

THE WORLD JEWISH BIBLE SOCIETY

דור לדור

# DOR<sup>LE</sup>DOR

EDITORIAL

LOUIS KATZOFF

TRAGEDY IN THE BIBLE

SARAH HALPERIN

SOLOMON'S HUMILIATION

SOL LIFTZEN

ELIJAH

SHIMON BAKON

MOSES, MAN OF INDECISION

STUART A. WEST

TORAH DIALOGUES

HAROLD D. HALPERN

INTRODUCTION TO A NEW KOHELET COMMENTARY

ELCHANAN BLUMENTHAL

SEVENTEENTH WORLD YOUTH BIBLE CONTEST

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דפוס רפאל חיים תכהן בע"מ, ירושלים

## EDITORIAL

### אמור ואמרת להזהיר גדולים על הקטנים

#### *Rashi on Parshat Emor*

With the Sidra Emor — 17 Iyar — the second year of the weekly Saturday night Bible Group was inaugurated at Prime Minister Menachem Begin's residence. A full year of weekly Bible sessions was completed, with practically no interruptions, always in the presence of the Prime Minister, and with the participation of forty selected guests. Scholars discussed aspects of the weekly Sidra in a varied and interesting combination of interdisciplinary orientations.

The group heard learned expositions of the text, involving commentaries, exegeses and midrashic interpretations. A special touch was added by the valuable contributions of experts in the fields of physical and social sciences. When the Parasha of Bereshith was discussed, scientific theories of the coming into being of our universe were presented by a renowned physicist. When the early Sidrot of Exodus were studied, Egyptologists gave us insights into the life and society of ancient Egypt. As we came to the episode of the Golden Calf, an engineer explained how the calf must have been cast through the "lost wax process."\* When the laws of leprosy were taken up in the Book of Leviticus, medical experts were brought in to dis-

cuss the possible skin diseases of the Biblical period. The wealth of learning stemming from experts in the areas of the flora of Israel, the geography of the land and of the history of ancient related cultures, was often the high point of the session.

The phenomenon of an organized Bible study group at the home of the head of the Government of Israel is not new. The first such institution was begun a quarter of a century ago by the then Prime Minister David Ben Gurion under the auspices of the World Jewish Bible Society (Professor Haim Gevaryahu, Director). Subsequently, Presidents Yitzchak Ben Zvi, Zalman Shazar and Ephraim Katzir respectively hosted these scholarly sessions. The novelty of the present group is the practice of meeting weekly instead of monthly, of dealing with the Sidra of the Week (Pentateuch) instead of the other books of the Tenakh, and the inclusion of the ancillary experts from other disciplines to enrich our background material.

One is prompted to ask: In how many countries can one find heads of state engaged in the study of Scriptures? And when one realizes the burdens of statehood on the shoulders of Prime Minister Begin, our admiration for the man grows as he is observed spending two hours in the company of outstanding scholars absorbing Torah and often asking a pointed question, and at times con-

\* See the article of Eli Minoff "The Golden Calf in Exodus 32" in *Dor le-Dor*, Vol. VIII, No. 4, Summer 1980, p. 181.

tributing a wise answer to a Biblical question raised by others. In fact, as the Prime Minister himself has stated, these two hours have been the most relaxing pastime for him as his absorption in the perennial Judaic problems arising from the Biblical text free him, at least momentarily, from the tensions of daily statecraft.

The Sidra Emor has a special significance at the beginning of the second year of the Bible group. Rashi, in his opening comment to the Sidra, poses the question: Why the repetition of the root word אמור: "And the Lord said unto Moses: Speak (Say – אמור) unto the Kohanim, the sons of Aaron, and say (ואמרת) unto them" (Lev. 21:1). Rashi brings the answer of the Talmud (Yevamot 114a): אמור ואמרת להזהיר ידולים על הקטנים. The repetition of the admonition – אמר ואמרת – refers to the obligation of the

adults to instruct the young about the laws of purity, enumerated in this chapter of Scriptures. In our present context, I would take the liberty of paraphrasing the answer of Rashi: If the great pursue the study of Bible, how desirable it is for us ordinary men and women to learn from their example to set aside appointed periods for the pursuit of Torah! The call comes forth, as it were, from the Prime Minister's residence: Organize your Bible groups, here and everywhere, and thus become one with us in Israel who have made Bible study an important focus of our lives.

And to Prime Minister Begin: May you be granted many years of healthy participation and leadership in showing us all the way toward a new dimension of life and society.

Louis Katzoff, Editor

#### PRIME MINISTER BEGIN ON DEMOCRACY

Prime Minister Begin: *I would like to tell you how I interpret democracy. When I went to Washington to sign the peace treaty with Egypt, I invited my predecessor the former Prime Minister, Mr. Yitshak Rabin, and the leader of the opposition, Mr. Shimon Peres, to come along with me. We all met at the Senate Building where I said to the Senators of the United States: "We have the proof of how beautiful Israel's democracy is. We have here three Prime Ministers, one that is, one that was and one that wanted to be. That is democracy." The Senators liked it.*

# TRAGEDY IN THE BIBLE

BY SARAH HALPERIN

The Bible sets a way of life before us. It consists of precepts and commandments which every man has to fulfill, and also of warnings and sanctions for those who try to transgress them. This set of divine rules constitutes the concept of retribution, which is based on the presupposition that man is responsible for his actions. Responsibility means moral obligation, liability, the state of being answerable for one's deeds. This state is possible only if man has free will<sup>1</sup> and can act because of free choice. Free choice therefore is the root and core of the concept of responsibility. No one is responsible for an act that he is compelled to perpetrate by physical law or divine pre-destination.<sup>2</sup> Nobody is morally answerable for a deed that he unwillingly commits due to irresistible compulsion. It follows, therefore, that compulsion excludes responsibility, and without responsibility man is not liable to retribution.

Now, as the Bible presents basically the doctrine of retribution and reward, it presupposes the notion of man's responsibility for the deeds he chooses to do. This is why the notion of repentance is so fundamental in biblical lore. Repentance<sup>3</sup> presupposes human volition. It affirms human capability to make voluntary decisions and to some extent change things, subjectively and objectively. Subjectively, man is capable to undo his misdeeds and to choose a new path. He can decide to exercise his own will and strengthen it against temptations and

1. Although human will is limited to a certain extent by circumstances and other forces, yet it exists and operates and has its respective effect when one makes his decisions and chooses between alternate ways.

2. Many instances in the Bible which seem as predestination are really not so. For instance, those who view Absalom's actions against his father as pre-ordained for him by the prophet's curse to David (II Samuel 12:11), do not realize that Absalom *chose* his way *by his own will*.

3. See, for instance, Deuteronomy 30:8-10; Ezekiel 18:23; 32; also 33:11.

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weaknesses. Objectively, such a decision realized in actual conduct might direct the course of events of his life and consequentially affect his lot.

This is in effect the meaning of God's admonition to Cain, when He said to him:

*If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.*

Genesis 4:9

*And thou shalt rule over him* is an imperative. It is an order put to man to control his inclination to sin and to restrain it. This order is based on the assumption that man is capable of overcoming temptations and of choosing his own way. That is why God had earlier prohibited man from eating from the Tree of Life and Tree of Knowledge. The very act of order and prohibition implies the assertion of free choice to obey or to disobey. This ability to choose between alternate ways is manifestly declared and stressed in many verses of the Tanakh, as for instance:

*I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both you and your seed live.*

Deuteronomy 30:19

Here we have a basically optimistic though most demanding view of life, It demands moral and pious conduct from man and gives him the chance of a new lease on life. It directs him to the path of belief and promises him salvation.

#### THE SUFFERING HERO

Yet this is only one essential facet of the Bible. Tanakh, as a comprehensive vision, is not as simple as that. It is far more complicated, and the reason for this complexity is that the Bible is not only a normative code of rules or regulations but also a historical record. It records factual accounts about reality and describes the applicability of the normative code to actual life. Throughout the Tanakh, narratives are recounted about the realization and the violation of the divine code by the human race. These narratives represent man in his full human quality, that is to say, in his many-sided characteristics and various states. For instance, urged by his aspirations on one hand and inhibited by his limitations on

the other, he rises to the heights of his successful achievements and he falls into the abyss of his despairing failures. Man's actions are illuminated in the Tanakh by understanding his nature and character. He is presented with deep insight into the motives and motivations<sup>4</sup> of his struggle with himself<sup>5</sup> and with his environment, and from it he emerges as a great suffering hero who wins our appreciation and sympathy. Thus we regard him not only from the pure theological point of view but also from the human angle.

The human approach, with all its depth and intensity, is limited, It is incapable of assessing the ulterior worth of each act committed by men. This is why many times it seems to us that people are too severely punished, that they suffer too much for their mistakes and misdeeds, or in Aristotle's words—that they undergo “undeserved misfortunes” (Poetics 13.53 a 5).

#### THE CASE OF THE REBELLIOUS SON

In contradistinction to the limited human view, the theological point of view is much more comprehensive, inclusive and far-reaching. For instance, we have in the Pentateuch the law of בן סורר ומורה—a son who is stubbornly disobedient and rebellious and also a glutton and a drunkard. This law states that such a son is liable to death. Among the Jewish sages there were many queries about this law. How could God demand such a harsh punishment, the death penalty for just being rebellious and a drunkard? The answer that they provide for this question is given in the following Hebrew words: בן סורר ומורה נדון על שום סופו that is to say, a stubborn and rebellious son is judged according to his prospective misdeeds, or more accurately, according to his anticipated end. This anticipated end is based on his present behaviour which clearly shows that he is going to grow up as an unrestrained culprit, most wicked and dangerous to society. Rashi, the famous popular commentator of the Tanakh and other Jewish writings, summarizes this problem in his typical exegetical statement:

*An obstinate and rebellious son is killed because of the final deeds he is anticipated to commit. The Torah penetrated his mind and foresaw that he*

4. I distinguish between ‘motives,’ as strong driving feelings (like jealousy, love, hatred etc.) and ‘motivation’ as the psychological attitude to these feelings (like the tendency to hide them, or contrariwise to expose them, or to feign other ones in order to achieve a certain effect).

5. Saul, for instance, struggled with himself concerning David. He loved David and hated him, he was charmed by his personality and dreaded his success.

*would end up wasting all his father's money because of his habitual gluttony and drinking, and by the time all his money was spent, he would turn to robbery and become a threat to society. So the Torah said, Let him die before he reaches this low state, while he is still innocent and not guilty.*

Rashi to Deuteronomy 21:18

Here we see that, according to the far-reaching theological foresight, a rebellious-gluttonous-drinking son deserves the infliction of death penalty. But according to the human concepts current in the human society such a son does not deserve death unless he has actually committed all these prospective sins. Human understanding judges people according to their present and past deeds. It cannot convincingly consider their future actions for condemning them to death. Such a sentence, if passed, would seem too severe, too great a punishment for the actual wrongdoings of the accused. This is the reason, I believe, for the remarkable fact that the law of the "obstinate and rebellious son" was never once carried out, as our Rabbis tell us.<sup>6</sup> The infliction of the death penalty, according to this law, was surrounded by so many regulations that it could not be carried out even once.

#### RETRIBUTION—THE THEOLOGICAL AND THE HUMAN POINTS OF VIEW

These two points of view—the theological and the human—typify also the approaches to Absalom's uprising against David his father and king. According to the theological point of view Absalom symbolizes the case of *בן סורר ומורה*, the stubborn and rebellious son in the biblical world, as we learn from the following:

*If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son—this we found with king David's offspring . . . Absalom, who wanted to overthrow his father, lay with his concubines in the sight of all the people of Israel, and caused tens of thousands of men to be killed, He caused much strife in Israel.<sup>7</sup>*

This is the understanding of the theological point of view of Absalom's revolt. But according to the human understanding<sup>8</sup> Absalom is differently viewed. He is regarded as a suffering hero who undergoes undeserved misfortune. As an am-

6. The Pentateuch & Haftorahs, ed. J.H. Hertz, London, Soncino, 1961, p. 842.

7. Abarbanel's Exegesis to the early Prophets, Jerusalem, Torah V'daat Publication, 1965, pp. 366–367.

8. As I showed in my paper "The Tragic Aspects of Absalom's Uprising," The Yearly Book of Bar-Ilan University, No. 18 (still in press).

bitious prince, whose rights had been deprived by his father, he was misled by his own judgement about what he ought to do in order to defend his rights. Thus he committed erroneous deeds, the consequences of which he bore most fatally.

It is interesting to state that this approach is also ingrained and expressed in the Tanakh itself. David's deep-hearted grievance for Absalom's death and his bitter reluctance to stop his mourning for him, reflects his feeling that Absalom was unduly punished. His outcry when he learned about Absalom's death

*Oh my son Absalom, my son my son Absalom!  
Would I had died for thee, O Absalom, my son my son!  
. . . O my son Absalom, O Absalom, my son, my son!"<sup>9</sup>*

II Samuel 19:1

show that though David was a king and a judge, nevertheless as a father and a human being he did not regard Absalom's death as a justified penalty. Too severe, excessive and cruel was the punishment inflicted upon his son. David knew he deserved a certain punishment, but the difference between what he deserved and what he got was too shocking and tragic for him. Thus he considered Absalom's life and death not as crime and punishment but as *tragedy*, as that apparent unbalanced predicament where man does not get the exact lot he deserves. Thus we see that the interplay between human and divine standards of justice is latent in the Bible. On one hand, we have human expectation for exact retribution; on the other, we see actual retribution which is far in excess of human expectation. This interplay constitutes tragedy in the Bible. It reflects the dynamics of the two points of view inherent in biblical narratives, which is, I believe, the gist of tragedy.

