

"HESED" for 2 Sam 9

as female deities who personify strangling (see ANE above). This may also explain the apparently fem. form of the vb.

Hanging, dangling, sprawling, strangling: → *dhl* II (dangle, # 1927); → *dhl* II (dangle, # 1938); → *hng* (strangle, # 2871); → *hng* II (let hang?, # 2912); → *srh* I (hang over, # 6243); → *dhhl'* (hang, # 9434)

Death: → *hd* I (perish, # 6); → "dhand (ground, piece of land, soil, earth, realm of the dead, # 141); → *zshn* (mortal accident, # 656); → *gn'* (expire, die, # 1588); → *hrg* (kill, murder, # 2222); → *zrn* I (put an end to life, # 2441); → *heded* (realm of the dead, # 2335); → *hrg* II (embalm, embalming, # 2846); → *mwr* (die, kill, execute, # 4637); → *qtl* (murder, slay, # 7779); → *r'pā'im* I (shades, departed spirits, # 8327); → *s'rt* (steal, netherworld, # 8619); → *skhat* (pit, grave, # 8846)

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2873 TDOT *hesed* I, nom. disgrace (# 2875).

ANE No direct cognate is attested in ANE texts or extrabiblical inscriptions with a meaning of shame or insult.

OT The vb. *hsd* I occurs only once, in Prov 25:10. From the context it is evident that it denotes public reproach. A nom. form exists as well. In 14:34 the reproachful way of living of a sinful people is contrasted with the pride of the righteous. Here it is best translated as disgrace—a semantic usage similar to that of *bōšet* in antithetic sayings (see *bōšet*, # 1425). According to Lev 20:17 it was considered a disgrace when a brother and sister have a sexual relationship, and they must therefore be removed from society.

P-B The vb. *hsd*, however, occurs in both RH and Aram. with the meaning shame or scorn at (Jastrow 1:486). The nom. *hesed* (Heb.) and *hisda'* (Aram.) do occur but seldom with the meaning disgrace. The latter may be interchanged with *hisda'dā'*, which also has the meaning shame or revilement, e.g., Tg. Prov 14:34.

Shame, disgrace, humiliation, scorn: → *hwt* (show contempt for, # 996); → *hwš* I (be ashamed, put to shame, behave shamefully, # 1017); → *hsd* I (insult, reproach, # 2873); → *hpr* II (be dismayed, feel ashamed, # 2917); → *hpr* II (taunt, mock, insult, defy, # 3070); → *km* (be shamed, humiliated, hurt, # 4007); → *lg* (scorn, mock, # 4352); → *h* (reject, disdain, treat disrespectfully, # 5540); → *qigalōh* (disgrace, # 7814); → *qhl* II (be of low esteem, treat with contempt, dishonor, detect, # 7829)

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IDB 4:305-6; TDOT 2:50-60; THAT 1:269-70; TWOT 1:222-23, 311-12, 442-43; 2:799; L. M. Bechtel, "Shame as a Sanction of Social Control in Biblical Israel: Judicial, Political, and Social

Shaming," JSOT 49, 1991, 47-76; K. Beyer, *Die Aramäischen Texte vom Toten Meer*, 1984; A. LaCoque, "Sin and Guilt," RE 13:325-31.

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2874 TDOT *hsd* II, hip, show o.s. kind (# 2874); TDOT *hesed* II, nom. loyalty, faithfulness, goodness (# 2876); *ḥsēd* (*ḥāsād*), adj. pious, faithful, godly (# 2883). The only occurrence of the vb. is in 2 Sam 22:26 || Ps 18:25[26].

ANE The root is well represented in later Heb. and in various phases of Aram., cf. Targumic Aram. *hisda'*, Syr. *hesdā*, Christian Pal. Aram. *hsd'*/*hsd'*, and Mandean *hszd'*. The Arab. *ḥasāda*, come together for aid, cited by HALAT, assumes an unlikely correspondence between Heb. *s* and Arab. *ḥ*.

OT 1. The concept of faithfulness, steadfast love, or more generally kindness, represented by *hesed*, has a strongly relational aspect that is essential to any proper definition of the term. *hesed* occurs 246x in the OT, just over half of them in Ps. It is commonly used of the attitudes and behavior of humans toward one another, but more frequently (ratio 3:1) describes the disposition and beneficent actions of God toward the faithful, Israel his people, and humanity in general. The phrase "the kindness of the LORD/God," as it occurs in 1 Sam 20:14; 2 Sam 9:3, represents, at least formally, an intersection between these two planes of human and divine *hesed*.

