

## The Expression of שָׁחַת in the Elihu Speeches: A Comparison of Instances in Texts from Qumran<sup>1</sup>

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### Introduction

This study examines similar expressions containing שָׁחַח (noun) in the Elihu Speeches<sup>2</sup> (ES) and Qumran (Q) texts. The noun שָׁחַח is used five times in the ES, all of which are concentrated in Job 33:15-30<sup>3</sup>, where Elihu presents his views

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- 1 This paper is based on part of my master's thesis, which was accepted by Rikkyo University (Tokyo, Japan) in January 2017.
  - 2 It is generally agreed that the Elihu Speeches are later additions (for instance, see James L. Crenshaw, *Reading Job: A Literary and Theological Commentary*, Macon 2011, 12ff.; John Gray, *The Book of Job*, THB1, Sheffield 2010 [paperback 2015], 66ff.; Stephan Lauber, *Weisheit im Widerspruch: Studien zu den Elihu-Reden in Ijob 32-37*, BZAW 454, Berlin 2013, 40ff.; K. Namiki, *Yobuki no Zentaizou* [an overall picture of Job], Tokyo 2013, 40-44; Carol A. Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations*, New York 2003, 201ff.; Tanja Pilger, *Erziehung im Leiden: Komposition der Elihureden in Hiob 32-37*, FAT 49, Tübingen 2010, 20ff.; Marvin H. Pope, *Job*, AB15, New York 1965, XXVI ff.). This paper treats the ES as part of an independent later addition written by different authors than those who wrote the rest of Job.
  - 3 The noun שָׁחַח is used 24 times in the HB (Isa 38:17; 51:14, Ezek 19:4,8; 28:8, Jonah 2:7, Ps 7:16; 9:16; 16:10; 30:10; 35:7; 49:10; 55:24; 94:13; 103:4, Prov 26:27; 28:10, Job 9:31; 17:14; 33:18,22,24,28,30). See Even-Shoshan, 1133; L. Wächter, "שָׁחַח," *TDOT* 14:596. An instance of Prov 28:10 (MT "בְּשָׁחַחְתּוֹ") is included within the range of investigation of this paper by adoption of *BHS*'s emendation "בְּשָׁחַחְתּוֹ" (supporting

on individual suffering by describing the deliverance of an afflicted people<sup>4</sup>. He also discusses his conceptualizations of God and human beings in this passage<sup>5</sup>. However, little attention has been given to the meaning behind its intensive use in this context<sup>6</sup>.

The first section of this paper clarifies the traits of שחַת as it appears in the ES by comparing its details with other instances in the Hebrew Bible (HB). The second section discusses how the expressions in the ES that involve שחַת compare to other instances in the HB and Q texts. The expressions of שחַת in the Q texts create a more threatening picture than do those of the HB and ES.

### The state of current investigations into שחַת in the HB

Since the etymology of שחַת is unclear, attempts to determine its basic meaning have been unsuccessful<sup>7</sup>. Some vocabularies are suggested as the possible relevant vocabulary of שחַת (for instance, Moabite האַשְׁתּוּ ["cistern"], Akkadian sbst. ḫaštu, ḫaltu ["hole, grave"] or Hittite sbst. ḫešta ["house"]). These diverse

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evidence: fragment of codex from Cairo Genizah “קִשְׁתָּה”).

- 4 T. Pilger considered this section to be the core of ES theology. Pilger pointed out that distinct elements of the ES theology can be found in the contained teachings on suffering. Pilger, 138ff.
- 5 The noun שחַת is mentioned as a key word in this passage. See Pilger, 44, 65f.; Eugene H. Merrill, “שחַת,” *NIDOTTE* 4:94; Patrick W. Skehan, “The Pit (Job 33),” *CBQ* 31(1969), 382.
- 6 For instance, A. van Selms saw this intensive employment as an indication that the ES author had a relatively poor vocabulary. A. van Selms, *Text en Toelichting, A. van Selms, Job* (trans. K. Toka, Tokyo 2002), 43-44.
- 7 BDB considers the noun שחַת as a derivative of the verb שוּחַ (“to sink”). “שוּחַ,” BDB: 1001. In contrast to BDB, *HALOT* sees the noun שחַת as denominative. “שחַת,” *HALOT*: 1472. For information on the indefiniteness of the etymology of שחַת, see N. J. Tromp, “Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Nether World in the Old Testament,” *BibOr* 21(1969), 69 and Othmar Keel, *Die Welt der altorientalischen Bildsymbolik und das Alte Testament: Am Beispiel der Psalmen*, Göttingen 1996<sup>5</sup>, 62f.

meanings cause difficulty in determining the basic meaning of שחת<sup>8</sup>. M. Held pointed out that Akkadian ḫaštu(m) and šuttatu(m) may be synonyms of שחת, despite the lack of etymological confirmation. Held also argued that the noun שחת may be derived from the verb שחה (“to lower,” “to bow down”). This contrasts with the traditional view positing that שחת is derived from the verb שוה (“to sink”). Despite these investigations, Held concluded that it was difficult to make a clear statement about the etymology of the noun שחת<sup>9</sup>.

