; 107-150).[9] Since this

dictum refers to the entire book of Psalms, the *seder* lemma אשרי האיש functions as the

title of Psalms. The final comparison leads to the citation of the *seder* verse: Moses and

David blessed Israel with the word אשרי (Deut 33:29; Ps 1:1).

Petiḥtah 3

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Prov 8:8: בצדק כל אמרי פי אין בהם נפתל ועקש[10] "All the

words of my mouth [are spoken] in righteousness, there are no circuitous or perverse

[words] among them." A dictum is derived from this lemma about Scripture in general:

אין בהם לא קפדנות ולא עקמומות מצינו שעיקם הכתוב שתים ושלש תיבות שלא להוציא

דבר מגונה מפיו - "There is never a word suggesting frowardness or perversity. Thus we

find Scripture speaking in a roundabout way so as to avoid an unseemly term."[11] Proof-

texts follow to demonstrate this dictum. Then another dictum is proposed - David was

like his creator in this regard: מה בוראו לא הוציא דיבור מגונה אף דוד כן - "As his Creator

refrained from using unseemly speech, so did David."[12] Therefore, when he composed

Ps 1:1, he expressed it in a seemly way. He could have written, ארור האיש אשר הלך בעצת

רשעים - "Cursed is the man who walks in the counsel of the wicked." However, it was

---

[9] The first four divisions end with praise to God; Pss 145-150 (or just 150) form a doxology to the fifth book, or to the whole Psalter.

[10] בְּצֶדֶק כָּל אִמְרֵי פִי אֵין בָּהֶם נִפְתָּל וְעִקֵּשׁ.

[11] Braude, *The Midrash on Psalms*, 1:5.

[12] Ibid., 1:6.

more seemly to write what he did in Ps 1:1. This *petiḥtah* continues to advance analogical arguments to demonstrate that David composed inspired Scripture. His writings exhibit a general characteristic of Scripture, i.e., they are written in a seemly way.

Petiḥtah 4

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Ps 84:12-13: כי שמש ומגן יהוה אלהים חן וכבוד יתן יהוה לא ימנע טוב להלכים בתמים יהוה צבאות אשרי אדם בטח בך - "Surely the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord grants favor and honor. He will not withhold good from those who walk blamelessly. Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in You." A dictum is proposed that Scripture uses figurative language: אשריהם הנביאים שהן מדמין את הצורה ליוצרה ואת הנטיעה לנוטעה - "Blessed are the prophets, who compare a form to the one who created it, and a plant to the one who planted it." Proof-texts of the use of figurative language (besides those in the *petiḥtah* lemma) are presented, followed by a summary of its use: משמיעין את האוזן מה שיכולה לשמוע ומראין את העין מה שיכולה לראות - "[The prophets] talk about things that people understand, and visualize what the [mind's] eye can see." After a digression about the figures in the *petiḥtah* lemma referring to God and Abraham (God is the shield, Abraham is the sun), the last part of the lemma is taken literally and not figuratively: "Blessed is the man" (אשרי אדם) does not refer to Abraham, but to every man. The parallel with the *seder* verse is obvious: אשרי האיש is also to be taken literally, and not figuratively. However, the dictum about the figure of a plant compared to the one who planted it seems to refer to Ps 1:3, where the righteous man of the *seder* verse is compared to a tree. Therefore, parts of Ps 1 are to be interpreted figuratively. Since the interpretation of the *seder* verse through figurative language

addresses a concern for all the Psalms (e.g., the *petiḥtah* lemma Ps 84:12-13), אשרי האיש

functions as the title of the book of Psalms. *Petiḥtaot* 3 and 4 address general issues about

the Psalms as Scripture, and some of its rules for interpretation.

Petiḥtah 5

This *petiḥtah* reverts to the final comparison made in *petiḥtah* 2, that Moses and

David blessed Israel with the word אשרי (Deut 33:29; Ps 1:1). Two *petiḥtah* lemmas are

given: Prov 25:6, אל תתהדר לפני מלך ובמקום גדולים אל תעמוד - "Do not honour

yourself before a king, and in the place of great men do not stand," and Ps 119:100,

מזקנים אתבונן - "From elders I gained understanding." The same dictum is derived from

these lemma: במקום שפתח זה חתם זה ובמקום שחתם זה פתח זה - "Where this one

begins that one ends; and where this one ends that one begins."[13] The body of the

petiḥtah consists of proof-texts that demonstrate the pattern of someone beginning his

blessing with the last word of an elder's blessing, e.g., Jacob's blessing for his sons began

with the last word of Isaac's blessing for him, and Moses' blessing for Israel began with

the last word of Jacob's blessing for his sons. Moses ended his blessing for Israel with the

word אשריך (Deut 33:29). Thus, David began his blessing in Ps 1:1 with that word,

אשרי. This *petiḥtah* continues to advance analogical arguments - David wrote a blessing

like Moses, and both blessings imitate a Scriptural pattern of composition.

---

[13] Ibid., 2:398, n. 21.

Petiḥtah 6

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Eccl 7:19: החכמה תעז לחכם מעשרה שליטים אשר היו

בעיר[14] - "Wisdom strengthens a wise man more than ten mighty men in the city." *Petirah*

sentences identify David as the wise man and the ten mighty men as the ten authors of the

book of Psalms (שאמרו ספר תהלים): Adam, Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, David,

Solomon, Asaph, and the three sons of Korah. The rabbis differed about whether

Jeduthun (Ps 39:1) was a personal name or not. However, as the "pleasant Psalmist of

Israel" (2 Sam 23:1, נעים זמרות ישראל) David is referred to as the author of the whole

book (אעייפ שנאמרו על ידי עשרה לא נאמר אלא על ידי דוד מלך ישראל). Ps 72:20, at the

end of the book of Psalms (בסוף תהלים) is offered as a proof-text: כלו תפלות [דוד] בן ישי

- "The prayers of David, son of Jesse, are finished." This verse is taken to refer to the

whole book. Since dicta about the *seder* verse אשרי האיש relate to the authorship of the

book as a whole and of the individual Psalms, it functions as the title of the book of

Psalms.

The list of the ten authors of the Psalms affords an occasion to present another

list of ten items. This list is of the ten kinds of songs (מיני זמר) in the book of Psalms:

בניצוח בניגון במזמור בשיר בהלל בתפלה בברכה בהודאה בהללויה באשרי - "Glory, melody,

Psalm, song, praise, prayer, blessing, thanksgiving, *Hallelujah*, and exultation."[15] All of

these items occur in the titles of individual Psalms,[16] and they represent genre

identifications for them. Thus, they characterize the types of literature that make up the

book of Psalms. Another dictum offered is that *Hallelujah* is the greatest type of Psalm,

---

[14] הַחָכְמָה תָּעֹז לֶחָכָם מֵעֲשָׂרָה שַׁלִּיטִים אֲשֶׁר הָיוּ בָּעִיר.
[15] Braude, *The Midrash on Psalms*, 1:11.
[16] Half of the words in this list are formed from the same roots as corresponding Psalm titles, e.g., ניצוח from the root נצח appears as the title מנצח.

for it contains both God's name and the word "praise." Rab even called the whole book

Hallelujah (רב קרא כל ספרא הלליה). Given that the five divisions of the book all

conclude with praise of God, this is an appropriate title.[17]

Introductory Material in Midrash Sentences

In a short section, a few midrash sentences treat the *seder* verse אשרי האיש as

the title of the book of Psalms, and discuss introductory issues about it. The first dictum

proposes that the blessed man should not associate with the wicked; if he did, he would

progress from walking to standing to sitting with them. Rather, he should delight in God's

Torah, and meditate on it day and night (Ps 1:2, כי אם בתורת יהוה חפצו ובתורתו יהגה

יומם ולילה). This Torah will be identified as the book of Psalms (see below). Another

dictum derived from אשרי האיש is that the word אשרי occurs twenty-two times in the

book of Psalms (בספר תהלים), which corresponds to the twenty-two letters of the

alphabet. This implies the book of Psalms is characterized by its blessings. Since this

question posed to the lemma אשרי האיש addresses an introductory subject about the

whole book, and since the lemma is paraphrased as ספר תהלים, אשרי האיש signifies the

title of the book.

Finally, אשרי האיש is cited and interpreted in light of Ps 19:15: יהיו לרצון אמרי

פי והגיון לבי לפניך - "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be

acceptable before you." These "words" are the book of Psalms, characterized by the

recurrence of the word אשרי. Ps 19:15 also keeps the lemma ובתורתו יהגה יומם ולילה in

---

[17] See above, n. 9.

view from a previous midrash sentence. David's "words" are "his torah," i.e., the book of

Psalms. Then a dictum is proposed about the Psalms: שיעשו לדורות ויוחקו לדורות ואל יהו

קורין בהם כקורין בספרי מירס אלא יהיו קורין בהם והוגין בהם ונוטלין עליהן שכר כנגעים

ואהלות - "Let them be treasured by the generations, even be graven by the generations,

and be read not as one reads the books of Homer, but both read and meditated upon; let

those who read them in this way be rewarded therefore as though they had read and

meditated upon the treatise of 'The Signs of Leprosy' or of 'Tents.'"[18] This dictum places

the book of Psalms in the category of Torah. It is to be read and meditated upon, with the

same expectation of reward that other Torah study brings. Psalms is also in a different

category than Homer, which implies it is inspired and Homer is not. There is also a

further note about reading the Psalms in the synagogues and study houses.

Summary of the IMI in *Midrash Psalms*

At this point in *Midrash Psalms* there is a clear demarcation between אשרי האיש

lemmatized as the title to the book of Psalms and the same lemma functioning as a title to

the first Psalm. Up to this point the IMI has carried out a sustained discussion of

introductory themes on the whole book. From this point on אשרי האיש lemmatizes the

whole first Psalm, e.g., how the verses in the Ps 1 refer to Adam, Noah, Abraham, the

Levites, and the Korahites.

The IMI is a form that binds together dicta about introductory issues, and applies

them as interpretation of the first verse of a biblical book.[19] In some cases this verse is

---

[18] Braude, *The Midrash on Psalms*, 1:12.

[19] I.e., introductory issues as I have defined them; see p. 4.

paraphrased to help identify its discoursive subject, i.e., introductory issues. In *Midrash Psalms* the lemma אשרי האיש is paraphrased as תהלים and ספר תהלים. Thus, אשרי האיש functions as the title and it lemmatizes the whole book as its discoursive subject. The IMI in *Midrash Psalms* is composed of six *petiḥtaot* whose *seder* verse is Ps 1:1, followed by a short section of midrash sentences on 1:1. After a detailed analysis of the *petiḥtah* lemmas, their dicta, paraphrases of אשרי האיש, and the midrash sentences that follow the *petiḥtaot*, I was able to establish that both parts of the IMI to Psalms contribute to a sustained thematic treatment of the following introductory issues about that book:

i) Authorship and Inspiration

The book as a whole was composed by ten authors. However, it is named after its primary author, King David. Certain positive aspects of David's biography are explored in order to address questions about the book's composition and inspiration. He gained merit to receive the רוח הקודש; therefore, the book is inspired. His life also compares to Moses' on many different levels. On one of these, he wrote Torah just as Moses did. Therefore, the obligation and reward of studying David's Torah is analogous to studying the Torah of Moses. David's Torah also compares with other Scripture, e.g., David's Psalms are written in a seemly way, and his blessings imitate a scriptural pattern of composition. Finally, David's Psalms are in a different category than Homer's books.

ii) Time of Composition; Historical Setting

The list of the different authors of the book in chronological order implies that individual Psalms were composed over a long period of time.

iii) Genre

The genre of the book of Psalms is illustrated by the kinds of songs it contains: glory, melody, Psalm, song, praise, prayer, blessing, thanksgiving, *Hallelujah*, and exultation. Thus, Psalms is a mixed genre. However, there is an attempt to characterize the whole book as *Hallelujah*. Not only do the five divisions of the book conclude with praise of God, but the whole book leads to such praise.

iv) Methods of Interpretation

Since Scripture in general and Psalms in particular speak in literal and figurative language, it is important to distinguish between them to interpret properly. The IMI also recommends the same method of study for Psalms as for other Torah. It is to be meditated upon in the same way as difficult Mishnah tracts.

v) Themes of Psalms

Some of the themes of Psalms can be derived from its titles: glory, melody, Psalm, song, praise, prayer, blessing, thanksgiving, *Hallelujah*, and exultation. These themes can be reduced to just three: prayer ("The Prayers of David"), praise (*Hallelujah*), and blessing (אשרי).

vi) Literary Forms and Unity

Just as Moses' Torah is composed of five individual books, David's Torah is composed of five. The unity of Psalms is also implied by the *seder* lemma אשרי האיש functioning as its title. At times it is paraphrased by the title תהלים [ספר]. Since the title אשרי האיש signifies the whole book of Psalms, questions posed to it pertain to the whole

book. Even though the book's unity is certain, it consists of a mix of different kinds of

songs written by at least ten authors.

CHAPTER SIX

THE INNER-MIDRASHIC INTRODUCTION IN
MIDRASH MISHLE

Textual Analysis of *Midrash Mishle*

There is a critical edition available for *Midrash Mishle* prepared by Visotzky.[1] He

presents a diplomatic text based on Ms. Vatican Ebr. 44, dated the 14th - 15th centuries.[2] I

cite *Midrash Mishle* in its original language from his edition and provide an English

translation.[3] I also cite the masoretic text (with vocalization and cantillation) in a footnote

so readers can compare it to its midrashic interpretation.

Initial Remarks about the Lemmatization of the IMI

Prov 1:1 is the *seder* verse of the opening *petiḥtah* in *Midrash Mishle*. This

petiḥtah is followed by midrash sentences on Prov 1:1. However, the IMI in *Midrash*

Mishle is the only one that discusses introductory issues beyond the lemma 1:1, in this

---

[1] Burton Lyle Visotzky, מדרש משלי על פי כתב־יד ואטיקן עבר. 44, עם שינויי גרסאות מכל כתב־היד
[English title added: ודפוסים הראשונים ועם מבוא, מראי מקומות וביאורים קצרים, הנקראים "מקור ברוך"
Midrash Mishle: A Critical Edition Based on Vatican MS. Ebr. 44, with Variant Readings from All Known
Manuscripts and Early Editions, and with an Introduction, References and a Short Commentary] (New
York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1990); also see Burton Lyle Visotzky, "Midrash
Mishle: A Critical Edition Based on Manuscripts and Early Editions with an Introduction and Annotated
English Translation of Chapters One Through Ten" (PhD diss., The Jewish Theological Seminary of
America, 1983).

[2] "Midrash Mishle: A Critical Edition," (PhD diss.), 91.

[3] Unless otherwise noted, I translate *Midrash Mishle* myself, in consultation with Visotsky's
translation (Burton L. Visotzky, *The Midrash on Proverbs: Translated from the Hebrew with an*
Introduction and Annotations [New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992]). When I cite Visotsky, I
occasionally add my own alternate or supplemental translations in square brackets.

case up to 1:9. The author/editors of *Midrash Mishle* interpreted the first nine verses in Proverbs as an introduction *within* the book of Proverbs itself.

Introductory Material in the Opening *Petiḥtah*

I stated in the Introduction that the IMI is a form that binds dicta on the first verse of a biblical book as a thematic and sustained presentation of introductory issues. Such a presentation enables the reader to keep related dicta in mind in the midst of other discoursive (digressive) matters.[4] These dicta are extracted from *petiḥtaot* and midrash and *petirah* sentences, and accompanied by proof-texts and illustrations that support the dicta of the main forms. The following analysis of the opening *petiḥtah* in *Midrash Mishle* demonstrates that its dicta interpret Prov 1:1 in terms of introductory issues, before the section of midrash sentences does the same. However, in the case of *Midrash Mishle* that section extends to Prov 1:9.

The *petiḥtah* lemma is Job 28:12: והחכמה מאין תמצא ואי זה מקום בינה[5] - "But where can wisdom be found? And where is the place of understanding?" A dictum in a *petirah* sentence identifies that Solomon (זה שלמה) searched for wisdom from 'הק (הקודש, The Holy One). Proof-texts follow about Solomon's request for the spirit of wisdom and understanding (רוח חכמה ובינה, 1 Kgs 3:5, 9), and God granting Solomon wisdom and knowledge (החכמה והמדע, 2 Chr 1:12). Thus, wisdom is found in God, and Solomon sought wisdom from Him as a gift.

The *petiḥtah* then explores aspects of Solomon's biography after he was granted wisdom and understanding. Solomon's attainment of wisdom was his first step in his

---

[4] In the case of *Midrash Mishle*, there is almost no digressive material.
[5] וְהַחָכְמָה מֵאַיִן תִּמָּצֵא וְאֵי זֶה מְקוֹם בִּינָה.

advancement towards Torah (ראשית חכמה יראת יי, Ps 111:10), which enabled him to

love the Lord and walk in the statutes of his father David (1 Kgs 3:3). Solomon also

searched for understanding (Job 28:12). A dictum is proposed that חכמה and בינה are

synonyms (חכמה ובינה לשון אחד הן). God granted Solomon understanding more than

any man: ויתן אלהים חכמה לשלמה ותבונה הרבה מאד ורוחב לב כחול אשר על שפת הים

ויחכם מכל האדם מאיתן האזרחי והימן וכלכל ודרדע בני מחול ויהי שמו בכל הגוים סביב[6]

(1 Kgs 5:9, 11) - "The Lord [God] endowed Solomon with wisdom and discernment

[understanding] in great measure, with understanding [broad knowledge] as vast as the

sands of the sea shore. He was the wisest of all men: (wiser) than Ethan the Ezrahite, and

Heman, Chalkol, and Darda the sons of Mahol. His fame spread among all the

surrounding nations."[7] *Petirah* sentences identify that he was wiser than האדם, i.e., the

first man Adam, wiser than איתן האזרחי, i.e., Abraham, who was roused from the east

(Isa 41:2), wiser than הימן, i.e., Moses, who was faithful (נאמן) in God's house, wiser

than כלכל, i.e., Joseph who sustained his brothers (Gen 47:12), and wiser than דרדע, i.e.,

the wilderness generation who were a knowledgeable generation (דר דעה). Solomon's

fame (שמו) refers to his wisdom that reached to the ends of the earth.[8]

---

[6] וַיִּתֵּן אֱלֹהִים חָכְמָה לִשְׁלֹמֹה וּתְבוּנָה הַרְבֵּה מְאֹד וְרֹחַב לֵב כַּחוֹל אֲשֶׁר עַל שְׂפַת הַיָּם׃ וַיֶּחְכַּם מִכָּל הָאָדָם מֵאֵיתָן הָאֶזְרָחִי וְהֵימָן וְכַלְכֹּל וְדַרְדַּע בְּנֵי מָחוֹל וַיְהִי שְׁמוֹ בְכָל הַגּוֹיִם סָבִיב.

[7] Visotzky, *The Midrash on Proverbs*, 17. Since I have already translated בינה as "understanding" (above in Job 28:12), I suggest the same translation for ותבונה (the midrash links Job 28:12b and 1 Kgs 5:9 based on the use of the same root); this requires another alternate translation for רחב לב.

[8] 1 Kgs 5:10, וַתֵּרֶב חָכְמַת שְׁלֹמֹה מֵחָכְמַת כָּל בְּנֵי קֶדֶם וּמִכֹּל חָכְמַת מִצְרָיִם - "Solomon's wisdom was greater than the wisdom of all the Kedemites and than all the wisdom of the Egyptians," is not cited in this section of *Midrash Mishle*; Visotzky includes it as "an understood link between this homily and the following text" (Visotzky, *The Midrash on Proverbs*, 127, n. 10). However, it makes more sense in the context to delete this verse to avoid any association of Solomon's wisdom with secular human wisdom. Compare *Meg.* 7a where it is proposed that Ecclesiastes is only the wisdom of Solomon (חכמתו של שלמה) and not divine wisdom.

In another interpretation of והחכמה מאין תמצא, a dictum is proposed that the Queen of Sheba found wisdom when she heard Solomon.[9] Proof-texts follow about her visit to Solomon's court and testing him with riddles (1 Kgs 10:1ff). During the test, Solomon in his humility repeated that the Lord gives wisdom, knowledge, and understanding (חכמה דעת ותבונה, Prov 2:6). After he answered her riddles she exclaimed, "I did not believe the reports until I came and saw with my own eyes that not even the half had been told me; your wisdom and wealth surpass the reports I heard" (1 Kgs 10:7).[10] This interpretation confirms the previous ones, that God granted Solomon wisdom and that his wisdom was very great.

The final midrash sentences in the *petiḥtah* compare Solomon's wisdom and scriptural writings to those of his father David. First, they both ruled with justice and righteousness (משפט וצדקה, 1 Kgs 10:9; 2 Sam 8:15); therefore, the wisdom they demonstrated during their reigns was the same. In another interpretation of והחכמה מאין תמצא, a dictum is proposed that Solomon searched for wisdom in his heart. As a sign that wisdom is found in the heart, i.e., the middle [of the body], Solomon commenced the book of Proverbs with מ, i.e., a middle letter of the alphabet (משלי, Prov 1:1). Then a comparison of Proverbs and Psalms follows. David began the Psalms with the beginning of the alphabet (א in אשרי, Ps 1:1) and ended it with the middle of the alphabet (כ in כל, Ps 150:6); Solomon began Proverbs with a middle letter of the alphabet (מ in משלי, Prov 1:1) and ended it with the last letter of the alphabet (ת in תנו, Prov 31:31). Based on this analogy, the Psalms are David's wisdom that he found in his head. Since Solomon

---

[9] This dictum is based on repointing the text to read: "Where did she [i.e., the Queen of Sheba] find wisdom?"

[10] Visotzky, *The Midrash on Proverbs*, 19.

imitated the same scriptural pattern of composition as David, his Proverbs are as much

inspired as David's Psalms. Another dictum is derived from Prov 21:1: פלגי מים לב מלך

ביד ה׳ על כל אשר יחפץ יטנו[11] - "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord as channeled

water; He directs it to whatever He wishes."[12] The dictum is that וכיון שהלב נתון ביד של

הב״ה אל כל מקום שהוא חפץ הוא מטה אותו - "When the heart is given into the hand of

the Omnipresent One, Blessed be He, He directs it to wherever He wants." This implies

that the wisdom in Solomon's heart was guided by God himself. In order to establish the

link between the *petiḥtah* lemma והחכמה מאין תמצא and Prov 1:1, the *petiḥtah* then

repeats that Solomon found wisdom in his heart, i.e., in the middle of his body, and so

began Prov 1:1 with a middle letter of the alphabet, משלי.

Introductory Material in Midrash Sentences

Midrash sentences on Prov 1:2-9 explore the relationship between wisdom in

Proverbs and in the Torah. Dicta derived from לדעת חכמה ומוסר[13] - "To know wisdom

and discipline" (Prov 1:2) propose that "If a man has wisdom, he learns [moral]

discipline"[14] (כיון שיש באדם חכמה הרי הוא למד מוסר), and, "If a man has wisdom,

words of Torah will be handed down to him"[15] (אם יש באדם חכמה דברי תורה נמסרין

בידו). Thus, wisdom enables one to progress towards מוסר, i.e., moral discipline, and

specifically the moral discipline found in דברי תורה. A dictum derived from להבין אמרי

בינה[16] - "To discern words of understanding" (Prov 1:2) is that a man needs

---

[11] פַּלְגֵי מַיִם לֶב מֶלֶךְ בְּיַד יְהֹוָה עַל כָּל אֲשֶׁר יַחְפֹּץ יַטֶּנּוּ.
[12] Visotzky, *The Midrash on Proverbs*, 20.
[13] לָדַעַת חָכְמָה וּמוּסָר.
[14] Visotzky, *The Midrash on Proverbs*, 20.
[15] Ibid.
[16] לְהָבִין אִמְרֵי בִינָה.

understanding to "bring out one thing from between another," i.e., "to form a conclusion by analogy"[17] (צריך אדם שיש בו בינה להבין דבר מתוך דבר). This type of hermeneutic applies especially to the forms of wisdom found in the book of Proverbs.

A dictum derived from לקחת מוסר השכל צדק ומשפט ומשרים[18] - "To acquire discipline to gain insight, righteousness, judgment, and equity" (Prov 1:3) is that if one merited receiving Torah (אם זכה אדם לתורה) based on his wisdom, then he is obligated to gain insight into all of its matters (להשכיל בכל דבר ודבר) and to be righteous in all his ways (להיות צדיק בכל דרכיו). This dictum continues to address the relationship between wisdom and Torah.

A dictum derived from ישמע חכם ויוסף לקח[19] - "The wise man will hear and enhance his learning" (Prov 1:5) is that "If a wise man becomes wiser with Torah, he increases his Torah [learning] with Torah" (אם חכם שמתחכם בתורה מוסיף לו תורה על תורתו). In this midrash sentence, לקח is identified as Torah teaching. Thus, the goal of wisdom is Torah study. The next dictum derived from ונבון תחבולות יקנה[20] - "The discerning man will acquire shrewdness" (Prov 1:5) is that if one advances in Torah, he will eventually need a sage to advance even further. If he advances that far, he will acquire (קנה) "portions" (תחבולות)[21] in this world and in the world to come. This is the reward for Torah study. In this context, Solomon is the sage who can help us advance in Torah through his wisdom in the book of Proverbs.

---

[17] Jastrow, *Dictionary*, sv. בִּין. Vizotzky translates, "to infer one thing from another" (Visotzky, *The Midrash on Proverbs*, 21).
[18] לָקַחַת מוּסַר הַשְׂכֵּל צֶדֶק וּמִשְׁפָּט וּמֵישָׁרִים.
[19] יִשְׁמַע חָכָם וְיוֹסֶף לֶקַח.
[20] וְנָבוֹן תַּחְבֻּלוֹת יִקְנֶה.
[21] Visotzky, *The Midrash on Proverbs*, 129, n. 45.

Petirah sentences on [22] - להבין משל ומליצה "To discern a proverb and a

figure/metaphor" (Prov 1:6) identify משל as a [hidden] proverb in the Torah (אילו משלים

שבתורה) and מליצה as the Torah itself (זו התורה עצמה). Thus, the forms of wisdom in

the book of Proverbs, i.e., משלים and מליצות help a wise man to discern the Torah. Other

dicta derived from [23]דברי חכמים וחידותם - "The words of the wise and their riddles"

(Prov 1:6) equate Solomon's wisdom with מצוה and תורה that should be bound to the

heart (Prov 6:20-21), and place his riddles on par with the Torah itself: אפילו סיחות חולין

שלהן שקולה כנגד כל התורה כולה - "Even the profane talk of the wise is as important as

all of the Torah itself".

Solomon's verse, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (יראת ה׳

ראשית דעת, Prov 1:7) is compared to David's verse, "The beginning of wisdom is the

fear of the Lord" (ראשית חכמה יראת ה׳, Ps 110:10). These verses either contradict each

other (לא הסכים של׳ על חכמתו של דוד אביו), or "knowledge" and "wisdom" are equal in

weight (שקולין כאחת). In either case, it is assumed that Proverbs enjoys the same status

of inspiration as Psalms. If it did not, then David's Scripture would have settled the issue.

Therefore, this comparison of verses presumes the high status of Proverbs as inspired

Scripture.

Dicta derived from [24]חכמה ומוסר אוילים בזו - "Fools despise wisdom and

discipline" compare the wise man who learns Torah to the fool who does not. The wise

man who honors Torah will himself be honored. He honors Torah by sitting and

occupying himself with דברי תורה (למד אדם דברי תורה ויושב ומתעסק בהן) in order to

---

[22] לְהָבִין מָשָׁל וּמְלִיצָה.

[23] דִּבְרֵי חֲכָמִים וְחִידֹתָם.

[24] חָכְמָה וּמוּסָר אֱוִילִים בָּזוּ.

gain wisdom and discipline (בידו חכמה ומוסר). If he does not, wisdom and discipline

will be taken from him (הן מתבוזזין ממנו) and he will be called a fool (ונקרא אייל).

In this context, דברי תורה that impart חכמה ומוסר is the book of Proverbs, already

identified as Torah, or as figures and metaphors that explain it.

