Daf Ditty Nedarim 37:פִּסּוּק טְעָמִים

בעיין שימור ולמ"ד שכר שימור מ"ט לא
אמר שכר פיסוק טעמים קסבר (שכר)פיסק
טעמים דאורייתא הוא *דא"ר איקא בר אבין
אמר רב חננאל אמר רב מ"ד °ויקראו בספר
תורת האלהים מפריש ושום שכל ויבינו
במקרא ויקראו בספר תורת האלהים זה
מקרא מפורש זה תרגום ושום שכל אלו
הפסיקים ויבינו במקרא זה פיסוק טעמים

Jastrow

וּלְמַאן דְּאָמַר שְׂכַר פִּיסּוּק טְעָמִים, מַאי טַעְמָא לָא אָמַר שְׂכַר שִׁימּוּר? קָסָבַר בָּנוֹת מִי קָא בָּעְיָין שִׁימּוּר?

And according to the one who says that the payment for teaching Bible is **payment** for teaching **punctuation** of the text with **cantillation notes,** and therefore in the case of one for whom benefit from another is forbidden by vow, that other person may not teach his sons and daughters Bible, **what is the reason** that he **did not say** that it is **payment** for **watching** the children? The Gemara answers: **He holds: Do girls need watching?** They stay home and are not accustomed to going out.

וּלְמַאן דְּאָמַר שְׂכַר שִׁימּוּר, מַאי טַעְמָא לָא אָמַר שְׂכַר פִּיסּוּק טְעָמִים? קָסָבַר (שְׂכַר) פִּיסּוּק טְעָמִים דְּאוֹרָיְיתָא הוּא.

The Gemara asks: **And according to the one who says** that the payment for teaching Bible is **payment** for **watching** the children, **what is the reason** that he **did not say** that it is **payment** for teaching **punctuation** of the text with **cantillation notes?** The Gemara answers: **He holds** that **the punctuation** of the text with **cantillation notes is by Torah law;** therefore, it is included in the prohibition against taking payment for teaching Torah.

RASHI

שכר פיסוק טעמים דאורייתא הוא - ולא מצי למשקל עלייהו אגרא:

Steinsaltz

ושואלים: **ולמאן דאמר** [ולדעת מי שאומר] כי זהו שכר שימור, **מאי טעמא** [מה טעם] **לא אמר שכר פיסוק טעמים?** ומשיבים: **קסבר** [סבור הוא] כי **(שכר) פיסוק טעמים דאורייתא** [מן התורה] **הוא.** כלומר, אין זו תוספת הוראה שאינה שייכת לתורה, אלא היא חלק מן התורה עצמה ועל כך בודאי יש איסור לקבל שכר.

17. See *Ran.* R' Yochanan, however, maintains that the cantillation of Scriptural verses is not of Biblical origin but is a later, Rabbinic, innovation (*Ran* to 37a ד״ה ורבי יוחנן אמר; *Tosafos* and *Rosh* ibid. ד״ה שכר; cf. *Chasam Sofer* ibid.). Cantillation is therefore not פיסוק טעמים; encompassed within the "*laws and statutes*" which Moses taught us, and which we are commanded to similarly teach others — without accepting payment (see previous *amud*). Some authorities thus conclude that one may charge a fee for teaching any laws not taught by Moses, i.e. any decrees instituted by the Rabbis (*Hagahos Maimoniyos, Hil. Talmud Torah* 1:5, citing *Rabbeinu Simchah; Rama, Yoreh Deah* 246:5). Others differentiate between cantillation and Rabbinic legislation. Rabbinic decrees, though instituted after the Revelation at Sinai, are nonetheless part of the body of Torah "*laws and statutes*," and must not be taught for a fee. Cantillation, however, is not actual law. [Teaching cantillation is encompassed within the teaching of "*laws and statutes*" only if we maintain, as does Rav, that the Biblical "*laws and statutes*" were originally dictated and recorded in cantillated form] (*Keren Orah; Aruch HaShulchan* ibid. 18).

The Gemara cites a Posuk in Nechemyah as פיסוק טעמים דאורייתא that רב's source

וַיִּקְרְאוּ בַסֵּפֶר — זה מקרא
תּוֹרַת הָאֱלֹהִים
מְפֹרָשׁ — זה תרגום
וְשׂוֹם שֶׂכֶל — אלו הפסוקים *The separation of the Pesukim*
וַיָּבִינוּ בַמִּקְרָא — זה פיסוק טעמים

Reading the Pesukim

ואמרי לה - אלו המסורות
This refers to חסרות ויתירות, *the words that are missing letters, or that have additional letters*

ויקראו בספר תורת האלהים

זה מקרא

Refers to the actual reading of the Pesukim;

The word

מפורש

זה תרגום

Refers to Targum אונקלוס

The words

ושום שכל

אלו הפסוקים

Refers to the separation of the Pesukim;

The words

ויבינו במקרא

זה פיסוק טעמים

Refers to the Trop

ואמרי לה

אלו המסורות

Some say this refers to חסרות ויתירות, the words that are missing letters, or that have additional letters. (כ"כ בפי׳

(הרא"ש)

18. A consequence of the dispute between Rav and R' Yochanan is that according to Rav, who maintains that a tutor of Scripture is paid only for safeguarding his pupils, one may not charge an adult pupil of Scripture, because an adult does not require safekeeping. Whereas according to R' Yochanan, who maintains that a tutor receives payment for teaching cantillation, an adult pupil may also be charged a fee. The halachah follows R' Yochanan in his disputes with Rav (*Beitzah* 4b). *Rambam* (*Hil. Nedarim* 6:7) thus rules that Scripture may be taught for a fee [and that the subject of a *neder* therefore may not be taught Scripture for free], without distinguishing between an adult pupil and a pupil who is a child (*Ran* above, 37a ד״ה ורבי יוחנן אמר; see also *Rambam Hil. Talmud Torah* 1:7; *Yerushalmi*).

דְּאָמַר רַב אִיקָא בַּר אָבִין אָמַר רַב חֲנַנְאֵל אָמַר רַב: מַאי דִּכְתִיב "וַיִּקְרְאוּ בַסֵּפֶר בְּתוֹרַת הָאֱלֹהִים מְפֹרָשׁ וְשׂוֹם שֶׂכֶל וַיָּבִינוּ בַּמִּקְרָא". "וַיִּקְרְאוּ בַסֵּפֶר בְּתוֹרַת הָאֱלֹהִים" — זֶה מִקְרָא, "מְפֹרָשׁ" — זֶה תַּרְגוּם, "וְשׂוֹם שֶׂכֶל" — אֵלּוּ הַפְּסוּקִים. "וַיָּבִינוּ בַּמִּקְרָא" — זֶה פִּיסוּק טְעָמִים. וְאָמְרִי לַהּ: אֵלּוּ הַמְּסוֹרוֹת.

This is **as Rav Ika bar Avin said** that **Rav Ḥananel said** that **Rav said: What is** the meaning of that **which is written:**

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ח וַיִּקְרְאוּ בַסֵּפֶר בְּתוֹרַת הָאֱלֹהִים, מְפֹרָשׁ; וְשׂוֹם שֶׂכֶל, וַיָּבִינוּ בַּמִּקְרָא. {ס}	8 And they read in the book, in the Law of God, distinctly; and they gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. {S}

Neh 8:8

"And they read in the book, in the Torah of God, distinctly; and they gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading"

The Gemara explains: "*They read in the book, in the Torah of God*"; **that is the Bible.** *"Distinctly";* **that is** the Aramaic **translation.** *"And they gave the sense*"; **these are the** division into **verses.** "*And caused them to understand the reading";* **this is punctuation** of the text with **cantillation notes,** which facilitate the understanding of the verses.

And some say: These are the traditions that determine the proper vocalization of the Bible.

Rav holds that the cantillation notes are an integral part of Torah study.
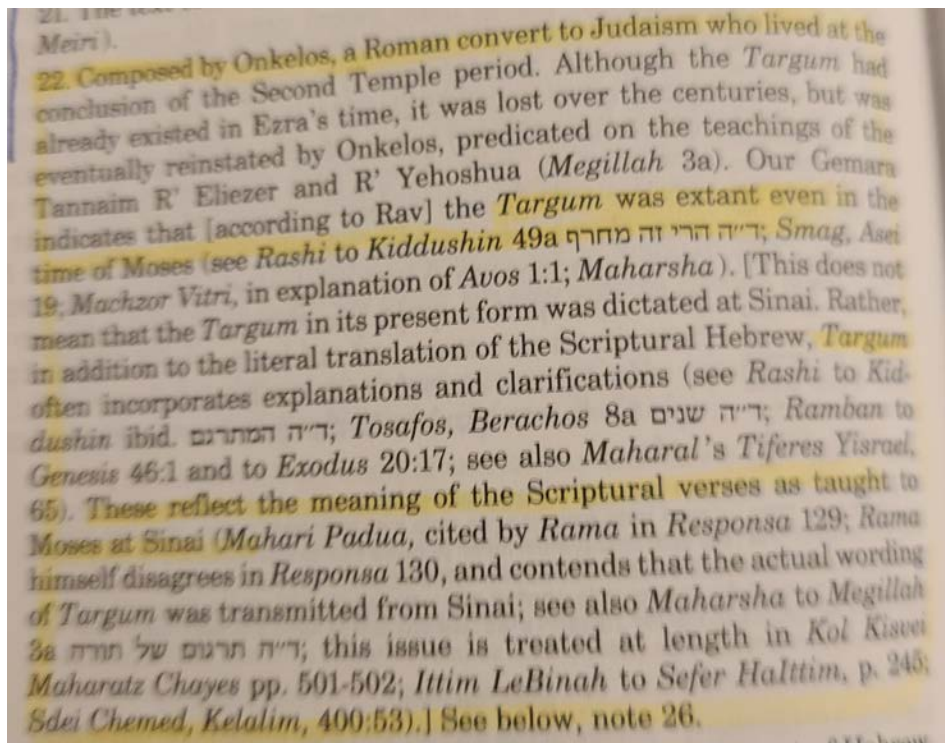
מקרא סופרים

The way one reads the Torah with טעמים, trop.

ועיטור סופרים

The excessive Torah words
that enhance the initial words;

וקריין ולא כתיבן

The words read aloud, but not written;

וכתיבן ולא קריין

The written words that are not read aloud;

הלכה למשה מסיני

רבי יצחק says that

מקרא סופרים

The way one reads the Torah with טעמים, trop.

ועיטור סופרים

And the excessive Torah words that enhance the initial words;

וקריין ולא כתיבן

And the words read aloud, but NOT written;

וכתיבן ולא קריין

And the written words that are NOT read aloud;

הלכה למשה מסיני

Were all given to Moshe Rabeinu at Har Sinai.

26. See 37a, beginning of note 6. The cantillation of a verse indicates its proper punctuation. Cantillation accents fall into two classes: *disjunctive accents* (such as זָקֵף קָטֹן and אֶתְנַחְתָּא) mark breaks between phrases or clauses; *conjunctive accents* (such as מֵרְכָא and קַדְמָא) join words into phrases. By expressing the grouping of words in a verse, cantillation accents indicate the verse's meaning (see *Rosh*). Indeed, the Gemara in *Chagigah* (6b) cites a verse whose meaning is ambiguous and can be understood in either of two ways, depending on how it should be cantillated (*Ran;* see also *Yoma* 52b, with *Ritva* and *Maharsha*).

The Gemara has proved that *Nehemiah* alludes to cantillation. This allusion actually implies not only that cantillation was already practiced in the time of Ezra, but that the Torah was originally transmitted to Moses at Sinai with its cantillation (*Machzor Vitri*, in explanation of *Avos* 1:1; see *Zohar* 2, 205:2). For a central tenet of Judaism establishes that following the transmission of the Torah to Moses, ''no prophet [or prophetic book] is authorized to innovate'' (*Shabbos* 104a). Thus, any law derived from *Prophets* (*Neviim*) or *Writings* (*Kesuvim*) must have been transmitted orally in an unbroken tradition from Sinai, and ultimately transcribed in the later book (*Machzor Vitri* ibid.; see *Yoma* 71b, and *Sanhedrin* 22b, in reference to certain laws first mentioned in *Ezekiel;* see also *Ramban, Sefer HaMitzvos, Second Principle* 27b-28a). This is the basis of Rav's view that cantillation is encompassed within the ''*laws and statutes*'' imparted by Moses (*Kol Kisvei Maharatz Chayes* pp. 499-500).

אָמַר רַבִּי יִצְחָק: מִקְרָא סוֹפְרִים, וְעִיטּוּר סוֹפְרִים, וְקַרְיָין וְלָא כְּתִיבָן, וּכְתִיבָן וְלָא קַרְיָין — הֲלָכָה לְמֹשֶׁה מִסִּינַי.

On a related note, **Rabbi Yitzḥak said: The vocalization of the scribes, and the ornamentation of the scribes, and** the verses with words that are **read but not written, and** those that are **written but not read** are all *halakha* transmitted **to Moses from Sinai.**

27. *Rosh; Tosafos.* There are no dedicated vowel letters in Hebrew; every letter in the alphabet can represent a consonant. However, certain consonants are also often used as silent letters to represent vowel sounds: *vav* to indicate חוֹלָם ("o" as in *go*) or שׁוּרֵק ("u" as in *flute*); *yud* to indicate חִירֵק ("ee" as in *seen*) or צֵירֵה ("ay" as in *say*); *aleph* or *hei* to indicate פַּתָח ("a" as in *father*, Ashkenazic pronunciation) or קָמֵץ ("u" as in *but*). Spelling that employs the relevant silent letters to represent their associated vowel sounds is known as *full script;* spelling that indicates only the consonant sounds (דָּוִד, not דָּוִיד; אָקֻם, not אָקוּם; שֻׁר, not שׁוּר) is known as *partial script.*

The Torah commonly employs both full script and partial script; often the same word is spelled in some verses in full script, and in other verses in partial script. The differing spellings are not arbitrary. Rather, the Torah's choice of full or partial script is precise and reflects an underlying meaning of the text (see *Succah* 6b, and *Rosh Hashanah* 25a, where the Gemara derives practical laws from specific usages of partial script; many additional examples of exegeses from the mode of spelling can be found in *Midrash Chaseiros ViYeseiros,* printed in *Otzar Midrashim,* pp. 194-201; see also *Rashi* to *Pesachim* 3b (ד"ה רכבת). Thus, by paying heed to the various spellings, Ezra and the assembly better "*understood the reading*" (*Maharal, Tiferes Yisrael,* end of Ch. 65).

An unbroken tradition preserved the correct spellings as they were dictated at Sinai (*Radvaz, Responsa* 1, 20), from Moses down to Ezra, and from Ezra down to the *Masoretes,* a group of Tiberian Sages who lived in the period of the late Amoraim and early Geonim, and who formally recorded the accurate orthography and vocalization of the Scriptures (see *R' Eliyah Bachur's Masores HaMasorah,* beginning of third intoduction). In the words of *Rambam* in his commentary to *Megillah* 31b: "It is a known, definite, and undisputed fact that the entire Torah, from '*In the beginning*' (*Genesis* 1:1) to '*before the eyes of all Israel*' (*Deuteronomy* 34:12), was written by Moses our Teacher as dictated by God. A word that God told him to write in full script, he wrote in full script; [a word that God told him to write] in partial script, he wrote in partial script." See also *Ramban's Commentary on the Torah,* introduction to *Genesis.*

R' Yochanan, who maintains that cantillation is not of Biblical origin, accords with this alternate interpretation of "***and they understood the reading***" (*Tosafos;* cf. *Meiri; Ritva*).

מִקְרָא סוֹפְרִים: אֶרֶץ, שָׁמַיִם, מִצְרָיִם.

The Gemara elaborates: **The vocalization of the scribes** is referring to words that when they appear at the end of phrases, clauses, or verses, their vocalization changes, e.g., *eretz* with a *segol* under the letter *alef* to **aretz** with a *kamatz* under the letter *alef*; *shamayim* with a *pataḥ* under the

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letter *mem*, to **shamayim** with a *kamatz* under the letter *mem*; and *mitzrayim* with a *pataḥ* under the letter *reish*, to **mitzrayim** with a *kamatz* under the letter *reish*.

28. The correct vocalizations were preserved in a tradition handed down from the Sages of antiquity (*Ran*), the People of the Great Assembly (אַנְשֵׁי כְּנֶסֶת הַגְּדוֹלָה) who flourished at the beginning of the Second Temple period (*Meiri*), and who were surpassingly erudite in the orthography and pronunciation of Scripture. They were known as סוֹפְרִים Sofrim—usually translated "Scribes" but also connoting "those who count" — because "they would count all the letters of the Torah" and could precisely mark the Torah's halfway points, whether calculated by the total number of letters, of words, or of verses (see *Kiddushin* 30a, with *Rashi* ד"ה נקראו).

עִיטוּר סוֹפְרִים: ״אַחַר תַּעֲבֹרוּ״, ״אַחַר תֵּלֵךְ״, ״אַחַר תֵּאָסֵף״, ״קִדְּמוּ שָׁרִים אַחַר נֹגְנִים״, ״צִדְקָתְךָ כְּהַרְרֵי אֵל״.

The ornamentation of the scribes are expressions that the scribes understood in a manner that differs slightly from its plain understanding. For example:

ה וְאֶקְחָה פַת-לֶחֶם וְסַעֲדוּ לִבְּכֶם, אַחַר תַּעֲבֹרוּ--כִּי-עַל-כֵּן עֲבַרְתֶּם, עַל-עַבְדְּכֶם; וַיֹּאמְרוּ, כֵּן תַּעֲשֶׂה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ.	**5** And I will fetch a morsel of bread and stay ye your heart; after that ye shall pass on; forasmuch as ye are come to your servant.' And they said: 'So do, as thou hast said.'

Gen 18:5

"Then [aḥar] go on"

נה וַיֹּאמֶר אָחִיהָ וְאִמָּהּ, תֵּשֵׁב הַנַּעֲרָ אִתָּנוּ יָמִים אוֹ עָשׂוֹר; אַחַר, תֵּלֵךְ.	**55 And her brother and her mother said: 'Let the damsel abide with us a few days, at the least ten; after that she shall go.'**

Gen 24:55

"then [aḥar] she will go"

ב נְקֹם, נִקְמַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, מֵאֵת, הַמִּדְיָנִים; אַחַר, תֵּאָסֵף אֶל-עַמֶּיךָ.	**2** 'Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites; afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people.'

Num 31:2

"afterward [aḥar] you will be gathered"

Hebrew	English
כו קִדְּמוּ שָׁרִים, אַחַר נֹגְנִים; בְּתוֹךְ עֲלָמוֹת, תּוֹפֵפוֹת.	**26** The singers go before, the minstrels follow after, in the midst of damsels playing upon timbrels.

<div align="right">

Ps 68:26

</div>

"the singers go before; the minstrels follow after [aḥar]"

Hebrew	English
ז צִדְקָתְךָ, כְּהַרְרֵי-אֵל--מִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ, תְּהוֹם רַבָּה; אָדָם וּבְהֵמָה תוֹשִׁיעַ יְהוָה.	**7** Thy righteousness is like the mighty mountains; Thy judgments are like the great deep; man and beast Thou preservest, O LORD.

<div align="right">

Ps 36:7

</div>

"Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains"

> קָרְיָין וְלָא כְּתִיבָן: "פְּרָת" דְּ"בִלְכְתּוֹ", "אִישׁ" דְּ"כַאֲשֶׁר יִשְׁאַל אִישׁ בִּדְבַר הָאֱלֹהִים", "בָּאִים" דְּ"נִבְנְתָה", "לָהּ" דְּ"פְלֵיטָה", "אֵת" דְּ"הֻגֵּד הֻגַּד", "אֵלַי" דְּ"הַגֹּרֶן", "אֵלַי" דְּ"הַשְּׂעֹרִים", הָלֵין קָרְיָין וְלָא כְּתִבָן.

Words that are **read but not written** are included in the *halakha* transmitted to Moses from Sinai. For example, the word:

Hebrew	English
ג וַיַּךְ דָּוִד, אֶת-הֲדַדְעֶזֶר בֶּן-רְחֹב מֶלֶךְ צוֹבָה, בְּלֶכְתּוֹ, לְהָשִׁיב יָדוֹ בַּנָּהָר- (פְּרָת).	**3** David smote also Hadadezer the son of Rehob, king of Zobah, as he went to establish his dominion at the river Euphrates.

<div align="right">

II Sam 8:3

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"Euphrates" **that** is in the phrase **"as he went** to establish his control over the river Euphrates" is not written in the text of the Bible.

The same is true for the word:

Hebrew	English
ג וַיֹּאמֶר הַמֶּלֶךְ, וְאַיֵּה בֶּן-אֲדֹנֶיךָ; וַיֹּאמֶר צִיבָא אֶל-הַמֶּלֶךְ, הִנֵּה יוֹשֵׁב בִּירוּשָׁלַם--כִּי	**3** And the king said: 'And where is thy master's son?' And Ziba said unto the king: 'Behold, he abideth at Jerusalem;

אָמַר, הַיּוֹם יָשִׁיבוּ לִי בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל אֵת מַמְלְכוּת אָבִי.	for he said: To-day will the house of Israel restore me the kingdom of my father.'

<div align="right">II Sam 16:3</div>

"man" **that** is in the verse *"now the counsel of Ahithophel, which he counseled in those days, **was as if a man inquired of the word of God"***

לז הִנֵּה יָמִים (בָּאִים), נְאֻם-יְהוָה; וְנִבְנְתָה הָעִיר לַיהוָה, מִמִּגְדַּל חֲנַנְאֵל שַׁעַר הַפִּנָּה.	**37** Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that the city shall be built to the LORD from the tower of Hananel unto the gate of the corner.

<div align="right">Jer 31:37</div>

and for the word *"come"* **that** is in the verse "*behold, the days come, says the Lord, that the city **shall be built** to the Lord from the tower of Hananel unto the gate of the corner*" (Jeremiah 31:37);

כט הַשְׁמִיעוּ אֶל-בָּבֶל רַבִּים כָּל-דֹּרְכֵי קֶשֶׁת חֲנוּ עָלֶיהָ סָבִיב, אַל-יְהִי- (לָהּ) פְּלֵיטָה, שַׁלְּמוּ-לָהּ כְּפָעֳלָהּ, כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר עָשְׂתָה עֲשׂוּ-לָהּ: כִּי אֶל-יְהוָה זָדָה, אֶל-קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל.	*29 Call together the archers against Babylon, all of them that bend the bow; encamp against her round about, let none thereof escape; recompense her according to her work, according to all that she hath done, do unto her: for she hath been arrogant against the LORD, against the Holy One of Israel.*

<div align="right">Jer 50:29</div>

*and for **"her"** that is in the phrase "let her not have **escape**"* ();

יא וַיַּעַן בֹּעַז, וַיֹּאמֶר לָהּ--הֻגֵּד הֻגַּד לִי כֹּל אֲשֶׁר-עָשִׂית אֶת-חֲמוֹתֵךְ, אַחֲרֵי מוֹת אִישֵׁךְ; וַתַּעַזְבִי אָבִיךְ וְאִמֵּךְ, וְאֶרֶץ מוֹלַדְתֵּךְ, וַתֵּלְכִי, אֶל-עַם אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָדַעַתְּ תְּמוֹל שִׁלְשׁוֹם.	**11** And Boaz answered and said unto her: 'It hath fully been told me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thy husband; and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people that thou knewest not heretofore.