Since the noun שחת generally appears with the verbs ירד (“to descend”) or נפל (“to come down”) in the HB, we can assume that שחת is found below the surface of the earth. Furthermore, the use of שחת as an object of the verbs הפר and כרה (both meaning “to dig”) indicates that שחת is shaped like a hole<sup>10</sup>. Indeed, שחת is used in areas of the HB to represent a grave and subterranean space in which the dead live. However, it is difficult to develop a unified concept for the noun שחת<sup>11</sup>.

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8 “שחת.” *HALOT*: 1472-1473; Wächter, *TDOT* 14:595-599:596; Merrill, *NIDOTTE* 4:93; M. Held, “Pit and Pitfalls in Akkadian and Biblical Hebrew,” *JANES* 5(1973), 173-190:176.

9 Held, 174-181.

10 However, Held pointed out that usages of the noun שחת in Ezek 19:4. 8 are homonyms meaning “net.” Held, 181-187.

11 A detailed interpretation of the noun שחת has not been settled. N. J. Tromp interpreted it as a hole connecting a subterranean world; this realm was later considered to be Sheol. Tromp saw the noun שחת as a grave, generally indicating the death of a human being. However, Tromp admitted there was difficulty involved in this interpretation. Tromp, 69-71. Rosenberg concluded that the noun שחת indicated the untimely death of the wicked. R. Rosenberg, “The Concept of Biblical Sheol within the Context of ANE Beliefs” (Ph. D. diss., Harvard Univ., 1980), 51-73. Wächter classified meanings of the noun שחת into two large groups (i.e., a crafty trap and a subterranean world). Wächter, *TDOT* 14:597f.

### The state of current investigations into שחת in the Q texts

The noun שחת appears 42 times in the Q texts<sup>12</sup>. R. Rosenberg considered that the phrase “Sons of שחת (בני שחת)” (CD [Cairo Genizah copy of the *Damascus Document*] VI, 15) may reflect “another stage” of its exegetical tradition. Rosenberg pointed out that this expression underscores the negative aspect from both a spatial and a moral point of view, which was already implied in the biblical term<sup>13</sup>. The object of Rosenberg’s investigation, however, is to clarify the meaning of שאול in the HB. Thus, Rosenberg did not search for instances of שחת in the Q texts in detail. R. E. Murphy suggested two interpretations of שחת in the HB after investigating instances of its usage in IQS (Serek Hayahad), 1QH<sup>a</sup> (*Hodayot*<sup>a</sup>), and the CD. That is, the verb שוח (“to sink”) and שחת (“to become corrupt,” “to be ruined”) influence the Qumran community’s two ways of interpreting the noun. According to Murphy, the Qumran community considered these two verbs to etymologically precede שחת. Thus, the verb שוח led the interpretation of the noun שחת as “hole or grave,” whereas the verb שחת led its interpretation as “corruption.” Since members of the Qumran community correlated the noun שחת with the verb שחת rather than the verb שוח, Murphy’s study concluded that the noun שחת had become a new ethical term in their theology<sup>14</sup>. L. Wächter noted that the meanings of שחת in the Q texts basically agreed with those in the HB. In contrast to Murphy’s assertions, Wächter concluded that while connotations with “hole” were weak in some instances, the shape of שחת remained a pit. Wächter accordingly supposed that the connotation of “hole” fused with “corruption” in those instances<sup>15</sup>.

12 DSSC 2:720-721. This paper treats the Q texts as a corpus of Hebrew archives that were written in later ages than the HB.

13 Rosenberg, 73.

14 Murphy, Ronald E., “Šaḥat in the Qumran Literature,” *Biblica* 39 (1958), 61-66. Murphy deals with instances in 1QH<sup>a</sup>, the CD, and IQS (IQS VI, 12, XI, 16, 22, X, 19, XI, 13, CD VI, 15, XIII, 14, XVI, 2, 1QH X, 23, XI, 13, 17, 19, 20, 27, XIII, 8).

15 Wächter, *TDOT* 14:598.

## 1. Expressions of שחַת in the ES (Job 33:15-30)

### 1.1. Translation

- 15 In the dream and in the vision of the night,  
When deep sleep falls on people  
In dozes on beds.
- 16 Thereupon He opens the ear of people,  
And He seals those with their discipline.
- 17 That He causes to depart human beings from their deed<sup>16</sup>,  
And He conceals<sup>17</sup> the arrogance from a man.
- 18 He keeps his soul from Shahat,  
And [he keeps back] his life from running to the arrow<sup>18</sup>.

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16 MT “להסיר אדם מעשה.” Since the verb סור (hif. “to separate,” “to remove”) cannot take two objects (see David J. A. Clines, *Job 21-37*, WBC 18A, Nashville 2006, 696), an emendation has been proposed to place מן before מעשה (“deed”). This emendation is widely accepted (see Norman C. Habel, *The Book of Job: A Commentary*, London 1975, 177; Clines, *Job 21-37*, 682).

17 MT “כסה” (pi. “to cover”). We read this in accordance with MT. The verb כסה is employed similarly in the ES (36:30.32) (in both instances, the subject of this verb is God). Furthermore, we can find a similar usage to this clause in Gen 18:17. The verb כסה is also solely used in an expression about cutting a plant (Ps 80:17, Isa 33:12). For these reasons, the emendation “כסה” (qal “to cut away”) (see *BHS*; Clines, *Job 21-37*, 696) is unnecessary.