Solomon was a wise man who occupied himself with דברי תורה, and added

wisdom to his wisdom. Therefore, he was able to "see with his wisdom" (צפה בחכמתו)

and write Prov 1:8, שמע בני מוסר אביך ואל תטוש תורת אמך - "Listen, my son, to the

discipline of your father, and do not disregard the Torah of your mother." The phrase "see

with his wisdom" (צפה בחכמה) is similar to a phrase that describes the inspiration of the

prophets who "(fore)see by the Holy Spirit" (סוכין ברוח הקודש).[25] Therefore, צפה

בחכמתו seems to refer to the inspiration of Solomon's wisdom, which in this IMI is a

Divine Wisdom that God imparted to him. "The discipline of your father" and "Torah of

your mother" are identified as the entire Torah God commanded at Sinai, or as the

commandment about honoring father and mother. Thus, Solomon by the inspiration of

God's wisdom wrote about Torah in Prov 1:8 using the metaphor of parents. If the

proverbs, figures, and metaphors in the book of Proverbs are probed and understood by

the wise, they will discover that they teach about the Torah. The final dictum in the IMI

is derived from Prov 1:9, [26] כי לוית חן הם לראשך ועקים לגרגרתיך - "For they are an

attractive garland on your head, and necklaces around your neck." It proposes that דברי

תורה are like a crown (נזר) and necklaces (קטלאות).

---

[25] Margulies, מדרש ויקרא רבה [Midrash Wayyikra Rabbah], 1:ט. We have seen this phrase in the IMI
in *Leviticus Rabbah* (p. 46).

[26] כִּי לִוְיַת חֵן הֵם לְרֹאשֶׁךָ וַעֲנָקִים לְגַרְגְּרֹתֶיךָ.

Summary of the IMI in *Midrash Mishle*

After a detailed analysis of the opening *petiḥtah* and the midrash and *petirah* sentences that follow it, I was able to establish that dicta from both parts of the IMI to Proverbs contribute to a sustained thematic treatment of the following introductory issues about that book:

i) Authorship and Inspiration

Solomon is introduced as a seeker of wisdom and as a recipient of the spirit of wisdom and understanding from God. A large part of the IMI addresses positive aspects of Solomon's biography that set him apart as the wisest of all men. He was wiser than Adam, Abraham, Joseph, Moses, and the generation in the wilderness. It is significant that Solomon's wisdom is not compared to the secular wisdom of the nations; such a comparison might imply that Solomon's wisdom was his own, and not from God.[27]

Since Solomon received wisdom from God, he found the wisdom in his own heart was directed by God. Solomon composed Proverbs with that wisdom. It is a book composed under a spirit of wisdom and understanding (רוח חכמה ובינה). Since other IMIs discuss their books as being composed by the inspiration of the רוח הקודש, it is likely that the phrase רוח חכמה ובינה is substituted for it in this non-prophetic book to describe its composition by the spirit of God's wisdom. Another phrase, "to see with wisdom" (צפה בחכמתו) prefaces the remark that Solomon wrote Prov 1:8; since a similar phrase describes the inspiration of the prophets who "saw by the Holy Spirit" (סוכין ברוח

---

[27] See above, n. 8.

הקודש), it also seems to imply that Solomon wrote Proverbs by the inspiration of God's wisdom.

Comparisons of Solomon's and David's life and scriptural writings show that Proverbs is just as much inspired as the book of Psalms. Even when verses from Proverbs and Psalms seem to contradict, Psalms does not enjoy a higher inspired status to settle the issue. The wisdom in Proverbs is also equated with Torah, or remains on par with it.

ii) Time of Composition; Historical Setting

The IMI implies that the book of Proverbs was authored by Solomon during the time of his reign. However, Prov 25:1 states that Hezekiah's men transcribed some of his proverbs. The teaching that Solomon was the author of Proverbs is similar to the one that David was the author of the Psalms, i.e., they were both the main authors and composers of their books.

iii) Genre

The book of Proverbs is wisdom literature whose various forms, e.g., proverbs, figures, and metaphors, provide analogies to help understand the Torah. This Torah wisdom is also identified as Torah, or valued as highly as דברי תורה themselves.

iv) Methods of Interpretation

The IMI is concerned with a hermeneutic that applies especially to the forms of wisdom found in the book of Proverbs, i.e., with analogical reasoning, both in understanding which matters compare to each other and how to form conclusions based on them. Since Proverbs interprets the Torah itself, its figures, metaphors, and proverbs

should be compared to verses in the Torah, and inferences derived from the comparisons should relate to דברי תורה. The goal of the wisdom of Proverbs is to understand the Torah. The IMI ends with metaphors that interpret the giving of the law at Sinai, and wearing דברי תורה like a wreath and necklaces.

v) Themes of Proverbs

In the *petiḥtah*, Solomon's wisdom allowed him to advance toward keeping the Torah. In the midrash sentences, the progression from wisdom to ethical discipline to Torah is a central theme. If one studies Solomon's wisdom in the book of Proverbs, one will understand the Torah and advance in it. The reward for Torah study is life in the world to come.

vi) Literary Forms and Unity

Since Solomon began Proverbs with a middle letter of the alphabet (מ in משלי, Prov 1:1) and ended it with the last letter of the alphabet (ת in תנו, Prov 31:31), the entire book is unified. Even though King Hezekiah's men transcribed some of Solomon's proverbs (Prov 25:10), *Midrash Mishle* treats Solomon as the main author of the book in its present form.

Finally, since the dicta in the IMI discuss all of these introductory issues about the book of Proverbs, I would propose that from the very start the lemma משלי, i.e., the title of the book, served to broaden the scope of inquiry to the entire book.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE INNER-MIDRASHIC INTRODUCTION:
FORMAL AND THEMATIC DIMENSIONS

Now that I have described six IMIs in detail, I am in a position to further clarify

the prototypical form IMI and discuss specific examples of its literary realizations. The

prototypical form will be described under the heading "Formal Dimensions," and the

literary realizations under the heading "Thematic Dimensions."

Formal Dimensions

The Signification of the Lemma

The paradigm for L in the IMI is 1:1 of a biblical book, with the exception of

Midrash Mishle, which extends this paradigm to 1:9. What is signified by the lemma can

be discovered by working backwards from the dicta that are derived from it. The

summaries of the themes of each IMI show that the dicta derived from Lev 1:1, Song 1:1,

Lam 1:1, Ps 1:1, and Prov 1:1-9 pertain to introductory issues about their books, i.e., to

questions regarding authorship and inspiration, time of composition, historical setting,

genre, methods of interpretation, themes, and literary forms and unity. Thus, the lemma

1:1 signifies the broad discoursive subject of "Introduction." Since the paradigm for L,

1:1, usually contains the Hebrew title of a biblical book, it is able to signify an entire

168

book as its subject. Given that the functional form midrash requires its scriptural lemma to provide its discoursive subject, the IMI's exploitation of the title lemma is the only reasonable explanation for its scope of discourse about 1:1.

This exploitation is confirmed by paraphrases of titles that specify discoursive subjects of introduction. The IMI in *Song Rab*. paraphrases 1:1 as, "The Holy Spirit rested on Solomon, and he recited these three books: Proverbs, Qohelet, and Song of Songs." This paraphrase addresses questions about the book's authorship and inspiration. The IMI in *Lam Rab*. paraphrases 1:1 most frequently as, "When they were exiled, Jeremiah began lamenting for them and saying, 'How lonely she sits.'" This paraphrase interprets Lamentations in terms of its place in the cycle of covenantal obligations, infractions, punishments, and lament, and addresses questions about the book's authorship and genre. Other paraphrases of Lam 1:1 deal with similar issues.[1] On the other hand, since the traditional title of Psalms does not occur in its first verse, the IMI in *Midrash Psalms* paraphrases אשרי האיש in 1:1 as תהלים and ספר תהלים. This paraphrase serves to broaden the scope of inquiry about אשרי האיש to introductory issues about the whole book.

Form of Thematic Discourse

The functional form IMI is a relational structure that binds dicta on 1:1 as a sustained thematic discourse on introductory issues, in the midst of other discoursive (digressive) material. The overall impression is that the IMIs carry out highly coherent discourses. The IMI to *Song Rab*. presents the most coherent and tightly bound discourse

---

[1] See Table 3, "Paraphrases of the *Seder* Verse Lam 1:1," p. 132.

on these issues, but all of the IMIs evidence the same thing to a high degree. Even the extreme length of the opening section of *petihtaot* in *Lam Rab.* did not present a challenge to the formal structure of the IMI. It focused attention on introductory issues by understanding and taking advantage of the formal structure of the *petihtah*, repeating key dicta that related to introductory issues, and paraphrasing the *seder* verse. In the final analysis, the length of that section did not challenge the IMI's ability to sustain thematic discourse, i.e., its length did not predispose it to a discoursive (digressive) nature, and its dicta related to introductory issues were not lost sight of in the midst of digressions. Digressions are found in the IMIs in both the *petihtaot* and midrash sentence sections. I mentioned most of them in passing to avoid giving the impression that the form of discourse in the Midrashim is like that of the commentaries.[2] However, the functional form *petihtah* limits their ability to detract from the main thematic discourse,[3] and the ones found among the midrash sentences are minor and also do not detract from it.

Formal Conclusion

The end of the IMI is marked by an interruption of its functional form, i.e., when a new lemma provides a new discoursive subject. Each IMI, except the one to Proverbs, exhibits the same explicit and functional lemmatization. The paradigm for L remains 1:1 until the treatment of introductory issues is exhausted. All of the IMIs, except the one in *Sifra on Leviticus*, also follow a similar pattern of presentation of their forms. One or

---

[2] I mentioned the following digressions in the thesis: *Sifra on Leviticus*, p. 38; *Song Rab.*, p. 87; *Lam Rab.*, pp. 120, 126, 140; I argued that the long digression in *petihtah* 24 of *Lam Rab.* was added later to the existing IMI, p. 119; and *Midrash on Psalms*, pp. 147, 149. In the case of *Midrash Mishle* there is almost no digressive material.

[3] The functional form *petihtah* allows for and even encourages digressions before dicta derived from its lemma interpret the *seder* verse; see pp. 17-19.

more *petiḥtaot* on the *seder* verse 1:1 present dicta on introductory issues followed by midrash sentences (and in some cases *petirah* sentences), and subordinate exegetical forms that present more dicta on the same issues. This results in the presentation of a large amount of material for a book's opening lemma. Once a new lemma is presented, i.e., one that is different than the title lemma, the IMI has ended. Usually this lemma is 1:2 of a biblical book, but in *Midrash Psalms* it is 1:1 signifying the new subject of the first verse of the Psalms, and in *Midrash Mishle* it is 1:10.

Thematic Dimensions

In the final analysis, the prototypical form IMI allows us to recognize and comprehend the texts that were used to extract it.[4] Therefore, I will now describe its literary realizations. I am particularly interested in their themes so I can compare them to the ones treated in introductions to medieval rabbinic Bible commentaries. Taken together, the themes of the IMIs are authorship and inspiration, time of composition, historical setting, genre, methods of interpretation, themes, and literary forms and unity.

Authorship and Inspiration

Each IMI demonstrates that its biblical book is inspired, i.e., it was written under the inspiration of the רוח הקודש or of God's wisdom. Positive aspects of each author's biography are explored to show how he gained merit to receive the רוח הקודש or God's wisdom. The IMIs also explore comparative biographies of scriptural authors and precedents of scriptural composition. At times their discourses address the wider themes of prophecy and the inspiration of other books in relation to the one under investigation.

---

[4] Goldberg, "Form Analysis," 159.

The IMIs in *Sifra on Leviticus* and *Lev Rab*. present Moses as a prophet and the father of prophets. Furthermore, he merited rewards that no other prophet would. He was mighty in strength to listen to and carry out God's word, as evidenced in his roles as representative of the people at Sinai, intercessor for Israel during the episode of the golden calf, overseer of the building and setting up of the tabernacle, and leader responsible for the life of Israel. He merited the unique reward of speaking with God mouth to mouth and even of looking on God's form. The book of Leviticus is a record of the Divine Speech that Moses heard in full clarity in the presence of God, in the tabernacle, from the רוח הקודש within the Holy of Holies, from over the cover of the ark. The IMI in *Lev Rab*. further addresses the theme of prophecy. It gives a classic definition of a prophet: a prophet is a messenger. Since the other prophets did not hear the word of God with the same degree of clarity as Moses, he was incomparable among them. It also presents a short history of prophecy, and demonstrates that Israelite prophets were incomparably greater than prophets of the nations. Therefore, Leviticus (and the Torah) enjoys a higher degree of inspiration than the other books inspired by the רוח הקודש and God's wisdom; however, these books enjoy an immeasurably higher status than prophecies of the nations.

The IMI in *Lam Rab*. presents Jeremiah the prophet as its author. Since his prophecies of punishment and exile were fulfilled, he was a true prophet. His words are also compared to Moses' and Isaiah's, and so enjoy the same prophetic status. Since he was a prophet, the book of Lamentations was composed under prophetic inspiration, by the רוח הקודש. The IMI in *Midrash Psalms* presents David as its author. He is not called a prophet, but it is stated that he gained merit to receive the רוח הקודש; and, therefore,

the Psalms were composed under its inspiration. David's life also compares to Moses' on many different levels, e.g., he wrote Torah just as Moses did. Therefore, the obligation and reward of studying David's Torah is analogous to studying Moses' Torah. David's Torah also compares favorably with other Scriptures, e.g., his Psalms are written in a seemly way, and his blessings imitate a scriptural pattern of composition.

The IMIs in *Song Rab.* and *Midrash Mishle* address the concern of Solomon's fitness to compose his scriptural books under divine inspiration. The IMI in *Song Rab.* explores positive aspects of his biography to demonstrate that his diligence in building the temple was the first step in his advancement towards piety, which eventually led to his reception of the רוח הקודש. In another interpretation, his seeking wisdom or דברי תורה was also a step in the advancement towards the fear of God and the reception of the רוח הקודש. Another aspect of his life that merited this reception was that he taught דברי תורה in public. When the רוח הקודש rested on him, Solomon composed three scriptural books: Proverbs, Qohelet, and Song of Songs. Other lines of reasoning show that his books were written under the inspiration of the רוח הקודש: his books compare favorably with David's Scriptures; he followed the precedent of his father and wrote some Psalms; and R. Akiva stated in the Mishnah that Song of Songs defiles the hands.

The IMI in *Midrash Mishle* presents Solomon as a seeker of wisdom and as a recipient of the spirit of wisdom and understanding from God. It also addresses positive aspects of Solomon's biography that set him apart as the wisest of all men, whose wisdom in his heart was directed by God. Solomon composed Proverbs under the inspiration of wisdom and understanding (רוח חכמה ובינה). Since other IMIs discuss their books' composition by the inspiration of the רוח הקודש, it seems likely that the phrase רוח

חכמה ובינה is used as a substitute for it in this non-prophetic book. Another phrase, "to see with wisdom" (צפה בחכמתו) is likely a substitute for a phrase that describes the inspiration of the prophets who "saw by the Holy Spirit" (סוכין ברוח הקודש). It also implies that Solomon wrote by the inspiration of God's wisdom. Comparisons of Solomon's and David's lives and Scriptures also show that Proverbs and Psalms merit the same status of inspired Scripture.

Time of Composition; Historical Setting

The IMIs address the question of when Moses, David, Solomon, and Jeremiah wrote their respective biblical books by exploring their biographies and identifying times when they were in possession of the רוח הקודש or of God's wisdom. The IMIs in *Sifra* and *Lev Rab*. affirm that Leviticus is a record of the Divine Speech given to Moses shortly after the tabernacle was set up. The IMI in *Song Rab*. affirms that Solomon could have written Proverbs, Qohelet, and Song of Songs only during times when he was fit to receive the רוח הקודש or God's wisdom, which was during his early and/or late adult years.

Sifra, *Lev Rab*., and *Song Rab*. do not distinguish between the times of composition and recitation of their books. Moses transmitted the Divine Speech straight away to Israel as a book with all of its *parashahs* and sections. Solomon received the רוח הקודש and composed his three books. In contrast, *Lam Rab*. raises the possibility that Jeremiah composed Lamentations during Jehoiakim's reign, but may not have recited it straight away. Since he was a prophet, he may have recited it during Jehoiakim's reign as a prophetic rebuke. On the other hand, he may have recited it after the exile as a lament.

Midrash Psalms introduces another distinction regarding its authorship. Even though David was the main author of Psalms, the notice about its ten different authors implies that it was composed over a long period of time.

Lam Rab. also broadens its historical inquiry to the events that led to the exile of the southern kingdom, in the context of Israel's covenantal obligations, violations, and punishments. Their sins or violations of the Torah, etc. became so egregious that God punished them with the exile. This interest in such a broad scope of history in *Lam Rab.* is matched to some degree by *Lev Rabbah's* interest in the history of prophecy, and *Midrash Psalms'* interest in the history of the composition of the Psalms.

Genre

The IMIs identify the genres of their biblical books. Some of these genre identifications relate to Torah. The IMIs in *Sifra* and *Lev Rab.* designate Leviticus as a record of Divine Speeches (not visions!) that Moses heard and wrote down as Torah for Israel. The IMI in *Song Rab.* designates Song of Songs and Proverbs as משלים on the Torah. *Midrash Mishle* designates Proverbs as wisdom literature whose various forms, e.g., proverbs, figures, and metaphors, provide analogies to help understand the Torah. Its torah wisdom is also identified as Torah and valued as highly. The other genre identifications are not related to the Torah. The IMI in *Midrash Psalms* identifies the genre of Psalms as different types of songs: glory, melody, Psalm, song, praise, prayer, blessing, thanksgiving, *Hallelujah*, and exultation. There is also an attempt to characterize the whole book as *Hallelujah*. The IMI in *Lam Rab.* proposes two genres for

Lamentations, either as a prophetic rebuke that anticipates punishment if Israel does not repent, or as a lament for punishment meted out.

Methods of Interpretation

The IMIs in *Sifra*, *Song Rab.*, and *Midrash Mishle* are concerned with hermeneutic issues related to the interpretation of the Torah. *Sifra* opens with rules for interpreting it, i.e., the thirteen *middot* of Rabbi Ishmael, which are applied to Leviticus to derive general and specific cases of halakhah. *Sifra* also has a short notice about the seven *middot* of Hillel. The IMI in *Song Rab.* proposes that the figures and metaphors in Song of Songs should be compared to verses in the Torah, and inferences derived from the comparisons should relate to דברי תורה. Since Song of Songs is a משל on the Torah, the IMI explains some of its figures and similes, e.g., its references to the lovers הקב״ה and Israel. The IMI in *Midrash Mishle* is concerned with a hermeneutic that applies especially to the forms of wisdom found in the book of Proverbs, i.e., with analogical reasoning, both in understanding which matters compare to each another and how to form conclusions based on them. Since Proverbs interprets the Torah itself, its figures, metaphors, and proverbs should also be compared to verses in the Torah, and inferences derived from the comparisons should also relate to דברי תורה. The goal of the wisdom of Proverbs is to understand the Torah. The IMI ends with metaphors that interpret the giving of the law at Sinai, and wearing דברי תורה like a wreath and necklaces.

The IMIs in *Midrash Psalms* and *Lam Rab.* are concerned with hermeneutic issues specifically related to their books. The IMI in *Midrash Psalms* states that it is important to distinguish between literal and figurative language in the Psalms. The IMI in

Lam Rab. states that the acrostics are to be interpreted as exhaustive treatments of punishment for egregious covenant violations.

The IMIs also express a concern about the amount of time and effort required to study their books. The IMI in *Sifra* argues that if Moses needed to pause and collect his thoughts between *parashahs* of Leviticus, then everyone needs to study them deliberately and methodically. The IMI in *Midrash Psalms* expresses a similar concern; Psalms is not just to be read, but meditated upon in the same way as difficult Mishnah tracts. The IMIs in *Song Rab.* and *Midrash Mishle* also imply that the משלים in Song of Songs and Proverbs need to be studied with the kind of effort that Solomon exerted in his search for wisdom.

Themes of Biblical Books

A common theme in the IMIs is obeying halakhah derived from proper interpretation of the Torah. The IMIs in *Sifra* and *Lev Rab.* are concerned with Israel following the Torah and gaining life. The IMI in *Sifra* notes that Leviticus contains narrative sections meant to persuade Israel to keep the Torah. The IMIs in *Song Rab.* and *Midrash Mishle* state that the purpose of studying their משלים on the Torah is to progress from wisdom to ethical discipline, piety, and the fear of God. The reward for Torah study is life in the world to come. As part of the cycle of covenantal obligation and violation of the Sinai covenant, the IMI in *Lam Rab.* treats the themes of violations of the Torah and punishments for them. Taken as a whole, the IMIs treat the themes of reward for keeping the Torah, and punishment for violating it. Thus, these IMIs focus on what Israel must or mustn't do. Similarly, the IMI in *Midrash Psalms* identifies positive actions directed

towards God derived from the titles of the Psalms: glory, melody, Psalm, song, praise,

prayer, blessing, thanksgiving, *Hallelujah*, and exultation.

<div align="center">Literary Forms and Unity</div>

The IMIs exploited the title lemmas of their books, i.e., אשרי, ויקרא

(paraphrased as [ספר] תהלים), משלי, שיר השירים, and איכה, in order to treat books in

their entirety. Then arguments are advanced to demonstrate their unity. One common

argument is that each book is an anthology of similar genres and/or literary forms. The

unity of Leviticus is implied by its very nature as a collection of Divine Speeches. Psalms

is a collection of different types of songs. Song of Songs and Proverbs are collections of

משלים on the Torah. Lamentations is a collection of seven acrostic laments, called מגילת

קינות. Another common argument is that specific literary devices unify these books.

Leviticus is unified by the repeated heading of its sections, וידבר יהוה אליו מאהל מועד

לאמר (Lev 1:1), and וידבר יהוה אל משה לאמר (Lev 4:1; 5:14, 20; 6:1, 12, 17; 7:22, 28;

8:1; 12:1; 14:1; 17:1; 18:1; 19:1; 20:1; 21:16; 22:1, 17, 26; 23:1, 9, 23, 26, 33; 24:1, 13;

25:1; 27:1). Psalms is unified by its five books (1-41; 42-72; 73-89; 90-106;

107-150). The different kinds of songs in Psalms and the משלים in Proverbs are also

bound by a unique literary device. David began the Psalms with the beginning of the

alphabet (א in אשרי, Ps 1:1) and ended it with the middle of the alphabet (כ in כל,

Ps 150:6). Solomon began Proverbs with a middle letter of the alphabet (מ in משלי,

Prov 1:1) and ended it with the last letter of the alphabet (ת in תנו, Prov 31:31).

Lamentations is unified by its repeated reference to איכה (Lam 1:1, 2:1, and 4:1).

Furthermore, the acrostic structures in Lamentations formally bind each chapter, and their

lament theme binds them as a book. The IMI in *Lam Rab.* offers even further proofs of its book's thematic unity, including links between the title lemma and verses from all of its chapters, and correlations between the book of Jeremiah and the book of Lamentations, both in terms of prophetic warning of punishment and its fulfillment, and in terms of a broad discourse about the causes and effects of the exile. Thus, the book of Lamentations is unified in terms of its acrostic literary structures and thematic presentation.

Now that I have discussed in detail the prototypical form IMI and its literary realizations, I will compare its formal and thematic dimensions to the forms and themes of a select number of introductions to medieval rabbinic Bible commentaries.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE INFLUENCE OF THE INNER-MIDRASHIC
INTRODUCTIONS ON RASHI'S INTRODUCTIONS

In this chapter I will demonstrate that the IMIs influenced Rashi's commentary

introductions in terms of their formal, thematic, and material characteristics. As stated in

my Introduction, I will limit my inquiry to his introductions to books of the Torah and

Writings, many of which have corresponding IMIs. I will establish the influence of the

IMIs on Rashi's introductions based on the following four criteria. First, his Inner-

Commentary Introduction (ICI) or הקדמה addresses some of the same themes as an IMI,

i.e., authorship and inspiration, time of composition, historical setting, genre, methods of

interpretation, themes of the book under investigation, and literary forms and unity.

Second, while exploring some or all of the same themes as an IMI, his ICI or הקדמה

cites or alludes to one. This criterion of influence is particularly compelling when his ICI

or הקדמה cites or alludes to an IMI to the same book. Third, his presentation of

introductory material within his comments on 1:1 (ff.), demonstrated by the first and

second criteria, shows that Rashi adopted the form of an IMI. And fourth, if Rashi

displays no familiarity with non-Jewish forms of introduction, it is more reasonable to

presume the influence of an internal Jewish model such as the IMI.

Rashi's Inner-Commentary Introduction to Leviticus

The following criteria show that the IMIs in *Sifra on Leviticus* and *Lev Rab.*

influenced the form, themes, and material content of Rashi's ICI to Leviticus.[1] First,

Rashi's ICI to Leviticus addresses the same themes as the IMIs in *Sifra* and *Lev Rab.*:

i) Authorship and Inspiration

Rashi begins by saying that לכל דברות ולכל אמירות ולכל צוויים קדמה קריאה -

"Before every וידבר ['And He spoke (to Moses)'], ויאמר ['And He said (to Moses)'],

and ויצו ['And He commanded (Moses)'], a call preceded" (cf. the IMI in *Sifra*, p. 35,

הקדים קרייה לדיבר). He then differentiates the call of Israelite prophets with an

expression of affection (לשון חבה), and the call of prophets of the nations with

expressions denoting chance and uncleanness (בלשון עראי וטומאה; cf. the IMI in *Lev*

Rab. p. 52, with the same proof-texts Isa 6:3; Num 23:4; and Deut 23:11). Rashi then

comments that Moses heard God's voice (קול), but Israel did not hear it (cf. the IMI in

Sifra, p. 37). He also notes that every divine speech act (דבור) in Leviticus is proceeded

by a call, whereas every paragraph (פסקה) is not, allowing Moses to pause and reflect on

each *parashah* and subject (ליתן ריוח למשה להתבונן בין פרשה לפרשה ובין ענין לענין; cf.

the IMI in *Sifra*, p. 35, a direct citation). Rashi then states that Moses' call excluded

Aaron, and mentions that there are thirteen proof-texts for this; he gives the first three and

---

[1] All Hebrew citations of Rashi's ICI to Leviticus are from A. Berliner, רש"י על התורה הוא פרוש רבנו שלמה ב"ר יצחק ז"ל מוגה על פי כתבי יד וספרי דפוס ישנים ומנֻקה מכל ההוספות אשר הובאו אל תוכו ומכל השגיאות שנפלו בו, ועם מראה המקומות והמקורים, אשר מהם שאב רש"י את פרושיו [Rashi on the Torah. The Commentary of Our Master Solomon b. Isaac, May His Memory Be Blessed. Edited on the Basis of Manuscripts and Early Printed Editions, Cleansed from All the Additions That Are Cited in It, and from All the Errors That Occur in It, and with the References and the Sources That Rashi Derived His Comments From] [German title added: *Raschi. Der Kommentar des Salomo B. Isak über den Pentateuch nach Handschriften, seltenen Ausgaben u. dem Talmud Kommentar des Verfassers mit Besonderer Rücksicht auf die Nachgewiesenen Quellen Kritisch Hergestellt*] (Frankfurt A. M.: J. Kauffmann, 1905), 209.

then refers the reader to their enumeration in *Sifra* (כולן בתורת כהנים; cf. the IMI in *Sifra*, p. 36; cf. also the same idea in the IMI in *Lev Rab.*, pp. 44, 48). Furthermore, Rashi says that Israel did not hear the sound of Moses' call (קול הקריאה). The call was only to him, and its sound did not travel beyond the tent of meeting, even though God's voice/sound is so loud and powerful that it affects all of nature. In fact, it only resonated near the cover of the ark between the cherubim (cf. the IMI in *Sifra*, pp. 37-38 with the same proof-texts Num 7:89 and Ps 29:4-5; also cf. the IMI in *Lev Rab.* p. 51).

