

THE HEBREW MASAL

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My studies in Hebrew ritual problems have led me to the conclusion that one of the most universal ceremonial words has thus far been overlooked. There are two reasons for this. First, the influence of the King James version. Finding the "Book of Proverbs" entitled *משל*, the tacit assumption was that *masal* expressed only verbal likenesses. The existence of a "pantomime" *masal* was not recognized; that the performance of a symbolical action was technically called a *masal* has been passed over. The second reason is that in fragments of priestly procedure as we have them the *masal* has been taken for granted; the performer of a *kipper*, an *asarah*, a *sabbath*, might use any one of various appropriate *mesalim* known to him. In the Babylonian *Surpu* collection, we know of a few such appended to one series—the officiator could take his choice. But as the performance of a *masal* was not restricted to the temple ritual, it is not strictly a priestly term (as scholars have been using the word priestly). The following collection of principal data tells its own story. That we are dealing with much that scholars call sympathetic magic need not surprise or disturb. Considering Hebrew antecedents and environment, how could it be otherwise? There is no difficulty in explaining its presence. Were it not present, we would have no rational explanation of that fact.

Perhaps we should employ the word "talifice" ("so shall it be done") for an acted *masal*. For the verbal *masal*, "proverb" is not an adequate translation, as all agree. "Likening," or "comparison" is technically more accurate.

In Gen. 37:5 if. Joseph tells a dream of the grain-sheaves of his brethren doing obeisance to his. The brethren at once reply, "Shalt thou indeed be king over us? or shalt thou be anything like that to us?" (*masol timsol*). Next, sun, moon, and eleven stars bow to him. It is at once construed the same way. The narrative establishes the fact that for the compiler such sheaf-action or star-action was a *masal*.

It shows his belief in portents. It shows that his principle of interpretation of a portent was that its *masal* or "likeness" was sure to occur in real life. We are told that Jacob paid careful attention to this *dabar* (oracle?), vs. 11. We may recognize that the compiler would also call the dream of either butler, baker, or Pharaoh a *masal*, were he asked for a technical term; its "like" was sure to follow. This ancient principle we have so far lost faith in that we say "dreams go by contraries."

Take next an acted *masal*: Joash's interview with the dying Elisha, II Kings 13:14 ff. Too feeble to act himself, the prophet acts as master of ceremonies—the king's hands acting for him as the prophet held them. An arrow is shot toward the eastern foe or place of battle, and the king commanded to complete the rite by striking the ground. Then he is angrily told that his victories are limited by the number of his ceremonial strokes. Any Central African "fetishman," making "war-medicine" today, would reason likewise. So would the King of Babylon, Ezek. 21:21. For the present inquiry it is immaterial whether such thought is Elisha's, or an invention of the narrators. In fact, in the latter case, it would be established that the efficacy of such "war-medicine" was believed in centuries after Elisha's death. Then if we turn to I Kings 22:11, we understand that Zedekiah was making "war-medicine" against the same Syrian foe, with his horns of iron. In neither case is the word *masal* used: in each case the "like-this" idea dominates.

Take then Ezek. 24:3: *mesol a masal*; then explain it to the gazing public, vs. 6-14. Here the *masal* is the pot-boiling ceremony; the terminology is definite. Turning then to Ezek. 21:1-5 (A.V., 20: 45-49), we find the prophet "sprinkles" (fire) toward Teman and the forest of Negeb, and announces a fire that shall utterly destroy it. The prophet demurs on comprehending his instructions: "People already say of me, He is a *memassel mesalim!*" a mighty *masal* performer.

I think we must recognize that for the superstitious masses such men as Ezekiel were powerful magicians, who were not simply warning of ruin but performing terrible incantations to bring it about. It is thus I understand Ezekiel's demurrer. Yet if the prophets abandon such ancient mummeries, who will heed? On the other

hand continuing them only arouses counter-magic; so what was gained? Some great Hebrew preachers perished, not for what they said, but for what they did—working magic for the overthrow of the state, as medieval scientists were deemed "in league with the devil." Their symbol-lessons against the frauds of the time were only "fighting the devil with fire"—a game in which the devil always has the best of it. One day the Hebrew preacher will see it.

Further evidence of a *masal* as "war-medicine" is afforded by the Balaam story. His specific task is to cast such a spell over Israel that Balak shall easily defeat them, as all recognize. Undertaking this, he four times chants a *masal*, Num. 23:7, 18; 24:3, 15. Let us observe at once that in so doing he would be a *mosel*. The accompanying action is not certainly specified, but we may have a hint in vs. 23: "There is no serpent against Jacob, nor any cutting up (*kasam*) for Israel"; and in 24:1, "went not as at other times to call serpents." I suspect that he did "call serpents," and fail; such pretenders, called *ha wy*, are still in the same region. Probably such art is in Amos' mind when he makes the Lord exclaim, "Though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the Serpent, and he shall bite them," Amos 9:3. We may recall fiery serpents sent into Israel in another wilderness story. As to "cutting up," observe the covenant ritual of Abraham and Jeremiah (Gen. 15:9 ff.; Jer. 34:19), and the cutting up of an ox as an imprecation or *masal* by Saul, I Sam. 11:7. We may ask if the preliminary "sacrifice" of Balak was the *masal* that Balaam hoped to make effective by incantation or "vision": "cutting up" animals as Saul and Ezekiel did.

