

# Sacrificed Upon the Alter

A staggering achievement in biblical translation and commentary—and why it goes wrong

By Meir Y. Soloveichik

‘**Y**OUR native language,” Henry Higgins proudly proclaims in *Pygmalion*, “is the language of Shakespeare and Milton and the Bible.” George Bernard Shaw knew very well that the Bible was not written in English, and yet this sentence remains true all the same. The King James Bible is the jewel of English literature, of greater import and influence than Shakespeare’s plays and Milton’s poems. Now, one man seeks to surpass it: the scholar and critic Robert Alter, who on his own has translated the entire Hebrew Bible into English, with an additional commentary. In his introduction, Alter explains what the King James has that other English versions of the Bible lack. “The unacknowledged heresy underlying most modern

English versions of the Bible,” Alter argues, “is the use of translation as a vehicle for *explaining* the Bible instead of representing it in another language, and in the most egregious instances this amounts to explaining away the Bible.” This, he stresses, leaves the readers “at a grotesque distance from the distinctive literary experience of the Bible in its original language. As a consequence, the King James Version...remains the closest approach for English readers to the original.”

At the same time, the King James, for Alter, contains “embarrassing inaccuracies” and “insistent substitution of Renaissance English tonalities and rhythms for biblical ones.” Its authors and editors often ignored the syntax and cadences of the Hebrew text, as well the Bible’s deliberate choices between flowery words and prosaic ones, each intended in its proper place. “An adequate English version,” Alter reflects, “should be able to indicate the small but significant modulations in diction in the biblical language—something the stylistically uniform King James Version, however, entirely fails to do.” No extant translation, he believes, captures how biblical prose “is a formal literary language but

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also, paradoxically, a plainspoken one.” Alter’s goal is to mirror the cadence of biblical Hebrew, to capture “both the deliberate elegance of beautiful phrases that at times stand out all the more because they are placed in the midst of verses that are deliberately repetitive by nature.” He seeks to show that the Hebrew of the Bible “has a distinctive music, a lovely precision of lexical choice, a meaningful concreteness, and a suppleness of expressive syntax that by and large have been given short shrift by translators.”

Does Alter accomplish this aim? He does indeed approach the text with an exquisite sense for its syntax and rhythm. At the same time, for all Alter’s sensitivity to the Hebrew Bible’s words, there are times when his attempt to put his own spin on biblical translation ends up being destructive of the ideas that the Bible is attempting to present. Moreover, his methods, defended in his commentary, can be challenged based on the very approach that he claims to represent.

Alter is himself a reputed Jewish academic, has previously served for thirteen years as contributing editor to COMMENTARY, and has devoted his distinguished career to biblical exegesis and translation. And yet, from the perspective of the People of the Book, the King James translation of the Hebrew Bible remains Jewish in ways that Alter’s translation will never be.

## II.

Let us begin at the beginning. It is in Genesis that we find both the linguistic virtues of Alter’s translation, as well as its profound flaws. Here are the immortal English words of the opening of the King James:

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.  
And the earth was without form, and void;  
and darkness was upon the face of the deep.  
And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

The words are justly famous, yet they fail to capture in any way the tonality of the Bible’s opening in Hebrew. The state of being at the moment of creation is described in the original as *tohu va-vohu*. The words are an example of more flowery language in the Bible, but they are also combined in a unique rhyme, one entirely lost in the King James’s “without form, and void.” Here is Alter’s version:

When God began to create heaven and earth,  
and the earth then was welter and waste and  
darkness over the deep, and God’s breath hovering  
over the waters.

“Welter and waste” is a flowery choice, as is *tohu va-vohu*. The translation is lovely, and the alliteration is loyal to the music of the text and perfectly done.

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Here we see someone seeking to capture the cadences of the Bible and achieving it better than anyone who has attempted it before. The King James, for all its brilliance, cannot give us all that the Hebrew attempts to convey.

As we move further into the Genesis story, however, things go awry. One of the most important verses in the history of religion appears in Genesis’s second chapter. There we read of the creation of Adam, so named because he is made from the *adamah*. In describing the origins of man, the Bible uses the most prosaic of words: *Adamah* means earth, or dirt, and it is not a flowery word at all. After we have been informed, in the previous chapter, that man was created in the image of God, the text suddenly disrupts our preconceptions of man’s magnificence by giving him a name derived from dirt, thereby reminding us that man is simultaneously majestic and humble.

