

# Late Hebrew ḥzr and Akkadian saḥāru

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The verb *ḥzr* is very common in Late Hebrew (LH) and in Western Aramaic.<sup>1</sup> Its semantic range includes the concepts, 'turn, return, repeat, circle, surround, besiege, seek'.<sup>2</sup> Our verb has correspondents in Eastern Aramaic as well. These are respectively *ḥdr*<sup>3</sup> and the weakened form *bdr*.<sup>4</sup> While these correspondences are well known, the relationship between *ḥzr* and Akkadian *saḥāru*<sup>5</sup> has not been previously noted. It is the purpose of the present study to examine that relationship.

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This article presents a revised version of a point which I examined in my dissertation, "Studies in Late Hebrew Lexicography in the Light of Akkadian," in the Department of Middle East Languages and Cultures of Columbia University. I sincerely thank Professors I. Barzilay, H. L. Ginsberg, David Weiss Halivni, and David Marcus who read the manuscript and made valuable suggestions. I particularly wish to thank my mentor Professor Moshe Held for his unflagging aid and encouragement.

It is a great privilege to present this article to Professor Gaster. He, more than any other individual, has enabled contemporary students to penetrate the veil of ideological and theological biases which the millennia have woven between the ancient near eastern world and our own. In so doing he has made us appreciate that lost world and taught us the necessity of understanding it in its own terms: Y'RK B<sup>c</sup>L SMM YMW WŠNTW.

Rabbinic abbreviations follow H. Danby, *The Mishnah* (Oxford, 1933). Text citations from the Tosefta follow S. Lieberman, *The Tosefta* (New York, 1955- ). In addition note the following abbreviations: Levy, *Wörterbuch* = J. Levy, *Neuhebräisches und aramäisches Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midraschim* (Leipzig, 1889); OBS = J. J. Finkelstein and M. Greenberg, *Oriental and Biblical Studies Collected Writings of E. A. Speiser* (Philadelphia, 1967); Sperling, *Studies* = S. David Sperling, "Studies in Late Hebrew Lexicography in the Light of Akkadian," (Ph. D. dissertation, Columbia, 1973); TW = Levy, *Chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Targumim* (Leipzig, 1881).

1 For attestations see Kasowski, *Thesaurus Talmudis* 13:288-324; Jastrow, *Dictionary*, 446-47; Levy, TW, 1:248; idem, *Wörterbuch*, 2:32.

2 See below.

3 E.g., Or. 10 (1941), 129:9; for Syriac *ḥdr* see Payne-Smith, *Thesaurus Syriacus*, col. 1203, and see below.

4 For Jewish Aramaic (JA) *bdr*, see Kasowski, *Thesaurus Talmudis*, 10:175-202; TW, 1:194-95; for Mandaic *bdr*, see Drower and Maccuch, *Mandaic Dictionary*, 131-32; for the shift of /h/ to /h/ see E. Kutscher, *Supplements to VT* 16 (1967), 172; J. N. Epstein, *A Grammar of Babylonian Aramaic* (Tel Aviv, 1960), 18. The form *bdr* may be hidden in Dan. 4:33. (See the commentaries).

5 For attestations see now AHw., 1005-8.

Jacob Levy first proposed the verb *špr* as an etymology for LH *h̄zr*.<sup>6</sup> Phonetically, the derivation presents no problems<sup>7</sup> and may be accepted in principle.<sup>8</sup> It is our contention, however, that the etymon of LH *h̄zr* is to be sought in Akkadian *saḥāru* rather than in the Biblical Hebrew (BH) *špr*. In order to establish this correspondence, we will attempt to show that the respective semantic ranges of *h̄zr* and *saḥāru* largely go hand in hand.

Levy made no distinction between BH and LH *špr* nor between Hebrew and Aramaic *špr*. It will be recalled that the meaning of BH *špr* is a matter of controversy. Though the 'meaning' of the noun *sōḥēṣ* 'merchant',<sup>9</sup> is an established fact, ancient and modern commentators alike dispute the meaning of the finite verb *špr* in Gen. 34:10, 21, and 42:34.<sup>10</sup> Some explain the

