# דור לדור

# DOR Le DOR

## Our Biblical Heritage

המרכז העולמי לתנ"ך בירושלים

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## OUR BIBLICAL HERITAGE

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# SCRIBAL PECULIARITIES IN THE SEFER TORAH

## על פאי"ן לפופין

BY MANFRED R. LEHMAN

לעלוי נשמת בני אהובי
ר' מנחם ז"ל תש"י — תשמ"ב

*We rarely comment on an article printed in our journal but this one presents such a novel subject and is based on so much original research that we want to send a special "Yisher Koach" to the author and thank him for giving "Dor le Dor" the "scoop" on the* פאי"ן לפופין.

The Editors

ויזהר באותיות גדולות... ואותיות משונות כגון הפאי"ן הלפופין.
(יד החזקה, הלכות ספר תורה, פרק ז' הל' ח').

My first introduction to פאי"ן לפופין came from a Yemenite "תאג'" (Taj: Yemenite Sefer Torah) in my Manuscript Library, dated in the year 1703 לשטרות (1391). In many places, a פ"א לפוף appears in the text, with a marginal gloss, as part of the מסורה, saying לפוף. I searched for an identification of this peculiarity in the script and found that the Rambam in his הלכות ספר תורה legislates a clear הלכה for this and other strange lettering: "The scribe should be careful not to write specially large letters ...or quaint lettering, such as 'fey'in lefufim'. (Yad Hachazaka, Hilchot Sefer Toah 7:8).

Not having found such letters in any other MS, חומש or Sefer Torah, I assumed that this phenomenon, although ancient, was only preserved in Yemen, where decisions by the Rambam were especially honored and preserved.

A few years ago, however, I came across an Ashkenazic Sefer Torah – in Miami Beach, USA – which was full of פאי"ן לפופין as well as a large number of אותיות משונות. After some years of negotiations with the synagogue which owned the Sefer Torah, I was able to buy it and began checking it against the Yemenite traditions contained in my תאג'. I immediately found that while there

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*Compare the ordinary* פ' *on lines 1, 3 and 4 with the* פאי"ן לפופין *(adorned* פ') *on lines 3 and 5.*

were many agreements between the two traditions, there were also many divergencies:

In 81 verses both sources coincide.[1] However in 203 places the Ashkenazic Sefer Torah had פאי"ן לפופין which did not occur in the Yemenite תאג' -Taj[2]. Likewise I found that in 37 places, the Yemenite תאג' had פאי"ן לפופין which did not occur in the Ashkenazic Sefer Torah[3]

As the years went on, I discovered more and more Sifrey Torah with פאי"ן לפופיןand I acquired as many as possible. Today I own 17 Sifrey Torah, all of which contain varying occurrences of פאי"ן לפופין. My latest acquisitions are a Sefer Torah from Amsterdam, one from Brazil and one (however only in photographic copy) from Asti in Italy.

The Amsterdam Sefer Torah is said to be over 400 years old, and was miraculously saved from destruction during the Holocaust. It is very rich in פאי"ן לפופין and other אותיות משונות[4].

1. 10 times in בראשית, 23 times in שמות, 21 times in ויקרא, 9 times in במדבר and 18 times in דברים.
2. 37 times in בראשית, 42 times in שמות, 39 times in ויקרא, 24 times in במדבר and 10 times in דברים.
3. 10 times in בראשית, 10 times in שמות, 6 times in ויקרא, one time in במדבר, and 10 times in דברים.
4. Rabbi Menahem Kasher. "תורה שלמה", כרך כ"ט, ירושלים, תשל"ח

The Sefer Torah from Brazil has an interesting history: it is said to have belonged to Don Pedro II, the last Emperor of Brazil, who had it in his family since the expulsion of the Jews from Portugal; it is written in an unusual script, and has פאי"ן לפופין in places where other Sifrey Torah do not have them. The Sefer Torah from Asti was discovered by me last summer when I visited the three communities of APAM (Asti, Fossano and Moncalvo), along with other very interesting synagogues in Piedmonte, together with my daughter Esther Alexandra. The Asti Sefer Torah is written on brown leather, and has unusually many אותיות משונות. As the community could not sell the Sefer Torah to me, they allowed me to have it photographed in its entirety.

I also own in my Library a תקון סופרים from Germany written on קלף, perhaps 300 years old, with an exact listing of פאי"ן כפולין, another expression for לפופין. Lately, I found the work by ר' שם טוב בן גאון[5] which states that there are 191 פאי"ן לפופין in the Torah, but this number is much lower than that given in the German Tiqqun.

I have also made the interesting discovery that פאי"ן לפופין also exist outside of Sifrey Torah and תאג'ין. I have acquired Mezuzoth and Tefillin with פא לפוף in the word פרעה (Ex. 14:10). This should not surprise us since the text is taken from the Torah. But, I have acquired two different Megilloth Esther with Lefufin! One such Megillah has Lefufin in the following words:

לפני המלך (Esther 1:11); פקידים (2:3); הפילגשים (2:14); הפרתמים (6:9).

The other Megillah has Lefufin in the following words:

פתגם (1:20); ויפקד (2:3); פתשגן (3:14); פתשגן (8:13); הפרוזים (9:19).

It is obvious that the Megilloth did not have a common tradition, although they both seem to originate in Italy.

The obvious questions which these phenomena pose are:

What is the purpose and meaning of a פ"א לפוף?

Was there ever a consistent, common fixed tradition for them?

Why were they discontinued, and when?

Where were they preserved, and why?

The answers to these questions can only be reached by researching all available texts. Thereby we will find whether at least a majority of those Sefarim

5. "בדי הארון ומגדל חננאל מאת ר' שם טוב בן אברהם בן גאון, ירושלים תשל"ו.

co-incide in the occurence of the פאי"ן לפופין. We can also then identify the words, or at least the categories of words or their specific context where פאי"ן לפופין can be expected in the Biblical text.

A recent work published in New York, called ילקוט צורת האותיות[6] comprises over 70 quotations from various Sefarim on laws relating to the writing of Hebrew letters, covering 751 pages. But only two or three references to פאי"ן לפופין can be found among them. This shows that this scribal peculiarity attracted very little attention during the last few centuries.

If we go back, however, to the חסידי אשכנז of the 12th century, it is evident that they had a very clear tradition on the פאי"ן לפופין. MS 202 of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, was composed by the grandson of R. Shemuel he-Hasid, whom he quotes frequently, by referring to him as זקני החסיד or ביסוד זקני החסיד, or רבנו שמואל זקננו משפירא. Unfortunately, the Ms is incomplete and only renders a commentary on ס' שמות. In about 30 places the author comments on a פ"א לפוף, which the author calls פ"א גדולה or פ"א משונה. All verses mentioned by the author as containing such a לפוף are also found in most of the Sifrey Torah in my possession as having a לפוף in the same place. Therefore, there can be no doubt that MS 202 uses the expression פ"א גדולה for פ"א לפוף. (In fact in one or two Sifrey Torah, the פאי"ן לפופין are written unusually large, so that both terms — פ"א לפוף and פ" גדולה — are justified. To this name, we can add the expression פאי"ן כפולים used in the German Tiqqun. These terms are thus interchangeable).

MS 202 gives this general explanation for the פ"א גדולה: כל מקום שתמצא אותיות משונות או אותיות הפוכות או פ"א גדולה,אין פתרונן כפשוטו של הענין אך דברים אחרים הדומה לו קצת.Whenever you will find... strange letters, or inverted ones, or a large פ, you should not interpret them literally, but attach some additional meaning closely related to the text.

I quote two places where the author of MS 202 applies this rule, as an illustration:

Exodus 21:22 ונגפו: פ' גדולה, נגיעה גדולה

Exodus 30:16 לכפר על נפשתיכם — מצוין לכפר כפרה גמורה ליום הדין; כשיעמדו לדין לפני ה' יתכפרו ויזדככו נפשותיכם.

It was my impression that the לפופין were only found in Sifrey Torah, but not in Humashim (except in the Tadjin of Yemen). However, I had to change my

6. ילקוט צורת האותיות, ניו יורק תשמ"ג.

opinion recently when I was able to check the codex MS Valmadonna Lunzer in London. This is a Humash written in 1189 on parchment.[7] It begins with Parshat Vayigash and ends at the end of Sefer Bamidbar. To my surprise I found 77 Fey'in Lefufin in this important MS, all in places where the Lefufin also occur in most of the Sifrey Torah which I have checked.[8]

It is thus evident that Humashim, in the days of the Hasidey Ashkenaz contained Lefufin.

When Rabbi Menahem Kasher dealt with the problem of the אותיות משונות in Volume 29 of his monumental "Torah Shelemah" (Jerusalem 1978), he was handicapped by having very little material to study.[9]

Rabbi Kasher mentions that he had before him two Sifrey Torah from Amsterdam, but did not have time to examine them closely.[10] On the jother hand, the material which I have accumulated will therefore, I hope, yield a more detailed and reliable comparative study and examination of available passages where Lefufin occur.

I should also mention that I recently visited a warehouse in London, where about 1500 Sifrey Torah had been accumulated, which had been given by the Czechoslovak Government to a Jewish organisation in England. These Sifrey Torah had been stolen by the Nazis during the war, and all originated in Bohemia. Although I was not given permission to carry out an extended examination of all the Sefarim there, I checked 38 Sifrey Torah, and found that 16 of them had Fe'yin Lefufin! These Sefarim were about 200 years old. It would therefore follow that Bohemia, more than any other place in Europe, preserved the tradition of the Lefufin for a longer period than other communities. By

7. "The Only Dated Medievel Hebrew Manuscript written in England", by Malachi Bet Arie, London 1985.

8. Prof. Bet Arie has informed me by letter that another MS (No. Jnul 240 5827) in the National Library is written by the same scribe, and also contains Lefufin.

9. Rabbi Kasher used mainly Moses Gaster's "The Tittled Bible" (London 1929), which, however, in my opinion seems a very ureliable disorganised work. The text used by Gaster does not seem to be written by an expert Scribe and does not follow the usual Yemenite style of writing. Also it misses the Mesorah which is usually found in Yemenite "Tadjin". Furthermore, it bears no date.

10 op. cit. p. 183 f.

contrast, when I examined Sifrey Torah fragments from the Cairo Genizah, in Cambridge, I did not find a single occurrence of Lefufin, or of any אותיות משונות.

As to the meaning of Lefufin, there can be no doubt that their meaning and significance can be divided into various completely different categories.

a. One group indicates that the Lefufin point to a negative, punative message, as, for example, in such words as משפט, פשע, כפרה, פן, אף, טרפה, פנים, שפוך, פסל, גפרית.

b. Another group points to God's beneficial blessings and powers, as for example in such words as:, לפני ה', פרץ, יפרץ, שופט, שפטים, נפשותיכם, ערפל, כפירים, כפי, תנופה, פתח אהל מועד.

c. The Lefufin occur — in every Sefer and Humash I have checked — in these foreign names:צפנת פענח, פטי פרע .

In conclusion of this preliminary survey, it is evident that the tradition of the Fey'in Lefufin continued in certain locations longer than in others. In some communities, the tradition was only preserved by a few, perhaps secretly, in order not to make the פאי"ן לפופין a "condition" (לעיכובא) for a kosher Sefer Torah. Yemen and Bohemia seem to be locations where the tradition remained in general use for a long time.

I hope that my complete study will give further information and explanations of this interesting phenomenon in Hebrew scribal tradition, and of this important aspect of the דינים relating to the writing of ספרי תורה.

*The* פאי"ן לפופין *can be seen on lines 1, 2, 3 and 5. Compare these with the regular* פ *on line 8.*

## *EDITORIAL COMMENT*

*The study of Torah was incumbent upon every Jew. The reason was clear: Holy Writ, to the traditional Jew, was the word of God. To study it thoroughly and reverently was for him to learn the will of God, thus allowing him the privilege of arranging his life in accordance with that will. So pre-occcupied was he with this task that it never occurred to him that the Bible may also be great literature. Thus when Rabbi Akiba saved the Song of Songs from obliteration, it was not due to its unsurpassed lyric quality. He did it on the conviction that all Scripture was holy and the Song of Songs the holy of holies. The Jew read portions dealing with sacrifices, though the Temple and its sacrifices were no more, with as much attention as those parts having unquestionably great literary merit.*

*It was the German poets and literary critics of the 18th & 19th century who "discovered" the literary excellence of the Bible. Thus A. Herder is reputed to have said that he would give years of his life to study Hebrew in order to read Psalm 104 in the original. Goethe was enamored of the Joseph stories and considered the Book of Ruth an idyl par-excellence.*

*No one doubts the literary merit of the Book of Esther. Thus Bewer*[1] *claimed that "the tale is told with great artistic skill and its plot is unfolded with remarkable literary ability." It is the writer of the following article who suggests that the Book of Esther is a "Novelle" in the best sense of the word. As a form of story telling made famous by Boccaccio and later Goethe himself, the Book of Esther meets, according to Dr. Siegel, every criterion of a Novelle as specified by some of its greatest practitioners and literary critics.*

*Professor Arye Bartal agrees that the Book of Esther was written with great artistry. Thus, for instance, the author of the Megillah utilizes a series of narrative techniques, such as tension.*

*We have included in this Spring Issue an article on the Song of Songs (read on the Passover) as well as two articles dealing with Passover: one by Rabbi Jeffrey Cohen "A Problem Verse in Dayenu", and the other by Professor Aaron Lichtenstein, "The Author of the Haggadah as an Educator".*

*The Editors*

1. Julius A. Bewer *The Literature of the Old Testament* (N.Y. 1938) p. 304.

# BOOK OF ESTHER - A NOVELLE

BY MONIQUE R. SIEGEL

As with so many other stories in the Bible, the author of the Book of Esther is unknown. Time and place of its origin, as well as the reason for its creation are also shrouded in mystery, and there have been a variety of conjectures on these points. Most scholars seem to agree, however, that it was written by a Persian Jew, as the writer's familiarity with Persian customs and his insight into the behavior at court point in this direction. If that is so, then the time of the writing of the story was probably shortly after the fall of the Persian Empire which would mean sometime during the third century B.C.E.

Whatever the circumstances surrounding its creation may have been – the book has become extremely popular and well known. And that in spite of a unique feature: although included in the canon of the Scriptures, it does not once make mention of the name of God, nor does it refer directly to religious observances. Instead, it deals with very human characters, very wordly pleasures and ambitions, and allows the solution of the problem to come about through human rather than divine intervention. But for those who can read between the lines, there are a number of subtle references to God, prayer and Divine Providence, and it is generally assumed that, for a variety of reasons, the direct omission of these points was intentional.

The reason for its popularity, however, does not lie in its secular subject matter or in its subtle references to religion, but rather in its literary merit. Although the scholars do not agree on the circumstances surrouding the authorship of the story, they are agreed upon this point.

