

²¹ W. L. Holladay, "Prototype and Copies: a new approach to the poetry-prose problem of the Book of Jeremiah", *JBL* 79 (1960), pp. 351-67, p. 358.

²² Skinner, pp. 321ff., W. Lempp, *Bund und Bundeserneuerung bei Jeremia* (Diss. Tübingen, 1955), *ThLZ* 80 (1955) cols. 238-9.

²³ Coppens, p. 15; W. B. Wallis, "Irony in Jeremiah's prophecy of the New Covenant", *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 12 (1969), pp. 107-10; W. C. Kaiser, "The Old Promise and the New Covenant: Jeremiah 31.31-34", *JETS* 15 (1972), pp. 11-23.

²⁴ In this connection it is interesting to note that the Ark which was both the contained of the tables of the Law and a symbol of royal authority is rendered redundant in the book of Jeremiah. Jerusalem replaces it as the throne of Yahweh (Jer. iii 16f.), while a Law written on the heart needs to container other than a man's body. At one go Jeremiah withdraws the Law from the clutches of the scribes and renders a symbol of dynastic power impotent. Cf. T. E. Fretheim, "The Ark in Deuteronomy", *CBQ* 30 (1968), pp. 1-14; Weinfeld, pp. 20-6.

²⁵ Jeremiah does not rely on the purifying power of exile but on the creative hand of God. Cf. A. B. Davidson, "Jeremiah the Prophet" in J. Hastings (ed.), *Dictionary of the Bible* II (Edinburgh and New York, 1899), pp. 569-78.

²⁶ Rudolph, p. 202, M. Sekine, "Davidsbund und Sinaibund bei Jeremia", *VT* 9 (1959), pp. 47-59, p. 55; C. F. Keil, *Biblischer Commentar über den Propheten Jeremia und die Klagelieder* (Leipzig, 1872), p. 337 = E.tr., *The Prophecies of Jeremiah* 2 (Edinburgh, 1874), p. 38.

HEBREW *RHM* = "RAIN"

In his commentary on the Psalms and elsewhere, M. Dahood has convincingly demonstrated that Hebrew *tôb* may occasionally have the meaning "rain" as well as its usual meaning "good".¹ From among the many passages he cites, we exemplify *tôb* = "rain" with the following passages:

- Jer. v 24-25 And say not in their hearts
 "Let us fear Yahweh our God
 Who gives rain (*gešem*), the latter and the former, in its season,
 Who watches for us the weeks appointed for harvest".
 Your iniquities have diverted these things.
 Your sins have withheld the rain (*hattôb*) from you.
- Ps. lxxxv 13 With a crash Yahweh will give forth rain (*hattôb*)
 And our land will give forth its produce.

Dahood also cites one Ugaritic verse where *tb*, the nominal form of *tb*, "good", may signify "rain". *CTA* 19 (1 Aqht) I. 45-46: *bl tbn ql b'q* is perhaps to be translated "no rain with the voice of Baal (= thunder)" in accordance with the context.²

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In his most recent publication on the subject,³ Dahood refers to a letter of S. Kaufman in which it is noted “that in some South Arabic and Arabic dialects, *raḥmat*, ‘mercy’, also means ‘rain’”.⁴ It is therefore not surprising to find that Hebrew *rḥm*, in its various forms, may also signify “rain” at times. That is to say, *rḥm*, “‘pity’” > “rain”, exhibits the same semantic development as *tób*, “‘good’” > “rain”. The following passages amply demonstrate this conclusion.

Ps. cx 3 *bēhadrē qōdeš*
mēreḥem mišḥār
lēkā ṭal yaldūtekā
 In holy splendor,
 From the rain of the dawn,
 For you the dew of your youth.

It is not my intention to solve the numerous difficulties of this verse, but rather merely to point out that when parallel to *ṭal yaldūtekā*, “the dew of your youth”, *reḥem mišḥār* should be translated “the rain of the dawn” in the light of South Arabian *rḥm*, “rain”. The collocation of “youth” and “dawn” is known from elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (Qoh. xi 10),⁵ and thus we should assume similar parallel significations for *ṭal* and *reḥem*.⁶

Isa. xlix 10 *lōʾ yirʿābū wəlōʾ yišmāʾū*
wəlōʾ yakkēm šārāb wāšāmeš
kī mēraḥāmām yēnahāgēm
wēʿal mabbūʿē mayim yēnahālēm
 They shall not hunger nor thirst,
 And hot wind and sun shall not strike them,
 For he that causes rain will lead them,
 To the springs of water he will guide them.

