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מיאכו מנו מ ש ה ו"ל

THE ART OF BIBLICAL NARRATIVE

BY PINCHAS DORON

Before we enter a discussion of the art of story telling in the Hebrew Bible, and before we delineate the various characteristic traits of this art, we must pose some basic questions. Since the Bible is "sacred" literature designed to impart moral and religious lessons,[1] do we have the right or need to speak of the "art" of biblical narrative? Doesn't the Bible simply relate what happened and no more? Is there an "art" in biblical story telling altogether? If there is, why was it necessary to employ an "art" merely to relate events that occurred in history?

The slightest reflection on the matter is enough to show that such a supposition is erroneous. Many events occurred; every day something happened. Nevertheless the Bible relates only a small number of the events. Some historical works, such as *The Book of the Wars of the Lord; Sefer Hayashar; The History of the Kings of Israel and Judea* are only referred to in passing,[2] without citing their contents.

Should one argue: "The Bible relates all the important events," the question arises: what is the criterion for the importance of an event – or its relative unimportance? E.g. we learn from an inscription of Shalmaneser II king of Assyria, that in 853 B.C.E. Ahab, king of Israel, formed a coalition of a number of nations (such as Judea, Aram Damesek and Arabs riding on a thousand camels) who went out to fight Shalmaneser at Carcar in northern Syria. Had the

1 See P. Doron, *The Mystery of Creation according to Rashi*, Moznaim Publishing Corp. N.Y. 1983, pp. 1–2 where the point is made that the Hebrew *torah* means "instruction," so that every part of the Bible, including the narrative portions, come to instruct the reader.

2 E.g. Numbers 21:14 – *The Book of the Wars of the Lord*; II Sam., 1:18 – *Sefer Hayashar*; I Kings, 11:41 *Sefer Divrei Shlomoh*; I Kings, 14:29; 15:7, 23; 22:46 – *The Book of the History of the Kings of Judea*; I Kings, 14–19; 15:31; 61:14, 20, 27 – *The Book of the History of the Kings of Israel.*

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various nations *not* united into a coalition against Assyria, it is quite conceivable that the exile of the Israel Kingdom would have taken place *then* and not 130 years later in 722 B.C. The battle at Carcar was, then, an event of utmost importance historically. Yet the Bible does not even bother to mention it!

However the seemingly private incident of Naboth's vineyard (I Kings, 21), which an ordinary history book might not have even mentioned, is related at length in an entire chapter. The conclusion seems inescapable: Ahab's military valor is insignificant in the eyes of the Bible, but his distortion of justice in the matter of the vineyard looms large.

Another example. The turning point in ancient Israel history was King David's period. Until David there was a danger that the Philistines would overrun the country and Israel would be their vassals. David stemmed this tide; the Israelites became the masters of the land. Yet there is no story in the Bible telling of David's systematic out-and-out war against the Philistines. In Samuel II, 5:16–24 we read of two local battles David waged against the Philistines at the beginning of his reign – a mere nine verses and that is all! On the other hand, the Book of Judges devotes four chapters to Samson and his rather indecisive exploits against them! What was the criterion which determined the inclusion of these seemingly historically insignificant stories of Samson and the exclusion of David's victories over the Philistines? We can make various assumptions, but surely the matter is by no means simple.

Many events related in Samuel and Kings are not mentioned in Chronicles.[3] But also the opposite is true; some events that bear the mark of great antiquity, such as the list of the supervisors of David's estate or economy[4] are not mentioned in Samuel II, 23. Hence, we must ask with regard to each story: Why is it told, what does it come to teach? In sum, one cannot state that the Bible is just a chronicle of events. The events related in the Bible are a judicious selection, each teaching some moral or religious lesson. The Bible is historiosophy (philosophy of history), not history.

3 E.g. all the events relating to the hostility of Saul toward David and Saul's pursuit of David; David's victory over Goliath; all the miracles wrought by Elijah and Elisha.

4 Cf. I Chronicles, 27:25–31; all the genealogies of Levites and the divisions into 24 "watches" related at great length in I Chronicles, Chaps. 23–27; the great battle between Aviyah King of Judea and Jeroboam of Israel described in detail in II Chronicles 13, is not even mentioned in I Kings 15.

With the exception of several books – Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, Canticles and Esther – the rest of the Bible is one long story, whose broad general theme is: "How the Jewish People acquired the land of Israel; how they lost it and then subsequently regained it." With very few exceptions[5] all the individual events and all the admonishments of the prophets bear directly or indirectly on this broad topic. Strictly speaking there are only two major characters in this story, God and Israel. The plot is unique: the covenant between God and Israel regarding the acquisition of the land of Canaan, which is dependent on the Israelites keeping the Torah.

However, this broad topic is made up of many books, which in turn are made up of "cycles" of stories centering around a major personality, e.g. the Abraham cycle, and Jephthah, Gideon, Joseph, Moses, Saul–David cycles. The cycles are divided into individual story-units. The characteristic traits of biblical narrative are present in each individual story as well as in the cycles and books as a whole.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF BIBLICAL NARRATIVE

As was stated above, biblical narrative is bent on transmitting religious and ethical values. The pedagogic concerns become clearer if we view biblical narrative in its several layers. In almost every biblical narrative one can discern three layers: the top layer is the plot itself; beneath it is the layer which reveals the emotional and mental attitudes of its characters (through the medium of their actions and statements, about which see below); and the deepest layer contains the general ideas and *weltanschauung* of the writer.[6] It is for this reason that the Bible speaks to us differently at each level and the text should be taught differently at each age-level, depending upon which of its layers is being explored.

As a popular folk story, which was probably handed down orally from generation to generation before being committed to writing,[7] the biblical story always contains a plot, an event, or series of events that occurred over a period of time. Generally, the tempo of a biblical story is very quick compared to modern writing. However, the tempo varies according to the purpose of the writer. At

5 Such as the Book of Jonah.

6 Cf. *Ha-Arakhim Ha-hinukhiim shel Ha-Tanakh* (The Educational Values of the Bible) by Zvi Adar, M. Newman, Jerusalem–Tel -Aviv, 1969, p. 54.

7 Z. Adar, *Ha-Sipur Ha-Mikraee* (The Biblical Narrative) Dept. of Education and Culture in the Diaspora of the World Zionist Congress, Jerusalem 1968, p. 39.

times, events taking place over a short span of time, are related at a leisurely pace,[8] whereas long spans of time are sometimes dismissed with a single phrase.[9]

The aim of the narrator also determines the period of the lifetime in which the major characters enter into the narrative. Thus, nothing is told of Abraham's childhood and adolescence. His story really begins with the imperative *'Go forth from your land'* (Gen. 12:1). It remains for later legend to fill us in on details about his childhood and adolescence.[10] Similarly, Elijah enters the biblical narrative with his ultimatum to King Ahab[11] (I Kings 17:1); Saul appears as a lad sent by his father on an errand. David enters as a shepherd boy in Bethlehem whither Samuel came to anoint him. Similarly, all the Judges (excepting Samson) enter the story as Judges–saviors of their people. Until then their life is unimportant to the narrator.

The biblical story always starts *in medias res* without lengthy introductions about the past of the protagonists.[12] In order to understand the purpose of a given narrative we must pay close attention to the tempo of the story; note at what situation and period in the life of the major character he enters the story and ask why the narrator chose this particular tempo and that particular time.

THE MINIMUM PRINCIPLE

Perhaps, the basic principle in the art of biblical narrative is the "minimum principle." Unlike the oriental tendency to embellish one's story with flowery speech, hyperbolic, intricate patterns of meter and rhyme, the biblical narrator gives only the bare minimum that is necessary for the unfolding of the story. If one compares a biblical story to Homer's works or the Persian epic *Shah-Namah*

8 E.g. the birth and formative years of Samuel to which three whole chapters, 1–3 are devoted; likewise the birth of Samson to which a whole chapter is devoted, Judges 13. Similarly most of the events related in the entire Book of Ruth took place in the short span of six weeks.

9 The phrase *The lads grew up* (Gen. 25:27) summarizes the entire period from birth to adulthood (or at least adolescence) of Esau and Jacob! Similarly, the two words *the lad grew* (Exod. 2:10) suffice to summarize the entire weaning period of Moses, and in the next verse (2:11) the words *Moses grew up* summarize Moses' entire education and growing up in Pharaoh's house!

10 As portrayed in some detail in Genesis Rabbah.

11 This sudden eruption is very appropriate to Elijah's character; he always appears suddenly and disappears just as suddenly and even leaves this world in like manner. Witness Obadiah's statement about this nature of his master in I Kings 18:12.

12 Z Adar, *Ha-Arakhim*, p. 57.

the simplicity of the biblical style is immediately apparent. There is no meter or rhyme here, obviating the introduction of much flowery speech and fanciful descriptions. Whenever a woman is mentioned in the *Shah-Namah*, she is invariably described with the phrase "whose face is the face of the moon." A man is always credited with: "the heart of a lion."[13] Such appelations rarely, if ever, have anything to do with the plot.

In each story, we sense the narrator's tendency to avoid introductions, to give only the details absolutely necessary for the understanding of the plot and to bring the reader as quickly as possible to the heart of the plot. Thus, the story of "the binding of Isaac" begins with the statement *God tried Abraham* (Gen. 22:1) and immediately proceeds to the main plot; the story of Abimelech (Judges, Chap. 9) begins without any introductions, with his conspiracy to kill his siblings. In the story of David and Abigail (I Samuel 25) a mere *two* verses are enough for the narrator to introduce the new characters (Nabal and Abigail), to depict their characters succinctly, to give the place and time of the plot! (verses 2–3). With the third verse of the story (verse 4 in the chapter) the actual plot begins and unfolds without any digressions to the very end. In this type of intensive writing the biblical narrative is akin to Greek tragedy which, too, goes directly to the heart of the matter in order to bring it to the audience in a most direct manner, without any external embellishments.[14] A modern writer is capable of turning a single biblical chapter into a whole novel for the modern reader of refined taste.[15]

In a biblical narrative one looks in vain for descriptions of the external, bodily appearance or the attire of the characters. Nor does one find elaborate descriptions of scenery.[16] Only the absolute minimum that is necessary for a proper understanding and appreciation of the plot is given. Thus, about Esau we are told that he was *a hairy man* (Gen. 27:11), because that detail is necessary for an understanding of Rebekah's scheme. Likewise, we are told that Joseph

13 Cf. S. D. Goitein *Omanut Ha-Sipur Ba-Mikra* (The Art of Story-telling in the Bible), *Iyunim* No. 23, Dept. of Youth Immigration of the Jewish Ageney, Jerusalem 1956, p. 25.

14 Cf. Z. Adar, *Ha-Sipur Ha-Mikraee* p. 44.

15 Compare the volumes of Thomas Mann in his *Joseph and his Brothers* to the biblical presentation of this huge drama in several brief chapters.

16 Contrast the elaborate descriptions of scenery in the works of such modern writers as Marcel Proust, Balzac, James.

wore a *striped shirt* (Gen. 37:3), because this attire caused the envy of his brothers. Scripture states that *Leah's eyes were weak* (Gen. 29:17), to show why Jacob preferred her more beautiful sister Rachel.

REASON FOR SIMPLICITY OF STYLE

What is the reason for this extreme simplicity of style and narration? S.D. Goitein[17] believes the main reason is sociological; the biblical narratives were written for simple working people; shepherds or farmers. Such folk know no luxuries, either in their life-style or in their spiritual pursuits. The only free time a farmer has is on Sabbath, Holidays and on rainy days. This is not the environment of nobles and princes, who spend weeks and months feasting.[18] Such noblemen require a skilled poet to occupy their many idle hours with long, artistic tales full of descriptions and flowery speech. The ancient Persians, Greeks, and Arabs had special guilds of professional storytellers, whose activity is recognizable in such works as *A Thousand and One Nights*. This phenomenon was so foreign to Israelite society that biblical Hebrew does not even have a word for "poet" or "story." There was no guild of story-tellers, but whoever saw God's works and prowess rose up and told the story. The original version and style of the Hebrew story was fixed by the "anonymous," non-professional story-teller, the man of deeds.[19]

Another reason for the simplicity of biblical narratives, according to Goitein, is the religious-ethical thrust common to all these tales. These stories do not come to entertain, but rather to enlighten and instruct the reader in religious and moral values. Therefore, there is no room for flowery speech or fanciful artistic embellishments in them.[20]

17 *Omanut Ha-Sipur Ba-Mikra* pp. 26–27.

18 Cf. Esther 1:4.

19 Op. cit. p. 28. However, one may ask: 1) How did the simple farmer-storyteller merit that his story was canonized into the Bible? 2) If the stories were written by "anonymous" simple people, how can we, and why do we make so mueh of the "art" of their story-telling? Does a simple farmer / shepherd have the time or inelination to develop his spontaneous story-telling into sueh an intrieate art?

20 However, if the biblieal narratives were designed *only* as instruction, one would expect them to be much less engrossing and rather dry, with little or no "art" in them.

BIBLICAL STORIES RELATE ACTIONS

The biblical story relates only the actions and the statements (and that very sparingly) of the characters of the story, but does *not* bother to tell the reader the motives for their actions, the thoughts and feelings of the actors. All these he expects the reader to guess or "figure out" somehow from the actions and words. Thus, from Abigail's deeds we are expected to guess her attitude toward her husband and to David, and her intentions regarding both; the great pain *and* the great faith of Abraham, during "the binding of Isaac," we are to understand from his actions and very scanty speech alone. From his frenzied actions, we guess at the strong lust for power of Abimelekh.

What does Abraham *feel* when God commands him to sacrifice Isaac? Why does Joseph deliberately estrange himself from his brothers and play tricks on them? What does Saul feel after the encounter with Samuel's spirit at the house of the woman of En-Dor? What did Bath-sheba feel when she was taken to David's palace? What did David feel and think while fleeing from his own son Absalom? How did Ruth feel and what did she think when she went, at her mother-in-law's bidding, to be with Boaz on the threshing floor? Was she in love with Boaz or merely fulfilling Naomi's wishes? The narrator says nothing at all about these and many other such questions that come to the reader's mind.

There are no Hamlets or Fausts in the Bible. This, however, is no indication of a lack of strong emotions and thoughts. On the contrary, the spiritual life of biblical characters stands out very clearly, but each mental or spiritual experience leads to action. It is from their deeds that we learn about their emotions and thoughts.[21]

In this way the biblical narrator achieves a well-knit, exciting plot that appears to be simple. However, the plot is not that simple, because it is always composed of two layers: the external and the internal, i.e. that which relates indirectly the inner, spiritual life of the characters. This artistic device contains an inherent *weltanschauung*, namely that man is a whole being — a "psychosomatic individuum." Therefore the narrator never describes the "external" (active) or "internal" (spiritual) side of the characters separately, but always the interlocking of the two.[22] This trait of biblical narrative is ubiquitous, throughout the Bible.

