

# *A Book of Writings*

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(Hebrew, 10th century B.C.)

## THE GEZER CALENDAR

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the moons of harvest

the moons of sowing

the moons of late planting

the moon of reaping flax

the moon of reaping barley

the moon of reaping & measuring

the moons of vine-tending

the moon of summer (-fruit)

a

b

g

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(Canaanite/Hebrew, before 13th century B.C.)

**YHVH'S BATTLE WITH THE SERPENT**

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1

Waken

Waken

Gird might of arm

YHVH

Waken as before endless generatings

Didn't you crush Rahab?

hole Tannin?

Didn't you dry up Yam?

mighty waters of Tehom?

set the { YAM deeps a path for the saved to tread?  
sea

2

In his might he stirred the { sea  
YAM

Then in his cunning crushed Rahab

By his wind set { YAM in net  
sea

His hand made holes in the twisty snake

3

You broke up { YAM in your might  
sea

"for Sisra  
"embroidered colors for his spoil  
"many cloths around my neck  
"for spoil  
O Yahveh Yahveh may your enemies  
be lost  
your lovers like the rising of the sun  
in power

*& so the land had rest  
for forty years*

J.R./H.L.

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(Hebrew, Bible, c. 10th century B.C.)  
From THE SONG OF SONGS

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1

I came into my garden  
saw my sister there  
but saw her as my wife

I picked my sweet plant  
ate my honeycomb with honey  
drank my wine with milk

(I told them) eat, friends  
drink & go on drinking  
O sweet love

2

I slept  
my heart was moving  
heard her voice

a knocking at the door  
(says) open for me  
sister

love  
my love  
my dove  
my head was wet  
with dew the night  
bathed in my hair

3

he put his hand against  
the keyhole

made me feel him  
down my belly

4

I got up  
I would let him in  
my hands smelled sweet

my fingers  
smelling sweet  
against the lock

5

had opened for him  
my sweet love  
was gone had left me

(says) he spoke  
I felt my breath go  
would look for him

but couldn't find him  
& called to him  
he didn't answer

6

is he more sweet  
than others?  
is she more beautiful?

is her sweet love  
more beautiful?  
has she told it to us right?

7

sometimes pale  
he blushes  
is better than 10,000 men

gold skin of forehead  
bushy hair  
& black is like a crow

with dove's eyes  
looking at a river  
washed with milk  
in perfect space

to hold his cheeks  
a spice bed  
his lips like lilies  
breathing a sweet spice

through hands with gold rings  
beryl at center  
his belly is high ivory  
& sapphire

marble legs  
like columns into pure gold sockets  
his face  
a strength like cedar

sweetness at his mouth  
"is altogether lovely  
"is my sweet love  
"is my friend

J.R.

## A PROLOGUE TO THE WORKS OF MOSES

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Moses said: "I am only flesh & blood & cannot look upon the angels." But Metatron changed Moses' tongue into a tongue of fire, & his eyes he made like the wheels of the heavenly chariot, & his power like that of the angels, & his tongue like a flame, & brought him up to heaven. 15,000 angels were on the right hand & 15,000 on the left, Metatron & Moses in the middle.

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(Samaritan Arabic, c. 16th century)

From MOLAD MOSHEH

"The Birth of Moses"

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Mount Sinai said:

You will receive while upon me the Book of Truth and there will be revealed to you secret things, and visions will be disclosed to you. The good news regarding you will be spread about in all the countries. The lights will be increased manifold, for you will step upon me in the curtain of fire. This is the honor, glory and respect all of which will appear for you in public, by the decree of the One God, the Victorious. For this reason I offer you, O chosen one, continual salutations: peace both night and day, as many as there are birds that light and fly.

.....

Then Night and Day began to glorify him  
with the tongue of circumstance in public. They said, Today  
is the greatest festival: today our joy is without sorrow.  
Our light has lighted up, appeared and shone forth at the coming to  
existence  
of the Master of the human race, the Master of all male and female  
beings, we were  
waiting for this great day from the time of the beginning of crea-  
tion.  
We offer you the finest greetings: peace, O prophet who is one who  
talks with God.

.....

Then the Sun came forth and in its praises said,  
Peace to you, O prophet, famous for brilliance  
and light until the end of time, for your light will never be ex-  
tinguished.  
All lights obtain light from your light. All the lights  
at times are put out and at times are lighted up, your light will  
never be extinguished.  
So to you from me be peace forever.

.....

And when the Sun had finished its words and what it had recited in  
the finest poetry  
the Moon stepped forth and said, Give ear to me, O you greater than  
me for I will have one night of  
fullness every month, then I begin to dim, decline and disappear  
but this new born babe will have perfection, beauty  
throughout the passing of the centuries and ages, and through all  
the passages of time.  
How can he not be perfect, free from imperfection,  
since he is the moon of day and night, the light of all the stars  
along their courses  
and all the lights like these spread in the highest places.  
This Master's light will never dim in earth



and sky. For this I chant your salutations: peace forever  
and forever. O you perfect Moon, you beacon in the darkness,  
O you intercessor with your Lord upon the Day of Resurrection,  
O you exalted in your dignity, O you most high  
in rank: our trust is on you, trust of Him of Mercy,  
you O Moses you the son of Amram.

SELIG J. MILLER/J.R.

### COMMENTARY

(1) "What does this mean: 'The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory'? —It means that he apportions some of his glory to those who fear him according to his glory. —How so?— He is called 'God,' and he called Moses 'god,' as it is said, 'See, I have made you a god to Pharaoh.' [Exodus 7.1] . . . And the Holy One Be Blest said to Moses, 'I have made you a king,' as Scripture says, 'He became king in Yeshurun' [Deuteronomy 33.5]. Just as they blow trumpets before the King when he goes forth, so in your case, when you go forth they will sound trumpets: 'Make for yourself two trumpets of silver.'" (*Midrash Tanhuma* IV, 51f.)

(2) "What then? Didn't Moses enjoy an even greater partnership with the Father and Maker of the universe, being deemed worthy of the same title? For he was named god and king of the whole nation. And he was said to have entered into the darkness where God was, that is, into the formless and invisible and incorporeal archetypal essence of existing things, perceiving things invisible to human nature." (Philo Judaeus, *Life of Moses*, i.155–58.)

(3) "The Patriarchs, and especially Moses, are [according to Philo] the great revelation of the higher Way. . . . Each reveals a different aspect of the struggle to rise, or of mystic achievement. But each Patriarch is really one who has achieved the end of the Mystery. . . . The Mystery of Moses abandoned the material world and led the worshipper above all material association; he died to the flesh, and in becoming re clothed in a spiritual body moved progressively upward through the *kosmos noetos*, the Powers, and at last ideally to God himself, being at each stage identi-

fi ed with the spiritual existence at that stage. . . . Moses, who put off his physical nature, went into the darkness naked, and so had communion in a constant way with the Monad, as a result of which he became the true initiate, hierophant of the rites, and teacher of divine things." (E. R. Goodenough, *By Light, Light*, pages 96, 238, describing Philo's view of Judaism as a mystery religion, centered in "initiation.")

For an example of a Hellenistic Jewish mystery play, circa 2nd century B.C., see below, page 493.