

THE WORLD JEWISH BIBLE SOCIETY

קקרת לתא ואבסלד ד רב, יעקב פלדן
1976

דור לדור

DOR^{LE}DOR

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THIRTEENTH WORLD YOUTH BIBLE CONTEST

Vol. V

No. 1 (1976)

Fall 1976

דור לדור
DOR le DOR

Published by the
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WORLD JEWISH BIBLE SOCIETY, 18 Abarbanel Str., JERUSALEM

An affiliate of the DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE IN THE DIASPORA OF THE
WORLD ZIONIST ORGANIZATION

PROFESSOR LIPTZIN HONORED



From left to right: Haim Abramowitz, Rev. Joseph Halpern, Professor Sol Liptzin, Dr. Louis Katzoff, editor, Rabbi S. Gershon Levi, Dr. Shimon Bakon, assistant editor.

This issue is dedicated to PROFESSOR SOL LIPTZIN on the occasion of his 75th birthday. He is being presented by the Editorial Staff with a bound volume of Dor le-Dor containing the issues of the first three years of publication. His contributions in this volume are:

King Saul in World Literature	Winter 1972-3
Elijah in Yiddish Literature	Spring 1973
The Contrite Heart	Winter 1973-4
Job and Faust	Summer 1974
In the Days of Job	Fall 1974
Psalms of Zion	Summer 1975

NOBLE JONATHAN

BY SOL LIPTZIN

Dedicated to the memory of *Sgan-Aluf Jonathan Netanyahu* ל"ו
who fell במצות פדיון שבויים at Entebe

The First Book of Samuel is dominated by the tragic figure of Saul. In the earlier chapters, the book reaches a climax in the confrontation between Saul and Samuel and, in the later chapters, it centers about the enmity of Saul toward David. Both of these conflicts have stirred the imagination of sages and creative writers.

None of these three principal figures are flawless. Samuel's unyielding fanaticism, his cruelty towards the royal prisoner Agag, his unforgiving attitude toward his own protegee Saul do not endear him to poets and dramatists. In plays by Voltaire and by Karl Gutzkow, he becomes the hated symbol of religious establishments against which they aim their literary barbs. Saul's deterioration from his early magnificent stature, when he towers above his contemporaries physically and spiritually, his succumbing to alternating states of depression, schizophrenia and megalomania, his relentless persecution of David, which contributes to his own final doom, arouse pity and awe but do not gain for him love or admiration on the part of later commentators and interpreters. David too suffers from moral frailties. He reaches an abyss of immoral behavior in the Uriah-Bathsheva episode and has to experience intense suffering before he emerges as the chastened forebear of a royal dynasty whose final offspring will be the Messiah.

Alongside of the three major figures in the First Book of Samuel—titanic personalities who reveal character deficiencies—there appears a single splendid character whose nobility of soul is untarnished and whose tragic fate is undeserved. He is Jonathan, the first-born of Saul and the faithful friend of David.

Jonathan is depicted by the biblical chronicler as gentle and brave, pure and kind, swift as an eagle and strong as a lion, devoted to his father even amidst disagreements, true to his friend even at the cost of his own claim to the throne, resourceful in snatching victory out of the jaws of defeat and, at a later time, not shrinking from death on the battlefield at the side of his father when the odds are overwhelming. Nevertheless, though many legends have grown up about his father and his friend, there are none that center about him. Impeccable Jonathan pales beside Saul and David. Always he stands in their shadow. His dilemma, torn between filial piety and altruistic friendship, does not attract as much notice as does Saul's dilemma, when torn between obedience to God's implacable command as voiced by the prophet Samuel and obedience to the dictates of his heart which stirs him to be compassionate and magnanimous toward his helpless

captive Agag, or as does David's dilemma, when he, the anointed of his people but also the vassal of the Philistine monarch Achish of Gath, his people's foe, has to choose between his conflicting loyalties during the renewed Philistine war against Israel.

Saul does not solve his dilemma satisfactorily and David skirts around his dilemma. Saul obeys his heart and is condemned as faithless to God. David is spared a final decision which would have necessitated his being faithless either to the Philistine king to whom he has sworn allegiance, or to his people against whom he, as a Philistine vassal, would have had to enter into battle. Jonathan alone faces his dilemma resolutely and emerges purehearted and noble-minded. He succeeds in remaining loyal to his father in all of the latter's moods and loyal to his friend David, his father's rival for the throne. In his undeviating, disinterested devotion to David, he, the heir-apparent, has nothing to gain personally and a crown to forfeit.

Jonathan's first entry upon the stage of Jewish history is as the bold warrior in the struggle against the invading Philistines and it is his daring which brings about the victory at Geva. When the Philistines thereafter mobilize thirty thousand warriors and when Saul's troops then begin to melt away and are soon reduced from three thousand fighting men to a mere six hundred, it is again Jonathan who turns the tide of battle at Michmas.

Jonathan's last appearance is at the side of his father in the battle of Gilboa, faithful even unto his final hour. He was lovely and pleasant in his life and in his death he was not separated from his father.

At the same time, Jonathan is unswerving in his friendship for David. He intercedes for David when Saul, overcome by jealousy at this young shepherd's increasing popularity, seeks to destroy him. Jonathan risks his father's displeasure, an intervention which almost costs him his own life. He warns David to stay away from court. He gives up his own claim to the throne and is prepared to accept a lesser role as second to David.

This princely figure, this pure personality, this chivalrous knight, this unblemished friend has not stirred the imagination of poets, painters or musicians to the same extent as have the more sinful or more criminal characters. Not until the twentieth century did he find a dramatist who did full justice to him. In 1933, the year of Hitler's ascent to power, Richard Beer-Hofmann completed *Der junge David*, as the first part of a projected dramatic trilogy, and in this masterpiece he assigned a magnificent scene to Jonathan, in whom he mirrored himself, his own spiritual immaculateness, his own traits of proud dignity and wise humility, and, above all, his own loyalty to the Jewish people to whom he owed allegiance.

Beer-Hofmann's Jonathan is in many ways a reincarnation of young Jacob,

the principal character of the dramatic mystery *Jaakobs Traum*, completed in 1915 as a prologue to the trilogy centering about David. In Jacob the poet incorporated his own dreams, desires and ideals. Jacob is ever obedient to his inner voice that bids him to remain true to the fate assigned to him and to bear it amidst all tribulations, not as a yoke but as a crown. Jonathan too accepts his fate, including its tragic aspects, without quarreling with his Maker.

Beer-Hofmann avoids all references to the romantic final meeting between Jonathan and David, not only because the biblical text is most eloquent in portraying this meeting and the dramatist did not want to enter into competition with the biblical narrator but also because drama, as a literary art, deals primarily with confrontation between opposing viewpoints, and there are no basic conflicts or even minor differences marring the relationship between the two friends. The Bible does, however, point to a confrontation between Jonathan and Saul when the former intercedes for David and arouses his father's wrath to such a high pitch that Saul hurls his spear at his own son. This confrontation is presented with such brevity that the Viennese Jewish dramatist, whose attitude toward the holy text was always one of great reverence, felt that it would not be impious to go into greater detail.

In Beer-Hofmann's play, Achinoam, wife of Saul and mother of Jonathan, warns her son against interceding for David during Saul's disturbed frame of mind. Normally, Jonathan would have agreed with her. He certainly would have preferred not to beard his father. However, when Saul, expecting a new incursion of the Philistines into the kingdom, wants first to assure himself that the followers of David would not seize the opportunity to join his enemies and he therefore issues a command to seize all of David's kin as hostages, then Jonathan can no longer remain silent. He pleads for a mitigation of his father's hatred, since hate destroys the hater more than the hated. He urges a reconciliation with David in this hour of national peril. He foresees a horrible catastrophe looming ahead unless there is a cessation of civil strife. He tries to move his father's heart by narrating a recent dream in which he foresaw his own little son Meribaal (Mephibosheth) grown up and seated at the royal table (as in Samuel II, ix, 10-13) with David standing before him, bowed by the weight of suffering, his eyes dripping tears. Saul's bitter reaction is that what Jonathan saw in a dream was indeed nothing more than a dream. Reality pointed in a different direction. David had apparently become the chief obsession of Jonathan. The fact that he was appearing in Jonathan's dream was but additional evidence that he was dominating Jonathan's thoughts and visions by night as well as by day. However, having gotten the disturbed monarch to listen patiently to his dream, Jonathan ventures going a step further and suggests that perhaps an understanding can be reached with David by accepting the realistic political situation and by ceding to

the latter the three southern tribes of Judah, Simeon and Dan. Even if Saul cannot forget what transpired in the past, recriminations must cease in the interest of all tribes. David has already been anointed with the crown of Judah, the mighty tribe which will never tolerate being subordinate to Benjamin. The other two southern tribes are allied to Judah. Let Saul content himself with sovereignty over the remaining nine tribes. For a moment Jonathan makes a deep impact upon Saul's troubled soul, but only for a moment. When Jonathan, continuing to plead for reconciliation, reveals that he has already sent messengers with overtures to David, then Saul suspects betrayal in his own house and breaks out in tremendous rage, a rage before which his entire family quails. In this uncontrollable mood, he now modifies his former command. He orders that, instead of merely seizing David's kin as hostages, they are to be put to death wherever found. Jonathan is aghast at Saul's outburst but he continues to stand at his father's side. At the same time, as we know from the biblical text, he will manage to warn David of the threatening danger.

In the fourth act of Beer-Hofmann's drama, the moment that David is released from his obligation to fight on the side of the Philistines who distrust him, his first reaction is to send messengers to Jonathan that he intends to link his troops to those of the House of Saul, even if this means subordinating himself to the monarch's command and risking the abandonment of his own royal ambitions. Whatever the faults of David, he too remains ever loyal to his truth with his friend Jonathan. But already it is too late. The battle at Gilboa is fought and lost before David and his men can get to the front.

Although Jonathan does not appear in the later acts of the play, we learn of his death in battle, faithful to his father to the very end, even as he kept his faith with David.

Saul and David are the two powerful adversaries in Beer-Hofmann's play as in the biblical narrative. Jonathan, who is caught up in their struggle, emerges as the innocent victim of their rivalry. Though he fails in his efforts to reconcile them, his sweet, radiant character remains untarnished. He is truly a noble personality in life and in death.

If painters and composers, poets, novelists, and dramatists, with the exception of Beer-Hofmann, do not display any great interest in him, it is because saintly personalities do not lend themselves as easily to artistic presentation and apparently do not normally move emotions as deeply as do characters who sin grandly, who have to work their way through error to clarity, and who have to pay by intense suffering the penalty for their moral aberrations.

□

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE MEZUZAH

BY B. Z. LURIA

*This essay was originally a paper presented in Hebrew before the Sixth World Congress of Jewish Studies at Jerusalem, Summer 1973, and reprinted in the author's collected essays *Mi-Yannai ad Hordos*, Jerusalem, 1974. It has been translated especially for *Dor le-Dor*.*

וכתבתם על מזוזות ביתך ובשעריך

'Write them on the door-posts of your house and upon your gates.'

The words of the Torah are the basis for the mezuzah, which marks the Jewish doorway. The Halachah describes the mezuzah as a parchment scroll, placed within a wooden or metal casing. Its purpose is to remind the Jew to live in accordance with the commandments of the Torah at all times. The words written on the scroll are two brief passages from Deuteronomy 6:4 to 6:9, and 11:13 to 11:21 both of which contain the verse cited above. It is customary to leave a small opening in the mezuzah-case, so as to show the word *shaddai*, which is written on the back of the parchment in its upper left-hand corner.

Our purpose here is to examine the development of the physical appearance of the mezuzah: what form it had originally, out of what materials it was fashioned, how it was written and where it was placed. We shall try to determine when and why changes in these respects took place, but we shall not deal with the text itself.

In order to trace the changes in the external appearance of the mezuzah, we shall begin with the latest halachic-rabbinic rules that govern such matters, and work our way chronologically backwards.

The Talmud contains, as a sort of appendix, a number of post-Mishnaic compendia known as "The Minor Treatises," the latest of which is "The Tractate Mezuza" (See Michael Higger: "Seven Minor Treatises," New York, Bloch 1930). This tractate deals with the kinds of materials on which mezuzot may be written, and lists the sorts of errors in writing which render a mezuzah ritually unfit. It prescribes which doorways require a mezuzah and which do not, and explains where on the doorpost a mezuzah is to be fastened¹.

