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דפוס רפאל חיים הכהן בע"מ, ירושלים

BUILDING IN BIBLICAL TIMES

BY HERMAN WOHLMAN-KON

לבנים נפלו וגזית נבנה—שקמים גדעו וארזים נחליף

The bricks are fallen, but we will build with hewn stones

The sycamores are cut down, but cedars will be put in their place.

Isaiah 9:9

This verse by Isaiah is directed as a rebuke against Samaria which, ignoring the dangers threatening her, throws herself into greater luxury.

Translators and commentators differ in their interpretation of this verse. Yet, it contains a realistic description of building in the times of the prophets, as can be verified by historical and archeological research.

לבנים

Excavations in the Tels (ancient sites of cities), uncovering remnants of houses from that time, reveal low foundation walls above the ground to a height of twenty to thirty inches. This foundation consisted of round, unhewn stones laid out in a quadrangle three by four yards long. The regular walls of biblical homes were built of twenty inch bricks, usually dried in the sun. In order to accelerate the process of drying, straw was added to the clay. Water was mixed with the clay in a hollow in the ground and kneaded by hand and feet. The finished material was then put into wooden forms.² Since such bricks deteriorate in humidity, brickwalls were set on the foundation stones to prevent their disintegration through rain in the winter.

גזית

These were stones cut in the form of a quadrangle. Such stones, which served as a foundation and building material for the richer classes, could only be processed when iron as a tool came into use since bronze was entirely too soft for such purpose³. A good example of building tools from the time of David is

1. Shemot 5:7.
2. Nahum 3:14.
3. II Samuel 13:9.

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furnished in II Samuel 12:31 which, incidentally, also clarifies a rather cryptic verse. Having conquered Rabbat Ammon, it is stated: ואת העם אשר בה הוציא:

וישם במגרה ובחריצי הברזל וכמזגרות הברזל והעביר אותם במלבן.⁴

And he brought forth the people that were therein and put them under saws and under harrows of iron, and under axes of iron and made them pass through the brickkiln (II Samuel 12:31).

The meaning of this passage is that David put the inhabitants of the conquered cities to forced labor, building for him fortifications with the indicated iron building tools already at his disposal.

שקמים

These are sycamore trees with powerful trunks growing to a height of three to five yards. This tree was a most significant resource in biblical times. Most utensils were made from its wood. Most importantly, it was used for building roofs upon the walls of simple houses. Such roofs were filled in with branches, clay and ashes and mortar, and then smoothed. Because of the crowdedness of cities and the small size of houses, roofs were a preferred place to spend free time.⁵

Sycamore trees grew wild, especially in the lowlands, such as in the Jordan valley, in the Shefela and in the Sharon.⁶ A short distance south of today's Haifa, there is a Tel of a small city from the Hellenistic-Roman period, Shikmonia, recently excavated. Strabo⁷ called this city Shikmonopolis and he mentions a forest consisting of שקמים, sycamore trees.

Obviously, שקמים were of great economic importance to the land. David appointed a special overseer over sycamores, which together with olive trees, were part of his royal property.⁸ The sycamore was also known in Egypt where, amongst others, it was used as sarcophagi for mummies. The fruit of the

4 According to the interpretation of B.Z. Luria (סח)תשל"ז, מגרה (בית מקרא א), from the root גרר (pulling), was a tool to haul the stones to the building site. חריצי הברזל was an iron instrument designed to smooth the face of the stone. מגורות הברזל were iron tools designed to cut the stones to specified size.

5 Isaiah 22:1.

6. I Kings 10:27.

7. Strabo, Book 16.

8. I Chronicles 27:28.

sycamore look like apples, growing straight from the trunk and the major branches. Though it has a bitter taste, it served as a major source of food for the poorer classes. In order to make them edible, it had to be cut to remove the bitter juice it contains. This again clarifies a difficult verse in Amos:⁹

לא נביא אנכי ולא בן נביא אנכי כי בוקר אנכי ובולס שקמים.

I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son but I was a herdsman and a "dresser" of sycamore trees.

If we interpret בולס as cutting the sycamore fruit rather than as dressing of the trees themselves, a difficulty is removed of seeking sycamore trees in Tekoah situated on a rather high and arid mountain, not far from Jerusalem. The thought Amos wishes to convey is that he was a poor man deriving his meager income from lowly pursuits and not from being a prophet.

Since the usable length of the sycamore tree was approximately four yards, we now understand that the foundation walls of buildings in biblical times could not exceed four yards in length. As we have seen before, since the roof was such an important part of the house, it follows that the area circumscribed by the groundwalls had to be of the same size.

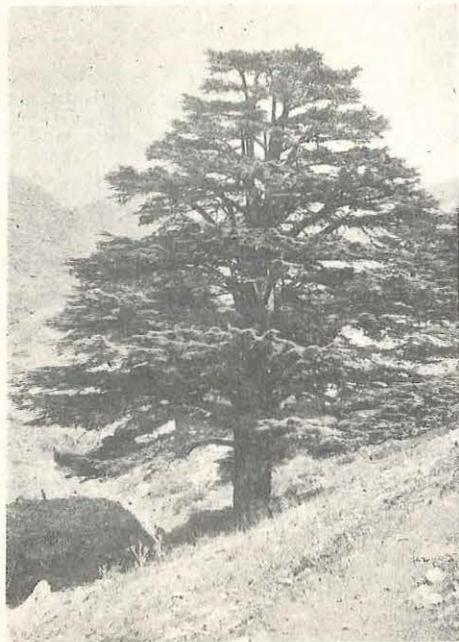
ארז

"But cedars will we put in their place," not only because its trunks are much stronger than those of the sycamore. It was much longer, thus enabling the building of larger structures. Cedars do not grow in Israel. It is a tree of the high mountains in the Lebanon and of Amanus, in northern Syria. In these regions cedars flourished and grew in veritable forests. Today they are practically non-existent. Only a few lonely trees on a mountain near Tripolis and a small grove at the river Kadisha have remained which is now under special protection by the government as a nature reservation. The cedar belongs to the family of needle trees, growing on mountains 1,600 to 2,000 yards high, covered with perennial snow. It is known for its beauty, height and longevity. It reaches a height of more than thirty yards and a diameter of three yards for its trunk. It has become the symbol of pride, wealth and might.

9. Amos 7:14.



Remains of an ancient building site



The Cedars of Lebanon

CEDARS IN ASIA MINOR AND EGYPT

Monuments and tablets found in Assyria and Babylonia, having cunei inscriptions, are witness to the importance of cedars for the erection of their great structures. On their military expeditions they felled cedars in the mountains of Lebanon and Amanus, and transported them under greatest of difficulties to Nineveh and Babylonia. The Salmanezer monolith tells: "I (Salmanezer II, 860—824) climbed the Amanus and cut cedars and cypresses." The Nimrod Inscription relates that Tiglat Pilezer III (745—727) "built a palace from cedars in the style of the Hittites...and covered it with cedars of Lebanon and Amanus." Isaiah exclaims at the death of Sargon II: "Ye, the cypresses rejoice at thee, and the cedars of Lebanon. Since thou are laid down, no feller is come up against us." (Isaiah 14:8). The Wadi-Brisa Inscription tells of the following exploits of Nebuchadnezzar II (605—562): "...that which no king has done before... I cut through high mountains, broke rocks, opened up a straight road to transport cedars...through the Aratum canal I had them brought to Babylonia..."

Also in Egypt the cedars were in great demand. The Nile valley had few resources for wood, and it had to be imported in large quantity. Cedars were needed for the building of their temples, ships and holy barks. The Egyptians transported them from the port of Gebal, at the foot of Lebanon, in exchange for papyros, whose plants grew plentifully in Egypt. In fact Gebal was renamed Byblos by the Greeks, because of this writing material exported from Egypt.¹⁰

CEDARS FOR ISRAEL

The building of Solomon's Temple is described in detail and contains not only its measurements and general layout but also building material that was utilized. Solomon asks Hiram, king of Tyre to cut for him cedars in Lebanon for the building of the Temple. Hiram agrees and sends felled cedars by barges to Yaffo. In exchange Solomon pays Hiram with wheat and oil, greatly in demand in Tyre which was a port city and commercial center, lacking arable fields to produce these vital commodities (I Kings, 6:9). Now, these were the measurements: its width and its height was 20 ells, the approximate equivalent of 13 yards. Only cedars had the requisite length and strength adequate for the size of the Temple.

Solomon's Temple was built after the pattern of *בית הלני*, which was the prevalent style of Temples and palaces erected in northern Syria and the eastern

10. Prof. H. Redlich, *Festschrift Schwarz*, Wien 1916, 15s.

parts of Asia Minor. In these regions the cedars of Amanus were easily accessible. A *בית הלני* was a building consisting of layers of stone interlaced, and thus strengthened, with layers of cedars.¹¹ In Ezra, 3:7 we find that Zerubabel also used cedars, imported from Tyre, for the building of the Temple.

THE TEMPLE BUILT BY AHAB

From sources at our disposal and from archeological excavations there is no definite indication that Samaria used cedars for its building projects. It is, however, probable that the Baal-Temple built by Ahab and later destroyed by Jehu could have been built from cedar. Jezebel, wife of Ahab and daughter of the priest-king Ethbaal of Sidon, was known for her zeal for Baal-worship. There is justification in the assumption that Ethbaal would have offered cedars for the erection of a Baal-temple. Furthermore it is known that Jehu invited all Baal-worshippers to a festival in Shomron. Here, assembled in the Temple, he had them all killed and the temple destroyed. The large assemblage of these worshippers presupposes a large structure, which then only could be built by means of cedars (II Kings 10:27).

CEDARS IN ALLEGORIES

Psalm 92:13 likens the beauty of the cedar to the palm trees, exclaiming: "the righteous shall flourish like the palm tree, he shall grow like the cedar in Lebanon." Amos, 2:9 compares the power of the cedar to that of the oak, when he says: "Yet destroyed I the Amorites before them, whose height was like the height of the cedars, and he was strong as the oaks." For the prophets Ezekiel (31:3) and Isaiah (41:19; 60:33) the cedar served as the symbol of the mighty empires Assyria and Egypt, whose fall they prophesied.

Concerning the wealth accumulated by Solomon it is stated "And the king made silver to be in Jerusalem as stones and cedars...as the sycamore trees that are in the Lowland, for abundance." (I Kings, 10-27). Here the cedar is the symbol of wealth. While in Isaiah's words *לכנים נפלו וגזית נבנה שקמים גדעו וארזים נחליף* the cedar represents pursuit after wealth and has the ironic undertone of the exaggerated sense of self-assurance, soon to be shattered.

Translated from the German by Shimon Bakon

11. Abel, *Géographie de la Palestine* I 341 S.

ECOLOGICAL MOTIFS IN THE BIBLE

BY SHIMON BAKON

WHAT IS ECOLOGY?

Ecology is that highly complex branch of science that researches the interrelation of living organisms with their environment. Making no pretense whatsoever at expertise in this field, I shall merely attempt to present a superficial outline of ecological manifestations for the purpose of exploring the relationship of Bible and ecology.

THE CHAIN OF LIFE

Even to the untrained observer of nature, it is clear that there exists a chain of life. Vegetation serves as sustenance to herbivores who, in turn, serve as the source of food for carnivores. From practical experience man is aware of the profound influence of environmental factors on life itself.

To the trained scientist, all these factors are known in highly sophisticated elaboration. This chain evolves in innumerable cycles, involving oxygen, hydrogen, nitrogen etc., necessary for sustaining life and made available by biological processes of energy-producing transformation of matter. Autotrophic organisms (such as plants) are capable of transforming matter by feeding directly on inorganic substances.

Heterotrophic organisms (herbivores and carnivores) feeding on plants or on herbivores, in their turn, begin a new complex cycle. Through their excreta and through their death they allow a host of micro-organisms to decompose organic into inorganic matter and to transform them into substances assimilable to vegetation.

