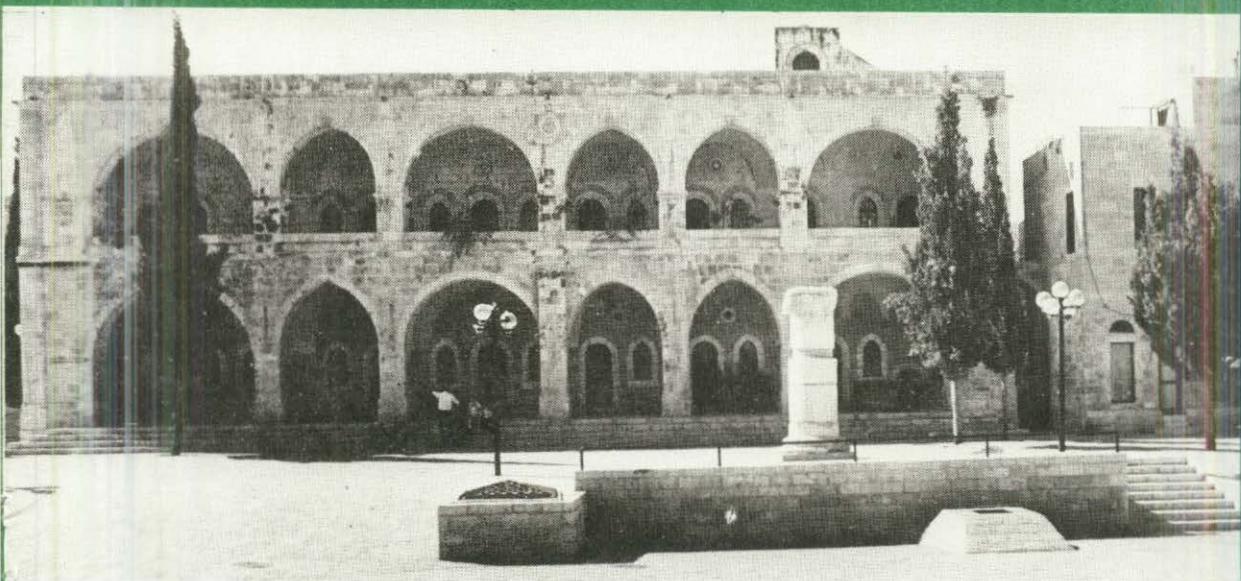


דור לדור DOR Le DOR

Our Biblical Heritage



המרכז העולמי לתנ"ך בירושלים

THE WORLD JEWISH BIBLE CENTER

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OUR BAR MITZVAH YEAR

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דור לדור

DOR le DOR

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*Tribute
to
Rev. Joseph Halpern*



As we begin our Bar Mitzvah year since the inception of our Quarterly Dor le Dor, we take immense pleasure in honoring a pioneer in the promotion of Bible reading, Rev. Joseph Halpern, formerly from England and at present a resident of Jerusalem. Forty five years ago he founded in London the Bible Readers' Union and published a calendar for daily Bible reading and bulletin which disseminated Bible instruction. Eventually he was instrumental in incorporating his Bible Readers' Union into our World Jewish Bible Society, thus rendering continuity to his life-long mission of educating and encouraging people toward Bible study. As a member of our Editorial Board he has contributed his talents especially in the areas of book reviews and the structuring of our Triennial Bible Reading Calendar.

On behalf of our Editorial Board and Bible "family", we extend our heartiest greetings to him and pray that he will continue for many years his active service with us and inspired leadership of his loyal Bible Readers' Union of England.

כה לחי
Louis Katzoff
Editor, Dor le Dor

AUTO-BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

SEVEN YEARS STAND OUT IN THE 77 YEARS OF MY LIFE TILL NOW

BY JOSEPH HALPERN

The first is 1907, the year I was born, on April 5, the seventh day of Pesah. "Spank him hard on his backside", was the advice given when I appeared to be dead when I came out of the womb. And I can truly say that my life has been one continuous miracle under divine blessing and guidance, השגחה פרטית, as we call it in Rabbinic Hebrew. When I contracted polio in 1908, and developed a nervous stammer at the age of three, when my father slapped me on my left hand and tore away the pencil I was holding, because I was born left-handed, a stammer set in which troubled me terribly until the age of 20, and of which I still show traces to this day, in times of stress.

The second is 1932, the year of my marriage to Eva Joshpe, on March 28. 20th Adar Sheni, and Bank Holiday Monday, so that I can celebrate three anniversaries each year. Everybody was against the marriage, particularly Sir Robert Waley Cohen, President of the United Synagogue, and Dr. Adolph Buchler, Principal of Jews' College. After seven years in the Underwood Street elementary school, from the age of 5 till 11, where my headmaster was the Rev. Isaac Goldston, who became my life-

long friend, I spent seven years in the Whitechapel Foundation School (later called the Davenant), from 1918-1925, leaving with my inter-B.A. (in English, French, History and Chemistry), and was admitted to Jews' College in September 1925. By 1928 I had obtained my B.A. (first-class Honours, in Hebrew and Semitics, and elementary Arabic) and in 1931 M.A. with distinction, in Rabbinitics, both at University College, London. In 1929 I became a student minister at the Buxton Street Welfare Centre, under the Rev. John S. Harris. It was work which I thoroughly enjoyed, giving advice to people and helping them in their troubles, particularly in ascertaining their correct age, so as to qualify for an old-age pension, which had just come into effect. I was also a chaplain to a hospital, and to the work-house. "What do you do with the inmates?" Sir Robert Waley Cohen once asked me, "play with them?" "Sir Robert", I answered, "these people are down and out, have nothing to live for, and I try to give them back their self-respect. It is because they have been left to starve by the capitalists who are responsible for their being unemployed". Sir Robert never forgot that, and regarded me as a Bolshevik, as he told a friend of mine.

But then they heard that I was

contemplating getting married. I had no job. John Harris had retired in 1931, and I was acting welfare minister. I was hoping to get the job, but that didn't happen. Dr. Buchler called me into his study. "Mr. Halpern", he said — he always addressed his students in that way, Mr. . . . — "You know the gemara in which it says that a man who gets married puts a millstone round his neck." But, with my usual obstinacy, for which I was famous, I said I was going ahead. And, in fact, Dr. Buchler was one of the participants at my wedding, together with the Chief Rabbi Dr. Joseph Herman Hertz, at the Great Synagogue, Duke's Place, London. And Sir Robert Waley Cohen sent me as a wedding present a copy of Sir Joshua Reynolds painting, *The Age of Innocence*. Three months later I was out of a job, not having been appointed Welfare Minister. I refused several other jobs they offered me, one of them being the Superintendent of a disused cemetery! But that same year, in September, I was appointed Secretary, and subsequently Education Officer, of the Talmud Torah Trust, London, of which more later.

The third is 1933, when I started to write my *History of Our People in Bible Times*. It was the late Dr. A.M. Silbermann who had suggested the title "Our People", and who had encouraged Mr. Barnett Samuel of Shapiro Valentine & Co. in Wentworth Street, to give me the contract. It was not easy to get a fluent style. Three times I wrote the first chapter, at my wife's insistence, and

I was ready to give it up. "You can't", my wife said, "you've already spent the £10 you received in advance on a Shick shaver". It was she who encouraged me, and typed every chapter as I wrote it, and when it was completed in 1935, I dedicated it to her, "To Eve". It took me three years to get the 20 chapters ready, and the book appeared in September 1935. It won instant popularity, selling a thousand copies in the first six months. Probably the main reason for its success was *The Points to Remember* at the end of each chapter, which gave a very useful summary for students. Secondly, it was soundly based on the Bible, and took no notice of the Documentary Theories which had plagued the 19th and 20th centuries after Wellhausen. But it did take into account outside events and the archaeological discoveries unearthed in the Middle East. A quotation from the review in the *Jewish Chronicle* may not be out of place: "Mr. Halpern has succeeded completely. The volume is well written and with all due reference to contemporary conditions, and to the general background of the Biblical story. It is fully illustrated with photographs of actual sites and of objects found in the course of recent archaeological excavations . . ." Five editions appeared between 1935 and 1968, and over 20,000 copies were sold in all parts of the English-speaking world. At a function shortly after its publication, Dr. Buchler came up to congratulate me. I could not resist the temptation to point to my wife at my side and say, "Thanks to her, the

millstone round my neck.”

History of Our People in Rabbinic Times appeared in 1939, and *History of Our People in Post-Biblical Times* (until the expulsion from Spain in 1492) in 1965. A large part of *History of Our People in Modern Times* is ready, but has not yet been published. Other books I have written include *Story Time* (in conjunction with A.S. Super), *Hebrew at a Glance*, *Makers of the Mishna*, and *Pamphlets in Jewish History*.

Rabbinic Times was dedicated to the memory of Dr. Silbermann, who had died in 1939. And that brings me at once to the fourth of my seven years series, 1939. And here I must mention the page-a-day diary which I have kept for over 60 years, beginning with January 1, 1924, because I shall be quoting a lot from it for 1939. The diary is a daily record of my life: personal, domestic, social, national and international, and there is scarcely any event of importance which will not be found in it. First I must refer to the death of Dr. Silbermann, on Saturday, June 3, the 16th of Sivan. The funeral was on the Sunday, at the Edmonton Cemetery, at which eulogies were given on his life's work, popularising Jewish learning among the masses. He died from cancer of the brain. A fortnight before his death he had suggested to me that I form a Union of Bible Readers, because he knew of my habit of reading three chapters of Nakh (Prophets and Holy Writings) every day, which I had begun in 1927. I had laughingly remarked that very few people would respond. But now it seemed a

good idea to start it as a memorial to him. A week after the shiva, his son Jacze, who now lives in Jerusalem, came to me and we drew up a letter to the Jewish Chronicle. This appeared on Friday, June 23, and I received some oral and written replies. So I made a copy of a plan which I had with me when I went to see the editor of the Jewish Chronicle, Ivan Greenberg, on another matter. I mentioned the Union of Bible Readers, suggesting that he should publish the chapters to be read each week in the weekly Calendar of the Jewish Chronicle. He readily agreed. He also took my plan and amended it so as to appear as a letter from me in the following Friday's Jewish Chronicle. He added that more might come of it than I imagined. I suggested starting with Isaiah chapter 1 on the Saturday before Tisha B'Av, July 22, when it is read as the Haftara, and Isaiah would be our starting point.

Less than two months after the first number appeared, the Second World War began, and it seemed unlikely that any constructive and worth-while activity not directly connected with the prosecution of the War could continue and survive. Providentially, the religious leaders in England, headed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, felt that the country and the world needed a recall to religion, and that religion meant going back to the Bible as the source of the word of God. The Times, in its issue of Saturday, February 10, 1940, devoted a leader to the subject, in which it said: "To revive the habit of Bible reading, and to make that Bible

reading intelligent, are immensely important today." And it was most helpful in supporting our Union from the beginning. The second number of the Bulletin did not appear until Friday, November 10, 1939, mainly through the support of Mr. I.W. Goldberg, the Treasurer, who was literally a tower of strength in the thirty years he served in that capacity, and in the subsequent support to this day from the charity founded in his name.

I had suggested to Sir Robert Waley Cohen that he become the President. He said he couldn't, and that I should ask Dr. Epstein. He meant Dr. Mortimer Epstein, Chairman of the Central Committee for Jewish Education and a prominent writer in the Jewish Chronicle. But I misunderstood him and thought he meant Rabbi Dr. Isidore Epstein (B.A., Ph.D., D.Litt., then Lecturer in Semitic Languages and Librarian, Jews' College, and Editor of the Soncino Talmud). Dr. Epstein was delighted that Sir Robert had suggested him and accepted at once. And from the third number, published on December 22, 1939, he contributed a regular message, and many series of articles, such as on The Psalms, and other subjects.

To mark the hundredth issue of the Bulletin, on March 23, 1962, a M'lava Malka was held at the Golders Green Synagogue, Dunstan Rd. London, N.W. 11, at which Dr. Epstein was the guest of honour and delivered an address on the subject. Nobody present on that occasion, on March 24, 1962, dreamt that in less than three weeks Dr. Epstein

would go to his eternal rest. We in the Bible Readers' Union were inspired, particularly in the war years by his Message of the Month in which his unquenchable optimism in the ultimate triumph of God's purpose sustained and cheered people in all parts of the world. He had been our President for twenty three years. The late Chief Rabbi, Dr. Sir Israel Brodie, accepted the honour of succeeding him, and was President for seventeen years until his death in 1979. He in turn was succeeded by our present President, the Hon. Greville Janner M.A., Q.C., M.P. who, in his letter of acceptance, wrote: "I shall be very happy indeed to follow in the footsteps of my distinguished late lamented uncle, Sir Israel Brodie, and to accept the Presidency of the Bible Readers' Union. Your excellent work is well known to me and I am happy to be associated with a venture designed to make Jews more aware of our great spiritual, cultural and literary heritage".

In the first year of the Bible Readers' Union, eight issues of the Bulletin were published, and 88 numbers appeared until March 31, 1948. Then, for nine years it did not appear because of a quarrel with the Central Committee of Jewish Religious Education. During those silent years of hope, contact with our members was maintained through the columns of the Jewish Chronicle, who published the Bible Reading Calendar weekly. They were trying years, but I never gave up hope that the time would come when we would be able to resume. We were also encouraged by

letters we received from members and friends, telling us how much they missed the Bulletin and asking to be informed as soon as publication was resumed. Then, in the year 5718 (September 1957–68) a Bible Reading Calendar was issued, giving the daily readings for the whole year. It was a poor thing of twelve pages, two columns to a page, secular dates on one side and Hebrew dates on the other, with the Readings in the middle. In the inside cover was the verse from Psalm 119:105: *Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path*, and at the foot of each page a quotation from the Reading of one of the days of the month, ending with Lamentations 5:21: *Bring us back, O Lord, to You, and we shall return; renew our days as of old*.

And on January 2, 1958, Bulletin no. 89 was published, and 43 more numbers were issued until the final one, no. 132, on Friday, September 25, 1970, when we were already in Israel. By then, from Sunday September 10, 1961, we had made a change in the pattern of our Bible Reading. Dr. Chaim J.M. Gevaryahu had established the Israel Society for Biblical Research and, subsequently, in collaboration with the Jewish Agency, the World Jewish Bible Society. In that year we began following their order, the 187 chapters of the Torah in one year, and the 742 chapters of the Books of the Prophets and Holy Writings, in the course of just over two years, beginning with Joshua chapter 1 on Simhat Torah. We ourselves published a yearly Calendar, and in 1970 we issued a Land of Israel Diary, a pocket diary containing

over 140 pages, with international times and full diary information, including Sidrot and Haftarot for 1971 and 1972, together with a table of notable days, as well, of course, as the daily Bible Readings. It also contained two double-page maps, one of the United Kingdom of Israel and Judah in the days of David and Solomon, and the other of Jerusalem today, walled and unwalled, in accordance with the prophecy in Zechariah 2:8.

Immediately on coming to Israel we agreed to be affiliated to the World Jewish Bible Society, and I was asked by Dr. Gevaryahu and Dr. Katzoff to prepare the First Triennial Bible Reading Calendar for the years 5733–35 (1972–1975). It included notes on the 24 Books of the Bible, and each week, from Sunday October 1, the Readings in Hebrew and English, followed by a verse in Hebrew and English dealing with the theme of the Promised Land, and much else. The Calendar ended on Saturday September 27, 1975, Shemini Atzeret, with the reading of Kohelet chapter 12, and the quotation: *The end of the matter; when all is said and done; Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man* (12:13).

