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EDITORIAL

It is with feelings of pride in the past and some concern for the future that we enter the twentieth year of uninterrupted publication of our Jewish Bible Quarterly — Dor Le Dor.

In 1972, the late Dr. Louis Katzoff, upon the urging of the late Professor Chaim Gevaryahu, chairman of the World Jewish Bible Society, launched a magazine in English, devoted entirely to the study of the Bible. In the editorial which appeared in the first issue, Dr. Katzoff outlined the main objectives of Dor Le Dor: "To deepen the attachment to the Bible among its readers. To deepen the commitment of our people toward the treasures of our heritage. To build a stronger link between the Diaspora and Israel."

These guidelines determined the basic policies governing the journal from its inception to this day. Our Associate Editor, Dr. Chaim Pearl, expressed the following view in a recent editorial (Vol. XIX, No. 3): "The J.B.Q. has deliberately remained without a definite policy with respect to theological aspects of Bible scholarship. Its single policy is to provide a forum for authors to offer an honest and reasonably expounded essay on any topic of interest to Bible readers." In fact, the Editorial Board always allowed a wide spectrum of theological views, so long as they were well-written, were designed to elucidate biblical passages, or displayed new perspectives on a biblical theme.

In the course of almost 20 years of publication, the readership of the J.B.Q. has spread beyond English speaking countries, and includes Japan, India, Germany, Italy, and, recently, also some of the Eastern European countries. We count among our subscribers some of the most prestigious libraries, theological seminaries and universities. To date, close to 150 authors, among them professors, rabbis and laymen, have contributed articles to the J.B.Q.

After the passing of our founder and editor, Dr. Louis Katzoff, and our assistant editor, Chaim Abramowitz, the Editorial Board was fortunate to have Rabbi Dr. Chaim Pearl, author of ten books, and

hundreds of scholarly articles, agree to serve as Associate Editor, and Dr. David Wolfers, an authority on the book of Job, as Assistant Editor. Rabbi Dr. Joshua Adler has been our managing editor since 1984. During the absence of David Wolfers we have been helped by Rabbi Dr. Shubert Spero, author of some notable books and Irving Stone, Professor of Jewish Thought at Bar Ilan University. That is all justification for pride.

And now the note of some concern.

In the 20th year of our publication, we face a number of changes in the structure of our organization. Till now, we were an integral part of the World Jewish Bible Center, which also publishes Beth Mikra, a Bible magazine in Hebrew, and which received substantial financial assistance from the WZO Dept. of Education and Culture in the Diaspora. The WZO decided that, in good conscience, it could no longer support a magazine in Hebrew, primarily for Israel. After lengthy discussion it has now been resolved that the J.B.Q. will henceforth be a separate and independent association, loosely linked with the WZO, and no longer part of the World Jewish Bible Center. From many points of view our greater independence will be a good thing, but we will also be left to meet more of our annual budget from our own resources and initiative. Ultimately, this presents a greater challenge to us all, particularly to our readership. By remaining a faithful subscriber, and also by interesting one additional subscriber (individual, synagogue, library), you will help us to assure our continued publication and even to expand and strengthen our valuable quarterly.

Shimon Bakon
Editor

THE THEOLOGY OF PSALM 145
PART I

CHAIM PEARL

Psalm 145 is one of the most popular psalms in the Synagogue liturgy and on account of that it appears in the Prayer Book more frequently than any of the other 149 psalms. Liturgically it is commonly known as *Ashre* from the opening word of the psalm as it appears in the Prayer Book.

The liturgical usage of this psalm contains a slight variation from the biblical text in that it adds two verses from two other psalms (84:5 and 144:15) by way of an introduction, and appends another verse (Ps. 115:8) as a conclusion. These additions have been variously explained by the commentators; but it is not our subject here. Suffice only to say that the most acceptable reason for the introductory verses was to suggest that people should arrive early in the synagogue to get into the mood for prayer. Thus, the Talmud taught[1] that the worshipper should be exercised in meditation for an hour before he offers his prayer service, as it is written, *Ashre yoshve vetekha, Happy are they that dwell in Thy house, they are ever praising Thee* (Ps.84:5). To which the compilers of the liturgy added verse 144:15 with its two-fold repetition of the word *ashre*, *Ashre haam shekakha lo, Ashre haam she-Adonai Elohav, Happy is the people that is in such a case. Yea happy is the people whose God is the Lord.* Together with the first verse of the introduction, this verse gives the liturgical psalm a three-fold repetition of the word *ashre* which supports the talmudic notion that the psalm is worthy enough

1 Ber. 32b.

Dr. Chaim Pearl is the Associate Editor of the J.B.Q., an author and lecturer. His tenth book "The Stories of the Sages" was recently published by Dvir.

to be recited three times a day.[2] The second verse of the introduction is appropriately chosen also because it is the verse immediately preceding our Psalm 145. The additional verse (Ps.115:18) which has been appended to the end of the psalm is more easily explained. It is clear that the editors of the Prayer Book chose a verse which ends in *Hallelujah* to correspond with the remaining five psalms in the Psalter (146-150) which all end with the same exclamation of praise.

Reference has been made to the talmudic suggestion that our psalm should be recited three times a day. The rabbis added that such piety warrants an "assured portion in the World to Come."[3] The original text seems to have been "once a day."[4] Support for that notion was found in the verse, *Every day will I bless Thee; and I will praise Thy name for ever and ever* (v. 2). The phrase *for ever and ever* was interpreted as a time stretch embracing this world and the next world, and when bracketed with the opening phrase, *Every day will I bless Thee*, the rabbinic homily was obvious. However the "once a day" was amended to "three times", probably with an eye to the phrase *l'olam va'ed (for ever and ever)* which is found in the psalm three times (vv. 1, 2, 21). Later on, a further support for the recital of the psalm three times a day was found in the fact, as already indicated, that the word *ashre* is found three times in the additional verses of introduction and conclusion. Be that as it may, the Prayer Book does have the worshipper recite Psalm 145 three times each day, twice in the morning — in the early psalm reading part and at the end of the Morning Service — and again in the Afternoon Service.

The Talmud then continues to discuss the psalm by introducing two significant questions.[5] This essay will deal only with the first of these, which poses the question why Psalm 145 is rated so highly that

2 Ibid. 4b.
3 Ibid., Ibid.
4 See Akiva Eger, *Gilyon Ha-Shass*, ad. loc.
5 Ber. 4b.

it deserves to be recited three times a day. In other words, what is so special about it? Could it be because it is an alphabetic psalm, that is, with each verse beginning with a letter of the aleph bet in its sequential order? Is it simply that literary device which makes the psalm special? Obviously not, replies the Talmud. That alone would certainly not make Psalm 145 unique since there are several other psalms which were composed in the same style.[6] The Talmud goes on to remind us of Psalm 119, which is an eight-fold alphabetic acrostic, each letter represented by eight verses. If then the alphabetic literary style is so significant why not recite Psalm 119? Clearly then, the uniqueness of Psalm 145 does not rest on its alphabetized form. At this, the Talmud offers another thought and suggests that our psalm is very special because it includes the emotive verse, *Thou openest Thy hand, and satisfiest every living thing with favour* (v. 16). The comment is interesting in itself. The rabbis involved in this discussion lived in Palestine in the third century, a time of political oppression, and above all of widespread poverty. This latter economic fact is frequently illustrated in the literary sources of the period, and the present rabbinic observation is just one example. To earn a livelihood and provide for one's family was a constant concern in the impoverished community. Consequently, the inclusion of a verse which referred to God as the great Provider was a moving scriptural statement which strengthened them in their faith in the goodness of God. Could it be then that Psalm 145 was singled out for a three times daily repetition because of the religious and comforting power of verse 16? The Talmud rejects that explanation because of the fact that Psalm 145 is not the only psalm with such a teaching, and offers another example of a psalm expressing praise of God the heavenly Provider; in the words, *Who giveth food to all flesh, for His mercy endureth for ever* (136:25). Having suggested two reasons for the special place of

6 Other alphabetic psalms, in a variety of literary patterns, are 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119.

Psalm 145, and having both of them separately rejected, the Talmud deftly settles for the idea that our psalm is unique and worthy of frequent daily reading because it has both factors, i.e., it is an alphabetic psalm and it also has the great verse, *Thou openest Thy hand, and satisfiest every living thing with favour.* Whereas Psalm 119 is a great alphabetic psalm, it does not have the encouraging teaching about God the beneficent Provider. And while Psalm 136 does contain such a verse it is not an alphabetic psalm. In contrast, Psalm 145 has both features; and that makes it special. Thus far the talmudic discussion on that question.

But we can carry the matter a little further. Granted that Psalm 145 does have both features described above, viz., it is an alphabetic psalm and also contains the beautiful verse which teaches about God who provides, does that make the psalm so important that the sages singled it out from all other psalms and even gave it three places in the daily liturgy? It is suggested here that the talmudic explanation needs some interpretation and that the rabbis intended in their own poetic and even subtle way to express a profound theological statement about their perceptions of God.

In Jewish theology, concepts of God can be examined under two chief headings. The first is the description of God as the great and powerful Creator. God is the omnipotent and omniscient Being who is the source of the universe and all things in it. In His attributes of total power and knowledge of all things He is, however, transcendent. That means, that He is over and above and totally remote from mankind. The liturgical phrase is very apt which refers to God as *Ha-El ha-gadol ha-gibbor ve-ha-norah El elyon koneh shamayim va-aretz*, "The great, mighty and revered God, Master of heaven and earth." This is God in all His transcendence. Carried to its extreme, it is a description of what the medieval Jewish writers called "the God of the philosophers."[7] Seventeenth-eighteenth century Deists also believed in a God who was the all-powerful creator of the

7 See my *The Medieval Jewish Mind*, Valentine Mitchell, London, 1971, pp.6-26.

universe, but that after the Creation, God has no further concern or relationship with the world of man. Man is on his own and there is no God who cares for him. Jewish theology of course never allowed its theology of transcendence to follow such an extreme view and whenever it considered the transcendence of God, the emphasis was, in that context, focussed only on the divine omnipotence. Biblical and rabbinic theology, while admitting concepts of the transcendence of God, were even more insistent on emphasizing another description of the divine presence.