The millions of forms of life serve as brakes on each other, bringing about a sensitive balance; f.i. the prodigious capacity of bacteria for food intake and proliferation is known. Given unlimited food supply, theoretically, one bacterium, through geometric multiplication, could in three days equal the volume of the

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entire earth. But in fact there are defenses against such imbalance. There is limited food supply. Bacteria are eaten by molds and viruses; they produce substances toxic to them, thus curtailing their activities, etc. The almost mystical totality of interrelation between all forms of life with one another and with factors of environment such as sun, air, water, etc., is what produces the balance of life as we know it.

ENTERS MAN

It was reserved for man to manipulate the environment. But it is the highly developed technological activities of modern man, bolstered by scientific progress, that shows evidence of seriously impairing the balance in nature. One need not be an ecologist to become alarmed by the development. It is sufficient to be an alert reader of newspapers or of popular books bearing on this issue. A few examples will illustrate the point:

The well meaning mass spraying of insecticide, while most effective in eradicating some types of pests, has deleterious side effects on the health of man.

It is hard to assess whether the Aswan dam in Egypt and the drying of the Hula swamps in Israel are doing more harm than good.

Industrial abuse is killing the Great Lakes in the United States. It is difficult to ascertain what the millions of tons of polluting substances poured daily into the bio-atmosphere may do to us and to future generations.

BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE

There are some Christian theologians and historians who lay the blame for this ominous development on the Bible, more specifically on the verse in Genesis (1:28) "...replenish the earth and subdue it." It is strange indeed that Marxism held the Bible and religion responsible for blocking progress; now theologians blame the Bible for progress.

In truth, the Bible is neither a book of dialectics, nor of technological progress, nor even a treatise on ecology. It is a divine book designed for man to enable him to orient himself toward God, nature and fellowman. As such we will attempt to discover if the Bible yields some clues bearing on the issue of man's relationship to his environment.

NATURE IN BIBLE

In biblical perspective the creation of the Universe is the purposeful act of God. God created the earth, the water, the firmament, the light, the sun, the very conditions for existence capable of supporting life, from plants to man.

He invests each living creature with the potential to reproduce after its kind, blesses them to multiply and fill the earth, the water and the sky. Successive acts of creation, symbolized by a day, are concluded with the refrain, "And God saw, and behold it was good." Each part of nature has its place, is dependent on each other and derives its sustenance from the wisdom and the goodness of the Creator. "The Lord by wisdom founded the earth and in understanding He established the Heaven" (Proverbs 3:19).

Psalms 104 is a paean to God, whose glory is revealed in nature, the miraculousness of life and its manifold forms. "How manifold are Thy works, O Lord, in wisdom hast Thou made them all." And there is interrelatedness. The springs of water are there to give drink to every beast of the field; He causes grass to spring up for the cattle; the trees of the Lord have their fill; the cedars of Lebanon serve as nesting places for birds; the high mountains are the habitat for the wild goats. It is with right that the celebrated scientist Humboldt* said of this Psalm: "A single Psalm may be said to present a picture of the entire Cosmos... We are astounded to seek within the compass of a poem of such small dimensions, the universe, the heavens and the earth, drawn with a few grand strokes."

THE BIBLICAL PARADOX OF MAN

Man has been assigned by the Bible a special place in the Universe. He is part of nature and he also transcends it. He is created in the image of God, is endowed with freedom of will and creativity, and is given dominion over nature. This aspect of man's endowment may bring him into conflict with his environment.

But there are other aspects of man that serve as restraints on him. First, he is also part of nature. In this capacity he must evince sympathy with all living creatures. A profound feeling of consideration for the beast pervades all of

* Quoted in the Soncino Edition of the Psalms. The 18th century German poet, Herder, not a great friend of the Jews, said that it would be worthwhile to study Hebrew for ten years in order to read this Psalm in the original.

Scripture: not to muzzle an ox while he threshes; to help a beast fallen under a burden; not to take the egg in the presence of the mother-bird; and above all, to allow a day of rest to working animals.

It is of significance that our Rabbis crystallized these concerns for living creatures into the general principle of *צער בעלי חיים*, not to inflict pain on animals. If we include the Talmud, we note an impressive body of laws and lore bearing witness to a spirit of reverence for life. This feeling of reverence is heightened by a sense of awe of all nature, in which the glory of God is manifested.

Second, if man has freedom, he is also restrained by ethical or ritual law in the exercise of his freedom. He may eat freely of every tree in the garden of Eden, except two; in the Covenant entered into by God and Noah, man again is given dominion over nature, but he is forbidden to eat blood or shed blood of man (our Rabbis deduced the Seven Noahide Laws from this Covenant).

Third, if man is a creator, he also is creature. In the final analysis, the ultimate sanction of man's relation to his environment resides in God, the Creator of the entire Universe. As partner with God in creation, man carries special responsibility to improve his environment through his creativity and not to spoil it in his insatiable desire for temporary gains. He is accountable, and if he is to have dominion over nature, it is to be administered with respect and responsibility.

THE SABBATH A RESTORATION OF BALANCE

In the institution of the Sabbath we find an ingenious resolution of the dialectics of man as both creator and creature. By working six days he fulfills the mandate of responsible dominion. Creative work — *מלאכה* — presents man in the full dignity of a creator but also in the role of one who interferes with nature, using, exploiting, even despoiling it to serve his ends. The six days of work serve as a legitimate outlet for our creative drives. But the Sabbath, a holy day dedicated to rest, with all its positive injunctions and the negative prohibitions, sets limitations on our freedom to exploit. The balance that goes out of joint during the six days of restless strivings and interference with nature, is re-established. On the Sabbath we call a moratorium on our propensity for using the "other"-nature, animals and above all our fellowmen — as means rather than as ends. The Sabbath thus stresses our fundamental identity with nature, stemming

ultimately from God, the Creator of all of us. On this day of rest we achieve at-oneness with God and His Universe.

THE SABBATICAL YEAR A SOLEMN REST FOR THE LAND

In the institution of the Sh'mitta, the Sabbatical year (and the Jubilee) this principle of non-interference with nature and restoration of balance is more explicit. During six years we are to sow the fields, prune vineyards and gather its produce. "But on the seventh year shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath unto the Lord" (Leviticus 25:3-7). There was to be no planting, pruning and gathering of produce. Tacitus may have ridiculed the Sabbath and the Sh'mitta, calling the Jewish people an indolent people. In more modern times the Sh'mitta was praised as a clever piece of agrarian legislation. By permitting the land to lie fallow, so it was argued, it saved it from exhaustion. Others saw in the Sabbatical Year an in the Jubilee an extraordinary institution having humane and social significance. They are right, but not completely so. They miss the key to this whole legislation, "a Sabbath unto the Lord." Man is not in absolute possession of the land, *כי לי הארץ*, "for the land is Mine." (Leviticus 25:23). He is merely a trustee. He is entrusted to "dress and keep it" (Genesis 2:15), but on each seventh day and each seventh year he is reminded of his status of fellow-creature. There are days and seasons in which he must pause and confirm the biblical ascription to God Himself: "and He saw, and behold, it was good."

BIBLICAL PROHIBITION AGAINST WANTON DESTRUCTION

Deuteronomy 20:19 states: "When you besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by wielding an axe against them; for thou mayest eat of them, but thou shalt not cut them down."

Deuteronomy forbids the cutting down of fruit trees. It allows, however, the use of ordinary trees for setting up bulwarks. This specific and even solitary instance was elevated to a far ranging principle of *בל תשחית*. Referring to II Chronicles (32:2) which tells that King Hezekiah, preparing for the threat of invasion of Sennacherib, "took counsel with the princes . . . to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the gate," the Rabbis disapproved of his action: "Three things they did not approve . . . he stopped the waters of upper Gihon" (Pesachim 56b).

Obviously the principle of the fruit tree in Deuteronomy was here extended to include vital water supplies. It must be admitted that both the verse quoted in Deuteronomy and the discussion cited from the Tractate Pesachim are ambiguous and are subject to various interpretations. It could be argued that the Rabbis disapproved of Hezekiah's action, because he showed lack of faith in God's intervention. What is clear, however, is the fact that the disapproval of the Rabbis, together with other discussions, build up a strong case against wanton destruction during periods of war or during times of peace.

The Talmud is replete with intricate discussions of what "wanton destruction" implies. It may include the needless killing of animals (Hulin 7b), the excessive rending of garments for the dead (Baba Kama 91b), the prohibition of diverting a natural water supply to a fruit tree, going so far as forbidding the emptying of a waterpool when its water could be used by others. Derech Eretz Rabbah (57b) states "They who cut down trees and breeders of small cattle will never see a sign of blessing."

It is difficult to ascertain where the bridge from one particular verse in the Torah to the Talmudic principle of "wanton destruction" was laid. It is perhaps the magnificent prophecy of Isaiah that motivated this development.

They shall not hurt nor destroy in all the holy mountain.

For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the

Lord, as the waters covers the sea.

Isaiah 11:9

If Halachah is the embodiment of the spirit pervading Torah, leading to the establishment of a new order in the world where the "earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord," it follows that the prohibition of pointless destruction in all its ramifications is the necessary step in that direction. In the interim between the pre-historic era of the Garden of Eden and the messianic era beyond history, man lives in history. In this interim the "thou shalt not destroy" must serve as the tentative guide for man with respect to nature.

MAINTAINING THE BALANCE IN NATURE

"In the beginning God created" implies that all of creation was a purposeful divine act and that each part had its proper place in the total design of creation. This concept found clear expression in the Tractate Shabbat (77b):

Rab Judah said in Rab's name: All that the Holy One, blessed be He,

created in His world, He did not create a single thing without purpose. He created the snail as a remedy for a scab; the fly (as an antidote) against the wasp, the mosquito for a serpent's bite, a serpent as a remedy for an eruption . . .

We noted before the scientific portrayal of a cosmic balance maintained by the unbelievably complex interplay of inorganic substances, plants, herbivores and carnivores, with the active intervention of micro-organisms and the sun and the atmosphere and water. Science detests the concept of "purpose." Yet proceeding from entirely different assumptions and frames of reference, both portrayals coincide in amazing fashion.

There is a Mishnaic Tractate, Kilayim, dealing with forbidden junctions. It is based on four verses in the Bible:

Ye shall keep my statutes — חוקים. Thou shalt not cause thy cattle to gender with a diverse kind. Thou shalt not sow thy field with two kinds of seed. And a garment mingled of wool and linen shall not come upon thee.

Leviticus 19:19

There are also three verses in Deuteronomy, in essence repeating and extending these injunctions, with one more notable addition:

Thou shalt not plough with an ox and an ass together (Deuteronomy 22:10). The word חק is usually translated as statute and is interpreted as a divine law that defies rational interpretation.

Thus Rashi, in his commentary ad loco: These חוקים are royal decrees for which there is no reason. But there are classical commentators, Ramban foremost among them, who argue against such interpretation. He states unequivocally that a decree of the Lord is never without reason. "The Lord created species in the world, gave them the power to reproduce so that they could exist so long as He desires existence of this world." A person who mixes two species in fact "denies מעשה בראשית." Not only is this sinful but also futile. "He who mixes even related species in nature, their offspring, such as mules are sterile."

Not satisfied with finding reasons for חוקים, Nachmanides (Ramban) goes a step further and pronounces them to be unshakable laws of Heaven: "Therefore did He say, 'you shall keep my statutes,' because they are laws of Heaven. And thus said Rabbi Hanina in the name of Rabbi Pinchas: because of the laws which I instituted in this world."

Indeed we encounter quite frequently in Scriptures קח, in the sense of a law that God had instituted as an integral part of nature through His acts of creation.

