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OF

RABBI DR. CHAIM PEARL
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EDITORIAL

Some controversies which achieve the status of *cause célèbre* could happen only in a state like Israel, where the people not only live in the Land of the Bible but where the Scriptures and their commentaries are the daily fare of a considerable proportion of the population. So, for example, sometime ago, in the 1950s, the government of Israel could have fallen by a vote of no-confidence just because the then prime minister David Ben Gurion offered his opinion, in a widely publicized Bible lecture, that it was inconceivable for the children of Israel to have left Egypt numbering as many as 600,000 adult males, as stated in the Bible (Ex. 12:37; Cf. Num. 1:46), since such a number would imply a total Israelite population with women and children of something like two million. Such a huge number leaving Egypt all at once and trekking through the inhospitable wilderness is incredible. Ben Gurion (who loved to study the Bible) suggested that a more reasonable reading of the Bible record would be 6,000! This led to an absolute deluge of criticism with fear for the stability of the government of the day.

Last July-August another controversy broke out with the Bible as its stage: this time without any political complications. No government was threatened and no national crisis loomed, but in many ways the quarrel went deeper and involved a principle of some importance. The cast in the centre stage were Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, several ultra-Orthodox spokesmen led by Rabbi Eliezer Schach and the Bible characters, Samson and Deborah.

Adin Steinsaltz is one of the most outstanding Jewish scholars in the world today. He is responsible for an ongoing massive modern commentary on the Talmud — for which he recently won the Israel Prize; he is the author of a large number of books on Jewish philosophy and religion and has recently set up a school for Jewish studies in Moscow. These achievements have rightly earned him the admiration of countless Jews all over the world. One might have thought that almost without exception his followers would include every section of the Orthodox community, including the most extreme elements.

But this was not to be. For Rabbi Steinsaltz published his views on Samson and Deborah. These views were broadcast in a series of talks on biblical

personalities which he gave on the Israel Forces Radio. Later the talks were published in booklets by the Israel Ministry of Defence. In his evaluations, Steinsaltz described Samson as a "young thug" while Deborah's song of victory (Judges 5) was characterized as "one of the most blood-thirsty poems in the whole of the Bible." Now it is safe to say, that such views would not offend most students of the Bible, including religiously Orthodox Jews. Steinsaltz's assessment of Samson finds ample support in the observations of the talmudic rabbis (Sota 9b) who criticize him for his dissolute sexual conduct and his lust after loose women, one of whom brought about his downfall. However, Rabbi Schach thinks otherwise, and he came down hard on Rabbi Steinsaltz for daring to criticize a Bible hero. It may be that the good Rabbi Schach was suspicious of Rabbi Steinsaltz because of the latter's great Talmud commentary, for which Steinsaltz has been compared to a modern Rashi! Such fame is unacceptable in the eyes of Schach for whom anything new in the way of traditional scholarship is outlawed. If that is true then the Bible interpretation incident was just a convenient excuse to have Steinsaltz publicly rebuked and a ban placed on all his books.

In the next act of the drama Rabbi Steinsaltz offered a public apology, and even thanked the ultra Orthodox community for correcting his mistakes; offering to refund the money to anyone who had bought the booklets that Rabbi Schach and his colleagues had denounced. Following the apology, a spokesman of the fundamentalist camp, not entirely satisfied with Rabbi Steinsaltz's sorrowful regret, questioned whether Steinsaltz's works are just errors of judgment or outright heresy. It is a pity, he said, that the community has dispensed with the need for the old type of rabbinic *haskamah* — the imprint of a spokesman for Orthodoxy that the new book has passed the test and is free from the taint of nonconformist views. What he seemed to advocate was a Jewish version of the Catholic Index of Prohibited Books.

What led Rabbi Steinsaltz to capitulate is still not known. He himself revealed some of his feeling on the matter when he said that he was concerned that his biblical criticism might cause bad feeling and dissention in the community. Peace and brotherly love among Jews was the most important value, and in pursuit of that aim he saw fit to retract.

For us however, the matter raises the fundamental question of an honest

examination of the Bible text and an open minded willingness to arrive at conclusions which may not meet with the approval of Rabbi Schach and his school. In this intellectually honest exercise we believe that we are in any case following the Jewish tradition which has taught that there are numerous ways to read and understand a Bible text. Indeed, Bible commentary is virtually a Jewish brainchild, and the entire corpus of midrashic literature, covering a thousand years and more of biblical exposition would have been impossible if the views of Rabbi Schach and Bible fundamentalism had dominated the scene of rabbinic scholarship. It was thanks to the more liberal, non-fundamentalist approach to the Bible text and its story that rabbis, scholars and teachers of the Jewish people were always able to make the Bible eternally relevant for every generation.

Chaim Pearl
Associate Editor



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DEBORAH, THE WIFE OF LAPIDOT

BY H. GEVARYAHU

The Book of Judges relates a unique historic event — the ideal sharing of tasks between the prophetess Deborah and the military leader Barak. No other example of a woman fighting for liberty, inspired by a divine vision, is found in ancient history. Neither do we find a woman who combined poetic and military skills.

Let us consider the historical background during the days of Deborah, the prophetess who dwelled in the mountains of Ephraim and instructed the military leader, Barak, son of Abinoam, to convene the fighting people upon Tabor, a mountain in the northern part of the land.

THE CANAANITE ENCLAVE IN THE VALLEY OF ZEBULUN

The largest of the Canaanite enclaves that remained unconquered was in what is today the Valley of Zebulun, north of Haifa. Its king was Yabin, and the captain of his army was Sisera, who had gained the upper hand over the Israelites.

And the children of Israel cried to the Lord for he (Sisera) had 900 iron chariots (Judges 4:1–3).

The chariot of antiquity was the equivalent of the tank of today. It was a powerful contrivance, driven by trained horses and manned by two or three soldiers. Such chariots, especially in large numbers, had clear advantage over foot soldiers. Since the Israelites had no chariots, the military superiority of Sisera's forces is quite apparent. Salvation from this major threat was offered by the Lord through the joint efforts of the two remarkable personalities — the prophetess Deborah and the military leader Barak.

* As this issue went to press, we were saddened by the passing of Prof. Haim Gevaryahu.

Professor Gevaryahu was the chairman of the World Jewish Bible Society. He has written extensively on biblical subjects. He is now preparing for publication major works on the Biography of the Book of Psalms, Biblical proto-canonical Colophons, and on Monotheism vs. Polytheism.

THE CHARISMA OF DEBORAH

This is how the Book of Judges describes her:

And Deborah, prophetess, the wife of Lapidot, judged Israel in that time. And she sat under the palm-tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill-country of Ephraim; and the children of Israel came to her for judgment.

She does not sit in the gates of the city – the way the Elders did – but in the fields, under the shade of a palm-tree that carries her name, in an area open to two settlements, Ramah and Beth-el – approximately seven miles north of Jerusalem. The very nature of the site, in which she sits in judgment, has the aura of antiquity – agricultural settlements on hills, without walls and gates. Deborah appears before Barak as a messenger of the Lord, imposing on him the mobilization of men and command over these forces, for the purpose of engaging in a war of liberation against Sisera.

Deborah seems to have a thorough knowledge of military and topographical conditions of the land within a 50 mile radius. She, in fact, advises Barak, the military leader, on strategic matters:

And she sent and called Barak... out of Kadesh-Naphtali, saying to him: hath not the Lord, God of Israel commanded: Go and draw toward mount Tabor, and take with you 10,000 men of the children of Naphtali and Zebulun, and I will draw Sisera unto you to the brook Kishon, with his chariots and his multitudes, and I will deliver him into thy hand (Judges 4:6–7).

MIRACLE AND STRATEGY

It is remarkable that this woman not only expresses the feelings of the people in whose midst she lives, but proposes a sound strategy of warfare to be waged. Let us consider the topography of Tabor and the brook Kishon, as well as the military equipment in the hands of the enemy. As stated before, the iron-chariot is an effective weapon on a plain where it can move and maneuver. However it is totally ineffective in a hilly region, therefore, the advice of Deborah to concentrate Israel's forces on mount Tabor, inaccessible to the chariots. The basic strategy is to attack the forces of Sisera and his chariots at a moment when they are immobilized, namely when the brook Kishon, overflowing through a downpour of rain, would create heavy mud.

Now comes a confluence of miracle and strategy, as Deborah determines the day of victory:

And Deborah said unto Barak: "Up, for this is the day in which the Lord has delivered Sisera into thy hand; is not the Lord gone out before you?"
(Judges 4:14).

What happened? Precisely on that day there was a heavy downpour and the entire area turned into mud. This important detail we learn from the Song of Deborah:

*They fought from heaven, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera.
The brook Kishon swept them away, that ancient brook, the brook Kishon
Oh my soul, tread them down with strength!* (Judges 5:21-22).

Sisera had made the fatal error when he and his nine hundred chariots became entrapped by the brook Kishon. The rain which caused the overflowing of the Kishon and the consequent mud is a perfectly natural event. What turns this into a miraculous event is the *timing*. For the rain came precisely on the day of the battle, enabling the mobile foot soldiers of a few Israelite tribes to gain a major victory over the heavily armed forces of Sisera. The deep personal commitment and excitement on the part of Deborah, who foresaw but could not be certain of the positive consequences of her prediction, finds full expression in her terse exclamation: *Oh my soul, tread them down with strength!*

THE SONG OF DEBORAH

The Book of Judges has left for us two documents concerning the battle between Barak and Sisera. One is historical, and the second is the Song. There are differences between both accounts. For instance, according to the narration essentially only two tribes, Zebulun and Naphtali, took an active part in the war. In the Song, however, six tribes participated. Deborah rebukes those tribes who refrained from coming to the aid of Zebulun and Naphtali. Her sarcasm is directed especially against the tribe of Reuben: *sitting among the sheepfold... having great searchings of the heart*. Her greatest anger is reserved for the inhabitants of Meroz, even to the point where she curses them. She praises these tribes which had come to the aid of God's people, singling out Zebulun and Naphtali. This is the way of Scripture. Both sources, though differing slightly, complement each other.

The Song expresses the aspiration of the people of Israel. The six tribes who participated are the "People of Israel" and represent all of Israel. "Songs", and Deborah's Song in particular, are one of the great contributions to the culture of Israel.

Though it is stated that "Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day," all ancient and modern interpreters are certain that Deborah was the actual author of this song. The name of Barak was mentioned in order to honor the military leader of this war. The song does not glorify human valor. It is primarily a song to the Lord, God of Israel. The poetess calls for the tribes to come to the aid of the Lord. The victory over the Canaanites is essentially a victory over the enemies of the Lord. A powerful religious feeling penetrates that song.

According to the portrayal of the song, the people who have dedicated themselves to fight the oppressor are young and warm-hearted:

*When men let grow their hair in Israel
When the people offer themselves willingly
Bless ye the Lord (Judges 5:2).*

How are we to understand the expression *When men let grow their hair*? The young men of Israel took upon themselves the vow of *Nazir*, when going to war against the Canaanite oppressor, which included sanctifying their hair.

Some of the leaders and law-makers of the people also joined these young men, and Deborah triumphantly exclaims:

*My heart is toward the governors of Israel
That offered themselves willingly among the people
Bless ye the Lord (Judges 5:9).*

Twice she addresses all her listeners, all of Israel, to praise the Lord who has appeared to save His people.

There is in the Song of Deborah, as in other narrations in which Israel is rebuked, the emphasis on God's acts of loving-kindness toward Israel in the past. Hence there is expectation of salvation in the present and in the future.

*Lord, when Thou didst go forth out of Seir
When You marched out of the fields of Edom...
The mountains quaked at the presence of the Lord...
Even Sinai, at the presence of the... God of Israel (Judges 5:4).*

It is characteristic that the prophetess turns to Mount Sinai, which is the site of

the first revelation, engendering the faith of Israel. For it is there that Moses experienced the divine presence in the form of the Burning Bush.

Perhaps the most significant point to be made is the complete absence of magic and mantic in this Song. Priests-magicians accompanied the military camps of the pagans. Here we cannot find the slightest indication of paganism. From the first, the One God controls heavens and earth, stars, mountains and clouds. Thus this Song serves as a first-rate document of the monotheistic faith of Israel almost from her inception as a people. It was unquestionably a young nation, alone in the world, steeped in a unique faith. This Song of Deborah is invaluable in two respects. Not only is it magnificent poetry, but it also serves as a major document for scholars who wish to learn about the history of Israel's faith.

AUTHORSHIP

There are differing opinions regarding the authorship of the Song of Deborah. If we have before us a religious song which was written in the heat of battle, reflecting the immediacy of an ongoing war, then Deborah was the authoress. Some feel that it may be an epos, written a long time after the event, and credited to Deborah, as was often the case in ancient literature. The great scholar, Martin Buber, viewed this Song as being contemporaneous with the events described there. Here is what he had to say:

“Almost everyone agrees that the Song of Deborah is truly historical, namely, it is a poetic expression which burst forth from the heart of a person, who took part in this mighty event. It was that person's obligation to capture this event... and to transmit it to others. The poet... is not only close to the event, but is in the midst of its actual happenings. He calls on those who act, he arouses and encourages them, he blesses and curses, not concerned with matters that have occurred before, but with those that unfold in the stormy actions that have not yet abated...”

