

THE WORLD JEWISH BIBLE SOCIETY

דור לדור

DOR^{LE}DOR

KING SAUL IN WORLD LITERATURE

SOL LIPTZIN

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HAIM GEVARYAHU

OUR BIBLE QUIZ

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KING SAUL IN WORLD LITERATURE

by SOL LIPTZIN

Biblical themes have been a constant source of inspiration to creative minds down the centuries. Biblical figures, ranging from Cain, Noah and Isaac to Jephtha, Samson and Esther have been reinterpreted in artistic works in many tongues. None have experienced a greater vogue in drama and fiction than Joseph and none have offered greater problems for the poetic imagination than Moses, whose personality was felt to be so overpowering that few writers had the hardihood to wrestle with him in prose or verse as did the titanic sculptor Michelangelo in the visual arts. King Saul, whom Ernest Renan saw as the most tragic figure of all the biblical heroes, fascinated painters from Rembrandt to Joseph Israels, musicians from Handel to Honneger, writers from Grimmelshausen, the seventeenth-century German novelist, and Pierre Du Ryer, the forerunner of Racine, to André Gide, the French Symbolist, and Torahiko Kori, the Japanese dramatist.

No amount of justification for David, his adversary and successor, has been able to rob Saul of human sympathy in all ages. Voltaire, as the outstanding representative of the Age of Enlightenment, depicted him as the innocent victim of religious fanaticism in the polemic drama *Saul*, written in 1763. The supreme master of irony levelled such vitriolic attacks upon the foes of the Jewish king, especially upon the priesthood as personified by Samuel, and was so certain of arousing the resentment of the French clergy by his pointed analogies to contemporary events and institutions, that he feared to acknowledge his authorship of this dramatic satire and therefore had it published as a translation from the English.

In Vittorio Alfieri's *Saul*, Italian classical tragedy reached its climax. Appearing in 1784, this psychological drama experienced a European vogue in English, French and German adaptations and translations. It concentrated on

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the final hours of a ruler who had to perish because he could not cooperate with his bravest and wisest subject, David of Bethlehem.

Saul was also a favorite hero of the Romantic generation of the early nineteenth century. In England, Lord Byron devoted to him four of the twenty-three *Hebrew Melodies*. The poet's admiration for the superior individual who walked to his doom with head unbowed was especially evident in the "Song of Saul Before His Last Battle", composed in 1815.

In France, Lamartine made the first Jewish monarch the central figure of the lyric drama *Saul*, which was completed in 1818 under the influence of Alfieri but which was impregnated with Byronic melancholy, fatalism and defiance.

In Germany, Friedrich Rückert portrayed both the rise and the fall of Saul in a lengthy versified drama of 1843, entitled *Saul und David. Ein Drama der heiligen Geschichte*.

The successors of the Romanticists in Central Europe, the generation that fought against religious obscurantism and the reactionary politics of the Holy Alliance, reverted to the tradition of Voltaire and saw again in Saul primarily the opponent of the clergy and the foe of religious orthodoxy. Karl Gutzkow, the uncrowned head of Jungdeutschland, the literary movement of the radicals between the revolts of 1830 and 1848, made the biblical monarch the champion of tolerance and freedom in a tragedy of 1839 entitled *König Saul*. Having shortly before served a prison sentence because of his "contemptuous presentation of the religion of the Christian communities," Gutzkow saw a kindred spirit in the unhappy king whose fatal end was caused by his refusal to submit to the insolent demands of the priests led by Samuel. Gutzkow's anti-clericalism, which had found its first formulation in his early novel *Maha Guru* and which was later to attain even more vigorous expression in the drama *Uriel Acosta* and in the nine-volume prose epic *Der Zauberer von Rom*, gave to his version of the biblical subject a contemporary interest and a political significance far beyond its literary value. His example was followed a year later by his admirer and ally, the Jewish-Bohemian poet Karl Beck, whose drama *Saul* also laid great stress upon the Jewish monarch's nobility of soul.

As late as 1862, the Suabian lyricist J.G. Fischer still walked in the footsteps of Gutzkow and, in his *Saul*, he too centered the dramatic interest upon the conflict between king and clergy. Even in the twentieth century the tradition begun by Voltaire in his portrait of the first Jewish ruler and continued by Gutzkow and his disciples has not entirely died out. In 1920, the Dutch dramatist L. Knappert, published his tragedy *Saul, Koning in Israel*, wherein Saul is presented as a tolerant and sympathetic innovator who is opposed by the fanatical adherents of the old order, Samuel and the prophets, and wherein

David is portrayed as an ambitious youth who enters into an alliance with Samuel because he wishes to gain the crown.

Robert Browning's *Saul*, published in fragmentary form in 1845 and in completed form ten years later, is a dramatic monologue spoken and sung by David, who recalls the memorable hour when Abner called upon him, the shepherd lad, to solace with his music the stricken king. The aging monarch, whose brow had been bent by brooding over errors he had committed during his reign, was uplifted from despair by David's comforting words, such as "'Tis not what man *Does* which exalts him but what man *Would* do!" and by David's faith in the power of loving and of being beloved to raise man from sorrow and to help him bear life's heavy burden.

With André Gide's *Saul*, the first attempt is made to interpret the ancient struggle between Saul and David in terms of modern psychology. Written in 1896, while Gide was under the influence of Oscar Wilde and published two years later, the tragedy seeks to win sympathy for a noble individual conquered and enslaved by morbid desires and sexual aberrations. The French Symbolist transfers to Saul the religious and moral conflicts which agitated his own soul and, anticipating Freud's scientific findings, he explores with literary equipment the twilight zone of man's complex psychic structure.

Richard Beer-Hofmann's drama dealing with the conflict between Saul and David appeared in the eventful year 1933, when the Nazis came to power and when books by non-Aryan authors were set afire in the public squares of German towns. Entitled *Der junge David*, it embraced the critical days which sealed the doom of Saul and which brought his more fortunate younger rival to the throne. The Viennese Jewish dramatist, whose attitude to the Bible, as already revealed in his earlier play *Jaakob's Traum*, was one of reverence and humility, did not wish to enter into competition with the biblical chronicler and was therefore generally silent when the biblical narrator waxed eloquent and was most eloquent when his model did not overawe him with too many details.

The dramatist depicts the disintegration of a powerful personality, the pathetic wreck of a gigantic will, the desolate end of a popular idol. The shy herdsman of the tribe of Benjamin, who once went forth to look for his father's she-asses and found a kingdom, became a harried ruler who for a quarter of a century had to bear on his broad shoulders the worries of a stubborn little people wedged in between many hostile neighbors. He had to fight innumerable battles and to wade in blood. In the process, he developed into a misanthropic despot, feared but no longer loved. Saul's face, that shone with pride, strength and kindness at his coronation, became clouded in the course of time with melancholy, suspicion, hate, envy and helpless rage. In the end, this master-

builder of Israel, who forged twelve discordant tribes into a strong, united people, had to witness the collapse of his proud structure on the bloody field of Gilboa, a collapse hastened by his break with David and David's followers.

In David Pinski's Yiddish drama *Shaul*, published in 1955, the impact of moral dilemmas posed by the Nazi Holocaust is evident in the questioning of God's ways with man. Did Saul deserve the fate decreed for him by God's spokesman Samuel? Was not Saul more sinned against than sinning? Samuel, as the prophet of God's will, anoints the peasant Saul as king but also demands of him absolute obedience to God's will. If God ordained that Amalek be destroyed utterly, then Saul must not show mercy even to women, children, and the captured young king Agag. Saul balks at such cruel demands of the prophet. The sins of Amalek were sins of an earlier generation, that of Moses, for which the later generation of Agag cannot be held responsible. If Samuel's God is the Lord of Vengeance, Saul's God is the Lord of Mercy. When Saul insists on listening to the voice of his own conscience and on sparing Agag, Samuel, in religious frenzy, strikes down the unarmed royal prisoner and in God's name deposes Saul and anoints David.