Continuing with Moab, we find another "war chant" which is credited with being effective, and is called a *masal*, Num. 21:27. Sihon had captured Heshbon, "for thus ('because') oracled the *moselim*," and the chant suggests that fire-flinging and arrow-shooting were a chief feature of the accompanying ceremony. The writer credits the *masal* with being effective: the performer is a *mosel*; and this is the official title of Sihon in Josh. 12:2, 5. This reminds us that one who would aspire to Semitic leadership is surest of success if credited with unusual magical powers; and that secular and sacred functions often combine in an oriental leader. The words *masal*

and *mosel* are unusually prominent in the Moab stories: the latter word seems to be a Moabite official title a long time. In the Mesha story, II Kings 3:27, Mesha cuts up his own son upon the wall as a mighty "war-medicine" (compare the Roman story of the self-immolation of Decius). In consequence there came a terrible *keseph*, "cutting to pieces," upon Israel. Observe that *keseph* in Josh. 9:20 is the technical term for the penalty of violating the "covenant cut" in vss. 11, 15, 16 (cf. Gen. 15:8–18; Jer. 34:18–19), as also in Josh. 22:18, 20. So every such treaty involves a *masal*—"so shall the violator of this oath be cut to pieces." This penalty for broken faith is in Isa. 34:2; 54:8; 57:16; 60:10; 64:9; Zech. 1:2; Gen. 40:2; 41:10. Consider again the suggestion above as to an actual *masal* of Balak, invoking the seven fates and cutting up an animal before each. And in Isa. 16 1 we read, "Send a lamb to the *mosel* of the land from Sela' toward the wilderness, unto the mount of the daughter of Zion" (= extent of Moab). I suspect a satirical reference to the foregoing sort of ceremony: "It is time for the Grand Magician to get busy!"

With Balaam's acknowledged failure to find any iniquity in Israel to conjure with, Num. 23:21, contrast Hab. 2:6, where the gathering foemen are pictured as "chanting their (war-)*masal*," using all the cruelty and treachery of Babylon as elements of their taunt-curse: "The like shall come upon thee." Such requirement is made by magicians everywhere. In the Babylonian *Surpu* texts it is a *sine qua non*.

In Sargon, Cylinder 29, we read *Kullat nakiri isluhu imat muti*, "all his enemies he sprinkled with the poison of death." I understand this to describe the success of similar war-medicine. Nergal-sharezer, in Cambridge Cylinder (*KB*, III, 2, 72), says that in the opening of his reign Girra, the Plague-God, gave him his mighty weapons for the protection of his land and people. Thus the king had "a covenant with Death, and an agreement with Sheol," such as was fashionable in Jerusalem in the time of Isaiah, the makers or ceremonial directors of it being called *moselim*, Isa. 28:14–15. Nergal-sharezer explains that he set up a pair of *sirussu* (*mus russu?*) at each of the four gates of the *kigallu* (= Aralu) as protectors of Esagila and Ezida; as no king before did. *Limnim u aibim izannu imat muti*, "upon the

wicked and hostile they rain the poison of death." These symbolism of the Underworld, Powers of Death and Darkness, an innovation at Esagila and Ezida, point to oscillations between the cult of such powers and the cult of their enemy, the Rising Sun. It must have been such a dragon that Hezekiah destroyed at Jerusalem. Historically, Nergal-sharezer's statement probably means that at his accession a terrible plague was ravaging his hostile neighbors.

With this "hailing or raining the poison of death" upon a foe, group the *birik limutti*, "lightning of evil," oft invoked in Assyrian imprecations, and the phrase *imtu burrudani* in some broken passages of the Harper letters. In [660] Bu. 91-5-9-15, Adad-sum-usur says (break) BUR.RU.DA. *mes damkuti(?) ma-a-du-ti ni-ip-pa-as*, "we performed many favorable BUR.RU.DA.-*mes*," whether offensive or defensive rituals cannot be determined. But in [18] K 490 the order of the king (broken) has been relative to the performance of *imtu bur-ru-da-a-ni* on the 24th of the month. Marduk-sakin-sum replies that it was not done. Many tablets are in readiness: . . . as soon as king orders, in five or six days. . . . If the king orders performances *ana imtu bur-ru-da-a-ni* in the month Tebet . . . and as to the instructions *sa imtu bur-ru-da-a-ni* which the king commanded, saying, Send to Nineveh and fetch *Nadin-ahé* I did not send . . . and those tablets of instructions (program) not complete(?) let (--) bring with him. On the 2d day of Tebet let the king perform . . . on the 4th day let the crown prince perform . . . on the 6th day let the people perform . . . (four broken lines). It will be observed that the time of *imtu burrudani* here is the time of midwinter storms—near Christmas: the proper time either to invoke their aid, or to cantillate against them. Again the invocation first by king, then by crown prince, then by all people, may be compared with the like order of public petition by shah and by people in modern Persia, in times of storms or droughts (Hajji Baba 305-6); I Kings 8:35f. The *Burrudani* of the foregoing tablet imply matters of national interest at midwinter solstice. Again the *imtu burruddni* is in the broken [11] K 643 and probably in K [25] K 639. It appears that the Sumerian BUR.RU.DA, familiar as an incantation term, has been adopted and a Semitic plural form used in the Sargonid letters. In a SAG-*Ba* SAG-*ba* incantation

published by Zimmern (ZA, XXVIII, 75 f.) the colophon line reads INIM-INIM-*ma* ZI-SUR-*ra* NIG-H UL-GAL BUR.RU.DA-*kam*. But the banishing of evil is by "smiting it = strike in the face, shatter, break, blow away, annihilate." The ritual is not the establishing of a passive barrier, but evoking a powerful repellent. The *imtu burrudani* then suggests "hailing poison or death" (Heb. *bered* = "hail") as in previous cases. Such ceremony could be either offensive or defensive. In HABL [977] K 350: "with regard to the procedures which the king directed, . . . sighing of Death in the palace (cf. *mehumath maveth* of I Sam. 5:11) . . . in the month Kisilimu we did so . . . , plague, sickness not approach the house of men, *u kispu* BUR.RU.DA-*mes ma'aduti nitapas*." In Sabatu were *nis kati* and NAM BUR-BI, to ward off evil, then special ceremonies on the first of Adar, employing images of Anu, Namtar, Death, Latarak (plague?), clay substitutes for the man of different clays; thirteen different substances (AJSL, XXVIII, 113), seven of each one. Note the Fate and Death covenant, as in Isa. 28:14–15. (Compare the nocturnal fife-kaditu ceremony to call up a tremendous storm against the Assyrian, Isa. 30:29–33; elaboration requires a separate paper). This Adar or mid-February ritual concludes distress-ceremonies begun with B UR.RU.DA-*mes* in November. It suggests comparison with a storm-omen text published by Weidner (*Babyloniaca*, VI, 96) :

