

THE JEWISH BIBLE QUARTERLY

DOR LeDOR



Vol. XVIII, No. 1 (69) FALL 1989

THE JEWISH BIBLE QUARTERLY
DOR Le DOR — דור לדור

Founded by Dr. Louis Katzoff, Editor 1972–1987

Published by the
WORLD JEWISH BIBLE CENTER
(Founded by David Ben Gurion and Zalman Shazar)

In cooperation with the WZO Department for Education and Culture in the Diaspora

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מחצית בנו משה ז"ל

Printed by Raphael Haim Hachohen Press Ltd., Jerusalem

Graphic Artist – Benjamin Hershkowitz

Cover picture – Philip Ratner

PARENTS HAVE EATEN SOUR GRAPES

BY NAHUM M. WALDMAN

Jeremiah and Ezekiel had to oppose a bitter charge made by the people against God, challenging His fairness and justice: *Parents have eaten sour grapes and children's teeth are blunted* (Jer. 31:29; Ezek. 18:1). Jeremiah responds by saying that in the future this saying will no longer be heard, for each one will die for his own sins; *he who eats the the sour grapes his teeth will be blunted* (Jer. 31:29–30). Ezekiel outlines in great detail a doctrine of individual responsibility, where the sins of the fathers in no way harm the children and the merits of their fathers do not aid them (Ezek. 18:ff.).

We must understand both the complaint of the people and the response of the prophets. First let us consider the prophets. I suggest that Jeremiah and Ezekiel, despite the similarity of the people's complaint, are saying different things. Jeremiah admits part of the people's charge: that the sins of an earlier generation are weighing heavily upon the contemporary generation. The destruction of the kingdom is occurring because of the sins of Manasseh (Jer. 15:4). The editor of the book of Kings also sees the invasions in the days of Jehoiakim as a punishment for the sins of idolatry and murder by Manasseh (II Kings 24:3–4; 21:1–18). However, Jeremiah does not believe that the people are innocent victims of their parents' sins. He rebukes the fathers and their children equally for having violated the covenant of God (Jer. 11:6–10). In his prayer for rain he stresses the responsibilities of fathers and children: *We acknowledge our wickedness, O Lord — the iniquity of our fathers — for we have sinned against You* (Jer. 14:20).

Jeremiah clearly anticipated the later view of our rabbis, that the sins of the fathers fall upon the children *when the children continue in their fathers' way* (*Targum Onkelos*, Exodus 20:5; TB Sanhedrin 27b; David Kimhi on Jer. 31:28 and Ezek. 18:2). The rabbis' interpretation is not an arbitrary reading but has a biblical foundation. When Jeremiah says that people will no longer say, *Parents*

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have eaten sour grapes and children's teeth are blunted, he does not deny the concept of the collective historical responsibility of the fathers. He accepts it as real when activated by the contribution of the children. His view is that once the expiatory destruction and exile occur the heavy guilt of the sins of Manasseh, aggravated by the sins of the contemporary generation, will be removed. The record will then be clear and there will be a fresh start: individual responsibility. Ezekiel, on the other hand, is not addressing the concept of collective guilt reaching back to the generation of Manasseh, whom he does not mention at all. He rejects the saying because it is, in his view, totally wrong and has never had any validity. He believes in strict individual responsibility.

What is the basis of the people's view? We might assume that it is simply an evasion of responsibility. They blame Manasseh and their parents and impute no guilt to themselves. Such a view even achieved a respectability by being included in the Book of Lamentations: *Our fathers sinned and are no more; and we must bear their guilt* (Lam. 5:7).

I would like to suggest that there are other possibilities of interpreting the people's view, attributing to them a greater level of sophistication: although their evasion of responsibility still remains. The first possibility is that the people knew the teaching of the Ten Commandments with respect to the cardinal offense of idolatry: *Visiting the guilt of the parents upon the children, upon the third and upon the fourth generations of those who reject Me* (Exodus 20:5). While Manasseh, having reigned for fifty-five years, died in peace (II Kings 21:18), his son, Amon, reigned only two years and was killed in a palace conspiracy (*ibid.*, 21:23). Josiah, Amon's son, who was promised by the prophetess Huldah that he would be buried in peace (*ibid.*, 22:20), actually died a violent death on the battlefield, and the editor of the Book of Kings considers the wrath of God to be still raging against the people because of the sins of Manasseh (*ibid.*, 23:26, 29–30). Josiah's son, Jehoahaz, is exiled to Egypt (*ibid.*, 23:34). His other son, Jehoahkim, is attacked by invading Chaldeans, Arameans, Moabites and Ammonites. This, too, is attributed to the wrath of God against Manasseh (*ibid.*, 24:1–3). Jehoiaquim's son, Jehoiachin, is besieged by the Babylonians and is exiled (*ibid.*, 24:8–16).

This is sufficient tragedy for one family to endure. The editor of the Book of Kings saw it in the light of Manasseh's sins and the people, no doubt, viewed

these troubles as excessive fulfillment of the retribution until the fourth generation. God operates by a rule of retribution in which inheres a statute of limitations to the fourth generation; any further punishment upon the people in the generation of the destruction and exile is interpreted by them as excessive, for God has gone beyond His own warning in the Ten Commandments. Of course, the flaw in their reasoning was that they failed to accept their own responsibility for the sin of idolatry and moral offenses, either during the reign of Manasseh or after it.

The significant element in the people's reasoning that we have now arrived at is the charge against God that His anger is excessive, that it is not measured or proportional to the offense. This is why they say to Ezekiel, *The way of the Lord is unfair* (or unmeasured) (*lo yittakhen*, Ezek. 18:29; *tokhen* means "measurement" Exodus 5:18; Ezek. 45:11).

Is God's wrath measured or excessive? Is it assuaged when justice has been done or does it continue to burn? In many passages the Bible stresses that God's anger is not arbitrary but is a result of the provocation of sin. It is temporary and can be assuaged by intercession or will be overruled by God's mercy. Thus the prophets would resist the people's charge and emphasize God's fairness and love. Illustrative passages are: *for soon my wrath (za'am) will have spent itself* (Isa. 10:25); *hide but a little moment until the indignation (za'am) passes* (*ibid.*, 26:20); *in slight anger, for a moment (be-shetsef ketsef), I hid My face from you, but with kindness everlasting I will take you back in love* (*ibid.*, 54:7); *I will not always contend, I will not be angry forever* (*ibid.*, 57:16); and *for in anger (be-kitspi) I struck you down but in favor I take you back* (*ibid.*, 60:10).

On the other hand, the wrath of God can strike forth in such an awesome manner that special pleading is required to mitigate its severity. Thus, Moses can implore: *When one man sins will You be angry with the whole community?* (Numbers 16:22) and the Book of Joshua states, *When Achan... violated the proscription anger struck the whole community of Israel* (Joshua 22:20).

It is understandable that the people, despite the emphasis of Torah and prophets on God's justice, would believe that His fury would get out of control. The pagans surrounding them also did not have the assurance that their gods were always reasonable in their anger. The *Gilgamesh Epic* depicts the god Ea protesting the amorality of the bringing of the flood by the wrathful Enlil: "How could'st thou, unreasoning, bring on the deluge? On the sinner impose his sin, on

the transgressor impose his transgression. Yet, be lenient, lest he be cut off, be patient, lest he be dislodged" (*Gilgamesh*, XI:179–82; *ANET*, 95). The Assyrian *Erra Epic* also tells of a god who sets out to punish the sins of humans in their disrespect for the gods but in his fury went too far. The god Ishum remonstrates with him: "Hero Erra, you killed the righteous man, you killed the unrighteous man. You killed him who sinned against you, you killed him who did not sin against you."¹ Erra blithely admits this: "My heart was burning with wrath and I laid low the people... when one is raging another cannot advise him."²

A Babylonian medical tablet discusses the case of a person whose god is angry at him. He suffers losses of property, cattle and slaves. He has constant anxiety, sleeplessness, bad dreams, "loose" limbs and an inability to remember or say the words he intends. The parallel with Job is striking. As if all of this suffering is not enough, the angry god drags into the accounting the additional sins of his father and mother, brother and sister, clan, kith and kin. The relief for this situation is a magical ritual, where two images, one male and one female, become substitutes for the sufferer and carry away the god's anger.³

One cannot know for certain what the people of Jeremiah's time knew about Babylonian religious ideas, although some of them were devoted to the cult of Ishtar ("the Queen of Heaven," Jer. 7:18; 44:17–19) and they had passed through the reign of Manasseh with its many foreign cultic importations. But even without outside influences, fear of an unreasoning and arbitrary divine anger which drags into the picture the sins of parents and clan is a natural one. However, if the people were thinking this way, they were again placing the blame on someone else; this time God and not their ancestors, and refusing to acknowledge their own guilt.

In summary, I have suggested that Jeremiah recognized the existence of a burden of guilt from the time of Manasseh but also insisted that the people admit their own sin. Ezekiel, on the other hand, believed in individual responsibility, without any reference to Manasseh. The people may have been thinking in one of several modes. Either they really believed that they had no guilt at all because

1 Luigi Cagni, *The Poem of Erra* (Malibu, California: Undena, 1977), 54, IV:104–107.

2 *Ibid.*, 54, V:7, 12.

3 Edith K. Ritter and J. V. Kinnier Wilson, "Prescription for an Anxiety State: A Study of BAM 234," *Anatolian Studies* 30 (1980), 23–30.

Manasseh alone had sinned, or that Manasseh's offspring to the fourth generation had already been punished. A further possibility is that they believed that the sins of the former generations were being unfairly loaded upon them because of the unreasoning wrath of God. Whatever explanation is correct, all the suggestions show the Judeans as unwilling to admit their own guilt. They also demonstrated a lack of trust in God's justice and fairness. The prophets, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, strove to teach that God is fair and just and that the people, too, must accept their own responsibility.

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Some years back we sent a questionnaire to our readership asking about a "Chug Tanakh" in your community or congregation. We received encouraging replies and we listed them in Vol. IX, No. 4.

Our Editorial Board again encloses a questionnaire in the hope you will respond. The purpose of the listing is to unite such groups in a fellowship of the world Jewish Bible Center.

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THE ILLEGITIMATE CHILD, (MAMZER) IN JEWISH LAW

BY JOSEPH LEVITSKY

A mamzer shall not enter into the Congregation of the Lord, even to the tenth generation (Deut. 23:3). The word mamzer in the Bible is cited only two times, in the above quoted passage and in Zechariah 9:9 — And a mamzer shall dwell in Ashdod, and I will cut off the pride of the Philistines.

The origin of the word *mamzer* is uncertain. Targum Onkelos, the Aramaic translation of the Bible as well as the commentators Nahmanides and Ibn Ezra relate the term *mamzer* to the Hebrew adjective *zar*, "a stranger," "an alien." In the *Sifre* (A tannaitic source, interpretations of the legal text of Deuteronomy, p. 248), in the Palestinian Talmud, *Kidd.* III:64 and in the Babylonian Talmud, *Yeb.* 76b, the word *mamzer* is considered to be akin to *moom-zar*, a person born with an "odd blemish." Rashi, the well known commentator, defines *mamzer* or *moom-zar*, a person with an innate character defect.

The tannaim, the authors of the Mishnah, posed the question: "Who is accounted a mamzer?" In Deuteronomy 23:1 it is stated: *No man shall marry his father's wife, so as to uncover his father's skirt.* In the same chapter in verse 3, we read: *No mamzer shall be admitted into the congregation of the Lord, none of his descendants, even in the tenth generation.* Due to the proximity of these two verses, R. Akiba said: "A *mamzer* is (the offspring from) any union forbidden (in the law). R. Simon of Teman said: "A *mamzer* is (the offspring of any union) for which the participants (of the forbidden act) are liable to *Karet* (extirpation at the hands of Heaven). The halakha is according R. Simon's statement. In other words, all offspring of forbidden intercourse punishable at least by *Karet* are *mamzerim* (*Yeb.* 49a). (*Karet*, extirpation is cutting off or shortening of life by the hands of Heaven, either through premature or sudden death Cf. *Moed-Katan* 28a).

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In a number of brief and concise statements, Maimonides, the celebrated codifier of the halakha, in his monumental work the *Mishneh Torah* epitomizes the laws concerning the *mamzer* as follows: "Who is a *mamzer* according to the Torah? A *mamzer*, is the offspring of any forbidden intercourse, whether by force or by consent, whether wilfully or by error. The child born of that union is regarded a *mamzer*, and both male and female are eternally forbidden to marry into Israel, as it is said (in the Bible) *even to the tenth generation* (*Mishneh Torah*, Issure-Biah Ch. XV) (Cf. also "Eben-Haezer," the code by Joseph Karo, Ch. IV). It is thus clear that a *mamzer* is not the offspring of a union of an unmarried couple, but of a forbidden union (adultery or incestuous).

HOLINESS AND INCEST

The central theme of the second part of the book of Leviticus, beginning with chapter 19 is holiness (*Kedushah*), the motto being — קְדוּשִׁים תִּהְיוּ *You shall be holy*. The Israelites must be an *Am Kadosh*, a holy people. In order to attain a state of holiness, a person must learn to shun degrading and dehumanizing practices, among which incest and adultery are prominently mentioned. Each instruction and each warning against these practices is motivated by the admonition, *You shall not follow their customs*. Most of the indicated repellent practices must have been in common use among the neighboring pagan peoples. The Torah was apprehensive about the influence these peoples might exert upon the Israelites. *Do not defile yourselves in any of those ways, for it is by such that the nations which I am casting out before you defiled themselves. Thus the land became defiled; and I called it to account for its iniquity... You shall keep my charge not to engage in any of the abhorrent practices that were carried on before you, lest you defile yourself through them: I the Lord am your God* (Lev. 18:24ff.).

