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Illustration of the Book of Ruth, Festival Prayer Book, Germany, c. 1320

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EDITORIAL

THE BIBLE "PROTESTS"

Webster's Unabridged Dictionary offers two diametrically opposed definitions of "protest" — "to make a solemn affirmation," and a "solemn declaration of dissent." The Bible in some sense is both, an affirmation and dissent. When the Bible proclaims the Unity of God, it simultaneously repudiates polytheism, and when it asserts purpose in the act of creation and providence in the affairs of men, it rejects the capriciousness of deities and the arbitrariness in God's relations with man.

On occasion the biblical dissent is explicit. Thus Israel is warned: *After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein you dwelt, shall ye not do, and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do . . . .* (Lev. 18:3).

On other occasions the protest is implicit, as in the case of Noah, when, after exiting from the ark, he builds an altar and offers a burnt offering of every clean beast and fowl. *And the Lord smelled the sweet savor* — This seemingly crude anthropomorphism must be seen against the background of the Mesopotamian Gilgamesh epic, in which the hero also offers a sacrifice after the flood. Here it is related that the gods, starved during the flood, swarm over the sacrifice like flies. Now, the biblical protest can be clearly discerned. God Almighty is in no need of a sacrifice. He merely "smells" the savor of a burnt offering, a sacrifice totally consumed by fire. In later passages of the Pentateuch, the term ריח ניחח (sweet savor) appears quite frequently and is understood to mean acceptable. In the biblical conception the sacrifice — the קרבן stemming from the term קרב (near), turns into a means for man to come closer to God. When the psalmist, using a magnificent play on words, exclaims:

I will praise the name of God with a song (שיר)
And it shall please the Lord better than a bullock (שור).
(Ps. 96:31, 32)

he merely carries this idea a step further. Prayer is more acceptable to God than a sacrifice. In this way the synagogue could later adequately fill the void left by the destruction of the Temple.

Another implicit "protest," this time against the kingship and priesthood as practiced by the Egyptians, can be seen in Deuteronomy 17:14 to 18:2. The pharaoh was an absolute monarch, raised almost to the status of a deity. The Bible, while accepting monarchy, puts limitations on a king's power. He must not multiply horses, symbol of military power. Similarly, he must not *greatly multiply to himself silver and gold*, to protect the people against exploitation. *He shall write him a copy of this law in a book*, in order to read it continually *that he may learn to fear the Lord his God.* Thus he is subject to the laws of the Torah, in what later came to be known as a constitutional monarchy.

The biblical injunction: *The priests, the Levites . . . shall have no portion nor inheritance with Israel* (Deut. 18:1) seems to be an open protest against the Egyptian institution of priesthood, which was probably the largest landowner in Egypt. It is most regrettable that this rule came into disuse, particularly with the return from Babylonian exile, contributing to the eventual corruption of the Jewish priesthood.

Shimon Bakon
Editor

Our Association and its Editorial Board
mourn the passing of

Dvorah Rosenberg ז"ל

wife of Rabbi Yaakov Rosenberg,
Chairman of our Association

ESTHER IS A STORY OF JEWISH DEFENSE NOT A STORY OF JEWISH REVENGE

HAIM M. I. GEVARYAHU[1]

Translated from the Hebrew by Gilad J. Gevaryahu
[The translator's inserted material in square brackets]

The essential point of the book of Esther is that the Jewish people defended and saved themselves. The purpose of this article is threefold: first, to honor a very early and successful instance of Jewish self-defense, and to recommend it as a model for our own day; second, to show that this Jewish collective action stopped at self-*defense*, and never degenerated into *revenge*; third, to present, in non-technical terms, a discussion of various interpretations — and misinterpretations — that have been made over the centuries concerning the Book of Esther and the festival of Purim.

The Book of Esther tells us that King Ahasuerus' decree for the extermination of the Jewish people *was not revoked* and, as a result, on the day of Purim the Jewish defenders battled with their attackers. The Jewish side won. Many of the attackers were killed, and there were few Jewish casualties. The magnitude of the victory was so overwhelming that it has been seen in Jewish history primarily as a miracle. Actually, it is one of the early examples of Jews defending themselves successfully, and this fact is quite clear throughout the book.

. . . כי כתב אשר נכתב בשם המלך ונחתום בטבעת המלך אין להשיב

. . . a decree written in the name of the king and sealed with the signet ring of the king cannot be revoked (Esther 8:8).

Too many people have erred in their understanding of this verse,

1 Dr. Gevaryahu passed away on the 22nd day of Kislev, 5750 (December 20, 1989). This is an unpublished article found among his papers, that the translator dates to the late 1970s.

and even teachers of the Bible and biblical scholars have not been exact in its interpretation.

We are told in the eighth chapter that Esther tried to reverse the decree, which was being carried out by Haman the Agagite, but that the king's reply was: "You may put into effect any order about the Jews that you wish." That is, try to find some trick or indirect way to help them. Abraham Ibn Ezra wrote:

> And King Ahasuerus said: Do whatever you can do to save your people, because the early orders were written on my behalf and were sealed with my signet ring, and as such you cannot revoke them, since this is the law of Media and Persia (Commentary to Esther 8:8).

Therefore, the king is instructing Esther that the only way to save the Jewish people is by the issuance of a new order, which technically does not revoke the previous order. [Doing that would be admitting to the public that the king and his government can make mistakes; or, "It is inappropriate to revoke it and to make the king's decree look like forgery" (Rashi).] Rather, it adds some additional elements to supplement and clarify the old order.

In this case, the new element is that the Jewish people will be allowed to defend themselves against the Gentiles who attack them. Both orders, the first one to annihilate the Jews and the second one to allow them to defend themselves, have the same legal standing. The side that acted in self-defense rather than in aggression, namely the Jewish people, had the higher motivation and the greater devotion to their cause, and therefore they won the battle. The Jewish people thus also secured themselves politically.

The maxim of the Jewish sages that "everything depends on luck" applies not only to the Torah scroll in the ark but also to the destiny of this single verse. I had the good luck to ask the Bible students about the meaning of this verse (Esther 8:8) and found that often only one out of ten, or even one out of twenty, knew that the king's first decree had not been revoked. The explanation for this astounding failure to see the obvious literal meaning of the narrative lies in that element

of present-day Jewish psychology to which I alluded above, the tendency to prefer to explain things by the Jews being the passive beneficiaries of miracles rather than being active agents in their own self-defense. This psychology has caused even exceptional biblical scholars, such as my teacher Professor Moshe Zvi Segal, to say: "The king orders Esther to publish in his name the revocation of the decree."[2]

Indeed this assumption, that the first decree was revoked, is already mentioned in the Jewish Hellenistic literature of the Second Commonwealth period, in additions to the Septuagint, and in the works of Josephus. Nevertheless, the traditional Jewish interpreters in the Middle Ages and later commentators felt that the decree had not been revoked (for example, Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Alshich, and HaGra).

They also explained that the writer of the Book of Esther did not see fit to give the details of the number of Jewish casualties in the battle between the two sides simply because there were very few Jewish casualties. This fact later brought about great misunderstanding of the book, and influenced Jewish and Christian interpreters alike.

THE CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL ATTITUDE TO THE BOOK OF ESTHER

The early Christian interpreters either neglected the Book of Esther, or, to the extent that they deigned to treat it at all, showed their obvious dislike for the book. Not one of the Church fathers felt a need to write a commentary on it. Most Christian theologians felt that this book lacks religious or moral values. Many of them joined in the opinion of Martin Luther, the founder of the Protestant Reformation, that it would have been better if this book had never been written at all.[3]

2 Moshe Zvi Segal, *Introduction to the Bible* (*Mevoei HaMikra*), Part III, (Jerusalem: Kiriat-Sefer, 1952) pp. 719-20.

3 No. 3391a. *Tabletalk* (*Tischreden*) (Weimer: Herman Böhlaus, 1914) III, 302.

Luther went even further and tried to draw parallels between the Jews in the time of Esther and the Jews of his own day. Likewise, he lamented that the Jews appreciate the Book of Esther more than the books of Isaiah and Daniel. Luther said: "*Sie Judenzen zu sehr*," an expression difficult to translate idiomatically, but which comes down to a claim that the Jews are "Judaizing too much." Luther, in his anti-Semitic book *About the Jews and their Lies* (*Von den Juden und ihre Lügen*) accuses the Jews of yearning to treat the Gentiles of his time in just the same way that they treated the Gentiles in the time of Esther.

> Oh, how much they love Esther who so neatly matches their evil desires! Never before did the sun rise on a more bloodthirsty people, a people more given to seeking revenge, than the Jews — and they even think of themselves as the people of the God!

HANS BARDTKE [1906-1975]

It is worth mentioning that after the Holocaust in Europe, a slight change occurred in the attitude of several commentators to the Book of Esther. In 1963, Professor Hans Bardtke [in far more than a slight change] published the best and most extensive Christian commentary on the Book of Esther.[4] We can highlight the change in the Christian perception of the Book of Esther by contrasting the early-twentieth-century commentary of L. B. Paton[5] with Bardtke's 1963 work.

Paton sees the Jewish behavior in the story as excessive revenge beyond mere self-defense. He states bluntly that: "There is not one noble character in this entire book."

4 Hans Bardtke, *Das Buch Esther* (Kommentar zum Alten Testament). (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1963).

5 L. B. Paton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Esther*, International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1908).

On the other hand, Bardtke, who wrote in the aftermath of the Jewish Holocaust, reads the book in light of the pogroms against the Jews, and actually uses the expression (*Endlösung der Judenfrage*) "the final solution of the Jewish problem," when he talks about the decree put together by Haman — the very words used by the Nazis in Germany. Bardtke also mentions the yearning of the Jews for peacefulness and tranquillity (*Ruhe*).

Bardtke explains the Book of Esther as a story of self-defense on the part of the Jewish people, and he emphasizes that the book has significant moral and religious value. The Book of Esther has also received more favorable reviews in recent years from other Christian commentators, most likely as a result of the Holocaust.

DO WE HAVE 'REVENGE' IN THE BOOK OF ESTHER?

Christian theologians and Jewish humanists alike show discontent with the Book of Esther because of the alleged stark themes of "revenge" and "desire to kill the Gentiles."

In 1938, the Jerusalem author Shalom Ben-Chorin wrote a small work about the Book of Esther,[6] in which he suggested that a Sanhedrin should convene and cancel the festival of Purim. Ben-Chorin relied on, and found support in, Professor Shmuel Hugo Bergman, of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Jacob Ashkenazy, a Jew originally from Vienna who had emigrated to Jerusalem, came out strongly against Ben-Chorin's opinion. In 1938, he wrote a pamphlet entitled *Davar Beito* (*A Timely Response*). This work, if one ignores its thorny style, is a real contribution to the understanding of the book of Esther.

Jacob Ashkenazy noted that Martin Luther translated נקמה (*nekama*) in 8:13 as aiming at vengeance (that is, trying to destroy from an evil desire) against their enemies (*sich zu rächen an ihren*

6 Shalom Ben-Chorin, *Kritik des Estherbuches. Eine theologische Streitschrift.* (Jerusalem, 1938).

Feinden). Ashkenazy states correctly that Luther translated the Hebrew word *nekama* in the Book of Esther as "destroy," whereas in the Book of Exodus (21:20) he translated the same word as "punish" (*gestraft werden*). Ashkenazy showed that in the entire Hebrew Bible the word נקמה (*nekama*) never means *Rache* or vengeance. Even the use of the word נקמה (*nekama*) in the famous verse in Psalms (94:1) means God is fashioning justice, and He rewards measure for measure. The Torah prohibits revenge: *Thou shall not revenge, nor bear any grudge* — לא תקם ולא תטר (Lev. 19:18).

It is regrettable to note that some modern translations of the Bible still continue to mistranslate the word in Esther 8:13 as "vengeance." For example,

1) "to be revenged of their enemies" *Catholic Layman's Holy Bible* (Chicago: Catholic Press, 1952).

2) "The book is 'down to earth,' in that it vividly describes the natural vindictiveness generated under persecution" *The Interpreter's Bible* (New York, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1954), p. 829.

3) "to avenge themselves upon their enemies" *The New Oxford Annotated Bible With the Apocrypha* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973).

Some still disregard the "cannot be revoked" clause concerning Haman's first decree and say:

4) "you will, therefore, disregard the letters sent by Haman . . . ." *The Revised English Bible with the Apocrypha* (New York: Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press, 1989).

