

THE WORLD JEWISH BIBLE SOCIETY

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THE BOOK OF JONAH

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EDITORIAL NOTE

With the launching of this Bulletin for the English reading public, the editors consider their objectives to be:

To deepen the attachment to Bible among its readers

To deepen the commitment of our people toward the treasures of our heritage

To interpret the program of the World Jewish Bible Society to the English speaking world

To build a stronger link between the Golah and Israel, where the love of the Bible enjoys a centrality of interest of incredible proportions.

The World Jewish Bible Society, in its twenty years of existence, enjoys an enviable record of activities. Among the cardinal achievements are publication of its quarterly Bet Mikra, publication of the scholarly Bible lectures and discussions held regularly since 1958, first at the home of the Prime Minister of Israel and presently at the home of the President of Israel, the publication of special Jubilee and memorial volumes in honor or memory of great Biblical scholars, the publication of special works by Biblical scholars, the convening of an annual national conference and quarterly regional conferences for Bible study, and the sponsoring of an annual international Bible contest for youth in which contestants from scores of countries have participated.

It is hoped that our efforts will restore the primacy of the moral law, as reflected in the Book of Books, in the minds of men as they face life in a growingly complex and turbulent society. May the word from Zion come forth to illumine the Jewish world through our basic source, the Bible.

THE BOOK OF JONAH

by ZALMAN SHAZAR

Opening address of the 19th Annual Conference of the Israel Society for Biblical Research, Jerusalem, Passover, 5731, translated from President Shazar's Hebrew article in *Beth Mikra*, Vol. 47 (4), September, 1971.

I chose for this address a very modest book from among the prophetic books, one of the Minor Prophets, a book consisting of only four chapters, but containing much of interest to the world. A commentator once pointed out that the number of books and commentaries written about this small book, Jonah, surpassed the total number of verses contained therein. I shall address myself to these four chapters which introduced a new idea into our culture and into Jewish as well as universal consciousness.

THE PROBLEM: IS JONAH A PROPHETIC BOOK

At first glance, it is difficult to understand why the book of Jonah was placed among the prophetic books. It is a book that contains no prophetic writings. There is no prophetic vision, no word of God, nor anything about prophecy, neither for Israel nor for the peoples of the world, except for one verse of five words, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (Jonah 3:4). These are the only words of prophecy. The rest is narrative, a psalm, but not prophecy. Furthermore, there is nothing in Jonah about the Jews, nothing about Israel, nor Jerusalem, nor Zion, nor about the redemption of Israel, none of the great thoughts that we regularly find in prophetic books.

My question is not how it came about that Jonah is included in Scripture, but rather why is it not included among the books of the Hagiographa ("the Writings") since it is an account of a prophet's life. That it has found its way among the prophetic books, specifically among the minor prophets, is difficult to understand. What are the books of the minor prophets? They are an anthology of prophetic statements that were preserved. The prophets might have spoken more than what has come down to us, or they might have uttered only those words that were preserved. However, if you will compare Jonah to Obadiah, Zephaniah or Zechariah, you will find it totally different in style, in content and theme.

It seems to me that the uniqueness and purpose of the book of Jonah, set within the prophetic books, are not accidental but fundamental. I would call it

an introduction to prophecy. It unravels for us the essential puzzle as to the function of the prophet in Israel, why prophecy was necessary in Israel, and what was its role in the development of civilization.

It is written in Amos 2:10-11, "Also I brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and led you forty years in the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite; and I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites." This was the great gift God bestowed upon the people of Israel, that He took us forth from bondage in Egypt and He gave us prophets.

The problem before us is: What is the task of the prophet, and what is his mission? Where is the essence of the prophet's mission stated? This question is bound up with another, which pervades the whole of the Bible. In our Bible circle, we are presently studying the book of Jeremiah, a book permeated by a problem: There are true prophets and false prophets, and it is for us to distinguish between the two. What is the difference between one and the other? The book of Jeremiah abounds in comparisons of this sort, so that a man can know who is a true prophet and who is not, what his function is and what responsibility is placed upon him as a prophet in Israel. Perhaps we can find the key to the answer in the short book called Jonah.

THE "SEER"

In the Pentateuch we find the distinction between a true and a false prophet. "And if thou shalt say in thy heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken?' When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken; the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously, thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deuteronomy 18:21-22). This is the rule set down for us by the book of Deuteronomy. But this rule can be applied only after the fact. At the time of the event, it is impossible to know whether the matter will come to pass or not. Translating this concept into prosaic language, I would say that this criterion is not the test of a prophet; it is rather a test of one who foretells the future. He predicts what will be, and we want to know whether in truth he knows that it will happen, and how he knows it will happen, and how we can know whether to heed his voice or not. This passage, therefore, applies only to a fortuneteller or to someone who foretells something for a future time, a talent not given to ordinary mortals but to one graced with a special sense, a special endowment of the divine spirit.

The matter is simply and beautifully expressed in the first book of Samuel 9:9, "Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he said, 'Come, and let us go to the seer'; for he that is now called a prophet was beforetime

called a seer." Before prophets came upon the scene of history, there were "seers" in Israel, dreamers who saw in their visions what would come about in the future or in distant places, an extra-sensory insight that ordinary persons did not possess. For example, when the donkeys of Saul's father were lost and Saul needed to know their whereabouts, he went to the seer to tell him. This the seer could envision.

The Bible wanted to distinguish clearly between the seer and the prophet. The Bible did not wish to blur the fields of endeavor of the two; it wanted to establish a clear difference between seer and prophet. The seers could see visions, foretell the future and they were identified with a sacred site, not necessarily Israelite. In every sanctuary there were men who could see and know what an ordinary person could not. They were called "seers". Samuel was a seer. He represented the period before that of the literary prophets. We now call prophets like Amos, Isaiah, and their like, literary prophets in order to distinguish them from seers, prognosticators and diviners who were identified with particular sanctuaries.

There is an event in the book of Samuel of frightening harshness which I would almost say is contrary to the prophetic concepts of the great prophets. Samuel tells Saul: "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (I Samuel 15:3). Saul heeded the voice of Samuel and destroyed Amalek, but he had compassion for Agag and for the best of his sheep, and spared them. Whereupon Samuel rebuked him thus: "... for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel" (ibid, v.26). Saul, the first king in Israel, who only recently had been "head and shoulders" above the rest, beloved by his people, suddenly finds himself abhorred by the Lord and cast out of his kingdom because he did not obey this one command.

When the king begs for forgiveness and pleads before Samuel, "I have sinned; yet honor me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people and before Israel" (ibid, v.30), he is answered by this "seer", the elder Samuel, with directness and coldly, "the Glory of Israel will not lie nor repent, for He is not a man, that He should repent" (ibid, v.29). Thus said the Lord, and so it shall be! Neither he, the seer, nor the first king can change the oracle. The sentence is passed, and there is no way out. The king must vacate his throne and leave it to "a neighbor of thine that is better than thou" (ibid, v.28). Samuel cannot help him at all.