Holiness of the home was the ideal pervading Jewish society throughout the ages. Chastity of the family — *taharat hamishpaha* — was the prerequisite for a pure and wholesome living. Hence irregular and abnormal sex relations were rigorously proscribed. Incest or consanguinity was of great concern to the law-giver, who thus decreed: *None of you shall come near anyone of his own flesh to uncover nakedness: I am the Lord* (Lev. 18:6). *Gillui arayot*, the "uncovering of nakedness" in the Hebrew language is a euphemism for forbidden intercourse.

According to the Bible, incest is not only detrimental to clean living but it is

also highly repugnant, and this sense of aversion is vividly illustrated by the attitude the Israelites displayed towards two of their perennial enemies, Ammon and Moab. In recounting the story of Lot and his daughters (Gen. 19), the Israelites expressed both their animosity and contempt for their aversaries by alleging that the birth of Ammon and Moab was due to incestuous intercourse between Lot and his daughters.¹

The injunctions against adultery and incest as outlined in Chapter 20 of Leviticus differ in text and degree of culpability from those mentioned in Chapter 18. Persons committing either incest or adultery, as in Chapter 18, are to suffer divine punishment, *karet*, extirpation; while adultery and five cases of incest, according to Chapter 20, are capital crimes punishable by death.² The authors of the Talmud were well aware of these differences and by resorting to hermeneutic interpretation of texts they were successful in further refining and clarifying sexual lawlessness (Cf. Nahmanides, Lev. 18:20).

MITIGATION OF THE LAW

The Talmud considered sexual promiscuity as a great social evil. For happy living *taharat-hamishpaha* — chastity — is indispensable and the halakhists bent their legislative and juridical efforts in two related directions. One to "sweep out evil from your midst," in modern Hebrew parlance we would call it *takanat-hahevra*, to safeguard society from evil-doers. The other is *takkanat habanim*, to

1 It is common knowledge that as late as the reign of the Seleucids and Ptolomies (ca. 300 B.C.E.) incest was practiced by the members of the royal houses of Egypt, Syria and Babylon. Antiochus II married his sister Laodicea; Ptolemy II married his sister and Queen Cleopatra married her brother (Cf. A. Cherikover, *Hayehudim ve-Hamityavnim* p. 54).

2 According to the Jewish statutory law, a person accused of a capital crime could not be convicted thereof unless he was forewarned of the consequence of the act. Advance warning is referred to in Hebrew legal terminology as "*hatraah*" and the warning must be made in the presence of witnesses (*San.* 8b).

To prove guilt in all cases of capital crime, the law requires testimony by not less than two eye witnesses. In criminal cases charging forbidden intercourse, the testimony of eye witnesses is hardly possible. Yet, the jurists allowed the statute prohibiting such intercourse to stand, defining the commission of the act as a remote possibility (*Mishneh Torah* chapter on "Forbidden Intercourse" 1:19).

mitigate the harmful effects of the harsh and unjust fate of the innocent child, the *mamzer*.

However, the *mamzer* was not the only one who was barred from entering the "congregation of the Lord." According to the Bible (Deut. 23:4–9) the Edomites and Egyptians were barred through the third generation while the Ammonites and Moabites were banned even in the tenth generation (forever).

Ruth the Moabite was admitted into the "congregation of the Lord" and turned out to be the great grandmother of King David. This was in direct violation of the biblical injunction: *No Ammonite nor Moabite shall be admitted into the congregation of the Lord* (Deut. 23:4). The case challenged the legalists, and the rabbis unravelled this disparity by interpreting the biblical text "Ammon the male but not the female, Moab the male but not the female." According to the rabbis, the Ammonites or Moabites are forbidden to marry an Israelite for all time but their women are permitted forthwith (*Yeb.* 8, 3). Later the rabbis in Galilee went a step further and permitted even the males to enter the congregation of the Lord. Their decision was based upon a legal principle, namely change of status. The Ammonites and Moabites lost their homogeneity. According to R. Joshua, Sennacherib, King of Assyria, in settling the vanquished peoples in other countries caused the various races to mingle and lose their identity (*Ber.* 28a).

Although the ban on the admission of the Ammonites and Moabites even to the tenth generation actually meant *ad-olam*, forever, yet in course of time this ban was completely removed. On the other hand, the barrier preventing the *mamzer* from marrying into the house of Israel appeared to be insurmountable. The halakhists evidently considered lawless sexual intercourse as one of the gravest offenses against society.

Rabbi Eliezer favored the termination of the status of the *mamzeret* (female *mamzer*) at the end of the third generation. In his contention, R. Eliezer resorted to the use of hermeneutic method, the *gezerah-shavah*, analogy of phrases (*Yeb.* 78b). The scholars, however, disapproved of R. Eliezer's reasonings and the constituted halakha remained in accordance with Mishnah *Yeb.* 3:8, namely: "*Mamzerim... are eternally forbidden (to enter the congregation of the Lord) whether males or females.*"

TAKKANAT HABBANIM

The rabbis, however, were anxious to achieve *takkanat habbanim*, the sparing of the progeny, and perhaps because of the severity of the issue they eschewed the use of hermeneutic methods. Instead, they projected a number of legal instruments whereby, if not the *mamzer* himself, at least his progeny would be spared the agony of going through life as outcasts of society: (1) A change in the social or religious status of the forebears of the *mamzer*. (2) The invalidation or the annulment of the marriage contract, and (3) Presumptive evidence.

(1) When a *mamzer* of either gender marries a non-Jew, the issue of this union is non-Jewish. However, if the non-Jewish person embraces Judaism, the subsequent offspring automatically gains the status of a legitimate Jewish child (*Kid.* 66–69).

(2) If a *mamzer* marries a slave girl, the marriage contract is valid and the offspring has a status of a slave. However, if the husband sets free either the woman or her child, the child is free and a legitimate Jew. The tanna, R. Tarphon declared that this is one of the ways for the *mamzer* to remove the stigma from his progeny, the halakha being, that the child takes the status of his mother (*Kid.* 3:13). The standard halakha is according to R. Tarphon (*Kid.* 69a).

(3) An unmarried prostitute who gave birth to a child and stated that the father of the child is not a *mamzer*, the offspring is considered a legitimate child (*Kid.* 74a). In order to clear the child, the scholars acquiesced to presumptive evidence.

(4) A man of high standing in the community appears in court declaring that he is not the father of one of his children and since there was no challenge from any quarter, the court could not help declaring that the said child is a *mamzer*. However, the man's declaration does not impugn the progeny of the assumed *mamzer*. The children of that *mamzer* are legitimate members of the community (*Kid.* 78b).

It is quite obvious that the scholars of the Talmud made excellent use of presumptive evidence to mitigate the harsh fate of the *mamzer*. Only recently the rabbinic courts in Israel made use of the same evidence to clear a little girl of the *mamzer* stigma. A man appeared in court claiming that he is not the father of his wife's little girl, and two witnesses testified to the identity of the real father. However, since the claimant resided with his wife under the same roof during the pregnancy the courts rendered the decision that the little girl is of legitimate birth.

(*Decisions of the Rabbinic Courts in Israel*, Volume III, p. 97).

LEGAL STATUS OF THE MAMZER

According to the sources, the legal status of the *mamzer* is highly complicated, but there is clear indication that the halakhists were inclined to reduce the harshness of the biblical law to a minimum. The apparent severe treatment of the *mamzer* was confined to the intermarriage with legitimate children in Israel, but for all other intents and purposes the *mamzer* was a full-fledged member of the Jewish community, enjoying all the rights and privileges thereof. He was entitled to the full share in his father's property and according to the Mishnah *Horiyot* 3:8, a learned *mamzer* is to be offered privileges and preferences over an ignorant high-priest. A *mamzer* could even serve as a member of a lay court of three, and as a matter of fact, all three members of the panel could be *mamzerim* (*Hoshen-Mishpat* 7:2.³

AMERICAN AND JEWISH LAW

A comparison between the Jewish laws concerning sex relations and the corresponding American laws might be of some interest. Adultery in the old English law is based upon the biblical commandment *Thou shalt not commit adultery* (Ex. 20:13), while the English and American laws pertaining to incest also have their origin in the Scriptures.

"The laws against incest are designed to protect the family relationship and its rights, duties, habits and affections from the destructive effect of family intermarriages and domestic licentiousness. To provide the family with such protection, the nations of the world, following the levitical law, have, by specific statutory enactment prohibited marriages and sexual intercourse between the closely related by blood and marriage."⁴

In a number of instances the relationship of parties involved in the perpetration of incest, as outlined in English and American laws, are similar to those stated in Leviticus and Deuteronomy as well as those discussed in the talmudic literature. In the Jewish law, incest is an offense against high morals, detrimental to the

3 On the "lay courts," (cf. M. Alon, *Hamishpat Haibri* . I, ch. 1, 6).

4 *State v. Tucker*, 174 Ind. 715, 93 Ne 3.

welfare of society and constitutes, in extreme cases, a capital crime; while in the English and American laws, the crime of incest is purely statutory, being either a felony or a high misdemeanor.⁵ There is also substantial agreement between the Jewish and American laws regarding (1) nature of offense, (2) relationship of parties, (3) cohabitation, (4) validity of marriage, and (5) incest and rape.

Although, these laws have not been fully enforced in all of the United States for a least 150 years, it is evident, however, that, as far as sexual relations are concerned, the intent of both American and Jewish laws is to preserve the integrity of the family and to protect society against sinister and destructive forces.

⁵ *Ibid.*

EDITORS' NOTE

The editors regret that they did not have the opportunity to suggest that reference be made to the greater awareness of the world wide problem of *mamzerut* in modern times caused chiefly by the large number of civil divorces of Jewish marriages without the halakhic requirement of a *get*. At the same time several noteworthy suggestions have been offered, in recent years, further to alleviate this painful halakhic problem.



A congregation or Bible study group may wish to honor one of its members by sponsoring a special issue of Dor Le Dor. We shall be happy to dedicate such an issue to the honoree. Please write to the Editor, Dor Le Dor, for further details.

ISAAC AND LAUGHTER

BY AARON LICHTENSTEIN

Dedicated to Pessa Lea Lichtenstein (1898–1988)

"Laughter," the Hebrew *tzehok*, appears twelve times in Genesis. It occurs only once more in the rest of the Pentateuch and only twice in all prophetic literature. Why this affinity for laughter in Genesis? The answer in part is that *tzehok* serves as a thematic word, a *Leitwort*, in the narrative about the patriarch Isaac, *Yitzhak*. This *Leitwort* usage reaches striking proportions in Genesis 26:8, where in effect the text has *Isaac Isaac-ing with Rebecca his wife* יצחק מצחק את רבקה אשתו.

Still, the role of laughter in this narrative has been unclear to students of biblical literature. English Bible translators have variously rendered *tzehok* as play, enjoy, fondle, insult, joke, laugh, mock, sport, rejoice, scoff. We need better reading toward an understanding of the humor, if any, in the Genesis narrative.

The root *tzehok* occurs with regularity in another epic in Semitic literature, the pagan myths of Ugarit. Discovered in Ras Shamra, on the Mediterranean coast in present-day Syria, these texts are roughly contemporaneous with Moses. One such epic, the Story of Aqhat, has *tzehok* in the following context, as translated in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*:¹

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| [By the hand] El takes his servant, | In the kissing of his wife [she'll |
| Blessing Daniel the Rapha-man, | conceive], |
| Beatifying Ghazir the Harnamiyy- | In her embracing become pregnant. |
| man: | |
| "With life-breath shall be quickened | [By conception] (and) pregnancy she'll |
| Daniel the Rapha-man | bear |
| With spirit Ghazir the Harnamiyy- | [A man-child to Daniel the Ra]pha- |
| man... | [man]. |

1 James B. Pritchard, editor, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, second edition. Princeton University Press, 1955, p. 150.

Professor Lichtenstein teaches at the City University of New York. A second edition of his book, The Seven Laws of Noah (Z. Berman/PJJ Press), is now in preparation.

| | |
|---|---|
| Daniel's face lights up, | Now will I sit and rest |
| He <i>parts his jaws</i> and <i>laughs</i> , (<i>wyṣḥq</i>) | And my soul be at ease in my breast. |
| And lifts up his voice and cries: | For a son's born to me like my brethren's |
| So shall there be a son [in his house, | A scion] in the midst of his palace: |
| | A scion like unto my kindred's. |

The translator, H. L. Ginsberg, has dutifully rendered "wyṣḥq" (va-yitzḥak) as "laughs."² But surely "exults" would suit the context better. Thus, I will be suggesting here, and in the several additional Ugaritic texts to be cited, that *tzeḥok* be translated "exult." Exult is defined as: rejoice in success; show self-congratulatory joy; triumph; jump for joy. The following citation is from the Ugaritic Baal myth:³

| | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| So I knew | His feet on the footstool he sets, |
| That alive was Puissant Baal! | And parts his <i>jaws</i> and <i>laughs</i> . |
| Existent the Prince, Lord of Earth | (<i>wyṣḥq</i>) |
| In a dream, Kindly El Benign, | He lifts up his voice and cries: |
| In a vision, Creator of Creatures, | "Now will I sit and rest |
| The heavens fat did rain, | And my soul be at ease in my breast. |
| The wadies flow with honey!"— | |
| The Kindly One El Benign's glad. | For alive is Puissant Baal... |

Once again, "exults" is required by the context instead of "laughs." A third example follows:⁴

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| At El's feet she bows and falls down, | He <i>parts his jaws</i> and <i>laughs</i> |
| Prostrates her and does him | (<i>wyṣḥq</i>) |
| reverence. | He lifts up his voice and [cri]es: "Why |
| As soon as El espies her, | is come Lady Asher [ah of the S]ea? |

2 The original in transliteration is from Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Handbook*. Roma: Pontificum Institutum Biblicum, 1947, p. 182.

