דור לדור

DOR Le DOR

Our Biblical Heritage

המרכז העולמי לתנ"ך בירושלים

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WHAT IS TERUAH

BY LOUIS KATZOFF

It is a remarkable, almost incredible fact, considering the predominant place which the Shofar has in the liturgy of Rosh Hashanah, that nowhere in the whole Torah, in the regulations enjoining the sounding of the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah, is there the slightest hint of its purpose. Although the Shofar and its purpose is mentioned on innumerable other occasions, when it comes to Rosh Hashanah, all that the Bible says is: *It shall be a day of sounding the Shofar for you* (Numbers 29:1).

As we listen to the sounds of the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah, we can easily discern these three types of blasts: *tekiah*, a straight blast; *shevarim*, three short sounds; *teruah*, nine staccato notes. The intent listener realizes that the length of each of these blasts is the same. Three staccato notes are the length of one short blast, and three short notes are the length of the straight blast. Thus the nine *teruah* notes equal the length of three short sounds, *shevarim*, which equal the length of the straight blast, *tekiah*.

There is a fourth type, a combination of *shevarim* and *teruah*. This takes twice the length of the straight blast, beginning with three short sounds and concluding with nine staccato notes, all in one continuous form. This is called, *shevarim-teruah*, and is counted as a double sound.

In all, 30 sounds are heard in the first series of the shofar blowing; and in a diagrammatic way we can see these sounds as follows:

3 times	tekiah	shevarim-teruah	tekiah	12 notes
3 times	tekiah	shevarim	tekiah	9 notes
3 times	tekiah	teruah	tekiah	9 notes

During the review of the Musaf Amidah the same sequence is followed, once

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each instead of three times, after the prayers of מלכיות, זכרונות and שופרות respectively. In the Sephardi service, the same are sounded as well in the earlier Musaf Silent Amidah. All in all, 100 notes are sounded during the Rosh Hashana service in both Ashkenazi and Sephardi traditions.

It would be interesting to determine how the Sages of the Talmud arrived at the specifics of the various blasts, and the order of their soundings. A revealing, interpretive procedure is related in the Tractate Rosh Hashana.

The first principle established by the Sages was that every *teruah* is to be preceded and followed by the *tekiah*, the straight blast. One might ask, how did they arrive at this sequence? In Leviticus 25:9, we read, והעברת שופר תרועה בחודש השביעי בעשור לחודש ביום הכיפורים תעבירו שופר: *Then you shall sound the horn loud; in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month — the Day of Atonement* (of the Jubilee Year) — *you shall have the horn sounded throughout your land and you shall hallow the fiftieth year.* The words והעברת שופר and תעבירו שופר apply to a straight unbroken blast. The words והעברת and תעבירו are to be translated: "You shall cause to pass a Shofar of Teruah," as it is written in Exodus 36:6: *And Moses commanded and they caused a voice to pass:* ויצו משה ויעבירו קול במחנה. Just as in Exodus, the "passing" is a straight unbroken sound, so in Leviticus the word "passing" connotes a similar sound (Rosh Hashana 34a). Since these phrases precede and follow the word *teruah*, the Sages understood that the unbroken blast *tekiah* is sounded always before and after the broken blast, the *teruah*.

Now, what is the sound of the *teruah?* The Sages were not entirely certain. A clue is found in the Aramaic translation: On the verse, *In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a sacred occasion; you shall observe it as a day when the horn is sounded* (Num. 29:1) — יום תרועה יהיה לכם. The Targum Onkelos translates it as follows: יום יבבא יהא לכון "a day of יבבא you shall observe." But what is the sound of יבבא? A second clue comes from the Song of Deborah in the Book of Judges:

Through the window she looked forth and groaned	ותיבב אם סיסרא
The mother of Sisera, through the lattice	
'Why is his chariot so long in coming?	
Why are the harnessed horses so slow?	

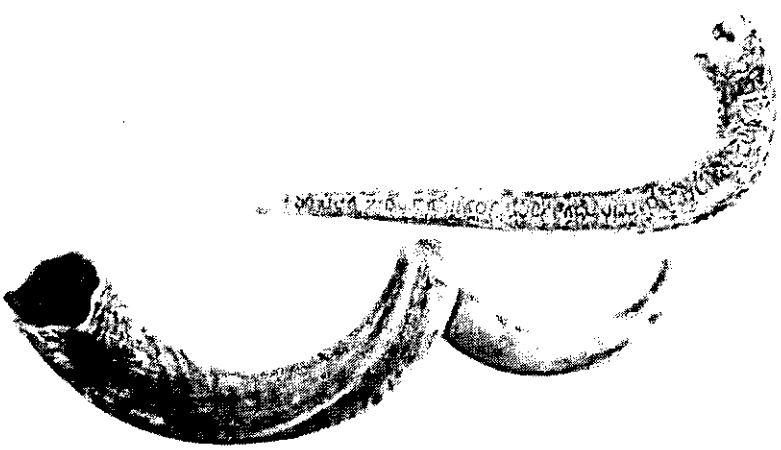
Judges 5:28

What was the sound of this "groaning" of Sisera's mother? Here, the opinions of the Rabbis were divided. One said it was גנוחי גנח, the sound of sighing (a *teruah* is equal to three sighs, that is, our *shevarim*) while another said it was ילולי יליל, short piercing cries (a *teruah* is equal to nine staccato sounds of crying, that is, our *teruah*).

The Sages go on to say that they were really not certain whether the sound was sighing or crying, and thus both interpretations were accepted. The Biblical *teruah* is therefore sounded today in three forms: sighing (3 *shevarim*), crying (9 of *teruah*, and a combination of both (3 *shevarim* and 9 of *teruah*).

This resulted in the pattern of the Shofar blasts on Rosh Hashana, taking on the procedure which we follow. The Biblical *teruah*, preceded and followed by the *tekiah*, makes for the following order:

tekiah	shevarim-teruah	tekiah	תקיעה	שברים־תרועה	תקיעה
tekiah	shevarim	tekiah	תקיעה	שברים	תקיעה
tekiah	teruah	tekiah	תקיעה	תרועה	תקיעה



JONAH AND NINEVEH
THE TRAGEDY OF JONAH

BY NORMAN FREDMAN

"How can I know that I will inherit the land?" Abraham asks. He is answered with a vision of horror.

> *Know for certain that your seed shall be strangers in a land that is not theirs. And they shall enslave and oppress them . . . And the sun set and it was very dark. And behold: a smoking oven and a torch of fire.*
>
> Genesis 15:13, 17

Since the vision of oppression dates from Abraham's Covenant-Between-the-Pieces, it is not surprising that the theological question raised by Jewish suffering has been addressed by the Bible. Moses gave the classical Biblical answer: suffering is the result of sin. *The corruption is not His! The fault belongs to His children – a perverse, a twisted generation* (Deuteronomy 32:5). But this answer, though it is constantly repeated in the Bible, was no more satisfying to pious prophets than to secular moderns. Granted that Jews are "perverse and twisted", do they deserve such extreme punishment? *Take comfort! Take comfort My people!* cries Isaiah (40:1–2). *She has been punished doubly for all her sins.* But we must ask: Was Israel as nasty as her enemies? Was Zedekiah worse than Nebuchadnezzar? The prophet Habbakkuk is best known for his famous line, *The righteous shall live by his faith* (2:4). He is no less faithful when he agonizes:

> *You, Whose eyes are too pure to view evil,*
> *Who cannot look on that which is improper,*
> *Why do You look on when* they *deal treacherously?*
> *You remain silent when the wicked swallows*

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the one more righteous than he.
For You have made men like the fish of the sea,
Like reptiles who have no ruler.

Habbakkuk 1:13–14

In an effort to answer the question why sinful Israel must suffer at the hands of their obviously more sinful enemies, the prophets developed the doctrine that Isaiah calls, "the rod of My wrath." Israel mimics the gentile and ignores her covenant with God. The doctrine of "measure for measure" demands that Israel who fawns over men shall be punished by men. These nations, however, simply do not realize that they are serving a Divine purpose. They hate Jews for the wrong reason. Therefore, God cannot allow them to succeed. Thus Israel, after suffering horribly, survives.

This model of sin, punishment, and undeserved redemption is described generally in Moses' Final Song:

They incensed Me with a no-god
Vexed Me with their futilities,
I'll incense them with a no-folk,
Vex them with a brute nation . . .
I thought I would make an end of them;
I would blot out their memory from human kind.
Were it not that I dread the enemy's taunt,
Lest their adversaries interpret falsely,
Lest they say: "Our hand is raised high!
None of this was done by God!"
(For they are a nation void of sense
And they lack all comprehension.)

Deuteronomy 32:21, 26–29

Assyria was the arch enemy that the kings of Israel and Judah justly feared. It was basically situated in what is now Iraq. The earliest Biblical record connects Assyria with Nimrod, *the first man of might on earth* (Genesis 10:8). Abraham himself fought a battle with an invading king from this area (Genesis 14). By the ninth century B.C.E., Assyria was so strong that only the combined forces of

twelve mideastern monarchies led by King Ahab of Israel could stop the Assyrian army at the battle of Karkar (854 B.C.E.). This alliance, however, was as morally debilitating as it was militarily successful. The prophets Elijah and Elisha strongly denounced the orgies, violence and Baal worship introduced by Ahab's Canaanite allies.

Eleven years after the battle of Karkar, Ahab's grandson was overthrown by Jehu. The new king breaks the alliance against Assyria and abolishes Baal worship. It is during the reign of Jehu's great-grandson Jeroboam II (785–745 B.C.E.) that a prophet named Jonah ben Amitai prophesies, *the borders of Israel would be returned to what they had been during Solomon's glorious reign* (II Kings 14:25). This is the only mention of Jonah outside his book. The prophecy was fulfilled when Assyria crushed the armies of Aram, and Israel occupied her former territory. This expansion was short lived. In 722 B.C.E., the Assyrians destroyed the Ten Tribes of Israel. They killed many and exiled the rest. The tribe of Judah was basically what remained and we are still called Jews after these survivors. The Ten Tribes never returned.

The prophets who had railed against Israel now had to explain the victory of vicious Assyria. After all, the prophet Nahum wrote of Nineveh, the capital of Assyria

> *Ah city of crime utterly treacherous*
> *Full of violence where killing never stops.*
>
> Nahum 3:1

Isaiah could not simply condemn Samaria, capital of Israel, when Nineveh was obviously so much worse. He therefore applies the model of sin, punishment and redemption, described generally in Deuteronomy 32 specifically to Assyria.

> *O Assyria, rod of My wrath,*
> *In whose hand My indignation is a staff,*
> *I do send him against a fawning nation.*
> *Against the people of My wrath do I command him*
> *To take spoil and to take prey*
> *And to trample them down like the mud in the streets.*
> *But he (Assyria) does not so intend*

And in his heart he does not so plan.
For to destroy is in his heart
And to wipe out nations not a few.
For he says,
"By the strength of my hand I have done it."

Should the axe boast against the woodchopper?

Therefore, will the Master, the Lord of Hosts
Send famine among his fat ones.

And it shall come to pass on that day,
That the remnant of Israel
The refugees from Jacob's house
Shall no more lean upon their smiter
But shall lean upon the Lord,
The Holy One of Israel, in truth.
O My people that dwell in Zion,
Be not afraid of Assyria.
He but smites you with a rod.

Isaiah 10:5–7, 13, 15, 16, 20, 24

This same idea, that Assyria is "the rod of My wrath," is the underlying theme of the Book of Jonah. Traditional Jews read the entire Book as the *Haftarah* for the afternoon service of Yom Kippur.

In chapter I, Jonah is commanded by God to go to Nineveh to *cry out against her.* The reader is expected to know that Jonah is the prophet of Samarian expansion and Nineveh is destined to destroy Samaria. Jonah is not being commanded simply to denounce; denunciations could be uttered from the safety of Samaria as the prophet Amos had done when he cursed Damascus. If Jonah is to go to Nineveh, it is to warn the city; to save Assyria so that it can destroy Israel.

This salvation is not otherworldly. The salvation of Nineveh is of this world. It might be best understood by putting yourself in the position of a surgeon in a German hospital, November 1918, with a young and wounded Adolph Hitler on the operating table in front of you. Only you can save his life, yet through

prophecy (secular Hollywood might prefer a time machine) you know exactly what Hitler will do if he lives. Remember, you are not being asked to *kill* Hitler. You are being asked, would you save Hitler's life or would you walk away and let him drop dead?

Jonah chooses to sail to Tarshish to the other end of the world. As the ancient sages put it, "Jonah put his loyalty to the son (Israel) above his loyalty to the Father" (Mechilta 28). It is not that he believes he can escape God Who, as he tells the sailors, "has made the sea and the dry land" (1:9). The medieval commentator Ibn Ezra points out, Jonah is not fleeing from the presence (מפני) of God but from the service (מלפני) of God.

A storm arises and Jonah sleeps. Critics love to point out the irony of the gentile captain ordering the Jewish prophet to pray. Pray? For what? If alive he will save Assyria; he does not wish for such a life. Jonah advised the sailors to throw him into the sea. Rabbi Yochanan, the greatest of the Palestinian Talmudists of the third century remarks: "The whole purpose of Jonah's sea journey was suicide." None-the-less, Jonah has no desire to take the innocent crew with him. He is literally willing to die to save non-Jewish *lives*. "The men" desperately try to row back to shore in the opposite direction of their destination and, indeed, of their own safety, if one considers the hazards of beaching a boat in a storm. They either wish to save Jonah's life or perhaps return him to his mission. They fail. Willingly, they had accepted a fugitive from Divine Service; unwillingly, they now surrender the fugitive to Divine Justice. Jonah is cast into the sea; the storm stops. *And the men feared God greatly.*

The episode abroad ship does more than describe Jonah's attempt at suicide to escape his mission of savior of Assyria, *the rod of His anger.* It also describes what the ideal "rod of His anger" should be: God-fearing, unwilling to punish except as a last resort. The Midrash underlines this by describing the sailors as citizens of every one of the "world's 70 nations." They do not simply throw Jonah overboard. To emphasize the humanity of the sailors, the Midrash comments that they first lower Jonah to his knees. The storm stops and they pull Jonah from the sea. The storm starts again and they lower him to his navel. The storm stops and again they pull him from the sea. The storm starts and they lower him to his neck. Again, the storm stops and again they pull Jonah from the sea. When the storm starts again the sailors finally cast him over board (Pirke

D'Rabbi Eliezer 10).

Israel's enemies should only be so reluctant. King David had told the prophet Gad, *Let us fall, I pray, into the hand of God, for His mercies are many, and let me not fall into the hand of man* (II Samuel 24:14).

