

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for the *Journal of Theological Studies* (old series) can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_jts-os_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[1st page of article]

read בַּעֲבֹדָתוֹ 'by his service'.¹ It may well be, however, that the M.T. is after all correctly preserved and that רַעְתּוֹ here is to be explained by reference to נָדַע. The sense obtained will then be 'his submission, humiliation, discipline'—a meaning which accords well with the general characterization of the Servant's degradation and silent submission to his martyr's fate as portrayed throughout the Songs. The equation of יָדַע here with נָדַע would seem to go far towards ridding the passage of both textual and exegetical difficulty.

The Massoretic punctuation of this first half-verse whereby בַּרְעָתוֹ is unconnected with יִשְׁבַּע must be regarded as erroneous. The parallelism is clearly between the phrases מַעֲמַל נַפְשׁוֹ יִרְאֶה and יִשְׁבַּע בַּרְעָתוֹ. Connecting then יִשְׁבַּע with בַּרְעָתוֹ,² and taking יִרְאֶה as the equivalent of יָדַע, and transferring צָרִיק to the first half of the verse,³ we may translate:

'Of the toil of his soul shall the righteous have his fill,
He shall be sated with his humiliation.'

One further passage may be mentioned where the rendering of a Greek version rests on the assumption of a יָדַע = נָדַע, viz. Hos. vi 3.⁴ The verse opens וְנִרְצָה וְנִרְדָּפָה לְדַעַת אֱתֵיְהוָה, which is translated in the R.V. 'And let us know, let us follow on to know the Lord'. The Versions in general derive וְנִרְדָּפָה similarly from יָדַע 'knew' (נילף), but *Quinta's* rendering by παιδευθώμεν⁵ may point to a derivation from יָדַע = נָדַע, even though such a translation cannot be correct.

D. WINTON THOMAS.

A NOTE ON THE MEANING OF אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב (אלהי יעקב) IN THE PSALTER

THE phrase אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב ('the God of Jacob', E.V.) occurs thirteen times in the book of Psalms, and since 'Jacob' is used frequently in true reason of his suffering', remarks that 'a fuller expression of this thought might however have been expected', and that the change to בַּרְעָתוֹ, which he translates 'in spite of his misery' provides a parallel suitable to the preceding one.

¹ In *Deuterjesaja in seinem Verhältnis zu Tritojesaja* 8.

² So Torrey *op. cit.* p. 422; Volz *op. cit.* pp. 171-172, &c. Kittel, however, *op. cit.*, *ad loc.* retains the Massoretic punctuation.

³ For יִרְאֶה = רָוַה and for the transference of צָרִיק to the first half of the verse, see Mr Driver in *J.T.S.* xxxvi 152.

⁴ Mr Driver has kindly drawn my attention to this passage.

⁵ *Field Orig. Hexapl.* ii 949. This is the word, of course, which is ordinarily used by the LXX to translate יָסַר. Only one other occurrence of *Quinta's* use of it is found (Hatch & Redpath *Concordance to the Septuagint* ii 1047), viz. in Ps. lxxviii 28, where it renders יָרַם by παιδευθῶν ἢ δάσκαλον (*Field op. cit.* ii 203; cp. *Syr.* ܝܫܝܢ 'chastise' (similarly Mishn. Hebr. רָדָה and Aram. ܪܕܐ).

the Old Testament, e.g. in Deutero-Isaiah, to correspond with 'Israel' in parallelism, the phrase 'God of Jacob' is usually understood wherever it occurs in a gentile sense. 'Jacob' is taken either as roughly equivalent to 'Israel', or more precisely (as Cheyne suggested on Ps. lxxvii 16) as equivalent to 'Southern Israel', plain 'Israel' being taken to refer to the Northern tribes.