If a reed tornado sweep the land, the command of a powerful enemy will encompass it,
 If a cattle tornado sweep the land, the usurper will be overthrown,
 If a sheep and goats tornado sweep the land, it will be weakened—the wisdom of the land will pass away,
 If a jar tornado sweep the land,—overthrow of the kingdom.

Weidner thinks such expressions refer to fancied resemblances in the clouds or to objects moved by the wind. It is fair to ask if they do not refer to various rituals for raising a storm. With this omen text compare another, cited by Waterman, AJSL, XXIX, 20:

ana musi sa-ri sutu iskun iskun-*ma*,
 im-sur im-sur-*ma*. izziz- izziz-^{ma}
 ip-ru-ud ip-ru-ud-*ma*, u-sa-pi-ih,
 rubu ina harrani illaku mimma sumsu
 busu kat-su ikassad.

"When the south wind blows all night, and having blown all night continues, and as it continues becomes a gale, and from a gale increases to a tempest, and as a tempest does sweeping damage: the prince on whatever expedition he goes will obtain wealth."

Compare the storm-omen to David, II Sam. 5:23–25, and continually recurrent thunderstorm theophanies of Yahweh, in O.T. There has been overemphasis upon the Storm-God theory because of inattention to storm-producing ceremonies. Yahweh, *ba'al* or Adad, etc., would be alike invocable. With the use of *paradu* in foregoing Assyrian oracle, note that a southern dialect might use *baradu*; and that B UR.RU.DA also might be PUR.RU.DA in another dialect. Thus while it is established as an old Sumerian ritual term of repulsion (Langdon, *Babyloniaca*, II, 107), Semitic borrowers would be pretty surely attracted to it by its formal identity with their own *baradu*, *paradu*. Compare Heb. *bered*, Arab. *bardun*, Syr. *bardo*, Eth. *barade*, = "hail"; Arab. *baruda*, "to hail, be cold"; and Isaiah's ritual usage of the word, 32:19: "and it shall hail mightily (*barad beredeth*), upon the fortress [reading עֵר for עֵר, as the parallelism suggests] and utterly overwhelm the city." The form of statement, and the result, is identical with Waterman's text above. Are we to translate *ib-ru-ud ibrud ma* "hail mightily"? Compare with these storm-omens, Job 38:22–23: "Hail and snow are stored for the time of affliction, for the day of battle and war"; and the Flood Legend, 189–90; Bel promises Pir-napistim life at the mouth of the rivers: "then sleep: six days and seven nights, *ina birid buridisu, rittu kima imbari inappus elisu*, "while it stormed unceasingly and rittu like a hurricane blew upon him. " Is the subsequent ritual a BUR.RU.DA?

Thus Isaiah's connecting the *moselim* of Jerusalem with the expected Assyrian hail and overwhelming flood opens an interesting group of incantations.

Apart from fifeing or whistling, the two pre-eminent folk-rituals for rain-making or storm producing are fire-kindling or throwing, and water-throwing. They are often combined as in the contest of Elijah and the prophets of Baal; the identical procedure found in some Negro and Moorish tribes today. The fire-throw originates in the observation that as a storm gathers a sudden downpour of rain follows nearby flashes of lightning. Hence Ecclesiasticus 43:13–14:

"Thou sendest forth the lightnings of thy judgment: they open the treasuries: and clouds fly forth as fowls." So pagan Arabs kindled fires on mountains, or tied firebrands to cattle's tails and drove them bellowing up the mountains to unlock the stores of rain (Leeder, *Desert Gateway*, p. 258). In the Zend-Avesta fires bring rain; a Persian girl of today will circle the family oven seven times that the fire may grant rain; fire-kindling and fire-throwing ceremonies to bring a storm or rain are familiar throughout South and East Africa (Virgil, *Aeneid* vi. 585–94; Casalis, *The Basutos*, pp. 273–82; Kay, *Travels and Researches in Caffraria*, pp. 181–83; Bentley, *Pioneering on the Congo*, I, 213; Lumholtz, *New Trails in Old Mexico*, 253; Moffatt, *Southern Africa*, pp. 210, 213, 216; Callaway, *Religious System of the Amazulus*, pp. 376, 405; Livingstone, *Zambesi Expedition*, pp. 22, 26, 231; Cameron, *Across Africa*, p. 255; Kidd, *The Essential Kaffir*, pp. 108, 115, 122, 123; Isaacs, *Travels and Adventures in East Africa*, I, 119; Stigand, *To Abyssinia through an Unknown Land*, p. 254). Alfonso the Wise, of Castile, in stamping out witchcraft, and the use of magic images for hurtful ends, permitted their use for banishing fog, hail, storms, etc.¹ Observe that Ezekiel is particularly disturbed at his reputation as a *memassel mesalim* when called upon to sprinkle fire toward the forests of the Negeb, 20:46 (cf. Jer. 21:14), though his career began with the vision of one called upon to take coals of fire from the cherubim altar and sprinkle them over the doomed city, 10:2, 6, 7 (cf. 13:11 f.). The populace might take such ritualist-preacher for a *mesugga* or lunatic: such ranting dervish as was in mind in Prov. 26–18, "Like a self-frenzied flinger of firebrands, arrows and Death—so is he that deceiveth his neighbor and saith, Am I not in sport?" It is fair to ask if late editors have not confused ritual traditions in Exod., chap. 9, where they get a plague of lice from the furnace ashes or coals thrown at the sky, when the subsequent hail and thunderstorm is the normal expectation in such ritual. With the notion of store-houses of rain and hail, and the fire *masal* to open them, compare Job 38:22–23, cited above, "Hail and snow are stored for the time of affliction; for the day of battle and war."