To emphasize the relevance of immediacy to a poet, David Ben Gurion once related how, in the War of Liberation, when a much-needed armament was secretly brought by ship, Nathan Alterman, who was on the scene, immediately wrote a mighty poem about it.

THE SONG REFLECTS THE CULTURE OF ISRAEL

This Song bears indirect witness to the cultural level of Israel, a people able to read and write. It is clear that the author of this Song – intended for it to be well known and studied by the people.

The Song states: *they that handle the marshal's staff (shevet sofer)* (4:14). In antiquity both the judge and the prince needed reading and writing skills in the pursuance of their tasks. Thus they were not merely law-makers, but also scribes. A careful analysis of all literary and historical sources indicates that Deborah and the women of her circle knew how to read and write as well. The many archaeological discoveries of writings in Israel confirm it.

Many passages in the Bible also tell of writing done by the people. Such as: *And you shall teach them to your sons*. This refers to teaching by heart. *And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and gates*. This refers to learning by writ. A most remarkable incident is related about Gideon (Judges 8:14). In his pursuit after the enemy across the Jordan he *caught a young man of the men of Succoth; and he inquired of him; and he wrote down for him the princes of Succoth*. Thus a simple youth in the days of Gideon knew how to write.

In the description of Sisera's mother we have a further hint regarding the differences between two cultures. We have indicated before that the Song of Deborah is free of any pagan influences. Now let us read the following:

*Through the window she looked forth and peered
The mother of Sisera, through the lattice.
Why is his chariot so long in coming?...
The wisest of the princesses answer her...
Are they not finding, are they not dividing the spoil?
A damsel, two damsels to every man... (Judges 8:28–30).*

The ideal of the Canaanite was to grab pretty girls and women and divide them among the soldiers – to become maid-servants and concubines - even two damsels per soldier. In opposition to it, the Torah puts strong limits on an Israeli soldier who focused his desire on a fair captive woman (Deuteronomy 21:1–14).

The Song of Deborah ends with the state of affairs after the war: *And the land was quiet for forty years*. During the period of an entire generation there was absolute quiet without war.

THE HUMPTY DUMPTY PRINCIPLE IN BIBLICAL TRANSLATION

BY DAVID WOLFERS

"There's glory for you!"

"I don't know what you mean by 'glory,'" Alice said.

Humpty Dumpty smiled contemptuously. "Of course you don't — till I tell you. I meant 'there's a nice knock-down argument for you!'"

"But 'glory' doesn't mean 'a nice knock-down argument,'" Alice objected.

"When *I* use a word," Humpty Dumpty said, in rather a scornful tone, "it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less."

"The question is," said Alice, "whether you *can* make words mean so many different things."

"The question is," said Humpty Dumpty, "which is to be master — that's all."

It is not possible to be certain that Lewis Carrol, *alias* the Rev. Charles Dodgson, was aiming this passage in "Alice Through the Looking-glass" at contemporary biblical scholars, but it is highly probable. As a cleric, he may be assumed to have some interest in the matter, and his book was published in 1871, just a short time after Dr. Pusey¹ had lambasted them in the following terms:

"The comparison of the cognate dialects opened for a time an unlimited licence of innovation. Every principle of interpretation, every rule of language was violated. The Bible was interpreted with a wild recklessness to which no other book has ever been subjected. A subordinate meaning of some half-understood Arabic word was always at hand to remove whatever one disliked."

I want to show, with a mere three illustrations out of the dozens which are

1 E.B. Pusey (1800–1882), quoted in the preface to H.H. Bernard "Book of Job", Adams & Co., London, 1864.

Dr. Wolfers is a medical practitioner and demographer who, since his retirement in Jerusalem in 1976, had devoted his time to study and translation of the Book of Job. He is the author of numerous scientific articles and co-author of several books on aspects of the international population problem. At present he is assistant editor of Dor Le Dor.

available in the Book of Job alone, how the "principle" by which the translator coerces a word into meaning what it does not wish to mean, was never intended to mean, never *could* mean, continues to flourish unabated in modern biblical scholarship. To make sure that there is no question but that my target is contemporary, and not merely recent work, I shall take all these illustrations from a very recently published translation of the book, that of the new Jewish Publication Society version,² which saw the light first in 1980.

אבי

My first example is the simple word אבי in Job 34:36. The complete verse is "אבי יבחן איוב עד-נצח / על-תשובה באנשי-און", and the translators have rendered this: "Would that Job were tried to the limit For answers which befit sinful men." That is, they have translated the word אבי to mean "Would that...!" By so doing they have also placed in the speaker, Elihu's, mouth an expression of blasphemous uncharity which is entirely at variance with his character in the remainder of his prolonged address to Job and his "friends."

It is true that these translators did not invent this reading, but they have acceded to it. The originator seems to have been no less a scholar than Rashi, and his first seconder was Ibn Ezra. An attempt has been made³ to provide a pedigree for this bastard, and it is said to be derived from ביי, a verb meaning "to entreat." That there is no such verb in Hebrew is easily brushed aside because there is apparently an Arabic word (see Pusey, *supra*) which, in the Hauran mountains only, means "to come as a suppliant, entreat." Driver & Gray⁴ have rather unsportingly pointed out that this is a recent dialectic meaning of the word *bayya* in that region. A reserve position is provided by the particle בי which forms part of the stockphrase בי אדני, and is a conventional form of respectful address. I have not come across the most probable explanation of this phrase, which is that בי is in fact a shortened form of אבי, with the normal meaning and derivation which I shall now discuss.

2 "The Book of Job" Jewish Publication Society of America, 1980.

3 *BDB Lexicon*, p. 106; or see R. Gordis, "Book of Job", Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1978, p. 395, who derives it from אבה "to be willing" or, according to him, "to wish or desire."

4 S. R. Driver & G. B. Gray, "Book of Job" Edinburgh 1921, *Philological Notes*, p. 265.

In II Kings 5:13 the servants of the Syrian commander, Naaman, faced with the delicate task of persuading him to change his mind, follow the advice of Elisha the prophet, and bathe in the Jordan to cleanse himself of leprosy, begin their address to him with the word אָבִי. This is usually translated "My father" which, after all, is what the word means. However, Naaman's servants are not his children, so a preferable translation would seem to be "Sire!" which, although it has the same meaning as "my father" has acquired a different usage as a form of extreme respect, usually addressed to kings. The same usage is to be found in I Sam. 24:11 where David addresses Saul as אָבִי, to which in 24:16, Saul returns the compliment with "Is this your voice, *my son* David?". בִּי אֲדֹנָי as "Sire, my Lord" would seem at least plausible. But let us return to Job 34:36.

The fact of the matter is that Job is already in the process of being tried to the limit; that is certainly one of the themes of the Book of Job, so that even were Elihu filled with black malice towards him, there would be little point in his entreating endless trial for Job. יִבְחַן אִיּוֹב עַד-נִצָּח surely only means "Job is being tried to the limit", and אָבִי is a respectful and introductory "Sire!" All that remains is to determine who is the recipient of this respect.

Chapter 34, almost in its entirety, is addressed to Job's three comforters, although in v. 33 Elihu turns and addresses Job. To conclude the chapter he returns to his original form of address in the first stitch of v. 34, and then modulates in the second from plural to singular, and where in v. 2 he termed the comforters, doubtless with sarcastic intent, "wise men", in the second stitch of v. 34 he refers ingratiatingly to "a man of wisdom". This gracefully prepares the way for the conclusion of the chapter with a final word to the leader of the company. If, with the use of the word "Sire" as a form of address to Eliphaz, Elihu has betrayed his intention "not to betitle" (32:21, 22), given the mixture of arrogance and uncertainty in his character, this was only to have been expected. Eliphaz is, of course, in the sense that the title is employed for example in Jer. 25, a king. The final remark to be made on this subject is that "Would that..." is an extremely common expression in the Book of Job, *always as* מִי־יִחַן.

A MARTIAL IMAGE

The next example, while it owes something to past misdeeds, is essentially an original piece of Humpty Dumpty linguistics in NJPSV. The author wrote, after

verse 20:24, which reads “Let him flee the iron shaft, the bow of brass will impale him!”

שלף יצא מגוה וברק ממרתו יהלך עליו אמים

The translators have rendered this as follows:

“Brandished and run through his body, The blade, through his gall, Strikes terror into him” – I should think it would, too!

There is a certain difficulty in discerning which words in the English are intended to represent which in the Hebrew, for the resemblances are faint. However, the following is fairly secure.

שלף = brandished.

ברק = the blade.

אמים = terrors.

יצא מן = run through.

ממרתו = through his gall.

עליו = into him.

גוה = his body.

יהלך = strikes.

Here, then, we have a verse which not only makes no sense in itself, not only does not follow consecutively from its predecessor, but in which every single one of its eight words and two prepositional particles is manifestly and brutally mistranslated! Let us see how we get on when we translate simply and literally what the Hebrew has to say.

שלף = He draws (a sword). יצא מן = he departs from. גוה = pride. ברק = a flash of lightning. ממרתו = his bitterness. יהלך מן = he goes from. עליו = upon him. אמים = terror.

Of these words, most are quite straightforward. The word גוה is a contraction of גאוה which, by a happy circumstance, is to be found twice elsewhere in the Book of Job and once in Jeremiah. The word ממרה as vocalized in this verse also occurs twice elsewhere in the Book of Job, once meaning “poison” and once “bitter things” or “bitterness”, and once in Deuteronomy where it is the abstract “bitterness”. Differently vocalized only in Job 16:13, it means “bile” (not, please, “gall”, still less “gallbladder”). The masculine plural of אימה is intensive and therefore denotes the singular “terror”. What then is the meaning of the verse? Its “correct” translation?

It is apparent that there are two masculine singular subjects here, as indeed the context indicates, for this passage is about the way in which God (1st subject) delivers his deserts to the sinner (2nd subject). Thus the “iron shaft” and “bow of brass” of the preceding verse are divine implements wielded by an avenging deity. The bow presumably shoots lightning, the iron shaft is the avenging sword. We must, therefore, in translating give full value to the “waw” before וַיֵּצֵא to yield: “When He (God) draws, he (the sinner) departs from his pride; And at a flash of (His) lightning he quits his bitter deeds — Terror is upon him!”

חפצו

Among all the biblical words signifying sin and punishment and doom and vengeance, the word חפצו is a joy to deal with. As a noun it signifies pleasure and delight; as a verb, the same thing, “to take pleasure in.” It forms the major part of that loveliest of names, Hephzibah — “My delight is in her.” We have seen⁵ how in Job 40:17 innumerable generations of scholars have refused to allow the word its true meaning in a somewhat salacious context. Now let us examine how NJPSV deals with the word in another context, 21:21:

כי מה-חפצו בביתו אחריו ומספר חדשיו חפצו

Both the meaning and the significance of this verse are, I suggest, perfectly clear, without obscurity, indeed quite without any difficulty. It asks:

“For what will be his pleasure in his house after him
When his time is cut short?”

and its significance for the story is that it represents a rejection of the consolation offered to Job by his friends to the effect that his descendants (or his people) will be restored to their former state at some time in the future (5:25; 8:19), on the grounds that post-mortem consolation is no comfort.

Now let us see what NJPSV has made of the verse:

“For what does he care about the fate of his family
When the number of his months has run out?”

Which is to say “What concern is it to him if his family is destroyed after his death?”. Which is more or less the exact opposite of what the Hebrew asks.

How has this absurd distortion, involving the destruction of the word חפצו, come about? To discover this, we have to examine the whole passage of which

5 D. Wolfers, “Is Behemoth Also Jewish?”, *Dor Le Dor*, Summer 1986, p. 223-4.

this verse is the conclusion. It begins, in verse 17, with the question “How often (NJPSV “seldom”) is the lamp of the wicked put out and their deserts come upon them?”, and this question is itself an answer to the assertion of Bildad (18:5) that “The lamp of the wicked *also* shall be put out”. The third line of v.17 and v.18 are ambiguous, either specifying the deserts of the wicked – to be chaff in the wind – or describing the way in which God distributes human destiny in a random fashion. “The wicked” in these lines, as in the first two lines of v.17 are construed as plural.

Verse 19 reads: **אלה יצפן לבניו אונו** **ישלם אליו ידע**

This, too, seems a very straightforward statement, and most particularly must we note that **בניו** is *his* sons, not *their* sons. The meaning is: “God reserves His strength (also = punishment) for His (own) children. When He requites one, he knows.” The word **אונו** is not only a pun, but one which makes it absolutely certain that it is God’s own “children” to which the verse refers, for one meaning of the word is reproductive vigour. The rather strange “he knows” at the conclusion is an assertion by Job of superior knowledge of the truth of his own situation, and also perhaps a reference to Prov. 24:21, 22.

This line is in fact a most important one, for it establishes Job as Jewish and his people as “God’s own children.” It proclaims the election of the Jews in the same authentic sense as Amos 3:2 “You only have I known of all the families of the earth; Therefore I will visit on you all your iniquities.”