1. Curiously enough, although the Torah specifies "thy gates," the Tractate Mezuza declares that city gates and the gates of streets and similar outdoor areas are exempt. Why this should be so remains unclear.

Ben Zion Luria is the editor of *Beth Mikra*, the Hebrew publication of the Israel Society for Biblical Research. His books include: *Geographical Districts in Israel*, *The Jews of Syria in the Times of Mishna and Talmud*, *Megillat Taanit*, *King Yannai*, and *The Copper Scroll*, all in Hebrew.

The names of the authorities cited in the text of Masekhet Mezuzah provide the clue for determining when the tractate was compiled, at least in its present form. Among those quoted are Rabbi Meir, a Tanna of the third generation; Rabbi Simeon ben Eliezer, Rabbi Yose bar Halafta, Rabbi Nathan and Rabbi Judah, all four of them Tannaim of the fourth generation, disciples of Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Akiba (that is, if we may assume that the Rabbi Judah mentioned is Rabbi Judah bar Ilai). The latest sage whose opinion is given is Rabbi Jacob, an Amora of the third generation, a native of Babylonia, who came up to the Land of Israel and studied at the academy of Rabbi Yohanan. The sum of this evidence leads to the conclusion that the Tractate Mezuzah was redacted in its present form at the beginning of the fourth century of the Common Era. It leaves us with a description of the Mezuzah that corresponds in every detail to what is current practice in our own day.

The Mishnah proper makes reference to "the housing of the Mezuzah,"² from which it is apparent that the mezuzah-case was an established practice by the end of the second century, when the Mishnah was given its final redaction. Another bit of evidence pointing in the same direction is to be found in the Tosephta: "A reed or tube which has been cut and had a mezuzah placed in it, and then mounted on the wall, remains impervious to ritual impurity."³

Another passage makes it clear that at that time the mezuzah was written on parchment, not incised on stone or any other material: "Those in the act of writing Torah scrolls, phylacteries or mezuzot may interrupt their work to recite the *shema*, but not to say the eighteen benedictions."⁴

FORBIDDEN IN THE ANCIENT HEBREW SCRIPT

It is interesting to note that the Tractate Mezuzah invalidates a mezuzah written in the ancient Hebrew script. The Jews returning from the Babylonian exile adopted the "square" alphabet still used today, whereas the Samaritans clung to the older script, as they still do, not only for their Torah-scrolls, but for their mezuzot as well. The rift between them and the Jews was such, that their style of writing was rejected as invalid.⁵

Of course, the really serious disqualification of the Samaritan mezuzah lay in the fact that it contained a different text. The mezuzah at the entrance to a house

2. Kelim, 16:7.

3. Tosefta Kelim, Baba Metzia VII:8; ed. Zuckerman 586 (22).

4. Tosefta Berakhot II:6; ed. Zuck. 4 (22).

5. On the other hand, a foreign language was acceptable in ritual objects: "Tefillin and mezuzot should be written in the square Hebrew alphabet. The sages permitted the use of Greek" (Megillah 9a).

identified the inhabitant of that house, and since the Samaritans were at odds with the Jews on such matters as ritual purity, food that may or may not have been tithed, and a number of other subjects, the sages were anxious to avoid confusion in these matters and they declared that any mezuzah written in "Hebrew" (that is, Samaritan) script was null, void and improper. A similar ruling is quoted in the Gemara: "Torah scrolls, phylacteries or mezuzot written by Saducees, Samaritans, pagans, slaves. . . or apostates are ritually invalid."⁶

WRITTEN ONLY ON PARCHMENT AND IN INK

Still another restriction is to be found in the Sifre on Deuteronomy, as follows: "If the tetragrammaton was written in letters of gilt, the parchments must be put away."⁷ In the same spirit are the Talmudic restrictions affecting scrolls of the Torah: "If these were written with other than ordinary ink, or if the *azkarot* (tetragrammata) were gilded, such scrolls must be put away."⁸ Additional background for this attitude is to be found in the tractate Soferim:⁹ "One is not to illuminate the Torah scroll with golden ink. It happened that the Torah of Alexandros had all its *azkarot* written in golden ink and the matter came up for discussion before the council of sages. Their ruling was that it should be hidden away." Elsewhere¹⁰ I have discussed the strong popular sentiment against showy and expensive ritual objects, following the death of King Alexander Jannaeus and the transfer of political power from the Sadducees to the Pharisees. If my analysis is correct, we can date the prohibition against illuminated mezuzah scrolls to the period following the death of Jannaeus.

The mezuzah found in Cave VIII at Qumran¹¹ was written on parchment and with regular ink throughout, which shows that there has been little change in the form of the mezuzah from the latter days of the Second Commonwealth until the present. It was already established usage to write with plain ink on parchment or on a vellum like variety of the same material.¹²

Additional evidence that the use of parchment for the mezuzah goes back to the Second Commonwealth can be adduced from the Targumim. Even though it seems that these were edited in their final form as late as the second century C.E.,

6. Menahot, 42b.

7. Sifre, ed. Meir Ish-Shalom, 75a.

8. Sanhedrin, 21b; Yer. Sanh. II:6.

9. Tractate Soferim Chap. I:18.

10. In the author's *Miyannai ad Hordos*, pp. 91–100.

11. "Discoveries in the Judean Desert III (1962). Les Petites Grottes de Qumran, p. 158, pl. XXXIV.

12. Shabb. 79b. The 'vellum', called *dukhsustos* is parchment peeled to half-thickness.

there is every reason to assign their basic texts to a time before the destruction of the Temple. A comparison of the translations of Deuteronomy 6:9 by Onkelos, Jonathan ben Uziel and the Targum Yerushalmi¹³ shows that all three, in varying ways, render "thou shalt write" as "thou shalt write and thou shalt affix." This proves that for these translators, the mezuzah was not inscribed on the building itself, but was written on a writing-surface, which was then attached to the door-post.

WHERE CAN THE MEZUZAH BE AFFIXED

Of early provenance is the testimony offered by the following *baraita*:¹⁴ "He who hangs a mezuzah in his doorway creates a danger, and does not fulfil the commandment. If he puts it on a stick and places it behind the door, he creates a danger without fulfilling the commandment. Those of the House of Monbaz (the royal dynasty of Adiabene, converts to Judaism) used to place them in caravanseries."¹⁵ A fuller version of this tradition occurs in the Gemara:¹⁶ "Rav Judah said in the name of Samuel: If one hung it (the mezuzah) on a stick, it is invalid. Why? Because Scripture says: 'within (upon) thy gates.' There is also a *baraita* to this same effect: If one hung it on a stick, or attached it (to the wall) behind the door, the commandment has not been fulfilled, and it constitutes a danger. But they of the household of Monbaz used to do this very thing when staying at an inn, to remind themselves of the Biblical precept. Rav Judah further said in the name of Samuel: "The proper way is to affix the mezuzah so that it is within the space of the doorway. But is this not obvious, since the Torah says, 'within thy gates?' Not at all! I might easily have remembered Raba's teaching that the mezuzah should be within the handbreadth nearest the public thoroughfare, and concluded that the further from the interior of the house, the better. This might have led me to think, 'Why not put it right outside, facing the street?' Hence, the point must be stated explicitly."

The mention of "danger" calls for explanation. Some commentators say that, since the commandment is not properly performed, the house is therefore left unprotected from malevolent forces. The explanation is not a very appealing one, and we shall try to offer a more satisfactory interpretation below.

A MOVEABLE MEZUZAH

There is still another ancient tradition about an unusual mezuzah, recorded in the Yerushalmi: "What if one hollowed out the top of a stick and placed a

13. Vatican Ms.

14. Tosef. Meg. IV; ed. Zuck. 228 (31).

15. One version reads: "In inns and caravanseries."

16. Men. 32b.

mezuzah therein? . . . This was just what the household of Malyon¹⁷ used to do when they went out to battle."¹⁸ It is usual to explain 'Malyon' as the proper name of a commander or ruler who carried a mobile mezuzah with him in the field on military campaigns, placing the pole with the parchment in it at the entrance to his tent or whatever structure served him as quarters for the time being.

Since the House of Malyon is not known from any other source, scholars tend to identify it with the House of the convert Monbaz of Adiabene.¹⁹ However, the passage seems to deal with a Jewish ruler who was frequently in the field, and whose custom it was to observe the Torah in literal detail. I would suggest that this description fits one or another of the Hasmonean kings, who did a lot of fighting, and were Sadducees. They were also known as "Maccabees," from the Greek word for "hammer." This could conceivably have been Latinized as "*mal-leus*." As a matter of fact, the whole picture fits King Jannaeus particularly. We know that he carried a Torah scroll with him wherever he went;²⁰ he could easily have done the same with a mezuzah.

A "stick with a hollow space for a mezuzah" was a known quantity as late as the time of Rabban Johanan ben Zakkai.²¹ However, since such sticks had come to be used by tricksters for a variety of confidence games, the Sages declared them invalid.

CARVING MEZUZAH ON STONE, PRE-MACCABEAN CUSTOM

The desert kingdom of Palmyra has preserved another kind of mezuzah. At the western end of the avenue of pillars which formed the main street, in the midst of archaeological ruins which remain to be investigated, there stand two door-posts supporting a rather large lintel, part of what was once a building. On the lintel itself there is carved the Hebrew paragraph, "Hear o Israel," (Deut. 6:4-9), while a number of blessings quoted from Deuteronomy are incised on the doorposts. In the opinion of the late Professor Sukenik, these are the remains of the local synagogue.²²

It is difficult to date this Jewish structure in Palmyra. All we have to go by are the following facts: Palmyra became a center of trade between east and west

17. A variant reading gives "Malvon."

18. Yer. Meg. IV:12.

19. See S. H. Kook: "Researches and Studies," I, p. 166.

20. Comp. Luria, op. cit. pp. 91-97.

21. Kelim, VII:16.

22. A. L. Sukenik, "A Visit To The Ruins Of Palmyra," (Hebrew) in *Teva va-Aretz*, Vol. II, No. 8, Kislev, 5694 pp. 224-416.

after the decline of Petra, which is to say, after the year 105 C.E. The city was ultimately destroyed in the days of Orleanus, in the year 273. It is therefore almost certain that the building with its peculiar mezuzah dates from the second century C.E. In that case, the mezuzah carved in the stone of the lintel would be an utter anachronism at that time, for by then it was well established that a mezuzah should be *written* on parchment and *attached* to the doorpost, not carved in the stone. The latter, a vestige of ancient custom, must have survived in this place so far from the beaten path, for reasons that we cannot possibly fathom at this late date.

A careful examination of traditions going back to the Seleucid persecutions which culminated in the Maccabean revolt, gives us some evidence that the pre-Maccabean custom was indeed to carve the mezuzah on the stone at the entrance to the house. There are two versions of a midrash about the events connected with Hannukah, one very brief,²³ and one much longer,²⁴ both of them betraying signs of a common origin.

The brief version of this tradition reads:

Our sages have taught: In the days of the wicked Greek Kingdom (the Seleucids) they issued a decree against the Jews: Whoever has a beam in his house, must carve on it that the enemies of Israel have no share in the God of Israel. Upon this, the Jews went and tore out the cross-beams of their houses. Then it was decreed that any one (Jew) who owned an ox must write on its horn that the enemies of Israel have no part in the God of Israel; whereupon they went and sold their oxen.

In, order to understand this passage, one has to be alert to the use of euphemism by the Midrash. "The enemies of Israel" is a way of saying "the people of Israel" — in the context, something too dreadful to utter.²⁵ In the same way, the "beam" really means, "the mezuzah," and the decree meant, "anybody who has a mezuzah on his door must tear it out" — for it was the custom at that time to carve the Biblical words on the actual stone of the lintel or the right-hand door-post as you entered the house. This reading is supported by the expanded version of the Midrash, which elaborates on the theme by showing how the Seleucid persecutions came in fulfillment of various Biblical verses, and by having the Jews engage in dialogue with God:

. . . . Then said Israel before the Holy One, Blessed be He: Why am I thus afflicted? Answered He: for the sin of (neglecting) the mezuzah. . . Now this

23. In Jellinek, *Bet ha-Midrash*, I, 133–136.

24. *Ibid.* IV, 1–3.

