

Ringgren 2003, 411–412

2. *Occurrences.* The verb *šāmaḥ* occurs 33 times in the OT, including 15 times in the qal (also once in Sirach), 14 in the hiphil, and 4 in the piel;

...the subst. *šemaḥ* occurs 12 times (also once in Sirach).

Of the 45 occurrences of the root, 10 are found in Isaiah, 6 each in Genesis and Ezekiel, and 5 in the Psalms. **II.OT.**

1. *Verb.* The verb is associated first of all with the life of plants. The J creation account in Genesis describes the primal state of the world when "no plant of the field was yet in the earth and no herb 'ēšēḥ of the field had yet sprung up" because it had not yet rained (Gen. 2:5, qal). Yahweh then causes every sort of tree to grow from the ground (^a*dāmā*) (2:9, hiphil). Hence the sprouting forth of plants is one of God's creative acts. By contrast, after the Fall the cursed ground will bring forth only thorns and thistles (3:18). In his dream Pharaoh sees seven plump and good ears of grain and seven thin and blighted ears growing up (41:6,23; 'ālā is used in reference to the strong, beautiful ears, vv. 5,22). The plagues in Egypt include the locusts that devour every tree "that grows in the field", (*šōmeaḥ* Ex. 10:5). Qoheleth boasts of having made pools from which to water the sprouting trees he planted (Eccl. 2:6). Ezekiel describes Zedekiah as a vine that Nebuchadnezzar, portrayed as an eagle, plants and that "sprouts" forth with branches but then stretches out its roots toward another eagle (i.e., Egypt; Ezk. 17:6). This disloyalty can only lead to disaster; the vine is pulled up by its roots, and its sprouting shoots wither where it once grew forth (*šmḥ*, vv. 9-10). The hiphil forms are also used several times in the literal sense. Dt. 29:22 (Eng. 23) announces that if the covenant is broken, the land will be

Lipschits 2010, 130–131

The root š-m-ḥ (רמח) appears in the Hebrew Bible 33 times as a verb (mainly in the Qal and Hiphil - 15 and 14 times respectively - but also four times in the Piel).

[Substantive see towards end]

Usually the verb is connected to the growth of plants (see, e.g., Gen 2:5,9; 3:18; 41:6, 23; Exod 10:5; Deut 29:22; Isa 61:11; Ps 104:14),

devastated such that it cannot be planted (*zr*'), nor will it make anything sprout forth (*šmh*, hiphil); indeed, not a single blade of grass will grow (*'ālā*). According to **Ps. 104:14**, God's creative care makes grass grow for cattle and plants grow for people, (*šmh*, hiphil). In his first discourse to Job, God similarly emphasizes that he sends the rain to quench the desert and to "make the ground put forth grass" (Job 38:27). Ps. 147:8 extols God for sending the rain and making the grass grow on the hills. Deutero-Isaiah then uses this fact to portray the power of God's word. Just as the rain and snow make the earth bring forth growth, so also shall God's word "not return to me empty" (**Isa. 55:10-11**). Trito-Isaiah uses a similar image in asserting that just as the earth brings forth its shoots (*šemaḥ*), and a garden "causes what is sown in it to spring up", (*šmh*, hiphil), so also will Yahweh cause "righteousness" to sprout forth (hiphil, metaphorically; **61:11**, referring back to the "seed whom Yahweh has blessed," i.e., Israel [v. 9]).

In a more general sense, *šmh* refers to the growth of hair (Lev. 13:27) or of healing skin (Isa. 58:8, metaphorically). The piel refers in a similarly metaphorical fashion to the "growth" of Samson's hair (**Jgs. 16:22**), of a young woman's (i.e., Jerusalem's) hair (**Ezk. 16:7**), and to the beards of David's envoys defiled by the Ammonites (**2 S. 10:5 par. 1 Ch. 19:5**).

In a purely metaphorical sense, *šāmaḥ* can also be said of people. One person dies, and another springs forth from the earth (Job 8:19; cf. Sir. 14:18, which asserts that the generations are like leaves sprouting forth on trees: "one dies and another matures [*gāmal*]").

In Deutero-Isaiah God promises his servant Israel that he will "pour water on the thirsty land" so that Israel's descendants "shall

...but also to the growth of hair (Lev 13:27; Judg 16:22; 2 Sam 10:5 [= 1 Chr 19:5]; Ezek 16:7). In one case the verb was used to symbolize the healing of the skin (Isa 58:8),

...in another as a metaphor for the birth (or rebirth) of a child (Job 9:19, and cf. Ben Sira 14:18),

...and in still another as a metaphor for the birth (or rebirth) of the nation (Isa 44:4).

spring up like willows by flowing streams" (Isa. 44:4, preserving thus the association with the plant world).