<div align="right">Ruth 2:11</div>

unto that is in the verse *"it has **been told me,** all that you have done unto your mother-in-law"*

ד וִיהִי בְשָׁכְבוֹ, וְיָדַעַתְּ אֶת-הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁכַּב-שָׁם, וּבָאת וְגִלִּית מַרְגְּלֹתָיו, ושכבתי (וְשָׁכָבְתְּ); וְהוּא יַגִּיד לָךְ, אֵת אֲשֶׁר תַּעֲשִׂין.	**4** And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do.'

	5 And she said unto her: 'All that thou sayest unto me I will do.'
(אֵלַי), אֶעֱשֶׂה. ה וַתֹּאמֶר, אֵלֶיהָ: כֹּל אֲשֶׁר-תֹּאמְרִי	

and for *“to me”* **that** is found in the passage *“and she said unto her: All that you say to me I will do. And she went down to **the threshing floor”***

	17 And she said: 'These six measures of barley gave he me; for he said to me: Go not empty unto thy mother-in-law.'
יז וַתֹּאמֶר, שֵׁשׁ-הַשְּׂעֹרִים הָאֵלֶּה נָתַן לִי: כִּי אָמַר (אֵלַי), אַל-תָּבוֹאִי רֵיקָם אֶל-חֲמוֹתֵךְ.	

and for *“to me”* **that** is in the verse *“he gave me these six measures of **barley;** for he said to me”* (Ruth 3:17). **These** words **are read but not written.**

⤳ Regarding payment for the teaching of Torah:

The Gemara rules that one may not accept payment for teaching Torah to others. Indeed, *Avos* 4:5 comments: "Whosoever gains advantage from words of Torah removes his life from the world," i.e. forfeits

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his reward in the World to Come (*Rashi* ibid.; see *Rambam* in his *Commentary to the Mishnah*, and in *Hil. Talmud Torah* 3:10, who decries those who receive income for the study of Torah). Notwithstanding, contemporary practice is to accept pay for teaching Torah. The permit is based on *Yerushalmi*, cited by *Ran* here. *Yerushalmi* states that while a person may not be paid for the actual task of teaching Torah, he may be remunerated for the loss of income suffered in forgoing all other pursuits, as long as he devotes himself entirely to teaching. [Our Mishnah, which implies that one may not receive pay for teaching Midrash, speaks of a case where this permit would not apply (*Kol HaRamaz*, printed in *Asifas Zekeinim*; see also *Rosh, Pesakim* 4).]

Moreover, any person who has no other means of support may accept payment for teaching Torah (*Tosafos* to *Bechoros* 29a ד"ה מה אני; see also *Darchei Moshe* to *Yoreh Deah* 246:3, citing *Rabbeinu Yonah*, whose understanding of *Avos* ibid. differs from *Rambam*'s).

Accordingly, the rabbi of a town may receive a salary from the townspeople. Otherwise, he would be compelled to engage in supplementary vocations, which might diminish the respect accorded by the people to the Torah (*Rama, Yoreh Deah* 246:21, at length). See also *Kesef Mishneh, Hil. Talmud Torah* ibid.; *Shach* to *Yoreh Deah* ibid. 20; *Tashbetz, Responsa* I 142-148; *Dvar Shmuel*, cited in *Beur Halachah* 231; see *Sefer Yissachar V'Zevulun* by R' Ephraim Zalman Shternbuch, Bnei Brak 5758.

19. See footnote 159 a. D.

Summary

1) Teaching Torah to a person who is forbidden by a vow to derive benefit from him (cont.)

The Gemara answers that according to Shmuel the Mishnah is teaching that it is permitted to take money for teaching Scripture but it is not permitted to take money for teaching Midrash.

Rav and R' Yochanan offer alternative explanations of when it is permitted to take money for teaching Scripture.

An unsuccessful challenge is presented to Rav's explanation (the money is for babysitting) of why it is permitted to teach Scripture.

Another unsuccessful challenge to Rav's explanation is recorded that revolves around the issue of teaching new material to children on Shabbos.

The Gemara explains why Rav rejected R' Yochanan's explanation and why R' Yochanan rejected Rav's explanation.

The source of Rav's position that cantillation is of Biblical origin is presented.

A related exposition that relates to unusual language or readings in Scripture is recorded.

Examples of these different categories are noted. ∎

Rav Avrohom Adler writes:[1]

Teaching Scripture

The Mishna had stated: And the vower may teach him Midrash, halachos and aggados (for mitzvos were not given for the purpose of deriving benefit, and therefore the Torah learning is not regarded as a forbidden benefit), but he may not teach him Scripture.

The Gemora asks: The reason that he cannot teach him Scripture is because he benefits him (by not taking any money); if so, it should also be forbidden to teach him Midrash? Shmuel answers: Our Mishna is discussing a place where the custom is to take money for teaching Scripture, but they do not take money for teaching Midrash (in which case, even if he waives the payment, he is not providing the subject of the neder with any monetary benefit).

The Gemora asks: Why should we make such a conclusion in order to explain the Mishna? The Gemora answers: The Mishna is teaching us the following: Even in a place where the custom is to take money for teaching Scripture, one is only permitted to take money for Scripture, but not for Midrash.

The Gemora asks: Why do we make such a distinction? The Gemora cites a Scriptural verse: Hashem commanded me at that time, and it is written: Behold, I have taught you laws and statutes, as Hashem my God commanded me.

The Gemora expounds as follows: Moshe said: Just as I taught you the Torah and I did not take any money for it, so too, you should teach others Torah and do not take money for it. If so, the halachah should be that one who teaches Scripture should not be allowed to take any money either? Rav said: While it's true that one cannot take money for teaching Scripture, he may take money for watching the students as they are studying (this applies only to Scripture teaching, for the students are young and need to be safeguarded).

Rabbi Yochanan said: While it's true that one cannot take money for teaching Scripture, he may take money for teaching them the proper cantillation of the verses. The Gemora asks on Rav from our Mishna: He may not teach him Scripture. Now, this is understandable according to Rabbi Yochanan, for since one is permitted to take money for teaching the proper cantillation of the verses, and here, he is waiving the payment, he is violating the terms of his neder. However, according to Rav, why shouldn't he be permitted to teach adults; they do not need to be protected (and therefore, the teacher should not be allowed to take money for teaching and when he teaches for free, there is no benefit)!?

The Gemora answers: Our Mishna is discussing a case where he is teaching a minor (and therefore, he would be permitted to take money; waiving the fee is therefore considered a benefit).

The Gemora asks: If it is referring to a minor, let us consider the last part of the Mishna which says: He may, however, teach his sons and his daughters Scripture. Now, is it possible for a minor to father children? The Gemora answers: It is as if there are some words missing in the Mishna and this isthe way it should read: He may not teach him Scripture if he is a minor. If he is an adult, he may teach him, and also his children, Scripture.

The Gemora asks on Rav from a braisa: Children are not taught new Scriptural material on Shabbos, but they may review it for the first time. Now, this is understandable according to Rabbi Yochanan, for since one is permitted to take money for teaching the proper cantillation of the verses, one is prohibited from taking compensation for employment on Shabbos; however, they may review on Shabbos, for the teacher is not paid for that. However, according to Rav, who holds that the teacher is compensated for safeguarding the children, why should there be a distinction between teaching them new material and reviewing with them; they both should be forbidden!?

The Gemora responds: And according to Rabbi Yochanan, is the braisa understood? Why should it be forbidden to receive compensation for teaching the proper cantillation of the verses on Shabbos? Isn't his payment for Shabbos absorbed within the larger sum (of many days), and it is permitted to receive compensation on Shabbos when it is absorbed within a larger sum (it would not appear like engaging in commerce on Shabbos), as we learned in the following braisa: If one hires a day laborer to look after the child (that he should not become tamei; it was customary for a child to draw the water from the spring to sanctify the ashes of the red heifer); the red heifer; or to watch over the shoots (for the korban omer), he may not pay him for Shabbos. Therefore, if the

heifer or the shoots were lost on Shabbos, he is not responsible to pay for them (since he is regarded as an unpaid custodian). If, however, he was hired by the week, or month, or year, or seven-year period, he may pay him for Shabbos. Therefore, he would be liable if they were lost. (Why, then, can the teacher not be paid for Shabbos when it will be absorbed within a larger sum?)

Rather, the Gemora explains the braisa differently: Children are not taught new Scriptural material on Shabbos, for their fathers wish to fulfill the commandment of Shabbos (learning new material takes longer and the fathers would not disturb the children's studies until they are finished; this would deprive them of spending time with their children; reviewing, on the other hand, is not so time consuming).

Alternatively, it is because they eat and drink on Shabbos, and they feel tired (they do not have the strength to study new material), as Shmuel states: Any change in schedule may lead to a stomach illness. The Gemora asks: Why doesn't the one (Rabbi Yochanan) who holds that one may take money for teaching them the proper cantillation of the verses explain like the one (Rav) who said that one may take money for watching the students as they are studying?

The Gemora answers: Rabbi Yochanan would say: Do daughters need watching (they generally stay inside, and therefore, the Mishna should have made a distinction between sons and daughters). The Gemora asks: Why doesn't the one (Rav) who said that one may take money for watching the students as they are studying explain like the one (Rabbi Yochanan) who holds that one may take money for teaching them the proper cantillation of the verses?

The Gemora answers: Rav maintains that teaching the proper cantillation of the verses is a Biblical obligation, and therefore, one may not receive payment for this. For Rav Ikka bar Avin said in the name of Rav Chananel, who said in the name of Rav: What is the meaning of that which is written [Nechemia 8:8]: And they read in the scroll, in God's Torah, distinctly, heeding the sense, so that they understood the reading? (This verse discusses what Ezra read from the Torah on Rosh Hashanah at Yerushalayim's gates in front of the people returning from the Babylonian exile.)

And they read in the scroll, in God's Torah refers to Scripture; distinctly refers to Targum; heeding the sense refers to the division of verses; so that they understood the reading refers to the cantillation. Others say that it refers to the Traditions (the manner in which a word is spelled).

Rabbi Yitzchak said: The textual reading, as transmitted by the Scribes (from the People of the Great Assembly), their scribal embellishments, words that are read but not written, and words which are written but not read, were all halachah (taught) to Moshe at Sinai. The Gemora provides examples for each of the above categories: The textual reading, as transmitted by the Scribes: words as eretz (land – can be vocalized as aretz), shamayim (heavens – vocalized as shamayim, and not shamim), Mitzrayim (Egypt – vocalized as Mitzrayim, and not Mitzrim).

Scribal embellishments:

[I will get a loaf of bread; nourish yourselves] then pass on. [The word 'then' is written for stylistic embellishment.] [Let the maiden live with us a year or ten months] then she will go. [The word 'then' is written for stylistic embellishment, as it could have said: and she will go.] [Let her be sequestered outside the camp seven days] then she may be gathered in. [The word 'then' is written for stylistic embellishment.] First went singers, then musicians. [It could have simply stated: The singers preceded the musicians.] Your righteousness is as the great mountains. [The word 'as' is written for stylistic embellishment.]

Words that are read but not written:

'Euphrates' in the verse: as he went (is read although it is not written). 'Man' in the verse was as a man might inquire of the word of God. 'Coming' in the verse: [Behold, the days are 'coming' said Hashem, when the city] shall be built up. 'Of her' in the verse: [let there be no] remnant [of her]. 'Es' in the verse: All was related to me (es) [all that you did]. 'To me' in the verse: [She told her, "all that you say (to me) I will do. She went down to the] threshing floor [and did all that her mother-in-law had instructed her]. 'To me' in the verse: [And she said, He gave me these six] measures [of barley, for he said (to me)]. All these words are read but not written.

The following are written but not read:

The word 'please' in (the verse) forgive. 'This is' in (the verse) the commandments. 'He will draw' in (the verse) the archer. 'Five' in (the verse) and on the southern side. 'If' in (the verse) that I am a redeemer. All these words are written but not read.

Compensation for Teaching Torah

Rabbi Yochanan said: While it's true that one cannot take money for teaching Scripture, he may take money for teaching them the proper cantillation of the verses. One is obligated to teach others the laws and statutes of the Torah without demanding payment. The Chasam Sofer rules: Nowadays that the entire Gemora and the poskim are written down, one is not obligated to teach them inside for free; rather, he is required to teach orally the halachos and the rationale behind them.

If, however, one teaches the students the Gemora inside, he may demand payment. The reason that the Gemora makes a distinction between Scripture and Midrash is because the Scripture was already written down. (Although Rebbe arranged the Mishna, it was not written down until much later.) Therefore, if one teaches student the correct method to read the Gemora, he may demand payment.

The Ran cites a Yerushalmi which rules that although a person may not receive compensation for teaching Torah, he may demand payment for the loss of income that he suffers by the fact that he does not pursue other means of support. This is true as long as he devotes himself completely to teaching. Other Rishonim rule that if a teacher has no other means of support, he may receive compensation for teaching Torah.

Abaye said: We have a tradition from our Forefathers and Rabbis that there is no true poverty except for one who is lacking Torah knowledge. This is what was taught by the Sage in Bavel.

Our Gemora relates that a similar idea was taught in Eretz Yisrael in the following manner: "One who has knowledge has everything; without it what does he have; whoever has acquired knowledge, what is he lacking; one who has not acquired knowledge, what has he acquired?"

Ohr Somayach quotes the Steipler zt"l as saying the following: Our Sages teach that the word "zaken" does not necessarily refer to an elderly person but is an acronym for a Torah scholar — "zeh kana chochma", "this person has acquired knowledge". One might recognize that the words "zeh kana" (this one acquired) can be seen in the word "zaken", but how do we see that he has specifically acquired "chochma" — Torah wisdom — and that the word zaken therefore refers to a Torah scholar?

The answer: The only real acquisition a person has is Torah. Material assets come and go and are external to the person; Torah is eternally part of the person who 'acquires' it. Torah knowledge and wisdom is our only true acquisition.

Educating Children on Shabbat[2]

Addressing the question of ways that one might benefit even though a vow forbade it, our last Mishna included the idea that one cannot teach Bible directly to that person. However, he can teach Bible to his sons and daughters. ***Our daf*** digs into that question.

Some competing facts that are presented or understood through ***our daf:***

- Teaching is work and should not be done on Shabbat
- Teaching verses for the first time is difficult and will take away from rest on Shabbat
- children are generally taught Bible through repetition of one verse until children can read and understand it on their own
- Repeating verses already taught is permitted on Shabbat
- Teaching minors is different from teaching adults, though sometimes similar guidelines are used when discussing teaching children and Torah scholars
- If one is paid for teaching children Bible on Shabbat, they are paid for watching, not teaching, but payment for 'work' on Shabbat is forbidden
- If work is done on Shabbat by a Gentile, it is not paid work OR it is lumped in with other work over a longer period of time
- If something is stolen or broken on Shabbat, the volunteer is not held responsible

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[2] https://dafyomibeginner.blogspot.com/2015/06/

- If something is stolen or broken on Shabbat, the paid person is held responsible
- Perhaps the Mishna is referring to learning Bible without cantillation notes and punctuation
- Children might not learn well on Shabbat because they eat more than usual and are sluggish
- Children should not refer to girls - they stay home anyway
- Rav and Rabbi Yehuda discuss whether or not cantillation is a necessary part of learning Torah
- Words are written that are not spoken; other words are spoken that are not written (proof texts are shared)

A fascinating digression!

RECEIVING PAYMENT FOR TEACHING TORAH

Rav Mordechai Kornfeld writes:[3]

The Gemara teaches that one may not receive a wage for teaching Torah. Nevertheless, there are several types of circumstances in which one is permitted to receive a wage.

(a) Rebbi Yochanan rules that one is permitted to receive a wage for teaching the "Pisuk Ta'amim" (the cantillation marks on the words in the Chumash), since those notes are not mid'Oraisa. Rebbi Yochanan's ruling implies that one is permitted to receive a wage for teaching Halachos or Mitzvos that are mid'Rabanan. The **HAGAHOS MAIMONIYOS** (Hilchos Talmud Torah 1, cited by the **REMA YD** 246:5) writes that one therefore is permitted to receive a wage for teaching rabbinical enactments.

(b) The Gemara states that one who teaches small children who need to be watched may receive a wage for teaching them, since the salary is paid not for the teaching but for the supervision. The Gemara assumes that adults, and even young girls (who tend to be more mature and independent than young boys), do not need to be watched, and thus one may not receive a wage for teaching them. (See the **ROSH** who writes that little children need to be kept off the streets so that they will not cause damage and become accustomed to doing bad things.) Obviously, in a place where young girls and older children need to be supervised, their teacher may receive a wage.

(c) The **RAN** and other Rishonim quote the Yerushalmi which says that one who chooses to teach Torah at the expense of working in a profession may receive a wage to compensate for the loss of income that he incurs as a result of teaching. In such a case, he does not take money for the teaching but for not working.

(d) **TOSFOS** in Bechoros (29a) and the **ROSH** write that one who has no other source of income may receive a wage for teaching.

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[3] https://dafyomi.co.il/nedarim/insites/nd-dt-037.htm

The **SHULCHAN ARUCH** (YD 246:5) rules that nowadays teachers may receive salaries for teaching Torah for the abovementioned reasons.

RECEIVING PAYMENT FOR PERMISSIBLE WORK ON SHABBOS

The Gemara discusses two types of payment for work (which does not involve Chilul Shabbos) performed on Shabbos. The first type is "Havla'ah," and the second type is payment for a Mitzvah done on Shabbos.

1. **HAVLA'AH**. The Gemara teaches that one who teaches Torah on Shabbos may not receive a wage specifically for his work on Shabbos. If, however, he is paid for a week or month at a time, he may be paid for his teaching for all seven days of the week since it is not evident that he is being paid for his work done on Shabbos.

This example of Havla'ah applies only when he is paid for an entire week or more and implies that only when *most* of the weekly salary is for work done on weekdays is it considered a permissible form of Havla'ah. The Poskim write, however, that this is not necessary. The **MISHNAH BERURAH** (OC 306:21) quotes the **CHAYEI ADAM** who permits Havla'ah for work done on Shabbos together with a few hours of work done on Erev Shabbos and on Motza'i Shabbos.

2. **WAGES FOR WORK DONE FOR A MITZVAH ON SHABBOS**. The Gemara says that one is prohibited to receive a wage for teaching Torah only on Shabbos, even though teaching Torah is a Mitzvah. The Gemara also quotes a Beraisa which says that the people who guard the Parah Adumah from Tum'ah may not take a wage for their services on Shabbos (without Havla'ah). The Beraisa implies that even though one's permissible work on Shabbos involves a Mitzvah, he may not take a wage for his work.

TOSFOS (37b) points out that although one may not involve himself in business matters on Shabbos, he may involve himself in matters that pertain to Mitzvos even when those matters involve expenses and costs for the Mitzvos. Why, then, is one prohibited from taking a wage for doing a Mitzvah on Shabbos, such as for guarding the Parah Adumah?

Tosfos answers that although guarding the Parah Adumah is a Mitzvah, receiving a salary for doing so is not part of the Mitzvah, and therefore it is prohibited.

The **TUR** (OC 585) quotes the Gemara here and writes that he does not know the source for permitting one who blows the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah to receive a salary. The **BEIS YOSEF** there quotes the **MORDECHAI** in Kesuvos who writes that receiving a salary for blowing the Shofar is permitted since the salary is paid for the Mitzvah. The Beis Yosef explains that this is not considered doing business on Shabbos because the contract was made before Shabbos. Although the Chachamim do not want people to take such wages because it looks as though one is working on Shabbos, they did not prohibit it and therefore for the sake of a Mitzvah it certainly is permitted. (The Beis Yosef cites the Gemara in Pesachim (50b) which says that a Meturgeman who receives a wage will see no blessing from his wage, since he looks like he

receives the wage for work done on Shabbos. The Gemara there implies that although receiving a wage for work done on Shabbos is not prohibited, it is not commendable and is strongly discouraged.)

The Tur's question, however, remains. The Gemara implies that one is prohibited to receive payment for work done on Shabbos even for a Mitzvah. The **TAZ** answers that one is permitted to receive payment only for a Mitzvah which is necessary for Shabbos or Yom Tov (for example, the Shali'ach Tzibur or Ba'al Toke'a may receive payment for their services) but not for other Mitzvos (such as guarding the Parah Adumah).

The **MISHNAH BERURAH** (OC 306:24) writes that the common practice is to be lenient with regard to receiving a wage for a Mitzvah done on Shabbos. One who wants to conduct himself stringently (and still receive payment for his efforts on behalf of the Mitzvah on Shabbos) should not set any fee prior to Shabbos, but rather he should accept his "wage" as a gift *after* Shabbos. Alternatively, he may perform some work during the week and be paid for his work done on Shabbos through Havla'ah.

The **MISHNAH BERURAH** (ibid.) adds that a midwife (or any other medical practitioner) certainly is permitted to receive payment for her work on Shabbos. The Poskim write that such a person should *not* be stringent not to take a wage, because this might cause him or her to avoid giving vital medical assistance when needed.

Teaching Torah on Shabbat

Steinsaltz (OBM) writes:[4]

It is surprising to learn that teaching Torah on *Shabbat* should be restricted in any way. Nevertheless, our Gemara quotes a *baraita* according to which *tinokot lo korim ba-tehilah be-Shabbat, ela shonim be-rishon* – children should not be taught to read a new section on *Shabbat*, although they can review something that they have already learned.

The typical method of teaching that was practiced in Talmudic times was that the teacher would teach a passage to his students and review it with them until they were able to read it on their own. They would also add explanations appropriate to the age of the student. After the children learned how the passage should be pronounced properly, together with its explanation, they would review it over and over again (*shonim be-rishon*, *shonim ba-sheni*) until they learned it by heart. Only then would they continue on to the next passage. We can well understand that the very first interaction with the passage was the most difficult one, while subsequent review sessions – even the very first one, i.e. *shonim be-rishon* – became easier and easier.

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[4] https://steinsaltz.org/daf/nedarim37/

Although Tosafot suggest that the reason to restrict an initial presentation of a lesson on *Shabbat* is because of a concern with *oneg Shabbat* – that the child will find the lesson tedious and will be upset on *Shabbat* – the simple understanding of the Gemara is that our concern is with payment: the salary that the teacher will be paid for his work on *Shabbat*. If the teacher is getting paid for teaching proper pronunciation of the *pasuk*, the main "work" is getting the student to grasp the basics of the passage – i.e. the first presentation – while subsequent repetition is merely review. (There is another opinion that the teacher is getting paid more for his babysitting). Rashi suggests that the point of the *baraita* is to allow the first review, which is permissible and would not be considered to be payment for work on *Shabbat*, but certainly subsequent review would be permitted, as well.

Payment rendered for teaching and learning Torah
כאשר צוני ה' אלוקי...מה אני בחנם אף אתם בחנם

The Torah must be taught free of charge. This is derived from the words of Moshe in this verse (Devarim 4:5), where he mentions that he was teaching the statutes and ordinances "as Hashem, my God, has commanded me."[5]

The lesson is just as Hashem instructed Moshe free of charge, so did Moshe teach them further without remuneration. What is interesting is that this particular statement of Moshe was said in the middle of an address which he was presenting to the Jewish people. It begins earlier, at the beginning of Perek 4 in Devarim.

Why did Moshe wait until verse 5 before noting that Hashem had taught him without his having to pay? He could have introduced this phrase when he opened his remarks in verse 1, when he said, "Now, O Israel, listen to the decrees and to the ordinances that I teach you to perform…" It would have been quite appropriate for Moshe to insert this lesson at the outset of this particular speech, rather than to wait until verse 5.