But is there nothing more to be said on this matter? Is Cheyne's suggestion sufficient to explain the choice of the expression אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב in several cases in which 'Jacob' is not balanced by an 'Israel' in the parallel member? There are passages in the Psalms in which אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב is used with emphasis on 'Jacob', but the emphasis does not seem to fall on the gentile meaning of the name, but on some further significance which resides in it. Twice in Genesis (xxvii 36 and xxxii 27, 28) it appears that the name 'Jacob' suggested to the Hebrew ear something beyond its gentile meaning.

The meaning of the root עֲקַב must be investigated. The substantive עֲקֵב is a well-known word for 'heel' or 'foot-print', and the literal meaning of the verb (a denominative) is 'to follow at the heel' i.e. 'to follow closely', 'to press upon in pursuit'. But it is not necessary to adopt Esau's angry suggestion that the true meaning of the name 'Jacob' is 'supplanter', nor does it follow from Gen. xxxii 27, 28 that 'Jacob' is a name of reproach. All that is certain about verse 28 is that God gives Jacob a theophorous (and so a *higher*) name: *Isra-El* 'El striveth (? persisteth)'.

From the physical sense of the verb עֲקַב, 'to follow closely', there follow two derivative senses, (a) to 'pursue as a victor'; (b) to 'follow as an avenger'. In some passages of the Psalms either of the two renderings of יַעֲקֹב, 'one who is victorious', 'one who avenges', would suit the context equally well, and either would answer to the emphasis laid on the title אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב better than the rendering 'God of Jacob' when understood simply as equivalent to 'God of Israel' (or 'of Southern Israel'). Lagarde (no mean authority) explains the name יַעֲקֹב from the Arabic as 'one closely following', and the corresponding verbal root in Arabic in the IIIrd stem means 'to take vengeance' as in Ḳur'ān xxii 59, 'Whoever hath taken a vengeance (*aḳāba*) equal to the vengeance which hath been taken (*uḳība*) on him'. Two illustrations of this meaning may be cited from the Old Testament.

Thus Gen. xlix 19 may be rendered:

'Gad, a troop chargeth upon him,

But he (in turn) as (his own) Avenger chargeth upon them.'

גַּד גִּדְרוֹ יִגְדְרוֹ וְהוּא יִגְדְרוֹ עֲקֵב:

So in Joshua viii 13 עֲקֵב means not precisely 'liers in wait' (as E.V. = מארב), but a force intended after Israel's defeat to follow the enemy,

and turn the tables on him, in other words an 'avenger'. The kindred sense of 'paying back' is found in the substantive עֶקֶב in Ps. xix 12 (11), 'In keeping of them there is great *reward*'.

In the sense of 'avenging' or 'rewarding' the form יַעֲקֹב may be suitably coupled in the Old Testament with the name of God. That it was so coupled in the ancient East appears from both Babylonian and Egyptian sources. The name *Yakub-ilu* has been read on a tablet of the age of Khammu-rabi, and a similar name has been tentatively read on Egyptian documents. 'The scarabs of a Pharaoh, who evidently belonged to the Hyksos time, give his name as Jacob-her or possibly Jacob-el, and it is not impossible that some chief of the Jacob-tribes of Israel for a time gained the leadership in this obscure age.' So writes Braested (*History of Egypt*, p. 220). *Yakub-ilu* (or *Jacob-el*) means apparently either 'God (*El*) is victorious' or 'God (*El*) avengeth'.

If then יַעֲקֹב can be used predicatively of יְהוָה I suggest further that in certain places of the Psalms יַעֲקֹב אֱלֹהֵי is to be rendered not 'God of Jacob' but 'God the Victor' or 'God the Avenger'. יַעֲקֹב becomes a virtual substantive (like the Tetragrammaton). No objection can be taken to this view on the ground that the two substantives stand in the construct relation. Similar instances are given in Gesenius-Kautzsch (§ 128, *k-p*); as Gen. xvi 12, פֶּרֶא אָדָם, 'wild man': Amos v 2, בְּחֹלֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל 'the virgin Israel': and especially Hosea x 6 מֶלֶךְ יָרֵב 'the king who contendeth', *regi ultori* (Vulgate). So אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב, 'God who is Victor' or 'God who avengeth'.

