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Isaiah LIII. 11 and Its Echoes

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Isaiah liii has an acknowledged importance stretching far beyond the confines of its original setting and background. It is proposed to consider the nature and extent of the influence of one verse within this chapter, and that mainly as we examine the significance and subsequent history of one word or phrase within the verse. *B^eda'tô* in v. 11 is translated in the English versions 'by his knowledge'. This rendering was queried by Prof. D. Winton Thomas in 1937: he proposed in its place 'by his submission' or 'by his humiliation'.¹ The linguistic reasons for the new translation are, briefly, that just as the verb *yāda'* 'he knew' underlies *da'at* 'knowledge', so there is, he suggested, a second root *yāda'*, meaning 'he was quiet, at rest, submissive, humbled', from which developed a second noun *da'at*, 'submission' or 'humiliation'. The proposed second root has a parallel in Arabic, Hebrew's younger sister, in which *wadua'* means 'became still, quiet, submissive'. In a series of notes in the *JTS* from 1934 onwards² Thomas has found many examples of the second root *yāda'*, beginning with Judges xvi. 9,³ where *nōda'* means 'was known' if taken from *yāda'* 'he knew', but most probably it is to be referred to the second root with support from the context and from the Peshitta, and means 'was brought to submission'. Another example he has discovered is in Job xxi. 19:⁴ 'he rewardeth him, and he shall know' is re-translated 'he requites (punishes) him, and he is submissive', *w^eyēda'* being regarded as 'an expression of submission consequent upon divine chastisement'.

The suggestion that *b^eda'tô* is to be rendered 'by his submission' gains support from another suggestion, made a few months earlier by Prof. G. R. Drivers⁵ on good grammatical grounds, that in Isaiah liii. 3 the phrase 'acquainted with grief' or 'acquainted with sickness' (cf. RV margin; Heb. *y^edūa' ḥolî*) be rendered instead 'humbled, disciplined by sickness', again with reference to the second root *yāda'*. Thomas has pointed out the confirmation of Driver's rendering to be found in Jewish tradition,⁶ and also evidence that the Targum and leading Jewish commentators such as Rashi and Ibn Ezra recognized this second root in many other parts of the Old Testament.⁷ L. J. Liebreich has parried⁸ the suggested force of this evidence by claiming that the authorities cited were merely rendering according to context and had no linguistic knowledge of a second root. One cannot prove this opinion wrong, but, even supposing that he is right, one can at the least perceive from the evidence a recognition by men immersed in the Old Testament that the meaning 'he knew' cannot cover all the instances of *yāda'*.

If *y^edūa'* in v. 3 does come from the second root, then it is reasonable to infer that the same root is picked up by *da'tô* in v. 11. There are parallels for this resumption of words: *m^e'unneh*

¹ *JTS* xxxviii, pp. 404 f.

² In most volumes from xxxv to n.s. xii (1961) See also *Record and Revelation* (Ed. H. W. Robinson), 1938, pp. 393 f. and C. S. Rodd, *ExpT* lxxi, 1960, p. 132. Hebrew, being a mixed language, contains many homonyms: e.g. *ḥrš* 'cut in, engrave' is a different root from *ḥrš* 'be silent'.

³ *JTS* xxxv, p. 302.

⁴ *JTS* xxxvi, pp. 411 f.

⁵ *JTS* xxxviii, p. 49; Rodd, *op. cit.*

⁶ *Loc. cit.* in n. 1.

⁷ *JQR* n.s. xxxvii, 1946, pp. 177 f.

⁸ *JQR* xxxvii, pp. 337 ff.

'afflicted' in v. 4 is repeated in *na^aneh* 'he was afflicted' in v. 7, and *m^edukkā* 'crushed' (AV 'bruised') in v. 5 is picked up by *dakk^eō* 'to crush him' (AV 'to bruise him') in v. 10. An admission of the difficulty of *da'at* 'knowledge' in v. 11 is to be found not only in proposals to