The Hebrew Bible’s anthropology is thus rooted in Hebrew etymology. This is manifestly obvious even to a layman, as long as he reads Hebrew. But to countless others who have pondered the text throughout history, the pun, and its corresponding powerful point, is lost entirely. Indeed, the King James itself can do nothing to capture the power of the biblical play on words, and it renders the verse in the following way:

And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

Alter, however, attempts to capture the linguistic link between Adam and the earth, and provides the following translation:



## GENESIS: THE SEVENTH EVENING AROSE IN EDEN

Then the LORD God fashioned the human, humus from the soil, and blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and the human became a living creature.

Alter's rendering of the Hebrew words at the end of the verse, *le-nefesh haya*—as “a living creature”—is more accurate than the King James's “living soul.” But Alter also ambitiously attempts to re-create the pun on “earth” as the source of man's origins, by rendering the creation of “Adam” from “adamah” as “human” from the “humus.” To which the reader of the Bible might immediately inquire: What is humus? It is a scientific word for the organic aspects of the soil derived from decomposed plants. It is not, however, the humus within the soil from

which Adam is created, but from the dust in the soil itself; the existence of humus as a separate substance was utterly unknown in the biblical age. The point of the Bible is not to stress the organic origins of Adam, but the opposite—to note the finitude to which he is predestined.

Moreover, the translation is jarring to the eye and ear and violates Alter's own professed approach. Alter's critique of the King James is that it makes no distinction between when the Bible chooses a complex and a prosaic word. Here, however, Alter chooses a word few know and thereby misses the entire literary thrust of the passage. In utilizing words in Hebrew—*afar*, dust, and *adamah*, earth—with which all Israelites were familiar, the Bible confronts the reader with an apparent paradox: Man, the summit and seeming purpose of God's creation, is given a name derived from a prosaic word, *earth*. In Alter's version, there remains a pun, to be sure, but the power of the pun is entirely lost.

The problems are only beginning. In choosing this pun, Alter renders the name “Adam” as “the human,” rather than “the man.” This is the version in the King James, verses 26–27:

**26** And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

**27** So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

Alter rejects the translation of “*ha-adam*” as “the man.” In his commentary, he defends his approach; if *adam* means “man,” he asks, how can man have been created both male and female? “The term *adam*, afterward consistently with a definite article, which is used



both here and in the second account of the origins of humankind, is a generic term for human beings, not a proper noun,” he writes. “It also does not automatically suggest maleness, especially not without the prefix *ben*, ‘son of;’ and so the traditional rendering ‘man’ is misleading, and an exclusively male *adam* would make nonsense of the last clause of verse 27.”

Yet Alter’s own translation does not make things any simpler. Here is his rendering:

And God said, “Let us make a human in our image, by our likeness, to hold sway over the fish of the sea and fowl of the heavens and the cattle and the wild beasts and all the crawling things that crawl upon the earth.

And God created the human in his image, In the image of God **He created him**, Male and female **He created them**. (emphasis added)

Alter’s translating *ha-adam* as “the human” does not make the Bible more coherent. If “*adam*” is no way male in connotation, how can the Bible tell us that “in the image of God He created **him**?”

The translation of *ha-adam* as “the human” continues throughout, as do the jarring results. For example, this is Alter’s version of a verse from the Garden of Eden: “And they heard the sound of the LORD God walking about in the garden in the evening breeze, and the human and his woman hid from the LORD God in the midst of the trees of the garden.” The human and his woman? Is the woman herself not a human being? Alter further complicates matters by translating the Hebrew word *ishto* in different ways; at times he uses “his wife” and at other times “his woman,” giving us the following odd series of verses: “Therefore does a man leave his father and his mother and cling to **his wife** (*be-ishto*) and they become one flesh. And the two of them were naked, the human and **his woman** (*ve-ishto*) and they were not ashamed.” I believe the former is correct. It is “the man and his wife” who were naked and who hid from God, not “the human and his woman.”