3 Pritchard, *op. cit.*, p. 140. The original in transliteration is from Gordon, *op. cit.*, p. 138, line 16 of column 2.

4 Pritchard, *op. cit.*, p. 133; and Gordon, *op. cit.* p. 141.

Why hither the Progenitress of the Or art become thirsty and
 g[ods]? *pa[rched]*?
 Art thou become hungry and *fa[int]*, Eat, pray, yea drink..."

Here too, "laughs" is better rendered "exults." A fourth and final example will suffice:⁵.

| | |
|--|--|
| The Maiden Anath rejoices, | <i>Laughing</i> , (shq) the Maiden Anath |
| <i>Stamps</i> with her foot so the earth | Lifts up her voice and cries: |
| <i>quakes</i> . | "Receive, Baal, the glad tidings I bring |
| There, she is off on her way | thee. |
| Unto Baal upon Zaphon's summit, | They will build thee a house like thy |
| O'er fields, ten thousand acres. | brethren's." |

What if, like the Ugaritic, the Hebrew *tzehok* in Genesis was intended to convey "exult?" What meaning would this narrative take on as a result? Genesis 17:17 would translate to:

Abraham fell to his face and *exulted*, saying in his heart: Shall a hundred year old man engender and shall Sarah, a ninety year old woman, give birth? Said Abraham to the Lord, Would that Ishmael live in your good favor. Said the Lord, But Sarah your wife bears you a son and you are to name him Isaac (Exultation, Success, Victory). And as for Ishmael, I have granted your plea...

So read, this text associates Isaac's name with the success of Abraham's quest for a worthy heir. Additionally it may signify a victory for the Lord who, after all, commands the naming in His quest for worthy human devotees and friends, a quest portrayed in Genesis as beginning just after creation but meeting with repeated disappointment and only short-lived success. Perhaps Isaac's naming applauds the introduction of the patriarchal arrangement with its covenantal family and eventual chosen peoplehood. Thus, it is that the Hebrew Bible, in its inimitable style, repeats all the "Isaac-ing" by way of emphasis when the foretold comes to pass, in Genesis 21:6:

⁵ Pritchard, *op. cit.*, p. 133; and Gordon, *op. cit.*, p. 142 line 87. For additional examples, see Pritchard, p. 135; p. 152 column I and again column II; p. 134 line 37 translates "exults" for "samah". For additional occurrences of "tzehok" in Gordon, see p. 151 D 12; p. 183 VI 41; and in the Glossary, item 1723 on page 265.

Sarah said, The Lord has let me *exult*, all who hear will rejoice with me. And she said, Who would have said of Abraham that Sarah shall nurse children, yet have I borne him a son of old age... Sarah witnessed the son of Hagar, the Egyptian who bore Abraham a child, *exulting*; she told Abraham, Cast out this handmaiden with her son, for this handmaid's son will not be heir together with my son, together with Isaac.

The reason for Ishmael's exultation seems expectedly self-evident, for no elaboration is offered. He is the first-born and has the right of primogeniture over Isaac. By terming Ishmael's victory display "Isaac-ing," the text prepares the reader for Sarah's characterization of Ishmael as unwilling to let Isaac have his glory, as perhaps unwilling to share the patrimony, and in any event as adopting the airs of an Isaac in a contest for glory.⁶

Already mentioned is the instance of *Isaac Isaac-ing with Rebecca his wife* יצחק מצחק את רבקה אשתו (Genesis 26:8). If exultation is *tzeḥok*'s basic meaning, then here the husbanding may express a manifestation of one's natural self, perhaps the achieving of sexual climax, or even — if the stress is on Isaac's being the male partner — the lording it over the female partner, that is, expressing his proper dominance. It is no laughing matter. Comparably, a nuanced sequence of *tzeḥok*'s variegated meaning occurs in Genesis 39:14, when Potiphar's wife accuses Joseph of *exulting/lording over us, le-tzaḥek banu*, where the plural includes the household servants to whom she is appealing for support. Then, emboldened by the first success of her lie, she repeats the phrase for her husband as *le-tzaḥek bi, to lord it over me*, now connoting seduction and a man having his way with a woman.

But certainly exult cannot be intended in Genesis 18:12, where Sarah is pictured as "laughing inwardly" at the prophecy about her giving birth, which is followed by an explicit rebuke, *Why did Sarah laugh saying, Can I give birth being old?* Indeed, the Aramaic Targum Onkelos version, which in Genesis 17:17 renders *tzeḥok* "rejoice," here switches to "laugh; scoff." If the primary meaning of *tzeḥok* is exult, would a reader have been expected to negotiate the

6 Compare, Adina Katzoff, "Sibling Relationships in the Bible: A Psychodynamic Dimension," in *Dor Le Dor*. Jerusalem, 1986, Summer (XIV, 4), pp. 228–236. Also, Aaron Lichtenstein, "Prefigurations of Roman Imperialism in Near Eastern and Biblical Literature," *Hebrew Studies*. University of Wisconsin at Madison, 1982 (vol. 13), pp. 173–176.

switch in terminology? Perhaps yes, if the combination "laughed inwardly" is intended to deflect the meaning away from "exult," because one does not exult inwardly but rather outwardly, in an open manifestation of glee. More likely, the shift in *tzehok*'s meaning is a feature of its *Leitwort* function, which is responsible for the abundant and ramified repetition of *tzehok* throughout the Book of Genesis.⁸

That Isaac's name signifies something positive, like victory and exultation, seems to be remembered in the intentional misspelling of his name in Amos 7:9, *The high places of Isaac (Yishak) will become desolate*. *Yishak*, spelled with "sin", ש instead of the usual "tzadi," צ, is a stinging jab at the people of Isaac who, named for success, are turned in Amos' prophecy of doom to losers and laughing stocks. For *sehok* is the biblical root connoting laughter, poking fun, insincerity, play, jest, and not-for-real sport,⁹ whereas *tzehok* expresses openness, sincerity, unselfconscious exuberance, an honest manifestation of glorious joy.¹⁰

Throughout the Hebrew Bible there may be no dearth of irony when it is

7 Compare, Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985, pp. 423–427. In his ramified treatment, Sternberg dubs this an example of "poisonous repetition." For yet another treatment of the repetitions in the story of Potiphar's wife, see Robert Alter's *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, New York, Basic Books, 1981, pages 107–113.

8 The remaining occurrences of "tzehok" in the Pentateuch are Genesis 19:14 and Exodus 6:32.

9 For "sport," see Proverbs 26:18, *When an archer practises, and there are arrows then death: Just so, when a man swindles his fellow and says, But I am only sporting* (I did it in jest).

10 This distinction is however contrary to the view of Nahmanides (1194–1270), who in his exegetical treatment of these verses apparently equates "tzehok" with "sehok," since he cites Psalms 2:4 and 126:2 (*Ramban Commentary on the Torah*, Charles B. Chavel, editor. New York: Shilo, 1971, p. 239, Genesis 18:15).

The usage in *Job*, where *sehok* is used ten times and consistently for poking fun, supports the distinction we are making here.

The *Yishak* occurring in Jeremiah 33:26, may be an imitation of the mode of denigration originated in Amos 7:9 (and repeated in Amos 7:16) because the Jeremiah verse too refers to a fallen nation.

Although Psalm 105:9 ("Hodu") has *That He established with Abraham and His oath to Yishak*, the version of "Hodu" found in I Chronicles 15:15 has *Yitzhak* instead. These seem to be mere poetic variations in an oft-used text that was meant for elaborate rendition with musical accompaniment.

limited to the *dramatis personae*'s poking fun at one another (as in I Kings 18, in the case of Elijah and the prophets of Baal) or limited to the narrator's holding up a character for ridicule (as in Numbers 22, when Balaam the Seer sees not what his ass sees). However, the narrator never laughs at his enterprise, at himself, or at his reader, because to do so would run counter to an artistic feature rooted in the seriousness of biblical narrative, in that it derives its omniscient capability, hence authority, from the Divine — as Meir Sternberg argues forcefully in his *Poetics of Biblical Narrative*.¹¹ Reading humor into the naming of a patriarch would raise problems, on this count.

Still, as with any literary construct, one cannot rule out all alternate interpretations conclusively. A most uproarious alternative is to consider the Lord's uneven handling of Abraham's and Sarah's laughter as a great joke on the reader, who must get furiously involved in linguistic hair-splitting, trying to make sense of the story.¹² On concluding that it is all a joke, the reader, too, is left laughing, so that he joins empathetically in the mirth of Sarah, Abraham, Isaac, and mainly the Lord — who is shown as having engineered a satisfactory relationship with his human creations. It is in the pursuit of this relationship that the Lord reduces His majesty to human-like inconsistency, outbreaks of anger, forgetfulness, and oversight — toying with both *dramatis personae* and eventual readers. If someone were moved to compose a Midrash-like parable to accompany this scenario, it might read as follows: A grandchild was born to a wise ruler, a veritable Solomon. The overjoyed king romps with the child on the floor, makes funny faces and animal noises, and invites his ministers to join in the play. The otherwise dignified grandfather reduces himself to the ridiculous in trying to relate to his bundle of joy, who is but a helpless, dumb being. Just so did the Lord rejoice and invite all to play with the first child born to the nation.

But reading "exult" instead of "laugh" remains the more satisfying interpretation of the narrative, and the one supported by a Ugaritic linguistic parallel.

11 Sternberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 1–127. Compare John M. Bullard, *Biblical Humor: Its Nature and Function* (dissertation). Ann Arbor, Michigan: University Microfilms, 1962.

12 The problem of this unevenness is mentioned as early as the Mishnah (*Tractate Sopherim* 1:8), where the Septuagint translators are shown changing the text of Genesis 18:12 to "Sarah laughed amidst her relatives," on the assumption that Abraham laughed but privately. So also in the *Midrash Rabba*, Genesis 48:20.

KING SOLOMON'S WIVES

AS ENVISIONED BY DAVID PINSKI

BY SOL LIPTZIN

The soul of woman is a vast panorama, an inexhaustible delight, an unfathomable enigma. However, it was not the soul of woman that fascinated Solomon, reputedly the wisest of kings, but rather the outer wrappings of the soul, the form in which it was enclosed — according to David Pinski, the Yiddish dramatist and storyteller.

In 1921, at the height of his popularity, Pinski set out upon his ambitious project to delineate the uniqueness of each of the thousand women that attracted Solomon and that he collected in his harem of seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines or assistant wives.

Pinski began this project on January 9, 1921. In an onrush of enthusiastic creativity, he was able to complete fifty-two of his narrative portraits. After a pause of almost three years, he resumed work on this theme. Between February and June of 1924, he succeeded in sketching Solomon's acquisition of additional wives up to the eighty-third. Again there followed an interval of three years before the subject once more occupied his creative imagination. In February 1927, he sketched Solomon's adding an eighty-fourth feminine conquest, but it was not until July of that year that he devoted his complete attention to the unfinished project and succeeded within three weeks to reach up to Solomon's ensnarement of his hundredth wife.

By then, Pinski's interest had been diverted to dramas and narratives about the integration of Jews into American society, the cause of Labor Zionism, and the spreading shadow of antisemitism over Europe's Jews. His profoundest work, completed in 1929, was the novel, *The House of Noah Eden*, which helped to counteract the melting-pot philosophy then still dominant on the American scene. Until 1936, he still hoped to continue with the Solomon project but he finally

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abandoned it in the course of that year after enriching the king with the one hundred and fifth wife.

In a preface, which Pinski prepared for the publication of a projected volume or volumes embodying his Solomon-tales, he gave expression to his approach to this biblical theme.

He recalled that the years of King Solomon's reign were the happiest in the long history of the Jewish people. It was then that this people blossomed into a mighty and prosperous power. Unlike his father, David, who had expanded the territory of the Jewish nation through countless wars, Solomon was able to retain David's conquests through his wisdom and diplomacy. He was a man of peace who built the Temple and brought splendor to Jerusalem. His subjects overlooked his failings and never upbraided him for the heavy burdens which his sumptuous harem with its thousand households involved. It was not until his old age that he succumbed to the lure of foreign women, who turned his heart away from the God of his fathers and of his people. And it was only after his charismatic personality was removed from his kingdom by his death that his subjects resented the onerous taxation and revolted against his successor Rehoboam.

Each of Solomon's wives was for him, according to Pinski, a unique experience, a fascinating adventure, a sudden flash of passion. Each wife appealed to a different aspect of his character and contributed a nuance to the development of his versatile personality, thus enabling him to emerge as the man and sovereign who in his youth could sing the amorous *Song of Songs*, who in his maturity could compose the aphorisms of the *Book of Proverbs*, and who in his old age could become the philosopher of *Ecclesiastes*.

Solomon's acquisition of wives began at the age of eighteen and the first one was Avia. She was, in his eyes, the most beautiful woman in the kingdom over which his father still reigned. She took complete possession of his senses. Among the populace, it was rumored that, unlike his father, he was unlikely to have a harem but would content himself with a single wife and no concubines. To marry Avia, he had to overcome the opposition of his mother Bath-sheba, who was training him to be the future king and who envisaged a king's daughter as a more suitable mate for him. When she discovered his passion for Avia, the daughter of a poor Jerusalemite, she tried hard to dissuade him. However, her wise son reminded her of her own humble origin and even of David's beginnings as a

shepherd. Then she relented, especially since he vowed that he would not consider any other wife even if his father threatened him with banishment. Thereupon, Bath-sheba sent emissaries to Avia's father to ask for her, and the couple were united. In the entire kingdom there were none happier.

