





*Tribute  
to  
Dr. Louis Katzoff*



As we begin the tenth year of our English quarterly, *Dor-le-Dor*, the Editorial Board wishes to honor its editor, Dr. Louis Katzoff, who started the periodical soon after his Aliyah and has continued his voluntary service in the World Jewish Bible Society during this past decade.

Dr. Katzoff came to Israel after a long career as a Jewish educator in the United States. After ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary, he served as Jewish Student Advisor at the University of Pennsylvania, where he received his doctorate in Education; as spiritual leader of Congregation Bnai Abraham in Easton, Pennsylvania; as Registrar and Assistant Professor at the College of Jewish Studies in Chicago; and lastly as the Director of Education at the North Suburban Synagogue in Highland Park, Illinois.

In Israel, he taught Bible and Education at the American College in Jerusalem, as Associate Professor in Education. The Jewish Theological Seminary recently bestowed upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Divinity. He is the author of "Issues in Jewish Education" and co-author of "Torah for the Family", the latter published by the World Jewish Bible Society.

Dr. Katzoff is presently Vice-Chairman of the World Jewish Bible Society, serving actively on the Executive Committee of the Bet Hatenach, the World Jewish Youth Bible Contest held annually on Israel Independence Day and on the Advisory Council for the International Adult Bible Contest for Jews and non-Jews to be held in September in Jerusalem.

Dr. Katzoff's entire family, children and grandchildren, live in Israel. Adina, his wife, teaches Social Work at the Government Institute of Social Work. She is the president of the Jerusalem branch of the International Association of University Women. His son, Dr. Ranon, teaches at Bar Ilan University and his son, Jonathan, serves in the Public Relations Department at Shaare Zedek Hospital.

The directors of the Society and the Editorial Board of Dor-le-Dor extend to Dr. Katzoff their greetings and blessings for continued leadership in the activities of the Society.

הקדמונים אמרו: "טורא בטורא לא פגיש, אינש באינש — פגיש". ואמנם לעתים מועידה ההשגחה העליונה מפגש בין אדם לאדם המוליד פירות של יצירה. הדברים חלים אולי גם על פגישתי עם דר' אריה קצוף בשיקגו לפני כ־20 שנה, כאשר הזמינו אותי לשבות בביתו ולהרצות בחוג תנ"ך שבהדרכתו. מיד בפגישה הראשונה נתברר שקיים אידיאל משותף להפיץ את ידיעת ספר הספרים בקרב המוני בית ישראל בארץ ובתפוצות. דר' קצוף אמר לי שהוא ורעייתו עומדים לעלות בקרוב לירושלים, ולהתייצב לרשות החברה לתנ"ך. הוא נהג כמנהגו של בורא עולם — אמר ועשה, דבר וקיים יותר ממה שהבטיח. מאז עובדים שנינו בשותפות ובהרמוניה. אריה קצוף כתב ויצר, ומשתתף בהנהגת החברה היהודית העולמית על כל שלוחותיה בחידון העולמי לתנ"ך לנוער יהודי, כחוג לתנ"ך בבית הנשיא שז"ר ו"ל, ובבית מנחם בגין, ייבדל לחיים ארוכים. ארגן גם את הועידה היהודית העולמית הראשונה לתנ"ך בירושלים ונבחר לסגן יו"ר החברה. ועל הכל הגדיל לעשות, כאשר יצר ונתן ונתן וצורה לכתב העת היהודי היחיד בעולם לתנ"ך בשפה האנגלית "דור לדור".

ואמנם זוהי יצירה חשובה, המסייעת להתקרבות אל האידיאל הנבואי, שישראל הוא עם אשר התורה חצובה בליבו (ישעיהו נ"א, ו).

במדרש בראשית רבה מובא ויכוח בין ר' עקיבא לבין שמעון בן עזאי. ר' עקיבא היה אומר שהכלל הגדול בתורה הוא: "ואהבת לרעך כמוך" — היינו: יחסי חיבה וידידות בין אדם לאדם. שמעון בן עזאי חולק עליו וסבור שהכתוב "זה ספר תולדות אדם . . . בדמות אלוהים עשה אותו" (בראשית ד', א) הוא הכלל הגדול בתורה. לאמר: הקובע היסודי שבתכונת האדם הוא ניצוץ האלוהי שבו. ידידי ורעי היקר והטוב ר' אריה קצוף, נ"י, נתן את דעתו ורוחו לאחד באישיותו את שתי התכונות. הוא אוהב אדם, ובנוסף לכך הוא נותן אל ליבו את האחריות של האדם שנברא בצלם אלוהים, לכורא עולם שנתן תורה לישראל. ומכאן, המאמץ הרוחני שלו להפיץ תורת ה' בישראל. ראוי הוא לקרוא עליו את הברכה שהחכם מכרך אדם צעיר: "כי אורך ימים ושנות חיים ושלוש יוסיפו לך חסד ואמת אל יעזובך קשרם על גרגרוחך כתבם על לוח לבך ומצא חן ושכל טוב בעיני אלוהים ואדם".

**פרופ' חיים גבריהו**

יושב ראש של החברה היהודית העולמית לתנ"ך

# THE STORY OF CREATION IN THE BIBLE

BY CHAIM ABRAMOWITZ

To us the Bible is important primarily as a form of communication between God and man, and particularly between God and His people who elected to listen. God communicates to us through His prophets and visionaries, if we would listen to them, and through events, if we would learn to understand them. It is this combined form of communication that is the essence of our Bible. Its message is universal and true, but its form must be so that it may be understood by every generation, in accordance with its respective culture and development. The reason for the account of creation in the first chapter of Genesis is a case in point.

Philo, who lived in Hellenistic Alexandria sought allegorical reasons which would be in harmony with stoic philosophy.<sup>1</sup> Rashi, who saw the Crusaders of his day trying to establish Christian dominance over the Holy Land, preferred the Midrash that says that the creation story is proof of the right of God to give the land to Israel.<sup>2</sup> Other midrashim saw it as an assertion that God is above and not coexistent with nature. Many commentators gave different explanations based on reason or belief, and sought to harmonize it with their favorite philosophy, but none doubted the verities of the story because in the light of the knowledge of their times it did not conflict with their concept of what was possible or believable. There was nothing in the thought of their times to definitely contradict the facts in the Bible.

Today we are living in an age when science reigns supreme. Since science is based on objective research and not on subjective reasoning, it can reasonably claim that its facts are incontestible. One is in a dilemma when confronted with

1. *His exordium consists of an account of the creation of the world, implying that the world is in harmony with the Law, and the Law with the world, and the man who observes the Law regulates his doings by the purpose and the will of Nature. Philo: On the Creation of the World, From selection in Hans Levy: Three Jewish Philosophies.*

2. Rashi to Genesis 1:1.

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Biblical and apparently contradictory scientific facts. How can we reconcile the Biblical age of the earth as under six thousand years with the current scientific estimate of over two billion years, or the six days of creation with the scientific evidence of millions of years? Should we relegate Bible stories to legend or imagination, or should we insist that the Bible is true and that science is untrustworthy since its theories and findings change from time to time? There have been attempts to correlate the two by claiming that all evidence on millions of years of development was built in by God at the time of creation.<sup>3</sup> Thus אלף שנים כיום אחמול *a thousand years are like a day in thine eyes* (Ps. 90:14) is interpreted to mean that each day is a thousand years, namely, an “era”.<sup>4</sup> Not completely satisfied with that explanation, Hertz in his notes, differentiates between the *fact* of creation, which we must accept on faith, and the *manner* of creation, the belief in which is not binding. He quotes Rashi, Maimonides and others who say that “the story of creation is not in all parts literal”.<sup>5</sup> What he is saying in effect is that the Bible is morally and ethically true, but its facts cannot be taken literally.

The modern man’s dilemma is not why the cosmogony was included. Regardless of whether it is there to prove God’s superiority over nature, or His right to assert His will in the world, or to build up to the sanctity of the Sabbath, his question is whether it is true or false. The answer is not necessarily in choosing sides, labeling one “true” and the other “false.” Let us assume that both are true and see if that assumption is possible. The “truth” of the Torah is universal; it therefore has to be conveyed in a phraseology that would be comprehensible to all men in every generation.

In the following chapter we will retell the Biblical account of Creation, using Orlinsky’s J.P.S. translation, with some deviations and interpolations. The purpose of the changes in the translations and the interpolations in the text, is to make the story acceptable to the reader in the light of modern knowledge, and the reasons, when necessary, will be explained in the notes. It is not the intention of this article to show that God, in His infinite wisdom, disclosed to us more than

3. W.J. Bryan in *Scopes trial*.

4. Hertz to Genesis 1.

5. What *they* are saying is that God created everything on the first day and that the *Let there be* of each succeeding day means that they were arranged or put into effect on that day.

three thousand years ago the exact process of creation as we think we know it today. Its purpose is to show that even though the story is included for moral and not historical reasons, it is so phrased that its contents are true and can be understood and accepted as fact by one who lived in the days of Moses as well as by one who lives in the twentieth century. This is true even if the Darwinian theory of slow evolution will be replaced by the new theory of “punctuated equilibria” or “evolution by jumps” or any other theory.

#### THE CREATION

*In the far distant past<sup>1</sup> God created the outer space<sup>2</sup> and the earth. Now the earth was unformed and void. It was merely an inert gaseous mass (water?) of atoms. Since there was no solid substance to reflect the rays of the sun there was darkness over the abyss; only the spirit of God was hovering over the gaseous mass. Then God said: Let there be light and since that light did not come from an outside source, it had to come from within. It was the bright light that is the result of the fission and/or fusion and the thermonuclear reaction of atoms as they form new elements and substances, and there was a tremendously bright light<sup>3</sup> that resulted from the breakdown of the atom. Since thermonuclear reactions do not take place at the same speed and with the same intensity everywhere, there were places where the light was great and others where there was little or none.<sup>4</sup> And God divided between the light and the dark. And He called the light “day” and the darkness He called “night”.<sup>5</sup> Chemical reaction and fusion have to take place*

1. The word הימים is understood after בראשית. Just as “the end of days” does not refer to when “time” will cease to exist but to the distant future so “the beginning (of days)” refers to the distant past instead of the beginning of time. See Cassuto: “From Adam to Noah”.

2. שמים cannot mean just the expanse visible to the naked eye for it is obviously different from the רקיע in v. 6. The Rabbis spoke of seven layers of heaven, each of extensive depth. Even the Bible talks of שמי שמים – literally heavens of heaven (1 Kings 8:27). Some and the etymology of the word שמים as a hybrid of שם מים – over there, there is water – or of אש ומים – fire and water (Hagiga 12a). Another suggestion is that it is a plural of the word שם – “there” – i.e. way out there, outer space.

3. According to the Rabbis the original light was sevenfold as intense as sunlight.

4. Perhaps that is what was meant by אור חושך משחמשים בערבוביה.

5. This may be a deliberate form of anachronism. Since “day” and “night” and “morning” and “evening” become synonymous with “light” and “dark”, these terms are used even before the earth became dependent on sunlight. See Sforno on this verse.

*slowly or they will result in explosion and confusion. The length of time it took for the gradual transformation from inertia to activity, and from atoms into elements and into substance and matter, taxes one's imagination. Finally it reached a certain point when it-was-evening and-it-was-morning,<sup>6</sup> i.e., one day and God said: The earth is surrounded by a heavy mist or steam generated by the hot earth and the unfiltered rays of the sun which make it impossible for hydrogen and oxygen molecules to become water. Therefore let there be an expanse<sup>7</sup> inside the water (vapor) which will separate water from water. God made<sup>8</sup> the expanse which separated the waters below and above it (i.e. the expanse).<sup>9</sup> And it was so. God called the expanse: Sky.<sup>10</sup> Finally, after a long period, the gradual formation of the atmosphere and cooling of the earth reached a degree of perfection. Then, when it-was-evening-and-it-was-morning,<sup>11</sup> a second day, God said: Let the waters below be gathered into one area<sup>12</sup> so that the dry land may appear. And it*

6. And it-was-evening-and-it-was-morning may be an extended form of hendiadys, that is two terms forming a unit like day-and-night, null-and-void, etc. Here it may denote a unit of time. It may also be another deliberate anachronism used from here on to show that the earth had finally enough mass to enable it to revolve on its axis every twenty four hours. In any event it means that even the transition from one period to another was not instantaneous.

7. The popular translation of רָקִיעַ as "firmament" is misleading. The Authorized Version used it because the translators believed that what they saw overhead was a solid-firm cover from one end of the earth to the other. It is interesting to note that Ibn Ezra who should have thought the same, says רָקִיעַ זֶה אֵינֶר. The new J.P.S. version is nearer the truth when it uses the word "expanse," that is a spread, or cover, without specifying its content. To prepare the earth for life, it needed a protective covering that would filter out the harmful sun rays and would permit only the beneficial ones to reach it. It would also help moderate the earth's surface temperature and make it possible for the particles of mist to coagulate and become water.

8. In the first verse God "created" the heavens and the earth because nothing existed before. Here God "made" the expanse by mixing or combining molecules of many elements in various proportions to form a life-giving and protective covering.

9. The waters above remained in their vaporous state (clouds) while those below gradually cooled and became liquid water.

10. All other versions translate שָׁמַיִם as heaven, which is in line with the conception that the expanse was a firmament, above which was the abode of God. Sky, on the other hand, is the region of the clouds, as in old English, Sceo-cloud (American College Dictionary).

11. See note 6.

12. If the waters came into being when the earth was in its fully rounded state, they covered its entire surface. Since water seeks its own level, it is obvious that this command could not be carried

was so. *When the exposed earth became dry*, God called the dry land Earth and the gathering of the waters he called: Seas. And God saw that it was good. God said: Let the earth sprout forth vegetation *but unlike inanimate objects it must be alive and self-reproducing, and since it will eventually be used as food, it must develop into seed-bearing grass, and ultimately into fruit trees that bear fruit according to their species.*<sup>13</sup> And it was so. The earth brought forth<sup>14</sup> vegetation, *then seed-bearing plants according to their species and then trees-bearing fruits that have their seeds in it, according to their species.* And God saw that it was good.

When it-was-evening-and-it-was-morning, a third day, God said: *Now that the atmosphere permits only the beneficial rays of the sun to penetrate and to capture the evaporated water of the sea, to have it come down again as rain bringing on plant life*, let lights in the expanse of the sky be hung in order to separate day from night.<sup>15</sup> They shall serve as signs for the set times — the days and the years; and they shall serve as lights in the expanse of the sky to shine upon the earth. And it was so. God made<sup>16</sup> the two great lights: the greater one to dominate the day and the lesser one to dominate the night, and the stars. And God set them in the expanse of the sky to shine upon the earth, to dominate the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good.

out unless tremendous grooves or indentations were made on the earth's surface into which the waters would flow, leaving other parts of the surface exposed to view. We know that these "grooves" were the result of the cooling of the earth and the subsequent uneven shrinkage and expansion of the surface, as well as by violent eruptions. That "one area" cannot mean only one area, for all the water is evident by the fact that in the next verse the gathering of the waters is called "seas" and not "sea."

13. Translating the word מין as "species" instead of "kind" makes the narration become more credible. Instead of having to believe that all thousands of varieties of plants and fruit trees and non-fruit bearing trees all appeared suddenly at the same time, we can understand it to mean that first a particular specie developed and from it different kinds, like lemons and oranges and Etrogim from citrus. Even today we have all kinds of apples, for instance, being developed. That means that plant life began with grass and developed into endless varieties of fruits and vegetables.

14. The reason for repeating the action after the command is to show that there was development, in addition to its taking a long time.

15. Instead of reading יהי מאורות . . . להאיר, read as if it said יהי להאיר מאורות

16. "and he made" means that the action was already completed (Malbim vs. 7 and 16).