*Dr. Monique R. Siegel, a naturalized American citizen living in Zurich, Switzerland, studied at Columbia University and New York University, New York City, where she received her PH.D. in Germanic Languages and Literature. Being profoundly interested in Hebrew and Bible, she chose as her dissertation: "A Comparison of the Translation of the Book of Psalms by Martin Luther and Moses Mendelson".*

Reverend Dr. S. Goldman, in the Soncino Press edition of *The Five Megilloth,* stresses the author's skill:

> *It is a work of considerable literary merit. The characters are distinctly portrayed, the descriptions are graphic: the language is clear, concise and adequate, with very few obscurities. A remarkable amount of action and description is crowded into its few chapters. Above all one must admire the author's ability as a narrator. He has a keen sense of situation and contrast, and manages his timing and entrances with the skill of consummate dramatist.*[2]

The time is 483 B.C.E., the place is the fortress of Shushan in city of Susa, the chief capital of the Medo-Persian Empire. The king Ahasuerus holds a 7-day feast for all the people of the city. Of course, there is much drinking and as the men are alone (the women being entertained by the queen in her quarters), the talk most likely circles around the beauty and merits of their women.

So far the exposition which is handled in exactly nine verses that include Ahasuerus' genealogy as well as a description of the pomp and riches of court!

On the seventh say of this party, "when his heart was merry with wine" (1:10), the king demands that his chamberlains summon Vashti, the queen, "with the crown royal to show the peoples and the princes her beauty; for she was fair to look on" (1:11). The queen refuses, and the king burns with anger.

There are two possible reasons for the queen's refusal. Talmud and Jewish commentators understand the command to have been for her to appear "'only with the royal crown,' i.e. naked" – a command which she understandably refused to obey. But even if she was to come fully clothed, it is also understandable that she may not have cared to be displayed to a crowd of drunken commoners.

Justified as her refusal may have been, the king's reaction shows no understanding at all. His honor has been mortally insulted; this offense must be punished in the most drastic manner. Anxious to give legal sanction to the venting of his personal rage, he consults his advisors, according to his custom, as to what should be "unto the queen Vashti according to law..." (1:15). These

2. Reverend Dr. S. Goldman, "Introduction" to *Esther,* in: *The Five Megilloth* (London and Bournemouth, 1952), p. 193.

advisors are not only anxious to please their king, but fearing that the queen may set an undesirable example for their own wives and the women throughout the country, they rush to prepare an edict (the first in this story) which is published in all languages throughout the kingdom, deposing the queen and bestowing on each man the legal right to treat his wife according to the custom of his house.

In true Novellen fashion we never learn what becomes of Vashti after her deposition. It can be assumed that she was executed, but her function in the Novelle is to prepare the scene for Esther's appearance. Thus, her fate is immaterial to the further development of the story. Her disappearance ends the first episode.

At the opening of chapter II, approximately two years have passed. The king is brooding over the unjust punishment inflicted on Vashti; he has long since regretted his rash action. His advisors are only too anxious to divert his attention from them and the role they played in deposing the queen. So to assuage his longing for Vashti, they devise a plan which is sure to be a pleasant diversion:there shall be a beauty contest of fair young virgins from among whom the king can choose Vashti's successor. Another decree goes out summoning the virgins to Susa where they are to undergo a 12-months beauty treatment in order to be pleasing to royal eyes. Thus ends the second episode.

At the beginning of the third, Esther and Mordecai are introduced unto the story. Esther has been an orphan almost since the moment she was born and has been raised by her cousin, Mordecai the Jew, who lives in the fortress of Shushan. Their family genealogy is given in a few words, and the author mentions that "the maiden was of beautiful form and fair to look on" (2:7). This fact undoubtedly qualified her for participation in the contest, although we do not learn whether she volunteered to participate or whether she was forced. The latter seems likely. From what we learn about the king – and he as well as the four other "dramatis personae" are characterized, in classical Novellen style, by their actions rather than by wordy descriptions – it seems quite reasonable to assume that he was far too smitten by Esther's beauty and charms to inquire much into her background.

Whatever the circumstances that made her part of it, during the 12-months preparation, Esther charms everyone who comes in contact with her. She is given all the attention, and is advanced to the best place in the house of women.

However, she "had not made known her people nor her kindred; for Mordecai had charged her that she should not tell it. And Mordecai walked every day before the court of the women's house, to know how Esther did, and what would become of her" (2:10).

The king finally begins the royal inspection of the young women.

When Esther's turn comes to be presented, she requires nothing other than what the keeper of the women has chosen for her. This may be a point in support of the theory that she was forced into this situation and did not care whether or not the king chose her. Perhaps the king's passion was aroused by this attitude even more than by her beauty. In any case, she is chosen, above all women, to be the new queen of Persia. The wedding is held, and the king, who must have had a special affinity for edicts and written records, issues another decree to celebrate the occasion. This edict marks the end of the third episode.

The fourth episode – or maybe one should speak of concentric circles getting narrower, the closer we get to the central issue – is an excellent example of the author's skill. We are told that "Mordecai sat in the king's gate – Esther had not yet made known her kindred nor people; as Mordecai had charged...." (2:19-20). This is by no means an unnecessary repetition of something mentioned in an earlier verse of this chapter, but rather it serves to authenticate the incident that follows: Mordecai, sitting in the king's gate learns that two of the king's chamberlains plan to assassinate Ahasuerus. This incident must be quoted in order to appreciate the author's talent of relating a matter of great importance with equally great economy:

> *And the thing became known to Mordecai, who told it unto Esther the queen; and Esther told the king thereof in Mordecai's name. And when inquisition was made of the matter, and it was found to be so, they were both hanged on a tree; and it was written in book of the chronicles before the king (2:22,23).*

The last part of this sentence shows the author to be a model Novellen writer. This seemingly unimportant sentence plays the significant role in the events that follow.

The beginning of the next circle enters the last of the main characters: Haman, a successful and ambitious courtier. Although very rich, he is evidently a social upstart and therefore extremely sensitive about receiving the honors which are

due him. Thus, he is enraged when Mordecai, being a Jew, refuses to bow down and prostrate himself before Haman.

Haman considers it beneath him to punish this one underling. Instead he decides to do something befitting his delusion of grandeur: he will suggest to the king to destroy *all* the Jews throughout the empire! And he goes about this mass destruction in an organized manner: he casts lots to find which day would be most suitable for his undertaking; the lot falls on the 13th day of the twelfth month.

Approaching the king in this matter, he is careful to insure acceptance of his plan. First, he phrases the accusation so cleverly that Mordecai's offense becomes a matter of state security:

> *And Haman said unto king Ahasuerus: 'There is a certain people scattered abroad and dispersed among the peoples in all the provinces of thy kingdom; and their laws are diverse from those of every people; neither keep they the king's laws; therefore it profiteth not the king to suffer them' (3:8).*[3]

Then he offers the king a substantial gift, making the plan all the more irresistible.

He has calculated correctly. The king is taken in by the plan immediately. Another edict goes out throughout the kingdom, in every language:

> *...to destroy, to slay, and to cause to perish, all Jews, both young and old, little children and women, in one day, even upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month Adar, and to take the spoil of them for a prey.*

All these elaborate details were written by the author for one purpose: to set off the final two phrases of verse 15:

> *...and the king and Haman sat down to drink; but the city of Shushan was perplexed (3:15).*

This passage is a particularly impressive proof of the author's skill. Having decreed genocide, the king and Haman sit down to drink! This callousness is heightened by the fact that the simple people of the city were perplexed, i.e. there

3. At no time does Haman mention the specific offense. To do so would have exposed his personal vanity.

had been no ill feelings between Persian and Jew to that time, and the decree came as a complete surprise to them.

Mordecai, of course, learns of the plot and the circumstances that led to its conception. He rends his clothes and puts on sackcloth and ashes and "went out into the midst of the city, and cried with a loud and a bitter cry" (4:1) – the author's way of telling us that Mordecai prayed to God. Esther is told of this by her attendants and sends a messenger to him to ascertain "what this was, and why it was" (4:5). "...And Mordecai told him of all that had happened unto him, and the exact sum of money that Haman had promised to pay to the king's treasuries for the Jews, to destroy them" (4:7). The literary skill here is noteworthy: the first part of the question answers Esther's "what this was" and the second part her "why it was."

> *Also he gave him the copy of the writing of the decree that was given out in Shushan to destroy them, to show it unto Esther, and to declare it unto her; and to charge her that she should go in unto the king, to make supplication unto him, and to make request before him, for her people (4:8).*

Esther's reaction is hardly what Mordecai had hoped for. She informs him that no one is allowed to go to the king without having been summoned by him[4] – for those that do appear uncalled, there is only one law: death, unless he holds out the golden sceptre indicating his forgiveness of the boldness.

Mordecai rebukes her sternly, and his words contain a reference to Divine Providence:

> *Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, then will relief and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place, but thou and thy father's house will perish; and who knoweth whether thou art not come to royal estate for such a time as this? (4:13-14).*

Convinced by Mordecai's argument, Esther rises to the occasion. She consents to appear before the king and, aware of the danger of her mission, she adds with great dignity; "...if I perish, I perish." This terse but haunting Hebrew phrase "avadeti, avadeti" is indeed a simple but sublime and courageous statement of resignation to God's will.

4. This was a security measure to prevent assassination.

The beginnig of chapter 5 is also the beginning of the next ring. Esther approaches the king; fortunately, he holds out the sceptre to her and asks her about the nature of her request.

In the face of this grave danger, Esther has become a mature woman. She has planned her strategy well, for she extends an invitation to a banquet at her quarters to the king as well as to Haman who is present. The king accepts and orders Haman to accompany him. There have been a variety of reasons suggested for Esther's invitation of Haman. "Perhaps the best are: (1) that Esther was purposely showing a great interest in Haman, to arouse the king's jealousy and to disarm Haman; (2) that Esther wished to expose Haman in the king's presence so that he might not have an opportunity to prepare excuses or persuade the king against relenting."[5]

At the banquet, the king asks Esther again about the nature of her wish. She answers very cleverly:

> *My petition and my request is: let the king and Haman come to the banquet that I shall prepare for them, and I will do tomorrow as the king hath said (4:7-8).*

This strategy of delay is most effective. For one thing, the king is really anxious now to learn what Esther wants of him. For another, Haman believes himself be now a favorite also of the queen. His ego is swollen, and with the queen so favorably disposed toward him, he is now able to speed up a matter so dear to his heart: the elimination of the Jew Mordecai. For even in his happiness over the royal favors, Mordecai's disrespect still irritates him.

Thus, Haman goes home, summons his wife and his friends to boast of the fact that he was the only courtier invited to the queen's banquet, not just once, but also for the next day, as well as to complain about Mordecai whose existence spoils everything for Haman. The resolution of this problem is narrated with the same irony that marked the earlier example of cruelty and callousness:

> *Then said Zeresh, his wife and all his friends unto him: 'Let a gallows be made of fifty cubits high, and in the morning speak thou unto the king that Mordecai may be hanged thereon; then go thou in merrily with the king unto the banquet'. And the thing pleased Haman; and he caused the gallows to be made (5:14).*

5. Mary Ellen Chase, *The Bible and the Common Reader*, New York, 1949, p. 220, n. 2.

## THE TURNING POINT

One could hardly find a better example to illustrate Tiecks "Wendepunkt-Theorie" than the next episode, and it is done in classical Novellen form. A seemingly insignificant incident causes the turn in fortune.

That night, the king suffers from insomnia, and to divert himself, he has the royal diary (i.e. the "book of the chronicles" of 2:23) brought and read before him. When the section is read which describes Mordecai's assistance in averting the king's assassination, Ahasuerus asks what was done to reward Mordecai for this deed. The answer is that nothing was done. The king decides to remedy this oversight immediately and asks who is in the outer court. Ironically, it is Haman who is there. He has come especially early in order to be the first in line the next morning to ask the king's death sentence for Mordecai!

It should be remembered here that Haman is reveling in the strength of his position. He does not believe for a moment that the king will refuse him the life of Mordecai – why should he after having the death sentence proclaimed over Mordecai's people? Thus, when the king asks him: "What shall be done unto the man whom the king delighteth to honor?" (6:6), Haman can only think that it is he whom the king wishes to honor. He suggests, therefore, the most lavish and extravagant honors, including that royal apparel be brought for such a man; i.e. something that the king used to wear. This is a special irony, for as with the maidens whom the king rejected but who had become sacrosanct by his touch, so it is with anything the king wears. Consequently, when the king admonishes Haman to do all these honors unto Mordecai, not only is Haman profoundly shocked that it was the Jew instead of him for whom these things were planned, but by virtue of having to clothe Mordecai in the royal apparel, he gave him a kind of "diplomatic immunity."

After this has been done, Haman rushes home to discuss this completely unexpected turn of events. And here the author displayed another example of his sense of irony:

> *Then said his wise men and Zeresh his wife unto him: 'If Mordecai, before whom thou hast begun to fall, be of the seed of the Jews, thou shalt not prevail against him, but shalt surely fall before him', While they were yet talking with him, came the king's chamberlains, and hastened to bring Haman unto the banquet that Esther had prepared (6:13-14).*

The "wise men" are the "friends" of the day before! Having become wise in hindsight, they are as quick to prophecy Haman's downfall as they were to advise him on the gallows for Mordecai. And while the world crumbles around him, Haman attends the second banquet surely with mixed feelings!

Chapter 7 is the climax of this Novelle. At the second banquet, the king invites Esther once more to make known her wish. Again using clever strategy. she discloses her wish:

> *If I have found favor in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request; for we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my peace, for the adversary is not worthy that the king be endamaged (7:3-4).*[6]

The king asks: "Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so?" (5:5) and Esther answers: "An adversary and an enemy, even this wicked Haman" (5:6).

Deeply angry, Ahasuerus gets up and storms out into the garden, while Haman, alone with the queen, prostrates himself on the couch on which she is reclining to ask for her mercy. At that moment, the king returns – this is the final touch of irony – and in his blind rage over Haman's seeming duplicity he completely misinterprets Haman's actions, asking him: "Will he even force the queen before me in the house?" (7:8). The attendants rush to cover Haman's face, a token of the death sentence. To make his downfall complete, one of the chamberlains informs the king of the gallows which Haman had made for Mordecai to the king responds: "Hang him thereon" (7:9). The author adds the terse note: "So they hanged Haman on the gallows that he had prepared for Mordecai. Then was the king's wrath assuaged" (7:10).

6. This is another one of those phrases that are too terse. The meaning suggested by Rev. Goldman is: "If the Jews had been sold as slaves, the king would have derived a considerable revenue from the sale; and if Esther had intervened, her intervention would have resulted in the loss of this revenue to the king. The downfall of the enemy Haman would not then have been sufficient compensation for the loss to the king; and Esther in that case would have kept silence, rather than that the king should suffer damage, i.e. loss. If Haman's plan had been to sell the Jews into slavery, at least their lives would not have been in danger" (*Esther, op. cit.*, p. 227, n. 2).