From then on the story belongs to Dor-le-Dor, the first number of which is dated Fall 1972. But I may be permitted to mention that the Third Triennial Bible Reading Calendar (1979–82) marked the 40th anniversary of the Bible Readers' Union and the beginning of its 18th cycle of daily Bible Readings on October 14, 1979, and that the Fourth (and current)

Bible Reading Calendar is dedicated to the memory of Lord Barnett Janner (1892-1982), Late President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and father of the Hon. Greville Ewen Janner, present President of the Board of Deputies and President of the Bible

Readers' Union. And on the title cover, for the Third Bible Reading Calendar, stands the grand verse from Isaiah, in Hebrew and English: *For out of Zion shall come forth the law and the word of God from Jerusalem* (2:3).

תדש"ם-1984

חג שמחה

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Joseph Halpern

TRIBUTES

In the dark days of World War II, foresight or fortune, together with courage and vision, here and there ignited modest lamps that occasionally blazed strongly enough to form spiritual beacons. One such was the Jewish Youth Study Groups in Great Britain, whose prime inspiration, driving force and effort came from its founder, the Rev. Joseph Halpern.

Mass evacuation of schools from the cities to rural areas certainly saved lives, but few realised at that time the emotional and spiritual disaster that it was creating for the budding generation, torn abruptly from their families. Jewish children in particular were thrown from close-knit communities into unfamiliar and totally un-Jewish surroundings.

Joseph Halpern was one of a small group who recognised the extent of the danger. Together with the late Dr. Nathan Morris, through the wartime Joint Emergency committee for Jewish Religious Education, he energetically began to establish contact with secondary schools all over the country where there were Jewish pupils. Tenaciously he continued to track down Jewish boys and girls; with the help of his colleagues he produced an incessant flow of self-teaching material of exceptionally high quality. Undaunted by difficulties, he set up summer schools and later winter environment, conveying a love of Judaism quite new to many of the young participants. Perhaps this was the precursor of the Open University.

Joey, as he is affectionately known by his thousands of 'children', was not only a tireless innovator and an indefatigable worker, he was a stimulating and effective teacher, always available to his pupils and above all a buoyant optimist, and a man of great humanity, giving generously of himself as confidant, 'uncle' and friend.

In his account of Jewish Education in Great Britain during World War II (Jewish Social Studies, Vol. 29, No. 1, P. 27, 1967), Bernard Steinberg writes:

'From its inception to the present day, the Study Groups movement has been instrumental in attracting large numbers of intelligent Jewish adolescents who would otherwise have remained indifferent and even hostile towards their Jewish heritage. The creation of the movement was undoubtedly one of the most important wartime achievements of Jewish education, and today the Study Groups form an integral part of the system'.

This is still true in 1984.

The names of the Study Groupers of the early years reads today like a roll of honour amongst Anglo Jewry and in Israel, and includes Rabbis, the President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and an M.P., judges, professors, QC's and others whose contributions to the Jewish community as a whole have been immeasurable. For Joey there can be no greater tribute.

Vivienne Léa Cohen, née Wolfson
Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Psychological Medicine,
St. Bartholomew's Hospital & Medical College, London



Many readers of *Dor-le-Dor* will no doubt remember the monthly magazine that used to be published in the United States — and probably still is — in which there appeared a regular feature entitled: "My Most Unforgettable Character".

I mention this because the heading of that series of articles admirably sums up my feelings with regard to the Rev. Joseph Halpern. We first met when we were students at Jews' College, London where I was able to see him at close quarters and where I soon learnt to admire his many remarkable gifts and qualities, which have remained unimpaired by the passage of time.

In due course our paths diverged. He remained in England, while I returned to South Africa. But we kept in touch with each other by means of letters. And when, soon after World War II, I was having a book published and needed somebody reliable to do the proof reading, whom could I request to undertake this laborious task, if not Joe Halpern?

He was in many respects a most remarkable person, and still is. No doubt, reference will be made by others to the books which he produced, the articles that he wrote, the lectures he delivered. I shall therefore not dwell upon these aspects; instead, I shall mention a few outstanding features that he possesses. There is his phenomenal memory, of which he gave ample evidence already as a student and which over-awed the rest of us. Thus, whenever some Hebrew grammatical point cropped up, as often as not Joe would give the number of the page or section in the bulky, authoritative Gesenius-Kautzsch Hebrew Grammar where this question was discussed. And this was no flash in the pan. It happened again and again.

Then there is the *Tenakh*. Joe began the habit, which has lasted some 57 years, of reading five chapters of the Bible every day. This is not merely a further example of his perseverance. It also means that he has acquired a thorough knowledge of the Bible which — it would be no exaggeration to say — is his *vade mecum*. You have only to quote a word or a phrase and he will immediately tell you where it occurs: name the Book, the chapter, and even the position on the page, whereupon he would whip out his *Tnakh* and triumphantly show you how right he was.

There are similar achievements to his credit, such as the keeping of a page-a-day diary in unbroken regularity for over 60 years:

But, over-arching all has been the moral strength which has enabled him to overcome his physical disability. I have never heard him complain, or even refer to it. He just goes on his way as if it did not exist. And this alone, in my very humble opinion, is sufficient to justify my designation of Joseph Halpern as my most unforgettable character.

Rabbi Dr. A. T. Shrock, Chief Minister of the Durban United Hebrew Congregation (Natal) until his Aliya to Israel in 1965; then Lecturer in Philosophy and English at Bar-Ilan University.



Indomitable will-power and perseverance which have enabled him to surmount severe physical handicaps; deep religious faith; devotion to our Scriptures engendered by close familiarity with the text and profound insight into its content; warm-hearted affectionate concern for his fellow-man which have gained him the esteem of a wide circle of friends and admirers, both Jewish and Gentile; a natural sympathy with the young and an understanding of their problems which made him a consummate educator; a natural power of eloquence and exposition — these are some of Joseph Halpern's outstanding qualities, revealed to me by an acquaintance of more than thirty years. Every meeting with him serves to enhance and deepen my regard for one who is truly, in Hillel's famous words, "of the disciples of Aaron, loving peace and pursuing peace, loving his fellow-creatures and bringing them near to the Torah".

Eric J. Frank, formerly Deputy Head of the Hasmonean Grammar School for Boys, London, Since Aliyah in 1972. Hon. Secretary of the Jerusalem Society for Social Rehabilitation.

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS:

THE MIDRASHIC APPROACH VERSUS JOSEPHUS' APPROACH

BY ARIE BEN-YOSEF

Dedicated to my friends, Professor Avraham Y. Katsh and Rev. Joseph Halpern, amongst the earliest pioneers of the World Jewish Bible Society, on attaining their 75th years.

Scripture portrays the section on Joseph and his brothers in great detail. Rabbinic and other literature elaborate upon it even more so, although there is a significant difference in the manner in which the biblical story is dealt with in the different texts.

In general, Scripture does not express an ethical assessment of its heroes. It is done, as Professor Franz Rosenzweig has rightly shown, only indirectly through the events depicted in Scriptures. Similarly, Rabbinic "midrashim," wherein the Sages add to or delete from that which is related in Scripture, deal with the rightness or wrongness of the heroes. Yet the "midrashim" do not offer ethical *judgments*; they merely express ethical *teachings*.

Such is not the manner of Gentile historians. They praise and exalt their own people and its heroes, making them faultless, while finding fault with other peoples and their heroes.

In keeping with the tendency of non-Jewish historians — to glorify their own heroes — a Gentile lady's question, put to R. Jose, does not surprise us: "How is it possible," she asked him, "that Joseph, seventeen years old, was perfect, and yet did such a thing?"¹ R. Jose opened the Book of Genesis, and began reading to her what Reuben did to Bilhah, and the story of Judah and Tamar, and went on to say: "If of these, who were grown up and yet under their father's authority,

1. Referring to: *At seventeen years of age . . . Joseph brought bad reports . . . to their father,* (Genesis 37:1,2).

Dr. Arye Ben-Yosef, received his B.A. and M.A. in Jewish history from Bar Ilan University and his Ph.D. from Dropsie University in Philadelphia, Pa. He has published on Biblical history and literary subjects in periodicals in Israel and abroad.

Scripture does not hide their faults; of Joseph, who was a minor and on his own, how much more so" (Bereshit Rabba, section 87).

Furthermore, the tendency in Scriptures towards objective historic descriptions is most evident in the section on Joseph and his brothers. In our literature, Joseph is described as "Joseph the Righteous," yet neither in Scripture nor in Rabbinic "midrash" is he regarded as an "angel of God." The Sages considered him as a man whose virtues exceeded his faults, and they do not hide his faults: "Sometimes he would act as a youngster, painting his eyes, walking on his heels, and playing about with his hair" (Bereshit Rabba, section 84).

As for the verse, *Joseph went into the house to do his work*² (Genesis 39:11), there are two opposing opinions. R. Shmuel bar Nachum interprets it as meaning: to do that which was necessary; whereas Rav Huna in the name of R. Matna says: "Joseph was prepared to do wrong, but he saw the image of his father, and it cooled his blood" (Bereshit Rabba, section 87). We therefore see that the Sages considered Joseph to be an ordinary human being, with his passions, which he knew how to control.

In contrast to the objective description in Scriptures, Josephus was being entirely subjective, when he explained in his introduction: "I am writing this book so that it may appeal to Greeks." Josephus was thinking of the Roman reader who was steeped in Greek culture, and wanted such reader to honour and respect the Jewish heroes, both in their thoughts and in their lives. In contrast to this, the Sages were more concerned with the ethical teachings of the Scripture story.

NOW ISRAEL LOVED JOSEPH BEST OF ALL HIS SONS

Josephus described Jacob's love for Joseph, born to him by his beloved Rachel, and accounted it to his physical beauty and high spiritual qualities. In contrast to Josephus' approach, the Sages commented on the verse *And Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his sons, because he was a child of his old age, and he made him a long-sleeved robe* (Genesis 37:3), saying: "Resh Lakish in the name of R. Elazar b. Azariah declared that a parent should not favour any child above the others, as we can learn from the fact that Joseph's brothers hated him on account of the long sleeved robe" (Bereshit Rabba, section 84).

2. Referring to the attempt of Potiphar's wife to seduce Joseph.

They, the Sages, derived an ethical teaching from Jacob's love of Joseph. They sought out eternal ideals, and with such an approach running like a scarlet thread throughout their studies, it fixed the content of their words.

We stand amazed at the sharpness of their understanding of a person's inner life. As for the verse, *And Israel said to Joseph, 'Your brothers are minding the flocks in Shechem; come and I will send you to them,' and he said, 'I am ready'* (Genesis 37:13), R. Hama bar Hanina commented: "Jacob remembered these words and was deeply disturbed. You know that your brothers hate you, and yet you say, 'I am ready' " (Bereshit Rabba, section 84). Jacob's suffering, when he remembered Joseph's immediate answer to the mission on which he was to be sent, reveals a deep understanding of a person's mind when incidents befall him. When he reconsiders the events, he blames himself.

In contrast to the Sages, Josephus does not mention this incident at all. It is irrelevant to his portrayal of Joseph.

PLEASE, MY LORD, LET YOUR SERVANT APPEAL TO MY LORD

Another example of the differing approaches between the Sages and Josephus is seen in their dealing with Judah's address to the vice-roy and his readiness to stay on as a servant to the Egyptian ruler in place of Benjamin, whom he had promised to restore to his father. Let us examine how Josephus deals with Judah's speech: Judah readily admits his wrong: "... Terrible actions which deserve punishment if committed against a ruler..." Then Judah asks Joseph to be gracious to them, thereby giving him a chance to show his gentleness and his "higher nature." Judah stresses their father's distress as a reason for being gracious to the brothers, but he also addresses Joseph with these words: "Do not pay attention to how we stand, and do not consider the way we have done you wrong. Look to your nature. Consider your good qualities and not your anger..." This is all rhetoric, so common to Roman pleading. It is all artificial. Judah, who is in trouble, is made to appear like a philosopher teaching his students about qualities such as anger.

Our Sages treat Judah's speech to Joseph differently. *Judah drew near to him* — R. Judah, R. Nehemiah, and the Sages: "R. Judah says he drew near to him — for battle; R. Nehemiah — for appeasement; the Sages — for prayer" (Bereshit Rabba, section 93). Obviously, such is the real way of a person in trouble. There

is no contradiction in these three approaches – they are complementary.

First, he pleads to be heard (בְּי אֲדוֹנָי); then he addresses him with prudence. When he sees he does not succeed, his words become sharper. The Sages interpret his words *for you are as Pharaoh* as meaning: “Just as Pharaoh makes a decree and does not observe it, so are you . . . and if I were to draw my sword, I would begin with you and finish off with Pharaoh, your master” (Bereshit Rabba, section 93).

Similarly, after Joseph had dramatically made himself known to his brothers, and they returned to their old father with the news that Joseph was alive, Jacob said: “רַב” *It is enough. Joseph my son is still alive; I will go and see him before I die.* (Genesis 45:28). In these few words are stored such deep feelings that there is no better way of expressing them. “רַב” is usually translated as “it is enough.” The “Midrash” however interprets the word “רַב”, as “great is the power,” giving that famous sentence the following meaning: “Great is the (moral) power of Joseph. In spite of all the troubles, he still has remained righteous” (Bereshit Rabba, section 94). The Sages, in their way, stress the ethical aspect that theirs and successive generations may learn a moral lesson.

We must add, however, that Josephus was also influenced by Hebrew sources in his treatment of many passages in the Bible. Midrashic influence is noticeable in his retelling of the story of Joseph and his brothers. Of particular interest in this connection is the search for the goblet among the brothers, *beginning with the eldest and finishing with the youngest*, so that they should not suppose that he knew where it lay (cf. Bereshit Rabba, section 82). Josephus says the same thing (cf. Antiquities, Book 2, par. 132). Furthermore, it appears that Josephus made use of a Rabbinic “midrash” which we no longer possess. He says that Joseph charged his servant to hide the goblet in Benjamin’s sack because he wanted to test the brothers whether they would stand by Benjamin if he were taken for the theft (cf. Antiquities, Book 2, par. 125). This same idea was known to the commentator R. Abraham ibn Saba, in his work *Zror HaMor*: “Many ask, why did Joseph want to cause trouble to the brothers with a goblet; in the *Midrash* they say: ‘Why did Joseph give this command? He wanted to test and find out whether they would show love for Benjamin his brother and endanger their lives for him,’” (*Zror HaMor*, Venice edition, section Mikketz L (56a). It is apparent therefore that both Josephus and R. Abraham ibn Saba had a “midrashic” source

which gave this interesting interpretation. One may assume that in Josephus' writings many similar "midrashim" were preserved which had originated in the Land of Israel and which were later lost. It is probable that in Josephus' extracts, in their Hellenistic form, the notion of "the crown coming back to its origin" was realised, similar to the ancient "Midrashic" tradition in the Land of Israel.

What was behind the spiritual motives of the heroes in Scripture? According to Josephus' analyses, the motives of Scriptural heroes convey but a single meaning, mostly in a tendentious and anachronistic manner. Josephus leaves little to his reader's imagination, thus destroying the meaning and true teaching woven into the original description. The "Midrashim" of the Sages, on the other hand, provide us sources for an in-depth understanding of the words of Scripture. Foremost, the "Midrashim" serve as a living example for us in examining "what happened to the fathers is a sign for the children" — "מעשה אבות סימן לבנים" — turning into the supremely important effort of drawing spiritual and ethical lessons for our own lives. This intention of the Sages is like a scarlet thread woven through all their writings. The lives and actions of Scriptural heroes are not only intended for their *own* times, but serve as an example and sign-post for all the generations of Israel, in *all* times. (Translated and adapted by Joseph Halpern)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

This is in response to Dr. David Lewis' letter in the Spring 1984 issue

Of course Dr. Lewis is correct that my Torah Dialogues on Ki Tetze (Dor le Dor X:4) should have called attention to the phrases which promise that "You will endure long on the soil..." if you have honest weights and measures (Deut. 25:13–16). (incidentally, it is good to see that 1982 issues are still being perused and studied).

