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CIVITAS DIVINO-HUMANA
В ЧЕСТ НА ПРОФЕСОР ГЕОРГИ БАКАЛОВ
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BIBLICAL TRANSLATION AS DIALOGUE WITH GOD:
REFLECTIONS ON THE EXEGESIS AND TRANSLATIONS
OF PSALM 22 (LXX 21)

Boris Naimushin, Sofia

Introduction

The issue for this essay is interaction between exegetical and translation principles in light of a critical analysis of the ideas put forward by Walter Benjamin (1892–1940) in his controversial and mystical work, *The Task of the Translator* (Benjamin 1923). Walter Benjamin together with Gershom Scholem (1897–1982) and Martin Buber (1878–1965) are among the most influential Jewish thinkers of the 20th century with their ideas having a lasting impact on the study of philosophy, religion, and literary criticism. That is why I have chosen to discuss Benjamin’s ideas on biblical translation, greatly influenced by doctrines of the Jewish religion and philosophy, on the example of the long-standing argument over verse 17 in the Masoretic text of Psalm 22 and, respectively, verse 16 in the Septuagint (LXX) text of Psalm 21.

The ancient controversy as to whether this verse should read “like a lion” (*ka'ari*) or “they pierced” (*ka'aru*) is reflected in numerous exegetical and academic works. An overview of modern scholarship on the issue may be found in Hoffman (Hoffman 1996). The difference in numbering is due to the fact that in the LXX Psalms 9–10 of the Hebrew text are united in one Psalm 9; as a result, Psalms 11–113 of the Hebrew text are numbered 10–112 in the LXX. The article will follow the Hebrew numbering with the Septuagint numbering in brackets, when necessary.

After the emergence of Christianity, the books of the Tanach (acronym for Torah, N’vi-im, and K’tuvim), belonging initially to the religion and culture of the Jewish people, became an indelible part of the Holy Scripture of the Christian church. As a result, every passage of the Tanach (usually in the translation tradition of the LXX) may receive different and sometimes conflicting interpretations within Christianity. The origins of the Christian perception of the Jewish Bible can be traced back to Philo of Alexandria (20 B.C.E. – 50 C.E.). Jesus Christ distances himself from the Jewish tradition appealing, however, to the prophetic tradition of the Torah. As a result, Christian interpretation of the Old Testament as the first part of the Christian Bible is predominantly allegoric.

Thus, Christian exegesis firmly places Psalm 22 in the group of the so-called "Messianic psalms" interpreting it as the picture of the Suffering Messiah. Exegetical differences naturally find their reflection in the translations of this psalm in Judaism and Christianity.

The starting point of the research is recognition of the fact that the ultimate purpose of philosophical hermeneutics is to devise a methodological means for interpreting, i.e., making explicit, the meaning of existence, of what it means to be an acting human subject, to clarify existence itself by use of concepts (Ricoeur 1966, p. 17). Religion is among the main conceptual systems aimed at clarifying our existence and our role in this world. Since the Tanach texts function in various cultures and religious systems, one and the same passage may receive more than one interpretation reflecting differences in the approach to these existential issues. In Gadamer's words, "a text is understood only if it is understood in a different way every time" (Gadamer 1975, 275–276). Another aspect of biblical translation bolstering the existence of competing interpretations is that different source text may be chosen for exegesis and translation, i.e. the Tanach may be translated directly from the Hebrew Masoretic text or from the Greek Septuagint. Some translations represent a combination of the two sources, as is the case, for instance, with the Russian Synodical Translation. From this point of view the aim of the essay is not to qualify the existing interpretations and translations as 'correct' or 'incorrect' but rather to investigate the reasons for such interpretations and their implications in the context both of each particular culture and of the intercultural communication.

Biblical Translation and the Mystical Power of Language

In *The Task of the Translator*, Walter Benjamin, himself the translator of Baudelaire and Proust, wrote: "*Fragments of a vessel which are to be glued together must match one another in the smallest details, although they need not be like one another. In the same way a translation, instead of resembling the meaning of the original, must lovingly and in detail incorporate the original's mode of signification, thus making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel.*" (Benjamin 1923)

In the above passage Benjamin invokes the Kabbalistic doctrine of *tsimtsum*, one of the most amazing and far-reaching conceptions ever put forward in the whole history of Kabbalism. It describes an act of self-limitation, performed by God in order to make room for Creation. As a result, Creation may be viewed as a kind of exile, because God removes Himself from the center of His essence to His secret places. However, certain sparks, or brilliant emanations of God trickled out and flowed into the vessels that are the material of the created world. The vessels were too fragile to contain such magnitudes and they broke apart, scattering the godly sparks. Since then nothing has been in its right place and there has been constant strife for the correction of confusion, for the

return of harmony (Sholem 1989). The gathering up of these scattered 'sparks of light' will usher in Messianic time as described, for instance, in Psalm 149.

