# Hebrew Idioms and Analogies in the Book of Mormon IV

**Abstract:**    A series that produces evidence that the Book of Mormon is an ancient Hebrew work, containing Hebraisms. Emphasizes: (1) The Book of Mormon contains peculiar grammatical structures that are similarly found in the Bible, (2) many of the proper names in the Book of Mormon possess a notable Jewish character, and (3) many of the Jaredite proper names contain Hebraic similarities that date back to the period predating the Tower of Babel. The fourth part covers Hebrew verb forms.

# Hebrew Idioms and Analogies in the Book of Mormon

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## IV

8. *Concerning particular species of Hebrew verbs.*

Hebrew verbs have seven different forms which have been called species or conjugations. They represent as many modifications of the verbal idea, and if the Hebrew verb meaning "to kill" be taken as the representative of the regular verb, the various species with their significations will be as follows:

1. Kal (simple active), to kill.
2. Niphal (simple passive), to be killed.
3. Piel (intensive active), to kill many or massacre.
4. Pual (simple passive), to be massacred.
5. Hiphil (causative active), to cause to kill.
6. Hophal (causative passive) to cause to be killed.
7. Hithpael (reflexive), to kill one's self.

See Greene's *Hebrew Grammar,* par. 76:1, and par. 83.

Two of these seven species are causatives, and the ancient Hebrews made frequent use of them.

Of course, the English affords all the terms necessary to express a causative idea, but we do not resort to their use in general, unless the idea of causation is a leading, or at least a prominent one. On the contrary, the Hebrew does employ the verb for "to cause," or the causative species of verbs, in many instances where the English ignores the use of terms to express plainly the idea of causation, as:

"And took her and pulled her [caused her to come] in unto him into the ark."—Gen. 8:9.

"Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth [cause to bud]."—Gen. 3:18.

"And the field and the cave were made sure [caused to stand] unto Abraham."—Gen. 23:20.

"And I will rid [cause to cease] evil beasts out of the land."—Lev. 26:6.

"And let them shave [cause a razor to pass over]."—Num. 8: 7.

"And Menahem exacted [caused to come forth] the money."—II. Kings 15:20.

"And he put down [caused to cease] the idolatrous priests."—II. Kings 23:5.

"When he came home, he sent and called [caused to come] his friends."—Est. 5:10.

"And bring him [cause him to ride] on horseback."—Est. 6:9

## ILLUSTRATIONS FROM THE BOOK OF MORMON

The Book of Mormon frequently follows this Hebrew mode, and uses one form or another of the verb "to cause," in its active or passive relation, where the English does not require it, as:

"I will cause [make them loathsome] that they shall be loathsome to thy people."—II. Nephi 5:22.
* * "And I will cause [make them howl] that they shall howl all the day long."—Mos. 12:4.
* * "And he will take away from them the lands of their possessions; and he will cause them to be scattered and smitten."—II. Nephi 1:11.

The change in this passage from the simple active to the causative passive is as noticeable as it is abrupt, there being no apparent reason for making it, from an English point of view; but as the equivalent of a verbal *form,* familiar to Hebrew writers, its occurrence here is not hard to account for.  Again:

"And if the Lord shall say, because of thine iniquities thou shalt be cut off from my presence, he will [do it] cause that it shall be so."—Hela. 12:21.
* * "for the sword of his justice is in his right hand, and * * if he spurn at his doings, he will [let it fall upon you] cause that it shall soon overtake you."—III. Nephi 29:4.
"Yea, it grieveth my soul, and [maketh] causeth me to shrink with shame."—Jacob 2:6.