This second concept of God is propounded by the religious theist with its emphasis not on the transcendence of God but on His immanence. The central teaching here is that God is ever present in the world of man. He knows and He cares. He is the Lord of history who ultimately redeems the righteous and punishes the wicked. In the unfolding record of Jewish history He is the *Goel* — the Redeemer — who delivered Israel from the bondage of ancient Egypt and will redeem them in the present and future. Moreover, He is the God who knows and loves not only mankind as a whole, or Israel as His chosen people, but extends His loving care and mercy to the individual sufferer. The theology of God's immanence is central in Jewish teaching.

Now we can go back to Psalm 145 and the talmudic conclusion that its uniqueness is found in the fact that it is both an alphabetic psalm and celebrates the belief in God the Provider. It is here suggested that these two features correspond to the two concepts of the divine attributes to which we have just referred.

When the Talmud remarks on the alphabetic form of the psalm, it is one way of observing that the psalm celebrates the omnipotence of God, from beginning to end. All existence is included in Him and in His power, from *aleph* till *tav*. The psalmist declares, *By the word of God were the heavens made* (33:6). The Talmud takes the idea further and describes the letters of the alphabet as the créative elements used by God in making the universe. Even the Tabernacle was made by Bezalel because he knew how to combine the letters of

the aleph bet as instruments of creative energy.[8] Post-talmudic mystical literature develops the theme further and the 22 letters of the alphabet are seen as the spiritual essences emanating from God's supernal power.[9] Throughout our alphabetic Psalm 145 this emphasis on God's greatness and omnipotence is found again and again. We will note here just a few of these verses or parts of them which sing of God's transcendence and omnipotence. Thus, *Great is the Lord . . . and His greatness is unsearchable* (v. 3). . . . *And shall declare Thy mighty acts* (v. 4). *And men shall speak of the might of Thy tremendous acts; and I will tell of Thy greatness* (v. 6). . . . *To make known to the sons of men His mighty acts, and the glory of the majesty of His kingdom* (v. 12). Interestingly, most of these verses dealing with God's omnipotence and transcendence — but not all of them — are found in the first part of the psalm.[10] It is as if the author deliberately designed his alphabetic psalm with this plan, namely to sing the praises of the transcendent God in the first half of the psalm.

But then we arrive at the second theme, God the immanent, the loving, caring and merciful God, who hears the supplications and answers the prayers of the needy. Almost half the psalm is dedicated to this grand theme which is really at the center of all religious faith. In addition to the famous verse 16 which has already been noted, the following are a few further examples of the same theistic teaching. Thus, *The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion . . .* (v. 8). *The Lord is good to all; and His tender mercies are all over His works* (v. 9). *The Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all that are bowed down* (v. 14). *The eyes of all wait for Thee, and Thou givest them their food in due season* (v. 15). *The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth* (v. 18). Here then is a remarkable collection of verses in one psalm on the

8 Ber. 55a.
9 Sefer Yetzirah, 2:2; 5:22; Zohar, 1:3; 2:152.
10 Verses 8 and 9 are the only exceptions.

single theme of the immanence of an all-loving God who knows about the sufferer and who extends His merciful kindness to save him. It must be clear that the sincere worshipper will have found, and still finds, tremendous spiritual help and a strengthening of faith in those powerful verses. Reference was made above to the Jewish liturgical practice of reciting Psalm 145 three times every day. In fact, there is one other occasion when this psalm is singled out for inclusion in the prayer service and that is for the *Selihot* or Penitential Services of the synagogue, from before the Jewish New Year and until the Day of Atonement, where it forms the opening reading for the service. One good reason for its place in the *Selihot* service is because of its appropriate verses dealing with the compassion of a loving God who is close to all who call on Him.

What has been said here can be quickly summarized. Psalm 145 has a special place in the synagogue liturgy because of its proclamation of the two essential concepts about God, viz., His transcendence and His immanence. Each half of that theological doctrine is important in Judaism. The first half without the second would see God only as the omnipotent Creator; as a force which is remote from the world and unconcerned with the human condition. The second teaching without the first might reduce God merely to the figure of a benevolent father, ever ready to comply with even the petty wishes of His children. Such a view would reduce religious faith to a childish level and remove the dimension of awe, mystery,divine power and authority. Both concepts of God are therefore needed and together they offer a teaching for a mature and powerful personal faith. This thesis is interestingly echoed in a very perceptive homily given in the name of the third century sage Rabbi Johanan who said, "In every biblical passage where the greatness (transcendence) of God is mentioned, there next to it you also find His humility (immanence)."[11]

11 Meg. 31a.

ISAIAH AND HIS AUDIENCE

YOSEF FREUND

The prophecies of Isaiah in chapters 40-46[1] contain some of the most exquisite pieces of Hebrew poetry, noted for the richness of language and imagery. But, above all, these prophecies tell a history of important developments in the life of the Jewish Diaspora in Babylon. We learn that in the prevailing circumstances, new ideas were conceived, particularly those concerning the relation of Israel and God. The Lord's declared comfort of His people[2] is now a part of the divine scheme, a shining manifestation of His glory: the severe punishment of the people and of Jerusalem has ended.

From the prophet's exhortations we learn about the material and the spiritual life of his audience, about its reaction to his utterances and about the ideological controversy which the prophet's demands evoked among the Judean exiles.

In the 6th century B.C.E. these exiles were devoted to the preservation of their national culture. They had achieved a high degree of material well-being in Babylon in the rural districts and in the capital city as well. Their position in this great metropolis enabled them to influence the Persian conqueror a short time after his conquest of Babylon, possibly leading to the Cyrus declaration.

Their efforts were indeed the fruits of their dedication to the national tradition, lovingly nurtured for decades. Ever since their arrival, the exiles in Babylon were eager to hear God's words (cf.

1 It is not within the compass of this study to elaborate on the theory of Deutero- and Trito-Isaiah. We refer here to the sayings of a prophet whose words reflect events between 545-515 B.C.E.

2 If not noted otherwise, the quotations are from Isaiah.

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Ezk. 33:30-33). They continued to teach the Hebrew language to their children and grandchildren, already born in Babylon. Isaiah's messages, delivered in a rich Hebrew, are a shining testimony to the competence of his audience in that language. Without a doubt, the material well-being achieved by the exiles was regarded by them as God-sent to create a comfortable atmosphere for the education of their children. There is no evidence of an attempt to translate the Holy Writings into the languages used in Babylon. They did not need such translations.[3]

The exiles in Babylon indeed clung to the religion of their fathers, which nurtured the hope of a return to Zion, of rebuilding cities in the Promised Land and of the restoration of Jerusalem to its exalted place in the world. Nevertheless, they were surprised by the favorable declaration of Cyrus. To most of them it was apparently too rapid, and seemed too good to be real. This radical change of policy in which Cyrus differed from the Assyrians and the Chaldeans, did not move the stunned exiles to act as demanded by Isaiah. The exulting metaphors, praising the doings of Cyrus, "His anointed one" did not prod the majority of the prophet's listeners to act. Only a few hundred responded.

Thus, at the outset of his mission, Isaiah faced the bitter reality: *All flesh is grass* . . . (40:6 ff). But he comforted himself: *The word of our God is always fulfilled* (40:8). Then starts a passionate series of appeals of the prophet to his listeners. These appeals present a richly dramatic exchange of views, starting with *Comfort, O comfort My people* (40:1) and parables of the careful shepherd tending his lambs, then adding the flattering exaltation of Israel's task in the divine, cosmic order, where a special place is accorded to *Jacob, the servant of the Lord.* It is worthwhile to discern the development of the ideological issues and to dwell on the stages in

3 To compare: hardly half a century had passed in Greek Alexandria when there was an urgent need for a Greek translation of the Torah.

the lively discussion which had arisen between the prophet and his audience.

It was quite natural to react in the way Isaiah's audience did to the great tidings of redemption: exultation mixed with fear of the unknown; the reluctance to give up the security that they had come to know in Babylon and feelings of doubt as to the success of the venture. The prophet reacted by intensifying the tone of encouragement in the words of the Lord: *Listen to me, O Jacob, Israel whom I have called . . . I am the first and I am the last . . . Draw near unto me and hear this* (48:12, 16). Again and again Isaiah encouraged the people not to fear: *Fear not My servant Jacob* (44:2).[4] *Thus says the Lord . . . your God, instructing you for your own benefit, guiding you in the way you should go* (48:17). "The way you should go" implies not only good and timely advice, but also resentment. At present the people are not choosing the right way, as evidenced by the lack of response to the prophet's initial call in 40:1-4.

Perhaps at this stage of the exchange between Isaiah and the people his audience could have countered with quotations from Jeremiah's letter to the exiles: *Build houses and live in them, plant gardens and eat their fruit. Take wives and beget sons and daughters, and take wives for your sons, and give your daughters to husbands, that they may bear sons and daughters. Multiply there, do not decrease. And seek the welfare - shalom - of the city to which I have exiled you . . . for in its prosperity you shall prosper* (Jer. 29:5-7). Jeremiah wrote this letter in an hour of emergency to prevent irresponsible, futile revolts and uncontrolled behavior. Those who did not agree with Isaiah might have argued that the "70 years" (Jer. 29:10) were not yet up. The change of rulers did not overcome their fears and their inhibitions concerning the Lord's promises: *And I will bring you back to the place from which I have exiled you* (Jer. 29:14).

Let us compare the meaning of the word *shalom* in Jeremiah's letter to that in Isaiah 48:18-19: *If you only would heed my*

4 Cf. 40:9, *Be not afraid!* 41:14, *Fear not, you worm Jacob!*

commands! Then your prosperity — shalom[5] *— would be like a river, your triumph* (old J.P.S. "righteousness") *like the waves of the sea. Your offspring would be as many as the sand, their issue as many as its grains. Their name would never be cut off or obliterated before Me. Shalom* is equated with the continued existence of Israel. In addition the prophet links *shalom* to "righteousness" in the best tradition of the moral teaching expressed already by Amos 5:24: *But let justice well up like water, righteousness like an unfailing stream.*

Here Isaiah pointed out that *shalom* as experienced in Babylon, is not the true peace for which the people of God should strive. When Isaiah exclaims: *All flesh is grass and all goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth* (40:6-7) he had the Jews in the Babylonian Diaspora in mind. There is no certainty that they will not wither and fade away, as happened to a large part of the ten tribes exiled by the Assyrians. Real *shalom* will only come after a quick departure from Babylon: *Go forth from Babylon, flee from Chaldea! Declare this with loud shouting! Announce this!* (48:20). The imperatives: "go," "flee," "announce," "listen," "hear" feature strongly in the prophet's form of appeal. This frequent use of the imperative shows that he is troubled by the lack of response. Hence his bitter remark in 48:4: *Your neck is like an iron sinew and your forehead bronze!*

The linking of *shalom* and *tzedakah* in 48:18 is deliberate. Isaiah in 48:21, 20-22 emphasizes the contrast between the "parched places" and the "water gushing forth" as metaphors of the difference between righteousness and wickedness. When Isaiah exclaims: *There is no safety — shalom — for the wicked* (48:22), who is meant by "the

5 Any translation is an interpretation as well: The J.P.S. translates: "Your triumph like the waves . . ." The French rendering had chosen "bonheur" i.e. happiness. Isaiah's use of צדקתך in 48:18 expresses the two meanings of the word צדקה "justice" and "righteousness" as well. I suggest that the translation in the new J.P.S. is misleading.

wicked"? David Kimhi comments, "This was said to the people of Babylon." The Metzudot David writes: "The wicked Babylonians shall have no peace, says the Lord. As a consequence, Cyrus will send Israel from the exile and he will destroy the Babylonians, for that is the edict of the Almighty."