What can we learn from this? Toldos Yitzchak (Parashas Vaeschanan) explains that the topics addressed at the beginning of this speech are the prohibitions not to add or subtract from the mitzvos (בל תוסיף ובל תגרע) and the prohibition not to follow the idolatry of בעל פעור.

These mitzvos applied to Moshe as much as to anyone else, and it is therefore no wonder that Moshe taught them for free. He had to study them for his own sake and teaching these laws to others as he studied and reviewed them himself was understandably done without his expecting pay. However, beginning with verse 5 and beyond, Moshe focused on the need for the people to continue to maintain their observance upon entering into Eretz Yisroel , "in the midst of the land to which you come, to take possession of it."

It was there that they would be confronted with the corruption and depravity of the Canaanite nations. Moshe knew that he would not personally enter into the land, and his words were aimed to benefit others, rather than himself. Moshe had no personal need to study these laws, and we

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[5] https://dafdigest.org/masechtos/Nedarim%20037.pdf

might have thought that he could expect to be paid for providing a service for others. Yet, it is here that the Torah teaches that he taught them without being paid.

This is why this portion of his address is the source from which we learn that a Torah teacher must teach for free. The words of the Rosh and ר"י suggest that the prohibition to pay for teaching Torah is aimed at the teacher. In other words, it is not prohibited to pay to learn, but it is rather prohibited to get paid to teach. Rambam (Hilchos Talmud Torah, 1:7), on the other hand, clearly rules that it is prohibited to pay to learn Torah.

Bequeathing the right to publish a sefer
מה אני בחנם אף אתם נמי בחנם

Just like I taught the Torah for free so too you should teach Torah for free

Rav Yitzchok Shechibar (1), the Chief Rabbi of Argentina, inquired whether the right to publish a sefer is something that one can bequeath to his children, and they will have the authority to prohibit others from publishing that sefer or perhaps the principle of our Gemara, "Just like I [taught] for free so too you should [teach] for free," indicates that heirs do not have the right to restrict others from publishing a sefer.

Rav Ovadiah Yosef (2) began analyzing this question by citing a discussion in Teshuvas Shaarei Deah3 about whether a bechor receives a double portion of the proceeds that the children will earn when they publish their father's sefer. The inquirer asserted that the right to publish is considered part of the father's assets and as such it is divided amongst the heirs the same way any asset is distributed.

Teshuvas Shaarei Deah refuted the different proofs and cited our Gemara as a clear indication of Chazal that Torah is not an asset that one bequeaths to another; therefore, the children should share the proceeds evenly.

Rav Yosef notes that one could refute the proof from our Gemara. Our Gemara only indicates that when teaching Torah there is a mandate that it should be for free but publishing a sefer is entirely different. There is no source that indicates that one is obligated to put forward the effort to write and publish a sefer and in fact there were many great rabbis who, although they taught Torah to others, never committed their teachings to writing that they should be published.

Therefore, one who takes upon himself the task of publishing a sefer should certainly have the right to bequeath that privilege to his heirs so that they should benefit financially. Although Teshuvas Beis Yitzchok4 rejects the conclusion that a father can bequeath the right to publish his sefer to his children because the Torah expects a person to be generous with his Torah, nevertheless, the matter is academic since the law of the land prohibits a person from publishing another person's work without permission from the author or his heirs.

Consequently, all opinions agree that others cannot publish a sefer written by someone else without first receiving permission. Rav Ovadiah Yosef concurs that on a practical level this is how people should conduct themselves.

1. מובא דעתו בשו"ת יביע אומר ח"ז חו"מ סי' ט'
2. שו"ת יבי"א הנ"ל
3. שו"ת שערי ח"א סי' קמ"ח
4. שו"ת בית יצחק חוי"ד ח"ב סי' ע"ה ■

Learning on Shabbos
היינו טעמא דאין קורין בתחילה

A certain wealthy man adopted the practice of learning with intensity all night long on the fifteenth of Adar every year.

After several years of this, the fifteenth of Adar fell out on Shabbos. Could he follow this custom even on Shabbos? He asked his Rav, but his local Rav didn't know the answer. So the man decided to consult with the Tzapichis Midevash, zt"l.

The great Rav responded, "It is definitely forbidden to learn on Shabbos with such intensity that one's head hurts. This explains the seeming contradiction between the Siddur of Rav Yaakov Emden, zt"l, which states that it is forbidden to learn iyun on Shabbos, and the Shelah Hakadosh which states that one should learn iyun on Shabbos.

The Chidah, zt"l, also argues on Rav Yaakov Emden, stating that in the time of the Pri Chadash talmidei chachamim would indeed learn iyun on Shabbos. The Rav continued, "However, there is really no argument between them. Rav Yaakov Emden meant intense iyun which can cause one's head to ache. This is not permitted because it is a violation of oneg Shabbos.

Lighter iyun, however, is permitted. It is to such study that the Chidah and Shelah are referring. We find a similar concept in Nedarim 37, which states that children are not taught new material on Shabbos because this would take great effort and is so difficult for them that they would not fulfill the mitzvah of oneg Shabbos."

The Minchas Elazar, zt"l, argued, however, and permitted any iyun on Shabbos. He said, "Even if the reasoning of the Tzapichis Midevash is correct, that the halachah prohibiting children to learn new material is brought in Hilchos Melamdim rather than in Hilchos Shabbos shows that there is no problem of intense study disturbing one's oneg Shabbos.

Perhaps we hold like the other reason in the Gemara, which states that we only review material that the children have already mastered because they eat heavily and will not be able to focus sufficiently on learning new material!"

Portrait of Artist's Children by Jan Matejko

Making money on the Torah?

Mark Kerzner writes:[6]

Earlier we saw that one is not allowed to take money for teaching Torah. We also saw that when this teaching is for singing the notes of the Torah, as it is sung in the synagogue, or simply for watching the kids so that they don't run out during lessons, then getting paid for this is acceptable.

But which of these two reasons is the real one? Some say that the singing notes were actually given to Moses together with the rest of the Torah: when Ezra read Torah for the people, he made them "understand the reading" - which is achieved with proper notes; thus, no money can be earned for teaching that.

Others argue and say that "understand the reading" refers to proper pronunciation, since there are places in the Torah where the words should not be read the way they are written. However, the notes were introduced by the Sages of the court of Solomon later, and reward may be taken for teaching them.

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[6] https://talmudilluminated.com/nedarim/nedarim37.html

According to the first point of view then one is not paid for singing but for watching the children. This sounds reasonable, what will the opposing side say? They will answer that both boys and girls are equally taught, and that little girls cause less trouble and don't run out of the room - so one is not paid for watching them, and we are back to paying for singing.

MASORETIC ACCENTS

Avigdor Herzog writes:[7]

MASORETIC ACCENTS (Musical Rendition)
historical development

In Jewish tradition, the formal reading of certain of the books of the Bible in worship and in study is carried out with a musical intonation linked closely with the masoretic accents of the text and governed by fixed rules and practices (see *Masorah; in supplementary articles). Public reading from the Bible is attested much earlier than the establishment of the written systems of accentuation. In the Bible itself, such readings are mentioned only in connection with special occasions (cf. Deut. 31:12; ii Kings 22:1–3; Neh. 8:8, 10:30). The practice was not a prominent part of the Temple liturgy but became so in the *synagogue. Talmudic sources attest the detail with which the practice was regulated, citing the choice and order of the scriptural passages for Sabbaths and weekdays (Monday and Thursday) and the feasts, the qualifications of the reader, the translation of each verse into the vernacular, the *somekh* ("supporter") who aided the reader, or the replacements of the lay reader by a specialist (sometimes the *ḥazzan). As to the musical element, the sources merely say that the Bible was to be read and studied only by melodic recitation (cf. Meg. 32a; Song R. 4:11). It is doubtful whether the terms *pissuk/piskei te'amim* (the division by the *te'amim*) refer to the melodic element, although they are connected with the aide-memoire movement of the reader's or *somekh's* hand (Meg. 3a; Ned. 37a; Ḥag. 6a; see Figure 1). The talmudic usage of the term *te'amim* is still not sufficiently clear; however, considering the strict regulation of every other element of the scriptural reading, it is inconceivable that the melodic rendition could have been left to the ad hoc invention or choice of the reader.

A comparison with the practices of "scriptural" reading in other religious traditions – such as Vedic recitation in India or Buddhist recitation in Japan and other countries – reveals that none is spoken or sung but they are "cantillated"; that this cantillation is based upon strict conventions handed down by oral tradition (which were described explicitly only in the respective Middle Ages of each culture); and, most important, that a basic similarity of constructive principles (not of melodic content) can still be recognized in all such practices throughout the Asian continent, including all Jewish traditions throughout the Diaspora. The melodic structure in all these traditions is of the kind defined by Curt *Sachs as "logogenic," where the musical element is generated by the words, bonded to the verbal and syntactical structure, and subordinated to the communication of the text, with no attempt at musical autonomy.

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[7] https://www.encyclopedia.com/religion/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/masoretic-accents

This "pan-Asiatic" style must already have been present in cantillated Bible reading in the synagogue preceding the period in which the system of written accents began to be developed. The Tiberian system of accent signs and vowel signs and their functions was based on existing practices not only of the pronunciation and grammatical basis and syntactical structure of the text, but also of its musical rendition. The earliest surviving treatise of this system, *Ben-Asher's *Dikdukei he-Te'amim*, mentions the *ne'imah* (melody) in the characterization of several of the accents. Neither this nor the preceding "Palestinian" and "Babylonian" systems seem to show the intention of establishing a complete correspondence between each accent sign and a specific and different melodic motive, which implies that no such correspondence existed in practice at that time, and that there was no intention on the part of the masoretes to create it artificially.

Comparative studies of the living traditions of the present and the evidence gleaned from the medieval and later masoretic treatises reveal that only in the Ashkenazi Diaspora was the system developed and augmented with the aim of having each accent sign expressed by a distinct melodic formation. The farthest point along this path is reached by the Ashkenazi cantillation of the Torah. Even there, however, one finds different accent signs expressed by identical melodic formations (e.g., *segol, zakef*, and *tippeḥa* in the "Polish-Lithuanian" tradition), or identical accent signs expressed by different melodic formations (e.g., the *darga* preceeding a *tevir* as against the *darga* preceding a *munaḥ-revi'a*, in the Western Ashkenazi tradition). Other traditions are still more limited in their repertoire of distinct melodic motives and content themselves with the expression of the divisive accents, or even of the major divisive accents only. This style is probably not the result of any erosion or loss of knowledge but may well be the surviving evidence of the earliest stages of the system, perhaps even of the Proto-Tiberian or Palestinian or Babylonian ones. In all traditions, the rendition of the accents of the prophetic books, the *haftarah*, and the Hagiographa is also partial and selective as is their rendition in the special style used for study in the *ḥeder.

Practice

The musical rendition of the text in conformity with the accent signs is based on the convention (as described above) of each sign or group of signs representing a certain melodic motive. The graphic symbol does not stand for an absolutely predetermined sequence of tones. As in all music cultivated by oral tradition, the motives exist as "ideals" to be realized in performance, within certain margins of flexibility. Preservation of the "ideals," i.e., the style, is assured by several factors: the support of the well-defined and strict doctrine of the grammatical and syntactical functions of the accents; the deliberate teaching, by which the tradition is handed on from generation to generation; and the constant public practice of the system in the synagogue, where not only the layman's rendition (when "called up to read") but even that of the specialized reader, *ba'al kore* – not always, and in some communities never, identical with the *ḥazzan* – is always subject to the critical ear of the more learned members of the community. The margin of flexibility, on the other hand, makes it possible to link, or rather blend, the motives as they are recalled and enunciated successively by the reader so as to create a melodic organism. The style itself remains constant, but each reader may interpret it with a certain individuality and will never repeat his previous performance precisely when he reads the same passage upon another occasion.

Theoretically, the accent signs are divided into only two categories: the accents of the "twenty-one books" (טעמי א״ך) and those of the Psalms, Proverbs, and Job (טעמי אמ״ת). In practice, the musical renditions show a much greater diversity of styles. These are determined by

1. the text, i.e., the specific book, chapter, verse, or contents;
2. the liturgical circumstances;
3. the medium of performance;
4. regional stylistic traditions;
5. the above-mentioned margin for individual interpretation.

style determined by text

Separate melodic conventions exist for the Pentateuch (Torah), the prophetic books (*haftarah*), and for several of the Hagiographa (cf. The Five *Scrolls, Musical Rendition). These may not be interchanged, and explicit prohibitions are found in several rabbinic sources (e.g., *Sefer Ḥasidim*, par. 302). Nevertheless there is a kind of infiltration of motives from one book to the other, as evinced by the appearance of motives from the cantillation of the Torah in that of the *haftarah*. Some motives may also be common to more than one book, such as certain motives in the cantillation of the Book of Esther and Lamentations in the Ashkenazi tradition. In principle, however, each book has its distinct and characteristic "melody," i.e., melodic style.

Most regional traditions have special "festive" styles for the reading of certain chapters or paragraphs – the Song of the *Sea, the *Decalogue, and often also for the Blessing of Moses (Deut. 32) and the Priestly *Blessing (Num 6:24–26), and also a "low" intonation for the "rebuking" text of Deut. 28:15–68. The Ashkenazi tradition is particularly rich in special intonations. A kind of "roster formula" is used for some verses in the story of the wanderings in the desert (Num. 10 and 33). Another intonation emphasizes the importance of certain single verses in the Torah (see A. Baer, *Baal T'fillah* (1883[3]), 39–40, nos. 117, 118, 121). Another one is used for the dramatic turning points in the Book of Esther (1:22; 2:4, 15, 17; 3:15; 4:1, 14; 5:7, 13:6, 10). Chapters and verses referring to calamities, such as several verses in the Book of Esther, are read in the style of the Book of Lamentations. Verses or parts thereof which denote supplication and the request for pardon are intoned in the style in which the Torah is read on the High Holy Days (see below). In the reading of the Book of Esther in the Ashkenazi tradition there is even one "quotation" from the prayer mode of the High Holy Days (Esth. 6:1) and another from that of the *seliḥot (*ibid.* 6:3).

style determined by liturgical circumstances

During the three pilgrimage festivals the reading is more festive, with more ornamentations and prolongations. The atmosphere of the Ninth of *Av influences the reading of the *haftarah* on the preceding Sabbath, the reading of the Torah on the Ninth of Av itself, which should be in a "low" voice and is sometimes rendered "almost without the accents," and its *haftarah* (which is often read with a verse-by-verse translation into the vernacular – Arabic or Ladino). The Ashkenazim of Holland read the Torah on the Ninth of Av in a style related to the *haftarah* style of the Polish-Lithuanian region. On the High Holy Days and Hoshana *Rabba, the Ashkenazi tradition has a special style for the reading of the Torah ("in a low melody, as if plaintive," as mentioned in the *maḥzor* ed. Sabionetta, 1557). On the Sabbath nearest to the wedding day, among some Near Eastern communities, the section "And Abraham was old" (Gen. 24) is read in front of the

bridegroom in a special festive style. Other modifications applied on Hoshana Rabba and Shavuot are described below.

style determined by the medium of performance

When part of the regular prayer service, the reading of the Torah, *haftarah*, or Scrolls is always carried out by a single reader. On certain other occasions, however, the reading may become communal. On the night of Hoshana Rabba and Shavuot, when there are assemblies for "studying" the Torah, chapters or sections are cantillated in alternation by several members of the group. The style is an abbreviated version of the regular Torah style, or that of the study of the Torah in the *ḥeder*. Cantillation by the entire congregation according to the accents is found in the Sephardi communities for the *Shema Yisrael* (i.e., Deut. 5:7 and 11:19) during prayer and for the "Thirteen Divine Attributes" (i.e., Ex. 34:6–7) during the *seliḥot*. In the *ḥeder*, the study of the Torah is traditionally carried out through constant, loud repetition by all the children together. This was done in many communities in a special intonation, related to the accents but more simple in structure than the one practiced by the adults in the synagogue. There are also other kinds of "*ḥeder* tunes" based upon the sequence of accented (long) and unaccented (short) syllables in the text, similar to those found in the group recitation of passages from the Mishnah and other prose texts in many Near Eastern communities (cf. *Talmud, Musical Rendition). It can be assumed that the "*ḥeder* tunes" have remained unchanged for very long periods, since under these circumstances there is no inducement, or indeed any possibility, for personal expression and initiative and the melodic element is wholly subjugated to the pedagogical task.

regional stylistic traditions

A.Z. Idelsohn's assumption (see bibliography, and frequently repeated in later writings) that the living traditions of masoretic cantillation developed out of one common – i.e., pre-Exilic – base does not seem to be confirmed by a more thorough examination. This is one of the central problems in research of Jewish music (cf. *Music, Introduction), and, by its very nature, this research is particularly prone to conscious or unconscious wishes to justify a foregone conclusion that there is, indeed must be, a common base. In the present state of research, it may tentatively be proposed that while the principle of cantillation as such is a common heritage (see introduction, above), the diverse regional and functional styles observable today stem from an albeit small number of distinct source styles. It can be assumed that several "melodies" for the reading of the Bible were current and equally legitimate at the time in which the forms of synagogal worship began to be stabilized. Later, by processes which we are unable to reconstruct, some of these "melodies" and melodic elements were accepted as normative by one or several communities, were attached to specific books, and were sanctified by custom. It must always be remembered that the accent signs themselves are not, and never were, a sound script with the same possibilities and limitations of the music notation which developed in Western Europe. They are only reference aids to the evocation of "motivic ideas" which, in themselves, are an orally transmitted patrimony. Some late medieval and renaissance writers mention the "style of the Sephardim," but with hardly any concrete definitions which would enable its character to be understood (Simeon b. Ẓemaḥ *Duran, *Magen Avot*; the Karaite Elijah *Bashyazi (1420–90) in his *Sefer ha-Mitzvot* (ed. 1870), fol. 71 and 81; Elijah *Levita in his *Tuv Ta'am*).

The living traditions of the present may be classified according to five major regional styles:
1. Yemenite,
2. Ashkenazi,
3. Middle Eastern and North African,
4. Jerusalem Sephardi,
5. northern Mediterranean local diverse styles.

(1) The Yemenite Style

This is particularly rich in distinct sub-styles for the biblical books and for particular chapters and in various divisions among single and group performers. One of the "ḥeder tunes," built upon the pentatonic scale, is related to the Ashkenazi Torah style.

(2) The Ashkenazi Style

This is the earliest to be documented in musical notation, in Johannes *Reuchlin's *De accentibus*… (1518) and soon afterward by several other scholars. The melodic elements have been preserved most tenaciously among the Western Ashkenazi communities, including southern Germany. The Eastern Ashkenazi Torah style (known as "Polish-Lithuanian") is somewhat different from the Western one. The *haftarah* style is particularly developed in Eastern Europe, and is nowadays common to both the Eastern and Western Ashkenazi communities.

(3) The Middle Eastern and North African Style

This is the style designated by Idelsohn as "Oriental." Its distribution, with many sub-styles, ranges from Cochin to Algeria, through Persia, Bukhara, Iraq, Syria, Kurdistan, the Caucasus, and North Africa. There is a close connection between this and the styles of the European Sephardi communities in Italy, France, Holland, England, and America. It can also be traced in some Balkan communities (those of the "Romaniote" rite). Its influence is also noticeable in the intonation of the Song of Songs of the "Polish-Lithuanian" tradition. The earliest notation of this style was published in 1699 in the Hebrew Bible edited by Daniel Jablonski, to whom it was given by David de Pinna, a *parnas* in the Portuguese community of Amsterdam.

(4) The Jerusalem Sephardi Style

This is the style designated by Idelsohn as "Oriental Sephardic." It is found around the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, from Turkey and the Balkan communities to North Africa, and centered in Ereẓ Israel. Due to the prestige of its association with Jerusalem and Ereẓ Israel, it overlaid and frequently even ousted many local traditions throughout the Mediterranean countries. The Torah style in this tradition cannot represent the pre-expulsion Spanish tradition since it is found neither in North Africa nor among the European Sephardim but is based upon the Maqam *Sigah*. It seems to be a relatively recent development, but this phenomenon needs further study before a conclusion can be confirmed.

(5) The Northern Mediterranean Styles

Several communities in this area, such as Rome and *Carpentras (in Provence), have distinct local styles of their own. The Carpentras tradition survives only in notation (M. and J.S. Cremieu, *Zemirot Yisrael*, c. 1887) since the community itself no longer exists.

In Israel, the "ingathering of the exiles" has caused a major deterioration in many of the local and regional traditions brought into the country, since the immigrants often could not keep up their homogenous associations centered around the synagogue. The breakdown of the traditional education system (there is no organized ḥeder of any community except the East Ashkenazi) has also broken the chain of tradition. The regional styles tend to disappear, yielding to two dominant and dominating styles: the East Ashkenazi is gradually adopted in most Ashkenazi synagogues and the "Jerusalem Sephardi" prevails, especially for the reading of the Torah, in the synagogues of all the Near Eastern and North African communities. In the latter, the virtuoso status and ambitions of the *ḥazzan* or *ba'al kore* and the influence of the maqam-based Arabic art music at present come near to completely eroding the traditional base of masoretic cantillation proper.
See also articles on the musical traditions of the various major communities.

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פָּשְׁטָא מֵנַח זַרְקָא מֵנַח סֶגּוֹל מֵנַח
מֵנַח רְבִיעִי מַהְפַּךְ פַּשְׁטָא זָקֵף־קָטֹן
זָקֵף־גָּדוֹל מֵרְכָא טִפְּחָא מֵנַח אֶתְנַחְתָּא
פָּזֵר תְּלִישָׁא־קְטַנָּה תְּלִישָׁא־גְדוֹלָה קַדְמָא
וְאַזְלָא אַזְלָא־גֵּרֵשׁ גֵּרְשַׁיִם דַּרְגָּא תְּבִיר
יְתִיב פְּסִיק | סוֹף־פָּסוּק: שַׁלְשֶׁלֶת קַרְנֵי־
פָּרָה מֵרְכָא־כְּפוּלָה יֶרַח־בֶּן־יוֹמוֹ:

Cantillation: Some Observations –

Part 1

William Gewirtz writes:[8]

Introduction:[1]

My hope is that this brief paper will contain something of value even for those familiar with cantillation, henceforth referred to as *trop*, and is not too cursory for those with only limited familiarity. In this essay, *trop* will be briefly introduced, followed by a look at its importance in a **local context**, structuring a phrase within a *pasuk*. It concludes with an unrelated topic: some signs of *trop's* rabbinic origin. A follow-up essay will look at *trop* in its **global context**, structuring the whole *pasuk*. The process by which the *trop* operates on a *pasuk* demonstrates its surprisingly recursive nature, providing the first such example in a musical context of which I am aware.

Before going any further, it is critical to recognize the role of *trop* in providing (only) syntax as opposed to semantics. Semantics specifies the meaning of a word, phrase, sentence, etc., something that *Onkelos* and other interpreters do; syntax provides only the structure. A given syntax can rule out a specific semantic interpretation, remaining consistent only with other interpretations. A semantic interpretation will normally imply a specific syntax and invalidate (some) other syntactic alternatives. Multiple examples in the next section will illustrate.

Both *trop* and *Onkelos* are accorded an ancient origin in the Talmud.[2] However, on arguably well over fifty occasions, they differ with respect to the meaning of verses in the Torah.