So far Rashi's ICI discusses aspects of Moses' uniqueness as a prophet. From the tent of meeting God called Moses alone to speak to him. Furthermore, the sound of God's voice did not travel beyond the tent. Only Moses heard the Divine Speech in a meeting with God in the tent. Moses' incomparability as a prophet implies that the book of Leviticus is also incomparable. It is a record of the Divine Speech that Moses heard in the presence of God, in the tabernacle, within the Holy of Holies, from over the cover of the ark, from between the cherubim. Thus, Leviticus enjoys the highest status as inspired Scripture.

ii) Time of Composition; Historical Setting

Rashi makes two comments about "saying" (לאמר) in Lev 1:1. The first is that God said, צא ואמור להם דברי כבושין בשבילכם הוא נדבר עמי - "Go and speak words of reproof to them, i.e., 'It is for your sake He held speech with me'" (cf. the IMI in *Sifra*, p. 38, almost a direct citation). When God did not hold speech with Moses for thirty-eight years, a generation of Israel wandered and died in the wilderness (Deut 2:16-17). Just as in *Sifra*, the implication is that "For their sake" means "For their life." The second

comment is that "saying" is short for two speech acts by Moses: transmitting God's word to the Israelites and bringing back their reply to Him. The reply that Moses brought back was, כל אשר דבר יהוה נעשה - "All that the Lord has spoken we will do" (Exod 19:8). Thus, Israel bound themselves to obey the laws in Leviticus (cf. the IMI in *Sifra*, p. 39).

Since the sound of the voice did not travel beyond the tent of meeting, Moses had to repeat the Divine Speech to Israel. The book of Leviticus is a record of that Speech that occurred shortly after the tabernacle was set up and that was reported to Israel straight away (before the incident of the spies; after that incident God did not hold speech with Moses for thirty-eight years).

iii) Genre

Rashi states that Leviticus is a written record of Divine Speeches (דברות) that Moses heard exclusively from God (cf. also the IMI in *Lev Rab.* p. 44).

iv) Methods of Interpretation

Rashi states that if Moses needed to pause and collect his thoughts between sections (פסקות and פרשות), how much more should a common person (הדיוט) do the same (cf. the IMI in *Sifra*, pp. 35-36). Therefore, one should study the sections of Leviticus slowly, deliberately, and methodically.

v) Themes of Leviticus

As noted above, Rashi makes a brief note about Israel binding themselves to obey the laws in Leviticus.

vi) Literary Forms and Unity

Rashi's mention of divine speech acts (דברות) written down as paragraphs

(פסקות) and *parashiyot* (פרשות) according to subjects (עניינים) implies that Leviticus is a

unified collection of these divine speech acts.

Second, we have seen above that while exploring the same themes as the IMIs,

Rashi cuts and pastes his ICI to Leviticus from the IMI in *Sifra* with occasional support

from the one in *Lev Rab.* He even directs the reader to his main source, i.e., *Sifra* (תורת

כהנים). Since this is the case, all of his ICI correlates with those two IMIs.

Third, Rashi's presentation of introductory material within his comments on 1:1,

demonstrated by the first criterion above, and his use of *Sifra* and *Lev Rab.* as sources for

it, demonstrated by the second criterion, shows that he adopted the form of an IMI.

And fourth, Rashi's ICI displays no familiarity with non-Jewish models of

introduction. Rather, we have seen that he uses *Sifra* and *Lev Rab.* as sources, and is

directly and profoundly influenced by their IMIs. These four criteria show that the IMIs

in *Sifra* and *Lev Rab.* influenced the form, themes, and material content of Rashi's ICI to

Leviticus. In this case, the influence of these IMIs was direct and exclusive.

Rashi's Inner-Commentary Introduction to Psalms

The following criteria show that the IMI in *Midrash Psalms* influenced the form,

themes, and material content of Rashi's ICI to Psalms. First, Rashi's ICI to Psalms

addresses these same themes as the IMI in *Midrash Psalms*:

i) Authorship and Inspiration

Rashi lists ten different authors in chronological order who composed the book of

Psalms: כנגד עשרה בני אדם שאמרוהו אדם מלכי צדק אברהם משה שלמה אסף ושלשה בני

קרח וחלוקין על ידותון יש אמורי׳ אדם היה כמה שכתוב בדברי הימים ויש אומ׳ אין ידותון

שבספר הזה אלא על שם הדת והדינין של גזירות שעברו עליו ועל ישר׳" [2] "These correspond

numerically to the ten people who composed [the 150 compositions contained in] it:

Adam, Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Asaph, and three sons of Korah.

Opinion is divided concerning Jeduthun. Some say that he [Jeduthun in the titles of

Pss 39:1; 62:1; 72:1] was a person such as was written about in [1] Chronicles [16:38]

while others explain that Jeduthun in this book is only [an acronym] referring to the

judgments [הדת והדינין], i.e., the tribulations, which overtook him [King David] and

Israel"[3] (cf. the IMI in *Midrash Psalms*, p. 151).

ii) Time of Composition; Historical Setting

The list of different authors of Psalms in chronological order implies that

individual Psalms were composed over a long period of time (cf. the IMI in *Midrash

Psalms*, p. 154).

---

[2] Gruber, *Rashi's Commentary on Psalms*, 811.

[3] Ibid., 165. Even though Gruber's Hebrew text omits the word "David," he translates it in English. I have not checked whether his base manuscript, Austrian National Library Cod. Hebr. 220 also omits it. The printed editions and all of Maarsen's manuscripts list David in the place where Gruber translates it (I. Maarsen, פרשנדתא והוא פירוש רש״י על נ״ך על פי דפוסים וכתבי יד שונים עם מבוא, הערות והגהות [English title added: Parshandatha. The Commentary of Rashi on the Prophets and Hagiographs: Edited on the Basis of Several Manuscripts and Editions {With an Introduction, Notes, and Emendations}], 3 vols., vol. 3, Psalms [Jerusalem: Central Press, 1936], 1).

iii) Genre

Rashi says that ten Psalm titles are descriptions of their different genres: אשרי האיש בעשרת לשוני זמר נאמ' ספר זה בניצוח בניגון במזמור בשיר בהלל בתפילה בברכה בהודאה באשרי בהללויק"[4] - "This book is composed of ten poetic genres [each identifiable by a characteristic introductory expression]: leading, instrumental music, psalm, song, *hallel* [i.e., 'praise'], prayer, *berakah* [i.e., 'blessing'], thanksgiving, laudations, Hallelujah."[5] Thus, Psalms is a mixed genre (cf. the IMI in *Midrash Psalms*, p. 151).

iv) Methods of Interpretation

Rashi does not mention methods of interpretation in his ICI even though the IMI in *Midrash Psalms* does (cf. p. 155).

v) Themes of Psalms

Some of the book's themes can be derived from the titles of the Psalms: "leading, instrumental music, psalm, song, *hallel* [i.e., 'praise'], prayer, *berakah* [i.e., 'blessing'], thanksgiving, laudations, Hallelujah"[6] (cf. the IMI in *Midrash Psalms*, p. 155).

vi) Literary Forms and Unity

Rashi cites the lemma אשרי האיש twice for two different purposes. The first citation functions as a title that signifies the whole book. What follows it is a discussion of the above introductory issues. The book is an anthology of ten kinds of songs written

---

[4] Ibid., 811.
[5] Ibid., 165.
[6] Ibid.

by at least ten authors (cf. the IMI in *Midrash Psalms*, p. 151). The second citation

signifies part of the single verse 1:1 and ends his ICI (cf. the IMI in *Midrash Psalms*,

pp. 153-154).

Second, we have seen above, that while exploring the same themes as the IMIs,

Rashi's ICI to Psalms cites or alludes to the IMI in *Midrash Psalms*. The following

correlations between them show that he used that exegetical midrash as a source: even

though similar lists of the ten authors of Psalms appear in the IMI in *Midrash Psalms* and

in *b. B. Bat* 14b, 15a, Rashi cites the one from the IMI;[7] the dispute about Jeduthun is

also mentioned in the IMI in the same place; the list of authors in chronological order

implies the book was composed over a long period of time; the titles in Psalms denote ten

different genres of Psalms; these genres describe the themes of the Psalms; and these

form a unified anthology.

Third, Rashi's presentation of introductory material within his comments on 1:1,

demonstrated by the first criterion above, and his use of *Midrash Psalms* as a source for

it, demonstrated by the second one, shows that he adopted the form of an IMI. In fact,

just like that IMI, he cites the lemma אשרי האיש twice with two different referents - the

first referent is the title that signifies the whole book; the second referent is to part of

verse 1:1.

And fourth, Rashi's ICI displays no familiarity with non-Jewish models in

introduction. Rather, we have seen that he uses *Midrash Psalms* as its source, and is

directly and profoundly influenced by its IMI. These four criteria show that the IMI in

---

[7] See p. 151. The list in the Talmud is: David, Adam, Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, Heman, Yeduthun, Asaph, and the three sons of Korah. Rashi cites the same names in the same order as the IMI in *Midrash Psalms*.

Midrash Psalms influenced the form, themes, and material content of Rashi's ICI to

Psalms. In this case, the influence of the IMI was direct and exclusive.

Rashi's Inner-Commentary Introduction to Proverbs

Rashi states that the first six verses of Proverbs constitute an introduction to the

book: [8] עייכ פיי לצורך מה עשה שלמה הספר הזה ועתה מתחיל הספר - "Up to this point [the

end of verse six] it explains why Solomon composed this book, and now the book begins

[at verse seven]." Therefore, he extends his ICI to Proverbs beyond 1:1 to 1:6 (cf. the IMI

in *Midrash Mishle*, pp. 157-158). The following criteria show that the IMI in *Midrash*

Mishle influenced the form, themes, and material content of Rashi's ICI to Proverbs.

First, Rashi's ICI to Proverbs addresses the same themes as the IMI in *Midrash Mishle*:

i) Authorship and Inspiration

As we have just seen, Rashi states that Solomon composed the book of Proverbs.

He also comments in 1:4 that Qohelet composed these Proverbs (משלים אלו אמר קהלת).

ii) Time of Composition; Historical Setting

Rashi's reference to Qohelet may imply that he believes Solomon wrote the book

in his mature adult years or in his old age (cf. the IMI in *Song Rab*. pp. 66-68, 86-87).

iii) Genre

In his comments on 1:1 Rashi states that all of Solomon's words in Proverbs are

דוגמות and משלים. Both of these words can not be translated adequately by one English

---

[8] All Hebrew citations of Rashi's ICI to Proverbs are from משלי : מקראות גדולות נביאים וכתובים
[Prophets and Writings. Rabbinic Bible - Proverbs] (Based on Warsaw and Lublin editions, n.d.),
(Jerusalem: מקור הספרים, 1998/1999), ו, ד, ב.

word; דוגמות encompasses similes and figures, while משלים encompasses proverbs, illustrations, examples, figures, similes, parables, and wise sayings.[9] Prov 1:6 also differentiates a מליצה, a figure or metaphor, from a משל (cf. the IMI in *Midrash Mishle*, p. 163). These three words, דוגמות, משלים, and מליצות, and all of the literary forms encompassed by them correspond to the genres of the book of Proverbs. One of these is listed in the introduction to Proverbs, i.e., חידות (riddles, 1:6).

iv) Methods of Interpretation

Since Proverbs contains many different types of analogies, i.e., figures, similes, metaphors, etc., Rashi states that analogical reasoning is a hermeneutic key to interpreting the book: להבין משל ומליצה שיתנו לב להבין במקראות שני הדרכים המשל והמליצה שיבינו את מה המשיל למליצה ואף מן המליצה לא יסורו לבם שגם היא צריכים להבין - "'To understand a משל and a מליצה' (Prov 1:6) [means] that they should pay attention to understand scriptural verses by two methods [of interpretation] - [by] the משל and [by] the מליצה, i.e., that they should understand what [the referent is that] he [Solomon] compared to the מליצה, and not disregard the מליצה, for it also necessary to understand it." Similarly, Rashi states, "The man who understands" (נבון, Prov 1:5) "knows how to derive one thing from another" (יודע להבין דבר מתוך דבר ומוסיף על שמועתו), i.e., "how to form a conclusion by analogy" (cf. the IMI in *Midrash Mishle*, pp. 161-162).[10]

Rashi also identifies some of the book's figures, similes, metaphors, etc. Rashi says that Solomon משל התורה באשה טובה ומשל העובדי גלולים באשה זונה - "He

---

[9] See p. 79.
[10] See p. 162, n. 17.

compared the Torah to a good woman, and he compared idolaters to a prostitute (1:1)."

He also says that חכמה (wisdom), מוסר (discipline), and בינה (understanding) in

Prov 1:2 refer to the Torah (cf. the IMI in *Midrash Mishle*, pp. 159, 161). Therefore, the

figures, similes, metaphors, etc. in Proverbs should be compared to referents in the Torah,

and inferences derived from the comparisons should relate to דברי תורה (cf. the IMI in

Midrash Mishle, pp. 164, 166). As an example of interpreting by the methods of the משל

and the מליצה, Rashi gives this example: כשאמר להצילך מאשה זרה ונכריה על הבלי

מצרים נאמר הרי המשל ואף המליצה שהוציא משלו בלשון אשה הבן בה והזהר מאשה זרה -

"When he [Solomon] says, 'To deliver you from a strange and foreign woman'

(Prov 2:16), it is said about idolatry [lit. the idols of Egypt]. This is the משל and also the

המליצה, for he expressed his משל in the language of a woman, [but] he understands by it,

'Be warned about a strange woman.'"

v) Themes of Proverbs

Since חכמה (wisdom), מוסר (discipline), and בינה (understanding) in Prov 1:2

refer to Torah, the goal of studying the wisdom in Proverbs is to understand the Torah

(1:2; cf. the IMI in *Midrash Mishle*, p. 161).

vi) Literary Forms and Unity

All of the figures, similes, metaphors, etc. in Proverbs are to be interpreted

according to the hermeneutic key provided by the introduction in 1:1-6, i.e., they are to be

be interpreted in light of דברי תורה. This hermeneutic will reveal that this anthology of

דוגמות and משלים is unified by a singular theme and educational purpose.

Second, we have seen above that while exploring the same themes as the IMIs, Rashi's ICI to Proverbs cites or alludes to the IMI in *Midrash Mishle*. The following correlations between them show that he used that exegetical midrash as a source: Rashi extends his ICI beyond 1:1 to 1:6, just as the IMI extends to 1:9; Rashi identifies the genre of Proverbs as משלים, דוגמות, and מליצות, while the IMI identifies it as משלים and מליצות; Rashi states that analogical reasoning is the interpretative key for unlocking the book in terms of understanding figures, what they are compared to, and how to derive conclusions from them, just as the IMI does; this hermeneutic key allows the book of Proverbs to treat a single theme, i.e., Torah; and Rashi identifies some of the book's figures, similes, and metaphors in relation to the Torah, just as the IMI does. Rashi also alludes to the IMI in *Song Rab.*, and to the time Qohelet wrote Proverbs.

Third, Rashi's presentation of introductory material within his comments on 1:1ff., demonstrated by the first criterion above, and use of *Midrash Psalms* as a source for it, demonstrated by the second one, shows that he adopted the form of an IMI. He was also influenced by the IMI in *Midrash Mishle* to extend his ICI beyond 1:1.

And fourth, Rashi's commentary introduction displays no familiarity with non-Jewish models of introduction. Rather, we have seen that he uses *Midrash Mishle* as a source, and is directly and profoundly influenced by its IMI. These four criteria show that the IMI in *Midrash Mishle* influenced the form, themes, and material content of Rashi's ICI to Proverbs. In this case, the influence of the IMI was direct and exclusive.

Rashi's *Haqdamah* and Inner-Commentary Introduction to Song of Songs

The following criteria show that the IMI in *Song Rab.* influenced the form,

themes, and material content of Rashi's הקדמה and ICI to Song of Songs. First, Rashi's

הקדמה and ICI to Song of Songs address the same themes as the IMI in *Song Rab.*:[11]

i) Authorship and Inspiration

In his הקדמה, Rashi says that the prophets spoke their words in similes or figures

(דוגמאות). Like the prophets, Solomon foresaw future events by the רוח הקודש - in his

case he saw future exiles and diasporas of Israel (שעתידין ישראל לגלות גולה אחר גולה

חורבן אחר חורבן ולהתאונן בגלות זו). Rashi implies that Solomon was a prophet who

spoke Song of Songs as a simile or figure (דוגמא). He also explicitly states that Solomon

wrote Song of Songs under the inspiration of the רוח הקודש (ויסד ספר הזה ברוח הקדש).

Rashi also addresses the theme of the inspiration of Song of Songs in his ICI.

There he cites a dictum by R. Akiva about whether it defiles the hands, i.e., whether it is

inspired: א'ר עקיבא לא היה כל העולם כדיי כיום שניתן בו שיר השירים לישראל שכל

הכתובים קדש ושיר השירים קדש קדשים - "R. Akiva said, 'The whole world is not as

worthy as the day on which Song of Songs was given to Israel, for all of the Writings are

sacred, but Song of Songs is the most sacred [of them]'" (cf. the IMI in *Song Rab.*,

p. 87).[12] Since Song of Songs is the most sacred of the Writings, it is inspired and does

defile the hands.

---

[11] All Hebrew citations of Rashi's הקדמה and ICI to Song of Songs are from J. Rosenthal, פרוש רש"י
על שיר השירים [Rashi's Commentary on the Song of Songs], in ספר יובל לכבוד שמואל קלמן מירסקי
[English title added: Samuel K. Mirsky Jubilee Volume], ed. Simon Bernstein and Gershon A. Churgin
(New York: Jubilee Committee, 1958), 136-137.

[12] See p. 87 for the fuller citation.

Rashi then illustrates the special status of Song of Songs with a parable: למלך

שנטל סאה חטין ונתנה לנחתום אמר לו הוצא לי כך וכך סלת כך וכך סובין כך וכך מורסן

וסלית לי מתוכה קלוסקית אחת מנופה ומעולה כך כל הכתובים קדש ושיר השירים קדש

קדשים - "This may be compared to a king who took a seah of wheat and gave it to a

baker and said to him, 'Extract so much fine sifted flour, so much bran flour, and so much

coarse bran flour for me. Then bake for me from it one delicate pastry, purely sifted and

choicest.' So (in the same way) all the Writings are sacred, but the Song of Songs is the

most sacred [of them]" (cf. the IMI in *Song Rab.*, p. 88).

ii) Time of Composition; Historical Setting

In his הקדמה Rashi states that Solomon foresaw the exiles and diaspora of Israel.

He wrote Song of Songs for these future generations so that they would remember their

former glory at Sinai when they were God's treasured possession from among the peoples

(סגלה מכל העמים), and turn back to God in the last days (באחרית הימים).

iii) Genre

In his הקדמה Rashi describes Song of Songs as a simile or figure (דוגמא). This

genre identification corresponds to the IMI's identification of *Song Rab.* as a *mashal*

(illustration, figure, simile; cf. the IMI in *Song Rab.*, pp. 81-82).[13] Rashi explains how to

---

[13] The printed edition of *petihtah* 4 of the IMI in *Song Rab.* reads, עד שלא עמד שלמה לא היתה דוגמא
- "Before Solomon appeared there was no דוגמא" (ט"רע פיזרו דפוס : מגלות חמש מדרש [Midrash on the
Five Scrolls: Pesaro 1519]. However, the manuscripts read either, עד שלא עמד שלמה למה היתה התורה
דומה - "Before Solomon appeared, to what may the Torah be compared?" (Ms Vatican 184a and Ms
Oxford 263a), or, עד שלא עמד שלמה למה היו דברי תורה דומין - "Before Solomon appeared, to what may
the words of Torah be compared?" (Ms Parma, 3122, in Goldstein, "מדרש שיר השירים" [Midrash Song of
Songs], 9), followed by משלים (see pp. 79ff.). The reference in the printed edition to Solomon's דוגמא is
probably a gloss, based on its own or Rashi's substitution of דוגמא for משל.

interpret a דוגמא, and identifies some of the figures in this one, i.e., in Song of Songs (see below).

iv) Methods of Interpretation

Rashi begins his הקדמה with a general description of his method of interpretation: אחת דבר אלהים שתים זו שמענו מקרא אחד יוצא לכמה טעמים וסוף דבר - "'One thing God spoke; two things we have heard' אין לך מקרא יוצא מידי משמעו [Ps 62:12]. One verse has many meanings, but in the final analysis no verse departs from its literal sense." Since he identifies Song of Songs as a דוגמא, he also describes how to interpret one: ואעפ"י שדברו הנביאים דבריהם בדוגמא צריך ליישב הדוגמא על אופניה ועל סדרה - "Since the prophets spoke their words in a דוגמא, it is necessary to arrange the דוגמא appropriately in its order."

As a דוגמא, Rashi also identifies some of its similes and figures. In his הקדמה he identifies its major figure as a marriage between God and Israel that explains their past and future relations. In the past, the partners enjoyed each other's love, acts of kindness, and faithfulness. At the time of her exile and diaspora, i.e., the future time for which Solomon wrote the book, God would afflict Israel for her unfaithfulness. She would be like a distressed separated wife longing and yearning for her husband and beloved (צרורה אלמנות חיות משתוקקת על בעלה מתרפקת על דודה). Even during that time, God would remain her husband. He would be distressed by her distress, and would also remember her former kindness, beauty, propriety of conduct, and His strong bond of love for her (חסדי נעוריה ונוי יופייה וכשרון פעלה אשר נקשר עמה באהבה עזה). In the end of days they

would again be marriage partners: לא שילוחיה שילוחין כי עוד היא אשתו והוא אישה -
"Her exiles are not bills of divorce, for she is still His wife and He [is still] her husband."

In Rashi's ICI he also identifies every שלמה as a sacred reference to the King of
Peace (כל שלמה האמור בשיר השירים קדש מלך שהשלום שלו; cf. the IMI in *Song Rab.*,
p. 89).

v) Themes of Song of Songs

The major theme of Song of Songs is the relationship of God and Israel described
as a marriage relationship. Since this relationship is permanent, Israel will enjoy it again
after her exiles and diaspora.

vi) Literary Forms and Unity

Rashi's הקדמה and ICI are concerned with the entire book of Song of Songs. In
his הקדמה he twice calls it a ספר (ויסד ספר הזה; ראיתי לספר הזה) whose verses he will
comment on in their [scriptural] order (לתפוס משמע המקראות ליישב באורם על הסדר). In
his ICI Rashi uses the title שיר השירים five times (once as the opening title lemma). It is
a book of figures and similes bound by a major one about the marriage between God and
Israel, to which all of the other ones relate.

Second, we have seen above that while exploring the same themes as the IMIs,
Rashi's הקדמה and ICI to Song of Songs cite or allude to the IMI in *Song Rab*. Rashi
mentions in his הקדמה that he used a Midrash on Song of Songs as a source for his
introduction: ראיתי לספר הזה כמה מדרשי אגדה יש סדורים כל הספר הזה במדרש אחד, ויש
מפוזרים בכמה ספרי אגדה מקראות לבדם ואין מתיישבין על לשון המקרא וסדר המקראות, ואמרתי
בלבי לתפוס משמע המקראות ליישב באורם על הסדר והמדרשות רבותינו קבעום מדרש ומדרש

במקומו - "I have seen many aggadic midrashim concerning this book. Some occur in a

single Midrash arranged in the order of this entire book, while others occur in verses by

themselves scattered in many aggadic books, which do not conform to the language of

Scripture or to the order of the verses. So I thought I would capture the meaning of the

verses and arrange their commentary according to the [scriptural] order and the midrashic

interpretations that our rabbis established, each and every one in its place [in that

order]."[14] In fact, Rashi cuts and pastes the majority of his introduction from *Song Rab.*[15]

The following correlations between his introduction and the IMI in *Song Rab.* confirm

this: Rashi's concern about the inspiration of Song of Songs, i.e., whether Solomon wrote

it under the inspiration of the רוח הקודש and whether it defiles the hand corresponds to

the main concern of the IMI about whether Solomon composed Song of Songs under the

inspiration of the רוח הקדש; R. Akiva's statement and the parable that support the

inspiration of the book both occur in Rashi's introduction and the IMI; genre

identifications in Rashi and the IMI as a דוגמא and a משל are very similar; the

identification of figures and similes by Rashi and the IMI is similar, i.e., their references

to the lovers הקב״ה and Israel; and the title lemma שיר השירים in 1:1 broadens the scope

---

[14] I consulted Marcus' translation for this passage: "This book has several aggadic midrashim. Some are arranged in the order of the entire book in a single midrash; others are scattered about in many books of aggadah, are on individual verses and do not conform to the language of Scripture or to the order of the verses. (Preferring the former,) I decided to capture the meaning of the verses and arrange each explanation following the correct order of the midrashim which our rabbis have established, each (midrash) in its proper place" (Marcus, "Rashi's Historiosophy," 49).

[15] This does not imply that Rashi cited *Song Rab.* verbatim. He was also familiar with the original sources that *Song Rab.* used, e.g., R. Akiva's statement from *m. Yad.* 3.5, and the statement about the King of Peace from *b. Šebu.* 35b. Grossman states, "Once Rashi had selected a suitable *midrash*, he was faced with the problem of its wording. Very frequently, he reworked the text as formulated by the Sages, omitting part of the talmudic argument, adding and omitting words and sometimes even changing the wording" (Avraham Grossman, "The School of Literal Jewish Exegesis in Northern France," in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament. The History of Its Interpretation*. Vol. I. *From the Beginnings to the Middle Ages (Until 1300)*. Part 2, *The Middle Ages*, ed. Magne Sæbø [Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000], 336).

of inquiry to the entire book. Even though Rashi pursues the metaphor of a marriage

further than the IMI does, and adds the notion that Solomon wrote Song of Songs for a

future generation in exile, by his own admission the IMI in *Song Rab.* influenced his

הקדמה and ICI.

Third, Rashi's presentation of introductory material within his comments on 1:1,

demonstrated by the first criterion above, and his use of *Song Rab.* as a source for it,

demonstrated by the second one, shows that he adopted the form of an IMI.

And fourth, Rashi's הקדמה and ICI display no familiarity with non-Jewish

models of introduction. Rather, we have seen that he cites *Song Rab.* as a source, and is

directly and profoundly influenced by its IMI. These four criteria show that the IMI in

Song Rab. influenced the form, themes, and material content of Rashi's הקדמה and ICI to

Song of Songs. In this case, the influence of the IMI was direct and exclusive.

Rashi's Inner-Commentary Introduction to Lamentations

The following criteria show that the IMI in *Lam Rab.* influenced the form,

themes, and material content of Rashi's ICI to Lamentations. First, Rashi's ICI to

Lamentations addresses these same themes as the IMI in *Lam Rab.*:[16]

i) Authorship and Inspiration

Rashi states ירמיה כתב ספר קינות - "Jeremiah wrote the book of laments."

---

[16] All Hebrew citations of Rashi's ICI to Lamentations are from Jacob ben Ḥayyim, תנ"ך מקראות גדולות [Biblia Rabbinica], 4 vols., (Venice, 1525), reprint (Jerusalem: Makhor, 1972), 4:289.

ii) Time of Composition; Historical Setting

Rashi states that Lamentations is the scroll that Jehoiakim burned on the brazier

that was on the fire (היא המגילה אשר שרף יהויקים על האח אשר על האש, Jer 36).

Therefore, it was composed during Jehoiakim's reign (cf. the IMI in *Lam Rab.*, p. 123).

Rashi also distinguishes two stages in its composition: והיו בו שלש אלף ביתו איכה ישבה

איכה יעיב איכה יועם שוב הוסיף עליו אני הגבר שהוא שלש אלף ביתו שנאמר ועוד נוסף

עליהם דברים רבים כהמה שלש כנגד שלש - "It was composed [originally] of three

alphabetic acrostics, i.e., איכה ישבה (Lam 1:1 = Lam 1), איכה יעיב (Lam 2:1 = Lam 2),

and איכה יועם (Lam 4:1 = Lam 4), and he kept on adding to it, i.e., אני הגבר (Lam 3:1 =

Lam 3), which contains three [more] alphabetic acrostics, as it says, 'And besides, many

words like them were added to them' [Jer 36:32], three acrostics corresponding to the

three [more]" (cf. the IMI in *Lam Rab.*, p. 122).

iii) Genre

Rashi's statement that "Jeremiah wrote the book of Lamentations" identifies the

genre of the book (cf. the IMI in *Lam Rab.*, pp. 101-132).

iv) Methods of Interpretation

Rashi gives a general description of his method of interpretation: יש מדרשי אגדה

הרבה ואני באתי לפרש לשון המקרא כמשמעו - "There are many aggadic midrashim, but I

have learned to interpret the language of Scripture according to its literal sense."

However, he does not proceed to treat methods that are specific to Lamentations, even

though the IMI in *Lam Rab.* does.

v) Themes of Lamentations

Rashi implies that the exile is a temporary situation. Although the city is lonely without its inhabitants (גלמוד מיושביה), she is not really a widow. She is like a wife whose husband went to a distant country but intends to return (ולא אלמנה ממש אלא כאשה שהלך בעלה למדינת הים ודעתו לחזור).

vi) Literary Forms and Unity

Rashi calls the book a book (ספר) composed of laments (קינות), and a מגילה. Its acrostic structure binds the individual chapters and the theme of lament binds them as a book (cf. the IMI in *Lam Rab.*, pp. 135-136).

