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SPEECH AND SILENCE IN PROPHECY

BY ANDRÉ D. NEHER

The Bible can be called the book of speech *par excellence*, even though the reader of the Bible finds - in almost every book and in almost every chapter whether knowingly or not - a phenomenon which is the opposite of speech. That phenomenon is *silence*. Silence in all its many forms and with all its ambivalent, or even polyvalent meanings plays an important and decisive role in the Bible: be it divine silence, human silence or cosmic silence. This silence has not been given its proper place by those who read and study the Bible.

True, the marvellous phenomenon of cosmic silence as expressed in Psalms, e.g. (Psalm 19) "There is no speech, there are no words, neither is their voice heard" enchanted the poets and composers of our nation and of the nations of the world. And the amazing human silence of man inhibited by the *mysterium tremendum* of holiness (this phenomenon is expressed in the famous line in Psalms 62:2, "Only for God doth my soul wait in stillness" and in 65:2, "Praise waiteth for Thee") has captured the minds of many psychologists and sociologists of religion from the school that specialized in mysticism such as Sigmund Freud, Jung, Mircea Eliade, Rudolf Otto and Gershom Scholem.

It is true, however, that quite a number of philosophers and theologians have paid attention to the phenomenon of divine silence as is stressed in the chapter on the sacrifice of Isaac and in the book of Job. One of the first to study this was Mordecai Martin Buber who was preceded by Kierkegaard in the last century. In order to point up the philosophical and theological meaning of the biblical concept, Buber coined the daring expression *Gottesfinsternis* (Eclipse of God). Two of Buber's pupils, Margareta Susmann (in her book on Job published in 1947) and Theodor Adorno (in his book *Negative Dialektik* published in 1967), also dis-

Professor Neher, now residing in Jerusalem, was Professor and Head of the Department of Hebrew Language and Literature at the University of Strassburg and Visiting Professor at the University of Tel Aviv. He has written many books on Bible and Jewish philosophy, among them: *Amos - A Contribution to the Study of Prophecy*, *Notes on Ecclesiastes*, *Moses*, *Jeremiah*, *The Prophetic Existence* and *The Biblical History of the People of Israel* (in collaboration with his wife, Renée). His most recent book is *The Silence of God in The Bible and Auschwitz*.

cussed the awful silence of God during the holocaust. They deal with the prominent figures of Abraham and Job - biblical heroes who were tested by silence - and compare their test to that of the victims of the holocaust, all of which became an intimate and integral part of their metaphysical test.

BIBLICAL SILENCE, A PROPHECYING FACTOR

However only very few scholars, commentators or historians have paid attention to the phenomenon of biblical silence as a basic factor in prophecy (like "word," "spirit," and "vision") that is a characteristic medium for the revelation of God to man; a factor which acts as a dominant element in the biblical prophetic dialogue. There are so few scholars who have expressed views on the subject, that I can dispense with a bibliographical introduction.

And so, I wish to turn your attention to the phenomenon of silence as a positive medium, characteristic of divine revelation in biblical prophecy.

In the prophetic dialogue, the constant dialogue between God and the prophet, silence is not merely an interruption, nor a meaningless truce. On the contrary, I think there is a positive significance to the silence, that it is of equal importance to speech, that it serves speech as a second, opposite side, or more explicitly, as an essential alternative.

I shall try to analyze the internal dialectic of speech and silence in biblical prophecy. I shall divide my article into the three classical sections of the dialectic: the thesis, the antithesis and the synthesis.

First of all I must present and clarify the material which I shall elaborate upon.

I have already hinted that the first temptation of the scholar studying the concept of silence in the Bible is to turn to Psalms, or to the chapter on the sacrifice of Isaac which pulsates with mystical experience, or to the Book of Job - 35 of its 42 chapters are permeated with divine silence. Abraham and Isaac are absorbed in divine silence and walk along as if blind, as if deaf and almost as if mute. Job, however, is not mute. On the contrary, he speaks and argues and cries out, but all his complaints and cries fall on the barred doors of the silence of God.

In my opinion, it is impossible to understand fully the principal meaning of these wonderful stories without prior clarification of known elements in their meaning, and scholars have not, to date, studied these factors.

NO PROPHECIC EXPERIENCE WITHOUT SILENCE

Among these elements is, first of all, the fact that there is almost no prophetic experience without the phenomenon of silence. The three major prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, were all tried by silence.

Isaiah: According to Radak's commentary (in the name of his father) to verse 5, chapter 6: "Woe is me! for I am undone" - because I have kept silent, because silence, or paralysis, has seized me.

The prophet Jeremiah in Chapter 42, when he was forced to wait ten days to receive an answer to his prayer to God: "Then Jeremiah the prophet said unto them: 'I have heard you; behold, I will pray unto the Lord your God according to your words, and it shall come to pass, that whatsoever thing the Lord shall answer you, I will declare it unto you; I will keep nothing back from you...' And it came to pass after ten days, that the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah..." Ten days! A long time for silence, for avoidance, for withholding an answer: a surprising length of time, since the nation was in terrible danger and an immediate reply was required.

As for Ezekiel, it is well known that there is a connection between his prophecy and silence since during his mission as a prophet he was mute for a long period - from the beginning of his mission (Chapters 1-4) to the dramatic climax (Chapters 24 and 33), which tells of the death of his wife and the destruction of the Temple. Already in the story of the beginning of his mission, in Chapter 3:26 we read: "And I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover; for they are a rebellious house. But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth and thou shalt say unto them:..." In Chapter 24:27 we read: "In that day shall thy mouth be opened together with him that is escaped, and thou shalt speak, and be no more dumb; so shalt thou be a sign unto them, and they shall know that I am the the Lord." In Chapter 33:22 we read: "Now the hand of the Lord had been upon me in the evening, before he that was escaped came; and He had opened my mouth against his coming to me in the morning; and my mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb."

It seems that, if we accept Radak's explanation, Isaiah's silence is no more than awe in the face of holiness. On the other hand, the silence of Jeremiah and of Ezekiel is of a completely different nature: it is dependent upon the principal con-

ditions of the prophetic dialogue, conditions which, I think, are indiscernible without paying attention to the simple and modest forms of prophetic silence expressed in ritualistic conditions known to prophecy. In other words, in the ritualistic enquiry of the prophet which in the history of biblical religion was preceded by the enquiry with the *urim vtumim*. I feel it is necessary to mention these matters of prophetic enquiry here as an important part of the material I wish to present.

URIM VTUMIM

I agree with the late Yehezkel Kaufmann who argued that the *urim vtumim* were a kind of lot. However, it is worthwhile noting the fact that the question put to the lot was not tied to any condition ("If I go... If I do not go... If I do... If I do not do..."). And the answer was not tied to an alternative of yes or no. However, the answer was sometimes tied to an alternative of speech or silence: either God answers or he evades the question and this evasion is in essence an answer on a par with a spoken reply. The most striking example of this in the Bible is in First Samuel 28:6, "And when Saul enquired of the Lord, the Lord answered him not, neither by dreams, nor by *urim*, nor by prophets." Saul understood just what this lack of an answer meant, a meaning that I will delve into later. And precisely for this reason Saul turns to a "woman that divineth by a ghost." To turn to witchcraft is to turn to the pole opposite the God of Israel, to magic. Saul is certain that there he will receive an answer, and indeed he does. Not giving an answer is characteristic of the originality and uniqueness of Israelite prophecy, for in the prophecy of the ancient Middle East, including Greece, there is no oracle which does not answer.

In the verse I mentioned we read that Saul even enquired of prophets and that God did not answer him by prophets either. And true, at the time when the prophets' enquiry substituted for enquiry by *urim vtumim* in the history of Israel, we again meet with silence as an alternative to speech.

THE MEANING OF LO ASHIVENU

In my book on Amos I suggested — and such scholars as the late David Cassuto, Louis Dennenfeld and Edouard Dhorme agreed with me — that the first two chapters of Amos should be interpreted as a scene of enquiring of God. It is a

cosmopolitan scene, and the enquirers are the nations of the Middle East: Damascus, Tyre, Ammon, Moab, Edom, Israel and Judea. They make enquiries of the prophet out of fear of the kingdom of Assyria, which was rising as a new power. However, in his answers the prophet replies with a refrain "*Lo ashivenu*," that is to say: God refuses to answer you, he withholds his reply. God's answer is a lack of an answer - silence. (*Ashivenu* is usually interpreted "I will not reverse it." See Job 31:14, 32:14.)

I think that the commentators of the Middle Ages were correct when they interpreted the famous scene in Ezekiel, chapter 20 in the same manner as I interpret Amos: "And it came to pass in the seventh year, in the fifth month, the tenth day of the month, that certain of the elders of Israel came to enquire of the Lord and sat before me. And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying: Son of man, speak unto the elders of Israel, and say unto them: Thus saith the Lord God: Are ye come to enquire of Me? As I live, saith the Lord God, I will not be enquired of by you." The medieval commentators explain these verses as an evasion of answering the arrogant question put by the enquirers. Rashi says (according to Midrash Tanchuma): "If he does not listen to us, we will not be punished for our transgressions, for we have already sold and he has nothing on us; a slave who has sold his master and a woman who has divorced her husband, has the one any claims on the other?!" God answers correctly: There is nothing between us, I will not answer your enquiry.

And Midrash Rabba on Song of Songs (7:13) goes deeper into the psychological and theological significance of the scene. The Midrash says that the enquirers are Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah, three friends of Daniel, who want to know "Yes or No" — will God save them from the fiery furnace? Withholding the answer is a prime condition for the holiness of God: "Do not say even a word to them," for this silence which prevents God from uttering a single word or giving any hint, bestows some element of martyrdom on the three friends, who are forced to prepare themselves for it without knowing whether God will save them, as He did Abraham and Isaac at Mount Moriah and Job in his tribulations.

THE THESIS

I think that in reviewing these incidents of silence in biblical prophecy — and these are only a few examples — I have reached my thesis, the first stage in the dialectic of speech and silence. It seems to me that this thesis is very simple.

The thesis is expressed by enquiry to the *urim vtumim* and to the prophets: the significance of the silence is unequivocal and clear to the enquirer, just as speech is, and perhaps even more so. The meaning of the silence: a 'hiding of God's face' because of the sin or the guilt of the enquirer. Sin prevents, as it were, the possibility of a relationship between God and man. Without any explanation whatsoever, Saul understands that his transgression is the cause of God's withholding a reply. Amos explains to the enquirers of God that because of their sins they will not be answered. Ezekiel presents a long list in Chapter 20 with a detailed description of sins which prevent God from the possibility of answering those who enquire of him, and of the causes of his negative reply: "I will not be enquired of by you."

This is my thesis. It is worth mentioning that there is no parallel to this thesis in the prophecy of idolatry. The reason is simple: a god who does not speak, a silent god, is not called a god in idolatry. In the words of the prophet, "He has a mouth, but he speaks not, ears but he hears not," etc. At the dramatic confrontation on Mount Carmel (First Kings 18) the Prophet Elijah makes use of the difference between speech and silence as the test to recognize between the true God and the false god: "And the God that answereth by fire, let him be God" (24). Baal proves not to be the true god for he does not answer at all ("But there was no voice, nor any that answered"). God is the true God precisely because he does answer.