The last circle is almost closed, except for the matter of the decree against the Jews. Royal edicts were irrevocable. Esther and Mordecai (who has now been advanced to Grand Vizier and put over Haman's property) still face the problem of how to save their people. With the same ease with which Ahasuerus has given power of attorney, i.e. his signet ring to Haman, so does he now confer it to Mordecai. Yet it is Esther, whose influence on the king has been tried and proven, who once more risks her life in order to intercede for her people. She appears before the king to effect a revocation of the decree. However, this is impossible, and the king gives Esther and Mordecai full power to devise ways and means to remedy the dangerous situation. Thus, a new decree goes out:

> *And they wrote in the name of king Ahasuerus, and sealed it with the king's ring, that the king had granted the Jews that were in every city, to gather themselves together, and to stand for their life, to destroy, and to slay, and to cause to perish, all the forces of the people and province that would assault them, upon one day in all the provinces of king Ahasuerus, namely, upon the thirteenth day of the twelfth month, which is the month of Adar (8:10-12).*

This caused great happiness among the Jews, and the author stresses the effectiveness of the decree by adding:

> *And many from among the peoples of the land became Jews; for the fear of the Jews was fallen upon them (8:17).*

On the day appointed for the destruction of the Jews, they stood up in the fortress of Shushan and defended themselves (9:1-3). The Jews throughout the country also defended themselves and did not touch the property of their slain enemies (9:16). Chapter 9 contains the telescoped version of the Purim events, and concludes with Esther's written confirmation of the festival of Purim, ending: "And the commandment of Esther confirmed these matters of Purim, and it was written in the book."

# THE ART OF NARRATION IN THE SCROLL OF ESTHER

BY ARYE BARTAL

Megillat Esther enjoys great popularity amongst Jews. Without a doubt, it next to the Torah is the best known biblical book. The reason for it is its content - telling of the success of our forefathers in defending themselves from their enemies. However, this is not all. The popularity of this little book must also be sought in its narrative presented with superb artistry. On this point, Bible exegetes and literary critics are united: the Scroll was compsed by a master novelist. According to Jewish tradition its author is no other than Mordecai who personally participated in these events and was therefore fully informed of what took place.

A careful examination will indicate that the author uses a series of narrative techniques which he utilizes with consummate skill. Thus, for instance, he is a master composer of tension. From the first to the seventh chapters he uninterruptedly keeps us in bated breath. For this purpose he uses three stylistic forms: confrontation of crass opposites and situations; a tense competition with time; and stress on eroticism which plays an important role in the narrative development.

From the onset, the first chapter portrays situations which force the barometer of tension to ascend and descend sharply. Thus, in the magnificent feast in the palace, the splendor of which is described in detail, we are put into a festive mood, as if we ourselves were participating in it. However, at the end of the feast, we read about queen Vashti who refuses to present her charms to her master, the king, and his guests. This causes a sudden break in the mood – and the tension caused by it will be overcome only when Esther is chosen as the successor to Vashti. Again we feel good, now that a Jewish woman is sitting on the queenly

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throne. Again, this pleasant atmosphere is suddenly broken in the third chapter: Haman rises in rank as the highest vizier in the land. Here he is confronted by Mordecai who does not bow to him, thus also disobeying an order given by the king himself for all his subjects. Haman, his pride hurt, raves, and we, the readers, are overcome by a feeling of anxiety. Haman asks the king for permission to destroy all the Jews of his kingdom, a request granted by the king. All this happens at a banquet when both King and Haman are in the best of moods. And when this plan of the forthcoming destruction is published, Jews are seized by fear. Again we note the contrast, but not the last one in the book of Esther.

Esther, challenged by Mordecai, prepares a counter attack. She must devise a strategem to effect the annulment of the verdict of death for her people. However, court etiquette as well as security measures make her plans an enterprise which might endanger her life. Full of tension, we pursue her preparations and her fasts in order to assure God's assistance, even when she dresses to appear attractive to her king. At this time we also hear that his relations with Esther had cooled, as of recent – a disturbing detail which increases the dangers of her mission and heightens our tension. Her next step almost takes away our breath: Esther enters the court of the palace, moving directly towards the reception hall of his majesty without having received, as was required, a special invitation. Now she passes the entrance, a charming smile on her face. The guards draw their swords, confused by the daring of the queen. They know the law: if they refuse to kill her, their own lives are forfeit. An oppressive minute – but then we can breath freely again. She has done it! His majesty has noticed her in time and stretches forth his scepter, a sign of imperial favor. "What is your request, Esther, even half my kingdom, and it is yours!" Esther is not interested in half his kingdom, yet is hesitant at first to petition for the rescue of her people. All she wants is to invite the king and Haman into her private chamber for a banquet. This request, seemingly modest but in reality artfully designed with feminine cunning, will, as we shall shortly see, play a central role in the development of the plot.

The "race against time" will be discussed at the end of this article. But how does Eros enter a Megillah? Some of it we already have indicated. Esther uses her feminine charms in order to invite the king and Haman into her chamber. This is also a significant element in scenes to come. Why, for instance, does Ahasuerus have a sleepless night following Esther's quaint request? Talmudic

exegetes interpreted this sleeplessness purely theologically: God willed it in order to succor Israel. In the final analysis this is proved to be true. However, unquestionably, something bothered the king about that peculiar invitation of Esther. Certainly from a Persian perspective at that time – as also of today – the invitation to a strange man to the private chamber of a married woman, was out of the ordinary, even unseemly, even when this happens in the presence of her husband, especially if he is king. Is it not so that high walls are meant to isolate the women's harem from the outside world? Even in the negotiations between Mordecai and Esther, a eunuch servant was needed. In other terms, Esther could not even talk directly to her adoptive father! That the invitation was out of the ordinary is also stressed by Haman: it was the greatest honor ever bestowed on him. As we know, it will turn out to be a vicious trap that will seal his destiny.

For whom did Esther risk her life –this seems to be the question which leaves Ahasuerus no rest on that fateful night. If it were to clear her relations with him, why utilize such a dangerous way? And why would she invite a strange man whose presence would only disturb and certainly not help in an intimate reunion. Is it perhaps Haman for whom she risks her life, to cuckold her own husband and king? This suspicion is not so farfetched as might be thought of at first; the king himself gives it expression in an event that takes place at the second banquet given by Esther for the two men. As will be remembered, Haman, accused by Esther of being her and her people's enemy, fell on the couch before Esther, begging for mercy. The King, already furious about Haman and noting this scene, charges Haman with wishing to force himself on his wife in his own presence! It is an absurd charge, since this scene lacks any elements having an erotic nature. In fact it is tragic. But it is jealousy, pure and simple, which brings up this suspicion and distorts his perception.

First traces of his jealousy were already noticed earlier, when the king ordered Haman himself to honor Mordecai. Would it not have been more fitting if somebody less prominent had been chosen for this task? Thus, here for the first time, a growing aversion toward Haman finds expression – and this after that fateful sleepless night! The scene in which Haman is forced to lead the hated Mordecai on the king's horse through the streets of Shushan, the capital of the kingdom, describes a situation more tragic than humorous. In fact it marks a turning point in the story: the rapid downfall of Haman, and parallel to it, the

first step toward the succor of Jews. All of Haman's life had been dedicated to further his career. And now, only in a few hours he is brought to the gallows. Here we have another proof of the superb artistry of the Book of Esther for dramatic presentation of material.

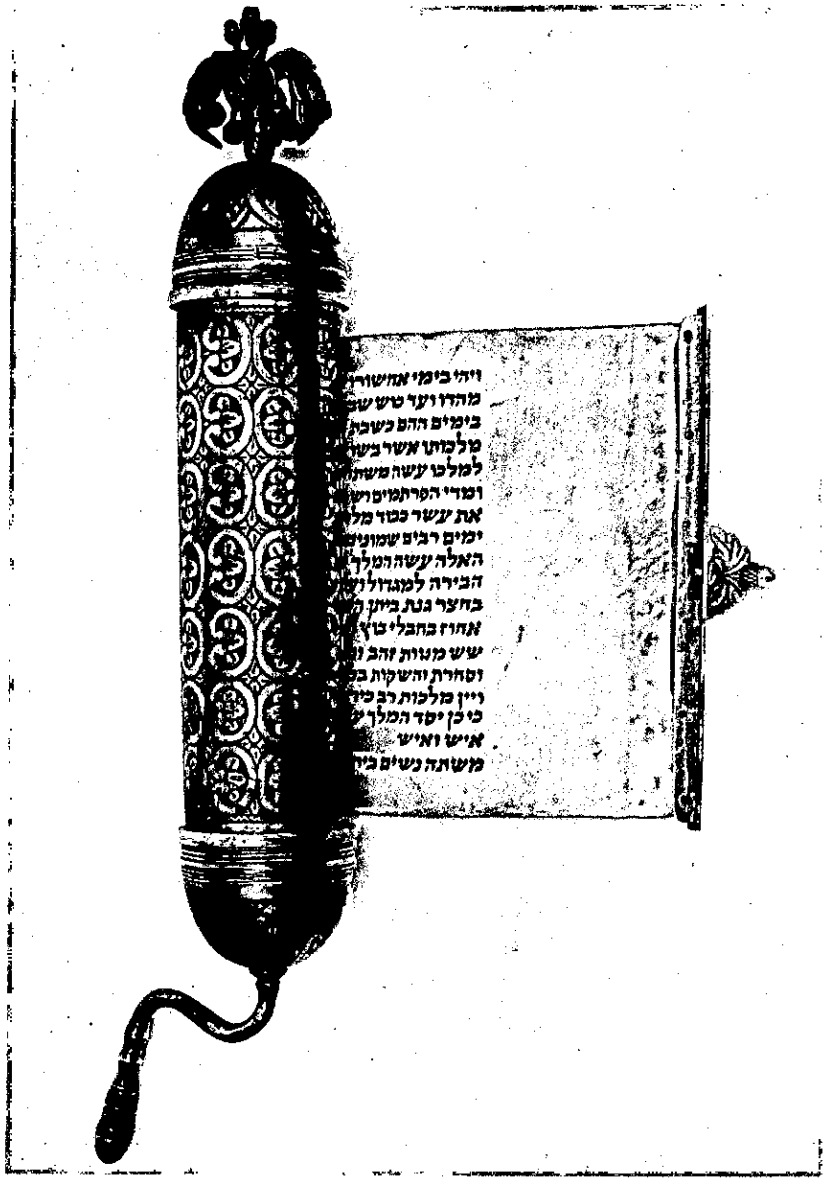
Frequently doubts have been expressed regarding the religious spirit of the Megillah. From the Talmud we find that its acceptance into the Holy Writ had met some resistance. In fact: God is not mentioned even once. However, though not mentioned, He is the central figure in the Book of Esther. He does not, as in the Patriarchal stories of Genesis, interfere openly; however He acts, as it were, behind the scenes. The heroes seem to act only from purely human motives: the king blinded by his might and capricious in his arbitrariness; his vizier drunk with power and glory; his clever and coquettish queen; her wise yet intriguing adoptive father – they all appear to act on their own. Yet, in reality, as seen in the end, they are no more than marionettes, and despite their differing characters, as in a show, the author and director is none other than God Himself.

This sort of narration is not out of the ordinary in the Bible. God's absolute sway is also described in the Joseph story. Here too it is human characters and motifs that seem at first sight to inform the events. But it is finally God's will which directs all these events toward the planned goal. Biblical scholars have called this type of narration the "double determinism." According to it, the heroes in it only appear to be thinking and acting freely, while in fact, it is God who directs things. Furthermore, it is His will that seems to reflect more in the intentions of the heroes than in His direct intervention in the events themselves. In fact, a hint of God's higher rule is to be detected, as noted by our traditional commentators in that famous scene where Mordecai impresses upon a hesitant Esther that the rescue of Jews will come from another "place" (מקום) if she refuses to help. As known (מקום) is one of the expressions used in the Bible to denote God.

However, the essential religious aspect of the Megillah resides in the race between the "Pur" – the lot – therefore the name of Purim for this holiday – the day for the destruction of the Jews determined by "lot," and God's determination to rescue His people from annihilation. Thus we have a confrontation between "pur" – fate, motivated by human hubris and exaggerated pride and dictated by the arbitrariness of gods, and faith in the just reign of a One God that makes life

worthwhile. Who will be victorious in this race? Will it be the heathen superstition finding expression in the "Pur" – or the Will of God? The end result is known to us – and in it the religious spirit of the Megillah finds its full expression.

Translated by Shimon Bakon



# THE AUTHOR OF THE HAGGADAH

## *AS AN EDUCATOR*

BY AARON LICHTENSTEIN

It is from biblical verses, in which the father is obligated to tell his son or children about the Exodus, from which the renowned Four Sons in the Haggadah emerged: the wise, the wicked, the simple, and the one who does not even know to ask. We shall present these four verses parallel to the Four Sons, note some of the difficulties and attempt to answer them.

TORAH

When thy son asks you in time to come: What mean the testimonies, the statutes and the ordinances, which the Lord our God has commanded you. Then you say to your son: We were Pharaoh's bondsmen in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand (Deuteronomy 6:20).

FOUR SONS

The wise son — what does he say: What is the meaning of the testimonies, the statutes and ordinances which the Lord our God has commanded you? Then you shall explain to him all the laws of the Passover and about the Afikoman (that we do not eat of the Afikoman after the ceremony).

And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say to you: What mean you (plural לכם) by this service? That you shall say: It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, for that He passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt... (And the people bowed the head and worshipped (Exodus 12:26-27).

The wicked son — what does he say? What mean *you* by this service? Saying "you" he excludes himself from the group and denies a basic principle. You may therefore taunt him (הקהה את שיניו) and say to him: *Because of the Eternal did to "me"* (Exodus 13:8) *when I came forth from Egypt.* For "me" and not for "him", because had he been there, he would not have been redeemed.

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| And it shall be when your sons asks you... What is this? | The simple son – what does he say: What is this? Then you shall explain and say: by strength of hand the Lord brought us forth from Egypt. |
| Then you shall say... by strength of hand the Lord brought us forth from Egypt (Exodus 13:14). | |
| And you shall tell your son in that day saying: | But for him who does not even know how to ask, you yourself must begin for him, because it is written in the Torah: And you shall tell your child on that day, saying: It is because of that which the Lord did for me, when I came forth from Egypt. |
| It is because of that which the Lord... did for me when I came forth from Egypt... (Exodus 13:8). | |

"The Beraita* concerning the Four Sons (in the Haggadah) has posed some difficulties. Throughout many generations no satisfactory explanations have been given for them. The question of the tradition regarding this Beraita is complex; there are many commentaries and guesses regarding its content and the time of its authorship. The "answers" (to be given by the father to the inquiring sons) are mixed up. This may be due to faulty transmission of the tradition. But it is possible that it is the intentional redaction of R. Hiya, in whose name this Beraita is taught in the Talmud Yerushalmi".**

From the wording of the questions raised by the sons, three types of sons are implied. The wise one, who by his questioning seems to be fully aware of the story of the Exodus and the many laws pertaining to its observance; the simple one, by his naive question: What is this?; and the one who does not even know how to ask, upon whose father falls the obligation to introduce him to the

* Beraita is a teaching of the Tannaim outside the Mishna.

** Daniel Goldschmidt p. 28, הגדה פסח במקורותיה ותולדותיה במשך הדורות

Exodus. It also must be noted that in each of these three cases the three sons are in the singular.

The difficulty arises with the verse (Exodus 12:26-27) which is ascribed to the wicked son. First of all, it is in the plural: *"When your children shall say to you"*, and this includes all types of children. What is more: though this verse states: what *mean you* by this service, this you (לכם) in the context of this verse is in no wise to be construed as a "denial of a basic principle" כופר בעיקר, an evil intent to exclude himself from the group. That this question raised by "your children" could not be applicable to a wicked son, the רשע, is made abundantly clear by the conclusion of that same verse in Exodus 27, which states: "and they bowed their heads and worshipped".