Love's intoxication lasted for three full years, but when Solomon was sent by his father on a mission to Geshur, he found the king's daughter irresistible and took her as his second wife. Avia was horrified and on her husband's return reacted angrily to his advances. When Solomon told her that she should have been wise enough to understand the behavior of man, she replied angrily that she knew only too well the nature of man. In that case, countered Solomon ironically, "You can explain it to my new wife and to any that may follow later. Beware, however, not to repeat the same slogan to any of them, lest I banish you from my sight and you spend the rest of your life in solitude, because you did not know how to behave to your husband who continues to love you."

Avia had to accept this verdict. She commented about Solomon and his wife that even the wisest and noblest among men becomes transformed into a hot Arabian stallion when he sees before him a hot mare. In story after story, Pinski delineated an ever new love experience of Solomon. For each wife and concubine, Avia had a new saying which best characterized the uniqueness of the relationship.

For example, the princess of Geshur, whose skin was white as the snow of Hermon, was soon followed by a third mate, whose red hair glittered like rays of fire and whose movements were like pure music. Solomon could only take her as a concubine because she was a slave of unknown parentage in the household of Bath-sheba. Avia said of her that she was like a spark of fire to the kindling wood on the altar.

As for the fourth wife, Solomon espied her as he was roaming along the streets of Jerusalem. For four days he lay in wait for her before he caught her in his arms and carried her off in mad ecstasy. Avia, who knew him too well, told him on the morrow that his intoxication was already subsiding and that he would go in pursuit of a fifth wife on that very day. Her insight proved to be correct. It was the day of Shavuot. The royal sons were drinking, singing and dancing. The air was charged with lust. The merry group about Solomon saw a couple locked in an embrace under a tree, oblivious of their surroundings. Upon his order, the

group tore the young man away from the maiden and Solomon dragged her off to his palace. On the morrow, when the tearful, distressed maiden was brought to Avia to be comforted, the latter remarked: "A ravenous wolf is man. Can this comfort you, my sister?"

When David fled with his retinue before the rebellious Absalom, Solomon, to whom the now endangered throne had been promised, also fled with his five wives. In the midst of his distress and peril, however, he could not take his eyes away from a weeping girl of extraordinary beauty who had joined the retreat. He had her brought before him and consoled her throughout the night. On the next morning, the astonished Avia remarked that desire and lust do not leave man even in misfortune and mean more to a man than does a throne.

Solomon's seventh wife was the daughter of Shimei ben Gera, who had cursed the fleeing David. When she escaped from her father's house during the night and Solomon caught sight of her in the moonlight, he forgot his sad state as he kissed and embraced her. Avia's reaction on the next day was that God provides the drunkard with wine, and who is more drunk than a man lusting for woman?

In flight across the Jordan, Solomon encountered a pious girl who could not swim and yet did not wish to be carried over on a man's back. He ordered his followers to fashion a seat of the branches of a tree and had her carried over. Her chaste nature impressed him to such an extent that he added her as his eighth wife. Avia said of her: "He took the chaste one for her chastity and yet he did uncover her body."

Solomon's ninth wife was the youngest grand-daughter of Barzillai, who sumptuously welcomed the refugees at Mahanaim. With her began the rivalry between Solomon and his older brother Adonijah, and it continued until Solomon had amassed twenty-seven wives. Solomon was not portrayed as the handsomest of David's sons. Absalom was more handsome but he perished in the revolt against David. Adonijah was also more handsome and also impressed Jerusalem's maidens. But Solomon always emerged as the victor over his chief rival because of his greater sagacity. In the case of Barzillai's grand-daughter, Solomon discovered that she preferred Adonijah when David's sons were introduced to her. He was filled with envy and set out to lure her away. It did not take him long to beguile her and win her for himself. And Avia commented: "He made you his wife but he will never forget the gaze you bestowed upon Adonijah. That is a wound that does not heal in man."

Avia was correct in her insight. Even though Solomon was the victor in every contest for Jerusalem's beautiful women, he never forgot the long and bitter rivalry. It ultimately resulted in the death of Adonijah when Solomon ascended the throne.

Pinski's sketches of the differing, appealing qualities of Solomon's first ten wives and the different insights they offer into his character is extended to the first hundred wives and might have applied to all of his thousand wives, if this weaver of delightful tales had succeeded in completing his grandiose project as he originally conceived it. It would have been the Yiddish epic of a thousand nights comparable to the tales woven by Scheherazade.

After the slaying of Absalom by Joab, Adonijah suggested to the sons of David that they divide Absalom's wives among them, leaving the ugliest for Solomon. However, when they reached the house of the women, they discovered that they were too late. Solomon had already taken the most beautiful of the widows as his fifteenth wife. What arose as a belated thought in the mind of Adonijah had already been accomplished as a deed by Solomon.

Somewhat later, when Solomon discovered that Adonijah was wooing a lovely, flaxen-haired girl, he lured her into his palace as his eighteenth wife and sent a note to his brother: "You sought her out in the bright light of day, but I sought her out in the white night of the full moon." And Avia gave her opinion that men and thieves love the night.

During the time of harvesting, Adonijah discovered among the reapers a girl of extraordinary beauty, but Solomon outwitted him and carried her off as his nineteenth wife. A few days later, when Adonijah saw another beautiful girl in the distance among the reapers, he waited until she finished her reaping. Meanwhile, a slave of Solomon had run to inform his master and before Adonijah reached her, Solomon had carried her off as his twentieth wife. Avia commented that it was safer for a woman to let a ravenous lion approach her than a man, since there was a greater chance of her being untouched by a sated wild beast than by man, who is never sated.

After these experiences, Adonijah was convinced that Solomon was victorious because of wise talk and not because of superior looks. He therefore, challenged him to vie without words. In two such contests, Solomon still emerged as the conqueror and added a twenty-third and twenty-fourth wife to his harem.

The rivalry between David's two sons extended not only to women but also to

the succession to the throne. When Solomon gained the upper hand and was crowned king, Adonijah accepted defeat and pleaded to be allowed to live on. Solomon granted his plea on the condition that this earlier rival turn over his last and most beautiful wife to him as his twenty-seventh mate. He was certain that, had she seen him, she would have preferred him to Adonijah. When Avia met this new acquisition to the harem, she remarked that a man's greatest triumph comes when he takes away another man's wife.

After his coronation, Solomon was hesitant to assume immediately the burden of ruling his country, especially since David, though aging was still of sound mind. He therefore entreated his father to let him leave Jerusalem and to let him enjoy his carefree youth a little longer. He was only twenty-three. He wanted to roam as a bird in the sky or as an untamed creature in the forest.

David granted his son's wish. Before leaving Jerusalem, Solomon did not forget to seek out the golden-haired maiden he had caught sight of during the ceremony of his anointment and he took her along as his twenty-eighth wife.

When word got around that the young king was departing from Jerusalem, a crowd streamed to his house to see him off. As he looked out from the rooftop terrace upon his admiring subjects, he noticed a splendid girl leaning against a tree and felt stricken to the heart, even as his father had been stricken on first catching sight of Bath-sheba from the roof of the royal palace. Unlike his father, however, he did not send down servants to fetch her. He rather wrapped himself in his cloak and made his way to the tree. But when he got there, she had disappeared in the crowd. Nevertheless, he did not give up. When he rediscovered her on the following day, he did not let her out of sight but sent Benaiah to bring her. When she came, blushing and excited, he calmed her by making her his twenty-ninth wife.

Solomon set out from Jerusalem with all his wives, attendants and sixty warriors under the command of Benaiah. Many Jerusalemites escorted the group until the sun began to set. When he had the tents set up for the night, he noticed that the departing crowd included a girl who retreated slowly, lingering and looking back every few steps. Wanting to find out why she was not home where she was undoubtedly expected, he walked back toward her. When she saw him, she began to run away, but he succeeded in catching up to her despite the darkness, and he saw her loveliness. On the following morning, when Avia asked her how Solomon found her in the darkness, this thirtieth wife answered that a

man's longing is a flare that lights up dark ways for him.

Before the end of his twenty-third year, Solomon had already acquired more wives and concubines than had his father throughout a life of seventy years. Unlike David, who sang psalms to nature, to God and to a variety of subjects, Solomon sang only of love for woman, songs of admiration for her body, songs of longing for her embrace. In number, these love lyrics were far fewer than his deeds of love. It was said of him that, if he continued as he began, there might not be enough girls in his kingdom to satisfy him.

Travelling on the road from Jerusalem to Shechem, and tarrying for a month in this town, he acquired his thirty-first to forty-third wives, each a different type of beauty. Continuing his carefree wandering, he came to Shunem but Abishag, most beautiful of the Shunamites, had already been taken to warm the aging David and Solomon had to content himself with an almost equally beautiful girl as his forty-sixth wife. Near Gilboa where Saul fell in the war against the Philistines, along the Kishon River where Deborah and Barak defeated the hosts of Sisera, and in the vicinity of Yael, the Kenite heroine who killed Sisera, Solomon found other girls to garner for his harem.

By the time he was summoned back to Jerusalem to succeed his dying father, he had more than ninety wives and sufficient amorous experiences to compose the immortal lyrics of the Song of Songs. His last encounter with Adonijah, who abjectly begged for David's widow Abishag and was refused, led to the death of this rival. Solomon, however, continued to amass ever new wives among the kingdom's beauties.

Pinski ceased to record them after the one hundred and fifth. Perhaps if he had credited Solomon with an interest in the soul of woman, he might have continued on and on. But Solomon was unlike his father, who experienced the wisdom of woman, when he was extricated from danger by the guile of Michal, his first wife, and who admired the sagacity of Abigail, his second wife. The son of Bath-sheba succumbed only to the looks of women until late in his reign when he met the Queen of Sheba after his wisdom in other matters had penetrated to her remote kingdom. She came to test him. She wooed him and he gave her all her desire.

The Bible assigned important roles to David's wives from Michal and Abigail to Bath-sheba and Abishag, but did not mention the names of any of Solomon's wives except for the mother of his heir Rehoboam. Not even the Queen of Sheba nor the daughter of Pharaoh whom he took to wife are

mentioned by name. As for his other foreign mates, they are listed collectively as women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians and Hittites. These were princesses. They probably came to him as a result of political alliances in order to strengthen his hold upon the extensive territory over which he ruled. They were latecomers, who may have brought him foreign physical nuances after he was no longer attracted by his own feminine subjects.

Pinski correctly recognized that, while the soul of woman was inexhaustible and an unfathomable enigma, Solomon was not interested in the soul and therefore accumulated women merely as precious objects to be enjoyed and to be discarded in the endless search for novelty.

Unlike Pinski's weightier novels and dramas, his sketches of Solomon's wives were but idle tales for empty days. He lost interest in them when the horizon darkened for the Jews of Europe and Palestine in the 1930's and 1940's and never completed his grandiosely conceived project.

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WHERE WAS THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD? – ERRATUM

Dear Sir,

In the Summer 1989 issue of *Dor Le Dor* a regrettable typographical error occurred in my article of the above title. The sentence beginning on p. 217, l.19 should have read:

“This means either that there has been no shift in the Hebrew calendar, relative to the secular calendar, since the time of the Exodus, or that ANY SHIFT THAT MAY HAVE OCCURRED HAS DONE SO OVER AN INTEGER NUMBER OF YEARS.”

It was the use of contemporary quail migration statistics that enabled me to conclude that any calendrical shift could only have occurred over an entire number of twelve-month periods. This is the logical justification to my use of modern astronomical algorithms in order to compute the direction of sunrise on that dim and distant day in the past when our ancestors set out from Mt. Sinai.

I should appreciate your publishing this erratum, and would like to take the opportunity to express – I am sure along with all of my fellow authors – an appreciation for the high standards of *Dor Le Dor*'s editors: The journal is a genuine pleasure to read.

Yours sincerely,
David Faiman

THE VERB נָעַר IN THE BIBLE

BY DAVID WOLFERS

In reading any ancient or foreign text, we are heavily dependent on the insights and conclusions of those scholars who first studied, commented upon or translated that text. It is well, however, that we should remember always that none of them, no matter how august, was infallible, and remain alert to detect and pursue incongruities to their origins lest they be what the scientist would call "artefacts," rather than kinks in the original writings. That is, we should always remain open to consider the possibility that a scholar or translator has made an error in understanding the original, rather than that the original itself contains some perversity.

In this article I seek to expose one example of what is probably the rarest form of such errors — the misunderstanding of the meaning of a Hebrew word consistently throughout the Bible. I have chosen the verb נָעַר, although there are several others whose true meanings appear to have been distorted throughout our generations.

There are in all eleven biblical examples of the use of this verb, and additionally nouns apparently derived from it occur on three occasions. The verb occurs in four different conjugations, the kal, the niph'al, the pi'el and the hithpa'el, and in seven different books, Isaiah (both the first and the second), Nehemiah, Psalms, Job, Judges and Exodus; thus it spans nearly the whole expanse of time during which the Bible was composed. The nouns occur in Zechariah, Judges and Isaiah.

The verb is common in rabbinic Hebrew (and has survived into modern Hebrew) with the meaning "to shake out." In the majority of biblical contexts this is the meaning which has been given to the verb in both commentaries and translations. This is the sense which is attributed to it in lexicons, concordances

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and dictionaries of biblical Hebrew. It is, however, most probably the wrong meaning.

NEHEMIAH 5:13

Because it is the most revealing of the sundry contexts in which the word appears, and because it appears there in three different forms, I propose to start the examination of the word with its use in Nehemiah 5:13. Nehemiah has exacted a promise from the nobles and rulers of the returning exiles that they will cease exacting usury and enslaving the common people. To emphasize the solemnity of this promise he reports: **גַּם-חֲצִנִּי נִעַרְתִּי וְאָמַרְתִּי: כִּכָּה יִנָּעַר הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת-כָּל-הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר לֹא-יָקִים אֶת-הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה מִבֵּיתוֹ וּמִיָּגְעוֹ וְכִכָּה יִהְיֶה נִעוֹר וְרֵק**

The usual translation and interpretation of this passage runs: *Also I shook out my lap, and said: 'So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise; even thus be he shaken out and emptied.'* (JPS).

