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דפוס רפאל חיים הכהן בע"מ, ירושלים

THE BIBLICAL TRADITION OF POPULAR DEMOCRACY

BY SOL LIPTZIN

INTRODUCTION

Throughout the long march on the road of history, there were many centuries when Jews existed without a land of their own and had to content themselves with only an unquenchable longing for the land of their origin and with a messianic hope of their ultimate return to it. There were also many centuries when Jews had no common spoken tongue and had to modify the languages of their neighbors to suit their own linguistic needs. Thus there came into being diverse Jewish languages ranging from Judeo-Greek, spoken in the Balkans, Judeo-Persian, spoken by the Jews of Iran, Tat, spoken by the Mountain Jews of the Caucasus, to Ladino, spoken by Sephardim, Yiddish spoken by Ashkenazim, and other tongues that arose, flourished and declined. However, Jews did have a common written language, the sacred Hebrew of the Bible, which they cherished so ardently that they could revive it as their common spoken tongue when they returned to Israel from the lands of the Diaspora, a miracle of linguistic rebirth that no other people has been able to duplicate.

Jews survived for millennia, scattered over many territories far from their ancestral soil, amidst alien peoples and alien tongues, and without a government of their own capable of guiding their destinies and protecting their common interests, because they did have a quasi-territory, a portable fatherland, the Torah, which they carried with them on their wanderings in many exiles; they did have a common legal code expounded in the Talmud; they did have a common core of linguistic expressions and idioms gleaned from their prayers, folkways, festivals, and historic memories; they did have, in addition to alien governments which

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lorded over them, a quasi-government based on the Mosaic legal code which they respected, obeyed and reinterpreted to meet their changing needs. Above all, they were able to maintain themselves as a united, disciplined historic group because, since their national birth, they had been trained to exercise popular sovereignty and to practice popular democracy—not representative democracy such as prevails in Central and Western Europe and in America and not the so-called people's democracy of Eastern Europe which is neither the expression of a people's will nor really democratic. There was a genuine participation of all the Hebraic individuals, men and women, in decision-making. There was an adherence by consensus to laws, written and oral, that guided their group behavior.

DEMOCRATIC BEGINNINGS

From their beginnings, when they stood at the foot of Mt. Sinai and freely accepted their first code of laws after their liberation from slavery, until their most recent historic experiences when, as denizens of Eastern European townlets and North African mellahs, they retained autonomous behavior-patterns which guaranteed survival under stress and when, as citizens of contemporary states ranging from North America to South Africa and Australia, they reacted with almost complete unanimity in defense of imperilled Israel, Jews have shown themselves to be a disciplined people, a people that acted with a common will and a common purpose in periods of adversity and danger, even though at other times, in periods of prosperity and relative stability, they indeed argued vehemently, raged against restraints and often rebelled against their traditional uniqueness.

There is a legend that the Torah was originally offered to other peoples but was rejected. It was then offered to the liberated Hebraic slaves. These included adherents of Moses and Aaron, dissidents like the horde of Korah, and wavering groups. Ultimately, all the men, women and children assembled at Sinai accepted the Torah by acclamation. It has been the constitution under which their descendants have lived until this day, descendants who freely chose to do so, freely and not under compulsion, since whosoever wished to secede from Judaism could generally do so.

Popular democracy prevailed during the forty years of wandering in the desert of Sinai and Moses needed ever anew his marvelous gifts of persuasion to win ap-

proval of his proposals and ordinances. He could not assume automatic obedience. He had to strive for a consensus and he was not always successful, for his people was from its very beginning a stiff-necked people.

POPULAR DEMOCRACY

Popular democracy was retained under Joshua, the successor of Moses. After the crossing of the Jordan and the conquest of Canaan, this military leader assembled the entire people at Shechem. And there at a great conclave he spoke to them about their past since the days of Abraham. He then presented them with the basic issue that now faced them as they settled down to a more stable existence. They could choose to serve the gods of the Amorite population in whose midst they were now to live or the God of their patriarchal ancestors and of Moses. The people answered that they would accept their historic God. Joshua warned them that it was not an easy fate they were about to accept. A second time they gave their assent to serve the God who had liberated them from Egypt. A third time Joshua reminded them that they were still free to choose. A third time they replied that they would obey the voice of the Lord. After these three presentations—a tradition of three readings is still practiced by Israel's Knesseth today whenever a new law is proposed—the basic law or covenant of the Jewish people, which had earlier been accepted at Sinai, was considered as having been again ratified by the voluntary acclamation of all those who were assembled and it was then written down by Joshua as a permanent record before the assembly dispersed, each family to its own home.

For generations thereafter the people ruled themselves within the framework of the accepted covenant and under tribal judges of their own choosing, judges who interpreted the laws for them in times of peace and who led them to battle in times of war. Whenever danger threatened, the Hebraic tribes united for common action, but otherwise each tribe did what was pleasing in its eyes.

RETAINED DURING MONARCHY

During the era of Samuel, however, the need to ward off the incursions of the Philistines led to a call for a strong central authority, a king who would be able to bring about greater unity among the divided tribes. Samuel warned the people not to give up their sovereign power to a monarch who might become a dictator and a tyrannical oppressor, who would expropriate their fields, vineyards, olive

groves to give to his retinue, who would take the best of their sons and daughters to be his servants. The people, however, were prepared to take the risk, since disunity imperilled their survival. They outvoted Samuel and he, in true democratic fashion, had to accept their decision. They did, however, reserve final legislative authority for themselves, turning over to their chosen rulers primarily executive and judicial power.

Amidst the changes of fortune throughout the First Monarchy, basic sovereignty continued to be vested in the people and found expression in the assemblies convoked when critical issues came up. Kings had to be confirmed by the people. Thus, when Solomon died and when his son Rehobeam was to be confirmed as his heir, the people were ready to do so only under certain specified conditions, chiefly a lessening of the tax burden that had been imposed. When Rehobeam refused to accept these conditions, the sovereign people decided not to confirm him. Ten of the twelve tribes chose Jerobeam as their executive officer and only two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, voted for Rehobeam and the Davidic dynasty.

PROPHETS ON GUARD

Popular democracy prevailed during the centuries of the First Temple and found eloquent spokesmen in the prophets from Elijah to Jeremiah. These gifted orators stood on guard against the infringement of the popular will by the monarchs both in Judah and in the Northern Kingdom. The most spectacular assertion of the popular will came to the fore during the reign of the Judean King Josiah. This young monarch was able to carry out his basic reformation of state and cult because he had the backing of public opinion and because he received a mandate to put his reforms into practice in an assembly of all the inhabitants of his kingdom. At this assembly, the king read out the words of the legal code that was found in the house of God and all the men of Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem reached an agreement, which they ratified by a covenant, to keep the Lord's commandments and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul. "And all the people stood to the covenant."

After the ascension of King Jehoiakim to the throne of Judah, the consensus that had been reached during the reign of his father Josiah and had been embodied in a covenant no longer prevailed. Pressured by the rivalling superpowers, Babylonia and Egypt, the new administration faced critical problems in-

volving its very survival as an independent state and its decisions were not always wise. But the tradition of popular democracy was retained and prophets, true and false, spoke up at assemblies convoked in Jerusalem and tried to win over the masses, each to his own viewpoint.

Jeremiah, chapter 26, depicts vividly this prophet's presentation to the entire people of his minority view about the political crisis that was brewing. All the people listened to him, princes, priests, and commoners, as he foretold a coming catastrophe but they were not convinced. Hotheads shouted him down and even demanded that he be put to death for his treasonable utterances that undermined public morale at a dangerous time. Nevertheless, the prophet continued his efforts to convince the majority of his listeners to change their political position on the burning issues. At the same time he accepted their democratic right to out-vote him. His defense and final summation are reminiscent of the speech of Socrates before the Athenians two centuries later. Jeremiah tells his listeners that they are wrong in their appraisal of current realities, even if they are in the majority. "As for me, behold, I am in your hand. Do with me as seems good and proper in your eyes. But know for certain, that if you put me to death, you shall surely put innocent blood upon yourselves, and upon this city, and upon its inhabitants, for of a truth the Lord has sent me to you to speak all these words in your ears." And, like Socrates, he makes no promise that he will desist from agitating for his minority view.

Jeremiah was no less a "gadfly" than was Socrates, but he was not forced to drink the hemlock because of his voiced subversive opinions. In true democratic fashion, his opponents against whom he railed protected him in his right to speak out and to attack the establishment and its policies.

SURVIVES THE FALL OF JUDAH

Popular democracy survived the fall of Judah and the destruction of the Temple, the symbol of Jewish unity. It survived the Babylonian exile and was fully restored upon the return to Zion of the pioneers under Zerubbabel and of the contingents that followed under Ezra and Nehemiah.

Nehemiah, in chapter 8 of his narrative, describes the democratic procedure of his generation, when the men and women came up to Jerusalem from their various settlements in the month of Tishri. On the first of the month, Ezra brought up for their consideration a reaffirmation of the earlier Hebraic constitution, the

laws that had governed them since the original adoption at Sinai. Standing on an elevated platform and flanked by thirteen prominent settlers, he read out the relevant passages of the Torah, a reading which took up the entire morning. All the people listened attentively. And when Ezra finished his presentation, the thirteen distinguished persons and the Levites explained, section by section, the sense of the laws the people were asked to reconfirm. The implications of the laws were clarified not only for the assembled men but also for the women and all those who could hear with understanding, meaning children above a certain age. Then the people dispersed for the day, to eat, drink, and discuss.

On the following morning, the second day of Tishri, the chiefs of the households, together with the priests and the Levites, met for further consideration of the practical application of the proposed ordinances. They arrived at a consensus that immediate priority be given to the ordinances for the celebration of Succoth, two weeks later. To prepare properly for this celebration, it was necessary for the Chalutzim who had come back out of captivity to go out to the mountain and fetch the prescribed materials, branches of thick trees, as well as olive, myrtle, and palm branches, needed for the making of Succoth in which to dwell during the coming holiday.

For seven days, amidst great gladness at their return to Jerusalem, the people celebrated Succoth as they had not done to that extent since the days of Joshua Bin Nun. On each day they read and discussed the Torah. This constituted the second reading. On the eighth day, Shemini Atzereth, they again were called into assembly to hear the report of the central committee headed by Ezra. which had during the preceding weeks made a thorough study as to what changes in communal life-style would be necessary and how the ordinances of the Torah could be applied to the contemporary situation in which the returnees from Babylon found themselves.

Before a vote was taken at this assembly, the relevant passages of the Torah were again read out, a reading which consumed one fourth of the day and which constituted the third or final reading. Then the leaders harangued the assembly. They recalled the glorious days of the past since the generation of Abraham and the less glorious days of the people's backsliding which resulted in catastrophes and the recent exile. They reminded their audience of the special relationship of the Hebraic community to God. The recommendation was made that final approval and ratification be formalized by a written covenant.

COVENANT DEMOCRATICALLY RECONFIRMED

Nehemiah, the high commissioner, was the first to attach his signature. He was followed by the outstanding priests, then Levites, gate keepers, singers, temple servants, and all who had separated themselves from the non-Jewish inhabitants by this covenant, men and women, their sons and daughters, everyone who was old enough to understand the significance of his vote. Before the assembly dispersed, all took an oath to observe the commandments, ordinances and statutes agreed upon. This was an oath of allegiance not to an individual but to the ratified constitution, the code of laws embodied in the Torah.

The most onerous of the endorsed laws bound them to refrain from mixed marriages and to dissolve those they had already entered into with foreign wives. The covenant also obligated them to be more scrupulous in observing the Sabbath ordinances, not to engage in buying or selling or in any business enterprise on the Sabbath and on Holy Days, to be meticulous during a Sabbatical year in forgoing the exaction of debts and in letting the land lie fallow, and finally to pay the various taxes of the religious cult.

During the ensuing two to three centuries, the Jewish people lived under its autonomous democratic traditions in its homeland and in the growing diasporas from Babylon to Alexandria, after the latter city was founded by Alexander the Great. Successive overlords of Judea, from the Persian satraps to the Ptolemaic successors of Alexander did not interfere too much with Jewish communal and religious institutions and did not attempt to splinter the unity of the Jewish people. Synagogues arose as Houses of Learning and as centers of discussion on religious and civic matters. Though no new prophets came to the fore after Haggai and Zechariah as spokesmen for the common man, popular democracy continued to flourish. Scholars tried to win approval of the masses for their interpretations of the Torah, the constitution which ruled the internal organization of the Jewish people. This people endured passively foreign political domination as long as this did not interfere with the cherished basic precepts of the Torah. However, when the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV tried to force Hellenization and the worship of Zeus upon the Jews, they rose up in revolt under the leadership of the Hasmoneans. They fought desperately to maintain their traditional way of life, as they had covenanted again and again, and they won out. Individual Jews, generation after generation, especially those of the upper social rank, might succumb to the lure of Hellenism and might freely chose assimilation to alien ways

but the masses were always ready to fight to the death for their God and their freely accepted constitution, the Torah.