A specially significant case of the use of אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב is that of Ps. xlvi 9, 10 (8, 9), a passage which is wrongly interpreted when the rendering 'He maketh wars to cease' is given in verse 10 for מְשַׁבֵּית מַלְחָמוֹת. יְהוָה is not represented in the Psalm as the Prince of Peace, but as the universal Victor in war. To the ends of the earth, His conquering power is made known, for He utterly destroys His enemies; it is He *who hath made desolations in the earth*. The details of his complete victories follow. The *battle-array* of the enemy is dissolved wherever it is found,¹ their bows are broken; their spears are cut up; and the supply-wagons (not 'chariots') which form their laager, the last line of defence of their camp, are burnt with fire.

To pin מַלְחָמָה to the abstract meaning of 'War' is wrong. The word is to be taken in a concrete sense, 'an embattled army'—'a host in battle-array' in several places of the O.T., e.g. 1 Kings xx 14, 'Who shall marshal the army?' מִי יֵאָסֵר הַמַּלְחָמָה: Jer. vi 4 'Sanctify an army in array against her', קִרְשׁוּ עֲלֶיהָ מַלְחָמָה: Ps. xxvii 3 'If there rose up an army (מַלְחָמָה) against me'.

¹ Hence the plural מַלְחָמוֹת, not 'wars'.

Noteworthy in Ps. xlvii is the description of JEHOVAH in the first member of verse 9 (8) as יהוה צבאות and in the second member as אלהי יעקב. This double description is repeated in the same form in verse 12 (11). The parallelism suggests that אלהי יעקב like the preceding יהוה צבאות describes JEHOVAH as an Avenger or as a victorious War-God. Further the passages quoted above (Gen. xlix 19; Joshua viii 13) help us to fix יעקב to the meaning, 'One who is victorious in war' or 'one who avengeth himself on his enemies'.

There are other striking passages in which we note how well the rendering 'God the Avenger' ('God the Victor') fits the context. Specially striking is,

Ps. xciv 7:

'And they said, JAH (JEHOVAH) shall not see,
Neither shall God the Avenger consider it.'

Again,

Ps. xx 2 (1):

'JEHOVAH answer thee in the day of trouble,
The name of God the Avenger set thee on high!'

Ps. lxxvi 7 (6):

'At thy rebuke, O God the Avenger,
Both chariot and horse are stilled.'

Ps. lxxxiv 9 (8):

'O JEHOVAH, Elohim, Šēbāoth, hear my prayer;
Give ear, O God the Avenger.'

To these let us add—

Ps. lxxxi 2 (1) and 5, 6 (4, 5). The latter passage runs:

'For it is a statute for Israel,
An ordinance of God *the Avenger*.
He appointed it in Joseph for a testimony,
When he went out against (על) the land of Egypt'

(cf. Exod. xii 12).

Here the rendering of אלהי יעקב by 'God the Avenger' certainly fits in with the context. The case in verse 2 (1) is less compelling, but the parallelism points to the same or to a similar rendering:

'Sing aloud unto God *our strength*,
Make a joyful noise unto God *the Avenger*.'

Two interesting passages remain on which we raise the question, can יעקב standing alone mean 'The Avenger' and so be taken as a designation of the God of Israel? The first passage is Psalm xxiv 6:

זה דור ררשוי (ררשו C'thib)

מבקשי פניך יעקב [סלה:]

'Thus is it with the people who enquire of Him,
With them that seek thy face,' O Jacob.'