I venture to suggest that almost every reader is struck by a sense of some incongruity at these uses of the expression *shake out*, feeling that the gesture of shaking out the lap is lacking in dramatic force, that the expression *shake out from his house and from his labour* displays an inexact and inappropriate sense of metaphor, and that the third use of *shaken out* in parallel with *emptied* negates this immediately preceding metaphorical use. If the reader now turns to the Hebrew text he at once finds that *my lap* is not a correct translation of חֲצִנִּי, which means "my bosom", and this in turn will suggest to him that what Nehemiah actually must have done was to "*bare* his bosom", saying, "So God *strip* every man of his house and his labour; even thus be he made *bare* and empty!" From this we may suggest that the *kal* of the verb means "to strip or expose"; the *kal* passive participle means "one who has been stripped or exposed", and the *pi'el* means "strip" in either an intensive or a causative sense (So God denude every man... So God cause every man to be stripped...).

ISAIAH 33

With this passage as a guidepost, let us now examine the other uses of the word in the Bible. The verb appears twice in quite different contexts in the 33rd chapter of the Book of Isaiah. The first of these is in a passage introduced with the verses:

*At the noise of the tumult the people are fled;
 At the lifting up of Thyself the nations are scattered.
 And your spoil is gathered as the caterpillar gathereth;
 As locusts leap do they leap upon it. (33:3, 4).*

and, in pursuit of this image, a few verses later:

*The Land mourneth and languisheth;
 Lebanon is ashamed, it withereth;
 Sharon is like a wilderness;
 And Bashan and Carmel נָעַר. (33:9).*

The AV and REV English translations represent the word, which is in the form of the active kal participle, by *shake off their leaves* and *their fruit* respectively. Many Hebrew commentators find the same image, but if we go back to the LXX or forward to JPS, we find that despite the acknowledged meaning of the verb as "shake out," both versions hint at nakedness and exposure; JPS has *clean bare* while the Greek expression is *manifest*. It is of interest that the form of the verb in this context is the *active* participle, which I surmise to mean "one who is bare" in contrast to the passive "one who is stripped bare" or "bared." Either active or passive participle would be consistent with a land laid bare by locusts and caterpillars, but the active participle of "shake off", as used in AV and REV contradicts the earlier image.

The later use of the verb in Isaiah 33:15 comes in the following context:

*He that walketh righteously and speaketh uprightly;
 He that despiseth the gain of oppressions,
 That נָעַר his hands מִשְׁחָד,
 That stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood
 And shutteth his eyes from looking upon evil;*

The JPS translation of the middle line is *That shaketh his hands from holding of bribes*, but נָעַר does not imply "holding," but "seizing," "grasping," or "laying hold of." As the man pictured in this passage does not allow sound or sight of evil into his ears or eyes, it seems clear that the image in relation to bribes should also be one implying the refusal to allow any contamination, not the shaking free of bribes already received. Possibly the best word to convey what the prophet apparently intended is "restrains his hands from grasping bribes," but there is no reason to suggest that נָעַר can have that meaning. נָעַר here is the infinitive absolute and is therefore essentially a noun in this sentence. "Keeps his hands

naked of [the taint of] the taking of bribes” makes perhaps slightly better sense than “shakes his hands free of the [taint of the] taking of bribes,” and certainly conforms better to the sense of rigid innocence conveyed by the ensuing two lines.

In Deutero-Isaiah 52:2 is found the only example of the *hithpa'el* in the expression, addressed to Jerusalem, *הִתְנַעֲרִי מֵעַפָּר*, in parallel with *Loose thyself from the bands of thy neck*. Most certainly the translation *Shake thyself free of the dust* is acceptable here, as is also *Denude thyself of the dust*. The verse does not help us to decide between the two competing meanings of the verb.

PSALMS

In Psalm 109:23 the image of the locust which we met in Isaiah 33:4 is again invoked, but the translators and commentators have ingeniously concluded that it is the image of a locust being shaken out of the clothing rather than the stripping of vegetation by the insect which is intended:

*For I am a poor and needy,
And my heart is wounded within me.
I am gone like the shadow when it lengthens;
נִנְעָרָחִי like the locust.
My knees totter through fasting;
And my flesh is lean, and hath no fatness.*

In biblical Hebrew the comparative כִּי may as well mean “as by” as “as,” so *stripped bare as by the locust* is a valid meaning, and a far more appropriate one than *shaken out like a locust*. If a locust becomes entangled in a man’s clothing and he “shakes it out,” the locust is released or freed and the act is welcomed by the insect. Here the speaker is describing a pathetic, even a tragic state. If we add this incongruity to the fact that the invariable conventional use of the locust simile or metaphor, in biblical Hebrew and in every other language, is to invoke absolute denudation, we can hardly come to another conclusion than that the intention here is *stripped bare*.

Psalm 136:15 and Exodus 14:27 both feature the verb in the context of the drowning of the Egyptian army in the sea which returned to its bed after the Israelites had safely crossed it. In both God is the subject, and it is stated that He *נָעַר* (*pi'el*) the Egyptians in, or in the midst of, the sea. Obviously “shook out” has no applicability. JPS renders the word “overthrew,” as do most versions since

LXX. But this is arbitrary, and has no relationship with other uses of the word. On the other hand *He laid bare the Egyptians in the midst of the sea* or simply “exposed” them is perfectly acceptable.

JUDGES

The use of the niph'al in Judges 16:20 is quite obscure and does not seem to correspond with any other use of the word. Samson, told by Delilah that the Philistines are upon him, replies *I will go out as at other times and* אֲנִיעֵר. “Neither *shake myself* nor *strip myself* makes much sense. On the previous occasions to which Samson refers he *freed* himself from various forms of restraint with which Delilah had bound him — seven fresh bowstrings, new ropes, a web woven with his hair, but he did not *go out* to do so but freed himself immediately upon awakening.

The niph'al form occurs again in Job 38:13. God is describing the effect of the dawn which *takes hold of the coverlet of the earth* (כַּנְפוֹת הָאָרֶץ) and *the wicked* (or *the poor*) יִנְעֲרוּ upon it. “Exposed” again seems the right word, for this is exactly what the advent of light does to those who have been hiding in the darkness. The usual version *the wicked are shaken out of it* is really absurd as an image. The next verse, which is somewhat obscure, probably actually refers to the nakedness of the poor discovered by the arrival of the light (a reference back to Job 24:7).

נִעְרָה, the feminine noun which occurs in Judges 16:9 and Isaiah 1:31, means “tow” — the fibre of flax. BDB derives this on the assumption that the flax is shaken to produce the tow, but in fact it is beaten. The process may aptly be described as one of *stripping* the fibres of flax from the surrounding wood pulp.

The masculine noun נָעַר in Zechariah 11:16 is usually considered corrupt. Probably the best meaning that can be suggested is “the young,” but either “the exposed” or “the naked” are equally possible. Derivation from “shake out” does not seem feasible.

Here the case must rest. It is clear that there is no example of the use of the root which *demand*s the meaning “shake out” rather than “bare,” and that there are several where “shake out” is quite inappropriate but where “bare” fits the context well. There are additionally some uses of the verb which remain puzzling, notably Judges 16:20 and Exodus 14:27 = Psalm 136:15.

If נָעַר does indeed have a meaning related to exposure and nakedness, it is likely that it is etymologically related to the root עָוַר, “to be exposed, bare.”

THE RISE AND FALL OF ISRAEL IN THE SINAI DESERT

BY BENJAMIN GOODNICK

Human beings are sensitive creatures, affected by and reacting directly to changes in circumstances, both positive and negative. Too much good news — as well as bad — at one time can be devastating and, at times, even destructive. Attaining rapidly the pinnacle of unexpected success, while initially highly exciting and uplifting can result ultimately in feelings of unworthiness and depression.

Such alternations in emotions can effect an individual or a whole people. We find such an illuminating example in the Bible. A fascinating series of apparently interrelated scenes (Book of Numbers, especially Chapters 11 and 12) are portrayed which glaringly reveal the vast impact of external events upon the individual and group psyche.

What do we find there? A profusion of complaints from the masses of the population, the strangers in their midst, Moses himself, and Miriam and Aaron. The focus of their grumbling may differ, but their attitudes are similar: all are distraught, despairing and demanding, even as they begin their second year of desert sojourn. We must remember that these reactions occurred before the forty-year stay in the desert was decreed.

These complaints seem strange when we consider the awesome history of the first year with the miraculous and stupendous occurrences of the first twelve months: the crossing of the Red Sea, the defeat of the Egyptians, the initiation of the Festival of Freedom (Passover), the assembly at Mount Sinai with the giving of the Ten Commandments, the welding of Israel into a holy nation and the construction and dedication of a central shrine, the tabernacle.

With the advent of the second year, further ego-enhancing scenes pass before

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our eyes. These include the poll of the people by individuals, families, and tribes, thus displaying the strength and solidarity of the people; the presenting of similar, rich offerings to the tabernacle by the princes of the twelve tribes; and the recognition of and assignment of special duties to the priests and levites — enough to make any nation giddy with its great gifts. It was a year of triumph.

Yet, now, after the whole camp has been organized and is about to proceed on its grand march forward toward the Promised Land, problems begin. It is true that the one great sin, the worship of the golden calf had already occurred. That early event, however, might be attributed to the lack of leadership of a still slave-minded, submissive people (i.e. the disappearance of Moses on the Mount for 40 days).¹

But why complain now, after undergoing these remarkable experiences?

Let us trace what happened. Initially, vague murmurings arose among the people. A fire then broke out at the edge of the camp (as a warning?); the people regretted their complaints and the fire ceased. Soon the riffraff (רֵאִסָּפִסָּ: "mixed multitude," probably a mixture of Egyptians and other foreign slaves who escaped with the Israelites) waxed gluttonous and incited the latter. They cried: "Give us meat! We are drying up," they claimed, "shrivelling, dying, unable to live on manna." But, when their request is analyzed, we find they can only recall their Egyptian foods, fish and a variety of vegetables. This is clearly a retreat to a previous condition of slavish dependency. But Moses, sensing a failure in his responsibility, took them literally and began thinking in terms of slaughtering cattle and flocks.

Moreover, his desperation, too, is unexpected. Complaining that this new task of supplying his people with meat was beyond him, he makes demands of the Lord to help him or destroy him (an implied threat?).² This is quite strange. After all, he had just supervised extensive activities involving the construction of a large tabernacle requiring vast supplies of wood, cord, and cloth, and preparation of a variety of unique sacred objects made of gold, silver and brass, and special priestly garments. He had overseen the work of thousands of craftsmen and artisans working with a tremendous number of materials, including precious and semi precious stones, to create all these objects. This was certainly a bigger, more

1 Exod. 32:1 fol.

2 Num. 11:14-15.

complex and delicate project than finding food, difficult though that might seem.

What had happened to the self-assured leader Moses? He had become weary, dispirited and weakened in his faith. The outcome? He was ordered to share his responsibilities with seventy others (elders).

Finally, we note that Miriam and Aaron (after she pressed him) complained regarding Moses' marriage to a Cushite (i.e., Ethiopic) woman.³ There are various explanations of this term. Some scholars understand it to refer to a second wife Moses took and that Miriam was opposed to this union.⁴ Rashi, however, considers the word "Cushite" to be one of endearment and beauty.⁵ His explanation is plausible: the term Cushite can be taken as a common noun rather than a proper noun.⁶ At the same time, there is some evidence that Cush may refer to an area, inhabited by wandering tribes, bordering upon or actually Midian.⁷ Inevitably, people living a bedouin life would tend to become dark-skinned.

3 Various legends have evolved regarding this passage with Moses pictured as ruling Ethiopia for many years after his flight from Egypt and taking an Ethiopian queen for his wife. See biblical commentators (e.g., Rashbam, Ibn Ezra) on these verses. Josephus (*Jewish Antiquities*, 2:248–58) relates Moses' adventures as a general of the Egyptian armies and his conquest of Ethiopia. See also A. Meyer, *Légendes Juives apocryphes sur la vie de Mosé* (1925), a collection of extra-biblical stories about Moses.

4 The Rashbam adds that, though he married a Cushite queen, he was not intimate with her, a fact not known to Miriam. Therefore, she accused him of arrogance (i.e., rejecting his own people for an alien match) and of being unworthy of leadership.

5 Rashi gives this story an unusual direction. According to his perspective, Miriam favored Moses' wife, Zipporah. Miriam was standing beside her when they heard of the two of the seventy elders, Eldad and Medad, prophesying in the camp. At that point Zipporah became distressed and said: "They will put away their wives just as Moses put me away." When Miriam heard this she became angry with Moses for deserting his wife and challenged his leadership on moral principles. In Rashi's view the term "Cushite" is elevating rather than ridiculing and suggests that in gematria (homiletic interpretation based in the numerical value of letters in words) that word is equivalent to "beautiful in appearance."

6 Thus it would not mean Ethiopian but black or dark-skinned (note that the word Ethiopia comes from the Greek words *aitho* (sun burnt) and *ops* (face)). A like reference to darkness of skin is found in the first chapter of the Song of Songs, where the maiden says, *Don't stare at me because I am swarthy, because the sun has gazed upon me.* (1:6).