The concepts of the oracle, of fatefulness, these are pre-prophetic notions, prior to the appearance of the literary prophets. Isaiah and Jeremiah could never be imagined to speak in this vein.

Let us look into the words of another pre-prophetic personality, prior to Samuel, Balaam, who declares categorically, "God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent: when He hath said, will He not do it? Or when He hath spoken, will He not make it good?" (Numbers 23:19). The verdict is cast, and nothing can be done by man to alter it. This is reminiscent of the Greek world view wherein fate is determined and man powerless to transcend it. Man is at the mercy of fate and is subjected to its decree with no escape possible.

THE PROPHET

The literary prophets start from a different frame of reference. They think the matter does not hinge upon a verdict, but rather upon man's deeds. "If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land; but if ye refuse and rebel, ye shall be devoured with the sword; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken" (Isaiah 1:19-20). Your destiny is in your hands, and whether it will be good or bad depends upon you.

The tiny book of Jonah is a great satire on the "seer" Jonah. This is a satire written by one who lived in the transitional period between the seer and the prophet. The book was written to show that prophecy has a mission in the world. What is that mission? To change fate, to alter the decree. Were I not fearful of paradox and were I not concerned about being quoted incorrectly, I would say that if the function of the seer as described in the book of Deuteronomy is authenticated by the fulfilment of his prediction, and his repudiation is fixed by stoning if his words do not come to pass, then the function of the true prophet is realized when his prediction *does not come to pass*. The prophet is sent to stir, awaken and to reprove, to tell his people "the future is before you, upon you depends the outcome, tear out the evil decree and make it nought, for which purpose you were redeemed from Egypt".

That "I raised up of your sons for prophets" (Amos 2:11), is an indication that this is vital to the nation if it is to be able to live properly and to be rescued from danger. Not only was the people redeemed from Egypt by a prophet, but it was likewise guarded from dangers, for it possessed a prophet to warn it. In other words, one can say that the concept of God not repenting is nullified, and a new idea is born. "And God repented of the evil, which He said He would do unto them; and He did it not" (Jonah 3:10).

In the book of Jeremiah we find an arraignment of the "seer's" concept of the unalterability of a decree. Jeremiah argues against the thought that the Holy One, Blessed be He, cannot harbor regret. On the contrary, the purpose of His word is to make it possible for Him to regret the thing He spoke of doing.

"Micah the Morashtite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah; and he spoke to all the people of Judah, saying: thus saith the Lord of hosts: Zion shall be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest. Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? Did he not fear the Lord, and entreat the favor of the Lord, and the Lord repented Him of the evil which He had pronounced against them?" (Jeremiah 26:18-19). This is an actual account of Jeremiah's stand in absolute contradiction to what Samuel had said. King Saul is sorry and pleads for compassion before Samuel, but is told nothing can be done since God is not man who can go back on his word, for as God speaks He makes it come to pass. But now, Jeremiah related what Micah the Morashtite prophesied, and king Hezekiah does not put him to death, but repentantly changes his way and becomes a righteous king in the eyes of God.

JONAH: "DO NOT DESPAIR"

Even when Jonah cites the thirteen divine attributes, that most sacred prayer recited with soul-stirring feeling at our religious service when the ark is opened, he introduces a change at the end, "Thou art a gracious God, and compassionate, long suffering and abundant in mercy, and repentest Thee of the evil" (Jonah 4:2). In the Torah (portion of Ki Tissa), the ending of this verse goes, "and God will by no means clear the guilty" (Exodus 34:7). In contrast, we find in Jonah, "and repentest thee of the evil." This is one of the majestic attributes of the Holy One, Blessed Be He. He does not insist on His pronouncement, but can repent and regret what He said; and if He passes an evil decree, the individual, the people or the ruling authority can reverse it. Even if it is not a single individual but an entire people that sinned, like Nineveh — Nineveh is here the prototype of a sinful people, of an iniquitous regime, one that oppresses, dehumanizes, and heaps evil upon evil — even for this people and for this regime one should not despair, for the day can come when this people can turn in repentance and be transformed into a free and righteous people.

This is the function of Jonah. He is sent to some land, any land — I doubt if the whereabouts of Nineveh is well known and what its society was like; many have searched but do not know what happened in that period to Nineveh, or whether there is even an historic background to Jonah's story — but the historic aspect is not important. What is significant is the literary side, the originality of this prophetic personality, and most of all the thought: "Do not despair". This is the profound message of his prophecy, "Do not despair". Even if man be very evil, he can repair his ways and thus reach redemption. A people too need not despair. "Let not the eunuch say, 'behold, I am a dry

tree'" (Isaiah 56:3). The transgressor should not despair. There is no righteous man who does only good and will not sin; "and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psalm 51:7). Many are the pitfalls and many the temptations; from within and without the danger lurks, and each one can fall victim. However, the man who sins can return in repentance.

Greek drama is based on the idea that when an evil is committed, it will pursue man generation after generation. The greatness of the Hebrew genius inheres in the fact that prophecy rose up and freed man from the shackles of tragic fate which heretofore left him nowhere to turn. The sinner too knows that he is not forlorn, his sentence is not yet sealed, and choice is still his. And so the Hebrew religion affirms that since man has free will, it is in his capacity to correct his deeds, causing every decree to vanish like smoke.

FROM SEER TO PROPHET

The great author of the book of Jonah even mocks the intellectual narrowness of Jonah who fears to forebode evil lest God later have compassion as a result of the people's penitence, and Jonah might therefore turn out to be a liar. In that case were it not better that he bring no message to Nineveh which might bring them to repentance? In that way the prophet will not appear a liar, and he will save his honor and himself.

Jonah is shown as acting in a manner inconceivable of the classical prophets, of whom one could not ever believe that "the prophet rose and fled from the presence of God." In the case of Jonah it is stated that "he rose up to flee unto Tarshish from the presence of the Lord". Who among you knows where Tarshish is, whether it is a legendary land or not? Yet, Jonah boards a ship headed for Tarshish, pays his fare and travels "toward that land escaping from the presence of the Lord" and from the task placed upon him by God. It does not matter if Nineveh is destroyed; — let it be destroyed as long as his honor is preserved and he is not a deceiver. The prophet mocking Jonah sees them as not understanding his function nor perceiving the necessity of his mission since God will anyway permit His compassion to prevail and put to nought all the dire forebodings of the destruction of the city.

Jonah is not aware that he was created for this very purpose, to warn and to deliver Nineveh from impending danger: if he will not go there, the Holy One, Blessed be He, will not be able to avert His decree since the people will not better their ways. What is essential is that man should better his ways. It is never too late, and the possibility of deliverance is always there. Whether the prophet ends up as a liar or not, is not the focal question. It is his duty to come and speak his word, to tell it so that the people will hear him, be shaken up and

make him a liar. The very task of the prophet is to become a liar — provided that he has made his point. All this is written in the book of Jonah.