There is here a change from the simple to the causative active.
* * "that they could cause [compel] them to yield."—III. Nephi 4:16.
"Behold, that great city Zarahemla have I burned with fire * * and that great city Moroni have I caused to be sunk in the depths of the sea, * * and that great city Moronihah have I covered with earth, * * and the city of Gilgal have I caused to be sunk, and the inhabitants thereof to be buried up in the depths of the earth, * * and waters have I caused to come up in the stead thereof, * * and the city of Gadiandi and the city of Gadiomnah * * have I caused to be sunk, and made hills and valleys in the place thereof, and the inhabitants thereof have I buried up in the depths of the earth, * * and that great city Jacobugath have I caused to be burned with fire."—III. Nephi 9:3-9.

In these passages the abrupt transition from one species of verb to another is remarkable.  Beginning with the simple active, the causative passive next occurs, then we find a return to the simple active, which is followed by the causative passive, a number of times, but succeeded again by the simple active, and that once more by the causative passive.  Once again, in verse 9, the latter verbal form appears; and also once in verse 10, not here quoted.  In verse 11, a return is made to the simple active, and in verse 12 the causative active form is found, and thus closes this

noticeable series of transitions from one verbal form to another, and illustrating the employment of a species of Hebrew verb whose use, in these instances, is not required by any principle of our own language.

    \*   \*   "in my anger I did cause [command] my people to come up to war."—Mos. 20:15.
    "And he did cause his people to commit sin."—Mos. 11:2; 26:6.

Our ideas of the individual responsibility on the part of him who commits sin would lead us in these latter passages to substitute some word for "did cause" which should imply the exercise of less power over the people. Other examples of the use of "cause," subject to a like criticism, are found in Mos. 10:4, 5, etc. This use of the word "cause" is analogically proper, however, according to the Hebraic meaning given to it sometimes, as examples already submitted make manifest.

Lest the reader become wearied, examples affecting this matter are now concluded. Those supplied, showing as they do the use of a causative form of expression, or of causative verbal compounds, which are identical with certain Hebraic practices or verbal form, as the case may be, make it appear that such constructions and forms were as familiar to the writers of the Book of Mormon as they could possibly have been to any Hebrew who ever lived. Such usages or constructions involving the idea of causation are not noticeable features of English composition, and we leave them with the Jew or Jews who gave them being. In a number of these examples the use of the infinitive is discarded.

9. *The verb "to begin," a copulative.*

Prof. Greene says that the predicate of a sentence in Hebrew, if a substantive, adjective or pronoun, may be connected with its subject without an intervening copula, or the use of certain mentioned words may be employed, or "verbs which denote some modification of being are sometimes employed in the same way."— *Hebrew Grammar,* par. 258:3. a.

Thus (omitting the Hebrew which the professor supplied) we have, "his eyes began [to be] dim"—I. Sam. 3:2; and, "Noah began [to be] a husbandman"—Gen. 9:10. Another example occurs in Matt. 26:37, which reads, "And he took with him Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy." So in Mark 14:19, "And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, Is it I?"

Book of Mormon examples:

    "And we began to be exceeding sorrowful."—I Nephi 3:14; 17:19; Alma 4:15; III. Nephi 1:7.
    "I began to be desirous."—I. Nephi 8:12; Mos. 21:6.
    "It began to be exceeding difficult."—I. Nephi 16:21.
    "And we began to be frightened exceedingly."—I. Nephi 18:13.

"And thus he slew a certain number of them, insomuch that they began to be astonished."—Alma 17:36, 37.
    *   *  "they began to be offended."—Alma 35:15.
"My faith began to be unshaken."—Enos 1:11.
"The people began to be astonished."—Alma 10:12.
    *   *  began again to be astonished."—Alma 11:46.
    *   *  "began to be more astonished."—Alma 12:19.