7 See Habbakuk (3:7) where he refers to Midian and Cush[an] (the "an" ending to rhyme with Midian) in the same sentence as almost synonymous. The Hebrew Encyclopedia (20:709, in an

But Miriam's complaint may be of a different nature. It is noteworthy that this is the second, and last, episode in which Moses' father-in-law and wife are both mentioned. Previously, Jethro had come to the Israelite camp (Exod. 18) to bring back Moses' wife and children, who had been left with him upon Moses undertaking his mission to rescue Israel from the slavery of Egypt. He has been there all this time apparently helping Moses in significant ways. Now he is about to go, leaving Moses' family in the camp of Israel,⁸ and Miriam is worried. It is not Zipporah's color that bothers her — although she may have used it as a slur — but a possible loss of status. Miriam is greatly concerned that Moses' wife may displace her as the leading woman of the nation, her position during the whole period of the redemption. Anxious, fearful and weak in faith, she could not share leadership with another person. Thus, she felt impelled to challenge Moses. How are the mighty fallen!

This brings us back in circular fashion to our original observation: why all this distress and these complaints at one time. The only plausible answer seems to be the old maxim: Pride goes before a fall. The numerous, exalting accomplishments packed into one year, coming one after the other, could only culminate in a sense of incredulity, unreality and disbelief. The reaction was an exhaustion of energy and vitality, a feeling of loss, ennui, and boredom after reaching such heights. Their present existence became too jarring and bewildering. All retreated, unable to continue on their own; they felt cravings, made demands for support. They still lacked the discipline and sense of direction to carry on an organized individual or community life.

Unable to deal with this new vision, the people withdrew and sought the only reality they had known which was the simple, accepted life of Egypt. At the same time, with the spirit so weak, primitive needs surged forth; carnivorous lust overwhelmed them. Lacking restraint, the masses, it would seem, could not wait to slaughter the quail but sank their teeth into the living flesh.⁹ By contrast, they

article by Samuel Abramsky) states that tribes by this name lived in the Negev, Sinai, Southern Trans-Jordan, and possibly in the Arabian peninsula.

8 Moses has become attached to him, calling him Hovev (related to "haviv," meaning dear) and begging him to stay.

9 Read in Num. 11:33 that *the meat was still between their teeth, not yet chewed,...* There may be an implication here of transgression of the commandment of not eating *חֵי מֵן* אֲכָר מֵן, a limb of

wearied of the delicate manna, too refined for them despite its excellent quality and nutritional value.

Even the great Festival of Passover, just celebrated for the second time, seemed to have lost its novelty and glamour and it is passed over lightly. However, as we might expect, those individuals denied the opportunity of celebrating the holiday because of uncleanness, complained. They alone won and they were allowed to observe the Passover in all its fullness at the same time the following month. We tend to seek what we are denied and denigrate what we are freely offered.

Thus, surprisingly, we discover that at this time the people, and their leaders, fell to a low moral level after their exhilarating and exulting accomplishments. Even Aaron, the gentle peace-maker, faltered and proved willing to associate wrong-doing with his own brother, Moses, pictured as the humblest of men.

The next scenario, the adventure of the twelve spies (at the beginning of chapter 13), provides the culmination of the preceding sequence of circumstances exposing the weakness in the human spirit. It was inevitable that their mission would be a dismal failure. The leaders and the people were not ready. Indeed, most appropriate is Rashi's comment that the Lord said to Moses: "If you want to, send; I do not command it."¹⁰ There was no way most of the spies could come back hopeful and zealous, for the slave outlook with its dependency had reasserted itself. The negative report thrust the whole people again into wailing, despairing and demanding to return to Egypt. Only when thoroughly rebuked and told their fate (i.e., a long desert wandering) did they briefly confess their misdeed and lack of faith and impulsively decide to go forth to fight and conquer. Once more their belated, feeble effort ended in defeat. It would require a long period of time, almost 39 more years, to exorcise that distorted spirit from the body of Israel and replace it with a new revitalized soul.

These consecutive incidents may thus serve us as prototypes for all the ensuing "complaints" by the children of Israel during their necessary desert sojourn. It was essential to remove the dependency and fear of the slave mentality and develop the spirit and discipline of free men.

a living animal (which includes fowl). Indeed, it is quite reasonable to assume that a lack of proper preparation of the food may have led to the severe plague through immediate infection.

¹⁰ Rashi's commentary on Num. 13:2.

WHO KILLED GOLIATH?

BY STEVEN A. MOSS

Every religious school student is taught that one of King David's earliest exploits was his killing of the Philistine Goliath. In chapter 16 of I Samuel, David is portrayed as a gentle young man whose ability to play the lyre beautifully is called upon to soothe the agitated King Saul. With chapter 17 and its description of David as a courageous warrior who single-handedly slayed the enemy Goliath, David's quality of bravery is added to his character trait of sensitivity. These two qualities allow the biblical reader to see a person who is perfect to be chosen King of Israel. Was, however, David the warrior the one who actually killed Goliath? The biblical text raises the question that it might have been someone else.

Chapter 17 of I Samuel describes the battle scene and the battle between David and Goliath in much detail. It tells the reader that the Philistine troops were massed at Socoh in Judah and were encamped at Ephes-dammim, while the Israelite troops under Saul's command were massed and encamped in the valley of Elah. A giant of a man, Goliath of Gath, comes forward to taunt the Israelite soldiers, challenging one of them to hand-to-hand combat.

The young David goes to meet his brothers who are stationed in the army camp. Upon hearing of Goliath's challenge and of the King's reward for the victor, he proudly declares to Saul, *Let no man's courage fail him. Your servant will go and fight that Philistine* (I Sam. 17:32). David approaches the large man Goliath, *...took out a stone and slung it. It struck the Philistine in the forehead; the stone sank in the forehead, and he fell down on the ground* (I Sam. 17:49, 50).

This chapter surely stands on its own as a marvelous and moving description of this event in young David's life. It demonstrates his courage, his skill, and his faith in the God who was with him (I Sam. 17:36, 37). This chapter

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unquestionably portrays David as the slayer of Goliath. For most biblical readers and teachers of the Bible this story ends here with chapter 17.

A question about this story is raised, however, when reading in II Sam. 21:19, *In another battle with the Philistines at Gob, Elhanan son of Jaare-oregim the Bethlehemite killed Goliath the Gittite, who had a spear with a shaft like a weaver's rod.* Is it true as Miller and Hayes state in their book *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* that the presence of this Elhanan in II Sam. 21:19 "is further warning that the story in I Sam. 17 is a folk tradition of doubtful historical value"?¹

The Bible does not give us much information as to who Elhanan was. In II Sam. 21:19 he is said to be a Bethlehemite (which was the same area in which David lived), the son of Jaare who was a weaver (JPS translation of *Oregim*). In II Sam. 23:24 and in I Chr. 11:26 Elhanan is listed as among David's select warriors. Here Elhanan's father's name is given as Dodo of Bethlehem. The *New Standard Bible Dictionary* sees both Elhanans as the same and is not concerned that the father's names are different in the two citations.²

There are two other discrepancies between I Sam. 17 and II Sam. 21:19. In the first, I Sam. 17 states that Goliath is a Gittite, while II Sam. 21:19 says he was from Gath. This discrepancy is reconciled in that a Gittite is from Gath. Secondly, while I Sam 17 describes the fight between David and Goliath as taking place around Socoh and II Sam. 21:19 at Gob (which was probably the city of Gezer), both cities were quite close to each other, and so the possibility exists that these place names could have become confused. Both places were, after all, places where David encountered his enemy, the Philistines.

Later rabbinic sources white-over the contradiction between these two versions of the slaying of Goliath. Talmud Sotah 42b quotes II Sam. 21:21, *These four were born to Harafah in Gath; and they fell by the hand of David and by the hand of his servants*, and then quotes R. Hisda as saying that these four from Gath slain by David were Goliath and his three brothers Saph, Madon, and Ishbi-

1 Miller, J. Maxwell, and John H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1986: p. 161.

2 Jacobus, M. W., E. C. Lane, and A. C. Zenos, eds., *New Standard Bible Dictionary*. New York: Funk and Wagnalls Co., 1936, p. 207.

benob. For R. Hisda, there can be no slayer of the Philistine warriors other than David.

Midrash Rabbah Ruth chapter II, 1 and Yalkut Shimoni 156:370 cannot even allow the possibility that there was an Elhanan who killed Goliath. The author of this section interprets Elhanan not as a person's name (which would then allow him to be the possible slayer of Goliath), but sees it as a descriptive noun for David. As it states in this section, "He [meaning David] was called Elhanan since the Holy One, blessed be he, was gracious (*el hanan*) to him" [by handing Goliath to David in battle].

I Chr. 20:5 also makes mention of this Elhanan. After David returned to Jerusalem from the town of Ammon, fighting broke out at Gezer against the Philistines. The text reads, *Again there was fighting with the Philistines, and Elhanan son of Jair killed Lahmi, the brother of Goliath the Gittite; his spear had a shaft like a weaver's beam.* It is interesting to note here that neither David nor Elhanan is described as killing Goliath. In 20:5, by inserting *Lahmi, the brother of Goliath*, I Chr. attempts to reconcile the differences between I Sam. 17 and II Sam. 21:19. Written as Chronicles is from the Davidic viewpoint, this addition to the text of II Sam. 21:19 (saying that Elhanan killed Goliath's brother and not Goliath) allows David to remain the slayer of the Philistine as he is in I Sam. 17, while at the same time taking nothing away from Elhanan and his own courage and ability. Radak in his commentary to II Sam. 21:19 affirms this view by interpreting the word *et* before Goliath's name to mean "with", meaning Goliath's brother who was "with" him at the time of battle.

It would seem that I Chronicles and the rabbinic sources and commentaries are in a cover-up of Elhanan's deed. As they could not and would not take away the honor of the victory over Goliath from David, they worked at re-working the text of II Sam. 20:19 so that Elhanan did not slay Goliath. These pro-Davidic texts needed to keep David's slaying of Goliath as a part of his image as a great and valiant King, progenitor of the Messiah.

Eerdman's Bible Commentary presents four possibilities for an understanding of these three texts, I Sam. 17, II Sam. 21:19, and I Chr. 20:5. These four possibilities are:

3 Guthrie, D., and J. A. Motyer, eds., *The Eerdmans Bible Commentary*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1970, p. 319.

1. Elhanan did kill Goliath, and I Sam. 17 transferred this deed to David.
2. Elhanan killed Goliath and David killed an unnamed Philistine giant.
3. As stated in I Chronicles, David killed Goliath and Elhanan killed his brother.

4 Just as Solomon had another name, Jedidiah (cf. II Sam. 12:24 f.), Elhanan and David were different names for the same person.³

The decision as to which possibility to choose to help us to find the slayer of Goliath is impossible to make. It is, however, of interest to see the questions these texts raise as to an historical moment in Israel's history which is often taken for granted as being so simple and straightforward.

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'BIBLICAL MAN AND HIS QUESTIONS OF FAITH'

BY JOSHUA J. ADLER

Many contemporary Jews feel that it is far more difficult to believe in God today and observe His commandments than it was in biblical times. Yet, when we study the Bible itself we find this view to be highly questionable. The biblical sage, Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) already noted that one should not say: *How has it happened that former times were better than these? For it is not wise of you to ask that question* (7:14). Throughout the Bible we find even the patriarchs, psalmists, prophets and sages of Israel struggling with their faith in a God who is both just and merciful and who brings salvation to individuals and to Israel. Even without quoting Job, a biblical book devoted entirely to the problem of why righteous man suffers while the wicked prosper, we find no dearth of complaints against God, His ways and His commandments scattered throughout the Scriptures. What follows are but some examples.

In the book of Malachi we read how the prophet was attacked, even by many loyal and religious Jews of his day, for preaching faith in God and observance of God's commandments: *It is useless to serve God. What have we gained by keeping His charge?... We account the arrogant happy: they have done evil and endured; they have dared God and escaped [punishment]* (3:14). *Where is the God of Justice?* (2:17).

Like many a religious teacher after him, Malachi apparently had no convincing answer but was only able to reiterate his own faith that the world is so constituted that justice will triumph in the end and that all people will eventually come to the realization that there is a difference *between the righteous and the wicked, between him who has served the Lord and him who has not served Him* (3:18 ff.). He also predicted that on the day that God carries out his divine justice *the arrogant and all the doers of evil shall be straw, and the day that is coming... shall burn them to ashes... but for you who revere My name a sun of*

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victory shall rise to bring healing...(3:19).^{*} One wonders if contemporary spiritual leaders can really come up with a better on-the-spot retort against those who challenge God's justice than did Malachi.

Although the Book of Psalms is usually associated with piety and faith, we find even there several attacks against God's silence and system of justice as well as His "compassion" for the wicked. In one of these Psalms we read: *I envied the wanton; I saw the wicked at ease. Death has no pangs for them; their body is healthy. They have no part in the travail of men; ...It was for nothing that I kept my heart pure and washed my hands in innocence* (73:3-5, 13). In another psalm the author even used rude language to gain God's attention akin to the words Elijah used against the Baal worshippers at Mt.Carmel: *Rouse Yourself; why do You sleep, O Lord? Awaken, do not reject us forever* (Psalm 44:24).

In the Book of Lamentations we find the author attacking God directly for his personal as well as for Israel's national tragedy. *He [God] is a lurking bear to me, a lion in hiding... He has bent his bow and made me the target of His arrows* (3:10 ff).

The prophet Habakkuk, in whose book we find several statements of faith which includes his belief that God will eventually punish the malefactors and will reward the righteous (2:4, 5), also complains about injustice in the world and God's silence. *How long, O Lord, shall I cry out and You not listen. Shall I shout to You, 'Violence!' and You not save?* (8:2).

The sage Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) who is well known for his attacks against the normative faith, makes many an unorthodox observation: *The same fate is in store for all: for the righteous, and for the wicked; for the good and pure and for the impure; for him who sacrifices, and for him who does not... that is the sad thing which goes on under the sun* (9:2). Such views are repeated by Kohelet several times in his book (8:10, 8:14).