It is to the credit of the strong and deep religious instinct of our people that they singled out this satiric book about the prophet who does not apprehend his mission and made it "Maftir Jonah" on Yom Kippur, crowning expression of repentance. What is it you seek of God? Forgiveness, pardon, and atonement. You relate the tale of Jonah, praise and glory for the special attribute with which God graced man, enabling him to return in penitence and thereby achieve atonement; repentance is mightier than any fateful decree.

I therefore think that this small book, Jonah, is the programmatic book for the literary prophets telling us why prophets were sent to Israel and what their function was. The words burn in the prophet's heart like a fire that he cannot contain. And what is the blessing for the sake of which God sent prophets to Israel, choosing the true ones among them? It is that the prophet warns his people, and changes their fate by altering the people's ways from evil to good.

Among the few Talmudic references to the biography of the prophets, there is a statement that Jonah, the son of Amittai, of the book of Jonah is the same Jonah, son of Amittai, of Second Kings who prophesied in the reign of King Jeroboam, son of Joash: "He restored the border of Israel from the entrance of Hamath unto the sea of Arabah, according to the word of the Lord, God of Israel, which He spoke by the hand of his servant Jonah, the son of Amittai, the prophet who was of Gath-hepher" (II Kings 14:25). It could be that the Talmudic identification is based merely on the similarity of the name. It seems to me, however, that the matter goes much deeper. The Jonah of Jeroboam's period whose prophecy refers to the recovery of the border at the entrance of Hamath, prophesied at the time when "the Lord saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter; for there was none shut up nor left at large, neither was there any helper in Israel" (ibid v.26). That is to say, he appeared precisely in the period between Samuel and Amos, at the conclusion of the era of the "seer" and at the beginning of the era of Amos, the first of the great ideological literary prophets. Jonah is still standing with one foot in the period of the "seer" and with the other stepping into the period of the literary prophets, and not yet grasping what task God was placing upon him, as the author of our book tells us in his clever and satiric manner.

JONAH AND JOB

I once wrote that I see another work in the Bible, similar in literary style and form to Jonah, and that is the book of Job. The author of the book of Job plays with Job in his introduction and prologue. I am not referring to the basic issue

in the book, which requires deep thought. I am referring to the literary setting of the book which puts Job in the position of a blind man who does not comprehend what is happening to him. He sees all these misfortunes falling upon him, he disputes the reasons, he cries out that he did not sin and does not deserve all this punishment. But he does not know what the reader is aware of, what you and all students of the Bible know, that in the prologue Satan appears with a special game to play, and it is decided to test Job. The reader is more knowledgeable than the hero. The central figure does not know what the reader knows, for already in the prologue the objective of the game is expressed. The same is true of Jonah who does not know why he was sent to Nineveh, and why God had made him a target of mockery. But the reader knows that the prophet was created precisely for this task, not that God's warning might come to pass, but that man might repent and be healed.

BACK TO THE BIBLE

BACK TO THE BIBLE

by H.M.I. GEVARYAHU

The extensive Tanakh study projects initiated by the Israel Society for Biblical Research, and the initial steps taken presently by it to stimulate the study of the Bible among Jews abroad, reflect a quickening of interest in the study of the Bible.

In Eretz Yisrael, only during the Second Commonwealth, was the learning of Bible (תורה שבכתב) as widespread as it is today. A Greek inscription, found in 1914 in Jerusalem, reads: "Theodus son of Vitinus, priest and of the synagoge, build this house *for the reading of the Torah* and teaching the commandments". In fact, the interpreters of the Law in the synagogues of that time laid down the basis for the "Oral Law" (תורה שבעל פה).

The study of the Tanakh continued to advance until the sect of Christians began to widen its influence in the country. The early preachers of that sect made frequent use of the Bible, interpreting it in accordance with their teachings. It reached such a point that Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus ruled: "Restrict your children from *"higayon"*. This was taken to mean, beware of scriptural interpretation, which leads to heresy.

It was only several hundreds of years later that the appearance of another sect, the Karaites, brought a remarkable revival of interest in the Tanakh. The Karaites who accepted only the written law cultivated its study as well as the Hebrew language. They were a challenge to the great rabbinical academies in Babylon, whose principal concern was the Talmud. Rabbi Saadia Gaon (b. 891) took up this challenge and called for interest in Tanakh and the Hebrew language. His success was immediate and far-reaching. Saadia wrote the first Hebrew grammar for Jews, and translated the Tanakh into Arabic.

The work begun by the militant Rav Saadia Gaon was carried on by numerous scholars in Western Europe, the new center of learning. Menahem ben Saruk (10th century) who compiled the first Bible dictionary, showed the way. Rashi (1040-1105) who is called the teacher of all Israel quotes Saruk frequently in his famous Bible commentary. Next we may mention Abraham Ibn Ezra (1092-1167) who followed closely Saadia Gaon's teaching. Maimonides instructed his son to consult Ibn Ezra's commentary on the Bible. Incidentally, Maimonides' advice was not to study Mishna and the later works until one had gained a competent knowledge of the Bible. Three other great scholars of that period when Bible scholarship reached its peak were Radak (Kimhi),

The study of the written law (Bible), together with the oral law was the norm among Jews until the period of Moses Mendelsohn (18th century) in Germany. In the Haskalah movement that arose after Mendelsohn's time a slogan developed, "We do not need the Talmud but only the Tanakh". This slogan didn't last long but it made enough of an impression on the Jews in Eastern Europe so that they retreated from studying those parts of the Tanakh which were not connected with synagogue ritual. A yeshivah student who studied Job or second Isaiah was suspected of heresy.

With the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, there were only three Bible study groups in action. One was in Haifa under the leadership of the renowned educator Dr. Arthur Biram. A second group, headed by the late Nehemiah Raban and Joseph Braslavi, was in Tel Aviv, and the third consisted of students of the Hebrew University who met in Jerusalem. A need was felt to spread the knowledge of Tanakh as a focus for the enrichment of the biblical experience in Israel. These three groups joined together to found the Israel Society for Biblical Research. They were aided in this effort by three great professors of Bible in Israel, Y. Kaufmann, M.D. Cassuto, and M.Z. Segal. Their work found fertile ground in the place that the Bible occupied in the schools and universities, and even with the Israel Defence Forces. (When a recruit enters the armed services he receives a copy of the Tanakh as part of the "general issue").

