

## One in Messiah Congregation

### Messiah

#### Midrash Rabbah - Ruth V:6

AND SHE DID EAT AND WAS SATISFIED AND LEFT THEREOF: he would eat in this world, and in **the Messianic age, and in the World to Come** .

The fifth interpretation makes **it refer to the Messiah** . COME HITHER: approach to royal state. **AND EAT OF THE BREAD refers to the bread of royalty; AND DIP THY MORSEL IN THE VINEGAR refers to his sufferings, as it is said, But he was wounded because of our transgressions (Isa. LIII, 5).** AND SHE SAT BESIDE THE REAPERS, for he will be deprived of his sovereignty for a time, as it is said, For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken (Zech. XIV, 2). AND THEY REACHED HER PARCHED CORN, means that he will be restored to his throne, as it is said, And he shall smite the land with the rod of his mouth (Isa. XI, 4). R. Berekiah said in the name of R. Levi: **The future Redeemer will be like the former Redeemer.**<sup>3</sup> Just as the former Redeemer revealed himself and later was hidden from them

**Isa.53[ 5] But he ( Messiah ) was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities:** the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

#### Midrash Rabbah - Numbers XI:2

. My beloved spoke, and said unto me (S.S. II, 10). He said, I am the Lord thy God (Ex. XX, 2). Another exposition of the text, ' My beloved is like a gazelle ': Israel, explained R. Isaac, said to the Holy One, blessed be He: ' Sovereign of the Universe! Thou hast told

us that Thou wilt come to us first.' ' My beloved is like a gazelle ' ; **as the gazelle appears and then disappears, so the first redeemer appeared and then disappeared.**

**R. Berekiah in the name of R. Levi said: Like the first redeemer so will the final redeemer be. The first redeemer was Moses, who appeared to them and then disappeared.** For how long did he disappear from their sight? R. Tanhuma said: Three months<sup>1</sup>; accordingly it is written, And they met Moses and Aaron, etc. (ib. V, 20).<sup>2</sup> **The final redeemer will also appear to them and then disappear.** How long will he remain hidden from them? R. Tanhuma in the name of R. Hama, son of R. Hoshaya, said: Forty-five days. Thus it is written, And from the time that the continual burnt-offering shall be taken away, and the detestable thing that causeth appalment set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days (Dan. XII, 11), and it is written, Happy is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days (ib. 12).

**Soncino Zohar, Shemoth, Section 2, Page 212a**

**When the Messiah** hears of the great suffering of Israel in their dispersion, and of the wicked amongst them who seek not to know their Master, **he weeps aloud on account of those wicked ones amongst them, as it is written: "But he was wounded because of our transgression, he was crushed because of our iniquities"** (ISA.: LIII, 5).

**Isa.53[ 5] But he ( Messiah )was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities:** the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.

**Soncino Zohar, Shemoth, Section 2, Page 212a**

The souls then return to their place. **The Messiah , on his part, enters a certain Hall in the Garden of Eden, called the Hall of the Afflicted. There he calls for all the diseases and pains and sufferings of Israel, bidding them settle on himself, which they do . And**

were it not that he thus eases the burden from Israel, taking it on himself, no one could endure the sufferings meted out to Israel in expiation on account of their neglect of the Torah. So Scripture says; “Surely our diseases he did bear”, etc. (Ibid. LIII, 4).

### Isa. 53

[4] Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows:

[11] He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; **for he shall bear their iniquities.**

**Now it is the Messiah who is the means** of averting them from mankind until the time when a man quits this world and receives his punishment, as already said. When a man's sins are so numerous that he has to pass through the nethermost compartments of **Gehinnom** in order to receive heavier punishment corresponding to the contamination of his soul, a **more intense fire is kindled in order to consume that contamination.** The destroying angels make use for this purpose of fiery rods, so as to expel that contamination. Woe to the soul that is subjected to such punishment! **Happy are those who guard the precepts of the Torah!**

### Soncino Zohar, Shemoth, Section 2, Page 220a

' Said R. Simeon: 'At the time when the dead will be awakened and be in readiness for the resurrection in the Holy Land, legions upon legions will arise on the **soil of Galilee,** as it is there that the Messiah is destined to reveal himself.'

Isa.9[ 1] Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in **Galilee** of the nations .[2] **The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.**

**Tanakh** : Hebrew Bible (*Torah/Teaching, Nevi'im/Prophets and Ketivim/Writings*).

**Targums** : Aramaic translations of the original Hebrew Tanakh (*Hebrew Scriptures*) written between 200 BCE and 200 CE.

**Talmud** : Mishnah (*Oral Law*) and Gemara (*Commentary*) written about 200-400 CE.

**Midrash** : Commentaries on the Tanakh (*Hebrew Scriptures*) from 100-1600 CE.

**Other Writings** : Various comments of Jewish rabbis and historians

### [The Concept of a Messiah](#)

"All the prophets prophesied only of the days of the Messiah." **[Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 99a]**

"A king shall come forth from the sons of Jesse, and the Messiah shall grow up from his sons' sons." **[Targum to Yesha'yahu 11:1 in the Tanakh]**

"Thus says the L-rd of Hosts, saying, 'Behold the Man whose name is the Messiah who shall be revealed.'" **[Targum to Z'kharyah 6:12 in the Tanakh]**

"Behold the days come says the L-rd that I will raise up unto David a righteous Messiah and he shall reign as King and understand." **[Targum to Yirmeyahu 23:5 in the Tanakh]**

"The world was created but only for the Messiah." **[Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 98b]**

"And as for the wonders that are not the work of Adonai, when he, that is the Messiah, comes then he will heal the sick, resurrect the dead, and to the poor announce glad tidings." **[4Q521, Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran]**

"I believe with faith in coming of the Messiah, and even though he should tarry, nevertheless I shall await for his coming every day." **[Maimonides, Thirteen Articles of Faith, 12<sup>th</sup> principle]**

"It was taught in the School of Elijah, the world will endure 6,000 years - 2,000 years in chaos, 2,000 with Torah, and 2,000 years will be the days of the Messiah." **[Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 97a]**

"Kings and rulers shall not cease from the house of Judah...until King Messiah comes." **[Targum Pseudo-Jonathan]**

"Rabbi Johanan said, 'The world was created for the sake of the Messiah, what is this Messiah's name?' The school of Rabbi Shila said, 'his name is Shiloh, for it is written, until Shiloh comes. (*Genesis 49:10*)'" **[Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 98b]**

"Satan said before the Holy One, blessed be He, 'Master of the World! The light which is hidden under your throne of Glory, for whom is it?' He said to him, 'For him who will turn you back and disgrace you, and shame your face.' He (*Satan*) said to him, 'Master of the World! Show him to me.' He said to him, 'Come and see him.' When Satan saw the Messiah, he trembled and fell upon his face and said, 'Surely this is the Messiah who in the future will cast me and all the princes of the nations of the world into Gehenna.'"

[**Pesiqta Rabbati page 161a**]

## The Messiah to Appear in Israel

"And you Bethlehem-Ephrathah who are too little to be counted among the thousands of the house of Judah, from you in My name shall come forth the Messiah who is to be ruler in Israel and whose name has been called from eternity, from the days of old."

[**Targum Jonathan on Mikah 5:1 in the Tanakh**]

"The King Messiah... from where does he come forth? From the royal city of Bethlehem in Judah." [**Jerusalem Talmud, Berakoth 5a**]

"**The Messiah will appear in the land of Galilee.**" [**Zohar I, Bereshith, 119a**]

**"The Messiah... will arise in the land of Galilee... the Messiah shall reveal himself in the land of Galilee because in this part of the Holy Land the desolation (*Babylonian exile*) first began, therefore he will manifest himself there first."** [**Zohar III, Shemoth 7b, 8b, 220a; Otzar Midrashim, 466**]

"He will be with the last deliverer, (*Messiah*), as with the first (*Moses*); as the first deliverer revealed himself first to the Israelites and then withdrew, so also will the last deliverer reveal himself to the Israelites and then withdraw for a while." [**Midrash Ruth Rabbath 5:6**]

"Rabbi Hillel said, 'there shall be no Messiah for Israel, because they have already enjoyed him in the days of Hezekiah.' Rabbi Joseph said, 'may G-d forgive him (*Hillel*) for saying so. Now, when did Hezekiah flourish? During the First Temple. Yet Zechariah, prophesying in the days of the second, proclaimed, 'rejoice greatly O daughter of Zion. Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem. Behold, thy King cometh unto thee! He is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. (*Zechariah 9:9*)'" [**Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 99a**]

## The Messiah to Provide Atonement

"The Holy One, blessed be He, will tell him (*the Messiah*) in detail what will befall him... their sins will cause you to bend down as under a yoke of iron and make you like a calf whose eyes grow dim with suffering and will choke your spirit as with a yoke, and because of their sins your tongue will cleave to the roof of your mouth. Are you willing to endure such things?... The Messiah will say: 'Master of the universe with joy in my soul and gladness in my heart I take this suffering upon myself provided that not one person in Israel shall perish, so that not only those who are alive be saved in my days, but also those who are dead, who died from the days of Adam up to the time of redemption.'" [**Pesikta Rabbati, Piska 36.1; Zohar II. 212a**]

"Dip your morsel of bread in the vinegar (*Ruth 2:14*). This refers to the Messiah's sufferings, for it is said in Isaiah 53:5: 'He was pierced through for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities.'" [Midrash Ruth Rabbah, 2.14]

"Rabbi Yochanan said, 'The Messiah - what is his name?'... And our Rabbis said, 'the pale one... is his name,' as it is written 'Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows - yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted.'"

[Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 98, p. 2]

"The Messiah our righteousness has turned from us. We are alarmed, we have no one to justify us. Our sins and the yoke of our transgressions he bore. He was bruised for our iniquities. He carried on his shoulders our sins. With his stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53). Almighty God, hasten the day that he might come to us anew; that we may hear from Mt. Lebanon (figurative reference to the Temple), a second time through the Messiah." [Ancient hymn-prayer by Eliezer Hakkalir sung during the Musaf Service on Yom Kippur; included in some Siddurs]

"What is the cause of the mourning (*Zechariah 12:10*) ? It is well according to him who explains that the cause is the slaying of Messiah, the son of Joseph, as it is written, 'And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced; and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son.'" [Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 52a]

## The Messiah is our Redeemer

"What is the name of the King Messiah? Rabbi Abba Bar Kahana said, 'His name is the Lord our Righteousness.'" [Midrash Lamentations Rabbah 1.16.51; Pesikta de Rab Kahana 22.5a; Midrash on Psalms 21.2; Baba Bathra 75b, Babylonian Talmud; Yalkut Shimoni, fol. 384: all referring to Yirmeyahu 23:6 in the Tanakh]

"In the times of the Messiah, the Lord shall manifest a second time His hand" (*Isaiah 11:11*). He shall be the Redeemer in person so that 'Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation' (*Isaiah 45:17*). And 'his rest shall be glorious' (*Isaiah 11:10*). All the world shall say, 'It is fitting that his rest shall be glorious, for while ordinary kings acquire glory for themselves through victorious wars, and do not believe themselves to be esteemed when they are at rest, he, on the contrary, without waging war makes everyone subject to him, and all render him homage." [Commentary Minha-Ghedola in the Grand Rabbinic Bible of Amsterdam, 1700-1705— Rabbinic Bible of Bombergi]

"The Patriarchs will arise and say to the Messiah... 'our righteous Messiah, even though we are your ancestors, you are greater than we because you did suffer for the iniquities of our children, and terrible ordeals befall you, such ordeals as did not befall earlier generations or later ones for the sake of Israel.'" [Pesikta Rabbati, Piska 37:1]

"The Holy One brought forth the soul of Messiah, and said to him, 'Art thou willing to be created and to redeem my sons after 6,000 years?' He replied, 'I am.' G-d replied, 'If so, thou must take upon thyself chastisements in order to wipe away their iniquity, as it is written, 'Surely our sicknesses he has carried.' The Messiah answered, 'I will take them upon me gladly.'" [P'Siqtha according to Hulsius in "Theologia Judaica"]

"Our sages said, 'King Messiah is subjected to sufferings in every generation according to the sins of that generation.' The Holy One, blessed be He, said, 'In that hour (*of the Redemption*) I shall create him a new and he will no longer suffer.'" [Pesikta Rabbati page 146b]

## [A Messiah of Israel and the Nations](#)

"The Messiah will be higher than Abraham, because Abraham possessed nothing except seventy souls, but King Messiah will turn to the service of G-d, many peoples, (*i.e. other nations*). More exalted than Moses, for Moses drew but a single nation to the service of G-d, but the King Messiah will bring to his service many peoples, and will restore peace between many kings; and even loftier than the ministering angels, for His sway will extend even over the heavens, whose movements He will miraculously change." [Rabbi Shlomo Astruc]

"And the King Messiah will be revealed and all the nations of the world will gather around King Messiah, and the verse will be fulfilled, 'The root of Jesse which standeth as the peoples' ensign, unto it shall the nations seek, and his resting place shall be glory. (*Isaiah 11:10*)'" [Zohar 2:172b]

"The rabbis have taught, the Holy One, blessed by He, will say to Messiah ben David, may he be revealed soon in our days. Ask of Me anything and I shall give it to you.' For it is written, Adonai said to me, 'Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. Ask of Me and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance (*Psalm 2:7-8*). ' And when he will see that Messiah ben Joseph will be slain, he will say before Him, 'Master of the World! I ask nothing of you except life.' G-d will say to him, 'Even before you said, "life," your father David prophesied about you, as it is written, 'He asked life of thee, Thou gavest it to him. (*Psalm 21:5*)'" [Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 52a]

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"As long as Israel dwelt in the Holy Land, the rituals and sacrifices they performed (*in the Temple*) removed all those diseases from the world; now the Messiah removes them from the children of the world." [Zohar 2:212a]

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### [Recognizing the Messiah](#)

***"Prepare the way! The King Messiah comes... may the mountains abase themselves, may the valleys be filled, may the cedars incline to render him homage. Prostrate yourselves all of you before the Messiah King, and bend your knees before him who is seated at the right hand of the Holy One."*** [Zohar I. 4b]

"I will raise up for them a prophet like you (*Moses*), from among their own people. I will put My words in his mouth and he will speak to them all that I command him. And if anybody fails to heed the words he speaks in My name, I Myself will call him to account." [Tanakh, D'varim (*Deut.*) 18:18-19]

"Seventy weeks are decreed for your people and your holy city, to put an end to transgression, to make an end of sin, to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to confirm the visions and prophets, and to anoint the Most Holy Place... After sixty-two weeks, the Messiah (*Mashiach*) will be cut off and have nothing. The people of a coming prince will destroy the city (*Jerusalem*) and the Sanctuary (*Temple*)."  
[Tanakh, Dani'el (*Daniel*) 9:24-26]

"Who has believed what we have heard? To whom is the arm of Adonai revealed? For before Him he grew up like a young plant, like a root out of dry ground. He had no form or beauty. We saw him, but his appearance did not attract us. He was despised and shunned by men, a man of pains and familiar with illness; like one from whom we would hide our faces. He was despised and we had no regard for him. In truth, it was our infirmities he bore, and our pains that he suffered; yet we regarded him as punished and afflicted by G-d. He was wounded because of our sins and crushed because of our iniquities. The chastisement he bore made us whole, and through his wounds we are healed. We all like sheep went astray; we turned, each one, to his own way. Yet Adonai laid on him the guilt of all of us... After this ordeal, he will see satisfaction. By his knowledge my righteous servant makes many righteous; it is for their sins that

he suffers. Therefore I will give him a share with the mighty; for he exposed himself to death and was numbered among the sinners. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." [Tanakh, Yesha'yahu (*Isaiah*) 53]

"I may remark then, that our Rabbis with one voice accept and affirm the opinion that the prophet is speaking of the King Messiah, and we ourselves shall adhere to the same view." [Rabbi Mosheh El-Sheikh regarding Yesha'yahu 53 in the Tanakh]

"Now there was about this time, Yeshua (*Eaysoos in Greek*), a wise man, if it be lawful to call him a man, for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles. He was Mashiach (*Christos in Greek*); and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of "Christians" (*followers of Messiah*), so named from him, are not extinct at this day." [Antiquities of the Jews, book 18, chapter 3, paragraph 3; Yosef ben Mattityahu a.k.a Josephus]

**"Our Rabbis taught: during the last forty years before the destruction of the Temple, the lot for the Lord (on Yom Kippur) did not come up in the right hand; nor did the crimson-colored strap become white (on the neck of the scapegoat); nor did the western-most light shine; and the doors of the Hekal (Temple) would open by themselves."** [Babylonian Talmud, Yoma, 39b]

"Who has gone up to heaven and come down? Who has cupped the wind in the palms of his hands? Who has wrapped up the waters in his cloak? Who established all the ends of the earth? What is his name, and what is his son's name? Surely you know!" [Tanakh, Mishlei (*Proverbs*) 30:4]

#### Messiah, Resurrection and Judgment

"At the conclusion of this seven-year period the son of David will come." [Talmud, Sanhedrin, 97a]

"The righteous whom the Holy One, blessed be He, will restore to life will never return to their dust." [Talmud, Sanhedrin, 92a]

"Since a person repudiated belief in the resurrection of the dead, he will have no share in the resurrection." [Talmud, Sanhedrin 90a]

"I believe with a perfect faith that there will be resurrection of the dead at a time when the will shall arise from the Creator, may His Name be blessed and His remembrance exalted for all eternity." [Maimonides, Thirteen Articles of Faith, Article 13]

"The resurrection of the dead will be brought about by the Holy One, blessed be He, in this world in order to sanctify His great name in the days of Messiah, and in order to give rewards to those who love Him and fear Him in the World to Come." [Seder Eliyahu Rabba 5:22]

"And it shall come to pass after these things, when the time of the advent of the Messiah is fulfilled, that He shall return in glory. Then all who have fallen asleep in Him shall rise again. And it shall come to pass at that time that the treasures will be opened in which is preserved the number of the souls of the righteous, and they shall come forth, and a multitude of souls shall be seen together in one assemblage of one thought, and the first shall rejoice and the last shall not be grieved." [Apocrypha, Baruch 30:1-5]

"And how does the Holy One, blessed be He, resuscitate the dead in the World to Come? We are taught that the Holy One, blessed be He, takes in His hand a Great Shofar, which is a thousand cubits of the cubits of the Holy One, blessed be He, and blows it, and its sound goes from one end of the world to the other. At the first blow the whole world shakes. At the second blow the dust breaks up. At the third blow their bones gather. At the fourth blow the members become warm. At the fifth blow their skins are stretched over them.

At the sixth blow spirits and souls enter their bodies. At the seventh blow they become alive and stand up on their feet in their clothes.” **[Midrash Alpha Bet Akiba 3:31, 9 century]**

“In that hour the Holy One, blessed be He, will crown the Messiah and place a helmet of salvation on his head, and give him splendor and radiance, and adorn him with clothes of honor, and stand him up on top of a high mountain in order to bring glad tidings to Israel.” **[Pirqe Mashiah, 3:73, 7th century]**

“Blessed be He Who formed you in judgment, who nourished you in judgment, and will hereafter raise you in judgment.” **[Talmud, Berachoth 58b]**

“And let not your imagination give you hope that the grave will be a place of refuge for you; for by force you were formed, and by force you were born, and by force you live, and by force you die, and by force you will in the Hereafter have to give account and reckoning before the supreme King of kings, the Holy One, blessed be He.” **[Talmud, Pirke Aboth 4:29]**

“The Holy One, blessed be He, will judge the righteous and wicked of Israel. To the righteous He will grant them into Gan Eden and the wicked He will send to Gehinnom.” **[Midrash on Psalm 31]**

“The Holy One, blessed be He, will sit in judgment with the righteous and wicked. He will judge the righteous and conduct them to Gan Eden. He will judge the wicked and condemn them to Gehinnom. **[Midrash on Psalm 1]**

“The sinners of Israel with their bodies and the sinners of the Gentiles with their bodies descend to Gehinnom and are judged there for twelve months. After twelve months their bodies are destroyed, and their souls burnt and scattered by a wind under the soles of the feet of the righteous; as it is said, ‘you shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet. (*Mal. 4:3*)’”  
**[Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 16b]**

“L~rd of the Universe, rightly You have judged, rightly You have acquitted, rightly You have condemned, rightly You have instituted Gehinnom for the wicked and Gan Eden for the righteous.” **[Talmud, Erubin 19a]**

#### World to Come - Olam HaBa

“In the Olam HaBa the Holy One, blessed be He, will arrange a dance for the righteous in Gan Eden, He sitting in their midst; and each one will point to Him with his finger, exclaiming, ‘Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him and He will save us; this is the L~rd, we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation. (*Isa. 25:9*)’” **[Talmud, Taanith 31a]**

“Ten things the Holy One, blessed be He, will renew in the Hereafter: (1) He will illumine the world; (2) He will cause running water to issue from Jerusalem, and whoever has an ailment will find healing there; (3) He will cause trees to produce their fruit every month and all persons will eat of them and be healed; (4) All ruined cities will be rebuilt and no waste place will remain in the world; (5) He will rebuild Jerusalem with sapphires; (6) Peace will reign throughout nature; (7) He will assemble all beasts, birds, and reptiles, and make a covenant between them and Israel; (8) Weeping and wailing will cease; (9) Death will cease; (10) No more sighing, groaning, or anguish, but happiness will prevail.” **[Talmud, Pesachim 50a]**

“How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the messenger of good tidings (*Isa. 52:7*), that teaches in the future the Holy One, blessed be He, will cause built-up Jerusalem to descend from heaven, and will set her upon the tops of four mountains – upon Sinai, upon Tabor, upon Hermon, and upon Carmel. And she will stand on the tops of the mountains and give good tidings to Israel about the End, the Redemption.” **[Pesiqta Kahana, 5th century, edited by Mandelbaum, p. 466]**

"In the future the Holy One, blessed be He, will seat the Messiah in the supernal Yeshiva, and they will call him "the Lord," just as they call the Creator "the Lord." And the Messiah will sit in the Yeshiva, and all those who walk on the earth will come and sit before him to hear a new Torah and new commandments and the deep wisdom that he teaches... And no person who hears a teaching from the mouth of the Messiah will ever forget it, for the Holy One, blessed be He, will reveal Himself in the House of Study of the Messiah, and will pour His Holy Spirit upon all those who walk on the earth, and His Holy Spirit will be upon each and every one." [Yemenite Midrash p. 349-350]

"These are the glad tidings of Messiah ben David, that is, ben Adam (*son of Man*). At the coming of the Messiah there will be one faith in the world... The Messiah will reign forever over the whole world. There will be general peace and eternal peace, and even the wild animals will cause no harm. At the coming of Messiah Jerusalem will be settled and the air healed and nature strengthened. The salvation of the Messiah will be accompanied by the resurrection of the dead... Jerusalem and the Temple will be called the 'footstool of the Adonai'... These are the glad tidings of eternal salvation." [Hebrew manuscript dated 15th century in British Library, London]

"In the days of King Messiah, when his kingdom is established and all Israel are gathered into it, the descent of all of them will be confirmed by him through the Holy Spirit which will rest upon him, as it is written, 'and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver' (*Mal. 3:3*)... And he will establish the descent not from Israel, but from each tribe and tribe. For he will announce that this one is from such and such a tribe... And in that time there will be neither hunger nor war, neither jealousy nor competition, but goodness will spread over everything. And all the delights will be as common as dust. And the whole world will have no other occupation but only to know the Lord... And they will attain a knowledge of their Creator as far as the power of man allows, as it is written, 'for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the L-rd, as the waters cover the sea'" (*Isa. 11:9*). [Maimonides, *Yad HaHazaqa, Shoftim, Hilkhot M'lakhim* 11-12]

"Rabbah said in the name of R. Johanan: Jerusalem of the world to come will not be like Jerusalem of the present world. Jerusalem of the present world, anyone who wishes goes up, but to that of the world to come only those invited will go." [**Talmud, Baba Bathra 75b**]

### **Messiah, a Righteous Branch, in Zech. 23:5,6 is called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.**

**Isa.11** [1] And there shall **come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch נֶצֶר shall grow out of his roots:**

[2] And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon **him**, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;

[3] And shall make **him** of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD: and **he** shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears:

[4] But with righteousness shall **he** judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and **he** shall smite the earth with the rod of **his** mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.

[5] And righteousness shall be the girdle of **his** loins, and faithfulness the girdle of **his** reins.

[6] The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

[7] And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

[8] And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.

[9] They shall not hurt nor destroy **in all my holy mountain** : for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

[10] And **in that day there shall be a root of Jesse** , which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to **it shall the Gentiles seek**: and **his** rest shall be glorious.

[11] And it shall come to pass **in that day**, that the Lord shall set his hand again the second time to **recover the remnant of his people**, which shall be left, from Assyria, and from Egypt, and from Pathros, and from Cush, and from Elam, and from Shinar, and from Hamath, and from the islands of the sea.

[12] And **he** shall set up an **ensign for the nations**, and **shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth**

[13] The envy also of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off: Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim.

[14] But **they shall fly upon the shoulders of the Philistines** toward the west; they shall spoil them of the east together: they shall lay their hand upon Edom and Moab; and the children of Ammon shall obey them.

[15] And the **LORD shall utterly destroy the tongue of the Egyptian sea**; and with **his mighty wind shall he shake his hand over the river, and shall smite it in the seven streams, and make men go over dryshod**.

[16] And **there shall be an highway for the remnant of his people**, which shall be left, from Assyria; like as it was to Israel in the day that he came up out of the land of Egypt.

**Isa.4**[ 2] In that day shall **the branch of the LORD** be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel.

**Jer.23**[ 5] Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David **a**

**righteous Branch**, **צַדִּיק צַדִּיק** and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

[6] **In his days** Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and **this is his name** whereby **he** shall be called, **THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS**.

**צַדָּקָנוּ וְזֹה-שֵׁמוֹ אֲשֶׁר-יִקְרָאוּ, יְהוָה**

**Jer.33** [15] In those days, and at that time, will I cause the **Branch of righteousness**

**צַדִּיק** ( mas. noun & fem. adj.)

to grow up unto David; and **he** shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land.

**cities in Hebrew are feminine**

[16] In those days shall **Judah** be saved, and **Jerusalem** shall dwell safely: and **this is the name wherewith she shall be called, The LORD our righteousness**

**צֶדָקָנוּ וְזֹה אֲשֶׁר־יִקְרָא־לְהָ, יְהוָה**

**Ezek.48** [35]... the **name of the city** from that day shall be, **The LORD is there .**

**Zech.3**[ 8] Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou, and thy fellows that sit before thee: for they are men wondered at: for, behold, I will bring forth **my servant the BRANCH**

**צָמֵח, עַבְדִּי**

**Zech.6** [12] And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying,

Behold **the man whose name is The BRANCH** ; **צָמֵח** and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD:[13 ] Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.

**Talmud - Mas. Megilah 17b**

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, may they prosper that love thee. (35) And when Jerusalem is built, **David (36) will come, as it says.**

(36) Mentioned in the next blessing, which commences, ‘Cause to sprout quickly the shoot of David’. ( Messiah )

**Midrash Rabbah - Numbers XVIII:21**

21. The letters menazpak<sup>1</sup> have double forms, and were instituted by the prophets. The double kaf hinted at Abraham, in the expression, Lek leka--get thee out (Gen. XII, 1), which intimated that he would have a child at the age of one hundred.<sup>2</sup> The double mem hinted at Isaac, in the expression, Ki ‘azamta mimmennu me’od--for thou art much mightier than we (ib. XXVI, 16), which intimated to him that he and his seed would be mighty in both worlds. The double nun hinted at Jacob, in the expression, Hazzileni na--deliver me, I pray Thee (ib. XXXII, 12), which informed him that He would deliver him in both worlds. The double peh hinted at Israel, through Moses, in the words, **Pakod pakadti--I have surely remembered you (Ex. III,16).** The double zade is hinted at in the verse, Behold, a man whose name is the shoot (zemah), and who shall shoot up (yizmah), etc. (Zech. VI, 12). This refers to the Messiah , of whom it also says, **I will raise unto David a righteous shoot (zemah zaddik), and he shall reign as king and prosper, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. The captain of fifty (Isa. III, 3).**<sup>3</sup> There are twenty-four books in Scripture. Add to them eleven of the minor prophets, excluding Jonah which is a book by itself,<sup>4</sup> the six orders and the nine chapters of Torath Kohanim,<sup>5</sup>

and you obtain a total of fifty6 There are threescore queens (S.S. VI, 8), i.e. sixty tractates of the Talmud; And fourscore concubines (ib.) alludes to the eighty houses of study that flourished in Jerusalem, this number corresponding to that of its gates; And maidens without

### Midrash Rabbah - Leviticus XXXI:11

#### Lev. 405

Because it says, There will I make a horn (1) to shoot up unto David , there have I ordered a lamp for Mine anointed (PS. CXXXII, 17), and it says, I rejoiced (2) when they said unto me: Let us go unto the house of the Lord (Ps. CXXII, 1) 3

(1) Viz. the Messiah; metaphor.

(2) Joy and light are synonymous .

(3) Sc. in the Messianic era when the divine light shall shine again.

### To the Jew the Messiah would be a stumbling block

Isa.49[ 7] Thus saith the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, **and his Holy One, to him whom man despiseth, to him whom the nation abhorreth**, to a servant of rulers, Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, and the Holy One of Israel, and he shall choose thee.

Isa.53[ 3] **He is despised and rejected** of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Isa.8[ 14] And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a **rock of offence** to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

This verse and its interpretation are given of the Messiah in the Talmud:

#### Talmud - Mas. Sanhedrin 38a

yet she1 did conceive standing.2 Another interpretation: Shealtiel, because God obtained3 [of the Heavenly court] absolution from His oath.4 Zerubbabel [was so called] because he was sown in Babylon.5 But [his real name was] Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah.

Judah and Hezekiah, the sons<sup>6</sup> of R. Hiyya, once sat at table with Rabbi and uttered not a word. Whereupon he said: Give the young men plenty of strong wine,<sup>7</sup> so that they may say something. When the wine took effect, they began by saying: **The son of David ( Messiah ) 8 cannot appear ere the two ruling houses in Israel shall have come to an end**, viz., the Exilarchate, in Babylon and the Patriarchate in Palestine, for it is written,

**And he ( Messiah ) shall be for a Sanctuary, for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both houses of Israel .**

**(8) I.e., the Messiah.**

**In the Soncino edition of the Talmud the footnote refers to Isaiah 8:14 and the reference given for the Son of David is the Messiah. The rabbis agree that as the cornerstone of the Temple is symbolic of the Messiah, it is the Messiah that is to be our foundation of faith. To remove the cornerstone is to remove the Messiah out of our life.**

**Isa.28[ 16] Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, **I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation:** he that believeth shall not make haste.**

**As has been established, this stone, the Messiah of Isaiah, was prophesied to be rejected.**

**Psalms has the same story:**

**Pss.118[ 22 ] The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.**

**Even Rashi in his commentaries accepted these two preceding verses as relating to the Messiah. Even though he denied that Isaiah 53 refers to the Messiah, he never denied that there is a personal Messiah.**

We took note that Rashi (Rabbi Solomon Ben Isaac, 1040-1105 AD) set forth the view that the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53 is Israel and not the Messiah. **This was not the accepted traditional view. The majority of the rabbis prior to and following Rashi rejected his view.**

The Talmud is clear that the Suffering Messiah is an individual. In tractate Sanhedrin 98b one of the names of the Messiah is identified as "Shiloh." The reference is Genesis 49:10. Another Rabbi said, "His name is the leper scholar as it is written, Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him a leper, smitten of God, and afflicted." The reference is given to Isaiah 53:4.

**Talmud - Mas. Sanhedrin 98b**

'Ulla said; Let him [**The Messiah**] come, but let me not see him.<sup>4</sup> Rabbah said likewise: Let him come, but let me not see him. R. Joseph said: Let him come, and may I be worthy of sitting in the shadow of his ass's saddle.<sup>5</sup> Abaye enquired of Rabbah: 'What is your reason [for not wishing to see him]? Shall we say, because of the birth pangs [preceding the advent] of the Messiah?<sup>6</sup> But it has been taught, R. Eleazar's disciples asked him: 'What must a man do to be spared the **pangs of the Messiah?**' [He answered,] 'Let him engage in study and benevolence; and you Master do both.' He replied: '[I fear] lest sin cause it,<sup>7</sup> in accordance with [the teaching of] R. Jacob b. Idi, who opposed [two verses] [viz.,] it is written, And, Behold, I am with thee, and 'will guard thee in all places whither thou goest:<sup>8</sup> but it is written, Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed'<sup>9</sup> — He was afraid that sin might cause [the nullification of God's promise]. Even as it was taught, Till thy people pass over, O Lord.<sup>10</sup> this refers to the first entry [into Palestine]; till thy people pass over, which thou hast purchased:<sup>11</sup> this refers to their second entry. Hence you may reason: The Israelites were as worthy of a miracle being wrought for them at the second entry as at the first, but that sin caused it [not to happen].

R. Johanan said likewise: Let him come, and let me not see him. Resh Lakish said to him: Why so? Shall we say, because it is written, As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him,' or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him?<sup>12</sup> But come, and I will shew you its like even in this world. When one goes out into the field and meets a bailiff,<sup>13</sup> it is as though he had met a lion. When he enters the town, and is accosted by a tax-collector, it is as though he had met a bear. On entering his house and finding his sons and daughters in the throes of hunger, it is as though he were bitten by a serpent!<sup>14</sup> — **But [his unwillingness to see the Messiah]** is because it is written, Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? Wherefore do I see every man [geber]<sup>15</sup> with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness?<sup>16</sup> What is meant by 'wherefore do I see every geber?' — Raba b. Isaac said in Rab's name: it refers to Him to whom all *geburah*<sup>17</sup> [strength] belongs.<sup>18</sup> And what is the meaning of 'and all faces are turned into paleness?' — R. Johanan said: [This refers to God's] heavenly family [I.e., the angels] and his earthly family [I.e., Israel,] when God says, These [the Gentiles] are my handiwork, and so are these [the Jews]; how shall I destroy the former on account of the latter?<sup>19</sup> R. Papa said: Thus men say, 'When the ox runs and falls, the horse is put into his stall.'<sup>20</sup>

R. Giddal said in Rab's name: The Jews are destined to eat [their fill] in the days of the Messiah.<sup>21</sup> R. Joseph demurred: is this not obvious; who else then should eat — Hilek and Bilek?<sup>22</sup> — This was said in opposition to R. Hillel, who maintained that there will be no Messiah for Israel, since they have already enjoyed him during the reign of Hezekiah.<sup>23</sup>

Rab said: The world was created only on David's account .<sup>24</sup> Samuel said: On Moses account;<sup>25</sup> R. Johanan said: **For the sake of the Messiah. What is his [the Messiah's] name? — The School of R. Shila said: His name is Shiloh, for it is written, until Shiloh come** .<sup>26</sup> The School of R. Yannai said: His name is **Yinnon**, for it is written, **His name shall endure for ever** :<sup>27</sup> e'er the sun was, his name is Yinnon.<sup>28</sup> The School of

R. Haninah maintained: His name is Haninah, as it is written, Where I will not give you Haninah.<sup>29</sup> Others say: His name is Menahem the son of Hezekiah, for it is written, Because Menahem ['the comforter'], that would relieve my soul, is far.<sup>30</sup> **The Rabbis said: His name is 'the leper scholar,' as it is written, Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him a leper, smitten of God, and afflicted.**

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The Zohar, a book of Jewish mysticism which is accepted as Talmud Torah, supports the fact of the Suffering Messiah of Isaiah 53. The Zohar purports to be a record of discourses between Rabbi Simeon ben Yohai and his contemporaries of the second century.

The Zohar makes some interesting statements concerning the Suffering Messiah:

"...In the Garden of Eden there is a hall which is called the Hall of the Sons of Illness. The Messiah enters that Hall and summons all the diseases and all the pains and all the sufferings of Israel that they should come upon him, and all of them came upon him. And would he not thus bring ease to Israel and take their sufferings upon himself, no man could endure the sufferings Israel has to undergo because they neglected the Torah" (Zohar 2:212a).

"Then shall pangs and travail overtake Israel, and all nations' and their kings shall furiously rage together and take counsel against her. Thereupon a pillar of fire will be suspended from heaven to earth for forty days, visible to all nations. Then the Messiah will arise from the Garden of Eden, from that place which is called 'The Bird's Nest.' He will arise in the land of Galilee...he shall reveal himself in the land of Galilee; for in this part of the Holy Land the desolation first began, and therefore he will manifest himself there first..." (Zohar 3:7b-8a).

The Zohar then describes that a star shall come from the East and proceed the Messiah:

"...And the Messiah shall have manifested himself, a star shall come forth from the East variegated in hue and shining brilliantly, and seven other stars shall surround it and make war on it from all sides, three times a day for seventy days, before the eyes of the whole world. The one star shall fight against the seven with rays of fire flashing on every side, and it shall smite them until they are extinguished, evening after evening" (Zohar 3:7b, 8a).

The Zohar continues and explains that when this star would disappear Messiah would go into hiding. Some very interesting things will then occur. Let's see what they are.

"After the seventy days the one star shall vanish. Also the Messiah shall be hidden for twelve months in the pillar of fire, which shall return again, although it shall not be visible. After the twelve months the Messiah will be carried up to heaven in that pillar of

fire and receive there power and dominion and the royal crown. When he descends, the pillar of fire will again be visible to the eyes of the world, and the Messiah will reveal himself, and mighty nations will gather round him, and he shall declare war against the world" (Zohar III, Shemot 7b 8a).

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Kabbalah teaches that one cannot know God, who is the Ein Sof, the unknowable God, by the simple content of the Scriptures but only by way of the mystical interpretation. It teaches that man atones for his own sin and can even eradicate his sin nature.