This constitution vested ultimate sovereignty in the entire people as trustees of God's will and the people exercised this sovereignty through their democratic institutions down the centuries. Pharisees and Sadducees argued, debated, quarreled, approved and disapproved Hasmonean leadership. The various factions of the Hasmonean dynasty tried to manipulate the popular will but they recognized its paramount importance.

When Rome seized control of Judea, as decay overtook the Hasmoneans, Roman rulers too had to respect Jewish democratic institutions. The Jews paid taxes and gave lip service to the Romans but they sought and followed the guidance of their own rabbis and scholars who expounded the Torah ordinances to them. When a Roman emperor, who was able to impose his godhood upon other provinces of his far flung empire, tried to have his statue as god-emperor installed also in Jerusalem's Temple, he had to recognize the limits of his authority over the Jewish masses, for these lined the highway to Jerusalem, prepared to die to prevent this desecration of their faith. Their action was not dictated from above but was a spontaneous upsurge of the Jewish population in defense of its freely chosen way of life. Nor was the revolt that led to the destruction of the Second Commonwealth and the exile of the Jewish people from its homeland in 70 C.E. dictated by any one Führer. It too was an upsurge of Hebraic democratic forces and an expression of the popular will. Whether this revolt or the desperate Bar Kochba Revolt two generations later was politically wise may be argued, but there is no doubt that these revolts were expressions of a democratic people that took great risks in order to preserve its national uniqueness.

DEMOCRATIC SELF-GOVERNMENT CONTINUED IN THE DIASPORA

Biblical democratic traditions continued to rule Jewish life. Jewish neighborhoods, ghettos, townlets were Jewish national enclaves in non-Jewish states. Without compulsion, Jews listened to the directions of great scholars and voluntarily followed the leadership of charismatic personalities with gifts of persuasion who arose in the various diasporas. The centuries of exile dragged on and on, but Jews did not give up their democratic processes and self-governing in-

stitutions. They retained the laws of the Torah and pored over the Talmud's interpretations of the Torah as their guides to individual and communal behavior, not only in the dark days of the Middle Ages but also in modern times. Communities freely chose martyrdom to apostasy and dissociation from the Jewish national entity. Yet, even when communities felt that apparent conversion to avoid extermination was the wiser decision, they temporarily became marranos and later reverted to the faith of their fathers as soon as mortal danger abated.

In every townlet and in every synagogue, popular democracy prevailed. Though aberrations occurred and communal leaders now and then proved faithless to their trust, the voice of the scholar and of a man of the masses arose to chastise and to demand a reckoning in the name of the Torah, the enduring constitution. And ten Jews could form a minyan and conduct public religious services and they did not need a rabbi or religious officer to call them together or to lead them. Any individual man or woman who felt aggrieved by a fellow-Jew and who failed to get justice in any other way could stop holy services by mounting the roster before the ark of the Torah scrolls and insist on being heard before permitting the Torah to be read.

When pogroms threatened and catastrophes loomed, the Jewish people united in defense of its unique way of life and rushed to save the imperilled sectors or organs of the Jewish national organism. In the early decades of the present century, Jewish unity was displayed in the worldwide relief activities for the victims of Czarist pogroms and of the revolutionary and counter-revolutionary Russian hordes. In the Nazi decades, Jewish efforts on a worldwide scale were directed to lessen the impact of the decrees promulgated for the annihilation of Jews and to rescue survivors of concentration camps and ruined ghettos.

DEMOCRATIC IDEALS EMBODIED IN CONTEMPORARY ISRAEL

Since the mid-century decades Israel has been at the center of Jewish concern everywhere. Jews felt new fire in their veins as they sensed the opportunity to renew and to consolidate Jewish sovereignty in their historic land. With unbroken unity, the Jewish masses throughout the diaspora have been unwavering in the defense of Israel's right to its national resurrection. Though governments of hostile and at times even friendly states sought to splinter this unity because of their own national interests, such efforts have met with little success and will undoubtedly continue to fail. Individual Jewish intellectuals, alienated from the

traditions rooted in the Bible, might decry the unswerving unity which often sets the little, heroic biblical people in opposition to non-Jewish world opinion. But this unity has been an historic fact since Jews were constituted as a people, one people, with democratic ideals and individual responsibility for the preservation of these ideals as embodied in their freely accepted covenants since Sinai and last renewed on Israel's sovereign soil in Israel's covenant of 1948.

For the preservation and security of the Jewish national entity, the Jewish masses are closing ranks today as in all earlier generations when this entity was imperilled and are again reaffirming by their sacrifices in war and peace their adherence to their millennial covenant by which they have lived since their national birth in the days of Moses.

Throughout the years Dor le-Dor has been trying to spread knowledge of the Bible throughout the Jewish community. However, the most valuable educational experience is that of studying with other people and of having the opportunity to exchange ideas and to express opinions. It is for this reason that we, the World Jewish Bible Society, are trying to complete a list of readers of Dor le-Dor and friends who are now participating in Bible study groups or who wish to participate in one. We hope that this list will strengthen existing groups and give those who desire to study the Bible a chance to do so. Eventually, we hope this list will form the backbone of a World Bible Readers' Union.

Therefore, it is with a sense of importance of purpose that we ask you to write to the World Jewish Bible Society if you

- a) participate in a Bible Study group
- b) wish to participate in one.

We hope to be in contact.

WHY DID SAMUEL INITIALLY REJECT MONARCHY

BY SHIMON BAKON

When Samuel heard the request of the elders of Israel to “make us a king, to judge us like all the nations,”¹ he was visibly stunned. He did not respond immediately to this request, but retired to pray unto the Lord. No response other than “the thing displeased Samuel”² is recorded.

In view of the statement in Deuteronomy 17:14:

If (thou) shalt say: I will set a king over me like all the nations that are round about me, thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee,

this displeasure of Samuel is surprising and has raised serious questions. If monarchy was allowed by Deuteronomy, why then were the Israelites rebuked by Samuel, when they requested a king? The Radak, for instance, quoting our sages, asks:

Three commandments was Israel	ג' מצוות נצטוו ישראל
commanded on entering the land:	בכניסתם לישראל:
To appoint for itself a King,	למנות עליהם מלך
to wipe out the seeds of Amalek	למחות את זכר עמלק
and to build a Temple. Why then	ולבנות ביח בחירה.
was this matter of appointing a	למה היה הדבר רע בעיני ה'
King displeasing in the sight of the Lord?	

PRECEDENCE

This problem is still more aggravated when we realize that prior to that there were already stirrings along the line of establishing a monarchy in Israel. In fact

1. I Samuel 8:5
2. Ibid. 8:6

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Mehlman³ proposes that this is the major thrust of the Book of Shoftim. He points to Gideon who rejected it, to Abimelech who usurped it, and to Jephthah who accepted leadership by basing it on a legal-religious contract.

Let us examine the biblical record. After Gideon had freed Israel from the oppressive burden of Midian, the "Men of Israel said to Gideon: 'Rule over us, both thou, and thy son, and thy son's son also'" (Judges 8:22). This offer of dynastic leadership was flatly refused by Gideon who exclaimed: "I will not rule over you, neither will my son . . . the Lord shall rule over you" (8:23).

Abimelech, in a conspiracy with the men of Shechem and of Beth-Millo, had all the sons of Gideon but Jotham killed at Ophra, the hometown of Gideon. Then "all the men of Shechem assembled themselves together, and all of Beth-Millo, and made Abimelech king" (Judges 9:6), and he was "prince over Israel three years" (9:22). If he ruled as king, then in all probability he ruled over the tribe of Manasseh and perhaps also the tribes of Asher, Zebulun and Naphtali, his immediate neighbors and allies of Gideon in the latter's successful campaign against the Midianites.

Jephthah, a man known for his military prowess, had been approached by a delegation of elders to serve as chief, in a war threatened by the Ammonites. Possessed of consummate diplomatic skill, he wrested from them the promise that he would also remain "head over all the inhabitants of Gilead" (Judges 11:8). "Then Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him head and chief over them and Jephthah spoke all his words *before the Lord in Mitzpah*."⁴ This suggests not only that the people acclaimed him as their leader but that he made some legal-religious contract, enhancing the promise made by the elders.

One need not accept the claim of Mehlman that these incidents are related in the Book of Shoftim in preparation for the establishment of monarchy. However, they do indicate that there were already some precedents in the direction of the establishment of monarchy.

3. Israel Mehlman—El Ha'ayin no. 4, 1962: *Jephthah and Jephthah's Daughter* "For this reason, . . . (Shoftim) chose to tell the story of Jephthah in order to throw into relief the characteristic features of continuity and uniqueness of the process leading to the creation of monarchy in Israel."

4. Not the Mitzpah of Benjamin, known from I Samuel. It was Mitzpah of Gilead.

THE EASY ANSWER

Higher Bible criticism has the easy answer. Deuteronomy is a book not written by Moses but at a later date. According to the fancy of these Bible investigators, this particular passage dealing with Israel's monarchy, could have been written at the time of Solomon, or shortly before Josiah, or even in post-exilic times.

In view of the fact that Deuteronomy specifically limits the kings' "prerogatives" in the area of horses, women and wealth, some of the critics wishing to align this aspect with a specific historical event maintain that these injunctions were intended as a reproof against King Solomon.

What is conveniently overlooked are some of the other limitations that could, in no wise, refer to King Solomon. Deuteronomy says: "Whom the Lord . . . shall choose"—אשר יבחר ה'. Already with Saul, and even more so with David and later with Solomon, there was no question as to whom the Lord had chosen. At no time up until Herod was there any question on the injunction: "one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee." Certainly, in the Kingdom of Judah the dynasty of David was a thoroughly established reality.

On the contrary, there are some logical and powerful arguments that would put Deuteronomy precisely there where it belongs, the result of the distilled wisdom, the outpouring of the heart of the God inspired, towering Moses, shortly before his death.

MONARCHY: COMMAND OR CONCESSION

The first problem that needs investigation is this: Was the setting up of a king a **מצוה**, a direct command, or was it merely a concession? Later tradition is unclear on this point, and one can find our sages ranged on one side or the other of this argument.

From a simple reading of the Deuteronomic text, particularly the verse:

When you art come unto the land . . . and shalt say: I will set a king over me . . .

it seems that election of a King was a concession, hedged around with conditions, limiting the manner of his choice and his conduct.⁵

5. Abarbanel cogently points to Deut. 21:10: "*When thou goest forth to battle . . . and thou seest among the captives a woman of goodly form . . . and wouldest take her to thee to wife: then . . .*

It should be said from the start, that in the total of seven verses representing the biblical conception of monarchy, the power of the king is circumscribed. He is one “whom the Lord thy God shall choose;” he should be one “from among thy brethren.” “He shall not multiply horses, neither wives, nor gold and silver... He shall write him a copy of his laws in a book—*וכתב לו אח משנה תורה הזאת על ספר*—to read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this Torah and its statutes to do them. That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren.” He is *primus inter pares*; he, like the rest of his brethren, the children of Israel is subject to the laws and statutes of this Torah. Though divinely chosen, he certainly is not above the law.

But even if interpreted as a concession, the reaction of Samuel to a legitimate request of the people seems out of line with Deuteronomy.

There were various approaches by our commentators to resolve this problem.

Some hold that the request, though legitimate, was premature. The people should have had the decency to wait till after Samuel’s death. Some also hold that it was not the request *per-se* but the clause: “that we also may be like all the nations” (I Samuel 8:20).

There are still others who point to the fact that two requests had been made, one by the elders (8:1) and the other by the people (8:19).

The elders said: “. . . now make us a king to *judge us like all the nations*,” while the people later said: “there shall be a king over us, *that we may be like all the nations*.” (8:19–20). According to these commentators Samuel was not so much displeased with the request for a king but the people’s indication to be like all the nations!

Abarbanel, basing himself on Rambam who held that it was “a positive commandment to choose a king *from Israel*—*מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל מֶלֶךְ לְמִנּוּחַ* (Sefer HaMitzvot, Positive Commandment 173), combined the concessional character of the choice of a king with that of a Mitzvah. He maintained that when Israel had come into its land and wished to appoint a king, then the act of choosing an *Israelite King* turned into a positive Mitzvah (Abarbanel on Parashat Shoftim).

. . .” to indicate the concessional character of injunctions of this sort, for which our sages have coined the phrase: “The Torah has allowed this in consideration of the evil inclination—*לֹא דְבָרָה—הַתּוֹרָה אֵלֶּא כְּנֹגַד יֵצֶר הָרַע*.”

This ingenious interpretation eliminates an outright contradiction between Deuteronomy and Samuel, because the former does not obligate Israel to elect a king.

TO JUDGE US

On careful reading of I Samuel chapters 8–12, we can see that none of these interpretations are fully satisfactory. Let us have a close look at the text.