A few representative quotations should suffice:

Knowest thou קח of heaven (Job 38:33).

For He commanded, and they were created.

He hath established them for ever and ever.

He hath made a קח which shall not be transgressed.

Psalms 148:5, 6

Thus saith the Lord, who giveth the sun for a light by day and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night . . . If these חקים will depart from Me . . . then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before Me forever.

Jeremiah 31:35, 36

Whether interpreted as an irrational royal decree or as a law which God had written into nature, the prohibition against mixed junctions was viewed as a prohibition against interfering with God's design. Nor is it a decree for Jews only. It was considered of such importance that the Rabbis proclaimed it to be valid for all men, including it amongst the "Noahide laws" (See discussion on this subject in the Tractate Sanhedrin, 56a, b).

PROHIBITIONS AGAINST POLLUTION

Thou shalt have a place . . . without the camp whither you shalt go forth . . . And thou shalt have a paddle among the weapons . . . thou shalt dig therewith . . . and cover that which cometh from thee.

Deut. 23:13-14

Deuteronomy refers to a military encampment and orders that a special place outside the camp be reserved for men to take care of their natural needs and that soldiers take with them special equipment to cover the feces. Now, these are requirements that any environmentalist would highly approve of. To him, above all, these requirements are sanitary, essential to the quality of life. Deuteronomy offers an entirely different rationale. "One shall keep from every evil thing." Included in this requirement is also ritual cleanliness. And "therefore

shall thy camp be holy; that He see no unseemly thing in thee." To act thusly is acting in keeping with the concept of holiness.

As in the case of the fruit tree that is not to be chopped down during a siege, we have here again specific, limiting factors: a camp during times of war. However limiting and however fragmentary, we have the emergence of regulations that prohibit, for strictly religious reasons, the pollution of man's habitation.

In the Mishna (B.B. 2:8, 9) we find two most instructive paragraphs:

A permanent threshing floor must be kept a distance of fifty cubits distance from a town . . . it must be a sufficient distance from the plantations and newly broken land of his neighbor to cause no damage.

Carcasses, graves and tanneries must be kept at fifty cubits distance from a town. A tannery may not be established save on the east side of the town. (The east wind in Israel is usually so mild that it would not carry the stench into town.)

It should be noted that these paragraphs occur in "Baba Batra" included in the Tractate summarized under "Nezikin" — Damages. This tractate itself deals with laws of acquisition, rights of sale, ownership, etc. Maimonides with his uncanny gift for precision and logical order, subsumed these paragraphs under the general "Book of Acquisitions" and under the specific heading of "Laws of Neighbors." The basic thrust is clear: the Torah offers regulations of a type of conduct required in very specific circumstances. This is translated here into everyday relationships between personal rights when they come into conflict with the rights of the group. More specifically, these regulations clearly limit the right of lawful acquisition, if these rights threaten the health or even the convenience of the community.

SUMMARY

Lest we be accused of turning the Bible into a guidebook of Ecology, it must be reiterated that there is, in some instances, convergence of concerns but for entirely different reasons. Reasons are so different because basic assumptions and intentions differ. Ecology's departure is a world portrayed to us by science. Its concern is the awareness that modern technology is so changing our environment that it has detrimental results for life on earth. It is therefore

prudential for man, for the sake of self-protection, to take measures not to disturb the precarious balance.

The biblical assumptions are a world created by God. Man has a particular role to play in it. As guardian, he is accountable and has the religious duty to manage this earth in a way that it is left in better shape than when he found it.

Far from the self-flagellating contentions of theologians and historians who see the verse in Genesis "replenish the earth and subdue it" (Genesis 1:28) a sanction for modern man to exploit and ravage the earth, we have found in the Bible and in its logical extension the Talmud, just the opposite. Man's ability to control his environment is circumscribed by his accountability to His Creator Who created the earth and the fullness thereof; by regulations that are designed to remind him that he is also a creature who must evidence respect, reverence and sympathy for all life; and by laws and regulations designed to resolve the dialectics of the paradox of man as guardian and creator.

We have enumerated specific laws and statements which dovetail with ecological concerns. The laws of *Sabbath and the Sh'mitta* prohibit manipulations of the environment by man for one day in the course of a week, and for one year in the course of seven years. *You must not destroy* lends itself to an interpretation of pointless destruction causing irreparable loss. *Prohibited Junctions* (Kilayim) opens vistas of cautions man should take not to upset the natural balance. *You shall not pollute* opens up untold possibilities and ramifications.

We noted with some satisfaction that in matters of rights, the community takes precedence over those of the individual; and that in matters of health and even convenience the rights of the community come before the rapacious rights of the individual, making Judaism most relevant to the burning issues of ecology.



IRONY IN I SAMUEL CHAPTER 8-15

BY DOV ROSNER

IRONY IN THE BIBLE

Biblical writers liked to use irony as a way of expressing themselves, both in poetry and prose. They used this method because it attracted the listeners with its variety of techniques.

The Biblical story dealing with Saul's anointment as king of Israel provides us with many ironic incidents, speeches and expressions. The intention of this paper is to examine and analyse them. In the pursuit of this goal, we will find not only ironic expressions or isolated ironic incidents in this story, but we will come to realise that the whole story as such is an ironic episode.

APPOINT US A KING

In I Samuel, chapter 8, we are told that the elders of Israel — who most probably were the leaders of the tribes — met, came to Samuel, the old prophet at Ramah, and said to him:

You are now old and your sons do not follow in your footsteps.

Appoint us a king to govern us like other nations.¹

What they really wanted, was the appointment of a king who would unite the Israelite tribes and guarantee them security; a king who would lead them, and would fight their wars and battles. Accordingly, the candidate should be a type of leader, a man with a strong personality, a powerful man.

Some scholars and Biblical interpreters regard this demand as *ironic*, as it was a serious and public insult to Samuel, who was an honest man, a loyal judge and prophet who had served his nation for over forty years. Samuel was not in fact very old. He could have remained their leader as before, and at least, he deserved respect and appreciation while he was alive. After his death, they could have replaced him with a young king, who would answer their expectations.

1. I Samuel 8:4.

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However, the facts brought forward in this Biblical episode, disagree with this attempt to regard the elders' demands as an ungracious attitude towards Samuel. There was no irony in their words concerning Samuel.

First of all, the appointment of a king in Israel, was a divine Biblical command, as we read in Deuteronomy:

When you come into the land which the Lord your God is giving you, and occupy it and settle in it, and you then say 'Let us appoint over us a king, as all the surrounding nations do,' *you shall appoint as king the man whom the Lord your God will choose.*²

Secondly, the leaders of the tribes wanted to prevent a recurrence of the fatal mistake made by Joshua, in not preparing and appointing a leader while he was still alive. Joshua himself was chosen by Moses as the candidate who would take over the leadership later on and was appointed by Moses to succeed him. Joshua's mistake and its results are summarised by the Biblical author as follows: "In those days there was no king in Israel and every man did what was right in his own eyes."³

Accordingly, the elders wanted a king. Their demands came to ensure permanent leadership, which should be different from the leadership of the Judges, which was temporary and with limited authority. The Judges were merely local leaders, who gained independence for one or more of the tribes and looked after their affairs, but were never national leaders.

NOT YOU BUT ME HAVE THEY REJECTED

After Saul's election as the first king, Samuel summoned the people, and asked them whether there was any complaint against him personally. In a most dramatic way, the people answered him: "You have not wronged us, you have not oppressed us, you have not taken anything from any man."⁴

Finally, when Samuel prayed to God and told Him their demand, He answers him: "Listen to the people and all that they are saying; they have *not rejected you*, it is *Me* whom they have rejected . . ."⁵ The king envisaged by the Divine command, as mentioned in Deuteronomy, would judge the people according to

2. Deuteronomy 17:14-20.

3. Judges 17:6; 21:25.

4. I Samuel 12:4.

5. Ibid., 8:7.

the laws of the Torah. However, the people demanded from Samuel a king who would judge them according to the ways of the neighbouring nations, and this was the irony in the situation.

Therefore, the above-mentioned sources prove there was no irony in the attitude of the people towards Samuel. Their demand reflected rather *fear* of the future, *after* Samuel's death, as the Philistines had increased their power, and expanded their territory, thereby endangering the Israelite tribes.⁶

One can see this danger through the period of the Judges up to David's times. However *God* considered their demand for a king as ironic, as it was a direct insult against Him and His Torah. The people wanted to be *judged as all the nations, to follow their ways, but not God's* "it is not you they are rejecting, it is *Me* they are rejecting from reigning over them."⁷

A GOOD MAN BUT TO BE A KING . . .

The last attempt to persuade the elders of Israel to change their minds is by telling them the "constitution of the monarchy" — "משפט המלך."⁸ From this description, the king appears to be an absolute king, a dictator, who will burden them with cruelty and injustice. Because of God's dissatisfaction with their demands, we would expect that the chosen king would be a dictator. However, most ironically, Saul is introduced as a man with values, a good young man.

. . . and he had a son named Saul, a young man in his prime; there was no better man among the Israelites than he.

He was a head taller than any of his fellows.⁹

But, as God said to Samuel:

. . . men judge by appearances, but God judges by the heart.¹⁰

Such was the case with Saul. He was a nice-looking young man, a good man, but he did not have the right character to be a king.

His quick decision and the drastic method he used in order to force his people

6. Ibid., 13-14; 17; 19:8; 29; and many more.

7. Ibid., 8:7-8.

8. Ibid., 8:11-18.

9. Ibid., 9:2.

10. Ibid., 16:7.

to join the army in his war against Nahash, the Ammonite king,¹¹ proves that Saul was impulsive, and could easily be dangerous.¹² The ironic episode which tells us about his first confrontation with Samuel proves this statement.

The Philistines had invaded the newly born kingdom to revenge the murder of their governor by Jonathan.¹³ Saul and his army waited for seven days for Samuel, who had to offer the sacrifice to God before the beginning of the war, but for some reason Samuel did not arrive, and the soldiers began to desert from the camp. Saul decided to do the prophet's duty as a military precaution, while he still remained with 600 soldiers.¹⁴ Immediately afterwards, Samuel arrived, and demanded from the king an explanation for his action. But, is it not ironic that the prophet arrived just as the king finished sacrificing the animal, while Saul had been waiting for him seven days, in vain? How ironic it appears to us that Samuel, who was late and delayed the military action, instead of *apologising*, *accuses* the king, and informs him that God has rejected him as a king. And Saul, the king, the victor of Jabesh-gilead, of whom all the tribes were in fear, has to appeal to the prophet's mercy, and tried to justify his action, which according to his understanding was the correct one.

WHO WAS THE LEADER

One may think that something had happened to Saul, which caused him to change from the great leader of Jabesh-gilead to a nervous and frightened man. Indeed, the reasons for that could be the constant attacks by the Philistines, as well as internal intrigues and problems. It could also be that Samuel's charisma and strong personality overshadowed Saul. Samuel's influence over the whole nation brought Saul to ask himself whether he, or Samuel, was the real leader.

I think that the Bible gives us the answer to our question. Samuel assembled the people to choose a king, which was done by drawing lots, and Saul's name came out. Surprisingly, we are told that Saul was missing, although he had

11. Ibid., 11:7.

12. We must remember how, and how often Saul tried to kill David; he almost killed Jonathan a few times, and insulted his mother. Saul killed the priests of Nov, because he suspected them of collaborating with David. There are many more examples.

