דור לדור

DOR Le DOR

Our Biblical Heritage

Vol. XVI, No. 4 (ס"ד) SUMMER 1988

דור לדור

D O R L e D O R

Founded by Dr. Louis Katzoff, Editor from 1972-1987

A Quarterly Published by the

WORLD JEWISH BIBLE CENTER

(Founded by David Ben Gurion and Zalman Shazar)

In co-operation with the Department of Education and Culture in the Diaspora of the World Zionist Organization

---

דפוס רפאל חיים הכהן בע"מ, ירושלים

קיאבו קנו ס ש ה וי"ל

Printed by Raphael Haim Hacohen Press Ltd., Jerusalem

SODOM: MANNERS, MORALS, MISDEEDS

BY LOUIS KATZOFF *Z.L.*

Sodom was certainly not a righteous city. If only ten righteous men were to be found, the city would have been spared from destruction. What was Sodom's sin? [1]

Three terms in our Hebrew parlance seem to spell out the specific culture of that society. They are: מידת סדום, מיטת סדום, מעשה סדום. What do these three characterizations represent?

מידת סדום

This term usually connotes selfishness. In the *Ethics of the Fathers* פרקי אבות the term מידת סדום is mentioned in connection with one of the four types of people in their relationship with others: ארבע מידות באדם... האומר שלי שלי ושלך שלך, זו מידה בינונית; ויש אומרים מידת סדום. "There are four types of men... He who says, 'Mine is mine, thine is thine,' this is the common type; but some say: this is מידת סדום, the type of Sodom" (Ethics 5:10).

Mine is mine and yours is yours may express a person's desire to be self-reliant, not to be dependent on others. This can be called מידה בינונית, the common type. It is the usual attitude of the ordinary man, a midway point between the extremes of the צדיק and the רשע, the righteous and the evil.

Other sages sense in this characteristic a strong streak of selfishness. There is a talmudic dictum, זה נהנה וזה לא חסר: One should be ready to lend a hand to another when nothing is being diminished by such action. And when a person deliberately refrains from helping the other (mine is mine and thine is thine) he

1 See Genesis 13:13 and chapter 19 in Genesis.

In our last issue (XVI–3) we published posthumously two articles by Dr. Louis Katzoff Z.L., founder of Dor Le Dor and its Editor from 1972 to 1987. In this issue we publish the last two articles he had written shortly before he passed away.

puts himself into the category of מידת סדום, of bad and selfish conduct.[2]

מיטת סדום

The "bed of Sodom" is a term of infamy in Jewish consciousness. The legend has it that all visitors to the city were subjected to a measuring test in a bed of a designated size. If the visitor was too short, his legs would be stretched, even out of their joints, to fit the length of the bed. And if he was too tall, the citizens of Sodom would simply cut off the ends of the legs to fit them to size.

Today, we can more readily apply the term of מיטת סדום to the realm of ideas. The Sodomites sized up every stranger in order to judge whether he accepted their life style: האחד בא לגור וישפט שפוט (Genesis 19:9). They called it unity, but it was really uniformity. It was the way of Sodom to place every stranger into their Procrustean bed, to produce conformity by arbitrary and violent means.

מעשה סדום

The worst epithet attached to the infamous city is called מעשה סדום: "The atrocities of Sodom." This unsavory conduct looms forth boldly in the confrontation of Abraham's nephew Lot with the inhabitants of Sodom. By the time the two angels were accomodated with a family dinner, the neighbors – מנער ועד זקן כל העם מקצה *young and old, all the people to the last man* (19:4), gathered around Lot's house and demanded the surrender of the guests to them. ויקראו אליו ויאמרו לו איה האנשים אשר באו אליך הלילה. הוציאם אלינו ונדעה אותם *And they called unto Lot and said unto him: 'Where are the men who came to*

2 I could never fully comprehend the meaning of מידת סדום, until I experienced the following incident as a patient in a hospital ward. My neighbor was wont to get up for his daily shower at 6 A.M. One morning we heard the sound of the shower flow at 5:45 A.M. Awakened by the sound, my neighbor, becoming more indignant by the minute, was already waiting at the door for the "trespasser," to pounce upon him as he left the shower room. He ranted: "What 'chutzpa' to preempt the facility before my turn and wet the floor of the shower stall!"

Apparently, people in situations necessitating sharing the facilities, are prone to "carve out" their individual territories, and woe betide the one who would disregard that "ownership." The principle of זה נהנה וזה לא חסר did not apply to my neighbor who ordinarily seemed like a very tolerant person in his political and social views.

you tonight? Bring them out to us so that we may know them' (19:5). A clear sexual connotation is evident in the phrase ונדעה אותם. The new J.P.S. translation renders it: *Bring them out to us so that we may be intimate with them.* Sodomy was their practice.

At this ominous turn, a most scandalous offer is made by Lot wherein his two daughters, not previously mentioned, are brought into the picture. To the assailants he suggests – nay, he begs – to make a deal: *I have two daughters who have not known a man. Let me bring them out to you, and do to them whatever you want. But to these men do nothing, for they have come under the shadow of my roof* (19:8). How low can a father fall! To put a higher value to hospitality than to the honor of his daughters! But by this time, even the good-natured and hospitable Lot had incorporated the corrupt mores of his community.

So this is what the sages call מעשה סדום, violent behavior leading to the moral collapse of civilization.[3]

3 See the end of chapter 19, about the acts of incest engineered by the daughters upon their father.

NOBLESSE OBLIGE

BY LOUS KATZOFF

כה אמר ה' — על שלשה פשעי ישראל — ועל ארבעה לא אשיבנו. *Thus saith the Lord – For three trangressions of Judah, Yea, for four, I will not reverse it.**

With this refrain, accusing Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Edom, Ammon and Moab, begins the Book of Amos which contains the religious-social message of one of the early prophets of Israel. Amos a herdsman and dresser of sycamore trees, felt

*Amos, 2:6.

the stirring of the spirit of God, while pursuing his lonely calling amid the hills of Judea. He came from the city of Tekoah, which is located about ten miles southeast of Jerusalem, not far from the present hill of Herodion, on the one side, and the Gush Etzion bloc on the other.

It is hard to believe that a peasant who tended a flock of sheep should be able to attract listeners to what he had to say in the name of the Almighty. And yet, with the keenest sense of public speaking, he intuitively knew exactly how to seize the attention of his listeners who, as he proceeded with his public address, were becoming glued to every word he uttered.

How did he do it? The key lies in the manner of his introduction: For three sins, I might overlook it, but for four – No! This phrase is like a refrain which is repeated a number of times – a refrain in a special style in the use of language. Here is the dramatic opening of his address which begins the Book of Amos: על שלשה פשעי דמשק — ועל ארבעה לא אשיבנו *For three transgressions of Damascus, Yea, for four I will not reverse it.* And he recounts the sins of Damascus, and he pronounces the impending punishment that will be meted out to its inhabitants. His listeners must have pricked up their ears when they heard their life-long enemy, Damascus, being denounced by this simple herdsman.

And then he goes on with the same catchy refrain—*For three transgressions of Gaza, Yea, for four I will not reverse it* and here too, he predicts a terrible scourge upon Gaza. By this time more listeners must have been attracted to this surprising speaker. After all, was he not denouncing the neighboring countries which were constantly harrassing the little state of Israel?

And so he continues with the recurring refrain, each time adding weight to what he is prophesying. He castigates and utters dire predictions, one after another – upon Tyre, upon Edom, upon Ammon and upon Moab – each time with the same refrain, each time setting forth their malicious deeds and each time predicting the consequential calamities that will be their punishment.

By now, he has captured the delighted attention of a large audience of Judeans and Israelites who were gleefully revelling in the verbal vengeance wreaked upon the foes of Israel. At this very dramatic moment of total attention, he suddenly turns on the southern state of Judah and then on the northern state of Israel, and with the same powerful refrain he castigates his own brethren for their transgressions.

And then comes the real essence of his message – his plea for social justice. Amos was the first of the literary prophets, and he sets the tone as it were for the principal nature of the prophetic word. His central theme is righteousness which to him, as to the prophets who followed him, bespeaks holiness of life in the individual and the triumph of right in the world.

Right at the beginning, he spells out the thrust of his message: כה אמר ה', *Thus saith the Lord: For three transgressions of Israel, for four I will not reverse it, because they sell the righteous for silver and the needy for a pair of shoes, who trample the heads of the poor into the dust of the ground and turn aside the way of the humble* — למען חלל את שם קדשו — *to profane My holy name.*

To take advantage of the poor is not only an immoral act, it is a חלול השם, a profanation of the name of God and of Israel. Man's inhumanity to man is the cardinal sin, and when Israel is guilty, it is doubly culpable.

There is one verse in the prophet's message which, at first glance, is difficult to grasp (Amos 3:2) רק אתכם ידעתי מכל משפחות האדמה — על כן אפקוד עליכם את כל עוונותיכם *You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore I will call you to account for all your inquities.*

The popular English commentary by J. H. Hertz, calls this the most famous "therefore" in history. Israel is the chosen of God. *Therefore* God demands higher, not lower standards of goodness from Israel, and will punish lapses more severely. The higher the privilege, the graver the responsibility. The greater the opportunity, the more inexcusable the failure to use it.

The word ידעתי can have two meanings: You only have I *known*, or, you only have I *loved* in the same sense as of Genesis 4, verse 1. והאדם ידע את חוה אשתו ותהר *Now Adam knew his wife Eve, and she conceived.* In the words of Amos, God is saying: Because I love you more than others, therefore, you deserve greater punishment!

Israel is the one people chosen by God from among the nations of the world to be an עם סגולה. והייתם לי סגולה מכל העמים *You shall be my treasured possession from among all the peoples.* Perhaps that very chosenness places a special responsibility upon the people of Israel, to set the example for the rest of the world; and so, Israel is thus doubly punished when they are lax in the higher standards of human behavior.

This is the way we perceive ourselves. We must be nobler than all the others –

because God loves us more. This is the way the other nations of the world perceive us as well. Sure, it is based on a double standard, but it is indeed a fact of life. But that is the way it is. We are the chosen people, the beloved of God, and we must set a nobler pattern.

Chosenness: There are some Jews who reject the idea of chosenness. To be an עם סגולה is a form of racialism, they say. They would claim that this is an extreme form of chauvinism which reminds them of the expressions heard during the 1930's about superior and inferior races. What an erroneous comparison!!

The strident claim of the superior race — the *Herrenvolk* — espoused by the German nation of the 30's was aimed to secure the mastery of the world and the subjection of weaker peoples, leading, as we are so sadly aware, to eventual wholesale genocide.

The admonition of Amos puts the lie to such comparisons, when we speak about Jewish chosenness. Being an עם סגולה does not make us superior to other peoples. It does impose upon us the double responsibility of service to mankind to be אור לגוים, a light unto the nations, for a blessing and not a curse.

At times we may feel that this is an unfair burden imposed upon us. But would we want it to be otherwise?

THE HART AND HIND IN BIBLE AND MIDRASH *(Continued from page 302)*

The shepherd complained to the king that no special directions were given regarding the sheep, goats and kids, but only to the stag. The king in his reply pointed out that it is usual for sheep to graze together on cultivated ground, but the stag is found in the wilderness. We must therefore show special consideration for the stag which leaves the wilderness and insists on joining us and mixing with the sheep and goats. Similarly, The Holy One enjoins us to love the stranger who leaves his family and background and comes to dwell with us, adopting our customs and laws (Numbers Rabbah 8).

The stag also figures prominently in a remarkable passage dealing with the teaching of Torah. R. Hiyya said, "I bring flax seed, sow it, and weave nets from the plant. With these I hunt stags with whose flesh I feed orphans, and from whose skins I prepare scrolls, and then proceed to a town where there are no teachers of young children, and write out the five books of the Pentateuch for five children respectively, and teach another six children" (Kethuboth 103b).

JOB: THE THIRD CYCLE

DISSIPATING A MIRAGE – PART I

BY DAVID WOLFERS

The suggestion that a passage in the Bible is corrupt, misplaced, or otherwise incorrect has been made far too frequently and far too lightly by biblical scholars, both Jewish and Christian, over the past two hundred years. Such suggestions have been particularly popular in respect of the Book of Job. One of the most firmly entrenched, and at the same time most destructive of these postulates has been the idea that the hypothetical "original" Book of Job contained three complete "Cycles of speeches", each comprising six speeches in which the three comforters alternated with Job in the presentation and refutation of their case.

In its present form the book contains two such cycles, Chapters 4–14 and Chapters 15–21, and what superficially resembles the first four speeches of a third cycle – Chapters 22–26, followed by a long soliloquy by Job only interrupted by the so-called independent poem to wisdom of Chapter 28. It was Kenicott in 1787[1] who first suggested that Chapters 24–27 had suffered disorder and that they should be rearranged to reconstitute the "original" third cycle of six speeches. Kennicott's "discovery" has been enthusiastically adopted by virtually all subsequent scholars, so that almost every modern version of the Book of Job features an attempt at reconstructing this section of the work, inventing, from bits and pieces of Job's speeches, the "missing speech of Zophar", and enlarging the very brief speech of Bildad (a mere five verses) which is the present Chapter 25. In justifying this vandalism the authors of these versions have claimed to

1 B. Kennicott, "*Remarks on Select Passages of the Old Testament*," 1787, pp. 169–170.

Dr. Wolfers is a medical practitioner and demographer who, since his retirement in Jerusalem in 1976, has devoted his time to study and translation of the Book of Job. He is the author of numerous scientific articles and co-author of several books on aspects of the international population problem. At present he is assistant editor of Dor le Dor.

have found unacceptable inconsistencies between parts of the speeches at present attributed to Job and the views adopted by Job elsewhere in the book.

J. B. S. Haldane coined the word "covery" for the process of refuting a previously widely accepted false discovery. This is what I propose to attempt here in respect of the "discovery" of a third cycle of speeches in the Book of Job. How accepted this discovery has become may be appreciated by reading Gordis, who is well aware of the speculative origin of this "third cycle": "That the Third Cycle has suffered great damage and cannot be meaningfully interpreted in its present form is beyond question."[2] The existence of such a third cycle is no longer there treated as a matter of dispute. It is regarded as a matter of fact, the starting point from which the examination of the text must depart. Such a cavalier attitude to the integrity of an ancient manuscript seems to me quite unacceptable. I propose to demonstrate here that the "third cycle" is nothing but a figment of the scholastic search for a symmetry of structure which never existed in the Book of Job, and that it is not only possible, but also therefore mandatory, to interpret the text of this disputed portion of the book precisely in its present form.

IS THERE A THIRD CYCLE?

The effect of the widespread acceptance of the false hypothesis has been to foist upon us an impoverished, unsubtle and confused version of the savage end of the great debate, and to deprive us of insight into Job's final state of mind.

Thus:

1. Chapter 24, which stands as one of the great historical documents of ancient literature, testifying to the overthrow of law and order in an occupied territory, to the plight of the poor and exiled in such a circumstance, and which in true Hebrew prophetic spirit arraigns God for their suffering, has been presented to us as a weak and confused plea for the punishment of the wicked.

