



Type: Magazine Article

Hebrew Idioms and Analogies in the Book of Mormon - II

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Source: *Improvement Era*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (January 1910), pp. 234–239

Published by: Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association

Hebrew Idioms and Analogies in the Book of Mormon.

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II.

These instances in which the principles of enallage have been applied, are not the only ones that occur in the Book of Mormon, and a few additional ones, without accompanying remarks, shall now be given, in connection with certain Biblical texts, in order that the correspondence of the two records upon the point in question may be perceived at a glance:

BIBLE.

Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry (Ex. 22: 22, 23.)

And it shall be if thou do at all forget the Lord thy God, and walk after other gods, and serve them and worship them, I testify against you this day, that ye shall surely perish (Deut. 8: 19.)

Remember and forget not how thou provokest the Lord thy God to wrath in the wilderness: for from the day that thou didst depart out of the land of Egypt, until ye came into this place, ye have been rebellious against the Lord (Deut. 9: 7).

And thou shalt write them upon the door-posts of thine house,

BOOK OF MORMON.

We knew that ye could not construct a ship, for we knew that ye were lacking in judgment; wherefore, thou canst not accomplish so great a work (1 Nephi 17: 19).

For the Lord had not hitherto suffered that we should make much fire, as we journeyed in the wilderness; for he said, I will make thy food become sweet, that ye cook it not (1 Nephi 17: 12).

And I said unto him, Believest thou the scriptures? And he said, Yes. And I said unto him, Then ye do not understand them (Jacob 7: 10, 11).

Now Amulek said, O thou child of hell, why tempt ye me. Knowest thou that the righteous yieldeth to no such temptation? (Alma 11: 23).

BIBLE.

and upon *thy* gates: that *your* days may be multiplied, and the days of your children (Deut. 11: 20, 21).

Notwithstanding *thou* mayst kill and eat flesh in all *thy* gates, whatsoever *thy* soul lusteth after, according to the blessings of the Lord *thy* God which he hath given *thee* * * * only *ye* shall not eat the blood; *ye* shall pour it upon the earth as water. *Thou* mayst not eat within *thy* gates, etc. (Deut. 12: 15-17.)

BOOK OF MORMON.

Now I would that *ye* should remember that what I say unto *thee*, I say unto all (Alma 12: 5).

Behold my sons and my daughters, who are the sons and daughters of my second son, behold I leave unto *you* the same blessing which I left unto the sons and daughters of Laman; wherefore *thou* shalt not utterly be destroyed; but in the end *thy* seed shall be saved (II Nephi 4: 9).

These Hebraisms are thus demonstrated to be fully as characteristic of the language of the Book of Mormon as they are of that of the Bible, and some of the grammatical errors in the former, to which our attention is sometimes called by our opponents, are also found in the Bible, which is a model of correct English; and they should not be regarded by any one as fit matters for ridicule, but be viewed in their true light, as peculiarities necessarily associated with the use of a Hebrew idiom, and hence as affording unimpeachable evidence that the Book of Mormon was not written by Joseph Smith, nor by any other man who was not thoroughly familiar with some peculiar principles of the Jewish language.

If those who peruse these remarks will turn to Christ's sermon on the mount, and read especially Matt. 5: 39; 6: 1, 2 and 6, 7, and 16, 17, and 7: 1-5, they will find that, if there is any ground for charging illiteracy against the Book of Mormon writers because of the peculiarities in the use of language just passed upon, an identical charge of illiteracy can be sustained against the writers of the Bible.

Remarks relative to the Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon will be closed, for the present, with a few observations respecting the use of *we* in the text where Nephi says, "We are a descendant of Joseph" (I Nephi 6: 2). Writers of these times frequently use *we* instead of the singular *I*, as it seems to savor less of egotism, and Nephi's substitution of *we* for *I* in the cited text, suggests to

some minds grounds for the charge of modernism against his writings; but his language is fully sustained as proper by examples already produced, where a plural form is used for the singular to imply that the person or thing contains within himself or itself what is to be divided amongst many. In this case, Nephi could not alone claim the honor of being a descendant of Joseph, for his illustrious descent was necessarily shared with all the other members of his family. Thus this alleged mistake, or error, on the part of Nephi is, when rightly viewed, simply another evidence of the authenticity of his writings.