But the "rod of His anger" is

> *terrible and dreadful;*
> *Their law and their majesty proceed from themselves . . .*
> *They fly as a condor swooping to devour.*
> *All of them come for violence.*
>
> Habakkuk 1:6–9

What the prophet, what the people of Israel expect from "the rod of His anger" is that they behave like Jonah's sailors. This crew wakes the pious from his slumber and begs him to call to his God (1:6). They ask "the Hebrew" himself what to do (1:11) and try with all their power to avoid doing harm (1:13). If they do punish they fear God greatly(1:16). What a contrast with the Assyrian horde!

It is the initial sentence of chapter 2 that gives the Book of Jonah its fame:

> *Now the Lord prepared a big fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.*

Key to any understanding of the fish is the name of the city Jonah is sent to warn, Nineveh. The word "nin" means "fish"; "neveh" means "home." "Nineveh" literally means: "the fish is the home." Indeed, the Akkadian cuneiform sign for Nineveh was a fish inside a house.

The fish connotes more than the capital of Assyria. The phrase "fish of the sea" is used by the Bible (e.g. Habakkuk 1:14) as the equivalent of Tennyson's "Nature, red in tooth and claw." Devouring fish are also the metaphor of Israel's enemies.

> *Nevuchadrezzar, King of Babylonia has devoured and discomfited me.*
> *He swallowed me like a sea monster.*
> *He filled his maw with my delicacies . . .*
> *I will make him disgorge that which he has swallowed.*
>
> Jeremiah 51:34, 44

This wealth of associations – Nineveh, violence, the enemies of Israel – makes the fish as appropriate an image for the real "rod of His anger" as the sailors had been the image for the ideal rod of God's anger. Brilliantly, it is precisely the fish that prevents Jonah's suicide. *My death is better than my life*, Jonah cries (4:3), but God will not let Jonah die.

The real problem of chapter 2 is not the miracle; it is Jonah's change of mind. Why does he finally consent to go to Nineveh after all? The Midrash answers by describing Jonah's agony inside the fish. There are fates worse than death. Where there is only one God there are no Prometheans.

A different answer is suggested by the observations of Joseph Ibn Caspi, a fourteenth century rationalist Biblical commentator. He could no more accept the literalness of the whale than he could accept the literalness of Balaam's talking ass. "There are those who say," writes Ibn Caspi, possibly referring to Maimonides himself, (see Guide to the Perplexed II, ch. 47) "that the first two chapters are a prophetic vision." A detailed comparison of the first two and last two chapters by Eliakim Ben-Menachem (in his modern commentary on the Book of Jonah, Daat Mikra, p. 3) reveals continuous parallels. A combination of Ibn Caspi's and Ben-Menachem's insights would divide the Book into two complementary sections. In chapters 1 and 2, Jonah in a prophetic dream tries to escape from the Divine command and is thrown by pious sailors into the jaws of the fish where he prays "for three days and three nights" and is saved. In chapters 3 and 4 Jonah reluctantly enters the jaws of Nineveh, "an exceedingly large city, of three days journey." As a result of his warning, the city repents and is saved. According to this explanation, Jonah never changes his mind. Only in a vision does he run away. Actually, he reluctantly delivers the warning he has been commanded to deliver.

Another problem with chapter II is Jonah's prayer recited *out of the belly of the fish.* He does not ask for life or even to be allowed to die. Instead, he thanks God for saving his life and prays to *gaze again at Your Holy Temple* (2:5). Bible critics feel that this prayer was added after the Book was written.* But with all the Psalms written about saving a life why would an editor choose a prayer that

* William Simpson, more an anthropologist than a Bible critic, argued that the whole Book was a holy text for a Temple initiation rite concerning death and resurrection.

is as devoted to Temple worship as it is to being saved from drowning? Perhaps the key to the prayer is the last line, *Salvation belongs to the Lord!* This previews the Divine message in the last verse of the Book when God asks Jonah, *Shall I not pity Nineveh* (4:11)? Miraculously God has saved the suicidal Jonah; graciously He would save the sincere idol-worshipping Nineveh; miraculously and graciously He might allow Jonah and those like him to *gaze again at Your Holy Temple.*

The reluctant Jonah now goes to Nineveh and warns: *In another 40 days Nineveh will be overturned.* Nineveh repents with the speed and thoroughness not found in stiffnecked Israel. The city fasts before a fast is proclaimed. Even sheep are forbidden to graze and cattle must be decked with sackcloth: *They turn from their evil ways.*

Modern critics are delighted with the picture of lightning repentance but admit it is as miraculous as the marvelous fish. Rashi quotes sages who have seen such changes too often to be impressed: "Heathens are too quick to repent" (Rashi on Jonah 1:3). Quick or not, the repentance is sincere. God forgives and Jonah is furious.

> *This is why I fled beforehand to Tarshish for I know that You are a compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in kindness, renouncing punishment. Please, O God, take my life, for I would rather die than live.*
>
> Jonah 4:2–3

The commentator Kimchi on Jonah 4:3 reminds the reader that Jonah is not the first prophet who preferred to die rather than "see the evil that will befall Israel." Moses himself cried,

> *If you will not (forgive Israel's sin), erase me from your Book . . . It is too much for me. Kill me, I beg you, and let me see their catastrophe no more.*
>
> Exodus 32:32; Numbers 11:14–15

Elijah, too, sitting exhausted beneath his shade tree asks that his life be taken when he fails to make Israel repent (I Kings 29:4). Perhaps the closest parallel to Jonah's anguish for saving Nineveh is the prophet Elisha's grief when he announces that Hazael will be king of Aram.

> *And he stared at him until he was embarrassed and the man of God wept. And Hazael said, "Why does my lord weep?" And he answered, "Because I know the evil that you will do to the children of Israel: their strongholds you will set afire, their young men you will slay with the sword, their little ones you will dash to pieces, and their pregnant women you will split open."*
>
> II Kings 18:11–12

Yet, Elisha fulfilled his mission and motivated Hazael's successful rebellion. No wonder the Midrash identifies Jonah as a student of Elisha.

Men wish for death when suffering physically, as well as when facing the death of a loved one. Job, patient at the death of his servants and children, rages when torn by the agonies of disease. Jonah is equally furious, whether the enemy of Israel is saved or he himself collapses from the heat of the hamsin, a fate he might have been spared if a shady castor oil* plant had not died from insects.

Jonah had built a hut to protect himself as best he could from the terrible summer heat – after all, miracles don't happen without man's total effort. The plant had arisen miraculously overnight and had protected Jonah from heat prostration only to be destroyed by insects. Jonah is thereby shown that he himself cannot survive without Divine kindness. God asks Jonah in the Book's climactic sentence,

> *Should I then not be concerned about the great City of Nineveh which has more the 120,000 people who can't tell their right hand from their left, and manny cattle.*
>
> Jonah 4:11

* Ibn Ezra feels that the precise identity of Jonah's shade tree (in Hebrew קִיק) – gourd or castor oil – is irrelevant. Most modern readers would agree. Perhaps one day some archeologist will provide insights through some ancient story featuring the shade of the "kik" tree. The only Jewish insight is non-Biblical. The Mishna, in discussing which oils to use for Sabbath lights, contrasts clear, dependable olive oil with undependable (for burning) castor oil. Jonah, whose name means dove, has been sent to the foot of the Ararat Mountains where Noah's ark rested. Noah's dove brings back an olive leaf as a sign that the Divine wrath has abated. Jonah must learn the same message from the undependable castor oil leaf.

God is concerned about the present existence of innocents in the city. They too will receive kindness.

Yet "the rod of His wrath" is thereby saved.

A Midrash captures the Book's message. Moses is informed by God that He is slow to anger. Moses inquires, "For whom?" God answers, "For the righteous and for the wicked." Moses wonders, "Of course for the righteous; surely not for the wicked." But Moses is overruled (Sanhedrin 111 a–b).

Note that the Divine love is not for repentant Nineveh. It is for the *more than 120,000 people who cannot distinghish between their right hand and their left, and the many cattle.* If, like Sodom, Nineveh lacks its minyan of righteous men, it does not lack innocent or at least ignorant men.

But the question remains: Isn't kindness to Nineveh cruelty to Samaria? What of the little ones of Samaria who will be dashed to pieces? Like Rashi before him, the scholar, Yehezkel Kaufmann, emphasizes that the Divine argument assumes that less is expected of the non-Jew.

> This is an attitude that pervades the *entire* Bible: Non-Jews are punished only for ethical sins, idol worship is not sinful for them . . . This is certainly not "the pinnacle of universalism." This attitude sees non-Jews as a kind of "lower race" without the duty to be monotheistic. God, however, has mercy on them since they are "people who do not know the difference between their right hand and left" whom the author includes with "the many cattle."
>
> Kaufmann: תולדות האמונה הישראלית, Vol. IV, p. 281

That final sentence of the Book of Jonah answers two questions: Why Nineveh lives and why Samaria dies. Nineveh lives because God is merciful and patient. Indeed, without that mercy, even a prophet would find life unbearable. Nineveh lives because it does not know any better; it does the best it can. Samaria dies because it does know better. For benighted Nineveh quick repentance is admirable. The implication is obvious: for Israel, who has a special covenant with God, the repentance found in Nineveh would not suffice.

Morality, such as that expressed by Job's comforters, would have us believe that the Jewish people must have done unique acts of evil to merit the horrors they suffered. The Book of Jonah ignores Israel's guilt except by implication.

Special horror need not mean special guilt. It means, in this case, a special relationship.

Nineveh did fall, but too late to save Samaria. Indeed Nineveh's years of glory came under Sennacherib soon after Samaria fell. Then *the Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold,* on Judah, the saving remnant. The Temple stood, but a generation later was defiled as King Menasseh began a half century of appeasement to Assyria. In 612 B.C.E. when Nineveh was finally conquered by Media and Babylonia the prophet Nahum recalled her evil:

> *God is slow to anger and of great forbearance*
> *But God does not remit all punishment.*
>
> *All who hear the news about you*
> *Clap their hands over you.*
> *For who has not suffered*
> *From your constant malice.*
>
> Nahum 1:3; 3:19

The Book of Jonah does not wonder, "Why do the righteous suffer?" The Book of Job with its gentile hero addresses that essentially universal question. Jonah comes to the reader who asks, "Why does Israel suffer at the hands of those obviously more evil?" In prophetic visions there are pious sailors who ask their Hebrews what to do about guilt. But in the real world, more is expected of prophets and sons of prophets than from heathens who do have moments to true repentance and lives of justifying ignorance. In the real world, says the author of Jonah, both prophet and villain need and receive Divine kindness.

The world still expects more of Israel, not because it accepts the prophets' belief that Israel has a special covenant with God but because the world expects more from the countries of freedom than from the countries of tyranny. The danger lies less in the increased expectation than in the unwillingness to remember that the civilized, despite an occasional barbarism, are civilized and barbarians, despite an occasional civility, are barbarians.

CAIN AND ABEL

THE STORY OF CREATION – PART IV

BY CHAIM ABRAMOWITZ

The first four chapters in Genesis are, according to Abarbanel, the Story of Creation. The history of mankind and civilization begins with chapter five. The events in the Garden of Eden, as related in chapter 3, were intended as an allegory,[1] as a guide to the understanding of "freedom of choice" and its consequences, and also of the relationship between mortality and the need for procreation.[2] Were it not for this important lesson, the natural chronologic continuation of *a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become as one flesh* (2:24) should be either *and the man knew his wife* (4:1) or *this is the record of Adam's line* (5:1). Except for the unnatural longevity of each individual's life span, there is nothing in chapter 5 that poses any scientific or logical or moral problem.[3] Adam had many children, but only the genealogy through Seth is listed because they are the direct antecedents of Noah who, with his family, was the only one to survive the flood. The list does not necessarily include the first born in each case. This accounts for the fact that though all of them, except Lemech, lived to a ripe old age, some had the child named at the age of 65–70, possibly their first, and others at the age of 182–187, obviously not their first born. Adam and his descendants each had many children as evidenced by the repeated phrase "and they had sons and daughters". Most probably many interesting events happened to these other children, some of such a nature that it

1. The Garden of Eden in Dor Le-Dor, vol. 10 No. 4 (1982).

2. We should be grateful to Eve for our very existence. Were it not for her sin and loss of immortality we would not have been born.

He who has offspring withers and dies; כל מי שיש לו תולדות מת ובלה,
He who has no offspring neither withers nor dies. כל מי שאין לו תולדות לא מת ולא בלה.
Breshit Rabba 12:5

3. See note on Longevity, following this article.

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brought them to the brink of corruption. Why, then, was the story of Cain and Abel selected, and why was Cain's genealogy included up to a point since they, too, perished in the flood? What does it intend to teach us?

The story, as related in chapter 4, poses a number of questions. Since it was Cain who initiated the idea of bringing an offering to God, probably as a gesture of gratitude, and Abel only followed in his footsteps and "he also brought one", then why was Cain spurned? The Rabbinic explanation that God's displeasure with Cain and his gift resulted from his selection of the poorest of his crop[4] is not very convincing. If the bringing of spoiled fruits or vegetables was the cause of the divine displeasure then that "sin" should have been emphasized. The verse referring to Cain's gift should have read "from the fruit of the earth *and from the spoiled ones.*" Whether Abel brought a fat or a lean sheep need have no bearing on God's action. The emphasis on the choice sheep of Abel's offering seems to imply that God has the all too-human trait of preferring a gift only because it looks or tastes better and scorning a comparatively cheaper one. Any higher motive for the choice is not evident in the story. *God paid heed to Abel and his sacrifice, and to Cain and his sacrifice He paid no heed* (4:4), leaves us with the impression that the previous description of the gift is the reason.

Since God is invisible, how did they know that He paid heed to one and not to the other? If, as commonly explained, a fire from heaven had come down to consume Abel's sacrifice, the Bible would have mentioned such an extraordinary event specifically. But more important than any of the above is the question: why did God, who is omniscient and who is cognizant of the future as well as of the past, turn away from Cain's gift knowing that by doing this He is causing the death of Abel, whom He preferred? The story takes on life and meaning, and its message becomes clearer if we disregard the supernatural and approach it from a natural and human point of view.

THE SACRIFICE

Eve gave birth to two sons, not necessarily twins. They are mentioned because we are interested in their particular story. Eve called the older one Cain, Cain (קין) implies acquisition, ownership, creation.[5] We are not told the name she gave

4. They reasoned that the phrase מפרי האדמה "*from* the fruit of the earth" refers to the *poorest* of the fruit since it is in apposition to מחלביהן from the *fat ones* in Abel's gift (Rashi).

5. Cain was so named at birth, in the hope that the name would influence his future, and since it

to the other son. All we are told is that *afterwards she bore his brother Abel.* We know him by the end result that he turned out to be הבל, the essence of negation, nothingness, short lived. He died without leaving a trace in the world. Eve saw in her children the two aspects of her husband. Adam was mainly an עובד אדמה, a tiller of the soil, but he was also a shepherd and he tamed wild animals for his own use.[6] Now, one of her children was a tiller of the soil, a creator, through whose efforts the earth brought forth fruits and vegetables. She called him Cain — קניתי איש, *I aquired a man!* His younger was הבל, nothing. He did nothing but watch the sheep and the cattle. The milk and the wool were not the result of anything he did.