18 Commentators are divided on their views about the translation for “שלה” (i.e., “some kind of weapon” and “a stream”). On the former view, see “שלה I”, *BDB*:1018-1020:1019; Held, 174; Artur Weiser, *Das Buch Hiob*, ATD13, Göttingen 19685, 220; Lauber, 59. On the latter view, see Clines, *Job 21-37*, 697; Pilger, 42; Pope, 218. There is a disadvantage to the latter view. That is, ancient versions (LXX, U, 11QtgJob) did not translate this word into a kind of stream (cf. Lauber, 59). As Pope insisted, if שלה means “infernal stream” (as is well-known in Mesopotamian Hubur and Styx in Greek

- 19 And besides, he is chastened by pain on his bed,  
So that his bones struggle<sup>19</sup> with each other.
- 20 Furthermore, his life loathes breads.  
His soul [loathes] the favorite food.
- 21 His flesh vanishes and is lost to view.  
His bones which were formerly in hiding<sup>20</sup> are exposed.
- 22 Then, his soul approaches Shahat.  
His life [comes close] to those who bring death.
- 23 If there be on behalf of him an envoy, a mediator, one of the thousand,  
To bring what is right to human beings,
- 24 He has compassion for him and says,  
“Redeem<sup>21</sup> him from going down into Shahat.

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mythology), ancient versions would have translated it to a kind of stream.

As supporting evidence for this interpretation of שלח, we can point to the relationship between the nouns שחת and חץ (“an arrow”) in 1QH<sup>a</sup> (XI, 16, XI, 27) (we will look at these instances below). The noun חץ is thus employed in connection with the noun שלח in 2 Sam 22:15, Ps 18:15; 144:6, and Ezek 5:16. Since a relationship between שלח and חץ is therefore assumed, it seems reasonable to conclude that the noun שלח in Job 33:18 can be interpreted as an arrow-like weapon. This reading is supported by the fact that verb עבר widely suggests a “change of location or position” (see H. F. Fuhs, “עבר,” *TDOT* 10:408-425:413). Thus, the verb עבר does not restrict the translation of שלח to mean a kind of stream.

- 19 K “ריב” (“struggle”), Q “רוב” (“abundance”). It is reasonable to adopt this reading of K from the perspective of parallelism (similar to that in 33:15-18).
- 20 It is appropriate to take “לא ראו” (they are not visible) as a relative clause that modifies “עצמותיו” (his bones). See Clines, *Job 21-37*, 699.
- 21 MT “פדעהו.” Since the verb “פדע” only appears here, it is difficult to confirm its meaning. *BHS* proposes “פרע” (“to release,” “to leave,” qal imp. +sf. 3ms.). *BHS*’s emendation (Habel adopted this emendation, see Habel, 177) is defective since the verb “פרע” connotes a negative meaning (see “פרע III,” *BDB*:828f.:828; Clines, *Job 21-37*, 701). Therefore 11QJob (Targum of Job) translates the verb “פצהו” as “to rescue” (see Emanuel Tov [ed.], *Qumran Cave 11 II 11Q2-18, 11Q20-31*, DJD 23, Oxford 1998,

I have found a ransom.”

25 H is flesh becomes more abundant<sup>22</sup> than a youth.

He returns to his youth.

26 He will pray to Eloah,

Then He will take delight in him and he will see His face with joy,

And He will give back righteousness to people.

27 He will sing<sup>23</sup> toward people and will say,

“I sinned and distorted what is right. But He has not brought retribution to me.

28 He has saved my soul<sup>24</sup> from running into Shahat<sup>25</sup>,

Now my life shines in the light.”

29 Behold, El does all these things.

Twice, three times, with a man.

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130-132), the proposed emendation “פדהו” is reasonable to adopt. For instance, Clines (Clines, *Job 21-37*, 701); Driver and Gray (S. R. Driver / G. B. Gray, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job*, International Critical Comemntary vol. 1, New York 1921, 248) also agreed with this emendation.

- 22 MT “רטפש.” *BHS* proposes “יטפש.” This is a proper emendation. See Driver and Gray, 248.
- 23 MT “יִשֶׁר” (√שור, “to see”). *BHS* also proposes vocalization “יִשֶׁר” (v. “שיר” [“to sing”], impf.) or “יִשֶׁר” (v. “שרר” [“to confess”], impf.). This new word is analogous to the Arab. *ašarra* (“he informed”). From a parallelism with the next verb “אמר,” the vocalization “יִשֶׁר” is suitable. Clines (*Job 21-37*, 703), Lauber (62), K. Namiki (*An Old Testament translating committee, Shosho [Writings]*, Tokyo 2005, 402), and Pilger (44) took the same reading.
- 24 In this verse, Q amends suffixes to 3ms. (נפש, חיתו). Since there is no doubtful point at this MT, we cannot find a reason to adopt this alteration.
- 25 MT “בשחת.” One medieval manuscript and one edition use “בשלח” (this reading seems to result from the expression in 33:18 and 36:12). As corroboration of the validity of MT, LXX “εις διαφθοραν.” Some Greek versions use “φθοραν” (see Joseph Ziegler [ed.], *Iob, Septuaginta auct. Acad. Scient. Gottingensis* vol. XI, 4, Göttingen 1982, 362f.). Both are translations of “שחת.”

