Comments on a translation of Deut. 12

<u>Format:</u>

CW Translation: Above
Comments: Below
Hebrew 'Word': Only used to refer to Hebrew words of two or more letters. Single letter prefixes not considered.

<u>Deuteronomy 12:1</u>

"**These are** (*'elleh* – providing perspective regarding a close and godly relationship these exist as) **the inscribed prescriptions on what one should do to be cut into the relationship** (*ha choq* – the clearly communicated thoughts which are engraved in stone and shared regarding an allocation of that which is nourishing and acceptable, marking out and portraying the proper way) **and the means to resolve disputes** (*wa ha mishpat* – in addition to the means to exercise good judgment regarding making decisions in a just, judicious, and acceptable manner consistent with the evidence and authorized standard and proper plan) **which relationally and beneficially** (*'asher* – by association and constructively) **you should choose to continually and literally closely examine and carefully consider** (*shamar* – you should of your own volition decide to always and actually focus upon, observing (qal imperfect paragogic)), **to approach by engaging** (*la 'asah* – to act upon and benefit from) **in the Land** (*ba ha 'erets* – in the realm) **by association and constructively** ('asher – which relationally and beneficially), **Yahowah** (*Yahowah*), **your God** (*'elohym*), **has given to** (*natan* – has produced, bestowed, offered, and appointed for) **your fathers** ('aby – forefathers, family, and household) **to inherit** (*la yarash* – to possess and occupy her as an heir) **all of the days** (*kol ha yowm* – every single day) **which relationally and beneficially** (*'asher* – by association and constructively) **you** (*'atem*) **are alive and live** (*chay* – exist and grow) **in close proximity to the Almighty's** (*'al* – upon, near, and close to the Most High's) **realm of man** (*ha 'adamah* – earth for mankind)."

Comments:

The translation begins great: **These are** is a perfect translation of the Hebrew אלה. However, the "amplified" bit within the parenthesis leaves us much to ponder: since when did a *demonstrative pronoun* mean anything close to "providing perspective regarding a close and godly relationship"? Whilst it is true that אלה appears as a word indicating *gods* (*plural* - not *singular*) in certain places in Scripture (Deut. 32:17 for example), from this context it cannot mean anything with regards to "gods" (unless we want to start arguing for polytheism), or anything "godly".

The *Dead Sea Scrolls* manuscript known as *4QpaleoDeut*[r] includes the Hebrew letter 𐤅 (Paleo Hebrew form of ו) meaning '*And*' at the beginning. This is to show that what follows is connected with what has preceded it.

The second word being translated (חקים, plural of חק with definite article ה) again starts off well as **the <u>inscribed</u> prescriptions**. However, there is nothing in the word that defines that the חקים/statutes are "inscribed" (that is, written down or carved on/into something). חקים/statutes can be written or spoken. There is also no indication that anything being spoken here by Yahuweh is being *engraved in stone*, or effectively written down at this point in time. Whilst it will eventually be written down, that isn't what's indicated by the Hebrew חק/choq. There's also nothing at all in the word that has to do with being "cut into a relationship". Whilst the verb חקק/chaqaq does indeed mean 'to cut/carve/engrave', it has no bearing on whether חק is to do with a covenant or not (in fact, the verb חקק *never* appears in conjunction with the noun ברית/beriyth/covenant). חקק is more used with regards to making a mark upon something, or tracing out shapes/images/pictures (Isa. 30:8; Eze. 23:14; Prov. 8:27). Essentially, חק means *prescription, statute, ordinance, decree, enactment, task, custom, defined due, set portion, established boundary*.

Word three being translated (והמשפטים, plural of משפט with additional definite article ה and conjunction ו) is more-or-less translated properly. It does indeed mean 'just decision; judgement', and משפט/mishphat is usually used in the context of God's *righteous judgement* (Prov. 29:26). משפט has a bit more to it however, for it does in fact mean *ordinance, rule, process, procedure* (in the sense of a previously established judgement), what someone is *due* or *obliged to receive* (again, in regards to a previous decision - Deut. 18:3). The main emphasis of משפט is that it's referring to something that's already been *decided* - it isn't about having the ability to "make" or "exercise" future disputes - the משפט are already decided upon and established. To me, the addition of **the means to** is not indicated by the text at all. However I will concede that I'm not precisely sure how the translation understands the word, as the translation seems to be using משפט as a *verb*, and not the *noun* that it is.

The fourth word is interesting word אשר/'asher. Whilst אשר does indeed express the relationship between one thing and another, it is however just a *connecting link* or a *relative pronoun* (אשר is from a group of words that are called *relative-clause* markers - they provide the link between one clause and the other e.g., "The man" (clause-1) "that" (relative-clause-marker) "had a broken foot" (clause-2)). אשר is the connecting link between *These are the statues and judgements* and *you shall be careful to do*.

The fifth word translated is the first Hebrew verb we've come to (תשמרון - from the root שמר, with prefixed ת indicting the 2nd person ('you'), and suffixed ו indicating that this is plural ('you *all*'), and final suffixed (and in this case also *paragogic*) ן (I'll explain a bit more what the *paragogic* is in a moment)). As you can see, Hebrew verbs work quite a bit differently to English -

Hebrew indicates both person (he, she, it, you, they, etc.), number (plural you, they, them) and even gender (masculine/feminine) pronouns in the construction of the verb - English has to add these to the verb in order for it to make sense as to what's (or who's) doing what. Many other languages have a similar manner of verb construction to Hebrew.

The translation of שמר above is actually not too bad - as long as you just take the *closely examine and carefully consider, actually focus upon, observing* bit. What is incorrect however are the added words to do with *volition* (that is, choosing to do from your active will). To begin with, I couldn't figure out how such a belief that there is anything to do with the *will* was gleaned from such a verb construction; until I found this:

> *In addition to these insights, we should also note that Yahowah presented 'arak using the paragogic nun ending, which like the cohortative, is an expression of volition.* (An Introduction to God, Volume 5 - Mitswah: His Terms).

I'm sorry: this is incorrect. Whilst yes, the *cohortative* mood expresses volition (along with the other moods *jussive* and *imperative*), the *paragogic nun* ending has absolutely nothing to do with volition. According to *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax, 31.7.1*, the *paragogic nun* is very rare in second-person masculine plural verb constructions (that is precisely what תשמרון is); they tend to occur as a *pause* (that is akin to a semi-colon); they have a prose difference; and in poetry, the paragogic nun marks *that a <u>volitional</u> sense is <u>excluded</u>*.

In *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar, 47.m*, the *paragogic nun* is more found in the older books of the Tanakh; has no change of meaning compared to if there was no *paragogic nun* (that is, תשמרון has no difference of meaning to תשמרו); expresses marked *emphasis*; usually occurs at the end of sentences (Ruth 2:9); and is used as a euphonic pause before the vowels א and ע. The *paragogic nun* therefore is in fact <u>removing a volitional sense</u>, and is used to emphasise the importance or concreteness of the verb. We first come to a verb with the *paragogic nun* in Genesis 3:3, where Chawah says to the serpent, *but God said, 'Of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, <u>you</u> (plural) <u>shall</u> not <u>eat</u> (תאכלו) from it, and neither <u>shall</u> <u>you</u> (plural) <u>touch</u> (תגעו) it, lest <u>you</u> (plural) <u>die</u> (תמתון).'* As we can see, the grammartarians are correct: the other times we've had second person, plural forms of verbs (תאכלו and תגעו) in Gen 3:3, they've been without the *paragogic nun*, but the final one includes the *paragogic nun* as the end of the sentence; a pause; and as a marked emphasis on the importance/concreteness of the fact that death awaits those who eat of the tree. There is absolutely no sense of "volition", "choice", "decide for yourself", or any other word you can think of that refers to ones "will". תשמרון is therefore a *command*: you <u>are</u> to closely examine and carefully consider, always focus upon and actually observe these statues and regulations, regardless of whether you choose to do so or not. שמר/shamar also has a sense of 'keeping guard, watching over, preserving, retaining, celebrating', with a final goal of 'not forgetting about, remembering, taking heed, being careful about, not losing or neglecting'.

I would therefore translate תשמרון as *you all are to remember, not forget about, keep guard to, watch over, retain, be careful to, and never neglect*. Anything with regards to one's volition is not contained within the meaning of the verb.

Word six is another form of the Hebrew verb known as the *infinitive-construct* (לעשות, from the verb עשה with prefixed preposition ל indicating *towards* something, and the weak vowel ה morphed into the concrete final ות, following the usual convention for verbs (and feminine nouns) ending in ה). This is pretty much the same meaning as the English infinitive (that is, the "doing" of the verb, so 'to drink', or 'to eat'). Therefore, as עשה means 'do', the infinitive of this is 'to do'. As such, the infinitive doesn't mean **to approach by engaging, to act upon and benefit from**. The only word there that comes close to the meaning of עשה is *act*, which isn't actually given as the main translation of the verb. Whilst the preposition ל does indeed indicate a sense of direction, it is not a verb meaning 'to approach' or 'to go near'. עשה primarily means 'to make, fashion', with the 'making' from materials that exist rather than making something out of nothing. From this basic sense, we find עשה used primarily as a word for things that people 'do, accomplish, produce, perform, practise', and even brings in a sense of 'observe, celebrate', and finally can be used to indicate something to be 'ordained, established, appointed'.

Accordingly, an actual amplified translation of לעשות would be *to do, perform, practise, observe, celebrate, ordain, and establish*. Yahuweh is telling the Yisra'elites that the statues and judgements that He's giving them are for them **to remember, not forget about, keep guard to, watch over, retain, be careful to, and never neglect to do, perform, practise, observe, celebrate, ordain, and establish** in the land that He's giving them as an eternal inheritance. They're not just things for them 'to do', but to make sure that they are 'established' *throughout* the land - regardless of peoples volition.