Some time after they grew up and each was engaged in his own particular activity, Cain initiated the idea of showing his gratitude to God by bringing Him a "thank you" present. Abel endorsed the idea, and obviously each one brought from what was available to him. Cain brought מפרי האדמה some of the produce of the field, and Abel also brought מבכורות צאנו ומחלבהן from the first-born and fatted sheep. Since God is in heaven and cannot be presented with a gift personally, it occurred to them to burn their presents and let the smoke rise heavenward. When they tried to implement the idea, laws of nature, with which they were still unfamiliar, affected the result. Cain tried to burn his fresh vegetables but they would only smoulder. He could get neither flame nor billowing smoke to rise upwards to his God. Abel, on the other hand, put the fat sheep (note the accent on ומחלבהן the fat) on the fire, and the melting fat kept dripping back, causing it to flare ever brighter and stronger. The two brothers looked at what was happening and reached what was to them the obvious conclusion: that God preferred Abel because of his gift, and He turned away from Cain because, by comparison, his was not good enough. Abel was probably jubilant, while (ויחר לקין מאד) Cain was annoyed, distressed and crestfallen. Because he was convinced that his rejection was due to the fact that his brother out-did him by bringing a better present, anger and envy added to his distress. At

proved effective that name remained. Abel may have been given a similar name of prophetic significance, but since it was ineffective, he is referred to as הבל.

See note on Names in Dor LeDor, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1982), p. 100.

6. Dor LeDor, ibid., page 189, Note 12.

this point the generally accepted translation of God's question: למה חרה לך "Why are you angry?" seems out of place, and what follows ephasizes his unnamed sin, and is no comfort or consolation.

If we understand the event, not as a willful act of God, but as a misinterpretation of a natural phenomenon, then the Divine question: למה חרה לך becomes an attempt to teach us a basis human behavior: "Why should you be angry, or distressed? What happened was not the result of anything you or your brother did. What did happen was only natural and to be expected. As for yourself and your relationship with your God, (הלא אם תשיב) as long as you do what is just and good, (שאת) you will carry on and nothing will happen to you. And (ואם לא תטיב) even if, at times, you do not act righteously, you should be aware that (לפתח חטאת רובץ) the opportunity to sin is always present; (ואליך תשוקתו) and temptation to take advantage of the opportunity is great.[7] However, (ואתה תמשול בו) you can, and you must develop the strength of character to resist temptation. This is one of the two important lessons in the story. Man is given the power to resist or submit to temptation, but whatever he chooses, the must accept the consequences. The second comes from Cain's misunderstanding and non-acceptance of God's assurances.

CAIN'S REACTION

Cain brooded over the event, and the more he thought about it the more convinced he became that it was his brother's fault. And (ויאמר קין) Cain kept saying to himself: (אל הבל אחיו)[8] that it was all his brother's doing. Had he not brought that fat sheep, God would have been satisfied with my fruit. The idea that Abel was responsible for his rejction grew within him and pervaded every part of his body. One day, they were alone in the field, and he could contain himself no longer. In a fit of anger he arose and killed him. No sooner was the deed accomplished and the body supposedly hidden, when he heard the ominous

7. The Midrash Hagadol characterised the human failing as follows:
ההולך לדבר עברה כל אבריו עוזרין לו, When one is about to sin, all his limbs help him;
ההולך לדבר מצוה כל אבריו מתעצלין לו. When one is about to do a good deed, all his limbs hinder him.

8. To use of "and he said" followed by "to (אל) meaning "on account of" is found in II Samuel 21:1.

words: *Where is your brother, Abel?* Coming at the very moment when the body was interred implies that the question was rhetorical and not an ordinary request for information.

Cain was aware of that, but in his distraught state of mind he felt that his action was justified and that the question meant only "why did this happen to your brother?" He answered what he thought was the truth: (לא ידעתי) I don't know; am (השומר אחי אנכי) I my brother's keeper? Am I responsible for his action? The divine response was strong and definite: The (קול דמי אחיך) voice of your brother's blood, freshly absorbed in the ground, cries out to me that an injustice was done to him. It was you, and not he, who perpetrated a misdeed, and you must accept the consequences: The (מדה כנגד מדה) punishment shall fit the crime. You spilled his blood on the earth and hid his body within it, therefore the earth shall no longer bring forth its treasures to you. You will have to wander from place to place (נע ונד תהיה) seeking a fertile piece of ground, but shall not find it.

Cain was overwhelmed by this divine decree. Cain, as a tiller of the soil, used to find satisfaction in his ability to make the earth bloom. He enjoyed the satisfaction that the land responded to his labors. As all this was taken away from him, he cried in agony: גדול עוני מנשוא *This punishment for my sin is more than I can bear.* Without the protection of my cherished land (הן כל מוצאי) any one who finds me can kill me."[9] Here we have another lesson in law and morality. Even a murderer is not open prey. Any one who will kill Cain shall himself be guilty of murder; (שבעתים יוקם) his retribution shall be sevenfold. Cain was reassured and felt safe after God gave him a sign that His word was his protection. True to the significance of his name, Cain adjusted to the new circumstances. Instead of wandering in vain from place to place in search for a fertile stretch of land, he gave up farming (וישב בארץ נד) and became more urban. He built a city, raised a family, and his children and grandchildren followed in his footsteps. Instead of farmers they were shepherds, musicians and artisans. All

9. Our Sages assumed that Cain and Abel were the only two sons of Adam alive at the time, and explained that "all who find me" refers to the animals, though it is difficult to see how an animal can be held accountable for murder. If there were other children born between the birth of Cain and Abel and their famous quarrel, then "all who find me" refers to other human beings.

may have gone well had they listened to God's admonition to their grandfather to control temptation. They forgot that Cain killed in a moment of emotional stress and remembered only the promise of retribution, a right they took upon themselves. Five generations later Lemech murdered in retaliation for some harm done to him and then boasted of his prowess to his wives. איש הרגתי לפצעי וילד לחבורתי *I have killed a man for wounding me, and a child for bruising me* (4:23). Cain may be avenged sevenfold; but when I take revenge it is seventy-seven fold!

This last boast sealed the fate of the family of Cain. Since revenge, retaliation and murder was accepted as a way of life, they were left to the fate of the rest of Adam's children and perished in the flood. Where there is no morality, man's existence is perilous.

LONGEVITY CONSIDERED

Many attempts have been made to explain the antediluvian life-span of close to a millenium, to the sudden reduction to half that amount immediately afterwards, and to the gradual reduction to a century or two at the patriarchal period. Since that is within the realm of possibility most of our traditional commentators (Rashi et al) accept it without comment. Maimonides saw in that list the exception rather than the rule. Only those named reached that abnormally ripe old age. All the rest of mankind attained the average age as we know it today. Nachmanides ridicules the idea because there is no reason in their reported conduct that warranted the granting of this extraordinary gift. He suggested another reason. Since Adam was originally granted immortality, which he lost upon eating the forbidden fruit, it is reasonable that it was taken away from him and his descendants gradually, to almost a thousand years (a day in the eyes of the Lord – Psalms 90:4), and then diminished gradually. Man never exceeded a thousand years because He said that "on the DAY you will eat of it you will die." Abarbanel explains from a health and diet point of view: Antediluvian man was forbidden to eat meat and subsisted on a healthy vegetarian diet of fruits and vegetables. This, together with the lack of stress and strain in pre-civilization, accounted for their longevity. With the permission to eat meat, after Noah, their health and life expectancy began to deteriorate.

There were some who suggested that the ancients had a different basis for counting the years, Those who claim that a *month* was a *year* prove it etymologically by saying that the word שנה (=Year = change) refers to the changes in the moon cycle. This would bring the average age to 70 or eighty before the flood and to 30 or forty after that, and the average child bearing age to five years before, and to two and a half after the flood, In addition to this absurdity, they do not explain the meaning of "days" and "months". Cassuto sees in this "reasonable" longevity an answer to the absurd reigns of twenty to sixty thousand years claimed for the early Chaldean kings.

In my opinion the reason has to be sought elsewhere, somewhere between legend and probability. Many events in pre-history left their imprints in the memory of mankind. The memory of a great flood, for instance, was retained differently by different people. The Hebrew and Babylonian accounts need not have been copied one from the other, but is the way each remembered the event. We know that in prehistoric times animals reached enormous heights and weights. Some of the Sauropod Dinosaurs reached over 30 feet in length and over forty tons in weight. They probably lived a very long time since the larger the animal, the longer was it's life-span. A trace of that is found in the Bible when it mentions: התנינים הגדולים "the great monsters" (Gen. 1:21) and giants (Numbers 13:31). This memory of extremes in size and in life-span became exaggerated among a people who considered their kings as demi-gods, but limited to a divine day by believers in monotheism.

The Torah, in selecting and reporting any particular version of an event, stamps that version as the truth.

Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him (Gen. 4:8) – DORE

REBEKAH'S BEGUILEMENT OF ISAAC

BY SOL LIPTZIN

The Bible presents two contrasting images of Rebekah, the wife of Isaac. One is of the young maiden at the well of Aram-Naharaim, virginal, good-natured, obedient, gracious and very beautiful. When Eliezer, who was sent by his master Abraham to find a suitable mate for Isaac, catches sight of her and asks her for a little water of the pitcher she has just filled, she not only gives him to drink but also volunteers to draw water from the well for his camels until they will have had their fill. The other image is of the mature Rebekah, wise and wily, unhappy with her son Esau and his Hittite wives, inciting her second son Jacob to deceive her old, blind husband.

The chief character trait common to Rebekah in her young years and in her old age is courage. She displays this courage when she, who has never ventured far from her birthplace, is ready to depart from it immediately with the strangers from beyond the desert, even without the suggested delay, the ten days of leave-taking advised by her brother Laban. She also displays this courage late in life when planning and executing the beguilement of Isaac and getting him to bless Jacob, the son preferred by her, rather than Esau, the son preferred by him.

Young Rebekah's encounter with Eliezer at the well is a favorite subject for pictorial artists in their illustrations of the many precious biblical manuscripts ever since the Vienna *Genesis* of the fifth century. The scene is also depicted in mosaics and frescoes of medieval cathedrals, including those at Palermo, Monreale, Amiens, and Pisa. In the Renaissance and Baroque periods, the Italian Guido Reni, the Frenchman Nicolas Poussin, the Spaniard Bartolomé Murillo, and the Austrian Josef Anton Zoller created notable paintings of this scene. Albert Bertel Thorvaldsen, the most famous of Danish sculptors in the nineteenth century and Marc Chagall among contemporary artists reverted to this popular

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subject. Though the older Rebekah had less fascination for sculptors and painters, she is favored more often by twentieth century writers. These emphasize her role in the deception of Isaac. They include the Austrian dramatist Richard Beer-Hofmann, the English dramatist Laurence Housman, the German novelist Thomas Mann, the French novelist Jean Cabries and the American novelist Irving Fineman, as well as many lyrics in diverse tongues.

JAAKOBS TRAUM BY BEER-HOFMANN

Beer-Hofmann, in his poetic drama *Jaakobs Traum*, begun in 1909 and published only as the First World War was nearing its end in 1918, opens with the conflict between the aging but still resolute Rebekah and the alien wives of Esau. To these Hittite women, who upbraid her for her beguilement of her blind husband, she explains that the broken, old man, whose life is ebbing so sadly, was always but a pale twig who grew up in the shadow of the resplendent Abraham. It was the son of the renowned Abraham she married, the mighty Abraham who defeated four kings at Laish, the magnificent lord who offered hospitality to God and His angels at Mamre. The weakling Isaac was attracted to the robust hunter Esau. The unseeing Isaac hesitated to bestow his blessing, when Jacob stood before him, and it was not his father's blessing that Jacob received but the ancestral blessing of Abraham that erupted from the lips of the aged Isaac.

Though Isaac himself does not appear in the play at all, an image of him emerges from the words of Rebekah and Jacob. It was the tragic fate of young Isaac to have been sacrificed on Mount Moriah, not physically but emotionally. The child that was placed there on the altar and that gazed, wide-eyed with fear, upon the knife hovering over him in his father's hand bore the scars of that horrible moment ever thereafter. He, who trusted his beloved and adored father and who saw this father ready to murder in an onset of religious frenzy, could never in later years trust anyone or feel sure of himself.

When Edom, the name under which Esau appears in Beer-Hofmann's play, is called back from the hunt and informed of the betrayal perpetrated during his absence from home by his mother and his brother, he is raging mad and refuses to listen to the admonition of Rebekah not to disturb the sleep of his father, whose days may be coming to an end. Edom forces his way into his father's tent but soon emerges sobbing. He demands an answer of his mother why she dislikes

him so much and harmed him so grievously. She defends her behavior toward him. A son, who spends his days hunting and his nights carousing with alien wives, has become a stranger to her and should be able to dispense with her affection.

When Edom threatens to avenge the wrong done him and to slay his brother, Rebekah adjures him to desist. She promises that Jacob will stay far away from the family home in Beersheba. Isaac and she herself are nearing their end. Soon he, Edom, will be lord of all their possessions. But Edom reminds her that it is Jacob who has the ancestral blessing and, if alive, will retain it. Only with Jacob's death can the nefarious deed be undone. Rebekah pleads with her son to be content with the earthly heritage and to desist from pursuing Jacob. To Edom's persistent questioning why Jacob and not he, her first-born son, was chosen for God's blessing, Rebekah replies: "Because Jacob walks about full of mysterious questions, hearing within himself the doubts, dreams, longings, and imperative voices of his ancestors, while you rejoice in your sure knowledge and satiety; because he does not entomb his God in distant heavens as you do but wrestles with Him day by day and breast to breast; because he does not hunt and sacrifice and murder as you do but rather pales in the presence of all suffering creatures and speaks to all of them as they to him. That is why the blessing is his – and the burden of the blessing."

These words enrage Edom even more and he rushes forth, with murder in his heart. Rebekah, helpless to stop him, turns in prayer to God not to permit an encounter between the two brothers that may result in fratricide but rather to let Jacob arrive safely in Haran, where she spent her happy youth until her marriage.

DIE GESCHICHTEN JAAKOBS BY THOMAS MANN

Beer-Hofmann's portrayal of Rebekah as a matron of strong will and decisive action is followed by Thomas Mann in his novel *Die Geschichten Jaakobs*, 1933, the first volume of his Joseph-tetralogy. It is she, according to Mann, who initiates the deception of Isaac, while Jacob merely obeys her instructions, trembling and hesitant. She it is who dresses him in his brother's festive garments and anoints him with his brother's oil. She it is who prepares the meal and sends him into the tent to steal the blessing. She anticipates that Jacob will have to flee

before Esau, who is out hunting and will return with the venison. She has a premonition that she will never see her favorite son again and is prepared for the sacrifice, though her heart aches. Jacob, aware that he wronged his brother, fears that Isaac, on discovering the deception, will curse the two deceivers.