Ashkenazy also noted Luther's translation of the Hebrew הרגו היהודים (*Hargu HaYehudim*) (9:6) as *erwürgten die Juden*, (roughly in English "the Jews strangulated"). *Erwürgen* in German implies the mass extermination of defenseless people. And indeed, Luther inserted into his German translation many anti-Semitic undertones, which influenced his followers. Bardtke, as I have mentioned earlier, made a sharp break from this aspect of Martin Luther, and

indeed he should be commended for doing so. Indeed, I heard first-hand from Bardtke, while he was staying in Jerusalem in the mid-1960s, about his efforts to understand the Book of Esther, and about his research concerning Luther's attitude to the book.

Dr. Moshe A. Anat should likewise be commended for his interpretation[7] of Esther 8:11, when he states that it gives permission to the Jews to defend themselves. "The king has permitted the Jews of every city (= with Jewish population) to assemble and fight for their life (= defense) to destroy, massacre and exterminate any forces of any people (= armed) who besiege them (= attack them) and [who besiege] their children and women (= who intend to kill the Jewish children and women) and who plunder their goods (= who want to plunder Jewish property)."

This defense decree permitting the Jews to defend themselves was different from Haman's extermination decree. It was given to the Jews in their own language, language which according to Bardtke had in it some recognition of their national rights.[8] More important, the decrees differed in that Haman's decree stipulated the extermination of all Jewish males, females and children as well as the destruction of all their possessions, whereas the second decree clearly limited the Jews to self-defense and hence would not allow them to destroy women, babies and goods. The fact that the Book of Esther says (9:2) "gathered in their cities" clearly suggests that the defense was also limited to cities with Jewish population.

> *Let the Jews in Shushan [i.e., Susa] be permitted to act tomorrow also as they did today* (9:13).

This verse was interpreted by some commentators as an authorization for Jewish revenge in addition to Jewish self-defense. But we should read the book as it is פשט (*p'shat*).[9] In all the other

7 *The People's Bible*, (Tel Aviv: Am Oved Publishers, 1972).

8 A similar idea is expressed in the Targum to the Book of Esther (5:7 and 7:2) where the king understood Esther's requests to involve permission also to rebuild the Jewish Temple.

9 That is, in the literal sense and not with midrashic interpretation.

cities, the battle between the Jews and their enemies was resolved, and the Jews could put matters to rest. However, in the city of Shushan there was not a clear victory for either side. Esther saw a need for an additional day to win a clear victory for the Jews and then allow them the same peaceful settlement of affairs.

The simple story of the Book of Esther highlights the fact that the enemies of the Jews did not take into account Jewish defense abilities.

They also made a tactical error in their estimation of Jewish political power. The enemies of the Jews started the attack, based on the decree in their hands, but they were repelled by a strong Jewish resistance, and hence they suffered many casualties. According to the Masoretic text (9:16), they lost 75,000 people. Bardtke makes the number somewhat more palatable by dividing it among 127 provinces; therefore each province suffered fewer than six hundred casualties.

The Septuagint counts only 15,000 casualties, and the Lucianos version of the Septuagint counts only10,170. It seems to me that these translations retain some accurate traditions, now otherwise lost, concerning the number of casualties. The Aramaic translator also reflected old Jewish traditions when he lent ethnic overtones to this battle between the Jews and their attackers by calling it a battle between the sons of Amalek and the Jews. In any event, the above clearly shows that this battle was not vengeance.

My conclusion, therefore, is that the festival of Purim and the Book of Esther are a story and celebration of the victory of Jewish self-defense which prevented the enemies of the Jews from carrying out their decree of Jewish annihilation. Bardtke pointed out that close to the time of the Book of Esther there was a pogrom against the Jewish settlement in Yeb-Alpetina in the northern part of Egypt. Those Jews did not defend themselves, and the Jewish temple in Egypt was burned. Therefore, the story of Jewish self-defense in the Book of Esther had a remarkable impact on the coming generations. Although, until now, no external evidence has been found to corrobo-

rate the story, it is quite clear that the story has historical foundations built upon the theme that on this occasion the Jewish people successfully defended themselves.

Jewish humanists should not have a problem reading the Book of Esther, or rejoicing in the festival of Purim. I hope that my friend Shalom Ben-Chorin, who forty years ago wrote that he and others with similar views celebrate Purim only "half-heartedly," will be able now, based on the above explanation, to celebrate Purim wholeheartedly.

Generations of scholars made major efforts to find historical foundations in Persian material for the story in the Book of Esther. Their success was limited to details of the historical background but did not include independent corroboration of the story in the Book of Esther as historical fact. Archaeological excavation in the city of Shushan did indeed find a palace. It is clear that the writer of the Book of Esther knew the structure of the palace, the throne hall and the palace-garden (7:7). The author also knew the Persian postal system which transmitted the king's decree with great speed. According to Assyrian law, which must have prevailed in Persia as well, every citizen had to keep a distance of at least seven paces from the royal family. Therefore, Haman violated that rule when he fell on the couch on which Queen Esther was lying (7:8). This kind of background to the story of the Book of Esther we now possess in abundance, thanks to archaeological and literary scholarship. However, specific identification of the main heroes and other characters of the book has not been achieved. Ahasuerus, Vashti, Haman, Mordecai and Esther cannot be identified with any specific historical personalities. [We do recognize the names Mordecai and Esther as stemming from the Assyrian deities Marduk and Ishtar.]

The fact that no specific historical verification could be made influenced many scholars, especially before the Holocaust, to assume that the entire story of Esther is mere fruit of the imagination. Scholars used to argue: "it is inconceivable that a king would give orders to kill an entire nation." But now after Hitler's attempt

to do just that, we start to look at the story realistically. Moreover, given his context, it appears that Esther's author himself tried to obfuscate the real names of his historical characters. The story of Esther dates from that remote time in history when there were few historical sources and archival historical documents, and therefore the historical foundation of the book is still an open question.

There are scholars who suggest that the Book of Esther is a secular book. A superficial argument in their favor can be fashioned from the fact that the proper name of God is not mentioned even once. However, these scholars are making a big mistake. The Book of Esther is one of the holiest books in the Bible. God watches over everything, and determines the destiny of nations.

The author of the book is a religious man, and a brilliant storyteller who leaves a lot between the lines. He hints several times at the God in heaven,[10] for example when he says that fasts were offered (9:31) to a high deity [= God] in order to save the Jews.[11] I think, however, that the author also [like Job] has some complaint against God as if saying: "Why, God, the redeemer of Israel, did you have to give an innocent daughter of Israel to an uncircumcised Gentile king?" His not mentioning the name of God is therefore a subtle form of intentional protest. The story itself is a masterpiece of intertwining narrative, probably one of the greatest ever told. It is proper to read and reread between the lines, to read the obvious and no less to read that which its author chose to let lie hidden.

In conclusion, it should be said that the words of the book *which are mentioned and done throughout all generations* (9:28) are a great lesson to all generations: the Jewish people must defend itself against any enemy.

10 The Targum to Esther, which is an expansive and not a literal translation, inserts the proper name of God numerous times into the book.

11 Other hints of the familiarity of the author with the Jewish religion can be found in the concepts "gifts to the poor" (9:22) and "conversion to Judaism" (8:17).

JOB: A UNIVERSAL DRAMA

DAVID WOLFERS

If the Book of Job is read as literally as a computer reads its instructions, it reveals a gravely flawed narrative. For it displays a God without morals and a man — where shall we find one so base? — who cries loudest for his own hurt. That is, it is realistic. But nonetheless it has achieved such renown as a universal drama that few serious books have been written in European languages without at least one quotation from Job.

I want in this article to explain what I believe the Book of Job is really about. I have written a number of articles in this journal on the subject of Job, but none has considered the book as a whole. Here goes.

The God in the Book of Job is indubitably the creator of the world. He is explicitly so in the final epiphany where He describes by catechism His labor at that task. He is implicitly so when He presides at the meetings of the בני האלהים and in the prologue interrogates the Satan who has been parading the earth. He is that too in the minds of all the speakers in the dispute. But in the prologue he is a troubled creator, troubled by the question raised by the Satan. To understand the true subject of the book, it is first essential to understand who or what the Satan represents.

It is certainly true that the Book of Job approaches the position of dualism more closely than any other biblical book, but the antagonist of God, the evil force, is certainly not the Satan, nor is the dualism the relatively abstract concept of Zoroastrianism. Rather does it derive directly from pagan mythology (see Job 38:8-11 and

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23). But if the Satan is not the spirit of evil, the partner, in however junior a sense, with God in the creation or government of the earth, who or what is he?

Weight must be given in answering this question to the one scene in the Bible which is closely similar to the heavenly scenes in the prologue of Job, the meeting of the heavenly host recorded in I Kings 22:19-22. Here God, seeking a device to destroy Ahab, asks the advice of the host. Various suggestions are made until "the spirit" steps forward and proposes to go forth and be a lying spirit in the mouths of his (Ahab's) prophets. This disgraceful proposal is accepted by God, who predicts its success. Here it is fairly clear that "the spirit" is the spirit of prophecy which offers to pervert its true function in the service of God's historic design. The spirit of prophecy, properly considered, is as much a part of God Himself as His other parts, His "heart," or His "eye" or His "arm."

The practice of detaching and personifying one or other of the attributes or faculties of God is not an uncommon conceit in Jewish thought. There is, for example, a midrash in which the word of God holds a dialogue with Him. Angels, particularly in the early books of the Bible, seem interchangeable with God Himself. Meir Weiss[1] makes this same case from a different point of view with great cogency. The line of thought leads to the proposition that the doubt which the Satan rouses in God, and the accusation of credulity which he makes against Him, are to be understood as processes actually taking place spontaneously in God's mind — that in speaking with the Satan, God is conducting an internal debate with Himself. The Satan has no independent existence. This is to an extent confirmed both by the disappearance of the Satan from the book at the end of the prologue, and the unchallenged assumption of Job and the other speakers, God Himself included, that events take place under the sole direction of God.

Now it is beyond contest that in any literal sense, the events described in the prologue never took place. They may be accounted

1 Meir Weiss, *The Story of Job's Beginning*, (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1983).

for on either of two assumptions. Either they are a formal and schematic fiction, setting forth the conditions for a subsequent examination of the moral problem of unmerited suffering, with a lack of verisimilitude designed to confirm the generality of their applicability, or they have only a symbolic significance, a meaning which, when decoded, will be quite different from their literal narrative sense.

The first of these possibilities runs into immediate difficulty, and the second receives great encouragement, from the fact that in the whole course of the subsequent discussion — the supposed examination of the moral problem — the details of the prologue do not reappear.[2] On the contrary, the misfortunes of which Job complains, and to which his "comforters" refer, seem to be of an entirely different species from those of the prologue. This contrast reaches a level of genuine incompatibility in 19:17, where Job refers to his children, all killed off in Chapter 1, as alive, well and haughty. Job complains both of the ceaseless hostile scrutiny of God, and His recent apparent inaccessibility. He complains of unremitting and continuing persecution, but it is in Chapter 12 that he specifies in careful detail what he perceives to be God's part in "this" his calamity.

For a detailed examination of this chapter of Job, I must refer the reader to my article "Greek Logic in the Book of Job" in *Dor LeDor* XV, 3, 1987, 166-172. In summary, the chapter sets out to *prove* the comprehensive responsibility of God for both the misfortune and the defects of a nation. There is every reason to believe that the nation is that of the Israelites and Judeans:

2 The sundry references to skin disease or general disease found in translations of the Book of Job dialogue all (with one trifling exception) depend upon false renditions of Hebrew words, and when correctly translated are found to refer to other matters than disease. There is no mourning for Job's ten children in the dialogue, and no comfort offered for their deaths. We hear nothing more of Job's oxen, asses or camels, while the references to his flocks in Chapters 30 and 31 must be set against his role in the city as described in Chapter 29.

He it was Who led the councilors away barefoot
And made fools of the judges;
Who slackened the bond of the kings
And bound their loins with a fetter;
Who conducted the priests away barefoot
And subverted those established of old;
Who perverted the speech of the faithful
And removed the judgment of the elders,
Pouring contempt upon princes
And undermining the morale of the legions . . .
He increased the nations and destroyed them;
Spread the nations abroad, and then abandoned them (12:17-23).[3]

What, we may well ask, is this complaint against God doing in the Book of Job? There is surely no doubt that it records stages in the demoralization and disintegration of a nation, not episodes in the beggaring of a sheikh. Nor is this an isolated reference. While there is no doubt that many of Job's complaints are personal, the national recurs in chapter after chapter until at the end of Chapter 23, the two are brought together in Job's profound objection, on the lines of II Kings 22:20 and Isaiah 57:1, 2:[4]

That I was not cut off before the darkness,
Nor did He cover my face from the gloom.

