



Lifnê haššabb## and 'a#ar haššabb#t = "On the Day before the Sabbath" and "On the Day after the Sabbath" (Nehemiah XIII 19)

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Vetus Testamentum, Vol. 28, Fasc. 3. (Jul., 1978), pp. 362-365.

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The metaphor equating the unintelligent man with the beasts is not unknown to the psalmist. It occurs, in another form, in Ps. xxxii 9: "Be not like a horse, like a mule, that does not understand". A similar figure of speech is to be found in Ps. lxxiii 22: "And I am a boor and know not; I have been (as) beasts with you". Of interest in this connection is Ps. xxxvii 20: *kiyəqar kārīm*. *AJT* translates: "as the fat of lambs", where the sense would be improved if we read *bēqar kārīm*, "cattle of the meadows". The enemies of the Lord are thus compared to cattle which, being sacrificed, "go up like smoke".

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1) Prof. J. A. Emerton has kindly pointed out that this part of my suggestion has been anticipated by A. B. Ehrlich in his *Randglossen zur hebräischen Bibel* 6 (Leipzig, 1913), p. 3, and has actually been adopted in, for example, the New English Bible.

LIFNĒ HAŠŠABBĀT and *ʾAḤAR HAŠŠABBĀT* = "ON THE DAY BEFORE THE SABBATH" AND "ON THE DAY AFTER THE SABBATH" (NEHEMIAH XIII 19)

In reporting on his order to close the gates of Jerusalem in order to prevent the desecration of the sabbath, Nehemiah describes his action in Neh. xiii 19. Most modern English translations render the verse more or less as does the 1917 Jewish Publication Society translation: "And it came to pass that, when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark¹⁾ before the sabbath, I commanded that the doors should be shut, and commanded that they should not be opened till after the sabbath." The literal translation²⁾ of the phrases *lifnē haššabbāt* and *ʾaḥar haššabbāt* gives the impression that the first conveys the meaning "just before the sabbath" and the second means after sundown on Saturday. This, indeed, is how *The Jerusalem Bible* translates the phrases: "just before the sabbath" (with a footnote referring to Friday at sunset) and "until the sabbath is over"³⁾. There is no question but that Nehemiah gave his order some time on Friday afternoon. That is made clear by the opening words of the verse. What is in question is whether the phrase *lifnē haššabbāt* also indicates, though vaguely, the time of the day⁴⁾, or whether it is in fact a term (like *bēʿereḥ šabbāt*) for (any time) on the day before the sabbath. Similarly, the question regarding the phrase *ʾaḥar haššabbāt* is whether it refers to Saturday night or is in fact a term for (any time) in the

twenty-four hour period following the sabbath (as *bemôšā'ê šabbāṭ* sometimes is)⁶).

With reference to the second term, the book of Nehemiah itself gives evidence that *'aḥar haššabbāṭ* must refer to Sunday, for we read in Neh. vii 3 that, for reasons of security, Nehemiah had earlier commanded that the gates of Jerusalem should not be opened until the sun was hot, which means that his command in xiii 19 must refer to the following day and not to the night following the sabbath⁶).

Sources of the Second Temple and Tannaitic periods indicate that *lifnê haššabbāṭ* and *'aḥar (haš)šabbāṭ* were actually phrases for "on Friday" and "on Sunday"⁷). In texts of Palestinian provenance of M. Shabbat XXII 2 we read: *kol šebbā' baḥammîn millifnê haššabbāṭ*, "Whatever was put into hot water before the sabbath," in place of the more common *mē'ereḥ šabbāṭ*, "on the eve of the sabbath" (i.e., Friday), found in texts of Babylonian provenance⁸). The same term is reflected in Hellenistic sources where Greek *prò toū sabbátou* and the nominalized *prosabbátou* are standard terms for Friday. For example, Judith viii 6 states that Judith used to fast "all the days of her widowhood except (the day) before the sabbath (*prosabbátou*), etc."⁹). Similar terminology is used for the day preceding Passover and the New Moon. *'ad lifnê happensaḥ* (variant *pēnê*) in M. Nedarim VIII 2 is explained by R. Abin in the Palestinian Talmud, Nedarim VIII 3, 41a, as referring to *perôs* (i.e. Gk *pros*) *happesaḥ*, the day before Passover¹⁰). In the passage just quoted from Judith the heroine also does not fast on *pronoumēniôn*, the day before the New Moon. As for "after the sabbath," Tosefta Ketubot I 1 refers to most of the days of the week by their numerical designations except for Friday (*'ereḥ šabbāṭ*) and Sunday: *'im kēn tinnāšē' le'aḥar šabbāṭ*, "If so, let her be married after the sabbath." That the latter reference is not restricted to Saturday night is made clear by the variant reading in one manuscript of the Tosefta¹¹) and in the quotation of this passage in the Babylonian Talmud, Ketubot 3b: *bē'ehād baššabāṭ*, "on the first (day) of the week." M. Shabbat XIX 4 discusses: "He who had two infants, one to circumcise after the sabbath and one to circumcise on the sabbath." The phrase *'aḥar haššabāṭ* cannot refer to Saturday night here since circumcision is normally to take place in daytime¹²). This term is also reflected in Greek: Justin Martyr (died ca. 165 C.E.) refers to the Sunday of Jesus's resurrection as *tē metā tēn Kronikēn, hētis estin Hēllou, hēmēra*, "the (day) after Saturn's (day), that is, the Sun's day"¹³).