Second, we have seen above that while exploring the same themes as the IMIs, Rashi's ICI to Lamentations cites or alludes to the IMI in *Lam Rab.* The following correlations between them show that he used that exegetical midrash as a source: Rashi's statement that Lamentations is a book of laments correlates with paraphrases of Lam 1:1 in the IMI in *Lam Rab.* that state Jeremiah קונן עליהם (lamented over them); Rashi's reference to Jehoiakim burning the scroll is from *petiḥtah* 28 of the IMI in *Lam Rab.*; Rashi's mention of six acrostics corresponds to most of *petiḥtah* 27 in *Lam Rab.*, which describes the same six acrostics besides a seventh one in Lam 5; Rashi's mention of the city without inhabitants may be an allusion to *petiḥtah* 34 in *Lam Rab.*; Rashi's implication that the exile is temporary correlates with one of the main themes in the IMI in *Lam Rab.*, that the exile and lament for it is part of the covenantal cycle. Rashi implies that the cycle will begin again.

Third, Rashi's presentation of introductory material within his comments on 1:1, demonstrated by the first criterion above, and his use of *Lam Rab.* as a source for it, demonstrated by the second one, show that he adopted the form of an IMI.

And fourth, Rashi's commentary introduction displays no familiarity with non-Jewish models of introduction. Rather, we have seen that he uses *Lam Rab.* as a source, and is directly and profoundly influenced by its IMI. These four criteria show that the IMI in *Lam Rab.* influenced the form, themes, and material content of Rashi's ICI to Lamentations. In this case, the influence of the IMI was direct and exclusive.

Rashi's "Introduction" to Genesis/The Torah

As I mentioned in my Introduction, there is a growing trend to view Rashi's preliminary remarks to his Genesis commentary as an introduction,[17] which would be an ICI according to my terminology. In a very short section preceding his remarks on creation, Rashi does make two observations related to the Torah in the context of the creation account, i.e., that the main theme of the Torah is commandments, and that God made the land and can give it to whomever He wants. However, based on the criterion of treating the same themes as the IMIs, his observations only address very briefly the genre and themes of Genesis. In my opinion, that is not enough to qualify as an ICI to Genesis or to the Torah, especially if we compare Rashi's brief comments here to his lengthy ICI to Leviticus that was influenced by IMIs. However, the trend does support my claim that an ICI is recognizable by its treatment of introductory issues within the comments on 1:1.

---

[17] See p. 3, n. 6.

CHAPTER NINE

THE INFLUENCE OF THE INNER-MIDRASHIC
INTRODUCTIONS ON IBN EZRA'S INTRODUCTIONS

Ibn Ezra's Knowledge of the *Ṣadr*, *Muḳaddima*, and *Prooemium*

As mentioned in the Introduction, it is generally believed that the first medieval

rabbinic introductions to biblical books written in Hebrew were adaptations of non-

Jewish models.[1] Ibn Ezra is regarded as the first commentator to adapt Arabic models in

Hebrew. His Arabic education in poetry, linguistics, science, and philosophy[2] would have

exposed him to generic models of introduction, the *ṣadr* and *muḳaddima*,[3] and to the

prooemium. The *prooemium* consisted of six to eight preliminary questions, called

headings or main points, to be answered before the study of an individual Aristotelian

treatise. These questions related to theme, place in the reading order, utility, title,

authenticity, divisional structure, relationship to other areas of philosophy, and method of

instruction.[4] He was also familiar with the introductions of the Ge'onim, e.g. Sa'adia

---

[1] Eric Lawee, "Introducing Scripture," 158, cited on p. 4 of the Introduction; cf. Sirat, "Biblical Commentaries and Christian Influence," 215ff.

[2] Lancaster, *Deconstructing the Bible: Abraham ibn Ezra's Introduction to the Torah* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), 1.

[3] W. P. Heinrichs, "Ṣadr," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition*, ed. C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W. P. Heinrichs and G. Lecomte (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), VIII: 748; P. Freimark, "Muḳaddima," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition*, ed. C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W. P. Heinrichs and Ch. Pellat (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993), VII: 495-496. See pp. 214-215 for more on these forms.

[4] See pp. 216-217 for a detailed description of this form.

Gaon,[5] and those of other Judeo-Arabic commentators, e.g., Ibn Ghiyyat's (1038–1089)

introduction to Ecclesiastes that adapted the *prooemium* with slightly different

terminology.[6] Ibn Ezra used Ibn Ghiyyat's commentary as a source for his own on

Ecclesiastes,[7] which was the first commentary he wrote in 1140,[8] and also for his הקדמה

to his first commentary on Psalms (see below). However, we shall see that Arabic models

did not influence Ibn Ezra exclusively. In some cases he was also influenced by the IMI.

Ibn Ezra's *Haqdamah* to Psalms - Second Recension

Ibn Ezra wrote two introductions to Psalms, a first recension somewhere between

1140-1143 in Rome or Lucca, and the second one in 1156 in Rouen.[9] Simon describes the

major Judeo-Arabic influences on Ibn Ezra's first recension to Psalms, including

---

[5] See Ibn Ezra's introduction to the Torah on the "first path" (הדרך האחת) (Irene Lancaster, *Deconstructing the Bible: Abraham ibn Ezra's Introduction to the Torah*, 145-148 [Eng.]; and Asher Weiser, פירושי התורה לרבנו אברהם אבן עזרא על־פי כת״י ודפוסים ראשונים עם מבוא, ביאורים, ציוני מקורות ומקבילות [Commentaries on the Torah by Our Master Abraham Ibn Ezra According to Manuscripts and Early Printed Editions with an Introduction, Comments, Notes on Sources, and Parallels], 3 vols., vol. 1, בראשית [Genesis] (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1976), א, ב [Heb.]). Also see Sirat for a description of these Judeo-Arabic introductions (Sirat, "Biblical Commentaries and Christian Influence," 212-215).

[6] See pp. 203-204, and n. 12 below, for more on his adaptation of the *prooemium*. For the consensus view that attributes this commentary on Ecclesiastes to Ibn Ghiyyat, see H. Mittelman, "A Commentary on Ecclesiastes in Judeo-Arabic Ascribed to Isaac ibn Ghiyat" (PhD diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1999), English Abstract, xii-xvi. Besides the scholars mentioned by Mittelman, see also James T. Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* and the Philosopher's Prooemium," in *Studies in Medieval History and Literature, III*, ed. Isadore Twersky and Jay M. Harris (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 123, n. 25; Sirat, "Biblical Commentaries and Christian Influence," 214, n. 13; and Dirk U. Rottzoll, *Abraham Ibn Esras Kommentare zu den Büchern Kohelet, Ester und Rut: Eingeleitet, Übersetzt und Kommentiert* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999), 8, n. 7.

[7] Mittelman, "A Commentary on Ecclesiastes in Judeo-Arabic Ascribed to Isaac ibn Ghiyat," English Abstract, xi, xv, xxxv; Rottzoll, *Abraham Ibn Esras Kommentare zu den Büchern Kohelet, Ester und Rut*, 7-8.

[8] Shlomo Sela and Gad Freudenthal, "Abraham Ibn Ezra's Scholarly Writings: A Chronological Listing," *Aleph* 6 (2006): 18; cf. Lancaster, *Deconstructing the Bible: Abraham ibn Ezra's Introduction to the Torah*, 4; Uriel Simon, *Four Approaches to the Book of Psalms; From Saadiah Gaon to Abraham Ibn Ezra* (New York: SUNY Press, 1991), 152.

[9] Sela and Freudenthal, "Abraham Ibn Ezra's Scholarly Writings," 18, 21; cf. Simon, *Four Approaches to the Book of Psalms*, 146, 149.

commentaries on Psalms by Sa'adia Gaon, Ibn Giqatilah, and others.[10] For example, "at

the beginning of the introduction to the First Recension Ibn Ezra enumerates the five

conditions that, according to Sa'adia, governed the recitation of the Psalms in the temple,

without noting that he is borrowing from a predecessor."[11] His הקדמה to the first

recension was also influenced by Ibn Ghiyyat's הקדמה on Ecclesiastes. "Isaac Ibn

Ghiyath begins his *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* by discussing the 'eight things that

someone beginning [a book] should know.' Ibn Ghiyath's terminology and categories

differ somewhat from the philosophers' prooemium, but his approach is the same."[12] Ibn

Ezra states in his הקדמה, "We must undertake four inquiries (והנה יש לחקור ארבעה

---

[10] Simon, *Four Approaches to the Book of Psalms*, 156-161. Sa'adia's long introduction to his Psalms commentary has been translated into English (Moshe Sokolow, "Saadiah Gaon's Prolegomenon to Psalms," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 51 [1984], 131-174).

[11] Simon, *Four Approaches to the Book of Psalms*, 157. For the five conditions see Sokolow, "Saadiah Gaon's Prolegomenon to Psalms," 154, 158-166.

[12] James T. Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* and the Philosopher's Prooemium," 84. Ḳafiḥ's Hebrew translation of Ibn Ghiyyat's eight things reads: שמונה ידיעות הם שצריך התלמיד לדעת אותם א ידיעת מי הוא בעל הספר הזה ב ידיעת השם שהוא מכונה בו ג ידיעת מי הוא הכותבו ובאיזה זמן נכתב ד מעלתו בין כתבי הקדש ה מה שנכלל בו מן הפרישות אם הדברים מדעתו או בכח אלהי ו ידיעת כל מה שנכלל בו מן הפרישות האם לא היה ידוע עד דוע או שהיה ידוע ז ביאור היסודות שהוא בנוי עליהם ח פירוש הכוונה . . . - "There are eight things that the student must know: i) who the author of the book is; ii) his pseudonym [Qohelet]; iii) who compiled it and when it was compiled; iv) its place among the books of Scripture; v) whether what is included in it regarding asceticism is from his own wisdom or the inspiration of God; vi) whether everything included in it regarding asceticism was not known before that time or was known; vii) the foundations upon which it is built; viii) the aim . . . חמש מגילות: שיר השירים, רות, קהלת, אסתר, איכה עם פירושים עתיקים היוצאים לאור פעם ראשונה על פי כתבי יד בצירוף מבואות הערות והארות (Y. Ḳafiḥ, [Five Scrolls: Song of Songs, Ruth, Qohelet, Esther, Eichah, with Ancient Commentaries Published for the First Time on the Basis of Manuscripts with Introductions, Notes, and Explanations] [Jerusalem: Ha-Agudah le-Hatsalat Ginze Teman, 1962], קסה). For translation of this passage I consulted Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* and the Philosopher's Prooemium," 84-85; Sirat, "Biblical Commentaries and Christian Influence," 214; and the French translation of Haïm Zafrani and André Caquot, *La Version Arabe de la Bible de Sa'adya Gaon. L'Ecclésiaste et son Commentaire «Le Livre de L'Ascèse»* (Paris: G. -P. Maisonneuve and Larose, 1989), 43. Since ידיעת, ביאור, and פירוש introduce the things the student should know, I left them untranslated. Regarding the attribution of this commentary to Ibn Ghiyyat, see n. 6 above.

(מחקרים)."[13] His first three inquiries parallel Ibn Ghiyyat's first five things.[14] Given all of

the Judeo-Arabic influences on his הקדמה to his first recension of Psalms and the

absence of any clear reference in it to the IMI in *Midrash Psalms*, it appears that the IMIs

did not influence it. Since he wrote the first recension between 1140 and 1143, shortly

after he left Spain for Rome and shortly after he wrote his commentary on Ecclesiastes,

the Arabic models of introduction and other Judeo-Arabic commentaries exerted a strong

influence on him. However, his הקדמה to the second recension of Psalms omits most of

what appears in the first one, including the five conditions and four inquiries.[15] One

explanation for this is that by the time he wrote the second recension he was influenced

by the model of the IMI for its הקדמה.[16] In fact, the following criteria show that the IMI

in *Midrash Psalms* influenced the themes and material content of Ibn Ezra's הקדמה to his

---

[13] All English and Hebrew citations of his first recension are from Simon, *Four Approaches to the Book of Psalms*, 308-329.

[14] Simon, *Four Approaches to the Book of Psalms*, 177-178. Ibn Ezra's first three inquiries are: "Is the entire book by David?"; "Who edited this book?"; and "Are these words of David and the other poets veritable songs, psalms, and prayers, or were they said through the Holy Spirit?" (ibid, 178).

[15] Compare Simon who states that the הקדמה to the second recension "does not contain even one sentence that parallels the prologue of the introduction to the First Recension, which deals with the excellences of the Book of Psalms" (Simon, *Four Approaches to the Book of Psalms*, 177).

[16] Other proposed explanations are that Ibn Ezra had forgotten Sa'adia's commentary during the elapsed time between the two Psalms recensions (Simon, *Four Approaches to the Book of Psalms*, 157), and/or that Ibn Ezra adapted his הקדמה to his more conservative surroundings in N. France, i.e., he accommodated more midrashic interpretation than he otherwise would have (ibid., 152ff.). Besides the arguments marshalled by Simon against the commonly held notion that Ibn Ezra *always* adapted his interpretations to his more conservative surroundings, it should be noted that Ibn Ezra's first recension of his commentary to Song of Songs, written in Rome or Lucca between 1140 and 1145, devotes one of its three sections to midrash (Sela and Freudenthal, "Abraham Ibn Ezra's Scholarly Writings," 18; H. J. Mathews, פירוש שיר השירים [מהדורא ראשונה] לרבי אברהם בן מאיר אבן עזרא הספרדי [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1874], reprint [English title added: Abraham Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Canticles, After the First Recension: Edited from Two Mss., with a Translation] [London: Trübner and Co., 1874, printed in Israel, n.d.], 17-29 [Eng.], 15-24 [Heb.]). If Ibn Ezra accommodated midrashic interpretations, he did so at different times and perhaps for different reasons. Furthermore, if he accommodated the model of the IMI for his הקדמה to his second recension of Psalms, his motives for doing so will not affect my argument.

second recension of Psalms. First, his הקדמה addresses these same themes as the IMI in

Midrash Psalms:[17]

i) Authorship and Inspiration

Ibn Ezra mentions that some Psalm headings name their poet or author while

others do not (יש בו מזמורים ושם המשורר או המחבר כתוב בראש המזמור ויש מהם רבים

בלא זכר שם המשורר). This creates a major dispute among commentators about whether

David wrote the whole book.[18] Some argue that since David was a prophet (Neh 12:24;

2 Sam 23:2), he wrote the entire book and all the Psalm titles should be interpreted in

terms of his exclusive authorship. For example, לידותון (Ps 62) refers to one of the chief

musicians, Jeduthun, and למשה (Ps 90), לאסף (Pss 50, 73-83), and לבני קרח (Pss 42, 44-

49; 84-85, 87-88) refer to the descendants of Moses, Asaph, and Korah, who all lived

during David's time, and to whom he gave Psalms to play. לשלמה (Ps 72) is a prophecy

by David concerning Solomon. "O God, heathens have entered your domain" (Ps 79), and

"By the rivers of Babylon" (Ps 137) are prophecies of David that he prophesied about the

future (נבואת דוד שהתנבא לעתיד).[19] Others argue that since the Psalms are a collection of

non-prophetic genres, i.e., songs, and prayers (מזמור ושיר ותפלה), the historical remarks

in their titles reflect the actual historical circumstances of their composition. Therefore,

different authors composed the book of Psalms over a long period of time (cf. the IMI in

Midrash Psalms, p. 151). Thus, "By the rivers of Babylon," לבני קרח, and לאסף, etc.,

were written by Babylonian poets during the exile.

---

[17] All Hebrew citations of Ibn Ezra's second recension are from Simon, *Four Approaches to the Book of Psalms*, 330-333.

[18] Ibn Ezra is referring to Sa'adia Gaon and Ibn Giqatilah among others (Simon, *Four Approaches to the Book of Psalms*, 157, 179, 188-189).

[19] Simon, *Four Approaches to the Book of Psalms*, 330.

While Ibn Ezra endorses the view that different authors composed the book, he still attributes many anonymous Psalms to David. For example, he states, "Why do some commentators wonder that the book does not begin [with the heading] 'The prophecy of David'? For there is no doubt among the Jews that our master Moses wrote Genesis, for we have received this tradition from our holy ancestors, their memory for a blessing, even though it does not begin 'the Lord spoke to Moses.'"[20] Just as Moses is the author of anonymous parts of the Torah, David is the author of some anonymous Psalms (cf. the IMI in *Midrash Psalms*, pp. 147-148, which compares Moses and David in other respects). He also states, "Those psalms that have no one's name in the heading may not be by David, or again they may be, like 'Praise the Lord, call on His name,' (105) which has no ascription to David but is by him, since it is said explicitly in Chronicles (1 Chr 16:7) that David wrote it about the Ark, and gave it to Asaph the singer."[21]

Ibn Ezra also endorses the view of the Sages that the book was composed (נאמר) by the inspiration of the רוח הקודש (cf. the IMI in *Midrash Psalms*, p. 147). This implies that all of its authors were inspired. However, others argue that the non-prophetic genres in Psalms diminish its degree of inspiration: "Others say that this book contains no prophecies about future events, which is why the Sages transcribed it with Job and the Scrolls, and this is attested by [the terms] "psalm," "song," and "prayer."[22] In response, Ibn Ezra argues that these terms can designate prophetic songs and prayers, which also supports his view that the book is a prophecy by its main author David (cf. the IMI in *Midrash Psalms*, p. 154), and by its other authors who lived during David's time.

---

[20] Ibid., 332.
[21] Ibid., 332.
[22] Ibid., 330.

ii) Time of Composition; Historical Setting

According to one view, David wrote all of the Psalms and future events described in them. Regarding the view that different authors composed the Psalms on different occasions, Ibn Ezra states, "As for those Psalms that have no explicit attribution, the editors of this Book of Psalms did not know the name of the author."[23] It follows then that the editors were not able to pinpoint the exact historical circumstances for each Psalm.

iii) Genre

The different genres of the Psalms are designated by the titles of individual Psalms (cf. the IMI in *Midrash Psalms*, p. 151), summarized as psalms, songs, and prayers (מזמור ושיר ותפלה). Ibn Ezra also argues that they are prophetic songs and prayers. Since songs and prayers are uttered by prophets, e.g., The "Song" of Moses (שירת האזינו, Deut 32:1), and "The Prayer of Habakkuk" (תפילה לחבקוק, Hab 3:1), the Psalm titles "Prayer" (תפלה) and "Song" (שיר) can designate a prophecy. Therefore, the Psalm titles do not designate non-prophetic genres.

iv) Methods of Interpretation

Ibn Ezra's genre identification of the Psalms as prophetic song and prayer dictates that some of the perfect verbs in the Psalms be interpreted as prophetic futures.

---

[23] Ibid., 332.

v) Themes of Psalms

Some of the book's themes can be derived from the titles of the individual

Psalms. Ibn Ezra summarized these themes as psalms, songs, and prayers (מזמור ושיר

ותפלה; cf. the IMI in *Midrash Psalms*, which devotes most of its attention to three title

themes, i.e., prayer [תפלה], praise [הללויה], and blessing [אשרי]). These titles also

designate a prophetic nature.

vi) Literary Forms and Unity

The unity of the book as a collection of psalms, songs, and prayers is assumed on

either view of authorship. Ibn Ezra does not mention the parallel between the five books

of the Torah and the five books in Psalms (as the IMI in *Midrash Psalms* does, p.148).

However, since anonymous parts of the Torah were written by Moses, he argued that

some anonymous Psalms were also written by David.

Second, we have seen above that while exploring the same themes as the IMIs,

Ibn Ezra's second recension הקדמה to Psalms cites or alludes to sections of the IMI in

Midrash Psalms. The following correlations between them show that he used it as a

source: the identification of multiple authors and an editor of the Psalms, attribution of

the book to its main author David, its composition under the inspiration of the רוח

הקודש, comparison of anonymous sections of the Torah and Psalms, and genre

identification based on Psalm titles.

And third, even though Ibn Ezra was familiar with Arabic models of

introduction, his הקדמה is not modelled after them. Rather, it is closer in form to the IMI

in *Midrash Psalms*. Since Ibn Ezra did not present introductory material within his

comments on 1:1, he did not adopt the form of an IMI. However, the three criteria above show that the IMI in *Midrash Psalms* influenced the themes and material content of his הקדמה. Even though he was familiar with non-Jewish models of introduction, his accommodation to a conservative Jewish model while living in N. France could explain the striking difference between his two הקדמות to Psalms.[24]

Ibn Ezra's *Haqdamah* to Song of Songs - Second Recension

The following criteria show that the IMI in *Song Rab.* influenced the themes and material content of Ibn Ezra's הקדמה to his second recension commentary on Song of Songs, written in Rouen between 1155-1157.[25] First, his הקדמה addresses these same themes as the IMI in *Song Rab.*:[26]

i) Authorship and Inspiration

Ibn Ezra states that שיר השירים is the most excellent of Solomon's one thousand and five songs (1 Kgs 5:12; ואין בכל שירי שלמה המלך חמשה ואלף כמוהו על כן כתוב שיר השירי אשר לשלמ כי זה השיר מעולה מכל השירים אשר לשלמה). He also states that there is no dispute about whether it defiles the hands, (ואין עליו מחלוקת כי הוא מטמא את הידים), i.e., he agrees with the Sages about its inspiration (cf. the IMI in *Song Rab.*, pp. 87, 89-91). Later he reiterates that the book was written under the inspiration of the רוח הקדש (ברוח הקדש דיבר זה הספר); cf. the leitmotif in the IMI in *Song Rab.*, pp. 69-72, 75-79, 82, 84-88).

---

[24] However, see n. 16 above.
[25] Sela and Freudenthal, "Abraham Ibn Ezra's Scholarly Writings," 21.
[26] All Hebrew citations of Ibn Ezra's הקדמה are from Jacob ben Ḥayyim, מקראות גדולות [Biblia Rabbinica], 4:262.

ii) Time of Composition; Historical Setting

Ibn Ezra states that since Solomon speaks figuratively about God and Israel, he

writes about the past beginning with Abraham, the father of the nation, and also about the

days of the Messiah (see below). Solomon prophesied about the future under the

inspiration of the רוח הקדש (יתנבא על דבר עתיד כי ברוח הקדש דיבר).

iii) Genre

Ibn Ezra identifies Song of Songs as משל (illustration, figure, simile; cf. the IMI

in *Song Rab.*, pp. 79-82, 88-89;), in which Solomon compares the people of Israel to a

bride and God to her beloved [husband] (המשיל כנסת ישראל לכלה והמקו' דודה; cf. the

IMI in *Song Rab.*, pp. 88-89). Since the prophets also used this genre (כן דרך הנביאים,

e.g., Isa 5:1; Ezek 16:7-8, 11ff.; Hos 2:21; 3:1; Ps 45:1, 11), Solomon followed a

scriptural and prophetic pattern of composition.

This genre identification also addresses the same concern that the rabbis had in

interpreting Song of Songs literally as an erotic love poem. He states, "Heaven (God)

forbid that the Song of Songs is about matters of sexual desire; rather, it is to be

interpreted as a משל" (וחלילה חלילה להיות שיר השירי' בדברי חשק כי אם על דרך משל).

Since it is a משל, it contains a mystery concealed and sealed [by the *peshat*] (ובו סוד

סתום וחתום), which is a collection of משלים about Israel from the days of Abraham to

the days of the Messiah. These משלים order the whole book from one on Abraham

(Song 1:2) to one on the Messiah (Song 8:12).

iv) Methods of Interpretation

Since Song of Songs is a משל, Ibn Ezra states he will identify its similes and figures: "I will interpret the topics of the משל - אבאר עניני המשל והנמשל בו" [i.e., Song of Songs as a משל] and the thing compared in it" (cf. the IMI in *Song Rab.*, pp. 81-82).[27] As we have seen, he identifies its major figure as a marriage between God and Israel. He also identifies every occurrence of Solomon as referring to king Solomon with one exception, i.e., Song 8:12 (cf. the IMI in *Song Rab.*, p. 89). There he interprets האלף לך שלמה as the tribes (אלף) returning to Solomon, i.e., to the Messiah. He also interprets that the בנות ירושלם should be compared to a woman speaking to her soul and replying to it, as if she was speaking to her own thoughts (על אשה המדבר עם נפשה ותשיב אמריה לה כאילו תאמר עם מחשבותיה).

v) Themes of Song of Songs

The major theme of Song of Songs is the relationship of God and Israel compared to a marriage. Israel has enjoyed this relationship from the beginning, and will enjoy it in the days of the Messiah.

vi) Literary Forms and Unity

Ibn Ezra's הקדמה is concerned with the entire book of Song of Songs. He refers to Song of Songs four times as a ספר. He also calls it a משל (singular) on the relationship of God and Israel, to which all of its similes and figures relate. It is also unified by the progression of its משלים from Abraham to the days of the Messiah.

---

[27] See Mordechai Z. Cohen, *Three Approaches to Biblical Metaphor from Abraham Ibn Ezra and Maimonides to David Kimhi* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 50-51, regarding the translation of this clause.

Second, we have seen above that while exploring the same themes as the IMIs,

Ibn Ezra's second recension הקדמה to Song of Songs cites or alludes to sections of the

IMI in *Song Rab*. The following correlations between them show that he used it as a

source: Ibn Ezra's concern about the inspiration of Song of Songs, i.e., that Solomon

wrote it under the inspiration of the רוח הקודש and that it defiles the hands, corresponds

to the main concern of the IMI about whether Solomon composed Song of Songs under

the inspiration of the רוח הקדש; his genre identification as a משל is identical to the IMI's;

in fact, Ibn Ezra's phraseology, "the topics of the משל (singular), and the thing compared

in it (singular)" (עניני המשל והנמשל בו) alludes to the phrase in the IMI, "this *mashal*"

(המשל הזה; cf. the IMI in *Song Rab*., pp. 81-82); the identification of figures and similes

is similar, i.e., their references to the lovers הקב״ה and Israel. Even though Ibn Ezra

pursues the metaphor of a marriage further than the IMI does, and he adds the notion that

Solomon described that relationship from its beginning to the days of the Messiah, it is

clear that the IMI in *Song Rab*. had a strong influence on his הקדמה. In fact, Ezra states

that he used ממדרש שיר השירים as a source for his הקדמה. Even though many of the

same correlations exist in Rashi's הקדמה and ICI to Song of Songs,[28] Ibn Ezra's

references to *Song Rab*., to the רבותינו ז׳ל and the קדמונינו ז׳ל, and his allusion to the

phrase "this *mashal*" along with his choice of the word משל (as in the IMI) versus דוגמא

(in Rashi) show that his primary influence was the IMI.

---

[28] That is, regarding defiling the hands (Rashi's ICI, p. 192); regarding inspiration by the רוח הקודש (Rashi's הקדמה to Song of Songs, p. 192); regarding genre identification as a משל (Rashi's הקדמה, p. 193, though he uses the word דוגמא, [simile or figure]); regarding the figure of a marriage between God and Israel (Rashi's הקדמה, pp. 194-195); and regarding the thing compared to Solomon (Rashi's ICI, p. 195). These correlations may be due to their sharing the same source, i.e., the IMI in *Song Rab*. On the other hand, the correlation that Solomon prophesied about the future under the inspiration of the רוח הקודש and wrote about it (Rashi's הקדמה, pp. 192-193) may show that Ibn Ezra was familiar with Rashi's הקדמה and ICI.

And third, even though Ibn Ezra was familiar with Arabic models of introduction, his הקדמה is not modelled after them. Rather, it is modelled after the IMI in *Song Rab.* Since Ibn Ezra did not present introductory material within his comments on 1:1, he did not adopt the form of an IMI. However, the three criteria above show that the IMI in *Song Rab.* influenced the themes and material content of his הקדמה.