The teaching of the "traditions of the elders" is a Kabbalistic teaching from the Zohar that has been incorporated into the second chapter of the Shulhan Arukh (Code of Jewish Law). It teaches that when one goes to sleep, the holy soul departs from his body and an unclean spirit descends upon him. When rising from sleep, the unclean spirit departs from his body except from his finger tips. One is not permitted to walk six feet until he ritually washes his hands alternately three times with water from a vessel. If he touches his eyes or any orifice, the evil spirit will enter back into the body. Also, the water must not be thrown away where an animal or person may drink it, for if they did they would become contaminated or possessed by the evil spirit. After the use of the rest room and before eating bread a similar washing is performed. This is not a Biblical teaching. One can't get rid of evil by washing the hands ritually. This is still practiced today by the religious Orthodox Jew.

The origin of the Jewish mysticism of Kabbalah is Babylonian. During the Babylonian captivity Judaism absorbed much occult influence from her captors such as reincarnation, necromancy, conjuration, astral projection, astrology, numerology and the use of charms. Eventually Babylon became the center of Talmudic learning.

The Zohar and other Jewish mystical books are full of false doctrine and deception. They must be avoided.

### **The Messiah**

**What is the name of the King Messiah? R. Abba b. Kahana said: His name is "the Lord" [Heb: YHWH, Jehovah, Adonai], as it is stated, And this is His name whereby he shall be called, The Lord [Heb: YHWH] is our righteousness'. (Midrash Rabbah, Lamentations 1:16)**

"The germ of the idea underlying the fuller conception of the messianic Age was in existence from the time of the founders of the race of Israel. *In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed*, was the promise given both to Abraham and Isaac. It was a promise that reached far beyond the lifetime of each, farther than the limits of the temporal kingdom their descendants founded." (R. Samuel Singer, quoted in *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, ed. J.H.Hertz)

A STAR shall proceed out of Jacob, and there shall come a SCEPTRE in Israel. The KING Messiah is here spoken of as a STAR. (Rabbi Lieva of Prague)

When a king shall arise out of Jacob and the Messiah be anointed from Israel, He will slay the princes of Moab, and reign over all the children of man. (Targum Onkelos)

Our rabbis have a tradition that in the week in which the Messiah will be born there will be a bright STAR in the east , which is "THE STAR OF THE Messiah." (Pesikta Sortarta fol. 58. c.1)

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between the seed of thy sons, and between the seed of her sons; and it shall be when the sons of the woman keep the commandments of the Law, they will be prepared to smite thee on thy head; but if they forsake the commandments of the Law, thou wilt be prepared to wound them in the heel. Nevertheless for them there shall be a medicine; *and they shall make a remedy for the heel in the days of the King Meshiha* . (Jerusalem Targum.)

As the incarnation of evil Satan is the arch-enemy of the Messiah he is anti-Christ. The light which was created before the world, was hidden by God beneath His throne; and to the question of Satan in regard to it God answered: "This light is kept for him who shall bring thee to shame." At his request God showed Satan the Messiah; and when he saw him, he trembled, fell upon his face, and cried: "*Verily this is the Messiah, who shall hurl (bruise) me*, and all the princes of the angels of the people" down even into hell. (Pesikta Rabbati. 3:6. ed. Friedmann, p. 161, b.)

And there shall go forth a King from the Sons of Jesse, and the MESSIAH shall be anointed from his children's children. (Targum Jonathan)

Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise up to David the MESSIAH, who is righteous, and he will reign a King, and shall prosper, and execute the judgement of truth and justice in the earth. (Targum Jonathan)

And they shall worship before the Lord their God, and they shall hearken to MESSIAH, *the Son Of David* , their King, whom I will raise up unto them.(Targum Jonathan on Jeremiah 30:9,21)

Out of thee *Bethlehem* shall Messiah go forth before me, to exercise dominion over Israel. Whose name has been spoken of Old from the day of Eternity. (Targum Jonathan)

Although thou art little among the thousands of Judah, out of thee. shall come forth unto me a Judge to be Ruler in Israel, and this is the King Messiah. (Rabbi David Kimchi)

O, thou Bethlehem Ephrata ... although thou art little in the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall come forth unto me a Man, a Ruler in Israel whose goings forth are from the days of old ... that is from the Seed of David ... who was of Bethlehem Judah.  
(Abarbanel, Mashmiah Jeshua, fol. 62, c. 2).

And a right Prophet [a Prophet of Righteousness] will the LORD your God give you, a Prophet from among you of your brethren like unto me with the Holy Spirit, will the Lord your God raise up unto you; to Him shall ye be obedient. (Targum Palestine, Targum Jerusalem)

In fact the Messiah is such a Prophet as is stated in the Midrash on the verses, ‘Behold my servant shall prosper ...’ Moses by the miracles which he wrought drew but a single nation to the worship of God, but the Messiah will draw all nations to the worship of God. (Rabbi Levi ben Gershon)

We may all feel thankful that the Jewish race was so prolific in great men, that even so late in history, it produced one (Jesus) who deserves to be compared with Moses, Isaiah and Hillel. (Rabbi Adolph Moses, The Courier Journal 1885)

Our rabbis have taught that this concerns the Messiah-King... (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki)

If it [Psalm 2] be interpreted of the Messiah, the matter is clear. (Aben Ezra)

Our Rabbis taught, The Holy One, blessed be He, will say to the Messiah, the son of David (May he reveal himself speedily in our days!), "Ask of me anything, and I will give it to thee", as it is said, *I will tell of the decree etc. this day have I begotten thee, ask of me and I will give the nations for thy inheritance* . (Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 52a)

For to us a Son is born, to us a Son is given: and he shall receive the law upon him to keep it; and his name is called from of Old, Wonderful, Counsellor, *Eloha, the Mighty*, abiding to Eternity, *the Messiah* , because peace shall be multiplied on us in His days. (Targum Jonathan)

What is the name of the King Messiah? R. Abba b. Kahana said: *His name is "the Lord"* [Heb: YHWH, Jehovah, Adonai], as it is stated, And this is His name whereby he shall be called, The Lord [Heb: YHWH] is our righteousness'. (Midrash Rabbah, Lamentations 1:16)

**What is the cause of the mourning [in Zechariah 12:12]?—R. Dosa and the Rabbis differ on the point. One explained, The cause is the slaying of Messiah the son of Joseph, and the other explained, The cause is the slaying of the Evil Inclination.**

**It is well according to him who explains that the cause is the slaying of Messiah the son of Joseph, since that well agrees with the Scriptural verse, *And they shall look upon me because they have thrust him through, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son* . (Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 52a)**

**"What is his [the Messiah's] name?" ... The rabbis said: His name is 'the leper scholar' as it is written, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him a leper, smitten of God and afflicted' ." (Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 98b)**

(Rabbi Moshe Kohen ibn Crispin, circa 1350 CE)

The expression "My Servant" they [certain contemporary commentators] compare rashly with Isaiah 41:8 "thou Israel art my servant", where the prophet is speaking of the people of Israel (which would be singular): here, however, he does not mention Israel, but simply says "My Servant": we cannot therefore understand the word in the same sense ... I am pleased to interpret it in accordance with the teaching of our rabbis of the King Messiah, and will be careful, so far as I am able, to adhere to the literal sense: thus, possibly, I shall be free from the forced far-fetched interpretations of which others have been guilty.

He (Messiah) shall intercede for many sins, and the rebellious for his sake will be forgiven. (Targum Jonathan)

The fact is it refers to King Messiah. "He was counted with the transgressors," because they appointed his grave by the wicked, He will intercede for the transgressors, and for those who rise up against Him. (Herz Homberg, 1749-1841)

Jonathan ben Uzziel interprets it in the Targum of the future Messiah; and this is also the opinion of our own learned men in the majority of their Midrashim. (Rabbi don Yitzehak Abarbanel, circa 1500 CE)

Forthwith the Holy One began to make a covenant with the Messiah: O Messiah, my righteousness, said he, the iniquities of those who are hidden beside thee will cause thee to enter into a hard yoke ... said the Messiah, Lord of the world I accept it joyfully, and will endure these chastisements ... *Messiah accepted the chastisement of love, as it is written; He was oppressed, and he was afflicted.* (Rabbi Moshe Ha-Darshan, 10th, 11th century CE, Midrash on Bereshith)

The prophet here declares, how the Messiah resigns himself to die, and be buried in their tomb. (Japheth ben Ali ha-Levi, c. 920 CE)

If we search the prophets we shall find that He who is promised as the Shepherd of Israel is THE MESSIAH. The Messiah therefore is the person to be smitten before the scattering of the sheep. (Rabbi David Kimchi on Zechariah)

The LORD is the King Messiah; He is also the Angel of the Covenant. (Rabbi David Kimchi)

The LORD is both the Divine majesty and the Angel of the Covenant, for the sentence is doubled. (Rabbi Aben Ezra)

The LORD may be explained of King Messiah (Mashimiah Jeshua fol. 76)

What is to be the manner of Messiah's coming, and where will be the place of his first appearance? He will make his first appearance in the land of Israel, as it is written, 'The Lord whom ye seek will come suddenly to His Temple'. (Rabbi Moses ben Maimon)

Exult vehemently, O assemblage of Zion, and exult O assemblage of Jerusalem; Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, just himself and a Saviour, humble, riding on an ass, and a foal, and the young of an ass. (Jonathan ben Uzziel)

**This is the Messiah our Righteousness. But is it not written of the Messiah, "Lowly, riding upon an ass?" Yes, but this shows he will come in humility, and not in pride upon horses. (Saadiah Gaon on Daniel 7:17)**

**R. Berekiah said in the name of R. Isaac: As the first redeemer was, so shall the latter Redeemer be. What is stated of the former redeemer? And Moses took his wife, and his sons, and set them upon an ass (Ex. 16, 4). Similarly will it be with the latter Redeemer [Messiah], as it is stated, Lowly and riding upon an ass. (Midrash Rabbah, Ecclesiastes 1. 9, 1)**

Our Rabbis taught, The Holy One, blessed be He, will say to the Messiah, the son of David (May he reveal himself speedily in our days!), "Ask of me anything, and I will give it to thee", as it is said, *I will tell of the decree etc. this day have I begotten thee, ask of me and I will give the nations for thy inheritance* . (Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 52a)

Our rabbis of blessed memory with one voice accept and affirm the opinion that *the prophet is speaking of the King Messiah*, and we ourselves shall also adhere to the same view. (Rabbi Moshe El-Sheikh of Safed: a disciple of Joseph Caro the author of the Shulchan Arukh, late 6th Century CE, Commentaries on the Earlier Prophets)

" *But He was wounded,*" etc. ... meaning that since *the Messiah bears our iniquities which produce the effect of His being bruised* , it follows that whosoever will not admit that Messiah thus suffers for our iniquities must endure and suffer for them himself. (Rabbi Elijah ben Moses de Vidas, 16th century CE)

Out of thee *Bethlehem* shall Messiah go forth before me, to exercise dominion over Israel. Whose name has been spoken of Old from the day of Eternity. (Targum Jonathan)

Although thou art little among the thousands of Judah, out of thee. shall come forth unto me a Judge to be Ruler in Israel, and this is the King Messiah. (Rabbi David Kimchi)

O, thou Bethlehem Ephrata ... although thou art little in the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall come forth unto me a Man, a Ruler in Israel whose goings forth are from the days of old ... that is from the Seed of David ... who was of Bethlehem Judah. (Abarbanel, Mashmiah Jeshua, fol. 62, c. 2).

I have examined and searched all the Holy Scriptures, and have not found the time for the coming of Messiah, clearly fixed, except in the words of Gabriel to the prophet Daniel,

which are written in the ninth chapter of the prophecy of Daniel. (Rabbi Moses Abraham Levi)

He (Jonathan) moreover sought to make a Targum of the Hagiographa; but the bath Kol came forth and said, "Enough." And why might he not execute a Targum of the Hagiographa? Because *the End about the Advent of the Messiah is revealed in it*. Rashi says, "In the Book of Daniel." (Megillah fol. 3a)

And they [the Romans] fulfilled the prophecy given out against the Fatherland. (Flavius Josephus)

The world is to exist six thousand years. In the first two thousand there was desolation; two thousand years the Torah flourished; and the next two thousand years is the Messianic era. (Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 97a) [The current year, according to Jewish reckoning, is 5765 years since creation. If that reckoning is correct Messiah should have come 1765 years ago!]

## The Messiah

What is the name of the King Messiah? R. Abba b. Kahana said: *His name is "the Lord"* [Heb: YHWH, Jehovah, Adonai], as it is stated, And this is His name whereby he shall be called, The Lord [Heb: YHWH] is our righteousness'. (Midrash Rabbah, Lamentations 1:16)

"The germ of the idea underlying the fuller conception of the messianic Age was in existence from the time of the founders of the race of Israel. *In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed*, was the promise given both to Abraham and Isaac. It was a promise that reached far beyond the lifetime of each, farther than the limits of the temporal kingdom their descendants founded." (R. Samuel Singer, quoted in *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, ed. J.H.Hertz)

A STAR shall proceed out of Jacob, and there shall come a SCEPTRE in Israel. The KING Messiah is here spoken of as a STAR. (Rabbi Lieva of Prague)

When a king shall arise out of Jacob and the Messiah be anointed from Israel, He will slay the princes of Moab, and reign over all the children of man. (Targum Onkelos)

Our rabbis have a tradition that in the week in which the Messiah will be born there will be a bright STAR in the east , which is "THE STAR OF THE Messiah." (Pesikta Sortarta fol. 58. c.1)

And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between the seed of thy sons, and between the seed of her sons; and it shall be when the sons of the woman keep the commandments of the Law, they will be prepared to smite thee on thy head; but if they forsake the commandments of the Law, thou wilt be prepared to wound them in the heel. Nevertheless for them there shall be a medicine; *and they shall make a remedy for the heel in the days of the King Meshiha*. (Jerusalem Targum.)

As the incarnation of evil Satan is the arch-enemy of the Messiah he is anti-Christ. The light which was created before the world, was hidden by God beneath His throne; and to the question of Satan in regard to it God answered: "This light is kept for him who shall bring thee to shame." At his request God showed Satan the Messiah; and when he saw him, he trembled, fell upon his face, and cried: "*Verily this is the Messiah, who shall hurl (bruise) me*, and all the princes of the angels of the people" down even into hell. (Pesikta Rabbati. 3:6. ed. Friedmann, p. 161, b.)

And there shall go forth a King from the Sons of Jesse, and the MESSIAH shall be anointed from his children's children. (Targum Jonathan)

Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise up to David the MESSIAH, who is righteous, and he will reign a King, and shall prosper, and execute the judgement of truth and justice in the earth. (Targum Jonathan)

And they shall worship before the Lord their God, and they shall hearken to MESSIAH, *the Son Of David*, their King, whom I will raise up unto them. (Targum Jonathan on Jeremiah 30:9,21)

Out of thee *Bethlehem* shall Messiah go forth before me, to exercise dominion over Israel. Whose name has been spoken of Old from the day of Eternity. (Targum Jonathan)

Although thou art little among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall come forth unto me a Judge to be Ruler in Israel, and this is the King Messiah. (Rabbi David Kimchi)

O, thou Bethlehem Ephrata ... although thou art little in the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall come forth unto me a Man, a Ruler in Israel whose goings forth are from the days of old ... that is from the Seed of David ... who was of Bethlehem Judah. (Abarbanel, Mashmiah Jeshua, fol. 62, c. 2).

And a right Prophet [a Prophet of Righteousness] will the LORD your God give you, a Prophet from among you of your brethren like unto me with the Holy Spirit, will the Lord your God raise up unto you; to Him shall ye be obedient. (Targum Palestine, Targum Jerusalem)

In fact the Messiah is such a Prophet as is stated in the Midrash on the verses, 'Behold my servant shall prosper ...' Moses by the miracles which he wrought drew but a single nation to the worship of God, but the Messiah will draw all nations to the worship of God. (Rabbi Levi ben Gershon)

We may all feel thankful that the Jewish race was so prolific in great men, that even so late in history, it produced one (Jesus) who deserves to be compared with Moses, Isaiah and Hillel. (Rabbi Adolph Moses, The Courier Journal 1885)

Our rabbis have taught that this concerns the Messiah-King... (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki)

If it [Psalm 2] be interpreted of the Messiah, the matter is clear. (Aben Ezra)

Our Rabbis taught, The Holy One, blessed be He, will say to the Messiah, the son of David (May he reveal himself speedily in our days!), "Ask of me anything, and I will give it to thee", as it is said, *I will tell of the decree etc. this day have I begotten thee, ask of me and I will give the nations for thy inheritance* . (Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 52a)

For to us a Son is born, to us a Son is given: and he shall receive the law upon him to keep it; and his name is called from of Old, Wonderful, Counsellor, *Eloha, the Mighty*, abiding to Eternity, *the Messiah* , because peace shall be multiplied on us in His days. (Targum Jonathan)

What is the name of the King Messiah? R. Abba b. Kahana said: *His name is "the Lord"* [Heb: YHWH, Jehovah, Adonai], as it is stated, And this is His name whereby he shall be called, The Lord [Heb: YHWH] is our righteousness'. (Midrash Rabbah, Lamentations 1:16)

What is the cause of the mourning [in Zechariah 12:12]?—R. Dosa and the Rabbis differ on the point. One explained, The cause is the slaying of Messiah the son of Joseph, and the other explained, The cause is the slaying of the Evil Inclination.

It is well according to him who explains that the cause is the slaying of Messiah the son of Joseph, since that well agrees with the Scriptural verse, *And they shall look upon me because they have thrust him through, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son* . (Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 52a)

"What is his [the Messiah's] name?" ... The rabbis said: His name is 'the leper scholar' as it is written, '*Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him a leper, smitten of God and afflicted*' ." (Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 98b)

The expression "My Servant" they [certain contemporary commentators] compare rashly with Isaiah 41:8 "thou Israel art my servant", where the prophet is speaking of the people of Israel (which would be singular): here, however, he does not mention Israel, but simply says "My Servant": we cannot therefore understand the word in the same sense ... I am pleased to interpret it in accordance with the teaching of our rabbis of the King Messiah, and will be careful, so far as I am able, to adhere to the literal sense: thus, possibly, I shall be free from the forced far-fetched interpretations of which others have been guilty. (Rabbi Moshe Kohen ibn Crispin, circa 1350 CE)

He (Messiah) shall intercede for many sins, and the rebellious for his sake will be forgiven. (Targum Jonathan)

The fact is it refers to King Messiah. "He was counted with the transgressors," because they appointed his grave by the wicked, He will intercede for the transgressors, and for those who rise up against Him. (Herz Homberg, 1749-1841)

Jonathan ben Uzziel interprets it in the Targum of the future Messiah; and this is also the opinion of our own learned men in the majority of their Midrashim. (Rabbi don Yitzehak Abarbanel, circa 1500 CE)

Forthwith the Holy One began to make a covenant with the Messiah: O Messiah, my righteousness, said he, the iniquities of those who are hidden beside thee will cause thee to enter into a hard yoke ... said the Messiah, Lord of the world I accept it joyfully, and will endure these chastisements ... *Messiah accepted the chastisement of love, as it is written; He was oppressed, and he was afflicted.* (Rabbi Moshe Ha-Darshan, 10th, 11th century CE, Midrash on Bereshith)

The prophet here declares, how the Messiah resigns himself to die, and be buried in their tomb. (Japheth ben Ali ha-Levi, c. 920 CE)

If we search the prophets we shall find that He who is promised as the Shepherd of Israel is THE MESSIAH. The Messiah therefore is the person to be smitten before the scattering of the sheep. (Rabbi David Kimchi on Zechariah)

The LORD is the King Messiah; He is also the Angel of the Covenant. (Rabbi David Kimchi)

The LORD is both the Divine majesty and the Angel of the Covenant, for the sentence is doubled. (Rabbi Aben Ezra)

The LORD may be explained of King Messiah (Mashimiah Jeshua fol. 76)

What is to be the manner of Messiah's coming, and where will be the place of his first appearance? He will make his first appearance in the land of Israel, as it is written, 'The Lord whom ye seek will come suddenly to His Temple'. (Rabbi Moses ben Maimon)

Exult vehemently, O assemblage of Zion, and exult O assemblage of Jerusalem; Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, just himself and a Saviour, humble, riding on an ass, and a foal, and the young of an ass. (Jonathan ben Uzziel)

This is the Messiah our Righteousness. But is it not written of the Messiah, "Lowly, riding upon an ass?" Yes, but this shows he will come in humility, and not in pride upon horses. (Saadiah Gaon on Daniel 7:17)

R. Berekiah said in the name of R. Isaac: As the first redeemer was, so shall the latter Redeemer be. What is stated of the former redeemer? *And Moses took his wife, and his sons, and set them upon an ass* (Ex. 16, 4). Similarly will it be with the latter Redeemer [Messiah], as it is stated, *Lowly and riding upon an ass.* (Midrash Rabbah, Ecclesiastes 1. 9, 1)

Our Rabbis taught, The Holy One, blessed be He, will say to the Messiah, the son of David (May he reveal himself speedily in our days!), "Ask of me anything, and I will give it to thee", as it is said, *I will tell of the decree etc. this day have I begotten thee, ask of me and I will give the nations for thy inheritance .* (Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 52a)

Our rabbis of blessed memory with one voice accept and affirm the opinion that *the prophet is speaking of the King Messiah*, and we ourselves shall also adhere to the same view. (Rabbi Moshe El-Sheikh of Safed: a disciple of Joseph Caro the author of the Shulchan Arukh, late 6th Century CE, Commentaries on the Earlier Prophets)

"*But He was wounded,*" etc. ... meaning that since *the Messiah bears our iniquities which produce the effect of His being bruised*, it follows that whosoever will not admit that Messiah thus suffers for our iniquities must endure and suffer for them himself. (Rabbi Elijah ben Moses de Vidas, 16th century CE)

Out of thee *Bethlehem* shall Messiah go forth before me, to exercise dominion over Israel. Whose name has been spoken of Old from the day of Eternity. (Targum Jonathan)

Although thou art little among the thousands of Judah, out of thee. shall come forth unto me a Judge to be Ruler in Israel, and this is the King Messiah. (Rabbi David Kimchi)

O, thou Bethlehem Ephrata ... although thou art little in the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall come forth unto me a Man, a Ruler in Israel whose goings forth are from the days of old ... that is from the Seed of David ... who was of Bethlehem Judah. (Abarbanel, Mashmiah Jeshua, fol. 62, c. 2).

I have examined and searched all the Holy Scriptures, and have not found the time for the coming of Messiah, clearly fixed, except in the words of Gabriel to the prophet Daniel, which are written in the ninth chapter of the prophecy of Daniel. (Rabbi Moses Abraham Levi)

He (Jonathan) moreover sought to make a Targum of the Hagiographa; but the bath Kol came forth and said, "Enough." And why might he not execute a Targum of the Hagiographa? Because *the End about the Advent of the Messiah is revealed in it.* Rashi says, "In the Book of Daniel." (Megillah fol. 3a)

And they [the Romans] fulfilled the prophecy given out against the Fatherland. (Flavius Josephus)

The world is to exist six thousand years. In the first two thousand there was desolation; two thousand years the Torah flourished; and the next two thousand years is the Messianic era. (Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 97a) [The current year, according to Jewish reckoning, is 5765 years since creation. If that reckoning is correct Messiah should have come 1765 years ago!]

**Below, are just a few of the ancient rabbis interpretations attributing Isa. 52:13 & 53 to the suffering and exalted Messiah.**

**Many ancient rabbinic sources understood Isaiah 53 as referring to the Messiah. This is by no means an exhaustive study, but it's a good "sampling" of ancient rabbinical thought concerning the person of Messiah. Some info below is said twice.**

**Let's have them speak for themselves:**

**Rabbi Moses Alsczech (1508-1600)** says:

"Our Rabbis with one voice accept and affirm the opinion that the prophet is speaking of the Messiah, and we shall ourselves also adhere to the same view."

**Abrabanel (1437-1508)** said earlier:

"This is also the opinion of our own learned men in the majority of their Midrashim."

After Rashi had popularized the view of Isaiah 53 as referring to Israel, Rabbi Don Yitzchak Abarbanel circa 1500, who did NOT interpret Isaiah 53 as Messianic, concedes the fact that the majority did. He stated:

"The first question is to ascertain of whom this refers; for the learned among the Nazarenes expound it of the man who was crucified in Jerusalem at the end of the Second Temple . . . Yochanan ben Uzziel interpreted it in the Targum of the future messiah; but this is also the opinion of the learned men in the MAJORITY [emphasis added] of the midrashim."

[Arthur W. Kac, The Messianic Hope (Grand Rapids: Baker House, 1975) p. 75]

**Rabbi Yafeth Ben Ali ( second half of the 10th Century):**

"As for myself, I am inclined to regard it as alluding to the Messiah."

**Abraham Farissol ( 1451- 1526)** says:

"In this chapter there seem to be considerable resemblances and allusions to the work of the Christian Messiah and to the events which are asserted to have happened to Him, so that no other prophecy is to be found the gist and subject of which can be so immediately applied to Him."

**Targum Jonathan ( 4th Century )** gives the introduction on Isa. 52:13:**"Behold, my servant the Messiah shall prosper; he shall be high and increase and be exceedingly strong..."**

**Gersonides (1288-1344)** on Deut. 18:18:

"In fact Messiah is such a prophet, as it is stated in the Midrasch on the verse, 'Behold, my servant shall prosper...' (Isa. 52:13)."

**Midrash Tanchuma:**

"He was more exalted than Abraham, more extolled than Mose, higher than the archangels" (Isa.52:13).

**Yalkut Schimeon ( ascribed to Rabbi Simeon Kara, 12th Century )** says on Zech.4:7:

"He ( the king Messiah ) is greater than the patriarchs, as it is said, 'My servant shall be high, and lifted up, and lofty exceedingly' (Isa. 52:13)."

**Maimonides (1135-1204)** wrote to Rabbi Jacob Alfajumi:

"Likewise said Isaiah that He (Messiah) would appear without acknowledging a father or mother: 'He grew up before him as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground' etc. (Isa.53:2)."

**Tanchuma:**

"Rabbi Nachman says: ,The Word MAN in the passage, 'Every man a head of the house of his father' (Num.1,4), refers to the Messiah, the son of David, as it is written, 'Behold the man whose name is Zemach'(the Branch) where Jonathan interprets,'Behold the man Messiah' (Zech.6:12); and so it is said,'A man of pains and known to sickness' (Isa.53:3)."

**Talmud Sanhedrin (98b) :**

"Messiah ...what is his name? The Rabbis say,'The leprous one'; those of the house of the Rabbi (Jehuda Hanassi, the author of the Mishna, 135-200) say: 'Cholaja' (The sickly), for it says, 'Surely he has borne our sicknesses' etc. (Isa.53,4)."

**Pesiqta Rabbati (ca.845)** on Isa. 61,10:

"The world-fathers (patriarchs) will one day in the month of Nisan arise and say to (**the Messiah**): 'Ephraim, our righteous Anointed, although we are your grandparents, yet you are greater than we, for you have borne the sins of our children, as it says: 'But surely he has borne our sicknesses and carried our pains; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was pierced because of our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him and through his wounds we are healed'(Isa.53,4-5)."

**Rabbi Simeon Ben Jochai (2.Century) , Zohar,, part II, page 212a and III, page 218a, Amsterdam Ed.):**

"There is in the garden of Eden a palace called : 'The palace of the sons of sickness, **this palace the Messiah enters**, and summons every sickness, every pain, and every chastisement of Israel: they all come and rest upon Him. And were it not that He had thus lightened them off Israel, and taken them upon Himself, there had been no man able to bear Israels chastisement for the transgression of the law; this is that which is written, 'Surely our sicknesses he has carried' Isa.53,4).- **As they tell Him (the Messiah)** of the

misery of Israel in their captivity, and of those wicked ones among them who are not attentive to know their Lord, He lifts up His voice and weeps for their wickedness; and so it is written,'He was wounded for our transgressions' (Isa.53,5).

**Midrash (on Ruth 2,14): "He is speaking of the King Messiah - 'Come hither', i.e." >Draw near to the throne<; 'eat of the bread', i.e.>, The bread of the kingdom.' This refers to the chastisements<, as it is said, 'But he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities' (Isa.53,5).**

**Rabbi Elijah de Vidas (16.Century) :**

"The meaning of 'He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities' is, that since the Messiah bears our iniquities which produce the effect of His being bruised, it follows that whoever will not admit that Messiah thus suffers for our iniquities must endure and suffer for them himself."

**Siphre:**

**"Rabbi Jose the Galilean** said, 'Come and learn the merits of the **King Messiah** and the reward of the Just - from the first man who received but one commandment, a prohibition, and transgressed it. Consider how many deaths were inflicted upon himself, upon his own generation, and upon those who followed them, till the end of all generations. Which attribute is greater, the attribute of goodness, or the attribute of vengeance?' - He answered, 'The attribute of goodness is greater, and the attribute of vengeance is the less.' - 'How much more then, will the King Messiah, who endures affliction and pains for the transgressions (as it is written, 'He was wounded,'etc.), justify all generations. This is the meaning of the word, 'And the LORD made the iniquity of us all to meet upon Him' (Isa.53:6)."

**Rabbi Eleazer Kalir (9.Century)** wrote the following Musaf Prayer:

**"Our righteous Messiah** has departed from us. Horror has seized us and we have no one to justify us. He has borne our transgressions and the yoke of our iniquities, and is wounded because of our transgressions. He bore our sins upon His shoulders that we may find pardon for our iniquity. We shall be healed by His wounds, at the time when the Eternal will recreate Him a new creature. Oh bring Him up from the circle of the earth, raise Him up from Seir, that we may hear Him the second time."

**Rabbi Moses, 'The Preacher'(11. Century)** wrote in his commentary on Genesis (page 660):

"From the beginning God has made a covenant with **the Messiah** and told Him,' **My righteous Messiah**, those who are entrusted to you, their sins will bring you into a heavy yoke'. And He answered, 'I gladly accept all these agonies in order that not one of Israel should be lost.' Immediately, the Messiah accepted all agonies with love, as it is written: 'He was oppressed and he was afflicted'."

**Pesiqta (on Isa. 61:10) :**

"Great oppressions were laid upon You, as it says: 'By oppression and judgement he was taken away; but who considered in his time, that he was cut off out of the land of the

living, that he was stricken because of the sins of our children' (Isa.53:8), as it says:'But the LORD has laid on him the guild of us all'(Isa.53:6)."

### **Rambam (Maimonides) in a letter to Yemen (12th c.) wrote**

What is to be the manner of Messiah's advent, and where will be the place of his appearance? . . . And Isaiah speaks similarly of the time when he will appear, without his father or mother or family being known, He came up as a sucker before him, and **as a root out of the dry earth**, etc. But the unique phenomenon attending his manifestation is, that all the kings of the earth will be thrown into terror at the fame of him -- their kingdoms will be in consternation, and they themselves will be devising whether to oppose him with arms, or to adopt some different course, confessing, in fact, their inability to contend with him or ignore his presence, and so confounded at the wonders which they will see him work, that they will lay their hands upon their mouth; **in the words of Isaiah**, when describing the manner in which the kings will hearken to him, At him kings will shut their mouth; for that which had not been told them have they seen, and that which they had not heard they have perceived.

**Rabbi Moses Maimonides:** "What is the manner of Messiah's advent...there shall rise up one of whom none have known before, and signs and wonders which they shall see performed by him will be the proofs of his true origin; for the Almighty, where he declares to us his mind upon this matter, says, `Behold a man whose name is the Branch, and he shall branch forth out of his place' (Zech. 6:12). And Isaiah speaks similarly of the time when he shall appear, without father or mother or family being known, *He came up as a sucker before him, and as a root out of dry earth, etc....*in the words of Isaiah, when describing the manner in which kings will harken to him, *At him kings will shut their mouth; for that which had not been told them have they seen, and that which they had not heard they have perceived.*" (From the Letter to the South (Yemen), quoted in The Fifty-third Chapter of Isaiah According to the Jewish Interpreters , Ktav Publishing House, 1969, Volume 2, pages 374-5)

**The Aramaic translation of Isaiah 53, ascribed to Rabbi Jonathan ben Uzziel, a disciple of Hillel, begins with the simple and worthy words:**

**Behold my servant Messiah shall prosper** ; he shall be high, and increase, and be exceeding strong: as the house of Israel looked to him through many days, because their countenance was darkened among the peoples, and their complexion beyond the sons of men. (Targum Jonathan on Isaiah 53, ad Iocum)

**We find the same interpretation in the Babylonian Talmud:**

The Messiah -- what is his name?...The Rabbis say, the leprous one; those of the house of Rabbi say, the sick one, as it is said, "**Surely he hath borne our sicknesses.**" (Sanhedrin 98b)

### **In Mysteries of Rabbi Shim'on ben Yohai (midrash) we find:**

And Armilaus will join battle with Messiah, the son of Ephraim, in the East gate . . . ; **and Messiah, the son of Ephraim, will die there**, and Israel will mourn for him. And afterwards the Holy One will reveal to them Messiah, the son of David, whom Israel will desire to stone, saying, Thou speakest falsely; already is the Messiah slain, and there is non other Messiah to stand up (after him): and so **they will despise him** , as it is written, "Despised and forlorn of men;" but he will turn and hide himself from them, according to the words, "Like one hiding his face from us."

### **Even the Zohar II, 212a (medieval) states**

There is in the Garden of Eden a palace named the Palace of the Sons of Sickness. This palace the Messiah enters, and He summons every pain and every chastisement of Israel. All of these come and rest upon Him. And had He not thus lightened them upon Himself, there had been no man able to bear Israel's chastisements for the transgressions of the law; as it is written, "**Surely our sicknesses he has carried.**"

### **Nachmanides (Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman) (13th c.) stated:**

The right view respecting this Parashah is to suppose that by the phrase "my servant" the whole of Israel is meant. . . . As a different opinion, however, is adopted by the Midrash, which refers it to the Messiah, it is necessary for us to explain it in conformity with the view there maintained. The prophet says, **The Messiah, the son of David of whom the text speaks**, will never be conquered or perish by the hands of his enemies. And, in fact the text teaches this clearly. . . .

**And by his stripes we were healed** -- because the stripes by which he is vexed and distressed will heal us; God will pardon us for his righteousness, and we shall be healed both from our own transgressions and from the iniquities of our fathers.

### **In the Midrash Rabbah, is an explanation of Ruth 2:14:**

He is speaking of the King Messiah: "Come hither" draw near to the throne "and dip thy morsel in the vinegar," this refers to the chastisements, as it is said, "**But he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities.**"

### **In the Midrash Tanhuma, parasha Toldot, it says:**

"Who art thou, O great mountain?" (Zechariah 4:7) **This refers to the King Messiah .** And why does he call him the "great mountain?" Because he is greater than the patriarchs, as it is said, "**My servant shall be high, and lifted up, and lofty exceedingly**

." He will be higher than Abraham who said, "I raise high my hand unto the Lord" (Gen. 14:22), lifted up above Moses, to whom it is said, "Lift it up into thy bosom" (Numbers 11:12), loftier than the ministering angels, of whom it is written, "Their wheels were lofty and terrible" (Ezekiel 1:18). And out of whom does he come forth? Out of David.

### **Yalkut ii: 571 (13th c.) says:**

Who art thou, O great mountain (Zech. iv. 7.) **This refers to the King Messiah**. And why does he call him "the great mountain?" Because he is greater than the patriarchs, as it is said, " **My servant shall be high**, and lifted up, and lofty exceedingly" -- he will be higher than Abraham, . . . lifted up above Moses, . . . loftier than the ministering angels.

### **Yalkut ii. 620 (13th c.), in regard to Psalm 2:6**

I.e., I have drawn him out of the chastisements. . . .The chastisements are divided into three parts: one for David and the fathers, one for our own generation, and one for the King Messiah; and this is that which is written, "**He was wounded for our transgressions**," etc.

### **Rabbi Elijah de Vidas (16th c.) wrote:**

Since the **Messiah bears our iniquities** which produce the effect of His being bruised, it follows that whoso will not admit that the Messiah thus suffers for our iniquities, must endure and suffer for them himself.

### **The musaf (additional) service for the Day of Atonement, Philips machzor (20th c.)**

Our righteous anointed is departed from us: horror hath seized us, and we have non to justify us. He hath borne the yoke of our iniquities, and our transgression, and **is wounded because of our transgression**. He beareth our sins on his shoulder, that he may find pardon for our iniquities. We shall be healed by his wound, at the time that the Eternal will create him (**the Messiah**) as a new creature. O bring him up from the circle of the earth. Raise him up from Seir, to assemble us the second time on Mount Lebanon, by the hand of Yinnon.

### **Rabbi Moshe Kohen ibn Crispin, a 15th-century rabbi in Spain, explains:**

"This passage, the commentators explain, speaks of the captivity of Israel, although the singular number is used in it throughout. Others have supposed it to mean the just in this present world, who are crushed and oppressed now... but these too, for the same reason, by altering the number, distort the verses from their natural meaning. And then it seemed to me that...having forsaken the knowledge of our Teachers, and inclined "after the stubbornness of their own hearts," and of their own opinion, **I am pleased to interpret it, in accordance with the teaching of our Rabbis, of the King Messiah.**"

**Rabbi Mosheh Kohen Ibn Crispin:** This rabbi described those who interpret Isaiah 53 as referring to Israel as those: "having forsaken the knowledge of our Teachers, and inclined after the `stubbornness of their own hearts,' and of their own opinion, I am pleased to interpret it, in accordance with the teaching of our Rabbis, of the King Messiah....This prophecy was delivered by Isaiah at the divine command for the purpose of making known to us something about the nature of the future Messiah, who is to come and deliver Israel, and his life from the day when he arrives at discretion until his advent as a redeemer, in order that if anyone should arise claiming to be himself the Messiah, we may reflect, and look to see whether we can observe in him any resemblance to the traits described here; if there is any such resemblance, then we may believe that he is the Messiah our righteousness; but if not, we cannot do so." (From his commentary on Isaiah, quoted in **The Fifty-third Chapter of Isaiah According to the Jewish Interpreters**, Ktav Publishing House, 1969, Volume 2, pages 99-114.)

