

Ancient Hebrew Research Center

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Biblical Word of the Month - Sick

By: Jeff A. Benner

The parent root רָף *raph* is the root to several Biblical Hebrew words related to health and sickness. The original pictographs for this word are the , representing man and , representing the mouth with the meaning open. Combined, the word  means an “open man” and is exactly what happens when one is cut or wounded. A common ancient medicine is the use of a poultice which is placed on an open wound. Hyssop was most likely used as a poultice because of its antibacterial properties. The Hebrew verb רוּף *ruph* ^[H:7322], derived from רָף, means “to pulverize,” what is done to plants being used as a poultice. From רוּף comes the noun רִפּוּף *ruphah* ^[H:8644] meaning “medicine.” Another verb derived from רָף is רָפָא *rapha* ^[H:7495] meaning “to heal.” This verb is first used when Avraham intercedes on Avimelekh’s behalf to heal him and his family from their illness (Genesis 20:17). When this verb is used in its participle form it can mean “healing” or “healer” (physician). One other verb derived from רָף is רָפַח *raphah* ^[H:7503] meaning weak or feeble as when someone is sick.

Now Laban was gone to shear his sheep: and Rachel stole the teraphim that were her father's. Genesis 31:19 (ASV)

The word “teraphim” is a transliteration of the Hebrew תרפים *teraphim* ^[H:8655] in the verse above and is the plural form of the word תרף *tereph*. Until recently the meaning of this word was completely unknown, this is why the older translations of the Bible simply transliterate it as teraphim. Ancient inscriptions discovered in Babylon assisted in defining this word as household gods and newer translations such as the RSV now translate it as household gods. It is also possible that the ancient people believed these household gods provided healing since the root of this is most likely רף.

Name of the Month - Levi

By: Jeff A. Benner

And she conceived again, and bare a son; and said, Now this time will my husband be joined unto me, because I have born him three sons: therefore was his name called Levi. Genesis 29:34 (KJV)

The Hebrew verb לוה *lavah* ^[H:3867] means “to join” such as we can see in the verse above. This is the root of the name לוי *leviy* ^[H:3878], meaning “joined,” and is also found in the verse above. Both of these words are also found in the following verse.

And thy brethren also of the tribe of Levi, the tribe of thy father, bring thou with thee, that they may be joined unto thee, and minister unto thee: but thou and thy sons with thee shall minister before the tabernacle of witness. Numbers 18:2 (KJV)

Question of the Month – Hebrew Words?

By: Jeff A. Benner

Q: What sources can be used to learn the original ancient meaning of Hebrew words?

A: A Modern Hebrew dictionary has its obvious limitations when studying Ancient / Biblical Hebrew as it is composed for a Modern Hebrew language. However, I have found that Biblical Hebrew dictionaries and lexicons often duplicate what is found in Modern Hebrew dictionaries unless there is a contextual reason in the Biblical text to change that meaning or, there is a theological (bias) reason for changing that definition. I believe this is due to two factors. First, no ancient dictionary was written to provide us the meaning of Hebrew words therefore; we are left with the modern Hebrew dictionaries

to define the words in the Bible. Secondly, modern Biblical Hebrew scholars are western thinkers and view the Hebrew language from that perspective matching the perspective of the modern Hebrew language and its dictionaries.

All scholars and students of the Hebrew bible are handicapped from the start for the reasons provided above. I was in this same dilemma until I heard a teaching by Dr. Fleming on how the Ancient Hebrew language really worked and how differently their way of thinking was from ours. Other resources I stumbled upon was a book titled *How the Hebrew Language Grew* by Edward Horowitz and *Hebrew thought compared with Greek* by Thorleif Boman. With this little bit of knowledge I started looking for these "ancient" definitions and the best place was within the words themselves. By studying the roots of words and words related to those roots the original concrete Hebraic definitions can be found.

Needless to say, there are only a small handful of people (today and in the past) working on the Hebrew language from this perspective and we are digging in virgin soil and each is approaching the problem from different angles. Hopefully one day the Academic world will grab a hold of this new perspective of an ancient language.

Verse of the Month – Exodus 20:12

By: Jeff A. Benner

כִּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמְךָ לְמַעַן יָאָרְכוּן יְמֶיךָ עַל
הָאָדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ נָתַן לָךְ:

Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which
Jehovah thy God giveth thee. (ASV)

כִּבֵּד (ka-beyd)

This verb means “to be heavy” but is written in the piel form which slightly changes the meaning to “give honor” in the sense of giving weight to another person. This verb is also written in the imperative form, sort of like a command - give honor.

אֶת (et)

This word identifies the direct object of the previous verb.

אָבִיךָ (a-viy-kha)

The base word is אב (av) meaning “father.” The suffix ם (iy) means “of” (only a few Hebrew words actually use this suffix but is only implied in most other words). The

suffix ך (kha) is the possessive pronoun you. This whole word means “father of you” or “your father” and is the object of the previous verb.

וְאֵת (v'et)

Again we have the word אֵת which identifies another direct object of the preceding verb and is prefixed with the ו meaning “and.”

אִמְךָ (i-mey-kha)

The base word is אִמָּ (eym) meaning “mother.” The suffix ך (kha) is the possessive pronoun you. This whole word means “mother of you” or “your mother” and is another object of the previous verb.

לְמַעַן (le-ma-an)

This word can mean “on account of” or “in order that.”