CHAPTER TEN

THE INFLUENCE OF THE INNER-MIDRASHIC INTRODUCTIONS
ON IBN TIBBON'S INTRODUCTION TO ECCLESIASTES

Ibn Tibbon's Adoption of the *Prooemium*

Ibn Tibbon was familiar with the same Arabic models of introduction as Ibn

Ezra.[1] The opening section of his lengthy Preface (פתיחה) to his commentary on

Ecclesiastes follows the practise of a *ṣadr* by presenting preliminary remarks before the

actual introduction begins.[2] He begins his Preface with an interpretation and application

of Prov 11:30, "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and he that takes souls is wise,"

in which he discusses the utility of the oral teaching and writing of the righteous,

including Moses, David, Solomon, and Maimonides. They used an allegorical method to

instruct others about wisdom that leads to the soul's eternal existence.[3] The middle part of

Ibn Tibbon's Preface[4] follows the practise of a *muḳaddima* by giving his reasons for

---

[1] He also states that "the preface of every book constitutes its first part" (James T. Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's Commentary on Ecclesiastes" [PhD diss., Harvard University, 2002], 257). His own Preface is 556 Hebrew lines long (see nn. 3, 4, 10).

[2] W. P. Heinrichs, "Ṣadr," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition*, ed. C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W. P. Heinrichs and G. Lecomte (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995), VIII: 748; cf. James T. Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's Commentary on Ecclesiastes" (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2002), 236, n. 129.

[3] James T. Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's Commentary on Ecclesiastes," 204-235 (Eng.), 540-548 (Heb.; 231 Hebrew lines). Later he states, "I drink from his [Maimonides'] water and make others drink; everything comes from the 'fruit of the righteous' and from his good 'work;' it is itself 'life' and causes 'life,' continuously and forever. This is why I began this Preface with this verse [namely, Prov 11:30]" (ibid., 253).

[4] James T. Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's Commentary on Ecclesiastes," 236-258 (Eng.), 548-555 (Heb.; 191 Hebrew lines).

writing his book,[5] including understanding its aim,[6] species of discourse,[7] title,[8] and

utility.[9] In the final part of his Preface[10] he discusses other introductory topics including

its division,[11] authorship,[12] title, aim, utility, and relation and position to Proverbs and

Song of Songs.[13] It will become clear that these categories are adopted from the

prooemium.

Following his Preface, Ibn Tibbon has a short section that is modelled on the

IMI.[14] I will deal with that section last (see below, pp. 218ff.). Following this short

section, he presents the headings of the *prooemium* followed by an explanation of their

meaning. Thus, the model of the *prooemium* entered Hebrew medieval rabbinic

commentary tradition directly through Ibn Tibbon's commentary on Ecclesiastes.[15] A

brief description of the *prooemium* follows before I return to his use of it.

---

[5] "In the central part, the author states the real reason for writing his book" (P. Freimark, "Muḳaddima," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam, New Edition*, ed. C. E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W. P. Heinrichs and Ch. Pellat [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1993], VII: 495).

[6] James T. Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's Commentary on Ecclesiastes," 239, 244 (cf. 320), 249, 254.

[7] Ibid., 246-248.

[8] Ibid., 252.

[9] Ibid., 253.

[10] Ibid., 258-273 (Eng.), 556-560 (Heb.; 134 Hebrew lines).

[11] Ibid., 258-260.

[12] Ibid., 260.

[13] Ibid., 260-273.

[14] Ibid., 273-276 (Eng.), 561-562 (Heb.; 32 Hebrew lines). It is also in Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* and the Philosopher's Prooemium," 103-104 (Eng.), 91-92 (Heb). I will cite the latter work for Ibn Tibbon's ICI.

[15] Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* and the Philosopher's Prooemium," 83; cf. Lawee, "Introducing Scripture," 160; and Sirat, "Biblical Commentaries and Christian Influence," 217. Lawee and Sirat use the term *accessus ad auctorem*. Hunt's Type C *accessus* is the Latin counterpart of the *prooemium* (Richard William Hunt, "The Introductions to the 'Artes' in the Twelfth Century," in *Studia Mediaevalia in Honorem Admodum Reverendi Patris Raymundi Josephi Martin* [Brugis Flandrorum: De Tempel, 1948], 94-97; cf. A. J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages* [London: Scolar Press, 1984], 18ff. However, Robinson and Lawee make it clear that Ibn Tibbon learned the questions or headings from Arabic sources (Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* and the Philosopher's Prooemium," 84, 122, n. 21; Lawee, "Introducing Scripture," 160, 170, n. 24).

Robinson offers an excellent summary of the *prooemium*. He states:

> The prooemium tradition developed in the Neoplatonic school in Alexandria as part
> of a fixed introduction to the study of Aristotle. The commentator on Aristotle
> would begin his work by asking ten questions, the first nine pertaining to Aristotle's
> writings as a whole, the tenth to each individual book in the corpus to be explained.
> The first nine subjects were: the origin of the names of the different schools of
> philosophy; the classification of Aristotle's writings according to genre or truth
> content; the starting point of the study of philosophy; the final goal; the way to reach
> the goal; qualifications of the student; qualifications of the commentator or teacher;
> Aristotle's style of writing; and why he wrote obscurely. The tenth point included an
> additional six, seven, or eight questions which were to be answered before beginning
> to comment on an individual book, namely the book's aim, utility, authorship, place
> in the order of reading, reason for the title, division into parts, relation to other works
> in the same field, and, later, the method of instruction."[16]

Ibn Tibbon used the term *prooemium* to refer to the prologue to an individual book, i.e.,

to the questions contained in the tenth point.[17] Although some of its questions already

appeared in introductions to philosophical and medical works, and even to some patristic

biblical commentaries from the turn of the third century on,[18] it is generally agreed that

the *prooemium* form was codified by Proclus (411-485)[19] and fixed by his students in

---

[16] Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* and the Philosopher's Prooemium,"
83-84. Compare Edwin A. Quain, "The Medieval Accessus Ad Auctores," *Traditio* 3 (1945): 248, 251;
Jaap Mansfeld, *Prolegomena. Questions to be Settled before the Study of an Author, or a Text* (Leiden: E. J.
Brill, 1994), 10-11, 22-24; A. J. Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 18; L. G. Westerink, "The
Alexandrian Commentators and the Introductions to their Commentaries," in *Aristotle Transformed: The
Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, ed. Richard Sorabji (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990),
342-343; and Eva Riad, *Studies in the Syriac Preface* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1988), 42-
46, 67.

[17] Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* and the Philosopher's Prooemium,"
104.

[18] Mansfeld, *Prolegomena*, 10-55. Regarding Origen's biblical commentaries to Psalms, Song of
Songs, and John, see Mansfeld, *Prolegomena*, 11, 14; and Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Commentary on
Ecclesiastes*," 84, 121, n. 13, 122, n. 22; regarding Eusebius on Psalms, see Mansfeld, *Prolegomena*, 17;
regarding Gregory of Nyssa on Psalms, see Mansfeld, *Prolegomena*, 18; and Robinson, "Samuel Ibn
Tibbon's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* and the Philosopher's Prooemium," 122, n. 23; for more biblical
commentators, see Mansfeld, *Prolegomena*, 18-19.

[19] Mansfeld, *Prolegomena*, 10, 22, 28-39, 55.

Alexandria.[20] From there it entered Arabic via Greek in the eighth to tenth centuries.[21]

Ibn Tibbon learned it from Alfarabi and Averroes.[22]

Ibn Tibbon used all of the *prooemium* categories in his Preface, though in a haphazard order. As part of his exegesis of Eccl 1:1, he presented a more systematic model of the *prooemium*. He states,

> Before saying anything more about this verse, I will first set before you a preliminary statement. I say: we have found that when sages, from Aristotle until the present, would compose a book of philosophy, they would preface it with a prooemium. They would generally make known all or some of the following eight things: the book's aim; its utility; its title; its division; its relation; its position; the method of instruction used in it; and the author's name. After mentioning them to you, as they occurred to me, I will now explain their meaning in summary form.[23]

After summarizing how the eight things apply to any work,[24] he explains how they apply to Ecclesiastes.[25] In the process, he also points out that Solomon also prefaced the book of Ecclesiastes with a *prooemium*.[26] Ibn Tibbon uses a part of Solomon's *prooemium* to complete his treatment of the eight categories.[27]

---

[20] Mansfeld, *Prolegomena*, 23; Minnis, *Medieval Theory of Authorship*, 18; Quain, "The Medieval Accessus Ad Auctores," 261-264; Riad, *Studies in the Syriac Preface*, 46; Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* and the Philosopher's Prooemium," 121, n. 13.

[21] Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* and the Philosopher's Prooemium," 84.

[22] Ibid., 84. "He uses the same terms and examples, and sometimes translates from their texts word for word" (ibid.).

[23] Ibid., 104-105.

[24] Ibid, 105-108.

[25] Ibid., 108-118.

[26] Ibn Tibbon says that Solomon wrote a *prooemium* to Ecclesiastes 1:1-11 (Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's Commentary on Ecclesiastes," 258-259, 319-320, 322).

[27] In his *prooemium*, Ibn Tibbon treats five of its categories: species of discourse ("a branch of the method of instruction"), order (position), relation (the teaching of the "perdurance of the soul" in Ecclesiastes, Proverbs, and Songs of Songs), division (i.e., 1:1 is the beginning of Solomon's *prooemium*), and utility (scattered references to the sages, etc., understanding Solomon's teaching in his book) (Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's Commentary on Ecclesiastes," 283-302). Regarding order, Robinson states that "place or position in the curriculum (*madregah*) is replaced with order in time (*seder*)" (ibid., 289, n. 320). At the end of his *prooemium*, Ibn Tibbon states, "Having introduced all that I needed to introduce, I say that this first verse [Eccl 1:1] is the beginning of the book's prooemium. He [Solomon] makes known herein the book's title . . . He has also made known the species of discourse . . . He has also

Ibn Tibbon's Inner-Commentary Introduction to Ecclesiastes

Returning to the short section that begins the interpretation of Eccl 1:1, not only is it formally separated from the two Arabic models of introduction that precede and follow it, i.e., from the Preface and the *prooemium*, it also does not treat the *prooemium* categories. This explains in part why the whole tenor of the short section is different from what surrounds it. It is a much less philosophical and scientific treatment of issues of introduction.[28] Ibn Tibbon's careful description of his sources for this section also explains the difference. He distinguishes between the rabbinic Sages, i.e., the Ancients (הראשונים) and the Wise (החכמים, ז"ל), and the later Bible commentators (המפרשים). "The Ancients, here, are the rabbinic sages as distinct from post-Talmudic scholars or exegetes."[29] Since Ibn Tibbon cites or alludes to *Song Rab.* in this section, he counted its authors among the sages. The only reference he makes in this section to the commentators is the one to Ibn Ghiyyat's and Ibn Ezra's interpretations of the word "Qohelet."[30] Therefore, the whole section sounds more traditional than philosophical. In fact the following criteria show that the IMI in *Song Rab.* influenced the form, themes, and material content of the short section of Ibn Tibbon's ICI to Ecclesiastes. First, Ibn Tibbon's ICI addresses these same themes as the IMI in *Song Rab.*:[31]

---

make known the author's name " (ibid., 302-303). Solomon also "makes known the book's aim" [in 1:2] (ibid., 320). These three additional categories complete Ibn Tibbon's overall treatment of the eight.

[28] Ibn Tibbon does briefly discuss Ibn Ghiyyat's interpretation of קהלת along scientific lines (Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* and the Philosopher's Prooemium," 91, 103), and refers the reader to his own interpretation of קהלת in the Preface, where he interpreted it along philosophical lines as a syllogism (Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's Commentary on Ecclesiastes," 246-247).

[29] Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* and the Philosopher's Prooemium," 129, n. 80.

[30] See n. 28 above regarding Ibn Ghiyyat's interpretation of קהלת.

[31] All English and Hebrew citations of this section of Ibn Tibbon's ICI to Ecclesiastes are from Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* and the Philosopher's Prooemium," 103-104 (Eng.), and 91-92 (Heb.).

i) Authorship and Inspiration

Ibn Tibbon states that "The Ancients (הראשונים) have explained that Qohelet is

Solomon, and this seems correct" (cf. the IMI in *Song Rab.*, pp. 86-87). Their strong

proof is their argument that Solomon was David's only son who was king" (cf. the IMI in

Song Rab., p. 72, n. 40).[32] Ibn Tibbon continues, "Therefore, we find three books by

Solomon. They are called: Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs, and all three of

them are among the texts (הכתובים [possibly, "The Writings"]) written with the Holy

Spirit" (ברוח הקודש; cf. the IMI in S*ong Rab.*, pp. 63, 67-68, 72, 77, 82, 85-87).

ii) Time of Composition; Historical Setting

Ibn Tibbon states that "in this book, called Qohelet, and in Proverbs, he

establishes his relation to his father and his kingdom," i.e., to his father David and his

[Solomon's] kingdom in Israel and in Jerusalem (Eccl 1:1; Prov 1:1). He states that it was

during his reign as a king, with the responsibilities of government and building Jerusalem

and the temple, that Solomon occupied himself with the pursuit of wisdom (חכמה) and

philosophy and the sciences (חכמות).[33] During that time he wrote the statements and

allegories that constitute Ecclesiastes (cf. IMI in *Song Rab.*, which repeats many times

that Solomon wrote it, and which also discusses the stage of his life that he wrote it in,

pp. 86-87). However, these may have existed "in confused order or [dispersed] in several

different places." If so, their order was set by Hezekiah and his "court scholars" (סיעתו),

as were his other books (see directly below).

---

[32] Regarding the comparison between David and Solomon that they both reigned forty years over Israel and Judah, the IMI in *Song Rab.* states that "Solomon ruled in Jerusalem over all Israel for forty years" (2 Chr 9:20); see Ms Vatican 183b.

[33] According to Ibn Tibbon, the wisdom of the rabbinic sages and that of the scientists and philosophers overlaps; see pp. 220-221 below.

iii) Genre

Ibn Tibbon states that Solomon studied wisdom in depth and "he became worthy

to understand the sages' secrets and riddles, to make 'wider allegories' with them, and to

compose books with them" (היה ראוי להבין סודות החכמים וחידותם ולהרחיב בהם משלים

ולחבר בהם ספרים; cf. the IMI in *Song Rab.*, which discusses Solomon's merit based on

his search for wisdom, pp. 77-78, and which discusses his משלים unlocking secrets of the

Torah, pp. 79-82).[34] He composed (חבר) Ecclesiastes "which is concerned with the

examination of the many and exalted sciences" (חכמות). However, due to the amount of

time and effort needed to compose allegories and statements (דברים and משלים), Ibn

Tibbon says it is possible that "Solomon wrote the statements and all the allegories

together in confused order or [dispersed] in different places." In that case, Hezekiah's

"court scholars" gathered these allegories and statements "and set them down in the Book

of Ecclesiastes, ordering them in a way they considered good" (Prov 25:1, 11).[35] Ibn

Tibbon's genre identification of Ecclesiastes as משלים and דברים corresponds to the

identifications of Proverbs and Song of Songs as משלים on the Torah (cf. the IMI in

Song Rab., pp. 79-82).[36] He simply expounds on the philosophical nature of the wisdom

hidden in the Torah (see directly below).

---

[34] Compare especially, כך מדבר לדבר וממשל למשל עמד שלמה על סודה של תורה, p. 80.

[35] In doing so, Ibn Tibbon says they followed the same method they had for Proverbs - they took Solomon's משלים that "pertained to one subject or to similar and related subjects (שהם מעניין אחד או מעניינים קרובים מתדמים) and composed them into the Book of Proverbs."

[36] In his *prooemium* Ibn Tibbon states that Ecclesiastes is composed of דברים and משלים: "He [Solomon] composed this book, Ecclesiastes, as words in their ordinary sense . . . It obviously contains many other things expressed in the way of allegory and riddle" (Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* and the Philosopher's Prooemium, 110). Robinson states that "*mashal* has many meanings, e.g., metaphor, simile, metonymy, allegory, proverb, and parable. Samuel [Ibn Tibbon] defines *mashal* as saying one thing but meaning something different" (ibid., 130, n. 98).

iv) Methods of Interpretation

Since Ecclesiastes interprets the secrets and riddles of the sages and makes "wider allegories" of them, its statements and allegories should be interpreted to reveal something hidden (ההסתר מצד). The wisdom of the Jewish sages composed as secrets and riddles also overlaps with that of the philosophers. Some of these secrets and riddles were composed by Moses himself ([37]משלי אדון הנביאים; cf. the IMI in *Song Rab.*, p. 80, which mentions the secret of the Torah [סודה של תורה]). Hence the ambiguity of the terms חכמה and חכמות for the respective wisdom of the sages and philosophers.[38]

v) Themes of Ecclesiastes

Ibn Tibbon states that as a king, Solomon occupied himself with the pursuit of wisdom and the sciences, rather than with "worldly pleasures, troubles, and occupations." "He did this to exhort the people to strive for wisdom." Thus, Solomon set an example that others can follow (cf. the IMI in *Song Rab.*, regarding Solomon's example of searching for wisdom, pp. 77-78).

vi) Literary Forms and Unity

As we have seen, Hezekiah's men collected the דברים and משלים that were related by subject matter, and composed Proverbs and Ecclesiastes with them. Therefore Ecclesiastes is a collection of statements and allegories on the same or similar subjects.

---

[37] This phrase refers to Moses; see Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* and the Philosopher's Prooemium,"110; cf. Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's Commentary on Ecclesiastes," 224-225.

[38] See Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* and the Philosopher's Prooemium," 131, n. 108, 132, n. 111.

Second, we have seen above that while exploring the same themes as the IMIs, the short section of Ibn Tibbon's ICI to Ecclesiastes cites or alludes to sections of the IMI in *Song Rab.*[39] The following correlations between them confirm that he used that exegetical midrash as a source: the identification of Qohelet as Solomon; Solomon's composition of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Songs by the רוח הקודש; composition of Ecclesiastes during Solomon's lifetime, either as a completed book or as separate materials for one; Solomon's merit to understand the secrets and riddles of the sages, including those of the Torah; Solomon's composition of allegories to unlock those secrets; genre identification of Ecclesiastes as a משל (Ibn Tibbon adds דבר); and Solomon setting an example to pursue wisdom.

Third, Ibn Tibbon's presentation of introductory material within his comments on 1:1, demonstrated by the first criterion above, and his use of *Song Rab.* as a source for it, demonstrated by the second one, show that he adopted the form of an IMI.

And fourth, Ibn Tibbon was familiar with Arabic models of introduction, and he introduced the *prooemium* into the rabbinic commentary tradition.[40] However, he was also familiar with the IMI in *Song Rab.*, which influenced a short section of his ICI to Ecclesiastes. His adoption of the form is striking in view of its position between two non-

---

[39] There are other proofs that Ibn Tibbon knew the IMI in *Song Rab.* In his *prooemium* he states that he "came to understand the statements of the sages in *Midrash Song of Songs* regarding the order of these books" (עמדתי על דברי החכמים בסדר אלו הספרים והוא במדרש שיר השירים) (Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* and the Philosopher's Prooemium," 99, 117). He is referring to R. Jonathan's dictum about the order of composition of Song of Songs, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes (ibid., 110-111, 117; cf. the IMI in *Song Rab.*, p. 86), which he strongly disagrees with. In his Preface he cites R. Hanina's parable about someone joining rope and cord to drink from a deep well, and Solomon joining words and משלים to understood the secret of the Torah (Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's Commentary on Ecclesiastes," 262, 269; cf. the IMI in *Song Rab.*, p. 80). He also cites the parable about a basket without handles, and Solomon making handles for the Torah (ibid., 262; cf. the IMI in *Song Rab.*, p. 79).

[40] The history of the influence of the *prooemium*, or its scholastic counterpart the *accessus ad auctorem* (see n. 15 above), lies outside the scope of this thesis.

Jewish models of introduction. These four criteria show that the IMI in *Song Rab.*

influenced the form, themes, and material content of a short section of Ibn Tibbon's ICI to

Ecclesiastes.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE INFLUENCE OF THE INNER-MIDRASHIC
INTRODUCTIONS ON RADAK'S INTRODUCTIONS

Radak's *Haqdamah* to Genesis

Since there is no IMI in a Midrash on Genesis, the IMIs in general could only

influence the form and themes of an introduction to Genesis. However, since the IMIs in

Sifra on Leviticus and *Lev Rab.* discuss the same author, inspiration, historical setting,

and position in the Torah as an introduction to Genesis would, those IMIs could also

influence the material content of Radak's הקדמה to Genesis. In fact, the following

criteria show that IMIs, especially the one in *Sifra*, influenced the themes and material

content of Radak's הקדמה. First, Radak's הקדמה to Genesis addresses these same

themes as the IMIs:[1]

i) Authorship and Inspiration

Radak states that Moses wrote the entire Torah from Gen 1:1 - Deut 34:12

(מבראשית לעיני כל ישאל), i.e., even the last eight verses of the Torah, under the

inspiration of the רוח הקודש and prophecy (cf. the IMI in *Sifra*, pp. 35-36). One

prophecy Moses received was God's dictation of the narratives in the book of Genesis

---

[1] All Hebrew citations of Radak's הקדמה are from Mordecai Leb Ḳatsenelenbogen, ed., תורת חיים:
חמשה חומשי תורה. ספר בראשית: בראשית - חיי שרה [Torat Ḥayyim: Five Books of the Torah. The Book
of Genesis, 1:1 - 25:18] (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1986), י.

(הספורים אשר בספר בראשית כלם נאמרו לו מפי האל ית'); cf. God speaking to Moses in

the IMI in *Sifra*, pp. 35ff.; cf. also *b. Menaḥ.*30a). Radak offers rabbinic support for the

prophetic inspiration of the Torah: anyone who does not believe the Torah is from heaven

(אין תורה מן השמים) has no portion in the world to come (*b. Sanh.* 90a), including

anyone who says one of its verses, one of its minute details (דקדוק), one of its *a fortiori*

arguments (קל וחומר), or one of its analogies (גזרה שוה) is not from heaven (*b. Sanh.*

99a; cf. the IMI in *Sifra*, p. 34). Anyone who says any one of these has despised the word

of the Lord (Num 15:31).

ii) Time of Composition; Historical Setting

Radak states that Moses wrote the Genesis narratives in the wilderness. In that

isolated place he did not receive those traditions from any person; rather, he received

them from God.

iii) Genre

Radak briefly mentions four genres of the Torah: instruction (תורה),

commandment (מצוה), narrative (ספור), and *mashal* (משל).

iv) Methods of Interpretation

Radak says the Torah should be interpreted according to the thirty-two *middot* of

R. Eliezer ben R. Yose the Galilean (התורה נדרשת בשלושים ושתים מדות במשנת ר'

אליעזר בנו של ר' יוסי הגלילי; cf. the thirteen *middot* of Rabbi Ishmael in the IMI in *Sifra*,

pp. 34-35). Radak then gives a few examples of verses in the Torah that were interpreted

allegorically by the rabbis. Returning to Genesis, he says they interpreted the "light" in

Gen 1:3 as the "Torah," and they interpreted other words in Gen 1 similarly. Even though

the words in Genesis have a plain sense (משמע), some have a hidden meaning that can be

unlocked by the allegorical method.

Radak also alluded to *a fortiori* arguments (קל וחומר) or analogies (גזרה שוה) in

the Torah itself (cf. the IMI in *Sifra*, p. 34), which an interpreter would need to be aware

of.

v) Themes of Genesis

Radak's הקדמה begins with a long exposition of Prov 3:19-21 as one of

Solomon's משלים on Gen 1 and Gen 6-9 (cf. the IMIs in *Song Rab.*, pp. 79ff., and

Midrash Mishle, p. 163, regarding Solomon's משלים on the Torah). Based on this

coverage of verses in Genesis, perhaps Radak implies that creation is a main theme in the

book. However, he does not discuss other introductory issues in this long opening section

of the הקדמה.

f) Literary Forms and Unity

Radak says that Genesis is part of the Torah of Moses. Radak stresses that all of

the Torah was dictated by God to Moses, which implies its unity as sacred speech.

Perhaps Radak was influenced by the idea in *Sifra*, that the unity of Leviticus is implied

by its very nature as a collection of Divine Speeches.

Second, we have seen above that while exploring the same themes as the IMIs,

Radak's הקדמה to Genesis treats the same themes as the IMIs, and alludes to the material

content of the IMI in *Sifra*. The following correlations exist between it and his הקדמה:

Moses' inspiration by the רוח הקודש and prophecy; God's dictation of a book to Moses;

the interpretation of the Torah by rabbinic *middot*; the interpretation of *a fortiori*

arguments and analogies in the Torah; and perhaps Genesis' unity as a Divine Speech.

Radak also alludes to the material content of the IMIs in *Midrash Mishle* and *Song Rab.*,

that Solomon wrote משלים on the Torah. Since the IMI in *Lev Rab.* presents content

similar to *Sifra*, Radak may have been influenced by it as well.

And third, there is no conclusive evidence that Radak was familiar with the

prooemium or its scholastic counterpart the *accessus ad auctores*.[2] Rather, his הקדמה to

his Genesis commentary was influenced by the IMIs, especially the one in S*ifra*. Since

Radak did not present introductory material within his comments on 1:1, he did not adopt

the form of an IMI. However, the three criteria above show that the IMIs influenced the

themes and material content of his הקדמה. In this case, their influence was direct and

exclusive.

Radak's *Haqdamah* to Psalms

The following criteria show that the IMI in *Midrash Psalms* influenced the

themes and material content of Radak's הקדמה to his commentary on Psalms. First,

Radak's הקדמה addresses these same themes as the IMI in *Midrash Psalms*:[3]

---

[2] Radak's familiarity with the *prooemium* or its scholastic counterpart, Hunt's Type C *accessus ad auctores* (see p. 215, n. 15), is based on the attribution of a Proverbs commentary to him that alludes to it (regarding the *prooemium*, see Robinson, "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* and the Philosopher's Prooemium," 120, n. 9; regarding the *accessus*, see Ephraim Talmage, פירושים לספר משלי לבית קמחי [The Commentaries to the Book of Proverbs by the Kimhi Family] [Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1990], 329; and Lawee, "Introducing Scripture," 161-162, with reservations). However, Grunhaus has shown that the commentary is falsely attributed to Radak (Naomi Grunhaus, "The Commentary of Rabbi David Kimhi on Proverbs: A Case of Mistaken Attribution," *JJS* 54 [2003]: 311-327).

[3] All Hebrew references to Radak's הקדמה are from S. M. Schiller-Szinessy, *The First Book of the Psalms according to the Text of the Cambridge MS. Bible Add. 465 with the longer Commentary of R. David Qimchi, Critically Edited from Nineteen Manuscripts and the Early Editions* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell and Col, 1883), 3-4.

i) Authorship and Inspiration

Radak states that the rabbis taught, "David, King of Israel, wrote his book with the contribution of ten elders, and these are they: Adam the first [man], Melchizedek, Abraham, Asaph, Heman, Jeduthun, Moses, and the three sons of Korah, Assir, Elkanah, and Abiasaph" (דוד מלך ישראל כתב ספרו על ידי עשרה זקנים ואלו הן אדם הראשון מלכי צדק אברהם אסף הימן ידותון משה ושלשה בני קרח אסיר ואלקנה ואביאסף). Radak's citation is from *b. B. Bat* 14b, 15a, with its identical list of names and nearly identical order.[4] The IMI in *Midrash Psalms* has a similar list (p. 151).[5] Radak notes the rabbis meant that the ten elders composed the Psalms ascribed to them (אמרו המזמורים הכתובים בשמם). However, his view is that David also edited them (see below).

Radak also states the rabbis taught that Psalms was composed under the inspiration of the רוח הקודש (ברוח הקדש נאמר זה הספר; cf. the IMI in *Midrash Psalms*, p. 147).[6] He adds that since it was not composed by prophecy but by the רוח הקודש (לא נאמרו דבריו בנבואה כי אם ברוח הקדש), Psalms was placed in the Writings and not in the Prophets. Radak then expounds on the difference between prophecy and the רוח הקודש, which he based on Maimonides' teaching on the degrees of prophecy.[7] He says that Psalms was composed under the influence (כח) of the רוח הקודש, by perfect men (שלם)

---

[4] Asaph and Moses switch places on the lists. Radak also gives the names of the three sons of Korah, while the list in the Talmud does not.

[5] The list in *Midrash Psalms* is: Adam, Melchizedek, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, Asaph, and the three sons of Korah. Compared to the list in *b. B. Bat* 14b, 15a, *Midrash Psalms* adds David and Solomon and excludes Heman and Jeduthun.

[6] The Talmud states that the *Shekinah* rested on David before and after he composed certain Psalms (*b. Pesaḥ.* 117a). Later in his הקדמה, Radak cites this talmudic passage more fully, and substitutes רוח הקודש for שכינה. It appears he did so under the influence of *Midrash Psalms*, which mentions that David wrote Psalms by the רוח הקודש.