Today the Israel Bible Society has nearly 20,000 members, organized in almost 500 study groups. When the Israel Bible Society was founded, it organized study groups throughout the country. These groups can generally be classified into three types: — a) scholarly groups, where every participant is a scholar in his own right and can contribute to the group, e.g. the head group meets in the home of the President of Israel; b) groups composed mainly of laymen but including a few scholars who usually lead the group; c) popular groups of laymen or youth only who study the Bible on their own with some guidance from the outside. The Society has had great influence and has received the active support of many of the country's leaders, e.g. President Shazar, David Ben Gurion, and others, enrolling as well many workers in its ranks.

Other than the study groups, the Society holds local conferences on biblical themes and a yearly national conference, held in Jerusalem. The national conference is based upon the idea of studying the whole Bible over a period of twelve years, the conference being devoted to one or two books each year. The coming year, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the establishment of Medinat Yisrael, the conference will be studying the books of Psalms and Ruth. The conference also visits sites associated with the book under study.

Other activities include the quadrennial International Bible Quiz and the

yearly World Bible Quiz for Jewish Youth. In addition, the Society sponsors exhibits of various kinds devoted to biblical art, realia, etc.

Finally, the Society publishes material for Bible study and the only Jewish Bible journal in the Hebrew language — "Beth Mikra". The World Jewish Bible Society, together with the Jewish Agency Cultural Department, strives to establish a common denominator with Jews the whole world over around the most precious heritage of Jewish creativity — the Bible.

In closing, I want to say to our friends in the Diaspora: Since the establishment of the State of Israel we have made tremendous strides. Israel is again an important center of Bible research. A generation of Israeli scholars have done much independent research which has brought them world-wide recognition. Our knowledge of the Hebrew language is being perfected, and our archaeologists have made many startling discoveries which have shed new light on biblical subjects.

I hope and pray that many Jews from abroad will come here to share in our work. And in the meantime I hope that through our various publications they will avail themselves of the growing store of knowledge accumulated by the Israel Society for Bible Research. Thus, we may come nearer to the day when "All your children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of your children" (Isaiah 54:13).

BELGIUM: THE NEWEST CHAPTER

The newest chapter of the World Jewish Bible Society was organized in September 1971 in Belgium, at the home of Mrs. Hava Fisher, President of the Belgian Wizo. Encouraged by the inspiring visit of Dr. Haim Gevaryahu, Director of the Society, a study group was soon later formed at the home of Dr. Harry Patcas, who assumed the presidency of the chapter. The group meets presently on a weekly basis at the new Romi Goldmintz Centrum, the cultural center of the Jewish community of Antwerp, and hears lectures by Biblical scholars.

Members of the Executive Board are: Moshe Dorf, Avraham Huterer Michel Klein; Mesdames Hava Fisher, Shula Greenbaum, Myriam Leiser and S. Tau.

THE BIBLE READERS' UNION AND THE WORLD JEWISH BIBLE SOCIETY

by JOSEPH HALPERN

New readers of this Bulletin, particularly members of the World Jewish Bible Society in the U.S.A., to whom we take this opportunity of extending a very warm welcome, may be interested in the origin and development of the Bible Readers Union. The Bible Readers' Union was launched, the first number of the Bulletin appearing on Friday, July 21st 1939. It was the day before שבת חזון and the reading began with the Haftara for that day, Isaiah chapter 1, on Saturday, July 22nd.

The intention was to publish the Bulletin monthly, and under "Our Plan" it was announced that the next issue would appear on Friday, Sept. 8th. But before that date World War II had broken out, and few people believed that it would be possible to continue with the Union. One may say that it was מן השמים that the Union had started before the outbreak of war, and events thereafter helped it to reach a much wider public.

The late Rabbi Dr. I. Epstein, editor of the Soncino Talmud and subsequently Principal of Jew's College, accepted an invitation to become the President of the Union, and until his lamented death in April 1962, was actively associated with its work. Throughout the war years his Message of the Month inspired literally thousands at home and abroad with the supreme conviction that in the end right would triumph and evil and wickedness would be destroyed.

That was the keynote of the Bulletin which, in spite of all difficulties, appeared no less than sixty times in the six years of the war. Providentially, the religious leaders of Great Britain, headed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, felt that the country and the world needed a recall to religion and that religion meant going back to the Bible as the word of God. *The London Times*, in addition to the *Jewish Chronicle*, was most helpful in supporting the Bible Readers' Union from the beginning and through it many non-Jews became members, and have remained constant readers through the years.

The one hundredth issue of the Bulletin appeared on Friday, March 23rd 1962, and since then another thirty-two numbers have appeared, the last in September 1970. On Tuesday, April 14th 1970, the Bible Readers' Union began its fourteenth reading of the 929 chapters of the Hebrew Bible.

Membership in the Bible Readers' Union is open to all, Jews and non-Jews alike, at a minimum subscription of £1 or IL. 10, which can be sent to the Treasurer, Mr. B. Rose, 18 Russell Gardens, Golders Green, London, NW11, 9 NL, England, or to the Hon. Secretary, Mrs. Eva Halpern, 122 Rehov Uziel, Ramat Gan, Israel.

1972-3 TRIENNIAL TANAKH STUDY CYCLE, FIRST YEAR

OCTOBER

SU	15	Joshua 13	ז	יהושע יג
MO	16	Joshua 14	ח	יהושע יד
TU	17	Joshua 15	ט	יהושע טו
WE	18	Joshua 16	י	יהושע טז
TH	19	Joshua 17	יא	יהושע יז
FR	20	Joshua 18	יב	יהושע יח
SA	21	לך לך הפט' ישעיה מ, א	יג	לך לך הפט' ישעיה מ, א

Genesis 12-13

ויאמר ה' אל אברם לך לך מארצך וממולדתך ומבית

אביך אל הארץ אשר אראך

Now the Lord said to Avram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred and from thy father's house to the land that I will show thee. (Gen. 12:1)

OCTOBER

SU	22	Joshua 19	יד	יהושע יט
MO	23	Joshua 20	טו	יהושע כ
TU	24	Joshua 21	טז	יהושע כא
WE	25	Joshua 22	יז	יהושע כב
TH	26	Joshua 23	יח	יהושע כג
FR	27	Joshua 24	יט	יהושע כד
SA	28	הפט' מלכים ב' ד, א	כ	יירא

Genesis 18

לעיון: בראשית יח

ויאמר יהושע אל העם עדים אתם בכם כי אתם בחרתם

לכם את ה' לעמוד אותו ויאמרו עדים

And Yehoshua said to the people, you are witnesses that you have chosen the Lord for yourselves to serve him.

And they said, We are witnesses. (Josh 24:22)

A page from the new Triennial Tanakh Study Calendar, sponsored by the World Jewish Bible Society

NOTES ON THE VERSE OF THE WEEK

TRIENNIAL TANAKH STUDY CALENDAR OF THE WORLD JEWISH BIBLE SOCIETY
WEEK OF OCTOBER 15-21, 1972.