In common with many other translations, however, NJPSV has contrived to turn one line of this verse into what Gordis terms a “virtual quotation” and, ignoring the discrepancy between the plural “wicked” and the singular possessor of the **בנים**, to convey that it refers to the children of the wicked, not of God:

(You say,) “God is reserving his punishment for his sons;”⁶

Let it be paid back to him that he may feel it

And then in verse 20, instead of the straightforward:

His own eyes see his ruin

As he drinks the wrath of the Almighty!

NJPSV continues in the jussive mood:

6 This is also the exact opposite of what Job’s friends have been asserting. Their thesis throughout has been that the “wicked” are in fact punished in their own lifetimes – see for example the preceding section. “A Martial Image.”

Let his eyes see his own ruin
 And let him drink the wrath of Shaddai!

and this despite the fact that "Let him drink" requires **תשׂ** rather than the text's **שחה**.

Having mistakenly come to the conclusion that the passage is all about the postponement of the punishment of the wicked to the generation of their children, the translators were left with no recourse but to twist the conclusion into referring to a dying man's reaction to the doom of his descendants, rather than to their restoration to a good life. Hence **תפצו** had to be sacrificed.

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ZERUBBABEL

BY SHIMON BAKON

In the year 586 B.C.E. with the sack of Jerusalem, the burning of the Temple, the kingdom of Judah came to an end. Still there was a flicker of hope. Jehoiachin, the grandson of Josiah, an authentic descendant of king David, voluntarily went into Babylonian captivity in the year 598, twelve years prior to the destruction. He was treated rather kindly. There is a cuneiform-tablet in existence which lists the daily rations supplied to Jehoiachin and his family from the royal treasury of the Babylonian monarch. Moreover, and this has to be kept in mind in the light of later developments, his title "King of Judah" is maintained in this tablet.

The Book of Kings reports that in the 37th year of his captivity, in 561 B.C.E., Jehoiachin was freed from prison by Evil-merodach.¹ While it is difficult for us to comprehend what this change in his status signified, we must remember what his very existence meant both to Jews who had remained in Judah and to those who now lived in the Babylonian diaspora. The light of hope for a Davidic succession was not yet extinguished. Undoubtedly the great prophet Ezekiel referred to him as the "top of the cedar" — צמרת הארז,² though it is questionable whether in the verse: *until he come whose right it is, and I will give it him*³ Jehoiachin is meant, or whether the ultimate restoration is already projected for the future.

THE PROCLAMATION OF CYRUS

The might of Babylon was rapidly declining. Once the scourge of the ancient Middle East, it was overthrown by the new Persian Empire under the enlightened leadership of Cyrus. In 538 B.C.E., just one year after the fall of Babylonia, he made his famous proclamation, which drastically reversed the policies of his

1 II Kings 25:27

2 Ezekiel 17:3

3 Ezekiel 21:32

Babylonian predecessors. Let us briefly summarize the essence of this proclamation contained in the Cyrus Cylinder:

The cities across the Tigris whose sites have been established from former times, the gods who live within them, I returned to their place...

All of their inhabitants I collected and restored to their dwelling places.⁴

I have never been able to ascertain whether exiles other than Judeans took advantage of Cyrus' proclamation, but then, the Judeans presented a special case. First, due to the reverence shown for Jeremiah after his death, and the ministry of the exiled prophet Ezekiel, Jews, contrary to expectations, preserved a powerful ethnic and religious identity. Furthermore, "the Persian religion... and its cult of the Sky-god, Ahura Mazda... could not fail to instill in its adherents a certain degree of sympathy toward the monotheistic creed",⁵ facilitating an amiable relationship. Since the only Jewish place of worship had been destroyed, Cyrus decided to authorize the rebuilding of the Temple, the return of the holy vessels plundered by the Babylonians, and the return to Jerusalem of anyone who so wished. The stage was set for the drama of the Return.

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Among the first wave of 40,000 odd returnees, three personalities stand out, Sheshbazzar, Joshua the High Priest, and Zerubbabel. Sheshbazzar, "prince of Judah" — הנשיא ליהודה⁶ was appointed governor of Judah by King Cyrus, and was assigned to return the vessels and to effect the return of the captives. However, his name quickly fades from history, and Zerubbabel, together with Joshua, emerge as the true leaders of the community of settlers in Jerusalem.

It should be mentioned in passing, that there are scholars who consider Sheshbazzar and Zerubbabel to be the same person. However, this is irrelevant to the events that followed. What is of importance is the recorded fact that Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, was a grandson of the exiled Judean king Jehoiachin, and thus an authentic descendant of David. We are told that shortly after the Cyrus proclamation, Zerubbabel, together with Joshua, laid the

⁴ *International Critical Commentary, Ezra, Nehemia*, Batten, pp. 35.

⁵ *Short History of the Jewish People*, Cecil Roth, pp. 52.

⁶ Ezra 1:8.

foundation of the Temple and built an altar: *And they set the altar upon its bases, for fear was upon them because of the people of the countries.* The slow process of the rebuilding of the Temple, begun in 537, took twenty years. It was only in the year 520, when due to the intercession of a new king, Darius, and the urgings of the prophets Haggai and Zechariah, the building was resumed in earnest.

THE LORD'S SIGNET

From the scant mentioning of Zerubbabel in the biblical accounts of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai and Zechariah, a shadowy personality emerges, lacking the dynamism expected of a true leader, and moved by forces over which he had no control. However, sixteen years after the proclamation, events occurred that catapulted Zerubbabel to a high position and made him the focus of feverish expectations.

Cambyses, who succeeded his father, the great king Cyrus, died after a reign of nine years. With his death, the Persian empire shook to its foundations, and the prophet Haggai saw in the upheaval the fulfillment of the "Day of the Lord":

*Speak to Zerubbabel, governor of Judah, saying:
I will shake the heavens and the earth
And I will overthrow the throne of kingdoms...
In that day will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, My servant,
and I will make thee a signet — ושמתי כחותם
I have chosen thee, saith the Lord of hosts.⁸*

This is a highly significant prophetic utterance. It proclaims that the "Day of the Lord" is at hand.⁹ For the first time in Jewish history a specific person, Zerubbabel, is chosen to be the "signet" חותם of the Lord. With this term Haggai daringly reversed his great predecessor Jeremiah, who had the following harsh words to say about Coniah = Jehoiachin, Zerubbabel's grandfather.

As I live, saith the Lord, though Coniah were the signet -- וחותם upon My

⁷ Ezra 3:3. The confusion in the matter of the identity of Sheshbazzar-Zerubbabel stems from the fact that Ezra 5:16 records: *Then came the same Sheshbazzar and laid the foundations of the house of God.*

⁸ Haggai 2:20-23.

⁹ It is not too certain whether this inaugurated the wave of apocalyptic visions of cosmic catastrophes which would mark the end of history, followed by "Redemption."

ZERUBBABEL

right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence... (22:24)

and

Write this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days, for no man of his seed shall prosper. (22:30).

DARIUS

Out of the chaos that threatened the very existence of the Persian Empire emerged a new king, Darius, who put the shattered pieces together and re-created an empire even mightier than that of Cyrus. It is this Darius who, together with Haggai and Zechariah, became an important force in the completion of the Temple, and who created the dynamic that strengthened the status of the priesthood which eventually dashed all hopes of the renewal of the Davidic succession through Zerubbabel.

The year was approximately 522 B.C.E., a time in which Darius brilliantly succeeded in consolidating his power. This coincided with the effective prophetic ministry of Haggai and Zechariah, encouraging the building of the Temple, which had been stagnating since the Return, and urging Zerubbabel and Joshua the High Priest to assume full leadership. The building of the Temple, slowed by the poverty of the Jewish community, was halted altogether due to the interference of the Samaritans and other nationalities. A certain Tattenai, governor of Aram-Naharaim (apparently all the provinces west of the Euphrates to the Mediterranean), came to Jerusalem, inquiring of the "elders": *Who gave you a decree to build this house and to finish this structure?*¹⁰ When informed that Cyrus had authorized it, a letter was dispatched to Darius, who, on finding the decree in his archives in Ahimeta, a province of Media, not only confirmed it, but added some significant paragraphs to it, as follows:

- a. Expenses for the building are to be paid from the king's treasury (even from the tribute beyond the River)...
- b. Maintenance of the daily services is to be made available, *according to the words of the priests that are in Jerusalem.*
- c. Offering of sacrifices unto the God of heaven and to *pray for the life of the king and his sons.*¹¹

¹⁰ Ezra 5:3.

¹¹ A brief summary of the proclamation of Darius. Cf. Ezra 5:6.

And so it came to pass that in the year 520 the building of the Temple was resumed with great speed, and completed in 516, precisely 70 years after the great prophecy of Jeremiah:

For thus saith the Lord: After seventy years are accomplished for Babylon, I will remember you and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. (Jer. 29:10).

CRUCIAL FOUR YEARS

What happened between the years 520–516 may be the result of misreading the Darius proclamation. There is good reason for the assumption that Zerubbabel disappeared from the scene of Jewish history in the course of these crucial four years. There is not a bit of concrete evidence to indicate what happened to him. Was he deposed? Was he executed by the Persians? Was he recalled to Persia?

It is only from fragments and echoes of what transpired that we can try to reconstruct some events. What are the facts?

While Haggai had spoken with enthusiasm of Zerubbabel when the work of the Temple was resumed,¹² and even called him the signet – חותם chosen of the Lord, he is not mentioned by any of our sources as being present at the exciting moment of the dedication of the Temple in 516 B.C.E. Ezra simply records:

And this house was finished in the sixth year of the reign of Darius... And the children of Israel, the priests and Levites, kept the dedication of this house of God with joy...(Ezra 6:15).

In addition, it has been noted that what had been omitted in the proclamations of Cyrus and Darius was as important as what was asserted by them.¹³ Primarily, both proclamations reaffirmed a Temple-autonomy, while omitting the rebuilding of Jerusalem, the restoration of Judah, and the establishment of a kingdom under the rule of a “shoot” – צמח of David, all aspects of restoration which were deeply entrenched in the consciousness of Jews, and considered by them the fulfillment of the binding covenant of God and Israel.

12 And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel the governor... in the second year of Darius (Haggai 1:14).

13 See: Dr. M. Zerkavod, *Die Persischen Königserlasse zugunsten der Zionsrückwanderung*, in *מעמד שיבת ציון*, Published by the World Jewish Bible Society. 1964.

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Another fact is that the high hopes raised in Zerubbabel by the prophet Haggai may have stirred ambitions which were on a direct collision course with Persian interests, and, perhaps, with the unexpected authority vested in Joshua the High Priest. It stands to reason that the monies poured into the Temple and its daily maintenance by the Persian treasury, inflated the wealth and power of the priesthood. Let us recall a phrase pregnant with meaning in Darius' proclamation:

Maintenance of the daily services is to be made available *according to the words of the priests that are in Jerusalem!*

These conflicting interests may have spelled the doom of Zerubbabel.

FROM "SIGNET" TO "SHOOT"

Zechariah, younger than Haggai, though his contemporary, continued to prophesy after Haggai's ministry ended, and some of his prophecies reflect the deteriorating fortunes of Zerubbabel. Admittedly, Zechariah's prophecies are difficult to understand, lending themselves to diverse and even opposing interpretations. However, when carefully read, they shed light on what may have transpired, especially a growing conflict between the two leading personalities, Zerubbabel and Joshua. Zechariah addresses Joshua:

Hear now, O Joshua the high priest... thou and thy fellows that sit before thee... for, behold,

I will bring forth My servant the Shoot — צמח.¹⁴

Most of the classical and modern scholars are in agreement that the prophet, in referring to the Shoot, had in mind Zerubbabel. Another address in chapter six, again directed to Joshua, strengthens this contention. There it is told that Jews from Babylonian captivity sent a deputation to Zechariah bearing gold and silver, in all probability a contribution toward the building of the Temple. Zechariah is now commanded by the Lord:

*Yea, take silver and gold, and make crowns,
and set the one upon the head of Joshua... the high priest.*

And speak unto him saying:

*Behold, a man whose name is the Shoot — צמח...
even he shall build the temple of the Lord;*

¹⁴ Ezekiel 3:8.

*and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon this throne;
and there shall be a priest before his throne,
and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.*¹⁵

This prophecy contains three messages. First, it refers to a real person, who shall build the Temple of the Lord. Though the name of this person is not mentioned here, he is Zerubbabel. All available records point to him as the one who laid its foundation, and gave the major impetus for its completion. Second, this person, the “Shoot”, shall have priority over the high priest, since he “shall bear the glory.” While Haggai pointed to Zerubbabel as the “Signet”, chosen of the Lord to establish a new kingdom, Zechariah is even more emphatic. Unquestionably, the “Shoot” — צמח alludes to Isaiah’s חֵטֶר — Shoot: *And there shall come forth a “shoot” חֵטֶר out of the stock of Jesse* (Isaiah 11:1), and to Jeremiah’s righteous shoot — צמח צדיק. *Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise out of David the righteous shoot* (Jeremiah 23:5). At this stage of development, this shoot is the ideal king. In the words of Prof. Kaufman, “Zerubbabel was the subject of a prophetic vision of redemption. His ascent to the throne was part of the divine scheme of redemption.”¹⁶ Third, the statement *and the counsel of peace shall be between them* hints at a tension between prince and priest.