THE ANTITHESIS: ILLUMINATING MIRROR

Moreover, the test which Elijah conducts is the turning point in the history of prophecy of divine silence. From here on there is a change in the perspective of silence. And so we arrive at the antithesis of our subject. The significance of "hiding of face" changes now to "an illuminating mirror" and becomes the opposite of what it was. This point is inherent in the fact that the silent God, who avoids answering, is not necessarily an idol (a theological fact that Elijah seemingly completely forgot). The reader of Chapter 18 of First Kings can ask himself with trepidation: what would have happened if God had not answered Elijah, if He had wrapped Himself in silence?! The answer comes to us in the following chapter, 19, and it leaves no room for doubt. Nothing would have happened; and it was clear to the Children of Israel who took part in the events on Mount Carmel that it was not enough that they could interpret God's silence and evasion

of answering as a hiding of face because of their sins and guilt, but that it was incumbent upon them to interpret it thus. However, in Chapter 19 (and here we cross to the simple and ancient meaning of God's silence) in verses 11 and 12 we learn clearly that God's silence is not a sign of hiding of face and of the disruption of the relations between God and man. We read the exact opposite: the silence is the purest and most suitable tool to serve as the "illuminating mirror" of prophetic revelation: "...but the Lord was not in the wind;... but the Lord was not in the earthquake; ... and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice."

By juxtaposing fire and stillness I see a sense of real irony. On Mount Carmel God answered in fire and on Mount Horeb not by fire but by silence.

I think that these two chapters present a kind of two-sided picture: on the one hand we are told that in crude and perhaps even in grotesque seriousness, you have no God except the God that answers, and on the other hand there is a hint of thin irony and fine mockery in the fact that the true God sometimes does not answer. Occasionally He evades answering and from the keyboard of voices He chooses the "voice" of silence, the still small voice.

THE TRUE AND FALSE PROPHET

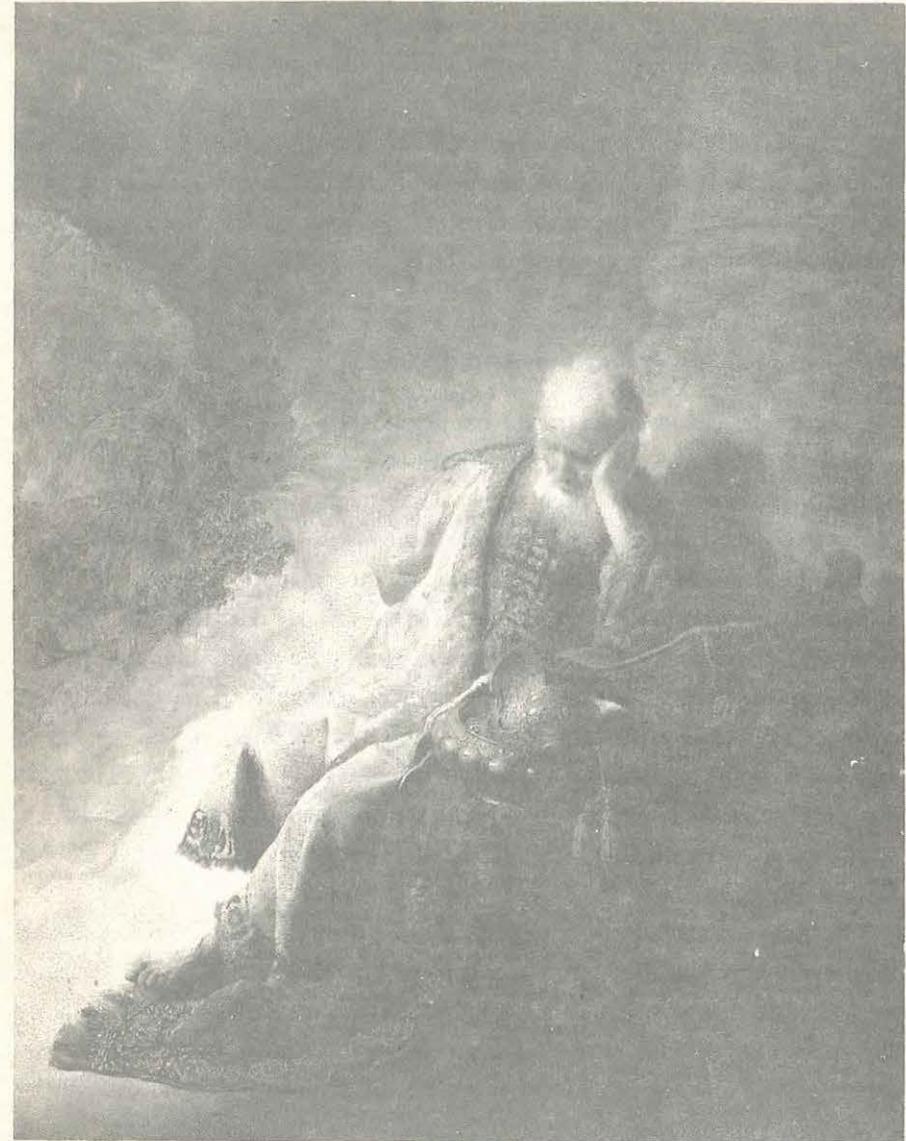
After this change in Elijah's time in the perspective of prophecy, in the period of literary prophecy, prophetic silence takes on a completely new meaning and becomes one of the ways of distinguishing between the true prophet and the false one. As is known, this problem troubled Jeremiah very much when he confronted Hananiah the son of Azzur (Chapter 28). Jeremiah and Hananiah make conflicting prophecies and they both speak in the name of God. Jeremiah is filled with doubt and he is bereft of the internal power of persuasion which usually accompanies prophecy and verifies it. When he confronts Hananiah he ascribes the possibility of distinguishing between true and false prophecy to an ancient theory which is based on the content of the prophecy: "The prophets that have been before me and before thee of old prophesied against many countries and against great kingdoms, of war, and of evil, and of pestilence. The prophet that prophesieth of peace, when the word of the prophet shall come to pass, then shall the prophet be known, that the Lord hath truly sent him." Since this method of differentiating between the true and false prophet utilized the future realization of

the prophecy, I assume that in order to find an immediate test Jeremiah chose the criterion of silence.

It seems to me that Chapter 23 in the Book of Jeremiah is dedicated in its entirety to this theme: the false prophets are those who prophesy continuously and incessantly. They have nothing to say, they make things up or steal the word of God from one another ("Therefore, behold, I am against the prophets, saith the Lord, that steal My words every one from his neighbour..."). They do not realize that prophecy is not a light matter that can be easily attained, nor do they realize that prophecy is a "burden" that is compared to a hammer or to fire. Just as it is impossible to evade prophecy when it is bestowed suddenly upon one, so is it impossible to obtain the ability to prophesy when it evades the prophet and disappears. The charismatic aspect of prophecy demands and determines this dialectic: free bestowal on the one hand, and evasion on the other. Prophecy is dependent upon God and not upon man. With the same measure of will and even caprice, with which the divine speech is given, it is withheld and in its place comes silence.

I have already hinted at the surprising event in Jeremiah's prophetic career — the event on which Chapter 42 dwells extensively. When the poor remaining in Judea after the murder of Gedaliahu son of Ahikam turn to the prophet and ask that he pray to God to find out what they should do, Jeremiah must wait for ten days until he receives a reply from God (Verse 7, "And it came to pass after ten days..."). It seems that this period was essential as verification of the prophetic speech. A false prophet would, no doubt, have fabricated some "prophecy" and told the leaders of the people about it. But Jeremiah — as a true prophet — waited in silence despite the danger to the whole population remaining in the country as well as to himself. The sword was pointing at the throats of the people, and the mouth of the prophet was closed in a sentence of silence. Precisely because of this ten-day silence the prophet accepted the speech as a true and faithful message. To Jeremiah silence is the prophet's seal of truth.

Also in the case of Ezekiel, Jeremiah's great contemporary, silence plays an important role, as I already mentioned, at the beginning of his mission (Chapters 1-4). In the dramatic climax (Chapters 24 and 33 which are connected with the death of his wife and the destruction of the Temple) we come upon the phenomenon of muteness. As opposed to Jeremiah, Ezekiel's muteness does not derive from God's silence which prevents him from prophetic inspiration, but is the product of his own will and determination.



Jeremiah lamenting the Destruction of Jerusalem, by Rembrandt (1606-69)

Jeremiah and Ezekiel therefore symbolize the ambivalent characteristic of prophetic silence. Jeremiah, confronting divine muteness when requesting inspiration to prophesy; and Ezekiel, choosing the muteness of God by his own will. Here we have divine silence on the one hand and human silence on the other; a miniature dialectic which enables me to clarify the dialectic on a large scale and to reach the synthesis between the thesis of "withholding face" and the antithesis "illuminating mirror" in prophetic silence.

PROPHETIC MUTENESS – THE SYNTHESIS

It is very strange, and even tragic, that despite the number of events (told about in the first four chapters of the book of Ezekiel) seen, heard and directed towards him as a prophet who has been chosen for a mighty task, Ezekiel reacts with silence to the spiritual happiness these phenomena instil in him. He will not utter a word of his own volition nor will he make any movement by his own will: "And he caused me to eat that roll" (3:2); he is fed the roll. He does not walk from the valley to Tel-Aviv but is carried there by the spirit ("So a spirit lifted me up, and took me away") (3:14). After a long silence, recounted in more than three chapters, we find that the first sound to come from Ezekiel's mouth is a cry of reprimand - a shout of mutiny against the will of God (4:14). We would be making a grave mistake if we were to attribute the prophet's passivity to wonder, ecstasy or fear and trembling before his Lord, the *mysterium tremendum*, as does Rudolph Otto.

This muteness should not be seen as a true paralysis of the tongue. Yehezkel Kaufmann writes justifiably that this is more than simple silence. He attributes the source of this muteness to a weakened nervous condition brought about by depression. But I think that Ezekiel's muteness is neither physiological, psychological nor sociological. It is prophetic muteness, a concept used frequently by Professors Yehuda Elitzur; Nehama Leibowitz and the late Abraham Joshua Heshel in their studies. If we say prophetic muteness, we are in fact saying that it has no connection with matters between men or between man and himself, but between man and God, matters because of which – and precisely because of which – a man like Ezekiel the son of Buzi was a prophet.

We have here one of the most natural and common phenomena in biblical prophecy: the refusal of a simple man to become a prophet and to accept the mission of God. The story of Ezekiel resembles the story of Moses, the story of Jeremiah – described in the first chapter of his book – and the story of Jonah. All of them look for excuses and pretexts to be released from the difficult task that awaits them. They all offer the same kind of excuses and occasionally add deeds. Moses says, "I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue." Jeremiah says, "I am a child..." Jonah who has been commanded to go to Nineveh, flees to Tarshish, and Ezekiel son of Buzi expresses his refusal by silence, stillness and paralysis - a muteness of words and of the body at once. From the phenomenological standpoint, this is the focus of biblical prophecy, it is the metaphysical dimension of the dialogue, with one of its partners trying to evade it. The prophet Ezekiel builds a kind of partition between himself and God, or perhaps more precisely, he leaves a *no-man's land* between them which is expressed in muteness and paralysis. In this way he hopes to find a way out of his divine mission and to preserve the autonomy of his soul. Just as all the prophets who came before or after him, Ezekiel in the end had to recognize that there was no escape from God nor a refuge from His mission. Just as God returned Jonah from Tarshish to Nineveh, He bestowed His mission on Ezekiel. However (and here is the main point) instead of waking Ezekiel from his muteness to speech, as He brought Jonah from Tarshish to Nineveh, God utilizes the muteness and paralysis as elements of his prophetic mission. Ezekiel will serve as a prophet using the muteness and the paralysis and these will be a sign to the people of Israel. Ezekiel is not returned from Tarshish to Nineveh as was Jonah, nor is he saved from the belly of the fish and the depths of the sea, nor is he returned to his previous status quo. He becomes a prophet in the midst of the very sea into which he threw himself with malice aforethought. As against the *no-man's land* that the prophet makes, God makes a *no-God's land* of sorts where the prophet stays for a long while seemingly deserted by his God, as a prophet who may not prophesy, but nevertheless as a prophet in the full sense of the word! Precisely by this imagined desertion, at a time when he has not one prophetic word to say, when God seems absent (Gottesfinsternis), the prophet serves as evidence of the existence of God, the reality of divine providence and the absolute power of God; precisely because of this paradox the Children of Israel knew that the man in their midst was a prophet of God.

