

REDRESSING THE CALAMITY IN THE TRANSMISSION OF THE BIBLE

Alexander Rofé

Harsh expressions and prophecies of doom against Israel troubled scribes, readers and interpreters. Therefore they resorted to various devices in order to redress the calamity. (a) In the Talmud this was done by midrashic reinterpretation. A case in point is the homily in bab. Berachot 4b on Amos 5:2. (b) Jewish liturgy, when it found ruthless statements at the end of a biblical book, repeated the preceding verse in the synagogal service. This is the case with the end of Isaiah, the Twelve and Lamentations. (c) The editors of biblical writs endeavored to put consolation notes at the end. This is evident in the books of Kings, Chronicles and in the prophetic books such as Hosea and Haggai. When authentic restoration words were not found, they were supplied by the editors: Joel, Amos, Micah, Zephaniah. Deut. 30:1-10 was transferred from its original position after 28:68 to its present place, in order to respond to the awful prediction of 29:21-27. (d) Interpolations serving the same intent are extant towards the end of Leviticus 26 and abound in Jeremiah's poetry (4:27; 5:10, 18; 30:10-11; 46:27-28) and prose (44:14b, 28a). A. Geiger even surmised that Jeremiah 15:13-14 was a restatement of 17:3-4 aiming at removing the affliction from Israel to its enemies. Amos 9:8b mitigates the doom expressed in vs. 8a. 1Kgs 11:39 sets a limit to the humbling of David's offspring. (e) On the textual level, the same tendency shows in 1 Kings 9:8. A primary reading לעיין 'for ruins', paraphrasing Micah 3:12 and Jeremiah 26:18, was corrected into עליין 'sublime, exalted'. Moreover, the self deprecation in David's oath in 1 Samuel 25:22 (LXXB) was alleviated in the MT by the introduction of one word: איבוי 'the enemies of'.

THE TEXTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE *AGGADAH* OF
RAV ADA B. ABBA (B BB 22A) IN LIGHT OF THE EVIDENCE
OF AN EARLY GENIZAH FRAGMENT

Yonatan Feintuch

This article discusses the *aggadah* of Rav Ada b. Abba (bBB 22a), which, as it appears in most textual witnesses, is a lengthy narrative, composed of several stories and statements of scholars. The *aggadah* revolves around Rav Ada's death following his disrespectful and offensive behavior toward fellow and superior rabbis. The article discusses the textual development of the *aggadah*, in light of the various textual witnesses, and especially in light of the evidence of an early Genizah fragment, which sheds new light on the textual history of this *aggadah*. The final part of the article discusses two terms that relate to Babylonian institutions of learning and teaching Torah, the *Siyuma* and the *Resh Kallah*, which appear in some of the versions of *aggadah*.

QINAH POEMS FOR THE 10TH OF TEVET AND THE 17TH OF TAMUZ

Avi Shmidman

It is well known that according to the early Palestinian custom, *qinah* poems were recited on the Ninth of Av in the fourteenth benediction of the *Amidah* (the Benediction of Jerusalem). However, heretofore, it was assumed that this custom was limited to the Ninth of Av alone. In the present study, I present evidence from three Cairo-Genizah manuscripts demonstrating similar use of *qinah* poems on two additional fast days: On the Tenth of Tevet and on the Seventeenth of Tammuz. This finding is particularly significant in light of a recent article by Shulamit Elizur in which she suggested that the early Palestinian poets did not compose *selihah* poems for the minor fast days. Elizur's study left open the question of how in fact the early Palestinian poets directed their poetic efforts for the minor fast days. The findings of the present study suggest that the early Palestinian poets composed *qinah* poems for the minor fasts, just as they did for the Ninth of Av.

KINGDOMS AND THEIR HARSH DECREES IN
MEDIEVAL ITALIAN JEWISH POETRY

Avraham Fraenkel

This article describes different nations and their harsh decrees, as reflected in medieval Italian Jewish poetry (פייטנות), composed in the ninth, tenth and eleventh centuries. We differentiate between poetry of southern Italy, which was Byzantine at that time, where the Jews were suffering from religious pressure and from frequent Arab conquests, and northern, Catholic Italy, where Jews experienced fewer attacks and less persecution. The division of Italy into several Christian kingdoms, as well as the Arab conquests in the south of Italy, are reflected in several *piyyutim*. Some hitherto unidentified poems with particular historic tone and content can be now identified as medieval Italian poems. Italian heritage is sometimes also compared to the Ashkenazic and French heritage, which inherited many *piyyutim* from medieval Italy.

‘MOST OF THE ERRANT ERR IN *MALKHUT*’:
THE WORSHIP OF THE *SHEKHINAH* IN EARLY KABBALAH

Tzahi Weiss

In many Kabbalistic treatises, the dread of *cutting the shoots* or the belief in two heavenly powers accompanies the depiction of the female divine presence: The *Shekhinah*. At the core of this apprehension stands the presumption that accentuating the independent qualities of the *Shekhinah* might give rise to a fallacy having both theological and ritual ramifications. Theologically, the fallacy might undermine the foundations of monotheism. Ritually, worship of the *Shekhinah* might subvert or even replace the worship of God.

The present article demonstrates that this concern was not solely a theoretical-literary one, but rather reflected the contextual theological tension within which some early Kabbalistic literature was written. The possibility that some Kabbalists feared *cutting the shoots* because of a contemporary theological tension might explicate puzzling characteristics of the *Shekhinah* in early Kabbalistic writings: First: why did the Kabbalists disseminate belief in the *Shekhinah* as a feminine divine presence – an idea that they did not event, though it had not been developed until their time – while they clearly express fear of the very same belief? Second: why did the Kabbalists depict the character of the *Shekhinah* at length while concurrently contending that the *Shekhinah* is not a real divine presence and has nothing of her own? In responding to these questions we demonstrate that many of the Kabbalists not only promoted and depicted the concept of the *Shekhinah* as a divine feminine presence, but in fact they sought to exert control over certain theological and mythical conceptions of her character, which were cultivated outside their own circles or on their margins.

RABBI SIMCHA BUNIM OF PRZYSUCHA

Tsippi Kauffman

Within Polish Hasidism, Przysucha has been repeatedly depicted as a 'rational' or 'reactionary' faction, which avoided miraculous and magic leadership, and minimized the place of Kabbalistic knowledge and practice.

Recently it has been argued that this was not the case, and the common image was exaggerated and developed only in later accounts. According to this view, various authors (Hasidim, Maskilim, etc.) influenced each other and built images suitable to their own different agendas.

In the present paper I suggest a reconstruction of the image of Rabbi Simcha Bunim's Hasidism. The research carefully examines the most reliable and earliest sources in order to paint an authentic picture of Przysucha. The paper focuses on Kabbalistic and mystical aspects of Przysucha, especially on the ideal of '*Midat Ayin*' (=the Kabbala's feature of nothingness/infinity), and on the practical ways suggested by Rabbi Simcha Bunim to achieve it.