2. Chapter 26, a virulent outpouring of scorn upon Bildad the Shuhite and, through him, the other friends, surely the outstanding example of the use of irony in contest literature, has consistently been entirely misunderstood, all traces of its

2 Robert Gordis, *The Book of Job*, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York, 1978, Special Note 20. p. 534.

true meaning and intention wiped away, leaving us compelled to read it as an irrelevant hymn to the glory of God!

3. The latter part of Chapter 27, which penetrates to the heart of Job's hard-won understanding of the true rewards of virtue and costs of sin, and which reveals him at one with the great psalmist of Psalm 73, has been trivialized and divested of its spiritual truth, appearing as just another of the comforters' naive misrepresentations of God's way with the wicked.

Limitations of space require that the paper should be in two parts. Because the bulk of the dispute regarding this section of the work has centered on Chapters 25–27, I intend to examine these chapters first and to demonstrate their complete consistency with the preceding elements of the debate, and to reserve the analysis of Chapters 22–24 for the second part.

Chapter 25 runs as follows:

Then answered Bildad the Shuhite, and said:
He decides who shall rule and who tremble,
He, Who made peace in His high places.
Is there any limit to His armies?
And upon whom does His light not shine?
How, then, can man be justified before God?
And how shall he be clean that is born of woman?
If He removes the moon that she shines not
And the stars are not bright in His eyes,
How much less man, the worm!
The son of man, a maggot!

The first two verses of this chapter are a response to contentions that Job has made in Chapter 24, viz that God has arbitrarily allowed the overthrow of social order, and that He has been indifferent to the sufferings of the poor on the specious grounds that they do not follow "the Light", whereas Job contends that they have had no opportunity to do so.* The remaining three verses have a very special significance which is crucial to the understanding of the dynamics, in general of this part of the Dialogue, and specifically of the following Chapter 26. They constitute a form of thematic quotation from two preceding speeches of

* See Part B.

Eliphaz, 4:17–19 and 15:14–16.[3] The first of these two passages constitutes the first argument raised by any of the comforters against Job's position that he has been unjustly visited with suffering. In re-stating this argument in slightly different words, Bildad may be seen as signalling the exhaustion of his and his friends' case. The brevity of Bildad's speech adds weight to this supposition. Certainly it is not in itself evidence that any part of the original speech has been mislaid, for short though it is, it is certainly complete in itself. There is a further important characteristic of the original statement of this argument by Eliphaz in Chapter 4. Eliphaz did not present the thesis as his own, but claimed to have received it in a dream state when he was visited by a "spirit" whose appearance made his hair stand on end. With this in mind, we can now proceed to Chapter 26.

CHAPTER 26, A MASTERPIECE OF IRONY

Then Job answered, and said:

What a help you are to the powerless!
How you have counselled the unskilled
And instilled wisdom into the multitude!

With whose help have you uttered your words?
And whose spirit goes forth from you?
Ah! The shades have been brought forth
From under the sway of the waters and their inhabitants!
Sheoul is naked before him

3. *Shall man be more just than God?*
The creature more pure than its Maker?
If He puts no trust in His ministers
And has no confidence in His angels,
How much less in those that dwell in clay,
Whose foundation is the dust! (4:17–19)
What is man that he should be clean
And he that is born of woman that he should be right?
If He does not trust in His ministers
And the heavens are not pure in His sight,
How much less the abominable and obscene –
Man that swills iniquity like water! (15:14–16).

And Abaddon uncovered!
It was he who stretched out Zaphon over chaos
And suspended the land over the void!
He who bottled up the waters in his clouds,
The cloud never splitting under its load!
He who shrouded the face of heaven,
O'erspreading it with his cloud!
He traced the line on the face of the waters
To be the boundary twixt light and darkness!
The pillars of heaven tremble
And are astonished as his rebuke!
By his power, the sea is quiet
And by his mastery, he shattered Rahab.
By his breath, the sky is bright;
His hand pinioned the serpent as it fled!
If these are but the fringes of his ways —
And what a whisper of a word was heard of it! —
Who, then, will comprehend the thunder of his might?

The first two verses of this speech answer the uncharitable first two verses of Bildad's. He has rejected Job's excuses for the poor, and Job attacks him for it. The third verse tackles the second theme of Bildad's speech, his "quotation" of Eliphaz's spirit message. Job asks with undisguised contempt in effect, "We know which spirit gave those words to Eliphaz; now which spirit are you going to claim dictated the same message to you?" In Chapter 6[4] Job made clear his contempt at Eliphaz's cheap device of ascribing his views to a supernatural source. Here his anger and resentment soar to far greater heights. He submits an answer to his own question — it is the shades of the dead who have been brought forth[5] to instruct Bildad, and then, as the passion which possesses Job begins the

4 *Is there any flavour in this drooling of dreams?*
My gorge refuses to touch! (6:6b, 7a)

5 This line is commonly rendered: "The shades writhe (or tremble) beneath the waters and their inhabitants." Not only does the picture contradict the accepted descriptions of existence in the Underworld, but the word translated as "writhe" or "tremble" cannot bear either of these meanings. It is the uncompromisingly passive Po'lal form of the verb חול — יחוללו. The only meaning which this form bears in the Bible, notably in Job 15:7, but also in Psalm 51 and Proverbs 8, is

ascent to its climax, he declares that the Underworld is transparent to Bildad. Not God, but Bildad! This sarcasm engenders all that follows. If Bildad (or his spirit adviser – the distinction has become lost) is like God in that the Underworld holds no secrets for him, then he is like God in other ways as well; and so rolls on the mighty catalogue of Divine attributes which, without this setting, seem so inappropriate in the mouth of Job at this juncture.

The final verse, 14, returns full circle to Eliphaz's spirit message with the expression שמץ דבר, "a whisper of a word". This is exactly what Eliphaz claimed was all he heard of the spirit voice – — ואלי דבר יגנב ותקח אזני שמץ מנהו *Now a word was brought to me by stealth, and my ear caught a whisper of it*" (4:12). This direct quotation should remove all doubt that this really weird chapter, and Eliphaz's spurious dream message are closely related, and that the speaker of Chapter 26 is not engaging in an essentially pointless hymn to the accomplishments of God (who is never named in the passage), but in a very pointed parody of the pretence to omniscience of the comforters. The speech, then, is surely Job's.

CHAPTER 27 – THE CONTINUATION OF JOB'S SOLILOQUY

Chapter 27 is distinguished by a form of introduction quite different from the common form of all the speeches of the Dialogue. These all proceed "Then Job (or whoever) answered, and said." The start of Chapter 27 runs: *Then Job resumed the thread of his parable* (מָשָׁלוֹ), *and said:*" Far from suggesting, as many commentators have concluded, that there is a missing speech of a third cycle of the Dialogue preceding this formula, this variant form suggests that the Dialogue proper was concluded some time before, and that Job now continues a soliloquy which had been interrupted, rudely, first by Bildad's brief recapitulation of the opening bars of the discussion, and second by Job's own angry, even vicious, put-down of Bildad.

The first five verses of Chapter 27 are incontestibly Job's, and represent a considerable landmark in the development of moral philosophy. Distinctly

"to be brought forth." The corresponding active form, the Po'lel means to bear (offspring), produce, or cause to produce.

unorthodox from the Jewish standpoint, they assert such an internalized confidence in the nature of right and wrong as is prepared to remain unmoved even in the face of contradiction by God Himself. Very nearly Job declares that he has his own image of God and the demands which He makes on man, and that he will continue serving *that* God though the living God prove indifferent or hostile to his service.

By the living God Who has denied me justice,
And by the Almighty Who has embittered my soul,
[I declare] that for all the time my breath remains within me
And the spirit of God in my nostrils,
My lips will not utter falsehood
Nor my tongue deceit.

The rest of Chapter 27 is devoted to a description of the fate of the wicked, and because the fate there outlined is an unhappy one it has been generally assumed that the words cannot have been rightly attributed to Job. But one should at least pause to ask if it is really believable that Job at heart envied "the wicked", or himself believed that theirs was the pathway to true happiness. It is true that in Chapter 21 Job presents a dissertation on the *lives* of the wicked which paints a picture of considerable felicity. In this Chapter 27, however, he is discussing their end. There is a remarkable parallel to Chapter 27 in Psalm 73, the Psalm of the man who, like Job, was at one time a "Behemoth" with God. He, too, observed the prosperity and felicity of the wicked and felt that he had suffered sorely for his adherence to the path of virtue. It was only when he "considered their end" (which he describes in terms remarkably similar to those of Job 27) that he became reconciled to the paradoxical realities of the moral governance of the world. Certainly if the same hand could have penned the whole of Psalm 73 (and there has been no doubt expressed of this), then Chapter 27 can be attributed to the same voice as Chapter 21 and any other of Job's utterances. Let us scrutinize what he has to say:

6 *I would still have my comfort*
While I recoil in the anguish He does not stint —
That I never disowned the words of the Holy One (6:10).

CHAPTER 27 AND PSALM 73

The fate of the wicked is described in two sections, vv. 8–10 and vv. 13–23, each of which has its own short introduction. V. 7 reads *Let my enemy be as the wicked and him who opposes me as the unjust*, a simple statement of firm dissociation from the wicked. 8–10 then explain this dissociation – *For what future is there for the godless, though he pillage, when God requires his life? Will God attend to his cry when trouble comes to him? Will he have pleasure in the Almighty? And call upon God for all seasons*? There is nothing in this which is inconsistent with anything Job has said before. It advances a spiritual reason for pursuing a life of virtue which is in sharp contrast to the practical reasons advanced by the comforters. Indeed, it embodies a formidable strain of consistency with Job's stated philosophy of life, that his one comfort in all his troubles has been that he has never denied the words of God[6] and therefore has retained the right to approach him.[7]

The second section is introduced with a formula which is certainly Job's, so that if we join the majority of scholars in denying the section to Job we are obliged (as Gordis[8] does) to postulate an additional missing passage which contains what Job really did say after this introduction – *Let* me *teach* you ***what is in God's hand. I shall not conceal the doctrine of the Almighty. Behold, you all have witnessed it; Why on earth do you vainly mouth vanity? This is the portion of the wicked man from God, The heritage of tyrants which they receive from the Almighty.***[9]

The fate of the "wicked" is then described in two vignettes. The first describes the elimination from the earth of the posterity of the wicked, the dispersal of their wealth and the destruction of their "House". Not only is there nothing in this picture which contradicts what Job had said of the wicked previously, but it is precisely the same as what he said in 21:30,[10], and found an unsatisfactory

7 *I will defend my ways to His face.*
Even this would be as good as victory to me
For the ungodly cannot approach His presence (13:15b, 16).

8 R. Gordis *op. cit.*, p. 289.

9 This verse is an almost *verbatim* repetition of 20:29, the concluding sentence of Zophar's last speech. The implication is of course that you (the comforters) have given me your version of the fate of the wicked, now I will give you the true version.

10 *The evil man is preserved for the day of retribution.*

punishment in 21:31.[11] Job had certainly expressed the wish that the wicked should suffer in their lifetimes for their sins, but he never suggested that they were building secure futures for their children or their nations. He found their punishment inadequate, but he would not exchange it for his own situation – it remains a fate he would only wish on his worst enemy.

It is the second vignette which most clearly parallels Psalm 73, describing the sudden and terror-infused death of the wicked man alienated from God.

Terror makes him ebb, like the flood.
One night the tempest steals him away.
A wind from the East carries him off, and he departs,
And it whirls him away from his home.
He hurls it at him without stint.
He flees in panic from His hand.
He claps His hand at him
And hisses him off the stage!

Compare with *Surely Thou settest them in slippery places; Thou hurlest them down to utter ruin. How are they become a desolation in a moment! They are wholly consumed by terrors* (Ps. 73:19–20). Again there is nothing in this picture to contradict what we know of Job's view of the rewards and punishments of the wicked. The only flimsy evidence of inconsistency is between this passage and 21:13b – *They spend their days in prosperity and* ברגע *go down to Sheoul.* Many translators have rendered this word "peacefully" although the more natural translation is "in a moment," i.e. "suddenly."

The essential difference between Job's and the comforters' pictures of the state of the wicked is that Job will not concede that they suffer for their crimes throughout their lives, while the comforters constantly advance this falsehood. If we understand Job to be asserting *This, and only this, is the portion of the wicked man from God,* we should find no difficulty at all in accepting the whole of Chapter 27 as spoken by him.

In all the above, I see no reason for any assumption of corruption of the text, particularly in view of a principle which should be fundamental to the art of

They are escorted to the day of wrath (21:30).
11 *Who will confront him with his sins?*
And who will requite him his works? (21:31).

translation and interpretation — that no effort should be spared to find a meaning of the text as it has been transmitted, before any effort is directed towards reconstituting a presumed defective original. We have here an example of violence to the text having been widely canvassed on insufficient grounds, with, in the case of the word יחוללו (see footnote 5) a manifest mistranslation employed to support the distortion. (There is another similar example in Chapter 24, v. 19. See Part B). The whole weight of probability, in this and in every case, must be presumed to lie with the accuracy of the transmitted text, and only in a case where it is *impossible* to interpret the transmitted text meaningfully, may the suggestion of corruption be reluctantly and tentatively considered.

It is possible to find a plausible and consistent meaning for Chapters 25–27 as transmitted and attributed in the Book of Job in whole and in every part, and we must therefore conclude the transmitted text to be correct and accurate.

Job and his wife by Albrecht Dürer (1504)

AHITOPHEL OF GILO

TWO LITERARY PORTRAITS

BY SOL LIPTZIN

In the 1980's new Gilo has arisen on the southwestern outskirts of the City of David. Its wide streets, hewn out of the Judean desert, buzz with the tread of new Gilonites. In its beautifully constructed homes with dazzling white facades are integrated immigrants and the children of immigrants, descendants of men and women who were exiled from their sacred land millennia ago and who have found their way back to a re-arisen Israel after long wandering along the highways and byways of the globe. In their recently built synagogue they intone the Psalms of David. In the ancient, revitalized Hebrew, their young sons and daughters are regaled with the tale of Absalom, the handsomest of David's sons, who, under the prodding of Ahitophel the Gilonite, rose up in revolt against his aging father.

Do the present dwellers of Gilo ever ponder on the ghost of Ahitophel who still stalks through literary texts in diverse tongues? Do they wonder, if the *Realpolitik* of the wily counsellor of Gilo foundered because it was grounded solely in self-interest and was utterly devoid of ideals?

In the turbulence of the contemporary world, the Bible is still their Book of Books and David, not Absalom or Ahitophel, is still their legendary hero, a hero who erred, repented, atoned, and triumphed over external and internal adversaries, and became an undimmed beacon for all later generations.

Ahitophel of Gilo, adviser to King David, ranks among the wisest biblical characters. Nevertheless, he committed the folly of betraying this monarch and instigating Absalom, the king's son, to revolt. Talmudic sages and more recent commentators speculated about the motive that beclouded his brilliant mind and brought about his nefarious behavior and disastrous end. Was it excessive ambition, the desire to seize the throne for himself, using Absalom as his pawn?