PARTNERS TO GOD'S SILENCE

It seems to me that this phenomenological analysis can serve as a methodological key to studying other forms of silence in the Bible, and in particular to the test of silence in the episode of the sacrifice of Isaac and to the Book of Job. Except that here, in Ezekiel, the prophet is the initiator — it is he who tries to evade — and in the stories of Abraham and Job, God takes the initiative. God begins to build the no-man's land of silence, it is He who distributes the parts and prepares the props just as a stage director does. Abraham's and Job's heroism is precisely in the fact — which served as a symbol through the whole period of the history of biblical religion — of their readiness to create a "man's land," a positive area "populated" with silence. It is not important what form this silence takes. It can be general silence as in the case of Abraham who accepts his suffering with love; or it can be the silence of Job which demands revenge with reprimands and cries, as the writer of the Midrash expressed it: "Your sons are slaughtered and you are silent?" What is important is that both Abraham and Job, as well as the writers of the Midrash and the poets of the Middle Ages and of the period of the Holocaust stand, yes, stand, upright before the silent God, just as they stand before the determined God without evading divine silence. Because of this stand, they are partners to God's silence and partners in a negative dialectic to a dialogue with the silent God (as formulated by Theodor Adorno in his book that I mentioned earlier).

PROPHETIC DRAMA

I used the terms "play" and "director." I didn't choose these words by chance. If I were not wary of digressing too far, I would conclude with a methodological conjecture which might, I think, summarize the phenomenological analysis of this paradox and perhaps summarize prophetic silence in all its dialectic scope.

It seems to me that the prophet Ezekiel undertakes a strange part which is similar to the role of the mute in Venetian comedy: and he is not the only prophet in the Bible who plays a part in a play. His role is sometimes very difficult and very serious. Isaiah, Jeremiah and Hosea play a similar role. Hosea's role in the story of his marriage is defined justifiably by Yehezkel Kaufmann as a prophetic-dramatic story and even as theatrical. And the suffering servant in Chapter 53 of Isaiah plays a similar part according to Kaufmann's interesting conjecture, with-

out exaggerating to the extent of using such daring concepts as those used by the noted psychologist Jacob Levi Moreno: *Die Gottheit als Komödiant*, God as Actor or Comedian. We certainly may use the word "drama" with respect of biblical prophecy on condition that we refrain from using it superficially and routinely. In our search for the meaning of this concept, we will find that it is impossible to define without dialogue, which is basically dramatic. In every dialogue there exists an internal mutuality. Man alone — in the Bible, the prophet alone — does not play the part in prophetic dialogue. God plays a symmetric part in it; and He is also the director and the one who initiates the play and concludes it. The play begins when God asks Adam, "Where art thou?" (Genesis 3:8) as if He did not know where Adam was, as if He had lost him. From then on God acts as a kind of conductor of an unfinished symphony in which the prophets are musicians who play and sometimes stand mutely. And this is how the comprehensive picture of silence appears as I have attempted to present it.

The believer will not be afraid for he knows, with the strength of his subjective recognition, that "hiding of face" contains the face in its dramatic reality — that there is a mask, a curtain or a screen which will one day be removed. But the phenomenologist, commentator and historian who are outside objective observers must also not forget that biblical prophetic silence is not something frivolous, a fault in the edition or a spiritual vacuum; they must see it as a rest in a musical score without which it is impossible to understand the whole intention of the composer.

מ. אליועיני

מחקרים בקהלת ובמשלי

יצא לאור על-ידי החברה לחקר המקרא

בהוצאת קרית ספר בע"מ

מחיר הספר כולל משלוח — 10 דולר

JABOTINSKY'S SAMSON

BY SOL LIPTZIN

The character of Samson in its many contradictions intrigued not only biblical scholars and theologians but also men of letters ever since the Middle Ages. Samson was variously depicted in prose and verse as hero and bully, wise judge and frivolous jester, God's champion and sinful weakling, national savior and whining lover.

St. Augustine ushered in the medieval approach, which saw Samson as a forerunner of the Christian Messiah and Samson's carrying off the gates of Gaza as a prefiguration of the bursting open of the gates of hell. The Renaissance failed to resolve the contradictions in Samson's personality. The dramatization of the Samson story in 1556 by Hans Sachs, the Meistersinger of Nuremberg and a contemporary of Martin Luther, merely expanded the biblical text to five acts without deepening its meaning. Far superior in dramatic quality were the seventeenth century versions of Joost van der Vondel and John Milton. The former's tragedy *Samson of Heilige Wraeck*, completed in 1660, is a masterpiece of Dutch literature. The latter's classical drama *Samson Agonistes*, completed in 1671, is a magnificent expression of the English poet's innermost feelings, after he had become blind. He then saw in the biblical hero, "eyeless in Gaza," an allied spirit whose inner light at life's end compensated for outer darkness.

SAMSON SINCE MILTON

The Century of Enlightenment displayed little interest in Samson. Voltaire's *Samson*, which formed the text for Rameau's opera of 1730, was not a distinguished work. Handel's oratorio *Samson*, for which Newburgh Hamilton wrote the libretto and which had its first performance in 1744, was based almost entirely on Milton's poetic tragedy. Nor were the Romanticists of the early nineteenth century enthusiastic about Samson's exploits in love, religion or nationalism. Lord Byron, in his *Hebraic Melodies* and in his drama *Cain*, treated strong, defiant and tragic biblical characters but made no mention of Samson.

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Franz Grillparzer, Austria's greatest dramatist of the Romantic and post-Romantic generations, did consider making Samson the principal character of a projected tragedy but, after sketching an outline in 1829, he abandoned the theme.

Not until Saint-Saens' opera of 1877 did an artistic rendition of the Samson-theme reach out to large audiences. But then it was not so much the text by Fernand Lemaire as the music, primarily the arias of Delilah, that made the deepest impact.

TWENTIETH CENTURY VERSIONS

During the early twentieth century, the French dramatist Henri Bernstein in 1907 and the German precursor of Expressionism Frank Wedekind in 1913 were the more important creative spirits that wrestled with this theme. During the First World War, Hermann Burte, German painter and poet, attempted in his verse drama of 1917 to transform Samson into a Nietzschean superman who was always in search of his identity in relation to God and to his people and who only found it after he was blinded and humiliated. Then the suffering hero learned to love his tribulations and to serve God and his people by means of his last, shattering, self-sacrificing deed. But it was Vladimir Jabotinsky, in his Russian novel of 1926, who created the finest artistic version of the Samson-theme since Milton and who influenced contemporary Jewish thinking by emphasizing the continuity of Jewish striving from the age of the Judges until our own. None of the later novels, such as Felix Salten's *Simson, das Schicksal eines Erwählten*, 1928, and Saul Saphire's *Shimshon Hagibor*, 1935, have aroused comparable interest.

SALTEN'S SAMSON

Salten is today best remembered as the author of the animal classic *Bambi*. His innovation of the Samson story consisted in making Delilah the faithful beloved of the hero and in ascribing his being betrayed to his enemies as the vengeance of her jealous sister. This sister insinuated to Delilah that Samson was merely using his beloved as a plaything and that he would not hesitate to cast her aside when he tired of her. Were his love genuine and enduring, he would confide to her his deepest secret. To test his love, Delilah worms out of him the secret of his strength. She is overheard by her jealous sister, who cuts off his hair as the couple lie fast asleep and thus brings about his capture by the lurking Philistines and his

blinding. Delilah, however, clings to him even after his disfigurement and disgrace. She comforts him with her undeviating love and dies with him.

For Salten, Samson's fate symbolized Jewish fate. During the years of increasing antisemitism in Central Europe, which were to climax in the rise of the Nazis to power, Salten voiced his pessimistic approach to coming developments through the words of the aging Manoah, Samson's father: "Ever and forever the rope will be about our neck, ever and forever the brutal hand of others will drive us as though we were cattle or scum. It is an accursed blessing that we bear but still a blessing... We bear the light of the world and must hence suffer as long as darkness reigns. We bear the wisdom of the world and must hence endure ill-usage as long as stupidity prevails. We bring liberation to the world and are hence persecuted as long as there is slavery. Wise is the Almighty, unfathomably wise, in burdening us with all these tortures and humiliations. Otherwise, whither would our arrogance lead us?"

A similar submissive acceptance by the Jews of their apparent role as God's chosen whipping boys emerged from the reference to Samson in the poem *Der Jude* by Julius Bab, penned in 1930 as the Nazi tide was threatening to inundate his coreligionists in his native Berlin. To a young Jew who wished to resist, even though he despaired of mustering sufficient strength to defeat his persecutors, Bab gave the reply of an old Jew: don't resist, don't emulate neighbors who put their trust in physical might, discover the virtue of your helplessness. The would-be young activist is reminded that, in the era of Samson, Jews also regarded defiance as a noble attitude. In the millennia since then, however, Jews have outgrown such an approach. The nations now persecuting Jews are so young. They too will mature and will cease to enjoy their bloody pastimes. They too will outgrow warfare some day. Meanwhile, let the Jews continue to create and amass spiritual treasures and remain a shining light for others.

Within a few years after these verses of Julius Bab and after the novel of Felix Salten, both writers became refugees in flight from their Central European homes and in search of an asylum in the New World.

SAMSON AS JABOTINSKY'S IDEAL

It was against the acceptance of non-resistance as a Jewish ideal that Jabotinsky protested ever since his youth. As early as 1905, he saw Russian revolutionary hordes swerve from the struggle against Czarist oppression in order

to vandalize and pogromize unresisting Jewish neighbors. Militant Zionism then became the burning passion of his life. Rejecting the spiritual Zionism of Ahad-Haam, in whose Odessa circle he mingled, he put his faith in physical power as the principal means of attaining his people's long unfulfilled yearning, a free territory for a Jewish state, a homecoming of the Jewish wanderers to their historic soil.

Jabotinsky foresaw the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire. During the First World War, he was the dynamic force behind the agitation for a Jewish Legion to fight alongside of the British and to bring about the defeat of the Turkish overlords of Palestine. After the war, he urged the Mandatory Power to let Jews arm themselves during the period of transition while they were still a minority and needed to defend themselves against threatening attacks by the Arab majority. In Samson, champion of the Danites at the height of Philistine domination of the Palestinian coast, he found the biblical hero closest to his heart. He had at first planned a trilogy of biblical novels centering about the loves of Jacob and Rachel, Samson and Delilah, and David and the Shunamite, but his political activities as the leader of the Zionist Revisionist Movement left him little leisure for literature and he only completed the middle piece of his trilogy. Indeed, his novel was in itself also a manifesto of his political creed. Into this novel about Samson, he was able to pour his own dreams, his deepest thoughts on Jewish national aspirations, his faith in a strong, independent Israel that would arise ere long. But this novel also gave expression to his zest for life and his admiration for the beautiful manners and the loyal discipline that prevailed among his non-Jewish adversaries, the British, whom he portrayed in the guise of the ancient Philistines. If all documents relating to Jabotinsky's Zionist philosophy were lost, its main tenets could be reconstructed from this novel, which is at the same time a masterpiece of literary art.

SAMSON'S CHARISMATIC PERSONALITY

Jabotinsky sensed in Samson a charismatic personality who combined wisdom and strength, gaiety and loyalty, a love of life and a readiness to sacrifice his life in the service of his people.

The generation of Samson was the late twelfth and early eleventh century before the common era, when the original Canaanite inhabitants of the land between the Mediterranean and the Jordan had already been ground up between

two conquering peoples, the Philistines along the coast and the Israelites in the highlands. The Israelite tribes had not yet coalesced into a national unity. An uneasy truce prevailed between Dan and Philistia during Samson's early years.