When Eliphas, the son of Esau, catches up with the fleeing Jacob, the latter pleads for forgiveness and explains that he did not plan the betrayal or even wish it. He considers himself to be a victim of his mother's machinations. He was helpless against a woman's cunning. He was enticed to cooperate in the nefarious deed, even as his first ancestor Adam was led astray by Eve.

Thomas Mann is not certain that Jacob was sincere in his protestations of innocence and in his explanation to Eliphas but these did have the effect of saving his endangered life. According to Mann, Jacob did not want to leave home as a thief in the night, burdened with the knowledge of his father's lasting ill-will. Upon his insistence, the strong-willed Rebekah successfully undertook to persuade her docile, pious husband to forgive the deception and to reconcile himself with Jacob, who was about to undertake the long flight, since this son would be finding refuge at Laban's estate and would there most likely choose a wife from among kin and not from among the worshipers of foreign gods.

PALESTINE PLAYS BY LAURENCE HOUSMAN

Laurence Housman, who dramatized the story of Jacob in the second of his *Palestine Plays*, 1942, devotes the first scenes to the betrayal of Isaac by Rebekah and Jacob. Housman interprets the Bible as the record of a long process of trial and error by which the Israelites finally arrived at the pure concept of God, the concept taught by the Prophets. While Beer-Hofmann was reverent and Thomas Mann ironic in their approach to the Bible, Housman is anti-biblical, even vicious, in debunking the Patriarchs and the supernatural miracles. His Jacob is not a good person and his behavior is atrocious. Obeying Rebekah, he cheated his brother and deceived his father. Isaac, old, tired, feeble, is entirely dependent upon his wife and his son Esau. Before dying, he wants to transmit to his first-born the blessing derived from Abraham. But, who is the first-born? Esau recalls that for a mess of pottage he has just sold to the scheming Jacob the right of the first-born. When Rebekah overhears Isaac suggesting to Esau that a venison feast be prepared for the morrow at which God's blessing to Abraham

would be handed down, she prepares for the deception. The frightened Jacob is reluctant to join in her plan but also fears to disobey his resolute mother.

Though Isaac and Esau are angry at Jacob after the deception, they do not curse him. They feel that he is already punished in so far as fear will always shadow him. Rebekah too is punished for her participation in the fraudulent act in that she will never again see her favorite, fleeing son. A later scene does indeed show Jacob overcome with terror during his flight. Fear haunts him throughout all the years until his reconciliation with Esau two decades later. Only then does he feel secure.

According to the dramatist, Esau is lordly, brave, magnanimous, but not too intelligent, while Jacob is humble, cowardly, greedy, deceitful, but very clever. Jacob will be fear-ridden until he and his brother compose their differences face to face. Then the dream he dreamed at Bethel, the most famous dream in all history, will be realized and he and his descendants, the race of Jacob, renamed Israel, will know peace and release from fear.

JACOB BY IRVING FINEMAN

During the Second World War, when Housman's drama was published, the American novelist Irving Fineman also dealt with Rebekah's beguilement of Isaac in the narrative *Jacob*, 1941, a fictional autobiography related by this Patriarch to his favorite son Joseph. In telling of his early life, Jacob explains why he cooperated in deceiving his father, though he himself did not initiate the deception. Scorned by his brother and loved by his mother, he early became aware of the unending struggle between the men of force and action and the men of thought and sensitivity. Since Esau could hunt and fight, he was looked up to by the gentle and poetically inclined Isaac, who had lost to the Philistines much of the lands and possessions inherited from Abraham. This loss occurred because he refused to resist by force the Philistine incursions. Jacob, who inherited his father's gentle nature, did not really want to deceive the blind, old man and felt that he could get along well even without the blessing. But the forceful Rebekah urged him on, overcame all his scruples, and then sent him off to Laban. Not only would he be safer there than in Beersheba but there she hoped he would choose his own wife. She recalled that this privilege of choosing a wife was denied to Isaac, whose too illustrious and too domineering father had done the choosing

for him. Like so many sons of daring and successful fathers, Isaac was timid, conservative, and obedient. As for herself, she had gone with Eliezer, Abraham's messenger, in order to see the fulfillment of her romantic vision of an unknown prince in faraway Canaan. But, when she met Isaac for the first time, she was disappointed to find him so ordinary and not at all dashing like the famed Abraham, thoughtful but not very talkative. She had been a good wife to him but she wanted her son to be more independent and not to be forced into a marriage arranged by others.

SAINT JACOB BY JEAN CABRIES

In the French novel, *Saint Jacob*, by Jean Cabries, which appeared in 1954, Rebekah is again the principal instigator in the beguilement of Isaac. The first glimpse of her is as an old, much-tried woman, who wanders about in the outdoors after midnight of the eventful day when both her sons left home. She will have to spend the rest of her years alone with Isaac, for better or for worse. Having hatched the plot and hurriedly made all preparations for carrying it through, she had pushed the hesitating Jacob into her husband's tent. Without her encouragement and resolute actions, he would not have deceived his blind father. But, even after the blessing had been obtained, Jacob still lacked the courage and the strength to set out on the long journey to Mesopotamia. Rebekah had to give him of her courage and her strength. She went even further and dared to confront Isaac after the blessing intended for Esau and to plead with him to bless Jacob a second time, so that this son would not leave home with the stigma of a stolen blessing. Though she succeeded in mollifying her husband, she knew that the peace which prevailed down the years in their relationship as husband and wife could no longer be fully restored and that a lasting alienation between her and her first-born son had set in. Esau told her on parting from her: "I am no longer your son, mother. Jacob alone has been your son from the beginning. I have never had a mother." Rebekah has much to brood on. In a single day she lost both of her sons. Jacob was fleeing eastward to his uncle Laban and Esau was heading westward to his uncle Ishmael, Each would experience different destinies while their old mother remained with her ailing husband, lonely and grief-stricken, yet confident that she had done God's will and that she was justified in her apparently unseemly action.

Unlike the novelists and dramatists but like most pictorial artists, lyric poets, confined within the limits of a few verses or stanzas, generally avoided the theme of Rebekah's beguilement of Isaac, since it was far more complex than the simple vision of Rebekah at the well.

MARK VAN DOREN

The American poet Mark Von Doren and the Yiddish poet Itzik Manger were among the rare exceptions, even as were Rembrandt and Chagall among painters. Van Doren was fascinated by Rebekah, although he did not condone her deception. In his poem "Rebekah," she is as clear-headed and resolute in her old age as in her youth, when she followed Eliezer to be the wife of Abraham's son. Isaac was helpless against her trickery. She was no longer the girl, perfect in simplicity. She knew that she was inflicting hurt upon Isaac and Esau but she felt that she was God's instrument in transferring the blessing to Jacob.

ITZIK MANGER

The sonnet "Rebekah" by Itzik Manger presented Rebekah as weeping at the thought that the two children to whom she gave birth in a single hour were about to leave her within a single hour. She was, however, comforted by the foresight that the two hostile brothers, who in her lifetime were going their separate ways, would be reunited after her death and would then again extend their hands to each other in fraternal reconciliation.

Of the four biblical matriarchs, Sarah and Rachel attract most attention in world literature. Leah is neglected or given a very subordinate role, and Rebekah is generally depicted primarily in her beguilement of her husband. This deception, which cannot be justified by normal human moral standards, was justified by claiming it to be God's will, a higher criterion than man's. In this respect, Rebekah's justification for her conduct is reminiscent of that of the Greek heroine Antigone, daughter of Oedipus.

Antigone rose to fame in literature and has maintained it to this day by acting against a human decree, which she regarded as impious, a decree of the state of Thebes proclaimed by its ruler Creon. She appealed to a higher law than that promulgated by mere man as justification for her action and she was prepared to pay the penalty of death, if necessary, for her wilful defiance of constituted

human authority. Similarly, in the beguilement of Isaac, Rebekah acts on the basis of what she believes is a higher law than that of mere man. Isaac may prefer to hand down the ancestral blessing to his first-born son, the mighty Esau. But she diverts the blessing to her younger son and is prepared to pay the high price for her disobedience, her husband's anger and condemnation, inevitable alienation from her older son, and a lifelong separation from her younger and more beloved son.

Isaac Blesses Jacob — Doré

THE LIVING TESTAMENT OF JACOB–ISRAEL

BY ETAN LEVINE

A paper presented at the Prime Minister's Bible Study Group at his official residence

Many years ago an old man lay on his death-bed, far from home in an alien land. According to the records which have been preserved, he was 147 years old, and he had spent the last seventeen years in the Goshen area of Egypt. At birth he had been named Jacob, but at one particularly heroic point in his tumultuous life he had earned the name Israel. Now this life was drawing to a close on a death-bed in a foreign land.

Thousands of years later we are able to softly enter that shepherd's hut and listen to the man's last words to his children as they gather round his bed. This we are able to do because his dying words are recorded in the Bible, in Genesis 49. However, if we are to understand the man's last words, and if we are to capture the meaning of this powerful episode, we must avoid the temptation to put words into Jacob's mouth. There are two temptations to be avoided.

First, although we can surely appreciate the motives of traditional Jewish exegesis, we must not recreate Jacob into some kind of ideal Jewish saintly father-figure, and his sons into a community of religious saints, scholars and cantors. The literary genre Midrash is invariably related to the Bible, of course, but its function is creativity, not literalism. And so, however insightful, sensitive and instructive Midrash may be, our present purpose is to enter the Biblical text, and not the commentaries surrounding it.

The second temptation to avoid is the so-called 'source criticism' of modern Bible scholars who claim a warrant to radically change the old man's recorded words. These scholars argue that our *textus receptus* is impossible as it stands, for several basic reasons. First, they argue, although the text states that Jacob

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'blessed them' (49:28), not all of his words are blessings. In fact, some are character analyses, and others are closer to diatribes and curses than they are to blessings.

Further, although the biblical section begins: *And Jacob called his sons and said: 'Gather together that I may tell you what will befall you in the end of days'* (49:1), not all relates to the future. Much relates to the past. And when Jacob does relate to the future, often he includes trivia, while leaving out the most important events, such as the Egyptian bondage, the Sinai theophany, etc. Finally, some Biblical critics argue, the man's words are disjointed; there is no stylistic unity to this last testament.

Unfortunately, to superimpose such literary criteria is to overlook and misunderstand the entire thrust, pathos and power of this old man's last testament. Some Bible scholars have apparently forgotten that in real life – as in great literature – there is a unity of disunity: that the organic process of life itself constitutes a unity of disunity; that it is marked by paradox and internal contradiction. And *a fortiori* is this the case when the life in question is the complex, enigmatic, heroic life of Jacob–Israel, in which pettiness and greatness, fear and courage, disaster and triumph are so intimately interwoven!

Those who would amend the old man's words may be partially excused on the grounds that they, like all of us, have never faced the experience of imminent death as Jacob was then facing. And therefore we may be excused if we refuse to accept their modern emendations which force upon the dying Jacob stylistic felicity, literary unity and conceptual coherence.

And so we return to the recorded words of the old man. His thoughts do ramble, as they sometimes do with all mortals, particularly the very old, and as they invariably do with the dying. Past and future, love and anger, fundamental and trivial all blend into a stream of consciousness. The biblical account allows us to study the man, not only his testament. We can even look into his tired eyes, as he has just finished nostalgically relating how he had buried his beloved Rachel, the love of his life, along the roadside in Canaan (48:7).

Shall we delete this 'trivial' nostalgia from the man's last words, as the biblical text itself could surely have done? Or shall we pause a moment to capture Jacob's feeling for the woman he had slaved and whom he had loved so deeply? On some level, the text is conveying, despite the presence of his sons, Jacob is in

agony because his wife is not there to hold his hand. The man is dying alone, just as we all must die alone.

We see that *the eyes of Israel were dim with age, so that he could not see* (48:10). And surely this harsh poetic justice, similar to the Oedipus motif, is not accidental. For as a youth, Jacob had taken advantage of his father Isaac's blindness, to obtain his blessing. And now he can barely see his own often-rebellious sons who stand at his bedside to receive his blessing.

Quite naturally, Jacob first addresses his eldest son, Reuben. We learn through euphemism that Jacob had been deceived by his wife Bilhah and his son Reuben. How deeply must Jacob have thought of the bitter irony of this, for he himself had tricked his own father Isaac, with the active participation of his father's wife Rebecca. The precise details are not crucial, nor are they given, but we clearly hear his ambivalent sentiments towards his first-born son: just as his own father's feelings toward him were mixed. In Reuben, Jacob sees an integral part of himself, and therefore, despite his hurt, he doesn't deny him; Reuben too is part of Israel.

This same ambivalence applies to Simeon and Levi, the brothers-in-arms who elicit their father's fear and anger. *Simeon and Levi are brothers; weapons of violence are their kinship* (49:5). He disclaims collusion with them, saying, *Cursed be their anger so fierce!* (49:7). And although he decides to distribute them among the tribes of Israel, rather than giving them separate holdings of their own, he does not deny or disinherit them. For Simeon and Levi too are replicas of their father, and of his own actual career. For the very inheritance that Jacob is now dispensing was not given to him as a gift by any ancient United Nations. Rather, it is a land which, in his own words: *I took out of the hand of the Amorites with my sword and with my bow* (48:22).

Of course Jewish mediaeval exegetes found this uncomfortable. It is no wonder that we find Rashi (1040–1105) explaining that 'sword and bow' mean 'study and prayer'. But with all due respect for Rashi's pacifism, and with all due recognition for the condition of powerlessness that marked the Jewish exile and the Jewish mentality, we will insist on being true to the old man's words. We insist on remembering that he is Jacob–Israel. The Jacob part of him, the *gentle tent-dwelling man* (25:27), as he was called, shies away from his two warrior sons. *Let my soul not join their council; into their assembly let my honor not be*

counted (49:6). Yet he connot deny or disown them, for he himself had learned the bitter lesson that in life it is not enough to have the gentle 'voice of Jacob', but one must be armed with the 'hands of Esau' as well.

As we look down upon the old man we may see the scar on his thigh, and it is that scar which testifies to the legitimacy of Simeon and Levi. It had happened many years before. One long night Jacob had fought with a fierce stranger, and as dawn broke, the wounded Jacob triumphed over his enemy. *And he said to him, 'What is your name?' And he replied, 'Jacob'. And he said, 'Your name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have striven with God and with men, and you have prevailed'* (32:28f.)

On that morning long ago, the rising sun shone upon Jacob limping, but walking away victorious, with the heroic name Israel. This is what the ancient sages meant by the expression: "The deeds of the fathers are signs for the children," for that was to be the destiny of the Children of Israel and the People of Israel, walking through history with great scars, yet greater triumphs.