In my opinion, when Benjamin speaks about "*making both the original and the translation recognizable as fragments of a greater language, just as fragments are part of a vessel*", he makes yet another reference to the Holy Scriptures. What I have in mind is the idea of the mystical power of language reflected in the act of Creation: "And God *said*: "Let there be light," and there was light." (Genesis 1:3 NIV). The same idea is emphasized in Psalm 33: "*By the word of the LORD were the heavens made*; their starry host by the breath of his mouth." (Psalm 33:6 NIV), or "For He spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm" (NIV Psalm 33:9 NIV). *Menucha Vesimcha*, a famous Shabbat song, says that God created the worlds "in His Name" (literally, in His Ineffable Name *yod-he*, where the letter *he* represents this world and the letter *yod* corresponds to a future world). In Philo of Alexandria's model of creation, representing a mixture of the Greek philosophy and the tradition of the Hebrew Scriptures, the direct agent of creation is not God himself, but the Logos, the shadow of God that was used as an instrument and a pattern of all creation. The Logos stands between Creator and creature mediating between God and the world. In the New Testament, Apostle John speaks of the mystical Word (Logos) of God: "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us." (John 1:14 NIV). According to St. John (influenced, as some scholars suggest, by the writings of Philo), when God was creating the world, he pronounced the names of the objects, and these abstract names "materialized" the objects themselves in physical reality.

This linguistic theory of creation became extremely popular among the Medieval mystics, especially the followers of Kabbalah, who claimed that if one succeeded to find the long forgotten original divine language (the greater language?), one would possess the ability to create objects anew (Sholem 1989). Translation, in a sense, is creation of a new reality, which, although brought forth by the original, has a life of its own in a new cultural tradition. The interaction and the combined influence of the original and the translation as fragments of a greater language reveal the mystical power of language. In Benjamin's words, in the Holy Scriptures "*meaning has ceased to be the watershed for the flow of language and the flow of revelation. Where a text is identical with truth or dogma, where it is supposed to be "the true language" in all its literalness and without the mediation of meaning, this text is unconditionally translatable. In such case translations are called for only because of the plurality of languages. Just as, in the original, language and revelation are one without any tension, so the translation must be one with the original in the form of the interlinear version, in which literalness and freedom are united. For to some degree all great texts contain their potential translation between the lines; this is true to the highest degree of sacred writings. The interlinear version of the Scriptures is the prototype or ideal of all translation.*" (Benjamin 1923)

There are a number of points in the above quotations that I would like to address. Continuing Benjamin's comparison between the process of gluing together fragments of

a broken vessel and the process of translation, one may describe the translation process as consisting of two stages. First, there is fragmentation of the original (i.e. confusion, exile, loss of harmony) in order to understand its (true) meaning. After that comes defragmentation (i.e. correction of confusion, return of harmony) leading to the incorporation of the original's mode of signification into the target language. The problem, however, is that the first stage represents a highly individual perception of the original by the translator, i.e. different translators may see different meaning in the same passage because every translation is, in fact, interpretation. Some textual difficulties may leave the interpretation of a given text open to dispute and cause its translation to be a source of contention.

Benjamin takes the idea of self-limitation of the translator to extreme insisting on the necessity or, better, inevitability of a literal translation, since the potential translation is contained between the lines and translations are called for only because of the plurality of languages. In defending such a view, Benjamin takes his side in a century-old argument over literalness and freedom in the Bible translation. Without going too far back in history, let us just mention that in 1890 John Nelson Darby published a literal translation of the Old Testament (his literal translation of the New Testament came out in 1884); about the same time Robert Young offered his literal version of the Holy Scriptures. Advantages of a strict literal translation are seen in the fact that it will leave most interpretive decisions in the hands of the reader protecting them from certain well-intentioned translator's decisions. In Young's words, "A *strictly literal* rendering may not be so pleasant to the ear as one where the *apparent sense* is chiefly aimed at, yet it is not *euphony* but *truth* that ought to be sought..." (Young 1887). Similarly, Darby stressed that the purpose of his translation was "not to offer to the man of letters a learned work, but rather to provide the simple and unlearned reader with as exact a translation as possible" (Darby 1890). Both Young and Darby claimed to have translated from the original languages, i.e. the Old Testament from Hebrew and the New Testament from Greek. However, if we look at the translation of the Masoretic Psalm 22:17, we will see that their supposedly "literal" translations in fact follow the LXX tradition; even the number of this verse in their translations is 16, as in the Septuagint:

"And to the dust of death thou appointest me, For surrounded me have dogs, A company of evil doers have compassed me, Piercing my hands and my feet." (Young's)

"For dogs have encompassed me; an assembly of evil-doers have surrounded me: they pierced my hands and my feet." (Darby's)

So is this really a *literal* translation? The Masoretic text available to both translators says "like a lion", not "they pierced"; however, both supporters of the "strictly literal" approach, supposedly looking in the Hebrew text, rendered an exegetical translation in line with the Christian tradition. In my view, this is a good example to illustrate Young's claim in the *Preface to the Revised Edition (1887)* that "The Word of God is made void by the traditions of men."

Every text, and especially every *great text*, is to some extent ambiguous and offers

a certain range of potential interpretations leading to different and sometimes conflicting translations. Religious disputes and heresies have more often than not aroused as a result of conflicting interpretations of passages in the sacred books. No translation can possibly render in the target language the whole spectrum of the potential interpretations of the original passage. The very essay of Walter Benjamin gives a perfect example in this respect. It was originally written in German under the title "*Die Aufgabe des Uebersetzers*", where the word "*Aufgabe*" means both "a task" and "a failure, a capitulation", because the translator capitulates (*der Uebersetzer gibt auf*) unable to perform his task (Paul de Man 1986, p. 80). And I am making comments on the English translation of this article performed by Harry Zohn, who has often been accused of distorting the meaning of the original. Anyway, translators usually choose one possible interpretation and render it in their translation. For instance, in verse 2 of the Psalm 58 (LXX 57) there is a Hebrew word spelt *aleph-lamed-mem*. It can be interpreted as *elem* "silence" but also as *elim* "gods (usually pagan)". Consequently, translators opt either for the first (gods, rulers, judges etc.) or the second (silence, in silence, silent ones) possibility, e.g.: "*Do ye indeed in silence speak righteousness?*" (American Standard Version); "*Наистина с мълчание ли изказвате правда?*" (Bible Society Translation); "*Подлинно ли правду говорите вы, немые...*" (Tehillim Translated By Haskelevich); "*Do you indeed speak righteousness, O gods?*" (New American Standard Bible); "*Justice – do you rulers know the meaning of the word?*" (New Living Translation); "*Наистина ли говорите правда вие, съдии...*" (Bulgarian Synodical Translation), etc.

Which translation here is "correct" and which is "incorrect"? What will the inter-linear translation of this verse look like? How shall it be recited in liturgical service? All these questions refer to Benjamin's remark that all great text have their potential translations between the lines and that the translator of Holy Scriptures is there just to see this potential translation. In reality, the Bible is full of ambiguous places, so different translators may see different potential translations, often influenced by their own religious views. In its turn, the translated text offers a new spectrum of interpretations in a new language and a new culture, invoking references and hidden meanings often impossible in the original text. As a result, the spectrums of interpretations of the original and the translation do not coincide creating the basis for potential exegetical arguments and heated debates, as is the case, for instance, with Psalm 22.

Psalm 22:17 – "like a lion" or "they pierced"?

The exegetical and linguistic controversy revolves around the following verse: "For dogs have encompassed me; a company of evil-doers have enclosed me; *like a lion*, they are at my hands and my feet." This is a Jewish Publication Society translation into English. Similar interpretations are offered by Jewish translations into other languages. For instance, a new Russian translation of this verse by Rabbi Dov-Ber Haskelevich (Haskelevich 1999) based on earlier Jewish translations of Tehillim into Russian, reads:

“Ибо меня окружили псы, скопище злодеев обступило меня, словно лев [терзают] руки мои и ноги мои.” This translation with an added word in brackets (*словно лев [терзают]*) - like a lion [are mangling] is obviously influenced by RaSHI’s (Rabbi Solomon ben Isaac, 1040-1105) commentary that in actual fact this depicted someone whose “hands and feet are as if they had been mangled in a lion’s mouth”. The Masoretic text of Psalm 22:17 reads “like a lion (*ka’ari*) my hands and my feet”. A strong argument in favor of the Hebrew version of the text is the fact that this verse, so crucial from the Christian messianic perspective, is never referenced in the New Testament. This leads some scholars to a suggestion that the common Christian rendition “they pierced” came after the New Testament was written.