If, in the light of the above, we return to the prologue, we must do so with the mind open to the possibility that the symbolism (if any) of the events and descriptions has a national rather than a personal significance. In fact, we shall find the key to the code in Deuteronomy Chapter 28, revealing specific correspondences as follows:

3 All translations from the Book of Job are the author's own.

4 The natural interpretation of 23:17 is that "the darkness" is something which would have come even had Job been "cut off" earlier. This is exactly the situation described in Isaiah 57: 1, 2:

The righteous perisheth
And no man layeth it to heart,
And godly men are taken away,
None considering
That the righteous is taken away from the evil to come.
He entereth into peace,
They rest in their beds,
Each one that walketh in his uprightness.

Job	Deut. 28
The work of his hands You have blest; and his possessions overflow in the land. 1:10	*The Lord will make you overabundant for good, in the fruit of your body, and in the fruit of your cattle and in the fruit of your land . . . and . . . bless all the work of your hand.* 11, 12
Then came a messenger to Job and said, "The oxen were plowing and the asses feeding beside them, and Sheba descended and took them and they slew the young men . . . and only I am escaped to tell you." While he was speaking another came and said, "The fire of God fell from heaven and burned up the sheep and the servants and consumed them" . . . another came and said, "The Chaldeans formed into three troops and made a foray against the camels and took them" . . . another came and said "Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in the house of their first-born brother, and behold, there came a great blast from beyond the desert, and struck the four corners of the house and it fell upon the young people, and they are dead, and I alone am escaped to tell you of it." 1:14-19	*Your ox shall be slain before your eyes, and you shall not eat thereof; your ass shall be violently taken away from before your face, and shall not be restored to you; your sheep shall be given unto your enemies and you shall have none to save you. Your sons and your daughters shall be given unto another people, and your eyes shall look and fail with longing for them all the day.* 31, 32
And the Satan went forth from the presence of the Lord and smote Job with sore boils from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head 2:7	*The Lord will smite you in the knees and in the legs with a sore boil whereof you cannot be healed, from the sole of your feet to the crown of your head.* 35

The last of these correspondences, perhaps not absolutely clearly a reference to national defeat in Deuteronomy, is defined for us by Isaiah (1:5ff):

On what part will you yet be stricken,
Seeing you stray away more and more?
The whole head is sick
And the whole heart is faint;
From the sole of the foot even unto the head
There is no soundness in it;
But wounds, and bruises, and festering sores;
They have not been pressed, neither bound up,
Neither mollified with oil.
Your country is desolate
Your cities are burned with fire;
Your land, strangers devour it in your presence.

It is in the highest degree improbable that so complex a description should be intended literally in one biblical book and figuratively in two others.

Supposing this analysis of the symbolism of the Prologue to be correct, we are thereby obliged to identify Job with the people of Israel, the destruction of the "house" with the ten children in it with the destruction of the ten tribes, and the "skin disease" as representing probably the Sennacherib invasion ("spare his life" being equivalent to leaving Jerusalem intact and the kingdom of Judah retaining its independence). A possible alternative is the exile under Nebuchadnezzar. In either case, what would then be the significance of the conversations between God and the Satan?

Understood literally, the burden of this exchange — crudely labeled a bet by some critics of the book — is the desire by God for assurance of the uncompensated love, fear, worship of Job. The realization is born within Him (or as some would say, implanted in Him by the Satan) that so long as He acts towards Job as protector and provider, there is no way of knowing (save by omniscience, which is private knowledge only) how real, honest and faithful is

Job's service. The test which is devised will give a public demonstration of the faithfulness (or otherwise) of Job, and presumably will serve, as did the testing of Abraham with the *akeda*, a public purpose. This public purpose must be an essential ingredient of the plot of the Book of Job, for without it, God is left in a posture of meaningless torturer for the sake of vanity or play. This is how many critics, including Carl Jung,[5] have seen Him.

The interpretation of this symbolic insecurity of God in relation to "my servant, Job" is, of course, the exactly similar and parallel situation existing in reality rather than in fiction between God and His chosen people, "Israel, My servant" (Is. 41:8 etc.).

There is, in fact, considerable discussion in the dialogue of the public effect which Job's "calamity" is having, and which his final extinction, which he considers imminent, will have. For example:

The upright are appalled at this
And the innocent that the heathen triumphs,
So that the righteous embraces his [i.e. the heathen's] *ways,*
And the pure of hand reinforces his strength.
(my translation 17:8, 9)

There is also a quite magnificent sophisticated discussion of the public and private purposes served by the exercise of virtue:

Regard the heavens and see,
And behold the vault, it is higher than you!
If you sin, what do you do to Him?
And if you multiply your iniquities, what have you wrought against Him?
If you are righteous, what do you give Him?
And what does He gain at your hand?
Your wickedness relates to men like yourself,
And your righteousness to human beings. (35:5-8)

But there is no discussion of any public effect to be expected from Job's emergence from the ruin with his faith intact. Nonetheless,

5 C. G. Jung, *Answer to Job*, (London & Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, orig. in German, 1952), pp. 19ff.

this is what the Book of Job is really about, and there is more to be understood under that rubric than the opening of Job's personal eyes to the complexity of the universe and the enlargement of his vision to embrace the hidden purposes of God. The whole future of mankind's intellectual and moral development depended upon it.

THE DIVINE DILEMMA

If we look at God's "situation" at this time in history, it appears as though His plans for the world have been stalemated by His own strategy. What the Satan pointed out to Him about Job applies with equal force to His relationship with the people of Israel. God is the creator of the universe, we have conceded above, but He is acknowledged by one people only out of all the people's of earth. The impression is prevalent (see, e.g. the Rab-Shakeh from outside the walls of Jerusalem, Is. 36:18-20) that His relation to that people is in no way different from the relationships of the chief gods of other nations to their worshipers.

There would seem to be only two ways to advance from that position. One, to adopt all the peoples of the world equally, had already been tried, and ended in the great flood. The other, to sever, or at least to slacken, the tribal ties with His own people and allow the worship of Himself to take on the absolutely novel aspect of disinterested service; that is to break, or appear to break, unilaterally, the Covenant with Israel — that aweful treaty of rewards and punishments embodied in Deuteronomy 28.

If one allows himself to take the biblical narrative at face value, this, historically *is* the course which God adopted at the beginning of the seventh century. He stepped back, withdrew some distance from His habitual participation in events on the side of His people, and either engineered or permitted the all-but-complete destruction of the nation as a political entity. It is not to be overlooked that while the destruction of the Northern Kingdom of Israel was foretold and justified by the prophets for the manifold sins and backslidings of

the kings and people, the near destruction of Judah took place in the time of Hezekiah *who did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, according to all that David, his father, had done* (II Ch. 29:2).

I would suggest that this severance of the bond, the Covenant, was implicit in the initial election of the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as the vehicle for rectifying the wrongs of the world. In the same way it is apparent that the dispersion of Israel throughout the nations was also implicit at the very beginning of the saga. Whatever it is now, Judaism was *designed* as a missionary faith. Can Jewish history be understood and interpreted within the framework of Jewish belief without seeing it in a world context, and in the light of a history-long mission?

If this reading of the prologue is correct, then its events, those of the Assyrian conquests, appear to the Jewish people as the unjust fulfillment of the Deuteronomic curses (specifically see Job 5:14; 7:4; 16:11; 17:5b; 16a; 24:10, 11 as well as those quoted above, as fulfillments of Deut. 28: 29, 67, 36, 32, 37 and 38-40 respectively). To Job, who in the dialogue is no longer the *symbol* of the Jewish people, but their representative and leader, Hezekiah himself perhaps, they appear as an unjust and unfaithful sentence.

The debate between Job and the three non-Jewish comforters takes place over two cycles of speeches (the so-called lost third cycle is a figment of the scholarly imagination[6]), of which the first deals primarily with this question of the justice of the sentence executed on the people and the extent to which it may be expected to go. Job himself is certain that, being wholly unfair, there is nothing to stop it proceeding to a final apocalyptic catastrophe. This is the "fear" of Job to which reference is repeatedly made (but frequently misunderstood as "fear of God" in a laudable sense). The comforters are equally certain that, being a just sentence for impiety, it will be reversed when Job (or his "children" who are his people) makes his peace with God, confesses and abandons his iniquities. Neither

6 See D. Wolfers, "Job: The Third Cycle," *Dor LeDor*, XVI, 4 and XVII, 1, 1988.

party expresses any doubt that the historic events have been orchestrated by God in pursuance of His policies, although Job several times approaches the position that God is indifferent to the random fall-out of His mighty schemes on innocent bystanders like himself:

Therefore do I declare:
He makes an end of the innocent and guilty both.
If disaster strikes suddenly [? randomly]
He derides the ordeal of the guiltless.
The earth is given over into the hand of the wicked.
He has covered the faces of her judges.
If not, then who did? (9:22-24)

The second cycle is primarily concerned with God's execution of justice upon "the wicked." It is very important to understand here that "the wicked" are not the ordinary and casual sinners of Israel or of the other nations. They are, in every instance, the aggressive pagan nations with which Israel was continually brought into hostile contact. This use of the term is not confined to the Book of Job, but occurs also in Psalms and prophets.[7] The comforters maintain in Chapters 15, 18 and 20 that the lives of the "the wicked" are miserable, full of fear, insecurity and poverty. Job denies and refutes this, referring them to the tales of travelers who have actually observed life in these distant lands (21:29, 30). Job asserts that God's scrutiny and His rod are reserved for His own people — אלוה יצפון לבניו אונו (*God reserves His punishment for His* [*own*] *children*. 21:19), but the significance of the cry, so reminiscent of Amos 3:2:

You only have I known of all the families of the earth.
Therefore I will visit on you all your iniquities!

has been obscured, like so much of Job, by misinterpretation and mistranslation.

7 Especially in Habbakuk, where it is the only meaning. See also Psalms, especially Ps. 9.

The comforters also assert that the *ultimate* fate of "the wicked" is to be destroyed utterly, swept from the pages of history into total oblivion. To this assessment of God's historical performance, Job assents emphatically, paraphrasing the psalmist of Psalm 73 in the much-disputed Chapter 27. But Job makes it clear that this posthumous retribution does not satisfy his sense of justice, for

Who will confront him with his sins?
And who will requite him his works? (21:31).

Like any sensible man not inspired with a great mission, Job is not personally concerned with the verdict of or on posterity. In the course of the discussions of these two cycles, Job is as much concerned with his personal position as with the national fate. He seeks, begs for, yearns for a face-to-face confrontation with his Deity, alive or posthumous, where he can plead his innocence. It is not possible, in many passages, (as in Psalms) to tell whether a man is speaking for himself or in a representative or a collective sense:

He set me to rule nations
But as the Tophet of yore I have become. (17:6)
Earth! Cover not my blood!
And let there be no home for my cry! (16:18)

Job's conviction of the betrayal of the nation by God, His abandonment of the Covenant and His obligations under it, receives its most explicit expression in Chapter 24 where, in a display of social conscience he deplores the current state of society after invasion and exile in a sort of Jewish "Lamentations of Ipawar,"[8] and attributes all to the indifference of God.[9]

8 An Egyptian text grieving over the degeneration of society and law and order. J. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to The Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969), pp. 441ff. It quite lacks the moral dimension of Job's Chapter 24.

9 See especially line 12c as representative of the comments scattered throughout the chapter.

The second part of this article will be published in the forthcoming issue (Vol. XXI-2).

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT*

RABBI JOSIAH DERBY

It has been commonly accepted by Jewish and Christian theologians and philosophers that the Ten[1] Commandments were arranged quite deliberately so that they would consist of two equal groups of five commandments each, with one group addressing one fundamental spiritual concern and the other focusing on its alternative: The first relating to the relationship between man and God and the second dealing with man and his fellow-man. This division is used to explain why it was necessary to have two tablets, one for each category of commandments.[2]

However, a careful study of the Third Commandment will indicate that the Torah did, indeed, use great care in listing the commandments, but that it intended that there be three categories of commandments, not two. Furthermore, that behind all three categories there was one all-encompassing principle.

