SHORT NOTES

THE MEANING OF THE PHRASE SETŪM HĀ‘AYIN IN NUM. XXIV 3, 15

The prophet-seer Balaam uses these words in describing himself at the beginning of two of his oracles. They have generally been thought to indicate that his eye was either ‘open’ 1) or ‘shut’ 2), the two interpretations being complementary as well as contradictory 3). For the former reading, reference used to be made to the rare NH and Aramaic word מַשָּׂא, ‘unseal, open’ 4). Since WELLHAUSEN 5), however, it has generally been recognised that the reading of the Targum here נֵזְרָה 6) owes more to a division of the phrase into לְגַם הָעֵינִי or לְגַם עֵינִי, i.e., the relative particle יְנָּהּ and the adjective (or noun) from the root מָה, ‘be perfect’ 7). Those who interpret the phrase as ‘closed of eye’, usually refer to the verb מָה (for מָה, = NH and Aramaic מָה), ‘stop up, close, conceal’, found in this form in Lam. iii, 9.

A. B. EHRLICH suggested 8) that there might be some connection with the Arabic ِtasāma, ‘reviled’, and thought the phrase then meant that Balaam looked upon Israel with ‘a malicious eye’ in vexation at their good fortune. There is, in fact, a phrase developed from this root which brings us very close to our Hebrew passage. As well as ِtasāma, ‘reviled’, there exists in Arabic ِtasūma, ‘was ugly, displeasing,

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1) Cf. Ibn Ezra, Rashi, ad. loc.; Qimchi, Sepher ha-Shorashim, 1546, p. 139; RV (Marg.).
3) Cf. Sanbedrin 105a: בלע דע נמצאה מעיניו.
4) Used of opening a cask of wine in ‘Abodah Zarah 69a; cf. M. JASTROW, A Dictionary of the Targumim, etc., 1903, s.v.
6) Cf. LXX, Syriac, Saadia.
7) Cf. A. VON GALL, Zusammensetzung und Herkunft der BILEAM-PERIKOPE in Num. 22-24, in Festgruss Bernhard Stade, pp. 1-47, 1900, p. 32, who, basing Jud. 1:7, advances this form of the relative particle as evidence of s
or hateful in countenance', with an adjective *l-muhammad, 'stern, unrelenting of countenance', of which *l-a'in would be an exact equivalent ²). This, it is suggested, is the true meaning of the Hebrew phrase, and Balaam calls himself 'the gaber, the unrelenting, or, the grim-faced one' ⁴).

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BIBLE QUOTATIONS
IN THE SECTARIAN DEAD SEA SCROLLS

The two scrolls containing the Hebrew text of the book of Isaiah and the Habbakuk scroll have been of great service to the student of the Bible and its text. There are, however, several quotations from the Bible in the purely sectarian writings and these, too, should be studied systematically.

DSD V 15 ⁸): מַכְוָל דְּבֵר שֶׁקֶר והוֹאַּשׁ. This reading agrees with the LXX against MT (Ex. xxiii 7) ⁹).

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¹) Cf. Al-Qāmūs, s.v.: *l-ka riby *l-majby.
²) Cf. Tāj al-'Arūs, s.v.: *l-'asād y *l-'ābis, used as a metaphor. Note the description of David's men in 1 Chr. xii, 9: נַעֲרֵי יֵרֵיחִי מַדְמִשְׁר.
³) E. W. Lane, An Arabic-English Lexicon, 1863-93, s.v. *a'in, and for BH מַדְמִשְׁר = מַדְמִשְׁר, cf. 1 Sam. xvi 7.
⁴) The text of our passage should presumably be spelt מַדְמִשְׁר, i.e. equal in form to the verb in Lam. iii 9. Should we not read that word there in an equivalent sense, i.e., 'He has reviled my prayer'? The passive participle in our text of Num. corresponds exactly with the Arabic adjective *l-timun, and the construction may be explained as denoting an inherent quality like bāṭūt(a), 'trustful', zā'īr('mindful'). J. Barth (Die Nominalbildung in den semitischen Sprachen, 1894, p. 175) and Gesenius-Kautzsch (Grammar ²², 2nd Eng. ed. Cowley, 1910, § 50f) think that these forms are not true passives but are active participles derived from a ə imperfect. In view of the use here, however, Segal's explanation (JQR, xx, 1908, pp. 686f.) is attractive, namely, that they are passives of acts which are so constant and continuous as to become a condition or quality of the subject, who is thus conceived to be himself influenced or acted upon by his own act.
⁵) I use the abbreviations usual by now. Quotations from the scrolls are given