Let us take, for example, Samson's story. From the human point of view Samson did not deserve the horrible catastrophe that befell him. But according to the concepts of the divine providence, he had to be more careful because he was a judge and a leader, a man of high rank and responsibility. Here lies the tragedy: the greater a man, the more he "pays" for his faults and errors. He pays with his own life for failings and mistakes which, had they been perpetrated by ordinary men, would not have cost them so much.

Such was also the case with Saul. Saul, as we all realize, was more virtuous and

9. Note the repetitive emphasis "my son!"—eight times.

sympathetic than both Samson and Absalom. Even his tragic error was much more humane and innocent. What was Saul's declared sin in the Tanakh? Mercy, compassion with a vanquished king, Agag, the leader of Israel's bitterest enemy, Amalek.

We, therefore, ask ourselves: Is human mercy a sin? Indeed most people would regard it as a human virtue, not as a crime. Surely they might be right if the case involved an ordinary man, not a king. But with a king the whole meaning of the act is different. A king is not allowed to be soft-hearted. His job is to rule, to exercise sovereignty, and he must have the ability to apply it. This ability is conditioned by will power, self-determination and mental power to withstand threats and difficulties. Softness, as the accompaniment of weakness, makes a king unfit to rule. If he is as soft-hearted and lacks firmness as Saul did, he is liable to suffer more than an ordinary man. This makes him a tragic hero.

#### UNDERSTANDING AND SYMPATHY—TWO APPROACHES TO TRAGEDY

Northrop Frye<sup>10</sup> established the very appropriate metaphor for this predicament of the tragic hero. The tragic hero is like the lightning-conductor which, because of its position very high above the ground, catches the lightning. Similarly, the tragic hero, because he is placed above regular people, is more susceptible to danger and faces higher demands than ordinary people.

This distinction is completely understood by our reason. Nevertheless, it is incessantly questioned by our sympathetic heart, which aches in sympathy with the tragic hero. Our logical understanding may concur with the theological point of view, but our heart's sympathy expresses the human approach to this heart-tearing suffering.

Thus we see that the two points of view do not oppose one another. They are two aspects of one experience: viewing man's suffering while understanding its reasons. I stress "understanding" because to both approaches human suffering is intelligible, and both approaches provide explanations which eventually are linked together in one comprehensive outlook.

The difference between them is that the theological point of view, which is normative in its approach, explains suffering as the *direct* consequence of the transgression of its divine laws: If you do not follow the law, you suffer, Suffering

10. In his *Anatomy of Criticism*, New York, Atheneum, 1967, p. 207.

is simply punishment. However, the human approach which observes reality and penetrates into man's life and nature as it actually is, understands suffering as the combined result of many factors. Suffering is not only a consequence of one's own mistakes, but is also the result of other factors impinging upon one's life. This approach considers human life as an interaction of many wills and powers, where the clash between them brings about tragedy.

It is important to note that man is not arbitrarily thrown into this interaction. His original action, chosen by his own free will, brings him to this particular interaction. His first choice initiates the causal chain of events, in which he now finds himself, interacting with all the other forces.

This emphasis on the first chosen action which, through the maze of all the other interactions in life leads to the same result posited by the theological point of view, is common to both approaches. So here lies the common quality of both points of view: Both the theological and the human approaches presuppose man's responsibility for his free choice. Both assume that man is fallible and weak and that by his mistaken actions he brings ruin upon himself. Both assume a causal chain of events as a result of man's original free will, and both view suffering as something intelligible and not arbitrary or mystical.

#### ARISTOTELIAN CATHARSIS

This lucid understanding of human suffering reached by the two approaches leads, in my opinion, to a better understanding of Aristotle's long disputed term, the "catharsis".

The "catharsis" originated from Greek rituals, where its meaning was "purification", and from Greek medicine, where it denoted purgation and cleansing. It was also applied in other fields where it signified "clearance", "clarification" and "clarity". Aristotle uses this term in the second half of his definition of tragedy, where he speaks about the tragic effect, and thus he says:

*"(Tragedy is) a dramatic imitation which through pity and fear achieves the catharsis of such emotions."*

Poetics, 6.49 b 28-28

This phrase is one of Aristotle's most controversial statements. Many explanations of the application of the term "catharsis" here have been suggested and rejected throughout the ages in literary criticism. To these I dare add another ex-

planation, and I suggest that from amongst the other meanings of the “catharsis”, we choose “clarification.”

When Aristotle says that the tragic effect is the catharsis of the emotions of pity and fear, it is my opinion that he means that the resolution of the tragedy is the clarity and enlightenment with which we are left when the tragic action is over. In other words, during our experience of watching the tragic events unfolding before us, we become partially involved in the lot of the tragic hero. Thus we experience pity and fear as we sympathize with him. We are afraid for the hero because with our logical mind we can anticipate the catastrophe which his action will cause. We pity him because we realize that the consequences of his course of actions will bring more suffering than he deserves upon himself. Thus we experience restlessness and agitation as we become involved in the action and destiny of the hero. We share in his aspirations for good and we become anxious at his failure. We hope that our fears, based on our rational understanding of the logic in the course of events, will not come to fruition; and this hope threatens our state of equilibrium. But at the bitter end, when the tragedy is completely unfolded, our logical mind takes over again as it clearly recognizes the inevitability of the causal chain of events that led to this end. Once we have this clarity, i.e. catharsis, we can again be detached from the hero's lot. Our feelings of pity and fear have subsided and we can again regain our equilibrium.

To me it is clear, therefore, that during our involvement with the hero we were viewing the events of his life from the human and the theological points of view. This causes the turbulent effect of pity and fear as we watch the action of the hero and foresee the consequences. But once we attain a catharsis and regain our equilibrium, we are given a new view in which the human and the divine approaches are clarified in one unified vision of life. This clarification provides us with a new understanding of the human predicament and of the truth of life. Although man fails in the battles of life, nevertheless the dignity of his struggle affirms the worth of mankind and his elevated position in creation, as stated in the Book of Genesis, which is the foundation of the biblical vision of man. □

# SOLOMON'S HUMILIATION

BY SOL LIPTZIN

Many centuries ago there lived a king in a large palace, surrounded by vineyards, gardens, orchards and pools of water. He was served by a multitude of male and female servants on plates of silver and gold, for the treasures of many provinces were his. He was entertained by a choir of men singers and women singers and was delighted by the caresses of hundreds of wives and concubines. He sat on a throne whose magnificence awed all who came near him. Whatever his eyes desired, he did not withhold from them. But he was also famed for his wisdom, which supposedly exceeded that of any of his contemporaries. His subjects wove an aura of legends about him. He was reputed to exercise dominion not only over people but also over beasts and birds, demons and spirits of the air. However, because everything he undertook prospered, he was gradually filled with arrogance and lost his moral hold upon himself.

Then catastrophe struck. He was cast down from his high estate and hurled away to a distant land, while a usurper took his place on the throne. The exiled king had to wander from province to province and to beg for bread from door to door. Wherever he mentioned that he had once been a king, he was laughed at and regarded as demented.

It was after experiencing such humiliation that the dethroned king attained to his greatest insight into life, an insight which he expressed in the single statement: "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." And when, after several years, the usurper was finally driven from the throne and the legitimate king was reinstated, there was no more arrogance in the latter's heart. He realized that all living creatures, man and beast, were of the dust and all returned to dust, and that a handful with quietness was better than both the hands full with striving after wealth, fame, power, victories, aggrandizement, and other vanities. He then became the prince of peace and truly the wisest of mortals.

Sol Liptzin, formerly Professor of Comparative Literature at the City University of New York, is the author of eighteen volumes on world literature, including *Germany's Stepchildren*, *The Jew in American Literature*, and most recently, *A History of Yiddish Literature*.

#### A LEGEND RETOLD IN MANY VERSIONS

This story of Koheleth, king over Israel in Jerusalem, who is far better known as Solomon, reverberated down the ages. It was later told, in a modified version, in the fourth chapter of the Book of Daniel and retold by Geoffrey Chaucer as "The Monk's Tale" in *The Canterbury Tales*, about the mighty Nebukadnezzar, king of Babylon and conqueror of Jerusalem, who was driven from his throne and for seven years roamed in the forest and ate grass as do oxen, until his pride was humbled and he acknowledged the preeminence of a divine power. It was retold about Emperor Julian the Apostate, who tried to restore to the Roman Empire the worship of Venus, Apollo and other pagan divinities, a version dramatized by Hans Sachs, the Meistersinger of Nuremberg, in his comedy of 1556, entitled *Julianus, der Kaiser im Bad*. It reappeared in the medieval *Gesta Romanorum* as the tale of Emperor Jovinian, a tale that was recast in the nineteenth century by William Morris, "the idle singer of an empty day," in his verse epic *The Earthly Paradise*, 1868. His contemporary, the American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, retold it in 1863, on the basis of an old English romance, as the humiliating experience of King Robert of Sicily. It was dramatized at the opening of the twentieth century by Frank Wedekind, the forerunner of German Expressionism, as the story of King Nicolo, under the title *Such Is Life*, 1902. The contemporary Yiddish novelists Abba Gordin and Saul Sapphire, however, retained King Solomon as the central figure of this strange adventure, even as did the Hebrew versions from the Talmudic period until Sammy Gronemann's poetic drama of 1942, *Der Weise und der Narr*, and as did also all the Yiddish versions since the *Maase-Book* of 1602 and the *Tseno-Ureno* of 1616, both of them best-sellers in their century and frequently reprinted until the present.

The motivation for this Solomonic tale goes back to the early biblical commentators who tried to explain why a sentence in the opening chapter of *Koheleth* read: "I, Koheleth, was king over Israel in Jerusalem," and not: "I, Koheleth, am king over Israel in Jerusalem." These commentators reasoned that there must have been a time during Solomon's life when he ceased to reign over Israel and that at such a time, recalling his earlier years of splendor and folly as a monarch, he recorded his pessimistic insight in the *Koheleth*-scroll.

A commentary which goes back to the fifth century, *Pesikta de Rav Kahane* (26:2), tells of an angel who came down from heaven, assumed the likeness of Solomon, and seated himself upon the throne in Jerusalem. Meanwhile, the real

Solomon found himself outside of the royal palace and went around everywhere trying to convince his listeners that he was the legitimate ruler over Israel. But he was always told in reply that he must be crazy, since King Solomon could be seen seated on the throne. When a pitying woman offered the famished, apparently demented person a dish of boiled grits or ground beans, he realized that all was vanity of vanities.

#### TWO VERSIONS OF SOLOMON'S ABDICATION

Rabbinical commentators differed as to whether Solomon ever regained his throne. Thus Rav, the founder of the Babylonian Academy at Sura in the third century, said that Solomon was first a king and then ended as a commoner, while Rav's contemporary, Samuel, head of the House of Learning at Nahardea, said that Solomon was first a king, then a commoner, and then again a king. Creative writers in later centuries were, therefore, free to choose between two possible endings. Did Solomon, after his humiliation, find ultimate happiness in being a righteous ruler, dispensing justice to all his subjects, without thought of the personal pleasures he had earlier found in wine, women and song? Or did he attain contentment and greater peace of mind by remaining a commoner, freed from the cares, responsibilities and intrigues of government, even as did many centuries later Emperor Charles V, ruler of the Holy Roman Empire and also of Spain, Netherlands, Naples, Sicily and the New World, who abdicated his throne in 1556 and retired to a simpler life in the Spanish monastery of St. Just?

The former version was preferred by the medieval narrators who substituted King Robert of Sicily for King Solomon. As modernized by Longfellow, in one of his *Tales of a Wayside Inn*, 1863, Robert, ruler of Sicily, brother of a pope and of an emperor, once heard priests chant the words: "The Lord has put down the mighty from their seat and has exalted them of low degree." He flared up in anger at such a seditious statement. He wanted his subjects to know that there was no power that could push him from his throne. Soon thereafter, lulled by the monotonous chants, he fell asleep in the church. When he awoke, it was already night and he found himself all alone. He had been locked in unnoticed, while an angel in his likeness and royal attire had left with the worshippers. Forcing his way out of the church and rushing back to the palace, Robert came into the banquet hall and found another king seated there, wearing his robes, his crown, his signet-ring, and looking like him in every feature. Robert raged and stormed at

the imposter who had usurped his throne. But the angel-king, with unruffled brow, confronted the intruder and suggested that Robert, who claimed to be the king, could far better qualify as the king's jester. When Robert's raving and threatening proved to be of no avail, he gradually adjusted to his role as a fool in cap and bells. After three years of humble living as a menial, he was sufficiently chastened to realize the truth of the words that the Lord could put down the mighty from their seat and could exalt those of low degree. Then was he fit to be restored to his throne.