Word seven is the first one we've come to that there's no issue with (בארץ - from ארץ with prefixed preposition ב meaning 'in'), for it does means 'land, realm, area, region'. Thankfully, ארץ is used so many times in Scripture it is quite apparent as to what it means.

The eighth word (אשר) is exactly the same as the fourth, so I won't repeat myself. Please refer to the bottom paragraph of page 2.

The ninth word is actually a name: a very specific name. It is the name of *God* Himself - יהוה. Now, there is a lot of disagreement on how to pronounce/write יהוה's name, so I won't go into it here. I'll just comment in that I vocalise יהוה as 'Yahuweh' and 'Yahweh', and not 'Yahowah'.

The tenth word is one of Yahuweh's titles - *God* (אלהי - from either אלוה or אל (etymologists are uncertain), which despite being formed as one would expect the *plural*, is in fact used in reference to one god, and one god only). Now, quite a lot of people think that we should transliterate this as *Elohim* (from the full form אלהים) due to apparently *God* being from the Germanic *Gott* which was a name for a polytheistic deity. Problem with this is that this just isn't true. Whist *Gott* was certainly used to refer to *gods*, it was never a name and is just a title and means *the mighty one* - which, not surprisingly, is the same meaning as the Hebrew אל/אלוה/אלהים. So there really is no problem with translating אל/אלוה/אלהים as *God*.

The next section of the translation above has the words all jumbled up. Firstly, the verb נתן/*has given* shouldn't be <u>before</u> the noun-pronoun combination אבתיך/*your fathers* (אבתי - plural from אב with suffixed pronoun ך meaning *your*) but <u>after</u> it, as אבתיך is modifying the previous אלהי, to give us the meaning **Yahuweh, God of your fathers**. Furthermore, there is no אל or ל prefixed to אבתיך, so there really is no indicating of direction to have the translation of 'to' included before 'your fathers'. Then after this we should find the verb נתן, which has been translated correctly.

Following on from this we should have the Hebrew לך, which appears to have been omitted from this translation. לך means 'to you', and should follow 'has given'.

The next few words (numbers 14-16) are translated correctly. They are לרשתה (an infinitive construct from root ירש with prefixed ל (with certain verbs, the initial י is dropped), and suffixed ת (to indicate it's an infinitive) and ה (to indicate that this verb is in reference to a noun that is feminine in nature - in this case, it refers back to ארץ/land)) meaning 'to possess, occupy, inherit'; כל meaning, 'all, every, each one'; and הימים (from יום with suffixed ים (indicating more than one), and prefixed definite article ה) meaning 'the days, times'.

Word 17 is again the same as word four. Refer to the bottom paragraph of page 2 above.

The eighteenth (אתם) and nineteenth (חיים from חי with suffixed ים to coincide with the fact that it's more than one person being talked about) words are translated correctly.

Word twenty is a very simple preposition על meaning 'upon, over, above', but which suddenly becomes the most absurd *in close proximity to the Almighty's and close to the Most High's*. Since when did a *preposition* mean such a thing? If על was a *noun* then we wouldn't have a

problem. But עַל isn't a noun; not here (only in three passages is it used as a noun reference to God as *the Most High* - Hos. 7:16, 11:7; 2 Sam. 23:1). Therefore, we have a problem.

The final word in the sentence is הָאֲדָמָה (from אֲדָמָה with prefixed definite article ה). This is translated correctly. "Whole earth" or "planet" will suffice as extra words to translate הָאֲדָמָה as.

Deuteronomy 12:2
"You should choose of your own volition to absolutely and consistently destroy, transforming your surroundings by totally eliminating from existence (*'abad 'abad* – you should decide to do away with, cause to perish by annihilating, wiping out and then moving away from (piel (object suffers the effect of the action) imperfect (ongoing) paragogic (expression of volition))), **therefore in opposition** (*'eth*), **all of the places** (*kol ha maqowm* – everyone of the sites and sources which provide direction for human lives) **where** (*'asher*) **the Gentiles** (*gowym* – foreigners and nations, pagans and heathens, animalistic peoples (non-Yisra'elites)) **worshipped and served, and where they were reduced to servitude as slaves in submission** (*'abad* – were enslaved and burdened with unfavorable circumstances, laboring for others), **which** (*'asher*) **you** (*'atem*) **will inherit** (*yaras*) **in opposition to them and their associated gods** (*'eth 'eth 'elohym*) **on the high mountains** (*'al ha har ha ruwm* – addressing that which is arrogantly lifted up and exalted in defiance and rebellion) **and upon the hilltops** (*wa 'al ha gib'ah* – addressing the lord and his rulers (from gabyr – lord, master, and ruler)) **in addition to** (*wa*) **under** (*tachath* – beneath) **every spreading and evil tree** (*kol 'ets ra'nan* – all bad and injurious flourishing wooden idols).**"**

Comments:
Whilst Deut. 12v1 may've started out great, v2 really hasn't. Again we have the incorrect assertion that the *paragogic* is an expression of volition (refer to word five of verse 1 as to why this is incorrect), when in fact it means the exact opposite: the Yisra'elites aren't to *choose* to destroy idol shrines; they're *commanded* to do so. In order to intensify meaning in Hebrew, it is customary to modify a verb form with what's known as an *infinitive absolute* - it effectively looks like a "doubling" of the verb - which we see in this verse. We have the text אַבֵּד תְּאַבְּדוּן, literally meaning "Destroy, you all will destroy". The *infinitive absolute* is essentially an adverb that enforces the meaning of the verb, which isn't strictly translatable in English. As a result, we place in adverbs such as *surely, absolutely, certainly, thoroughly*[1] to bring out the importance of the verb in question. In essence, translating אַבֵּד תְּאַבְּדוּן as ***completely tear down and demolish*** is more-or-less correct. The added words that express volition are not correct, however.

I also would contest that אַבֵּד doesn't mean *pull/tear down* either, for there is another Hebrew word that means just that - נתץ (which, ironically, is in the next verse). Hebrew isn't exactly known

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[1] The eagle-eyed will have noticed I have a tendency to use adverbs quite a lot.

for its synonyms (unlike English). I think a translation of *You all will utterly lay waste* would suit the meaning of אבד תאבדון here.

Word three is a special word. את in Hebrew is commonly used as the *direct-object* marker, to indicate to the reader as to what the verb is acting upon. In this case, את is used to point out that what the Yisra'elites are to *utterly lay waste*: the places where the nations in Canaan currently serve their gods. את is very helpful in determining whether we're to understand a verb as either the *Qal* (from the Hebrew קל meaning *simple*, and which comprises about 69% of verb forms in the Hebrew Tanakh; this is used to refer to a verb in the *simple active* state) or the *Piel* (the *Piel* is used for when the object in question (a person, thing, animal, etc., etc.), is being acted upon by the verb in question (there's a *lot* more to the *Piel*, but I won't go into it all here - people have written entire books on the subject of Hebrew verbs)). Only context really helps differentiate between the two - תאבדון for example is the form for either *Qal* or *Piel* - you cannot differentiate the two from in the consonantal base text just by looking at them. But even then, a את after a verb doesn't necessarily make the verb a *Piel* - context defines that. Although את can mean *against/in opposition to* in certain contexts, it makes absolutely no sense here, and not once does את mean *against* when coming after a *Piel* verb. As a *direct-object* marker, English doesn't have the means (or the necessity) to translate it.

The next group of words (4-5) are translated correctly. The text is made up of the noun כל meaning *all*, the definite article ה meaning *the*, and מקמות (from מקום, with suffixed ות meaning this is a feminine noun in its plural form) meaning *places, spots, locations.* מקום is a noun constructed from the verb קום meaning *to arise, get up, to stand*; to which we get certain meanings such as *to be established, confirmed, become powerful, maintain oneself, be fixed* - the noun מקום is therefore essentially *where one is established/fixed/has risen = spot, place, location.* מקום is never used in any context to indicate *provide direction for human lives.*

The translation of the sixth word אשר is correct, which is quite different to how it was translated in Deut. 12v1.

The seventh word is translated properly. הגוים (from גוי with added definite article ה, and suffixed ים to denote plurality) does indeed mean *Gentiles*, which is a word denoting the nations of non-Yisra'elite descent. Now גוי can just mean *nation* by itself, and is used of the Yisra'elites/descendants of Abraham in many places (Gen. 12:2, 35:11; Exo. 19:6; Psa. 33:12; Jer.

31:36 etc.). Once more - *context* - defines the translation of a word, rather than the assumption that a word always means the same thing, no matter where it's used.

Following on from this we find an extremely jumbled up mess of words. Technically, word seven above is word *nine* - but due to English word order not being the same as Hebrew word order, we have to move them around a bit so that we can make sense of what's being said. The sequence is made up of nine Hebrew words עבדו שם הגוים אשר אתם ירשים אתם את אלהיהם, to which a literally translation would be *served* (עבדו) *there* (שם) *the nations* (הגוים) *whom* (אשר) *you* (אתם) *shall dispossess* (ירשים) *them* (אתם) *gods their* (את אלהיהם). Hopefully this'll serve to show that a word-for-word translation can make absolutely *no* sense in the target language. It's not impossible to do so however, it just seems a bit *heavy* in English, with a few needless pronouns. Notwithstanding, the translation above is a huge mess. But that's because of the forcing of the *direct-object* marker את to be translated as **in opposition to**, which it doesn't mean.

Firstly, let's sort out the word order. Coming after *the Gentiles* shouldn't be the verb עבדו (from עבד with suffixed ו to indicate the third person, plural 'they') meaning *to serve, obey, worship, work for*, but rather the phrase *those whom you shall dispossess*, taken from the words אשר אתם ירשים אתם. Then we should have the verb עבד, after which we should have את אלהיהם.

