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ספר ואלה שמות

נאם אברהם בר מאיר אבן עזרא הספרד

עולם ומירת חיות היבשת ויתחזקות
ואנו משרים ברחם ספר ואלה שמות

נספחת קדושים ליה מרדת בוכרם ימות
יבנה סביר אל כלי לסק ופה כאלמות

אמר ברום לבנת בעיות
להוציא לאור כל תעלומות
סודות הנריכו בדיק כלמות
כוד אחד כעל החלומות
וקנה סמס כעל חיות
דיב כסף זהב ואלמות
יחול לבנות קדויות תעיות
וכס סודות ושל ימות סודות
באף ספר ואלה שמות

כרוך השם הלה תעניות
יהיה היותו תבניות לנסיות
וכספר הזה והחיות ואלמות
יחלה הנהגה אחריו מות
וכבר חבו הכבוליות ההחיות
ויצית את אבותינו נדיהם ריות
ישם לעניותם כצדיקה נקיות
הן ככתב חיות ראיות
דבר ומסך כעשה מתריות

כל השעבודות האל ואלהי חבל התישבות האלה
לאבנים האל ואלה חלדו להרסה היה חנינה לחל
וכס חלת לזיהסכיות הלזיהכשי הלז יכסדי
היות חלת אלה חלועל היה האר כסף כאל ללה
כאלה חנינים וסס לסק זכר וסודות לסק ריב

עשה הוי כעבור סהכיה באף
הספר הראשון כי יוסף ראה ל
לבונו כנו שלמים חסר ט
אלהי ברדיה היו ונעשים ופרו ורבו וילת אלתי
כס כחצון האל סיה לזכרים ולכהסד ומנוכ את

ואלה

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FOREWORD

After a lapse of thirteen years, the International Adult Bible Contest of the World Jewish Bible Society was resumed, the fifth such contest since its inception in 1958. Invitations went out to many countries through Israel's embassies and consulates for men and women, Jews and non-Jews, to apply for this international event.

Thirty two countries responded, sending their contestants as well as their consular and/or clerical notables. Several days before the contest took place, they were the guests of Prime Minister Menachem Begin at his state residence. The occasion was one of the regular weekly Saturday evening Bible sessions he had been hosting for some years, this time on the lawn of his garden, in order to accommodate the enlarged group consisting of the regular members of the Bible group and of the specially invited guests connected with the Bible contest.

Two papers were presented that evening on the theme of the Prophet Samuel and King Saul: the first by Prime Minister Begin wherein he stressed the glory of King Saul as a national hero; the second paper by Dr. Sarah Halperin, Senior Lecturer at Bar Ilan University, on the application of Aristotle's concept of Tragedy to the rise and fall of King Saul.

Both lectures, originally rendered in Hebrew, are herewith offered in their English translation in the first two articles of this issue. The third article – the psychological dimension in the relationship of the Prophet Samuel and King Saul – was presented at another study session of the Prime Minister's Bible Group by Adina Katzoff, a lecturer at the Government Institute for the training of Social Workers. The fourth article – the prophetic dimension in the relationship of the prophet and the king – was written specially for Dor le Dor by its Associate Editor, Dr. Shimon Bakon.

It is the plan of the World Jewish Bible Society to publish these and other papers given at the Prime Minister's Bible Study Group in a special form. In the meantime, it is the pleasure of the Editorial Board to present these articles in a preliminary manner, hopefully to be enjoyed by our readership.

The Editor

THE PROPHET SAMUEL AND KING SAUL

BY MENACHEM BEGIN

DEUTERONOMY OR BOOK OF SAMUEL

It is difficult to reconcile Samuel's feelings concerning the crowning of a king and the laws of monarchy as set down in Deuteronomy. Let us refresh our memories and see what is written in Deuteronomy:

When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God gives thee; and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein; and shalt say: 'I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are round me'; thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the Lord thy God shall choose, one from among thy brethren shalt thou set king over thee; thou mayest not put a foreigner over thee, who is not thy brother.

Deut. 17:14-15

Following this 'preface', there are a number of negative as well as positive precepts, such as that the king should not possess too many horses or women, that the king must study the Torah, etc.

What is meant by *I will set a king over me*? In my opinion, this is not a command, but an option: if the nation chooses to appoint a king and lets its desire be known, then it is permitted to do so. The only pre-condition is that the proposed king must be *from your bretheren*.

Yet the Book of Samuel offers a different view of monarchy. The elders of Israel come to the prophet Samuel and say unto him:

Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways; now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.*

I Sam. 8:4-5

* A remark about the etymology of the Hebrew word 'king': In English, the word is derived from the German 'koenig' which is related to the idea of being capable', or a 'capable person'. In Hebrew the root of the word connotes 'to lead', and indeed this is what is written quite explicitly in the Bible, *and go out before us and fight our battle*. This idea is very similar to our modern notion in Israel of 'after me', meaning the commander goes first and his soldiers follow after him.

The reaction to this request is characteristic of the rest of the narrative:

But the thing displeased Samuel when they said: 'Give us a king to judge us'. And Samuel prayed unto the Lord.

I Sam. 8:6

Afterwards Samuel turns to God, and is told: *Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee* (I Samuel 8:7). However, God Himself also takes the people to task: *For they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me* (ibid.).

Then follows the description of the ways of the future king. His behavior towards his people is not in consonance with the spirit of the precepts contained in Deuteronomy 17:17. In order to frighten the Children of Israel, the people are told in I Samuel 8 that the king will enslave their sons and daughters and will confiscate their property.

Yet in spite of this:

The people refused to hearken unto the voice of Samuel; and they said: 'Nay, but there shall be a king over us; that we may be like all the nations; and that our king may judge us and go out before us and fight our battles.'

I Sam. 8:19–20

Ultimately Samuel gives in and anoints a king.

THE HUMAN EQUATION IN THE PERSONALITY OF THE PROPHET

Many ingenious interpretations have been put forward to reconcile the conflict between the express permission of anointing a king as set forth in Deuteronomy and the rejection of monarchy on the part of Samuel. I have come to the conclusion that Samuel's behavior towards Saul is dictated by personal factors. The Bible does not depict individuals in angelic terms: Ordinary traits characterize them all. This is true even of prophets, as I hope to demonstrate.

It is written: *But the thing displeased Samuel*. What exactly displeased him? Was it the request to be like all the other nations? Yet, in Deuteronomy it states quite clearly, *I will set a king over me, like all the nations that are round me*. So what is new or wrong with their request? They are simply asking what is written in the Torah. However, they do say, 'Give us a king to judge us'. It was because

the people asked for someone to judge them that he was displeased.

This is a perfectly human reaction. Samuel was not only a prophet. He was a judge, too. And the people came to him and asked for a new judge. This obviously greatly angered Samuel.

WHY WAS SAMUEL DISPLEASED?

In I Samuel 8:20 the people say, *that we may be like all the nations; and that the king may judge us*, which greatly angers Samuel. The people add that *this king/judge go out before us, fight our battles. Samuel heard all the words of the people, and he spoke them in the ears of the Lord* (v. 21) as though appealing to God to thwart the people's desire. What did the Lord say? *Hearken unto their voice, and make them a king* (v. 22), whereupon Samuel returns to the people and tells them, *Go ye every man unto his city* (v. 22). There is no other option. Even the Lord told him to listen to the people. Samuel must anoint Saul.

Yet, even after God commands him to anoint a king, and after he does anoint him, Samuel remains angry. In his bitterness he says:

Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of Israel: I brought up Israel out of Egypt, and I delivered you out of the hand of all the kingdoms that oppressed you. But ye have this day rejected your God, who Himself saveth you out of all your calamities and your distresses; and ye have said unto Him: Nay, but set a king over us. Now therefore present yourselves before the Lord by your tribes and by your thousands.

I Sam. 10:17-9

After this address he does anoint a king for them – yet he still remains angry. He claims they have forsaken God! How?, I ask. By fulfilling that which is commanded in the book of Deuteronomy?

SAUL SAVES ISRAEL

From I Samuel 11 we learn that because of Saul's prowess the children of Israel were saved.

Then Nahash the Ammonite came up and encamped against Jabesh-Gilead; and all the men of Jabesh said unto Nahash: 'Make a covenant

with us, and we will serve thee'. And Nahash the Ammonite said unto them: 'On this condition will I make it with you, that all your right eyes be put out; and I will lay it for a reproach upon all Israel.

I Sam. 11:1-2

Nahash the Ammonite was indeed a 'nahash' (Hebrew = a snake). He was willing to make a covenant with the people of Jabesh-Gilead on the condition they blind themselves in one eye. They certainly could not accept this condition, and so sent messengers out to their Israelite brethren, ultimately reaching Saul:

And they told him the words of the men of Jabesh. And the spirit of God came mightily upon Saul when he heard those words; and his anger was kindled greatly.

I Sam. 11:5-6

Now there is a king, and he will come to the rescue. He literally enforces a total draft of the nation by cutting apart a pair of oxen into twelve parts, sending them to the tribes saying, if you don't come to battle, you will wind up like the piece of dissected meat sent to you. The draft succeeds and three hundred thousand men from northern Israel and another thirty thousand from the tribe of Judah are conscripted. Three hundred and thirty thousand men! It is not surprising that Saul wins a stunning victory and saves the day.

SAMUEL APPLIES PSYCHOLOGICAL PRESSURE ON THE NATION

After the great victory, Saul demonstrates his largesse and refuses to put to death all his detractors from amongst the Children of Israel, saying: *There shall not a man be put to death this day; for today the Lord hath wrought deliverance in Israel* (11:13). Despite this, we still see traces of anger in Samuel in the very next chapter.

Behold, I have hearkened unto your voice in all that ye said unto me, and have made a king over you.

1 Sam. 12:11

As if to say, 'you were indeed correct so that I chose for you a good king.' Unexpectedly Samuel turns on the nation and asks them to testify before the Lord that he — Samuel — never committed any offense.

Here I am: witness against me before the Lord, and before His anointed one: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? or whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I taken a ransom to blind my eyes therewith? and I will restore it to you . . . And he said unto them: The Lord is witness against you and His anointed is witness this day, that ye have not found aught in my hand. And they said: 'He is witness.' And Samuel said unto the people: '. . . Now therefore stand still, that I may plead with you before the Lord . . . (he recounts for them Israelite history from the Exodus through the story of Nahash the Ammonite) ye said unto me: Nay but a king shall reign over us, when the Lord your God was your king.

I Sam. 12:6-12

Samuel heard their request for a king and responded, received the testimony that he never committed an offense, yet still in anger says, *ye shall know and see that your wickedness is great, which ye have done in the sight of the Lord, in asking you a king* (12:17).

Observe what sophisticated psychological pressure Samuel applied to the nation. He convinced them after the fact that they were wicked when they asked for a king. Immediately after the miracle of the thunder and lightening during the time of the wheat harvest (something unheard of in the Mideast), the people cry out:

Pray for thy servants unto the Lord thy God, that we die not; for we have added unto all sins this evil, to ask us a king.

I Sam. 12:19

SAMUEL AND SAUL AND THE BATTLE WITH AMALEK

Samuel gives no rest to Saul. This becomes apparent in Saul's not waiting for the prophet to begin the victory sacrifice (13:8-15) and the way he fought and won against Amalek (15).

In the story of Amalek, Saul essentially did what he was commanded to do. The soldiers took the sheep as booty when they were not supposed to, and therefore *they* were responsible for the sin, not Saul. Saul took nothing for himself, but nevertheless this incident leads to his downfall and dooms him to

continual unrest.

What was the real sin of Saul? What can possibly explain Samuel's feelings to him?

Not only did Samuel nullify Saul's kingship, even more serious, while Saul is still alive, Samuel anoints David. This is an act of outright treason against the living king. Given the way he was treated, is it so hard to understand Saul's paranoia vis a vis David? As soon as David is anointed he can start his quest for the crown. What kind of king can Saul be when there is a new pretender to the throne? Generally, the two claimants to the throne fight against one another until one side can claim victory.

Given all this, I have come to the conclusion that the original request of the people for someone "to judge" them was the cause of Samuel's anger. It is not a question of a premature request for a king, but simply from the time they requested a 'judge', Samuel does not forgive the nation. He does not forgive himself either. He is perpetually sorry for having acquiesced to the request of the nation. He will not forgive the man whom he anointed to replace him as 'judge'.

I want to state that this is a perfectly understandable human trait, and I believe that the Bible wants to emphasize this point. Even though Samuel is likened to Moses in many ways, we should not forget that he is human and simply cannot tolerate the request to have another ruler or 'judge' in his place. Therefore we have this entire story, up to the point where he tried to convince the people that they were mistaken in asking for a king, irrespective of what is written in Deuteronomy.

This is an all too human quality. Samuel was deeply offended by the nation's request and just could not get over it.

THE HUMAN CHARACTERISTICS OF JONAH

I will try and bring a proof for my interpretation of how Samuel felt from the book of Jonah. The Lord commands Jonah to pronounce a prophecy on the city of Nineveh concerning the punishment that is to be meted out. Jonah flees to Tarshish. The story is well known: the storm, the big fish, etc. Finally he arrives in Nineveh and proclaims that in another forty days the city will be destroyed. What happens though? The people, even the animals, fast. God hears their prayers:

And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil ways, and God repented of the evil, which He said He would do unto them.

Jonah 3:10

What should Jonah's reaction to the situation have been? He should have rejoiced at their repentance! They promised to reverse their evil ways, and God responded to their prayers. Jonah should have been elated. However this is not what is written in the account.

But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry. And he prayed unto the Lord, and said: 'I pray Thee, O Lord . . . take, I beseech Thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live'.

Jonah 4:1-3

What happened? If people were saved, why should he request to die? Because this was a very human reaction on the part of Jonah. His prophecy was not fulfilled. Had he returned to Nineveh, the boys in the street would have run after him and shouted, 'False Prophet! You claimed the city would be destroyed, but here, it is still standing.' Presumably, this is the reason why he did not re-enter the city. When God asks, *Are you greatly angry?*, what does Jonah do? He removes himself to outside the city precincts (verse 4). He is afraid lest someone from the city should come to him and say, 'What stories were you telling us? What kind of prophet are you?'

The continuation of the story is well known. A gourd plant grows over his head giving him shade, it dries up and dies, and Jonah, exposed to the heat of the sun, once more asks to die.

Why is he so unhappy? Once again God asks that same question, and once again Jonah replies in like fashion. This is simply a proof of the human side of the prophet. Though he should have been happy that because of his warning no one died and the city was saved, he is despondent. His prophecy did not come true and as a result, he cannot still his troubled soul.

MAN LIKES TO CONTINUE WITH HIS APPOINTED TASK

In brief, it appears to me that both cases are similar. Both Samuel and Jonah are motivated by personal, human traits. They like to continue in their appointed

tasks (not only prime ministers – laughter). Samuel wants to continue as a judge. When they try to remove him from authority, it offends him greatly. He can not forget it and therefore continues to bring it up again and again. In the same way, when a man prophesies, he expects his prophecy to come true. And if someone causes it not to come true, even if it be via repentance, people are likely to come to that prophet and tell him he was mistaken, that he is not a true prophet. Well, that makes him angry.

I think therein lies the greatness of the Bible, that it always tells the truth. The Bible is not afraid to tell us that Moses as well as the other prophets were men of flesh and blood.