The traditional view of this passage, however, is that it refers to *National* existence on the soil of Israel. The other two commandments promising long life, honoring parents and sending away the mother bird, refer to an *Individual's* longevity. That is why Midrash Rabba (Tetze 3 and Classical Commentaries as loc.) single them out as the only two commandments of this type. Ibn Ezra and others also see a reference to the nation as a whole in the commandment to honor parents because of the addition of the words "upon the land".

The reason that I posed the question so categorically was to avoid confusion with Deut. 11:21 which also promises long life albeit to the nation as a whole

Harold D. Halpern
New Milford, N.J.

EASTWARD AND WESTWARD

THE MOVEMENT OF PROPHECY AND HISTORY IN THE BOOK OF YONAH

BY GERDA ELATA-ALSTER AND RACHEL SALMON

השיבנו ה' אליך ונשובה, חדש ימינו כקדם (איכה, ה' כא)

Why is the book of Yonah read on Yom Kippur? The usual answer is that it is an exemplary tale of repentance and forgiveness: if even Nineveh, the gentile city of sinners, can be saved through repentance, then certainly the people of Israel, in whom God had invested so much, can be saved in the same way. Less attention has been paid, however, to a certain incongruity between the story of Nineveh and that of Yonah himself. The fact that the Book of Yonah is read at the Minhah service has perhaps something of significance to say regarding the difference between a story about repentance and the working out of the process of repentance. Like the Jew at the point at which the day begins to turn towards its close, and like the People of Israel at every point of its history, Yonah's own repentance is not yet complete. Strangely enough, the prophet who successfully activates the repentance of Nineveh appears not to follow the example of its inhabitants. The book ends at the gates of Nineveh, with God's question to Yonah to which the prophet does not respond.

IN THE SERVICE OF ATONEMENT

Whereas the story of Nineveh maps out the completed sequence of sin,

Dr. Gerda Elata-Alster teaches in the Department of Foreign Literatures and Linguistics at the Ben Gurion University of the Negev and in the Department of Comparative Literature at Bar Ilan University. She has published a textbook of modern Hebrew for Dutch students, and has written on Greek Tragedy, Dante and on Biblical discourse.

Dr. Rachel Salmon is a Lecturer in the Department of Foreign Literatures and Linguistics at the Ben Gurion University of the Negev. She has published on Henry James, Gerard Manley Hopkins and literary theory.

repentance, and forgiveness — the abstract framework of divine-human relationships — Yonah's tale moves through the obstacles and obscurities of man's interaction with God. Unlike the tale of Nineveh, which provides an overview of the fulfillment of human history, Yonah's open-ended story invites completion by the participant in the service of atonement. The question which Yonah stood to answer at the gates of Nineveh is posed, at the end of his story, to every Jew who stands at the gates of heaven before the closing of the gates of the day. To answer it (תשובה) is the act to repentance itself — atonement (at-one-ment), being at-one with God.

The Book of Yonah, not yet at-one, moves in conflicting directions. Yonah's mission is to arise and cry out (1:2 — וקרא . . . קום) against Nineveh whose wickedness has ascended before God. Without waiting for the actual words he is to speak, or explaining his reasons, Yonah indeed arises (1:3 — ויקם), but instead of proceeding eastward to Nineveh, he flees westward before God (ib., twice מלפני ה') to Tarshish.

SAVED THROUGH REPENTANCE

The Sages, who fill in the gaps of motivation, attempt to explain why the prophet rebels in this way. They suggest either human frailty: the fear of appearing to be a false prophet when the city whose destruction he had proclaimed would be saved through repentance (thus discrediting the credibility both of God's prophecy and his own name), or the apparently more lofty reason: the attempt to save an unrepentant Israel from punishment at the hands of the nation which God was preserving for that very purpose.¹ However, it is not as difficult to understand *why* Yonah did not wish to fulfill God's commandment, as it is to understand *how* he thought it possible to avert God's plan.

What kind of understanding of history does Yonah's act imply? The attempt to write his own history in defiance of what had been revealed to him — to take a westward rather than an eastward course — indicates his assumption that man's plans can stand in opposition to those of God. Man constructs his concept of the divine governance of history upon his own natural propensity to think in either or categories. Theological dichotomies such as: free will, predestination,

1. See L. Ginsberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, 7 vols. (1909–38; rpt. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society 1946–7) Index Vol. under "Jonah"; in particular vol. IV, pp. 246–53.

compassion/justice (מדת הרחמים ומדת הדין ומדת הרחמים), and prophecy/history invite choice of one pole or the other. Thus faced with the divine command, Yonah thinks that he can choose an alternative: that he can rewrite history in his own terms. In fact, he goes to great lengths – the Midrash suggests that he pays the fare for the entire passenger load – to ensure his immediate departure in the direction diametrically opposed to that commanded. Interestingly, Yonah's desire moves him westward in the direction of all human narration which follows the path of time traced by the sun from sunrise to sunset, and the logical rules of cause and effect and contradiction.² Yonah's plan to escape by sea to the west is, however, overturned and turned around by God's storm and God's fish.

REWRITING GOD'S HISTORY

According to the story that Yonah had been trying to write, his act should have led to his arrival at Tarshish. Although he clearly knows that God rules the whole world, Yonah may have thought, the Sages tell us, that prophecy was limited to the Land of Israel. His attempt to erase God's projected narrative comes up, however, against God's power to inscribe His story on top of Yonah's. God answers Yonah's wordless evasion of His word with an equally nonverbal sign: the text leaves no space between Yonah's flight before God (ib. מלפני ה') and God's hurling of a great wind into the sea (1:4 – ויהי השיל רוח גדולה בים). The naive sailors think to deal with this as with any great storm at sea, by throwing the ballast overboard and praying to their gods, but Yonah knows better. Recognizing that the storm expresses the wrath of God, he thinks, nonetheless, that he can turn it to his own purposes. Even if he must read this upheaval of nature as divine retribution, he can still interpret it as a sign that he has succeeded in rewriting God's history. By going to sleep he seems to affirm his triumphant control of the story – his sleep is an emblem of the death which will make his escape from God's word irreversible. Yonah thus willingly accepts his own impending destruction as the condition necessary for the prevention of Nineveh's return from its evil ways.

However, the sailors soon appear to be less naive than Yonah. They awaken him from his sleep-death, and call upon him in the words of God (1:6 – וקרא קום-1:6).

2. "Human stories", like the *Odyssey* and the *Aeneid*, take indeed a "westward" course.

Their decision to cast lots (1:7 – *לכו ונפילה גורלות*) opens a space for the intervention of God in their fate, which He employs to designate Yonah (ib. *ויפול* *הגורל על יונה*). In the account the sailors demand of Yonah, he says that he fears God, but even if his fear is an awesome recognition that God controls the sea as well as the land (1:9 – *עברי אנוכי ואת ה' אלוקי השמים אני ירא אשר – עשה את הים ואת היבשה*), he still hopes to forestall God's story through death. Ironically, Yonah's confession of faith, which does not mark his own repentance, does turn the sailors to God.

GOD ASSUMES FULL CONTROL

As we have seen, they have already spoken in God's language (1:6 – *ויאמר לו – מה לך נרדם, קום קרא אל אלוקיך, אולי יתעשה האלוקים*) and now they hesitate to carry out Yonah's instructions to cast him overboard and pray for divine guidance. Only after trying to save Yonah's life by rowing back against the divine wind (1:3 *ויחחרו האנשים להשיב אל היבשה*) are they fully convinced that Yonah's demand is in accordance with the divine spirit. At the very moment when Yonah's escape seems to have become absolute in death, God assumes full control over the direction of his movements (2:1 *וימן ה' דג גדול*).

DIVINE AND HUMAN FREEDOM VIE FOR THE SAME SPACE

What was God's story, and why did He have to use Yonah? If this is a narration about the repentance and subsequent salvation of Nineveh, God could have allowed Yonah to die and then have appointed another prophet in his stead. What we see, however, is that God does not allow Yonah to create and conclude an autonomous story. Nor is God's story in respect to Yonah over when the prophet, released from the great fish, carries out his mission to Nineveh and brings about the individual and collective penitence of its inhabitants. In fact, the prevention of Nineveh's destruction may only have been the pre-text to another story: that of the attempted conversion of Yonah himself. As a God-fearing man (1:9) who knows that God is Lord of sea and land, and as a prophet who knows that the end of Nineveh's tale is to serve as a punishing rod for Israel, Yonah's position is homologous to that of the People of Israel who have been informed through the Torah of the ends of creation, and who have been appointed to reunite prophecy and history. According to the Kabbalistic tradition, the created

world is categorized by severance and differentiation. The aim of history thus becomes the restoration of divine unity by man.³ This is a situation which man can never comprehend logically. Man could easily understand a history subjected entirely either to divine or human control. Difficulty arises, however, when he must face, as in the Book of Yonah, the juxtaposition of divine coercion and human freedom on the historical plane. Human logic presents this problem of control in either/or categories as if divine and human freedom vie for the same space. If God is omnipotent, there would appear to be no room for human freedom. On the other hand, any attribution of choice to man, rules out God's omnipotence. Throughout the book, Yonah behaves as if there is room either for God or for himself. Yonah's sin weighs heavily precisely because, as a prophet, he knows God's plan for the future repentance of Nineveh and he tries to sabotage it. He thus violates God's will at the very point where there can be no question of a lack of knowledge. No such attenuating circumstances, as those which God attributes to Nineveh ("one hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left")⁴ apply to Yonah. Yonah knows that God will deal with the repentant Ninevites according to the measure of mercy as well as that of justice; nevertheless he assumes that he can sever history from prophecy, prevent — through the withholding of God's word — the repentance of Nineveh which had been foreseen by God. Therefore, after God has forced Yonah's outward compliance by overturning his westward movement (to Tarshish) and downward movement (into the hold of the ship, into the depths of the sea, and into the belly of the fish), He tries Yonah with the *kikayon* (קיקיון).⁵

MERCIFUL INTERVENTION OF GOD

Like the People of Israel, Yonah turns only temporarily in the wake of God's show of power. Having proclaimed the prophecy which reverses Nineveh's sinful

3. See Gershom G. Sholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*, 3rd. ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1955), pp. 217–44, esp. pp. 222–44. The Zohar calls the visible creation (as different from the Sefiroth) the *alma de-peruda*, the "world of separation" (p. 222).

4. All translations from: *Sefer Yonah*, translation and commentary by Rabbi Meir Zlotowitz (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Menora Publications Ltd., 1978).

5. In the spirit of some of the medieval commentaries, the authors have chosen not to translate the word *kikayon*, because its exact botanical definition has no bearing on its function as a symbol of the repeated intervention of God in Yonah's life.

course as quickly as his few words of piety converted the sailors, Yonah pleads with God to take his life, just as he had previously preferred to die in the sea in order to avoid delivering the prophecy to Nineveh. This refused, he crosses the city from west to east, instead of returning westward to his own land, and encamps himself before it to the east (4:5 מקדם) in the hope that God will repent and go back on His history after all. He builds a succah to shade himself from the sun, just as he had previously purchased passage to Tarshish in order to further his own version of the tale. The rabbis tell us that this succah was of no more avail than the westward-bound boat. It withered, leaving Yonah miserable and again desirous of death.⁶ However, God once again overthrows Yonah's cause-and-effect calculations – the expectation of death according to the measure of justice – and sends, in his mercy, the *kikayon* (4:6 – וימן ה' אלוקים קיקיון). The manner in which God summons the *kikayon*, repeats God's call to the storm and the fish (1:4, 2:1 – ויהי הטיל רוח גדולה ביים; וימן ה' דג גדול – 2:1); all are merciful interventions of God in history which open up space and time for atonement.

Why is the repentance of Yonah and of Israel theologically necessary? Why does God not simply destroy the rebellious individual or nation and create a substitute? Although in the most extreme incident of rebellion – the golden calf – God does threaten to do so, the threat is not actually carried out. The gates of repentance are kept open and punishment, even when it is severely meted out, does not put an end to the story. What order of necessity is here implied?

FREEWILL AND DETERMINATION

As the rabbis tell us: “Everything is in the hands of heaven except the fear of heaven” (הכל בידי שמים חוץ מיראת שמים).⁷ In the either/or constructions of human logic, this situation can be represented only as the binary opposition between freewill and predetermination. In such terms, God either can or cannot make man repent. If He can, God's omnipotence is obvious, but man is not free. If He cannot, man is indeed free, but God's omnipotence is placed in question. The story of Yonah takes up this classic problem in narrative rather than logical (or theological) terms. It does not, therefore, attempt a philosophical solution, but seeks to make accessible a situation which is not amenable to human logic.

6. Radak ad loc.

7. *Berakhot*, 33b.

However, narration itself is only possible in language, and is thus also contingent upon logic and cannot transcend itself. It cannot, therefore, directly represent an order in which both freewill and determinism prevail (הכל צפוי והרשות נתונה).⁸ Human history and human logic are both unidirectional; they move from past to present and from cause to effect. The Book of Yonah both establishes and subverts this movement. What narration can do is undermine the natural structure of human thought, not by representing an alternative order but by violating this one. In this way the *possibility* of another order is opened up.

CONTRASTING SETS OF NARRATION

There are two contrasting sets of parallel narrations within the compass of this tiny book: one which is comprehensible in human terms and one which is not. As we have noted, the tale of the sailors foreshadows the tale of Nineveh; both follow the same unidirectional causal pattern in which repentance leads to forgiveness. However, the two episodes which concern Yonah himself – his attempted flight from God to Tarshish and his sullen wait before Nineveh – violate this pattern in a manner all the more striking because of the doubling of elements in the scenes. The boat which Yonah takes and the succah which he builds both fail to fulfill his expectations; the great wind by which God causes the storm at sea and the hot easterly wind which discomforts Yonah at Nineveh are both direct interventions of the divine into the natural world; the big fish which saves Yonah's life and reverses his course serves a purpose similar to that assigned to the *kikayon*. Human causality fails to work in all of these instances. Neither the boat nor the succah protect Yonah, and the agents which God summons forth – the fish, the *kikayon*, the worm and the wind – undermine Yonah's understanding of cause and effect. In human narration, God's story can never meet the story of man because it is not organized according to the same categories. While man's story must run in one direction, working itself out by choosing between alternatives, for God everything is present and apparent contradictions cohere in an unimaginable whole.

8. *Avot*, 3, 15.

SUBVERSION OF HUMAN TIME AND HUMAN LOGIC

In the incident of the *kikayon*, which is God's story, not Yonah's, the subversion of human time and of human logic reaches its climax. According to the rules of human logic, man should not be able to repent because of the irreversibility of time. There is no way in which man himself could abrogate the flow of history. God's interventions in Yonah's story make visible what the possibility of repentance given to every man means. Usually we imagine the difficulty of repentance to reside in the nature of the sin. However, the extraordinary requirement set out by the Rambam which specifies that man truly repents only if he chooses another road in exactly the same situation as that in which he previously sinned refers to the structure, rather than to the contents, of repentance.⁹ God gives man the opportunity to return in time, but man himself must make the new choice which is repentance. When God intervenes directly in Yonah's progress — reversing his course by means of the storm and the fish — He forces Yonah to return, but not necessarily to repent.