**Rabbi Moshe Alsheikh, Rabbi of Safed, late 16th century, points out this fact saying:**

I may remark, then, that our Rabbis with one voice accept and affirm the opinion that **the prophet is speaking of the King Messiah.**

**Rabbi Sh'lomoh Astruc (14th c.)**

My servant shall prosper, or be truly intelligent, because by intelligence man is really man -- it is intelligence which makes a man what he is. **And the prophet calls the King Messiah my servant**, speaking as one who sent him. Or he may call the whole people my servant, as he says above my people (lii. 6): when he speaks of the people, the King Messiah is included in it; and when he speaks of the King Messiah, the people is comprehended with him. What he says then is, that my servant the King Messiah will prosper.

**Much to the point is the commentary of the great Jewish educator, Herz Homberg (1749-1841), who says:**

According to the opinion of Rashi and Ibn Ezra, it relates to Israel at the end of their captivity. But if so, what can be the meaning of the passage, "He was wounded for our transgressions"? Who was wounded? Who are the transgressors? Who carried out the sickness and bare the pain? **The fact is that it refers to the King Messiah.**

**One of our greatest Jewish religious poets, Eliezer HaKalir, paraphrased this chapter in the 9th century into rhyme and metric poetry. It is recited in the Yom Kippur prayer of Kether:**

**Messiah**, our righteousness, hath turned from us: we are in terror and there is none to justify us! Our Iniquities and the yoke of our transgressions He did bear for He **was wounded for our transgressions**: He carries our sins upon His shoulders, that we may find forgiveness for our iniquities and by His stripes we are healed. O eternal One the

time is come to make a new creation: from the vault of heaven bring Him up, out of Seir draw Him forth, that He may make His voice heard to us in Lebanon, a second time by the hand of Yinnon.

**Below are remarks from The Karaite Yefeth ben Ali (10th c.)**

As to myself, I am inclined, with Benjamin of Nehawend, to regard it as alluding to the Messiah , and as opening with a description of his condition in exile, from the time of his birth to his accession to the throne: for the prophet begins by speaking of his being seated in a position of great honour, and then goes back to relate all that will happen to him during the captivity. He thus gives us to understand two things: In the first instance, that the Messiah will only reach his highest degree of honour after long and severe trials; and secondly, that these trials will be sent upon him as a kind of sign, so that, if he finds himself under the yoke of misfortunes whilst remaining pure in his actions, he may know that he is the desired one....

By the words "surely he hath carried our sicknesses," they mean that the pains and sickness which he fell into were merited by them, but that he bore them instead. . . . And here I think it necessary to pause for a few moments, in order to explain why God caused these sicknesses to attach themselves to the Messiah for the sake of Israel. . . . The nation deserved from God greater punishment than that which actually came upon them, but not being strong enough to bear it. . . God appoints his servant to carry their sins, and by doing so lighten their punishment in order that Israel might not be completely exterminated.

"**And the Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all.**" The prophet does not by avon mean iniquity, but punishment for iniquity, as in the passage, "Be sure your sin will find you out" (Num. 32:23).

**Lekach Tov (11th c. midrash) says:**

"And let his [Israel's] kingdom be exalted," in the days of the **Messiah, of whom it is said** , "Behold my servant shall prosper; he will be high and exalted, and lofty exceedingly."

**Here is where things really changed:**

**Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Itzchaki, 1040-1105) and some of the later rabbis, though, began to interpret the passage as referring to Israel. They knew that the older interpretations referred it to Messiah.**

However, Rashi lived at a time when a degenerate medieval distortion of Christianity was practiced. He wanted to preserve the Jewish people from accepting such a faith and, although his intentions were sincere, **other prominent Jewish rabbis and leaders realized the inconsistencies of Rashi's interpretation.**

They presented a threefold objection to his innovation. **First**, they showed the consensus of ancient opinion. **Secondly**, they pointed out that the text is in the singular. **Thirdly**, they noted verse eight. This verse presented an insurmountable difficulty to those who interpreted this passage as referring to Israel. It reads:

He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgressions **of my people was he stricken**.

Were the Jewish people, God forbid, ever cut off out of the land of the living? No! In Jeremiah 31:35-37, God promised that we will exist forever. We are proud that Am Yisrael Chai-- "The people of Israel are much alive." **Likewise, it is impossible to say that Israel suffered for the transgressions of "my people," which clearly means Isaiah's people. Surely Isaiah's people are not the Gentiles, but the Jews.**

The words of the prophet Isaiah are words of hope. We have a glorious future and an abundant present if we appropriate the salvation made possible by the One who "was wounded through *our* transgressions and bruised through *our* iniquities."

#### **Info from many books, some refs. are duplicated**

#### **Jewish Messianic Interpretations of Isaiah 53**

It's commonly maintained that Isaiah 53 was never considered messianic by rabbis and Jewish sages. Sometimes the statement is phrased as, "Judaism teaches" that Isaiah 53 refers to the nation of Israel.

The fact is that Isaiah 53 (more precisely, 52:13 to 53:12) has been interpreted in messianic terms by a wide variety of Jewish commentators over a long period of time.

**Other interpretations have certainly been offered, including the view first popularized by Rashi in medieval times that the prophet speaks of the nation of Israel.**

Nevertheless the messianic interpretation has a long history in Jewish Bible exegesis, as shown by the quotations below.

#### **The Targum**

Behold, My Servant the Messiah shall prosper.

-- Targum ("Targum Jonathan") to Isaiah 52:13, various editions (such as Samson H. Levey, *The Messiah: An Aramaic Interpretation; the Messianic Exegesis of the Targum.*" Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College, 1974, p. 63).

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The addition of 53.4-5 [to the cycle of synagogue readings] was evidently of a Messianic purport by reason of the theory of a suffering Messiah. The earlier part of [the Haftarah] (52.7ff.) dealt with the redemption of Israel, and in this connection the tribulations of the Messiah were briefly alluded to by the recital of the above 2 verses.

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And Armilaus will join battle with Messiah, the son of Ephraim, in the East gate . . . ; and Messiah, the son of Ephraim, will die there, and Israel will mourn for him. And afterwards the Holy One will reveal to them Messiah, the son of David, whom Israel will desire to stone, saying, Thou speakest falsely; already is the Messiah slain, and there is non other Messiah to stand up (after him): and so they will despise him, as it is written,

"Despised and forlorn of men;" but he will turn and hide himself from them, according to the words, "Like one hiding his face from us."

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What is to be the manner of Messiah's advent, and where will be the place of his appearance? . . . And Isaiah speaks similarly of the time when he will appear, without his father or mother or family being known, He came up as a sucker before him, and as a root out of the dry earth, etc. But the unique phenomenon attending his manifestation is, that all the kings of the earth will be thrown into terror at the fame of him -- their kingdoms will be in consternation, and they themselves will be devising whether to oppose him with arms, or to adopt some different course, confessing, in fact, their inability to contend with him or ignore his presence, and so confounded at the wonders which they will see him work, that they will lay their hands upon their mouth; in the words of Isaiah, when describing the manner in which the kings will hearken to him, At him kings will shut their mouth; for that which had not been told them have they seen, and that which they had not heard they have perceived.

-- Driver and Neubauer vol 1: p. 322. Edition is Abraham S. Halkin, ed., Igeret Teman (NY: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1952). See Soloff pp. 127-128.

### **Zohar II, 212a (medieval)**

There is in the Garden of Eden a palace named the Palace of the Sons of Sickness. This palace the Messiah enters, and He summons every pain and every chastisement of Israel. All of these come and rest upon Him. And had He not thus lightened them upon Himself, there had been no man able to bear Israel's chastisements for the transgressions of the law; as it is written, "Surely our sicknesses he has carried."

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And by his stripes we were healed -- because the stripes by which he is vexed and distressed will heal us; God will pardon us for his righteousness, and we shall be healed both from our own transgressions and from the iniquities of our fathers.

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## **THE SERVANT OF YEHOVAH**

### **THE SUFFERINGS OF THE MESSIAH AND THE GLORY THAT SHOULD FOLLOW**

#### **AN EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH 53**

**BY DAVID BARON 1855-1926**

**Baron, David (1855-1926)** David Baron and his Hungarian friend C.A.Schonberger found the Hebrew Christian Testimony to Israel in London in 1893. Born from a Russian family in Poland, David studied the Talmud and was told that Jesus was a liar and charlatan, but after emigrating to England he read the New Testament for himself, became a missionary to his own people and also to British church leaders, whom he often finds to be ignorant of the Old Testament and thus presenting a shallow gospel. He edited the Scattered Nation, wrote The Visions and Prophecies of Zecharia, The Shepherd of Israel, The Servant of Jehovah, Anglo-Israelism Examined, and The History of Israel. When the Zionist Congress began in a rented casino in Basle, Switzerland, David attended. Timing his continental tours to include the annual conference in his itinerary each year, as a reporter David obtained a permit to sit in with the delegates. He personally knew Theodor Herzl, the visionary and chairman of the congress. At one conference, a delegate stood and began to vent his spleen on Christian Jewish missionaries. Herzl's response was to quietly leave the rostrum and come down and seat himself by the side of Mr. Baron and a few of his fellow missionaries. In 1911, he used the term 'Messianic movement' to describe a belief among Hebrew Christians that: "It is incumbent on Hebrew Christians, in order to keep up their "national continuity," not only to identify themselves with their unbelieving Jewish brethren, in their national aspirations-as expressed, for instance, in Zionism and other movements which aim at creating and fostering "the national idea" and regaining possession of Palestine-but to observe the "national" rites and customs of the Jews, such as the keeping of the Sabbath, circumcision, and other observances, some of which have not even their origin in the law of Moses, but are part of that unbearable yoke which was laid on the neck of our people by the Rabbis." He disagreed with this "rather grand-sounding designation [which] does not describe any movement of Jews in the direction of recognizing our Lord Jesus Christ as the Messiah, but an agitation on the part of some Hebrew Christian brethren, who have evidently yet much to learn as to the true character of their high calling of God in Christ Jesus, supported by a few no doubt well-meaning excellent Gentile Christian friends, who...do not understand the real tendency of this 'movement'." Messianic congregations

have multiplied throughout the earth, and his negative judgment may have been too hasty, but his warnings have merit in view of some heretic fringes of the Messianic movement which at times de-emphasize Yeshua's central role and Divine sonship.

### **THE ANCIENT JEWISH INTERPRETATION OF ISAIAH 53**

There is truth in the observation of a scholarly writer that this great prophecy was "an enigma which could not be fully understood in the days before Christ, but which has been solved by the sufferings, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Him who was both Son of Man and Son of God."

It is therefore not surprising to find that in the Talmud and Rabbinic Midrashim there is much confusion and contradiction in the various interpretations advanced by the Rabbis. But though it may be true, as Professor Dalman observes, that the Messianic interpretation was not the general one, or the one officially recognized in Israel (any more than any of the other interpretations can be said to have been either generally or officially recognized, yet from most ancient times there have not been wanting authoritative teachers who interpreted the chapter of the Messiah--in spite of the fact that the picture of the Redeemer which is here drawn is utterly opposed to the disposition and to the hopes and expectations in reference to the Messiah which have developed in Rabbinic Judaism.

In proof of this, the following few brief items form ancient Jewish interpretations will be of interest:

First, let me quote Jonathan ben Uziel (early first century A.D.), who begins his Targum with, "Behold, my servant Messiah shall prosper; He shall be high and increase, and be exceeding strong." And then, to reconcile the interpretation of this scripture of the Messiah with his reluctance to recognize that the promised Deliverer must suffer and die for the sins of the nation, he proceeds to juggle with the scripture in a most extraordinary manner, making all the references of exaltation and glory in the chapter to apply to the Messiah, but the references to the tribulation and sufferings to Israel. In illustration of the method by which this is accomplished I need only quote his paraphrase of the very next verse (52:14), which reads, "And the House of Israel looked to Him during many days, because their countenance was darkened among the peoples, and their complexion beyond the sons of men." [It should also be noted that the targums of Ben Uziel and others are thought to have been extensively re-written much later by the Babylonian schools--ed.]

In the Talmud of Babylon (Sanhedrin 98b), among other opinions, we find the following: “The Messiah--what is his name?. . . The Rabbis say, The Leprous One; (those) of the house of Rabbi (say), The Sick One, as it is said, ‘Surely he has borne our sicknesses’.” The expression, ‘The Leprous One, is based on a mis-interpretation of the word ‘*nagua* ’,

**נָגַף** verse 8 **נָגַף**

**H5062 נָגַף** na?gaph *naw-gaf'*

**A primitive root** ; to *push* , *gore* , *defeat* , *stub* (the toe), *inflict* (a disease): - beat, dash, hurt, plague, slay, smite (down), strike, stumble, X surely, put to the worse.

**Total KJV Occurrences:** 47

**smitten, 15**

Deu 1:42 (2), Deu 28:7, Deu 28:25, Jdg 20:32, Jdg 20:36, Jdg 20:39, 1Sa 4:2-3 (2), 1Sa 7:10 (2), 2Sa 10:15, 2Sa 10:19, 1Ki 8:33, 2Ch 20:22

**smite, 9**

Exo 8:2, Exo 12:23 (2), 1Sa 26:10, 2Ch 21:14, Isa 19:22 (2), Zec 14:12, Zec 14:18

**smote, 6**

Exo 12:27, Jdg 20:35, 1Sa 25:38, 2Ch 13:15, 2Ch 14:12, 2Ch 21:18

**worse, 5**

2Ki 14:12, 1Ch 19:16, 1Ch 19:19, 2Ch 6:24, 2Ch 25:22

**hurt, 2**

Exo 21:22 (2), Exo 21:35

**plagued, 2**

Exo 32:35 (2), Jos 24:5

**slain, 2**

Lev 26:17, 2Sa 18:7

**struck, 2**

[2Sa 12:15](#), [2Ch 13:20](#)

**stumble**, 2

[Pro 3:23](#), [Jer 13:16](#)

**beaten**, 1

[2Sa 2:17](#)

**dash**, 1

[Psa 91:12](#)

**H5061 נֶגֶה** nega? *neh'-gah*

From H5060; a *blow* (figuratively *infliction*); also (by implication) a *spot* (concretely a *leprosy* person or dress): - plague, sore, stricken, stripe, stroke, wound.

**Total KJV Occurrences:** 78

**plague**, 64

[Lev 13:1-6](#) (11), [Lev 13:9](#), [Lev 13:12-13](#) (2), [Lev 13:17](#) (2), [Lev 13:20](#), [Lev 13:22](#),  
[Lev 13:25](#), [Lev 13:27](#), [Lev 13:29-32](#) (5), [Lev 13:44-47](#) (4), [Lev 13:49-59](#) (17),  
[Lev 14:3](#), [Lev 14:32](#), [Lev 14:34-37](#) (5), [Lev 14:39-40](#) (2), [Lev 14:43-44](#) (2),  
[Lev 14:48](#) (2), [Lev 14:54](#), [Deu 24:8](#), [1Ki 8:37-38](#) (2), [Psa 91:10](#)

**sore**, 5

[Lev 13:42-43](#) (2), [2Ch 6:28-29](#) (2), [Psa 38:11](#)

**stroke**, 4

[Deu 17:8](#) (2), [Deu 21:5](#), [Psa 39:10](#)

**stripes**, 2

[2Sa 7:14](#), [Psa 89:32](#)

**plagues**, 1

[Gen 12:17](#)

**stricken**, 1

Isa 53:8

wound, 1

Pro 6:33

that is, ‘stricken’, or ‘plagued’, as meaning ‘leprous’.

(The other names of the Messiah mentioned in the passage are:

Shiloh, with reference to Gen. 49:10, “until Shiloh come”; “Yinnon”, with reference to Psalm 72:17, “His name shall endure forever; before the sun [was created] his name was Yinnon”; Haninah, in reference to Jer. 16:13, “where no Haninah (favor) will be given to you”; Menahem, in reference to Lam. 1:16, “the comforter (Menahem) that should restore my soul is far from me.” )

That the generally received older Jewish interpretation of this prophecy was the Messianic is admitted by Abrabanel, who himself proceeds in a long polemic against the Nazarenes to interpret it of the Jewish nation. He begins, “The first question is to ascertain to whom (this scripture) refers, for the learned men among the Nazarenes expound it of the man who was crucified in Jerusalem at the end of the Second Temple, and who according to them was the Son of God and took flesh in the virgin’s womb, as is stated in their writings. Jonathan ben Uziel interprets it in the Targum of the future Messiah; *and this is also the opinion of our learned men in the majority of their Midrashim.*”

Similarly another, Rabbi Mosheh el Sheikh, commonly known as Alshech (latter half of the sixteenth century), who also himself follows the older interpretation, at any rate of the first three verses (52:13-15, which, however, as we shall see, contain a summary of the whole prophecy), testifies that *our Rabbis with one voice accept and affirm the opinion that the prophet is speaking of the King Messiah.*

In fact, until Rashi (Rabbi Solomon Yizchaki, 1040-1105) applied it to the Jewish nation, the Messianic interpretation of this chapter was almost universally adopted by Jews, and his view, which we shall examine presently, although received by Ibn Ezra, Kimchi, and others, was rejected as unsatisfactory by many others, one of whom (R. Mosheh Kohen Ibn Crispin, of Cordova, and afterwards Toledo, fourteenth century, who says rightly, of those who for controversial reasons applied this prophecy to Israel, that “*the doors of literal interpretation of this chapter were shut in their face, and that they wearied themselves to find the entrance, having forsaken the knowledge of our teachers, and*

*inclined after the stubbornness of their own hearts and of their own opinions.* According to Ibn Crispin, the interpretation adopted by Rashi “distorts the passage from its natural meaning, and that in truth “it was given of God as a description of the Messiah, whereby, when any should claim to be the Messiah, to judge by the resemblance or non-resemblance to it whether he were the Messiah or not.

Another (R. Eliyya de Vidas, c. 1575), says “The meaning of ‘He was wounded for our transgressions. . . bruised for our iniquities’, is that since the Messiah bears our iniquities, which produce the effect of him being bruised, it follows that whoever will not admit that the Messiah thus suffers for our iniquities must endure and suffer them for himself.”

Before proceeding to an examination of the modern Jewish interpretation of this chapter, let me add two further striking testimonies to its more ancient Messianic interpretation--taken this time, not from any Targum, or Midrash, or Rabbinical Commentary, which might be said to express the individual opinion of this or that Rabbi, but from the Jewish liturgy, which may be said to bear upon it the seal of the authority and usage of the whole synagogue.

The first is taken from the liturgy for the Day of Atonement--the most solemn day of the Jewish year--and reads as follows: “We are shrunk up in our misery even until now! Our Rock has not come nigh to us; Messiah our righteousness (or, “our righteous Messiah”) has departed from us. Horror has seized upon us, and we have none to justify us. He has borne the yoke of our iniquities and transgressions, and is wounded because of our transgression. He bears our sins on his shoulder, that he may find pardon for our iniquities. We shall be healed by his wound at the time the Eternal will create him (Messiah) as a new creature. O bring him up from the circle of the earth, raise him up from Seir to assemble us the second time on Mount Lebanon, by the hand of Yinnon.” (This forms part of the Musaph service for the Day of Atonement. The author, according to Zunz, was Eleazer ben Kalir, who lived in the ninth century. Yinnon, as will be seen, was one of the names given by the Rabbis to the Messiah, and is derived from Psalm 72:17, which the Talmud renders, “Before the sun was, his name. . .” a rendering and expression which implies a belief in the pre-existence of at least the name of the Messiah, and perhaps of the Messiah himself.)

The other passage is also from the Machsor (Liturgy for the Festival Services), and will be found among the prayers on the Feast of Passover. It is as follows: “Flee, my beloved, until the end of the vision shall speak; hasten, and the shadows shall take their flight hence; high and exalted and lofty shall be the despised one; he shall be prudent in judgement, and shall sprinkle many! Lay bare thine arm! Cry out and say, ‘The voice of my beloved; behold he cometh!’” (David Levy, the English translator of the Machsor, says in a note that this verse referred to “the true Messiah”).

### **THE MODERN JEWISH INTERPRETATION OF ISAIAH 53**

ON examining the different non-Messianic interpretations of this great prophecy, given by Jewish and unbelieving Christian rabbis, it is an important fact to be borne in mind, as Pusey points out, that next to nothing turns upon the renderings of the Hebrew. It is not then a question of knowledge of Hebrew grammar, or Philology; and ordinary intelligent English readers, with the Authorized or Revised version in their hands, are well able to judge of the merits of the different interpretations which are advanced.

It is not necessary for us to examine those Jewish interpretations which apply this chapter to Jeremiah, Isaiah himself, Hezekiah, Josiah, or Job, etc., for they have been sufficiently refuted by Jewish writers themselves, but I may quote Hegstenberg's observation in reference to those Christian writers who have followed in the same lines:

*"Among the interpretations which refer the prophecy to a single individual other than the Messiah," he says, "scarcely any one has found another defender than its own author. They are of importance only in so far as they show that the prophecy does most decidedly make the impression that its subject is a real person, not a personification; and further, that it could not by any means be an exegetical interest [i.e., a desire to find out what the text really says--ed] which induced rationalism to reject the interpretation which referred it to Christ."*

The most generally accepted Jewish modern Jewish interpretation of this prophecy is that which makes it apply to the Jewish nation.

The first mention we have of this explanation is by Origen (c. 200 A.D.) who, in his work against Celsus, says, "I remember once having used these prophecies in discussion with those called wise among the Jews, whereon the Jews said that these things were prophesied of the whole people, as one which was both dispersed abroad and smitten." But this may then have been the opinion of that particular Rabbi, or the counter-explanation may have been advanced by him (as has been done by later Rabbis and Jewish commentators) as a device "in order to answer heretics", who were pressing them with the remarkable resemblance between the prophecy and its fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth. [In addition, the emphasis of the Rabbi in this discussion was on the *dispersion* of his people, not on their *suffering*. At that time, the Christians who were being persecuted, and if the Rabbi's stress had been on the suffering of the figure in Isaiah 53, then the Christians could have retorted that it was they, then, who were the fulfillment of the prophecy.--ed]

The first of the authoritative Jewish commentators who applied this chapter to the Jewish nation was Rashi, and since his time it has become more and more the "generally received" interpretation among the Jews. And that unbelieving Israel should have

departed from the ancient interpretation which applied this prophecy to the Messiah is really not to be wondered at, for first the idea of a suffering expiatory Messiah became more and more repugnant to Rabbinic Judaism, which lost the knowledge of sin and the consciousness of the need of salvation, such as alone could have made the doctrine of a vicariously suffering Redeemer acceptable. "Not knowing the holiness of God, and being ignorant of the true import of the Law," as Hegstenberg observes, "they imagine that in their own strength they can be justified before God. What they longed for was only an outward deliverance from their misery and oppressors, not an inward deliverance from sin. For this reason the synagogue occupied itself exclusively with those scripture which announce a Messiah in glory, which passages also it misinterpreted."

Secondly, lacking or rejecting the key to the true understanding of this prophecy, namely, its fulfillment in the Nazarene, Jewish commentators encountered great difficulties and inexplicabilities in their attempts to expound it. This picture of a Messiah, which represented him as passing through the deepest humiliation and suffering, and pouring out his soul unto death, appeared to them irreconcilable with those prophecies which speak of the Messiah as coming in power and glory.

And thirdly, this explanation was "too flattering to the national feeling not to be extensively adopted", as Pusey observes, but it really has something plausible from their point of view as its basis. Is not Israel called "The Servant of the Lord" in this very book of Isaiah? And has not Israel among the nations suffered humiliations, and wrongs, and tortures, and massacres, such as have been the lot or experience of no other people? As Lukyn Williams says in his "Christian Evidences for Jewish People", "Every true Christian reader feels humbled as he reads this portion of scripture, because he sees in it a description of his Savior, and the cost of his redemption; almost every Jew is like to feel lifted up, because he sees in it a description of the value of Israel to the nations of the world, and of his own sufferings as a means of peace and prosperity to the gentiles. There is thus a fundamental difference in the two interpretations of the chapter, answering to the fundamental difference that there is between Judaism and Christianity--the one a religion which magnifies the human efforts, the other one which makes humiliation of soul necessary to true exaltation."

It is an interesting fact that the explanation of this chapter, which made the Jewish nation to be the innocent sufferer for the guilt of the other nations, originated in what has been described as "the iron age of Judaism". Its author, Rashi, at an earlier period of his life--when he wrote his Commentary on the Talmud--actually followed the older interpretation, which applied Isaiah 53 to the Messiah, but he very probably wrote his Commentary on the bible (in which the new interpretation is first introduced) after the second Crusade, when the hideous massacres of Jews in Spire, Worms, Mainz, Cologne by the wild profligate swarm which gathered, after the first Crusaders were gone, might well have occasioned it.

### **THE UNTENABLENESS OF THE MODERN INTERPRETATION**

I shall now proceed to show the untenability of this modern interpretation; but before doing so it is necessary to point out that, like most of the false teaching of the present day, it contains a germ of truth which lends plausibility to the error.

The germ of truth contained in this explanation is that, as has already been observed, the term “Servant of the Lord” is indeed applied to Israel in the book of Isaiah. Thus, we read, “But you, Israel, are My servant, Jacob whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, My friend.” (Isaiah 41:8) Again, “You are My witnesses, says the LORD, and My servant whom I have chosen; that you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He.” (Isaiah 43:10). “Yet now hear, O Jacob My servant, and Israel whom I have chosen,” etc. (Isaiah 44:1)

This is Israel’s high calling, but alas! in this, as in the other great relationships to God, to which he was called, namely that of a son to his father, and of a wife to her husband, Israel has failed and proved himself unfaithful.

Israel’s failure to apprehend that for which he was apprehended to God, and his unfaithfulness as the Lord’s Servant, is forcibly depicted in many passages in these very chapters of Isaiah. *“Hear you deaf,”* God complains in the 42nd chapter, *“and look, you blind, that you may see. Who is blind, but My servant? Or deaf, as My messenger that I send? Who is blind as he that was called to be perfect (or, ‘as he that is at peace’), and blind as the LORD’s servant? Seeing many things, but they observe not; his ears are open, but he hears not.”* (Isaiah 42:18-20).

But Israel’s sins and disobedience cannot frustrate the purpose of God. The ideal to which the nation could not rise is gloriously realized in him who is both the Head and Heart of Israel. In the words of Von Orelli, “The idea, Servant of the LORD, which was united from the first in God’s purpose with the people of Israel, outgrew this national limit, even as the idea, “Son of God”, which was likewise at first attributed to the people, also became a separate Person and was definitely assigned to the Messiah--i.e., the Lord’s Anointed” (as, for instance, in Psalm 2). It is true that both these designations (“Servant” and “Son”) remain as much of the *character indelebilis* impressed by God’s grace on this nation, and in and through their Messiah, and in union with him, will yet become true of their actual condition and experience; hence, whenever this grace speaks, and restored and converted Israel in the future is prophetically contemplated, the nation still wears these names of honor, as, for instance, in the passages from chapters 41, 43, and 44, quoted above. “But the more the nation as a whole shows itself incapable of rising to the high calling implied in it, and the less the Lord is willing to renounce the realizing of this high idea, the more plainly the term ‘Servant of the LORD’ detaches itself from the national multitude and becomes a personally conceived ideal, which acquires such independence that the nation itself becomes the object of the Servant’s redeeming work.” (In chapter 49 especially we see this one individual who is out of the nation, and yet towering high above it, invested with the name and the mission to which the whole people was called in the first instance:

*Listen, O isle, to me: and hearken, you peoples, from far; the LORD has called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother has he made mention of my name.*

*And he has made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand has he hid me, and he has made me a polished shaft; in his quiver has he kept me close.*

*And he said to me, You are My servant, Israel, in whom I will be glorified.*

*But I said, I have labored in vain, I have spent my strength for nothing, and for vanity; yet surely my judgment is with the LORD, and my recompense with my God.*

*And now, says the LORD that formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob again to him, and that Israel be gathered to him (for I am honorable in the eyes of the LORD, and my God is become my strength)*

*Yes, he said, It is too light a thing that you should be My servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will give you for a light to the gentiles, and that you may be My salvation to the ends of the earth.”*

(Isaiah 49:1-6)

That it is not of the nation of Israel that this prophecy speaks is clear, and manifest to every unbiased mind, since the one who is here thus dramatically introduced as proclaiming his own call and endowment for his office, and whom the LORD addresses, is the one who is sent as *the Redeemer of Israel*, namely, “to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel,” i.e., not only to their land, but to *their God*.

Here God says to him, “You are My servant, O Israel”, (or, “You are Israel”). He is invested with the name of Israel because he, “as Israel’s inmost center, as Israel’s highest head,” realizes the idea and carries out the mission to which the nation had originally been called, to the task of carrying out God’s saving purpose in relation to the world.

Here, too, as in chapter 43:1-0, where the ideal personal Servant of the LORD is contrasted with the nation whose failure and unfaithfulness is depicted in verses 18-25 of the same chapter, his mission extends, not only to Israel, whom he is to raise up and restore, and to whom he is to be, not only the mediator, but the very embodiment of the “covenant” which shall be everlastingly established between them and their God, but he is to be the light also of the gentiles, and God’s salvation to the very ends of the earth.

And as in the chapters 42 and 49, so also in Isaiah 53 itself, “where the figure of the Servant of the LORD unfolds its entire fullness of meaning”. He is clearly and definitely distinguished from the nation. Thus, for instance, we read in the 8th verse, “*For the*

*transgressions of my people was he stricken.*" The speaker is either the Lord, or the prophet, but in either case "my people" can apply only to Israel, and if the servant is stricken for Israel he cannot be Israel. But, apart from the fact that in chapters 42:1-9, 49:1-7, 50:4-11, 53 (which begins with 52:13), and 61, this ideal servant stands out clearly distinguished from the nation, there are other conclusive reasons by the 53rd chapter in particular cannot apply to Israel, for (1), the subject of the chapter is an absolutely innocent sufferer who suffers for the guilt of others--one who has himself "done no violence, nor can deceit be found in his mouth", but is "stricken", "smitten", and "afflicted of God" for others. (2), He is a *voluntary* sufferer--one who willingly "pours out his soul unto death". (3) He is an *unresisting* sufferer--one who is "led as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, he opens not his mouth." (4) His suffering ends in *death*.

Now, none of these points is found in the Jewish nation. Israel has been suffering, and is suffering as no other nation has suffered. Truly, "under the whole heaven", to use the words of Daniel, "has not been done as has been done upon Jerusalem", and upon her people during the many centuries of their dispersion. I have elsewhere (in *The Shepherd of Israel and His Scattered Flock*) given a condensed summary of the terrible story of Israel's sufferings since the destruction of the Second Temple, and of the guilt incurred by the nations by their cruel conduct towards them, but Israel is not an innocent sufferer. Israel's sorrows are the consequences of his sins.

Modern rabbis, in spite of the definite statement in the chapter itself, that it was "for the transgression of my people" that the righteous servant was stricken, put verses 1-9 into the mouth of the gentile nations, and make them say, that "he (Israel) suffer the sickness and suffering which we gentiles deserved"; but this is only part of the self-deception which characterizes the modern teachers and leaders of the Synagogue, and which has led them to perverse views of their own scriptures and facts of history. It is in this same spirit of self-satisfaction which regards the dispersion among the nations as a blessing, and denies the necessity of atonement and of a mediator between God and man.

But whether we will heed it or not, the solemn fact remains that Israel's dispersion among the nations, and their many sufferings during the long period of their wanderings from the presence of God, are the direct consequences of their apostasy and sin. "*Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the LORD? He against whom we have sinned, and in whose ways they would not walk, neither were they obedient unto His law.*" (Isaiah 43:23-25)

To evade the force of this truth, that the nation could not be the innocent sufferer set forth in the personal portraiture of the servant of the Lord, some writers have interpreted this prophecy of the godly remnant in the nation. But, though relatively the pious in the nation may be spoken of as righteous men when compared with the godless majority, they are not absolutely righteous and, far from being able to render a vicarious satisfaction for others, they cannot even stand themselves before God on the ground of their own righteousness.

It is indeed the godly remnant in the nation which is described in the second part of Isaiah as “a contrite and humble spirit”, who are themselves waiting for the salvation of God. It is they--the “righteous ones”--who confess for themselves and the entire nation that “we are *all* become as one that is unclean, *and all our righteousnesses are as a polluted garment; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away.*”

It is perfectly true, therefore, that Isaiah speaks of the entire nation as needing enlightening, redeeming, and reconciling to God, and the godly remnant of it, far from being represented in these chapters as rendering satisfaction to others by their sufferings, appears on the contrary a fainting flock which the servant of the Lord is to release, and refresh, and for whose justification he is to suffer and die.

And as Israel is not an innocent sufferer, so neither does he suffer *voluntarily*. The Jews did not go voluntarily into captivity, as Hegnstenberg observes, but were dragged into it by force; and so through all the centuries they did not voluntarily suffer the many oppressions and wrongs which they had to endure, but were forced to submit to them by the gentile nations.

Still less can it be asserted that Israel was an *unresisting* sufferer. As long as Israel had the power, he did resist, bitterly and bloodily. The history of the Jewish captivity for the first seven centuries is a history of insurrections, fierce and violent, against the nations. How desperate was the resistance to the Roman power which brought on the destruction of the Temple by Titus. In A.D. 115, the Jews of Cyrene rebelled and slew 220,000 Libyans; in A.D. 132, Bar Kochba appeared in the guise of the Messiah at the head of an army; a bloody war was the consequence, and it was only by force that this insurrection was put down. In A.D. 415, the Jews of Alexandria revolted. In A.D. 522, the Jews of Persia revolted under the conduct of R. Mid, or Miz, at their head, and declared war against the king of Persia. In A.D. 535, the Jews in Caesarea rebelled. In A.D. 602, the Jews at Antioch. In A.D. 613, they joined the armies of Chrosoes, when he made himself master of Jerusalem, and put thousands to death. As is said in the prayers in the Service for the Festival of the Dedication, “*When You shall have prepared a slaughter of the blaspheming foe, I will complete with song and psalm the dedication of Your altar*”; and “*Lay bare Your holy arm. . . Take vengeance for the blood of Your servants from the wicked nation.*”

And neither have the sufferings of the nation ended in *death*, as is the lot of the servant of the Lord in Isaiah 53. No; Israel, in spite of all the centuries of persecution and oppressions, still lives and can say as of yore, “*Many a time they have afflicted me from my youth, yet they have not prevailed against me.*”

I may add to all that has been said that it is clear and manifest to all unprejudiced minds that the chapter cannot be applied to a collective body, but must refer to an individual person. No similar example can be found of a personification carried through an entire section, without the slightest hint that it is not a single individual who is spoken of. In verse three the subject is called “*ish*” (“a man”). If we had an allegory before us, distinct hints as to the interpretation would certainly not be wanting. It is, in other words, quite

different in those passages where the prophet designates Israel by the name of the servant of the Lord. In them, all uncertainty is prevented by the addition of the names “Jacob” and “Israel”, and in them, moreover, the prophet uses the plural to indicate that the servant here is an ideal personification, a collective.

No, this prophecy (Isaiah 53) speaks of an individual, and there is only one person in the world whom it fits. There is the most perfect correspondence between the two. In Jesus of Nazareth alone, but in him perfectly, has this prophecy found fulfillment. The meekness, the pathos of undeserved suffering, the atoning, the final triumph, will suit no other. That there is a marked resemblance between the picture of the servant of the Lord in this chapter and the historic account of Jesus of Nazareth is acknowledged by many Jews.

Thus, Rabbi Abraham Farisol (early 16th century, author of *Iggereth Orechoth Olam*), who himself mis-interprets the prophecy of Israel, says, “In this chapter there seem to be considerable resemblances and allusions to the work of the Christian Messiah and to the events which are asserted to have happened to him--so that no other prophecy can be found, the gist and subject of which can be so immediately applied to him.” And as a matter of fact this glorious prophecy of the sufferings of the Messiah and the glory which should follow has been used of God more than any scripture in opening the eyes of Jews to recognize in Jesus Israel’s Redeemer-King.

Is this, perhaps, the chief reason why this chapter is omitted from the public readings in the synagogue? We know, of course, that whereas the whole Torah is read through on the Sabbaths in the course of the year, only selections from the Prophets are appointed for the *Haftarahs*, but it is none the less remarkable that in these “selections” the portion for one Sabbath should end with the 12th verse of the 52nd chapter, and the one for the following should begin with the 54th chapter, and that the whole of this sublime section about the suffering servant, through the knowledge of whom the many are made righteous, is passed over.

It certainly gives ground for the statement that the 53rd chapter of Isaiah is “the bad conscience of the synagogue”, which it dare not face because it reminds them too much of him whom the nation--alas!--still despises and rejects, and considers “smitten of God and afflicted”. But this very feeling and attitude on the part of the Jewish nation is one great proof that Jesus is the Messiah, and that it is to him that this prophecy refers.

***Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. Acts 8:35***

***Behold My servant will act wisely. He will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.***  
***(Isaiah 52:13)***

The prophecy begins with the word “*hinneh*” (“behold”).

This is the little word by which in scripture God seeks to call the attention of men to matters which are of the utmost importance for them to know.

We may note in passing that several different times is the Messiah introduced in the Old Testament by this word, “behold”. For example, in Zech. 6:12 we read, “Behold the man whose name is the Branch”; and in chapter 9:9 of the same prophecy, the announcement is, “Behold, your King comes to you”; while the proclamation to the cities of Judah in the latter part of Isaiah is, “Behold your God”. “Behold My servant, whom I uphold; Mine elect, in whom My soul delights”—one reason being, perhaps, because in this respect this ideal servant stands out in great contrast, not only to Israel nationally, who was called to be God’s servant, but to all other men.

The servant of the Lord, we read, “shall deal wisely”. The verb, *his’kil*, primarily means “to act wisely”, but the verb is also used sometimes as a synonym for “prosperously”. In Jeremiah 23:5, this verb is used directly of the Messiah: “*Behold, the days come, says the LORD, that I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper (his’kil), and shall execute judgement and justice in the land.*”

“He shall be exalted and extolled (“lifted up”), and be very high.” There is an ancient Rabbinic Midrash on this sentence, which says, “He shall be exalted above Abraham, he shall be lifted up above Moses, and be higher than the ministering angels.” I sometimes think that when the inspired writer of the letter to the Hebrews proceeded to show how the Messiah was greater, and higher, and “better” than the angels, than Moses, than Joshua, than Aaron and the whole Aaronic priesthood and ritual, that he must have had in mind the thought expressed in the Midrash.