The word אשר is translated incorrectly as *which* when it should be *whom*. אשר is a pronoun referring back to *the nations*. Due to the incorrect word order, and unreliable translation of the words, it's quite a task to figure out what on earth is going on sometimes. The translation of *which* above seems to be a reference back to *the places where*. This is inaccurate, and it is quite impossible to get such a meaning from the Hebrew words. If the proper word order had been followed, then mistakes like this wouldn't happen. אשר essentially shows that the phrase/clause coming directly after it is modifying the preceding word (in this case, הגוים), not a throwback to another object earlier on in the sentence. To get the translation above, we'd have to have the words המקמות after אשר אתם ירשים.

Succeeding אשר we correctly have the personal pronoun אתם meaning *you all*. We have the verb ירשים (from ירש with suffixed ים indicating this verb is a pure participle) following this. We've seen ירש already in verse 1 (word 14), where we saw it meant "to possess, occupy, inherit." Now we see where context truly comes into the translation of words. As mentioned above, the entire phrase אשר אתם ירשים is in reference to הגוים (Gentiles); so how does "possess", "occupy", or "inherit" make much sense here? Surely Yahuweh isn't saying that the Yisra'elites are about to *possess* the Gentiles, as in, incorporating them into Yisra'el? Well, one may argue that *yes* - that is what Yahuweh is saying - as Gentiles are regularly invited to join Yahuweh's family. However

in this context, *incorporation* isn't the meaning. It's more a sense of "take possession of by *removing*" or "to inherit by *getting rid of*", from which we get the definition "dispossess, expel, oust". The meaning is therefore, *the Gentiles whom you are about to expel* (as the verb is a *participle*, we usually bring this across in English by sticking *-ing* to the end of the verb (giving it a function like an adjective), but when it comes to translating Hebrew, the idea is usually something that is happening in the immediate future - again, *CONTEXT* is what determines translation). Furthermore, the fact that ירשים is in reference to הגוים (the Gentiles) and not המקמות (the places) as the translation would have us believe is because ירשים is the *masculine, plural* form of the verb ירש - this therefore means that ירשים has to agree with a noun that is also both *masculine* and *plural*. The only noun mention that is both *masculine* and *plural* is הגוים - המקמות is *feminine*, so if ירש was to refer back to this, we'd have to have the Hebrew ירשות.

Next we have אתם. One may be a bit confused as we've already had this word above, but here it has a different meaning compared to *you all*. Above it was a stand-alone second-person personal pronoun; here it's a combination of the direct object marker את suffixed with ם from the third-person pronoun המה. It's main function is *emphasis* - in this case it throws back to the הגוים, specially to point out that הגוים isn't every single nation on the planet, but effectively *those whom ... you are about to dispossess*. What it most certainly doesn't mean is *in opposition to them*; for it is referring to what has preceded it, not what follows. אתם isn't to be translated with את אלהיהם.

Now is where we finally should have the verb עבד. There's nothing wrong with the translation of עבד above *per se*, because it does indeed mean *worshipped and served*, and in certain places means *enslaved* or *forced to labour for* - it's just not convincing in the slightest that it means that here. There's absolutely nothing that indicates that the *Gentiles* were *reduced to servitude* or *burdened with unfavourable circumstances* when serving their polytheistic deities. The word really doesn't have such a connotation in this context. Everything points to it being a choice that they served their polytheistic deities, rather than something they were coerced into doing. Especially as עבדו is the *Qal* form, not the *Hiphil/Hophal* (another two classes of Hebrew verbs - effectively indicating that the verb causes the object to suffer it as an event) forms.

Directly adjoining the verb עבדו in the Hebrew text is the adverb שם meaning *there*. This isn't translated above, but I'm not going to reprimand this omission. שם is routinely seen early on in sentences to mark *emphasis* - in this case, it's a reference back to *the places where*. In English, this is superfluous as we've already had *where* in the sentence, so adding an extra *there* will do nothing other than cause the sentence to sound quite goofy. Nevertheless, if it's possible to translate all the Hebrew words without destroying the sentence, one should always do so.

At last we get to the end of this little section. In the Hebrew sentence we have את - את אלהיהם being the direct object marker for the verb עבד and so is untranslatable; and אלהיהם (see word 10 in v1, plus suffixed הם from third-person pronoun המה) being the direct object meaning *their gods*. Once more, I really don't see where *their associated* comes from. Unless it's supposed to be a translation of את as meaning *with*, to which it would be senseless to think it meant *with* here. Either way, it's wrong to have *their associated* here. *Gods* is the correct translation of אלהי.

For the subsequent five Hebrew words (על ההרים הרמים ועל הגבעות), the words in *bold* are pretty much correct, but the bracketed explanations aren't. Yes, רמים is from the verb רום meaning "to be high, exalted, be raised, uplifted", but there really is no figurative sense here in Deut. 12:2 - it is purely to point out that the mountains are "high, great, lofty", as in *tall* and *big*; the Gentile nations haven't put their shrines on itty-bitty mounds for no one else to see. Translating הגבעות (from noun גבעה with added prefix ה meaning *the*, and suffixed ות indicating plural) as hill*tops* isn't exactly right, either - גבע is more just *hill*, rather than specifically the hill *top* (which we find written in Scripture as ראש גבעה literally, *top* ראש *of hill* גבעה) גבעה is usually prefixed with the definite article ה giving us *the hill*) - see Exo. 17:9; Jdg. 16:3). The brackets are wrong as well - גבע isn't from gabiyr/גביר at all - they're actually unrelated terms.

The last four words in the sentence (ותחת כל עץ רענן) are kinda translated okay-ish. I'm afraid that there is no meaning of *injurious* or *evil* to any of the words translated; and none of them indicate *wooden idols* either. "Under every green tree" is a description of a *location* - not an object of worship. We actually find this phrase several times throughout the Tanakh (1 Kgs. 14:23; 2 Kgs. 16:4, 17:10; Jer. 2:20; Ezek. 6:13; 2 Chr. 28:4), so that it refers to a *location* of idolatrous worship isn't up for debate.

Deuteronomy 12:3
"And you should of your own volition completely tear down and demolish (*wa nathats* – you should choose to pull down and destroy (piel perfect consecutive)), **therefore** (*'eth* – associated), **altars** (*mizbeach* – places where animals are slaughtered and sacrificed to deities) **and you should opt to break** (*wa shabar* – you should choose to destroy, crushing (piel perfect consecutive)) **associated** (*'eth*) **sacred stone pillars** (*matsebah* – stones erected to commemorate and memorialize deities) **and in addition** (*wa*) **you should want to burn** (*saraph* – you should choose to consume (qal imperfect paragogic)) **'Asherah** (*'asherah* – to bless, religious idols and poles erected to worship the Canaanite pagan mother-goddess Asherah, the wife of 'El and thus Queen of Heaven (the Canaanite variation of the Babylonian goddess Astarte (goddess of fortune and happiness and thus akin to the Roman Gratia / Graces and consort of Lord Ba'al, making her the Queen of Heaven and Mother of

God in the Babylonian religion and thus the inspiration for the idols to the Queen of Heaven and the Mother of God in the Roman Catholic religion) **in the flaming fire** (*ba ha 'esh* – within radiant light) **and the idols and images** (*wa pacyl* – man-made religious icons eliciting worship) **of their gods** (*'elohym*) **you should want to cast down and disassociate from** (*gada'* – you should of your own volition choose to fell, cutting down and chopping to pieces, silencing and severing relations as if they no longer exist (piel imperfect paragogic)). **Then** (*wa*) **you should choose to completely wipe out** (*'abad* – you should want to annihilate and exterminate, blotting out, voiding so as to cause to vanish (piel perfect consecutive)) **their names** (*'eth shem*) **from** (*min*) **such places** (*ha maqowm ha huw'*)."

Comments:

Alrighty. Good start. *And* is indeed the correct translation of the Hebrew conjunction **וְ**. But this is where the *good* bit ends. Once more we find a sense of volition inserted into the translation of a verb - **נתצתם** (from the verb **נתץ** with suffixed **תם** indicating second-person, plural), meaning specifically *to pull down, tear down, break down*. The force of **נתץ** is that it is specifically calling out the act of *pulling down* a structure, to which a translation should always focus upon when translating **נתץ**. This is also a command - it is something the Yisra'elites are to do, regardless of whether they wish to or not. There's no *paragogic nun* at the end of this verb, so I don't know where the idea of volition is from.

The second word is translated when it isn't supposed to be. **אֵת** is the direct-object marker to signify which thing is being affected by the verb, which is not necessary in English translation. I can't stress this fact enough. **אֵת** is to be left untranslated when serving as the direct-object marker. Context will help you decide.

Word three is only half translated. **מזבחתם** certainly means *altars*, but as it's from the root **מזבח** suffixed with **ת**- (signifying that the feminine noun is *plural*) and **ם**- (third-person, plural from pronoun **הֵמָה**), this indicates that it should be translated <u>their</u> *altars*. It is referring back to the Gentile nations that the Yisra'elites are going to be expelling as seen in verse 2.

Word four has the *verb* aspect translated suitably, but once more there is no volitional sense to the verb. It is a *command* that is to be done, regardless of ones wishes. Even though one does have to choose to follow a command, there's absolutely no indication of that in the verb itself. Yahuweh isn't giving the Yisra'elites an opinion - He's telling them what they are to do when they enter the land of Canaan. Lastly, the verb in question is **שבר** (in the main text as **שברתם** - **שבר** with added suffix **תם** indicating second-person, plural), and the main nuance is the act of *breaking* something, usually in the sense of *smashing* or *shattering* it to pieces. This is something that really should be brought across in a translation; *opt to break* doesn't exactly do that.

The fifth word is the same as the second one: את *is to be left untranslated when serving as the direct-object marker*. את is the direct-object marker in this verse, and so should not be translated.