- 30 That He brings back his soul from Shahat,  
And to make [him] shine in the light of life.

## **1.2. Composition and content of Job 33:15-30**

Elihu shows how God prevents a person from running to שחַת by repeatedly using it in 33:15-30.

Details are below:

- 15-18 God warns a person about going to שחַת but without much effect.  
19-22 In a second phase, God gives a reproof of pain on the person, but this is ineffective. Thus, the person is approaching שחַת.  
23-26 The person is rescued from being sent to שחַת by the appearance of an envoy/mediator.  
23-24 The envoy/mediator has compassion for the person. The envoy/mediator intervenes between God and the person by means of presenting a ransom.  
25 The person recovers his or her physical health.  
26 The person prays to God. God then returns righteousness to the person.  
27-28 The person sings about salvation of God from שחַת.  
29-30 In summary, God performs the above several times to rescue a person from שחַת.

Scholars such as R. Gordis and T. Pilger interpreted that the subject of chapter 33 is suffering as a means of instruction by God<sup>26</sup>. Although the person learns of God's merciful deeds from their sufferings (as C. Newsom pointed out<sup>27</sup>), the suffering itself does not have direct efficacy in reforming the person.

In these passages, an envoy/mediator appears to converse about the afflicted

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26 Robert Gordis, *The Book of God and Man: A Study of Job*, Chicago/London 1965, 113ff.; Pilger, 61.

27 Newsom, 215.

person's situation. Only after the person has been rescued do they respond to God and find meaning in past sufferings. Elihu accentuates God's wondrous deed in delivering the person from שחת.

### 1.3. Characteristics of שחת expressions in the ES

In the ES, שחת is fundamentally located as a realm of death that opposes a realm of life.<sup>28</sup> Having committed a crime, the person goes down to שחת. Thus, שחת is also depicted as a place of punishment<sup>29</sup>.

The following section provides a detailed discussion of the expressions of שחת in the ES by comparing them with other instances in the HB.

#### A place of punishment

In 33:18, שחת appears in parallel with "עבר בשלח (run to the arrow)" and "ממתים (those who bring death)." Both are expressions about death<sup>30</sup>. A closer examination of these expressions may elucidate the character of שחת in the ES.

In 36:12, "עבר בשלח (run to the arrow)" is connected with "be choked to death" ("If they do not listen, they will run to the arrow and are choked to death without knowledge."). Elihu also uses the phrase "without knowledge" in his evaluation of Job's statement ("And also Job opens his mouth in vain and increases declarations without knowledge" [35:16]). The phrase "לא בדעת (disregarding knowledge)" is also used as an expression of criticism for Job ("Job speaks disregarding knowledge. His words are not based on insight" [34:35]). Elihu declares that Job's statements lack "knowledge." Here, Elihu sees "knowledge" as the understanding of God's real nature ("Bear with me a little, I will show you, because still I have an opinion about Eloah. I hold knowledge (דעי)

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28 About the noun שחת as a realm of death, see Tromp, 70. For instances in the ES, see Pilger, 44; Lauber, 59-62, 200.

29 About the noun שחת as a place of a punishment, see Rosenberg, 62-64.

30 See the translation of this paper and Held, 173f.

from afar. I inform you about the righteousness of my maker, since certainly there is no untruth in my words. A perfect knowledge (תמים דעות) is with you” [36:2-4]). The expression “עבר בשלח (run to the arrow)” therefore indicates death from a lack of knowledge about God.

The phrase “ממתים (those who bring death [מות hif. Pt. pl.])” also appears in 2 Kgs 17:26 (Lions from Yahweh slay settlers lacking regulation of God in Samaria) and Jer 26:15 (Jeremiah says to the government officials and the people of Judah, “If you are murderers against me, you will shed innocent blood”). In both cases, “ממתים” is represented as a slayer of humanity. A. Weiser notes that 2 Sam 24:16 and Ps 78:49 are instances related to Job 33:22<sup>31</sup>. Both accounts refer to a slayer from God with a justifiable reason (David’s sin due to his investigation of the population [2 Sam 24:16], and a punishment for Egypt [Ps 78:49]). Although the instances in 2 Sam 24:16, Ps 78:49, and 2 Kgs 17:26 refer to a mass murderer (unlike the personal murderer in Job 33:22), the HB provides evidence that God sends a slayer to administer punishment.

We can therefore conclude that, “עבר בשלח” and “ממתים” suggest undesirable death as a punishment for human sin. Examination of these expressions in parallel with שחת in the ES reveals that שחת has the same meaning. In Ps 55:24 and 94:13, שחת is used to make a similar implication (a premature death as a punishment<sup>32</sup> [55:24], a destruction of the wicked who insult and dismiss God [94:13]). In Ps 7:16; 9:16, Prov 26:27 and 28:10, שחת is utilized effectively for the purpose of depicting the self-destructions of the author’s foes. In these instances, שחת refers to both a wrongdoing of the foes and a place of ruin for them<sup>33</sup>. However,

31 Weiser interpreted “ממתים” as an angel of death (“Todesengel”). Weiser, 220.

32 In the HB, premature death is clearly seen as divine punishment. See M. A. Knibb, “Life and death in the Old Testament” in: R. E. Clements (ed.), *The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological and Political Perspectives*, Cambridge 1989, 395-415: 403.