It is especially curious that the key to the problem of the divisions in the Ten Commandments should be found in the Third, which is the vaguest and seemingly regarded to be the least significant.[3] In

* This is part of a lecture given at a seminar for Hebrew teachers on the Ten Commandments.

1 The number "ten" in the Bible is seen as a symbol of completeness, as was evident to the ancients in their counting system. Hence, it was necessary and proper to have *ten* commandments. The number "seven" also plays a special role in the biblical tradition.

2 But see my article "The Two Tablets of the Covenant" in this publication (formerly *Dor LeDor*) where this division is shown to be erroneous, and it is demonstrated that all ten commandments were incised on each of the two stone tablets.

3 However, a statement in Shevuot 39a claims that this sin is among the most serious.

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fact, there is not complete unanimity as to exactly what this single verse (Ex. 20:7) actually means. The following is a sampling of three translations:

(A) King James Version: *Thou shalt not take the name of The Lord Thy God in vain; for The Lord shall not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain*: This translation is used by the old (1917) Jewish Publication Society.

(B) James Moffatt (1922), using more contemporary language, is somewhat more specific. He translates: *You shall not use the Name of the Eternal your God profanely; for the Eternal will never acquit anyone who uses His Name profanely.*

(C) The new (1962) J.P.S. goes further and limits the commandment to a special case: *You shall not swear falsely by the name of The Lord your God; for the Lord will not clear one who swears falsely by His name.*[4]

As far as the intent of the Third Commandment, translation C is necessary but not sufficient. The verb *tissa*, when used, as in this case, in regard to speech simply means "to utter" (to carry on the lips). It does not even imply swearing. And the participate *lashav* is not an adverb (*shav* may be taken as "false"); and it signifies "frivolousness," "promiscuity," "without meaningful purpose or consequence."

It should be noted that unlike each of the other nine Commandments, the Third is neither mentioned elsewhere in the Torah nor expanded by further definition. The Third Commandment is the only one for which the Torah does not specify punishment by the courts for its violation, even though it implies that God will impose whatever punishment He would deem necessary in a given situation.

There are, of course, legitimate uses of God's name, as in prayer and in testimony before the courts. This Commandment proclaims

4 This translation is probably based on Shabbat 120a and the first half of Lev. 19:12.

that it is a sin to speak the Name in ordinary conversation as an expletive, for emphasis, which is a universal common habit of people. It also warns against swearing by the Name in the heat of anger or excitement to do or not to do something, an oath from which a person could be absolved by the courts.[5] The Name is not to be treated like all other words in the language. It is special, unique. It is holy.[6]

That is the point: as God is holy, so is His Name which represents Him. Therefore, it must be used with reverence and not bandied about. To sum it up, the Third Commandment performs the important and necessary function of defining the Name of God, thereby linking it to the first two Commandments and creating a group of three.

Thus, the First Commandment identifies Israel's God by name and by the act that created this relationship.[7] The Second Commandment distinguishes Him from all other gods, from the various forms by which they are represented and worshiped. And the Third Commandment characterizes the Name by which He is to be referred. Hence, the first three commandments form a unit telling us who the God of Israel is, and what kind of God He is.

5 The classic example is the oath taken by Jephthah before leaving for war with the Ammonites. Judges 2.

6 In consequences of this Commandment the tradition developed a hierarchy of holiness in the use of the Name. The highest is the ineffable Name of the four Hebrew letters, called the Tetragrammaton (transcribed by Bible scholars as YHWH), whose real pronunciation has been forgotten, and which only the High Priest in Second Temple days could utter during the sacrificial service of the Day of Atonement. See L. Ginzberg's *Legends of The Jews* Vol. VI, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1954), p. 191, Note 53. The Tetragrammaton is usually pronounced as *Adonoi* in prayer, and is the second lower rank in this hierarchy. The third is the use of substitutes for the Name, such as *Ribbono shel Olam* (Master of the Universe), *Hakadosh Baruch Hu* (The Holy One, blessed be He), or simply *HaShem* (The Name); but even these are to be used with care. This Commandment also led the rabbis to the concept of the *Brakhah l'vatalah* — an unfulfilled blessing, as when we recite the blessing for bread and don't eat it, thus having spoken the Name in vain.

7 Derby, *op. cit.*

Now, the Fourth Commandment deals with the Sabbath, but the Sabbath, in its broadest sense and implication, defines the character of the Jewish home and the Jewish family. The Sabbath establishes the spiritual quality of the family, the quality of holiness. The Sabbath is the focus towards which the rest of the week is directed and around which the family is concentrated.

The Fifth Commandment defines the family further by the relationship that must exist between the generations. The requirements set forth by this Commandment create the atmosphere for peace, harmony and love within the family, the conditions in which each member can find fulfillment and happiness.

Hence, these two commandments constitute a second group that concerns itself with the family. If the Jewish people is to be holy, then the Jewish family must be holy, a character which is guaranteed in the fulfillment of the Fourth and Fifth Commandments.

The rest of the Commandments, the last five, define the community. The violation of this prohibition leads to a community in chaos, in which power and might reign supreme, in which the rights of the individual are non-existent. Where there is no concern for man there can be no reverence for God. Rather, through these five Commandments a community is made holy.

Thus, we see that there is one concept that underlies and unites all of the Commandments, the concept of Holiness. And they are divided into three groups, the first defining God, the second defining the family, and the third defining the community. It is a simple yet precise and necessary division which lends this monumental document, the Decalogue, even greater depth and meaning.

ECCLESIASTES 1:4
A PROOF TEXT FOR REINCARNATION

STEVEN A. MOSS

Most students of Judaism would affirm that the notion of transmigration of souls has little or no place in mainstream Judaism. Yet the concept is found in some of the teachings of the mystics and it is well-known that the kabbalists "believed in a doctrine of transmigration of souls through various bodies and forms of existence."[1] The kabbalists could not turn to the rabbinic sources to find a foundation for their belief in reincarnation as "it is evident that the classical Jewish tradition, as set down in the Talmud and the Midrash, knew nothing of transmigration."[2] The Torah certainly makes no statement about this subject. And yet, the kabbalists sought the Bible to substantiate this belief which developed into an essential part of the mystic's outlook on life and life after death.

The biblical passage used by the kabbalists was Ecclesiastes 1:4, which reads *One generation passes away and another generation comes, but the earth abides forever.* Before looking at the kabbalists' interpretation of this verse as a basis for transmigration, it would be interesting to see the comments of some of the traditional classical commentators.

Rashi interprets this verse as a description of the effect one generation of evil-doers will have on the one which follows it. He writes: "All that an evil person does to oppress and to rob is not lost because a generation comes and another after that one; all is exacted from his sons as it is stated in Job 20:10, "'His sons ingratiate themselves with the poor.'"

1 Gershom Scholem, *On The Mystical Shape of the Godhead* (New York: Schocken Books, 1991), p. 197.

2 Ibid., p. 201.

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Ibn Ezra's comment is similar to Rashi's. Metzudat David gives the most literal comment, as he writes "As one generation dies, another comes in its place," meaning that Ecclesiastes 1:4 is no more than a time sequence description of the passage of one generation to the next.

The commentaries in Midrash Rabbah Ecclesiastes mostly follow this same mode of seeing the verse as being a description of the passage of time, as well as a way of comparing one generation to the next. Rabbis Berekiah; Jacob ben-Abunah, and Hiyya ben-Abba in the name of Rabbi Levi ben-Sisi said, "between sunrise and sunset one generation passes away and another comes," (I:1). Rabbi Abba ben-Kahan said, "The generation which comes should be esteemed by you as the generation which has passed" (I:4) so that no one should favor the past generation over the present one.

The comment by R. Levi and R. Jacob of Gebal in the name of R. Hanina is most interesting for it uses this same verse as a basis for a belief in a life after death philosophy, resurrection. In I:2 it is written, according to the Soncino translation and interpretation, "As a generation passes away so it comes [at the resurrection]; i.e. if one dies lame or blind he comes lame or blind, so that people shall not say, 'Those He allowed to die are different from those He restored to life.'"

Sefer HaBahir, redacted around 1180 in southern France, gives the following comments to the verse under discussion:

121. What is the meaning of "generation to generation"?

R. Papias said: "A generation goes and a generation comes (Eccl. 1:4)."

R. Akiba said: "The generation came" — it already came.

122. What is this like? A king had slaves and he dressed them with garments of silk and satin according to his ability. The relationship broke down, and he cast them out, repelled them, and took his garments away from them. They then went on their own way.

The king took the garments, and washed them well until there was not a single spot on them. He placed them with his storekeepers,

bought other slaves, and dressed them with the same garments. He did not know whether or not the slaves were good, but they were [at least] worthy of garments that he already had and which had been previously worn.

[The verse continues] Ecclesiastes 1:4 *But the earth stands forever.* This is the same as Ecclesiastes 12:7, *The dust returns to the earth as it was, but the spirit returns to God who gave it.*

Through the use of this parable in paragraph 122, Sefer HaBahir, in paragraph 121, views Eccl. 1:4 as a proof text for transmigration of the soul. The king is God, the garment is the soul, and the slave is the person. The repelling of the slaves after soiling the garment is the change of generations which occurs to allow the soul another incarnation, that is opportunity, to purify itself.

The Zohar in Ra'aya Meheimna also uses Ecclesiastes 1:4 as its proof text for the kabbalistic mystery. As it is written in Sec. 3, page 216B: "Come and see: This sun is revealed during the day and is hidden at night and shines with the 60,000 souls of Israel, if the generation is worthy. And this is the mystery of reincarnation as Kohelet speaks of this, *A generation goes and a generation comes.*

Moshe Idel, in his book *Studies in Ecstatic Kabbalah*, refers to the scholar Shulamit Shahar and her article *"Hakatarism VeReshit HaKabbalah BeLanguedeoc"*[3] when he writes, "She adduces this [metempsychosis] from a quotation from Ecclesiastes, 'a generation goes and a generation comes,' which, as far back as *Sefer HaBahir*, was interpreted as referring to metempsychosis."[4] In other words, Shahar sees Ecclesiastes 1:4 pointing to the existence of spiritual worlds for both the living and the dead.

It is interesting to see how this verse from Ecclesiastes 1:4 could be read in its simplest sense as is done by several classical commentators as well as a proof text for the life after death philosophers of resurrection and reincarnation, as is the case with the kabbalists.

3 *Tarbiz* 40 (1941) pp. 483-508.

4 Moshe Idel, *Studies in Ecstatic Kabbalah*, (New York: State University of New York Press, 1988), p. 39.

CHRONOLOGY IN THE BOOK OF JUDGES

DAVID FAIMAN

The order of events presented in the Book of Judges would appear to be as chaotic as the times it describes. Simple addition of the periods for which each judge ruled and the various stated periods of oppression yields a total of 410 years. If one then adds the 40 years of Israelite wandering in the desert and the 40 years that Eli ruled Israel, the sum exceeds the 480 years which, according to I Kings 6:1, elapsed from the Exodus until the building of Solomon's Temple — before allowance has been made for Joshua, Samuel, Saul and David.

Scripture itself attests to the fact that the times were chaotic:

> *And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers; and there arose another generation after them, that knew not the Lord, nor yet the work which He had wrought for Israel* (Jud. 2:10).

Thus it is possible that no accurate records were kept of current affairs, and when the history was subsequently written down it may indeed have reflected the confusion of the times. It is also possible, however, that each generation did include a small number of souls who kept the tradition alive and accurately recorded the chronology for future generations. Our problem, therefore, is to try to unravel the logic used by those ancient Israelites in an age long before the classical historians had established norms for writing history.

An important review of the various scholarly ideas regarding this chronology was given some years ago by Rowley.[1] The theories range from a total of about a century to five centuries or so. The shorter span (which could accommodate a 13th century B.C.E. date for

1 H. H. Rowley, *From Joseph to Joshua*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1949).

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the Exodus, but fewer than 480 years until the Temple) is obtained by assuming that several judges ruled contemporaneously over their respective tribes.[2] The longest span (which would imply an earlier date for the Exodus) is obtained by simple addition of all the time periods stated in the text but, as mentioned above, this would leave no place for Joshua's leadership.