The drama portrays how the good King Saul, who began his reign by forgiving his opponents and scoffers, gradually becomes hardened and tyrannical in the course of his tempestuous reign. If God sanctions injustice and the destruction of the innocent, then he, the king, may also drug his conscience and commit injustice. He will not relinquish his throne to the young upstart, the singer David. He orders the death of the priests of Nob who sheltered David. However, when he learns that Doeg, in executing this command, also slew the women and babes of this priestly city, then he is crushed by the burden of this terrific guilt. He is no Hitler. Basically good, he broods incessantly over the need of terror in order to preserve his throne. "I have committed an injustice," he exclaims and then adds: "Samuel's injustice toward me drove me to this deed." Thereafter Saul knows that retribution will come, that he is doomed. He goes into battle against the Philistines, a broken man, without hope of surviving.

As in former centuries and in our own, the fate of King Saul will continue to stimulate writers to wrestle with moral dilemmas, to probe God's ways with man, to confront the religious establishment with the claims of the individual's conscience, and to explore the ramifications of the conflict between age and youth. The biblical chronicler of the *Book of Samuel* raised questions which have reverberated and will continue to reverberate down the generations. He touched on eternal problems which, by definition, are problems that cannot be solved short of eternity, but with which the human mind must occupy itself so long as man fulfills his destiny as the sole questioning species on earth.

WHAT HAPPENED TO UZZIAH'S BONES

THE SECOND GRAVESTONE OF KING UZZIAH

By BEN ZION LURIA

II Kings 15, Reading of March 8 in the Triennial Bible Reading Calendar

One of the remarkable outcomes of the Six Day War is the new accessibility of so many historical sites. Archeology is the most favorite indoor and outdoor hobby of Israelis, young and old. Wise and culturally inquisitive tourists slip away from their "packaged" tours, if only for one day, to experience the personal identification with Jewish history by visiting out-of-the way biblical places. For example, how many tourists have seen from afar or looked closely at the tombs of the Judean kings in the Arab village of Silwan, within easy open view from the Old City gate nearest the Western Wall? The following article deals with the burial place and tombstone of one of the most prominent Judean kings, Uzziah, called also Azariah in the Bible...

In the twenty and seventh year of Jeroboam, king of Israel, Azariah (Uzziah) son of Amaziah, king of Judah, began to reign. Sixteen years old was he when he began to reign; and he reigned two and fifty years in Jerusalem. And he did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that his father Amaziah had done. . . . And Azariah slept with his fathers; and they buried him with his fathers in the city of David.

II Kings 15:1, 2, 3, 7.

A glance at the inscription on Uzziah's gravestone (see photograph and translation of the inscription on page 6) will reveal the fact that the king's remains were removed from his original resting place and reinterred in a second place. E. L. Sukenik, who discovered this inscription in the Russian monastery on the Mount of Olives, wrote that it is difficult to determine exactly the age of this inscription. Comparing the script with similar ones on sarcophagi, he was inclined to date it to the last of the Hasmonean dynasty, or the end of the second century B.C.E.

Ben Zion Luria, who is the editor of *Beth Mikra*, the Hebrew publication of the Israel Society for Biblical Research, is known as an authority in the historical topography of Israel and the history of the Second Commonwealth. He has published a number of books on histo-



ENGLISH TRANSLATION:

To this place were brought
The bones of Uzziah
King of Judah
Do not Open.

התרגום :

לכאן הובאו
עצמות עוזיהו
מלך יהודה
ולא לפתוח.

זו לשון הכתובת

לכה התיח
טמי עזייה
מלך יהודה
ולאלמפתח

rical maps of Israel and historical sites, among them "Geographical Districts in Israel", "The Jews of Syria in the Times of Mishna and Talmud", "Megillat Taanit", "King Jannai", and "The Copper Scroll", all in Hebrew.

His most favorite subject is Jerusalem and its historical sites upon which he has lectured at the President's Bible Circle and published articles in Beth Mikra. The present article is a shortened version of one of these lectures.

Sukenik's research was followed by Y. N. Epstein who connected it with the discussions in the Talmud between the sages and Rabbi Akiba concerning the clearing of graves in the city of Jerusalem. Of the six references on this subject, two of them are brought here for a possible clue to the solution of our problem.

Ten ordinances were promulgated in Jerusalem. . . Burial places were to be removed except for the graves of the House of David and of the Prophetess Hulda since they were kept intact from the days of the early prophets. And when they cleared the graves, why did they leave these? They said: There was a tunnel leading from the tomb to the outside which allowed for the uncleanness to be emitted to the Kidron Valley.

Abot de Rabbi Natan, First Schechter Edition, ch. 35.

All the graves in Jerusalem are to be emptied except that of the king and that of the prophet. Rabbi Akiba said: These too are to be cleared. Whereupon they queried: But the graves of the House of David and Hulda's have been in Jerusalem, and no man ever touched them. And he replied: Do you bring proof from these? There was a tunnel leading away from it and uncleanness was emitted to the Kidron Valley.

Tosefta Baba Batra, ch. 1. Section 11.

According to biblical legislation, the presence of a corpse produces defilement (Deuteronomy 17:16). Ezekiel was the first protagonist for the elimination of all such defilement from the city of Jerusalem which was to be holy through its purity. For the divine presence to dwell in the sacred city, even the mortal remains of kings must be removed as well as their "high places" which refer to their tombstones (Ez. 43:7).

It is important to note that already in the days of the First Temple, there were monuments over the graves of the kings of the House of David and of others who were revered by the people. The last of the kings of Judah to be interred in or near the tombs of the House of David was Hezekiah, in the year 698 B.C.E. (II Chronicles 32:33). The few Jews remaining in Jerusalem after the destruction of the Temple kept alive the tradition of his burial place, and it is quite likely that the monument over it was not destroyed when the city was sacked. At any rate, the place was well known when the exiles returned to

Zion, and served as a landmark in the rebuilding of the city wall by Nehemiah, 250 years after the burial of the last king there. "Nehemiah, son of Azbuk, repaired the outer wall up to the place opposite the sepulchres of David" (Nehemiah 3:16).

Hulda, the prophetess adds, died about the year 700 B.C.E. Her burial place is not known. One of the gates to the Second Temple Mount was called the Hulda Gate (*You can see it today in the new excavation near the Western Wall*). Could it be that the name was so called because the gate was built close by her burial place? At any rate, her burial place was well known, probably because the tombstone above it was held sacred by the people who passed on the tradition from generation to generation.

According to the Halacha, the presence of a corpse will defile everything, houses and all, above it and below it. But if there is an opening in the side wall of a tomb, then the defilement goes sideways rather than upwards. This is the meaning of the "tunnels" near the tombs of the royal House of David and of Hulda which were exempt from removal when the city was cleansed from all defilements of the dead.

Uzziah, because of his illness of leprosy, was not buried in the tombs of the House of David but somewhere else inside the city walls. He was not the only Judean king deprived of this privileged burial. We can now understand that many royal remains were removed from Jerusalem and reinterred outside the city walls. This was done during the great cleansing of the city.

Who stood at the head of this sweeping action? Who was it who was thus concerned about the spiritual purity of Jerusalem?

It seems to me that it was Jochanan, the High Priest, who ruled from 135 to 106 B.C.E. The Mishna tells about some of the innovations he brought into the administration of the city. Though the removal of the graves is not mentioned in the Mishna, it is most likely that the leader who wrought the most significant changes in the character of the city can be said to have carried out its purification in this thoroughgoing manner of removing all the possible areas of defilement, including the mortal remains of such kings buried outside the tombs of the House of David.

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DISTRICT FINALS — SUNDAY, MARCH 25, 1973

NATIONAL FINALS — SUNDAY, MAY 13, 1973

WORLD FINALS IN JERUSALEM — YOM HA-ATZMAUT :

DO NOT DESTROY THE FRUIT TREES

Based on II Kings, Chapter 3

February 22, 1973 in the Triennial Tanakh Calendar

by JEHUDA FELIKS

This chapter describes the war between the kings of Israel, Judah and Edom who united to fight the King of Moab. In all probability, this king was Mesha who, after the death of Ahab, had thrown off the burden of taxation that he had been forced to pay to Israel. The description of this war in Scripture is not explicit and gives rise to several problems.