21 Cf. Z Adar, *Ha-Arakhim ha-Hinukhiim*, p. 62.

22 Ibid. p. 65.

STORIES INTERLINKED

We saw above that the literary unit is the individual (usually short) story. Each story is an independent entity, understood by itself, expressing its own values. And yet, each story is connected to what came before it, as well as to the event that follows it. For instance the chapter about Eliezer and Rebekah (Gen. 24) is only one link in the Abraham cycle. Yet all the details in that chapter are understood by themselves; they are artistically beautiful and the ideas underlying them are clear, even if we did not know that they are only part of a more complex story. We could easily identify with an old father who is anxious to marry off his beloved son and who insists that he finds a wife from his own family.[23] Of course, he would send his trusted servant, for surely it is not becoming that the son himself should go out to search for a bride. It is charming that the bride is chosen not only for her physical assets, but also tested by her deeds. Also charming is the detail that the family asks the girl's consent.[24] Above all, the wonderful success attendant upon every step of the matchmaking is an assurance that the match will be successful. Even without the names Abraham, Isaac, Eliezer, Rebekah, Laban and Bethuel, and without any connection to the history of the forefathers, the story would have been complete in itself. However, now that it is placed within a larger framework and being a crucial chapter in the history of the Patriarchs, it is all the more beautiful and complete.

Similarly, the binding of Isaac (Gen. 22) is an integral part of the history of the Patriarchs. And yet, it is a very poignant and complete story within itself. Had we read this chapter alone, without any knowledge of all the agony and pain Abraham (and Sarah) suffered before they had Isaac, we would still learn from it the full meaning of a test and the true meaning of devotion to God.

Sometimes even very short stories are independent units. The six verses about the sale of the birthright for a pot of lentils (Gen. 25:29–34) are surely an organic part within the trilogy: *Jacob-Esau-Laban.* Even taken by themselves, they paint a complete social scene. We see here the hunter, whose life depends upon chance,

23 As is the custom to this very day among the Arabs, only in Abraham's case we also detect a religious motive.

24 Unlike the prevalent custom by which the fathers of the groom and bride decide the match among themselves. This custom still prevails among many Arabs and even in a minority of Jewish circles.

who enjoys whatever comes his way, without considering the future. In contradistinction to Esau the hunter, we meet Jacob, the dweller in tents, who plans his life carefully, who foresees the developments, who eats of what he himself prepared.[25] And all this in a mere six verses!

The brevity of the biblical story results in its being unified and clear; each story has a definite beginning and a definite end and its own environment. But still, the individual short story is a connecting link to the story that follows it and that which precedes it.[26] The unity and clarity of the biblical story is also ensured by the fact that only a few major characters appear in each at one time. In David's or Jeremiah's times we encounter numerous characters, nevertheless in each single incident only two or three actors appear. Big stories such as those concerning Joseph or Jacob, Esau or Laban are divided into small episodes in each of which no more than two or three characters appear. In this the biblical narrative is akin to Greek drama; it is full of action, it is brief. Hence, the entanglement, the climax and anticlimax come in rapid succession. The small number of characters presented in each scene enables one to concentrate on the plot and makes the biblical narrative so dramatic.[27]

25 Scripture only states that Jacob cooked a broth of lentils, but since Jacob "the dweller of tents" is here placed in contrast to Esau "the hunter," there is a distinct possibility that Jacob also sowed and harvested the lentils before cooking them. One gets the impression of a contrast being made between a self-sustaining worker of the land and an adventurous hunter leading a precarious life.

26 The incident of the sale of the birthright is an elaboration and example of the statement in verse 27: *When the boys grew up, Esau became a hunter, a man of the field.* However, it is also connected to Chapter 27 – Isaac's blessing of Jacob, instead of Esau. The intervening Chapter 26 about Isaac's sojourn in Philistia, his digging of wells and great prosperity, probably comes to show that while the sale of the birthright took place during the brothers' youthful years, the blessings took place in Isaac's old age, when they were fully mature. In the meantime Esau had a change of heart regarding the value of the birthright and strongly desired the blessings attendant upon it. Hence the need for Rebekah's scheme.

27 Cf. S. D. Goitein, *Omanut ha-Sipur, p. 32.*

JONAH: TOWARD THE RE-EDUCATION OF THE PROPHETS

BY ROBERT J. RATNER

For my friend and colleague, Edward Hobbs

The author of the Book of Jonah has created a character in Jonah, the prophet, who is a scorner whom God strikes, though never mortally, so that some audience may learn of the author's view of the prophetic office and of God's relationship with His creatures. Jonah is portrayed as the negative model of prophetic behavior and ideology whom the audience is warned not to imitate.

The writer is a master pegagogue. He weaves his tale with a consummate artistry that leaves the readership convinced that Jonah's arrogant reluctance and intellectual narrowness mock the grand and venerable prophetic calling. Irony, satire, and extensive use of word play serve as rhetorical means to make light of Jonah. The writer has created a narrative sequence in which God repeatedly attempts to teach Jonah: but Jonah always fails to comprehend. The audience could be moved to call out: "Jonah, do you not hear what your own lips utter (1:9, 12; 2:10)? Jonah, do you not see the wisdom of those around you (1:6, 14; 3:9)? Jonah, if these mere 'heathen' realize that repentance is a prerequisite for salvation (1:6; 3:9), should you not, how much the more so, O prophet of Israel? Wake up, you sleeper!"

A CARICATURE OF A PROPHET

Jonah is drawn as a caricature of a prophet. His hypocritical utterances (cf. 1:9), empty and hackneyed praises lacking all sentiment of contrition (as if repentance is simply not in Jonah's vocabulary; cf. the Psalm), and his uniquely

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selfish and self-centered concerns (he continually has changes of heart when it comes to his own welfare, but refuses to allow this in others; cf. the Psalm and chapter 4), all prove to the reader that Jonah has a great deal to learn. By the end of the book, Jonah sits silently, yet presumably unmoved by the personalized object lesson given him by the great Teacher. The rhetorical question that ends the book so abruptly forces this lesson in an unmediated form upon the readers, and on the readers alone. As one scholar put it so well, the audience is left to ask, "Am I (or is my group) like Jonah? If so, what do I (or we) make of the Lord's rebuke?"[1] In effect, then, the book of Jonah seeks to elicit a strong unfavorable response to the figure of Jonah, from its readers, while inculcating what may be a new or, perhaps, controversial view (at the time of the writing) of the role of prophecy. God is the proponent of this view in the story.

God tells Jonah to rise and go east to Nineveh and proclaim doom upon it. Jonah arises, but then flees in precisely the opposite direction in an attempt to escape from the Lord. Outrageous! How can a prophet imagine that he can flee his commission? It is true that Moses begged God to send another prophet in his stead (Ex. 4:13) and Jeremiah complained that he was too young to have any credibility (Jer. 1:6), but never before or after does a prophet attempt to flee his commission. The reader may well ask why Jonah does not sense in his own commission the urgency felt by an Amos, when Amos states: *A lion has roared, who can but fear? The Lord has spoken, who can but prophesy?* (Amos 3:8).

Could God have permitted Jonah successfully to resist and flee His command to pronounce doom? It is this question which we believe goes directly to the heart of one of the central problems addressed in this book. Following, to some extent, the work of both E. Bickerman and A Feuillet,[2] we would like to suggest that the author of the Book of Jonah wrote as a contemporary of or soon after Ezekiel in response to his vision of the prophet as both watchman (3:33) and one whose singular duty it is to bring the wicked to repentance so that God might renounce His judgment of doom (18:33). Jonah's flight is symptomatic of his deeper problem with both God and his own prophetic responsibility. God's response to Jonah's insubordination brings to the fore the author's principal understanding of prophecy.

1 N. Gottwald, *The Hebrew Bible: A Socio-Literary Introduction* (Philadelphia, 1985), 560.

2 E. Bickerman, *Four Strange Books of the Bible* (New York, 1967), 40, and A. Feuillet, Les sources du livre de Jonas, *Révue biblique* 54 (1947), 161–186.

A BOOK ABOUT PROPHECY

As J. Rosenberg has noted, this is "a book about prophecy – that is, about the prophetic voeation."[3] We would like to suggest that the writer of the book of Jonah has produced a tract on prophecy that stands as a defence and an expansion of the views of both Ezekiel, and his earlier contemporary Jeremiah, against those who held a very different perspective on the role of the prophet in Israel and beyond. Clearly, this age of turmoil for Israel at large likewise presented significant challenges to the institution of prophecy itself.

The sixth century was a time of change, indeed crisis, for classical prophecy in ancient Israel. The Book of Jeremiah addresses this crisis directly. The once reluctant prophet now does not hesitate to condemn those of his profession whom he knows to be leading the people astray by words of peace when admonishment is called for (Jer. 23). True prophets, Jeremiah believes, following his great predecessors Hosea (9:8) and Isaiah (21:6 ff.), stand as watchmen to warn the guilty of impending doom (6:17). But, is the prophet's role simply to declare inevitable destruction? Jeremiah's response was revolutionary. Jeremiah made it known that the people of Judah would suffer each one for his own sins. That being the case, the prophet must bring the people to repent wholeheartedly so that God might pardon them and thus annul the punishment.

Jeremiah uses the example of other nations in his parable of the potter (18) in order to make this point to his Judean audience:

> *If at any time I declare concerning a nation or a kingdom, that I will pluck up and break down and destroy it, and if that nation, concerning which I have spoken, turns from its evil, I will repent of the evil that I intended to do to it. And if at any time I declare concerning a nation or kingdom that I will build and plant it, and if it does evil in my sight, then I will repent of the good which I intended to do to it.* (18:7–10).

Jeremiah is then told to tell the people of Judah and Jerusalem:

> *Thus says the Lord, Behold I am shaping evil against you and devising a plan against you. Return every one from his evil way, and amend your ways and your doings.* (18:11).

3 J. Rosenberg, Jonah and the Prophetic Vocation, *Response* 8/2 (1974), 23.

Most telling is the response put in the mouths of the people by Jeremiah. We ean easily see in the people's words an epitome of their thinking, as Jeremiah understood it, when they say, in effect, "What is the use?" (18:12). The people neither have it in them to repent (as if repentance is simply not in their vocabulary) nor can they aceept that their repentance could possibly be effective in the face of so much past accrued wrongdoing. But Jeremiah's message is founded upon the certainty that God will reshape this people just as He will any other people that repents sincerely (18:6). Thus, the example of God's relations with other nations is used by Jeremiah in order to convince a sceptical and stubborn Judean audience to turn from their view toward that of God as interpreted by the prophet. It was the national misfortune that his words went unheeded in his generation.

Ezekiel, the younger contemporary of Jeremiah, is famous for his pronouncements on precisely the theme of individual responsibility (chapters 14; 18; 33). Ezekiel likewise does not hesitate to condemn those of his contemporaries who carry out their professional obligations in a way incompatible with that of his, and thus of his God's views (12:21–13:16). Finally, Ezekiel develops more fully the watchman metaphor in his application of the doctrine of personal responsibility to the prophetic office. Our attention will focus now on the watchman passage in Ezekiel 3:16 ff.

Modern scholars have long viewed this fourth commission speech as "artificially abstracted and built up from [18 and 33] and secondarily inserted here."[4] M. Greenberg has argued persuasively that such a view misunderstands the basic intentions of both 33 and 3: the former being a public discourse, the latter a private communication.[5] The foci of chapter 3 are the role and responsibility of the prophet. Greenberg has demonstrated that the watchman passage in 3 is, in all likelihood, primary, and 33 was built from it. He states concerning 3:16–21, "The lookout metaphor for prophets (to judge from Jeremiah, a commonplace of the times) is here adapted for the original purpose of defining for the reluctant (or dismayed) prophet a role he should be ready to undertake."[6]

4 M. Greenberg, Ezekiel 1–20, *Anchor Bible* (Garden City, 1983), 90.
5 Op. cit., 91 ff.
6 Op. cit., 92.

Let us look at this passage more closely.

> *At the end of seven days, the word of the Lord came to me: Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. If I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way,* in order to save his life, *that wicked man shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. But if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, or from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity, but you will have saved your life* (3:16–21).

Before we can adduce a vital relationship between this prophetic program and that espoused by the author of Jonah, we must treat the phrase *lehayyoto*, "in order to save his life," in 3:18. Is this merely a secondary insertion in order to bring the message of 3 into line with that of 33, or is this phrase original to its present context? Greenberg rightly observes that this phrase is put in terms of the prophet's responsibility and, thus, is fit contextually.[7] If so, then the author of Jonah, we believe, may have built his story, at least in part, upon this very passage just as Ezekiel himself did in creating the oracle of chapter 33.

JONAH AND EZEKIEL 33

In Ezekiel 33, the prophet reworks 3:16–21 against the backdrop of both 14 and 18 that deal with personal responsibility within the context of the Exile. This oracle is framed as a response to those around him who say: *Our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we waste away because of them; how then can we live?"* (33:10). Repentance in their eyes is useless. Among Ezekiel's contemporaries are those who believe that the sins of the fathers, so numerous as they were, spell certain doom for this and all future generations (cf. Ex. 20:5). It is, as M. Fishbane has noted, Ezekiel's goal and burden to contradict the now intransigent "sour grapes" attitude of his audience (18:2 and cf. Jer. 31:28–9).[8] They simply cannot accept that repentance is sufficient to wipe the slate clean before the Lord and they therefore say: *The way of the Lord is not just!* (33:17, 20). This sceptical attitude certainly finds its parallel in the actions of Jonah. We

7 Ibid.

8 M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford, 1985), 338–339.

submit that the author of Jonah may well have had this precise audience in mind as he formed his misfit prophet.

Now we return to the original watchman oracle in Ezekiel 3 (a brief treatise on prophetic responsibility) which, we believe, presents two ideas fundamental to the Jonah story. First, the watchman has freewill to decide whether or not he will deliver the threat of destruction to the sinner. This is the first time, leaving aside Jeremiah's inner struggles found in the laments (cf. 20:9), that we encounter an explicit statement of the prophet's freewill. Underlying this expression is the probability that Ezekiel perceived that some of his profession had, in fact, fled from their appointed task in the past. Interestingly, the reasons why the prophet might decide to decline his commission are left unstated here even though we have already seen that his contemporaries held an attitude that simply would not allow for repentance. Ezekiel prescribes death for any prophet who should so desert the wicked who depend upon him for their very survival. This vital dependence is the second idea fundamental to the Jonah story. The prophet's responsibility is "to keep the sinner alive." That is, the prophet is obliged to warn the sinner so that he might choose to repent, whereupon God might relent from the intended destruction, thus saving the sinner's life. This whole potential chain reaction depends entirely upon the prophet's decisions and actions.