In the present paper I would like to present some of my own speculations, that enable one to understand how the events written in the Torah, Joshua, Judges and Samuel may fit within the canonical 480 years that, according to Kings, elapsed between the Exodus from Egypt and the building of Solomon's Temple. One must have an internally consistent biblical chronology in mind if one wants to attempt the difficult (and hitherto illusory) task of placing early Israelite history within a wider historical context.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE LEADERS

In order to arrive at an internally consistent chronology, it is convenient to start with the statement in Judges 11:26, in which Jephthah reproves the Ammonites for having allowed Israel to remain settled in their territory for 300 years before they started to complain:

> *While Israel dwelt in Heshbon and its towns, and in Aroer and its towns, and in all the cities that are along by the side of the Arnon, three hundred years; wherefore did ye not recover them within that time?*

Suppose, first, that this statement was made at the start of Jephthah's six-year judgeship. If one counts back 300 years — supposing that all time periods given thus far in Judges are to be summed as occurring sequentially — one arrives at a point in time somewhere during the judgeship of Othniel; i.e., there is no place for Joshua and his conquest of the land. Moreover, since Jephthah

2 W. M. F. Petrie, *Egypt and Israel* (London: Murray, 1911).

was judge for only six years, it makes no difference from which point in his judgeship one begins the count.

Suppose, however, one were to ignore the various periods of oppression that are mentioned in Judges and count only the periods of the successive judgeships. There would then be room for 55 years of rule under Joshua. Now the Bible does not tell us how old Joshua was at any significant moment during his lifetime; only that he died at the age of 110 years (Josh. 24:29 and Jud. 2:8). If he did rule Israel for 55 years he would have been 15 years of age at the time of the Exodus: Truly a *young man* (נער) as he is described in Exodus 33:11:

> *And the Lord spoke unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend. And he would return into the camp; but his minister Joshua, the son of Nun, a young man, departed not out of the Tent.*

Perhaps a trifle young (although this is debatable) to have led the Israelites in battle against Amalek at that time (Ex.16).

Jephthah was judge, however, for six years. So Joshua's rule could have been anywhere between 50 and 55 years in length. Hence he could have been, say, in his late teens at the time of the battle against Amalek, but still young enough to warrant the title *young man*. For the sake, however, of keeping the numbers simple, let us stick with our first assumption: that Jephthah made his statement at the *start* of his judgeship. This reasoning then gives the following chronology from the Exodus to Jephthah:

Moses ruled	40 years
Joshua ruled	55 years
Othniel ruled	40 years
Ehud ruled	80 years
Deborah ruled	40 years
Gideon ruled	40 years
Tola ruled	23 years
Jair ruled	22 years
Sub-total	340 years

In order to complete the chronology of Judges we must now skip to the Book of Kings, where we learn from I Kings 6:1 that Solomon began to build the Temple in the fourth year of his reign, 480 years after the Exodus from Egypt:

> *And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month Ziv, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord.*

This implies another 140 years after the start of Jephthah's judgeship before the Temple was built. Once again the various periods of oppression cause complications, but if again we ignore them we can account for the remaining 140 years as follows:

Jephthah ruled	6 years
Ibzan ruled	7 years
Elon ruled	10 years
Abdon ruled	8 years
Samson ruled	20 years
Eli ruled	40 years
Samuel ruled	4 years
Saul ruled	2 years[3]
David ruled	40 years
Solomon ruled	3 years
Sub-total	140 years

In this second table the four years of Samuel, the actual length of whose rule is also not known, are derived by deducting the sum of the other figures from the required total of 140.

It might be objected that Samuel deserves a more prominent place in this table, but one can counter such a claim by arguing that the later prophets, such as Isaiah, are regarded by the Bible as advisers to kings rather than as rulers. Samuel is clearly the prototype for

3 This improbable figure is based on I Samuel 13:1: . . . *and two years he reigned over Israel*.

such advisers, having lived during the reigns of both Saul and David. However, for an undisclosed period of time between Eli and Saul, he did actually lead Israel, and this period we may deduce to have been four years. In this respect, we note that Joshua can have been a maximum of 19 years old at the battle with Amalek, and that if he was indeed that "old" Samuel would have needed to anoint Saul king the same year that Eli died, without himself being counted as one of the rulers. But again, for simplicity, let us leave the *young man* Joshua at 15, and allocate four years leadership to Samuel.

THE PERIODS OF OPPRESSION

The last question that must be addressed, if our claim for internal consistency is to be substantiated, concerns the various periods of oppression listed in Judges but thus far ignored in our chronological discussion of the leaders of Israel. Specifically, there were:

8 years under the king of Aram prior to delivery by Othniel
18 years under the king of Moab prior to delivery by Ehud
20 years under the king of Canaan prior to delivery by Jael
7 years under the Midianites prior to delivery by Gideon
3 years under Abimelech son of Gideon
18 years under the Ammonites prior to delivery by Jephthah
40 years under the Philistines around the time of Samson

I would suggest that the eight years oppression under Cushan-Rishathaim, king of Aram-Naharaim, commenced after the death of Joshua but were included in the 40 years under judge Othniel. That is to say, Cushan-Rishathaim oppressed Israel for eight years and was defeated by Othniel, who then kept his people out of trouble for a further 32 years; the entire 40 year period, commencing from the death of Joshua, being credited to Othniel's rule. In such a scheme the frequently occurring phrase: *And the land had rest for 40 years* is to be interpreted here as meaning that there was rest for the remainder of the 40-year period named in honor of judge Othniel.

Similarly, the 18 years oppression under Eglon, king of Moab, would have been the first part of the 80 years of "rest" named in honor of judge Ehud — only the last 62 of which were truly peaceful.

After Ehud came the seemingly not too effectual judge Shamgar. He was able to deal the Philistines a blow :

> *And after him was Shamgar the son of Anath, who smote of the Philistines six hundred men with an ox-goad: and he also saved Israel* (Jud. 3:31).

but they were later to return in strength. Deborah too, in her song, offers some unkind innuendo about his leadership:

> *In the days of Shamgar son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways ceased* (Jud. 5:6).

Hence the next period of rest was evidently named in honor not of Shamgar, but of Deborah. The 40 years of Deborah might include an unspecified period under judge Shamgar and 20 years of oppression under Jabin, king of Hazor. Alternatively, it is also possible that the 80 years of rest in the time of Ehud included the successful part of Shamgar's judgeship and that the latter lost the credit for them on account of his later ineptitude. This kind of speculation need not, however, concern us, as both possibilities lead to the same over-all chronological picture.

The seven years of trouble from the Midianites are similarly readily absorbed into the 40 years of "rest" honoring the name of judge Gideon, only 33 years being truly peaceful. This is the last occasion in which the term *And the land had rest* is used: a significant point to note.

After the death of Gideon, his son Abimelech troubled Israel for three years — a period easily absorbed into the 23 years of Tola's judgeship which followed.

But then came 22 years under judge Jair and 18 years oppression by the Ammonites, followed by delivery at the hands of Jephthah. Since the latter was judge for only six years, the 18 years of Ammonite oppression must have occurred during the judgeship of Jair. In this respect it is instructive that the land is not described as

having had rest under judge Jair! Our picture is, therefore, one of Jair inheriting the judgeship from Tola but, after a few years, coming into conflict with the Ammonites: a conflict that would not be resolved in his own lifetime but by Jephthah whose judgeship was to follow his.

Next came a 40-year period of oppression by the Philistines (evidently not the only period of such oppression) which may, in principle, have started during any of the judgeships of Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon or even Samson, and terminated with the death of Samson or later. In fact, one may deduce (from the fact that Judges does not make the *land had rest* statement for Jephthah) that this period of Philistine oppression started during Jephthah's judgeship and terminated during Samuel's lifetime.

MATCHING CHRONOLOGIES: A PRELIMINARY EXCURSION

The main purpose of this article is to demonstrate that an internally consistent interpretation of the chronology given in the Book of Judges is possible albeit complicated. One way of interpreting the stated time periods is to include in the canonical 480 years between the Exodus and the Temple only those epochs named after the leaders of Israel. The various periods of oppression may then be fitted within these epochs by interpreting the X in the term *and the land had rest for X years* as including, in each case, a first part during which the land was not at rest; a somewhat novel but, as demonstrated above, completely consistent interpretation. It must be admitted that such an interpretation is by no means unique or even necessarily the correct one. It has been indicated, indeed, that there are points in time at which some flexibility is possible (e.g., with the Ehud/Shamgar/Deborah successions, and the six years of Jephthah's judgeship). The present interpretation, however, does demonstrate explicitly that there is no reason to conclude that Judges is necessarily contradictory regarding its obscure method of pro-

viding dates — an assumption taken for granted by most of the authors whose theories are cited in Rowley.

But internal consistency, as evidenced from the above discussion, is not so difficult to arrive at. By far the harder problem is to understand the manner in which any such derived chronology might also be consistent with what is known, from extra-biblical sources, of the histories of the surrounding nations — particularly the history of Egypt.

In order to see the magnitude of this problem let us, for example, fix (somewhat arbitrarily) the beginning of Solomon's reign as the year 968 B.C.E. The Exodus would consequently have occurred in 1445 B.C.E. Now the official pharaoh at that time was Tuthmosis III. Perhaps it may be argued that the Israelites escaped partly on account of the political rivalry between this young king and his usurping aunt Hatshepsut. It might also be argued that the spectacular military campaigns of this pharaoh and his successor Amenophis II, into the land of Israel, occurred during the Israelites' 40 years of wandering in the desert and so went unrecorded in the Bible.

The 55 years of Joshua's leadership (1405-1350 B.C.E.) would have coincided, in large measure, with the reigns in Egypt of Amenophis III and Akhenaten — two pharaohs who, as the Tel el Amarna tablets attest, did not interfere with events unfolding in the land of Israel. And indeed no mention of Egyptian military action occurs in the Book of Joshua. But there may be a problem here. The Tel el Amarna tablets name the rulers of several towns in the land of Canaan. None of these names seems to coincide with any that the Book of Joshua ascribes to the kings of those places. And yet several of the events described in these tablets are strikingly similar to those recorded in Joshua. Did the Canaanite vassal kings (like their Egyptian overlords) have more than one name?

The military campaigns of Rameses II would have occurred during the 80 long and silent years of Ehud's judgeship (1310-1230 B.C.E.). Here there may be a problem too, for "rest" is hardly what

Rameses II gave the land! Was Shamgar, in some mysterious way, the scapegoat?

Finally, the pharaoh Merneptah would have reigned at the beginning of Deborah's 40 years (1230-1190 B.C.E.). Perhaps his famous *Israel is desolated* boast is an Egyptian version of Deborah's poetic description, quoted above, of the sorry state of affairs that existed at the start of her judgeship. A time chart of our proposed Judges chronology alongside that of the Egyptian kings (using the dates recently published by Kitchen[4]) is displayed for convenience in Fig.1.

CONCLUSIONS

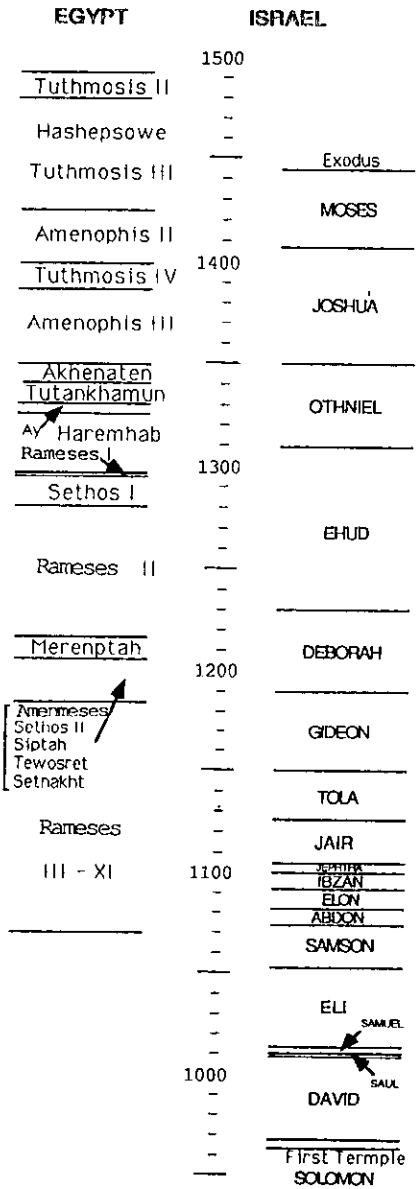
After this brief excursion into Egyptian history it is worth emphasizing, once more, that the purpose of the present article is to find an internally consistent interpretation of the chronology of events in Judges, not to place a definitive secular date on this time period. The placement of the start of Solomon's reign at 968 B.C.E. was merely in the spirit of exploration. The results, as we have seen, are possibly interesting but not completely free from difficulties at the present stage.