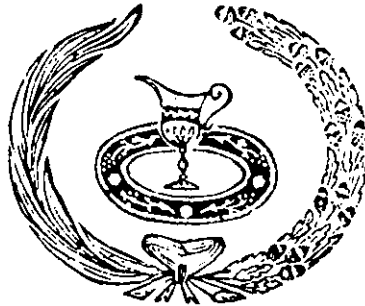
I hope that this interpretation, which is based upon the rational assumption that natural human tendencies underly the story, is an acceptable one.

SAUL RETURNED THE GLORY OF ISRAEL

Consider the period of the judges, from which Saul emerged as king. This is indeed an ugly period in Biblical history. In numerous places in the Book of Judges it is stated: *In that time there was no king in Israel and every man did what he pleased.* Frequently, Israel falls into dire straights, and only occasionally a charismatic leader arises to rescue the people from their oppressors.

The defeat of Israel at the hand of the Philistines, when the Ark is captured, is so grievous that it causes a mother to name her child, Ichabod, Without Glory. Along comes Saul, who returns the glory of Israel and enables her to stand upright once again.

I believe therefore that today we must correct the wrong that was done to Saul. He was the first king of Israel. He was a brave fighter. He gave his life in defence of his nation. After three thousand years he deserves the recognition due to him.



SAUL'S KINGSHIP – THE TRAGEDY OF A LEADER

BY SARAH HALPERIN

God's greatness and human weakness is the gist of *theology*. It underlines every verse of the holy Scripture and constitutes the spirit of religion. It may also be considered as the gist of *tragedy as a literary genre*. But, whereas religion stresses the first half of the aphorism – God's greatness and man's duty to live up to His commandments – tragedy embodies man's fallibility and failure to reach this goal.

The Bible stresses both aspects. On the one hand, it sets forth a sacred creed, a set of values and a code for men to follow. God appears as the omnipotent power which rules His created world including man, as the sustainer of the natural universe as well as the leader of human history. On the other hand, man functions there as the highest creature below God, who sometimes – though not very often – *succeeds* in attaining the highest degree of obedience to God and of self-fulfillment; but more often he *fails* to comply with the sacred rules and imperatives set before him, and ends up with misfortune and self-destruction.

In contrast to the perfect image of our forefather Abraham, who serves as a paragon for human ability to pass uninjured through the ordeal of life, other characters are depicted in the Bible who fail through weakness and delusion to act according to their obligations, and pay heavily for their deficiencies. The most striking of these tragic figures is Saul, the first anointed king of Israel.

Saul rises like a meteor in Israel's history. *He was higher than any of the people from his shoulders and upwards* (I Samuel 10:23). He delivered the people of Israel from the Ammonites¹. He established a united kingdom from unruly tribes

1. Note the similarity between the way Saul stirred up the people to fight and that of the master of the Gibeon-concubine – cutting a corpse into pieces and sending them through all the tribes of Israel (Judges 19:29; I Samuel 11:7).

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wherein *every man did that which was right in his own eyes* (Judges 21:25). He was admired by his people and liked by Samuel, the prophet of the Lord².

Yet, if we consider his end, we get quite a different picture. Saul dies on Mount Gilboa together with his three sons, the heirs to his throne, lonely and desolate, with none of his loyal men near him³. For the redeeming blow that will release him from his agonies in the desperate battle with the Philistines, he turns to an Amalekite youth, perhaps one of those youths taken as spoil of war from the greatest enemy of Israel, defeated earlier.

These two opposed directions of Saul's course of life – the upward line at the outset of his route and the downward motion at its conclusion, form a pyramidal movement typical of great tragedies in world literature. It accords with the basic principles of tragedy in Aristotle's theory of drama.

In order to demonstrate that, I shall summarize Aristotle's main principles of tragedy and apply them to the biblical story of the rise and fall of King Saul. In his *Poetics* Aristotle establishes that tragedy embodies a dynamic process which usually starts upwards and concludes downwards⁴ according to the following five stages:

The first stage is the *hamartia*⁵, which literally means: missing the mark, a bad shot. This literal meaning is retained in its many applications and it is mainly used for error, ill-judgement, wrong-decision, or sin. The *hamartia* in the *Poetics* is usually connected with a state of ignorance or with the hero's lack of knowledge about some important factor of his action.

The second stage is what Aristotle calls in chapter 14 the *tò deinón*⁶, which designates the *horrible deed* perpetrated by the tragic hero. It usually refers to an act that causes death or great injury to a dear or important person or persons; and it is mostly regarded as an infringement of a certain taboo.

Thirdly, we have the *peripeteia*⁷, which has been variously translated even by the same translator. The best example is S.H. Butcher. In his two first editions of

2. See I Samuel 14:34 60 15; 1; also Abarbanel to I Samuel 15:34; and also Ta'anith Tractate 5b.

3. Because all of them were dead already, killed in the mortal battle.

4. *Poetics*, chapter 18.

5. *Ibid.*, 13. 53 a 10, 16.

6. *Ibid.*, 53b 30.

7. *Ibid.*, ll. 52a 22.

his translation he rendered *peripeteia* as Reversal of Fortune. Then he changed it to Reversal of Intention. Finally he adopted the version Reversal of Situation. The common denominator of all these renderings is the word *Reversal*, which is also the most accurate translation of the term. *Peripeteia* means: inversion of direction of movement, the overturn of the course of events into its opposite direction.

Fourth is the *anagnorisis*⁸ – *Recognition* or *Discovery*, mainly of some significant facts relating to the action, maybe also of some laws and general truths of life, the lack of which led to the error.

Fifthly we have the *pathos*⁹: *Suffering*, the basic element of tragedy. But suffering alone does not constitute a tragedy in the literary sense of the word. Only when it follows a great *error* does suffering function as tragedy; and only when it is accompanied by Reversal and/or Recognition¹⁰ does it form great tragedy.

In other words, when the tragic figure reaches the end of his route, a *dead-end* (in its two-fold implication), he suddenly realizes the mistake he has perpetrated at the outset of his journey. He now understands that it was a wrong decision to choose the particular way he followed, and he knows it is too late to retrieve it. This recognition is really heart-tearing and soul-lacerating. It is this agony on the part of the hero and his tormenting realization of his irretrievable error that makes *real tragedy*.

When we examine Saul's course of life according to his formula, we see that it complies with all its principles.

First, we have the *hamartia* at the outset of his kingship. The too early sacrificing of the burnt offering at Gilgal (I Samuel 13) and the incomplete execution of the divine instructions to utterly destroy the Amalekites and shun any spoil of that war of Herem (Ch. 15), indicate that Saul misunderstood the *internal* meaning of his doings. Saul did not grasp that, as God's anointed king by means of his prophet Samuel, he had to follow his appointers' instructions with determination. By succumbing to the people's rush for spoils and to his own feelings concerning the conquered Agag, resulting in the infringement of his

8. Ibid., II. 52a 29.

9. Ibid., II. 52b 10.

10. Ibid., 10 52a 17.

commitments to Samuel, the prophet of the Lord, Saul showed himself as a soft-hearted ruler who lost long range sight for short range exigencies, who could not withstand momentary pressure and who lacked patience and determination¹¹.

Saul's fatal error (*hamartia*) was, therefore, to use Abarbanel's phrasing – "that his sin belonged to the craftsmanship of kingship"¹². that is to say, that he showed incompetence as king.

The tragedy is that being the first anointed king of Israel, Saul lacked experience and royal tradition. He did not completely understand his task. He misunderstood the injury caused by his violation of God's instructions. When he finally realized it, it was too late¹³.

The second stage, which is the horrible deed (*tò deinón*), can be detected in chapter 22, where his earlier *soft-heartedness* towards Agag, the leader of Israel's worst enemy, is hardened and turned into *fierce* obsession against his *own people*, namely against Achimelech and the priests of God in Nob, the city of priests, whom he utterly destroys as he should have done in the case of the Amalekites.

The *peripeteia* in Saul's tragedy, namely the Reversal, is composed of several stages. It starts with Samuel's rejection of Saul, continues with David's secret anointment and culminates in the Gilboa battle.

The Recognition (*anagnorisis*) is the most heart-rending moment in the tragic events of Saul's unfortunate kingship. He discovers too late the fatal meaning of his abandonment by God – whose commands should be regarded as the ideals and goals of the people of Israel. He tries to repent, to retrieve his errors, but his deeds are irrevocable. He cannot restore to life Achimelech and his innocently killed priests. He cannot erase the past and start anew his role in life, as every human being who learns from suffering would wish. Shame because of his terrible deeds and remorse because of his irreparable predicament add a profound dimension to his pain. Saul is ashamed of his sacrilegious massacre at Nob and avoids the mention of the Urim in his supplication to the evoked spirit of Samuel¹⁴. He is ashamed of his unjustified chase after David, which ends up

11. As we see also in I Samuel 14:19.

12. Abarbanel to Former Prophets, Torah va'Daar Publication. Jerusalem, 1955, pp. 249–250.

13. This is implied in Samuel's rebuke נִסְכַּלְתָּ. The root נִסְכַּל means: to lack knowledge, be ignorant, to act without understanding.

14. See I Samuel 28:15.

disgracefully and unsuccessfully.

The Suffering (*pathos*), the fifth stage in Saul's tragedy, is the most fundamental element in the downward movement of his life. It permeates every step he takes after his first breach of God's bidding and culminates in his despair after the evocation of Samuel's spirit.

One can imagine Saul's pain and frustration when he is asked on his return from the necromanceress' house, what Samuel told him. According to the Midrash, Saul answered: "He told me: Tomorrow you go to war and win; moreover, your sons will be appointed masters"¹⁵.

Extraordinary courage is manifested in this forced answer. Saul knows that he must not utter anything that is liable to discourage his people on the eve of their fateful battle. Therefore he keeps the disheartening vision to himself, feeling very lonely with his foreboding among his unknowing people. Loneliness, which is a typical trait of the tragic hero in literature, characterizes also Saul's life as king, when two of his beloved children betray him because of their love for his rival. Jonathan, his kind and conscientious son and heir to throne, cherishes David as his best friend. Michal, his warm-hearted and lovely daughter, falls in love with David and becomes his wife. Consequently they become the rival's partners and do not shun from lying to Saul their father in their efforts to save David from Saul's rage.

This situation is really maddening, and no wonder that Saul loses his self-confidence. Deceived by his own family, and estranged from everybody, Saul starts to suffer from depression and undergoes paranoid attacks.

It is interesting to note that nothing is narrated about Saul's wife (besides her and her father's name) throughout the whole long narrative of his kingship (I Samuel chs. 9–31). There is a conjecture that she was "caught" by Saul at the yearly festival of Shiloh from among the dancing girls, as was the custom with the young men of Benjamin who wanted to marry and build a home, after the outrageous Gibeon-concubine affair (Judges Ch. 19) and its calamitous consequences (*ibid.*, chs 20–21). It seems that any allusion to these tragic events was unfavourable and therefore the narrator refrained from enlarging upon Saul's wife and also upon his birth place, which presumably was the notorious Gibeon,

15. *Va'Yikra Raba* 26.

the name of which was turned into Gibeat Saul¹⁶.

Thus we see that Saul was born and brought up in a place which had undergone a great communal tragedy. Tragedy was, therefore, part of the air Saul breathed in the beginning of his life. Finally it dominated Saul's whole being till it became a symbol of a tragic leader, the first anointed king in Israel.

Our sages questioned Saul's severe destiny in the following statement:

“There were in Israel two kings, both anointed of the Lord, both courageous and heroes. Each of them sinned, repented and confessed – the one was not forgiven, the other was immediately favored. Saul was severely treated by God, who rent the kingdom over Israel from him with *strict justice* (“Midath ha-din”). David was leniently treated with a mixture of strict justice and *merciful justice* (“Midath ha-rachamim”) and his kingship was not taken away from his descendants”¹⁷.

From among the various answers to the question, “Why did God accept David's repentance and reject Saul's penitence?” the most relevant one to my thesis is Abarbanel's:

“David sinned as a man, not as a king . . . Saul failed in the hard craftsmanship of kingship . . . Kings should be cruel to their enemies and merciful to their people, but Saul was the opposite, because he pitied his enemy Agag and did not pity innocent Nob, the City of Priests, which he smote with the edge of the sword . . . Moreover, a king should be strong-minded and not be afraid of anybody, which Saul was not, as he confessed: *I feared the people and obeyed their voice* . . . This is why Saul was punished by removal of the kingship from his seed and by his untimely death”¹⁸.

16. See Radak to I Samuel 15:34: *Gibeat Saul* – Possibly the above-mentioned Gibeat Benjamin, where Saul built his royal house. ‘Giv’at’ Benjamin or alternately ‘Geva’ Benjamin (both translated in the English version ‘Gibeah of Benjamin’) are mentioned earlier in Judges 20:10 and I Samuel 13:2; 15; and 14:16.

17. J.D. Soloveitchik, *The Voice of my Beloved is Knocking*, (‘Kol Dodi Dofeck’) in his book *The Man of Faith*, Harav Kook Institute Publication, Jerusalem, 1975, pp. 75–76.

18. Abarbanel to Former Prophets, p. 249–250.

In the light of these noticeable deficiencies, one wonders at another statement made by our Sages: "Why did not Saul's kingship continue? Because he was immaculate"¹⁹.

This favorable attitude to Saul accords with Rashi's commentary to 13:1, where he compares (in the wake of our Sages) Saul's innocence to that of a one year old baby.

These two contradictory attitudes can be reconciled by the understanding that Saul was not a deliberate transgressor. All his violations were innocently perpetrated, or brought on by a paranoid attack.

Here lies Saul's tragedy. By his *hamartia* and *horrible deed* he initiated a causal chain of events that boomeranged in fatal *peripeteia*. Having killed all the priests of Nob, no priest was left to encourage him and his people before the frightful war with the Philistines on Mount Gilboa. Having driven away David and his brave followers, he missed a valuable group of fighters who, together with his people, might have changed the whole situation on Mount Gilboa.

Thus we see that Saul's sins (using our Sages' terms) were such that could not evoke God's kindness and merciful justice to him. On the contrary, they closed about him and locked him up in the framework of nature's causality. The inexorable chain of this causality is parallel to God's strict justice. So we can say that, by the nature of his deeds, Saul made himself subject to God's strict justice and brought calamity upon himself.

The dialectic between justice and mercy generates the tragic element in the biblical narrative. God does not often interfere with the causal chain of events within which human beings entangle themselves. When God does interfere, we have a miracle, which happens very seldom. But when God does not interfere, we have tragedy.²⁰ God's greatness is manifest in both the steady rules and principles He established in the world, and in their momentary disruption by His spontaneous interference. As this spontaneity²¹ is very rare, we have seldom erring characters with good endings. Most biblical figures are wholly subjected to the causal chain of events of nature. This is why we have tragic heroes in the Bible.

19. Yomah 22b.

20. That is, when the sufferer does not deserve that much of a calamity.

21. Spontaneity versus causality.

SAMUEL AND SAUL: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL DIMENSION

BY ADINA KATZOFF

Samuel mourned for Saul (I Samuel 15:35), and this while Saul was alive, a reigning king over Israel delivering victories in battles. What is the meaning of Samuel's mourning?

On first glance one might give it a simple explanation: Samuel gave up on Saul and severed his relationships with him. Or we might say, he put him out of his life.