Despite a dispute between traditional and academic scholars over the identity and dating of *Onkelos*, many contemporary scholars date *Onkelos*' commentary to the later part of the 4th century CE to the early part of the 5th century,[3] during the period of the *amoraim*. Not surprisingly, at times *Onkelos* differs from the view of the *bavli*. However, while the *trop* of various *pesukim* was still unsettled in Talmudic times,[4] the *trop* does not differ from *halakhic* conclusions of the *bavli* in any critical instance of which I am aware. While there are minor differences in the *trop* currently in use, our system of *trop* correlates with the Aleppo codex. No version of *trop* in our possession predates the end of the period of the *geonim*.

The *trop* – a simplified overview[5]

Trop contains 4 levels of separators (*mafsikim*) and a single set of connectors/servants (*meshartim*). The first level separators (often referred to as *keisarim,* Caesars) are the sentence ending *sof pasuk*, and the *etnahta*, which identifies the midpoint of the sentence, a semi-colon of sorts. Both parts of the sentence, before and after the *etnahta*, are treated identically by the syntax defining rules of *trop*.[6] The second level of separators (often referred to as *melakhim*, kings), the *zakeif katon*, *zakeif gadol*, *segol*, *shalshelet* and *tipha,* define the major structure of the *pasuk*. *Pashta*, *revii*, and *tevir* are common third level separators, while *darga*, *pazeir* and *telisha gedolah* are common fourth level separators.

Munah, *merha*, *mahapah*, and *kadma* are common connectors; there should not be an apparent pause between the reading of words where they appear and the following word.

Trop structures both at a global / macro level (the entire *pasuk* and its two major components) and at a local / micro level (each individual phrase).

Some examples of *trop's* importance locally

To begin examining *trop* in a localized context, let's look at the significant impact that can be drawn from the placement of the *tipha*, a second level separator, versus the *munah* and *merha*, connectors that almost always occur prior to the *sof pasuk* and the *etnahta*. The examples below further illustrate the difference between semantics and syntax. Two phrases from *Az Yashir,* מַרְכְּבֹת פַּרְעֹה וְחֵילוֹ יָרָה בַיָּם(*Shemot* 15:4) and צָלֲלוּ כַּעוֹפֶרֶת בְּמַיִם אַדִּירִים(*Shemot* 15:10), illustrate this difference. Both phrases have two different interpretations; in each case, the first interpretation, coming from *Onkelos* and based purely on semantics, is inconsistent with the *trop;* the *trop* is, however, consistent with the second interpretation.

יָרָה בַיָּם can mean either:

1. The army was **shot** while at sea or

2. The army **drowned** in the sea.

There is a major difference between

1. being shot at the sea, where the sea does not play a participating role but is simply the location where the shooting occurs, and

2. being drowned in the sea, where the sea is an indispensable part of the event.

By use of a connector, the *munah*, linking יָרָה to בַיָּם, the *trop* implies a significant link between the sea and the event. The *trop* is identical to that on רָמָה בַיָּם, slightly earlier in אָז יָשִׁיר, again indicating a significant connection between the sea and the action. The connecting *munah* in the word יָרָה is consistent with being cast into the sea (and dying as a result of of drowning in the sea) as opposed to simply being shot while at sea. *Onkelos*' translation, *shedi ba'yamoh*, unquestionably means shot at sea.

Similarly, בְּמַיִם אַדִּירִים can mean either:

1. The Egyptians sank in the **mighty** waters or
2. The **mighty** (Egyptians) sank in the water.

There is a major difference between

1. the **mighty** waters, where mighty is an adjective describing the waters, and

2. the **mighty** (Egyptians) being drowned in the sea, where the two words are an independent noun and verb, and the noun appears awkwardly, alone, at the end of the verse.

By (strongly) separating בְּמַיִם and אַדִּירִים, the *trop* is consistent only with the second interpretation where the words are independent, telling us who, the אַדִּירִים, and where (they drowned), בְּמַיִם. *Onkelos*, on the other hand, translates the phrase as *be'mayin takifin,* the mighty waters.

When a *tipha* and a *munah* or *merha* are interchanged, as in the above two examples, the impact on the semantics must be carefully examined. In the above examples, even not following the *trop* results in a different but still very plausible reading.

Most often, however, an incorrect reading has no coherent interpretation. Another phrase from *Az Yashir,* נִצְּבוּ כְמוֹ־נֵד נֹזְלִים, is illustrative. The phrase has a *tipha* on the third word, separating the first three words from the fourth, which supports a meaning like "the waters formed a heap." However, erroneously reading the *tipha* on the first word and connecting the second, third and fourth word would support a farfetched and rather unlikely meaning, which alleges that God formed a leaky heap.

A second localized area of oft overlooked significance concerns pausing in a manner consistent with the *trop's* four levels of separators. Pausing properly for the four levels requires a full stop,

one-half stop, one-quarter stop and one-eighth stop respectively. Stopping is rarely explained or practiced; when the proper length of stops is violated the resulting error has varying consequences.

An amusing example involves a *tevir*, requiring a one-quarter stop, followed a word or two later by a *tipha*, requiring a recognizably longer one-half stop.

Correctly read, וּמְקַלֵּל אָבִיו וְאִמּוֹ מוֹת יוּמָת: (*Shemot* 21:17) means

And one who curses his father or mother is put to death.

With improper pausing, a longer pause after the *tevir* on the word אָבִיו than after the *tipha* on the word וְאִמּוֹ, the sentence can be misinterpreted to mean:

And if one who curses his father, then his mother is put to death.

Equally shocking is the second half of *Shemot* 31:15, which states כָּל־הָעֹשֶׂה מְלָאכָה בְּיוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת מוֹת יוּמָת:

He who works on the *Shabbat* is executed.

With improper pausing exactly as above, it might be misinterpreted to mean:[7]

He who works is executed on the *Shabbat*.

While humorous examples like the two above are rare,[8] there are typically one or two such examples in every week's Torah reading. Some are of minimal consequence at best; the *trop* repeated 12 times in *parshat Nasso* ending the sacrifice of each tribe's head is a good example.[9] However, many cases of improper pausing work at cross purposes with the *trop*, modifying associations that the *trop* intends. For example, the *trop* on the *pasuk* פַּר אֶחָד בֶּן־בָּקָר אַיִל אֶחָד כֶּבֶשׂ־אֶחָד בֶּן־שְׁנָתוֹ לְעֹלָה: implies that the bull, the ram and the lamb in its first year are all sacrificed as *olot*. Improper pausing could imply that only the lamb is sacrificed as an *olah*. Such examples abound; three more examples are given in the footnote below.[10]

A famous example is the *pasuk i*n *Ha'azinu*:

שִׁחֵת לוֹ לֹא בָּנָיו מוּמָם דּוֹר עִקֵּשׁ וּפְתַלְתֹּל

The *pasuk* has multiple interpretations; most fundamental is the decision whether to connect the word לֹא with the next word/phrase, בָּנָיו מוּמָם, or (as the *trop* does) with the prior word/phrase, שִׁחֵת לוֹ. The former would refer to a group characterized as **not** His children; the latter a **negative response** to either a quizzical or an assertive assignment of responsibility for destruction to God.

Trop is Rabbinic:

There has been reference to the Karaite leanings[11] of (some of) those involved in the transmission or transcription of *trop*. Other *sefarim*, first among them *Ve'yavinu Ba'mikra*[12] by R. Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Gettinger, try to explain idiosyncrasies in the trop by citing a rabbinic view, halakhic or midrashic, that might explain an otherwise (often mildly) troublesome sequence of *trop*. While many of these explanations are plausible or even brilliant, they are not always entirely convincing.[13] I will illustrate that surprisingly, non-literal, rabbinic interpretations, as opposed to ones that adhere more closely to the text, are supported by the *trop* in its most critical decision, the placement of the *etnahta*.

Such examples are not common; in most cases rabbinic interpretations:

- augment the text, providing missing context but leaving the text itself unchanged; or
- modify the semantics in a way that does not impact the syntax.

The rabbinic constraints on parameters surrounding a *ben sorer u'moreh* are a classic example of the former; the additional constraints are derived from the words in the text without changing their inter-relationship and hence their *trop*. Similarly, the rabbinic implications drawn from *lo ba'shamayim hi* or treating *lex talionis* as requiring monetary compensation illustrates the latter; both the literal and the rabbinic interpretation would suggest similar syntax and *trop*.

The first example of a non-literal Rabbinic reading being supported by the *trop* is Shemot (20:20):

לֹ֣א תַעֲשׂ֖וּן אִתִּ֑י אֱלֹ֤הֵי כֶ֙סֶף֙ וֵֽאלֹהֵ֣י זָהָ֔ב לֹ֥א תַעֲשׂ֖וּ לָכֶֽם:

The most literal interpretation would divide the sentence into two parts, the first ending with the word כֶ֙סֶף֙; the *pasuk* prohibits graven images of both silver and gold, using a chiastic structure. However rabbinic interpretation lists three prohibitions:

1. לֹ֣א תַעֲשׂ֖וּן אִתִּ֑י – forbidding making images of my celestial beings.
2. אֱלֹ֤הֵי כֶ֙סֶף֙ – (do not make)[14] the *keruvim* from silver, as opposed to gold.
3. וֵֽאלֹהֵ֣י זָהָ֔ב לֹ֥א תַעֲשׂ֖וּ לָכֶֽם – other than the *keruvim*, make no other images of gold.

A rather idiosyncratic trop, with an otherwise inexplicable *etnahta* on אִתִּ֑י, is in complete alignment with rabbinic interpretation.

A second verse will illustrate the challenges that are associated with the methodology. Consider *Shemot* (22:12):

אִם־טָרֹ֥ף יִטָּרֵ֖ף יְבִאֵ֣הוּ עֵ֑ד הַטְּרֵפָ֖ה לֹ֥א יְשַׁלֵּֽם:

As written, the *etnahta* divides the *pasuk* at the word עֵ֑ד. However, the literal interpretation embraced by many *rishonim* interprets the *pasuk* to mean that the body of the animal is brought as

witness to its having been devoured by a wild animal. This explanation would place the *etnahta* on the word הַטְּרֵפָה, one word beyond עֵד.

The rabbis interpret *eid*,[15] a witness, to mean two *eidim,* or witnesses, despite the word being written in the singular, and explain that the witnesses tell of the occurrence, as opposed to bringing the physical carcass as evidence. Their interpretation is therefore consistent with an *etnahta* on the word עֵד*,* as occurs in the trop. This proof was convincing, until modern scholars gave two alternate readings that would also imply the same *trop* as in the rabbinic interpretation (the first ironically providing added rationale / support for the reading in the Talmud):

1. Witnesses do not have to bring physical evidence; their word is adequate.
2. The word יְבִאֵהוּ, the word preceding עֵד*,* already refers to the carcass,. The Pasuk is saying implicitly that it is to be brought as a witness.

As well, the halakhah may also favor the *trop* over *Onkelos*. Consider the oft repeated phrase throughout *selihot*:

וַיִּקְרָא בְשֵׁם יְקֹוָק

Whereas *Onkelos's* translation places a *dalet* in front of יְקֹוָק*,* connecting the word to בְשֵׁם, meaning "that we call in the name of God," the *trop* separates the word בְשֵׁם from יְקֹוָק, which would support several alternative meanings, including "we call to God by His Name."

Ashkenazic practice when reciting *selihot* follows the *trop.[16]*

There are also many instances where the *trop* follows a *midrashic* interpretation, as for example in *Bereishit* (13:13) וְאַנְשֵׁי סְדֹם רָעִים וְחַטָּאִים לַיקֹוָק מְאֹד. A possible translation given by JPS reads: "Now the inhabitants of Sodom were very wicked sinners against the LORD." This and other translations would not comport with the presence of an *etnahta* on the word וְחַטָּאִים. Other interpretations, like: "Now the inhabitants of Sodom were very wicked and sinners against the LORD," might move the *etnahta* one word forward. The *trop* seems to support various *midrashic* interpretation that lists specific sins (blasphemy, idolatry, sexual promiscuity, etc.) associated with both the words לַיקֹוָק and מְאֹד.[17]

This topic has other examples, almost always involving second level separators.[18] Clearly providing examples from only 4 of over 4000 meaningful sentences in the Torah, some of which are potentially arguable, do not constitute proof of a Rabbinic origin for *trop*; influence, undoubtedly, but determining origin requires more extensive analysis.

In summary, almost every instance that attempts to demonstrate *trop's* rabbinic origin may be disputable. However, the existing evidence and the absence of any contradictory indication supporting a non-rabbinic reading makes a Karaite one unlikely. In fact, over the last 1000 years we do not have examples where the *trop* was determined to be in such significant opposition to rabbinic interpretation to result in raising fundamental questions.[19]

Conclusions:

The Halakhah requires that we correct errors that impact meaning during the (public) reading of the Torah.[20] Increased awareness of *trop's* implications may require halakhists to create additional guidelines with respect to *trop* implementing that rule more precisely. While I do not feel it is my place to shout out corrections, I have on occasion told the reader afterwards what interpretations his reading might suggest. On rare occasions, I have also told a reader that his reading was consistent with *Onkelos's* interpretation as opposed to the *trop*.

It has been jokingly remarked that the full understanding of *trop* is an example of something lost in the transmission of Torah from Moses to Joshua. My goal was to illustrate some remarkable features of *trop*, which might increase the level of interest in *trop's* essential role.

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[1] This essay is dedicated in honor of my father's 21st yahrzeit. My father died peacefully on *Shabbat* after *davening*, telling my sister to go home to hear *kiddush* from her husband, telling the nurse to say goodbye to his wife, and then settling into bed. He died on the 21st of *Elul*, which fell on *Shabbat parshat Ki Tavo,* as occurred this past year and this year as well. My father was an expert's expert *ba'al keriah* to whom I asked too few questions.

[2] *Nedarim* 37b and *Megillah* 3a. It is not clear if *trop* denoted the same system throughout its history; in fact, the *trop* now in use is assumed to be post-talmudic. How it might relate to earlier such systems is unknown.

[3] See for example: https://seforimblog.com/2015/08/the-history-and-dating-of-onkelos/

[4] The *bavli* in *Yumah* 52a and 52b lists 5 places where there is uncertainty over the placement of the *etnahta*, the middle of the *pasuk*, the most important decision made by the *trop*. All 5 examples involve a dispute concerning the literal as opposed to rabbinic interpretation.

[5] A comprehensive review of *trop* is provided in *Ta'amai Ha'mikrah* by Rav Mordechai Breuer, who also authored a much shorter overview included in the first volume of *Daat Mikrah, Bereishit.* Also, Joshua Jacobsen has authored both an abbreviated and a comprehensive version of "Chanting the Hebrew Bible."

[6] The equal treatment of both parts of a *pasuk*, covered in Part 2, is fundamental to how *trop* operates.

[7] Shlomo Zuckier pointed out that the erroneous meaning associated with improper pausing is not correct grammatically. While certainly in this instance and in several others that is true, one cannot assume such knowledge of grammar among all listeners.

[8] Another arguably bizarre example is *Vayikra* (14:7) where improper pausing would / might imply that diseased scale, as opposed to water, is to be sprinkled on the person being purified.

[9] The result of improper pausing creates a tighter connection between one's name and one's father's name than the *trop* correctly read would suggest; the *trop* makes a tighter connection between the name and the *korban.*

[10] There are numerous examples that the reader can examine. See for example *Vayikra* (11:31), which requires a longer pause after the *tipha* than the *tevir*; improper pausing might imply that if you are in contact with someone while they are still alive, you become impure after their death. Other clear examples are in *Bamidbar* (10:29), identifying Moshe's father-in-law, and *Bamidbar* (16:27) identifying from whose tents to separate.

[11] https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/aaron-ben-moses-ben-asher.

[12] The classification of *trop* in some of these *sefarim*, including *Ve'yavinu Ba'mikre*, differs from that described more in details than in fundamentals. Interestingly, the recursion to described in Part 2 is asserted only for the system of *trop* described by R. Breuer.

[13] We are not talking about a strict proof; that would be impossible. Instead, a more intuitive (and biased) sense of the likelihood that it was the rabbinic interpretation that drove the *trop's* composition. *Devarim* (28:22), in *parshat Ki Tavo*, is a perfect example of the literal explanation given by *Rashi* being reflected in the *trop*. Provable, never; very likely, yes.

[14] This second phrase borrows לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ לָכֶם from the end of the third phrase.

[15] There is a dispute about whether the carcass or witnesses are brought, (see *Baba Kama* 11a and *Meḥilta*, which quote the opinion of Abba Shaul, a mid-2nd century *tanna*, who supports bringing the carcass) the (uncontested) conclusion of the *gemara*, (*Sotah* 2a) brings proof from *Devarim* (19:15) that qualifies *eid* with *ehad*, implying *eid* without qualification, although singular (can) mean a pair of witnesses.

[16] *See Avudraham* in the Laws of Fasts where in alignment with the *trop* he suggests pausing after בְּשֵׁם. The phrase בְּשֵׁם יְהֹוָה occurs in multiple locations throughout the Torah. At times the *trop* and *Uneklos* have the same disagreement as they do in this example, at times they reverse positions, and at times they agree.

[17] See for example *Sanhedrin* 109a, *Tosefta Sanhedrin* chapter 13, and *Torat Kohanim Be'Ḥukotai*, parsha 2.

[18] A good example is found throughout the beginning of *parshat Tzav* where the different types of *korbanot* are preceded by the phrase "*zot torat ha-…*" While *Onkelos* **separates** the word *zot* from the word *torat*, consistent with the assumed *pshat*, the *trop* **links** them. See *Titein Emet le'Yaakov* by R. Yaakov Kaminetsky for various rabbinic interpretations the *trop* supports.

[19] As Shlomo Zuckier noted it is still possible that Karaites created much of the *trop*, which the Rabbinites modified in several places. One might, however, argue that it is unlikely that subsequent Karaite generations involved in *trop's* transmission would not restore the Kariate version of the *trop*. I would very much appreciate being e-mailed *halakhic* examples consistent (or inconsistent) with the *trop*.

[20] Rambam, *Hilkhot Tefillah* (12:6) and Rabbi Yosef Karo in *Shulhan Arukh* (*Orah Hayyim* 142:1). Some, including *Kaf Hahayyim* to *Orah Hayyim* 142, paragraphs 1-12, extend this to the *trop* as well.

Part 2

Introduction

Part 1 of this essay (above) briefly introduced the *trop*, followed by a study of its significance in some **local contexts**, concluding with some evidence of *trop's* rabbinic origin. Part 2 looks at *trop* in its **global context**, structuring the two parts of most *pesukim*, until and after the word containing an *etnahta*. The process by which the *trop* operates demonstrates its recursive nature, providing a very early example of recursion in a musical context.

Trop contains 4 levels of separators (*mafsikim*) and a single set of connectors (*meshartim*). All *trop* symbols are either separators or connectors. The first level separators (often referred to

as *keisarim,* Caesars) are the *sof pasuk*, which ends the sentence, and the *etnahta*, which divides the *pasuk* into two parts, analogous to a semi-colon. Both parts of the sentence, before and after the *etnahta,* are treated identically by the rules of *trop.* The second level of separators (often referred to as *melakhim*, kings), the *zakeif katan*, *zakeif gadol*, *segol*, *shalshelet* and *tipha,* define the major structure of the *pasuk. Pashta*, *revi'i*, and *tevir*, an additional level lower, are common third level separators, while *darga*, *pazeir,* and *telisha gedolah* are common fourth level separators.

Munah, *merha*, *mahapah*, and *kadma* are common connectors; there should not be an apparent pause between the reading of words where they appear and the following word.

Trop identifies the *pasuk's* structure both at a global / macro level (the entire *pasuk,* or its two components divided by the *etnahta*) and at a local / micro level (each individual phrase).

Trop is Recursive

Recursion is primarily a mathematical notion which operates on an entity, dividing that entity into parts where at least one part is operated on by the identical process. One can think of this as an arbitrary number of Russian matryoshka (often called Babushka) dolls, each embedded in another.

In a brilliant book, *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid,* Douglas Hofstadter shows that recursion, which in mathematics was brought to its ultimate use by Kurt Gödel, was also present in painting (such as by Escher) and music (such as by Bach). In music, recursion involves a (completely or partially) identical pattern that repeats (iteratively) within a pattern. Recursion was present in the *trop* 1,000 years before its occurrence in Bach's music, albeit with *trop*'s much less intricate musical scope.

Trop's global operation

Except for short *pesukim*, the vast majority of *pesukim* contain one *etnahta* that divides the *pasuk* into its two principal parts.[1] Going forward, we refer to either a short *pasuk* or to either of the two parts of a longer *pasuk* as an **initial segment**. *Trop* operates independently on each individual segment. Note that all initial segments end with a first level *mafsik*, either a *sof pasuk* or an *etnahta*. The lower level *mafsikim* (listed above) further divide the *pasuk* into smaller segments.

Trop's operation on a segment is governed by the following rules:

1. Read the segment (from right to left) until the first *mafsik* one level lower than the *mafsik* on which the segment ends are encountered.
2. If such a *mafsik* is encountered, divide the segment into two, with the *mafsik* acting as the separator. Those two segments are then operated on again by the rule.

3. If a *mafsik* one level lower is not found, the segment is not further divisible, and no further operation is performed.

Since all *pesukim* are of finite length, part 3 of the rule will eventually occur either because

- the *mafsik* at the end of the segment is at level 4 (and there are no *mafsikim* of a lower level), or
- even though the segment ends with a *mafsik* of levels 1, 2, or 3, no *mafsik* one level lower is present.

One of the fundamental rules of *trop* forbids the presence of a *mafsik* of lower level than the level being sought. For example, if a segment ends with a second level *mafsik* and there is no third level *mafsik* earlier in the segment, one can be certain that a fourth level *mafsik* will also not be present.

When operating with the rules of *trop* on any segment, the rule will divide that segment into two parts, providing it finds a *mafsik* one level lower; the part to the right ends on the word containing the *mafsik*, and the part to the left is the remainder of the original segment. This pattern repeats on any segment, regardless of length.[2] The rule's identical repetition on both segments demonstrates its recursiveness.[3]

Consider the second *pasuk* in Ki Tavo (Deuteronomy 26:2). The first part of the *pasuk*

וְלָקַחְתָּ֞ מֵרֵאשִׁ֣ית ׀ כׇּל־פְּרִ֣י הָאֲדָמָ֗ה אֲשֶׁ֨ר תָּבִ֧יא מֵֽאַרְצְךָ֛ אֲשֶׁ֨ר יְהֹוָ֧ה אֱלֹהֶ֛יךָ נֹתֵ֥ן לָ֖ךְ וְשַׂמְתָּ֣ בַטֶּ֑נֶא

encounters its first *melekh*, a *tipha,* on the word לָ֖ךְ. Note that this symbol accurately divides the first section into two parts; the first part tells us what should be taken, and the second part tells us where it should be placed.The second part of the *pasuk*,

וְהָֽלַכְתָּ֙ אֶל־הַמָּק֔וֹם אֲשֶׁ֣ר יִבְחַר֙ יְהֹוָ֣ה אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ לְשַׁכֵּ֥ן שְׁמ֖וֹ שָֽׁם

encounters its first *melekh*, a *zakeif katan*, on the word הַמָּק֔וֹם. The *pasuk* tells us to travel to the place, and then provides a further description of the place.

The segment comprising the second half of the *pasuk* succinctly illustrates a critical detail that can cause some confusion when separating a *pasuk* into its constituent parts. Consider the two subdivisions of this half-*pasuk*, one up to and including the word הַמָּק֔וֹם and one after it. The second subdivision can be further divided by a **second level *mafsik***, the *zakeif katan* on the word אֱלֹהֶ֔יךָ. However, the first subdivision is further divided by a **third level *mafsik***, the *pashta* on the word וְהָֽלַכְתָּ֙. Note that it is not the level of a *mafsik,* but its role in the *trop's* division of a segment, that determines a *pasuk's* syntax.

