LEXICAL REMARKS CONCERNING
YAHAD AND YAHDAW

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I. The necessity of rectification.

For a long time there was a considerable divergence of opinion on
the meaning and derivation of the words, יָהַד, יָהַדָּו, יָהַדָּא, but for want
of material from pre-Masoretic source, one had to be satisfied with
the establishment of a complete promiscuous use of the three forms.
Especially the waw in יָהַד caused a lot of trouble. F. E. König took
it for a pronomen personale 3 sing. masc.: “nach seinen (des all-
gemeinen Subjectes) Vereinigungen” 1). But he had to admit that
the word did not care about number, genus, and person 2). Others
considered the waw to be a locative-ending, which seems more accep-
table, although the origin of the auxiliary forms yahdaw and yahad
was not explained clearly 3).

Accordingly the Bible-translators acted prudently, often trans-
slating “together” where apparently this did not overlap the true
meaning; they grew even more conservative, which is illustrated in
the case of yahdaw, rendered by the LXX as meaning ἕνα (40t.), by
LUTHER as “mit einander” (40t.), by a new Dutch translation 4) as
“tezamen” (53t.), by the Revised Standard Version as “together” (61t.)
the word yahdaw being used ± 95t. The argument that yahdaw is
a petrified form and has to be translated with little variation cannot
be used, because a petrified form is not a petrified word; consequently
it must be rendered in full colour. Moreover, the translators chose
several terms only once or twice; the Dutch translation for example
uses, minus “tezamen” and its synonym “samen”, 22 different words
for 31 times yahdaw.

The meaning and even the existence of a substantive yahad was
discussed over and over again. Both grammar and lexicon ask for a

1) F. E. König, Hist. kritisches Lehrgebäude der hebr. Sprache, § 324c.
2) ibidem, § 344h γ.
3) P. Jensen, Zeitschrift für Assyriologie xi (1896), pp. 348 ff.; C. Brockelmann,
4) Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap, 1951.
rectification of our conceptions, and most assuredly since the Dead Sea Scrolls abound with material concerning *yahad* and *yahdaw*.

II. Recent attempts

First is mentioned the paper of M. D. Goldman, dealing with the adverbs *yahad* and *yahdaw* 1). From the root יָהָד = “one” he derives יָהָד and יָהָדָו in which the semantic development would be “as one” or “like one”. He concludes: “However “all one” can be understood either “all as one”, or, as it happened in German and English “only” or “sole”, compare German “allein”, “all ein”, and English “alone” from “all one”. The Hebrew words יָהָד and יָהָדָו do duty for both meanings, together and alone”.

Indeed the sense of passages, in which with great emphasis a body of persons is described as being together in contrast to the others, may be expressed so. Thus in Ezr. iv 3 (“in which the word יָהָד obviously cannot mean “together”, but “alone” ”, Goldman, cited below, p. 61) יָהָדָו stands in front, stressed. A translation like “WE, without meddling . . .” is possible and even more convincing. Ps. xxxiii 15 lost the parallelism in the translation proposed by Goldman: “who alone forms their hearts”; in Ps. cxli 10 there is no binding reason for the construction: “Let the wicked ones fall into his nets, until I alone shall pass”. Especially not while terms like “the wicked ones altogether, as a whole” are very frequent. The Masoretic division is of little use to dispute this.

Besides, Goldman himself condemned the usefulness of this evidence; in regard to Ps. iv 9 he says: “In verse nine (b) the synonym of יָהָדָו in my opinion relates to the author himself, not to God”, with that deserting the Masoretic division.

In Ps. iv 9 *yahdaw* connects two verbs, יָהָדָו and יָהָדָו, like in Is. xli 20. 23, xliii 14. But assumed that it is connected with the subject “I” (Goldman: “I alone”), even so it would be the only occurrence of *yahdaw* with a singular, and a singular form is required for the exact idea of being a sole, single individual 2). So “alone” is always “together alone”, which merely can be interpreted as separately; this does not result from the semantic development “as one” — “all one” — “alone”, but from the separating nature of the concept “together”.

2) Like in Arab wahdabū.