NOT BY MIGHT

Zechariah’s vision of the golden candlestick, flanked by two olive branches contains one of the truly great biblical statements:

*This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel...
Not by might nor by power, but by My spirit.*

In the context of two verses that follow:

*Who art thou, O great mountain before Zerubbabel?
thou shalt become a plain...
the hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house
his hands shall also finish it —¹⁸*

15 Zechariah 6:11–13.

16 *The Messianic Idea — The Real and the Hidden Son of David*. Prof. Yehezkel Kaufman Jewish Bible Society p. 5.

17 Zechariah 4:6.

18 Zechariah 4:7–9.

it could mean that Zerubbabel will accomplish his high calling with the aid of the Almighty. However, it can also be interpreted as a warning to him not to engage in a hot-headed attempt to achieve his ambitions through power. The significance of the golden candlesticks, flanked by two olive branches¹⁹ is initially not understood by the prophet, and is explained toward the end of chapter four.

*These are the two anointed ones,
that stand by the Lord of the whole earth.*

Thus the candlestick symbolized the restoration of the Temple, with the civic and religious leaders sharing equally the responsibility of guiding the people. Seen in the light of the previously quoted prophecy, in which Zerubbabel is declared the unquestioned Shoot, who *shall sit and rule upon this throne* (6:12), one gets the feeling of a rising conflict between Zerubbabel and Joshua, with Zechariah serving as peace-maker. At any rate, we may have here an indication of the declining status of Zerubbabel, and the growing anxiety on the part of Zechariah that Zerubbabel might challenge the power of the Persian Empire.

ECLIPSE

No doubt, the disappearance of Zerubbabel from the scene of Jewish history left the Jewish communities in Babylonia and in Judah in a state of shock. Faith in an everlasting Davidic dynasty was too deeply embedded in Jewish consciousness to be passed over without profound reverberation. Since the time when the prophet Nathan, speaking in the name of the Lord, promised: *And thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure forever*,²¹ the concept had become an integral part of God's covenant with Israel. The disappointment could lead to possible excesses in eschatological, apocalyptic, and messianic expectations. It is to the great credit of Zechariah that he was able to deflect the trauma of shattered hopes, by projecting a vision of a better world to be realized into the distant messianic future.

*Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion
behold thy King cometh unto thee*

19 Zechariah 4:2.

20 Zechariah 4:10.

21 I Samuel 7:11.

22 Zechariah 9:9.

*He is צדיק ונושע – triumphant and victorious
Lowly, and riding upon an ass.*

That Zechariah has in mind some Messiah is made clear by the following lines:

And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim

And the horse from Jerusalem

And the battle bow shall be cut off

And he shall speak peace unto the nations...²³

Thus the first act of this redeemer will be the destruction of implements of war, so reminiscent of Isaiah's vision of the *Aharit hayamim*, the End of Days.

²³ Zechariah 9:10.

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To standardize spelling, the American usage will be employed.

Quotations from the Bible should follow one of the Jewish Publication Society's translations, unless a special point is being made by the author for the purpose of his article.

The following transliteration guidelines, though non-academic, are simple and the most widely accepted:

- א and א assumes the sound of its accompanying vowel = e.g., Amen. Alenu, Olam, Eretz.
- ה = H e.g., Hodesh.
- כ and ק = K e.g., Ketuvim, Kadosh.
- כּ = Kh e.g., Melekh.
- צ = Tz e.g., Tzaddik.
- .. = e.g., Ben

Standard transliteration of biblical names remains unchanged.

SATAN: PSYCHOLOGIST

BY S. LEVIN

ABSTRACT: The various views concerning who Satan was are presented. Upon analysis, it appears that Satan was neither a lawyer (traditional Jewish view) nor the Devil (Christian view), but a psychologist conducting a behavioral experiment under the supervision of the director. This is evident most clearly in Satan's role in the story of Job. Job, however, did not respond in anticipated fashion. Some implications of this view are suggested.

Christians, like Jews, have wrongly evaluated the nature of Satan. Christians have made him the Devil while Jews view him as a lawyer. The devilish diagnosis has been responsible for fiendish medieval horrors perpetrated on Jews, witches and other unfortunates suspected of being in league with the Devil, while the supposed legal role of Satan barely survives in Jewish liturgy and has also harmlessly entered the judicial realm, a devil being a junior lawyer who summarizes the facts and laws relating to a brief. The Devil's Advocate is a kind of Devil's devil.

Unhappily the misdiagnosis took place very early in the Middle East with an Angel of Darkness already featured in the 1st century B.C.E. Essene Dead Sea Scroll, the Manual of Discipline. Among Jews this quasi-dualism did not get much further, neither in apocalyptic literature nor in talmudic or medieval commentaries or liturgy, for none could share or compete with a monotheistic God in administering the world and taking responsibility for all therein; none, neither an Angel of Darkness, nor demons, nor a fully fledged Devil: evil among Jews being generally attributed to a *yetzer hara*, an evil inclination within people. The most advanced development of Satan in rabbinic literature is that of a

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Reprint from *Journal of Psychology and Judaism*, 1980, summer issue vol. 4.

“tempter, accuser and Angel of Death” (Talmud, Baba Bathra 16a), partaking of the roles of lawyer and Devil’s emissary. To this day the Devil does not feature in Jewish religious thought.

At its inception Christian literature already views Satan as a fully developed Devil, presented, without apparent contradiction, as claiming authority over the kingdoms of the world (Luke 4:6) and rapidly absorbing the functions not only of the Persian devil, Ahriman, but of the Jewish satan, by this time probably a combination of evil lawyer cum Angel of Darkness, and also including the pagan Pan-Priapus, the horned goat-god of fertility.

But we should be wary of exegesis, of reading back into biblical texts the accumulated constructions of later centuries. The Hebrew texts dealing with satanic matters have no devilish connotation whatever, although one can make out a good case for a legal context. There are references in the Hebrew Bible to shedim, demons (Deuteronomy 32:17, Psalms 106:37), and to seirim, satyrs (Leviticus 17:7, II Chronicles, 11:15), but these are nowhere connected with satanic references.

II

The three-consonant Hebrew word SaTaN is used several times in the Hebrew Bible and always means to oppose, obstruct, contest, challenge. A derivative, SiTNah (Genesis 26:21) also has the connotation of contention and challenge. Only twice, in the books of Zechariah and Job, is Satan a divine character among the angels of God. In all other biblical references Satan denotes human or obscure agencies or their obstructive activities, the word *satan* then being used as a verb. As an impedier or obstructor, *satan* can be coupled, in a negative manner, with the term rascal, (Psalms, 109:6), but *satan* can also be a good agency preventing (*satan*, a verb) Balaam from ill-treating his ass (Numbers, 22:22, 32) and ultimately prophesying evil against Israel.

In fact it is a neutral term which, if used in relation to impeding or interfering with the desirable and moral activities of God or man, necessarily develops negative connotations. Thus, in II Samuel 24:1 it is related that God punished the Israelites for holding a census which God had commanded, an episode which, in a later retelling of the circumstances (I Chron. 21:1), involves a *satan*, an adversary, who had ordered the census. The context determines value judgments on *satan* (as noun or verb) in I Samuel 29:4; II Samuel 19:23; I Kings 5:18,

11:14, 11:25; Ezra 4:6; Psalms 38:21, 71:13, 109:4, 6, 20, 29. In the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus, or Ben Sira, satan, the adversary, is one's inner self.

Satan as a theological figure, prefixed with the definite article Ha, *HaSaTan*, "The Satan", features in Zachariah 3:1-2, in a dream, and in terms which can be viewed within a legal context, Satan functioning as a kind of public prosecutor, although there is no indication of a trial of a sinning figure nor of God as a judge. The most famous appearance of Satan, however, is within the first two chapters of the Book of Job, which is devoted to exploring the origin of undeserved misfortune and evil in a world ruled by a good God. The story opens briskly, with not a word wasted.

The day came when the members of the court of heaven took their places in the presence of the Lord, and Satan was there among them. The Lord asked him where he had been, "Ranging over the earth," he said, "from end to end." Then the Lord asked Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? You will find no one like him on earth, a man of blameless and upright life, who fears God and sets his face against wrongdoing." Satan answered the Lord, "Has not Job good reason to be God-fearing? Have you not hedged him round on every side with your protection, him and his family and all his possessions? Whatever he does you have blessed, and his herds you have increased beyond measure. But stretch out your hand and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face." Then the Lord said to Satan, "So be it. All that he has is in your hand; only Job himself you must not touch". And Satan left the Lord's presence. (Job 1:6-12).

Then follow the destruction of Job's possessions and the deaths of all his children. But throughout all this Job did not sin; he did not charge God with unreason.

Once again the day came when the members of the court of heaven took their places in the presence of the Lord, and Satan was there among them. The Lord asked him where he had been. "Ranging over the earth," he said, "from end to end." Then the Lord asked Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job? You will find no one like him on earth, a man of blameless and upright life, who fears God and sets his face against wrongdoing. You incited me to ruin him without a cause, but his integrity is still unshaken." Satan answered the Lord, "Skin for skin! There is nothing the man will grudge to save himself. But stretch out your hand to touch his bone and his

IV

Two basic arguments are presented by Job's comforters, the first moral and legal, suggesting that Job had indeed sinned against God and that his punishment is at least partially merited.

But the second kind of argument, generally ignored in commentaries, is of a wholly different character. Eliphaz reasons thus:

If God mistrusts His own servants and finds His messengers at fault, how much more those who dwell in houses whose walls are clay, whose foundations are dust... man is born in trouble... what is frail man that he should be innocent, or any child of woman that he should be justified? If God puts no trust in His holy ones, and the heavens are not innocent in His sight, how much less so is man, who is loathsome and rotten and laps up evil like water! (4:18, 19; 5:7; 15:14-16).

Eliphaz is suggesting that there is some basic flaw in the human condition, and Bildad adds emphasis:

How then can man be justified in God's sight, or one born of woman be innocent? If the circling moon is found wanting and the stars are not innocent in His eyes, much more so man who is but a maggot, mortal man who is only a worm (25:4-6).

One can view this flaw in religious, indeed Christian terms; an ontological corruption, an original sin which renders the very newborn guilty, his mere existence being a deviation, a crime. Or, one can view it in psychoanalytic terms; Job's actions are predetermined, like the moon and stars; he is not wholly responsible for his deeds. He is a cripple, without control over his fate and subject to the rule of God!

His protestations are in order; he has not sinned, is not guilty, merits no punishment, but must accept calamities, and still make the best of the business of living.

Job does not come to terms with this kind of argument; he is thrice physically attacked and afflicted and ignores the philosophical-psychological element completely. But its introduction by the comforters suggests that the author had it in mind when formulating the seminal experiment in heaven, and this experiment was of a character designed, after each calamity, to condition Job to "curse God and die" (2:9). Several commentators admit to the experimental nature of the

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heavenly proposals, though without understanding that Satan is an investigating agency; a research assistant acting at the behest of God. Thus Brandon states that Satan is "described as a kind of observer of human conduct... Satan scoffs (at Job's integrity)... insisting that it is motivated only by self-interest." A similar opinion features in the Encyclopedia Britannica: "Satan is cynical about disinterested human goodness and is permitted to test it under God's authority and control and within the limits God sets" ("Satan," Vol. 19 p. 1084).

Pope, who annotates Job in the Anchor Bible, writes that the devilish sadistic experiment was to see if he (Job) had a breaking point... God here gives the Satan credit for instigating the experiment. Aside from Pope's unwarranted introduction of a Christian "devilish," one must agree with this assessment. Pope also views sympathetically a theory that the Persian Shaitan is derived from a word meaning gazing about and was related to the eyes and ears of the king, to his secret police; in fact, the police responsible for investigating and reporting the conduct of citizens.

V

How could one possibly portray the function of a psychologist in biblical times? What word could be used to depict his function? One thing is certainly clear; the definite article *Ha* placed before *SaTaN*, *HaSaTaN*, defines Satan as a title, not a proper name. Titles indicate function and the function of *HaSaTaN* was to tempt, entice, seduce, injure, obstruct and examine the consequences. The proto-psychologist therefore could have been called a tempter, enticer, seducer, injurer, obstructor; this last word and function being preserved within Satan.

Satan is not only psychologist but a behaviorist, propounding a simple stimulus-response explanation. Satan challenges the glib assumption that Job is inherently good. "Of course Job is righteous; what do you expect? You have prospered all his ways. But change his environment, hurt him, and his response will be very different."

In the event, Satan the behaviorist is proven wrong, Job has inner resources, an internal integrity which does not bend with the external winds of change.

Neither Jews nor Christians can be blamed for not having recognized Satan as the archetypal psychologist. Psychology, after all, branched off from philosophy only in the 19th century. More than any other discipline, more than law, more

than theology, psychology probes and challenges the given assumptions on the nature of human conduct. Sin has been dissolved as behavior resulting from internal drives and external pressures while guilt has become a *feeling* of guilt, not a moral or legal fact but a psychological state. These are surely the heritage of Satan, who first challenged the easy assumptions of God, of authority.