It was because of the harsh realities of life that the dying Jacob again and again returned to the themes of military prowess when he spoke to his sons. That is why he describes Judah as a crouched lion (9), foreseeing that *thy hand shall be on thine enemies' neck* (8). And *Dan shall be a serpent on the road, a horned snake on the path; biting the horse's heel, so that the rider falls off backward* (17). True, he is a religious man, and he suddenly cries out, *I rely on your salvation, O Lord*: (18) But he continues, *Gad, a troop shall troop upon him, but he shall troop upon their heel* (19). Religious faith and physical power intermingle in his words to his beloved Joseph, which include the description, *His bow remained strong, and his arms remained supple, by the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, from there: from the Shepherd, the Rock of Israel* (24). And in speaking to his youngest son Benjamin, he says, *Benjamin is a marauding wolf; in the morning he devours his prey, and at evening he divides the spoil* (27).

In brief, the old man does not and cannot honestly bless his children with 'Peace'. For then he would be as one of the false prophets *who cry 'Peace', 'Peace', when there is no peace!* As a realist even on his death bed, he blesses them with that which eventually produces peace: power. As the biblical blessing reads, *The Lord will grant strength unto his people; the Lord will bless Israel with peace* (Ps. 29:11).

This realism extends to the other realities of life too; how characteristic of the man that even on his death-bed his words are not of death but of life! Jacob had been a shepherd, a patriarch, a man of affairs knowing the practicalities of life. When he was a young, almost naive idealist, he dreamed of a ladder from heaven to earth. But when he matured and had to earn a living in adversity, he began dreaming like a businessman, with his flock increasing and his wealth growing. How then could he criticize Joseph whose dreams of achievement exceeded his own? Jacob again and again returns to the theme of material blessing as he speaks to Joseph, Naphtali, Asher, Issachar, Zevulun and Judah. For although he would be the first to affirm that, *Man does not live by bread alone* (Deut. 8:3), he also knew that man does not live without bread: Therefore he was so concerned that when the Children of Israel would return to the Land of Israel, there would be a prosperous economy.

It is not only in his speaking to Issachar (24) that Jacob refers to labor and its rewards. The recurrent references to agricultural and pastoral productivity presuppose hard work. For Jacob himself had learned that God's blessing must be joined by Man's own efforts. And this too must be an integral part of Israel's heritage.

Jacob continues to speak, but it is unseemly of us to remain so long at his bedside, even if we are his children's children. We have shared a special moment: the death of Jacob marks the birth of Israel. We have seen a diversity of symbols and characters, yet the Bible explains, *All of these are the tribes of Israel* (28). And if we are to grasp the unity of the diversity, and the essential message in the literary medium, we can find it in the Midrash. "Gather together", says Jacob, "Because if you are of one heart, nobody can withstand you! (HaḤefeṣ *ms.*)" Or, as another *Midrash* puts it, "Why does Jacob say 'assemble' and 'gather'? Because it implies an assembing of the scattered and a gathering of the dispersed. As it is written, *And he shall assemble the scattered and shall gather the dispersed* (Is. 11:12).

The *sine qua non* is Jewish peoplehood: togetherness, mutual support and unity. Not universalism but particularity. As one ancient seer described Israel's children, *This is a nation that dwells apart, and does not count itself among the nations* (Nu. 23:9). Note the grammar: it is not the passive נחשב, which would mean 'is not counted among the nations', but rather יתחשב a transitive reflexive

meaning, 'does not count itself'. This is to be a people which will mold its own destiny. It will be marked by triumph and disaster, by inner contradiction and paradox, and by constantly changing fortune. It will wrestle with others and with itself, but upright it will walk through history creating its own uniqueness.

When the old Jew finished talking, he asked one thing, and only one thing of his sons: *Do not bury me in Egypt* (47:29). And it wasn't enough for them to agree: he made them swear (47:31).

Should anyone ask what gives us the right to intrude upon Jacob's last moments, I say that all of us here, gathered in the residence of the Prime Minister have respected Jacob's dying plea: we have not buried Israel in exile. And whatever our numbers, we Jews from the four corners of the world have returned to the inheritance which Jacob left us 'by his sword and his bow': it is an inheritance which we will bequeath to generations of the Children of Israel yet unborn.

THE TRIAL OF JEREMIAH

BY M. HERSHEL LEVINE

While numerous essays have been written about the judgement of the noble Socrates, little has been penned about the appearance before the court on capital charges of the prophet Jeremiah.

Nevertheless, a careful study of the Bible reveals some fascinating details about a little-known but major episode in legal and religious history. Jeremiah lived and ministered to his people of Judea during the seventh century B.C.E. when the near East, then as now, was fought over by two great powers. At first Egypt dominated the area, but later the Babylonians under the leadership of Nebuchadnezzar defeated the forces of the Pharaohs and forced Judea to become a vassal to them.

The ruler of Judea was Jehoiakim, a selfish tyrant who exploited the needy and compelled his people to enlarge the royal palace to suit his extravagant tastes. Moreover, he reintroduced pagan forms of worship that his righteous father, King Josiah, had stamped out. However, he and his nobles, as well as the religious functionaries of the Temple, felt that neither social injustice from within nor the great nations from without could threaten the security of Judea as long as God's Temple and the priestly sacrifices flourished in Jerusalem.

One festive day, however, when the Temple courtyard was filled with worshippers who were about to bring their animal offerings to the altar, Jeremiah shocked the large throng by declaring that unless the king and his officials improved the lot of the poor and refrained from oppressing them, the Temple would be destroyed and Jerusalem laid waste.

Infuriated at the prophet's blasphemous words, the priests had their officers seize Jeremiah and place him on trial for his life. Following the Deuteronomic Law *Any prophet who presumes to speak in My name an oracle which I did not command him to utter . . . that prophet shall die* (Deut. 13:2, 6), they demanded the death penalty for Jeremiah.

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As in the case of Socrates, where there was no judge deciding the outcome but rather a large jury of five hundred Athenian citizens, Jeremiah was tried before the king's nobles, as well as several of the elders of Judea and *the entire assemblage of the people* (Jer. 26:8).

Unlike many defendants in political and religious trials, Jeremiah did not attack the right of the judges or jury to try him. Instead, he submitted to their authority and declared: *I am in your hands; do to me what seems good and right to you* (26:14).

At the same time, he staunchly proclaimed his innocence of the main charge against him of falsely prophesying in the name of the Lord by affirming that indeed *it was the Lord who sent me to prophesy against this temple and this city* (v. 15).

Nevertheless, Jeremiah, still was optimistic about the fate of his people and despite his many forecasts of disaster that faced Judea, offered hope to his many co-religionists who formed his jury. He called upon them to repent and to avert divine punishment: *Therefore mend your ways and your acts, and heed the Lord your God, that the Lord may renounce the punishment he has decreed for you* (v. 13).

In his final appeal to the jury, Jeremiah courageously declares that he was not afraid to die, but that if they shed innocent blood they would bring about their own destruction. In Biblical days when a corpse was discovered near a city, the elders would wash their hands to avert any dire consequences for the crime of (judicial) murder. In the face of grave personal danger, Jeremiah was not worried so much by his own fate as he was disturbed by the thought of the evils that would come upon those of his beloved people responsible for the sentencing of an innocent man.

Evidently, the impassioned and eloquent defense of Jeremiah impressed many members of the jury who were convinced that he truly spoke in the name of the Lord. Some of the prophet's defenders at this point reminded their fellow jurors of a precedent about a hundred years ago, which supported Jeremiah's right to voice unpopular opinions. Elders, friendly to Jeremiah declared that Micah the Morashtite had similarly prophesied to the people of Judah about the impending destruction of Jerusalem and the temple; and that King Hezekiah and the Judeans did not place Micah on trial or threaten him with the death penalty.

Rather, they repented of their sins and *the Lord renounced the punishment he had decreed against them* (vv. 18–19).

But to the great consternation of the prophet and his loyal defenders, some of Jeremiah's opponents cited a more recent legal precedent which supported the king's right to drastically curtail freedom of speech and to sentence speakers of sedition to death.

The attorneys for the prosecution of Jeremiah recalled to the crowd of Judeans that only a year or two prior to Jeremiah's trial, *a man prophesying in the name of the Lord, Uriah . . . prophesied against this city and this land the same things as Jeremiah* (v. 20). Hearing about Uriah's treasonous speech, *King Jehoiakim and all his warriors and all the officials* wanted to put him to death. When he escaped to Egypt, Jehoiakim had him extradited and returned to Judea where he was *put to the sword and his body thrown into the burial place of the common people* (vv. 21–23).

The fickle crowd of festive pilgrims that had already revised their opinion of Jeremiah once, now returned to their original view and demanded that the prophet like his predecessor Uriah,be put to death. Fortunately for Jeremiah,one of the more enlightened nobles, Ahikam, rushed the prophet away from the mob and concealed him in some secure spot, ending the attempt to conclude the trial by lynching (v. 24).

The fact that the Book of Jeremiah does not conclude his account of the trial with the first verdict of innocent by the "People's Jury" or even with the citation of the elders of the positive precedent of Micah's right to freedom of speech, indicates that we have here an accurate account of a brave seer's struggle for his right to voice unpleasant truths rather than a propagandistic glorification of the Biblical judicial process.

History proved Jeremiah's stern warning correct. After rebelling against Babylon, Jehoiakim was assassinated and many of his people were sent off into exile. In July 587 B.C.E. the Babylonians again attacked Judea, destroyed most of Jerusalem and the holy Temple, fulfilling Jeremiah's dire prophecy. The holy city and Temple were not rebuilt until the time of Cyrus the Great, who in 538, after his conquest of Babylon, issued a decree which allowed the return of the exiled Jews and the restoration of Jerusalem and the Temple.

AGGADAH IN BIBLE STUDY

BY NEHAMA LYN

INTRODUCTION

The term 'aggadah' may be literally translated 'narration'. In fact, it includes all of the broad range of traditional narrative materials which are not juridical, or 'halakah'. Aggadah includes all of the legends, homilies and folklores of Rabbinic literature, particularly the Biblical interpretations, allegories and homilies composed by the Jewish sages. Both the Jerusalem and the authoritative Babylonian Talmud contain considerable aggadic material. And almost the entire body of literature known as 'midrash' belongs to this genre.

In the course of time, traditional Bible study became thoroughly infused with 'aggadah'. In fact, aggadah became so entrenched that frequently the Biblical text was not separated from the overlay of its aggadah. For aggadah was recognized and utilized as an effective and versatile didactive technique. As a literary genre it was readily adaptable to both Scripture and contemporary life. From its own 'middle ground', aggadah extracted meaning and relevance from Scripture, and lent coherence to the events of daily life.[1]

This brief study is intended to serve as an introduction to the literary genre of aggadah, in order to gain an insight into a teaching method which continues to be of manifold value to this very day.

AGGADAH AS BIBLICAL ENRICHMENT

The most widespread use of aggadah was that of illustration: serving as cases in point of the adaptability of the Bible for the infusion of Jewish insights and

1. For English language texts, see Louis Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews*, Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1954. Also cf. recent translations of Midrash Rabbah, Mekilta, Pesiqta de Rab Kahana, Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer, Abot de Rabbi Nathan, etc. Also see survey, Etan Levine, "Haggadah in Jewish Bible Study," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, 1969, 92–96, and *idem, The Burning Bush; Jewish Symbolism and Mysticism*, New York (Hermon Press) 1981.

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values. For example, the biblical Creation epic was used to illustrate the concept of harmonious marriage. Upon discovering the strange and beautiful creature with whom he is to share life's journey, Adam is described as asking Eve what would be the nature of their life together. And she replies, 'We shall share a common table; you will provide it with bread, and I will garland it with flowers."[2]

Moving from the familial to the communal, another aggadah deals with the ever-present dilemma facing Jewish communities in *galut*. The Jewish People is depicted as addressing God and saying: "Lord of the Universe: The nations of the world have spread out their snare to catch me. They say, 'Worship idols.' Were I to listen to them, I would be condemned by Thy law. Yet if I do not obey them, then they slay me. Lo, I am like a thirsty wolf who stands before a well with a trap in it. If I descend to drink of those waters, I will be caught by the snare; if not, then I shall die of thirst."[3]

And again moving from the communal to the individual, one aggadah deals with Abraham and his deceptive and treacherous brother Haran. Haran, lacking the conviction and faith of his brother, avoids committing himself openly, either on the side of Abraham or on the side of Abraham's persecutors. When King Nimrod proclaims that all those who will not participate in idolatry will be cast into a fiery furnace, Haran, in characteristic fashion, makes a calculated decision. Since, as the elder brother, Abraham will be called first, Abraham's fate will determine what Nimrod will subsequently decide. Indeed, Abraham is summoned first, avows his allegiance to God, and is duly thrown into the furnace. Abraham is spared from death through divine intervention, thereby indicating to Haran that a mere declaration of faith in Abraham's God will now secure a miraculous rescue for him. Reassured by his own scheming logic, Haran allows himself to be thrown into the furnace. However, unlike the faithful Abraham, he is not rescued, for God does not countenance scheming and insincere loyalties.[4]

These few examples from the vast fund of aggadic literature serve to

2. See Raphael Gold, "Sex in Jewish Tradition," *Jewish Heritage Reader*, New York: Taplinger, 1965, 150.

3. Esther, Ch. 7, and Yalqut HaMaqiri to Ps. 140:1, cited in A. Marmorstein, "The Background of the Midrash," *Hebrew Union College Annual*, VI (1929), 187.

4. See the context of the Aggadah in Ginzberg, *op. cit.*, I, 202.

demonstrate its adaptability and applicability. A more extensive list would only further demonstrate the richness of the genre, embodying didactic techniques which continue to be evocative to this very day.[5]

AGGADAH AS AN ART FORM

The Hellenistic period saw the increased development and popularization of aggadah as an art form. The synagogue service provided the usual setting for this 'literary drama'. In the synagogue, services were divided into three portions: prayer, scriptural reading and aggadah. The latter category designated that portion of the service which was specifically popular in nature, catering to the entire assemblage, regardless of age, sex or educational level.[6]

During the Hellenistic period, there was a widespread development of theatre, drama, poetry and literature among all peoples influenced by the Greek world. The Jews, however, developed their own unique forms of artistry. And the one which was most closely linked to the Biblical origins of the Jewish people, was the aggadah.

FORM AND STRUCTURE

In form, aggadah was presented generally as drama or allegory. The various structural devices included aphorism, proverb, dialogue, chorus and riddle. These were primarily intended to emphasize and focus upon the 'message of the medium'. In some cases they merely expanded upon the Biblical message, in other cases they introduced Jewish values and concepts not related to the literal Biblical account.

As literary creativity, aggadah offered a wealth of possibilities; it was adaptable for textual addition and alteration of emphases, with the end-product constituting a largely original creation. Basing itself upon the Biblical text, aggadah was often characterized by rich narrative, liveliness of tone, stimulation of thought and inculcation of values. In brief, it was a magnificent source of intellectual-spiritual engagement in its own right.