And when it-was-evening-and-it-was-morning, a fourth day, God said: Let a living creature,<sup>17</sup> a creeping thing creep in the water<sup>18</sup> and let a bird fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky. God created<sup>19</sup> the great sea monsters, and every living creature that creeps, that moves<sup>20</sup> in the water, according to its species, and every winged bird according to its species. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them,<sup>21</sup> saying: Be fertile and increase, fill the waters in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth.

And when it-was-evening-and-it-was-morning, a fifth day, *and the world was ready for the final step in evolution*, God said: Let living creatures, according to their species, come out on the earth:<sup>23</sup> cattle, creeping things and wild beasts according to species. And it was so. God made (caused to be evolved) species of wild beasts, and species of cattle and species of creeping things of the earth. And God saw that it was good.

*After the creation of man*, God saw all that he had made and behold it was very good.

And God said: Man was made<sup>24</sup> *and evolved* in our image, after our likeness,<sup>25</sup> and let him have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the fowl of the air, over

17. The use of the singular *נפש חיה* may not be just a collective noun. It may be an indication that life began with a *נפש חיה* in the water from which all living things evolved.

18. The ordinary translation of *ישרצו המים* "let the waters swarm" was reasonable at the time when the world believed in spontaneous generation. Now that we believe that only life can generate life the commands to begin to live: *תושא הארץ* and *ישרצו המים* can refer only to the grass and creeping thing respectively and not to the earth or the water to generate them.

19. The word here is "created" because "life" was created where no life existed before.

20. *שרץ* is something that moves continually (Targum, Rashi).

21. Had *ישרצו* meant swarm in great numbers and *ירב* to be numerous immediately, there would be no reason for this blessing.

22. Species i.e. family groups. The reason for the difference in the order in the command and in its fulfillment may be to show that the earth animals evolved from different species of maritime or airborne animals.

23. See comment number 18. *תוצא הארץ* has the same meaning as if it said *על הארץ תוצא*.

24. This translation is based on an explanation which Ibn Ezra quotes and with which he disagrees. In the light of our approach to this chapter, this deviation from the accepted understanding of these verses is quite valid.

25. The use of the plural is a theologic problem and not within our purview. However, it may be the plural of majesty as also possibly in Isaiah 45:22.

the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. And God created (ויברא) man in his<sup>26</sup> image, in the image *which* God created him – male and female He created them, *and together they are the examples of the species called man*. And God said: I have given you every herb yielding fruit which is on the face of the earth, and every tree bearing fruit to you shall be for food. To every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, to everything that creeps on the earth, that is alive, I have given every green herb for food and it was so; and God saw that it was good.

And it was-evening-and-it-was-morning, the sixth day,<sup>27</sup> *the day when* the heavens and the earth, and all their array, were finished. And on the seventh day God was done with all the work which He had been doing, and He ceased on the seventh day from all the work which He had done. And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all His work which He created *suitable for evolution*.<sup>28</sup>

26. “his” refers to man and not to God,” created” because man is a new creature. Every genus has its groups, such as dog, wolf, fox or cat, leopard, tiger, or chimpanzee, orang-outang, gorilla. Man alone is the only living example of the genus homo. He is also the only one among all creatures with a moral sense (The Science of Life – Hewells as Julian Huxley – both strong advocates of the Darwinian theory of evolution).

27. Up to now the Bible spoke of each turning point in the creative process as “a day.” It was not the second day or the third day (of the week), but an indefinite “day.” It is as if to say, “one day”, “another day” etc., and each “day” marks the end of the period. When we reach the end of the process it becomes “the sixth day.” What follows is the “seventh day”, the “day” or “period” we are living in now when “matter can neither be created nor destroyed.” That is the reason there is no “and it was evening and it was morning” for that day, and there is no reference to another “first day of the week.”

28. **ברא לעשות** literally “created to do” has been a stumbling block to most commentators. If we understand **ברא** as creating something new and **עשה** as evolving and developing that which was created, the phrase “created to do” can only mean created to be evolved. The Malbim comments on the sentence: Let the earth bring forth step by step, first inanimate, then growing things, then living things, then speaking (man). And even when going up the steps of the ladder, creation did not proceed in jumps. Between each there was always something that was a little of each. Between the inanimate and the plants, there was the coral; between plants and living creatures there was the polyp – and between animals and man was the monkey (Shades of Darwin!). □

# JACOB, MAN OF DESTINY

## HIS YOUTH

BY SHIMON BAKON

### INTRODUCTION

The Biblical narration encompassing the four generations from Abraham to Joseph is the best known story ever told. Among the three patriarchs Jacob stands out as the most colorful. His life is presented on a wide panorama filled with rich detail. It begins prenatally and ends with a royal burial in his eternal resting place in Hebron. We are witness to his many struggles with Esau, Laban, with himself, and with the mysterious man-angel at the crossing of Jabbok. We note many abrupt changes to which he is subjected. Three times he is uprooted; first, when he flees for his life to Paddan-aram; the second time, when he escapes with his family from Laban on his return to Canaan; and a third time when, in his old age he moves to Egypt to be reunited with his long lost son, Joseph.

The changes are not merely external. Profound inner transformations occur in the course of his life, the most dramatic being that from Jacob to Israel-Yeshurun. These changes, his struggles, his loves, even his weaknesses allow us to identify with him. We sense in Jacob-Israel the man of destiny whose spiritual roots reach back to his grandfather Abraham and to his father Isaac, and who in critical times of his life is vouchsafed divine visions, grand in design and pregnant with deep meaning. Providence, hovering over him, has marked him and foreshadows the destiny of an eternal people whose real father he is.

No wonder then, that great writers, to mention just a few — young Goethe, Richard Beer-Hofmann and Thomas Mann — have attempted a creative recasting of the story; also, that great artists have captured the flavor of some of the unforgettable scenes on canvas.

The sequence to this series appeared in *Dor le-Dor*, Vol. IV, No. 3 under the title *Jacob's Return to Canaan*.

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## ON BIBLICAL INTENTION

What is the biblical intention of the specific episodes narrated, and what is the message that the Bible wishes to convey?

In Jacob we see a man reaching out to God, but also submerged in his personal ambitions and battles. We become aware of Providence guiding his destiny and often bringing his plans to nought. The battle with his brother for the birthright and the blessing was really unnecessary. In spite of his love for Rachel, the only one he wanted for a wife, he ends up with four wives, thus providing him with a family that was to become the progenitor of twelve Israelite tribes. His preferential treatment of Joseph, almost turning into tragedy, is also providential. It prevents him from focusing his blessings on this son alone. It brings about an untarnished family unity succeeding where Abraham and Isaac failed. It causes Jacob to move to Egypt and to develop there into a great nation in keeping with the divine promise: *I will there make of you a great nation* — *ואעשך שם לגוי גדול* (Gen. 46:3), and in fulfillment of the Covenant between God and Abraham — *ברית בין הבתרים*, in which Abraham is told: *Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them* (Gen. 15:13).

## PRIMOGENITURE AND ITS TWO MEANINGS

When Rebekah, after prolonged barrenness finally conceived, she experienced extreme discomfort, to a point where she complained: *If it be so, wherefore do I live* — *אם כן למה זה אנכי*. In her despair she went to consult the Lord's oracle. This is the text of the oracle:

<i>Two nations are in thy womb</i>	שני גויים בכטנך
<i>And two peoples shall be separated</i>	ושני לאומים ממעריך
<i>from thy bowels</i>	יפרדו
<i>And the one people shall be stronger</i>	ולאום מלאום יאמץ
<i>than the other</i>	
<i>And the elder shall serve the younger</i>	ורב יעבד צעיר
	Genesis 23:23

In the light of subsequent events the last verse poses difficulties.



ried deep hatred toward him. One could sense a Scriptural word play on these two words: בכורה — ברכה! The בכורה contains within it also the element of persevering faith, a willingness to forego the pleasure of the moment in order to lay the spiritual groundwork, whose completion may have to wait for three, four generations or even millennia. Esau is incapable of such faith. He is contemptuous of this challenge precisely because he is only capable of the “carpe diem” — grab the day, for tomorrow I’ll die, or as the Bible puts it: *Behold I am on the point to die* — הגה אנכי הולך למוח.

This episode is crucial for the development of Jacob. By accepting the challenge of בכורה, he marked himself as the man of destiny. There is nothing startling in this differentiation between biological primogeniture and spiritual birthright. In the Bible it is not necessarily the oldest who is marked for leadership. Only after Solomon, also chosen above his older brother Adoniyah, was the principle of promogeniture applied to dynasty.

Many scholars have derided the concept of “chosenness” of the Jewish people. They conceive of it as arrogance. They failed to see in it, despite the many biblical statements to the contrary, a free acceptance of the burden of responsibility. Thus — *only you have I known, from all the families of the earth, therefore I shall visit upon you all your sins*. רק אתכם ידעתי מכל משפחות הארמה. (Amos 3:2). The connection of בכורה and chosenness is most succinctly expressed in Exodus twice: *My son, my first born, is Israel . . . Let My son go, that he may serve Me*. בני בכורי ישראל, שלח את בני (Ex. 4:22). This means essentially that His בכור first-born, Israel, was chosen to *serve the Lord* with additional duties and burdens. Even more powerfully, this thought is expressed in the following words:

*Now therefore, if you will hearken  
unto My voice and keep my covenant  
then you shall be Mine own treasure  
from among all peoples . . .  
And you shall be unto Me a Kingdom  
of Priests and a holy nation.*

ועתה אם שמוע תשמעו בקולי  
ושמרתם את בריתי  
והייתם לי סגולה  
מכל העמים  
ואתם תהיו לי ממלכת כהנים  
וגוי קדוש  
Ex. 19:6-7

## DEW OF HEAVEN OR ABRAHAMITE BLESSING

That Isaac loved Esau while Rebekah preferred Jacob has troubled all our commentators. It need not have. Love is not necessarily deserved, and the Bible is replete with instances emphasizing the basic irrationality of this emotion.

The narration of the first blessing that Jacob received by deception at the prompting of his mother (Gen. Chapter 27) contains many layers of meanings. This is the way of Scripture; it does not concern itself with problems of motivation. Its superb quality resides in the fact that it relates facts and dialogues leaving it to the reader to fill in missing parts.

What should engage our attention is whether Isaac was going to follow the tradition in his family to single out one of his sons to continue the spiritual line and confer his blessings only on Esau. And connected with that, was Isaac truly fooled by the mummery of Jacob?

The Or HaHayyim, desirous to find a rationale for Isaac's wish to bless Esau has this to say:

And the reason why he (Isaac) wished to bless Esau was because he thought that through his blessing he (Esau) would turn around and change for the better.

The Ramban suggests a simpler answer:

It was Isaac's intention to bless him that he should (merit) the blessings of Abraham to inherit the land and to be party to the Covenant with the Lord because he was the firstborn.

Both commentators believe that it was Isaac's intention from the start to confer on Esau the Abrahamite Blessing and that Jacob's action was divinely preordained to prevent Isaac from a grievous error.

Is a different interpretation possible? Let us review the Blessing.

*(So) God give you of the dew of heaven  
and of the fat places of the earth  
and plenty of corn and wine  
Let peoples serve you . . .*

ויהן לך אלוקים  
מטל השמים ומשמני הארץ  
ורב דגון ותירוש  
יעבדוך עמים

*Cursed be everyone that curseth you  
And blessed be everyone that blesseth you*

וארריך ארור  
ומברכך ברוך  
Gen. 27:28-29

Though this blessing has found its way into the liturgy, one may ask: What, besides the *Cursed be . . . and Blessed be . . .* is there of the original Abrahamite Blessing? Certainly prosperity and power were not part of it! Furthermore, when Esau appeared and found to his dismay that he had been supplanted by his brother, a most significant dialogue ensued between Isaac and Esau. First we learn that, though *Isaac trembled very exceedingly עד מאד* גדולה חרדה, he hesitated to bless Esau. And when the latter asked in despair, *Hast thou but one blessing, my father* – אבי – אבי, אבי – אבי, אבי, Isaac merely added some words designed to ease Esau's heartbreak (Gen. 27:38-40).

Yet later on, when Isaac, prompted by his wife, urged Jacob to go to Paddan-aram to marry a woman from the house of Laban, he blessed him:

*And God Almighty bless you and  
make you fruitful and multiply,  
that thou may be a congregation  
of peoples and give you the  
blessing of Abraham to you and  
your seed with you that you may  
inherit the land of your sojournings.*

ואל-שדי יברך אותך  
ויפרך וירבך  
והיית לקהל עמים  
ויתן לך את ברכת  
אברהם לך  
ולזרעך  
לרשתך את ארץ מגורך  
Gen. 28:3-4

From this narration, two facts become obvious: Isaac was indeed shaken by Jacob's action, but not for the reason we usually assume. That first blessing was intended for Esau. However, from the start he had intended to give each of his sons the kind of blessing they deserved or appreciated: to Esau power and prosperity and to Jacob the true, spiritual Abrahamite Blessing. Though he loved Esau, and though the latter begged for it, saying, *hast thou not reserved a blessing for me* and *hast thou but one blessing*, he remained adamant. Isaac was merely misled but never fooled and Rebekah's meddling with Isaac's intention turned out to be unnecessary. Jacob was confirmed as the man destined to carry on the spiritual line of Abraham.

## REBEKAH, THE MOTHER OF JACOB AND ESAU (28:6)

The subsequent move of Jacob to Paddan-aram poses new puzzles. Though Hosea (12:13) insists that *Jacob fled* – ויברח יעקב – the relevant narration simply indicates that *Jacob went out* – ויצא יעקב. Did he, then, go out peacefully or was he in sudden flight? Scripture is obscure, offering two different motives for Jacob's move to Paddan-aram. Rebekah, we are told, had become aware of Esau's hatred and of his intention to kill Jacob as soon as their father died. Thereupon, she called Jacob and urged him to flee to Laban and *tarry with him a few days until thy brother's fury turns away* (27:44). Yet, apparently not wishing to disturb Isaac's peace of mind, she presented to him the argument that *if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth . . . what good shall my life do me?* (27:46).

It is an interesting reflection on father Isaac who, becoming increasingly alienated from this world, a recluse since the frightful event of the Akeda, turned "blind" to what was developing in his own family. It was Rebekah, a down-to-earth and practical woman, the perfect helpmate to Isaac, who sensed the danger and saved her entire family. For she was *Jacob's and Esau's mother* as well as a loving and loyal wife to Isaac.

One might assume that Jacob, a son of wealthy parents, would have been well-equipped for his long and arduous journey to Paddan-aram. Why was it then, that twenty one years later he prayed, *For with my staff I passed over the Jordan, and now I have become two camps* (32:11)? One Midrash has it that it was Eliphaz, son of Esau, who pursued Jacob intending to kill him, and eventually robbed him of all his possessions. Whatever happened in this short interval, there can be no doubt that his move or flight was the first existential crisis in his life – the first of the three subsequent uprootings. At this juncture God revealed Himself to Jacob in that marvelous dream-vision at Beth-el.

## A STRANGE VOW

Responding to the words of the Lord directed to him, Jacob now made a vow:

THE WORDS OF THE LORD:

*I am the Lord, the God of . . . Abraham and of Isaac  
The land whereon you lie, I give to you and thy seed  
And your seed shall be as the dust of the earth  
And in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed*

JACOB'S RESPONSE AND VOW:

. . . . I am with you  
and will keep you  
wherever you go  
  
and will bring you back  
into the land . . .  
Genesis 28:13-15

IF God will be with me  
and will keep me — ושמרתני  
in this way that I go  
and will give me — ונתן לי  
bread . . . and raiment . . .  
and I will return — ושבתי  
to my father's house  
THEN shall the Lord be my God — והיה  
and this stone . . . והאבן הזאת . . .  
Genesis 25:20-22

God's assurances consist of two parts, the first projected for the distant future and the second designed to assuage the existential fears of Jacob. Jacob's vow is most unusual for a number of reasons. First, the grand design in God's plan for Jacob, namely, His promises for the land, numerous descendants and that *families of the earth shall be blessed* in Jacob and his seed, seem ignored. Second, it contains specific, even prosaic requests for bread and raiment, not contained in God's promise to him. Third, and most surprising is his vow, *then shall the Lord be my God* (J.P.S. Translation).