The climax in the height of his exaltation is expressed by the word “*meod*”, literally, “very much”, with which the sentence ends. “*He shall be exalted and lifted up and be high very much, exceedingly.*”

***Just as there were many who were appalled at him, his appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man, and his form marred beyond human likeness.***

The verb “shamem”, which is rendered “astonished”, or “appalled”, means to be desolate or waste; to be thrown by anything into a desolate or bereaved condition; to be startled, confused, as it were petrified by paralyzing astonishment. (See its use in Lev. 26:32; Ezek. 26:16). Even to such an extent will many be astonished at him because of the greatness of his suffering, which will cause his blessed countenance to be so “marred” that it shall appear, as it were, “disfigurement” itself, without any trace of the grace and beauty which belong to the human race and figure.

*so he will sprinkle many nations.*

But as his humiliation and sufferings were great, so also shall the blessed fruit and consequences of them be. The word “*nazah*” occurs in very many passages in the Old Testament, and is used for the sprinkling with the blood of atonement and the water of purification. So shall “many nations” be sprinkled.

*Kings will shut their mouths because of him. For what they were not told, they will see, and what they have not heard, they will understand.*

These words, as well as the words of the seventh verse of Isaiah 49:7, summarize in a few words the sufferings of the Messiah and the glory which should follow--”Kings shall see and arise, princes and they shall worship, because of the LORD that is faithful, the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you”--they shall see that the one whom man humbled God has exalted; that he who was despised of man, and abhorred of the nation, is, after all, he whom the Holy One of Israel has chosen; that in spite of their vain counsels, and their individual and united efforts, his kingdom progresses, and is destined to triumph--and they shall “arise” from their thrones in token of reverence, and shall signify their submission and allegiance by prostrating themselves before him in worship.

In a measure this has already been fulfilled. Because “He has humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, therefore also God has highly exalted him, and given to him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

***Who has believed our report, and the arm of the LORD over (or upon) whom has it been revealed? (Isaiah 53:1)***

The arm of the LORD is the emblem of divine power. In the 51st chapter we have the remnant of Israel appealing to it: “*Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the LORD, as in the days of old, the generations of ancient times.*” And in the 52nd chapter we read, “*The LORD has made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.*”

From the context we see that it is the manifestation of this power of God in and through the messiah that is here spoken of. “In the Servant of the LORD”, an old writer truly observes, “the redeeming arm of the LORD manifests itself; so to say, personifies itself. The Messiah himself is, as it were, the outstretched arm of the LORD,” and the message concerning him, “the power of God unto salvation for all who believe.” But who has believed this message? And whose eyes were opened to behold in this despised and humiliated Servant the very embodiment of the power of God and the wisdom of God? The answer implied in the first question is that *very few, if any*, did believe it; and to the second question, that only such upon whom an operation of divine power has been performed, only those “over” or “upon” whom the arm of the LORD has been *revealed*, could believe it--so marvelous, so utterly incredible to mere human thought and imagination is the wonderful story which, in all its saving power and glory, is now made known to us.

***For (or “And”) he grew up before Him as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground.***

The LORD’s Servant, as has been well said by another, “does not burst upon the world all at once in sudden splendor of daring or achievement, dazzling all eyes; but he conforms to God’s slow, silent law of growth.

The word *yoneq*, translated “tender plant”, literally means “suckling”, but is used here figuratively for the tender twig upon a tree or trunk, or stalk (as also in Ezekiel 17:22). Taken in connection with chapter 11:1, we see that it springs up out of the decayed stump of Jesse, “after the proud cedar of the Davidic monarchy had been felled”. But the second verse of Isaiah 53 presents not only a parallel but also a contrast to chapter 11. There, the figure is of a strong, vigorous shoot coming out of the decayed house of David; here, it is the frail “tender twig” or sapling, struggling out of the dry ground. Here, men are represented as turning away in disappointment, if not in disgust, from this “root” springing up out of such unpromising surroundings; there, we read in the tenth verse,

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the root of Jesse, which stands for an ensign of the people, unto him shall the nations seek, and his resting place shall be glorious.”

The difference is explained by the fact that whereas in chapter 53 the messiah’s sufferings and rejections are depicted, it is especially his millennial glory and reign, the beneficent effects of which extend even to the animal creation, which are described in chapter 11.

The expression, “out of dry ground”, is intended to depict “the miserable character of the external circumstances in the midst of which the birth and growth of the servant would take place.” (Delitzsch). [In addition, a root emerging out of *dry* ground is something not to be expected in the ordinary course of events; nor is a child born from a *virgin*, or a *seed* from a woman (Gen. 3:15). Thus, there is a constant refrain in scripture, marking a special intervention of God in the affairs of men when He sends this Redeemer.]

***He had no form and comeliness that we should look on him, and no beauty that we should desire him.***

It is not inconsistent with the text to suppose that “there may have been in his aspect, power, grace, majesty, blended with sorrow and meekness. The heart of the thing is, that men did not see the beauty that was there. He did not answer to their ideal; he wanted the qualities which they admired; his greatness was not shaped to their thoughts. They would have welcomed a plumed warrior, riding forth to battle against the oppressor. They have no admiration for one who comes, meek and lowly, to make his soul an offering for sin, and to be God’s salvation to the ends of the earth. It was not sin that troubled them; so how should a savior from sin delight them?”

***He was despised and rejected (or “forsaken”) of men ,***

The first description in this line--*nibhzeh*--“despised”--takes our thoughts back once more to what has already been said of the LORD’s Servant in the seventh verse of the 49th chapter: “*Thus says the LORD, the Redeemer of Israel, and His Holy One, to Him whom man despises, to Him whom the nation abhors.*”

No person in the history of Israel has produced such deep-seated abhorrence as the messiah who came only to bless them, and who even on the cross prayed, “*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*” And all through the centuries no name has provoked such intense abhorrence among his own people as the name of Jesus.

But let it not be forgotten that if the messiah has been so “abhorred of the nation”, there has always been a remnant in the nation to whom he has been “the fairest of ten thousand”, and who, for the love of him, counted not even their lives dear to them. It was a man of Israel and a Pharisee who wrote, *“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Messiah, yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Messiah Yeshua my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I might win Messiah.”*

The phrase “*chadal ishim*”--“rejected (or “forsaken”) of men”--has been variously rendered. But it seems to me that Franz Delitzsch has caught the true force of the Hebrew idiom. “the predicate *chadal ishim* is misunderstood by nearly all the commentators, inasmuch as they take *ishim*, the word for “men”, as synonymous with *b’ne Adam* (children of men), whereas it is rather used, in the sense of *b’ne ish* (men of high rank, lords) as distinguished from *b’ne Adam* (ordinary men, or common people). Hence, he was “wanting in men”, i.e., having no respectable men with him to support him with their authority. . . finding no sympathy from men of rank The chief men of his nation who towered above the multitude, the great men of this world, withdrew their hands from him.

***a man of sorrows (or “a man of pains”) and acquainted with grief .***

He was *ish-makh’obhoth vidua choli*--“a man of sorrows” (or “of pains”, the Hebrew idiom denoting “sorrow of heart in all its forms”), a man whose chief distinction was that “his life was one of constant, painful endurance”--and “acquainted” (or, “well acquainted”) with grief (or “sickness”), the meaning of which, as Delitzsch explains, is not that he had by nature a sickly body, but that “the wrath instigated by sin, and the zeal of self-sacrifice (Psalm 69:9) burnt like the fire of a fever in his soul and body.” The point emphasized is that sorrow and grief were the very characteristics of the Servant of the LORD, “the tokens by which we know him.” Grief and sorrow were present with him as his close companions through life. And the chief causes of these sorrows were not his personal ills, but the state of mankind.

***Like one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised***

The words *kh’master panim mimmennu*--“like one from whom men hide their faces”-- suggests one from whom men turn away their face or hide it with their clothing; or, one whom, instead of meeting with joy, turn away--as one turns away to avoid meeting the eyes of a person he dislikes, or as one shrinks from an object of loathing.

***and we esteemed him not.***

And a second phrase is added, to indicate the depth of the contempt in which he was held. Instead of counting him dear and worthy, we formed a very low estimate of him, or rather, we did not esteem him at all.

This, dear reader, will be Israel's broken-hearted confession on the day when the Spirit of grace is poured upon them, and their eyes are opened at last to their Messiah. But, as we read the words, "*He was despised, as we esteemed him not*", may we not pause for a moment to ask ourselves if this is not true also in professing Christendom today? "How often," writes another Hebrew Christian brother, "do we meet Christians expanding upon the wickedness of the *Jews* in crucifying the Messiah; implying, in fact, that if he had appeared amongst *them*, he would have met with a more favorable reception. . . You may be sure, however, that if Jesus humbled himself once more, and appeared visibly in modern Christendom, he would be treated in the same way as he was by Israel--yes, crucified afresh, and put to open shame." He would once again be subjected to the intolerance of the dogmatic; he would once more be confronted with the sneers of the reprobate, and the high-born.

***Verily they were our griefs (or “sicknesses”) which he bore, and our sorrows (or “pains”) with which he burdened himself, but we regarded him as one stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.***

No plainer or stronger words could be used to express the thought of vicarious suffering than those employed in the original of this verse.

The verb *nasa*, "to bear", is continually used in Leviticus of the expiation offered by the appointed sacrifices, as, for instance, in Leviticus 16:22, "*The goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities into a solitary land.*" "When construed with the accusative of the sin", as Delitzsch explains, "*nasa* signifies to take the debt of sin upon oneself, and carry it as one's own, i.e., to look at it and feel it as one's own (for example, Leviticus 5:1,17) or more frequently to bear the punishment occasioned by sin, to make expiation for it (as in Lev. 20:19,20; 24:15), and in any case in which the person bearing it is not himself the guilty person (*nasa* signifies) to bear sin in a mediatorial capacity for the purpose of making expiation for it. It is evident that both the verbs used in this verse, '*he has borne*', and '*he carried*', are to be understood in the sense of an expiatory bearing, and not merely of taking away, which we may see also from Ezek. 4:4-8, where '*seth ‘avon*' ('bearing iniquity') is represented by the prophet in a symbolical action. . . The meaning here is not only that the Servant of God entered into the fellowship of our sufferings, but that he took upon himself the suffering which we had to bear, and deserved to bear, and therefore not only took them away, but bore them in his own person, that he might deliver us from them.

Every one of the expressions of the second part of the verse, “*but we regarded him as stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted*”, is intended to describe one suffering terrible punishment for sin.

The error here confessed is not so much in their having considered these sufferings as punishment, but in having considered them as punishment for the sins which the Servant himself, and not they themselves, had committed. This alas, is what Israel has thought for all these centuries, and still thinks--thus Jesus, the only sinless man who ever trod this earth, is called the *Poshe*--the transgressor--who, according to even such illustrious figures as Maimonides, well deserved the violent death which he suffered (see especially *Iggereth Teman*, for example); while in the Talmud Jesus is consigned to hell along with Titus and Balaam, and condemned to the severest punishment.

We can well imagine, therefore, the deep contrition and *heartbrokenness* of repentant Israel when their eyes are at last opened by the Spirit of God to the true character of this holy sufferer, and when they perceive that it was for them and in their stead that he endured it all. “In that day”, of weeping and mourning over him whom they have pierced, we can hear, as it were, the sobs which will accompany this confession: “*Yet we regarded him as plagued, smitten of God, and afflicted!*”

***But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.***

He was wounded, literally, “he was pierced through” (as the verb *chalal* primarily means) or, “wounded to death”--an expression which reminds us of Zechariah 12:10, “*They shall look on me whom they have pierced,*” though the verb for piercing used there is not exactly the same as here. And “*he was bruised*”, literally “*crushed*” (*m’duka*) by the heavy burden of our sin which he took upon himself.

The phrase *musar sh’lomenu*--the “chastisement (or punishment) of our peace”--denotes the “chastisement which leads to our peace”, or, “the punishment by which our well-being and peace are secured”; and this was “*upon him*”. The same thought is expressed in the last clause of this verse, “*by his stripes (ubhachabburatho*, literally, *his wounds*) “we were healed”, or, “*healing was brought to us*”. In Isaiah 1:6 the prophet uses the same expression, *chabburah*, to describe the condition of Israel marred by sin; now, the stripe-wounds of a sinless one will remove the stripe-wounds of Israel.

***All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one into his own way, and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.***

We all, without exception, are involved in this sin and guilt of having strayed from the Great Shepherd. We have all gone in the paths which we chose. We are like sheep which are scattered. But now the LORD has collected all our guilts together, and laid them upon him.

The word ‘*hiph’gia*, from *paga*’, signifies to cause something to strike, or to fall upon a person. The rendering in English (“laid upon him”) is too weak and suggests the idea of a mild and inoffensive gesture, whereas that conveyed by the Hebrew word is necessarily a violent action, namely, that of “causing to strike or to fall”. The verb is used in such a passage as II Samuel 1:15, “Go near and *fall upon him*; and he smote him that died.” In other passages our iniquity is spoken of as resting upon the Holy One, and he bears it. Here it is spoken of as coming upon him like a destroying foe, and overwhelming him with the wrath that it brought with it.

***He was oppressed, and he was afflicted; and he opened not his mouth.***

A possible paraphrase of these words is, “*He was rigorously demanded to pay the debt, and he submitted himself, and did not open his mouth.*” *Niggas*, usually translated as “*he was oppressed*”, can also mean “to exact from”, and is sometimes applied to the rigorous exaction of debts. Another possible meaning of the word *niggas* is, “he was treated tyrannically”. And yet, he submitted himself voluntarily.

***As a sheep that is led to the slaughter, as a lamb before its shearers is dumb, and opened not his mouth.***

The whole object of this passage is to mark the meek and quite acceptance by our Redeemer in his prolonged suffering. In sublime silence he endures to the uttermost, sustained by the conviction, that the LORD wills it; he rests in the LORD. He came to do what only Love was equal to--and he shrank from no suffering; raised not his arm, opened not his mouth, in his own defense, wearied not, fainted not, but was dumb with silence. And further, we see here no only his love, but his acquiescence in the justice of God, in the punishment of sin, the whole burden of which he bore.

***He was taken away from prison and from judgment.***

The principal emphasis here is that it was *out of the midst* of suffering that he was carried off. The idea that is most prominent in the word *luqqach* (“taken away”) is that of being snatched or hurried away. The word *otser* (“prison”) primarily means a violent constraint. Here, as in Psalm 107:39, it signifies a persecuting treatment which restrains by force, such as that of prison, or bonds. The word *mishpat* (“judgment”) refers to the judicial proceedings; and out of hostile oppression and judicial persecution he was carried away.

### ***And who shall declare his generation?***

There is a great variety of opinions as to how these words should be understood; and it would be useless to try and speak with dogmatism. Yet I may venture to suggest the explanation which seems to me the most probable.

In the Hebrew, *dor* (“generation”) signifies “an age”, or “the men living in a particular age”, or, a group who are all connected together by some similar disposition. *Soche’ach* (“declare”) can mean, “a thoughtful consideration, or a “meditation”; but it can also mean “to speak, “to complain”, “to lament”, and is used in at least one or two places to describe an exercise very much akin to *prayer*. (As, for instance, in Psalm 55:17, “Evening, morning, and at noonday *will I pray*, and cry aloud. . . .”; and also in the inscription of Psalm 102: a prayer of the afflicted when he is overwhelmed and pours out his *complaint* (*sicho*) before the LORD.) Thus, this passage may be understood as saying, “*As for his generation--who (among them) pours out a complaint?*” (i.e., at his treatment); or “*who among them utters a prayer (on his behalf)?*”

In addition, as Bishop Lowth has pointed out, these words may contain a prophetic allusion to the custom which then prevailed, to call upon all those who had anything to say in favor of an accused, to come forward and “declare” it.

The following striking passage from the Talmud (Sanhedrin 43a) may be cited by way of illustration. “There is a tradition: On the eve of the Passover they hung Jesus the Nazarene. And the herald went forth before him forty days saying, ‘Jesus the Nazarene goes forth to be stoned, because he has practiced sorcery and led Israel astray. Anyone who knows anything in his favor, let him come and declare concerning him.’ And they found nothing in his favor; and they hung him on the eve of the Passover. . . .” (The reference to ‘stoning’ most likely derives from the fact that this would have been the punishment according to Jewish law; but it was the Roman, not the Jewish, method of execution which was imposed.)

This legend about Jesus may recall that in that hasty, mock trial before the Sanhedrin, which was in flagrant violation of the regulations which were supposed to govern that body’s procedures, there were none found who would, or who *dared*, to appear in his favor. When the Messiah of God stood on trial before a corrupt world, no one came

forward with a justifying plea; the sword awoke to smite the Shepherd, and the sheep were all scattered, even his own disciples, who forsook him and fled.

***For he was cut off from the land of the living.***

It is by wicked and violent hands that this righteous Servant of the LORD dies--"cut off", as it were, in the midst of his days. The prophet Daniel gives expression to the same theme (chapter 9:26), when he says that ". . .*the Messiah (Anointed One) will be cut off and have nothing*", or, rendered another way, ". . .*the Messiah (Anointed One) will be cut off, but not for himself* . . ."; (though Daniel uses a different verb for "cut off").

***For the transgression of my people the stroke fell upon him.***

The term *ami*, ("my people"), can only apply to Israel, and is one of the many internal marks which make it impossible to interpret the prophecy of Israel as a nation, for the servant *suffers* and *dies for* the people, and therefore cannot be the *same* as the people themselves.

The expression *lamo* ("upon him"), has a plural suffix, and might also be translated "upon them". But Kimchi says in his grammar, that this suffix "is used both of *many*, and of *one*". Examples of this can be found in Job 20:23; 22:2, and even in Isaiah 44:15 ("he makes a graven image, and falls down to it"). But even if the word here were to be a plural, the translation would merely be, "*He was cut off from the land of the living. For the transgression of my people--the stroke that should have fallen on them*", or, "*to whom the stroke was due*"; and thus the sense is in no way changed.

***And they made (or "appointed") his grave with the wicked, and with a rich man in his death, because he had done no violence, neither was deceit in his mouth.***

“The predictions concerning Jesus in this chapter,” says Moses Margoliouth, “are so numerous and minute that they could not possibly have been dictated by any but by Him to whom all things are naked and open, and who works all things according to the counsel of his own will. The most insignificant details are set forth with as much accuracy as those which are most important. What could be more unlikely than that the Messiah should be crucified, when crucifixion was not a Jewish but a Roman punishment? And yet David (Psalm 22) predicted that such would be the case, and did so centuries before Rome’s founding. And this fulfillment was brought about by the Jewish leaders themselves *contrary to their own law and tradition*. The law expressly forbade them to choose a heathen for their king, or to deliver an Israelite to a heathen magistrate. But in *this* case--that the word of God should come to pass--they regard neither their own law nor their tradition, but deliver Jesus to the judgment of the Roman governor and call upon him to pronounce sentence. And when Pilate said, “Shall I crucify your king?”, they replied, “We have no king but Caesar.”

And after Jesus had been crucified according to Roman law, and put to death with two criminals, what should be more likely than that he should be treated afterwards as they were, and buried in a common grave? But no; for though “they appointed his grave with the wicked”, he was (instead) “with a rich man in his death”. The word “and” here may also have the meaning “but”; and so the sense may be, that while they wished to further dishonor him by burying him with the wicked, “but” (instead) he was with the rich in his death”.

The word “death” here is a plural, and so some have argued that it should be translated, “deaths”. But that is to ignore the Hebrew use of plural forms to describe conditions or periods of life, such as *chayim* for “life”, (but literally, “lives”); and similarly the words used for “age”, “youth”, “maidenhood”, “bridehood” (Jer. 2:2), “embalming” (Gen. 50:3), “blindness”, etc. There is no reason why “deaths” here should not mean “the state of death”, as “*chayim*” means the “state of life”. And this agrees better with the use of “*b*”, that is, “in”, or “at”, his death. Similarly, in Ezekiel 28:10 this plural form of “deaths” is used to describe the (singular) death of the king of Tyre.

And the reason assigned for his honorable burial--with the rich, instead of the wicked--is that “*he had done no violence, neither was deceit in his mouth.*” It was a death of atonement that he died; but immediately after those sufferings were ended and that death accomplished, *his humiliation was ended*, and no further indignity to his person was to be permitted. And so, already in his burial, he was “separated from sinners”, and was laid in the tomb of the “rich man of Arimathea, wherein never man before was laid”.

***Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise (or “to crush”) him; he has put him to grief.***

This is the confession of the penitents whose eyes are now opened to see the true meaning of it all. It has pleased the LORD to make the sins of men subservient to his pleasure, and to accomplish his predetermined counsel. Not only did the LORD bruise him, but it was the “good pleasure of his will” to do so. He who has no pleasure in the death of the wicked was pleased to put His righteous Servant to grief--not, of course, because the death-agony was a pleasure to look upon, but as a means to the fulfillment of a great purpose.

[And it should be noted that with the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls, we can see that this verse, in the Great Isaiah Scroll found there, reads differently: “Yet the LORD wanted him crushed, and he *pierced him* (intently, i.e., to death)”. Perhaps somehow through the interval of a thousand years from the time of the writing of this scroll, to the finalization of our present-day text, around 900 A.D., the wording came to be somehow changed?--ed.]

### ***If (or “when”) his soul shall make an offering for sin***

The word *tasim* (“shall make”) can be read either “*When You* (that is, God) *shall make his soul an offering for sin*”; or “*When his soul shall make an offering...*” The latter is more likely, since nowhere else is God addressed directly in this chapter; but in either case the Servant of the LORD gives his life as an offering for the sins of others. To become an *asham*, a “sin offering”, plainly implies *death* (see Lev. 6), and since, as is also plainly indicated, he was to *prolong his days*, and to some extent *on condition* of becoming a sin offering, it plainly speaks then of his life after death, and implies that the Messiah must rise from the dead and then live.

### ***He shall see his seed***

Some have wished to say here that the word *zera* (“seed”) here cannot refer to Jesus, who had no children. But in fact it can be used also (as it is used, both in scripture and in the later post-Biblical rabbinical writings) in a figurative sense. Genesis 3:15 speaks of the “seed” of the serpent, which surely does not mean literal descendants of the serpent. Isaiah 1:4 describes the nation as “a people heavy with iniquity, *a seed of evildoers*, sons who corrupt”. In Psalm 22:30 (31), which is a parallel prophecy about the messiah, it says “*A seed shall serve him*”, and even Ibn Ezra agrees that the word is used here, not in the sense of natural issue, but of disciples or followers. Thus the “seed” of the Messiah are his spiritual offspring, the new family which he has come to found, the “bringing of many sons unto glory” (Heb. 2:10).

***He shall prolong his days.***

How wonderful, how seemingly paradoxical! He “pours out his soul unto death”, as a trespass offering; he is “cut off from the land of the living”; is dead and buried, and yet he shall live and have continuance of days!

How is it possible? The answer to this question is that the Messiah was not only to die for our sins, but must rise again from the dead “according to the scriptures”. This prediction that the Messiah shall “prolong his days” after having died, is also in accord with what we read in other scriptures, as for instance Psalm 16:10, “*You will not leave my soul in Sheol; neither will you suffer Your Holy One to see corruption*”; and Psalm 21:4, “*He asked life of You, You gave it him, even length of days for ever and ever.*”

[And this last is even specifically applied in the Talmud to the messiah, son of Joseph, whom some strains of Jewish thought believed would live and then be slain, before a second messiah, the son of David, appeared. And then this second messiah would raise to life the first: “And when he sees that Messiah son of Joseph is slain, he (the second messiah, the son of David) will say to Him (God), “Lord of the Universe! I ask of you nothing except for life (for messiah, son of Joseph).” And God will answer, “Before you even said, ‘life’, David your ancestor prophesied about you, as it is written, “*He asked life of You, You gave it him.*” (Talmud, Sukkah 52a).].

***And the pleasure of the LORD will prosper in his hand,***

God’s will shall be fully accomplished by him; the mission on which he is sent he shall triumphantly carry through. But if we want to know more particularly what this “pleasure of the LORD” is, we shall find the answer in the commission entrusted to the perfect Servant of the LORD as set forth earlier in Isaiah. Let me quote only briefly from preceding chapters: “*Behold My Servant, whom I uphold; My chosen, in whom My soul delights. I have put My Spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment (or ‘justice’) to the nations. . . I the LORD have called you in righteousness, and will hold your right hand, and will keep you and give you for a covenant of the people, for a light of the gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.*” “*And now, says the LORD that formed me in the womb to be His Servant, to bring Jacob again to him, and that Israel be gathered unto Him (literally, ‘though Israel is not gathered’) . . yes, He says, It is too light a thing that*

*you should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel. I will also give you for a light to the gentiles, that you may be My salvation to the ends of the earth.” (Isaiah 43:1-7; 49:5,6)*

This, then, is the pleasure of the LORD which shall prosper in his hand, or be brought to triumphant accomplishment through him, namely, the ultimate regathering of Israel, the bringing back of Jacob, not only to his land but into new covenant relationship with God, of which he himself will be the bond; the illumination of the gentile world with the knowledge of the true and living God; the deliverance of men from spiritual blindness and the bondage of sin, and the bringing near of God’s salvation to all men throughout the whole world, even “unto the ends of the earth”.

***After the suffering of his soul, he shall see and be satisfied.***

After the sufferings of his soul (“*My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death*”), the messiah will see and be satisfied. [The Septuagint version reads here, “*he shall see light and be satisfied*”. The word “light” is not included in our present Hebrew text, though the sentence seems incomplete without some additional word as the object of the sentence. However, the Great Isaiah Scroll from the Dead Sea Scrolls does include the word “light”; and it is thought by some scholars that this word is another indication that, though “*cut off from the land of the living*”, the Servant will be restored to life, and “*see light*” again.]

***By his knowledge shall My Righteous Servant justify many,***

More literally, this reads, “*By his knowledge shall make righteous (or, “bring righteousness”) the Righteous One (My Servant) many.*” It cannot be stated for certain whether *beda’to* (“by his knowledge”) should mean, “according to his knowledge”, or, “by the knowledge of him”. Grammatically it might be translated either way, though many who see in the Servant the Redeemer of mankind seem inclined to favor the latter version.

The phrase *Tsaddiq ‘abhdi* (“My Righteous Servant”) is unusual. In the first place, though many in scripture are called God’s servant, this is the only place where reference is made to a “righteous” servant. Secondly, in normal Hebrew usage, the adjective “righteous” should be placed after the word, “servant”. However, here it is placed before the noun “servant”, and it also lacks an article (i.e., the word “the”). This lack of an article (such as the word “the”) indicates that the person spoken of is to be regarded as standing

in a sphere all his own--singular, isolated, pre-eminent. Thus, he is “the Righteous One”. The omission of the article indicates that the person spoken of held a position of righteousness that was singular and isolated, and that there was none like it. And the position of the adjective “righteous” before, and not after, the word it modifies (“servant”) is intended to emphasize even more the condition of this particular servant’s righteousness. Our minds are intended to focus on the righteousness of this Righteous One as the cause of the blessing spoken of in this verse. By virtue of having been the Righteous One, he becomes the cause, or the bringer of righteousness, to his believing people.

The *rabbim* (“many”) to whom he thus brings righteousness is the mass of mankind; and it is possible that this passage was in the mind of our messiah when, on the night of his betrayal, he took the cup and said to his disciples, “*This is my blood of the new covenant which is poured out for many*” (Matt. 26:28). And it may also have been in the mind of Paul when writing Romans 5:12-21. After setting forth the consequence of Adam’s transgression, he says, “*For if by the trespass of one man the many died, how much more did the grace of God, and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Messiah Yeshua, abound to many. . . For just as through one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the one shall the many be made righteous.*”

*and he will bear their iniquities.*

The fact that this phrase occurs in the future tense suggests, according to Delitzsch, that it “refers to something to be done by the Servant after the completion of the work to which he is called in this life, and denotes the continued operation of his ‘bearing’ or ‘carrying’ our sins through his own active mediation. His continued bearing of our trespasses upon himself is the constant presentation of his atonement which has been offered once for all. He is an eternal priest, who now lives to distribute the blessings that he has acquired.”

***Therefore I will divide to him a portion among the many (or, “great”), and with the strong shall he divide the spoil.***

This reward is bestowed upon him by the LORD’s own hand, and the prize is glorious beyond conception. “Ask of Me”, says Psalm 2, “and I will give you the heathen for your inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for your possession.”. And Psalm 72 says, “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea. . . Yes, all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him.” And truly he and no one else is worthy to be thus

exalted, as is emphasized in the recapitulation of his peerless merit in the last words of this wonderful prophecy:

***Because he poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. And he (himself) bore the sin of many.***

The phrase *tachath asher* (“because”) expresses more than just the English word “because”, and indicates an idea of compensation or reward. It has been translated by some “instead of”, or “in return for that”, i.e., the glorious portion or allotment which is divided to him by the LORD is “in return” for the great redemption which he has accomplished by his own life’s blood.

And although this was all in accord with the predeterminate counsel of God, he did it *voluntarily*, which accords again with his own words, “*Therefore does my Father love me, because I lay down my life. . .*” He was numbered with *poshim* (“transgressors”). To any believer it must be precious and interesting to remember that this clause formed one of the direct quotations made by Jesus just before his betrayal and crucifixion. “*This which is written,*” he said, “*must be fulfilled in me, ‘And he was reckoned among transgressors’*”. (Luke 22:37).

***And he made (or “makes”) intercession for the transgressors.***

Again, the verb *yaph’gia* (“made intercession”) is an indefinite future verb, which expresses a work begun, but not yet ended. Its most striking fulfilment, as Delitzsch observes, was the prayer of the crucified Savior, “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” But this work of intercession which he began on the cross he still continues at the right hand of God, where he is now seated, a Prince and a Savior, to give repentance unto Israel and the forgiveness of sins. He still bears his own nation of Israel on his heart, for he still pleads: “*For Zion’s sake I will not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem’s sake I will not rest, until her righteousness goes forth as brightness and her salvation as a lamp that burns*”—because it is not until then that the glory of the LORD shall fill this earth as the waters cover the sea. Will you not, therefore, for love of him share in this ministry of intercession for that people which are still beloved for their fathers’ sakes, and whose receiving again into God’s favor will be as life from the dead to the whole world?

*“I have set watchmen upon your walls, O Jerusalem; they shall never hold their peace day or night. You that are the LORD’s remembrancers, take no rest, and give Him no rest until He establishes and makes Jerusalem a praise in the earth.”*

*appendix*

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*the suffeirng Messiah of the Synagogue*

**THE TARGUM:**

The oldest testimony we possess that Isaiah 53 was by the Synagogue applied to the Messiah is found in the Targum on the Prophets ascribed to Jonathan ben Uziel (early first century A.D.) Although the Targum in the form we now possess it has been edited in Babylonia in the fourth century A.D.; yet there is no doubt that the material it contains is derived from sources more ancient, and that as a whole it is of Palestinian origin. The paraphrase--for it is not a literal translation--of the chapter begins with the words:

“Behold, my servant, the Messiah, shall prosper. He shall be high, and increase, and be exceedingly strong.”

This is almost a literal translation. But in what follows the Targum, although ascribing to the Messiah a central place in Israel’s redemption, contrives by a method singularly strange to make Israel the real sufferer, for her own sins--the idea of Israel suffering for the nations being entirely foreign to the Targum. In this way the Targum succeeds in purging the Messiah from any taint of personal suffering and humiliation. [However, since our present versions of the Targum date only from after the period when Christianity was already well-established as a world religion, and its doctrines were known, it may be wondered if some later editing may not have taken place.--ed]

The Targum pictures the Messiah as a man of an imposing, holy and awe-inspiring appearance (verse 2). He makes intercession for the sins of his people, and they are forgiven for his sake. (verses 4,6,11,12). His prayers are answered, and before opening his mouth he is accepted (verse 7). He is a great teacher. By his wisdom he holds the guilty free from guilt, makes the rebellious subject to the Law (verses 11,12); by his instruction peace increases upon his people, and on account of its devotion to his words it obtains forgiveness of sin (verse 5). From subjection to the nations, from chastisement

and punishment, he delivers the souls of his people (verses 8, 11), builds the Holy Place (verse 5), and wondrous things are done in Israel in his days (verse 8). He overthrows the kingdoms of the nations (verse 3), scatters many peoples (verse 52:15), the mighty of the peoples he delivers like sheep to the slaughter (verse 7), causes the dominion of the gentiles to pass away from the land of Israel, and transfers on them the sins Israel had committed (verse 8), Israel looking on the punishment of those that hated her, and is satisfied with the spoils of their kings (verse 11). But the Messiah is also judge of his own people. He delivers the wicked to Gehenna, and those who are rich in possessions into the death of utter destruction (verse 9).

With the advent of the Messiah is a glorious time dawns for Israel. The purified remnant looks on the kingdom of the Messiah, their sons and daughters multiply, they prolong their days, and those who perform the Law of the Lord prosper in His good pleasure (verse 10). The righteous will grow up before him like blooming shoots, and like a tree which sends forth its roots to streams of water they increase--a holy generation in the land that was in need of him (verse 2).

Thus the Targum succeeded in reading into this chapter the whole Jewish Messianic hope, in which there was no place for a suffering Messiah. The words, "because he delivered up his soul to death", in verse 12, do not mean that the Messiah actually died, but rather, that he for the sake of his people, like Moses of old, was ready to give his life.

But the Targum, in spite of the high esteem in which it was held, found no imitators. Its method was too drastic, and the violence done to the sacred text too apparent to be imitated. We find, therefore, in early Rabbinic literature not a few passages which speak of a suffering Messiah; but they all belong to the time after the Mishnah was created, i.e., after about 200 A.D.

## **THE TALMUD:**

1. In the Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 98a, we read, "The Messiah--what is his name? . . . The Rabbis say, The leprous one of the house of Rabbi is his name, as it is said, Surely he has borne our griefs. . . yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.' " The name, "The leprous one of the house of Rabbi", is very obscure. Dr. Pusey (in his *Introduction to The Fifty-Third Chapter of Isaiah According to the Jewish Interpreters*) has called attention to the better reading of this passage found in the *Pugio Fidei* by Raymundus Martini, where it reads, "The Rabbis say, The leprous one is his name; those of the house of Rabbi say, The sick one is his name," etc. In *Isaiah 53:4* the word "stricken" (*nagua*) is taken by the Rabbis as meaning stricken with leprosy, hence they give the name, "The leprous one". The house of Rabbi (i.e. Rabbi Judah the holy, the editor of the Mishnah) based the name, the sick one", on the words, "our griefs literally, our diseases", having in mind their teacher, Rabbi Judah, who had voluntarily taken upon

himself bodily sufferings for thirteen years for the sake of the whole people, for during this period no pregnant woman died, nor did any miscarriage take place. (Jerusalem Talmud, Kilayim 32b and Ketuboth 35a).

2. Babylonian Sanhedrin 93b : “It is written (in Isaiah 11:3), And his delight (*haricho*) shall be in the fear of the Lord. Rabbi Alexandri said, This indicates that He (God) will load him (i.e., the Messiah) with commandments and sufferings as with millstones (*rechayim*).” It is not said here for what purpose many sufferings will be laid on the Messiah, but the idea of a suffering Messiah is here expressed, although it has no connection with the scripture quoted.

3. Babylonian Sanhedrin 98a. Here we read, “Rabbi Joshua, the son of Rabbi Levi (third century A.D.), met Elijah standing at the door of the cave of Rabbi Shimon ben Yochai. . . He said to him, When shall the Messiah come? He answered, Go and ask him personally. --And where does he abide?--At the gates of Rome.--And what is his sign?--He abides among the poor who are stricken by disease. And all unbind, and bind up again, the wounds at the same time, but he undoes (i.e., the bandage) and rebinds each separately, saying, Perhaps I am wanted (i.e. will be summoned by God to perform my task), and I would not be detained. He went to meet him and said, Peace be to you, my master and teacher. He replied to him, Peace be to you, son of Levi. He said to him, When will you come, my Lord? Today, he replied. Then he returned to Elijah, who said to him, What has he said to you? He said to me, Son of Levi, peace be unto you. Elijah said to him, He has assured you and your father of the world to come. He said to him, But he deceived me in that he said, I come today, and he has not come. Elijah answered him, it was so meant--’Today, if you will hear my voice.’ “

To understand this legend one must remember that, according to the Rabbis, Messiah was born on the very day Jerusalem was destroyed, and is now living in obscurity. According to this passage his place is at the gate of Rome where he, through suffering, is waiting every moment to deliver his people.

### **THE MIDRASHIM :**

1. In Ruth Rabba 5,6 (on chapter 11,14), we read: “ ‘Come hither’--this refers to the King Messiah. Come hither’, draw near to the kingdom; ‘and eat of the bread’, that is, the bread of the kingdom; ‘and dip your morsel in the vinegar’, this refers to the sufferings, as it is said, ‘But he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities’.”

2. Midrash Tehillim on Ps. 2, and Midrash Samuel chapter 19 (with the readings of the Yalkut 11 620): “Rabbi Huna in the name of Rabbi Acha says: The sufferings are divided into three parts: one for David and the fathers, one for our own generation, and one for the King Messiah, and this is what is written, “He was wounded for our transgressions,” etc. And when the hour comes, the Holy One, blessed be He, says to them: I must create a new creation, as even as it is said, ‘This day I have begotten you’. This is the hour when he is made a new creation.” So many and great are the Messiah’s sufferings and afflictions that God must create for him a new body. It is not said in what way, perhaps by raising him from the dead. Psalm 2:7 is here used almost in the same way as it is used by the Apostle Paul in Acts 13:33.

3. Pesikta Rabbati, chapters 33-38. Nowhere in Rabbinic literature are the sufferings of the Messiah so graphically described and so expressly stated that he is suffering for the sins of his people as in this Midrash. Apart from this, we have here a vague conception of the pre-existence of the Messiah, for the transaction between God and the Messiah takes place at the beginning of Creation, when man was not yet created.