The sixth word, like the third, is also only half translated. מצבתם signifies *pillars* (not necessarily *sacred*) definitely, but like מזבחתם, the added suffix ת- (meaning *plural*) and ם- (third-person, plural from pronoun המה) to מצבה (weak final ה- is usually dropped in word-constructions) means it is to be translated as *their pillars*. Again, this is a throwback to the Gentile nations the Yisra'elites are about to eject from Canaan. Not to be omitted in translation.

The translation of the seventh word תשרפון (from שרף with prefixed ת signifying *you,* and suffixed ון denoting *plural*) has the idea of volition inserted into it again. I really am at a loss as to how this idea that a paragogic *anything* points to a verb implying volition. As pointed out when discussing word five in Deut. 12:1, the *paragogic nun* ending removes volition - it doesn't add it. We therefore should actually see words like *must*, *have a need*, *are required to*, *have a duty to* in the translation of verbs with the *paragogic nun* ending. In this case, שרף means *burn, consume* (as correctly translated above), and as a result the translation would be *you all must burn* or *you all are required to consume*. We also usually find the verb with the noun אש meaning *fire* (word 9 in the translation above), always with a destructive sense (so not just a "burning fire", i.e., a fire that is just burning by itself without destroying anything).

Word eight is quite an interesting one. To begin with, it shouldn't just be translated *'Asherah*, for the noun is אשרה in its plural form (אשרי - week final ה morphed into י from ים signifying more than one), and as it has הם suffixed to the end (from pronoun המה), it should be translated *their 'Asheriym*, again calling back to the Gentile nations of Deut. 12:2. The interesting bit is that in the Tanakh, אשרה is rarely used to refer to just the goddess *Asherah*, but is specifically used in contexts to refer to the wooden poles that were used in Canaanitic worship of the goddess. In a translation, it is best to bring this across, rather than explain it in some sort of footnote. Lastly, the bracketed explanation for אשרה is wrong as well; there is no correlation between Asherah and Astarte/עשתרת (they are in fact separate goddesses, as even the Tanakh confirms - see 1 Kgs 11:5), and in Babylon they're sisters - not the same goddess. There's also absolutely no correlation between Asherah, Astarte, and the Roman Graces.

The ninth word is translated properly in **bold**. The brackets amplification is erroneous - אש is used for fire or burning, not 'radiant light'.

There's nothing wrong with the translation, nor bracketed amplification, for word ten וּפְסִילֵי (from פְּסִיל with suffixed י indicating plural, and prefixed וּ meaning *and*).

Word eleven אֱלֹהֵיהֶם (from אֱלוֹהַּ with suffixed י signifying plural *gods*, and הֶם from pronoun הֵמָּה indicating *their*) is translated properly. Previously in this verse, anything suffixed with the pronoun הֵמָּה seems to have been completely ignored (see words three, six, and eight). I don't know why - retaining them doesn't take any meaning out of the text that I can see, so I see no reason whatsoever for the exclusion.

The twelfth word תְגַדֵּעוּן (from גדע with prefixed תְ signifying *you*, and suffixed וּן conveying plural) isn't translated properly. Once more we have the connotation that the *paragogic nun* has anything to do with *volition*, which it doesn't in any text that uses it - the *paragogic nun* is the opposite of *volition*. There's no subject of *cast down* to the verb גדע - it's a literal *cutting/severing/chopping* with something sharp, usually in the sense of slicing it in two.

There is one thing I like here though - and that is the *full-stop* after the verb. This is quite in keeping with the *paragogic nun* being a sort of *pause* or even *end of a sentence*, which makes an awful lot of sense here. A semi-colon would work very well also.

Word thirteen is one we saw back at the start of Deut. 12:1 (אבד), but as you can see here we have the slightly different translation of *to blot out, void, do away with*, which the above translation gets right (minus the *volitional* sense words, of course - added even though there is no *paragogic* anything). This is perfect proof that *context* defines meaning. אבד is used mainly to portray *destruction* or *extermination*, usually of actual objects. But as is followed by words with regards to *names*, to *destroy* or *exterminate* a name is therefore to *blot*, *wipe*, or *cause it to vanish*. I personally like the translation '*cause the disappearance of*' here - Yahuweh is commanding the Yisra'elites to make sure that even the *name*(s) of the polytheistic gods of Canaan are no longer remembered. We also might take the sense of *name* indicating the gods' *symbol of authority*, as a throwback to their *altars, pillars, and Asherah poles*.

We come across the fourteenth word אֵת, which isn't translated as '*associated*'. Translating it as '*their*' isn't right though (argh!), even though following אֵת is the fifteenth word שְׁמָם (from שֵׁם with suffixed ם indicating the *third-person, plural*), which does actually bear the translation of '*their* name'. שֵׁם is also in the singular (שֵׁם), not the plural (שֵׁמוֹת), and so meaning *name* rather than *names*. Nevertheless, this is actually step in the right direction.

To end with, I'm going to group words sixteen to eighteen together. We have in Hebrew מִן הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא, to which the translation above gets מִן/*from* right. The translation

above unfortunately gets המקום ההוא incorrect by turning it into the plural *such places*. A literal translation would be *the place* (המקום) *the that* (ההוא) *= that place.* As you can see, this is *singular* and not *plural.*

Deuteronomy 12:4

"You should choose not to act or engage likewise (*lo' 'asah ka* – you should not want to make or do similar things) **to approach** (*la*) **Yahowah** (Yahowah)**, your God** (*'elohym*)**."**

Comments:

The first little phrase is לא תעשון, starting with the word לא meaning "Not". This small adverb is a negation of the word that follows it. It is also used as an *emphatic absolute*, which is therefore a *command* that removes any sort of volitional sense. Accordingly, the translation is again wrong as it forces the sense of "choice" into the verb תעשון (from the verb עשה, with prefixed ת indicating *you*, and suffixed ון signifying *plural*). The Yisra'elites are not told they are to "choose" to "not do" the same things that the Gentile nations they're about to throw out did, they are *commanded* to not do them. There is no volitional sense here at all. עשה is translated adequately, especially with the connotation of *make* included (a meaning missing from most popular English translations); *create, manufacture, perform, appoint,* and *institute* would also be good choices here. Yahuweh doesn't just want them to not *do* the same things as the Gentile nations were doing - He doesn't want the Yisra'elites *creating* or *manufacturing* the same things that the Gentile nations made for their gods - carved images or icons; Asherah poles or Christmas trees; polytheistically-designed and decorated columns and stone pillars in Temples - Yahuweh wants none of these to be used with regards to Him.

Word three is simple enough - the adverb כן meaning "likewise, so, thus, the same way, in like manner" which the translation above has properly.

The fourth word is the name יהוה prefixed with the preposition ל meaning "to, towards, with regards to, for, on behalf of, with reference to, at, against," and a whole host of other possible meanings. What ל *doesn't* mean however is anything to do with *motion;* so ל is never used in the sense of "approaching" or "advancing towards" something. Looking *towards* something, but not literally *moving towards* it physically.

In conjunction with the previous words, the translation of לא תעשון כן ליהוה should be something along the lines of, ***You all will not create such things in regards to Yahuweh.*** There's no meaning of "approaching Yahuweh" with the use of the preposition ל.

The final word is one we've seen several times over the past verses. Following the usual spelling of *God* in Hebrew as אלהי, we have a suffix of כם. This suffix indicates the *second person, plural* pronoun should be included in the translation ('*your*'), which we do.

Deuteronomy 12:7
"**But** (*wa*) **you can genuinely choose to eat** (*'akal* – you should want to consume food and be completely nourished (qal perfect consecutive)) **there** (*shem*) **before the presence of** (*la paneh*) **Yahowah** (*Yahowah*), **your God** (*'elohym*). **And** (*wa*) **you should of your own volition rejoice joyfully** (*samah* – you should be glad, having a happy attitude and outlook, choosing to delight (qal perfect consecutive)) **in everything** (*ba kol*), **stretching out your open hand** (*mishlowach yad 'atem* – reaching out and outstretching your hand) **so** (*wa*) **your families** (*bayth* – households) **beneficially are blessed** (*'asher bara*k) **by Yahowah** (*Yahowah*), **your God** (*'elohym*).**"**

Comments:

Before we get on to verse seven, it's probably best to give a quick overview of verses 1 - 6.

After telling the Yisra'elites to destroy the Gentile nations' polytheistic shrines and practices (verses 1 - 4), Yahuweh then continues to explain to them that there's going to be a location to which He will "place His name, to set as His home" from among the tribes of Yisra'el, where they must seek and then travel to (verse 5). Once Yahuweh has established His name, it is to this place that the Yisra'elites are to bring their "burnt offerings" and "sacrifices", their "tithes" and "vow offerings", in order to offer them to Yahuweh (verse 6). It is in this context that the words of verse 7 are to relate to.

Accordingly, it's incorrect to translate the consecutive ו/*wa* as a contrastive *But*. Yahuweh isn't making a *contrasting* statement to what He's just said, but is *continuing* His discussion of the place where He's put His name and what the Yisra'elites are to do there. Therefore, ו is to be translated *And*.

Conjoined to ו is the word אכלתם (from verb אכל with suffixed ת meaning *you,* and suffixed ם indicating *plural*), and should be translated *you all shall eat*. Once again, we see in the translation above the idea that there's anything volitional forced upon the meaning of the verb. There isn't, and it's a *command*: *you all shall eat*. To get across the point that this is a command, translating it as *you all must eat* would be applicable; even putting *you all are obliged to eat* would be more in keeping with the sense of אכל here.

The second word שם is translated correctly. The "there" that שם is referring to is what Yahuweh mentions in verse 5: the location that He has chosen to place His name. Later on in Scripture, we find that this location is Jerusalem, and specifically in the Temple that would eventually be built by King Solomon.