Needless to say, our commentators have seen these difficulties, and a mere summary of their interpretations would require a separate article. Though these difficulties, taken separately, pose almost insurmountable problems, if taken together from the perspective of the "Sitz in Leben" of Jacob's state of mind when arriving at Beth-el, they find a reasonable solution.

Let us put ourselves in his situation. Being a refugee, deprived of the security of his home, he responds with hope to the pledges made to him by God, assuring his survival. His request for bread and raiment is the cry of a real man who, in his

distress, appeals for the necessities of life! God's priorities are not Jacob's in the "here and now" at Beth-el.

What does the phrase *then shall the Lord be my God* signify? Does it mean that *if* God will fulfill His promises *then* shall the Lord be his God? Let us have a closer look at the structure of the vow: *if* – אם is followed by a number of verbs ויהיה, ושבת, ונתן, ושמרתי, indicating that they belong to the clauses of the "condition." This is then followed by the noun, *and this stone* והאבן הזאת, clearly pointing out that only with this part the actual vow begins! Thus the verse in question should not be translated as the J.P.S. would have it, *then shall be Lord be my God . . .*, but rather: *and the Lord shall be my God*, continuing the conditional clauses.

Yet even stated this way, this verse needs further clarification. It is this writer's opinion that Jacob did not ignore God's great promises for the future, expressed in the introductory statement *I am the Lord* – אני ה'. He simply reversed the order. As a man in deep distress, he first appealed for his personal security, for basic necessities and safe return to his father's home, and then to the Lord's promises for the future contained in the words and (if) *the Lord* – ה' *will be my God*. The sense would then be as follows: If, indeed, You will do all that for me, tend to my personal needs and You will also fulfill the promises given to Abraham and Isaac and me, *then* I shall establish a sanctuary here in Beth-el and give tithes to You!\*

#### FROM VISION TO REALITY

In what circumstances does God appear to a patriarch? Jacob's divine encounters are connected with existential fears resulting from his three uprootings.

According to the biblical account, Jacob was forty years old when, upon leaving Beersheba and staying for the night in Beth-el, God appeared to him for the first time in the dream of the Ladder. After a period of silence that lasted twenty one years, four revelations are recorded clustering around his second uprooting, when he is told to return to Canaan and during the ensuing period shortly afterward (31:3; 32; 35:1, 9). In the many years following the return to Canaan

\* On this verse: If God will be with me R. Abihu and R. Johanan differed. (R. Johanan) said that Jacob meant: When all the conditions are duly fulfilled then I shall fulfill my vow (Gen. R. 70).

we meet Jacob beset by tragedies, such as the rape of Dinah, the death of Rachel, and the loss of Joseph. Yet, not once during this long bleak period is Jacob granted a revelation until, in his old age, he is faced by a new decision leading to his third uprooting, his move to Egypt.

We thus observe that private tragedies do not deserve divine intercession. Only events which threaten the implementation of the promises spark divine assurances and reiteration of blessings.

Once in the household of Laban, the drama of the two levels of Jacob's existence unfolds before our eyes. Against his will he marries the tragic Leah, who seeks unsuccessfully to gain his love by bearing him sons; he marries Bilha at the urging of the barren Rachel; he marries Zilpah given to him by Leah who wishes for more children *seeing that she left off bearing*.<sup>\*</sup> Thus Jacob is destined to build a family and to become the father of the twelve tribes of Israel, and to succeed where neither Abraham nor Isaac did. He establishes one people, unmarred by separation as had occurred in the cases of the Ishmaelites and Edomites. All of Jacob's children would continue the spiritual line of Abraham.

An additional dimension in the complexity of Jacob's personality is revealed in his dealings with the treacherous Laban. First characterized as a *quiet man, dwelling in tents* – איש חם יושב אהלים, we see Jacob rising up to challenging situations, capable of achieving his goal sometimes even by questionable means. With Esau, a physically dominant personality, he uses guile and undignified flattery. With Laban *who changed his wages ten times* (Gen. 31:7) he exercises superior knowledge and skill. And, indeed, being with Laban, he becomes a clever husbandman and successful raiser of flocks. In the process of accumulating great wealth, he becomes oblivious of his other existence, that of the man of destiny, the carrier of the Abrahamic Blessing, until recalled to his alter-ego existence by divine intercession.

Thus we note two layers of contradictory traits in his personality. He is Jacob, the man engaged in his own personal struggles and ambitions, and also Israel, the man of destiny, on one hand. On the other, he is the quiet, introspective איש חם yet capable of overcoming a hostile environment, when challenged. □

\* See the interesting article bearing on this topic by Louis Katzoff, *Dor le-Dor*, Vol. IX. 3.

# THE UNIVERSALISM OF THE BOOK OF JONAH

According to the Teaching of Yehezkel Kaufmann

BY HAIM GEVARYAHU

The book of Jonah is important in the historical development of universalism during the biblical period. This aspect was subjected to careful study by Yehezkel Kaufmann. The universalism of the Book, its concern for the welfare of all men and its disregard for mere national interests, was a source of astonishment even in earlier centuries.<sup>1</sup> Thus, David Kimhi (Radak) comments: "One may ask: 'Why was this book included in the Bible, especially since the main burden of its tale deals with Nineveh, one of the non-Jewish nations of the world?' For there is no mention in the Book of Israel as a nation; indeed, there is no other Book like it in the whole Bible."<sup>2</sup>

The Book of Jonah reflects the reactions of Israel to the idea that Israel's national God is at the same time the God of the universe; that He judges the people of a distant non-Jewish nation, imposes punishment on them, and displays compassion for them. The very fact that the prophet Jonah seeks to escape the Divine mission to a strange nation is evidence of the divergence of opinion in ancient Israel on the attitude Jews should adopt toward other nations.

Two questions highlight the internal problems of Jonah:

1. When did the events related in the book take place? And when was the book composed? Is the unique, universalist message of the book a product of the period prior to the destruction of the First Temple or after? And is this universalism closer to the Early Prophets, or to the Literary Prophets?
2. Why was Jonah sent to Nineveh? To what extent was there in Nineveh reverence for the God of Israel?

1. The Book of Jonah was popular with the ancients. They appointed it to be read as the Haftarah at the afternoon (Minhah) service of Yom Kippur.

2. Jonah 1:1 commentary found in all editions of Mikraot Gedolot.

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## FEARERS OF GOD

Although the Book of Jonah is based on legendary material, it is possible to discern historical threads. Thus, this book recounts the trials of a foreign city whose inhabitants were the first “fearers of God.” They were not among those who “became attached to the Lord” — נְלוּיִם after the Return to Zion. We may thus place the book prior to the destruction of the First Temple.

We read: “And the sailors were afraid, and cried each man unto his god” (Jonah 1:5). One must assume that, since they were sailors, they turned first to the common god of the sea, and later to their own personal-national gods. Jonah on the other hand, does not describe himself to the sailors as a man of Eretz Israel who fears the God of his native land. He extends the boundaries of his God by defining himself by the name “Hebrew.” His God is not only the god of Israel, or “the God of the Hebrews,” but the universal God who rules over all three dimensions of nature: heaven, sea and land.

## I AM A HEBREW

The term “Hebrew,” designating a member of the nation of Israel, appears here for the last time in the Bible. This designation had wider limits in the early biblical period, but was later narrowed to cover only the Children of Israel. Thus it is interesting to compare the presentation of the God of Israel to the foreigners in the Book of Jonah with the description of Him given to Pharaoh. In the command given to Moses and Aaron to appear before Pharaoh, they were to say “the Lord — YHWH — God of the Hebrews, hath met us” (Ex. 3:18). They tried, at first, to mention only His national Name: “Thus saith the Lord, God of Israel” (Ex. 5:1); but when Pharaoh retorted: “I do not know the Lord” (Ex. 5:2), they were then compelled to mention the Name by which He was more widely known: “The God of the Hebrews hath met with us” (Gen. 5:3).

During the period of the Israelite monarchy, a person hailing from Judea and Eretz Israel could represent himself as a native of his ancestral homeland. In Assyrian documents, the kings of Judea and Israel are designated by the national names, or nicknames, of their land. But the compiler of the Book of Jonah, who, Kaufmann claims, lived about the period of Hezekiah, King of Judah, thought it more fitting to use the Aramaic appellation. Hence he placed the description “I am a Hebrew” in the mouth of his hero.

Jonah adds a further characteristic of Israel's God: "The Creator of the sea and the dry land." This tallies with the general biblical conception of God as the Ruler over every part of the universe. The sailors are impressed at this revelation of God's might: "And the men were sorely afraid of the Lord, and sacrificed unto Him, and offered vow-offerings" (Jonah 1:16). This gives a picture of a foreign nation that feared the Lord with "a great fear."<sup>3</sup>

Concerning the citizens of Nineveh, the Book says: "And the men of Nineveh believed in God" (Jonah 3:5). In the earlier accounts of foreigners who experienced the might of God, there is no indication that they abandoned idolatry, they merely feared the Almighty because He had impressed them with His might in specific events. The sailors probably feared the Lord more than the men of Nineveh because they offered sacrifices to Him.

#### THE DATE

The exact date of the Book of Jonah is very important in the history of biblical universalism. Is it an early or a later compilation? The nucleus of such a story may well have been current for some time before it was written down by an anonymous writer. Of this writer, Eissfeldt says: "We cannot determine with certainty what material was at his command, or what he added from his own imagination." What does appear clear is that the compiler's outlook is not identical with that of Jonah. Jonah speaks in terms acceptable to men of faith in his day, and so does the compiler. The question is: when did this view become current?

Traditional interpretation identifies Jonah, the son of Amittai, the Jonah of the narrative, with Jonah, son of Amittai of Gath-Hepher (II Kings 14:26). This identification only goes as far as the names. In the framework of the Twelve Minor Prophets, tradition assigns Jonah to a place between Obadiah and Micah. In the Septuagint, its position is between Micah and Nahum. Hence, it may be inferred that tradition believed that the story of Jonah belonged to a much earlier period, probably to the 8th or 7th century B.C.E.

Some scholars believe that *Jonah* is one of the later compilations of the Bible.

3. *Toledot*, Vol. II, p. 282. Kaufmann points out that this does not mean that they were ready to forsake their idols.

They find support for this view in a few words, which they ascribe to a later Aramaic period. Other scholars suggest that these words were borrowed from Phoenician. It is thus necessary to try to seek other ways to ascertain the date of the Book, namely from internal evidence.

Scholars have surmised that in *Jonah*, Nineveh symbolizes the whole pagan world in juxtaposition to Israel. They feel that reflected therein is a sublime universalism, nobler than that of post-literary prophetic literature. Only moral repentance, such as was emphatically advocated by the classical prophets, was demanded of the people of Nineveh. These scholars suggest that the compiler of the book firmly believed that Israel's mission was to bring the Gentile nations to the God of Israel; to brush aside their national particularism. The modern view is summed up by Eissfeldt:

We can only say with certainty that the broad universalism and tolerant humanity which give the book its attractive tone, belong to the compiler and his time. While it is possible that such ideas were already hinted at in the material which the compiler found to hand, the belief as it is now stated, that the Lord's mercy is not limited to Israel, but includes even quite alien people, even the inhabitants of a city hated by Israel, and also includes animals, certainly belongs to the compiler. This determines his period. In the pre-exilic period such far-reaching universalism and such unconditional tolerance are difficult to imagine. We must therefore assign the book to the post-exilic period.<sup>4</sup>

A widely-held view is that the Book was written in the 5th century B.C.E. as a reaction against the divorce of the foreign wives at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.

The late dating of *Jonah* is supported, say some scholars, by its scene Nineveh. The historic Nineveh was completely destroyed in 612 B.C.E.; it was forgotten and became a proper source for legend. Kaufmann opposes this view and declares: No Jewish writer could possibly forget the historic position once occupied by Nineveh . . . Jews did not forget Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Rome, even after two or three thousand years.<sup>5</sup>

4. Otto Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament, An Introduction* New York: Harper and Row, 1965.

5. *Toledot*, Vol. II, p. 283.

## THE HISTORY OF BIBLICAL UNIVERSALISM

From the point of view of the history of biblical universalism, the essential statement in the Book is that depicting Jonah's disinclination to fulfill a mission to a foreign city. This reveals the divergence of opinion which existed in prophetic circles. Jonah seems to have belonged to that circle of prophets whose words are preserved in the Book of Micah: "For let all the peoples walk, each one in the name of its God" (Micah 4:5). From this, it can be deduced that even in this early period of history there were discussions and confrontations about the meaning of universalism and nationalism.

Kaufmann, who at first inclined toward the view that the book is a late composition, gave up this theory as he continued his studies.<sup>6</sup> He came to the conclusion that the book does not include any of the fundamental teachings of the literary Prophets, thus indicating its compilation in a period much earlier than literary prophecy. In fact, from the standpoint of literary style and subject-matter, all the illustrations of God's relationship with human beings belong to the time of the Early Prophets.

Kaufmann attaches much importance to the fact that nowhere in the book is there any mention that the nations should abandon pagan worship — proof that the Book preceded Isaiah and the other classical prophets who awaited the universal abandonment of idolatry. How can one suggest that Nineveh symbolizes paganism, Kaufmann asks, when the idolatrous practices of Nineveh are nowhere mentioned in the Book?

Nineveh is punished for its moral corruption, not for its idolatrous practices. This is consistent with the earliest biblical stories — the flood, Sodom, etc. — in which ethical sins are punished but idolatry is not seen as a transgression. The prophets did view idolatry as a sin, but Jonah does not.

Similarly, the prophetic literature always included the vision of the return of the nations from idolatry at the "end of days." This, too, is not present in Jonah. The universalism in Jonah is entirely within the context of the ancient biblical universalism prior to the prophets. He does not, for example, demand of the sailors that they abandon their gods. And Kaufmann equates the belief of the people in "God" with the earlier "fear of the Lord" of pagan nations.

6. *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 279 note 23.

There may have existed in the earliest days people who both feared the Lord and worshipped idols. For example, it is written of the people who dwelt in Samaria that “they feared the Lord, but that they also worshipped their graven images, as did their children and grandchildren . . . to this day” (II Kings 17:41). Kaufmann believes, the people in the Jonah story may have been like these, and the dating of the book thus moves back to that period.

#### THE ANTIQUITY OF THE BOOK OF JONAH

The antiquity of the Book is discernible from the motive of *flight* from the face of the Lord; Jonah flees to Tarshish. The ancient belief that God dwells only in Eretz Israel is here in all its innocent conception, a belief reminiscent of that found in I Sam. 26:19, as well as in the Book of Ruth. The attempted flight of Jonah from before the Lord is paralleled by that of Elijah’s flight to Horeb, to be in His presence (I Kings 19) — both being flights by prophets. The background of the story is the feeling which prevailed in Israel prior to their being dispersed in the lands of the Gentiles, and before they sang the song of the Lord “on strange soil” (Psalm 137:4).

Equally ancient is the description of Divine Revelation which pervades the Book of Jonah. God does not appear to Jonah in a vision, and there is nothing in the nature of revelation. God speaks simply to the Prophet, devoid of the trappings of Divine revelation. God speaks with Jonah during the day, when he is wide awake, not in a dream (4:4–11). The last biblical account of such Divine revelation is in I Kings 19. The form and manner of revelation in the book of Jonah is very ancient.<sup>7</sup>

Kaufmann compares the Jonah, Elijah, and Elisha stories and concludes that the accounts harmonize with the widely-held view that the Book of Kings is a literary amalgam of the acts of the Prophets. There were in circulation scrolls containing stories of the deeds of the prophets, the common denominator of these accounts being the miraculous exploits of the prophets. The Book of Jonah may have been one of these scrolls, differing, however, from all the others in “that it does not possess any historical-national element, and that it does not specifically mention any confrontation between Israel and the nations.”<sup>8</sup>

7. *Toledot*, Vol. II, p. 282, note 25.