In Jabotinsky's novel, Samson is introduced as the young leader of a group of highwaymen whom he nicknamed his Jackals. He is depicted as possessing gigantic strength, extraordinary diplomatic skill, and as alternating between asceticism and licentiousness. In Zorah among his Danite kinsmen, he was a stern Nazarite who abstained from wine, desisted from women, and left his unshorn hair tied in braids, but in Timnah, the neighboring town of the Philistines, he caroused with drunken Philistine companions, loved Philistine women, gambled, laughed heartily, and let his hair flow down his broad shoulders. When a Levite upbraided him for sinning, he replied that there was a time for waking and a time for sleeping. In Dan he was awake and subject to moral restraints. In Philistia he found relaxation in dreams and was free of all restraints.

He proved his basic loyalty to his tribe and his high quality of leadership when he appeared in Zorah at the popular assembly of his entire tribe. Dan, wedged in between the Philistines and the more prosperous Hebraic tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Ephraim, was seeking a way out of its overpopulation, impoverishment and decline. It had to break out of its encirclement. But how? To war against the overwhelming might of the Philistines, who fought with iron weapons from armored chariots, would result in inevitable defeat and annihilation. To engage in a struggle against the other Israelite tribes, the most likely future allies of Dan against the Philistines, would also not solve the problem of survival. In this dilemma, Samson suggested a third possibility, namely, to send out trustworthy men to scout the land north of Ephraim and Naphtali, a land rich in water and forests, a land which could absorb Dan's overpopulation. Then this tribe would have two territories even as Manasseh had since the days of Joshua.

SAMSON THE LEADER

Samson's suggestion was accepted by his tribesmen, who were spellbound by his personality. Subconsciously, they had yearned for someone in whom to believe, someone who would do the thinking for them, someone on whose shoulders they could pile their worries. In Samson, they found such a leader and they were happy to acclaim him, despite his youth, as their Judge and the arbitrator of their disputes. He proved to be wise and decisive, qualities that rarely

go together. But Samson was more than merely a sagacious and stern Nazarite. He was also a joyous human being, fond of the refined, sophisticated culture brought by the Philistines from their Minoan ancestral land across the sea. He was charmed by their carefreeness and contrasted their lightheartedness with the Danites' solemn bondage to moral laws. He therefore sought out a wife not of his own tribe but from among the Philistines of Timnah. The wedding ceremonies lasting seven days began with lavish feasting and games of skill and endurance. They ended, however, with the betrayal of the solution of Samson's riddle by his young wife Semadar and with fierce enmity between Philistines and Danites, leading ultimately to the burning of Timnah and the death of Samson's wife.

When a shaky truce was patched up, Samson used the peaceful interval in order to solve Dan's population explosion by sending part of the tribe to the northern region which the scouts had found suitable for settlement and cultivation. He also used the years of non-belligerency to garner iron and to teach the Danites the art of forging weapons such as the Philistines had. Observing Philistine behavior, he noted that their collective might stemmed in large part from the discipline that prevailed among them. Thousands obeyed the will of a single commanding person. In this trait he sensed the most important secret of how peoples were able to found new, stable states. He also noted that the Philistines, unlike his own tribesmen, could relax from discipline during less serious times, that they could enjoy wine, song, dance, frivolous laughter and love's delights. In Gaza, he was attracted to a Philistine woman. Delilah fascinated him as once had Semadar of Timnah. Indeed, he saw in her a reincarnation of his wife whom he had lost long, long ago. Delilah, however, was overcome with jealousy when she realized that, in his embracing her, he was but reliving his unforgotten youthful love for Semadar. In her jealous anger, she cut off his hair and betrayed him to his enemies, who then put out his eyes.

SAMSON'S MESSAGE

The blinded hero's message to his people before his violent end at the temple of Dagon in Gaza consisted of but three words: iron, king and laughter. If his people wanted to preserve their freedom and independence, they must be strong and iron weapons would make them strong. They must also be disciplined and united. The election of a king would put an end to their disorganization and disunity. And they must learn to laugh as a relaxation from the constant stern demand of their

national existence. An optimistic philosophy would dissipate the gloom that weighed upon Jewish hearts as a result of the tragedies Jews experienced.

In reading this novel of 1926, Colonel John Henry Patterson, who had earlier been the commanding British officer of the Jewish Legion, discerned in its pages Jabotinsky's uncompromising revolt against the unorganized, formless Jewish dispersion with no stable organization, no leadership, no discipline, and no national feeling. "He wanted for the Jews what they lacked most: a united nation with a central leadership; a state with an army; iron for their defense in a hostile world."

More than half a century has passed since Jabotinsky embodied his Zionist credo in his novel about Samson. The State of Israel is a reality and Jabotinsky's disciple, Menahem Begin, is its Prime Minister. For both Jabotinsky and Begin, the Bible was a constant source of inspiration, and biblical experiences such as those of Samson furnished an enrichment of their thinking on Jewishness and on Israel in the contemporary world. In the thirtieth year of Israel's statehood, its Prime Minister, as Jabotinsky before him, is emphasizing the need for a strong deterrent force, for a disciplined consensus, and for the therapy of exhilarating laughter.



"And he found a new jawbone of an ass . . . and smote a thousand men herewith." (Judges 15:15)

JERUSALEM IN THE DAYS OF JEREMIAH

BY BEN ZION LURIA

One of the outstanding features of Jerusalem are the magnificent walls surrounding the Old City. One must not get the impression that these are the ancient walls. During its three thousand year history as a Jewish city, Jerusalem went through many changes. This article will deal with the Jerusalem during the First Commonwealth. The following is the second article in the series on Jerusalem in honor of the observance of the tenth anniversary of the unification of the city.

The period following the Six Day War in 1967 opened up new vistas in the exploration of the size of the city of Jerusalem during the final period of the First Temple. Though some archeological research on Jerusalem was done before 1967, its real impetus began at the reunification of the city when Jewish scholars could start archeological digs in areas hardly studied before, especially in the places of the Jewish Quarter destroyed during the nineteen year occupation by Jordanian forces. Many of the findings bear on the size of the city before it was destroyed by the Babylonian army in 586 BCE.

When the Babylonians broke down the walls of Jerusalem (II Kings 25:10), the upper stones must have fallen on both sides of the wall, while the general line of the wall was retained in the remains of the lowest tiers or its foundations. It is reasonable to assume that Nehemiah, a century and a half later, must have followed this line as he secretly surveyed the wall in the dark of the night (Nehemiah 2:3), searching out the ruined wall and marking the locations needing major repairs. It is evident from his account of his nocturnal investigation that he was quite aware of the line of the wall. At one point, he found the stones near the wall so tumbled that "there was no place for the beast that was under me to pass" (Nehemiah 2:14).

Now, it took him only fifty two days (Nehemiah 6:15) to rebuild the wall. Had

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he not known the line of the wall nor had there not been the fallen stones available nearby, it would have been impossible for him to complete the wall in such short time. He did not build a new wall; he repaired the old wall, which was destroyed by Nevuzradan, the Babylonian general, in 586 BCE. This wall would thus tell the limits of Jerusalem in the final period of the First Temple.

But where is this wall? From archeological findings and from internal biblical evidence, we shall try to deduce some hypotheses.

Actually, there are varying theories propounded by scholars about the size of Jerusalem during the Monarchy of the First Temple period. Until the recent digs in the Old City, three varying views were dominant in scholarly circles. The minimalist view, held by M. Avi-Yonah,¹ limited the extent of Jerusalem in the days of Nehemiah to the City of David (formerly the Jebusite city), the Ophel² and about two thirds of the Temple Mount (now the area of the Mosque of Omar), bounded in the east by the Kidron Valley and in the west by the Tyropean Valley.

The city limits are broadened by other scholars. K. Galling adds the western hill facing the Temple Mount.³ This is as well the view of Y. Aharoni.⁴ G. Dalman enlarges the city, to include present-day Har Zion,⁵ but stops at the northern line corresponding to the present David Street (the market street leading to the Kotel) running east from Jaffa Gate.

In the light of new archeological findings, since 1967, we should expand the limits of the First Temple city far beyond these aforementioned borders. Rightly did Jeremiah declare: *And many nations shall pass by this city, and they shall say every man to his neighbor, "Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this large city?"* - לעיר הגדולה הזאת (Jeremiah 22:8).

1. מ. אבי-יונה. הטופוגרפיה של ירושלים בימי המלוכה, ספר ירושלים. מוסד ביאליק. תשט"ו. ע' 156.

2. If you will stand on the road outside the present city gate, about 100 yards east of the Dung Gate, you will behold the ancient Second Temple's southern wall with its arched outlines of the Hulda Gates, and on the opposite side the steep road, originally the Tyropean valley, leading down to the City of David (Jebusite City) at the Siloam Pool. The road you are standing on is the location of the ancient Ophel.

3. This would take in the present Jewish Quarter of the Old City, from Habad Street up to the slopes of the western hill. Standing at the Kotel plaza, you face the hill west of it.

4. The Macmillan Bible Atlas, Carta, Jerusalem, Map no. 170.

5. Har Zion was seized by the Israeli Haganah in the War of Independence in 1948. It is the extension of the western hill outside the Zion Gate. It is easily recognizable by the structures of the Dormitian Church. The Tomb of David is also located on that hill.

Recent archeological explorations bear this out. To cite only a few:

In 1968-9, R. Amiran and A. Eitan discovered in the area of the Tower of David (near the Jaffa Gate) a layer containing sherds and a Hebrew seal dating back to the 7th century BCE.⁶

In 1970, D. Bahat found in the Armenian Quarter many sherds dating from the period of the Monarchy. Among the inscriptions there were sherds marked with the word למלך - "to the king."

M. Broshi, who explored the area on Mount Zion, attests to similar findings from the First Temple period. Nearby, outside the present city wall opposite Yemin Moshe, Broshi discovered remains of a wall from the First Temple period.⁷

N. Avigad found similar artifacts in the Jewish Quarter, near the Nisan Bak Synagogue. In a later exploration, he disclosed a wall, eleven meters wide, which he attributed to the time of King Hezekiah, in the 8th century BCE, which marked the beginning of a decidedly expanding city.

M. Broshi has been exploring the area of the Church of the Sepulchre since 1975 and has discovered important artifacts and ostraca going back to the 7th century BCE. This is confirmed as well by the remains of walls dating from that century. He also found there a quarry which clearly shows that the area was then inhabited - the only quarry dating from the period of the Monarchy.⁸

The limits of the city before the destruction of the First Temple can be documented by the discovery of graves in various parts of present-day Jerusalem. Burial vaults found by B. Mazar near the Temple Mount go back to the 8th century BCE. Vaults discovered on the slopes of Har Zion facing the Valley of Hinnom date from the 7th century BCE. Additional graves found by Broshi near the Church of the Sepulchre date from the same century. These burial places were found as far north as the present Garden Tomb, about 100 meters north of the Damascus Gate, on Nablus Road.⁹ It is evident that Jerusalem witnessed a marked expansion during the 7th century BCE.