Passing now to another phase of our general subject, it becomes necessary to quote again some recognized authority as the foundation for our remarks. Turning, therefore, once again to *Greene's Hebrew Grammar*, paragraph 69, we learn that the "formation of words and their inflections are accomplished partly by internal changes and partly by external additions. * * * The external additions are significant syllables welded to the root or to the word, either at the beginning or the end." This statement of the principles upon which Jewish words are built up, shall be supplemented with a part of paragraph 181, as follows: "All nouns are, with respect to their formation, reducible to certain leading types or classes of words, each having a primary and proper import of its own. The derivation of nouns, as of the verbal species, from their respective roots and themes, calls into requisition all the expedients, whether of internal or of external changes, known to the language."

A general exhibit, illustrating the application of some of these principles in the formation of many of the Nephite proper names, is to be submitted; but before presenting it, there is one Nephite name that deserves special consideration, together with the meaning given to it in the Book of Mormon. The one thus singled out is Rabbanah (Alma 18: 13)).

The termination in *ah* is a very common one among Jewish proper names, and almost invariably carries with it the idea of some kind of relationship to Jehov-ah. For example: Abij-ah, means him to whom Jehov-ah is a father. Azari-ah signifies helped of the Lord, and Hezeki-ah, strength of the Lord. Further, the meaning of the Hebrew name Rabbi is, generally, "teacher," but

it also has the meaning of "master," or Lord, as we readily gather from the context of Matt. 23: 7, 8. A few relative remarks from the able pen of Dr. Adam Clarke in his notes on the text just cited now follow, and the special attention of our readers is requested to the points that he presents for our consideration. He says: "There are three words used among the Jews as titles of dignity, which they apply to their doctors—Rabh, Rabbi and Rabban, each of these has its particular meaning: Rabban implies much more than Rabbi, and Rabbi much more than Rabh. They may be regarded as three degrees of comparison: Rabh great, Rabbi greater, and Rabban greatest." Now it is evident, from all the facts which bear upon this matter, that Rabban-ah must have some meaning that is associated with the highest of earthly dignities on one hand, and with the power, wisdom, or other attributes of Jehovah on the other,—with those of Him who is King of all kings. The Book of Mormon, therefore, in giving to the name Rabban-ah the meaning of "powerful or great king," is correct to the last degree. From the context of Alma 18: 13, where the name occurs, we learn that Lamoni, a Lamanitish king, and his people did not think the appellation beneath the dignity of the Great Spirit, whom they imagined they saw in their presence clothed upon with a body of flesh and bones. Not only is the meaning of this word correctly interpreted by the Book of Mormon writer, but it is built up upon unquestioned principles for the formation of names in the Hebrew. No mistake of any character has been made. It is derived from the proper root. The proper modification of that root is selected in order that its whole force—all the force and meaning that it was capable of being made to express—might appear in the new name, and, finally, the proper termination is added to associate it with the Almighty, or the Great Spirit, as he was known to the Lamanites.

The evidence which other Nephite names afford in favor of the Jewish origin of the Book of Mormon is very valuable; and some of the characteristics, by which they are distinguished as Hebraic, shall now be made apparent by means of the promised exhibit, which is of a comparative nature, showing at a glance the correspondence that exists between many Biblical names and others that are of Nephite formation. By means of this exhibit, our

readers will also get a view of the prefixes and suffixes, and other modifications that have been applied or effected in the formation of these Nephite names, which have been constructed according to the principles last quoted from *Greene's Hebrew Grammar*:

