

SUMMARIES

Baruch Kehat

The Bikkurim Offering and the Omer Sacrifice

Following Chazal's description of the Omer sacrifice, the majority of traditional commentators identify it with the gift offerings of the first fruits (Bikkurim). Accordingly, the word Omer is explained as a volume measure unit – a tenth of the ephah. This paper presents the difficulties with this identification, leading to Ibn Ezra's explanation that the Bikkurim is a gift offering of the individual. Other commentators suggest that the Omer is a wheat sheaf. According to this last explanation, Bikkurim and Omer are separate offerings. By combining the two offerings, the Rabbis enabled the layity to participate in this special sacrifice. Moreover, this explanation clarifies the association between the Omer and the showbread. The wheat sheaf that is the Omer is brought at the beginning of the harvest representing its raw produce, while bread – the finished product – is offered at the peak of the harvest season.

Baruch Alster

The Torah Cycle: Study, Recitation and Memorization in Deuteronomy

The book of Deuteronomy includes content that each Israelite is required to study, recite, and memorize. The passages discussing this issue appear prominently in this Chumash. This paper attempts to connect the different materials which require study, establishing a method to systematically describe the book's general attitude to learning. According to the author, Deuteronomy contains two genres to be studied: commandments details and the motivation for obeying them. Study of both is supposed to motivate their observance, which is a precondition for receiving divine blessing in the land of Israel. As the agricultural blessing must be renewed each year, Deuteronomy proposes various mechanisms to ensure the perpetuation of study in order to ensure the continued divine blessing on the land.

Boaz Shpigel

Why was not Haran Mentioned in Joshua's Last Speech? – Haran in the Eyes of Rabbinical Literature

In his last speech, Joshua turned to the people and said: “Your Fathers dwelt in olden times beyond the River (Euphrates), Terach, the father of Abraham and the father of Nachor, and they served other gods” (Joshua 24:2).

This paper discusses the question of why Joshua ignored the fact that Terach was also the father of Haran. Firstly, this question is presented in detail and is reinforced by Biblical and Talmudic sources showing that Haran had a significant part in the history of Israel. Then two groups of answers to this question are presented and elaborated upon. The first group incorporates those answers that appear explicitly in the Rishonim and Ach'ronim literature, and these are further divided to three sub-groups. The second group contains three additional answers garnered from early commentaries, even though they did not relate explicitly to this question. This study leads to various understandings of the Joshua verse. Moreover, the image of Haran is illuminated and many details are revealed regarding his origin, his history and his descendants.

Ephraim Bezalel Halivni

Rabbi Mordechai Breuer, Editor of the Bible: Several Questions

Rabbi Mordechai Breuer published an edition of the Tanakh based on the reliable Tiberian manuscript. He explained at length his method for determining the correct text in his book *The Aleppo Codex and the Accepted Text of the Bible*. However, there are some issues about his methodology that he does not address. One issue concerns the reading of the minority of the manuscripts. Rabbi Breuer adopted the reading of the majority of the manuscripts. He often labels the minority reading a ‘mistake’, but sometimes he labels it an ‘alternate tradition’, even though he states that there is only one Masoretic text, i.e. the one version put out by the Tiberian Masorites. The second issue concerns the Aleppo codex. Rabbi Breuer writes that this manuscript “represents the Masoretic text of the Tanakh”, yet he himself acknowledges that there are errors in it. The third issue concerns places where there is no majority reading. Rabbi Breuer does not indicate what to do in such cases.

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These points in Rabbi Breuer's method need to be clarified. It is possible that in the course of clarifying these issues it will be necessary to change his decisions in a few verses. However, overall his method – checking the manuscripts and the Masoretic notes – is valid.

Ezra Chwat

A Remnant of an Early Medieval Commentary on Minor Prophets found in a Binding Fragment

A manuscript fragment recently found in reuse as binding material along with fragments of other early-medieval European Rabbinic treasures, presents an antique commentary on Minor Prophets. One folio on Micah 4-5, and the other on Amos 7. These remnants are published here for the first time. The commentator appears to be oblivious to the commonly-known works, possibly preceding them, although some parallels can be drawn. In the style of pre-medieval exegesis, he weaves his comments into the Biblical text. He focuses on the simple meaning of the text, depending primarily on biblical parallels, yet he often employs Talmud, Midrash or Targum for lexical comparison.

Ayelet Seidler

Poet and Exegete – Literary Aspects in Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra's Commentary on Psalms

Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra (?1090-1165) wrote prolifically in diverse areas of scholarship, and is considered one of the greatest Spanish poets of his time. Nevertheless, except for a few discussions pertaining the subject of poetic meter in his book on grammar, *Sefer Tzachot*, and his commentary on Eccl 5:1, it seems that Ibn Ezra never addressed in writing the literary devices that characterized either the poetry of his time or biblical poetry. It seems as if his knowledge and skills as a poet find no expression in his commentary.

In this paper I argue that Ibn Ezra does indicate literary devices, mainly in his commentary to the Psalms, by using the terms 'כנגד' (-corresponding to) and 'הפך' (-opposite). By utilising these terms Ibn Ezra points to linguistic affinities that in his eyes bear literary value and expose the contents and messages of the Psalm.

Amos Frisch

**An Additional Chapter in Nechama Leibovitz's Approach:
'Leading Word'**

The aim of the present paper is to formulate Nechama Leibovitz' approach to the 'leading word' as a literary device in the Bible. In the first part of the paper three references on the subject by Leibovitz are analyzed, as well as the theoretical background for evaluating the leading word as an important component for Bible understanding.

Twenty five examples for 'leading word' are examined in the second part, grouped by their Biblical mode of appearance: the 'frequent leading word', the 'rare' and the 'complex'.

The paper concludes that Nechama was not the first to introduce the concept of the 'leading word'. Moreover, the majority of the examples dealt by her are already mentioned by previous commentators. Yet she made the 'leading word' an important tool in her arsenal for understanding the Bible.