[7] Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, translated with an Introduction and Notes by Shlomo Pines (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), 2:45; cf. Frank Talmage, "David Kimhi and the Rationalist Tradition," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 39 (1968): 185-193.

occupied by the things of God (דברי האלהים), perfect in their perceptions (הרגשות) with

none of them inactive (לא תתבטל אחת מהן), who spoke like ordinary men except that a

higher spirit (רוח עליונית) stirred them to speak words of praise and thanksgiving to their

God, or to speak words of wisdom and ethical instruction (דברי שכל ומוסרים), or even to

speak about future events (העתידות). Even though some of the authors of the Psalms, i.e.,

David, Asaph and his sons, Heman, and Jeduthun, are called prophets or some other

designation of a prophet (Neh 12:24; 1 Chr 25:2-3, 5), they always prophesied by the

power of the רוח הקודש, which did not attain to the power of the prophecies by Isaiah,

Ezekiel, and the other prophets.

ii) Time of Composition; Historical Setting

Radak states that David either composed (חבר) every Psalm or wrote (כתב) the

Psalms of the ten elders in his own words (וזה הספר חברו דוד וכתב עם דבריו דברי אלה

המשוררים הנזכרים). David wrote (כתב) Ps 90 attributed to Moses. He also gave some of

the Psalms that he composed (חבר) to singers to sing, e.g., he composed Ps 62 and gave it

to Jeduthun to sing. David composed (חבר) all of the unattributed Psalms, and wrote

some on his own behalf.

Radak also discusses the historical occasion of the Psalms: some were composed

(אמר) in the context of enemy threats to David or Israel; some were composed as prayers

and thanksgiving without specific occasion; and others were composed (דבר) about future

exiles and restoration of the kingdom of the house of David (נחמות הרבה שתשוב מלכות בית

דוד למקומה).

Radak also raises a question about the performance of the Psalms with or without instrumental music (כלי שיר). However, he admits that the meanings of the Psalm titles were unknown in his day, which precluded pursuing the issue.

iii) Genre

The genre of the book of Psalms is illustrated by ten expressions of praise (עשרה לשונות של שבח): glory, melody, song, instrumental playing, praising, *maskil*, praise, prayer, blessing, and thanksgiving (בנצוח בנגון בשיר בזמרה בהלל בהשכל בתהלה בתפלה בברכה בהודאה).[8] *Midrash Psalms* (p. 151) and *b. Pesaḥ.* 117a have similar lists, both of which influenced his.[9] Even though he was familiar with the one in *Midrash Psalms*, he also turned to the original source in the Talmud. Even though Psalms is a mixed genre, Radak characterizes the whole book as praise (שבח; cf. *Midrash Psalms*, p. 152; *b. Pesaḥ.* 117a).

iv) Methods of Interpretation

Radak does not address methods of interpretation in his הקדמה on Psalms, even though the IMI in *Midrash Psalms* does.

v) Themes of Psalms

Some of the book's themes can be derived from the titles of the individual Psalms. Radak characterizes them all as praise (שבח).

---

[8] This translation uses Braude's terms for the list in *Midrash Psalms*, p. 151.

[9] All three lists share the expressions ניצוח, ניגון, שיר, תפלה, הודאה, תהלה, a variant based on the root זמר (מזמור or זמרה), and a variant based on the root הלל (הלל or הללויה). Compared to the list in *Midrash Psalms*, Radak includes ברכה, omits אשרי, and adds השכל. Compared to the list in *b. Pesaḥ.* 117a, he substitutes השכל for משכיל, and omits אשרי. More than half of these words are formed from the same roots as corresponding words in the Psalms titles.

vi) Literary Forms and Unity

Radak states that the rabbis taught that "just as Moses our Master divided the

book of the Torah into five books, so David divided the book of Psalms into five books"

(מה משה רבנו חלק ספר תורה לחמשה ספרים כן דוד חלק ספר תהלים לחמשה ספרים ;cf.

the IMI in *Midrash Psalms*, p. 148. Since he is citing the rabbis, the IMI is its only

source). Even though the book is as unified as the Torah, it consists of different kinds of

psalms written by at least ten authors and edited by David.

Second, we have seen above that while exploring the same themes as the IMIs,

Radak's הקדמה to Psalms cites or alludes to sections of the IMI in *Midrash Psalms*,

either exclusively or in association with *b. B. Bat* 14b, 15a, and *b. Pesaḥ.* 117a. The

following correlations between his הקדמה and the IMI in *Midrash Psalms* show that he

used it as a source: that Psalms was composed under the inspiration of the רוח הקודש (a

phrase borrowed from the IMI and which Radak substitutes for the word שכינה in

b. Pesaḥ. 117a);[10] that the titles in Psalms denote different genres in Psalms (the lists in

Midrash Psalms and *b. Pesaḥ* 117a influenced Radak's list); that these genres describe

the themes of the Psalms, which can be summarized as praise (שבח); and that David

divided the Psalms into five books, just as Moses divided the Torah (since Radak is citing

the rabbis' teaching, *Midrash Psalms* is the exclusive source for this). Radak's statement

about David writing the book of Psalms with the contribution of ten elders correlates with

the ones in *Midrash Psalms* and in *b. B. Bat* 14b, 15a. Radak's familiarity with the IMI in

Midrash Psalms may have influenced him to cite its original source in the Talmud.

---

[10] See n. 6 above.

And third, there is no conclusive evidence that Radak was familiar with the *prooemium* or its scholastic counter part the *accessus ad auctores*.[11] Rather, his הקדמה to his Psalms commentary was influenced by the IMI in *Midrash Psalms*. Since Radak did not present introductory material within his comments on 1:1, he did not adopt the form of an IMI. However, the three criteria above show that the IMI in *Midrash Psalms* influenced the themes and material content of his הקדמה. In this case, the influence of the IMI was direct and exclusive.

---

[11] See n. 2 above.

CHAPTER TWELVE

THE INFLUENCE OF THE INNER-MIDRASHIC
INTRODUCTIONS ON RAMBAN'S INTRODUCTIONS

Ramban's *Haqdamah* to Genesis

Since there is no IMI in a Midrash on Genesis, the IMIs in general could only

influence the form and themes of an introduction to Genesis. However, since the IMIs in

Sifra on Leviticus and *Lev Rab.* discuss the same author, inspiration, historical setting,

and position in the Torah as an introduction to Genesis would, those IMIs could also

influence the material content of Ramban's הקדמה to Genesis. In fact, the following

criteria show that IMIs, especially the ones to Leviticus, influenced the themes and

material content of Ramban's הקדמה. First, Ramban's הקדמה to Genesis addresses these

same themes as the IMIs:[1]

i) Authorship and Inspiration

Ramban states that God dictated Genesis to Moses (מפיו של הקב"ה; cf. God

speaking to Moses in the IMI in *Sifra*, pp. 35ff., and in *Lev Rab.*, pp. 48, 53-54; cf. also

---

[1] All Hebrew citations of Ramban's הקדמה to Genesis are from Ch. Chavel, פירושי התורה לרבינו משה בן נחמן (רמב"ן) על פי כתבי יד ודפוסים ראשונים בצרוף הערות ומראי מקומות [Commentaries on the Torah by Our Master Moses ben Nachman (Ramban=Nachmanides) According to Manuscripts and Early Printed Editions, with Explanatory Notes and References], 2 vols., vol. 1, בראשית, שמות [Genesis, Exodus] (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1959-1960), א - ח.

b. Menaḥ. 30a). Since Genesis was dictated, Ramban questions why the Torah does not begin with the title, "And God spoke to Moses all these words, saying" (וידבר אלהים אל משה את כל הדברים האלה לאמר). He responds that Moses wrote it anonymously (הכתב סתם) in the third person (כשלישי המדבר) because the Torah preceded the creation of the world (*b. Šabb.* 88b), and the early history of the world preceded his birth and life experiences. Therefore, he wrote as a scribe who copied from an ancient book (כסופר המעתיק מספר קדמון).

ii) Time of Composition; Historical Setting

Based on Exod 24:12, Ramban states that Moses probably wrote Genesis at Mt. Sinai (הקרוב שכתבו בהר סיני). In that verse, the Lord says He would give Moses three things: first, the stone tablets, i.e., the ten commandments; second, the commandment, i.e., all of the positive and negative commandments; and third, the torah (instruction), i.e., the narratives from the beginning of the book of Genesis (הספורים מתחילת בראשית). Moses wrote the narratives from the beginning of Genesis to the end of the section on the tabernacle when he descended the mountain.

iii) Genre

Ramban identified the genre of Genesis as narrative. Ramban also says these narratives function as torah, i.e., instruction, for it [Genesis] teaches about the way of faith (הוא מורה האנשים בדרך בעניין האמונה).

iv) Methods of Interpretation

Much of Ramban's הקדמה discusses secrets of the Torah (סתרי תורה), i.e.,

kabbalah. He says that all of Solomon's wisdom came from the Torah (cf. the IMI in

Song Rab., pp. 79-82).[2] However, at the end of his הקדמה he warns that these secrets can

not be properly understood without the oral teaching of a wise kabbalist (who is a link in

the chain of tradition back to Moses at Sinai). Rather, most readers should pay attention

to the *peshat* and midrashic interpretations of the rabbis, and take ethical instruction

(מוסר) from them.

v) Themes of Genesis

Ramban's exposition of Exod 24:12 implies the thematic unity of the Torah as

embodied in the ten commandments, the positive and negative commandments, and

instruction (torah) in the narratives of Genesis. The instruction in Genesis is about the

way of faith.

vi) Literary Forms and Unity

Ramban stresses that all of the Torah, from Gen 1:1 - Deut 34:12 (מתחלת ספר

בראשית עד לעיני כל ישראל), i.e., even its last eight verses, was dictated by God to Moses,

which implies its overall unity.

Second, we have seen above that while exploring the same themes as the IMIs,

Ramban's הקדמה to Genesis alludes to the IMIs in *Sifra*, *Lev Rab.*, and *Song Rab*. The

following correlations exist between them: Genesis was dictated by God to Moses at

---

[2] Ramban cites another passage from *Song Rab.* in his הקדמה, showing his familiarity with it (Chavel, פירושי התורה לרבינו משה בן נחמן [Commentaries on the Torah by Our Master Moses ben Nachman], vol. 1, בראשית, שמות [Genesis, Exodus], ד).

Sinai, just as Leviticus was dictated to Moses in the tabernacle; the time of composition

of Genesis can be narrowed down to occasions when God spoke to Moses, just as

Leviticus was composed when God spoke to him in the tabernacle; Genesis and Leviticus

function as part of the Torah; and there is hidden wisdom in the Torah.

And third, Ramban's הקדמה to Genesis displays no familiarity with the

prooemium or its scholastic counterpart, the *accessus ad auctorem*. Rather, the IMIs,

especially the ones in Leviticus, influenced the themes and material content of his

הקדמה. Since Ramban did not present introductory material within his comments on 1:1,

he did not adopt the form of an IMI. However, the three criteria above show that the IMIs

influenced his הקדמה in other ways. In this case, their influence was direct and

exclusive.

Ramban's *Haqdamah* and Inner-Commentary Introduction to Leviticus

The following criteria show that the IMI in *Sifra on Leviticus* influenced the

form, themes, and material content of Ramban's הקדמה and ICI to Leviticus. First,

Ramban's הקדמה and ICI to Leviticus address these same themes as the IMI in *Sifra* on

Leviticus:[3]

i) Authorship and Inspiration

In his הקדמה, Ramban states that the Lord (השם) commanded Moses about

offerings and safeguarding the tabernacle (צוהו בקרבנות ובשמירת המשכן). Citing *Sifra* in

---

[3] All Hebrew citations of Ramban's הקדמה and ICI to Leviticus are from Ch. Chavel, פירושי התורה
לרבינו משה בן נחמן (רמב"ן) על פי כתבי יד ודפוסים ראשונים בצרוף הערות ומראי מקומות [Commentaries
on the Torah by Our Master Moses ben Nachman (Ramban=Nachmanides) According to Manuscripts and
Early Printed Editions, with Explanatory Notes and References], 2 vols., vol. 2, ויקרא, במדבר, דברים
[Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy] (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1959-1960), ה, ו.

his ICI, Ramban says the Rabbis taught that every Divine Speech to Moses, whether introduced by "וידבר" ("And He spoke"), ויאמר ("And He said"), or ויצו ("And He commanded"), was preceded by a call (קדמה קריאה; cf. the IMI in *Sifra.*, p. 35). He also mentions two other dicta from *Sifra*. The first is that God's call expressed His love for Moses and desire for a response from him (חבה וזרוז למשה; cf. the IMI in *Sifra*);[4] God's call was, "Moses, Moses," and Moses' reply was, "Here I am" (הנני). The second is that sound of the Divine Speech did not travel beyond the Tent (cf. the IMI in *Sifra.*, pp. 37-38). Both dicta imply that Moses was already in the Tent of Meeting, and God's call was not for him to enter it from outside. These dicta from *Sifra* enhance Moses' status as an incomparable prophet and lawgiver. However, Ramban offers a *peshat* interpretation of God's call, that Moses was outside the tent and God called him to enter it so He could speak with him (Exod 40:35).

ii) Time of Composition; Historical Setting

In his ICI, Ramban states the book of Leviticus was revealed to Moses in the tabernacle, within the Holy of Holies, from over the cover of the ark, shortly after it was set up (cf. the IMI in *Sifra*, pp. 36-38).

iii) Genre

In his הקדמה, Ramban calls the book of Leviticus the instruction for priests and Levites (תורת כהנים ולוים). He also calls these instructions laws (מצות). He later clarifies that all of the sections (פרשיות) except קדשים (Lev 19, 20) are addressed to the priests.

---

[4] Finkelstein, ספרא [*Sifra on Leviticus*], 2:13.

iv) Methods of Interpretation

In his הקדמה, Ramban describes parallels between God's presence at Sinai and in the tabernacle, e.g., warnings about breaking through the prescribed limits at Sinai (Exod 19:21) and about entering the tabernacle at an inappropriate time. In his ICI, Ramban's *peshat* interpretation that Moses stood outside the tabernacle waiting for God's call parallels Moses' waiting for God's call at Sinai (Exod 24:16). These parallels demonstrate the thematic unity of Exodus and Leviticus. Thus, Ramban uses typology as a method of interpretation to establish thematic links in the Torah and to verify some of his own interpretations.

v) Themes of Leviticus

In his הקדמה, Ramban states that the subjects of Leviticus are offerings and the service of the tabernacle (עניני הקרבנות כולן ומשמרת המשכן). These subjects are linked to the themes of the presence of the *Shekinah* in the tabernacle, its defilement that could cause the departure of the *Shekinah*, and offerings to atone for defilement. He says, "The offerings will atone for them so that their sins will not cause the departure of the *Shekinah*" (יהיו הקרבנות כפרה להן ולא יגרמו העונות לסלוק השכינה). To avoid defiling the tabernacle (טומאת מקדש), the priests must sanctify themselves (Exod 19:22) and enter it at the proper times (Lev 16:2). Leviticus also instructs about the causes of uncleanness, all of which defile (Lev 15:31) and which require offerings for atonement, e.g., forbidden foods (Lev 11), skin diseases (Lev 13, 14), childbirth (Lev 12), and bodily discharges (Lev 15). The sin of uncovering forbidden nakedness (Lev 18) defiles, causes the departure of the *Shekinah*, and brings exile (Lev 26:31-32). Ramban says other

offerings are mentioned in Leviticus, e.g., the freewill offerings (נדבה, Lev 1-3) and

offerings for the Sabbath and festivals (Lev 23), which are not necessarily related to the

main themes.

vi) Literary Forms and Unity

In his הקדמה, Ramban shows how the books of Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers

treat the common theme of the presence of God as the *Shekinah*. The *Shekinah* fills the

tabernacle after its construction and assembly (Exod 25-40). Laws and instructions in

Leviticus warn about the defilement of the tabernacle and the departure of the *Shekinah*.

The borders of the camp for the clean and unclean in Numbers ensure that the impure will

not defile the tabernacle (Num 5:1-3). Therefore, Leviticus is part of a larger unified

narrative about the presence of the *Shekinah*.

Second, we have seen above that while exploring the same themes as the IMIs,

Ramban's הקדמה and ICI to Leviticus cite or allude to the IMI in *Sifra*. He cites it

regarding God's calling Moses before He spoke with him. However, he disagreed with

the implication in *Sifra* that Moses was already inside the tent when he was called. He

does agree, along with *Sifra*, that Leviticus is a Divine Speech given by God to Moses in

the tabernacle shortly after it was set up, within the Holy of Holies, from over the cover

of the ark, which enhances the portrayal of Moses as an incomparable prophet and

lawgiver. He also treats the same themes as *Sifra*, although his material content is

different for method of interpretation, theme, and literary unity.

Third, Ramban's presentation of introductory material within his comments on

1:1, demonstrated by the first criterion above, and his use of *Sifra on Leviticus* as a source

for it, demonstrated by the second one, shows that he adopted the form of an IMI.

And fourth, Ramban's הקדמה and ICI display no familiarity with the *prooemium*

or its scholastic counterpart, the *accessus ad auctorem*. Rather, the criteria show that the

IMI in *Sifra* influenced the form, themes, and material content of his introduction to

Leviticus. In this case, the influence of the IMI was direct and exclusive.

Ramban's *Haqdamot* and Inner-Commentary Introductions to Numbers and Deuteronomy

A perusal of Ramban's הקדמות and ICIs to Numbers and Deuteronomy will

show that the IMIs also influenced their form, themes, and material contents. Since the

existence of the IMI has already been corroborated in his introductions to Genesis and

Leviticus, and by the other commentators in chapters 8 to 11, it is not necessary to

describe them in detail here.[5]

---

[5] See Chavel, פירושי התורה לרבינו משה בן נחמן [Commentaries on the Torah by Our Master Moses ben Nachman], vol. 2, ויקרא, במדבר, דברים [Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy], קצה (for Numbers), and שמג-שמה (for Deuteronomy). For English versions, see Charles B. Chavel, trans., *Ramban (Nachmanides): Commentary on the Torah*, 5 vols., vol. 4, ספר במדבר [Numbers] (New York: Shilo Publishing House, 1975), 3-5; and Charles B. Chavel, trans., *Ramban (Nachmanides): Commentary on the Torah*, 5 vols., vol. 5, ספר דברים [Deuteronomy] (New York: Shilo Publishing House, 1976), 3-9.

CONCLUSION

The opening sections of some exegetical Midrashim deal with the issues of authorship and inspiration, time of composition, historical setting, genre, methods of interpretation, themes, and literary forms and unity of their biblical book. This is the same type of material that is found in the introductions to medieval rabbinic Bible commentaries written in Hebrew. Since an introduction has been defined on the basis of the form of discourse in the commentaries, i.e., as separate from and preceding the comments on 1:1ff., the introductory sections of the Midrashim have not been considered as introductions. However, if an introduction were to exist in the Midrashim it would have to be placed within the midrashic comments on 1:1ff., as opposed to outside of the scriptural verse order in a separate introduction like the commentaries. Therefore, I designated these opening sections as "Inner-Midrashic Introductions."

I adopted Goldberg's and Lenhard's form analysis of rabbinic literature to uncover the new form the "Inner-Midrashic Introduction." Form analysis establishes criteria for isolating propositions that contribute to thematic discourses in the Midrashim, and it explains how propositions are held together in the midst of digressive elements. It demonstrates that dicta from the base form "midrash sentence" are used as building blocks for thematic discourses, and that taxonomically higher forms limit the ability of digressive elements to detract from the thematic presentation. I applied this method to the

opening sections of the exegetical Midrashim and uncovered the new prototypical form "Inner-Midrashic Introduction."

The scriptural lemma of the IMI is 1:1 of a biblical book, or in one exceptional case (of *Midrash Mishle*), 1:1-9. The lemma 1:1 signifies the broad discursive subject of "Introduction" by appropriating the Hebrew title of the book contained in it, or in one exceptional case (of *Midrash Psalms*), its opening words are paraphrased by the Hebrew title. Since the functional form midrash requires a scriptural lemma to provide its discursive subject, the IMI's exploitation of the title lemma is the only reasonable explanation for its scope of discourse about 1:1. The IMI binds dicta in a sustained thematic presentation of introductory issues, and allows for some digressive elements as a controlled rhetorical feature. The IMI's dicta that address introductory issues can be grouped under the headings of authorship and inspiration, time of composition, historical setting, genre, methods of interpretation, themes, and literary forms and unity of their biblical book. Inner-Midrashic Introductions are found in Midrashim on the Torah, i.e., in *Sifra* on Leviticus and *Leviticus Rabbah*, and on the Writings, i.e., in *Song of Songs Rabbah*, *Lamentations Rabbah*, *Midrash Psalms*, and *Midrash Mishle*. Their opening sections provided the basis for describing the prototypical form "Inner-Midrashic Introduction," and also supplied specific examples of its literary realizations. All of these were described in detail in chapters 1 to 6 and summarized in chapter 7.

The Inner-Midrashic Introduction existed as an introductory form prior to Hebrew medieval rabbinic commentary introductions. In order to corroborate its existence, I analyzed a select number of commentary introductions by Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Samuel Ibn Tibbon, Radak, and Ramban, and demonstrated that the IMIs influenced

them in terms of their formal, thematic, and material characteristics. Since some of them discuss introductory issues within their comments on 1:1, and this form of introduction is adapted from the IMI, I designated it as an "Inner-Commentary Introduction." All of the commentary introductions I analyzed also treat many or all of the same themes as the IMIs, and cite and/or allude to their material content. Therefore, my analysis revealed that a high degree of continuity exists between the forms, themes, and material contents of the IMIs and the commentary introductions. The ICI even shares a descent relationship with the IMI.

The IMI exerted an early and exclusive influence on Rashi's introduction, when there was no other model available to him. However, the IMI continued to exert an influence on the commentaries even when non-Jewish models of introduction became available. This is true even of Ibn Ezra and Ibbon Tibbon, who introduced Arabic models into the Hebrew medieval rabbinic commentary tradition. In some cases their introductions are modelled after Arabic ones, and in other cases they are modelled after the IMI. I traced the influence of the IMI to Radak and Ramban also. Since Ramban presents introductory material in הקדמות and ICIs, the IMI continued to influence the form, themes, and material content of his introductions.

My demonstration of the early and continued influence of the IMI, and of its continuity with the rabbinic commentary introductions, satisfies my requirements for the thesis. However, it also provides a solid basis for further research that lies beyond its scope. First, the discovery of the Inner-Commentary Introduction widens the extent of the influence of the IMI potentially to every medieval rabbinic commentary introduction. An exhaustive study of the ICI should be carried out in another work. Second, since the study

of introductions to medieval rabbinic commentaries is just beginning, it is a good time to inject the two newly discovered forms of introduction - the Inner-Midrashic Introduction and the Inner-Commentary Introduction - into the debate about their origin and development. The addition of two new Jewish models of introduction to the already known non-Jewish ones will add to the complexity of untangling the influences on the commentary introductions. In fact, the availability of so many models by the 13th century, including the Jewish IMI, ICI, and הקדמה, and the non-Jewish *prooemium, accessus ad auctores*, and Aristotelian prologue, along with determining an individual commentator's other sources, complicates this task exponentially. In addition, textual analysis of the Midrashim and the commentaries, and detailed analysis of each commentator's sources that would facilitate this research, remain much needed desiderata in rabbinic studies. Third, since the origin of Bible introduction in rabbinic commentaries has been traced exclusively to non-Jewish models, the prior existence of the IMI and its continuity as a form of introduction is an important discovery for the history of Bible interpretation in general, and Jewish Bible interpretation in particular. Its discovery also raises questions about the true origins of the genre of biblical introduction in rabbinic Judaism. After all these areas have been researched, a new history of the origin and development of that genre needs to be written that assigns the Inner-Midrashic Introduction its rightful and deserved place.

APPENDIX:

THE HISTORY AND RECEPTION OF GOLDBERG'S
FORM ANALYSIS OF RABBINIC LITERATURE

Goldberg wrote many articles on the form analysis of rabbinic literature.[1] His

analysis was acknowledged as a standard method in Stemberger's bibliographical

introduction to rabbinic literature. We have already seen that he placed Goldberg's

---

[1] These are, in order of appearance: "Form und Funktion des Ma'ase in der Mischna," *FJB* 2 (1974): 1-38[*]; "Entwurf einer formanalytischen Methode für die Exegese der rabbinischen Traditionsliteratur," *FJB* 5 (1977): 1-41[*]; "Die Peroratio (Ḥatima), als Kompositionsform der rabbinischen Homilie," *FJB* 6 (1978): 1-22[*]; "Zitat und Citem; Vorschläge für die descriptive Terminologie der Formanalyse rabbinischer Texte," *FJB* 6 (1978): 23-26[*]; "Petiha und Hariza; zur Korrektur eines Missverständnisses," *JSJ* 10 (1979): 213-218[*]; "Versuch über die hermeneutische Präsupposition und Struktur der Petiha," *FJB* 8 (1980): 1-59[*]; "Rede und Offenbarung in der Schriftauslegung Rabbi Aqibas," *FJB* 8 (1980): 61-79; "Das Schriftauslegende Gleichnis im Midrasch," *FJB* 9 (1981): 1-90[*]; "Die funktionale Form Midrasch," *FJB* 10 (1982): 1-45[*]; "Der verschriftete Sprechakt als rabbinische Literatur," in *Schrift und Gedächtnis: Beiträge zur Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation*, ed. Aleida and Jan Assmann, and Christof Hardmeier (München: W. Fink Verlag, 1983), 123-140[*]; "Der Diskurs im babylonischen Talmud; Anregungen für eine Diskursanalyse," *FJB* 11 (1983): 1-45[*]; "Distributive und kompositive Formen; Vorschläge für die descriptive Terminologie der Formanalyse rabbinischer Texte," *FJB* 12 (1984): 147-153[*]; "Form Analysis of Midrashic Literature as a Method of Description," *JJS* 36 (1985): 159-174[*]; "The *SEMIKHA* - A Compositional Form of the Rabbinic Homily," in *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, August 4-12, 1985: Division C, Jewish Thought and Literature* (Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1986), 1-6; "Questem; Vorschläge für die descriptive Terminologie der Formanalyse rabbinischer Texte," *FJB* 14 (1986): 99-109[*]; "Die 'Semikha'; eine Kompositionsform der rabbinischen Homilie," *FJB* 14 (1986): 1-70[*]; "Die Schrift der rabbinischen Schriftausleger," *FJB* 15 (1987): 1-15,[*] trans. Alexander Samely, "The Rabbinic View of Scripture," in *A Tribute to Geza Vermes: Essays on Jewish and Christian Literature and History*, ed. Philip R. Davies and Richard T. White (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990), 153-166; "Stereotype Diskurse in den frühen Auslegungsmidraschim," *FJB* 16 (1988): 23-51[*]; "Midrashsatz; Vorschläge für die descriptive Terminologie der Formanalyse rabbinischer Texte," *FJB* 17 (1989): 45-56[*]; "Pesiqta Rabbati 26, ein singulärer Text in der frühen rabbinischen Literatur," *FJB* 17 (1989): 1-44[*]; "Paraphrasierende Midrashsätze," *FJB* 18 (1990): 1-22[*]; and "Formen and Funktionen von Schriftauslegung in der frührabbinischen Literatur," *Linguistica Biblica* 64 (1990): 5-21. Most of these articles were collected in Arnold Goldberg, *Rabbinische Texte als Gegenstand der Auslegung: gesammelte Studien II*, ed. Margarete Schlüter and Peter Schäfer (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999); these are marked by a superscript asterisk ([*]).

contribution to form history of midrash alongside Neusner's contribution to form history

of halakhahic texts.[2] Stemberger listed most of Goldberg's articles on form analysis under

these headings: "Handling Rabbinic Texts: The Problem of Method;"[3] "Midrashim:

Introduction;"[4] and "Synagogal Sermon, *Petihah* and *Hatimah*."[5] Schäfer discussed the

method in the context of the current state of research in rabbinic literature and stated that

Goldberg's and Neusner's approaches "aimed at the same point [rabbinic literature] from

different directions."[6] Two recent bibliographic essays on midrash have also recognized

Goldberg's form-analytical work as standard in midrashic research.[7] From the beginning,

Goldberg presented his method as an interim state of knowledge on the question; it was

still in its formative stages at the time of his death.[8] Although he was not able to present

a definitive systematic of his form-analytical method, he and some of his students applied

---

[2] See p. 8, n. 28.