Here we note that the Prosody is regular, for each member of the verse contains three beats (accents), as I have marked them. Moreover, there is no difficulty in the syntax. Hans Schmidt (*Psalmen*, 1934) proposes indeed 'enquire of *Thee*' in the first line, but the emendation is not needed. Sudden appeals to God such as that in the second line are found elsewhere in the Psalter, e.g. in Ps. xl 18 (17); xci 9 a, R.V. The difficulty of this verse lies not in its form, but in its substance. The parallelism and the phrases 'enquire of Him' and 'seek thy face' suggest a Divine person as the object, while on the contrary the name 'Jacob' suggests either the patriarch (long dead)¹ or the people named after him.

The reading of the LXX removes one difficulty but raises another :

αὐτῆ ἢ γενεὰ τῶν ζητούντων αὐτόν,
ζητούντων τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ θεοῦ Ἰακώβ.

To 'seek the face of God' is a suitable phrase, but the addition of τοῦ θεοῦ, אלהי, makes the second member too long with four beats (accents).

There are two further objections to accepting the help of the LXX. In the first place we are not sure of the Greek text, for one important authority, the St Germain MS of the Old Latin, does not notice the τοῦ θεοῦ (Rahlfs). Secondly, we cannot be sure that the Hebrew text which lay before the Alexandrian translators read יעקב אלהי. Their τοῦ θεοῦ may be borrowed from xix 2; xlv 8; 12; al (Septuagintal numeration). For the Greek translators it was a cheap emendation.

Is any emendation needed? May we not take יעקב standing by itself in the sense of 'Victor' or 'Avenger' as a Name of God? 'Jacob' is one of whom enquiry is to be made, and one whose face is to be sought. This description suits best a Divine person. And if it be objected that יעקב has a strange look standing by itself with this sense, we appeal to the use of עליין (Ps. ix 3) and שרי (Ps. lxxviii 15) without א prefixed.

The whole context favours the simple rendering 'O Avenger' or 'O Victor' in verse 6. The Psalm contemplates the triumphal entry of $\text{JH}\text{E}\text{O}\text{V}\text{A}\text{H}$ into His city. At His coming He will bestow a blessing upon the pure in heart. Deeply stirred, the Psalmist turns and addresses

¹ R.V. margin, Or even Jacob.

² See *J.T.S.* xxxvi 403.

his God directly: 'Those that seek thy face are they who shall be thus blest, O Victor' (verse 6). The Psalmist contents himself here with an epithet, 'O Victor'. He reserves the Name of the Victor for the last four verses that he may announce it with becoming emphasis. He cries in verse 7, 'Let the King of glory come in', and in verse 8 he hears in answer a challenging question, 'But of what kind (מי זה, *qualis*) is the King of glory?'. He replies at once in the same verse, 'JEHOVAH strong and mighty, JEHOVAH mighty in battle'. The challenge is put a second time, and then the full name, the double name, is announced, 'JEHOVAH-Şebaoth'.

P.S.—The margin of the R.V. gives the Jewish (Aben Ezra, Rashi, Kimkhi) interpretation, thus:

'This is the generation of them that seek after him,
That seek thy face, [even] Jacob.'

But the construction is harsh, *first*, because a vocative is to be expected after the affix of the second person in פניך, and *secondly*, because יעקב, 'Jacob', stands in isolation too far removed from דור, 'the generation', to be easily understood as being in apposition to it.

The second passage of the Psalter in which יעקב standing without אלהי appears to be a Divine epithet used in the vocative—with emphasis—is Ps. xlv 5 (4):

אתה הוא מלכי אלהים¹
: צוה ישועות יעקב:

'Thou art He, my King, JEHOVAH;
Command victory, O Avenger.'

Here יעקב is usually treated as a subjective genitive, in agreement with the accentuation.² But such a qualifying genitive is not needed. The victory for which the Psalmist prays can be only the victory of his own people. The verse gains both in vigour and in symmetry, if יעקב be taken as a vocative: 'Command victory, O Avenger.'

W. EMERY BARNES.

¹ אלהים is due to the Elohist redactor in Book II.

² The LXX does not help.