However, this reasoning does not square with Samuel's severe outbursts of anger at the people when the elders came to him and said, *Now make us a king* (I Sam. 8:5), for Saul was not in the picture yet.

While the request for a king was a new turn in events, it was not an unforeseen situation for the lawmakers. In fact, in the Book of Deuteronomy there are distinct instructions about the nature of the monarch of Israel: *When thou art come unto the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shall dwell there and shalt say, 'I will set a king over me, like all other nations'; in any wise thou shalt set him king over thee* (Deuteronomy 17:14). Indeed, there are stipulations as to the criteria or expectations, such as: he must be chosen by God, he must be from among the Children of Israel, he may not be a foreigner, he may not multiply horses, nor wives, nor cause the people to return to Egypt. Providing these conditions are met, *Thou shalt in any wise set him a king*, tells us the lawmaker.

Neither did the people's request for a king necessarily contradict or interfere

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with the role of the prophet since the Israel monarchy developed along lines of dual authority, namely, the king and his prophet.

Many a reader is left with a sense of discomfort, not only with Samuel's tremendous anger against the people who asked for a king but even more so over his over-reacting with harsh treatment of Saul for every infraction of Samuel's directives. What was there in the people's request which so provoked Samuel, to the point of mourning?

The relationship, the interaction between Samuel and Saul are so tense and emotional that they seem to beg for an explanation.

I propose to examine this interaction between Samuel and Saul from the psychological dimension and shall try to explain the psychodynamics of the statement, *For Samuel mourned over Saul*, while Saul was still alive. What in fact was Samuel mourning?

MOURNING: THE PSYCHODYNAMIC DIMENSION

Psychologists explain bereavement and mourning as a complex process. This process goes through a series of phases. It is set in motion when a person experiences a great loss.

THE LOSS

Generally we tend to think of a great loss as the loss of a close and dear person. And indeed this is the most difficult loss to endure. However, the sense of loss or bereavement can be experienced by a person in relation to the loss of other meaningful objects or situations, such as the loss of an important position, the loss of self esteem, the loss of status, even the loss of a precious and meaningful material possession.

The sense of loss or even the very threat of loss consciously or unconsciously sets off a chain of reactions which constitute a process of mourning in order to cope with this sense of loss. The following are considered to be "reasonable" or "normal", even healthy reactions in the process of mourning:

1. *Denial and Disbelief* – The first reaction is denying or disbelieving the knowledge of the loss. The tendency is to reject the reality of the loss, that is, to deny the knowledge of it.

2. *Guilt and Regret* — As the reality of the loss is slowly accepted, feelings of guilt and regret develop, such as, “Why have I not done . . .”, or “What have I done to contribute to the loss . . .”, or “Why did I not . . .”, etc.
3. *Recapitulation* — The griever seems to recapitulate former life situations which seem to be connected with his present situation.
4. *Anger* — Feelings of anger overtake the mourner, feelings which are not always expressed overtly, but they are there. In the beginning the anger may be expressed against others around him, even against the lost object itself. Finally this anger may be turned toward the griever himself. This anger turned inward tends to depress and silence the mourner and he may withdraw from interaction with others and even his interest in life activities.

Psychologists tell us that this process is not only “normal” but is necessary for the mourning person. Only after he goes through this process is the mourner ready for a healthy coping with his loss. Only then is he able to reorganize his emotions and thoughts towards recuperation and rehabilitation.

SAMUEL'S LOSS

The first question we need to answer is, what was in fact the loss or the threat of a loss which Samuel sensed and which caused him to go into mourning?

As we turn to I Samuel 8:5, (before Saul came upon the scene) we read that the elders gathered and said unto Samuel: *Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways; now make us a king to judge us* (emphasis mine). Now, since the request “make us a king” is not contrary to the strictures of the Law, we may speculate that the request for a king *to judge us* was the noxious phrase. The people wanted not only a king like all the other nations but they specified *to judge us*, i.e. to assume the role of the judge. But the role of the judge belonged to Samuel. It therefore seems reasonable to assume that the people, requesting a king who will assume the role of judge, would deprive Samuel of his life-long function, constituting a tremendous loss of a cherished role with which Samuel's identity was so tied up.

SAMUEL'S DISBELIEF AND DENIAL

The first reaction of Samuel to the people's request of *make us a king to judge us* was indeed denial and rejection. No, he seems to tell them, you really do not want a king. How can you possibly want a king since you know how bad a king can be? And he proceeds to warn them about the "manner of the king", all the ills and evils which will befall them should they get a king: *He will take your sons and appoint them unto him to run before his chariots, and to make his instruments of war, and your daughters he will take to be servants and cooks, and he will take your fields, your vineyards and your oliveyards, even the best of them and give them to his servants . . . and you shall cry out in that day because of your king whom ye shall have chosen and the Lord will not answer you in that day* (I Sam. 8:11–18). He pours out upon them many more threats and warnings. His words are very forceful and impressive but they weigh down like one big curse, a curse which seems to explode out of his tremendous feelings of sadness and bitterness. We may conjecture that Samuel's objective was to change the reality of their request; he seemed to have hoped that the people would change their mind.

But the people refused to hearken unto the voice of Samuel and they said: *Nay; but there shall be a king and that our king may judge us* (I Sam. 8:19). At that point, he disperses the people, each unto his own city.

Samuel remains restive. He continues to plead with his people: *Behold I am old and gray headed, and my sons are with you, and I have walked before you from my youth unto this day* (I Sam. 12:2). He is bargaining with them: How can you reject an honorable judge like me, it is unbelievable. And if I have done any wrong, then I shall repay my debt *Here I am; witness against me before the Lord and tell me, whose ox have I taken? Or whose ass have I taken? Or whom have I oppressed and I will restore it* (ibid. 12:3).

But the people are firm. Finally, it is God who tells Samuel: *Hearken unto their voice and make them a king* (ibid. 8:7). God advises him to accept the reality, to make them a king, whereupon Samuel appoints Saul.

But even this reality Samuel finds hard to accept. In anointing Saul, Samuel proclaims: *The Lord hath anointed thee to be prince over his inheritance* (ibid. 10:1). He cannot get himself to state "king and judge", just prince. It is the people however who cheered, "long live the king" (ibid. 10:24).

Even this act of anointment he seems to deny. Otherwise it is difficult to explain the verses in chapter 11 verses 14–15 where Saul is newly presented as king as though he had not already been anointed previously. It were as if Samuel needed to confirm for himself the reality of the new monarchy.

SAMUEL'S FEELINGS OF GUILT AND REGRET

The Bible offers the antecedent for the people's request for a king: *And it came to pass, when Samuel was old, that he made his sons judges over Israel . . . And his sons walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted justice* (ibid. 8:1–3). What shame and regret! What feelings of guilt! Had he not raised such disgraceful sons, his own dynasty might have continued and survived after him. Here is where he himself failed, causing this sad turn of events which he found so unacceptable.

He might even have regretted his part in the choice of Saul. Was it not partially of his own making? Had he not carried out the anointment too hastily, when he was under extreme distress? He had no one to blame but himself. It was indeed different than in the case of David's anointment. The election of David as God's chosen was a much more comfortable process from a psychological point of view. David was still young. He was not about to seize the role from Samuel. There was still time for Samuel to prepare David and to train him so that Samuel could relate to him as to a protegee or disciple. The whole process of passing on the role to David was less emotionally distressing. It more closely resembled the process of Samuel himself who was trained by the old prophet Eli when he, Samuel, was still a young lad.

RECAPITULATION OF LIFE'S EVENTS

If we take careful note, we can see how the author of the book recapitulates for us Samuel's experiences as he grew up in the Shilo sanctuary under the tutelage of the old priest Eli. *And God called to Samuel at night and said . . . and I will judge his house for ever (Eli's) for the iniquity, in that he knew that his sons did bring curse upon themselves, and he rebuked them not. And therefore I have sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be expiated with sacrifices nor offering for ever* (I Sam. 3:13–14).

And now, when the people turn to Samuel, *Behold thou art old and thy sons*

walk not in thy ways; now make us a king (ibid. 8:5). he is reminded of this earlier association. Samuel turns to Saul, when the latter disobeys his instruction, in a tone and manner which are very similar to the words of God against Eli which Samuel heard in his youth. He now exclaims: *The Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel* (ibid. 15:26) and, *the Lord has rent the kingdom of Israel this day and hath given it to a neighbor of thine that is better than you* (ibid. 15:28).

THE EXPRESSION OF ANGER

Samuel's anger is the clearest expression of his feelings. At first it is against the people who, as he perceived it, were depriving him of his most important role. Then his anger turns against Saul. He smites him with his anger, punishing him for every infraction whether significant or minor, and wrests the kingdom from him in the harshest of terms.

And finally, the anger is turned unto himself. Samuel withdraws, is depressed, and *mourns over Saul*, the object representing his loss of position and status.

THE REHABILITATION OF SAMUEL

It is after Samuel had gone through this process of mourning that he was ready for rehabilitation. And of course the great rehabilitator is the Lord God of Israel: *And the Lord said unto Samuel, 'How long wilt thou mourn over Saul? Fill thy horn with oil, and go; I will send thee to Jesse the Beth-lehemite, for I have provided me a king among his sons'* (ibid. 16:1).

New tasks in the right timing begin the process of rehabilitation from mourning. Samuel now assumes a new role, the maker of kings for Israel.

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SAMUEL AND SAUL: THE PROPHETIC DIMENSION

BY SHIMON BAKON

The modern world, Jewish and non-Jewish alike, has accorded respect, admiration and even adulation to the long list of prophets adorning Jewish history, with the notable exception of Samuel. Because of a steadily deteriorating relationship between him and Saul, first king of Israel, a tendency has developed to denigrate his importance. The worsening relationship between king and prophet-judge is reduced to a prosaic power struggle, where Samuel compensated for the loss of autocratic power over Israel by stepping crudely on the king's prerogatives. Some moderns are inclined to blame Samuel's overpowering presence for the tragedy of Saul. It is this tragedy that clouds their judgement and prohibits them to see Samuel's tremendous achievements in proper perspective.

There are others who assault Samuel's character, and accuse him of base jealousy, claiming that he could never forgive Saul for being indirectly responsible for his own sons not becoming hereditary judges of Israel. Others berate his pettiness and his alleged lack of compassion. After all, they claim, what sin did Saul commit when preceding an unequal war with the Philistines and impatient for the arrival of Samuel, he began the ceremony of sacrifices? What, indeed, was Saul's sin when he exhibited humane feelings of pity toward Agag by sparing his life? Finally, some argue, where is the proportion between sin and penalty? Is it for such petty sins that the kingdom was torn from Saul and given to another? Thus, according to such interpretations, an image of a jealous, petty, unbending, even cruel despot emerges, devoid of love and compassion.

It is the thesis of this writer that with due respect, such interpretations have failed totally to enter into the spirit of prophecy, according to which personality and personal inclinations are completely submerged, and what becomes

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supremely significant is the word of the Lord. Therein lies the secret, as well as the greatness, of prophecy. Its bearers merely become God's messengers.

BIBLICAL ASSESSMENT

If one wishes to know how Scripture values its personalities, we must pay attention to the manner of their birth. In this respect there is perhaps none to compare with Samuel. A gift of lovingkindness, his birth is preceded by fervent prayer and the unforgettable encounter between his mother and Eli, and is followed by a song of thanksgiving and his consecration to the service of God at Shilo.

It was while he was at Shilo that two events occurred which were to determine his future, first, the call to prophecy while yet a child. Eventually¹

All Israel from Dan to Beer-sheva knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord.

I Samuel 3:20

The second was the capture of the Holy Ark at Eben-ezer, followed by the death of Eli and his two sons and the eventual destruction of Shilo, which brought about a shifting of leadership from priest to judge-prophet. In a subtle way, another change took place. Samuel, unlike Eli, did not welcome worshippers only in one place, but became a circuit judge.

And he went from year to year in circuit, from Beth-el and Gilgal and Mizpah and he judged Israel in all those places. 7:16

It is perhaps in the spirit of democratization and decentralization of his great ministry that he established a fourth site in Beer-sheva, and installed his two corrupt sons there.

The Bible has placed him on a par with Moses and Aaron. Thus Psalm 99:6 speaks of

*Moses and Aaron among His priests and
Samuel among them that call upon His name,
did call upon the Lord, and He answered them.*

1. One should note that here, for the first time in the history of Judges, Scripture tells of a leader's influence over all Israel, including Beer-sheva in Judah.

Jeremiah singled him out from among a galaxy of worthy candidates, when he exclaimed

Then said the Lord unto me: 'Though Moses and Samuel stood before Me, yet My mind could not be toward this people' (15:1).

It is characteristic that it is Jeremiah who envisioned Samuel as the great interceding prophet, helpless to obviate God's stern verdict over Israel. No one can doubt the gentleness of a Jeremiah who cursed the day he was born, because it would be his lot to bring evil tidings to Israel! It was Jeremiah, that compassionate soul, who took Samuel, together with Moses, as paradigms of the ideal prophet. For Jeremiah deeply understood the suffering and inner struggle of the prophet, one part hesitating and loving, the other part overwhelmed by divine imperative to bring unpleasant messages to whomever he was directed to do so.

None has yet blamed Jeremiah for castigating Israel and predicting dire consequences for her sins. Yet, in the case of Samuel, far too many are prone to condemn him and to attribute base motives for some of his actions.

THE TRAGEDY OF SAUL – WHO IS TO BLAME

We have mentioned before that for many moderns, the image of Samuel is marred by a dark shadow cast by the ambivalent relationship between prophet and king. It is therefore essential to ask the question: who is to be blamed for Saul's tragedy?

Our Sages were disturbed by this question. In the Talmud (Masechet Yoma 22b.) there is a serious discussion on the subject of why the kingdom of Saul did not endure. Being close to the spirit of Holy Scripture they never once blamed Samuel. Rather, they searched for possible flaws in Saul's character or background, or they claimed Saul's tragedy to be an almost arbitrary divine decision, whose judgment one dares not question. Thus, ironically, they were in close alignment with Webster's definition of ancient or modern tragedy.²

2. "A serious play having an unhappy or disastrous ending brought about by the characters or central character impelled, in *ancient drama* by fate or, *more recently*, by moral weakness, psychological maladjustment, or social pressures" *Webster New Twentieth Century Dictionary, Unabridged.*

R. Judah, in the name of Samuel, seemed to put the blame on Saul's perfect genealogy (thus contrasting Saul with David), leading to arrogance. He based himself on a dictum "that no community leader should be appointed unless he carries a basket of reptiles – קופת שרצים – on his back so that, if he became arrogant, one could tell him: turn around!" The same R. Judah, quoting Rav, blamed Saul's tragedy on his too great humility. That Saul *was as one who held his peace* when, after being crowned in Mizpah, *certain base fellows said: How shall this man save us. And they despised him . . .* (I Samuel 10:27).

R. Huna, on the other hand, found Saul completely without blemish. Interpreting the difficult verse *בן שנה שאול למלכו* – *Saul was (one) year old when he began his reign* (I Samuel 13:1), he said "that Saul was blameless as a one year old child." Nahum ben Yitzhak claimed the opposite, namely, "that he was soiled as a one year old baby." It is only after two successive horrifying visions while dreaming that he regretted his statement and begged forgiveness of "the bones of Saul, son of Kish, King of Israel."