In the course of events as described in Scripture, we find the three kings arraigned for battle against the King of Moab, and their armies thirsting for water. In their predicament, they turned to the prophet Elisha who prophesied that salvation was at hand. The stream near which they were encamped would be flowing with flood waters from sudden, heavy rain that would fall on the mountains of Edom. This miracle actually came to pass and, in its wake, the children of Moab were routed.

When Elisha announced the miracle of the water, he also commanded the waging of an outright war of destruction against Moab. He commanded not only the conquest and ruin of every city, but also that "every good tree shall ye fell, and stop all fountains of water and every good piece of land with stones" (II Kings 3:19). In short, he commanded what may be described as a "scorched earth" policy against Moab — the demolition of the terraces, the filling up of the springs of water and the destruction of "every good tree", namely the trees bearing fruit.

The Sages were troubled by the implication of this injunction which, on the face of it, is opposed to the commandment in the Torah: "When thou shalt besiege a city a long

The two articles by Professor Feliks are chapters in his forthcoming book *Nature and Man in the Bible*. Dr. Feliks is Professor of Biblical-Talmudical Botany at Bar Ilan University and Professor of Talmud at Tel Aviv University. His books include: *החי של התנ"ך, עולם הצומח, המקראי, צמחיית המשנה, החקלאות בארץ ישראל בתקופת המשנה והתלמוד, כלאי זרעים והרכבה, החי של המשנה.*



From an ancient drawing in an Egyptian tomb depicting the enemy cutting down the date trees.

time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by wielding an axe against them; for thou mayest eat of them, but thou shalt not cut them down; for is the tree of the field man, that it should be besieged of thee? Only the trees of which thou knowest that they are not trees for food, them thou mayest destroy and cut down, that thou mayest build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it falls" (Deut. 20: 19-20).

Midrash Tanhuma ad loc. quotes a discussion between the Children of Israel and Elisha, in connection with this command, "every good tree shall ye fell." They asked him: "Surely it is written: "thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof"? To which Elisha replied: "This commandment refers to all other nations, but this nation (Moab) is base and contemptible." They found some basis for this reply by Elisha in his words: "And this is but a light (*nakel*) thing in the sight of the Lord" (II Kings 3:18), which they interpreted as "this nation is abject (*nikleh*) in the eyes of the Lord." The Sages connected this with the verse in Deut. (22:7): "Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days forever," — and explained: "This refers to their good (fruit) trees."

The Children of Israel did as the prophet commanded them. They subdued the armies of Moab and conquered considerable portions of its land. The King of Moab remained with only 700 warriors and with them he tried to break through at the weakest spot in the Israelite defences — at the point where the army of the King of Edom was concentrated. When he failed to achieve his purpose, he reacted in a unique manner: "Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall." And the chapter concludes with the words: "And there came great wrath upon Israel; and they departed from him and returned to their own land."

This last verse is recondite and occult in meaning. Attempts have been made to explain it in various ways. According to Kimchi, it refers to an act of political significance. The King of Moab affixed to the wall the eldest son of the King of Edom, whom he had kept as a hostage, and when the King of Edom saw that his allies failed to help him save his son, he waxed wroth with the Children of Israel and departed from the battlefield.

According to the simple meaning of the biblical account, the King of Moab had sacrificed his own son on the wall. According to the Talmud (San. 39b), this act of the King of Moab implied an accusation against the Children of

Israel, who had not yet abandoned their idolatrous ways, had not yet put their trust in God, nor had they evinced that same measure of faith and self-sacrifice as the King of Moab had done towards his god. This, according to the Sages, explains the great wrath that came upon Israel at the hands of God.

Yet, the connection between the offering of a human sacrifice to his god and the victory of the King of Moab, who was guilty of this horrible act, still calls for explanation. Possibly one might seek a solution in a different direction by connecting it with the actions referred to above concerning the felling of the fruit trees, the stopping up of the fountains of water and the marring of the fields by the Children of Israel. This method of warfare — destroying the agriculture and installations of an enemy was widespread among ancient peoples. This is borne out by Egyptian and Assyrian inscriptions and pictures from which one learns that one of the first acts of a conquering nation was to destroy first and foremost the agriculture and eventually the entire economy of a defeated country. It is against such acts that the Torah warned. It was no doubt due to their observance of this commandment that the Children of Israel gained renown for their compassion: “the Kings of the House of Israel are merciful” (I Kings 20:31). But in this war, the children of Moab suddenly discovered that the Children of Israel, too, adopted the accepted method of leaving a trail of “scorched earth” in enemy land. History teaches that in such situations, when the vanquished nation has nothing more to lose, it is capable of supreme acts of heroism and super-human effort, often turning seemingly inevitable defeat into victory. It is likely that this is the meaning of “and there came great wrath upon Israel,” forcing them to leave the battleground and return to their land.

Some allusion to the struggle between Israel and Moab is to be found in the inscription of Mesha, King of Moab, on a stone slab which contains words of self-aggrandisement as well as words of slander against the people of Israel and their God. Some scholars believe that this inscription was made before the expedition which the Children of Israel undertook against Moab as described in this chapter. In their opinion these words of slander was the ‘causus belli’ of the war of this expedition. This may also have been the reason for the prophet’s commandment to fell the trees and to stop up the fountains of this vile and haughty people.

In the end, however, the strength shown by the Children of Israel proved unavailing and, as the Midrash (Tanhuma) summed it up, “In that hour the enemies of Israel (euphemism for Israel itself) descended to the lowest rung.” As already mentioned, it is likely that this fall was also due to the fact that they had wrought their wrath against the trees, the fields and the fountains of water.

SAID THE THISTLE TO THE CEDAR

*Based on Chapter 14, II Kings
March 7, 1973 in the Triennial Tanakh Calendar*

by JEHUDA FELIKS

In tracing the chain of relationship between the kingdom of Judah and of Israel, special importance attaches to this chapter which tells of a war of words that preceded the bloody feud that raged between these two kingdoms. Amaziah, King of Judah, returning from his great victory over Edom, found the moment opportune for a settlement of accounts with Joash, king of Israel. So he issued the provocative challenge: "Come, let us look one another in the face" implying, come, let us test our strength in battle. This challenge is reminiscent of that of Abner to Joab: "Let the young men, I pray thee, arise and play before us." (II Sam. 2:14). But the spirits of Joash, king of Israel, were not dampened by Amaziah's challenge. He gave an equally provocative reply, calculated to lower the morale of his adversaries. He took up a parable about a thistle which sent word to the cedar, that was in Lebanon, asking for the hand of his daughter in marriage. But hardly had the thistle approached the cedar, than it was trodden down by the beasts which habitually were sheltered in the cedars shadow. The moral is clear. The mighty cedar is Joash, and it would be well for Amaziah — the lowly thistle — not to measure strength with him, nor as much as approach him.

It has already been pointed out that this parable does not pretend to portray the real state of affairs between the two kingdoms. All it does is to give expression to the central theme of Joash being the cedar, the loftiest among the trees of the forest and his army being as mighty as the beasts of the Lebanon, whereas Amaziah was but a thistle, the tallest among the ephemeral grasses. The thorny thistle, it is true, was likely to annoy the beasts passing by it, but in the end it is trodden down by them. The fact that the thistle wished to take "to wife the daughter of the cedar" is not borne out by the moral to which the parable points. In Scripture, the parable does not necessarily have to be similar in every detail to the moral preached. Possibly, the motif was a play on the names of the two kings, Joash, the son of Jehoahaz, and Amaziah, the son of Joash. In his parable, Joash perhaps desired to warn Amaziah, the son of Joash, not to aspire to place himself on an equal footing with him, Joash the son of Jehoahaz (figuratively, to marry the daughter of Joash), and so he puts him in his place, pointing out that the similarity in names does not necessarily imply any equality in status or ability. This, in fact, is the tenor of Radak's interpretation: "Even though he might have wanted to strike an

alliance with him by peaceful means — he regarded it below his dignity to associate with him, let alone through war.”

In Joash's parable, one clearly senses the hatred and disdain that the king of Israel professed for Amaziah, king of Judah. Possibly the root cause of this hatred can be gathered from the narrative in II Chronicles, Chapter 25, which relates that Amaziah hired the sons of Ephraim to go to war against the King of Edom, but in the end sent them back without allowing them any part in the fighting, concerning which Scripture says that “their anger was greatly kindled against Judah.”