Word three is also translated properly. Technically, לפני does mean "towards face of", which idiomatically means "before" or "in the presence of". Effectively, anything that gets across the fact that the Yisra'elites are literally eating "in front of" Yahuweh is fine.

The fourth and fifth word we've seen in conjunction previously in verse four - יהוה אלהיכם, meaning *Yahuweh God-of-you* = *Yahuweh your God.*

As an interesting statistic: this phrase, *Yahuweh your God* (in reference to multiple people) appears 123 times in the Tanakh; and of these 123 times, 39 of them appear in Deuteronomy *alone* (32% of the occurrences). Yahuweh is *our* God - He isn't some remote Being who wants nothing to do with us (a doctrine of the Deists) - He wants us to know and understand that He is very interested in us and our lives. It's why the Yisra'elites were told to come and be "before" Him - Yahuweh wanted them to spend time with Him in His presence. He wasn't planning on being an absent parent, taking no interest in His children.

Now, for word six שמחתם (from שמח with suffixed ת meaning *you,* and suffixed ם indicating *plural*) and its ו prefix ('*and*'), I don't think that a full-stop prior to it is a good thing, especially as Yahuweh is still talking about the "eating before" Him - so the idea of "rejoicing" is in this setting. The full-stop really breaks the flow, notably with the words that follow שמח.

Regardless of whether one agrees with the full-stop or not, the addition of "volition" to שמח is wrong. The Yisra'elites *must* "be glad, rejoice, and be extremely happy" when they eat before Yahuweh: He doesn't want a load of glum people coming to Him and His temporary earthly dwelling place.

Word seven is improperly translated. Due to the incorrect placement of the comma after בכל, it has butchered the meaning of the full phrase (which includes words eight and nine משלח ידכם), inappropriately making it seem as if בכל is whole by itself. When preceding a noun, כל is never used independently as an absolute indicating "everything" - it instead is used as a *genitive* (something that expresses possession or association, usually signified in English using the word "of"), and so כל is to be translated "all of". With the preposition ב, בכל therefore means "in all of".

Moving on to the eighth and ninth word (משלח ידכם), we find that the translation has made a mistake, in that it incorporates word ten (אתם) into this idiomatic phrase. משלח ידכם literally translates as "sending of (משלח) hand-you-all (ידכם)". Word nine (ידכם) is formed from יד meaning "hand", suffixed with כ signifying "you", and ם indicating *plural*. Idiomatically this

means "your endeavours", literally "those things to which you have extended your hands in order to accomplish". We find the full phrase בכל משלח ידכם used six times in the Tanakh, and all of them in Deuteronomy (12:7, 18; 15:10; 23:21; 28:8, 20), so its meaning is quite clear - "in all of sending of your hands" = "in all of your endeavours". Also to translate it as "your undertakings" or "your tasks" or even "your efforts" would be acceptable.

Due to the fact that the כם suffixed to יד indicates "your", word ten אתם shouldn't be translated as "your". This would then say "your hand your", which makes no sense (and isn't Hebrew). No, אתם *never* means "your" - it is not used as a genitive. In this case, אתם is being used as the start of the next clause, and should actually be construed with word eleven ובתיכם. אתם indicates the *second person*, *plural*, therefore should be translated "you all" or "all of you", or even "each of you". Unfortunately English doesn't have a way to distinguish between a plural and singular "you", most of the time expecting the reader/speaker to distinguish from the context. In translation though, I believe it's best to try and bring the plurality of words across.

The eleventh word ובתיכם (from בית (house/family) with prefixed ו signifying *and*, and suffixed with י indicating that בית is *plural*, and כם specifying the *second person*, *plural*) isn't translated completely correct. It gets the "your families/households" bit right, but I'm afraid that ו doesn't mean "so". If word ten hadn't been misconstrued with words eight and nine, then it would be quite obvious that the full clause was אתם ובתיכם, and that it is to be translated "all of you, and all of your families".

Translating words twelve and thirteen together (אשר ברכך), the translation above fails to get the aspect of the verb ברך across. Whilst ברך does indeed mean "bless", the fact that it has ך suffixed to it (ברכ+ך) indicates that there should be a '*you*' somewhere in the translation of the verb. ך is a straightforward pronominal suffix. The correct translation of ברכך is "has blessed you" or "has endued you with special power".

For word twelve (אשר), please look back at word four of the first verse. This is an incomplex relative particle to translate; here it means "in which", a reference back to "your undertakings".

The last two words of the verse we've come across already (יהוה אלהיך). Although there is a slight difference: suffixed to אלהי isn't the *second person*, _plural_ pronoun כם, but the *second person*, _singular_ pronoun ך. This is because everything here is referring to the singular noun

משלח. So in this verse we have Yahuweh being referred to not only as a god for the *collective*, but also of the *individual person* as well. Yahuweh has a personal interest in us as individuals, as well as a family. Yahuweh is not just *my god*, or *their god* - Yahuweh is *YOUR* god as well.

As another interesting statistic: this phrase, *Yahuweh your God* (in reference to an individual person) appears 267 times in the Tanakh; and of these 267 times, 212 (!) of them appear in Deuteronomy *alone* (79% of the occurrences). To say that Deuteronomy is a *personal* book would be a bit of an understatement!

Deuteronomy 12:14
"**Indeed** (*ky* – rather and instead, surely and truly), **whenever** (*'im* – as a condition and as often as) **in the place** (*ba ha maqowm* – with regard to the source of direction) **which beneficially** (*'asher* – relationally) **Yahowah** (*Yahowah*) **chooses** (*bachar* – selects and prefers (qal imperfect)) **for one of your related family groups** (*ba 'echad shebet* – for a certain one of your tribes, branches, or offshoots), **there** (*shem*) **you should meet, grow up, become acceptable, and ascend** (*'alah 'alah* – you should follow, visit, withdraw, and rise, ready to be taken away (hiphil (subject causes the object to participate in the action as a secondary subject) imperfect (ongoing))). **So there** (*wa shem*), **you should act upon** (*'asah* – you should engage in, do, and gain from) **everything which beneficially** (*kol 'asher*) **I** (*'anky*) **have instructed** (*tsawah* – have provided as direction and guidance)."

Comments:

As with verse seven, a quick overview of the previous verses 8-13 is required.

Following Yahuweh's talk of the place that He is to "place His name", He then continues to reiterate the same thing that He's done already, although with a slight expansion: the Yisra'elites aren't to do "whatever's right in [their] own eyes" (v8), because they have yet to "come to the inheritance" that Yahuweh's promised them (v9), but when they have done so and are "living in safety" (v10), the Yisra'elites are to "bring [their] offerings" to the "place where [Yahuweh's] name dwells" (v11), and all of them are "to rejoice before Yahuweh [their] God" (v12). Then directly preceding the words of verse fourteen, Yahuweh tells the Yisra'elites, *You are to take care, so that you do not present your burnt offerings at any location that you happen to see...*

With the introduction of verse 13, verse 14 is a continuation of the sentence. It is therefore incorrect to begin a translation of verse 14 as if it was the start. The first two words of verse 14 are closely joined and form a very common clause used throughout the Tanakh (over 150 times) - כי אם - meaning *but only*, *except*, *apart from*. כי אם is used to indicate that what follows is the *only* alternative in play.

The third word במקום is translated correctly. We saw this noun (מקום) back in verse 2 (word five), and verse 3 (word seventeen), and if we'd looked at verses 5, 11, and 13, we'd have

seen them there as well. Thankfully the meaning of מקום is quite obvious, as is the preposition ב. Combined with the end of verse 13 and the start of verse 14, we'd get the understanding *...at any location that you happen to see, [14]but only in the location....* The Yisra'elites weren't just to present offerings at any old place - there was (and is) only one viable location where people are to present offerings to Yahuweh. Unfortunately, that location is currently inaccessible. In the future, however, it won't be.

Word four is אשר. See verse 1 words four and eight; verse 2 words six and ten; and verse 7 word twelve.

Word five (technically word six in Hebrew) - יהוה. The name of God. Not to be vocalised "Yahowah".

The sixth word (technically the fifth word in Hebrew) - יבחר (from בחר with prefixed י indicating *he*, a reference to יהוה), which the translation gets mostly correct. Nevertheless, is this to be deemed a *present tense* verb (he chooses), or is it a reference to a future event (he will choose)? Looking at the context, the idea is a future one - He (Yahuweh) will choose (a location) in the future. *Context* defines meaning.

The seventh and eighth words (באחד שבטיך) are *almost* translated properly. The main contention is with the translation of the preposition ב. ב more or less refers to something "in" something else (the main 'in' the boat etc., etc.), from which we get other such meanings as "within" or "among" or "into", but never the meaning "for", as in "on behalf of" something or someone - we'd expect the preposition ל to indicate that. No, Yahuweh isn't saying He's choosing a location "for" one (אחד) of the clans of Yisra'el, but a location *among* one of them. "Related family groups" is quite the florid translation of שבט - *tribe* or *clan* are more than sufficient words to employ for שבט. (As an interesting aside: שבט is only ever used to refer to the tribes of Yisra'el - it is never used of the tribes of other nations.)

Word nine is translated accurately. The adverb שם is quite routinely translated '*there*'.