This same R. Huna introduced an element of God's grace directed to His favorites, when he stated: "How little does he whom the Lord supports, need to trouble himself. Saul sinned once, yet brought upon himself calamity. David who sinned twice, and it was not reckoned against him." R. Mani, in sharp opposition to R. Huna, found, as we shall see later, imperfection in the form of extremism in Saul's character.

SAMUEL AND SAUL – THE BEGINNING

After the disastrous defeat of Israel at Eben-ezer, the Philistines succeeded in penetrating deeply into Israel's territory. Though the Book of Samuel only relates the capture of the Holy Ark, we note that Jeremiah (7:12, 26:6) specifically refers also to the destruction of Shilo. Scriptures gives us this vivid description of armament control during the reign of Saul.

Now there was no smith found throughout all the land of Israel. For the Philistines said: Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears; but all the Israelites went down to the Philistines to sharpen their plowshares. So it came to pass on the day of battle that there was neither sword nor spear found in the Land of any of the people that were with Saul and Jonathan.

I Samuel 13:19–22

as you were humble in your sight then *the Lord anointed you king over Israel*. Now, due to your arrogance, acting against divine directives, and even having set yourself up a victory monument, you are being rejected! Paradoxically, both contrasting interpretations fit the pathos of Saul's condition.

In the face of Samuel's fury, which was provoked on hearing the bleating of the sheep and goats, Saul had pleaded that they had been designated as sacrifices, upon which Samuel thundered:

Hath the Lord great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in the harkening to the voice of the Lord?

15:22

The empty formalism of which Samuel had accused Saul in their earlier encounter has now become fully explicit.

AND IT GRIEVED SAMUEL

Chapter 15, which records the final break between Samuel and Saul, raises two troubling theological questions. Why did God proclaim a war of annihilation against Amalek when such a harsh sentence does not seem in keeping with His attribute of compassion? Though reasons for it are given both in Exodus and Deuteronomy, another possible answer is given in the Book of Job: it is presumptuous for us to project our standards of justice and compassion to those of God.

The second problem is that contained in the verse: *It repenteth Me that I have set up Saul as a King* (I Sam 15:11). We will not delve too deeply into this problem except to state that with the creation of man as a free agent, God, as it were, took a gamble.⁴ Saul, though chosen of the Lord, proves to Him a disappointment!

Yet the very same chapter that insists that God repents, also states that *the Glory of Israel* — נצח ישראל *will neither lie nor repent* (15:29). The two statements seem irreconcilable unless viewed in two different contexts. That God will not repent can only be understood in the light of Saul's heartrending entreaty to the prophet: now, *I pray thee, pardon my sin*. We are told that it grieved

4. Thus already in Genesis (6:6) Scripture records: *It repenteth the Lord that He created man on earth*.

Thus, according to the profound insight of R. Mani, Saul's downfall came about as a result of following a human impulse, when it is stated that *Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep and of the oxen . . .* (15:9), defying God's "rigorous" demand. R. Mani, however, immediately points to the flaw in following one's impulse. For on the matter of the priestly city of Nob, King Saul

smote with the edge of the sword, both men and women children and sucklings, and oxen and asses and sheep. 22:19

On reading chapter 15 which relates the war against Amalek and the final break between prophet and king, one discerns many layers of deep disappointments and human weaknesses. Saul had been approached by Samuel in the following words: *The Lord sent me to anoint thee to be king over His people, over Israel; now therefore, hearken thou unto the words of the Lord* (15:1). This, to Samuel's mind, was the Lord's war against Amalek. On hearing that the king *had spared Agag . . . and all that was good*, Samuel, rushing to confront Saul, was told that he is *setting him up a monument*. Not only had Saul defied divine orders for total annihilation of the remembrance of Amalek, but he had turned this successful campaign into a personal victory! If that weren't enough, he blamed the taking of war booty on the people, though it is stated explicitly that *Saul and the people spared Agag and the best of the sheep* (15:8). Thus in the acts of setting up a war monument and of blaming the people for taking war booty, Saul displayed paradoxical traits of arrogance and of cowardice. This is, perhaps, the dual meaning in Samuel's accusation: הלא אם קטן אתה בעיניך ראש שבטי ישראל אתה.

This verse can be translated in two ways: *Though thou be little in thy own sight, art thou not head of the tribes of Israel?* The meaning would be that as king, Saul should have exercised the powers of a king. He should have prevented the people from taking to flight, and he should have stopped them from taking spoil. It was unbecoming for a king to put the blame on the people, using the element of fear as his excuse: *I feared the people and so listened to their voice*.

The above verse also lends itself to a different interpretation, which would be the opposite of the previous one: *When you were little in your sight, you were made head of the tribes of Israel*. The meaning conveyed here is that so long

unfortunate incident when the Holy Ark was brought into battle by Eli's sons. Though Samuel did not accuse the king of meaningless formalism in this specific confrontation, we shall note later in the fatal episode of the victory against Amalek, that Saul was taken severely to task over this issue.

THE FINAL BREAK

And the Lord said to Moses: For I will utterly blot out the remembrance of Amalek from under the heaven.

Exodus 17:14

Following the charge by Samuel to *go and smite Amalek and utterly destroy all that they have*, Saul went and gained a brilliant victory over Israel's arch enemy. Yet in this victory he also met his defeat. Something occurred which caused a total break between prophet and king. *And Samuel never beheld Saul again until the day of his death* (15:35). Thus began the tragedy which loomed over Saul the rest of his life, culminating in his final defeat. The threat hurled by Samuel: *The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day* (15:28), Saul's growing isolation from priests and prophet, the rising popularity of David, the alienation of his two children, Jonathan and Michal, both of whom sided with David, led undoubtedly to psychic deterioration and melancholy. The final chapter of the tragedy was the utter defeat of Israel at Gilboa, ending in the death of Saul and Jonathan.

What had occurred there? Rab Mani (quoted before), commenting on the verse: *And Saul came to the city of Amalek and lay in wait in the valley* – וירב בנחל (15:15), interpreted וירב בנחל not in the accepted: ארב בנחל, that is: he lay in wait, but literally, having an argument with the Lord Himself on the issue of the נחל, namely the ceremony of the heifer, whose neck is to be broken at a נחל in the case where a dead body is found whose murderer is not known (Deut 21:4). Saul is presented as saying:

Concerning one soul (life) the Torah has commanded us the עגלה ערפה, even more to all these souls (lives). And even if man sinned, what is the sin of the cattle? And if adults have sinned, what is the sin of the young ones?

Yoma 22b

The wider context of the narration in the Book of Samuel makes these two points clear. One senses a deep irony in the pathetic failure of Saul's leadership precisely at a moment when military leadership was of the essence. As will be recalled, the elders had demanded a king for the specific reason *that he will go before us and fight our battles* (8:20). At this moment of crisis, the failure of Saul's leadership stood out in bold relief! Is it for this that Israel was willing to cashier the prophet?

As can be ascertained from I Samuel chapter 7, Samuel on a previous occasion had gathered Israel at Mizpah to recall the people to God's service. The Philistines, misinterpreting this gathering as a possible threat of revolt, had gone up to Mizpah to meet Israel in battle. The people had entreated the prophet: *Cease not to cry unto the Lord for as that He save us out of the hands of the Philistines* (7:8), whereupon the Lord interfered and *thundered with a great thunder on that day upon the Philistines and discomfited them; and they were smitten down before Israel* (7:10). And before Samuel, was it not Gideon who with a remaining force of three hundred out of ten thousand, had gained a remarkable victory?

In fact, Saul loses stature in comparison with his own son, when Jonathan alone with an armor-bearer attacked an entire garrison with the great words: *Perhaps the Lord will work for us. For there is no restriction to the Lord to save by many or by few* (14:6). It was this daring act, based on deep faith in God's saving power, that turned a possible severe defeat into a major victory against the Philistines.

It was not merely the lack of faith, expressing itself in failure of great leadership, that irritated Samuel; it was also the means by which Saul desired to gain God's favor. On Samuel's query: what have you done, Saul excused himself as follows:

Now will the Philistines come down upon me in Gilgal and I have not entreated the favor of the Lord. I forced myself, therefore, and offered the burnt offering.

13:12

It was the empty formalism of sacrifice as a means of obtaining divine favor which seemed repellent to the prophet. It no doubt reminded him of the

leadership of Saul, one is hard put to understand what caused the anger of Samuel and what prompted him to proclaim: *but now thy kingdom shall not continue* (13:13). The account of what precipitated the battle is short, vivid, and to the point.

Saul had established a standing army of three thousand men, two thousand under his command and one thousand led by his son Jonathan. The Philistine penetration of Israeli territory had reached dangerous proportions, close to Gibeon Benjamin, the home of Saul, no more than five miles north of Jerusalem. Jonathan, in a daring raid, struck a Philistine garrison nearby, provoking a sharp Philistine reaction. They gathered in Michmash for a major attack on Israel. King Saul called for general mobilization. We have noted before the general lack of adequate military equipment. In the face of the massive preparations on the part of the Philistines, the poorly equipped men of Israel panicked, dispersed, hid in caves and even fled across the Jordan. Saul, waiting for Samuel in Gilgal for seven days, began the sacrifices himself, seeing that the prophet was late. It is at this point that Samuel appeared, challenging him: *What have you done!*

What indeed did Saul do to incur the prophet's anger? What had he committed or failed to do and *had not kept that which the Lord commanded him*? From a sheer human perspective our sympathies are with Saul, but there lies the pitfall. It is a curious fact, not easily noted, that the two major recorded clashes between king and prophet occurred in situations where Israel was either going to win or had already won major victories against two of its sworn enemies. It is therefore not the element of "success" which was at the core of the conflict between Samuel and Saul.

Let us reconsider the situation at hand: Does it really make sense to impute Samuel's action to pettiness, growing out of a show of disrespect on the part of Saul? Are we to say that the outcome of a serious war with the Philistines was less important to him than his "offended" honor? In fact, was the seemingly justified impatience of Saul the real cause of Samuel's castigation of him? The apparent disproportion of Saul's indiscretion and the vehemence of Samuel's reaction should give us warning that there was an entirely different issue at stake which, to discover, forces us to delve more deeply into biblical intent. The source of the conflict was lack of faith in God and the means by which His favor could be won.

It is obvious that the Philistines had a metal working monopoly, thus exacting economic and military control over Israel.

It is against the backdrop of the growing Philistine threat that the elders of Israel made the not unjustified demand upon Samuel to appoint a king.³ We read of his initial shock, his plea to God, the answer he received to heed the voice of the people, and his first meeting at Ramah with Saul, then an impressive young man, standing head and shoulders above the rest. *Now the Lord had revealed unto Samuel a day before Saul came*, instructing him to anoint Saul prince over Israel. Their meeting is described as having been most cordial. Samuel astonished Saul with the words: *And in whom is all the desire of Israel. Is it not on thee?* (9:20). Saul understood the hint but countered that being of the smallest tribe in Israel and from the least important family, he was not worthy of the great honor. Samuel had him seated at the head of thirty specially invited guests, and inviting him afterwards to his home, he spent the entire night on the rooftop with him. With the advent of morning, both descended to the outskirts of the city, where Samuel anointed him king, kissed him, and gave him three signs, the fulfillment of which was designed to strengthen Saul's flagging self-confidence. He promised him that on encountering a band of prophets *the spirit of the Lord will come mightily upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them and shalt be turned into another man* (9:6).

In this first encounter we note only love between the two. There is certainly no hint of displeasure or jealousy. We discern no trace of resentment for diminished power for himself nor grudge for the displacement of his sons. As a true prophet Samuel did without hesitation what he had been asked to do. At a national assembly at Mizpah. Saul, by the process of drawing lots, was presented to the people as king. After Saul's decisive victory at Yabesh Gilead, Samuel convened a new assembly at Gilgal, at which time Saul was enthusiastically acclaimed king by all the *people before the Lord* (11:15).

THY KINGDOM SHALL NOT ENDURE

On superficial reading of chapters 13 and 14 of the Book of Samuel, which records the first serious clash between Israel and the Philistines under the

3. See also the author's article in *Dor le-Dor*, Vol. VIII, 4 (Summer 1982) *Why Did Samuel Initially Reject Monarchy*.

Samuel, and he cried to the Lord all night (15:11) on hearing the divine edict. His intercession bore no fruit. Samuel, presented by some as a heartless, cold cleric, displayed tenderness toward the king. Twice more Scripture records this fact: *Samuel never beheld Saul again until the day of his death, though Samuel mourned for Saul* (15:35); and a third time, when Samuel is addressed by the Lord: *How long will you mourn for Saul, seeing that I have rejected him from being king over Israel* (16:1).

We do not discover that same tender relationship between Samuel and David. Commanded by the Lord to go and seek a king from among the sons of Jesse the Beth-lehemite, one senses reluctance on the part of the prophet. First he expressed fear for his life: *How can I go, if Saul hear it, he will kill me* (16:2). On meeting the sons of Jesse, the prophetic spirit, so evident in his first meeting with Saul, seems to have left him. In fact a direct divine rebuke is noticeable when Samuel had singled out Eliab: *Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart* (16:7). After he had anointed David, one searches in vain for a sign of personal favor, such as the kiss Samuel had bestowed on Saul.

A FINAL NOTE ON SAMUEL AND SAUL

The Book of Samuel abounds in tragic figures. There is the life and death of Eli who witnessed the capture of the Holy Ark and the death of his two sons. We note the story of David who lost four sons and experienced the bitterness of a daughter, forced to live a secluded life in shame. There is Abner, assassinated by Joab, and Joab, executed by direct orders of Solomon. Of course, Saul's life and death assumes the dimensions of a classical tragedy. Neither is Samuel spared. When he secluded himself in Nayot, his brilliant ministry, outside the secret anointing of David, seemed to have come to an inauspicious end. We even have noted an element of fear for his life. Thus we encounter a great leader who in old age was deprived of the fruits of all his life's labor. Being the greatest of Israel's Judges, he was also its last. Directly responsible for the establishment of monarchy, he was to die in the knowledge of the transience of this accomplishment in the choice of Saul. In the winter of his life, he was overwhelmed by the disappointment of two unworthy sons, a disappointment shared by Moses and Eli. Looking from a narrow perspective, his life must have seemed to him a failure.

A GUIDE TO ISAIAH – CHAPTER II

BY CHAIM PEARL

The introduction to the book and the comments on chapter 1 can be read in the Spring issue (XI:2) of Dor le Dor.

1–4. These verses are not only among the most remarkable in Isaiah, but are among the most noteworthy verses in the entire Bible. In these verses Isaiah proclaims his vision of the messianic age and reaches the highest peak of biblical prophecy. We see four elements in this period which are explicit in Isaiah's vision.

a) The concept of universalism. The ultimate blessing will embrace all nations of the world, and not only the Jewish people.

b) A primary characteristic of the messianic period will be the universal acknowledgement of the truth of the only One God. In those days, all idolatry will be wiped off the earth.

c) Although all mankind will be included in the messianic blessing, the geographic and spiritual centre will be the holy city of Jerusalem which will be the focal point for universal pilgrimage and for the teaching of God's law.

d) In the messianic era all the world will live in peace and the weapons of war will be transformed into instruments of prosperity and universal friendship.