Verse: And the Lord said to Avram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy *Moledet* and from thy father's house to the land that I will show thee. (Genesis 12:1).

THEME: MEANING OF MOLEDET

The concept of *Moledet* had several meanings in the cultures of the Biblical setting.

HOUSE OF THE MOTHER

The original meaning was Bet Ha-em, the House of the Mother. This seems to be hinted at in the commentary of the Zohar on the verse Ruth 2:11, "It has been told to me how you left your father and your mother and the land of your *Moledet*." The Zohar interprets this to mean דא בטן דאמא "this is the womb of the mother", a possible reference to the Bet Ha-em or the House of the Mother.

It seems that the original meaning of our verse in Genesis was: Get thee out of thy country, and from thy mother's (*Moledet*) house and from thy father's house.

From the various references in the Bible to the House of the Mother, it is apparent that the maternal household was not always coterminous with the paternal one,* and that the Bet Ha-em contained social rights belonging to the mother and brothers. *Genesis 24:28,29* — "The maiden (Rebekah) ran and told all this to her mother's household (Bet Ha-em); now Rebekah had a brother whose name was Laban." Throughout the chapter, Rebekah's father

* Scholars have found three systems of households in ancient Middle East societies.

2) The *Baal* system: The new husband takes his wife to his home and he is the head of the family; e.g. Isaac and Rebekah.

2) The *Baena* system: The man goes to the family of his wife and remains in the household of his father-in-law. The father-in-law retains the authority over his daughter and her husband even after marriage; e.g. Jacob at Laban's home. Jacob cannot leave his father-in-law's household without his permission; for this reason Jacob runs away.

3) The Bet Ha-em: The wife carries on the household on her own and is visited by her wandering husband (e.g. soldier, merchant or other) at appointed times. In this case the mother and the eldest son are the heads of the family; e.g. Rebekah's mother and brother.

Betuel is in the background, while the negotiations for Rebekah's marriage are in the hands of her mother and brother. They represent her as is evident in the verse, "But her brother and her mother said, let the maiden remain with us some ten days" (Gen. 24:51).

Song of Songs 3:4 — "When I found him whom my soul loves, I held him and would not let him go, until I had brought him into my mother's house (אל בית אמי)." In this setting, too, it is the responsibility of the brothers to see their sister married. "We have a little sister; What shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for" (*Song of Songs 8:8*). This state still reflects an early society, when a man, in a polygamous community, could have wives in different places, each of them a head of a maternal household and responsible for the marriage of her daughters. (See footnote above).

With the concept of the Bet Ha-em in mind, several Biblical passages become clearer in their meaning. Were Abraham and Sarah deliberately lying when they passed themselves off as brother and sister in two instances, upon their entry into Egypt and later during their sojourn in Gerar? Not exactly. Sarah was Abraham's half-sister, and it was perfectly permissible in the pre-Sinaitic period for a man to marry his half-sister if they were not the offspring of the same mother. And Abraham said, "And, moreover, she is in truth my sister, my father's daughter though not my mother's; and she became my wife" (*Genesis 20:12*).

Marriage of a half brother, offspring of the same father or mother, was forbidden later by Torah legislation.

Do not marry "your sister, your father's daughter or your mother's, whether born into the household (מולדת-בית) or outside" (מולדת-חוץ)** (*Leviticus 18:9*). However, such prohibition was not always deeply ingrained in the consciousness of the people, for otherwise, how can we understand the plea of Tamar to her half-brother Amnon not to dishonor her but to take her as a legal wife? "Now therefore, I pray thee, speak unto the king (David, their father) for he will not withhold me from thee" (*II Samuel 13:13*).

The concept of the Moledet as the Bet-Ha-em illuminates several additional passages in the Bible. And Israel (Jacob) said to his sons, "Why did you serve me so ill as to tell the man (Joseph) that you had another brother?" (*Genesis 43:6*). Their reply was, "But the man kept asking about us and our Moledet,

** It is evident from the distinction between מולדת-בית and מולדת-חוץ that the former מולדת-בית was referring to the case in which the girl remains in her father's house while the latter מולדת-חוץ (outside household) was when the—Bet Ha-em was located elsewhere than the father's household.

saying, is your father still living? Have you another brother?" (Verse 7). The inquiry of Joseph probed beyond the composition of the father's household. He was asking about any additional offspring from any mother's (Moledet) household. In other words, are there brothers from other mothers who were not here, the inference being to the missing brother Benjamin.

The passage in *Ezekiel 16:3* takes on more meaning as well in the context of our interpretation. "Thine origin (מכורותיך) and thy birth (מולדתיך) is of the land of the Canaanite; the Amorite was thy father, and thy mother was a Hittite." The parallelism מכורותיך and מולדתיך refers to the paternal and maternal origins.

MOLEDET AS HOMELAND

Today Moledet contains primarily the notion of *homeland*. The beginning of this concept can be discerned in the Bible.

Jeremiah 22:10 — "Weep not for the dead, neither bemoan him; but weep sore for him that goeth away, for he shall return no more, nor see his native country (Moledet)." Jeremiah here is predicting the captivity of Shallum, the son of the king Josiah, from which captivity he will not return to see his land again (*Jer. 22:11, 12*).

Jeremiah 46:16 — "And they said, arise and let us return to our own people and to our homeland (Moledet)."

Ezekiel 23:15 — "The likeness of the sons of Babylon, even of Chaldea, the land of their birth (Moledet)." The notion of nationality is here adumbrated by the prophet.

Esther 2:10 — "Esther had not made known her people nor her kindred (Moledet), for Mordecai had charged her that she should not tell it." It is evident that Esther is referring to her nationality in the concept of Moledet.

BIBLICAL RELIGIOUS WITNESSING

Verse: And Joshua said to the people: "You are witnesses that you have chosen the Lord for yourselves to serve him. And they said, we are witnesses (*Joshua 24:22*). (Verse of the week October 22–28, 1972)

The Radak renders the following interpretation for this verse:

"עדים אתם בכם: אתם בעצמכם תהיו עדים בכם כי אתם בחרתם לכם את ה'"

On the phrase, "You are witnesses": you yourselves will be witnesses toward yourselves that you chose the Lord for yourselves.

THEME: RELIGIOUS WITNESSING

Religious witnessing in the Bible takes on variations of poetic and prophetic imagery.

NATURE AS WITNESS TOWARD ISRAEL

In a number of instances we find Moses, the law giver, and the later prophets appealing to nature to be witness towards Israel about the relationship between God and Israel.

Deuteronomy 32:1,2 — “Give ear, O heavens, let me speak; Let the earth hear the words I utter. May my discourse come down as the rain, my speech distill as the dew.”

Isaiah 1:2 — “Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken; children I have reared and brought up, and they have rebelled against me.”

