

2. Amos 5²⁵: **הזבחים ומנחה הגשתם לי במדבר ארבעים שנה : בית ישראל :** This is usually translated, "Did ye bring me sacrifices and meal-offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel?" Such a rendering evidently expects the answer, No, and thence the conclusion is drawn that to the historical memory of Amos's age the period of the wanderings in the wilderness had been one without sacrifices and meal-offerings. I will attempt to show that this translation is false and that the passage will not bear the conclusion commonly drawn from it. Two points seem generally¹ to have been neglected: first, the force of **הניש** and of the root **ננש** as a whole, and, secondly, the emphatic position of **הזבחים ומנחה**.

First, as to **הניש**. This is not a technical term meaning 'to offer,' though Siegfried-Stade says so explicitly, and Gesenius-Buhl suggests the same. None of the cases quoted (I leave out of account, of course, this passage) supports that force. All it means is to bring near into any one's presence or to put before any person or any thing; it is used of bringing to the altar, but not of offering on the altar. Further, the root **ננש** is used of approach to God, in worship and otherwise; thus of lip worship, Is. 29¹³, **ננש העם הזה בפיו ובשפתיו ככדוני**, ולבו רחוק ממני: **העלה**² (used in v.² with **זלות** and **מנחות**, and with **מנחה** Is. 66³), or **זבח**, which would have been strictly parallel to **הזבחים**, or **הביא** as in Lev. 11⁹? Had he possibly to use a word which would apply to other things besides these altar offerings?

Second, as to the emphatic position of the words. Is not the correct translation of Prov. 30⁷, **שתים שאלתי מאתך ה**, "Only two things do I ask of thee"? If a **ה** interrogative were prefixed, should we not have to translate thus, "Have I asked only two things of thee?" Again, take Gen. 42¹², **ערות הארץ באתם לראת ה**; must we not render, "It is nothing but the nakedness of the land ye have come to see," or words to that effect? And if a **ה** interrogative were prefixed, would not the true rendering be, "Is it only the nakedness of the land that ye have come to see?"

I feel therefore compelled to render the passage in Amos, "Was

¹ Geo. A. Smith (*The Twelve Prophets* i., p. 170) renders, "Was it flesh or meal-offerings that ye brought Me . . . ?" but on p. 103 he has, "Did ye offer unto Me sacrifices and gifts . . . ?" Which of these renderings does he regard as correct?

² N. Schmidt, in the *JOURNAL OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE* xiii. 11, renders **תשלו לי** here and **לי הגשתם לי** alike by "ye bring me."

it only (or nothing but) flesh-sacrifices and meal-offerings that ye brought to me in the wilderness for forty years, O house of Israel?" And the answer expected can only be, We brought to thee other things as well, true worship of the heart and righteousness, public and private. Such a translation renders the emphatic position of the words, and explains why Amos had here to use **הגיש** and not a specific sacrificial term. It also fits perfectly into the context, but it does *not* prove that in the wilderness there were no **זבחים** and **מנחות**.