2. There have been several published monographs (Glueck, 1927/1961 [ET 1967]; Sakenfeld, 1978, 1985; Clark, 1993) and articles, as well as occasional unpublished dissertations, that have sought to illuminate the term from a number of different angles. Glueck, for whom *hesed* connotes mutual obligation on the part of individuals or groups almost by virtue of their being human, focused on three principal aspects of the concept, viz., human behavior in the secular realm, human behavior in the religious sphere and especially as directed toward God, and God's dealings with humanity. The mutual obligation that Glueck associated with the term naturally led him to give prominence to covenant (→) as an especially appropriate context in which *hesed* operated. The divine exercise of *hesed* is based on God's covenantal relationship with his people (1967, 102); *hesed* is the "essence" of the covenantal relationship (1967, 55).

Sakenfeld sought to move beyond Glueck by attempting to define more clearly the circumstances in which *hesed* was supposed to operate. She argued that *hesed* is appropriate to the superior party in a relationship, involving "deliverance or protection" as a responsible keeping of faith with another with whom one is in a relationship (1978, 233), and that action in accordance with this principle was not such a fundamental human responsibility as to be legally enforceable. There was a moral responsibility resting on the superior party, but it could be sidestepped if circumstances favored such an evasion. The sense of mutuality, so strong in Glueck's discussion, is clearly played down here, though the covenant as a prime exemplar of the *hesed* relationship maintains its position, particularly as regards God's treatment of his "covenantal people in the Mosaic tradition" (1978, 237).

More recent developments within structural linguistics are reflected in Clark's discussion, which still is concerned with the relational dimensions of *hesed*, now partly

in terms of agent-patient relationship, and engages with semantic fields and associated usages much more formally and systematically than was true of previous studies. Clark finds that bilateral commitment is characteristic of *hesed* relationships, and that practical expression of the underlying attitude is essential (contrasting, in these respects, the vb. *hnt* [be gracious] and its derivatives). Moreover: "The relative status of the participants is never a feature of the *hesed* act, which may be described as a beneficent action performed, in the context of a deep and enduring commitment between two persons or parties, by one who is able to render assistance to the needy party who in the circumstances is unable to help him- or herself" (267). These and other studies have helped to establish the uses of *hesed* with increasing precision and to set up a series of instructive comparisons and contrasts with related terms. All the while it is important to keep in mind that the instances of *hesed* as a divine characteristic greatly outnumber the rest, and that attempts at comprehensive definition can therefore easily become unbalanced. For example, *hesed*, when used of God, will, by definition, involve relationships of superior and inferior, whatever may be concluded about its operation on the human plane. Again, the synchronic preoccupations of the more recent linguistic approaches may be contrasted with the emphases of some earlier work, but at the same time the observation that *hesed* is used predominantly with God as agent invites an obvious question or two along diachronic lines (notably, whether this is a primary or a secondary development).

3. *The human plane.* (a) The "steady-state" relational aspect of *hesed* is seen most clearly in its operation within a familial setting (Gen 20:13; 47:29), between friends (1 Sam 20:8; cf. 2 Sam 9:1), and in such other relationships as that between king and subjects (1 Kgs 2:7). The formulaic "show (lit. do) kindness to" (e.g., Gen 21:23; 1 Sam 15:6; 2 Sam 3:8) is frequently used in these and in other contexts. The importance of *hesed* loyalty within friendships is normally assumed and sometimes stated, if not always as poignantly as in 2 Sam 16:17, where Hushai's feigning of sympathy for the rebel cause of Absalom is met with the latter's inquiry, "Is this the love (or loyalty, *hesed*) you show your friend?" The frequent pairing of *hesed* with "merit, truth, as in Prov 3:3; Hos 4:1, agrees with this sense of faithfulness or loyalty, where the trustworthiness of a promise as yet unfulfilled, or more prolonged commitment in circumstances of continuing need, may be involved (cf. Clark, 260).

