

The King James Version and Modern English Translations

In 1530, William Tyndale translated the Bible directly from Hebrew into English. In 1611, a group of nearly fifty scholars from London, Oxford, and Cambridge completed a revised English translation, which bore the name of King James of England. This translation, prepared under the influence of Puritanism, superseded all of its predecessors and became the “Authorized Version” of the Church of England, and one of the greatest literary accomplishments in the English language.

There even is unfounded speculation that Shakespeare participated in this translation. A particularly engaging “proof” is said to be found in Psalm 46, whose forty-sixth word from the beginning is “shake” and whose forty-sixth word from the end is “spear” and which was—ostensibly—composed in the forty-sixth year of William Shakespeare’s life, although, to be sure, we are not certain of his precise birth year.

Numerous English translations have followed. Among the twentieth-century Jewish translations that have influenced contemporary Jewish study and teaching of the Tanakh are:

- Jewish Publication Society (Old JPS/OJPS; 1917);
- Jewish Publication Society (New JPS/NJPS; 1962, 1978, 1984);
- Aryeh Kaplan: *The Living Torah* (Moznaim Press, 1981);
- Everett Fox: *The Five Books of Moses* (Schocken Press, 1995);
- ArtScroll, *The Stone Edition Tanach* (Mesorah Publications, 1996);
- Robert Alter: *The Five Books of Moses* (Norton, 2004).

The JPS and ArtScroll translations were prepared by committees; the remaining translations represent individual efforts. The Old JPS editorial committee was chaired by Max L. Margolis of Dropsie College. The New JPS committee for the Torah and Prophets was chaired by Dr. Harry Orlinsky (Hebrew Union College) and consisted of the biblical scholars H.L. Ginsberg (Jewish Theological Seminary) and E.A. Speiser (University of Pennsylvania); Rabbis B.J. Bamberger (Reform) and H. Freedman (Orthodox); and Dr. Solomon Grayzel, the editor of the Jewish Publication Society. The committee on Writings consisted of Professors Moshe Greenberg and Jonas Greenfeld (Hebrew University), Nahum Sarna (Brandeis); and Rabbis Saul Leeman (Conservative), Martin Rosenberg (Reform) and David Shapiro (Orthodox). Chaim Potok, the noted author, served as its secretary.

In 1969, Dr. Orlinsky edited a volume entitled *Notes on the New Translation of the Torah* (JPS). Its introduction surveys translations of the Bible in general, and those in English in particular. The balance of the book goes through the Torah chapter by chapter and explains the translation process utilized in cases where the text could not be translated literally.

Subsequently, the Jewish Publication Society published a series of commentaries on the Torah, incorporating its own translation. The commentaries on Genesis and Exodus were written by Nahum Sarna, Leviticus by Baruch Levine, Numbers by Jacob Milgrom, and Deuteronomy by Jeff Tigay. More recently, JPS has begun to publish an English translation of *Mikra'ot Gedolot* named *The Commentators' Bible*, edited by Michael Carasik.

The **ArtScroll** translation was edited by Rabbi Nosson Scherman, the general editor of ArtScroll Publications. The acknowledgments name Rabbis Avi Gold, Yaakov Blinder, Moshe Rosenblum, Chaim Cohen, Asher Margoliot, and Moshe Shapiro, and anonymous "scholars in Israel."

The late lamented **Aryeh Kaplan** was a veritable polymath; his translation incorporates notes drawn from rabbinic literature, medieval philology and exegesis, comparative Semitic languages and literatures, and archaeology.

Everett Fox, a professor of Judaic and biblical studies, patterned his 1962 translation after Martin Buber and Franz Rosenzweig's German version. It is characterized by consistently replacing Hebrew word forms with the same English translations and the ingenious representation in English of word plays, alliteration, and even puns present in the original Hebrew.

Robert Alter, a professor of Hebrew language and comparative literature at the University of California at Berkeley, attempts to render the biblical text in "lyrical, lucid English," and his annotated commentary reflects on the text's literary and spiritual dimensions.