[3] Stemberger and Strack, *Introduction*, 45; under this heading he lists Goldberg's "Entwurf einer formanalytischen Methode," "Distributive und kompositive Formen," and "Form Analysis of Midrashic Literature." Neusner's statement that "the other introductions to rabbinic literature do not address the matters of rhetoric, logic, and topic" needs qualification (Neusner, *Introduction*, 31, n. 1). Stemberger's treatment of rhetoric (form) includes references to Goldberg's analysis. Goldberg's form analysis also addresses the issue of coherent and thematic discourse.

[4] Stemberger and Strack, *Introduction*, 233; under this heading he lists Goldberg's "Die funktionale Form Midrasch," "Stereotype Diskurse in den frühen Auslegungsmidraschim," "Midrashsatz," and "Paraphrasierende Midrashsätze."

[5] Stemberger and Strack, *Introduction*, 243; under this heading he lists Goldberg's "Petiha und Hariza," "Versuch über die hermeneutische Präsupposition und Struktur der Petiha," and "Die Peroratio (Hatima), als Kompositionsform der rabbinischen Homilie." In other places Stemberger also mentions "Das Schriftauslegende Gleichnis im Midrasch" (ibid., 52), and "Form und Funktion des Ma'ase in der Mischna" (ibid., 51, 108), as well as other articles not mentioned in n. 1.

[6] Peter Schäfer, "Research into Rabbinic Literature: An Attempt to Define the Status Quaestionis," *JJS* 37 (1986): 143-146.

[7] Lieve Teugels, "Two Centuries of Midrash Study: A Survey of Some Standard Works on Rabbinic Midrash and its Methods," *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 54 (2000): 142-143; D. Büchner, "Midrash. A Bibliographical Essay," *Journal for Semitics* 8 (1996): 61-62.

[8] From the beginning he presented his method as a working hypothesis and a starting point for further research (Goldberg, "Entwurf," 2; "Versuch," 50, 52-53, 57; "Die funktionale Form Midrasch," 37, 39; "Distributive und kompositive Formen," 147-148). In this regard, the subtitle "Vorschläge für die descriptive Terminologie der Formanalyse rabbinischer Texte" appeared three times in his articles; he also frequently mentioned that his research was only an [initial] attempt to describe rabbinic forms ("Entwurf," 1; "Versuch," 2, 57; "Die funktionale Form Midrasch," 40, n. 1; "Form Analysis," 159; "Midrashsatz," 45).

it to a number of the homilies in Pesiqta Rabbati[9] before Lenhard applied it to all

homilies.[10] Tuegels also presented a case-study of Goldberg's form analysis of midrash.[11]

Schäfer, Teugels, and Kern Ulmer presented concise summaries of Goldberg's form

analysis, while Lenhard and Zellentin presented much more substantial ones.[12]

Zellentin and Kern Ulmer noted that Goldberg's (German) language of

presentation has prevented the widespread reception of his method among English

---

[9] Editions of individual chapters of *Pesiqta Rabbati* appeared under the auspices of the Seminar für Judaistik at the Johann Wolfgang Goethe University in Frankfurt-am-Main: A. Goldberg, Pisqas 34, 36, 37; K. Grözinger, Pisqa 20; H. Hahn, Pisqa 1; B. Kern, Pisqa 30; and D. Lenhard, Pisqa 9. For full bibliographic references see Lenhard, "Document or Individual Homily?", 340 n. 4.

[10] Lenhard, *Die Rabbinische Homilie*. She states that her dissertation, also published as *Die Rabbinische Homilie*, attempted to "test Goldberg's approach by applying it to a statistically relevant number of texts . . . This *Index* consists of a concise listing of and brief commentary on all texts of the form 'rabbinic homily'" (Lenhard, "Document or Individual Homily?", 340. As an aside, Teugels points out that Lenhard does not include the homilies from the second parts of *Exodus* and *Numbers Rabbah* in her index [Teugels, review of *Die rabbinische Homilie* and *Rabbinische Texte*, 103-104]).

[11] Lieve Teugels, "Midrash in the Bible or Midrash on the Bible? An Enquiry Into the Midrash on Gen 24," in *Jewish Studies in a New Europe*, ed. Ulf Haxen, Hanne Trautner-Kromann, and Karen Lisa Goldschmidt Salamon (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzel A/S International Publishers, 1998), 830-841; cf. idem., "Midrash in the Bible or Midrash on the Bible? Critical Remarks about the Uncritical Use of a Term," in *Bibel und Midrasch; Zur Bedeutung der rabbinischen Exegese für die Bibelwissenschaft*, ed. Gerhard Bodendorfer and Matthias Millard (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998), 45-50 , 57-61, which adds an additional section on midrash in the Old and New Testaments, and omits the section on whether her case is formally a *petiḥtah*.

[12] Schäfer, "Research into Rabbinic Literature," 143-146; Teugels, review of *Die rabbinische Homilie* and *Rabbinische Texte*; idem., "Midrash in the Bible or Midrash on the Bible? An Enquiry;" idem., "Midrash in the Bible or Midrash on the Bible? Critical Remarks," 45-50 , 57-61; Rivka B. Kern Ulmer, review of *Mystik und Theologie des rabbinischen Judentums: Gesammelte Studien I*, by Arnold Goldberg, *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 24 (1999): 381-384; idem., review of *Rabbinische Texte als Gegenstand der Auslegung: Gesammelte Studien*, vol. 2, by Arnold Goldberg, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 121 (2001): 508-509. Lenhard presented the most detailed summary and advancement of Goldberg's form-analytical method and its relation to form analysis of rabbinic literature in general (Lenhard, *Die Rabbinische Homilie*, 1-106). Besides summarizing Goldberg's achievements, she points out and clarifies certain deficiencies and ambiguities in Goldberg's work (e.g., she discusses some of the theoretical underpinnings of the method that were lacking in Goldberg; cf. her discussion on Goldberg's use of the term *idealtypische Form*, pp. 23-24). She also summarizes parts of the method in her English article (Lenhard, "Document or Individual Homily?", 339-356). Lenhard's work is so intertwined with Goldberg's that one could even speak of the Goldberg-Lenhard school of form analysis. Zellentin presented the most detailed English summary of the theoretical background, application, and methodological implications of Goldberg's method (Holger Zellentin, "Reading the Rabbis," 11-59). The remainder of his thesis is devoted to a critical evaluation and transformation of Goldberg's method by taking into account "contextual hermeneutic factors inspired by an intertextual approach, and the definition of formal analysis per se as an approach to a paradigmatic formal context and mode of discourse" (ibid., 117).

speaking academics.[13] In view of this, Zellentin plans to distribute an updated version of

his substantial English summary of Goldberg's form analysis.[14] It should be noted

however that the available English literature, including two articles by Goldberg himself,

does give a reasonable overview of it.[15] In spite of its mainly German presentation,

Goldberg's form analysis is beginning to appear in the secondary literature on Midrash in

English, on the Continent and in America.[16] Kern Ulmer, one of Goldberg's former

---

[13] Zellentin stated that Goldberg's work did not get the scholarly attention it deserved partly because he wrote in German ("Reading the Rabbis," 118); therefore, he has taken up the translation issue: "The challenging decision to incorporate a translation in my presentation of Goldberg . . . may also promote the reception of Goldberg's achievements among English speaking academics" (ibid., 2). Kern Ulmer echoed the same sentiment: "It is unfortunate that Goldberg's brilliant theories have found only a small readership beyond scholars of Judaic studies conversant with German" (review of *Rabbinische Texte*: 508). Goldberg's English article ("Form Analysis") proved invaluable for translating his form-critical terms and neologisms in my thesis (e.g., see p. 13, n. 47; cf. Zellentin, "Reading the Rabbis," 2).

[14] In a personal communication.

[15] In order of appearance these are: Goldberg, "Form Analysis;" idem., "The *SEMIKHA*;" Schäfer, "Research into Rabbinic Literature," 143-146; Lenhard, "Document or Individual Homily?;" Teugels, "Midrash in the Bible or Midrash on the Bible? An Enquiry;" idem., "Midrash in the Bible or Midrash on the Bible? Critical Remarks," 45-50, 57-61; Kern Ulmer, review of *Mystik und Theologie*; Teugels, review of *Die rabbinische Homilie* and *Rabbinische Texte*; Phillip Alexander, review of *Rabbinische Texte als Gegenstand der Auslegung*, by Arnold Goldberg, *JSOT* 89 (2000): 185-186; Kern Ulmer, review of *Rabbinische Texte*; and Zellentin, "Reading the Rabbis."

[16] Two scholars at Manchester who publish regularly on midrash have been strongly influenced by Goldberg's research. Samely calls Goldberg's research "groundbreaking" (Alexander Samely, "Between Scripture," 39; cf. his comment about standing on Arnold Goldberg's shoulders in idem., "Scripture's Implicature: The Midrashic Assumptions of Relevance and Consistency," *JSS* 37 [1992]: 167). Alexander states that the "midrashim employ a variety of literary forms and patterns of discourse. A. Goldberg has successfully analyzed the structure of a number of these" (Alexander, "Midrash," 457). Kern Ulmer (Bucknell U., previously U. of Penn.) calls Goldberg's theories "brilliant" and says his articles collected in *Rabbinische Texte als Gegenstand der Auslegung* "should be on the shelves of every Judaic research library" (Kern Ulmer, review of *Rabbinische Texte*: 508-509). She often cites or alludes to Goldberg's form analysis. Regarding her definition of "midrash" see Rivka Ulmer, "The Advancement of Arguments in Exegetical Midrash Compared to that of the Greek *ΔΙΑΤΡΙΒΗ*," *JSJ* 28 (1997): 49 n. 3; 89, n. 124; regarding her description of a homily see Brigitte (Rivka) Kern Ulmer, "Some Questions in Respect to the Editing of Hebrew Manuscripts," in *Approaches to Ancient Judaism: New Series*, vol. 9, ed. Jacob Neusner (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996), 7-9; and idem., "Some Redactional Problems in Pesiqta Rabbati," in *The Annual of Rabbinic Judaism: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern*, vol. 1, ed. Alan J. Avery-Peck, William Scott Green, and Jacob Neusner (Brill: Leiden, 1998), 72, 82; regarding her descriptions of the microform midrash and macroforms *petihtah* or complete homily see Rivka Ulmer, *Pesiqta Rabbati: A Synoptic Edition of Pesiqta Rabbati Based upon All Extant Manuscripts and the Editio Princeps*, 2 vols. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 1:xxv, xxxix. Zellentin (graduate student at Princeton) has plans to introduce Goldberg's form analysis to an English audience (see. n. 14 above).

students in Frankfurt, also mentions the possible application of the method for editing

critical editions.[17]

From the preceding survey we can see that the progress Goldberg made in form-

analytical research was well received and is growing in influence as scholars begin to

promote it. Neusner's criticism of what he dubbed the "Goldberg-Schäfer School" for its

fixation on the problem of manuscript variations (and the associated problem of the

textual basis for rabbinic research) does not form an exception to this.[18] The grounds for

Neusner's criticism is Schäfer's discussion of the textual basis for Goldberg's *and*

Neusner's form analyses.[19] However, Neusner's criticism does not deal with Goldberg's

---

[17] She states, "When using such a formalistic approach one may detect missing elements. Nevertheless, the question remains whether one should emend the texts" (Kern Ulmer, "Some Questions," 9).

[18] Jacob Neusner, "German Scholarship on Rabbinic Judaism. The Goldberg-Schäfer School," *Temenos* 31 (1995): 113-126; idem., "German Scholarship on Rabbinic Judaism: The Goldberg-Schäfer School," in *Archaeology and the Galilee: Texts and Contexts in the Graeco-Roman and Byzantine Periods*, ed. D. R. Edwards and C. T. McCollough (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 75-81; idem., "Rabbinic Judaism in Nihilistic Perspective: The Goldberg-Schäfer School and the Theory of the Empty Text," in *Judaism in Late Antiquity, Part 3. Where We Stand: Issues and Debates in Ancient Judaism*, vol. 2, ed. Jacob Neusner and Alan J. Avery-Peck [Leiden: Brill, 1999], 75-88.

[19] Schäfer, "Research into Rabbinic Literature," 143-152. Schäfer's point and counterpoint discussion with Milikowsky on the *status quaestionis* of rabbinic textual criticism shows that he was addressing a text critical issue and not a form-analytical one. Schäfer's article sparked a debate about a fundamental question: What is a rabbinic text?, especially in terms of the redactional identity of a rabbinic work. After the exchange between Schäfer and Milikowsky, a series of papers was delivered at the conference, "Artefact and Text: The Re-Creation of Classical Jewish Literature in Medieval Hebrew Manuscripts," in Manchester at the John Rylands University Library, April 1992. A year later these appeared under a slightly different title, including important articles on the transmission of Hebrew manuscripts during the Middle Ages. Schäfer's and Milikowsky's articles along with four others are in large part responsible for the present debate over the correct way to prepare critical editions of the Midrashim: Peter Schäfer, "Research into Rabbinic Literature: An Attempt to Define the Status Quaestionis," *JJS* 37 (1986): 139-152; Chaim Milikowsky, "The Status Quaestionis of Research in Rabbinic Literature," *JJS* 39 (1988): 201-211; Peter Schäfer, "Once Again the Status Quaestionis of Research in Rabbinic Literature: An Answer to Chaim Milikowsky," *JJS* 40 (1989): 89-94; Philip S. Alexander and Alexander Samely, "Introduction: Artefact and Text," *BJRL* 75 (1993): 5-16; Philip S. Alexander, "Textual Criticism and Rabbinic Literature: The Case of the Targum of the Song of Songs," *BJRL* 75 (1993): 159-173; Malachi Beit-Arié, "Transmission of Texts by Scribes and Copyists: Unconscious and Critical Interferences," *BJRL* 75 (1993): 33-51; and Israel M. Ta-Shma, "The 'Open' Book in Medieval Hebrew Literature: The Problem of Authorized Editions," *BJRL* 75 (1993): 17-24.

Based on Schäfer's article, "Research into Rabbinic Literature," Neusner was led to believe that a methodological premise of Goldberg's form analysis is that it treats only a [medieval] received text, and

form analysis per se; neither has he dealt with Lenhard's later criticism of his (Neusner's)

method.[20] It follows then that Neusner's statement, "Goldberg has no continuators, except

that it prohibits any type of historical work based on the fluidity of manuscript traditions of that received text. In other words, he was led to believe that Goldberg's method is exclusively synchronic. In this regard, Neusner should have noted Schäfer's qualification, "Goldberg by no means considers his method as being exclusive in the sense that he allows for no other and different approaches . . . he is perfectly aware of the fact that each method requires its own set of questions, and may exclude other questions but not other methods" (Schäfer, "Research into Rabbinic Literature," 151, n. 45; cf. Goldberg, "Form Analysis," 159). Schäfer's caveat is borne out by Goldberg's articles on form analysis. Goldberg's remarks about the synchronicity of texts, cited by Schäfer and used as a basis for Neusner's criticism, should be interpreted in their context. Goldberg stated there that the diachronic-historical method asks questions about the historical development of a text, and one could arrive at a partial understanding of a text from that perspective. However, such a method could not supply an adequate explanation of a text as a linguistic communication, with its text units held together at one time in a system of relations (Goldberg, "Der Diskurs im babylonischen Talmud" [1983], 4-6). Goldberg's articles pre- and post-1983 show that when he discusses historical questions about the origin of midrash and homilies in the schools and synagogues, he consistently contrasts his method to form criticism proper with its own set of questions regarding the *Sitz im Leben* of these forms (including the original oral and early literary contexts, of which Goldberg argues we know little about; cf. Sarason, who states that historical questions are posed prematurely [Richard Sarason, "Toward a New Agendum for the Study of Rabbinic Midrashic Literature," in *Studies in Aggadah, Targum and Jewish Liturgy in Memory of Joseph Heinemann*, ed. Jakob Petuchowski and Ezra Fleischer {Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1981}, 61-62]). Goldberg also consistently raised historical questions when he discussed the degradation of forms in text production. Regarding the relation of his form analysis to textual criticism (in the sense of establishing earlier forms of texts), Goldberg never enunciates a position on this. On one occasion he mentioned the possibility that his form analysis could be "an important means of literary criticism as well as of textual criticism" (Goldberg, "The *SEMIKHAH*," 6). However, in the final analysis he remained ambivalent about whether his method could be used in the service of form criticism proper or textual criticism. The most likely reason for this was his postponement of the question until rabbinic forms were described in their entirety (Goldberg, "Distributive und kompositive Formen," 147-148; idem., "Form Analysis," 160); he appears to have left the whole question open until then. With his death it has fallen to his students to answer it. Lenhard stated: "While form analysis can only investigate *one* text at a time (synchronically), the analysis of a *first* (not 'best'!) text does not exclude others. Insofar as form-analytical differences between the text versions are found (not every difference on the text surface constitutes a difference in the *functional form*), the synchronic approach simply requires that each version has to count as a *different* text" (Lenhard, "Document or Individual Homily?", 351, n. 66). His students have also concluded that Goldberg's form analysis can be used in the service of form history or textual criticism, or in combination with other methods (e.g., Lenhard, *Die Rabbinische Homilie*, 12, 15; Teugels, review of *Die rabbinische Homilie* and *Rabbinische Texte*, 104; and Zellentin, "Reading the Rabbis," 8, 11; cf. n. 17 above regarding the use of form analysis in the service of textual criticism).

[20] Neusner's 1995 and 1997 articles ("German Scholarship on Rabbinic Judaism") do not interact with Goldberg's two (1985 and 1986) English articles on his form analysis ("Form Analysis of Midrashic Literature as a Method of Description," and "The *SEMIKHA* - A Compositional Form of the Rabbinic Homily"), nor do they take note of Stemberger's recommendation of Goldberg's method (see nn. 2-5 above). Neusner's 1999 article ("Rabbinic Judaism in Nihilistic Perspective: The Goldberg-Schäfer School and the Theory of the Empty Text") does not interact with Goldberg's articles, nor Teugel's (1998) English articles on Goldberg's method and its application in a case study (see n. 11 above); nor does it interact with Lenhard's (1997) critical assessment of his form analysis compared to Goldberg's (Lenhard, "Document or Individual Homily? A Critical Evaluation of Neusner's Methodology in Light of the Results of Form Analysis"). In fact, Neusner does not mention Goldberg's form analysis in his three articles. Based on these English articles alone, Goldberg is not guilty of what Neusner accuses him.

for his student, Peter Schäfer," is not true regarding form analysis.[21] In fact, Goldberg has more students than I have mentioned.[22]

---

[21] Jacob Neusner, "German Scholarship," (1995): 117; idem., "Rabbinic Judaism," 79.

[22] See Teugels, review of *Die rabbinische Homilie* and *Rabbinische Texte*, 105, and contributors to *FJB* not mentioned in this appendix.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Midrashim

Editions, Manuscripts, Translations

Genesis Rabbah

Theodor, J., and Ch. Albeck. *Midrasch Bereschit Rabba mit kritischem Apparat und Kommentar* (Berlin, 1903-1929), second printing with additional corrections by Ch. Albeck, 3 vols. Jerusalem: Wahrmann Books, 1965.

Sifra on Leviticus

Finkelstein, Louis. ספרא דבי רב והוא ספר תורת כהנים ע"פ כת"י רומי (אסמני מספר 66) ושנויי נוסחאות משאר כתה"י, קטעי הגניזה ודפוסים ראשונים וגם מהבאות אצל הראשונים בצירוף מסורת הספרא ופירושים [English title added: Sifra on Leviticus According to Vatican Manuscript Assemani 66 with Variants from the Other Manuscripts, Genizah Fragments, Early Editions and Quotations by Medieval Authorities and with References to Parallel Passages and Commentaries]. 5 vols. New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1983-91.

Neusner, Jacob. *Sifra: An Analytical Translation.* Vol. 1, *Introduction, Vayyiqra Dibura Denedabah and Vayyiqra Dibura Dehobah.* Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988.

Porton, Gary G., trans. "Prologue: Beraita deRabbi Ishmael." In *Sifra: An Analytical Translation.* Vol. 1, *Introduction, Vayyiqra Dibura Denedabah and Vayyiqra Dibura Dehobah,* by Jacob Neusner, 55-63. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988.

Leviticus Rabbah

Israelstam, J., and Judah J. Slotki, trans. *Leviticus Rabbah.* In *The Soncino Midrash Rabbah (© 1983 The Soncino Press, Ltd.): Davka Corporation's Judaic Classics Library II,* by David Kantrowitz. Institute for Computers in Jewish Life [Chicago], Davka Corporation [Chicago] and Judaica Press Inc. [Brooklyn], 1991-1999. CD-ROM. Print ed. Freedman, H. and Maurice Simon, eds. *Midrash Rabbah: Translated into English with Notes, Glossary and Indices.* 3rd ed. 10 vols. Vol. 4, *Leviticus Rabbah,* translated by J. Israelstam and Judah J. Slotki. Soncino Press, London and New York, 1983.

Margulies, Mordecai. מדרש ויקרא רבה יוצא לאור על־פי כתבי־יד ושרידי הגניזה עם חילופי נוסחאות, הערות וביאורים [English title added: *Midrash Wayyikra Rabbah: A Critical Edition Based on Manuscripts and Genizah Fragments with Variants and Notes*]. 5 vols. Jerusalem: Louis M. and Minnie Epstein Fund of the American Academy for Jewish Research, 1953-60.

Neusner, Jacob. *Judaism and Scripture: The Evidence of Leviticus Rabbah.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1986.

Midrash Tannaim to the Book of Deuteronomy

Hoffmann, David. מדרש תנאים לספר דברים [German title added: *Midrasch Tannaïm zum Deuteronomium*]. 2 vols. Berlin: H. Itzkowski, 1909.

Midrash Psalms

Braude, William G. *The Midrash on Psalms. Translated from the Hebrew and Aramaic.* 2 vols. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.

Buber, Salomon. מדרש תהלים המכונה שוחר טוב . . . על פי כתב יד שבאוצר הספרים בפארמא, ועי״י השואה עם שבעה כתבי יד אחרים . . . ומתוקן גם ע״פ הגהות הרופא ה״ר אברהם ב״ר דוד פריווינצאלי ז״יל שהגיה את המדרש ע״פ ששה כתבי יד שהיו לפניו ונשארו הגהותיו בכתובים בכתב ידו יותר משלש מאות שנה: ערוך ומסודר עם סימנים באותיות להפריד בין מאמר למאמר, וציונים מתני״ך בגוף הספר, ועם הרבה הוספות ע״פ כתבי יד האחרים, וגם הערות ותקונים ומראה מקומות, ובאר להבנת דבריו, וגם פירוש המלות הזרות הבאים בתוכו ועם מבוא גדול המפיץ אור על המדרש בכלל ובפרט [Midrash Tehillim (Also) Called Shoḥer Tov . . . According to a Manuscript Stored in the Library in Parma, and in Comparison with Seven Other Manuscripts . . . And Also Corrected According to Emendations by Doctor and Rabbi Abraham ben David Provençal (May His Memory Be Blessed) Who Emended the Midrash According to Six Manuscripts in His Possession, and (Whose) Emendations Survived in Writings in His Own Hand for More Than Three Hundred Years. Annotated and Arranged by Letters of the Alphabet to

Divide Each Section, with Notes from the Tanakh in the Main Part of the Book, and with Many Additions According to Other Manuscripts, and with Comments, Emendations, References, Elucidation of its Words, and Also Explanations of Foreign Words Cited in It. And with an Extensive Introduction That Sheds Light on the Midrash in General and in Particular] (Vilna 1891), reprint. New York: Om Publishing Company, 1947.

Midrash Mishle

Visotzky, Burton Lyle. "Midrash Mishle: A Critical Edition Based on Manuscripts and Early Editions with an Introduction and Annotated English Translation of Chapters One Through Ten." PhD diss., The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1983.

Visotzky, Burton Lyle. מדרש משלי על פי כתביד ואטיקן עבר. 44, עם שינויי גרסאות מכל כתב היד ודפוסים הראשונים ועם מבוא, מראי מקומות וביאורים קצרים, הנקראים "מקור ברוך" [English title added: *Midrash Mishle: A Critical Edition Based on Vatican MS. Ebr. 44, with Variant Readings from All Known Manuscripts and Early Editions, and with an Introduction, References and a Short Commentary*]. New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1990.

Visotzky, Burton L. *The Midrash on Proverbs: Translated from the Hebrew with an Introduction and Annotations*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992.

Megillah

מדרש חמש מגלות: דפוס פיזרו רע"ט [Midrash on the Five Scrolls: Pesaro 1519]. A facsimile of the first edition. Berlin: Hotsa'ot 'Sefarim,' 1926.

Song of Songs Rabbah

Boyarin, Daniel. "The Song of Songs: Lock or Key? Intertextuality, Allegory and Midrash." In *The Book and the Text: The Bible and Literary Theory*, edited by Regina M. Schwartz, 214-230. Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1990.

Dunsky, Samson. מדרש רבה: שיר השירים / מדרש חזית עם נוסחאות ביאורים ומבואות [Midrash Rabbah: Song of Songs/Midrash Ḥazit with Variants, Explanatory Notes, and Introductions]. Jerusalem and Tel Aviv: Devir, 1980.

Goldstein, N. "מדרש שיר השירים רבה בכתב יד פרמה 1240" [Midrash Song of Songs Rabbah in Manuscript Parma 1240]. *Qôbeṣ ʿal Yad* 9 (1979): 1-24.

Lachs, S. T. "The Proems of Canticles Rabba." *JQR* 56 (1966): 225-239.

—————. "Prolegomena to Canticles Rabba." *JQR* 55 (1965): 235-255.

מדרש שיר השירים רבתי [Midrash Song of Songs Rabbati]. Ms Oxford, Bodleian 164. Folios 261r-329v.

[Midrash Song of Songs]. Ms Vatican, Ms Ebr. 76. Folios 118r-182v.

Neusner, Jacob. *The Midrash Compilations of the Sixth and Seventh Centuries: An Introduction to the Rhetorical, Logical, and Topical Program.* Vol. 4, *Song of Songs Rabbah.* Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989.

—————. *Song of Songs Rabbah. An Analytical Translation.* Vol. 1, *Song of Songs Rabbah to Song Chapters One Through Three.* Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989.

Rabinovitz, Z. M. גנזי מדרש: לצורתם של מדרשי חז״ל לפני כתבי יד מן הגניזה [English title added: *Ginzé Midrash; The Oldest Forms of Rabbinic Midrashim According to Geniza Manuscripts*]. Tel Aviv: The Chaim Rosenberg School For Jewish Studies, 1976.

Simon, Maurice, trans. *Song of Songs Rabbah.* In *The Soncino Midrash Rabbah (© 1983 The Soncino Press, Ltd.): Davka Corporation's Judaic Classics Library II,* by David Kantrowitz. Institute for Computers in Jewish Life [Chicago], Davka Corporation [Chicago] and Judaica Press Inc. [Brooklyn], 1991-1999. CD-ROM. Print ed. Freedman, H. and Maurice Simon, eds. *Midrash Rabbah: Translated into English with Notes, Glossary and Indices.* 3rd ed. 10 vols. Vol. 9, *Song of Songs Rabbah,* translated by Maurice Simon. Soncino Press, London and New York, 1983.

Steller, H. E. "Preliminary Remarks to a New Edition of Shir Hashirim Rabbah." In *Rashi 1040-1990; Hommage à Ephraïm E. Urbach,* edited by Gabrielle Sed-Rajna, 301-311. Paris: Cerf, 1993.

Steller, H. E. "Shir HaShirim Rabbah 5.2-8: Towards a Reconstruction of a Midrashic Block." In *Variety of Forms: Dutch Studies in Midrash,* edited by A. Kuyt, E. G. L. Schrijver and N. A. van Uchelen, 94-132. Amsterdam: Juda Palache Institute, 1990.

Lamentations Rabbah

Astor, Carl. "The *Petihtaot* of Eicha Rabba." PhD diss., The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1995.