OBLIGATIONS OF A PROPHET

The author of Jonah has created a new and novel scenario that explores the obligations of the prophet by developing and challenging ideas current in his day. The author has his caricature prophet express his freewill by fleeing his God-given commission to pronounce doom upon a foreign nation. The reasons for the flight are left unspecified until chapter 4. No matter what the reason for the flight, the audience might be prepared to watch the prophet die. The actions of God in chapter 1 tend to reinforce this expectation (cf. 1:14) as does the constant pursuit of self-destruction by Jonah. However, this is a naive expectation. To strike Jonah mortally would be to give in to him, to allow him to be victorious. For the Ninevites, with no one to warn them, would certainly perish. So, the author of Jonah agrees with Ezekiel (3) that the prophet has freewill. However he parts company with Ezekiel in maintaining that the utter helplessness of sinners and their complete dependence upon the prophet for their very lives necessarily limits

the extent to which he can express that freewill. The reader learns that Jonah must be retained and sustained at least for the moment.

So the prophet, once commissioned, must carry out his assigned task. But we are not satisfied that this fully explains God's purpose in retaining Jonah. For were this the only reason, we would expect the story to end immediately after 3:10. However, the revealing confession (4:2 – *For I know that you are a compassionate and gracious God; slow to anger; abounding in kindness; renouncing punishment)* and the subsequent object lesson of chapter 4 suggest that a second purpose may be found to explain the retention of Jonah; the prophet must be taught something. He must be made to accept a fundamental characteristic of God's relationship with man (emphasized over and over by both Jeremiah and Ezekiel), a characteristic Jonah stubbornly continues to deny.

What is this basic concept that Jonah must be taught? He must learn that it is not the death of the sinner that is desired (neither that of the Ninevites nor his own), but rather sincere repentance. Jonah's belief in a direct and irreversible causal relationship between the announcement of doom by the prophet and the actualization of the sentence by God has no place in the Divine perception, as interpreted by our author, of the man-God relationship. Likewise invalid from God's point of view is Jonah's idea that the sole prophetic obligation is the announcement of doom. Bickerman has stated, "...Jonah refused to accept the perspective of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, in which the prophet is no longer God's herald, but a watchman who blows a horn to warn his people of coming danger."[9]

So, Jonah is to be educated in the true prophetic role, namely to bring the people to repentance. This task is to be carried out even if the prophet's message of doom is not fulfilled. Now the prophet might construe this, incorrectly, as being false prophecy based upon the dictum of Deut. 18:20–22;

> *And if you say in your heart, 'How may we know the word that the Lord has not spoken?' – When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the word does not come to pass or come true, that is a word which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously, you need not be afraid of him.*

But the author's view, following Jeremiah and Ezekiel, is that the prophet must

9 See note 2, ibid.

be so effective in presenting his message that the punishment need never come to pass. Whereas both, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, had poured out between them thousands of words and still success eluded them, Jonah was, to his dismay, wholly successful in bringing the Ninevites to repentance, though he put forth only the effort necessary to pronounce five words.

Jonah enters the city of Nineveh as a watchman bearing an urgent message: *Yet forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned.* (3:4). What is most exciting about Jonah's five word utterance is its polyvalence; the message communicates both a threat and a hope simultaneously. As B. Halpern and R. Friedman have noted, *nehpakhet,* "overturned," like Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:25 and Amos 4:11). Nineveh might have been *nehpakhet* "overturned", had it not been for the fact that the city was truly *nehpakhet,* "changed," by turning in repentance.[10] The Ninevites hear the words, "Forty more days," and immediately recognize in them a divinely sanctioned waiting period during which time they have the opportunity to repent. They repent individually and collectively, and are saved. The true prophet, it turns out, always speaks the truth; for Nineveh is indeed transformed through repentance. Yet, this prophet, wearied by his exertion, sits by deaf to his own words and blind to their miraculous effect.

In the end, then, not only must Jonah carry out his appointed mission, but every effort must be made to transform him, by whatever pedagogical means necessary, into one who is in complete agreement with God's purpose. Unfortunately, the latter effort utterly fails. God is as unsuccessful as both Jeremiah and Ezekiel had been in their attempts to bring their audiences to repentance and understanding. Jonah, the unteachable scorner, never turns. Now, he must be abandoned. The book closes with the reader alone being called upon to listen, learn, and be changed.

AUTHOR AND AUDIENCE

At this juncture, we are ready to make a few suggestions about the authorship of Jonah and the identity of its intended audience. We have argued that the author intentionally forms the narrative in order to portray Jonah as a negative model of the prophetic vocation whom the focal point of this narration, the

10 B. Halpern and R. Friedman, Composition and Paronomasia in the Book of Jonah, *Hebrew Annual Review* 4 (1980), 87 and 89.

audience, is admonished not to imitate. The culminating rhetorical question posed by God puts the reader directly into Jonah's shoes and leaves him to ask, "Am I or is my group, like Jonah, perceiving God's relationship with His creatures incorrectly?"[11] Jonah, the prophet, represents the audience itself. Jonah typifies the particular group of prophets targeted by the author for reproof and instruction. If so, the author intends to chastise his peers for their adamant adherence to an outmoded view of the prophetic role and thereby to persuade them not to act like Jonah. They could learn the proper perspective vicariously by watching the fool prophet suffer for his obstinacy. The response desired of the audience by the author, therefore, is: "I will not go about my business as Jonah did!"

Now who would have been in a position to admonish other prophets? Who kept a careful wateh on the prophetic profession and continually spoke out against those who erred in their understanding of it?

We would like to suggest that the author, like both his 'teachers', Jeremiah and Ezekiel, was an exilic prophet whose name has been lost to posterity. He, too, ridicules his peers and gives them some constructive criticism. His tract seeks to persuade a group of prophets, by means of a unique and, therefore, striking literary form, to abandon their misguided attitude, perhaps expressed in the words, "The way of the Lord is unjust." Our author tells them to wake up and accept *his* idea that the prophet's obligation is to bring sinners to repentance so that God might relent. Those prophets found themselves in conflict with God's desire for repentance, became discouraged. The good prophet refutes the understanding of prophecy that causes their despondency. The worthy prophet, according to our author, must not, indeed cannot flee his responsibility to warn the wicked who depend upon him for their very survival. The prophet must do God's bidding to move humanity to repentance without regard to his personal reputation; and if he does so, the very words he believes may bring his own downfall, will, in actuality, demonstrate that watchman's greatness.

11 See note 1, above.

* This is a shortened version of a chapter from my unpublished rabbinic thesis, *"Studies in the Book of Jonah"* (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College – Jewish Institute of Religion, 1988). The writer is greatly indebted to the insights of Z. Shazar. *"Jonah – Transition from Seer to Prophet,"* Dor Le Dor 7/1 (1978), 1–8.

JOB: THE THIRD CYCLE

DISSIPATING A MIRAGE – PART II

BY DAVID WOLFERS

In the first part of this paper we have observed that, by taking the easy path of assuming textual corruption in Chapters 24–27, generations of scholars have denied themselves insight into two aspects of Job's character and obliged readers to be satisfied with a Job who is little more than a one-dimensional caricature of loss and indignation. For rightly read, Chapter 26 exhibits Job in the clutches of a towering fit of anger and contempt, whilst Chapter 27 uncovers the spiritual calm and balance which underlie his passion and sustain his ability to endure without breaking faith with or losing faith in God.

In the second part, we shall find in Chapter 24 two additional unsuspected facets of this prototypical Jew – the universality of his compassion, his ability to pity others from the depths of his own despair, and his readiness to assume that most fundamental of the prophet's roles, the intercessor who disputes as an equal with God on behalf of those whom He has condemned.

CHAPTER 22

If the hypothesis of a third complete cycle of speeches as a component of the "original" Book of Job is accepted, then Chapter 22, Eliphaz's last speech, must be seen as the introduction to this cycle. The components of this speech are accusations against Job of all kinds of crimes against his fellow men and of sins against God, and a call to repentance and purification climaxed by a promise of restoration to God's favour. On analogy with the first two "cycles" of speeches,

1 E.g: *Happy is the man whom God correcteth, Therefore despise not the chastisement of the Almighty.* 5:17.

If you yourself seek earnestly to God... Then surely He will... restore the habitation of your righteousness. 8:5,6.

Stretch out your hands to Him... Then the future will dawn brighter than noon. 11:13,17.

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we should expect the ensuing speeches of Bildad and Zophar to echo, expand and intensify these elements. Chapters 4 and 5, 8 and 11 all concentrate on the same two themes, that misfortune is evidence of wrongdoing and that if Job repents and places his trust in God, his fortunes will be restored.[1] Chapters 15, 18 and 20 likewise merely echo and expand each other in reciting the arduous lives which the wicked are destined to endure.[2] It is a powerful argument against the hypothesis of a third cycle that the thematic elements of Chapter 22 are all completely absent both from Bildad's surviving speech and from the fragments with which various scholars have sought to reconstruct the "missing" speech of Zophar and to enlarge the brief speech of Bildad.

If the hypothesis of a third cycle is rejected, then Chapter 22 must be seen as the peroration of the comforters' case, a final summary and exhortation. Its contents appear to be consistent with this view.

CHAPTER 23

The speech which follows Eliphaz's spreads over two chapters and has two distinct themes, slenderly linked by the bridge between 23:17 and 24:1. Chapter 23 poses few problems. Job muses that if only he could find God he would plead his case to Him and "emerge like gold." But God has become inaccessible and Job is left helpless to await the "execution of his sentence." He stands terrified of God because, in the strange terms of the last verse *I was not cut off before the darkness, Nor did He cover my face from the gloom.* This verse demands consideration. It appears to mean that Job feels that he was entitled to have been spared certain sights – that God should have slain him before allowing certain events to take place, and there is at least the implication that these events were not personal to Job – they could have taken place *after* Job had been cut off; without Job at all.

We find, in the Bible, two references to the Divine habit of "cutting people off before the darkness." One in which the darkness is delayed until the death of a good man, the other in which good men are slain so that they shall not witness

2 E.g: *All the days of the wicked he shall writhe, And few shall be the days in store for the tyrant.* 15:20.
Terror will affright him [the wicked] *on all sides And harry him by the heels.* 18:11.
The exultation of the wicked is brief And the joy of the godless momentary. 20:5.

the vengeance of God on their people. *Therefore behold, I will gather thee to thy fathers, and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace, neither shall thine eyes see all the evil which I will bring upon this place.* (II Kings 22:20, Hulda the prophetess' message to Josiah) and *The righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to his heart, and godly men are taken away from the evil to come* (Isaiah 57:1).

CHAPTER 24

Chapter 24 opens with a specific reference to this practice – *Why? From the Almighty the times are not hidden, And those who knew Him never saw His Days!* That is: a. God cannot have allowed this to happen through ignorance; He knows precisely what is going on, and b. He has always in the past spared "those who knew Him," i.e. His faithful followers, the sight of His Days of vengeance. "His Days" is short-hand for *The Day of the Lord... Cruel and full of wrath and fierce anger: To make the earth a desolation, And to destroy the sinners out of it* (Isa. 13:9).

The remainder of Chapter 24 is devoted to a description of the land during "the Day of the Lord" and a remonstrance with God at the injustice and failure of discrimination which He is exhibiting. The chapter is a monumental social and historical document recording the situation in the Land of Israel in the aftermath of Sennacherib's conquests, reflecting and contesting the theory that the people of Judah received their just deserts in this holocaust. In its examination of the overthrow of settled order it rivals as a literary curiosity the *Lamentations of Ipuwer*;[3] in its advocacy of the poor it reflects the highest traditions of prophetic Judaism. It is a chapter which does not fit at all into the accepted interpretation of the Book of Job as a record of the unjust suffering of one individual, for it is a contemporary outcry against the unjust suffering of a people. If for this reason alone, it is not surprising that the chapter has created enormous difficulties both of translation and comprehension.

In form, Chapter 24 is unusual in that it consists of four strophes each of six verses, with each strophe containing an additional independent line serving as a detached comment on the contents of the strophe; these comments are ironic asides critical of God's part in events. The only other ancient work which resembles this in form is the so-called *Babylonian Theodicy* which is written in

3 J. B. Pritchard (Ed), *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Princeton, 1969, p. 441 ff.

stanzas of five couplets each, each stanza containing a single floating extra line.[4]

THE PLIGHT OF THE POOR

Verses 2–12 describe, in pathetie terms, the situation of the poor of the land after the deportation of their leaders, under foreign domination. Lines 5c and 12c the floating "commentary lines."

Boundary stones are removed
And the flock seized with its pasture.
The ass of orphans is driven away;
The widow's ox taken in pledge.
The poor are shouldered out of the road;
The destitute of the earth go to ground together.
See! wild asses of the wilderness
They set off on their business searching diligently for prey!

To Him, the desert is food for young men!

They forage the open field for fodder
And glean the vineyard of the wicked;
They lodge naked, for lack of clothing,
Without cover from the cold.
They are drenched with the mountain rain
And resort to the rock for want of shelter.
The fatherless is snatched from the breast
And pledges taken from the poor –
Naked, they tramp about unclad,
And hungry, they hump the grain.
Between the bullocks they trundle the olive-press;
They tread the winepress and thirst.
Far from the crowded city they groan
And the soul of the victims cries aloud,

But God imputes nothing amiss:

Already the above translation differs considerably from the conventional in

4 W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, Oxford, 1960, p. 63 ff.

that it treats the entire section as a unity in which the poor are the subject of each verse. This has been achieved by regarding those sentences where the subject is the unexpressed third person plural as being in the passive voice, a common device in both biblical and modern Hebrew and particularly Aramaic.[5]

THE REBELS AGAINST THE LIGHT

The next four verses are commonly known as "the rebels against the Light" passage and are generally considered simply to list varieties of wickedness practiced by those hostile to God. They have, however, been sorely misunderstood. The first of the four verses follows directly from line 12c and gives the explanation of why God imputes nothing amiss in the sufferings of the poor. It contains Job's deductions of the thought processes of God about these people, and should therefore be framed in quotation marks. The first line is undeniably written in the past tense (המה היו) and, with the use of the personal rather than the demonstrative pronoun, clearly refers *backwards* to the persons last referred to.[6] It contains what God *does* impute to the victims.

"They were among the rebels against the Light.
They knew nothing of its ways
Nor did they abide in its paths."

The next three verses reveal Job acting the prophet, instructing God in who the real rebels against the Light are:

It is the murderer who revolts against the Light.
He k i l l s the poor and needy –
So let it be him that is (hounded) as a thief in the night!
And the eye of the adulterer awaits the dusk.
Saying no (human) eye shall see me,
And He puts a veil over His face.
(Another) digs in the dark into houses.
In the daytime they seal themselves up.
T h e y know not the Light.