In considering Joash's parable about the cedar and the thistle, it should be pointed out that, in Scripture, plant parables are more common than parables about animals. The latter very frequently appear in Rabbinic literature, particularly “parables of foxes,” apparently under the influence of Graeco-Roman parable literature. In the plant parables of the Bible, the Lebanese cedar, the loftiest among the trees of the forest, plays a central role. The minor, opposite roles are played by its lowly neighbours: the boxthorn, the thistle and the hyssop. In reading Joash's parable, one is reminded of the end of Jotham's parable (Judges 9) where the boxthorn declares to the fruit trees: “Come and take refuge in my shadow; and if not, let fire come out of the boxthorn and devour the cedars of Lebanon.” Whereas Joash's parable preaches that the low but conceited thistle cannot possibly harm the cedar, Jotham's parable points out that the boxthorn, which seeks to reign over the trees, has it in its power to consume by fire even the mighty cedars of Lebanon.

To the category of plant parables belongs the parable about the cedar and the hyssop. Scripture, in speaking about Solomon's wisdom, tells us that “he spoke of trees from the cedar that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall” (I Kings 5:13). Possibly Joash's parable about the thistle and the cedar may have been borrowed from some ancient relic of parable literature. The motif of the cedar as a symbol of loftiness and the hyssop as a symbol of lowliness is possibly hinted at in the precepts of the Torah, which requires anyone who comes to cleanse himself from Levitical uncleanness to have the water of purification sprinkled upon him by splinter of cedar wood and a bundle of hyssop tied together (Num. 19:18 and *passim*). Of special interest is the parallelism between Joash's parable, in which the beasts of the Lebanon tread the thistle underfoot, and the parable about the cedar and vine in Ezekiel 17, which tells of a vine that nestled in the shadow of a lofty cedar, entwining its tendrils around its trunk, but of a sudden there came an eagle which cut off the vine from the cedar and tore it up by its own roots.

The identification of the Erez Halevanon with the Lebanese cedar — *Cedrus libani* — is undisputed. Only several hundred of these trees, which reach a

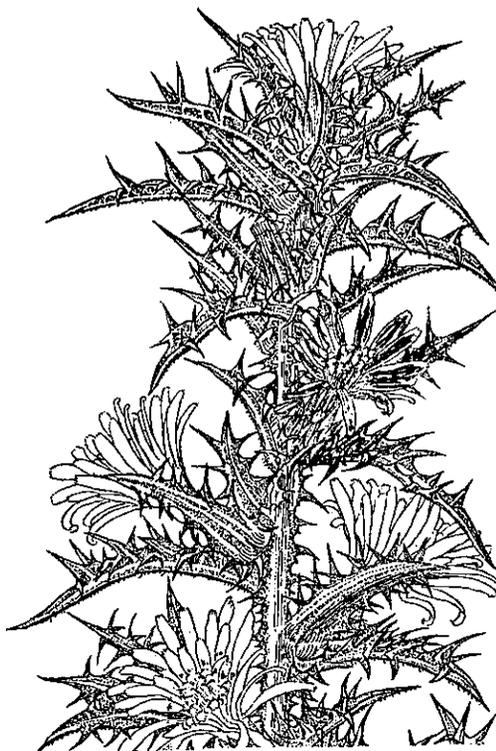
height of about 30 metres and a trunk circumference of about 10 metres, still survive in the Lebanon. Differences of opinion, however, exist concerning the identification of the hoah. Some would identify it with a bush or a tree with prickly branches, such as the wild plum (*Prunus ursina*), or the wild Jujube (*Zizyphus spina Christi*) and others. We cannot accept these identifications because the beasts of the field are unlikely to tread underfoot these thorny and ligneous plants. It is more feasible to identify hoah with the thistle *Scolymus maculatus*, which is widespread in fallow fields, particularly in heavy soil which has been left fallow, but which is suitable for the growing of wheat. The *Scolymus maculatus* is the tallest of the ephemeral plants, and rises far above them, as the cedar rises above the trees of the forest. It is this that Joash had in mind at the end of his parable when he said: "Glory therein and remain at home; for why shouldst thou meddle with evil." In other words, the glory and honour of the thistle is in its own habitat, among the other lowly plants; let him not presume to compare himself to the cedar, the loftiest among the trees of the forest.

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Scolymus thistle

ANSWERS

VAYYIQRA

1. Some are voluntary and may be brought as: Thanksgiving (Shelamim), Sin-offering (Hattat), and guilt-offering (Asham). They may be of certain animals, but also of grains and birds.
2. Prayer. For this the sages cite a verse "we render the words of our lips in place of the offering of bullocks" (Hosea 14:3).
3. See Leviticus, chapter 5, verses 1, 15, 21, and 22.
4. No. They only protested ritual *without* righteous living. The purpose of sacrifice and ritual was to inspire people to better behavior. (See Isaiah 1:10-17 and Amos 5:21-24).
5. Many explanations are offered in the traditional and modern literature. Maimonides felt that it was an accommodation to primitive people. Samson R. Hirsch states that it is a symbol of gratitude and dependence. (Further discussion in Hertz, pp. 560-562).

ZAV

1. The country was divided into districts each of which sent representatives to participate at the Temple. Those at home would then gather for special recitations.
2. See Hertz, p. 430, note for verse 6.
3. Morning and evening prayers in the synagogue or at home.
4. No. When the sin was against God, it also required sincere intention to atone and resolve not to repeat the offence. When the wrong was to a fellow-man, first, one had to set things right with him.
5. The Kohanim (priests), sons and descendants of Aaron.

SHEMINI

1. That we remain ritually pure and holy. See Lev. 11:44-47, and Hertz, Commentary pp. 448 f.
2. One that has a split hoof and chews its cud.
3. Those that have both fins and scales (not shells).
4. a) Removal of excess blood (based upon Lev. 17:10 ff.).
b) Not mixing dairy and meat foods (based upon Exodus 23:19 ff.).
c) Ritual slaughter (based upon Deut. 12:21).
5. Jewish identity. Reverence for life. To sanctify an everyday function. Spiritual discipline. Others?

THE FAMILY CORNER

Have you ever engaged in Bible discussion at your home? The Shabbat table is ideal for this purpose. Once again, we present a series of questions, this time on the sidrot in the Book of Leviticus, to stimulate Bible discussion. We suggest an informal atmosphere and the gearing of the language of the questions and comments to the background and maturity of the members of your family. Use the J.P.S. volume, entitled "The Torah" for reading, and the Hertz Pentateuch for interpretations.

VAYYIQRA

March 17, 1973

The Torah (J.P.S.), pp. 179-187

Hertz Pentateuch, pp. 410-324

1. What types of sacrifices are mentioned in this sidrah?
2. What have we substituted in our times for the ancient sacrifices?
3. What offences call for the "guilt-offering" (Asham)?
4. Did the prophets oppose sacrifices and rituals?
5. What meaning can you offer for the system of sacrifices?

ZAV

March 24, 1973

The Torah (J.P.S.), pp. 187-194

Hertz Pentateuch pp. 429-438

1. How did those distant from Jerusalem in Temple times participate in the daily national sacrifices?
2. What meaning would you attach to the Torah's stress that the altar fire must never be extinguished?
3. What have we substituted for daily sacrifice and the Tabernacle?
4. Was it enough to bring a sacrifice to obtain forgiveness for sin?
5. Who officiated at sacrifices?

SHEMINI

March 31, 1973

The Torah pp. 194-199

Hertz pp. 443-454

1. What reason does the Torah give for the laws of Kashrut?
2. What are the signs of a kosher animal?
3. Which sea foods are kosher?
4. What additional requirements for Kashrut, not in Shemini, are derived by our sages from the Torah?
5. What reasons for Kashrut can modern men give?

Turn to the next page for the answers

52:4 — For thus saith the Lord God: My people went down aforetime into Egypt to sojourn there; And the Assyrian oppressed them without cause.

52:5 — Now therefore, what do I here, saith the Lord, Seeing that My people is taken away for naught? They that rule over them do howl, saith the Lord, And My name continually all day is blasphemed.

