

THE YALKUT ON ZECHARIAH

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The Yalkut on Zechariah by Edward G. King

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**THE YALKUT
ON ZECHARIAH**

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TRANSLATED

WITH NOTES AND APPENDICES

BY

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1882



TO MY FRIEND AND TEACHER

DR SCHILLER-SZINESSY, M.A. CANTAB. &c.,
READER IN RABBINIC AND TALMUDIC LITERATURE IN THE UNIVERSITY
OF CAMBRIDGE,

THIS LITTLE BOOK,

COMMENCED AT HIS SUGGESTION,

AND COMPLETED UNDER HIS INSTRUCTION,

IS

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

INTRODUCTION.

THE name *Yalkut* literally signifies a *bag*, or *purse*.

The *Yalkut Shim'oni*, from which the following specimen has been selected for translation, is a compilation from Talmud and Midrash in illustration of the Bible. Part I embraces the Pentateuch, which is treated at such length as to take up nearly two-thirds of the whole work; Part II includes the remaining Books of the Old Testament. This compilation was made in the XIth century, and consequently dates from the time of Rashi.

The principal editions are as follows:

- (a) Editio princeps on Ezra, Neh. and Chronicles, printed in the first Rabbinic Bible, *Venice*, 1517.

Yalkut, Part II. *Salonica*, 1521. A copy of this valuable edition exists in the Library of Clare College (B. 6, 12). I regret to say that I was not aware of its existence until it was too late to avail myself of it.

The editio princeps of Part I. was printed at *Salonica*, 1526—27. Folio.

- (b) The Second Edition of the whole work appeared at *Venice*, 1566. Folio.
- (c) Third Edition, *Cracow*, 1595—96. Folio.
- (d) Fourth Edition, *Lublin*, 1643. Folio.
- (e) Fifth Edition, with the *ברית אברהם*, *Livorno*, 1650—52, 55—57. This edition is rare. Emmanuel College Library possesses a complete copy (t. 2. 16, 17), presented by Archbishop Sancroft.

- (f) Sixth Edition, *Frankfort on the Main*, 1687. This is the edition I have used; a copy is also found in the Camb. Univer. Library.
- (g) The *Zayith Raqnan* can scarcely be reckoned as an edition of the Yalkut, since it contains only selections. *Dessau*, 1704. Folio.
- (h) Seventh Edition, *Frankfort on the Oder*, 1709.
- (i) The תולדות edition, 1806.
- (j) Another edition at *Livorno*, 1813.
- (k) At *Königsberg*, 1856.
- (l) An edition, 8vo., *Zolkiew*, 1858, 9.
- (m) There is also a *Warsaw* edition, 1876-7; and an edition, probably Polish, but without indication of time or place; this last has been wrongly ascribed to *Livorno* because, on the title-page, allusion is made to the fact that the work was formerly printed at Livorno.

Though the edition I have used may be considered one of the best, the text is by no means in a satisfactory condition; the marginal references, which are supposed to refer to the passage quoted, are quite untrustworthy. Thanks however to Dr Schiller-Szinessy I have been enabled to trace them all, with the exception only of one or two which are probably derived from some Midrash not now extant. On comparing the Yalkut text with the passage which it professes to quote I have found in almost every case considerable divergence. I have not however attempted to correct the Yalkut text even when it seemed to me to be decidedly inferior, except in one or two passages where I have called attention to the fact in the notes.

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September 19th, 1883.

YALKUT

PART II.

HINT 568.

8 "Return unto Me, is the saying of the Zech. ch. i. Eternal of Hosts and I will return unto you..."

Rav Yehudah says that Rav used* to say, What is this T. B. Yoma¹ which is written "Return unto Me...and I will return..."?

¹ The marginal reference here refers to Yoma 81, where no such passage is to be found. The passage which comes nearest to our text is T. B. Yoma 86^a, where, according to Rashi's note, a reading existed agreeing with the Yalkut. Rav Yehudah's difficulty seems to be that, of two passages in Scripture where we read "Return unto Me," the first seems to imply that Israel must first turn to God, "Return unto Me that I may return unto you," whereas the second makes God's overmastering election the reason of His people's return even while they were yet sinners, "Return O backsliding children for I have mastered you..." (Jer. iii. 14).