8. *Toledot*, Vol. II, p. 282.

The editors of the Book of Kings included in their volume extracts from the scrolls in which Elijah and Elisha figured as heroes, as well as extracts from the miraculous exploits of Isaiah. Since Jonah was not included within the historical stories recorded in the Book of Kings, perhaps it belongs among the Twelve Minor Prophets, though it differs from them in its literary style and presentation.

In comparing the Book of Jonah and the stories of Elijah and Elisha, Kaufmann concludes that just as the legends of Elijah and Elisha (II Kings 5:4) began to be woven around them during their lifetime, so it is equally possible that the wonderful story of Jonah, who sought escape from the Presence of the Lord, may have circulated during his lifetime or a short while after his death. The Book of Jonah, even as the cycle of legends concerning Elijah and Elisha, is part of the legacy left to us by Ephraim.

#### A MORALITY TALE

Kaufmann adduces further support for his early dating of Jonah from the fact that it is essentially a "morality tale." This view approximates the traditional belief that the Book of Jonah is fundamentally a call to repentance.

According to Kaufmann, the contents of the Book of Jonah link it to the biblical wisdom and ethical literature which bears the stamp of antiquity and whose essential mode is universalism and humanity. It unfolds an ethical problem and suggests its solution. It is like the Book of Job which also deals with an ethical problem and attempts its solution.

This explains why the story does not have an Israelite background. The ethical literature of the Bible in general is without locus in Israel. Abraham pleads with God to save the righteous of Sodom, a non-Jewish city. The heroes of the Book of Job are non-Jews. All problems of sin and evil, justice and mercy, in the early periods of Israel's history are set against the universal backdrop of mankind in general, not within a Jewish scene. The Book of Jonah belongs in that category.<sup>9</sup>

Kaufmann sees a distinct similarity between the story of the Book of Jonah and the Sodom narrative; both question the judgments of the Judge of all the earth. The tone is quite different, however: Abraham asks humbly; Jonah asks,

9. *Toledot*, Vol. II, p. 284.

complainingly, rebelliously. In this sense, Jonah is closer to Job, who also complains and rebels. But there are also differences. Job complains that God's *anger* perverts His justice; Jonah complains that God's *mercy* perverts His justice.

#### REPENTANCE – ITS CENTRAL THEME

Jonah is alone among the biblical books in presenting a prophet entrusted with a message to all the world in a non-Jewish, universalistic context. This uniqueness, Kaufmann says, stems from the theme of the book – repentance – which is an essential of missionary prophecy. He believes that the narrator of the Jonah story may well have chosen an anonymous, legendary, non-Jewish background for his story to allow ideal presentation of the Jewish concept of repentance. Contrary to the pagan idea of sin, an impure power capable of inflicting harm, the Jews see sin as the result of man's free will – hence repentance is a concomitant of that same freedom of choice.

The people of Nineveh did not know the God of the prophet and so did not have any means of atonement for their sins. They did not turn to their own priests for instruction; they did not make sacrifices, swear vows, burn incense. They did not even ask Jonah what to do to propitiate his God. Instead, they fasted, cried out, put on sackcloth, sat upon the floor. These are expressions of pain and fear; but if they were not acts of atonement, they did indicate remorse, a turning away from their evil ways. "And when the Lord perceived their deeds, and that they had returned from their evil ways, then did He have remorse for all the evil He had planned" (Jonah 3:10).

"Here," says Kaufmann, "we have the emancipation of repentance from any connection with any supernatural worship." To Kaufmann, the Book of Jonah reveals the noble heights of religious ethics to which Ephraim had risen in the days of Jeroboam.<sup>10</sup>

10. *Toledot*, Vol. II, pp. 286–287.

# TORAH DIALOGUES

BY HAROLD D. HALPERN

## BEMIDBAR – NUMBERS

The Book of BeMidbar (Numbers) contains both legislation and historical narrative. The period dealt with is, as the Hebrew title indicates, the 38 years of the Israelite travels in the wilderness before their arrival at the banks of the Jordan River.

### QUESTIONS

#### *PINHAS*

1. *Why is a census taken again at this point (chap. 26) and how does it differ from the method of counting the people at the beginning of BeMidbar?*
2. *Once again, a set of laws is promulgated in response to a complaint when the daughters of Zelophehad approach Moses for a share in the land (chapter 27).*
  - a. *Where else in BeMidbar (Numbers) did this occur?*
  - b. *In which other case in this volume did Moses need to turn to God not on a matter of law but to inquire about punishment for an offender?*
3. *Aaron had the “nahat” to see his son Eleazar succeed him as Kohen Gadol (Num. 20:26). This sidrah begins with God bestowing special honors and the guarantee of succession upon Aaron’s grandson, Pinhas. In chapter 27, however, when Moses’ successor is to be appointed his sons are not even mentioned. Though Moses never asks that his own prominence be conferred upon them, the rabbis detected that this was indeed his desire. From the context of the passage in which Joshua is designated the new leader (27:15 ff) how did the sages come to this conclusion?*
4. *The sacrificial offerings for all festivals are listed in chapters 28 and 29.*
  - a. *Which two of the holy days are not recalled by their names?*
  - b. *Which festival has two of its names mentioned?*
5. *Labor is prohibited on the first and last days of each of the festivals in chapters 28 and 29. What distinction is made with regard to working on Yom Kippur?*

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## RESPONSES

## PINHAS

1. The census was needed because the leaders were about to allocate portions of the land. Also various recent battles and plagues had taken their toll and the number of fighting men had to be determined for the invasion of Canaan. Here the individual sects or clans are mentioned since the division of each tribe's land was to be by family groups while in Chapter 1 there is no breakdown within individual tribes.
2. a. In 9:1–14, the laws of Pesah Sheni.  
b. The punishment for the desecrator of Shabbat (15:32 ff) was not known. Rashi and other commentators explain that only the method of execution was not known to the leaders.
3. The Midrash (cited by Rashi) notes that Moses' request for a successor comes soon after the laws of inheritance in which sons are first in line for the birthright (27:8). The sages emphasize, however, that one must earn a legacy by his own merits. In fact, they comment on 25:13 that Pinhas attained his exalted status only after his zealous act in 25:7–8 (Zevahim 101a).
4. a. Yom Kippur (29:7), though the word kippurim is used in v. 11 and Sukkot (29:12) which is only referred to as ḥag (festival). Rosh Hashana is simply called a yom teruah (day of blowing the horn).  
b. Shavuot and Bikkurim are mentioned in 28:26.
5. The usual English translation for the prohibited labor on the festivals is "servile work" (כל מלאכה עבודה) which our sages interpreted to exclude certain tasks, especially in connection with the preparation of food. On Yom Kippur, however, all manner of work (כל מלאכה) is prohibited as on Shabbat. See also Emor, Leviticus 23.

Responses to Massey, cont. from p. 31.

4. The Iron object is not referred to as a "tool" as are the other two. Apparently anything made of iron was regarded as lethal while wood and stone tools had to be specifically judged to possess that quality. Some scholars believe that this section reflects a pre-Iron Age outlook (cf. Deut. 19:4 ff.).
5. a. Shechem (Nablus) and Hebron (Kiryat Arba). Joshua 20 also lists other cities whose names are familiar in modern Israel: Holon, Beth Shemesh, and Nahalal.  
b. The altar (Exodus 21:14).  
c. Adonijah in I Kings 1:50 and Joab in I Kings 2:28.

## QUESTIONS

## MATTOT

1. *This sidrah begins with laws of vows. Once again we seek the logical connection of material in this chapter with what precedes it. How does chapter 30 relate to the contents of Pinhas?*
2. *Special mention is made in 31:8 of the slaying of Balaam. In v. 16 we are informed for the first time that it was because of his counsel to Israel's enemies that the sinful actions at Baal Peor took place (chap. 25). Why does the Torah reveal this fact here and not at the time of the incident? This and the following question were suggested by Prof. Nehama Leibowitz.*
3. *If you study the proposals of the tribes of Reuben and Gad to settle in Transjordan (32:16–19) and contrast them with Moses' responses (32:20–24) you find some subtle but significant differences. How does Moses transform the requests of these two tribes and elicit from them a more desirable attitude (32:25–27)?*
4. *Which Hebrew term in chapter 32 was used extensively in the Zionist movement? Why was it especially apt?*

## MASSEY

1. *When we studied about the census at the beginning of this volume of the Torah we discussed the edifying messages that could be derived from it, (see BeMidbar question 4). Once again, in chapter 33 we come across a passage with no evident spiritual message nor association with a mitzvah. We read 40 verses listing names of Israelite campsites. Besides its value to historians and archaeologists, what religious lessons does this list convey?*
2. *Where do we find that Mount Hor is in the Negev while another Torah passage places a mountain of the same name in the Gallilee? (Based on a World Bible Contest question)*
3. *Some political activists propose the emigration of all Arabs from the land of Israel. Which verse in this sidrah could they cite as support for this view? In what way could this use of the verse be faulted?*
4. *In 35:16–18 the Torah mentions implements of iron, stone and wood that might inflict a mortal wound. What distinction is drawn between one of these and the other two and what significance do you attach to the difference?*
5. *In chapter 35 the Torah provides for six "cities of refuge" for people who kill without pre-meditation. Later, these included the Levitical cities listed in Joshua 21. The Talmud (Makkot) discusses procedures for admission to and release from these cities as well as regulations governing life there.*
  - a. *Name at least two Israelite cities, famous in our day, that were among the cities of refuge.*
  - b. *In the Book of Exodus there is a passing reference to a different type of safe sanctuary for a fugitive. What is it?*
  - c. *There is no account in the Bible of use of a city of refuge but, in the Book of Kings, there is use of sanctuary as referred to in b. above. Name at least one person who seeks safety at such a sanctuary.*

## RESPONSES

## MATTOT

1. Vows are another form of sacred obligation similar to the sacrifices listed in chapters 28 and 29 (v. especially 29:39). Nahmanides refers to the sacrifices as נדרי גבוה (high vows) and to these as נדרי הדיוט (ordinary vows). Ibn Ezra states that this segment on vows was uttered after the chapter dealing with the victory over Midian because that too involved certain obligations due the sanctuary and the Kohanim (cf 31:29f, 50).
2. A vital moral lesson is conveyed by the omission of Balaam's complicity in the context of the transgression of Israel at Baal Peor. It teaches that no matter what temptation is placed in one's path, the ultimate responsibility for sinfulness is one's own. Balaam's provocation is therefore not offered as an alibi for Israel. In this chapter, however, the reason for Balaam's execution is given. Rashi and others explain Balaam's presence amidst the Midianites as due to his coming there to be rewarded for his evil counsel (v. San. 106a).
3. In their request the tribes place their sheep before their children and lastly they mention that they will precede the Israelites into Canaan. Moses reverses the order. While the name of God is absent on their lips, Moses recalls God six times in his response, implying that their duty is a Divine one. Finally, the tribes mention God and place their families ahead of their livestock (cf. Rashi on v. 16).
4. "Halutz" in verses 21, 27, 29, 30 and 32. Though in modern times it is translated as pioneer, in the Torah it implies "armed". Indeed modern Israel's pioneers still plow the land with a rifle slung over the shoulder.

## MASSEY

1. This list would serve to remind the student of the Torah of the many experiences, both oral and written, of the Israelites during their wanderings. It could be a guide to travellers who wish to re-visit and come to realize fully God's providential care of our ancestors in these barren wastes (based on S.R. Hirsch and Nahmanides). Rashi, citing Moshe HaDarshan, emphasizes the teaching of God's benevolence toward Israel since the list indicates an average of only one movement every two years.
2. Both citations are in Massey (33:37 and 34:7)!
3. 33:55 warns that harrassment and discomfiture would follow if the Canaanites are not expelled. However, the passage is mainly concerned with the harmful influence of the pagan practices of the natives (see v. 52 & Sforno on v. 56). Later Halachists considerably mitigated the Torah's commandment (v. Maimonides: Hilchot Melachim 6:1).

continued on p. 29

## כי יצר לב האדם רע מנעוריו

BY LOUIS KATZOFF

The world was destroyed by the flood. The only survivors were Noah, his family and the creatures brought into the Ark. After the waters had receded and thank offerings brought by Noah as he left the Ark, God declared that He would never again doom the world to destruction. The reason given was: **כי יצר לב האדם רע מנעוריו**.

How are we to understand this phrase? The original J.P.S. translates: "For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth." The New J.P.S. translation is similar: "Since the devisings of man's mind are evil from his youth."

Both versions stamp man's nature as evil, a concept which contradicts the idea expressed in the prayer book: **ונשמה שנחת בי טהורה היא**, "The soul you have given me, O God, is pure." The comment of Hertz on the biblical verse introduces the Jewish notions of **יצר הרע** and **יצר הטוב** as being innate in man: "The evil inclination — **יצר הרע** — too often gains the mastery over the good inclination, the **יצר הטוב**."

It is not clear from the verse whether this evil inclination stems from birth or from youth. From the word **מנעוריו**, we might assume, as the translations have it, that at some point after birth, perhaps in adolescence, the evil inclination springs up. The commentator Rashi indicates clearly that **מנעוריו** is not to be derived from the root noun **נער** — from "youth," but from the root verb **נעור** — which means "to stir" or "to shake": **משננער ממעי אמו ניתן בו יצר הרע**: "When the embryo is shaken from the mother's womb, the **יצר הרע** is given to it."

The assumption is that the *evil* inclination comes with birth, a belief hardly reconcilable with the statement that the soul given divinely to man is *pure*.

It seems to me that the dynamic theory of personality, expounded by the psychoanalytic school of psychology can be quite helpful in understanding our verse. The **יצר הרע** is not to be translated: *evil inclination*. It would be more fitting to translate it: *natural impulse*.

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Briefly, we can explain this theory of personality as follows: At birth the child is motivated purely by physiological drives. Freud called it, the id. The demands of the id are assumed to underlie the pleasure principle, the favoring of those activities which, by reducing physiological tensions, bring pleasure.

The child, however, slowly becomes aware of an environment around him. Moreover, he is increasingly subjected to restraints imposed by previous experience as well as by people closest to him who presume to “train” him. Under the influence of the real external world which surrounds him, a special organization arises within the personality which henceforward acts as an intermediary between the id and the external world. This region is given the name of ego, what some call the “I” or the “self.” The ego thus takes cognizance of reality as well as impulse. Much of the individual’s interaction with his environment may, in this sense, be conceived as “reality testing.”

In reacting to the environment, the child develops not only an ego, but an awareness of right and wrong. This is the basis of what is commonly called “conscience,” and what Freud called the superego. This superego is to a great extent dependent upon parental influences. At this point, the ego has an additional task to perform. It is called upon to satisfy simultaneously the demands of the id, the superego and of reality.

How does this relate to our verse? I would call the **יצר הרע** the id or natural drives. The **יצר הטוב** is a combination of the ego and superego.

With this in mind, we can now better understand some Jewish ideas and practices which bear on the functions, as it were, of the **יצר הרע** and the **יצר הטוב**. It is not the calling of the **יצר הטוב** to deny the “rights” of the **יצר הרע** by suppressing it or even by sublimating it. It is rather the concern of the “good inclination” to control the **יצר הרע** — to make it do its very bidding. It is a process of self-discipline. For instance, when children in the nursery school are given the opportunity to go to the drinking fountain, the process of “socialization” can be implemented by directing the children to line up for their turn at the fountain, thus also developing their inner sense of impulse control.<sup>1</sup> Needless to state, impulse control is a sign

1. One Chassidic group instills this impulse control by a deliberate restraint, for shorter or longer periods, depending on the age and maturity of the individual, whenever the desire to quench one’s thirst arises. This might be considered an extreme position on impulse control.

of maturity in one's capacity to fend off an immediate satisfaction for a greater and more rewarding end pursuit.