6 Levy, *Wörterbuch*, 2:32; cf. TW, 1:194. Levy attempted, erroneously, to associate these words further with biliteral stems. Levy buttressed his argument semantically by demonstrating that the different Targums alternate between Aramaic *špr* and Aramaic *h̄zr* when translating Hebrew *sābīb*. Thus, in Gen. 23:17, Ongelos reads *sēḥōr sēḥōr* while Pseudo-Jonathan has *h̄zōr h̄zōr*. (Peshitta has *kd ḥdr*; cf. further the Aramaic versions of Gen. 41:48) Sefire Aramaic which was unavailable to Levy provides his view with additional support. In one of the Sefire inscriptions we encounter the phrase: *wkl mlky' zy šprty* "All the kings of my surrounding region." (Fitzmyer, *Sefire*, 96:7-8. Cf. Fitzmyer's translation a.1.; cf. further ANET<sup>3</sup>, 660; KAI, 2:264, 268; Degen, *Altaramäische Grammatik* [Wiesbaden, 1969], 134; contrast Dupont-Sommer in *Aramaic Handbook*, 1/2:5. Aramaic *šprt* is most likely to be equated with Akkadian *siḥirtu* 'Umgebung', a synonym of *limītu*. See AHw, 1040.) Cf. this phrase with the Targums to Deut. 17:14 *kol haggōyīm ašer sēbībōtāy*. Ongelos translates: . . . *dī bē saḥarānāy*. Pseudo-Jonathan renders: . . . *dib h̄zrānūtāy*. (Peshitta reads *dbḥdry*.) A further case in point is the expression *wayyassēb'et pānā(y)w* (2 Kgs. 20:2). The Targum translates: *wē'asḥar yat 'appōbi*. Cf. LH *yaḥazūr* 'et pānā(y)w (e.g., Mishnah Ber. 2:5; Maas. 2:2). The BH, Aramaic and LH idioms are to be equated with Akkadian *panī subḥuru*, 'to turn the face'. (The sense may be either 'zuwenden' or 'abwenden'. See Mullo Weir, *Lexicon*, 292; AHw., 819a, 1007a-b.)

7 For a similar combination of voicing and metathesis, cf., e.g., the respective words for 'honey' in Akkadian, Hebrew, and Aramaic:

Akkadian	Hebrew	Aramaic
<i>dīšpu</i>	<i>dēbaš</i>	<i>dūbš'ā</i>

Contrast GvG, 1:278, 1f.

8 The Aramaic forms with medial /d/ remain to be explained. We consider two possibilities: a) false etymologizing; Aramaic knows other such examples. Thus *pēṭōrā*, 'table' is a well-known loan from Akkadian *pašsuru*, which is in turn borrowed from Sumerian *BANŠUR*. Similarly Mandaic *zql* 'date-palm' corresponds to *dql* of the other Aramaic dialects and to LH *dēqql*; b) Professor Ginsberg has suggested (privately) that the Aramaic forms with medial /d/ have resulted from blending or contamination with some word on the order of Arabic *dāra*, which, like the verbs *špr*, *saḥāru* and *h̄zr*, is a synonym of Hebrew *sbb*. (See Saadia's translations of Ps. 3:7, 114:4,5; note that a verb *daru* in this sense may be attested in Old Akkadian. See ZA 62 [1973], 273; cf. MAD 5, 8:22.) Ginsberg has illustrated the operation of the linguistic phenomenon of blending in BH. (*Louis Ginsberg Jubilee Volume* [New York, 1945], 161, n. 8.) For other illustrations in Semitic and elsewhere, see Brockleman, ZS 5 (1927), 6-38.

9 Though Speiser (OBS, 99) has remarked that *sōḥēṣ* lacks "the outward credentials of a professional term," this should give us no pause. The same lack appears in *rōḥēl*.

10 Possibly related as well are Jer. 14:18 and Ps. 38:11. Speiser is justified in terming the Jeremiah verse as "much too obscure." (OBS, 100). As regards the Psalms passage, Speiser (along with Rashi, Qimhi, and Saadia) parses *sēḥarḥar* as a reduplicated form of *špr*, which he translates 'to circle'. Hence he translates the difficult *libbī sēḥarḥar* as "my heart goes round and round, pit-a-pat." This is difficult to accept because no other biblical passage describes the troubled heart as going round in circles. (For the terms actually

finite verb as 'to trade, engage in commerce',<sup>11</sup> while others prefer 'to circle, travel',<sup>12</sup> seeking support in Akkadian *saḥāru*<sup>13</sup> and Aramaic *šḥr*.