Samuel Krausz writes in his commentary on the book of Isaiah: "The wicked according to the context are the Babylonians, but according to a note of B. Z. Bachir, they are the wicked from among the Israelites."[6] Indeed, the identification of "the wicked" in Isaiah with the Babylonians misses the point. The prophet was concerned with his audience. One should heed Ibn Ezra who comments on Isaiah 57:26 where the same verse recurs. "The Almighty will heal the righteous of Israel, and not the wicked."

After the many terms of pity and of endearment that the prophet had used, we witness a radical change of tone. He says "wicked" when he speaks of his brothers in exile. He describes them thus because they will not move from Babylon even after the proclamation of Cyrus. The effect of several years of strain and disappointment show in the prophet's words. The hoped-for decisive step towards the long awaited redemption is not taken, not only because of fear or reluctance to leave a life of ease, but also because a new ideology is taking shape. It is as though the people are saying to Isaiah, "Look, you have repeatedly told us that there is one God, He is the only one, He created the world, He is the first and the last." Of Him it is said: *From the west they shall revere the name of the Lord and from the east His presence* (59:19), and *His presence fills all the earth* (6:3).[7]

If the whole earth is full of His glory, His presence is no less here than it is in Judea. They came to the conclusion that one can believe in the only God everywhere, one can pray and serve the Creator

6 We quote from his commentary on Isaiah, Budapest, 1904, as published by A. Cahana in Israel.

7 KJV (1614) translates: "The whole earth is full of his glory."

piously and be His servants, the "bearers of His vessels" even by the rivers of Babylon.

The prophet had a reply. He states that the soil of the lands of exile is unclean. Two hundred and thirty years earlier we heard a similar pronouncement from Amos of Tekoa, when he said to Amaziah the priest: *And you yourself shall die on unclean soil* (7:17). Isaiah stresses that the "bearers of the vessels of the Lord" have only one option: to remove themselves from the unclean soil of the exile: *Turn, turn away, touch naught unclean as you depart from there; keep pure, as you go forth from there, you who bear the vessels of the Lord* (52:11).[8]

As already mentioned, this plea of Isaiah, the bringer of comfort, is unprecedented for its stern tone. Being in exile defiled the man of Israel, because he cannot help coming into contact with uncleanliness. Exile is likened to a long term of imprisonment that was imposed on a wicked generation and its descendents. There was no escaping this imprisonment which was decreed from above. But now, *Her term of service is over* (40:2). It is no longer necessary to live in conditions of uncleanliness. With the announcement of divine grace the option to be cleansed is open. The choice to make use of it is in the hands of each individual. "Uncleanliness" is equated with defilement, something to be avoided at all costs.

The fundamental difference between purity and holiness on one hand and uncleanliness on the other was perfectly obvious to all Israelites. A person was warned not to come into contact even with an object suspected of uncleanliness.[9] The actions of the unclean and their very existence in the country defile the land of the Lord (Jer. 2:7).

Of all Isaiah's appeals to his congregation, the one in chapter 52:11 is the most urgent. If merely living in exile makes the Israelite

8 Cf. Ezra 1:7-8; 5:14-15.

9 The Torah elaborates on this subject in Leviticus Ch. 16-18. To stress the contrast between uncleanliness and purity the portion — "You shall be holy" (Lev. 19-20) follows immediately.

unclean, since there is no possibility of avoiding contact with uncleanliness, the only way to avoid uncleanliness is by self-purification, *Keep pure, as you go forth from there, you who bear the vessels of the Lord* (52:11). The call to the "bearers of the vessels of the Lord" expresses the prophet's stand-point in the ideological discussion. Who is meant by those who *bear the vessels of the Lord*? The prophet does not allude to the priests or the levites whose cultic tasks bring them in daily contact with the "vessels of the Lord." It is rather a symbolic designation honoring all "the servants of the Lord" who obey His commandments and begin their journey to Jerusalem. "My servant shall prosper" (52:13) will be the result. The prophet has already detailed how Israel and the congregation of his listeners can be designated "servants of the Lord." Here the prophet emphasizes another important aspect of the true servant of the Lord: obedience to his master. Every servant is obliged to carry out his master's wishes. *Through him the Lord's purpose might prosper* (53:10). The Lord's ultimate design is shown here in an ideal, satisfying harmony. An important aspect of the duty of the "bearer of the vessels" (52:11) is here pointed out: to implement God's mission!

In this study we have tried to deal with the problems arising from Isaiah's stern call that the people turn and depart from their exile and to satisfy ourselves as to its part in the vision of the prophet and importance in the fulfillment of his mission among the Babylonian exiles. The prophet is forced to turn from expressions of encouragement and of sympathy to fierce and uncompromising demands. These demands were founded on fear that the people who were comfortably settled in exile would lose courage and forego the historical opportunity offered by the new circumstances. In other words, only those who left the exile and went back to Jerusalem to be her watchmen (62:6) were the "bearers of the vessels of the Lord." They and no others. In the wake of the news of the redemption and of renewal of the work of the Lord in Jerusalem, there is nothing to be sought in the uncleanliness of the exile. Only in the land which is the inheritance of God, can an Israelite live in purity.

WHAT IS A גב?

DAVID WOLFERS

In biblical Hebrew, wherever we encounter the word "back" in an unmistakable context, it is גו, vocalized either with *patah* or with *seri*. In modern Hebrew this word has disappeared, and the principal word for "back" is גב with *patah*. The principal purpose of this note is to examine the biblical usage of this latter word and to show how its meaning has become distorted until it has usurped the sense of its weaker brother גו.

According to the great Lexicon of Brown Driver & Briggs, and the concordances and dictionaries of the Bible, the root of גב is גבב, which means "to be curved, convex or hollowed out," and which is cognate with the Aramaic source of גבבא, "a hill," and related to Arabic, Aramaic, Ethiopic and Assyrian words all meaning "cistern." However, the root remains hypothetical, for there is no other trace of a Hebrew verb גבב with that or any other meaning. In appropriate combinations, however, גב is always spelt with a *dagesh* in the ב, apparently confirming the conjectured root.

Possibly the only example of the word גב in the Bible where its meaning is unambiguous is in Leviticus 14:9, in the phrase גבת עיניו, "his eyebrows," but whether this phrase derives from the fact that the eyebrows *curve* or arch, or from the fact that they are set *above* the eyes, is entirely uncertain.

In all, the word גב occurs thirteen times in the Bible, and in only five of its books. Of these no fewer than seven occurrences are in Ezekiel and three in Job, leaving one each for Leviticus, I Kings and Psalm 129.

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In I Kings 7:33 in the description of the molten sea of the Temple of Solomon, גבs are mentioned as parts of the brass wheels supporting the "bases," which are described as like chariot wheels. The usual well-justified assumption is that the גב is the rim, or the felloe of the wheel. The other parts described are the axletrees, the hubs and the spokes.

In Psalm 129:3, the dramatic complaint is voiced: *The plowers plowed upon my* גב. *They made long their furrows*. It is principally from this verse that the idea derives that גב means "back."

The Ezekiel passages belong in three groups – 16:24, 31 and 39; 1:18, 18 and 10:12; and 43:13.

43:13 relates to the vision of a new temple and specifically to the dimensions of the altar. It occurs in the phrase *the* גב *of the altar*, and the most probable interpretation as well as I can deduce is the height. JPS translates "the base of the altar." NJPSV gives "height," but claims a contradictory literal meaning, "bulge." LXX has "height." In NEB the translation is so dissimilar from the Hebrew that it is not possible to deduce which word in it corresponds to גב, and the same applies to the Vulgate version. REV sees the phrase as meaning "the higher place of the altar." None of these versions seems to relate the word to its alleged root, and most seem to suggest an origin in גבה, "to be high, exalted," which is a proper biblical Hebrew verb. If this is correct, then the *dagesh* in the ב is not.

The references to a גב in Ezekiel Chapter 16 are in the context of the prophet's favorite assault on his countrymen – the accusation that they go a-whoring after false gods. *You have built yourself your* גב *at the head of every street, and made your* רמה *in every road* is v. 31 while v. 24 is a slight contraction of this sentence and 39 declares *I shall throw down your* גב *and break your* רמה*s*. The word rendered "throw down" here is הרס, a very strong word used for altars, cities and even countries.

In Ezekiel 16 it is quite certain that the גב is some form of ceremonial object for the worship of deviant deities, and its consistent parallel with רמה (high place) strongly suggests that it is

some form of lofty construction, a phallic pillar or similar. BDB essays "mound." Clearly, the גב is something which must be *built*, and having been built, may be *overthrown*. A mound does not quite meet this specification. Again it appears that the appropriate root for the word in these passages is גבה rather than גבב.

As a bridge to the next example we require to examine Isaiah 57:7, 8. Here also a prophet is inveighing against the metaphorical whoredom of the people: *Upon a high and lofty mountain hast thou set thy bed; Thither also wentest thou up to offer sacrifice. And behind the doors and the posts hast thou set up thy* זכרון. The resemblance between this last line and Ezekiel's complaints in Chapter 16 is very apparent.

Job 13:12, in an attack by Job on the qualifications of his friends to speak on behalf of God, runs: *Your* זכרונs *are figures of ash; Like* גבs *of clay are your* גבs. This strange insult, and insult it surely is, cannot possibly be comprehended without reference to both Ezekiel 16 and Isaiah 57 in which גב and זכרון are used in identical contexts, in verses exhibiting a close parallel between them, and serving the same function in both verses. That is, the real parallelism in the Job passage reflects what we might call a *synthetic parallelism* between the lines of the two prophets, who were contemporaries. Both words, גב and זכרון unmistakably signify objects of deviant worship, the first as we have noted a lofty symbol erected in the open air, the second apparently a household image – some pagan equivalent to the Jewish *mezzuzah*, a sinister reminder or remembrance. The Job verse draws attention to the artefactual nature of the objects of worship of his pagan friends which leaves them wholly unprepared for any confrontation with the living Lord of the Universe (see the preceding verse). These גבs, therefore are identical with those of Ezekiel 16.