25. The Gemara on the sixth mishna of Megillat Ta'anit is more explicit: "They would write on the forehead of an ox or donkey that the owner had no share in the God of Israel."

decree lasted three years. And when the Greeks saw that the Jews did not succumb, no not one, they made another decree: Everyone who has an ox or a sheep must inscribe on its horn that he renounces the God of Israel. . .

These passages record two stages in the persecutions of Antiochus IV (Epiphanes). The first was an attempt to eliminate the visible identification of the Jewish house, and the second was an effort to dragoon the Jews into actual pagan worship. Here too, the writer is euphemistic rather than explicit; he could scarcely bring himself to say that what was really required was the dedication of the animal to Aphrodite, the goddess of fertility. By writing her name on the horn, the owner acknowledged that it was by her power that he could plough and plant and reap his crop.^{25a}

MEZUZAH IN ITS ACCEPTED FORM THE RESULT OF SELEUCID PERSECUTIONS

Guided by hellenizing Jews, the Greeks of the Seleucid Empire sought to erase the Torah and its way of life. They defiled its scrolls, rubbed out words, and drew pagan pictures on the parchment. They may also have outlawed the use of the Hebrew alphabet. Certainly they uprooted the stone in the doorway on which the words of the "Shema" were carved.²⁶ Those loyal to the faith had to leave their houses doorless, their property unguarded. This is the source of the legend that the Lord provided for them by sending kosher animals to wander tamely right into their unprotected homes. On the other hand, hellenizers and other Jews who sought to curry favor with the ruling Greeks took out the stone adorned with the symbol of a crown.²⁷

25a. An echo of this has survived in the liturgical poem for the Second Sabbath of Hanukkah by Menahem ben Makhir (Central Europe, 11th century): "When mine enemy had the upper hand and he commanded to write on the horn of the ox and on the beam: Ye have no portion in the Lord."

26. Cf. the Targum on Lamentations II:9: where "He hath broken her bars" is rendered "He hath broken her mezuzot." The more intense the persecutions became, the greater was the importance and status attached to the mezuzah. In the Mekhilta of R. Ishmael (Mas. d'Pisha, ch. 11) we read: "'The Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto houses.' . . Is not a conclusion a fortiori called for? If the blood of the paschal lamb in Egypt on that last night, something that was a very temporary precept, and applied only at night but not by day, and was not continued in future generations — still was effective in keeping 'the destroyer out of your houses,' how much more effective is the mezuzah, which contains the Holy Name ten times.'" Since the only time when an attack on Jewish practices included an attack on the mezuzah was the period of persecution under Antiochus, it is reasonable to regard this midrash as an echo of those events.

27. Meg. Taan. IV. See my commentary ad. loc. pp. 113–116.

There were many for whom all this was too much, and they abandoned their homes and joined the rebel bands led by the Hasmoneans. There were others who could not leave home, but determined nevertheless to cling to their Judaism. In order to observe the commandment of mezuzah, they resorted to writing the texts on parchment, which they then placed within a hollow stick, and put the latter in their doorway. It is suggested that this is what the Baraita meant when it called this practice “a danger.” The sages, seeing that this practice involved the risk of life, wanted to discourage it, and declared it “no fulfilment of the mitzvah.” The same thing applied to those who placed the stick behind the door – the Greeks were on the lookout, and would easily detect such a violation of their decree. So this too was declared “a danger, and no fulfilment of the mitzvah.”

WHEN THE NEW FORM OF THE MEZUZAH CAME INTO BEING

It is therefore proposed that this was the time when the new form of the mezuzah came into being. The carving on the stone at the entrance was replaced by the texts written on parchment, rolled up and inserted into a small case. Later, when the Hasmoneans had led the Jews to cast off the yoke of the Seleucid occupation, and Judaea was free again, this new form was retained, having become sanctified by the sacrifices made during the dark days of oppression, when loyal Jews had risked their lives to preserve the commandment of the mezuzah.

The ancient practice of carving the mezuzah-text into the very stone of the building has left its traces in the Sifre on Deuteronomy 6:19:²⁸ “Scripture says, ‘And you shall write them,’ from which I deduce, write on stone, for the same verb is used later on in Deuteronomy explicitly for writing on stone.”²⁹ In this connection Chaim Tchernowitz (Rav Tza’ir) writes as follows: “Carving texts on stone was an ancient practice, going back to the time when it was the only known method of writing. No doubt the texts of the mezuzah were also carved in this fashion on the actual doors. However, when writing with ink was introduced, there was no further reason to continue the old practice. That is the basis for the distinction made in the tradition between a (temporary) injunction and a precept (for the generations). Unspecified “writing” in the Bible means ink on parchment, or the equivalent. No doubt the midrash in the Sifre is very old, for the custom of writing the mezuzah on parchment goes back to the Soferic period.”³⁰

28. Ed. Meir Ish-Shalom, p. 75.

29. That is, in Deut. 27:2–3. “Thou shalt set thee up great stones, and plaster them with plaster. And thou shalt write upon them...”

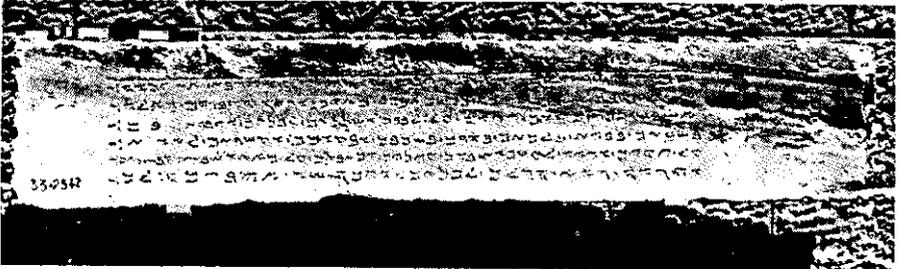
30. *Toledot ha-Halakhah*, IV, p. 77.

THE SAMARITAN MEZUZAH

It was stated above that the older form of the mezuzah carved in stone survived in Palmyra three centuries after it had been replaced in Judaea by the parchment scroll. There was also another place where it survived — in the synagogues of the Samaritans, of which a considerable number are known to us.

In the appendix to the book about the Carmel by Count von Mulinen³¹ there is a description and drawing by one Dr. Schroder³² of a Samaritan mezuzah from the Samaritan village of Sindianah.³³ The mezuzah is carved on a stone tablet in Samaritan script, and consists of the paragraph "Shema."

The same Biblical paragraph, engraved in seven lines of Samaritan Hebrew, was found on a stone lintel in Gaza. So too with the mezuzah-inscription of Beth-Alma, near Shechem. In the latter case, the lintel was about 3 meters long, 85 cm. high, and 42 cm. thick.³⁴ On the other hand, Samaritan mezuzot found in Shechem³⁵ and in the neighbourhood of the modern Kfar Bilu³⁶ are engraved on marble tablets, and it is difficult to determine exactly where they were affixed to the structure of the synagogue — whether outside, over the doorway, or beside the entrance, or perhaps even in the interior.



Samaritan Mezuzah engraved on stone lintel containing the Biblical paragraph of the Shema in ancient Hebrew script.

31. Dr. E. Graft von Mulinen, "Beitrage zur Kenntnis des Karmels," 1908, p. 340.
32. He was the German Consul General.
33. A village about 4km. east of Zichron Ya'akov.
34. I. Ben Zvi, *Sefer ha-Shomronim* (5700) plate XIII.
35. See A.L. Sukenik: "The Date of a Newly Discovered Samaritan Inscription," in *Yediot*, Vol. IV, Shevat 5694, p. 130. See also Ben Zvi, op. cit. plate XI.
36. Ben Zvi, op. cit. Plate XII.

FROM ENGRAVINGS ON STONE PILLARS TO PARCHMENT

To sum up, it appears that the form taken by the mezuzah originally, from the time that the Israelites first began to observe this ritual practice, was that of an inscription engraved on one of the actual stone pillars supporting the entranceway. This form underwent a drastic change at the time of the Syro-Greek persecutions under the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV. Under his policy of *gleichschaltung* which withdrew toleration from the rituals of the Jewish religion, the mezuzah, or doorpost inscription, was outlawed by the regime. This gave rise to a new and secret method of observing the Biblical precept: The text was written on parchment and placed inside a hollow stick, which could be whisked out of sight when danger threatened. After the Maccabees had succeeded in driving the Syro-Greeks out of Judaea, the form created under pressure of the emergency — writing on parchment — persisted and became the accepted norm, gaining the stamp of approval of the Halachah. During the reign of the last Maccabean Kings, whose habit it was to observe the rituals of Judaism with great panache, it became fashionable for the wealthy to adorn their mezuzot, and to write the Divine Names therein in golden ink. When the last important Hasmonean King had died, the sages declared this form of conspicuous display impermissible. At that point the mezuzah had reached the stage in its development which is enshrined in the Tractate Mezuzah, and which is the form and the halachah on the subject that have come down to us at the present day.

Translated from the Hebrew by S. Gershon Levi



Samaritan Mezuzah engraved on stone containing the Ten Commandments in ancient Hebrew script.

SAUL AND THE WITCH OF ENDOR

BY SHIMON BAKON

The Tragedy

According to Webster (unabridged), tragedy is "a serious play having an unhappy or disastrous ending brought about by the characters or central character impelled in *ancient drama*, by fate or, *more recently*, by moral weakness... psychological maladjustment, or social pressure." There can be little doubt that, in the entire range of Scriptures, there is no character who so closely fits the description as does King Saul. Is it possible to reconstruct the intention of the author of the Book of Samuel, to which circumstance he ascribes the final tragedy of King Saul? Is his final downfall caused by forces over which he had no control (in this case the will of God), or is it the result of flaws in his own character? Chapter 28 of I Samuel, the encounter of King Saul with the necromancer of En-Dor offers important clues to the questions raised.

Professor André Neher in his *L'Existence Juive*, in a chapter dealing with "Biblical Mystery," has pointed to an interesting debate on Saul contained in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Yoma 22 a., concerning the sin which brought about Saul's downfall.

Rav Mani, commenting on the verse (I Samuel 15:5), dealing with the fateful battle of Israel with Amalek, said:

"And Saul came to the city of Amalek, and lay in wait in the valley"; because of what happens in the valley. When the Holy One, blessed be He, said to Saul: Now go and smite Amalek, he (Saul) said: If on account of one man the Torah commanded, perform the ceremony of the heifer, whose neck is to be broken (referring to a ceremony to be performed if a person is found slain, and it cannot be ascertained who slew him) how much more ought consideration be given to all these persons. And if human beings sinned, what has the cattle committed? And if adults have sinned, what have the little ones done? A divine voice came forth and said: "Be not righteous overmuch." And when Saul said to Doeg (in the incident related in I Samuel 22:18), when Saul had all the priests killed on account of David: "Turn thou and fall upon the priests," a heavenly voice came forth to say: "Be not overly wicked."

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It seems, then, that according to Rav Mani, Saul overstepped his royal prerogatives on both accounts. The penalty for his sin was his downfall.

Rav Huna, on the other hand claimed:

How little does he whom the Lord supports need to grieve or trouble himself. Saul sinned once and it brought calamity upon him. David sinned twice and it did not bring evil upon him.

Here, in this statement by Rav Huna we find almost embarrassing overtones of the dogma of "grace," which is the final determinant of how man will fare; David, God's darling, who sinned repeatedly, though severely punished is eventually forgiven. But Saul, by sparing Agag, King of the Amalekites, is told: "It repents Me that I have set up Saul to be king" (I Samuel 15:11).

This debate is most instructive. It reflects the thinking of the ancient Rabbis on fundamental issues that agitated great writers of drama, from antiquity to modern times. It even touches on the moral question of why Saul should be so severely punished for sparing his enemy, proving that this particular question already troubled the consciences of the ancients. But it does not answer the basic question posed in the beginning: what was the view of the author of Samuel on the issue of what brought about the tragedy of Saul?