Samuel, getting on in age, appointed his two sons to be judges in Beer-Sheba. Samuel, though residing in Ramah, served as “circuit” judge in Beth-el, Gilgal, and in Mitzpah. He thus instituted a new center in the southern district with his two sons in charge. At this point we may only guess what Samuel’s intentions were, to establish a dynasty, or to appoint two assistants. That the sons did not follow in his footsteps and were accused of dishonesty and bribery, a fact never disputed by Samuel, together with the fact that “you have become old” is put forward as the first reason by the elders for their request: “set us a king to *judge us like all the nations*—*לשפטנו ככל הגויים*.” The immediate response, most crucial to our understanding of his anger, is put in the following words:

<i>And these words were displeasing in the eyes</i>	וירע הדבר בעיני שמואל
<i>of Samuel when they said: Give us a King to</i>	כאשר אמרו תנה לנו מלך
<i>judge us.</i>	לשפטנו

What, in the plain words of Scripture, displeased Samuel? Nowhere does he rebuke them for the wish to have a king *like all the nations*. Of course, it could have been the request to have a king. To me it seems that the emphasis has to be put on the words *to judge us*—*לשפטנו*!” He is not so much irked by the fact that they wished a king in the manner of all the nations, a matter also conceded by Deuteronomy, but that they wished him to serve in the *capacity of a Judge* and to divest Samuel of this role.

It must be admitted at this point that the manner of the request was crude, ad-hominem and tactless. He must have been shocked by the ingratitude of the people whom he had served selflessly and loyally. This request was not merely a rejection of his leadership but implied perhaps an insult to his integrity. This can be surmised in the words that he addressed to the people later in Gilgal: “Here I am: witness against me before the Lord . . . Whose ox have I taken? . . . or whom

have I defrauded? Or whom have I oppressed? Or of whose hand have I taken a ransom to blind mine eyes therewith?" (12:3).

In the context of the dynamics of a most instructive process of dialogues developing between Samuel, God, and the people, and in the light of the reality of division of leadership that eventually emerged, this word to judge us—*לשפטנו*—easily overlooked, assumes great significance.

It is common knowledge that the Israelite charismatic "judge" had many functions. Serving as chief justice was one of his major functions. We can easily deduce it from the aspersion thrown by Scripture on Samuel's sons who "walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, took bribes and perverted justice."⁶ Praises are heaped on the younger David: "... and David reigned over all Israel; and David executed justice and righteousness unto all his people."⁷ This indicates that the king, after the demise of the *Shofet*, arrogated to himself this privilege as chief justice.⁸

In his bitterness Samuel turned to God in prayer. He was told to accede to the wishes of the people, since the insult was not so much directed against him as against God. "They have rejected Me"—*כי אחי מאטו*—(8:7).

THE MANNER OF THE KING

Now follows one of the best known passages in Scripture (8:11–18): "This will be the manner of the King—*משפט המלך*—that shall reign over you."

What is meant by *משפט המלך*? Is this identical with the *משפט המלוכה* (10:25), proclaimed, written down and "laid (it) up before the Lord" in Mitzpah to point to the sacredness of this contract?

6. I Samuel 8:3

7. I Samuel 8:15

8. II Samuel 15:3–4. That this privilege of dispensing justice by her chief leaders still had a profound hold on the imagination and memory of the people is attested to by the successful demagoguery engaged in by Absalom, who wished to ingratiate himself with the people. Perhaps there was a grain of truth in his words when he said to litigants whom he had cornered: "See thy matters are good and right; but there is no man deputed of the king to hear thee." Perhaps the aging king had begun to take this aspect of his responsibilities less seriously. At any rate, most relevant, if surprising, are the words of Absalom when he exclaimed: "Oh that I were made judge in the land, that every man who hath any suit or cause might come to me, and I would do him justice." Of all the prerogatives of leadership, Absalom singled out this one, designed to strike a sympathetic chord in the hearts of the people, whom he wished to alienate from his father.

In the context of an ongoing process of negotiations, the following emerges at this stage. Samuel has acceded to the *vox populi* calling for a king. There are two matters, as indicated before, that needed elucidation: Who elects him and what are his prerogatives?

Verse 18 of chapter 8 may give us the key of what was the thrust of his warnings:

And ye will cry out in that day because of the King whom ye shall have chosen you—אשר בחרתם לכם, and the Lord will not answer you in that day.

The weight of his utterances seem to lie in the warning that a king, elected in the manner of the nations, perhaps by popular acclaim, “whom ye have chosen you,” one not sanctioned by the Lord, is bound to arrogate unto himself oppressive rights; and when you then will cry out to the Lord, He will not be responsive to your complaints.

The response of the people to these warnings is most significant.

Nay, but there shall be a king over us that we shall also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us, and go out before us, and fight our battles.

(8:20)

At this stage the people are adamant about having a king. However, they do not care about the way he is elected, so long as he performs as a king, like the rest of the nations—namely: he will judge, be a leader, and conduct wars. In effect, in expanding on their initial demands, the sting of the open insult is softened. The demand is no more concentrated on “he shall judge us.” There is no more talk of a personal rejection of Samuel on account of his age or on account of his corrupt sons. They merely wish normalization of their lives in accordance with other surrounding peoples, and a king upon whom the usual responsibilities of royalty would devolve.

AND HE SHALL SAVE MY PEOPLE

There follows another of the many pearls of biblical narrative, how Saul is catapulted to the position of kingship.

We may have noted that Samuel had merely listened to the arguments of the people and, dismissing them silently, addressed himself to the Lord.

The attention of the reader is directed to the following verse, which suggests a new milestone in the unfolding negotiations. In 9:9 God reveals to Samuel to expect on the morrow a man from Benjamin:

And you shall anoint him prince over my people and he will save my people from the Philistines.

Not only was Saul “elected by the Lord,” even prior to having been seen by Samuel but we also note a subtle limitation in his function: to save the people. He is to be king, wage battles of Israel and redeem them from Philistine overlordship. No more, no less! The element of judge—שופט—is entirely omitted.

The Book of Samuel is most particular in telling us in great detail about the manner in which Saul was elected king. It is not only the coming into being of a new institution in the history of the Jewish people that precipitated the detailed account given of his three successive crownings. It wishes us to understand one of the basic principles underlying the concept of monarchy. For indeed there were three partners who shared in this event.

First, in Ramah, Saul, already elected of the Lord, was secretly anointed by Samuel. The second crowning occurred in Mitzpah where Saul, by the process of “lots,” was singled out in the presence of all the people. It is characteristic that on this occasion Saul was not acclaimed unanimously. There were base fellows—בני בליעל, not impressed either with him or by the manner in which he had been elected, showed him open contempt. Saul humbly swallowed this humiliation.

It was only after the successful campaign in Yabesh-Gilead, where Saul fulfilled his assigned role as the deliverer, that Samuel called the people to Gilgal to ratify the crowning through general acclamation. And “all the people went to Gilgal and crowned there Saul before the Lord” (11:15). Thus, first elected by the Lord and anointed by Samuel in Ramah, Saul’s divine election was later confirmed in Mitzpah and finally fully acclaimed by the people in Gilgal.

THE MISHPAT HAMLUCHA — משפט המלוכה

It is nigh impossible to ascertain what this “Manner of Kingdom”—משפט המלוכה—contained. One can say with certainty that it was not identical with the משפט המלך⁹, the warning of what a king might do unto the people. Yet its con-

9. Also commentators are divided on what משפט meant. Some interpret it as “law—חוק” others as “manner” similar to משפט כהנים.

nection with the rules governing kings as set down in Deuteronomy is not clear.

From the preceding negotiations and from what follows, one can form some ideas of what it may have contained.

There can be no question that in it the theocratic nature of government is guaranteed.

. . . and behold, the Lord hath set a king over you. If you will follow the Lord . . . and both ye and also the king . . . be followers of the Lord . . .

אם תיראו את ה' והייחם גם אתם וגם המלך אחר ה'

Ibid. 12:13–14

Ultimate authority resides with the Lord, who elects the “anointed of the Lord,” and whose laws must be kept by both king and the people. Some authority rests also with the people for whose welfare the king is accountable and to whom the king must be acceptable. Thus:

Rehoboam went to Shechem: for all Israel were come to Shechem to make him king

(I Kings 12:1)

Later we find that the people asked of Rehoboam to “make the grievous service of thy father, and his heavy yoke which he put upon us, lighter” (Ibid. 12:4). It is only when the young king disregarded the counsel of “old men” that the Ten Tribes rebelled against the house of David.¹⁰

And what about the Prophet-Judge? Note what he says:

Far be it for me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will instruct you in the good and the right way.

(I Samuel 12:23)

Samuel had not given up on his prerogatives—he still stands and mediates between God and the people and he still remains the supreme teacher.

It is only in the light of this “constitution” that we begin to understand the fury of Samuel when Saul, waiting for him in Michmash for the ensuing battle with the

10. Note the special covenant entered by the priest Jehoiada—“And Jehoiada made a covenant between the Lord and the King and the people, that they should be the Lord’s people” (II Kings 11:17).

Philistines, offered sacrifices, thus arrogating to himself one of the jealously guarded functions of the prophet-judge-priest.

THE HISTORICAL IMPACT

With the demise of Samuel, the supreme position of the prophet-judge came to an end. It also contributed to the weakening of the balance established in the משפט המלוכה.

Yet we must be mindful that throughout the entire history of Israel the essential concept of constitutional monarchy was deeply anchored, disturbed only on few occasions.

Above all, the quintessential features of constitutional monarchy had been laid down in Deuteronomy. Samuel, far from contradicting Deuteronomy but faced for the first time with the challenge of Kingship, must be considered as the architect of this concept, arrived at after profound soul-searching in his dialogues with the Lord and his negotiations with the people, and in perfect alignment with the basic precepts contained in Deuteronomy.



Agag, King of Amalek, before Samuel

Gustave Doré

THE GOLDEN CALF IN EXODUS 32

A FOUNDRY ENGINEER'S INTERPRETATION

BY ELI MINOFF

To the foundry engineer with an interest in the history of metal casting, the Holy Scriptures are indeed a fertile source of valuable information and challenge.

One of the most fascinating and controversial metal casting problems found in the Bible relates to the story of the Golden Calf, and the purpose of this article is to interpret the story on a purely technical basis using the original text as the only source.

Exodus 32:4 describes, in what seems to be a confusing way, the making of the calf, supposedly by Aaron. From 32:24 it would appear that the calf emerged directly from the fire, a fact which seems to contradict verse 4 and casts doubts on Aaron's behavior in the affair. Finally in verse 20 we are told that Moses burns the calf, thus adding to the confusion, for as everyone knows gold does not burn.

Verse 4 is complicated because it reads: וַיִּקַּח מִיָּדָם וַיִּצַר אֹתוֹ בַּחֶרֶט וַיַּעֲשֶׂהוּ עֵגֶל "מַסְכָּה". The common English translation is: "He took it (the gold) from them, and shaped it with an engraving tool and made it into a molten (cast) calf."

A first reading of the above text would have us believe that the calf was engraved before it was even made!!! Had the order been reversed, no problem would exist as the calf would have been cast in gold and then perhaps the finishing touches engraved.

Biblical scholars have attempted to solve this dilemma by various means, the most common of which is to assume that the biblical author reversed the sequence of fabrication and cited proof of this by noting various passages in the Bible when reversal of sequence occurred. Childs¹ suggests that the order may have

1. Brevard S. Childs, *"The Book of Exodus"*, Westminster Press 1974, pp. 553-581.

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been reversed to purposely highlight Aaron's participation in the event. Loewenstamm² presents a summary of commentaries which will not be discussed in this article as my contention is that the answers to the problem are in the original text itself.

I should like to suggest a very simple solution to the problem based on the premise that the author who recorded the event did so in *the proper sequence*.

What has been described in verse 4 is the way in which the casting was produced—by the lost wax process (*cire' perdue*).

This process is one of the most ancient casting techniques known to man and was one of the major methods in use during the period under consideration, especially for the production of small idols and statues.

In brief—a wax model is made of the piece to be cast. This model can be produced in very great detail as the wax is soft and readily workable by even the most primitive engraving tools.

The finished wax model is then coated with a clay slurry and, once the clay has set sufficiently to be handled, the entire mold is fired. During the firing the clay hardens and the wax melts and runs out leaving a cavity which is an exact negative replica of the original wax model.

While the mold is still hot (or it may be reheated if it has cooled down), the molten metal is poured into the cavity. When the casting has solidified and cooled off, the clay is broken away, leaving the finished object. All that remains to be done are some minor surface repairs and perhaps some polishing, if desired.

With the above in mind, Exodus 32:4 is now quite clear. First the gold was collected and weighed in order to determine the size of the calf which could be produced. As gold is conveniently 20 times the weight of beeswax, it was a simple matter to make a wax model weighing 1/20 of the gold in hand. The model of the calf was then fashioned in the wax using common engraving tools. The wax idol was then covered with clay, fired, and molten gold poured in. Further proof that this was the method used to produce the casting comes to us in verse 20 where Aaron exclaims—"I threw *it* (?) into the fire and out came this calf." Thus the calf emerged from the mold as a *finished, recognizable* object which would be

2. S. E. Loewenstamm, "The Making and Destruction of the Golden Calf," *Biblica* 48, 1967 pp. 481-490.

the case of casting produced by the lost wax process. The above solution is in complete agreement with the sequence of the text.