Though a final decision in this matter is still impossible, the present evidence weighs heavily in favor of translating the BH verb *šḥr* by 'to trade, engage in commerce'. We note that despite the alleged identity of BH *šḥr* and Aramaic *šḥr*, none of the Aramaic versions employs the verb *šḥr* in translating the verses in question.<sup>14</sup> Secondly, though Aramaic *šḥr* is attested as a *verbum movendi*, one may question whether it is ever attested in the sense 'travel, journey'. In the absence of conclusive evidence to that effect it can not be employed to corroborate such a meaning for BH *šḥr*.<sup>15</sup> Thirdly, in LH, a dialect considerably influenced by Aramaic, *šḥr* means 'to

employed, see Sperling, *Studies*, 28, n. 9.) Apparently this is why Rashi translated *muqqāp yāḡōn* (cf. his comment on TB *Gitt.* 70a, s. v. *šḥrḥr*), while Qimhi preferred *maḥššē bōtā(y)w ḥōlē kōt wē sobē bōt 'ānāb wē 'ānāb*. Though not without difficulty, Landsberger's comparison with Akkadian *libbašu šuharrur* 'his heart is dead silent' is preferable from the viewpoint of style and idiom. (See *Supplements to VT* 16 [1967], 189, n. 1.)

11 For the medievals see Sforno to Gen. 34:10 and Qimhi a.1.; among the modern proponents of this interpretation are Albright (*BASOR* 163 [1961], 44f.; *ibid.* 164 [1961], 28); Gordon (*Studies . . . Driver* [Oxford, 1963], 78; and Landsberger (*Supplements*, 188-90).

12 Rashi is the medieval proponent of this view. We read in his comment on Gen. 42:34: *tishārū tē sōbē bū wē kol lē sōn sōḥarīm ū sē ḥōrāb 'al sēmē ḥazzērīm wē sōbē bīm 'aḥar happraḡmaṭiyā* "tishārū 'you shall go round'. The entire terminology of *sōḥarīm* and *sē ḥōrāb* derives from (the fact) that they (the merchants) move about constantly in search of trade" (Berliner, *Raschi*, 84-85). Rashi's employment of *mē ḥazzērīm* indicates that he was not only mindful of LH *rōkē līm mē ḥazzērīm bā 'ayyārōt* 'peddlers traveling between towns (Mishnah *Maas.* 2:3; TB *B.K.*, 82a), but that he may have equated the roots *šḥr* and *hzr*. Speiser, being in almost complete agreement with Rashi, asserts that "the Heb. verb *šḥr* signified originally 'to circle, follow on irregular course' . . . The connotation 'to trade' is a late secondary development in Heb. and Jewish Aramaic based on the noun *sōḥēr* 'merchant,' i.e., 'peddler, one who makes the rounds' " (*The Anchor Bible Genesis* [Garden City, 1964], 264-65; Cf. *OBS*, 97-105). Speiser's assertion, however, is unsupported. There is no evidence as to what "the Heb. verb *šḥr* signified originally." In fact, though Akkadian knew a *sāḥīru* 'merchant' (see Landsberger, *Supplements*, 176-90; cf. *AHW.*, 1009, s. v., *sāḥīru* and *sāḥīru*) and a *saḥirtu/saḥartu* 'merchandise' (see Landsberger, *Supplements*, 176-90; *AHW.*, 1008b; K. Balkan, *Or.* 36 [1967], 405, it never employed the common verb *saḥāru* to describe the movement of either, preferring *etēqu* for the merchant and *wabālum/sūbulum* for the goods (See Landsberger, *Supplements*, 180-82, 188). Hence we surely are not compelled to treat the ambiguous BH verb *šḥr* as the source of the unambiguous noun *sōḥēr*. Quite possibly (with Speiser) the verb 'to trade' is a secondary development from the noun. However (contra Speiser), the attested Akkadian noun forms allow a loan into West Semitic and a consequent secondary verbal development well within the generally accepted limits of the patriarchal period.

13 Landsberger has shown that Speiser's appeal to Akkadian *saḥāru* does not alleviate the syntactic difficulties of the Genesis verses. (*Supplements*, 189.)

14 Thus, for example, Onqelos to Gen. 34:21 has: *wy'bdwn bh šḥwrt'*. Pseudo-Jonathan a.1. reads: *wy'bdwn bh prmqty*. A manuscript fragment reads: *wytgrwn bh* (*Aramaic Handbook*, 1/1: 57); Peshitta reads: *wnttgrwn bh*. Cf. further Saadia's *w'tgrw pyh*.