At the Necromancer of En-Dor

Let us first consider the circumstances which impelled Saul to take the step of seeking a necromancer, which, on any account, has to be considered his final tragedy. The battle at Gilboa, in which he and three sons fell, and the Israelites suffered a disastrous defeat, is merely an anticlimax. We already know with certainty that the lives of Saul and his sons will terminate in ignominious disaster.

The prophet Samuel has died. It is significant that the same verse which tells of his death also relates:

And Saul had put away those that divined by a ghost or a familiar spirit out of the land (I Samuel 28:3).

This particular action is not in chronological order. The banning of these individuals had occurred probably long before at the prompting of the prophet. It is mentioned here preparatory to the event that follows:

And the Philistines gathered themselves together and came and pitched in Shunem; and Saul gathered all Israel together, and they pitched in Gilboa. And when Saul saw the host of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled (I Samuel 28:4-5).

There can be little doubt that the juxtaposition of Samuel's death, the timing of a major thrust on the part of the Philistines and loss of self-confidence on the part of Saul, is no coincidence.

And when Saul inquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither in dreams, nor by the Urim, nor by the prophets (I Samuel 28:6).



KING SAUL AT THE WITCH OF ENDOR (1 Samuel 28:7-25) by Gustav Doré

It is at this dark moment that Saul decides to seek a woman “that divineth by a ghost.”

Seen in the light of later prophetic refinement, deep sensitivity of the Psalmist, and later Rabbinic elaboration, this particular verse poses difficult theological questions. God is willing to listen to Abraham’s plea for the evil Sodomites. He is anxious for the “Teshuvah” of Nineveh from her evil ways, yet He does not respond to Saul’s inquiry?

Saul Incapable of Turning to God

There are two possible answers:

The author had a profound psychological insight into human propensity for either limiting or widening the scope of freedom. Erich Fromm in “You Shall Be as God”, commenting on the verse, “I will harden Pharaoh’s heart (Ex. 7:3-8),” states:

What does God mean by saying, I will harden Pharaoh’s heart? It seems to me that this is to be understood in terms of the belief that all necessary events are events not only predicted, but caused by God. Any act that will necessarily happen is God’s will. Hence when God says that He will harden Pharaoh’s heart, He is announcing that Pharaoh’s heart will *unavoidably* harden... What the biblical text stresses here is one of the most fundamental laws of human behavior. Every evil act tends to harden man’s heart that is, to deaden it... The more man’s heart hardens, the less freedom does he have to change. But there comes a point of no return ... when he is forced to go on until the unavoidable end, which is, in the last analysis, his own physical and spiritual destruction.

It is possible that the author takes a similar view, indicating that Saul at this stage was incapable of turning to God. The author, well acquainted with the life of Saul, knew much more than is indicated in Scripture; one could make a case that, in his later years Saul had taken a series of actions which Samuel considered inimical to God. What for instance would the name Ish Boshet (Ish-baal) given to his youngest son indicate? Perhaps of some significance also is the following innocuous statement:... “And behold, he is setting him up a monument” (I Samuel 15:12). Has Saul, so modest and shy in the beginning of his career, now become an arrogant king? Is this perhaps the meaning of Samuel’s accusation: **הלא אטם קטן אתה בעיניך ראש שבטי ישראל אתה**; “So long as you were little in your own sight, you were (chosen to be) head of the tribes of Israel,” and not “Though thou be little in thine own sight, art thou not head of the tribes of Israel?” (in the translation of J.P.S. 15:17).

But perhaps of greatest significance is the comparison of relevant verses in Chapter 22:19 and Chapter 15:9.

And Nob, the city of priests, smote he with the edge of the sword, both men and women, children and sucklings, and oxen and sheep (22:19).

But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, and the oxen ... and would not utterly destroy them (15:9).

In addition, there is little to prevent us from assuming that chapters 15 and 22 are not in chronological order, and that, in fact, events related in chapter 15 occurred at a later time. If one takes a good look at I Samuel, one will find that up to chapter 17 we follow the career of Saul, including his successful campaigns which, therefore, also tells of the decisive victory over Amalek. From chapter 17 on, the author's interest turns primarily to the career of David and his relation to Saul. One can then state that chapter 22, telling of Saul's revenge taken against the city of Nob, preceded the events related in chapter 15. Thus the fury of Samuel is better understood. It was the final straw. The city of priests is utterly destroyed, but Agag and the best of the oxen and sheep are spared. It is this action that ripped to pieces the already strained relationship between king and prophet.

Not Through Magic

The second answer is closer at hand. God did not answer because Saul, by his own deeds, had cut off the instrumentalities of the "right" approach to God.

Such an answer assumes identification of the author with a tradition that found full expression in Deuteronomy 18:10-11 where, in the larger context of the roles of priest and prophet, Israel is admonished:

There shall not be found among you anyone that maketh his son or his daughter pass through the fire, one that useth divination... or a necromancer.

The intent of this passage is obvious. God is to be approached through priest and prophet but not through magic.

One has also to assume that the author was steeped in a tradition that looked with abhorrence at any witchcraft viewing it, together with idolatry, as an abomination and antithetical to true religion, leading to moral turpitude and debasement.

There can be little doubt that the author fully identifies with the views on witchcraft as presented above. In fact, the words spoken by prophet Samuel berating King Saul at the aftermath of the war with the Amalekites, summarize these points:

...behold to obey is better than sacrifice
for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft
and stubbornness is as idolatry and terafim (I Sam. 15:22-23).

Furthermore, when in ch. 28:10, to assuage the fears expressed by the necromancer:

Saul swore to her by the Lord, saying As the Lord liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing,

one can feel a tone of irony, expressed by the author. At this moment the position of Saul is not tragic but pathetic. Resh Lakish, commenting on this particular verse, suggested that Saul is to be compared with a woman who swears by her husband's life, in the company of her lover.

While there is sufficient evidence that to the author magic and true religion are considered to be antithetical, no evidence can be adduced as to whether or not the author gave credence to the efficacy of magic.

This particular question has significance when we approach the story of Saul's meeting with the necromancer, told movingly and with consummate skill in chapter 28. A brief summary as described by the author is in place.

Saul, in fear of the gathering forces of the Philistines camp and unable to inquire of God, asks his servants to search for a necromancer. They lead him, disguised, to the sorceress of En-Dor. After allaying her fears, he requests to speak to the ghost of Samuel. It is at this point that she "discovers" that it is King Saul himself who had made the request. In the ensuing dialogue Samuel confirms in even stronger terms what he had told Saul at the affair of Agag. At hearing this, Saul faints. After being urged by the woman and his servants to eat (in profound depression he had fasted all day), he leaves the same night for the encampment of the Israelites.

The question of what truly transpired at the fateful encounter at En-Dor has exercised traditional commentators. They seem to agree that the act of necromancy was such that the necromancer saw the apparition but did not hear its voice, while the petitioner heard the voice but did not see the apparition. They disagree on the act of bringing up the ghost, with some claiming that it actually occurred by the power of the sorceress; others question the possibility of necromancy in general but give credence to this particular instance, claiming that here it occurred by direct intervention and power of God; and there are others who view this entire act as trickery which, however, to the feverish imagination and troubled conscience of Saul, had all semblance of reality.

No matter how the modern reader wishes to reconstruct the events at this encounter, the results are the same: the king leaves a shattered person, preparing for a battle in full knowledge of what will happen.

Saul and David

The episode of Saul's visit at En-Dor has to be seen against the background of a much wider canvass. This entire episode is, so to speak, sandwiched in by

dramatic events centering around David. David, as will be recalled, had finally come to the conclusion that it was unsafe for him to remain in Israel, and sought safety from the wrath of Saul in the land of Philistines. He and about 600 highly trained, disciplined and desperate men and their families found refuge with Achish, King (Seren) of Gath, who offered them Ziklag. When, now the Philistines gathered for a major war against Saul, Achish requested participation of David and his men in this campaign. David, however, was saved from a dilemma by the suspicion of the rest of the Philistine city-kings who did not trust him. David, on returning to Ziklag, found the city devastated, women and children and flocks taken in booty by the marauding Amalekites. We are told:

And David was greatly distressed; for the people spoke of stoning him, because the soul of all the people was grieved, every man for his sons and for his daughters; but David *strengthened himself in the Lord his God* (I Samuel 30:6).

It is most noteworthy that at the same moment, both Saul and David, each in his own way, have reached the nadir of their career. It is equally noteworthy how the author, knowing the desperate situation of both, presents their reaction to extreme adversity. Saul is seeking a necromancer, submitting himself to the indignity of seeking help from individuals whom he himself had banished, while it is David who strengthened himself in the Lord his God, and it is not the other way round. What then follows is a most significant verse:

And David said to Abiathar the priest:

"I pray thee, bring me hither the Ephod."

And David inquired of the Lord— *וישאל ה'*

And He answered him.

This verse invites comparison with Saul's predicament related in 28:6:

And when Saul inquired of the Lord— *וישאל ה'*,

The Lord answered him not, neither in dreams nor by Urim, nor by prophets.

Again, it is proposed that the similarity in the wording: *וישאל ה'* conveys a special meaning. The author seems to say that here are two men, two rivals, both at a moment of serious trouble, both turning in their moment of agony to God, and God does not respond to the one but responds to the other. On the surface it looks that Rav Huna is correct. Saul, whom God has rejected, no matter how he tries, no matter what he undertakes, moves inexorably toward his own doom; David, the beloved of God, precisely at the moment when things look darkest for him, when chances of the promises made to him by Samuel that he would inherit the kingdom of Judah and Israel, seem burnt to ashes, yet it is out of these ashes, strengthened in the Lord, that the beginnings of his meteoric rise are formed. On deeper inquiry, however, the opposite picture emerges: It is his own deeds, flowing from a flawed character that block Saul's way to God, and eventually seal his doom. He had killed the priests of Nob, and therefore God did not

respond through the Urim; he had alienated the prophet, and God did not respond through the instrumentality of the prophet. David, perhaps the only one who could have succored him in this contest with the Philistines, had been exiled by Saul. And if one stretches somewhat the point, all his dreams about establishing a dynasty blew up like a bubble in the dreamy eeriness of En-Dor. We observe King Saul, a man of great and impressive stature (head and shoulders above the people), a courageous warrior-king who staved off successfully, time and again, inroads attempted by surrounding peoples, who had defeated the Philistines at Michmash, in the undignified posture, first of panic and then of choosing an anti-religious means of approaching God.

It is only from this point on that our deep sympathy for him is re-awakened, as in his younger years when he summoned all Israel against the Ammonites at Yabesh-Gilead. We admire again his rise to heroism, albeit hopeless, giving battle against the Philistines in full knowledge that Israel will be defeated, that his sons and he will perish and that his dynasty will come to an abrupt end.

It is a wonderful and fitting end that the mangled bodies of Saul and his sons were recovered from the walls of Bet-Shan and interred in Yabesh-Gilead, completing a cycle of life begun in hopeful heroism and ending in an hopeless act of heroism. We cannot help but identify with the simple and yet so moving elegy composed by David:

Thy, beauty, O Israel, upon the high places is slain
How are the mighty fallen! (II Samuel 1:19).

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DAVID AND BATHSHEBA

BY MOSHE GARSIEL

Part I

The dramatic account of David's adulterous affair with Bathsheba has captured the imagination of countless artists, authors and critics. The snocking portrayal of the sin of the king who was destined to be the ancestor of the Messiah is not only a narrative gem but, at the same time, a striking delineation of the courage of the prophet-father who dared to denounce that great monarch to his face.

Despite the superb literary art of the narrator (who may very well have been the prophet himself or one of his disciples), the reader might still grapple with some perplexing and fascinating problems that the Bible has apparently failed to elucidate.

Does the narrator criticize or condemn David for his failure to take a more active role in the war in which his men were heavily engaged?

To what extent was Bathsheba herself responsible for David's affair with her?

Did Uriah know about her adultery?

Exactly how was the murder of Uriah accomplished?

Could the narrator have brought out the moral aspects of the incident in a more effective way?

'SAFE IN HIS CAPITAL

In the spring of the year, the time when kings go forth to battle, David sent Joab and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they besieged Rabbah. But David remained at Jerusalem (II Samuel 11:1).