5 Gesenius *Hebrew Grammar*, Oxford, 1910, par. 144 f.g.

6 Gordis (*op. cit.* p. 267) recognized this difficulty, but was satisfied to claim the personal pronoun as a frequent introducer of a fresh subject without commenting on the unmistakeable tense of היו.

The implication of all this is that in allowing disaster to befall the poorest in the land, God is punishing the innocent and letting the guilty go scot-free. The next four verses, which seem to have been universally misunderstood, penetrate to the heart of the status, the simplicity, and the unbearable vulnerability of these poor whom God despises for failing to "follow the Light." Job argues that their pathetic situation leaves them absolutely the prey to chance forces, that the distinction between the Light and dark can have no meaning for them. To understand the passage it is necessary first to realise that it is about the poor, and not about the sinners; second to read כי in verse 17 as "but," its usual sense after a negative, and third to translate the word חטאו in verse 19 as what it is, third person plural masculine of the verb "to stray, to miss the way, to sin" rather than as a noun, "the sinners." The passage runs (with two commentary lines):

But as one are the morning to him and the deepest dark,
For well he knows the terror of deep darkness.
Foam is he on the face of water;
Their portion accursed on the earth –

He does not smooth their path as that of the lofty.

As drought and heat consume the snow-waters,
They stray into Sheol.
When the vulture is done with one, the worm devours him.
He is no longer remembered.

And injustice is smashed like a tree!

By misinterpreting this passage as being a largely incomprehensible treatise on the fate of sinners, many scholars have forced themselves into the position of being obliged to deny its authenticity in the mouth of Job. Similarly they have made it impossible to derive a clear meaning from the remainder of the chapter. Without the recognition that it is the insignificance of the poor which is the theme of these lines, the whole thread of the argument is lost, and it proves impossible to pick it up again. Thus we find numerous suggestion for the reallocation of the latter part of Chapter 24, or sections of it, to Bildad or Zophar.[7]

7 E.g. Marvin Pope (*Job* The Anchor Bible, Doubleday & Co., NY, 1965) assigns 24:18–25 to the hypothetical missing speech of Zophar. Others, including the new JPS, transform the whole of the same passage into the optative mood in defiance of its grammatical form in order to achieve some sort of consistency.

ABANDONMENT BY GOD

The remainder of Chapter 24 is a lament for the transformation of the compassionate God whom Job once knew and with whom he was on intimate terms into the faithless and untrusting God he now appears to confront. The last verse but one describes how God destroyed the nation just as it seemed to have established itself historically, and the chapter ends in a rhetorical flourish of defiance.

He who tended the barren that bore not
And the widow whom none rejoiced,
And dragged down the mighty in his prime
Is aroused, and He trusts not the living.
One may give Him His due for security, and rest easy,
But His eyes are upon their ways.
When they rise up a little, He is gone;
And they are brought low, like all men, They retract
And are lopped off, like a head of corn!

And if it is not so, who then will prove me a liar
And reduce my words to nought?

Of especial interest in the above is the twisted meaning which Job gives to the expression "His eyes are upon their ways" – not, he implies, to serve out to them their deserts of reward or punishment, but to make sure that their success and prosperity do not endure.

Properly understood, there is nothing in Chapter 24 which should give rise to any suspicion that it is corrupt, either in its text or its continuity or its attribution. Given the natural bias which ought to exist in favour of the traditionally transmitted text of any ancient work, there is every reason to accept this chapter, like those which precede and follow it, as a part of the authentic original Book of Job.

THE FALL OF SAMARIA

BIBLICAL HISTORIOSOPHY ON TRIAL

BY SHIMON BAKON

Three dramatic events in the history of Israel put biblical historiosophy on trial by shaking some of the fundamentals of stubbornly held beliefs, creating in their wake crises of faith. The usually articulate prophetic voice became muted in the face of these events and kept silent regarding their consequences. Miraculously, a Judaism slowly emerged which seemed to derive strength from these crises.

The three events in question were the fall of Samaria in 722 B.C.E., the death of King Josiah in 609 B.C.E., and the sudden and unexplained disappearance from history of Zerubbabel. The latter, an authentic scion of the Davidic dynasty was a man upon whom much hope had been pinned to re-establish rule over the newly constituted Judean polity of Babylonian returnees.

HISTORIOGRAPHY – HISTORIOSOPHY

If one consults even the best dictionaries, one will not find the term "historiosophy". However, it is in use, and denotes a philosophy of history, to distinguish it from historiography, which purports to record "objective" historical events. Historiography is not unknown to the Bible, since we know of at least three kings: David, Solomon, and Hezekiah,[1] who employed מזכירים – secretaries to record events of the court and of the State.[2] The existence of the ספר דברי שלמה – The Book of the Acts of Solomon and the ספר דברי הימים למלכי ישראל–יהודה – The Books of Chronicles of the kings of Israel and of Judah, is further indication of biblical historiography.

Biblical history is undisguised historiosophy, introducing the concept of God's involvement in the history of nations and, particularly, of Israel. To illustrate this historiosophic view of the Bible, let us look at the case of Jeroboam II (780–740 B.C.E.), one of the most "successful" Israelite kings. Devoting to him a total of

1 II Sam. 8:16, 20:24; I Kings 4:3; II Kings 18:18, 37.

2 I Kings 11: 41.

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seven verses (II Kings 14:23–29), the Bible portrays him as *doing that which was evil in the sight of the Lord* (v. 24), while giving him credit for *restoring the borders of Israel from the entrance of Hamath up to the Sea of Arabah* (v. 25). His success is immediately circumscribed by the statement that this was *according to the word of the Lord, the God of Israel.*

> *Seeing that the Lord saw the affliction of Israel [He] resolved* – דבר, *not to blot out the name of Israel from under the heaven; but He saved them by the hand of Jeroboam, the son of Joash...* (v. 27).

As if as an afterthought, actually unworthy of mention in the Bible, verse 28 states: *Now the rest of the acts of Jeroboam... are they not written in the Book of Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?*

GOD IN HISTORY

Biblical monotheism is not a simple concept but embraces several elements. Totally opposed to the prevailing views of the entire pagan world, from Egypt to Mesopotamia, the Bible broke with the notion of His immanence in nature. As the sole Creator. He transcends the cosmos and its inexorable rules, for it is He who establishes these rules. To monotheism and the concept of a transcendental God, the Bible adds one more dimension: He is God of history.

Already in the account of Creation, the Bible breaks with ancient myths and introduces the idea of God's sanctification of time, namely the Sabbath. However, to be in history, He is in need of men and of nations to direct their destiny. For this purpose He makes a covenant with the peoples of the world through Noah, and then with a single family, and their descendants, the people of Israel, at Sinai. This covenant contains obligations and promises and imposes upon Israel moral and religious burdens. These obligations which Israel took upon itself are not arbitrary, but emanate from a God of justice. Though only dimly aware of God's grand design "when the distant, yet related parallels of human and Divine existence are to meet in infinity,"[3] Israel is certain that fulfilling these moral obligations furthers God's design, while not fulfilling them detains it. Thus, biblical history turns into an interpretation of events in terms of covenantal obligations which invests history with meaning and purpose. Non-fulfillment of these obligations brings upon Israel severe sanctions.

3 Before Philosophy, M. and H. Frankfort, *The Emancipation of Thought from Myth* p. 241.

It is the fall of Samaria which both strengthened and paradoxically, partially undermined this edifice of biblical historiosophy.

HOW ARE THE MIGHTY FALLEN

In the year 722 B.C.E., Samaria was sacked by the Assyrians, bringing the 200 year old kingdom of Israel's ten northern tribes to a tragic end. It is doubly sad to contemplate that only about twenty years before, King Jeroboam II, of Israel, and King Uzziah of Judah, who were on friendly terms, in a joint effort, had succeeded in enlarging both kingdoms to the size they had had under King David.

Their death, however, brought about a series of reversals. The relationship between Israel and Judah fell apart and ended in open hostility when Pekah, King of Israel, made an alliance with Syria and invaded Judah. Assyria's power was growing while Israel and Judah were each splintered internally into two warring parties – pro-Assyrian and pro-Egyptian. The situation became especially acute in unstable Israel which, torn by internal dissension, overestimated Egyptian readiness to come to their assistance, and fell prey to Shalmaneser V of Assyria, whose successor, Sargon II *carried Israel away... and placed them in Halah and in Habor on the river Gozan, and the cities of Medes.*[4]

Following a policy of pacifying a conquered country by exchange of population, Sargon imported into Samaria people from *Babylonia and from Cutah, Avva, Hamath and Sepharvayim.*[5] Those Israelites who had remained were weakened politically, economically, and religiously, and without leadership fell victim to religious syncretism. The Northern Kingdom faded away, as the writer of the Book of Kings dolefully complains: *The Lord was very angry with Israel and removed them out of His sight* – ויסרם מעל פניו; *there was none left but the tribe of Judah only.*[6]

A SEEMINGLY CLASSIC VINDICATION OF BIBLICAL HISTORIOSOPHY

The downfall of the Northern Kingdom of Israel seems, on first sight, a classic justification of biblical historiosophy. In the aftermath of this tragic event, the Book of Kings has the following to say:[7]

4 II Kings 17:6.
5 II Kings 17:24.
6 II Kings 17:18.
7 II Kings 17:7–23.

> *And it was so, because the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord and had feared other gods, and walked in the statutes of the nations... Yet the Lord had forewarned Israel... by the hands of every prophet... and they rejected His statutes and His covenant... worshipped all the hosts of heaven and served Baal... And the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel, afflicted them, and delivered into the hand of the spoilers, until He had cast them out of His sight...*

Indeed, there had been forewarning by the prophets which went unheeded by Israel. Amos warned:

> *Hear this word... that are on the mountains of Samaria... The Lord has sworn by His Holiness: Lo, surely the days shall come upon you, that ye shall be taken away with hooks...*[8]

The gentle Hosea, who was witness to the upheavals besetting the Northern Kingdom in the interval between Jeroboam and the destruction of Samaria, was no less vehement than Amos in his denunciations. Ridiculing the constant political vacillations, he accuses Ephraim, the leading northern tribe:

> *And Ephraim is become like a silly dove, without understanding. They call unto Egypt, they go to Assyria.*[9]

For this folly and for the sins committed

> *Samaria shall bear her guilt... They shall fall by the sword.*[10]

It is at this point that one characteristic of the prophet should be mentioned. He was absolutely certain that *the Lord will do nothing, but He revealeth His counsel unto His servants, the prophets.*[11] This certainty, expressed by Amos, holds true for every prophet. It is not arrogance, but the firmly held belief that he had been appointed, even against his will, to do the bidding of his Lord.

This dimension of prophecy needs to be stressed here, since it will explain two phenomena. Because the prophetic predictions came true, the Judean exiles were saved from the fate of oblivion, such as had befallen the ten northern tribes. Indeed, this was one of the miraculous ways that led to *return* and *restoration.* Furthermore, this certainty that they were in the counsel of the Almighty, caused the strange phenomenon of *prophetic silence,* to which we shall refer shortly.

8 Amos 4:1 (See also 7:1–9, 17, 9:8).
9 Hosea 7:11.
10 Hosea 14:1.
11 Amos 3:4.

Although the fall of Samaria should have served to vindicate biblical historiosophy, a shift in attitude becomes discernible on closer perusal. It will be remembered that the Book of Kings, embarrassed by the triumphant reign of that "arch-sinner," Jeroboam II, depicted him as a savior, sent by the Lord Himself to prevent the blotting out of the name of Israel. Yet, it is the same "sinfulness" that leads Israel to her eventual downfall, for *He removed them out of His sight*[12] *because the children of Israel had sinned against the Lord.*[13]

It is true, Israel has rejected the binding Covenant and is punished for it, but what of God's obligations to the Jewish people? Is the disappearance of ten of the twelve tribes such a small matter in the sight of the Lord? Did He not enter into a covenant with all of Israel? Has He not promised:

and all the land that I have spoken of
will I give unto your seed
and they shall inherit for ever (Ex. 32:13).

Whether God's obligation to Israel was conditional or unconditional was a matter that troubled our prophets, and never seemed to have found a successful resolution. Hosea vacillates between חסד – *covenantal love,* symbolized in the relationship between man and wife, and אהבה – *unconditional love,* symbolized by the unbreakable relationship of father and son.[14] Micah re-introduces the concept of הסתרה פנים,[15] that which Martin Buber called the *Gottesfinsternis,* namely, *hiding His face.*

Then shall they [the rulers of the house of Israel] *cry unto the Lord*
But He will not answer them
Yea, He will hide His face from them at that time.[16]

Isaiah offers another solution to the problem of the integrity of the Covenant: the שארית הפלטה – the *saving remnant.* Seeing the obduracy of the people, Isaiah foresees utter destruction, caused by the Lord Himself.

And if there be yet a tenth in it, it shall again be eaten up;
as a terebinth and as an oak, whose stock remaineth
when they cast their leaves

12 II Kings 17:18.
13 II Kings 17:7.
14 Hosea, *Dor Le Dor,* XV–2 Shimon Bakon.
15 Cf. Deut. 31:17, 18; 32:20.
16 Micah 3:6.

so the holy seed – זרע קדש – *shall be the stock thereof.*[17]

CONSPIRACY OF SILENCE

This term, used by Frost[18] when referring to the death of King Josiah, characterizes the silence surrounding the fall of Samaria. The Book of Kings devotes a chapter to this event in the form of a commentary on why this happened, while Chronicles does not even mention it. No elegies were composed, and both Micah and Isaiah, who lived during the time Samaria fell, keep an astonishing silence.

This silence is so powerful that it begs דרשני – to be interpreted. Let us look at two other prophets, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who also had spells where they kept silent.

We are told that after Gedaliah's assassination, following the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem, captains of the defeated army and other important men, fearing the revenge of Nebuchadnezzar, wished to emigrate to Egypt and asked Jeremiah for his advice. He kept silent for ten days. *And it came to pass after ten days, that the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah.*[19] It is the mark of the true prophet that he kept silence, for a prophet does not speak his own mind, but remains the mouthpiece of God, and if he does not receive His word, keeps silent.

Stranger still is the case of Ezekiel, who maintains silence on four occasions.[20] It was only *in the twelfth year of our captivity...that one that had escaped out of Jerusalem, came unto me saying: The city is smitten... and my mouth was opened and I was no more dumb.*

ISAIAH AND THE SHOAH

The vacuum left as a result of Isaiah's silence is so tangible, that we shall examine a few possibilities in order to try to explain it. The first assumption is that Isaiah did articulate his concern, but no record was left of it. This seems highly improbable, for Isaiah, with his sweep of vision and eloquence, encompassing many nations, and arraigning them before God's judgment, must

17 Isaiah 6:13.
18 *The Death of Josiah, Conspiracy of Silence,* S. B. Frost, JRL. of Biblical Lit. #7. 1968.
19 Jeremiah 42:2–7.
20 Ezekiel 3:15, 26; 24:27, 33:22.

surely have uttered words so memorable as to leave an indelible imprint on his listeners, to be recorded for posterity.