R. Yehudah wishes to point out that the pronouns are here emphatic in the original, כִּי אֲנִי בָעֲלֹתֵי בָכֶם "For it is I that have mastered you."

The E. V. "married" is scarcely correct, for בָּעַל when construed with ב, seems to have the stronger sense of *masters*, or even of *spurning, loathing*. Kimchi tells us that his father took it in this latter sense in the only two biblical passages in which it is found, viz. Jer. iii. 14 and Jer. xxxi. 32, and that he considered it kindred with בָּעַל, with ב, in Zech. xi. 8, "And also their soul loathed me." It was in this sense also that the LXX. translated בָּעֲלֵתִי בְכֶם (Jer. xxxi. 32) by καὶ ἐγὼ ἠαδῆσα αὐτοῦ, a rendering which is adopted by the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews (Heb. viii. 9).

There is a similar passage in *Sanhed.* 97^b, where Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua are disputing on this same question, the former maintaining that Israel's repentance is the condition of God's return, the latter that God's grace will overmaster Israel's ingratitude, and that if they are not ripe for the blessing, God will bring upon them such chastisements as will render them fit for His time;—The discussion is continued as follows:—

* See next page.

(Zech. i. 3), and it is also written ("Return unto Me) for I have mastered (E. V. married) you" (Jer. iii. 14.)

There is no real difficulty; the one (passage) refers to love, the other to chastisements.

5 "Your fathers where are they?" "And the Prophets do they live for ever?"

Rabbi Eliezer said, If Israel do works of repentance they are redeemed, for it is said, "Return O backsliding children"; (and then) "I will heal their backslidings" (Hos. xiv. 4).

Rabbi Yehoshua replied, But is it not already said, "Ye have been sold for naught, and not with silver shall ye be redeemed" (Isai. lii. 3)? "Ye have been sold for naught"—this means for your *idolatry*;—"And not with silver shall ye be redeemed";—this means not with *repentance and good works*.

Rabbi Eliezer said to Rabbi Yehoshua, But has it not already been said, "Return unto Me that I may return unto you" (Zech. i. and Mal. iii.)?

R. Yehoshua replied, And has it not already been said, "...for I have mastered you: and I will take you one from a city, and two from a family, and will bring you to Zion" (Jer. iii. 14)?

R. Eliezer said to him, But is it not also said, "By repentance and rest shall ye be saved" (Is. xxx. 15)?

R. Yehoshua replied to R. Eliezer, And is it not also said, "Thus saith the Eternal, the Redeemer of Israel, his Holy One, to the utterly despised by every creature and abominated by nations, to the slave of tyrants: Kings shall see and arise, princes shall prostrate themselves, &c." (Is. xlix. 7)?

R. Eliezer replied, And is it not also said, "If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Eternal, unto Me thou shalt return" (Jer. iv. 1)?

R. Yehoshua replied, Is it not also said, "And I heard the Man who was clothed in linen, who was over the waters of the River, and he raised his right hand and his left unto Heaven, and swore by Him that liveth for ever that it (i. e. the Redemption) was for a set time of times, and a half; and when the scattering of the power of the Holy People shall have been accomplished, then all these things (i. e. the Redemption) shall be accomplished" (Dan. xii. 7).

Rabbi Eliezer was silenced.

* The formula רַבִּי אָמַר כִּי רַבִּי אָמַר "Rabbi A said that Rabbi B said," always implies that Rabbi A had himself heard the saying quoted, from the mouth of Rabbi B.

Whereas רַבִּי אָמַר בְּשֵׁם רַבִּי אָמַר "Rabbi A said in the name of Rabbi B," implies that Rabbi A had received by tradition the saying of Rabbi B, who may therefore have lived some centuries earlier.

This rule is of great importance in the interpretation of the Talmud. For example, there are many R. Yehudahs mentioned, but the formula of quotation shews us that the R. Yehudah here mentioned was a contemporary and disciple of the great Babylonian teacher Rav: we therefore know that he was the R. Yehudah who lived from the middle to the end of the 3rd century.