The "covenant with Death and agreement with Sheol" in Isa., chap. 28, is specifically connected with raising or averting a hailstorm.

¹ Lea, *History of the Inquisition*, III, 430.

Everyone thinks himself properly "kippered"; but "your covenant with Death shall be 'kippered' away, and your agreement with Sheol shall not stand"; "and the hail shall sweep away your refuge of lies"; "when the overflowing flood passeth through, ye shall be trodden down by it," etc. (28:17–18). Yahweh is Lord of Death and Sheol. Isaiah calls these magicians, *moselim*, "men of almond-magic": *luz*, almond, largely used in "hastening" ceremonies; and a familiar foundation ceremony is probably cited in "Stone! Chosen Stone! Precious Corner! Founded! Founded! The established (stone) shall not haste away!" Jar-floods, such as cited above, and reed or almond magic cannot move it. We may ask if like storm magic is in mind in Isa. 32:19; compare the death-hail of Isa. 30:27–33; the hail threats of Ezek. 13:11, 13; 38:22; Isa. 29:6; the historic Egyptian hail, Exod. 9:18, produced by the almond rod, Josh. 10:11, and the jar-pouring of Israel: I Sam. 7:5–10, with its consequent thunderstorm. Would that we had Samuel's invocation on this occasion! For water-pouring or water-throwing ceremonies to produce rain or call up a thunderstorm, compare Rae, *The Country of the Moors*, p. 72; Kidd, *The Essential Kaffir*, pp. 114–15; *North India Notes and Queries*, V, 373; *Sacred Books of the East (India)*, XLI, 335–36; XXV, 89; Krapf, *Travels and Researches in East Africa*, pp. 122, 139, 235–36; W. H. Anderson, Barotseland; Arbousset, *Exploratory Tour in South Africa*, p. 386; Moffatt, *Southern Africa*, pp. 208–10; Sibree, *Madagascar*, pp. 333–34, 389. Of the terror and helplessness of the superstitious Arab during a thunderstorm, Peters observes that the Anazeh camel-drivers and guards were "more afraid of the fury of the elements than of the dangers of war. Poor Arabs, without tents, were lying like dead men on the ground. An enemy could have murdered the whole camp without a man stirring," *Nippur*, II, 44, 75.

This unmistakable prominence of hailing or sprinkling rituals suggests notice of another Hebrew word to be classed here. In the fire-*masal* of Ezek. 20:45–49 (A.V.) *nataf* is the verb used of fire on the forest of Negeb. Cf. Mic. 2:4 f., "In that day they shall chant a *masal* against you, and sigh a sighing." The *masal* closes, vs. 6,

Sprinkle not, O they that sprinkle,
Not for these things shall they sprinkle.
They shall not take away shame.

The *nataf* ritual will be utterly unavailing. A few verses farther on (vs. 11) Micah scornfully says, "Any liar that announces I will sprinkle to you (rain upon you) wine and strong drink; verily, he is the sprinkler for this people!" which compare with Amos 9:13; Joel 3: 18, "the mountains shall drop (*nataf*) wine"; and with the *kudurru* fragment in King, BBS, No. 37: "The tops of the mountains in my land Ea filled with vines; 30 *ka* of wine for one shekel of silver was the price current in my land." Micah's liars were promising like abundance, using a magic and copious *masal* to insure fulfilment of the prediction. The change of tense above suggests their chant, "As I drop, they shall drop." They and their audience were on the level of Shakespeare's Jack Cade, decreeing "that the city sewer run nothing but claret wine this first year of our reign" (*King Henry VI*, Part II, Act IV, scene vi). Ezekiel uses the same word *nataf* in a dripping and sighing *masal*, 21:1-7, which he explains as portending that all knees shall run water, and all souls faint, and sigh. Amaziah was familiar with such dripping and outpouring ceremonies, and scornfully sent word to Amos, "None of that here!" Amos 7:16. Amos was instantly angered that he was supposed to employ such devices.

The great prominence of sprinklings and pourings in all manner of ancient ritual is familiar enough. The *Bit Rimki* series in cuneiform ritual is available for almost any occasion. The preparatory ceremony could be the same for opposite purposes; the object cursed or blessed would be the only difference. Recall the "sprinkling enemies with the poison of death" cited above from Sargon; and compare the familiar red heifer-ashes-cedar-hyssop water for times of death, in Num., chap. 19. It would suit an Assyrian *masmasu* or Babylonian *asipu* perfectly for Sargon's ends. He would have chanted, "As this heifer is cut to pieces, this cedar hath been burned, this hyssop hath poisoned, this water poured forth, so may the enemy be cut to pieces, poisoned, burned, swept away by floods." In the Palestinian ritual case of Num., chap. 19, he would have chanted, "So may this *edimmu* (family ghost) be removed, washed away," etc. Did Hebrew priests so chant? Black ark or hurtful magic is proscribed, for the masses, yet the priests have solemn cursing as one

of their official duties,¹ e.g., Num. 5:23; Deut. 27:13. In *masal* we see a technical term and the general formula. The red heifer ritual probably originated in such solemn cursing and burning as Mesha used when he cut his son to pieces and burned him, that the life cutting to pieces might come upon Israel.