With this explanation, we can readily see how the natural drives of man can be utilized for nobler purposes. In the verse, *וַאֲהַבְתָּ אֹת ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ*, *And thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thine heart* (Deuteronomy 6:5), the Rabbis ask: Why the word *בְּכָל לִבְבְּךָ* instead of *לִבְךָ* (thine heart)? — *בשני יצריך*, *מהו בכל לבבך* — *ביצר הטוב וביצר הרע*. The doubling of the "heart" comes to teach us that we are to serve our Creator with both the *יצר הטוב* and the *יצר הרע*. Were it not for the natural sex drive, would man marry and establish a family? What would then happen to these basic institutions of marriage and family?

Judaism does not deny the pleasures of the flesh. As a matter of fact, Jewish tradition actually helps arouse desire within the family setting. The Talmud suggests specific food ingredients for the Friday evening Sabbath menu which would stimulate love making between husband and wife. The sanctification of the Sabbath (*מקדש השבת*) and the sanctity of marriage (*קידושין*) inherently blend together toward fulfillment of body and soul in the happy synthesis of the *יצר הטוב* and the *יצר הרע*.

A most prosaic example of the upliftment of the *יצר הרע* to the service of God can be seen in the act of partaking food. (What more natural drive is there than eating?) The Jew is required to wash his hands in the ritual *נטילת ידים* and recite the blessing thereto before starting his meal. This act of washing is not meant for sanitation but is an expression of ritual, in the service of God. After the completion of the meal, the Jew is required to recite the *ברכת המזון* (Grace after meals) to fulfill the commandment of the verse: *וְאָכַלְתָּ וּשְׂבַעְתָּ וּבְרַכְתָּ* *When you have eaten your fill, give thanks to the Lord your God* (Deuteronomy 8:10).<sup>2</sup> Thus, the Jew is asked to glorify his maker in the very satisfaction of his natural drives.

In summary the basic words *יצר* and *רע* in the verse, *יצר לב האדם רע מנעוריו* are not to be translated: "evil inclination." The verse should be translated: "For the *natural impulses* of man are *raw* at birth," waiting for the process of growth to refine and control these impulses as maturity develops. □

2. The word *וּבְרַכְתָּ* — "give thanks," when compared to the word *וּבְרַחַתָּ* — "you will run away," demonstrates the sharp contrast between the boorish and the edifying manner of such a basic matter-of-life act like eating.

# THE TOWER OF BABEL

BY SOL LIPTZIN

The episode of the Tower of Babel, as narrated in *Genesis* 11:1-9, testifies to man's aspiration to reach Heaven by his own united efforts, even against the will of God. It has its parallel in the Greek story of the Titans who piled Pelion on Ossa and tried to ascend to the realm of the Olympian divinities. But, unlike the Greeks who saw this effort as part of a struggle between immortals for supremacy, the biblical tale is of mere mortals, descendants of Adam and Noah, who were undaunted by the punishments meted out to their forefathers for disobedience to God, such as expulsion from paradise and the catastrophe of the Deluge. These human beings of a postdiluvian generation dared to challenge the Creator of the Universe. Endowed with the attribute of reason and under the leadership of Nimrod, an heroic rebel against God's establishment, they were animated by a common purpose and spoke a common tongue. They attracted God's attention as their Tower rose ever higher and higher. He descended from the Heaven to which they aspired and was filled with astonishment at their monumental achievement. They were reaching out beyond the earthly limitations He had set for these creatures of earth. To frustrate their arrogant striving, He confused their tongue. Without a common language, they could no longer counsel together and hence could not engage in this or any other venture of such magnitude. He also weakened them further by scattering them over the face of the entire earth. Since then, human beings have been moving in different directions and have never again known unity. Even their efforts during the present century to establish a viable League of Nations and an effective United Nations have not been crowned with great success.

Though *Genesis* does not specifically mention that Nimrod was the initiator of the building of the Tower, most commentators since Josephus Flavius have made this assumption, because he was recorded to be the strongest personality of the generations between Noah and Abraham. He was the first ruler who wanted to

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encompass all mankind under his dominion. This grandson of Ham succeeded in uniting the Mesopotamian cities on the plain of Shinar into the great power later named Babylonia. The symbol of his mighty domain was to be a lofty structure, called a ziggurat, in the heart of its capital, the metropolis of Babylon, even as the Eiffel Tower is today the symbol of France's capital.

#### THE ORIGINAL TOWER

Biblical scholars have tried to discover the historical basis of the Tower-narrative. Archeologists have explored ruins throughout the Middle East and conjectured which of these might have been known to the biblical people. The original Tower that gave rise to the story was probably rebuilt after its destruction and was destroyed again and again in the course of many warring centuries.

An inscription of Nabopolassar, the father of Nebuchadnezzar, records that he rebuilt the Tower of Babylon in honor of the god Marduk, with its foundation deep in the earth and its pinnacle striving heavenward. Nebuchadnezzar continued with the building of this grandiose structure whose pinnacle was to compete with the sky. This was probably the tower which the Jews who were exiled to Babylon saw in the sixth century B.C.E. and which the Greek historian Herodotus saw when he visited this city in the middle of the following century. He described it as consisting of eight towers, each erected upon the other, with a great temple crowning the topmost tower. In this temple there was reputed to be a golden table and a large couch on which a lady chosen by God among the women of Babylon spent her nights. The priests claimed that God himself came down to the temple and slept with her on this couch. Herodotus, however, does not vouch for the authenticity of these nightly divine encounters in the temple. He merely reports them as hearsay.

#### THE JEWISH SYBIL

References to Babylon's tower recur in the works of the Greek geographer Strabo and the historian Diodorus, both of whom lived during the reign of Emperor Augustus, and in the prophecies of the Jewish Sybil a century and a half earlier. A sybil was a seeress who in ecstatic moments foresaw and foretold events to come, above all, dire events. In order to make her oracular utterances more credible, she spoke of past events as if she had also foreseen them. The so-

called Jewish Sybil, a few of whose oracular verses have been preserved, stemmed supposedly from Hellenistic circles in Alexandria, a center of the Jewish Diaspora in the middle of the second century B.C.E. Her incantations survey the early history of the world and report on the Tower of Babel erected after the Deluge by the descendants of Noah, who still spoke a common language and who were living in Assyria after their descent from Mt. Ararat, the resting place of Noah's ark. Their plan to reach the starry heaven was, however, frustrated by God, who sent a storm to topple the Tower before it could be completed. Thereafter, dissension broke out among them and they scattered in three directions, peopling the three realms over which ruled Cronus, Titan and Japetos (Japhet), realms which engaged in constant warfare with each other.

Josephus Flavius, who quoted the Sybil, was thoroughly familiar with Greek historical sources as well as with biblical ones. Unlike Philo who, in the treatise *On the Confusion of Languages*, attempted a complicated allegorical interpretation of the Tower-episode, Josephus assumed the factual reality of the Tower's existence. In his *Jewish Antiquities*, he mentioned that God suggested to the descendants of Noah, who had come down from the mountains to the plains of Senaar and who had multiplied rapidly, that they send out colonies to cultivate other parts of the earth and to enjoy an abundance of the earth's fruits. But Nimrod urged them to stay where they were and to trust in their mightiness. He promised them that he would avenge the destruction of the civilization of their antediluvian ancestors. He would build a tower higher than the waters could reach so that, if God were inclined to inundate the earth again, its inhabitants would have a safe shelter. The people went to work and built the towering structure at a tremendous speed because of the multitude of available laborers. Seeing their mad enterprise, God put an end to it by confusing their speech and sowing discord among them.

Since Hellenistic and Roman days, the Tower-episode has engaged the popular imagination and has been embellished in arts and letters by Jews, Christians and Moslems. In a six-volume study, entitled *Der Turmbau von Babel*, 1957-1965, Arno Borst analyzed most of this material.

#### THE DOR HAFLAGA

For the Middle Ages, this Tower was the symbol of human arrogance and

human defiance of God's order. The boldness of the sinning multitudes stemmed from the fact that, despite the population-explosion after the Flood, mankind remained a united community and spoke a common tongue, the Hebrew in which God conversed with Adam, and Adam with his descendants. The unity of the human race came to an end when God scrambled spoken Hebrew to such an extent that seventy, or seventy-two, languages arose from its fragments and these were spoken by the seventy, or seventy-two, peoples dispersed over all continents. At the end of days, however, fragmented humanity will be reunited and mankind will then sing the Lord's praises in the unscrambled, original Hebrew. As it is said in Zephaniah, 3:9: *For then I will convert the peoples to a purer language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent.*

Stories about the *Dor Haflaga*, the generation of the Tower of Babel, were embellished and expanded by rabbinical sages century after century. They were recorded in compilations such as *Bereshith Rabba*, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, and *The Chronicles of Jerahmeel*. The former two commentaries were the principal sources for the detailed narrative in the *Tseno Ureno*, which has been a bestseller down the centuries since its first printing in 1616. This Yiddish commentary on the Bible was especially designed for women readers. Like its sources, it attributed the plan of the Tower to Nimrod, a wicked tyrant whose power over his fellow-men emanated from the God-tailored coat which he inherited from his grandfather Ham. God had made this coat for Adam as replacement for the fig-leaves and Noah had taken it into the ark. When Nimrod, the slave of a slave, put on this coat, all beasts and birds prostrated themselves before him and all men obeyed him. Upon his command, the Tower was built and, though never completed, it reached a height of twenty-seven miles. Rabbi Eliezer's narrative mentioned seven miles but the *Tseno Ureno* added another twenty, thus giving the Tower a more impressive height. The staircases were in the east and in the west. The laborers carrying bricks ascended from the east and descended in the west, so as not to get in each other's way. However, if a person fell down from the dizzy height and was killed, no great ado was made, since he was easily replaceable, but if a brick fell down, there was weeping at its loss, because a great effort would be needed to replace it.

## IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

English poets, well versed in biblical lore, often referred to the Tower of Babel. Thus, Edmund Spenser, in a sonnet published posthumously in 1599 and prefixed to the English translation of Cardinal Contarini's *The Commonwealth and Government of Venice*, reminds us that ancient Babel, Empress of the East, upreared its building to threaten the sky, and tyrannical Rome, the Babel of the West, also upraised its airy towers to great heights. Yet both are fallen and lie buried in ruins. But fair Venice, flower of the world's delight, persists in its beautiful structure, because Venice is more righteous than Babylon or Rome.

John Donne, comparing the joys of this world with those of the next, holds that, just as the builders of Babel's Tower could not have found enough material in the entire earth to serve as a base for their structure, so too the world is too poor a foundation upon which to erect true joy such as is to be found only in the afterworld.

John Milton, in his epic *Paradise Lost*, has the Archangel Michael give Adam a panoramic view of future events. Book XII previews events after the Deluge. At first, the survivors and their offspring would be content to till the soil, to reap goodly crops, and to live in peace. But then an ambitious person would arise who was not content with fair equality. He would be a mighty hunter, not of beasts but of men. He would arrogate unto himself dominion over his fellows and would dispute God's sovereignty. He would set out with a crew to build a city and a tower whose top was to reach to Heaven. But God, who often descends unseen to visit our planet, would notice what these men were doing and He would not like it. He would deride them and garble their native language so that they would not understand each other and would have to stop building:

"Great laughter was in Heaven  
And looking down to see the hubbub strange,  
And hear the din. Thus was the building left  
Ridiculous, and the work *Confusion* named."

(XII, 1.59-62)

The etymology of Babel as meaning "confusion" was accepted by Milton, unaware that the Babylonians derived this name from "babilu," which in their tongue meant "Gate of God."

The anti-monarchical Milton has Adam angrily condemn the execrable descendant who assumed authority to rule over his brethren, whereas God gave man dominion only over beast, fish and fowl but not over his own species. Besides, what a wretched fool was this first tyrant not to realize that, even if he completed the Tower, he could not breathe in the thin air above the clouds!

#### NIMROD EXONERATED

A generation after Milton and two years after a bloodless revolution toppled James II from the throne of England, the philosopher John Locke sought to exonerate Nimrod from blame in the Tower-episode. In the first of the *Two Treatises of Civil Government*, 1690, Locke refuted the doctrine that absolute monarchy was grounded in the divine right of kings, as claimed by the Stuarts. He rather maintained that the right of rulers to rule was based on the consent of the people to be governed. It was not Nimrod who was responsible for the decision to erect the Tower of Babel. It was rather the people who reached this decision and authorized the building. The people said: "Come, let *us* build *us* a city and a tower, with the top in Heaven, and let *us* make *us* a name, lest *we* be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4). The people built as free men for themselves and not as slaves for a lord and master, because they wanted a permanent settlement so as not to be dispersed.

#### MACHINATIONS OF SATAN

Daniel Defoe, a younger contemporary of Locke, attributed the entire project of the Tower to the machinations of Satan. In *The Political History of the Devil*, 1726, he theorized that after the Flood Satan did not find it as easy to bring about man's degeneracy as in antediluvian days. His first major opportunity came when he persuaded mankind to start the Tower of Babel. The building was designed chiefly as a storehouse for provisions in case of a second Deluge. But God thwarted Satan and put an end to the diabolic enterprise, not in anger but in pity for the dreaming human creatures. The collapse of the project was Satan's first great disappointment. He had always triumphed earlier, as in the case of Eve, Cain, and when he got the sons of God to engage in promiscuous, voluptuous living with the daughters of hell. After man's dispersion from Babel, Satan had to learn many tongues, if he wanted to set human beings upon each other as

one sets dogs upon each other. He was responsible for the growth of oppression, invasions, bloodshed. Warring human beings lost their former beautiful, angelic features and were distorted into furious monsters, into veritable devils. War was Satan's masterpiece. King Nimrod was but the first of many tyrants. He was baited by Satan with dreams of empire, the same bait which ensnared all Majesties down to Louis XIV of France. King Nimrod the First was later idolized as a god under the name of Belus, then Baal.

#### IN GERMAN LITERATURE

Among the more original eighteenth century interpretations of the Tower-story was that of the German philosopher and poet Johann Gottfried Herder. He regarded the entire narrative as a *Spottsage*, a satire on the first usurper, Nimrod. In Herder's eulogistic work on biblical literature, *Vom Geist der ebräischen Poesie*, 1782, he presented Nimrod as a mighty ruler of Babylon who wanted to build himself a royal residence with a tall tower as the monument of his greatness and his people's subjugation. He persuaded his subjects that such a tower would guarantee them security and lasting unity. The higher it rose, the more did it impinge upon God's domain above the earth. Fearing that the builders would never desist from encroaching upon His territory, God put His finger to their lips, confusing their speech and putting an end to their united effort. Babel became the symbol of man's humbled pride, the symbol of insolence punished. Nimrod, the mighty hunter who wanted to rise on the shoulders of a betrayed and enslaved human herd, suffered disgrace when he challenged the Lord. The gigantic project became the laughing-stock of later generations.

Goethe, who early came under Herder's influence, defended the Promethean striving of the builders of the Tower. He did not look upon their dispersion as a curse and as God's punishment for their arrogance. The swarming of the human race over the entire earth, even as the ants, was a blessing, though a mixed blessing. It enabled man to populate all lands but it also brought about the ensuing disunity. The builders were only a few generations removed from the catastrophe that wiped out the previous race of mortals, save for Noah and his family. The postdiluvian were nourishing themselves by raising herds of cattle. However, to find sufficient pasture, they had to roam ever further from their center. Their desire to build a tower visible from great distances arose from their

wish not to cut themselves off entirely from their roots. They wanted to be able to find their way back again to their ancestral ground. If God ruined their project, it was because He did not want them to be happy and wise, numerous and united, too near to heaven.