The Koren Standard Tanakh Maalot - Magerman Edition

Author: Rabbi Jonathan Sacks

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בראשית מא (מב) וַיִּסַּר פַּרְעֹה אֶת טַבַּעְתּוֹ מֵעַל יָדוֹ וַיִּתֵּן אֶתָּהּ עַל יַד יוֹסֵף וַיִּלְבַּשׂ אֹתוֹ
בְּגָדֵי שֵׁשׁ וַיִּשֶׂם רֶבֶד הַזָּהָב עַל צַוְאָרוֹ: (מג) וַיִּרְכַּב אֹתוֹ בְּמִרְכָּבַת הַמִּשְׁנָה אֲשֶׁר לוֹ וַיִּקְרָאוּ
לְפָנָיו אַבְרָךְ וַנְתֹן אֹתוֹ עַל כָּל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם: (מד) וַיֹּאמֶר פַּרְעֹה אֶל יוֹסֵף אֲנִי פַרְעֹה
וּבְלַעְדֶּיךָ לֹא יָרִים אִישׁ יָדוֹ וְאֶת רַגְלוֹ בְּכָל אֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם:

King James Bible

And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, **Bow the knee**: and he made him *ruler* over all the land of Egypt.

New King James Version

And he had him ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried out before him, **"Bow the knee!"** So he set him over all the land of Egypt.

New American Standard Bible

And he had him ride in his second chariot; and they proclaimed ahead of him, **"Bow the knee!"** And he placed him over all the land of Egypt.

OJPS

42 And Pharaoh took off his signet ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck.
43 And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him: **'Abrech'**; and he set him over all the land of Egypt.

NJPS

He had him ride in the chariot of his second-in-command, and they cried before him, **"Abrek!"*** **Abrek** Thus he placed him over all the land of Egypt.
Others "Bow the knee," as though from Heb. barakh "to kneel", perhaps from an Egyptian word of unknown meaning.

Kaplan

41:43 He had [Joseph] ride in his second royal chariot, and [those going] ahead of him announced, **'The Viceroy!'** [Joseph] was thus given authority over all Egypt.

The Viceroy

(*Targum*). *Avrekh* in Hebrew. Since *rekh* can mean king (see 2 Samuel 3:39, Radak *ad loc.*), this word can be interpreted as 'father of the king' or 'arch-ruler' (*Sifri* on Deuteronomy 1:1; *Bava Bathra* 4a; Rashi; Rashbam. See Genesis 45:8; note on Genesis 20:2). It may also be related to the Akadian word *abarakhu*, denoting the chief steward of the royal house. Others define *Avrekh* as 'merciful father' (Sh'muel ben Chofni). Still others see it as a command, 'bow down' (Ibn Janach; Radak, *Sherashim*; Sforino). It may thus be related to the Egyptian expression *a-bor-k*, 'prostrate yourself,' or *aprek*, 'head bowed.' Others see it as related to the Egyptian *ibrek*, 'attention,' *aabrek* 'to the left' or 'stand aside,' *ap-rekh-u*, 'head of the wise,' *ab-rek*, 'rejoice!' or *abu-rek*, 'your command is our desire.'

Everett Fox

He had him mount the chariot of his second-in-rank, and they called out before him:
Avrekh! / Attention!...

Hebrew unclear. Some suggest that it is Hebrew for “bend the knee,” others that it resembles an Assyrian title.

Robert Alter

And he had him ride in the chariot of his viceroy, and they called out before him *Abrekh*, setting him over all the land of Egypt.

Despite the ingenuity of traditional commentators in construing this as a Hebrew word, it is evidently Egyptian (in consonance with the loanwords in the surrounding narrative) and may mean something like “make way.”

(מה) וַיִּקְרָא פֶּרְעֵה שֵׁם יוֹסֵף צְפֹנָת פְּעִנַח וַיִּתֵּן לוֹ אֶת אֲסֵנַת בֵּת פּוֹטִי פֶּרַע לְהֵן אֵן לְאִשָּׁה
וַיֵּצֵא יוֹסֵף עַל אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם:

NJPS

Pharaoh then gave Joseph the name Zaphenath-paneah* and he gave him for a wife Asenath daughter of Poti-phaera, priest of On. Thus, Joseph emerged in charge of the land of Egypt.