Another explanation would be his justified anger with Israel for invading Judah in the days of Pekah, causing much damage and death there. However, it is hardly in keeping with the noble character of Isaiah, a prophet totally immersed in the service of God and his people, to suspect him of *Schadenfreude,* joy at the destruction of Samaria.

Let us examine another possibility, his despair that the Northern Kingdom will ever rise again. Although it is true that religious life there had deteriorated, a number of instances are recorded which point to ties with Jerusalem and the hope of eventual re-unification. When King Hezekiah of Judah planned the re-introduction of Passover as a major festival, and sent messengers through the countries of Ephraim, Manasseh, and Zebulun, *They laughed them to scorn and mocked them. Nevertheless, men of Asher and Manasseh and Zebulun humbled themselves and came to Jerusalem.*[22]

One hundred years later, King Josiah, attempting to extend his influence to the cities of Manasseh and Ephraim, involved their inhabitants in the restoration of the Temple.[23]

The prophet Ezekiel, already in exile, was told to take one stick and write upon it the names of Judah, and another one for the names of Israel, *and join them one to another into one stick, that they may become one in thy hand.*[24]

In the light of these efforts, which went on for a few hundred years, to attribute Isaiah's silence to total despair seems improbable. After all, the final break between Jerusalem and Samaria came only after the Return,[25]

We are left with the question whether one may derive conclusions from the "conspiracy of silence" surrounding the collapse of Israel but the facts, forcing themselves upon us, are overwhelming.

Biblical historiosophy, on one hand, seemed fully vindicated. Israel had sinned grievously, had rejected her terms of the sacred Covenant, had been forewarned

21 Ezekiel 33:21–22.
22 II Ch. 20: 10- 11. 23 II Ch. 34:6, 9.
24 Ezekiel 37:15f.
25 See Ezra 4:1–6; 10; Nehemiah 3:33.
(It is a remarkable fact that the remnants of the Samaritans consider themselves now as part of the Jewish people).

repeatedly, had ignored these warnings, and was duly punished. However, cracks were discovered, challenging the integrity of biblical historiosophy. Add to it the trauma of the first Shoah, where ten-twelfths were torn away from the body of the "House of Jacob". God, in biblical terminology, extended the *hiding of His face* also to the prophets, and the only response in the face of such a cataclysmic event was silence. God is justified in what He is doing, and He cannot be questioned on the enormity of the tragedy.

We are reminded of the upheaval in theological thinking in the aftermath of the Shoah visited upon the Jewish people in modern times. It ranged from "God is dead" to "man's inhumanity to man." None of the answers make the fact of the Shoah more comprehensible, and it leaves some unanswerable questions relating to both God and man. Perhaps the most fitting response should have been silence, like the silence of Isaiah at the time of the fall of Samaria.

ELIJAH'S RECOVERY FROM DEPRESSION

BY ALLEN S. MALLER

On Mount Carmel Elijah won a fantastic victory over the 850 prophets of Baal and Asherah. With thousands of Israelites watching, Elijah's sacrifice was struck by lightning, while the sacrifice offered by the 450 prophets of Baal remained untouched even though they had called upon their god from morning till afternoon. (I Kings 18:26). Elijah had ridiculed their ineffectiveness (v. 27) and had poured water over the wood of his sacrifice three times (v. 34) to show how confident he was. When Elijah's sacrifice was consumed by God's fire (v. 38) all the people proclaimed, *The Lord is God. The Lord is God.* The prophets of Baal were defeated and destroyed. In the rain that followed, Elijah was so high with excitement at the victory, that he was able to outrun Ahab's chariot, until they came to the Jezreel Valley, (v. 46).

From the height of this victory Elijah plunges to the depths of despair in the very next chapter. A man with the energy to outrun a chariot became suicidally depressed (I Kings 19:4). How did this transformation take place, and how does Elijah overcome it? Most comentators think that Elijah was depressed because he had to flee from his homeland to avoid the threat of revenge from Queen Jezebel. This is clearly a factor; but is it enough to explain Elijah's mood? First of all, how long after his victory did Jezebel threaten him? The printer who divided the chapters puts the verse where Ahab tells the queen what happened at the beginning of Chapter 19. But medieval printers are not necessarily good theologians or psychologists. This verse really ends the previous story of Chapter 18. Chapter 19 should start with Jezebel's threat. After Elijah's great victory he could not be seriously threatened. A clever politician would wait for things to die down and return to normal. After a few months she could deal with him, and this must have been what happened. When Elijah flees he justifies his action to God by claiming that the Israelites have abandoned the covenant and *I only am left.*

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(v. 10). How long did it take for this state of affairs to occur? Certainly several weeks, probably many months. The Bible doesn't say, and in reality it doesn't matter. The point is that the fantastic victory proved to be highly transitory. The impact of a clearly visible public miracle on the people isn't very lasting. Although we often wish for a clear sign that will convince all the people of the truth, it would seem that public miracles aren't that effective. Individuals believe in miracles because they have faith, not the reverse. To experience the miraculous you have to trust God, just as you have to become a lover to feel love. A public performance only gives a clue to the reality. Without personal commitment, study and self discipline, the "high" of the public experience dissipates over time.

Thus, when Elijah is threatened, the Bible says, *he saw,* (v. 3) but it does not say what he saw. Perhaps he saw that things had returned to the way they were before the victory on Mount Carmel. Perhaps he saw that social and personal change take a long time, and is more of a process than an event. Perhaps he realized that just as the people who saw the miracle of the plagues in Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea were not transformed overnight from their slave mentality, so too he and his people, for he was no better than his ancestors (v. 4). This revelation so discouraged Elijah that he was ready to give in completely and die.

How does Elijah recover from this deep depression? An angel gives him nourishment (v. 5–7). Who is this angel? First note that the messenger that Jezebel sends to threaten Elijah is also described as an angel (Malakh in Hebrew actually means a worker, i.e. someone who carries out the work, i.e. an agent). Could Jezebel's agent turn out to be God's agent? Perhaps. We do know that one of Ahab's servants named Obadiah had hidden 100 prophets during Jezebel's persecution (18:4). He, or more likely, one of his sons, could have been the messenger whom Jezebel sent to Elijah. This youth, who trusted in the God of Israel, could have accompanied Elijah in his flight to Beer-sheba. He kept his faith in the Lord, and tried to encourage Elijah, but without success. Elijah leaves him in Beer-sheba (19:3) and goes off by himself to die. But the young man follows him, and brings him food and water while he is asleep. The first time he touches Elijah the Bible calls him *an angel* (v. 5) but the second time he is called *angel of the Lord* (v.7). As a result of this interaction, Elijah's spirit is elevated and he has the energy to travel onward to Mount Sinai.

The first part of Elijah's recovery from depression is thus stimulated by the

attention, and concern expressed by the angel. The angel remains nameless, because any individual whose actions in some way contribute to someone else's redemption, should be considered as his angel, and God's agent.

But even the devoted and dedicated concern of those who love a depressed person is not enough by itself to dissolve the victim's depression. The victim must also act. Thus, when God questions Elijah, *What are you doing here?* Elijah's answer is passive and self-pitying. Elijah then experiences a profound revelation that the Divine is not in the power of nature (external circumstances) but in the slender sound of silence (internal spiritual response to circumstances) (v. 12). Yet, when God asks His question a second time, Elijah's response is identical to his first answer. The insight he has achieved hasn't resulted in any change yet. So now God commands Elijah to act; to make coalitions and to appoint a successor, i.e. to stop trying to do everything himself, and share the burden.

In modern terms insight therapy isn't enough. The depressed person has to get up and get himself working. Aecording to the Bible that is not simply adviee: it is a Divine command. Once Elijah starts being active again, his energy will return and his depression will disappear. Although few of us reach either the heights or the depths of Elijah's experience, most of us are at times faced with threats of overwhelming pressure. It is good to remember that not only did Elijah's successors achieve victory over Ahab and Jezebel, but that Elijah himself never died. He continues to live in legend, and in the will of the minority to struggle for its beliefs.

JEWISH ORIGINS OF THE LORD'S PRAYER

BY ROBERT CHERNOFF

The term "Lord's Prayer" unmistakably refers to Jesus. This is the prayer, which by Christian tradition, refers to the Christian deity. "Lord" in this case does not refer to the God of Israel and mankind, though this prayer is seemingly addressed to Him.

The Lord's Prayer is part of Jesus' sermon on the mount as recorded in the Gospel of St. Matthew, chapter 6:9–13. In it we note that Jesus says to his disciples:

> "Pray then like this; Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we have forgiven our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil."

Another version of the same prayer appears in the Gospel of St. Luke 11:2–4, wherein it reads "He (Jesus) was praying in a certain place, and when he ceascd, one of his disciples said to him. 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples.' And he said to them, 'when you pray, say:

> Father, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come. Give us each day our daily bread; And forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us; And lead us not into temptation."

The oldest book on church order is the Didache, or the Teaching of the Twelve Disciples, dating back to the first half of the second century C.E. It commands the faithful Christians "not [to] pray as the hypocrites do, but as the Lord commanded in His gospel; pray thus three times daily: 'our Father...'" The word "hypocrites" refers to Jews; and it stems from Matthew 33:15, wherein it is stated: "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees! For you traverse sea and land to make a single proselyte..."

The reference to prayer thrice daily highlights the attempt of the disciples of

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the early church to counter the Jewish recitation of the Shema –שמע, morning, afternoon and night. This then was a substitute for the Jewish declaration of faith.

In that first century, the competition for converts carried on by Jews and Christians, was fierce. The "Lord's Prayer" was inextricably bound up with the reception of candidates into church membership. After their baptism, the candidates would stand up, face eastward, and repeat "the prayer which 'our Lord' taught us." It is deeply connected with the most sacred and intimate of Christian experiences. Only one who believes in Jesus as an incarnation of God may perform the religious duty of expressing his "Lord's Prayer."

Yet, it is no less interesting that virtually every word and phrase is traced to Jewish religious expressions and authentic Jewish sources of that age.

The late Dr. Joseph Klausner wrote in his book, *Jesus of Nazareth* (MacMmillan, 1926), "Throughout the Gospels there is not one item of ethical teaching which cannot be paralleled either in the Old Testament, the Apocrypha or in talmudic and midrashic literature of the period..."

Now, let us trace back the words and thoughts of the "Lord's Prayer" to their Jewish origins.

Whenever we search for the basic sources of the Christian Bible, we rely on the classic *Komentar Zum Neuen Testament Aus Talmud Und Midrash,* by Herman L. Strack and Paul Billerbeck (published in Munich, 1922). Volume I, *Das Evangelium Nach Matthäus,* discusses the "Lord's Prayer" on page 406. From it, we learn that the salutation, "Our Father who art in heaven," was prescribed in the ancient synagogue service for Mondays and Thursdays, when the Torah was read, specifically when the Torah scroll was replaced in the ark. In this instance אבינו שבשמים was a standard liturgical formula in the first century C.E.

"Hallowed be Thy Name" is of course from the opening words of the קדיש — יחגדל ויתקדש שמה דבא – "Exalted and hallowed be Thy great Name." The קדיש as we know, was not originally employed as a mourner's prayer in the early first century CE. It was frequently intoned as an exaltation of the Almighty upon the completion of a study session of sacred literature.

"Thy kingdom come" adds to the opening words of the קדיש — וימליך מלכותה – "May He rule over (bring about) His Kingdom..."

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," comes to us directly from the Talmud (Berakhot 29b), wherein we read: עשה רצונך בשמים ממעל ותן נחת רוח לידיאיך מתחת והטוב בעיניך "Do Thy will in heaven above and ease the spirit of them that revere Thee below and do that which is good in Thine eyes."

"Give us this day our daily bread" is a paraphrase of Proverbs 30:8, wherein we read: הטריפני לחם חקי — *Feed me my allotted portion of bread.* These words are also in concert with Psalm 145:15, *The eyes of all look to Thee and Thou givest them their food in time.* Again from R. Eliezer in Berakhot 29b, wherein we also read: יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלהינו שתתן לכל אחד ואחד כדי פרנסתו ולכל... "May it be Thy will, O Lord God, to give each person his sustenance and to each body what it lacks."

"And forgive our debts as we have also forgiven our debtors," is from "The Wisdom of Ben Sirah, in the Apocrypha – "Forgive thy neighbor the injury done to thee. And then, when thou prayest, thy sins will be forgiven" (28:2).

Now the crucial phrase which strikes a particularly discordant note to Jews: *"And lead us not into temptation,* but deliver us from evil," is considered a dichotomy. In classic Jewish thought, it is inconceivable that a loving God would deliberately lead frail man into sin. While the words may not mean that *per se,* they nevertheless state it so in unmistakable language, which Christian clergy fail to qualify. Here again, we find a companion phrase from the Talmud Bavli (Berakhot 29b): "May it be Thy will, O Lord my God, to make me lie down in peace, and set my portion in Thy law and accustom me to perform religious duties and keep me from developing the habit of transgression that lead me to sin." *Such words* are indeed meaningful to Jews and Christians alike. In fact, the prayer culled from Berakhot goes even further: "May the good inclination have sway over me and let not the evil inclination have sway over me; and deliver me from evil happenings."

Thus, except for the phrase dealing with "temptation," there is not a single thought in the "Lord's Prayer" that does not find its origin in the Jewish tradition. Jesus, who knew the Oral Law (Talmud) as well as the written Law (Torah), took passages from each and wove this prayer. Yet, it is not a Jewish prayer. For almost 2,000 years, certainly since the canonization of the New Testament, it has been a very sacred *Christian* prayer.

In regard to the problem of the "temptation" phrase, I commend the New Common (English) text of the "Lord's Prayer" (United Methodist, circa 1975), which uses the more meaningful words: "Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil."

Indeed, O Lord, deliver us *all* from time of trial!

CAIN AND ABEL

BY ERNEST NEUFELD

How innocently it all starts. Cain and Abel bring offerings of thanksgiving to the Lord. Cain, a tiller of the soil, expresses his gratitude with some of his produce. Abel, a shepherd, presents the choicest firstlings of his flock. The Lord accepts Abel's offering but spurns Cain's.

We are not informed what form the acceptance took, but the acceptance is mentioned first. We may conclude, therefore, that Cain's tribute is simply ignored. The absence of Divine favor indicates to Cain its rejection.