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emend the text at this point to *b^erā'atō* from *rā'ā* 'adversity',⁹ but also, as Thomas said, in the moot problem whether the suffix is objective or subjective, i.e. whether it means 'by (the many's) knowledge of him' or 'by his knowledge (of Yahweh)'.¹⁰ 'Submission, humiliation,' fits much more naturally into the context. Two interesting illustrations of the natural link between suffering and the immediate context are to be found in Jewish tradition. R. Mord'khai ben Y'hosaphah of Provence wrote in 1274: 'And for his sufferings (Heb. *'al hayyissôrîm*) in exile he will justify among many the Just One of the world, as the prophet says "By his knowledge (*b^eda'tō*) my servant will justify the Just One unto many", confessing Him to be righteous'.¹¹ It is just possible that *'al hayyissôrîm* is put deliberately for *b^eda'tō*, for the same root *ysr* is sometimes used in Jewish tradition to give the sense of *yd^a*.¹² An unknown Jewish annotator¹³ comments as follows upon *b^eda'tō* and the following three words: '“My servant” still “justified the Just” and did not, for what he had suffered (*ba^abûr s a^arô*, literally “on account of his affliction”), condemn Him, but judged righteously in spite of all that he endured' (*mišta'ēr*, lit. 'was afflicted'). At the least these two references indicate the suitability of a reference to suffering and affliction in the context.

It has been widely questioned whether *b^eda'tō* properly goes with the succeeding words, according to the Masoretic punctuation, or with the preceding *yišba'* ('shall be satisfied'). The LXX did the latter, together with two of the later Greek translators, Symmachus and Theodotion, and with the Peshitta. The Targum and the Vulgate agree with MT, and so does 1 QIs^a, as is shown by its insertion of the conjunction 'and' before *b^eda'tō*. It is not clear what Aquila intended.¹⁴ Thomas follows Driver and many others¹⁵ in linking it with the foregoing, and he translates 'He shall be sated with his humiliation'. The linking with *yišba'* is attractive, for it is rhythmically and stylistically superior to the alternative. But a possible objection presents itself from the fact that in three independent ancient sources 'he shall see' is followed by 'light'. The LXX and the mutually independent 1QIs^a and iQIs^b all add *'ôr* after *yir'eh*. A threefold cord is not quickly broken, and MT's omission of *'ôr* is easily explained as a case of haplography.¹⁶ 'Light' is then a metaphor for success as in Psalm xcvi. 11, etc. The Servant will have a happy issue out of all his afflictions when the night of sorrow turns into the light

⁹ So Kittel in *BH³*, following one Hebrew MS. This and another suggestion are mentioned in art. cit. in n. 1. Duham, Ehrlich and Kissane (*Comm. ad loc.*) also read *b^erā'ātō*. H. L. Ginsberg in *JBL* lxxvii, 1958, p. 156, suggests, among other emendations of the context, *mērā'ātō* 'from his adversity'.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, referring to Delitzsch, *Comm. ad loc.* I. Sonne in *JBL* lxxviii, 1959, p. 338 takes the word as an infinitive construct 'because he knew', assuming an ellipse of *kī* 'that' afterwards and making small emendations in the following words.

¹¹ See Driver and Neubauer, *Isaiah 53 according to the Jewish Interpreters*, 1876-7, vol. i, p. 327; ii, p. 380.

¹² *Loc. cit.* in n. 7.

¹³ *Op. cit.* (n. 11), i, p. 336; ii, p. 392. Vol. ii, p. xvi states that the passage of which part is here quoted is taken 'from the Paris MS No. 17'.

¹⁴ So H. Hegermann, *Jesaja 53 in Hexapla, Targum and Peschitta* (1954,) p. 43.

¹⁵ G. R. Driver, *JTS* xxxv, p. 152. Cf. among others C. R. North, *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah* (1948), p. 126 and H. W. Wolff, *Jesaja 53 im Urchristentum* (3rd ed., 1952), p. 25.

¹⁶ Cf. F. F. Bruce, *Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls* (1956), p. 69, who calls this a certain emendation. [http://www.biblicalstudies.org.uk/book_dss_bruce.html]

of success. By restoring 'ôr a sense is obtained which is congruous with the happy tone of the immediately preceding 'He shall see (his) seed, he shall prolong (his) days, and the purpose of Yahweh shall prosper through him'. But the proposed translation 'Of the toil of his soul shall the righteous have his fill,¹⁷ He shall be sated with his humiliation' makes the poem switch back suddenly and unexpectedly from success to a surfeit of toil and suffering. The attachment of *b^eda'tô* to what precedes may thus be questioned on exegetical grounds.¹⁸

DANIEL XII. 4

Thomas has also explained *hadda'at* in Daniel xii. 4 in terms of the second root *yāda'*, translating the end of the verse 'and great will be the humiliation (punishment)'.¹⁹ This suggestion avoids the common emendation to *hārā'ôṭ* 'calamities' on the basis of the LXX.²⁰ The thought suits the context of

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'a time of trouble' (v. 1), and would echo the tribulation mentioned in xi. 31-35. On this interpretation the preceding *y^ešōf^etû* ('shall run to and fro') is to be taken with Bevan as expressing commotion, unless indeed *y^ešōf^etû* ('shall fall away, become apostates') be read with Behrmann²¹ harking back to the thought of xi. 34b.