33 M. H. Lichtenstein designated this sort of retribution for wickedness as “poetic justice.” See Murray H. Lichtenstein, “The Poetry of Poetic Justice: A Comparative Study

unlike the ES, in such instances of Ps or Prov, שחַת is represented as an ambiguous device for general retributive justice. As we will discuss later, the author of the ES pays attention to all individuals rather than to a conceptual evil.

### A cause for going to שחַת

In 33:17, Elihu indicates that “גוה (pride)<sup>34</sup>” and “מעשה (deed)” are causes for going to שחַת. In addition, גוה appears<sup>35</sup> in Jer 13:17 and Job 22:29. Jeremiah warns the people about their pride in Jer 13:15-17. Jeremiah says that their pride will bring them gloom of death, darkness, and captivity if they ignore Yahweh’s glory. Eliphaz hints at Job’s pride in Job 22:29 (“You may say ‘pride!’”)<sup>36</sup>. Elihu also blames Job’s pride by correlating גוה with “גבר (a man)” by which Job represents himself<sup>37</sup>.

The word “מעשה (deed)” occasionally has negative connotations<sup>38</sup>. In Gen 44:15, the alleged theft committed by Joseph’s brothers is represented as מעשה (but a false charge). In Neh 6:14 (a cunning scheme of enemies) and Lam 3:64 (the behavior of those who insult and oppress the author), מעשה is mentioned as something that must be avenged by God. Ezekiel declares that pride incurs שחַת as punishment (“They will take you down into Shahat, then you shall die the death of the perforation in the heart of the sea” [28:8]). “The death of the perforation,” which parallels שחַת, is used as an expression of Yahweh’s judgment (such death is cruel and dishonorable). Passages in Ezek (28:1-10) are pro-

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in Biblical Imagery,” *JANES* 5 (1973), 255-265.

34 For the meaning of the noun “גוה,” see D. Kellermann, “גאה,” *TDOT* 2: 344-350: 346.

35 There is general agreement that the noun “גוה” in Job 20:25 means “the back (of a human body)” as a hapax legomenon. See Clines, *Job 1-20*, WBC 17, Michigan 1989, 478.

36 See Clines, *Job 21-37*, 567.

37 As Namiki pointed out, the noun “גבר” is used as Job’s own representation in Job’s speeches (for instance, 3:3.23; 15:25). *Shosho*, 403.

38 See “עשה I”, BDB: 793-796: 795.

nouncements of death as punishment for the prince of Tyre who is conceited over his wealth. Thus, similarly to Job 33:17, שחת is represented in Ezek 28:8 as a place of punishment for pride.

### A contraposition of שחת to an ethical value

In Job 33:27, the person who was rescued from שחת states, “I sinned and perverted<sup>39</sup> what is right (ישר)<sup>40</sup>.” Notably, “to pervert what is right” is a cause for going to שחת in the ES.

First, what does “what is right (ישר)” mean here? The phrase ישר is repeatedly used as a virtue of Job in 1:1, 8 and 2:3. Job’s friends Eliphaz and Bildad also approve of the value of ישר in regard to retributive justice (4:7, 8:6). They unanimously assert that whoever has the virtue of ישר shall not perish.<sup>41</sup> The phrase ישר is also highly rated in a retributive justice framework in three instances in Prov (4:11, 2:21-22, 3:32). As H. Olivier suggested, the virtue of ישר is referenced in Job, Prov, and Ps as something that every human should strive to obtain. As a virtue, it leads its owner to a satisfactory life. This is because Yahweh is intimate with whoever has it (Prov 3:32)<sup>42</sup>. Eilhu himself applies the noun ישר to qualify his mind in Job 33:3 (“uprightness of my mind, my statements and knowledge of my lips utter genuine words”).

There is a turning point in the condition of the sufferer in 33:23 as an envoy/mediator informs the sufferer of “what is right for him (sf. 3ms.)”<sup>43</sup> so that they who have ignored this may know an appropriate way of life. In short, the suf-

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39 In 33:27, the verb עוה (hif.) means “to bend” when taking the noun ישר as an object. See Hannes Olivier, “ישר,” *NIDOTTE* 2:563-568:566.

40 The adjective ישר is employed as a noun in this instance. See BDB:409; *HAL*:429.

41 This reference is insisted as an axiom. See Clines, *Job 1-20*, 125, Crenshaw, 57.

42 Hannes Olivier, “ישר,” *NIDOTTE* 2:563-568:566.

43 For an interpretation of “ישרו,” see also Seow’s consideration. Choon-Leong Seow, “Elihu’s Revelation,” *ThTo* 68-3(2011), 253-271:269.

ferer must be aware of “what is right for him” to avoid שחַת. Conversely, שחַת is represented as the fate of a person who ignores the virtue that every human ought to embody<sup>44</sup>.