Micah 6:1,2 — “Hear ye now what the Lord saith: Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice. Hear, O ye mountains, the Lord’s controversy, and ye enduring rocks, the foundations of the earth, for the Lord hath a controversy with His people.”

WITNESS OF ISRAEL TOWARD ITSELF

Our verse in Joshua is a case in point. The *בכח* is taken by the Radak to mean that Israel itself will be witness toward itself of their relationship to God.

A mutual election between Israel and God is evident in the verses in Deuteronomy 26:17,18. “You have affirmed this day that the Lord is your God, that you will walk in His ways, that you will observe His laws and commandments and norms, and that you will obey Him. And the Lord has affirmed this day that you are, as He promised you, His treasured people which shall serve all His commandments.”

ISRAEL AS WITNESS TOWARD THE NATIONS

The prophets introduced the idea of Israel being the witness for God towards the nations of the world. Israel is already so strongly identified with the monotheistic God that it is able to serve as a witness of the Almighty towards the nations of the world.

Isaiah 43:10 — “You are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe Me and understand that I am He; before Me there was no god formed, neither shall any be after Me.”

Isaiah 55:4 — “Behold, I have given him for a witness to the peoples, a prince and commander to the peoples.”

THE FAMILY CORNER

Have you ever engaged your children in a Bible discussion? How about trying this at your Sabbath table? Here are a series of questions, selected at random from several Sidrot of the Book of Genesis, which might help you stimulate thinking about Biblical ideas. Keep the atmosphere informal and relaxed, allow for reading of passages by members of the family, and, above all, try to meet the interests of the various age levels in your family. Use the new J.P.S. edition of “The Torah” for direct reading of passages and the Hertz edition of the Pentateuch for the Commentary.

NOAH

- Q:* Noah was a “righteous man” and he “walked with God”. How would you compare Noah to Abraham in this respect.
A: See both comments of Hertz — ch. 6:9.
- Q:* Why was the world destroyed by the flood.
A: See Hertz comment on Ch. 6:11.
- Q:* Why did Noah take so long in building the Ark.
A: See Hertz comment on ch. 6:14.
- Q:* In verse 6:9 Noah is described as “righteous and blameless”. Why did God shorten His praise of Noah in Ch. 7:1.
A: See Hertz comment ch. 7:1.
- Q:* What birds did Noah send out of the ark to see how much the waters had subsided, and at what intervals.
A: See Bible text and Hertz comments on ch. 8:7–11.
- Q:* After Noah left the ark, he acted shamefully, but his son Ham behaved even more shamefully. What did each do to bring disgrace.
A: See text and Hertz comments on ch. 9:20–23.
- Q:* The Ziggurat was the Mesopotamian temple-tower, rising to an immense height which we know about through archeology. This is probably the “tower of Babel” referred to in ch. 11. Why did God confuse the language of the builders and scatter them over the face of the earth.
A: See Hertz’s elaborate comment on page 197.
- Q:* Who were the three sons of Noah. How would you relate them to the three large branches of peoples, Semites, Hamites and Indo-European.
A: See text and comments on ch. 10.

9. *Q:* How many ancient countries can you spot in chapter 10 which outline the families of the nations.
A: See text and Hertz comments on the entire chapter 10.
10. *Q:* Abraham came originally from Ur, a Babylonian city. Do you think Abraham came from a primitive or highly cultured civilization.
A: See Hertz comment on chapter 11:28.

VAYYERA

1. *Q:* Where do we learn from this Sidra about the Mitzvah of visiting the sick ביקור חולים (Bikkur Cholim).
A: See Hertz comment on Ch. 18:1.
2. *Q:* Where do we learn from the Sidra about the Mitzvah of hospitality הכנסת אורחים (Hachnasat Orchim).
A: See the second Hertz comment on Ch. 18:1.
3. *Q:* אמור מעט ועשה הרבה is a maxim in the Ethics of the Fathers. Where do we learn that it is good to promise little and do more than you promise.
A: See Hertz comment on Ch. 18:5.
4. *Q:* Where do we learn that it is the duty of the father to train the child in the duty of hospitality.
A: See Hertz comment ch. 18:7.
5. *Q:* Where do we learn that it is proper to conform to the social habits of the people in whose midst one lives, assuming of course that these habits are not wicked.
A: See Hertz comment Ch. 18:8.
6. *Q:* Where do we learn that man should exert every effort to work for justice, even if it means to contend with God Himself.
A: Read and interpret one of the sublimest passages in the Bible, from ch. 18:23 to ch. 18:33.
7. *Q:* What does the phrase בני רחמנים בני רחמנים mean? How would you apply this to the Jewish people.
A: See Hertz comment ch. 18:25.
8. *Q:* In the story of the Akedah (the binding of Isaac) it is twice mentioned that father and son "went both of them together" (ch. 22:6 and 22:8). What does the repetition connote in this context.
A: See Hertz comment ch. 22:8.
9. *Q:* How many times did God test Abraham as signs of his faith.
A: See Hertz comment ch. 22:1.

10. *Q:* What was God's promise to Abraham as a result of the latter's willingness to sacrifice his dearest hope to the will of God.
A: See text ch. 22:15-19 and Hertz comment on Ch. 12:2.

TOLEDOT

1. *Q:* What does the Hebrew word "Bechor" בכור mean.
A: The first born son is called the Bechor.
2. *Q:* What privileges and responsibilities did the Bechor have.
A: The first born was recognized as the future head of the tribe. This was his birthright. However, he must be worthy of this by setting the right example.
3. *Q:* What was the difference in Esau's and Jacob's characters as children.
A: Esau was the hunter, while Jacob was the student. See Hertz comment on ch. 25:27.
4. *Q:* What is meant by the well known phrase "selling one's birthright for a mess of pottage". Where is the source for this idea in our Sidra.
A: Gen. ch. 25:29 to 25:34. See Hertz comment on ch. 25:31.
5. *Q:* In verse 34, the Bible states "and so Esau spurned the birthright". What does this mean.
A: Esau took the spiritual responsibility of his birthright very lightly. He was willing to sell it for a mere stew which would satisfy his physical hunger. He thereby showed himself unworthy to keep the birthright. See Hertz comment on ch. 25:34.
6. *Q:* To whom was Isaac attached, and who was the favorite of Rebekah.
A: See ch. 25:28 and Hertz comment.
7. *Q:* Did Jacob want to impersonate his brother Esau, in order to receive his blind father's blessing.
A: Jacob resisted at first his mother's command to wear Esau's clothes, and to bringing food to his father and to receive the blessings.
8. *Q:* Was Jacob right in impersonating his brother.
A: Legally, Jacob was entitled to the blessing of the first born since Esau had sold his birthright willingly. However, Jacob's twenty-year exile from his home and family was the consequence of his wrong act.
9. *Q:* What is the meaning of (ch. 27:22) "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau".
A: The rabbis comment that through history, nations (represented by Esau) used warfare to gain their ends, while the children of Jacob preferred peace and used peaceful persuasion to bring about justice and morality in human behavior.