Much research has gone in recent years into the relation between Daniel and the Servant Songs.²² In the book of Daniel has been found 'the oldest interpretation of the Suffering Servant',²³ and in the interests of historical theology many parallels in thought and language have been drawn, including the claim that the 'one like a son of man' in Daniel vii. 12 is 'a visionary representation of the Servant of the Lord'.²⁴ The phrase in Daniel xii. 3 *mašdîqê hārabbîm* (AV 'they that turn many to righteousness') is an obvious reference to *yašdîq lārabbîm* (AV 'shall justify many') in Isaiah liii. 11, as has often been pointed out.

May an extra thread contributed by Hebrew lexicography be woven into the web of this well-established theological pattern? So far as the writer knows, *hadda'at* in Daniel xii. q. has not hitherto been linked with *da'tô* in Isaiah liii. 11. If *hadda'at* is a deliberate echo of *da'tô*, it fits in well with the reference to the following words of Isaiah liii. 11 in the preceding verse, as well as with the many parallels elsewhere suggested by others. If this proposal of an allusion to Isaiah liii. 11 here be right, not only is support given to Thomas's suggestion that

¹⁷ So Thomas, taking *yir'eh* as an alternative form of *yirweh* with Driver.

¹⁸ Cf. T. H. Robinson in 'A Note on the Text and Interpretation of Isaiah liii. 3, 11', *ExpT* lxxi (1960), p. 383. He accepts the originality of 'ôr, but rejects the new meaning for *b^eda'tô* on the ground that 'the old rendering leads up well to the triumph of v. 12'. He translates 'be satisfied by his knowledge' and explains 'knowledge' as 'that gained through the vision' (cf. H. Cazelles, 'Les Poemes du Serviteur', *RSR* xliii, 1955: 'the knowledge of divine things already given in connection with a vision in chs. xli. 20; xlv. 9... the knowledge of the wishes and commandments of God'). By taking *b^eda'tô* in the new sense with the following words this objection does not arise.

¹⁹ *JTS* n.s. vi (1955), p. 226.

²⁰ See *loc. cit.* in n. 19 for references. This emendation goes back to A. A. Bevan, *Comm. ad loc.*

²¹ See R. H. Charles, *Comm. ad loc.*

²² See e.g., H. W. Wolff, *op. cit.*, pp. 38 f.; H. L. Ginsberg, *VT* iii (1953), pp. 400ff.; W. H. Brownlee, *BASOR* cxxxii, 1953, pp. 12 ff.; C. R. North, *The Suffering Servant in Deutero-Isaiah* (1948), pp. 6 f.

²³ The title of Ginsberg's article.

²⁴ Brownlee, *loc. cit.*, p. 15. See too C. F. D. Moule, *SNTS Bulletin* iii (1952), pp. 40 ff.; M. Black, *SJT* vi (1953), pp. 1 ff.; F. F. Bruce, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts* (1959), p. 58; 1960, p. 65.

hadda 'at means 'humiliation', but also yet another link is seen to have been forged between Daniel and the Servant Songs.

ROMANS V. 19

In Paul's great formulation of the origin and effect of sin and its redemptive counteraction in Christ (Romans v. 12 ff.) it has been recognized that the concepts of the Son of Man and of the Servant have been united.²⁵ O. Cullmann has written²⁶ of v. 19: 'Verse 19 shows clearly that the apostle had in mind the "Servant" of Isaiah: "...by one man's obedience many will be made righteous".' This is a reference to Isaiah liii. 11: "My Servant shall make many to be accounted righteous".' A. M. Hunter agrees: 'The latter half of the verse [v. 19] surely echoes Isaiah liii. 11.'²⁷ It is noticeable that Cullmann omits *b^eda 'tô* in his quotation from Isaiah liii. 11. But is not that too echoed in Romans v. 19, in the words διὰ τῆς ὑπακοῆς τοῦ ἑνός ('by the obedience of the one')?