There, of course, is an additional diffiiculty with the verse which is ascribed to the רשע. The answer, in contrast to that given by the three other sons, is not the same as given in that verse quoted by the Bible, namely: *It is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover.* Rather, the author of the Haggadah quotes Exod. 13:8, the one applied to the son who does not know to ask: It *is because of that which the Lord did for me.*

THE AUTHOR OF THE HAGGADAH – AN EDUCATOR

The Haggadah utilizes a strange expression when it states: The Torah speaks about four sons– כנגד ארבעה בנים, instead of: "Four sons, are mentioned in the Torah". For, in fact, the author speaking about them had in mind the four types of children that may sit around the table at the Seder service. It is concerning them – כנגדם, that the Torah refers. This is re-enforced by another peculiarity of the Haggadah which, instead of simply stating: the wise son asks, the wicked one asks, etc., uses the round-about way: the wise son – what does he say... Now we also understand why verse 26 in Exod. 12 is ascribed to the questions by the wicked son. If today, after the Torah is already handed to us and known to all that read it, someone chooses to raise a question in the following terms: – "What does this service mean to you" – מה העבודה זאת לכם – it is done by a רשע who clearly wishes to separate himself from Israel, and thus denies a fundamental principle of the Torah. More than that: by selecting parts of verses out of context, to suit his own spirit, he tramples on the sanctities of the Torah, denying all of it. Even worse, he hides behind the mask of the wise son who had asked a similar question:

"What are the laws... that the Lord has commanded you —אתכם. In the mouth of the רשע: "What mean you (לכם) by this service", has the connotation of a taunt. Therefore, it is incumbent upon you to answer him in kind! Having twisted the true meaning of the biblical quotation, you do not give him the expected answer as given on the spot by the Torah, namely "it is the Sacrifice of the Lord's passover". You return his taunt by quoting "It is because what the Eternal did for me", the answer ascribed to the son who does not know how to ask. You put him where he belongs: as the outsider! This may be the true meaning of הקהה את שיניו, not, to blunt his teeth, but to blunt his wits (שיניו = למודיו), as in ושננתם לבניך A true educator is one "whose words of the Torah are astute" — דברי תורה מחודדים בפיך. In so doing, he fulfills two verses in Proverbs: 26:4-5.

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| Answer not a fool according to his folly | אל תען כסיל כאולחו |
| lest you also be like him | פן תשוה לו גם אתה |
| Answer a fool according to his folly | ענה כסיל כאיולתו |
| lest he be wise in his own eyes. | פן יהיה חכם בעיניו |

GIVE THE APPROPRIATE ANSWER

The wise son chooses a verse from the Torah in order to pose his question. You immediately discern the sophistication of the youngster by the very choice of his question. Therefore: "then you too, tell him" אף אתה אמור לו. That is, you will not be satisfied solely with the biblical answers given to him: "We were Pharaoh's bondsmen"... This youngster already knows it. The אף אתה is a mandate to satisfy his thirst to know and to comprehend the implication of the Exodus, and all the laws pertaining to Passover — from the beginning to the Afikoman with which the ceremony of the Seder is concluded.

We now have a clearer understanding why the Haggadah uses the elliptic expression: the wise son — what does he say etc. It refers to the son of today and the sort of question he asks. By it, one can discern which category the youngster belongs to — is he wise, wicked, simple, etc.

Had it been the intention of the Haggadah to serve, in this respect, as a commentary to the Bible and the four sons found there, it would have simply stated: The wise son, since it is written in the Torah; the wicked son, since it is written in the Torah, etc.

In every generation Jews have the obligation to view themselves as having personally gone through the agonies of Egypt and having personally participated in its Exodus. Thus, on that night of the Exodus the author of the Haggadah was less interested in the "son" of the Torah than in the youngster around the Seder table today. Thus the Haggadah offers a practical lesson in education. It is incumbent upon the parent-educator to assess the potential and attitude of the child on the basis of questions he raises and to give appropriate answers that will satisfy him.


*Seder* plate, engraved pewter with symbols of the festival, Germany, 1790

# A PROBLEM VERSE IN DAYYENU

BY JEFFREY M. COHEN

The problem we wish to highlight in this article is presented by a familiar line in the Dayyenu composition of the Pesach Haggadah: אילו קרבנו לפני הר סיני ולא נתן לנו את התורה דיינו. – "Had He brought us near unto Mount Sinai, but had not given us the Torah, it would have sufficed."

The problem is that the first halves of all the other conditional clause-lines in this composition stand in their own right as self sufficient and intrinsically beneficial acts of favour. They each constitute an independent boon whose benefit could be enjoyed without the supplementary boon enumerated in the second half on the line. Our problem line above stands out, however, in that it offers nothing of value to Israel in its first hemistich. For, what purpose could possibly have been served by "bringing us near unto Mount Sinai" if this was not to be accompanied by the "giving of the Torah?" Without Torah, Sinai was nothing more than a deserted mountain, of no consequence as a stopping-place for Israel!

The answer we propose is that the popular translation, 'Had He brought us near *unto* Mount Sinai,' misses the true nuance. It should rather be rendered, 'Had He brought us near (sc. to Himself) *before* (lifnei) the mountain of Sinai.' The emphasis now is not on the mountain, but rather on the verb *kervanu.* The verb *karav* frequently denotes a *spiritual proximity* and convergence, a personal revelation or self-disclosure of God's presence; human absorption into the experience of divine communion.

This meaning can be illustrated by reference to one of our best-known liturgical psalms (148:14):

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| He has lifted up a horn for *His people,* | וירם קרן לעמו |
| A praise for all *His saints,* | תהלה לכל חסידיו |
| For Israel, a people *in close proximity.* | לבני ישראל עם קרובו |

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The synthetic parallelism will be seen to contain a progressive amplification of Israel's attributes, from *Am* to *Hasid* to *Am karov*. The latter term must clearly be a more intense and elevated degree of spiritual attainment than that of saint, supporting the notion of 'absorption into the experience of divine communion.'

The same verb, *karav*, is employed in connection with the episode of the daughters of Zelafchad: ויקרב משה את משפטו לפני ה'. 'And Moses *brought* their case *close* to God' (Nu. 27:5). The sense here is of Moses repeating his original Sinaitic audience with God, when the rest of the law was disclosed to him. Moses, in this instance, again brings their case before the very bar of divine jurisdiction. The sense of the verb *karav* is thus of a judge hearing a plea *in chambers*, in the closest informal proximity.

The overtone of intimacy and self-disclosure contained in the usage of the verb *karav* also explains the employment of this root as an euphemism for sexual intercourse.[1] Again the noun *kirvah*, in both its occurrences,[2] clearly denotes the state of proximity to God. קרבת אלקים לי טוב does not mean 'approaching God is good unto me,' but rather, 'God's *proximity* is good unto me' in an objective genitive sense.

Moving from biblical to rabbinic usage, we find the above nuance of *karav* expressed in an even more popular and overt sense. This forms the pivot of a midrashic comment on the verse 'Happy are they whom thou choosest and bringest near (u-tekarev)'[3]. The Midrash[4] here draws a distinction between those whom God merely 'chooses,' and those whom He chooses and also 'brings close' (karev). The Patriarchs are quoted as examples of those whom God 'chose' but did not have to 'bring near' because they were able to achieve this *proximity* as a result of their own spiritual efforts. Jethro and Rahab, on the other hand, were not 'chosen' by God, but God did 'bring them near' when they demonstrated their readiness for conversion to monotheism.

The comment of the 'Etz Yoseph,[5] clarifying the distinction between 'choosing' and 'bringing near' in this context, is pertinent to our thesis:

1. Gn. 20:4; Lev. 18:6, 14, 19; Dt. 22:14 et al.
2. Is. 58:2; Ps. 73:28.
3. Ps. 65:5.
4. Bemid. Rabb. 3:2.
5. Loc. cit.

> 'Choosing' means that man finds favour in God's eyes on account of his goodly qualities. The Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, possessed goodly qualities, but God did not initially bring them close – *to aid them in their goodliness* – rather they strengthened themselves (spiritually) to walk before God. Rahab and Jethro, on the other hand, were not chosen, for they were not (initially) possessed of goodly qualities. However, God 'brought them near,' *arousing them* by means of Moses and Joshua.

From this Midrash, as elucidated by the 'Etz Yoseph,' it is clear that the verb *karav* connotes a divinely-initiated act of touching the souls of certain individuals such as Rahab and Jethro, who of their own accord, might never have achieved the leap of perfect faith, or it may denote a divine augmentation of pre-existent faith and strength of spiritual purpose (as in the case of the Patriarchs). In the former case, God may employ intermediaries (such as Moses and Joshua) to arouse and inspire the would-be convert.

Another Midrashic passage, on the same theme, highlights this special sense of the verb *karav*, as bringing into divine proximity, especially as a prelude to spiritual conversion:

> I brought Jethro near, and did not keep him far. You also, when a man comes to you to become converted, if his intention is purely in the name of heaven, bring him close and do not keep him at a distance. From here we learn that while a person rejects another with his left hand, he should (at the same time) bring him close with his right hand.[6]

Again, the sense of spiritual proximity underlying the verb *karav* (in the Aramaic *Pa'el* conjugation) explains its usage to denote 'interceding with God,' 'leading the prayers,' hence the noun קרובא, hymnologist, reader.[7]

In line with this rabbinic usage of the verb *karav* is a perfect example from the Haggadah itself: מתחלה עובדי כוכבים היו אבותינו ועכשיו קרבנו המקום לעבודתו 'Originally our forefathers were idolators, but now God has brought us close (kervanu) to His service.'

The conditional clause under consideration from the *Dayyenu* composition –

6. Mechilta Yitro, on Ex. 18:6.
7. See Jastrow, Dictionary, p. 1413.

אילו קרבנו לפני הר סיני ולא נתן לנו את התורה דיינו— now takes on a new dimension. It may now be rendered: 'had God made us experience a close personal revelation (*kervanu*) before Mount Sinai, without having given us the Torah, it would have sufficed.' The presumption is that God could actually have raised Israel to the same high spiritual gradation without having given them a tangible, written Torah. He could have inspired them spiritually by His mere proximity; the revelatory experience alone could have galvanised a permanent bond of religious fealty, as it did with the Patriarchs.

The type of instantaneous conversion here contemplated is akin to that recorded as having occurred to a number of biblical heroes. Saul, for example, 'as he turned to leave Samuel, God gave him a new heart' (I Sam. 10:9). The effect of this was to transform, in an instant, a naive youth into a man endowed with the hightest prophetic qualities (vv.6,10). The same sudden spiritual transformation endowed Samson with his power of strength (Ju. 14:6) and David with his regal quality (I Sam. 16:13).

The experience referred to was possibly a sudden flash of psychological self-realisation and awarenes; a revelation of hidden potential and spiritual sensibility. The trauma caused by the instantaneity of the revelation is described by the heathen prophet Balaam: 'Who sees the vision of the Almigty, fallen down and with opened eye.' The latter phrase (Heb. *shtum ha-'ayin*) is appositely rendered 'opened of *mental* eye,' by a modern lexicon.[8]

God, accordingly, could have made Israel undergo that same experience whose instantaneous effect would have been no less potent (and probably more so) than that which was achieved by handing over to them a written Torah which took time to digest and assimilate. The Torah could have remained a *Torah Sheblev*, with Israel remaining no less committed. 'Had He brought us into revelatory proximity (*kervanu*) before Mount Sinai, without having given us the (written) Torah, it would have sufficed.'

The fact that God chose rather to give us a tangible gift, to inspire and challenge us intellectually, to enable us to give free rein to our *tzelem 'Elokim* potential, that was a special boon for which we must indeed thank Him and praise His name.

8. Brown, Driver, Briggs, Lexicon p. 1060.

# THE SONG OF SOLOMON

## *A DREAM BALLET*

BY M.H. LEVINE

Rightfully considered one of the world's greatest love poems, the "Song of Solomon" has both enthralled and puzzled readers for many centuries.

Among the questions raised are:

a) Is the work religious or secular, or a combination of both?

b) Did one author compose the song or several? (1) As drama? (2) As collection of wedding songs? (3) As dream sequence?

c) Who was the author? Why did s(he) write this poem?

d) During which era was this literary creation edited?

Because of its sensuous descriptions and of any direct references to God, some ancient rabbis hesitated to accept this literary masterpiece into the bilical canon. However, Rabbi Akiba, the great scholar and noble martyr, viewed the Song as the "Holy of Holies", since he considered it to be an allegory celebrating the Lord's love for Israel, his bride. This opinion was accepted by the rabbinic sages, who added the Song to the כתובים or additional official biblical writings. The Sages of Midrash as well, as almost all medieval Jewish commentators, agreed with this outlook.

However, even in the days of the Talmud, there were some who looked upon the Song as a secular ballad and sang selections from it as they imbibed their wine at taverns. Hence, Rabbi Akiba sternly warns that "he who trills his voice while singing the Song of Songs and makes it into a secular song has no share in the world to come!" But the rabbis, perhaps sub-consciously, recognized that the book deals with love between men and women, when they explained that Solomon composed this work in his earlier period because "when a man is young, he sings songs."

While many consider physical love as secular, others see this type of love as also spiritual in nature. Jastrow maintains that "love is sacred even in passionate

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manifestation, when not perverted by a sophisticated self-analysis". By this definition, the Song must be considered holy.

Because of its unusual use of dialogues, the Song has been interpreted by many scholars as a romantic drama, built on two or three characters.

One such theory, whose chief proponent was Franz Delitzch, maintained that the two main characters were King Solomon and a country lass, the Shulamite. Both express their mutual love throughout the Song in a sort of love-duet.

Some modern scholars prefer, however, to follow the notion, first developed by J. S. Jacobi in 1771, that the play has three principal characters: the king, a rustic maiden and her shepherd-lover. According to this view, King Solomon, while visiting the countryside, encounters a beautiful young girl and is so overcome by her charms that he takes her to his palace, where he tries to win her love and add her to his harem.

Despite his overtures and those of the "Daughters of Jerusalem" or women of his court, the Shulamit maiden remains faithful to her true love. Respecting her fidelity, Solomon allows her to depart, and the play concludes with the reunion of the two sincere lovers.

While this charming account is heartwarming, a careful reading of the Song reveals its deficiencies. First of all, the poem does not seem to offer a consistent plot. Furthermore, the abrupt change of scenes from country to city and apparent lack of clearly separated acts and incidents make it difficult to accept the Song as a drama.

In addition, as Gordis has pointed out, episodes which should have been acted out if this were a real drama are narrated instead, as in 2:8, 5:1 and 5:4. Moreover, while the climax of the play is supposedly in the section following 8:11, where we are supposed to believe that the young couple spurn the blandishments of the luxury-loving monarch and go off together after declaring their deep and abiding love for each other, it lacks a major ingredient of conflict.

Instead of having a powerfully dramatic confrontation between the young lovers and the lusty king, we discover from the use of the third person, "Solomon had a vineyard at Baal-Hamon" that the monarch is *not* present.