Some Bible scholars see subtle irony in David remaining safely in his capital city while his men faced grave danger on the battlefield. The listing of the details of "Joab, his servant" perhaps and "all Israel" besieging Rabbah, contrasts sharply with the laconic and even sarcastic comment, "but David remained at Jerusalem." Unlike other kings and his own men who were risking their lives, the "mighty" king of Israel was far from any peril. The phrase, "when kings go forth to battle," sardonically juxtaposes David's secure stay in Jerusalem with the military expeditions of other monarchs.

However, before we can properly evaluate the narrator's intent in this opening

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verse of the crucial chapter, we must determine on the basis of historical and biographical facts exactly why David at this time declined to lead his troops in battle against Ammon. We must understand that, although the presence of a charismatic leader on the battlefield would undoubtedly have been a tremendous boost to the morale of his soldiers, any grave injury that he might have suffered could very well have led to a catastrophic defeat for his entire army, as in the case of Jehoshaphat's death (I Kings 22:36).

Hence it is likely that David and other monarchs would only take an active military role in decisive battles but would remain in their capitals during less important campaigns. At the start of his career, David fought personally against the Philistines in a number of battles. However, after he was almost killed in a later encounter with them, his men adjured him to refrain from going out himself to fight them lest he "quench the lamp of Israel" (II Samuel 21:17).

During an earlier phase of the present campaign when the Syrian forces led by Shabach posed a grave threat to the army of Israel, David personally led the attack against them which resulted in their defeat. Once this was accomplished, however, David restored the active command of the army to Joab, his loyal and able general. This is why the narrator emphasizes that "in the spring of the year when the kings go forth to battle, *David sent Joab.*"

As David had been away from Jerusalem for some time, various administrative affairs might also have required his presence there. Since the siege of Rabbah would take several months, David's continued presence on the scene would not contribute much to the eventual outcome. Only when the city's fall was imminent, would he be needed to appear.

It should be clear, therefore, that the narrator is not critical of David for not taking part in battle. He is only setting the stage for the incident with Bathsheba while Israel was in the midst of an important series of struggles to the east and north of Israel. David's presence in Jerusalem is important to the episode at this point. His failure to be personally engaged in combat is not criticized by the narrator. Only later, when Uriah enters the scene, is the King's absence from the field of battle alluded to with any sense of judgment on David.

FROM THE KING'S ROOFTOP

"It happened, late one afternoon, when David arose from his couch and was walking upon the roof of the King's house, that he saw from the roof a woman bathing; and the woman was very beautiful and David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" (II Samuel 11:2-3).

Some critics view the description of David arising from his nap as another ironic touch of the narrator who contrasts David's idle siesta with the battlefield

perils of his people; but this is not necessarily the case. (The noonday heat in most countries of the Near East is so intense that even in modern Israel most stores are closed in the early afternoon.) In Biblical days it was customary for people of all walks of life (note Ishbosheth, II Samuel 4:5) to take a noonday rest or even to work after sunset to avoid the heat of day (Ruth 3:2).

Consequently, David's nap and subsequent rooftop walk need not be considered self-indulgent. His first real misdeed was his failure to turn away immediately when he sighted the nude woman below. By noting that this incident took place in the "late afternoon", the narrator may be implying that David made a special effort in the dim twilight to stare at the bathing woman.

Because David's moral lapse was initially visual, his punishment is meted out when Absalom lay with David's concubines "in the sight of all Israel" (II Samuel 16:22). His son's degrading and shocking deed fulfills the measure for measure retribution that the Lord placed in the mouth of Nathan: "And I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun" (II Samuel 12:11). The talion is carried out even to the extent of having this act occur at the very place where David's straying began—on the roof of the royal palace.

Although David's misdeeds began with his rude gazing, the enormity of the sin was not revealed until he was informed, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" The artistic function of all of these details is to deliberately prolong the reader's suspense. When the king learns that the woman is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, it is still possible for her to be an unmarried woman and hence permitted to David. But the phrase, "the wife of Uriah the Hittite," closes the fatal circle. Now David is confronted with a very real conflict between obedience to the Law of God and surrender to lustful desire.

BATHSHEBA'S ROLE

Bathsheba's outdoor ablutions represent to some critics a deliberate attempt on her part to seduce the king. She was, in their view, more of a designing character than an innocent lamb.

However, we must note carefully that the episode took place "in the late afternoon" when there was very little daylight left. Even if Bathsheba bathed by candlelight, it would have been difficult for anybody to observe her clearly, unless he exerted special effort.

Bathsheba had no way of knowing beforehand that the king would behave in such a way. Yet, by the same token, neither did David deliberately plan in advance to spy on Bathsheba. The encounter was totally unforeseen. Moreover, Bathsheba had no reason to believe that David, who was influential enough to

select any unattached girl as his wife or concubine, would prefer instead the complications of choosing to lie with a married woman.

Furthermore the series of verbs referring to David ... "he saw ... sent ... inquired ... sent ... took her ... lay with her ..." indicates that it was he rather than she who instigated the adultery. Additional support for this view is found in verse 11:4 which states explicitly that David "sent messengers and took her and she came unto him." Had she taken a more active role in the episode, the account would have read simply that "he sent messengers and she came to him" or for even greater effect, "he sent messengers and she hastened to come to him", (implying that she was eager to seduce him).

The actual phrase employed, "and he took her," suggests that David used a degree of force. It is likely, however, that Bathsheba's resistance was only minimal for she was probably surprised by the king's unexpected overtures but may have been afraid to ward off his advances in a more aggressive manner.

It would be unfair to characterize Bathsheba as an opportunistic female who schemed her nefarious way to the throne. No doubt the killing of Uriah shocked her deeply. Her true role in the affair can be gauged by her relationship with two key individuals who were involved in the unfolding of the drama, Nathan and Joab.

When Nathan, the prophet, delivered the sternest of rebukes to David for his sin of adultery and openly accused the king of stealing the poor man's love, not a word did he utter against Bathsheba. And yet, it is he, the prophet, who later announces the partial punishment for the crime—the death of the child resulting from the affair, the offspring of David and Bathsheba. Now, if Bathsheba had planned or even been gratified with the adultery, she certainly would have resented Nathan's exposing of the episode to the whole court of the king. She would have been antagonized even more by the death sentence that Nathan pronounced on their "love child."

Actually, the reverse is true. Not only does Bathsheba not hate Nathan, but she apparently concurs with his condemnation of David for his theft of the love. Nathan's affection for Bathsheba is revealed when he names her second child Jedidiah (Beloved of God).

Bathsheba's confidence in Nathan is shown in the episode when her own fate and the fate of her son Solomon (I Kings 1:11-53) are jeopardized by Adonijah.

It is clear that Bathsheba was perturbed at the course of events that led to her adultery and the tragedy of her husband. To ward off public scandal, however, she was compelled to marry her husband's murderer (hastily), recognizing the evil that he had done to her. David sought to appease Bathsheba by promising that her son, Solomon, would inherit his throne.

Bathsheba's innocence is further revealed by the subsequent actions of Joab,

the general who had saved his king's skin by murdering one of his first soldiers. When David became old and feeble and his sons were vying for his throne, Joab supported Adonijah, rather than Solomon, the son of Bathsheba. Had Bathsheba rejoiced at or even somehow plotted "the removal" of Uriah, it is logical that Joab would have expected a reward from her for the good service that he had rendered. Instead it appears that Joab feared Bathsheba's and her son's retribution for his evil deed, so much so that he joined the ranks of their chief opponent, Adonijah. Fate made Joab the murderer of Uriah, but deliberate choice on the part of Bathsheba brought about Joab's death at the behest of her son despite the fact that the murder had been ordered by her present husband, thus avenging the slaying of her first husband.

To be continued

Translated and abridged by Dr. Herschel Levine from an article in Beth Mikra, the Hebrew quarterly of the World Jewish Bible Society.

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KOHELETH – A RE-INTERPRETATION

BY JACOB FELTON

There is a general consensus among modern Biblical scholars that the Book of Koheleth contains heretical elements. Some of their major arguments center on the passages (3:21): "And who knows whether the spirit of the sons of man rises upward and whether the spirit of the animal descends into the earth," and on 1:3: "What profit has man of all his labor which he toils under the sun." They bring further proof by stating that the Sages themselves considered "hiding" the book, and what saved its inclusion in the Holy Canon were the final two verses which, they consider, were grafted into the text, to save it for Holy Scripture.

THE TALMUD'S JUDGMENT OF THE BOOK OF KOHELETH

The following passage of the Talmud (Bab. Shabbat 30b) is usually cited in which Rav Yehuda, basing himself on a pronouncement of Rav (first generation of Amoraim, circ. 240 C.E.) tells us that "the Sages had intended to hide away the Book of Koheleth, because its words are self-contradictory. Why then did they not suppress it? Because its beginning and its end are words of the Torah." A closer study of the "contradictions" of which the Gemara speaks are merely a comparison of two sets of sayings, each concerned with "joy" – שמחה and שחוק. Once each, "s'chok" and "simcha" are declared to be vanities, while on two other occasions, these joys are regarded as possessing value. The contradictions are disposed of by typical talmudic explanations.* There is no trace here of the Sages having suspected Kohelet of being a disbeliever.

Who were these "Sages"? One may assume that an early Amora (a rabbi of the Gemara period), when speaking of "the Sages," was referring to his predecessors, the rabbis of the Mishnah, the Tannaim (from about 250 B.C.E. to about 230 C.E.). It is most unlikely that these Tannaim would have felt competent to

* An interesting example of the Talmud's approach to these contradictions is the following statement in the same page of the Talmud (Shabbat 30b): The verses (in Koheleth) wish to show one that the Divine Presence (שכינה) rests upon man neither through gloom, nor through sloth, nor through frivolity (שחוק), nor through levity, nor through idle talk or chatter, save through a matter of joy (שמחה) in connection with a mitzvah (שמחה של מצוה).

With the advent of Hitler, Mr. Felton emigrated to London. There he pursued studies in Bible and Talmud, contributing many articles to the Bulletin of the Bible Reader's Union. In 1968 he settled in Israel. Here he completed translations of works from Hebrew into English. At present he is writing an original Book on the meanings of the Divine Names in the Torah.

remove from the Bible any book which their predecessors, Ezra and the Men of the Great Synod, had included in the Canon. The statement that “the Sages” wished to hide the Book of Koheleth — a similar statement about their intention to hide the Book of Proverbs, certainly not a heretical work, follows on the same Gemara page — is merely an exaggeration, to add some spice to the discussion. Instead of the usual talmudic contra-positioning of phrases, such as those seemingly approving of “joy” and others disapproving, the discussion is clothed in a somewhat sensational fashion, that the Sages had intended to hide Koheleth. The fact that the passage is so widely quoted — even by those who have not studied it — proves the effectiveness of the style.

I claim Rashi as an ally to this theory. I suspect that he also took the statement about the Sages’ intention to hide the Book of Koheleth with a large pinch of salt. Usually, he is the wonderfully faithful interpreter of texts, but on this occasion he adds a pithy, almost sly remark, which amounts to a total contradiction of what the Gemara says. On the Gemara’s word: “The Sages did not remove Koheleth from the Canon because its start and its end represent words of the Torah,” Rashi comments drily: “and all the more, that there is Torah in the intervening passages.” Rashi obviously thought that the whole Book breathes the spirit of the Torah.

THE FOCAL MESSAGE OF KOHELETH

It is now my privilege to sketch a general outline of what I regard as the Book’s philosophy. It has a most logical, systematic structure. It starts with a question and twice gives the same closely-reasoned answer: once at the end of what I regard as Part One of the Book (3:14) and again in its closing verses.

Modern scholars are of the opinion that a belief in the World-to-Come is never mentioned in the Bible. However, belief that God judges the soul of man after his death occurs several times in the Book. Indeed, it is the essential reply to Koheleth’s question.

Koheleth is not the only example of the Bible’s belief in the eternal life of soul and of God rewarding or punishing the human soul, in true justice, in the World-to-Come. It underlies many Bible passages. Perhaps the clearest evidence of that belief, outside Koheleth, is to be found in Psalm 73, the philosophy of a good man who suffers new afflictions daily, while he sees wicked people basking in the enjoyment of all the delights of life, right up to their death. And yet, the Psalmist is happy, just because he knows that God is near him, holding his right hand. Such steadfastness presupposes full trust that in the World-to-Come God will establish full justice and that there the Psalmist will be richly rewarded.