BIBLE.	BOOK OF MORMON.	BIBLE.	BOOK OF MORMON
Abinad-ab	{ Abinad-i Abinad-om		{ Gid Gid-don-ah
Abish-ag	Abish	Gid-eon	{ Gid-ianhi Gid-gid-doni
Gosh-en	A-gosh		{ Am-gid Mori-ancumer
Kish	{ A-kish Kish-cumen		{ Mori-anton Mori-antum
Riblah	{ Ripla-kish Aminod-i	Mori-ah	{ Zer-ah-emn-ah Gaz-elem
Aminad-ab	An-gola	Zer-ah	Gaz-elem
Gola-n	Chemish	Gaz-ara	Hesh-lon
Car-chemish	{ Math-on-i Math-on-ih-ah	Hesh-bon	{ Jacob-u-gath Josh
Math-u-sala	Com	Jacob	O-gath
Mil-com	Gim-gim-no	Gath	{ Shem-non Shem-lon
Gim-zo	Hag-oth	Josh-u-a	{ Shim-nil-on Shim
Hag-gai	Jeho-cab	Gath	{ Nephi-h-ah Ze-nephi
Jeho-ash	{ Kim Kim-nor	Shem	Z-enock
Eli-a-kim	Shiz	Shim-ron	Z-enos
Shiz-a	Tubal-oth		Ammon-ih-a
Tubal	Zara-hem-la	Nephi	Anti-par-ahh
Zara	{ Amni-gad-d-ah Gad-iandi	Enoch	Sar-i-ah
Hem-dan	{ Gad-iant-on Gad-iomn-ah	Enos	Nimrah
Gad	Amal-ieki-ah	Ammon	Nehor
Amal-ek	Ant-(j)i-on-ah	Par-ah	Shared
Jon-ah	Gil-g-ah	Sar-ah	Shilem
Gil-gal	Shilo-m	Nim-rod	Sidom
Shilo	He-lam-an	Nahor	Zoram
Elam	Hem	Jared	Ante-onum
Elam	Nahom	Jared	Emer
Hem-dan	{ Shurr Sher-riz-ah	Shillem	Ethem
Nahum	Ah-ah	Sidon	Ezrom
Shur	Ah-a	Zorab	Jacom
Ah-i-ah	Rip-l-ah	Onam	Laman
Ah-i	Ab-lom	Emmer	Omer
Rib-blah	{ Am-aron Amm-aron	Etham	Shez
Ab-(sa)-lom	Amnor	Ezra	Shule
Aaron	Melek	Jacob	Zeram
Amnon	Jordon	Mosol-lamon	Jashon
Melech		Omar	
Jordan		Shiz-a	
		Shulam	
		Zera	
		Jashen	

The names that appear in the foregoing lists, from Zara to the close, comprise a class in which it appears very probable that most of the variations from the Biblical standard are due to modifications in their orthography by the Nephites, and when we consider that these people were cut off entirely from communication with their brethren in Palestine during the whole period while the Book of Mormon history was making, it is not strange that such changes in some of the Jewish names were made. Their occurrence was inevitable under the circumstances; and they are just as necessary and valuable as evidence to sustain the authenticity of the Book of Mormon record, as the remarkable features of correspondence connected with the names in the first part of the exhibit are. Our case would be very defective without these variations.

Taking the names that have been given above as of Jewish origin, and this course seems fully justified, and adding them to those in the Book of Mormon that are identical in every way with Biblical names, there are fully sixty per cent of all that occur in the former work that are Hebraic on their face—about thirty per cent in the foregoing lists alone.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Flagstaff, Ariz.

Thrift, Thrift, Horatio.

John D. Rockefeller never wearies of impressing on the young the folly of mean and parsimonious habits. In one of his most recent interviews he said:

“These miserly people reap nothing but discomfort from their false economies. Take, for example, the case of Mrs. Silas Long of Sussex.

“‘Martha,’ said old Silas one fall day, ‘I think I’ll go and get a few apples from the orchard.’

“He looked at her timidly. She said:

“‘Well, be careful now, Si, only to pick the bad ones.’

“‘Suppose there ain’t no bad ones, Martha?’

“‘Then ye’ll have to wait till some goes bad, of course,’ the old lady snapt. ‘We can’t afford to eat good, sound fruit wuth three cents a bushel.’—*St. Louis Globe-Democrat*.