### **A testimony of salvation from שחַת in a first-person narrative**

Most uses of שחַת refer to it as a place for wicked foes to whom the authors are opposed. Such evil people are destined for שחַת. Thus, God’s actions in these instances are meant to bring guilty people down to שחַת. Elihu sees God and שחַת from a different perspective. Elihu considers a person’s approach to שחַת to result from their pride and deeds. Elihu says that such a person shall finally be rescued and will testify in the presence of an audience<sup>45</sup>.

A testimony of salvation from שחַת is depicted in Ps 103:4. At the outset of the lines beginning at 103, the author orders one’s own soul to praise the merciful arrangement of Yahweh. The author then lauds Yahweh with some eulogistic names in which Yahweh is praised as a forgiver of sin, a healer of sickness, and a redeemer from שחַת. In this psalm, שחַת also connotes punishment because it is treated equally with blame and sickness, which are considered the results of sin<sup>46</sup>. Although the details of “blame” are ambiguous in this psalm, it is evident that Yahweh rescues the person from שחַת, which is represented as a place of punishment. A declaration similar to that in Job 33:27 is also mentioned in 103:10 (“According to our sins, He did not deal with us, and in proportion with our blames, He did not treat us”). Thus, it can be argued that Ps 103 is similar to the ES in relation to the testimonies. In both instances, God delivers a sinner from a deserving punishment in שחַת. Unlike the ES, the author of Ps 103 is interested

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44 The nouns יִשָּׁר and שחַת are also used together in Prov 28:10. Unlike in the ES, יִשָּׁר (pl.) means “the righteous” in this instance. The wicked who are destined for שחַת attempt to mislead them in this passage.

45 Lauber considered the theme of this passage (33:26-28) to be “Danklied.” Lauber, 214.

46 See Christian Frevel, “Krankheit/Heilung,” *HGANT*<sup>5</sup>:301-305:302.

in a godly group (“we”) rather than an individual and does not provide a detailed cause for going to שחת.

#### **1.4. Different expressions of שחת in the ES and HB: A brief summary**

Several observations in this chapter have shown three distinctions for שחת in the ES. First, the שחת of the ES is concretely mentioned as the fate of an individual who ignores the virtues that every human ought to embody. Second, שחת contrasts with an ethical value (ישר). In the ES, שחת is not a fate of foes or merely of every mortal<sup>47</sup>. Third, the testimony of salvation from שחת is told in a first-person narrative in which the individual confesses to a past fault (33:27-28). Such an individual confession about salvation from שחת is missing in the rest of HB; therefore, this is a distinguishing feature of שחת in the ES. Fourth, שחת is used in various expressions as a threatening individual menace. This menace waits for an individual who makes an ethical mistake on the path of life at any time. Repetition and relationships with multiple depictions of death (“עבר בשלח,” “ממתים”) give nuance and impact to שחת in the ES.

## **2. Expressions of שחת in the Q texts**

In the following, we examine instances of שחת in the Q texts.

### **2.1. Similar testimonies involving שחת in the ES and Q texts**

The 1QH<sup>a48</sup> contains testimonies with expressions that are similar to those in Job 33:27-28. Some opening paragraphs of 1QH<sup>a</sup> describe confessions of the author’s own past faults and thanks to God for salvation from שחת.

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47 Although Ps 49:10 mentions שחת as an individual menace, this שחת is fate for every mortal in the context of this psalm. See Tromp, 69; *TDOT* 14, 598.

48 The text of 1QH<sup>a</sup> is based upon Hartmut Stegemann, Eileen Schuller, Carol Newsom (Transl. of Texts), *1QHodayot<sup>a</sup>*, DJD 40, New York 2009.

In a psalm in 1QH<sup>a</sup> XI, 20-37, שחַת is depicted as a crisis that the author has experienced.

(vacat) I thank you, O Lord. For you have redeemed my soul from שחַת, and from Sheol-Abaddon, (21) You have lifted me to the eternal height. I move about the boundless plain. I know that that place is a hope for those who (22) were formed from dust for an eternal council. And also, You have purified the crooked spirit from a huge sin.

1QH<sup>a</sup> XI, 27-28

(27) when all traps of שחַת are open, all nets of evil and casting nets of the wickedness are spread on the surface of the water. (28) When all the arrows of שחַת fly unavoidable and shoot without hope<sup>49</sup>. ...

In this psalm, שחַת is something that drives individual activity into a crisis. Thus, שחַת is a threat that contains traps and shoots arrows. The expression “traps of שחַת” is also used in 1QH<sup>a</sup> X, 23 and CD XIV, 2 (in these instances, it is seen as “מִיקְשֵׁי שַׁחַת”). 1QH<sup>a</sup> X, 23 is also part of a thanksgiving in the opening of a psalm beginning at 1QH<sup>a</sup> X, 22 (“And You save me from all traps of שחַת”). In these instances, שחַת is a threat that intends to absorb a powerless individual<sup>50</sup>. The authors state that God’s conduct rescues an individual from שחַת.