The Jewish Sages ascribe great importance to the Messianic message of the Psalms related to King David. Thus, the Targum (originally, it represented oral Aramaic paraphrase of the Hebrew Bible; the Targum is printed in the margin of corresponding parts of the Hebrew Bible) sees Messianic texts, for instance, in Psalms 2, 18, 21, 45, 61, 72, 80, 89, 110, 132. As far as Psalm 22 is concerned, it lies on the margin of this group of Messianic psalms. From the Jewish perspective, the overall theme of Psalm 22 is the plight of the Jew who, speaking as an individual, prays for an end to Israel’s long exile from its land and Temple (Yosef 2001) with Messianic motives in its closing section (verses 26-32), the ‘praise’ or *shevah* (Santala 1992). The Midrash on the Psalms relates the theme of Psalm 22 to Esther, even though there is no direct link between the two. However, on the basis of the treatment of Psalm 22 in the Rabbinical corpus, Mark Hoffman suggests that the application of the psalm to Esther is likely to be a critical, post-New Testament response to its Christian application to Jesus (Hoffman 1996, cf. §4.19).

The Christian tradition relates to Jesus Christ numerous whole psalms (e.g. LXX 2, 8, 15, 21, 39, 40, 44, 67, 68, 97) and passages from psalms (e.g. LXX 48, 72, 109) quoted by Jesus or applied to him by the New Testament writers. The LXX translation of the Psalm 22:17, done long before Christianity, reads “they pierced my hands and my feet” featuring the Greek verb *oruxsan* “they dug” from *orusso* “to dig” or “to burrow”. This tradition is followed by virtually all translations based on the Vulgate and/or the Septuagint, e.g. the Middle Bulgarian *Norov Psalter* of XIV century (*пригвоздиши* “they nailed”), the Church Slavonic Psalter (*ископаша* “they dug”), the Russian Synodical Translation (*пронзили* “they pierced”), the Bulgarian Synodical Translation (*пробиха* “they pierced”) etc. The New American Bible offers a milder translation of “wasted” instead of “pierced”: “Many dogs surround me; a pack of evildoers closes in on me. So *wasted are my hands and feet* that I can count all my bones...” It is also interesting to note that some of the earlier Slavonic translations preserve the semantics of the LXX verb *oruxsan* “they dug” (i.e. the Church Slavonic Psalter). I was extremely amazed when I came across a new literary Russian translation of this psalm, claimed to have been done from the Church Slavonic Psalter, in which there is no mention of this crucial in the Orthodox Christianity act of piercing. The translation reads: “Ибо окружила

меня свора псов, Сети лукавых опутали меня, увязла в них и рука и нога моя,” speaking about the nets of evil-doers entangling the psalmists hand and foot. (<http://www.particle.narod.ru/colon.html>) The only problem is that this “poetic” piece of work is proudly entitled *Slavonic Psalter in the Russian Language* and claims to serve as an equivalent of the deeply exegetical Church Slavonic Psalter.

The Christian exegesis insists that the Septuagint translation represents the oldest and therefore the most trustworthy translation of the Jewish Bible. According to Philaret (1782–1867), an outstanding Russian hierarch of the 19th century and metropolitan of Moscow from 1821 to 1867, the LXX translation was carried out by Jewish Sages at a time when the Jews were still the God’s people, when Hebrew was still the language of everyday communication and when the Jews did not have any reason to obscure the meaning of the Holy Scripture by an incorrect translation (Mitropolitan Philaret 1845). Philaret describes the LXX Psalm 21:17 as an example of an important prophetic saying preserved by the LXX, whereas the Hebrew reading “like a lion” instead of “they pierced”, by its very obscurity of meaning, reveals, according to him, a deliberate textual change. This Psalm is explicitly cited in the Gospels of Mark, Matthew and John, and its influence is felt in all Passion Narratives of the four evangelists. St. Athanasius the Great (293–373), St. Aurelius Augustine (354 – 430), St. Thomas Aquinas (1225 or 1227–1274) and other famous Christian thinkers stress that although this psalm speaks figuratively about David, it is especially referred to Christ in a literal sense and that the discussion in this psalm is principally about Christ’s passion.