The two novel features of our proposed internal chronology are our interpretation of the phrase *and the land had rest* and our deduction that Joshua ruled over Israel for 55 years. As was emphasized, there is no unequivocal tradition about how long his rule did last. Ibn Ezra and Nahmanides, in their respective commentaries on Exodus 33:11, concern themselves with the problem that Joshua seems to be described — based on their assumed 14 years of rule — as a 56-year-old lad. Our deduced 55 years would make the *young man* Joshua, of Exodus 33:11, 15 years old. One may note, in this respect, that Rashi (never someone to pass up a chance to comment on a numerical peculiarity) did not feel compelled to comment on the usage of the word *naar*.

4 K. Kitchen, "The Basics of Egyptian Chronology in Relation to the Bronze Age," in *High, Middle or Low?* ed. P. Åström (Gothenburg: Paul Åström Förlag, 1989).

Fig. 1

A Proposed Judges Chronology in the Context of Egyptian History



METZORA(AT) KASHALEG: LEPROSY
CHALLENGES TO AUTHORITY IN THE BIBLE

JUDITH Z. ABRAMS

The notion that leprosy is a punishment for slander is widespread in the Jewish tradition.[1] However, it may be possible to refine this concept somewhat by examining the use of leprosy in three biblical narratives. The phrase *metzora(at) kashaleg*, "leprous as snow," occurs only three times in the Bible: Exodus 4:6, Numbers 12:10 and II Kings 5:27. In each of these cases, leprosy is a punishment for a specific type of slander: the questioning or challenging of a prophet's authority.[2] In each narrative the nature of the leprosy, it's length of duration and the means by which it is cured, all vary with the severity of the challenge. Let us examine the specifics of each of these narratives in turn.

When Moses encounters God at the burning bush, he doubts his ability to effectively perform the duties of a prophet, i.e., transmit

1 See, for example, *Tanchuma Metzora* 7, 24a and 22b. The word leper, *metzora*, is homiletically interpreted as *motzi shem ra*, one who brings forth a bad name, i.e., a slanderer. Joseph Zias argues that biblical *tzaraat* is not Hansen's disease, i.e., what we know as leprosy today. Instead, he believes the term applies to a variety of skin diseases. See his article, "Lust and Leprosy: Confusion or Correlation" in the *Bulletin of the American School for Oriental Research* 275, August 1989, pp. 27-31. Also see E. V. Hulses, "The Nature of Biblical 'Leprosy' and the Use of Alternative Medical Terms in Modern Translations of the Bible" in *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 1975, pp. 87-105. Julius Preuss' survey of the subject includes biblical and rabbinic sources (*Biblical and Talmudic Medicine*, translated by Fred Rosner. New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1978, pp. 323-339. It may be that a specific kind of skin disease, or other medical condition such as vitiligo, is referred to by the phrase *metzora(at) kashaleg*.

2 While a similar story of a challenge to a religious authority and punishment by leprosy is recorded regarding Uzziah and his presumptuousness toward the priests in the Temple (II Chr. 26:16-23), the phrase *metzora(at) kashaleg* is not used there and so has not been included in this discussion. However, his transgression and its punishment is consistent with the themes presented in this essay.

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God's message in such a way that it will be listened to (Ex. 4:1). God then demonstrates that Moses will be an effective prophet, having the power to perform miracles to bolster his words. First, God enables Moses to turn his rod into a serpent and then cause it to revert to its original form (4:2-5).

As a further sign God then makes Moses' hand leprous as snow (*metzoraat kashaleg*) and then immediately heals it (4:6-8). There is almost an implied rebuke in God's next words to Moses: *And it shall come to pass, if they will not believe thee, neither hearken to the voice of the first sign* [the rod/snake], *that they will believe the voice of the latter sign* (4:8)[3] as if to say, "*You* did not believe the first sign, so here is a second." Moses may not have been convinced by the first sign; a subtle, wordless questioning of his ability to be an effective prophet, and is thus struck with this leprosy. This mild challenge to God's designation of a prophet is punished mildly. The leprosy extends only to Moses' hand, is brought on at God's direct order and is similarly, and immediately, cured. No prayer is required to have the leprosy withdrawn.

This is quite different from the imposition of leprosy found in Numbers 12. There, Miriam and Aaron challenge Moses, not only because of his Cushite wife (Num. 12:1) but, more importantly, because they feel that they, too, are prophets like Moses (12:2). God[4] responds directly and vigorously to this attack, publicly rebukes Miriam and Aaron and afflicts Miriam until she is *metzoraat kashaleg*, leprous as snow (12:10). The leprosy appears to cover a large area of her body.[5] Both Aaron and Moses pray that she be

3 Significantly, Moses and Aaron do show the Egyptians the former sign (i.e., the rod/snake, Ex. 7:8-13), but not the latter (i.e., the leprosy).

4 Not Moses! The statement in Num. 12:3, *Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth*, almost seems to be an explanation of Moses' failure to respond personally to the challenge.

5 Aaron describes her as *one dead, of whom the flesh is half consumed when he comes out of his mother's womb* (Num. 12:12). Certainly, the area afflicted seems to be larger than her hand. The Talmud (Shabbat, 97a) records the view that Aaron, too, was afflicted with leprosy.

healed[6] and God decrees that she will be healed after seven days (Num. 12:14).

This story differs from the first we considered in several significant ways. First, the challenge to the prophet here is direct and public whereas Moses' was silent and private. Second, the leprosy is more widespread and lasts for seven days, as opposed to being confined to the hand and being healed immediately. Finally, while the leprosy is clearly brought on by divine decree, as it was in Exodus 4, here it is only relieved after a prayer by the prophet. We may begin to discern a pattern here, which will be confirmed in our third example. The more flagrant the challenge to the prophet, the more severe the leprosy suffered and the more difficult it is to cure.

The story of Gehazi's leprosy in II Kings 5 involves a public challenge to the prophet Elisha's authority, not only in word, but in deed. Elisha has cured Naaman, a Syrian general, of leprosy by advising him to bathe in the Jordan River (II Kg. 5:1-14). Naaman, deeply grateful, urges Elisha to accept a gift, but Elisha refuses (5:15). However, Elisha's servant Gehazi is eager to take Naaman up on his offer and, with two young prophetic disciples, collects a talent of silver and two changes of clothes from the Syrian general (5:20-24).[7] Elisha confronts Gehazi on his return and challenges Gehazi to explain why he has defied him by accepting this man's gifts. In doing so, he exaggerates Gehazi's transgression, asking, *Is it time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards*

6 Num. 12:12-13. She is healed only after *Moses'* prayer, the shortest in the entire Bible.

7 Preuss writes of this incident: "We have a strong indication of the cause of leprosy in the case of Gehazi, servant of Elisha. The thankful Syrian (general Naaman), healed of his leprosy by Elisha, wished to reward the prophet with gifts of gold and clothing. The latter, however, refused to accept them. On the other hand, the servant (Gehazi) obtained both by begging, and himself became leprous. *Naturally, I believe this was contracted by direct contact* [emphasis added]" Preuss, Rosner, transl. *Biblical and Talmudic Medicine* (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1978) p. 338. The talmudic account of this incident coincides with Preuss' and makes it appear that the leprosy inflicted on Gehazi was brought on by the latter's physical contact with Naaman's personal goods, and not by Elisha's malediction (Sanhedrin 107b).

and vineyards, and sheep and oxen, and men-servants and maid-servants? (5:26). Either this is the latest in a series of similar transgressions perpetrated by Gehazi, or Elisha is simply driving his point home. Elisha thereupon decrees that not only shall Gehazi be afflicted with Naaman's leprosy, but his children, too, will suffer from it forever (5:27).[8] At this point, Gehazi becomes *metzora kashaleg* leprous as snow (5:27).

The course of events in this narrative follows the pattern already established in the two previous leprosy stories. A challenge to the prophet's power is followed by an outbreak of leprosy. However, this story contains some significant differences. Elisha is not Moses' equal as a prophet. Indeed, the Deuteronomist who, it is widely agreed, shaped the stories in Kings,[9] holds Moses up as the ideal prophet, and would scarcely shape a narrative in such a way as to make Elisha appear more powerful than Moses. Therefore, Elisha must decree the leprosy on Gehazi, rather than having God do so, as was the case in the first two narratives. In addition, the leprosy may have come about through natural causes rather than being clearly miraculously caused, as it was in the first two narratives.[10] Finally, no healing takes place, as it did in the cases of Moses and Miriam. A sudden healing of leprosy is evidence of greater divine power than its sudden eruption, for leprosy may occur on its own, whereas sudden healing after a prayer has been offered could only be testimony to an individual's powerful connection to the Divine. Even the healing of Naaman's leprosy is not accomplished directly through Elisha's word. Rather, Cogan and Tadmor note, "The role of the prophet in the cure is minimized: Elisha suggests through an

8 The midrash also identifies the four leprous men involved in the siege of Samaria (II Kg. 7:3) as Gehazi and his three sons (Sanhedrin 107b).

9 See Mordechai Cogan and Hayim Tadmor. *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1988); Z. Zevit, "Deuteronomistic Historiography in I Kings 12-II Kings 17 and the Reinvestiture of the Israelian Cult," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 32, 1985, pp. 57-73 or "Kings, Book of" *Encyclopedia Judaica* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing, 1972) vol. 10, pp. 1021-1031, especially p. 1030.

10 See note 7.

intermediary that Naaman bathe in the Jordan, and the general's disappointment that Elisha did not behave as a true exorcist (v. 11) underscores this point."[11]

Each of the three narratives in which the phrase *metzora(at) kashaleg* appears are characterized by symmetry. In the first two, a person is afflicted with leprosy and then is cured. In this last, a person has leprosy at both the outset and conclusion of the story, albeit a different individual. There is even symmetry within the physical movement of the characters in the Naaman story itself. Naaman, who goes *down* to the river, humbling himself, is uplifted. Gehazi who takes Naaman's gifts *up*on a hill, through his arrogance, is eventually brought down.[12]

What purpose does this narrative serve within the framework of the Elisha narratives and the Book of Kings? Not only does it serve as a link between the prophets Moses and Elisha, but it serves to underscore Elisha's ability to use God's power to control challenges to his authority, in much the same way as Moses did. In summary, we can see from the three uses of the phrase *metzora(at) kashaleg* in the Bible that the punishment of leprosy thus described is not invoked merely for *lashon hara*, but for a particular kind of slander: the unjust challenging of God's prophet.[13]

11 Cogan and Tadmor, p. 66.

12 Rick Dale Moore, *God Saves: Lessons from the Elisha Stories* (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press, 1990) p. 81 notes: "The transfer of booty takes place when Gehazi and Naaman's servants reach ha-ofel, translated 'the hill' (v. 24). It is a rare form of the verb 'to swell' and in certain hiphil forms it is used to connote arrogance. It does not seem unlikely that the narrative is using this particular word to draw attention to Gehazi's swelling disposition as he accepts the costly presents." Moore also notes, p. 81, Gehazi's lack of submission before God. See this volume, pp. 71-84 for a detailed analysis of II Kings 5:1-27.

13 We might also wonder why this punishment is not more frequently invoked in the Bible, for example in the case of Korah or Nadav, all of whom were killed. Obviously, this is fertile ground for further research, but we might initially hypothesize that these infractions were so severe that they merited a harsher punishment. In addition, Moses, Miriam and Gehazi were all prophets or disciples of prophets and thus the affliction of *metzora(at) kashaleg* may represent a special punishment reserved only for God's prophets, or disciples thereof.

MIDRASH ON MAPS

HAROLD BRODSKY

The 13th-century commentator Moses de Leon summarized the scope of traditional Jewish biblical exegesis, or midrash. He used the mnemonic *pardes* as an acronym for four types of interpretation: *peshat* (literal), *remez* (hinted), *derush* (moral), and *sod* (hidden). As examples of Jewish midrash on biblical maps I have selected the theme of boundaries of the Twelve Tribes of Israel. Midrashic variations also can be found on maps of the Exodus and desert wanderings.

PESHAT — LITERAL MEANING

The appearance of some maps showing the Twelve Tribes of Israel may suggest that the geographic descriptions of tribal boundaries are accurately drawn. But maps can be deceptive. Unlike a printed text where qualifications can be made, and shades of meaning conveyed, a map, if it is to be readable, must be simple and decisive. An examination of Joshua Chapters 13-19, however, will show that the boundary descriptions of the tribes are incomplete. The Bible provides vague boundaries for the tribes east of the Jordan, and none for Simeon.[1] Descriptions of tribal territorial extent are imprecise, and various lists of included cities are often difficult to reconcile. Some locations are unknown, or questionable. Geographic descriptions of tribal locations found elsewhere in the Bible (Numbers, Judges, Chronicles, etc.) may only add to the confusion.

