**A Research Plan:**

**Dr. Naama Golan**

**מחקריי עוסקים בשני תחומים עיקריים: ספרות בית שני, בדגש על קריאה ספרותית ותיאולוגית ופרשנות המקרא בימי הביניים.**

**Theological Concepts in Second Temple Literature:**

In an article I wrote recently which will be published soon in *VT* , "Can God Deliver His Servants? Two Theological Problems in the Daniel Narratives (Dan. 1:9, 3:17–18)", I dealt with the chief officer’s denial of Daniel's request (Daniel 1:9) and the words of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego (Daniel 3:17–18). Both cases raise a theological difficulty, as, according to the MT version, they both doubt the power of God to deliver his servants. A comparison between the MT version and the OG version shows that, in both cases, the MT version—posing greater theological difficulty—is the earlier version, while the OG version—which attempts to resolve this difficulty and dispel the doubt concerning God’s deliverance of his servants—is later and comprises an early interpretation of the MT version. A continuation of this interpretive trend may be found in Josephus, in the Midrash and in commentary by Rashi. In my paper I demonstrated how this trend is surprisingly continued also in modern biblical criticism scholarship.

This concept, which views deliverance by God as an option that is possible yet not automatic, appears not only in the book of Daniel, but as Crenshaw has shown, this is a concept that is typical of the post-exilic period (Crenshaw 1986).

Continuing the subject of my article, I would like to conduct a comprehensive study of the theological concepts that characterize Second Temple literature that are related to the question of deliverance and Divine providence, and the perception of God in general.

**The metaphor of the cut off tree in Second-Temple Aramaic literature**

A vast and varied Jewish literature in Aramaic was written during the Second Temple period. One of the notable motifs, prevalent in Aramaic literature from the second and third centuries B.C.E. was the metaphor of the tree that symbolized a proud king, compared to the description of the cut-off tree that expresses the approaching catastrophe. These trees usually appear in a dream.

This motif occurs in Daniel 4, ascribed to this period, regarding Nebuchadnezzar's dream (identified as the historical figure Nabonidus). The same motif appears in 4Q530, which preserves a copy of *the Book of Giants* that includes a description of the dreams of two giants. They are described as two gardeners, who water the garden and make it grow it. This dream is meant to inform the giant brothers, 'Ohyah' and 'Hahyah' that a flood is impending that will include tongues of fire and water (Stuckenbruck 2016). One of the texts discovered in Qumran, known as 'The Four Kingdoms' (4Q552a; 4Q553-4Q552), tells of the vision that was revealed to a seer, and he reports it to the king. Their names were not preserved, but some details of the vision do appear in the two manuscripts. Four trees were revealed in the vision symbolizing four kingdoms. Two of these are mentioned explicitly: Babylonia and Media (Puech 2009). As shown by Eshel (Eshel 2009), the motif of the cut-off tree also appears in the Genesis Apocryphon, and also in later literature, such as 2 Baruch, Ch. 36.

The metaphorical use of a tall tree in order to describe a proud king is widespread in the literature of the ancient East (Widengren 1951; Coxon 1986; Henze1999). It also occurs in the Bible, especially in the prophecy literature, e.g. Ez. 17:22-24; 28:11-19; 31; Is. 10:33-34; 11:1-10; 14:3-27 etc.

In my study I intend to track the motif of the trees and their cutting down, as a metaphor for the destruction of kingdoms, as expressed both in biblical literature and in Aramaic literature, from the Second Temple period. By examining this motif, we can trace the metamorphosis of a biblical tradition to Second Temple literature and identify various surprising theological concepts regarding the fall and rise of kingdoms.

**R. Yehuda Uziel's Super-commentary on Rashi's Commentary on the Torah**

These days I am researching a Super-commentary on Rashi's Commentary on the Torah.This super-commentary was written by R. Yehuda Uziel, who lived in the sixteenth century, an exile from Spain and one of the leaders of the community of Fez and the scion of a dynasty of rabbis and sages active in that city. Uziel's commentary is not well-known since it is still unpublished and has not been researched to date

Uziel's super-commentary has come down in only one manuscript, Ms. Paris, in the Bibliothèque nationale, Ms. Hebr. 169. The manuscript is well-preserved, containing a commentary on Rashi's commentary on all of the Torah. It consists of 114 pages leaves. A colophon at the end of the manuscript inscribed by the copyist discloses that its copying was completed on Tuesday 1 Nissan 5274 (= March 28, 1514)

In an article that I wrote recently, "Creative interpretation within the genre constraints: A study of Rabbi Yehuda Uziel's commentary on Rashi's commentary" (Golan 2021), I described Uziel's complex approach to Rashi. Together with his strong commitment to Rashi, to whom he refers as his master) *rabbo*), examples can be identified in which he explicitly contradicts his master's interpretation. He does so for various reasons: e.g., reasons of content, such as defending the honor of the patriarchs and also philological considerations or a lack of conformity of Rashi's interpretation to the cantillation marks in the Masoretic text.

Continuing this research, I shall be taking part next year (January 2022) in a research group at the *Center for Jewish Studies* at *Harvard University* led by Prof. David Stern, which will focus on the Middle Ages.

In addition, I intend to submit a research proposal to the ISF and other foundations in Israel and abroad in order to publish a scientific edition of R. Yehuda Uziel's super-commentary on Rashi's commentary. This edition will include presentation of the text, formatting the commentary by separation of the Uziel's commentary from the *incipit*s that quote Rashi, exegetical clarification and discussion of passages in the super-commentary, indentifying exegetical trends in Uziel's commentary related to the time in which he lived and historical events reflected in his commentary.

This edition will make a contribution on a number of levels: First of all, it will make this important, but little-known commentary available, thus adding another layer to Biblical exegesis in general, and specifically to the genre of super-commentaries on Rashi's commentary.

In addition, by means of this commentary we may learn about the culture, world view, beliefs and opinions, and also the way of thinking of exiles from Spain who lived in Morocco in the 16th century. The study of Jewish history in Muslim countries in the last 400 years is only in its early stage. Since the lives of Jews in the Middle East and North Africa in particular were stamped in traditional patterns until the early twentieth century, there is great importance to studying Jewish thought, and in particular Biblical exegesis in this period, in order to reveal the intellectual, cultural and social world of these communities (Bar Asher 1990).

Research on the commentary by R. Yehuda Uziel, who lived in Fez, Morocco, after the Expulsion from Spain, will add a missing piece to reconstructing the mosaic of the Jews in Muslim lands in the sixteenth century.

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**Teaching Plan**

In the last few years I have been teaching at the Department of Bible and Jewish Culture at the Kibbutz Seminary and the Department of Bible and Master Studies at Herzog College. I have accumulated experience teaching a variety of different courses in Bible (both frontal courses, and digital ones). For example:

1. Jewish Literature in the Second Temple Period
2. Biblical and -Biblical Court Tales
3. The Book of Daniel
4. The Biblical Narrative
5. Introduction to the Bible
6. Medieval Exegesis
7. A Guide to Biblical Bibliography
8. A Guide to Writing Seminar Papers
9. Law, Prose, and Poetry – A Study of Deuteronomy
10. Reading the Joseph Stories
11. The Scrolls of Ruth and Esther
12. The Stories of Elijah and Elisha
13. The Story of Judah and Tamar (Gen. 38) – From the Bible, Second Temple Literature, Rabbinic Literature and Aramaic Translations
14. Inner-Biblical and Extra-Biblical Exegesis of the Hagar Story
15. Biblical Dreams
16. Women in the Bible
17. Teaching the Bible – A Pedagogical Course