5. See excellent treatment of the Haggadah genre in E. Epstein-Halevi, *Sha'are Ha-Aggadah*, Tel Aviv, 1963.

6. Eventually the term 'Haggadah' was fused with the concept of 'sermon', and often used interchangeably.

Allegorical aggadah was a popular mode of creativity. While not amending the Biblical text itself, it juxtaposed personalities, events and situations in order to convey and emphasize an explicit or implicit aspect of the text: righteousness or disobedience, cowardice or courage, reproach or comfort, etc.

THE FUNCTIONS OF AGGADAH

In antiquity, the teacher of *Torah* faced the identical challenges as his modern colleague: he had to present the Biblical text as vital, relevant and stimulating material. Aggadah was an excellent vehicle for addressing a host of didactic concerns, e.g., resolving apparently incongruous Biblical ordinances without disruption of the Biblical text itself; explicating the prevailing religious norms and practices; reconciling discrepancies which confuse the historical setting without actually amending the text (differences in place names, time periods, numbers, etc.); explaining theological difficulties (e.g. anthropomorphic allusions which cannot be taken literally); resolving grammatical and linguistic problems.

The principal function of the aggadah, however, was identical to the fundamental goal of good Jewish education generally: establishing the relevance of the classical text for contemporary life. In form, aggadah may have exhibited certain similarities to ancient literary criticism, but it was not similarly oriented to the dim past. Its function was not merely analysis of a classical text, but rather, application of Jewish sensitivities and values to the dilemmas, conflicts and needs of real life, from generation to generation.[7] Although the basic subject matter of aggadah was the Biblical text, its conceptual focus was contemporary: the reworking of scriptural material into a medium for coping with issues in ethics, theology, esthetics and societal norms. In sum, aggadah endeavored to extract insights from Biblical passages which would serve to illuminate unrecognized dimensions of the present and future, as well as the past.[8]

AGGADAH AS BIBLICAL EXGESIS

In relating to the Biblical text, aggadah must often be viewed as being

7. Note Aristotle's *Poetica*, Ch. XXV, relating to 'the impossibilities, illogicals, contradictions, perversions (i.e. ethical) and corruptions (i.e. esthetic)' of texts.

8. There were two main types of scripturally-based Haggadah: the linguistic-logical method, and the intuitive method. Both attempted to reveal allusions hidden in scripture.

constructed in a question-and-answer format. However, paradoxically, as can easily be ascertained by reference to virtually any aggadah anthology today, most of the extant aggadah do not provide any explicit question but only an answer. Numerous factors account for this phenomenon: often the formulation of the question was considered superfluous due to its being self-evident. And on a stylistic level, presenting the question in a pedagogic fashion might well have interfered with the dramatic or the theatrical quality of the aggadah itself. Furthermore, frequently the intellectual formulation of a specific question could have created more ideological problems than the aggadah was intended to answer.

These factors account for the technique of the 'unarticulated question'. Far from being an intellectual detriment, it served a further pragmatic function: the student was perforce obliged to engage his own resources in analyzing the aggadah. He had to exercise his own intellectual insights in postulating the 'why' of the aggadah. And this method itself was an organic development, for the precedent had been set by the authors of the aggadah themselves: their extrapolations from Scriptural sources generated a versatile, provoking genre standing on its own creative merits.

CREATIVITY AND TRUTH

The admirable balance between textual authenticity and creative interpretation in aggadah is well-described by A. Halevi: "In truth it may be said that aggadah stands at the boundary between free creativity and the search for truth."[9] For an example, we may turn to the aggadah concerning the incident of Achan ben Carmi (Josh. ch. 7). The treatment extends far beyond examination of the ancient practices and beliefs reflected in Scripture; rather, it presents a broad range of issues raised by the Biblical account. Thus, for example, why is the culprit not revealed to Joshua by God, instead of Joshua being compelled to resort to the casting of lots? Is God morally justified in using collective punishment against the other soldiers as retribution for Achan's theft? Is lot-casting a valid means of establishing guilt? Why did Achan confess without first attempting denial?

9. See Epstein-Halevi, *op. cit.*, 1 *et seq.*

These and other facets are addressed by the aggadic literature on the subject.[10]

On the human interest level, the incomplete drama enacted in the "Cain and Abel confrontation" provides an opening for aggadah. The aggadah resolves such questions as what was the actual nature of the struggle between the two brothers; what were the determining factors in the outcome; what strategies and weapons were used; what caused the change in Cain's psychological make-up in the transition from *Am I my brother's keeper?* to *My guilt is greater than I can bear.* Further, why was Cain subsequently granted divine protection?

In similar fashion, short biblical narratives such as the flood, the binding of Isaac, the destruction of Sodom, the Jacob-Esau conflict, the rebellion of Jeroboam ben Nebat, to cite but a few, provided the basic parameters for dramatic or allegorical aggadah. These usually involved anticipation, a central event and a didactic conclusion. Historical parallels were often drawn, serving to create analogy and to convey value concepts.

In sum, through aggadah, the living Bible was transmitted from generation to generation, developing, broadening and inspiring. And to this very day, the literary genre aggadah continues to be an invaluable element in Jewish Bible study.

10. See Joshua 7:1–26.
11. Gen. 4:1–16.

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HEAVEN AND EARTH AS WITNESSES

Both Isaiah and Moses called in heaven and earth as witnesses to the mutual obligations between Israel and God. They were directly involved because some commandments stemmed from heaven, i.e. months, holidays and some from the earth, i.e. all laws concerned with crops. Reward and punishment also come from them, i.e. abundance of lack of rain, fertility of the fields and abundance or sparsity of crop.
They are witnesses and according to the law the hand of the witnesses shall be first upon him (Deuteronomy 17:7)
CH.A. *Yalkut Shimoni*

A GUIDE TO ISAIAH – CHAPTER III

BY CHAIM PEARL

The following is the third installment of a study guide on the first twelve chapters of the Book of Isaiah, prepared by Rabbi Chaim Pearl, a member of the Dor le-Dor Editorial Board. The introduction to the book and the comments on chapters 1 and 2 can be read in the 1983 Spring and Summer issues of Dor le-Dor.

Readers of the Bible, particularly of the Prophets, should not expect a chapter to concentrate on only one subject. We cannot be absolutely certain about the composition of the chapter or its original beginning and ending. In any case, Isaiah did not write in chapters and verses! What we often see in any collection of verses is an anthology of the prophet's statements which were subsequently put together into a single chapter.

So in chapter three which we are about to read there are four really separate subjects. We begin with the prophet's warning that all responsible leadership will be removed (vv. 1–8, 12), then there is a brief diversion on the subject of reward and punishment (vv. 9–11), a denunciation of social evil (vv. 13–15), and an attack against decadent luxury (vv. 16–26). There is no easy way to make a unity out of these four subjects; nor is it really necessary to attempt to find one.

* * *

1. God will take away from the people every source of support. Strong leaders will be removed from office and economic stability will disappear.

2–3. The list of deposed leaders is comprehensive and includes military and civil chieftains as well as religious teachers. Even the "diviner" and the "enchanter", who also bring some comfort of a kind to the people, will be taken away.

Rabbi Dr. Chaim Pearl, rabbi emeritus of the Synagogue Adath Israel of Riverdale, New York, was formerly the spiritual leader of the Birmingham Hebrew Congregation, England. He is the author of several acclaimed books on Judaica. He now lives in Jerusalem.

4. The country will be led by incompetent and inexperienced upstarts.

5. The result will be a social revolution in which proper values will be turned upside down.

6–7. The picture painted by the prophet is one of utter confusion brought about through the absence of proper leadership. If one so much as has a house or a garment – any visible symbol of respectability – he will be urged by the people to be their chief. "At least you've got something left; look after this mess of a country!"

8. All this will come about because in both word and deed the people have rebelled against God.

The eyes of His glory This is a difficult phrase, certainly in English, and it can be variously interpreted. "Eyes" symbolise God's omniscience, i.e., He sees and knows all. The complete phrase then refers to God's omniscience and power.

* * *

9. *The show of their countenance doth witness against them* The look on their faces gives them away, i.e., their guilt shows up clearly.

10–11. These verses touch on what is to the prophet the fact of reward and punishment. The righteous will be rewarded and the wicked will be punished. But there is here an additional dimension to the teaching, in that the prophet argues that the good and the evil which will come to the righteous and the wicked respectively, will be the automatic outcome of their own deeds. Taken in this light it is rather an "advanced" concept. It is not so much God who rewards and punishes from the "outside", but virtue and wickedness which bring their own irrevocable result.

* * *

12. This verse is a crorollary to 4–7, where the lack of proper leadership is a cause of national despair.

13–15. Isaiah here raises a central issue of all prophetic preaching which is that social corruption is at the core of all rottenness in the nation. It is because of this that God Himself will come to judge the people. In these verses the prophet particularly rebukes the "elders" and the "princes" who should have worked to prevent injustice to the poor, but did nothing.

14. *Ye have eaten up the vineyard.* Isaiah uses the metaphor "vineyard" to symbolise the Jewish people, the chosen of God.

* * *

16–26. From here to the end of the chapter, the prophet denounces the ostentatious wealth and vulgar high living of the women folk. The immediate object of his criticism is the excessive and extravagant jewelry with which they adorn themselves. It is hardly likely that Isaiah's criticism is especially directed at the wealthy women. Rather, the picture which he paints is symbolic of the decadence of luxury in a society in which there is injustice and poverty around the corner.

The passage is also intrinsically interesting. No fewer than twenty one items of jewelry (vv. 18–24) are listed, and provides the glittering picture of upper class social life at the beginning of the 8th century B.C.E.

26. *Her gates shall lament and mourn* The "gates" were the city centre, where all public affairs were transacted.

We are happy to record that articles written by our readers are increasing.

For potential writers, we recommend the following:

1. Manuscripts should be typed, double space, with two inch margins for editing.
2. Articles should not exceed 10 typewritten pages.
3. We attempt to keep a happy balance between the popular and the scholarly.

The Editorial Committee reserves the right to accept or reject articles, and to edit them for stylistic purposes.

FIRST BAT-MITZVAH AT TOMB OF RACHEL

Malia with ther father, mother, grandmother and brother

The Tomb of Rachel was the scene of the first Bat-Mitzvah ceremony ever held there. On July 15, 1983, Malia Merav Aharoni, daughter of Rafael and Susan Aharoni of Honolulu, Hawaii, recited special Hebrew prayers for the occasion, which was conducted by Rabbi David Kimchi, resident rabbi of the Biblical site. Yonatan Yuval, head of the outreach department of the Ministry of Religion, was the coordinator of the event. Chief Rabbi of Israel Ovadiah Yosef blessed the celebrant.

With her hand on the tomb, Merav repeated the Hebrew words enshrined on it:

כה אמר ה' קול ברמה נשמע . . .
ויש תקוה לאחריתך נאום ה' ושבו בנים לגבולם

Thus saith the Lord: A voice is heard in Ramah . . . There is hope for thy future, saith the Lord and thy children shall return to their own border (Jeremiah 31:14–16).

For a daughter of Israel coming half way around the world to celebrate her Bat-Mitzvah in the land of her fathers, this shrine, more ancient than the Kotel, held forth the special charm of historic continuity of close to four thousand years of religious inspiration to Jewish womanhood. Malia donated all her gifts to the Israel Defense Force.

THE HEBREW ELEMENT IN EVERYDAY ENGLISH – 5

BY GABRIEL SIVAN

The earlier installments of these Kol Yisrael radio talks can be read in the Spring and Summer issues of Dor le Dor.

INDIRECT BORROWINGS

In my second talk I dealt with Hebrew terms like "Jubilee" and "Sabbath" that have passed, with only slight modification, into the English language. We now have to consider a much larger group of words for which the Greek Septuagint or Latin Vulgate were able to find "equivalents" that have been part of Western vocabulary for so long that few people are alive to their true origin. Since the Hebrew terms and concepts of the Bible reflect the psychology of Jewish monotheism, their Greek and Latin translations really embodied a profound semantic change; in other words, what we have today is Hebrew terminology in European dress.

A few of the more striking examples will serve to shed light on this process. As most listeners will be aware, the holiest of all Divine Names mentioned in the Bible is written *YHVH* and this Tetragrammaton or "Name of Four Letters" – *Shem ha-Meforash* (שם המפרש) in Hebrew – was treated with such reverence that, by 2nd Temple times, its authentic pronunciation was restricted to the Sanctuary. We know from the Mishnah[1] that only the High Priest of Israel eventually had the prerogative of uttering the *Shem ha-Meforash* in the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur, and for well over 2,000 years Jews have substituted the pronunciation *Adonai* "my Lord", in their daily worship. The Hellenistic Jews of Alexandria followed this tradition by supplying the Greek *Kurios* (meaning "Lord") in place of the Hebrew Name, which Jerome later translated as

1. *Yoma* 6.2.

Dr. Gabriel Sivan, author of *The Bible and Civilization*, and co-author of *Judaism A–Z*, is a member of the editorial board of Dor le-Dor. Born in England, he emigrated to Israel on the eve of the Six-Day War of 1967, was one of the editors of the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, and later served as director of education with the South African Zionist Federation.

Dominus; this, in turn, gave rise to the English *Lord*, German *Herr*, French *Seigneur*, and so forth. In this way, all such European terms have been infused with a special religious sense which they never possessed in their earlier history. One further point of interest here is the fact that, as a result of some confusion over the proper vocalization or "pointing" of the four Hebrew consonants *YHVH*, many Christian hymn-books preserve the mistaken reading of the Name as "Jehovah".[2]

For the Hebrew *mal'akh* (מלאך), "Divine messenger", a Greek equivalent was found in *aggelos* and this would never have come down to us as *angel* had it not been for the demands of Bible translation. *Satan* (שטן), meaning "adversary", has of course been preserved as "Satan", but the Greek word *diabolos* (meaning "slanderer") was also supplied for the personalized Satan of the Book of Job, hence our English *Devil* and *diabolical*; the Germanic *Feind* or *fiend* assumed much the same role.

At the beginning of Genesis we read of Adam and Eve inhabiting *Gan Eden* (גן עדן), the Garden of Eden, and for this idyllic region the ancient translators found an "equivalent" in *paradeisos* – a Greek rendering of the Old Persian *pairi-daēza*, meaning an "enclosure" or "park" in which wild beasts were kept for hunting purposes; Biblical Hebrew borrowed this term in the form of *pardes* (פרדס), "orchard",[3] and English has absorbed it in the restricted sense of *paradise*. "Idol" stems from the Greek *eidōlon* ("phantom"), a substitute for the Hebrew *elil* (אליל) which was incomprehensible to the pagan Greeks and Romans. Down to the present day, any priestly descendant of Aaron is a *kohen* (כהן) and "Cohen" may be that person's surname; avoiding unacceptable pagan "equivalents", the Septuagint translated *kohen* as *presbuteros* ("an elder" chosen to perform sacred acts), from which we ultimately derive both "priest" and "Presbyterian". Another instance is the Biblical *navi* (נביא), a seer who admonished the wicked and had insight into the future; for *navi* Greek invented

2. It seems probable that "by Jove!" was never a pagan oath borrowed by the English, but a disguised form of "by the great Jehovah!" Other familiar substitutions – "by gosh!" and "by golly!" and the French *parbleu!* – may be likened to the pious Jew's use of *Ha-Shem* (השם), in place of even *Adonai*.