The prophet Jeremiah, perhaps more than all the above biblical personalities, struggled with his faith in the God of justice as well as against the challenges

^{*} Malachi was the last of the classic prophets. He lived during the early years of the Second Temple period and did not preach any doctrine of hell and damnation in an afterlife, a doctrine not as yet part of Judaism until the post-biblical era.

from his fellow Jews, priests and prophets. At times he uses even brutal language against God. *Why are You like a stranger in the land, like a traveller who stops only for the night?... Like a man who is stunned, Like a warrior who cannot bring victory?* (14:8). *You have been like a spring that fails, like waters that cannot be relied on* (15:18). At other times Jeremiah voices the usual complaints: *Why does the way of the wicked prosper? Why are the workers of treachery at ease?* (12:1).

What perhaps may be seen as the most direct challenge to his theological outlook may be found in the response from his fellow exiles in Egypt following the destruction of the Temple by the Babylonians. When he saw the women of the "remnant of Judea" again involved in idolatrous rites, offering food to the "queen of heaven," he denounced them for this, and he was given the following answer: *We will not listen to you... on the contrary, we will make offerings to the queen of heaven and pour libations to her as we used to do, we and our fathers... in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem. For then we were well off and suffered no misfortune. But ever since we stopped making offerings to the queen of heaven... we have lacked everything and we have been consumed by the sword and by famine* (44:16 ff). The only answer Jeremiah could give them was to reassert his faith that God will surely punish them for their idolatry and that only time will tell *whose word will be fulfilled — Mine or theirs!* (44:27).

The fact that we witness biblical man wrestling with his faith no less than modern man should serve us as a warning that any instant conversion to faith or born-again phenomenon is not a proof of authenticity for that religion but should rather make one suspicious of that faith. To obtain and maintain faith is a daily struggle which lasts throughout one's lifetime. This is the lesson the Bible wishes to teach us and this is why the above quotations were not revised or softened, but permitted to remain as part of the Hebrew scriptures in their original and uncensored form.

REFLECTIONS OF READERS

WHY WAS AARON PUNISHED?

BY NORMAN ASHER

Moses and Aaron are told by God that they will not bring the assembly of Israelites into the Promised Land because they did not follow instructions to speak to the rock, before the congregation of Israelites, that it give forth water.¹ Instead, Moses reprimanded the people in anger, and then *Moses lifted up his hand and smote the rock with his rod twice; and water came forth abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their cattle.*²

Later, it is stated that *The Lord spoke unto Moses and Aaron in Mount Hor, by the border of the land of Edom, saying: Aaron shall be gathered unto his people; for he shall not enter into the land which I have given unto the children of Israel, because ye rebelled against My word at the waters of Meribah.*³ In what way did Aaron rebel?

The original instruction was for Moses to act with Aaron and for both of them to

speak to the rock. The Hebrew is in the plural, *V'dibartem*, "ye shall speak," *both Moses and Aaron* shall speak to the rock.⁴

What was intended? We must remember that Aaron was appointed as the spokesman for Moses.⁵ Aaron spoke all the words which the Lord had spoken unto Moses, and did the signs in the sight of the people.

I submit that Aaron should have spoken to the rock on behalf of Moses (and himself). But Aaron stood by, and did nothing. He even did not interfere when Moses directly castigated the assembly. He remained mute when he should have acted. He should have told Moses that he would speak to the rock on his behalf, *before* Moses took action with his rod.

I submit that Aaron was punished for his inaction! Aaron had a duty to participate. He had an obligation to try to prevent Moses from becoming angry, and certainly to keep him from striking the

1 Numbers 20:8.

2 *ibid.*, v. 11.

3 *ibid.*, v. 24.

4 *ibid.*, v. 8

5 Exodus 7 1:2; 6:14, 15, 16, 30.

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rock. Aaron had a duty to inform Moses that he, Aaron, was required to speak out publicly in this situation, and that he would

fulfil his task as spokesman. However, Aaron did not become involved. Therefore, he was punished.

THE PUNISHMENT OF CAIN

A REFLECTION IN MIDRASHIC STYLE

BY ALLEN S. MALLER

Cain arose against his brother Abel and killed him (Gen. 4:8).

God gave Cain a chance to confess, but Cain denied knowledge of his brother's whereabouts. God then convened a jury of 12 angels and asked them to rule on Cain's culpability. Raphael said that Cain must have been temporarily insane because normal sibling rivalry doesn't lead to murder. Raphael also pointed out that Cain was a victim of his mother's delusions of grandeur for she had named him Cain because *with God I got a man* (4:1). The other angels rejected these arguments. Then Satan spoke up, saying, "I didn't tempt him, and without temptation there is no free choice. They both acted according to their class interests *Abel was a herdsman and Cain was a farmer* (4:2)

and so they are victims of society and socio-economic influences." The other angels rejected this argument also. They then voted to hold Cain culpable for the murder of his brother, and began to discuss the proper penalty.

Gabriel advocated capital punishment, in order to set a standard indicating how terrible a crime is the murder of a human being who is created in the image of God. Michael, however, objected stating that capital punishment was barbaric, a cruel and unusual punishment, and since mankind was created in the image of God, human life was sacred, and therefore it was not right for society to execute anyone for anything. Raphael then proposed that

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since Abel's blood cried out from the earth, Cain should be banished to wander the earth. (4:10-11). To this they all agreed. Even Satan agreed for he foresaw that Rabbi Akiba would someday declare, "If I had been in the Sanhedrin, no man would ever have been put to death." Satan also knew the correctness of Rabbi Simeon ben Gamaliel's reply to Akiba, "You would thus multiply murderers." (Mishnah Mak-kot 1:10). So Satan agreed with the rest of the angels.

Thus God leaned to the side of mercy, and didn't impose capital punishment on Cain, but sent him out to wander on the earth (4:11-12). However, the failure to establish a precedent for strict accountability diminished the sense of responsibility in the generations that followed and soon, *God saw that the evil of mankind had increased on the earth* (6:5). Indeed, in not too many generations *the earth was full of violence*

(6:11). The constant repetition of the word earth shows that as Cain wandered the earth, and people saw him alive while his brother was dead, respect for human life was undermined, and murder increased on the earth.

Finally, things became so bad that God realized that He had to destroy everything with a flood and begin again. After the flood, He instructed the descendants of Noah that capital punishment was to be imposed because the victim as well as the murderer is made in the image of God. *He who sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God made He man* (9:6). The lesson is that when excessive mercy is shown to the criminal all of society becomes the victim, and eventually the stronger corrections that are necessary bring more suffering to everybody.

COMMENTS ON BIBLICAL VERSES

BY HERBERT RAND

Let Reuben live and not die. (Deut. 33:6).

This is the blessing given by Moses to the tribe of Reuben.

The commentators point out that that

tribe had already decreased in numbers and would continue to dwindle. What then was the basis for the form of that blessing?

As related in Gen. 37:21, 22, Reuben tried to thwart his brothers' plan to murder

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Joseph, intending to rescue him later. In substance, Reuben pleaded: "Let Joseph live and not die."

Thus a kindness practiced by the ancestor earned a similar blessing for his descendants.

And if the plague be in the walls of the house... (Lev. 14, 34-48).

Scientists at the Metropolitan Museum of the City of New York have been studying the subject of infestation of building stones in old buildings. With the naked eye, such stones appear to have greenish or reddish streaks, just as noted in Leviticus. But with the advent of the electron microscope, the phenomenon may be observed as a layer of stone-eating bacteria which ingest the calcium and sulphur from the stone and excrete gypsum. When it rains, the gypsum is washed into the pores and cracks the stone. Later, on drying, the gypsum expands with tremen-

dous pressure causing the stone to flake.

As in biblical days, there is no remedy for that condition, short of removing and discarding the infected stones.

צדק צדק חרף *Justice, justice shalt thou pursue* (Deut. 16:20).

Is the repetition of the word "justice" redundant?

An honest weight is characterized as **צדק** (Lev. 19:36). Job asked that he be weighed in just scales. (Job 31:6). And Hosea inveighed against deceitful scales. (Hosea 12:8).

A balance scale consists of two pans, hung at each end of a crossbar poised midway on a fulcrum. **צדק** is required for each of the two pans.

When neither pan of the Scale of Justice is weighted by bribery, favoritism, or prejudice, the weighing may be described as **צדק צדק** and the resulting judgment as **משפט צדק**.

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BOOK REVIEW

BY SHIMON BAKON

RASHI, by CHAIM PEARL, Peter Halban Publishers, London, 1988, 20 Shekels.

If I were asked to choose the Jewish personality of the last millenium who had the greatest impact on the course of Jewish life, and whose influence lasts to this day, I would unhesitatingly nominate Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki), the 11th century French commentator par excellence.

What is it that made Rashi and his achievements so outstanding? Rabbi Chaim Pearl has authored a work *Rashi* which gives us satisfactory answers to this question. Though a compact booklet, containing no more than 112 pages, it provides instructive information, useful both to the scholar and to the layman, about the historical background, the life, achievements, and the lasting influence of Rashi. Written lucidly, it is very readable, and provides profound insight, illustrated by concrete examples, into the unique approach of Rashi to his two monumental works, the commentary on the Bible and the commentary on the Talmud, upon which Rashi's fame rightfully rests.

Rashi was blessed by fate. He was born in Troyes, not too far from the highly prosperous belt and centers of Jewish learning along the Rhine, such as Mainz, Speyer, Treves. It was in Mainz where just one or two generations before Rashi, Rabbenu Gershom, the "Light of the Exile" served as spiritual leader. It was also a time when, for most of Rashi's lifetime, Jews still lived peacefully with their gentile neighbors. Thus, Rashi could devote most of his years, and all his considerable intellectual abilities, to the pursuit of his scholarly endeavors. Rashi himself was gifted with a phenomenal memory, an encyclopedic grasp of the existent Jewish cultural heritage, and a concise, yet comprehensible style of writing. When he died at the age of 65, at least one of his sons-in-law and two grandsons, great in their own right, Rabbenu Tam and the Rashbam, continued his work.

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The greatness of his Bible commentary lies in the unique method he used. Rashi provides the reader with the plain meaning (peshat) of the text and introduces, at the same time, the deeper religious and ethical teaching, culled from the vast treasury of rabbinic sources.

From the numerous illustrations brought by the author, I single out Exodus 21:5-6, which deals with laws relating to a Hebrew servant. One of them states that on the seventh year he shall go free:

But if the servant shall say... I will not go out free; then his master shall bring him to the door, or unto the doorpost, and his master shall bore his ear...

There are two questions that may be justifiably raised: Why the ear, and why the door or doorpost? Both questions are answered by Rashi in a delightful manner, by bringing the ethical explanation of the rabbis.

Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai taught: the *ear* heard from Sinai *Thou shalt not steal* (Exodus 20:15) — and this man went and stole, then let his ear be pierced. And again, it was the *ear* which heard from Sinai *For unto Me the children of Israel are servants* (Leviticus 15:55), and this man went and acquired another master for himself, let his *ear* be pierced.

And why: *To the door or the doorpost?*

Rabbi Simeon expounded the verse... God said: 'The door and doorpost were witnesses in Egypt when I passed over the lintel and doorposts, and proclaimed, *For unto Me the children of Israel are servants* (ibid), i.e. My servants and not the servants of servants!'

Thus Rashi answers two questions, bringing home the exquisite lesson of human freedom, an inalienable human right stemming from God.

While it is conceded that Rashi wrote "the most important Bible commentary ever written," his commentary on the Talmud is, perhaps, even more outstanding. It may be stated without reservations that, without Rashi's commentary, the Talmud may have become an inaccessible, even forgotten work.

The student of the Talmud was frequently faced with the problem of how to "decipher the actual meaning of the difficult text." It is in his commentary to the Talmud that Rashi revealed his astounding genius. Commentaries to the Bible and to the Talmud, to be effective, had to be different. The Bible was read as part of the prayer-service twice a week and on the Sabbath. Here Rashi chose a

method appealing to the masses. The Talmud, at best, was studied by an intellectual elite. His commentary is directed to the serious student searching to unravel difficult words and the complexities of the massive tomes of the Talmud, and to penetrate to the meaning of the text. He succeeded so well that he "made the Talmud, next to the Bible, the foundation of Jewish life."

In his last chapter, the author addresses himself to Rashi's lasting influence. It is based on two facts. The Humash — the Pentateuch — was studied together with Rashi's commentaries, from early age. It turned the reader into a knowledgeable Jew, involved in Jewish life, acquainted with fundamentals of Jewish religion, ethics and values. Knowing something of Rashi's commentary, he could not be called an *עם הארץ*, an ignoramus, one of the worst epithets that could be hurled against a Jew.

Rabbi Pearl relates, in a footnote, a personal experience. He witnessed a teacher expounding to an elementary Hebrew class Genesis 48:7, in which Jacob, on his deathbed exacts a promise from Joseph to have him buried in his family tomb. The verse in question, simple to understand, does not fit in the context of the dialogue between the dying Jacob and his son.

And as for me, when I came from Paddan, Rachel died unto me in the land of Canaan in the way, when there was still some way to come unto Ephrath; and I buried her there...

Rashi's comments woven skilfully into the biblical text, fills the vacuum of words not uttered. Why indeed did he not bring Rachel to the family grave? Furthermore, Rashi's immortal comments on this passage were sung in a special tune, utilized by the teacher. They made an unforgettable impression on anyone who became acquainted with it — and this includes the writer of this book review.

Second, to this day the biblical and talmudic texts and Rashi's commentary invariably go together. Throughout all subsequent time Rashi's commentary has become an indispensable guide. All commentators followed him; all the modern translations, including the Soncino and the evolving Steinsaltz Talmud, draw heavily on Rashi.

Chaim Pearl is the author of ten books on Judaism, the latest being *Sefer Ha-Aggadah*, by Bialik and Rawnitzky, Selected, Translated and Annotated.*

We, from Dor Le Dor, are proud that Chaim Pearl serves as its Associate Editor.