Sol Liptzin, Emeritus Professor of Comparative Literature at the City University of New York, is the author of eighteen volumes on world literature, including Germany's Stepchildren, The Jew in American Literature, A History of Yiddish Literature, Biblical Themes in World Literature. In 1986 a Festschrift, Identity and Ethos, was published in honor of his 85th birthday.

Or was it vengeance for David's adultery with Bathsheba, reputed to be Ahitophel's granddaughter? Some interpreters of his personality have compared him to Doeg, Saul's wicked confidant, who is remembered for the slaughter of the innocent priests of Nob. Yet, even in executing this vicious massacre, Doeg was loyal to his monarch, unlike Ahitophel whom David raised to a high position at the royal court and who proved to be disloyal. Other interpreters have compared Ahitophel to Balaam, wisest of non-Jewish seers, who was summoned by King Balak of Moab to curse Israel and who betrayed this monarch's trust by blessing them.

In English literature, Ahitophel's infamy is most often invoked in the war of pamphleteers that raged between Puritans and Royalists in the seventeenth century and that culminated in John Dryden's satiric epic *Absalom and Ahitophel*, 1681.

DRYDEN'S ABSALOM AND AHITOPHEL

Dryden was poet-laureate during the reign of Charles II. As a Tory and a Royalist, he was urged by the friends of Charles II, perhaps even by the monarch himself, to participate in the struggle between Tories and Whigs over the succession to the English throne, a struggle then at its height because of the king's failing health. The heir–apparent, favored by the Tories, was the Duke of York, brother of Charles, who ascended the throne at the latter's death in 1685. The opposing claimant, favored by many of the Whigs, was the Duke of Monmouth, illegitimate so of Charles, who later led a revolt against his father's successor, James II, was defeated and executed.

Dryden's satire appeared at the height of Charles II's embroilment with an uncooperative Parliament, whose most powerful figure was the Earl of Shaftesbury. This nobleman had originally been favored by the king. After the death of Cromwell and the disillusionment of most Englishmen with the Puritan regime, Shaftesbury had helped the exiled son of Charles I to be restored to the British throne and had served him faithfully for several years. But, relations between them gradually soured. The king began to distrust him and the Earl allied himself with the Whigs. This party feared that, if the king's brother who was reputed to have embraced Catholicism, succeeded to the throne, Papacy might again dominate the English scene. It, therefore, espoused a bill that would

prevent such a possibility. The Earl favored the cause of the Duke of Monmouth and engaged in intrigues to win support for him. This brought about the downfall of this powerful aristocrat. He was charged with high treason and imprisoned in London Tower. A week before the Grand Jury brought in its charge, *Absalom and Ahitophel* was published. It had an immediate impact. Though the author's name did not appear on the title-page, the secret of its authorship soon leaked out.

In this satire, Charles II served as the model for King David and the Duke of Monmouth as the model for Absalom. Shaftesbury was easily recognizable as Ahitophel, the wicked politician who had led the good-natured, naive Absalom astray.

Well publicized sermons and pamphlets had already popularized in the mind of the average Englishman of the seventeenth century the image of Ahitophel as a crafty, evil counselor. Christian biblical commentators even saw in Ahitophel, who betrayed King David and ended by committing suicide, a precursor of Judas, the disciple who betrayed his master and ended by hanging himself. In his portrait of Ahitophel, Dryden was able to link up with long established traditions.

In the satiric poem, Ahitophel is introduced as "A name to all succeeding ages accursed," despite the fact that he was sagacious, bold and of talented wit. His failings were that he was restless, unprincipled, false to his friends, and implacable in his hate. Raised to high office by David's trust and overmuch goodness, he misused the power and prestige he had attained. He engaged in political intrigues. His wild ambition was to rule the state or, if this proved impossible, to ruin it. In Absalom, he thought that he found a pliant tool for his machinations. He began by flattering him as a second Moses, the savior of the nation, the answer to the people's prayer. Though persuaded that, because of David's aging and declining power, the best moment had come to seize the throne, Absalom nevertheless hesitated. Though debauched by Ahitophel's unceasing flattery, he could not bring himself to raise the standard of revolt against his kind father, who had given him everything except the royal diadem. Ahitophel proceeded to organize a coalition of malcontents, people of different factions who had differing personal interests in changing the regime. Surrounded by ever increasing adherents, Absalom was finally deluded into following Ahitophel's advice and guidance. The admiring crowds hailed him and David was left with but few followers. These were, however, firm in their fidelity. When

David in a magnificent speech outlined his theory of government, he succeeded in turning the tide in his favor. The masses returned to his benevolent rule and Ahitophel could not prevail.

NAHUM TATE AND THE SEQUEL

The publication of Dryden's satiric poem, which reflected the burning issues of the day, had so great an impact that he was persuaded to undertake a sequel. To hasten the composition of *The Second Part of Absalom and Ahitophel*, Dryden won as collaborator the poet Nahum Tate, whose talent was, however, inferior to his own.

The struggle between Charles II and his Tory adherents, on the one hand, and the short-lived parliaments which had been controlled by the Whigs under the leadership of Shaftesbury was nearing a climax and was soon to be decided in favor of the king's party. The trial of Shaftesbury was attracting enormous attention. Though the treason charge against him was not proven, his power diminished. He fled to Holland in order to escape further harassment and died there a few weeks after the second part of the satire was published in November 1682.

In this part, Dryden and his collaborator Tate continued to heap scorn upon the Earl in the figure of Ahitophel. He was again depicted as the wily manipulator who took advantage of the madness of the times and devised ever more desperate plots to unleash rebellion and to slay the aging monarch. Absalom continued to resist Ahitophel's temptations. He did not want the crown, if it involved the murder of his father. He pointed out that he could not live with a guilty conscience. Besides, such a murder of the reigning monarch would set a precedent to be followed by later claimants to the throne. New Ahitophels might arise and his own rule would be jeopardized. Ahitophel found this wrestling with a tender conscience unbefitting an aspirant to a throne. A statesman was constantly confronted with hard decisions and could not be overscrupulous.

Ahitophel tried to convince the reluctant Absalom that conspirators had gone too far along the path of rebellion to retreat at this advanced stage. Numerous followers had become involved. These had a vested interest in changing the regime. Absalom was reminded that, if his father banished him earlier for the less weighty crime of avenging Amnon's rape of Tamar, how much more severe

would be the punishment for the greater crime of fomenting rebellion. But Absalom could not be budged. The head of David, his father and the anointed of Israel, was sacred. Neither blandishments nor fears moved him to a quick decision. His hesitation was his undoing. The fickle rabble became reconciled to David's rule and deserted the cause of Absalom and Ahitophel. The satire ended with the couplet.

"With David then was Israel's peace restored.
Crowds mourned their error and obeyed the lord."

Dryden's Ahitophel was the arch villain of the satiric poem of 1681 and its sequel of 1682. Absalom was merely the dupe of this tempter, while David emerged as the good, mild sovereign, interested solely in the welfare of his subjects. The poet-laureate made use of the biblical model in order to mirror the politics of the Restoration Era and the attitude of the royal party to which he adhered. He flattered Charles II and blackened the opponents of the king, attributing to them the vilest motives. The Earl of Shaftesbury, as the loyal subject who became disloyal, as the former chancellor who was charged with treason, was the main butt of Dryden's wit. Ahitophel, who masterminded Absalom's revolt, needed merely slight reshaping to conform to his later British counterpart, and was ideally suited for the poetic diatribes.

BEER HOFMANN'S DER JUNGE DAVID

A less vindictive portrait of Ahitophel emerged two and a half centuries after Dryden in the drama *Der junge David* by the Austrian-Jewish poet Richard Beer-Hofmann, which left the press in the year of Hitler's ascent to power in Germany. The drama had, however, matured slowly during all the years between the two world wars and mirrored stirring events of the pre-Nazi era under the guise of a biblical struggle for power. Ahitophel was not the main character of this drama, which centered about the struggle between Saul, the aging, ailing ruler on Israel's insecure throne, and David, his young charismatic rival. He was, however, the exponent of practical politics, the sceptical realist who was needed to balance the overexuberant idealism of David's followers. He was the pragmatist who converted the visions of innovators to viable, stable structures. He functioned as king-maker. His astute mind applied the brakes to extreme political theories. It guided the ship of state away from Utopian delusions.

Ahitophel was cynical but not wicked. Indeed, Beer-Hofmann has not a single villain in all his plays. He has protagonists and antagonists, each acting on the basis of differing character-traits and subconscious forces beyond voluntary control. People live as they must. They act as they are impelled.

In the conflict between Saul and David, Ahitophel at first came to Saul's court in order to offer his services to the reigning monarch but, after studying the situation, he changed his mind, not wanting to attach himself to the party whose fortunes were rolling downhill. He joined the cause of David not because he believed in David's ideals, but because David looked like a sure winner. But, even if David were to lose out and Jonathan, Saul's oldest son, were to ascend the throne after his father, Jonathan was David's friend and would not act harshly against David's followers.

Abner, who caught sight of the oily, flattering Ahitophel, was glad that Saul's cause would not be mired by such retainers. Arriving at David's camp in Bethlehem, Ahitophel quickly oriented himself by incessantly questioning everyone with whom he came in contact. He explained that he was not a busybody, but rather, that he could be of most value to David by constantly keeping his eyes open and his mind thinking clearly. He must not let himself be intoxicated by lofty slogans. If his actions were not quite proper or dignified, he could be disowned and David could remain proper and dignified.

David was not taken in by Ahitophel's flattery at their first meeting but he accepted his services. Surrounded by admiring followers, David outlined his political objectives. He wanted to establish a state in which justice would reign supreme, a kingdom in which the moral law, faith in God and fellow-men, would replace violence and rule by force. His splendid words were interrupted by the cutting, cold, hard voice of Ahitophel who reminded him that in the meantime he must nevertheless resort to violence and war if he wished to attain such an objective. David could not deny that for the immediate present this was indeed so. He must still do what all peoples around him did. He must resort to force and fighting. But, his wish lay elsewhere. He did not seek to have Israel become a superpower and to dominate other powers. He wanted only a tolerable peace and sufficient time to plant the seed for a better order and for a generation to arise that would be more moral than the existing one. Such a generation would not be happy as long as unhappiness surrounded it. It would not rest content with its own achievements if it saw hardship and distress overtake its neighbors. It would

not lust for dominion over others or exhaust itself in the pursuit of splendor and power.

Ahitophel persisted in his scepticism as to the possibility of erecting such an ideal order even in a little state like Israel. He knew too well the failings of human beings on this imperfect planet. His insight into human nature did not let him believe that truth was likely to beam over falsehood, or goodness overtop evil. The ideal state was far from realization. The proof for his views came immediately when David was faced with a problem that offered no clear choice between right and wrong, a dilemma that was seemingly insoluble.

War was breaking out between Israel and the Philistines. Achish of Gath, one of the five Philistine rulers who formed a confederation, called upon David, who had become his vassal when fleeing from Saul and who still owed him allegiance, to join him in the war against Israel. David's choice was between two conflicting loyalties. Would he be loyal to Achish and assist him to murder the defenders of Israel or would he be loyal to Israel and break his oath of allegiance to Achish?

David sought to solve his dilemma by releasing his followers from their allegiance to him so that they would be free to join Israel's mobilizing army, while he himself would betake himself to his liege lord and the Philistine camp, knowing full well that he would be going to his death. Ahitophel questioned whether this was indeed the best decision. He wanted to know why David did not choose a less tragic course. When David replied that his decision was the only moral one, because faith and loyalty must be preserved, Ahitophel, the cynic, countered that faith and loyalty were but two words and should not be taken so seriously. David answered that upon these two words the moral world order depended.

Fortunately, David's dilemma was sidetracked when Achish, under pressure from the four Philistine allies, released David from his oath of obedience, since the Philistine confederation did not want fifth columnists in its midst. Ahitophel tried to dissuade David from setting out to assist Saul's army. But David, unlike Ahitophel, was not motivated by self-interest and set out for Gilboa, leaving the wily counsellor behind. The battle of Gilboa, however, was fought and lost before David and his men could arrive. After the death of Saul and Jonathan, David was offered the crown of Judah at the unconquered fortress of Hebron.

In the last act, Ahitophel was already ensconced as an important figure at David's circle. He took command of the coronation. David, who had just learned

of the death of his wife Maacha, was in no mood to go through with the ceremony. Ahitophel reminded him that a person could refuse an invitation to a meal but not a crown.

The personality of Ahitophel was clearly delineated in *Der junge David*, so that he could play a more important role in *König David*, the succeeding part of Beer-Hofmann's dramatic trilogy as the chief instigator in the revolt of Absalom. The invasion of Austria by the Nazis, however, interrupted the dramatist's creativity. It was not until a few days before the outbreak of World War II that he succeeded in escaping from Vienna. While en route to America, his wife Paula passed away and his final book, *Paula*, was devoted to her memory. In his American exile, he did not resume work on his trilogy.

A comparison of the portraits of Ahitophel by Dryden and by Beer-Hofmann reveals wide differences. The satirist distorts the biblical character for political purposes. He accuses, reviles, blackens, exaggerates, and imputes ugly motives. He draws a caricature, a vile serpent in human shape who poisons Absalom with flattery and evil counsel, and compares him to the serpent who led Eve astray and brought about the expulsion from Paradise.

Beer-Hofmann's portrait, on the other hand, aims to be faithful to the Bible and merely seeks to fill in the gaps in the original narrative. Ahitophel is a strongminded individual, a human being with profound insight into the normal behavior of his fellow-men, a realist who does not succumb to facile slogans, a pragmatist who puts his trust in facts and distrusts impractical ideals, a sceptic with a dose of cynicism but not a wicked person, a sagacious statesman who errs only in underestimating the yearning for goodness that wells up from the heart of the species made in the image of God.

TEHILIM: THE BOOK OF PSALMS

BY HAIM GEVARYAHU

This study was a guest lecture at the Princeton Theological Seminary delivered February 24, 1976.

The survival of an ancient literary text hung in the balances in the hands of scribes who copied it generation after generation until it had the good fortune to be included in the accepted "mainstream" of a national literature. Of course the scribes copied poems and literary pieces which were liked by the people, but the main factor was the heads of scribal schools who decided what was worthwhile to be copied from the original texts. I am much impressed by the clear expression of certain Scandinavian scholars (Nyberg and Birksland) who have suggested that a text in antiquity may be subject to the Darwinian law of "the survival of the fittest."

One can say that a book is like a man having a "biography," and that its survival is a very complicated and dramatic process. This applies to all biblical books but especially to the Book of Psalms where 150 units written by many poets at various times make up a book with a dramatic "life history" (150 dramatic histories as well as the overall history of the entire book). In the words of Midrash Tehilim I, Psalms is "a book composed by many mouths." Such a dramatic history lasted more than 1000 years, from its beginnings until it was sanctified and included in the inspired canon of Scripture.

In this paper we shall glance at the Divine drama of the genesis and growth of the Book of Psalms. We shall do so by attending principally to two questions. 1. Why and how were psalms written originally? 2. On what writing material were psalms written? Then we shall say something about historical period and the persons connected with the writing and the preserving of psalms. Finally a comment on the process of collecting from smaller units to a canonized Psalter.