In 1QH<sup>a</sup> XIII, 7-8, the author confesses a past fault and thanks God for salvation from שחַת. These verses are located in the opening of a psalm composed in 1QH<sup>a</sup> XIII, 7-21.

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49 The translation in this paper refers to Svend Holm-Nielsen’s translate and comment. Svend Holm-Nielsen, *Hodayot Psalms from Qumran*, Aarhus 1960, 65, 70.

50 In this phrase, Murphy saw שחַת as a power held by corrupted enemies. Murphy, 64.

1QH<sup>a</sup> XIII, 7-8

(7) I thank you, O Lord. For You did not abandon me when I temporarily lived with foreigners. [ ] (8) You [have not] judged me (7) according to my sin. (8) You have not abandoned me in a scheme of my inclination<sup>51</sup>. And You saved my life from שָׁחַת, ...

## 2.2. A contraposition of שָׁחַת to an ethical value

In 1QS<sup>52</sup> XI, 13-14, שָׁחַת is used in contraposition to “way (דֶּרֶךְ).”

1QS XI, 13-14

If my affliction bursts, He will let my life out from שָׁחַת. And He will establish firmly my steps on the way. Through His affection, He drew me near, and by His loving-kindness, He shall provide <sup>53</sup>(14) my righteousness.

Regarding the contraposition of שָׁחַת to “way,” Murphy pointed out that שָׁחַת refers to a moral corruption rather than one of mere death that contrasts to “way.” The same situation is present in the ES, in which a moral value is represented as יֵשֶׁר. Murphy commented about instances in both 1QS and 1QH<sup>a</sup> when שָׁחַת is expressed as a threat by which the authors attempt to indicate apprehension about loss of faith and participation in evil. Murphy even pointed out that the authors

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51 K. Nakazawa commented that the noun יֵצֵר refers to the fundamental evil of a human being from which no one escapes. Japanese Biblical Institute, *Shikaibunshyo* [Dead Sea Scrolls: Translations and comments], Tokyo 1963, 176, 301.

52 The text of 1QS is based upon *DSSR* 2, 2-35 (ed. M. Abegg, trans. M. Wise, M. Abegg, E. Cook and N. Gordon).

53 A literal translation is “he putted.” The translation in this paper refers to *DSSR* 1. *DSSR* 1, 33.

54 Murphy, 61, 63f.

declare a belief that God should give relief to an individual who has sinned or lost faith<sup>54</sup>.

It is evident that some characteristics are shared by several statements of thanks in 1QH<sup>a</sup> and the ES (i.e., a confession of the author's past sin [straying from the right path of life] and a testimony of God's salvation from שחַת in a first-person narrative). Several psalms in 1QH<sup>a</sup> and the ES entail a belief that God even saves individuals who are in hopeless situations and who have strayed from the right path of life in the past.

### 2.3. A stronger combination of arrows/envoys and שחַת

The arrows and envoys mentioned in parallel with שחַת are related more strongly in the Q texts. A comprehensible instance is found in 1QS IV, 11-14.

1QS IV, 11-14

(11) The Judgment for (12) all of those who walk in such a manner (i.e., those who belong to a wicked spirit and commit evil deeds) is numerous afflictions at the hand of all the angels of destruction, eternal שחַת in rage for God's horrible avenger, an endless dread (13) with a humiliating destruction in a fire of external darkness, and an endless (12) rebuke. (13) Until all the ages and generations, they will know sorrowful misfortune, a bitter calamity, and a dark incident during (14) their exhaustive destruction. There are no survivors and no rescue. [vacat]

Another instance is found in 1QH<sup>a</sup> XI, 17-18.

1QH<sup>a</sup> XI, 17-18

... and when those rush toward, She[o]l [and A]bbad[on] are opened, and

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55 The translation in this paper refers to DJD 40. DJD 40, 37. Literally, "together with their going," Nielsen, 59.

all the arrows of שחת are (18) together with their retinue<sup>55</sup>.

#### 2.4. שחת as a more advanced threat in the Q texts:

##### A comparison with instances in the ES

Examinations of instances containing שחת in the Q texts have shown that expressions of שחת in the ES contain three common features: (1) A first-person testimony in which God saved an individual who sinned, (2) a contrast between שחת and an ethical value, and (3) a relationship between שחת and arrows and envoys.

However, it is noteworthy that שחת increases in threat as a means of God's judgment and as an infernal realm in the Q texts. In a former investigation of 1QS IV, 12, שחת relates to "eternity (עולם)." Similar instances are found in 4Q286 (Ber<sup>b</sup>)<sup>56</sup> 7ii5, 4Q418 (4QInstruction<sup>a</sup>) 69ii6, and 162 4<sup>57</sup>. In 4Q286 7ii5, שחת is employed as a final retribution for Berial, who plots against the author. In 4Q418 69ii6, שחת is a menace of God's judgment for fools who behave wrongly. On the contents of 4Q418, Harrington commented that this text provides a right and wise conduct appealing to "the threat of eschatological judgment."<sup>58</sup> In 1QH<sup>a</sup> XI, שחת is mentioned as an infernal realm. This tells us that שחת has a gate (דלת) (parallel with "eternal bars [בריחי עולם]") and imprisons those who conceive evil (עול). Further, as in the instances in 1QH<sup>a</sup> XI, 28, שחת attacks an individual actively and independently. In 1QH<sup>a</sup> XI, 13, שחת has a womb-like opening (שחת משברי)<sup>59</sup>. שחת develops into the final judgment by combining with עולם in an

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56 The text is based upon *DSSR* 2, 635-645 (ed. and trans. B. Nitzan).

