

Réfutation Almah

Réfutation des talmudiques
concernant le terme allah dans Esaïe 7:14

Sources

Les rabbins modernes ont d'abord contesté la traduction par « Vierge » du terme hébreux « **Alma** » qui est utilisé pour désigner la jeune fille mais c'est bien exactement ce terme (*parthénos*) qui a été choisi dans la traduction grecque inspirée des Septantes, et Paul Drach montre que ce terme est celui qui convenait le mieux pour indiquer ce sens précis (cf. [DHES 2](#) p.120 -172) :

- **Naara**, ne convient pas, étant un nom générique qui désigne toute jeune femme, soit vierge, soit non vierge, comme le masculin *Naar* désigne tout jeune garçon
- **Betula**, non plus qui désigne une jeune femme vierge sans distinction d'âge, jeune ou vieille (p.129), qui a les signes matériels de la virginité (p.161) quelques soient son âge, ses mœurs ou ses dispositions morales,
- **Alma**, par contre, signifie étymologiquement cacher, soustraire au regard, ôter à la connaissance de tiers, et il désigne exactement une jeune femme vierge, dans l'innocence la plus absolue, tenue loin de toute communication avec les individus de l'autre sexe (p.161).

follows: $\kappa_m \kappa_n \leq \kappa_{m+n}$

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certainly means "chaste girl" or "virgin,"

and this translation may infer that

Christians translated Isaiah, though we

cannot be certain of this conclusion.

Although we do not know whether

Christians or Jews translated the OT

Peshitta, this version still testifies to

another reading of virgin over young

woman.

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin (almah) will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

- Gen 24:43, here "almah" refers to Rebekah, a virgin.

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- Exodus 2:8, here almah is used to describe Moses' s young sister, a young girl who is likely a virgin.
- Song of Solomon 6:8, classifies Solomon's women into three categories: wives, concubines and virgins. If they were not virgins, they would be concubines, suggesting almah means virgin.⁽⁴⁾

Psalm 68:25, Song of Solomon 1:3, Proverbs 30:19 and Isaiah 9:6.

- [A Virgin Birth - Isaiah 7:14 Prophecy](#)
- [Common Objections To Isaiah 7:14](#)
- [The Meaning Of Almah](#)

For those who think that the Hebrew word "*Betulah*" should have or would have been used to promote the clear concept of a virgin birth is Isaiah's 7:14 prophecy, you may be interested in reading the comments on this issue from the [Common Objections To The Isaiah 7:14 Prophecy](#). In some cases *betulah* may refer to a married woman (Joel 1:8).

In ancient Jewish culture, a young, unmarried woman was presumed to be a virgin.

Objection:

The question has been asked why did not Isaiah choose the common noun "bet(h)ulah" for virgin, instead of "almah."

The Answer Is:

The term "bethulah" while often used in the Old Testament in the sense of "a virgin," sometimes also refers to "a married woman," for instance:

Lament like "a virgin" (bethulah) girded with sackcloth for the husband of her youth (Joel 1:8). (Widows are not virgins).

Obviously the bethulah in this passage was a married woman, who lost her husband and therefore was not a virgin. On the other hand almah always refers to an unmarried woman.

Likewise in Deuteronomy 22:19, a married woman, after the wedding night is described as bethulah - a term which supposedly applies exclusively to a virgin. Therefore, we conclude that of all possible terms which Isaiah might have used to describe a virgin "almah" was the best and least ambiguous.⁽³⁾

Consider this. In the NJPSV (New Jewish Publication Society Version) of the Tanakh (Old Testament) - the word betulah is used fifty-one times. Out of those fifty-one times the NJPSV translates betulah as "maiden" - rather than "virgin" - thirty-one times. This translation is the most widely used Jewish translation of our day. Even the Stone edition of the Tanakh which reflects traditional Orthodox scholarship, frequently translates betulah as "maiden" as well.⁽⁴⁾

It is believed that in a legal context, betulah is often interpreted as "virgin." However, in Esther 2:17-19, the young women who are chosen to spend the night with the king are referred to as betulah both before and after they have sexual relations with the King.⁽⁴⁾

Objection:

This prophecy had to be fulfilled during the time of King Ahaz.

The Answer Is:

It is important to understand who this prophecy goes out to. Because Ahaz has a chance to ask for a sign (include God in the decision making process) and Ahaz refuses (Ahaz is looking somewhere else for help besides God) Isaiah's prophecy is meant for the entire "house of David".

God is allowing King Ahaz who is king of Judah to know that Judah will survive (no thanks to Ahaz who is viewed as an unrighteous unbelieving king). While in the near term the two kings, Rezin, king of Aram (i.e. Syria) and Pekah, King of Samaria (i.e. the northern ten tribes of Israel) will not be allowed to overthrow Ahaz kingdom, a little farther down the timeline of the prophecy (65 years) Ephraim's destruction is predicted.