Professor Gevaryahu is the chairman of the World Jewish Bible Society. He has written extensively on biblical subjects. He is now preparing for publication major works on the Biography of the Book of Psalms, Biblical proto-canonical Colophons, and on Monotheism vs. Polytheism.

I

We start with the question: how did it happen that people wrote psalms? The answer is clear: many were inspired to express thanksgiving prayers or laments connected with events in life. The more gifted among these authors offered praise to God in a written form (e.g. King Hezekiah after recovery offered a mikhtam, that is, a votive inscription, Is. 38:10. Also the story of Hannah where there is no reference to its being written down, I Samuel 2). The motive for this was to proclaim to a large public the greatness and the love of God. Temples and holy places served as main centers for prayers. The sacrificial activities (as in the case of Hannah) were always accompanied by prayers. Thus the original individual psalms that survived were used later on by the community for similar cases. The original individual "I" became a collective "I". Such is the case with the larger part of the Psalter.

While the prayer is often an accompaniment to sacrifice, we do have in our Book of Psalms at least one explicit reference to the offering of a written scroll instead of a sacrifice. Let us take as our starting point passages from Psalms 40:7–8 and 51:16–17.

Psalm 40 belongs to the "gattung" of individual thanksgiving.[1] The Psalmist brings to the saving God *shir hadash* , a new song. In verses 7–8 he says that God does not want animal sacrifices, and therefore he pays his vow by bringing a written scroll. The poet declares: *bati bimgillat sefer katuv alai*. What he means to say is: "I came to your holy place with a written scroll. I have vowed to declare your wondrous deeds to great congregations."

Some critics, not feeling the authenticity of the phrase *megillat sefer*, a written scroll, hold it to be a gloss. Duhm, for example, is suspicious of this text asking regarding the written scroll; *"woher, wohin, wozu?... ist der Dichter damit gekommen? und was will er damit?"*[2] Regrettably the translators of the New English Bible accepted this view and omitted this phrase. But this phrase, *bati bimgillat sefer*, is found in all the ancient translations and is also mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews 10:5–7. Therefore there is no reason to doubt its genuineness.

1 A good survey of the history of the study of the Psalm is given in L. Sabourin, *Psalms, their Origin and Meaning*, 1974, pp. 285–287.

2 B. Duhm, *Die Psalmen*, 1922, p. 170.

Let us take the verses of 40:7–10 as they stand:

Sacrifice and meal-offering Thou hast no delight in;
Mine ears hast Thou opened;
Burnt-offering and sin-offering hast Thou not required.
Then said I: 'Lo, I am come
With the roll of a book which is prescribed for me;
I delight to do Thy will, O my God;
Yea, Thy law is in my inmost parts.'
I have preached righteousness in the great congregation,
Lo, I did not refrain my lips; O Lord, Thou knowest.
I have not hid Thy righteousness within my heart;
I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation;
I have not concealed Thy mercy and Thy truth from the great congregation.[3]

We may ask: Why is God so entirely disinterested in sacrifices? The answer can be found in a similar statement in Psalm 51:17–19 which is well known as a prayer of confession, repentance and a plea for forgiveness. Here the Psalmist states:

O Lord, open Thou my lips; And my mouth shall declare Thy praise.
For Thou delightest not in sacrifice, else would I give it;
Thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

This non-acceptance of sacrifices should not be interpreted as opposing sacrifice *per se* as is supposed by a few Psalm commentators. Such scholars want to see here the idea of the prophetic opposition to sacrifice (cf. Amos 5:21–24, Hosea 6:6). I would follow rather the conclusion of Y. Kaufmann that the psalmic literature is a protoprophetic stratum and thus the parallel of Amos and Hosea is not convincing. In fact many psalms speak favorably about ritual

3 Cf. translation by Dahood, *Psalms I*, AB, 1966, p. 243, "Then I promised", "Look, I come", "In the inscribed scroll it is written to my debit."

Cf. also *Book of Psalms*, JPS, 1972, "See, I will bring a scroll reciting what befell me" with a note that the Hebrew is uncertain.

activity including sacrifices: (Ps. 116:17–19). But Psalms 40 and 51 refer to specific situations in which, according to religious custom, it was not right or fitting to bring a sacrifice.

It was understood by the Israelite worshippers that no sacrifice was to be offered for any acts relating to death or murder or sexual offenses. Tradition ascribes Psalm 51 (cf. the heading of the Psalm) to David after the death of Uriah the Hittite for whose death David bears the guilt. He prays for purification, hoping for God's peace. He seeks to be saved from the blood vengeance due him because of his responsibility for Uriah's death. He, therefore, prays: תחטאני באזוב ואטהר, *Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean* (v. 9). The hyssop was never used in the Temple compound itself but always outside the Temple in cases of purification and protection from blood vengeance (cf. Ex. 12:22–23), or from ritual impurity connected with purification at death (cf. Num. 19:18), or the purification of a leper (cf. Lev. 14:6–7), because his flesh was considered as dead. The psalmist uses the hyssop as a metaphor meaning a purification that must come from God.

Let us go back to the historical situation of David and his case as described in II Samuel 12 after the death of the child born of David's sinful relationship with Bathsheba. David prays in the tent of the Lord (cf. II Sam. 12:20). But why does he not eat of a sacrifice before God as was customary? Rather he goes to his own home to eat. Here we have a reflection of a religious custom that one could not participate in sacrifice which has some connection with a sin of murder.[4] We may infer therefore that Psalms 40 and 51 deal with the same kind of situations.

This also reveals to us the meaning of the particle כי as "because" in 51:18 כי לא תחפץ זבח *Because you don't want a sacrifice, which I would have given...* The particle כי gives trouble to the commentators who are not aware of this matter.[5] The psalmist is offering prayer instead of a sacrifice.

It also seems to me that the psalmist in Psalm 40 states explicitly that he brings a written scroll as an offering. It appears that this is also the case of Psalm 51. The words *megillat sefer* were explained by old and new interpreters as

4 This I have dealt with in my Hebrew article *Hatzileni middamim Elohim* in the Festschrift for J. Braslavi, 1970.

5 The JPS translator omits the *ki*. A detailed analysis of the problem is given by E.R. Dalglish, *Psalm Fifty One in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Patternism*, 1962.

referring to a book of the Torah, but obviously a *sefer Torah* can not be identified with a new song (שיר חדש). Therefore we follow Ibn Ezra that the written scroll is the payment of the vow; that is, the psalm itself is the written scroll.

It should be emphasized that Psalms 40 and 51 deal with situations that are exceptional. Nevertheless it may be granted that there were those that joined together the bringing of sacrifice with the offering of "written words" in honor of God, as was the case with King Hezekiah as mentioned above.

Perhaps we may understand the phrase in Hosea 14:3 קחו עמכם דברים ושובו אל ה׳, אמרו אליו... *Take with you words and return to the Lord and say to him...* as being written offerings instead of sacrifices. The term *devarim* may refer to written text as a similar phrase, קחו טוב, may be a technical term for a written prayer (cf. Nehemiah 6 at the end where *tovot* means written letters).[6]

II

Let us now consider briefly the writing material with which the psalmist may have been familiar.

The psalmist in 40:8 states that he brought a מגילת־ספר. The term *megillah*, in Akkadian *magaltu*, refers to a skin. *Sefer* originally meant writing material. *Megillat sefer* then means written on writing material that can be rolled. This is, by the way, the oldest recorded biblical reference to an animal skin as writing material. The second reference is in Isaiah 34:4 where *megillah* is hinted at: וְנָגֹלּוּ כַּסֵּפֶר הַשָּׁמָיִם · *and the skies roll up like a scroll.* In the 6th century the technical development of writing skin was quite developed and a prophet like Jeremiah had *megilloth* in his storeroom (cf. Jer. 36). In the Persian period the forms of parchment began to be common so that the scroll became the classical writing material of the ancient world. But the scroll of 40:7 was not the regular writing material because it was expensive; our psalmist emphasizes that he offered an expensive writing material.

In the book of Psalms another *sefer* is mentioned, *sefer hayyim*, (Ps. 69:29), which means "a written (recorded) list." The very mention of *Sefer* indicates, in all the probability, that this list was written on wooden tablets. The custom was to write on a layer of wax on a wooden tablet. This was used in the entire ancient

6 Cf. the notes of H. W. Wolff, *Hosea*, Fortress Press, 1974, p. 235.

world, for preparing lists (cf. *le'u* in Akkadian) and even literary texts. It may be said that the psalms of thanksgiving were for the most part written on *luah sefer*, that is on wooden tablets. This term, *luah sefer*, is to be found only in Ugaritic texts although it is hinted at in Isaiah 30:8 where *luah* and *sefer* are paralleled. *Luah sefer* is planed wood that was used commonly in the days of the first Temple for writing, as referred to in Ezekiel 37:16, *Take a wooden tablet and write on it."* At times they overlaid the wood with wax and wrote with a metal or hard stylus as in Isaiah 8:1. Wooden tablets were in common use until the development of tanning skins and making parchment.

I would like to call attention to the fact that most of the psalms and the writings of the prophets were originally written on wooden tablets. It is important to emphasize this fact for it is almost entirely unknown. The papyrus that could be used as writing material was expensive, had to be imported, and is almost never mentioned in the Bible. So wooden tablets and animal skins appear to be the main writing materials of the day.

There are indications in the Book of Psalms that beside the wooden tablets upon which at first many of the psalms were written, some of them were copied from inscriptions that were engraved on stones or on walls. We have six psalms with the heading of *mikhtam* (16, 56–60), a word which means according to LXX, Tosefta, and Midrash "copied from a stelograph."

From this investigation we may conclude that in the court and archives of the Temple there were many tablets of wood and scrolls of leather on which there were written thanksgivings, laments, prayers and hymns like Psalm 18 which were, in my opinion, originally inscribed on a wall, like the inscription of Hezekiah. Psalm 107, which was a favorite of the American Pilgrim Fathers, was a collection of many votive inscriptions which together created a poem, covering types of Divine rescue of people who then gave thanks.

I mentioned the Temple court as a central place for the display of the original Psalms. They were also written and displayed on the city gates as in Ps. 107:32, *Exalt him in the assembly of the people and praise him in the council of the elders.* These tablets and scrolls so displayed were the main source for the growth of the Book of Psalms as we have it. Our Book of Psalms originated from

7 Cf. H. L. Ginsberg, Psalms and Inscriptions of Petition and Acknowledgement, *L. Ginsburg Jubilee Volume*, 1945, pp. 159–171.

the offering of such votive prayers which were originally displayed and later copied and collected.

We may also understand this "sacrificial offering" in the form of a written scroll in the light of the international customs of the time. In the contemporary Egyptian temples, there have been found thousands of votive stones expressing thanksgiving for rescue, saving, healing. Similar thanksgiving inscriptions have been found in Phoenicia, Tadmor, and in other places. From all of this we may learn that Israel also could have used written offerings of gratitude.

But here the question may be asked: why are these votive inscriptions not preserved and have not been found in archeological digging? In reply it is possible to say that in Israel words of thanksgiving were written mostly on perishable material, leather or more often wooden tablets, which have not survived.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION

BY B. Z. LURIA

The obligation of compulsory education is an ancient one in Israel, and perhaps, the oldest in the world. It is common knowledge that this regulation is credited to Joshua the son of Gamla who served as "Kohen Gadol" (High Priest) shortly before the outbreak of the great revolt against Roman rule.[1] In the Jerusalem Talmud[2] there is a short item which indicates that Simeon ben Shetah preceded him. The item reads: Simeon ben Shetah introduced three things: "and that small children should go to school." About Simeon ben Shetah it is stated: "The world was confounded until Simeon ben Shetah came and returned the Torah to its ancient glory." About Joshua ben Gamla they said: "Were it not for him the Torah would have been forgotten in Israel." Do not these comments about two personalities on the same subject indicate that they refer to the identical regulation, first initiated by Simeon ben Shetah and implemented by Joshua ben Gamla?

Why was this "Kohen Gadol" called the son of Gamla? In Mishnaic terms the word "Gamal" means a camel driver. For instance, the Amora Abba Yudan Degamloy was a camel owner. However, one can reasonably assume that the High Priest, one of the leading personalities in Jerusalem, was neither a camel driver nor a camel breeder. The name "ben Gamla" was given to the High Priest in deference to the fact that he initiated and implemented some significant regulations concerning compulsory Torah education. "Gamla" in Aramaic means a small bridge – a board stretched across a brook[3] – and this was one of Rabbi Joshua's regulations.

1 63–65 C.E.

2 Ketubot 88a.

3 See the Aruch – Gamla.

Ben Zion Luria is the editor of Beth Mikra, the Hebrew publication of the Israel Society for Biblical Research. He is the author of numerous volumes in Hebrew on biblical history and geography.

If two neighboring communities are separated by a brook and there is a strong bridge that is safe for children to cross, then one teacher may be appointed for both communities. If, however, there is only a "gamla"[4] – a cross board – that is unsafe for children to cross, then the children of the community that has no teacher may not be sent to the other side which has one. One teacher must then be assigned to the community on one side of the brook and another on the other side of the brook.

A careful reading in the Talmud[5] makes it clear that even the Sages did not attribute the regulation *solely* to Joshua be Gamla. There were several phases in a process that eventually led to the important regulations instituted by Joshua ben Gamla.

1. In the beginning, he who had a father was taught Torah. This was based on the biblical injunction ***And you shall teach them to your children.***[6]

2. This was followed by the regulation that teachers should be appointed in the city of Jerusalem. This was based on the phrase *For out of Zion shall come forth the Law.*[7] Therefor, even if one had a father he was brought to the teacher to learn.

3. The next phase was the regulation that teachers should be appointed for every city – and the pupils were brought in at the age of 17 or 18. As a result, whenever one was scolded by his teacher he would rebel and leave.

4. Then Joshua ben Gamla came and instituted that teachers should be placed in every province and every city and that the children should be brought to them at the age of six or seven.

In the time of Joshua ben Gamla there were tens of large cities and hundreds of smaller ones, and it seems that the highest authority was the state, and that the Sanhedrin paid the teachers' wages, in whole or in part. Joshua ben Gamla who was himself very wealthy and who was in charge of the Temple treasury and the contributions from the diaspora, was able to enforce this regulation in every detail, to the extent that there was to be separate schooling in a small community when it was dangerous for the children to go elsewhere.

4 Jastrow: a small bridge crossboard. Rashi on Moed Katan 6b: it has no bridge only a board.

5 Baba Batra 21a.

6 Deuteronomy 11:19.

7 Isaiah 2:3.

We have seen that in the beginning this regulation was instituted in the days of Simeon ben Shetah who was neither rich[8] nor in charge of the Temple treasury. Since he issued a decree regarding compulsory education, he most probably depended on financial help from the government, that is, on King Jannai. Judging from the co-operation between the king and his brother-in-law in the attempt to clear the city of Ashkelon of idol worship we can assume full co-operation also also in this matter, and that Jannai provided the means for Simeon ben Shetach to introduce compulsory education in Israel.