Chapter 36 is based on Isaiah 40:1,2. Psalm 36:10 is quoted, and the question is asked, What mean the words, ‘*In your light we see light?*

Which light is the congregation of Israel looking for? This is the light of Messiah, as it is written, And God saw the light, that it was good. This is intended to teach us, that the Holy One, blessed be He, foresaw the Messiah and his works before the world was yet created, and he did the light for the Messiah and his generation under his throne of glory. Said Satan before the Holy One, blessed be He, Lord of the World, the light hidden under your throne of glory, for whom is it prepared? And He said to him, For him who in the future will conquer you, and cover your face with shame. Said he: Lord of the World, show him to me. Come and see, was the Divine answer. And when he saw him, he began to tremble, and fell on his face, saying, Surely, this is Messiah, who in the future shall cast me and the (angelic) princes of the nations into the world of Gehenna, according to Isaiah 35:8 . . .

“And the Holy One began to make an agreement with him (Messiah), saying, Those who are hidden with you--their sins will cause you to be put under an iron yoke, and they will make you like this calf whose eyes are dim, and they will choke your spirit under the yoke, and on account of their sins your tongue will cleave to the roof of your mouth. Are you willing to do this? The Messiah said to the Holy One, Perhaps this anguish will last for many years? And the Holy One said to him: By your life, and by the life of My head, one week only have I decreed for you; but if your soul is grieved I shall destroy them even now. But he said to Him, Lord of all the worlds, with the gladness of my soul and the joy of my heart I take it upon me, on condition that not one of Israel shall perish, and not only those alone should be saved who are in my days, but also those who are hid in

the dust; and not only should the dead be saved who are in my days, but also those who have died from the days of the first Adam till now; and not only those, but also those who have been prematurely born. And not only those, but also those whom You have intended to create, but who have not yet been created. Thus I agree, and thus I take all upon me. In that hour the Holy One, blessed be He, orders for him four creatures to carry the throne of glory of the Messiah.”

“In the week when the Son of David comes, they bring beams of iron and put them (like a yoke) on his neck, until his stature is bent down. But he cries and weeps, and his voice ascends on high, and he says before him, Lord of the World, what is my strength, the strength of my spirit, of my soul and my limbs? Am I not flesh and blood? In view of that hour David wept, saying, ‘My strength is dried up like a potsherd.’ (Psalm 22:15/16. Here the Editor, Friedman’s edition, Vienna, 1880, has a note in which he calls attention to the fact that this psalm deals with the exile of the congregation of Israel, the sufferings of the Messiah and the future redemption, and that only on account of “the seditious talk of the heretics--i.e., the Christians--the Rabbis explained it as referring to Esther.) In that hour the Holy One, blessed be He, says to him, Ephraim, My righteous Messiah, (The Messiah is in these chapters called Ephraim; but the Messiah, son of Joseph, is not meant here, as Dr. Edersheim thinks, but the Son of David, as can be seen from the words with which the passage begins. I believe that they called the Messiah Ephraim on account of Jeremiah 31:20, which passage they applied to the Messiah.) you have already taken this upon you from the six days of Creation, now your anguish shall be like My anguish, for from the time that Nebuchadnezzar, the wicked one, has come and destroyed My house, and burned My sanctuary, and sent My children into exile among the nations of the world, by your life and the life of My head, I have not sat down upon My throne. And if you will not believe Me, see the dew which is on My head, as it is said, My head is filled with dew. (Song of Songs 5:2) In that hour the Messiah answers Him, Lord of the World, now I am quitted, *for it is enough for the servant that he is like his Master.*

Chapter 27 describes Messiah’s triumph and the glory which he receives as a due reward for his humiliation and suffering on behalf of Israel. It is based on Isaiah 41:10:

“The fathers of the world (the patriarchs) will rise again in the month of Nisan and will say to him, Ephraim, our righteous Messiah, though we are your fathers, yet you are greater than we, because you have borne the sins of our children, and hard and evil measure has passed upon you, such as has not been passed either upon those before or upon those after. And you have been for laughter and derision to the nations for the sake of Israel, and you have dwelled in darkness and in gloominess, and your eyes have not seen light, and your skin was cleaving to your bones, and your body was dry as wood, and your eyes were darkened through fasting, and your strength was dried up like a potsherd. And all this on account of the sins of our children. Is it your pleasure that our sons should enjoy the good things which the Holy One, blessed be He, has poured out so

abundantly upon Israel? Or, perhaps, on account of the anguish which you have suffered so much for them, and because they have chained you in the prison house (i.e., this would indicate that he also suffered at the hands of his own people), perhaps you are not pleased with them?

He says to them, Fathers of the world, whatever I have done I have done only for your sakes, and for the sake of your children, for the sake of your honor and that of your children, and that they may enjoy the goodness which the Holy One, blessed be He, has poured out over Israel. Then the fathers say to him, Ephraim, our righteous Messiah, let your mind be at rest, as you have put the mind of your Maker at rest and also our mind.

Rabbi Simeon, the son of Rabbi Pasi, said: In that hour the Holy One, blessed be He, exalts the Messiah to the heaven of heavens, and spreads over him the splendor of His glory. . . And the Holy One says: You righteous ones of the world, Ephraim, the Messiah of My righteousness, has not yet received even one half for all he has suffered. . .

### A MESSIANIC HYMN

As a bridegroom decks himself with a garland.' (Song of Songs 4:26) This teaches us that the Holy One shall clothe Ephraim, our righteous Messiah, with a garment, the splendor of which will be seen from one end of the world to the other. And Israel shall walk in his light and say:

"Blessed is the hour when the Messiah was created!

Blessed is the womb out of which he has come!

Blessed the generation whose eyes behold him!

Blessed the eye that was waiting for him. . .

The speech of his tongue is pardon and forgiveness to

Israel

His prayer is the sweet incense of offerings

His petitions are purity and holiness

Blessed are his fathers who obtained the eternal good  
hidden forever. (or, as in some versions, Blessed  
is Israel, for whom such has been prepared”)

### **THE LITURGY:**

The following remarkable hymn, by the famous hymn-writer, Eleazor ben Qualir, who, according to the Jewish historian, Zunz, lived in the 9th century A.D., is taken from the service for the Day of Atonement:

Our righteous Messiah is departed from us,  
We are horror-stricken, and have none to justify us.  
Our iniquities and the yoke of our transgressions  
He carries who is wounded because of our transgressions.  
He bears on his shoulder the burden of our sins,  
To find pardon for all our iniquities.  
By his stripes we shall be healed--  
O Eternal One, it is time that you should create him anew!  
O bring him up from the terrestrial sphere,  
Raise him up from Seir  
To announce salvation to us from Mount Lebanon,  
Once again through the hand of Yinnon.

(Seir stands here for Edom, and by Edom the Talmud means Rome, where, as we have seen above, the Messiah already lives in deep humiliation and suffering. Lebanon stands for the Mount of the Temple, from which Messiah is to proclaim to Israel that the time of salvation has come. Yinnon is another name for the Messiah.)

### **THE ZOHAR:**

(VOL. II 212a) “The souls which are in the garden of Eden below go to and fro every new moon and Sabbath, in order to ascend to the place that is called the Walls of Jerusalem. . . After that they journey on and contemplate all those that are possessed of pains and sicknesses and those that are martyrs for the unity of their Lord, and then return and announce it to the Messiah. And as they tell him of the misery of Israel in their captivity, and of those wicked ones among them who are not attentive to know their Lord, he lifts up his voice and weeps for their wickedness, and so it is written, ‘He was wounded for our transgressions’, etc. Then those souls return and abide in their own place.

“There is in the garden of Eden a palace called the palace of the sons of sickness. This palace the Messiah then enters, and summons every sickness, every pain, and every chastisement of Israel; they all come and rest upon him. And were it not that he had thus lightened them off Israel and taken them upon himself, there had been no man able to bear Israel’s chastisements for transgression of the Law; and this is that which is written, ‘Surely our sicknesses he has carried.

### **THE FIFTY-THIRD CHAPTER OF ISAIAH ACCORDING TO THE JEWISH INTERPRETERS**

**Translations by S.R.Driver and Ad. Neubauer**

### **INTRODUCTION**

**By E. B. Pusey, Regius Professor of Hebrew, Oxford**

**A suffering messiah?** The belief that the messiah was to be an object of contempt survives in the prayers of the German Jews for the first day of the Passover ( c. 1876). It survived also in the belief of a Messiah ben Joseph, to whom were allotted the sufferings foretold of the messiah. Those who date the mystical books [about this Messiah ben Joseph] to a later time must also bring down to a later date the period during which belief in such a messiah continued.

But a suffering messiah, and a messiah who should deliver them from their enemies, were humanly incompatible in the same person. Before the destruction of Jerusalem, the Jews looked for the coming of a messiah to save it; afterwards, to restore it. Every token of increasing evil made Rabbi Akiva expect the more the messiah, whom he later found in Bar Kochba. In the rebellion against Antoninus Pius, Shimon ben Yohai said, in expectation of a Parthian invasion, "When you see a Persian (Parthian) horse fastened at the gravestones in the land of Israel, then hope for the messiah".

Yet even in the controversy with Christians, the belief that the messiah should die was not extinct even in the second century. In Justin's time, Trypho is still alleged to declare in the name of his people, "That the scriptures do say that the messiah should suffer, is plain, but we wish to learn if you can prove also, that it should be by a kind of suffering which is cursed in the Law." (Dialogue 89) "That he should suffer and be led as a sheep to the slaughter, we know; but if he was to be crucified, and die so shamefully and dishonorably by a death which is cursed in the Law, prove to us, for we cannot bring ourselves to conceive this." (Dialogue 90)

The Jews at this time explained Isaiah 9 as referring to Hezekiah; they offered no solution of Isaiah 53. The Jews, of whom Tertullian reports, also limit their objections to this: "Concerning the last step of his passion, you [the Jews] raise a doubt, insisting the passion of the cross was not predicted with reference to the messiah; and urging besides that it is not credible, that God should have exposed His own Son to that kind of death; because He Himself said, 'Cursed is every one who is hung on a tree.' " But they do not appear to have set up any kind of counter-explanation.

The first counter-explanation which we hear of is that so often quoted from Origen: "I remember once having used these prophecies in a discussion with those called wise among the Jews, whereon the Jew said, that these things were prophesied of the whole people as one, which was both dispersed abroad and smitten, that there might be many proselytes; and on that ground Jews were scattered in many nations." (Contra Celsus 1.55) The stress here is laid on their scattering, not on their suffering (for Christians at this time were also objects of persecution, as much as Jews). The Jew anticipated that his nation, not the Christians, were to be the converters of the world.

But there was no fixed opinion as to the meaning of Isaiah 53. Athanasius, bishop of a city where the Jews, even after the mutual massacres of Jews and Romans under Hadrian remained in considerable numbers, says that the Jews interpreted Isaiah 7:14 as being about one of themselves, and Deut. 18:18 as referring to one of the prophets; and as for

"He was led as a sheep to the slaughter", conjectured them to be spoken of Isaiah or some other one of the prophets. ("Against Arians" 1:55)

In the dialogue between Gregentius, bishop of Taphar in Arabia Felix, and Herban, "a teacher of the Law", about 542 A.D., Hebran is reported to have expressed himself as perplexed between the declaration of God (though Moses) of His unity, and what "David and Isaiah speaking in truth [say] about him who is called messiah". Benjamin of Nehawend, a philosophic Karaite of much reputation (c. 800 A.D.), still believed that Isaiah 53 referred to the messiah (according to Yepheth ben Ali). "Many," Ibn Ezra says, in the middle of the twelfth century, "explained it as being of the messiah", on the authority of a traditional saying of the rabbis. Saadiah Gaon interpreted the whole section as being about Jeremiah. Judah ben Balaam thinks this possible, and ridicules Moses ben Gecatalia's opinion that it might refer to Hezekiah.

The interpretation which survived the longest allowed that the messiah might be referred to in the first three verses of the great passage (Isaiah 52:13-53:12) about the suffering servant. Then this also came to be objected to.

The traditional gloss on the words of Isaiah 52:13, "The messiah shall be 'higher' than Abraham, 'lifted up' above Moses, 'loftier' than the ministering angels", seemed too great to be interpreted of a mere man. The Christians alleged them only fulfilled in Jesus. So the following explanations of the gloss were made:

- (1) Perhaps the words did not mean "greater than", but only "great from", that is, the person spoken of derived his greatness from Abraham, Moses, and the ministering angels. The chief writer who adapted this view added that otherwise the words gave an opportunity for error, because the heretics (Christians) used them to point to the Godhead of the messiah.
- (2) Perhaps the words, "ministering angels" really referred to the rabbis.
- (3) Or perhaps the words really were explained by the earlier rabbis as referring to the messiah, but, as Abarbanel says, the rabbis were only stating the traditions which they had received; without, however, agreeing that this was their true meaning. Or alternately, as others suggested, the words were only allegorical.
- (4) Ibn Kaspi (1280-1340 A.D.), an ardent admirer of Maimonides, and "a gifted fanatic for philosophic thought" (Gratz vii, 340-345), wanted to abandon the gloss altogether, and said "that those who expounded the section of the messiah gave occasion to the heretics to interpret it of Jesus." Passani objected to bringing the messiah into the text; and says that "Scripture never bears any meaning other than the simple and natural meaning; a different supposition would not allow us to reply to the Epicureans (i.e., the Christians).

A few, however, still continued to explain the whole of Isaiah 52:13-53:12 as referring to the messiah. But these were met by the great paradox: How can the same one both be put to death and yet also prolong his days and reign? Hence Moses ben Nachman supposed only a readiness to die. Ibn Crispin, only a nearness to death. Some rabbis explained the last verse of Moses, although (as Moses Elsheikh hints) they thereby had a difficulty in connecting it with what preceded. Moses Elsheikh himself followed the "unanimous opinion of the rabbis" that the section referred to the messiah; but so great was the difficulty of admitting the death of the messiah, that he also interpreted all the verses which spoke of death as referring to Moses.

From this difficulty, however, they could be freed as soon as they could satisfy themselves that the prophecy might refer to any group of men, some of whom had died, or even of any one man, except Jesus. The expected exhalation of the figure could be relegated to the future. And out of the many explanations suggested, it was only natural that the one most flattering to national feeling was extensively adopted. It might have in effect become universal, except for its unsatisfactoriness.

This new interpretation, emphasizing Israel's suffering, began with Rashi. Rashi's authority is put forward by some who followed him, with Ibn Ezra, J. and D. Kimchi, who were later than he; but no one before him. His great Talmudical studies, which seem to have been his earliest occupation, did not suggest it. On the contrary, in his notes on the Talmud he followed the older tradition. In the graphic story in which Joshua ben Levi is reported to have made diverse inquiries of Elisha and Shimon ben Yohai as to the coming of the messiah, and was told that he would find the messiah sitting at the gates of Rome among the poor who bare sicknesses, Rashi explains the words "bearers of sicknesses" by reference to this section of Isaiah. "'Bearers of sicknesses', in other words, stricken; and he too is stricken, as it is written, 'And he was wounded for our iniquities,' and it is written, 'And our sicknesses he bare'."

But if Rashi's later commentary was written after 1096 A.D.--after the hideous massacre of Jews in Spire, Worms, Maintz, and Cologne, by the wild swarm which gathered in the wake of the first Crusaders--then these deeds may have been the cause for his change of mind. Before then, according to Gratz (who is careful in noting any disparity of condition between them and any people among whom they sojourned), Jews "were neither in a condition of oppression nor contempt, nor were shut out from holding property". Afterwards, though, according to Milman ("History of the Jews"), scenes were far too common in which the Jews suffered as innocent victims.

Rashi's interpretation that Isaiah 52:13-53:12 referred to Israel as a nation, with stress on her suffering (instead of her dispersion) was accepted by most subsequent commentators. But it would have been a strange exception to the language of the prophets, and of Isaiah himself, who upbraids his people for their wickedness, their neglect of God, their dullness and blindness, hypocrisy, idolatries and disobedience, and who tells them, "Your iniquities have separated you and your God"--it would have been a strange contradiction

had he, in the midst of this, described them as God's righteous servant, who should bear the sins of the world. And that we, the gentiles, when converted, after the arrival of the messiah, should admit that they suffered in our stead, the just for the unjust, and atoned for us.

It is also strangely contrary to their own solution of other prophecies, which point to an expected earlier coming of the messiah during the period of the Second Temple, and their explanation that his coming has been delayed by their sins (but that he would come if they would repent).

However, this new interpretation enabled them to overcome most of the difficulties. They could interpret of the Christians a disbelief in their mission. They put in our mouths the confession, that they bore the sufferings which we deserved, while we thought them afflicted by God; that the sufferer described (i.e., themselves) grew up in the presence of God, as a root out of the dry ground; that he was despised and rejected; that his countenance was so marred as scarce to retain the human form; that he (i.e., some Israelites) actually suffered as martyrs; that he (i.e., therefore, these who died) actually suffered death, and was buried with the rich; that kings (when the messiah came) would acknowledge him (Israel); and that he should intercede for the transgressors.

What is meant by "vicarious suffering"--the just suffering for the unjust--however, is a matter of comment. The Jews cannot accept the belief that One suffered for us as the propitiation for our sins. But then how can they suppose that their own sufferings can serve as that same propitiation? Or that their own sufferings will produce in the watchers a feeling of remorse sufficient to lead to repentance; and thus, having repented, the perpetrators will need not to be punished for their deeds?

But that interpretation being accepted (that the passage refers to Israel in the collective sense), then the criticisms of the Christian position on this passage center mainly on four points of language: (1) That the word rendered "grief" is only used in the scripture of a physical ailment, and is not used metaphorically; (2) That the word rendered "on him" is plural; and, being plural, proves that the subject--even though spoken of throughout the rest of the passage in the singular--must in fact be a plural, and not an individual; (3) That the same inference can be drawn from the seemingly plural form of the word "deaths"; and (4) That the word "seed" is never used metaphorically, but always only of the physical descendants of a person.

**Objection 1:** "You will not find in your New Testament that your messiah ever had a pain, even a headache, up to the day of his death. The very terms employed here, 'pain' and 'sickness', were not realized in his person, and so cannot apply to him."

**Answer:** Yet the very same people who make this argument assert that the "pains and sickness" refer to the suffering of the people in their exile; thus they, too, interpret these expressions in a way that is metaphorical rather than literal. Further, Isaiah himself opens his book (1:5,6) with a description of the people as suffering from the "sickness" and stripe-wounds of sin; and here presented is the one who, through his own stripes, will bear away their sickness.

**Objection 2:** In 53:8, they say "lamo" ("to them") is a plural; and, being a plural, shows that the subject spoken of is also a plural (in other words, Israel), and not a single individual.

**Answer:** Kimchi, who originated the argument, at another time denied it. In his challenge to the Nazarenes he says, "Moreover, the prophet says, 'to them'; but then, (if this referred to Jesus), the prophet ought to have said, 'to him' ('lo')."

But in his Hebrew grammar he says, " 'Mo' [mem-vav] represents the third person singular, as in Job 20:23, 22:2." "For 'm' and 'o' ('mo') contains in itself the sign of the plural noun, and indicates the masculine singular also. For 'm' is the sign of the third person masculine plural, and the 'o' of the third person masculine singular. And therefore 'mo' is used both of many and of one." [And thus, "lamo" could mean either "to him" or "to they".]

Further demonstrating this point, both the Chaldee and Septuagint render Job 22:2 in the singular. Levi ben Gershon and Meri b. Aramah both render this form singular in Job 20. In Psalm 11:7, the Septuagint and the Chaldee both have it in the singular; In Isaiah 44:15 the Chaldee again uses the singular; in Job 27:23, Ibn Ezra and Levi ben Gershon both use the singular.

About this very passage (Isaiah 53:8), Abraham Farisol prefers the singular. " 'Lamo' will then be singular, as in Psalm 55:20 and elsewhere." Rabbi Judah ben Bala'm (eleventh century) says, "By 'lamo' he means 'lo', i.e., that his misfortune came to him from the sins of the people, not what he deserved himself." Rabbi Tanchum gives the choice of its being either singular (which he places first) or plural. Naphthali Altschuler has, "For the transgression of 'my people' had this 'stroke' come upon the messiah." In the Milchamoth Adonai, it is admitted as possible: "We certainly find 'lamo' used occasionally as a singular, as Psalm 11:7, but only as an anomaly." Gershon, while interpreting the passage as of Israel, explains it as a singular.

Of more modern critics, even Ewald, who would translate this verse as "For my people's sin, the plague for them. . . ", and says , " 'lamo' corresponds to 'amo' ('my people')", also remarks, "It cannot be denied that the very old ending 'mo' is sometimes used by poets in the sense of a singular, in very little words, as 'lamo' for 'lo' ('to him')." And in his earliest grammar he said, "Exceedingly probably it is singular in Job 20:23, 27:23, where the whole context of ten to twenty verses, in which the singular occurs throughout, speaks for

it. But it is certain in Isaiah 53:8, in which the singular alone appears; Isaiah 44:15, where the plural does not at all suit the sense; and the poet himself explains 'lamo' in the same connection (verse 17) by 'lo'; Psalm 11:7, where 'his countenance' can only relate to God. Hab. 3:4 explains 'lamo', Deut. 33:2, by 'lo'." Various other scholars (Ewald, Movers, Meier, Schlottmann, Schroeder) have found similar uses in Phoenician.

But,

(2) In fact, nothing turns on it. The rendering, "for the transgression of my people a blow came *to them*" is just as natural as "came *to him*".

If the word is rendered "to them" the obvious meaning would be that it refers to the people in the same clause. This makes a complete sense in itself, without introducing the anomaly, that whereas the one spoken of in this section of Isaiah is referred to some sixty times (in verbs and pronouns) in the singular (and three times in this very verse), he is to be spoken of once in this one verse in the plural. And "the kings", alleged to be speaking in the plurals "we", and "our", fourteen times previously, should in this one verse speak in the singular, "my" people, i.e., the people of each of them. And this double anomaly is to take place in four words, without any indication in the context. Those who were spoken of before in the singular are now to be spoken of in the plural; and those who were spoken of in the plural are now to be spoken of in the singular.

Yet though this suggestion found eleven adherents, among them Abarbanel, among the former scholars, nearly twice as many prefer one of the other interpretations (see below\*). Thus this objection apparently became merely a traditional one, used without much thought. For Abarbanel, when interpreting this portion of Isaiah of an individual (Josiah), and Mordechai do not themselves consider the "to them" to refer to the one spoken of in the rest of the portion.

**Objection 3:** The argument that "his death" (53:9) should be rendered, "deaths", and so implies that the one spoken of is not one, but many, is used by Lipmann, among others:

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\* This argument, begun by Kimchi, found support from R. Jacob ben Rueben, Karaite; Ibn Shaprut; Mosheh Cohen; Abarbanel; Abraham of Cordova; Lopez; Mordechai; Manasseh ben Israel; and Orobio. It was not used by Lipmann nor by Meir b. Shimon; and Rashi apparently refers the "to them" to "the people" in the same verse: "for the transgression of his people, the stroke of exile had fallen upon the just who were among them."

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On the other hand, Symmachus has, "He was cut off, and for the injustice of my people there was a plague upon them." Theodotion, "He was cut off, on account of the defection of my people he touched them." Saadiah Gaon, "He was cut off, and for the transgression of my people the stroke was upon them." Ibn Ezra (as the more correct), "For the transgression of my people the stroke will come upon them." Yepheth b. Ali, "All this trouble came upon him because of the transgression of my people, for whom this stroke was, i.e., who deserved it." Mosheh b. Nachman, "He has been cut off--for the transgression of my people--an event which will be a severe blow to them." Lanyado, "He was cut off, and slain, for the transgression of my people"--the stroke intended for them being borne by him instead (Messiah ben Joseph)". Alternative reading in Lanyado, "On account of the transgression of my people, for which the righteous was to be taken away." Passani, "The attribute of justice laid upon him the iniquity of them all, as the text says, 'for the transgression of my people', even the stroke which should have fallen upon them."

"Observe, that he does not say 'death', but 'deaths'."

**Answer:** There is no more reason for making the word used here into a plural than there is for turning "hayim" ("life") into a plural, even though it seems outwardly to have a plural form. Many nouns in Hebrew are used in the plural were we, Westerners, could hardly account for it. The plural is used of a condition, as a period of life, or a condition of the body. (For example, in the words for "age", "youth", "maidenhood", "bridehood" (Jer.2:2), "embalming" (Gen. 50:3), "blindness". ) There is then no reason why "deaths" should not mean "the state of death", as "hayim" means "the state of life". And this agrees better with the usual use of "b' ", "in", or "at". In the only other case in which the plural occurs, Ezekiel 28:10, it is used of an individual, the prince of Tyre.

In addition, the earliest interpreters of the Isaiah passage rendered this as a singular. (For example, all the Greek versions have a singular. Saadiah has "in his dying"; the Persian and Tataric versions, "how the messiah will resign himself to die"; Yepheth b. Ali, "in his death"; Joseph b. Nathan; Abarbanel--using it of Josiah; Marini; Lopez; Mosheh of Salerno; Passani; and Tanchum.)

**Objection 4:** "If the disciples of Jesus were meant (53:10), then it should be written, "sons", not "seed"; for the word "seed" only refers to physical descendants."

**Answer:** This objection is actually founded upon a mistake, for the text does not have "his seed", but "a seed". This corresponds exactly with the use of "a seed shall serve him" in Psalm 22:30, which contains a similar prophecy to this one, that "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him. . . A seed shall serve him; it shall be counted to the Lord for a generation; they shall come and shall declare his righteousness to a generation yet unborn, that he has done this." (Psalm 22:27-31)

Further, "seed" is elsewhere used in a sense other than the physical. For example, in Genesis 3:15, "seed of the serpent" surely does not mean to refer to literal physical

descendents of a serpent. And Isaiah uses "seed" in the tradition of "sons of", when he says, "seed of evil-doers" (1:4).

I have not included under this head the objection, that "he was cut off from the land of the living" means only that he was exiled from the land of Israel (i.e., the "land of the living"). "Land of the living" is used elsewhere, for example, by the same prophet, in Is. 38:11 to refer to Hezekiah's expectation of dying young; in Jer. 11:19 about a plot to kill Jeremiah; and in Job 28:13, where it is stated that wisdom cannot be found in the "land of the living". From these contexts it seems clear that this expression means literally what it says, and does not refer to the land of Israel. This is so obviously an applied meaning that only Lipmann and one other have chosen it to swell the list of objections.

But the chiefmost answer to all of the above objections, and to the very conception that the one spoken of in Isaiah 53 must be the people of Israel, instead of the messiah, is that the sufferer must be righteous; without sin; and suffering innocently. And yet never is Israel's exile said to be without cause, or wanton; but rather, as the punishment for sins. And the principal reason provided for the delay in the messiah's arrival is the continuance of sin among them. Thus, they cannot be both innocent and suffering without cause, yet at the same time be guilty of such sins as warrant their exile and the delay of the messiah.

Ibn Crispin complains of "the forced and far-fetched interpretations, of which others have been guilty. . . [those who would interpret this passage collectively of Israel] distort the passage from its natural sense, [since] the singular is used throughout"; and whereas the prophet calls the people, "Israel, my servant" previously, in this passage he says only, "My servant". [And this is also the only place in scripture where the express phrase, "My righteous servant", is to be found.] Further, he says, "These expositors shut the doors of the literal interpretation against themselves, and wearied themselves to find the entrance." He himself goes back to "the teachings of our rabbis, [who affirm that it speaks of] the King Messiah."

Rabbi Isaac b. Eliyyah Cohen, while speaking strongly against the Christian interpretation, says, "I have never in my life seen or heard an interpretation by a clear or fluent commentator, with which my own judgement, and that of others who have pondered the question, might completely concur." Saadiah Ibn Danan (a contemporary of Abarbanel), says, "I set before myself the notes of those who had commented upon this chapter. . . and pondered over them, and examined the opinions they contained. But all alike, I found, lacked solidity and soundness." (For example, the Karaites interpreted the section of their own sages, on the grounds that they were persecuted. Some rabbinic Jews applied it to the righteous among themselves. Others thought it might refer to Isaiah himself, or Jeremiah, or Hezekiah, or Job; some, to the seed of David in exile.)

Abraham Farissoll apologizes for those who interpreted it of the messiah. "Whatever justice there may be in the expressions of our sages, who applied the prophecy to the messiah [note, therefore, that some sages did in fact apply this passage to the messiah], it should be borne in mind that although they themselves and their words are both truthful, yet their object was [only] allegorical."

Moses Elsheikh says, "The verses in the chapter are difficult to fix or arrange in a literal manner, so that the various parts, from the beginning to the end, may be combined and connected closely together. I see commentators going up and down among them, and yet neither agreeing on the subject to which the whole is to be referred, nor disentangling the words with any simple plan." He himself then plans, in "all humility", to set himself to "apply to it a straightforward method, according to the literal sense of the text, such as should be adopted by one who would rightly unite the several words and periods, and determine what view is legitimate, and what not." He then interprets it of the Messiah; yet, when he comes to verses 9-12, all of which speak of the death, he says, "These verses are all of them hard, though we shall not touch on everything which might be noticed."

Shlomo Levi says, "Throughout this prophecy, all the commentators exert their utmost on its interpretation, and are at no small variance as to its import." Even in later times, R. Napthali Altschuler expresses his surprise that "Rashi and David Kimchi have not, with the Targum, applied them to the Messiah likewise."

Passani expresses his surprise at former commentators, and says, "Not one of the explanations is in complete accord with the language of the text, or succeeds in satisfying us--still less the [Christians]." He thinks that, like all other prophecies, most of Isaiah's also point to the latter days, when the Messiah shall have appeared, but exhorts caution how it should be interpreted. "Take heed, O wise man, in your words, even though the language be meant to be metaphorical and indirect."

Rabbi Tanchum seems to be carefully ambiguous. He uses the phrase, "any person or nation", but speaks of the subject as being "one of the generation in exile", who had died, yet "a guide and a deliverer", who "rescues them from captivity and their enemies generally", and speaks of "his hidden nature, the mystery connected with him not being revealed to them." He concludes with a protest against there being anything allegorical, and seems to think that the intention of the prophet was, not to be understood.

Ibn Amran says, "As relates to the Jews, there is no little difficulty in giving a sense to these most obscure words of Isaiah at the present; they manifestly need a prophetic spirit; thus our older and more abstruse masters went apart from one another to different explanations. But," he satisfies himself, "each very far removed from the exposition of the Christians." For error is manifold, truth but one. Oxford, 1876)

## ***Mosheh El-Sheikh***

**Isaiah 52:13** The verses in this parashah are difficult to fix or arrange in a literal manner, so that the various parts, from the beginning to the end, may be combined and connected closely together. . . I see the commentators going up and down these parts, yet neither agreeing about the subject to which the whole is to be referred, nor disentangling the words in any simple plan.

I, therefore, in my humility, am come after them; not with any sense of the wisdom that I am about to utter, but merely with the object of applying to its elucidation a straightforward method, in accordance with the literal sense of the text, such as ought to be chosen by one who would rightly unite the several words and periods, and determine what view is legitimate and what not.

I may remark, then, that our rabbis with one voice accept and affirm the opinion that the prophet is speaking of the King Messiah, and we shall ourselves also adhere to the same view; for the Messiah is of course David, who, as is well known, was "anointed", and there is a verse in which the prophet, speaking in the name of the Lord, says expressly, "*My servant David shall be king over them*" (Ezekiel 37:24). The expression *My servant*, therefore, can justly be referred to David; for from what is explicit in one place we can discover what is hidden or obscure in another.

Our rabbis say that of all the suffering which entered into the world, one third was for David and the fathers, one for the generation in exile, and one for the King Messiah. If we examine the meaning of this saying, we shall see that there are punishments for iniquity, and also punishments of love, the latter being endured by the righteous for the wickedness of his own generation. Now those who do not know how far the reward of the righteous really extends feel surprised at this. . . wondering whether it can be true that He will be wroth with a just and perfect man who never sinned, and heap on him the iniquities of wrong-doers, in order that they may rejoice, and he, the just man, be pained; that they may be 'stalwart in strength' while he is stricken and smitten; that they may exult at his calamity, and mock during their feasts at his distress, while he is smitten for their sakes.

In order to put an end to the "fear from this thing", God declares in these verses how far the merits of those who suffer for the sins of their own age extend their effects, adducing a proof from the case of the Messiah who bore the iniquities of the children of Israel, "*and behold his reward is with him*" The Almighty argues with Israel, saying, ". . . look and learn how great is the power of the man who suffers for a whole generation; you shall see then from the exaltation which I shall confer upon the King Messiah how vast are the benefits of the chastisements of love to him that endures them."

*Behold my servant* (i.e., the Messiah) *will prosper*-- this prosperity of his will extend through four worlds, viz., the lower world; the world of angels; the world of stars; and the highest world of all; in each of which the same prosperity will attend him. He will be *high* in this world; exalted in the world of the stars; and *lofty* in the world of angels; *exceedingly* because prosperity will accompany him in the uppermost world as well, in the presence of God, according to the saying of the rabbis on Psalm 2:8, that he will be 'like a dear son, delighting himself before the Creator'; He says therefore, *Ask of me*, etc. [Psalm 2:8], because of the good fortune which is to be his in each of the four worlds.

Our rabbis further say, "He shall be higher than Abraham . . . lifted up above Moses. . . and loftier than the ministering angels." As Moses ruled even in the world of the stars-- for the rabbis say that for this reason the hail, the locusts, and the grasshoppers were sent through his instrumentality--so, even more fully, will the Messiah hold sway over these likewise. This does not imply that he will be superior to Moses in wisdom or in prophecy, nor again, that at the time alluded to Moses will not in every respect be the greater (indeed anything different from this will not be credited by those who have real knowledge), but only that he will be more exalted than Moses was previously, in his own lifetime.

And he is to be loftier than the angels, according to the text (Ezek. 1:18), for these had "loftiness and fear", i.e., in spite of their high position, they still stood in awe of the Almighty, not venturing, like the righteous one who "played before him, as a son before his father", to make request of their Creator.

**Isaiah 53** The Almighty, however, says that there is no need for surprise at their attitude of incredulity in the presence of these marvels [of the restoration of Israel], for who believed our report--the report, namely, which we made known to you from heaven, but which the kings had not heard of? So fearful was it, that in the eyes of everyone who did hear it [of the restoration of Israel], it was too wondrous to behold; and *upon whom was the arm of the Lord revealed* as it was upon the King Messiah? The sum of the whole is that he obtained this honor for himself owing to his merits in enduring for Israel (as has been said) chastisements of love. The contents of this and the following verses show unmistakably that they are the words of the prophet, instructing or guiding the people, and not the words of God. From the fact that the rabbis expounded the previous verses of the Messiah, it may be seen that these speak of the righteous who endures in the present world the chastisements of love; and therefore I maintain that up to this point we have had the words of God announcing the greatness of the Messiah in return for his sufferings.

Here, however, the prophet seems to set before us the words of Israel endorsing the Divine declaration, and affirming in their own persons its entire truth. "The '*tried saying of the Lord*'", they exclaim, "which He has made known to us concerning the King Messiah, has opened our ears and removed the blindness of our eyes; we beheld a man, just and perfect, bruised and degraded by suffering, despised in our eyes, and plundered

verily before God and man, while all cried, 'God has forsaken him!' ; he must surely, therefore, we thought, be '*despised*' likewise in the eyes of the Almighty, and this is why He has made him '*an offscouring and refuse*' (Lam. 3:45). But now the Lord has awakened our ear, and taught us that the chastisements of love are infinitely great; henceforth, then, will '*his strength be magnified*', when we see him just, and humble in spirit, stricken, and smitten; for them we shall all agree in concluding that what we had seen before meant nothing except that he was carrying our sicknesses; and that his sufferings were for the protection of his generation."

Such is the substance of what the prophet puts into the people's mouth. And first of all they say, "*He came up as a tender shoot*", etc. ; i.e., we see one who was as tender shoot with water for it to absorb, and growing great and tall; he was like this, however, only in the upper world; for though this just and perfect sufferer flourished and grew great before God in the upper world, yet in the earth which we see below, he was as a *root* coming forth out of the *dry earth*, where there was no water for him. Being lowly, therefore, in the sight of our eyes, he was without *form and comeliness* in the world; his form was "darkened" by the blackness of his sufferings (cf Lam. 4:8), and "*his own leanness bore witness in his face*"; neither had he any beauty that we could desire him on account of his righteousness, but, on the contrary, he was rejected in our eyes.

But besides this, *he was despised*, also, in is own eyes; it is not stated that he was humbled for his pride, since in reality men hid their faces from him, nor from any fault of his own, but for the iniquity of his generation; though he himself looked upon the matter differently, imagining in his goodness that he must be guilty, and thus was punished for his sins. Accordingly he was both *despised* in his own eyes, and *we esteemed him not*. Yet in truth the cause of this "face-hiding" lay not in him, but in the people, for, as we learn from the expression used in the preceding verses, *he carried our sicknesses*, that he was ready to carry them of his own accord.

We, however, thought that he was not bearing them of his own accord, but that he was *stricken and smitten of God*, by a judgement of retaliation for his own iniquities, and not out of love. Yet it was because *he was wounded for our transgressions* that he was "broken by sickness"; and because he was *bruised for our iniquities* that he became "a man of pains"; and he was "afflicted" with poverty, because *the chastisement of our peace was upon him*. His being wounded and bruised for our iniquities had merely the negative effect of rescuing us from our punishment; in order for us to enjoy positive peace and prosperity, further sufferings were needed, and these consisted in his being "afflicted" with poverty. For while the direct consequences of our sins had been averted by his sickness and stripes, something still was needed in order to confer peace upon us.

*All we like sheep had gone astray*--like sheep which all follow after their leader, so that if the leader strays, they all stray with him, because of the unity of the whole flock; as the rabbis say, "*When the shepherd is angry with his flock, he makes their leader blind.*" (Baba Kama 52a) But in this case, we learn from also that "*each turned to his own way*", showing that with us this was not so, but that it resulted from the separate action of each individual. Had it indeed been otherwise, our guilt would not have been so great. But see now the mercy of God: after we had individually gone astray, he might have been expected to punish us individually likewise; yet the Lord did not look to this, but counted us as one man, reckoning up *the iniquity of us all* together, and causing it to light upon this just one, who was accordingly sufficient to bear the whole of it, which would not have been the case had each one's iniquity been reckoned up against himself.