We now turn to Aaron's role in this incident. How do we explain Aaron's apparent complicity and activity in verse 4 with his show of complete astonishment in verse 24.

The Bible does not tell us that Aaron had any particular skills in metal working and we may assume therefore that the first person references made in verse 4 are not to be taken literally in the same way that no one imagines that Solomon built the temple himself, although the Bible refers to the construction of the edifice in the first person as his work.

Aaron as the leader of the Israelites during Moses' absence succumbed to pressures to produce the calf and was definitely instrumental in obtaining the gold used in its manufacture. However, the actual work of making the statue required skills, and this work was undoubtedly carried out by others.

How then can we explain Aaron's statement in verse 24? It is possible that the verse should not be read as Aaron throwing the *gold* into the fire but rather that he threw the *mold* into the fire to heat it prior to casting.

Taking into consideration that the calf was to be a national idol, the actual act of pouring the casting may have been accompanied by some sort of ritual ceremony where Aaron in his capacity as leader was given the mold and instructed to place it in the fire. Therefore what Aaron tells Moses is to be taken at face value. Aaron, perhaps for the first time in his life, witnessed a casting being produced and did not quite grasp what happened. Even today many people who are not familiar with foundry practice will often express complete amazement upon seeing a casting poured and then after cooling, emerge from the mold.

We now turn our attention to the destruction of the calf. The Bible tells us that Moses "burns" the statue, then grinds it to powder and casts (throws) it into the water which is then drunk by the Israelites (32:20).

The solution to this dilemma lies in explaining why the author, presumably Moses, chose to use the word "burn" instead of any of the common words available such as melting, refining etc.

The reason is that biblical words relating to melting--*נָסַךְ*, *צָרַף* imply an act which will lead to the positive *creation* of something. In this case the intent was to utterly *destroy* this abhorrent idol and hence the negative word "burn" was used in order to carry home the idea of total destruction which the word signifies. No

doubt the author knew that he was using a word which might cause some difficulties but he wanted to stress the point.

Lastly, the Bible refrained from giving us too much detail on the making of the calf. One may ask why, in the light of the fact that in the following chapters we are told in minute detail how the tabernacle was fabricated and erected.

Once again the reason may be deceptively simple. The entire incident was sordid but nevertheless must be recorded for posterity so that future generations could learn from the experience of their forefathers. Therefore the logical thing to do was to relate the story with an absolute minimum of detail so as not to place the calf in a favorable light.

To summarize: By focusing on the technology of the period, we have shown that the Biblical verses on making the golden calf are in fact accurate and in the correct sequence requiring no emendation or distortions. I have also rationalized the verse on the destruction of the calf by examining the context of the relevant verb.



Worship of The Golden Calf
From an Old Dutch Bible

THE EVOLVING SYMBOLISM OF THE BURNING BUSH

BY ETAN LEVINE

INTRODUCTION

According to the Biblical account, it was while he was tending the flock that Moses came to the edge of the wilderness, "to the mountain of God" called Horeb. The Bible tells how "an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of the fire out of a bush; and he looked, and behold the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed." (Ex. 3:2). Not only was this the crucial event in the life of the leading character of biblical Israel; it was also the paradigm of the crucial event in Jewish history; the Sinaitic theophany and covenant. Further, it became the grounding for an ongoing exegetic, speculative, homiletic confrontation of divine challenge and human response.

When "doing midrash" one senses the need to justify the enterprise, in light of the alternative literary and philosophical options. The charge is formulated simply: "Isn't it sheer obscurantism to scrutinize the simple homily of antiquity as a potential source for contemporary religious enlightenment?" One is tempted to reply in the coinage of Rabbi Yehoshua bar Karhah. In a somewhat analogous vein a nonbeliever once asked him, "Why did your God choose a lowly thorn-bush from which to speak to Moses?" He replied, "Had it been a carob tree or a sycamore, you would have asked the same question! But to dismiss you without an answer would be improper, so I will tell you the reason. It was done to teach you that no place is devoid of God's presence, not even a thorn-bush."¹ And one

1. For preliminary study, cf. Etan Levine, "Midrash on the Burning Bush," *Reconstructionist* XXXVI:2 (1971), 24-29. See sources in *Shemot Rabbah* 2:5; *Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah* 8:2. For a less polemical version attributed to Rabban Gamaliel, cf. *Midrash HaGadol*, Vol. II, 3:2 (ed. Margalioth p. 55). Also see *Bamidbar Rabbah* 12:4 and *Pesiqta de Rab Kahana* 2:2.

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might add, inspiration may be found even in the midrashim which sprouted from the thorn-bush. For the Burning Bush became an incredibly rich source of evolving symbolism through the ages.

THE BUSH

This question of “thorn-bush theophany” was rhetorically raised by Jewish homileticians: what implicit theology or symbolic meaning can be derived from God’s choice of a burning thorn-bush? One suggestion is that this was done to underscore the importance of peace. “For the Holy One, Blessed Be He, did not initially become revealed to Moses through *Hayyot*, *Cherubim* or *Ophanim* but through something of peace. As it says: ‘And the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of the bush.’ He showed Moses the flame burning in the vegetation without consuming it, and without the vegetation extinguishing the flame.”²

This homily of mutual non-aggression addresses only one facet of the question; the essential question involves God’s choice of a lowly bush. Numerous commentators suggest that whereas God appropriately could have become manifest “from the peaks of mountains, the pinnacles of heights, and the vastness of space” which He inhabits, here His purpose was to convey intimacy. These midrashim address the paradox of God being both transcendent and immanent; here His intent is to demonstrate His nearness and accessibility.³ “The Lord is near unto all who call Him.”

THE BUSH SYMBOLIC OF ISRAEL

A survey of traditional Jewish texts reveals that through the ages the bush symbolized Israel, or Israel’s condition. Midrashim often drew historical parallels. Using Rabbi Eleazar’s analogy, “Just as the bush is the lowest of all trees, so had Israel been reduced to the lowest of conditions. And the Holy One, Blessed Be He, went down with them to redeem them, as it is written: ‘And I went down to rescue them from the hand of Egypt’ (Ex. 3:8).”⁴

2. *Mishnat Rabbi Eliezer* ch. 4. p. 71; cf. commentary of *al-Naqawa*, q, in MHG II 3:2 (ed. Margaliof p. 47).

3. *Shemot Rabbah* 3:6; *Mekilta de Rab Shimeon Bar Yohai*, 2; MHG II, 3:2. These refer to *Shemot* 25:22, *Jeremiah* 23:24, *Tehillim* 138:6, *Mishle* 29:23.

4. *Mekilta Bo, Pisha* 14 and *Shemot Rabbah* 2:9 where Rabbi Eleazar uses the conjunction “therefore,” implying a causal relationship between Israel’s low estate and God’s intervention.

The bush also symbolized Israel to Rabbi Yohanan, who draws this analogy: "Just as one makes of the thorn-bush a protective hedge for the garden, so is Israel a protective hedge for the world." He is not uncritically chauvinistic, however, for he further observes that "just as the thorn-bush produces both thorns and roses, so too among Israel are there both wicked and righteous people." In a reflection on both history and eschatology, a congratulatory comment explains that "Just as this particular bush grows both on land and in water, so too does Israel live both in this world and in the world to come."⁵

Continuing with the thorn-bush—Israel analogy, some midrashim stress that God's intervention was due to Israel's need, not Israel's merit. "O Bush, O Bush, it is not because you are higher of all trees that the Holy One Blessed be He appeared to you. Rather, it is because you are lowest of all trees."⁶ This applies not only to the Egyptian bondage, but to the later diaspora as well, for "just as the bush is the lowest of all trees, so is Israel in exile the lowest of all nations."⁷

In the vast amount of literary creations which used the Burning Bush for symbolic purposes, the bush frequently represents both oppression and depression. One individualistic note is the comment that God appeared in this manner because the Israelites were depressed; and God bestows His presence on those who are depressed and burdened.⁸ According to Rabbi Yehoshua, the choice of the bush reflects God's own anguish, not simply Israel's condition. Thus, the bush is used to symbolize God's empathy in "sharing" Israel's circumstances.⁹

Since the word for "bush" used in the biblical account is of dubious meaning, and since "creative philology" is a familiar homiletic addiction, it was suggested that the word for "bush" may describe the message, rather than simply the medium. The Hebrew letters for "the bush" are the numerical equivalent of 120, suggesting that God was thereby conveying to Moses that he would live for 120 years.¹⁰

5. *Shemot Rabbah*, *loc. cit.*

6. Talmud Babli, *Shabbat*, 67A.

7. Cf. *Seror HaMor* ad h.l., q. M. Kasher, *Torah Shelema*, Vol. 9, p. 120, note 41.

8. Barcelonai's commentary to *Sefer Hayesirah*, p. 134, q. in Kasher, *loc. cit.*

9. MHG II 3:2 *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, Ch. 40; *Tanhuma*, *Shemot* 14; *Mekilta Bo*, *Pisha* 14; *Shemot Rabbah* 2:9; *Midrash Shoher Tob*, 27:2.

10. Cf. *Shemot Rabbah*, *loc. cit.* These plays on the Hebrew words "the bush" are largely due to the fact that this word is found in the Bible only here and in *Debarim* 33:16, where its meaning is doubtful. Cf. the commentaries on *Maimonides*, Guide 1, 66.

THE BUSH SYMBOLIC OF EGYPT

The bush occasionally represents Egypt. Thus, Rabbi Yosi said, "It is characteristic of the thorn-bush that when a man puts his hand into it, he feels no pain, because its thorns are turned downward. However, when he tries to extricate his hand, the thorns trap it. Similarly, when Israel went down into Egypt, they were welcomed, as it is written, 'The land of Egypt is before you. In the choicest land let your father and brothers dwell: in the land of Goshen let them dwell' (Gen. 47:6). However, when they wanted to leave, they were ensnared, as it is written, 'and moreover, I will not let Israel go.' (Ex. 5:2)"

The dangers of other 'trips' and other traps are implied in the analogy. The symbolism of the Burning Bush evolved into a political metaphor: a warning about the Jewish *modus vivendi*. As Rabbi Yehudah bar Shalom described it: "Just as a bird does not feel when it flies into a thorn-bush, but when it flies out its wings are torn to pieces . . .,"¹¹ so too must the Jew be cautious!

The thorn-bush sometimes represents unsullied authenticity. Those who currently charge the religious establishment with substituting symbolism for activism may find relevance in Rabbi Yosi's assertion: "Why did God speak to Moses from a thorn-bush? Because it is unsullied; and the nations of the world do not exploit it for idolatrous purposes."¹² The Biblical encounter symbolized the purity of a genuine religious experience.

THE BUSH AND THE ANGEL

In the Biblical *textus receptus* the speech which followed the angel's appearance is ascribed to God (Ex. 3:4). The midrashim therefore largely de-emphasize the angel's role. He is most frequently identified as the archangel Michael, or as the archangel Gabriel. Some suggest that he is Moses' heavenly teacher Zagsugel.¹³

11. MHG II *loc. cit.*: *Shemot Rabbah*, *loc. cit.*

12. *Ibid.*

13. Compare *Aggadat Bereshit* 32:64 (Michael), *Shemot Rabbah* 2:8 (Gabriel), *Targum Yonatan Ben Uzziel* (Zagsugel). Cf. Trypho, in *Justin's Dialogue* 20:128, and *Talmud Babli*, *Shabbat* 67B. Contrast *Constitutions Of The Holy Apostles*, Vol. V, 3:20 for reference to Jesus. Philo does not include prophecy through an angel in his listing of the types of prophecy to Moses: see *De Vita Mosis* 12:63f., and Harry Austryn Wolfson, *Philo*, Vol. 2, p. 45 and Vol. 1, p. 379.

One midrash is similar to the familiar legend involving Isaac. "What is meant by the words 'an angel of the Lord appeared to him'? This teaches that other people were there with him, but they didn't see. Only Moses saw."¹⁴ In other words, the human being must be an active participant.

The essential role of the angel is intimated by the emendation of a vowel, so that instead of appearing 'in a flame of fire'—בִּלְבַת, he appears 'with a heart of fire.'—בְּלֵבָת. The anticipation of challenge and mission is thus conveyed, when "an angel of the Lord appeared to him with a fiery heart."

Similarly, many commentaries described the function of the angel enveloped in a flame of fire, to inspire Moses with courage, so that when he would return, leading Israel to Sinai, and would see the flames, he would be unafraid, having himself acquired a "heart of fire."¹⁵ Unlike the legend of Prometheus, this fire of Moses kindles the spirit; and it is offered freely to man.