The tenth and eleventh words are peculiarly translated as if they form some sort of emphatic clause. The Hebrew reads תעלה עלתיך, which we would split down into the following: ת (*you*) + עלה (*offer/present*) = *you shall/will present*; followed with על (*burnt offering*) + תי (*plural ending (offering<u>s</u>)*) + ך (*your*) = *your burnt offerings*. The first word is a verb (עלה), the

second is a noun (עלוֹה). The "emphatic doubling" we find is usually between two of the same kind of word (two nouns, two verbs, etc., etc.); it isn't found between two different types. Whilst both words may look similar *in their* <u>*root form*</u>, how they are constructed in the <u>*Hebrew text*</u> itself demonstrates that they're not the same word. We know that the first עלה is a verb due to the fact that it is prefixed with a ת, which in Hebrew conjugation presents the second person, singular pronoun *you* (it also signifies something else I've not yet mentioned: that this verb is *imperfect* compared to *perfect*. There is far too much to go into with regards to the imperfect and the perfect, so I'll just leave this here for now.); this is not used before a noun (nouns in Hebrew in fact have no pronominal prefixes), so עלה can only be a verb. Following on from this we know that the next word is a noun due to the fact that it has declined the way a noun does to show that it's plural, and suffixed by the second person, singular pronoun - עלתיך is constructed from עלֹה: the final, weak ה is dropped; תי is added (or the ה has morphed into the תי) to indicate that the noun is feminine, plural (if it was just ת by itself, then that would make the noun singular); and the pronominal suffix ך closes the word, indicating the second person, singular (you). The reason we have the second person, *singular* suffix ך- compared to the second person, *plural* suffix כם- is because the "burnt offerings" is a throwback to the verb עלה before it, which has the second person, singular prefix ת. If the verb עלה declined as תעלו, this would indicate that the *you* (ת prefix) is *plural* (final ה morphed into a ו), for which we'd then expect the "burnt offerings" following to also agree in *gender* and *number* with the verb or other noun that they're referring to.

The Hebrew is quite clear: *you will present your burnt offerings*. There really is no other viable alternative (of course it can be amplified quite a bit: *you will offer and bring, present and show your whole burnt offerings and tributes, your sacrifices and gifts of appreciation*), and this is what it means in the 100+ times the noun and verb appear together in the Tanakh.

The twelve word is the same as the ninth (שם = *there*), although this time prefixed with the letter ו indicating *and*. Now, the translation above has it as ***So there***, which whilst being technically okay (ו has a vast array of divergent meanings), doesn't quite fit with the fact that the sentence is continuing straight on from the '*there you shall offer your burnt offerings*'; the '*and there*' is a continuation of this thought, rather than a new one.

Word thirteen is translated okay, although the added "volitional" sense is still very much incorrect. As it's the same word we saw back in verse 1 (word six - עשה), its meanings there of *to institute*, *appoint*, *ordain*, *celebrate* are also applicable here: the Yisra'elites aren't just *to do*; they're to *appoint*, *ordain*, and *celebrate* these things in the place Yahuweh will choose.

The fourteenth and fifteenth words translated together have been witnessed numerous times before. כל means "all" or "everything", and אשר is a simple particle meaning "which" or "that". See verse 1 words four and eight; verse 2 words six and ten; and verse 7 word twelve.

Word sixteen doesn't need any correction (אנכי = first person personal pronoun: *I* or *me*), but word seventeen (מצוך) needs three corrections to it. The first correction is to mention that the verb צוה has the second person, singular personal pronoun (ך-) suffixed to it (again, notice the dropped/morphed final ה), so should have *you* somewhere in the translation of the verb. The second correction is to note that צוה is in its piel, pure verb participle form (מצו), and so should be translated *am instructing* rather than *have instructed*. The participle form of צוה is mainly used in Deuteronomy (38 out of 45 instances - 84%), so as Yahuweh has yet to finish instructing the Yisra'elites, the present perfect tense *have + -ed* does not apply. The third and final correction is to point out that, contrary to what is a popular opinion among certain circles of people, צוה does indeed mean *to command*, *order*, *charge* as its primary meaning, so omitting any of the previous three words from any translation of צוה is ill-advised. Yahuweh does indeed command people, including His family. Sorry if you don't like that idea, but that's what צוה means.

Deuteronomy 12:15
"**Except** (*raq* – however, noting this exclusive, singular, and unique instance as an exception) **with** (*ba* – in) **every** (*kol* – all) **sign that points something out, denoting a desire** (*'aowh* – measure and depiction which denotes a preference for being called out and marked, description which sets apart based upon a fondness for a desirable and pleasing yearning) **of your soul** (*nepesh* – your unique, individual consciousness), **you may actually and continually butcher** (*zabah* – you may on an ongoing basis kill and then prepare and dress for literal consumption (qal imperfect)) **and also** (*wa* – in addition) **you may choose to completely consume** (*'akal* – you may elect to eat as actual food and be totally nourished under the auspices of freewill (qal perfect consecutive)) **creatures** (*basar* – the flesh of living things and the meat of animals) **in connection with and consistent with** (*ka* – in harmony with and in association with) **the blessing and superlative gift** (*barakah* – excellent nature of the vow which results in reconciliation and the eternal benefits of the covenant relationship by the willingness to kneel down in love) **of Yahowah** (*YHWH*), **your God** (*'elohym* – your Almighty), **which as a benefit of the relationship** (*'asher* – which in association and fortuitously) **He has provided** (*nathan* – He has produced and given on occasion (qal perfect)) **to you** (*la*) **in any reasoned out and thoughtful conclusion in any city or town** (*ba kol sha'ar* – in any gated area or public place where people assemble for living and by all means of thinking), **the unclean** (*ha tame'* – the impure) **and also the clean** (*wa ha tahowr* – in addition to the pure) **He may genuinely and consistently be nourished by it or Him** (*'akal* – he may literally and always consume what He provides that is valuable) **consistent with** (*ka*) **the beautiful** (*tsaby* – the desirable and valuable, the glorious, or the

buck) **and in harmony with** (*wa ka*) **the Lamb** (*ha 'ayl* – the Leader, the Mighty Pillar, the Doorway, the Protective Covering, the Source of Power, Strength, and Vigorous Live, or the stag).**"**

Comments:

The first word is רק. Whilst it certainly can mean *except*, without a negation with it (either the word לא or אין) it is to be employed as an adverb rather than a preposition. *However* or *nevertheless* should be used here, especially as רק is being used as a sentence connector. Oddly enough, *however* is mentioned in the parenthesis - this should've been used in the main translation.

Word two is כל with the preposition ב. There's no issue with the translation *with every*. Other translational possibilities for כל are *all* or *each and every*, and *in* and *according to* for ב.

Word three is אות (a construct form from the root אוה). There is absolutely no evidence to suggest that this is the noun אות which does mean *sign* or *mark*. As we usually find אוה along with the fourth word (נפש), this shows that אות נפש is an idiom (seen in Deut. 12:20, 21, 18:6; 1 Sam. 23:20; Jer. 2:24; as תאוה נפש in Deut. 12:20, 14:26; 1 Sam. 2:16; 2 Sam. 3:21; 1 Kgs. 11:37; and we see several other uses in Job 23:13; Isa. 26:9; Micah 7:1), so its meaning of *desire*, *craving*, *will*, *want of the soul = a person desires* is well documented. The noun אות meaning *sign* never appears in combination with נפש/soul.

The fourth word (נפש) I've already mentioned. From the meaning of נפש as *soul* we get other definitions such as *life*, *person*, *being*, *self*, and a few other connotations. Suffixed to נפש is the pronoun ך- indicating *your*. As such, the translation above is correct with *your soul*; however as pointed out in word three, נפש is to be translated in conjunction with אוה, for it is a common idiom. The understanding therefore of *with every desire of your soul* is *whenever you desire/want/will*.

Words five (תזבח - from זבח with prefix ת meaning *you*) and six (אכלת - from אכל with suffix ת indicating *you*) are just about translated okay (only with the main meanings of *butcher* and *eat*). The rendering of the conjunction ו as *and also* or *in addition to* is improper - it isn't a choice of just killing or eating as separate acts (an either/or situation), but a case of killing *and* eating in the same event. A more nuanced meaning of זבח is *slaughter in order to sacrifice*, from which

we get the word מזבח indicating *sacrificial altar*. זבח isn't just used for generic killing. One of the things I absolutely love about Hebrew is that there's a specific meaning for each word. There are quite a few words used to refer to 'ending the life' of something, but always with a certain connotation (the word usually translated as "kill" in the Decalogue is רצח, which refers explicitly to the killing (either on purpose or by accident) of human beings). It's no different here: זבח is used for sacrificially animal killing. Keep this in mind as we continue on.

The form of אכל has absolutely no connotation of "choosing" or "electing" to eat something. It just means "to eat, devour, consume". Nothing in the verb indicates "under the auspices of freewill". אכל can be used of anything that has the possibility of being consumed by another element, such as fire, famines, plagues, and even the sword (Deut. 32:42). Another meaning is "to enjoy", which would work well in this context, especially with regards to the "desire of your soul".

The seventh word (בשר) primarily means *flesh* or *meat* compared to *creatures*. Of the thirteen uses of בשר in Deuteronomy (5:26; 12:15; 20 (x3), 23, 27 (x2); 14:8; 16:4; 28:53, 55; 32:42), it's never used to refer to *creatures* as a whole, and so shouldn't be translated as such. The "meat of animals" or "flesh of creatures" would serve to make it be a bit more specific, but there's really no need for that. "Meat" or "flesh" is the meaning of בשר in Deuteronomy, which actually excludes such things such as bones, eyes, cartilage, muscles etc., etc. As a quick note, בשר is a masculine, singular noun. I've been mentioning the gender (masculine/feminine) and number (singular/plural) of certain words and verbs throughout this review, with the intention of ingraining them into the memory for a specific purpose. In Hebrew grammar, nouns and verbs that refer to the same thing are to agree in both *gender* and *number*: a difference indicates a difference of reference. So if a feminine verb follows a masculine noun, then the feminine verb isn't referring to the masculine noun, but to something else feminine in the verse. Vice--versa for masculine verbs and feminine nouns (although if the reference is both masculine and feminine, then the masculine takes precedence). Even adjectives have to agree with the gender and number of the word they're modifying. Again, keep this in mind.