In the Book of Yonah, repentance is represented in two different ways. The story of Nineveh's repentance evidences a backward movement which runs against the stream of time, followed by a forward movement which revises historical expectations. Yonah does not repent in this straightforward manner, and his story sets out in detail the workings of the entire process of repentance. Twice God enables Yonah to return to the moment of decision. In the first instance, when the fish threw Yonah back upon the land, he did indeed go eastward to Nineveh as God had directed. But he did so because he was overpowered. His misery and renewed desire for death when he sees the repentance of Nineveh bears witness to his lack of inner compliance with God's will. As Yonah explains to God, he had hastened to get beyond the original prophecy by his flight to Tarshish (4:2 — על כן קדמתי לברוח חרשישה), and now he goes to station himself east of the city of Nineveh (4:5 — וישב מקדם לעיר). The same root (קדם) indicates *before* in both time and place, and hints at Yonah's attempt to get ahead of or beyond God's will. Gifted with prophecy, Yonah had concluded that God's time differs from that of man only in respect to direction —

9. *Hilkhot Te-shuvah*, 2, 1.

that divine time runs counter to human time (future to past, or west to east). Yonah must learn that the either/or categories of human thought are irrelevant to God, that his own desired end – the salvation of Israel – is not excluded from the divine plan of punishment which appears, to him, to be contradictory.

A GLIMPSE OF DIVINE WAYS

Now we can begin to understand the final episode of the book in which God tries Yonah once again, by sending him the *kikayon*. Although God may bring man back to the decisive moment by supernatural means, only man can write his story anew – be it an underwriting of God's story or the repetition of his own sinful tale. The question which remains is why God cannot or will not complete His history without Yonah's cooperation. According to the dictates of human logic, such dependence of the divine upon the human would seem to cast doubt upon the omnipotence of God. Therefore, God subverts human logic, as he has subverted human time, in order to give the prophet a glimpse of the divine ways. Only such a glimpse, evidently, enables man to repent in full acknowledgement of the divine will. Such acknowledgement on the part of Yonah and on the part of the People of Israel seems, somehow, to be the condition of complete at-one-ment – the very end of creation itself.

In traditional commentary, the distinction between the divine names of God (אלוקים) and the Lord (ה') is explained in terms of the difference between justice and mercy in the divine manifestations to man.¹⁰ Early in the book, it is the Lord (ה') who deals with Yonah – gives him the command (1:1 – ויהי דבר ה' אל יונה) before which the prophet flees (1:3 – ויקם יונה לברוח תרשישה מלפני ה'), sends the storm to obstruct his flight (1:4 – ה' הטיל רוח גדולה), and the great fish to save him (2:1 – וימך ה' דג גדול). It is also to the Lord (ה') that Yonah prays in the fish's belly, and who commands the fish to restore Yonah to dry land. The third chapter, which parallels the first in a reverse direction (now Yonah obeys) uses the same divine appellation, Lord, whereas Nineveh is consistently called a great city of God (3:3 – ויגוה היתה עיר גדולה לאלוקים). All the dealings of the people of Nineveh are with God (אלוקים), and it is He who accepts their repentance and spares them. So far, it would appear that the nations recognize and are judged

10. E.g., Slotowitz, *Sefer Yonah*, p. 136.

according to the attribute of justice, while Israel deals with and is judged by divine mercy. Justice and mercy thus appear to be mutually exclusive categories. However, in chapter four, Yonah must acknowledge a structure which completely surpasses human understanding.

COMPOSITE DIVINE NAME

The *kikayon* is summoned by the composite divine name (4:6 – וימן ה' אלוקים – קיקיון), and its purpose is to force Yonah to acknowledge what no human being can understand – that the standards of justice and mercy which man distinguishes and opposes logically are, in God, one. However, there is no way in which this unity can be directly manifested in human terms. Only through the annulment of human logic in paradox can something of the sort be communicated. If the Lord, God brought the *kikayon*, it is God who destroys it (4:7 – וימן האלוקים תולעת – רוח קדים – וימן אלוקים רוח קדים). Since Yonah refused even the measure of divine justice to Nineveh, he will himself be tried according to that standard. Once again he fails the test: he is filled with anguish and begs to die. It is now God who asks Yonah the very question: *Are you so deeply grieved about the kikayon* (4:9 – ויאמר אלוקים – אל יונה, ההיטב חרה לך על הקיקיון (ויאמר ה' ההיטב חרה לך – 4:4). This time Yonah answers – in the affirmative – he is indeed deeply grieved by the divine ways; Yonah is still in inward rebellion against God.

In the final verse of the book God's question – rhetorical or not – finally undoes man's logic. This question has engaged the ingenuity of the rabbis throughout the ages; the proliferation of solutions indicates the inexorable difficulty of the text. We wish to suggest that this difficulty needs to be made fully present rather than to be explained away.

After God has asked him about his grief over the *kikayon* (4:9 ויאמר אלוקים – ההיטב חרה לך על הקיקיון), the Lord (ה') ends the scene with an "impossible" question: *You took pity on the kikayon for which you did not labor nor did you make it to grow, which came into existence overnight and perished overnight – and I – shall I not take pity upon Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and many beasts.* This question, to which there is no

recorded reply, is structured so as to make Yonah's pity for the *kikayon* parallel to God's pity for Nineveh. Its form suggests a logical relationship (קל וחומר), but no exercise of rabbinical ingenuity has succeeded in reconciling its logically incompatible components. Since Yonah's grief over the *kikayon* is the "just as" portion of the proposition, we are led to surmise that God's relation to Nineveh parallels Yonah's relation to the *kikayon*. The immediate problem is that Yonah cares only for the service he receives from the plant; he is sorry about his own discomfort, not about the demise of the *kikayon* in and of itself. His pity is thus self-pity, not at all pity for the threatened object. If God's purposes are made parallel to Yonah's, then God cares for Nineveh only as a tool (i.e., as a punishing rod for Israel) and the example of innocent people and beasts worthy of pity is quite irrelevant. However, if God pities the inhabitants of Nineveh and He extends to them the measure of mercy — the use of the divine name, the Lord (יהוה), is significant here — then His pity finds no parallel in Yonah who would not accord the repentant sinners even the measure of justice.

CATEGORIES OF JUSTICE AND MERCY

Despite efforts by the sages to demonstrate Yonah's concern for the *kikayon* itself, or God's need of Nineveh for the execution of his plans, the misfit of the two parts of the construction cannot be explained away. What Yonah is finally invited to face is his inability to contain God within his own categories. All homologies between his ways of thinking and those of God break down by necessity. Yonah does not answer God's question because he cannot do so; although it looks logical at first glance, it turns out to be perpetually self-contradictory in the terms of human logic. There is no way in which he can reduce God's purposes to his own or unravel God's purposes in themselves. For him, self-interest and interest in the other are self-exclusive, as are the categories of justice and mercy. The structure of God's final address to Yonah — if, and only if, its contradictory form is fully realized — can indicate to him what he cannot comprehend.

We can now hazard a guess at why God does not abandon Yonah to his sin and appoint another prophet for the job. The real job is not the salvation of Nineveh, which could be accomplished in sundry ways, but the repentance of Yonah himself — and through Yonah, of the People of Israel. God's plan of at-one-ment

with creation is, paradoxically, one with man's *freedom* to unite himself with the will of God. It appears from the Book of Yonah that God can prevent man's departure, but not engineer his willing approach. Man is not free *finally* to refuse (God can keep bringing him back to the point of decision), but he can assent only in freedom. Yonah, the agent of repentance to the sailors and to Nineveh, must himself learn how to repent – as Israel the agent of God's will in the world must learn how to identify itself with the will of God.

Addressed by the Lord God (ה' אלוקים), Yonah and Israel must learn the silence of accordance appropriate to God's unity which can be manifested in human terms only as paradox. He who participates in the synagogue reading of the Book of Yonah at the Minhah service on Yom Kippur is left, at its completion, immersed in such silence. The Jew is beckoned, before the gates of the day close, to experience – if only momentarily, and thus within the human order of time – that at-oneness with the will of God which is atonement.



And the Lord appointed a large fish (Jonah 2:1–11)

(Gustave Doré)

THE ENUMA ELISH HOAX

BIBLICAL CREATION STORY – NOT CONNECTED WITH ANY
CUNEIFORM TEXT

BY I. RAPAPORT

If the problem which I am presenting in these pages displays a note of polemic here and there, it is because innumerable scholars, who have dealt with the subject before, have departed from the path of objectivity in the course of their considerations. I refer to the current attitude that the Biblical Creation story in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis has been taken over from Babylonian cuneiform sources, particularly from the poem known as *Enuma Elish* (the opening words of the poem, meaning: *when on high*).

Indeed, endless material has been written on the subject by both Assyriologists and Biblicists, continually and uncritically repeating the same view as if it expressed the pinnacle of truth. On the contrary, in my opinion this attitude is wrong and unjustified, and I deeply regret that it has been allowed to undermine the traditional veneration in which the Scriptural Creation narrative of ancient Israel had long been held among the peoples of the world. Hence my endeavour here to reverse the process.

The problem first arose a little over a hundred years ago. At the time, very many cuneiform tablets from the archaeological sites in Mesopotamia (old Assyria and Babylonia) began to be deciphered by European scholars revealing a very old civilisation which had been forgotten for nearly two-and-a-half thousand years. A leading expert in this area of inquiry was the late George Smith of the British Museum in London who concentrated on many cuneiform texts which, in his opinion, resembled such narratives as were found in the opening eleven chapters of the Book of Genesis. But inasmuch as the science of cuneiform was

Rabbi Dr. I. Rapaport, O.B.E., Emeritus Chief Minister of the Melbourne Hebrew Congregation and Chairman of the Melbourne Beth-Din, has written extensively on Biblical and Judaic subjects. The present article is based upon his book The Babylonian Poem Enuma Elish and Genesis Chapter One, published in Melbourne, 1979. He now lives in Givatayim, Israel.

still at its beginnings, the inscriptions were badly interpreted, and the late Mr. Smith had his share in the all too many imperfections at the time, with *Enuma Elish* having suffered most badly.

Some readers of *Dor le Dor* will recall my article *The Flood Story in Bible and Cuneiform Literature* (published in the Winter Issue of the Journal, vol. xii/2, 1983/1984, pp. 95f.) in which I endeavoured to refute the view by George Smith that the Biblical Flood narrative had been adapted from Tablet XI of the Gilgamesh Epic. Smith's view was first put forward in 1872, and so great and sensational was its impact that members of the scholarly community had all too readily accepted it, and by today it appears in every publication dealing with the subject. My own view as elaborated in the above-mentioned issue of *Dor le Dor* is that Tablet XI of the Gilgamesh Epic is not about a Flood at all, because even the elementary word *water* is not recorded in the Babylonian text of the story; the disaster which is described in the text of the tablet is about a most severe windstorm and a fire which destroyed the particular locality, and accordingly this story could not have been the forerunner of the Biblical Flood.

However, at the time, George Smith was intoxicated with the renown of his Flood discovery and he went on to "prophecy" that eventually "all the earlier narratives of Genesis would receive new light from the inscriptions so long buried in the Chaldean and Assyrian mounds."¹ In fact, barely twelve months later he announced, after having participated in a series of archaeological excavations in Mesopotamia, that a particular tablet which he had found "turned out to contain the story of man's original innocence, of the temptation, and of the fall."² He then continued by saying that the cuneiform fragments he had discovered "all join and form part of a continuous (cuneiform) series of legends, giving the history of the world from the Creation down to some period after the fall of man. Linked with these, I found also other series of legends on primitive history, including the story of the building of the Tower of Babel and of the Confusion of Tongues."³

1. See Smith's letter in the "Daily Telegraph," dated March 4, 1875.

2. Smith, *The Chaldean Account of Genesis*, London, 1876, p. 12.

3. Smith, *Genesis*, p. 13. It is now known that no such cuneiform tablets have ever been found.

These assertions by the British scholar were extraordinarily impressive, and it may be said that the two publications we have just mentioned marked a veritable turning-point in the basic research of the Hebrew Bible. The scholarly community everywhere had fallen under the spell of Smith's persuasiveness.⁴

Be it as it may, the British scholar does not seem to have accumulated sufficient evidence to prove his case that the Biblical Creation Story had its origin in any of the cuneiform tablets. Most of the time he simply groped in the dark. He decided to rely on a record by Synkellos, a Constantinople monk of the 8th century CE, saying that Berosus, a Greek-writing priest of the city of Babylon of the third century BCE, reported that the world was created by the monster-goddess Tiamat. Now, this Tiamat was found by George Smith in the cuneiform fragment, and he suggested that this must be the source of the Biblical Creation narrative. He was not discouraged by the fact that he had no cuneiform text to support his contention. Today we would regard his "reconstruction" of the case as utterly unbelievable, if not preposterous, but he did it in the following manner.

He started off by assuming that, like in Genesis chapter One, prior to Creation, there was chaos. But as the cuneiform tablets which were supposed to describe the actual events of Creation could not be found, the British scholar is on record as saying that "judging by analogy of the Book of Genesis," he "conjectured" that the Babylonian version was the source of the Biblical story in some such way as this:

- "Verses 1 & 2 of Genesis agree with tablet 1.
- "Verses 3 to 5 1st day probably with tablet 2.
- "Verses 6 to 8 2nd day probably with tablet 3.
- "Verses 9 to 13 3rd day probably with tablet 4.
- "Verses 14 to 19 4th day agree with tablet 5.
- "Verses 20 to 23 5th day probably with tablet 6.
- "Verses 24 & 25 6th day probably with tablet 7.

Unfortunately, the British scholar passed away in 1876, and was not in a position to know that his "prophesies" were never fulfilled.

4. This persuasiveness is seen from the fact that Smith's *Genesis* was published in German in the same year of 1876 by Dr. Herman Delitzsch, a nephew of the controversial Professor Friedrich Delitzsch.

“Verses 26 and following, 6th and 7th day, probably with tablet 8.”⁵

George Smith then goes on to weave his phantasy in the following manner: “The tablet which I think to be the eighth appears to give the Creation and Fall of Man, and is followed by several other tablets giving apparently the war between the gods and the powers of evil, but all of these are very mutilated . . .”

The British scholar seems to have been satisfied that he had accomplished the task he had set out to do; to which we can only say that seldom had a scholar been so wrong in interpreting a text the wording of which he did not even have in front of him, and equally seldom had a scholar misled so many others in a matter which was of the highest importance to the conscientious person, as the theological importance of the Holy Scriptures. If the late George Smith had been alive, we would ask him quite bluntly, which line of the *Enuma Elish* poem speaks of the creation of heaven and earth? Which line speaks of any act of creation altogether? We have the text of the poem, but no Creation in it.^{5a}



Strange as the British scholar’s methodology was, stranger still has been the attitude of those Assyriologists and Biblicists who came after him. While it is true that in the same year that Smith’s book was published in London, the book was translated and published in Germany, showing the great appeal of the book’s conclusions, scholars began to abandon Smith’s original way of linking the Babylonian poem *Enuma Elish* with Genesis chapter One. A new interpretation of the poem came into being, but George Smith’s view about the poem’s narrative remained, namely that the narrative somehow dealt with the creation of the world and that, as such, it had served as the prototype of the Biblical Creation Story. Yet, there is not the slightest truth in this attitude.⁶

5. See Smith, *Genesis*, pp. 67 and 72.

5a. “It is most regrettable that numerous scholars have all too generously bestowed upon the Babylonian poem various high-sounding titles, e.g., “Creation Epic” in English, and “Weltschöpfungsepos” (Delitzsch) or “Weltschöpfungslied” (Ebeling) in German. Such impressive titles, to which the poem is not entitled, could not but have a most one-sided influence upon the unwary reader.”

6. The reader will notice that I am not discussing here the point of *Enuma Elish* being a polytheistic narrative, whereas Genesis chapter One is monotheistic. If it suited the ancient

We can only hope that the readers here are acquainted with the contents of the first chapter of Genesis: how God created the heavens and the earth, with light and darkness, on the first day. On the second day, God divided the upper waters from the lower waters. On the third day, dry land was separated from the seas. On the same day, all manner of trees and plants were brought into being. Then, on the fourth day, the sun, the moon and the stars were created. On the fifth day, the birds and fishes were created. On the sixth day, the animals and man were created. The Divine Creator saw it all and found it very good, and blessed it, and rested on the seventh day, which He also blessed and sanctified.