A novel modern solution to the problems posed by the Song was first proposed by the German Consul in Syria, J. G. Wetzstein, in 1893. Observing the

fascinating nuptial customs of Syrian peasants, Wetzstein discovered many interesting parallels to aspects of the Song.

Thus, he found that during the wedding celebrations the couple are addressed as "King" and "Queen". They sit on crude "thrones", sometimes fashioned from farm utensils. The bride and groom sing songs of praise or *WASFS* to each other, Some times the guests chant the *WASFS* to the wedding couple. Moreover, the bride often performs a sword dance similar to the one described in Song 7:1,2.

Utilizing these models, many scholars have concluded that the Song is a series of *Epithalamia* or wedding songs, combined with several other songs extolling the beauties of nature and the loveliness of the male and female physique. Hence, Robert Gordis sees the Song as an anthology of twenty-eight poems of these types, written by different authors over a period of several centuries.

## THE SONG OF UNITY

While dividing the Song into separate poems seems to solve many problems with the simplicity of Alexander's cutting of the Gordian knot, this theory has not won the support of some outstanding Bible scholars. Authorities as eminent as Professor H.H. Rowley, S.D. Goitein and most recently Michael V. Fox offer strong support for the unity of the Song based on the "stylistic uniformity" of the work, as well as the repetition of motifs, the phraseology and the "echo" technique, whereby the words of one lover duplicate or respond to the phrases of the other. Examples of this last technique are found in 2:15 and 2:16 and 2:1 and 2:2 (key words are repeated). Professor J. Feliks of Bar-Ilan University in His book, "The Song of Songs": Nature, Epic and Allegory (Jerusalem, 1974), also believes that the *Song of Songs* is a unified work composed by a single author (page 11). He maintains that the composer wove into the fabric of the Poem, "Ancient Folk Songs", which form an integral part of the visions and dreams of the lovers against a background of both realist and imaginary landscapes."

He sees the poem as the budding of love between a village maiden and a king. Their ardor keeps pace with the changes in the flora and fauna of Israel, in accord with the seasons.

At first, the women of the King's harem mock the naïveté and lack of sophistication of the maiden but she maintains, for the most part, that her love

will find its fruition. Sometimes, however, the king's frequent absences from her and their rare trysts sadden her; "only in her dreams does she find a release for her strong feelings and deep yearnings for her beloved" (page 12).

## DREAM THEORIES*

A brilliant explanation of the gaps or lack of continuity between parts of the Song was offered by the late Rabbi Solomon B. Freehof in 1948 who interpreted the entire Song as a series of dreams: *On my bed at night, I sought my beloved* (3:1). Similarly, we find in 5:2: *I sleep, but my heart wakes.* Since we do not need to find any logical connections between episodes in dreams, we are not obligated to connect the episodes in the Song in a logical fashion. Dreams must be understood as wish fulfillments on a symbolic level. Since the ancient regarded dreams as sacred, the Song must, in their eyes, describe the love between God and Israel. As one lover in a dream seeks a departed mate, Israel seeks God, who seems remote. However, just as the lovers find each other, so too will Israel be eternally reunited with God. "The approach of tradition," maintains Freehof, is hence, "essentially sound".

A New Jersey psychiatrist, Dr. Max N. Pusin, uses the Song as a method of teaching physicians and psychologists how to interpret dream symbols. Dr. Pusin sees a remarkable resemblance between two key dream accounts in the Song and some modern dreams recounted to him by his female patients.

In both dreams in the Song, namely in the third and fifth chapters, the dreaming woman searches anxiously for her beloved but is prevented from finding him by "The Keepers of the Walls".

In the first episode she manages to elude them and in a happy ending joins her beloved (Chapter 3). But in the more extensive vision in Chapter 5, she is caught by the "Keepers" who degrade her by beating her and stripping her of her mantle.

To Dr. Pusin this nightmare symbolizes the punishment a woman fears for satisfying forbidden sexual desires. The "Wall" must be regarded as a sign of chastity as in the playful dialogue in 8:8-10 of the Song. Ezekiel (16:37-39) notes that women guilty of sexual misbehavior were stripped of their clothing. Similarly, modern women who were prevented from joining their lovers, either by

parental objections or by their own conscience, realized their fears and hopes in dream fantasies.

### OTHER DREAM THEORIES

An interesting dream interpretation of the Song is given by Professor S.D. Goitein, formerly of the Hebrew University. He suggests that the visions depicted in the Song are the dream fulfillments of a nubile Hebrew maiden, who was taken into the court of Solomon because of her talent as a singer.

Since her father is never mentioned, her brothers serve as her guardians. For selfish reasons the brothers continue to exploit her and frown on her marriage, which would remove her from their jurisdiction. However, her masterful love songs, expressing her deepest yearning, so impress the king and her brothers that she is finally released and permitted to seek her true love.

### DREAM-BALLET

About ten years ago Professor Moshe Goshen-Gottstein, in a lecture at Yeshurun Synagogue in Jerusalem, suggested that the dreams in the Song could be choreographed. He felt that the writer of the Song must have been a talented composer of dances who perhaps utilized her own adolescent yearnings as a basis for a ballet performed by a young woman and her male lover, as well as a chorus, "The Daughters of Jerusalem."

A key episode in Chapter 7 of the Song describes a beautiful dancer and "The Two Camps" or two sections of the chorus. The dialogues, as in the Greek theatre, were probably chanted or sung.

A recent article in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* argues convincingly that there are close affinities between Egyptian love poetry (going back to the period between the thirteenth and eleventh centuries BCE) and the Song.

King Solomon married Pharaoh's daughter and hence had close ties with the Egyptian royal family. Members of his court may have included Egyptian entertainers who introduced their national art forms, just as they brought their pagan customs.

The Egyptian love songs were very likely accompanied by music and dancing. An ancient Egyptian tomb painting depicts a small orchestral chorus singing

about "The Four Winds", and also shows dancing girls. Mimetic dances also played a role in old Egyptian temple rituals.

The book of *Ecclesiastes* speaks of the "Singers and Songstresses" (2:8) of Solomon's court, as well as others (perhaps dancers) who "delighted" or entertained the court, and among these we may have had a talented Hebrew woman who harked back to her adolescent yearnings to fashion a great work of art which combined magnificent poetry, music and dance.

THE AUTHOR

As implied above, the author of the Song seems to be a woman. As Goitein has shown, the entire atmosphere of the work is feminine. The chorus consists of women, the heroine speaks always of her "mother's house", never about her father. Even in connection with Solomon, reference is made to his mother and not to his father David.

Furthermore, the proud declaration by the girl, *I am my beloved's and his desire is for me* (7:10) seems to be a feminist reaction to the statement in Genesis 3:16: *Your desire will be for husband and he shall master you.*

Clearly the woman in the Song takes greater initiative in seeking physical love than she does in other sections of the Bible. As Phyllis Trible puts it: "Here she actively seeks the man, desires him on her bed, and searches for him in the streets and squares openly, without secrecy or shame. When she finds her lover, she grabs and holds him".

The strongest support for female authorship of the Song is brought out by Dr. Pusin who is certain that no man, even a great artist, could know and present so vividly a woman's dreams.

Moreover, 85% of the lines in the Song are for or about women. The protagonist is female, and she is the pivotal character whose problems concern the reader. The main theme of the Song concerns romantic concerns of women: "Love versus marriages arranged by consideration of money (8:7) or by power of the king" (8:11-12).

DATE

On the basis of numerous Aramaisms and the Persian "loan word" פרדס (4:13) and the Greek "loan word" אפיריון (3:9), most scholars have assumed that the Song must have been compiled or edited as late as the third century BCE.

However, Gordis has demonstrated that "Apirion may derive from the Sanskrit *Paryanka*. Solomon imported from the east apes (quf) and peacocks (tuki). However, since both of these words have Indian derivations, the apes and peacocks probably came from that Asian sub-continent.

While Gordis maintains that only some sections of the Song go back to the Solomonic era, the present writer believes that the entire work was originally composed by a member of Solomon's court and dedicated to him. The Aramaism's and use of Iranian may simply indicate that the ancient poems were edited at a later period and hence reflected a late stage of the Hebrew language, when it was influenced to a greater extent than in the classical period by Aramaic and Persian. As previously shown, the extremely close parallels with Egyptian love poetry make it very likely that the great poem was composed in the Solomonic era. As the Song became increasingly popular, the language may have been "modernized".

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## APPENDIX

### A SCHEMATIC OUTLINE OF THE SONG AS DREAM

The maiden dreams that she is drawn by the king (lover) into his chambers, where he kisses her strongly and bestows upon her his love, which is *more delightful than wine.* (1:2). But the joyful interlude is jarred by growing fears that her brothers or guardians will reproach her for her daring and independent exploits. Moreover, she is afraid that her dark complexion mars her beauty.

Soon, however, the nightmare phase of her vision is dispelled by her rapturous return to the "king's" bed chamber, which is actually a bower in a forest of cedar and cypresses.

II

In a second dream, the maiden envisions herself being brought by her beloved into a banquet hall (or wine cellar), where he gazes at her with deep longing, and embraces her so passionately that she feels *faint with love* (2:5).

As she recounts this happy dream to her companions, the daughters of Jerusalem, she falls into a reverie and hears her lover's voice as he descends from the hills and peers through her window. She can hear his sweet voice, entreating her to partake of the joys of spring outdoors, the song of the turtledove and the fragrance of the blossoming vines and fig trees. He urges her to disregard the foxes, those who would hinder the consummation of their love.

III

While dreaming about her beloved, the maiden imagines that she actually arises from her couch and searches for her lover throughout the nearby town, even inquiring about his whereabout from the city watchman.

To her joy, she comes upon him and warmly embraces him. Then she brings him into her mother's house, *to the chambers of her who conceived her* (3:4), (perhaps expressing thereby a subconscious wish to bear her lover's child).

As she dreams of her approaching marriage, her lover is transformed into a king, carried on a palanquin, wearing the crown that his mother had presented to him.

IV

The lovers then exchange compliments, extolling each other's beauty with extravagant praise. As she had earlier declared his love *more delightful than wine,* (1:2), he repays her by proclaiming that his bride's love is *more delightful than wine* (4:10).

V

In a fairly long dream sequence, the maiden hears her beloved knocking on the door. He requests her to allow him to find shelter, as his *head is drenched with dew* and his *locks with the damp of the night* (8:2).

She however hesitates to open the door, offering the rather curious excuse that she cannot leave her bed, as she would then be compelled to don the robe that she

had already removed. Nor does she wish to soil her newly washed feet by stepping on the floor.

Soon, however, she overcomes these rather irrational fears and rises to open the door for her beloved. But to her intense disappointment, she discovers that he has mysteriously vanished!

Determined to find him, she leaves her room and desperately begins to search for him all through the town, and again she encounters the watchmen who patrol the village. However, instead of assisting her in her frenzied hunt, the watchmen strike and bruise the maiden and drive her away, after stripping her of her mantle.

Returning to her companions after her nightmare, she describes the deeply handsome body of her beloved to them.

VI

Her friends volunteer to assist her in her search for her lover. She politely rejects their offer, since somehow, perhaps intuitively, she knows where he is to be found. He is in the Garden of Love, picking lilies for her, his beloved one. She needs nobody to assist in achieving her love, as she triumphantly proclaims: *I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine* (6:3).

VII

In another vision, the maiden views herelf dancing before a host of admirers, who are stricken with her noble bearing and extraordinary loveliness.

She imagines that once again her lover is calling to her, urging her to join him in the fields to see *if the vine has flowered and its blossoms had opened* (7:13).

VIII

The maiden finally conjures up a vision of embracing her lover in public. Once again she dreams of bringing him to her mother's home, where he would drink of the wine of love as he caresses her.

She dearly yearns to be placed as a seal upon his heart, for her love is *as fierce as death, a blazing flame that even vast floods cannot quench* (8:6).

So powerful is her love that it overcomes the previous objection of her brothers, representing all those who try to frustrate her heart's deepest desire. Relenting at last, they permit her to depart with her lover who, she dreams, urges her to hasten and bound away with him, *swift as a gazelle... to the hills of spices* (8:14), to enjoy forever love's rich fragrance.

# FROM THE CITY OF DAVID TO JERUSALEM

BY LOUIS KATZOFF

*In honor of* יום ירושלים *on* כ"ח אייר; *adapted from an address on the development of biblical Jerusalem*

*Do not worship the Lord your God in any manner, except at the site that the Lord your God will choose* – אשר יבחר– *amidst all your tribes as His habitation, to establish His name there*(Deuteronomy 12:4–5).

*When you cross the Jordan and settle in the land, then you must bring your offerings to the site where the Lord your God will choose* – אשר יבחר – *to establish His name* (Deuteronomy 12:10–11).

*Take care not to bring your burnt offerings in any place you like, but only in the place which the Lord will choose* – אשר יבחר – *in one of your tribal territories* (Deuterononomy 12:13-14).

*You may not partake in your places of residence of the tithes of your new grain or wine or oil... These you must bring before the Lord your God in the place that He will choose* – אשר יבחר. (Deuteronomy 12:17–18).

Four times, in a single chapter, the Bible emphasizes the future choice of the site – אשר יבחר – which will become the central sanctuary, the exclusive location for all votive offerings.

As we read these verses, every one of us knows which place is adumbrated. Of course, it refers to the city of Jerusalem, where the Holy Temple will eventually be located.

If so, why not mention the holy city by name?

But, it might be said: the city of Jerusalem was not yet known in the days of Moses. This is not so. Jerusalem was a well established city, with a history of

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close to 1,000 years before Moses. Egyptian inscriptions, from the twentieth century B.C.E., called Execration Texts, illustrate how the Pharaoh sought to bring magical powers to bear on his enemies. Imprecations against various foes were inscribed on jars, which were then smashed, thus making the curses effective. Among the places noted in the texts, we find mention of the city of Jerusalem.

The Execration Texts correspond in time approximately to the age of the Patriarchs, or somewhat earlier. Thus, Jerusalem was well known in antiquity. Indeed, the name Jerusalem can be found in the Book of Genesis, as we read in the account of how Malkizedek, King of Shalem, i.e. Jerusalem, greets Abraham with bread and wine after the defeat of the kings who captured Lot, Abraham's nephew.

The question is again raised: Why isn't the city of Jerusalem mentioned by name by Moses in his farewell address to his people?

Apparently, Providence does not disclose His plans instantly. History must unfold the sequence in the fulfillment of the predictions in their due time.

And so, may I invite you, my readers, to see how the city of Jerusalem emerged as the place that God chose to put His name thereon.

First, I invite you to stand with me at a location in the heart of Jerusalem, at the Moshe Montefiore windmill at the bottom of Keren Hayesod Street. near the display of Montefiore's famous carriage — and we look east to the Valley of Hinnom below us. And here, I would like to refer to the verse from the Book of Joshua which deals with the boundary line between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin.

> *Then the boundary ascends into the Valley of Hinnom along the southern flank of the Jebusites — that is, Jerusalem. The boundary then runs up to the top of the hill which flanks the Valley of Hinnom on the west, at the northern end of the Valley of Refaim* (Joshua 15:8).