Abstract notions can also "spring up," e.g., faithfulness (Ps. 85:12[11], par. righteousness from heaven), trouble (Job 5:6), the new things in Deutero-Isaiah (Isa. 42:9; 43:19), and perhaps salvation itself, albeit not explicitly mentioned (Zech. 6: 12).

The hiphil twice takes the obj. → קרן *qeren*, "horn." According to Ps. 132:17, Yahweh "will cause a horn to sprout up for David" and has prepared (*ārak*) "a lamp for my anointed one." The horn symbolizes power, particularly that of the king, or even the king himself, while the lamp refers to the stability of the dynasty. Ezekiel picks up this imagery and associates it with Israel, asserting that the people will receive new power (Ezk. 29:21).

It is less likely that the reference here is to a messianic figure; the expression is rather alluding to "approaching deliverance for Israel." In his "last words," David acknowledges that because of the covenant, Yahweh caused his *yesa'* and all his */:tepe!j* to sprout forth (2 S. 23:5), i.e., Yahweh has made him successful and fulfilled all his wishes. This passage may also allude to the dynasty. According to Isa. 45:8, Yahweh's creative power (*biirii'*) will cause salvation (*yesa'*) and righteousness to sprout up. The imagery of righteousness raining down from heaven and the skies completes the metaphor from the world of plants (*rp, nzl*; concerning this imagery, cf. Ps. 72:6-7 with *miitiir* and *piiraJ:t*). Concerning Jer. 33:15, see below.

In this symbolic way, too, we find "Truth shall spring out of the earth" (Ps 85:12), "salvation spring up" (Isa 45:8), and, in contrast, "trouble will not sprout from the ground" (Job 5:6).

In two cases the verb in the Hiphil was connected to קרן ("horn"). In Ps 132: 17 it seems that the horn is a symbol for the growing power and eternity of the king, while in Ezek 29:21 it symbolizes the growing power (and eternity?) of Israel.

[See Ringgren above] The substantive *šēmaḥ* appeared in the Hebrew Bible 12 times, usually in reference to plants, or even in a wider reference to anything that sprouts from and grows on the land (and cf. Gen 19:25; Isa 61: 11; Ezek 16:7; Hos 8:7; Ps 65:11 [10]).

2. *!jema/:t*. The subs.t. *!jema/:t* refers to that which sprouts, i.e., "growth." The rain of sulfur and fire on Sodom and Gomorrah also destroys all plants and "growth" on the ground (Gen. 19:25). By contrast, God softens the field with rain and blesses its growth (Ps. 65:11[10], an allusion to the vivifying autumnal rains). God's salvific work is compared to the sprouting of new growth (Isa. 61: 11; see above), and prosperous Jerusalem with the sprouting plants of the field (Ezk. 16:7). Sir. 40:22 praises the beauty of green shoots. Hosea asserts in the fashion of a proverb that those who sow the wind will reap the whirlwind, and that sprouts without heads will yield no meal (Hos. 8:7), i.e., that Israel's idolatry accomplishes nothing, particularly not the intended fertility; indeed, it has even worse consequences in that Israel's enemies will devour the growth of the field.

In Jeremiah and Zechariah, *šēmaḥ* has become a messianic title. According to Jer. 23:5, Yahweh will raise up for David a *šēmaḥ šaddîq* who will reign as king and execute justice and righteousness. He will be called *yhwḥ šidqēnû* (v. 6). With regard to the expression *šēmaḥ šaddîq*, one might mention the expression *šmḥ šdq* in a 3d-century Phoenician inscription with the meaning "legitimate sprout, legal heir." The reference is thus to a legitimate ruler from the Davidic dynasty, and the name obviously alludes to Zedekiah; this ruler will actualize much more effectively than did Zedekiah the royal ideal expressed in the name.

The oracle is reinterpreted in 33:15-16, though here the name "Yahweh is our righteousness" is transferred to Jerusalem.

In Jer 23:5; 33:15-16 and in Zech 3:8; 6:12-13 (and cf. also Isa 4:2) *šēmaḥ* became a messianic title, probably as part of a textual and ideological process between the texts. According to Jer 23:5, the Lord will raise up to David *šēmaḥ šaddîq* (a righteous branch," or perhaps, after Swetnam (1965, 29-40), and parallel to Ugaritic texts and a fourth- or third-century B.C.E. Phoenician inscription from Lapethos and Idalion in Cyprus: "legitimate scion"), "who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land." According to v. 6, his name will be *yhwḥ šidqēnû* (*yhwḥ* is our righteousness), with a clear allusion to King Zedekiah by a deliberate reversal of the meaning of his name.

In 33: 15-16 this oracle is reinterpreted and the name *yhwḥ šidqēnû* is transferred to Jerusalem (Thompson 1980,601)."