15 The Targums usually express the notion 'travel' by *nīl* (e.g., Gen. 11:2, 12:9, 33:17), while Peshitta prefers *šql* (e.g., Peshitta to above verses). Speiser has called attention to Aramaic *šḥr* allegedly construed with 'ar'a' as a direct object in IQapGen. 21:15 and has employed this verse as a corroboration of his interpretation of BH *šḥr* 'r' (*OBS*, 101-2). However, the following considerations must not be ignored. First, the phrase actually reads: *lmsḥr wlmḥz' r'*, the noun *r'* being the direct object of the verb *ḥz'*. Second, the passages immediately following IQapGen. 15-18 employ *šḥr* as a *verbum movendi* with the sense 'to make

trade, engage in commerce', never 'to circle, travel, make a circuit'.<sup>16</sup> Finally, we think it possible to demonstrate that the actual etymological correspondent of Akkadian *sah̄aru* in BH is *š̄hr* rather than *šhr*.<sup>17</sup> Accordingly, we separate Hebrew *šhr* from Aramaic *šhr*<sup>18</sup> and from Akkadian *sah̄aru*.<sup>19</sup>

On the other hand, when we compare LH *h̄zr* with Akkadian *sah̄aru*, we note close semantic parallels between them. First, note that both verbs mean 'circle, revolve'.<sup>20</sup> We see this for example in astronomical contexts. Thus we read: *hakmê yisrā'el 'ōmrîn galgal qābū'a ūmazālôt h̄ōzērîn w'e'hakmê 'ummôt ha'ōlām 'ōmrîn galgal h̄ōzēr ūmazālôt q'ebū'in*<sup>21</sup> "The Jewish sages say, 'The vault of heaven is stationary but the heavenly bodies revolve'. But the gentile sages say, 'The vault of heaven revolves while the heavenly bodies are stationary'."<sup>22</sup>

Akkadian employs *sah̄aru* similarly to describe the motion of heavenly bodies. Thus we read in a neo-Assyrian (NA) letter: *Šalbatānu kīma ištu libbi zuqaqīpi ittusia issuhra ina libbi zuqaqīpi ētarab* "Mars, having come forth from Scorpio, circled round and reentered Scorpio."<sup>23</sup>

In the intensive conjugation, LH *h̄zr* (*h̄izzēr*) means 'to travel, make a circuit'. We note the following LH paraphrase of a biblical verse: *šēbāyā PN haššaddīq m'e'ḥazzēr b'kol m'e'qômôt yisrā'el w'e'dān 'ōtām b'e'ārēhem šene'ēmar w'e'hālak middē šānāh b'e'sānāh w'e'sābab GN wGN2 wGN3* "For the righteous Samuel used to travel to all the Israelite cities and judge them (the people) in their own cities. As it is stated: (1 Sam. 7:16) every year he went on circuit to GN, GN2 and GN3."<sup>24</sup>

a circuit around'. However, this sense is not necessarily synonymous with 'traverse, journey, travel'. The preceding lines of the narrative provide a motive for Abraham's movements: he is to circle the land in order to symbolize his formal acquisition of same in behalf of himself and his descendants in perpetuity. The BH passages in which the finite verb *šhr* occurs do not intend to bestow any such land grant. Finally, it is worth noting that IQapGen. itself expresses 'travel, traverse' by terms other than *šhr*. See, e.g., 2:23 (*w'zl l'rk mt*) and 21:13 (*blk w'zl*).

16 Thus we read in a midrash: *'amar PN mah ballāšōn d'erōr kim'e dayyēr b'e' dayyārā ūm'e saḥēr b'kol m'e'dīnāh* "PN said, 'What is the meaning of the term *d'erōr*? (Its beneficiary) compares to a person who lodges at an inn and can engage in commerce in every province.'" (Weiss, *Sifra*, 107a; for a variant of *kim'e dayyēr b'e' dayyārā*, see Kohut, *A uch Completum*, 3:134.) A parallel text of the last phrase reads: *ūmōbīl s'e'pōrāh b'kol m'e'dīnāh* "transports merchandise (= *saḥīrtam wabālum/šūbulum*; see above, n. 12) in every province." (TB *R. Sb.* 9b. Contrast Rashi to Lev. 25:10 (Berliner, *Raschi*, 268). Rashi does not comment on the second half of the parallel text in his commentary to *R. Sb.* 9b. We are therefore unaware of his reading of the crucial passage.