At our observation point we are looking down directly upon the geographical line dividing the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. We can well imagine that David, the ruler over the kingdom of Hebron, i.e., only over the tribe of Judah, might have stood at this location, and looking down at the valley below, might have had these thoughts:

"Right about where the two main valleys meet, i.e. the Kidron and the valley of Hinnom, the Jebusite city is located. At present, I am master of only one tribe, the tribe of Judah. If only I could seize this Jebusite city and establish it as my new capital, I might be accepted by my brother tribes as their king – of all the twelve tribes."

The Jebusite city is located exactly on the border between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. As a neutral spot it could be acknowledged as the capital for all the tribes.

And thus he did. He captured the city and made it his capital –and there he reigned for 33 years – seven years in חברון and 33 years in what we may now call: the City of David. To those who live in the United States, the idea of a national capital, Washington, D. C., belonging to no one state, is so logical and natural. This ingenious idea was tried out by King David 3,000 years ago and it worked.

Many of our readers, I am sure, have visited the City of David. Has it ever occured to you to compare the physical size of David's capital with the vast empire which David, the warrior, established and handed over to his son Solomon? The empire stretched from the Euphrates (in upper Syria) to El Arish, and perhaps deeper into the Sinai Peninsula. And yet, the City of David, all in all 40 dunams, or ten acres, was equal in territorial size to one long New York City block. If we take the Central Library of New York, from 40 to 42nd Streets, and from Fifth to Sixth Avenues – that was the size of the City of David!

Did the city ever grow to encompass more territory during the existence of the First Temple? Here we hit into an academic battle royal among the archeologists and Bible historians. We can divide these into two groups – the minimalists and the maximalists.The minimalists claimed that Jerusalem remained a small city, not expanding beyond the limits of the City of David. The maximalists claimed that the city expanded northward, to encompass what we know today as the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. On a recent walk in the Jewish Quarter, we went to see the newly discovered wall of Hezekiah. We walked along רחוב היהודים just above the Cardo, and turned into a side street, פלוגת הכותל, and there before us we saw under special illumination of bright amber lights, yes, we saw the seven meter wide wall, built by King Hezekiah to protect the northern side of the city. I recall how moved I was when I walked through the Cardo for

the first time. That same excitement seized me as I beheld this massive wall of 2,700 years ago, the northern limit of the city of Jerusalem.

Today the debate between the minimalists and the maximalists is over. Nachman Avigad, the archeologist, having discovered the seven meter wide Hezekiah wall, near רחוב היהודים, clearly proves that the city expanded quite beyond the original City of David, encompassing the Jewish Quarter, the Armenian Quarter and part of Mount Zion.

The most promising aspect of the founding of the capital city was the building of the Holy Temple just north of the City of David. However, though the Temple was a focal point for the Twelve Tribes during the reign of Solomon, and then later on for the two tribes, Benjamin and Judah, after the secession of the ten northern tribes, it did not represent the central institution in the life of the nation. The monarchy and the prophets occupied center stage for nearly all of the historical events during the entire period of the First Temple. Here and there, the בית מקדש loomed large in the temporal affairs of the day, but it did not have an all-absorbing impact upon the people of the land.

But it was altogether different in the period of the Second Temple. The centrality of the Temple took on a momentous turning point after the Judean exiles returned from the Babylonian captivity. Everything revolved around the only institution available to the people, the בית המקדש. And, as time progressed, the importance of the Temple became imbedded in the consciousnees of the entire community — its cultic rituals, the pilgrim festivals which brought into Jerusalem great throngs of people from all parts of the country, the special ceremonies of the first fruits (ביכורים), the newer emphasis on ritual purity and on tithes — especially מעשר שני. Because of this, and more, Jerusalem and the בית המקדש took on an all embracing expression for the entire Jewish people, not only in Eretz Yisrael, but also for the Mediterranean diaspora.

After the destruction of the Second Temple, Jerusalem was not forgotten in the hearts of the ensuing generation, as it was fixed on the lips of every worshipper ותחזינה עינינו בשובך לציון ברחמים . The Heavenly Jerusalem – ירושלים של מעלה – took the place of the real Jerusalem – ירושלים של מטה – for 1,900 years, until our present return to this city, bringing us back to the real Jerusalem והיה המקום אשר יבחר ה' אלהיכם בו – לשכנו שמו שם — שמה תביאו את כל אשר אנוכי מצוה אתכם (Deuteronomy 12:11).

# JERUSALEM IN RABBINIC LITERATURE

## BY HYMAN ROUTTENBERG

### PART II

In the eyes of our Sages there was something very special and unique about the city of Jerusalem. Thus, for example, when the Almighty was looking for an appropriate place for the Temple, He considered all cities and found no city wherein the Temple might be built, other than Jerusalem.[1] מדד הקב"ה את כל העיירות ולא מצא עיר שייבנה בה בית מקדש אלא ירושלים (ויקרא רבה י"ג, ב)

This is because Jerusalem had unique qualities of holiness. Not only is it holier than other cities in the world, but its holiness exceeds that of the rest of Eretz Yisrael.[2] What makes it so holy is the fact that God chose it for His presence to reside therein forever. And in Jerusalem there is one particular place which is the most sacred site and that is the Western Wall. In time of prayer, therefore, one should face Jerusalem. One might think, say the Sages, that a man may pray turning in any direction he wishes; therefore the text states: 'Toward Jerusalem' (Daniel 6:11).[3] יכול ויתפלל אדם לכל רוח שירצה? ת"ל "נגד ירושלים" (ברכות ל"א)

Rabbi Eleazar said: The Divine Presence never departed from the Temple, as it is written: *For now I have chosen and sanctified this house so that My name shall be there forever and My eyes and My heart will be there all the days* (II Chronicles 7:16). Even when the Temple is destroyed, it remains in its sanctity. Even when it is destroyed, God does not leave it. Rav Aha said: The Divine Presence will never leave the Western Wall, as it is written: *"Behold, He (God) stands behind our wall"* (Song of Songs 2:9).[4] הנה זה עומד אחר כותלנו זה כותל מערבי של בית המקדש שאינו חרב לעולם, למה? שהשכינה במערב (במדבר רבה י"א, ב).

When Rabbi Dimi came from Palestine, he said: The Shechina rested on Israel

1. Lev. Rabbah 13, 2.
2. Kelim 1,8.
3. Berakoth 31a.
4. Num. Rabbah 11, 2.

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in four places: in Shiloh, in Nob and Gibeon and in the Eternal House (The Temple in Jerusalem).[5]

In Rabbinic literature the city of Jerusalem has taken on an even greater spiritual dimension than what it had in the days of the Bible. According to the Sages, in addition to an earthly Jerusalem, there was also a heavenly Jerusalem, and said R. Johanan: The Holy One blessed be He said, "I will not enter the heavenly Jerusalem until I can enter the earthly Jerusalem."[6] אמר ר' יוחנן: אמר הקב"ה לא אבוא בירושלים של מעלה עד שאבוא לירושלים של מטה (תענית ה', ע"א).

In an interesting passage the Talmud relates how Joshua, son of Gamla. who served as high priest in the days of the Second Commonwealth, saved the Torah from being forgotten in Israel. In those days a child whose father was living, was taught Torah by his father. If his father was not living, he grew up without any Torah instruction. When Joshua ben Gamla saw that many children were growing up without instruction in Torah, he made a 'Takanah' (ordinance) that teachers of children should be appointed in Jerusalem. By what verse did he guide himself, the Sages asked, and they replied, by the verse: *For from Zion shall the Torah go forth* (Isa. 2:3).[7] התקינו שיהיו מושיבין מלמדי תינוקות בירושלים מאי דרוש: 'כי מציון תצא תורה' (בבא בתרא כ"א, ע"א).

Perhaps as a result of ben Gamla's 'Takanah,' Jerusalem became a great center of learning in the days of the Second Commonwealth. Thus we are told in the Talmud that R. Phinehas stated on the authority of R. Oshaia that there were three hundred and ninety-four courts of law — each consisting of twenty-three judges — in Jerusalem, and an equal number of synagogus, of Houses of Study and of schools.[8] שלוש מאות ותשעים וארבעה בתי דינין היו בירושלים. כנגדן בתי כנסיות וכנגדן בתי מדרשות וכנגדן בתי סופרים (כתובות ק"ה, ע"א).

The Sages of Israel loved the city of Jerusalem and believed that it was the most beautiful city in the world. "Ten 'Kabs' of beauty descended to the world; nine were taken by Jerusalem."[9] עשרה קבים יופי ירדו לעולם תשעה נטלה ירושלים ואחד כל העולם כולו (קידושין מ"ט, ע"ב).

R. Isaac the Smith said: The Holy One, blessed be He, cast a stone into the ocean from which the world then was founded... but the Sages said: *Out of Zion, the perfection of world* (Ps. 50:2). That means from Zion was the beauty of the

5. Zebahim 118.b
6. Ta'anith 5a.
7. Baba Bathra 21a.
8. Kethubot 105a.
9. Kiddushim 49b.

world perfected.[10] There is no beauty like the beauty of Jerusalem.[11] וחכמים אומרים: מציון נברא, שנאמר: מזמור לאסף אל אלהים ה' (תהלים נ',א'). ואומר: מציון מכלל יופי (שם). ממנו מוכלל יפיו של עולם (יומא נ"ד, ע"ב). ואין לך יופי כיופי של ירושלים (אבות דרבי נתן כ"ח, א').

The Sages extolled Jerusalem as the city of peace. Beloved is peace, for God has given it to Zion, as it is said, *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem* (Ps. 122:6). Beloved is peace, for God comforts Jerusalem only with the promise of peace. Great is peace, for God announceth to Jerusalem that they (Israel) will be redeemed only through peace, as it is said: *That announceth peace* etc.[12] חביב הוא השלום שנתנו הקב"ה לציון שנאמר: שאלו שלום ירושלים (תהלים קכ"ב, ו'). חביב הוא השלום שאין הקב"ה מנחם את ירושלים אלא בשלום, שנאמר: הנני נוטה אליה כנהר שלום (ישעיהו ס"ו, י"ב). גדול השלום שאין הקב"ה מבשר את ירושלים שיהיו נגאלים אלא בשלום שנאמר: מבשר, משמיע שלום (ישעיה ס"ו, י"ב) [דברים רבה, ח' ט"ו].

The Sages of Israel speak of the qualities of Jerusalem in the most glowing terms. He who has not seen Jerusalem in her splendor, has never seen a desirable city in his life.[13] מי שלא ראה ירושלים בתפארתה לא ראה כרך נחמד מעולם (סוכה נ"א)

According to the Sages, any one who does work on the ninth of Ab and does not mourn for Jerusalem will not share in her joy, as it is said: *Rejoice ye with Jerusalem and be glad with her, all ye that love her; rejoice for joy with her, all ye that mourn for her* (Isa. 66:10).[14] כל העושה מלאכה בתשעה באב ואינו מתאבל על ירושלים אינו רואה בשמחה (תענית ל', ע"ב).

Said R. Helbo: One who sees the cities of Judah in their state of ruin, recites the verse: *Thy holy cities are become wilderness* (Isa. 64:9) and rends his garment On seeing Jerusalem in its state of ruin, one recites: *Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is burned with fire and all our pleasant things are laid waste* (ibid. 10), and rends his garment. He first makes a rent for the Holy Tenple and then enlarges the rent for Jerusalem...[15] Since they were so virtuous, why were they punished? He replied: Because they did not mourn for Jerusalem, as it is written: *"Rejoice ye with Jerusalem and be glad for her, all ye that love her, rejoice for joy with her all ye that mourn over her"* (Isa.

10. Yoma 54b.
11. Aboth de R. Nathan 28, I.
12. Deut. rabbah 5, 15.
13. Sukkah 51b.
14. Ta'anith 30b.
15. Moed Katan 26a.

ומאחר דהוו צדיקים כולו האי מאי טעמא אינעוש? א"ל משום דלא איאביל[16] (66:10). על ירושלים דכתיב: שמחו את ירושלים וגילו בה כל אוהביה שישו אתה משוש כל המתאבלים עליה (ישעיהו ס"ו, י') [גיטין, נ"ז, ע"א].

Our Rabbis taught: If one is standing outside Palestine, he should turn mentally towards Eretz Yisrael, as it says: *And pray unto Thee towards their Lord* (I Kings 8:48). If he stands in Eretz Yisrael, he should turn mentally towards Jerusalem, as it says: *And they pray unto the Lord toward the City which Thou hast chosen* (Ibid. 44).[17] היה עומד בארץ ישראל וכיון את ליבו כנגד ירושלים, שנאמר: והתפללו אל ה' דרך העיר אשר בחרתי (מלכים א' ח', מ"ד)[ברכות ל'].

16. Gittin 57a.
17. Berakoth 30a.

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# JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

## VENGEANCE OR RECONCILIATION?

BY DAVID CHINITZ

The climax of the drama between Joseph and his brothers raises the question: Why did Joseph subject his brothers to this painful experience? Why does he engineer the bringing of Benjamin to Egypt, the accusation of Benjamin as a thief, and the necessity for the brothers to come to his defense?

What seems on the surface to be the working of vengeance, is in reality an effort to test the extent of penitence on the part of the brothers. For according to Maimonides (Ch. 2 of Hilchot Teshuva), true repentance can only be measured if the repentant sinner finds himself in the same circumstances in which he had found himself at the time of the commission of the sin. If he, this time, resists temptation and does not sin, then we know his penitence is complete.

At the moment of climax in the story, the brothers find themselves once more in the situation in which a son of Rachel is in danger of being sold into slavery. Judah, who had years earlier suggested the selling of Joseph to the Ishmaelites, proves his penitence and his return to the concept of brotherly love when he makes it clear that he is not going to permit harm to come to Benjamin.

It is not surprising that the Jewish people have contributed so greatly to the fields of psychology and drama, these two fields being closely related. The source for this prolific productivity can be traced to the stories in Genesis concerning the Patriarchs. The speech delivered by Judah to Joseph is one prominent example of this. At the moment of climax in the text, we may discern even in the Cantillation notes an intimation of what is transpiring.

ויגש אליו יהודה —And Judah approached him: ויגש אליו are marked with the notes: קדמא ואזלא; Judah is marked with a רביעי . We can translate this freely as: "the fourth son took the initiative and acted." He then proceeds to deliver the longest oration in the book of Genesis.

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Nechama Leibovitz in her commentary on Genesis cites material from Midrash Tanchuma which converts the speech of Judah into a dialogue between Judah and Joseph, in sharp tones:

*My lord asked your servants: Do you have a father or a brother*. Judah is here accusing Joseph of plotting against the brothers right at the start. Many came from all lands to purchase food in Egypt. Did you ask any of them such questions? Have we then come to obtain your daughter, or do you have plans to marry our sister? Nevertheless we replied to your questions and did not conceal anything from you!

Joseph responds: Judah, are you the spokesman for your brothers? I see in my cup of divination that there are greater than you among them. To which Judah replies: I am the one who took the responsibility for Benjamin upon myself.

Says Joseph: why is it that you did not take responsibility for your brother when they sold him to the Ishmalites for twenty shekels? Then you brought pain to your elderly father by telling him that Joseph has been "torn by an animal." Your brother had not sinned. But now, you will have to tell your father that the one who stole my cup has to be jailed – "the rope follows the bucket."