* See Review by Prof. Sol Liptzin in Dor Le Dor, Vol. XVII, 4.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE DIASPORA WINNERS OF THE INTERNATIONAL BIBLE CONTEST FOR YOUTH

BY SUSAN TOURKIN-KOMET

It is always a rewarding experience to interview some of the teenagers — and to be present with them at their reception by the President of the State of Israel, Chaim Herzog.

The President's reception was attended by the Israeli contestants, who again took top prizes in the International Bible Contest for Youth, held on Israel's Independence Day, televised "live" from the Jerusalem Theater. The Israeli top winner was Yaron Yanai, a student at the Nechalim Yeshiva High School, near Petach Tikvah.

The top Diaspora winners, chosen at a separate contest in Beersheva several days before the final contest on Independence Day, were: Tova Tarshish, Ron Wald, Aviva Kallus, and Yehuda Fruchter who scored evenly with Judith Kerekes.

Tova Tarshish, who was the winner from the Diaspora, is a senior at the Hanna Sack's Girls' High School in Chicago, Illinois. Her parents are Leon and Ethel Tarshish and her father teaches at the Telshe Yeshiva in Chicago. Tova is one of six children. Her interests include writing and ceramics and she intends to major in engineering. She will be attending the Beis Yaakov Seminar in Jerusalem this coming year.

Ron Wald, the runner-up from the Diaspora, is a tenth-grader at the Herzliyah High School, Snowdon branch, in Montreal, Canada. His parents are Ted and Hadassa Wald, and Ron is one of two siblings. He is interested in Judaism, history, religion, traveling, and science. He is considering studying in Israel after completing high school.

The third-place winner was Aviva Kallus, daughter of David and Ann Kallus

Susan Tourkin-Komet has a degree of Bachelor of Social Sciences from Case-Western Reserve Univ. of Cleveland, Ohio (1970) and from the Paul Baerwald School of Social work of the Hebrew Univ. of Jerusalem (1973). She is a native of Washington, D.C. and immigrated to Israel in 1968. Susan is the academic secretary of "Dor Le Dor," since 1983.

of Kew Gardens Hills, N.Y. Aviva is also tenth-grader, at Yeshiva University High School for Girls in Queens, N.Y. She is one of four children, and she plans to become a lawyer. Her special interest is debating, and she too plans to return to Israel.

Yehuda Fruchter, shared the fourth-place in the Diaspora contest with Judith Kerekes. Yehuda is a tenth-grader at the Yeshiva of Flatbush, N.Y. and is the son of Aaron and Susan Fruchter of Belle Harbor, N.Y. He is one of three children, and his special interests are karate, basketball, and Bible. Yehuda plans to study in Israel after finishing high school, and then to attend Yeshiva University of N.Y., and eventually become a lawyer.

Judith Kerekes, of Budapest, Hungary, is a tenth-grader at the "Anna Frank" School in Budapest. Her parents are Bela and Gyorgyi Kerekes, who are working professionals, and who keep a traditionally religious Jewish home, a matter of distinction in the city from which they come. Judith is one of two children. She spoke English quite well — which is also unusual for her background. Her special interest lies in music, and she has not yet decided on future plans.

This is the second year in a row that contestants have come to Israel from behind the "Iron Curtain." This year there were also the brother and sister, Reuven and Judith Rati of Hungary, and Eliezer Yaygnin of Yugoslavia.

Special enthusiasm is always expressed by the contestants from Latin and South America — as witnessed in the "Thank You" speech, delivered in a North American accent by the boy from Panama, Eliezer Mizrachi.

As usual, President Herzog took special pride in the young contestant, Ezra (Robin) Simmons from Ireland (where the President was born and raised). Robin made sure to wear an Irish emerald green shirt and jacket for the occasion.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

As a Christian and a minister I feel I must respond to the article in "Dor Le Dor," Vol. XVII, No. 2, Winter 88/9: "Jewish and Christian Covenants and the Holocaust," by Sidney Breitbart.

There was much said in the article about the Christian church with which I must sadly agree. The Christian church often does not deserve the title Christian.

I have been a minister for seven years now. In that time I have never been embarrassed or ashamed of Jesus Christ, nor of my relationship with Him, nor of my beliefs in who He was and is. I cannot say the same about the Church which is supposed to be His Body on this earth. Often the Church's conduct towards people outside and even inside the Church is un-Christian. This is why many Christians and ministers are praying for and seeking renewal within the Church. Our prayers are being answered and many areas of the Church are being renewed and can be again called "Christian" churches..

Today, within the Church, there are many that do not accept the views about the Jews that the writer associates with Christians.

I, and many other Christians, believe:

- the Jews are, always have been, and always will be, God's chosen people.
- the formation of the State of Israel in 1948 was a fulfillment of prophecies found in Scripture. (Our Old Testament).
- that the Jews are not guilty of crucifying Jesus and the Holocaust was NOT God punishing the Jews for doing so.

But my prayer for God's chosen people is that they will be faithful to God and the Torah, as a nation and as individuals.

Christians have a lot to learn from the Jews and so I regularly lead Christian pilgrimages to Israel not just to visit sacred places but to understand and appreciate Judaism. For the Jewish Faith is the father of the Christian faith, and Jesus, our Messiah was, and still is, a Jew.

Reverend Lindsay Hassall, B.A.
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(The Wellingborough Group of United Reformed Churches)

עשה חורתך קבע

THE TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
CHAIM ABRAMOWITZ

October-November 1989

חשון תש"ן

| | | | | |
|----------|----|----------------------------------|----|----------------------------|
| 30 | M | Jeremiah 31 | א | ירמיהו ל"א |
| 31 | T | Jeremiah 32 | ב | ירמיהו ל"ב |
| November | | | | |
| 1 | W | Jeremiah 33 | ג | ירמיהו ל"ג |
| 2 | Th | Jeremiah 34 | ד | ירמיהו ל"ד |
| 3 | F | Genesis 6:9-11 | ה | נח |
| 4 | | Haftarah: Isaiah 54:1-55:5 שבת | ו | הפטרה: ישעיה נ"ד, אינ"ה, ה |
| 5 | S | Jeremiah 35 | ז | ירמיהו ל"ה |
| 6 | M | Jeremiah 36 | ח | ירמיהו ל"ו |
| 7 | T | Jeremiah 37 | ט | ירמיהו ל"ז |
| 8 | W | Jeremiah 38 | י | ירמיהו ל"ח |
| 9 | Th | Jeremiah 39 | יא | ירמיהו ל"ט |
| 10 | F | Genesis 12-17 | יב | לך לך |
| 11 | | Haftarah: Isaiah 40:27-41:16 שבת | יג | הפטרה: ישעיה מ', כזמ"א, טז |
| 12 | S | Jeremiah 40 | יד | ירמיהו מ' |
| 13 | M | Jeremiah 41 | טו | ירמיהו מ"א |
| 14 | T | Jeremiah 42 | טז | ירמיהו מ"ב |
| 15 | W | Jeremiah 43 | יז | ירמיהו מ"ג |
| 16 | Th | Jeremiah 44 | יח | ירמיהו מ"ד |
| 17 | F | Genesis 18-22 | יט | וירא |
| 18 | | Haftarah: II Kings 4:1-32 שבת | כ | הפטרה: מלכים ב', ד', אילב |
| 19 | S | Jeremiah 45 | כא | ירמיהו מ"ה |
| 20 | M | Jeremiah 46 | כב | ירמיהו מ"ו |
| 21 | T | Jeremiah 47 | כג | ירמיהו מ"ז |
| 22 | W | Jeremiah 48 | כד | ירמיהו מ"ח |
| 23 | Th | Jeremiah 49 | כה | ירמיהו מ"ט |
| 24 | F | Genesis 23-25:18 | כו | חיי שרה |
| 25 | | Haftarah: I Kings 1:1-31 שבת | כז | הפטרה: מלכים א', א', אילא |
| 26 | S | Jeremiah 50 | כח | ירמיהו נ' |
| 27 | M | Jeremiah 51 | כט | ירמיהו נ"א |
| 28 | T | Jeremiah 52 | ל | ירמיהו נ"ב |

November-December 1989

כסלו תש"ן

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

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טבת תש"ן

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| 29 | F | Genesis 41-44:17 | חנוכה מקץ | א |
| 30 | | Haftarah: I Kings 7:40-50 | חנוכה הפטרה: מלכים א ז', מ"ב | ב |
| 31 | S | Ezekiel 23 | יחזקאל כ"ג | ג |
| January | | | | |
| 1 | M | Ezekiel 24 | יחזקאל כ"ד | ד |
| 2 | T | Ezekiel 25 | יחזקאל כ"ה | ה |
| 3 | W | Ezekiel 26 | יחזקאל כ"ו | ו |
| 4 | Th | Ezekiel 27 | יחזקאל כ"ז | ז |
| 5 | F | Genesis 44:18-47:27 | ויגש | ח |
| 6 | | Haftarah: Ezekiel 37:15-28 | הפטרה: יחזקאל ל"ז, ט"כ | ט |
| 7 | S | Ezekiel 28 | צום עשרה בטבת יחזקאל כ"ח | י |
| 8 | M | Ezekiel 29 | יחזקאל כ"ט | יא |
| 9 | T | Ezekiel 30 | יחזקאל ל' | יב |
| 10 | W | Ezekiel 31 | יחזקאל ל"א | יג |
| 11 | Th | Ezekiel 32 | יחזקאל ל"ב | יד |
| 12 | F | Genesis 47:28-50 | ויחי | טו |
| 13 | | Haftarah: I Kings 2:1-12 | הפטרה: מלכים א ב', א"ב | טז |
| 14 | S | Ezekiel 33 | יחזקאל ל"ג | יז |
| 15 | M | Ezekiel 34 | יחזקאל ל"ד | יח |
| 16 | T | Ezekiel 35 | יחזקאל ל"ה | יט |
| 17 | W | Ezekiel 36 | יחזקאל ל"ו | כ |
| 18 | Th | Ezekiel 37 | יחזקאל ל"ז | כא |
| 19 | F | Exodus 1-6:1 | שמות | כב |
| 20 | | Haftarah: Isaiah 27:6-28:13 | הפטרה: ישעיה כ"ז, רכ"ח, יג | כג |
| 21 | S | Ezekiel 38 | יחזקאל ל"ח | כד |
| 22 | M | Ezekiel 39 | יחזקאל ל"ט | כה |
| 23 | T | Ezekiel 40 | יחזקאל מ' | כו |
| 24 | W | Ezekiel 41 | יחזקאל מ"א | כז |
| 25 | Th | Ezekiel 42 | יחזקאל מ"ב | כח |
| 26 | F | Exodus 6:2-9 | ווארא | כט |

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| | | | | |
|----------|-----------------------------|-----|----|------------------------------|
| 27 | Haftarah: Isaiah 66 | שבת | א | הפטרה: ישעיהו ס"ו |
| 28 | S Ezekiel 43 | | ב | יחזקאל מ"ג |
| 29 | M Ezekiel 44 | | ג | יחזקאל מ"ד |
| 30 | T Ezekiel 45 | | ד | יחזקאל מ"ה |
| 31 | W Ezekiel 46 | | ה | יחזקאל מ"ו |
| February | | | | |
| 1 | Th Ezekiel 47 | | ו | יחזקאל מ"ז |
| 2 | F Exodus 10-13:16 | | ז | בא |
| 3 | Haftarah: Jeremiah 66:13-28 | שבת | ח | הפטרה: ירמיהו ס"ו, יג"כח |
| 4 | S Ezekiel 48 | | ט | יחזקאל מ"ח |
| 5 | M Hoseah 1 | | י | הושע א' |
| 6 | T Hoseah 2 | | יא | הושע ב' |
| 7 | W Hoseah 3 | | יב | הושע ג' |
| 8 | Th Hoseah 4 | | יג | הושע ד' |
| 9 | F Exodus 13:17-17 | | יד | בשלח |
| 10 | Haftarah: Judges 4:4-5:3 | שבת | טו | הפטרה: שופטים ד', ד"ה, ג |
| 11 | S Hoseah 5 | | טז | הושע ה' |
| 12 | M Hoseah 6 | | יז | הושע ו' |
| 13 | T Hoseah 7 | | יח | הושע ז' |
| 14 | W Hoseah 8 | | יט | הושע ח' |
| 15 | Th Hoseah 9 | | כ | הושע ט' |
| 16 | F Exodus 18-20 | | כא | יתרו |
| 17 | Haftarah: Isaiah 6-7:30 | שבת | כב | הפטרה: ישעיהו ו', יד, ל |
| 18 | S Hoseah 10 | | כג | הושע י' |
| 19 | M Hoseah 11 | | כד | הושע י"א |
| 20 | T Hoseah 12 | | כה | הושע י"ב |
| 21 | W Hoseah 13 | | כו | הושע י"ג |
| 22 | Th Hoseah 14 | | כז | הושע י"ד |
| 23 | F Exodus 21-24 | | כח | משפטים פ' שקלים |
| 24 | Haftarah: II Kings 11:17 | שבת | כט | הפטרה: מלכים ב י"א, יד"ב, יז |
| 25 | S Joel 1 | | ל | יואל א' |

THE JEWISH BIBLE QUARTERLY

DOR Le DOR — דור לדור

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ABSTRACTS OF ARTICLES IN DOR Le DOR APPEAR IN

Internationale Zeitschriftenschau für Bibelwissenschaft und Grenzgebiete Habichtweg 14, 7400 Tübingen
Old Testament abstracts The Catholic University of America, Washington DC 20064

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02 245751

Dor Le Dor is published in Jerusalem for the benefit of the English-speaking public and is directed to all those who wish to further their understanding of the Hebrew Bible.