

in Psalm 90:9 alpha parallels *shanenu* ("our years") in beta. *Kal . . . panu* ("all . . . we have faced") parallels *kilinu* ("we end") in beta. This leaves us *b'ebascha* ("thy wrath") demanding a matching term. *K'mo hegeh* ("as in a sigh") is given.

The spider appears but twice in the Hebrew Bible: Job 8:14—"And the web of the spider is his trust," and Isaiah 59:5—"And they shall weave a spider's web." The Hebrew for spider is *akkabis*; for web, *kur*.

How did Smith and his disciple Allen get entangled in spinneret silk? Whence the "cobweb?" They somehow extract it from the phrase *k'mo hegeh* ("as in a sigh"). Some translators render the two words, "as a tale that is told." The noun *hegeh* derives from the verb *hagah*, meaning to point, to pierce, to reason, argue, pronounce, recite, spell, murmur a charm. *Hegeh*, the noun, is found three times in the Old Testament: our Psalm 90:9; Job 37:2—"And the sound that goeth out of His mouth"; and Ezekiel 2:10—"And there was written therein lamentations, and *moaning*, and woe." There is neither spider nor web associated with *hegeh* in these verses.

Smith knew post-Biblical Hebrew literature (Talmud and Midrash), where in the spider symbolizes bad luck. In the Babylonian Talmud, for example, we find, "The evil inclination is at first like the thread of a spider. . . ." The evil inclination is the fuel kindling God's wrath. Thus Smith rounds out the parallelism in concept, forging a gossamer link between *hegeh* and "cobweb." Allen must have reasoned: where there is a web there must be a spider.

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Erratum: Wrong Man

In my letter in the issue of 24 December ("Looking ahead," p. 1667), I erroneously made Klement Gottwald, instead of Walter Ulbricht, the protagonist of "a story popular in Germany (East and West) during the 1950's." I am indebted to Károly Balogh for reminding me that Gottwald was Ulbricht's Czech counterpart.

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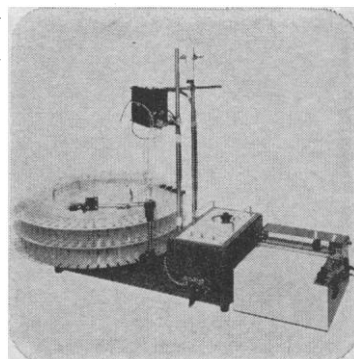


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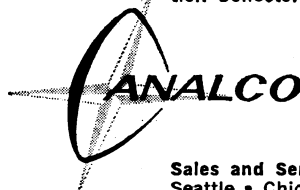
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