VAYYISHLACH

1. *Q:* In preparing for his encounter with his brother Esau, what three things did Jacob do.
A: a. His first defence was prayer to God for His protection (ch. 32:10-13).
 b. The second was to turn Esau's hate into goodwill by gifts (ch. 32:14-22).
 c. His third and last resort was to stand his ground and fight, leaving a way out for some of his camp to escape in dire emergency (ch. 32:8-9).
2. *Q:* What were the circumstances which brought about the change of his name from Jacob to Israel.
A: See text ch. 32:23-30.
3. *Q:* Can you spot on a map of Israel and Jordan the "ford of Jabbok" where he struggled with the angel.
A: The Jabbok is a tributary of the Jordan river on the east, half way between the Sea of Galilee (Lake Kinneret) and the Dead Sea.
4. *Q:* What is the difference in meaning between the name of Jacob and that of Israel.
A: See Hertz comment on ch. 32:29.
5. *Q:* Who was Deborah (not to be confused with Deborah in the book of Judges) in relationship with Rebecca.
A: See text ch. 35:8.
6. *Q:* Who was the last son of the twelve sons of Jacob, and what were the circumstances of his birth.
A: See text ch. 35:16-18.
7. *Q:* Where is Rachel's Tomb (קבר רחל).
A: See text ch. 35:19-20.
8. *Q:* Name the twelve sons of Jacob and their respective mothers.
A: See text ch. 35:23-26.

VAYYIGGASH

1. *Q:* Why did Judah, of all the brothers, step up to plead their case before Joseph.

A: See last week's Sidra text ch. 43:1-10.

2. *Q:* What statements in Judah's plea were most tellingly persuasive.
A: Analyze and discuss the text from ch. 44:18 to the end of the chapter with Hertz's comments.
3. What did Judah propose at the end of his plea.
A: See text and Hertz comment on ch. 44:33.
4. *Q:* Why was an interpreter always employed in the meetings of Joseph and his brothers, except when Joseph made himself known to them.
A: See Hertz's comment on ch. 45:1.
5. *Q:* What was the first question that Joseph asked when he revealed himself to his brothers.
A: See text and Hertz's comment on ch. 45:3.
6. *Q:* How did Joseph reassure his brothers that he bore them no ill-will.
A: Joseph attributed all his suffering and subsequent rise to power as part of God's plan. It was necessary that these things should happen so that he might be in the position to help his family during the terrible years of famine. (See text and Hertz comment on ch. 45:5).
7. *Q:* When did the brothers get over the shock which dumbfounded them so that they could not speak to Joseph.
A: See text ch. 45:3-15 and comment on 45:15.
8. *Q:* In what part of Egypt did Joseph want his family to settle. Why?
A: See Hertz's comment on ch. 45:10.
9. *Q:* What did Joseph mean when, upon sending them back home laden with the good things of Egypt, he cautioned them, "See that ye fall not out by the way".
A: See Hertz's comment on ch. 45:24.
10. *Q:* What did Jacob mean by his exclamation in ch. 48:28 "It is enough".
A: See Hertz's comment on ch. 45:28.
11. *Q:* Why is the migration of Jacob's family to Egypt a turning point in Jewish history.
A: See Hertz's comment ch. 46:3.
12. *Q:* Can you name the twelve sons of Jacob from the list of the family who went to live in Egypt.
A: See text ch. 46:8-27.

BIBLICAL NAMES IN ISRAEL

If you were to stop a boy in a street in Jerusalem and ask him his name, he is likely to answer: Ithamar (Exodus 6:23), Ehud (Judges 3:15) or Avshalom (II Samuel 3:3).

The return to biblical names marks a definite change of outlook, which came about within the last three generations. With the return to the homeland, began the revival of biblical names which had been almost forgotten in the course of our wanderings all over the earth.

A noted Hebrew scholar relates: At the end of the Six-Day War, while visiting a patient in hospital, he was passing near the maternity ward when he stopped by a young soldier on leave for a few days from the Golan front in order to be with his wife who had just given birth to a girl.

The proud father told our scholar that he was in a quandary. He was searching for a biblical name, but wanted one that would recall his war experience. The scholar remembered that the Golan Heights were settled by *Yair* the son of *Menashe* (*Yair* the son of *Menashe* took all the region... and called them after his name *Havoth-Yair*", Deuteronomy 3:14) and suggested for the young lady the beautiful name *Yaira*. Thus a new name from the Bible was coined.

The Bible contains about 1500 personal names, but only 140 of them were in use among Jews in the diaspora. In the past three generations 460 additional names from the Bible have come into use in Israel. But so many other new names have since been adopted in Israel that the total is now about 2,000. Many of these new names originate also from the Bible. In the text they designate localities like *Jaffa*, *Eilat*, etc., while others are names of plants and animals. So you may find names like *Yardena*, *Kinneret*, *Jerusalem*, not only on the map of Israel but also in the persons of our boys and girls here. Likewise, we have *Ail* (ram אֵיל), *Leviah* (lioness לִבְיָאִי), *R'em* (antelope רֵאֵם), and the very popular Sabra name *Opher* (deer עוֹפֵר) — names that can be heard in the roll-call of the average army unit.

Occasionally, the hasty adoption of Biblical names can cause some confusion. For instance in the names *Yitzhaq Nissim* (Chief Rabbi), *Moshe Carmel* (a member of the Government), *R'uven Avinoam* (the poet), one cannot tell which is the family name and which is the personal name. Another difficulty arises from the practice of using the same biblical name for individuals of either sex. Many young ladies bear the name of the prophet *Yonah*. Then there are *Vered* (for Rose), *Carmel*, *Tel* (a hill). When in a list of letters you come across such names, how are you to address them, Dear Sir or Dear Madam?

The desire to revert to names in the Bible has also brought into circulation some names that are undesirable. Among current names are included *Goliat*, *Nimrod* (Genesis 10:8), and *Izevel* (= Jezebel, the wicked wife of King *Ahab*). Our youth, who are well versed in Bible, will most probably soon drop such names.

In recent years Jews all over the world have taken a new interest in Israel, and many have begun to study the Hebrew language and Jewish history. But how many have given a thought to their children's names? It is worth noting that our Sages laid great stress on guarding our traditional names. They maintained that the Children of Israel were redeemed from the slavery of Egypt because they did not change their names.

Statistical data in this article were taken from a detailed study of this subject by Dov Rosen, a senior official in one of our government departments, who made a study of Jewish names for a number of years and published an interesting book on this subject.

OUR BIBLE QUIZ

In Israel there is an extremely keen interest in the Bible today, and young people and adults eagerly take part in national and international contests to select what are picturesquely described as bridegrooms and brides of the Bible (חתני התנ"ך וכלות התנ"ך). We append here a selection of the questions asked at the Regional Finals of the eighth world bible quiz for Jewish youth.

