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M.D. Cassuto's Notes on the Aleppo Codex

The Aleppo Codex is one of the most important manuscripts of the Bible from the Massoretic period. For hundreds of years the manuscript was preserved by the community of Aleppo in Syria. In 1943 the Hebrew University of Jerusalem initiated a project to publish a new and more accurate edition of the Massoretic text. For this purpose Professor M.D. Cassuto went to Aleppo late that year to examine the codex. After great efforts, he was allowed to study the manuscript and make notes of his findings, but was not permitted to photograph it. For five days Cassuto studied the codex for a number of hours each day and took copious notes.

Cassuto's findings were never published; the Aleppo Codex, damaged in the riots of 1947, was brought to Jerusalem in 1958, but part of it was lacking, including most of the Pentateuch. The good fortune is that most of Cassuto's notes deal with the part of the codex that was lost. Cassuto examined the Pentateuch, Genesis in particular, and described in great detail the structure of the entire Codex and the chapters of *Massora* appended before and after the text of the Bible. Cassuto's lists, published here, enable us to reconstruct partially the missing parts of the manuscript and solve questions that were left unsolved by the incomplete condition in which it arrived in Jerusalem.

Some of the issues about which Cassuto's notes are edifying: (1) open and closed *parshiyot*: resolving the question of whether Maimonides referred to the Aleppo Codex as the best codex available; (2) the orthography of the Pentateuch; (3) an accurate reconstruction of the chapters of *Massora* appended to the codex; (4) the physical description of the manuscript in its entirety; (5) the Palestinian tradition of dividing the Pentateuch into weekly portions; (6) questions of pointing and accentuation; (7) points of disagreement between Ben Asher and Ben Naftali; (8) accurate transcriptions of the colophons and dedicatory inscriptions in the manuscript.