THE BUSH AND THE FLAME

This unusual fire is itself the subject of midrashic speculation on history, theology and human nature. For although revelation with fire is a familiar biblical motif, whereas in the other incidents the fire symbolizes destruction, here it is beginning.¹⁶

Thus, on a historical note: "Why did God show Moses such a symbol? Because Moses had believed that the Egyptians might consume Israel. Hence God showed him a fire which burned, yet which did not consume, saying to him, 'Just as the thorn-bush is not being consumed, so will the Egyptians not be able to consume Israel.'" Or, in a variation on the theme, "He showed Moses a flame rising from the midst of the thorn-bush without the thorn-bush being consumed,

14. Cf. Talmud Babli, *Yoma* 4B and *Shemot Rabbah* 2:8 with parallels from Daniel 10:7. Also cf. Etan Levine, "Midrash Sobre La Zarza Ardiente," *Pensamentos X* (1971), and *idem*, "The Literary Genre Midrash," *Reconstructionist* XXXIV (1969).

15. See Etan Levine, "Aggadah in Jewish Bible Study," *Concordia Theological Monthly* ZL (1969) and *idem*, *Ibn Ezra's Commentary to the Minor Prophets*, Jerusalem 1976. See sources found in Cf. *Sode Razyah*, *Hilkot Malakim* 2, q. in Kasher, *op. cit.*, p. 116 note 26; also see *Shemot Rabbah*, *loc. cit.* (hiriq replaces the *patah* in the vocalization).

16. See *Shemot* 19:18, *Debarim* 4:11, and *Hebrews* 12:29. Compare the storm-god feature of Baal in the Ras Shamra texts and corresponding biblical poetry. See, e.g. Patton, *Canaanite Parallels In The Book of Psalms*, p. 20.

conveying to Moses, "This is a sign that if, heaven forbid, this people which I am taking out of Egypt with your assistance should transgress my Torah, which is similar to fire, I will deliver them into the hands of the four kingdoms which are also like fire . . . But they will not be destroyed at their hands."¹⁷

Or, in a more bellicose spirit: "Why did the Holy One, Blessed be He, show Moses a flame in the midst of the thorn-bush? Because the flame signifies Israel, as it is said, 'And the House of Jacob shall be a flame.' (Obadiah, 18). Thus, the symbolism of the Burning Bush was utilized to kindle Jewish faith in eventual independence.

To some Bible exegetes, the thorn-bush signifies idolators, who are comparable to thorns and thistles. God said to Moses, 'So shall Israel be among the nations. The smoke of Israel will not consume the idolators, who are comparable to thorns and thistles, and the idolators will not extinguish the flames of Israel, which are the words of Torah. But in the future, the smoke of Israel will consume all of the idolators.' As it is said, 'The peoples of the world shall be as the burnings of lime, as thorns cut down that are burned in the fire.' (Is. 33:12)¹⁸

PROTO-SCIENTIFIC EXPLANATIONS

Earlier generations saw more than historical symbols in the flames. Thus, on an eschatological note refuting the concept of eternal damnation ". . . from this we learn God's mercies toward sinners. As it is written, 'And the bush burned with fire'; this is the punishment of the sinners. But then we read 'but the bush was not consumed'; i.e., they are not completely destroyed."¹⁹

Exegetes "explained" the phenomenon of the flame in various proto-scientific ways. For example, the plant was supposedly endowed with a fire-proofing liquid. What Moses could not understand was how the fire could burn in a moist plant and not be extinguished itself. He was intrigued by the unusual properties of both the thorn-bush and the flame, and that is why he was moved to investigate further and to approach more closely.²⁰ According to one view, not only was the bush

17. *Shemot Rabbah* and *MHG II*, *loc. cit.*

18. See sources in *Pirqa de Rabbi Eliezer*, *loc. cit.* Cf. Etan Levine, *The Aramaic Version of Kohelet*, New York 1978, and *idem*, *The Targum to the Five Scrolls*, Jerusalem 1977, for background data.

19. *Zohar II*, 21B.

20. Targum Yerushalmi ad h.l.; *Midrash lekah Tob ad h.l.*; *PRE loc. cit.*

not being consumed, but it was actually sprouting new leaves from the midst of the flames. "And," lest one be skeptical, "if you are surprised about this, come see from Aaron's staff; it was made of dried wood, yet it produced almonds and flowers!"²¹

One comment reflects upon individual man: "The bush signifies the body. A flame burns in the heart and the heart is not consumed; a flame burns in the heart and the body is not consumed." As a modern commentator observed, the flame is essential, for "*hitlahavut* unlocks the meaning of life; without it even heaven has no meaning."²² The flame is the *elan vital* which makes Jewish life an adventure in the heroic dimension.

THE BUSH AND THE MAN

Since religious experience was not regarded as simple accident, many commentators emphasize that Moses was an active participant. Yet two divergent poles are stressed. One suggests that divine intervention is not a substitute for human socio-political activism. Thus, R. Simeon b. Lakish tells that God first called to Moses through the angel, yet Moses was unwilling to stop engaging in his responsibilities. It was "when God noticed that Moses did not actually stop tending the flock, but merely turned aside to see, that He concluded, 'This man is fit to tend Israel.'" The opposite implication is contained in the observation that "it was only after Moses ceased from his normal duties and went to seek, that immediately it followed that 'God called to him.' (Ex. 3:4)"²³

According to both views, however, the character of the man is an essential prerequisite for the revelation. God confined to him: "You neglected your own palatial affairs and went out to become involved in Israel's needs, and treated them as brothers. I will therefore forsake my celestial and terrestrial domain, and will converse with you." The midrash concludes that it was because Moses had abandoned his royal activities and had gone out and involved himself in

21. *Mekilta de R.S.*, 2; *Tanhuma Shemot* 15; *MHG* II and *Shemot Rabbah loc. cit.*

22. Manuscript commentary of al-Bihani, q. *Kasher, op. cit.*, Vol. 9, p. 123 note 64; compare Buber, *On The Bible, passim.*

23. Cf. sources in note No. 21.

Israel's sufferings that God eventually called to him from the midst of the thorn-bush.²⁴

Both the man and the message had anticipated and were prepared for the event. The relationship between the right man and the authentic message is reflected in the observation that "as a magnet and a needle are drawn to each other when they are in close proximity, so were Moses and the mountain attracted to each other."²⁵ Anticipation is the child of imagination; one idealistic view has it that Moses did not visually see the bush. Rather, the imaginative powers of the righteous lift them above immediate, earthly reality to the garden of Eden. It was here that Moses saw the vision of the thorn-bush.²⁶ There is a dimension of experience in which Man rises above himself.

THE BUSH AND THE MESSAGE

Actually, discussion of the specific Biblical message itself would be inappropriate here; for it is found in its own place, in the later verse. Still, one can hardly divorce the medium from the message, or at least from the prologue: 'Remove your shoes!' Apparently the presence of God does not appear where one stomps about. And one does not use a holy place for grazing around.²⁷ To some commentators, shoes symbolize a basic human necessity. They contend that if these legitimate needs are forbidden, then less essential selfish desires and machinations are even more incompatible with holiness and commitment.²⁸

Buber's observation is that Moses does not discover a new God. This mystical event is the renewal of a relationship. It is not an alien God; it is the God of the Fathers, who first identifies Himself as the God of Moses' father, and then as the God of the Fathers. Or, as the midrashim earlier observed: "From this episode

24. Compare *Shemot Rabbah* 1:32; on contradictory sources see my *Meqorot Sotrim Betargum Yonatan Ben Uzziel*, Sinai (Jerusalem, Vol. 64, No. 1), and "Contradictory Sources in Targum Jonathan," *Augustinianum*, p. p. 118f).

25. *Zohar* II, 21A, particularly R. Abba's comment on the passion of the mountain. The commentary of Ibn. Shu'aib, *Shemot* 25B is similar.

26. *Yalqut HaMakiri*, *Tehillim* 52:6; *Midrash Esther Rabbah*, Ch. 7.

27. Josephus, *Antiquities*, II, Ch. 12; *Shemot Rabbah* 2:9; Mishnah, *Berakot* 9:8; Talmud Babli, *Berakot* 42A.

28. Cf. note no. 27 and comments of my late teacher Prof. Mordecai Margalioi in his edition of MHG II, 3:2.

we learn that a teacher should teach his student gradually, from level to level. And he should not attempt to immerse him suddenly in depth. Thus, in God's actions, when He commissioned Moses to our forefathers . . . He spoke to him gently, in order not to frighten him' . . ." The midrash continues that God showed Moses the bush, and then the light, and then the glow of the angel, and then the presence of God. And only at this point did He call to him from the bush.²⁹ The religious experience is not a "leap of faith" but rather, a steady climb.

CONCLUSION AND POSTSCRIPT

In surveying the symbolism of the Burning Bush in its evolution through 2,000 years of Jewish history, one thing is clear: the Burning Bush constituted a rich source of inspiration and creativity. In the course of time, some of the imagery no longer elicited the responses for which they were intended; other, new metaphors grew in their place. The fact is that however the Burning Bush was understood, it has a significance deeper than adornment or insignia. It evoked insight, commitment, courage and direction.

Interestingly enough, the essential idea behind the Biblical account and behind the countless midrashic exegeses is the concept "My People", which is repeated both at the beginning and at the conclusion of the Revelation. It is this central motif which adds appropriateness to the Burning Bush as a symbol of Jewish history: the saga of a people which chose God at Sinai, and thus left its foot prints in the sands of the desert and the sands of time.

29. Cf. Buber, *op. cit.*; also see rabbinic sources in Talmud Babli Yoma 4B and Barcelona's comments, q. Kasher, Vol. 9, p. 118, note 33. Interestingly, the Samaritan Bible telescopes the continuum by simply reading "the God of your fathers." For background material, cf. Etan Levine, *Ibn Ezra's Commentary to the Pentateuch*, Jerusalem, 1974 and *idem, The Aramaic Version of Ruth*, Rome 1973.

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A BIBLICAL PROTEST AGAINST THE VIOLATION OF WOMEN

BY M. HERSCHEL LEVINE

In ancient days when armies clashed, the outcome was often tragic for the defeated soldiers, and perhaps even more so for the women non-combatants. Common soldiers and their "aristocratic" officers could violate, enslave or kill "enemy" women with impunity.

The true theme of Homer's Iliad is not the wrath of Achilles but rather his quarrel with Agamemnon over the sexual exploitation of a female captive. Even the Hebrew Bible, despite its numerous sexual taboos, devotes a section of Deuteronomy (Chap. 21) to a discussion of the enforced marriage or sanctioned rejection and discarding of the "beautiful (alien) woman" taken as a prisoner of war.

On the other hand, the book of Judges offers a subtle but stinging rebuke to soldiers who view women as sex objects, who exist solely to gratify men's physical desires.

Although some scholars would deny that the Song of Deborah, aptly termed "The Finest Masterpiece of Hebrew Poetry,"¹ was penned by the protagonist herself² inner evidence seems to demonstrate that the narrator must have been a woman.

The fascinating portrayal of the Israelite victory over the Canaanite begins (Judges Chap. 2) with the refusal of Barak, the Hebrew general, to go into battle unless he is accompanied by Deborah, the charismatic prophetess and leader. It is she who rallies the Hebrew troops and gives the signal to attack.

When the Canaanite troops are routed, and Sisera, their commander, attempts to flee, he is killed by a second woman, Jael. The final section of the Song of Deborah dramatically depicts the frantic climax as Sisera's mother vainly awaits the triumphant return of her son with the spoils of his victory. The central role

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played by these three female characters suggests strongly that the author of this account must have been a member of the same sex.

However, this anonymous writer was not only a consummate literary artist but also a staunch defender of the dignity of women. But since her society was almost completely male dominated, she had to voice her advocacy of women's rights in veiled and obtuse fashion.

It is important to note that when the women of Sisera's court (or members of his harem) try to allay the fears of his mother concerning his long delay in returning from battle, they imply that he was late because he was allocating to his men to booty taken from the defeated Hebrews.

In mocking tones, the author imitates the "macho" crowing of the supposedly triumphant general announcing the distribution of female Hebrew captives to his sexually hungry and aggressive followers: רחם רחמתיים לראש גבר . Literally "A womb or two to each male head."³ Despite the apparently strange juxtaposition of womb and head, this rendition, as we shall demonstrate, is superior to that of the revised standard version: "A maiden or two for each man."

Although most scholars date the composition of Deborah's Song between 1150 and 1100 B.C.E., the author employs a Montage technique, similar to one used in the modern cinema, to present a series of tableaux or episodes revolving around a central theme. Hence, the portrayal of Sisera's death is closely connected with the simultaneous scene occurring at Sisera's court. This is done to add deeper dramatic irony to the defeat of the Canaanites.

But, at the same time, the author(ess) had another purpose in mind. She deliberately placed the two actions together to indicate her extreme disdain of male chauvinism.