**Zaphenath-paneah Egyptian for “God speaks; he lives,” or “creator of life.”*

Kaplan

Tzaphnath Paaneach

Many authorities state that this is a Hebrew translation of the Egyptian name that he was given, and that it means 'revealer of secrets' (*Targum*; Rashi; Septuagint; Josephus 2:6:1). Others say that it is an Egyptian name (Ibn Ezra; Radak, *Sherashim*). In Egyptian, Tzaphnath is *tza-pa-neth* meaning, 'the Neth speaks' or 'the god speaks.' Paaneach is *pa-anakh*, meaning 'the life,' where *anach* or *ankh* is the symbol of life. Hence the name can be translated as, 'Lord of life,' 'Neth speaks life,' or 'The God speaks and [this man] lives.'

Everett Fox

Pharaoh called Yosef's name Tzafenat Pane`ah / The God speaks and he lives...

במדבר ד (כ) וְלֹא יָבֹאוּ לִרְאוֹת כִּבְלֵעַ אֶת הַקֹּדֶשׁ וּמָתוּ:

King James Bible

But they shall not go in to see when the **holy things** are **covered**, lest they die.

New King James Version

But they shall not go in to watch while the **holy things** are being **covered**, lest they die.”

New American Standard Bible

but they shall not come in to see the **holy objects** even for **a moment**, or they will die.”

Christian Standard Bible

The Kohathites are not to go in and look at the **holy objects** as they are **covered** or they will die.”

OJPS:

But they shall not go in to see the **holy things** as they are being **covered**, lest they die.

NJPS:

But let not [the Kohathites] go inside and witness the **dismantling** of the **sanctuary**, lest they die.

Others: look at the sacred objects even for **a moment**

Aryeh Kaplan:

[The Kehothites] will then not come and see the sacred [**furniture**] being **packed**, and they will not die.

Art Scroll:

But they shall not come and look as the **holy** is **inserted**, lest they die.

Everett Fox:

But they are not to enter and see (even) for **a moment** (the **dismantling** of) the Holy-**Shrine**, lest they die.

Robert Alter:

And they shall not come in to see the **sanctuary** for even **a moment** and die.

Others construe it as “dismantling,” but that seems a long stretch from the basic meaning of “swallow” or “destroy.”

SR Hirsch:

They shall not go in to see when the **holy [objects]** are completely **wrapped**, and die.

...sacred things should remain to their bearers ideational concepts, not objects of physical perception... and a physical perception of these objects while they are being covered would distract the Kehathites from their spiritual contemplation and thereby desecrate the objects themselves.

THE GREAT FACE OFF

בראשית פרשת וישלח פרק לב

(כא) וְאָמַרְתֶּם גַּם הִנֵּה עֹבְדֵךְ יַעֲקֹב אַחֲרֵינוּ כִּי אָמַר אֲכַפְּרָה פָּנָיו בַּמִּנְחָה הַהִלַּכְתָּ לְפָנָיו וְאַחֲרֵי כֵן אֲרֹאֶה פָּנָיו אוֹלֵי יִשְׂאֵא פָּנָיו:

1. Jewish Publication Society (1917): For he **said**: "I will appease him with the present that goeth before me, and afterward I will see his **face**; peradventure he will accept me."
2. Jewish Publication Society (1962): For he **reasoned**: "If I propitiate him with presents in advance, and then **face** him, perhaps he will show me favor."
3. Aryeh Kaplan: *The Living Torah* (1981): [Jacob] **said [to himself]**: "I will win him over with the gifts that are being sent ahead, and then I will **face** him. Hopefully, he will forgive me."
4. Art Scroll (1996): (For he **said**, "I will appease him with the tribute that precedes me, and afterwards I will **face** him; perhaps he will forgive me.")
5. Robert Alter (2004) For he **thought**, "Let me placate him with the tribute that goes before me, and after I shall look on his **face**, perhaps he will show me a kindly **face**."*
6. Everett Fox (1995) For he said to himself: I will wipe (the anger from) his **face** with the gift that goes ahead of my **face**; afterward, when I see his **face**, perhaps he will lift up my **face**!