The Hebrew Bible is replete with authoritarian judgments, of course, and with complex psychological situations, beginning with Adam who acceded to temptation via Eve and a serpent to ignore the command of authority. But Satan is the first real figure in biblical and extrabiblical sources of that early period to represent a true psychologist. One can only speculate how differently the western world would have developed had Satan been illustrated as a psychological rather than a devilish figure. The Talmud (Baba Bathra, 15a) even supplied a hint in this direction when it suggested that Job never existed; that the book is a parable.

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THE PROBLEM OF THE "CHOSEN PEOPLE"

BY SIDNEY BREITBART

Much has been written on the question of Israel being the "Chosen People" of God. The interpretations range from the traditional concept, that God chose Israel by giving them the Torah in self-revelation at Sinai, and thereby conferred upon the Jewish people the special distinction of His enduring providence, to such modern interpretations as those of Mordecai Kaplan,¹ in which all claims of transcendent distinction are qualified, if not outrightly rejected. Kaplan's interpretation is, as it were, suspended in mid-air, disconnected not only from the history of Jewish theology, but from Jewish history itself, i.e., from the past existence of the Jews, to whom the claim of being chosen provided the will and the power to continue their lives in spite of adversity; all the while feeling ennobled by the spiritual concept implied in their status of election.

Kaplan's view, of course, derives from his strong attachment to American democracy. He could not allow a view of chosenness to be superimposed on a portion of the democratic people. Instead of questioning the *imposition* of the chosenness view, however, Kaplan destroyed the view of chosenness itself as well as the resultant relationship between God and the Jewish people. The alternative to Kaplan's position, however, does not require a return to traditional theologies of transcendence. It is possible, indeed necessary, to mediate the extremes. The interpretation that follows is a response to that necessity. It offers instead a new interpretation which remains Jewish and keeps God and the Jews in a unique

¹ Mordecai M. Kaplan, *Judaism as a Civilization*, McMillan, New York, 1987. Kaplan claimed that the Jewish people "live with a sense of vocation or calling, without involving ourselves in any invidious distinctions implied in the doctrine of the election, and yet to fulfill the legitimate spiritual wants which that doctrine sought to satisfy."

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relationship. Essentially, it claims that it is man who originates the choosing and displays characteristics which make him qualified to be chosen by God.

The "chosenness" idea does not involve a "holier than thou" attitude, and does not result in a sense of superiority on the part of the Jews. It mandates neither the belief that God favors the Jews to the exclusion of others, nor justifies the expectation of future material rewards or special privileges. Indeed, the interpretation that follows argues against all forms of parochialism to a genuinely universalist end.

INTERPRETING THE CONCEPT OF CHOSENNESS

God's meaning for life is the great theme with which Genesis deals. In Chapter I of Genesis, God creates man as the final act. Man is described as being created in the image of God. It is generally agreed that the "image" represents the reasoning and intellectual ability, imagination as well as the creativity of man. This may be correlated with the view of God's decision to assign the physical world to man's dominion.² It is also of interest that "image" mentioned in Genesis is represented by the Hebrew word תְּצֵלֶם (tzelem) which also denotes "representative." Chapter I thus shows that man, as a representative of God and charged with the responsibility for the physical world, can be considered a partner of God. The implication is that since Adam was the only being in existence, his charge by God to have dominion over the world applies to all future beings and thus represents a universal condition.

The narratives in Genesis Chapter II are entirely different. Adam is created first, and thus a comparison is invited with Adam I,³ who was created last, the crown of creation. Adam I is part of the creation of the physical world, while Adam II belongs to a different dimension by virtue of God's breath giving life to Adam II, a factor absent in Chapter I. It may be thus reasonably assumed that Adam II became a living being related to God spiritually. Support for this can be deduced from the action of God in calling for Adam II to name the animals, which in the ancient world represented an act of transcendence.⁴

2 Sidney Breitbart, "The Creation of the Moral and Spiritual Man — The Torch, Winter Issue, 1964–1965. See also Psalm 115:16.

3 Adam I refers to Chapter I of Genesis, while Adam II refers to Chapter II of Genesis.

4 Naming a thing implies knowledge of its nature, habits and characteristics. Transcendence goes beyond excellence, extent, degree, etc.

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This is followed by the test of Adam II to determine whether Adam II would opt for "the knowledge of good and evil." Adam II did choose this knowledge, and by this action, became "as God" (Genesis 3:22). In this process, man became a potential partner of God in the moral and spiritual sphere. The active choice for man to become an actual partner lies in man's choice of good and in becoming committed to its fulfillment. Inasmuch as Adam I and Adam II may be considered as two different aspects of man, one of physical desires and one of spirituality, and since man is a descendant of Adam, all human beings are to be considered as partners of God, provided they choose the "knowledge of good and evil" and become committed to it. Thus, the partnership concept represents a universal outlook.

In accordance with the preceding discussion that God's intention for mankind was to be His partners in the world, how then could Israel regard itself as the "chosen" people or partners of God? It is suggested that the universal appeal to man did not achieve God's intent. Therefore, since God's desire for mankind to opt for the partnership did not materialize, the procedure was adopted to work through individuals, a process which would finalize itself in a community with the mission of partnership and would become its *raison d'être*.

In a definite sense, a person or a people is not chosen by God by grace, but in response to the requisites portrayed by them which reflect their choice of God in their moral and spiritual advances. The process of choosing or responding to the challenge of God starts with man. Once man chooses God, which is a basic choice, he enters into a relationship with God in which man accepts the responsibility of commitment to act as a partner of God, to act as he perceived God would want him to act. In this dynamic, man's choice and action represent the intent of God's will and man's will is to fulfill God's will. From man's view, the two wills become synonymous. Similarly, the Jewish people through the process of evolutionary development of their precepts freely arrived at, and willing to demonstrate the moral and spiritual values, fulfilled the prerequisites to be called by God for a mission and example to the world.

THE QUESTIONS INVOLVED IN CHOOSING

Thus, there are a number of major factors which must be considered in this process of choice: the purpose of the choice, that is, the goal to be achieved, the way in which the goal may be achieved, and the appropriateness of the choice, or

adequation of means and ends, the prerequisites of “chosenness.”

The prerequisites required in a choice must satisfy the purpose of the choice. A small wooden hammer will not be selected to demolish a 10” steel wall. Similarly, for a specific person to be chosen by God, the person has to be able to carry out the intent of God and be a “choosing” person. A “choosing” person is one who, in facing problems, takes into account the knowledge of good and evil and is committed to the solution of the problem morally – thus responding to the challenge of God⁵.

The progression of prerequisites begins with Adam who chose God’s universalistic challenge of the “knowledge of good and evil,” without which man cannot make a choice in the moral and spiritual sphere. Then came Noah, who is simply described as being righteous in his generation. The next person (Abraham) conceived of monotheism and expressed verbal commitment to morality by challenging God on the question of justice. Moses expressed full active commitment to moral problems by saving a slave, a Jew, even to the point of killing the overseer and thus showing responsibility to his people, Israel.

Israel, on being offered the Torah, accepted it as a guide for moral, spiritual and legal behavior. The Israel community is thus chosen by God. In the final step in the process of development of Jewish values are the prophets whose views and visions reflected social justice, moral values and spiritual relationship to God, which is the basis of their election by God to be prophets and true partners of God on the scale of the evolution of Jewish basic values.

God’s challenge to the choosing person is for the benefit of that person. God knows what the person can do. This world was created to serve as the medium for human free-willed performance. When God challenges the choosing man, it is in order to permit him to translate potential into reality, as the Psalm 115 v. 16 states:

*The heavens belong to the Lord
But the earth He gave to the children of men.*

In light of the above, it is instructive to compare the order of progression of prerequisites the chosen people exhibited.

⁵ *Artscroll Tanach Series* – Vol. II – on Genesis, p. 387. Rambam 22:1 states “God will not test (choose) the wicked who will not obey.”

1. *Adam* — Genesis, to a large extent, deals archetypically with man — e.g., Adam and the Tree, Cain-Abel, etc. These narratives are intended to reveal something *essential* for our understanding of man; something of the essence of the human situation and something that contributes to the relationship between man and God. This first act of choosing archetypically reveals a *positive* dimension of man and his immediacy in his relationship with God. Furthermore, subsequent biblical narratives in Genesis can be understood as a *progression in this dimension*. Thus, the Adam narrative expresses an original choice that enables man to *rise* in partnership with God by a deeper and more sensitive understanding of such values as justice, morality, compassion for his fellow man, and goodness.

The first choice in history made by Adam presented the objective mankind faces — to establish a partnership relationship with God, and to obtain the "Knowledge of Good and Evil" which is necessary and fundamental to make other choices involving moral and spiritual attitudes.

2. *Noah* — The narrative of Noah is another archetypal situation. The world in his generation was corrupt and the violence of man filled the earth (Genesis 6:12–13). God in reaction to this situation decided to condemn the world. Noah was a righteous man which resulted in his being chosen to continue life. Noah walked with God (Genesis 9), by which can be understood that he relied on the judgment of God and consequently he did not question God on the issue of justice and mercy. This revealed that Noah lacked the element of responsibility for others. This was only a small step in the evolution of the partnership concept because he still lived in a polytheistic culture. The comparison with Abraham is significant.

3. *Abraham* — Abraham, living in a polytheistic culture for many years, conceived of monotheism which calls for the existence of only one God from whom all aspects of life derive. By this action, Abraham changed the future of mankind. When God decided to destroy only two cities, Sodom and Gomorrah, unlike the case with Noah which involved the whole world, Abraham's reaction was different and represented several degrees upward on the ladder of relationship and partnership with God above that of Noah. Abraham chose to question God on the issue of justice, and by his insistence Abraham demonstrated the right of man to question God on the issue of justice and morality. However, Abraham by stopping at ten people, failed to carry his

responsibility to its final conclusion, by not arguing on behalf of innocent children and the unborn. Abraham also showed a lack of compassion in the case of Hagar and Ishmael. However, Abraham nevertheless was qualified to be chosen as a partner of God at this step of evolution of Judaism. Abraham in his choosing monotheism, in his acceptance of the *Akedah*,⁶ and in his sense of justice, provided the necessary prerequisites to be chosen by God, as demonstrated by the establishment of the Covenant.

4. *Moses* — He acknowledged the difference between good and evil, which led him to become involved with his people. His persuasive attitude to become actively committed and responsible for his fellow Jews qualified him to be chosen to lead the Jews to nationhood and to give them the cohesiveness by offering them the Torah.

5. *The Nation of Israel* — When Moses offered the Torah which contained in it the spiritual, moral and legal codes by which man could live, the answer was: *We shall obey and we shall listen*. This indicated a prior commitment to the values to which their illustrious chosen predecessors already were committed. This stand of the Jews was a measure of their nature enabling them to be chosen. Israel represented a community setting in which the universalistic imprint of morality and spirituality was evident, and became part of the national psyche of the nation. Active commitment to morality was never abandoned. In Judaism, the human act of choosing God represents a self-imposed commitment to discharge the responsibilities of morality.

6. *The Prophets* — A prophet is a unique person, not simply a mouthpiece. Not an instrument, but a partner, an associate of God — a true partner who feels God's assignment of this world to man and, in spite of it, does not forsake God. The prophet has the ability to hold God and man in a single thought. He is a penetrating observer of the social contemporary scene. His concern is with widows and orphans, the poor and the needy, corruption and affairs of the market place. He is indignant about matters of injustice. To us, injustice is injurious to the welfare of the people; to the prophet, it is a deathblow to existence. The prophet is preoccupied with society and its conduct, not the issues of thought. Nothing that has a bearing upon good and evil is small and trite in the eyes of

6 Sidney Breitbart, "Akedah," *Dor Le Dor*, Vol. XV, No. 1, Fall 1986.

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God, the prophet declares. The prophet is intent on intensifying human responsibility.

Since the prophet acts as a partner of God and is committed to that relationship, his election by God is assured. To the prophet, God's presence is a challenge, an incessant demand for man to participate in partnership. It is noteworthy to point out that while man has the option of choosing or rejecting God, God has no such option but to choose man, because the intention of God is then fulfilled. God cannot choose a man who rejects him.

In sum, there are two parallel, though not concurrent, processes in the development of the idea of chosenness:

(1) Man's progression as a choosing person necessary to be chosen by God for increasingly responsible tasks.

(2) Man's progressive enhancement of the values in Judaism which are seen as the direct consequence of man's prior development as a partner of God.

In this sense, Judaism is an evolving development of man's moral and spiritual values deriving from his continual responses to the challenges from God.

Dedicated in loving memory of my sister Guta



OMISSION

*In our Fall issue of the Jewish Bible Quarterly we regrettably omitted listing an article by Rabbi Dr. Jeffrey Cohen: THE TABERNACLE — A PSYCHO-
THEOLOGICAL ENTERPRISE, in the contents on the back cover.*

SOLOMON AND SHEBA: AGGADIC ROOTS OF THE KORAN STORY

BY HAROLD M. KAMSLER

There is some evidence that Jews came to Northern Arabia as far back as the seventh century B.C.E.¹ According to most scholars there was then a large Jewish population in Yathrib and, according to Torrey² there was a large Jewish settlement in the Hijaz as early as the sixth century B.C.E. He also notes that the Jews played an important role in the city of Yathrib (later to become Medina), with a large proportion of the population professing Judaism.