#### ROMANTIC LITERATURE

The English Romantic poet William Wordsworth, in the long poem *The Excursion*, 1814, harked back to Herodotus, in the verses on the Tower of Babel. Generalizing that in earlier stages of society apathy was unknown because religion prevented apathy, he offered as evidence illustrations from Jewish, Persian, Babylonian, Chaldean and Greek modes of belief. The Babylonian god was Belus. For this divinity, the people of Babel, with immense toil, upreared tower planted upon tower, so that, when Belus descended nightly to rest on his splendid couch in the eighth tower, the highest one, he could overlook the winding Euphrates and the vast city of his devoted and contented worshipers (*The Excursion*, Book IV, 1.682–693).

The romantic drama *Der Turm zu Babel* by the post-Romantic German poet Julius Rodenberg formed the libretto for the opera by the Russian composer Anton Rubinstein. Its first performances in 1870 in Königsberg, Berlin and Vienna attracted wide attention. It has, however, rarely been staged since then. Nimrod is the opera's main character. Proud of his achievement, as his workers build the Tower ever higher, he boasts of his soon being able to challenge God in heaven and not merely on earth. Abram warns him that God can be approached only in humility and not in defiance. He implores Nimrod to desist from sinning against God by building the impious edifice. The enraged Nimrod orders this insolent herdsman to be flung into the glowing kiln in which the bricks are being made. When Abram emerges unscathed by the fire, the people attribute the miracle of his salvation to God. But, which God? Was it Baal, or was it Abram's God, or was it a third divinity? Nimrod silences the quarrelling factions, adherents of different gods, and sends them back to work on the Tower. As for the rebellious Abram, he is to be hurled from the Tower and to find his grave at its bottom. But again a miracle intervenes. Amidst thunder and lightning, the Tower topples and the people scatter in fear. As Nimrod contemplates the ruins, he is converted to the worship of the one true God, the God of Abram. At the

end, Abram sees the three groups descended from Noah – the Semites, Hamites and Japhetites – wander off in different directions, but he also foresees their finding unification again in the course of time, since they are all God's children. They will then know universal peace and will again speak a common tongue. The world will be a golden Paradise, irradiated by love.

A fiercer spirit pervades Heinrich Hart's blood-drenched *Nimrod*, 1888, the second poetic narrative of a projected gigantic epic in twenty-four parts, entitled *Das Lied der Menschheit*. Before his death in 1906, this German poet and critic, who championed Realism, even when dealing with remote ages and far-off lands, succeeded in completing three of the twenty-four narratives and only fragments of others. He wanted to present on a grand scale mankind's progress from primitive savagery to the present complex civilization, and even beyond the present on to distant millennia. *Nimrod* deals with the transition from the nomadic way of life to a more settled condition, the forging on the banks of the Euphrates of wandering Bedouins into a united people under the leadership of a titanic personality. Nimrod battles his way to supremacy. He becomes the first king. He then builds the first city and a Tower from which he can survey the entire area over which he rules. However, in his immeasurable conceit as the sovereign of Babel, he conceives of himself as the god of the earth and he challenges Bel, the god of the starry sky. He hurls his flashing lance at the firmament above him. The reaction of Bel comes in flashes of lightning and peals of thunder, which topple the Tower. It seems as if man's defiance is answered with mocking laughter by a power greater than man.

#### THE 20th CENTURY

The German novelist Josef Ponten began his novel *Der Turm zu Babel* before the First World War but did not complete it until the war's end, since he had to spend much of the time after 1914 fighting on various European battlefields. When this novel finally appeared in 1918, the German Empire which had arisen in the 1870's under the strong, guiding hand of Bismarck, was crumbling into ruins. Ponten mirrored its rise and fall in his narrative of a master-builder whose grandiose vision of erecting a tower that would scrape the sky ended only as a dream because, as in the biblical Tower of Babel, construction could not proceed when confusion in communication set in among the members of the family.

After reading the biblical tale of the Tower-project, Ponten's master-builder wishes he could have lived in the generation that conceived such a project. He even makes sketches of how a similar tower could still be built now-a-days. He entitles his envisaged structure "The Babylonian Tower: an Attempt At Its Reconstruction." This structure is not to be an iron needle like the Eiffel Tower but is to have a broad base and to be made of massive old stones. If his vision is never realized and the tower is never built, it is because, as in ancient days, misunderstandings arise, communication stalls, each member of the master builder's family pulls in a different direction. At the end, the aged master surveys the wreck of his hopes, the finale of the dream in his youth in the 1870's, when even the impossible seemed possible.

#### STEFAN ZWEIG

Stefan Zweig's *Der Turm zu Babel* was written in the midst of the First World War but after the initial patriotic enthusiasm for the conflict had begun to wane in the Austrian capital, which was his home. This literary gem was an expression of Zweig's faith in the reconstruction of European unity after its collapse. He had witnessed the shattering of the bonds of friendship which he had forged across national boundaries before 1914. Unable to join the chorus of European writers who preached hatred, he had at first lapsed into silence. But, by 1916, he resumed broken contacts with the French novelist Romain Rolland, the Belgian poet Emile Verhaeren, and other Europeans in hostile lands who had earlier influenced his thinking. He began work on his pacifistic drama *Jeremias*, in which, under the guise of biblical events of a distant past, he bewailed the insane behavior that gripped his own generation and his own continent, which was in essence a spiritual and cultural unity. However, before *Jeremias* was completed and staged in neutral Switzerland in 1917, he made known his own views on the Europe that he wished to see rebuilt after the War.

In his biblical allegory of the Tower of Babel, he pointed out that the Tower-vision arose when human beings after the Deluge found themselves on a dangerous, pathless, desolated earth. As they looked up to the pure, radiant sky above them, there was born in their souls a longing to aspire toward heaven and they united to build a tower that would reach up to it. When God looked down upon these tiny creatures, He at first smiled at their apparently naive, harmless

amusement. But, as He saw the foundation pillars of the Tower growing ever stronger, He feared that these united Lilliputians, endowed with the spirit He had implanted in their species, would continue in their task until they could challenge Him. In their unity lay the key to their strength. And so He destroyed this unity by confusing their tongue. Not understanding each other, they quarreled and abandoned the grandiose, common enterprise. They scattered and built individual homesteads, each family for itself. The Tower became a ruin and ultimately a legend.

For thousands of years human beings continued their selfish existences as strangers separated by borders that were breached only for plunder. But the vision of their lost unity never died within them. Gradually they began to interchange ideas and to revive communication across boundaries. Life became richer as they discovered that a unity of arts, science and commerce was possible amidst diversity. On Europe's soil a new Tower of Babel arose, not as a monument of brick and cement but as one of fraternal solidarity. The Tower's foundations were sublime, spiritual substances gathered from the wisdom of the Orient and the Occident. Each nation added its contribution and the Tower grew until its spire reached an unprecedented height. In the intoxication of unity, the European builders were nearing Heaven. They felt themselves to be creative even as was God. However, the God who had destroyed the first Tower of Babel sensed the danger to His superiority that a united humanity posed and so He again sowed confusion. Again people raged against each other. They threw away the tools of peace and took up arms. Destruction replaced creativity. The new Tower of Babel, symbol of European solidarity, was crumbling as the war went on. It may take a long time before the interrupted common work can be resumed, but the Tower must rise again from its ruins. After the war, the nations must again find their lost unity.

As a literary champion in the reconstruction of Europe's spiritual and cultural unity, Zweig was untiringly active in liberal causes until the Nazis overran his native Austria and forced him to flee from country to country. When the Second World War broke out, the Good European, as he was wont to call himself, saw the third Tower of Babel collapsing and he could no longer sustain any faith that on Europe's ruins a fourth Tower could be built. As a refugee in Brazil, he ended his life in 1942.

The pessimistic mood that drove Zweig to his death dominated German literature after the Nazi regime left Germany in shambles. This mood was reflected in the cynical plays of the dramatist Friedrich Dürrenmatt. The Tower of Babel occupied this Swiss writer's imagination since his youth. In a sketch that he drew of it, he showed its tottering pinnacle rising to a height comparable to the earth's radius. Human beings are too small to be seen and even mountains appear to be tiny. Long, transparent ribbons, apparently emanating from God's glory, seem to be tugging at the Tower and will soon topple it to the ground.

#### DÜRRENMATT

In the play of 1957, *Ein Engel Kommt Nach Babylon*, Dürrenmatt explains how this grandiose Tower-enterprise came to be undertaken in ancient days, as senseless an enterprise as similar ones today. An angel, disguised as a beggar, comes to Babylon, whose ruler Nebuchadnezzar has just overthrown his opponent Nimrod after being Nimrod's footstool for nine hundred years. The angel brings with him Kurrubbi, a newly born cherub, who is to be handed over to the lowliest man. The play ends with the tyrant Nebuchadnezzar, in despair at Kurrubbi's disappearance, giving the order to herd mankind into one great enclosure. In its midst, he intends to raise a tower which would pierce the clouds and reach his enemy, God. "I will oppose to the creation out of the void, the creation of the spirit of man, and we shall see which is the better: my justice, or the injustice of God." From this city the lowliest beggar, a lover of freedom, flees to the wide open spaces with Kurrubbi, the spirit of love. They leave behind them the mighty but unstable structure of steel and stone as they face the colorful and wild unknown, the beautiful earth of beggars, and a new dawn of dangers and promises.

Among the most recent reinterpretations of the Tower of Babel is the long poem published under this title in 1979 in Israel by the Yiddish poet Hirsh Osherowitch. He wrote it, however, in Vilna during 1964 and 1965, the years when the Great Thaw that followed Stalin's death had not yet come to an end and when biblical themes were no longer frowned upon as subversive.

The poem is an affirmation of man's faith in himself and in his ability to give reality to magnificent dreams, such as the dream of the Tower of Babel. Our species may have been created out of the dust of the earth but spirit has been breathed into it. We love the firm earth upon which we have been planted but we

also aspire to rise beyond our earthly condition and to touch the realm of the radiant sun, even though it scorch us. Not only in ancient Babylon but also in the present century did we take bricks and stones, sand and loam, and built a Tower, so that, like the angels, we could be with God. For, are not angels merely human beings with wings? Though we have no wings, we can emulate the heavenly host by ascending to God by means of the Tower which already extends beyond the clouds that cover the cellar called Earth. The winged eagle can no longer reach us as we toil upward but, alas, the cynical serpent manages to creep upward with us and to sow dissension among us. Truth is mated with falsehood and becomes a stone with which a comrade cracks another comrade's skull. Once stones begin to be hurled, there is no stopping them until the entire structure totters and collapses.

The poet, in heavily veiled, interspersed hints, tries to get the idea across that the structure built by the Soviet Nimrod may be collapsing but that man's dreams remain indestructible and it is the dreams that make humanity God-like.

In the many literary versions of the Tower of Babel legend, from its biblical beginning until its present configuration, man's irrepressible, boundless, upward striving finds expression. Though this striving is often condemned as arrogance and defiance of the established order, it also mirrors the greatness of the human species, a species that is not content to stay within the bounds set for it by God or fate or the genetic code but that rather wills to build towers with spires reaching up to dizzy heights, even to Heaven itself. Such towers may topple and fall, as did the first Tower of Babel, but upon the ruins new towers will be built again and again as sublime monuments of man's indomitable spirit.

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# AND A FOUNTAIN SHALL COME FORTH FROM THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

BY BEN ZION LURIA

On rare occasions do eschatology and archeology meet. In the verse "Fountain Coming Forth from the Temple" (Joel 4:18) there is such a meeting of imagination and of the concrete, of aspiration and of reality.

In the Middle East, so close to the desert, water is a source of life, both for vegetation and for man. Drought sows death; water turns into the opposite of death, "into the fountain of life."

According to the ancients a divine secret is hidden in water — be it rain, fountain or river. Bringing life with it, it is holy.<sup>1</sup> In Babylonian mythology the sources of rivers serve as the abode of gods. Also in Ugaritic mythology<sup>2</sup> Eli the head of the gods, resides in fountains, rivers and in the depths of the sea.

The outlook of the Hebrews differs from that of the Babylonians and of the Ugarits. In the eyes of the prophet,<sup>3</sup> Tyre, which dwells on an island in the heart of the sea, is in itself arrogance, an insult to God. Prophesying dark tidings against the prince of Tyre, he says:

*Because your heart is lifted up and thou hast said: I am God, I sit in the seat of god, in the heart of the seas: Yet thou art man, and not God.*

Ezekiel 28:2

## THE RESTORING POWER OF WATER

It is in the power of living waters, that bring blessing in the fields and in the

1. Annemarie Ohler, *Mythologische Elemente in Alten Testament*, p. 148.
2. עלילות אוגריט, מהדורת רין, ע' 27-29
3. Ezekiel 28:2.

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vineyards, to overcome the desolation of the ground and cure man of his sickness.

The source of water for the entire earth is the Garden of Eden:<sup>4</sup> *And a river went forth from Eden to water the garden and from thence it was parted, and became four heads.* Its waters spread on the face of the entire ancient world, and assured man a good life.<sup>5</sup> This is Sforno's comment on this verse: Man will not be so dependent on water and hard work. That is to say, the watering occurs through nature and man is freed from the fear of a drought and from hard labor necessitated by carrying water from the rivers to the fields.

The vision of Ezekiel concerning the revival of the people, known as the vision of the dry bones, is merely the first phase of restoration. The second phase of the vision is the unification of the nation<sup>6</sup> while the final phase is the restoration of the land from its desolation, the desert turning into a fruitful land. The source of the final restoration, when in the Days to Come<sup>7</sup> Israel will return to its land, is the life-giving water in the Temple in Jerusalem. Ezekiel portrays how the waters coming from the Temple in a powerful stream, will turn the Judean desert into a fruitful garden.<sup>8</sup> It will even cure the Dead sea from its desolation, turning it into a body of waters capable of sustaining life.

In the prophecy of Joel this thought recurs briefly:<sup>9</sup> *And a fountain shall come forth from the House of the Lord, and will water the valley of Shittim.* In vain have Bible scholars sought to identify this valley of Shittim; this is not an actual but only a symbolic valley. The prophet singled out the acacia tree found in the valleys in the Judean desert and in the Arabah to symbolize a desolate and dry place. This fountain coming forth from the House of the Lord will turn the desert, which only grows acacia trees, into a fruitful land; on the mountain slopes vineyards will be planted, and on the hills there will be grazing land for flocks, thus producing milk in abundance.

4. Genesis 2:10.

5. Before the sin of Adam and Eve.

6. Ezekiel 37:15-28.

7. Not in the End of Days, but when the Return to Zion will be materialized. This is how P. Meltzer interprets this passage.

8. Ezekiel 47:1-12.

9. Joel 4:18.

The prophecy of Joel is uttered in brevity and in hints, while that of Ezekiel is presented in detail and in vivid colors.

#### WATER AN ESCHATOLOGICAL SYMBOL

The prophecy of Zechariah is entirely different:<sup>10</sup> *And it shall be on that day that living waters shall go forth from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea; in summer and in winter shall it be.*

This is an eschatological vision in which abundance and fruitfulness are spread over the entire land; not only over the desert and the Arabah, but also over the western slopes of the Judean mountains, the Shefela and the coastal plain. There will be rains of blessing both summer and winter. He adds, though, on condition of pilgrimages to Jerusalem on the Festival of Succoth to give homage to the Lord of hosts.