If we pause a moment to weigh the meaning which "began" implies in these passages, we will plainly perceive that the sense is wholly foreign to our modes of thinking, and, consequently, the word "began" should be omitted from the text, if pruned to an English standard. Thus, referring to the quoted passage, "they began to be frightened exceedingly"—feelings which were occasioned by a terrible storm which was encountered when Lehi and his little company of colonists were crossing the seas in an untried ship to the "land of promise"—the sense which the word "began" conveys is that there was a fright of unusual intensity in prospect, and the people were working themselves, or were being worked up to it by degrees. It may be said with assurance that if any one with English blood in his veins had been present on that occasion, he would immediately have been frightened outright and exceedingly, without waiting for any varying or increasing stages of fright to intervene. At any rate, when speaking of such experiences we say that we "were" frightened exceedingly or greatly. It certainly is a peculiar idiom which suffers a state of oppressive fear, or of great astonishment, or of extreme difficulty, to be referred to as a "beginning" of that state or condition. These remarks also particularly apply, in their place, to the expression, "began to be offended" for English "*were* offended."

10. *Active for Passive Verbs.*

"And I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant to the people, * * to cause to inherit the desolate heritages."—Isa. 49:8, for "to cause the desolate heritages to be inherited."
"There remaineth yet very much land to possess it" (to be possessed).—Josh. 13:1.

    Book of Mormon illustrations:

"And Akish did administer unto them the oaths which were given them of old, * * and they were kept by the power of the devil, to administer these oaths unto the people."—Ether 8:15, 16—to be administered.
"There are many who do add [have added] to their numbers daily."—Hela. 15:6.
"How great the importance to make these things known."—II. Nephi 2:8—that these things shall be made known, or, "of making," etc.

11. *Verbs with Cognate Nouns.*

In some instances cognate nouns are governed directly by the verb, while in others they follow a preposition.
    Examples from the Bible:

"And slay and make ready"—literally "kill a killing."—Gen. 43:16.

"All that enter in to perform the service," or, "war the warfare."—Num. 4:23.

"And David fasted,"—"fasted a fast."—II. Sam. 12:16; "made a conspiracy"—"conspired a conspiracy."—II. Chron. 25:27. "wept very sore,"—"wept a great weeping."—Ezra 10:1; "feared a fear"—Job 3:25; "fled a flight"—Jer. 46:5; "wall a wall"—Hos. 2:6; and in another form we have, "stand upon my standing"—Dan. 8:18; "fashioner of his fashion"—Hab. 2:18; "the desire of Solomon which he desired"—I. Kings 9:19.

Those that follow are found in the Book of Mormon:

"peopled with a people"—Mos. 8:8; "dreamed a dream"—I. Nephi 3:2; 8:2; "warred a warfare"—Alma 1:1; "written a writing"—I. Nephi 16:29; "write the writing"—II. Nephi 3:18; "slew with slaughter"—Mos. 10:20; Alma 2:18; see also Alma 2:19; 49:21; 59:7; "curse with a curse"—I. Nephi 2:23; "work a work"—I Nephi 14:7; III Nephi 21:9; "yoketh with a yoke"—I. Nephi 13:5; "taxed with a tax"—Mos. 7:15; Ether 10:5; "feared with fear"—Alma 18:5; "creature of his creating"—Mos. 27:30.

In most of these examples qualifying terms which are not essential to the illustrations, are omitted.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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# The Potter's Field

There sleepeth here beneath the ever-changing sky
A city's unloved dead;
And all the world doth pass them by,
Yet earth doth pillow soft each weary head,
And like a mother crooneth low beside each humble bed.

Mayhap one hungered for the light of stars,
Yet blindly groped the upward way along,
Missing the radiance he sought,
But ever chanting one poor quavering little song
To strengthen some wayfarer on the road,
Who scarce could bear the burden of his load.

Mayhap upon the altar of some heart
A holy flame burned, dim and low;
While one departed hence to sound of music, soft and slow,
From unseen choir of angels—
For Heaven, a soul's true worth doth know.

Yet, when vast cycles wheel their way around,
Unhonored dead, and those whom pomp laid in the ground,
Shall be as one beneath the gorgeous robe that nature spreads
So tenderly, above their beds.

Courageous deeds and thoughts most pure,
Alone, shall live forever and endure;
And heaven to each his meed shall yield—
For God knows not nor recks—the "Potter's Field!"

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