17 See below.

18 The most common BH equivalent of Aramaic *šhr* is *sbb*. (See, e.g., Onqelos to Gen. 42:24 [Pseudo-Jonathan: *h̄zr*]; Exod. 13:18 [Pseudo-Jonathan: *h̄zr*]; Num. 34:4,5; Targum to 1 Sam. 5:8, 9, 10; 2 Sam. 5:23, 14:24). Other BH correspondents of Aramaic *šhr* are *swg* (see Targum to Isa. 42:17, 59:14; Jer. 38:22, 46:5; Zeph. 1:6); and *zwr* (Targum to Isa. 1:4). We note that in JA, alone, among the Aramaic dialects, *šhr* is attested both as a *verbum movendi* and as a verb denoting 'to trade, do business'. (For an attestation of this latter sense, see Theodor, Albeck, *Bereshit Rabba*, 2:551:2-3. One may assume that this second sense of *šhr*, restricted to JA, is a Hebraism.

19 Akkadian *sah̄aru* never denotes 'to do business, engage in commerce' or anything of that sort. For the relevant Akkadian terms, see Landsberger, *Supplements*, 186.

20 *h̄zr* occurs in hendiadys with *gl̄l* 'revolve, spin' in TB *B. B.* 16b.

21 Akkadian employs *kānu* to describe the stationing of heavenly bodies. (See CAD *K*, 160.)

22 TB *Pes.* 94b.; for a metaphoric use of this image see TB *Shab.* 151b commenting on Deut. 15:10.

23 ABL 519:21-23 (AOAT 5/1, 13:21-23).

24 TB *Shab.* 56a. This midrash makes a specific semantic connection between *h̄zr* and *sbb*.

Further, the Babylonian Talmud (TB) credits Ezra with the following mercantile reform: *šey<sup>e</sup>bû rōklîn m<sup>e</sup>hazz<sup>e</sup>rîn bā'ayyarôt miššūm*<sup>25</sup> *takšûê nāšim* "That peddlers be allowed to travel between towns for the purpose of (selling) women's trinkets."<sup>26</sup>

Akkadian *subhuru* has this very same meaning. Thus we read in a letter from Mari: *inanna šumma libbi bēliya lūbēl arnim ina ne-pā-rim lidūkūm[a] birūt*<sup>27</sup> *ālānē adi GN u GN2 lisahbīrū aššum šābum ipallaḥma [arḥ] iṣ ipahḥuram* "Now if my lord approves, let them execute a criminal (kept) in jail, and let them cut off his head, and go round (with it) between the settlements as far as GN and GN2 so that the troops will be afraid and will assemble here quickly."<sup>28</sup>

Both LH *h̄zr* and Akkadian *saḥāru* are attested in the meanings, 'seek out, search for, attempt to find'. We note first some LH passages which illustrate these senses of *h̄zr*: *h̄izzēr DN 'al*<sup>29</sup> *kol middôt iḥbôt littēn l<sup>e</sup>yisrā'ēl w<sup>e</sup>lō' māsā' ēla aniyyūt* "DN searched through all the good qualities in order to bestow (them) upon Israel but found only poverty,"<sup>30</sup> *darkō šēlā iṣ laḥazōr 'al iṣšāb w<sup>e</sup>en darkāb šēlā iṣšāb laḥazōr 'al iṣ māsāl lā'ādām šē'ābdāb lō 'abēdāb mī h̄ōzēr 'al mī ba'al 'abēdāb m<sup>e</sup>hazzēr 'al 'abēdātō* "It is a man's course to (actively) look for a wife, but it is not a woman's course to (actively) look for a husband. The situation is analogous to a person who has lost an article. Who seeks what? The owner of the article seeks his article."<sup>31</sup>

Akkadian *saḥāru* is attested in the meanings, 'search, seek', as early as Old Babylonian (OB). In an OB letter, a prospective oil-buyer writes: *šamnam damqam . . . šamamma liqā šamnum mād šumma šamnum ša PN lā damiq suburma šamnam damqam šamamma liqā* "Buy for me oil of good quality and get (it). Oil is plentiful. If PN's oil is not of good quality, look around, and buy for me only oil of good quality and get (it)."<sup>32</sup>

We call attention as well to the famous Gilgamesh passage: *Gilgameš ēš tadāl balāṭam ša tsaḥḥuru lā tutta* "O Gilgamesh, to where are you roaming? The (lasting) life which you are looking for you shall not find."<sup>33</sup>

The connotation of *saḥāru* as 'seek' is further corroborated by its association with *se'û* and *bu'û*, the most common Akkadian words for 'to seek'. Thus in Maqlû we find the following sequence: *šedû liba'ûki utukkû lište'ûki eṭemmû lissahruki* "May the genies look for you, the

25 The employment of *miššūm* in our passage is very similar to Elephantine *bšm* (e.g., AP 8:12, 13:9) and to Akkadian *aššum* followed by a substantive. (See CAD A<sup>2</sup>, 468-69.)