In the course of time the concept of a river flowing from the House of the Lord changed into a symbol of blessing. After the defeat of Sennacherib at the gates of Jerusalem, Isaiah envisions a blessing being bestowed on the saved city. Zion will be blessed with abundance of water, and *there the Lord will be with us in majesty, in a place of broad rivers and streams.*<sup>11</sup>

In the Psalms<sup>12</sup> the concept of living waters is already fully spiritualized; those that take shelter under the shadow of the wings of the Almighty . . . *are abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house, and thou makest them drink of the river of thy pleasures.* Divine inspiration is compared to a source of living waters coming from Eden. True, already Jeremiah had utilized this simile when he said:<sup>13</sup> *They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.* While this simile, taken from actual life was to represent a spiritual concept, the words of the Psalmist are entirely spiritual and symbolic. This is fully brought out in the next verse of the psalm (36:10) wherein the poet declares: *With the Almighty is the Fountain of Life.* When the Psalmist turns to the Lord, asking that He *make them to drink*

10. Zechariah 14:8.

11. Isaiah 33:21.

12. Psalm 36:9.

13. Jeremiah 2:13.

of the river of Eden – נחל עדן – paralleling the *fatness of God's house* דשן ביהח, he hints at the river that went out from Eden, the source of the four great rivers which brought life and fertility to all the lands of the ancient world.

Again the Psalmist uses this concept when he wishes to point to the graciousness of the Lord. When the world quakes and roars, *there is a river, the streams whereof make glad the city of God, the holiest dwelling-place of the Most High*.<sup>14</sup> He sees Jerusalem as a garden of Eden, the river coming out of this holy city like unto the river of Eden, the source of divine blessing. Hé returns to the thought expressed before that “Thou makest them to drink from the river of Eden” which is the source of God’s graciousness.

It is in the power of waters not only to fructify but also to purify. Thus Zechariah<sup>15</sup> envisions the day in which a new source of waters will open in Jerusalem, to purify Israel from all sins and defilement: *In that day a fountain shall be opened to the House of David and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for purification and for sprinkling.*

Ezekiel was about 20 years old when he went into exile, in Babylonia, the exile of Jehojachin. He had spent, however, a few years in the Temple as one of the “young priests.” He was fully acquainted with the Temple, its structure, its inner organization and kept all of it deeply engraved in his memory. This expertise of the young priest leaves no room for doubt that he had a clear knowledge of water, springing forth from the Temple Mount, near the אבן שתייה,\* – Foundation Stone. Also Haggai and Zechariah were from Jerusalem. They were very much interested in the rebuilding of the Temple and urged the people to complete its structure. Also they were aware of all the “secrets” of the Temple and knew about a water source coming from the Temple Mount that appears in the valley, north of the gate שלכת.

Though one cannot deny that their prophecy is influenced by Ezekiel, there is certainty that the concrete background for their prophecy was known to them. This same assumption holds true for the Psalmist, who knew the Courts of the Temple, its entrances and subterranean passages, both the obvious and the secret ones. The little fountain springing forth among the clefts of the rock at the foot of

14. Psalm 46:5.

15. Zechariah 13:1.

\* In the Temple; the rock upon which the Ark rested.

the Fountain Stone – אבן שחיה – served them as the subject of their songs and aspirations.

#### IN THE TALMUD

The first who mentioned this fountain was the Tanna R. Eliezer ben Jacob, who lived during the time of the Temple. In accordance with tradition, preserved in both Talmuds, it was he who taught the Tractate Midot (Measurements) and who perpetuated the memory of the Temple in all its details. And this is the language of the Mishna:

And why was it named the Water Gate? Because through it they brought in the flagons of water for libation at the Festival (Succoth). R. Eliezer ben Jacob says: Through it there trickled forth the waters and in the hereafter they are destined to fulfill the prophecy of Ezekiel 47:1: *Waters issued forth from the threshold of the House.*<sup>16</sup>

A more detailed description of the fountain coming from the Temple can be found in the Talmud<sup>17</sup> from the mouth of R. Huna of Sepphoris, an Israel Amora (teacher of the Talmud) of the third generation. And though he lived 200 years after the destruction, the description is so vivid that we are forced to assume that it must have been transmitted with precision all these years from generation to generation from an original eyewitness account:

Rabbi Pinhas in the name of R. Huna of Sepphoris said: The spring that issues forth from the Holy of Holies in its beginning resembles the antennae of a locust. As it reaches the entrance of the Sanctuary it becomes as the thread of a wasp; as it reaches the entrance of the Temple Court it becomes as large as the mouth of a small flask. From there onwards it becomes bigger, rising until it reaches the house of David (Zion). (Thence) . . . it becomes a swiftly running brook in which men and women bathe to become ritually clean.

#### ARCHEOLOGICAL FINDS

Edward Robinson, the first who did research on the land of Israel a century

16. Midot 2:6.

17. Yoma 77b.

ago, noted that spring of water on the Temple Mount. In his book of his first journey to Israel, he writes:<sup>18</sup>

A short while after we arrived in Jerusalem, we learned from our friends . . . about a fountain beneath the Haram Ash-Sharif, from which the bathhouse close-by received some of its water . . . When the Mufti happened to be visiting our landlord, we mentioned this fountain, and also he confirmed what we had heard . . . He offered us every help in our investigation. On April 28 we went to the bathhouse . . . This bathhouse is called Hamam Ash-Shafa, (i.e. the bathhouse) and it seems that many who come to the Mosque visit this bath. From this bath they led us . . . to the road leading to the Mosque from the south and thence to a low structure with a square roof, 18–20 feet above the road. There we found two men drawing water with a leather pail suspended from the ceiling.

Robinson did not on that day go down to the well cavity, and later when he wished to do so, his request was denied him. At his first visit he elicited some information from the Arabs drawing the water concerning the structure of the well and the subterranean tunnel. The information he received was so exaggerated that he expressed skepticism on it. The one thing that seemed beyond doubt was that in hot summers water did not stream into the bathhouse, and the drawers of water were then obliged to transfer water from a brook nearby, streaming at a lower level than the bath. Robinson was of the opinion that in the Rock of the Temple Mount, from a depth of app. 80 feet, a well sprang forth which had the same characteristics as the waters of Gichon and of the Shiloah.

R. Jehosef Schwartz knew the fountain and its characteristics, since he lived in one of the houses close-by. He writes about the Fountain Ash-Shafa:<sup>19</sup> "I found many wells in the city, and they taste as the waters of Shiloah, salty and heavy and bad-tasting . . . Also near my building and the ruins of the Temple, on the western side, there is a well, called in Arabic Hamam Ash-Shafa, which is quite deep and its waters taste like that of the Shiloah."

As to the taste of these waters there is unanimity amongst the scholars:

18. Edward Robinson, Palästina. *Tagebuch einer Reise im Jahre 1838*, p. 159.

19. תבואות הארץ ע' שני"ג (מהדורת לונץ).

Robinson, Tobler, Chaplin, Wilson – they all compare it to the Shiloah. Yet the temperature of these two water sources differ somewhat. Wilson, Chaplin one hundred years ago and many others, who came after them, attempted to offer an explanation for the appearance of these waters. In their opinion these were rain waters that seeped through the channels left from the ruins, upon which the city is built. They were certain that these did not come from subterranean sources; otherwise, according to their reasoning, there should have been both religious or secular records to this effect. They accepted the possibility that long ago there existed a large pool near this place in which waters coming from the valley was caught. Even after the destruction of the city and after the pool was blocked, some waters continued to seep through their ancient channels and landed at that place. Only one scholar of that period, Pierotti, was of the opinion that we had before us an actual fountain.

Since the Fountain of Ash-Shafa is on a higher level than that of the Gichon, and since both taste alike, they proposed that the waters of Ash-Shafa flows into the Gichon. However, this cannot be true since the Ash-Shafa streams from the Temple mount in a south-westerly direction and not toward the east. There is, therefore, no connection whatsoever between these two water-sources.

Captains Wilson and Warren<sup>20</sup> paid attention to the welling up of waters in the Ash-Shafa, known to us also in both the Gichon and the Shiloah. This phenomenon is determined by the rain fall. In the rainy season (winter) there are from three to five wellings up during the day; in the months of the summer only two, and in the fall only one. When the rains come late, this welling-up occurs once in three or four days.

Wilson descended to the fountain through a shaft at the site of the drawing and found that in its upper part it had been built anew, and in its middle part it consisted of pointed, and its lower part, of round arches. It seems that in the course of time the shaft was raised above the ruins and the rubble that were heaped up. Waters pouring into the ditch from a little cave (or brook in the south) pass through a channel that had been dug in the lower part of the rock, and is covered by vaults made of stone. In the summer, when the waters diminish, a person goes down into the cave, draws the water and passes it into the channel. From the shaft

20. *The Recovery of Jerusalem* by Capt. Wilson and Capt. Warren (1871) p. 25.

to the bathhouse there is a channel covered by vaults of various sizes. This would indicate that it had been changed several times during different periods. The part, dug in the rock is the oldest one, and it seems that it served to supply water to the city. From the side of the cave one cannot discern any drainage. Wilson thought that most of the waters arrived there through the layers of ruins and the rubble accumulated above it, and thence its bad taste.

About six years after the visit of Wilson, on Nov. 1870, Chaplin investigated an additional section of the channel which Wilson had described. It began at the southern side of the Western Wall and continued about 40 yards in an interrupted line. At its end the channel was blocked by a broken wall. There was no pool of water there. It was possible to sink a stick between the stones of the blocking wall for about 90 cm. (almost one yard), but one could not ascertain if there was a continuation of the channel anywhere. When the waters diminished and did not reach the bath, a servant of the bathhouse went down the shaft and drew water from the southern end over the downward slant of the channel. The passage was relatively easy except for one place. The cisterns were built of heavy stones, apparently taken from ancient structures. The entire channel, however, was artless and in a state of severe neglect.

In spite of a most careful examination, Chaplin could not find any springs of water. It is of importance to note that, while the ceiling and the wells in many spots were quite wet, there were others where both wells and ceilings were almost dry.

#### WHENCE THE WATER

The conclusion arrived at by these investigators, i.e., that the waters found on the Temple Mount derived from the rain trickling down from above, is unacceptable. If this were true, how do we account for the fact that the channel is dry in many places and that no moisture is visible from the ceiling or from the upper parts of the retaining wall? Furthermore, it must be remembered that there was not much rubble among the ruins on the Temple Mount. The Foundation Rock rests firmly on a level which has scarcely been raised over generations, reaching back to the destruction of the Temple. This can be ascertained from the subterranean structures, wells, passages and remains of bridges. From the area of the Temple Mount no water stream escapes to the outside; it is entirely paved, and

rainfall is collected into thirty five cisterns. Thus we are forced to the conclusion that there exists a living spring that feeds the Hamam Ash-Shafa.

As we indicated before, the existence of such a spring was known to the ancients. It is hinted at in the words of the prophets, as background for the Days to Come, and is mentioned by our sages. It served a function in the ritual cleansing of the Kohanim, as we shall see later.

Before we get to propose a solution to the question of the channel and the stream that flows in it, we wish to discuss another subterranean passageway in the Temple Mount, connected with it, and which is twice mentioned in the Mishna.

#### TAMID 1:1

The Chamber of the Hearth had a vault and it was a large chamber with stone pavement round inside. If one of these (Kohanim) experienced seminal discharge he would go out and walk by the passageway — מסיבה. Underneath the Temple, lamps were burning here and there, until he arrived at the Chamber of Immersion . . . And there was a fire there . . . he went down and immersed himself . . . he returned and sat down beside his brethren the Kohanim (in the Chamber of Hearth — the מוקד) until the gates were opened, when he went forth and departed.

#### MIDOT 1:6-9

And there were four sections in the Chamber of the Hearth (מוקד) like recesses (cells), opening into a reception room, two cells within and two without the holy ground . . . And what purpose did they serve? (from) the north western, they went down to the Chamber of Immersion . . . The Chamber of Hearth had two gates: one opened to the חיל (surrounding rampart) and the other toward the Temple Court. If one of them experienced seminal discharge he would go out and make his way by the passageway — מסיבה — leading beneath the Temple where lamps were burning . . . until he arrived at the Chamber of Immersion. R. Eliezer ben Jacob said: by the מסיבה leading under the ramparts he went out by the Tadi gate.

The clear intention of the Mishna, speaking of the מסיבה, as a passageway leading quite a distance from east to west, was to show that the ascent was inter-

nal, between a double wall. This was thusly understood by Josephus<sup>21</sup> who wrote: "And the King (Solomon) established . . . an ascent to the upper floor through the thickness of the wall."

In order to understand the nature of the *מסיבה* passageway, by which one ascended to the roof of the Temple, one must remember that the Temple contained heavy walls, in the midst of which there was a passageway.

Our Mishna uses two verbs: from it (the north-western compartment) they *went down* to the Chamber of Immersion; he would go out and walk by the *מסיבה*, which *leads beneath* the Temple. Thence we learn that the *מסיבה* had two parts: the first consisting of a staircase, by which the Kohen descended to a certain depth. The second was a passageway on a downward slant, wide enough to permit for lights in well-recesses. One cannot say, at this time at what depth these two parts met, since one could not pass the entire length of this tunnel, broken up by cisterns dotting the Temple Mount.

Inside the Court of the Temple there is a cistern marked by archeologists as the number 30 which is called by the Arabs Shakib Ka-it-Bey. This cistern begins at a distance of about 25 yards from the wall and continues towards the west at a length of app. 30 yards. It passes underneath the wall of the Temple Mount, continuing for another 5 yards, its width narrowing down to 4 yards. The floor is 12 yards underneath the area of the Temple Mount.

This cistern had been originally built as a subterranean passageway. From this passageway one could ascend to the surface by a staircase. Arabs built a wall on the eastern side, plastered it and blocked the entrance to this passageway.

It now seems certain that the Kohanim who became unclean, descended from the Chamber of the Hearth by a staircase to the tunnel (this is the passageway that turned into Cistern 30), leading beyond the walls of the Temple Mount, then turned west to the pool of Hamman Ash-Shafa. Here he immersed, dried himself and warmed himself by a fire maintained there; then he ascended by the same tunnel to another passageway that led to the Tadi gate, leaving the Temple until eve.

#### SUMMARY

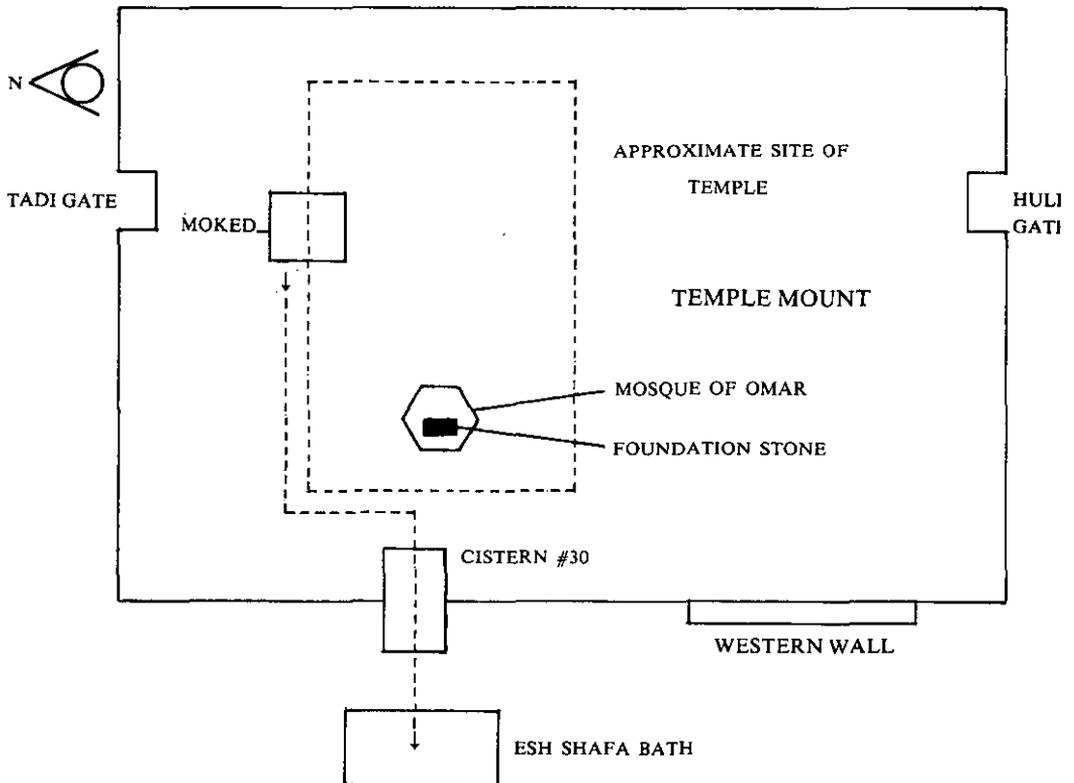
Here then, at the Temple Mount we find a meeting place of eschatological

21. קדמוניות ח.ג.ב 70.

visions and prophecies, some practices of Kohanim, hinted at by our sages, remarkable technological achievements of the Second Temple period and challenges for the archeologist.