On the other hand, such an approach may be viewed as disregard of the clear reading of the Hebrew text in favor of the LXX reading, because the latter bolsters the messianic interpretation of the passage in Christianity. Some scholars point out that the LXX translation reflects a growing trend among Jews in the late Diaspora to interpret the text far more liberally (perhaps predating Philo’s view of the text) and it is incorrect to assert that Jesus can be applied to this verse (e.g. Freedman 2002). What’s more, just as Mitropolitan Philaret suspected a deliberate change in the Hebrew text by the Masorets, the LXX was suspected of changing the Hebrew original. Answering to such criticism, Christian exegetes readily point to semantic precedents in Isaiah (53:5) speaking of the Suffering Servant being “pierced through” (*mecholah*) as well as in Zechariah (12:10) describing the Messiah as “pierced” (*daqaru*). Another instrument in support of the “they pierced” version came with the discovery at Nachal Hever of a scroll containing some of the Psalms, including one scrap with the controversial line from Psalm 22. According to some scholars, the word in question clearly ends in a *vav*, not in a *yod*, giving *ka’aru* “they dug”. The conclusion is that the LXX translators did not “fool” with the text, but faithfully translated the Hebrew original that was before them (Hegg 2003). If the dating of the scrap to 50–68 CE (on the basis of the style of letters used) is correct, it means that there is at least one of the earliest Hebrew traditions, in which the spelling is *ka’aru* and not *ka’ari*.

Other scholars date the Nahal Hever papyri as late as the 2nd century CE (see, for

instance, Vermes 2000, p. 29), but this really does not reduce drastically the almost one thousand year distance from the earliest extant Masoretic text. A much stronger argument against the above reading of the Nahal Hever scrap is the fact that there is no root verb which contains the letter *aleph* in it and is conjugated in this fashion with the meaning of "they pierced", as rendered in most Christian translations (Yosef 2001). As a result, it is pointed out that the last letter most probably is a somewhat elongated *yod*, which some perceive to be the letter *vav*.

The Christian response to this argument is a suggestion that, although the three consonant root *ka'ar* (kaf-aleph-resh) does not show up in the lexicons of biblical Hebrew, the root may be *kur* (kaf-vav-resh), written in an archaic form with *aleph* instead of *vav*, i.e. *ka'ar*. The next step in this line of reasoning is to suggest that *ka'aru* could be an alternative (archaic) spelling for *karu* "they dug" from *kara* (kaf-resh-hey) "to dig" (Hegg 2003). From the Jewish perspective, the Hebrew root verb *karah* has the meaning "to dig (in dirt)" (e.g., Psalm 57:7) and, consequently, *karu* would have the meaning "they dug (in dirt)". It is also noted that this verb is never used, either literally or metaphorically, in the context of "piercing" in any of the 15 instances it appears in the Hebrew Bible (Yosef 2001).

Translation of the Bible as Dialogue with God

In biblical translation, exegesis and freedom have always represented a strange and mystical union pushing translators (at least theoretically) to one of the two extremes (cp. Desnitsky 1999): 1) a strictly confessional translation, in which all ambiguous places are translated in compliance with the translator's religious tradition, and 2) a free translation that rejects any previous interpretation of the Bible and claims to reveal the Bible's "original meaning". However, a completely "free" translation is hardly achievable, because every translator will, either consciously or not, follow a certain exegetical tradition or else will create a paraphrase of the original text. From this point of view we can understand why Benjamin considers the interlinear version of the Scriptures limiting the translator's presence to the lowest possible degree, an ideal translation, a perfect example to be followed. Theoretically, the interlinear version may sound like an ideal translation but in practice things are much more complicated.

The Holy Scriptures are not only sacred books that reveals God's message to the people; they also contain liturgical and highly poetic text used in religious services. How can an interlinear translation of a poetic text be used in a religious service? Shall the reading of the Six Psalms, one of the most important points in the All-night Vigil in Orthodox Christianity, be constantly interrupted by the explanation of all possible interpretation of an ambiguous word or phrase? In my view, when God performed an act of *Tsimtsum* to make room for Creation, He also indicated that people must assume responsibility for their action and their lives. He gave the people His Law, His Wisdom as hypostatization of God's Creative Power, but He also gave them the opportunity to make

choices, to make mistakes and learn by these mistakes. God's Wisdom, the Logos, stands between God and the world. Interpretation of the Bible is, in fact, an important part of our experience in this world, an exercise in humbleness and tolerance. Humanity is in partnership with God in bringing His message to the world and aiding Him in the repair of the shards, in restoring harmony back to this world.