It should not be wondered at that such an ethical religious and universalistic teaching was preached as early as the days of Isaiah. In fact the 8th century B.C.E. was a seminal period for advanced and new prophetic teachings such as were taught by Amos and Hosea. The same messianic message in Isaiah is repeated by Micah (1v. 1–4), who was a young contemporary of Isaiah. The weight of scholarly opinion inclines to the view that the messianic vision is original with Isaiah.

2. *The top of the mountains . . . above the hills* Jerusalem will be seen as the

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city of spiritual leadership and will be acknowledged as such by all mankind.

Mountain of the Lord's House This is the Temple mount, on which was built the first Temple by Solomon and the second Temple by the returning Babylonian exiles, subsequently and magnificently rebuilt by King Herod.

All nations shall flow unto it They will all make their pilgrimage to the holy city.

And it shall come to pass in the end of days A great deal has been written about the concept of "the end of days". Here we will touch only briefly on some of its meaning. First, it does not mean the "end" of the normal natural world. There is nothing in Judaism which would support such an extreme notion. It means rather "the distant future". A better translation is therefore "the latter days". The weight of Judasim is on the concept of the arrival of an ideal period, sometime in the future, when all wars and other social evils will cease, all physical evil will be redeemed and all moral evil will be abolished. This will be the age of the Messiah and it will be reached by the efforts of men of good will working under the inspiration of God. The world will be rid of paganism, and all peoples will be led to the truth of one God and live in the direction of His teaching. This, in general, is what the prophet means by "the end of days", and its fulfillment is the clue to the meaning of history.

4. *And decide for many peoples* God's direction will be the moral arbitrating factor among the nations.

It is a sad reflection. The United Nations was established with great ideas about the objective supremacy of morality, law and truth as the decisive factors of arbitration among the nations of the world. However, it has become an instrument for international rivalry, disunity and selfish nationalism. Instead of being an indicator of the messianic age, the United Nations is today morally bankrupt and therefore politically powerless.

* * *

5-11. In spite of the apparent change of theme which now enters into the chapter, there is in fact a unity in the entire chapter, because the prophet views the destruction of idolatry as a pre-requisite for the purification of the world and the approach of the messianic era.

5. *O House of Jacob, Come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord* From the heights of his vision of the messianic era, the prophet comes down to a description of the contemporary grim realities where widespread idolatry and superstition fill every section of the land. He begins with an urgent appeal to the people to recognise these evils and to follow God's teaching.

The Hebrew for *O House of Jacob, come ye and let us walk* is *Bet Yaakov lechu venelcha* and provided the acronym "bilu" from the initial letters of the four Hebrew words. This was the title of the first movement of pioneers who left Russia at the end of the nineteenth century and emigrated to Eretz Israel.

6. *Thou hast forsaken* i.e., God has forsaken the people.

For they are replenished from the east with all kinds of immorality and magic.

Brood of aliens Probably meaning young novices in the art of witchcraft.

7. The verse paints a picture of economic prosperity and luxury, fitting the reigns of Uzziah and Jotham at the beginning of Isaiah's ministry.

8. *Their land is full of idols* Note the parallel with the beginning of verse 7. The prophet makes the deliberate connection between prosperity (v. 7) and idolatry (v. 8).

9. An inescapable result of witchcraft and idolatry is the loss of human dignity and man's slavery to ignorance, superstition and the social evils of primitive paganism.

10. Inevitably, this **degradation** of the human spirit will bring the hour of retribution. When it comes, there will be cries of terror as the people try to hide and escape destruction.

* * *

11-17. These verses form a unity, and the prophet here proclaims the downfall of all haughtiness, pride, arrogance, and those human failings which delude man in the false belief of his own greatness.

11–13. The prophet employs metaphors from the world of Nature – cedars of Lebanon, oaks of Bashan, high mountains and tall hills – to symbolise the arrogance of man.

* * *

15–17. In mixing the metaphors, Isaiah moves from the world of Nature to the works of man's hands. But they signify the same weakness. High towers and powerful ships sailing to distant ports also give man the false impression of his own might. But all his stupid pride will be brought low when the punishment of God will prove how worthless is all man's handiwork.

16. *All delightful imagery* This is a difficult phrase and the Hebrew noun is not found anywhere else. Commentators suggest that it refers to the ornamentation on the prows of the ships, referred to in the previous phrase, or to other examples of human art which idolatrous man invested with divine qualities.

* * *

18–21. The destruction of all idolatry will be a prerequisite for the dawning of a new world order.

20. *The moles and the bats* In his state of terror idolatrous man will throw away his idols into the deep crevices and caves where they will not be seen in the dark inaccessible hideouts of the night creatures.

22. *Cease from man* If man, who possesses the spark of life, is transient and insubstantial, how much more so is the absolute worthlessness of his false pride and his idolatry. The chapter concludes by returning to one of its central themes.

* * *

FAMOUS AND NOTEWORTHY PHRASES TO COMMIT TO MEMORY

CHAPTER TWO

Verses 2–4

These verses are among the most important and precious, not only in the book of Isaiah but in the entire Bible, for they contain the Jewish hope in

the future messianic age – a period in world history when all mankind will be united under God, living in peace and happiness. This is not only the golden age of the Jew but of all human history. In religious terms it is the *hatikvah* of Judaism which seeks to ennoble the entire world.

If it is too difficult to learn all three verses by heart, then concentrate on the following key phrases.

Verse 2

והיה באחרית הימים

And it shall come to pass in the end of days

As indicated earlier, a better translation is “the latter days”, i.e., a time in world history when, by the inspiration of God, and through the efforts of all good men, society will be free of war and other evil. The ideal of an utopian era is the messianic hope of Judaism. This is the ultimate meaning of all human existence and the challenge involved in all history. Therefore a good Jew is always a messianic Jew living with the ideal which is implicit in the phrase: *And it shall come to pass in the latter days.*

ונהרו אליו כל הגוים

And all nations shall flow unto it

To Jerusalem, the centre of God’s teaching, not only for Jews but for all mankind. The phrase is a significant pointer to the religious universalism of Judaism.

Verse 3

כי מציון תצא תורה ודבר ה' מירושלם

For out of Zion shall come forth the law and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem

These words are familiar to us from the Torah reading service of the Synagogue. It says many things to the Jews. But primarily, it points to the role of the Holy City as the magnetic nucleus for God’s teaching and the challenge of Judaism to be a civilising force for all mankind.

Torah is translated here “the law”, but this can be misleading. The “law” of the Bible and Talmud is part of the unique religious culture of one

people – the Jews. Others are welcome to accept it – if they choose. But the messianic age does not necessarily look to all mankind to become Jews and live with the particular cultural and religious pattern say, of Sabbath, festivals or dietary code. Rather does it look to all mankind to recognise the only one God and to direct their lives according to the highest moral teaching. It is that which is universal. The word *Torah* has to be translated here in its widest connotation to mean “teaching” or “direction”.

Verse 4

וכתתו חרבותם לאחים וחגינותיהם למזמרות לא ישא גוי אל גוי חרב ולא ילמדו עוד
מלחמה

And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; Nation shall not lift up sword unto nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

This is one of the greatest of all prophetic utterances. Universal peace will be the most important characteristic of the messianic age. The absence of such an idyllic ingredient is a conclusive Jewish argument to prove the absence of the messianic age, and the spurious claims of false messiahships.

In 1978, at the peace signing ceremony between Egypt and Israel, with American participation, all three national leaders – President Sadat, Prime Minister Begin and President Carter, included this prophetic utterance in their speeches made in honour of that historic event.

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ADDITIONAL LISTING OF BIBLE STUDY GROUPS

In our Dor le Dor volume IX,4 issue, Bible Study Groups were listed in response to a questionnaire we had sent out. In volumes X,1, X,3, X,4 and XI,2 additional Study Groups were published.

PENNSYLVANIA

Or Ami Study Group
Congregation Or Ami
Lafayette Hill, PA
Rabbi Seymour Prystowsky, PhD

Beth Shalom Congregation
Johnston, PA
Rabbi A. Soloff, Leader
Benjamin A. Isaacson, Chairman

THE HEBREW ELEMENT IN EVERYDAY ENGLISH – 3

BY GABRIEL SIVAN

PROPER NAMES

Classical Hebrew sources emphasize the lasting value of a good name, but like Shakespeare (in *Romeo and Juliet*) we may well ask: "What's in a name?" The answer to that question is likely to surprise many listeners. An entire book could be written about the absorption of Biblical proper names in the languages and usage of most nations, and changing fashions have not seriously affected parents' choice of names for their children over the past five centuries. Taine, the French historian and philosopher, was alluding to the influence of the Hebrew Bible when he wrote: "Hence have sprung much of the English language and half of the English names. To this day the country is biblical".*

Certain phonetic modifications were, of course, inevitable as Hebrew or Aramaic proper names were borrowed and transliterated by Greek and Latin, then re-borrowed by English and other modern languages. Since the classical tongues were unable to cope with the guttural Semitic *het* (ח), names like *Havvah* (חווה), *Rahel* (רחל) and *Yohanan* (יוחנן) evolved as Eve, Rachel and John, while the lack of an equivalent for *shin* (ש) changed *Sha'ul* (שאול), *Shim'on* (שמעון) and *Shoshannah* (שושנה) to Saul, Simon and Susanna.

Nowadays, Biblical names such as Abraham, Isaac, Moses, Solomon and Ezra are more often borne by Jews than by Christians, although this was not always the case. We are all familiar with Abraham Lincoln, Sir Isaac Newton and Ezra Stiles; indeed, until quite recently, Americans retained a sentimental affection for names like Ethan, Seth, Ebenezer and Jethro, Nathaniel, Jesse, Jabez and even Ichabod. In the English-speaking world of today, a

* H. Taine, *Histoire de la littérature anglaise* (1864).

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comparatively large number of given (or "Christian") names are of Hebraic origin. I need only mention Adam (אדם; meaning "man"), Benjamin (בנימין; "son of the right hand"), Daniel (דניאל; "God has judged"), David (דוד; "beloved"), Gabriel (גבריאל; "God's champion"), Jacob (יעקב; popularly interpreted to mean "he will supplant"), Jeremy (ירמיהו; "May God exalt"), John (יוחנן; "God has been gracious"), Jonathan (יונתן; "God has given"), Joseph (יוסף; "he shall add"), Matthew (מתתיהו; "God's gift"), Michael (מיכאל; "Who is like God?"), Samuel (שמואל; "asked of the Lord"), and Simon (שמעון; "one who obeys"). A few other men's names are Biblical, though not strictly Hebrew: Cyrus (כורש) derives from Old Persian, Hiram or Ahiram (חירם, אחירם; meaning "brother of the exalted one") is of Phoenician origin, while Thomas (תאומה; an epithet meaning "twin") stems from Aramaic.

An equally impressive list of women's names can also be presented. Beginning with Abigail (אביגיל; "my father rejoices") and Ada (עדה; "ornament"), we find Beluah (בעולה; "married"), Carmel (כרמל; "God's vineyard"), Deborah (דבורה; "bee"), Dinah (דינה; meaning perhaps "vindicates"), Edna (עדנה; "delight"), Elizabeth (אלישבע; "God has sworn"), Eve (חוה; "lively"), Judith (יהודית; "Jewess"), Madeleine or Marlene (from the Galilean town of Magdala), Martha (מרתא; Aramaic for "lady" or "housewife"), Mary or Miriam (מרים; "wish"), Naomi (נעמי; "pleasantness"), Rebekah (רבקה; a name of uncertain meaning), Ruth (רוח; perhaps "friendship"), Sarah (שרה; "princess"), and Sharon (שרון; "coastal plain"). Like Cyrus, Esther (אסתר; "star") comes from Old Persian.

Some of these Biblical names have well-known diminutives: Hannah (חנה; is the source of Ann(e), Nancy and Nina; Miriam, of May, Minnie and Molly; Sarah, of Sadie and Sally; and Elizabeth gives us Betty, Elsie, Isabel, Lillian and Lisa. Incidentally, *Ya'aqov* or Jacob has given rise to James and Jacques, while *Yohanan* or John has a whole range of European equivalents including Jack, Ian, Sean, Giovanni, Jean, Hans, Juan and Ivan. I can only mention in passing some of the many female derivatives of men's names such as Gabrielle, Josephine and Michelle. Here in Israel, of course, a much higher proportion of Biblical names can be found in regular use — including some (like Nimrod) which Jews traditionally avoided because of their disagreeable associations.

A number of these names have acquired lasting significance in some memorable phrase — "to raise Cain", "like David and Jonathan", "as old as

Methuselah”, “Job’s comforters” and “a judgment of Solomon” are a few examples. Because of the decline in standards of behaviour, one rarely hears a loose woman described these days as “a shameless Jezebel” — recalling King Ahab’s unpopular Phoenician wife.* One further Biblical expression was coined by Shakespeare — “A Daniel come to judgment” (in *The Merchant of Venice*) — and I shall return to the great English dramatist in another of these talks.

THE HEBREW ELEMENT IN EVERYDAY ENGLISH — 4

PLACE NAMES IN MANY LANDS

As the Reformation steadily gained ground in England from the early decades of the 16th century, printing presses and forceful preachers revealed the Book of Human Destiny to an entire nation. John Richard Green, the eminent historian, tells how the English then “became the people of a book, and that book was the Bible. It was read in churches, and it was read at home, and everywhere its words, as they fell on ears which custom had not deadened to their force and beauty, kindled a startling enthusiasm”.** The Puritans, soldierly “servants of the Lord”, shaped their stern creed and libertarian ideals in this new climate; with Bible and sword in hand, they felt themselves to be the instrument of Divine Providence — the “chosen people” who would build a new commonwealth on the foundations of God’s covenant with Israel at Sinai.

Puritan Biblicism inspired the term *bethel* (i.e., בית-אל) designating the “house of God” or chapel where Nonconformists preferred to worship. Their characteristic attachment to Biblical place names has left its mark here and there in the British Isles (the town of Bethesda in North Wales, for example), but this aspect of the Puritan spirit is far more evident in those distant lands where English dissenters chose to settle.

Close on 400 places in North America, mostly in what is now the U.S.A., perpetuate the names of locations mentioned in the Hebrew Bible. A few towns

* It is worth noting that after their expulsion from Spain in 1492, many embittered Jewish refugees gave Queen Isabella the derisive Hebrew nickname איזבל (*Izevel*: Jezebel).

** J.R. Green, *A Short History of the English People* (1874).

and villages recall Biblical personalities such as Boaz (Ala., W. Va.), Elisha (R.I.), Hephzibah (Ga.), Jonah (Okla.), and Nimrod (Minn.), but the wholesale transplantation of authentic Biblical place names bears witness to a spiritual tradition rooted in the most intimate knowledge of Scripture.* American pioneers named locations after Canaan from Vermont in the north to Florida in the south; Goshen is even more frequent, from the Atlantic seaboard to the Pacific coast; while Mount Carmel recurs almost as often, from South Carolina to Utah. Other popular designations are Bethel, Hebron, Jericho, Mizpah, Pisgah, Sharon, and (of course) Shiloh. Some places on the Biblical map of North America are found only once in the *Tanakh*: Ai (Ohio), Elim (Nebr.), Shushan (N.Y.), Zarephath (N.J.); and there are occasional curiosities, such as Nineveh (Ind., N.Y., Pa., Tex.) and even Sodom (Ohio)! A Californian forty-niner, remembering his Genesis (2:11-12), chose Havilah as the name for the Gold Rush settlement that he founded.