It is significant that A. Richardson in *An Introduction to the Theology of the New Testament* (p. 82; cf. p. 220) quotes Isaiah liii. 11 in the following form: 'By his knowledge (i.e. obedience) shall my righteous servant...' He does not refer to Romans v. 19 in this connection, but if this new interpretation is justified, it might well be argued that Paul interpreted *b^eda 'tô* 'by his knowledge' in the same way. Apparent support is gained from Brown, Driver and Briggs, *Hebrew Lexicon*, which states that the verb *yāda* may involve 'intelligent worship, obedience, etc.' and that the noun *da 'at* is sometimes 'knowledge of God (inc. obedience)'.²⁸ But although the knowledge of God in the Old Testament implies and leads on to obedience, 'obedience' is not easily *substituted* for 'knowledge'. It is noteworthy that where 'obedience' may apparently be substituted for

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'knowledge' without much difference in meaning, it is set in contexts which are virtually or actually negative: Israel, etc. do not 'know' Yahweh, are not manifesting a personal relationship with Him, and so do not obey (e.g. Hosea iv. i, v. 4).

Is it not less circuitous and more straightforward to infer that διὰ τῆς ὑπακοῆς goes back to *b^eda 'tô* in the sense of 'by his submission'? *Da 'at*, in close association as it is with *abdî* 'my servant' a couple of words away, falls naturally into Greek as ὑπακοή. If this suggestion is right, the results are twofold. First, further confirmation is gained for Thomas's view of *da 'tô*. It is significant that Paul sides with IQIs^a and the Targum in linking *b^eda 'tô* with the following words in Isaiah liii. 11. Secondly, if Paul's use of Isaiah liii. 11 is taken from 'a pre-Pauline stock of tradition', as Jeremias suggests on the ground that Paul does not here quote from the LXX, the New Testament emphasis on the obedience of Christ²⁹ may not only flow

²⁵ O. Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, 1959, pp. 171 ff.; A. M. Hunter, *Paul and his Predecessors* (revised ed., 1961), pp. 141 f.

²⁶ Cullmann, *op. cit.*, p. 77. Cf. W. Zimmerli and J. Jeremias, *The Servant of God*, p. 89, n.399. S. Mowinckel in *ZNTW* xxxii (1933), p. 121, n. 82 (cited by Jeremias) includes Romans v. 19 in a list of New Testament references to Isaiah liii without comment.

²⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 141.

²⁸ *S. v. yāda* 2, p. 394a and *s.v. da 'at* 2b, p. 395b.

²⁹ Cf. C. H. Dodd, *According to the Scriptures*, 1952, p. 125: 'All our New Testament theologians—Paul, the author of the Hebrews, and John alike—constantly emphasize the obedience of Christ... as the operative feature in His sacrifice'.

from the general concept of the Servant as an interpretation of the historical facts of His life and death, but may represent a specific link with the 'submission' of the Servant in Isaiah liii. ii. In that case the importance of Isaiah liii. 11 in New Testament theology, great as it is for the application to Christ of the title ὁ δίκαιος 'the Righteous One' and for the ideas of justification and of 'the many', is increased even more.

In this connection one may also ask whether γενόμενος ὑπήκοος (RV 'becoming obedient') in Philippians ii. 8, in the middle of a passage in which many reflections of Isaiah liii have been found³⁰ and which many consider to be a pre-Pauline Christian hymn,³¹ does not refer back to *y^edūa* 'humbled, submissive' in Isaiah liii. 3. Certainly the following μέχρι θανάτου echoes v. 12 and also v. 8 in the LXX.³² Hitherto the only suggested link between γενόμενος ὑπήκοος and Isaiah liii has been Symmachus' rendering (according to Eusebius) of *na^aneh* in Isaiah liii. 7 by ὑπήκουσεν.³³ But if ὑπακοή in Romans v. 19 be rightly regarded as a reflection of *da'at* in Isaiah liii. 11, it is a natural inference that *y^edūa* underlies between γενόμενος ὑπήκοος. If these things are so, here is yet another example of the New Testament's dependence on the Old Testament and of the insistence of the early Christian Church that the great events and truths of the Gospel were 'according to the Scriptures'.

Abbreviations

BH ³	Kittel, <i>Biblia Hebraica</i> , 3rd edition
LXX	Septuagint version
MT	Masoretic text
1QIs ^a	Complete Isaiah scroll discovered in Cave I at Qumran
1QIs ^b	Second (incomplete) Qumrân scroll of Isaiah.

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³⁰ Jeremias, *op. cit.*, p. 97; Dodd, *op. cit.*, pp. 92 f.; Hunter, *op. cit.*, pp. 43 f.; W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism* (1948), p. 274.

³¹ Hunter, *op. cit.*, pp. 40, 122 f.; R. P. Martin, *An Early Christian Confession*, 1960, section ii.

³² In addition to the above see L. Cerfaux, *Miscellanea Historica in honorem A. de Meyer*, 1946, p. 122.

³³ Jeremias, *op. cit.*, p. 97, n. 446.