We may imagine that the work involved in this creational drama demanded truly divine efforts, yet the Hebrew text refers to no extra strength being used in the drama. Only God's word causes the emergence of the world and all that there is in it, and the description of the drama covers no more than some thirty-three verses. On the other hand, the Babylonian poem covers some one thousand lines of text, inscribed on seven tablets of cuneiform text, and to give here even the shortest summary of it is almost a frightening undertaking.

Yet, we will endeavour to do it, so as to see whether the poem really has anything in common with the Biblical narrative, as has now been claimed by Assyro-Biblical scholars for the last hundred years and more.



The poem opens with a description of the time when "On high the heavens were not called by name, and the earth below was not mentioned by name," then only Apsu and Tiamat mingled their waters together. A long time then passed, without any existence in the world, and then the gods were born. Generation after generation of gods came into being, which finally was the cause of a murderous war between the older and younger generations of deities. It is only my respect for the notion of literature as such that prevents me from giving a full description of the extremely low quality of the alleged poetry of the Babylonian epic and the crudeness and cruelty which mark the conduct of the divine battle. Nearly four complete tablets (or as much as is left of their fragments) are taken up by the

Babylonians to be polytheistic, it was their business. My only issue with Smith and his successors is that in my opinion *Enuma Elish* is not a Creation story, and thus it could not have influenced the Biblical story.

description of the fighting, with the god Marduk conquering and slaughtering the goddess Tiamat. Towards the end of the fourth tablet Marduk is said to split the dead Tiamat into two parts, "like the splitting of a flat fish," and hanging up one half across the heavens.

Then, as from the fifth tablet onward, we have Marduk arranging the shining forth of the moon, followed by much mutilated and unintelligible text. We can barely then make out about Marduk proposing to the god Ea his plan to make himself an imbecilic human being with the blood of his head. As the text continues we read about how Marduk is elevated to the rank of supreme godhead in the Babylonian pantheon, which is located in the city of Babylon, and a long hymn of praise is sung in his honour. So ends the cuneiform text of the narrative.

I should like the reader to believe me that the summary of the Babylonian poem *Enuma Elish*, as given above, is presented in a spirit of the highest impartiality, and my question is: how could any scholar possibly maintain that this poem contains any matter which could in any manner whatsoever be compared to the Biblical Creation Story in the first chapter of the Book of Genesis? Surely, there is not a single word about any act of creation in the Babylonian composition. Why, then, should an eminent Assyriologist of the calibre of Professor L.W. King tell us as follows: "From the time of the first discovery of fragments of the poem considerable attention has been directed towards them, for not only are the legends themselves the principal source of our knowledge of the Babylonian cosmogony, but passages in them bear a striking resemblance to the cognate narratives in the Book of Genesis concerning the creation of the world."⁷

If the learned professor were still alive, we would insist on his pointing out to us which "passages" in the poem "bear a striking resemblance" to the Biblical record of the Creation of the world, as we outlined it in our summary a few paragraphs earlier? On our part, we deny that there are any such passages. Yet, unbelievably, there is a long line of Assyriologists and Biblicists who have over the years repeated L.W. King's statements as if they could be corroborated from the actual Babylonian text of the cuneiform inscription. Again, if I were not held back by the conventional respect which I have been trained to hold for the written

7. L.W. King, *The Seven Tablets of Creation*, London, 1902, p. xxvi.

word of literature, I would accuse an endless number of scholars with being quite unobjective in their assessments of what is contained in the cuneiform poem and what is not.

Thus, we read in an authoritative publication by Professor D.O. Edzard about the god Marduk, soon after his great victory: "Er spaltet Tiamat, richtet die obere Hälfte als das Himmelsgewölbe auf, die untere als die Erde."⁸ As the learned professor is happily with us, we would be grateful to him if he were to give us chapter and verse in the poem *Enuma Elish* where Marduk indeed makes *the upper half of Tiamat into the heavenly firmament, and the lower half into the earth*. To be sure, this assertion would carry the greatest weight in determining whether we are in any way justified in looking upon *Enuma Elish* as a Creation narrative along the same or similar lines as we have in Genesis. Indeed, this equation has gone so far that almost without exception the cuneiform narrative has received in the scholarly world the prestigious title of the Babylonian *Epic of Creation*. In my view, this is a falsified title which, if anything, should have been something like: *A story of a barbaric war among the Babylonian deities*.

★ ★ ★

According to the Assyriologists and Biblicists who advocate the view first put forward by the late George Smith, that *Enuma Elish* is a Creation story, on the one hand, and constitutes the literary basis for the Biblical Creation narrative in Genesis, on the other, we would require very much clearer proof that such is indeed the true position. 1e

Genesis chapter One is a narrative in which a divine message is conveyed to man. No human being could have depicted the Creation of the world in such a manner, unless he had received inspiration from a divine source, which is not the case in the cuneiform *Enuma Elish*.

8. D.O. Edzard, *Die Mythologie der Sumerer und Akkader*, Stuttgart, 1965, p. 122. See also N.M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, 1976, p. 4.

ALTARS AND TABLES IN THE BIBLE

BY JACOB CHINITZ

In his *Religion of Israel*, Yehezkel Kaufmann investigates the Biblical procedures of sacrifices. Unlike Maimonides who used the broad rationalization of sacrifices as a concession to the state of worship in the world at large, and unlike the Kabbalists who tried to find in the details of the sacrificial rituals intimations of elements in the "upper world," Kaufmann is primarily motivated by an attempt to distinguish Israel's sacrifices from pre-Biblical sacrifices. Yet he reluctantly recognizes stubborn remnant features in Biblical sacrifice which bespeak pagan notions.

On page 102 of Moshe Greenberg's English abridgement, Kaufmann writes: "Beliefs and practices grew old and fell out of fashion without ever becoming rejected." But, on the other hand, "all was reformed and brought into harmony with the new idea."

Discussing pagan sacrifice, Kaufmann lays the issue "on the table": "It is a widespread belief that the gods require food and drink . . . the very creation of man is to provide gods with servants who will wait upon them" (p. 54). How then could the Torah tolerate this very same language with respect to God: . . . *nor shall you accept such (blemished animals) . . . for offering as food for your God . . .*" (Lev. 22:25).

The image of divine consumption of the sacrifice continues in other ways in Scripture. Consider, for example, these verses from Deuteronomy 4: *For the Lord your God is a consuming fire . . .* (4:24) *There you will serve man-made gods of wood and stone, that cannot see or hear or eat or smell* (4:28). Are we being told here that God "eats" His offerings and the idols do not? That the Lord is capable of enjoying *the offering by fire of pleasing odor* (Lev. 1:9) but the idols *have a nose but do not smell* (Psalms 115:6)?

After a distinguished career in the Rabbinate in the United States, Rabbi Jacob Chinitz recently settled in Israel. He has been a frequent contributor to the Anglo-Jewish press in the States and in Israel.

Is it not only a question of capability but a sign of acceptance, as in Lev. 10:2: *And a fire came forth from before the Lord and consumed them*, and in 9:24: *And a fire came forth from before the Lord and consumed what was on the altar*? Upon the latter verse J.H. Hertz comments: "Portions of the sacrificial flesh still upon the altar hearth were suddenly consumed by Divine fire, a sign that the sacrifice found favor in the sight of God". Kivyocho, the guest shows his appreciation by eating, or the host shows his appreciation of the gift brought to him by eating it.

There is no question about it. In the old imagery man's altar is God's table. Malachi uses this language: *They serve disgusting bread on My altar . . . and if you say, how have we contemned you, when you say the table of the Lord is contemptible* (1:7). Even a late, comparatively modern minded commentator, Malbim, is caught up in the culinary metaphor. Upon Numbers 28:2: *Be punctilious in presenting to Me at stated times My offerings, My food, as offerings by fire of pleasing odor to Me*, he comments: "Essentially the name 'bread' refers to the offering of the limbs of the daily Tamid, which is in the nature of a regular meal, and by extension, the 'snack' is the sprinkling of the blood which is not called bread but offering."

Kaufmann in his scholarship and Hertz in his apologetics are not shocked by this pagan language. On the contrary, they use it as proof that so immersed were the people of Israel in spiritual monotheism that this language was considered safe. Yet we find Biblical, Targumic, and Midrashic fulminations against the literal interpretation of sacrifices as the feeding of God. Upon the verse from Numbers 28:3 quoted above, Onkeles translates: "The offering of the regular bread as My offering to be accepted in satisfaction". The Torah extolls the spiritual experience of Moses by telling us that for forty days and forty nights he did not eat or drink. Psalm 50 is the fullest and strongest rejection of sacrifices as divine food.

I will not take the bull from your house . . . am I then hungry and have to tell you . . . shall I eat the flesh of oxen drink the blood of sheep . . .

Psalms 50:9, 12-13

The Rabbis in Aboth D'Rabbi Nathan (1,6) tell us of the fallacious thinking of Titus who struck the altar, called it Lukos (wolf), and said: "How many oxen,

how many birds, how much wine have you consumed? It is you who are destroying the world!"

No, man does not feed God; God feeds man, and the Table in the Sanctuary makes the point. For while the altar consumes part of all of the animal and meal offerings brought to it, all the bread, the complete twelve loaves that are placed upon the Table, emerge from it and are eaten by the Kohanim. Only the frankincense smeared upon the loaves is offered as an "Azkarah" — a token memorial to the Lord.

Both in Exodus where the construction of the Table is given, and in Leviticus where the procedure of the Showbread, the Bread of the Face, is described, the point is made that the bread is not for Divine consumption. In Exodus, the first blueprint is for the Ark; the second is for the Table. The Altar is not mentioned until after all the furniture and all the walls and trappings of the Sanctuary are presented. In Leviticus 24, there is a conjunction between the paragraph dealing with the loaves and the blasphemer. The Rabbis choose to relate the blasphemy to a misinterpretation of the bread. In the Tanchuma on Emor, Section 53, they quote the son of the Egyptian and the Israelite woman as complaining: "It behooves a king to eat fresh bread daily and not stale bread."

In the end, the Table is not an instrument of sacrifice, but a provider of sustenance — to man. As God destined the plant kingdom as nourishment for man, so did He require a Table with bread in the Tabernacle (Legends of the Jews, III, 151). In the desert one Table sufficed for sustenance to Israel, because they had the manna, but as the demand for food was greater in the land, Solomon had ten Tables set up (idid. 159). The Table is placed on the northern side, because the north wind is the most beneficial for the production of nourishment (VI, 65).

The ideological turning point comes in a Talmudic comment upon a verse in Ezekiel (41:22): *The Altar . . . and he said unto me: This is the Table that is before the Lord.* Was Ezekiel speaking of the Altar or of the Table? Here we have an interesting contrast between two Bible scholars, one a Christian and one a Jew.

Roland de Vaux in his *Ancient Israel* (page 422) writes:

The fact that incense was placed there justifies us in regarding the loaves as something like a sacrificial offering, and Ezekiel himself likens the Table, on

which they were put, to an Altar. This Table is described as part of the furniture of the desert Tent.

However, Kaufmann goes in the opposite direction. It is not the Table that is called an Altar, but the Altar that is called a Table. The fact that the Altar is called Table may represent a problem in anthropomorphism, to be solved in its own way, but to call the Table in the Tabernacle an Altar, is to reverse the evolution of Biblical thought. These are the words of Kaufmann (p. 111):

Expressions such as bread of God, a pleasing odor, and the like, must be regarded as petrified linguistic survivals which by Biblical times had lost their original significance. As late a writer as Ezekiel still calls sacrifice "My Bread," and the Altar "the Table that is before YHWH".

The Targum solves the problem of the two terms in Ezekiel's verse by assuming that they represent both the Table of Showbread and the Altar of incense. But it remains for the Talmud (Berachot 55a) to present the final stage in the evolution of the Jewish concept of worship:

He who lengthens his stay at the Table, thinking perhaps a poor man will come along and he will offer him something . . . as it is written (Ezek. 41:11) *The Altar of wood, three cubits high . . . and it is written: And he spoke to me, this is the Table that is before the Lord.*

He opens with Altar and concludes with Table. Rabbi Yohanan and Rabbi Elazar both say: "As long as the Temple stands, the Altar atones for Israel. But now, the Table of a man atones for him".

Need we add, not the Table in the Tabernacle or the Temple is here spoken of, but the Table in a man's kitchen or dining room. And, therefore, we come to this conclusion: It is not man's Altar that is God's Table, but on the contrary, Man's Table is God's Altar. At that table man worships by saying Boruch Ata, "Blessed art Thou". But the transaction is not one of sacrifice, but of sustenance: "Who bringest forth bread from the earth". It is not God who consumes man's offering, but man consumes God's gift.

Of all the sacrifices in the Torah, the Pesach is the least "sacrificial" in nature. Even in Temple days, when the Pesach was offered in the sanctuary, its connection with the Altar was minimal. Being in the category of Shelamim, peace offerings, some portions of the lamb were offered on the Altar, but the main parts of the lamb were used as food by the offerers.

In fact, the Pesach is the only sacrifice that must be eaten by those who offer it, while in all other cases they may be eaten by anyone in a condition of ritual purity. However, in the category of sin offerings, Scripture stipulates: *They shall be eaten by those who are forgiven through them* (Ex. 29:33). This is interpreted in Talmud (Pesachim 59b) as referring to the eating of sin offerings by the priests, in order to effect atonement for the sinners who bring the offerings.

This tenuous connection between the Pesach and the Altar has been discussed by the scholars. The home, Table, non-Altar aspects of the Pesach are manifested in several areas: the Pentateuchal prohibition against offering the Pesach at home; the fact that Josiah is given credit for returning the Pesach to the Temple; the very first Pesach in Egypt was not offered at an Altar; the festive meal of which the Pesach formed the center piece in Temple days has been observed at the Seder Table for nineteen centuries subsequent to the destruction of the Altar.

We offer snatches of the phraseology of Kaufmann to illustrate this point:

The law of the paschal sacrifice . . . ordains that the sacrifice be performed in the home . . . it belongs to the type of ancient home sacrifice . . . Each family had its lamb . . . The conception of the house as a sanctuary . . . (p. 179)

The popular cult reflected the historical rationale . . .

The paschal sacrifice with its dramatic element commemorated the deliverance of the Israelite first-born . . . It is a home sacrifice, entirely apart from temple . . . (p. 305).

In the desert, only the Passover (which has no connection with the Tent) and the Day of Atonement are said to have been celebrated (p. 184).

Josiah enjoins the people to celebrate the Passover in Jerusalem. This was a great innovation. Heretofore, the paschal sacrifice was performed at home; it had nothing at all to do with the cult . . . (p. 288).

H.H. Rowley in *Worship in Ancient Israel*, discusses the same points in these words:

That the Passover was unlike other sacrifices is undeniable . . . When Pharaoh refused to let the people go, the Passover was sacrificed in Egypt . . . In the account of that Passover there is no mention of any Altar, and consequently no mention of the disposal of blood and fat on the

Altar . . . Each household killed its own animal . . . the entire animal had to be roasted and consumed before dawn . . . (p. 177).

Throughout the intervening period since the settlement, Passover must have been observed as a home festival wherever men lived . . . It was laid down by Deuteronomy that the Passover must be eaten at the place where the central sanctuary was . . . and the fat and the blood would be disposed of at the Altar, though this is not stated (p. 118).