13. I Samuel 13:3.

14. Ibid., 13:8-14.

already been told by Samuel that he would be the king, and he was already anointed by him. Saul, the chosen king, who, according to the *משפט המלך* was supposed to be an absolute monarch, was in fact a shy man as evidenced by the fact that he was found "hidden among the baggage."¹⁵ No doubt, the description of Saul's first public appearance was very ironic. It was in fact a mocking-irony. This mocking-irony was emphasised most vividly as soon as Saul was found and brought to the election place. Looking on this young, tall and good looking man who was "hidden among the baggage," Samuel says to the nation: Look at the man whom God has chosen, there is no one like him in this whole nation.¹⁶

The people agreed with Samuel, without feeling the irony in his words, and shouted: "Long live the king." Samuel, the wise and experienced leader, who dominated the ceremony, demonstrated in his ironic statement, his and God's dissatisfaction with the people's demand to choose a king for them. As I see it, Saul was the *victim* of the situation created by their demand, and it would not surprise me if Saul's reign would be a complete failure from the beginning, as his failure should prove to the nation that they were wrong in their demand. Saul's tragic-ironic representation is concluded with Samuel's decision to *repeat* the *משפט המלך*. But one must ask oneself, what purpose should this repetition serve? Saul had already been anointed and crowned and the nation had shouted "Long live the king." Should it be a reminder to Saul how he must rule over his people? But does Saul resemble the type of king who appears in *משפט המלך*? He does not! Ironically, Samuel is not the only one who sees the irony in Saul's election as the king of Israel. A group of people identified only as "bnei bliyaal" – בני-בליעל, seeing Saul's appearance, said ironically:

How can this fellow save us, and they despised him and brought him no presents.¹⁷

A DISAPPOINTING KING

In justifying their demands for a king, the leaders said that they wanted a king "to lead us out to war and fight our battles."¹⁸ Their point is clear, they wanted a

15. Ibid., 10:17-22.

16. Ibid., 10:24.

17. Ibid., 10:27.

18. Ibid., 8:20.

king who would wage wars against their enemies and would be victorious. On this basis we should understand the national joy and triumph after his victory at Jabesh-gilead. But ironically, with the exception of one war, against the Amalekites, all Saul's wars were wars of *defense* and not of *attrition*. His victory over the Amonites was also effected on his territory, after the Amonites attacked Jabesh-gilead, and wanted to humiliate Saul's subjects.

We would expect that Saul's first war would be against the Philistines, who endangered the Israelites. However, his first war was against the Ammonites, at Jabesh-gilead,¹⁹ which shows again that Saul did not attack his enemies, but defended his territory after it was invaded. The second war only was against the Philistines, as we read in chapter 13 which was once more a defensive war.

JONATHAN THE HERO

From the beginning until the end, it was not Saul, but Jonathan, who dominated the events and was the hero. The war began after Jonathan killed the Philistine governor in Geba (Saul's 'capital'), and as was expected, the Philistines invaded Israel to retaliate and to suppress the rebellion.

As mentioned above, Saul and his army were at Gilgal for seven days, waiting for Samuel to come and offer the sacrifice, as was the custom before each war.²⁰ In the meanwhile, Saul's soldiers started to desert the army, because they were afraid of the mighty Philistine army, and therefore Saul sacrificed the animal, as a military precaution, in order to begin the attack, while 600 soldiers still remained.

Meanwhile, Jonathan, who realised that it would make no difference if his father had 600 or 3000 soldiers, because the Philistines were too strong, and strategically the Israelites could not hope to win the battle, undertook a suicidal action, which was based on the psychological effect it would have on the Philistines. He, with the aid of his servant, attacked the Philistines, brought them into confusion and achieved a tremendous victory.²¹

19. Ibid., 11.

20. Ibid., 7:5-10.

21. Ibid., 14:1-16.

AN IRONIC LESSON FOR SAUL

This victory was an ironic lesson for Saul, to which Samuel alluded in his accusations against him. Saul, who thought that the *number* of his soldiers would count to ensure the victory, realised through his son's action that he was wrong. There was something stronger than an army, and that was the ideal, the belief, with which Saul was not familiar.

At this stage, Saul found that his son was missing, although he did not know of Jonathan's action. Saul saw that his enemies were confused and killing each other, but he did not know the reasons for it.

Saul commanded his soldiers not to eat anything, but to fast in order to please God, so that he would be saved from the Philistine attack. He swore that he who violated his command not to eat would be put to death. Jonathan was not aware of his father's command, and on his way back to his father's camp, ate some honey that he had found in the bush.²² When he was told by one of his father's soldiers about his father's command, Jonathan said: "My father has done the people nothing but harm . . ." ²³ Saul planned to go at night-time to the Philistine camp to loot it, but before doing so, he asked God's approval through a priest, but God did not answer him. By this Saul understood that something had gone wrong, and soon realised it was Jonathan who had violated his oath.

Ironically, it was Jonathan the hero and the victor who stands for trial, and not Saul who disobeyed the prophet and God and who "had done the people nothing but harm."

Saul was prepared to put his son to death. However, he discovered at that stage that his people had abandoned him, and stood on Jonathan's side. It was the people who saved Jonathan from death, by taking an oath on the name of God, that no harm would be done to Jonathan.

Again, most ironically, it was the king, with a similar oath to *put to death* the man who disobeyed his command, who had to give in. Saul was actually defeated here twice. It was Jonathan, and not he, who brought the desired victory, and it was he who had to give in to his people.²⁴

22. Ibid., 14:27.

23. Ibid., 14:29.

24. Ibid., 14:36-45.

TOTAL WAR AGAINST THE AMALEKITES

Chapter 14, verse 52, informs us that as a result of the Philistine's constant attacks, Saul built up a strong army to face the danger. Although Samuel had already told him that God had rejected him, most surprisingly, Samuel came to the rejected king, on God's behalf, with an order to wage a total war against the Amalekites and to exterminate them.²⁵ This command is completely ironic, if Saul had been rejected by God, which he had. Why was he asked by God to fight His war against the Amalekites? Should this command indicate that God had changed His mind concerning Saul's rejection? Or did He give Saul a chance to redeem his mistakes by undertaking this task? Should we understand that Saul was actually rejected by Samuel, and not by God? Whatever the answer is, this question will remain a riddle for us.

Saul mobilised his army, fought against the Amalekites and achieved a tremendous victory. However, "*Saul and his army spared Agog and the best of the sheep and cattle, the fat beasts and the lambs and everything worth keeping. They were unwilling to destroy them . . .*"²⁶ The Bible stresses that Saul and his soldiers spared Agog and the best of the sheep. Saul was the king and he gave the orders. However, when the prophet arrived at his camp *after* the victory, he accused Saul, again, of disobedience. The king tried to save his dignity by blaming his soldiers, saying that *they* disobeyed the divine command, and not he. When Saul saw the prophet arriving, he quickly welcomed him, saying:

The Lord's blessing upon you!

*I have obeyed the Lord's commands.*²⁷

WHAT THEN IS THIS BLEATING OF SHEEP

For sure, Saul's words do not demonstrate authority, nor security or confidence. The king, who had just now returned victorious from the war, behaved like a child who had misbehaved, and is afraid of punishment. Samuel, most ironically, asked him:

"And what then is this bleating of sheep in my ears? וימה קול הצאן הזה באזוני?"

25. Ibid., 15:1-3.

26. Ibid., 15:9.

27. Ibid., 15:13.

Why do I hear the lowing of cattle?"²⁸ וקול הבקר אשר אנכי שמע?"

The irony is not only in the content of Samuel's accusation, but also in the word וימה he used to express it. Samuel used the word ממה instead of the word מה, because ממה is the sound of a sheep's bleating! Furthermore, ממה is very often used in the Bible as a way to express an accusation. For example, after Cain murdered his brother Abel, God accuses him of the murder saying:

What have you done? Your brother's blood
is crying out to me from the ground.²⁹ ממה עשית? קול דמי אחיך
צעקים אלי מן האדמה"

In this quotation, we have not only the word ממה but קול as well. After Saul's first sin, when he offered the sacrifice to God, instead of waiting for Samuel to do it, the prophet accused him using the same words: "מה עשית?"³⁰ So, in both cases, Samuel's disgust and anger is expressed ironically in the words מה and ממה. His ironic question comes to totally reject Saul's statement that he had obeyed the Lord's commands.

When Saul saw that he could not mislead the old prophet, he tried to save his honor and fate by putting the responsibility for the sin committed, unto his soldiers' shoulders!

Saul answered, *the people* have taken them from the Amalekites. These are what *they* spared, the best of sheep and cattle, to *sacrifice to the Lord your God.*³⁰

Examining Saul's words carefully, we will find in them a double irony, as Samuel pointed out:

Samuel answered,

*'if you are small in your eyes, but you are head of the tribes of Israel, and God has anointed you king over Israel.'*³¹

The prophet ironically points out that the people should obey their king and follow his commands, and not vice-versa. As far as Saul's second statement is concerned, that the sheep and cattle were spared in order to *sacrifice* them to God, most ironically, the prophet points out that God will never accept offerings after his commands were not carried out.

28. Ibid., 15:14.

29. Genesis 4:10.

30. I Samuel 15:15.

31. Ibid., 15:17.

Does the Lord desire offerings and sacrifices as he desires obedience?
Obedience is better than sacrifice, and to listen to Him than the fat rams.³²

Isaiah adopted the same attitude towards sacrifices,³³ as did Jeremiah³⁴ and most of the prophets.

Finally, after Saul admitted that he failed to carry out God's commands, because he feared the people,³⁶ we reach the climax of the ironic episode.

ELECTION AS KING OF ISRAEL AN IRONIC MISTAKE

The king who was supposed to unite the tribes, to defend them and to lay the foundations for a strong state, failed in his duties. This king was supposed to be a powerful man, a dictator, according to Samuel's warnings in משפט המלך. Saul, most ironically, was a weak man, and his people knew that and took advantage of it.³⁶ Saul was a tragic figure, and his election as king of Israel was an ironic mistake. He failed to bring peace and security to his nation, and his reign was characterised by constant wars with his enemies. His confrontation with Samuel, and later on his struggle with David, weakened him and his country.

Therefore, Saul's reign was an ironic non-fulfillment of the nation's desires.

32. Ibid., 15:22.

33. Isaiah 1:10-17.

34. Jeremiah 7:21-23.

35. I Samuel 15:24-25.

36. Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, could be compared to Saul. See: Jeremiah 38:24-26.

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

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CAIN, THE ANTI-ESTABLISHMENT HERO

BY SOL LIPTZIN

According to the Bible, God created the world and established the world order. No living thing, from the lowliest plant to the most magnificent animal, can question His establishment. All must react with the mute language of impulse or instinct to the environment in which they have been placed. The tiger must rend and the lamb must accept its destiny to be rent. Man alone God made in His image and upon him alone He bestowed the gift of free will. However, when Adam and Eve used this gift for the first time, when they willed against God's prohibition and ate of the fruit of a forbidden tree, they were so severely punished that they never again willed against God's established order. Nevertheless, the faculty which enabled them to distinguish between good and evil and which they acquired by their single act of disobedience was handed down by them to their descendants.

When Cain, their first-born son, made use of this faculty and when he exercised his freedom of will in order to question God's fairness and to reject God's decision exalting Abel, his younger brother, above him, he was condemned as a criminal and as a rebel against the Supreme Authority by the Biblical narrator and by all the later theologians and literary interpreters who bowed their necks under the yoke of religious authorities. In Christian lore, Abel was idealized as the innocent sufferer and as the first martyr. His fate was regarded as a prefiguration of the Christian savior. Cain, on the other hand, was depicted as the incarnation of evil. This tradition was followed throughout the Middle Ages and in the religious spectacles of the Renaissance and the Age of Baroque.

From the Age of Enlightenment, however, Cain has been viewed with greater tolerance and since the Age of Romanticism he has even been idolized by creative spirits who themselves rebelled against the Establishment and who themselves became outcasts because they dared to will against the social, political and religious environment of their days. As the anti-establishment hero, Cain

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reached the summit of defiance against the universal order and God's authority in Lord Byron's dramatic mystery of 1822 and in the European versions under Byronic influence.