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Syntax only, not semantics

As noted in Part 1, since *trop* provides only syntax, it can

1. provide likely support for a specific interpretation or
2. be conclusively inconsistent with a specific interpretation.

The following examples, more complex than those covered in Part 1, all contain a separator / connector where the other might be expected, and therefore support dramatically different interpretations.

Consider the semantically ambiguous reply that occurs when a pregnant Tamar confronts Yehudah (Genesis 38:26). Yehudah responds:

וַיַּכֵּ֣ר יְהוּדָ֗ה וַיֹּ֙אמֶר֙ צָֽדְקָ֣ה מִמֶּ֔נִּי כִּֽי־עַל־כֵּ֥ן לֹא־נְתַתִּ֖יהָ לְשֵׁלָ֣ה בְנִ֑י

The first part of the *pasuk* ends on the word מִמֶּ֔נִּי, which contains a *zakaif katan*. The word צָֽדְקָ֣ה has a *munah*, linking it to the word מִמֶּ֔נִּי. The *trop* is seemingly in accordance with the interpretation given by those such as Rashbam where Yehudah admits that "she is more righteous than I." On the other hand, the *trop* is inconsistent with an alternative interpretation, "she is righteous; the child is mine," which is the interpretation given by Onkelos, Rashi, and others. For that interpretation to be tenable, the word צָֽדְקָ֣ה would require a *mafsik*.

Often the syntax can provide (nearly) equal support for two alternative interpretations. Consider the brief *pasuk* in Genesis (49:18) with which Yaakov ends his *berakhah* to Dan:

לִישׁוּעָתְךָ֖ קִוִּ֥יתִי יְהֹוָֽה׃

An interpretation like: "I wait for Your deliverance, O Lord," as translated by JPS, is inconsistent with the *trop*. Such an explanation would require placing the *tipha* one word further, at קִוִּ֥יתִי. This interpretation is also hard to reconcile with the context, unless God's deliverance is awaited not on behalf of Yaakov but on behalf of Dan. However, as written, the *trop* is consistent with various semantic alternatives. The sentence can mean "For **deliverance by You**, I have prayed to the Lord," without stating explicitly for whom deliverance is prayed for. Again, the context more likely implies that Yaakov is praying for Dan's (or his descendant's) deliverance. Alternatively, directly addressing Dan, Yaakov tells him that he prays to the Lord for **his deliverance.** This explanation is given by Rashbam.[4]

On occasion, dramatically different semantic interpretations are both possible given the *trop*. In both of the following *pesukim* the *trop* is consistent with either interpretation. First let's consider Exodus 8:19:

וְשַׂמְתִּ֣י פְדֻ֔ת בֵּ֥ין עַמִּ֖י וּבֵ֣ין עַמֶּ֑ךָ לְמָחָ֥ר יִהְיֶ֖ה הָאֹ֥ת הַזֶּֽה׃

Does פְּדֻת mean a separation or a salvation? Both interpretations likely agree that God will create a **separation** between the Israelites, who will receive **salvation,** and the Egyptians, who will be **afflicted**. The argument is about the meaning of the word פְּדֻת, either a separation or a salvation, making one word explicit and the other implied. Onkelos interprets פְּדֻת as salvation, more consistent with its typical meaning; most commentators prefer separation, more consistent with the context of this *pasuk*.

Next, let's look at Exodus 17:16:

וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי־יָד עַל־כֵּס יָהּ מִלְחָמָה לַיהוָה בַּעֲמָלֵק מִדֹּר דֹּר:

Are we taking an oath, or referring to a time when there is a monarchy? The term יָד עַל־כֵּס יָהּ is ambiguous. It could mean that one's hand is on God's throne, as might happen as one is holding a religious object while taking an oath. This explanation is given by Rav Saadyah Gaon, and likely Onkelos as well. Alternatively, as posited in *Sanhedrin* 20b, it could be indicating that the command to obliterate Amalek refers to an era when a king is leading a religious monarchy. Which explanation is correct is disputed by the classical commentaries, some proposing both possibilities.

Dealing with lists

In numerous places, the *trop* deals with the individual elements in a list of items.

Let us first give two examples that comport with what one might sense as the expected case. Numbers (30:6) and Exodus (6:3) given below are representative.

- וְאִם־הֵנִיא אָבִיהָ אֹתָהּ בְּיוֹם שָׁמְעוֹ כָּל־נְדָרֶיהָ וֶאֱסָרֶיהָ אֲשֶׁר־אָסְרָה עַל־נַפְשָׁהּ לֹא יָקוּם
- וָאֵרָא אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אֶל־יִצְחָק וְאֶל־יַעֲקֹב בְּאֵל שַׁדָּי

The first example divides the segment on the word שָׁמְעוֹ – if the father objects on the day when he first hears. The second segment then lists two types of restrictions:

1. vows; and
2. self-imposed restrictions.

The second example divides the segment first on the word יַעֲקֹב and then on the word וָאֵרָא. God declares he appeared, and then lists the three people to whom He appeared. In both examples, the action applies to all items on the list.

The next example from Numbers (30:3) contains a similar pattern but in reverse, with the list occurring first.

אִישׁ כִּי־יִדֹּר נֶדֶר לַיהוָה אוֹ־הִשָּׁבַע שְׁבֻעָה לֶאְסֹר אִסָּר עַל־נַפְשׁוֹ לֹא יַחֵל דְּבָרוֹ

The segment divides on the word נַפְשׁוֹ, with the first part listing vows and restrictions and the second half admonishing the listener not to profane them.

In the following three examples, only certain elements of the list link to the verb in the opening phrase.

1. Numbers (6:14): וְהִקְרִ֣יב אֶת־קָרְבָּנ֣וֹ לַיהֹוָ֗ה כֶּ֩בֶשׂ֩ בֶּן־שְׁנָת֨וֹ תָמִ֤ים אֶחָד֙ לְעֹלָ֔ה וְכַבְשָׂ֨ה אַחַ֧ת בַּת־שְׁנָתָ֛הּ תְּמִימָ֖ה לְחַטָּ֑את וְאַֽיִל־אֶחָ֥ד תָּמִ֖ים לִשְׁלָמִֽים

2. Exodus (1:6): וַיָּ֤מׇת יוֹסֵף֙ וְכׇל־אֶחָ֔יו וְכֹ֖ל הַדּ֥וֹר הַהֽוּא

3. Exodus (1:14): וַיְמָרְר֨וּ אֶת־חַיֵּיהֶ֜ם בַּעֲבֹדָ֣ה קָשָׁ֗ה בְּחֹ֙מֶר֙ וּבִלְבֵנִ֔ים וּבְכׇל־עֲבֹדָ֖ה בַּשָּׂדֶ֑ה

In each case, one can assume the verb applies to all elements of the list, despite being syntactically linked **only** to the first element. In Numbers (6:14) the opening phrase וְהִקְרִ֣יב אֶת־קָרְבָּנ֣וֹ לַיהֹוָ֗ה presumably applies to the two other elements in the list, even the element occurring in the next segment, **after** the *etnahta*. The *pasuk* may be read as if the phrase is implicitly assumed to be repeated.

The reasons for this syntactic choice may often be semantic or stylistic.[5] In the second example above, it is highly plausible that the *pasuk* is ranking the people mentioned: Joseph is most important, followed by his brothers, and finally other members of his generation. There are many other examples, sometimes with a less compelling assumed ranking among list members. The last example may link to the most prevalent work performed. Many other examples that occur in the Torah are less clear.

Conclusions

The formality introduced is necessary to guide a beginner trying to parse a sentence following the rules associated with the *trop*. Fortunately, almost anyone experienced with how the *trop* operates can look at a *pasuk* and directly observe the implied levels of division implied. My late father went a step further, claiming that if he assumed a particular interpretation, he could normally deduce the associated *trop*. I inherited my mother's mathematical skills and not my father's literary prowess; on occasion, I still make embarrassing errors studying and teaching *trop*.

[1] Of the 5,853 *pesukim* in the Torah only 372 do not contain an *etnahta*; see https://quantifiedcantillation.nl/.

[2] The book of Esther has particularly long *pesukim*, providing the most involved examples.

[3] A detailed recursive algorithm and an example is available here.

[4] These alternatives would be clearer if there was a ל before Hashem.

ALL THE RIGHT NOTES: THE TWO TROPS FOR THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Dov Gertler writes:[9]

Many a young bochur has labored over the taamei hamikra for his bar mitzvah parshah. Following the trail through the sources uncovers some interesting findings.

Many a young *bochur* has labored over the *taamei hamikra* for his bar mitzvah *parshah*, and those whose *parshah* includes the Ten Commandments face an even harder task — learning the special *trop* for those verses. But why do we have this extra set of taamim, only for these occasions? And when did the taamim come into existence, anyway? Following the trail through the sources uncovers some interesting findings.

The text in a typical Chumash is accompanied by special cantillation marks indicating how the words should be read aloud during *leining*. They function much like musical notation and guide the *baal korei* in the *trop* he should use. In addition, these marks serve as a sort of punctuation; they delineate the beginnings and endings of *pesukim*, as well as providing pauses and emphasis. The marks, known in Lashon Hakodesh as the *taamei hamikra*, follow a system of rules that remains consistent throughout the Chumash. (Indeed, the system applies to all of Tanach, although the *taamim* for the books outside of Chumash denote different musical notation.)

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[9] https://mishpacha.com/all-the-right-notes-the-two-trops-for-the-ten-commandments/

We find an interesting discrepancy, however, in the two passages where the Aseres Hadibros are transmitted, the first time in *parshas Yisro* in Sefer Shemos and the second time in *parshas Va'eschanan* in Sefer Devarim. In these two places, a unique situation obtains: the passages are marked with two different versions of the *trop*.[1] One version is like the trop found throughout the rest of Chumash, but the other version appears only here.

The two versions of the trop that appear in these two places have come to be called by special names in the halachic literature. The version that stays consistent with the *trop* in the rest of the Chumash is called *taam tachton.* Meanwhile, the special version that appears only in the two Aseres Hadibros passages is called *taam elyon*, so named for the preponderance of notes written above the letters — unlike the standard *trop*, which distributes the marks fairly evenly above and below the letters.

This raises a question. Are both versions of the *trop* original? That is, have the Aseres Hadibros always been *leined* with two versions of the *trop*, or did one evolve later than the other?

To answer the overarching question, we must first understand the differences between the versions, then identify the sources in halachah that attempt to trace the origins of those differences. Since the *taam tachton* is basically the standard *trop*, its provenance is not really in question. The presumed original would be the *taam tachton.*

The alternative notation of the *taam elyon*, however, diverges from the standard form in a number of instances. It deviates not only in the frequency with which it places the notes above letters, but also in the length of its *pesukim.* Reading the text according to the standard *trop*, nowhere in Tanach do we find a *pasuk* made up of fewer than three words. In dividing *pesukim* of the Aseres Hadibros according to the *taam elyon*, however, we encounter three such instances.[2]

The *taam elyon* also outmatches the standard *trop* on the opposite end of the spectrum. The longest *pasuk* in the rest of Tanach, per the standard *trop*, is 43 words.[3] The *taam elyon* has two *pesukim* that surpass that: one totals 55 words; the total of the other is subject to debate and is either 50 or a full 59.[4]

In order to accurately assess date of origin of the *taam elyon*, these differences must be addressed separately, because the simple division of *pesukim* and the specific notes of *trop* might have developed independently of each other.

Melodies of the Torah

Before we can determine if the *taam elyon* originated at the same time as the standard *trop*, we must first identify when the concept of *taamim* developed altogether, and when they were implemented.

Chazal themselves discuss the origin of the *trop* in *Nedarim*37b.[5] Their reference to the subject provides evidence that a system of cantillation already existed in their time. The catalyst for this discussion in *Nedarim* is a seemingly unrelated debate about Torah educators' compensation. We are instructed to transmit Torah the same way Moshe originally transmitted it to the

congregation — i.e., without a fee. All agree that the prohibition against paying a Torah teacher applies when he teaches *midrash,* but the same does not necessarily hold true for *mikra.* The Gemara quotes a *mishnah* that indicates payment for the latter is indeed permitted.

This of course raises the next question: What aspect of teaching *mikra* would make payment for it acceptable? According to Rav, one can receive payment for teaching *mikra* only when the students are children, because then the compensation is specifically for the childcare the teacher provides. By contrast, Rav Yochanan believes that one is exempt from the no-compensation rule when one teaches *mikra* because payment is specifically for the service of teaching the *trop* on *mikra* rather than the *mikra* itself. Rav Yochanan believes that studying the *trop* is inherently different from the study of the words of *mikra.*

The basis for this disagreement originates from a fundamental difference in historical understanding of the *trop*'s origin. If the *trop* was invented after the codification of Tanach, it would not count as an original part of the study of *mikra.* Therefore, the study of *trop* would qualify as something for which a teacher could be compensated. This is the approach taken by Rav Yochanan, which is why he allows the exemption for a teacher to be compensated.

Rav, however, considers *trop* an integral part of *mikra*, and therefore cannot accept Rav Yochanan's reasoning. Rav posits an origin date for *trop* that is far earlier than codification of Tanach. As evidence for this, he quotes Nechemiah 8:8,[6] which depicts a moment during Ezra's lifetime with the congregation reading the Torah using all its linguistic accoutrements: *"Vayikr'u basefer b'Toras ha'Elokim, meforash; v'sum seichel, vayavinu bamikra."* Rav interprets the last words of the *pasuk*, "*vayavinu bamikra*," as referring to the *taamim* of the *trop.* This interpretation would offer evidence of the creation of *trop* sometime before or during Ezra's life, either of which would date its existence to before the codification of Tanach. If so, the *trop* qualifies as *d'Oraisa*, akin to *mikra*, which subsumes it under the group of studies for which compensation is prohibited. (This is why Rav must give the alternative approach of child rearing as the basis for compensation in this case.)

Rav Yochanan, on the other hand, interprets that same phrase, "*vayavinu bamikra*," as a reference to the *mesorah.* With this interpretation, the statement no longer acts as evidence for the existence of the *trop* before codification. One can assume, like Rav Yochanan, that the *trop* emerged at a later point in history, thereby invalidating its *d'Oraisa* status.[7]

As a rule in the Gemara, when Rav and Rav Yochanan disagree, the halachah follows the opinion of Rav Yochanan.[8] It would therefore seem appropriate to conclude from the *gemara* in *Nedarim* that the *trop* was instituted after Ezra's time. Although this does not provide a specific date of origin, it does narrow down the possibilities to between Ezra's lifetime and when this *gemara* was written — i.e., before the Amoraim — because if Rav Yochanan and Rav can debate it, it must already have existed.

There may be another indicator of this approach in the Gemara in *Yoma* 52b. Chazal there bring five examples of *pesukim she'ein lahem hechra*, i.e., *pesukim* with indeterminate punctuation that obscures meaning of the text. As mentioned above, the purpose of *trop,* in addition to marking the

tune, is to serve as punctuation that clarifies text.[9] Without it, interpreting *pesukim* would be a complicated task riddled with ambiguity.

Rav Eliyahu Habochur therefore uses this *gemara*'s apparent difficulty with these five *pesukim* as evidence that the *trop* had not yet been canonized when this *gemara* was written. Unlike the explanation from our previous *gemara* in *Nedarim*, this conclusion would imply that *trop* was instituted somewhat later than the early Amoraim, which is when the conversation in this *gemara* took place. As a result, some Rishonim and Acharonim[10] take the opinion that the *trop* was a somewhat later invention.

Of the Rishonim who take the stance of this later invention of *trop*, there is some discussion of authorship. Ultimately, most agree that the *trop* was invented by, or during the era of, the Anshei Haknesses Hagedolah. The Tosafos Rid[11] says as much explicitly, while Ben Asher[12] alludes to the involvement of *neviim* in the process, a group that died out before the dissolution of the Anshei Haknesses Hagedolah.

Other Rishonim and Acharonim refer on numerous occasions to an otherwise anonymous person called only the *baal hataamim*.[13] While an exact date for this person (if it is indeed a reference to a specific individual) is unclear, these authorities obviously assumed that *trop* was a later addition to the text. It would, after all, be an odd choice in phrasing to refer to a "*baal hataamim*" if they believed the *trop* had been given over to Moshe at Har Sinai. It would seem that all who utilize this phrase assume the *trop* to have been a later addition to the text.

One early Acharon who takes a unique approach is the aforementioned Rav Eliyahu Habochur.[14] He posits that the *trop* was instituted by the Tiberian Masoretes. This opinion is unprecedented, likely because the Masoretes lived concurrently with the Geonim (in the sixth through tenth centuries CE), an era a few hundred years after the Amoraim lived. Stranger still is that Ben Asher, who was himself one of the Tiberian Masoretes (and therefore one of the highest authorities on the subject), indicates otherwise.

At least one source in Chazal, the *Zohar*, takes a vastly different approach by placing the origins much earlier than canonization of Tanach. In fact, the *Zohar* states explicitly that the *trop* was taught directly to Moshe at Sinai.[15] Many of the Rishonim adopt this opinion, among them Rav Eliezer from Metz,[16] Rav Moshe of Coucy,[17] Machzor Vitri,[18] the *Kuzari*,[19] *Sefer Chassidim*,[20] and *Sefer Hapardes*.[21] Among the Acharonim subscribing to this view are Radvaz,[22] Chida,[23] and *Minchas Shai*.[24]

This would, of course, call into question the ambiguity in *Yoma* of *pesukim she'ein lahem hechra*.[25] However, those who adopt the *Zohar*'s approach explain the ambiguity differently: it is due not to the *trop* not yet existing but instead to a failure in the *mesorah* to accurately transmit the *trop* in those specific instances.[26] An alternative explanation is to remove *trop* from the equation altogether. Instead, the ambiguity was because for other *pesukim* the Gemara relied on hints within the words themselves as to proper interpretation, while these five *pesukim* offer no such hints.[27]

Breaks in the Mesorah

In addition to tracing the inception of cantillation, it is equally important to delve into the origin of the *pasuk* divisions. This would be necessary in any study of the history of *trop* as a whole, but it becomes especially significant in the discussion of *taam tachton* and *taam elyon*, because the differences of cantillation in *taam elyon* seem to stem from a desire to change *pasuk* divisions.

Unlike the *tachton*, the *elyon* seems to operate with a specific purpose in mind, namely, to construct separate *pesukim* for each *dibrah*. While in *tachton* the sixth, seventh, and eighth *dibros* are contained in a single *pasuk,* the *elyon* breaks them into three separate two-word *pesukim.* In addition to isolating *dibros* from each other, the *elyon* also seeks to prevent breaks within one *dibrah.* It is for this reason that the second and fourth *pesukim* are so long; they comprise the entirety of their respective *dibros.*

All the differences in the *trop* stem from the varying length of the *pesukim*; the connective notes that allow for longer *pesukim* tend to be those that appear above words, which is why these notes are so common to the *elyon.* This places special importance on determining the origin of *pasuk* division with regards to the *tachton-elyon* analysis.

Dating the division of *pesukim* is much simpler than dating the cantillation. Earlier in the same *pasuk*[28] whose phrase *"vayavinu bamikra"* prompts the debate about cantillation, the Gemara[29] discusses another phrase. It interprets *"v'sum seichel"* as referring to the division of *pesukim*; none of the Amoraim challenge this interpretation, which suggests a unanimous opinion that the *pesukim* existed in the times of Ezra.[30]

We can conclude an even more specific time range from *Megillah*22a. There the Gemara teaches that our division of *pesukim* cannot deviate from those that Moshe set, "*kol pasuk d'lo paskei Moshe anan lo paskinan*." While the Gemara does not specify whether Moshe authored the divisions himself or whether they were given to him at Sinai, the wording of this rule makes it clear that the canonization of *pasuk* divisions occurred during Moshe's lifetime.

This last remaining vaguery — whether the *pasuk* breaks were given to Moshe at Matan Torah, or whether he made them up — may be resolved if we take a look at two of the textual *derashos* Chazal employ: *hekesh* and *semichus.* While both these vehicles derive information from the juxtaposition of two concepts, there is a telling difference between them. When the juxtaposed concepts appear in a single *pasuk*, the hermeneutical principle is a *hekesh,* but when the two ideas are presented in two different *pesukim*, the construct is called *semichus.*[31] This is not just a question of terminology, as there appears to be an effect on the strength of the *derashah.*

While neither appears on the famous list of 13 *derashos* that many recite daily, a *hekesh* is agreed upon by all to be a valid *derashah. Semichus,* on the other hand, has its dissenters, with the Gemara[32] naming Rav Yehuda as one of those who do not learn from *semichus*, unless the *semichus* is entirely unnecessary for any other purpose.[33] In fact, even those who disagree with Rav Yehuda seem to recognize the relative insignificance of the juxtaposing of two *pesukim* in Torah. To further drive home the point that a *semichus* is not a mere outgrowth of

a *hekesh*, the Gemara in *Berachos*21b feels it necessary to bring another *pasuk* to teach us this concept.

This differentiation seems to make sense only if we assume the *pasuk* breaks to have been given at Sinai, thereby affecting the ability to use a *hekesh*, when the words or concepts appear in two separate *pesukim*. Even if we assume that it was Moshe who introduced the *pasuk* breaks, it seems somewhat difficult to use this innovation as a differentiator between two *derashos*. After all, if the Torah did not contain breaks between *pesukim* when given, who are we to discriminate functionally between two different *limudim*?

As a result of the aforementioned arguments, most of the Rishonim appear to agree that the *pasuk* breaks were given at Sinai. The exception is the Meiri, who seems to hold that the *pesukim* were institutionalized by the Zekeinim, a view at clear odds with many of the earlier sources. In light of the seemingly overwhelming proof, we might be forced to reassess our understanding of the Meiri.

With the *gemara* in *Megillah* in tow, we might think that any doubts we had about the *taam elyon* have been settled as well. After all, it is forbidden to reformat the *pesukim* after they were established, so who other than Moshe could have given us this new breakdown of *pesukim*? It is therefore important to make note of the many exceptions to this rule we encounter each day. There are numerous examples of *pesukim* that we parse in davening,[34] many of which are discussed by the Acharonim. Among the explanations given by the Acharonim, we find those who allow for splitting *pesukim*, so long as the intent is to quickly continue with the second half.[35] This would allow for the possibility that the *taam elyon* was created later, and yet, given that the intent is to flow from one *pasuk* to the next, there is no issue of "*kol pasuk d'lo paskei Moshe anan lo paskinan*."

Origin of Tachton-Elyon Split

We can now return to the two sets of *trop* for the Aseres Hadibros. When did these alternate readings come to exist? More specifically: can we trace these two *trops* back to the time that the rest of the *trop* was canonized?

While we can trace the *minhag* back to the times of the Rishonim, the trail seems to go dark in the mid-13th century.[36] In early manuscripts, though, we see clear indication of this *minhag*. Already in the Leningrad Codex, sometime in the early 11th century, both sets of notes are present for the Aseres Hadibros. While this proves the existence of both *trops* at the turn of the millennium, there might possibly be an even earlier hint of the *taam elyon*, the divergent *trop*. At the end of each *parshah* of the Torah is a small note about the *pasuk* count in that *parshah*. These notes were early additions to the Chumash, though their origin is the subject of some debate. The number of *pesukim* in *parshas Yisro* is recorded as 72, the count assuming the *pesukim* of the *taam elyon*. The *taam taḥton* yields an additional three *pesukim* and would have pushed the count to 75.