Torrey writes that "there can be no question as to Mohammed's ignorance in many matters; but the amount of material historical, folklorish, legislative and religious which he transmitted with substantial correctness from Jewish sources is truly astonishing."³

Mohammed writes in Koran (Sura 26:197) that the learned men of the Israelites gave him encouragement. It was in Yathrib that he learned of the biblical and aggadic stories which comprise many verses of the Koran. He was a frequent visitor to the Jewish section of Yathrib and Torrey suggests that he probably had a Jewish teacher who had come from Persia. He learned the Jews' beliefs, their love of book learning, their laws and forms of worship from such personal relationships. It was these Jews who influenced him in founding Islam. Mohammed posited the strict monotheism which is found in much of the Koran; this too, learned from his Jewish friends. It was only after they refused to accept his new religion that he turned against them.

Torrey also writes that "When a thoroughgoing comparison is made of the koranic material of all sorts with the standard Hebrew-Jewish writings then current, we must say with emphasis that his authorities, wherever they were, were

1 Graetz, H. *History of the Jews* Vol. III Ch. 3.

2 Torrey, Charles C. *The Jewish Foundations of Islam*, N.Y. 1933.

3 *Ibid.* p. 25.

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men well versed in the Bible, the Oral Law and their aggadot."⁴

Since the Targumim and the aggadah were often written in Aramaic, such writings were numerous in Yathrib. It is from these that Mohammed gained some knowledge of the Bible. In Sura 27 he tells the story of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, taken perhaps from the Aramaic of Targum Sheni, a midrash to the Book of Esther. Since the story in the Targum is much longer than that in the Koran, it may be presumed that he took it from the Targum.

As we compare the Koran Sura 27, verses 22ff. to Targum Sheni we can see how much of this chapter came from the Targum.

TARGUM SHENI (Megilat Esther)

SURA XXVII

He gave Solomon wisdom and discernment. He was the wisest of all men. He ruled over the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air and the demons and jinns. He knew the language of all the living things and they understood him as it is written. (I Kings 5:13).

Once he commanded all the beasts of the earth, the fowl, the spirits and jinn to gather and dance before him.

And the councillors of the king called all the beasts by name as well as the spirits and jinn. All of them came to the king. He then sought the hoopoe. But he was not there. King Solomon became angry at the hoopoe and he commanded that they search for him, bring him for punishment.

The hoopoe appeared before the king, bowed and said: Do not be angry with

15 We gave knowledge to David and Solomon. And they said Praised be to God Who has favored us.

16 And Solomon was David's heir. He said O People we have been taught the speech of birds...

17 And there congregated before Solomon jinns and men and birds all in parallel with each other.

20 He took a list of the birds, and he said: Why don't I see the hoopoe? Is he among the absent?

21 I will punish him with a severe punishment, unless he brings me a good reason.

22 He was not long absent, however, and he said: I have compassed

4 Ibid. p. 61.

me. I was not rebellious. I looked for a kingdom that did not know of your greatness. I flew 90 days and nights and came to Kitor. It was a golden land with beautiful trees and were not warlike.

I found a woman ruled the land. She is the Queen of Sheba. If it please Your Majesty I shall fly to Sheba with other birds and place their rulers in chains and bring them to my lord, Solomon. And Solomon called his scribes and wrote a letter to the Queen of Sheba and placed it in the wing of the hoopoe and he flew with many other birds to Kitor.

The Queen came out of her palace to worship the sun as was her custom. The sun became dark because of all the birds. She cried and tore her garments. While she was wondering about the event, the hoopoe gave her the letter...

God gave me the right to rule over the nations as well as the animals and spirits. If ye come and give me obeisance I shall honor thee, if not I shall send my army.

She called her councillors to seek their advice. We do not know Solomon. You decide what is to be done.

territory which you have not. I bring you from Sheba sure information.

23 I found a woman ruling over them. She has been given all things, and she has a magnificent throne.

24 I found her and her people worshipping the sun.

27 Solomon said soon we shall see whether you are telling the truth or are one of the liars.

28 Go thou and take this letter of mine and throw it before them. Return and see what reply they make.

29 She said O you chieftans. A noble letter has been thrown me. It is from Solomon and it says:

30 Do not resist me, but come to me resigned.

32 O ye chiefs. Advise me in this matter. They said no affair have I decided except with you.

33 They said we are mighty men but it is for you to command.

She sent gold, silver and precious things to Solomon with many young men and women. She sent a letter to Solomon telling him that she heard of his wisdom and will visit him in three years.

34 She said: When kings enter a city they plunder it and humble it.

35 I am going to send him a present and see what my messengers bring back.

39 Said a jinn I will bring it to thee before you can rise from your seat.

She came to Jerusalem. When Solomon had heard she had come he went to the Crystal Palace. When she came in, she thought he sat on a throne in the water. She lifted her skirt and it revealed her legs, and they were hairy. Solomon said: You are beautiful but you have the hair of men.

42 When she arrived...

44 She was asked to enter the palace. When she saw it she thought it was a lake of water, and she lifted up her skirts, uncovering her legs. He said: This is but a palace paved smooth with slabs of glass.

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THE RED HEIFER MYSTERY

BY ERNEST NEUFELD

Despite the strictures in the Torah against magic, magical elements persisted in the rituals of ancient Israel. This is not surprising in view of the heathen influences to which the Hebrews were subject before, and after their entry into the Promised Land. What is remarkable is the way these magic practices were transmuted to conform to the imperatives of Hebrew monotheism. The transformation was revolutionary and complete. The pre-eminent example is the red heifer rite, a rite in which the water of purification cleanses the defiled but defiles all those who participate in its preparation and administration.

The Torah states that the red heifer rite was ordained by God. He is said to have prescribed the slaying of a red heifer and the use of its ashes, together with those of cedar-wood and hyssop. The concoction was to be mixed with scarlet and water and sprinkled on those defiled by contact with the dead. This ceremony would purify them (Num. 19:9–11).

To understand the *modus operandi* of this purification ceremony, it is useful to consider other cases of magical practices detailed in Scriptures, and to trace their origins and methodology.

One easily recognizable illustration of the resort to magical methods is Moses' fabrication at the command of God of the Brazen Serpent while the children of Israel were in the wilderness. Anyone bitten by a serpent would be cured by looking up at the shiny image (Num. 21:8–9). Another example is the administration of the water of bitterness to the woman suspected by her husband of adultery (Num. 5:16–31). Still another is the consignment of the people's sins on the head of a goat and its expulsion into the wilderness (Lev. 16:10, 21, 22). Each is an example of sympathetic magic.

This anthropological term comes from Sir James G. Frazer, who developed the view that magic is based on two concepts, "first, that like produces like, or that an effect resembles its cause, and second, that things which have once been in

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contact... will continue to act upon each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed." He called the first notion the law of similarity and the second, the law of contact or contagion. He classified the first as homoeopathic magic (or imitative magic) and the second as contagious magic. Both operate under the perception of relation through sympathy.¹ Frazer noted that the magician sees these principles as those regulating the phenomena of inanimate nature.

A well-known example of homoeopathic magic is the attempt to injure an enemy by destroying his effigy or burning the parings of his nails. Another is to effectuate a cure, as for instance in the Hindu ceremony, to cure jaundice by resort to the idea that the yellow color can be banished to yellow creatures — birds, and yellow things, such as the sun.²

While we discern the traces of primitive magic in the illustrations cited from the Torah, in each case it is clear that the magical means have been purged of human control. It is not man who is able to accomplish his aims of injury or cure, by applying the laws of magic; it is God.

While the principle of magic that like produces like is evident in the Brazen Serpent episode, it is significant that there is no intervention by a magician using incantations and acts of exorcism. The illness induced by the serpents' bites is cured without human mediation and attributed directly to God. By looking at the effigy of the Brazen Serpent the bitten person transfers back the cause of his affliction to its source.

The same principle of like producing like can be seen in the case of the water of bitterness administered by the priest to the woman accused of adultery. The priest inscribes a curse on a scroll, immerses it in water to dissolve the ink and adds dust from the floor of the Sanctuary. If the woman is defiled by adultery, the unclean property of the dust, symbolizing death, induces the symptoms (e.g. swelling of the belly) indicative of her guilt. If she is innocent, the source of the dust and its association with the holiness of the sanctuary will assure that no such symptoms will ensue. The curse infused into the potion also relies on sympathetic magic. Written by the priest in the Sanctuary, thus assuming an awesome holiness, it operates as the dust from the floor. For two opposite

1 Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, Vol. I, ed., The MacMillan Co., 1927. pp. 11-12.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 492.

associations appertain to each — the holy, and the taboo because of the danger of defilement. Human instrumentality, it is to be noted, is confined to preparation of the potion. The answer comes from God — in His sanctuary, where He dwells.

Our third example of ancient Israelite magical practice is the consignment of sins to the goat banished to the wilderness. This is a clear instance of the application of contagious magic. The sinners are cleansed as the priest places his hands on the goat's head and confesses their sins, thus transferring them to the goat which is then banished to the wilderness, outside the camp, that is outside the community of Israel. No magic incantation or conjuration accompany the ceremony, only a penitential confession, and it is God who removes the sins.

In each of the three rituals discussed, a radical transformation has occurred. God has displaced man as the causative agent. What we have referred to as survivals of magical practices are no longer magic but miracles of the One universal God. The outward forms of magic persist but man's attempt to control the forces of nature and his destiny is replaced by reliance on God.

The red heifer rite, too, exhibits the use of forms of magical art. It combines both homoeopathic and contagious magic. We note that a cow is specified. Why not a ram, a bullock, or any other animal? and why a *red* cow? Why do all who participate in the slaying, burning of the animal, gathering the ashes, or are in any way in contact with the water of purification become unclean? Why does the cleansing agent pollute them?

First to the question why a heifer or cow. In many primitive religions the cow is identified with fertility, birth, life. Frazer cites the story of two Hindu ambassadors to England, who upon their return to India, were deemed to be so polluted by contact with strangers, that only by being reborn could they be restored to purity. They were directed to enter a gold replica of a woman or cow and come forth in the manner of being born.³

It would seem, therefore, that the red heifer rite was intended to be a ceremony of rebirth into the pure state of the newly-born, a ceremony of resurrection from the state of death which is defilement. The cow is designated because of its association with birth and life.

A *red* heifer is specified, because red symbolizes blood and the primitive mind sees life as being in the blood. In the red heifer rite the association with rebirth

³ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

and resurrection is enhanced and heightened by use of the red animal — blood equated with red, supplying the vital force in the mixture.

Why does the cleansing mixture also defile? Everything dead is taboo. Dead bodies defile because they emanate death. Under the logic of homoeopathic magic, they effect death. They are life-denying, death-producing. Contact, direct or even exposure to their presence, is to be feared and avoided, for the emanation is sufficient to cause pollution which can be eliminated only by purification.

In Num. 19:1–9 one defiled by contact with the dead is to be cleansed with the water of purification — “a purification from sin.” The result of exposure to the dead is conceived as similar to the result of sin. In modern terms, we perceive the consciousness of sin as destructive of the psyche, thus threatening and destroying life. The life which when conferred on one is unsullied, pure and unblemished, is threatened by any diminution of its integrity, its wholeness, and its wholesomeness. In primitive terms, sin is defiling, for it is a denial of life. The red heifer, it is to be observed, is not sacrificed, not consecrated to God. Sacrificed animals do not render anyone unclean, but an animal slain for man, being an unconsecrated dead animal, is a source of contamination.

What are the roles of cedar-wood, hyssop and scarlet in the water of purification? Because of their beauty, hardiness and longevity, cedars are described in Holy Scripture as “the cedars of God,” (Ps. 80:11) and as “trees of the Lord” (ibid. 104:16). The cedar is an evergreen and grows to a great height. Some surviving cedars of Lebanon are estimated to be a thousand years old.

So the tree is associated with long life, and by further association as the Tree of God, with eternal life and holiness.

In contrast with the cedar, the hyssop is a lowly plant, growing in rocks and stone walls. The Talmud, Tractate Parah, identifies the plant as the *majorana syriaca*, which grows wild in Israel. But it has not been identified definitely. The word hyssop is the Greek form of the word transliterated from the Hebrew *'ezob* — אֵזוֹב, not a translation that would help identify the species. Though a humble plant, it endures and clings to life, producing its own testimony to life's goodness.

In the scarlet, we have another element symbolic of life, a red dye derived from the egg of an insect found on an oak growing in Israel.

The cedar-wood, hyssop and scarlet, representing life, are burned with the heifer's body, and by the process of homoeopathic magic serve in their own way to restore life, and hence help restore life by purifying the defiled. They thus

reinforce the life-restorative effects of contact with the ashes of the red heifer.