The Midrash continues to describe the stormy and bitter debate between Joseph and Judah, in terms that are far from the simple meaning of the Judah's speech as it appears in the text. What is the justification for this approach? Nechamah Leibovitz suggests that during Judah's speech he was really debating with himself. The voice of Joseph within him is representing his own conscience. In the process of resisting the judgement of Joseph upon Benjamin, Judah realizes the injustice of his own behaviour in the past. Therefore, his repentance reaches its fullest dimension in that he is now ready to sacrifice himself in order to save Benjamin.

When Joseph sees this, he cannot control his feelings and he reveals himself to his brothers. His brothers are frightened of him and cannot speak to him. *His brothers could not respond to him for they were overwhelmed by him.* The Hebrew word "Laanot" (לענות) here could be taken in a double sense: To respond or to oppress. His brothers could not now oppress him the way they did when they had sold him into slavery. This time, in place of the former hatred, there was fear.

Only when Joseph makes it plain that he was not interested in vengeance are the brothers prepared to speak to him. Indeed, as indicated above, Judah's speech may not have been directed to Joseph as much as it constituted an innner dialogue with himself, as part of the process of repentance.

Two prerequisites for the repentance of the brothers were: their recognition of their sin, and their speaking with Joseph.

The matter of recognition (הכר) occurs over and over again in the stories about the Patriarchs. *He did not recognize him* (ולא הכירו) *because his arms were as hairy as those of his brother Esau, and he blessed him.* Issac did not recognize Jacob.

*In the morning, behold it was Leah.* Jacob did not recognize his wife.

*Do recognize* (הכר נא), *is it the shirt of your son or not?* He recognized it and said: *It is the shirt of my son — an evil animal has eaten him, Joseph has been devoured.* Jacob recognized the shirt, but at least according to the simple text, he did not recognize the reality of the brothers' act.

*Recognize (הכר נא) and tell to whom do this seal and these fringes and this staff belong?* (Gen. 38:25). Judah recognizes Tamar, but only after he had not recognized her.

*Joseph recognized* (ויכרם) *his brothers but they did not* (לא הכרהו) *recognize him.*

The subject of speech, too, when to speak and when not to speak, holds an important place in the patriarchal tales. *And he said, Let not my Lord be wroth, let me speak but this time... and the Lord left after He was finished speaking to Abraham (Gen. 18:32).* Abraham knew when to speak, and when to cease speaking.

*They could not speak to him peacefully* (Gen. 37:4). Reb Aharon Langerman has explained that the brothers exemplified their total hatred, in that they were incapable of saying hello to their brother, or hold an ordinary conversation with him.

*The man, the master of the land, spoke to us harshly* (Gen. 42:30). Joseph possessed the art of correct speech. *Afterwards, the brothers spoke to him* (Gen. 45:15). With the turnabout from this sin of not being able to speak civilly to Joseph, the brothers complete the process of repentance, by now speaking to him.

As has been pointed out very often by others, the Torah does not hesitate to portray the Patriarchs together will all their faults as well as virtues, with their perfections on the one hand and their weaknesses and conflicts on the other. But the Torah also presents the process of repentance and the settlements of conflicts.

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## IN THE FORTHCOMING SUMMER ISSUE

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# THE COCK AND THE HEN IN BIBLE AND MIDRASH

BY S.P. TOPEROFF

The cock is known by one of three names – 'sekhvi', (שכוי) 'gever' (גבר) and 'tarnegol' (תרנגול).

'Sekhvi': This word is mentioned once in Tanakh: *Who has put wisdom in the inward parts?* or *Who has given understanding to the sekhvi?* (Job 38:36).

Rashi distinctly states that 'sekhvi' is a 'tarnegol', a cock. Some translate the word as mind or heart, but tradition seems to favour 'cock'.

We are familiar with the word 'sekhvi' because a special blessing has been alloted to it in the early morning blessings in our prayer book. Indeed it heads the list of benedictions when we thank God for giving the 'sekhvi' understanding to distinguish between day and night. The time of day and night alters with the different continents, but the Almighty has implanted in the cock the instinct to crow at dawn wherever he may be. It is worth noting that in the days of the temple the service began with the cleansing of the altar at cock-crow (Yoma 20b). Today prayer is substituted for sacrifice and altar, and it is a salutary thought that we commence our prayers with the meaningful blessing which symbolises the cleansing of our mind and heart.

Some suggest that the inclusion of the blessing in the liturgy is due to Persian influence but Israel Abrahams, a modern scholar, refutes this and states that the lesson underlined here is the regular recurrence of daily phenomena and life. On awaking, the worshipper expresses his sense of the order of nature and to the marvellous regularity of her operations. The Talmud translates the verse in Job as follows: "Who has put in the inward parts (of man) or who has given understanding to the cock" (Rosh Hashannah 26a). Thus both the intelligence of

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man and the instinct of the whole animal world are derived from the same divine source (Companion to the Prayer Book, p. XVI).

In a striking passage of the Zohar we learn that the cock crows at midnight and early morning. In poetic imagery the Zohar depicts for us the heavenly scene at midnight when the divine flame strikes against the wings of the cock who then crows and God enters the Garden of Eden and has joyous communion with souls of the righteous. Again at daybreak when the sun appears, Israel takes up the song below in unison with the sun above. R. Eleazar said: "Were mankind not so obtuse and insensitive, they would be thrilled to ecstasy by the exquisite melodiousness of the orb of the sun when he journeys forth singing praises to God (Vayakhel 196a p. 158 of English translation by M. Simon).

The above is a curtailed version of the original and calls for clarification. The Zohar reminds us indirectly that it is proper to recite at midnight Tikun Hatzot, the anthology of prayer and study reserved for the pious. More pertinent to our subject is the reference to the break of dawn and the appearance of the sun. Then in the stillness of the morning when the air is pure and clean and the wheels of industry have not yet commenced to move, the crow of the cock arouses us from our slumber and calls us to prayer. In our material world we are apt to use mechanical gadgets for many of our needs and requirements. Judaism however reminds us very forcibly that the day should begin not with the artificial sound of the alarm clock which is made with the hands of man, but with the crow of the cock, the heavenly bell, the handiwork of God. The Torah often reminds us that the day should be initiated with a spiritual exercise. The first action leading to the momentous Akedah, the binding of Isaac, was the early rising of Abraham, probably at dawn: *And Abraham rose early in the morning* (Genesis 22:3). The early morning is reserved for prayer as the Psalmist records: *O God, in the morning shalt Thou hear my voice; in the morning will I order my prayer to Thee and will look forward* (5:4). Indeed in ancient times the Vatikim (very pious people) read the Shema with the rising of the sun (which coincided with the cock-crow) (Berakhot 9b, 25a) and we have in our midst today pious individuals who follow this practice.

In addition to the lessons adduced from the crow of the cock, the Talmud underlines a most vital aspect of the life of the cock, who is loyal, faithful and chivalrous to his mate. In the animal world every species fends for himself and

searches for food but the cock provides for his wives. Moreover in the words of the Rabbis the cock does not force his attention on the hen but coaxes her. How does he coax her? He says to her: I will buy you a cloak that will reach to your feet. After the event he tells her: may the cat tear off my crest if I have any money and do not buy you one (Eruvin 100b).

This detailed portrayal of the relationship of the cock and his wives is very illuminating and it contains a timely lesson for mankind.

This leads us to the second name by which the cock is known:'Gever'. This word is found in the Mishnaic expression 'Keriat hagever', the crowing of the cock (Yoma 20b). Here the cock bears the mane of 'man' and it has been suggested that the family life of the cock almost resembles that of mankind, hence the name 'gever' which incidentally is connected with gevurah, strength, might. Indeed the crow of the cock is a unique and mighty force in the animal world. As we see from a Talmudic statement: If a cock stretches its head into the cavity of a glass vessel he can break it by mean of his crowing (Kiddushin 24b). It should also be noted that the word 'gever' in Isaiah 22:14 is compared by Rashi to a cock.

Tarnegol is the third name by which the cock is known: it is an Aramaic word and is widely used in the Talmud. The derivation of the word is uncertain but the Rabbis give it a fanciful interpretation when they observe that he who sees a tarnegool in a dream may hope for a male child; he who sees a hen in a dream may hope for a beautiful rearing of his children (Berachot 57a).

Tarnegol is also traced to the Hebrew Nergal found in II Kings (17:30) and which is a Babylonian deity. Thus the Rabbis interpret the words: *And the men of Babylon made Succoth-Benoth,* the image of a fowl: *And the men of Cuth made Nergal,* that is a cock (Sanhedrin 63b). In this connection it is apt to mention the rule which the Rabbis formulated that it is forbidden to sell a white cock because this was a recognised offering of the poor to idols. However, if the cock has its spur clipped it may be sold because a defective animal is not sacrificed to an idol (Avodah Zara 14a).

Above we have referred to the favorable characteristics of the cock, we must therefore point to some of the uncomplimentary remarks noted by the Rabbis. Thus we learn that a certain cock killed a child by picking at its scalp and the cock was stoned (Eduyot 6:1). We are also informed that the cocks of Bet Bukya

(Upper Galilee) were fierce and would not allow the intrusion of a stranger among them (Yevamot 84a). Again the Rabbis testify that among the birds the cock is distinguished by its fierceness (Bezah 25b).

This fierceness of the cock was probably responsible for the introduction of cock-fighting, a sport indulged in by some people but forbidden in Jewish life.

Incidentally, the fighting of a bird called 'zarzir-motnayim' (Proverbs 30:31) is mentioned in Yalkut Shimoni (Proverbs 963). This bird is usually translated as 'greyhound' but the Targum and Septuagint render it as 'cock'.

In the Middle Ages the cock for a male and a hen for the female were used in Kapparah (atonement), a rite which took place before Yom Kippur. Today we use money in the practice of this custom.

Finally it is worth noting that tarnegola is a name of a place or district. Thus we have Fort Tarnegola and Tarnegola of Caesarea.

Hen and chicken: Tarnegolet (Aramaic Tarnegolta) is the usual name for a hen. However, the Talmud also mentions Gabrit, a denominative of 'gever' (Shabbat 67b) and Panya a cackling hen (Beza 7a). The hen (chicken) is not specifically mentioned in Tanakh but, as we have noted above, the Rabbis designate 'Succoth-Benoth' in II Kings 17:30 as hens with chicks. Shoshan informs us that the engraving of hens is found on ancient Babylonian pillars. He also adds that Caesar found chickens in Britain in the middle of the last century before the common era (Animals in Jewish Literature p. 83).

In another Biblical reference the expression 'barburim avusim' (I Kings 5:3) is translated as fattened fowl or chickens. Both Talmud and Rashi explain this term to mean chickens or birds fattened by force (Bava Metzia, 86b).

It should be noted that among domestic birds chicken and geese are the most common and are mentioned often in the Talmud. Thus we learn that chickens and geese may be caught on a festival day because it is not considered 'capture' and so not prohibited whereas other birds are forbidden (Beza 24a). Chickens were often reared because of their food value and one Rabbi Amemar considered it to be the finest bird (Shabbat 19b). The popularity of the chicken can be gauged by the fact that the egg in the Talmud always refers to the egg of the hen (Shabbat 80b, Beza 26b and 7a).

The perennial question as to which came first, the chicken or the egg, was simply solved by the Talmudic statement that all works of creation were brought

into being in full grown stature, in complete understanding and in their designated shape and form (Rosh Hashanah 11a).

It is recorded that R. Simeon Ben Halafta who was a keen observer of animal life experimented not only on ants but also on hens. For instance he cured a hen which suffered from a dislocated hip-bone by attaching a reed to it; on another occasion he experimented with a hen that had lost its feathers and new feathers grew (Hullin 57b and Leviticus Rabbah 22).

A delightful story is told in the Midrash in which we learn how an invited guest who joined a family meal was asked to carve a chicken and apportion it to the members of the family which included, apart from the host and hostess, two sons and two daughters. He gave the head of the chicken to the host who was the head of the family, the entrails to the hostess because children issue from the womb, the two thighs to the two sons who are the pillars of the home, two wings to the two daughters who in the future will fly away and go to their husbands, and the guest took for himself the body shaped like a boat as he came, and will leave, in a boat. This pleased the host who tested the guest and found him not wanting (Lamentations Rabbah 1:4).

An interesting episode about kindness to animals is recounted by R. Isaac Luria (1534-1572). After having enjoyed the hospitality of his host, he asked if he could repay in some way. The host pleaded that he was childless and prayed for an offspring. R. Luria then intimated that this was due to his cruelty to animals. It appeared that the wife of his host had inadvertantly removed a ladder leading to a cistern and this deprived the chickens of water. When this was rectified, the child arrived in due course (Shechter Studies, 2nd Series p. 175).

The Besht said: a farmer held an egg in his hand and mused, I shall place this egg under a hen, I shall raise up chickens and shall hatch other chickens, I will sell them and purchase a cow and ... While planning in his imagination, he squeezed the egg and it broke in his fingers. In the same manner, said the Besht, some people are satisfied with the holiness and knowledge they have attained and constantly think they are superior to others. They do not perceive that by doing this they lose even the little they have attained.

# BOOK REVIEW

BY SOL LIPZIN

*THE HEBREW BIBLE AND ITS MODERN INTERPRETERS*, edited by D.A. Knight and G.M. Tucker. Philadelphia, Fortress Press, 1985. pp. 516.

The book surveys the contributions of scholars to the expansion of our knowledge of the Bible since the Second World War, However, this expansion has brought in its wake new problems and new controversies.

A generation ago, for example, the hypotheses of William F. Albright in the United States and of Albrecht Alt and Martin Noth on the European continent regarding the Patriarchal Era and the beginning of Israel's history were widely accepted. Since the mid–century, these hypotheses have been subjected to increasing challenges and sceptical appraisals. By now, opinions range from a mild questioning of the historicity of the Patriarchal narrative to an aggressive judgment of them as pious fiiction. Even the dating of the first Patriarch ranges over a millennium, from 2800 B.C.E. to 1800 B.C.E. Perhaps the continuing publication of the archeological discoveries of Mari, Nuzi, Ebla and throughout the countries of the Fertile Grescent will cast clearer light on many mysteries of the Patriarchal period. But meanwhile the biblical text is still our principal source.

As for the Israelite invasion and occupation of the land of Canaan, Albright's conclusion that the account in *Joshua* is substantially correct has been undermined by two newer but antithetical theories, which in turn are not favored by the most recent interpreters. One theory maintained that there was no sudden incursion of the Twelve Tribes but rather a gradual, peaceful infiiltration by pastoral clans from the fringe of the desert into the thinly populated territory west of the Jordan. The other held that Israel came into being as a result of an internal revolt of the oppressed Canaanite peasants against their feudal overlords, a sociopolitical upheaval and retribalization of the indigenous population with the addition of escapees from Egypt and of pastoral desert nomads.

William G. Dever, who offers a detailed survey of archeological discoveries in the biblical area since 1945, and J.M. Miller, who evaluates the present trends in studying Israelite history from its origin, agree that further research is necessary before new generalizations are projected. J.M. Roberts welcomes the growing

tendency to place biblical events within the wider background of the ancient Near Eastern environment, but concludes that the complexities in this broader field have reached such dimensions that no one scholar can any longer master it entirely. The present generation of Israeli scholars is at the forefront of Ugaritic studies but is severely handicapped in assessing the Ebla finds in hostile Syria.