In the long term Isaiah prophesied to "house of David" (Judah) that Israel and Syria would be deprived of their kings before Yeshua (Jesus) would know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. Not only was Israel and Syria forsaken of both her kings, but Israel and Judah (national Israel) were forsaken of both their kings before Yeshua/Jesus knew to refuse the evil, and choose the good. At the birth of the Messiah, national Israel was under the complete domination of the Roman Empire.

Another interesting comment is that the prophecy is viewed by the Septuagint translators to render the verb "shall give" in the future tense. They felt this rendering appropriate because the sign is promised for the future, grammatically and contextually. Claims that the Septuagint tampered with the text by changing the tense to the future are sometimes made. Since the Septuagint translation was done around 285 - 244 BC it could not contain a Christian slant because Jesus had not even been born yet. The translation was done only by Jewish scribes who still felt at that time that the prophecy had not yet been fulfilled completely.⁽²⁾

Some Christian scholars believe that the prophecy found in Isaiah 7:14 may be an example of the doctrine of dual fulfillment's, which claims that a prophecy may be fulfilled in some part or in whole more than one time. There is however only one recorded virgin birth and that is the birth of Jesus.

Jewish commentators who do not embrace Christianity in any way are still unable to agree on who this prophecy is pointing to. Historical figures who lived at the time or near the time of the prophecy do not meet all the criteria.

Objection:

The prophecy does not mention that the baby is The Messiah.

The Answer Is:

There does not need to be any mention in these verses of the prophesied child Emanuel (meaning God with us) also being the Messiah. One of the beautiful things about Messianic prophecy is that there are so many prophecies that one prophecy helps to reinforce the understanding of another. Collectively put together, Messianic prophecies paint an unmistakable image of many aspects of Messiah's life and death including Messiah's Divine origin. Passages that teach of Messianic Divinity like Psalm 110:1 and Jeremiah 23:6 are an example of how God allows one area of the Bible to support another area.

Jerome's Vulgate has as follows: *propter hoc dabit Dominus ipse vobis signum ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium et vocabitis nomen eius Emmanuel*. Jerome represents the conclusion to the debate, since his version was completed by 405 AD. He also brought a new dimension to the debate, since he was the only Christian to argue from the Hebrew text, who concluded that the Hebrew *העלמה* should be read as *virgo*, if even in a periphrastic way. Jerome actually believed that the Hebrew *העלמה* meant *abscondita* "hidden." Therefore the girl in Isaiah 7:14 was more than a virgin. She was a cloistered girl, which necessitates virginity.

The LXX has *διὰ τοῦτο δώσει κύριος αὐτὸς ὑμῖν σημεῖον ἰδοὺ ἡ παρθένος ἐν γαστρὶ ἔξει καὶ τέξεται υἱὸν καὶ καλέσεις τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἐμμανουὴλ*. Its reading is found in

Septuagint Note:

Interestingly enough when the Septuagint was written by the 72 elders of Israel (six from each tribe) the writers specifically chose the Greek word "parthenos," for virgin. This clearly demonstrates the common Jewish understanding of this passage at that time. There is no doubt that Jewish leaders looked at this passage as a messianic passage with the expectation of some type of supernatural birth.

The Septuagint translation of the Torah was done between 285 and 244 B.C.E. The Septuagint is the oldest Greek translation of the Bible...the legend contained in the apocryphal letter of Aristeas, according to which 72 elders of Israel, six from each tribe, translated the LAW [Torah] into Greek in Alexandria, during the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-244 B.C.E.)...The designation Septuagint was EXTENDED to the rest of the Bible and non-canonical books that were translated to Greek during the following two centuries."⁽¹⁾

Since this translation was completed in pre-Christian Alexandria more than 100 years before Jesus was even born, the position that Christian scholars have intentionally misinterpreted this word holds no merit. The Septuagint was not attempting to support a "Christian" interpretation of Isaiah 7:14 or any other verse.

However the question does arise as to why this passage, that was originally understood and taught as messianic during the days of the Second Temple and the time of Christ, is no longer viewed that way anymore by most Rabbinical commentaries in modern day Judaism. The same holds true for [What The Rabbis Said About Isaiah 53](#).

Traditional Jewish Commentary:

Rashi: In his comment on The Song of Solomon 1:3, Rashi frankly explains that "alamoth" the plural of "almah" means "betuloth"- "virgins."⁽¹⁾

While writing about this verse (Isaiah 7:14) Rashi writes "And some interpret that this is the sign, that she was a young girl (almah) and incapable of giving birth." Here, Rashi is acknowledging that some Jewish commentators interpret the text to indicate that God's sign to Ahaz had to do with the highly unusual nature of the birth.⁽³⁾