With the sprinkling or pouring wine or death, indicated by the passages above cited, compare Josephus' description of the expulsion of an evil spirit (*Ant.*, VIII, ii, 5) by a Pharisee exorcist, illustrating Solomon's *mesalim*. A magic root and a bowl of water are the equipment. When the water is upset or poured out, the expulsion is complete, and the ghost cannot return—recalling the warning to David by the "wise woman," II Sam. 14:14, "For we must die, and like water spilt upon the ground, which cannot be gathered up again." (Did David perceive a threatened curse in her words?) Such *rimki* underlie "I will pour out my Spirit"; in Abyssinia still it is seen. Jars of water are brought to a shrine, an invocation induces the saint to enter into the water, which is then poured over any ailing or demoniac brought for healing. Observe the contrasting "He hath poured out himself unto death," Isa. 53:12, instead of pouring out the life of his foemen.

Isaiah also applies the term *masal* to the famous apostrophe of overthrown Babylon, 14:4 f.: "Chant a *masal* against the ling of Babylon," etc. The opening words suggest that the symbolical action accompanying was the smashing or "annihilating" (*sabbath*) of a gilded wand or scepter, perhaps a copy of Babylonian insignia (like "trampling upon the flag." The later Isaiah of Babylon scorns such mummery: "a bruised reed he shall not break," Isa. 42:3). Calling this wand "scepter of the *mosel*," vs. 5, may point to certain ritual activities of the Babylonian king, as head of the sacred asylum city. What else was in the *masal* we cannot tell; but the result is that the great functional *mosel* is "made like" (*nimsalta*) unto the shades that address him in Sheol, vs. 10, another of Isaiah's famous

¹ Cutting up an animal and burning it to ashes, and using the ashes in decoctions, unguents, and lotions for marvelous effects is still part of dervish medicine. The liver-ashes is in special repute, as in Book of Tobit. A human being not being available, a monkey is next best, as in Hajji Baba, pp. 68-69, or as in Thuggee lore in India.

"Cool it with a baboon's blood,
Then the charm is firm and good!"—Macbeth

plays on words. Jeremiah's "one *mosel* against another" in Babylon, 51:46; suggests the familiar wrangling of her numerous religious functionaries in time of evil tidings: "There, must be a *takpirtu!*" "A BUR.RU.DA!" "A *nis Kati!*" "A NAM.BUR.BI," "No! the day is one of ill-omen!" Isa. 40:10 has such in mind: "Yahweh is not" hired "by anyone, his work is open (not secret), his own arm *mosel*" (sets the pattern. Compare oft mentioned ceremonial, "Outstretched Arm").

Ezekiel uses the word *masal* again in another of his numerous object lessons, 17:2: "Sharpen a sharpening" (Gesenius) and *mesol* a *masal*, against the house of Israel. Then follows the cantillation of the Great Eagle, and his faithless transplanted vine, which shall be "cut off," "plucked up." The "sharpening" and these penal expressions may suggest the ceremony.

All these rituals against a foeman bring before us Jeremiah's great curse-ritual against Babylon, chap. 51. He himself dictates the curses; they are solemnly written down. Then Seraiah is to take the writing, bind a stone to it, cast it into the Euphrates, with the solemn curse: "Thus shall Babylon sink, and not rise from the evil that I will bring upon her; and they shall be utterly exhausted (never recover)." This is perfectly accurate "black art." It must be emphasized that Jeremiah is not the "functioning personality" here. His wishes or desires are as those of any other man; Seraiah is the solemnly functioning party. And the narrator is careful to explain that such ritual is his special business; he is *sar menuhah*, "Chief Producer of Quiet," vs. 59. We have a suggestion of the immense amount of *masal* ritual implicit every here in the familiar "the Lord had given them rest (*nuh*) from their enemies round about."

Purely protective magic to such end is probably in mind in Isa. 27:4. Yahweh exclaims, " (There is) no poison! (*hemah*) for me! Who would set briars and thorns against me in battle? I would go through them; I would burn them utterly!" The basis of such mummery is the practice of fencing a temporary camp or zareeba with a hedge of cut thorns, a precaution familiar to every African explorer. Manasseh, fleeing, was perhaps overtaken at such a thorn-camp: II Chron. 33:11; cf. Hos. 2:6; Prov. 15:19; 22:5.

In Nah. 1:10, "For though surrounded by thorns, and soaked like a *sudd*, they shall be consumed like stubble fully dry."¹ Isa. 10:17, "The Light of Israel shall be for a fire, and His Holy One for a flame; and it shall burn and devour his thorns and briers in one day " Ps. 58 is a liturgy dealing with such *hemah* magic (vss. 4–5) "before your pots can feel your thorns, like *hai* (hawwy, a gale? Arab.) like *haron* (lightning ?) he will storm them away, vs. 9." II Sam. 24:6 "And Belial,—all of them like thorns repelling, For not by hand can they be grasped; Yet a man shall approach them! He will be equipped with iron and the staff of a spear, and with fire shall they be burned where they lie!" Cf. Deut. 32:22–24. Observe that the pagan Arab divinity al 'ozzah, "Uzzy," was represented by a thorn-bush or thorn hedge (Sale, *Koran*, p. 14). Lat = Allatu. Hence the invocation "by Lat and Uzzy" is an appeal to Death and Thor magic ("a covenant with Death and agreement with Sheol"? The seven Evil Spirits—"Among the thorns on the Mountain was their growth"—Smith, *Chaldean Account of Genesis*, p. 105). Ezek. 28:14, 16, 18, seems to refer to Tyre surrounding herself with a magic fire barrier, which only burns herself. These suggestions as to thorn-zareeba protective *mesalim* must suffice. The *hemah* and "cup of poison for all nations," Jer. 25:15; Isa. 51:17, with the "poison of death for all foes" of Assyrian ritual is reserved for separate and extensive elaboration.