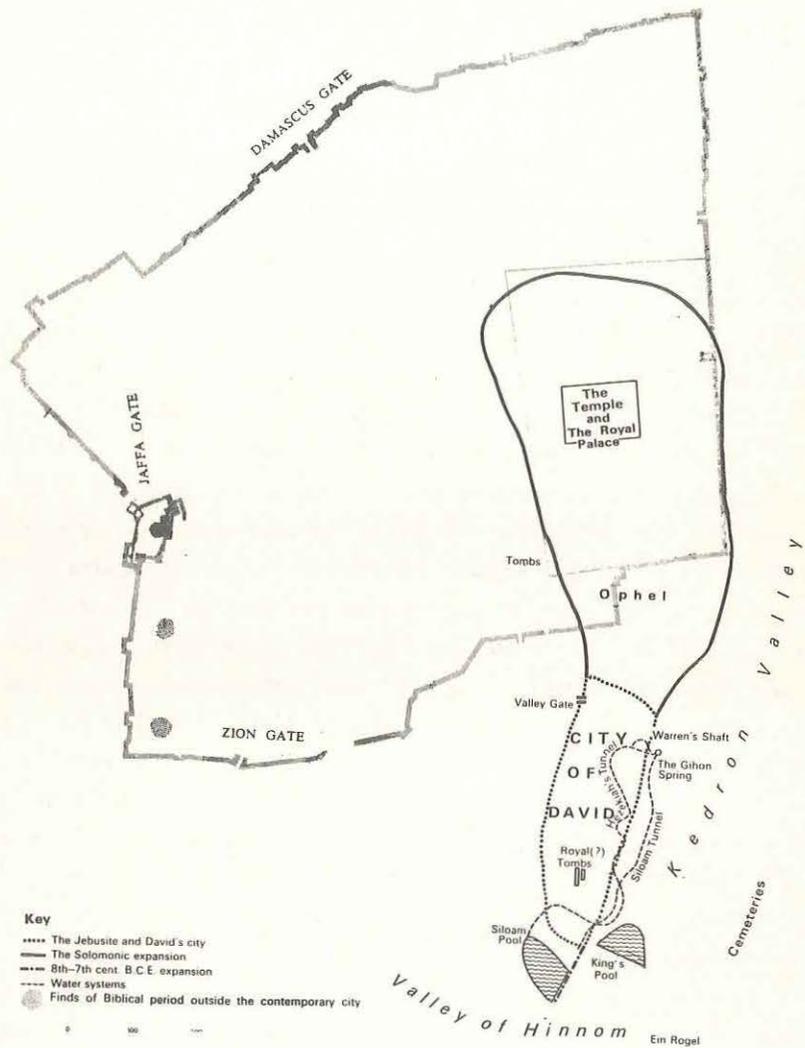
From a study of internal biblical sources, it seems that the city kept on expanding northward during all the seventh century BCE, reaching as far as the

6. Already in 1935, Jones discovered in the same area of the Tower of David sherds which he attributed to the 8th and 7th century BCE.

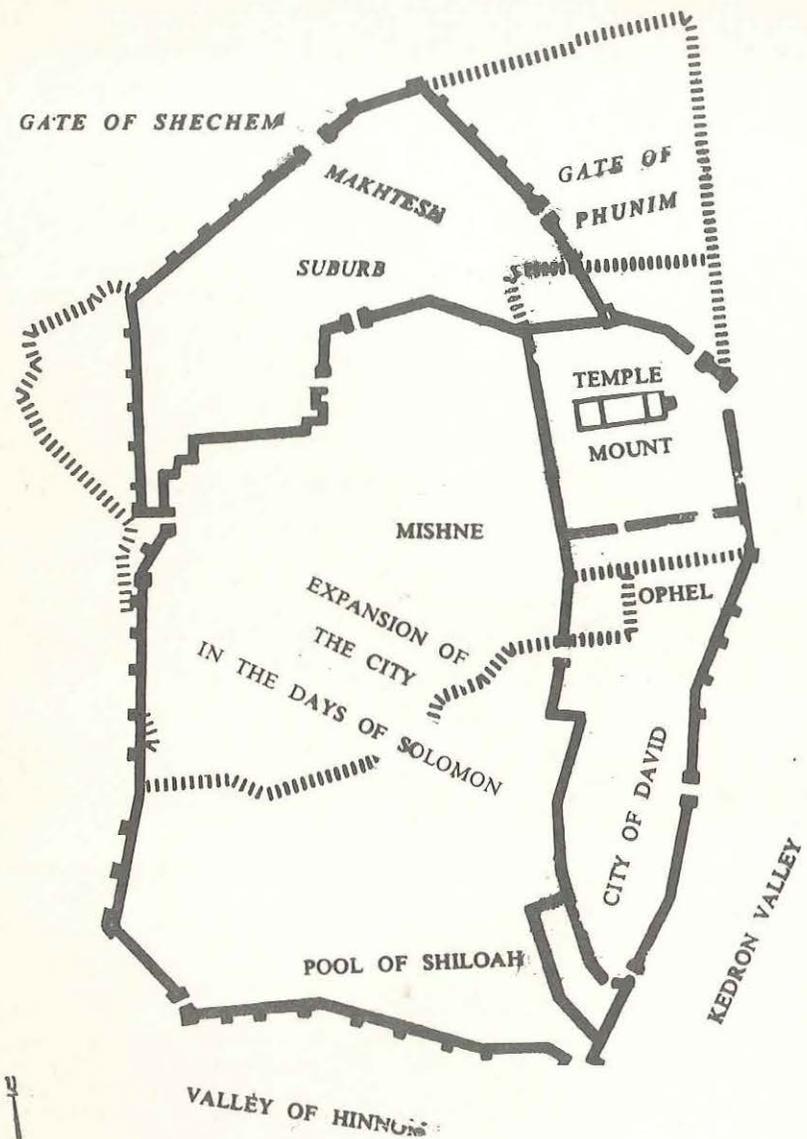
7. In his explorations in the area of the Gobat School on Har Zion R.W. Hamilton, in 1938, found small amounts of sherds dating from the Israelite period, reaching back to 900-600 BCE.

8. קדמוניות, שנה י', חוברת ר', תשל"ז 1977, ע' 30.

9. Kadmoniot, idem.



Jerusalem at the end of the first commonwealth according to a *minimalist* version (in comparison to the old city of today)



Jerusalem at the end of the first commonwealth according to a *maximalist* version (in comparison to the old city of today)

Damascus Gate by the time of Jeremiah.¹⁰ In the Book of Jeremiah, we read: *Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that the city shall be built to the Lord from the tower of Hananel unto the gate of the corner* – עד שער הפנה. Building a gate in the corner of a city wall is most unlikely, since corners always contained towers for protection in two directions. A gate at that point never found in ancient cities would be the invitation to the enemy to breach the wall at its weakest point. Relating the word פנה in Jeremiah to four other sources where variations of the word are found,¹¹ the term is to be understood as “the Phoenicians” – פוניתים – the merchants near the Damascus Gate, who were driven out by Nehemiah.¹²

From the prophet Zephaniah, a contemporary of Jeremiah, we read about the places called the Mishne and the Makhtesh: *In that day, saith the Lord, Hark! a cry from the fish gate, and a wailing from the Mishne* – משנה – *Wail ye inhabitants of the Makhtesh* – מכחש – *for all the merchants are undone* (Zephaniah 1:10–11).

The Mishne was in the northern section of the city, corresponding to the present area north of the Via Dolorosa.

The Makhtesh was the northernmost end of the city – near the present Damascus Gate – which, in its topography, resembles a bowl. There the Phoenician merchants of Tyre sold their goods. This was originally a suburb of Jerusalem,¹³ outside the wall, which was eventually incorporated within the city gates.

Admittedly a maximalist point of view, it seems to be borne out by the archaeological findings since 1967 and by a new look at the internal biblical evidence bearing on this subject.

10. In 1937–8, Hamilton explored the area near the Damascus Gate, and brought up from the level below that of the hellenistic period artifact which he dated from the years 900–600 BCE.

11. II Kings 14:13, II Chronicles 25:23, II Chronicles 26:9 and Zechariah 14:10.

12. In Nehemiah 13:16, the Phoenicians are called Tyrians – צוריים.

13. See II Kings 23:11 and I Chronicles 26:18.

Adapted by Louis Katzoff from a Hebrew paper בימי ירמיהו, read at the President's Bible Circle and published by the WJBS in the volume ב' עיונים בספר ירמיהו חלק ב'.

EZRA THE SCRIBE

BY HAIM GEVARYAHU

Ezra is known by two titles: Ezra the Priest and Ezra the Scribe. Ancient sources do not clearly indicate whether he ever functioned as a priest. Sigmund Mowinckel, the renowned Norwegian Bible scholar, suggests in his book: *Studien zum Buche Ezra Nehemia*, that Ezra never served in the capacity of priest, and that the title merely stated the fact that he was of priestly family. This conjecture is supported by the known fact that also in other countries of antiquity men of priestly lineage never carried out this function.

Nissan Arrarat¹ called attention to a Mishna (Parah 3, 5), regarding the preparation of the Red Heifer, which states: “And who did it? This first was done by Moses and the second by Ezra; and five have been prepared since Ezra.” But one could interpret this Mishnaic saying that Ezra merely taught the priests how to prepare the Red Heifer, just as Moses instructed the priest Elazar (Numbers 19). At any rate the problem of the title priest or chief priest still needs additional clarification.

EZRA THE SCRIBE

Contrary to the obscurity surrounding Ezra the Priest, old sources abound in many references as regards his activities as a Scribe, as a man having at his disposal Torah scrolls, one who teaches law, a man who reads the Torah at public Assemblies and also as one who changed the script.

Shaeder in his work: *Esra der Schreiber*², views that the title “Scribe” was conferred upon him by official royal Persian decree. He interprets the verse: ספר דתא די אלה שמיא (Ezra 7:12) in the sense of a royal Persian secretary in matters of Jewish religion.

1. Bet Mikra, (תשל"ג ג'ג).

2. H.H. Schaeder, *Esra der Schreiber*, 1930.

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Bible critics of the Kuenen-Graf-Wellhausen school, went so far as to propose that it was Ezra who was the author of the Books of the Torah, especially of the (P)riestly Codes; and that the public reading of the Torah before the Great Assembly, called for this purpose (See Nehemiah 8) was designed to have this book, allegedly authored by him, penetrate the consciousness of the people. Eduard Meyers suggests that the verses: "The scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord and His statutes" (Ezra 7:11) and "the scribe of Law of the God of Heaven" (7:12) can only be interpreted that he was its real author. Artaxerxes would have never bestowed on him, he argues, the exalted titles, had he merely been a scribe-copyist.

EZRA THE SAGE AND NOT THE AUTHOR

Mowinckel opposed these radical views and proves convincingly from the context of the verses just cited that Ezra was a Sage of the Torah, a doctor of theology, if we wish to apply contemporary terms. But he is not the author, but one who knows the Torah; one who kept in his private possession a scroll of the Torah. This is the Book referred to as "Law of your God in *your hands*" – בדת בידך אלהך די בידך (7:14). Mowinckel finds no support for the assumption of Shaeder that there existed a royal office for Jewish religious affairs.

It seems certain that there is sufficient evidence for the traditional view of Ezra, a great sage of the Torah. In ancient Assyria, Babylonia and Persia the title "scribe" was an academic designation given to men who had received special training in schools for scribes.

In Persia there existed two types of scribes. One who was an expert in Sumerian and Akkadian languages, and who *wrote* on clay tablets. The other who were experts in Aramaic language and script, and who wrote with pen or stylus on parchment or on wood, covered with wax. The general ascription of "Sofer" in ancient time was reserved for men who thus served in a royal public or Temple capacity.

SOFER, A ROYAL TITLE

Following this line of facts presented, one can assume with a large degree of certainty that the title Sofer was royal and did not designate a Jewish title. Ezra served as a public Persian servant. Due to his connections with the royal house he

was, in all probability, a highly placed public figure and belonged to the group of royal scribes.