#### GESTA ROMANORUM

The versions that substituted Emperor Jovinian for King Solomon also have the ruler regain his kingdom, after his pride was humbled and he experienced much suffering. Their main source was the *Gesta Romanorum*, a medieval collection of entertaining stories, each emphasizing a moral. The fifty-ninth tale, which stresses the aftermath of overweening haughtiness, has Jovinian survey his vast dominions and impiously assert that he was more than mere mortals, if not the equal of God. The next day, outriding all his servants while on a hunt, he dismounted at a stream to refresh himself in the water. But when he came out of the water, he could find neither his horse nor his clothes. Someone had replaced him and ridden off as the emperor. Naked and ashamed, he made his way to the castle of a knight. When he introduced himself as the emperor, he was flogged for his impudence and driven off. He experienced similar treatment when he tried to make himself known to a duke. There he was imprisoned and fed bread and water before and after a lashing. Escaping from the dungeon, he finally got to the palace. There he hoped he would be acknowledged as the emperor by his wife. But neither the empress nor his courtiers recognized him. Ultimately, his humiliation brought about a change in his personality. He repented of his arrogance and subjected himself to the mercy of God. Then the pretended emperor, who was an angel sent from heaven, vanished from the scene, and Jovinian reascended the throne.

Hans Sachs, in a *Meisterlied* of 1549, remained faithful to the version of the *Gesta Romanorum*. However, in his comedy of 1556 on the same subject, he substituted Emperor Julian the Apostate as the haughty monarch who was humbled, mocked, beaten, and chased away from his palace until he repented of his apostasy and returned to the true God.

The Victorian poet William Morris entitled his tale based on the *Gesta Romanorum* "The Proud King," and added his own conclusion that, thirty years after the ruler was restored to the throne, he commanded a clerk to write down the adventure, since no man was any longer alive who remembered that the madman, once thrust out of the palace, had been the king himself. He hoped that what had happened to him would be taken to heart by his successor. Yet, like Rehoboam, successor to Solomon, the new king, who filled the throne when Jovian died, took little heed of his predecessor's humiliation, so much did all things feed his swelling pride.

*"But whether God chastised him in his turn  
And he grew wise thereafter, I know not;  
I think by eld alone he came to learn  
How lowly on some day must be his lot."*

#### THE UNPOPULAR ENDING

Less popular among poets and novelists was the ending that Solomon never returned to his throne but lived on as a simple commoner far from his sumptuous palace and flattering courtiers. This ending, espoused by the ancient Babylonian Talmudist Rav, was preferred by the contemporary writer Abba Gordin in his Yiddish historical novel *King Solomon*, 1960. The author, who lived on three continents and wrote in the four languages, Russian, English, Hebrew and Yiddish, adhered to anarchism as his political and social philosophy, and regarded all governments as evil and oppressive. He, therefore, depicted Solomon as sated with orgies, wives, slaves and palaces, and as disgusted with court intrigues and sycophantic courtiers. Voluntarily he abandoned his kingdom and fled incognito from Jerusalem. He had arrived at the conclusion that people did not need a king but only the illusion that behind the portals of a palace lived someone in royal attire who ruled over them. A Golem could be substituted on the throne and would gain the reputation of a successful monarch, provided that there were competent generals and warriors to fight his wars for him. If all kings were dethroned, life could still go on normally, but if peasants were to stop cultivating the soil, a real catastrophe would result.

In ragged clothes, begging for food and then insisting on paying for his nourishment with hard work, Solomon wandered on and on until, in his third year, he overheard a fantastic rumor that Ashmedai, king of the demons, had

usurped the throne in Jerusalem and that the real king had been hurled far away. Solomon's reaction was that only Ashmedai could find satisfaction in ruling, indeed, that every ruler, no matter how benevolent his beginnings, must become in time a demonic Ashmedai. Dominion over others corrupted. Government was a diabolic institution.

The itinerant Solomon finally arrived in Rabbat Ammon and found honest work as a dishwasher in the royal palace. There he rediscovered Princess Naamah, whom he had earlier known, loved and lost, when she, disguised as a shepherdess, escaped the fate of her brothers, who were slaughtered by the Hebrews after David's victory over the Ammonites. When the King of Ammon heard of the love of his daughter for the dishwasher, he imprisoned both and condemned them to death. Before the sentence could be carried out, the queen helped them to escape. They made their way to a remote fishing village. There they lived to the end of their days, happy to be far removed from the evil world of rulers and ruled.

The legend of Solomon's love for Naamah, daughter of the King of Ammon, goes back to ancient sources and reappears in the Kabbalistic tract *Emek Hamelekh (The King's Valley, 14d-15a)* of Naphtali Bacharach, published in 1648. The Bible mentions, in *I Kings 14:21*, that Naamah was the mother of Rehoboam. Since it also states that Rehoboam was forty-one years old when his father died, after ruling over Israel for forty years, the love of Solomon for the disguised shepherdess Naamah must have occurred before he ascended the throne and not afterwards. However, the novelist had to change the chronology in order to make the story conform to his political and social philosophy. His predecessor, the seventeenth century cabbalist, also had to manipulate the chronology and also had to emphasize the saintliness of Naamah but for a different reason, namely, in order to make her worthy of being the ancestress from whom the Messiah would descend at the end of days.

#### THE TALMUDIC VERSION

In the Talmudic version of the humiliated Solomon, as related in *Gittin 68b*, the role of the usurper was assigned not to an angel but to Ashmedai, and it was the king's experience with this demonic adversary that opened his eyes to the vanity of all earthly power and possessions.

As the possessor of the ring upon which God's Ineffable Name was engraved,

Solomon was able to keep Ashmedai in chains and to get him to complete the building of the Temple. One day, when both were alone, Solomon wanted to know wherein the demons were superior to human beings. Ashmedai replied that, if the king would remove his chains and lend him the magic ring, this superiority would be demonstrated. Solomon agreed. Then Ashmedai swallowed the ring and, placing one wing on the earth and the other on the sky, he hurled the king four hundred parsangs away and palmed himself off as King Solomon.

The dethroned Solomon wandered about begging from place to place and insisting that he was the legitimate king of Israel. When he found his way back to Jerusalem and came to the Sanhedrin with his claim, the rabbis inquired of Benaiah whether the king had sent recently for this faithful servant and the answer was "No." They then asked the queens whether the king ever visited them. They replied "Yes," but that he behaved peculiarly. The rabbis of the Sanhedrin recalled that demons had legs like those of a cock and therefore asked the queens to examine their husband's legs. But the queens replied that he always came in stockings. Thereupon the rabbis gave the claimant another ring with the engraved Ineffable Name. When Ashmedai then caught sight of Solomon, he flew away and Solomon regained his throne.

#### IN ARABIC LITERATURE

In Arabic literature, the role of the usurper was taken over neither by an angel nor by Ashmedai but by the rebellious spirit Sakhr. Just as a single sentence in *Koheleth* sufficed to stimulate the creative imagination of Jewish commentators and Talmudists, so too did a single passage in the *Koran* stimulate Moslem commentators and storytellers to elaborate its significance by the addition of illustrative tales. The relevant passage, *Sura* 38:34f., was as follows: "Certainly we made trial of Solomon, and we placed a phantom upon his throne, then he repented in true devotion. He said: 'O, my Lord, forgive me.'"

A typical Arabic tale of the testing of Solomon related that this king used to take off his signet-ring, in which his power resided and to ask one of his wives to hold it, while he was washing himself. Sakhr, the demon who lived in the sea, came to her on such an occasion in the figure of her husband and asked her for the ring. When she gave it to him, he was able to usurp Solomon's place on the throne. The true Solomon was driven away from the palace as an imposter. For forty days Sakhr ruled over Israel, while Solomon roamed about as a beggar.

These were forty days of humiliation that rid the dethroned king of his arrogance. Toward the end of this period of trial, he was hired by a fisherman as an assistant and was given two fish each day as his pay. On the fortieth day, the demon Sakhr dropped the ring in the sea and it was immediately swallowed by a fish. When the fish was caught and given to the hungry Solomon for his supper, he cut it open and discovered the ring. Then his power returned to him. He regained his throne and reigned thereafter as a wise and just king.

The final episode of this Solomonic tale reappears in the Arabian collection, *A Thousand and One Nights*, as the testing of a pious Israelite. This good person gave the money he received in the market-place to a friend who was in greater need. Coming home without any money, he found an old jug and an old cap. He tried to sell them but nobody wanted to buy them except a fisherman who paid for them with a fish. When the fish was split open, a pearl was found in it, which the pious Israelite then sold for seventy thousand drachmas. On his way home with this immense sum, a beggar accosted him and the Israelite told him: "Yesterday, I was as poor as you. Take half of my money. The beggar replied: "Keep your money. God bless you. I am a messenger of God, sent to try you." The Israelite praised God and lived happily ever after.

#### GERMAN VERSIONS

On the basis of Arabic, Persian and Turkish sources, Joseph Freiherr von Hammer-Purgstall included in his collection of tales, *Rosenöl*, 1813, the episode of Solomon's dethronement. According to this account, genii tried for twenty years to obtain Solomon's magic ring. Finally, one of his many wives, who was secretly an idol-worshiper, found an opportunity at night to slip it off his finger and to hand it over to a demon named Sihrtshin. This demon then impersonated Solomon on the throne. When Solomon asserted his claim as the legitimate monarch, he was mocked, beaten and expelled. Becoming aware of his helplessness, he kept from starving by hiring himself out to fishermen. Though the demon was at first successful in impersonating Solomon, his demonic nature soon reasserted itself and the people became suspicious of their ruler, especially since his decisions lacked wisdom. The wives of the harem complained that the king no longer visited them and the concubines complained that, when he did visit them, he behaved in a wild and arrogant manner, unworthy of Solomon. The Hebrew priests and prophets then decided to get at the truth. They assembled in

front of the throne with Torah scrolls in their hands and began to chant passages aloud accompanied by much clamor. The demon could not resist such penetrating noise and fled to the depths of the sea, his more congenial element, abandoning his kingdom and throwing away the signet-ring. On the same day, Solomon found the ring in the fish on which he wanted to lunch. He regained his kingdom and reigned for another twenty years.

Shortly after Hammer-Purgstall published his *Rosenöl*, the German poet and novelist August Friedrich Ernst Langbein wrote his verse "*Märchen vom König Luthbert*." His model for King Luthbert was Napoleon, who had been hurled from his imperial throne and exiled to Elba. Did Napoleon learn the lesson that arrogance and tyranny did not pay and would he be a better ruler if he made a comeback from his exile?

Luthbert, who knew only to command others and to wage bloody wars, had to beg from house to house after his dethronement and learned to give thanks for a bit of bread. In his humiliation, he betook himself to a hermit who recognized him as the real king and upbraided him for his tyrannical rule that plunged the country into misery and for his wars which resulted in a sea of blood. However, now that the king himself experienced what it meant to be a beggar, remorse at his earlier nefarious behavior assailed him and he promised, if forgiven, to be henceforth a father to the poor and to walk in God's ways. Thereupon he was restored to his former greatness but, whether he then really behaved better, the poet left unsaid. Apparently, it was not clear to Langbein how Napoleon, the model for King Luthbert, would have behaved if he had made a successful comeback and had not been defeated at Waterloo.

#### PARALLEL THEMES

There is considerable similarity between the theme of Solomon's dethronement and his return to power and the theme of the prince who exchanged clothes with a pauper and experienced humiliations until he was restored to his princely estate. However, there is no evidence that the latter theme, as best treated by Mark Twain in his novel *The Prince and the Pauper*, was influenced by the former. The similarities can better be explained by parallel patterns of thought operating upon creative minds. Nor can any relationship be established between the Solomonic theme and the theme of the beggar who is elevated to the aristocracy and then hurled back into the gutter. The latter theme also went through a considerable

development from a tale of the *Arabian Nights* and Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew* to Ludwig Holberg's *Jeppe vom Berge* and Gerhart Hauptmann's *Schluck und Jau*. The two themes are, however, combined in Sammy Gronemann's German comedy *Der Weise und der Narr*, which has been repeatedly staged in Hebrew since the first performance by Tel Aviv's Ohel Theater in 1942. After the text was set to music by Alexander Argov in 1965, it became the first successful Hebrew musical comedy, under the title *Solomon and the Cobbler*.

Gronemann, the son of a rabbi, was immersed in biblical lore. Though he had to give up his successful career as a jurist in Berlin, when Hitler came to power, he did not give up his optimistic view of the world. In his satiric tales and plays after reaching Palestine in 1936, his wit and wisdom cheered readers and theater audiences both before and after the emergence of the embattled Jewish state.

Gronemann's King Solomon, even at the summit of power, remains a lonely, unhappy person, who flees to books and women. On the other hand, the cobbler Shemadai, whose features resemble those of Solomon, is a happy person, though often wallowing in drunkenness, jeered by his cronies, and scolded by his distraught wife. Solomon, who maintains that a king remains a king even in beggarly clothes and that a beggar retains the traits of a lowly commoner even if garbed in royal robes, undertakes to prove that the opposite dictum held by others that clothes make the man is far from the truth. He summons Shemadai to the palace and exchanges clothes with him. Thereupon the unrecognized Solomon is thrust out of the palace and the royally swathed Shemadai adjusts quickly to the kingly role. It is this cobbler turned king who unwittingly solves the riddles of the Queen of Sheba and wins ever greater adulation. However, Shemadai's new eminence does not bring him happiness, even as it did not to Solomon. The cobbler finds kingship a lonely, miserable existence. He is bored even when rushed from one festive ceremony to another and he feels his muscles growing flabby when deprived of physical work. He can hardly wait for his ordeal to end so that he can return to cobbling. Solomon, meanwhile, acquires deeper insight and greater humility by mingling with ordinary folk on their level. He realizes that man is in God's hands and that much which formerly appeared important was in reality trivial. He returns to the throne and Shemadai to hammer and last, both to continue their brief span on earth as best they may before death envelops them.

