

אמרות או אמרים?

אבנר רמו



In the Book of Psalms we read: **אמרת-יהוה צרופה** - “*YHWH's saying is pure*” (Ps 18:31; see also: 2 Sam 22:31; Is 5:24; Ps 105:19; Pro 30:5).

Six chapters earlier we read: **אמרות-יהוה, אמרות טהרות: [כסף-צרופ]** - “*YHWH's sayings [are] pure sayings [as] pure silver*” (Ps 12:7).

The understanding of the translators indicates that they believed that several letters and words are missing in this verse. However, it is also possible that these words are a letter deletion, and a word insertion error of: **אמרות-יהוה טהרות כסף-צרופ** - “*YHWH's sayings (are) pure as Pure silver.*”

We also find in the Bible the words: **אמרתִי** (*imrathi*)- “*my saying*” (Gen 4:23; Deu 32:2; I 32:9; Ps 17:6), **אמרתֶךָ** (*imrathcha*)- “*your saying*” (Deu 33:9 and another 20 verses), and **אמרתוֹ** (*imratho*)- “*his saying*” (Ps 147:15; Thr 2:17). From these verses we can conclude that the Hebrew word for “*a saying*” is: **אמרה** (*imrah*), but such a word does not appear in the Hebrew Bible.

Yet we also find: **אמרי** (*amarai*) - “my sayings” (Ps 5:3; 141:6; Pro 2:1; 4:10, 29; 7:1; Job 33:3); **אמרינו** (*amarav*) - “his sayings” (Pro 17:27; Job 22:22; 32:13; 34:37); **אמריה** (*amareah*) - “her sayings” (Jud 5:29; Pro 1:21; 2:16; 7:5); and **אמריכם** (*amreichem*) - “your (plural) sayings” (Is 41:26; Job 32:14).

In the Book of Joshua we find:

ויכתב יהושע את הדברים האלה בספר תורת אלהים; ויקח אבן גדולה ויקימה שם תחת האלה אשר [] במקדש יהוה. ויאמר יהושע אל כל העם: הנה האבן הזאת תהיה בנו לעדה, כי היא שמעה את כל אמרי-יהוה אשר דבר עמנו; והיתה בכם לעדה,

“And Joshua wrote these words in the book of God’s law, and he took a big stone and he set it up under the oak that [was] in *YHWH*’s sanctuary.

And Joshua said to all the people: Behold, this stone shall be in us to a witness, for it heard all *YHWH*’s sayings which He spoke with us; and it shall be in you to a witness” (Jos 24: 26-27).

We also read about: **אמרי-אל** - “God’s sayings” (Num 24:4, 15; Ps 107:11); **אמרי-קדוש** - “holy-one’s saying” (Job 6:10); **אמרי-אמת** - “truthful sayings” (Pro 22:21); **אמרי-ישר** - “rightful sayings” (Pro 6:25); **אמרי-בינה** - “mindful sayings” (Pro 1:2); **אמרי-דעת** - “erudite sayings” (Pro 19:27; 23:12); **אמרי-שפר** - “fine sayings” (Gen 49:21); **אמרי-נעם** - “pleasant sayings” (Pro 15:25; 16:24); **אמרי-נאש** - “desperate one’s sayings” (Job 6:26); and **אמרי-שקר** - “untruthful sayings” (Is 32:7).

We also read about: **אמרי-פי** - “my mouth’s sayings” (Deu 32:1; Hos 6:5; Ps 19:15; 54:4; Pro 4:5; 5:7; 7:24; 8:8); **אמרי-פיך** - “your mouth’s sayings” (Ps 136:4; Pro 6:2; Job 8:2); and **אמרי-פינו** - “his mouth’s sayings” (Job 23:12).

These verses suggests that **אמרים** (*amarim*) mean “sayings” (e.g. Pro19:7), but it is not clear from these verses what is the biblical Hebrew word for a singular “saying.”

Furthermore, we cannot determine if the biblical Hebrew “sayings” are feminine objects **אמרות** (*amaroth*) or masculine ones **אמרים** (*amarim*).