A third source that may go back significantly earlier is a manuscript of a *targum* now referred to as the Targum Neofiti, so named for the collection to which it belonged. While the manuscript itself was written in the early 16th century, many attempt to trace this *targum* back to the period

just after the Churban Bayis. This *targum* clearly breaks the *pesukim* up in the fashion of the *taam elyon*, while retaining the *pasuk* breaks we have throughout the rest of Torah. What makes this manuscript difficult to rely on is its comparatively mysterious origin.[37] This, in addition to questions about its usage, as well as the possibility that the text was emended, raise questions on its authenticity as a testament to the early origin of the *taam elyon*.

The Leningrad codex, and possibly the masoretic notes, are interesting in another respect as well, in that they all have the *taam elyon* for *parshas Va'eschanan* as well as for *parshas Yisro*.[38] This is significant, as there is some question as to whether the *taam elyon* should be used only on Shavuos, or could it be used in reading the Aseres Hadibros during the remainder of the year as well. Given that only *Yisro* is read on Shavuos, just the existence of a manuscript that contains *taam elyon* in *Va'eschanan* seems to indicate the existence of this *minhag* even prior to its earliest mention in *seforim*.

If we adopt the view of Eliyahu Habochur, we have traced the existence of the *taam elyon* back to nearly to the point of origin for the remainder of the *trop*. The last of the Masoretes was Ben Asher, who lived in the latter half of the tenth century. At the dawn of the 11th century we see our first copy of the *taam elyon*. It would therefore seem that if the two *trops* did not originate simultaneously; at the very least they began in the same period of Jewish history, that of the Masoretes. All the other views of the *trops*' origin leave us with a significant gap, one which may be cut down pending a definitive dating of the Targum Neofiti.

Some of the various masoretic notes, specifically those counting the *pesukim*, seem to indicate that the while the two versions were created in the same time period, they came about in different locales. There were many groups of Masoretes working simultaneously to create a *mesorah* for Tanach. In Tiberius a group of Masoretes culminating with Ben Asher was working on the *seforim* of Eretz Yisrael. At the same time, in Babylon, the project was being undertaken using the *seforim* that had been used in the region for hundreds of years.[39] There is evidence that suggests that the *elyon* may have arisen in Babylon, while the *tachton* was the work of the Tiberian Masoretes.

Nevertheless, little other than place of origin changes due to these assumptions. The *mesorah* in Babylon, while differing slightly from that of Tiberias, for the most part retained the same *pesukim*. This is evidenced by some of the fragments recently found in the Cairo Genizah, which, while based on the Babylonian Masoretes, contained similar *pesukim*. In addition, the works of Chazal, specifically those authored in Babylon, were based on the Babylonian *mesorah*. If the *mesorah* differs significantly in the breakdown of the *pesukim*, one would expect to find some cases of a *hekesh* and *semichus* switched, something which seems not to occur in our Gemaras.

These two proofs seem to point to a mostly similar *mesorah*, at least with regards to the *pesukim*. And yet the Babylonian Masoretes deviated from this path for the Aseres Hadibros. Clearly, this was an innovation for the Aseres Hadibros rather than an indicator of a greater difference between the various *mesoros*. Therefore, it would seem to have developed from a desire to ensure all the *dibros* receive their own *pasuk*.

Footnotes

[1] The idea of variant opinions about the *trop* is not itself a unique phenomenon. There are a few isolated instances elsewhere in Tanach where doubt arose about the proper notes of individual words, as the transmission of the *trop* was not perfect and at times came with multiple opinions. What makes the duality of *taam* in Aseres Hadibros unique is its existence as an entire self-contained section with two distinct and fully developed sets of notes. The comprehensive nature of the *taamim* supports the expectation that their creation was a product of deliberate effort rather than an accident of transmission.

[2] *Lo tirzach, lo tin'af, lo tignov*. See *Biur Halachah* 494 s.v. *mibachodesh* who notes this irregularity.

[3] Esther 8:9.

[4] There is some debate as to the breakup of *pesukim* in the *taam elyon*. If "*anochi"* is a separate *pasuk*, then the second-longest *pasuk* in the *taam elyon* is 50 words. If *anochi* runs into the subsequent *pasuk*, it becomes the longest with 59 words.

[5] Similar statements in *Megillah*3a, *Yerushalmi Megillah*4:1, and *Bereishis Rabbah*chapter 36.

[6] Often when the Gemara quotes a *pasuk* in Nechemiah, Rashi comments that the *pasuk* is in Sefer Ezra. Rashi in *Nedarim* omits this annotation, lending credence to the view that the commentary on *Nedarim* was not composed by Rashi. In *Megillah*, Rashi does make this comment.

[7] This argument is delineated explicitly in Tosafos 37b, s.v. *ve-amri*; the Ran 37a, s.v. *v'rav*; and Meiri 37b, s.v. *af al pi*.

[8] See *Beitzah*4a.

[9] See Tosafos, *Chagigah*6b, s.v. *lifsukei*, who indicate that the *trop* is meant as more than a tool for punctuation. Even with certainty about the correct *trop*, there may still be uncertainty as to the proper punctuation of a *pasuk*.

[10] *Sefer Ratzuf Ahavah* 60b (Shlomo Algazi 1610-1683), quoting Tosfei haRosh. Our Tosafos haRosh in *Yoma* lacks the explicit phrase. Meiri, *Nedarim*37b, s.v. *af al pi*; Maharal, *Netzach Yisrael*, chapter 45 and 66; and *Chavos Yair* 140 are among those who adopt this approach.

[11] *Megillah*3a, s.v. *vayavinu*.

[12] *Dikdukei Taamim*, chapter 16. Though it is somewhat difficult to conclude with conviction as due to the poetic nature of the writing, some liberties may have been taken.

[13] See Ibn Ezra, Bereishis 3:22, s.v. *k'echad*; *Akeidas Yitzchak*, *sha'ar* 21, chapter 8. Also found in the Maharal, Menachem Azarya M'panu *ma'amar me'ah kesitah*, and Rav Shlomo Alkavetz in *Shoresh Yishai*, pg. 17.

[14] Eliyahu ben Asher HaLevi (1469-1549), often referred to as Elia Levita. See introduction to *sefer Tuv Taam*. See also in the introduction to *Sefer Masores Hamesorah*, where more of the approach is explained.

[15] Vayakhel 61a. See also *Megillah*32a, which may support this approach.

[16] *Sefer Yereim*, chapter 255.

[17] *Semag Lo Taaseh* 155.

[18] Pg. 462, commentary on *Avos*1:1.

[19] *Maamar* 3, chapter 31.

[20] Chapter 302. Notable, though, is that *Sefer Chassidim*'s opinion is unique in asserting that the melodies of the *trop* were also given over at Sinai.

[21] *Sha'ar* 28.

[22] *Teshuvos* 3:643.

[23] *Sheim Hagedolim Maareches Haseforim* entry on *sefer Tuv Taam*, responding to opinion of Rav Eliyahu Habochur.

[24] Rav Yedidya Norzi (1560-1626) in the introduction. Additional Acharonim who adopted this view include the *Ketzos Hachoshen* 333:7; *Chasam Sofer* 6:86; *Chayei Adam* 31:31.

[25] Tosafos Rid, *Megillah*3a, s.v. *vayavinu*, who points out that the question exists also for those who claim the *trop* was canonized by the Anshei Knesses Hagedolah.

[26] See Maharsha, *Yoma*52b, Rashi s.v. *vaya'alu*. This also seems to be the approach adopted by the *Machzor Vitri*, pg.462.

[27] See Ritva, *Yoma* ibid., s.v. *chamesh*. The fact that such *pesukim* have a *trop* would seem to indicate that it was given at Sinai. Otherwise, lacking any evidence from the *pasuk*, who would be capable of establishing a *trop*, and consequently a translation?

[28] Nechemiah 8:8.

[29] *Nedarim*37b.

[30] There is some uncertainty raised by alternate versions of the interpretation of the *pasuk* in Nechemiah. While in the Gemara *Nedarim*, "*v'sum seichel*" is interpreted as referring to *pesukim*, this is not so in the version brought by the Talmud Yerushalmi, and *Midrash Rabbah*. In both instances *v'sum seichel* references the *trop*, while *vayavinu mikra* per some interpretations refers to the *pesukim*, while in the view of others it refers to *hechraim*. Aside from the fact that the Babylonian Talmud's word would be taken as authoritative over the Yerushalmi and Midrash, these two sources do not necessarily conflict with the view of the Bavli. While there is disagreement as to the interpretation of a phrase, nevertheless, it is entirely possible that even according to the version contained in the Yerushalmi Ezra included *pasuk* breaks, the *pasuk* just felt no need to tell us an aspect of the *kriah* that had been included since the time of Moshe. Therefore we should be able to assume, with some degree of certainty, that the *pesukim* were canonized in the times of Moshe.

[31] Tosafos, *Yevamos* 4a, s.v. *dichsiv*, and Rav Shmuel Hanaggid in his introduction to the Talmud printed after *Maseches Berachos*, both explicitly state that this is the difference.

[32] *Berachos*21b, *Yevamos* 4a.

[33] Based on explanation of Tosafos, *Yevamos* 4a.

Genesis 1:9: *And God said, "Let the waters be collected."*
Letters in black, **niqqud** (vowel points) and **d'geshim** (gemination marks) in red, **cantillation** in blue.

THE SYNTAX OF MASORETIC ACCENTS IN THE HEBREW BIBLE

James D. Price, Ph.D. writes:[11]

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[10] Originally featured in Mishpacha Magazine

[11] https://www.jamesdprice.com/images/21_Syntax_of_Accents_rev._ed..pdf

Antiquity of the Accents

The Masoretic vowel points preserve the oral tradition of the text and the accent marks preserve the tradition of cantillation or oral punctuation. Although these signs were not added to the consonantal text until about the eighth or ninth century A.D.,[30] there is evidence that these signs essentially represent an oral tradition that antedates that time by about a millennium. E. J. Revell suggested that the accentuational tradition may have been stabilized earlier than that of pronunciation.[31] He found evidence for the existence of the Hebrew accent system in the second century B.C.[32] The spacing of the words in an early manuscript of the LXX corresponds strikingly with the accents in the Hebrew Bible. Important data from Qumran also seems to support this view.

When the Masoretes developed a system of signs to represent the cantillation that had been orally transmitted to then from antiquity, they evidently developed a set of symbols that had a rather simple syntactic grammar of its own. This grammar defined the hierarchy and range of governance for each symbol. This system was designed to accommodate both the musical and syntactical requirements of cantillation. The development of such a system was indeed ingenious.

Usually the simple syntactic grammar of accents was adequate to reflect the sense of the verses to which they were applied. But occasionally the linguistic complexity of a verse exceeded the capacity of the simple syntax of the accents. In these instances the accentuators had to improvise, making necessary compromises to adapt a simple accent grammar to a complex linguistic grammar. Also

they had to improvise when the musical restraints of the accent grammar were in conflict with the linguistic syntax. These instances provide the student of accentuation with interesting problems of interpretation.

Four Purposes of Primary Accents

The accents in Biblical Hebrew serve four purposes: (1) phonetically they mark the syllable that receives the principal stress in pronunciation; (2) syntactically they indicate the degree of grammatical separation or connection between adjoining words and phrases much like punctuation marks in English; (3) musically they indicate the relative intonation of a word in cantillation; and (4) in addition, they often reflect the poetic structure of the text.

Marking Stress

Every Hebrew word or phonetic unit has a prominent syllable that receives stress in pronunciation. The prominently stressed syllable of a Hebrew word is marked by one of the accents. The accent mark usually is written above the first consonant of the stressed syllable or below it and immediately to the left of any vowel there.[33] Most Hebrew words receive the prominent stress on the last syllable (the ultima); a few are stressed on the next-to-last syllable (the penultima). The prominent stress never occurs earlier than the penultima. In a few cases the stress distinguishes inflected forms that otherwise would be spelled exactly the same.

Marking Syntactic Relationship

Syntactically the Hebrew accents indicate the degree of grammatical separation or connection between adjoining words and phrases much like punctuation marks in English. There are two types of accents: (1) disjunctive accents that di-

vide words or phrases, and (2) conjunctive accents that join words or phrases. In the reading of Hebrew Scripture, the disjunctive accents call for a pause following the words on which they occur. The duration of the pause depends on the type of accent: the stronger disjunctive accents call for longer pauses. In addition, the two strongest disjunctive accents frequently alter the pronunciation of some words, causing the stress to shift to the penultima with a corresponding lengthening of the vowel of the stressed syllable. On the other hand, a conjunctive accent calls for the word on which it occurs to be read with no pause between it and the word that follows.[34] This syntactic function of the accents is discussed in depth in the main body of this work.

Musical Cantillation

In addition to marking the stressed syllable and syntactic relationships, the marks of accentuation also indicate the relative intonation of a word in cantillation, that is, the public liturgical reading of the Hebrew Scriptures in the synagogue. Avigar Herzog described an elaborate system of cantillation.[35] Several different traditions have developed throughout the extended history of synagogue worship. Weil opposed the idea that the system of cantillation may be referred to as "musical." John J. Hughes summarized Weil's views on cantillation:

> According to Weil, the Masoretic chains of cantillation are mathematically governed, following "very rigid rules of production and succession," and have nothing to do with a musical system. Instead, they constitute a precise, rule-governed

reading system that enables the reader "to give to his sentence an accent of meaning which is linked to the traditional reading."[36]

Weil reasoned that a system that would be primarily musical would require at least one note for each of the syllables of each word of the text. He is right in observing that the accents do not define a syllable-by-syllable melody for the text, but he is wrong in denying that the accents are devoid of any musical connotation.

In the first place, those who describe the musical character of the accents indicate that each accent signifies a sequence of tones, rather than a single tone. Thus a kind of melody is defined for each word, even though the number of tones of the melody ascribed to a word may not exactly match the number of syllables in the given word. The cantor must accommodate the melody to the syllables of the word, either by singing multiple tones on a single syllable (melisma) or multiple syllables with a single tone (chant).

In the second place, although it is true that the grammar rules of accentuation are well defined and mathematically governed, yet the rules are sufficiently flexible in certain areas as to accommodate musical variety.[37] In fact, this flexibility may be accounted for by phonetic and musical considerations. Where the grammar rules of accentuation admit options, the choices are made nearly always on the basis of musical considerations, that is, on the rhythmic and phonetic nature of the context. The evidence supports the view that the accents provide a type of musical guide for chanting (cantillating) the reading of the text.

Yeivin stated that

> their primary function . . . is to represent the musical motifs to which the Biblical text was chanted in the public reading. This chant enhanced the beauty and solemnity of the reading, but because the purpose of the reading was to present the text clearly and intelligibly to the hearers, the chant is dependent on the text, and emphasizes the logical relationships of the words.[38]

Herzog reasoned that the liturgical reading of Scripture in the synagogue was quite early, and that "as to the musical element, the sources merely say that the Bible was to be read and studied only by melodic recitation (cf. Meg. 23a; Song R. 4:11)."[39] He further stated that

> the Tiberian system of accent signs and vowel signs and their functions was based on existing practices not only of the pronunciation and grammatical basis and syntactic structure of the text, but also of its musical rendition.[40]

Herzog was likely correct. Therefore the musical influence on the Hebrew accents should not be excluded even though they are observed to follow well-defined rules.

Poetic Structure

Much of the Hebrew Old Testament is written with poetic structure, even those portions that are commonly regarded as prose. Wickes observed:

> It is important to notice the influence which *parallelism* has on the division of the verse. This main ornament of the Hebrew style characterizes all the poetical and (to a great extent) the prophetical parts of the twenty-one Books. It is also found in the simply narrative portions, for a poetic colouring often shews itself even there. The most conspicuous instances are where it is marked by the main dichotomy, but it appears hardly less frequently in the minor divisions of the verse.[41]

This has become increasingly evident as a result of recent studies in Hebrew poetry.[42] For example, Duane L. Christensen asserted that "much of Scripture as we know it was probably performed and sung in liturgical settings in ancient Israel, and thus the form of Scripture is essentially poetic."[43] Again he wrote that

> research in Deuteronomy over the course of the past several years suggests that the Hebrew text in its present form, as preserved by the Masoretes, is a musical composition. The canting tradition of the synagogues preserves accurate memory of the original performance of the text during the period of the second temple in Jerusalem and perhaps earlier. . . .The book of Deuteronomy is poetry in its entirety. . . Though it contains a lyric 'Song of Moses' (chap. 32), most of the book is in the form of didactic poetry of a lesser nature so far as heightened speech goes.[44]

Finally, in regard to the book of Jonah, which is commonly regarded to be a mixture of prose and poetry, he concluded:

> In light of the foregoing metrical reading of this delightful literary masterpiece, it is clear that the book of Jonah can be described as a narrative poem, written in metrical language in five parts which are integrally structured along two primary dimensions.[45]

It is not unusual for the use of the accents to be influenced by poetic structure as well as grammatical syntax. In good poetry, grammatical syntax and poetic structure exhibit considerable harmony. Where such harmony fails, it should not be surprising to find the accents being influenced at times by the rhetorical demands of the poetic structure.

Two Systems of Accentuation

Two sets of accent marks are used in the Hebrew Bible: (1) those used in the twenty-one so-called prose books of the Hebrew canon; and (2) those used in the so-called books of poetry (Psalms, Job, and Proverbs) also referred to as the Books of Truth, based on the acronym אֱמֶת (truth) constructed from the first letters of their Hebrew names אִיוֹב—Job, מִשְׁלֵי—Proverbs, and תְּהִלִּים—Psalms.[46] Part One of this work deals with the set of accents as used in the Pentateuch. Although this part deals only with the Pentateuch, it is reasonable to assume that the rules that explain the use of the accents in the Pentateuch explain the use of the accents in the remaining prose books. Part Two deals with those used in the books of poetry.

For each system of accentuation a set of rules is provided which have been exhaustively tested and tabulated by means of a computer. The rules define the structural syntax of the Hebrew accents using a generative phrase-structure grammar as a model. Each set of accents has its own rules and associated grammar—similar in structure but different in content. The grammars have proven to be simple and consistent. They confirm the general conclusions of Weil that the accents follow a strict system of rules, and they demonstrate that the rules are consistent with a generative phrase-structure model. This work differs from those of Yeiven and Weil in that it deals primarily with the structural syntax of the accents and their rules, not primarily with the reasons behind the rules and their interpretation.

JOSHUA R. JACOBSON

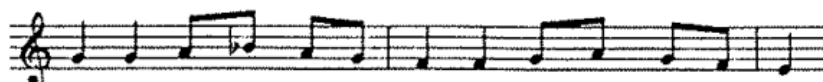# Chanting the Hebrew Bible

The Art of Cantillation

SECOND EXPANDED EDITION

TA'AMEY HAMIKRA: A CLOSER LOOK

Joshua R. Jacobson

What's wrong with these tunes?

Example 1

ta - mid   lo   cha - sar   la - nu,   ve - al   yech - sar   la - nu

Example 2

ka - ka - tuv   ve - a - chal - ta   ve - sa - va - ta   u - ve - rach - ta

Example 3

Sho - chen   ad   ma - rom   ve - ka - dosh___   she - mo.___

In the first example the word *la*-nu was changed by the composer[1] to la-*nu*. *La*-nu means "to us;" la-*nu* means "they stayed overnight."

In the second example the same composer changed the words ve-a-chal-*ta* and u-vey-rach-*ta* to ve-a-*chal*-ta and u-vey-*rach*-ta. Ve-a-chal-*ta* and u-vey-rach-*ta* mean "you shall eat" and "you shall bless;" ve-a-*chal*-ta and u-vey-*rach*-ta mean "you ate" and "you blessed."

In the third example we see how the careless application of nusach to this text changes its meaning from "He who abides for eternity, exalted and holy is His name!" to "He who abides for eternity is exalted, and holy is His name!"

Well, who cares about such linguistic nit-picking? and what does all this have to do with ta'amey hamikra, anyway?

Ta'amey hamikra refers to the Jewish traditions of scriptural cantillation: the system of motifs that are assigned to the text and the

[1] Moshe Nathanson

[12] https://repository.library.northeastern.edu/files/neu:331006/fulltext.pdf

graphic symbols that represent those motifs. The three functions of ta'amey hamikra are (1) to enhance the aesthetic quality of public reading by providing the texts with melodies, (2) to indicate the syllabic stress of each word[2] and (3) to clarify the syntactical sense by parsing each verse.

As Jewish music professionals, we are most often concerned with the first two functions: how to chant the Torah, the haftarot and the megillot with appropriate allocation of the motifs.

According to traditional Jewish practice, one is obliged to be scrupulous about pronunciation when reading scripture in public. If a ba'al k'riyah makes an error in cantillation that results in a change of meaning, he is to be interrupted, the correct reading is to be pointed out and he is to repeat the phrase with the correction.

The *Shulchan Aruch*, a sixteenth-century code of Jewish law compiled by Joseph Caro in Venice, stipulates:

> In the first place, the reader is obligated to read with absolutely correct te'amim and pronunciation, so that he does not confuse voiced schwa with unvoiced schwa and so that he knows which letters take daggesh.... If he makes an error in the reading, even in the pronunciation of a single letter, he is obliged to repeat it and pronounce it correctly.[3]

The *Mishnah Berurah*, a nineteenth century commentary on the *Shulchan Aruch* by the Chafetz Chayyim, elaborates on this passage.

> If the reader makes an error in the melody of the te'amim, and that error results in a change in the sense of the text (for example, if he chanted a word with a conjunctive ta'am in place of a disjunctive ta'am), he is obliged to repeat [the phrase].[4]

Unfortunately, many of those who are scrupulous about observing the correct word stress in cantillation are not always as careful when chanting the liturgy and singing hymns. As we saw in the first two examples cited above, a change in a word's stress can change a word's

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[2] Most te'amim (except the prepositive, postpositive and interlogic signs) indicate where in the word we should sing the "body of the trope" (to borrow Prof. Binder's term). Those who are confused about where to place the proper stress on words which have prepositive and postpositive tropes should consult the Koren editions of the Bible. The editors have consistently adhered to the policy of placing a secondary tropal sign on the stressed syllable of any word in which the trope falls on an unstressed syllable.

[3] *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayyim,* §142 (the present author's translation).

[4] *Mishnah Berurah, Orach Chayyim,* §142 (the present author's translation).

meaning. Example four shows Louis Lewandowski's well-known setting of the verses included in the zichronot portion of the Rosh HaShanah service:

הָלֹךְ וְקָרָאתָ בְאָזְנֵי יְרוּשָׁלַ͏ִם לֵאמֹר כֹּה אָמַר ה' זָכַרְתִּי לָךְ חֶסֶד
נְעוּרַיִךְ אַהֲבַת כְּלוּלֹתָיִךְ לֶכְתֵּךְ אַחֲרַי בַּמִּדְבָּר בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא זְרוּעָה:

Jer. 2:2

וְזָכַרְתִּי אֲנִי אֶת־בְּרִיתִי אוֹתָךְ בִּימֵי נְעוּרָיִךְ וַהֲקִמוֹתִי לָךְ בְּרִית
עוֹלָם:

Ezek. 16:60

Note the difference in accentuation of the word זכרתי. In the verse from Jeremiah, the word is za-*char*-ti, "I remembered." But in the verse from Ezekiel the word appears with "vav consecutive" (ו ההפוך) as ve-za-char-*ti*, "I *shall* remember;" the accent has shifted and the tense is changed. Was Lewandowski aware of this distinction when he composed his setting?[5]

Example 4: Two excerpts from *Zacharti Lach* by Lewandowski.