## THE OPERA ASHMEDAI

In 1971, the Israeli composer Josef Tal composed an opera, *Ashmedai*, based on a libretto by Israel Eliraz. Its theme was a wager between the king, who was proud of the culture, music, religion and enduring peace he brought to his people of simple peasants, and Ashmedai, the chief of the devils, who held that peace was undesirable and that the kingdom's subjects were really yearning for the glory of conflict and conquest. Ashmedai suggested that the correctness of his own view could be tested if the king and he were to exchange roles and he were to take over the conduct of the state for a year. The king, who was certain that the people would not tolerate the rule of a stupid devil, agreed to the interchange. Ashmedai took over the reins of government. He introduced a military dictatorship. His subjects readily adjusted to war, cruelty, murder, injustice, and exciting orgies, even though they saw ruin gradually spreading about them. When the year was over and the king, in accordance with the wager, replaced Ashmedai, he found to his dismay that he could not end the bloodthirsty system. Officers, soldiers and the masses of ordinary people, under the leadership of his own son, accused the king of wanting to betray the regime which had registered victories on many battlefields and conquered much territory, even though final victory had not yet been attained but might be within grasp. Philosophers, musicians, and theologians acclaimed the verdict of death pronounced upon the royal pacifist. After the liquidation of the peace-loving monarch, Ashmedai exulted and left the scene. The people, who were left with the ruins of their kingdom, denied that such a devil had existed and they were purified by the holy water of the priest. Only the daughter remained at the end as the representative of another world in which the sun shone golden, the fields were carpeted with flowers, and blue peacocks flew on clouds up to heaven.

The opera is obviously a commentary on Germany before, during and after the Nazi period, with Hitler as the model for Ashmedai and the German people as his willing dupes.

Despite the introduction of comic elements into the story of Solomon's humiliation, the theme is basically pessimistic, proclaiming the final insight of Israel's monarch in *Koheleth* that all things were full of weariness and that all striving was but vanity, a conclusion well expressed by Christine Rossetti's verses on Solomon:

*"He who wore out pleasure and mastered all love,  
 Solomon wrote 'Vanity of vanities;'  
 Down to death, of all that went before,  
 In his mighty long life the record is this.*

*With loves by the hundreds, wealth beyond measure,  
 In this he who wrote 'Vanity of vanities;'  
 Yea, 'Vanity of vanities,' he saith of pleasure  
 And of all he learned set his seal to this."*

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# ELIJAH

BY SHIMON BAKON

## ELIJAH'S CHALLENGE

The challenge facing Elijah is contained in the following verses:

*And Ahab, the son of Imri did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him. And it came to pass, as if it had been a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, that he took to wife Jezebel, the daughter Ethbaal, king of the Sidonians, and went and served Baal and worshipped him.*

I Kings 16:30, 31

Measured by the standards of other people, Ahab may have been considered a great king, subduing the Arameans, establishing peaceful co-existence with the kingdom of Judah, building cities, and a magnificent ivory palace for himself. But in true prophetic tradition this greatness is summed up in one verse: "Now the rest of the Acts of Ahab and all that he did . . . are they not written in the Book of Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?"<sup>1</sup> What matters sub specie eternitatis is that "there was none like unto Ahab, who did give himself over to that which was evil in the sight of God, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up."<sup>2</sup> Scripture thus attests to the fact that the true source of the trouble was Jezebel, a dominant and domineering figure, an evil spirit. She did what had never been done in Israel before. Not satisfied with merely building sanctuaries for Baal and his consort Ashera, she imported four hundred and fifty priests of Baal and four hundred priests of Ashera in order to supplant the religion of Israel with that of Sidon. Simultaneously, and not hampered by Ahab, she engaged in a campaign to eliminate the prophets of Israel; and it was her evil genius which devised the stratagem of acquiring the vineyard of Nabot for her husband through the judicial murder of its owner.

1. I Kings 22:39.

2. Ibid 21:25.

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Ahab himself possessed some redeeming features. On two occasions we find him “sullen and displeased”<sup>3</sup>: when a certain man of the sons of prophets severely rebuked him for showing clemency to Ben Hadad, the Aramean king; and when Nabot the Jezreelite refused him his vineyard. In the first case, he retreated to sullenness in the face of a sharp rebuke by a prophet who, speaking in the name of God, was still inviolate. In the second, he was aware of the Israelite king’s limitations of power as regards a commoner. On the occasion of Elijah’s rebuke to him, after the murder of Nabot, we see Ahab seized by profound remorse, when he “rent his clothes, put sackcloth upon his flesh and fasted . . . and went softly.”<sup>4</sup>

THERE SHALL BE NO DEW NOR RAIN

*And Elijah the Tishbite . . . said unto Ahab: As the Lord the God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall be no dew nor rain three years, but according to my words.*

I Kings 17:1

This is indeed a surprising introduction to a prophet. Commenting on the abruptness, the seeming *non-sequitur* of this utterance, Rashi suggests that these were Elijah’s concluding words of a long debate he had with Ahab. The latter mocked the warnings: Take heed . . . lest you be deceived . . . and serve other gods, and worship them. And (He will) shut up the heaven, so that there will be no rain,<sup>5</sup> thus indicating the powerlessness of the Lord to fulfill His warning. Thereupon Elijah uttered this threat.

The Radak who felt the peculiarity of a prophet being introduced without an express mandate of the Lord, commented

Elijah decreed concerning the	והנה גזר אליהו
rain because he was zealous for	על המטר
the Lord (finding authority for	בקנאתו בד'
this decree in the verse in	(בהסתמך) על מה שכתוב
Deuteronomy 11:16, 17), and was	'וסרתם ועבדתם'
certain that the Lord would	ובטח בד' שיקיים
fulfill His words.	אח דבריו

3. Ibid 20:43, 21:4.

4. Ibid 21:27.

5. Deut. 11:16, 17.

Only after he had “committed” himself, and the rain indeed had stopped, causing a serious drought, do we read that the word of the Lord came to him, instructing him to hide by the brook Cherit and after the brook had dried up, to betake himself to Zarephat. There he dwelt for three years. Ahab, in the meantime, spared no effort to search for Elijah, “for there is no nation or kingdom, wither (he) hath not sent to seek thee.”<sup>7</sup>

It is on their second recorded meeting, when Ahab greeted him with the sarcastic “Troubler of Israel – עוֹכֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל”, that Elijah challenged his antagonist to the contest on Mount Carmel.<sup>8</sup> This greeting is a clear indication that Ahab still did not grasp, or did not wish to acknowledge that it was his and Jezebel’s religious perversion that was responsible for the withholding of rain.

Was Ahab impressed by what he witnessed on Mount Carmel: The impotence of the Baal priests; the miraculous lightning of the altar built by Elijah; the destruction of the Baal priests; the sudden repentance expressed by the people in “The Lord He is God;” the gathering storm turning into the long awaited rain.? One may safely assume that king Ahab did not come without retinue and without sufficient guards. He could have prevented the fury of the people now turned against the Baal priests, but Scripture is silent on this question. However, we must assume that Ahab was impressed. How else do we interpret what now follows?

*And the hand of the Lord was on Elijah; and he girded his loins and ran before Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel.* I Kings 18:46

What was the purpose of this gesture? Noticing a temporary softening, perhaps even sign of regret on the part of Ahab, Elijah now revealed his aspect of the true prophet: he signaled to Ahab that it was not personal caprice, nor was it his personal power that brought the calamity of the drought or the blessing of the rain; and that he, Elijah, was merely acting as the messenger of God. And now that God was vindicated, he was ready to humble himself before the chastised king. And so he ran before the king, who rode by chariot, to the entrance of Jezreel.

#### IT IS ENOUGH, TAKE AWAY MY LIFE

The essence of the phenomenology of prophecy is revealed as much in the

6. Near modern Sarfend, south of Zidon.

7. I Kings 18:7.

8. See more on it in my article: *Phenomenology of Prophecy*, Vol. VIII, No. 2.

dramatic contest on Mount Carmel, as in its aftermath. In the first instance, Elijah stands before us as one of those rare selected individuals through whom the elemental force of God burst forth on humanity. Yet in its aftermath, he is enveloped in dark despair, revealing himself as human, all-too-human.

How do we explain this paradoxical phenomenon, the sudden reversal from the exhilarating experience on Mount Carmel to the despair that seized him afterwards, causing him to wish for his own death? Was his despondency the result of a sense of failure? Was it fear for his life? Or was he perhaps apprehensive that with him the lamp of prophecy would be extinguished? If we weigh carefully the evidence presented to us in the scriptural account, we may dismiss fear for his life as the overriding cause for his despair. Elijah, as a true prophet, conscious of the power vested in him by God, would not let that fear turn into a wish for death. True, Jezebel hearing directly from Ahab what had transpired on Mount Carmel, and that all of her prophets had been slain, threatened Elijah by a messenger to "make thy life as the life of one of them by tomorrow about this time."<sup>9</sup>

But her threat cannot be taken too seriously. Why the warning? Why "by tomorrow"? Had she dared, she would have been capable of disposing of him without prior warning. Apparently, all she wanted at this hour of obvious upheaval, was to get him out of Israel. And when Elijah, taking her threat seriously, fled to Beer-Sheba, he was already out of reach, being in the territory of Judah. Knowing the close alliance between Ahab and Jehoshaphat, King of Judah, he still may not have felt secure and "went one day's journey into the wilderness . . . sat down under a broom tree . . . and said 'It is enough, now, O Lord take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers'."<sup>10</sup>

#### THE CAVE ON MOUNT HOREB

What happened on Mount Horeb is shrouded in mystery. We can only unravel to a limited extent the meaning of the divine call and the *mysterium tremendum* of the vision that came to Elijah there. First, we have no scriptural basis for the assumption that he was summoned to Horeb. We are told that on arriving there, he was addressed by God's query: What doest thou here, Elijah? And he responded:

9. I Kings 19:1.

10. Ibid 19:4.

*I have been very jealous for the Lord . . . for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets . . . And I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.*

I Kings 19:9

Two questions force themselves upon us: What, indeed, did Elijah expect at Horeb? Did his complaints have a basis in reality?

If his sole wish was that God take his life, he need not have troubled to undertake a long and arduous journey to Horeb. Furthermore, Elijah's baring of his soul before the Almighty, in response to the rhetorical query, "What doest thou here," seems irrelevant in the light of his magnificent achievement on Mount Carmel. True, he had been jealous for God; it is true that the Children of Israel had forsaken the covenant, but was it not equally true that, with the revival of religious fervor, a change for the better was in the offing? And was it entirely true that Elijah was the only prophet left? What about Micaiah, and what about the hundred prophets kept secretly by Ovadiah, another true servant of the Lord?

We are driven to the conclusion that Elijah came to Horeb to seek divine guidance. Shaken in his confidence that stormy miracles would bring about a change in the heart of the people, he was gripped by a sense of failure, an inner loss of purpose and a terrible feeling of loneliness. It was at Horeb that Moses had received divine guidance. Perhaps at that spot such guidance would also come to him.

#### THE STILL SMALL VOICE

Elijah is now granted a vision of God, an experience that has exercised the imagination of great men in all generations. But what is the significance of the spectacle, described in only two verses which for grandeur of image, terseness of style, and infinity of possibilities, has no match in all literature? What is the meaning of a revelation of God "in a still small voice," preceded by the mighty winds, by earthquake and fire, in which God is not present? Is it not strange that Scripture records where God was not, as well as where He was? For certainly the wind and the fire, if not the earthquake, are suggestive of the winds that drove the long awaited clouds, and the fire that consumed the sacrifice on Mount Carmel!

In the light of Elijah's predicament, can we perhaps say that the message of the vision is that the divine influence on the course of human events is not through the invoking of winds that rend mountains and break rocks into pieces, neither is it

through earthquakes and fire, but through the patient action of man following His divine mandate? While Scripture does not record what went on in the mind of Elijah, one may be allowed an imaginative reconstruction. At this critical juncture in his life, Elijah may have remembered that the first giving of the tablets to Moses on Sinai amidst fire and earthquakes<sup>11</sup> had ended in dismal failure. The tablets were broken, the people found steeped in almost irreparable sin. God's anger was kindled against Israel resulting in an outbreak of pestilence. Israel was divided against itself, with brother lifting up sword against brother. It was precisely the second tablets, given in majestic silence, without dramatic divine manifestations in nature, which were received, accepted, and left an indelible impression on Israel and, subsequently, on the world.