The third use of גב in Job is very conjectural. The wicked man *runs at Him (God) full tilt* בעבי גבי מגניו. The accepted translation of this opaque phrase has been "with the thick bosses of his bucklers" giving to גב the meaning "boss" — the rounded protuberance

sometimes to be found in the center of a shield. There is in the ancient world one illustration of a "thickly bossed" shield – a relief from the palace of Ashurnasirpal II (883-859 B.C.E.) showing such a shield affixed to the *rear* of war-chariots.[1] All other examples show only single-boss shields. The translation is very improbable. עבי, if related to density, is a noun "thickness," not an adjective. One man, wicked or otherwise, carries only one shield, and a shield, bossed or not, is a defensive not an offensive weapon. It is difficult indeed to imagine the thick-bossed shields being selected as the only weapons to be attributed to the assailant in such an attack. The poet would surely either have illustrated his metaphor with genuine weapons of assault, or with some imaginative figure.

Thus we might essay (treating עבי as "beams" [cf I Kg. 7:6 & Ezk. 41:25]) "with the battering-rams of his siege-engines", i.e. his tall ones of shields, but this seems very artificial. Alternatively we could understand a גב מגן to be of a form cognate with איש מגן which simply means a warrior, giving "in the density of his guardian idols" allowing גב again the meaning of some form of deviant worship-object.

This leaves us only with the use of the word in the description by Ezekiel of the extraordinary vision of the four four-faced creatures with which his prophetic career commenced, and which repeated itself more or less exactly at a later time as described in Chapter 10.

The relevant portion of the JPS reading of Ezekiel 1:15-20 is the following:

> *Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel at the bottom hard by the living creatures at the four faces thereof. The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the colour of beryl and the four had one likeness; and their appearance and their work were as it were a wheel within a wheel. . . . As for their* גבs *they were high and they were*

1 Yigal Yadin, *The Art of Warfare in Biblical Lands*, McGraw-Hill, London, 1963, p. 386.

dreadful; and their four had their גבs *full of eyes round about. And when the living creatures went, the wheels went hard by them; and when the living creatures were lifted up from the bottom, the wheels were lifted up.*

The same vision appears to Ezekiel a second time and he describes it in similar terms with some variation. 10:12 reads: *and their whole body and* גביהם, *and their hands and their wings, and the wheels were full of eyes round about, even the wheels that they four had.* In this vision Ezekiel twice confirms that this is the same conglomerate creature that he saw previously by the river Chebar.

In the first of these descriptions, JPS translates the word גב as "rings," and in the second as "backs," but there can be no real doubt that the same translation must be applied to both citations. The first 1:18) runs:

וגביהן וגבה להם ויראה להם וגבתם מלאת עינים סביב לארבעתן

and the second, (10:12):

וכל–בשרם וגבהם וידיהם וכנפיהם והאופנים מלאים עינים סביב לארבעתם אופניהם

The first of these passages is exceptionally strange, with the two forms of גב, both apparently plural construct with 3rd person plural suffixes, startlingly different, one with the masculine form and the other with the feminine; one with the Aramaic suffix and one with the Hebrew, while the whole syntax of the line is grossly aberrant. I cannot speculate on the significance of these anomalies. In the second passage yet a third form of the plural with 3rd person plural suffix is used, while the same word in I Kings is spelled in even a fourth way.

We may, to begin with, rule out "back" as the meaning of the word here, for creatures with four faces, either pointing in the four directions, or two to the right and two to the left (it is not certain which of these configurations Ezekiel intended) have no backs! We may I think also rule out "rings," for their introduction as new features is inadequate, and how it can be said of "rings" – יראה להם *they were fearsome* is incomprehensible. NJPSV reads the sentence

Their rims were tall and frightening, for the rims of all four were covered all over with eyes. It is certainly true that 1:18 is situated in the middle of the description of the wheels, so that גב appears here, as in I Kings, to signify some part of a wheel, but the (for NJPSV) characteristic distortion of reading ו as "for" *is* a distortion, nor can one speak of "rims" as being "high." The appropriate word would be "thick."

In 10:12 we read quite simply that the creatures' *whole body and their* גבs, *and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels were covered all over with eyes.* These must surely be the same גבs as are covered all over with eyes in chapter 1. But both rims and wheels are inappropriate in this second context. There are really only two possibilities – the term here refers either to the *torso* of the creatures, or to their heads. While looking at the two uses together, the only appropriate word emerges as *torso*, which may indeed be "tall and fearsome", which is a part of the body like the hands and wings, and which fits the first chapter as the only remaining essential part of the creatures not hitherto described.

The torso – the height and stretch of the body – is as appropriate as the back as a translation of גב in Psalm 129. Again the derivation appears to be from גבה, "to be high."

From this examination, it appears that every example of the use of the word גב *may* be related to the root גבה with one exception, the description of the sea of brass in I Kings 7:33. Here there is no doubt that the word signifies some part of a wheel, and almost certainly either the rim or a part of it – an arc. It is *probable* that the term גבת עינים in Leviticus is of the same derivation as this – the arc of the eye. It is *certain* that in Ezekiel Chapter 16 the word implies some form of tall structure for pagan worship and so is derived from גבה, while it is *certain* that Job 13:12 has the same derivation. Job 15:26 cannot be deciphered with any confidence. In Psalm 129 a derivation from גבה is most *probable*, while in Ezekiel 43:13 there is also no certainty of the meaning. In Ezekiel 1:18 and 10:12 a derivation from גבה gives the most *plausible* translation.

Nowhere does גב necessarily or even probably mean "back", nor is it likely that a word for back would be derived from a root meaning "rounded." It would be salutary for modern Hebrew to change the spelling of גב to גו.

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

Standard transliteration of biblical names remains unchanged.

THE OEDIPUS COMPLEX AND ITS BIBLICAL PARALLELS

BENJAMIN GOODNICK

Dr. Sigmund Freud, as we well know, was thoroughly acquainted with the Bible and in his writing referred frequently to biblical events and quoted biblical passages.[1] He was taught Scripture early, initially by his father at home and later in religious school classes.[2] Biblical characters provided Freud with a number of models (e.g., dreamers and interpreters of dreams, such as Joseph, and national religious leaders such as Moses).[3]

Still, Freud did not utilize his knowledge of the pattern of the biblical family and society in conceptualizing the Oedipus Complex, a foundation-stone of psychoanalytical theory and widely discussed in psychoanalytical circles to this very day.

Thus, it is most interesting that in tracing his "scientific myth"[4] of human history Freud takes a giant leap from his "primal horde"

1 Sigmund Freud's Hebrew Bible, entitled Die Israelitische Bibel (Leipzig, 1839), includes a German translation and commentary by Ludwig Philippson, as well as numerous illustrative woodcuts.

2 This Bible contains a Hebrew poem dedicated to Dr. Freud by his father on the occasion of the former's 35th birthday (when his father was about 75). It begins:

"My darling son Shlomo
At the age of seven the spirit of the Lord began to move you
And spoke to you: Go read the books I have written
And there will break open to you the fountains of wisdom,
knowledge and understanding . . ."

3 Freud was troubled by the character of Moses most of his life. His last creative work, *Moses and Monotheism*, was completed when he was past eighty, the age of Moses on leading the Israelites out of Egypt.

4 Freud, S. (Collected Writings) in J. Strachey (Ed.) Standard Edition of the *Complete Psychological Works of S. Freud,* London, Hogarth Press, 1964.

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society to the family pattern of the ancient Greeks, presumably equating the latter period with the monogamous romanticism of his own Victorian age.

On the other hand, this gap is more apparent than real. Aside from his supplementary Hebraic training, the adolescent Freud studied classical languages and literature, later finding in Greek mythology a vital source for portraying his analytical principles. Indeed, the Oedipus legend, by using known characters within a historic culture, served to enhance his theory of the primal horde, parricide and the incest taboo.

The Oedipus tale, developed into a trilogy by Sophocles, tells of a child abandoned on a mountain-top by his parents, the rulers of Thebes, fearful of a Delphic oracle prophesying the murder of King Laius by his son. He is found, adopted and reared at the court of Corinth until maturity. On the road to Thebes, after leaving home, Oedipus unwittingly kills his father. Upon solving the riddle of the Sphinx, the scourge of Thebes, he is offered the crown, marries the widowed queen, his mother Jocasta, and begets four children. A plague within Thebes leads to making inquiry of an oracle, whereby Oedipus discovers that his incestuous relationship is the cause.[5] His mother hangs herself; he blinds himself, leaves the throne, and goes into exile.

At first blush, this story appears to share little with the Bible. Yet common themes confront us illuminating both similarities and contrasts.

The opening Oedipus scene of parents placing offspring on a mountain-top finds a parallel in the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. 22:1-19). In both cases the actions take place after divine pronounce-

5 It does seem rather strange and harsh to bring a plague upon Thebes to condemn Oedipus for an act committed unwittingly a generation ago. Contrast this with the divine plague brought upon Pharaoh's household soon after his servants brought Sarah, Abraham's wife, to his palace, thus allowing Pharaoh to grasp the cause of the plague — without need of an oracle (Gen. 12:14-20).

ments; in both instances the child is bound, to await his death on an exposed mountain peak.

From this point on, the differences are glaring. In the Oedipus tale, the father rejects the child, seeking to save his own life: in the latter, the father accepts the divine command with heavy heart. He is in torment, overwhelmed emotionally, confused by the command and hoping — yet despairing — to allay the decision of the Almighty who directed him to *take your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac* (Gen. 22:2) to be sacrificed.

Not only are his fatherly, tender feelings being assailed; his very faith is shaken. Through his progeny he has been promised the making of a great people, and now the sole heir to his "spiritual heritage," to carry on that cherished goal, is about to be cut off. This encounter is indeed a "trial": to see whether Abraham can ". . . maintain confidence in that promise when all appeared lost . . . with unswerving faith . . ."[6]

The mothers' attitudes likewise point to a wide disparity. Jocasta casts aside her maternal feelings and accepts her son's doom. Sarah, although the test says nothing explicitly, is thought to have experienced a profound wrenching of her emotions. Traditional commentators noticed the proximity in the Bible of the sacrifice of Isaac to the death of Sarah. They concluded that Sarah, when informed of the imminent sacrifice of her only son, expired (e.g., Rashi Gen. 23:2). More revealing is the oft-told Solomonic story wherein the mother of a child willingly yields it to another woman rather than let her son die (I Kg. 3:16-23).

