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English, Hebrew Loanwords in

A recent large dictionary of English lists over 120 loanwords from Hebrew (see Huehnergard 2010). Many of these are quite specialized, such as the names of the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, or words related to Jewish religious practice, such as *seder, tzitzit*, and *yad*. But others, such as *behemoth, cherub, messiah, schmooze*, and *tush*, have become part of everyday English vocabulary.

Hebrew loans into English can be grouped into a few broad chronological and cultural categories. The earliest loans came into English with the introduction of Christianity to Britain. These are Hebrew words for which the early Greek- and then Latin-speaking Christians had no ready equivalent in their own languages. Some of these appear as transcriptions of Hebrew forms in the Greek New Testament (NT), for example the following, all of which are already attested in Old English:

amen from אָמֵן *ʾāmēn* 'true, truly' (NT ἀμήν)
cherub from כְּרוּב *kərūḇ* 'cherub' (NT χερουβίμ)
hosanna from הוֹשַׁע־נָא *hōšaʿ-nā* 'deliver!' (NT ὡσαννά)
mammon from (Mishnaic) מָמוֹן *māmōn* 'wealth' (NT μαμωνᾶς)
manna from מָן *mān* 'manna' (NT μάννα)
messiah from מָשִׁיחַ *māšīaḥ* (or Aramaic *məšīḥā*) 'anointed' (NT μεσσίας)
pasch(al) from פֶּסַח *pesaḥ* (or Aramaic *pasḥā*) 'passover' (NT πάσχα)
rabbi from רַבִּי *rabbī* (or Aramaic *rabbī*) 'my master' (NT ῥαββί)
sabbath from שַׁבָּת *šabbāṯ* 'sabbath' (NT σάββατον)
satan from שָׂטָן *śāṭān* 'adversary, satan' (NT σατᾶν).

Other early loans are first attested in Middle English translations of the Bible, such as the following words, which appear in the Wycliffe translation of 1382:

alleluia from הַלְלוּ־יָהּ *halălū-yāh* 'praise Yah!'
behemoth from בְּהֵמוֹת *bəhēmōṯ* 'beast'
jubilee from יוֹבֵל *yōḇēl* 'ram's horn; jubilee'
leviathan from לִוְיָתָן *liwyāṯān* 'serpent'
tophet from תֹּפֶת *tōpeṯ* 'Tophet (a place name)'.

Still other examples of early Hebrew loans into English are *kabbalah* and *cabal* (1521 and 1646, respectively; both from Mishnaic קַבָּלָה *qabbālā* 'reception, tradition'), *mohel* (1613; from Mishnaic מוֹהֵל *mōhēl* 'circumciser'), and *seraph* (1667, Milton; a back-formed singular from שְׂרָפִים *śərāfīm* 'burning ones').

A new wave of Hebrew words entered English with the migrations of Ashkenazi Jews from Eastern Europe during the 19th and early 20th centuries. Most of these words were absorbed through Yiddish, and so they sometimes differ considerably from the original Hebrew form. Below are some examples, with the date of their first written attestation in English (according to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edition):

chutzpah (1892) from (Mishnaic) חוּצְפָּה *ḥuṣpā* 'insolence'
gonif(f), *ganef* (1840) from גַּנָּב *gannāḇ* 'thief'
golem (1897) from גֹּלֶם *gōlem* 'lump, clod'
goy (1841) from גּוֹי *gōy* 'people'
klezmer (1929) from כְּלֵי זֶמֶר *kəlē zemer* 'musical instruments'
kosher (1851) from כָּשֵׁר *kāšēr* 'proper'
maven (1950) from מֵבִין *mēḇīn* 'understanding'

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megilla (1943, in the slang sense of 'story') from מְגִלָּה *məgīllā̂* 'roll, scroll'
meshuga and *meshugaas* (1885) from מְשֻׁגָּע *məšuggā̂ʿ* 'mad, crazy'
mitzvah (1892) from מִצְוָה *miṣwā̂* 'command'
schlemiel (1892) from the personal name שְׁלוּמִיאֵל *šəlūmīʾēl* 'Shelumiel' (Num. 7.36)
schmooze (1897) from Yiddish *šmues* 'chat', pl. of *šmue* 'rumor', from שְׁמוּעָה *šəmūʿā̂* 'news, report'
shegetz and *shiksa* (1892) from שֶׁקֶץ *šeqeṣ* 'blemish'
tref, treyf (1837) from טְרֵפָה *ṭərēpā̂* 'carrion'
tush (1962) from Yiddish *tóxes*, from תַּחַת *taḥaṯ* 'under'.