Unlike the reading of the Haftarah, the Torah must be read consecutively. As Rashi, the commentator, points out, the listener's attention may be distracted from concentrating on the understanding of the Law, should the reader skip around in the reading of the Torah.

Chapters in the Haftarah need not be read consecutively, providing that the new place is found by the reader before the interpreter completes his translation. The reason is obvious. While a new chapter is being located or a new scroll unrolled, the translator is keeping the attention of the congregation; but should there be too long a pause, it would constitute a discourtesy to the congregation.

The Talmud seeks support for the significance of the three verses as constituting an aliyah to the Torah, and refers to Rav Assi's statement that the three verses represent symbolically the three main sections of Scriptures.

In another reference concerning the reason for three aliyot on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturday afternoons, the Talmud also brings Rav Assi's interpretation of the three biblical sections. However, unlike our present passage of Megilla 24 a, the Gemara brings no additional interpretations for the number three.

(Since the subject of Monday and Thursday readings is discussed at greater length in the Talmud, we shall deal with it as a separate theme — in the next issue of Dor le Dor).

Mishna

מדלגין בנביא ואין מדלגין בתורה.

The reader may skip from place to place in the Prophet but not in the Torah.

Mishna

ועד כמה הוא מדלג עד כדי שלא יפסוק המתורגמן.

How far may he skip? Only so far that the translator will not have to stop before he finds the new place.

Gemara

הני ג' פסוקים כנגד מי אמר ר' אסי כנגד תורה נביאים וכתובים.

What do these three verses represent? Rav Assi said: The Pentateuch, the Prophets and the Writings (Hagiographa).

SOURCES ON THE HISTORY OF TORAH AND HAFTARAH READING

by HAIM M. I. GEVARYAHU

We start here a series of notes bearing on the development of Torah and Haftarah reading in the synagogue. The sources, given in the original Hebrew text and in translation, will be interpreted, forming a lesson in Talmudic literature.

Since there are seven readings on the Sabbath, there would be a minimum of 21 verses to be read publicly on the Torah in the synagogue. Likewise, the number of verses to be read in the Prophets is also 21.

המפטיר בנביא לא יפחית
מעשרים ואחד פסוקים כנגד
שבעה שקרא בתורה.
(מגילה כג.)

The Pentateuch contains 4845 verses. According to the calculation of 21 verses each Sabbath, the Humash would be completed after 278 consecutive weeks, or 5 1/2 years. But in reality, more than 21 verses are read in the Torah and Haftarah (and at times less in the Haftarah). In the development of synagogal practice, two procedures of Torah reading came into being: the yearly completion of the Torah in Babylonia and the triennial (or 3 1/2 years) reading in Eretz Yisrael.

The interpreter translated each verse from the Hebrew text to the Aramaic vernacular. No more than one verse at a time could be read so that the translator, who gave forth orally without a written text, would not be likely to make mistakes. Since the Torah was the book of laws, mistakes in translation would be most reprehensible. This stringency did not apply, however, to the reading of the Haftarah which is either narrative or prophetic in contents but not Halachic.

If, however, the three consecutive verses in the Haftarah deal with different themes, the verses should be read and translated separately, for fear of confusion. The Gemara gives the example of Isaiah 52:3-4-5 which must be read separately: 52:3 — For thus saith the Lord: Ye were sold for naught; And Ye shall be redeemed without money.

Tractate Megilla 23b-24a

Mishna

הקורא בתורה לא יפחית
משלשה פסוקים.

He who reads in the Torah may not read less than three verses.

Mishna

לא יקרא למתורגמן יותר
מפסוק אחד ובנביא שלשה.

He may not read to the interpreter more than one verse; in the Prophets he can read three at a time.

Mishna

היו שלשתן שלושה פרשיות
קורין אחד אחד.

But if these three are three separate paragraphs, he must read them out singly.

QUESTIONS

TAZRIA

April 7, 1973

The Torah pp. 199–204

Hertz pp. 460–466

1. What is the difference between a mother's period of ritual uncleanness after the birth of a boy and after the birth of a girl?
2. Why this distinction between the birth of a boy and the birth of a girl?
3. What is the procedure for naming a baby today?
4. How were skin diseases to be treated according to the Torah portion?
5. What interpretation did the rabbis give to "mezora" (leper)?

MEZORA

April 14, 1973

The Torah pp. 204–210

Hertz pp. 470–477

1. What do the cedar wood and hyssop branches used in the ceremony of leper-purification symbolize?
2. How were the two birds in the ritual used?
3. What does the Torah mean by "leprosy in a house"?
4. Can you name some famous cases of leprosy in the Bible?
5. Do the Jewish people still observe laws of purity and impurity today?

AHARE MOT

April 28, 1973

The Torah pp. 210–216

Hertz pp. 480–493

1. On which Jewish holy day is this reading repeated?
2. What famous word and concept stem from the goat sacrifice mentioned at the beginning of this sidrah?
3. What requirement is made concerning the slaughter of animals here?
4. The Torah spells out forbidden marriages. The rabbis added others (see Hertz p. 559). What seemingly illogical prohibition is listed?
5. What is the emphasis of the Haftarah read on Yom Kippur morning when most of this sidrah is also read?

Turn to the next page for the answers

ANSWERS

TAZRIA

1. For a son, seven days; for a daughter, fourteen days. In addition 33 days had to elapse after the birth of a boy before the mother could enter the sanctuary, 66 days for a girl baby.
2. No one knows.
3. A girl is named when her father is called to the Torah at the earliest opportunity after her birth. A boy is named at his Brith Milah.
4. The Kohen acted as diagnostician. The patient would be isolated, and might be quarantined for a week or more. His clothes might have to be burned.
5. They saw in the word "מצורע" a hint of the expression, מוציא שם רע (slander). Obviously, they regarded malicious gossip as a grievous crime.

MEZORA

1. The sages suggest that the cedar and hyssop symbolize excessive pride and humility, respectively. (See also Hertz p. 570, note 4).
2. One was set free, the other sacrificed.
3. We can only guess that it was a fungus, dry rot, insect nests, or similar incrustation.
4. Moses gets leprosy very temporarily in Exodus 4:6; Miriam in Numbers, chapter 12; Naaman in II Kings, chapter 5 (Haftarah for Tazria), to cite three famous cases in the Bible. See also the Haftarah for Mezora.
5. Very few. The kohen's avoidance of the dead, the woman's observances during her monthly period are main remnants.

AHARE MOT

1. On Yom Kippur, in the morning and at Minha.
2. Scapegoat. See chapter 16:21.
3. That the animal be brought to the tabernacle (17:3—5). This is explained as avoidance of heathen practices, but it may also be another limitation on meat-eating. See questions numbers 4 and 5 in sidra Shemini.
4. An uncle may marry his niece, but a nephew may not marry his aunt.
5. It is mainly Isaiah chapter 58, where you are reminded that fasting and prayer are not enough. You must also "let the oppressed go free. . . share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house."

QUESTIONS

QEDOSHIM

May 5, 1973

The Torah pp. 216-220

Hertz pp. 497-508

1. What is the difference between fearing parents and honoring parents?
2. How do we know that we have to help the needy?
3. Can you think of several different types of situations which are forbidden by the law of stealing?
4. "Thou shalt not put a stumbling block before the blind" (19:14). Can you think of several ways of interpreting this verse?
5. Are we allowed to feel hatred in our heart or should we tell our neighbor when we have a grievance?

EMOR

May 12, 1973

The Torah pp. 220-228

Hertz pp. 513-528

1. For which relatives are we required to sit Shivah (seven days of mourning)?
2. What is the meaning of קידוש השם (Kiddush Hashem)?
What is the meaning of חילול השם (Chillul Hashem)?
3. The Jewish holidays are enumerated in chapter 23. Can you tell the difference between the three festivals and the two solemn holydays?
4. What is different about Shavuot in the enumeration of the holidays?
5. Where do we learn about the etrog, lulav, myrtle and willow in connection with Succot?