[5] I realize that it is tremendously difficult to impose new rhythm on a hymn that the congregation has been singing in its own way for years (although I confess I

Ta'amey hamikra also function as an elaborate system of punctuation, indicating the placement of major and minor pauses in the reading, as well as groupings of words which are to be syntactically connected. Every word in scripture is marked with a masoretic accent, or "ta'am." Te'amim are either conjunctive or disjunctive. A conjunctive ta'am indicates that the word is joined in meaning to the word which immediately follows. A disjunctive ta'am indicates a syntactic separation following the word. The masoretes instituted the te'amim as a means of clarifying the meaning of the sacred texts at a time when the Jewish people were no longer fluent in the use of the Hebrew language.

Without punctuation, a verse could be open to more than one interpretation. For example, this short verse from Gen. 24:34, ויאמר עבד אברהם אנכי could be read in any of three ways:

(1) with a disjunctive accent on עבד:

A servant said, "I am Abraham." וַיֹּאמֶר עֶבֶד אַבְרָהָם אָנֹכִי׃

(2) with a disjunctive accent on אברהם:

Abraham's servant said, "It is I." וַיֹּאמֶר עֶבֶד אַבְרָהָם אָנֹכִי׃

(3) with a disjunctive accent on ויאמר:

He said, "I am Abraham's servant.": וַיֹּאמֶר עֶבֶד אַבְרָהָם אָנֹכִי׃

The third version is the masoretic punctuation.

Another verse from the same chapter serves to further illustrate the point. Observe this phrase from Gen. 24:65.

The servant said, "he is my master." וַיֹּאמֶר הָעֶבֶד הוּא אֲדֹנִי

One who is careless about the te'amim, making the "insignificant" error of confusing a mer'cha (a conjunctive ta'am) with a tipcha (a disjunctive ta'am), might easily pervert the sense of this verse, rendering it:

He said, "the servant is my master." וַיֹּאמֶר הָעֶבֶד הוּא־אֲדֹנִי

Another interesting example is this enigmatic verse from 1Sam. 3:3.

ונר אלהים טרם יכבה ושמואל שכב בהיכל ה' אשר שם ארון אלהים:

At first glance we might translate this verse as "The lamp of the Lord had not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the Temple of the Lord where the ark of God was."[6] However, the masoretic interpretation is quite different, and takes into account the fact that the young Samuel would never have been allowed to sleep in the sanctuary. The ta'am etnachta on the word שכב indicates the main dividing point in the verse. The phrase ending with the etnachta must therefore be treated as a parenthetical phrase. The adverbial phrase "in the Temple…" modifies "gone out," not "sleeping."

וְנֵר אֱלֹהִים טֶרֶם יִכְבֶּה וּשְׁמוּאֵל שֹׁכֵב בְּהֵיכַל ה' אֲשֶׁר־שָׁם אֲרוֹן אֱלֹהִים:

"The lamp of the Lord had not yet gone out (while Samuel was sleeping) in the Temple of the Lord where the ark of God was."

At times an improper inflection in the reading can lead to a heretical interpretation. In Isaiah 6:2 we encounter the following four words: שרפים עמרים ממעל לו . Connecting the last two words מִמַּעַל לוֹ would result in the unacceptable translation, "Seraphim are standing above Him." Isaiah's vision surely would not have allowed any creatures to appear superior to the Deity. The masoretic interpretation places the disjunctive ta'am pashta on the word ממעל, separating it syntactically from the word לו:ממעל לו | שְׂרָפִים עֹמְרִים, "Seraphim are standing on high for [to serve] Him."

In the liturgy for the High Holidays we frequently encounter the phrase: ויקרא בשם ה'. In chanting this phrase, should we pause after the first word or after the second word? According to the masoretic interpretation, the latter would be more correct. The source of this phrase is Exod. 34:5. וַיֵּרֶד ה' בֶּעָנָן וַיִּתְיַצֵּב עִמּוֹ שָׁם וַיִּקְרָא בְשֵׁם ה: "The Lord came down in a cloud; He stood with him [Moses] there, and proclaimed the name Lord."[7] According to Ibn Ezra, 'ה is the subject of the verb ויקרא; God uttered His own name to teach Moses how to invoke Him.[8]

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[6] Note that this is how the verse is translated in the new JPS *Tanakh* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1985).

[7] *Tanakh.*

[8] Note that in this case Rashi disregards the masoretes and follows instead the Targum, interpreting the subject of ויקרא as Moses.

Contrast this verse with Genesis 12:8.

וַיַּעְתֵּק מִשָּׁם הָהָרָה מִקֶּדֶם לְבֵית־אֵל וַיֵּט אָהֳלֹה בֵּית־אֵל מִיָּם
וְהָעַי מִקֶּדֶם וַיִּבֶן שָׁם מִזְבֵּחַ לַיהֹוָה וַיִּקְרָא בְּשֵׁם ה׳׃

Here the conjunctive ta'am mer'cha on the word בשם indicates that the word is in construct form (s'michut), implying that Abram is calling "in the name *of* the Lord." The disjunctive ta'am tipcha on the word ויקרא causes a daggesh to appear in the first letter of בשם.

Another commonly misread verse is the quote from Jeremiah 31:11 which we chant in the ma'ariv service כִּי־פָדָה ה׳ אֶת־יַעֲקֹב וּגְאָלוֹ מִיַּד חָזָק מִמֶּנּוּ׃ , "For the Lord will ransom Jacob and redeem him from one too strong for him." The ta'am tipcha indicates a slight pause after the word מיד , while the mer'cha on חזק indicates that it is connected syntactically to the word ממנו. The common practice of pausing between חזק and ממנו contradicts the sense of the text.

In the Torah service, we often hear the fourth verse from Psalm 34 chanted as:

Example 4

Ga-de - lu la-do-shem___ i - ti   u-ne-ro-me-ma she-mo___ yach-dav.
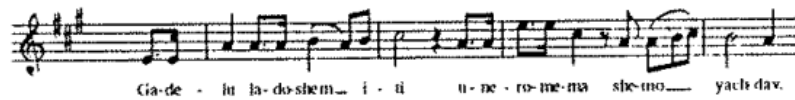
But observe the biblical text: גַּדְּלוּ לַה׳ אִתִּי וּנְרוֹמְמָה שְׁמוֹ יַחְדָּו׃ The presence of a disjunctive ta'am on the word ונרוממה might suggest the following alteration[9]:

Example 5

Ga-de - lu la-do-shem___ i - ti   u-ne-ro-me-ma she - mo___ yach-dav.___

Note that Sulzer's original setting of the text shows that he was quite sensitive to the correct accentuation and phrasing.

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[9] Note that the te'amim for the book of Psalms are different from those of the twenty-one prose books.

Example 6, Salomon Sulzer, *Gad'lu*

Ga-de-lu la-do-shem i - ti u - ne-ro-me - mo she-mo yach - dov.

We would also do well to follow more closely Sulzer's original setting of the "Yehalelu" from the Shabbat Torah service. From an examination of the te'amim[9] we observe that there should be a slight pause after (not before) the word שְׁמוֹ.

יְהַלְלוּ ׀ אֶת־שֵׁם הֹ כִּי־נִשְׂגָּב שְׁמוֹ לְבַדּוֹ הוֹדוֹ עַל־אֶרֶץ וְשָׁמָיִם:

"Let them praise the name of the Lord, for His name is sublime—His alone."

Example 7: Salomon Sulzer, *Yehalelu*

Ye-ha - le - lu es shem A-do - shem ki nis gov_ she-mo le-va - do.

*   *   *

Up until this point the emphasis has been on demonstrating how the te'amim can serve as a guide to the correct pronunciation of individual words and the proper inflection of verses. But we can also reverse the process. By applying the principle of "continuous dichotomy"[10] to a verse of scripture we can analyze the sentence structure and thereby predict the ta'am for each word.

Let us examine a simple verse: ותבט אשתו מאחריו ותהי נציב מלח
"His wife looked back and she became a pillar of salt." (Gen. 19:26)

The main syntactic division of the verse separates the two predicates ותבט and ותהי.

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[9] Note that the te'amim for the book of Psalms are different from those of the twenty-one prose books.

[10] Continuous dichotomy refers to the process of dividing a scriptural verse into two parts according to the syntactical structure, then further subdividing each part into two smaller parts, and continuing until the smallest indivisible syntactic unit is reached. While this process was probably originally derived from the parallel structure of Biblical poetry, it was later applied to the prose books as well.

וַתַּבֵּט אִשְׁתּוֹ מֵאַחֲרָיו ‖ וַתְּהִי נְצִיב מֶלַח

Each of the two halves of the verse can then be further subdivided. According to one of the basic rules of syntactic subdivision, a phrase that begins with a verb is subdivided before its final complement.[11]

וַתַּבֵּט אִשְׁתּוֹ | מֵאַחֲרָיו

modifier   subject verb

In the second half of the verse we apply the principle that two words in construct state must remain together as a syntactic unit. Since נציב and מלח must remain together, the division must come before the word נציב.

וַתְּהִי | נְצִיב מֶלַח

cmpound noun verb

Now that we have successfully parsed the verse down to its smallest possible units, we next insert the te'amim appropriate to each syntactic position. The disjunctive ta'am marking the last word in a verse is siluk.

ותבט אשתו | מאחריו | ותהי | נציב מֶלַח

The disjunctive ta'am marking the last word in the first half of a verse is etnachta.

ותבט אשתו | מֵאַחֲרָיו | ותהי | נציב מֶלַח

The disjunctive ta'am marking the next subdivision is tipcha.

ותבט אִשְׁתּוֹ | מֵאַחֲרָיו | וַתְּהִי | נציב מֶלַח

The conjunctive ta'am "serving" tipcha is mer'cha.

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[11] A complement (משלים) can be subject, object or modifier.

וַתַּבֵּ֥ט אִשְׁתּ֖וֹ מֵאַחֲרָ֑יו וַתְּהִ֖י נְצִ֥יב מֶֽלַח

The conjunctive ta'am serving siluk is also mer'cha.

וַתַּבֵּ֥ט אִשְׁתּ֖וֹ מֵאַחֲרָ֑יו וַתְּהִ֖י נְצִ֥יב מֶֽלַח׃

The verse is now fully accented.

Let us examine a slightly more complex verse.

וכסף אחר הורדנו בידנו לשבר אכל לא ידענו מי שם כספנו באמתחתינו.
"We have brought in our hands other monies with which to buy food; we do not know who put the money in our bags." (Gen. 43:22)

The primary dichotomy separates the two predicates הורדנו and ידענו.

| לא ידענו מי שם כספנו באמתחתינו | וכסף אחר הורדנו בידנו לשבר אכל |

In the first half, we mark the primary subdivision before the final complement.

| לשבר אכל | וכסף אחר הורדנו בידנו |
| subject | verb modifier modifier |

We can now sub-divide the inner phrase; the dichotomy is before the predicate.

| הורדנו בידנו | וכסף אחר |
| subject verb | modifier |

The second half of the verse subdivides before the compound complement.

| מי שם כספנו באמתחתינו | לא ידענו |
| verb | object |

The object itself is a phrase which further subdivides before its final complement.

מי שם כספנו | באמתחתינו
modifier   object   verb
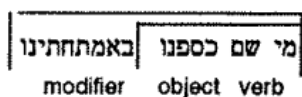
We now apply the te'amim according to the hierarchical structure of the parsed verse. The final word of the verse is marked with the disjunctive siluk, and the final word of the first half of the verse is marked with the disjunctive etnachta.

וכסף אחר הורדנו בידנו | לִשְׁבָּר־אֹכֶל | לא ידענו | מי שם כספנו | בְּאַמְתְּחֹתֵינוּ:
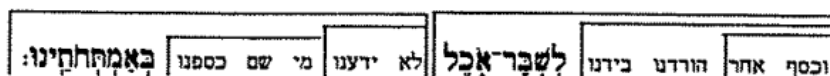
In the first half-verse we mark the last word of the first sub-division with the disjunctive tipcha.

וכסף אחר הורדנו | בְיָדֵנוּ | לִשְׁבָּר־אֹכֶל | לא ידענו | מי שם כספנו | בְּאַמְתְּחֹתֵינוּ:
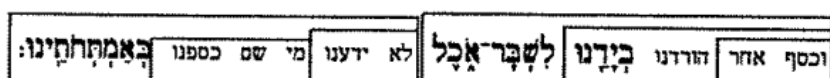
The last word in a phrase which is subordinate to tipcha is marked with the subordinate disjunctive, t'vir.

וכסף אָחַר הורדנו | בְיָדֵנוּ | לִשְׁבָּר־אֹכֶל | לא ידענו | מי שם כספנו | בְּאַמְתְּחֹתֵינוּ:

We can now mark the conjunctives which "serve" the disjunctives. Before tipcha—mer'cha.

וכסף אָחַר | הוֹרַדְנוּ | בְיָדֵנוּ | לִשְׁבָּר־אֹכֶל | לא ידענו | מי שם כספנו | בְּאַמְתְּחֹתֵינוּ:
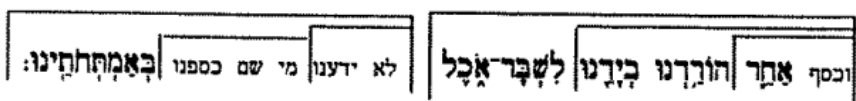
Before t'vir, since there are two intervening unstressed syllables— darga.

וְכֶסֶף אַחַר | הוֹרַדְנוּ | בְיָדֵנוּ | לִשְׁבָּר־אֹכֶל | לא ידענו | מי שם כספנו | בְּאַמְתְּחֹתֵינוּ:
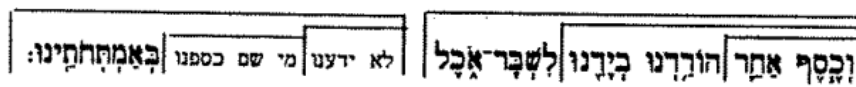
The second half-verse is accented in a similar fashion. The final phrase before siluk must end with the disjunctive, tipcha.

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וְכֶסֶף אַחֵר הוֹרַדְנוּ בְיָדֵנוּ לִשְׁבָּר־אֹכֶל | לֹא יֵדְעוּ | מִי שָׂם | כַּסְפֵּנוּ | בְּאַמְתְּחֹתֵינוּ:

The first subdivision, since it is on a higher level than tipcha, must be the disjunctive, zakef.

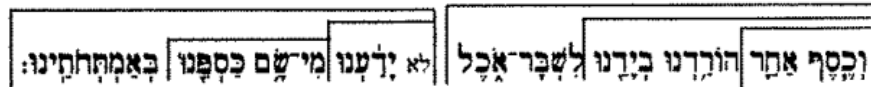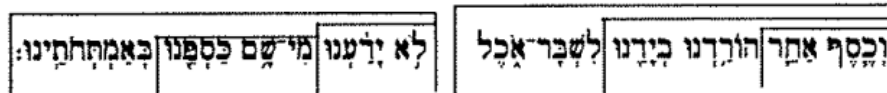וְכֶסֶף אַחֵר הוֹרַדְנוּ בְיָדֵנוּ לִשְׁבָּר־אֹכֶל | לֹא יָדַעְנוּ | מִי שָׂם | כַּסְפֵּנוּ | בְּאַמְתְּחֹתֵינוּ:
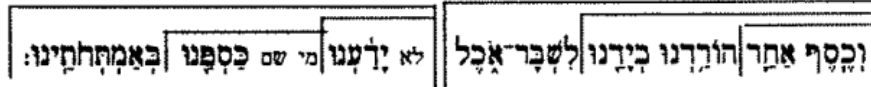
The conjunctive which serves tipcha is mer'cha.

וְכֶסֶף אַחֵר הוֹרַדְנוּ בְיָדֵנוּ לִשְׁבָּר־אֹכֶל | לֹא יָדַעְנוּ | מִי־שָׁם | כַּסְפֵּנוּ | בְּאַמְתְּחֹתֵינוּ:

The conjunctive which serves zakef is munach.

וְכֶסֶף אַחֵר הוֹרַדְנוּ בְיָדֵנוּ לִשְׁבָּר־אֹכֶל | לֹא יָדַעְנוּ | מִי־שָׁם | כַּסְפֵּנוּ | בְּאַמְתְּחֹתֵינוּ:

The verse is now fully accented.

With knowledge of the rules of parsing scripture and of the hierarchy of the te'amim, one can apply this method to any verse in the Bible. Although this procedure may seem complex when revealed in such a cursory fashion, a practiced reader studying the subject with a step-by-step approach can become rather proficient.

Regrettably, this method of analysis is not well known outside of Israel, where it is taught to young children in many schools. The benefits of this knowledge to a ba'al k'riyah should be obvious. The ability to predict patterns of te'amim can greatly facilitate the process of what often seems to be rote memorization. The introduction of this method of analysis into the curriculum of our day schools and Hebrew high schools could potentially improve the students' ability to understand the Hebrew Bible and could even increase the number of skilled ba'aley k'riyah in the next generation. Ta'amey hamikra does not have to be taught as a purely musical pre-confirmation exercise. It can and should be integrated into the curriculum of Bible study.

Unfortunately, there are no textbooks in English that adequately treat this subject. Binder's text is an excellent resource but is limited to

musical interpretation of the motifs.[12] Cantor Samuel Rosenbaum's books on Torah and Haftarah chanting reflect an earnest attempt to present the techniques of cantillation in a logical manner, but contain a number of errors.[13] Pinchas Spiro has a sound pedagogical approach, but his book is riddled with inconsistencies.[14] Maurice Gellis and Dennis Gribetz's book presents many grammatical rules which are extremely helpful to the ba'al k'riyah.[15] Yet none of these authors explains the relationship of the te'amim to the grammatical structure.

Solomon Rosowsky's revered tome[16] is many things. It is an extremely thorough treatise on every possible permutation of the ta'amey hamikra as they would appear in Western notation. It even presents a method for cantillating the Bible in Swedish translation. While Rosowsky does deal with grammatical aspects of the te'amim, he does so primarily from the antiquated concept of the "chain of command" (emperors, kings, dukes, and so forth). There is no attempt to correlate the te'amim to grammatical parsing of the text.

The best (and only) book on the subject in the English language remains William Wickes' *Treatise on the Accentuation of the Prose Books of the Old Testament*, available now in a reprint edition.[17] Wickes gives a thorough explanation of the relationship of te'amim to the syntax, including the rules for parsing scriptural verse. But his book is better suited to scholars than to young students.

In Israel, many scholars have delved into the complex functions of the te'amim. Rabbi Mordecai Broyer has written a thorough explication of the subject in his *Ta'amey HaMikra*.[18] There is one author, however, who, until his untimely death last year, stood alone in his single-minded dedication and his ability to present the complexity of ta'amey hamikra in a clear and understandable way. Michael Perlman, of K'vutsat Yavneh,

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[12] Abraham Binder, *Biblical Chant*. (NY: Sacred Music Press, 1959).

[13] Samuel Rosenbaum, *A Guide to Torah Chanting* and *A Guide to Haftarah Chanting*. (New York: Ktav Publishing, 1973).

[14] Pinchas Spiro, *Haftarah Chanting*. (New York:The Board of Jewish Education, 1964).

[15] Morris Gellis, and Dennis Gribetz, *The Glory of Torah Reading*. revised 1983 ed. (Jersey City: M.P. Press, 1982).

[16] Solomon Rosowsky, *The Cantillation of the Bible*. (New York: The Reconstructionist Press, 1957).

[17] William Wickes, *Two Treatises on the Accentuation of the Old Testament*. 2 vols. 1881-1887. (reprint ed., New York: Ktav Publishers, 1970).

[18] Mordecai Broyer, *Ta'amei HaMikra*. (Jerusalem: 1982. Reprint ed. Jerusalem: Chorev, 1989).

had written more than twenty books on this subject. His seven-volume *Dapim LeLimud Ta'amey HaMikra* [19] presents the subject in a series of fully-explained graduated lessons, with exercises for the student at the end of each lesson. His six-volume *Chug LeTa'amey HaMikra* [20] is a collection of lectures on various topics related to cantillation, including fascinating parshanut based on the te'amim. He has also initiated a series displaying the text of the Bible grammatically parsed with his own system of analytical symbols. Always concerned with the practical application of his work, Mr. Perlman has issued pamphlets for the shaliach tsibbur which display liturgical texts with the parsing symbols, a tremendous boon to those who are concerned with the correct rendering of the prayers.[21]

<p style="text-align:center">*   *   *</p>

This article represents an attempt to stimulate interest in an area of study which is largely unknown in this country and to raise the banner for correct pronunciation and inflection of the sacred texts. Many performers are extremely careful about consulting an authoritative ur-text score in order to discover a composer's original intentions regarding the notation, phrasing and articulation of a particular passage; yet these same musicians are ignorant of the phrasing and articulation of the text of a Biblical passage.

If we believe that Hebrew is a language meant to be understood, not merely a gobbledygook of meaningless sounds to be spun out, then we must make every effort to speak and chant the language correctly. Would we respect a professional actor who constantly mispronounces words, destroys syntax and evidences only a minimal understanding of a script? Certainly we, as Jewish music professionals, should hold to the same standards in both performance and teaching.

The fact that most congregants can't tell the difference should not be a determining factor. דע לפני מי אתה עומד . Acknowledgement of the

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[19] Michael Perlman, *Dapim LeLimud Ta'amei HaMikra.* 7 vols. (Jerusalem: HaMachon HaYisra'eli LeMusikah Datit, 1962).

[20] Michael Perlman, *Chug LeTa'amey HaMikra.* 6 vols. (Tel Aviv: Zimrat, 1971).

[21] To my knowledge, there has been only one attempt to translate Mr. Perlman's work into English. Alan Smith, a student of Perlman's, has put together a booklet entitled, *Removing the Mystery from Ta'amey HaMikra,* a lucid and entertaining introduction to the subject. Copies may be obtained directly from Mr. Smith at 27 Bet Zayit, Harey Yehudah, 90815, Israel.

Divine Presence demands that our public prayers and reading of scripture be formulated in the ancient sacred language. We now have the opportunity and the sacred obligation to lead our communities with this knowledge.

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A Story of Ohs and Ahs

Hakham Isaac S. D. Sassoon writes:[13]

Maimonides [*Yad Tefillah* 8:12, 15:1], as well as several other Sephardic scholars, [declares] to be *'illegin* (=defective of speech) [those] people who cannot distinguish between the sounds of *aleph* and *ayin* or between the sounds of *heh* and *heth*. These alone they declare *'illegin*. But our Talmudic sages, when they cited these two pairs of easily confounded gutturals, were citing them merely as examples as is shown by their use of the word *kegon* (=such as)—a word which always implies that what has been mentioned represents a larger group.[i] Hence I am amazed at their [i.e. Maimonides and the Sephardic scholars] singling out for the epithet *'illegin* just those who fail to distinguish between *aleph* and *ayin,* etc. but forget to apply it to themselves and their countrymen who make no difference between the sounds of *samekh* and *tsadi*.