Why is Abel's oblation accepted? Why is Cain's disapproved? These questions have puzzled Bible readers and scholars alike. Some commentators discern here a reflection of ancient conflict between the settled agriculturalist mode of life and the nomadic existence of sheep and eattle herders. Others point out that Abel brings the choicest of the firstlings, whereas Cain takes indiscriminately of the fruit of the land to offer to the Lord. The distinction implied in the narrative as to the quality of the gifts and the care in their selection, stems from the notion in ancient religions that the first fruits and first-born are gifts of the god. Their sacrifice, therefore, is a return to the deity of what belongs to him and restores to him the energy expended in producing the first issue of the plant or animal. The difference between the offerings of Cain and Abel, it is apparent, was not only the qualitative difference in what was offered but in what it revealed about the subjective element behind the acts of the brothers. The outward act does not suffice. The intent, the spirit, the fullness of heart or half-heartedness accompanying the act, demean or sanctify. An offering as mere ceremony or prompted by a sense of duty alone, lacks unreserved acknowledgment of what is owed to the giver. Devotion is missing.

All citations are from the *Torah, A Modern Commentary,* Union of American Hebrew Congregations, New York, 1981.

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Underlying Cain's failure is not only a meanness of spirit but, though less clearly defined, also a shortcoming in intellectual perception of the special position he holds in relation to God. For Cain is the first-born. The Bible is explicit on the special status of the first-born. It is ordained in Ex. 12:12 that *you shall set apart for the Lord every first issue of the womb,* and verse 13 provides, *And you must redeem every first-born male among your children,* with a restatement in 34:20. Later the Levites were substituted for the first-born upon the institution of the priestly class (Num. 3:12,41,46; 8:13–19).

But the questions relating to the acceptance and refusal of the brothers' oblations are peripheral to the story. Its purpose is not so much to teach what kind of offerings or sacrifices are acceptable to the Lord. Its purpose is to teach us something about the nature of man. Man, endowed with free will, can exercise it for good or ill. In this simple, brief story the Bible illustrates the operation of free will in its purest form – voluntary offerings, unbidden, spontaneous, without ulterior motive, expressions of thanksgiving. We learn how the operation of free will even for the loftiest purposes can lead man into the most extreme form of immorality – the shedding of human blood – our brother's blood.

When Cain, the older brother, observes that Abel's offering is accepted but his is not, sibling rivalry – a recurrent theme in the Bible – perhaps restrained up to this point between the two brothers, turns into the biting acid of jealousy. Cain, the first-born and first in his parents' affections, sees himself as supplanted by Abel as first and more favored by God Himself. Cain's resentment, uncontrolled by force of his will, leads in turn to words between the brothers, and to violence and murder.

This ground has been covered by Nahum M. Sarna in *Understanding Genesis.* But there are other aspects of the Cain and Abel story that require examination.

The falling out of Cain and Abel follows immediately after the "fall" of their parents – their temptation and expulsion from the Garden of Eden. In the exercise of free will, Adam and Eve succumb to the desire to know, to be *like Divine beings who know good and bad* (Gen. 3:5). They aspired not only to have knowledge but also to have the power that comes from knowledge, thus to be like Divine beings.

When the Lord finds that Adam and Eve have eaten of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, he remarks, *Now that the man has become like one of us, knowing*

good and bad, what if he should stretch out his hand and take also from the Tree of Life and eat, and live forever! (3:22). That is to say, God recognizes that man, possessing one of His attributes, now is in position to complete his apotheosis by gaining immortality. That would be a usurpation, a complete denial of the untrammeled hegemony of the Creator, the One God, and therefore unmitigated evil.

Whereas the "fall" of Adam and Eve results from intellectual curiosity and the will to power, the falling out of Cain and Abel is the outgrowth of unbridled emotion, in this case propelling the will to the point of pitting brother against brother and ultimately to murder. The integral relation of the two stories thus becomes manifest.

Other interconnecting threads abound. Whereas Adam and Eve, in partaking of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, are in effect taking from God, Cain and Abel are giving to God. Whereas Adam and Eve exhibit ingratitude and the usurpers' disobedience, Cain and Abel offer gratitude and acknowledgment of their dependence on God.

When the Lord calls out to Adam after he has eaten of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, Adam, hiding from the Lord, tells Him that he hid because he was naked. Asked if he has eaten of the forbidden tree, Adam admits it but blames it on Eve. Eve in turn blames the serpent. The theme of shunting responsibility for the exercise of one's free will, recurs in the Cain and Abel account. When God asks Cain, *Where is your brother Abel?* Cain, unable to pin responsibility on someone else, nevertheless seeks to shift it from himself by the rejoinder, *Am I my brother's keeper?* (3:9–13; 4:9–10), implying either that it is Abel's responsibility to take care of himself or that it is God's!

Just as Adam and Eve receive forewarning from God, Cain is warned of the dangers posed by his resentfulness (3:3; 4:6–7), and the sense of shame felt by Adam and Eve when they become aware of their nakedness, finds its analogue in Cain's fallen countenance when his offering is rejected (3:7; 4:5–6). The awakening of Adam and Eve to the realization of their mortality resonates in Cain's discovery of the meaning of death, now that he has killed his brother, and his realization that the threat of death now hangs over his own head (3:19; 4:14).

Parallels are to be found also in the punishments meted out to Adam, Eve and Cain. Adam is sentenced to earn his bread by the sweat of his brow. Eve is condemned to severe labor in childbirth, while Cain is to labor in vain if he tills

the soil (3:16–19; 4:12). When Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden, God places cherubim and the fiery over-turning sword to guard the entrance to the Garden east of Eden to prevent access to the Tree of Life. It is east of Eden, with its inaccessible Tree of Life, that Cain settles, a location bound to remind him of his mortality, as though the consciousness of death which dawned for him with the killing of Abel and the mark put on him by God lest anyone should kill him (4:15–16) had not been sufficient reminders.

In these two interlocking stories of Adam–Eve, Cain–Abel, the Bible delineates the true condition of man. He is endowed with free will, the power to choose good or evil. Precisely because he can choose between the two, his power is not absolute. If he exercises it without regard to consequences, if he acts recklessly, if he lets emotion carry him away, he courts mortal danger. Knowledge gives man power and through knowledge man can subdue the earth, but through his unbridled will he can sow it with the seeds of death. Created in the image of God, man can create, but he himself is but a creation owing his existence to God. His will must be a rein on his power to ride the horse of his intentions to good and not evil.

Cain slays Abel (Gustave Doré)

IN THE SHADOW OF AMALEK

BY HINDISHE LEE

The commandment of dealing with Amalek is so crucial to Israel's survival, that God *Himself* swears *...For I will blot out the memory of Amalek ...because a hand is on God's throne, war for God with Amalek from generation generation.* (Exodus 17:14–16).

We note that the word "throne" (כסא), is shortened to כס without the א. Secondly, the concept of God waging constant war with a nation is disturbing. If God indeed is omnipotent, can He not obliterate any foe within a breath? Rashi[1] comments: "God's hand is upraised to swear by His throne to have war with Amalek. Yet, why the missing letter in כס? It is answered: God's throne will not be complete or whole (שלם) until He annihilates Amalek's name entirely."

However, Rashi raises a deeper problem. How can any aspect of the Almighty be described as "incomplete"? Is it possible satisfactorily to interpret "God's throne" to fit Rashi?

The two passages declaring Amalek's destruction[2] utilize the term מתחת השמים *from under the heavens.* Clearly, Amalek is an entity to be reckoned with on the terrestrial, not the celestial level. What could represent God's throne, His kingdom? S. D. Luzzato cites the Bible critic Clericus of Amsterdam (1683–1715): "For Amalek set his hand against God's throne, i.e., against Israel, since God dwells in their midst..."[3] Now Rashi can be understood: God's כסא, namely Israel, being in an incomplete state, causes God Himself to fight Amalek. The particular absence of א from the word כסא to form כס, corroborates this idea. A nation which lacks unity is unwhole and incomplete.

The precept of waging eternal war against Amalek appears twice in the Pentateuch:

1 Rashi Exod. 17:16. 2 Exod. 17:14; Deut. 25:19.

3 Samuel David Luzzato, *Perush Shadal Al Hamisha Humshai Torah* (Tel Aviv; Devir, 1965), p. 303.

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a. As an oath which God takes upon Himself, (Exodus 17:14):

And God said to Moses... I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under the heavens.

b. As a demand to Israel, (Deuteronomy 25:19):

...You shall blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under the heavens. You shall not forget.

These quotations are complementary. The first, God's self-imposed pledge, is juxtaposed in the very same passage mentioning כס.[4]

The second statement, directed towards the Children of Israel, describes the human element of this undertaking. The word כס is the binding factor.

How can Israel obey this commandment? Only through אחדות — unity. For Israel's unity (God's throne complete) can end the war with Amalek.

WHY AMALEK

Why Amalek? Why the incessant strife between God and this people? An elucidation of the Amalekite origin and nature is essential in this study.

Amalek is the son of Eliphaz, the son of Esau, Jacob's brother. His mother, Timnah, is a concubine.[5] This latter fact denotes Amalek's filial position. Eliphaz has other sons by standard marriage. They, the Edomites, are the inheritors of Mount Seir. In fact, Nahmanides proposes the alienation of Amalek as the solution to a paradox:

Thou shalt not abhor an Edomite, for he is thy brother.[6].

You shall blot out the remembrance of Amalek.[7]

These statements seem to contradict each other. Isn't Amalek an Edomite? The answer, according to Ramban, is "no." As the son of a concubine, Amalek does not share in his brothers' portion.[8] Ironically, Amalek's fate is indeed tragic; for he has no other recourse but to go his own separate way, as an outcast. While Israel displays different attitudes towards Edom and Amalek, there seems to be, from the start mutual animosity.

Let us begin with the biblical account of the birth of Jacob and Esau. *And the children struggled together within her.*[9] God answers Rebekah's enquiries regarding the struggle: *Two nations are in thy womb and two peoples shall be*

4 Exod. 17:16. 5 Gen. 36:12. 6 Deut. 23:8.
7 Deut. 25:19. 8 Ramban Gen. 36:12. 9 Gen. 25:22

separated from thy bowels.[10] Twins were born. These two individuals, Jacob and Esau, though of identical ancestry and background, possess antithetical characters and follow different destinies. Curiously, their descendants perpetually interact as two poles of a magnet, apart, yet always in contact.

It is told that, when Jacob returned from his sojourn in Haran, and crossing the Jabbok river, he split his camp and his family into three distinct groups.[11] Remaining alone during the night, he is assailed by an alien man and wrestles with him. According to the Midrash, this man is Esau's = Edom's guardian angel.[12] Jacob must fight the emissary of his other half – his twin brother, thus continuing the struggle that had already begun long before, a struggle which Jacob neither wins nor loses. It should be noted: this confrontation occurs right after Jacob divides his own people.

AMALEK THE SYMBOL OF ISRAEL'S DISUNITY

This incident is prophetic, presaging future events. When the Children of Israel are filled with discord, they invite the attack of Edom and to larger degree, that of Amalek. For it is now Amalek, Esau's grandson, who falls heir to the role of Edom's "guardian angel."[13] However, Amalek's role as a gadfly is magnified. Examining the Bible it seems more than a curious incident that Amalek and Israel clash whenever the latter is fragmented.

The first such encounter occurs in the aftermath of a dispute between the Children of Israel and Moses. The newly freed people begin their journey to the Promised Land, but not without trouble: וילנו *And they murmured.*[14] From the Red Sea till Masa Umeriva, every protest echoes variations of the word וילנו. However, at Masa Umeriva there is a change: וירב העם עם משה *And the people strove with Moses.*[15] Here we have anger, a mob, chaos! Ibn Ezra postulates that Israel is rent into two camps during this crisis.[16]

We witness the first account of such disharmony among the people of Israel.

10 Gen. 25:23. 11 Gen. 32:8, 25. 12 Rashi Gen. 32:25.

13 Issachar Jacobson, *Chazon Hamikra*, I (Tel Aviv: Sinai, 1962), 97.

14 Exod. 15:24. 15 Exod. 17:2.

16 Picture the scenario. One group is devoid of water. The second group has maintained water from the encampment at Elash. Daringly they set upon testing God... Will He give them what they ask? (Ibn Ezra. Exod. 17:2). Ibn Ezra's theory supplies added meaning to the name מסה ומריבה (Test and Dispute).

What happens then is devastating – Amalek, swooping down upon the weakest, killing mercilessly.[17] Victory over Amalek is achieved through supernatural intervention symbolized by Moses' upraised hands. Ramban explicates this rationally. The sight of Moses on a hill, hands uplifted towards heaven, praying sincerely, arouses the people's faith and courage.[18]

Nahmanides further quotes the Midrash to illustrate the unifying effect of Moses on the Israelites:

> All the people would go out of their tents and see Moses bending on his knees, and they would bend on their knees; he falls with his face to the ground, and they fall... thus, all the people answer after him and the Holy One blessed be He defeats Amalek and his people...
>
> (Ramban, Exodus 17:9)

Disunity brings Israel's punishment through Amalek, while unity brings Amalek's defeat through Israel's oneness. Only in one other part of the Pentateuch is it stated וירב העם עם משה – *and the people strove with Moses* namely, in the infamous Me Meriva, the "Waters of Dispute," where Moses tragically errs, and loses his right to enter the Land (Numbers 20:3). This is confirmed by the commentator Kli Yakar.[19] Me Meriva precipitates a confrontation with Edom, not Amalek. Threatened with violence by the kingdom of Edom, freedom to pass through that land is denied. As it is written; *And he said, 'You shall not pass.' and Edom went out to meet him with a heavy army and a strong hand.*[20] Remembering the commandments against wronging on Edomite,[21] Israel detours without incident.

At first view, this event seems inconsistent with our Amalek-disunity theory. Why is this dissension – so severe as to cause Moses to sin – dealt a mild punishment? Or Hachaim suggests that the transgressions of Masa Umeriva and Me Meriva are not of the same degree.

> "At Masa Umeriva, the people are *not* in dire need; they said: "Give us water!" and because Moses has water to give them, this is nothing else but a quarrel (Or Hachaim, Exodus 17:2). At Me Meriva they are truly

17 Exod. 17:8. 18 Ramban, Exod. 17:9.

19 Kli Yakar, Num. 20:3. 20 Num. 20:20. 21 Deut. 2:4–5; 23:8.

suffering:[22] they were grumbling at him that he should pray for them that they should not die (Or Hachaim, Numbers 20:3).

The unfortunate circumstances of Me Meriva do not merit strict punishment. Therefore, there is no Amalek here, only a menace of harm from Edom. Battle cannot ensue, for the Law protects Edom's inheritance. Divine retribution is exercised through caveat, but, still via Esau's descendants.

AMALEK – ISRAEL

This correlation between Israel's disharmony and Amalek's position in Jewish history spans the Bible, from the Exodus through the Exile, although in the later records Amalek's presence is subtle and symbolic. It is then to the earlier books that we turn for confirmation of the relationship.