Whatever be the case with reference to the ancient forms of the Pesach, certainly with the abolition of the offering of the lamb, the full emphasis of the Seder Table is upon the feast, not upon the sacrifice. Verbal remembrance of the sacrifice is found in the Hagadah, similar to the verbal references in the prayer-book. But just as in the synagogue the central position is taken by the reading and liturgical Table, second only to the Ark as the repository of the scrolls which are read from the Table, so at home, the Pesach festival is celebrated without the lamb, at a Table, not an Altar.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I thought you might be interested in my reaction to "The Flood Story" by Rabbi Rapaport in the issue of Winter 1983/84. His thesis — that Tablet XI of the Gilgamesh Epic could not have been the prototype of the Genesis version of The Flood, is proven by the later dating of that Tablet. The difference in treatment of the catastrophe is interesting; but highlighting those differences was surplusage. The Gilgamesh Epic could not be considered a prototype for Genesis even though both versions had been substantially identical.

The Gilgamesh Epic was based on an older Babylonian History of Mankind (1692 B.C.E.) which in turn had been inspired by an even older Sumerian version of Creation and the Flood Story. That earlier (and possibly earliest) version was extant at the time Abraham's family left Ur of the Chaldees and it was then an important part of Sumero-Akadian culture (see: *The Babylon Legend of the Flood*: Solberger, The British Museum 1971).

As Rabbi Rapaport concludes in his final paragraph, Genesis presents a unique view which emphasizes the monotheistic and moral concept of cosmology. If similar stories of Creation and the Flood were current in the ancient Near East, they do not detract from the spiritual uniqueness of Genesis.

*Herbert Rand
Highland Park, N.J.*

IRONY IN THE BOOK OF JOB

BY AARON LICHTENSTEIN

The central puzzle in Job is: "Since the author confirms the righteousness of Job, why indeed does a just God punish him?"

According to Isidore Epstein, the Whirlwind's answer to this riddle lay in the words **אִיפֹה הָיִיתָ בְּקִסְדֵי אֶרֶץ הַגֹּד אִם יָדַעַתָּ בִּינָה (לח:ג)**. In other words "Man is not wise enough to question God."*

From a literary viewpoint, this answer is not satisfactory. True, Job might have been satisfied with the satisfaction of receiving a revelation, but the reader of the Book, who is not part of the revelation, certainly requires a rational solution. Does the text provide one?

Perhaps the answer lies in the material of the Prologue, and that is the reason for combining the Prologue and Colloquies. Satan is the dominating factor in the Prologue. Satan, a rare figure in the Bible, serves to bring to mind the issue which he personifies: evil; good vs. evil; or more precisely, how man chooses good or evil. That is, to what extent is man free, and to what extent is he a puppet in the battle between a good God and an evil Satan (i.e. a slave of his environment)?

In the text, Satan is opposed not by one of the angels in attendance but by God Himself. If so, the struggle between Good and Evil is not fair, for God is Master and Satan only a deputy! The Omnipotent God showers rich rewards on man for doing good; but Satan cannot similarly reward his champions. Indeed, it is this very argument that Satan hurls at God, saying that there's no reason for being proud of Job's goodness: **הֲלֹא אָמַרְתָּ בְּעַדִּי . . . מַעֲשֵׂה יָדָיו בְּרַבְּתָּ וּמְקַנְהוּ פָּרֵץ בְּאֶרֶץ** (א:א). "By rewarding good deeds," argues Satan, "You limit freedom of choice. Good is bound to win; so how can you consider Job a man who achieved righteousness and therefore deserves recognition for his choice?"

* Isidore Epstein, *Judaism*. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1964, page 76, "No attempt is made to give an intellectual answer to the questionings of the human spirit by God's apparent misgovernment . . . it was not what God said but the fact that God had spoken to him."

Professor Lichtenstein teaches at the Baruch, Kingsborough and Manhattan Colleges of the City University of New York. He recently authored The Seven Laws of Noah (The RJJ Press, New York).

On the other hand, it is an inherent quality of a Supreme Good Being that He shower goodness upon as much of mankind as possible. Thus, a partial contradiction exists between the Doctrine of Retribution and the Doctrine of Freedom of Choice. The reader of Job is expected to understand at the outset (from the Prologue) that at times the Reward of the Just must be abrogated, for otherwise man could never *earn* just reward.

Thus the reader (via the Prologue) understands what Job does not, for he is not aware of how the scene in Heaven precipitated his suffering: (This is a reverse on Epstein's view that Job understood what the reader can not.) The reader feels the dramatic irony in Elihu's argument: *כִּי יִרְבֶּה אֱלֹהֵי מִאָנוֹשׁ (לג:יב)*. Job takes this to mean that a finite being such as himself must silently accept the portion meted out to him by God, but the reader of Job sees more in this argument: that only God in His infinite wisdom decides when the Doctrine of Retribution should function and when it must be tempered by the Doctrine of Freedom of Choice, lest the structural basis for reward and punishment collapse.

The messengers' four-time refrain, "I alone am escaped to tell you" (chapter one), is an early example of this dramatic irony, which points the reader toward a grasp of the book's essential irony. For the reader understands very well how a survivor must come each of the four times in order to put Job to the test. Indeed, even those who perished, died in order to test Job. At the same time, the reader casts a pitiful glance at the figure of Job, for whom the messengers' formulation, "I alone am escaped to inform you", is nonsense.

Continued from p. 58

of Solomon. Characteristically, a few generations later, King Josaphat of Judah joined Ahazia, King of Israel, in a venture *to make ships to go to Tarshish. And they made ships in Ezion-geber*,¹⁰ a venture that regrettably ended in shipwreck and great losses. Yet, in a period of a few generations, Israel had learned the art of ship-building together with the growing ambition to send a navy to far away Tarshish and Ophir.

Observing the history of an ancient people torn by internecine wars, threatened by neighboring countries, we realize that the great achievements of ancient Israel in agriculture and technology are secondary to that in the realm of the spirit.

10. I Kings 22:49; II CH, 20:35.

THE ASS IN THE BIBLE

BY S.P. TOPEROFF

In the biblical period the ass served a dual role; it carried burdens (including the pulling of the plough) and people who regularly rode on them. This was the main form of transportation in early days.

Though the ass was a beast of burden, it was not to be exploited. Thus we are enjoined *You shall not plough with an ox and ass together* (Deuteronomy 22:10). Compared with the ox which is a heavy animal, the ass is slight and normally takes quick, short steps, so making the burden unequal for both animals and causing pain. This humanitarian approach to the animal is extended even to one's enemy. *If you meet your enemy's ox or his ass going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. If you see the ass of him who hates you lying under its burden, you shall forbear to pass by it; you shall surely release it with him* (Exodus 23:4-5). Why should the ass be penalised because of an enmity which exists between two human beings? It is therefore a positive command to render assistance to the animal whether it is lost or is suffering under an excessive load.

Let us now consider another law concerning the ass: *And every firstling of an ass you shall redeem with a lamb* (Exodus 13:13). The ass was an unclean animal and therefore could not be sacrificed, yet the ass alone and no other unclean animal is mentioned in this law, because the ass was of assistance to the Israelites when they left Egypt, for there was not a single Israelite who did not take with him from Egypt several asses laden with silver and gold (Rashi based on the Mechilta and Bechorot 5b). This law teaches us the significance of gratitude. Jewish ethics demand that we should continually show our appreciation for kindnesses we receive. The ass does not possess any of the signs of kashrut, it does not chew the cud nor has it a divided hoof, yet it was considered holy and had to be redeemed with the lamb because it helped the Israelites by

Rabbi S.P. Toperoff, Rabbi Emeritus of the United Hebrew Congregation of New Castle upon Tyne, England, now resides in Israel. He is the author of Eternal Life, Echad mi Yodea and Lev Avot. He is currently engaged in preparing a volume to be entitled: The Animal Kingdom in Jewish Thought.

carrying their burdens when they left Egypt. Such consideration to the animal world is the highest form of gratitude.

In addition to carrying the physical burdens of man, the ass is figuratively portrayed as carrying the spiritual burdens of Torah. Commenting on Genesis 49:14, 'Issachar is a large boned ass' the Sages affirm that, 'as the ass carries burdens, so Issachar carries the yoke of the Torah (Genesis Rabah 99). Both the ass and the tribe of Issachar were strong, hard working and resolute and were destined to serve mankind in different spheres of life.

An allusion to the role of Issachar as a devout and accomplished student of Torah is found in I Chronicles 12:33: *And of the children of Issachar, men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred.* In another source we learn that the two hundred chiefs mentioned above were the leaders of the Sanhedrin and their decisions were followed without question (Genesis Rabbah 72:5, 98:17).

We shall now deal with riding or travelling for which the ass was extensively used. It is noteworthy that though the ass was a beast of burden, it was cherished by princes and leaders of men. Thus of Abdon the son of Hillel the Pirathonite the Bible says: *He had forty sons and thirty grandsons that rode on three score and ten ass-colts* (Judges 12:13); and Jair (Judges 10:3) had thirty sons who rode on thirty ass-colts.

Two outstanding instances in which influential people rode on asses cannot pass unnoticed. One is the speaking ass on which Balaam rode, recorded in Numbers chapter 22. Whatever interpretation we follow, the message of this narrative is patently clear and is forcibly presented by Maimonides: "There is a rule laid down by our sages that it is directly prohibited in the Law to cause pain to an animal and it is based on the words: *Wherefore have you smitten your ass?* (Numbers 22:32). But the object of this rule is to make us perfect, that we should not assume cruel habits and that we should not uselessly cause suffering to others; on the contrary we should be prepared to show pity and mercy to all living creatures, except when necessity demands the contrary". ('Guide' page 288, Freedlander's edition). We should add that it is significant that the ass was chosen by God to be the vehicle of expressing the rights and privileges of the animal kingdom.

Man is distinguished from the animal because he is endowed by God with

'speech'. In this story the ass takes on the mantle of man.

The other example is found in the Book of Zechariah; *Behold your king comes unto you, he is triumphant and victorious, lowly and riding upon an ass* (9:9). In the words of Rashi; "This can only refer to King Messiah of whom it is said, 'And his dominion shall be from sea to sea', since we do not find any ruler with such wide dominion during the days of the Second Temple".

In this prophetic vision of the messianic era the ass is contrasted with the horse. The latter is the beast of war galloping triumphantly from the field of battle; the former is the quiet, reserved animal symbolising peace, carrying the burdens of mankind willingly and unbegrudgingly.

One additional aspect of the domesticated ass needs to be discussed and clarified. It is universally acknowledged that the ass is a foolish animal, but how do we reconcile this with the foregoing? The Mishnah in Pirkei Avot 5:9 declares that the mouth of the ass was one of the ten miracles created before the Sabbath. We cannot envisage the Almighty performing a miracle through the medium of a foolish animal, nor can we look forward to the future King Messiah riding on a stupid ass. It is true that in the Talmud there are several proverbial sayings which speak of the ass in a derisive fashion, but they have no scriptural authority. There is no passage in the Tanakh which treats the ass in an uncomplimentary manner. It is possible that the derogatory connotation given to the ass crept into Jewish thought during the Greek or Roman period. We know that Jerome (4th century) translated the Bible into Latin but did not resort to the Greek translation; he preferred to use the original Hebrew text. When his critics attacked him for doing so, he retorted by calling them 'two-legged asses'.

There is however one passage in the Bible which calls for examination. In the story of the Akedah (Genesis 22:5) Abraham says to his two youths; *Abide you here with the ass and I and the lad (Isaac) will go yonder*. The Talmud (Yevamot 62a) infers from this verse that certain people are to be compared to the ass for lack of status. We contend that this conveys a simple observation. The two young men were not inspired to the same degree as Abraham and Isaac. They could not reach the celestial heights of Moriah; they were therefore asked to stay behind with the ass because their task was completed. In addition to the above midrashic interpretation, the halachic implication in the Talmud is very clear: It deals with the legal status of a slave, and the Rabbis postulate that as a slave is

the chattel of the master, so is the ass. There is no hint here of alleged stupidity. Indeed one writer (M. Seale) goes to the other extreme and is of the opinion that the word ass is a laudatory term meaning chieftain or head of a tribe (The Desert Bible, page 88).

At any rate, we prefer to direct our attention to the story recounted in 'The Fathers according to Rabbi Nathan' chapter 8:

Once the ass of Rabbi Chanina Ben Dosa was stolen by brigands. They tied it up in a yard and put before it straw, barley and water, but it would not eat or drink. They said, 'Why should we allow it to die and befoul our yard? So they opened the gate before it and drove it out. It walked along braying until it reached the house of Rabbi Chanina Ben Dosa. When it arrived, the Rabbi's son heard its voice and said to his father, 'This sounds like our beast'. Said the Rabbi, 'My son, open the door to it for it has almost died from hunger'. Immediately the son placed before it straw, barley and water and it ate and drank. Therefore it was said, 'Even as the righteous of old were saintly, so were the beasts saintly like their masters'.

We cannot conclude this review without mentioning the wild species of the ass found in Tanakh. There are three: Ayir (עִיר), Pere (פֶּרֶא), and Arod (עֲרוֹד). Ayir and Pere occur in one verse, Job 11:12, while Pere and Arod are in Job 39:5. Samson Raphael Hirsch, in his Bible Commentary, designates 'Ayir' as a lively mettlesome young donkey and 'Pere' as a wild animal that wishes to be free from the human yoke. 'Arod' which is considered an Aramaic loan word is defined in Mishnah Kilayim 8:6 as belonging to the class of beasts of chase. The 'Arod' is an uncontrolled animal that cannot be tamed. An interesting story of Chanina Ben Dosa and an Arod is recorded in the Talmud: On learning that an Arod injured people, Rabbi Chanina placed his foot on the hole from which the Arod usually emerged and it promptly bit him, but then it died. He carried it over his shoulder and brought it to the House of Study. He then addressed himself to the disciples, 'See, my sons, it is not the Arod that kills, but sin that kills.' At the time the saying originated, 'Woe to the man that meets an Arod but woe to the Arod which Rabbi Chanina Ben Dosa meets' (Berachot 33a).

PARALLEL LISTS OF PREDILUVIAN PATRIARCHS

A PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

BY BENJAMIN GOODNICK

The early chapters of the Bible have been subjected to many and diverse treatments involving investigation, criticism and elucidation. The names, the places, the events, and even the numbers offer a field day for intellectual search and discovery. There is, indeed, a fascination and excitement in probing this content and attempting to make comparative studies.

Such research has opened up new and wide avenues of knowledge, both linguistically and textually. More recently, from the educational standpoint, efforts have been made to elicit and emphasize the moral concepts and ideals contained in these initial sections of the Writ.

Often such research, as described above, seems to be based on narrow constructions, isolated passages or wordings. Some scholars have concentrated their energies on behalf of textual analysis, to discover and refine the different strands or sources that were combined to compose the whole (albeit from a common origin).

It might be of value to shift to another vantage point, to the acceptance of the principle that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. In other words, perhaps there is a need to recognize the basic integrative intent and pattern of the total Biblical text.

There is nothing novel in seeking to utilize a fundamental unifying factor. This goal would appear to be a deliberate effort to create a cosmos of wholeness and meaning. It would imply a moral outlook in relation to the world of reality.

Benjamin Goodnick, Ph.D., a diplomate of the American Board of Professional Psychology, is a consultant to governmental agencies and public and private religious schools. He is engaged in private practice in the Greater Philadelphia area. His articles have appeared in Jewish and professional journals.

Moreover, within this structure psychological insights should certainly be found, appropriate to and inherent in the content.

An attempt to illustrate the functioning of this approach, will make use of the two parallel antediluvian patriarchal lists as suitable material for discussion (Gen. IV and V).

In order to establish a parallel, there must be similarities between parts, and the more there are, the more suitable is the parallelism. On the other hand, if these two facets are too exact, then the parallel disappears, and identity and duplication take its place. The latter situation is evidently not the case with the source being considered. Indeed, the more the genealogies seem alike, the more significant become their very differences.