Many of the early New England settlers, true to their Puritan upbringing, believed that they were reenacting the Biblical drama of the Hebrew nation. Having escaped from a new Pharaoh (in the guise of Britain's king), they had crossed the Red Sea (or Atlantic) and reached the Promised Land of America, where their ancient covenant was renewed at Plymouth Rock. Since the newly gained Land of Promise had an organic relationship with the old, Biblical place names such as Zion and Salem acquired fresh significance. No fewer than 27 locations commemorate Salem throughout the U.S.A., the first and most famous of these being the town in Massachusetts, so named by the Pilgrim Fathers because the kindness of local Indians had a Scriptural precedent (Gen. 14:18). Places called Zion in a dozen American states include Zion City (Ill.), whose original streets were given Biblical designations, and the famous Zion National Park in Utah. New Jerusalem in California may be an exceptional case, since it is claimed that the founders (in 1875) were Jewish pioneers.

To a lesser degree, this Biblical map can be reproduced in Canada and Australia. The New England Puritans had really substantial counterparts, however, in South Africa, where the Dutch-speaking Calvinists assumed much

* For a fuller account, see Lottie K. Davis, "Promised Land: Biblical Place-names in America", in *The Jerusalem Post* (July 4, 1976).

the same role. During the Great Trek of 1835–38, when their escape from British domination led these pious farmers north from the Cape to Natal, the Boers found comfort and inspiration in their daily readings from the Book; and so it continued when they were forced onward, over the mountains, into the virtually uncharted Transvaal. When they read of that ancient “Great Trek” by Pharaoh’s oppressed slaves, who braved the unknown wilderness with its daily perils and “the assegaes of treacherous Amalekites” to reach their Promised Land, “can we wonder that it seemed to them that it was their own lives that they read in the pages of this Divine Book? . . .”^{*} Memories of that exodus live on in Elim (Cape Province), Migdol, Nelspruit or Nile River, and Nebo (Transvaal); while other Biblical localities are commemorated in Hermon, Mamre, Priel, Salem, and Zoar (C.P.), Eden and Mount Moriah (Natal), Bethlehem and Jacobsdal (O.F.S.), Bethal, Gilead, Hebron, Jericho, and Josefsdal (Tvl.). The city of Benoni (Tvl.) recalls Benjamin, Jacob’s youngest son (Gen. 35:18), and there are places in South-West Africa called Berseba, Gibeon, and Rehoboth; but Rosh Pinah in that disputed territory was named by a pioneering Jew and Zionist!

Puritan fanaticism accounts for the witch-hunt at Salem in 1691–92, while Afrikanerdom’s misreading of the Bible is at the root of Apartheid. There is nevertheless a positive side to Protestant Biblicism, and we in Israel must acknowledge the importance of Biblical place names in fostering Christian sympathy for the People of the Book.

* J.H. Hertz, “The Jew As Patriot” (1898), quoted by G. Saron in *The Jews in South Africa*, ed. G. Saron and L. Hotz (Oxford University Press, 1955), p. 183.

The first two installments of a series of eight Kol Israel radio talks can be read in the Spring issue of Dor le Dor.

ISRAELITES AND ALIENS — IV

Under Ezra and Nehemia

BY MAX M. ROTHSCHILD

In our previous study (cf. *Dor le-Dor* vol. XI, No. 1, Fall 1982) we tried to point to the Age of Return as an era of confusion. Nothing shows this state of affairs more clearly than the relationship of Israelites to aliens. Many of the non-Israelites who had come with the returnees from Babylonia to Palestine in the wake of the edict of Cyrus, sought to join the Jewish faith. They were among the first of the "Mityahadim". Subsequently we learn from Ezra (4:1-3) that Zerubavel and the other Jewish leaders did not permit those aliens to participate in the rebuilding of the Temple. They were rebuffed, perhaps in the same manner as the Samaritans. Some scholars think that it is these people whom Isaiah had in mind in his famous passage (56:3-8), and perhaps also Zechariah (2:15) after they had been prohibited from coming to the Temple for prayer and sacrifices and after they were not permitted even to reside in Jerusalem. It appears that some measure of civic equality was denied them as well. Zechariah displays a different attitude later on, after the completion of the Temple (8:21-22).

The Samaritans had originally been commanded by the Persian king to help finance the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem by way of extra taxes. Not only did they refuse to do so, but they remained hostile to the returning Jews and caused them great troubles in their efforts to rebuild the sanctuary. They were supported in this attitude by the Pacha's, i.e. the provincial officials and deputies of the Persian king. There occurred protracted disputes over the ownership of individual parcels of land which had been left behind two generations earlier by those Israelites who were driven from their homeland into Babylonian exile; now these holdings were claimed again by their descendants, the returnees, after the land had been worked on during the interim by the local population.

No student of the Age of Return can disregard the episode of the "alien women" as described in chapters 9 and 10 of the Book of Ezra. These

Dr. Rothschild, past Director of the Department of Regional Activities of the United Synagogue of America, served as the secretary of the first World Jewish Bible Society International Conference.

descriptions have a dramatic character with a tragic undertone that cannot fail to impress the modern reader. At the same time, they show elements of a Hebrew racism with which it may be difficult to reconcile oneself today. When Ezra learns that many Israelites, among them priests and Levites, had married women from among the Canaanites, Hittites, and six other alien nations, including even Egyptians, he says (9:3 ff.) . . . *I rent my garment and my mantle and plucked off the hair of my head and my beard, and sat appalled . . .*

The returning Israelites were small in number, even if we add to them the few who had remained in Palestine during the period of the exile. They could not compare in size with any of the nations mentioned in the Ezra story. In addition, there did not yet exist a clear-cut Halakha concerning converts or conversion to Judaism. In this age of confusion, normative Judaism was still in a formative stage. The group of leaders appointed by Ezra to deal with the 113 alien women who were married to Israelites carried out its task. These women were assumed to have persisted in their allegiance to idol worship and to continue practising their pagan rituals. Despite Kaufmann's occasional arguments to the contrary (and later on he himself expressed some doubts about his earlier opinions), it is obvious that these women were not considered to be Jewish, i.e. full members of the religious and cultural Jewish community of Eretz Yisrael at that time. Extra-biblical documents are far and few between for this period, and, as Prof. Gevaryahu has shown, Kaufmann cannot always find biblical proof for his hypothesis that these women did not continue their pagan worship.

Ezra goes so far as to imply that the destruction of the Temple was caused by these intermarriages (9:6-15), and he is equally fearful for the future: . . . *Shall we again break Thy commandments, and make marriages with the peoples that do these abominations? Wouldst not Thou be angry with us, till Thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant, nor any to escape* (vs. 14)? We know that Ezra's authority extended beyond the borders of Palestine proper, i.e. from the Euphrates to Egypt. Despite their dispersion in various lands "West of the River", including the land of Egypt, the Jews were considered a separate group whose identity and loyalty transcended borders. This is evident from the official orders issued to Ezra by king Artaxerxes upon his appointment as a kind of chief justice and keeper of the law to the Jews "wherever they reside" (cf. Ezra 7:25-26). Implied in these orders is the recognition of some judicial autonomy of

the Jews in all the lands of their habitation. And although we have no further documents and no extra-biblical sources which could explain this state of affairs, we must conclude that the royal decree confirmed, as it were, a situation that had developed over a certain length of time. Contacts between those Jewish communities and non-Jews must have been extensive. Ezra's later reaction to the problem of mixed marriages — even while he speaks only of the situation in Eretz Yisrael — has to be seen against this background. We should also keep in mind that Ezra and Nehemiah appeared in all probability one or two generations after the actual Return, and that therefore a number of mixed marriages might have occurred during the intermediate generation about which so little is known.

In view of the several halakhic changes which Ezra and Nehemiah instituted — all which are known to us only from later sources — it is astonishing that we do not hear of a more precise ruling or legal determination concerning the mixed marriages, or about relations with non-Jews generally. However, it would be erroneous to conclude that these leaders did not promulgate such laws. All we can say is merely that our sources make no mention of such laws, and that it is quite possible that other sources may yet be discovered.

In a fine study on Ezra (published in the Bible Society's *Beth Mikra*, Vol. 15) Zer Kavod demonstrated that the mixed marriages were not a matter of the people at large, but that they occurred mainly among the priests and leaders of the returning Israelites. It was held then that the original biblical prohibitions (f.i. Deut. 7:3) no longer were in force, since those alien people referred to by the Torah with whom inter-marriage was forbidden, no longer existed. Furthermore, it was thought that their offspring actually sought to join the Jewish community. These intermarriages were not only tolerated by the leadership of the returnees, but legal grounds were found and officially recognized which gave permission to enter into such liaisons. Included were Ammonites and Moabites, of whom the Torah had specifically said that "they should not come into the congregation of the Lord" (Deut. 23:3, 8). The reason for the new permission was that now they could no longer be thought of as true descendants of Ammon and Moab. Later on in the Mishnah, no less an authority than R. Yehoshua (Yadayim 4:4) pronounces a specific permission to marry women from among those people. His statement was subsequently accepted as Halakhah. There is a theory that one of the reasons for this permissiveness was the assumption that the lands inhabited

by these people in Ezra's time and a later one, actually formed part of Eretz Yisrael.

For Ezra, according to Zer Kavod and other modern scholars, the difference between Israel and the other nations was a qualitative one, similar to the difference between the sacred and profane. Even Ezra's terminology shows it: the term "Am" refers to Israelites, whereas aliens are called "ummah", or "ammei ha'aratzot". The view of the difference between sacred and profane explains Ezra's strong opposition to any marriage between Israelites and aliens. A mixture of the two groups would endanger the future of the "She'erit hapleitah", the remnant of the Jewish people who had returned from captivity. Indeed, mixed marriages and the decline in Sabbath observance (Neh. 13:15-22) were singled out by Ezra and Nehemiah as endangering the future of the Jewish people.

Despite the opposition to Ezra's point of view on the part of the priests and other leaders, and despite the fact that only 113 families of mixed marriages subjected themselves to Ezra's authority — with the coming on the scene of Nehemiah, Ezra's ruling became binding upon the entire nation, and the judges appointed by him remained in office (cf. Neh. 9:1-2): *Now in the twenty and fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting and with sackcloth, and earth upon them. And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all foreigners, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers.*

There is an additional note of interest — the language used by the children of those mixed marriages:

In those days also saw I the Jews that had married women of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab; and their children spoke half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak the Jew's language ("Ye'hudit" in the original text), but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God: 'Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons, or for yourselves'.

Neh. 13:23-25

Ezra's task is well known. With the support of the Persian authorities he was to "strengthen", or re-establish, the law of God, the law of the Torah.

A NEW WORLD AND A NEW MAN

Utopias In the Era of the Babylonian Exile and the Return to Zion

BY ABRAHAM MENES

The idea of the rise of a regenerated human being is a central theme in the literature of the Babylonian Exile. This idea found its classical formulation in the visions of Ezekiel and of the Second Isaiah, the Isaiah of chapters 40 to 66.

Ezekiel appears during the transition between two eras. No other prophet was as extreme in his criticism of all sectors of the Jewish population before the catastrophe overtook the nation. But immediately after the catastrophe occurred, he underwent a complete transformation. The longed-for return to Zion came to mean for him not only the reunion of the people with its home but also, and primarily, *the reestablishment of the covenant between the people of Israel and the God of Israel*, the spiritual and moral regeneration of the individual and of the community through repentance. This meant that each generation bore full responsibility for its fate and each person for his personal fate (Chapter 18). If the wicked person would repent and turn away from his sinful path, then none of his transgressions would be remembered against him. Verse 23 quotes the Lord as saying: *Do I desire that the wicked should die? Do I not rather desire that he should turn from his ways and live?*

The idea of personal responsibility is taken for granted by us today. However, this was not so self-evident two and a half thousand years ago. This brings us to the central doctrine of Ezekiel's prophetic visions, the doctrine of the regenerated man. His words, *A new heart and a new spirit* are not mere poetic rhetoric. They are meant literally. The renovation of man's morals — a new heart and a new spirit — is the very axis on which the religious doctrines of Ezekiel's era revolved.

At approximately the same time as Ezekiel, we have the famous prophecy of the new covenant in Jeremiah 31. Some scholars assume that this chapter does not stem from Jeremiah himself. However, whether uttered by Jeremiah himself or by one of his disciples at the time of the national catastrophe, the doctrine of repentance and spiritual regeneration acquires a profounder meaning in this chapter, a chapter which does not merely pray for forgiveness of a specific

transgression that can be atoned for by sacrifices but rather calls for a radical inner transformation of the individual.

Ezekiel 36 has a similar objective in view. This prophet, in exile by the river Kevar, defends the right of the exiled group to assume the national heritage. The exiles are to be the ones to regenerate the nation and the land.

A further idea of Ezekiel about a *מקדש מעט* has been correctly interpreted by the Talmudic tradition as a sanctuary that would be a place for prayer and learning. Ezekiel was thus calling attention to an entirely new and revolutionary institution, the House of Prayer. The Temple was to be replaced by the House of Learning and the sacrifices of the destroyed Temple by daily worship, by prayers from the heart. Thus began the spiritualization of religious life which later reached its loftiest development in the traditions of the Pharisees.

The groundwork for this spiritualization during the Babylonian exile was already prepared to some extent a generation earlier by the reform movement during the reign of King Josiah (II Kings 22). This Reformation of Josiah, which took place in 621 B.C.E., approximately thirty-five years before the destruction of Jerusalem, is correctly regarded by contemporary scholars as a turning point in the history of the Jewish religion. The renewal of the covenant between God and His people during Josiah's reign was also interpreted traditionally as *the beginning of a new era in Jewish history*. It was customary in the Bible to date documents in accordance with the reign of the kings. However, in Ezekiel, we find a new chronological method. The book of this prophet begins with the words: "Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year." All commentators have been faced with the question: what is meant by the thirtieth year? What chronology is being used? Among the various answers, the traditional one seems to me to be the best, namely, that the prophet dated his prophecy as coming to him in the thirtieth year after the Reformation of Josiah. This is also the interpretation of the Jonathan Aramaic translation.

The new chronological system introduced by the Josiah-Reformation was connected with the counting of sabbatical years and jubilee years. Every seventh year there took place the symbolic renewal of the covenant entered into at Sinai and every fiftieth year the ideal of a social order of equality and justice was reaffirmed and to some extent reconstituted.

The ethical aspects of the Jewish religion became more prominent in the life of

the exiled community in Babylon. In the first years of Galuth, the exiles were filled with doubts as to their future, but ultimately Ezekiel's view won out. The exiled prophet discussed the problem in chapter 11 and in greater detail in chapter 20. The mood of the exiles in Babylon found its finest expression in Psalms 51, a chapter which has much in common with the ideas of Ezekiel, such as the polemic against sacrifices and the prayer for moral purification, for the recreation of a pure heart and a steadfast spirit (Psalms 51:12).

Amidst the hardships of exile, it was not easy to awaken in the Jewish people faith in a better world and better human beings. The exiles were dominated by the mood that they were a lost generation, a heap of dried-up bones. In Ezekiel's wonderful vision of the valley of dried bones that are to be restored to new life, we have for the first time in Biblical literature the idea of the resurrection of the dead. It is true that this idea is presented merely in symbolic form. Nevertheless, the prophet's vision of the dry bones that come to life again did have an influence upon the despondent spirit of the Babylonian captives. The despairing exiles began to regain faith that there was a way for national renewal and individual regeneration, by way of repentance.