The problem which Koheleth makes it his task to investigate is set out clearly in the opening of the Book, in 1:3: מה יתרון לאדם בכל עמלו:

WHAT IS ENDURING IN LIFE

What profit (יתרון) hath man of all his labour, wherein he laboureth under the sun(1:3)–מה יתרון לאדם בכל עמלו שיעמל תחת השמש. In order to convey the true meaning of the verse, it is fitting to interpret the word יתרון from the derivation of הותר, i.e., to remain, to leave over. Koheleth's penetrating question, therefore, means: "What is left over from a man's labour under the sun?" When a man dies, having lived a wise, good and rich life – has he left behind something of eternal value? Has his wise, good and successful life added something new and everlasting to the sum-total of that which existed when he came into the world? In other words: Has life any real value? Is life worth living? Worth all the work and worry? This question is as modern and relevant to-day as it was when the Book was written.

Up to 3:14 – which I regard as the end of Part One – Koheleth examines methodically whether any man, even a King Solomon, can add anything enduring to the material world, be it to nature or to architecture or to some other forms of man-made products. If any man could add anything permanent to the world – that would be a "yitron." But Koheleth finds that all movement and all supposed development in the world is really nothing but a motion in circles. Generations come and go. Sun, wind and water, they all merely return to their starting points. "What has been will be again, and what has been done will be done again; and there is nothing new under the sun" (1:9). None-the-less, the urge to find out the essence and aim of existence drives him on. "It is a bothersome interest which God has given man, so that, because of it, man should argue with God" (1:13). Amassing wisdom cannot be the answer, for this only adds to man's pains (1:16-18). Seeking pleasure and sipping wine leave him empty.

Would he be able to achieve something of lasting value if he were to combine all his gifts, his inventive intelligence, his architectural imagination, his ability to design a palace and gardens of unique splendour (2:4-6)? True, designing and building it all provides tremendous exhilaration, but it does not lead to a permanent "yitron" "for who knows whether (my successor) will be wise or foolish" (2,19)? True also, wisdom is superior to foolishness, but only as a flash of light is brighter than darkness. The flash does not last. Wise men and fools share the fate of being forgotten (2:13ff).

Now follows the summing-up of Part One (3:1-8): "To everything there is a season." Life is followed by death; building and destruction, laughter and loving, war and peace, nothing lasts. "Now I knew fully that only what God makes lasts forever. One cannot add to it; one cannot take away from it. God has made it for the purpose that one should fear him" (3:14).

This is the end of Part One, a most appropriate place for stressing that man

must fear God. The closely-knit, comprehensive search for a “yitron” in the material world has ended in failure. Man cannot add anything lasting to that which God has made. The remaining chapters of the Book describe a variety of human life courses and experiences; the rapid changes in man’s fortunes; thoughts on the avoidance of loneliness, and much thoughtful advice.

This is not a pessimistic book. The lack of a “yitron” is limited to this, the material world. But this is only part, the preparatory stage of our life. If fear of God and good deeds fill this stage, then the “yitron” will be ours in the eternal world which follows. 3:17 assures us that “there” God judges between the good and the wicked — “The righteous and the wicked God will judge, for there is a time *there* for every purpose and for every work” (3:17).

Koheleth proclaims that man is the master of his own salvation. His good deeds, based on fear of God, will gain him eternal happiness. If, in addition, God grants him good health and some wealth on earth, then man should see in this a gift of God and he should enjoy it fully.

INJUSTICE ON EARTH

Koheleth does not explain why there is injustice on earth, why one sometimes finds “a righteous man perishing, despite his righteousness, while some wicked man lives long, despite his wickedness” (7:15); and again: “Some sinner does evil a hundred times and lives longer” (8:12). All the same, “I know that it will be well with those who fear God, and it will not be well with the wicked. He who does not fear God will not prolong his days which, however long, are only as a passing shadow” (8:12-13). I venture to suggest that Koheleth leaves it to us to understand why there **MUST** be no justice on earth, for if all good deeds were rewarded here and all wickedness punished man’s free will to choose between doing good or evil, man’s true dignity would be taken away from him. It would be profitable, good business, to be righteous. That must not be.

Something vain occurs on earth: There are righteous men who meet the same fate as wicked ones; and there are wicked ones who meet the fate of righteous men. I said: this also is vanity (8:14).

This last verse, unlike others, starts and ends with “hevel”—הבל—“as non-lasting as man’s breath.” The double “hevel” may point to the two-fold significance of the fact that justice is not realised on earth: it is vanity, but even this vanity itself is non-lasting. Koheleth never loses faith in God’s justice. He knows full well that, despite all the evidence to the contrary, it will be well with the righteous and not well with the wicked. This verse, more than any other, proves Koheleth’s belief in the immortality of the soul and in God dealing out justice in the World-to-Come. Justice is postponed, but sure to arrive.

To cite another verse expressing the same: “If you see the oppression of the

poor and violent perversion of judgment and of justice in a province, do not wonder about that matter, for high above every high one is a Guardian, and Highest Ones—גבהים—are above them” (5:7). The “Highest Ones” is a plural, like Elohim. Both “Guardian” and “Highest Ones” refer to God Who is above those seemingly highly placed judges. Just as the plural form of Elohim indicates His all-comprising power, so the plurality of *G’vohim* points to God’s all-exceeding exaltedness. God will punish corrupt judges and compensate those wronged by them. Obviously, only in the World-to-Come.

THE MEANING OF “MI YODE’A”

What about the passage in 3:21: מי ידע רוח בני האדם העולה היא למעלה ורוח למטה which is usually translated as follows: Who knoweth the spirit of man whether it goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast whether it goeth downward to the earth.”

In an article, “Mi Yode’a” (Bulletin of the Bible Readers’ Union, London, December 1965), I tried to show that the passage (Kohelah 3:21) which, more than any other, has given rise to the idea that the author did not believe in the eternity of the soul has to be seen in the light of the true meaning of the operative words, “Mi Yode’a”—מי ידע—“who knows.” I compared the other eight occasions in the Bible where the expression “Mi Yode’a” occurs: II Sam. 12:22; Joel 2:14; Jonah 3:9; Psalm 90:11; Eccl. 2:19; Eccl. 6:12; Eccl. 8:1; Esther 4:14. In none of those other sentences is the meaning of “Mi Yode’a” a simple “who knows?”. In each case, the author either strongly believes in what he refers to as “Mi Yode’a” or he fervently wishes it were so. David (II Sam. 12:22) prays and fasts that his child should live. Joel implores the people to turn away from their bad ways (Joel 2:14). The King of Nineveh wants to persuade his people to mend their actions and thus save the city (Jonah 3:9). The Psalmist does not doubt the power of God’s anger. He merely exclaims: Who can fathom that power? (Psalms 90:11). The passage in Eccl. 2:19, “umi yode’a,” occurs after Kohelah has constructed (in fact, or in his poet-philosopher’s imagination) a grand palace and gardens. He is passionately concerned that his successor should be wise and appreciate the grandeur of his architecture. Similarly, in Eccl. 6:12 and 8:1, through the questions, “who knows what is good for man in life” and “who knows the solutions of the matter,” Kohelah puts the central question of the Book. His whole endeavour is not to leave the problem with a question mark. Lastly, Mordecai’s message to Esther, “And who knows whether (it is not God’s purpose that) you have reached royalty for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:14) is not a simple “who knows?”. It is an assertion that Providence directs all events which happen on earth. Yet, it remains a “mi yode’a,” something which cannot be proved. Kohelah’s “mi yode’a” in 3:21 means the same: I am convinced

that man's soul is eternal and ascends to God after death. But, like all belief, this cannot be proved.

TO KNOW IS TO EXPERIENCE

"Yode'a" means either "to know without the slightest doubt" or "to experience on one's own body, in one's own life." That is why the Talmud concludes from "asher teida"—אשר ידע—(Deut. 20:20) that even the slightest doubt whether a certain tree is fruit-bearing will bring about a ban on cutting it down. "Yado'a" is to know with absolute certainty. In Genesis 4:1, 4:17 and 4:25, "yode'a" refers to the personal experience of marital relations. This understanding of the term "Yode'a" solves other difficult passages, such as: "*Now Samuel did not yet know the Lord*" (I Sam. 3:7) — טרם ידע את השם. Of course, he had known of God, but he had not yet experienced being addressed as a prophet by God.

Through feeling the truth, though not able to prove it logically, Koheleth affirms in 3:21: "I know that the spirit of man goeth upward..."

The whole Book, just as the end of Part One (3:14), extols the fear of God. This is the only but important "yitron" which man can achieve. The Book's last two verses are Koheleth's philosophical, logical conclusions: "The end of the matter, after everything has been heard: fear God and observe His commandments, for this is what all man's life is about. Because God will bring every deed into judgment, even if it is ever so hidden, whether good or evil" (12:13-14). We are taught to hope that God's judgment will be exceedingly merciful, so that many of us can look forward to a "yitron," a lasting share in the brilliance of the Divine Presence.



זאת עבודת הלוים

THE LAWS OF MOURNING

BIBLICAL SOURCES

BY HYMAN ROUTTENBERG

Part I

We start here a new series of texts compiled by Rabbi Routtenberg which form a lesson in the laws of mourning and their Biblical sources. Readers of Dor le-Dor will recall the series of texts dealing with the Biblical sources relating to prayer.

The custom of mourning for the dead was in vogue even before the Torah was given, as we find in the case of Joseph, "And he made a mourning for his father seven days" (Genesis 50:10). One cannot bring proof from there, however, that according to the Torah one is required to mourn for seven days because this happened before the Torah was given. As the Yerushalmi queries: Can we make legal decisions on the basis of what happened before the Torah was given? The Yerushalmi then brings other sources including the verse in Amos: "And I will turn your feasts into mourning" (8:10); just as the feast lasts seven days, so there are seven days of mourning.

—Yerushalmi, Moed Katan 3:5

According to both the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmud, the seven days of mourning were observed even before the Flood. The seven days of grace granted to the wicked generation of the flood were to allow the period of mourning for Methuselah to expire. "And it came to pass, after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth" (Genesis 7:10). What was the nature of these seven days when the flood was postponed on their account? Rav said: These were the days of mourning for Methuselah, thus teaching that the lamenting for the righteous postpones retribution.

—Sanhedrin 108b

ויעש לאביו אבל שבעה ימים

(בראשית נ' י).

ולמדין דבר קודם למחן תורה?

דר' מועד קטן ג', ה'.

"והפכתי חגיכם לאבל" (צמוס ח' י), מה ימי החג שבעה, אף ימי האבל שבעה. — שם.

"ויהי לשבעת הימים ומי המבול היו על הארץ" (בראשית ז' י), מה טיבם של שבעת הימים?

אמר רב: אלו ימי אבילות של מחושלח, ללמדך שה-ספדין של צדיקים מעכבין את הפורענות לבא.

סנהדרין ק"ח:

Maimonides, however, states specifically that according to the Torah, there is only one day of mourning, the day of death and burial. The remainder of the seven days are not required by the Torah, even though the Torah says, "And he made a mourning for his father seven days" (Genesis 50:10), for with the giving of the Torah, new laws were propounded. The Rambam affirms that the seven days of mourning were enacted by Moses (after the Torah was given).

—Rambam, Laws of Mourning 1:1

Maimonides presumably bases his view on the statement by R. Joshua who says: A mourner is forbidden to put on phylacteries during the first two days. From the second day onward, the second day included, he is allowed to put on phylacteries; but at the entry of fresh personages he takes them off.... Said R. Ena: What is the reason for R. Joshua's view? Because it is written: "And I will turn your feasts into mourning... and the end thereof as a bitter day" (Amos 8:10) which indicates that the essential mourning is but one day.

—Moed Katan 21a.