*As for his generation, would that someone would declare to them how it was cut off from the land of life* for the iniquity which the just one had before averted, because they did not repent. Hitherto, he means to say, this just one had been stricken for the people's transgression; but henceforward *the stroke* would be *upon themselves*, for there would be no one else to be smitten for them. It is possible, from his use of the singular "*transgression*", that Isaiah means to allude to their sin in supposing that he had died for his own iniquity, and in not having brought themselves by his death to repentance.

*And he made his grave with the wicked.* I will show you an instance of this in the chief of all the prophets [Moses], who, by still suffering after his death, endured a heavier penalty than others who had suffered for their generation. Moses was buried away from the Promised Land, together with the wicked ones who died in the wilderness. For these were unworthy to enter the world to come, had not Moses borne the disgrace of being buried at their side, in order that he might bring them into it with himself. [A story--found in Deuteronomy Rabba 2.9--illustrates this belief, by telling of a man who dropped some pennies and a single gold piece on the floor of a darkened room. He had a light brought and collected up all the coins. Had he dropped only pennies, however, he would not have bothered to fetch the light and search for them. So for the sake of the gold piece, the rest were also collected.]

Moses was not, however, buried solely with these. In the wilderness also rested Korah, who was "*rich*", along with all those who perished with him (Num. 17:6). With all these Moses made his grave, in order to bring them likewise into the future world. For it is well known that even Korah and his deaths, i.e., those who died in his cause, will all rise up with him. The prophet thus appeals to a known case: he, Moses, *made his grave with the wicked*, for he was buried in profane ground in order to bring them in with him into the future world.

Because he afterwards died for the iniquities of his generation, therefore *with the mighty*, the patriarchs and those like them, *he will divide spoil, because he poured out his soul to die* for the sake of Israel, and also because *he was numbered with the transgressors*; for people said when they saw his sufferings that he was smitten of God for his sins, and classed him with the transgressors. This he knew, yet went on enduring, and *carried this sin of many*, not caring to be vexed with them, but, on the contrary, *interceding* with the Holy One *for--that is, on behalf of--the transgressors*; the ones, namely, who spoke thus of him; not, like some, from ignorance, but from actual malice. And therefore *by his knowledge*, i.e., in accordance with his will, *the just one*, my servant, *will justify many and bear all their iniquities* without solicitude, and without inquiring whether it is not a strange thing to endure distress for the sake of others after death. (For if this be the case, why did Moses our master endure, for the sake of those who perished in the wilderness, to be buried with the wicked in a foreign land?)

And do not wonder, if this is an excessive reward for him to receive. Had it not been for him, they would never have entered into the world: did not Moses [likewise] "pour out his soul to die" when he "put his soul into his hand", saying, "But if not,--blot me, I pay you, out of the book you have written." (Exodus 32:32), where he expresses his willingness to die in their stead? Moses was also on their account "numbered with transgressors"; Accordingly it is said that "he was numbered with them", i. e. he felt no anxiety at having given his soul for them, and, besides this, that "he carried the sins of many", as God said to him, "Go, get you down" (Exodus 32:7), as though to say, Descend from all your greatness, because Israel has sinned; but still, in spite of this, "he made intercession for the transgressors", because in every place that Israel sinned he interceded for them. And this is the prophet's meaning when he writes, "*And he carried the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.*"

## YEPHETH BEN ALI

**Isaiah 52:13** The commentators differ concerning this section. The Fayyumi [Sa'adyah Gaon of Fayyum] lost his senses in applying it to the prophets generally, or, according to some authorities, in supposing that it referred to Jeremiah. Some of the learned Karaites apply the prophecy to the pious of their own sect. Others think that the subject of it is David and the Messiah, saying that all the expressions of contempt, such as "*many were desolated at you*", refer to the seed of David who are in exile; and all the glorious things refer to the Messiah. As to myself, I am inclined, with Benjamin of Nehawend, to regard it as alluding to the Messiah, and as opening with a description of his condition in exile, from the time of his birth to his accession to the throne.

The expression "*My servant*" is applied to the Messiah as it is applied to his ancestor in the verse, "I have sworn to David My servant" (Psalm 89:4).

"*As many were desolated at him*" (verse 14) His condition is described as being such that anyone seeing him would be desolated at him, on account of the sicknesses which had befallen him. The prophet explains the cause of their desolation concerning him by saying, "*His countenance was marred beyond any man*", in other words, the complexion of his face was so changed as to become like that of a corpse. He adds further, "*And his form beyond the sons of Adam*". In other words, he was so altered in form as to resemble a corpse; and alluding to the same fact, he says, towards the end of the section, "*For he was cut off out of the land of the living.*"

"*At him the kings shall shut their mouths*". (verse 15) This means that the kings of the world will close their mouth when he lays a command or prohibition upon them.

**Isaiah 53** Here begins Israel's words; they ask, in their amazement, Which of the nations believed the report that was among us? Not one of them; for they all agreed that there would be for Israel no recovery. "*Upon whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?*", in other words, through which nation has the might of God revealed itself?

Israel now (verse 2) turns back to describe the manner of the Messiah's birth, comparing him to a young twig or shoot because he is one of the children of David, and to a root because he will become a root like his father David. "*And . . . out of the dry earth*" means that he resembles a root emerging, sickly and weak, out of the arid soil. This comparison relates to the beginning of his career; and the same is the case with the words, "*he had no form or comeliness*".

By the words, "*surely he has carried our sicknesses*", they mean that the pains and sicknesses which he fell into were merited by them, but that he bore them instead. The next words, "*yet we did not esteem him*", intimate that they thought him afflicted by God for his own sins, as they distinctly say, "*smitten of God and afflicted*".

And here I think it is necessary to pause for a few moments, in order to explain why God caused these sicknesses to attach themselves to the Messiah for the sake of Israel. We say that God makes known to the people of their own time the excellence of the prophets who intercede for a period of adversity in two ways. First, while Israel's empire lasted, it was shown in prayer and intercession, as in the cases of Moses, Aaron, Samuel, David, Elijah, and Elisha, whose prayers for the nation were accepted by God. Second, in a time of

captivity and extreme wickedness, though their intercession showed no such traces as these, yet the burden of the nation's sins was lightened; such was the case with Ezekiel when God obliged him to sleep 390 days on his left side and forty on his right (Ezekiel 4:4). He carried on the first occasion the iniquity of Israel, and on the second the weight of that of Judah. The nation deserved from God greater punishment than that which actually came upon them, but not being strong enough to bear it (as Amos says, "*O Lord, forgive, I beseech you; how can Jacob endure, for he is small?*") the prophet had to alleviate it.

Inasmuch as now at the end of the captivity there will be no prophet to intercede at the time of distress, the time of the Lord's anger and of his fury, God appoints His Servant to carry their sins, and by doing so lighten their punishment in order that Israel might not be completely exterminated. Thus, from the words, "*he was wounded for our transgressions*", we learn two things: first, that Israel had committed many sins and transgressions, for which they deserved the indignation of God; and second, that by the Messiah bearing them they would be delivered from the wrath which rested upon them, and be enabled to endure it, as it is said, "*And by associating with him we are healed .*"

The expression "*smitten of God*" signifies that these sicknesses attacked him by the will of God; they did not arise from natural causes. And the word "*afflicted*" corresponds to "*despised*" in verse 3, the meaning being that he was afflicted with poverty.

Verse 6 exhibits Israel's wickedness in not awaking to repentance after God had punished them with his plagues. They are compared in this respect to sheep without a shepherd, wandering from the way, and torn by wild beasts, going astray among the mountains without any to lead them back,. In like manner Israel in captivity has no one to call him, and lead him back to the right way, and if a guide rises up to them, desiring to bring them back, they hasten to kill him, and so cause their captivity to be prolonged. By the words "*we have turned every one to his own way*", they mean that each is occupied with the necessities of life and with establishing his fortune. And while God looks upon their work, and they do not think of their sicknesses, their guilt is thrown upon this guide, as it is said, "*And the Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all.*" The prophet does not mean literally "*the iniquity*", but rather the punishment for this iniquity.

Verse 9 says, "*And he made his grave with the wicked .*" This means that he sometimes despaired so much of his life as either to dig for himself a grave among the wicked (i.e., the wicked Israelites), or at least desire to be buried among them. The general sense is that he resigned himself to die in exile.

It was said, "*The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all*", and the prophet repeats the same thought here, saying that God was pleased to bruise and sicken him, though not in consequence of sin. The prophet next says, "*When his soul makes a trespass offering*",

indicating thereby that his soul was compelled to take Israel's guilt upon itself, as it is said, "*And he bore the sin of many*".

I must here give a compendious account of the whole of the Messiah's career. It is as follows: his first advent will be from the north, as we have explained upon Isaiah 41:25 "*I have raised one up from the north and he came*". Then with his arrival in the land of Israel the period of affliction and violence will cease from Jacob, and at the same time all the things mentioned in the present section will happen to him. Every good quality will be united in him, but in spite of all this the people will not recognize in him the will of God. For his sake, however, God will deliver Israel from all her afflictions.

And when the season of redemption comes, our lord Elijah will appear to the people and anoint him, and from that moment he will begin to be prosperous, as it is said, "*Behold My servant shall prosper*". His forces will then spread in every direction and be victorious; and then at last Israel will dwell in safety. When news of this reaches Gog, they will rush forth and "*gather themselves together against the Lord and his Anointed*" (Psalm 2:2); but when he prays to God in the midst of his people, God will come to him with deliverance, as his forefather prophesied, "*The Lord will answer you in the day of trouble*", etc. (Psalm 20). And then he will be "*high and exalted and lofty exceedingly*".

## MYSTERIES OF RABBI SHIMON BEN YOHAI

And Armilus [i.e., the devil] will join battle with the Messiah, the son of Ephraim, in the East gate. . . and Messiah, the son of Ephraim, will die there, and Israel will mourn for him. And afterwards the Holy One will reveal to them Messiah, the son of David, whom Israel will desire to stone, saying, You speak falsely; already is the Messiah slain, and there is none other Messiah to stand up (after him). And so they will despise him, as it is written, "*Despised and forlorn of men*"; but he will turn and hide himself from them, according to the words, "*Like one hiding his face from us*".

## THE ZOHAR

The souls which are in the Garden of Eden below go to and from every new moon and Sabbath, in order to ascend to the place that is called the Walls of Jerusalem. . . After that they journey on and contemplate all those that are possessed of pains and sicknesses and those that are martyrs for the unity of their Lord, and then return and announce it to the Messiah.

And as they tell him of the misery of Israel in their captivity, and of those wicked ones among them who are not attentive to know their Lord, he lifts up his voice and weeps for their wickedness, as it is written, "*He was wounded for our transgressions*", etc.

There is in the Garden of Eden a palace called the Palace of the sons of sickness. This palace the Messiah enters ,and summons every sickness, every pain, and every chastisement of Israel; they all come and rest upon him. And were it not that he had thus lightened them off Israel and taken them upon himself, there had been no man able to bear Israel's chastisements for transgression of the Law; and this is that which is written, "*Surely our sicknesses he has carried .*"

The children of the world are members of one another. When the Holy One desires to give healing to the world ,he smites one just man among them, and for his sake heals all the rest. From where do we learn this? From the saying, "He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities", i. e. , by the letting of his blood--as when a man bleeds his arm--there was healing for us--for all the members of the body. In general a just person is only smitten in order to procure healing and atonement for a whole generation.

At the time when the Holy One desires to atone for the sins of the world, like a physician who to save the other limbs, bleeds the arm, he smites their arm and heals their whole person, as it is written, "*He was wounded for our iniquities*", etc.

## **DON YITZCHAK ABARBANEL**

The first question is to ascertain to whom [this passage] refers; for the learned among the Nazarenes expound it of the man who was crucified in Jerusalem at the end of the Second Temple, and who, according to them, was the Son of God, and took flesh in the virgin's womb, as stated in their writings. But Yonathan ben Uzziel interprets it in the Targum of the future messiah; and this is also the opinion of our own learned men in the majority of their midrashim, although one of the verses (verse 12) is referred to Moses our master.

In the same way I see in the exposition of Rabbi Mosheh ben Nachman that he explains the prophecy [as being about] the King Messiah. The Gaon Rabbi Sa'adyah, however, interprets it entirely of Jeremiah. And Rabbi Abraham Ibn Ezra, and also Rabbi

Menachem [ben Shlomoh] Meiri speaks of this interpretation as "excellent", though what may be the goodness or excellence that they see in it, I do not understand.

Rashi, however, and Rabbi Joseph Qamchi, and his son, the great Rabbi David Qamchi, all with one voice explain the entire prophecy of Israel.

The opinion held by the learned among the Nazarenes is that the prophecy refers to Jesus of Nazareth, who was put to death at the end of the Second Temple. . . However, the simple sense of the words themselves will not bear the interpretation put on them. And this for several reasons.

1) First, how could the prophet say of God, "*He will become wise*" (verse 52:13)? If the word here means "*to acquire knowledge*", then God, just because He is God, knows all from eternity. How then can the prophet testify of him, "*He will be intelligent*", as though he were devoid of intelligence now? And if this word is taken to mean, "*prosperity*" or "*success*", what was the success which came to him as something new? Was it in things carnal or in things spiritual? For "*successful*" and "*not successful*" are terms which cannot rightly be used of the First Cause. Moreover, so far as the manhood [of Jesus] is concerned, it is evident from the history of his last moments, that he did not have "*success*".

2) He is called "*My servant*". Now how could God call one who was the self-same substance with Himself, His "*servant*"? Because "*master*" and "*servant*" are two distinct terms, each exclusive of the other. And it cannot be replied that the word is used relative to his manhood, because both the "*prosperity*" named previously and the "*exaltation*" are attributes applicable to him only in so far as he is (as the Christians think) God; the expression, "*My servant*", therefore, which stands between the two, must perforce be understood in the same sense. An object is, moreover, not defined or described except by its "*form*". A "*man*", for example, is so called not on account of his material body, but because of his rational soul. Even, therefore, from the point of view of those who assert that God became incarnate, He could never be termed a *servant*.

[But see Isaiah 43:24, "*You have caused Me to serve*"--reduced Me to servitude--"*by your sins*". Thus the redemption was effected by One who, "*being in the form of God*", "*took upon Himself the form of a servant*" (Phil. 2: 6,7)--ed.]

3) Isaiah says, he will be "*high and exalted*", the verbs being, as you know, all future. I wish I could learn whether this "*exaltation*" was to show itself in things pertaining to the

body (relative to his manhood) or in those things pertaining to his Godhead. For, insofar as his manhood was concerned, he enjoyed no exaltation or dignity, but rather suffered humiliation and death. While if, on the other hand, the words relate to his Godhead, then the announcement is an idle one, for God is forever "high and exalted". How then can a period be predicted when he will become high and exalted afresh?

4) He says that "*his countenance was marred beyond man*"; and again, that "*he had no form or comeliness*", etc. Such phrases show that he was troubled naturally by melancholy ,and was also of weak constitution, and a feeble frame. This account of him, however, is not in accordance with fact: for Jesus was young and handsome--even their own teachers saying that his constitution was of a normal state. And if the words have reference to his death, everyone 's countenance is altered when he is dead. He could not, then, on this account alone, be spoken of as "*marred beyond men*".

5) He says, "*He has borne our sicknesses and carried our pains*". These expressions cannot be understood of the sufferings borne by the souls of the just for sin, from which Jesus released them; because a spiritual penalty is never called "sickness". [But see Isaiah 1:4-6; 9:12/13; 33:24, etc.--ed.] The natural sense of the words is that he took upon himself the sicknesses which he removed from them; accordingly, it is said, "*We thought him smitten, stricken of God, and afflicted*"--he was not stricken and smitten himself. If again, the words be understood of the sufferings inflicted upon Jesus at the time of his death, then the terms themselves present a difficulty, for the death did not consist of "sicknesses" or "pains".

6) He says, "*And he made his grave with the wicked.*" This is referred by the Christians to Jesus of Nazareth, whose death was accomplished by the hands of the wicked; but according to their view, it ought to have been, "*made his death with the wicked*", not his *grave*. The following words, "*And the rich in his death*", have plainly nothing to do with him.

7) "*The Lord was pleased to bruise him.*" Now, if he had been God, and had consented to endure these sufferings in order (as the Christians hold) to rescue the souls of the righteous from the pit, how could it be said to be God's pleasure thus to bruise and sicken him? Moreover, what is done without any assignable cause is attributed to "pleasure", and not what is done for some definite purpose.

8) "*He shall see seed, shall lengthen days*". Yet, according to what is related of his life, Jesus died in youth, and had neither son nor daughter. Or, if "seed" be explained of those

who follow his doctrine, then such as these are never in the whole of scripture so named. [But see Gen. 3:15; Isaiah 1:4--ed.] And, if it be supposed to refer to God, it is well known that God sees and observes both future and past; how, then, can it be said that he "*will see seed*", as though such "seeing" were something new for him? And if Jesus died in his youth, when not more than thirty-two years old, where are his "*long days*"?

It will be clear now from these considerations that, in accordance with its simple and straightforward sense, and as rightly understood, this prophecy cannot possibly be interpreted as is done by Christian expositors.

As regards the course taken by Yonathan ben Uzziel and our other wise men, who interpret it of Messiah our righteousness, I do not know whether in saying this they mean Messiah ben Joseph, who they believe is to come at the commencement of the deliverance, or whether they intend Messiah son of David, who is to arrive afterwards. In either case, however, the sense of the words will not admit of such an explanation. Of Messiah, son of Joseph, it could not be said that he would be "*high and exalted, and lofty exceedingly*". And how could it be said he was to "*lengthen his days*" when he was to die at the beginning of his career?

If, on the other hand, our rabbis have in view Messiah the son of David, then a difficulty arises from the words "*marred beyond man*", "*without form or comeliness*", for Isaiah himself, so far from calling him "*despised*" or "*forlorn of men*", describes him as God's "*chosen one, in whom his soul delights*" (42:1). Then again, how *could he be said to have borne our pains*", or to be "*stricken and smitten*"? Rather, he is to be a righteous king--not "*stricken and smitten*", but "*righteous and victorious*" (Zech. 9:9). And if this is the case, what can be the sense of the verses which teach how he will bear sufferings and death for Israel's sake?

In a word, the interpretation of Yonathan, and of those who follow him in the same opinion, can never be considered to be the true one, in a literal sense, because the character and drift of the passage as a whole will not bear it. These learned men were concerned only with allegorical or adventitious expositions, and hence merely applied the traditions they had received respecting the Messiah to the present passage, without in the least imagining it to be its actual meaning.

**MOSHE KOHEN IBN CRISPIN**

This Parashah the commentators agree in explaining of the captivity of Israel, although the singular number is used throughout. The expression *My Servant* they compare rashly with Isaiah 41:8, " *you Israel are My servant*"; here, however, he does not mention Israel, but simply says, *My servant*; we cannot therefore understand the word in the same sense. Again in verse 41:8 he addresses the whole nation by the name of their father Israel (or Jacob, as he continues, "*Jacob whom I have chosen*"), but here he says *My servant* alone, and uniformly employs the singular, and as there is no cause restraining us to do so, why should we here interpret the word collectively, and thereby distort the passage from its natural sense?

Others have supposed it to mean the just in this present world; but these, too, for the same reason, by altering the number, distort the verses from their natural meaning. As then it seemed to me that the doors of the literal interpretation of the Parashah were shut in their face, and that "*they wearied themselves to find the entrance*", having forsaken the knowledge of our Teachers, and inclined after the "*stubbornness of their own hearts*", I am pleased to interpret it, in accordance with the teaching of our rabbis, of the King Messiah, and will be careful, so far as I am able, to adhere to the literal sense; thus, possibly, I shall be free from the forced and far-fetched interpretations of which others have been guilty.

*My servant*. I may begin by remarking that we find this term used in scripture of an individual prophet, as Moses; of all the prophets generally (Amos 3:7), and of the whole of Israel (Lev. 35:42). But we do not find it used of angels, known clearly to be such, because it is only applicable to one who enslaves himself assiduously to the service of God, and directs both his person and his thoughts "*to serve Him with all his heart and with all his soul*". This service is implanted in the heart; it cannot, therefore, be said of an angel, for [this service] has its seat in a bodily organ, in the *heart*, and nowhere else, and an angel has no body. As obviously, then, the expression cannot possibly be applied to the substance of the Creator Himself, as is done by our opponents in their theory of the Trinity (according to which this man was of the substance of the Creator). Yet even granting all this, which, though it is impossible to speak about, still less to conceive, how could he describe himself as "*My servant*", since for a man to be called his own servant is a palpable absurdity.

*He shall be high*, etc. These words likewise afford an answer to our opponents, for they refer exclusively to the future. And this language clearly cannot be applied to God. For how could it be said of Him that, like a mortal man, He will at some future time be high and exalted, as though he had not been so before? The prophet says that he is to be "*high and exalted*"; but during the whole time that he [Jesus] is reported to have been incarnate, we do not find that exaltation or supremacy ever fell to his lot, even to the day of his death.

*He shall be high and exalted, and lofty exceedingly.* He will be more *exalted* than Moses; for when he gathers together our scattered ones from the four corners of the earth, he will be exalted in the eyes of all the kings in the whole world, and all of them will serve him, as Daniel prophesies concerning him, " *All nations, peoples, tongues shall serve him .*" (Dan. 7:14). He will be *loftier* than Solomon, whose dignity was so lofty that he is said to have "*sat on the throne of the Lord*" (I Chron. 29:23), and our rabbis say that he was king over both the upper and the nether world. (Sanhedrin 20b) But the King Messiah, in his all-comprehending intelligence, will be loftier than Solomon. *Exceedingly* above the ministering angels, because that same comprehensive intelligence will approach God more nearly than theirs.

And when this "*servant of the Lord*" is born, from the day when he comes to years of discretion, he will continue to be marked by the possession of intelligence enabling him to acquire from God what it is impossible for any to acquire until he reaches that height wither none of the sons of men, except him, have ever ascended; from that day he will be counted with his people Israel, and will share their subjugation and distress; " *in all their affliction*" (Is. 53:9) he will be exceedingly afflicted; and because of their being outcasts and scattered to the ends of the earth, his grief will be such that the color of his countenance will be changed from that of a man and pangs and sicknesses will seize upon him, and all the chastisements which come upon him in consequence of his grief will be for our sakes, and not from any deficiency or sin on his part which might bring punishment in their train, because he is perfect, in the completeness of perfection, as Isaiah says (11:2ff) .

Truly all his pains and sufferings will be for us; continually he will be prostrating himself, and stretching out his hands to God on our behalf, and praying to him to hasten the time of our redemption, until in compassion upon him, and in order to shorten the intense grief felt by him for us, the Creator "speeds" the time of our deliverance.

And so great will be his grief and pain endured thus on our behalf, that those who see him will despise him, thinking that in consequence of his many deficiencies and sins God brought all those chastisements upon him; for they will never believe that such sufferings could be caused merely by grief. And because of their attributing them to these deficiencies and sins, he will be despised in their eyes, and they will count him as nothing, not perceiving the great perfection that is in him, who will be a compassionate father to have compassion on us, even more than Moses our master, and in the multitude of his compassion for us will draw to himself all those sicknesses and chastisements, until the Creator hears his prayer, and looks upon all his pain, and has compassion on us for his sake, and speeds our redemption, and sends him to redeem us.

*So will he sprinkle many nations.* As his countenance is marred beyond man when he comes to redeem us, so he will scatter many nations and disperse them to the ends of the earth, like one who *sprinkles*, i.e., who scatters blood. The expression *sprinkle* means that he will scatter them without difficulty, like one who sprinkles blood.

*Who has believed our report?* Who was able to believe the report which we heard of him, when they said to us that , as the prophets had announced, he had at last come to redeem Israel , "with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm", until we saw the matter with our own eyes?

Verse 53:2 states how the servant of the Lord grew up, like a branching tree which had sprung up out of the dry earth. The King, thus, through the grief and sorrow which he bore on our account from the time of his coming to years of discretion, and which clung to him until it left him no form or comeliness, resembles either the branching tree coming up out of a root planted in the dry earth, or both the branches and the root together, which sprang up out of the dry soil.

*A man of pains and known to sickness,* i.e., possessed of pains and destined to sickness; so all that see him will say (murmur) of him. They will also, it continues, on account of his loathsome appearance, be *like men hiding their faces from him*; they will not be able to look at him, because of his disfigurement. And we, when we see what he is like, *shall despise him* till we no longer *esteem him*. We shall cease to think of him as a Redeemer able to redeem us and fight our battles because of all the effects which we see produced by his weakness.

*Surely our sickness he has carried .* These words explain the cause of his sufferings; they will all come upon him on account of the grief and sorrow which he will feel for the sickness caused by our iniquities. It will be as though he had borne all the sicknesses and chastisements which fall upon us. Or, perhaps, "*carry*" may mean take away, forgive, as in Exodus 10:17; from his pity and his prayers for us he will atone for our transgressions. *And our pains he has borne,* as a burden upon himself; all the weight of our pains he will carry, being himself exceedingly pained by them. *And we esteemed him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.* We shall not believe that there could be any man ready to endure such pain and grief as would disfigure his countenance, even for his children, much less for his people. It will seem a certain truth to us that such terrible sufferings must have come upon him as a penalty for his own many shortcomings and errors; and therefore we shall account him "*smitten of God* ". But it is not so; they are not a penalty sent from God, but *he was panged for our transgressions--pangs, as of labor, will seize him for the*

distress that has come upon us for our transgressions. *And by union with him we are healed*. Although he is in the utmost distress from pain and sickness, yet by union and nearness to him, we are healed from all the diseases to which our afflictions give rise. God will have mercy upon him and, by sparing him from the sake of his sufferings endured on our account, heal us.

*Like sheep which have no shepherd*, and which wander hither and thither on the plain, so we were wandering in our own works and ways, each going after his own business, and none caring for the service of God. Our iniquity was "too great to be forgiven", and because in our exile we had incurred the most extreme penalty, behold it was as though this penalty, which was deserved by all of us, had been laid by God upon him.

*For he, is cut off*, etc. The nature of this Messiah is truly wondrous. He *soul* is "*cut off from the land of the living*", in other words, it is derived from the living angels who exist forever, from these abstract intelligences. These form the source from which his own intelligence emanates, and gradually, in virtue of its comprehensive wisdom, ascends to an elevation which, as we have already explained, none else has ever attained.

His *body*, on the other hand, is composed of griefs and pains and sicknesses--of grief *for the transgression* and affliction of his people (which was so great as to disfigure his appearance), and of pains and sicknesses greater than those of other men. And it is an indication of his perfection that he does not care for the pain of his own body, for he recognizes its proper rank, and its deficiencies, in this nether world--a world which has no permanence. And therefore, all that hear of him, or know him, will marvel at him exceedingly, because never in the world had a prophet or wise man been heard of who was compounded of two natures such as these.

This prophecy was delivered by Isaiah at the divine command for the express purpose of making known to us something about the nature of the future Messiah, who is to come and deliver Israel, and his life from the day he arrives at the age of discretion until his advent as a redeemer, in order that if anyone should arise claiming to be himself the Messiah, we may reflect, and look to see whether we can observe in him any resemblance to the traits described here. If there is any such resemblance, then we may believe that he is the Messiah our righteousness; but if not, we cannot do so.

## RABBI SHLOMOH ASTRUC

*My servant shall prosper*, or be *truly intelligent*, because by intelligence man is really man--it is intelligence which makes a man what he is. And the prophet calls the King Messiah *My servant*, speaking as the One who sent him. Or he may call the whole people *My servant*, as he says above *My people* (52:6). When he speaks of the people, the King Messiah is included in it. And when he speaks of the King Messiah, the people is comprehended with him. What he says then, is that My servant the King Messiah will prosper.

Our rabbis declare that he will be *higher than Abraham; more exalted than Moses; and loftier than the angels. Lofty through the angels*, in that he will depend upon the intelligent powers which belong to him and are his ministers, and which tend to attach themselves to God, so that he will be like the Angel of the Lord of Hosts. Of him also, it is said, that "*His angels He will appoint for you, to keep you in all your ways.*" (Psalm 91:11).

In verse 52:14, the prophet, speaking of Israel as a whole, says, Just as all who saw you were amazed at the greatness of your distress, and said, What is the heat of this fierce anger (Deut. 29:24) that is upon this people more than any other people? and, Is this the city which men used to call the perfection of beauty (Lam. 2:15)? [so will they now be amazed at your glory]. For as before the Lord gave full measure in smiting you, so now he will give you full measure of prosperity, so that the dignity of this Anointed One, when he is anointed, will surpass that of all others who are anointed, by the radiancy of his countenance which will shine like that of Moses (Ex. 34:30).

[Normally this verse is translated, "he was *marred* beyond any other man"; but with a slight change in the spelling of one word it could read, "he was *anointed* beyond any other man". Apparently this is how the verse is being interpreted in the above passage. It is interesting to note that one of the versions of Isaiah found among the Dead Sea Scrolls also has this alternate reading--ed.]

*Chapter 53:* A continuation of the words spoken by the gentiles and their kings. Who, at the time when our [gentiles'] exaltation and prosperity seemed secure to us, would have believed this *report* brought to us? Such a wondrous change could have been anticipated by no one. *And upon whom was the arm of the Lord ever revealed* to raise him to such dignity as this Messiah? For when we looked at him, and gazed upon his countenance, it had no beauty, and we did not desire him. (The prophet means to say here that there was nothing in him to cause us--the gentiles-- to desire him. Or, the meaning may be, "and now we desire him", on account of the many desirable qualities which he possesses.

*He was despised and forlorn of men.* He was not permitted to enter the society of men, because he was *a man of pains*, and *broken by sickness*. Or perhaps this denotes that he was so well known generally for the sicknesses which he endured that in imprecation men would say, "May such a one be like him!"

The next words assign the reason why Israel was rejected and cast aloof and hated in their [gentile] eyes. They say, "When we saw *the face-hiding*, the manner in which God hid His face *from him* [i.e., from Israel], and carried him [Israel] far away captive among the gentiles, he [Israel] was then despised and cast aloof by us [i.e., the gentiles], and we esteemed him [Israel] not--he had no value in our eyes". Or, "*We did not think of him* [Israel] that God would again open his eyes and have mercy upon him, after having thus rejected and removed him far from his own place."

### **SA'ADYAH IBN DANAN**

I was perusing the book of the prophet Isaiah, and when I came to the Parashah Behold My servant, I set before myself the notes of those who had commented upon it, and pondered over them and examined the opinions they contained. But all alike, I found, lacked solidity and soundness; as was the more palpable, since each differed from the rest in the subject to whom he supposed it to refer, some expounding the Parashah of the congregation of Israel as a whole, and others, in one way or another, of the King Messiah, who will speedily be revealed in our days. This, in fact, is done by our rabbis, who , in the section *Heleq* (Sanhedrin 94a), on the words *To the increase of his government* (Isaiah 9:7), expound as follows: *The Holy One sought to make Hezekiah the Messiah, and [to make] Sanacherib, Gog and Magog.*

And the heretics explain it of their messiah, by their method of interpretation, discovering in its arguments relating to his passion and death, and their false belief in him, which, however, have been refuted oftentimes with unequivocal proofs by learned Jews. One of these, Rabbi Joseph ben Kaspi, was led so far as to say that those who expounded it of the Messiah, who is shortly to be revealed, gave occasion to the heretics to interpret it of Jesus.

May God, however, forgive him for not having spoken the truth! Our rabbis, the doctors of the Talmud, deliver their opinions by the power of prophecy, possessing a tradition concerning the principles of interpretation, so that their words are the truth. The principle which every expositor ought to rest upon is never to shrink from declaring the truth. And now I will make known what has been communicated to me from heaven, namely, the Parashah was originally uttered with a reference to Hezekiah, king of Judah and Israel,

but being "*a word deftly spoken*" (Prov. 25:11), nevertheless alludes covertly to the King Messiah. . .

Says the author: Behold, we have explained the several parts of this Parashah in an elegant and plausible manner; and the interpretation here given is the one that is revealed and open to all, but there is a secret one, sealed and treasured up in its midst, which sees throughout allusions to the King Messiah (who is assuredly to be speedily revealed in our own days). And in the same sense it is expounded by our rabbis.

We cannot, however, interpret each individual detail in it of the Messiah, because we do not know all the incidents of his advent, or the precise manner of the redemption which he will then accomplish for Israel. Still, what our rabbis teach in this respect, we must accept, for, like all their other opinions, it will be true and right; but anyone who imagines himself able to apply every single particular in the Parashah to the Messiah is in error, and feeling after darkness rather than light, as is the case with the heretics who struggle vainly to refer it to their messiah in detail. We see then their error and delusion, which has already more than once been sufficiently replied to by our wise men. May God, for His Name's sake, lighten our eyes with the illumination of his Law, and bring us forth out of darkness into light, and redeem us with a perfect redemption!

### **MOSHEH BEN MAIMON (MAIMONIDES)**

What is to be the manner of Messiah's advent, and where will be the place of his first appearance? He will make his first appearance in the land of Israel, as it is written, "*The Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to His Temple*" (Mal. 3:1); but as to the manner of his appearance, until it has taken place, you cannot know this, not so that you could say he is the son of a specific person, or to be from the family of that person. There shall rise up one whom none have known before, and the signs and wonders which they shall see performed by him will be the proofs of his true origin. For the Almighty, when he declares to us his mind upon this matter, says, "*Behold a man whose name is the Branch, and he shall branch forth from his place.*" (Zech. 6:12) And Isaiah speaks similarly of the time when he will appear, without his father or his mother or family being known, *He came up as a shoot before him, and as a root out of dry earth*, etc. But the unique phenomenon attending his manifestation is, that all the kings of the earth will be thrown into terror at the fame of him---their kingdoms will be in consternation, and they themselves will be devising whether to oppose him with arms, or to adopt some different course, confessing, in fact, their inability to contend with him or ignore his presence, and so confounded at the wonders which they will see him work, that they will lay hands

upon their mouth; in the words of Isaiah, when describing the manner in which the kings will hearken to him, *At him kings will shut their mouth; for that which had not been told them have they seen, and that which they had not heard they have perceived.*

### MEIR BEN SHIMON

*Behold My servant , etc.* This Parashah is applied by the Nazarenes to Jesus; such an explanation, however, is untenable even on the ground of their own allegations. For example, they assert Jesus to be the Son of God, and to be himself God, but if so, how is he called *my servant* ? Almighty God is not a servant; on the contrary, all are His servants. If to this it be replied that Jesus is termed *servant*, as being a servant of the Godhead, do not the Christians assert that he is God? How, then, can one who is the Creator of all and the Lord of all receive such a title?

Again, how can it be said that he should *prosper*? In what did his prosperity consist? Were not his misfortunes and general ill-success clear to all, when the Pharisees and the doctors condemned him to death (as is related in their own book), and he was slain with his disciples? And how can it be said that he should be *high and exalted and lofty exceedingly* ? Jesus in his lifetime was only thus exalted at the time of his crucifixion.

### YOSEPH ALBO

Sometimes, too, misfortunes light upon the righteous not as a punishment, but for the sake of a whole nation, that atonement might be made for it. This is because the Almighty takes pleasure in the preservation of the world, and knows that the righteous will bear his sufferings cheerfully, without quarreling with any of his attributes. He therefore brings sufferings upon the just, as a satisfaction for the evil [otherwise] destined to afflict a whole people, in order that it may be thus averted. This is what our rabbis mean by their saying (Moed Katan 28a), " *The death of the righteous works atonement*" .

We find the Law stated clearly in scripture. God says to Ezekiel (4:4-6), "*Lie on your left side, and I will place upon it the iniquity of the house of Israel*", etc., and you will bear it; and when you have finished these things, then you shall lie again on your right side, and shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah." In accordance with the same principal, the statements found in the Parashah, *Behold My servant shall prosper* , are all to be referred to Israel (who is here called *My servant* , as in Isaiah 44:2, 41:8). When the prophet says, *Surely he carried our sicknesses, etc., but we thought him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted*, he means to say that when men see sufferings falling upon the righteous, they think they fall on them of their own account, and are hence naturally surprised. It is not so in fact, however; they do not fall upon them for any sin they may have committed, but

as an atonement, whether for all the world, or for the entire people, or for some single city.

## RABBI SHMUEL LANYADO

*My servant, i.e., the King Messiah, shall be high and exalted, and lofty exceedingly--he shall be higher than Abraham; lifted up above Moses; and loftier than the ministering angels.* Rabbi Yitzchak Abarbanel was unable to comprehend how the Messiah could be lifted up above Moses, of whom it was said that "*there arose no prophet in Israel like him*". (Deut. 34:10); and still more how he was to be greater than the angels, who are spiritual beings, whereas the Messiah is born of a woman. It is, in fact, upon that expression that the idolators [Christians] rest the chief article of their faith, the divinity of the Messiah. Abarbanel rejects also the opinion of the learned En Bonet, who explains it of the doctors, "for how", he asks, "could it enter into anyone's mind to speak of the doctors as *exalted above Abraham or Moses?*"

In my own humble opinion it seems that in this instance En Bonet is right; for in point of nobility the Messiah will excel even Abraham, and therefore it is promised that he *shall be high*. And in the ability to guide Israel he will be superior to Moses. For Moses, when he was a shepherd, had compassion on the kid which escaped from him in order to drink, and brought it to his bosom; and for that purpose the Almighty had chosen him (Shmooth Rabba)--how much more then that he might guide and tend Israel?

As regards En Bonet's explanation of "*loftier than the angels*", my judgement coincides with that of Rabbi Yitzchak Aramah and Rabbi Yitzchak Arbarbanel, who reject it on two grounds. I think that the words should be understood in their natural sense, but believe also that they involve a mystery which no mouth can utter.