BEHAR

May 19, 1973

The Torah pp. 228-232

Hertz pp. 531-539

1. The number *seven* plays an important part in this sidra. Can you point out the connection of the number seven with aspects of the Jewish calendar read in last week's and this week's sidrot?
2. Which of the Hebrew calendar years at present is the Shemitah year?
3. Did you know that the Liberty Bell in Independence Hall in Philadelphia has an inscription which is the English translation of part of a verse in our sidra? What are the words of this inscription?
4. We find several laws in this sidra on how to help our fellow-man. Can you name some?
5. The system of slavery which was tolerated by the Torah was fundamentally different from the cruel systems of the ancient world. How?

Turn to the next page for the answers

ANSWERS

QEDOSHIM

1. See Hertz, note for verse 3, p. 498.
2. Ch. 19:9-10. The law of leaving the gleanings of the field for the poor.
3. Ch. 19:11, see the comment of Hertz.
4. Verse 19:14 can be applied to the following situations (see Hertz):
 - a) Practical jokes which involve hurting your friend.
 - b) Giving bad advice knowingly to the inexperienced.
 - c) Misrepresenting the worth of an article to be sold.
 - d) Callousness or cruelty to the unsuspecting person.
 - e) Leading a person into doing something wrong.
5. See comment of Hertz on verse 18.

EMOR

1. The seven relatives for whom the kohen may become impure upon their death are enumerated in Ch. 21:1-3.
2. See the comment of Hertz on 22:32. Can you discuss situations of Kiddush Hashem and Chillul Hashem in modern Jewish life?
3. See chapter 23.
4. The month and day are given in all of the holidays enumerated in this chapter. Shavuot, on the other hand, is observed fifty days after Pesach.
5. Interpret each phrase in 23:40, with the Hertz commentary.

BEHAR

1. The number 7 is connected with the number of days of the week and the Shabbath:
 - a) There are 7 weeks between Pesach and Shavuot.
 - b) Each seventh year is called *Shemittah*, or sabbatical year (שמיטה).
 - c) Seven times seven years were counted, and the 50th year is observed as the Jubilee year (יובל).
2. This year, 5733, is being observed in Israel as Shemittah year. (Can you think in what way it is being observed)?
3. Ch. 25:10: "Proclaim Liberty throughout the Land into all the Inhabitants".
4. Read ch. 25:35-40.
5. Read ch 25:39-46 and comment of Hertz on verse 46 (p.537).

1. This is the last sidra of the Book of Leviticus. What does the congregation exclaim as the last verse is ended?
2. What is the feature of this reading?
3. What special name is given to the Great Warning?
4. What laws are found in this sidra?
5. Can you give the names of all the ten sidrot in Leviticus?

Turn to the next page for the answers

THE YOUTH CORNER

OUR BIBLE QUIZ

We began on Simchat Torah the reading of the daily chapters of the Tanakh, as listed in the Triennial Bible Reading Calendar. We started with Joshua, and we shall complete the Former Prophets on March 22. Below are questions, taken from these books that were asked at Bible contests in Israel — of adults, youth, Zahal, Gadna and, believe it or not, even of prisoners in jail. The national contests take on the intense interest of an American World Series. Try your hand at these questions, this time in Hebrew. They are not easy. The answers can be found in page 32. They include only the references in the Former Prophets.

1. מסופר בתנ"ך על מעשים שעשו נשים, אבל לא ציון שמן הפרטי כי אם רק כנויין. הזכר שבע מהן (כגון: אשת פוטיפר).
2. מנה חמשה מקומות בתנ"ך שבשמותיהם כלולים שמות פירות (לדוגמא: גת־רמון).
3. הזכר ארבעה כלי עבודה חקלאיים הנזכרים בתנ"ך ורשום באיזה ספר נזכרו.
4. מפי שני אנשים יצאה הברכה "ברוכים אתם לה'". מי הם שני האנשים האלה, ואת מי ברכו.
5. היכן מצינו אם המברכת את בנה.
6. שני מלכים הומלכו על ידי "עם הארץ". מי הם.
7. מלך עומד על עמוד נזכר פעמיים. מי הם המלכים.
8. שני מלכים אמרו "צר לי מאוד". מי הם, ובאילו הודמגויות אמרו בטוי זה?
9. מנה חמשה מלכים בתנ"ך שבנו ערים ביהודה ובישראל. מי הם המלכים? ציין שם העיר אשר בנה.
10. בספר מלכים נזכרו בדרך כלל שמות האמהות של מלכי יהודה. ציין שני מלכים שלא נזכרו שמות אמותיהם.

1. חזק, חזק ונתחזק — Be strong, be strong, and let us strengthen one another.
2. Moses' warning.
3. תוהחה — Tohaḥah. See also Deuteronomy, chapter 28.
4. The laws of the redemption of Vows and Tithes, chapter 27.
5. Try it — and then check on yourself.

1972-3 TRIENNIAL TANAKH STUDY CYCLE, FIRST YEAR

APRIL

אדר ב'/ניסן

SU	1	Isaiah 8	כח	ישעיהו ח
MO	2	Isaiah 9	כט	ישעיהו ט
TU	3	Isaiah 10	א	ראש חודש ישעיהו י
WE	4	Isaiah 11	ב	ישעיהו יא
TH	5	Isaiah 12	ג	ישעיהו יב
FR	6	Isaiah 13	ד	ישעיהו יג
SA	7	Leviticus 12	ה	תזריע הפט' מלכים ב' ד, מב לעיון: ויקרא יב

עצו עצה ותומר דברו דבר ולא יקום כי עמנו אל
 Take counsel together, and it shall come to nought;
 speak word, and it shall not stand; for God is with us.
 (Is. 8:10)

APRIL

ניסן

SU	8	Isaiah 14	ו	ישעיהו יד
MO	9	Isaiah 15	ז	ישעיהו טו
TU	10	Isaiah 16	ח	ישעיהו טז
WE	11	Isaiah 17	ט	ישעיהו יז
TH	12	Isaiah 18	י	ישעיהו יח
FR	13	Isaiah 19	יא	ישעיהו יט
SA	14	Leviticus 14	יב	מצורע שבת הגדול הפט' מלאכי ג, ד לעיון: ויקרא יד

ביום ההוא יהיה ישראל שלישיה למצרים ולאשור ברכה
 בקרב הארץ
 In that day shall Yisra'el be the third with Mizrayim
 and with Ashur, a blessing in the midst of the land.
 (Is. 19:24)

NOTES ON THE VERSE OF THE WEEK

TRIENNIAL TANAKH STUDY CALENDAR OF THE WORLD JEWISH BIBLE SOCIETY

HAIM GEVARYAHU

THEME: GOD'S PLAN IN ISAIAH

Week of April 1, 1973

Verse: Take counsel together, and it shall come to naught; speak word, and it shall not stand; for God is with us (Is. 8:10).

THE SETTING:

An unusual approach was taken by Isaiah to impress his message upon his hearers, especially the royal court. He wrote a striking phrase on a large wooden* placard which carried an urgency not to be ignored. (One other instance of such demonstrative action is found in Ezekiel ch. 37 where the prophet is told to take two sticks, inscribe them with the names of Judah and Joseph and join them into one, thereby symbolizing the reunion of the two kingdoms.)

The cryptic *מהר שלל חש בו*, Maher — shalal — hash — baz, ("the spoil hastens, the plunder comes quickly") were inscribed boldly in the presence of two prominent witnesses, one of whom was the Kohen Uriah. A child was born to Isaiah that year and was given the name Maher-shalal-hash-baz. The prophet exclaimed the meaning of this cryptic statement, in both symbolical expressions, that before the child would learn his first words, "my father, my mother", Damascus and Samaria would be despoiled by Assyria. Dramatically, Isaiah calls upon Judah to reject the invitation of these two kingdoms to join them in a coalition against Assyria, at that time the empire of the Near East.

HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES:

How could King Ahaz resist the pressure of the kings of Damascus and Samaria? More serious, moreover, was the impending danger of their plot to dethrone him by creating dissension and setting up the son of Tabeel as a

* Writings on wooden tablets, bound together in a form of a book, were discovered in the archaeological excavations at Tell-Nimrod, (ancient Kalah). It has been established that these writings date back to the days of Isaiah. This is the oldest *book* that we know about. Similar to this discovery, we can picture Isaiah's wooden placard with the dramatic phrase inscribed on it.