In sum, throughout the Second Temple and Tannaitic periods *lifné haššabbāt* and *ʿaḥar (haš)šabbāt* and their Greek equivalents are attested as terms for “on the day before the sabbath”¹⁴) and “on the day after the sabbath,” and that is often how they should be translated.

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¹) See the commentaries on the problem of *šālēlū*.

²) The Septuagint and Peshitta are also literal; the Vulgate, which renders *lifné haššabbāt* as *in die sabbati*, seems to agree with *The New English Bible*'s “in preparation for the sabbath.”

³) A few of the modern commentaries understand these phrases similarly. On *lifné haššabbāt* see the commentaries of W. Rudolph (*HAT*, 1949), p. 207, and D. C. Siegfried (*HK*, 1901), p. 130; on *ʿaḥar haššabbāt* see the same works and R. A. Bowman in the *Interpreter's Bible* 3 (1953), p. 814.

⁴) Thus L. W. Batten (*ICC*, 1913), p. 296, and Abraham Kahana (*Pêrûš Maddāʿt*, Tel Aviv, 1930), p. 119 (comment on *šālēlū* in Neh. xiii 19).

⁵) Compare M. Taanit IV 3 to TP Taanit IV 4, 68b (see *Penē Mošeb ad loc.*); cf. Eḡah Rabbah 1:16 (ed. Buber, p. 88; see n. 446 there); Sofrim 17:5 (*bemōšāʿē šabbāt = bāriʿšōn*); M. Sotah VII 8 (I owe the latter reference to my colleague, Prof. J. Goldin). For further examples cf. H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (Munich, 1922-1928) 1, pp. 1052 f.

⁶) As recognized by H. Schneider (*HSAT*, 1959), p. 259.

⁷) I.e., the first day of the week, which began Saturday evening (cf. John xx 1). (*le*)*ʿaḥar (haš)šabbāt* does refer at times to Saturday evening. See, for example, Genesis Rabbah X 8 (ed. Theodor-Albeck, p. 84:5, with variants *ʿeḥād haššabbāt* and *mōšāʿē šabbāt*).

⁸) The phrase recurs in the following sentence as *lifné haššabbāt* (without *mem*). See the wording of the Mishnah in the Palestinian Talmud and as quoted in the Gemara, TB Shabbat 39a (but not in the Mishnah of TB Shabbat 145b). On the reading in manuscripts of the Mishnah see A. Goldberg, *Pêrûš Lammišnāb—Masseket Šabbāt* (Jerusalem, 1976, pp. 58, 367. This variant can also be seen in R. Rabbinovicz, *Diqdūqē Sōfrim II (Šabbāt)* (New York, 1960) 173a (345), and in the variant readings cited in the Vilna *mišnāyoḡ* and its derivatives. See also M. Pesahim III 6 and Tos. Pesahim III (II) 9-11; M. Beṣah II 2 (on which see Rashi, and Danby's translation).