It is, however, revealed in the Zohar, in the section on Deut. 22:6 ("*When a bird's nest chances before you*", etc.); so that we need not wonder if, as is the fact, he is to be loftier than the angels. The text appears to me to refer simply to the fear and dread which he will inspire into all flesh even more than the angels, who are yet so awe-inspiring that, as we know, when one appeared to Manoah and his wife, they exclaimed, "*We have seen God; we shall surely die!*" (Judges 13:22). Accordingly the Messiah is said to be *loftier than the angels* in respect of the terror which their presence creates, since everyone who beholds them, like Ezekiel, is "*afraid and trembles*".

And then, lastly, he is called "the great mountain, which is greater than the patriarchs", because each of the patriarchs in his turn helped to restore the world after it had been corrupted by the sin of our first parents. Isaac, for example, made atonement for bloodshed, inasmuch as, for the fear he felt, his own blood was as good as poured out on the altar. And Jacob averted the consequences of a forbidden marriage by preserving

peace between two sisters, where anyone else would only have been a cause of rivalry and discord.

The opinions of our wise men on the interpretation of this verse have now been discussed. But we do not gather clearly from their language whether they are speaking of Messiah son of Ephraim or of Messiah son of David. The same doubt is suggested by Abarbanel, who thinks however that the former cannot be intended. For how, he asks, could it be said of him that he will be *high and exalted, and lofty exceedingly?* If, on the contrary, we refer the prophecy to Messiah son of David, there is a difficulty in the expression, *marred beyond man*; for Isaiah says, "*Behold My servant, whom I uphold; My chosen one, in whom my soul delights.*" (42:1) How, too, can he say of him, *Stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted*, for Messiah son of David will be *just and victorious* (Zech. 9:9), and so far from being *despised and forlorn of men*, that *unto him will the gentiles seek* (Isaiah 11:10)? Nor are the other verses more applicable to him, which declare how he will endure sufferings and death for Israel's sake.

In a word, the explanation of the rabbis and of the Targum of Yonathan cannot possibly be conceived as being truthful in the sense of being literal; it is allegorical and adventitious, consisting, as it does, in the adaptation of one of their traditions to the language of the text. And a proof of this lies in the fact that the Targum itself refers the subsequent verses to Israel, and not to the Messiah, and that one verse, the last, is referred by our rabbis to Moses.

In my own humble opinion, I believe that they mean to assert that the verse speaks solely of Messiah son of David, to whom all the gorgeous language in it will apply. The prophet next addresses the people of Messiah son of Ephraim, and encourages them not to be afraid of the myriads which were against them; that even though the son of Ephraim were slain, the Almighty would avenge him by the hand of Messiah son of David, who would *sprinkle* the blood of *many nations*.

The words mean, then, As when you, O Messiah son of Ephraim, went forth into the world, *many were astonished at you*, wondering how it could possibly be that *his countenance was so marred beyond men*, and *his form beyond the sons of men*, whether also such was the usual appearance of a conqueror--as they thus mocked you without measure, *so will the Messiah son of David sprinkle* the blood of many nations.

The Messiah, son of Ephraim, who will *come up before him*, and in comparison with Messiah son of David (who will follow after him) will be as a *shoot or a root out of dry ground*. He is to have *no form*, to be *despised, forsaken of men, and afflicted* with endless pains--as our rabbis relate of him, he will stand in the gate of Rome, binding up each wound separately by itself, lest the season of Deliverance arrive too suddenly; and his pains and sicknesses will make it seem *as though* the faces hidden from them were

averted *because of himself* and his deeds, which had been the cause of our esteeming him not. Yet in truth it was otherwise. In all his sufferings he was guiltless. It would *our sicknesses that he bore* --the sicknesses and pains which were in readiness to come for our iniquities upon us were carried by him instead, and we were in error thinking him *stricken and smitten of God*, i.e., as Rashi explains, an object of his enmity.

After his advent, to use again the words of Rashi, the son of Ephraim, who for a while had held sovereignty and executed *judgement* over Israel and the gentiles, was *taken away*, because the gentiles resolved to slay him; and *who then could tell of his generation* and the travail which befell him? For *he was cut off out of the land of the living*, and slain *for the transgression of my people*, the *stroke* intended *for them* being borne by him instead. He was not to be put to death speedily, but tortured by every conceivable method of producing a severe and painful end; and hence it is that the prophet says *not in his death but in his deaths*. And all this happened not because he had done no wrong in word or deed, but because it was *the Lord's good pleasure to bruise and sicken him*.

Such is the sense of these verses, according to the opinion of those among our wise men who apply them to Messiah son of David, and to Messiah son of Joseph, who is of the tribe of Ephraim.

But in my own humble opinion, the verses must be supposed to describe the righteous worshipper of God. Israel now asks, *Who believed* the glad tidings which they heard of our future exaltation? And upon whom were revealed the prophecies of vengeance about to be executed by *the arm of the Lord* upon them that hate him? Were they not revealed solely to us Israelites? And the gentiles, when they heard that we were to attain security and prosperity, would not believe; so that when they do perceive our successes, they will be seeing things which had never been told them. All this will happen on account of the one righteous who is here called *My servant*. But before the sons of men he will appear simply as a *root* devoid of moisture, rising *out of the dry earth*, without form or bodily beauty.

*He himself* carried our sicknesses, and bore our pains, and by saying *he himself*, the prophet indicates that the righteous, of his own free will, was pleased to carry them for Israel. We however *thought him stricken of God* for his own sins, whereas in reality he was stricken for ours, being himself just and perfect. The view here taken obviates the surprise felt by Abarbanel, as to how one man could possibly suffer for another, if even "*the son shall not die for the iniquity of the father, nor the father for the iniquity of the son*" (Ezekiel 18:20); for the righteous voluntarily and of his own accord bears the sicknesses of his generation, in order to merit the never-ending pleasure of making atonement for them.

## THE MIDRASH KONEN

The fifth mansion in Paradise is built of onyx and jasper, and set stones, and silver and gold. . . there dwells Messiah son of David, and Elijah, and Messiah son of Ephraim. There is also the "*litter of the wood of Lebanon*", like the tabernacle which Moses made in the wilderness; all the furniture thereof and "*the pillars thereof of silver, the bottom of gold, the seat of purple*", and within it, Messiah son of David who loves Jerusalem. Elijah takes him by his head, and lays him down in his bosom, holds him, and says, "*Bear the sufferings and wounds with which the Almighty does chastise you for Israel's sake*"; and so it is written, *He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities*, until the time when the end should come.

## ASERETH MEMROTH

The Messiah, in order to atone for them both [for Adam and David] will *make his soul a trespass-offering*, as it is written next to this, in the Parashah *Behold My servant*. And what is written after it? *He shall see seed, shall have long days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand*.

## YAKOV YOSEPH MORDECHAI CHAYIM PASSANI

I am much surprised at those commentators who have applied themselves to investigate the meaning of this Parashah. One, for example, maintains that it was the intention of the prophet to allude to Moses; another, that he referred to the Israelitish people; a third applies it to king Josiah; a fourth dwells much upon the King Messiah, and so brings the Midrash into the text. For ourselves, however, we know with certainty that scripture never bears any other than the simple and literal meaning.

Moreover, not one of the explanations mentioned is in complete accordance with the language of the text, or succeeds in satisfying us, still less does the opinion of the disbelievers who make these verses the foundation of their faith.

Thus the words *had no form or comeliness* cannot possibly be interpreted of Moses, for everyone is well aware that Moses had a fine form and the strength of a lion. And if (as is indeed the case) the words, *For the transgression of my people were they smitten* allude to Israel, then the person described as suffering for the nation cannot be the nation itself.

And as regards the explanation which refers it to the Messiah, we may say, Take heed, O wise men, in your words, even though the language be meant to be metaphorical and indirect.

I have therefore been led to the conviction that the Parashah may after all be referred intelligibly and naturally to Hezekiah.

### RABBI NAPHTHALI BEN ASHER ALTSCHULER

*Behold my servant.* Since I see that unfortunately the gentiles have built upon this Parashah a heap of vanity, I have undertaken the task of refuting their errors by a true and convincing method in accordance with the teaching of my relation, the great and illustrious Rabbi, Nachman of Belsitz. If the opinion of the Christians is correct, why is he [Jesus] called *My servant*? Is he not by their own arguments God? And if it be replied that he is called servant in reference to the time during which he was still a man, why does Isaiah say he will be *high and exalted*? For even, by their own accounts, Jesus was never during his whole life in any position of authority. If again it be supposed that the expression relates to what will take place after the Resurrection, even then there is a difficulty; for even the gentiles say that at that time he will be altogether God; how then could he be called a *servant*?

I will now proceed to explain these verses of our own Messiah, who, God willing, will come speedily in our days. I am surprised that Rashi and Rabbi David Kimchi have not, with the Targum, applied them to the Messiah likewise.

*He was despised in our eyes, and the most insignificant of men (or, forlorn of men, because they would not associate with him); a man of pains,* who passed all his days in anxious dread lest the gentiles should appear suddenly and attack them; *and taught of sickness,* being accustomed to have the yoke pass over him. The prophet uses the singular, referring to the Messiah who is their king. Thus the Messiah is termed despised as representing Israel.

And he was *as though we hid our faces from him*, for we would not look at him because of the loathing which we felt for him; *and we accounted him*, i.e., Israel, for nought. But now we see that this was not a consequence of his depression, but that he suffered in order that by his sufferings atonement might be made for the whole of Israel, as it is said of the prophet Micah, that the blood issuing from him made atonement for all Israel. The sickness which ought to have fallen upon us was borne by him. The prophet means to say here, that when Messiah son of Joseph shall die between the gates, and be a marvel in the eyes of creation, why must the penalty he bears be so severe? What is his sin, and what his transgression, except that he will bear the chastisements of Israel, according to the words *smitten of God*?

Others consider that the passage speaks of the Messiah who is smitten *now* with the pains of the world to come (as it stands in the Gemara), and so endures the suffering of Israel. And *yet we* --it is Israel who are speaking-- *thought* he had been hated of God. But it was not so. *He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities, and the chastisement which was afterwards to secure our peace was upon him.*

*Like sheep* , i.e., like sheep without a shepherd so long as the Messiah had not arrived, *we all went astray* . Yet *the Lord let himself be entreated* by him and propitiated for the iniquity of us all, in that he refrained from destroying us.

*From the confinement* in which he was kept by them, and *from the judgement* or sentence of punishment, *he was taken*; and who said or suspected that *his generation* would ever attain such greatness that it has attained now? *For at first it was cut off from the land of the living*, that is, the land of Israel. Because *for the transgression of my people* had this *stroke* come upon the Messiah. He resigned himself to be buried in whatever manner the wicked might decree, who were always condemning Israel to be murdered; and was ready for any form of death (or *deaths* ), according to the decision of *the rich* , that is, of the [wealthy] magistrate.

Why, however, should he have been thus punished *although he had done no violence* , except that the Almighty was trying him? The words allude to Israel who are now in exile; though others hold that they allude to the Messiah.

*By his knowledge he will justify the just.* The King Messiah will mete out right judgement to all who come to be tried before him; and *My servant* will also become a prince over many--the word *ebed* [i.e., servant] being used as in the Gemara, *When I make you a prince, I make you also a slave.*

(It may be remarked that Rashi explained this Parashah of the righteous who are in exile, and who endure there suffering and affliction.)

## **YITZCHAK TROKI**

From this verse (Isaiah 52:13) as also from Isaiah 53, the Nazarenes argue to prove that Isaiah predicted of Jesus of Nazareth. Of him, they affirm, he says *He shall be high and exalted, and lofty exceedingly* , for the language here employed is applicable to him alone and none besides. In the same way they suppose him to be referred to in the words, *He carried our sicknesses* , etc. And, *He was wounded for our transgressions.*

In reply it may be shown that their argument is not valid. For whereas the text says, *Behold My servant*, how can they apply this to Jesus of Nazareth, since they themselves, according to their own absurd tenants, assign to him deity? And how could God in any prophecy be called a *servant*?

It must in addition be remembered that the words, *He shall be high*, etc., were not fulfilled in him; since he was condemned to death like any other common man among the people. Similarly, we do not find that he had *long life*, for he was put to death when thirty-three years old.

The truth is, the whole Parashah, down to verse 53:12, was spoken prophetically to Isaiah with reference to the people of Israel, who were enduring the yoke of exile, and who are called *My servant* in the singular here, as frequently elsewhere.

The general design, then, of the prophecy contained in this Parashah is to confirm and encourage us in the assurance that although by our exile we are exceedingly depressed and brought down, that through the Lord's compassion on us we may again be *high and exalted*. And that from the time of redemption onwards our position may rise until the nations of the world and even their kings, when they see the salvation of Israel and their elevation to the highest possible pitch of dignity and greatness, become astonished and awe-struck at the spectacle. For just as before they had marveled at our depression in exile, so now they will then marvel in like manner at our exaltation, saying one to another, Lo, now we perceive clearly, that *all we like sheep without a shepherd have gone astray, we have turned each after his own way*; "our fathers have inherited lies and vanity, wherein there is no profit" (Jer. 16:19); neither is there any divine law, or true religion, in any nation of the world except Israel. From this we [the gentiles] see further that the chastisements and calamities borne by Israel during their captivity did not fall upon them for their own iniquity; it was we [the gentiles] who for the multitude of our sins had rendered them liable to endure them, but the sickness and pain which ought to have been ours came upon them, in order to make atonement for our guilt in treating them as our slaves.

## LEVI BEN GERSHOM

It follows necessarily from this verse (Deut. 34:10) that no prophet whose office was restricted to Israel alone could ever arise again like Moses; but it is still quite possible that a prophet like Moses might arise among the gentile nations. In fact the Messiah is such a prophet, as it is stated in the Midrash on the verse, *Behold My servant*, etc., that he will be "greater than Moses", which is explained to mean that his miracles will be more wonderful than those of Moses. Moses, by the miracles he wrought, drew but a

single nation to the worship of God, but the Messiah will draw all nations to the worship of God. And this will be effected by means of a marvelous sign, to be seen by all the nations even to the ends of the earth, that is, the resurrection of the dead.

## RABBI LIWA OF PRAGUE

The Messiah, who is the perfection of the world, will be *high and lofty and exalted*. Now, inasmuch as he is the perfection, he is also the consummation, and the consummation is above all things; and this is why it is said of this Messiah that he will be *high and exalted and lofty*.

*A star shall proceed out of Jacob, and there shall arise a scepter in Israel .* (Numbers 24:17) The King Messiah is here spoken of as a star, for (as we have explained above), his position and dignity will be of the highest, since it is said of him, *He will be high and exalted and lofty exceedingly* . He is here, therefore, compared to a star, because a star is elevated over all things.

### **The Suffering Servant of Isaiah, According to the Jewish Interpreters**

Samuel R. Driver and Adolf Neubauer

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#### **Targum Jonathan (Driver/Neubauer)**

##### **Isaiah 52:**

###### **13. Behold my servant Messiah shall prosper; he shall be high, and increase, and be exceeding strong:**

14. as the house of Israel looked to him during many days, because their countenance was darkened among the peoples, and their complexion beyond the sons of men,

15. so will he scatter many peoples; at him kings shall be silent, and put their hands upon their mouth, because that which was not told them have they seen, and that which they had not heard they have observed.

## Isaiah 53

1. Who hath believed this our glad tidings? and the strength of the mighty arm of the Lord, upon whom as thus hath it been revealed?
2. The righteous will grow up before him, yeah, like blooming shoots, and like a tree which sends forth its roots to streams of water will they increase - a holy generation in the land that was in need of him; his countenance no profane countenance, and the terror at him not the terror at an ordinary man; his complexion shall be a holy complexion, and all who see him will look wistfully upon him.
3. Then he will become despised, and will cut off the glory of all the kingdoms; they will be prostrate and mourning, like a man of pains and like one destined for sicknesses; and as though the presence of the Shekhinah had been withdrawn from us, they will be despised, and esteemed not.
4. Then for our sins he will pray, and our iniquities will for his sake be forgiven, although we were accounted stricken, smitten from before the Lord, and afflicted.
5. But he will build up the Holy Place, which has been polluted for our sins, and delivered to the enemy for our iniquities; and by his instruction peace shall be increased upon us, and by devotion to his words, our sins will be forgiven us.
6. All we like sheep had been scattered, we had each wandered off on his own way; but it was the Lord's good pleasure to forgive the sins of all of us for his sake.
7. He prayed, and he was answered, and ere even he had opened his mouth he was accepted; the mighty of the peoples he will deliver up like a sheep to the slaughter and like a lamb dumb before her shearers; there shall be none before him opening his mouth or saying a word.
8. Out of chastisements and punishment he will bring our captives near; the wondrous things done to us in his days who shall be able to tell? For he will cause the dominion of the Gentiles to pass away from the land of Israel and transfer to them the sins which my people have committed.
9. He will deliver the wicked into Gehinnom, and those that are rich in possessions into the death of utter destruction, in order that those who commit sin may not be established, nor speak deceits with

their mouth.

10. But it is the Lord's good pleasure to try and to purify the remnant of his people, so as to cleanse their souls from sin; these shall look on the Kingdom of their Messiah, their sons and their daughters shall be multiplied, they shall prolong their days, and those who perform the Law of the Lord shall prosper in his good pleasure.

11. From the subjection of the nations he will deliver their souls, they shall look upon the punishment of those that hate them, and be satisfied with the spoil of their kings; by his wisdom he will hold the guiltless free from guilt, in order to bring many into subjection to the law; and for their sins he will intercede.

12. Then will I divide for him the spoil of many peoples, and the possessions of strong cities shall he divide as prey, because he delivered up his soul to death, and made the rebellious subject to the Law: he shall intercede for many sins, and the rebellious for his sake shall be forgiven

**The Talmud states it has authority over the Torah.**

**Erubin 21b (Soncino edition): "Raba made the following exposition: What is the purport of the Scriptural text: And, furthermore my son, be admonished: Of making many books etc.?**

**13 My son, be more careful<sup>14</sup> in [the observance of] the words of the Scribes than in the words of the Torah, for in the laws of the Torah there are positive and negative precepts;<sup>15</sup> but, as to the laws of the Scribes, whoever transgresses any of the enactments of the Scribes incurs the penalty of death.**

**In case you should object: If they are of real value why were they not recorded [in the Torah]? Scripture stated: 'Of making many books there is no end'.<sup>13</sup> And much study is a weariness of flesh.<sup>13</sup>**

**R. Papa son of R. Aha b. Adda stated in the name of R. Aha b. Ulla: This<sup>16</sup> teaches that he who scoffs at the words of the Sages will be condemned to boiling excrements.**

**The Talmud Nullifies the Bible.**

**Babylonian Talmud, Baba Mezia 59a-59b**

Rabbi Eliezer then said to the Sages: 'If the Halakhah is in accordance with me let it be proved directly from Heaven.' Suddenly a heavenly voice went forth and said to the Sages, 'Why are you disputing with Rabbi Eliezer? The Halakhah is in accordance with him in all circumstances!' Rabbi Yehoshua rose to his feet and quoted a portion of a verse (Deuteronomy 30:12), saying, **The Torah is not in heaven!**

The Gemara interrupts the Baraita and asks for a clarification: What did Rabbi Yehoshua mean when he quoted the Scriptural verse that **the Torah is not in heaven?**

Rabbi Yirmeyah said in reply: Since **God already gave the Torah to the Jewish people on Mount Sinai, we no longer pay attention to heavenly voices that attempt to intervene in matters of Halakhah.** For You, God, already wrote in the Torah at Mount Sinai (**Exodus 23:2, After the majority to incline. ( not in scripture )**)

### real scripture

**Exod.23 [2] Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil ; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment:**

**וְלَا תַּעֲגֹת עָלִירָב, לֹא-תֵּהֶנֶּה אַחֲרֵי רַבִּים, לְרַעַת  
לְגַטָּה אַחֲרֵי רַבִּים--לְהַטָּה**

From this verse we learn that Halakhic disputes must be resolved by "majority vote of the Rabbis." God could not contradict His own decision to allow Torah questions to be decided by free debate and majority vote.

The Gemara relates that generations later Rabbi Natan met the Prophet Elijah. (Several of the Talmudic Sages had visions of Elijah the Prophet, and discussed Halakhic questions with him.) Rabbi Natan asked Elijah about the debate between Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua. He said to him: What did the Holy One, blessed be He, do at that time when Rabbi Yehoshua refused to heed the heavenly voice? In reply, Elijah said to Rabbi Natan: **God smiled and said: 'My sons have defeated Me, My sons have defeated Me! God's sons defeated Him? with their arguments. Rabbi Yehoshua was correct in his contention that a view confirmed by majority vote must be accepted, even where God Himself holds the opposite view.**

### Talmud - Mas. Baba Metzia 59b

Why do ye dispute with R. Eliezer, seeing that in all matters the halachah agrees with him! But R. Joshua arose and exclaimed: It is not in heaven.<sup>4</sup> What did he mean by this? Said R. Jeremiah: That the Torah had already been given at Mount Sinai; we pay no attention to a Heavenly Voice, because Thou hast long since written in the Torah at Mount Sinai, **After the majority must one incline**  
<sup>5</sup>

**R. Nathan met Elijah<sup>6</sup> and asked him: What did the Holy One, Blessed be He, do in that hour? He laughed [with joy], he replied, saying, My sons have defeated Me, My sons have defeated Me.....**

The Jewish Scribes claim the Talmud is partly a collection of traditions **They say Moses gave them in oral form, not ture.** The Bible has no mention of an oral law. This oral law was not written down in Yeshua's time. "It is written, as it was written" are the words used all the time.

The rabbis later "added" the Mishnah to the Gemara (rabbinical commentaries with many debates). Together these comprise the Talmud. There are two versions, the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud.

The Babylonian Talmud is regarded as the authoritative version: "The authority of the Babylonian Talmud is also greater than that of the Jerusalem Talmud. Both are just made up wisdom of men that don't agree.

**Do you think the rabbis, defeated Him??**

**Read this below!!**

**Talmud - Mas. Sanhedrin 2a**

## **CHAPTER I**

**MISHNAH. MONETARY CASES [MUST BE ADJUDICATED] BY THREE JUDGES; CASES OF LARCENY AND MAYHEM,<sup>1</sup> BY THREE; CLAIMS FOR FULL OR HALF DAMAGES,<sup>2</sup> THE REPAYMENT OF THE DOUBLE<sup>3</sup> OR FOUR- OR FIVE-FOLD RESTITUTION [OF STOLEN GOODS],<sup>4</sup> BY THREE, AS MUST CASES OF RAPE<sup>5</sup> SEDUCTION<sup>6</sup> AND LIBEL<sup>7</sup>; SO SAYS R. MEIR. BUT THE SAGES<sup>8</sup> HOLD THAT A CASE OF LIBEL REQUIRES A COURT OF TWENTY-THREE SINCE IT MAY INVOLVE A CAPITAL CHARGE.<sup>9</sup>**

**CASES INVOLVING FLOGGING,<sup>10</sup> BY THREE; IN THE NAME OF R. ISHMAEL IT IS SAID, BY TWENTY-THREE.**

THE INTERCALATION OF THE MONTH IS EFFECTED BY A COURT OF THREE;<sup>11</sup> THE INTERCALATION OF THE YEAR,<sup>12</sup> BY THREE: SO R. MEIR. BUT R. SIMEON B. GAMALIEL SAYS THE MATTER IS INITIATED BY THREE, DISCUSSED BY FIVE AND DETERMINED BY SEVEN. IF HOWEVER, IT BE DETERMINED ONLY BY THREE, THE INTERCALATION HOLDS GOOD. THE LAYING OF THE ELDERS' HANDS [ON THE HEAD OF A COMMUNAL SACRIFICE]<sup>13</sup> AND THE BREAKING OF THE HEIFER'S NECK<sup>14</sup> REQUIRE THE PRESENCE OF THREE: SO SAYS R. SIMEON. ACCORDING TO R. JUDAH, FIVE. THE PERFORMANCE OF HALIZAH,<sup>15</sup> AND THE DECISION AS TO MI'UN<sup>16</sup> IS MADE BY THREE. THE FOURTH YEAR FRUIT<sup>17</sup> AND THE SECOND TITHE<sup>18</sup> OF UNKNOWN VALUE ARE ASSESSED BY THREE. THE ASSESSMENT OF CONSECRATED OBJECTS FOR REDEMPTION PURPOSES IS MADE BY THREE; VALUATIONS OF MOVABLE PROPERTY<sup>19</sup> BY THREE. ACCORDING TO R. JUDAH ONE OF THEM MUST BE A KOHEN;<sup>20</sup> IN THE CASE OF REAL ESTATE, BY TEN INCLUDING A KOHEN, IN THE CASE OF A PERSON, BY THE SAME NUMBER. CAPITAL CASES ARE ADJUDICATED BY TWENTY-THREE. THE PERSON OR BEAST CHARGED WITH UNNATURAL INTERCOURSE, BY TWENTY-THREE, AS IT IS WRITTEN, THOU SHALT KILL THE WOMAN AND THE BEAST,<sup>21</sup> AND ALSO, AND YE SHALL SLAY THE BEAST.<sup>22</sup>

THE OX TO BE STONED<sup>23</sup> IS TRIED BY TWENTY-THREE, AS IT IS WRITTEN, THE OX SHALL BE STONED AND ITS OWNER SHALL BE PUT TO DEATH<sup>24</sup> AS THE DEATH OF THE OWNER, SO THAT OF THE OX, CAN BE DECIDED ONLY BY TWENTY-THREE.

THE DEATH SENTENCE ON THE WOLF OR THE LION OR THE BEAR OR THE LEOPARD OR THE HYENA OR THE SERPENT<sup>25</sup> IS TO BE PASSED BY TWENTY-THREE. R. ELIEZER SAYS: WHOEVER IS FIRST TO KILL THEM [WITHOUT TRIAL], ACQUIRES MERIT, R. AKIBA, HOWEVER, HOLDS THAT THEIR DEATH IS TO BE DECIDED BY TWENTY-THREE.

A TRIBE,<sup>26</sup> A FALSE PROPHET<sup>27</sup> AND A HIGH PRIEST CAN ONLY BE TRIED BY A COURT OF SEVENTY-ONE. WAR OF FREE CHOICE<sup>27</sup> CAN BE WAGED ONLY BY THE AUTHORITY OF A COURT OF SEVENTY-ONE. NO ADDITION TO THE CITY OF JERUSALEM OR THE TEMPLE COURT-YARDS CAN BE SANCTIONED SAVE BY A COURT OF SEVENTY-ONE.

**SMALL SANHEDRINS FOR THE TRIBES CAN BE INSTITUTED ONLY BY A COURT OF SEVENTY-ONE.**

**NO CITY CAN BE DECLARED CONDEMNED<sup>28</sup> SAVE BY A DECREE OF A COURT OF SEVENTY-ONE. A FRONTIER TOWN CANNOT BE CONDEMNED NOR THREE CITIES AT A TIME,<sup>29</sup> BUT ONLY ONE OR TWO.**

THE GREAT SANHEDRIN CONSISTED OF SEVENTY-ONE MEMBERS; THE SMALL SANHEDRIN OF TWENTY-THREE. WHENCE DO WE DEDUCE THAT THE GREAT SANHEDRIN IS OF SEVENTY-ONE? IT IS SAID, GATHER UNTO ME SEVENTY MEN;<sup>30</sup> WITH MOSES AT THEIR HEAD WE HAVE SEVENTY-ONE. R. JUDAH SAID IT CONSISTED ONLY OF SEVENTY. WHENCE DO WE KNOW THAT THE SMALL SANHEDRIN IS OF ONLY TWENTY-THREE? IT IS SAID, AND THE EDAH<sup>31</sup> SHALL JUDGE... AND THE 'EDAH SHALL DELIVER.<sup>32</sup> ONE EDAH JUDGES, [I.E. CONDEMNS] AND THE OTHER MAY DELIVER [I.E. ACQUIT], HENCE WE HAVE TWENTY. BUT HOW DO WE KNOW THAT A CONGREGATION CONSISTS OF NOT LESS THAN TEN? IT IS WRITTEN, HOW LONG SHALL I BEAR WITH THIS EVIL EDAH?<sup>33</sup> EXCLUDING JOSHUA AND CALEB, WE HAVE TEN. AND WHENCE DO WE DERIVE THE ADDITIONAL THREE? BY THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE TEXT, THOU SHALT NOT FOLLOW A MAJORITY FOR EVIL,<sup>34</sup> I INFER THAT I MAY FOLLOW THEM FOR GOOD;<sup>35</sup> IF SO, WHY IS IT SAID, TO INCLINE AFTER THE MAJORITY<sup>36</sup>? TO TEACH THAT THE MAJORITY TO INCLINE AFTER FOR GOOD [I.E. FOR A FAVOURABLE DECISION] IS NOT THE ONE TO INCLINE AFTER' FOR EVIL [I.E. FOR AN ADVERSE DECISION] SINCE FOR GOOD, A MAJORITY OF ONE SUFFICES; WHEREAS FOR EVIL, A MAJORITY OF TWO IS REQUIRED. [

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(1) An assault on a person involving bodily injury, Lev. XXIV, 19.

(2) Done by a goring ox, Ex. XXI, 35.

(3) Ex. XXII, 3.

(4) Ex. XXI, 37.

(5) Deut. XXII, 28-29.

(6) Ex. XXII, 15-16.

- (7) Deut. XXII, 14ff.
- (8) Representing the opinion of teachers in general.
- (9) For if the woman is proved guilty she is stoned.
- (10) Deut. XXV, 2-3.
- (11) V. p. 42.
- (12) Making it 13 instead of 12 months.
- (13) Lev. IV, 15. According to Maimonides, 'The Ordination of Elders'.
- (14) Deut. XXI, 1- 9.
- (15) Deut. XXV, 5-10. V. p. 91, lit., the 'drawing off' of the shoe.
- (16) The annulment of a woman's marriage following her refusal to agree to the union contracted by her as a fatherless girl during her minority.
- (17) V. Lev. XIX, 23-25. It could be exchanged into money and its equivalent consumed in Jerusalem.
- (18) The tithe taken by the landowner to Jerusalem there to be consumed, as distinct from the 'first tithe' assigned to the Levites, according to Rabbinic interpretation of Deut. XIV, 22-26.
- (19) The value of which had been vowed to the Sanctuary.
- (20) Priest, v. Glos.
- (21) Lev. XX, 16.
- (22) Lev. XX, 15. The procedure at the trial of the beast and the person is thus made alike.
- (23) If he gored a person. Ex. XXI, 28.
- (24) Ex. XXI, 29.
- (25) Which has killed a human being.
- (26) That has gone astray after idolworship, v. p. 76.

**(27) Deut. XVIII, 20.** (12) I.e., all wars apart from the conquest of the seven nations inhabiting Canaan.

**(28) Deut. XIII, 13.**

**(29) V. p. 82.**

**(30) Num. XI, 16.**

**(31) vsg Congregation.**

**(32) Ibid. XXXV, 24.**

**(33) Ibid. XIV, 27. Referring to the twelve spies. Ibid. XXXV, 24.**

**(34) I.e., for condemnation. Ex. XXIII, 2.**

**(35) For acquittal.**

**(36) Ibid.**

### **Babylonian Talmud, Baba Mezia 59a-59b**

**The following concerns a halakhic ruling regarding whether a reconstructed oven is ritually pure or impure.**

On that day, Rabbi Eliezer used all the arguments in the world. He produced powerful arguments to justify his position that the oven should be considered unreconstructed and not susceptible to ritual impurity. But the Sages did not accept his arguments, and insisted that the oven was susceptible to ritual impurity. After Rabbi Eliezer saw that he was not able to persuade his colleagues with logical arguments, he said to them: "If the Halakhah is in accordance with me, let this carob tree prove it." The carob tree immediately uprooted itself and moved one hundred cubits--and some say four hundred cubits--from its original place. The Sages said to him: "Proof cannot be brought from a carob tree." Rabbi Eliezer then said to the Sages: If the Halakhah is in accordance with me, let the channel of water prove it. The channel of water immediately flowed backward, against the direction in which it usually flowed. The sages said to him: 'Proof cannot be brought from a channel of water either.' Rabbi Eliezer then said to the Sages: 'If the Halakhah is in accordance with me, let the wall of the House of Study prove it.' The walls of the House of Study then leaned and were about to fall. Rabbi Yehoshua, one of Rabbi Eliezer's chief opponents among the Sages, rebuked the falling walls, saying to them: 'If Talmudic scholars argue with one another in their discussions about the Halakhah, what

affair is it of yours?' The walls did not fall down, out of respect for Rabbi Yehoshua, nor did they straighten, out of respect for Rabbi Eliezer, and indeed those walls still remain leaning to this day. Rabbi Eliezer then said to the Sages: 'If the Halakhah is in accordance with me let it be proved directly from Heaven.' Suddenly a heavenly voice went forth and said to the Sages, 'Why are you disputing with Rabbi Eliezer? The Halakhah is in accordance with him in all circumstances!' Rabbi Yehoshua rose to his feet and quoted a portion of a verse (Deuteronomy 30:12), saying, "**The Torah is not in heaven!**

The Gemara interrupts the Baraita and asks for a clarification: What did Rabbi Yehoshua mean when he quoted the Scriptural verse that the Torah is not in heaven?

Rabbi Yirmeyah said in reply: Since **God already gave the Torah to the Jewish people on Mount Sinai, we no longer pay attention to heavenly voices that attempt to intervene in matters of Halakhah.** For You, God, already wrote in the Torah at Mount Sinai (**Exodus 23:2**),**After the majority to incline.**

**Exod.23 [2] Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil; neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment:**

**וְלَا תַּעֲגֹת עָלֵרֶב, לֹא תִּהְיֶה אַחֲרִיר בָּבִים, לְרֻעָת  
לֹגֶת אַחֲרֵי רַבִּים—לְהַטָּה**

From this verse we learn that Halakhic disputes must be resolved by majority vote of the Rabbis. **God could not contradict His own decision to allow Torah questions to be decided by free debate and majority vote.**

The Gemara relates that generations later Rabbi Natan met the Prophet Elijah. (Several of the Talmudic Sages had visions of Elijah the Prophet, and discussed Halakhic questions with him.) Rabbi Natan asked Elijah about the debate between Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua. He said to him: What did the Holy One, blessed be He, do at that time when Rabbi Yehoshua refused to heed the heavenly voice? In reply, Elijah said to Rabbi Natan: **God smiled and said: 'My sons have defeated Me, My sons have defeated Me! God's sons "defeated Him" with their arguments. Rabbi Yehoshua was correct in his contention that a view confirmed by majority vote must be accepted, even where God Himself holds the opposite view.**

**Talmud - Mas. Baba Metzia 59b**

and this was the oven of Aknai.<sup>1</sup> Why [the oven of] Aknai? Said Rab Judah in Samuel's name: [It means] that they encompassed it with arguments<sup>2</sup> as a snake, and proved it unclean. It has been taught: On that day R. Eliezer brought forward every imaginable argument,<sup>3</sup> but they did not accept them. Said he to them: 'If the halachah agrees with me, let this carob-tree prove it! Thereupon the carob-tree was torn a hundred cubits out of its place others affirm, four hundred cubits. No proof can be brought from a carob-tree, they retorted. Again he said to them: If the halachah agrees with me, let the stream of water prove it!' Whereupon the stream of water flowed backwards. No proof can be brought from a stream of water, they rejoined. Again he urged: If the halachah agrees with me, let the walls of the schoolhouse prove it, whereupon the walls inclined to fall. But R. Joshua rebuked them, saying: When scholars are engaged in a halachic dispute, what have ye to interfere? Hence they did not fall, in honour of R. Joshua, nor did they resume the upright, in honour of R. Eliezer; and they are still standing thus inclined. Again he said to them: If the halachah agrees with me, let it be proved from Heaven! Whereupon a Heavenly Voice cried out: Why do ye dispute with R. Eliezer, seeing that in all matters the halachah agrees with him! But R. Joshua arose and exclaimed: It is not in heaven.<sup>4</sup> What did he mean by this? Said R. Jeremiah: That the Torah had already been given at Mount Sinai; we pay no attention to a Heavenly Voice, because Thou hast long since written in the Torah at Mount Sinai, After the majority must one incline.<sup>5</sup>

R. Nathan met Elijah<sup>6</sup> and asked him: What did the Holy One, Blessed be He, do in that hour? He laughed [with joy], he replied, saying, **My sons have defeated Me, My sons have defeated Me.** It was said: On that day all objects which R. Eliezer had declared clean were brought and burnt in fire.<sup>7</sup> Then they took a vote and excommunicated him.<sup>8</sup> Said they, Who shall go and inform him? I will go, answered R. Akiba, lest an unsuitable person go and inform him, and thus destroy the whole world.<sup>9</sup> What did R. Akiba do? He donned black garments and wrapped himself in black,<sup>10</sup> and sat at a distance of four cubits from him. Akiba, said R. Eliezer to him, 'what has particularly happened to-day?<sup>11</sup> Master, he replied, it appears to me that thy companions hold aloof from thee. Thereupon he too rent his garments, put off his shoes, removed [his seat] and sat on the earth, whilst tears streamed from his eyes.<sup>12</sup> The world was then smitten: a third of the olive crop, a third of the wheat, and a third of the barley crop. Some say, the dough in women's hands swelled up.

A Tanna taught: Great was the calamity that befell that day, for everything at which R. Eliezer cast his eyes was burned up. R. Gamaliel<sup>13</sup> too was travelling in a ship, when a huge wave arose to drown him. It appears to me, he reflected, that this is on account of none other but R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanus. Thereupon he arose and exclaimed, Sovereign of the Universe! Thou knowest full well that I have not acted for my honour, nor for the honour of my paternal house, but for Thine, so that strife may not multiply in Israel! At that the raging sea subsided.