1. The meeting of brothers brings joy. To whom was it said that meeting his brother would make him happy, and where did they meet?
2. After a famous victory, the hero was met with song and dances. What was the victory and who went out to greet him with song and dances?
3. In which book of the Bible, and in what connection, is Jerusalem first mentioned?
4. Two rebellions broke out in the city of Shechem. Who headed the rebellion in each case, and against whom did they rebel?
5. A non-Jewish king boasted of his enormous army before going out to battle against a king of Israel. Who was the non-Jewish king, what was his boast, and what was the retort of the king of Israel?
6. Mention two events with which the river Kishon is connected.

7. On two occasions a king forbade a man "to see his face" (meaning, to come into his presence). Who was the king in each case, and what was the occasion?
8. The word "river" is used by a prophet as a simile for peace. Give two examples from that prophet.
9. Two prophets use a basket as a simile and symbol. Who were the prophets, and what were the similes?
10. A prophet prophesied that judgment would be executed on all nations in a place near Jerusalem. Who was the prophet, and what is the name of the place?
11. Which is described as the "gate of the peoples", by whom, and in which book of the Bible?
12. How many of the Hebrew months are mentioned by name in the Bible? Give 3 examples.
13. The psalmist contrasts man's inferiority and greatness. Quote the passage.
14. A certain city was sown with salt. What was the city, and who sowed it with salt?
15. The Mediterranean Sea is called by a number of names in the Bible. Give two of them and say where they can be found.
16. Who interrupted his pursuit of a personal enemy in order to fight the enemies of his people? What was the name of the place where the pursuit was interrupted?
17. Who took witnesses when he bought something, and what things did he buy?
18. The psalmist describes what a man should not do and what he should do in order to succeed "in all that he does". What are the actions which he should not do and do?
19. At a time of trouble it was customary to wear mourning. Give two examples.
20. How did Boaz greet the reapers, and what was their reply?

ABOUT BOOKS

BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS

DAVID BEN GURION
Am Oved, Tel Aviv
pp. 252, 1969

This volume of Reflections on the Bible is a collection of addresses and articles by the first Prime Minister and founder of the State of Israel in the midst of a busy and eventful active life, not in the comparative calm of retirement. They reflect a pre-occupation with certain ideas which have dominated Ben Gurion's thought for decades and have had no little influence on his actions, especially in going to the desert and personally helping to turn it into garden-land, in accordance with biblical prophecy.

The work, published by Am Oved in conjunction with the Israel Society for Biblical Research, contains 17 subjects. The first, on The Unique Destiny of the Jewish People, is from an address on army education to the High Command of the Israeli Defence Forces in 1950. The second, The Bible Shines by its Own Light, is a letter addressed to Isaac Daniel Schweiger following an article by the latter in *Davar* in September 1953. The third, The Antiquity of Israel in its Land, is an address given to the Bible Study Circle in Jerusalem in April 1959. The fourth, A Double Messianic Vision which is One, is a message of welcome to the Third World Congress on Research on Judaism in Jerusalem in July 1961. The fifth, The Father of the Hebrew People, was an address to a Bible Conference, undated. The sixth, The Antiquity of the Ivrim in Canaan, is a talk with the late Professor Kaufman in Jerusalem in June 1962.

The seventh, Eilath, was delivered at the Conference on Archaeology in the Land of Israel in Eilath in October 1962. The eighth, Southwards, was written in Sdeh Boker in September 1956, and expresses the author's conviction that one of the most important tasks of the new Israel is the conquest and settlement of the desert. The ninth, On Joshua chapters 23 and 24, was an address at the house of the President in February 1963. The tenth, The Antiquity of the Ivrim, returns to the dispute with the late Professor Kaufmann already referred to. The eleventh, on the Book of Deuteronomy, was an address at the Thirteenth Bible Congress in April 1965. The twelfth, on Saul and David, returns to a subject dealt with in the second article, David's faults as well as his greatness, because the Bible is unsparing in its honesty. The thirteenth, on King Cyrus, was an address delivered at the Ninth Bible Congress in April 1951. The fourteenth, on The Return to Zion, emphasises that both in

the time of the Maccabees and in our own day independence was achieved through the force and might of our Defence Army. The fifteenth, on The Bible and the Jewish People is dated July 1964, Nahalal. The sixteenth, on Royalty and Prophecy, was an address at the Bible Circle in the Midrashia at Sdeh Boker in October 1968. And the last, on The Exodus from Egypt, was an address to the Journalists' Association in May 1960.

Ben Gurion's views on the Bible, the Jewish people, and the Land of Israel are well known and are here forcefully expressed, and the publishers have performed a real service in preserving these valuable — and controversial — thoughts and ideas for posterity. They might consider enlarging the circle of its readers by a translation into English.

A guiding thought with Ben Gurion has been the double aspect of the Messianic vision of the Prophets of Israel — the ingathering of the Exiles and world peace.

THE PEOPLE'S BIBLE (TANAKH LA'AM) in Hebrew, presented and annotated by Dr. MOSHE A. ANAT.

THE PENTATEUCH, Am Oved, Tel-Aviv, 1970, pp. 1036; THE FORMER PROPHETS, 1971, pp. 906.

The words in a Sefer Torah are written without vowel signs or musical notes and are not marked off in verses. On the other hand the Bible text used for study today, though marked off in verses, is complicated with cantillation notes in addition to vowel signs. Yet there are no other punctuation marks, nor are passages divided into paragraphs, except in accordance with the traditional "open" and "closed" signs. The Magill Chumash in England over a generation ago attempted to overcome some of these difficulties by printing the text with an interlinear translation which was a boon to some teachers and enterprising pupils.

Dr. Anat, the author of The People's Bible, spent 27 years in devoted study to devise a means of presenting the ordinary reader with a text which could be read easily and understood at a glance, and this without, as he proudly and rightly adds, altering even a single letter of the traditional massoretic text. The novelty is in the arrangement, with verses split up into shorter and longer lines, according to the sense, complete with quotation and exclamation marks, commas, semi-colons, and full stops, but without the musical notes. The 777 pages of text are followed by over 250 pages of short notes, mainly to explain biblical phrases in modern Hebrew terms. The first volume, the Pentateuch, was an instant success. It has been remarked that it could probably happen only in Israel that shop stewards and local labour councils ordered thousands of

החברה לחקר המקרא בישראל

נשיא — ד. בן-גוריון

יו"ר — חיים גבריהו

גזבר כבוד — ב"צ לוריא

יו"ר המועצה הארצית — שמואל ייבין

ההנהלה:

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החברה היהודית העולמית לתנ"ך

הנשיא — ש. ז. שזר

המנהל — חיים גבריהו

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ר' ברנר 9, ירושלים

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