

THE TRANSLATOR TO THE READER

This translation was begun during a time of Theological Doctoral studies in 1971, and was not completed until this year, 2002. Each key word in the original language is transliterated and translated so that the orthodox Jewish meaning will shine through. These key words are listed in a glossary for the benefit of the reader who will thereby be able to pour over every key word of the Hebrew Bible, even rather exhaustively through *The Orthodox Jewish Bible*.

Those who read the Bible with Gentile spectacles need to take another look. It took a lifetime to do this translation because of the research involved. Moreover, the problem with Bibles translated by a committee is that usually none of the committee members actually studies every single word in the original languages. Being led by G-d to spend 31 years doing exactly that, always in Jewish communities, always in the midst of Chasidic Jews, and always surrounded by the finest array of scholarly and rabbinic books—this was a divinely provided, unique advantage. Consequently, part of the **OJB** is already being translated into Hebrew and Yiddish and Russian, and is available online even now in Spanish and Ladino.

But why another translation? Why the **OJB**? To answer that question, let's look at the **OJB** rendering of Isaiah 7:14. "Therefore Hashem Himself shall give you an *ot* (sign); *hinei* (behold), *Ha-Almah* (The unmarried young Virgin) shall conceive, and bear *Ben* (Son), and shall call *shmo* (his name) *Immanu-El* (G-d is with us).

From Isaiah's writings we learn that stubborn and unteachable people like the proud religious leaders in Isaiah chapter 28 and proud King Ahaz in chapter 7 don't lower themselves to "factor in" signs, but a sign of tongues will be given to the unbelievers in Isaiah chapter 28; and, to Ahaz and the House of David, a sign will be given of the unmarried young virgin conceiving (a potentially scandalous sign, wouldn't you say, when we think of teenage unwed mothers?). Furthermore, this sign will be given, whether Ahaz wants it or not. (Judging from their "young woman" rendering of *Ha-Almah*, apparently many "Ahaz" Bible translators have not wanted it). When we think of "the" virgin, the only other times in the entire Tanakh that we see the expression *ha-Almah* (*the* virgin), is that unmarried young virgin Rikvah (Rebekah) in Genesis 24:43 who is preparing in that passage to conceive the nation of Israel; and that young unmarried virgin Miryam, who is preparing to bring forth the Savior of the Exodus (Ex 2:8). So let's begin our discussion by pointing out that there are only three *ha-Almah* virgins in Scripture: the mother of Moshiach (Isa 7:14) and the mother of the Nation of Israel (Gn 24:43) and Miryam the virgin pointing us to the Savior of the Exodus (Ex 2:8).

But in this passage, Isaiah 7:14, Moshiach is promised. What is at stake in this one word *ha-Almah*? The answer is: simply everything. If, according to the Hebrew Scriptures, Moshiach was not born of the *Almah* virgin, then he is not *Ben HaElohim*, he is not Moshiach, and we are not delivered from death's eternal judgment by the one who is 'G-d with us.' [See p. 1222 for a long list of places where the word *almah* occurs in the **OJB** Index].

So, to say the least, it is worth probing the Scriptures to study this and related words. A passage in Judges chapter 8, mentions royal bearing (verse 18) and also the word *pilegesh* (concubine, verse 31). See also Shir Hashirim (Song of Songs) chapter 6 verse 8, where that passage infers the royal bearing in the harem of the *pilegesh* as concubine and the royal bearing of *malkah* (queen) as legitimate royal wife and the royal bearing of *almah* (who in the harem has the royal bearing of *betulah* or virgin, not merely "young woman" since a merely young woman would throw a question on hereditary rights to the throne in that any young woman who was only that, only a woman, only young, and then introduced into the harem other than a virgin could destabilize the dynastic