In the context of scorching heat, thirst, and water, we may note the meaning “causes rain” for *mēraḥāmām* (parsing the suffixed *mem* as enclitic⁷). This verb would be a denominative from the postulated Hebrew *rḥm*, “rain”.⁸ Given the striking synonymous parallelism of *yēnahāgēm* and *yēnahālēm* in the second half of the verse, it is easy to see why *mēraḥāmām* should mean “causes rain” parallel to “the springs of water”. Note that the two sources of water commonly referred to in the Hebrew Bible, those above and those below (e.g. Gen. i 7), are both mentioned as a cure for the thirsting community

in Exile. The above translation of Isa. xlix 10 does not deny that the traditional rendering “he who loves them” may be simultaneously inherent; thus we have an instance of polysemy or multiple meaning not unusual in Hebrew poetry.⁹

Hos. i 6 *q^erā^ʔ š^emāh lō^ʔ ruḥāmāh*
kī lō^ʔ ʔōsîṭp ʿod
ʔarahēm ʔet-bêt yiśrāʔēl
kī nāsō^ʔ ʔēśśā^ʔ lāhem
 Call her name “Lo-ruhama”,
 For I will not continue
 To have pity on/cause rain upon the house of Israel,
 Or pardon them at all.

This passage and the following ones from Hosea i-ii show a continual use of the polysemy obtained from recognizing the two meanings of *ḥm*, “pity” and “rain”. Thus Lo-ruhama, the name of Hosea’s second child, means not only “not pitied” but also “not rained upon”. This second meaning, hitherto unrecognized, fits nicely into the opening chapters’ and indeed the entire book’s concern with the fertility cult in ancient Israel.¹⁰ Similarly, *ʔarahēm* signifies not only that God will not have pity on Israel but also that he will not cause it to rain upon Israel. The main aim of the fertility cult was to produce rain; the prophet is stating that this apostasy will have the totally opposite effect.

Hos. i 7 *w^eʔet-bêt y^ehūdāh ʔarahēm*
 But I will have pity on/cause rain upon the house of
 Judah.

This passage immediately follows the preceding passage. Although Israel has fallen into disfavor with God, Judah has not and will therefore receive both God’s compassion and his rain. That God can cause rain to fall upon Judah but not upon Israel recalls the geographic distribution of the fourth, seventh, and ninth plagues (Exod. viii 18, ix 26, x 23).

Hos. ii 6 *w^eʔet-bānehā lō^ʔ ʔarahēm*
 And I will not have pity on/cause rain upon her sons.

The second meaning of *ʔarahēm* in this colon is easily seen when we note that it follows the tricola “I will make her like the wilderness, set her like the dry land, and slay her with thirst” in Hos. ii 5. The

number one way of transforming arable land into wasteland is to deny rain, a fact which the Israelites well knew.

Hos. ii 25 *ûz^{ra}tihā lî bā^ʾāreš*

w^{er}ihamtî ʾet-lô^ʾ ruḥāmāh

I will sow her to me in the land,

And I will have pity on/cause rain upon “Lo-ruhama”.

The continual use of *rḥm* in the first two chapters of Hosea comes to a head in this final verse. The agricultural prosperity described in Hos. ii 24 is possible only by means of 1) God’s sowing (*zr^ʿ*) and 2) God’s rain (*rḥm*). The polysemy of *rḥm* in all the above four passages is additional material for those who have recognized the many layers of meaning throughout Hosea.¹¹ Indeed, the prophet himself warned us of the many hidden meanings in his work with his closing words: “Whoever is wise will understand these things, whoever is prudent will know them” (Hos. xiv 10).