After the death of Jannai and during the civil wars and the reign of Herod the situation was such that people stopped paying attention to the educational needs of their children. A new spirit and a new awakening was needed and this was provided by the High Priest Joshua ben Gamla. His extraordinary, unprecedented success consisted in the establishment of a school system throughout the land. They therefore attributed the regulation to him even though it was begun by Simeon ben Shetach with the help of King Jannai.

8 He worked with flax and would walk in connection with his work until his pupils bought him a donkey to lighten his work.

COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS

BY ZE'EV W. FALK

The Hebrew Bible, as well as other documents of faith, is based upon oral and written communication, and refers time and again to problems in communication between prophets and their audience. Likewise, the Hebrew Bible describes various communication problems between human beings, and indicates moral conclusions to be drawn therefrom.

The most striking example can be traced in the story of Joseph and his brothers:

> *But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him* (Gen. 37:4).

Obviously, Jacob's discrimination in favor of young Joseph caused frustration to his older sons. Envy and hatred prevented them from speaking peacefully with Joseph, or even from greeting him. A more mature attitude would have led them to discuss the situation with their father and perhaps arrive at a positive solution to the conflict. Once this line of communication had developed, the hatred could have been overcome. Another possibility would have been to talk in peace with Joseph, who would perhaps have pointed out to them why he was in special need of signs of love from their father.

But Joseph himself shared the guilt of having failed to create a relationship of confidence between the brothers. His uninhibited recital of his dreams showed lack of sensitivity for his brothers' feelings and concerns. By describing his chosenness he fostered the already existing envy and increased the communication barrier within the family.

There is another interruption of communication at the point where Joseph discloses his identity to the brothers:

Ze'ev W. Falk is Berman Professor of Law at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He is the author of "Hebrew Law in Biblical Times" and numerous other publications. He is the Editor of "Siah Mesharim", a monthly dealing with contemporary and eternal issues of Judaism.

And Joseph said to his brothers, I am Joseph; is my father still alive? But his brothers could not answer him, for they were terrified נבהלו *(nivhalu) at his presence* (Gen. 45:3).

The grave rebuke expressed by Joseph's very presence had left the brothers speechless. Security and self-confidence are requirements of communication. On later occasions Joseph understood how to relate to the brothers without undermining too much their self-image. He said:

I am your brother Joseph whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life... (Gen. 45:4 ff).

If the brothers had really carried out a Divine scheme, their guilt was bearable and would not prevent them from communicating. Likewise, it was necessary to raise the brothers' confidence, without belittling the original injury.

Fear not, for am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good... So do not fear; I will provide for you and your little ones. Thus he comforted them and spoke to their hearts וידבר על לבם *wayedabber al libbam* (Gen. 50:19).

This opening gave the brothers courage to reestablish communication and express their remorse:

And now we pray you, forgive the transgressions of the servants of the God of your father. And Joseph wept when they spoke to him. (Gen. 50:17).

Thus the initial communication problem was solved on both sides.

The Joseph story hints at the antagonism between the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, which in its turn was the result of lack of communication between Rehoboam and the elders of the people, following a similar problem between Saul and Samuel and between Saul and David.

Moreover, the Joseph story reflects the tension between the ancient tribal, egalitarian theocracy and the later political, functional monarchy. While Joseph represented the *raison d'état* and utilitarian concepts, his brothers stood for freedom and equality under God. This conflict could also have been overcome by better communication between the spiritual and the secular leaderships and by constitutional guarantees. The Deuteronomic law of the king, for instance, provided:

That his heart may not be lifted up above his brothers, and that he may not turn aside from the commandments... (Deut. 17:20).

But even a higher barrier to communication between brothers is reflected in the story of Cain and Abel.

> *And God had regard for Abel and his offering, but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry and his countenance fell. And God said to Cain: Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? If you do well, will you not be accepted? If you do not do well, sin is couching at the door, its desire is for you, but you must master it. And Cain said to Abel his brother... And when they were in the field, Cain rose up against his brother Abel and killed him* (Gen. 4:4 ff.).

According to the Hebrew text, nothing is said about the contents of Cain's proposal. The ancient translations assumed that Cain suggested a walk into the fields, while Abraham ibn Ezra suggested that Cain reported to Abel about the Divine rebuke.

However, the detail was left out on purpose, to teach us that the real problem was not *what* was said, but *how* it was said. Although the brothers spoke to each other, they did not communicate. The younger brother was obviously chosen to be the priest of the family. If both had understood that he acted on behalf of the whole family and as their servant the conflict could have been solved. Again, if Cain had communicated with God, instead of passively listening, he would have been able to accept and to overcome his envy.

Here we have again a symbolic representation of the conflict between groups, in this case, the cattle-raising nomads and the farmers. According to rabbinic interpretation, Cain said to Abel: "The land on which you tread belongs to me," to which Abel replied: "The woolen clothing you wear is mine" (Gen. Rabbah 22:7).

The argument reflects the insistence on the respective rights, which led to blood shed. We get the idea that the two sides should have collaborated in the use of their resources, instead of arguing and fighting. Although they are said to have talked with each other, no communication really took place.

The possibility of collaboration and coordination through communication is clearly expressed in the story on the confusion of tongues.

> *And God said, Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language; and this is only the beginning of what they will do; and nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them. Come let us go*

> *down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech (Gen. 11:6 f.).*

Communication is the fountain of all creativity and allows for the combination of efforts. God is shown to be intervening, once such an effort was directed against His will. In all other respects, however, human beings were meant to communicate with each other for their mutual benefits.

We have found fear to be a barrier to communication. Oddly enough this is so not only in the case of fear between human beings, but even in the case of the fear of God, the *tremendum.*

> *Then Laban and Bethuel answered, The thing comes from God; we cannot speak to you bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before you, take her and go, and let her be the wife of your master's son, as God has spoken* (Gen. 24:50).

The overwhelming realization that God had intervened, shocked the family of Rebekah so much, that they were unable to speak what was proper for the occasion. They should of course have joined in the servant's thanksgiving: *When Abraham's servant heard their words, he bowed himself to the earth before God* (Gen. 24:52).

Only at a later stage were they able to convey a blessing to the bride and express their feelings (Gen. 24:60).

Let us finally mention the liberating and purifying function of communication:

> *You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall rebuke your kinsman (amitekha), lest you bear sin because of him* (Lev. 19:17).

Hatred should be overcome by communication, by airing out one's grievance. Muteness prevents the solution of conflicts, perpetuates negative feelings and therefore sin.

The above insights owe much to Martin Buber's *I and Thou*, published over sixty years ago.

DOUBLE MEANINGS IN THE SONG OF SONGS

BY BENJAMIN J. SEGAL

Many are the overviews of the Song of Songs. Seen as allegory, drama, literary collection, or reworked pagan material, the Song's inherent worth has left all efforts at interpretation to pale before the beauty of the text itself. While the present article approaches the Song as literature, not accepting dramatic or pagan theories, it should be noted that an allegoric approach could be consonant with the view presented, but only on the basis of first achieving an integrated overview independent of the allegory and only then proceeding to the representational interpretation. (Such was the approach, for example, of Ibn Ezra). The details of the Song are to be explained first; allegory afterward. We do not here approach the latter topic.

UNITY OF AUTHORSHIP

The attribution of the Song of Songs to a single author (or single active editor, whose control and revision are evident throughout) has found an increasing number of proponents over the past two decades. Concentrating upon repeated themes,[1] word repetition,[2] literary structure,[3] and the like, many find in the work the product of a single hand.

In the present essay, we accept the conclusion of unity of authorship. Given that assumption, one should be able to find other traces of the style of the author,

1 e.g., Murphy, R. E., "The Unity of the Song of Songs", *Vetus Testamentum* XXIX, 4 (1979), pp. 436–443.

2 e.g., Rowley, H. H., "The Interpretation of the Song of Songs," in *The Servant of the Lord*, second edition (Oxford, 1965).

3 e.g., Exum, J. C., "A Literary and Structural Analysis of the Song of Songs" *Z.A.W.* LXXXV (1973), pp. 47–49. cf. also Shea, W. H., "The Chiastic Structure of the Song of Songs," *Z.A.W.* XMII (1982), pp. 378–396.

Rabbi Benjamin Segal is director of the Ramah Programs in Israel. After four years in a pulpit position, he made aliyah to Israel in 1973. He is author of the study books: Missionary at the Door and Midrash; The Search for a Contemporary Past.

these then being at one and the same time further indications of the unity and clues to the meaning of the poem. It is our intention in this article to dwell upon one such stylistic tendency, while indicating a number of passages that are best understood once the author's predilection for this method is noted.

DOUBLE ENTENDRES

The style of which we write we shall refer to as "double meanings," a form of word play whereby an author makes use of both of two alternative meanings of a word or phrase. Commentators have found such uses throughout.[4]

The author of the Song frequently uses a word which can have two meanings in both of its senses. Some commentators have noted isolated instances of such usages. Amos Hacham points out several such possibilities, including *nazkirah,* – נזכירה – 1:4 ("praise" and "sense the smell of").[5] Daniel Grossberg suggests that *ahavah* – אהבה – (3:10) signifies both "leather" and "love" at the same time.[6] Marvin Pope notes two interpretations of *karmel,* – כרמל – 7:6, as "crimson wool" and Mount Carmel.[7] Probably both are meant. R. J. Tournay cites the double implication of *zamir* – זמיר – as indicating both singing and pruning.[8] Michael Fox even suggests a double meaning based on near homonym – *midbareikh naweh* מדברך נאוה (4:3) as indicating both a pleasant mouth and, as "a very clever metaphor," that she (or any part of her) if compared to desert, is really an oasis.[9]

4 e.g., Y. Roth, "The Intentional Double Meaning Talk in Biblical Prose," (Hebrew), *Tarbiz* 41 (1972), pp. 245–252. See in particular the extended list *"des expressions ambiques et polyvalentes"* in Tournay, Raymond Jaques, *Quand Dieu Parle Aux Hommes Le langage de L'amour: Études Sur Le Cantique Des Cantiques* (Paris: J. Gabalda et Cie, 1982), pp 116–119.

5 Hakham, Amos, "Song of Songs," in *The Five Megilloth* [Hebrew] (Jerusalem: Mosad Harav Kook, 1973). Gordis, *The Song of Songs,* New York, Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1954), p. 78, proposed the translation, "inhale." Hakham also understands *oholei,* 1:5, as both "tents" and "people" (an interpretation we do not accept).

6 Grossberg, D., "Canticles 3:10 in the Light of a Homeric Analogue and Biblical Poetics," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* XI:3 (July 1981). Elsewhere ("Sexual Desire: Abstract and Concrete", *Hebrew Studies* XXII [1981], p. 59), Grossberg suggests a double entendre for the root *h–f–ts,* 2:7; 3:5, as "desire" and "extend stiffly" (i.e., membrum virile).

7 Pope, Marvin H., *Song of Songs* (New York: Doubleday, Anchor Bible, 1977), p. 629.

8 Tournay, *op. cit.,* pp. 69, 116.

9 Fox, Michael V., "Scholia to Canticles," *Vetus Testamentum* XXIII, 1983, p. 204.

We have noted that there may be as many as fifty such occurrences within the Song, and we shall dwell upon several of them here. To those cited so far, we include *mekutteret* — מקטרת — (3:6), which may mean both "perfumed" and "clouded"; *tashuri,* — תשורי — (4:8) ("trip down," "look"); *kefarim* — כפרים — (7:12) ("henna", "villages") and *kol,* — קול — (2:8 and 5:2 both as "hark" and "voice"). *Ro'eh* — רועה — is used in 6:2 and several times thereafter, the author taking advantage of its dual meanings – "browses" (intransitive) and "feeds his flock" (causative).[10] In this case, the double meaning allows for important and complex interpretations as the Song progresses, as shall be illustrated below.

BROTHERS AND SISTER

Particularly striking in terms of use of double meanings is the brilliant structure of 8:8–10a, wherein the author uses a series of double entendres to create at least two separate, distinct and even contradictory levels of meaning.

We have a little sister who has no breasts	אחות לנו קטנה ושדים אין לה
What shall we do with our sister	מה נעשה לאחותנו
On the day when she is spoken for?	ביום שידֻבר בה
If she be a wall	אם חומה היא
We shall build upon her battlements of silver	נבנה עליה טירת כסף
And if she be a door	ואם דלת היא
We shall form upon her cedar board	נצור עליה לוח ארז

The double understandings involved are the following: *na'aseh le...* נעשה ל as both "do for" and "act against";[11] *dabber be...* דבר ב as "spoken for in marriage" and as "spoken against";[12] *'al* – על as "upon" and "against"; and *nazur* — נצור as "form" and "besiege." Using these double meanings, and different possible interpretations of the symbols of verse 9, the author is able to construct two parallel statements.

10 Pope, *ibid.*, p. 405 ff. deals at length with the controversy over which of the two interpretations is meant, noting the grammatical ambiguity: "In the final analysis, the choice is determined by predilection." Our contention is that *both* implications were intended, and thus no one translation is sufficient.

11 Cf. Genesis 9:24 and Exodus 18:8 for *'aseih le...* as acting against the interest of.

12 Cf. Numbers 12:1 and Psalm 50:20 for *dabber be...* as speaking against.

On one level, the brothers[13] express real concern as they wonder how they can help their sister as she approaches marriageable age. She is not ready, but they offer to adorn her in the best way possible when the time comes. She responds by disagreeing with their evaluation. Though externally unready, she is, in some other way, fully ready.

On a second level, the young woman, in listening to her brothers, hears a threat. They act not for their sister's benefit as she understands it, but against her desire. They do not intend to build "upon" her but to set siege "against" her, and the imagery is of attacks and defenses. She responds that her defenses are superior to any attack that they can mount.[14] Thus, the author allows the reader to hear both the brothers' concern and the sister's fear at one and the same time.[15]

GIRLS OF JERUSALEM

These uses of two inherent levels of meaning open before us the added possibility of dual meaning based on implications imputed to words within the context of the Song itself, in which case the developed metaphor or symbol serves as one of the two levels of meaning of a verse. A particularly impressive instance of this type occurs in 6:2–3, as the woman speaks to the Girls of Jerusalem. They have asked for direction in order that they might help the woman find her lover. The answer that she gives certainly sounds appropriate to them, but for her (who has little interest in letting these other women really find her lover), her comments are strong recollections of moments of intimacy: *My beloved has gone down to his garden* (recalling their love tryst, 5:1) *to the bed of spice* (the spices which grew, and which he plucked in the garden — 4:14; 5:1) *to feed in the*

13 The assumption that the true brothers speak is supported by the reference to a real brother in the previous use of the term, 8:1, and is accepted by many commentators. If there is a veiled reference to the lover as speaker, most of the interpretations here included in the first level of meaning would apply, and another level of understanding would be achieved.

14 Verse 10b also involves a complex of double meanings, among them *'az* indicating both temporal and logical sequence, and *motseit* as both "find" and "produce." These, in turn, revolve about the meaning of the letter combination *sh–l–m*, a complex issue on which we shall comment in a separate article.