3. Song of Songs 4:13; Eccles. 2:5.

the word *prophētēs* ("one who speaks before") and, once again, our "prophet" retains the full sense of the original Hebrew.

Similarly, "benediction" or "blessing" convey the meaning of *berakhah* (ברכה), "commandment" substitutes for *mitzvah* (מצוה), "Decalogue" for *Aseret ha-Dibberot* (עשרת הדברות), "lovingkindness' for *ḥesed* (חסד), "proselyte" for *ger* (גר), "repentance" for *teshuvah* (תשובה), and "sanctuary" for *miqdash* (מקדש). The process I have described also governed the development of many other familiar English words such as "ark", "covenant", "festival", "holy", "merciful", "psalm", "righteousness", "sin", "tabernacle", "Temple", "tithe", and "zealot". These renderings sometimes do less than justice to the original: *ẓedaqah* (צדקה) in Biblical Hebrew nowhere conveys the idea of institutionalized "charity", nor are the negative overtones of the Mosaic "Law" present in *Torah* (תורה), which really means "teaching" or "instruction". Even "peace" (implying the mere absence of war) scarcely conveys the sense of health, wholesomeness and harmony which makes our greeting *shalom!* (שלום) so distinctive.

Tyndale first drew attention to the fact that "the properties of the hebrue tonge agreth a thousande tymes moare with the english then with the latyne. The maner of speakynge is both one, so that in a thousande places thou neadest not but to translate it in to the english worde for worde..."[4] By way of the classical tongues, many of our Biblical borrowings have absorbed the semantic essence of the original terms and, in this way, "caught some gleam of Hebrew meaning".

THE HEBREW ELEMENT IN EVERYDAY ENGLISH – 6

BIBLICAL PHRASES AND PROVERBIAL EXPRESSIONS

Although our film and television screens give a very different impression these days, both the British and the Americans have long been called "Bible-reading people" and this is because the Biblical idiom was injected into the language of ordinary men and women over four centuries ago. John Fiske once wrote that "great consequences have flown from the fact that the first truly popular literature in England – the first which stirred the hearts of all classes of people

4. W. Tyndale, *Obedience of a Christian Man* (1528).

and filled their minds with ideal pictures and their everyday speech with apt and telling phrases – was the literature comprised within the Bible".[5]

What we are concerned with here is the diffusion throughout the English language of essentially *Hebraic* phrases and proverbial expressions. The *Torah*, or Five Books of Moses, is our source when we speak of people making their "exodus", eating "forbidden fruit" (Gen. 2:17), "worshipping the Golden Calf" (Ex. 32:4), hankering after "the fleshpots of Egypt" (Ex. 16:3) or living off "the fat of the land" (Gen. 45:18), and looking for a "scapegoat" (Lev. 16). We know that "man does not live by bread alone" (Deut. 8:3) and earns his living "by the sweat of his brow" (Gen. 3:19); he may live to "a good old age" (Gen. 15:15) but must finally go "the way of all flesh" (Gen. 6:12) and "return to the dust" (Gen. 3:19).

Later portions of the *Tanakh* yield an even more dazzling wealth of expression. The wise man will heed "a word in season" (Prov. 15:23), even "out of the mouths of babes and sucklings" (Ps. 8:3), and – when faced by disaster – "escape by the skin of his teeth" (Job 19:20) and then "go from strength to strength" (Ps. 84:8); after he departs from "the land of the living" (Ps. 27:13), he may enjoy "the sleep of the just'" (Eccles. 5:11). Evildoers, on the other hand, "sow the wind and reap the whirlwind" (Hos. 8:7), cannot see "the writing on the wall" (Dan. 5:25) and forget that "there is no peace for the wicked" (Isa. 48:22) and that "pride goes before a fall" (Prov. 16:18). Remembering that man's life-span is "but threescore years and ten" (Ps. 90:10), parents will "move heaven and earth" (Isa. 13:13, Hag. 2:6) to teach their children "the good and the right way" (I Sam. 12:23), being careful not to "spare the rod and spoil the child" (Prov. 13:24), since "man proposes, God disposes" (Prov. 16:9) and "there is nothing new under the sun" (Eccles. 1:9)![6]

It is not hard to detect the Scriptural origin of phrases such as "feet of clay" (Dan. 2:33–34) or "a voice crying in the wilderness" (Isa. 40:3), but how many listeners can immediately identify "a man after his own heart" (I Sam. 13:14), "white as snow" (Isa. 1:18), "sour grapes" (Jer. 31:29), "a fly in the ointment"

5. J. Fiske, *The Beginnings of New England* (1889).

6. For further examples, and parallel expressions in other languages, see Sivan, *The Bible and Civilization*, pp. 207–210.

(Eccles. 10:1), "at death's door" (Ps. 107:18) or "the Great Unknown" (Job 36:26)? Such Biblical and Hebraic idiom has left its imprint on men's speech from Russia to Hawaii, and in every sphere of Western literature.

Shakespeare was steeped in the Bible, echoes of which recur throughout his plays, and the modern reader is apt to confuse citations from Shakespeare and from the *Authorized Version*, although the dramatist himself used the much reprinted *Geneva Bible* of 1560. His most "Biblical" play is *Henry VIII* (1613), where Archbishop Cranmer pictures the future Queen Elizabeth's reign in terms reminiscent of the Book of Micah and I Kings:

> She shall be lov'd and fear'd. Her own shall bless her:
> Her foes shake like a field of beaten corn,
> And hang their heads with sorrow. Good grows with her;
> In her days every man shall eat in safety
> Under his own vine what he plants, and sing
> The merry songs of peace to all his neighbours.
> God shall be truly known ... (Act V, Scene 5).

The genius of Shakespeare thus helped to naturalize the English Bible in the everyday speech of Elizabethan Engiand. A century later, the essayist Joseph Addison was to point out that "Hebrew idioms run into the English tongue with a particular grace and beauty ... They give a force and energy to our expressions, warm and animate our language, and convey our thoughts in more ardent and intense phrases than any that are to be met with in our own tongue".[7]

One last point: the very titles of certain literary classics bear witness to this pervasive Biblical influence. Here are just a few of the many examples: Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667), Shaw's *Back to Methuselah* (1921), Edith Wharton's *Valley of Decision* (1902; Joel 4:14), Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh* (1903; Gen. 6:12), Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* (1926; Eccles. 1:5) and Aldous Huxley's *Eyeless In Gaza* (1936; Judges 16:21); Warwick Deeping's *The Strong Hand* (1912; Ex. 3:19) and *Corn In Egypt* (1942; Gen. 42:2), Thornton Wilder's *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1942; Job 19:20), Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (1939; Deut. 32:32) and *East of Eden* (1952; Gen. 4:16), and Margaret Mitchell's *Gone With The Wind* (1936; Ps. 103:16).

7. J. Addison, in *The Spectator* (June 14, 1712).

BOOK REVIEWS

B.H. Rigney, *Lilith's Daughters: Women and Religion in Contemporary Fiction*, University of Wisconsin Press, 1982, Pages 120.
P.W. Hadas, *In Light of Genesis*, Jewish Publication Society, 1980, Pages 107.

Eve's daughters were those women who, down the centuries, accepted man's dominance. Lilith's daughters are those women who, in our generation, insist on emancipation from such dominance. Barbara Hill Rigney, Professor of Women's Studies at Ohio State University, explores the approach of contemporary feminist literature, primarily novels of the 1960's and 1970's, to traditional religion, which has been patriarchal and which is now challenged by liberated women in novels of protest and revolt, novels that reject any belief in a male deity.

Legends of the Jews spoke of Lilith as Adam's first wife, who was created simultaneously with him out of the dust of the earth. Because she refused to subordinate herself to him and insisted on full equality with him, the union of this original human couple ran into difficulties and Lilith flew away from her mate.

Eve, Adam's second wife, was created subsequently out of an unimportant part of his anatomy as a mere object for his delight, as a creature that would take loneliness from him and that would always subordinate herself to him. Feminist theology, therefore, rejects Eve as the ideal symbol of womanhood and prefers Lilith as the more adequate symbol of the free woman, the heroic rebel against male hegemony, the first woman to struggle for feminine equality. Feminist literature does not accept the earlier Jewish folkloristic image that degraded Lilith to a demon dangerous to infants, snatching them away soon after birth and quenching their spark of life.

While the submissive Eve is rejected by most feminist novelists, who prefer her proud, untrammeled predecessor, a few attempt to rehabilitate her because she did exercise a moment of freedom and independent decisiveness when she willed against God's injunction. Her sin of disobedience against God's order may have brought death into the world but it also brought knowledge of good and evil and hence progress from naive innocence to a better awareness of reality with its harshness and ecstasy. The Eve acceptable to some champions of woman's liberation is, therefore, not the naive mate in the unproblematic Garden of Eden but rather the needed companion of Adam who leaves or is expelled with her husband from this Utopia and who confronts freedom and responsibility in the real, imperfect world.

The poetic volume of Pamela White Hadas devotes only the first of four sections to Lilith. The other three sections deal with "The Departure and Voice of Sarah," "The Passion of Rahel Varnhagen," and "Woman With

Quasar." Lilith, the original temptress, Sarah, the first woman to convert to Judaism, Rahel, the German Jewess who accepted baptism but who never really escaped from Jewish fate, and the anonymous astronomer, who explores the most distant phenomena of space, are all seeking their identiy, asking, as do contemporary feminists: "Who am I and What am I to become?" Lilith, in her strangeness, revolt and exile, never finds herself but learns to carry on her immortal existence with her crazy freedoms. In the end, however, she proposes to God, who originally exhaled her from his lungs by an unpremeditated gasp, when for the first time he saw the magnificence of the earthly dawn, to marry her and breathe her in again, thus ending her long isolation in the universe. For the Lilith poems, the lyricist relies upon Raphael Patai's *The Hebrew Goddess* (1967) as her principal source, a study that surveys the many faces of Lilith since the Sumerian era but primarily in kabbalistic literature.

Sol Liptzin

THE BABYLONIAN POEM ENUMA ELISH AND GENESIS CHAPTER ONE

A new theory of the relationship between the ancient cuneiform inscription and the Hebrew Scriptures, by Rabbi Dr. I. Rapaport OBE, Melbourne, the Hawthorne Press, 1979, pp. 123.

In our review of Tablet XI of the Gilgamesh Epic (Dor-le-Dor X:4, Summer 1982) we demonstrated how Rabbi Dr. Rapaport had shown how wrong George Smith had been in his conclusions about cuneiform tablets which he had discovered connecting them with the biblical Flood Story. In his current work our author demonstrates at greater length, in a series of 12 chapters, how wrong was the same George Smith in claiming that he had discovered the Babylonian version of the narratives in early Genesis. "The tablets, or rather fragments of them, were specially described by him in a letter to *The Daily Telegraph* on 4 March 1875. And it was all so impressively written up that many a serious student was led into a labyrinth of pseudo-scholarship from which we have not freed ourselves to this day" (p. 11).

The poem is quite undeniably a dramatic composition, one thousand lines long, and inscribed on a series of seven tablets. According to Dr. Rapaport, "the story told in the 162 lines of the first Tablet of Enuma Elish makes no reference to any creational activity . . . The first reference to any such activity is in Tablet 4:138, some 560 lines later on in the poem" (p. 68). If anything, the main figure in the Babylonian figure is Marduk, who seems to pos-

sess several features which are very much like those of Moses in the Book of Exodus. Moreover, *Tiamat* is not a Babylonian word or the name of any divine being. It is most likely an adaptation of the Hebrew word *Tehomot*, with the Babylonian author transferring God's fight against the deeps in Exodus 15 with winds to the scene of Marduk, the supreme Babylonian god, fighting against Tiamat with winds, and overcoming her.

It is not necessary in a review of this nature to go into the detailed arguments by which Dr. Rapaport proves his case, but it is worth quoting his conclusion on p. 119:

"My own view is that Enuma Elish is merely a piece of Babylonian fiction composed in honour of Marduk at the time of Nebukadnezzar's great imperial conquests, and the poem gradually found its way into Assyrian-Babylonian libraries. In much later times the poem – which contains several elements from the biblical Book of Exodus – began to be included in the liturgy of Babylon's New Year Festival. It is as such that the title Enuma Elish is first mentioned in Mesopotamia's cuneiform literature. Indeed the poem never had nation-wide ramifications. It was recited only in the city of Babylon, and nowhere else, while the liturgy itself stems from Seleucid times".

The titles of some of the chapters are of especial interest.

Chapter 5: Enuma Elish and Genesis have nothing in common.

Chapter 7: Echoes from Exodus in the Babylonian poem.

Chapter 8: Similarities between Marduk and Moses.

Chapter 12: The Babylonian author knew Hebrew lore.

The book opens with the New English Bible translation of Proverbs 8:22–31, under the title DIVINE WISDOM PRECEDES THE CREATION OF THE BIBLICAL WORLD.

A book well worth studying.

Joseph Halpern

THE MIDDLE ROAD

A dialogue

Samuel: Go and destroy Amalek (I Sam 15:3)

Saul: If even one person is found slain then all the nearest town must solemnly avow their ignorance of and non-compliance with the murder. How can I go and kill all the Amalekites? Were the women involved? Are the children guilty? Are the cattle to blame?

Divine Echo: Be not righteous overmuch. (Kohelet 7:16)

Samuel: Where was your conscience when you told Doag to kill the priests of Nob? (ibid. 22:18)

Divine Echo: be not overmuch wicked. (ibid. 7:17)

CH.A. *Yoma 22b*

THE 20th WORLD JEWISH YOUTH BIBLE CONTEST

Yom Ha-atzmaut on April 18 not only marked the 35th anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel but also signified the landmark of two decades of annual Bible contests for Jewish youth held each year on Israel's Independence Day. Of the many special events held during the day, the Bible Contest takes on a central and most popular aspect of the T.V. showings for the nation at large.

Thirty one participants, finalists from 13 countries, gathered in Jerusalem for the culminating phase of the contest, which this year included an innovation of a separate earlier contest for Diaspora youth exclusively.

DIASPORA WINNER

The winner of the Diaspora Youth Contest was Rivka Mendelson, from Mexico City. Daughter of the Chief Hazzan of Mexico City and, on the maternal side, a teacher in one of the city's Hebrew schools, Rivka displayed a thorough grasp of the Biblical books that made up the prescribed content of the contest. Asked about her future aspirations, Rivka pointed out her strong desire to study in Israel, either in the field of computers or dental surgery.

ISRAELI WINNERS

Twelve diaspora finalists joined the three Israeli finalists for the Yom Ha-atzmaut event at the over-filled Jerusalem Theater. Raphael Navon, of Israel, emerged as the top winner of the contest, trailed closely by Shimon Ashual, of Israel, and Lisa Szubin, of the United States, in a tie for second place.