An age likeness is also noted in the two youths to be sacrificed: they were not infants. Oedipus, whose name means "swollen-foot," had a spike driven through his feet causing inflammation, injury, and immobility. Such a cruel action to prevent escape is not needed

6 E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (Garden City, N.Y., 1982), p. 166.

for a young child.[7] Isaac, it is estimated, was also a mature person. He could easily have resisted being bound by an old father but, as Scripture portrays, he willingly offered himself in an act of faith.

A more basic difference lies in the reactions of the actors in these two scenarios. In the Oedipus story the parents sought to circumvent the decree of the gods and ultimately failed. In the Bible tale the decree of the Almighty — despite soul-searing emotions — is accepted and obeyed.

The two decrees themselves reveal contrasting outlooks with respect to human behavior. Among the Greeks the oracle, once declared, can in no way be altered. Human beings must suffer through events over which they have no control. The gods are callous and indifferent to mankind's travail even when humans are faultless. The biblical view looks upon divine decrees as intimately related to humanity and its deeds, and readily modifiable through admission of guilt, reparation of misdeeds, repentance, and changes in attitude and in behavior (e.g., Gen. 6:6; Ex. 32:12-14; Jer. 26:19; and Jon. 3:7-10).

For Freud, however, the approach of Greek mythology was essential, a treasure-find. With his discovery of and stress on unconscious motivation he maintained that what is done unknowingly is actually intended. Therefore, although Oedipus was innocent, unaware he was killing his father or marrying his mother, since the acts were done, he is guilty and must pay for his parricide and incestuous deed.

Thus in Freud's view the unconscious takes priority over the conscious. Nothing occurs by chance, error or oversight; every human act is ultimately premeditated, though the motive may be

7 T. Lidz says: "It does not make sense that the feet of an infant had to be fettered, which suggests that Oedipus was older when exposed. He was not the first ruler or future ruler of Thebes to be exposed on Mount Cithaeron . . . the tales of the exposure of boys reflect either the ancient practice of sacrificing . . . the firstborn son to the gods as Abraham was about to sacrifice Isaac . . ." (p. 47 n. 2). In "The Riddle of the Sphinx," *The Psychoanalytic Review* 75 (1988), 35-50.

concealed from the doer. The unconscious, moreover, becomes the repository of repulsive thoughts now repressed and censored, which, though bound, still clamor for expression. Early man, in a related sense, identified the content of his mind with the reality outside, so that his thoughts became as deeds.[8] For this reason apparently cities of refuge were established where an innocent person could flee to save his life from the "primitive" blood avenger who is prone to attribute intent to every act (Num. 35:11-26).

Unconscious motivation, then, in Freud's view provides the core of the Oedipus complex: the unconscious wish to kill one's father, a person feared by the son, and to marry (or have relations with) one's mother, the source of one's affection.

The above dichotomy need not be perceived as remarkable; it has been the norm in most families, past and present. In historical stereotype the father has been pictured as powerful, awe-inspiring, and distant whereas the mother offers warmth, care, and closeness. Thus the immature being, small and weak, usually views his father as towering, stronger, louder and harsher, less warm and more distant — far above the child's physical plane; on the other hand, he sees his mother as sitting, gentler, softer and sweeter in voice, closer and warmer — on the youngster's proximal level.

For this reason commentators claim the Bible reverses the parental order and states: *You shall fear your mother and father* (Lev. 19:3) but *honor your father and mother* (Ex. 20:13) in order to balance out the usual emotional attitudes of children.

As to Oedipus' marriage to his mother, this incestuous relationship is itself not uncommon. Throughout ancient history we find a new ruler taking over the wives of the previous king. In this way a

8 Freud quotes J. G. Frazer (*The Magic Art*, p. 420) in *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud*, (New York, 1937): ". . . men mistook the order of their ideas for the order of nature, and hence imagined that the control which they have, or seem to have, over their thoughts, permitted them to have a corresponding control over things" (p. 871).

new leader, usurper or conqueror would legitimize his ascending the throne and present an acceptable image to the people.

Thus we find that David was given *your master's (i.e., Saul's) house and possession of your master's wives* (II Sam. 12:8) on becoming king. Previously he had demanded from Abner ben Ner, leader of Israelite forces of Ishboshet, the son of Saul, as a condition for a pact, the return of his wife, Michal, Saul's daughter (II Sam. 3:12-13) — although there was no love lost between David and Michal (II Sam. 7:20-23).

Another of David's wives, Ahinoam of Jezreel, also appears to fall into the same category. Indeed, she occupies a unique status. All his other wives are real; their biblical tales portray them as vital personalities whereas Ahinoam remains a shadow. While there are six biblical references to this person (i.e., I Sam. 25:43; 27:3; 30:5; II Sam. 2:2; 3:2; and I Ch. 3:1), we learn only that she is from Jezreel and bore sons for David. Indeed, it is most remarkable that her name coincides with that of Saul's wife, the mother of Jonathan (I Sam. 14:2-3).

Fascinating questions arise: Was this really simply a coincidence? Or, is there a deep symbolic meaning, a deliberate choice by David, whereby he associated himself with the kingship.[9]

An instructive example is that of Adonijah who sought to marry the dead King David's former attendant (concubine?), Abishag the Shunammite. Upon hearing his mother present his brother's petition for Abishag, King Solomon confronted Bathsheba: "Why not demand the kingdom for him" (I Kg. 2:19-22). The request of Adonijah, Solomon's older brother, is patently transparent for he had just attempted to establish his right to the kingship as his father lay dying (I Kg. 1:5).[10]

9 A most unusual situation arose here. David ultimately had two wives with the same name: 1. the Ahinoam he married and 2. the Ahinoam he received from his "master's (i.e., Saul's) wives." Notice that the first bore David's first-born, Absalom, and Saul's wife bore his first-born, Jonathan.

10 J. P. Fokkelman in *Narrative Art in Genesis* (Assen, Netherlands, 1975) considers Adonijah's request for Abishag as intended to be a consolation prize for his loss of rightful kingship (as the older son) rather than an attempt to challenge Solomon. Yet, it remained a foolish thing to do.

More glaring is the overt deed of Absalom, the oldest brother, who earlier has proclaimed himself king, gained the loyalty of large sections of the populace through machinations, and revolted against his father, King David (II Sam. 15:10). Upon the advice of Ahitophel who told him that in order to establish your own kingship: *'Have intercourse with your father's concubines, whom he left to guard the palace' . . . Absalom lay with his father's concubines with the full knowledge of Israel* (II Sam. 16:21-22).

Another biblical story, also bordering on incest, involves Reuben, eldest son of Jacob, who had cohabited with his stepmother, Bilhah (Gen. 35:22). The intent in this case is not clear. Possibly the underlying motive may have been purely sexual, in an analytical sense a transfer of libido from the original maternal object. Equally likely, as in the situations mentioned above, it may have been an attempt by Reuben, as the oldest son, to reestablish his leadership role; a failed effort.[11]

Two significant biblical accounts exist in which the male, like Oedipus, unknowingly commits incest. Lot's daughters, thinking *there is not a man on earth to consort with us* and desiring offspring, intoxicated their father at night and "lay" with him. They bore sons who were the progenitors of Ammon and Moab (Gen. 19:30, 38).

An interesting aspect of Lot's story is its parallel to the Oedipus tale with respect to a denigrating attitude towards children and its repugnant outcome. Oedipus is rejected by his parents and later commits incest with his mother. Lot offers his virgin daughters to the Sodomites attacking his home, only to have forbidden sexual relations with them later (Gen. 19:8). In the biblical view these

11 Observe that, in the incident of Joseph's seizure by his brothers, Reuben attempted to save him and had him placed in a pit. When on his return he found the pit empty, he tore his clothes in despair. He felt sorry for himself since as eldest brother he was responsible for Joseph's welfare and had not succeeded. Here is another instance of his failed leadership (with Judah taking command of the situation).

On his death-bed, Jacob addresses his son in these words: *Reuben, you are my first-born, My might and first fruit of my vigor, Exceeding in rank And exceeding in honor. Unstable as water, you shall excel no longer; For when you mounted your father's bed, You brought disgrace — my couch he mounted!* (Gen. 49:3-4).

illicit unions produced unfeeling, untrustworthy descendants for the text is critical of them saying: *No Ammonite or Moabite shall be admitted into the congregation of the Lord* . . . (Deut. 23:4).

In the other tale the widowed Judah son of Jacob had coitus unwittingly with his widowed daughter-in-law, Tamar (Gen. 38:6-26). Yet Scripture did not condemn her but rather named her as the ancestress of the royal family of David (Ruth 4:12; I Ch. 2:4), for Judah admitted *she is more righteous than I* . . . (Gen. 38:26). In this case evidently Judah's motive was sexual fulfillment.

In the above narratives, extramarital relationships occur which are adjudged incestuous and proscribed in the Pentateuch, most punishable by death (Lev. 18:7-20; Lev. 20:10-21; Deut. 20:20, 22, 23; Deut. 23, 1).

These incidents — or almost all of them — point strongly to factors other than physical desire as a primary cause in seeking sexual unions. When evaluated, these acts focus basically on the need to enhance self-esteem, to overcome handicaps, to control others. Note that in the Oedipus drama Sophocles ". . . emphasized the danger of hubris and conveyed the fragility of greatness to those who might envy greatness and seek it for themselves."[12]

Such findings bring us closer to the basic concept of Alfred Adler with his "will to power." As he put it, ". . . this fiction of complete superiority . . . has become the principal conditioning factor of our life . . . [and]. . . introduces into our life a hostile and fighting tendency . . ."[13] Moreover, since this aggressive drive pervades all areas, even "in his love he desires to experience his power over his partner."[14]

Thus we can choose to interpret the Oedipus complex in another manner: It is not due to the son's sexual wish to overthrow (kill) the father in order to have relations with the mother, but rather to an aggressive drive to attain the status and power of the father and

12 T. Lidz *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, p. 47.
13 A. Adler, *Individual Psychology* (London 1964), p. 8.
14 Ibid. p. 7.

marry the mother so as to legitimize his new position (i.e., to prove his worth). The youth is highly motivated — sometimes driven — to challenge his dependency and overcome his feelings of subordination to his father. Freud himself acknowledged that "They [i.e., the sons] hated the father who stood so powerfully in the way of their sexual demands and their desire for power . . ."[15]

Aggression as well as sex, undoubtedly, has an instinctual basis, their energy and impact varying with different individuals. Yet, the distinction between these drives must always be kept in mind — despite their occasional overlap. When the latter occurs, as in rape, we recognize today that the violent deed has little to do with the need for sexual satisfaction.