In chapters 40 to 48, Ezekiel presents his prophetic vision of a restored national life in Israel. Though he was a priest by birth and by training, he was at the same time also imbued with the ideas of right and justice promulgated by the prophets. The most important part of his vision was the utopian concept of the irrigation of the Negev. The prophet asked himself, where in the tiny land of the Jewish people would there be room for all the dispersed of Israel after their ingathering once again in their ancestral home? His answer was: in the Negev. The entire Negev would be transformed into a Garden of Eden. Not only man but all nature would be regenerated and the entire people of Israel would be able to live in peace and tranquillity on its rejuvenated ancestral soil.

Ezekiel's teaching in chapters 40 to 48 later on aroused much scepticism among Talmudic sages. They were especially worried by certain contradictions between his utopian constitution and the Mosaic commandments.

There were differences of opinion on the question of the spiritual leadership and on the manner in which the religious and social life was to be regenerated. Ezekiel felt that it was especially important to restrict the privileges and responsibilities of the secular power. The secular ruler was not to have the title of

king but only that of *Nassi*, head of the government. The right of the *Nassi* was to be circumscribed while the powers and the prerogatives of the people were to be enhanced. Ezekiel continued the tradition of *Deuteronomy* in this respect as well as in other details. His last great vision occurred in the month of Tishri, the first month of the Jewish calendar, and in a Jubilee year. This was not merely a coincidence. The Jubilee year, the year of emancipation, was a most important date for the prophet of the Galuth. The institutions of the Sabbath, the Sabbatical year, and the Jubilee year were connected from the very beginning with messianic aspirations. A year of liberation for bondsmen must surely become a year of liberation for the Jews who had been driven into exile.

Almost all contemporary scholars point out the similarities between Leviticus 26 and the Book of Ezekiel. Stylistically, this chapter resembles Ezekiel. To some extent this is also true of the entire second half of Leviticus, the last eleven chapters. The central theme is the concept of a holy people, the idea of an entire kingdom of priests. The entire people is holy. The entire people is a partner to God's Torah.

This theme of a holy people can be traced back directly to the generation of Josiah and the Deuteronomic reforms. The *Book of Deuteronomy* never tires of repeating that the Torah was given to the entire people. Josiah's reforms of 621 B.C.E. left a deep impact on the Jewish mind. It is not mere chance that the passage in Deuteronomy 6: "*Shma Israel*" – *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One* – became the symbolic expression of the Jewish faith. As a result of the centralization of the sacrificial system in the Temple of Jerusalem, Zion and Jerusalem assumed more and more the central position in Jewish thought. The influence of the Josiah-Reformation is also clearly discernible in Ezekiel's doctrine of repentance and personal responsibility (Deuteronomy 25).

The Judean exiles were thus able to take along with them a far richer treasure of ideas, institutions and traditions than their kin (ten tribes) who were driven out of the Kingdom of Israel 135 years earlier. The former took along with them to their Babylonian exile not only memories and folkways but also the entire Pentateuch and a rich literature of prophecy. In their heart of hearts, they believed that they were a chosen people (Deuteronomy 4).

The most important expression of Jewish faith was the preservation of the Sabbath. Since the Babylonian exile, we often come across such names as

Shabtai and Haggai, derived from the Hebrew words for the Sabbath and the Holidays.

The ideas of social and national freedom were also organically linked with the visions of another great prophet of the era of the Babylonian exile, the Second Isaiah. The dispersed captives in Babylon observed most faithfully the traditions of the Sabbatical and of the Jubilee. Indeed, they went so far that some of the religious leaders and thinkers saw the misfortune of being driven into exile as a punishment for their previous non-adherence in Israel to the obligations of the Sabbatical years (Chronicles 2:26).

The stubborn adherence of the exiles to their faith evoked the amazement and respect of their neighbors. There were even proselytes who linked their destiny to that of the exiled community. The monotheistic universalism which found such a marvelous expression in the comforting prophecies of the Second Isaiah became then a matter of daily practice.

Barely half a century after the destruction of Jerusalem, there came the great historic moment when the first pioneers could set out with tremendous enthusiasm on the difficult homeward trek to their ancestral land.

It was not easy to rebuild the devastated land. Nevertheless, the leaders of the exiles returning from Babylon devoted their energies simultaneously also to renew Jewish spiritual life. Some of their thinkers, including the Second Isaiah in his last chapter, even put at the forefront of his message the need for a new Temple. This prophet did not especially relish the reintroduction of animal sacrifices, even though he realized the symbolic value of the traditional rituals of the earlier Temple which included such sacrifices. He believed in a rebuilt Temple as a House of God which should be a center of prayer for all mankind. He gave us his ideal of the new community, envisaged in chapter 56. He saw in the restoration of Judea the beginning of the regeneration of the world.

What were the basic demands that the prophet put to the returning exiles and to the strangers who wished to join them? Chapter 56 gives us the answer. In this chapter, he repeats three times the demand to keep the Sabbath holy, thus providing evidence of the supreme value put on Sabbath-holiness in the era of the Return to Zion, the generation of Shivath Zion.

It is not possible for us in the present framework to treat in detail the personality and the many ideas of the greatest thinker of the Babylonian exile, the

Second Isaiah. We shall content ourselves to point out two of his contributions which were and still are of great importance to the development of Jewish religious thought:

I. The prophet's new approach to the problem of suffering had an enormous influence on later generations. He held that misfortune and pain were not necessarily and at all times punishment for sins. On the contrary, suffering was often an experience of moral purification. The righteous person at times took upon himself the sins of the world. This suffering servant of God was despised by the world and avoided by all. Nevertheless, he improved by his example the state of morality. The figure of the suffering righteous individual came in time to be identified with the suffering chosen people, an identification which appealed to the prophet. He therefore depicted in several passages the suffering of the people of Israel as suffering that led to purification, because this people was destined for the great historic mission of being a light unto the nations.

II. The period of suffering would not last long. A favorable turn must come. The whole world will come to realize that the people of Israel did not suffer because of its own guilt and injustice. Jerusalem will receive a new name as premonition of a new age and a new man.

During the era of Shivath Zion, a change of names was apparently a common occurrence. This was especially so in the case of proselytes. Typical symbolic names were Shabtai, Haggai, Nehemiah (God comforts), Pedayah (God will deliver us). The new name for Jerusalem, as we shall see, had a special importance.

The idea that the capital of Judea was to receive a new name is encountered for the first time in chapter 1 of Isaiah ben Amoz, more than a hundred years before Jerusalem's destruction. There we are dealing merely with a prophet's poetic image. The change of name assumed a realistic aspect, however, when the exiles returning from Babylon tried to start a new existence. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah then appeared upon the scene. This was about a quarter of a century after the decree of the Persian king Cyrus, when life in Judea was extremely difficult, not only in a material sense but also because of a moral let-down. The settlers faced aggravated domestic conflicts, social grievances and outside pressures. Many of the returnees were afflicted with doubts. Could it be that God was no longer with them and that the Holy Presence did not come back to the

City of Holiness? In this critical hour of the movement for Shivath Zion, the message of the prophet Zechariah that Jerusalem would be called "the City of Truth" was more than a mere poetic image. It was an assurance that truth would indeed reign, truth within its borders, truth in private life and public life, truth in relations with one's fellow-men, and truth even in the thoughts that well up within the individual mind. This is the vision of the prophet Zechariah.

We have comparatively few reports about the organization of social and political life in the era of Shivath Zion. Communal life was preserved mainly by voluntary moral discipline. When Ezra and Nehemiah began to carry out their reforms, they had to call together the entire population. A consensus was reached. All who were assembled freely accepted the necessary responsibilities. The ancient tradition of the democratic popular assembly was revived with renewed vigor, because the structure of a central governmental authority was still lacking. Its place was taken by the people's voluntary assumption of responsibilities in the form of social contracts, obligatory oaths, etc. For example, Ezra called on the entire people to solemnly swear that they would separate themselves from the foreign women. Similarly, at a later time, that of Nehemiah, the entire people solemnly undertook to obey all the commandments of the Torah. Such voluntary acceptance of holy responsibilities became the instrument for the regeneration and purification of the human personality. The new converts served as an example to others. The Talmud explicitly states that the convert is likened to a newly born child. And so is the genuine repentant who renounces his entire past. This is also the meaning of the symbolic ritual of prayer, the washing away of the sinful past and thus becoming a new person.

The sacred word, the solemn oath, has a power of its own. A person who desecrates his oath converts it into a curse; hence the double meaning of the Biblical word *הֲלָא*, which can be defined both as an oath and as a curse. No wonder that the sacred word plays such an important role in the utopian vision of the prophet Zechariah. Jerusalem must become the City of Truth and the entire land must be purified of sin. How is this to come about? Zechariah gives the answer in chapter 5.

The meaning of his vision in this chapter is clear enough. Wickedness will depart from the Holy Land and will find its place in the land from which the national catastrophe and the conquering hordes came. The vision of Zechariah is

to some extent reminiscent of the ritual of the scapegoat driven to Azazel, the ritual when the sins of the entire people were sent off to the desert together with the sacrificial animal. In such dramatic fashion was the war waged against wickedness, the war against the evil inclinations of man. It is therefore not without significance that the Talmudic legend in Yoma 39 bases itself primarily on the prophetic vision of Zechariah 5, when it relates how the sages of the Great Assembly finally overcame the personified Evil. The entire movement of Shivath Zion was engaged in a war against sin and wickedness. The most stirring prayer of the pious of that era climaxed in the words: "The Lord created a pure heart for me and implanted a righteous new spirit within me." The City of Holiness must become the City of Truth, because the God of Israel cannot tolerate falsehood and injustice. It is not enough to cleanse merely the body of impurities. It is far more important to have a pure heart and a pure conscience.

In ancient days it was customary to wash the body and to put on holiday raiments before setting out to appear before the Lord. The religious leaders of the era of Shivath Zion could not content themselves solely with this outward ritual of purification. They introduced the custom of calling upon the people who came on pilgrimage to Jerusalem during the High Holidays to do penance and to undergo spiritual purification. Since the entire ritual at the Temple on such days was filled with dramatic suspense, the call for repentance was also carried out in a spectacular fashion. The Kohanim and the Levites stood in rows on the steps ascending to the Temple mount and chanted the twenty-fourth Psalm: *Who shall ascend unto the mountain of the Lord? Or who shall stand in his holy place? He that has clean hands and a pure heart.* A similar sentiment is also expressed in the sixteenth Psalm. To have a pure heart, to be upright and honest with oneself, is the central theme that interpenetrates the entire literature of the era of Shivath Zion.

The era of Shivath Zion prepared the ground for the Halachah — the legal tradition — of the Pharisees. The tradition of the religious thinkers of this era was a kingdom of Kohanim and of a holy people, a people whose entire life was permeated by the idea of holiness. Talmudic tradition developed this idea further and sought the renewal and regeneration of the human personality through repentance. Thus, a passage in Talmud Yerushalmi, Rosh Hashanah, chapter 4, teaches us: "While in the case of all other sacrifices, the commandment uses the

words *Ye shall sacrifice*, in the case of Rosh Hashanah sacrifices, the words used are *Ye shall do*. The Lord, blessed be He, said to them: 'If you did come to Me on the day of judgment and you did depart in peace, I, the Lord, regard it as if you became a new human being.'"

On the Sabbath, too, the Jew becomes a new human being and on weekdays he receives his moral nourishment from the sanctity that adheres to the Sabbaths and holidays. In this respect, it is especially instructive to note how the mystics and the moralists of the Mussar-Movement interpreted the commandment to search for leavened bread and to remove this Chametz on the eve of Passover.

What is, according to their view, the real meaning of the strange custom to hide bits of Chametz on the night before Passover and then to go from room to room with a candlelight to pick up these bits of leavened bread? And what is the underlying meaning of the custom to burn the Chametz in public on the morning before Passover, as was the practice in the smaller communities of Eastern Europe? The answer of the mystics and the Mussar-adherents is that Chametz, the leaven in the dough, is the symbol of man's evil inclinations. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us, on the eve of Passover, to rid ourselves of our evil inclinations. We must search for them in the innermost corners of our soul, in the most hidden crevices that can be penetrated by our light. In so far as possible, we must free ourselves of our evil desires, of the Chametz of our soul. Not a trace is to remain.

In this way did the ideas of the era of the Babylonian Exile, the association of repentance and Shivath Zion, the expectations for a new world order and for a regenerated man, influence, fertilize and inspire Jewish spiritual life for all later generations.

Translated from Yiddish by Sol Liptzin

Abraham Menes (1897–1969), religious socialist, founder of YIVO, historian and biblical scholar, began with the German volume *Die vorexilischen Gesetze Israels*, 1928, and continued with Yiddish essays, of which a selection in four volumes appeared posthumously in the 1970's.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Dr. Katzoff,

Thank you for your enquiry regarding the 10 years of publication in the form of a questionnaire. I believe that it would take reams of paper to describe the importance of Dor le Dor to those who do not live in Israel.

The scholarship is to be marvelled at and certainly the range of subjects is most welcome, and I trust this will continue in the future publications.

I have all the publications in my library and I lend them to friends, but I shall endeavor to make those people into subscribing members in their own right.

I look forward to receiving your publications on a regular basis.

Solm Yach
Chairman, The Mauerberger
Foundation Fund
Cape Town, South Africa

* * *

Dear Dr. Katzoff:

Dr. Jeffrey M. Cohen presented a very interesting thesis in his article "Spies, Princes and Korach's Rebellion" (Dor le Dor, Vol. X, No. 4, Summer 1982, page 220).

However, I do not believe that this analysis eliminates my theory of the Sin of the Spies, as I have explained in my paper sent to you last January 1982 ("Moses and the Spies").

Dr. Cohen does not answer the question of how Joshua and Caleb were chosen and included as mere tribal representatives — certainly not Joshua,

who was second in command to Moses.

(Dr. Cohen overlooks the fact that the "Spies" were Scouts sent out on a "*fact-finding* mission". They were not chosen merely to endorse the intent and decision of Moses to move into the Promised Land. The facts were necessary to help the invasion to be successful, *to be prepared* to meet and to overcome any obstacles.)

Moses wanted to know the problems and difficulties in advance, so that he might plan how to handle them. He did not want "Yes" men who would not report the dangers involved.

Sincerely,
Norman Asher
Chicago, Ill.

* * *

Dear Editor

As a subscriber to Dor le Dor for many years, I have always found the Triennial Bible Reading Calendar most useful for my biblical studies. The routine of reading a chapter of the Bible each day, along with the parasha of the week, has given me a sense of direction and purpose in my biblical studies both professionally and personally.

I am constantly looking for ways to enhance my study and appreciation of the Bible. With this in mind, I recently purchased an edition of the Book of Psalms which contained an order of reading these beautiful devotional poems. This leather bound edition of the Psalter was magnificently illuminated by Owen

Jones. While there is no date mentioned, it is dedicated to Her Majesty Queen Victoria of England.

Within each page's illumination and at the bottom of each page directions are given for an order of reading the Psalms. When this order is followed, all 150 psalms are read during a thirty day period of time.

I have enjoyed following this discipline

of reading the psalms according to the order given in this Psalter. The number of psalms read each day is more manageable than when the book is read within a seven day time period. As I want to share this order of daily psalm readings with my fellow Dor le Dor readers, I am presenting that order below. I hope that it will be as inspirational to the readers of Dor le Dor as it has been to me.