Boundaries on two popular maps published recently in Israel show differing literal interpretations (Figure 1 A, B). The Carta map

1 Z. Kallai, *Historical Geography of the Bible* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1986), p. 114.

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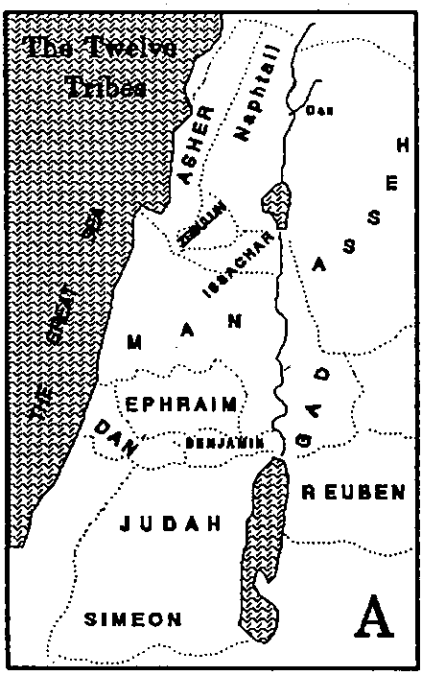
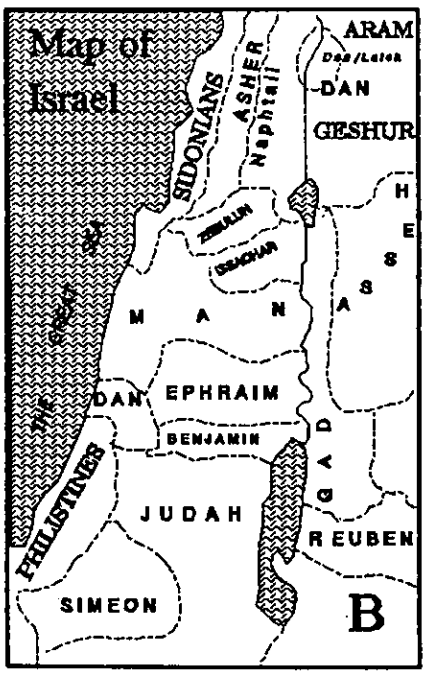
(1983) tries to follow the idealized tribal boundaries described in Joshua, while the Amir map (1984) tends to incorporate circumstances reflected in Judges. Clearly, the use of contrasting biblical texts can result in maps which differ.

1A — CARTA



1B — AMIR



REMEZ — HINTED MEANING

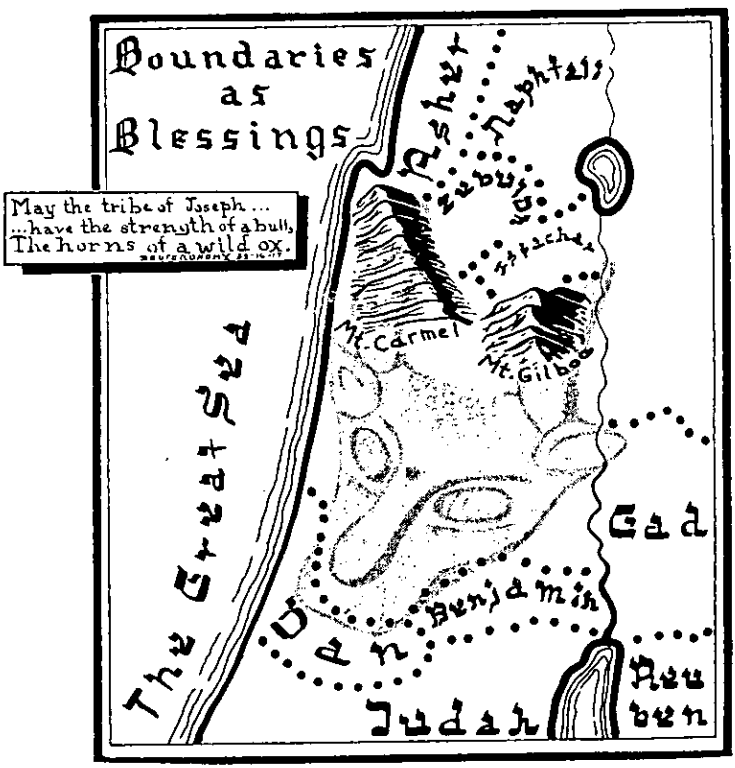
In Hill's delightful book *Cartographical Curiosities*, we find animals and fabulous beasts drawn to fit the boundaries on maps: a lion fantasy on The Netherlands, Asia in the shape of Pegasus, and more.[2] One can also derive similar figures from the shape of geographical areas in the Bible.

2 G. Hill, *Cartographical Curiosities* (London: British Museum Publications Ltd., 1978).

Yehoseph Schwarz in his book on the geography of Palestine did not produce a map of tribal boundaries, but he did devote a chapter in his book to the discussion of these boundaries.[3] With respect to the sons of Joseph he states:

> If we now contemplate carefully the possessions of the sons of Joseph, we shall see that it had two prominently protruding points . . . . Perhaps Moses alluded to this conformation of their territory when he blessed Joseph, and said (Deut. 33:17), *And his horns are as the horns of the re'em* . . . .

FIGURE 2



3 Y. Schwarz, *A Descriptive Geography and Brief Historical Sketch of Palestine*, translated by Isaac Leeser (New York: Hermon Press, 1850, reprinted 1970), pp. 163-64.

Jewish legend depicts the *re'em* as an animal of fabulous size. Because of its size Noah could not bring it into the ark but tied it outside and towed it behind (Gen. Rab. 31:13). To David the *re'em* looked like a mountain (Mid. Ps. to 22:25).

The idea that the northern boundaries of Joseph may conform to the outline of the horns of a *re'em* (wild-ox) is fanciful. But this type of thinking is common. For example, when an aerial photo of Lake Titicaca was shown to an Aymara boatman he said immediately: "Look. The Puma!"[4] The word "Titicaca" means puma to the Aymara Indians. With a bit of imagination it is possible to see in the outline of the lake a leaping puma. People have a tendency to see faces, animal forms and human figures in clouds, in physiographic features, and even on maps.

If not many geographers have thought that the boundaries of Joseph resembled a blessing of Moses it may be due to variations in translations. The Vulgate and its Douay translation refer to the *re'em* as a rhinoceros, and the King James version suggests a unicorn. The *re'em* may really be an oryx, rather than a wild ox. An oryx has two closely-spaced horns and when seen in profile at a distance the animal may look like a unicorn.[5]

Some mapmakers did consider one blessing as descriptive of tribal territory. Tribal maps, particularly those published before the 20th century, often show Zebulun bordering on the Mediterranean in conformance with Jacob's blessing in Genesis 49:13, *Zebulun dwells by the seashore*. However, a careful study of the boundaries shows that Zebulun is landlocked. Albright suggested that the blessings of Asher and Zebulun were somehow reversed.[6]

4 L. R. Lippard, *Overlay*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983), p. 145.

5 B. Clark, "The Biblical Oryx — A New Name for an Ancient Animal," *Biblical Archeology Review*, 10 (1984), pp. 66-70.

6 W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan*, (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1968), pp. 265-66.

DERUSH — THE MORAL IMPLICATIONS OF BOUNDARIES

The name of the tribe of Dan derives from the Hebrew verb "to judge," which is an apt description of what mapmakers do when the legitimacy of Danite northern possessions is an issue. Mapmakers have to consider how to draw territory not allotted to Dan but seized "by the unnecessary and unauthorized slaughter of the unsuspecting folk of Laish."[7]

A mapmaker knows that a reader is likely to interpret a boundary as an indication of legitimacy (*de facto*, if not *de jure* — a distortion that is difficult to make on a map). Boundaries, after all, should conform to political standards of justice and morality.

The allotment gave Dan territory in the foothills and coastal region (Josh. 19:40-48). This sanctioned territory was difficult to conquer (Jud. 1:34), and so the Danites set out to seize territory elsewhere. Judges (Ch. 17 and 18), details the migration and conquest of Dan. Theft, sacrilege, broken promises and violence accompany this process. Dan set upon the peaceful Phoenician city of Laish (Leshem in Joshua), put the people to the sword, and changed the city name.

Throughout the centuries exegetes have struggled with this description. Josephus in his *Antiquities* is particularly cautious about retelling the least attractive aspects of this biblical narrative.

Mapmakers such as Amir show tribal borders around the seized northern area of Dan, while other mapmakers such as Carta appear to be more cautious about recognizing northern Dan (Figure 1 A, B). Whether the absence of boundaries for northern Dan on a tribal map shows reluctance by the mapmaker to recognize seized territory cannot be determined from the map itself. Boundaries for northern Dan are not actually described in the Bible, and so it is entirely

7 R. G. Boling, *The Anchor Bible: Judges*, (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1975), p. 267.

possible that the mapmaker was simply responding to this uncertainty.[8]

The Carta map only shows the name of the city of Dan. The Amir map shows Dan and its former name Laish. Just as a boundary connotes a legal order (unless one is told otherwise) the presence of a former city name on a map calls attention to the events responsible for the name change. (Imagine the effect on a reader of a map showing the name Leningrad as well as St. Petersburg, or Aelia Capitolina as well as Jerusalem).

After the break-up of the twelve-tribe union, King Jeroboam of Israel (in the North) set up rival temples of worship in Dan and Beth-el to divert loyalties from The Temple at Jerusalem (I Kg. 12:25-31). It is possible, therefore, that this event influences the tone of the text in Judges.[9]

Despite the immorality associated with Dan one can sympathize with a mapmaker trying to decide how strongly to express this feeling on a map. Even if the mapmaker tries to avoid this issue, it will be difficult to draw a map that will leave a neutral moral impression. From another point of view, the mapmaker may feel ambivalent. After all, the biblical condemnation of Dan was not total. The blessings of Moses (Deut. 33:22) included Dan, and the byword "from Dan to Beersheba" was not only a picturesque way of describing the dimensions of Israel, it was also a call, during periods of national crisis, for a national unity amid the differences and animosities of the tribes.

SOD — HIDDEN MEANING

The maps of Ben-Har (1964) show the Land of Israel as a macrocosm of a microcosmic person[10] (Figure 3). The idea of a

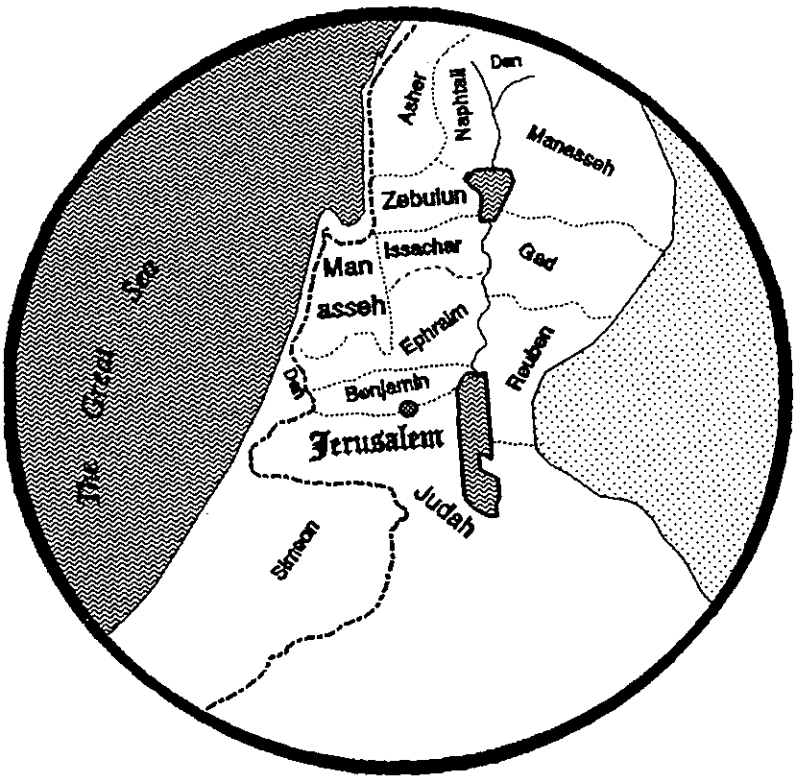
8 N. Na'aman, *Borders and Districts in Biblical Historiography*, (Jerusalem: Simor Ltd., 1986).