An appropriate biblical tale dealing with these two strong emotional forces reveals clearly the nature of rape, an act seen as stemming from inner pressure to prove one's ability to conquer rather than gain sexual gratification. Moreover, this incident illustrates what recent studies have discovered: Most rapes are perpetuated by individuals well known to the victim.

Amnon, son of David, was infatuated with his virginal half-sister Tamar and became distraught because he could not have her. Through deception he had her come to see him in his chamber and there, despite her entreaties, he overpowered her.

Then Amnon felt a very great loathing for her, indeed, his loathing for her was greater than the passion he had felt for her. And Amnon said to her, 'Get out!' . . . He summoned his young attendant and said 'Get that woman out of my presence, and bar the door behind her' (II Sam. 13:1-17).

A striking facet of the Oedipal complex related to youth's inner questioning of his father's power and authority is found in the former's proneness, his need, to block out, to suppress his father's positive traits — perhaps rationalized on the basis of some pretext, true, trivial or fictive — and "transfer" his original feelings of awe and admiration of his stature and strength, bestowing them upon a

15 Freud, *Basic Writings*, p. 916.

more suitable father, an acceptable adult with whom no familial conflict exists. Thus, Sigmund Freud himself transferred the positive features of his father to a number of father-substitutes among his mentors and professors. Indeed, he sought throughout his life to find a satisfying father-model.

In the Bible we find such clear relationship shifts within the Saul-Jonathan-David triangle.

David seems to transfer his allegiance from his father to Saul, awed by and admiring both his presence and his royal position.[16] He seeks to emulate and even identify with his king, eager to fight the Philistine Goliath when he learned victory would make him Saul's son-in-law (I Sam. 17:25-27f).[17] At one point David feels the kinship so closely that he calls Saul "my father" (I Sam. 24:11).[18]

David idealized Saul (the "anointed") to the very end of their association, forgiving him for his life-threatening acts against him and pleading with him to realize his (i.e., David's) devotion to him (I Sam. 24:18-20, 24:9-11).

Jonathan, on the other hand, cognizant of his father's weaknesses and resistant to his domination (i.e., the Oedipal factor), later transferred his allegiance to David, who had become his ideal of strength and leadership, loving him and willing, though true heir to the throne, to be subservient to David as the future ruler (I Sam. 23:16-18). Note that initially Jonathan took on the heroic role. On two occasions he smote Philistine garrisons (I Sam. 13:3 and 14:8-15) and caused a route of their armies, even as Saul remained behind

16 Note, by contrast, little is said of David's father. The only specific characteristic mentioned is that Jesse was old (I Sam. 17:12). Moreover, he did not consider David worthy of anointment (I Sam. 16:10-11).

17 It should be mentioned that David, from his youth, felt he was under divine protection and guidance and destined for a distinguished role. His speech to Saul relating how he killed a bear and a lion is revealing (I Sam. 17:34-37). Young Freud had a similar notion regarding his future destiny.

18 It is, of course, possible that terms such as "my son" and "my father" may be loosely applied but in biblical contexts they seem to be deliberately chosen as terms of endearment and closeness, whether based on actual familial relationships or not. There is only one instance in the Bible where the expression "my son" may be intended to belittle the person addressed: Joab's words to Ahimaaz (I Sam. 18:22).

with the main Israelite forces (I Sam. 13:2 and 14:2). Yet, Saul was praised for these victories (e.g., I Sam. 13:4); nowhere does he extol his son. Soon after, his relations with his father deteriorate. He strongly criticizes Saul for making a foolish oath (I Sam. 14:29); Saul then finds his son guilty of violating the oath, a capital offense (I Sam. 14:39). Only the army's protest saves Jonathan's life (I Sam. 14:45). Later the king accused him of shaming his own family because Jonathan challenged his father's attitude toward David (e.g., I Sam. 20:30). We see here a continuing process of Saul's denigration of his son and their further estrangement.

Yet, Jonathan did not neglect his filial duties and remained loyal to his father to the end, dying with him in their last battle against the Philistines on Mt. Gilboa (I Sam. 31:2).

Saul, king and leader, yet insecure in his position, related to Jonathan in a harsh, domineering and disappointed fashion. He wanted his eldest son at his side and under his control, perhaps in realization and envy of his heroic qualities (as discussed above; an Oedipal aspect). We find nowhere expressions of love or appreciation; rather Saul looked upon Jonathan merely as fulfilling his assigned role: extending his (i.e., Saul's) name, his dynasty.

On the other hand, Saul readily transferred his affection and admiration to David (e.g., I Sam. 16:21), a preferable attachment since he was outside the family unit (a classical example). True, he came to fear David as the destined future ruler and determined to hunt him down. Yet, in the midst of his inner turmoil, he called him, significantly, "David, my son" more than once (I Sam. 24:17, 26:17, 21, 26:26) an epithet never applied to Jonathan in direct address.

These analytical efforts, weaving Freudian and other psychological strands into the biblical tapestry, suggest alternative ways of understanding the Oedipal situation and related concepts. They may, also, open doors and lead to new ways of perceiving and interpreting biblical events and practices.

DID PYTHAGORAS FOLLOW NAZIRITE RULES?

ELLIOT A. GREEN

Twentieth century scholars of ancient philosophy, science, and literature have commonly tried to divorce what is known as the Greek tradition from the Israelites, from the Phoenicians (as much as possible), and from the Bible. This is true in the cases of the famous early philosophers, Thales and Pythagoras, among others. Thales, for instance, is called Phoenician in various ancient writings (Herodotus, Giogenes Laertius). Yet modern histories of philosophy and reference works, such as encyclopedias and handbooks of classical literature, usually refer to him simply as a "Greek," disregarding not only the ancient authorities, but the biblical and other Judaic parallels in the extant statements attributed to him. Now the ancients did call Thales the first of the Seven Sages of Greece. However, this does not make him a Greek any more than Albert Einstein, for example, an American.

The same treatment is accorded to Pythagoras. The account in Iamblichus' *Life of Pythagoras* has him growing up in Sidon, a Canaanite-speaking (tantamount to Hebrew-speaking) city, studying with prophets, and living on Mount Carmel. This version is commonly disregarded or, when mentioned, disparaged. The writer of the article on Pythagoras in the *Enciclopedia Italiana* discounts Iamblichus' account and others like it (Hermippus, Porphyry) by positing what he calls

> *the general tendency of the Greeks of a later age to have the origins of their culture derive from intercourse with the Orient.*[1]

1 G. C. "Pitagora e Pitagorismo," trans. by E. A. G.

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This writer does not tell us why this "tendency" should be discounted, nor why the parallels between the rules of Pythagoras' brotherhood and his personal behavior on the one hand and the rules of the biblical Nazirite code on the other hand ought to be overlooked.

The view quoted from the *Enciclopedia Italiana* above is fairly typical, when moderns recognize the problem at all. The "Greeks of a later age" wanted, for some reason, to see "the origins of their culture" in the Orient (meaning the Middle East in this context, including Israel). This reference to "a later age" does not tell us why Herodotus (ca. 484-425 B.C.E.) who was born only about sixty years after the death of Thales (-546) and came from the same region (Ionia) calls the first of the Seven Sages a "Phoenician." Nor does it explain why Hermippus — who flourished in the third century B.C.E., only some 300 years after Pythagoras (ca. 572-497) and much earlier than Laertius, Porphyry, and Iamblichus — asserts Jewish influence on the teachings of the same Pythagoras. Even earlier than Hermippus, Theophrastus (ca. 372-288 B.C.E.), the leading pupil of Aristotle, had called the Jews "a race of philosophers," while the contemporary Megasthenes attributed to the Jews (and Brahmans) knowledge of nature before the Greek philosophers.

The author of the view quoted, and other authorities, impute a peculiar psychological motive to Greeks like Hermippus who mention Jewish influence on "the origins of their culture." However, were the ancient Greeks the kind of people who wanted to attribute their own accomplishments to others?

Be that as it may, it is curious, or perhaps symptomatic, that some modern writers who disregard or disparage Laertius' identification of Thales as a Phoenician, favor Laertius' report on Pythagoras over Iamblichus' biography. To be sure Laertius does not connect Pythagoras with Phoenicia whereas Iamblichus does make the connection emphatically. This curiously inconsistent approach to the different ancient accounts appears in what is probably the most broadly circulated modern history of philosophy. The book in question is *A History of Philosophy* by Frederick Copleston, a

multi-volume work which enjoyed several editions in Britain and the United States, including a paperback edition by a major American publisher.

It is not our purpose here to try to explain why most modern writers prefer one version over another, nor to determine which version is closer to the truth. We may note however that the biblical and other Judaic parallels in Laertius' record of statements ascribed to Thales are almost universally disregarded as are the biblical parallels to the teachings and practices of Pythagoras. This is true even with twentieth century writers with an outstanding exception. Peter Gorman, a recent biographer of Pythagoras, stands out from the crowd when he emphatically identifies both Thales and Pythagoras as Phoenicians. Yet he too fails to note any biblical parallels or to consider possible Israelite influence resulting from Pythagoras' stay on Mount Carmel.