SALOMON GESSNER'S *DER TOD ABELS*

The most influential treatment of the Cain-theme in the generations before Byron was that of the Swiss writer Salomon Gessner in 1758. His idyllic *Der Tod Abels*, composed in five cantos of lyrical prose, centers about the hard-working, first-born son of Adam rather than about his gentler brother. Gessner displays great sympathy for the serious, manly tiller of the soil, beside whom the more light-hearted shepherd pales. Cain is the eagle and Abel the dove. Toiling on the raw earth from dawn to dusk in order to eke out a living for his family, Cain has neither the leisure nor the inclination to sing hymns to God as does Abel, who sits idling away the daylight hours while the sheep graze. Cain is good and noble, a fine husband and a loving father. However, he is not satisfied with God's world and hence cannot dissolve in sweet smiles and sentimental tears of happiness. He compares himself to the raging storm and to the torrential stream. He has no hatred in his heart toward Abel and would not intentionally hurt him. He becomes an innocent fratricide when he is aroused to anger by a horrible dream in which he sees his own descendants clubbed and enslaved by Abel's descendants, a nightmare induced by Anamelech, an infernal spirit of Lucifer's retinue. On awakening, Cain impetuously strikes a blow with his club at his brother, but is immediately seized by remorse when he realizes that he unwittingly brought death into the world. His murderous deed was a momentary aberration of his real nature and he is ready to atone for the pain he inflicted upon Adam's family. Though Adam is ready to forgive him, his own conscience drives him forth into the unknown. In his remorseful, bleak existence, however, he will be comforted by his faithful wife, who shared his joy and is willing to share his misery. Accompanied by her and by his children, he goes out into the desolate wastes where no human foot has yet trodden.

Gessner's idyllic epic enjoyed a worldwide vogue surpassing that of any other literary work in the German language until his day. *Der Tod Abels* was translated into English, French, Italian, Dutch, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish, Czech, Hungarian, and other tongues. The sentimental Swiss author was hailed as the new Theocritus. In England, his work was as popular as *Pilgrim's*

Progress and *Robinson Crusoe*, the two best-sellers of the eighteenth century. Byron read it when he was eight years old and Wordsworth, in *The Prelude*, compared it with the works of Shakespeare and Dante. (See Bertha Reed's study *The Influence of Gessner Upon English Literature*, 1905).

COLERIDGE'S *THE WANDERINGS OF CAIN*

Coleridge intended his own prose-poem *The Wanderings of Cain* to be a continuation of Gessner's idyl. In a prefatory note, he mentioned that he wrote it in 1798, the year of his intensive collaboration with Wordsworth, although it was not published until thirty years later. He planned this work to be written on the scale of *The Ancient Mariner*. It was to consist of three cantos in lyrical prose. Wordsworth was to write the first canto and he the second, before either or both poets embarked upon the third canto. However, the only part completed was the second canto, since Wordsworth could not adapt himself to the spirit of Gessner. Coleridge's wanderer Cain does indeed have the same traits as the German model of which it is a continuation. Cain is still the questioning, discontented son of Adam. Accompanied by his own innocent little son Enos, he roams through the forest in the moonlight, pursued by his conscience and yearning for death or at least for blackness to cover him. His countenance bears the marks of agonies that were, are, and would continue to be.

On emerging from the forest, he beholds a strange Shape whose limbs and face were like those of Abel and whose voice was full of lamentations. When Cain asks the Shape why one who found favor in the sight of God during life was now lamenting so bitterly, the Shape replies that there was one God for the living and another for the dead. Abel, who was beloved by the God of the living, had been snatched away from His power and dominion by the death-dealing blow. Cain, on the other hand, who had brought sacrifices to the God of the dead, might be accursed and wretched all the days of mortal life but could look forward to relief from toil and pain after death. When the afflicted Cain wanted to know who and where was the God of the dead, Abel undertook to lead him over the white sands to where an answer could be found.

The second canto ends as Cain, Abel and Enos set out on this journey. Though the third canto was never written, Coleridge's imagination, stirred by the Cain-theme of remorse and atonement, carried this theme with him into his most famous poem *The Ancient Mariner*, composed soon after *The Wanderings of*

Cain. The face of the strange mariner was like the face of Cain and, just as a mark was branded upon Cain after the murder, so the albatross was hung about the mariner's neck after the latter's crime. The expiation that Coleridge may have planned for Cain in the unwritten canto he bestowed upon the wandering mariner with the glittering eye and hoary face.

BYRON'S CAIN RESEMBLES PROMETHEUS

In contrast to the sentimental and humanitarian versions of the eighteenth century that plead for greater tolerance toward the erring, accursed Cain, the most influential nineteenth century version, that of Lord Byron, presents Cain not as the accused, crushed person who merits understanding and compassion but as the accuser against God and as a rebel against the world establishment.

Byron's defiant Cain resembles the Greek titan Prometheus, who loved mankind and revolted against the injustice and tyranny of the Lord of Olympus who withheld from man the gift of fire, the basis for progress and civilization. The oldest son of Adam and Eve makes use of his reason, the precious but fatal gift acquired by the sin of his parents, and becomes an uncompromising seeker of absolute truth. His reason tells him that this is not the best of all possible worlds. Indeed, it is not even a good world. He, therefore, refuses to pay homage to the omnipotent creator who demands of all creatures, including man, unquestioning obedience and blind submission to the establishment.

Just as Goethe, under whose influence Byron stood while composing his Biblical mystery, begins his masterpiece *Faust* with a *Prologue in Heaven* in which the Archangels sing the praise of God, with Mephistopheles alone failing to join in, so too Byron's poetic drama begins with hymns to the Lord by Adam, Eve, Abel, and his sisters Adah, the wife of Cain, and Zillah, the wife of Abel. Only Cain is silent. He has nothing to ask of God and can think of nothing for which to thank Him. When Adam points out that just to be alive is reason enough to be thankful, Cain replies that life is but transitory and death the inevitable end and the more enduring state. To his parents' expression of remorse for having brought death into the world by their eating the fruit of the forbidden tree, Cain counters that they should have gone a step further and that they should also have plucked the fruit of the other forbidden tree, the tree of life, that was in the midst of Eden. Then they would have been in a position to defy God successfully. For Adam's ears these are blasphemous words, but Cain insists that

to taste the fruit of knowledge and of life was good and not evil. He cannot, however, convince his parents. They are resigned to their expulsion from Eden and their suffering on earth as a deserved punishment for their sin of disobedience, and they warn their son not to let himself be ensnared to rebel against the established order. But Cain remains incorrigible. Adam may have been tamed down; Eve may have forgotten the mind which made her thirst for knowledge even at the risk of an eternal curse; Abel may be humbly offering up the firstlings of his flock to the despotic Creator; but Cain will not bow to the heavenly Tyrant. He accepts the offer of Lucifer, a kindred defiant spirit, to conduct him through the abyss of space and to show him worlds upon worlds made and unmade by the Lord enthroned in eternal solitude beyond space and time.

Flying through the star-studded constellations in the company of Lucifer, Cain becomes aware of how tiny and inferior is the terrestrial planet in the vastness of the universe. Emerging beyond the brink of space and the realm of life, both arrive in Hades, the silent, gloomy abode of swimming shadows and enormous shapes, the realm of the monstrous dinosaurs and pre-Adamites who once inhabited the earth and other orbs, and who are now lodged in the habitation of Death. The principal lesson Lucifer imparts to Cain, his human ally, is to make use of the gift of reason and not to believe what is contrary to the experience of the senses.

Cain returns to earth a sadder and wiser man. Though surrounded by the love of his wife Adah and the smiles of his son Enoch, he cannot desist from brooding on his recent experience in space when he perceived the earth as no more bright or significant than a little shining firefly. He cannot grasp why the search for knowledge was and is branded as a sin that required atonement or why the Creator must be bribed with burnt offerings such as the worshipping Abel sacrificed daily. Nevertheless, Abel ultimately succeeds in persuading his sceptical brother to forgo gloomy speculations and to offer fruit of the tilled soil to the Lord. However, while Abel's prayer during the sacrifice is a hymn extolling God's justice, goodness and mercy, Cain's prayer is permeated with scepticism and lacking in humility. He cannot bring himself to whine for forgiveness of sins when he does not feel himself guilty. He rather wants to know which sacrifice is more pleasing to the Omnipotent, Abel's blood-drenched offering of a slaughtered sheep whose limbs reek to the sky with sanguinary incense or his

own sweet and blossoming produce of agricultural toil spread on the unstained turf. The answer comes when the fire upon the altar of Abel kindles into a column of the brightest flame, while a whirlwind throws down the altar of Cain and scatters the fruit far and wide. Apparently, God prefers flesh-offerings and the fumes of smoking blood. The so-called Lord of justice, goodness and mercy seemingly pays little heed to the pain of a bleating mother who still yearns for her missing, slaughtered offspring or the pangs of the victim under the pious knife. In an outburst of rage at such a God, Cain attempts to destroy the smoking altar. When Abel tries to stop him in this impious deed, Cain snatches a brand from the altar and strikes him. But immediately remorse assails Cain. He who loved life so fervently and abhorred the thought of death so deeply has himself become guilty of ending a human life. The mark branded on his brow burns him less than the thoughts within his brow. He would gladly give up his own life to redeem his brother from the dust. But what has been done cannot be undone. He will betake himself to the most desolate region east of Eden. Abel is at peace but he, the wanderer and eternal seeker of absolute truth, will never know the blessing of peace.

Byron, who called himself the wandering outlaw of his own dark mind, mirrored himself in Cain. The poet's transformation of the first murderer to an heroic fighter against falsehood, servility and injustice influenced not only his own Romantic generation but also later ones, and not only his own country's versions but also those of other literatures. Jacob Rothschild's excellent study, *Kain und Abel in der deutschen Literatur*, 1933, and Auguste Brieger's *Kain und Abel in der deutschen Dichtung*, 1934, deal in detail with the German dramas, epics and lyrics that felt the impact of Byron's *Cain*.

BAUDELAIRE'S ABEL ET CAIN

In France, Baudelaire's *Abel et Cain*, included in his finest poetic collection *Les fleurs du mal*, 1857, contrasts the seed of Abel, who form the Establishment, with the seed of Cain, who resist the Establishment. The poem reaches a climax in the final stanza which predicts the destruction of God's established order and foresees Cain's offspring scaling Heaven's walls and hurling God to the ground. While Victor Hugo's Cain-poem, *La conscience*, included in the cycle *La légende des siècles*, 1859, is free of Byronic influence, Leconte de Lisle's poem *Qain*, which ushers in the *Poemes barbares*, 1869, is permeated with such influence. It

reflects the bitterness and atheism of this pessimistic Parnassian poet and is an extremely powerful expression of divine culpability for the miserable human lot. As in Byron's *Cain*, God is shown to be a sad and jealous deity, deserving of hatred. Though Qain seeks a world of kindness and happiness, he is precipitated into crime against his will. While Byron ends Cain's revolt against God on a note of despair, Leconte de Lisle ends his poem with a vision of the overthrow of Jehovah and Qain's reconquest of Eden. (For a detailed analysis of *Qain*, see Alison Fairlie's study *Leconte de Lisle's Poems On the Barbarian Races*, 1947, pp. 244-279).

A. WILDGANS – G. B. SHAW – E. LASKER-SCHÜLER

The wrathful defiance of Cain, the anti-establishment hero, continues until the twentieth century versions. In the drama of the Viennese Expressionist Anton Wildgans, *Kain*, 1920, and in George Bernard Shaw's *Back to Methuselah*, 1921, the oldest son of Adam still retains the Byronic aggressive attitude toward God and the universe. He, the first murderer, and not Abel, the victim, is the central figure in most versions. Jewish writers, on the other hand, center their attention upon Abel, in whom they see their own fate prefigured. Thus, Elsa Lasker-Schüler's lyric *Abel*, included in her *Hebräische Balladen*, 1913, asks the Jewish question of Cain: Why did you kill your brother? Abel was living a peaceful life that was pleasing to God. His face was a golden garden and his eyes were nightingales. The strings of his soul were vibrating with God's bright melody. But Cain could not endure his brother, the prototype of the Jew, and murdered him. Since then, the blood of the innocent victim cries out from the earth and colors even heaven.