However, Scripture points to an additional and unique feature of Ezra, contained in the following verse: "For Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances" (Ezra 7:10). The term חכם Sage, Rabbi, intended for the greats of the Torah had not yet come into existence in those days. Therefore, for lack of a fitting title the author of Ezra found it necessary to state that Ezra was, in addition to the royal-academic sense of the term also a סופר - Scribe in the specific Jewish sense. These two attributes are clearly indicated in Ezra 7:11: "Now this is the copy of the letter that king Artaxerxes gave unto Ezra the priest, the *Scribe*, even the *Scribe* of the words of the commandments of the Lord, and of His statutes to Israel." Thus the term "even the scribe" need not to be ascribed to later chroniclers, as suggested by Mowinckel, but are the actual statements made by the author of the Book of Ezra who wished to stress the particular Jewish aspect of Ezra which, in his times, was an entirely new phenomenon.

Soferim are mentioned before in Scripture. Yet there is no comparison between Ezra the Sofer and Gemaryahu the Sofer or to Elishama the Sofer who flourished in the time of Zedekiah (Jeremiah, Ch. 36); neither can he be compared to Zadok the Sofer, an officer of treasure mentioned in Nehemia 13:13. For Ezra was much more. He dedicated himself to the task of thorough investigation of God's Torah and to teach Israel His statutes and ordinances.

EZRA, THE UMMĀNU

There can be no doubt that with Ezra a new era opens in the history of the Jewish people. He is the first of a group of sages, whose acts are recorded as "דברי סופרים".

In the apocryphal version of Ezra, he is known also as Anagnostai, namely "Reader of the Torah." This appellation is most significant. There are scholars who believe that the apocryphal Ezra is totally independent of the biblical Ezra and that he preceded him. It is a fact that Josephus, writing about the period of Zerubabel and Ezra, leans upon the apocryphal Ezra which had been translated into Greek prior to that of the biblical Ezra by Theodotus.

In the apocryphal version Ezra is given the title of Anagnostai five times, namely Reader of the Torah, with added explanations of his functions that had

been mentioned before: "The scribe of the words of the commandments of the Lord and His statutes", or, "The scribe of the Law of God of Heaven."

The meaning of the term "Anagnostai" in apocryphal Ezra is much wider than that of "Grammatai", the usual Greek translation of Ezra ha Sofer of the biblical version. It seems that those who formulated the "Persian copy of the letter" had in mind a sage-scribe, a personage who held high position in the cultural life of Babylonia-Assyria-Persia, usually described as *Ummânu*, one who assumes a more important role than a regular סופר = טפסר scribe.

In those countries the title *Ummânu* was bestowed on important sages, experts in editing and collecting of literary texts. From tens of Colophons (comments written by copying scribes on margins of texts), found in the collection of colophons published by Hermann Hunger, one can find circumstantial evidence which throws some light upon the functions of Ezra the Scribe.

Thus we find an *Ummânu* who advises the king of Ashurbanipal, and who owns a large library. We find that a disciple of scribes tells of an *Ummânu* dictating to him a literary text. Moreover, we find a group of *Ummânu* editing together a literary text by comparing different versions, thus arriving at a canonical version.

For our purposes it is most instructive that there existed groups of scribes-sages working together in units beside other groups of priests. The *Ummâni* themselves, as we have seen, owned libraries. From a proper interpretation of the renowned colophon 292 in Herman Hunger's collection, it is evident that *Ummâni* had various versions of a literary text before them, and that they had the authority to determine a precise and final version of such texts.

Leo Oppenheim maintains that there were heads of scribal schools, who encouraged their young disciples to keep in their homes collections of literary texts. Ezra, was undoubtedly the head of such a school of disciples-scribes, known by the name of "Mevinim." From Nehemiah 8:4 we learn that while Ezra reads the Torah a group of twelve "Mevinim" (usually translated: caused the people to understand) stood at his side. However, it seems that "Mevinim" may have been one of the titles given to Akkadian scribes. Ezra the master scribe stands at the head of a group of disciples of scribes whose function it also is to teach and interpret the Torah so that it is fully grasped and absorbed by the people.

In the light of all these findings it is quite certain that the king of Persia and his administration saw in Ezra an important *Ummânu* - a scribe of unusually great

mind, owner of a library, a man who knows religious ritual, expert in matters of law and an expounder of statutes and ordinances, head of a school of scribes. It seems therefore that both sources, the biblical and apocryphal Ezra, attempt in their different descriptions to present to us the qualities and high status of Ezra, the great *Ummânu*.

EZRA-BARUCH-KOHELET

For a better understanding of Ezra's personality, we should keep in mind Baruch ben Neriah, who lived three or four generations before him and who, as is known, collected the prophecies of Jeremiah, serving as his scribe. He was, indeed, more than a scribe-copyist, since he was the first to write a biography of a prophet, a spiritual personality. Biographies had been written before but only about Kings and rulers. He thus preceded by two hundred years the genre of Greek biographies of Pythagoras and Socrates. While Baruch ha Sofer was a disciple of a prophet and belonged to the group of "Bnei Haneviim", serving as a member of the prophetic disciples, Ezra presents the image of the Jewish sage-scribe when prophecy had already stopped, and heralds the emergence of a new spiritual leader, the חכם-Rabbi.

Ezra reminds to some degree also of the sage Kohelet whose activity is vividly described in Ecclesiastes, Chapter 12: 9-11: "And besides that Kohelet was wise, he also taught people knowledge; yea, he pondered and sought out, and set in order many proverbs. Kohelet sought to find out words of delight and *recorded genuinely truthful sayings.*"

These two last verses, which seem to be colophons (marginal notes by copyists), strongly suggest that Kohelet, as a sage, taught Israel and collected books of wisdom, that he was most particular in precise texts at the disposal of his disciples. What he performed in the area of Books of Wisdom, Ezra performed for the Books of the Torah. Both Soferim must be considered "Sages-Ummâni", both in possession of private libraries.

EZRA, SOFER MAHIR

Ezra is known also as Sofer Mahir - סופר מהיר -. The meaning of this ancient title, mentioned in Psalm 45:2 and also in connection with Canaanite scribes, denotes a highly qualified scribe. Ezra 7:6 states... "and he was a *ready scribe* in

the Law of Moses." It may be assumed that two ancient traditions, recorded in the Talmud, throw some light on Ezra the ready scribe, Ezra who writes a Book of the Torah, Ezra who changed Hebrew script. Another tradition, extant in the apocryphal book, "The Vision of Ezra," portrays him as a man dictating to a group of scribes, who copy all of Scripture, revealed and hidden.

We must pay attention to the tradition that it was Ezra who implemented the change from the ancient Hebrew to the square, Aramaic script. This ancient tradition is mentioned in many places in both Talmuds; Tosefta Sanhedrin 4, 5, 10; Megillah (Yerushalmi) 1, 9; in the Babylonian Tractate Sanhedrin 21, 22. Rabbi Joseph, according to the Tosefta says: "Ezra was qualified to receive the Torah by his hands; *but* it was through him that script and language was given" The Yerushalmi Megilla alleges: "Though Torah was not received by his hands, yet script and language was." In the Babylonian Sanhedrin we read: "Though the Torah was not given by his hands, the script was changed through him."

Nissan Arrarat points to talmudic sources which merely tell that the "change occurred in the days of Ezra", without referring the act of changing the script to Ezra himself. Yet the frequency of the tradition of Ezra and the change of script he effected cannot be ignored, and it must be assumed that it is grounded in historical fact.

The late Solomon Zeitlin called attention to a book of Ezra - ספר עזרה - mentioned in talmudic literature, thus attributing to him an ancient Scroll of the Torah in his own handwriting.

From all the evidence presented there can be little doubt that the tradition about Ezra the Sofer and one who effected a change of script is based on historical reality. Julius Lewy³ who did research on evidence available on the script-reform implemented by the kingdom of Persia, preserved in the Bahutan Inscription, assumes that it was due to the decision of the Persian government to turn the Aramaic language and script into the official method of communication in the western part of its empire. This adds weight to the argument that Ezra, an official royal Persian Sofer was responsible for the effort of fitting ancient Hebrew script into renewed Hebrew literature, by changing it into Aramaic, an effort which had far-reaching consequences. It is this effort by which, perhaps, he acquired the title Sofer Mahir. At any rate, change of script contributed much to the saving of the ancient cultural heritage of Israel. Written in script that was cur-

3. Julius Lewy, Section 70 of the Bahutan Inscription, H.U.C., Annual 25, 1954.

rent in these parts of the world, it found many readers. Judaism would have suffered had Scripture been frozen in the archaic script, read only by the few.

THE IMAGE OF EZRA

Ezra's image in history passed through various stages. Nissan Arrarat emphasizes the point that in the renowned song: Shevach Avot Olam by Ben Sira, praises are heaped on Nehemiah, builder of the walls of Jerusalem and owner of libraries. Ezra the Scribe is not mentioned at all. In those days Nehemiah was seen as the central personality of the Return and Reconstruction, having priority over Ezra. Yet it must be pointed out, that until the time of Shimon ben Shetah none of the Sages-Soferim were named. Only ancient sages and prophets are recorded. Ben Sira does not single out one sage during the time of the Second Temple, with the exception of Simon the Just, the High Priest, and this only in his capacity of priest and national leader. All personalities of the Great Assembly have remained anonymous. Only during the later period of the Second Temple the names of the great sages are being mentioned. Starting with the period of Hillel, according to Arrarat, the image of Ezra grew to legendary importance, with a heavenly voice declaring Hillel the Great to be a disciple of Ezra.

Our sages appreciated Ezra's true significance stating that it was he who renewed the knowledge of Torah in Israel. "At first when the Torah was forgotten in Israel, Ezra went up from Babylonia and founded it; when again it was forgotten, Hillel the Babylonian went up (to Eretz Israel) and founded it." (Succa 20 a).

Translated from the Hebrew by Shimon Bakon.

POST SCRIPT

We have mentioned two scholars: Mowinckel and Hunger. It would be worthwhile to acquaint our readers with them.

Sigmund Mowinckel of Oslo, Norway, who passed away recently in his Nineties was one of Europe's foremost Bible scholars. He began his scientific work on Ezra and Nehemiah and, in his old age returned to his first scholarly work of love. He has left a most brilliant legacy.

Dr. Hermann Hunger, a young scholar from the University of Vienna, and a personal friend of the author, prof. Gevaryahu, is the founder of Babylonian-Akkadian Colophonology.

THE BLOOD COVENANT IN THE BIBLE

BY HAROLD M. KAMSLER

COVENANT – TERMS AND SYMBOL

It has long been recognized that Judaism is a covenanted religion. A covenant or agreement, consists of two parts. There are first the *terms* of the covenant, the agreement made between the parties to the pact, and then the *symbol* of the covenant, that which binds the agreement.

The ancient Semites, of whom the Israelites were a part, would bind a covenant between two individuals or groups in the following way: They would cut an animal in parts, and the parties to the treaty would pass through the severed parts. They believed that the blood of any living thing was the *elan vital*, the source of life of the group, and therefore individuals or groups bound themselves together through the blood. A mystical union took place, making the parties to the agreement one; they became "blood brothers." In Judaism, this symbol of the covenant was called "*Dam Habrit*" - דם הברית - the blood of the covenant. The Biblical term *karot brit* - כרות ברית - (to cut a covenant) is a literal description of this practice.

That the practice was quite common among our ancestors both before and after the Exodus is attested in many places in Scripture. Just before Saul became the first king of Israel, the Ammonites sought to enslave the men of Jabesh Gilead. Saul was called upon to rescue them. He realized that all the tribes should have a part in this undertaking. In order to establish a treaty with all Israel, Saul slew two oxen and sent a part to each tribe, thus binding the covenant, making all Israel one (I Sam. 11:7ff).