This problem exists throughout Alter’s translation of the Genesis story; for Alter, it is “the human” who is searching for a mate, rather than “the man,” and it is “the human” who is punished for listening to “his woman,” as if his woman were a nonhuman posses-

sion, rather than “the man” who listened to his “wife.”

The King James translation is not only more accurate; it better captures the complex series of ideas expressed by the Bible in its first few chapters. The Hebrew word *adam*, whether it refers to the first person created by God or to the entire human race, does indeed mean “man.” The word, in Hebrew, serves the same role as “man” did in proper English; it refers simultaneously to one who is male, and also to mankind, which includes both men and women. In Genesis, Adam’s name is at times meant to connote both meanings simultaneously. He is both a male seeking a female counterpart, and he is the ancestor, and therefore the embodiment, of all mankind. Both meanings are expressed in Genesis’s description of his creation: “In the image of God created he **him**; male and female he created **them**.”

The etymology is theology: Adam is created male, but his very name reminds us that because man is made from *adamah*, he is mortal: He is from dust and to dust he shall return. The man named “Adam” needs the woman first and foremost because she, and she alone, provides him his source of immortality—and she does so not only as a woman but *as his wife*. It is not merely that the translation of *adam* and *ha-adamah* as “human” from “humus” conjures an odd image; Alter’s rendering fails to capture what the Bible means to convey. In Genesis, we are introduced to Adam to teach us, in part, that the first *man* needed a *wife*. Alter’s translation neutralizes a central teaching of the Bible, and the one

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notably most in tension with the ethics of today—that male and female are different, that one needs the other, that one without the other is incomplete.

### III.

Similar virtues and flaws can be found in Alter’s translation of the book for which the King James translation is especially immortal: the Psalms.

Here, too, one will at times find astonishingly insightful renderings, drawn from Alter’s sensitive readings of the original Hebrew. Let us take a verse from Psalm 130, central to Jewish prayer. The King James gives us “My soul waiteth for the Lord more than they

that watch for the morning: I say, more than they that watch for the morning.” The repetition parallels one in Hebrew: *mi-shomerim la-boker, shomerim la-boker*. Alter cleverly notes that the word *shomerim* can function as both a noun and verb, and he gives us instead “more than the dawn-watchers watch for the dawn.” This is exegetically wonderful, and the translation captures the play on words in the original.

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But then we have the Psalm describing the Jewish delight in the Torah, equally central to the liturgy. The King James:

The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Alter seeks to improve on this. Both final nouns in Hebrew, *nofet* and *tsufim*, are words for honey; the intention, Alter claims, is “to create a hyperintensification—the sweetest of imaginable honeys.” He therefore gives us the following.

More desired than gold  
than abundant fine gold,  
and sweeter than honey,  
quintessence of bees.

Quintessence of bees? The Hebrew word for bees, *devorim*, does not appear in the passage. Alter is engaging in *explanation* rather than *translation*, which he claims is the crime of many earlier English versions of the Bible. He himself comments that “the English equivalent offered here may sound like a turn of phrase one might encounter in the poetry of Wallace Stevens, but it offers a good semantic match for the Hebrew.” Perhaps, but the phrase “quintessence of bees” sounds like insects ground up in a blender, and does not make the Torah sound appetizing at all.

The most surprising, and jarring, diversion from the King James’s version of the Psalms can be found in Alter’s translation of the phrase that appears more

than any other in that entire book: the Hebrew words *mizmor le-David*. They introduce many of the Psalms, and in the King James, as in so many other translations, the words are rendered as “a psalm of David.” This accords well with the literal meaning and rhythm of the words and the order in Hebrew in which they appear. The Psalms are a window into David’s mind, and there we find a man who, though flawed, lives at every moment with a sense of the intimacy of God.

Alter rejects all this. “The Davidic authorship enshrined in Jewish and Christian tradition,” he informs us in his introduction to the Psalms, “has no credible historical grounding.” Therefore, for *mizmor le-David*, he gives us “a David psalm,” explaining:

The traditional rendering is “a psalm of David,” which tends to imply authorship. The Hebrew preposition *le* is ambiguous. It could mean “of” or “by”; it often means “belonging to”; another common meaning is “for”; or it might refer to something as loose as “in the manner of.” The choice of translation is intended to preserve these ambiguous possibilities.