Not only is Sisera killed by a woman but he dies in an extremely humiliating

1. Robert H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941) p. 326.
2. *Ibid.* p. 325.
3. Studien in *Das Buch der Richter* (1835) p. 170. (Quoted in Yehezqel Kaufmann. *The Book of Judges* (Hebrew) (Jerusalem: Kiryath Sefer, 1962) p. 146 N. 50) notes that *Raham* or the female sex organ was a vulgar term for a woman similar to the use of *Cunus* by Horace in his *Satires* (I, 3, 107).

way. As his head is crushed by Jael's mallet, he falls בין רגליה (Judges 6:27),⁴ literally "between her feet," or with his head near her womb. This is the poetic justice meted out by our caustic author(ess) to the general or any other male who would dare to degrade women captives or otherwise by offering them as sexual prizes to his companions: "A womb or two to each male head."

Note: This article also appeared in Beth Mikra (פ) חש"ם כסלו, חשרי-

4. Louis Ginzberg in his *Legends of the Jews* (Hebrew) (Ramat Gan: Massada Press, 1975) Vol. V, p. 137 N. 85, observed that the Talmud was aware of the sexual overtones of this biblical passage. One Talmudic sage maintained that Jael had relations with Sisera several times. As only in this manner, Ginzberg maintains, could she weaken Sisera sufficiently to enable her to kill him with impunity. Ginzberg, however, fails to point out that another sage, in a far more likely view, maintains vehemently that the Lord himself testified that Sisera never even touched her. As a sign of her innocence, He gave her His divine name Ja-El (both names of God). See *Leviticus Rabbah* Section XXIII.



Jael and Sisera

A picture ca. 1430 from The Brunswick Museum

THE DIALECTIC OF FAITH AND DOUBT IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF SOCRATES AND PIETY OF JOB

BY BY ELLIOT R. WOLFSON

Intellectually, we distinguish between faith and doubt: the one who has faith does not doubt. In short, the two terms are taken as logical contraries and thus mutually exclude one another. Analogously, we view darkness and light, fire and ice, heat and cold, good and evil, day and night, as pairs of antithetical realities. We would argue, however, that in concrete experience, i.e., the realm of lived time and lived space, faith and doubt, as well as the other pairs, are organically conjoined. The person who does not doubt, does not believe; the person who does not believe, does not doubt. In the final analysis, faith is the commitment to a truth which entails the possibility of falsehood, and doubt, the judgment of a falsity which entails the possibility of truth. The correlation, although conceptually disjoined, cannot be experientially separated; the meaning of faith includes that of doubt, while the meaning of doubt includes that of faith. Language places faith on one end of the spectrum and doubt on the other; in the sphere of actual experience, however, doubt lies coiled in the heart of faith and faith in the heart of doubt.

In the following essay, we should like to examine this dialectic. The genuine real, as we shall maintain, exceeds the boundaries of logic and overflows the categories of language. Intellectual limits are too narrow to contain the on-rush of life's stream. The faith-doubt dialectic belongs to this stream. The Western, i.e., scientific, bias to circumspect reality in terms of Aristotle's logic of identity—a thing cannot be both A and not A—collapses in the face of immediate experience. It is only abstract reason which divorces the existential marriage of faith and doubt.

As basis to illustrate the dialectic correlation of faith and doubt, we shall

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analyze the centrality of scepticism in the activities of Socrates and in the suffering of Job. For Socrates, to doubt is the first step to know; for Job, to doubt marks the genesis of belief. Rather than accept traditional and conventional ideas, Socrates and Job possess the courage to search and to challenge. Their ability to doubt is anchored in their conviction that truth is possible—in fact, probable. These two heroic figures clearly demonstrate that dialectic of faith and doubt. Let us proceed to explore each case individually.

The ironic nature of Socratic wisdom is well-known: one can be said to have knowledge when one knows that one does not know. It is evident from this that, for Socrates, knowledge is ground in doubt—to be certain of one's ignorance demands the ability to doubt knowledge's claims. We may understand this better if we look at Socrates' life. The philosopher, as Socrates interpreted his mission, has the role of a gadfly, i.e., one who stings others in order to get them to move. In the Platonic dialogues, Socrates is always presented as the one without knowledge who, therefore, tries to figure out what all the rest took for granted. The Socratic curiosity and ignorance, however, ultimately revealed the ignorance of others. Paradoxically, the doubt of Socrates exposed the lack of knowledge on the part of those who claimed to know.

Socrates' task was to question unexamined beliefs, to force people to search their hearts and minds for truth rather than accept the words or opinions of strangers. This philosophic quest was founded on the act of doubting: without doubt, Socrates would have passively received those traditional beliefs which fell short of universal certitude. Thus, on one hand, to doubt what seemed false was Socrates' unique gift, his particular wisdom; on the other, what perpetuated his mission was the underlying conviction that truth was an authentic possibility. In spite of the fact that Socrates, unlike Plato, never reached a level of positive affirmation—as he says in the *Apology*: “. . . yet I was never a teacher to anyone” (32B)—he nonetheless vehemently continued his search. Socrates' struggle for truth and knowledge was only possible because of his courage to doubt. Socrates doubted, not to despair but to rejoice, not to negate but to affirm. The doubt of Socrates is dialectically connected to his faith in the existence of one truth. If we were to remove the faith in an absolute truth, then, Socrates' doubt would have no support to stand on. Notwithstanding the fact that Socrates never taught any positive doctrine, from his unyielding doubt, we are certain that he believed knowledge possible.

Let us proceed to examine the case of Job. In response to Satan's challenge, God tries Job with death, destruction, and disease. Job, in reality, has done nothing wrong; on the contrary, the narrator tells the reader that he "was perfect and upright, and one who feared God and turned away from evil" (1:1). Job thus is confused by the events that occur to him and his family. How could a just and benevolent Deity cause such tragedy to a righteous man? As the narrative continues, Job becomes more and more upset by his situation; gnawing at his inside is the question: How can it be that the good suffer and the bad prosper?

The book of *Job* is born out of the above paradox. Job emotionally wrestles with God for he is convinced of his innocence. For Job, not unlike Socrates, the ability to doubt is rooted in the faith that there is some measure of truth and justice. The wisdom of Socrates is the piety of Job. To comprehend this, we must delve deeper into the story. While Job sits and bemoans his fate, three friends arrive to comfort him—or so they believe! In a series of dialogues, they try to persuade Job of his wrongdoing; their aim is to get Job to repent before the Lord. Their advice is based on two traditional theological axioms: first, God punishes no man for no reason; therefore, if one suffers, one must have done something evil in the eyes of God. Secondly, all that God does must be just; thus, punishments are really blessings and not curses for man. It follows that, even if one cannot understand one's suffering, one ought to be grateful to God. Pain is a mode of grace and not rejection. Notwithstanding the theological soundness of these statements, Job is unmoved: no philosophic-abstract reasoning can erase his existential-concrete feeling that his suffering is ill-founded. Job doubts; however, only because underlying his doubt is the stubborn faith that his God is just. Hence, Job has but a single request throughout: he demands to confront God face to face. He says: "God has delivered me to the ungodly, and turned me over into the hands of the wicked . . . My friends scorn me: but my eyes pour out tears to God. O that a man might plead his cause with God; as the son of man with his fellow!" (16:11, 20, 21).

The doubt of Job is eventually praised by God, whereas the insistent claims of his friends are denounced. Thus, God informs Eliphaz, one of the three friends: "My anger burns against thee, and against thy two friends: for you have not spoken of me the thing that is right, like my servant Job" (42:7). Prima facie, God's assertion is problematic: Did not Job's friends defend the ways of God, while Job challenged them? Upon closer examination, however, the meaning of

God's statement is obvious: The doubting of Job is more religious or spiritual than the philosophy of the others, for the doubt involves the true faith in God. That is to say, Job could not doubt if he did not believe; hence, the intensity of his doubt is parallel to the firmness of his conviction. God approves of Job's behavior; when a man is plagued by confusion and uncertainty, he must doubt his former beliefs—otherwise, faith is worthless. The true value of faith rests in the doubt which lies at the fringe—just as true knowledge is the awareness of one's ignorance. Both Socrates and Job apprehended this: it is mankind's greatest misfortune when people passively accept the opinions of others as the final truth. The process of life must be a struggle—even if 'true wisdom is ignorance' (as in the case of Socrates) and 'genuine faith is doubt' (as in the case of Job).

The Socratic and Biblical view of the place of doubt in human existence are closely related. According to both, faith and doubt are dialectically conjoined: without one, we cannot discover the other. Although logic and language isolate the two, concretely, they com-mingle. For Socrates, if one did not doubt, one could not possibly know. For Job, if one did not doubt, one could not possibly believe. Man's power to disbelieve must be contained within the sphere of faith, i.e., one could not doubt if one did not already believe.

In the last analysis, both Socrates' and Job's doubt was intrinsincally correlated with their faith that truth and knowledge were attainable. More specifically, Socrates doubted the false opinions he encountered; Job the injustice he experienced. Neither doubted for the sake of doubting; on the contrary, scepticism is inseparable from conviction. The doubt is merely an instrument, a tool, a means to achieve certainty. Without Socrates' faith that absolute knowledge was plausible, his ceaseless doubting would have never occurred. Similarly, without Job's faith that God was absolutely just, he would have never dared to question the orthodox theodicies. Just as Socrates' ignorance represented the apex of wisdom, so too, Job's relentless doubt represented the apex of faith.



HEZEKIAH AND JOSIAH—A COMPARISON

BY DAVID GLATT

In memory of Heidi Welcher ל"ו, third place winner of the International Bible Contest 1975, whose life was an inspiration to us all.

Hezekiah and Josiah were two of the greatest Judean kings. Their exemplary personalities enabled them to initiate sweeping changes in the religious life of Judea. One king after another lacked the conviction or courage to uproot the notorious "bamot" from the land, yet Hezekiah and Josiah were capable of doing so. Only Hezekiah and Josiah succeeded in holding a national Paschal sacrifice. The remarkable religious accomplishments of these two kings stand out even more when one considers the fact that they followed after the reigns of some of the most assimilationist-type kings in Judea's history.

A quick reading of the Biblical passages centering on Hezekiah and Josiah could lead the reader to believe that these two leaders and their reformations were quite similar. After all, in both stories, one reads of a righteous king who is determined to wipe out the idolatry from Judea. The king gathers together the people, exhorts them to observe the Law of Moses, and begins "cleaning house." The idolatry is removed, the sanctity of Jerusalem is restored, and the Paschal sacrifice is offered with great enthusiasm.

A closer reading of the texts, however, reveals that Hezekiah's and Josiah's reformations were markedly different from each other. This can be based on the fact that the personalities of Hezekiah and Josiah stand in sharp contrast to one another.

HEZEKIAH—EPITOMY OF TRUST

Hezekiah's outstanding quality was his trust in God. II Kings 18:5 states: "He (Hezekiah) trusted in the Lord God of Yisrael; so that after him there was none like him among all the kings of Yehuda, nor among those that were before him."

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The commentators take the latter part of this verse to refer to Hezekiah's quality of trusting in God. Hezekiah always had a deep seated conviction and belief in the God of Israel despite the wicked ways of his father Ahaz. II Chronicles 29 relates that Hezekiah did not waste any time in translating his beliefs into action, but began his far-reaching reformations in the very first year of his reign.

Although Hezekiah put his trust in God, he was not faultless. The Sages accuse Hezekiah on three accounts (Mishna Pesahim 4:9) in addition to his sin concerning the messengers of Brodach-Baladan. Abarbanel points out: "From these words (of the Sages), we can learn that Hezekiah did have a fault and therefore . . . it is proper that the verse states that Hezekiah trusted God in the crisis with Sennacherib, more than any other king. However, in the spheres of wholesomeness and clinging to God, Josiah was greater than Hezekiah and all the other kings." Feeling confident in his personal religious condition, Hezekiah, in his capacity as king, aimed primarily at a national religious revival. But his reforms left him personally untouched.

JOSIAH—EPITOMY OF T'SHUVA

Josiah's outstanding characteristic was his returning to God. As II Kings 23:25 states: "And like him was there no king before him that *returned* to the Lord with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his might . . . neither after him arose there any like him." II Chronicles 34 relates that when Josiah was just a lad of sixteen, he began seeking the God of David his father. In Josiah's twelfth year as king, he began to purify Judea and Jerusalem. In other words, he came gradually to a complete turnabout. As a "baal t'shuva," Josiah was aiming first and foremost at personal perfection. Perhaps this is why the Bible, in describing Josiah, not only repeats the phrases stated concerning Hezekiah, "And he did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and walked in all the way of David his father," but also adds the phrase, "and turned not aside to the right hand nor to the left." The shock generated by the finding of the Torah scroll shifted Josiah's focus to national reformation, but as we shall see, his "national" reformation was in reality, merely an extension of his *personal* reformation.