The Targum Yonatan translates the word *גליון* (8:1) as *לוח*. From Accadian and other Semitic sources, we know that, unless described specifically. (e.g. *לוחות אבנים*), the word *לוח* refers to a wooden tablet.

new ruler in Judah (Isaiah 7:6). At this point the prophet sets out to meet the king at the end of the conduit of the upper pool (Siloam), and gives him words of cheer: "Keep calm, and be quiet; fear not, neither thy heart be faint, because of these two tails of smoking firebrands" (7:4). Their plot "will not stand, neither shall it come to pass" (7:7). But Ahaz must put his trust in God and be patient, for if not, he can lose it all. In a word-play, Isaiah declares: — אַם לֹא תִאֱמִינוּ כִּי לֹא תִאֱמָנוּ, "if you will not have faith, surely you will not be confirmed in your position".

THE PROPHET'S MESSAGE:

The dramatic scene of the placard and the strange name given to his newborn child (the spoil hastens, the plunder comes quickly)** seem to have meaning within the political vicissitudes of that period which might be understood as the insights of a political strategist. The prophet's real message transcends the local and temporal circumstances by putting its trust in God's plan which, understood or not by man, will not be shaken. By this trust, the prophet can turn to the menacing nations about him and exclaim challengingly:

Make an uproar, O ye peoples,
And ye shall be broken in pieces;
And give ear, all ye of far countries,
Gird yourselves, yet ye shall be broken in pieces;

Take counsel together, but it shall be brought to nought;
Speak the word, but it shall not stand,
For God is with us.

Isaiah 8:9-10.

These two universal statements ring through the corridors of history.

RADAK'S INTERPRETATION:

The commentator David Kimchi focuses on the destiny of Jerusalem in his prophecy. "Of what avail is your plan against Jerusalem since it will be foiled; purpose what you please, but it shall not stand; And why? Because God is with us."

** מֵהָר שֶׁלֵּל חֵשׁ בּוֹ: Scholars have found that this expression was a well known military term used in ancient Egypt and in other Near Eastern countries.

THEME: PROPHETIC SOLUTION FOR NEAR EASTERN PEOPLES

April 8, 1973

Verse: In that day shall Yisra'el be the third with Mitzrayim and with Ashur, a blessing in the midst of the land (Is. 19:24).

THE SETTING:

Chapter 19 dwells on the future of Egypt, the first half being a doom oracle against it. The chapter begins with the internal chaos into which Egypt has fallen. (This was the political and military situation in Egypt in Isaiah's time). The internal confusion will "spur Egypt against Egypt, and they shall fight every one against his brother, and every one against his neighbor, city against city and kingdom against kingdom" (19:2). It will be a hard time for Egypt, for even the natural resources of the country, especially its life stream, the Nile, will dry up, vegetation will be parched, the fishermen will lament and the textile occupation will languish (19:5-9). Pharaoh's advisers are helpless since they are not wise. They caused Egypt to go astray and they caused it "to stagger in every work thereof, as a drunken man staggers in his vomit" (19:11-14). "It is as if God, riding upon a swift cloud" ordered a total incapacity upon this people.

"IN THAT DAY" CHEERFUL ORACLES

Suddenly, the prophet's mood changes, and a number of oracles are pronounced with the opening faith of a better day to come.

In that day, five cities in Egypt will speak "the language of Canaan" (Hebrew) and will worship the monotheistic God (19:18).

In that day, Egyptians will build an altar to God in their capital and a monument with an inscription (אלה) "to God" at their border with Israel. They will turn to God as they confront their oppressors, and a defender will deliver them. Though God will smite Egypt, He will as well bring healing (19:19-22).

In that day, a highway will be built out of Egypt to Assyria, passing through Judah, which will bring about friendly commerce between these two mighty empires, so often at war with each other. They will even be able to worship together the monotheistic God, known up to the age of Isaiah only to Israel (19:23).

MESSAGE OF THE VERSE OF THE WEEK:

Finally, "in that day, shall Yisrael be the third with Mitzrayim and with Ashur, a blessing in the midst of the land" (19:4). The three nations will form a federation and become the bearers of God's blessings, "for the Lord of hosts hath blessed him saying, blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Yisra'el mine inheritance" (19:25).

RASHI'S COMMENT:

On verse 24, Rashi points to the peace and the blessing that will result from this federation. "No other nations were as mighty as these two great empires, Egypt and Assyria, while Israel and Judah were thrown into their shade in their smallness and weakness. Now, the prophet proclaims that, by a miracle, Judah will grow in importance and will be considered like them, for blessing and greatness."

HOW RELEVANT ARE THESE TWO VERSES TODAY:

Faced by a hostile world of Arabs who encircle Israel from all sides, Israel girds itself in strength and self-reliance. It faces its enemies with the fortitude of Isaiah's verse in chapter 8, "take counsel together, but it shall come to nought". On the other hand, Israel constantly holds out the promise of an honorable peace, even toward a federation of nations, in the spirit of the prophet's verse in chapter 19, wherein the peoples of the Nile Valley and the Mesopotamian Valley could prosper and become a blessing to the entire region and beyond. This may seem visionary, but the prophetic message, pronounced two and a half millenia ago, beckons toward this ultimate goal.

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GREETINGS TO BEN GURION ON HIS 86th BIRTHDAY

by HAIM FINKELSTEIN

The Israel Society for Biblical Research, headed by Mr. Ben Gurion, held its annual Succot study session at the Midrasha in Sde Boker in honor of his 86th birthday. The following is the greeting of Haim Finkelstein, as the new Triennial Bible Study Calendar was presented officially to him. Mr. Finkelstein is the head of the Diaspora Department for Education and Culture of the World Zionist Organization, and serves on the Executive Committee of the World Jewish Bible Society.

It is not easy to talk about our colleague, Mr. Ben Gurion, in the usual way of a greeting. First, he has never been fond of the usual; and secondly, so much has already been said about him. No personality compares with him among our people or nation, who has drawn to himself so much interest from all levels of the nation and beyond it. And this is only natural, since for two generations he has stood at the helm of a national revolution which restored the glory of sovereignty in our generation. This he achieved, to my mind, not only through his leadership in the establishment of the state in 1948 but many years earlier when he began, with his comrades, the national and social struggle, the pioneering and cultural renaissance toward the goal of our people's redemption and independence upon our historic soil.

Ben Gurion is called the architect of our state. This is no doubt true. But I think he is more than that, for he is as well the architect of our entire people. Whoever looks upon the establishment of the state and rebuilding of the land without seeing in it the revitalization of a people does not grasp the true essence of Zionism. How correct Ahad Ha-am was when he said, "It is difficult to build a land, but seven times more difficult to build a people."

It should not surprise us that Ben Gurion has identified himself with our World Jewish Bible Society. The Book of Books has been the source for his inspiration and faith. These values have been part of him all of his life. He sees the Bible as the leading force in the new upbuilding of our land. He believes in the bond of our people with the Tanakh which represents the glory of our heritage as well as the hope for our future. In addition, he attributes the aspirations of mankind for peace and humaneness to the biblical utterances of peace, love of neighbor, and kindness to the stranger.

Ben Gurion has contributed much through his personal example to spread the knowledge of Bible among all sections of our people. The Central Study Group which he established at his home and which still continues at the home of the President of Israel, constitutes a turning point in the reawakening of the "people of the book" to its study. It was therefore natural for leaders in Bible

study to turn to him to take on the presidency of the Israel Society for Biblical Research, the central Israel chapter of the World Jewish Bible Society. The influence of this man who sets aside regular periods for study of Bible has spread here and abroad where Bible study groups have been formed, Bible contests organized, and other activities of the World Jewish Bible Society initiated.

Now another enterprise has been started through his encouragement. This is the new Triennial Tanakh Study Calendar which outlines the daily chapters to be read by individuals and families at home. This pursuit will enable the person to go through all of Tanakh in three years. Moreover, by reading the same chapter, wherever Jews reside, each individual will be part of the cultural unity of our people.