The readiness of a *mosel* to take advantage of an incident for his purposes is illustrable. In I Kings 11:29 if. Ahijah takes Jero-boam's new cloak, tears it into twelve pieces, and tells him to take ten. "Thus you take ten tribes of Israel." But in I Sam. 15: 27–23, when Saul seizes and rends Samuel's cloak, the superstitious populace, aware of the conflict as to authority, are certain to count it an omen that Samuel's official authority has been rent away. Ere anyone else can speak, the old seer with quick wit exclaims, "The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day!" It parallels the story of William the Conqueror falling as he leaped ashore in England.

¹ Not a man "well-soaked" but a channel or protective moat of water-vegetation is required by the context. Immense masses of such floating water-weed, a deadly snare to the foot, block the upper Nile, and locally are called a *sudd*. Nahum's assurance that such will be burned away may be compared with Amos' fire, so mighty as to devour the *Tehom rabbah*, VII, 4.

As a murmur of terror at the ill omen rose from some near, the quick-witted duke cried, "Thus have I seized the land with my hands!"

In like manner notable cases of disaster may be used as the objective starting-point, leaving only an invocation to be supplied, for good or for ill. In Isaiah of Babylon we find reference to such usage, giving us a vivid picture of the wretchedness of those Hebrews who have not accepted assimilation or amalgamation with their captors. In 49:7, Israel is "Abject of soul, abhorred of a *goi*, servant of *masal*-framers" (their vilest object of comparison). In Isa. 52:5, "My people are taken (utilized) as a Nothing: the *moselim* make them a howling." That is, "May N.N. be made to wail like a Jew!" In Joel 2:17 ff. is another illustration: "Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thy heritage to reproach that the heathen make a *masal* of them (or with them)": which reading is supported by the assurance in vs. 19, "I will no longer make you a reproach among the heathen," and in vss. 26, 27, "My people shall nevermore be ashamed!" A terse specimen of such a curse-*masal* in Babylon in the exilic period is given by Jer. 29:22, "The Lord make thee like Zedekiah and like Ahab, whom the king of Babylon roasted in the fire! "Compare the official general formula with ceremonial *masal* (word not used) in the jealousy ritual, Num. 5:21, and *masal*-threats, Deut. 28:37; I Kings 9:7. Like the Zedekiah Ahab case is the Deborah-curse by the fate of Sisera: "So perish all thine enemies, O Lord," Judg. 5:31; and Cush's by Absalom: 'May the enemies of my lord the king and all that rise up against thee to do thee hurt, be as that young man is!' II Sam. 18:32. In the Psalms we find orthodox liturgy uses the same word, and the liturgist objects to curse or bless by. In 28:1; 143:7, "Lest I be made like (*nimsalti*) them that go down into the pit! "Probably knowledge of an imprecation to such end prompted composition of the original liturgy. Ps. 49 merits consideration here. Entitled "Unto death," and asserting that man is *nimsal*, "made like" unto a beast; was hewing some beast to pieces and chanting the liturgy against a named enemy the original intention? In Ps. 83:9, "Do unto them as to Midian; as to Sisera, as to Jabin at the brook Kishon"; vs. 11, "Make their nobles like Oreb and Zeeb: yea, all their princes like Zeb and Zalmunna"; vss. 13-15, "like a wheel—like stubble—as fire buineth (this ?) wood,

as flame fireth mountains so persecute them with thy tempest, and make them afraid of thy storm!" The "war-medicine" origin of the liturgy is apparent at a glance. The figures may be compared with Isa. 17:13. Compare the imprecatory section of Ps. 109:7ff. Contrasting with persons used to curse by, note the blessing *masal* in Ruth 4:11, 12: "The Lord make the woman that is come into by house like Rachel, and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel. Let thy house be like the house of Pharez!" And Gen. 48: 20: "By thee shall Israel bless, saying, God make thee as Ephraim and Manasseh!" So Deut. 15:6, "thou be a *masal* for many nations, but they not for thee."

Numerous other symbolisms occur to the reader; any of these we may understand is a *masal*, though not specifically stated. There is Neh. 5:13, a lapshaking curse; Jer. 5:19, "Like as ye have forsaken me, so shall ye serve others"; his bottle breaking, 19:10 ff.; his girdle ceremony and bottle ceremony, chap. 13; Isaiah's walking naked and barefoot three years, Isa. 20:2 ff.—all these actions and solemn curses and asseverations we may recognize as classifiable as *mesalim*. So also Ezekiel's siege ceremony, 4:1-8, and the following famine warning, vss. 9-17, are to be given the name Ezekiel himself has given to like ceremonies. Hananiah tries to nullify Jeremiah's yoke *masal*, Jer. 28:10-11, and is told that the Lord will kill him for trying to do so, vs. 16; which reminds us that in a battle of magicians one is always facing the possibility of more powerful "war-medicine," as the Philistines believed they were doing, I Sam. 4:7ff., and might fear to attempt counter-magic against a more powerful divinity.

In Job we find the same use of the word *masal*. In 27:1 he "continued, chanting a *masal*." I believe the reference is to the supremely solemn asseveration with which he reaffirms that he will not acknowledge wrong. "Like as God lives! like as He hath taken my vindication away! sure as I am tormented in soul, I will hold fast my righteousness, so long as I shall live!" vss. 2-6. In 41:33 is an interesting reference to a hunter's familiar and futile spells against the crocodile: "(There is) no *masal* of him (by) those who render harmless!" Bildad in 25:2 says, "*Mosel* and *pahad* (something to swear by, binding power for an oath, Gen. 31:53) are with Him"; which means no spell or ceremony can bind unless God will. This may be a late

and rational acknowledgment that no such ritual has any value. Compare David's belief that the Lord might reverse Shimei's curse, II Sam. 16:10–12; and the imprecation in Ps. 109:28 that the curser's imprecations might return upon him. Assyrian cross-questioning of an oracle to know if it is *kinis*--can be relied on—will be remembered. As between the alternatives (in case of failure), that the god lied, or that any ritual was absolutely worthless, morality goes hand in hand with rational views.