At a most vital point in the desert journeys, Amalek appears once again. The account of the faithless spies ignites the people to panic and loss of faith. God sentences the Israelites to forty years of nomadic life in the wilderness. In a reckless attempt to prove their faith, the people venture to conquer and ascend the hill. Moses warns them to abort this foolhardy plan, declaring God is not with them. Nevertheless, they go on their futile quest. However, *the ark of the covenant of God, and Moses, did not depart from the midst of the camp.*[23] A rift begins. Moses and the priests are on one side, the Israelites on the other. Dissension now takes hold. Consequently, the *Amalekites and the Canaanites came down... and smote them.*[24]

Later on, King Saul's encounter with Amalek[25] is of special interest. An opportunity is presented to fulfill the law of Amalek's annihilation. Saul's failure to obey, evokes division:

> *And Samuel turned to go and he took hold on the corner of his* [Samuel's] *mantle and it rent. And Samuel said to him 'God has rent the Kingdom of Israel from you.'*

This trangression ultimately sparks the civil war between pro-David and pro-Saul factions, becoming the counterpoint of the Israel-Amalek relationship. Amalek's elimination, through Israel's oneness, can be fulfilled. Disobedience to

22 According to the classic commentator, Rashi, the water source supplying Israel in the desert ceased at this time, upon Miriam's death. (Numb. 20:2).

23 Num. 14:44. 24 Num. 14:45. 25 I Sam. 15.

the destruction of Amalek, brings fragmentation. The final battle in the Bible between Amalek and Israel is symbolized in the Book of Esther. Though its confrontation is blatant and straight-forward, paradoxically, Amalek appears as the *concealed* foe of Israel. Interestingly, this coincides with the beginning of the "non-prophetic period." According to Tradition, this era is marked by God's "hiddenness," revealing Himself indirectly, not through prophets or supernatural miracles.

In Haman the Agagite, descendant of Amalek, who seeks to oppress Israel, the Amalek–disunity motif is crystallized. Megillath Sesorim[26] explains "When the Israelites reach a spiritual nadir, they become disunited, scattered and separated.[27] Upon repenting (i.e., returning to the Torah, which has always identified them as one people), they are once again a solidified unit."

The rabbis teach that every generation has its own Amalek, if not the physical progeny of the Amalekites, then their spiritual heir.[28] This is already found in the Pentateuch. Both verses stating Amalek's destruction use the term – זכר עמלק *remembrance of Amalek*.[29] Those who continue in Amalek's ways, attacking and oppressing Israel, cause Amalek to be remembered.

26 Megillath Sesorim, Esther 9:19. 27 Esther 3:8.

28 Exod. 17:14; Deut. 25:19. 29 Exod. 17:16.

REFLECTION OF READERS *(Continued from p. 50)*

The route necessarily taken by the merchantmen who drew Joseph out of the pit ran westward through Beth Shean towards Megiddo, transversing the Dothan Valley and exiting at Dothan Juncture to join the Via Maris for the journey south to Egypt. Since that route never came closer than sixteen miles from Shechem, the encounter between Joseph and the caravan could not have taken place had he not proceeded to Dothan in the search for his brothers.

REFLECTION OF READERS

BY HERBERT RAND

Genesis 2:7

And [He] breathed into his nostrils נשמת חיים *the breath of life and man became a living soul.*

The word for "brain" מח does not appear in the Pentateuch. However, the last and first letters of חיים read in that order, form the word מח. The same letters read from right to left, form the word חם, "warm."

A warm body and a brain are two indispensible conditions for life. The double "Yod" in the center of the word are the initials which we use to denote God. Also as the unifying force in the word חיים, they can stand for the Yetzer Tov and the Yetzer Ra, (the inclination to do good or evil), two inherent ingredients of the "breath of life."

Genesis 18:16 ff.

Since the wickedness of Sodom was already known to God, why was it necessary to send two angels there before destroying that city?

God wanted to acquaint Abraham with His plan for Sodom *so that he can command his children and household after him* to do justice. Abraham reminds God that as judge of all the earth, He must act justly.

The two angels continued on their way to Sodom to demonstrate the requirement, later redueed to writing in Deut. 17:6 and 19:15, that no one may be condemned to death without the testimony of at least two witnesses to the crime. Only after both of them in person had witnessed the depravity of the Sodomites did God overthrow the city and destroy its inhabitants.

Genesis 37:17

In the story of Joseph, what purpose is served by the information that his brothers whom he was seeking had moved on from Shechem to Dothan and that he followed them there?

Without those details, the entire episode would have lacked credibility to anyone familiar with the geography of the region and with the ancient caravan route from Gilead to Egypt.

(Continued on p. 49)

Herbert Rand is a Doctor of Jurisprudence and a practicing New York attorney. He is the author of published articles dealing with Law, Biblical archaeology, and Judaic subjects. He lives in Highland Park, New Jersey.

NEW FINDINGS IN ARCHEOLOGY

BY ABRAHAM RUDERMAN

LIFE IN JUDAH AND ISRAEL

What contribution can archeology make to our understanding of the Bible? Amichai Mazar, in his article appearing in *Recent Archeology in the Land of Israel,* indicates that the Bible was written during the period of the Israelite monarchy. The term "People of the Book" could rightfully be applied to the Israelites of this period, but in the material realm they were hardly creative. Compared to her neighbors, Mazar notes, Israel left no statues or monumental reliefs, no magnificent palaces, delicately carved ivories, jewelry or skillfully crafted metal objects of local manufacture. Whatever art objects were found had been imported. The material culture of the Kingdom of Judah and Israel reveal a dense, well-organized population, concerned with matters of agriculture, commerce, and self-defense. Agriculture and irrigation reached a high degree of development as recent research in the Negev and Judean Desert have revealed. The fortified cities of Hazor, Megiddo, Lachish, and Beersheva reveal large projects given over to royal institutions such as granaries, storehouses, and stables. The system of fortresses and towers point to a highly developed system of defense and road networks. Urban planning indicated that provision was made for large populations. Here is where archeology can shed light on the manner of life in which our ancestors lived from day to day. A typical residence in both Judah and Israel, consisted of a four-room dwelling. The houses were strung together to form a security cordon. In Jerusalem, already at that time, dwellings were constructed of Jerusalem stone, and homes of varying size to adjust to social status, were in abundance. Their engineering ability is indicated by impressive water systems found in a number of cities. They are unexcelled even by those in use today. Their fortifications were also skilfully designed. They consisted of casemate walls containing fortified positions, and six-chambered

Rabbi Abraham Ruderman is a graduate of the HUC—JIR of N.Y.C. He was a Chaplain with the U.S. Army Air Corps in W.W.II. He served in pulpits in Poughkeepsie, N.Y., Hazelton, Pa., and on Long Island. He made Aliyah in 1976.

gates. The palaces of Megiddo, Samaria, and Ramat Rahel, were made of smoothed-hewn stone, decorated with Aeolic carved capitols and with ornamental windows.

The Bible makes many references to cults, but a description of these cults is generally lacking. Archeologists have excavated at least dozen sites revealing the objects used by these cults: Canaanitish Temples have been uncovered in such sites as Hazor, Beth Shean, Megiddo, Shechem, and Lachish.

Burial customs of this time were unique. Stone burial caves with benches were hewn out of solid stone.

A HOARD OF BULLAE FOUND

One of the most exciting archeological discoveries is described in an article in *Biblical Archeological Review*, September 1987, "Jeremiah's Scribe Speaks from a Hoard of Clay Bullae." Here is a rare occasion where archeology comes face to face with people mentioned in the Bible. A bulla is a small lump of clay impressed with a seal that served as a signature. These were used to secure documents and identify the sender. The scholarly community was stunned when a hoard of bullae surfaced on the antique market, one of which contained the name of Baruch, son of Neriah, secretary and companion to the Prophet Jeremiah. In 1975 over 250 of these bullae showed up in a shop in East Jerusalem. Several collectors came to Professor Avigad to determine their authenticity. One collector had acquired 200 bullae and another 49 pieces. Professor Avigad found the collection sufficiently authentic to publish the entire collection in a volume entitled *Hebrew Bullae from the Time of Jeremiah.* Another biblical figure mentioned on a bullae is that of the son of King Yehoiakim, Yerachmiel, who was sent to arrest Jeremiah and Baruch because of Jeremiah's unpopular prophesies. One bulla contains the name of Elishama, the official who advised Jeremiah to go into hiding. He is mentioned in Jeremiah 36:12. Other bullae contain the names of high officials whose titles are inscribed on the bullae.

BOOK REVIEW

BY DAVID WOLFERS

1. Norman C. Habel. *The Book of Job, a Commentary,* Old Testament Library, SCM Press, 1985.
2. Stephen Mitchell. *The Book of Job,* North Point Press, San Francisco, 1987.

These two books, bearing the same title, represent opposite poles of biblical endeavour. The first contains almost 600 pages of concentrated analysis, directed essentially towards the elucidation of the structure of this great Hebrew classic and of the literary devices employed by its author to knit it into the seamless unity which it presents to the discerning reader. The second, a mere 130 little pages, is a belle-lettristic verse rendition of selected parts of the book, with a vigorous and ebullient introduction which seeks to encapsulate the philosophy of the author in sweeping strokes.

In Norman Habel's study, the translation of the text is so traditional and uninnovative, and so devoid of poetic diction, fancy, and tact, (27:2 "By El, who has deprived me of litigation" offers a not-atypical example) that one wonders why he went to the enormous trouble of providing a fresh version in English, rather than appending his commentary to any one of the half dozen modern translations which have appeared in the past twenty years. The same may be said of the exegetal analysis which forms the first part of the commentary on each chapter. There is nearly nothing new in this, the author noting the suggestions of predecessors in the field, and making his selection, not always judiciously, from amongst them. Many quite crucial problems of the text are passed over in silence, with radical amendments to the MT embodied in the translation without comment or attribution. The number of "corrections" of the text in this translation runs into many hundreds.

Nonetheless, despite these serious defects in the actual English text which forms the object of the subsequent structural analysis – this book must be regarded as a monumental work of scholarship which will provide food for future commentary and dispute perhaps for many decades. Its great value consists in the two sections entitled "Design" and "Message in Context" which follow the

textual notes in each chapter. The first analyzes the chapter according to what appears to be its plan. These analyses reveal symmetries and balances within the chapters of the book which are usually felt merely as echoes or even as clumsy repetition. Habel is extraordinarily sensitive to what might be called the skeleton over which the textual flesh is drawn, and it is this which he X-rays for us, revealing a facet of the literary art of the poet of Job to which little attention has hitherto been paid. The last section, "Message in Context", takes each of the elements of a speech and explores its relations both within the Book of Job and in the wider literature of Bible and Middle East, revealing innumerable interconnections, many of which have never previously been noted. Undoubtedly much of this is fascinatingly debatable, with many associations which are but coincidental being vested with significance, and others – most notably the Deuteronomic precedents for elements in the Prologue – being overlooked. But this is a form of analysis on which no two scholars will ever reach complete agreement, and there is no doubt that Habel has assembled by far the most comprehensive study of this aspect of the Book of Job yet published.

Habel has also delivered a massive blow at the almost universally accepted theory of multiple authorship of the Book of Job, demonstrating the solid interconnections between the Prologue–Epilogue (commonly regarded as a survival of an ancient folk-tale) and the heart of the book, and between the speeches of Elihu and its other elements. Similarly his rejection of the theory that Leviathan, a full-fledged mythological monster in chapter 3 has somehow degenerated into an oversized crocodile in chapter 40, is a healthy retreat from centuries of error. Happily Mitchell takes the same line.

These affirmations of the unity and integrity of the Book of Job as it has come down to us are unfortunately diluted by a singularly inept re-ascription of chapter 24 to Zophar the Naamathite. Likewise the slashing of chapters 26 and 27 into sections to be apportioned between various speakers is a serious blemish.

Stephen Mitchell's translation and introduction is a beautifully printed soft-covered book, the front cover of which features a superb 65% reduction facsimile of Blake's watercolor of the "the morning stars singing together." The translation, incomplete though it is, is an unquestionable literary *tour de force,* with the resuscitation of the rhythmic quality of the original an unique accomplishment.

One example, taken at random will convey the subtly varied rhythms which admirably recreate the sound effects of the original. However, even in this short passage there are several lines arbitrarily omitted.

Though his face was plump and cheerful
and his thighs bulged with health,
he lives in a desolate city
and sleeps in an empty room.
All his works have decayed;
his roots have rotted in the ground.
The sun withered his shoots;
his blossoms fell in the wind.
His leaves shriveled and died;
all his branches are bare.
He was stripped of his grapes like a vine
and dropped his buds like an olive tree. (15:27–35

Much more damaging is the omission of entire chapters: 28, and 32–37 and, as in Habel's study, the reallocation of parts of speeches in chapters 24–27 to new speakers. It is time that these practices ceased. Whatever the translator's views as to the origins of different parts of biblical books, his task as translator is to render the text as he finds it and to relegate his speculations to commentary. What Mitchell has done in omitting multiple sections of the book comes perilously close to censorship, while both authors are guilty of serious presumption in over-riding every single textual source to impose their own sense of what is or is not appropriate to the different speakers.

The introduction to Mitchell's translation is essentially an independent work. In describing the Book of Job, Mitchell repeats all the hoary errors which surround it – that it is based on an ancient folk tale, that its hero is one of the *Bene Kedem,* that the author is a gentile. Once these formalities are left behind, however, the introduction runs fresh and sparkling through the story of the book, replete with novel insights and surprising allusions.

"The Book of Job is the great poem of moral outrage. It gives voice to every accusation against God, and its blasphemy is cathartic. How liberating it feels *not* to be a good, patient little God-fearer, scuffling from one's hole in the wall to squeak out a dutiful hymn of praise," and writing of God's speeches:

"Each metaphor describing creation in human terms has a large, ironic humour to it. As if God were really a gigantic carpenter, measuring the earth with a cord, cutting a path for the thunderstorm, etc. How else can he talk to Job about such cosmic energies, except in Job's language and with a cosmic amusement?" And "The final section of the Voice from the Whirlwind is a criticism of conventional dualistic theology. *What is all this foolish chatter about good and evil,* the Voice says, *about battles between a hero-god and some cosmic opponent? Don't you understand that there is no-one else in here?* Job's vision ought to give a healthy shock to those who believe in a moral God."