15 See the appendix for a graphic presentation of the two levels of meaning.

gardens (the Girls "hear" the causative – he feeds his sheep there, while she recalls the transitive – he "feeds" or "browses" there – just as her breasts are pictured by him as fawns feeding – 4:5).[16]

A similar use of previous developments to provide a second level of meaning to a verse occurs in 5:8, as the woman again turns to the Girls of Jerusalem, this time in order to have them communicate to her lover her "love-sick" status. The previous addresses to these Girls had been adjurations of non-intervention, and the term *im* אִם had been used as negation – *Do not wake or rouse love...* (2:7; 3:5). The unsuspecting reader, then, first understands in 5:8 that the woman does not want the Girls of Jerusalem to find her lover, and only the continuation shows that a conditional *im* — אִם is meant. However, the sense of competition throughout with these Girls, her subsequent use of directions that are meaningful to her but will not help them find her lover (as above), and her ultimate victory, as she arouses her lover while they are still adjured to non-interference (8:4–5) all support the understanding that this first "mis-reading" is yet another double entendre, an indication that the woman really does not want her lover found by the Girls.

אֵם — MOTHER

Yet another type of double meaning in the Song involves the term *em* —אֵם (mother), which appears in several verses. This term is unique in that it bears a constant dual implication or symbolism, this defined within the text of the poem and applicable to the term *em* — אֵם throughout. In 3:4 the woman longs to bring her love to her mother's house, the chamber of *horati* — הורתי (which we can translate temporarily as "she who conceived me"). In 6:9 he acknowledges her attachment to her mother, the word *em* — אֵם set parallel to *yoladettah* — יולדתה, "she who bore her." In 8:2 she restates her desire to bring him to her mother's house, this time the word *em* — אֵם defined as *telammedeini* — תלמדני "my teacher,"[17] completing the articulation of the double entendre. ***Horati*** – הורתי of 3:4 is interpreted twice, as reflecting two separate roots: as "she who

16 Hacham, A., *op. cit.*, senses the possibility of a double entendre throughout 6:2 – "It is possible that these words have multiple references" – though he does not spell out the details thereof.

17 following Gordis, *op. cit.*, p. 95f.

conceived me" (root: *h–r–h*) in 6:9, and as "she who instructed me" (root: *y–r–h*) in 8:2. The word thus brilliantly plays back upon itself. In her role as she who gives birth, the mother serves as instructor, as model, for her daughter.

The author of the Song of Songs, then, frequently resorts to double meanings as a primary literary technique. Given this frequency, one must take into account the possibility that the very title of the poem is also meant to be understood on more than one level. Among the possibilities are: "The most sublime of all songs, by Solomon," "The greatest of all of Solomon's songs" and "The greatest of all songs – concerning Solomon."[18] As with other cases of double uses of meaning, we should avoid the attempt to reduce our appreciation to one translation, but rather enjoy the skill with which the author uses the potential of double meanings to add depth and beauty to the poem. The technique is used throughout the poem, an additional testimony to the unity of the authorship of the Song and an important clue to unraveling its message.

18 For *le...* as "concerning," cf. Pope, *op. cit.*, p. 295 f.

APPENDIX

DUAL IMPLICATIONS – SONG OF SONGS 8:8–10a

(Brothers as speakers)

Text	*Brothers as helpers (they speak)*	*Brothers as threat (she hears)*
We have a little sister	not yet ready for	not physically ready for
who has no breasts	marriage	love
What shall we do	How can we help	What will they do to
with our sister	her?	me?
on the day when she	when it is time to	what will they say to
is spoken for?	marry her off?	my detriment?

Text	*Brothers as helpers (they speak)*	*Brothers as threat (she hears)*
If she be a wall	If she is not yet developed	If I resist
We shall build upon her	We shall adorn her	They shall build against me
Battlements of silver	With expensive, large accoutrements	Huge and expensive battle machinery
And if she be a door	If she is undeveloped	A. If I keep them out B. If they feel I'm too open and free*
We shall form upon her	We shall build her up	A. They will besiege me B. They will try to close the "open" door.
Cedar board	with beauty and strength.	A. With strong wooden battle machinery B. With strong wood
I am a wall And my breasts are like towers	She may seem unready But she is ready for love	I resist you I have greater power than you

* Variations "A" and "B" proceed on two tracks, depending on whether the "door" is perceived to be open or closed.

GENESIS 14 – MEANING AND STRUCTURE

BY NAHUM M. WALDMAN

Chapter 14 of Genesis, where Abraham is presented as a brave warrior, has intrigued many scholars. One view of the chapter is that it reflects actual historical events. Much effort has been expended in identifying the kings Amraphel, Arioch, Chedarlaomer and Tidal and connecting them with personalities known from cuneiform literature. However, the older identification of Amraphel with Hammurabi has long been abandoned. Another group of scholars sees the chapter as a kind of midrash, ostensibly glorifying Abraham but actually reflecting events of a later period, that of David, the Neo-Assyrian, the exilic or the Hellenistic periods.[1] It has been observed that kings from the different locations mentioned could not have invaded Palestine at the same time.[2] We will therefore approach this chapter on the assumption that it is not an exact historical description but a poetic reconstruction of historical materials.

THE COSMIC THEME

Whence do the four invading kings come and to what nations do they belong? Astour has made the felicitous suggestion that the invading kings represent the four corners of the universe as it was conceived in ancient times. The Assyrians saw the world as a circle divided into quadrants by intersecting diagonal lines. To the east was Elam; to the west, Amurru (the biblical Emori). In the north was Subartu (Assyria) and in the south Akkad, or Babylon.

Subartu

Amurru *Elam*

Akkad

1 The literature is cited in M. Astour, "Political and Cosmic Symbolism in Genesis 14 and in its Babylonian Sources," in Alexander Altmann, ed., *Biblical Motifs* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966), 65.

2 Astour, *op. cit.*, 78.

Dr. Nahum M. Waldman is Professor of Bible and Hebrew Literature at Graetz College, Philadelphia. He also teaches Assyriology at Dropsie University, Philadelphia.

Thus, Amraphel comes from Shinar, which is Babylonia to the south. Chedarlaomer comes from Elam, which is to the east. The form of his name follows the pattern of known Elamite royal names, such as Kudur-Mabuk and Kudur-Nahhunte. Tidal comes from an unknown place called Goiim, but the form of his name is Hittite, as in the royal name Tudhalias. He must have come from the west. During the biblical period, after the Hittites disappeared as an empire, western Asia, once called Amurru ("the West") was called "Hittite land" (see II Kings 7:6). Ellasar, from which King Arioch comes, is more difficult to identify. Astour sees the word as embodying Ashur, Assyria, on the north.[3]

The four kings who punish the insurrection of the five kings of the cities of plain come from the four corners of the universe.

The fact that the kings come from the four corners of the world adds to their significance and power. We have a similar idea expressed in Jeremiah 50:41. In an Assyrian poem, *Erra*, kings invade the sinful city of Babylon from the four corners and even more places: the Sea land in the south, Subartu and Assyria in the north, Elam in the east, the lands of the Sutians in the west and of the Guteans and the Lullubeans in the northeast.[4]

ABRAHAM AS KING

The midrash offers the valuable insight that, in the midst of the four and the five kings, Abraham the victor in battle, was also a king. In fact, he was recognized as the supreme king among them: "All the idolators came to a consensus, cut down cedars, made for him a great platform, seated him up high and did him homage, proclaiming, *Listen, my lord, you are a prince among us* (Gen. 23:6). You are our king, you are our prince, you are our God.' Abraham, however, answered, 'the world is not lacking its true king; it is not lacking its true God.'"[5]

Yohanan Muffs has made a very important contribution by demonstrating that Abraham's conduct as depicted in this chapter conforms to the norms of magnanimity expected of ancient monarchs. Our chief source for these norms are the ancient Hittite treaties of vassalship and suzerainty. When Abraham

3 Astour, 74–81.

4 L. Cagni, *The Poem of Erra* (Malibu: Undena, California, 1977), 56.

5 *Genesis Rabbah* 42:5.

responds to the king of Sodom that he will not accept the booty he retrieved, though he earned the right to it in battle, his action corresponds to that of the Hittite king Shuppiluliumas(1375–1370 B.C.E.) who came to the aid of his vassal Niqmaddu, king of Ugarit. Niqmaddu, in gratitude, presents the Hittite overlord with silver, gold and copper, all of which the Hittite king has just recovered. The Hittite king nobly refuses this gift.

Further evidence of Abraham's magnanimity is his concern for the soldiers who fought with him, that they should receive their share of the booty, even when he renounces his (Gen. 14:24). A parallel is David's ruling that the soldiers who remained in the camp should share with the fighters in the captured spoil (I Sam. 30:22–25; cf. Numbers 31:27).[6]

THE ETIQUETTE OF KINGSHIP AND VASSALSHIP

What is the relationship of Abraham to the king of Sodom? If a parallel can be drawn between Abraham's generosity and that of the Hittite king, Shuppiluliumas, was the king of Sodom likewise a vassal of Abraham by some existing treaty? This is possible, although no evidence for such a treaty is clearly given. Abraham may have come to rescue the Sodomites not because of a treaty but because of his kinship with Lot. The king of Sodom may have acted the part of the vassal *de facto,* because of Abraham's retrieval of all that he had lost, but was not a vassal *de jure,* because of a treaty. We shall discuss below the problematic behavior of the king of Sodom.

In our chapter we see an example of the proper etiquette that should be shown to kings. Melchizedek, king of Salem, comes forth to greet Abraham, bearing bread and wine. He blesses Abraham and God. Abraham responds by giving a tithe. Melchizedek's behavior is generous, as he presents nourishment to a tired warrior and his men. The book of Deuteronomy condemns, on the other hand, the Moabites and the Ammonites who did not welcome the weary Israelites with bread and water (Deut. 23:9). Moreover, Melchizedek is honoring both God and, in the person of Abraham, king. God and king are not to be cursed or blasphemed (Exodus 22:27). Naboth was falsely accused of "blessing" (a euphemism for cursing) God and king (I Kings 21:13). An Assyrian proverb states: "You will praise your god and salute the king."[7]

6 Muffs, *op. cit.*, 95.

7 W G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford University Press, 1960), 229-(26).

Saluting an overlord was the expected practice in the Ancient Near East. Toi, king of Hamat, sent his son to salute David and to bless him on his victory *(lish'ol-lo le-shalom u-levarakho;* II Sam. 8:10). Ahaz, who made himself a vassal of Tiglath-Pileser, came forth to greet his master (II Kings 16:10).When this act of homage was omitted, there was great anger on the part of the overlord.

We might also see **Melchizedek's action as hailing Abraham in the** presence of God, and for this, too, we can find parallels in Assyrian royal annals. Sargon II (721–705 B.C.E.) reports that the Maneans (cf. Jer. 51:27) hailed his kingship before the god Ashur and the gods of their land.[8] From the Assyrian passages we see that in inquiring after the king's well-being and blessing him **the operative words are *shulma sha'alu; karabu,* an equivalent of Hebrew** *barekh);* and in the Hebrew passages from Gen. 14 and II Sam. 8 the operative words are similarly *sha'al lishlom* and *barekh.*

THE NON-ACCEPTANCE OF OVERLORDSHIP

Now, we must look at the glaring contrast in the behavior of the king of Sodom. Between Gen. 14:17 and 24 Abraham's communication with **Melchizedek, the king of Salem,** and Bera, king of Sodom, is described. First the king of Sodom comes forth to greet Abraham, but there is no record of what he said. The account of Abraham's dealing with him is interrupted so that **Melchizedek's blessing of God and Abraham can be narrated.** Only after this, in vv. 21–24, is the conversation between Abraham and Bera recorded.

This A:B:A structure enables us to see that the scriptural text is contrasting the behavior of the two kings toward the victorious king (Abraham) and the true King, who is the real source of the victory (God). The very names of the two kings say as much: **Melchizedek,** whose name includes the element ***tzedek,*** "righteousness," and Bera, where we hear the word *ra*, "evil." The midrashim already sensed this, one interpreting Bera as *be ra*, "an evil son"[9] and another as *she-kol yamav hayah be-ra,* "one who was evil all his days."[10]

Rabbi Hayim ibn Attar, in his commentary *Or* ***Ha-hayyim,*** observes that the

8 *Textes cunéiformes du Musée du Louvre,* 3, 63.

9 *Genesis Rabbah* 42:5.

10 *Midrash Aggadah,* 29.

the king of Sodom, unlike Melchizedek, brings no gifts. We may also note that he bears no praise of God on his lips. Obviously, he is quite reluctant to recognize an authority higher than himself, whether human or Divine. Indeed, the whole story is about a hierarchy of authority which the king of Sodom and his colleagues did not want to acknowledge. The five kings were subordinate to the invading four kings for twelve years, rebelling in the thirteenth. However, Sforno adds another insight on the question of hierarchy. He notes that the earlier inhabitants of the land, the Rephaim, the Zuzim and the Emim were subordinate to the five kings and fought for them, as vassals were expected to do, against the invading four kings (on Gen. 14:5).

We mentioned earlier the ancient practice of the vassal offering the overlord the booty which the latter had retrieved. The king of Sodom makes this gesture to Abraham, recognizing, it would seem, the fact of his dependence. Yet we must further consult the cuneiform evidence. Muffs notes that there were other traditions regarding vassal relationships in war. There is a document known as the Ishmerika Treaty, which permits the vassals who come to the aid of the Hittite overlord to keep the *people* they have captured in punishing a city that has rebelled against the overlord.[11] It is reasonable to assume that the overlord also has this right. Abraham, then, as victor and overlord, can keep the people he has captured as well as the property, and he needs no magnanimous gestures from the defeated king of Sodom to confirm this. The king of Sodom is burning the candle from both ends: he is acting as the dutiful vassal and as the victorious, magnanimous overlord. He, the beggar, is bestowing upon Abraham what Abraham owns by right, in terms of the international law of that time. The opportunistic arrogance of Bera is clearly brought out. Did not Ezekiel (16:49) specify the sin of Sodom: *'Only this was the sin of your sister Sodom: arrogance*!

In the light of all this, Abraham's rejection of any part of the booty stands out. While the king of Sodom seeks to evade and manipulate hierarchical relationships, Abraham is one who honors covenant relationships, such as the one with his colleagues, Aner, Eshkol and Mamre, *bale berit-Avram*, "Abram's covenantal partners" (Gen. 14:13). By raising his hand to God in an oath, he demonstrates his loyalty to his Lord. Swearing by God is equated with service to

11 Muffs, *op. cit.*, 90; A. Kempinski and S. Kosak, *Die Welt des Orients* 5 (1969), 195.

Him (Deut. 6:13) and with cleaving to Him (Deut. 10:20). There is only one overlord for Abraham, who rejects the entire structure of vassal relationships because, in the human vassal network, the vassal can claim that he has contributed to his lord's wealth and therefore exerts some control over him. The king of Sodom could boast that *he made Abraham rich.*

STRUCTURAL DEVICES

There are repeated phrases which give a poetic flavor and draw attention to similarities or contrasts. In vv. 11–12 we have *they seized (va-yikhu) all the wealth of Sodom and Gomorrah and all their provisions (okhlam) and went their way (wa-yelekhu)*; note the similarity of the consonants in these two words) and *they took (va-yikhu) Lot... and his possessions and departed (va-yelekhu).* We hear two different uses of the root *ch–l–k* in *va-yechalek aleyhem laylah, at night, he and his servants deployed against them* (v. 15) and *chelek ha'anashim, the share of the men* (v. 24). There is a contrast between *va-yetze' melekh Sedom likra'to, the king of Sodom came out to greet him* (v. 17), in disgrace and defeat[12].