TAKE ME AN HEIFER

Our ancestors were also of the belief that when a covenant was made between a people and its God, a similar ceremony had to be performed. When Abraham made a covenant with God, we are told that He said to Abraham: "Take me an

Rabbi Kamsler is the spiritual leader of the Norristown Jewish Community Center, Pennsylvania. He served on the faculty of the New York University, teaching sociology and anthropology.

heifer of three years old and a she goat of three years old and a ram of three years old and a turtle dove and young pigeon. And he took him all these and divided them in the midst and lay each half over against the other" (Gen. 15:9-17). A deep sleep then came over Abraham, according to the story, and a fire passed through these parts. Abraham probably walked between the parts and then the fire, which represented God, did the same. This was the symbol of the covenant making the contract binding. The terms of the covenant, which was reciprocal, are mentioned just before the binding of the contract. "Look toward heaven and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He added, "So shall your offspring be" (Gen. 15:5).

That blood becomes the principal part of the symbol of the covenant is also attested in Genesis 17:1ff. God appeared to Abraham and said to him, "I am El Shaddai. Walk in My ways and be blameless. (i.e. Abraham's terms in the development of the covenant). As for Me, this is My covenant with you. You shall be the father of a multitude of nations....I will make you exceedingly fertile, and make nations of you....I give the land you sojourn in to you and your offspring to come, all the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession. I will be their God." (i.e. God's part of the terms of the covenant is to make Abraham's seed a numerous people and to give them the land of Canaan. Israel's part is to continue to walk blameless in God's ways.)

SYMBOL OF THE COVENANT

The symbol of the covenant between God and Israel is then mentioned. "As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring to come, throughout the ages. Such shall be the (symbol of) the covenant, which you shall keep, between Me and you and your offspring to follow: every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and that shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you." The drawing of the blood becomes the symbol of the covenant.

We find a similar ceremony performed by Moses when the children of Israel gathered at Mt. Sinai and accepted the Torah (the terms of the covenant). This acceptance is a reciprocal treaty. God once again accepts Israel as His people and Israel accepts God and His Torah. "And they offered burnt offerings, and sacrificed feast offerings of bulls unto the Eternal. And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins; and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took

the Book of the Covenant and read in the hearing of all the people; and they said, 'All that the Lord hath spoken we will do and obey.' And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, 'Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you in agreement with all these words' " (Ex. 24:3ff). Again we see the pattern: the blood of the sacrifice placed on the altar, the representative of God, the other part sprinkled over the people, to bind the covenant.

We read a similar incident as late in Jewish history as the time of the prophet Jeremiah. The prophet chides the people for not obeying God's law. As a punishment, the King of Babylon has threatened Judah with disaster. In the face of this imminent danger, the King of Judah induces the aristocracy of wealth and privileges to bind themselves by oath to release their Jewish bondsmen who, according to Jewish law, should have been released after six years of service. The ruling classes take the oath and renew their covenant with God, but after the danger seemed to have passed, they break their oath.

Jeremiah promises, then, that God will destroy them and give them to their enemies, "the men that have transgressed My covenant, that have not performed the words of the covenant which they made before Me, *when they cut the calf in twain and passed between the parts thereof*; the princes of Judah, and the princes of Jerusalem, the officers and the priests, and all the people of the land, *that passed between the parts of the calf*" (Jer. 34:18, 19). He describes the practice whereby all the heads of the ruling classes passed between the parts of the animal, to renew the covenant made with God, expecting that God would then honor His part of the treaty.

DRAW OUT AND TAKE YOU LAMBS

If we understand the importance of blood in the rite of the covenant we may better appreciate the initiation of the sacrifice of the Passover as the Jews prepared to leave Egypt. Moses calls all the elders of the children of Israel and says to them, "Draw out and take you lambs according to your families, and kill the Passover lamb. And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin, and none of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning" (Ex. 12:21).

Our ancient ancestors, living in Egypt for such a long time, had given up many of the practices of Israel. Their observance of Jewish rites had been neglected. Before they were to leave Egypt, Moses insisted that their covenant with God must be renewed. They were bidden to slaughter a lamb and put the blood upon the doorpost, marking the fact that this family, upon whose lintels the blood was found, had renewed its bonds with God and His people. Hence the Passover sacrifice, with the blood as the symbol of the pact, was a sign of the renewal of the covenant.

MAKE THEE KNIVES OF FLINT

To cite a further instance from this period, the Israelites had long wandered in the desert. The time of the Passover had come, as they approached the Promised Land. Before they could celebrate it, they had to show that they were part of God's covenanted people and so we read, "At that time the Lord said unto Joshua, 'Make thee knives of flint and circumcise again the children of Israel... And this is the reason why Joshua did circumcise: all the people that came forth out of Egypt that were males, even all the men of war, died in the wilderness by the way, after they came forth out of Egypt. For all the people that came out were circumcised; but all the people that were born in the wilderness by way as they came forth out of Egypt had not been circumcised'" (Josh. 5:2ff). Only after the Israelites were brought into the covenant with the rite of circumcision (the symbol of the covenant) could they observe the Passover (Josh. 5:10ff).

THE PASSOVER OFFERING AND THE RITE OF CIRCUMCISION

The Rabbis recognized the close connection between the sacrifice of Passover and the rite of circumcision, both were symbols of the covenant. In commenting on the verse, "And ye shall keep it until the fourteenth day of the same month" (Ex. 12:6), the Mekhilta notes:

Why did Scripture require the purchase of the paschal lamb to take place four days before its slaughter? R.Matia says, Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, and behold, thy time was the time of love. (Ezek. 16:8). This means, the time has arrived for the fulfillment of the covenant which God had sworn unto Abraham, to deliver his children. But as yet they had no religious duties to perform by which to merit redemption...

basilicas to attend to communal affairs on the Sabbath. Similarly, one may make arrangements on the Sabbath for the betrothal of young girls and the elementary education of a child and to teach him a trade. This is deduced from the phrase "nor pursuing *thy* business," *thine* affairs are forbidden, but the affairs of Heaven (i.e. religious matters) are permitted.

Shabbat 150a

From the phrase "nor speaking thine own words," the rabbis derive that thy speech on the Sabbath shall not be like thy speech on weekdays (Shabbath 113a-b). Rashi explains this to mean that one should not engage in business talk or in calculations on the Sabbath. Tosafot, however, states that Rabenu Tam does not agree with Rashi, for the prohibition against business talk and calculations has already been derived from the phrase "nor pursuing thy business," Rabenu Tam, therefore, interprets the phrase "nor speaking thine own words" to mean that one should talk less on the Sabbath than on weekdays. He cites the episode that is related in the Yerushalmi (Shabbat 15:3) and in the Midrash (Leviticus Rabba 34:16). R. Shimon b. Yohai heard his aged mother speaking excessively one Sabbath. He reminded her that it was Shabbat and she immediately stopped talking.

Not only do we derive a number of specific laws from the above verse in Isaiah, but we find that the prophet appears to give new dimensions

נחמני א"ר יונתן: הולכין לטרטיאות ולקרקסאות ולבסילקאות לפקח על עסקי רבים בשבת, ותנא דבי מנשה משדכין על החינוקות ליארס בשבת ועל החינוק ללמדו ספר וללמדו אומנות דאמר קרא "ממצוא חפצך ודבר דבר" (ישעי' שם), חפצין אסורים, חפצי שמים מותרין.

שבת ק"נ.

"ודבר דבר" (ישעיה נ"ח, י"ג), שלא יהא דברוך של שבת כדבורך של חול שבת קי"ג.

ר"ש בן יוחי כד הוה חמי לאימיה משתעיא סגין הוה אמר לה אימא שובתא היא. ירושלמי שבת ט"ו, ג'

to the concept of the Sabbath. As the 'Semag' put it: there is a positive commandment in the Torah to abstain from work on the seventh day, as it is said, "But on the seventh day thou shalt rest" (Exodus 34, 21). From the words of the prophets, however, there is a positive commandment to honor the Sabbath and to make it 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), and as the sages interpreted the verse: "And thou shalt honor it," that thy Sabbath garments should not be like thy week-day garments; and even as R. Johanan called his garments 'my honorers'; "Not doing thine own ways," that thy walking on the Sabbath shall not be like thy walking on weekdays (not to take great strides on the Sabbath); "nor finding thine own affairs," thine affairs are forbidden, the affairs of Heaven (religious matters) are permitted; "nor speaking thine own words," that thy speech on the Sabbath should not be like thy speech on weekdays.

Shabbat 113a

Sefer Mitzvot Gadol (Semag)

Vol. 2, 30



מצות עשה של תורה לשבות ממלאכה ביום השביעי שנאמר "וביום השביעי תשבות" (שמות ל"ד, כ"א) . . . ומצות עשה מדברי הנביאים לעשות לשבת כבוד ועונג שנאמר "וקראת לשבת ענג, לקדוש ה' מכבד, וכבדתו מעשות דרכיך, ממצוא חפצך ודבר דבר" (ישעיה נ"ח, י"ג), ודרשינן בפרק אלו קשרים (שבת קי"ג) "וכבדתו", שלא יהא מלבושך של חול דרבי יוחנן קרי למאני מכבודתא: . . . "מעשות דרכיך", שלא יהא הילוך של שבת כשל חול; "ממצוא חפצך" חפצין אסורין, חפצי שמים מותרין; "ודבר דבר" שלא יהא דיבורך של שבת כדיבורך של חול.

שבת קי"ג.

סמ"ג, חלק שני, ל'.

TO THE BIBLE READERS' UNION – ENGLAND

A Report from the Chairman.

All members of the Bible Readers' Union will be pleased to learn of the successful function in the Harris Lebetkin Memorial Hall of the Golders Green Synagogue Tuesday, July 19 this year. Mr. Ben Rose, the Treasurer, welcomed the Rev. and Mrs. Halpern on their visit to England, and pointed out that the function was being held only two days before the thirty-eighth anniversary of the establishment of the Union on July 21, 1939.

The proceedings opened with the reading in Hebrew by Dr. Harold Claff of Psalm 72, the Bible reading for the day, and an original translation in English, composed and read by the Emeritus Minister of the Synagogue, the Rev. Isaac Livingstone. Dr. Edward Conway, Financial Representative of the Golders Green Synagogue, spoke of his long association with Mr. Halpern, as did also Mr. David Gedalla – who had recently been awarded the M.B.E. – one of the wardens.

Mr. Halpern, in his reply, quoted from the letter which was being sent to members with the 21st number of Dor-le-

M.E.C. (Leamington Spa) thinks it an excellent idea that Dor-le-Dor should be sent as "a splendid Bar-Mitzva gift", and has sent a subscription for this purpose. This is being done, and it is hoped that many others will emulate her thoughtful example.

Joseph Halpern

THE BIBLE IN ISRAELI EDUCATION

BY J. SCHONEVELD

A study of approaches to the Hebrew Bible and its teaching in Israeli educational literature. Published 1976 by Van Gorcum, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

"Turn it and turn it for everything is in it." This Talmudic dictum might be applied to the numerous approaches to the teaching of the Tanach in the Israeli school system. Since the Bible is taught in every type of school, religious, non-religious, and anti-religious, the goals and methods will reflect a wide variety of viewpoints, ranging from traditionally religious, universalist, humanist, socialist, and even atheist.

The author begins his survey with a description of Jewish Bible teaching in Europe before the rise of the modern Zionist movement. We capture a glimpse of "cheder" education, Haskalah education, the neo-orthodox approach represented by Samson Raphael Hirsch, and nationally oriented Jewish education, represented by Peretz Smolenskin, Ahad Haam, H.A. Zuta, and Chaim Nachman Bialik.