The eschatological visions concerning water coming from the Temple, having curative qualities in removing the evil from nature, fructifying the desert, are the fruit of the imagination. The building of a tunnel bringing the waters to the bath, in which priests immersed, and the subterranean passageway leading to it from the Chamber of Hearth, undoubtedly are the fruit of ingenuity. The partial archeological discoveries are instructive witness to the creative genius of Jewry in the days of the Second Temple.

Translated from Hebrew by Sh. B.



## THE 18th WORLD JEWISH YOUTH BIBLE CONTEST

*Redemption of the Land*, marking the 80th anniversary of the Jewish National Fund, was the central motif of the 18th World Jewish Youth Bible Contest on Independence Day in May. Twenty eight participants, from fourteen countries, took part in the contest. These contestants were chosen from more than 60,000 youngsters who had previously competed in local, regional and national finals.

Winner of the Hidon (contest) was Naphtali Makhoulf, a 17-year old pupil from Netanya and son of Libyan born immigrants. He scored a perfect 102 points and displayed an instant recall of computers, the field he hopes some day to study.

Close behind him were two youths with a tie score of 98 points, an American, 16 year old Alon Mogilner of Brooklyn's Yeshivah of Flatbush, and an Israeli, Asher Hafuta of Ashdod. Among the finalists, 14 year old twins, Hava and Hana Ross from Liverpool, England, added an exciting touch of enthusiasm as they responded to the questions in their rich English accent which nearly confounded chief judge Minister Yosef Burg. Prime Minister Menachem Begin, who handed out the prizes, lovingly singled them out, remarking that he has a specific fondness for twins because his wife Aliza is one. A fourth finalist was Yaacov Fransus, of Manhattan Hebrew High School.

Greetings were given by Colonel Moshe Sharir, Commander of the Gadna, the pre-military youth corps which administers the contest; by Zevulun Hammer, Minister of Education and by Aryeh L. Dulzin, Chairman of the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Organization. Chaplain (Major) Mordecai Abramovski coordinated the program. Joseph Shaar composed the questions, this marking his 18th year of participation. On the Sunday following Yom Ha-atzmaut, all the contestants were received by Yitzchak Navon, President of the State of Israel, at his official residence.

The winner Naftali Makhoulf is the eighth child in a family of ten children. His father, an electrician, encouraged him in his Biblical studies, but it was Naftali's grandfather who gave him the added impetus to master the books of the Bible. "Hours upon hours I would study Tanach with my grandpa. And when he went blind, I would read the Scriptures regularly to him, reviewing over and over again

many full chapters. This helped me enormously in my grasp of the Biblical content.”

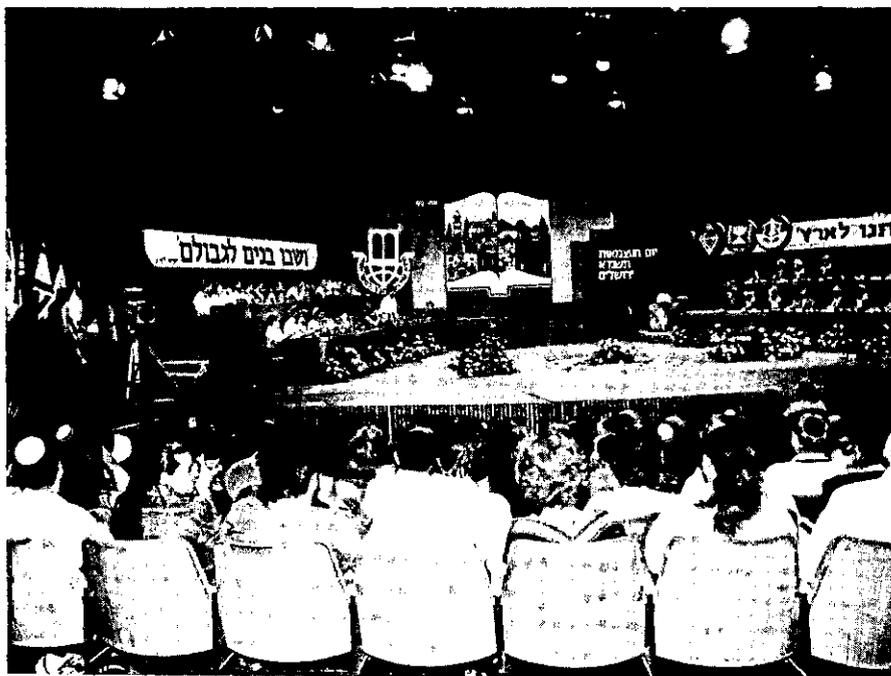
The backgrounds of the American and English participants reveal a strong common quest for Jewish knowledge. Alon Mogilner, son of a physician and of a social worker, was assisted by his paternal grandfather. His aim is to study medicine, and eventually to live in Israel.

Yaacov Fransus is the youngest of three sons. His father is Professor of Talmud at the Jewish Theological Seminary and his mother is a researcher in ageing.

The twins Hava and Hana, as their father, a technical manager in a packaging firm, explained to us, are self taught as well as self-motivated. Exceptional in their general studies, they were especially inspired to pursue their Jewish studies by their teachers, the wives of Rabbinic students of a Kollel recently established in Liverpool.



*Finalists (from right to left) Lower Row: Naphtali Makhlof (Israel), World champion; Alon Mogilner (USA), Champion of the Diaspora; Asher Hafuta (Israel), second place. Upper Row: Hana Ross, Yonatan Rosin, Hava Ross.*



## PARTICIPANTS IN THE 18th WORLD CONTEST

### *Argentina*

Mordecai Yismach  
Reuben Simmelman

### *Australia*

Ita Frankel

### *Brazil*

Nir Becker  
Rivka Zeligkraut

### *Canada*

Yitzhak Becker  
Eli Raisen  
Monica Wise

### *Chile*

Gabriel Manter

### *England*

Chava Roos  
Chaya Roos

### *France*

Yitzhak Ben-Shimon  
Benjamin Gabbai

### *Israel*

Zion Eliuz  
Asher Hafuta  
Naftalie Makhoulf  
Yonatan Rosin

### *Mexico*

Joseph Engelmayer  
Uri Fisher

### *Panama*

Nisim Becker

### *South Africa*

Stulamith Demlin  
Jonathan Kaplan

### *Sweden*

David Coleman

### *U.S.A.*

Jacob Francus  
Shalom Hoffman  
Alon Mogitner  
Etan Orlan  
Chaya Senturyia

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I have been enjoying Dor le Dor for some years and find the articles and illustrations very informative. Your last issue (Winter 1980-81) impels me to respond to an article, "And Thou Shalt Love Thy Neighbor as Thyself". I shall take the liberty of using Mr. Edmund Berg's words in part, that this is indeed "a topic which calls for being treated by a scholar and not by a common senior citizen". I am a common senior citizen, a Jewish female, no scholar, but interested in Bible Study.

I have an emotional reaction and objection to the word love. We assume that the idea of neighbors extends to many people in one's periphery. It is truly difficult to love so many people. It seems to me that love is a select feeling for a select person. Sometimes we are unable to explain it. So what happens to all the people one deals with who are not lovable? According to my Jewish upbringing, the most important thing is to see that justice is done, easy enough to those we love. But even to those we do not love, we must grant justice. Therefore I have always liked the translation that quotes Hillel as saying, "What is hateful unto thee, do not do unto thy neighbor."

I have brought this up in my Bible Study group some time ago with my Rabbi. He says the word 'ahavta' translates into love; but this word in English has many shades of meaning. I

realize translations can never convey the exact feeling one gets from a word in another language. Two examples. In Mr. James Michener's book *THE SOURCE*, the word 'makor' is used constantly and is translated into the word "source." In our Prayer Book (The Sabbath and Festival Prayerbook under the editorship of the Rabbinical Assembly of America), in the *L'cha Dodi*, the word 'makor' translates into 'fountain' (of all blessings). Fountain and Source may mean the same but somehow each creates a different image to the reader. Another example. While attending a class at Hebrew University some years ago, in archeology, we were shown slides, one with a picture of an Egyptian frieze on it. An army was marching and bearing something aloft. The teacher asked the class to identify it. We came up with four words: flag, banner, shield, and emblem. One word would go into the translation.

Helena Kavalier  
Wethersfield, Conn. 06109

Dear Dr. Bakon,

I think your Quarterly is doing a marvellous job, and I have no doubt many Jewish people throughout the world are benefitting from the same.

Miss S. Kelly  
Principal, Hill Grange College  
Bombay, India

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## עשה תורתך קבע

### TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

August 1981	אלול חשמ"א	W 30	Haftarah:	ב ראש השנה
M 31	Psalms 69		Jeremiah 31	
September				
T 1	Psalms 70		October 1981	
W 2	Psalms 71		Th 1	Jonah ג
Th 3	Psalms 72		F 2	חילך ד
F 4	שופטים ה		Sa 3	Haftarah: ה שבת שובה
Sa 5	Haftarah: ו			Hosea 14:2-11
	Isaiah 51:12--52:12			Joel 7:15-27
S 6	Psalms 73		S 4	Jonah ו
M 7	Psalms 74		M 5	Jonah ז
T 8	Psalms 75		T 6	Jonah ח
W 9	Psalms 76		W 7	ט ערב יום כפור
Th 10	Psalms 77		Th 8	Haftarah: י יום כפור
F 11	כי תצא יב			Isaiah 57:14-58:16
Sa 12	Haftarah: Isaiah 54:1-10 יג		F 9	האזינו יא
S 13	Psalms 78 יד		Sa 10	Haftarah: יב
M 14	Psalms 79 טו			II Samuel 22:1-51
T 15	Psalms 80 טז		S 11	Ecclesiastes יג
W 16	Psalms 81 יז		M 12	יד ערב סוכות
Th 17	Psalms 82 יח		T 13	Haftarah: טז סוכות
F 18	כי תבא יט			Zechariah 14
Sa 19	Haftarah: כ		W 14	Ecclesiastes טז חול המועד
	Isaiah 60:40-63:9		Th 15	Ecclesiastes יז חול המועד
S 20	Psalms 83 כא		F 16	Ecclesiastes יח חול המועד
M 21	Psalms 84 כב		Sa 17	Haftarah: יט שכח חול המועד
T 22	Psalms 85 כג			Ezekiel 38:18-39:16
W 23	Psalms 86 כד		S 18	Ecclesiastes כ חול המועד
Th 24	Psalms 87 כה		M 19	Ecclesiastes כא חול המועד
F 25	נצבים כו		T 20	Haftarah: כב שמיני עצרת
Sa 26	Haftarah: כז			I Kings 8:54-66
	Isaiah 61 10-63:9		W 21	Psalms 89 כג שמחת חורה
S 27	Psalms 88 כח		Th 22	Psalms 90 כד
M 28	כט ערב ראש השנה		F 23	בראשית כה
September				
T 29	Haftarah: א ראש השנה		Sa 24	Haftarah: כו
	I Samuel 1-2:10			Isaiah 42:5-43:10
			S 25	Psalms 91 כז
			M 26	Psalms 92 כח
			T 27	Psalms 93 כט
			W 28	Psalms 94 ל

TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

October 1981	חשון חשמ"ב	November 1981	כסלו חשמ"ב
Th 29 Psalms 95	א	F 27 חולדה	א
F 30 נח	ב	Sa 28 Haftarah: Malachi 1-2:7	ב
Sa 31 Haftarah: Isaiah 54-55:5	ג	S 29 Psalms 117-118	ג
		M 30 Psalms 119	ד
		December	
November		T 1 Psalms 119	ה
S 1 Psalms 96	ד	W 2 Psalms 119	ו
M 2 Psalms 97	ה	Th 3 Psalms 120-121	ז
T 3 Psalms 98	ו	F 4 ייצא	ח
W 4 Psalms 99	ז	Sa 5 Haftarah:	ט
Th 5 Psalms 100	ח	Hosea 12:13-14:10	
F 6 לך לך	ט	S 6 Psalms 122-123	י
Sa 7 Haftarah:	י	M 7 Psalms 124-125	יא
Isaiah 40:27-41:16		T 8 Psalms 126-127	יב
S 8 Psalms 101	יא	W 9 Psalms 128-129	יג
M 9 Psalms 102	יב	Th 10 Psalms 130-131	יד
T 10 Psalms 103	יג	F 11 וישלח	טו
W 11 Psalms 104	יד	Sa 12 Haftarah:	טז
Th 12 Psalms 105	טו	Hosea 11:7-12:12	
F 13 וירא	טז	S 13 Psalms 132	יז
Sa 14 Haftarah: II Kings 4:1-37	יז	M 14 Psalms 133-134	יח
S 15 Psalms 106	יח	T 15 Psalms 135	יט
M 16 Psalms 107	יט	W 16 Psalms 136	כ
T 17 Psalms 108	כ	Th 17 Psalms 137-138	כא
W 18 Psalms 109	כא	F 18 וישב	כב
Th 19 Psalms 110-111	כב	Sa 19 Haftarah: Amos 2:6-3:8	כג
F 20 חיי שרה	כג	S 20 Psalms 139	כד
Sa 21 Haftarah: I Kings 1:1-31	כד	M 21 Psalms 140-141	כה חנוכה
S 22 Psalms 112	כה	T 22 Psalms 142-143	כו חנוכה
M 23 Psalms 113	כו	W 23 Psalms 144	כז חנוכה
T 24 Psalms 114	כז	Th 24 Psalms 145	כח חנוכה
W 25 Psalms 115	כח	F 25 מקץ	כט חנוכה
Th 26 Psalms 116	כט	Sa 26 Haftarah:	ל שבח חנוכה
		Zechariah 2:14-4:7	

דף יומי

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

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כ"א בחשרי מחילים במסכת חולין

DOR le DOR

# דור לדור

OUR BIBLICAL HERITAGE

Vol. X, No. 1 (ל"ז)

Fall 1981

TRIBUTE TO Dr. KATZOFF		1
THE STORY OF CREATION	<i>Chaim Abramowitz</i>	3
JACOB, MAN OF DESTINY — HIS YOUTH	<i>Shimon Bakon</i>	10
THE UNIVERSALISM OF THE BOOK OF JONAH	<i>Haim Gevaryahu</i>	20
TORAH DIALOGUES — BEMIDBAR	<i>Harold D. Halpern</i>	28
כי יצר לב האדם רע מנעוריו	<i>Louis Katzoff</i>	32
THE TOWER OF BABEL	<i>Sol Liptzin</i>	35
AND A FOUNTAIN SHALL COME FORTH FROM THE HOUSE OF THE LORD	<i>Ben Zion Luria</i>	49
THE 18th WORLD JEWISH YOUTH BIBLE CONTEST		59
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR		62
TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR		64

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