HEZEKIAH'S REFORMATION

Hezekiah's reformation is described in detail in II Chronicles 29–31. From the outset, it is evident that Hezekiah made a great effort to get the nation involved in the reformation.

With paternal warmth he addressed the priests and Levites, saying: "My sons, be not now negligent: for the Lord has chosen you to stand before Him, to serve him." Hezekiah's ceremony, rededicating the sanctuary, was very elaborate. He wanted to impress the people with the beauty of the temple service as in "the good old days." Hezekiah himself brought sacrifices and bowed to God while the Levites sang or played their instruments. After the initial ceremony, Hezekiah sent out letters throughout the land urging the people to come to Jerusalem to observe the Passover. His appeal was one of encouragement and comfort: "For the Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and he will not turn away His face from you, if you return to Him." Hezekiah's appeal found its way into the people's hearts to the extent that God Himself put a spirit of unity in the people. As the Sages remarked: "He who comes to cleanse himself of sin is aided by heaven." Hezekiah's Passover was a tremendous success in that it truly had an effect on the people's ways: "Now when all this was finished, all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Yehuda, and broke the images in pieces, and cut down the asherim, and broke down the high places and the altars out of all Yehuda and Binyamin, in Efrayim also and Menashe, until they had destroyed them all." It is interesting to note that all the actions in this verse and throughout the narrative are connoted in the plural form, meaning that all the people participated in uprooting the idolatry. After they purified the land, the people readily brought heave offerings and tithes.

The picture which the text paints of Hezekiah's generation, a picture of sincere change, led Malbim to his interpretation of II Chronicles 32:1: "After these things and these deeds of integrity, Sennacherib, king of Assyria, came and entered Yehuda, and encamped himself against the fortified cities." According to Malbim, "these deeds of integrity" refer to the righteousness of Hezekiah's generation. God caused Sennacherib to come up upon the land of Yehuda only for the purpose of performing a public miracle for this generation for the whole world to see. Other commentators like the Metzudat David take a different approach and say, that "these deeds of integrity" only refer to Hezekiah's conduct.

Sennacherib attacked Yehuda, however, because of the evil ways of Hezekiah's generation. These commentators base their opinion on Isaiah 8:5–8 which describes the coming of the king of Assyria upon Yehuda: "Since this people (presumably the people of Hezekiah's generation) refuses the water of Shiloah that go softly, and rejoices in Rezin and the son of Remalyahu." I find it difficult to apply these verses in Isaiah to Hezekiah's generation for the simple reason that the verses mention Rezin and the son of Remalyahu. Both of these kings had already met their ends by the time Hezekiah ascended to the throne. Legends aside, the Biblical texts portray exemplary behavior on the part of Hezekiah's generation, especially during Sennacherib's siege.

JOSIAH'S REFORMATION

Neither the Book of Kings nor the Book of Chronicles gives a detailed account of Josiah's temple ceremony after the finding of the Torah scroll. The text simply states that Josiah read the Torah scroll and made a covenant before God that the people should follow in His ways. The last two verses of II Chronicles 34 tell us: "And he (Josiah) caused all who were present in Jerusalem and Binyamin to stand to it (the covenant of God) . . . and he made all that were present in Yisrael to serve the Lord their God; and all his days they departed not from following the Lord, the God of their fathers." Yes, the people served God (supposedly), but only because Josiah enforced this mode of behavior. The people did not choose themselves to serve God. The most striking feature of Josiah's reformation is the singular form used throughout the narrative. Josiah did all the burning, uprooting, grinding, and shattering while the people were at most passive bystanders. Jeremiah, in commenting on the generation of Josiah, gives us a very good idea of how involved the people really were in the reformation. Jeremiah 3:10 states: "And yet for all this her treacherous sister Yehuda has not turned to me with her whole heart, but in falsehood, says the Lord." Rashi quotes the Talmud's explanation on the last phrase of this verse, namely, that "the generation of Josiah made themselves look like righteous people, but in fact, they were wicked. They used to carve figures of idolatry on the inside of their doors . . . and when those who were responsible for destroying idolatry checked the house, the door was open and they did not recognize the figures." As Abarbanel points out, it was just for the one Passover of Josiah that the people changed their ways,

“but at once they returned to their sins and were worshippers of idolatry, some secretly and others openly.”

LONG-RANGE EFFECTS OF THE TWO REFORMATIONS

Josiah's reformation, understandably, did not have much of an effect on the people as a whole. The people may have loved him for other reasons, such as his bringing relative peace and quiet to the country, but they were not swept up in Josiah's religious zeal. According to the Talmud (Taanith 22b), Josiah did not even realize that his generation was sinful. Consequently, he thought that his generation was worthy of enjoying all the blessings of the Torah including the promise that “neither shall the sword go through your land” (Leviticus 26:6). Because of this gross miscalculation, Josiah went out to fight Pharaoh-Necho who was on his way to do battle in Charchemish. We see that, in effect, Josiah brought about his own death precisely because he was out of contact with the ways of his people.

The question remains, however, why Hezekiah's reformation did not have a more lasting effect on the people. We know that Hezekiah's son Menashe succeeded in reversing all that his father had done. A possible answer is that after his illness, Hezekiah was never in the same condition that he was before and consequently, he may also have begun to lose contact with the people. We must also bear in mind that Menashe ruled for a very long time and could have carried out his reversal process gradually so as to gain the acceptance of the people.

ANSWERS

Continued from p. 213

2. c. Karaites and others interpreted the word “Shabbat” in v. 15 literally but the Rabbis said that it referred to the festival day of rest, meaning the first day of Pesah. They pointed out that v. 16 also uses “Shabbat” to mean the festival day. (See: Talmud Menahot 65b).
3. 24:2 opens the “Eternal Light” program of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.
4. The Rabbis used reason to prove that this phrase did not mean literal blinding. First of all, blinding the perpetrator would not be equal justice since the eye of one might be much more valuable than another's eye. The example they give is of a man already blind in one eye. Secondly, to carry out such punishment might result in death. They also noted that the Torah specifically prohibits compensation only in the case of murder (Numbers 35:31).

THE PROPHETS – NATIONALISTS OR UNIVERSALISTS

BY JACOB CHINITZ

In this article we wish to examine three well-worn quotations that are trotted out by many to illustrate Biblical thinking in the areas of brotherhood, race relations and religious tolerance. Taken out of context, the words of these verses actually do sound as if they support these worthy ideals. But when examined in the setting of the original chapters from which they were taken, it is evident that the Biblical text means something different.

MALACHI

The first of these quotations is from Malachi 2:10. "Do we not all have one father; hath not one God created us? Why do we deal treacherously with each other, to desecrate the covenant of our fathers?" On the surface, this would seem to be, and is often taken, as the most perfect formulation of the doctrine of brotherhood among men, the desirability of breaking down barriers, and the rejection of any kind of separatism. Is this what the prophet really meant? The prophet is represented by some as being internationalist. In reality, he was also deeply nationalistic.

What is the background of Malachi and his preaching? Most authorities agree that he is to be placed somewhere between the return from Babylon and the time of Ezra and Nehemiah. His general themes are: rebuild the Temple with more enthusiasm; bring more sacrifices; renew and be faithful to the covenant between God and Israel; *stop the wave of divorce and intermarriage which are violations of this covenant.*

This interpretation of Malachi is borne out, not only by an examination of the history of the period, but also by looking at the surrounding context from which our quotation is taken. We offer the following chapters and verses as support for our contention that far from being exclusively an internationalist and integrationist, Malachi was also *nationalist and a separatist.*

After a distinguished career in the Rabbinate in the United States, Rabbi Jacob Chinitz recently settled in Israel. He has been a frequent contributor to the Anglo-Jewish Press in the States and in Israel.

Was not Esau Jacob's brother, saith the Lord. Yet I loved Jacob, but Esau I hated. 1:2-3

That My covenant might be with Levi. 2:4

Have we not all one father, hath not one God created us?

Why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother,

Profaning the covenant of our fathers? 2:10

Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and Jerusalem;

For Judah hath profaned the holiness of the Lord which He loveth, and hath married the daughter of a strange god. 2:11

And he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver.

3:3

And all nations shall call you happy, for ye shall be a delightsome land.

3:12

And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts,

In the day that I do make, even Mine own treasure,

And I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son.

3:17

AMOS

The second of the quotations we wish to examine is from Amos 9:7. "Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto Me, O children of Israel, saith the Lord." On the surface this would seem to be a perfect rejection of racism. Is this what the prophet had in mind?

Just as we can find legitimate quotations for the ideal of brotherhood, other than the one from Malachi, so can we find proper quotations for the ideal of racial tolerance, other than the one from Amos. But this particular verse does not necessarily have this particular meaning. It is more likely that the truth lies with the interpretation of the Bible scholar Ehrlich who maintains that Amos is using the simile of the Ethiopians, not as an indication of universalism, but as an exemplar of permanence.

It is true that Amos is perhaps the most universal of all the prophets. He begins his prophecies by calls to nations other than Israel: Damascus, Gaza, Tyre, Ammon, Moab. Nations other than Israel had been even redeemed, as Israel had

been redeemed from Egypt. "Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt, and the Philistines from Caphtor and Aram from Kir" (Amos :7). Therefore, Israel had no reason to believe that their covenant with God was exclusive or permanent.

Nevertheless, again an examination of the surrounding texts will demonstrate that Amos, even Amos was nationalistic, and ethnocentric.

*Yet destroyed I the Amorite before them,
Also I brought you up out of the land of Egypt,
And led you forty years in the wilderness, to possess
and land of the Amorites.* 2:9,10

*You only have I known of all the families of the earth;
therefore I will visit upon you all your iniquities.* 3:2

I will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob. 9:8

*I will sift the house of Israel among all the nations,
yet shall not the least grain fall upon the earth.* 9:9

*In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that
is fallen, and I will build it as in the days of old . . .* 9:11

*And I will turn the captivity of My people Israel,
And they shall plant vineyards and drink the wine thereof,
And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no
more be plucked up out of their land which I have given
them, saith the Lord thy God.* 9:12-15

MICAH

The third of the quotations we wish to examine is from Micah 4:5. "For let all the peoples walk each one in the name of its god, but we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever." Here is the perfect formula for ecumenism! Let us see if that is what Micah had in mind.

This verse follows immediately upon the grand vision of the end of the days. "The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and peoples shall flow unto it. And

many nations shall go and say: Come yet, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob. And He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem” (Micah 4:1-2).

How can we reconcile this union of faiths with the separatism implied in verse 5? Ecumenism, we have been taught, means separate faiths living in harmony. Micah foresees the merging of religions, or, if you will, the conversion of all nations to the religion of Zion. Do we not have to say that verse 5 speaks of the present, or some era prior to the end of days?

In any event, whether it be in the present, or in the Messianic days, it is not mutual respect between religions that Micah is preaching or predicting here. In the present, he is advising Israel to hold on to his own particular faith, though others worship other gods. The Hebrew word *Ki* – “because” or “even though” – at the beginning of verse 5 forces us to accept this interpretation; whereas for the future, Micah foresees all the nations worshipping the God of Israel.

Certainly the following (chapter 5:6-8) is not in the spirit of ecumenism: “And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many peoples, as dew . . . that are not looked for from man . . . as a lion among the beasts of the forest, as a young lion among the flocks of sheep, who, if he go through, treadeth down and teareth in pieces, and there is none to deliver. Let thy hand be lifted up above thine adversaries, and let all thine enemies be cut off.”

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TORAH DIALOGUES

BY HAROLD D. HALPERN

LEVITICUS

This series of questions and responses on the weekly Sidra is designed to encourage closer study of the text and to promote discussion. The dialogues are especially appropriate for the Shabbat table between parents and children or in the synagogue between rabbi and congregation.

The responses are necessarily brief and should be regarded merely as starting points for fuller discussion. We recommend that these dialogues be kept for future reference.

QUESTIONS

METZORA

1. *When the leper recovered, he was to bring a special offering. What articles were presented? Which other Torah ritual included the same objects?*
2. *We've emphasized the idea that "leprosy" is retribution for a sin. When the house is afflicted, the rabbis suggested that this is due to the presence of ill-gotten sins within it. Which verse subtly points to this possibility?*
3. *Which verse speaks of procedures similar to the process of kashering utensils today?*
4. *Usually an aliyah section (portion read for one called to Torah) ends on a positive note. What is peculiar about the endings of the aliyot in this sidrah?*

AḤARAY MOT

1. *On which two occasions besides the weekly Torah-reading cycle do we read selections from this Sidrah?*
2. *Which rule of the Shoḥet (ritual slaughterer) is found in this Sidrah?*
3. *What important general principle of Jewish law does the Talmud derive from 18:5?*
4. *Which two of the prohibited marriages listed in Chapter 18 are affected by death?*

These "Torah Dialogues" grew out of discussions between Rabbi Harold Halpern and his congregants in Beth Tikvah Synagogue in New Milford, New Jersey.