Word eight (ברכה) is a feminine noun constructed from a verb we've already seen - ברך (verse 7 word thirteen), to which we therefore get the meaning *blessing, special endued power*. I don't know from where '*vow which results in reconciliation and the eternal benefits of the covenant relationship by the willingness to kneel down in love*' originates; ברכה has no connection to שבע ('to swear an oath'), שבועה ('oath'), נדר ('to vow'), ערב ('to give as a pledge'), חבל ('to bind as a pledge'), or ערבון ('to make a secure pledge').

The ninth and tenth words (יהוה אלהיך) have been seen in combination a few times already (verse 4 words four and five; verse 7 words four and five, fourteen and fifteen), so I won't waste any more time on them.

Word eleven is אשר meaning *which*.

Word twelve has also been seen previously (נתן - verse 1 word twelve), and it's translated properly. We could bring in other meanings of the verb: *to commit*, *to bestow*, *to appoint*, *to send*, *to dedicate*, *to entrust* - all of which would make complete sense here.

Following this is the word לך meaning "to you". I do find it kinda strange how the preposition ל now doesn't mean "to approach", as it did back in verse 4. ל is being used the exact same way, and so should be translated the same.

For the next two words, we have one of the most *bizarre* translations of בכל שעריך that has ever been seen. The actual translation of this is simple: *in* (ב) *all* (כל) *towns/gates* (שערי) *your* (ך) = *in all your towns*. That's it. That's what it means the other twelve times שעריך appears in the Tanakh (Deut. 15:7, 16:5, 18, 17:2, 5; 18:6, 23:17, 28:52 (x2), 55; Isa 60:11; Psa. 147:13). I can only presume that the idea that שער means anything to do with *reasoning* or *thinking* is due to the incorrect assumption that anything that looks even remotely the same in the Tanakh therefore must overlap in meanings. There are several other Hebrew words spelt exactly like שער: a verb meaning *to be a storm/shake with terror/be afraid* (Jer. 2:12); a noun meaning *storm* (Isa. 28:2); another noun meaning *hair* (Gen. 25:25); a noun indicating *measure* (Gen. 26:12); or an adjective meaning *disgusting* (Jer. 29:17). It shouldn't be assumed that the same looking Hebrew words have a similar etymological overlap. שער in the plural (שערי) means *gates* and therefore *gated area = town/city*.

Looking at words sixteen to eighteen (הטמא והטהור יאכלנו), we come to the crux of the entire reason why I was asked to go through this translation. Apparently, הטמא והטהור (*the unclean and the clean*) is here a reference to unclean and clean *meat*, to which *He may eat it* (יאכלנו), and so Yahuweh is here stating that people will be able to eat both the clean and the unclean animals specified in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. But is this interpretation correct? Does the Hebrew give us such a translation? We'll look at these words separately to begin with, and then together.

The meaning of the Hebrew טמא is incontestable: of its 162 usages as a verb in the Tanakh, it means "to be unclean/defiled" or "to become unclean/defiled"; as an adjective, טמא in all its 88 uses refers to something that is "unclean" or "defiled". The same is true for the Hebrew טהר: its 94 uses as a verb it always means "to be clean" or "to become clean/purified"; its 95 uses as an adjective (טהור) refers to something that is "clean" or "purified". The issue here is whether טמא and טהור are being used as adjectives referring back to the בשר/meat, or whether they have a different usage. The Hebrew here already answers the question: whilst both טמא and טהור may be *adjectives*, the fact that טמא and טהור are preceded by the definite article ה, this then turns both טמא and טהור into *nouns*: *the unclean* and *the clean*; they have been changed into *subjects*, in this case we have הטמא and הטהור indicating *persons*, not references as adjectives back to the בשר/meat.

We see this clearly in another place in the Tanakh: Numbers 19:19 start in the Hebrew as follows: והזה הטהר על הטמא ביום השלישי וביום השביעי; which is translated thus: ***And he shall splatter*** (והזה) ***the clean*** (הטהר) ***upon*** (על) ***the unclean*** (הטמא) ***on the day*** (ביום) ***the third*** (השלישי), ***and on the day*** (וביום) ***the seventh*** (השביעי)... As there's no other subject here in the sentence, the definite הטהר functions as the subject in its own right. The subject (הטהר) does the action of the verb (והזה) upon the object (הטמא).

Furthermore, as the word following both הטמא והטהור is the verb אכל/to eat, in its third person, masculine, singular form (יאכל/he will eat) followed by the third person, masculine, singular pronoun נו, we have to find both a subject and an object for the verb. Now, usually in Hebrew syntax, the verb precedes both the subject and the object, but this isn't always the case: either the subject or the object can precede the verb, and the object can precede both verb *and* subject. We see this exact thing in the following verse, where the object הדם ('the blood') precedes the subject and the verb תאכלו ('you will eat'). The placement of words in Hebrew can change due to *emphasis*; in verse 16, the object הדם is placed first due to the fact that it is has extreme emphasis; here in verse 15, הטמא והטהור is preceding the verb אכל due to the emphasis placed on 'the unclean' and 'the clean'. If Yahuweh wanted to say that both clean and unclean meats were allowed to be eaten, we would have to have both הטמא והטהור back where בשר/meat first appeared, or have it again repeated before הטמא והטהור, also including the definite article הבשר (can't have definite adjectives and indefinite nouns), which

would look like הבשר הטמא והטהור. The grammar doesn't allow us to change it to our liking - we can't make the Hebrew say something that it doesn't. This is why you have to *check what people say* - even what's been written here.

Coming back to יאכלנו, I've mentioned a subject, but not what the subject is. As יאכל indicates the third person, masculine, singular ('he' - there's only one plural pronoun prefix - נ, meaning *'we'*. We don't have that here), we then need to find a masculine, singular, noun to which it refers. This is usually the closest one to the verb, and the closest noun to the verb is the preceding one, הטהור. You may think then, that as הטהור is joined to the other noun הטמא, then surely הטהור can't be to what the verb יאכל refers? Shouldn't it have to be "they" or a "you" *plural?* No. Not when two things are being combined as one reference: a person can't be both *clean* and *unclean* at the same time: they're either clean *or* unclean. The 'he' of יאכל is therefore either the clean *or* the unclean *person*. The subject of a verb has to agree in both number and gender with the number and gender of the verb, another reason why הטהור or הטמא is the subject in question. In languages, not everything has to be spelled out: when an obvious word or explanation is not mentioned, this is known as an *ellipsis*, and we see it numerous times throughout all languages, Hebrew included. The only other choices for what the masculine noun could be if not הטהור or הטמא, would be either God (אלהי), Yahuweh (יהוה - although as אלהי is modifying יהוה, these would be taken as one reference), or flesh/meat (בשר). These choices therefore make no sense: God isn't saying He can "eat" of the clean and the unclean (!), nor can the meat. The subject of יאכל are the preceding nouns הטהור or הטמא.

The final thing to determine is therefore the object of what הטהור or הטמא can eat. Again, as נו is masculine, singular, with have to find a masculine, singular noun to what it refers. We once more have our choices of Yahuweh God (יהוה אלהי), or flesh/meat (בשר). Personally, I love the idea that it could be either or both. We may have here in Deut. 12:15 a very clear Messianic undertone: both the clean and the unclean persons shall "eat" of God, because they wish "to sacrifice" His "flesh" - a clear cut reference to the Messiah, Yahushua. This may also help in determining what Yahushua was talking about when he referred to the "eating" of his "flesh" (Yahuchanon/John 6:22-59). It also fits in with the fact that this "flesh" is part of the blessing that Yahuweh has "given/sent/entrusted" to the Yisra'elites - a direct reference to the Messiah perhaps? The literal meaning of the verse has בשר/meat as the object of נו.

So there we go: the subject of יאכלנו is הטהור or הטמא, and the object is בשר. This is clear cut, and fits Hebrew grammar exactly. That, surprisingly, is what the translation has above, more or less. Remove the unrequired "he", and the meaning of the words would be quite clear: **the unclean**

and also the clean may genuinely and consistently be nourished by it. Not sure why *genuinely* was inserted - אכל doesn't have that usage anywhere. There is no ambiguity in the Hebrew - it is clear and precise, and there's absolutely no way to change it to say that clean and unclean meats would be allowed to eaten - ever. It's just not possible grammatically to have the text say such a thing. The grammar matters, and shouldn't be overlooked.

The last two words of the verse (כצבי וכאיל) are barely translated properly. צבי and איל refer to two animals: צבי to the *gazelle*, and איל to the *stag*, neither of which we see in the main translation. There is no reference to "lamb" in Deut. 12:15: the word כבש does not appear, and so "lamb" shouldn't be used here whatsoever. The preposition כ means *just like* or *as*. The mentioning of these two animals צבי and איל is probably due to the fact that even though they're both clean animals (those allowed to be eaten), they weren't animals that could be sacrificed (as they were "wild" animals) - a reference back to the usage of זבח/to slaughter for sacrifice. The "flesh" that the Yisra'elites were allowed to eat weren't just from the domestic animals they would be keeping - wild game animals were permissible for consumption.

"**Only** (*raq* – exclusively) **the blood** (*ha dam*) **you should not consume** (*lo' 'akal* – you should not habitually eat or drink (qal imperfect). **Upon the ground** (*'al ha 'erets*) **you should pour it out** (*shapak* – you should spill it) **as** (*ka*) **water** (*maym* – liquid)."

Comments:

The first word is the same used at the beginning of verse 15 - רק. There it was being used as a sentence connector, however as רק is being used in conjunction with a negation (לֹא - not), here it can actually mean *except*. "Only" is also a legitimate translation of רק, so the verse has started out well.

The second word I've mentioned in my discussion of verse 15 - הדם meaning *the blood*. There's no quibble with the rendering of הדם. Of the 360 uses of דם, its meaning of *blood* is unquestionable.