The above passages amply demonstrate that Hebrew *rḥm* occasionally bore the meaning “rain” as well as “pity”, cognate with South Arabian *rḥm*. In closing, it remains to observe that the early rabbis were apparently aware that *rḥm* could mean “rain”. First, I quote Rabbi Yohanan’s remarkable statement about the forbidden bird *rāḥām* in Lev. xi 18 (*rāḥāmāh* in Deut. xiv 17): “*Rāḥām* is the *š^{er}agraq*, and why is it called *rāḥām*? Because when the *rāḥām* comes, *raḥ^amīm* comes to the world” (B. Ḥullin 63a). This passage has universally been taken to mean that the *rāḥām* bird betokens the coming of rain upon the world.¹² Second, I call attention to the interpretation of Gen. ii 5 given by Rabbi Asi (or Ashi): “This teaches us that the plants were coming forth but stopped just below the surface of the soil until Adam came and sought *raḥ^amīm* for them, and then the rains came ... Rabbi Nahman bar Papa had a garden and he planted seeds in it but they did not sprout, he then sought *raḥ^amē* and the rains came” (B. Ḥullin 60b).¹³ Third, I quote the final benediction which the rabbis instituted to combat prolonged drought: *bārūk ʾattāh yḥwḥ ham^{er}rahēm ʿal hā^ʾāreš* (M. Taʿanit II 4). In the light of the Arabic and South Arabian evidence, the biblical examples cited, and the above Talmudic statements, is there any doubt that this prayer should be translated “Blessed are you, O Lord, who cause rain upon the earth”?¹⁴ Finally, we have the story of Rabbi Honi who prayed for rain but could not produce any. Next he drew a circle, stood inside it, and said “I swear by

your great name that I will not move from here *ʿad šetrahēm ʿal bānekā*’, at which time rain began to fall (M. Taʿanit III 8). The Hebrew should no doubt be translated “until you cause rain (to fall) upon your children”.

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¹ “Hebrew-Ugaritic Lexicography II”, *Biblica* 45 (1964), p. 411; *Psalms I* (Garden City, N.Y., 1966), p. 25; *Psalms II* (1968), p. 290; “A note on *tōb* ‘rain’”, *Biblica* 54 (1973), p. 404.

² Others, however, translate differently. T. H. Gaster, *Thespis* (revised edn, New York, 1975), p. 358, reads “Neither the goodly voice of Baal (= Neither welcome thunder)”. H. L. Ginsberg in *ANET*, p. 153, reads “No sweetness of Baal’s voice”. C. H. Gordon, *Berytus* 25 (1977), p. 22, reads “Let there be no goodness of Baal’s voice”. J. C. L. Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* (2nd edn, Edinburgh, 1977), p. 115, following G. R. Driver, reads “without the sweet sound of Baal’s voice”, and Driver adds in note 2 on p. 61 of the first edition (1956) “I.e. welcome sound of thunder and rain”. The fact that there is no consensus on *tbn* = “rain” somewhat weakens Dahood’s argument, though the biblical verses can still stand on their own merit. It in no way, however, affects the present discussion of *rhm*, which is independent of Dahood’s work on *tōb*. I cite his work as a spring-board, if for no other reason.

³ *Biblica* 54 (1973), p. 404.

⁴ The South Arabian data may be found in two works cited by Kaufman: M. Bittner, *Studien zur Laut- und Formenlehre der Mehri-Sprache in Südarabien* (Vienna, 1909), pp. 39-40; and le comte de Landberg, *Études sur les dialectes de l’Arabie méridionale* 1 (Leiden, 1901), pp. 480, 586. A more recent publication which may be consulted is T. M. Johnstone, *Harsūsi Lexicon* (London, 1977), p. 103, where *Ḥarsūsi rehemēt/rehāyem* and diminutive *rehmānōt*, “rain”, Mehri *rehemēt*, “rain lying on the ground”, *Harsūsi* and Mehri *šerhāum*, “to rain”, and *Šheri šerhīm*, “to rain”, are all cited. Note that South Arabian has both nominal and verbal forms of *rhm*, “rain”. The Arabic evidence is cited by Bittner, p. 40, and by R. B. Serjeant, *South Arabian Hunt* (London, 1976), pp. 35, 76-7, 99 n. 146, 113 n. 402, 126. The latter quotes the 19th century poet ʿAbd al-Ḥaqq, who uses *rahmah* in the sense of “rain”. The title of Serjeant’s book refers to the southern part of Arabia, but not to the South Arabian language; the language of al-Ḥaqq’s work is Arabic. I am grateful to Professor J. A. Emerton for this reference and also for kindly supplying me with copies of the appropriate pages of Bittner and le comte de Landberg. The meaning “rain” for *rahmat* is not to be found, however, in the standard dictionaries such as E. W. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon* (London, 1863-93), and H. Wehr and J. M. Cowan, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (Wiesbaden, 1961), or in the various dialect dictionaries. The same is true of G. Schuttermayr, “*RHM* — Eine lexikalische Studie”, *Biblica* 51 (1970), pp. 499-532; this article is a comprehensive review of Hebrew *rhm* and its cognates, but it is limited to the meaning “love, pity”.