Thus, by beginning with the stated premise that the present biblical text is deliberate rather than incidental, planned rather than haphazard, moral rather than historical (with no intention of negating or seeking to diminish its historical character), remarkable meanings can be revealed – even within the limited confines of the Biblical chapters here involved.

First of all, the registers of the comparable patriarchs themselves offer information. For this purpose, the series start with two somewhat similar names, Cain and Kenan, respectively (Gen. 4:17–24 and 5:12–31). From these two ancestors there follow the outstanding heroes of each age, totaling seven in each column below in their proper sequence:

A		B	
First List		Second List	
(Gen. 4:17–24)		(Gen. 5:12–31)	
Cain	קין	Kenan	קינן
Enoch	חנוך	Mahalalel	מהללאל
Irad	עירד	Jared	ירד
Mehujael	מחויאל	Enoch	חנוך
Methushael	מחושאל	Methuselah	מתושלח
Lamech	למך	Lamech	למך
Tubal-Cain	חובל קין	Noah	נת

The similarity in names is enhanced more in the original Hebrew than in the

English efforts at transliteration. Even so, the likenesses are striking in their visual form as well as in their relative placements.

It is quite possible to say, as some scholars have doubtless maintained, that these two genealogies are variants of a single tradition or two parallel traditions from some dim, prehistoric past, with the dual inclusion indicative of their equal merit and assumed authenticity.

And yet, analysis suggests that these two lists are not treated equally — and deliberately so. The impression increases convincingly that each may be intended to present a different strand, with a different beginning and a different ending to its story. The overall purpose would seem to be an attempt to show, early in mankind's history, the two paths (see Deut. 30:19) that are available, the two choices for human beings: life and death, good and evil, blessing and curse.

The first, obvious contrast lies in the selection of life-goals. The story of the generations of Cain focuses on the great things that were accomplished in productivity and creativity, in wealth and material goods. In the second grouping the generational statements are repeated that the patriarchs had many sons and daughters and lived relatively long lives. The aim of the first group appears to have been towards self-aggrandizement and that of the other, for lack of a better term, towards posterity and humanity. In other words, although there are superficial resemblances in these two human strands, their life styles diverge widely.

Despite their practical strides in achievement, the generations evolving from Cain do not appear to be worthy within the scope of the Biblical text for extended mention. This is not to imply that they did not endure. The brief handling of the Cainite line and the extensive treatment of the Kenanite line are not unique phenomena within the Biblical text. The same design is shown later (Gen. X and XI) in the slight space allotted to the Hamitic and Japhetic lines in contrast to the detailed delineation of the descendants of Shem, the latter likewise described with the dual positing of long years of life and many children. Further on, the twin brothers, Esau and Jacob, are similarly developed. Esau is first discussed, with a simple history of his generations; he is followed by the wider recording of the on-going story of the children of Jacob.

Other real distinguishing traits appear in the start and finish of these two lineages. Cain was brought up in a more primitive (natural?) environment, not

grasping the evil of his crime — and having, therefore, his punishment delayed. Kenan grew up in a more refined atmosphere, since men had begun to “call on the name of the Lord.” At the end of the seven generations of Cain, a crime is again committed, again resulting in the deaths of human beings.

Significantly, within all this content two quotations are mentioned by two individuals with the same name Lamech but sharply contrasting in their moods and aims. The first seeks forgiveness for causing the death, perhaps unintended, of two people (Gen. 4:23–24) whereas the second, quite the opposite, sees hope for the universe through the birth and future life of a child (Gen. 5:28). The former completed the prophecy of the fulfillment of a curse upon the earth while the latter would remove a curse from the earth for the benefit of humanity.

Here occur the only glaring name divergencies in the listings: the first name, Tuval-Cain (=worker in metals, fashioner of weapons; Gen. 4:22), being a duplication and extension of that of his criminal ancestor and the other, Noah (=rest, comfort, Gen. 5:25), being one to bring tranquillity and relief to all human beings.

In review, then, we note that the Cainite genealogy appears to center about material attainment which is beset by destruction and death. The Kenanite genealogy focuses on longevity and descendants, both symbolic of the continuity of existence. Thus, we return full circle to a strengthening of the hypothesis that these two strands clearly represent the free choices, the two directions open to humankind, one leading to evil and death, the other the good and life.

In light of the above analysis respecting two strains of human beings, it might be possible to attempt to elucidate the intriguing initial passage of the following chapter (Gen. VI). It appears that the “sons of God” were attracted to the “daughters of man” and “they took for themselves wives” as many as they wished. From these unions emerged “the heroes” and those who became “men of renown.”

The Hebrew expression, בני אלהים, literally “sons of God,” has varied usages within the Biblical text; it has been applied to rulers, priests, and judges (see Exod. 21:6 and 22:8).

If so, the meaning of the above passage (Gen. 6:1–4) might be induced from like wordings in Psalm 82:6–7. These verses read: *I said you were gods, all of you*

sons of the Most High. Nevertheless you shall die like mortals; you shall fall like one of the princes.

Here, too, we see a dichotomy between persons high in status and power, almost divine beings, and those referred to as mortals, ordinary human beings.

Perhaps we may now interpret the Genesis passage (i.e., in VI) as related to the continuity of the same two strands: the Kenanite line, those who represent the "sons of God," the elite (i.e., priests, judges, or rulers gratia dei) on the one hand and, on the other, the Cainite line, "the sons of man," the "average" run of human beings beset by all the emotions, yearnings, and conflicts that flesh is heir to. Evidently, even those extolled and placed on high were not able to overcome their bodily drives and succumbed. The unions of these two groups seemed to produce "men of renown," who, apparently combined the traits of intellect and physical prowess to become heroes at that time.

Ultimately, then, the sexual drive once again emerges as the cause for the "second sin of man." This happening, in turn, led to the deluge and man's second beginning on earth through Noah and his descendants.

In summary, an effort has been made to derive additional understanding from the initial chapters of the Biblical text by focusing on the internal relationships deduced through the operation of a central integrating moral factor. These views, however, are offered only as hypotheses, awaiting further confirmation.

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A GUIDE TO ISAIAH — CHAPTER VIII

BY CHAIM PEARL

The following is part of a study guide on the first twelve chapters of the Book of Isaiah prepared by Rabbi Chaim Pearl, a member of the Editorial Board of Dor le-Dor. The interpretations of the earlier chapters can be read in the previous issues of Dor le-Dor.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The historical background of this chapter is the event in 735–4 B.C.E., when Rezin king of Syria and Pekach king of Israel threatened King Ahaz and the kingdom of Judah after he refused to join the alliance against Assyria.

God commanded Isaiah to offer two signs to the people to convince them of the upheavals to come and the destruction of Syria and Israel.

The first sign was to be a visual aid — a large poster or tablet which would be easily seen and easily read by the people. The large tablet was to be inscribed with big letters spelling out the four words which mean, “speeding to the spoil, hastening to the prey”, and everyone would know its meaning, i.e., that Assyria would swoop down and quickly destroy Syria and Israel.

The second sign was the name given to Isaiah’s new born son which would be the same as the words written on the tablet. Whoever would see the child would be reminded of the imminent tremendous events foretold by the prophet.

* * *

3. *Prophetess* Isaiah’s wife. She was not a prophetess, but received the honourable title as a mark of respect.

5–8. When Ahaz of Judah was threatened by Syria and Israel, Isaiah counselled Ahaz to remain calm and confident that the trouble would pass. He advised

Rabbi Dr. Chaim Pearl, rabbi emeritus of the Synagogue Adath Israel of Riverdale, New York, was formerly the spiritual leader of the Birmingham Hebrew Congregation, England. He is the author of several acclaimed books on Judaica. He now lives in Jerusalem.

Ahaz against joining the conspiracy. However there was an anti-Assyrian party which opposed such neutrality, some favouring resistance to Assyria. At the same time there were others who favoured calling in Assyria's aid against Syria and Israel. All this went counter to Isaiah's policy of strict neutrality and the cultivation of quiet confidence. In the result, Ahaz of Judah turned for help from Assyria and thus lost his independence. Assyria ultimately invaded Judah, destroyed much territory and laid siege to Jerusalem. All this is prophesied by Isaiah.

6. *The waters of Shiloh* Silwan, a small stream south west of Jerusalem. Here it symbolised the tiny State of Judah when contrasted to the mighty Assyria. It can also indicate the quiet and steady confidence in God which the people rejected in favour of the tempestuous and turbulent Assyria.

Rezin King of Syria.

Remaliah's son Pekah, king of Israel.

7. *The River Euphrates* which is the symbol of Assyria. The invasion of Judah is metaphorically described by the mighty river in flood, overflowing all its banks and destroying everything in its path.

8. *He shall reach even to the neck* The metaphor is of the rising tide submerging a trapped and helpless man. It can also symbolise the invading army of Assyria which will reach Jerusalem, the capital of the kingdom of Judah. In the blessings of Moses, the tribe of Benjamin is described as "dwelling between his shoulders", an allusion to the Temple which would be situated in the centre of Benjamin's tribal possessions (Deut. 33:12). *The stretching out of his wings* The best meaning given to this difficult phrase is that the different divisions of Assyria's army will be spread throughout the land.

9-10. These two verses seem to be a digression from the theme yet they can be connected to the history of Assyria's siege of Jerusalem. In the previous verses Isaiah warns about Assyria's invasion of Judah. Here he assures the people that the enemy's attack will fail, "for God is with us".

11. The prophet is instructed by God to counsel the people to remain steadfast and uninfluenced by the weakness and the fearfulness which were prevalent.

With a strong hand i.e., under the powerful influence of God's inspiration.

Saying The prophet himself should say to the people.

12. *Say ye not . . . a conspiracy* Do not join all the defeatist talk about the conspiracy of Syria and Israel against Judah.

14. *He shall be for a sanctuary* As a refuge and a stronghold of quiet confidence for the faithful.

To both houses of Israel Israel and Judah.

For a trap and for a snare God will punish the unbelievers who will be entrapped by their own faithlessness.

16. The simple way to understand this verse is to read it as the words of Isaiah who states that he will give his disciples evidence of the validity of his prophecy — the “testimony and the instruction”. The former refers to the written document in which the prophecy about Assyria's defeat of Syria and Israel and its siege of Judah are recorded. The “instruction” (תורה) refers to the message of God as submitted to the prophet. Our English translation (J.P.S.) puts the verse in quotation marks indicating its interpretation that the words are spoken by God as an instruction to the prophet.

17. Isaiah proclaims his total faith and trust in God.

18. *I and the children* Their names alone will bear a constant message to the people. The names of the children have been noted in this Guide. The name “Isaiah” means “God will save”.

19. In the time of despair the faithless people will seek help from “ghosts and spirits”. When these superstitious people approach the faithful to draw them into such forbidden practices then the faithful should answer: “Should not a people seek unto their God?”

On behalf of the living unto the dead Better read as an exclamation of wonderment, i.e., Should people seek information from the dead about the living? Surely not!

20. *For instruction and for testimony* Do not resort to superstition, but go to learn from the teaching of God.

21–23. A description of the utter desolation which will befall the kingdom of Israel at the time of the Assyrian invasion.

21. *And they shall pass this way* The Israelite captives.

23. *Is there no gloom to her that was steadfast?* This verse is difficult. The Jewish commentators read it very differently. Basing their ideas on an examination of the Hebrew verbs, they apply the phrase to Assyria; “There is no faintness to the nation which brings distress to Israel”.

Now the former has lightly afflicted There was an earlier invasion of the northern territories of Israel by the Assyrian monarch, Tiglat Pileser III.

But the latter hath dealt a more grievous blow The final destruction of Israel by Assyria in 722 B.C.E., when the entire country was ravaged and depopulated. The ten tribes of the northern Kingdom of Israel were widely scattered over the vast Assyrian empire.

PASSAGES WORTH MEMORISING

8. *עד צואר יגיע* *He shall reach even to the neck*

In the context of the passage the phrase refers to Assyria’s invasion of Judah, reaching up to Jerusalem the capital.

But the phrase is idiomatic, and in general use to describe a situation which has reached crisis proportions – a situation of life or death.

10. *עצו עצו וחדרו דברו ולא יקום כי עמנו אל* *Take counsel together, and it shall be brought to nought; speak the word, and it shall not stand; for God is with us.*

The alliances of the nations against God’s people will come to nought. The text can be applied to the conspiracy of the Northern Kingdom and Syria against Judah, or the confederacy of the gentile nations against the Holy Land.

In spite of its historical background the verse is peculiarly appropriate, perhaps today more than at any other time. The experiences of Israel in the United Nations calls the text to mind.

FOR THE LOVE OF THE LAND

BY SHIMON BAKON

As we celebrate the 36th anniversary of Israel's Independence, an event of great importance took place in our capital, when industrial giants from all over the world gathered in Jerusalem for a major trade conference. It came as a surprise to many that Israel, in a quiet, unobtrusive way, has gained a respectable position among the world's technological powers. Of course, our agricultural pre-eminence was well known to the entire world. Many a country, even those who officially have broken diplomatic ties with Israel, surreptitiously invited her aid in this area. The question that arises is how a small country, with scarcely four million inhabitants, so beset by internal and external difficulties, has been able to achieve excellence both in agriculture and technology in such a short span of time. Both realms of enterprise are far removed from the pursuits of small traders or scholars only a few generations ago.

A little booklet by the prominent Israeli geographer, Menashe Harel, "Dwellers of the Mountains"¹, may offer us a clue to this question, reaching back to biblical times.

LOVE AND NECESSITY, THE MOTHER OF INVENTION

When Joshua conquered the land of Canaan, Canaanites and Philistines were strongly entrenched in the fertile lowlands. We learn that the tribes of Joseph (Ephraim and Menasseh) complained: *All the Canaanites that dwell in the land of the valley have chariots of iron*, And Joshua advised: *The hill country shall be thine; for though it is forest, thou shalt cut it down and the going out (slopes) shall be thine.*²

Hill country, covered by woods and removed from easily available watersources, had been avoided by the Canaanites. It is thus necessity that placed the conquering Israelite tribes in possession of the hilly areas.³ Being restricted to such areas, the settlers were faced by two major problems, available arable land

1. Copyright Carta, Jerusalem, 1977.

2. Joshua 17:16-18.

3. The modern situation is regrettably the reverse of what occurred more than 3,200 years ago.

and water supply. Solving the first problem, they invented, according to Harel, the method of terracing, clearing away stones on mountain slopes, building retaining walls, filling and fertilizing the soil, all this backbreaking labor done by hand, slowly and painstakingly. Yet a labor of love it was, so beautifully described by the prophet Isaiah in his song of the vineyard, a parable of God's love for Israel (and His disappointment).⁴

My well loved had a vineyard in a very fruitfull hill. And he digged it and cleared it of stones... and planted it with choicest wine... And also hewed out a vat therein...

It is on such slopes, particularly in the Judean hills, turned into terraces, that all kinds of crops were raised, grain, wine and oil. On many of these slopes ancient wine and olive presses can be found today. "Every inch of land was worked with a thoroughness unparalleled in the history of Mediterranean countries."⁵ It was a combination of necessity and love for the land that prompted the settlers to apply all their energies, wit and inventiveness, to become economically self-sufficient.