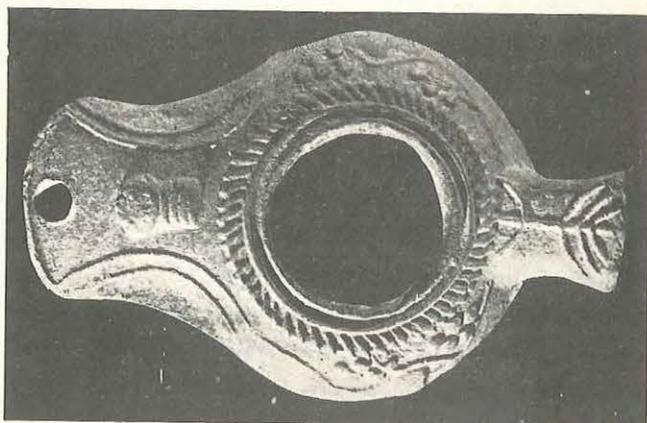
AFTER AUSCHWITZ AND HIROSHIMA

In the post-Holocaust period, German versions of the Cain-theme stress the murderer's remorse after his terrible deed. In the collective volume edited by Joachim Illies and entitled *Brudermord – Zum Mythos von Kain und Abel*, 1975, Friedrich Kienecker analyzes several of the more than twenty recent literary treatments of the Cain-theme. Typical of these are Christa Reinig's lyrical dialogue *Gott ruft Kain*, 1967, and Walter Helmut Fritz's poem *Kain*, 1971. The former takes issue with the contemporary Cains who want to obliterate the memory of their atrocious behavior. God seeks out Cain and finds him reading a

newspaper. In their dialogue, God asks him: What happened to Abel? Cain answers that he does not know, that he did not read anything about Abel in the daily press, and that he has forgotten happenings of long ago. When God insists: "So you know nothing and heard no outcry?" Cain replies that he did hear but he passed by, indifferent to the outcry. After all, what concern is it to him now, decades after the tragic events of the Holocaust?

The poem of Walter Helmut Fritz also condemns the German tendency to forget the unpleasant past. Cain of the 1970's no longer wanders over the fields with a club, he can now kill at a vast distance without looking his victim in the eye. He need not feel any personal responsibility. He neither hears nor knows the identity of the slain. He no longer even has to reply that he is not his brother's keeper. His face is marked with absolute indifference. He is living in a world devoid of moral values and hence feels no guilt and no need to atone.

A generation after Auschwitz and Maidanek, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the blood of Abel still cries out from the ground. How does the contemporary Cain face up to the innocent blood he shed? Does he, a member of the only species that can distinguish between good and evil, bear personal responsibility for his murderous deed or can he disclaim responsibility by putting the blame on the established world order against which he may at best rage but whose bidding he feels he must patriotically obey? These questions continue to reverberate in the literature of our day even as they stirred the conscience of sensitive creative spirits in earlier generations.



THE JERUSALEM STREETS ABRAHAM WALKED ON

BY LOUIS KATZOFF

In commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the reunification of the city of Jerusalem, we plan to present a series of articles aiming to get better acquainted with the city as it is reflected in Biblical history and geography. We have chosen as our first piece the route the biblical patriarchs might have taken through the city as they moved up and down the land from Shechem to Beersheva. Admittedly imaginative and speculative, this article is of educational value in feeling the ground possibly trodden by Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

THE VIA MARIS AND THE KING'S HIGHWAY

Ancient Canaan was the connecting land strip between two highly developed countries, Egypt and Mesopotamia. Two principal roads are recorded in the Bible linking the two large empires of the Fertile Crescent. One was the Via Maris — דרך הים — which went along the lowland not far from the coast. Armies especially traversed this road, using the Megiddo Pass¹ to by-pass the Carmel range and to enter the broad Jezreel Valley leading northeast toward the Tigris-Euphrates Valley. The Via Maris was on the western side of Israel.

On the eastern side of the Jordan River (in present-day Jordan), another main road linked the north (Mesopotamia) with the south (Egypt). It was called the King's Highway — דרך המלך. When the Israelites approached the Promised Land at the end of their forty year sojourn in the desert, they first asked permission of Edom and then of Sihon, king of the Amorites, to pass through their lands by way of the King's Highway (Numbers 20:17, 21:22). These then were the two main roads used by travelers during the biblical period.

ABRAHAM TOOK THE WATERSHED ROAD

Abraham took neither of these roads as he entered the Promised Land. He

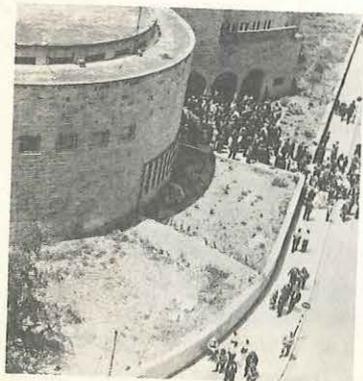
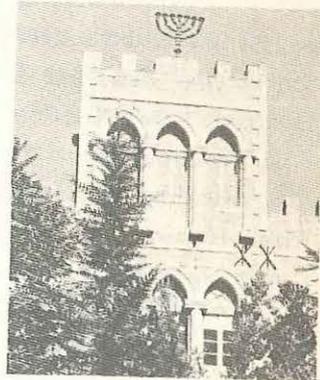
1. Megiddo played an important role in antiquity. Archeological excavations revealed the existence of over twenty levels, beginning with the Chalcolithic period in the fourth millennium BCE. In the Bible we find it as one of the three cities fortified by Solomon (I King 9:15); King Josiah lost his life there in the battle against Pharaoh Necho (II Kings 23:29).

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The market place, Mahane Yehuda

Bezalel, The National Museum and School of Arts and Crafts



The Yeshurun Synagogue

Heichal Shlomo, Seat of the Chief Rabbinate



The YMCA Building



The Montefiore Windmill



Map of the central part of Jerusalem: 1. The tall Clal building now in the process of construction 2. the Jerusalem market place Mahane Yehuda 3. Bezalel School of Art 4. Yeshurun Synagogue 6. Heichal Shlomo 7. Kings Hotel 8. Terra Sancta Monastery 9. YMCA 10. King David Hotel 11. Montefiore Windmill

used what we shall henceforth call the Watershed Road, along the crest of the north-south mountain range which divides the land into its western coastal plain and the eastern Jordan rift. With fewer and quieter settlements in the hills, the patriarchs had easy side roads when they wanted access to their respective destinations. Furthermore, the road was nearly all level, with hardly any precipitous ups-and-downs which would make travel difficult.

The first city mentioned in Abraham's itinerary as he entered Canaan was Shechem (Genesis 12:6). Beth El was another stop (12:8) as he moved south toward the Negev (12:9). All along, from Shechem to Beth El, to Hebron and to Beersheva, he moved along the summit of the mountain range.

THE WATERSHED ROAD IN JERUSALEM

Now, the Watershed Road cuts across the western side of our present-day Jerusalem. Anyone can take the periodic Saturday afternoon walk with the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel charting (explanations are in Hebrew) the watershed line through the city from the Shaare Zedek Hospital near the western end of present-day Jerusalem to the Montefiore Windmill at Yemin Moshe on the southeastern side of the city.

Today we can point out the streets along the Watershed Road. As Abraham moved through these parts and as Jacob was nearing Bethlehem (just south of present-day Jerusalem) where he lost his wife Rachel in childbirth (Genesis 35:16, 35:19) they found no settled communities along the road. Jerusalem, the Canaanite-Jebusite city existed in their day but it is not mentioned as one of the stations in their itinerary,² since Shalem (Jerusalem) was located a mile away from the Watershed Road, down a 1000 feet descent, near the confluence of the valleys of Hinom and Kidron. The patriarchs moved consistently along the summit road.³

2 Malchizedek, king of Shalem, came forth to greet Abraham (Genesis 14:18). Did he meet him near his city in the valley or somewhere along the Watershed Road?

3 At this point, it can be argued that Abraham by-passed present-day western Jerusalem altogether, using a shorter route, leaving the Watershed Road at Mount Scopus down into the Kidron Valley, stopping to drink of the water of the Gihon Spring at the city of Shalem, and then ascending the Valley of Hinom and meeting the Watershed Road again at about the present location of the railroad station. The watershed route through the western Jerusalem is longer but quite level, with plentiful water available at the Spring of Neftoah.

CHARTING THE STREETS OF THE WATERSHED ROAD

When you visit Jerusalem, see if you can pick out the following easily identifiable landmarks which follow along the ancient Watershed Road: Shaare Zedek Hospital near the Davidka Square further east of Jaffa Street; the Jerusalem market place Mahane Yehuda; the Bezalel School on Shmuel Hanagid Street; Jeshurun Synagogue, the Jewish Agency Compound, Heichal Shlomo, the Kings Hotel and the Terra Sancta Monastery, along King George Street; the Montefiore Windmill at the juncture of King David and Keren Hayesod Streets; the Scottish Church south of the Windmill and finally the road going on to Bethlehem. Drawing direct lines between these points will outline the ancient Watershed Road.

One of the most interesting corners of the city is the French Square. The following prominent establishment face each other on the four corners of the square: Supersol, the first general food store in the city, the Kings Hotel, the Terra Sancta Monastery and the Agron Conservative Center. Standing on the square, you can get the feel of the ancient Watershed Road. Look down Agron Street and note how steep is its decline. All the rainfall on that street will flow eventually into the Dead Sea. Now look down Keren Hayesod Street. The first hundred yards seem level, but then a steep descent starts a block from the square, from the corner of Lincoln Street. All the rainfall on Keren Hayesod Street will end up ultimately in the Mediterranean Sea. Why are the first yards level? If we draw the shortest route from the French Square to the tall cupolaed YMCA building, we are following the direct line of the ancient Watershed Road. Thus along the Keren Hayesod Street for one hundred yards and then on through Lincoln Street to the YMCA, you will encounter a very slight decline, while the two streets on both sides of this line have steep descents.

The area described above is generally well known to tourists, since most of the popular Jerusalem hotels are located there. When you come next to Jerusalem, take the walk along some of the streets where our patriarchs may have trod close to four thousand years ago.

THE LAWS OF SABBATH

BIBLICAL SOURCES

BY HYMAN ROUTTENBERG

PART I

With this issue we begin a new series of articles by Rabbi Routtenberg, dealing with laws of the Sabbath derived from Biblical sources.

The laws concerning the Sabbath are as mountains hanging by a hair, for they have scant scriptural basis but many laws.

Hagigah 10a

All the Sabbath laws are included in the commandment: "The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work" (Exodus 20:10) and in the positive commandment: "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" (Ibid. 20:8).

The only specific laws pertaining to the Sabbath that are mentioned in the Torah are the following:

"Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the Sabbath day" (Exodus 35:3).

"Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest; in plowing time and in harvest thou shalt rest" (Exodus 34:21).

הלכות שבת... הרי הם
כהררים התלוין בשערה שהן
מקרא מועט והלכות מרובות
חגיגה י.

יום השביעי שבת לה'
אלהיך לא תעשה כל מלאכה
(שמות כ', י)

זכור את יום השבת לקדשו
(שמות כ', ח).

לא תבערו אש בכל
משבתכם ביום השבת
(שמות ל"ה, ג).