26 TB B.K. 82a-b; cf. TB B. B. 22a.

27 Cf. LH *h̄izzēr bēn*, e.g., Lieberman, *Tosefta* (Order Zera'im), 49:36.

28 ARM II, 48:14-20. Contrast Oppenheim, *Letters from Mesopotamia* (Chicago, 1967), 98.

29 Usually *h̄zr* in this sense is followed by the preposition 'al. Occasionally *b* is employed (e.g.: 'illū bāyitā meḥazzēr b<sup>e</sup>kol 'obālē GN 'ēn 'at mōšē' . . . "Even if you were to search through all the tents of GN, you would not find . . ." [Yalqut Shimoni, 80b]).

30 TB Hag. 9b.; for the similar Akkadian construction *lā . . . ēla*, see Sperling, *Studies*, 40, n. 42; contrast Lieberman, *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine* (New York, 1950), 49, n. 19; see further, A. Bendavid, *Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew* (Tel Aviv, 1967), 148 [in Hebrew].

31 TB Kidd. 2b.

32 AbB 2:144:17-25.

33 Gilg. X:i: 7-8 (OB). Cf. XI:198 *balāṭa bu'û* and XI:7 *balāṭa še'û*; note that the sequence *saḥāru . . . (w)atû(m)* is the semantic equivalent of *h̄zr . . . mš'* as cited above in our text and in the passage quoted in n. 29.

spirits always seek you out, the shades of the dead search you out.”<sup>34</sup>

Finally we note that *saḥāru* and *še’û* are equated in a lexical list, to wit:

Ú-KIN=ri-tam šu-te-’ú ‘to seek pasture’.  
Ú-KIN=MIN sa-ḥa-rum ‘to look for pasture’.<sup>35</sup>

An additional meaning shared by *hzr* and *saḥāru* is that of ‘besiege, surround’. For *hzr* in this sense we note the following passage in Tosefta: *bāri’šônāh hāyû manniḥin zēnān babbayit hassāmūk laḥomāb pa’am aḥat ḥāzērū alēhem wē hāyû nidḥāqin liṭṭōl ’et zēnān wē hārē gū zeh ’et zeh bitqīnū šeyē hē kol ’ehād wē ’ehād maḥazr lē bētō* “Originally they used to deposit their weapons in the house nearest the city wall. One time they were besieged; while pressing to reach their weapons, they killed one another (in the confusion). They decreed (therefore) that (henceforth) each person take his weapon home.”<sup>36</sup>

Akkadian *saḥāru*, with the connotation ‘besiege’ is attested in a well-known inscription of Nabonidus: *palḥiṣ atamma ana enlil ilāni Marduk bīta šu’ātim ša taqbū epēšu ummān-manda saḥiršumma puggulū emūqāšū* “Reverently I spoke with Marduk, the enlil of the gods (saying): That very temple which you have ordered me to rebuild, the Medes are besieging it and their armed force is very strong.”<sup>37</sup>

It is well-known that LH *hzr* attests the sense ‘return’, and thus is a synonym of, and often

