

טרם לעומת בטרם

אבנר רמו



In the Book of Genesis we find:

וכל שיח השדה טרם יהיה בארץ וכל-עשב השדה טרם יצמח: כי לא המטיר יהוה אלהים על-הארץ,

“And yet no shrub of the field was in the earth, and yet no herb of the field grew up; for *YHWH* God did not rain upon the earth” (Gen 2:5).

However, the understanding of the translators, and the Hebrew grammar suggest that here the words: יהיה and יצמח are a vowel letter insertion error of: היה and צמח, respectively.

Similarly, seventeen chapters later we find: טרם ישכבו ואנשי העיר אנשי סדם נסבו על-הבית - “Not yet they laid down, the men of the city, the men of Sodom, compassed the house round” (Gen 19:4).

Here again, the Hebrew grammar suggests that the word: ישכבו is a vowel letter insertion error of: שכבו. In addition, the Hebrew syntax suggests that here the word אנשי - "the men" is superfluous.

Similarly, five chapters later we find:

אני טרם אכלה לדבר אל-לבי והנה רבקה יצאת וכדה על-שכמה,

“And I not yet finished speaking to my heart, and behold, Rebekah came out and her pitcher on her shoulder” (Gen 24:45).

Here again, the Hebrew grammar, and the understanding of the translators suggest that the word: אכלה is a letter substitution error of: כלתי - "I finished."

Similarly, in the Book of Exodus we find:

ואתה ועבדיך: ידעתי כי טרם תיראון מפני יהוה אלהים.
"And you and your servants, I know that not yet you will fear *YHWH* God" (Ex 9:30).

However, the understanding of the Greek translator, and the Hebrew syntax suggest that these words are: a letter substitution, a word deletion, and a letter and a word disorder of:

ואני ידע כי אתה ועבדיך טרם יראתם מפני יהוה אלהים.
"And I know that you and your servants did not yet fear *YHWH* God."

Similarly, three chapter later we find: וישא העם את-בצקו טרם יחמץ - "And the people carried up their dough that not yet was leavened" (Ex 12:34).

Here again, the Hebrew grammar, and the understanding of the translators suggest that the word: יחמץ is a vowel letter insertion error of: חמץ - "was leavened."

Similarly, we find in the Book of Numbers:

הבשר עודנו [] בין שניהם טרם יכרת; ואף יהוה חרה בעם ויך יהוה בעם,
"The flesh yet [was] between their teeth, it was not yet chewed, and the anger of *YHWH* was kindled against the people, and *YHWH* smote the people" (Num 11:33).

Here again, the Hebrew grammar, and the understanding of the translators suggest that the word: יכרת is a letter substitution error of: יכרת - "chewed." It is also suggested that here the words: יחמץ יחמץ יחמץ יחמץ are a vowel letter deletion, and a letter and word insertion error of: יחמץ יחמץ יחמץ יחמץ - "and the anger of *YHWH* was kindled against the people, and He smote them."

Similarly, we find in the Book of Joshua: והמה טרם ישכבון - "And they not yet laid down" (Jos 2:8).

Yet the understanding of the translators, and the Hebrew syntax suggest that these words are a letter insertion error of: יחמץ יחמץ יחמץ יחמץ - "And they not yet laid down."

Similarly, we find in the Book of Samuel: ונר אלהים טרם יכבה ושמואל שכב בהיכל יהוה - "And the lamp of God was not yet gone out, and Samuel laid down [to sleep] in *YHWH*'s temple" (1 Sam 3:3).

Yet the understanding of the translators, and the Hebrew syntax suggest that here the word: יכבה is a vowel letter insertion error of: יכבה - "was gone out."

Four verses later we find: וטרם יגלה אליו דבר-יהוה; ושמואל טרם ידע את-יהוה; - "And Samuel did not yet know *YHWH*, and the word of *YHWH* was not yet revealed to him" (1 Sam 3:7).

The understanding of the translators, and the Hebrew Grammar suggest that here the word: **גלה** is a letter substitution error of: **נגלה**. - “**was revealed.**”

It should be noted that in all these (9) verses, the verb associated with the word: **טרם** is in the past tense.

On the other hand, in association with verbs in the future tense we find the word: **בטרם**. For example, we read in the Book of Isaiah: **תעזב האדמה: בטוב: בחר וברע מאס ברע ובחר בטוב: תעזב האדמה** - “**For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land shall be forsaken**” (Is 7:16; and 29 other verses).

However, In the Book of Joshua we find:

וישכם יהושע בבקר ויסעו מהשטים ויבאו עד-הירדן, הוא וכל-בני ישראל; וילנו שם טרם יעברו.