57 The phrase "שחת עולם" appears in 4Q418 162 4. However, the context is difficult to determine since it is fragmentary data and there is no parallel text. The text in question is based upon *DSSR* 2, 107-165 (ed. and trans. J. Strugnell and D. Harrington).

58 Harrington, Daniel J., "Wisdom Texts," *EDSS* 2:976-980:978.

59 Depending on its vocalization, "משבר" can have two different meanings (i.e., "a womb" or "a wave"). The author seems to suggest both. H. Katsumura and S. Uemura (tr.), *Shikaibunso* VII [Psalms from Dead Sea Scrolls: Translations], Tokyo 2018, 49). Newsom's translation is "the womb opening of the pit." *DJD* 40, 155. As a metaphor

eschatological context. These expressions of שחַת can be mentioned as a trait of שחַת in the Q texts.

Further, שחַת is employed in 1QS IX, 16<sup>60</sup>, 22, X, 19<sup>61</sup> as an attribute of a group that members of Qumran should avoid because of their corruption. This group is represented as “the Men of Shahat (אנשי שחַת)”<sup>62</sup>. Notably, this group is expressed as “sons of Shahat (בני שחַת)” in the CD VI, 15. This usage of שחַת is not evident in the ES.

### **Conclusion: The Transition and Development of שחַת**

As we have seen, the expression שחַת exhibits the following four traits in the ES: (1) a place for punishment (this usage appears in some instances in the HB; however, these references are ambiguous and lack concreteness), (2) a multiforimity of expressions owing to repetition (it relates to arrows and those who bring death), (3) a contrast between שחַת and an ethical value, and (4) an individual testimony referring to God’s salvation and one’s past faults. In the ES, שחַת has a distinct outline as a place of punishment for an individual who has become ethically corrupt. Therefore, God’s salvation from שחַת is reported as a remarkable deed of God. Then, a rescued individual sings about God’s salvation and discerns one’s past fault. In this way, שחַת serves as warning equipment for individual ethical corruption in the instances of the ES, whereas in other instances in the HB שחַת appears obscurely as a realm of death or terror. Although several שחַת in the rest of the HB are retribution for wickedness and sin, we cannot detect שחַת as

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of pregnancy is used frequently in this context, Newsom’s translation is suitable.

60 In this instance, it is seen as “אנשי השחַת.” *DSSR* 1, 26.

61 In this instance, it is seen as “אנש שחַת.” *DSSR* 1, 30.

62 M. Wise, M. Abegg, E. Cook and N. Gordon’s translation is “the Men of the Pit.” This translation uses capital letters to indicate that שחַת is not a normal pit. *DSSR* 1, 27-29. Murphy pointed out that the phrase “wicked people (אנשי עול)” (IX, 17, X, 20) is a synonym for “אנשי שחַת.” Murphy, 61.

warning equipment for individual ethical corruption in such instances.

The above four traits of שחת in the ES are also found in the Q texts, where שחת function as warning for individual ethical corruption. Furthermore, שחת enhances its degree of dread and makes its presence more felt in this corpus. In the Q texts, שחת represents an infernal realm for the eschatological judgment of God, an active and independent assailant for an individual, and an attribute of a group that is constituted by corrupt people. Thus, as a warning to individual ethical corruption, שחת expands its effect in eschatological contexts. Moreover, as a qualification for a disgusting group, שחת clearly has a negative meaning on the ethical plane.

To sum up, regarding the instances in the ES, on the one hand, שחת has a distinct outline as a warning equipment for individual ethical corruption more obvious than the other instances in the HB; on the other hand, שחת is moderately expressed in comparison with those in the Q texts with regard to terror and activity. In the instances of שחת in the ES, we cannot find any eschatological expressions, an active and independent assailant, or an attribute of corrupted people. Therefore, we can conclude that, in the ES, שחת is on the eve of usage in the Q texts. In other words, in the ES, שחת indicates that the word was in a transitional period during the development of its meaning: from an obscure space of death or terror to a dreadful eschatological menace to an individual who has become ethically corrupt. Intensive usages of שחת in the ES show that the author of the ES had a high level of interest in שחת and indicate that God's deeds save individuals from it<sup>63</sup>. Therefore, the author of the ES expresses שחת concretely in detail.

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63 During the course of this research, similarities between the contents of some psalms of 1QH<sup>a</sup> and of the ES came to light in particular. The ES shares an individual testimony referring to God's salvation from שחת in 1QH<sup>a</sup>. This result suggests that both were chronologically produced in a similar environment (Puech concluded that "the sequence of the Hymns in 1QHodayot<sup>a</sup> was known at least until about 100 BCE." Émile Puech [trans. Robert E. Shillenn], "Hodayot," *EDSS I*, 365-369: 366) and ideologically. This subject requires further consideration.