ANSWERS

METZORA

1. Besides the two birds, he brought cedar wood, scarlet fabric and hyssop twigs. The identical materials were associated with the red heifer ceremony in Numbers 19:6. Rashi explains that leprosy is sometimes punishment for excessive pride. The lofty cedar would symbolize his sin while the scarlet dye, deriving from a worm and the lowly hyssop, were symbolic of humility.
2. 14:36. The home is emptied of the stolen property (Based on Talmud Arachin 16a.).
3. 15:12 states that if the impure person touched (the interior of) earthenware it must be broken but wooden vessels may be cleansed with water. Rules of kashering such objects generally parallel these instructions.
4. Four of the seven aliyot conclude with the word "pure" or "clean." The last aliyah ends with a summary verse so that there was no alternative but to end with "unclean."

AḤARAY MOT

1. Yom Kippur morning (16:1-34) and afternoon (18:1-30).
2. That the blood of a slaughtered fowl or animal must be covered (17:13).
3. The principle that "pikuah nefesh," danger to life, takes precedence over a prohibitory mitzvah. The Talmud (San. 74a) lists three exceptions to this rule: pagan worship, illicit sex and murder.
4. Marriage to two sisters is only prohibited while both are alive. Only in Verse 18 are the words, "in her lifetime" added. The other case is in Verse 16 where the death of a childless brother causes the levirate law (Deut. 25:5) to come into effect.

From Breshit Rabba (chap. 48)

Rabbi Tanhuma quoted Rabbi Elazar and Rabbi Abin who in turn quoted Rabbi Meir as follows: There is a popular proverb which says "When you visit a city, follow its customs". In heaven where there is no food or drink Moses went up (the mountain of God) and did not eat, as it is written: *And I dwelt on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water.*
(Deuteronomy 9:9).

On earth where there is food and drink the angels ate, as it is written: *And he (Abraham) stood by them (the angels) under the tree, and they ate.*

(Genesis 18:8).

QUESTIONS

KEDOSHIM

1. *How does 19:3 differ from the 5th commandment of the Decalogue (Ex. 20:12)? How would you interpret the differences?*
2. *The oft-repeated golden rule, "Love your neighbor as yourself," is found in verse 18. Why did Hillel interpret this phrase in the negative: "What is hateful to you do not do to another?"*
3. *Which phrase in Chap. 19 is appropriate to post in busses and trains?*
4. *It is often difficult to justify the juxtaposition of some rules in Chap. 19. Sometimes, however, a teaching is expanded and reinforced by the phrase that follows it. How would you apply this to the two parts of v. 16?*
5. *In Jewish law only the guilty party is liable for his wrongdoing (cf. Deut. 24:16), not his family. How then would you explain 20:5?*

EMOR

1. *The chapter opens with restrictions against a Kohen (priest) defiling himself by contact with a dead body. Exceptions are allowed in the cases of seven close relatives. For the Kohen Gadol (high priest) contact even with the remains of his parents are prohibited. Under which circumstance is the Kohen permitted to defile himself?*
2.
 - a. *Which festival is not designated by a specific date?*
 - b. *Why isn't it?*
 - c. *Why did some sectarians insist upon celebrating it on a different day than the Rabbis ordained?*
3. *Which verse in this sidrah introduces a television series shown in the United States?*
4. *How could the Rabbis interpret "an eye for an eye" (24:20) to mean monetary compensation?*

ANSWERS

KEDOSHIM

1. In the 10 commandments the term “honor” (כבוד) is used while here it states “revere” (חיראו). Also, mother and father are in reverse order in the Decalogue. The Talmud (Ked. 31a) explains that there is a tendency to *revere* a father more than a mother so the Torah places the mother first here to emphasize reverence for her. Some sages felt that the reversing of mother and father in the two commandments simply taught the obligation to treat them equally (Ker. 28a).
1. Also, here the Sabbath commandment follows reverence for parents.
2. Some sages and commentators point out that the positive fulfilment of this mitzvah, if interpreted literally, is virtually impossible. Hillel’s interpretation brings it into the realm of reality. Also, the golden rule appears to be a summation of all the laws beginning with verse 9 and they are all stated in the negative form.
3. “Rise before the aged . . .” (v. 32).
4. Usually, the second phrase is interpreted to mean that you must save the life of an endangered person, but the entire verse can also be explained to mean that tale bearing can lead to bloodshed. The second admonition may also be related to the first directly: If you hear gossip about your neighbors, don’t stand idly by.
5. Perhaps the family is expected to correct the actions of the individual in its midst. The problem posed by this verse is discussed in the Talmud (Shevuot 39a). There R. Simon expresses the belief that often an entire family cooperates in unethical behavior or protects the guilty one. The sages note, however, that only “he and all who *follow* him shall be cut off . . .”

EMOR

1. In the case of a “met mitzvah” — מת מצוה — a body to which no one else is attending, even the Kohen Gadol may see to its burial.
2. a. Shavuot, the Festival of Weeks (23:15–16).
b. Perhaps it was viewed solely as a complement to Pesah. The Torah doesn’t even give it a distinctive name here. In later times it is referred to simply as Atzeret (assembly or conclusion).

Continued on p. 205

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE BIBLE READER'S UNION A NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

You already know, and we trust you have been following the new Bible Readings since Simhat Torah, which has also been adopted by Israel Radio, Kol Yisrael. As a result, the identical Bible chapter will be read and studied throughout the Jewish world, fulfilling the words of the Prophet Isaiah which appear on the front cover of the new Calendar: **כי מציון תצא תורה ודבר ה' מירושלים** For from Zion will Torah go forth, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

The New Triennial Bible Reading Calendar covers the years 1979–1982, and marks the 40th anniversary of the founding of the Bible Readers' Union on July 21st 1939, and the beginning of the 18th cycle of daily Bible Readings for English-speaking Jews throughout the world.

There are still some of you who will remember that the Bible Readers' Union was originally started in London in memory of the late Dr. A.M. Silbermann, who died in that year and had often suggested to me the founding of such a society. It was Ivan Greenberg, then Editor of the Jewish Chronicle, who enthusiastically took up the idea, and it was he and I.W. Goldberg who helped to start it. Sir Robert Waley Cohen was also very interested, and it was at his suggestion that Rabbi Dr. Isidore Epstein became the first President. On his death, in April 1962, Rabbi Dr. Sir Israel Brodie, then Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth, readily accepted the Presidency. He died in February 1979, and now his nephew, the Hon. Greville Janner, Q.C., M.P., President of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, has become the new President of the Bible Readers' Union. In his letter of acceptance, he writes:

“I am happy to be associated with a venture designed to make Jews more aware of our great spiritual, cultural and literary heritage”.

In our Message last year we paid tribute to Mr. Ben Rose, who had been our Treasurer for ten years, from 1969 to 1979. We are now happy to record that Tuvya Shahar, B.A., Education Officer of the London Board of Jewish Religious Education, has accepted the post of Treasurer in his place, and we trust that members will support him by renewing their subscriptions and introducing new members as we go towards our fiftieth anniversary towards the end of the present decade.

We cannot let the occasion pass without resording the loss we have suffered in the death in Israel of Jacob Sarna, one of the oldest members of the Bible Readers' Union, a veteran Zionist who showed his love for the country in the countless letters he wrote to the Jewish Chronicle and to all, no matter how great and important they were, who had a word to say against the Land of Israel. He died on the 17th of Heshvan 5739 (Nov. 17, 1978) in his 87th year, and is buried on the slopes of Mount Carmel, not far from where the Prophet Elijah challenged and defeated the prophets of Baal. His extensive Library, which was his pride, is in the Jabotinsky Institute at 38 King George St., Tel-Aviv, in his own book-cases, which adorned his flat in Haifa.

We conclude with greetings from Israel, and best wishes for peace, health, happiness, and prosperity in the year 5741.

Joseph Halpern
(Chairman)

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TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

May 1980	סיק חש"ם	June 1980	חמה חש"ם
F 16 במדבר	א	S 15 Isaiah 13	א
Sa 17 Haftarah: Hosea 2:1-22	ב	M 16 Isaiah 14	ב
S 18 II Kings 22	ג	T 17 isaiah 15	ג
M 19 Ruth	ד	W 18 Isaiah 16	ד
T 20 ערב שבועות	ה	Th 19 Isaiah 17	ה
W 21 Ruth	ו שבועות	F 20 חוקק	ו
Th 22 Ruth	ז שבועות	Sa 21 Haftarah: Judges 11:1-33	ז
F 23 נשא	ח	S 22 Isaiah 18	ח
Sa 24 Haftarah: Judges 13:2-25	ט	M 23 Isaiah 19	ט
S 25 II Kings 23	י	T 24 Isaiah 20	י
M 26 II Kings 24	יא	W 25 Isaiah 21	יא
T 27 II Kings 25	יב	Th 26 Isaiah 22	יב
W 28 Isaiah 1	יג	F 27 בלק	יג
Th 29 Isaiah 2	יד	Sa 28 Haftarah: Micah 5:6-6:8	יד
F 30 בהעלותך	טו	S 29 Isaiah 23	טו
Sa 31 Haftarah:	טז	M 30 Isaiah 24	טז
	Zechariah 2:14-4:7		
June			
S 1 Isaiah 3	יז	July	
M 2 Isaiah 4	יח	T 1 Isaiah 25	יז צום י"ז חמוז
T 3 Isaiah 5	יט	W 2 Isaiah 26	יח
W 4 Isaiah 6	כ	Th 3 Isaiah 27	יט
Th 5 Isaiah 7	כא	F 4 פנחס	כ
F 6 שלח	כב	Sa 5 Haftarah:	כא
Sa 7 Haftarah: Joshua 2:1-24	כג	I Kings 18:46-19:21	
S 8 Isaiah 8	כד	S 6 Isaiah 28	כב
M 9 Isaiah 9	כה	M 7 Isaiah 29	כג
T 10 Isaiah 10	כו	T 8 Isaiah 30	כד
W 11 Isaiah 11	כז	W 9 Isaiah 31	כה
Th 12 Isaiah 12	כח	Th 10 Isaiah 32	כו
F 13 קרח	כט	F 11 מטות ומסעי	כז
Sa 14 Haftarah:	ל	Sa 12 Haftarah: Jeremiah 1-2:3	כח
Isaiah 66		S 13 Isaiah 33	כט

TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

July 1980	מנחם אב תש"ם	August 1980	אלול תש"ם
M 14 Isaiah 34	א	W 13 Isaiah 53	א
T 15 Isaiah 35	ב	Th 14 Isaiah 54	ב
W 16 Isaiah 36	ג	F 15 שופטים	ג
Th 17 Isaiah 37	ד	Sa 16 Haftarah:	ד
F 18 דברים	ה	Isaiah 51:12-52:12	
Sa 19 Haftarah: Isaiah 1:1-27	ו	S 17 Isaiah 55	ה
S 20 Lamentations	ז	M 18 Isaiah 56	ו
M 21 Lamentations	ח	T 19 Isaiah 57	ז
T 22 Lamentations	ט צום ט' באב	W 20 Isaiah 58	ח
W 23 Isaiah 38	י	Th 21 Isaiah 59	ט
Th 24 Isaiah 39	יא	F 22 כי חצא	י
F 25 ואחחנן	יב	Sa 23 Haftarah: Isaiah 54:1-10	יא
Sa 26 Haftarah: Isaiah 40:1-26	יג	S 24 Isaiah 60	יב
S 27 Isaiah 40	יד	M 25 Isaiah 61	יג
M 28 Isaiah 41	טו	T 26 Isaiah 62	יד
T 29 Isaiah 42	טז	W 27 Isaiah 63	טו
W 30 Isaiah 43	יז	Th 28 Isaiah 64	טז
Th 31 Isaiah 44	יח	F 29 כי חכא	יז
August		Sa 30 Haftarah: Isaiah 60	יח
F 1 עקב	יט	S 31 Isaiah 65	יט
Sa 2 Haftarah:	כ	September	
Isaiah 49:14-51:3		M 1 Isaiah 66	כ
S 3 Isaiah 45	כא	T 2 Jeremiah 1	כא
M 4 Isaiah 46	כב	W 3 Jeremiah 2	כב
T 5 Isaiah 47	כג	Th 4 Jeremiah 3	כג
W 6 Isaiah 48	כד	F 5 נצבים וילך	כד
Th 7 Isaiah 49	כה	Sa 6 Haftarah:	כה
F 8 ראה	כו	Isaiah 61:10-63:9	
Sa 9 Haftarah:	כז	S 7 Jeremiah 4	כו
Isaiah 54:11-53:5		M 8 Jeremiah 5	כז
S 10 Isaiah 50	כח	T 9 Jeremiah 6	כח
M 11 Isaiah 51	כט	W 10	כט ערב ראש השנה
T 12 Isaiah 52	ל		

דף יומי

We add here the daily Talmud page followed by the Jewish Community

א' בסיף: ממשיכים בבא בתרא — דף קנ"ה

כ"ג בסיף: מתחילים סנהדרין

דור לדור

DOR le-DOR

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