This scene of the still small voice is followed by a word for word repetition of God's query, *What doest thou here*, and Elijah's identical response, encountered at the start. It is only then, that divine guidance becomes fully explicit:

*Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus; and when thou comest, thou shalt anoint Hazael to be king of Aram; and Jehu the son of Nimshi shalt thou anoint king of Israel. And Elisha the son of Shaphat of Abel-mehola shalt thou anoint to be prophet in thy stead . . . Yet will I leave seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal . . .*

I Kings 19:15–18

#### WHAT HAVE I DONE TO YOU

At this point two questions arise that demand a categoric “דרשני – interpret me.” Why is there a word for word repetition of God's query “What doest here – מה לך פה” and Elijah's response? Why didn't he follow the explicit divine command of going to Damascus but instead “he departed hence and found Elisha”? As to the first question, is this repetition merely a narrator's uncertainty regarding the tradition when God's query and Elijah's response occurred? Is it perhaps a copyist's error? It seems to me that the two queries, though couched in identical language, carry a different meaning. The first, addressed to Elijah when coming to Horeb, merely asks “Why have you come here?” After Elijah stated his case

11. Exodus 19:18. Now Mount Sinai was altogether smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire . . . and the whole mount quaked greatly.

God reveals Himself in the still small voice, directing to Elijah a new query: Then, what are you doing here, this time implying a gentle rebuke. Elijah, like a child caught by His father in an indiscretion, restates his case.

The second question is even more puzzling. Why, indeed, did Elijah not follow the mandate imposed upon him, of going first to Damascus? One can sense a silent but rebellious mood on his part. He wants to die, yet, before his stormy life is ended, when "the Lord would take up Elijah by a whirlwind into heaven,"<sup>12</sup> there were still two major acts for him to accomplish.

He sought out Elisha, appointing him as successor and leaving it to him to complete the assignment of anointing Hazael and Jehu through whom the divine plan for Israel would be fulfilled. And there still remained his magnificent confrontation with Ahab on the matter of Nabot.

The account of the appointment of Elisha of Abel-mehola<sup>13</sup> is brief but full of detail that invites careful inquiry. Scripture indicates a brief and hasty meeting in which Elijah "threw his mantle over him." The Hebrew says אָלָיו — "at him" and not עָלָיו, "over him". We are told that Elisha was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen; that he "left the oxen, and ran after Elijah," asking to allow him to kiss his father and mother; and we are let in on a most curious reply that has strained the ingenuity of all our commentators: "Go back; for what have I done to you?" — לך שוב, כי מה עשיתי לך.

One can easily visualize an embittered and frustrated Elijah coming on a pastoral scene of peace, of apparent wealth and of undisguised filial piety, all of which Elijah now would break up by putting on his young (he is not married, otherwise he would also have asked to kiss his wife) and enthusiastic successor the heavy and troubling mantle of prophecy. Thus the hurry of Elijah, to be done with the investiture of his successor, and his almost implied desire that Elisha would not be fool enough to accept. And when Elisha ran after Elijah, the latter cried out in dismay: "Return, for what am I doing to you!" However Elisha, undeterred, accepted unquestioningly the challenge of prophecy.

#### HAVE YOU KILLED AND ALSO TAKEN POSSESSION

The majestic confrontation of Elijah with Ahab, subsequent to the judicial murder of Nabot, engineered by Jezebel, is well known and need not be related

12. II Kings 2:1.

13. The modern Kibbutz of Mechola in the Jordan valley, about 15 miles south of Beth-Shean.

here in detail. It ends with Elijah's condemnation of the king "And you shall speak to him saying: Thus sayeth the Lord, hast thou killed and also taken possession — הרצחת וגם ירשת"<sup>14</sup> a condemnation which will reverberate throughout man's sojourn on this earth. This taking to task of a king by a humble prophet equals, perhaps even exceeds, the well known confrontation of Nathan and King David. With this deed, quite acceptable in the monarchies abounding in antiquity, but abominable in the eyes of Israelitic monarchy, Ahab and Jezebel, sealed the verdict they had brought about upon themselves by "following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites whom the Lord cast out before the children of Israel."

#### MOSES AND ELIJAH

At this point a comparison between Moses and Elijah seems relevant. It has been noted that Elijah patterned his life on that of Moses. The Midrash *Pesikta Rabbati* enumerates twenty eight similarities, which extend even to language used. The theophanies on Horeb granted to both are a case in point. But it is precisely these theophanies that suggest a major contrast between these two great prophets.

It is essential to recollect that God revealed Himself to Moses in His Thirteen Attributes, and that within them there are two sets of contradictory qualities: that of being "merciful, gracious and long-suffering" on the one side, and "punishing the iniquity of the fathers on the children . . . to the third and fourth generation" on the other.<sup>15</sup>

Moses on receiving this revelation, "made haste and said . . . pardon the iniquity and our sin, and take us for Thine inheritance."<sup>16</sup> He seized the clue offered him and appealed to God's attribute of mercy and, using the plural, our sin, our iniquity, he involved himself in the guilt of the people. By contrast, Elijah stated twice that he had been zealous for the Lord. As we have stated before, the second query of "What doest thou here" is suggestive of a rebuke, implying an ironic question: Elijah, are you not reversing our roles? It is with fine perception that our sages taught from the conduct of Moses on Horeb the great rule of *Imitatio dei*; just as He is merciful, gracious, longsuffering, so should we be. The attribute of "zealousness — קנא" is better left in the hand of an all-wise God. That Elijah

14. I Kings 21:17-26.

15. Exodus 34:7.

16. Exodus 34:9.

did not fully comprehend this can be seen even later when Ahab evidenced profound remorse after the pronouncement of doom by Elijah. For it was the Lord who had to take the initiative and lead Elijah on by saying to him: Seest thou how Ahab humbleth himself before Me?<sup>17</sup> And because Ahab humbled himself before the Lord, He will not bring the evil in his days, but in his son's days.

The dynasty of Omri did indeed come to an end in the reign of Joram, the second son of Ahab. With ironic poignancy divine retribution to the third and fourth generation became fulfilled.

#### THE MESSAGE

The life and deeds of Elijah initiate a decisive turning point in prophecy. Concern with morality began with Nathan and Elijah and not with "classical prophets" as is often assumed. It began with Nathan's sharp rebuke of David in the affair of Bath-sheba and Elijah's condemnation of Ahab in the matter of Nabot. It is true, that, in the formative years of Israel's history, the primary challenge threatening its existence was the indiscriminate syncretism of pure religion with Baal-worship. It is to this danger that all the pre-exilic prophets addressed themselves. But a genuine "Knowledge of God" included also His moral demands on man, and especially on Israel. It was precisely the blatantly immoral act perpetrated by Ahab against Naboth and his sons<sup>18</sup> which provoked the final verdict against the dynasty of Omri. This was Elijah's crowning achievement.

Second, the essence of prophecy is not the miraculous. It is true that Elijah lived so completely with God – for this is the meaning of his statement: As the Lord, the God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand<sup>19</sup> – that for him the impossible did not exist. What was God's will will be done. The stress on the miraculous ran its course with his great disciple Elisha.<sup>20</sup>

Third, God's glory is manifested more in history and in the destinies of people than in nature. God needs man to establish His kingdom on earth. His special

17. I Kings 21:28, 29.

18. II Kings 9:26 "Surely I have seen . . . the blood of Naboth *and the blood of his sons*, saith the Lord . . ."

19. I Kings 17:1.

20. Our sages have correctly pointed out the profound difference in the level of faith of the Patriarchs who persisted in their faith in God without benefit of miracles and in spite of painful delays of promises made to them, compared to Moses who asked for "signs" at the Burning Bush.

providence and protective care of Israel are evident. It is He who appoints His prophets. Elijah need not worry that he is the last of them. And it is He who left seven thousand in Israel, a decisive remnant who would always be faithful to Him. Yet, when the need arises, God will use even Israel's enemies as His rod of anger. Thus we understand the mandate given to Elijah to appoint Jehu and Hazael to destroy the dynasty of Omri.

And finally, it is most significant that the co-operative venture between man and God is revealed in the "still small voice" and not in the whirlwind of a Job. It is this voice made vocal by the classical prophets that was to eventually bring about a change in the heart of Israel and that was to mark Elijah as their true teacher. In the post-exilic period idol worship had ceased to be one of the essential sins of Jews in Babylonia.



*Elijah ascends to Heaven by Francesco Polazzo, ca 1790*

## MOSES — MAN OF INDECISION

BY STUART A. WEST

Although Moses suffered the same fate as the rest of his generation — who left Egypt only to die in the wilderness, without reaching the Promised Land — Scripture does not disclose any specific sin which he committed. If Moses was guilty of a sin at the waters of Meribath-kadesh, the Bible is, to say the least, ambiguous as to its nature. The whole incident is set out in Numbers 20:

*And there was no water for the congregation; and they assembled themselves together against Moses and against Aaron . . . And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the tent of meeting, and fell upon their faces; and the glory of the Lord appeared unto them. And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying: 'Take the rod, and assemble the congregation, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye onto the rock before their eyes, that it give forth its water; and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock; so thou shalt give the congregation and their cattle drink.' And Moses took the rod from before the Lord, as He commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the assembly together before the rock, and he said unto them: 'Hear now, ye rebels; are we to bring you forth water out of this rock?' And Moses lifted up his hand, and smote the rock with his rod twice; and water came forth abundantly; and the congregation drank, and their cattle.*

Numbers 20:2-11

Although an abundance of water was obtained from the rock, sufficient for the people and their cattle, the Almighty was quick to condemn both Moses and Aaron:

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*Because ye believed not in Me, to sanctify Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them.*

Numbers 20:12

What did Moses and Aaron do to warrant such a punishment? How did their non-belief in God manifest itself?

According to Rashi,<sup>1</sup> had Moses and Aaron spoken to the rock and had it brought forth water, the Almighty would have been sanctified in the eyes of the congregation, who would have said, "If this rock, which neither speaks nor hears and does not require sustenance, fulfils the word of God, how much more should we do so."

Unfortunately, Rashi's explanation reveals certain inconsistencies. First, if Moses was commanded to take his rod, what would have been the purpose if not to strike the rock? After all, he had experienced such a situation before. In Exodus 17, we also read of the people at Rephidim demanding water to drink<sup>2</sup> — and on that occasion the Divine instructions had been quite specific:

*'Pass on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thy hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink.'*

Exodus 17:5–6

Secondly, even if the punishment was because Moses struck the rock with his rod, why was Aaron punished as well? Scripture makes no mention either of his taking a rod or of his striking the rock.

In his commentary, Nachmanides discusses the problem at length.<sup>3</sup> He does not accept Rashi's explanation and regards the command to Moses to take his rod as implying that he should smite the rock. Nachmanides observes that Scripture is brief concerning matters which are self-understood.

Ibn Ezra is of the opinion that, by rebuking the people, Moses lost the concentration of mind necessary to invoke Divine intervention so as to bring forth

1. Rashi on Num. 20:12.

2. Ex. 17:1–3.

3. Nachmanides on Num. 20:1.

water. Instead, Moses struck the rock, but it was only when he struck it a second time that the concentration of mind returned, so that the waters gushed forth.<sup>4</sup> Nachmanides also rejects the explanation because God could not then have said about Moses' action, "Ye believed not in Me to sanctify Me," as there was no lack of faith by Moses here at all.

For Maimonides,<sup>5</sup> the sin of Moses was in his becoming angry with the people, implicit in his reference to them as "rebels." In his view, Moses was held in high esteem by the people as a man of moral perfection. Their attitude was that he must surely have known that God was angry with them for demanding water, otherwise Moses would not have been so irate with them himself. According to Maimonides, we find no hint of Divine wrath directed against the people by reason of this matter; hence, Moses was unjustified in his anger.

As with Rashi and Ibn Ezra, so too, Nachmanides takes issue with Maimonides, pointing out (inter alia) that, after this incident, the place became known as –

*... the waters of Meribah<sup>6</sup>, where the children of Israel strove with the Lord...*

Numbers 20:13

It is therefore arguable that, indeed, the Almighty was angry with the people. Nachmanides also cites in support Psalm 106:

*They angered Him also at the waters of Meribah,  
And it went ill with Moses because of them;  
For they embittered his spirit,  
And he spoke rashly with his lips.*

Psalms 106:32–33

A possible reason for the Divine decree against Moses and Aaron is indicated in Deuteronomy 32, in which the Lord tells Moses that the time had arrived for him to die:

4. Ibn Ezra on Num. 20:8. His explanation is based on the Kabbalistic notion that he whose mind is concentrated on God alone can achieve miracles.

