

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 יי "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

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 parallel to יי בשם יי הנשבעים 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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Because of His omnipotent might,
Not one is missing. (40:26)⁷

But now, thus says the Lord,
Your creator, O Jacob,
And your fashioner, O Israel:
Fear not, for I am about to redeem you
I have created you, and you are mine. (43:1)⁸

And I will give you treasures hidden in darkness,
Buried in secret hiding places,
In order that you should realize that I, Yahweh,
The God of Israel, have dedicated you for this task. (45:3)⁹

For the sake of my servant Jacob,
And my chosen one Israel,
I have dedicated you for this task.
I have ... you, but you have not recognized me. (45:4)¹⁰

Listen O distant shores to me!
Pay heed O faraway lands!
God created me in the womb.
In my mother's belly he fashioned me. (49:1)¹¹

And nations shall take note of your righteousness,
And all kings -your glory.
And you shall be as one who is created anew,
For God has thus commanded. (62:2)¹²

7. The phrase לכלם בשם יקרא "he has created all of them" is parallel to וראה מי ברא אליה "and see who created these". Cf. Mackenzie's translation in the Anchor Bible (Second Isaiah, 1968) p. 21 "He who leads out their host by number, and calls all of them by name."

8. The phrase יקראתי בשםך "I have created you" is parallel to יצרך "your fashioner" and בראך "your creator." Cf. Mackenzie, op. cit., p. 49 "Do not fear for I am your avenger, I have called you by name, you are mine."

9. Cf. North's translation in op. cit., p. 46 "...that you may know that I am the Lord, who summons you by name, the God of Israel," and Mackenzie, op. cit., p. 75 "that you may know that I am Yahveh the one who calls you by name, the God of Israel."

10. Problematic here is the verb כנה. This verb may be connected to Ugaritic kny if the meaning "call by a title" (Gordon, UT, Glossary 1267) is correct. The Ugaritic passages containing this root (II AB I:16; IV: 54; V AB E:5-6) are, however, far from clear.

11. Cf. Mackenzie's translation "Yahveh has called me from birth; from the womb of my mother he pronounced my name." (op. cit., p. 103).

12. Cf. the translations of Kissane, The Book of Isaiah (Dublin:1943)II,

The idiom קרא בשם "to create, to dedicate for a new task" made up of the word for "name" and the verb "to call" is paralleled in Akkadian by the idiomatic expressions šuma nabû, šuma zakāru and zikra nabû which are also made up of words for "name" (šumu and zikru) and of verbs "to call" (nabû and zakāru) and have the same meaning as the Hebrew idiom.

Thus, mimma ša šuma nabû šimta tašāma "whatever is created, you decree its fate" (Reiner, Šurpu, p. 53). In Esarhaddon - ..ša ultu šehrišu Aššur u šamaš ..ana šarrūti māt Aššur ibbû zikiršu "...when he (Esarhaddon) was still a child Aššur and Šamaš dedicated him for the kingship of the land of Aššur," (Thompson, Esharaddon Prism I:5-7). Also in Enūma Eliš - enūma eliš lā nabû šamāmu u šapliš ammatum šuma lā zakrat "when, on high, the heavens had not yet been created and below, the earth had not come into existence," (lines 1-2).

Note in the latter passage that the use of šuma lā zakrat parallel to nabû and the use of הוֹכִיר שְׁמִי parallel to קראני in Is. 49:1 indicates that ellipsis of the word for name can occur in this idiom.¹³

It is quite possible that we have further evidence of this idiom in Ugaritic in the expression p^cr šm as in III AB A:11, 18 ktr smdm ynht wyp^cr šmthm which can be tentatively translated as "Kothar brings down two clubs and dedicates them (for specific purposes)." But this is not certain as the precise meaning of p^cr itself has not yet been determined in Ugaritic.^{14*}

p. 278 "And thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of Yahweh shall pronounce," and Mackenzie (op. cit., p. 183) "Nations shall see your deliverance, and all the kings your glory; and you shall be called a new name which the mouth of Yahweh will designate." Although neither Kissane nor Mackenzie say so explicitly their translations imply that God, anthropomorphically, pronounced a new name for Israel. This is incorrect because in the first place יי פי simply means God's command (cf. Num. 14:41; 22:18; 24:13; Deut. 1:26,43; 9:23; 1 Sam. 15:24 etc.), and in the second place, as this paper attempts to show, קרא בשם is a special idiom meaning "to create, to dedicate for a new purpose."
13. Cf. Is. 48:8,12,13; 51:2,19; 58:12; 61:3 and possibly also 41:4; 44:7; 46:11; 48:15.

14. P^cr occurs with šm in VI AB IV:14-15 and BH I:28-29; and occurs by itself in VI AB 4:17, 19, 29; Text 6:32; 2054:16.

* After this paper was written it was brought to the writer's attention that Dr. Shalom Paul of the Jewish Theological Seminary had dealt with this idiom in a paper read to the 1967 meeting of the American Oriental Society. Dr. Paul has also written an article about this idiom which is to appear in the forthcoming Speiser Memorial Volume (JAOS 88).