*The Hebrew actually has "face" four times in this brief speech.

- בראשית פרשת ויצא פרק לא(ב) וַיֵּרָא יַעֲקֹב אֶת פָּנָיו לְבֵן וְהִנֵּה אֵינָנוּ עִמּוֹ כְּתָמוּל שְׁלֹשׁוֹם:
- בראשית פרשת ויצא פרק לא(ה) וַיֹּאמֶר לֶהֱוֶן רֹאֶה אֲנֹכִי אֶת פָּנָיו אֲבִיכֹן כִּי אֵינָנוּ אֵלַי כְּתָמַל שְׁלֹשׁוֹם וְאֱלֹהֵי אָבִי הִזָּה עִמָּדִי:
- בראשית פרשת וישלח פרק לב(כב) וַתַּעֲבֹר הַמִּנְחָה עַל פָּנָיו וְהוּא לָן בְּלִילָה הֵהוּא בַּמַּחֲנֶה:
- בראשית פרשת וישלח פרק לב(לא) וַיִּקְרָא יַעֲקֹב שֵׁם הַמָּקוֹם פָּנֵי־אֵל כִּי רֹאִיתִי אֱלֹהִים פָּנִים אֵל פָּנִים וַתִּנְצַל נַפְשִׁי:
- בראשית פרשת וישלח פרק לג(י) וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב אֵל נָא אִם נָא מִצָּאתִי חֵן בְּעֵינֶיךָ וְלִקְחַת מִנְחָתִי מִיָּדִי כִּי עַל כֵּן רֹאִיתִי פָּנֶיךָ כִּרְאִית פָּנָיו אֱלֹהִים וַתִּרְצָנִי:

שמות פרשת וארא פרק ט

- (לא) וְהִפְשַׁתָּהּ וְהִשְׁעָרָה גִּפְתָּהּ כִּי הִשְׁעָרָה אָבִיב וְהִפְשַׁתָּהּ גְּבַעַל:
- (לב) וְהַחֲטָה וְהִכְסַּמְתָּ לֹא נָכוֹן כִּי אֲפִילַת הִנֵּה:

BDB:

אָפּוּל] adj. (darkened, concealed, thence) late, of crops

[King James Bible](#)

And the flax and the barley was smitten: for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was bolled. But the wheat and the rie were not smitten: for they were not grown up.

[New King James Version](#)

Now the flax and the barley were struck, for the barley was in the head and the flax was in bud. But the wheat and the spelt were not struck, for they are late crops.

[New American Standard Bible](#)

(Now the flax and the barley were ruined, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud. But the wheat and the spelt were not ruined, for they ripen late.)

[Amplified Bible](#)

(Now the flax and the barley were battered *and* ruined [by the hail], because the barley was in the ear (ripe, but soft) and the flax was in bud, but the wheat and spelt (coarse wheat) were not battered *and* ruined, because they ripen late in the season.)

OJPS:

And the flax and the barley were smitten; for the barley was in the ear, and the flax was in bloom. But the wheat and the spelt were not smitten; for they ripen late.--

NJPS:

Now the flax and the barley were ruined, for the barley was in the ear and the flax was in bud; but the wheat [emmer] and the millet were not hurt, for they ripen late.

Aryeh Kaplan:

The flax and barley have been destroyed, since the barley was ripe, and the flax had formed stalks; but the wheat and spelt have not been destroyed, since they are late in sprouting.

ArtScroll:

The flax and the barley were struck, for the barley was ripe and the flax was in its stalk. And the wheat and the spelt were not struck, for they ripen later.

Everett Fox:

Now the flax and the barley were stricken, for the barley was in ears and the flax was in buds. But the wheat and the spelt were not stricken, for late (-ripening) are they.