The sages derive a number of laws of mourning from the prophet Ezekiel who, upon the sudden death of his wife, was instructed by the Almighty not to weep for her nor perform the customary rites of mourning. "Sigh in silence; make no mourning for the dead, bind thy headtire upon thee, and put thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not thine upper lip, and eat not the bread of men" (Ezekiel 24:16-17).

...ואין אבלות מן התורה
אלא ביום ראשון בלבד
שהוא יום המיתה ויום
הקבורה. אבל שאר השבעה
ימים אינו דין תורה אף על
פי שנאמר בתורה "ויעש
לאביו אבל שבעת ימים".
ניתנה תורה ונתחדשה
הלכה, ומשה רבינו תקן להם
לישראל שבעת ימי אבלות
ושבעת ימי המשחה.
רמב"ם הל' אבלות א', א.

ר' יהושע אומר: אבל ב'
ימים הראשונים אסור
להניח תפילין, משני ושני
בכלל מותר להניח תפילין,
ואם באו פנים חדשות
חולף... אמר רב עינא מאי
טעמא דר' יהושע: דכתיב
"ואחריתה כיום מר" (עמוס
ח' י').

מועד קטן כא.

בן אדם הנני לוקח ממך את
מחמד עיניך במגפה, ולא
תספד ולא תבכה ולוא תבוא
דמעתיך. האנק דום, מתים
אבל לא תעשה, פאריך חבוש
עליך, ונעליך תשים ברגליך,
ולא תעטה על שפם, ולחם
אנשים לא תאכל.
יחזקאל כ"ד, ט"ז-י"ז.

A mourner is obliged to muffle his head. Since the All Merciful enjoined Ezekiel, "And cover not thine upper lip," we infer that everybody else is obliged to do so.

—Moed Katan 15a.

A mourner is forbidden to put on Tefillin. Since the All Merciful enjoined Ezekiel, "Bind thy head-tire upon thee". This implies that everybody else who is in deep mourning is forbidden to do so.

—Ibid.

A mourner is forbidden to give the usual greeting because the All Merciful said to Ezekiel, "Sigh in silence."

—Ibid.

A mourner is forbidden to engage in the words of the Torah, because the All Merciful said to Ezekiel, "Sigh in silence."

—Ibid.

אבל חייב בעטיפת הראש,
מדקאמר ליה רחמנא
ליחזקאל, "ולא העטה על
שפם", מכלל דכולי עלמא
מיחייבי. מועד קטן ט"ז.

אבל אסור להניח תפילין.
מדקאמר ליה רחמנא
ליחזקאל "פארך חבוש
עליך" מכלל דכולי עלמא
אסור.

שם.

אבל אסור בשאילת שלום
דקאמר ליה רחמנא
ליחזקאל "האנק דום".

שם.

אבל אסור בדברי תורה
מדקאמר רחמנא ליחזקאל
"דום".

שם.



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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MOSES
BY MOSHE PEARLMAN

Natteev printing and publishing enterprises Ltd., Tel-Aviv, in conjunction with Steimatsky's Agency, Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv and Haifa

Although first published less than three years ago, Moshe Pearlman's book has proved so popular that it has already been translated into German, French, Dutch and Portuguese, and a paper-back edition has also been published.

And it is deservedly popular. It has superb illustrations, 81 in colour and 43 in black and white, with end-pieces on the possible routes of the Exodus, which are a delight to follow. Nearly every one of the 223 pages of text is illustrated, and the captions accompanying the illustrations are frequently no less illuminating. One, on p. 117, of a Torah scroll several hundred years old in the possession of a Jewish family in Peki'in in Galilee, makes the apposite comment "Peki'in has a record of unbroken Jewish settlement throughout the period of the exile"—a well-known fact which is brought home forcibly in this context, and cannot be ignored.

Actually, the book is much more than the story of Moses. It goes back in time to the very earliest period of Canaanite history and, in a few words, takes the story right up to the Prophets. "the visionaries and poets of the following five turbulent centuries (after Solomon), who consolidated the unique historic works initiated by Moses, giving permanent form to the Jewish religion and to Jewish nationhood" (p. 221).

There are five main sections: The Revolutionary Courtier, The Great Freedom Trek, The Law-Giver, Moulding a Nation, and The Promised Land. The story is dealt with in modern language which is attractive to young and old. Modern archeological research is heavily drawn upon, and the authenticity of the Biblical account in the Pentateuch and Joshua convincingly demonstrated, though the views of Julius Welhausen, "the most notable biblical critic of the 19th century" (p. 115) are also mentioned, and refuted. The author, leaning largely on the findings of Yigael Yadin—who also writes a Foreword to the book—dates the Exodus in the 13th century B.C.E., and so foreshortens the period of the Judges by about 200 years. One need not argue with the current views, but at least one reader is still convinced that the Biblical record, though it gives no dates, is the more reliable, and will be shown to be so in the end. But this point is not obtrusive, and the impression one gets is that the Biblical narrative is faithfully followed and accepted.

Anglo-Jews in Israel will feel a reflected glory in reading this work by "one of them." Moshe Pearlman comes from an East End family which was noted for its Jewish and Zionist tradition. In Israel he speedily made his mark, both

in public affairs and in writing. It must be left to history to tell of the part he played in the special mission he undertook in the early 1960's. He has been an army officer, and adviser to the prime minister, and his own experiences lend weight to his comments, a few of which may not be out of place:

"Xenophobia is often contradictory, and always irrational, as the behaviour of leading xenophobes throughout history, right down to Hitler in our own day, has shown, and cruelty to the Hebrews was not enough. They had to be eliminated, even though this would mean losing a sizeable labour force" (p. 21).

"Thus was one of the first major resistance movements in history faced with a key problem which would be encountered by every subsequent movement to resist oppression, right down to our own day: how to stir the masses to rise above their fear of reprisals, that fear which keeps them passive. It is not light matter—and it certainly was not in the Egypt of those days—for the weak and unarmed to defy authority; but a few sturdy souls, setting the example which releases the pent-up feelings of a down-trodden community, can launch a successful revolt" (p. 65).

"If, in the civilised world of today, it is taken for granted that killing is abominable, theft and adultery

reprehensible, the worship of idols an abhorrence, the observance of the Sabbath a vital safeguard of the health of the working population, it is due entirely to these landmark guidelines for human behaviour formulated three thousand three hundred years ago in the wilderness of Sinai. At the time they were startling and revolutionary, some of them marking an historic break from the customs and practices of the peoples of the ancient Near East among whom the Israelites dwelt. They represented a giant leap forward in the conception of man's relationship to man and to God..." (p. 112).

"...a people is always more united in war than it is in peace. But perhaps the principal factor, which was to be even more crucial during the settlement period, is that all were bound by a covenant with God, by a distinctive faith, and this made the Israel experience so very different from that of other infiltrating nomadic tribes—and gave it a lasting impact. They were a more cohesive force than the enemies they faced, and were moved by a higher sense of purpose, and they accordingly displayed a more tenacious fighting morale. It was their unique faith, as John Bright says, which set Israel off from her environment and made her the distinctive and creative phenomenon that she was."

Joseph Halpern

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE PROPHETS
BY MOSHE PEARLMAN

Steinmatsky's Agency, Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv, Haifa, together with Nateev Publishing 1975.

This is a companion volume to the author's *In the Footsteps of Moses*, and just as the first book is much more than the story of Moses, so the second is much more than the story of the Prophets. Actually, with two introductory chapters on Moses, Joshua and Judges, drawn largely from the first volume, the present book deals with the history of the Jewish people from the time of Samuel in the middle of the 11th century B.C.E. till that of Ezra and Nehemiah six hundred years later. And it is more than a history. It is concerned in the first place with the Hebrew prophets of old, men who "were seized with a burning passion to root out wickedness and draw forth the righteousness in man" (p. 7). Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the so-called Twelve Minor Prophets, are not just names, Moshe Pearlman has clothed them with flesh and blood, and has presented a vivid picture of their life and their activity in the troubled times in which they lived. And always he has an eye for their relevance today. And so there is continuous reference to present-day conditions. Samson is described (p. 38) as "a one-man commando unit." "Saul was the first to raise the nucleus of a regular army, with the individual tribal militias kept in reserve. (This is the broad principle applied in the Israel Defence

Forces today, which maintains a comparatively small regular army together with the young men and women on national service, while the bulk of the able-bodied population go about their normal functions but are speedily mobilized when the country is threatened) (pp. 62-64).

"Isaiah's vision of the ideal world saw the Temple as an international court giving forth 'instruction' to the peoples of all countries, and issuing 'decisions' to settle international strife—the very first notion of an ideal United Nations Assembly" (p. 125).

On p. 149 he quotes Yigael Yadin on the Rabshakeh's attempt to weaken Hezekiah's resolve to resist. This is perhaps the earliest recorded example of psychological warfare, which follows the principle of appealing directly to the people and army, over the heads of their chiefs, rousing them to overthrow their leaders by the threat of severe action if they refuse and the promise of paradise if they acquiesce.

"In speaking out against Assyria as he did, Isaiah was concerned not only for the fate of Jerusalem but also for the welfare of all who suffered under imperialism. Indeed, as Professor Moshe Weinfeld has pointed out. Isaiah was the first man in history to protest against imperialism" (p. 151).

"These protests against imperialism, delivered by Isaiah with such vigor and eloquence, go well with the prophet's idea—and he was the first to express this, too—of a world not dominated by physical imperialist might but ruled by the spirit, a world of universal peace, 'of wisdom and understanding', where the nations will accept decisions by their own will, persuaded not by sword or whip but by mount' and 'the breath of... lips' (Is. 11:2-4)" (p. 155). In passing, one may comment, what a contrast to the present state of the world!

"To him (Jeremiah) and his prophetic colleagues (Zephaniah, Nahum, Habakkuk — and the greatest of his contemporaries, Ezekiel), however, political action was but one facet of their larger preoccupation with the destiny of the nation and with moulding the minds of their people to meet their challenge at all times in the future; and in this they succeeded" (p. 186).

"They (the prophets, and particularly Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Habakkuk) had concluded that if catastrophe came, it would be the product not of divine indifference but of divine justice, and that a change of behaviour in Hebrew society would bring a change of fortune" (p. 191). A message that we can well lay to heart today!

And, characteristically, the book ends with the apocalyptic vision of the prophet Joel. Following the "divine judgement, and the punishment of all who had oppressed Israel, a new world of purity would arise, with Jerusalem as

its jewel. Judah would become a land of fruitfulness whose 'mountains shall drip sweet wine, and the hills shall flow with milk, and all the stream beds'.. shall flow with water... and Judah shall be inhabited for ever, and Jerusalem to all generations... 'for the Lord dwells in Zion' (Joel 3:18-21)" (pp. 220-221).

All this, and much else, is found in this book, with 91 full color illustrations and 40 in black and white, adorning almost every one of the 223 pages of text in the book, many of them photographed specially for this volume.

And, in contrast to so many Bible critics, Pearlman is faithful in the main to the Biblical record and Jewish tradition. Thus, for example, after giving the two views on the composition of Isaiah 40-66, Pearlman ends the section with these words: "Traditionalists, however, hold to the view that entire book is the work of the one and only Isaiah of the 8th century, and that the later chapters are the projection of the prophet's vision into the future" (p. 158).

But at least one reader is surprised that there is not a word about Samuel's great achievement in founding the guilds of the prophets, and how Gilgal, Bethel and Jericho became centers of prophetic groups. And why are the pagan prophets and the false prophets in Israel referred to as priests?

These, however, are minor faults in a work which is sure to become as great a best-seller as the first volume.

Joseph Halpern

THIRTEENTH WORLD YOUTH BIBLE CONTEST

On the 28th anniversary of the State of Israel, twenty eight contestants, from fourteen countries, participated in the thirteenth Jewish Youth Bible Contest, held annually on Israel Independence Day in Jerusalem. The international contest marks the culmination of numerous local, regional and national contests in the participating countries, in which close to one hundred thousand youth assume a special study of selected books of the Bible, in addition to whatever studies they pursue in their Hebrew high schools.