Contrasting with foregoing hunter-magic for mastering the crocodile, take Jacob's ceremonies for hastening increase of herds with storax and almond (*luz*), previously cited, and using spotted plane tree sticks, that the cattle might be "likewise" spotted. The word *masal* is not used in the narrative; but we may notice that the like general manager of Abraham's affairs is called a *mosel*, Gen. 24:2. We observe his dependence upon portents or little presages when he waits at the well for the coming of a gracious maiden, and that Rebekah's family are equally influenced, on hearing his story: "the thing proceedeth from God." We have come back to Joseph, and find that the remarkably favorable *mesalim* of his youth, and his later aptness in such things in prison, have resulted at last in his becoming *mosel* for all Egypt, Gen. 45:8, 26; Ps. 105:20, 21. His marriage into the priest-clan of On we can see would mean that no small part of his official duties would be participation in ceremonies for promoting the prosperity of the land. *Mosel* would be a proper title for this phase of his work. Secularly he is merely "lord of Pharaoh's house" (mayor of the "palace") as Eleazar was of Abraham's house. His "divining cup" we recall. As *sare miqneh*, "chief herdsman," we hope his brethren had the magic skill of their father Jacob.

The passage already cited from Josephus, of exorcism of an evil spirit, occurs in his narrative of Solomon's pre-eminent wisdom. As a powerful magician Solomon is still the marvel of oriental lore—Jew, Moslem, or oriental Christian. The cavalier treatment of this tradition by modern scholars has been due to the limited conception of the word *masal*, and to the popular western notion that he was an author rather than a collector. With the data before us, and the thousands of such mummeries accumulating for ages before his day, I see no reason to question the statement, I Kings 4: 30–34, that he

collected 3,000 *mesalim*, and that this folklore included all manner of plants in magic use, from the hyssop to the cedar. Of magic incantations he gathered 1,005 (*sirim*). It is such activity as Assurbanipal displayed; and the material, if available, we might think indicative of less intelligence. We may be sure it contained many duplicates or variations of the same fundamental *masal*. Josephus says specifically that Solomon had a "parable" (= *masal*) upon every sort of tree from the hyssop to the cedar; which is decisive as to the meaning of the word *masal* in his time (Ant. VIII, ii, 5). (His water-spilling *masal* in this connection has been previously cited.) It must be understood that Solomon himself is a master *mosel*, and as such (I Kings 5:1; II Chron. 7:18; 9:26) enters upon his career with the best of auspices and rituals. Observe also that Gideon having achieved distinction by the aid of several notable portents, is promptly begged, "*mesol* for us" (Judg. 8:22), and his ephod is a cultus object when he declines.

The translation "rule" of our A.V., coupled with the fact that the Arabic *mathala* has not such meaning, turns our attention to the probable origin of the use of *masal* in the sense of "rule." Three new translations are suggested here: Gen. 3:16, "Thy longing shall be toward thy husband; and he shall be likewise (A.V. 'rule') toward thee" (and not toward another) seems to me the common-sense translation. Gen. 4:7 is the same. The two brothers have appealed to the judgment of God. The defeated one is angry. "Were there no wrong on your part, would you not be accepted? and would not your brother's longing be toward you ? and you would feel like wise toward him."

Gen. 1:18; Ps. 136:8: The pious astrologer-compilers did not need sun, moon, and stars to give light; they viewed them as Jacob did in the case of Joseph's dream, already cited, giving portents of coming events: "to show likenesses" and be "*othoth* in the heavens," v. 14. In the Seven Tablets of Creation from Asur, we gather the same view (VI, 58-95), despite breaks, *AJSL*, October, 1921: "The great gods dwelt on their road (ecliptic) The gods of fate, (planets) seven are they, for . . . were stationed. . . . After fates of heaven and earth had been decreed, a tamsil (likeness thereof) in heaven he made . . . let them not ignore their god," etc. The

use of *tamsil* in the sense of "pattern, likeness to be followed," is too familiar to need extensive citation. One headdress is furnished a workman *ana tam-si-li*, "as a pattern"; he is to make another (AJSL, XXXI, 85). "The works of the god *lu ma-la*" (*Creation Tabs.*, VI, 100). Ekal *tamsil* ekal Babili (Neb. *KB*, III, 2, 30).

Bezold¹ reads of Mercury in astrological text, u M 86378, *mumassil same*, "the mimic of the heavens." Astrologer, held the influence of Jupiter and Venus to be good; Mars and Saturn were bad; while Mercury was like his company. This use of *mumassil*, "mimic," compare with Ezekiel's *memassel mesalim*, already cited. It does not matter, for the present inquiry, whether the populace regarded Ezekiel as a "mimic" or as an originator of *mesalim*.

The evidence of the *Koran* is important: for Mohammed regularly follows Gen. chap. 1, and adheres to the word *mathala*; but neither he nor the Jews of his acquaintance understood it as "rule" in our A.V. sense. Sura XXIV, 35-36, God created heavens: the stars are a lamp in glass in a niche whereby God "strikes out parables."² In X, 101; XII, 105, is the same assertion, "and men ignore them"; in X, 5, God "details signs to a people who do not know." In XXX, 23-25, the stars obey God and furnish *mithl* to men. In XXVII, 25, "God brings forth the secrets of the heavens, and knows both what they hide and what they manifest." In V, 16, the signs of the zodiac oracle futurity, and devils who eavesdrop are pelted away by shooting stars. In XXV, 41: "Ad and Thamud and people of ar-Rass—for each one we struck out parables, and each one we have ruined with utter ruin." Observe *'amtathala 'amrun*="be like the order"="obey" (Lane, s.v.). So that "rule" is a derivative idea ="setting a pattern."