WATER SUPPLY

As mentioned earlier, one of the major problems facing the new settlers was a regular supply of water in arid areas such as the Judean hills or the Negev, where the rainfall is scant even during the rainy season. Basing himself on no less an authority than W.F. Albright, Harel maintains that cisterns, cut out from the chalky hillsides, and covered with lime, was another Israelite invention. Similarly, settlers in the Negev used the techniques of damming the flood waters in wadis for a year-round use of water. If so, they must have preceded the remarkable achievements of the Nabateans by many centuries. Yet we must look to Jerusalem as the focal point of technological advancement. Growing from a provincial Jebusite town to an Israelite metropolis, it served as the center of government, worship, culture and commerce. The need for large quantities of water, combined with the need for security, made the available springs of Gihon and Ein Rogel insufficient. Thus King Hezekiah⁶ *made the pool and conduit and brought water into the city.* These modest words mask a remarkable engineering

4. Isaiah 5:1.

5. Opus cit. p. 14.

6. II K. 20:20.

feat, as can be learned from an inscription found in that five hundred meter tunnel, cut simultaneously from two opposite directions, in which the spring of Gihon was brought within the security of the city walls into the pool of Shiloah. It goes without saying that cisterns were built into each house, as well as big pools of water-reservoirs. But even all that was not sufficient for the needs of the Temple, the many ritual baths and for the swelled population during the pilgrim festivals. Eventually two aqueducts were built, one probably Israelitic, that brought water from the Hebron mountains to the Temple mount: and the other, (Herodian) that brought water from the Gush Etzion bloc to Jerusalem.

ISRAELITES LEARN FAST

How fast ancient Israelites learned from their neighbors, soon surpassing them, can be seen in the rapidly developing techniques of military warfare during the life time of King David. Having started by mastering "stone-slinging", David learned from the Philistines, after the tragic defeat of Saul at Mt. Gilboa, the advantages of the bow and arrow. Thus David pleaded ⁷ *to teach the sons of Judah the bow* — ללמד בני יהודה קשת. Probably breaking the Philistine monopoly on iron making and metal products, David must have developed his own machinery to clear most of the land, defeat hostile people surrounding Israel, defeating redoubtable alliances such as Ammon and Syria. Much later, when Sheba ben Bichri, revolting against David, was defeated and fled to Abel of Beth-Maacah, Joab *cast up a mound against the city*.⁸ What a far cry from stone-slinging to the sophisticated siege of a fortified city.

It is a moot question who built the copper mines of Solomon, some of the port-cities, notably Jaffa (Joppa), Ezion-geber and Elat (Elot), as well as ships for Solomon and the kings who followed him. If they were non-Israelites it stands to reason that homegrown talents soon learned from them: *Solomon made a navy of ships in Ezion-geber . . . Hiram sent in the navy his servants, shipmen that had knowledge of the sea*.⁹ It is not clear who really built it. Logic would dictate that the navy and the experienced navigators were provided by Hiram on the initiative

Continued on p.42

7. II Sam. 1:18.

8. II Sam 20:15.

9. I Kings 9:27, II Ch. 8:17.

TWENTY-FIRST YOUTH BIBLE CONTEST

Highlighting the celebration of Israel's 36th Independence Day, Jerusalem witnessed a spectacular event with the twenty-first International Jewish Youth Bible Contest, held at the Jerusalem Theater, viewed by several million on television. Twenty-nine contestants, from 18 different countries, competed for the special awards which were presented by Yitzchak Shamir, Prime Minister of Israel.

DIASPORA WINNER

Hillel Novetsky, a pupil at the Flatbush Yeshiva in Brooklyn, New York, was the winner of the preliminary contest for youth from the diaspora. He also emerged as the runner-up in the final contest, which was won by Benjamin

DIASPORA FINALISTS



From Right to Left: Itzhak Kidouchim, France; Hillel Novetsky, U.S.A.; President Chaim Herzog; Pnina Glasser, U.S.A.; Chaim Hemsani, Mexico; Mordecai Roitman, France.

Moskovitch of Ashkelon, Israel. Other finalists were Itzhak Asraf and Itai Elitzur, of Israel.

Interviewed by a reporter from the "Jerusalem Post," Hillel Novetsky underscored his special effort in his study of Bible. "Basically," he said, "there's a lot of time in your life, and this has speeded up the process (of my Bible studies.)" Hillel plans to enter the Gush Etzion Yeshiva in Israel upon graduation from high school. His father is a specialist in the field of cancer research, and his mother is a Ph.D. candidate in Bible at New York University.

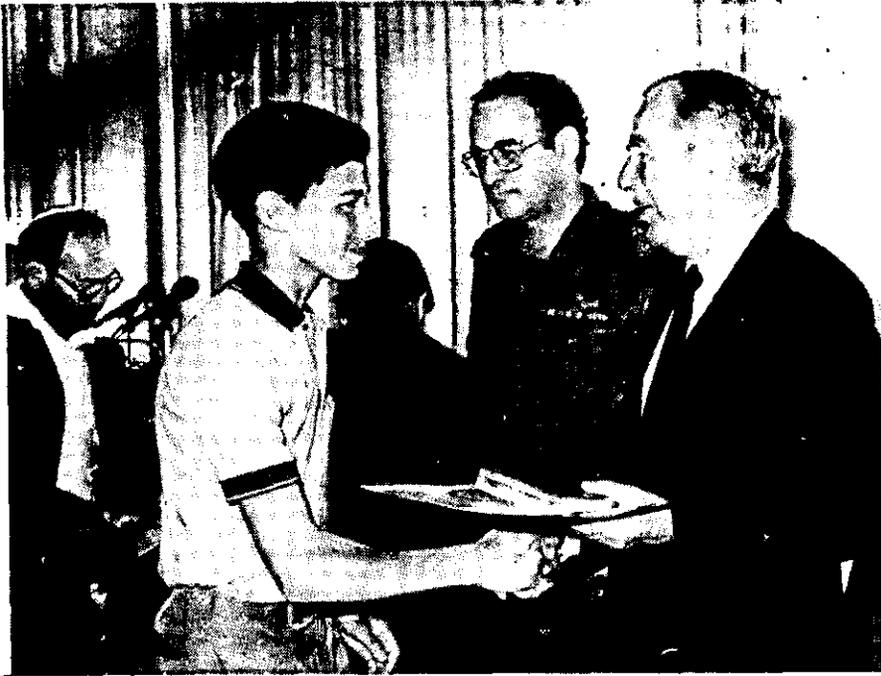
GREETINGS

Greetings were given by Colonel Moshe Sharir, Commander of the "Gadna," the pre-military Youth Corps which administers the contest; by Zevulun Hammer, Minister of Education; and by Aryeh L. Dulzin, Chairman of the Jewish Agency. The Chaplain of "Gadna," Major Samuel Alevitzki, served as Co-ordinator of the contest.

Joseph Shaar, noted writer and educator, composed the contest questions. He also served on the distinguished panel of judges, chaired by Dr. Joseph Burg, Minister of Interior as well as Minister of Religious Affairs.

The presidium included: Aryeh Dulzin; General Gad Navon, Chief Chaplain of the Israeli Defense Forces; Dr. Eli Tavin, Director of the Department of Education and Culture for the Diaspora; Yitzchak Maier, Head of the Torah





Hillel Novetsky, Diaspora winner of Bible Contest, receiving an award from President Chaim Herzog, with Colonel Moshe Sharir looking on

Department of Education for the Diaspora; and Mordecai Dayan, World co-chairman of the Jewish National Fund.

Working in conjunction with the Contest Co-ordinator were Chana Rahav, of the Ministry of Defense; Yaakov Halpern, of the Jewish National Fund; and David Shemesh, of the Ministry of Education.

AT THE PRESIDENT'S RESIDENCE

The contest participants were hosted, on the day following Yom Ha'atzmaut, by the President of the State of Israel, Chaim Herzog, at his state residence. The President was accompanied by his wife, Ora, who had the distinction of initiating the first Bible contest over two decades ago. Greetings at the President's reception were given by Colonel Sharir, Chaplain Alevitzki, and by Professor Haim Gevaryahu, Chairman of the World Jewish Bible Society.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE 19th WORLD CONTEST

Argentina

José Steimetz

Australia

Simona Amzalok

Belgium

Philippe Tob

Brazil

Marcelle Chouaki

Canada

Moshe Fischer

Esther Lang

Chile

Ariel Stroh

Costa Rica

Judko Rosenstock

France

Itzhak Kidouchim

Mordecai Roittman

David Abitbol

Holland

Simon Van Dam

Ireland

Jean Rivlin

Israel

Benjamin Moskowitz

Zachai Asraf

Itai Elitzur

Mexico

Shoshana Nissan

Chaim Hemsani

Panama

Ekias Levy

Spain

Yael Emergui

Sweden

Michael Gilsohn

Uruguay

Bernard Katz

United States

Margalitte Kohn

Hillel Novetsky

Noga Aharoni

Ehud Danon

Pnina Leah Glasser



עשה תורתך קבע

TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 1984

חשרי תשמ"ה

Th	Genesis 21:1-34 Haftarah: I Samuel 1-2:10	א 27 ראש השנה בראשית כ"א, א-לד הפטרה: שמואל א א'-ב', י
F	Genesis 22:1-24 Haftarah: Jeremiah 31:2-20	ב 28 ראש השנה בראשית כ"ב א-כד הפטרה: ירמיה ל"א, ב-כ
שבת	Deuteronomy 32	ג 29 האוינו
S	Jonah 1	ד 30 יונה א
October		
M	Jonah 2	ה 1 יונה ב
T	Jonah 3	ו 2 יונה ג
W	Jonah 4	ז 3 יונה ד
Th	Jonah 4	ח 4 יונה ד
F		ט 5 ערב יום כפור
שבת	Leviticus 16 Haftarah: Isaiah 57:14-58:16	י 6 יום כפור ויקרא ט"ז הפטרה: ישעיה נ"ז, יד-נ"ח, טז
S	Ecclesiastes 1	יא 7 קהלת א
M	Ecclesiastes 2	יב 8 קהלת ב
T	Ecclesiastes 3	יג 9 קהלת ג
W	Ecclesiastes 4	יד 10 ערב סוכות קהלת ד
Th	Leviticus 22:26-23:44 Haftarah Zechariah 14	טו 11 סוכות ויקרא כ"ב, כו-כ"ג, מד הפטרה: זכריה י"ד
F	Leviticus 22:26-23:44 * Haftarah: I Kings 8:2-21	טז 12 סוכות ויקרא כ"ב, כו-כ"ג, מד* הפטרה: מלכים א ח', ב-כא
Sa	Haftarah: Ezekiel 38:18-39:16	יז 13 חול המועד הפטרה: יחזקאל ל"ח, יח-ל"ט, טז
S	Ecclesiastes 5-6	יח 14 חול המועד קהלת ה-ו
M	Ecclesiastes 7-8	יט 15 חול המועד קהלת ז-ח
T	Ecclesiastes 9-10	כ 16 חול המועד קהלת ט-י
W	Ecclesiastes 11-12	כא 17 הושענא רבה קהלת יא-יב
Th	Deuteronomy 14:22-16:17 Haftarah: I Kings 8:54-66	כב 18 שמיני עצרת דברים י"ד, כב-ט"ו, יז הפטרה: מלכים א ח', נד-טו
F	Deuteronomy 33-34 ** Haftarah: Joshua 1	כג 19 שמחת תורה וזאת הברכה** הפטרה: יהושע א
שבת	Haftarah: Isaiah 42:5-43:10	ד 20 הפטרה: ישעיה מ"ב, ה-מ"ג, י
S	Psalms 87-88	כה 21 תהילים פז-פח
M	Psalms 89	כו 22 תהילים פט
T	Psalms 90-91	כז 23 תהילים צ-צא
W	Psalms 92-93	כח 24 תהילים צב-צג
T	Psalms 94	כט 25 תהילים צד
F	Genesis 6:9-11	ל 26 נח
		* רק בחוץ לארץ
		** רק בחוץ לארץ בישראל ביום ה'

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1984

חשון תשמ"ה

שבת	Haftarah: Isaiah 66	הפטרה: ישעיה ס"ו	27	א
S	Psalms 95	תהילים צה	28	ב
M	Psalms 96-97	תהילים צו-צז	29	ג
T	Psalms 98	תהילים צח	30	ד
W	Psalms 99-100	תהילים צט-ק	31	ה
November				
Th	Psalms 101	תהילים קא	1	ו
F	Genesis 12-17	לך לך	2	ז
שבת	Haftarah: Isaiah 40:27-41:16	הפטרה: ישעיה מ', כז-מ"א, טז	3	ח
S	Psalms 102	תהילים קב	4	ט
M	Psalms 103	תהילים קג	5	י
T	Psalms 104	תהילים קד	6	יא
W	Psalms 105	תהילים קה	7	יב
Th	Psalms 106	תהילים קו	8	יג
F	Genesis 18-22	וירא	9	יד
שבת	Haftarah: II Kings 4:1-37	הפטרה: מלכים ב ד', א-לו	10	טו
S	Psalms 107	תהילים קז	11	טז
M	Psalms 108	תהילים קח	12	יז
T	Psalms 109	תהילים קט	13	יח
W	Psalms 110-111	תהילים קי-קי"א	14	יט
Th	Psalms 112-113	תהילים קיב-קי"ג	15	כ
F	Genesis 23-25:18	חיי שרה	16	כ"א
שבת	Haftarah: I Kings 1:1-31	הפטרה: מלכים א א', א-לא	17	כ"ב
S	Psalms 114-115	תהילים קיד-קטו	18	כ"ג
M	Psalms 116	תהילים קטז	19	כ"ד
T	Psalms 117-118	תהילים קיז-קי"ח	20	כ"ה
W	Psalms 119	תהילים קיט	21	כ"ו
Th	Psalms 120	תהילים קכ	22	כ"ז
F	Genesis 25:19-28:9	תולדות	23	כ"ח
שבת	Haftarah: I Samuel 20:18-42	הפטרה: שמואל א כ', יח-מב	24	כ"ט

M	Jeremiah 30		7	א	ירמיה ל
T	Jeremiah 31		8	ב	ירמיה לא
W	Jeremiah 32		9	ג	ירמיה לב
Th	Jeremiah 33		10	ד	ירמיה לג
F	Genesis 28:10-32:3		11	ה	ויצא
שבת	Haftarah Hosea 12:13-14:10	הפטרה הושע י"ב, יג-י"ד, י	12	ו	
	Hosea 11:7-12:12	הושע י"א, ז-י"ב, יב			
S	Jeremiah 34		13	ז	ירמיה לד
M	Jeremiah 35		14	ח	ירמיה לה
T	Jeremiah 36		15	ט	ירמיה לו
W	Jeremiah 37		16	י	ירמיה לז
Th	Jeremiah 38		17	יא	ירמיה לח
F	Genesis 32:4-36		18	יב	וישלח
שבת	Haftarah Hosea 11:7-12:12 (A)	הפטרה הושע י"א, ז-י"ב, יב (א)	19	יג	
	adiah (S)	עובדיה (ס)			
S	Jeremiah 39		20	יד	ירמיה לט
M	Jeremiah 40		21	טו	ירמיה מ
T	Jeremiah 41		22	טז	ירמיה מא
W	Jeremiah 43		24	יח	ירמיה מג
F	Genesis 37-41:43		25	יט	וישב
שבת	Haftarah: Amos 2:1-3:8	הפטרה עמוס ב', א-ג', ח	26	כ	
S	Jeremiah 44		27	כא	ירמיה מד
M	Jeremiah 45		28	כב	ירמיה מה
T	Jeremiah 46		29	כג	ירמיה מו
W	Jeremiah 47		30	כד	ירמיה מז
					December
Th	Jeremiah 48	חנוכה ירמיה מח	1	כה	
F	Genesis 41:44-17	חנוכה מקץ	2	כו	
שבת	Haftarah Zechariah 2:14-4:7	הפטרת חנוכה: זכריה ב', יד-ד', ז	3	כז	
S	Jeremiah 49	חנוכה ירמיה מט	4	כח	
M	Jeremiah 50	חנוכה ירמיה נ	5	כט	
T	Jeremiah 51	חנוכה ירמיה נא	6	ל	

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