Moreover, when it comes to the diacritics—which are to the letters like brains and legs [to humans]—they do not respect each diacritic's phonetic value. Instead, *kamets* and *patah* are all one to them as are *tsere* and *segol*.… All this happened to them because they fulfilled the verse [Ps. 106:35] "They intermingled with the nations and learnt their ways." Having resolved to aggrandize themselves above their fellows, they made every effort to gain admission into royal and princely courts. And the better to ingratiate themselves with the princes, they took up the study of these uncircumcised princes' tongue, script, astronomy [*or* science], and philosophy…. Furthermore, they sought to bring their own language [Hebrew] into line with the language of the uncircumcised by retaining only those five of our vowel sounds that correspond to the latter language's vowels while doing away with all the rest. Misguidedly the [Sephardic] multitude followed their lead until in time all, but the five vowel sounds were lost to those communities. Another consequence of the philosophical studies was—for our sins—the proliferation of heretics in Israel.[ii]

The above diatribe leveled against what we think of as Sephardic pronunciation came from the pen of Asher Lemlein ben Meir Reutlingen. This all but forgotten visionary—a messiah to some—

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appeared on the scene on Izola in Istria at the beginning of the sixteenth century. Contemporaries, both Jewish and Christian, recall 1502 as the "year of penance" when masses of Jews divested themselves of their worldly possessions in preparation for what Asher Lemlein had led them to believe was their imminent redemption.

Ephraim Kupfer who published the surviving writings of Asher Reutlingen,[iii] quotes several such reports and assessments of Asher's impact, by chroniclers both contemporary and slightly later— including Abraham Farissol (d. 1525). In his book *Magen Abraham*, Farissol writes:

In these regions of Italy, in the Venetian domains[iv] there arose a man of stature[v] from the ranks of Ashkenaz by the name of Asher Lemle.[vi] He put on airs of being a king despite his limited wisdom and deeds. Through the mediation of his disciples he misled the entire region [into believing that] the redeemer is coming. Indeed, to the multitudes he would announce that "he [the redeemer] is already here." From his place of seclusion he let most of the Diaspora come to believe in him, his teachings, the fasts and flagellations; for they said, "the redeemer is here!"—until it all ended in "emptiness and chasing the wind." These events played out before me in the year 262 [1502] here Ferrara where I reside.[vii] [DEA1]

 A generation later the historian Joseph haKohen (d. 1577) records in his *'Emeq haBakhah*:

In Istria, which is near Venice, there arose an Ashkenazic Jew by the name of Lemlin—a fool of a prophet a madman in spirit.[viii] Jews flocked to him saying "he is surely a prophet since God has sent him to lead His people Israel and to ingather the scattered of Judah from the four corners of the earth." Even among the rabbis he had some followers. They called for fasting, wearing of sackcloth, and for everyone to repent of their bad ways; for they said "Our redemption is close at hand[DEA2] ."

The recollections of David Gans (d. 1613) are charming—if second-hand:

Rabbi Lemlin announced the coming of the messiah in the year 260 [1500]. Throughout the dispersions of Israel they believed his words. Even among the gentiles his fame grew and many of them also believed his words. My grandfather Seligman Gans of blessed memory smashed the oven he kept for baking *massoth* in his total confidence that the following Passover he would be baking *massoth* in the Holy Land. I myself heard from the venerable Rabbi Eliezer Trevis, head of the Francfort beth din, that it was no trifling matter[ix]—[Asher] having provided signs to prove it. He [R. Trevis] added "perhaps our sins were the cause of its failure[DEA3] ."

Lastly, the remarks that the Christian protagonist addresses to his Jewish counterpart in *haVikuah* by the famous Hebraist Sebastian Münster (d. 1552):

In the year 262 [1502] Jews did penance wherever they lived in all lands throughout the diaspora in expectation of messiah.[x] It continued for almost a full year; young and old, children and women. Never had such penance been done as was done in those days.[xi][DEA4]

Asher Lemlein is certainly fascinating in his own right; but our present interest is his conviction that seven diacritic signs must represent an equal number of distinct vowel sounds. Fewer sounds

than signs made no sense to Asher. His logic seems perfectly cogent and was to be echoed by other worthies until the dawn of the modern age. As late as the second half of the eighteenth century, R. Jacob Emden (d. 1776) was faulting the Sephardic vowel system:

[W]ith regard to the pronunciation of the vowels, happy are we [Ashkenazim] and goodly is our portion unlike the Sephardim who do not distinguish between *kamets* and *patah*, thus making the holy profane[xii] .… In addition to that, they diminish the number of the vowels which were handed down to us from Sinai…. They do the same with the vowels *segol* and *tsere*, making the pronunciation of both alike.[xiii]

Emden's allusion to the vowels' Sinaitic origin is cryptic; but almost certainly harks back to a talmudic passage in *Nedarim* 37b.

What is the interpretation of the verse "They read in the scroll of (*var.* in)[xiv] the Torah of clearly they made its sense plain and gave instruction[xv] about what was read" [Neh 8:8]? "They read in the scroll of the Torah of God" this refers to Scripture proper; "clearly" refers to Targum [=Aramaic translation]; "they made its sense plain" refers to the division of the text into verses; "and gave instruction about what was read" refers to the cantillation—or, according to others, to the *masorot*. R. Isaac said: The reading of the Scribes, the embellishments of the Scribes, words read but not written or written but not read are all *halakhah le-moshe mi-sinai*.[xvi] Examples of "readings of the Scribes" are the two ways of pronouncing the consonantal word spelt *aleph resh tsadi* [=earth, land]. Also, the consonantal word spelt *shin mem yod* final-*mem* [=sky, heaven] and the word spelt *mem tsadi resh* final-*mem* [=Egypt].[xvii]

Although R. Isaac obviously attaches the highest importance to giving each vowel its proper phonetic value, he says nothing about seven vowel sounds—let alone any diacritical sigla. Nevertheless, both R. Emden and Asher Lemlein, the former explicitly, assume the seven diacritics along with their respective values to be ancient, if not coeval with the biblical text itself. Nor were these teachers alone in that assumption. Indeed, some Sephardim showed symptoms of an inferiority complex on account of their indifference to the *kamets*! For example, R. David Ibn Yahia (d. 1528) makes the following confession:

"Know that we [Sephardim] have lost the proper way to read written texts…. We do not differentiate between *kamets* and *patah* nor between *tsere* and *segol* …. Undoubtedly each consonant and each vowel must have its discrete sound…."[xviii]

Even today one occasionally hears the argument that neglecting to differentiate between *patah* and *kamets* or *segol* and *tsere* must surely be a deviation from what was intended by the tradition that instituted these distinct sigla. For the sake of full disclosure, I own up to my own bewilderment regarding this seeming anomaly of having two distinct "squiggles" to represent one and the same sound. When I finally mustered the courage to ask my father, he proceeded to show me a text with supralinear Babylonian vocalization. Today, he said, we know that the Babylonian system of vocalization differed radically from the Tiberian, and certainly did not assign distinct values to *tsere* and *segol*—and possibly not even to *patah* and *kamets*.[xix] However, the Tiberian system won the day and ousted the Babylonian—at any rate among scribes and writers

of vocalized Hebrew. But not in the mouths of entire communities who retained their erstwhile pronunciation, either through inertia or in conscious defiance of the "officially" sanctioned system.

My father's answer was no more than a distillation of a century of discovery and scholarship that has identified not merely two but three historical systems of vocalization. Some of the most accessible scholarship in the field can be found in the writings of pioneers such as Benjamin Klar (d. 1948), Paul Kahle (d. 1964), Yehiel F. Gumpertz and in the ongoing research of Israel Yeivin and others. These are some of the primary scholars whose conclusions we shall now summarize, paraphrase and/or cite.

Benjamin Klar

From the very beginning of the enterprise of vocalizing the sacred texts—i.e., from the Gaonic age—there existed three distinct systems.… It is premature to say what the historical relationship between the three systems might have been. But it would not be unreasonable to conjecture that the so-called "Egyptian-Sephardic" pronunciation was the most ancient since it is attested in the transcriptions of the Septuagint as well as Josephus.[xx] If so, the Tiberian and Babylonian systems must be due to later influences. It is worth noting comparable phonetic developments in Persian where the long 'a' sound mutated into a Swedish 'å'.[xxi]

Paul Kahle

When in the course of the ninth century the Masoretes of Tiberias began their work of adding a consistent punctuation to the text of the Hebrew Bible, they were convinced that it was their duty to give the text of the Bible as correct a form as possible.… They secured the abolition or adaptation of all the texts provided with a different kind of punctuation such as the Babylonian.… The text fixed by the Masoretes has been almost the only one considered in the preparation of our Hebrew grammars. Now we know this text was altered by the Masoretes. I have tried to show that the Masoretes of Tiberias introduced a number of new vowels to safeguard the newly-established pronunciation of the gutturals.[xxii]

Yisrael Yeivin

The well-known report in *Mahzor Vitry* regarding the existence of three systems of pronunciation appears to be taken from a compilation by the twelfth century R. Jacob bar Samson. That report, found in the commentary to Pirqe Avoth, reads: 'Therefore Tiberian punctuation differs from our punctuation, and both differ from the punctuation of the Holy Land.'[xxiii] M. Friedlander thought that 'our punctuation' referred to the Babylonian system. To the objection that a 12th century Frenchman was unlikely to identify his group as Babylonian, Friedlander responded that *Vitry*'s commentary to Pirqe Avoth was a miscellany of material borrowed from a variety of sources, including Gaonic, which the compiler incorporated as he found it. Nehemiah Aloni rejected Friedlander's theory, preferring to understand 'our punctuation' as referring to the 'expanded' Tiberian punctuation.… If so, *Vitry* cannot be counted as a witness to Babylonian vocalization.[xxiv]

All agree, then, that the system we are most familiar with, originated in Tiberias and comprised seven diacritics. The system that developed in Babylonia probably had no more than six. A third

system, often referred to as the vocalization of *Erets Yisrael*, seems to have had just five. Although the Tiberian system with its seven sigla ultimately prevailed, not all communities renounced their traditional way of pronouncing Hebrew. This can be demonstrated in a number of ways. For instance, a plethora of extant manuscripts can be seen to disregard the quintessentially Tiberian vowel distinctions; interchanging *kamets* with *patah* and *sere* with *segol*. Many of these old manuscripts would have shocked the messiah of Istria because they hail from the very heartlands of Ashkenaz.

Yes indeed! Careful study by scholars, notably Hanokh Yalon (d. 1970),[xxv] of early French and German manuscripts showed that their writers, too, were pronouncing *kamets* the same as *patah*. Take for example the comments of Rashi (d. 1105) to the "Earth, Heaven, Egypt" passage at Ned. 37b (cited above). Since the Talmud is typically written without *matres lectionis*, Rashi sets out to describe in his own words the sound of nouns such as ERETS (=earth) and their pausal modifications. "It is the "readings of the Scribes" that fixes the two ways of pronouncing the consonantal word spelt *aleph resh tsadi*. For there is no *yod* between the *aleph* and *resh* nor between *resh* and *tsadi* [to fix the pronunciation as ERETS]. Similarly for the pausal form, there is no second *aleph* or *heh* between the *aleph* and *resh* nor is there a *yod* between *resh* and *tsadi* [to fix the pronunciation as ARETS]." By explaining that the pausal is pronounced as if there were a *mater lectionis aleph* or *heh* between the initial consonantal *aleph* and the *resh*, Rashi reveals that the *kamets* was just like *patah* in his own system of pronunciation.[xxvi]

Another important proof is furnished by transcriptions of Hebrew in European alphabets. In 1273 R. Abraham Ibn Ezra's astrological treatise *Reshit Hokhmah* was translated into French.[xxvii] Yehiel F. Gumpertz in his *Mivta'e Sefatenu* (Jerusalem 1953) analyzed the transliterated Hebrew words in this thirteenth-century Old French text. Gumpertz begins by telling us that the Hebrew (and Arabic) words were dictated to the scribe Obers de Mondidier by Hagin the Jew. The latter could not write French and the former knew no Hebrew (or Arabic). "The first thing to emerge [from my study of this text]," Gumpertz continues, was a total and unqualified confirmation of Hanoch Yalon's theory regarding the "Sephardic" pronunciation of the *kamets* by French Jews. Indeed so "Sephardi" are his transcriptions that I began to suspect Hagin to be an Iberian Jew. However, his non-Sephardic origin was soon revealed in the way he represents *sheva*s and *hataf*s, no less than in his transcriptions. For instance, the Hebrew word for myrtle he gives as *hedas* instead of *hadas*. *Hedas* is attested exclusively in non-Sephardic MSS of the period. (Gumpertz, *ibid*.)

A third clue comes from rhymed Hebrew compositions by early French and German versifiers. Very frequently *kamets* and *patah* words are used to form the rhymes, strongly suggesting that the rhymsters treated them as homophonous.

But to gain a fuller picture of Ashkenazic pronunciation and its evolution, we turn now to—of all unlikely linguists—Max Weinreich. Weinreich's Yiddish research necessitated a thorough understanding of the kinds of Hebrew that fed Yiddish at its various stages. Not only did Weinreich (d. 1969) master the evidence available in his day, but he managed to present it in a manner succinct as it is orderly. Indeed, we cannot do better than quote him in extenso.

Up to a hundred years ago, not only the reading of the Bible, but all of Hebrew grammar was based on the Tiberian tradition. There are statements of medieval authors that the pronunciation, along with the text of the Torah, were given on Mount Sinai. Aharon Ben Asher [early 10th century] himself maintained that punctuation derived from the men of the great assembly, namely from the beginning of the second Temple. Still others, more critical, came to the conclusion that Hebrew speakers in the period of unmediatedness needed no punctuation.… The Tiberian punctuation was created with the conscious aim of teaching correct reading at a time when Hebrew had long ceased to be an unmediated language.… Scholars can now declare with sufficient confidence that of the three attempts to elaborate a punctuation, the Tiberian attempt was the most recent. The Babylonian system apparently came into use around the year 600, the southern Palestinian[xxviii] about 700, that is some 50 years before the work of the Tiberian sages had begun.…

Behind the north Palestinian punctuation there was an inventory of seven vowels whereas the southern Palestinian punctuation has an inventory of only five vowels. One fact is striking; this vowel system is similar to what was later called the Sephardic pronunciation.…

From southern Palestine and Egypt it [the five-vowel system] penetrated all of northern Africa and even the Iberian Peninsula. The centre of learning in Kairwan was also a point of supply of Jewishness to Italy.…

From there it passed into Loter-Ashkenaz.… It was one exclusive Western sphere, from southern Palestine to the Atlantic, from the edge of the Sahara to the northernmost settlements in central Europe. The southwestern sphere retained the five-vowel reading system [while] the northwest, that is, central Europe, was pervaded by the Tiberian; through conscious efforts of the adherents of this system there grew up here what is known as the Ashkenazic pronunciation…

The similarity of the pre-Ashkenazic pronunciation in Ashkenaz to the Sephardic pronunciation was not the result of the influence of Sefarad on Ashkenaz. There was no such influence, but both Sefarad and Ashkenaz drew their spiritual sustenance from one pre--European source. Sefarad clung to the old system; Ashkenaz changed its reading system radically and the break came not because the scholars of Ashkenaz created the Ashkenazic pronunciation *ex nihilo*… but by virtue of external prestige.

In the writings of the Rosh, born in Ashkenaz about 1250, we find the same as in the case of Rashi's grandsons: the *kamets* symbol was called a *patah*. But [soon] there begin to appear in Ashkenaz signs of the northern Palestinian system, and towards the end of the 14th century Ashkenazic Hebrew manuscripts are usually pointed according to the Tiberian style. [Nevertheless] Ashkenazic Bible manuscripts of the 13th, 14th, and a few perhaps even from the 15th centuries have also been preserved that … can be understood only in the light of the southern Palestinian reading. Some of these manuscripts have a *patah* instead of a *kamets* and a *kamets* instead of a *patah*; similarly a *segol* instead of a *tsere* …. A second group of manuscripts have only *patah* and *segol*…. Such confusion and such interchange are conceivable only in the case of punctuators whose vocalic value of *patah* and *kamets* on the one hand, and *segol* and *tsere* on the other, differs from the Ashkenazic pronunciation of today.

Since it is a matter of proving that today's reading in Ashkenaz is not the original one, the question of how far back the Ashkenazic pronunciation was demonstrably the same as it is today having to be raised. The answer is about 1500; that is, since the beginning of the middle Yiddish period the situation has been more or less the same as today. In the last quarter of the 15th century the Ashkenazic value of the *kamets* is confirmed by both Jewish and non—Jewish testimony.… Up to the 13th century there are no indications of "Ashkenazism".….The oldest known instance of a *kamets* with the value 'o' is in a Cologne Hebrew document dated 1266.[xxix]

If there has to be a moral to this story of phonetic vicissitudes, let it be this: No Jewish community need deem its own tradition for pronouncing Hebrew superior or inferior to any other phonetic tradition. Doubtless those Sephardic authors who expressed misgivings about their neglect to respect *kamets* or *segol* would have been relieved to learn that their 'neglect" was justified all along. Nor should the antiquity of such linguistic heterogeneity surprise us when we ponder the *shibboleth–sibboleth* dichotomy of Jephtha's day. "The Gileadites held the fords of the Jordan against the Ephramites. When any fugitive of Ephraim said, "Let me cross" the men of Gilead would ask him, "Are you an Ephramite?"; if he said "No" they would ask him to say "shibboleth", but he would say "sibboleth" being unable to pronounce it correctly" (Jud 12:5–6).

In his commentary to these verses, R. David Kimhi (Radak, d. 1235) actually compares the phonetic differences between Gileadite and Ephramite to a situation in Europe of his day: "Just as they would test the Ephramites with this word *shibboleth,* they would likewise test them with any word that had the letter *shin*; *shibboleth* serving merely as an example.… Perhaps it was the climate that influenced their discrete pronunciations in the same way that the people of *sarfat* [=France] are unable to make the 'sh' sound but rather pronounce it as a soft *tav*."

[i] See Meg. 24b; Yer. Ber. 2:3 [4d] (although the word *kegon* does not appear in either source).

[ii] "The Visions of R. Asher b. R. Meir Lamlein Reutlingen" (Heb.) by Ephraim Kupfer, *Kobez al Yad* vol. viii (xviii) Jerusalem 1975, pp. 387–423.

[iii] "The Visions of R. Asher b. R. Meir Lamlein Reutlingen" (Heb.) by Ephraim Kupfer, *Kobez al Yad* vol. viii (xviii) Jerusalem 1975, pp. 387–423.

[iv] Istria belonged to the Venetian Republic from 1267 until the eighteenth century.

[v] *Ish haBenayim* (cf. 1Sam 17:23).

[vi] A variant of Lemlein which is, in turn, a diminutive of the German for "lamb."

[vii] For a fuller appreciation of Farissol, see *The World of a Renaissance Jew: The Life and Thought of Abraham ben Mordecai Farissol* by David B. Ruderman, Cincinnati 1981.

[viii] Cf. Hos 9:7.

[ix] Heb. *davar req* see Dt 32:47.

[x] The original Hebrew reads "*ekh mashiah yabo*." *Ekh*'s basic meaning is "how." In a non-interrogatory sense it occurs in stock phrases such as "*ekh habahur*" (in the text of the *kethubah*). It must also be borne in mind that *Ha-Vikuah*'s Hebrew is not exactly standard. The context, however, leaves little doubt as to Münster's (or rather his protagonist's) intent. Lemlein is also mentioned (derisively of course) by Johannes Pfefferkorn (d. c. 1522) in his *Der Juden Spiegel* (see *The Jewish Messiahs* by Harris Lenowitz, Oxford 1998, pp. 99–101)

[xi] Basle 1529 (or 1534. Kupfer gives the date as 1534, but *Ha-Vikuah*'s preface is dated 'Tishri 290' which equals September–October 1529).

[xii] The Hebrew word *adon* means master, ruler or lord. With the letter *yod* added as suffix it could mean either "my master" or "my masters" depending on the vocalization of the *nun*. A *hiriq* under the *nun* indicates that the suffix is singular (*adoni*) as in Gen 33:8, 13; Num 11:28. But when the word is not in the singular, the Tiberian masoretes further distinguish "sacred" from "profane" by pointing the former with a *kamets* under the *nun* and the latter with a *patah*. Thus at Gen 15:2,8 where Abraham is addressing Hashem the *nun* is pointed *kamets*; while in Lot's address to the angels at Gen 19:2 it is pointed *patah*. Now unless the reader distinguishes *kamets* from *patah*, the contrast between "sacred and profane"—as intended by the Tiberian vocalizers of the Bible— is lost. Sephardic pronunciation invites the criticism of R. Emden insofar as it ignores that contrast, thereby "making the holy profane." R. Emden's criticism is endorsed by R. Yitzhak Yaakov Weiss (d. 1989) in his *Minhat Yitzhak* 3:9 and discussed most

insightfully by Dr. Isaac B. Gottlieb in "The Politics of Pronunciation" *AJS Review* 32:2, pp. 360–62. I herewith thank R. Alex Kaye for bringing this and related sources to my attention.

[xiii] *Siddoor Beth Ya'aqob*; translation based on H. J. Zimmels' in his *Ashkenazim and Sephardim* London 1976, p. 86. For other renderings from Hebrew, this article employs a blend of standard and our own translations.

[xiv] The Talmud (both at Ned. 37b and at Meg. 3a) reflects a Hebrew Vorlage *be-sefer torat ha-elohim* whereas our biblical text reads *be-sefer be-torat ha-elohim*.

[xv] In late Biblical Hebrew HBN often denotes "causing others to understand."

[xvi] Literally: "an oral law (*or* tradition) to Moses from Sinai." However, the phrase's precise connotation is disputed.

[xvii] Since the biblical books are traditionally written without diacritics, the word formed of *aleph- resh- tsadi* allows of various pronunciations. We depend on "tradition" to tell us that the word is ERETS—except in its pausal form which is ARETS (*or* ORETS).

[xviii] *Leshon Limmudim* 1:5, 1st edition, Constantinople 1506.

[xix] Because of the extreme scarcity of Hebrew texts with pristine Babylonian vocalization (i.e., prior to the infiltration of Tiberian norms), scholars remain divided as to whether the Babylonian diacritic called *kemots puma* resembled the Tiberian *kamets* or the "Sephardic" *patah*. In the Babylonian system itself there was no discrete *patah*; a single diacritic served as counterpart for both Tiberian *patah* as well as *segol* (see "The *Kamaz* in Babylonian Phonetics and in Yemen" by Hanokh Yalon, *Tarbiz* 33 pp.97–108, English summary p.i; also Israel Yeivin's *The Hebrew Language Tradition as Reflected in the Babylonian Vocalization* [Heb.] Jerusalem 1985 vol. 1 pp. 56–57).

[xx] E.g., The patriarch is Abraham not Abrohom; the matriarch Sarah not Soroh, etc.

[xxi] "*le-toldot ha-mivta ha-ivri bime ha-benyim*" in *Mehkarim Ve-iyyunim*, Tel Aviv 1954 pp. 42ff.

[xxii] *The Cairo Genizah*, second edition, New York 1959 pp.184–186.

[xxiii] *Mahzor Vitry*, S. Hurwitz edition, Nuremberg 1923 p. 462.

[xxiv] *The Hebrew Language Tradition as Reflected in the Babylonian Vocalization* vol. 1 pp. 29–30.

[xxv] *Inyanei Lashon*, Jerusalem 1942.

[xxvi] The convention of using aleph to represent an 'o' sound belongs exclusively to the orthography of the Yiddish language which began to be written in Hebrew letters not much earlier than the fourteenth century. Rashi's spelling of *la'az* (=Old French) words knows nothing of such a convention.

[xxvii] For a modern edition see *The Beginning of Wisdom* edited by Raphael Levy and Francisco Cantera, Johns Hopkins Studies in Romance Literatures and Languages, Extra Volume XIV, Baltimore 1939.

[xxviii] Weinreich's designation for what is more commonly referred to as the Erets Yisrael system. The Tiberian he sporadically calls the northern Palestinian.

[xxix] *History of the Yiddish Language*, translated by Shlomo Noble with the assistance of Joshua A. Fishman, Chicago 1980 pp. 359–369.