Tossing out correct answers without hesitation and quoting chapter and verse effortlessly, 16-year-old Yair Shapira, Jerusalem Yeshiva student, sailed into first place, with a perfect score of 70 points. Following closely behind were the two other Israelis, Shimon Lapid, and Avraham Tannenbaum, winning second and third places. The top five winners – including Nathan Randler, Cincinnati, and Shlomo Friedman, Brooklyn – were each awarded certificates and scholarships. All the contestants were presented to the President of the State of Israel, Professor Efraim Katzir, at a special reception at the Israel "White House" on the day



The finalists of the World Jewish Bible Contest, from fourteen countries, at the reception tendered by the President of the State of Israel. President Katzir is seated center, left of Aluf Mishneh (Colonel) Isaiah Tadmor.



"The top five winners of the Youth Bible Contest, with President Efraim Katzir. From left to right: Shlomo Freedman (Brooklyn, 5th place), Shimon Lapid (Israel, 2nd place), Yair Shapira, (Israel, 1st place), President Katzir, Avraham Tannenbaum (Israel, 3rd place), Nathan Randler (Cincinnati, 5th place).

after the contest. For over a week before Independence Day, the participants were housed at the central camping grounds of the Gadna Youth Corps, at Juara in the Galil, where they engaged in intensive final study of the Biblical books designated for the contest. Following Independence Day, the group proceeded to tour the country, under the guidance of special instructors.

A new feature of this year's proceedings was a run-off contest, held in Safed prior to Independence Day, with a panel of judges, headed by Knesset Speaker Yisrael Yeshayahu. The city of Safed went all out in receiving the participants enthusiastically, which turned out as one of the main highlights in their experience in Israel.

The Bible Quiz was organized by the World Jewish Bible Society. The Gadna Youth Corps, commanded by Aluf Mishneh (Colonel) Isaiah Tadmor, was the host of the participants. The coordinator of the Bible Contest was Rav Seren (Major) Yosef Winograd, specially assigned to the Gadna Youth Corps for this event. Dr. Yosef Burg, Minister of Interior, served as chairman of the Panel of Judges which included Ben Zion Luria, Yosef Shaar, Chaplain (Major) Avraham Sherman and Avraham Yinon.

PARTICIPANTS IN THIRTEENTH YOUTH BIBLE CONTEST

Argentina

Raquel Freud
Esther Lichter

Australia

Danny Mond

Canada

Raizie Handler
Rose Feiner
Raphael Shochat

England

Shlomo Cohen
Aaron Sulzbacher

France

Joseph Tedgoi
Yves Jossot
Maurice Amar

Iran

Shlomo Gadian

Ireland

Jonathan Judeiken

Israel

Shimon Lapid
Abraham Tannenbaum
Yair Shapira

Mexico

Dov Stein

Panama

Orit Haratz

Peru

Nancy Grief

Sweden

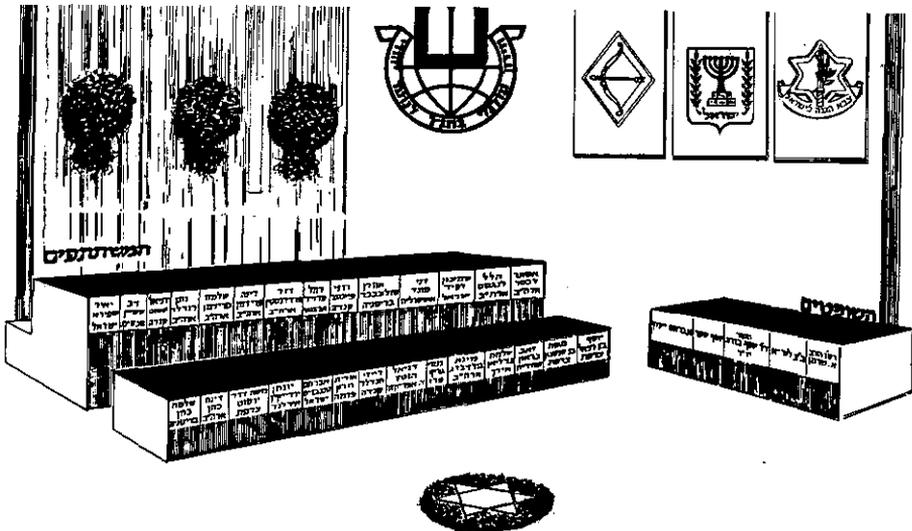
Zev Braun

South Africa

Daniél Hotz

U.S.A.

Minette Goldberg
David Freudenstein
Dina Cohen
Dawn Friedman
Nathan Randler
Shlomo Freedman
Harold Langsman



LETTER TO THE EDITOR

After having had a long talk with Dr. Gevaryahu, he suggested that I should express some of the ideas we discussed. I am sure you are somewhat informed about my activities for the last twenty five years, first as a member and then as a leader of a Tenakh discussion group at the Beth Emet Synagogue in Evanston, Illinois. This group exists almost twenty five years and meets continuously week after week on Tuesday nights. It came into being at a suggestion of our rabbi, Dr. David Polish, and was conducted for a number of years by Mr. Harry Ruskin. Gradually, we became connected with the World Jewish Bible Society. I want to compliment you and the members of the editorial board of Dor L'Dor. The articles and the material of this magazine are always most interesting and of great help to our group. The Triennial Tenakh Study Calendar is used by our members. It is a very good idea to publish it in every copy of Dor L'Dor.

As you know, there are many Bible groups and classes in the Chicago area. There is, however, no real connection among them. One feels somewhat isolated, especially as the leader of such a group. It would be of great help to make connections with other leaders and methods. My group is conducted in a modified style of the "Great Books" of the University of Chicago.

I think it is here that the WJBS could be of great assistance, by acting as a kind

of coordinator among these groups. I know that in the Chicago area, for instance, the Jewish Community Centers organize Bible classes for adults and senior citizens. Almost every synagogue has Bible classes and courses, conducted by their rabbis or teachers. I think it should be possible to have a regional coordinator, perhaps a retired rabbi who would be interested in and capable of such a task. He could perhaps work out of one of the JCC offices or another existing organization with which the WJBS is able to establish a working relationship. The funding does not have to be expensive. Perhaps the UJA could be approached to provide some funds. Dissemination of knowledge of the Bible is of general Jewish interest as well as of great importance for the preservation of the Jewish people. The main purpose of such regional offices would be to help the leaders by providing them with material and by arranging periodic meetings to discuss problems on some aspects of their groups, and even have a specific Bible discussion among themselves. Such cooperation will strengthen existing groups and can be of help in establishing new groups.

I am not an organizer but it seems to me that such coordinating offices could be established throughout the U.S.A. on a regional basis. I am not advocating another organization; there are too many already, but as I said above, it could be done in cooperation with an existing organization

plus an overall office for North America to service all regional offices, who would maintain full autonomy. I remember what a huge success the Bible Congress in Chicago was in 1967, with delegates from all over the U.S. and with the presence of Ben Gurion. It should be possible to have this kind of meeting every few years. This meeting was organized single-hande-

dly by Mr. Harry Ruskin. I hope I have made myself clear enough. It is not another organization that I am after. My only thought and wish is to proliferate knowledge of Tenakh among the Jews of USA.

Shalom
Herbert Hubert
Evanston, Illinois.

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TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

With these pages we are continuing the second triennial Bible reading calendar, beginning with the first chapter of Joshua and concluding with the Book of Chronicles at the end of the third year. The sequence of the daily chapters is interrupted in order to allow for the readings connected with the Sidra of the Week and the holidays.

Aug—Sept 1976	אלול תשל"ז		Sept—Oct 1976	תשרי תשל"ז
F 27 שופטים	א		Sa 25 ראש השנה	א
Sa 28 שופטים	ב		Su 26 ראש השנה	ב
Su 29 Jeremiah 25	ג		M 27 Jeremiah 45	ג צום גדליה
M 30 Jeremiah 26	ד		T 28 Jeremiah 46	ד
T 31 Jeremiah 27	ה		W 29 Jeremiah 47	ה
W 1 Jeremiah 28	ו		Th 30 Jeremiah 48	ו
Th 2 Jeremiah 29	ז		F 1 האזינו	ז
F 3 כי תצא	ח		Sa 2 שבת שובה האזינו	ח
Sa 4 כי תצא	ט		Su 3 ערב יום כפור	ט
Su 5 Jeremiah 30	י		M 4 יום כפור	י
M 6 Jeremiah 31	יא		T 5 Jeremiah 49	יא
T 7 Jeremiah 32	יב		W 6 Jeremiah 50	יב
W 8 Jeremiah 33	יג		Th 7 Jeremiah 51	יג
Th 9 Jeremiah 34	יד		F 8 ערב סכות	יד
F 10 כי תבוא	טו		Sa 9 סכות	טו
Sa 11 כי תבוא	טז		Su 10 סכות	טז
Su 12 Jeremiah 35	יז		M 11 חול המועד סכות	יז
M 13 Jeremiah 36	יח		T 12 חול המועד סכות	יח
T 14 Jeremiah 37	יט		W 13 חול המועד סכות	יט
W 15 Jeremiah 38	כ		Th 14 חול המועד סכות	כ
Th 16 Jeremiah 39	כא		F 15 השענא רבה	כא
F 17 נצבים - וילך	כב		Sa 16 שמיני עצרת	כב
Sa 18 נצבים - וילך	כג		Su 17 שמחת תורה	כג
Su 19 Jeremiah 40	כד		M 18 Jeremiah 52	כד
M 20 Jeremiah 41	כה		T 19 Ezekiel 1	כה
T 21 Jeremiah 42	כו		W 20 Ezekiel 2	כו
W 22 Jeremiah 43	כו		Th 21 Ezekiel 3	כו
Th 23 Jeremiah 44	כח		F 22 בראשית	כח
F 24 ערב ראש השנה	כט		Sa 23 בראשית	כט
			Su 24 Ezekiel 4	ל

TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

Oct—Nov 1976			חשן תשל"ו	Nov—Dec 1976			כסלו תשל"ז
M	25	Ezekiel 5	א	T	23	Ezekiel 26	א
T	26	Ezekiel 6	ב	W	24	Ezekiel 27	ב
W	27	Ezekiel 7	ג	Th	25	Ezekiel 28	ג
Th	28	Ezekiel 8	ד	F	26	תולדות	ד
F	29	נח	ה	Sa	27	תולדות	ה
Sa	30	נח	ו	Su	28	Ezekiel 29	ו
Su	31	Ezekiel 9	ז	M	29	Ezekiel 30	ז
M	1	Ezekiel 10	ח	T	30	Ezekiel 31	ח
T	2	Ezekiel 11	ט	W	1	Ezekiel 32	ט
W	3	Ezekiel 12	י	Th	2	Ezekiel 33	י
Th	4	Ezekiel 13	יא	F	3	יצא	יא
F	5	לך לך	יב	Sa	4	יצא	יב
Sa	6	לך לך	יג	Su	5	Ezekiel 34	יג
Su	7	Ezekiel 14	יד	M	6	Ezekiel 35	יד
M	8	Ezekiel 15	טו	T	7	Ezekiel 36	טו
T	9	Ezekiel 16	טז	W	8	Ezekiel 37	טז
W	10	Ezekiel 17	יז	Th	9	Ezekiel 38	יז
Th	11	Ezekiel 18	יח	F	10	ישלח	יח
F	12	ירא	יט	Sa	11	ישלח	יט
Sa	13	ירא	כ	Su	12	Ezekiel 39	כ
Su	14	Ezekiel 19	כא	M	13	Ezekiel 40	כא
M	15	Ezekiel 20	כב	T	14	Ezekiel 41	כב
T	16	Ezekiel 21	כג	W	15	Ezekiel 42	כג
W	17	Ezekiel 22	כד	Th	16	Ezekiel 43	כד
Th	18	Ezekiel 23	כה	F	17	ישב	כה חנוכה
F	19	חיי שרה	כו	Sa	18	שבת חנוכה	כו ישב
Sa	20	חיי שרה	כז	Su	19	Ezekiel 44	כז חנוכה
Su	21	Ezekiel 24	כח	M	20	Ezekiel 45	כח חנוכה
M	22	Ezekiel 25	כט	T	21	Ezekiel 46	כט חנוכה

עשה תורתך קבע

If you wish to receive copies of our complete Triennial Bible Reading Calendar for yourself or your friends please write to: Editor, World Jewish Bible Society, P.O.B. 7024, Jerusalem, Israel.

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