ששת ימים תעבד וביום
השביעי תשבת בחריש
ובקציר תשבת (שמות ל"ד,
כ"א).

Dr. Routtenberg, ordained rabbi from Yeshiva University and Ph.D. degree from Boston University, presently resides in Israel. He is author of *Amos of Tekoa* in which he explored the Rabbinic sources interpreting the message of the prophet.

And while the Children of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man that gathered sticks upon the Sabbath day" (Numbers 15:32).

"Abide ye every man in his place, let no man go out of his place on the seventh day" (Exodus 16:29).

There are, however, additional specific laws pertaining to the Sabbath in the Books of the Prophets and in the Hagiographa. Thus Jeremiah says: ... "and bear no burden on the Sabbath day, or bring it in by the gates of Jerusalem; neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the sabbath day, neither do ye any work" (Jeremiah 17:21-22).

Rabbi Hezekiah states specifically in the name of Rabbi Aha that the prohibition to carry out on the Sabbath is derived from the words of Jeremiah, "Neither carry forth a burden out of your houses on the Sabbath day, neither do ye any work" (Jeremiah 17:22).

Yerushalmi, Shabbat 1:1

Isaiah mentions the prohibition of doing week-day (profane) things on the sabbath... "And shalt honor it, not doing thy wonted ways, nor pursuing thy business" (Isaiah 58:13).

In the Book of Nehemiah reference is made to the prohibition of doing business on the Sabbath. "And if the peoples of the land bring wares or any victuals on the Sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy of them on the Sabbath or on a holy day" (Nehemiah 10:32).

ויהיו בני ישראל במדבר וימצאו איש מקשש עצים ביום השבת (במדבר ט"ו, ל"ב).

שבו איש תחתיו, אל יצא איש ממקומו ביום השביעי. (שמות ט"ז, כ"ט)

ואל תשאו משא ביום השבת והבאתם בשערי ירושלים. ולא תוציאו משא מבתיכם ביום השבת וכל מלאכה לא תעשו (ירמיה י"ז; כ"א-כ"ב).

מנין שהוצאה קרויה מלאכה... ר' חזקיה בשם רבי אחא שמע כולהן מן הדין קרייא. "לא תוציאו משא מבתיכם ביום השבת וכל מלאכה לא תעשו" (ירמיה י"ז, כ"ב).

ירושלמי שבת א', א' וכבדתו מעשות דרכיך ממצוא חפצך ודבר דבר (ישעיה נ"ח, י"ג)

ועמי הארץ המביאים את המקחות וכל שבר ביום השבת למכור. לא נקח מהם בשבת וביום קדש (נחמיה י', ל"ב).

"In those days saw I in Judah some treading winepresses on the Sabbath, and bringing in heaps of corn, and lading asses therewith; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manners of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; and I forewarned them in the day wherein they sold victuals" (Nehemiah 13:15).

The prohibition against doing business on the Sabbath is also implied in the Book of Amos. The merchants are showing impatience with the Sabbath and are saying "When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell grain? And the Sabbath, that we may set forth corn?" (Amos 8:5).

Perhaps more than from any other single verse in Scriptures, the sages derive a number of laws pertaining to the Sabbath from Isaiah 58:13. In fact, the uniqueness and special character of the day is derived from this verse in Isaiah which reads as follows: "If thou turn away thy foot because of the Sabbath, from pursuing thy business on my holy day; and call the Sabbath a delight, and the holy of the Lord honorable; and shalt honor it, not doing thine own ways, nor pursuing thy business, nor speaking thine own words (Isaiah 58:13).

בימים ההמה ראיתי ביהודה דרכים גתות בשבת. ומביאים הערמות, ועמסים על החמרים, ואף יין ענבים ותאנים וכל משא, ומביאים ירושלים ביום השבת, ואעיד ביום מכרם ציד (נחמיה י"ג, ט"ו)

... לאמר מתי יעבר החדש ונשבירה שבר והשבת ונפתחה בר (עמוס ח', ה').

אם תשיב משבת רגלך, עשות חפצך ביום קדשי, וקראת לשבת ענג. לקדוש ה' מכבד, וכבדתו מעשות דרכיך, ממצוא חפצך ודבר דבר (ישעיה נ"ח, י"ג).

THE SIBERIAN EXILE AND HIS BOOK

REVIEW OF A STUDY IN WISDOM LITERATURE

BY BEN ZION LURIA

Elyoenai's book gives testimony to the invincibility of the spirit of man that knows no submission even in the far cold exile of Siberia, an exile that holds no hope for home nor release. This is one of the marvelous revelations of the human spirit which evokes wonderment and admiration. A Jewish scholar from Lithuania, exiled to a lonely village in Khazachastan in Siberia, teaches German to German children who also have been banished there, while every free moment of his is dedicated to research in Bible, thorough, balanced, and worthy of a place of honor in the field of biblical inquiry.

Meir Kantorowitz stems from Kovno, is a graduate of the local university in the field of Semitic languages. He served as a teacher in the Hebrew Gymnasium in Kovno. His family was wiped out in the Holocaust. He was the only survivor. The Soviet government that took over in Lithuania saw in him a "Zionist threat" and exiled him to the distant wastes of Siberia. Dwelling among the Germans who were deported there from their homes on the Volga, he started family life again. And as he took for wife one of the German deportees, he changed his name to Elyoenai, a name found among the

returnees from Babylon who married foreign women (Ezra 10:22).

A stranger among the Germans in the village, a stranger in his own household, he sought refuge in the Book of Books. At first he had no books, not even a Bible. He was forced to rely on his memory alone — though, indeed, his memory was remarkable. Once a doubt arose in his mind about a reading of a verse. He rose and went to a neighboring village of deportees, a distance of seven viorst (about 6 miles) from his town Zerenda to consult a Bible which a "criminal" like he had somehow smuggled to his city of exile. With time, friends of his, from near and far sent him scholarly books. Today he is in the position to study biblical and linguistic themes, basing himself on contemporary studies and will contend with eminent scholars in his field of interest.

The government authorities decreed that he may not leave his place of residence. Once, a strong desire seized him to visit the library of Leningrad which contains a rich store in Judaica. And so he traveled there. But he thought that he might as well visit some friends in Moscow and wrote to them accordingly. But the local police, who censor every piece of mail of "criminals," forthwith in-

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formed the Moscow police. In the dead of night he was dragged from his friend's home and forcibly transported back to his exile town Zerenda.

A boyhood friend, Dr. Berman, principal of a secondary school in Tel Aviv, encouraged him to put into writing his thoughts and ideas about the ancient Hebrew wisdom literature. After several years, bundles of scrap notes began to arrive containing a comprehensive study of Ecclesiastes and Proverbs. It was difficult to properly arrange the order of the contents. It was apparent that these notes were written at different times. Thus repetitions abound, though to eliminate them would damage the main course of his themes. It should be recalled that a span of a generation had passed by without access to a Hebrew book or contact with the living printed Hebrew medium.

The World Jewish Bible Society determined to get his notes published in book form. This was not an easy task. Fashioning the disparate notes into a coherent whole posed a major difficulty. Tenaciously holding on to his theories, he will at times engage in sharp refutation against scholars who have written contrary theories.

Contact with the author is weak and unstable. Not every letter arrives and replies are uncertain. One never knows whether letters are handed to him or what happens to them. Clearing up discrepancies in expression through direct communication was most difficult. It might just be possible that some of the thoughts do not exactly reflect the

author's real meaning, and if so, apology is offered to the reader and to the author.

Elyoenai rejects the theories that place Ecclesiastes in the period of the Second Commonwealth and that see in it a reflection of the ideas of the Greek philosophers. He claims that Israel's culture, as we know it from the period of the Monarchy, was sufficiently developed for abstract thought. He denies the Aramaic source of the book and even more so the influence of Ugaritic upon the language of Ecclesiastes. He tries to prove that Kohelet lived in the generation of Hezekiah and Josiah, and was known as a man of thought, but not as a disbeliever.

Several principles dominate his research, such as: The literal interpretation of the text is paramount, and one should not emend it to suit his particular theory or outlook. He takes it for granted that most of the statements of the book are not given because of the beauty of expression, but are taken from life experiences and given articulation in the form of mottos, proverbs or moral lessons. Facts that are mentioned in the book should not be doubted. One should not distort the statement, "I was a king over Israel in Jerusalem," by searching for different meanings of the word מֶלֶךְ through Arabic or Ugaritic. Indeed, the names of the kings of the First and Second Commonwealth are known to us, yet none are mentioned. The term "king" here is used in a restricted way, in the sense that Kohelet was a regent, with the appellation of king, a temporary ruler who filled in while waiting for the

dynastic king to come of age and take over the rule. Kohelet was "a scion of David," a member of the kingly family, who served as regent while Josiah, who had ascended the throne at the age of eight, was yet a minor. Kohelet recognized the evils of the earlier regime of Manasseh, and thus he declares: *Better a poor lad (a ruler) yet wise, than a king old yet foolish* (Ecclesiastes 4:13). The People of his generation readily understood his reference.

Elyoenai opens a door for our understanding of the Book of Ecclesiastes through knowledge of the society and the ruling governments in the final period before the destruction of the First Temple. His interpretations are rooted in a deep grasp of the biblical idiom.

Elyoenai's treatment of the Book of Proverbs is different. The traditional version of Ecclesiastes is adhered to strictly and he suggests only a few changes in punctuation. He takes more liberties with Proverbs, structuring it along the principle of its original sources.

The first is the source of the Wisdom School which takes in sayings of the wise in the generation of Hezekiah and Josiah. This source glorifies human understanding. Elyoenai perceives here the es-

sential personality of Kohelet.

The second source stems from the Faith School, containing the sayings of the faithful who fought against the free ideas of the Wisdom School. A central figure in this circle is Agur, the son of Yeka.

The third source includes moral lessons, written in a special literary form, which keeps away from epigrams but is descriptive of life vignettes accompanied by general ideas. This source is early, from the beginning of the Monarchy, with Solomon probably taking part in it.

The fourth source consists of lessons to learners. Here the individual approach of the teacher is dominant, and the emphasis is upon the value of reason. Its essence is practical wisdom illumined by enlightened faith.

The World Jewish Bible Society set as its task to redeem this book. Much toil and effort went into this endeavor. Appreciation is expressed to all who assisted in this Mitzvah, especially Dr. M.S. Schulzinger of Cincinnati. Regrettably, it is beyond our power to redeem its author, who still languishes in his loneliness in the steppes of Siberia.

Translated from the Hebrew by Louis Katzoff

מ. אליועני

מחקרים בקהלת ובמשלי

יצא לאור על-ידי החברה לחקר המקרא

בהוצאת קריית ספר בע"מ

מחיר הספר כולל משלוח — 10 דולר

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Kindly permit me to add a remark each to two excellent penetrating studies in the Spring issue of *Dor le-Dor*, *David and Bathseba*, Garsiel, and *Psalm XV* Avishur:

Professor Garsiel, in the last of his three articles on David and Bathsheba, deals extensively (pp. 135-137) with the fact that the Bible "deliberately refrains from depicting at length the deep and turbulent feelings of the characters connected with the sinful episode," David, Bathsheba and Uriah. Professor Garsiel rightly concludes that the author wished to concentrate on his moral goal of deprecating the evil of sin and showing how its tragic, unlimitable consequences engulfed even guiltless people who were drawn into the path of the events. Moreover, says Professor Garsiel, any laying bare of the driving motivations of the dramatis personae would have resulted in the readers' taking sides too deeply and too definitely.

Professor Garsiel does not point out that we have here before us a general feature of the Bible's style. The actors' sentiments are omitted, except where they form an essential part, without which the events would have taken a different course. Likewise, the beauty or deformity of people, the excellence or deficiency of their character, their moral standards are only cited when, without it, the story would become unintelligible.