Lisa, born in New York City, studied at the Yavneh Academy in Paterson, N.J., and is presently a student at the Ramaz High School in New York City. Her father is a Professor of Comparative Jewish Law at the College of the City of New York. Lisa plans to apply to medical school after her college study.

The Gadna, under the leadership of its commander, Colonel Moshe Sharir, as in previous years, hosted the contestants. The Chaplain of Gadna, Major Samuel Alevitzki, served as Co-ordinator of the International Bible Contest. The Gadna is the pre-military youth corps and has been administering the Bible contest for many years.

A special sub-committee of the ועד חידון התנ"ך worked in conjunction with the Co-ordinator in administering the contest. Serving on this sub-committee were: Chana Rahav, of the Ministry of Defense; Yaakov Halpern, of the Jewish National Fund; David Shemesh, of the Ministry of Education; and Joseph Shaar.

Joseph Shaar, noted writer and educator, was the author of the questions and served as the co-ordinator of the question committee. He also served on the distinguished panel of judges, chaired by Minister of Interior, Dr. Joseph Burg. Other judges included: Oded Cohen, Director of the Youth Division of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Rabbi Elchanan Samuel of the World Zionist Organization Youth Department, and Captain Shimon Bar-Noy, Chaplain in the Israel Defense Forces.

The presidium included: David Bergman, Vice-mayor of Jerusalem; Haim Finkelstein, Chairman of the Board of the Mercaz Hatenakh; Abraham Katz, Vice-chairman of the World Zionist Organization; General Gad Navon, Chief Chaplain of the Israel Defense Forces; Moshe Rivlin, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Jewish National Fund; and Dr. Eli Tavin, Director of the Department of Education and Culture for the Diaspora.

The prizes were presented by Zevulum Hammer, Minister of Education and by Professor Haim Gevaryahu, Chairman of the World Jewish Bible Society.

Rivka Mendelson, winner of the diaspora contest, and Lisa Szubin, second place in the final contest, with the then President of the State of Israel, Yitzchak Navon, and with Yacov Halpern, of the Steering Committee of the Bible Contest.

Minister of Education Zevulun Hammer addressing the convocation before distributing the prizes.

PARTICIPANTS IN THE 20th WORLD BIBLE CONTEST

Argentina
Dino Feigenstock

Australia
Anthony Leibler
Menahem Shlomi

Brasil
Nelson Homsi
Joseph Sasoun

Canada
Yaacov Basser
Elie Kadoch

Costa Rica
Sidney Rosenstock
Tamara Tarnopolsky

France
Michel Bodokh
Shlomo Sebbag
Isac Toledano

Ireland
Simone Fireman
Susan Yaffe

Israel
Shimon Ashual
Raphael Navon
Dov Kaltowitz

Mexico
Rivka Mendelson
Yaffa Szezupak

Panama
Shay Levy

South Africa
Barry Burland
Nicole Wittert

United States
Alan Goldman
Larry Kauffman
Mara Leventhal
Mishaela Rubin
Solomon Schneider
Stacey Sern
Lisa Szubin

Uruguay
Gabriel Fialco
Judith Stolarski

SUGGESTION FOR FUTURE BIBLE CONTESTS

BY BEN ZION LURIA

There is no doubt that the Bible Contest for Jewish Youth, held annually on Yom Ha-atzmaut, is the highpoint of the Independence Day celebration. It brings to the forefront our love for the Book of Books, on the day that identifies the love of all "Am Yisrael" toward the land of Israel. It is no wonder that tens of thousands of viewers are glued to the T.V. set, from Dan to Eilat. The administrative organizers of the Contest have brought in each year interesting innovations which have enhanced the enjoyment and excitement of the event, both at the Jerusalem Theater where it is held and on television. The exemplary program of the Contest developed by the Gadna, the pre-military youth corps, who are responsible for the success of the event; the Israel Army choir and the T.V. stars participating in the presentation, adding a special note of enthusiasm; the greetings of the Minister of Education and of many prominent leaders of the Israel Knesset and the World Zionist Organization; the participation of a panel of judges presided over by Dr. Joseph Burg, Minister of Interior; the full house at the theater following intensely every question and answer; all these lend the Contest a regal note of splendor.

Despite all this, may I be bold enough to raise certain issues which strike at the roots of the rationale for such contests: By the nature of things, a contest is competition. Now, this competition is legitimate when the contestants are more or less of comparable strength. However, our Bible contest, in its present form pits youth of unequal strength, and already in its early preliminary stage, students from religious schools to compete for the honors.

If the Contest is meant to arouse interest in the study of Bible, then it misses its goal since students from Yeshivot or "Bnei Akiva" need no such incentive. The Contest could serve a tremendous educational purpose if it were geared to

Mr. Luria, editor of Beth Mikra, the Hebrew quarterly of the World Jewish Bible Society, served for many years on the ועדת חידון התנ"ך, the Bible Contest Committee. This article appeared in the Israel daily newspaper Maariv, on May 25, 1983. We present it here in the hope that this will stimulate our readers who have had some connection with the Bible Contest to come forth with their ideas.

students of the general school who could benefit from gratifying experiences through participation in the Contest. But the chance for such gratification is nil for the larger majority of Israel's youth. As it is today, the Contest turns out to be an interesting show, and as such, does not add glory to the Tanach, in my opinion.

Though the Contest aims to reach all the youth of Israel, it essentially closes out 75% of our youth, those who study in the general school. This, I think, should be corrected.

The Contest has another aim: to encourage the study of Bible among Jewish youth of the Diaspora. But here too there is a too wide discrepancy between the knowledge of the students in the Israeli religious school and of students in the Diaspora religious schools. The Diaspora participants simply cannot compete with the Israeli religious students, who have a much more intensive exposure to the Bible by virtue of their living in Israel and Hebrew as their native language. To ameliorate this condition, the Contest committee devised a dual form of honors: one for the winner of the Contest (practically always an Israeli winner) and the Diaspora contestant with the largest number of points. This innovation likewise lacks dignity, in distinguishing between first class and second class honors.

There agencies participate in the sponsorship of the Contest: the Youth Division of the Ministry of Education, the Gadna and the World Jewish Bible Society. Since my forthcoming recommendation touches a sensitive chord in the whole area of education, I would be happy to see the Minister of Education, responsible for all aspects of educational advancement, consider this matter and determine an alternate annual contest. On each alternate year a contest, intended exclusively for students in the general secular schools, should be held; that is, one year in its present form and the other, only for the participants from the general schools. Contestants from the Diaspora could participate in each contest, with no distinction between Israel and the Diaspora in the honors.

This alternate cycle is justifiable in that the level of the questions could be regulated in accordance with the level of Biblical knowledge of the respective groups.

Editor's Comment:

It is evident that Mr. Luria's concern is primarily centered in the

equalization of competition between the two systems of education in Israel. How about the Diaspora contestants? Will his proposal correct the unevenness between the Israeli and Diaspora contestants?

For the first time, this year, a special contest was held only for the Diaspora participants (see the earlier story). In addition, the Diaspora contestants took part in all of the phases of the Contest, that is, a written test, from which the finalists for the final stage were selected for participation in the Yom Ha-atzmaut contest at the Jerusalem Theater.

We should like to receive the reactions of our readers. Have we hit the proper solution for the Diaspora contestants? Is our Bible Contest achieving its primary goal of encouraging a maximum study of Bible among Diaspora youth?

עשה תורתך קבע

Excerpts from the

TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER–OCTOBER 1983 — תשרי תשמ"ד

Th	Genesis 21:1-34	ראש השנה בראשית כ"א, א-לד	א 8
	Haftarah: I Samuel 1-2:10	הפטרה: שמואל א א',-ב', י	
F	Genesis 22:1-24	ראש השנה: בראשית כ"ב, א-כד	ב 9
	Haftarah: Jeremiah 31:2-20	הפטרה: ירמיה ל"א, ב-כ	
שבת	Haftarah: Hosea 14:2-10	האזינו הפטרה: הושע י"ד, ב-י	ג 10
S	Jonah 1	יונה א	ד 11
M	Jonah 2	יונה ב	ה 12
T	Jonah 3	יונה ג	ו 13
W	Jonah 4	יונה ד	ז 14
Th	Jonah 4	יונה ד	ח 15
F		ערב יום כפור	ט 16
שבת	Leviticus 16	יום כפור ויקרא ט"ז	י 17
	Haftarah Isaiah 57:14-58:6	הפטרה: ישעיה נ"ז, יד-נ"ח, ו	
S	Ecclesiastes 1-2	קהלת א-ב	יא 18
M	Ecclesiastes 3-4	קהלת ג-ד	יב 19
T	Ecclesiastes 5-6	קהלת ה-ו	יג 20
W		ערב סוכות	יד 21
Th	Leviticus 22:26-23:44	סוכות: ויקרא כ"ב, כו-כ"ג, מד*	טו 22
	Haftarah Zechariah 14	הפטרה: זכריה י"ד	
F	Leviticus 22:26-23:44*	סוכות: ויקרא*	טז 23
	Haftarah: I Kings 8:2-21*	הפטרה: מלכים א ח', ב-כא*	
שבת	Haftarah: Ezekiel 28:18-39:16	הפטרה: יחזקאל ל"ח, יח-ל"ט, טז	יז 24
S	Ecclesiastes 7-8	חול המועד: קהלת ז-ח	יח 25
M	Ecclesiastes 9-10	חול המועד: קהלת ט-י	יט 26
T	Ecclesiastes 11-12	חול המועד: קהלת יא-יב	כ 27
W		הושענא רבה	כא 28
Th	Deuteronomy 14:22-16:17	שמיני עצרת דברים י"ד, כב-ט"ז, יז	כב 29
	Haftarah: I Kings 8:54-66	הפטרה: מלכים א ח', מד-סו	
F	Deuteronomy 33-34	שמחת תורה: זאת הברכה**	כג 30
	Haftarah Joshua 1	הפטרה: יהושע א	
		October	
שבת	Haftarah: Isaiah 42:5-43:10	הפטרה: ישעיה מ"ב, ה-מ"ג, י	כד 1
S	Jeremiah 4	ירמיה ד	כה 2
M	Jeremiah 5	ירמיה ה	כו 3
T	Jeremiah 6	ירמיה ו	כז 4
W	Jeremiah 7	ירמיה ז	כח 5
Th	Jeremiah 8	ירמיה ח	כט 6
F	Genesis 6:9-11	נח	ל 7

* Only in the Diaspora
** In Israel this is read on Thursday

* רק בחוץ לארץ
** בישראל קוראים את זה ביום ה'

חשון תשמ"ד

OCTOBER–NOVEMBER 1983

א	8	הפטרה: ישעיה ס"ו	שבת	Haftarah: Isaiah 66
ב	9	ירמיה ט	S	Jeremiah 9
ג	10	ירמיה י	M	Jeremiah 10
ד	11	ירמיה יא	T	Jeremiah 11
ה	12	ירמיה יב	W	Jeremiah 12
ו	13	ירמיה יג	Th	Jeremiah 13
ז	14	לך לך	F	Genesis 12-17
ח	15	הפטרה ישעיה מ', כז-כ"א, מו	שבת	Haftarah Isaiah 40:27-41:46
ט	16	ירמיה יד	S	Jeremiah 14
י	17	ירמיה טו	M	Jeremiah 15
יא	18	ירמיה טז	T	Jeremiah 16
יב	19	ירמיה יז	W	Jeremiah 17
יג	20	ירמיה יח	Th	Jeremiah 18
יד	21	וירא	F	Genesis 18-22
טו	22	הפטרה מלכים ב ד', א-לז	שבת	Haftarah II Kings 4:1-37
טז	23	ירמיה יט	S	Jeremiah 19
יז	24	ירמיה כ	M	Jeremiah 20
יח	25	ירמיה כא	T	Jeremiah 21
יט	26	ירמיה כב	W	Jeremiah 22
כ	27	ירמיה כג	Th	Jeremiah 23
כא	28	חיי שרה	F	Genesis 23-25:18
כב	29	הפטרה מלכים א, א', א-ל"א	שבת	Haftarah I Kings 1:1-31
כג	30	ירמיה כד	S	Jeremiah 24
כד	30	ירמיה כה	M	Jeremiah 25
		November		
כה	1	ירמיה כו	T	Jeremiah 26
כו	2	ירמיה כז	W	Jeremiah 27
כז	3	ירמיה כח	Th	Jeremiah 28
כח	4	תולדות	F	Genesis 25:19-28:9
כט	5	הפטרה שמואל א כ', יח-מב	שבת	Haftarah I Samuel 20:18-42
ל	6	ירמיה כט	S	Jeremiah 29

M	Jeremiah 30	ירמיה ל	7 א
T	Jeremiah 31	ירמיה לא	8 ב
W	Jeremiah 32	ירמיה לב	9 ג
Th	Jeremiah 33	ירמיה לג	10 ד
F	Genesis 28:10-32:3	ויצא	11 ה
שבת	Haftarah Hosea 12:13-14:10	הפטרה הושע י"ב, יג-י"ד, י	12 ו
	Hosea 11:7-12:12	הושע י"א, ז-י"ב, יב	
S	Jeremiah 34	ירמיה לד	13 ז
M	Jeremiah 35	ירמיה לה	14 ח
T	Jeremiah 36	ירמיה לו	15 ט
W	Jeremiah 37	ירמיה לז	16 י
Th	Jeremiah 38	ירמיה לח	17 יא
F	Genesis 32:4-36	וישלח	18 יב
שבת	Haftarah Hosea 11:7-12:12 (A)	הפטרה הושע י"א, ז-י"ב, יב (א)	19 יג
	Obadiah (S)	עובדיה (ס)	
S	Jeremiah 39	ירמיה לט	20 יד
M	Jeremiah 40	ירמיה מ	21 טו
T	Jeremiah 41	ירמיה מא	22 טז
W	Jeremiah 43	ירמיה מג	24 יח
F	Genesis 37-41:43	וישב	25 יט
שבת	Haftarah: Amos 2:1-3:8	הפטרה עמוס ב', א-ג', ח	26 כ
S	Jeremiah 44	ירמיה מד	27 כא
M	Jeremiah 45	ירמיה מה	28 כב
T	Jeremiah 46	ירמיה מו	29 כג
W	Jeremiah 47	ירמיה מז	30 כד
		December	
Th	Jeremiah 48	חנוכה ירמיה מח	1 כה
F	Genesis 41:44-17	חנוכה מקץ	2 כו
שבת	Haftarah Zechariah 2:14-4:7	הפטרת חנוכה: זכריה ב', יד-ד', ז	3 כז
S	Jeremiah 49	חנוכה ירמיה מט	4 כח
M	Jeremiah 50	חנוכה ירמיה נ	5 כט
T	Jeremiah 51	חנוכה ירמיה נא	6 ל

דף יומי

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

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ז' בחשון מתחילים מס' פסחים

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