

THE IDIOM

קרא בשם

IN SECOND ISAIAH Chayim Cohen

The two words קרא and שם occur together no less than sixteen times in Second Isaiah.¹ Fourteen of these sixteen occurrences² involve the use of various idioms consisting of these two words, such as the well-known phrase יי לקרא בשם "to call upon God (i.e. invoke God's name),"³ which is found twice.⁴ Of the remaining twelve occurrences, there are six clear examples of the idiom לקרא בשם "to create or to dedicate for a new task."⁵ That this idiom occurs most often in Second Isaiah is not surprising, since it has long been known that nearly half of all the occurrences of the verb "to create" ~~קרא בשם~~ are in Second Isaiah.⁶

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The six verses should be translated as follows:

Lift up your eyes on high,
 And see who created these.
 He who brings out their host en masse,
He has created all of them.

1. Is. 40:26; 41:25; 43:1,7; 44:5; 45:3,4; 48:1,2; 49:1; 54:5; 62:2; 63:19; 64:6; 65:1,15.
2. The two occurrences not being considered, Is. 48:2 and 54:5, involve the use of קרא and שם seperately.
3. Cf. the Akkadian semantic equivalent šum DN nabû/zakāru (CAD Z p.17) e.g. šumka azkur narbika aqbi "I invoked you (Marduk), I proclaimed your greatness." Note also יזכירו ישראל ונאלהי ישראל parallel to יי הנשבעים בשם יי in Is. 48:1.
4. Is. 64:6; 65:1.
5. The remaining six passages are Is. 41:25; 43:7; 44:5; 48:1; 63:19; 65:15.
6. North, The Second Isaiah, (Oxford:1964), p. 88.

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