The serpent was cunning; Hanoch walked with God. God saw that Noah was the only one worthy of being saved from the Flood. Of Sarah's beauty we only learn when it makes her a victim to Pharaoh's lust. Without Rachel's beauty, Joseph's and David's handsomeness, Ehud's left-handedness their lives would have taken quite a different course. So would Jewish history.

In Genesis 12, we are not told why God ordered Abraham to move "to the Land which I shall show you." Only prior to Sodom's destruction, do we learn why God finds it fitting to take Abraham into God's confidence. Exodus 3 does not explain why just Moses was entrusted with leading the Hebrews out of Egypt. His utter humility is only cited when he failed to reply to Aron's and Miriam's jibes. Isaac's love for Esau and Rebecca's feelings for Jacob are essential components of the story that follows.

The realisation that we are here dealing with an immutable rule of Bible accounts helps solve many problems, such as why God appointed certain people to be His prophets, without our being told of these prophets' particular qualities. Why, on occasion, even an evildoer like Bileam is granted prophet's rank.

This also answers a recently published question why the Bible never explicitly tells us of children's love for their

parents. None of the Bible's stories requires such an illustration.

It is clear that this self-imposed reluctance of the Bible to describe people and their feelings is a major enriching contributor to the possibilities of different interpretations which readers, Midrash tellers and researchers can attribute to Bible passages. Often these Midrashim and ways of understanding are radically at variance with each other. Esau can be turned into a merry, naive, guiltless huntsman, morally superior to the sneaking Jacob. The fact that God appointed Jacob as the spiritual heir of Abraham and the holder of the legal title to the Land of Israel shows that there should be limits to character readings into the Bible text.

Malachi's words that God loved Jacob and hated Esau should equally lead to our rejecting the relative revaluation of Esau and Jacob, for God does not hate or love without full reasons.

However: "Rivalry among researchers increases wisdom".

Professor Avishur's analysis of Psalm XV is truly profound. I was particularly interested in his (it seems original) pointing to the fact that the good deeds of the one who deserves to dwell in God's tabernacle are given in the present tense, while the negative features from which he is free are rendered in the past tense.

Professor Avishur sees in this an indication that the Psalmist visualises this excellent person. As he sees him, he

finds him "walking the path of righteousness", in the present. The Psalmist has also observed him in the past. He was never guilty of improper action.

This differentiation I find unconvincing. The good deeds are not just of this present moment — except with a Ba'al T'shuvah. Like the absence of negative acts, so the practice of good ones stretches far back into the person's past.

Moreover, in the Hebrew original, the verbs in verse 4 are in the future tense. The English A.V. translates them in the present tense, but this is no guide. The correct rendering is: "he will (always) honour those who fear God — he will not pervert his oath, even when this hurts his interests."

For both those reasons, I prefer to think that the Psalmist, in using different tenses has adopted the well-known Jewish rule that God, in His mercy, "uses double standards" when deciding "who may dwell in His tabernacle." Sinful acts which will exclude a man (or his soul) from a place of honour must actually have been committed. They must be part of the person's past. On the other hand, even good intentions may weigh in the person's (or his soul's) favour, providing he honestly tried to carry out the good deeds, but was prevented by harsh circumstances. The good deeds may be present or even unfulfilled future ones.

Jacob Felton

FOURTEENTH WORLD YOUTH BIBLE CONTEST

The annual World Jewish Youth Bible Contest has turned out to be the most significant feature of Israel Independence Day celebration in Jerusalem. Spectators filling the beautiful Jerusalem Theater to capacity, witnessed a battle of wits and knowledge of twenty seven youngsters from fourteen countries, spanning five continents, from Australia and South Africa to Canada, and from Peru to Iran.

A long and arduous way, from elimination to elimination, beginning in the various cities and regions of the countries of their origin, led to the eventual crowning of the "Chatan Hatenakh," and the four top winners with him. This year saw a fair distribution of winners by countries, with the top winner from Israel and an American in second place, a Belgian in third place, an Israeli girl in fourth place and a Canadian in fifth place.



The top five winners, from left to right: Samuel Goldberger (5th place), Mira Ohev-Shalom (4th place), President Ephraim Katzir, Chilkiah Khabra (1st place), David Glatt (2nd place), Harry Hirsch (3rd place).

Nir David, a Kibbutz and center for the whole Bet-Shean valley, served as the opening phase of the competition. A distinguished panel of judges was presided over by Israel Yeshayahu, Speaker of the Israel Knesset. The second phase, a written quiz, took place two days later at the Yellin Teacher Seminary in Jerusalem.

The third and final phase, held in the Jerusalem Theater, began with a spirited choral rendering of the joint choirs of the military chaplaincy and the children of Ramat Gan, with Major Braun, soloist, under the baton of Major Menashe Lev-Ran. A tense group of twenty seven youngsters faced the panel of judges consisting of Professor Haim Gevaryahu, Chairman of the World Jewish Bible Society, Ben Zion Luria, the editor of the WJBS Hebrew quarterly *Beth Mikra*, Balfour Hakkak, a previous winner of the Youth Bible Contest, and Joseph Shaar composer of the Bible quiz. This panel was presided over by the former chief of the military chaplains, Rabbi (General Ret.) Mordecai Piron.



Twenty seven finalists of the fourteenth World Jewish Youth Bible Contest, at the reception tendered by the President of the State of Israel, Ephraim Katzir.

After one round of questions, posed by Amikam Gurewitz, noted radio Bible reader, nine contestants remained to face two more rounds of questions, until only five remained. In a tense and expectant atmosphere the final round would determine the order of the five winners. The question: who were the the six kings in Israel anointed with oil, and who of these was anointed three times? Where were they anointed and who anointed them?

The most remarkable performance was that of Chilkiyah Khabra, a 17 year old student of Yeshivat Darom, in Rehovot. The seventh child of a family of thirteen, whose parents had immigrated on the fabulous Magic Carpet in 1949 from Yemen, he swept into first place with a perfect score of 74 points. A whole bus load of fellow students cheered the winner. It was touching indeed to watch this group honoring the father of this youth, blind, and a simple factory worker, with special dances and songs. It was not only his family and friends who cheered him. The spectators in the theater, all those who watched the competition on T.V., the city of Rechovot and, indeed all of Israel. In Chilkiyah Khabra, the saying of the Sages came true that Torah comes forth from the children of the disadvantaged.

David Glatt's performance of 73 points, one point shy of the possible maximum, was formidable. Son of Rabbi and Mrs. Melvin Glatt, from Princeton, N.J. Center, he is a tenth grade student of the Manhattan Yeshiva University High School (MTA). At the age of 15, it was not his first appearance in the World Bible Youth Contest, having participated two years prior to it, at the age of thirteen, and coming in then in eighth place. David's finest showing came in the answering of the final question, sailing through the complexity of it with unbelievable assurance, thus getting together with Chilkiyah a perfect set of answers. His position in second place was unquestionable deserved. It is David's intention to come for studies to Israel, following thus in the footsteps of his older sister Shari who, at present, is studying at Machon Gold, in Jerusalem.

Harry Hirsch, son of Mr. and Mrs. Gedalyahu and Paula Hirsch of Antwerp, Belgium, and eleventh year student of Tachkemoni, came in third; Mira Ohev-Shalom, a 17 year old girl, 11th grade student at the religious High-school Givat Washington, Israel, came in fourth. Samuel Goldberger, son of Mr. and Mrs. Arieh and Judith Goldberger, residing in Toronto, Canada, and a twelfth grade student of the Community Hebrew Academy in Toronto, came in fifth place.

To assist in the comprehension, questions were translated into French,



David Glatt, 2nd place winner, son of Rabbi and Mrs. Melvin Glatt, Princeton, N.J., addresses audience. Seated from left to right, Michael Ravid (director general of the Department of Education and Culture of W.Z.O), Col. Hillel Ben-Meir (Commander of Gadna), President Ephraim Katzir, Professor Haim Gevaryahu (Chairman, World Jewish Bible Society).

Spanish, Persian and English. The panel of judges allowed questions to be answered in various languages and at least one Spanish and five English speaking participants took advantage of this privilege to express themselves in their mother tongue. It is estimated that perhaps one hundred thousand youngsters participated in preliminary contests on local, regional and national levels, while one thousand adults were involved in the planning and administration of the World Youth Bible Contest in all of the countries.

It is interesting to note that of the twenty four participants from the Diaspora no fewer than nine indicated an intention to settle permanently in Israel, with an additional eight expressing a desire to study here.

The Bible Contest was organized by the World Jewish Bible Society, in cooperation with the Gadna Youth Corps, the pre-military youth division of the Israeli army, under the command of Col. Hillel Ben-Meir, and co-ordinated by Major (Rabbi) Mordecai Abramovski.

PARTICIPANTS IN FOURTEENTH YOUTH BIBLE CONTEST

<i>Argentina</i>	Salomon Mamane	<i>Peru</i>
Judith Faifman	Prosper Toledano	Nellie Pinczowski
<i>Australia</i>	<i>Ireland</i>	<i>South Africa</i>
Naomi Baral	Robert Rhodes	Bernard Patz
<i>Belgium</i>	<i>Iran</i>	Leon Welcher
Harry Hirsch	Bahmian Shemesh	<i>U.S.A.</i>
<i>Britain</i>	<i>Israel</i>	David Glatt
David Fagelston	Zvi Bazak	Smadar Eliach
<i>Canada</i>	Chilkiah Khabra	Shoshana Pollak
Samuel Goldberger	Mira Ohev-Shalom	Esther Schreiber
Adina Hower	<i>Mexico</i>	Elliot Schwartz
Raizie Turin	Daniel Fischer	Miriam Sobolofsky
<i>France</i>	<i>Panama</i>	Todd Werner
Isaac Danino	Sandra Eisen	

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Oct—Nov 1977	חשון חשל"ח	Nov—Dec 1977	כסלו חשל"ח
Th 13	Psalms 120	א	F 11 תולדות
F 14	נח	ב	Sa 12 תולדות
Sa 15	נח	ג	Su 13 Psalms 141
Su 16	Psalms 121	ד	M 14 Psalms 142
M 17	Psalms 122	ה	T 15 Psalms 143
T 18	Psalms 123	ו	W 16 Psalms 144
W 19	Psalms 124	ז	Th 17 Psalms 145
Th 20	Psalms 125	ח	F 18 ויצא
F 21	לך לך	ט	Sa 19 ויצא
Sa 22	לך לך	י	Su 20 Psalms 146
Su 23	Psalms 126	יא	M 21 Psalms 147
M 24	Psalms 127	יב	T 22 Psalms 148
T 25	Psalms 128	יג	W 23 Psalms 149
W 26	Psalms 129	יד	Th 24 Psalms 150
Th 27	Psalms 130	טו	F 25 וישלח
F 28	וירא	טז	Sa 26 וישלח
Sa 29	וירא	יז	Su 27 Proverbs 1
Su 30	Psalms 131	יח	M 28 Proverbs 2
M 31	Psalms 132	יט	T 29 Proverbs 3
T 1	Psalms 133	כ	W 30 Proverbs 4
W 2	Psalms 134	כא	Th 1 Proverbs 5
Th 3	Psalms 135	כב	F 2 וישב
F 4	חיי שרה	כג	Sa 3 וישב
Sa 5	חיי שרה	כד	Su 4 Proverbs 6 חנוכה
Su 6	Psalms 136	כה	M 5 Proverbs 7 חנוכה
M 7	Psalms 137	כו	T 6 Proverbs 8 חנוכה
T 8	Psalms 138	כז	W 7 Proverbs 9 חנוכה
W 9	Psalms 139	כח	Th 8 Proverbs 10 חנוכה
Th 10	Psalms 140	כט	F 9 מקץ חנוכה
			Sa 10 ל מקץ שבת חנוכה וראש חודש

עשה תורתך קבע

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