⁵ As is pointed out by M. Dahood, *Psalms III* (Garden City, N.Y., 1970), p. 116.

⁶ Whether *mišhār* should be repointed *miššahar* on the basis of the LXX’s *πρὸ ἐωσφόρου* or whether *šahar* should be read with the *mem* deleted as a dittograph (both possibilities are noted by *BHS*) is beyond the scope of the present study, but a few comments may be added. The latter suggestion seems to be an unnecessary altera-

tion of the consonantal text and may be rejected outright. The former is less objectionable, and it would give us a nominalized prepositional phrase *miššāhar*, like *bag-gilbōa*^c in 2 Sam. i 21; for other examples see D. Grossberg, *Nominalization in Biblical Hebrew* (unpublished dissertation, New York University, 1977). But even this change of the Masoretic vocalization may be unnecessary if we invoke the rule of *lectio difficilior* and simply accept *mišhār* as a by-form of *šāhar*.

⁷ Some exegetes may object to postulating an enclitic *mem* in a work as late as Second Isaiah, but the most thorough treatment of this morpheme has shown that it does occur in poetry datable to the 6th century; see D. A. Robertson, *Linguistic Evidence in Dating Early Hebrew Poetry* (Missoula, 1972), pp. 79-110, especially 108-9. Of course, it is also possible to treat the *-m* as the object of the verb and to translate *mēraḥēmām* as "he that causes rain upon them".

⁸ The South Arabian verb with prefixed *še-* is in the causative-reflexive conjugation, while the Hebrew verb is in the intensive or Pi'el conjugation. But it is by now a commonplace to point out that the Hebrew Pi'el is sometimes causative; see A. E. Cowley (ed.), *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar as edited and enlarged by the late E. Kautzsch* (2nd edn, Oxford 1910 = 28th German edn), §52 *g*. Even when other Semitic languages use the causative, Hebrew sometimes has the corresponding verb in the Pi'el; e.g. Akkadian *ml*² in the Š-stem corresponds to Hebrew *ml*² in the D-stem, both meaning "to fill". Moreover, Hebrew denominatives are almost always in the Pi'el; cf. G.K. §141 *h*.

⁹ Cf. G. Rendsburg, "Double Polysemy in Gen 49:6 and Job 3:6", *CBQ* 42 (1982), pp. 48-51, and the references in n. 1. Less sure examples are the uses of *riḥamtik* in Isa. liv 8 near *mē nōaḥ*, "the waters of Noah", and *wirahēmēhū* in Isa. lv 7 in the context of thirst, water, and rain. I simply raise the question whether polysemy is intended by the prophet in these verses without pressing the issue. As is well known, the root *riḥm* is one of Second Isaiah's favorites, and so it appears ubiquitously in sections with and without rain imagery.

¹⁰ See, e.g., H. G. May, "The fertility cult in Hosea", *AJSL* 48 (1931-2), pp. 73-98.

¹¹ See, among the many fine works available, T. H. Gaster, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament* (New York, 1969), pp. 632-6.

¹² For example, in the 11th century, Rabbi Gershom ben Judah (d. 1040) wrote *bā'ū raḥēmīm le'ōlām 'ellū g'sāmīm*, "raḥēmīm comes to the world—these are the rains", and Rashi (d. 1105) wrote *raḥēmīm mā'ār*, "raḥēmīm means rain". Cf. also E. Cashdan, *Hullin* (London, 1948), p. 343, n. 3, who states "raḥēmīm, i.e., rain", and M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim, the Talmud Babli and Yerushalmi, and the Midrashic Literature* (London and New York, 1903), p. 1467b, who translates the end of the passage as "mercy comes upon the world (it betokens rain)".

¹³ The first statement is in Hebrew and the second in Aramaic. I am indebted to Professor Emerton for pointing this passage out to me.

¹⁴ My thanks are due to Dr Stuart Miller of Notre Dame University for pointing both this and the next passage out to me.

"TAKING SOULS" IN PROVERBS XI 30

The meaning of the second half of Prov. xi 30 is not clear; the verse reads:

pe'ri šaddīq 'eš hayyim weloqeah nepāšōt hākām

that is,

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