9 J. A. Soggin, *Judges*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1981).

10 B. Ben-Har, *The Concealed Maps of the Land of Israel*, (New York: Edison Lithographing and Printing Corp., 1964).

person as a microcosm, reflecting a larger universe, goes back to Philo and even older sources in Western philosophical tradition. Even today we speak of the analogy between the whole and its parts.

FIGURE 3



The features of a human face appear impressed on the land in Ben-Har's map and conform to the boundaries of the tribes. The profile looks out westward, toward the Mediterranean, with an indentation at Acco Bay forming the sockets of an eye. The half-tribe of Manasseh in the east forms the back of the head.

According to Ben-Har the hidden secret lies in the realization that ". . . the position of the city of Jerusalem is the essential key in deciphering the map of the tribes, since through it, the upper portion of the tribe of Judah is designated as a tongue . . . ." (p. 16), this in fulfillment of Genesis 49:9, II Samuel 23:2, and especially Isaiah 2:3. Vision emanates from the city of Tiberias (where the masoretic text was developed), and the macrocosmic person has its heart at Mt. Sinai.

The idea of depicting geographic areas as parts of the human body goes back at least to the sixth century B.C.E. when an Ionian from Miletus wrote of the earth consisting of seven parts. Naturally, the first part, the head and face, was in the Peloponnesus.[11]

BIBLICAL MAPPING AND MIDRASH

Archaeological and geographical exploration have still not clarified all the locational problems associated with completely accurate tribal map. There are also questions of design. Should the boundaries of both Dan and Simon be left off a map? Literally that may be the most reasonable approach to take, yet esthetically the map may look peculiar. Some people are likely to think that the mapmaker carelessly failed to draw all the tribal boundaries. Even a literal map requires subjective judgment and is subject to artistic variations in style.

An allegoric use of mapping is not unique to Bible lands since people generally find it easy to see familiar forms in geographic shapes. While allegoric hints can be controversial in biblical interpretation, a clever map may add interest to an otherwise obscure biblical verse.

The mapping of northern Dan highlights the difficulty involved in adopting a detached approach toward Scripture. Regardless of

11 L. Bagrow, *History of Cartography*, 2nd edition (Chicago: Precedent Publishing, Inc., 1985), p. 33.

what the mapmaker does, some sense of morality is implied; the predicament is that a simple graphic choice has to be made on a map. The Bible itself contains an inner midrash as a suspended Hebrew letter "nun" in Judges 18:30, which leaves little doubt that the founding of the city of Dan is a moral issue.

Finally, modern statistical geography assumes that it is possible to learn about a regional population from a small sample. The mathematics of fractiles is based on the idea of the self-similarity of the part to the whole. These concepts have their antecedents in philosophic speculation about macrocosms and microcosms. A similar idea, derived from the Bible, suggested to a mapmaker the personification of the Land of Israel on a map.

ANNUAL BIBLE CONTEST

JOSHUA J. ADLER

The twenty-ninth annual Bible contest for Jewish youth was held in Hadera in May. Thirty-six high school students from 23 different countries, many from the former Communist bloc countries, competed for the title of Diaspora champion. The winner was Devora Sino-Mishan from Argentina. Three days later, on Israel Independence Day and in a two hour telecast, 16 of the best Diaspora contestants faced four Israeli high schoolers who, a few weeks earlier, came out on top in the Israeli competition. The winners of the International contest, however, were two of the Israelis, Doron Sofer of Netivot and Yonatan Sharabi of Rehovot, both scoring 97 points.

The Diaspora participants together with the four Israeli youths spent two weeks touring Israel, during which time they also met many important personalities including the president of the State, the speaker of the Knesset and one of the chief rabbis. This year the army again took control in organizing the program under a new staff headed by Brigadier General Shalom Ben-Moshe, commander of the army education corps, and its chaplain, Rabbi Haniel Farber. Many organizations are represented in the committee which each year plans this contest, one of the focal events of the Independence Day celebrations. These include Dr. Haim Skirball, head of the Department of Education and Culture of the WZO, Mr. Moshe Rivlin of the Jewish National Fund, representatives of the Israeli Ministry of Education and the writer of these lines representing our Bible Association.

Rabbi Joshua J. Adler, former US army chaplain and spiritual leader of Chisuk Emuna Congregation in Harrisburg, PA., has lived in Jerusalem since 1972. He lectures extensively on Judaic subjects and serves as managing editor of the Jewish Bible Quarterly.

As in previous years, Avshalom Koor, Israel's master teacher of Hebrew on radio and television, served as moderator in both the Hadera and Jerusalem contest. The 82-year-old Dr. Yosef Burg came back from an overseas lecture tour especially in order to serve as chief judge at this annual event; a post he has filled very many times.

The two themes of this year's contest were the anniversary of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain 500 years ago and the 90th anniversary of the Jewish National Fund. We were pleased to note that after an absence of many years England sent a contestant to the competition, though Spain failed to do so despite the fact that one of the themes had to do with Spanish Jewry. However, Bulgaria, which had never before been able to send a contestant, this year managed to do so.

We urge our readers who have connections with young people and Hebrew schools around the world to encourage students to prepare for and compete in local Bible contests so that they can become candidates for the annual Israeli Bible competition. All participants, whether they win or lose come away with a most meaningful experience which they will never forget.

of imperfection in his hero that, with few exceptions, he gives no valid rebuttal to the political, psychological, and sociological points raised by Edwards. His major valid point, regarding the religious implications of bowing down, does require a response. Hyman is so eager to attack Edward's premise, he accuses Edwards of essentially falsifying the record by admitting the word "potential" in describing the disaster that Edwards claims is due to Mordecai's behavior, since the disaster never actually occurred. The meaning and intent of the statement is quite clear to any careful reader. Finally, we have the ultimate charge — Edwards is guilty of "blaming the victim" by impugning Mordecai's actions. Apart from the fact that historically the evil that has befallen our people has sometimes been exacerbated by individual Jews' actions (or inactions), this charge is improper in the context of the author's hypothesis. Since his very premise assigns blame to Mordecai's behavior, if this argument applies here then Edwards is to be condemned for even attempting to write the article, regardless of the validity of his own arguments.

Apart from any other way of thinking about it, The Book of Esther, as a literary document, is a morality play. The format of such plays requires a hero and villain. In reading these articles, I assumed the quest for assigning a villain to be in this spirit. However, since it is a Jewish morality play, it must also teach a moral and spiritual lesson, rather than just titillate us with portrayals of one-dimensional heroes and villains. What Esther teaches us, as exemplified by the articles in question, is that there are attributes of villainy, and heroism as well, in all the characters (well, maybe no heroism in Haman). The Torah repeatedly presents us with flawed heroes of much greater stature than Mordecai. The lesson that there is danger even in the best-motivated behavior is a useful and valid one.. It is Professor Hyman himself who misreads "the dynamic interaction among Mordecai, Esther, Haman and Ahasuerus" in his response.

Mitchell Litt

Sir,

I was fascinated by Rabbi Maller's article in the Spring issue, Vol. XX:3, in which he highlights the importance of Adam in world history as the father of our civilization. I myself have always held the historical Adam in great reverence not only as the discoverer of wild wheat as a result of which settled agricultural communities began, but also as a prophet who started Monotheism, the weekly day of rest, the belief in Man's free will to choose between good and evil, and other tenets which form the basis of Judaism. Adam was subsequently honored by naming him as the first man of creation. Islam regards him as a major prophet and he is reputed to be buried in Hejaz.

However, I am unable to find any corroboration for Rabbi Maller's statement that according to Rabbi Yosi ben-Halafta in his second century book, *Seder Olam Rabba*, Adam exited from the Garden of Eden 3760 B.C.E. Surely this is the date given for the creation of the universe.

Naim E. Dangoor

Rabbi Maller responds:

The word *olam* has many different meanings in Hebrew, just as the word "world" has in English. For example, when the Sayings of the Fathers states that the world is sustained by three things, the world referred to is the world of society, or civilization. I believe that the statement "from the beginning of the world" or "from the creation of the world" refers to the world of human society, i.e., the social world, and specifically in terms of the calendar the historical world, i.e., the world we know about from written records.

It is true that some rabbis specifically include the creation of the natural world within the historical time span of the Jewish calendar, but I believe this is in reaction to Aristotle and his claim that the world was not created, but is eternal.

Allen S. Maller

עשה תורתך קבע

THE TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
CHAIM ABRAMOWITZ

January 1993

1	F	Exodus 30:1-30:38
3	S	Hosea 8
4	M	Hosea 9
5	T	Hosea 10
6	W	Hosea 11
7	Th	Hosea 12
8	F	Exodus 31:1-32:14
10	S	Hosea 13
11	M	Joel 1
12	T	Joel 2
13	W	Joel 3
14	Th	Joel 4
15	F	Exodus 32:15-34:26
17	S	Amos 1
18	M	Amos 2
19	T	Amos 3
20	W	Amos 4
21	Th	Amos 5
22	F	Exodus 34:27-36:38
24	S	Amos 6
25	M	Amos 7
26	T	Amos 8
27	W	Amos 9
28	Th	Obadiah 1
29	F	Exodus 37:1-38:20
31	S	Jonah 1

February 1993

1	M	Jonah 2
2	T	Jonah 3
3	W	Jonah 4
4	Th	Micah 1
5	F	Exodus 38:21-39:32
7	S	Micah 2
8	M	Micah 3
9	T	Micah 4
10	W	Micah 5
11	Th	Micah 6
12	F	Exodus 39:33-40:38
14	S	Micah 7
15	M	Nahum 1
16	T	Nahum 2
17	W	Nahum 3
18	Th	Habakkuk 1
19	F	Leviticus 1:1-3:17
21	S	Habakkuk 2
22	M	Habakkuk 3
23	T	Zephaniah 1
22	W	Zephaniah 2
25	Th	Zephaniah 3
26	F	Leviticus 4:1-6:11
28	S	Haggai 1

March 1993

1	M	Haggai 2
2	T	Zechariah 1
3	W	Zechariah 2
4	Th	Zechariah 3
5	F	Leviticus 6:12-7:35
7	S	Zechariah 4
8	M	Zechariah 5
9	T	Zechariah 6
10	W	Zechariah 7
11	Th	Zechariah 8
12	F	Leviticus 8:1-9:7
14	S	Zechariah 9
15	M	Zechariah 10
16	T	Zechariah 11
17	W	Zechariah 12
18	Th	Zechariah 13
19	F	Leviticus 9:8-10:20
21	S	Zechariah 14
22	M	Malachi 1
23	T	Malachi 2
24	W	Malachi 3
25	Th	Psalms 1
26	F	Leviticus 11:1-11:47
28	S	Psalms 2
29	M	Psalms 3
30	T	Psalms 4
31	W	Psalms 5

April 1993

1	Th	Psalms 6
2	F	Leviticus 12:1-13:28
4	S	Psalms 7
5	M	Psalms 8
6	T	Psalms 9
7	W	Psalms 10
8	Th	Psalms 11
9	F	Leviticus 13:29-13:59
11	S	Psalms 12
12	M	Psalms 13
13	T	Psalms 14
14	W	Psalms 15
15	Th	Psalms 16
16	F	Leviticus 14:1-14:32
18	S	Psalms 17
19	M	Psalms 18
20	T	Psalms 19
21	W	Psalms 20
22	Th	Psalms 21
23	F	Leviticus 14:33-14:57
25	S	Psalms 22
26	M	Psalms 23
27	T	Psalms 24
28	W	Psalms 25
29	Th	Psalms 26
30	F	Leviticus 15:1-15:24

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TRANSLITERATIONS: The following transliteration guide-lines, though non-academic, are simple and the most widely accepted:

ע and א	assumes the sound of its accompanying vowel = e.g., Amen, Alenu, Olam, Eretz.
ה	= H e.g., Hodesh.
כ and ק	= K e.g., Ketuvim, Kadosh.
כ	= Kh e.g., Melekh.
צ	= Tz e.g., Tzaddik.
ֶ	= E e.g., Ben.

Standard transliteration of biblical names remains unchanged.

FOOTNOTES:

For a book: Author's name, *Title of Book*, (place, date of publication), p.

For an article: Author's name, "Title of Article," *Title of Book* or *Periodical*, vol. (date), p.

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