Robert Alter:

And the flax and the barley were struck, for the barley was in bud and the flax was in ear. But the wheat and the emmer were unripened.

S.R. Hirsch:

For though the flax and the barley were struck down because the barley was upon the straw and the flax was on the stalk, Neither the wheat nor the spelt was struck down because they ripen late.

שמות פרשת בא פרק יב

(יא) וְכָכָה תֹאכְלוּ אֹתוֹ מִתְנַיִכֶם חֲגָרִים נְעֲלֵיכֶם בְּרִגְלֵיכֶם וּמְקַלְכֶם בְּיַדְכֶם וְאָכַלְתֶּם אֹתוֹ בְּחִפְזוֹן פֶּסַח הוּא לִיקוּק:

King James

And thus shall ye eat it; with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste: it is the LORD's passover.

Revised Standard Version

In this manner you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's passover.

RSV Catholic

In this manner you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it in haste. It is the LORD's passover.

OJPS

And thus shall ye eat it: with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and ye shall eat it in haste--it is the LORD's passover.

Aryeh Kaplan

You must eat it with your waist belted, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand, and you must eat it in haste. It is the Passover (*Pesach*) offering to God.

NJPS

This is how you shall eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand; and you shall eat it hurriedly: it is a Passover offering* to the LORD.

*Or "protective offering"; Heb *pesah*

ישעיהו ל"א (ה) כְּצַפְרִים עִפּוֹת לִן יִגַּן ה' צְבָאוֹת עַל־רוּשְׁלָם גִּנּוֹן וְהִצִּיל פֶּסַח וְהַמְלִיט:

Art Scroll

So shall you eat it: your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand; you shall eat it in haste*—it is a pesach-offering to HASHEM.

Isaiah 52:12 You will not leave in chaos, nor will you go in flight...

Robert Alter

And thus shall you eat it: your loins girded, your sandals on your feet, your staff in your hand, and you shall eat it in haste. It is a Passover offering to the LORD.

Everett Fox

And thus you are to eat it: your hips girded, your sandals on your feet, your sticks in your hand; you are to eat it in trepidation*—it is a Passover-Meal to YHWH.

*Others, "in haste," but the element of fear is also contained in the verb (Heb. *Hafoz*).

וַיֵּרָא מֹשֶׁה אֶת-הָעָם, כִּי פָרַע הוּא: כִּי-פָרְעָה אֶהְרֹן, לְשִׂמְצָה בְּקִמְיָהֶם.

Christian Translations

King James: And when Moses saw that the people were naked; (for Aaron had made them naked unto their shame among their enemies:)

New KJ (1982): Now when Moses saw that the people were unrestrained (for Aaron had not restrained them, to *their* shame among their enemies),

New American Standard (1960): Now when Moses saw that the people were out of control--for Aaron had let them get out of control to be a derision among their enemies—

The Message: Moses saw that the people were simply running wild—Aaron had let them run wild, disgracing themselves before their enemies.

Amplified Bible (2015): And when Moses saw that the people were unruly and unrestrained (for Aaron had let them get out of control, so that they were a derision and object of shame among their enemies),

Jewish Translations

OJPS: And when Moses saw that the people were broken loose—for Aaron had let them loose for a derision among their enemies—

NJPS: Moses saw that the people were out of control—since Aaron had let them get out of control—so that they were a menace to any who might oppose them.

Fox: Now when Moshe saw the people: that it had gotten-loose, for Aharon had let-it-loose for whispering among their foes,

Alter: And Moses saw the people, that it was let loose, for Aaron had let them loose as a shameful thing to their adversaries.

ArtScroll: Moses saw the people, that it was exposed, for Aaron had exposed them to disgrace among those who rise up against them.

Kaplan: Moses realized that the people had actually been restrained¹. Aaron had restrained them, doing only a small part of what the outspoken ones [had demanded].

¹ (Ralbag). Or, exposed (Rashi, Seforno, Ibn Jannah); exposed to harm (Abrabanel); undisciplined (Rashbam, Hizkuni); unrestrained (Hirsch); going the wrong way (Ibn Jannah, Radak Shorashim).