34 Maqlû II:210-12. Cf. 206-8.

35 MSL XIII, 193:272-73. The synonymous relationship of *saḥāru* and *še’û* may provide us with an etymological distinction between BH (and rare JA) *špr* ‘to engage in commerce’ on the one hand and Akkadian *saḥāru*, Aramaic *špr*, and Aramaic-LH *hzr* on the other. Professor Held has noted (oral communication) that the parallelism of *saḥāru/še’û* corresponds to the Hebrew parallelism of *drš/špr* (Ps. 78:34; cf. Prov. 11:27.). At the same time he noted the equivalence of the Akkadian idiom *saḥiru damqāti* (OIP 2, 23:6) and Hebrew *šōḥēr tōb* (Prov. 11:27; cf. Esth. 10:3) ‘seeker after good’. Note further that the Aramaic versions at times translate Hebrew *špr* by *b*. (See Peshitta to Prov. 8:17; Job 7:21, 8:5; Targum to Job 7:21.) The Hebrew-Aramaic correspondence has its parallel in the inner-Akkadian correspondence of *saḥāru* and *bu’û*. It is additionally noteworthy that in LH, where *špr* survives vestigially in literary contexts, it is associated with *šqd* and *hqr*. (See Buber, *Midrash Tehillim*, 492; cf. Targum to Isa. 8:20.) We conclude therefore that the Hebrew etymon of Akkadian *saḥāru* is BH *špr* ‘to seek, search, look for’ and possibly, ‘turn’ (see Job 8:5). If we are correct, it is likely that the BH orthography reflects an etymological \**špr* which shifted to *špr* in the later dialects in keeping with a well-known phenomenon in Hebrew and Aramaic. (See e.g. M. Segal, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew* [Oxford, 1970], 32.) We would then be justified in distinguishing BH \**špr* ‘to seek’ and BH *špr* ‘to engage in commerce’. Additional support for our hypothesis is furnished by Mari *IŠ-hu-ra-am-ma* (ARM II, 129:21). Though von Soden reads the initial sign here as *š* (AHw., 1005b, 3f, cf. 1006a, 6e; Syllabar 139.), the evidence for his preference is not compelling. (Bottéro, ARM XV, 43: 139, lists only one occurrence of this value which is itself not entirely convincing. For a critique of von Soden’s procedure in assigning values to the sign *IŠ*, see Held, *JAOS* 79 [1959], 173, n. 87.) Finally, note that K. Riemschneider has recently listed *saḥāru* as a MA variant of *saḥāru*. (K. Riemschneider, *Lehrbuch des Akkadischen* [Leipzig, 1969], 174, 269; see further, Sperling, ‘Studies’, 44, n. 58.) Taken together, the Akkadian occurrences and the Hebrew orthography may indicate the nature of the original initial sibilant.

36 Tosefta (Mo’ed), 99-100:23-25; cf. further Pseudo-Jonathan to Gen. 19:4; Targum to Ps. 22:13, 17.

37 VAB 4, 218:23-25; see further ARMT X, 81:8-10. For *saḥāru* in hendiadys with *lawû*, the more common word for ‘besiege’, see *Ugaritica* 5, 31:30-32.



a substitute for, *šwb*. This synonymy and substitution may best be illustrated by comparing pairs of BH and LH idioms, e.g., *šāb l'ētānō*<sup>38</sup> *hāzar l'ētānō*,<sup>39</sup> 'returned to full strength'; *šāb rēqām*<sup>40</sup> *hāzar rēqām*,<sup>41</sup> 'returned empty-handed'; *šāb 'el 'āpār*<sup>42</sup> *hāzar l'e'āpār*<sup>43</sup> 'returned to dust, died'; *bēšib lim<sup>e</sup> qômô*<sup>44</sup> *bēḥezir lim<sup>e</sup> qômô*,<sup>45</sup> 'returned (transitive), restored'; and similar pairs.<sup>46</sup>

Similarly, Akkadian *saḥāru*, like its LH counterpart, attests the meaning 'return'. We note the following passage: *lā emūqā balātuššunu rēš hūrāši lā anašši kīma issuhūrūne ana GN allak . . . ina panīšunu rēš hūrāši anašši* "Without their presence I have no authority to examine the gold. As soon as they have returned here, I shall go to Uruk . . . and examine the gold in their presence."<sup>47</sup>

In fact, the relationship between the Hebrew pair *h̄zr/šwb* has its parallel in the Akkadian pair *saḥāru/tāru*, it being recalled that *tāru* is the semantic equivalent of *šwb*.

In Akkadian *saḥāru* and *tāru* are employed in synonymous parallelism as in the following passage: *ilī šabsu litūra ištari zenitum lissahra* "May my angry personal god return to me, my enraged personal goddess come back to me."<sup>48</sup>

The two verbs are likewise attested in hendiadys as in the following passage: *ašū siḥru u tāru simat tābāzi lā kullumū* "They (the foals) had not been trained how to advance, turn about and turn away as is befitting for battle."<sup>49</sup>

In various idioms *saḥāru* and *tāru* are interchangeable. Thus the idiom *kīšāda turru* is synonymous with *kīšāda saḥāru*, both denoting 'to turn the neck.'<sup>50</sup> Similarly, *ana lā bašī litterrū-šu* "May they make him (the demon) non-existent" is in no way different from *kīma lā nabšī kalāša ussaḥḥir* "It made all (the land) like (something) that had never existed."<sup>51</sup>

38 Exod. 14:27; Targum has *twb*; Peshitta has *hpk*.

39 TB B. B. 75a.

40 Jer. 50:9; Targum: *twb*.

41 TB R. H. 17b.

42 Gen. 3:19; Qoh. 3:20.

43 Theodor, Albeck, *Beresbit Rabba*, 213:8; TB *Sot.* 17a; *San.* 92a

44 1 Sam. 5:3.