Ben Gurion cherishes yet another vision — the establishment of the World Bible House in Jerusalem that will contain the best in Jewish and other cultures derived from the influence of Tanakh. Several weeks ago he finalized, he and President Shazar signing on behalf of the Israel Society for Biblical Research, the leasing from the Government of Israel of the hill opposite the railroad station, upon which the World Bible House will be erected. It is our collective hope that construction will start soon and that in the not distant future we shall see this Bible center which will add glory to our people and our land.

In the name of the World Zionist Organization of its Department for Culture and Education in the Diaspora, in the name of the World Jewish Bible Society, and in my own, we send our blessing to you, our teacher and master, Mr. Ben Gurion, on your birthday, in the spirit of the Book of Proverbs: "For length of days and years of life and peace will they add to thee; and kindness and truth shall not forsake thee."

It is now my privilege and honor to present to you the Triennial Tanakh Study Calendar on behalf of the World Jewish Bible Society.

JOURNEE BIBLIQUE 1972
AMITIE FRANCE ISRAEL (PARIS, FRANCE)

Pour la première fois, l'organisation des Femmes Pionnières aura participé en 1972 à la Journée Biblique qu'organise annuellement la WIZO. C'est ainsi que de très nombreuses auditrices ont suivi durant un mois le cours d'études bibliques de notre collaboratrice Irène Kanfer sur le thème: l'Exil et le Retour chez les prophètes.

Le sujet de la journée biblique étant "Israël, Terre Promise", les membres de la Wizo avaient, de leur côté, suivi les exposés de Régine Zaoui-Lehmann et de Francine Kauffmann sur "La promesse faite aux pères" (Genèse) "Le Courage et la Liberté" (Exode).

La Journée Biblique s'est déroulée dans une des salles du Musée des Arts Décoratifs et devant une très nombreuse assistance, où M. Amir, représentant l'Ambassade d'Israël, a rappelé le sens de cette journée et l'éternelle actualité de la Bible. De sa spiritualité également, comme devaient le prouver Régine Zaoui-Lehmann, Francine Kauffmann et Irène Kanfer.

THE NINTH WORLD WIZO BIBLE DAY

The theme of the 9th World Wizo Bible Day, in cooperation with the World Jewish Bible Society, was the "Promised Land". The study material was prepared by Col. Yitzchak Yitzchaki, former Director of the Pedagogic Centre of the Israel Ministry of Education. Coloured slides accompanied by appropriate explanations accompanied the study texts. Since its inception in 1964, Lag B'Omer has been the traditional date for holding World Wizo Bible Day. Wherever possible, the Federations adhere to this date. In many countries Bible Day culminates many months of Bible studies by Wizo chaverot and in many others it has been a community-wide celebration for men, women and children. This year several communities introduced an ecumenical approach when Jews and non-Jews studied the Book of Books together.

The main Bible Day event is usually a festive function at which the Rabbi of the community delivers the keynote address and prominent guests and Israel's diplomatic representatives are also invited.

Osfa-Wizo in Buenos Aires led by its cultural chairman, Dr. Sonia Gerber, with the participation of chaverot from 14 groups in the Capital, celebrated Bible Day in sessions lasting two days. Each participant presented as an innovation a "do it yourself" paper. Senior — and Aviv-Wizo in Austria were joined by many guests. They were addressed by Rabbi Dr. A. Eisenberg. Wizo president Aliza Stadler who is a well-known radio personality, delivered a beautiful rendition of the "Sons of King David". She also did the commentary on the slides. Bible Day was observed in Australia by all groups with the exception of Victoria where this event always coincides with Simhat Tora. The Chief Rabbis of Luxembourg and Strasbourg and the Dean of Jewish Students of France addressed Bible Day celebrations in Antwerp (Belgium) where the year-round Bible Study circle initiated by President Eva Fischer, lays the groundwork for this annual event.

In La Paz (Bolivia) a very successful ecumenical Bible Day sponsored by the Bolivian-Israeli Cultural Institute attracted outstanding Bible scholars including a second place winner in one of the Jerusalem International Bible Quizzes, Mr. Manuel Laka, and replaced this year's traditional World Wizo Bible Day. Numerous Bible Study groups in all towns in Brazil are the pride of the Federation. The Bible Day celebrations are held at different times and are among the highlights of the year's cultural activities. This year the group in Belo Horizonte invited prominent non-Jews, representatives of the House of Deputies, the Mayor, the Portugese Consul and Church dignitaries, attracting a large segment of the community's intelligentsia.

In Curacao, Wizo led by its President Norma Moreno, organised a beautiful Bible Night. This event coincided with the Ecumenical Week of the Churches and Synagogues to promote family solidarity and better understanding of Israel. A musical programme accompanied the showing of the slides. The Bible Study Circle in Copenhagen (Denmark) meets regularly during the entire working year. This year's Bible Day celebrations were attended by more people than in past years. It was the culmination of a cultural symposium of 10 evenings' duration which promises to become an annual feature. In El Salvador Wizo invited the entire community to its Bible Day whose programme was based on the slides sent from Israel.

Twenty-nine cities in France conduct Wizo Bible Day celebrations — each more exciting than the other. In most of them, the chaverot break up into workshops and not only study but learn to analyze and do research on the theme of the year. As in former years, Wizo Bible Day in Athens (Greece) unites the whole Jewish community with the non-Jewish community.

Bible Day was celebrated on a smaller scale in Larissa. In Amsterdam (Holland), the chaverot prefer research and deliver papers on the Bible Day themes themselves. After intensive discussion they invite a guest speaker to sum up. This year, the Israel Federation held Bible Day celebrations in four towns: Yerucham with a visit to Ben Gurion in Sde Boker, Jerusalem, the Beisan Valley and in Tel-Aviv where the festive event took place in Wizo House. For the first time in Israel there were Bible Day Sessions held in the English and French languages in Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv for new immigrants who do not yet know Hebrew. In all the groups of Adei-Wizo of Italy, both the large ones such as Milano and Rome, and in the smaller communities of Florence, Padua, Torino, Venice, Verona, Ancona, Naples, Bologna and Trieste, Bible Day is the outstanding cultural event of the year. In Mexico, there are year-round Bible study groups who carry out World Wizo Bible Day as the closing feature of the year. Both in Auckland and Wellington (New Zealand) audiences were delighted with the beautiful slides on the "Promised Land" presented on Bible Day. In the small Jewish community of Trondheim (Norway) Wizo chaverot marked Bible Day. Chaverot in Johannesburg and Cape Town (South Africa) were especially privileged to attend a series of Bible Study seminars conducted by the author of this year's study material, Col. Y. Yizhaki, and gained tremendous insight into how to study the Bible. In most cities in Switzerland the Rabbis deliver the principal address and participate in the study sessions as well. The Bible Day assemblage in Geneva was particularly fortunate in hearing André Schwarzbart, author of the "Last of the Just". The programme of the Bible Day function in Caracas (Venezuela) to which the whole community was invited, was prepared by Johana Roitman, of the Cultural Department of 'Aviv'.

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUIZ

1. אשת מגוה, אם סיסרא, האשה שהשליכה פסח רכב על אבימלך, אשת שמשון, פילגש בגבעה, האשה התקועית, האשה החכמה מאבל, מלכת שבא, אשת ירבעם, ועוד.
2. ענב (יהושע יא, 21), בית תפוח (יהושע טו, 53), עין תפוח (יהושע יו, 7), רמון (יהושע יט, 13), בעל תמר (שופטים כ, 33), סלע רמון (שופטים כא, 13).
3. מחרשה (שמ"א יג, 20), קלשון (שמ"א יג, 21), קרדום (שמ"א יג, 21), את (שמ"א יג, 20), מלמד (שופטים ג, 31).
4. שמואל א', כג, 21; שמואל ב', ב, 5.
5. שופטים יז, 2.
6. מלכים ב', כא, 24; מלכים ב', כג, 30.
7. מלכים ב', יא, 14; מלכים ב', כג, 3.
8. שמואל א', כח, 15; שמואל ב', כד, 14.
9. שלמה: מלכים א' ט, 19; ירבעם בן נבט: מלכים א' יב, 25; בעשא: מלכים א' טו, 17; אסא: מלכים ב' טו, 6; עמרי: מלכים א' טז, 29; עזריה: מלכים ב' יד, 22.
10. מלכים ב', ח, 16; מלכים ב', טו, 1.

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