Chiastic structure, where repeated elements are reversed in an A: B :: B': A' order, plays an important role in this chapter. Soleh has observed that there is a chiastic structure between the four kings in v. 1, the five kings in v. 2, then the five kings in v. 8 and the four in v. 9[13].

We have a chiastic structure in v. 16: (A) *va-yashev* (B) *et kol harekhush* :: (B) *we-gam et Lot ahiv u-rekhusho* (A) *heshiv,* (A) *he brought back* (B) *all the possessions, and* (B') *his kinsman Lot and all his possessions he also* (A') *brought back.*[14]

There is an extended chiastic structure between vv. 19–22:

A (19)barukh Avram le-El Elyon koneh shamayim va-'aretz Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth

12 Aryeh Soleh, "The Structure of the Story about the War of the Kings in Genesis 14" (Hebrew), *Beth Mikra* 99 (1984), 361–367.

13 Soleh, *op. cit.*, 363; on word repetitions, see 365.

14 The use of two forms such as *va-yashev* and *heshiv* is a feature of Ugaritic and biblical poetry; cf. Moshe Held, "The *YQTL–QTL (QTL–YQTL)* Sequence of Identical Verbs in Biblical Hebrew and in Ugaritic," *Studies and Essays in Honor of Abraham A. Neuman*, ed. by M. Ben-Horin, B. D. Weinryb and S. Zeitlin (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 281–290.

B (20) *asher-miggen tzarekha be-yadekha, who has delivered your foes into your hand*

C (20) *va-yitten-lo maaser mi-kol, and he gave him a tenth of everything*

C' (21) [note also the internal chiasm[(A) *ten-li* : (B) *ha-nefesh :: (B') ve-harekhush* : (A) *kah-lakh, give me the persons and the possessions take for yourself*

B' (22) *harimoti yadi, I have lifted up my hand*

A' (22) *Hashem El Elyon koneh shamayim va-aretz..., God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth*

This chiastic structure emphasizes the dramatic power of Abraham's recognition of the only God and his absolute rejection of the dependency which human overlordship imposes upon vassal and lord.

Many peoples of many languages will come to Jerusalem to seek the Lord
Zechariah 8:22

POLARIZATION IN THE MOSAIC PERIOD

BY JEFFREY M. COHEN

The early verses of Devarim chapter 4 present us with two problems. The primary theme of those verses is Moses' summons to Israel to keep the Torah because of its unique truth and wisdom and because of the special proximity to God which study and observance of our law will achieve.

Verse two states:

> *Do not add to the commands I have given you, neither take any away.*

But verses three and four suddenly interject an extraneous reference, apparently unrelated to the theme of keeping the precise number of mitzvot given by God, neither adding nor subtracting thereto:

> *Your eyes have seen what God did to Baal Peor, for He destroyed out of your midst any person who followed after the idolatry of Baal Peor.*

Verse five once again reverts to the original theme:

> *Behold I have taught you statutes and judgments... and you shall keep and observe them.*

So the first problem is why does Moses go off at a tangent and remind Israel of the consequences of the Baal Peor episode when, at the end of the Sidra Balak, the daughters of Moab trapped Israel into immoral practices and lured them into their own cult of Baal Peor.

What has *that* got to do with the context of observing the precise number of mitzvot in the Torah, neither adding any nor subtracting?

The second problem is, why should Moses imagine for one moment that Israel will not be satisfied with 613 laws, and still be tempted to add more to the Torah? What would possibly have prompted him to issue the warning "Do not *add* to this matter"? It could not have been that he regarded the nation as so saintly that he suspected they would obsessively look for more and more laws, since, in the

Rabbi Dr. Jeffrey M. Cohen is the Rabbi of Stanmore & Canons Park Synagogue, London, and lecturer at Jew's College. He has written five books, the most recent one Horizons of Jewish Prayer. A book of his collected biblical and contemporary essays will be published in 1988.

very next breath, he warns them: *neither take away from any of the laws!* We suggest that both of these problems are inextricably interwoven, and that the answer to them is related to our contemporary religious predicament, the one we refer to by the term 'polarisation'.

Moses wants to establish here a rational, sensible approach to religion. He wants the Hebrews to adopt a religious stance that would serve as a light to the other nations, and help to eradicate heathenism. This purpose is made clear in verse 6:

> *Observe and keep the Torah, because it is a sign of your wisdom and your understanding in the eyes of the nations, who, when they will hear all its statutes, will say 'this great nation is truly wise and understanding'.*

At that moment when Moses was uttering that challenge to Israel to adopt a form of a religion that would be attractive to the outsiders, that would have a wider, international, if not global, appeal, Moses was suddenly struck by a major reservation regarding Israel's capacity to interpret and observe its religion in that rational way. Perhaps he had seen recent and disturbing manifestations of a philosophy of extremism which ran counter to a rational Judaism.

He immediately reflected on the episode of Baal Peor – a moral abyss in the religious life of the nation. Twenty four thousand people had perished in the aftermath of that national act of moral degeneracy.

We know today what happens when a nation or a group becomes assailed by moral corruption and licence, when all values and standards are swept away.

Two opposing reactions can be expected. Some will be so outraged, so fearful for the future moral survival and ethical integrity of their offspring, that they will withdraw from any association with the outside world; they will recoil from the coarse environment which fostered that moral decline. They will go – and take their religion with them – to the opposite extreme. They will adopt stringencies and disciplines; they will hedge themselves in with many precautionary regulations whose sole objective is to draw an iron curtain between them and those whose life-style they perceive as their greatest threat.

They will not want a Torah that synthesizes religion and everyday living, since they will reject the world and all it stands for in their apprehension of what the standards of the street, and the gutter, are capable of doing, and have succeeded in doing, to undermine the cohesion, identity and values of the faithful

community. Their solution is to become מוֹסִיפִים to *add* fences and religious restrictions, so as to ensure that contact with wider society becomes impossible.

On the other hand, this approach does not appeal to everyone. There are those who doggedly assert that if Judaism is to have a wider mission, to be a 'light to the nations', then we have to expose ourselves even to Baal Peor cults. We have to live *in* the world, to live cheek by jowl with corrupting influences, and, by our example, to change the complexion of society.

Popular among adherents of this philosophy is the strategy of reform, namely that to influence others you have to adapt your own practices, moderate and modernize them somewhat, trim them a little, so that the wayward and misguided will be attracted to your Judaism and be prepared to accept the less demanding and less rigorous form of the ancestral faith.

Two diametrically opposite approaches. And, of course, the third approach, that defects and opts-out altogether, that finds the freedom and licence offered by the adherents of *Baal Peor* just too alluring to give up.

We now have an answer to the two problems we raised at the outset. When Moses was calling upon Israel to observe God's Torah, it suddenly occurred to him that since Baal Peor, keeping the Torah was no longer a simple matter, for he had to contend with polarisation, with the differing reactions to that episode. Hence he includes a reference to that tragedy. And hence his call to both sides of the spectrum.

To the pietists who, in their flight from society were enwrapping themselves with layer after layer of *chumrot*, undemanded stringencies, extra precautionary laws, Moses said: לא תסיפו על הדבר — *Do not add to the word.* That approach, withdrawal from the world, panic flight into sectarian exclusivism, is not the purpose of the Torah which is to appeal to *all* nations and all ideologies.

And to those whose modernist solution was to attract others by compromise, Moses adds, ולא תגרעו ממנו — *And you, do not take away anything from it.* Not only will you not win over others by that approach, but you will lose your own convictions, undermine your own discipline and fall away to total assimilation.

Interestingly, a little later in his Deuteronomic discourse, Moses' mind turns through the very same thought-association. Deut. 12:29–31 cautions Israel against becoming ensnared by the heathen practices of the indigenous Canaanite tribes — *for every abomination to the Lord, which He hateth, have they done unto*

their gods; for even their sons and their daughters do they burn in fire to their gods.

The very next verse (which, in Jewish masoretic tradition, unlike the Christian chapter division, is not the beginning of a new chapter, but the *concluding* verse of the previous section, and therefore inextricably interconnected thematically with the above two verses) reintroduces the apparently unconnected caution, "All the word which I command you, that shall ye observe to do: *thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it*" (Deut. 13:1).

Once again, we may assume, Moses is anticipating the polarizing effects on Israel of a confrontation with an alluring though morally degenerate influence.

If our reading of Devarim chapter four is correct, then we have foreshadowed therein the scenario with which we are currently so familiar. And, more to the point, we have an implicit rejection of polarization as a solution to society's ills.

Only a Judaism that remains wedded to modern life, without compromising its laws, can serve the purpose of God and our people. Only a rational, non-extremist and non-polarized Judaism will secure our future as *Klal Yisrael*, a unified people, acting out its preordained destiny, instead of sapping its very life-blood by internecine rivalry, sectarianism and mutual hostility.

We still have a long way to go until we deserve the acclaim of nations, as promised by Moses, when they will say כי מי־גוי גדול אשר־לו אלהים קרובים אליו *What a great nation is this, to whom God is so close* (v. 7).

But we must not cease to work towards the attainment of that objective, by rejecting polarization and fostering tolerance and love among all sections of our people, and among all the family of nations.

LINGUISTIC ELEMENTS IN THE BOOK OF RUTH

BY MIRIAM SCHNEID–OFSEYER

The Book of Ruth is not considered a book of poetry. Commentators attempted to find in it clarity and simplicity characteristic of an idyllic story devoid of echoes of the stormy days of the era of the Judges.

Some have investigated the purpose of the book and the reason for which it was written. Some thought that the book was a response to the expulsion of the gentile wives in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah. Others interpreted it as an emphasis on the element of grace and the reward that is reserved for those who do a good deed.

I intend in this article to examine only the language of the Book of Ruth, whose author was undoubtedly a person sensitive to fine points of language and to its sounds. It must be admitted that only those who read the Book in Hebrew with vocalization and emphasis on consonants will experience the delights of its language.

As far as sound is concerned, one must remember that the letters *pe* and *beth* with and without *dagesh* as well as the letters *vav* and *mem* are labial consonants, and thus sound alike. The four letters ב,ו,מ,פ sound similar and may have sounded more so in antiquity.

Discovery of this multiplicity of labial consonants made me suspect that in olden times these letters were pronounced in an identical manner. I find confirmation of my hypothesis after reading the book, *Writings of Arad* by Yohanan Aharoni.[1] In *Writings of Arad* Number 24 there are two cases where *feh* and *veth* are interchanged: בהבקידם instead of בהפקידם; בנבשכם instead of בנפשכם. This is the way they pronounced it in the South, the locale of the actions occuring in the Book of Ruth. Perhaps the book was written there.

Reading will make now more sense if we will check how many times labial consonants are repeated in a similar or identical way in the first sentence: ויהי

1 *Studies of the Judean Desert*, Mosad Bialik, Jerusalem, 1976.

Mrs. Schneid–Ofseyer, graduate of Yeshiva University (M.A.) and doctoral candidate, served as Supervisor of the B.J.E., Toronto, taught there in the Teachers' Seminary, and in the Institute for Continuing Studies. She is the author of seven books of poetry (Hebrew) and received First Prize for poetry from the Society of Composers.

בימי שפט השופטים — ויהי רעב בארץ. וילך איש מבית לחם יהודה לגור בשדי מואב הוא ואשתו ושני בניו. Thus we note that labial consonants appeared twenty times in the nineteen words of the sentence.

It is also worthwhile to listen to the labial consonants in the answer of Ruth to the pleading of Naomi.

And Ruth said: Entreat me not to leave thee,	ותאמר רות אל תפגעי בי
and to return from following after thee;	לעזבך לשוב מאחריך
for whither thou goest, I will go;	כי אל אשר תלכי, אלך
and where thou lodgest, I will lodge;	ובאשר תליני, אלין
thy people shall be my people,	עמך עמי
and thy God my God;	ואלהיך אלהי
where thou diest, will I die,	באשר תמותי אמות
and there will I be buried;	ושם אקבר
the Lord do so to me, and more also,	כה יעשה ה' לי וכה יוסיף
if aught but death part thee and me.	כי המות יפריד ביני וביניך.

Though the Book of Ruth is written in prose, the style is frequently poetic. This is effected by the rhythmic repetitions of similar sounds. More than that: on occasion, the special use of sounds heightens the sense of emotional tension.

Thus, in the eighth sentence, when Naomi tries to send her daughters-in-law away and mentions the advantage of it to them, she says: — יעש ה' עמכם חסד כאשר עשיתם עם המתים ועמדי. *God will bless you for being graceful towards the departed ones and towards me.* The *mem* being repeated here seven times turns each word in which it occurs into a closed entity, and its slowness emphasizes the pain that it evokes.

When Naomi sees that Ruth makes an effort to go with her, she stops talking and they walk till they arrive at Beth-lehem, where the town is humming with the news of their arrival. ותלכנה שתיהם עד בואנה בית־לחם, ויהי כבאָנָה בית לחם ותהם כל העיר עליהן ותאמרנה הזאת נעמי. In the sounds of the words we hear the onomatopea of the turmoil and of the shouting.

ECHOES

A careful reading or listening to consonants and vowels enhances our impression by putting us in contact with the subconscious. In the answer to the

question *Is this Naomi?* she says: אל תקראנה לי נעמי קראן לי מרא כי המר שדי לי מאד. *Don't call me Naomi* (sweet), *call me Mara (bitter) since Shaddai made my life bitter.* Shaddai reminds us of the saying שד משדי יבוא *A misfortune that comes from God*, or perhaps (subconsciously) it hints at *he will sleep between my breasts* בין שדי ילין, since צרור המור דודי לי *My beloved is to me as a bag of myrrh.* Song of Songs suggested שדי המר לי in the Book of Ruth. The association between צרור המור and המר שדי לי is probably not accidental. Since this echo comes from the subconscious it reinforces the degrading feeling it entails that the beloved becomes the cause of the misfortune. This adds strength to the verse dealing with the subconscious feelings. Thus the question of the women becomes justified: *Is this Naomi*? or has she changed to *Mara.*

KEY WORDS

The special charm and literary excellence of the Book of Ruth resides not only in its effective use of consonants and vowels but also in its use of key words — especially in conjunction with sounds.

And they came to the fields of Moab and remained there ויבואו שדי מואב ויהיו שם. Here again labial consonants in the Hebrew are repeated six times in five words. Here the prolongation of the period of sojourn is described. The original intention was to live there temporarily as foreigners. Later on they remained in Moab as permanent inhabitants. All the events of ten years are related in the first five sentences. They consist of hunger, exile, infertility, widowhood and loss of two sons.