יֵאָרְכוּן (ya-ar-khun)

The base word is the verb אָרַךְ (arakh) meaning “to be long.” The prefix י with the suffix וּ identify the verb tense as imperfect - will be long - and the subject of the verb as masculine plural - they will be long. The suffix ן is what is called the paragodic nun and changes the meaning from “they will be long” to “they may be long.”

יָמֶיךָ (ya-mey-kha)

The base word is the noun יוֹם (yom) meaning “day.” It is written in the plural form יָמִים (yamiym) but because it is suffixed by the pronoun ך, meaning “of you,” the final ם is dropped from the word. This whole word means “your days.” This is the subject of the previous verb.

עַל (al)

This word means over or upon.

הָאָדָמָה (ha-a-da-mah)

The base word is אֲדָמָה (adamah) meaning “ground” and is prefixed by the ה (ha) meaning “the” - the ground.

אֲשֶׁר (a-sheer)

This word is the relative particle meaning “which,” “who” or “that.”

יְהוָה (YHVH)

This is the name of God usually pronounced as “Yahweh.”

אֱלֹהֵיךָ (eh-lo-hey-kha)

The base word is אֱלֹהַ (elo'ah) meaning "One of power and authority" - a judge, but is often used for another name for God. This word includes the suffix ים (iyim) indicating a plural noun - judges. The suffix כָּ (kha) is the second person pronoun - your Elohiym. Because the suffix כָּ (kha) is added to this word the ים is dropped from אֱלֹהֵיךָ.

נָתַן (no-teyn)

This verb means "to give" and is written in the participle form - giving.

לְךָ (lakh)

This is the prefix לְ meaning "to" with the suffix כָּ meaning "you" - to you.

The following is a literal rendering of this verse from its Hebraic meaning.

Give honor to your father and mother in order that your days will be long upon
the ground which Yahweh your Elohiym is giving to you.

In following issues we will continue with this chapter.

Mechanical Translation Excerpt - Genesis 3:8-19

8 and they heard the voice of "YHWH [He exists]" of "Elohiym [Powers]" walking himself in the garden for the wind of the day and the human and his woman withdrew themselves from the face of "YHWH [He exists]" of "Elohiym [Powers]" in the midst of the tree of the garden, **9** and "YHWH [He exists]" of "Elohiym [Powers]" called out to the human and he said to him, where are you, **10** and he said, I heard your voice in the garden and feared given that I was naked and I withdrew, **11** and he said, who told to you that you were naked, are you eating from the tree which I directed you to not eat from, **12** and the human said, the woman which you gave by me, she gave to me from the tree and I ate, **13** and "YHWH [He exists]" of "Elohiym [Powers]" said to the woman, what is this you did and the woman said, the serpent had deceived me and I ate, **14** and "YHWH [He exists]" of "Elohiym [Powers]" said to the serpent, given that you did this, spitted upon are you from all of the beasts and from all of the living ones of the field, upon the belly you will walk and powder you will eat all of the days of your life, **15** and hostility I sat down between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed, he will fall upon you a head and you will fall upon him a heel, **16** To the woman he said, I will make a great increase of your hardship and your pregnancy, in distressing pain you will bring forth sons and to your man is your following and he will regulate in you, **17** and to the human he said, given that you heard the voice of your woman and you ate from the tree which I directed you saying, you will not eat from him, spitted upon is the ground on account of you, in your hardship you will eat of her all of the days of your life, **18** and brambles and thistles she will make spring up for you and you will eat the herbs of the

field, **19** in the sweat of your nostrils you will eat bread, until you turn back to the ground given that from her you were taken, given that you are powder and to powder you will turn back,

For details on this new translation see the web site at
<http://www.mechanical-translation.org>

AHRC Website Excerpt – Adjectives

This excerpt is from the new “Learn Hebrew Lessons” available on the web site.

An adjective is a word that provides description to a noun. For instance, the Hebrew word **טוב** is a common adjective such as in the phrase **יום טוב** (a good day, 1 Samuel 25:8). Notice that in Hebrew the adjective follows the noun it is describing. If the noun is preceded by the article **ה** (as a prefix) then, the adjective will as well, such as in **ההר הטוב** (the good mountain, Deuteronomy 3:25).

The adjective will also match the gender of the noun. In the last two examples, the word **יום** and **הר** are masculine nouns therefore, the masculine form **טוב** is used. The word **אֶרֶץ** (land) is a feminine word so the feminine **טובה** is used in the phrase **אֶרֶץ טובה** (a good land, Exodus 3:8). The adjective will also match the number (masculine or singular) of the noun. In each of our previous examples the singular form of the word **טוב** is being used because the noun it is describing is also singular. In the phrase **בתים טובים** (good houses, Deuteronomy 8:12) the word **בית** (house) is used in the plural form therefore, the adjective is as well.

In the phrase **המלך טוב** the word **מלך** (king) is prefixed by the article **ה** (the) but, the word **טוב** is not. In this case the word **טוב** is not being used as an adjective but as a noun and should therefore be translated as “the king is good” or “the king is pleased” (Nehemiah 2:5).

It should be kept in mind that Biblical Hebrew does not really like adjectives but instead prefers to provide description by using verbs since the Ancient Hebrew mind describes things by their function and purpose rather than their appearance.

Some common Biblical adjectives are as follows.

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Fem.	Masc.	Meaning
טובה	טוב	good
רעה	רע	bad, evil
גדולה	גדול	great, large
קטנה	קטן	small, little
זאת	זה	This
היא	הוא	That
אל / אלה	אל / אלה	These, Those

This article is located on the web site at
http://www.ancient-hebrew.org/43_lesson01.html

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