In the residue of magic rites incorporated into the religious practices of the ancient Israelites, sublimated as these were in the process of their admission to monotheistic ritual, what is extraordinary is not that they persisted but that *in their similarity they were essentially different*. The resurrection concept embodied in the red heifer rite, for example, in its entry into Israel's religious ceremonies, underwent a profound change, a complete reversal in purpose. Unlike the pagan rituals of resurrection directed at the physical rebirth of the body after death and its reunion with the soul, the red heifer rite sought to achieve *spiritual rebirth* or *renewal of the living* — by restoration to a state of purity.

The transformation of the resurrection ritual, cleansed from its original primitive intent, was a radical sublimation; as was the transmutation of other magical forms by removal of the human protagonist. In the transcendent transformation, the magic of man was supplanted by the miracles of God. Man's attempt to control the forces of nature is abandoned and his complete dependence on God is demonstrated even in the very magical procedures.



EDITORIAL NOTE

Near Bat Shlomo, Israel, there is the G. & G. Ranch, managed by Danny Greenberg. On this ranch an attempt is being made to breed red heifers by a complex process.

Embryos of unblemished red strains are imported frozen and then implanted in local reddish cows who are, at present, not purely red as required by the Torah.

THE ENOCH-TRADITION

BY SOL LIPTZIN

A German study has just appeared which meticulously surveys the origin and development of the Enoch-tradition down the millennia and its dispersion across the continents of Asia, Africa and Europe.¹ This study by Ulrike Peters, with its bibliography of fourteen pages, attests to the wide interest of scholars in this complex theme and can serve as a guide to future research.

In the *Genesis*-list of Adam's descendants, Enoch appears as the son of Jared and the father of Methuselah. The biblical text interrupts the genealogy of the ten generations between Adam and Noah to inform us that *Enoch walked with God and he was not, for God took him*. The general interpretation of the expression "He walked with God" is that Enoch was a good person who walked in the ways of God. The statement *He was not* is meant to convey the idea that he disappeared from the earth. If the question is asked how or why he disappeared at a younger age than any of his ancestors, the answer is given *For God took him*. He did not die as do all mortals but left the earth for the Great Beyond, even as did only Elijah who ascended to Heaven in a fiery chariot at a later date.

Layer upon layer of influences enriched the biblical passage about Enoch. The origin of the tradition that grew up about this passage is traced back to Sumerian, Akkadian and Babylonian civilizations. Hebrew contacts with Egypt since the reign of Solomon added details and so did Persian contacts since the days of Cyrus and the spread of Zoroastrian doctrines. The result was that, before the end of the Second Temple period, the saga of Enoch came to include events from the antediluvian era to the final apocalyptic era. Enoch even became

¹ Ulrike Peters, *Wie der biblische Prophet Henoch zum Buddha wurde*, Die jüdische Enoch-Tradition als frühes Beispiel interkultureller und interreligiöser Vermittlung zwischen Ost und West... Verlag für Theologie, Sinzig, 1989, pp. 209.

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

identified with Metatron, the Heavenly scribe, who played an important role in kabbalistic literature.

The emphasis in the study by Ulrike Peters is on the Enoch tradition as an early example of cultural and religious relationships between Jewish thought and that of peoples as far remote as Ethiopia, Russia and China.

The Ethiopian manuscripts of Enoch are the most numerous. They are based on Greek versions which were current among Alexandrian Jews during the Hellenistic period and which were probably derived from an Aramaic-Hebrew source.

The early Christian writers, who generally interpreted biblical events as prefigurations of events in their sacred texts, saw in the ascension of Enoch even as in the ascension of Elijah prefigurations of the heavenly ascent of Jesus.

The Slavonic *Book of the Secrets of Enoch* is also based on a Greek source which was compiled, according to some scholars, about the beginning of the common era. The Qumran fragments of *Enoch* go back to an even earlier date.

The Enoch tradition was disseminated not only southward to Ethiopia, westward to Roman Christianity and northward to Byzantium and Russia but also eastward where it penetrated the Manichaean religious circles and made its way to China where Enoch was transformed into Buddha.

According to Genesis, Enoch's life on earth spanned only 365 years compared to the 969 years of his son Methuselah. According to legend, however, his life, unmarred by death, has continued for thousands of years in his heavenly abode and will continue eternally. After his ascension, he was invested with important functions in the angelic realm, while other functions still await him on Judgment Day at the end of time.

The expansion of a single biblical sentence to a vast and complex tradition is an indication of the fascination that Enoch had upon the Hebraic mind and upon cultures that came in contact with the Jewish people.

IN THE SPIRIT OF PURIM

THE HIDDEN HAND OF GOD

BY NILI S. FOX

The absence of God's written name from the Book of Esther has been the subject of inquiries and theories spanning centuries of commentaries on the Megillah. Numerous scholarly exegeses have been written about the story's purpose, authenticity, and religious message or lack thereof. My intention in this paper is simply to present another *midrashic* interpretation of God's whereabouts in the Megillah, and the narrative's general theme.

Although neither God's name nor the explicit act of prayer appear anywhere in the Book of Esther, it has been suggested that allusions to both may be concealed in its chapters. The signs take different forms: acrostics, hidden *midrashim* — elaborations on the meaning of the story buried within the text itself, and *gematria* — significant numerical values derived from Hebrew letters.

One such common notion is the allusion to God in the word *makom*, Hebrew for "place." While attempting to convince Esther to intercede on her people's behalf, Mordecai warns: *If you keep silent at a time like this, relief and deliverance will come to the Jews from another place...* (Est. 4:14). The word *Ha-Makom* is often used in rabbinic literature to designate God.¹

An allusion to prayer can be derived from Esther's response to Mordecai: *Go, assemble all the Jews in Shushan, and fast for me...* (Est. 4:15). On several occasions in the Bible people fast in times of stress and in conjunction with prayer (e.g. Jud. 20:26; I Kings 21:9, 27; II Sam. 12:16, 22). Furthermore, it has been suggested that the Hebrew verb for "assemble," *k'nos*, is a veiled allusion to "synagogue," *bet-k'nesset*.

¹ Carey Moore, *The Anchor Bible: Esther*, (New York: Doubleday and Company 1971), p. 50.

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The thirteenth century sage Rabbenu Bahya ben Asher discovered in the Megillah the presence of God's name in acrostics. The letters in YHWH each begin one of the four words "Yavoh Ha-melekh V'ha-man Ha-yom" (*let the king and Haman come today...*) (Est. 5:4). In at least three other places YHWH is formed by the use of acrostics in final letters or initial letters read backwards (Est. 1:20, 5:13, 7:7).

Even if these acrostics are purely coincidental their occurrence has not gone unnoticed. This is reflected in the fact that many Esther manuscripts, some more than a century old, highlight the acrostic letters by writing them in larger characters.

WHY "YEHUDIIM" – יהודיים?

As a result of recent studies of the Book of Esther, and in the spirit of the allusions referred to, I propose a new *midrashic* interpretation of God's whereabouts in the Megillah.

The word *y'hudim*, יהודיים Hebrew for Jews, appears 38 times in the Book of Esther. Thirty-two times it is spelled in the traditional way, *yud-hey-vav-dalet-yud-mem*. The other six times, however, an extra *yud* is inserted before the final *mem*, so that there are two *yuds* together (Est. 4:7, 8:1, 8:7, 8:13, 9:15, 9:18). Is there a reason for this inconsistent spelling of *y'huriim*? יהודיים. Are the variations simply scribal errors, or perhaps were they purposely inserted?²

If they are simply scribal errors, then no more need be said. But if the six spellings of *y'hudim* with an extra *yud* are intentional, then an explanation is warranted. First of all, the letter *yud* itself means *yad*, "a hand." The hand of whom? Moreover, two *yuds* are a common abbreviation, frequently found in the prayer book, of the tetragrammaton (YHWH), the name of God. In the six variant spellings of *y'huriim* with two *yuds*, it is suggested that they can stand for the name of God. Homiletically, the meaning of the double *yud* could be the "hand of God."

But why does "the hand of God," in the word "Jews," appear in the Megillah six times? I suggest that this is so because there are six separate occasions in the story of Esther where divine intervention rescues either a Jew, or the Jews as a whole.

2 Ibid. p. 51.

The first occurs after Queen Vashti's disobedience, when she is exiled and Esther, a Jewess, ascends to the throne of Persia. That this step was necessary for the final redemption of the Jews is recognized by Esther's uncle, Mordecai, who tells her, *Who knows whether it was just for such a time as this that you attained the royal position* (Est. 4:14).

The second episode takes place when Haman throws a *pur* "a lot" to determine the date for the destruction of the Jews (Est. 3:7). The date that appears is the 13th of Adar, a full 11 months away from the first of Nisan, when the lot was cast. This gave the Jews sufficient time to prepare a plan of action, and perhaps prove themselves worthy of redemption.

The third incident revealing divine handiwork happens at the time of Esther's daring visit to the king on behalf of her people. After a three-day fast, Esther appears unsummoned before Ahasuerus. The king's heart is swayed to extend the golden scepter toward her, thereby saving her life.

In the fourth episode where divine intervention takes place, Mordecai is rescued from the gallows prepared for him by Haman. The night before Mordecai is to be hanged, the king cannot fall asleep.³ Consequently, the king orders the reading of the book of records, where he discovers that Mordecai has not been rewarded for having saved the king's life (Est. 6:1-3). Therefore, instead of being hanged the following day, Mordecai is royally attired, and paraded through town by Haman.

The fifth incident demonstrating the hand of God at work occurs in the palace. Esther reveals to the king that Haman intends to destroy her and all the Jews in the kingdom. Ahasuerus leaves the room in anger, and returns to find Haman *lying prostrate on the couch on which Esther reclines* (Est. 7:8), as though he were about to do violence to the queen in order to further enrage the king.⁴ Or, perhaps, Haman became so angry that he actually meant to kill Esther after having failed to convince her to intercede on his behalf, and only the king's miraculous appearance at that precise moment saves her.

3 Other examples of words with extra letters, larger letters, or words that are read differently than written are found in Esther 1:5, 1:6, 1:16, 3:4, 4:4, 6:9, 8:13, 9:7, 9:9, 9:10, 9:19, 9:27, 9:29, 10:1. *Midrashim* have been written for some of these as well.

4 See also, Louis Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews*, (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society 1954), p. 442.

The sixth and final event revealing the veiled hand of God in the Book of Esther is the salvation of the entire Jewish population. Following the demise of Haman, it was still necessary to reverse the royal decree that doomed the Jews. Once again, Esther begs for the king's mercy. In an unprecedented act, the Jews of Persia are officially given the freedom to defend themselves and destroy the enemy (Est. 8:9–12).

Thus we see that the six unusual double *yuds* may alert us to the six occasions when God intervened in order, ultimately, to save the Jews.

GEMATRIA

But the six extra *yuds* may also be evaluated for their numerical values, a way of understanding Hebrew letters that is called *Gematria*. In Hebrew, each letter has a numerical value. *Yud* represents the sign for the number ten. Therefore, six *yuds* would add up to 60. Looking for phrases or words implying God's intervention, we find that the numerical value of the Hebrew letters *yud-hey-vav-hey go-el* "God redeems," also is 60.

If one accepts the idea that God reveals Himself in a hidden manner throughout the Megillah, the question still hangs over us: Why? Why should God's name be hidden so that we must search for obscure hints of His presence?

Here too I would like to offer an explanation. Perhaps the author of the Megillah sought to communicate the belief that although God may become involved in the lives of men, He may do so in a veiled fashion. God can create favorable possibilities, but God's covenant with Israel demands renewal through meritorious deeds. Esther's example tells us that she could not hide behind her royal title, and that the Jews had to unite both in spirit and action. Only then did God reciprocate with His protection as previously promised: *Yet even when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not reject them or spurn them so as to destroy them, annulling My covenant with them* (Lev. 26:44).

THE LESSON OF PURIM

The lesson of Purim is not solely directed at the Jews of Persia, for, it serves as a bridge between past and future events in Jewish history. Through the ages, Purim's theme of salvation was repeated many times, and numerous other Purim festivals were established by Diaspora communities that were saved from doom. The message which pervades the Megillah is relevant and universal. Divine

intervention functions in combination with human action. The Jews of Persia were saved because they worked with God.

Perhaps in isolation each acrostic, each instance of *gematria*, each *midrash* extracted from the text of Esther may seem insignificant or associated with a chance occurrence. But every midrash has also a homiletic intention. And the homiletic purpose of my midrash suggests that we are meant to discern God's presence in the action as the Jews of Persia are saved from annihilation. But we must search for Him. When we do so, we find that God was there all along, with a guiding hand at the helm.

AHASUERUS IS THE VILLAIN

BY MARSHALL A. PORTNOY

What would any self-respecting Oriental monarch do if his wife disobeyed a direct order? The answer to that question defines the eternal importance of the Book of Esther, the brilliant biblical blockbuster of relevant substance and cunning subtlety. An examination of the first four chapters of this treasured book reveals some surprising conclusions, with stark implications for the Jews of any age, of any land. In the post-Holocaust era, in an age when other Oriental despots demand the death of those whose writings they despise, the Book of Esther should be required reading.