*An Order for the Reading of the Book of Psalms
According to the Monthly Calendar*

<i>Day</i>	<i>Psalms</i>				
1	(morning) 1-5 (evening) 6-8	11	(m) 56-58 (e) 59-61	21	(m) 105 (e) 106
2	(m) 9-11 (e) 12-14	12	(m) 62-64 (e) 65-67	22	(m) 107 (e) 108-109
3	(m) 15-17 (e) 18	13	(m) 68 (e) 69-70	23	(m) 110-113 (e) 114-115
4	(m) 19-21 (e) 22-23	14	(m) 71-72 (e) 73-74	24	(m) 116-118 (e) 119:1-32
5	(m) 24-25 (e) 26-29	15	(m) 75-77 (e) 78	25	(m) 119:33-72 (e) 119:73-104
6	(m) 30-31 (e) 32-34	16	(m) 79-81 (e) 82-85	26	(m) 119:105-144 (e) 119:145-176
7	(m) 35-36 (e) 37	17	(m) 86-88 (e) 89	27	(m) 120-125 (e) 126-131
8	(m) 38-40 (e) 41-43	18	(m) 90-92 (e) 93-94	28	(m) 132-135 (e) 136-138
9	(m) 44-45 (e) 46-49	19	(m) 95-97 (e) 98-101	29	(m) 139-141 (e) 142-143
10	(m) 50-52 (e) 53-55	20	(m) 102-103 (e) 104	30	(m) 144-146 (e) 147-150

Rabbi Steven A. Moss
B'nai Israel Temple
Oakdale, New York

Dear Dr. Katzoff,

I am enclosing an article that appeared in our local Anglo-Jewish press describing the newly established Bible study group in the Greater Fort Lauderdale area. We complete another chapter of Thilim at each of our fortnightly meetings.

I hope to enroll the members shortly in the World Bible Society and have them subscribe to Dor L'dor or Bet Hamikra.

"Mystical allusions, grammatical explanations, traditional commentaries, historical analysis, contemporary ethical issues, all are part of the ideas, concepts, interpretations and counter interpretations that flow back and forth at the fortnightly meetings of the *Chug Tanach* (Bible Study Group) of Greater Fort Lauderdale.

Organized to provide an opportunity for high level analysis of one of the sacred texts of the Bible, the *Chug Tanach* began meeting in late August with each one and one-half hour sessions devoted to another chapter of the Book of Psalms. Members took turns in leading each session, with the particular interest and expertise of the leader shaping the direction of the discussion.

Rabbi Reuben Luckens, prominent scholar and lecturer, conducted the first two sessions with emphasis on the hidden and revealed mystical and holistic elements in the Book of Psalms. Max Furer, veteran educator, led the third session describing the manner in which Christological elements are read into certain verses of chapter two and then

highlighted the Jewish commentaries having a bearing on these sentences.

Dr. Diana Reisman, staff member of the Central Agency for Jewish Education, led the fourth session dealing with various terminologies found in the Book of Psalms and the authorship of the chapters.

The group is modeled on the Bible Study Society that was founded in Israel by David Ben Gurion, the first Prime Minister of the State of Israel and a lifelong student of the Bible.

Rabbi Albert Schwartz, Federation's Director of Chaplaincy Services and member of the group noted that "the joy of Torah study is a supreme value in Jewish life. The existence of such a group in our community is visible evidence of the constantly increasing quality of Jewish life and Jewish learning."

The Jewish Federation of Greater Fort Lauderdale provides meeting rooms for the *Chug Tanach*."

Sincerely,
Abraham J. Gittelson
Director of Education

* * *

Dear Editor

In as much as the Torah Study Group of Temple Beth Israel of San Diego is now registered in your listing, I would like to share with you some important facts that relate to the beginnings and development of our group.

Ten years ago, a group of women at our Temple decided to learn more about their Jewish heritage. They formed a study group which, with some changes in

membership, is still actively functioning today.

During these years the group read and discussed modern Jewish literature and biographies of famous Jews.

About five years ago we decided to get to the Source — to study Torah. We used the Hertz Pentateuch, with its excellent notes and commentaries. In this endeavor, we were blessed with the help of a very wonderful person, Aliza Checkoway.

Mrs. Checkoway is a Hebrew teacher at Temple Beth Israel. She also prepares

students for Bat/Bar Mitzvah. She is also the Temple librarian, and so great is her love for Torah that she took (and still takes) time from her busy schedule to work with our study group. With her great knowledge and enthusiasm, she has been guiding us through the study of Torah.

Now we eagerly look forward to studying and enjoying more of the Holy Writings under her inspiring leadership. The joy we are experiencing in our studies is most rewarding, and we know it will continue to grow with time and deeper understanding.

Mrs. Sally Sacks,
San Diego, Cal.

ABSTRACTS OF ARTICLES FROM BETH MIKRA QUARTERLY

PUBLISHED BY THE ISRAEL SOCIETY FOR BIBLICAL RESEARCH

BY MORDECAI SOCHEN

THE CURSE HANGING ON AMMON AND MOAB

by B.Z. Luria (vol. 91, p. 191-195, 1982)

The biblical injunction (Deuteronomy 23:4-5) states: *an Ammonite or a Moabite shall not enter into the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation shall none of them enter into the assembly of the Lord forever; because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of of Beor from Pethor of Aram-Naharaim to curse thee.* Other nations, such as Edom and Egypt, whose treatment of Israel seems much

more cruel, were to be excluded from the assembly of the Lord only up to the third generation (ibid 9-10). The author attempts to explain the reason for the stern verdict against Moab and Ammon and the relatively lenient attitude toward Edom and Egypt. He traces the problem these curses posed regarding the possible foreign descent of David and of the Maccabees and gives the real reasons why the Moabites and the Ammonites were condemned more than the other nations. On the basis of midrashic

comments the author attributes the sterner treatment of the Moabites to their attempt to defeat Israel by causing them to commit harlotry with their daughters, to bring sacrifices to their gods, and to bow down to them (Numbers 25:1-3). Whereas the Edomites and Egyptians

mistreated Israel physically, the Moabites attempted to destroy their soul. The principle applied by the Sages to this situation is that one who causes his neighbor to sin is more dangerous than one who attempts to kill him.

THE INFLUENCE ON DAVID OF ABIGAIL VERSUS BATH SHEBA

by Sarah Ben Reuben (vol. 91, p. 244-246, 1982)

The author brings proof that I Sam 25 which tells the story of David and Abigail contains a central idea which exerted its influence on David to refrain from shedding innocent blood. The Bible refers to Abigail as an "intelligent woman", טובת־שִׁכְלָה, (ibid. 25:3). Only two other women are referred to as wise women (חכמות), the one of Tekoa (II Sam 14:2) and the other of Abel-beth-Maachah (ibid. 20:16). These three women had one thing in common, namely, they tried to prevent bloodshed. Abigail prevented David from killing Nabal; the wise woman of Tekoa prevented David from taking revenge of Absalom; and the wise woman of Abel-beth-Maachah prevented the destruction of her city and the killing of its inhabitants by handing over Sheba the son of Bichri to Joab.

The Sages included Abigail among the seven prophetesses in Israel (Megilah 14a), although they did not overlook a serious flaw in her conduct when she as a

married woman gave special attention to David. The fact remains that she did not sin in her actions, and above all, she did not cause David to sin, but rather prevented him from bloodshed. She warned him not to take the law in his hand and not to shed innocent blood now or in the future. *When the Lord has made good all his promises to you, and has made you ruler of Israel, there will be no reason why you should stumble or your courage falter because you have shed innocent blood or given way to your anger* (I Sam 25:31).

Not so Bath-Sheva. By not preventing David from committing adultery and murder, she symbolizes the trend of events in David's later days. Whereas until then David always denounced the tyrannical actions of the sons of Zeruyah, he now made use of the evil services of Joab, and later learned to cover up evil. This is exactly what Abigail urged him not to do.

Dr. Sochen is a member of the Dor le Dor Editorial Board. He is also Chairman of the Bible Study group of the American Jewish educators in Israel.

The Israel Society for Biblical Research is the Israel Branch of the World Jewish Bible Society.

עשה תורתך קבע

TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

JUNE-JULY 1983

חמוח חשמ"ג

S	Isaiah 11	ישעיה יא	12	א
M	Isaiah 12	ישעיה יב	13	ב
T	Isaiah 13	ישעיה יג	14	ג
W	Isaiah 14	ישעיה יד	15	ד
Th	Isaiah 15	ישעיה טו	16	ה
F	Numbers 19-22:1	חקת	17	ו
שבת	Haftarah Judges 11:1-33	הפטרה שופטים י"א, א-לג	18	ז
S	Isaiah 16	ישעיה טז	19	ח
M	Isaiah 17	ישעיה יז	20	ט
T	Isaiah 18	ישעיה יח	21	י
W	Isaiah 19	ישעיה יט	22	יא
Th	Isaiah 20	ישעיה כ	23	יב
F	Numbers 22:2-25:9	בלק	24	יג
שבת	Haftarah Micah 5:6-6:8	הפטרה מיכה ה', ו-ו, ח	25	יד
S	Isaiah 21	ישעיה כא	26	טז
M	Isaiah 22	ישעיה כב	27	טז
T	Isaiah 23	צום י"ז חמוח ישעיה כג	28	יז
W	Isaiah 24	ישעיה כד	29	יח
Th	Isaiah 25	ישעיה כה	30	יט
				July
F	Numbers 25:16-30:1	פינחס	1	כ
שבת	Haftarah I Kings 18:46-19:21	הפטרה מלכים א י"ח, מו-י"ט, כא	2	כא
S	Isaiah 26	ישעיה כו	3	כב
M	Isaiah 27	ישעיה כז	4	כג
T	Isaiah 28	ישעיה כח	5	כד
W	Isaiah 29	ישעיה כט	6	כה
Th	Isaiah 30	ישעיה ל	7	כו
F	Numbers 30:2-36	מטוח ומסעי	8	כז
שבת	Haftarah Jeremiah 1:1-2:3	הפטרה ירמיה א', א-ב', ג	9	כח
S	Isaiah 31	ישעיה לא	10	כט

JULY-AUGUST 1983

מנחם אב תשמ"ג

M	Isaiah 32	ישעיה לב	11	א
T	Isaiah 33	ישעיה לג	12	ב
W	Isaiah 34	ישעיה לד	13	ג
Th	Isaiah 35	ישעיה לה	14	ד
F	Deuteronomy 1:3:22	דברים	15	ה
שבת	Haftarah: Isaiah 1:1-27	הפטרה: ישעיה א', א-כז	16	ו
S	Lamentations 1-2	איכה א-ב	17	ז
M	Lamentations 3-4	איכה ג-ד	18	ח
T	Lamentations 5	תשעה באב איכה ה	19	ט
W	Isaiah 36	ישעיה לו	20	י
Th	Isaiah 37	ישעיה לז	21	יא
F	Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11	ואחחנן	22	יב
שבת	Haftarah: Isaiah 40:1-26	הפטרה: ישעיה מ', א-כו	23	יג
S	Isaiah 38	ישעיה לח	24	יד
M	Isaiah 39	ישעיה לט	25	טו
T	Isaiah 40	ישעיה מ	26	טז
W	Isaiah 41	ישעיה מא	27	יז
Th	Isaiah 42	ישעיה מב	28	יח
F	Deuteronomy 7:12-11:25	עקב	29	יט
שבת	Haftarah: Isaiah 49:14-51:3	הפטרה: ישעיה מ"ט, יד-נ"א, ג	30	כ
S	Isaiah 43	ישעיה מג	31	כא
August				
M	Isaiah 44	ישעיה מד	1	כב
T	Isaiah 45	ישעיה מה	2	כג
W	Isaiah 46	ישעיה מו	3	כד
Th	Isaiah 47	ישעיה מז	4	כה
F	Deuteronomy 11:26-16:17	ראה	5	כו
שבת	Haftarah: Isaiah 54:11-55:5	הפטרה: ישעיה נ"ד, יא-נ"ה, ה	6	כז
S	Isaiah 48	ישעיה מח	7	כח
M	Isaiah 49	ישעיה מט	8	כט
T	Isaiah 50	ישעיה נ	9	ל

W	Isaiah 51	ישעיה נא	10	א
Th	Isaiah 52	ישעיה נב	11	ב
F	Deuteronomy 16:18-21:9	שפטים	12	ג
שבת	Haftarah: Isaiah 51:12-52:12	הפטרה: ישעיה נ"א, יב-נ"ב, יג	13	ד
S	Isaiah 53	ישעיה נג	14	ה
M	Isaiah 54	ישעיה נד	15	ו
T	Isaiah 55	ישעיה נה	16	ז
W	Isaiah 56	ישעיה נו	17	ח
Th	Isaiah 57	ישעיה נז	18	ט
F	Deuteronomy 21:10-25	כי תצא	19	י
שבת	Haftarah Isaiah 54:1-10	הפטרה: ישעיה נ"ד, א-י	20	יא
S	Isaiah 58	ישעיה נח	21	יב
M	Isaiah 59	ישעיה נט	22	יג
T	Isaiah 60	ישעיה ס	23	יד
W	Isaiah 61	ישעיה סא	24	טו
Th	Isaiah 62	ישעיה סב	25	טז
F	Deuteronomy 26-29:8	כי תבא	26	יז
שבת	Haftarah: Isaiah 60:1-22	הפטרה: ישעיה ס', א-כב	27	יח
S	Isaiah 63	ישעיה סג	28	יט
M	Isaiah 64	ישעיה סד	29	כ
T	Isaiah 65	ישעיה סה	30	כא
W	Isaiah 66	ישעיה סו	31	כב
September				
Th			1	כג
F	Deuteronomy 29:9-31	נצבים-וילך	2	כד
שבת	Haftarah: Isaiah 61:10-63:9	הפטרה: ישעיה ס"א, י"ס"ג, ט	3	כה
S	Jeremiah 1	ירמיה א	4	כו
M	Jeremiah 2	ירמיה ב	5	כז
T	Jeremiah 3	ירמיה ג	6	כח
W		ערב ראש השנה	7	כט

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

א' תמוז ממשיכים מס' שבת קל"ח
כ"א בתמוז מתחילים מס' עירובין

DOR le DOR

דור לדור

OUR BIBLICAL HERITAGE

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FOREWORD

THE PROPHET SAMUEL AND KING SAUL	<i>Menachem Begin</i>	202
SAUL'S KINGSHIP – The Tragedy of a Leader	<i>Sarah Halperin</i>	210
SAMUEL AND SAUL – The Psychological Dimension	<i>Adina Katzoff</i>	217
SAMUEL AND SAUL – The Prophetic Dimension	<i>Shimon Bakon</i>	223
A GUIDE TO ISAIAH – II	<i>Chaim Pearl</i>	234
THE HEBREW ELEMENT In Everyday English	<i>Gabriel Sivan</i>	240
ISRAELITES AND ALIENS – IV	<i>Max M. Rothschild</i>	245
A NEW WORLD AND A NEW MAN	<i>Abraham Menes</i>	249
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR		258
ABSTRACTS OF BETH MIKRA	<i>Mordechai Sochen</i>	261
TRIENNIAL BIBLE READER CALENDAR		263

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