The problem is, however, that the Psalms that begin *mizmor le-David* often ask the reader to see into David’s soul at moments in David’s life and career, as expressed by David himself. Thus Psalm 51 begins, in Alter’s version: “For the lead player, a David psalm, upon Nathan the prophet’s coming to him when he had come to be with Bathsheba.” A similar passage presents itself in the third Psalm, where Alter gives us “a David psalm, when he fled from Absalom his son.” Such ascriptions, Alter comments, “have no historical authority.” He goes on: “Because the psalm is spoken by someone beset by relentless enemies, it would have seemed plausible to the editor to tie it in to this moment of David’s flight after Absalom had usurped the throne.”

Alter is certainly entitled to his opinion. At the same time, the phrase, as written, is meant to ascribe the reflection to David. The text, as it currently stands, is insisting that it is indeed a *Psalm of David*. In inverting the words *mizmor* and *le-David*, Alter violates his own rule of representing the order and rhythm of Israelite syntax in order to emphasize that these Psalms are not authored by David himself. But if the Hebrew is presenting David as the author, why translate this differently? Is the obligation to uproot the traditional



ascription of authorship so important as to deviate from the simpler meaning of the Hebrew itself?

#### IV.

Alter's denial that the Psalms tell us anything about David seems linked to his own interpretation (in his commentary) of the book of Samuel. In that book's description of the rise of Israel's greatest king, Alter sees none of the Psalm's depiction of a David who is close to God in every aspect of his life. Rather, his depiction is of a man hell-bent on power. Samuel's depiction of David, for Alter, "is, in sum, the first full-length portrait of a Machiavellian prince in Western literature. The Book of Samuel is one of those rare masterworks that, like Stendhal's *Charterhouse of Parma*, evinces an unblinking and abidingly instructive know- ingness about man as a political animal in all his contradictions and venality and in all his susceptibility to the brutalization and the seductions of exercising power."

One need not approach David with the reverence of Jewish and Christian tradition in order to realize that this gets the most famous figure in the Bible wrong. The reason David is so compelling—both religiously and literarily—is that this man who lives a life of violence and desire simultaneously lives a life of love and faith. And when the former come into tension with the latter, the latter triumph. For this reason, the picture presented in Psalms is utterly consistent with that in Samuel, and David is nothing like Machiavelli's prince.

The most interesting aspects of his story lie in the fact that David, in the midst of violence and sin, destruction and desire, shows a love for God, and for particular people, including family and friends, even when that love does not seem to be in his political self-interest at all. What makes him remarkable—and to my mind, David is the most compelling religious and literary figure in human history—is that he refuses to act like Machiavelli's prince exactly when we expect



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him to do so.

This is most obvious in one of the most fascinating moments in David's story, when King Saul has been overcome by hatred for David and seeks his death. David finds Saul asleep in a cave; his enemy is now at his mercy. David's men expect him to act as anyone under threat would, and surely, as Machiavelli's prince might have. Here is what happens:

And David's men said to him, "Here is the day that the LORD said to you, 'Look, I am about to give your enemy into your hands, and you may do to him whatever seems good in your eyes.'" And David rose and stealthily cut off the skirt of the cloak that was Saul's. And it





## KING DAVID MOURNING ABSALOM

happened then that David was smitten with remorse because he had cut off the skirt of the cloak that was Saul's. And he said to his men, "The LORD forbid me, that I should have done this thing to my master, the LORD's anointed, to reach out my hand against him, for he is the LORDS's anointed."

One is struck by the utter lack of political self-interest here. David has come upon the very king who seeks to kill him, a threat that can be neutralized at this very instant, and yet he not only holds back, he is overcome with remorse for even having torn his enemy's robe. The cause of his remorse is made quite clear: Saul is God's anointed, proclaimed king by Samuel, and

David therefore has no right to harm him; indeed, even tearing his cloak was a sacril violation. The reverence David feels for God as expressed in the Psalms has a profound impact on his conduct, holding him back at the one moment when he could act to save his own life.

The story is difficult to reconcile with the image of David given to us by Alter. It is hard to think of Machiavelli's prince recoiling from removing a chief political rival, the supreme threat to his power, because of his enduring faith in the God who appointed that rival king. The significance of the moment is not lost on Alter himself, who reflects that "some interpreters have read the whole episode as an apology for David's innocence and piety in relation to Saul. But the very gesture of piety is also self-interested—David, after all, is conscious that he, too, is the LORD's anointed, and it is surely in his long-term interest that the reigning king's person should be held sacred by all his subjects."