This is very vigorous and very radical, but it pales into insignificance before the drastic images in which Mitchell endeavours to convey the sense of total acceptance of good and evil to the point of obliteration of their distinction which he seems to see as the message of the book. It is hard not to feel that the author has been carried away, not only from the Book of Job, but from all reality when he writes: "Job has received his answer, and can only remain awe-stricken in the face of overwhelming beauty and dread. At Alamogordo on July 16 1945, Robert Oppenheimer responded to another kind of vision by remembering a verse from *Bhagavad Gita:* 'I [God] am death, the shatterer of worlds'... Reading the two (Job and the Gita) together, we are likely to feel even more powerfully the earthliness that moved the author of *Job* to write in such magnificent, loving detail of the lioness and the wild ass and the horse, those creatures as radiant in their pure being as the light that is 'brighter than a thousand suns.'"

From a scholastic point of view, there is little or nothing to be gained by reading this book, but the free translation is a delight and the wide-ranging, undisciplined, racy introduction an extravaganza of sometimes self-contradictory, but always provocative ideas.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

With a great deal of deference, I would like to comment on the article by Dr. Benjamin Goodnick "The Saga of the First Born," appearing in the Spring, 1988, issue of *Dor Le Dor* (Vol. XVI, No.3).

I enjoyed reading the article. As a rank amateur in the field, I feel that Dr. Goodnick, in his discussion of Judah and Joseph, seems to equate leadership of a clan or tribe with the right of the first born. It is clear to me that Judah, of all the brothers, was the natural leader, possessing all the qualities which we associate with the position of leadership. But that alone does not qualify him to be selected by his father to be given the perquisites of the first born son in place of Reuben. Nor do I find in my reading of the text a real contest between him and Joseph for that position.

As I understand the text, Joseph was chosen by his father early on as the recipient of that position. I have seen commentators who eontend that the coat of many colors was worn by the first born as one of his prerogatives. If that is so, Jacob replaced Reuben with Joseph when the latter was still in his teens.

One other comment. Dr. Goodnick alludes, almost in passing, to Jacob "adopting" Ephraim and Manasseh as his sons, giving each of them a full portion. To me this is very significant, and I feel it should have received more emphasis. It appears to me that what Jacob was really doing was giving Joseph the double portion which was one of the main benefits of being considered the first born son.

I hope my remarks will not be taken amiss as I in no way intend to denigrate the excellent exposition given by Dr. Goodnick to this interesting subject.

Harold Z Novak
Illinois

DR. GOODNICK REPLIES

Sir,

We both agree that, with respect to Judah, he possessed "the qualities which we associate with the position of leadership." Reading the blessings of Jacob to his sons (Gen. 49:13–7) reveals that Judah not only displaced Reuben but Simeon and Levi as well. Father Jacob gives the reasons: all three had weaknesses and, lacking discipline,

became overwhelmed by passions of sex or aggression. Jacob clearly denies them any right to leadership and gives the "sceptre" to Judah.

Joseph presents a different picture. Biblically, we note that in both instances mentioned by Mr. Novak, his receiving a coat of many colors (which many have assumed to be a symbol of firstborn status) and a double portion for his two sons among the tribes, we find conditional statements. These acts (i.e., gifts) occurred, interestingly, not because of any virtue on the part of Joseph but because of his father's desire: Jacob loved Joseph because he was a son of his old age (Gen. 37:3); and he mourned the death of Rahel, Joseph's mother, whom he loved depply (Gen. 48:5–7).

So, to put the biblical text in a clearer light, we might say we are dealing here with two different types of firstborn sons: Judah represents the father's firstborn, the determined, strong leader of all the tribes; and Joseph, the firstborn of his mother, to whom out of love has been given a special cloak of recognitionand an additional portion, both signs of favor granted him by his father.

I am aware there are midrashic and other interpretations of the relationship between Judah and Joseph, but it would take us far afield from the Bible itself to discuss them.

May I add that the whole tenet of my article was to indicate that within biblical history the firstborn condition did *not* extend automatically to leadership. I hope these remarks help clarify the issue.

Benjamin Goodnick

CORRECTION PLEASE

Sir,

May I be permitted to make a small correction to the otherwise fine review of my book *Jephthah And His Vow* by the late Chaim Abramowitz which appeared in the Spring issue, volume XVI, no. 3. My conclusion in the book is not, as your reviewer stated, that Jephthah actually sacrificed his daughter. While I personally favor the opposite conclusion, the major thrust of the book is that because of the deliberate ambiguities in the story we simply do not know what was the fate of Jephthah's daughter. I quote from my *Conclusions* chapter:

> My conclusion is that while I personally favor a non-sacrificial fate for Jephthah's daughter, the evidence is so ambiguous that it must be admitted that both conclusions are possible.

I go on to indicate that this situation was not accidental, that the narrator being a brilliant stylist and craftsman and familiar with Hebrew rhetorical techniques could have been quite capable of devising a deliberately ambiguous ending. The reader, or listener, is

not meant to know, nor was it thought necessary for him to know, precisely how the action is resolved. In this way the tension is maintained and the suspense increased.

I further suggest, primarily on the basis of Jewish tradition, that the fate of Jephthah's daughter may not have been the chief element in the story at all, rather Jephthah's rash vow is. The story in effect is one which illustrates the consequences of a hasty vow; a fine irony for a man whose *forte* was eloquence of speech and mastery of words!

David Marcus
Associate Professor of Bible

Sir,

In the course of preparation for an adult class on the subject of "Introduction to the Bible," I reviewed the back issues of *Dor Le Dor* that I have collected since 1983.

I await the arrival of each issue with the greatest anticipation, and refer to back issues frequently. I constantly discover (and recover) new facts, ideas, concepts, approaches, and speculations, to my personal enormous gain – intellectually and spiritually – and for the fascinating enrichment of my students / teachers.

May you be vouchsafed strength to continue your nourishment of the scattered of Israel.

Harold Kaufman
Boca Raton, Florida

Sir,

I'm a very pleased subscriber to *Dor Le Dor* in the U.S., and while in Israel, wanted to extend my subscription to your fine publication.

I've given the magazine as a gift to friends, and the articles often spark lively and thoughtful Torah discussions.

Please accept my thanks for your good work and continued publication.
בהצלחה!

Jessica Schechter
Miami Beach, Florida

TWENTY-FIFTH WORLD BIBLE CONTEST

FOR JEWISH YOUTH

It is a fitting testimonial to the State of Israel that the Book of Books has become a central feature of its Independence Day celebration. Commemorating the fortieth anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel, a number of precedents in the world-wide Bible competition for youth were broken. For the first time, a girl, Zehava Hadad from Israel, broke the tradition of male domination in this annual Bible contest. And, for the first time, Jeremy Wieder, a youth from the United States, broke the tradition of the Israeli domination of this contest. And it was the first time that two youths from the Eastern bloc, one from Hungary and the other from Yugoslavia, participated. And, for the first time, the winner of the Diaspora contest, Jeremy Wieder, was also a co-winner of the World Bible Contest.

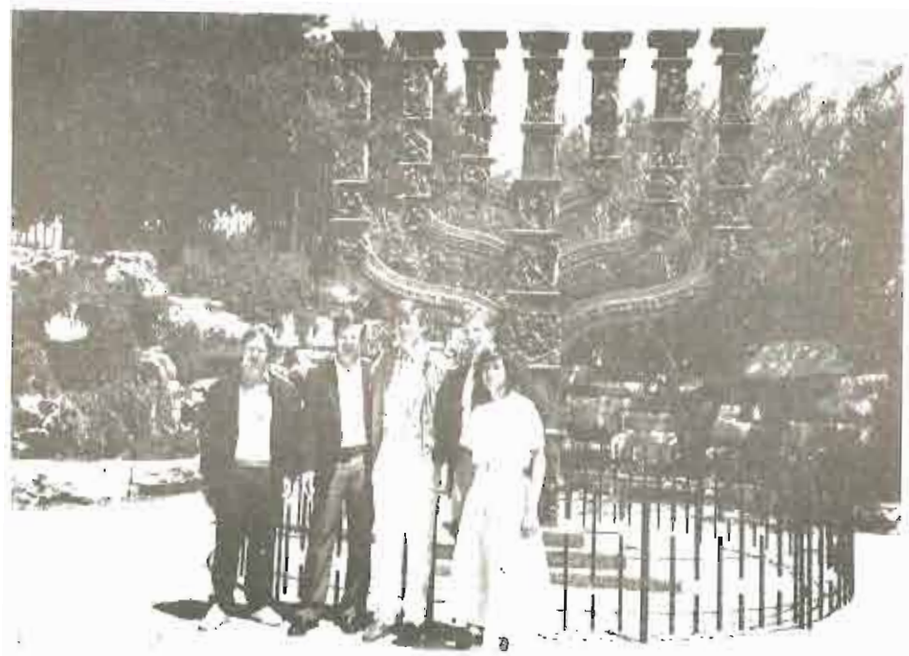
In the Diaspora Bible quiz, hosted at Or-Akiva, thirty-two participants, representing eighteen countries on five continents, vied for honors. Jeremy Wieder, a graduate of Yeshiva University High School, N.Y., and son of Professor Solomon and Suzanne Wieder of Monsey, N.Y., came out in first place. He was followed by Shawn Zelig Aster, a graduate of Herzliah High School, Montreal, Canada, son of Morlin and Margaret Aster of Montreal. Third prize was won by Noah R. Feldman, a graduate of the Maimonides School of Brookline, Mass., son of Dr. Roy and Dr. Penny Feldman of Cambridge, Mass. Fourth honors were won jointly by Adina Greenberg, a ninth grader of the Yeshiva of Flatbush, N.Y., daughter of Dr. Abraham and Channy Greenberg of Merrick, N.Y., and by Israel Davidowics, of Nyiregyhaza, Hungary.

Israel Davidowics deserves special mention. Three years ago, being prepared for his Bar-Mitzvah by an uncle in Budapest, his interest in his Jewish roots was fired. He learned Hebrew with the help of a dictionary and materials which he received from Israel. He began his preparations for the Bible contest with the help of a Protestant Bible, written in Hungarian and borrowed from a neighbor.

The major event, the World Bible Contest, was held in Jerusalem in the Jerusalem Theatre. It was a colorful event, nationally televised and viewed by hundreds of thousands. The importance of this event can be seen by the galaxy of

important Israeli leaders who participated. Yitzchak Navon, the Minister of Edueation, and Simcha Dinitz, newly appointed Executive Chairman of the Jewish Agency, addressed the gathering. Dr. Joseph Burg, the longest serving member of the Knesset, chaired a distinguished panel of judges. Prime Minister Yitzchak Shamir posed the last, and probably most difficult question, asking for the sources of ten biblical expressions dealing with peace. It was also the Prime Minister who handed out the prizes at the conclusion of the program.

WINNERS OF THE DIASPORA CONTEST



From left to right:
Israel Davidovicz, Shawn Z. Aster, Jeremy Wieder, Noah R. Feldman, Adina Greenberg

חשון תשמ"ט — October-November 1988

א	יהושע ח'	W	Joshua 8	12
ב	יהושע ט'	Th	Joshua 9	13
ג	נח	F	Genesis 6:9-11	14
ד	הפטרה: ישעיה נ"ד, א-נ"ה, ה	שבת	Haftarah: Isaiah 54:1-55:5	15
ה	יהושע י	S	Joshua 10	16
ו	יהושע י"א, י"ב	M	Joshua 11-12	17
ז	יהושע י"ג	T	Joshua 13	18
ח	יהושע י"ד	W	Joshua 14	19
ט	יהושע ט"ו	Th	Joshua 15	20
י	לך לך	F	Genesis 12-17	21
יא	הפטרה: ישעיה מ', כו-מ"א, טז	שבת	Haftarah: Isaiah 40:27-41:16	22
יב	יהושע ט"ז	S	Joshua 16	23
יג	יהושע י"ז	M	Joshua 17	24
יד	יהושע י"ח	T	Joshua 18	25
טו	יהושע י"ט	W	Joshua 19	26
טז	יהושע כ'	Th	Joshua 20	27
יז	וירא	F	Genesis 18-22	28
יח	הפטרה: מלכים ב ד', א-לב	שבת	Haftarah: II Kings 4:1-32	29
יט	יהושע כ"א	S	Joshua 21	30
כ	יהושע כ"ב	M	Joshua 22	31
				November
כא	יהושע כ"ג	T	Joshua 23	1
כב	יהושע כ"ד	W	Joshua 24	2
כג	שופטים א'	Th	Judges 1	3
כד	חיי שרה	F	Genesis 23-25:18	4
כה	הפטרה: מלכים א א', א-לא	שבת	Haftarah: 1 Kings 1:1-31	5
כו	שופטים ב'	S	Judges 2	6
כז	שופטים ג'	M	Judges 3	7
כח	שופטים ד'	T	Judges 4	8
כט	שופטים ה'	W	Judges 5	9

כסלו תשמ"ט — November-December 1988

א	שופטים ו'	Th	Judges 6	10
ב	תולדות	F	Genesis 25:19-28:9	11
ג	הפטרה: מלאכי א', יא-יב', ג	שבת	Haftarah: Malachi 1:11-2:3	12
ד	שופטים ז'	S	Judges 7	13
ה	שופטים ח'	M	Judges 8	14
ו	שופטים ט'	T	Judges 9	15
ז	שופטים י'	W	Judges 10	16
ח	שופטים י"א	Th	Judges 11	17
ט	ויצא	F	Genesis 28:10-32:3	18
י	הפטרה: הושע י"ב, יג-יד"ד,י(א)	שבת	Haftarah: Hoseah 12:13-14:10 (A)	19
	הושע י"א, ד-י"ב יב (ס)		Hoseah 11:7-12:12 (S)	20
יא	שופטים י"ב	S	Judges 12	21
יב	שופטים י"ג	M	Judges 13	22
יג	שופטים י"ד	T	Judges 14	23
יד	שופטים ט"ו	W	Judges 15	
טו	שופטים ט"ז	Th	Judges 16	24
טז	וישלח	F	Genesis 32:4-36	25
יז	הפטרה: הושע י"א, ד-י"ב, יב (א)	שבת	Haftarah: Hoseah 11:7-12:12 (A)	26
	עובדיה (ס)		Obadiah (S)	
יח	שופטים י"ז	S	Judges 17	27
יט	שופטים י"ח	M	Judges 18	28
כ	שופטים י"ט	T	Judges 19	29
כא	שופטים כ'	W	Judges 20	30
				December
כב	שופטים כ"א	Th	Judges 21	1
כג	וישב	F	Genesis 37-40	2
כד	הפטרה: זכריה ב',יד- ד', ז	שבת	Haftarah: Zechariah 2:14-4:7	3
כה	חנוכה שמואל א א'	S	1 Samuel 1	4
כו	חנוכה שמואל א ב'	M	1 Samuel 2	5
כז	חנוכה שמואל א ג'	T	1 Samuel 3	6
כח	חנוכה שמואל א ד'	W	1 Samuel 4	7
כט	חנוכה שמואל א ה'	Th	1 Samuel 5	8

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