What do we know about Ahasuerus? His statesmanship consists in giving the party to end all parties, a six-month-long no-holds-barred shindig for all the movers and shakers in his 127 provinces. Then the king has the general population over to the palace to admire his furniture and interior decorating, to feast, to drink and to make merry — for one week. Democracy in action. The king gets drunk and orders his wife to appear so everyone can see how pretty she

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is, and she refuses. This happy drunk turns angry — but what does he do? He asks his advisors how he should discipline Vashti! Imagine every alternative available to the king — find out why she refused, hang her if the excuse isn't adequate, hang her anyway, banish her, etc. But to show royal weakness by appearing not to know *what* to do was his worst move, an unmistakable invitation to every power-hungry Persian pol.

Thus the sub-plot of Vashti does much more than prepare the reader for her more pleasing successor. The story illustrates the essential character of the king — moody, fond of drink, utterly dependent. In fact, for ten years King Ahasuerus *never acts* — he always asks. And the lesson for us is that it is not Haman, but Ahasuerus, who is the cause of the near-disaster. We boo Haman, but Haman is really a nobody who goes crying to his wife at the first hint of trouble. Ahasuerus is the king, but the real villain of the story because he all but abdicates. It is not Haman's strength but Ahasuerus' weakness that is the dramatic pivot of the parable.

Ahasuerus is advised to seek another queen in Vashti's place. Memuchan's reasoning in suggesting this seems forced but Ahasuerus characteristically assents without the slightest amendment. Similarly, the "beauty contest" idea is not the king's, but the servants'. Once more, "the advice pleased the king."

In contrast to the passive Ahasuerus, is the active Mordecai. Though his family had been in captivity three generations earlier, Mordecai has evidently achieved some status in Shushan since he moves freely near the palace and even risks not bowing to the Prime Minister. Mordecai adopts his younger cousin, and he instructs her not to reveal her background at the palace. He is at once compassionate, caring, shrewd and subtle with the gift of impeccable political timing.

Though her passivity almost matches the king's, Esther is one of those lucky people with another gift — the gift of charm. "Esther obtained favor in the eyes of all who looked upon her." The custodian of the harem pushes her to the front of the line, gives her the best perfumes, delectables and attendants. Ahasuerus can resist Esther no more than anyone else. Four years after Vashti, he makes her queen, and — guess what? — has a drink! Heaven knows whether pretty Esther would have acted at all when Haman took power, but Mordecai characteristically leaves nothing to chance, and stalks the court *every day*, always keeping in close touch. So much so that when he overhears a plot to harm

the king, he tells Esther who tells the king who — well, “the matter was investigated” and the plotters were hanged. The Book again reports no direct act on the part of the king against Bigthan and Teresh.

Ahasuerus finally acts. A decade of drink has obviously made it impossible for him to govern, so he elevates Haman and commands his other servants to bow to him. Mordecai will not prostrate himself, explaining to the servants that he is a Jew. Haman’s egomania and obvious insecurity are such that he seeks the death of *all* the Jews! But — note well — it is not he that seals the decree of doom. He bribes the king who, after so many years of drinking and womanizing, gives him his ring — and the Jews. The king who needed all his advisors to dispose of his wife doesn’t need any help in disposing of an entire people. While he and Haman — guess what? — have a drink, Mordecai acts. In a great public relations coup, he rends his garments and cries out in the middle of town. Soon all the Jews do! Sweet but silly Esther, obviously oblivious, tries to send him fresh clothes! When Mordecai refuses, Esther asks one of the eunuchs to find out what is going on. Mordecai sends him back with all the news and, ready to play his ace, instructs her to intercede with the king. But, to his dismay, Esther refuses! She sends a message to Mordecai, protesting that visiting the king without an invitation could mean death unless the king were to hold out his golden sceptre.

Mordecai’s final entreaty finally persuades Esther:

Do not imagine that you alone, among all the Jews, will escape with your life because you are in the king’s palace. On the contrary, if you keep silent in this crisis, relief and deliverance will still come to the Jews from some other source, while you and your father’s house will perish. Who knows, perhaps you have attained your royal position for just such a time as this?

Who knows? Mordecai knows. His warning is for us as well. A few weeks after Purim, we celebrate a holiday in which all of us imagine that we personally left Egypt. Mordecai’s words, too, echo through the generations to us. In the face of adversity, there are no excuses for inaction. For the Jew, a preferred position is an illusion, as the wealthiest Jews of Germany could testify in 1935. Help comes when we assume that it will not come but, like Esther, we finally act. It is not Haman — symbol of evil — but Ahasuerus — symbol of the uncaring apathetic government who is the more dangerous character. This was true in the Purim story and true also in the history of the Jews in the Diaspora.

THE TEL DAN EXCAVATION

BY ABRAHAM RUDERMAN

The Skirball Archeological Museum of the Hebrew Union College contains an outstanding exhibit of twenty years of exploration at Tel Dan in northern Israel. This exhibit includes a model of a huge, sun-baked mudbrick gateway uncovered by Professor Abraham Biran, Director of the Nelson Glueck School of Biblical Archeology, Hebrew Union College — Jewish Institute of Religion. It was preserved for more than 4000 years by being incorporated into the city wall and totally covered with earth. Its intact arch, according to Prof. Biran, precedes by almost 2000 years the earliest arches in this country which date from the Herodian period. The archway is flanked by two towers to a height of seven meters.

Dan is mentioned frequently in the Bible. In Judges 18:29 it is referred to as Laish and in Joshua 19:47 they call it Leshem. The territory allotted to Dan by Joshua (Josh. 19:40–47) was not occupied. Instead, Dan captured the city of Laish, or Leshem, and called it Dan. (Josh. 19:47, 48; Jud. 18:27–29). The city of Dan occupied by the Danites circ. 1150 B.C.E. was settled several hundred years after the destruction of the first Laish originally established circ. 2000 B.C.E.

Another discovery by Prof. Biran has intrigued archeologists immensely. After the break-up of the monarchy following the death of Solomon in 921 B.C.E., Jeroboam became king of the northern kingdom of Israel. In order to discourage pilgrimages to Jerusalem, he set up two religious shrines, one at Beth-el and the other at Dan. In each of these shrines Jeroboam installed golden calves which were to be idolized as “the gods which brought you out of the Land of Egypt.” Prof. Biran and his team uncovered the *bamah*, a sixty foot square sanctuary of hewn limestone. These stones were in the style of the period of the Israelite monarchy. On the southern edge of the *bamah* they uncovered a huge flight of stairs, eight meters wide. Pottery found on the stairs date from the mid 9th cen-

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THE TEL DAN EXCAVATION

ture B.C.E. I Kings 12:31 confirms the existence of a *bamah* built by Jeroboam I. *And he made houses of high places and appointed priests of the lowest of the people who were not of the levites.* A sounding under the stairs revealed pottery from the mid 9th century B.C.E. This second stage could be attributed to Ahab who fortified Dan and devoted himself to the worship of the golden calf. *And Ahab did more to provoke the Lord, God of Israel to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him.* (I Kings 16:33). There was extensive rebuilding after the Assyrian conquest and the cult tradition was never forgotten even down to the Hellenistic and Roman periods. A marble statue of Aphrodite found nearby probably dates from this period when it well may have been located at the site of our *bamah*.

Near the entrance to the gate an unusual bench was uncovered. It was made of huge oblong stones about three meters long. It is likely that on such a bench sat the elders of Israel referred to in Psalms 69:12 when it speaks of those *That sit in the gate.* Reference to the gate is also found in Ruth 4:1 *Then Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there and behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz had spoken came by, and he said to him, 'Sit down here', and he sat down.* The structure near the bench, also built of huge ashlars, originally included small columns with decorated bases. Three of these columns which were found may have supported a canopy which covered a throne. The Bible refers to thrones at the city gate. *And the king of Israel and Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, each sat on his throne, arrayed in their robes at the entrance of the gate of Samaria,* (I Kings 22:10). In II Samuel 19:9 reference is made to David sitting where the people could see him. *'Behold, the king doth sit in the gate.'* *And all the people came before the king.* Prof. Biran raises the possibility that the structure in the gate at Dan may have served as a base for the statue of a god. He referred to Josiah's action in II Kings 23:8: *And he broke down the high places of the gate that were in the entrance of the gate of Joshua, the governor of the city.* The date of the construction of the city Gate is arrived at from the following evidence. The original city gate was destroyed in a huge conflagration from evidence of burnt debris, cooking pots, juglets and bowls. This destruction in the 9th century B.C.E. might be attributed to Ben Hadad of Damascus about 855 B.C.E. I Kings 15:20: *So Ben Hadad*

sent the commanders of his armies against the cities of Israel and smote Ijon, Dan... If this assumption is correct, Prof. Biran concludes that the construction of the city gate and fortification was undertaken by Jeroboam.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

In your fall 1989 issue, Mr. Norman Asher's article "Why was Aaron punished" is very stimulating.

If we follow Rashi that Moses was punished for striking the rock, the question arises, why was Aaron punished?

Mr. Norman Asher suggests that Aaron was punished for not fulfilling his mission to be the spokesman to the Jewish people. Had he done his duty and spoken to the people, Moses' anger would have been avoided. This is borne out in Exodus 6:16 – God says to Moses: "And he (Aaron) shall be thy spokesman unto the people." We see here clearly that Aaron was to be the spokesman not only to Pharaoh but also to the people. Aaron's silence in Numbers 20:10, was considered an inaction and sin.

Ibn Ezra, Abrabanel and Joseph Albo suggest that the sin of Moses and Aaron is found in Numbers 20:6 – *And Moses and Aaron went from the presence of the assembly unto the door of the Tent of Meeting and fell upon their faces.* They understand this in the sense of "fleeing" from the assembly, and see in this action a lack of faith for which Moses and Aaron were condemned.

Raphael S. Schwartzman
Chicago, Illinois

עשה תורתך קבע

THE TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR
IS DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
CHAIM ABRAMOWITZ

March-April 1990

April-May 1990

28 W Micah 6
29 Th Micah 7
30 F Leviticus 1-5
31 שבת Haftarah: Isaiah 43:21-44:23
April
1 S Nachum 1
2 M Nachum 2
3 T Nachum 3
4 W Habakkuk 1
5 Th Habakkuk 2
6 F Leviticus 6-8
7 שבת Haftarah: Malachi 3:4-24
8 S Song of Songs 1-2
9 M Song of Songs 3-4
10 T Passover Exodus 12:21-41
11 Haftarah: Joshua 5:2-6:1
12 W Leviticus 22:26-23:44*
13 Haftarah: II Kings 23:1-25*
14 Th Song of Songs 5-6
F Exodus 33:12-34:26
15 שבת Haftarah: Ezekiel 37:1-14
S Song of Songs 7-8
16 M Exodus 13:17-15:26
17 Haftarah: II Samuel 22
18 T Deuteronomy 14:22-15:17
19 Haftarah: 10:32-12:6
20 W Habakkuk 3
Th Zephaniah 1
21 F Leviticus 9-11
שבת Haftarah: II Samuel 6:1-7:17
22 S Zephaniah 2
23 M Zephaniah 3
24 T Haggai 1

25 W Haggai 2
26 Th Zechariah 1
27 F Leviticus 12-15
28 שבת Haftarah: II Kings 7:3-20
29 S Zechariah 2-3
30 M Isaiah 10:32-11-12
May
1 T Isaiah 4
2 W Isaiah 5
3 Th Isaiah 6
4 F Leviticus 16-20
5 שבת Haftarah: Amos 9:7-15
6 S Zechariah 7
7 M Zechariah 8
8 T Zechariah 9
9 W Zechariah 10
10 Th Zechariah 11
11 F Leviticus 21-24
12 שבת Haftarah: Ezekiel 44:15-24
13 S Ezekiel 12
14 M Ezekiel 13
15 T Ezekiel 14
16 W Malachi 1
17 Th Malachi 2
18 F Leviticus 25-27
19 שבת Haftarah: Jeremiah 16:19-17:14
20 S Malachi 3
21 M Psalms 1
22 T Psalms 2
23 W Psalms 3
24 Th Psalms 4

*Only in the Diaspora

May-June 1990

- 25 F Numbers 1-4:20
 26 שבת Haftarah: Hosea 2:1-22
 27 S Ruth 1
 28 M Ruth 2
 29 T Ruth 3-4
 30 W Exodus 19:20
 Haftarah: Ezekiel 1
 31 Th Deuteronomy 14:22-16:17*

June

Haftarah Habakkuk 2:20-3

- 1 F Numbers 4:21-7
 2 שבת Haftarah: Judges 13:2-25
 3 S Psalms 5
 4 M Psalms 6
 5 T Psalms 7
 6 W Psalms 8
 7 Th Psalms 9
 8 F Numbers 8-12
 9 שבת Haftarah: Zechariah 2:14-4:7
 10 S Psalms 10
 11 M Psalms 11
 12 T Psalms 12-13
 13 W Psalms 14
 14 Th Psalms 15-16
 15 F Numbers 13-15
 16 שבת Haftarah: Joshua 2:1-24
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WE MOURN THE LOSS OF

Professor **HAIM GEVARYAHU**

חיים מ. י. גבריהו ז"ל

Chairman: Israel Society for Biblical Research
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The next issue of our Jewish Bible Quarterly
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