Buber, Salomon. ‏מדרש איכה רבה על פי כתב יד הגנוז באוצר הספרים ברומי, והפתיחות ע״י‎
‏השואה עם כתב יד בבריטיש מוזעאום בלאנדאן. ערוך עם ציונים מתני״ך, וגם הערות‎
‏ותקונים ומראה מקומות, ובאור המלות הזרות הבאות בתוכו ועם מבוא גדול המפיץ‎
‏אור על המדרש בכלל ובפרט‎ [Midrash Eikhah Rabbah According to a Manuscript
Stored in the Library in Rome, and the Petiḥot in Comparison with a Manuscript
in the British Museum in London. Annotated with Notes from the Tanakh,
Comments, Emendations, References, and Explanations of Foreign Words
Cited in It. And With an Extensive Introduction That Sheds Light on the Midrash
in General and in Particular]. [German title added: *Midrasch Echa Rabbati:
Sammlung agadischer Auslegungen der Klagelieder. Herausgegen nach einer
Handschrift aus der Bibliothek zu Rom cod. J. I.4, und einer Handschrift des
British Museum cod. 27089. Kritish bearbeitet, kommentiert und mit einer
Einleitung versehen*] (Vilna 1899), photostatic reprint. Hildesheim: G. Olms,
1967.

Cohen, A., trans. *Lamentations Rabbah.* In *The Soncino Midrash Rabbah
(© 1983 The Soncino Press, Ltd.): Davka Corporation's Judaic Classics
Library II*, by David Kantrowitz. Institute for Computers in Jewish Life
[Chicago], Davka Corporation [Chicago] and Judaica Press Inc. [Brooklyn],
1991-1999. CD-ROM. Print ed. Freedman, H. and Maurice Simon, eds. *Midrash
Rabbah: Translated into English with Notes, Glossary and Indices.* 3rd ed.
10 vols. Vol. 7, *Lamentations Rabbah*, translated by A. Cohen. Soncino Press:
London and New York, 1983.

Mandel, Paul. "Between Byzantium and Islam: The Transmission of a Jewish Book
in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods." In *Transmitting Jewish Traditions:
Orality, Textuality, and Cultural Diffusion*, edited by Yaakov Elman and Israel
Gershoni, 74-106. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

Marx, A. "Midrasch Echa Rabbati." *Orientalistische Litteratur-Zeitung* 7 (1902):
293-297.

Neusner, Jacob. *Lamentations Rabbah: An Analytical Translation.* Atlanta: Scholars
Press, 1989.

Rabinovitz, Z. M. "‏מדרש איכה רבה בקטעי הגניזה‎" [Midrash Eikhah Rabbah in the
Geniza Fragments]. *World Congress of Jewish Studies* 6, 3 (1977): 437-439.

Raphael, Chaim. "The Midrash on Lamentations: Textual Questions." In *The Walls of
Jerusalem: An Excursion into Jewish History*, by Chaim Raphael, 220-224.
New York: A. Knopf, 1968.

Stern, David. "Hebrew Texts of the *Meshalim* from *Eikhah Rabbah*." In *Parables in
Midrash: Narrative and Exegesis in Rabbinic Literature*, by David Stern,
247-251, 335. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.

Qohelet Rabbah

Hirshman, Marc G. "Midrash Qohelet Rabbah: Chapters 1-4. Commentary (CH. 1) and Introduction." PhD diss., The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1983.

Lieberman, Saul. "הערות לפרק א של קהלת רבה" [Notes on Chapter One of Qohelet Rabbah]. In *Studies in Mysticism and Religion Presented to Gershom G. Scholem on His Seventieth Birthday*, edited by E. E. Urbach, R. J. Zwi Werblowsky, and Ch. Wirszubski, קסג – קעט. Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1967.

Seder ʿOlam Rabbah

Milikowsky, Chaim. "Seder Olam: A Rabbinic Chronography," 2 vols. PhD diss., Yale University, 1981.

General Studies

Albeck, Ch. "Einleitung und Register zum Bereschit Rabba." In *Midrasch Bereschit Rabba mit kritischem Apparat und Kommentar* by J. Theodor & Ch. Albeck (Berlin, 1903-1929), second printing with additional corrections by Ch. Albeck, 3 vols., vol. 3 (1931-1936), 1-138. Jerusalem: Wahrmann Books, 1965.

Alexander, Philip S. "The Rabbinic Hermeneutical Rules and the Problem of the Definition of Midrash." *Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association* 8 (1984): 97-125.

Büchner, D. "Midrash. A Bibliographical Essay." *Journal for Semitics* 8 (1996): 49-78.

Fraade, Steven D. "Literary Composition and Oral Performance in Early Midrashim." *Oral Tradition* 14 (1999): 33-51.

Jastrow, Marcus. *A Dictionary of the Targumim, The Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature*. Brooklyn: P. Shalom Pub., 1967.

Kugel, James L. *The Bible as It Was* (1997), third printing. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1998.

————. "Two Introductions to Midrash." *Prooftexts* 3 (1983): 131-155.

Leiman, Sid Z. "The Canonization of Hebrew Scripture: The Talmudic and Midrashic Evidence." *Transactions* 47 (1976): 1-234.

Lerner, M. B. ‏הדפוס הראשון של ’מדרש חמש מגילות’: עיונים בדרכי פעולתם של‎
‏המדפיסים העבריים בקושטא ובפיזארו‎ [The *editio princeps* of "Midrash on the
Five Scrolls:" Studies in the Methods and Procedures of the Hebrew Printers in
Constantinople and Pesaro]. In ‏יד להימן: קובץ מחקרים לזכר א”מ הברמן‎
[English title added: The A. M. Habermann Memorial Volume], edited by Zvi
Malachi, 289-311. Lod: Habermann Institute for Literary Research, 1983.

Parzen, H. "The Ruaḥ Hakodesh in Tannaitic Literature." *JQR New Series* 20
(1929-1930): 51-76.

Samely, Alexander. "Between Scripture and its Rewording: Towards a Classification of
Rabbinic Exegesis." *JJS* 42 (1991): 39-67.

————. "Scripture's Implicature: The Midrashic Assumptions of Relevance
and Consistency." *JSS* 37 (1992): 167-205.

Sarason, Richard. "Toward a New Agendum for the Study of Rabbinic Midrashic
Literature." In *Studies in Aggadah, Targum and Jewish Liturgy in Memory of
Joseph Heinemann*, edited by Jakob Petuchowski and Ezra Fleischer, 55-73.
Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1981.

Stemberger, Günter, and H. L. Strack. *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash,
(Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch [1982])*. Edited and translated by Markus
Bockmuehl, second printing with emendations and updates. Minneapolis:
Fortress Press, 1996.

Teugels, Lieve. "Two Centuries of Midrash Study: A Survey of Some Standard Works
on Rabbinic Midrash and its Methods." *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift*
54 (2000): 125-144.

Ulmer, Rivka. "The Advancement of Arguments in Exegetical Midrash Compared to
that of the Greek *ΔΙΑΤΡΙΒΗ*." *JSJ* 28 (1997): 48-91.

Textual Criticism

Alexander, Philip S. "Textual Criticism and Rabbinic Literature: The Case of the
Targum of the Song of Songs." *BJRL* 75 (1993): 159-173.

Alexander, Philip S., and Alexander Samely. "Introduction: Artefact and Text." *BJRL* 75
(1993): 5-16.

Beit-Arié, Malachi. "Publication and Reproduction of Literary Texts in Medieval Jewish Civilization: Jewish Scribality and Its Impact on the Texts Transmitted." In *Transmitting Jewish Traditions: Orality, Textuality, and Cultural Diffusion*, edited by Yaakov Elman and Israel Gershoni, 225-247. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

————. "Transmission of Texts by Scribes and Copyists: Unconscious and Critical Interferences." *BJRL* 75 (1993): 33-51.

Cook, Johann. "New Horizons in Textual Criticism." In *Text and Context: Old Testament and Semitic Studies for F. C. Fensham*, edited by W. Claassen, JSOT Supplement Series 48, 51-61. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988.

Distefano, Michel. "Paradigmatic Shifts in the Methods Used in the Preparation of Text-Critical Editions of the Midrashim." In *Studies in Scriptural Interpretation I*, edited by B. Barry Levy, forthcoming.

Kern Ulmer, Brigitte (Rivka). "Some Questions in Respect to the Editing of Hebrew Manuscripts." In *Approaches to Ancient Judaism: New Series*, vol. 9, edited by Jacob Neusner, 1-12. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1996.

————. "Some Redactional Problems in Pesiqta Rabbati." In *The Annual of Rabbinic Judaism: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern*, vol. 1, edited by Alan J. Avery-Peck, William Scott Green, and Jacob Neusner, 71-81. Brill: Leiden, 1998.

Kirschner, Robert. *Baraita De-Melekhet Ha-Mishkan: A Critical Edition with Introduction and Translation*. Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1992.

Mandel, Paul. "Between Byzantium and Islam: The Transmission of a Jewish Book in the Byzantine and Early Islamic Periods." In *Transmitting Jewish Traditions: Orality, Textuality, and Cultural Diffusion*, edited by Y. Elman and I. Gershoni, 74-106. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.

Milikowsky, Chaim. "The Status Quaestionis of Research in Rabbinic Literature." *JJS* 39 (1988): 201-211.

Neusner, Jacob. "German Scholarship on Rabbinic Judaism. The Goldberg-Schäfer School." *Temenos* 31 (1995): 113-126.

————. "German Scholarship on Rabbinic Judaism: The Goldberg-Schäfer School." In *Archaeology and the Galilee: Texts and Contexts in the Graeco-Roman and Byzantine Periods*, edited by D. R. Edwards and C. T. McCollough, 75-81. Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997.

————. "Rabbinic Judaism in Nihilistic Perspective: The Goldberg-Schäfer
School and the Theory of the Empty Text." In *Judaism in Late Antiquity, Part 3.*
Where We Stand: Issues and Debates in Ancient Judaism, vol. 2, edited by Jacob
Neusner and Alan J. Avery-Peck, 75-113. Leiden: Brill, 1999.

Schäfer, Peter. "Once Again the Status Quaestionis of Research in Rabbinic Literature:
An Answer to Chaim Milikowsky." *JJS* 40 (1989): 89-94.

————. "Research into Rabbinic Literature: An Attempt to Define the Status
Quaestionis." *JJS* 37 (1986): 139-152.

Ta-Shma, Israel M. "The 'Open' Book in Medieval Hebrew Literature: The Problem of
Authorized Editions." *BJRL* 75 (1993): 17-24.

Ulmer, Rivka. *Pesiqta Rabbati: A Synoptic Edition of Pesiqta Rabbati Based upon All*
Extant Manuscripts and the Editio Princeps, 2 vols. Atlanta: Scholars Press,
1997.

Form Analysis

Alexander, Philip S. "Midrash." In *A Dictionary of Biblical Interpretation*,
edited by R. J. Coggins and J. L. Houlden, 452-459. London: SCM Press, 1990.

————. Review of *Rabbinische Texte als Gegenstand der Auslegung: Gesammelte*
Studien II, by Arnold Goldberg. *JSOT* 89 (2000): 185-186.

Goldberg, Arnold. "Der Diskurs im babylonischen Talmud; Anregungen für eine
Diskursanalyse." *FJB* 11 (1983): 1-45.

————. "Distributive und kompositive Formen; Vorschläge für die descriptive
Terminologie der Formanalyse rabbinischer Texte." *FJB* 12 (1984): 147-153.

————. "Entwurf einer formanalytischen Methode für die Exegese der rabbinischen
Traditionsliteratur." *FJB* 5 (1977): 1-41.

————. "Form Analysis of Midrashic Literature as a Method of Description." *JJS* 36
(1985): 159-174.

————. "Formen und Funktionen von Schriftauslegung in der frührabbinischen
Literatur." *Linguistica Biblica* 64 (1990): 5-21. Please check

————. "Die funktionale Form Midrasch." *FJB* 10 (1982): 1-45.

————. "Midrashsatz; Vorschläge für die descriptive Terminologie der Formanalyse
rabbinischer Texte." *FJB* 17 (1989): 45-56.

————. "Paraphrasierende Midrashsätze." *FJB* 18 (1990): 1-22.

————. "Petiha und Hariza; zur Korrektur eines Missverständnisses." *JSJ* 10 (1979): 213-218. Please check

————. "Questem; Vorschläge für die descriptive Terminologie der Formanalyse rabbinischer Texte." *FJB* 14 (1986): 99-109.

————. "Die Schrift der rabbinischen Schriftausleger." *FJB* 15 (1987): 1-15. Translated by Alexander Samely. "The Rabbinic View of Scripture." In *A Tribute to Geza Vermes: Essays on Jewish and Christian Literature and History*, edited by Philip R. Davies and Richard T. White, 153-166. Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1990.

————. "Das Schriftauslegende Gleichnis im Midrasch." *FJB* 9 (1981): 1-90.

————. "The *SEMIKHA*-A Compositional Form of the Rabbinic Homily." In *Proceedings of the Ninth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, August 4-12, 1985: Division C, Jewish Thought and Literature*, 1-6. Jerusalem: World Union of Jewish Studies, 1986.

————. "Stereotype Diskurse in den frühen Auslegungsmidraschim." *FJB* 16 (1988): 23-51.

————. "Versuch über die hermeneutische Präsupposition und Struktur der Petiha." *FJB* 8 (1980): 1-59.

————. "Zitat und Citem; Vorschläge für die descriptive Terminologie der Formanalyse rabbinischer Texte." *FJB* 6 (1978): 23-26.

Heinemann, Joseph. "The Proem in the Aggadic Midrashim: A Form-Critical Study." *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 22 (1971): 100-122.

Kern Ulmer, Rivka B. Review of *Mystik und Theologie des rabbinischen Judentums: Gesammelte Studien I*, by Arnold Goldberg. *Association for Jewish Studies Review* 24 (1999): 381-384.

————. Review of *Rabbinische Texte als Gegenstand der Auslegung: Gesammelte Studien*, vol. 2, by Arnold Goldberg. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 121 (2001): 508-509.

Lenhard, Doris. "Document or Individual Homily? A Critical Evaluation of Neusner's Methodology in the Light of the Results of Form-Analysis." Translated by Alexander Samely. *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 4 (1997): 339-356.

——————. *Die rabbinische Homilie: Ein formanalytischer Index*. Frankfurt am Main: Gesellschaft zur Förderung Judaistischer Studien, 1998.

Neusner, Jacob. *A History of the Mishnaic Law of Purities, Part Three. Kelim: Literary and Historical Problems*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974.

——————. *Introduction to Rabbinic Literature*. New York: Doubleday, 1994.

Rothschild, Jean-Pierre. Review of *Die rabbinische Homilie. Ein formanalytischer Index*, by Doris Lenhard. *Revue des études juives* 159 (2000): 529-530.

Sarason, Richard S. "The *Petiḥtot* in Leviticus Rabba: 'Oral Homilies' or Redactional Constructions?" *JJS* 33 (1982): 557-567.

Teugels, Lieve. "Midrash in the Bible or Midrash on the Bible? Critical Remarks about the Uncritical Use of a Term." In *Bibel und Midrasch; Zur Bedeutung der rabbinischen Exegese für die Bibelwissenschaft*, edited by Gerhard Bodendorfer and Matthias Millard, 43-63. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1998.

——————. "Midrash in the Bible or Midrash on the Bible? An Enquiry Into the Midrash on Gen 24." In *Jewish Studies in a New Europe*, edited by Ulf Haxen, Hanne Trautner-Kromann, and Karen Lisa Goldschmidt Salamon, 830-841. Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzel A/S International Publishers, 1998.

——————. Review of *Die rabbinische Homilie. Ein formanalytischer Index*, by Doris Lenhard, and of *Rabbinische Texte als Gegenstand der Auslegung*, by Arnold Goldberg. *JSJ* 31 (2000): 97-105.

Zellentin, Holger. "Reading the Rabbis Reading the Bible: Arnold Goldberg's Formal Description of Midrash." Doctoraalscriptie, Universiteit van Amsterdam: Juda Palache Instituut voor Hebreeuws, Aramees en Joodse Studies, 2001.

Mishnah, Tosefta, and Talmud

Neusner, Jacob. *The Mishnah: A New Translation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988.

——————, trans. *The Talmud of the Land of Israel: A Preliminary Translation and Explanation*. 35 vols. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982-1994.

——————, trans. *The Tosefta: Translated from the Hebrew. Fourth Division Neziqin (The Order of Damages)*. New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1981.

Medieval Rabbinic Commentaries

Editions, Translations

Torah

רש"י על התורה הוא פרוש רבנו שלמה ב"ר יצחק ז"ל מוגה על פי כתבי יד וספרי .Berliner, A
דפוס ישנים ומנֻקה מכל ההוספות אשר הובאו אל תוכו ומכל השגיאות שנפלו בו, ועם
מראה המקומות והמקורים, אשר מהם שאב רש"י את פרושיו [Rashi on the Torah.
The Commentary of Our Master Solomon b. Isaac, May His Memory Be Blessed.
Edited on the Basis of Manuscripts and Early Printed Editions, Cleansed from All
the Additions That Are Cited in It, and from All the Errors That Occur in It, and
with the References and the Sources That Rashi Derived His Comments From].
[German title added: *Raschi. Der Kommentar des Salomo B. Isak über den
Pentateuch nach Handschriften, seltenen Ausgaben u. dem Talmud Kommentar
des Verfassers mit Besonderer Rücksicht auf die Nachgewiesenen Quellen
Kritisch Hergestellt*]. Frankfurt A.M.: J. Kauffmann, 1905.

Chavel, Charles B., trans. *Ramban (Nachmanides): Commentary on the Torah*. 5 vols.
Vol. 1, ספר בראשית [Genesis]. New York: Shilo Publishing House, 1971.

_____, trans. *Ramban (Nachmanides): Commentary on the Torah*. 5 vols. Vol. 3,
ספר ויקרא [Leviticus]. New York: Shilo Publishing House, 1974.

_____, trans. *Ramban (Nachmanides): Commentary on the Torah*. 5 vols. Vol. 4,
ספר במדבר [Numbers]. New York: Shilo Publishing House, 1975.

_____, trans. *Ramban (Nachmanides): Commentary on the Torah*. 5 vols. Vol. 5,
ספר דברים [Deuteronomy]. New York: Shilo Publishing House, 1976.

פירושי התורה לרבינו משה בן נחמן (רמב"ן) על פי כתבי יד ודפוסים ראשונים .Chavel, Ch
בצרוף הערות ומראי מקומות [Commentaries on the Torah by Our Master Moses
ben Nachman (Ramban=Nachmanides) According to Manuscripts and Early
Printed Editions, with Explanatory Notes and References]. 2 vols. Vol. 1,
בראשית, שמות [Genesis, Exodus]. Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1959-1960.

_____ . פירושי התורה לרבינו משה בן נחמן (רמב"ן) על פי כתבי יד ודפוסים ראשונים
בצרוף הערות ומראי מקומות [Commentaries on the Torah by Our Master Moses
ben Nachman (Ramban=Nachmanides) According to Manuscripts and Early
Printed Editions, with Explanatory Notes and References]. 2 vols. Vol. 2, ויקרא,
במדבר, דברים [Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy]. Jerusalem: Mossad Harav
Kook, 1959-1960.

Ḳatsenelenbogen, Mordecai Leb, ed. תורת חיים : חמשה חומשי תורה. ספר בראשית
בראשית - חיי שרה [Torat Ḥayyim: Five Books of the Torah. The Book of
Genesis, 1:1 - 25:18]. Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1986.

Lancaster, Irene. *Deconstructing the Bible: Abraham ibn Ezra's Introduction to the
Torah*. London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003.

Weiser, Asher. פירושי התורה לרבנו אברהם אבן עזרא על־פי כת"י ודפוסים ראשונים עם
מבוא, ביאורים, ציוני מקורות ומקבילות [Commentaries on the Torah by Our
Master Abraham Ibn Ezra According to Manuscripts and Early Printed Editions
with an Introduction, Comments, Notes on Sources, and Parallels]. 3 vols.
Vol. 1, בראשית [Genesis]. Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1976.

Psalms

Finch, R. G. *The Longer Commentary of R. David Ḳimḥi on the First Book of Psalms,
Translated from the Hebrew*. London: Society for Promoting Christian
Knowledge, 1919.

Gruber, Mayer I. *Rashi's Commentary on Psalms*. Leiden: Brill, 2004.

Maarsen, I. פרשנ־דתא והוא פירוש רש"י על נ"ך על פי דפוסים וכתבי יד שונים עם מבוא,
הערות והגהות [English title added: Parshandatha. The Commentary of Rashi
on the Prophets and Hagiographs: Edited on the Basis of Several Manuscripts
and Editions {With an Introduction, Notes, and Emendations}]. 3 vols. Vol. 3,
Psalms. Jerusalem: Central Press, 1936.

Schiller-Szinessy, S. M. *The First Book of the Psalms according to the Text of the
Cambridge MS. Bible Add. 465 with the longer Commentary of R. David
Qimchi, Critically Edited from Nineteen Manuscripts and the Early Editions*.
Cambridge: Deighton, Bell and Col, 1883.

Simon, Uriel. *Four Approaches to the Book of Psalms; From Saadiah Gaon to Abraham
Ibn Ezra*. New York: SUNY Press, 1991.

Sokolow, Moshe. "Saadiah Gaon's Prolegomenon to Psalms." *Proceedings of the
American Academy for Jewish Research* 51 (1984): 131-174.

Proverbs

נביאים וכתובים מקראות גדולות : משלי [Prophets and Writings. Rabbinic Bible -
Proverbs] (Based on Warsaw and Lublin editions, n.d.). Jerusalem: מקור
הספרים, 1998/1999.

Grunhaus, Naomi. "The Commentary of Rabbi David Kimhi on Proverbs: A Case of Mistaken Attribution." *JJS* 54 (2003): 311-327.

Talmage, Ephraim. פירושים לספר משלי לבית קמחי [The Commentaries to the Book of Proverbs by the Kimhi Family]. Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1990.

Song of Songs

Jacob ben Ḥayyim. תנ"ך מקראות גדולות [Biblia Rabbinica]. 4 vols. Vol. 4. (Venice 1525), reprint. Jerusalem: Makhor, 1972.

Mathews, H. J. פירוש שיר השירים (מהדורא ראשונה) לרבי אברהם בן מאיר אבן עזרא הספרדי. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1874, reprint [English title added: Abraham Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Canticles, After the First Recension: Edited from Two Mss., with a Translation]. London: Trübner and Co., 1874. Printed in Israel, n.d.

Rosenthal, J. פרוש רש"י על שיר השירים [Rashi's Commentary on the Song of Songs]. In ספר יובל לכבוד שמואל קלמן מירסקי [English title added: Samuel K. Mirsky Jubilee Volume], edited by Simon Bernstein and Gershon A. Churgin, 130-188. New York: Jubilee Committee, 1958.

Ecclesiastes

Gómez Aranda, Mariano. *El Comentario de Abraham Ibn Ezra al Libro del Eclesiastés (Introducción, traducción y edición crítica)*. Madrid: Instituto de Filología del CSIC, 1994.

Ḳafiḥ, Y. חמש מגילות: שיר השירים, רות, קהלת, אסתר, איכה עם פירושים עתיקים היוצאים לאור פעם ראשונה על פי כתבי יד בצירוף מבואות הערות והארות [Five Scrolls: Song of Songs, Ruth, Qohelet, Esther, Eichah, with Ancient Commentaries Published for the First Time on the Basis of Manuscripts with Introductions, Notes, and Explanations]. Jerusalem: Ha-Agudah le-Hatsalat Ginze Teman, 1962.

Robinson, James T. "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's Commentary on Ecclesiastes." PhD diss., Harvard University, 2002.

Mittelman, H. "A Commentary on Ecclesiastes in Judeo-Arabic Ascribed to Isaac ibn Ghiyat." PhD diss., The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1999.

Rottzoll, Dirk U. *Abraham Ibn Esras Kommentare zu den Büchern Kohelet, Ester und Rut: Eingeleitet, Übersetzt und Kommentiert*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1999.

Zafrani, Haïm, and André Caquot. *La Version Arabe de la Bible de Sa'adya Gaon. L'Ecclésiaste et son Commentaire «Le Livre de L'Ascèse»*. Paris: G. -P. Maisonneuve and Larose, 1989.

Lamentations

Jacob ben Ḥayyim. ‏תנ"ך מקראות גדולות‎ [Biblia Rabbinica]. 4 vols. Vol. 4. (Venice 1525), reprint. Jerusalem: Makhor, 1972.

General Studies

Cohen, Mordechai Z. *Three Approaches to Biblical Metaphor from Abraham Ibn Ezra and Maimonides to David Kimhi*. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

Sæbø, Magne, ed. *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament. The History of Its Interpretation*. Vol. I. *From the Beginnings to the Middle Ages (Until 1300)*. Part 2, *The Middle Ages*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2000.

Grunhaus, Naomi. "The Dependence of Rabbi David Kimhi (Radak) on Rashi in his Quotation of Midrashic Traditions." *JQR* 93 (2003): 415-430.

Kamin, Sarah. "Rashi's Exegetical Categorization with Respect to the Distinction between Peshat and Derash." *Immanuel* 11 (1980): 16-32.

Maimonides, Moses. *The Guide of the Perplexed*. Translated with an Introduction and Notes by Shlomo Pines. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963.

Sela, Shlomo, and Gad Freudenthal. "Abraham Ibn Ezra's Scholarly Writings: A Chronological Listing." *Aleph* 6 (2006): 13-55.

Talmage, Frank. "David Kimhi and the Rationalist Tradition." *Hebrew Union College Annual* 39 (1968): 177-218.

Talmage, Frank Ephraim. *David Kimhi: The Man and the Commentaries*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975.

Commentary Introductions

Fraade, Steven. "The Turn to Commentary in Ancient Judaism: The Case of *Sifre Deuteronomy*." In *The Return to Scripture in Judaism and Christianity: Essays in Postcritical Scriptural Interpretation*, edited by Peter Ochs, 142-171. New York: Paulist Press, 1993.

Hunt, Richard William. "The Introductions to the 'Artes' in the Twelfth Century."
In *Studia Mediaevalia in Honorem Admodum Reverendi Patris Raymundi Josephi Martin*, 85-112. Brugis Flandrorum: De Tempel, 1948.

Lawee, Eric. "Don Isaac Abarbanel: Who Wrote the Books of the Bible?" *Tradition* 30 (1996): 65-73.

————. "Introducing Scripture: The *Accessus ad auctores* in Hebrew Exegetical Literature from the Thirteenth through the Fifteenth Centuries." In *With Reverence for the Word: Medieval Scriptural Exegesis in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, edited by Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Barry D. Walfish, and Joseph W. Goering, 157-179. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

————. "Isaac Abarbanel's Intellectual Achievement and Literary Legacy in Modern Scholarship: A Retrospective and Opportunity." In *Studies in Medieval History and Literature, III*, edited by Isadore Twersky and Jay M. Harris, 213-247. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.

————. "On the Threshold of the Renaissance: New Methods and Sensibilities in the Biblical Commentaries of Isaac Abarbanel." *Viator* 26 (1995): 283-319.

Mansfeld, Jaap. *Prolegomena. Questions to be Settled before the Study of an Author, or a Text*. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994.

Marcus, Ivan. "Rashi's Historiosophy in the Introductions to His Bible Commentaries." *Revue des études juives* 157 (1998): 47-55.

Minnis, A. J. *Medieval Theory of Authorship: Scholastic Literary Attitudes in the Later Middle Ages*. London: Scolar Press, 1984.

Riad, Eva. *Studies in the Syriac Preface*. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 1988.

Robinson, James T. "Samuel Ibn Tibbon's *Commentary on Ecclesiastes* and the Philosopher's Prooemium." In *Studies in Medieval History and Literature, III*, edited by Isadore Twersky and Jay M. Harris, 83-146. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.

Saperstein, Marc. "The Method of Doubts: Problematizing the Bible in Late Medieval Jewish Exegesis." In *With Reverence for the Word: Medieval Scriptural Exegesis in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam*, edited by Jane Dammen McAuliffe, Barry D. Walfish, and Joseph W. Goering, 133-156. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

Sirat, Colette. "Biblical Commentaries and Christian Influence: The Case of Gersonides." In *Hebrew Scholarship and the Medieval World*, edited by Nicholas De Lange, 210-223. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001.

Quain, Edwin A. "The Medieval Accessus Ad Auctores." *Traditio* 3 (1945): 215-264.

Westerink, L. G. "The Alexandrian Commentators and the Introductions to their Commentaries." In *Aristotle Transformed: The Ancient Commentators and Their Influence*, edited by Richard Sorabji, 325-348. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990.