Other recent loans have entered English directly from Hebrew; some of these reflect Jewish religious practice, others reflect Israeli culture and society:

kibbutz (1931) from קִבּוּץ *qibbūṣ* 'gathering'
kippah (1964) from כִּפָּה *kippā̂* 'vault'
knesset (1949) from כְּנֶסֶת *kənesеṯ* 'assembly' (from Aramaic)
menorah (1886) from מְנוֹרָה *mənōrā̂* 'lamp'
moshav (1927) from מוֹשָׁב *mōšā̂ḇ* 'seat, dwelling'.

Many personal names used in English-speaking countries are also ultimately derived from Hebrew. Some of these have also yielded common nouns, such as *jack* (denoting 'any man' from 1548; 'any machine' from 1572) and *jacket* (1462; diminutive form of the obsolete *jack*, 1375), both probably from French *Jacques*, ultimately from יַעֲקֹב *yaʿăqōḇ* (although the English name Jack may also be a shortening of John-kin[s], thus from יוֹחָנָן *yōḥā̂nā̂n*); *marigold* (by 1400), from Mary (presumably the Virgin Mary), from מִרְיָם *miryā̂m; tom* (as in *tom-cat*, etc., by the 18th century), from תּוֹאָם *tōʾā̂m* 'twin' (or from Aramaic).

A number of other English words that resemble Hebrew lexemes derive instead from close relatives of Hebrew, such as Phoenician (via Greek and/or Latin); examples include

balsam (compare בֹּשֶׂם *bōśem*)
cumin (compare כַּמֹּן *kammōn*)
mat (compare מִטָּה *miṭṭā̂*)
myrrh (compare מֹר *mōr*).

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Enjambment

'Enjambment' occurs when a sentence (or clause) does not end with a line of verse but runs into the next line. It has been defined as "the continuation of syntax and sense across line junctures without a major pause" (Dobbs-Allsopp 2001b:385). Much of Hebrew poetry is in synonymously parallel lines, where the break in meaning (here marked by /) comes at the end of the first line, as in

אַל־תִּתְחַר בַּמְּרֵעִים
אַל־תְּקַנֵּא בָּרְשָׁעִים׃

ʾal-tiṯḥar bam-mərēʿīm
ʾal-təqannē bā̂-rəšā̂ʿīm

'Do not get infuriated by evildoers./
Do not be envious of wicked persons' (Prov. 24.19).

Here the end of the first line is also a sentence boundary; this is called 'end stopping'. In enjambment, on the other hand, the sentence in the first line continues into the second, as in

אֵלִי כִּבְתוּלָה חֲגֹרַת־שָׂק
עַל־בַּעַל נְעוּרֶיהָ

ʾĕlī ki-ḇṯūlā̂ ḥăgūraṯ-śaq
ʿal-baʿal nəʿūrehā̂

'Wail like a virgin clad in sacking
over the husband of your youth' (Joel 1.8).

"Enjambment explains how some bicola are neither in synonymous nor antithetic parallelism but 'structurally' parallel: a single sentence has been divided into two…" (Watson 1984:334). In the past, enjambment went unrecognised, because it did not conform to the customary forms of parallelism of Hebrew poetry. However, as scholars re-examine the texts, it is becoming increasingly clear that, in fact, enjambment occurs quite extensively. Indeed, some Hebrew poems have a high proportion of enjambment, for instance Lam. 1–4 (Dobbs-Allsopp 2001a; 2001b), Ps. 133 (Dobbs-Allsopp 2008), and much of Prov. 31 and of the Song of Songs.

The main effect of enjambment "is to provide a sense of forward movement" (Dobbs-Allsopp 2001b:371). This is shown below through a comparison of two texts, one with end-stopped parallel lines and the other with two run-on lines. In the first text (Qoh. 10.18), there is no activity at all, as the end-stopping emphasizes. In the second (Prov. 31.25), the incomplete first

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