Here are a number of excerpts from Iamblichus' *Life of Pythagoras* which indicate a Phoenician birth, upbringing, and education for the philosopher, as well as material concerning parallels.[2] Section A supplies references to Pythagoras' birth, family, upbringing, and education. B contains material about personal habits; and C relates his experiences on Mount Carmel and in Phoenicia:

> A) . . . *Mnesarchus (who came to Delphi for the purposes of merchandize, with his wife not yet apparently pregnant, and who inquired of the God concerning the event of his voyage to Syria) . . .*
> *he called the infant, who was soon after born at Sidon in Phoenicia, Pythagoras . . .*
> *. . . after his father Mnesarchus had returned from Syria to Samos, with great wealth, which he had collected from a prosperous navigation . . . (Mnesarchus) took care to have his son nourished with various and the best disciplines, at*

2 Ibid., pp. 3 to 8. Trans. Taylor, London, 1926.

one time by Creophilus, at another by Pherecydes the Syrian . . .
while he (i.e., Pythagoras — EAG) *was yet a youth, his great renown having reached Thales at Miletus . . .*
. . . departed to Pherecydes, to Anaximander, the natural philosopher, and the Thales at Miletus . . . they all loved him, admired . . .
B) *the youth was everywhere celebrated as the long-haired Samian* (emph. in orig. — EAG) . . .
. . . he entirely abstained from wine and animal food . . .
C) *he sailed to Sidon, being persuaded that this was his natural country . . . there he conversed with the prophets who were the descendants of Mochus the physiologist, and with others, and also with the Phoenician hierophants. He was likewise initiated into all the mysteries of Byblus and Tyre, and in the sacred operations which are performed in many parts of Syria . . .*
he immediately embarked for Egypt, through the means of some Egyptian sailors, who were very opportunely at that time landed on the Phoenician coast under Mount Carmelus, in whose temple Pythagoras, separated from all society, for the most part dwelt . . .
. . . they (e.g., the sailors — EAG) *called to mind how unexpectedly he had appeared to them on their landing, when from the summit of Mount Carmelus, which they knew was more sacred than other mountains, and inaccessible to the vulgar, he leisurely descended without looking back, or suffering any delay from precipices or opposing stones . . .*

We see from the above that Pythagoras was born in Sidon which he considered "his natural country," and lived there as a child. His father stayed in Sidon for an extended time carrying on a merchant shipping business. This suggests that his father was of Sidonian or at least Phoenician origin, since it is questionable whether the

Sidonians would have allowed a Greek maritime trader to operate from their port. The links of Mnesarchus to the isle of Samos, as reported by Iamblichus, Laertius, and others, do not contradict a Phoenician identity, since Phoenician trading colonies were spread throughout the Aegean.

Pythagoras must have known the Canaanite language spoken in Sidon, and therefore would have understood Hebrew. He was closely associated with other intellectuals of Phoenician and Syrian origin, namely Thales and Pherecydes. Miletus seems to have had a Phoenician (i.e., Canaanite-speaking) colony, and the possibility that Anaximander, too, was of Phoenician origin should not be excluded. Pythagoras' relationship with the three of them is described as warmly personal.

We also see that Pythagoras observed two of the three Nazirite prohibitions listed in the Book of Numbers (6:1-8); he is called "long-haired," suggesting that he did not cut his hair, and he abstained from wine (Laertius' report has Pythagoras advocating that people drink "pure water only.") The third ban, that on coming near to human dead, does not seem to appear in accounts of Pythagoras. On the other hand, Laertius ascribes to some earlier authorities the claim that Pythagoras

> *forbade even the killing, let alone the eating, of animals which share with us the privilege of having a soul.*

Now Numbers 6:6 in the original Hebrew uses the term *nefesh met* which is represented as human dead in various translations. The new JPS translates this as "a dead person," which seems reasonable. Yet we may bear in mind that *nefesh* can also mean "soul."

However, the present writer has never seen Pythagoras' rules and practices compared to the Nazirite rules. Instead, they are commonly compared to the Orphic cult. Now the Pythagorean order had something in common with both the Nazirite code and Orphism, namely a concern for bodily purity. Further, Pythagoras abstained from "animal food" (according to the quotes from both Iamblichus and Laertius above) and Orphism did forbid eating meat. Thus it

could have been an influence on him. On the other hand, Pythagoras' abstention from eating animal food could be taken as a modification of Num. 6:6 (through extending *nefesh* to animals), albeit that this abstention does not necessitate a prohibition on proximity to dead bodies. Further, letting the hair grow and abstaining from wine do not seem to have figured in Orphism.[3] Indeed it seems that Orphism was close to the Dionysian cult which mandated wine-drinking. But be that as it may, why should the Nazirite rules be overlooked as a possible influence on Pythagoras?

We have noted above that Pythagoras observed two of the three Nazirite prohibitions listed in the Book of Numbers, with a curious, though inexact, parallel to the third ban.

However, this third prohibition is also missing from the story of Samson, the most famous Nazirite of all. Instead, the angel instructing Samson's mother supplies another prohibition, that of eating "anything unclean" (Jud. 13:4, 14), together with bans on drinking wine (extended as in Num. 6 to other intoxicants and to fresh grapes) and shaving the head (Jud. 13:5, 14), corresponding to the rules in Numbers 6. Laertius' report, which appears as a compilation of earlier reports, represents mutually contradictory claims about Pythagoras' diet and the dietary rules he prescribed, and specifically as to whether he forbade *all* "animal foods." However, he did at least forbid beans, which might be considered unclean, because they are believed to cause flatulence. Indeed, the Egyptian priests considered beans "unclean," according to Herodotus (11:37) who adds that Egyptians did not eat them. Porphyry quoted Pythagoras enunciating the command: "Do not eat those things that are unlawful."[4] This pronouncement has a ring close to that of the ban on "unclean" food in Judges 13:4-5. In the

3 One authority among the many consulted for this inquiry — the Britannica Micropedia, Vol. VII — does mention an Orphic prohibition on wine.

4 *The Pythagoras Sourcebook and Library*. Grand Rapids, Mich., 1987, Guthrie, K. S.

matter of beans, we may have an overlapping of Israelite and Egyptian influences on Pythagoras.

Returning to the account of Iamblichus, we see that Pythagoras forbade his "intimates" the eating of meat. (i.e., the initiates of his brotherhood), whereas

> *eating of the flesh of certain animals was permitted to those whose lives were not entirely purified, philosophic and sacred; but even for these he appointed a definite time of abstinence.*[5]

This last quote may resolve the contradictions between various older reports compiled by Laertius in regard to Pythagoras' dietary practices and prohibitions for others. More importantly for our argument here, it shows that Pythagoras thought in terms of two moral classes in society, the "purified," and the "not entirely purified." Can this be compared to the distinction of Nazirites who were governed by more stringent rules than ordinary Israelites? In any case, the notion of permitted meat from "certain animals" and forbidden meat of other animals is obviously parallel to the very ancient Jewish dietary laws of *kashrut* (Deut. 14:4ff.; Lev. 11:3-12; *inter alia*).

It is unfortunate that the foods that are "unclean" for the Nazirite, as envisaged by Judges 13:4-5, are not specified. (Num. 6:3-4 bans all products of the grapevine for Nazirites, but this is part of the prohibition on wine and intoxicants. These products are also forbidden for Nazirites in Jud. 13:14, but not designated unclean there or anywhere else in the Bible). We may assume that certain foods were especially designated "unclean" for Nazirites that were not forbidden for the ordinary Israelite by the laws of *kashrut*.

Leaving the domain of food, we can draw another parallel between Pythagoras and the story of Samson. Laertius' report quotes Pythagoras as warning that "When you want to lose what strength you have, consort with a woman."

5 Ibid.

Samson, of course, loses his strength because of his relationship with Delilah. She entices him to reveal to her that the secret of his strength lies in his hair which she then proceeds to cut off, thus robbing him of his superior physical power while he sleeps (Jud. 16:6-19).

In light of the several Nazirite parallels mentioned above, not only with Iamblichus' more coherent account, but with Laertius' compilation of often contradictory sources, it would seem unreasonable to overlook them in discussions of the origins of Pythagoras' doctrines and rules. This is so, the Pythagorean similarities to Orphic doctrines notwithstanding. The remaining issue is how Pythagoras could have learned about the Nazirite code and, perhaps, the story of Samson.

The references to Mount Carmel show how Pythagoras might have obtained this knowledge — as well as learning about other Jewish Israelite teachings. It is true that Mount Carmel was the site of an altar to Baal. However, an altar to the Lord God of Israel was there too (I Kg. 18:30). And it was there that Elijah defeated the prophets of Baal (Ibid. 18:17-40). Most crucially, it is reported that Elijah's pupil Elisha lived there for some time (II Kg. 4:25). Was Elisha the only prophet of Israel to live on Mount Carmel? Did Nazirites lodge there? In addition, the reference to "prophets who were the descendants of Mochus" is intriguing. Could "Mochus" be a garbled reference to Moses? As a matter of fact, Sabatino Moscati and the Pauly-Wissowa refer to a Mochus who was a Phoenician historian and author of a cosmogony, but this Mochus is not described as the ancestor of prophets, biologically or spiritually. K. S. Guthrie's translation of Iamblichus adds another "s" to the name, spelling it "Moschus." A footnote in Guthrie's translation (first published early in this century) explains "Moschus" this way: "That is, Moses."

One might object at this point that the Temple was destroyed and the Exile began in 586 B.C.E., not long before Pythagoras was born about 580. However, the Exile mainly affected the leading classes of

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IN DEFENSE OF ESAU

ERNEST NEUFELD

The traditional view of Esau is that he was rash, impulsive, emotional, quick-tempered, lacking in appreciation of his father's and his own spiritual legacy. He was a hunter; a man of the fields. The satisfaction of his physical needs came first. And so, he blithely traded his firstborn's birthright for a mess of pottage.[1]

Jacob, his brother, emerges as opposite in character and temperament. He is quiet, home-loving and calculating. Whereas Esau blurts out whatever he feels, Jacob is devious, cunning, wily.

Esau's exchange of his birthright for a serving of Jacob's stew has branded him for the commentators with contempt for his inheritance and heritage. In Genesis we read that when Jacob asked Esau to sell his birthright for some of the lentil stew, the latter exclaimed, *I am at the point of death, so of what use is my birthright to me?* Jacob firms up the deal by asking Esau to swear to it, which he does without hesitation. The biblical narrator adds, *Thus did Esau spurn his birthright* (25:29-34).

The text is strong indeed and Esau's behavior seems irresponsible and cavalier. Could it be, however, that Esau was not the simple child of nature which is our customary picture of him? Can a man's motivation always be deduced from his actions and words? Or is it possible that his deeds and speech conceal his real motive?

We need not look farther for an answer than an incident in the life of Abraham. When the four kings, including the king of Sodom,

1 So he is viewed, for instance, by Nahum M. Sarna, who observes that Esau displayed careless indifference to the sacred institution of the firstborn's special status in relation to God. *Genesis*, The JPS Torah Commentary, Jewish Publication Society, 1989, p. 119.

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engaged in battle with Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, and his four allies, Sodom with his allies, were defeated, and they were captured together with their provisions, as well as Abraham's nephew, Lot, with all his goods. Abraham learns that Lot has been taken captive, musters his retainers, pursues the captors as far as Damascus, defeats them and frees all the prisoners and retakes their provisions.