Words three and four have been mentioned before - לא תאכלו. My first concern in the translation above of these two words is the inclusion of "should" - is this being used in a sense of something that must/ought to be followed (*You should do it this way*); as a way to make the exception of blood eating less direct (*I should think not*); or as a remark of condition (*I should be grateful*)? The uses of *should* in preceding verses makes one confused as to what is being meant by the word here. Usually context helps us decide, but due to the awfully translated verses previous to this one, it's impossible to determine what's being indicated by the word "should". My second concern is the mention of *habitually* in the amplified sections - Yahuweh isn't telling the Yisra'elites that they shouldn't be making it a *habit* of consuming blood, with the indication that they may devour blood from time to time, but He's telling them *absolutely not* to eat the blood of animals. It is something that they *are never to do*. The addition of *habitually* is extremely reckless. That is not something that to be inserted whatsoever.

Lastly, as the verb is second person, plural, something along the lines of *you all*, or even *none of you are* is to be indicated to bring across the plural meaning of the verb אכל. Yahuweh is addressing *all* the Yisra'elites as a collective whole; not as individuals.

(Quick FYI: as we're translating Hebrew to English, we should really be putting words into English word order, so we must place the words in our subject-verb-object order: *Only none of you must consume the blood.*)

Words five and six are further confirmation of what I said regarding Hebrew syntax - the object is stated before the verb - על הארץ. Accordingly, there's no issue with the translation above of "*Upon the ground*". We also again have confirmation of context defining meaning - we've

seen אֶרֶץ being used specifically to refer to the land of Canaan (eventually Yisra'el), a bordered area or region, but here it is referring to the *land* or *ground* as in the soil itself.

The seventh word is a new one, although we have seen other verbs in this form - תשפכנו. By now I would expect people to realise the structure of the verb here: we have the second person, singular prefix ת; followed closely by the verb in its root form with only a final to middle letter change שפכ; and to finish this off is the third person, singular, masculine pronoun נו. This is therefore translated *You* (ת) *must pour* (שפכ) *it* (נו). The subject "You" is the individual Yisra'elite eating the meat, and the object "it" is the blood. We know that "it" is the blood due to two things: context; and the fact that דם is a singular, masculine noun. There is no other masculine noun in the sentence, so דם is the only connection for נו. Once more, the meaning attached to *should* isn't quite apparent. This is a command, and is to be translated to bring this across.

The eighth and final word is כמים, which the translation has correctly as *as* (כ) *water* (מים).

I again detect an awful lot of Messianic undertones even here: The Yisra'elites were not to "consume the blood" (we find in another verse that this is because "in the blood is life" (Lev. 17:11-14; Deut. 12:23), "life" here being a translation of the Hebrew נפש also meaning *soul*), but only the flesh, and they were to "pour out the blood like water". The "flesh" of Yahushua was "consumed", but His "soul" was "poured out". Refer to MattithYah/Matthew 26:26-28; Marcus/Mark 14:22-24; Lucus/Luke 22:15-20. This blood was spilled out onto the land of Yisra'el - Yahuchanon/John 19:34.

(Again, quick FYI: English word order should be followed: *you must pour it out upon the ground like water*.)

Final Remarks

For those reading this, please, learn Hebrew. If you want to know what Yahuweh said, then increasing your knowledge of Hebrew is paramount. Relying on how other people render Yahuweh's words are not going to aid your understanding, nor will you have the capability to check the accurateness of someone's translation. Without that, it can quickly escalate into a case of "the blind leading the blind" - you'll soon fall down a hole none of you can get out from.

If people are still not convinced that Deuteronomy 12 speaks against eating unclean animals, then there're a few more verses in Deuteronomy itself that can also be used as evidence.

Directly after Deuteronomy 12:16, verses 17-24 essentially repeat verses 5-16, with a few extra instructions regarding the Levite and the offerings. The verse that confirms exactly what's been said regarding v15 is v22, which reads as follows (Interlinear style - please read right to left):

אך	כאשר	יאכל	את	הצבי	ואת	האיל	כן	תאכלנו	הטמא
Just	like which	is eaten	-	the gazelle	and -	the stag,	thus	you will eat it,	the unclean

והטהור	יחדו	יאכלנו
and the clean	together	he will eat it

As you can see, this is very much like verse 15, just said slightly differently. Again the words "the unclean" (הטמא) "and the clean" (והטהור) precede the verb יאכלנו, and the "he" of יאכלנו refers to them both in the singular.

We have another confirmation in Deuteronomy 15:22, where we have (interlinear style):

בשעריך	תאכלנו	הטמא	והטהור	יחדו	כצבי	וכאיל
in your towns	you shall eat it ;	the unclean	and the clean	together ,	like a gazelle	or a stag.

Again, we have הטמא and והטהור being employed as nouns in their own right. They're not adjectives modifying another noun, but definite nouns by themselves. We also have another example of *ellipsis* here: one would expect another verb to appear after יחדו, but this is supplied from the context ("shall eat it").

What's even more obvious that it isn't unclean or clean *meats* being referred to in v15, is the fact that the unclean and clean food instructions in Deuteronomy don't appear until *chapter 14*, where Yahuweh outlines the animals that are to be considered clean or unclean. I won't repeat Deuteronomy 14 here, but note that at the end of verse 8, Yahuweh says, **From their flesh** (מבשרם) **you shall not eat** (לא תאכלו), **and their carcasses you shall not touch.** Yahuweh truly could not be clearer. Don't eat the flesh of unclean animals, and leave their carcasses alone.

Translation of Deuteronomy 12:1-4, 7, 14-16:
1. **These are the prescriptions and established judgements that all of you must keep in mind to ordain in the land which Yahuweh, God of your ancestors, has bestowed to you, to possess her all of the days that you are living upon the land.**

2. **All of you must utterly destroy all of the places where the nations, those whom all of you are about to expel, worshipped their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills, and under every flourishing tree.**

3. **And all of you shall tear down their altars, and all of you shall smash their stone pillars, and all of you must burn their 'Asherah poles with fire; and all of you shall slice up the images of their gods, and you shall obliterate their names from that place.**

4. **None of you shall perform such things with regards to Yahuweh, God of you all.**

7. **And all of you shall eat there, in the presence of Yahuweh, God of you all, and all of you shall be glad in each of your undertakings, all of you and all of your households in which Yahuweh, your God, has blessed you.**

14. **...but at the place which Yahuweh shall chose among one of your clans, you shall present your burnt offerings there, and you shall ordain there everything that I am commanding you.**

15. **However, whenever you desire, you may slaughter and eat meat in all of your towns, according to the blessing which Yahuweh, your God, has given to you; the unclean and the clean shall eat of it, like the gazelle and like the stag.**

16. **Only none of you must eat the blood; you must pour it out upon the ground like water.**

A response to a friend

A friend of mine (who, like me, taught himself Hebrew), had some comments regarding the initial version of this document. As I do appreciate his input, I felt it right to re-do some of this document, but to also just give a few corrective responses to a couple of things.

> **JB: I have not read all of Swalchy's commentary yet, finding it difficult to get through all of the insults and opinions.**

My apologies. Hopefully this new version is better for you to get through.

> **JB: What I have noticed is that he uses a very mechanical process to translate it. And what I mean by this is that he looks to whatever definition logos points too and takes the definition as given there.**

If you get the opportunity to read this version properly, you'll notice that this isn't the case. I actually prefer to use books compared to the Logos programme, knowing full well that the morphologies given in Logos (that then link to Strong's definitions - never a good thing) don't correspond to the Hebrew text itself, but rather to how the Masoretes vowel pointed the text.

> **JB: There is nothing wrong with this, but I think a lot can be gained from first looking to every word that contains the same root letters. What I mean by this is ignore the vowel pointing and look at the letters that comprise the word and the definition of every word made with those letters.**

Agreed, and this is what I do. I read an unpointed text based on the work I've done with the Dead Sea Scrolls. However, the forming of words in the Hebrew text itself doesn't allow us to go through all the words that have similar letters and assume that that's a word it *could* be.

> **JB:** The original Hebrew did not have vowel points and so context alone was used to determine the meaning of the word. When logos points to a definition it is the definition as the vowel pointing in the MT defines it. Often I find that other definitions fit the context better. A good example is edon vs adon both are identical in the original text Aleph Dalet Nun. Edon meant upright pillar or upright one, while adon means lord or master. Context dictates which is chosen, but the MT may point it as Adon when in context Edon is more correct.

This really only works with certain nouns and verbs. Plus there are quite a few *hapax Legomenons* in the Tanakh that make it very difficult to determine what the initial root word was.

> **JB:** The other thing I don't think he does is look to the root words to understand the derived word. If the root word means the opposite of a definition given for the derived word you have to consider the likelihood that the derived word is accurate or intended to mean what a particular definition says. Yada has talked about this in terms of Towrah. If you look at the root of Towrah the LAW definition makes no sense. Beyond this the root word can color or add to the understanding of the derived word, something Yada often does is is translate a word in the context of its root word.

This is unfortunately an *Etymological Fallacy* that is quite popular. As you've said - *context* and usage defines meaning - especially as the *roots* of words aren't set in stone either. What if the scholars have got the root wrong? That will then colour the meaning for the supposed derived words. But even then, the usage of a word doesn't necessarily indicate that it has all the nuances of the root word.

> **JB:** So from what I have read so far I don't think Swalchy's translations are wrong, but I think much is left unconsidered in them.

I'm always open to people pointing out where they think I've not considered something. However, if you do read this document all the way though, you'll notice that I've considered quite a lot, and have given reasons for why I've translated words the way I have. I've probably missed something somewhere though ☻

Nevertheless, you should notice that CW has left an awful lot of things out in his translation which I have picked up on. We can consider all the meanings of root words all day long, but the prefixes and suffixes are not to be ignored. It's also impossible to omit them when looking at the Hebrew text itself - without them it wouldn't make any sense at all.