45 TB *Makk.* 9b, based on *bēšib* in Num. 35:25; cf. Mishnah *Yad.* 4:4 expounding on Jer. 49:6 and R. Yohanan's comment on Lev. 5:23 (TB B. K. 94b). In general midrashic explanations of biblical verses are extremely valuable in determining BH-LH sequences.

46 For additional examples see Bendavid, *Biblical Hebrew and Mishnaic Hebrew*, 364.

47 AOAT 5/1, 277:r. 1-5; note that *alāku* occurs as an antonym of *saḥāru* in BWL 128:44. (Cf. EA 44:9-10.) This sequence has its LH parallel in *blk . . . h̄zr* (Mishnah *San.* 10:3). Cf. further Aramaic *ʿl . . . m̄h̄zr* (Targum Qoh. 1:6).

48 Ebeling, *Handerhebung*, 46:87; cf. ZA 32 (1918-19), 174: 56; See further BWL 343:8 (Ludlul).

49 TCL 3:28:173.

50 Oppenheim, *JAOS* 61 (1941), 256.

51 Cf. ZA 28 (1914), 77:60 and JCS 11 (1957), 86:iv:12; The synonymy of *saḥāru* and *tāru* extends as well to the terminology of the Schlussklauseln. We read in an Neo-Babylonian document: . . . *nadin mahir apil rugummā ul iši u aššu matīna lā saḥārimma ana muḥḥi amēlūtu šu'ātu lā ragāmu dayyānū tuppi ištūrū . . .* ["The money] has been given and received. He is satisfied and has no (further) claim. The judges have inscribed a tablet so that a claim will never again be raised against these men . . ." (Nbn. 668:17-20). Generally *tāru* is employed in clauses of this type. (For examples see ABAW NF 51 [Munich, 1960], *passim*.) Note further that *saḥāru . . . ragāmu* corresponds to LH *h̄zr . . . ḥ' n* (e.g., TB B. B. 31a).

Furthermore, both *tāru* and *saḥāru* may be employed as auxiliary verbs in the sense of 'again, a second time', in a manner very similar to the Hebrew employment of *šwb* and *ḥzr*.<sup>52</sup>

In this last connection the manner in which both Akkadian *saḥāru* and LH *ḥzr* are employed is significant. Each of these, when employed as an auxiliary, generally connotes 'to repeat the action (of the main verb), to revert to a former condition (referred to by the main verb)'. At times, each of these auxiliaries may introduce an action opposed to the main verb.

The following LH examples are self-explanatory: *bikkāh zēh w<sup>e</sup>ḥāzar w<sup>e</sup>bikkāh zēh qillēl zēh w<sup>e</sup>ḥāzar w<sup>e</sup>qillēl zēh* "He struck one, then turned and struck the other. He cursed one, then turned and cursed the other."<sup>53</sup> *kēwān šēbiggīd šūb 'ēnô ḥôzēr ûmaggīd* "Once he has testified he may not change his testimony."<sup>54</sup>

For Akkadian *saḥāru* in similar connotations, note the following examples: *[ša] matīma ina šarrāni kullat nākirī lā iṣḥuru lā iṣnū qabalšu mamman* "Against whom no one among all the hostile kings ever returned to wage his battle again."<sup>55</sup> *ilu uṣeṣṣâ u saḥḥar uṣerrab* "He will cause the god to go forth (in the procession) and then to reenter (his sanctuary)."<sup>56</sup>

*šar māt GN ittišu [i]sl[i]m ittasharma šar māt GN itti šar māt GN2 ittaškan*, "The king of Aleppo made a pact with him. But then the king of Aleppo proceeded to compact with the king of Hanigalbat."<sup>57</sup>

52 For *šwb* in this sense see, e.g., Mic. 7:19; for *tāru* see, e.g., En. el. IV:26.

53 TB *Makk.*, 16a.

54 *Ibid.*, 3a.

55 Borger *Esarb.* 103:27.

56 ABL 65 rs. 3: cf. LH *ḥāzar w<sup>e</sup>biknîs* (Mišnah *Shab.* 10:1).

57 JCS 8 (1954), 61, n. 132.