⁹) See W. F. Arndt and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Cambridge and Chicago, 1957), p. 718, s.v. *prosabbaton*. Other instances are Josephus, *Antiquities*, III. x. 7 (255); 2 Macc. viii 26; LXX Ps. xcii (xciii) 1; note especially Mark xv 42, which explicitly equates “before the sabbath” with Friday: *paraskeuē hó estin prosabbaton*, “the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the sabbath” (so, correctly, E. J. Goodspeed, in *The Complete Bible: An American Translation* [Chicago, 1951]); cf. also the variant *hēméra prosabbátou* for *hēméra paraskeuēs* in Luke xxiii 54, cited in Arndt-Gingrich, p. 627, s.v. *paraskeuē*. Justin Martyr refers to the Friday of Jesus's crucifixion as “the (day) before that of Saturn,” *iē prò iēs Kronikēs (hēméra)*; First Apology, Ch. 67, end; text in Migne, *Patrologia Graeca* 6, 431-432; note 92 there quotes a view that Justin employed this as a circumlocution in order to avoid saying “Venus's Day” for Friday because of the turpitude of that goddess, but Justin's subsequent use of a similar locution for Sunday, which he must then explain (see below), weakens this argument, and the terminology reviewed in this note obviates it entirely.

¹⁰) See S. Lieberman, *Tosefta Ki-fshuṭab, Part VII, Order Nashim* (New York, 1967), p. 461; *Part IV, Order Mo'ed* (New York, 1962), pp. 674-5; and in *Alexander Marx Jubilee Volume, Hebrew Volume* (New York, 1950), pp. 298-9; and J. N. Epstein, *Māḥō' Le'Nūsab Hammišnāb* (Jerusalem, 1964), I, pp. 68-9; II, p. 1305.

¹¹) S. Lieberman, *Tosefta: The Order of Nashim* (1967), 56, apparatus to line 2.

¹²) Sifra on Lev. xii 2; M. Megillah II 5-6; Tos. Shabbat XV (XVI) 9. For other examples of 'aḥar (*baš*)šabbāṭ see *Discoveries in the Judean Desert 2* (Oxford, 1961), No. 44, lines 9-10; M. Megillah I 2 (variant *b^e'ehād bašabbāṭ*); Shabbat XIX 5; Tos. Shabbat XV (XVI) 10; M. Ḥagigah II 4; TB Menaḥot 65a. This list is not complete. In light of this term it is not impossible that the Boethusians and others who interpreted *mimmāb^araṭ hašabbāṭ* in Lev. xxiii 11, 15, and 16 as Sunday (see M. Haran in *'Enšiqlopediāb Miqrā'ū 7* [Jerusalem, 1976], pp. 517-21) regarded that phrase as essentially a standard rather than a unique designation of that day.

¹³) See n. 9. See also 2 Macc. viii 28.

¹⁴) This may also be the meaning of the problematic *lpny šbt* in the seventh century Hebrew letter from Mešad Ḥašaviahū (H. Donner and W. Röllig, *Kanaanäische und aramäische Inschriften* [Wiesbaden, 1962], No. 200 :5 f.). See the interpretation of the text by W. F. Albright in *ANET*³, p. 568, and earlier *apud* F. M. Cross, *BASOR* 165 (1962), pp. 44 f., and n. 45. For other views see J. Naveh, *IEJ* 10 (1960), p. 133; *Lesbonenu* 30 (1965), p. 70; S. Talmon, *BASOR* 176 (1964), p. 32.

A CONNECTING LINK IN AN OLD HYMN: DEUTERONOMY XXXIII 19A, 21B

In his article "A Psalm from Pre-regal Times", *VT* 14 (1964), pp. 75-92, Prof. I. L. Seeligmann has made a contribution to the reconstruction of the hymn which serves as a framework to the Blessings on the tribes, known as "The Blessing of Moses" (Deut. xxxiii). Basing myself on his study¹), I shall restrict myself to a discussion of the connecting link between the two sections of the hymn, which he has attempted to restore (vss. 2-3, 5, 21b, 26-9).

Basically, I accept his suggestion that vs. 21b, which stands in loose connection with the blessing of Gad²), is the connecting link between the two disjointed sections of a hymn (vss. 2-3, 5, 26-9)³) whose *Sitz im Leben* was a ceremony acclaiming JHVH as king over Israel (p. 89). Yet one is sorely tempted to consider another verse of this poem, whose place among the songs of the tribes is also questionable, as an additional fragment of the hymn and as a part of the connecting link. I refer to vs. 19a:

צדק עמים הר יקראו שם יזבחו זבחי-צדק

It has already been noted that this verse can hardly be accounted an integral part of the blessing on Zebulun and Issachar⁴). However,