5. Maimonides, שמונה פרקים, Chapt. 4.

6. The Hebrew word מריבה means "strife" or "contention" from the root ריב meaning to "strive," "contend" or "quarrel."

*' . . . Because ye trespassed against Me in the midst of the children of Israel at the waters of Meribath-kadesh, in the wilderness of Zin; because ye sanctified Me not in the midst of the children of Israel . . .*

Deuteronomy 32:51

The words, "because ye trespassed against Me," are rendered in the Hebrew text, *על אשר מעלתם בי* — the verb coming from the root *מעל* which also means, "to act unfaithfully." It is in this sense that the new JPSA<sup>7</sup> translation of the Torah understands the word, rendering the opening words of the verse, "for you both broke faith with me." This translation supports the thesis of Joseph Albo, which Jacobson quotes in his very interesting study on the subject.<sup>8</sup> Albo suggests that, when the people demanded water, Moses and Aaron should thereupon have ordained that the rock shall split and water flow. In this manner, they would have demonstrated their belief in God's Providence —

*That confirmeth the word of His servant,*

*And performeth the counsel of His messengers . . .*

Isaiah 44:26

In other words, God would have confirmed the word of Moses and Aaron, and would thus have been sanctified in the eyes of all the people. As it happened, Moses and Aaron went away from the people to the entrance of the tent of meeting as though fleeing<sup>9</sup> — without any idea as to what to do. They were turning to God for help in a situation where strong leadership really required self-help, based on faith that the Almighty would satisfy the people's need for water. In the words of the old adage — "Help yourself, and heaven will help you."<sup>10</sup> Albo cites the example of Joshua who, in the midst of battle against the Amorites at Gibeon and in the sight of the Israelites, called upon the sun and the moon to stand still:

*'Sun, stand thou still upon Gil' eon;*

*And thou, Moon, in the valley of Aijalon.'*

*And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed,*

*Until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies.*

Joshua 10:12–13

7. i.e., The Jewish Publication Society of America.

8. Jacobson, B.S., *Meditations on the Torah*, 1969, pp. 230–235.

9. See Ibn Ezra on Num. 20:6.

10. See Jacobson, *Meditations on the Torah*, 1969, pp. 234–235.

In this way, Joshua demonstrated that steadfast faith in God which Moses and Aaron failed to display at the waters of Meribath-kadesh. The conclusion of the account of Joshua's victory attests to the fact that Moses and Aaron never achieved a self-confident belief in God's Providence:

*And there was no day like that before it or after it, that the Lord hearkened unto the voice of a man . . .*

Joshua 10:14

Albo, himself, regards this verse as "an allusion to the lack of faith which the Bible imputes to Moses and Aaron because they refused to act of their own accord without Divine authority."<sup>11</sup>

What is so puzzling about the conduct of Moses at the waters of Meribath-kadesh is that he must then have been aware from recent events that the Almighty could be called upon to confirm his word. Only a short time before, an incident had occurred which, in the opinion of Jacobson, corroborates Albo's thesis.<sup>12</sup> It happened when Moses confronted Korah and his fellow rebels:

*'Hereby ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works, and that I have not done them of mine own mind If these men die the common death of all men, and be visited after the visitation of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and the ground open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down alive into the pit, then ye shall understand that these men have despised the Lord.'*

Numbers 16:28-30

In immediate answer to his initiative on that occasion, the Almighty did indeed confirm the words of His servant, Moses:

*And it came to pass, as he made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground did cleave asunder that was under them. And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and all their households, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. So they, and all that*

12. Ibid., p. 235.

*appertained to them, went down alive into the pit; and the earth closed upon them, and they perished from among the assembly.*

Numbers 16:31–33

Besides his lack of faith at the waters of Meribath-kadesh, Moses was also guilty of failing to uphold God's sanctity among the Children of Israel. In this respect, Nachmanides refers to the commentary of Rabbenu Hananel,<sup>13</sup> who explains that the sin of Moses was his saying, "Are *we* to bring forth water out of this rock?" He should have said, "Shall *the Lord* bring you forth water?" — as previously, in the case of miracles, these had invariably been attributed to God. The omission, in this instance, made it appear as though it was Moses and Aaron themselves who performed the miracle. Thus, the Divine condemnation was also for their failure to affirm God's sanctity before the people:

*'... because ye rebelled against My commandment in the wilderness of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify Me at the waters before their eyes.'*

Numbers 27:14

The question still remains as to why the punishment decreed by God was so severe. Surely, the momentary lapse which occurred did not merit a tragic death at what should have been the crowning moment of Moses' leadership — taking the people into the Promised Land? The answer is implicit in the words of Moses, himself:

*Also the Lord was angry with me for your sakes, saying: 'Thou also shalt not go in thither; Joshua the son of Nun, who standeth before thee, he shall go in thither; encourage thou him, for he shall cause Israel to inherit it ...'*

Deuteronomy 1:37–38

Although his pleas to the Almighty on behalf of the people were often heeded, Moses found that in no way could he persuade God to alter the Divine decree concerning himself, as he admitted:

*But the Lord was worth with me for your sakes, and hearkened not unto me; and the Lord said unto me: 'Let it suffice thee; speak no more unto Me of this matter ...'*

Deuteronomy 3:26

13. Nachmanides on Num. 20:1.

It is interesting to note that in both passages Moses says that the Lord was angry with him – “for your sakes.” However, in Deuteronomy 1:37, the Hebrew rendering of these words is, בגללכם, whilst in Deuteronomy 3:26, the same words are rendered in the Hebrew, למענכם. In the new JPSA translation these Hebrew words are translated respectively, “because of you” and “on your account,” thereby revealing why the Divine decision could not be changed. Because Moses was the leader of God’s Chosen People, and therefore held a unique position of responsibility, his conduct had to be exemplary and beyond reproach. As a lawgiver, his standing was unchallenged:

*Moses commanded us a law,  
An inheritance of the congregation of Jacob.*

Deuteronomy 33:4

Now that the children of Israel were about to cross over the river Jordan, that task was completed. Ahead lay the onerous responsibilities of conquest and settlement, for which markedly different qualities of leadership were required— in particular, authoritative leadership. By reason of his extreme meekness, which the Torah specifically mentions, Moses was wanting in that self-confidence so necessary for the leader of a people set upon military conquest:

*Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth.*

Numbers 12:3

At the very outset, when God had selected Moses to confront Pharaoh in Egypt with the demand that he free the children of Israel from slavery and let them leave the land, Moses put forward every possible excuse to avoid the responsibility:

*‘who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?’*

Exodus 3:11

When Moses protested –

*‘Oh Lord, I am not a man of words, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant; for I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.’*

Exodus 4:10

– the Divine reply should have been enough to satisfy any man of faith:

*'Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh a man dumb, or deaf, or seeing, or blind? is it not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt speak.'*

Exodus 4:11-12

For all that, Moses was not satisfied and, not surprisingly, incurred the Divine anger by his re-action to God's words:

*'Oh Lord, send, I pray Thee, by the hand of him whom Thou wilt send.'*

Exodus 4:13

Perhaps the new JPSA translation achieves the proper nuance of the Hebrew, which it renders – "Please, O Lord, make someone else Your agent."

In contrast, Joshua, who was to succeed Moses as leader of the people, had all the qualities of leadership which were called for at that time. He had shown military prowess early on, as evidenced by his overwhelming victory over Amalek at Rephidim.<sup>14</sup> Along with Caleb, he had spoken out boldly against the evil report of their fellow spies on their return from Canaan.<sup>15</sup> While Moses and Aaron had re-acted to the evil report and the people's rebellious murmurings, which it had engendered, by falling on their faces before all the congregation<sup>16</sup> – as Hertz puts it, "overwhelmed by sorrow and shame"<sup>17</sup> – Joshua and Caleb, although in a minority, affirmed their faith in the Lord and the people's capacity to conquer the land in no uncertain terms:

*'The land, which we passed through to spy it out, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then He will bring us into this land, and give it unto us – a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us; their defence is removed from over them, and the Lord is with us; fear them not.'*

Numbers 14:7-9

14. See Ex. 17:8-13.

15. See Num. 13:25-14:9.

16. Num. 15:5.

17. Hertz, J.H., *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, 2nd ed., 1961, p. 626.

There can be little doubt that the state of the people necessitated a change in leadership. More than that, their low morale and tendency to rebel threatened to drag them down to the point of destruction as a people. The situation could only be remedied by delaying their entry into the Promised Land until the trained generation had died out, and then by ensuring that the new generation, which was to settle in Canaan, made the conquest under firm and resolute leadership. Because the Israelites required a strongly decisive and self-confident man as their leader for the conquest of Canaan — a man who would be steadfast in his faith that Divine Providence would ensure victory and a successful settlement — it was unequivocally on their account that the change of leadership had to be made. So it was that, after telling the people that the Lord had been angry with him for their sakes, Moses recalled God's final words to him in the matter:

*' . . . Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward, and northward, and southward, and eastward, and behold with thine eyes; for thou shalt not go over this Jordan. But charge Joshua, and encourage him, and strengthen him; for he shall go over before this people, and he shall cause them to inherit the land which thou shalt see.'*

Deuteronomy 3:27–28

Perhaps it was not so much that Moses sinned, rather than that he lacked those requisite qualities of leadership, that was the real cause of the Divine "wrath." After all, we have already noted the hesitancy of Moses and his lack of self-confidence at the time of the burning bush, shortcomings which one might have expected would have been overcome with experience. However, this was not to be, and, as if to emphasize the justice of the Divine decree, these characteristics of Moses continued to show themselves thereafter. Later, at Shittim, when the people profaned themselves by committing harlotry with the Moabite women and engaging in idol worship, there occurred the incident involving an Israelite man and a Midianite woman:

*And, behold, one of the children of Israel came and brought unto his brethren a Midianitish woman in the sight of Moses, and in the sight of all the congregation of the children of Israel, while they were weeping at the door of the tent of meeting. And when Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest saw it, he rose up from the midst of the congregation,*

*and took a spear in his hand. And he went after the man of Israel into the chamber, and thrust both of them through, the man of Israel, and the woman through her belly . . .*

Numbers 25:6-8

Why was Moses hesitating, indecisively, in the background? It may be that the Torah is impliedly criticizing Moses by indicating that, although the Israelite man brought the Midianitish woman to his companions quite brazenly — in the sight of Moses and all the community — it was only Phinehas who “saw” this.<sup>18</sup> In other words, it was only he, and not Moses, who fully comprehended the significance of what was happening and, therefore, he alone realised the necessity for immediate and decisive action. Had Moses been a self-confident and resolute leader, he would have been in full control of the situation himself and would have done more than weep along with the others. He would surely have taken the initiative himself and not left the matter to a priest, acting independently and without his authority.

Moses the great law-giver, teacher and prophet was really no sinner, but, like all human beings, had his failings, which were inherent in his character and which the passage of time did not alter. The humbleness, patience and prophetic vision, which made him our great teacher — משה רבנו — were always in contradistinction to his hesitation, lack of self-confidence and inability, in certain situations, to take the initiative. Israel in Canaan could not have as its leader a man of indecision, who might require Divine prompting before acting. Unfortunately, Moses was such a man, to whom the Almighty had found it necessary to say, as the Israelites were about to cross Red Sea —

*‘Wherefore criest thou unto Me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward . . .’*

Exodus 14:15

Nachmanides, commenting on this verse, is of the opinion that Moses, standing at the sea-shore with Pharaoh’s army in pursuit and fast catching up on the Israelites, neither knew what to do nor how to conduct himself.<sup>19</sup> Orlinsky refers

18. Num. 25:7.

19. Nachmanides on Ex. 14:15. See also Rashi on the same verse and Hertz, J.H., *The Pentateuch and Haftorahs*, 2nd ed., 1961, p. 268.

to this as an occasion when Moses betrayed his mission. This tendency is decisive ruled out any role for Moses beyond the Jordan. The realisation of God's promise to the Children of Israel required a leader with those very qualities which he lacked. His life's task as lawgiver, teacher and prophet fulfilled, the interests of the people demanded that change of leadership necessary for the successful conquest of the Promised Land.

20. Orinsky, H.M., *Essays in Biblical Culture and Bible Translation*, 1974, p. 36.



# TORAH DIALOGUES

BY HAROLD D. HALPERN

## LEVITICUS

These "Dialogues" are based on questions actually presented to a congregation before the Torah reading services. Many people were thus motivated to study the text and commentaries closely in order to find answers. Their responses were given after the conclusion of the Sidrah or during breaks in the reading. The questions are ideal for home discussion as well, but most of them assume a careful study of the text. We recommend that these dialogues be kept for future reference.

## QUESTIONS

### BEHAR

1. Find at least two connections between Chapter 25 and Parashat Emor, the previous Sidrah.
2. Why do you think the Torah reiterates the phrase "fear your God" in Chapter 25, verses 17, 36 and 43?
3. Which famous American inscription is taken from this chapter?
4. Which English word is derived from the Hebrew term in Chapter 25?
5. Chapter 25 deals with economic laws and rules pertaining to servitude. It would seem logical to begin the next portion with 26:1-2 which deals with another subject. Why are these verses appended to this Sidrah?

### BEHUKOTAI

*Much of this Sidrah is made up of the small Tokhahah (admonition). The large Tokhahah is found in Ki Tavo in Devarim, the fifth volume of the Torah. Nehama Leibowitz calls attention to two problems with the dire warnings in Chapter 26. See how well you can deal with them as they are posed in the first two questions that follow:*

1. There appear to be many more curses than blessings here. How could God, who loves Israel and whose kindness exceeds His retribution, address Israel in this manner?
2. Why is there so much emphasis in the Tokhahah upon material blessings and curses rather than spiritual ones?
3. What is wrong with the numbers given in 26:8? How would you explain the discrepancy? (Compare Deuteronomy 32:30).
4. What connection is there between Chapter 27 on vows and Chapter 26 which deals with the dire warnings?

Rabbi Harold (Chaim) Halpern is president of the Bergen County, New Jersey, Board of Rabbis. These "Torah Dialogues" grew out of discussions between the Rabbi and his congregants in Beth Tikvah Synagogue in New Milford, New Jersey.