שָׂדֶה (field) is a key word. The story begins with an absurdity: hunger in Beth-lehem (the house of bread). The dignified man must leave the beth of Beth-lehem that is characterized by lehem (bread) to reside for a short time in *Sdeh Moab.* The main events in the book will occur in the fields — the one of Boaz and later in his granary.

The man moves with his movable possessions, with his wife who belongs to him, and his two sons. He seems to be in control of his fate. He does not know, of course, that man knows his fate and his goal only on a most superficial level of existence. The slow detailing of *he and his sons and wife* and then the full listing of names is meant to emphasize what will follow subsequently:

I left with my full possessions and God returned me empty-handed.

The man's *going* from Beth-lehem will find its parallel later in the *return* of

Naomi and her daughters-in-law. Thus, וילך will be parallel with ותלכנה.

וילך איש מבית לחם יהודה ותלכנה לשוב אל ארץ יהודה

and the circle is closed in which leaving the land brought misfortune, and return to it – blessings.

The Book of Ruth uses some words and names to evoke hidden layers of higher meaning. Thus: *Elimelech, Naomi's husband died.* – While he was alive Elimelech was referred to as *He and his wife.* After his death – he belongs to her. The disaster is her misfortune, the way it is described in Sanhedrin: "A man dies to nobody but to his wife." She will miss him more than the sons. Indeed in the next sentence it relates with the succintness characteristic of this story: *They married Moabite women.* One son was married to Orpa and the other to Ruth. **This is not told in order to castigate marrying non-Jewish women. The** story is told with naturalness. It is true that it was interpreted to mean that the marriages came off easily since the father Elimelech was dead.

They lived there about ten years. – וישבו שם כעשר שנים

And again the family was struck by disaster with the death of Mahlon and Chilion. Now we hear in the names the fate and destiny of their bearers. The story thus advances to a higher level that gives us a broader view of the disaster that struck Naomi: *The woman remained without her children and husband.* Despite the fact that they were adults – they were still children in relation to her. Naomi is called the "woman" – her name does not fit in the story of the misfortune.

The root of the word *Ephratim* is fertility and indicates birth of sons and **affluence. This is hinted in the second sentence. The main problem in the book is survival of a son and continuity of life. No wonder that the book ends** triumphantly with the birth of a son, a son of Ruth and Boaz, named Obed, the grandfather of David.

The fact of the naming is quaint. It is the *women,* Naomi's neighbors, who gave the child a name, saying: *There is a son born to Naomi.* It is, in all probability the same women, who on welcoming Naomi on her return from Moab, had said: *Is this Naomi?*

THE HART AND HIND IN BIBLE AND MIDRASH

BY S. P. TOPEROFF

The hart is the male of the herd; the hind, or the doe, is the female. In Hebrew, *Ayal* (not to be confused with *Ayil*, a ram) is a generic term for hart, stag, and deer. The derivation of *Ayal* is uncertain but some connect it with a word meaning strength or help; compare Psalms. 88:5 where the word *Eyal* (אֵיָל) means strength or help.

The place named *Ayalon* (deer field) is connected with *Ayal* and is found in Joshua 10:12 and 19:42. The hart is a "clean" animal, permitted to be eaten, (Deuteronomy 12:15); indeed it was served at the table of King Solomon (I Kings 5:3). The hart is characterized by its elegance and speed; according to the Talmud it is the swiftest animal (Kethuboth 112a). In Genesis 49:21 Naphtali is compared to a hind let loose, an image of swiftness. The comment of the Midrash refers to the rapid ripening of fruit. As the rabbis remark: This is symbolical of the Valley of Gennesareth which ripens its fruit very quickly, just as the hind runs rapidly (Genesis Rabbah, 99:9). The swiftness of the hart is employed metaphorically by the prophet Isaiah who foretells that even the lame shall leap as a hart (Isaiah 35:6). King David, too, praises the Almighty for making it possible for him to flee — *who makes my feet like hinds* — as he ascends the heights to escape from his enemies (Psalms. 18:34). In an amazing outburst of religious fervour David exclaims, *as the hart pants after the water brooks, so pants my soul after Thee O God* (Psalms 42:2). Here, too, David uses the simile of the hart to express the flight from his relentless pursuers who deprive him of the living waters of the Torah for which he thirsts.

The Yalkut analyses the words of Psalm 42:2 in a striking manner. On the words *as the hart pants after the water brooks*, the Yalkut points out that the hart or hind is the most pious of all animals, for when the animals thirst for water

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

they gather round the hind who digs her horns deep into the earth and prays for water and the Almighty in his abundant mercy causes the water to rise from the depths of the earth, quelling the thirst of the animals.

Psalm 22 is headed by the beautiful superscription, *Ayelet Hashhar – the hind of the morning.* Modern commentators claim that this title was the name of a melody to the acompaniment of which the psalm was written. The rabbis, however, are more specific. They declare that the antlers of the hind branch off this way and that way, so the light of the dawn is scattered in all directions (Yalkut Shimoni).

An interesting observation is made by the rabbis who infer that Queen Esther recited Psalm 22 when she presented herself to King Ahasuerus (Megillah 15b). R. Zera asked why was Esther compared to a hind? To teach you that just as a hind has a narrow womb and is desirable to her mate at all times as at first, so was Esther precious to King Ahasuerus at all times as at the first time. R. Eleazar said: Why is the prayer of the righteous compared to a hind? To teach you that as with the hind, it grows its antlers from additional branches every year, so with the righteous, the longer they abide in prayer, the more will their prayer be heard (Yoma 29a).

In another biblical passage we read of the beauty of form and gracefulness of the hind – *a lovely hind and a graceful doe* (Proverbs 5:19). A modern writer has underlined the elegance of the hind in these words: "I have often stopped to admire the grace, ease and fearless security with which these pretty animals bound along the high places of the mountains" (Thompson).

So far we have dealt with the hart and hind, but another name for the male deer is the stag. This animal occurs in the Midrash in a striking parable. The rabbis exhort us to love the proselyte or stranger who is compared to a stag amongst the flock. The Holy One loves the proselytes. To what is the matter like? To a king who had a number of sheep and goats which went forth every morning to the pasture and returned in the evening to the stable. One day a stag joined the flock and grazed with the sheep, returning with them. The shepherd said to the king – "There is a stag which goes forth with the flock and grazes with them and comes home with them." The king then loved the stag and commanded that no one should beat it. He ordered that the stag should have plenty of food and drink.

(Continued on page 246)

עשה תורתך קבע

TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

May-June 1988 — **סיון תשמ"ח**

T	Ruth 1	א	17	רות א'
W	Ruth 2	ב	18	רות ב'
Th	Ruth 3-4	ג	19	רות ג'-ד'
F	Numbers 1-4:20	ד	20	במדבר
שבת	Haftarah: Hosea 2:1-22	ה	21	ערב שבועות הושע ב', א'-כב
S	Exodus 19-20	ו	22	שבועות
	Haftarah: Ezekiel 1			הפטרה: יחזקאל א'
M	Deuteronomy 14:22-16:17*	ז	23	שבועות דברים י"ד, כב-ט"ז, יז*
	Haftarah: Habakkuk 2:20-3*			הפטרה: חבקוק ב', כ-ג'*
T	Ezra 1-2	ח	24	עזרא א'-ב'
W	Ezra 3-4	ט	25	עזרא ג'-ד'
Th	Ezra 5	י	26	עזרא ה'
F	Numbers 4:21-7	יא	27	נשא
שבת	Haftarah: Judges 13:2-25	יב	28	הפטרה: שופטים י"ג, ב'-כה
S	Ezra 6	יג	29	עזרא ו'
M	Ezra 7-8	יד	30	עזרא ז'-ח'
T	Ezra 9	טו	31	עזרא ט'
				June
W	Ezra 10	טז	1	עזרא י'
Th	Nehemiah 1	יז	2	נחמיה א'
F	Numbers 8-12	יח	3	בהעלתך
שבת	Haftarah: Zechariah 2:14-4:7	יט	4	הפטרה: זכריה ב', יד-ד', ז
S	Nehemiah 2	כ	5	נחמיה ב'
M	Nehemiah 3-4	כא	6	נחמיה ג'-ד'
T	Nehemiah 5	כב	7	נחמיה ה'
W	Nehemiah 6	כג	8	נחמיה ו'
Th	Nehemiah 7-8	כד	9	נחמיה ז'-ח'
F	Numbers 13-15	כה	10	שלח
שבת	Haftarah: Joshua 2:1-24	כו	11	הפטרה: יהושע ב', א'-כד
S	Nehemiah 9	כז	12	נחמיה ט'
M	Nehemiah 10	כח	13	נחמיה י'
T	Nehemiah 11-12	כט	14	נחמיה י"א-י"ב
W	Nehemiah 13	ל	15	נחמיה י"ג

*Only in the Diaspora — *רק בחוץ לארץ

June-July 1988			תמוז תשמ"ח
Th		16	א
F	Numbers 16-18	17 קרח	ב
שבת	Haftarah: I Samuel 11:14-12:22	18 הפטרה: שמואל א י"א, יד-יז"ב, כב	ג
S	I Chronicles 1-2	19 דברי הימים א א'-ב'	ד
M	I Chronicles 3-4	20 דברי הימים א ג'-ד'	ה
T	I Chronicles 5-6	21 דברי הימים א ה'-ו'	ו
W	I Chronicles 7-8	22 דברי הימים א ז'-ח'	ז
Th	I Chronicles 9-10	23 דברי הימים א ט'-י'	ח
F	Numbers 19-22:1	24 חקת	ט
שבת	Haftarah: Judges 11:1-33	25 הפטרה: שופטים י"א, א-לג	י
S	I Chronicles 11-12	26 דברי הימים א י"א-י"ב	יא
M	I Chronicles 13	27 דברי הימים א י"ג	יב
T	I Chronicles 14	28 דברי הימים א י"ד	יג
W	I Chronicles 15	29 דברי הימים א ט"ו	יד
Th	I Chronicles 16	30 דברי הימים א ט"ז	טו
		July	
F	Numbers 22:2-25:9	1 בלק	טז
שבת	Haftarah: Micah 5:6-6:8	2 הפטרה: מיכה ה', ו'-ו', ח	יז
S	I Chronicles 17	3 דברי הימים א י"ז	יח
M	I Chronicles 18	4 דברי הימים א י"ח	יט
T	I Chronicles 19	5 דברי הימים א י"ט	כ
W	I Chronicles 20	6 דברי הימים א כ'	כא
Th	I Chronicles 21	7 דברי הימים א כ"א	כב
F	Numbers 25:10-30:1	8 פינחס	כג
שבת	Haftarah: I Kings 18:46-19:21	9 הפטרה: מלכים א י"ח, מו-י"ט, כא	כד
S	I Chronicles 22	10 דברי הימים א כ"ב	כה
M	I Chronicles 23	11 דברי הימים א כ"ג	כו
T	I Chronicles 24-25	12 דברי הימים א כ"ד-כ"ה	כז
W	I Chronicles 26-27	13 דברי הימים א כ"ו-כ"ז	כח
Th	I Chronicles 28	14 דברי הימים א כ"ח	כט

July-August 1988

F	Numbers 30:2-36
שבת	Haftarah: Jeremiah 1:1-2:23
S	I Chronicles 29
M	II Chronicles 1
T	II Chronicles 2
W	Lamentations 1-2
Th	Lamentations 3-4
F	Deuteronomy 1-3:22
שבת	Haftarah: Isaiah 1:1-27
S	Lamentations 5
M	II Chronicles 3
T	II Chronicles 4
W	II Chronicles 5
Th	II Chronicles 6
F	Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11
שבת	Haftarah: Isaiah 40:1-26
S	II Chronicles 7
M	II Chronicles 8
T	II Chronicles 9
W	II Chronicles 10
Th	II Chronicles 11
F	Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25
שבת	Haftarah: Isaiah 49:14-51:3
S	II Chronicles 12
M	II Chronicles 13
T	II Chronicles 14
W	II Chronicles 15
Th	II Chronicles 16
F	Deuteronomy 11:26-16
שבת	Haftarah: Isaiah 66

*Only in the Diaspora

מנחם אב תשמ"ח

א	15	מטות ומסעי
ב	16	הפטרה: ירמיה א', א-ב', כג
ג	17	דברי הימים א כ"ט
ד	18	דברי הימים ב א'
ה	19	דברי הימים ב ב'
ו	20	איכה א'-ב'
ז	21	איכה ג'-ד'
ח	22	דברים
ט	23	הפטרה: ישעיה א', א-כז
י	24	תשעה באב איכה ה'
יא	25	דברי הימים ב ג'
יב	26	דברי הימים ב ד'
יג	27	דברי הימים ב ה'
יד	28	דברי הימים ב ו'
טו	29	ואתחנן
טז	30	הפטרה: ישעיה מ', א-כו
יז	31	דברי הימים ב ז'
		August
יח	1	דברי הימים ב ח'
יט	2	דברי הימים ב ט'
כ	3	דברי הימים ב י'
כא	4	דברי הימים ב י"א
כב	5	עקב
כג	6	הפטרה: ישעיה מ"ט, יד-נ"א, ג
כד	7	דברי הימים ב י"ב
כה	8	דברי הימים ב י"ג
כו	9	דברי הימים ב י"ד
כז	10	דברי הימים ב ט"ו
כח	11	דברי הימים ב ט"ז
כט	12	ראה
ל	13	הפטרה: ישעיה ס"ו

*רק בחוץ לארץ

Dor Le Dor

דור לדור

OUR BIBLICAL HERITAGE

Vol. XVI, No. 4 (ס"ד) Summer 1988

SODOM: MANNERS, MORALS, MISDEEDS	*Louis Katzoff*	211
NOBLESSE OBLIGE	*Louis Katzoff*	213
JOB: THE THIRD CYCLE	*David Wolfers*	217
AHITOPHEL OF GILO	*Sol Liptzin*	227
TEHILIM: THE BOOK OF PSALMS	*Haim Gevaryahu*	235
COMPULSORY EDUCATION	*B. Z. Luria*	242
COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS	*Ze'ev W. Falk*	245
DOUBLE MEANINGS IN THE SONG OF SONGS	*Benjamin J. Segal*	249
GENESIS 14 – MEANING AND STRUCTURE	*Nahum M. Waldman*	256
POLARIZATION IN THE MOSAIC PERIOD	*Jeffrey M. Cohen*	263
LINGUISTIC ELEMENTS IN THE BOOK OF RUTH	*M. Schneid–Ofseyer*	267
THE HART AND HIND IN BIBLE AND MIDRASH	*S. P. Toperoff*	271
TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR		273

This issue of Dor Le Dor is subsidized
by the
BARECHA FOUNDATION. N.Y.

ABSTRACTS OF ARTICLES IN DOR le DOR APPEAR IN

Internationale Zeitschriftenschau Für Bibelwissenschaft und Grenzgebiete Habichtweg 14, 7400 Tübingen

Old Testament Abstracts The Catholic University of America, Washington DC 20064

WORLD JEWISH BIBLE CENTER

29a Keren Hayesod St. Jerusalem 94188 02-245751

Dor Le Dor is published in Jerusalem for the benefit of the English speaking public and is directed to knowledgeable Jews who wish to further their understanding of Jewish Scripture.