Ima Shalom was R. Eliezer's wife, and sister to R. Gamaliel. From the time of this incident onwards she did not permit him to fall upon his face.<sup>14</sup> Now a certain day happened to be New Moon, but she mistook a full month for a defective one.<sup>15</sup> Others say, a poor man came and stood at the door, and she took out some bread to him.<sup>16</sup> [On her return] she found him fallen on his face. Arise,' she cried out to him, thou hast slain my brother. In the meanwhile an announcement was made from the house of Rabban Gamaliel that he had died. 'Whence dost thou know it? he questioned her. I have this tradition from my father's house: All gates are locked, excepting the gates of wounded feelings.<sup>17</sup>

**Our Rabbis taught:** He who wounds the feelings of a proselyte transgresses three negative injunctions, and he who oppresses him infringes two. Wherein does wronging differ? Because three negative injunctions are stated: Viz., Thou shalt not wrong a stranger [i.e., a proselyte],<sup>18</sup> And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not wrong him,<sup>19</sup> and ye shall not therefore wrong each his fellowman,<sup>20</sup> a proselyte being included in ‘fellowman.’ But for ‘oppression’ also three are written, viz., and thou shalt not oppress him,<sup>21</sup> Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger,<sup>22</sup> and [If thou lend money to any of my people that is poor by thee,] thou shalt not be to him as a usurer<sup>23</sup> which includes a proselyte! But [say] both [are forbidden] by three [injunctions].

**It has been taught:** R. Eliezer the Great said: Why did the Torah warn against [the wronging of] a proselyte in thirty-six, or as others say, in forty-six, places? Because he has a strong inclination to evil.<sup>24</sup> What is the meaning of the verse, Thou shalt neither wrong a stranger, nor oppress him; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt? It has been taught: R. Nathan said: Do not taunt your neighbour with the blemish you yourself have.<sup>25</sup> And thus the proverb runs:<sup>26</sup> If there is a case of hanging in a man's family record, say not to him,<sup>27</sup> ‘Hang this fish up for me.

#### **MISHNAH. PRODUCE MAY NOT BE MIXED WITH OTHER PRODUCE, EVEN NEW WITH NEW,**

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(1) This refers to an oven, which, instead of being made in one piece, was made in a series of separate portions with a layer of sand between each. R. Eliezer maintains that since each portion in itself is not a utensil, the sand between prevents the whole structure from being regarded as a single utensil, and therefore it is not liable to uncleanness. The Sages however hold that the outer coating of mortar or cement unifies the whole, and it is therefore liable to uncleanness. (This is the explanation given by Maimonides on the Mishnah, Kel. V, 10. Rashi a.l. adopts a different reasoning). Aknai is a proper noun, probably the name of a master, but it also means snake. (Gr. \*\* ) which meaning the Talmud proceeds to discuss.

(2) Lit., words.

(3) Lit., all the arguments in the world.

(4) Deut. XXX,12.

(5) Ex. XXIII,2; though the story is told in a legendary form, this is a remarkable assertion of the independence of human reasoning.

(6) It was believed that Elijah, who had never died, often appeared to the Rabbis.

(7) As unclean.

(8) Lit., blessed him, a euphemism for excommunication.

(9) I.e., commit a great wrong by informing him tactlessly and brutally.

(10) As a sign of mourning, which a person under the ban had to observe.

(11) Lit., what is this day (different) from yesterday (or to-morrow)?

(12) Rending the garments etc. were all mourning observances. (In ancient times mourners sat actually upon the earth, not, as nowadays, upon low stools.) The character of R. Eliezer is hotly contested by Weiss and Halevi. The former, mainly on the basis of this story (though adducing some other proof too), severely castigates him as a man of extreme stubbornness and conceit, who would brook no disagreement, a bitter controversialist from his youth until death, and ever seeking quarrels (Dor. II, 82). Halevy (Doroth 1, 5, pp. 374 et seqq.) energetically defends him, pointing out that this is the only instance recorded in the whole Talmud of R. Eliezer's maintaining his view against the majority. He further contends that the meekness with which he accepted his sentence, though he was sufficiently great to have disputed and fought it, is a powerful testimony to his humility and peace-loving nature.

(13) The Nasi and the prime mover in the ban against R. Eliezer.

(14) After the Eighteen Benedictions there follows a short interval for private prayer, during which each person offered up his own individual supplications to God. These were called supplications (iubj.), and the suppliant prostrated himself upon his face; they were omitted on New Moons and Festivals. Elbogen, Der jüdische Gottesdienst, pp. 73 et seqq. Ima Shalom feared that her husband might pour out his grief and feeling of injury in these prayers, and that God, listening to them, would punish R. Gamaliel, her brother.

(15) Jewish months consist of either 30 days (full) or 29 (defective). Thinking that the previous month had consisted of 29 days, and that the 30th would be New Moon, she believed that R. Eliezer could not engage in these private prayers in any case, and relaxed her watch over him. But actually it was a full month, so that the 30th was an ordinary day, when these prayers are permitted.

(16) I.e., she did not mistake the day, but was momentarily forced to leave her husband in order to give bread to a beggar.

(17) Lit., wrong, v. p. 354, n. 4. She felt sure that R. Eliezer had seized the opportunity of her absence or error to cry out to God about the ban.

(18) Ex. XXII, 20.

(19) Lev. XIX, 33.

(20) Lev. XXV, 17.

(21) Ex. XXII, 20.

(22) Ex. XXIII, 9.

(23) Ex. XXII, 24

(24) So Rashi in Hor. 13a. Jast.: because his original character is bad into which

### Messiah Yeshua is the King

Zech.9[ 9] Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

**Matt.21**[ 5] Tell ye the daughter of Sion, **Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass .**

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**Dan.7**[ 13] I saw in the night visions, and, behold, **one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven,**

**[10] A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened.**

**Rev.1**[ 7] **Behold, he cometh with clouds;** and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen.

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### Talmud - Mas. Sanhedrin 96b

13, **there came with the clouds of heaven one like a son of man**, which R. Nahman gave a Hebrew connotation.]

### Talmud - Mas. Sanhedrin 98a

**of man came with the clouds of heaven** 34 whilst [elsewhere] it is written, [ **behold, thy king cometh unto thee . . . ]** lowly, and riding upon an ass! 35 — if they are meritorious, [he will come] with the clouds of heaven; 36 if not, lowly and riding upon an ass. King Shapur [I] said to Samuel, ‘Ye maintain that the Messiah will come upon an ass: I will rather send him a white horse of mine.’37 He replied, ‘Have you a hundred-hued steed?’38

### Talmud - Mas. Sanhedrin 98a

**will come] with the clouds of heaven; 36 if not, lowly and riding upon an ass. King Shapur [I] said to Samuel ,** ‘Ye maintain that the Messiah will come upon an ass: I will rather send him a white horse

## **Talmud - Mas. Sanhedrin 99a**

**lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.**

### **Reasons Why we Don't Accept the Oral Law**

**The Oral Law is not mentioned even once in the entire Hebrew Bible.** When God told Moses to come up to Mount Sinai to receive the tablets He said: "Come up to me into the mountain, and be there: and I will give thee tablets of stone, and **a law, and commandments which I have written;**" (Ex 24,12). No mention is made of an Oral Law.

The Hebrew Bible reports that the written Torah was both lost and completely forgotten for 75 years and only rediscovered by the Temple priests (2Ki 22,8; 2Chr 34,15). **Also, after King Josiah died, the other Kings forsook the Lord and His Law again for more the 30 years.**

**It is inconceivable that an Oral Law could have been remembered when even the written Law was forgotten and forsaken many times.**

The words of the Mishnah and Talmud are clearly the words of men living in the 2nd-5th centuries CE and absent are the familiar Biblical formulae "And the Lord spoke unto Moses saying," and "Thus saith the Lord".

The Rabbis claim that the "Oral Law" is the official interpretation of the Torah given on Mount Sinai. Yet if one actually looks at the Mishnah and Talmud **they are full of the opinions of Rabbis who disagree with each other on almost every issue**. The Rabbis explain that whenever there are such disagreements, "both opinions are the words of the living God".

**We maintain that it is unreasonable to believe that God would contradict Himself.**

**2Kgs.22[ 8]** And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, **I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD.** And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.

**2Chr.34[ 15]** And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, **I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD.** And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan.

**Deut.17[ 14]** When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me;

**[15]** Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.

**[18]** And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that **he shall write him a copy of this law in a book** out of that which is before the priests the Levites:**[19 ]** And **it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them:**

**[20]** That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that **he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left:** to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

## 2Kgs.21

**[1]** **Manasseh** was twelve years old when he began to reign, and reigned **fifty and five years** in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Hephzi-bah.

**[2]** And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, after the abominations of the heathen, whom the LORD cast out before the children of Israel.

**[18]** And **Manasseh slept with his fathers**, and was buried in the garden of his own house, in the garden of Uzza: and **Amon his son reigned in his stead.**

**[19]** Amon was twenty and two years old when he began to reign, and **he reigned two years** in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Meshullemeth, the daughter of Haruz of Jotbah.

**[20]** And he did that which was evil in the sight of the LORD, as his father Manasseh did.

**[21]** And he walked in all the way that his father walked in, and served the idols that his father served, and worshipped them:

**[22]** And he forsook the LORD God of his fathers, and walked not in the way of the LORD.

## 2 Kings 22

**[1]** **Josiah was eight years old** when he began to reign, and he reigned thirty and one years in Jerusalem. And his mother's name was Jedidah, the daughter of Adaiah of Boscath.

**[2]** And he did that which was right in the sight of the LORD, and walked in all the way of David his father, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left.

**[3]** And it came to pass **in the eighteenth year of king Josiah** , that the king sent Shaphan the son of Azaliah, the son of Meshullam, the scribe, to the house of the LORD, saying,

**The book was lost or forsaken for 75 years ( 55 + 2 + 18 = 75 )**

**One thought is, with great probability, that the passages read to the king, was a portion of Deuteronomy, the twenty-eighth, twenty-ninth, and thirtieth chapters, in which is recorded a renewal of the covenant, and an enumeration of the curses denounced against all who violated the law. Yes, the Blessing and the curses.**

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In a little more detail....

No written law for a long time

2Chr.12 [1] And it came to pass, when Rehoboam had established the kingdom, and had strengthened himself, he forsook the law of the LORD, and all Israel with him.

2Chr.15 [1] And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah the son of Oded: [2] And he went out to meet Asa, and said unto him, Hear ye me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin; The LORD is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.[3] Now for a long season Israel hath been without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law.

2Kgs.22 [8] And Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan, and he read it.

[10] And Shaphan the scribe shewed the king, saying, Hilkiah the priest hath delivered me a book. And Shaphan read it before the king. [11] And it came to pass, when the king ( In the 18th year of king Josiah ) had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes. ( There is appox. 338 years from Asa to Josiah) [12] And the king commanded Hilkiah the priest, and Ahikam the son of Shaphan, and Achbor the son of Michaiah, and Shaphan the scribe, and Asahiah a servant of the king's, saying, [13] Go ye, inquire of the LORD for me, and for the people, and for all Judah, concerning the words of this book that is found: for great is the wrath of the LORD that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according unto all that which is written concerning us.

2Kgs.23 [21] And the king commanded all the people, saying, Keep the passover unto the LORD your God, as it is written in the book of this covenant. [24] Moreover the workers with familiar spirits, and the wizards, and the images, and the idols, and all the abominations that were spied in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem, did Josiah put away, that he might perform the words of the law which were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the LORD. [28] Now the rest of the acts of Josiah, and all that he did, are they not written in the book of the chronicles of the kings of Judah?

2Kgs.23 [22] Surely there was not holden such a passover from the days of the judges that judged Israel, nor in all the days of the kings of Israel, nor of the kings of Judah;

2Chr.34[15] And Hilkiah answered and said to Shaphan the scribe, I have found the book of the law in the house of the LORD. And Hilkiah delivered the book to Shaphan.

### The Attributes of God

**Gen. 1:26 -And God said: Let us make man in "our" image, after "our" likeness**

**[27] So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.**

**אֱלֹהִים נָשָׁה וַיּَאמֶר בְּצַלְמָנוּ כִּדְמוּתֵנוּ אָדָם**

**Gen.9 [6] Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.**

**The more I looked, the more I saw we are made in HIS IMAGE and HIS LIKENESS**

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**Rambam (Maimonides; Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon) (1135-1204 C.E.)**

**Should we believe him? Not in everything. Sounds like he added to the Word of God.**

A physician born in Moorish Cordoba, Rambam lived in a variety of places throughout the Moorish lands of Spain, the Middle East and North Africa, often fleeing persecution. He was a leader of the Jewish community in Cairo. **He was heavily influenced by Greek thought, particularly that of Aristotle.**

Rambam was the author of the **Mishneh Torah**, one of the greatest codes of Jewish law, compiling every conceivable topic of Jewish law in subject matter order and providing a simple statement of the prevailing view in plain language. In his own time, he was widely condemned because he claimed that the Mishneh Torah was a substitute for studying the **Talmud**.

Rambam is also responsible for several important theological works. He developed the **13 Principles of Faith**, the most widely accepted list of Jewish beliefs. He also wrote the **Guide for the Perplexed**, a discussion of difficult theological concepts written from the perspective of an Aristotelian philosopher.

**Attribute** - A quality or characteristic inherent in or ascribed to someone or something. An object associated with and serving to identify a character, personage, or office - To relate to a particular cause or source; ascribe: *attributed their failure to a lack of*

*preparation.* To regard as the work of a specified agent, place, or time: *attributed the painting to Titian; attributed the vase to 18th-century Japan.* An object associated with and serving to identify a character, personage, or office: face, hand, arm voice, etc. of God, *Grammar.* A word or phrase syntactically subordinate to another word or phrase that it modifies; for example, *my sister's* and *brown* in *my sister's brown dog.*

**an·thro·po·mor·phism** n - Attribution of human motivation, characteristics, or behavior to inanimate objects, animals, or natural phenomena. **anthropomorphic** adj.

**Metaphysics.** An underlying philosophical or theoretical principle, *used with a sing. verb*) *Philosophy.* The branch of philosophy that examines the nature of reality, including the relationship between mind and matter, substance and attribute, fact and value. (*used with a pl. verb*) The theoretical or first principles of a particular discipline: *the metaphysics of law.* (*used with a sing. verb*) A priori speculation upon questions that are unanswerable to scientific observation, analysis, or experiment. (*used with a sing. verb*) Excessively subtle or recondite reasoning.

**philosophy:** Love and pursuit of wisdom by intellectual means and moral self-discipline.

**Investigation of the nature, causes, or principles of reality, knowledge, or values, based on logical reasoning rather than empirical methods.**

A system of thought based on or involving such inquiry: *the philosophy of Hume.*

The critical analysis of fundamental assumptions or beliefs.

The disciplines presented in university curriculums of science and the liberal arts, except medicine, law, and theology.

The discipline comprising logic, ethics, aesthetics, metaphysics, and epistemology.

A set of ideas or beliefs relating to a particular field or activity; an underlying theory: *an original philosophy of advertising.*

A system of values by which one lives: *has an unusual philosophy of life*

Rambam said God is not anthropomorphic. We will see what God's Words says about that below. We use only the Word of God, not our opinions.

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**Here are just a "few" attributes of God in the Scriptures**

Image of God, knows good & evil, eyes of the LORD, LORD smelled, anger of the LORD, anger of the LORD was kindled, voice of the LORD God, His ears, His heart, face of the LORD, hand of the LORD, arm of the LORD, mouth of the LORD, finger of God, breath of God, jealous God, pitiful, The Lord spake to so many people, thinks, remembers, considers, He Blesses and curse, sees, talks, stands, sits, hears

God has a Son (His Word), Spirit, army, host, angels, kingdom

all: power, strength, wisdom, understanding, might, knowledge, knowing - the hearts of men

Some events in the Scriptures that show the some of the Lord's Attributes

Saw that it was good

Cast out the angels that sinned - \* Jude & 2nd Peter 2

The Flood

Destroyed Sodom & Gomorrah

slew kings, nations, Pharaoh, etc...

Just a few verses.....

Heb. 4[15] For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Prov.8 [17] I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me.

Deut.11 [12] A land which the LORD thy God careth for: the eyes of the LORD thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year

Gen.8[21] And the LORD smelled a sweet savour; and the LORD said in his heart , I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done.

Gen.8 [1] And God remembered Noah , and every living thing, and all the cattle that was with him in the ark: and God made a wind to pass over the earth, and the waters asswaged;

Pss.5[1] Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation.

**Pss.34** [15] The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.

**Exod.33** [ 18] And he said, I beseech thee, shew me thy glory.

[19] And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.

**[20] And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.**

[21] And the LORD said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock:

[22] And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a clift of the rock, and **will cover thee with my hand** while I pass by:

[23] And I will take away **mine hand**, and thou shalt see my **back parts** : but my face shall not be seen.

**Pss.86** 15] But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.

**Pss.78** [38] But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.

**Pss.145** [8] The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy.

**Pss.146** [8] The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous:[9] The LORD preserveth the strangers; he relieveth the fatherless and widow: but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down.

**Pss.40** [17] But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my deliverer; make no tarrying, O my God.

**2Cor .4**[4] In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

Deuteronomy Chapter 6 verse 15 - אֱלֹהִים יְהוָה קָנָא jealous God, even the LORD thy God

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anger of the LORD thy God

## Anger

H639 **אָף** 'aph *af*

From H599; properly the *nose* or *nostril*; hence the *face*, and occasionally a *person*; also (from the rapid breathing in passion) *ire*: - anger (-gry), + before, countenance, face, + forbearing, forehead, + [long-] suffering, nose, nostril, snout, X worthy, wrath.

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H3707 **כָּעֵס** kaas *kaw-as'*

A primitive root; to *trouble*; by implication to *grieve*, *rage*, *be indignant*: - be angry, be grieved, take indignation, provoke (to anger, unto wrath), have sorrow, vex, be wroth.

Wrath H5678 **עֲבֹרָה** ebrah *eb-rav'*

Feminine of H5676; an *outburst* of passion: - anger, rage, wrath.

H2740 **חָרוֹן חָרָונָה** charon *khaw-rone'*, *khaw-rone'*

From H2734; a *burning* of anger: - sore displeasure, fierce (-ness), fury, (fierce) wrath (-ful).

H7110 **קְצַפְתִּי** qetseph *keh'-tsef*

From H7107; a *splinter* (as *chipped off*); figuratively *rage* or *strife*: - foam, indignation, X sore, wrath.

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Deut. 6:15

וְהַשְׁמִידֵה, מֵעֶל פְּנֵי הָאָדָם, פְּנִימֵיהֶרֶת אֲפִיהָה אֱלֹהִיךְ, בְּ

lest the anger of the Lord your God be kindled -

H2734 **חָרָה** charah *khaw-rav'*

A primitive root (compare H2787); to *glow* or grow warm; figuratively (usually) to *blaze up*, of anger, zeal, jealousy: - be angry, burn, be displeased, X earnestly, fret self, grieve, be (wax) hot, be incensed, kindle, X very, be wroth. See H8474.

### Yeshua is the Messiah

**Dan.7[ 13]** I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the **Son of man came with the clouds of heaven**, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him.

**Matt.24[ 30]** And then shall appear the sign of the **Son of man** in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the **Son of man coming in the clouds** of heaven with power and great glory.

**Matt.26[ 64]** Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the **Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven**.

**Mark.13[ 26]** And then shall they see the **Son of man coming in the clouds** with great power and glory.

**Mark.14[ 62]** And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the **Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven**.

**Luke.21[ 27]** And then shall they see the **Son of man coming in a cloud** with power and great glory.

**Zech.14[ 5]** And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azal: yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah: and **the LORD my God shall come, and all the saints with thee**.

**Jude.1[ 14]** And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, **the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints.**[ 15] To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

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### Talmud - Mas. Sanhedrin 96b

R. Nahman said to R. Isaac: "Have you heard when Bar Nafle<sup>35</sup> will come?" "Who is Bar Nafle?" he asked. "**Messiah,**" he answered, "Do you call **Messiah** Bar Nafle?" Even so," he rejoined, "as it is written, in that day I will raise up

35) [Lit., "son of the fallen." Bar Nafle is generally assumed to represent the Greek \*\*, the "son of the clouds ;" cf. **Dan. VII, 13**, there came with the clouds of heaven one like a son of man, which R. Nahman gave a Hebrew connotation.]

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### Talmud - Mas. Sanhedrin 98a

Kings shall see and arise, princes also shall worship?

1 R. Eliezer countered, But is it not written, if thou wilt return,

2 O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto me?

3 R. Joshua answered, But it is elsewhere written, And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times and a half and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished.

4 At this R. Eliezer remained silent. R. Abba also said: There can be no more manifest [sign of] redemption than this: viz., what is said, But ye, O mountains of Israel, ye shall shoot forth your branches, and yield your fruit to my people of Israel, for they are at hand to come.

5 R. Eleazar said: Than this too, as it is written, For before these days there was no hire for man, nor any hire for beast; neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in because of the affliction.

6 What is meant by, "neither was there any peace to him that went out or came in because of the affliction? " Rab said: Even for scholars, who are promised peace,

7 as it is written, Great peace have they which love thy law,

8 'There [shall] be no peace on account of the affliction.' Samuel said, "Until all prices are equal."

9 R. Hanina said: **The Son of David will not come** until a fish is sought for an invalid and cannot be procured, as it is written, Then will I make their waters deep, and cause their rivers to run like oil;

10 whilst it is written,

11 in that day will **I cause the horn of the house of Israel to bud forth.**

12 R. Hama b. Hanina said: **The son of David will not come** until even the pettiest kingdom ceases [to have power] over Israel,

13 as it is written, He shall both cut off the sprigs

14 with pruning hooks, and take away and cut down the branches;

15 and this is followed by, in that time shall the present be brought unto the Lord of hosts of a people that is scattered and peeled.

16 Ze'iri said in R. Hanina's name: **The son of David will not come** until there are no conceited men in Israel, as it is written, For then I will take away out of the midst of thee them that rejoice in thy pride:

17 which is followed by, I will also leave in the midst of thee an afflicted and poor people, and they shall take refuge in the name of the Lord.

18 R. Simlai said in the name of R. Eleazar, son of R. Simeon: **The son of David will not come** until all judges and officers are gone from Israel, as it is written, And I will turn my hand upon thee, and purely purge away thy dross and take away all thy tin: And I will restore thy judges as at first.

19 "Ulla said: Jerusalem shall be redeemed only by righteousness,

20 as it is written, Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.

21 R. Papa said: When the haughty cease to exist [in Israel] the magi

22 shall cease [among the Persians]; when the judges cease to exist [in Israel], the chiliarchi

23 shall cease likewise. Now, "when the haughty cease to exist, the magi shall also cease," as it is written, And I will purely purge away thy haughty ones

24 and take away all thy tin.

25 'When the judges cease to exist, the chiliarchi shall cease likewise, as it is written, The Lord hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy.'

**26** R. Johanan said: When you see a generation ever dwindling, hope for him [**the Messiah**], as it is written, And the afflicted people thou wilt save.

**27** R. Johanan said: When thou seest a generation overwhelmed by many troubles as by a river, await him, as it is written, when the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him;

**28** which is followed by, And **the Redeemer shall come to Zion .**

**29** R. Johanan also said: **The son of David will come** only in a generation that is either altogether righteous or altogether wicked. 'in a generation that is altogether righteous," as it is written, Thy people also shall be all righteous: they shall inherit the land for ever.<sup>30</sup> 'Or altogether wicked," as it is written, And he saw that there was no man, **and wondered that there was no intercessor ;**<sup>31</sup> and it is [elsewhere] written, **For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it.**

**Isa.59 [16]** And he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him. ( the Messiah )

**32 --R. Alexandri said: R. Joshua b. Levi pointed out a contradiction. it is written, in its time [will the Messiah come], whilst it is also written, I [the Lord] will hasten it!**

**33** if they are worthy, I will hasten it: if not, [he will come] at the due time. R. Alexandri said: R. Joshua opposed two verses: it is written, **And behold, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven**

**34** whilst [elsewhere] it is written, [behold, thy king cometh unto thee . . . ] lowly, and riding upon an ass!

**Zech.9 [9]** Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

**John.12 14]** And Yeshua / Jesus, when he had found a young ass, sat thereon; as it is written,**[15] Fear not, daughter of Sion: behold, thy King cometh, sitting on an ass's colt.**

**35** " if they are meritorious, [he will come] with the clouds of heaven;

**36** if not, lowly and riding upon an ass. King Shapur [I] said to Samuel, "Ye maintain that the **Messiah will come upon an ass:** I will rather send him a white horse of mine."

**37** He replied, 'Have you a hundred-hued steed?"

**38** R. Joshua b. Levi met Elijah standing by the entrance of R. Simeon b. Yohai's tomb. He asked him: "Have I a portion in the world to come?" He replied, "if this Master desires it."

**39** R. Joshua b. Levi said, "**I saw two , but heard the voice of a third.**"

40 He then asked him, "**When will the Messiah come?**" "Go and ask him himself," was his reply. 'Where is he sitting?"At the entrance."41 **And by what sign may I recognise him?"**"**He is sitting among the poor lepers:** all of them untie [them]

42 all at once, and rebandage them together,

43 whereas he unties and rebandages each separately, [before treating the next], thinking, should I be wanted, [**it being time for my appearance as the Messiah**] I must not be delayed [through having to bandage a number of sores]." So he went to him and greeted him, saying, "peace upon thee, Master and Teacher."peace upon thee, O son of Levi," he replied. "When wilt thou come Master?" asked he, "To-day", was his answer. On his returning to Elijah, the latter enquired, 'What did he say to thee? "peace Upon thee, O son of Levi," he answered. Thereupon he [Elijah] observed, "He thereby assured thee and thy father of [a portion in] the world to come."He spoke falsely to me, " he rejoined, 'stating that he would come to-day, but has not." He [Elijah] answered him, 'This is what he said to thee, To-day, if ye will hear his voice."

44 The disciples of R. Jose b. Kisma asked him, "**When will the Messiah come?**" " He answered, "I fear lest ye demand a sign of me [that my answer is correct]."  
They assured him, "We will demand no sign of you." So he answered them, "**When this gate**

**45 falls down, is rebuilt, falls again, and is again rebuilt, and then falls a third time, before it can be rebuilt the son of David will come.**" They said to him, "Master, give us a sign." He protested, "Did ye not assure me that ye would not demand a sign?" They replied, "Even so, [we desire one]." He said to them. "if so, let the waters of the grotto of Paneas turn into blood;" and they turned into blood. When he lay dying he said to them, "place my coffin deep [in the earth],

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(1) ibid. XLIX, 7: "to him whom man despiseth etc." implies that he is still an unrepentant sinner (Rashi), or that their prostration in itself will bring about the redemption (Yad Ramah).

(2) I.e., to thy land.

(3) Jer. IV, 1.

**(4) Dan. XII, 7, thus proving that Messiah's coming is dependant only upon the utter prostration of Israel, not his repentance.**

(5) Ezek. XXXVI, 8. When Palestine becomes so very fertile, **Messiah's advent is near**, and there can be no clearer sign than this (Rashi).

(6) Zech. VIII, 10; I.e., when there is no money left, and troubles abound everywhere. Cf. supra "until the perutah ceases from the purse.'

(7) Lit., 'concerning whom peace is written.'

(8) Ps. CXIX, 165.

(9) This is a difficult passage. Rashi explains it as meaning either that the prices of all commodities, e.g., wheat, wine, oil etc. shall be alike, or that all commodities shall be equally dear. But it is difficult to see how this explains "neither was there any peace etc. Maharsha therefore connects this verse "to him that went out or came in "" with Ezek. XLVI, 9: But when the people of the land shall come before the Lord in the solemn feasts, he that entereth in by the way of the north gate to worship shall go out by the way of the south gate; and he that entereth by the way of the south gate shall go forth by the way of the north gate . . . Accordingly he interprets: until all gates are alike, i.e., all people, whether entering or leaving the Temple—an idiom denoting "without exception " will suffer.

(10) Ezek. XXXII, 14. When an oily film covers the water, fish cannot be caught—an anticipation of the havoc to sea life wrought in modern times by oil-burning vessels?

(11) [in the same connection, dealing with the destruction of Egypt (Maharsha).]

(12) Ibid. XXIX, 21.

(13) [So Maharsha. Rashi renders: "until even the pettiest rule ceases among Israel "i.e., Israel will be deprived of all semblance of power.]

(14) Metaphorical for "petty kingdoms."

(15) Isa. XVIII, 5.

(16) Ibid. 7.

(17) Zeph. III, 11.

(18) Ibid. 12: i.e., for them shall the redeemer come.

(19) Isa. I, 25f: this proves that they must first have been removed.

(20) I.e., through the exercise of charity.

(21) Ibid. 27.

(22) [The Guebres who were responsible for much of the suffering of the Jews under the Sassanians, v. supra p. 504, n. 6.]

(23) hyprhzd [Pers. Wezirpat, a ruler, Funk, Schwarz Festschrift, p. 432;] the name of a class of oppressive Persian officers.

- (24) lhdhx from hdx, "great", "haughty".
- (25) Metaphorically applied to the magi, as being "a cheap metal.'
- (26) Zeph. III, 15.
- (27) II Sam. XXII, 28.
- (28) Isa. LIX, 19.
- (29) Ibid. 20.
- (30) Ibid. LX, 21.
- (31) Ibid. LIX, 16.
- (32) Ibid. XLVIII, 11.
- (33) Ibid. LX, 22: The verse reads, I the Lord will hasten it in its time. The two phrases are contradictory, since 'hasten it' implies before its proper time.
- (34) Dan. VII, 13.
- (35) Zech. IX, 7.
- (36) "Swiftly" (Rashi).
- (37) This is more fitting.
- (38) [This jest is explained by Krochmal, (Hechalutz, I, p. 83) as an overt invitation to the Jews to help Shapur in his struggle with the Romans.]
- (39) **He referred to the Shechinah**, which was with them (Rashi). Maharsha renders: when thou art worthy thereof.
- (40) I.e., he saw only himself and Elijah there, but heard a third voice "**that of the Shechinah**".
- (41) Cur. edd. read ". . . of the town:" The Wilna Gaon deletes this and substitutes "of Rome."
- (42) The bandages of their sores for dressing.
- (43) I.e., if they have many leprous sores, they first take off all the bandages, and treat each sore, then replace them together.

(44) Ps. XCV, 7, thus he made his coming conditional-the condition was unfulfilled.

(45) [The gate of Caesarea Philippi, the home of R. Jose. Its fall would be a symbol of the destruction of the Roman power by the Parthians. Bacher, AT, I, p. 402.]

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### Talmud - Mas. Sanhedrin 98b

for there is not one palm-tree in Babylon to which a Persian horse will not be tethered, nor one coffin in Palestine out of which a Median horse will not eat straw."

1 Rab said: **The son of David will not come** until the [Roman] power enfolds Israel

2 for nine months, as it is written, Therefore will he give them up, until the time that she which travaileth hath brought forth: then the remnant of his brethren shall return unto the children of Israel.

3 "Ulla said; Let him [**The Messiah**] come, but let me not see him.

4 Rabbah said likewise: Let him come, but let me not see him. **R. Joseph said: Let him come, and may I be worthy of sitting in the shadow of his ass's saddle.**

**Zech.9 [9] Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.**

5 Abaye enquired of Rabbah: "What is your reason [for not wishing to see him]? **Shall we say, because of the birth pangs [preceding the advent] of the Messiah?**

6 But it has been taught, R. Eleazar's disciples asked him: '**What must a man do to be spared the pangs of the Messiah?**' [He answered,] 'Let him engage in study and benevolence; and you Master do both.' He replied: '[I fear] lest sin cause it,

7 in accordance with [the teaching of] R. Jacob b. Idi, who opposed [two verses] [viz.,] it is written, And, Behold, I am with thee, and 'will guard thee in all places whither thou goest:

8 but it is written, Then Jacob was greatly afraid and distressed'

9 " He was afraid that sin might cause [the nullification of God's promise]. Even as it was taught, Till thy people pass over, O Lord."

10 this refers to the first entry [into Palestine]; till thy people pass over, which thou hast purchased:

11 this refers to their second entry. Hence you may reason: The Israelites were as worthy of a miracle being wrought for them at the second entry as at the first, but that sin caused it [not to happen]. R. Johanan said likewise: Let him come, and let me not see him. Resh Lakish said to him: Why so? Shall we say, because it is written, As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him," or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him?

12 But come, and I will shew you its like even in this world. When one goes out into the field and meets a bailiff,

13 it is as though he had met a lion. When he enters the town, and is accosted by a tax-collector, it is as though he had met a bear. On entering his house and finding his sons and daughters in the throes of hunger, it is as though he were bitten by a serpent!

14 " But [**his unwillingness to see the Messiah**] is because it is written, Ask ye now, and see whether a man doth travail with child? Wherefore do I see every man [geber]

15 with his hands on his loins, as a woman in travail, and all faces are turned into paleness?

16 What is meant by "wherefore do I see every geber? " Raba b. Isaac said in Rab's name: it refers to Him to whom all geburah

17 [strength] belongs.

18 And what is the meaning of "and all faces are turned into paleness? "R. Johanan said: [This refers to God's] heavenly family [I.e., the angels] and his earthly family [I.e., Israel,] when God says, These [the Gentiles] are my handiwork, and so are these [the Jews]; how shall I destroy the former on account of the latter?

19 R. Papa said: Thus men say, 'When the ox runs and falls, the horse is put into his stall.'

20 R. Giddal said in Rab's name: The Jews are destined to eat [their fill] **in the days of the Messiah.**

21 R. Joseph demurred: is this not obvious; who else then should eat " Hilek and Bilek?

22 " This was said in opposition to R. Hillel, who maintained that there will be no Messiah for Israel, since they have already enjoyed him during the reign of Hezekiah.

23 Rab said: The world was created only on David's account .

24 Samuel said: On Moses account;

25 R. Johanan said: **For the sake of the Messiah. What is his [the Messiah's] name?**

— The School of R. Shila said: **His name is Shiloh, for it is written, until Shiloh come.**

26 The School of R. Yannai said: **His name is Yinnon, for it is written, His name shall endure for ever:**

27 e'er the sun was, his name is Yinnon.

28 The School of R. Haninah maintained: His name is Haninah, as it is written, Where I will not give you Haninah.

29 Others say: His name is Menahem the son of Hezekiah, for it is written, Because Menahem ["the comforter"], that would relieve my soul, is far.

30 **The Rabbis said: His name is "the leper scholar," as it is written, Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him a leper, smitten of God, and afflicted.**

**Isa.53 [4] Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.**

31 R. Nahman said: if he [**the Messiah**] is of those living [to day], it might be one like myself, as it is written, And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governors shall proceed from the midst of them.

32 Rab said: if he is of the living, it would be our holy Master;

33 if of the dead, it would have been Daniel the most desirable man.

34 Rab Judah said in Rab's name: The Holy One, blessed be **He, will raise up another David for us,**

**35 as it is written, But they shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom I will raise up unto them:**

36 not "I raised up", but "I will raise up" is said. R. Papa said to Abaye: But it is written, **And my servant David shall be their prince [nasi] for ever?**

**Pss.132 [11] The LORD hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I, Messiah set upon thy throne.**

37 " E.g., an emperor and a viceroy.

38 R. Simlai expounded: What is meant by, Woe unto you, that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light.?

39 This may be compared to a cock and a bat who were hopefully waiting for the light [i.e., dawn]. The cock said to the bat, "I look forward to the light, because I have sight; but of what use is the light to thee?"

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(1) This was a forecast of the future. Babylon and Palestine would be overrun with Persians, Medes and Parthians and their horses would dig up the dead, whose coffins would serve as cribs.

(2) I.e., the whole world in which Israel is scattered.

(3) Micah V, 2: "therefore will he give them up" is interpreted as meaning to a foreign " viz., the Roman " power, and the duration of their servitude is fixed by "until the time etc." i.e., nine months, the period of pregnancy.

(4) V. n. 7.

(5) [Following the reading in Yalkut (v. Levy,) tkuac. Our texts read: t,hpufs,"dung".]

(6) These troubles are generally referred to as birth pangs, being the travail which precedes the birth of a new era.

(7) That sin may neutralise the other two, and so I will suffer after all.

(8) Gen. XXVIII, 15; spoken by God to Jacob.

(9) Ibid. XXXII, 8: in view of God's promise, why did he fear?

(10) Ex. XV, 16.

(11) Ibid.

(12) Amos V, 19.

(13) Who contests his title to the field-(Jast.). Rashi translates: an official surveyor, who fixes the boundary lines of the different owners, and thus may increase or: limit one's property.

(14) I.e., we experience the same successive troubles even now, without the Messiah coming: why then should you be afraid of it?

(15) rcd.

(16) Jer. XXX, 6.

- (17) vrucd.
- (18) I.e., the Almighty himself bewails Israel in the power of the Gentile.
- (19) To avenge the wrongs suffered by the Jews. Because the suffering would be so great that even the Almighty would lament it, R. Johanan desired to be spared the Messiah's coming.
- (20) The horse is made to replace it, but when the ox recovers, it is difficult to remove the horse. So the Israelites, having fallen, were replaced in power by the Gentiles: but on their recovery, it will be difficult to remove the Gentiles from their position without inflicting much suffering.
- (21) I.e., the years of plenty which the Messiah will usher in will be enjoyed by the Israelites."**
- (22) Two fictitious names "any Tom, Dick and Harry"" shall these years be enjoyed indiscriminately by anyone?
- (23) Therefore R. Giddal puts it in the future.
- (24) That he might sing hymns and psalms to God.
- (25) That he might receive the Torah.
- (26) Gen. XLIX, 10.
- (27) E.V. "shall be continued".
- (28) Ps. LXXII, 17.
- (29) Jer. XVI, 13. Thus each School evinced intense admiration of its teacher in naming the Messiah after him by a play on words.
- (30) Lam. I, 16.
- (31) Isa. LIII, 4.
- (32) Jer. XXX, 21: this description fitted R. Nahman, who, as the son-in-law of the Resh Galutha, enjoyed great power and prestige.
- (33) I.e., R. Judah the Nasi, generally called Rabbi par excellence.
- (34) [Preferably, if of the living, our holy Master (would be the type) **of the Messiah; if of the dead, Daniel.] "**

(35) Lit., for them".

(36) Ibid. XXX, 9.

(37) Ezek. XXXVII, 25: prince (nasi) is a lower title than king.

**(38) The second David shall be the king, and the former David shall be his viceroy.**

(39) Amos V, 18.

(40) Thus Israel should hope for the redemption, because it will be a day of light to them: but why should the Gentiles, seeing that for them it will be a day of darkness?