## BEHAR

1. a. Chapter 25 deals with the seven-fold cycle of seven years and in Chapter 23 the period of the counting of the Omer is comprised of seven weeks of seven days.  
b. In the earlier chapter the harvest festivals are discussed and in Behar certain rules regarding the harvest are given.  
c. Yom Kippur is ordained in Chapter 23 and here it is designated as the day for inaugurating the jubilee year.
2. The passages talk of individuals who have little power, so an appeal is made to a person's fear of God in dealing with them. The Midrash notes that the phrase "fear your God" is used to appeal to the heart.
3. "Preclaim liberty throughout the land..." on the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia. (25:10)
4. Jubilee. Used as a fiftieth or sometimes as a twenty-fifth anniversary event. In Hebrew it refers to the ram's horn.
5. The Torah may be identifying pagan worship as a type of enslavement or saying that even if an Israelite is enslaved to an idolator he should not follow pagan worship nor violate Shabbat. Also, the last verse (26:2) exhorts Israel to observe Shabbats and the beginning of Bahar discusses a type of Shabbat (see 25:2, 4, 6).

## BEHUKOTAI

1. Dr. Leibowitz expresses doubt about the appropriateness of the name "Tokhahah" given to this chapter. Ibn Ezra sees more blessing than imprecation here. The blessings are stated in general sweeping fashion, while the curses are detailed in order to deter the hearers from sin. The Biur (Naftali Hertz Weisel) emphasizes the recurrent "im" (if) in the Tokhahah, and explains that only the first group of curses would be inflicted when the people sins. "Im" (if), they persist, then the second group, and so on.
2. Here are some traditional comments cited by Nehama Leibowitz:
  - a. The Torah avoids profound themes like the hereafter because they are beyond the understanding of nearly all people (Ibn Ezra — Albo strongly disagrees).
  - b. The immortality of the soul is an idea taken for granted in the Torah but material rewards and punishments are special acts of the Almighty to help humans along the proper path. (Nahmanides and similarly Maimonides, regards rewards and punishments as means not ends, in the sense that "one mitzvah leads to another".)

(continued on page 52)

# INTRODUCTION TO A NEW KOHELET COMMENTARY

BY ELCHANAN BLUMENTHAL

Kohelet, or the Book of Ecclesiastes, is the classical book of a general Jewish philosophy. Following the aspiration of general philosophy to comprehend the interdependence of all things, Koheleth attempts to grasp logically the quintessence of the world as he knows it, and to construct a specific worldview using the method of empirical verification.

While falling in the category of books of Wisdom in antiquity, we note a characteristic difference. Books of Wisdom of other people like to repeat the sayings of their elders in order to keep in general accord with them. Koheleth, however, examines every problem, and poses the basic question of purpose and meaning of existence. This search for the basic meaning of existence he sums up in the pregnant word "יתרון" literally, "abiding-value", which then for his empirical quest becomes the quintessential criterion.

Most commentaries, not having grasped the deeper meaning of יתרון, namely lasting value, have assumed almost without exception that Koheleth teaches pessimism. Not only have they misunderstood the term יתרון, but have ignored later chapters, especially seven to twelve, which contain positive values taught with the intent of affirming life. Furthermore those commentaries have failed to understand the special logic of inquiry utilized by Koheleth. It is that of induction, concluding from the particular to the general. The book thus constitutes a dynamic whole where, beginning with a critical analysis of certain basic assumptions, its development moves to a higher level of truths which again are critically examined, until it reaches the final truth, the essential יתרון.

It is, therefore, the fallacious judgement of parts, separate from the organic totality, which have led to erroneous conclusions about the basic intent of Koheleth. It is most instructive that even the first six chapters, seemingly pes-

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simistic, serve in our tradition as an indirect proof for the necessity of life-affirmation. This proof is not explicit, merely hinted at, when Koheleth proclaims that there is no "יתרון" under the sun." By a simple inversion, if there is no יתרון under the sun, there is one "above" the sun. It is toward this that man must reach in order to attain a meaningful life. Concerned that premature and faulty conclusions might lead to doubt or even apostasy, our Sages at first hesitated to include Koheleth among canonical Scripture.

#### NATURE AND PURPOSE

Already philosophical systems of antiquity dealt with the problem of what constituted the lasting values of our existence. The socratic and platonic ideals were justice, beauty; those of hedonism, the enjoyment of life, while some later systems view crass materialism as the highest goal of human existence. Thus, philosophic schools of thought differ in their views of what constitutes the ultimate values of life. Indeed, Koheleth proceeds in his examinations in a similar vein.

In a series of inductive analyses he scrutinezes the various "ultimate values" that had been propounded by thinkers known up to his generation.

In his first chapter he attempts to show why pre-occupation with pure intellectuality does not afford the fulfillment of our quest for meaning. To the pure intellect the cosmos appears as nothing more than a monotonous oneness, without goal and purpose. Its four elements (c.f. Ibn Ezra: stars = fire; streams = water, winds and earth) seem to be in constant circular movement. There is an "eternal return of things," devoid of any meaning. Koheleth is forced to two conclusions. First, there is nothing absolutely new. What we consider to be new is merely changed appearance. Whatever exists is merely relatively new, since all has been there, potentially, since creation (c.f. Maimonides' dictum "עולם כמנהגו נוהג").

The second conclusion is that preoccupation with pure intellect is "הבל", erroneously translated "vanity." In fact this term is the key to our understanding of the inductive method employed by Koheleth. By this term he wishes to convey that הבל, as in the Aramaic הבלא = steam, is a "mirage," the direct opposite of יתרון. Precisely as steam seems to the beholder as something real, but on closer contact turns into nothing, so the occupation with pure wisdom (intellect) leads to sham-values, leaves one unsatisfied and with frustrating sense of trouble and oppression of the soul (c.f. Targum: רעות רוח).

## HEDONISM

In the second chapter Koheleth searches for new experiences and different ways of conducting one's life, designed to find the elusive יחרון. He now wishes to experience life in accordance with the whole range of hedonistic teachings: enjoyment and joy, all that pleases the heart of man. It is luxury and limitless acquisition of material goods, which now become the sole content of his life. Since they prove unsatisfactory, he attempts to combine these "material values" with "spiritual" ones. But alas, this attempt too proves to be a failure—as another mirage — הכל. Experience has taught him that the three partial values: spirituality, pleasure-seeking and material riches, even if combined, do not offer true satisfaction; they are an agonizing רעות רוח (v. II, and) not the יחרון.

Koheleth is now prepared for the next step in his inductive process. Comparing various life-values, he comes to the conclusion that חכמה (to be understood as the teleological striving for wisdom) is to כסילות (a goalless dilettantism) as light is to darkness. But soon he discovers that, if the "יחרון" of חכמה is limited to the this-worldly, it also is הכל. For both the wise and the dilettante the חכם and כסיל are struck by the same fate. The difference between both is equalized by inevitable death. For all earthy creations, irrespective of source, are bound for oblivion.

At this stage of the inductive process of reasoning, Koheleth turns into a man contemptuous of the this-worldly resulting in suffering day and night. He is enveloped by a dark sense of resignation and is deeply troubled by the uncertainties of the future concerning the creative achievements of the wise. He concludes, therefore, that there is no purpose in human this-worldly creativity. There is however one ray of hope: perhaps it is best to enjoy all values offered by life in the knowledge that these are perhaps divine gifts (v. 25). The man, in whom God has taken pleasure, gracing him with wisdom and joy of life has the chance for יחרון, while the rest, filled with the unsatiable drive after material goods, and pleasure-seeking, are merely chasing after phantoms — הכל.

We thus arrive at an important stage in the dynamic development of the thought-world of Koheleth, in which he recognizes God as the true source and the dispenser of all values and also as the prime-mover of all events and supreme guide of all happenings.

Resigned by the futility of impressing one's life-work on posterity, he concludes that it is God who had assigned spiritual or material blessings to men on their temporary earthly sojourn.





## TIME AND SEASON

In his third chapter Koheleth now examines the question of God's providence in the affairs of men and, following his inductive method, proceeds to weigh the problem of the individual and society. The lasting value deriving from personal ethics are sought in the fourth and fifth chapters respectively. At this level of inductive reasoning he comes to the conclusion that in all events, it is God who is the cause of all changes<sup>1</sup> and precisely this, for Koheleth, is unshakeable proof that God indeed is the supreme guide. Thus the concept of time turns into a significant ordering principle for the יתרון both in the micro and the macrocosmos. For him there exist two types of "time:" "זמן" – the time fated for the individual (c.f. Targum to "לכל גבר" 3:1); and "עת" – signifying a "season for all things."

This is to say that while all human beings are ruled by predestination, for all other phenomena in nature there is a divinely appointed season.<sup>2</sup> Koheleth enumerates thirteen contrasting "seasons," yet all are good in their time, for it is God's justice that equalizes them. All that has been seemingly crooked will be eventually straightened out by God's immanence in time. But the epitome of God's justice in the eyes of Koheleth are the persecuted. Attending to them and taking sides, rectifying the injustice, point to God's actuality in time.<sup>3</sup> When Koheleth subsequently states: "God hath so made it that men should fear before Him" (3:14), he confirms God's rectifying omnipotence. The knowledge that God's providence rules his life makes it incumbent upon man to live a life of affirmation. Yet at the same time he must be conscious of his limitations, since a permanent יתרון is only "above the sun," as intimated by the word שם (3:17) – yonder, the ultimate goal of our existence.

Now Koheleth attempts – again inductively – to test this new concept in the light of experience. He demonstrates (similar to Book II of Plato's "Republic"), that man can only be fully assessed in his interaction with society. But in his examination of society, known to him by experience as they key to test his newly gained world view, he notes severe defects, caused primarily by jealousy and

1. משנה עחים ומחליף הזמנים הרבני.

2. c.f. Maimonides, Guide to the Perplexed Part 3, ch. 13.

3. Ibn Ezra presents on this verse a remarkable non mathematical theory of relativity.

greed.<sup>4</sup> In these circumstances the stronger always oppress the weak. On close examination “society” represents again a “הבל” – a phantom value.

However a “society” based on foundations of positive ethics reveal the possibility of some lasting value. For such a society derives its strength from the motivation of individuals engaged in a constant battle between the good and evil inclinations. The good inclination makes man morally free while the evil inclinations enslaves him.

But even following one’s good inclinations has its weakness. It is like a “young child,” rather weak in the awakening moral progress of mankind. Relying on the inner strength is not enough, for bitter experience teaches that in the protracted battle between good and evil, the good loses out. In this battle Koheleth appreciates the individual who “knows his enemy.” But only as a servant of the Lord can he come out victorious from the battle between good and evil.

Thus the inductive philosophy of life, pursued by Koheleth, has reached the second and a most important turning point, allowing him to propose in the following eight chapters positive guides to a meaningful life.

#### A NEW LIFE CONTENT

The fifth chapter pursues the thought of a new content of life based on the newly gained insight. It begins with a warning against vain speculations, even against theodicy, since God cannot be comprehended. It therefore calls on man to a “religion of deeds.” Man stands before the alternatives of “autonomous morality” – one which is subjective, requiring no commitments but will only present another הבל, or of “heteronomous morality,” requiring submission to God and making full demands on him. From the standpoint of heteronomous morality, any breach of justice, any oppressive exploitation of the disadvantaged, is no victory for human arbitrariness. For man must know: “The Exalted One above the exalted, it is He who watches” (5:7) – for there is divine providence and supervision. Even kings are mere puppets doing the will of the Supreme Ruler.

#### DIVINE AND HUMAN PERSPECTIVES

In chapters six and seven Koheleth searches for an answer to the most troubling questions: Why are some favored and others ill-favored? Why the inequalities that plague us in this life?

4. c.f. La Fontaine: La Raison du plus forte est toujours la meilleure!

It is not given to man to eradicate existing flaws that prevail in the world for, in the last analysis, every discord and even pain is willed by Him. Perhaps they will find a place to fit harmoniously in the order of creation. In the human perspective our existence is shadowy, our struggles seem futile, our abilities limited, our appetites never satisfied. "All the labor of man is for his mouth, and his soul finds (here) no fulfillment — כל עמל האדם לפיהו, וגם הנפש לא תמלא (6:7). In short, the multitude of all our efforts seem to lead nowhere. Yet in the divine perspective there is some meaning to our frustrations which escapes us. Perhaps that meaning can be found in a life after death.

Yet man can do something about inequalities besetting him: How we dispose of material goods can serve as a source of moral action. "Oppression turneth a wise man into a fool and a gift destroyeth understanding" (7:7). He therefore advises "In the day of prosperity be joyful and in the day of adversity consider that God has made even the one as well as the other — to the end that man cannot find fault with Him — שלא ימצא האדם אחריו מאומה (7:14). For we lack absolute knowledge since: "that which is far off and exceeding deep, who can find it out?" (7:24). Koheleth now is led to a further conclusion, that perhaps it is man's insufficiency which is the root cause of all evil: it is only by man that all that was originally straight and harmonious is changed into its opposite.