Since portents in the heavens control the lives of men, Nabu-aid prays Samas, "Daily in thy rising and thy setting make favorable my portents (*ittatua*) in heaven and earth" (Col. III, 18-19). Cf. II Sam. 23:3-4, "Said the God of Israel to me; oracled the Rock of Israel, (who) *mosel* among men justice,³ (who) *mosel* the fear of God, and like light of morn, the sun ariseth a cloudless morn; with clearness from rain, and herbage from the earth"—which is

¹ *Sitz.-Berichte d. Heidelb. Akad. d. Wiss.*—Phil. Hist., XIII, Abh. 11.

² Palmer, *SBE*, IX, regularly translates *mithl* so.

³ Parallelism suggests noun Sedek, instead of MT saddik.

as definitely astrologic as Nabuna'id. Just as definite is Jer. 33:25–26 as the ordinances of heaven and earth, so the *moselim* of the seed of David,. Bildad's speech, Job 25:2–5, has an astrologic base. So has I Chron. 29:11–12 (*masalta*); II Chron. 20:6; Ps. 89:9–11; 103:10; Isa. 60:1–3.

For *mesalim* of darkness, note the gloom heralding the day of Yahweh, Amos 5:8, 18–20; Joel 2:2, 10, 25, 30, 31; Mic. 3:6; Nah. 1:8; Zeph. 1:14–15: every earthly disaster has its presaging heavenly darkness. So is the fall of Babylon heralded, Isa. 13:10; 24:21–25; of Edom, 34:4–5; of Judah, 5:30; of North Israel, 8:22–92; of Egypt, Ezek. 32:7–8.

Bright portents are in Isa. 30:26; 60:1–3; 58:6–11; 59:9–11, presaging favor to Israel. To the *othoth* of Gen. 1:14 add the *othoth* and *mo^fetim* of the Hexateuch and of Isa. 8:18; 20:3; Jer. 33:20; Dan. 4:2, 3; 6:27. Observe Josephus' emphasis upon comets, heavenly hosts, and earthly prodigies (Bell. J, VI, v), and his statement that it was the business of the Jewish "sacred scribes" to interpret such; and the firm belief of the devout author of Daniel in the value of such portents and his insistence that a pious Hebrew was a better interpreter than any Babylonian. The fervid effort to propitiate these heavenly powers is historic, II Kings 17:16; 21:3; 33:4, 5, 12; II Chron. 33:35; Jer. 8:2; 19:13; 7:18; 44:13–25; and there is the effort to control or provide signs, *othoth*, Isa. 7:11; 38:7–8; II Kings 20:8–11. The prominence of astrology in the Talmud is familiar to the scholar. Geikie (*Life and Words of Christ*, chap. xi) devote's two pages to citations that need not be repeated here. With Jeremiah scorning such lore (10:1–2), and others announcing portents of delivery and marvelous signs, perplexity is inevitable, and there is consequent inquiry if the *ni^flaoth* can be relied on (21:2). But the compilers of the Pentateuch evidently approve such learning; we have varying shades of opinions from different O.T. periods.

Thus the astrologic *masal* or heavenly portent in the O.T. is more frequent than any other type, and its "pattern-setting" best explains the use of *masal* in the sense of "rule." The "ruler" "gives instructions" or "fixes the pattern" which his people follow. The idea of "foreshowing," or "pattern" passes into the N.T., the word **deiknumi** expressing it, as Christ forewarns of the crucifixion, Matt.

16:21. So "Father sheweth Son all that He doeth," that the Son may also do. So Peter is "shown" (Acts 10:2:) the sheet *tamsil*. Jas. 2:18; 3:13 has like usage of the word in view; cf. Jude 7. In Col. 2:15, Christ "set a pattern of boldness, triumphing over them in himself."

There are very few *masal* passages in which the idea suggested is not clearly discernible. Zech. 6:13 suggests an earlier *mosel* activity on the part of a priest. It could hardly have been maintained in exile. Jewish magic could hardly be flaunted in the face of Babylonian magicians. But Zechariah hopes for a genuine *patesi*, a priest king, and in announcing Joshua, The Branch, declares "he shall be *mosel* on a throne," "he shall be priest on a throne"; which seems a parallelism. In Isa. 3:4, 12 the lady *mosel* seems to "pronounce blessed" her dupes, then swallow them. Ezek. 19:14; Isa. 63:19; Ps. 59:14; 66:7; Ezek. 16:44; Judg. 14:4; 15:11; Exod. 21:8 do not suggest any ritual. Abimelech as *mosel*, Judg. 9:2, 6, is logical after Gideon's success in that role. The *moselim* in II Chron. 23:20 are third in a religious procession: "captains of hundreds, adirim, *moselim*." In Jer. 30:10 the *mosel* is parallel to the *nasi*, a religious functionary.

Popular magic clearly had an enormous place in pre-exilic Hebrew life, though not officially detailed in our present O.T. Morality demands rationality; magic had to go. Hebrew preachers who followed ancient forms of annunciation would be classed by the superstitious with charlatans of past and present. The exile helped end the folly. For a fervid ritualist is commonly infuriated by another fellow's ritual. But such attitude has large possibilities of reaction for the more intelligent. I have known a fervid partisan to be weaned from his ceremonial contention by observation of and reflection upon the ritual of another. And the final failure of all Jewish "war-medicine" was an outstanding fact. So it is really logical that while Isaiah of Babylon scoffs at all the incantation he sees, he should also declare for a "Servant of Yahweh" who will use no street cantillations nor mummeries with bruised reeds or smoking flax (extinguished in water, Isa. 42:3. Such *masal*, imprecating a like extinction of one's self, is still current in Abyssinia).¹

¹ See Harris, *Highlands of Ethiopia*, I, 349.