(b) Such loyalty is appropriate a fortiori to individuals who are in a covenant or treaty relationship, as in 1 Sam 20:8, where David reminds Jonathan of the necessity of remaining loyal to him in the light of the covenant relationship that exists between them: "show kindness to your servant, for you have brought him into a covenant with you before the LORD." The concluding phrase in the quotation puts the obligation in a specially solemn light, and according to one explanation the expression "kindness of the LORD/God" (1 Sam 20:14; 2 Sam 9:3) represents the same idea of a covenant oath having been taken with God as witness and guarantor. However, there are other possible explanations, for example, that the divine element functions as a superlative (outstanding kindness). It is, in any case, unwise to regard *hesed* in such a context as if it were an aspect or ingredient of covenant as such. Rather, the covenant comes in to reinforce the commitment to *hesed* in a situation where its exercise is not naturally to be expected or is likely to be put under strain by future circumstances. This may also apply in the account of the covenant between Abraham and the Gerarites in Gen

21:22-34, where the *hesed* undertaking (v. 23) by parties otherwise alien to each other is consolidated in the ratification of a covenant.

(c) *hesed* also comes to feature in statements of the moral and ethical demands that God lays upon Israel. The charge against the northern Israelites in Hos 4:1 is that there is no faithfulness or love in the land, while, according to 6:6, God puts a higher premium on *hesed* than on sacrifice. Similarly, to love loyalty in human affairs is part of the duty that God lays upon his people (Mic 6:8). Those who observe this standard are "men of *hesed*" (Isa 57:1; cf. Prov 11:17); moreover, the exercise of *hesed* meets with the approval of both God and humans (Prov 3:3-4). Sometimes *hesed* is used in the pl. for good deeds, as of Hezekiah (2 Chron 32:32) and Nehemiah (Neh 13:14) (cf. *š'diqā* in postbiblical Heb.).

(d) Occasionally *hesed* is used of the human response to God, even if this tends to be affected and transient, as in Jer 2:2, where Israel's youthful loyalty in her wilderness phase contrasts with the present reality of national apostasy deployed by God and his prophet. Essentially the same complaint was made by Hosea, whose influence on Jeremiah can be traced at many points, when he claimed that the loyalty of Ephraim and Judah was "like the morning mist, like the early dew that disappears" (Hos 6:4). Indeed, according to Isa 40:6 all human loyalty is as perishable as the flower of the field. (There is no need to emend *hasdā* here, least of all on the basis of LXX, whose *doxa* is a stock translation term of the G translator of LXX Isaiah; see L. H. Brockington, VT 1, 1951, 23-32.)

(e) The form *hāsīdā* (32x) occurs as an adj., but principally as a nom. denoting the one whose life is lived in accordance with the principles of *hesed*. Synonyms are *yāsār* (upright, Mic 7:2) and *tāmīn* (blameless, 2 Sam 22:26 || Ps 18:25[26]). In the ps. pl. appears a number of times (the godly, the faithful, Ps 30:4[5]; 31:23[24]; etc.). The term may apply to Israel (148:14; 149:1) or to a group of the faithful within Israel (31:23[24]; 37:28). Twice the word is used in relation to God himself as loving and faithful (145:17; Jer 3:12).

4. *The divine plane.* (a) When we turn to the divine plane to survey God's *hesed* toward human beings, we discover the same strong relational aspect that was noted on the human plane, as well as the importance of a prior commitment or bond. Though that prior commitment is usually on the part of God toward humankind, there is an expected reciprocity and mutuality that demands service, fear, and even a corresponding exercise of *hesed* in return. Several characteristics of divine *hesed* become apparent.

(b) Divine *hesed* saves people from disaster or oppressors. The biblical writers seem persuaded that life is fragile. One lives surrounded by the threat posed by the calamities of nature, the hostility of enemies, and the weakness of self. The same writers plead for God to save them by his *hesed*, and they recognize that this effective loyalty on God's part is their only hedge against disaster. In Gen 19:19, Lot speaks gratefully of the *hesed* of the three men—one of them is identified as Yahweh—in saving his life from destruction together with the people of Sodom.

The Psalms, in particular, are full of this motif (cf. Ps 31:7[8], 21[22]; 32:10; 57:3[4]; 59:10[11]; 94:18; 143:12). Often this takes the form of thanksgiving after God has rescued the psalmist from his adversaries. Rarely, however, is the eventual salvation that God's *hesed* provides seen to eradicate the anxiety of the endangered while