Translations of the Tanach in the Jewish and Christian traditions are and will always be exegetical by definition and there is nothing wrong with it. A religious system is an organization that needs to be united around some core values shared by all its members. Denial of a tradition will usually lead to the establishment of a new tradition with a new group of followers. Thus, the Karaims, rejecting the Oral Torah, brought to life their own tradition of strictly literal interpretation of the Written Torah with their own dogmas. The Oral Torah in Judaism or the interpretations of the Church Fathers in Christianity, in their turn, can also be viewed as a "translation" of the Holy Scriptures into the language of everyday life.

Extreme self-limitation of the translator, whose role is reduced to the transmission of the potential translation hidden between the lines, is more of a metaphor than a practically applicable tool. More fruitful, in my opinion, is the view of biblical translation as Dialogue with God. Perception of a life of faith as a life of dialogue between man and God has its origins in the Bible. Schleiermacher compared the reader's (and, of course, the translator's) approach to a text with the efforts by participants in a dialogue to understand each other on the basis of a shared language. Martin Buber developed this biblical idea into a philosophical system. Differentiating between I-Thou and I-It relationships, he stresses that the ultimate objective is not only the I-Thou relationship between man and the world, but between man and the eternal source of the world, namely, God (Buber 1923). From this point of view, the Bible may be perceived as a record of this dialogue experience between man and God. The translation of the Holy Scriptures, in its turn, is an extension of this Dialogue with God into other languages and other cultures broadening the range of participants and increasing the diversity of (conflicting) opinions. Many see the essence of religious life in the affirmation of their religious beliefs. At a closer scrutiny, however, it becomes quite obvious that religious beliefs are just different "languages", different modes of communication enabling us to maintain constant dialogue with the Creator and to find support in meeting the challenges of day-to-day existence.

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ПРЕВОД НА БИБЛИЯТА КАТО ДИАЛОГ С БОГА: РАЗМИСЛИ ВЪРХУ ЕКЗЕГЕТИКАТА И ПРЕВОДА НА ПСАЛМ 22 (LXX 21)

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Резюме

В статията се разглежда въпросът за ролята на екзегетиката при превод на текстове от Танаха в юдейската и християнската традиции в светлината на критичен анализ на възгледите на Валтер Бенямин за същността на библейския превод. Подлага се на съмнение идеята за това, че идеалният превод на Священото Писание е т.нар. подстрочен превод и че потенциалният превод на такъв тип текст се съдържа между редовете, защото по този начин би трябвало да признаем, че всеки пасаж от Священото Писание може да има само един-единствен „правилен“ превод независимо от личността на преводача. Неоднозначността на оригиналния текст (напр. Псалм 58:2), наличието на повече от една редакция на някои текстове, както и силата на традицията създават предпоставки за съществуването на повече от една възможна интерпретация на даден текст от Танаха.

Християнството разглежда еврейската Библия през призмата на Новия Завет и преводаческата традиция на Септуагинтата, в резултат на което всеки пасаж от Танаха може да получи в юдаизма и християнството конкуриращи се интерпретации и съответно преводи. Влиянието на религиозните възгледи на преводача върху характера на превода е показано на фона на полемиката относно прочита и превода на Псалм 22:17 (Псалм 21:16 в Септуагинтата) – „като лъв“ (*ka'ari*) в еврейската традиция или „пробиха“ (*ka'aru*) в християнството. Изтъкват се примери, когато дори т.нар. „буквални преводи“ на Танаха (напр. на Р. Йънг от 1887 или на Дж. Дарби от 1890), направени, според твърденията на преводачите, от еврейския език, всъщност следват не масоретския текст, а Септуагинтата.

Въз основа на възгледа на философа Мартин Бубер за живота като диалог между човека и Бога Священото Писание се разглежда като свидетелство за този диалог. От тази гледна точка всеки превод на Библията е всъщност продължение на диалога между човека и Бога в различни култури и епохи, като заедно с увеличаването на броя на участниците в него нараства и разнообразието от (конкуриращи се) интерпретации.