Rolf Knierim points to the new directions in biblical studies which anthropology, sociology and linguistics have sparked.

F.D. Miller notes that, immediately after the Second World War, there followed a decline of interest in the historic development of the Israelite religion. This contrasted with the prominence aroused in preceding decades by the so-called Pan-Babylonian School and by the disciples of Julius Wellhausen. Yekheskel Kaufmann and G.E. Wright led the attack upon the Wellhausen approach to the Israelite religion. They stressed the uniqueness of Israel's monotheism in the midst of the pagan polytheism of all their neighbors. Since the 1960's, however, renewed attention has been focused on the history of the biblical faith, especially by Jewish scholars. Cyrus Gordon, H.L. Ginsberg and Umberto Cassuto stressed both similarities and differences between biblical and Canaanite religious practices. Some researchers point out that beneath the official Israelite cult there survived many layers of popular beliefs that reflected great antiquity.

Surveys of numerous studies on individual biblical books and genres by P.R. Ackroyd, J.L. Crenshaw, E.S. Gerstenberger, Susan Niditch, P.D. Hanson and the two editors call attention to many unresolved issues that still await satisfactory answers. To give but a single example: the origin of prophecy and its early history have long been subjects for dispute. On the one hand, no writings of the early Hebrew prophets have been preserved. On the other hand, Mari texts, which continue to be published, deal with prophets and prophetic discourse of a pre–Israelite period. Were Israel's early seers following an established Near Eastern tradition or were they unaffected by the pagan practitioners of prophecy?

The concluding chapter by Walter Harrelson deals with the relationship of the Bible to contemporary culture. Scholarship mirrored the influence of the Holocaust and the establishment of the Jewish State, the impetus toward ecumenism, the effect of the Qumran discoveries, the issues of war and peace, of

economic exploitation, and of women's rights.

Harrelson lists the ironies in the Bible's present impact. The sacred text is used to buttress the struggle for the equality of men and women but also to give underpinning to a male-dominated society. It is used both to further individual freedom of thought but also as an instrument for enforcing conformity of thought, both to show God's interest in the poor and the oppressed but also to support systems of economic life that resist the redistribution of the earth's resources to benefit the underprivileged. Apparently, every breakthrough toward human liberation has been both affirmed and denounced on the basis of appeals to biblical authority. Nevertheless, Harrelson lists values in the Bible upon which, in his opinion, a consensus can be reached by scholars, but these are general values. When it comes down to specifics, disagreement is bound to reemerge.

The book is most valuable as a summary of the post-war achievements, the present issues that arouse controversy, and the desiderata for further biblical research. It is a centennial publication of the Society of Biblical Literature, most of whose members are American and Protestant. Despite its ardent striving for objectivity, it overemphasizes the contributions of Protestant scholars and underemphasizes those of Catholic and Jewish scholars.

# BIBLE TRIVIA

## BY CHAIM ABRAMOWITZ

*"Trivia", as a modern word, and as the name of the popular Trivia games now on the market, does not mean trivial, non-consequential, unimportant, as defined in the older dictionaries. By Bible Trivia we mean the same as* פרפראות לחכמה, *the periphery of wisdom in reference to Bible study.*

The tetragrammaton is the subject of the most common circumlocution in the Bible. To avoid pronouncing the four letter name of God – the Hebrew eqivalent of Y–H–V–H as it is written, we vocalize it as if the letters were אדני and read it accordingly. In addition to the above tradition, we know of other ineffable names: of twelve, of forty-two, and seventy-two letters each. The latter was the one the Cohen Gadol pronounced when he prayed for the welfare of all Israel in the Holy of Holies in the Temple on Yom Kippur. That pronunciation is now forgotten, but it is not surprising that the Kabbalists saw an aspect of divinity in that number, and found God's name entwined in the three consecutive sentences of seventy-two letters, each in the Book of Exodus.

Each of the verses 19, 20, 21, in Exodus 14 consists of seventy-two letters. By combining one letter from each of the three verses in a particular order, we have seventy-two three-letter names of God. The two that concern us is the first of verse 19 (ו); the last of verse 20 (the first from the end) (ה); and the first of verse 21 (ו) = והו; and the seventeenth (the beginning of the second half) of verse 19, (א); the seventeenth from the end of verse 20 (נ); and the seventeenth from the beginning of verse 21 (י). This gives us the names: והו and אני.

Here we can see how the mystical association of letters and numbers is not only a matter for the Kabbalists, but also affects our prayers. During the Hoshannot prayers for Succoth the Cantor begins with the words אנא ה' הושיעה נא – Help us O Lord – and the congregation was supposed to respond with the same words at the end of the procession around the בימה. However, to avoid pronouncing God's name, we say אני והו instead of אנא ה' since, incidentally, the two are numerically equal (Rashi on Succah 45a).

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# WORDS OF TORAH

*Samson Raphael Hirsch's commentary on the Torah (Pentateuch),* translated into English by his grandson Isaac Levy, selected and arranged by *J. Halpern.*

*1. On Genesis 1:1* The word ראשית is used of Israel (Jeremiah 2:3), of Moses (Deuteronomy 33:21), Halla (Numbers 15:20), Maaser (tithes) (Deuteronomy 18:4), and Bikkurim (First fruits) (Exodus 23:19 and Deuteronomy 26:10). This explains the saying of our Sages: בזכות ישראל, בזכות משה, בזכות חלה, מעשר ובכורים נברא העולם For the merit of Israel, Moses, Halla, Maaser and Bikkurim was the world created; הקב"ה היה מביט בתורה ובורא העולם God looked into the Torah and created the world. Israel and Moses are the first fruits of God's harvest; Halla, tithes and first fruits acknowledge return-gifts of the world to its Giver. The Torah is the first building-stone for the purpose which God had in creating the world.

*2. On Genesis 1:5:* Apart from day and night, the earth, the sea, and heaven, we do not find the Creator "calling" anything by name – even Man, of whom it does not say: He formed a creature and called it Adam. Where God does call something by a name, it always expresses a mission, light for the tasks of the day and darkness for the tasks of the night.

*3. On Genesis 1:27:* The whole Torah rests primarily on making the body holy. Keeping the body holy is the foundation of all ennoblement of the spirit, and the preparatory condition for all spiritual greatness. God created Man in a form worthy of Himself.

*. On Genesis 2:16:* And God gave the commandment to man: From every tree of the garden you may indeed eat. This explains the Baraita in Sanhedrin 56b, showing how R. Johanan's dictum bases the 7 Noachide laws on this verse: 1) Civil law, 2) blasphemy, 3) idolatry, 4) bloodshed, 5) immorality, 6) robbery, and 7) limb torn from a living animal.

The intention is not to suggest that this verse actually teaches that these laws are obligatory for the sons of Noah. But the Rabbis had a tradition that these 7 commandments were customary among all the peoples of the world, and the Sages wisely associated them with our verse in the Torah in order to remember them better.

With this probibition the education of Man for his moral, high, godly calling begins.

# עשה תורתך קבע

## TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

**February-March 1986** | **אדר א תשמ"ו**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| M | II Samuel 16 | | 10 | א |
| T | II Samuel 17 | שמואל ב י"ז | 11 | ב |
| W | II Samuel 18 | שמואל ב י"ח | 12 | ג |
| Th | II Samuel 19 | שמואל ב י"ט | 13 | ד |
| F | Exodus 25-27:19 | תרומה | 14 | ה |
| שבת | Haftarah: I Kings 5:26-6:13 | הפטרה: מלכים א ה', כו'-ו', יג | 15 | ו |
| S | II Samuel 20 | שמואל ב כ' | 16 | ז |
| M | II Samuel 21 | שמואל ב כ"א | 17 | ח |
| T | II Samuel 22 | שמואל ב כ"ב | 18 | ט |
| W | II Samuel 23 | שמואל ב כ"ג | 19 | י |
| Th | II Samuel 24 | שמואל ב כ"ד | 20 | יא |
| F | Exodus 27:20-30:10 | תצוה | 21 | יב |
| שבת | Haftarah: Ezekiel 43:10-27 | הפטרה: יחזקאל מ"ג, י-כז | 22 | יג |
| S | I Kings 1 | מלכים א א' | 23 | יד |
| M | I Kings 2 | מלכים א ב' | 24 | טו |
| T | I Kings 3 | מלכים א ג' | 25 | טז |
| W | I Kings 4-5 | מלכים א ד'-ה' | 26 | יז |
| Th | I Kings 6 | מלכים א ו' | 27 | יח |
| F | Exodus 30:11-34 | כי תשא | 28 | יט |
| | | | March | |
| שבת | Haftarah: I Kings 18:1-39 | הפטרה: מלכים א י"ח, א-לט | 1 | כ |
| S | I Kings 7 | מלכים א ז' | 2 | כא |
| M | I Kings 8 | מלכים א ח' | 3 | כב |
| T | I Kings 9 | מלכים א ט' | 4 | כג |
| W | I Kings 10 | מלכים א י' | 5 | כד |
| Th | I Kings 11 | מלכים א י"א | 6 | כה |
| F | Exodus 35-38:20 | ויקהל פ' שקלים | 7 | כו |
| שבת | Haftarah: II Kings 11:17-12:17 | הפטרה: מלכים ב י"א, יז-י"ב, יז | 8 | כז |
| S | I Kings 12 | מלכים א י"ב | 9 | כח |
| M | I Kings 13 | מלכים א י"ג | 10 | כט |
| T | I Kings 14 | מלכים א י"ד | 11 | ל |

**March-April 1986** **אדר ב תשמ״ו**

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| W | I Kings 15 | | 12 | א מלכים א ט״ו |
| Th | I Kings 16 | | 13 | ב מלכים א ט״ז |
| F | Exodus 38:20-40 | | 14 | ג פקודי |
| שבת | Haftarah: Isaiah 43:21-44:21 | | 15 | ד הפטרה: ישעיה מ״ג, כא־מ״ד, כא |
| S | I Kings 17 | | 16 | ה מלכים א י״ז |
| M | I Kings 18 | | 17 | ו מלכים א י״ח |
| T | I Kings 19 | | 18 | ז מלכים א י״ט |
| W | I Kings 20 | | 19 | ח מלכים א כ׳ |
| Th | I Kings 21 | | 20 | ט מלכים א כ״א |
| F | Leviticus 1-5 | | 21 | י ויקרא |
| שבת | Haftarah: I Samuel 15:1-34 | | 22 | יא הפטרה: פ׳ זכר שמואל א ט״ו, א־לד |
| S | Esther 1-2 | | 23 | יב אסתר א־ב׳ |
| M | Esther 3-4 | | 24 | יג אסתר ג־ד׳ |
| T | Purim Esther 5-7 | | 25 | יד פורים אסתר ה׳־ז׳ |
| W | Esther 8-10 | | 26 | טו שושן פורים אסתר ח׳־י׳ |
| Th | I Kings 22 | | 27 | טז מלכים א כ״ב |
| F | Leviticus 6-8 | | 28 | יז צו פ׳ פרה |
| שבת | Haftarah: Ezekiel 36:16-38 | | 29 | יח הפטרה: יחזקאל ל״ו, טדלח |
| S | I Kings 23 | | 30 | יט מלכים א כ״ג |
| M | I Kings 24 | | 31 | כ מלכים א כ״ד |
| | | April | | |
| T | II Kings 1 | | 1 | כא מלכים ב א׳ |
| W | II Kings 2 | | 2 | כב מלכים ב ב׳ |
| Th | II Kings 3 | | 3 | כג מלכים ב ג׳ |
| F | Leviticus 9-12 | | 4 | כד שמיני פ׳ החדש |
| שבת | Haftarah: Ezekiel 45:16-46:8 | | 5 | כה הפטרה: יחזקאל מ״ה,טדמ״ו,יח |
| S | II Kings 4 | | 6 | כו מלכים ב ד׳ |
| M | II Kings 5 | | 7 | כז מלכים ב ה׳ |
| T | II Kings 6 | | 8 | כח מלכים ב ו׳ |
| W | II Kings 7 | | 9 | כט מלכים ב ז׳ |

## April-May 1986

## ניסן תשמ"ו

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Th | II Kings 8 | א | 10 | מלכים ב ח' |
| F | Leviticus: 12-13 | ב | 11 | תזריע |
| שבת | Haftarah: II Kings 7:3-20 | ג | 12 | הפטרה: מלכים ב ז', ג-כ |
| S | II Kings 9 | ד | 13 | מלכים ב ט' |
| M | II Kings 10 | ה | 14 | מלכים ב י' |
| T | II Kings 11 | ו | 15 | מלכים ב י"א |
| W | II Kings 12 | ז | 16 | מלכים ב י"ב |
| Th | II Kings 13 | ח | 17 | מלכים ב י"ג |
| F | Leviticus 14-15 | ט | 18 | מצורע |
| | Haftarah: II Kings 7:3-20 | י | 19 | הפטרה: מלכים ב ז', ג-כ |
| S | Song of Songs 1 | יא | 20 | שיר השירים א' |
| M | Song of Songs 2 | יב | 21 | שיר השירים ב' |
| T | Song of Songs 3 | יג | 22 | שיר השירים ג' |
| W | Song of Songs 4 | יד | 23 | שיר השירים ד' |
| Th | Exodus 12:21-51 | טו | 24 | פסח שמות י"ב, כא-נא |
| | Haftarah: Joshua 5:2-6:1 | | | הפטרה: יהושע ה', ב-ו', ו |
| F | Leviticus 22:26-23:24* | טז | 25 | ויקרא כ"ב, כו-כג, כד* |
| | Haftarah: II Kings 23:1-25* | | | הפטרה: מלכים ב, כ"ג, א-כה* |
| שבת | Exodus 33:12-34:26 | יז | 26 | שמות ל"ג, יב-לד, כו |
| | Haftarah: Ezekiel 37:1-14 | | | יחזקאל ל"ז א-יד |
| S | Song of Songs 5-6 | יח | 27 | שיר השירים ה'-ו' |
| M | Song of Songs 7 | יט | 28 | שיר השירים ז' |
| T | Song of Songs 8 | כ | 29 | שיר השירים ח' |
| W | Exodus 13:17-15:17 | כא | 30 | שמות י"ג, יז-ט"ו, יז |
| | Haftarah: II Samuel 22 | | | הפטרה: שמואל ב כ"ב |
| | | | | May |
| Th | Deuteronomy 14:22-15:17* | כב | 1 | דברים י"ד, כב-ט"ו, יז* |
| | Haftarah: 10:32-12:6* | | | הפטרה: ישעיה י', לב-י"ב, ו'* |
| F | Leviticus 16-18 | כג | 2 | אחרי מות |
| שבת | Haftarah: Malachi 3:4-24 | כד | 3 | הפטרה: מלאכי ג', ד'-כד* |
| S | II Kings 14 | כה | 4 | מלכים ב י"ד |
| M | II Kings 15 | כו | 5 | מלכים ב ט"ו |
| T | II Kings 16 | כז | 6 | יום השואה מלכים ב ט"ז |
| W | II Kings 17 | כח | 7 | מלכים ב י"ז |
| Th | II Kings 18 | כט | 8 | מלכים ב י"ח |
| F | Leviticus 19-20 | ל | 9 | קדושים |

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