Alter's explanation for David's action cannot be reconciled with the plain fact that the Bible explicitly tells us that David was "smitten with remorse." The book seeks not to describe the Machiavelian manner in which David publicly expresses remorse; rather, it

tells us what is occurring within him. Only one with a preconceived notion of who David is can read this passage as reflecting what Alter calls "the seductions of exercising power."

This theme continues throughout Alter's interpretation. Immediately after becoming king, David desires to build a temple for God that will crown his capital. God, in turn, informs David that his son and successor will build the temple and that he will father a dynasty. David's response is abject gratitude and humility: "And King David came and sat before the LORD and said, "Who am I, LORD God, and what is my house, the you have brought me this far?...Therefore are you Great, O LORD God, for there is none like You and there is no god beside You."

This is difficult to reconcile with Alter's image of David, and he knows it. "Although the thread of piety in David's complex and contradictory character could be perfectly authentic," Alter comments, "he does not elsewhere speak in this elevated, liturgical, celebratory style, and so the inference of the presence of another writer in this passage is plausible. Yet it is at least conceivable that the original writer has introduced this celebratory rhetoric to punctuate David's moment of respite in the story." In fact, David's words here are utterly consistent with the man who feels God's presence in every aspect of his career, and who in success and failure is depicted by the Psalms as humbling himself before the divine.

Equally irreconcilable with a Machiavellian interpretation is David's relationship with those he loves. There is David's farewell from Saul's son, Jonathan: "Just as the lad came, David arose from by the mound and fell on his face...and bowed three times, and each man kissed the other and each wept for the other, though David the longer." The scene is compelling precisely because each one of these beloved comrades is the chief rival to the other for the throne—Jonathan is Saul's heir, and David the chief threat to Saul's dynasty—yet each weeps for the fact that he's parting from the other, and the text goes out of its way to emphasize that *David is more overcome than Jonathan*. The David who weeps for his chief rival to the throne, without a scintilla of ambition or desire for power, is the same person who later weeps at the death of his rebellious son Absalom, who has rebelled against him and posed the greatest threat to his own power.

Is David's story filled with violence? Yes. Does he falter and fail, overcome at times by anger and desire? Absolutely. But is he a power-hungry prince, a Machiavellian man who seeks first and foremost to wield power—a man who, to summon Machiavelli's famous phrase, would rather be feared than loved? Never in the annals of the literature has there been a warrior and statesman less Machiavellian. The David revered by traditional Jews and Christians is far more evident in the text than Alter chooses to acknowledge.

## V.

This staggeringly ambitious project took three decades to complete. But for whom exactly has this translation been made? Who is his audience? Who does Alter hope will use his version of the Bible?

Alter makes clear that his translation, com-

mentary, and interpretive method are premised on a rejection of all that traditional Judaism, and much of traditional Christianity, believes the Bible to be. He begins his introduction to the Pentateuch by stressing his acceptance of the documentary hypothesis that the first five books of the Bible were not written by Moses at all: "Scholarship for more than two centuries has agreed that the Five Books are drawn together from different literary sources." What he seeks, in this work, is an appreciation of the Bible not as revelation but as literature. The Pentateuch, he insists, "is a work assembled by many hands, reflecting different viewpoints, and representing literary activity that spanned several centuries." Still, in his view, the redacted text "creates some sense of continuity and development," yielding "an overarching literary structure we can call, in the singular version of the title, the Torah." This translation, it would seem, is for the secular reader of the Bible, who seeks not prophecy but literary splendor.

