

## Ketib (כתיב) --- Qere (קרא)

The *ketib* and *qere* has been the subject of many scholarly works. The classic work on the subject is:

Gordis, R. *The Biblical Text in the Making: A Study of the Kethib-Qere*. New York: Ktav Pub. House, 1971.

On page 82---see at the end of this text--- Gordis categorizes all the pairs into “equally satisfactory”, “equally unsatisfactory”, “*ketib* superior to *qere*” and “*qere* superior to *ketib*”.

As regards the pairs that I have been using, in *Exodus* 16, verses 2 and 7, Gordis considers them equally satisfactory:

### LIST 56

#### KQ, IN DIFFERENT CONJUGATIONS WITH IDENTICAL MEANINGS.

-	קרי	כתיב	
-	וַיִּלֹּנוּ	וַיִּלִּינוּ	שם' טז, 2
-	תִּלְיִנוּ	תִּלְוִנוּ	טז, 7
-	וַיִּלֹּנוּ	וַיִּלְוִנוּ	במ' יד, 36
-	תִּלְיִנוּ	תִּלְוִנוּ	טז, 11

In fact if we look at the *Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, p.534a we see that the *ketib* in 16:2 and the *qere* in 16:7 are both niph'al forms, whereas the *ketib* in 16:7 and the *qere* in 16:2 are both hiph'al forms. In other words, the *ketib* in one verse becomes (aside from the person) the *qere* in the other!! The root לוּן only appears a few times in the *Bible* and so it is difficult to arrive at a definite conclusion, but apparently both the niph'al and hiph'al seem to mean “to murmur (against)”.

On page 20, Gordis lists sixteen examples (among many) of this type, where the *ketib* in one is the *qere* in another and uses this to argue that the *qere* can not be simply viewed as a correction.

In some cases the *qere* does not make sense whereas as the *ketib* does. This is the case in *Genesis* 30:11. Here the text with the *qere* would read:

וַתֹּאמֶר לְאֵה בְּגַד וַתְּקַרָּא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ גָּד.

which does not make sense.

But text with the *ketib* reads: בָּא גָּד which goes with the last words:

וַתְּקַרָּא אֶת־שְׁמוֹ גָּד.

“Leah said ‘What luck’ So she named him Gad.” [Jewish Publication Society *Torah*, p. 53, fn. c].

So in this case the *ketib* superior to *qere*.

## APPENDIX A

### THE DETAILED RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS

#### *Relative Value of the KQ*

1.	K and Q equally satisfactory		
	a. definite	657	
	b. doubtful	58	
	Total		715
2.	K and Q equally unsatisfactory		
	a. definite	25	
	b. doubtful	4	
	Total		29
3.	K superior to Q		
	a. definite	108	
	b. doubtful	25	
	Total		133
4.	Q superior to K		
	a. definite	132	
	b. doubtful	68	
	Total		200
	GRAND TOTAL	1077	
	Lists #1-8	273	
		1350	

#### PERCENTAGE TOTALS

K and Q equally satisfactory	66.38%
K and Q equally unsatisfactory	2.69%
K superior to Q	12.34%
Q superior to K	18.57%