#### KEEP THE KING'S COMMAND

In the eighth chapter Koheleth views with concern the fact that man, modelling himself after laws he himself created, is the very cause which prevents him from living in accordance with a universally acknowledged code of morality. Therefore he decides: "As for me, I keep the king's command, as an oath of God." (18:2). This brings him, finally, to an unconditional surrender to divine revelation and to a full commitment of the historical covenant binding him to the religion of our fathers.

The inductive method of Koheleth now nears a climax: the free acceptance of the tradition and of certain religious premises, which is the fulfillment of "Mitzvah." For "whoever keepeth the commandment shall know no evil thing. And a wise man's heart discerneth that final judgement is meted out in its proper time" (8:5). He who upholds the covenant at Sinai by fulfilling His commandment will not view anything as being absolutely evil. Though Koheleth still has doubts as to

the apparent injustice in the success of evil man and the suffering of the righteous, he now knows that this is so “because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of sons of man have the audacity to do evil” (8:11). From here it follows that God is long suffering and that, in the end, there is reward for the just.

#### DIVINE PROVIDENCE

While in the ninth chapter Koheleth demonstrates the limitations of human judgement as against divine pre-knowledge and providence, the tenth and the eleventh offers advice to the individual and to society on how to deal with the uncertainties of fate and the limitations of our understanding.

From the premise that God and His law are the rock foundation of all reality, Koheleth advises: “Rejoice, young man in thy youth and let thy heart cheer you in the days of thy youth . . . . But know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgement” (11:9). This now marks a positive attitude toward life. One is permitted to enjoy life, provided that man is conscious of the limits set by God’s Law.

In the final chapter Koheleth portrays again in vivid colors the nothingness of being, the vanity of earthly and finite existence – which of necessity leads to physical death. This attitude is again summed up with הכל הכל (12:8) which was his opening sentence. By a tour de force the climax of his inductive search for a lasting value is reached: “The end of all the matters, all having been weighed is: “Fear the Lord and keep all his commandments – for this is the whole man” (12-13), the only יתרון on earth.

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*(Answers continued from p. 45)*

3. The ratio of 100 to 10,000 does not match 5 to 100. Rashi comments that people who fulfill the Torah increase their power disproportionately! Ibn Ezra believes that it is natural and idiomatic to use decimal numbers such as 10,000 (especially since that number is here expressed in one word – רבבה). It is also reasonable to assume that as numbers increase power often increases disproportionately. The situation in Deuteronomy 32:30 is of a different nature.
4. The commentary “Kli Yakar” suggests that when people are in a state of anxiety and misfortune such as described in the Tokhahah, they tend to make rash vows.

## SEVENTEENTH WORLD YOUTH BIBLE CONTEST

The seventeenth World Youth Bible Contest was held on Israel Yom Haatzmaut Day at the Jerusalem Theater. The stage, resplendent with the seating arrangement of the 27 contestants from 13 countries, facing the array of judges and presidium, lent an aura of festivity as well as excited anticipation in the exercises of the day. Over the years, this program has become the central feature of Israel's Independence Day celebrations. Nationally televised, the Bible contest was followed by a nationwide audience, some of whom became sufficiently aroused to call up the theater to contest here and there a ruling of the judges. On several occasions, the contestants themselves raised demurrers at the decision of the judges, and in many instances, after quick consultations among the judges and presidium, adding excitement to the proceedings, the verdict was issued in favor of the contestants.

This year, an Israeli youth of Yemenite extraction, Nehria Pinchas, one of a family of nine children was proclaimed the world champion of Bible for Jewish youth, gaining one hundred of a possible hundred points. He was trailed by David Moriah another Israeli youth who earned ninety nine of the possible hundred points. These were fantastic performances by any standards.

It was a wise decision on the part of the directorium of the Bible contest to introduce, for the first time, two types of champions, one for the world and one for



*Nehria Pinchas (Israel), World Champion (left).  
Meir Orlian (U.S.A), Champion of the Diaspora.*



*Finalists from the Diaspora, with Professor Haim Gevaryanu, Chairman of the World Jewish Bible Society.*

*From left to right: Meir Orlian, David Zinberg, Prof. Gevaryahu, Aline Bauer, Francine Zussman*

the Diaspora. A fourteen year old youth from the USA, Meir Orlian, a student from the Yeshivah University High School in New York, emerged as the champion of the Diaspora, followed by David Zinberg, a student of Flatbush Yeshivah Brooklyn.

Present at the theater was Prime Minister Menachem Begin who not only addressed the contestants and distributed prizes, but himself submitted the final set of questions. Minister of Interior, Dr. Joseph Burg, served as in previous years as the head of a distinguished panel of judges. Colonel Meir Ben Hillel, commander of the Gadna, the pre-military youth corps which hosts and administers this program and Zevulun Hammer, Minister of Education offered greetings. Chaplain (Major) Mordecai Abramski coordinated the program. Joseph Shaar composed the questions as in previous years.

On the day following Yom Ha-atzmaut, all participants were received by Mr. Yitzhak Navon, President of the State of Israel, in the Beth Ha-Nasi, the President's Mansion.

It should be noted that it was Ben Gurion who together with Professor Haim Gevaryahu, Chairman of the World Jewish Bible Society, initiated this program, and engineered the partnership between the Gadna and the World Jewish Bible Society, symbolizing the mutual relationship of self defense and the eternal values of Bible – **סייפא וספרא**. It is estimated that 50,000 to 60,000 youth participated in the local, regional and national Bible contests throughout the world. The unity of the Jewish people is most evident in this cultural event.

## PARTICIPANTS

### *Argentina*

Miriam Freue

### *Australia*

David Gershov

### *Belgium*

Aline Mauer

### *Canada*

Gil Aronson

Kathy Schneider

### *France*

Benjamin Gabai

Yomtov Trabelski

Moche Niddam

### *Chile*

Lili Cohen

### *Israel*

Naftali Macheluf

David Moriah

Neheriah Pinchas

Nahum Stepanski

### *Mexico*

Nissim Betesh

Ezra Hemsani

### *Panama*

Yiffat Hasky

### *South Africa*

Kim Fabian

David Nossel

### *Sweden*

Dina Nulman

### *Uruguay*

Daniel Aksler

### *USA*

Meir Orlian

Rosalyn Weiss

Francie Zussman

David Zinberg

Larry Cohen

Hana Lukinsky

Mickey Kahan



## CORRECTION

In the Dor le-Dor issue, Vol. VII, No. 2, we were pleased to submit an article in Hebrew by a previous contestant, Leonard Warner. In the comment, following his article, an important omission and a little error occurred which we now wish to correct.

Leonard Warner, of Downsview, Ontario participated in the World Jewish Bible contest in 1974. Being then only a lad of 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ , he won first prize to become the world champion of the international Jewish Bible Contest in that year.

## עשה תורתך קבע

### TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

September 1980			חשרי תשמ"א	October 1980			חשון תשמ"א
Th	11	Haftarah:	א ראש השנה	Sa	11	Haftarah: Isaiah	א 54:1-66
			I Samuel 1-2:10	S	12	Jeremiah	ב 12
F	12	Haftarah:	ב ראש השנה	M	13	Jeremiah	ג 13
			Jeremiah 31	T	14	Jeremiah	ד 14
Sa	13	האוינו	ג שבת שוכה	W	15	Jeremiah	ה 15
		Haftarah:		Th	16	Jeremiah	ו 16
			Hoseah 14:2-16(A)	F	17	לך לך	ז 17
			Joel 7:15-27(S)	Sa	18	Haftarah:	ח 18
S	14	Jonah	ד			Isaiah 40:27-41:16	
M	15	Jonah	ה	S	19	Jeremiah	ט 19
T	16	Jonah	ו	M	20	Jeremiah	י 20
W	17	Jonah	ז	T	21	Jeremiah	יא 21
Th	18	Jonah	ח	W	22	Jeremiah	יב 22
F	19		ט ערב יום כפור	Th	23	Jeremiah	יג 23
Sa	20	Haftarah:	י יום כפור	F	24	וירא	יד 24
			Isaiah 57:14-58:16	Sa	25	Haftarah: II Kings 4:1-37	טו 25
S	21	Ecclesiastes	יא	S	26	Jeremiah	טז 26
M	22	Ecclesiastes	יב	M	27	Jeremiah	יז 27
T	23	Ecclesiastes	יג	T	28	Jeremiah	יח 28
W	24		יד ערב סוכות	W	29	Jeremiah	יט 29
Th	25	Haftarah:	טו סוכות	Th	30	Jeremiah	כ 30
			Zechariah 14	F	31	חיי שרה	כא 31
F	26		טז סוכות				
Sa	27	Haftarah:	יז שבת חול המועד				
			Ezekiel 38:18-39:16				
S	28	Ecclesiastes	יח חול המועד	Sa	1	Haftarah: I Kings 1:1-31	כב 1
M	29	Ecclesiastes	יט חול המועד	S	2	Jeremiah	כג 2
T	30	Ecclesiastes	כ חול המועד	M	3	Jeremiah	כד 3
				T	4	Jeremiah	כה 4
October				W	5	Jeremiah	כו 5
W	1	Ecclesiastes	כא חול המועד	Th	6	Jeremiah	כז 6
T	2	Ecclesiastes	כב שמיני עצרת	F	7	תולדות	כח 7
F	3		כג שמחת תורה	Sa	8	Haftarah: Malachi 1-2:7	כט 8
Sa	4	Haftarah:	כד בראשית				
			Isaiah 42:5-43:5				
S	5	Jeremiah	כה				
M	6	Jeremiah	כו				
T	7	Jeremiah	כז				
W	8	Jeremiah	כח				
Th	9	Jeremiah	כט				
F	10	נח	ל שבת ראש חודש				

## TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

November 1980	כסלו חשמ"א	December 1980	טבת חשמ"א
S 9 Jeremiah 32	א	M 8 Ezekiel 1	א חנוכה
M 10 Jeremiah 33	ב	T 9 Ezekiel 2	ב חנוכה
T 11 Jeremiah 34	ג	W 10 Ezekiel 3	ג חנוכה
W 12 Jeremiah 35	ד	Th 11 Ezekiel 4	ד
Th 13 Jeremiah 36	ה	F 12 ויגש	ה
F 14 ויצא	ו	Sa 13 Haftarah:	ו
Sa 15 Haftarah:	ז	Ezekiel 37:15-28	
Hosea 12:13-14:10(A)		S 14 Ezekiel 5	ז
Hosea 11:7-12:12(S)		M 15 Ezekiel 6	ח
S 16 Jeremiah 37	ח	T 16 Ezekiel 7	ט
M 17 Jeremiah 38	ט	W 17 Ezekiel 8	י
T 18 Jeremiah 39	י	Th 18 Ezekiel 9	יא
W 19 Jeremiah 40	יא	F 19 ויחי	יב
Th 20 Jeremiah 41	יב	Sa 20 Haftarah: I Kings 2:1-12	יג
F 21 וישלח	יג	S 21 Ezekiel 10	יד
Sa 22 Haftarah:	יד	M 22 Ezekiel 11	טו
Hosea 11:7-12:12(A)		T 23 Ezekiel 12	טז
Obadiah(S)		W 24 Ezekiel 13	יז
S 23 Jeremiah 42	טו	Th 25 Ezekiel 14	יח
M 24 Jeremiah 43	טז	F 26 שמוח	יט
T 25 Jeremiah 44	יז	Sa 27 Haftarah:	כ
W 26 Jeremiah 45	יח	Isaiah 27:6-28:13(A)	
Th 27 Jeremiah 46	יט	Jeremiah 1-2:3(S)	
F 28 וישב	כ	S 28 Ezekiel 15	כא
Sa 29 Haftarah: Amos 2:6-3:8	כא	M 29 Ezekiel 16	כב
S 30 Jeremiah 47	כב	T 30 Ezekiel 17	כג
		W 31 Ezekiel 18	כד
December:			
M 1 Jeremiah 48	כג		
T 2 Jeremiah 49	כד	January	
W 3 Jeremiah 50	כה חנוכה	Th 1 Ezekiel 19	כה
Th 4 Jeremiah 51	כו חנוכה	F 2 וארא	כו
F 5 מקץ	כז חנוכה	Sa 3 Haftarah:	כז
Sa 6 Haftarah:	כח שבת חנוכה	Ezekiel 28:25-29:21	
Zechariah 2:14-4:7		S 4 Ezekiel 20	כח
S 7 Jeremiah 52	כט חנוכה	M 5 Ezekiel 21	כט

### דף יומי

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

ראש השנה ממשיכים מ. סנהדרין צ"ח

י"ז בתשרי מתחילים מ. מכוח

י בחשון מתחילים מ. שבועות

דור לדור

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<b>Editorial</b>	<i>Louis Katzoff</i>	1
<b>Tragedy in the Bible</b>	<i>Sarah Halperin</i>	3
<b>Solomon's Humiliation</b>	<i>Sol Liptzin</i>	11
<b>Elijah</b>	<i>Shimon Bakon</i>	23
<b>Moses-Man of Indecision</b>	<i>Stuart A. West</i>	33
<b>Torah Dialogues</b>	<i>Harold D. Halpern</i>	44
<b>Introduction to a New Kohelet Commentary</b>	<i>Elchanan Blumental</i>	46
<b>Seventeenth World Youth Bible Contest</b>		53
<b>Triennial Bible Reading Calendar</b>		56