Yet elsewhere in his introduction, Alter addresses one of the most obvious questions facing the biblical translator: How should we render the name of God, which appears throughout the Hebrew Bible with the letters YHVH? This is God's personal name, which traditional Jews have refused to pronounce. Vowelizing this name, Alter tells us, "would have given the English version a certain academic-archaeological coloration that I preferred to avoid, and it would also have introduced a certain discomfort at least for some Jewish readers of the translation." Alter ends up fol-

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lowing the King James by rendering YHVH as "the LORD," explaining that "my aim has been to name the deity in English in ways that would be in keeping with the overall concert of literary effects that the translation strives to create." But in the Bible, God is not at all introduced as the "LORD," but as a character in the story—the character, One Who falls in love with a people. From a purely literary perspective, there is no reason whatsoever to follow the King James in this respect. There is, in fact, only one reason for refusing to place God's name in the biblical translation, and for replacing it with "the LORD"—a way of reading the text that has no foundation in the text itself and comes only out of a reverence for Jewish history.



The tension in the way we Jews approach the God of the Bible—He is both One Who is in love with us as a people, Who seeks communion with us, and also an unknowable omnipotent being Who is utterly unlike us—is captured in the way Jewish parlance refers to the biblical God. He is first and foremost *Hashem*, a Hebrew word that means “the name” but is actually used as a personal name in itself. It reflects both a desire to name the Divine Lover of Israel, while making clear our awareness that we cannot say His actual name. The appellation connotes both love and fear, closeness and distance.

But if one seeks to translate the Bible as a literary text, what possible excuse is there for not naming the book’s central character? If one is translating a book that is produced not by God but men, edited and redacted over centuries, what possible excuse is there to take into account the pieties of religious Jews in composing what Alter claims is a scholarly and accurate Hebrew translation? Why allow the traditional sensibilities of biblical believers to affect almost every sentence?

This question was raised by Adam Kirsch in reviewing Alter’s translation of the Psalms (published on its own in 2009 before Alter completed the entire work). Kirsch insightfully notes the tension—indeed, the outright contradiction—between the literary approach Alter applies to the Bible and his translation of the Name that appears more than any other in the Bible. From a literary perspective, as I have argued, there is absolutely no reason to not name the central character. To do otherwise because of the religious reverence of readers, Kirsch reflects,

is silently to admit what Alter’s translation sets out to deny—that the Psalms cannot, should not, be translated with the same detachment that we would bring to any other ancient text.... If even Alter feels compelled to call God “the Lord,” it is not out of piety, but out of a sense that this honorific is a last remaining sign of our culture’s intimate and reverent relationship with the Bible. Yahweh is the strange-sounding name of an ancient Middle Eastern deity...but the Lord is the name of God. Not until God is no longer the Lord will it be possible to have a perfectly scholarly translation of the Psalms. But on that day we may no longer need the Psalms, or understand them.

This is exactly right, and what is true of the Psalms can be said of Alter’s entire translation. Alter’s version of the Bible has a contradiction at its core; it seeks readers who are reverent of the Bible but builds its entire method on denying all they believe about the Bible.

And this is why Jews who read scripture in the way that their ancestors did can love the King James version of the Hebrew Bible despite its inaccuracies in a way that they never can love Alter’s. Over 800 years ago, Maimonides authored a remarkable responsum, addressing the question of whether Jews were permitted to study the Torah together with Christians. Maimonides was himself critical of Christianity, seeing its Trinitarian theology as a violation of biblical monotheism. He nevertheless replied that because both Jews and Christians share a reverence for the Hebrew text, and believe it to be an embodiment of revelation, this commonality allows them to engage the text together and even to argue about the proper translation and interpretation of that text.

At the same time, he added, Jews should not read the Bible with those who deny its divine source, even if those individuals are more monotheistic than the adherents of Christianity, for no exegetical bond exists without shared reverence for the text. The authors of the King James Bible did not know any Jews, but Jews have every reason to feel an admiration for their work. And in a United States whose Hebraic roots were so influenced by the King James, traditional Jews can even feel gratitude for a work that has had such a positive impact on the American imagination.

The same can never be felt for Alter’s work. The intellect and scholarship made manifest in his translation and commentary are astoundingly impressive, as are the years of work invested in producing it. But in an age when so many deny all that the Bible proclaims—when what was once acclaimed as the Good Book is not even acknowledged as an important book—believers in biblical revelation will seek a translation that reflects all that the Bible and its heroes have been to them.

They will continue to cherish a translation that, despite its inaccuracies, allows its readers to understand the reverence and love lavished by millions of Jews and Christians upon this text—and why, despite the scorn and cynicism of so many today, they will continue to love and revere it still. 📖