There follows a review of the three main orientations of Bible teaching in Palestine during the mandatory period. The General trend, divorced from any ideological bias, attempts to bridge the gap between the religious and secular trends. While this trend espoused neither extreme ideology, it held that any contempt for religion produces contempt for

the Jewish people and ends in self hatred. Bible education has in its power to strengthen one's bonds with the Jewish homeland and the Hebrew language. Unlike the Religious trend, the General trend was open to the scientific approach in the study of Biblical literature and adopted the results of modern Bible research. While the General trend recognized the inability of the Secularists and the Religionists to unite in a common conception of God, it sought to unite them in teaching the significance of the ideas and values implied in the Biblical image of God. One of the principal exponents of the General trend, Zvi Adar, criticised the traditional practice of glorifying the forefathers, justifying them in all their actions by means of anachronistic interpretations. According to Adar, layer upon layer of religious interpretation strangled the spirit of life in the Bible and its religious spirit as well. Instead of religionist or anti-religionist interpretation he recommended a humanistic approach as a creative alternative to the two extreme forms of education. For example, in teaching Psalms, he would not urge his pupils to pray, but would stress the inner turmoil, anxiety, doubt or

fear which inspire men to pray. The Bible, he held, is not a closed, dogmatic system of beliefs. Some of its crucial concepts are challenged by Ecclesiastes and Job who refused to accept God's word, but test them with their own minds. Adar believed that the purpose of the Bible is not one of indoctrination, but one of exploration and questioning leading to growth and development of mind.

Schoneveld devotes several chapters to a critique of the Movement for the Deepening of Jewish Consciousness during the late fifties and early sixties. It sought a deepening of Jewish consciousness in Israeli youth through a deeper knowledge of Jewish history and culture and thereby strengthening its moral attachment to world Jewry in every generation. The government sought to achieve these goals by the teaching of Aggadah and Mishnah together with the Bible and chapters from the Daily Prayer Book. The secularists protested fiercely, accusing the government of introducing religious education into the General State schools by referring to these elements as part of national folklore. The secularist, on the other hand, in order to achieve a deeper Jewish consciousness, advocated a commitment to the continued existence of the Jewish people as a light to the nations, to the ingathering of the exiles,

to a preference for the commandments between man and man, to a high estimation of physical labor and to a preparedness to suffer and sacrifice for fundamental Jewish values.

The Religious interpretation of Jewish consciousness added to the above the idea of religious consciousness with its stress on belief in One God. Judaism is unique not by virtue of its ethics, which are universal, but by the sanction of its ethics by God. The Religionists held that the moral principles of the Torah are absolute, and the commandments of God are a reflection of God's nature. Judaism teaches not only "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" but "You shall love the Lord your God."

Of special interest to the educator is a series of chapters on methods of teaching crucial chapters of the Bible, e.g. the Abraham stories, the laws on slavery, Jeremiah, Amos and Job.

The author has presented us with a multi-approach to the study of the Bible into which he has poured an enormous amount of research. Whether one views the Bible as the absolute authority over him, or as great human literature, or as a source book of Jewish history the reader will find material here to support his every taste and inclination.

Abraham Ruderman

NEWS FROM WJBS CHAPTERS and READERS' COMMENTS

HARTFORD, CONN.

Emma Cohen, chairman of the Greater Hartford Chapter of the World Jewish Bible Society reports that the fourth Annual Bible Conference of Greater Hartford Bible Study groups was held this year at the Jewish Community Center. The Abraham Sachar Memorial Lecture was chaired by Henry S. Cohen, founder of the Young Peoples Group.

Dr. Nehama Aschkenazy, lecturer at the Hartford Hebrew College, talked about the narrative techniques and moral messages of Bible stories. She compared the story method of the Akedah story and the Job story, showing the difference in the characters of Abraham and Job and how each met God's testing.

There are five active Bible study groups. The oldest, founded in 1965 by Professor Haim Gevaryahu, is now named the Yad Reuven Bible Study Group.

MT. VERNON, N.Y.

Interest in Bible study is persistent. The Chug Tanakh of the YM-YWHA has completed its eight active year. In addition to the regular participation of the five Rabbis of the community, visiting lecturers have been invited from time to time. The Chug is chaired by Nat Abramson and Dr. Bert Jahr is its secretary.

Mollie Weinstein, lecturer at Queens College, writes to us:

Thank you for your attention, and for the fine quality of Dor le Dor. I use material from Dor le Dor in my class: Philosophical

Ideas of the Bible, a class I teach at Queens College.

RARE DUTCH BIBLE

Professor Haim Gevaryahu, Chairman of the World Jewish Bible Society and of the Israel Society for Biblical Research was the recipient of the magnificent reprint (2 vols., 1284 pages) of the first Dutch Old Testament (printed in 1477).

Offering this gift on behalf of the Dutch Bible Society, Mr. Aad J. Van Der Toorn representing the Netherlands postal services, felt it most appropriate that the Israel Society for Biblical Research located in Jerusalem should be the recipient of this rare Bible. He expressed deep appreciation to the Jewish people and to Israel for the gift of the Bible to Western civilization and its profound influence on the cultural and social life of the Western world and particularly of the Netherlands.

Professor Gevaryahu also received an owner's certificate, designed by the artist Malla Carl, Jerusalem, and specially dedicated to the Israel Society for Biblical Research. It contains a postal stamp issued by the Netherlands postal service to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the publication of the first Dutch Bible (1477) and its reprint (1977).

In accepting, Professor Gevaryahu thanked Mr. Van Der Toorn on behalf of the Jewish people in Israel and promised that this Bible would find a place of honor in the World Jewish Bible Center which will be built in the near future.

READERS' COMMENTS

Dear Dr. Efron,

I have read with considerable interest your article in the Summer issue of Dor le-Dor. Might I comment on one particular point, please. You bring out very clearly, that Joshua had learned his lesson well, and sent out only two spies secretly. I wonder whether this thought could be linked at all with the fact, that in Joshua 2:4 וַחֲצַפְנֹו is written in the singular instead of plural. Could this be deliberate to reinforce the idea of an intelligence unit, or is it just an error? In Chapter 2:6 the plural is used, although in a different verb: וַחֲטַמְנֹו. I should be most grateful to know your views.

W. Sharman
England

Dear Mr. Sharman,

I appreciate very much your letter of 26 June and your so nice comment on my article in the 1977 Summer issue of 'Dor le Dor', titled: 'Military Intelligence in the Bible.'

With regard to your interesting question why in Joshua 2:4 the word 'hid' — וַחֲצַפְנֹו is written in the singular instead of the plural, since it is applied to two men, there are a number of explanations advanced by Bible commentators.

Thus, Rashi, foremost Bible and Talmud commentator of the 11th

century, explains that the singular is used instead of the plural to denote that Rahab hid each man separately. Similarly, the 13th century Biblical commentator, Rabbi David Kimhi (RADAK) states that Rahab hid each of the men separately to make it more difficult to discover them in case of a search. A third popular commentator, known as 'Metzudath David' (Rabbi David Altshuler) also indicates that the use of 'hid' — in the singular means that Rahab placed each man in a separate hiding place, which was safer than placing them together.

It is further interesting to note that the 'Targum Onkelos,' the Aramaic translation of the Scriptures uses the word וַחֲטַמְרַחֲנוּן 'hid them'. Similarly, the English translations, as well as the Yiddish translation of the Bible by Yehoash use the plural.

In my humble opinion, in this case there was no doubt an error by the copyist from an older text, who instead of the letter ם at the end of the word וַחֲצַפְנֹו put the letter ך, thus changing the plural to singular. In my article I made the logical conclusion that Joshua learned from the experience of his teacher Moses, and sent out only two spies secretly. However, the above text is not indication of same.

Dr. Reuben Efron

TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

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

Dec—Jan 1977-8			שבט תשל"ה	Jan—Feb 1978			שבט תשל"ה
Su	11	Proverbs 11	א הנוכה	M	9	Job 1	א
M	12	Proverbs 12	ב הנוכה	T	10	Job 2	ב
T	13	Proverbs 13	ג	W	11	Job 3	ג
W	14	Proverbs 14	ד	Th	12	Job 4	ד
Th	15	Proverbs 15	ה	F	13	בא	ה
F	16	ויגש	ו	Sa	14	בא	ו
Sa	17	ויגש	ז	Su	15	Job 5	ז
Su	18	Proverbs 16	ח	M	16	Job 6	ח
M	19	Proverbs 17	ט	T	17	Job 7	ט
T	20	Proverbs 18	י צום י' בטבת	W	18	Job 8	י
W	21	Proverbs 19	יא	Th	19	Job 9	יא
Th	22	Proverbs 20	יב	F	20	בשלה	יב
F	23	ויחי	יג	Sa	21	שבת שירה בשלה	יג
Sa	24	ויחי	יד	Su	22	Job 10	יד
Su	25	Proverbs 21	טו	M	23	Job 11	טו ט"ו בשבט
M	26	Proverbs 22	טז	T	24	Job 12	טז
T	27	Proverbs 23	יז	W	25	Job 13	יז
W	28	Proverbs 24	יח	Th	26	Job 14	יח
Th	29	Proverbs 25	יט	F	27	יתרו	יט
F	30	שמות	כ	Sa	28	יתרו	כ
Sa	31	שמות	כא	Su	29	Job 15	כא
Su	1	Proverbs 26	כב	M	30	Job 16	כב
M	2	Proverbs 27	כג	T	31	Job 17	כג
T	3	Proverbs 28	כד	W	1	Job 18	כד
W	4	Proverbs 29	כה	Th	2	Job 19	כה
Th	5	Proverbs 30	כו	F	3	משפטים	כו
F	6	וארא	כז	Sa	4	משפטים	כז
Sa	7	וארא	כח	Su	5	Job 20	כח
Su	8	Proverbs 31	כט	M	6	Job 21	כט
				T	.	22	ל

TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

Feb—March 1978	אדר א תשל"ח	March—April 1978	אדר ב תשל"ח
W 8 Job 23	א	F 10 פקודי	א
Th 9 Job 24	ב	Sa 11 פקודי	ב
F 10 תרומה	ג	Su 12 Song of Songs 3	ג
Sa 11 תרומה	ד	M 13 Song of Songs 4	ד
Su 12 Job 25	ה	T 14 Song of Songs 5	ה
M 13 Job 26	ו	W 15 Song of Songs 6	ו
T 14 Job 27	ז	Th 16 Song of Songs 7	ז
W 15 Job 28	ח	F 17 ויקרא	ח
Th 16 Job 29	ט	Sa 18 ויקרא שבת זכור	ט
F 17 תצוה	י	Su 19 Song of Songs 8	י
Sa 18 תצוה	יא	M 20 Ruth 1	יא
Su 19 Job 30	יב	T 21 Ruth 2	יב
M 20 Job 31	יג	W 22 Ruth 3 תענית אסתר	יג
T 21 Job 32	יד	Th 23 מגילת אסתר פורים	יד
W 22 Job 33	טו	F 24 צו שושן פורים	טו
Th 23 Job 34	טז	Sa 25 צו	טז
F 24 כי תשא	יז	Su 26 Ruth 4	יז
Sa 25 כי תשא	יח	M 27 Lamentations 1	יח
Su 26 Job 35	יט	T 28 Lamentations 2	יט
M 27 Job 36	כ	W 29 Lamentations 3	כ
T 28 Job 37	כא	Th 30 Lamentations 4	כא
W 1 Job 38	כב	F 31 שמיני	כב
Th 2 Job 39	כג	Sa 1 שמיני שבת פרה	כג
F 3 ויקהל	כד	Su 2 Lamentations 5	כד
Sa 4 ויקהל שבת שקלים	כה	M 3 Ecclesiastes 1	כה
Su 5 Job 40	כו	T 4 Ecclesiastes 2	כו
M 6 Job 41	כז	W 5 Ecclesiastes 3	כז
T 7 Job 42	כח	Th 6 Ecclesiastes 4	כח
W 8 Song of Songs 1	כט	F 7 תוריע	כט
Th 9 Song of Songs 2	ל		

עשה תורתך קבע

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