“**And Joshua rose up early in the morning, and they traveled from Shittim, and they came to the Jordan, he and all Israel’s children; and they lodged there before they will pass over.**” (Jos 3:1).

However, as the associated verb is in future tense, it is suggested that here the words: **טרם יעברו** are a letter deletion error of: **בטרם יעברו**.

Similarly, we find in the Book of Isaiah: **והיה טרם-יקראו ואני אענה** - “**And it shall be that before they shall call, I will answer**” (Is 65:24; see also: Ps 119:67).

Here again, as the associated verb is in a future tense, it is suggested that the words **טרם-יקראו** are a letter deletion error of: **בטרם-יקראו**.

On the other hand, we find in the Book of Proverbs: **בטרם הרים הטבעו** - “**Before the mountains were settled**” (Pro 8:25; see also: Ps 90:2).

However, the comparison between these verses suggests that these words are a letter insertion and word disorder of: **הרים טרם הטבעו** - “**Mountains were not yet settled.**”

In the Book of Isaiah we read: **לעת ערב והנה [] בלהה, בטרם [] בקר [] איננו** - “**At evening time and behold, [] terror; [and] before the morning [] it is not**” (Is 17:14).

However, the Hebrew syntax, and the comparison between these verses suggest that here the words: **לעת ערב והנה היתה בלהה** are a word deletion error of: **לעת ערב והנה היתה בלהה** - “**At evening time and behold, there was terror**”, and the words: **בטרם בקר איננו** are a letter substitution, and a letter and a word deletion error of: **ובטרם יבוא הבקר והיא איננה** - “**and before the morning will come and it is not.**”

Similarly, eleven chapters later we find: **קניץ [] בטרם [] כבכורה** - “**as the first-ripe fig before the summer []**” (Is 28:4).

The comparison between these verses suggests that these words are a letter and a word deletion error of: **כַּבּוֹרָה בְּטָרָם יִבּוֹא הַקִּיץ** - “as the first-ripe fig before the summer will come.”

In the Book of Genesis we find: **וַיִּרְאוּ אֶת־מֶרְחָק; וּבְטָרָם יִקְרַב אֲלֵיהֶם וַיִּתְנַכְּלוּ אֹתוֹ לְהַמִּיתוֹ** “**And they saw him afar off, and before he will come near them, they conspired against him to slay him**” (Gen 37:18).

However, the Hebrew syntax suggests that here the words: **וַיִּתְנַכְּלוּ אֹתוֹ לְהַמִּיתוֹ** are a letter insertion and substitution, and word disorder of: **הִתְנַכְּלוּ לְהַמִּית אֹתוֹ** - “they conspired to slay him.”

In the Book of Exodus we find: **כִּי-חַיּוֹת הֵנָּה, בְּטָרָם תִּבּוֹא אֱלֵהֶן הַמִּילֵדָת וַיִּלְדּוּ** - “**for they are lively, and before the midwife will come to them, and they delivered**” (Ex 1:19).

However, the logic of this verse suggests that here the words: **כִּי-חַיּוֹת הֵנָּה** are a letter deletion, and a letter insertion error of: **כִּי כַחַיּוֹת הֵן** - “For they are like animals.”

In the Book of Zephaniah we find:

בְּטָרָם לֹא-יִבּוֹא עֲלֵיכֶם [] חֲרוֹן אַף-יְהוָה, בְּטָרָם לֹא-יִבּוֹא עֲלֵיכֶם יוֹם אַף-יְהוָה.
“Before [] the fierce anger of YHWH will come upon you, before the day of the YHWH’s anger will come upon you” (Zep 2:2).

The understanding of this verse by the Greek (and the English) translators indicates that the believed the here the word: **לֹא** was erroneously inserted (twice). In addition, it is suggested that here the word: **יוֹם** - ‘the day’ is erroneously missing, and that this was already noticed by a late scribe who inserted the correction: **בְּטָרָם לֹא-יִבּוֹא עֲלֵיכֶם יוֹם אַף-יְהוָה**.

In the Siddur we find the prayer:

אֲדוֹן עוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר מָלַךְ – בְּטָרָם כָּל־יְצִיר נִבְרָא
“Eternal master, who reigned supreme, Before, all of creation was created.”

However, the comparison to the biblical verses suggests that here the words:

בְּטָרָם כָּל יְצִיר נִבְרָא are a letter substitution error of: **וְטָרָם כָּל יְצִיר נִבְרָא** - “**and not yet any being was created**”, or of: **בְּטָרָם כָּל יְצִיר יִבְרָא** - “before any being will be created.”