Now freed, the king of Sodom asks Abraham to return his people but keep the goods. Offended, Abraham replies, *I swear to the Lord God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth that I will not take so much as a thread or sandal strap of what is yours, lest you say, 'It is I who made Abram rich'* (Gen. 14:22-23).

As spoils of war, all those freed and the provisions captured, could rightfully be claimed by Abraham. The king of Sodom assumes that Abraham's overriding motive in taking up arms was the desire for booty, and now that he not only freed Lot but retrieved all the supplies, he would want it all. Abraham resents the imputation. But he resents it not as personal affront but because he wants to establish beyond any doubt, by referring to the Lord in his oath, that it is to God that he owes everything.

Another biblical example of misread motive is to be found in the story of Jacob's deception by Laban when the latter substitutes Leah for Rachel after assuring Jacob, *Better that I give her* (Rachel) *to you than that I should give her to an outsider* (Gen. 29:15-20). Naturally, Jacob thinks Laban intends to give Rachel to him after seven years in Laban's service as they had agreed. We learn, of course, that Laban had no such intention. Laban's true intent was to keep Jacob in his service by taking advantage of his love for Rachel and have him work for him for another seven years (21-30). Laban's words rather than being clues to his motive, disguise them.

How words can conceal motive is illustrated by another incident involving Jacob. When Jacob decides to leave Laban's service and asks Laban to let him go, together with his wives and children, Laban not only consents but offers to settle Jacob's compensation

however Jacob may define it. Jacob asks for the speckled, streaked and dark-coated animals in Laban's herds, to which Laban agrees. Laban has no intention of giving the specified animals to Jacob. He promptly has them separated from the others and quickly driven away (35-36). It is only then that Jacob realizes the true motive behind Laban's ready assent to the nature and extent of his wages.

Words and actions indeed are the surface features discerned by the eye often only to deceive the mind. Is it possible, then, that Esau's words when he sells his birthright so offhandedly, may not have completely represented the state of his mind? He appears to be a simple, direct man. But was he simple-minded? Did he know what his rights as the firstborn were, or was he so dull or unconcerned that he did not know or care?

The text helps us answer these questions. When Isaac is on his deathbed and has already blessed the deceitful Jacob as the firstborn, Esau comes in with the savory dish of venison he prepares for his father, and asks for Isaac's *innermost blessing* (Gen. 27:31). Isaac tells him that he has already blessed Jacob, thinking it was Esau, whereupon Esau bursts out in bitter sobbing and begs his father to bless him also. Isaac says he cannot, for he has given away Esau's blessing to Jacob (Ibid., 35).

Was he then named Jacob, anguished Esau cries, *that he might supplant me these two times? First he took away my birthright and now he has taken away my blessing* (36).

Esau's passionate pleas and protest bear examination. *Was he named Jacob that he might supplant me . . .?* is a question that indicates that Esau was aware his brother was crafty. Could Esau have consented so readily to sell his birthright for a dish of food because he thought that such a trivial consideration, such a one-sided bargain could not be valid; and even if Jacob insisted that it was binding, their father would not sustain it? After all, Esau was not only the firstborn but also his father's favorite and might well have counted on Isaac's support. Note how Esau characterizes the "sale." He describes it not as a sale but as an extortion: "First he took

away my birthright." Whether Esau was conscious at the moment of the transaction that he was being "taken", or recognized it only later, it is clear from his complaint that he did not regard the transfer as fair. Moreover, if the sale was valid, why did Rebekah, Jacob's mother, and Jacob himself, go to such lengths of deception to secure Isaac's blessing for Jacob?

Sarna regards Isaac's patriarchal blessing of Jacob as *confirming* the exchange of the birthright to Jacob, even though it was obtained by unfair advantage.[2] That Isaac's blessing carried with it authority and potency is indicated by the way Jacob himself deprives Reuben, his eldest son, of his birthright, because he lay with Jacob's concubine, Bilhah. Reuben's divestiture is part of Jacob's testamentary statement as he is dying, and is a mixture of blessing and condemnations, meted out much as the provisions of a will might contain. Being the last will and testament, it has legal effect and validity (Ibid. 49:1-27).

In the normal course of events, the birthright devolved on the eldest son, as it did under primogeniture later in Europe. However, in the world of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the father could decide otherwise, as in the case of Reuben cited earlier. In other words, it was not a vested right at birth, but in fact was conditional upon the father's discretion. Consequently, a testamentary bequest of the birthright, as in form of the biblical blessing, was necessary to confirm it or to annul it.

The Jewish Encyclopedia indicates that the vesting of the firstborn's rights involved two elements: the *bekhorah*, and the *berakhah*. The first refers to the estate or property rights (Deut. 21:17), and the second to the blessing by the person conferring the rights. According to the Encyclopedia:

> Of the two terms, the berakhah counted for more, probably because pronouncing the blessing was considered to be the

2 Ibid., p. 195: "By this act, Isaac confirms Jacob's title to the birthright independently of the deception."

act formally acknowledging the firstborn as the principal heir. Berakhah connotes both the blessing which is to be pronounced and the effects of the blessing, i.e., the wealth transmitted as inheritance.

In the light of the foregoing, we can understand the reason for Esau's eagerness to secure his father's deathbed blessing and also his disdainful attitude when he "sold" the *bekhorah* with so little inducement. Esau well might have expected that Jacob could not obtain their father's confirmatory blessing. Hear his desperate supplications: *Have you but one blessing, Father? Bless me too, Father!* Then Esau breaks down and weeps (Gen. 27:38).

Isaac is at a loss at first as to how he can give a blessing to Esau now that he has bestowed the confirmatory blessing on Jacob, for he knows any blessing of Esau cannot carry the legal import of the one he conferred on Jacob.

In blessing Jacob, Isaac said: *May God give you of the dew of heaven and the fat of the earth, abundance of grain and wine. Let peoples serve you . . .* (Ibid. 28-29).

To Esau he says: *See, your abode shall enjoy the fat of the earth and the dew of heaven above* (39). Commentators have pointed out that the blessings are not the same because the one received by Esau is weaker since the preposition used before two key words is partitive. Isaac bestowed blessings on both Jacob and Esau, but whereas the blessing of Jacob conferred the firstborn's rights to him, having legally ratifying effect, that on Esau was a mere blessing, that is, it was only an invocation of divine favor for Esau. A testamentary bequest on one's deathbed is voiced at the moment of truth, not a time when a person facing his Maker is likely to resort to ambiguous declarations. Logic and experience, therefore, argue against a theory derived solely from grammatical analysis, hypothetical at that. The blessing Esau receives gives him no legal rights but does assure him of his father's concern and abiding love.

Esau's offhand trade of his birthright has been cited to establish his contempt for it. The case was buttressed by pointing out that Esau

married outside his kinsfolk, a source of bitterness to Isaac and Rebekah (Ibid. 26:34), and further proof of his indifference to his heritage. Bitter a pill as it may have been for Isaac to swallow, the Bible provides no indication that Isaac ever intended to disinherit Esau from the firstborn's rights. Nor do his repeated marriages to women outside his kindred keep him from prospering and becoming the father of a people, as foretold in a divine oracle to Rebekah when he and his twin, Jacob, struggled in her womb (36:6-7; 9-43).

Let us now return to the biblical narrator's editorial comment in connection with Esau's headlong willingness to part with his birthright for a mess of lentils: *Thus did Esau spurn the birthright.* Why did the narrator feel impelled to further color the picture he presented of Esau as animalistic, heedless and irresponsible?

To begin with, a strong incentive may have been the election of Jacob by God to be the one to inherit the birthright, as foretold to Rebekah (Ibid. 25:23). But Jacob is depicted in the Bible as devious and deceitful. To offset this image of the man who is to be one of the patriarchs of Israel, it was deemed desirable to blacken Esau. Furthermore, the relations between the Edomites, identified with Esau, and Israel identified with Jacob, were antagonistic despite the kinship of the two peoples, both being descended from Isaac. The Edomites refused to let the children of Israel pass through their territory when they were on their way from Egypt to Canaan (Num. 20:21; Jud. 11:17f). The bitterness between the two peoples, as delineated in the Bible, was unending.

The tradition of enmity between the two branches descended from Isaac may well lie behind the consistently unfavorable picture presented of the Edomites by the biblical accounts, and in particular, that of Esau. By magnifying Esau's failings, the narrator projects them into the future with respect to his descendants, thus further strengthening and justifying the choice of Jacob to be God's elect.

The superb characterizations provided by the biblical narrator of Esau and Jacob may persuade at first reading, but closer

examination of the text and a historical perspective enable one to discern his true motives. Esau undoubtedly was impulsive, rash, driven by need for self-gratification. But he also was loving to his parents and desirous of pleasing them. We know that when he found they disapproved of his marriage to a Hittite woman and Isaac has sent Jacob to Paddan-aram to take a wife from there, adjuring him not to marry a Canaanite, Esau took to wife a daughter of Ishmael, brother of Isaac (Gen. 28:6-9). How deftly the biblical narrator manages even in this to portray Esau as unthinking, for he is reported as marrying the daughter of another outcast, another disinherited firstborn!

Esau's filial devotion is further attested by the fact that when Isaac died, he as well as Jacob, buried him. That is all the biblical narrator tells of this moment when the twin brothers, who had striven from birth against each other, are united in a common act of piety. It is not without significance that the text in this respect mentions Esau first (Ibid. 35:29). Esau, the disinherited, holds no resentment toward his father for the loss of his birthright. Jacob, who was eager to distance himself from Esau despite their reconciliation when they met as Jacob was returning to Canaan from Haran, now has no fear in joining Esau in performing the last rites for their father.

In justice to Esau we must remember that he was capable of love, capable of forgiving his deceitful brother. We may even conclude on the basis of a detailed study of the text and the historical context of the story, that Esau was not completely the unthinking, irresponsible character he has been painted to be.

NUMEROLOGICAL STRUCTURE IN BIBLICAL LITERATURE

HERBERT RAND

No matter how sound and reliable a translation of the Hebrew Bible may be, it cannot adequately convey the form and structure of the original text. Lost in translation are literary devices and other features such as: alliteration, assonance, use of foreign loan-words, play on words, bilingual puns, idiomatic expressions, meter, rhyme, and variations in vocalization reflecting different regional dialects. Hebrew is an economical language requiring about 20% fewer words than its English translation (compare the 23rd Psalm in the Hebrew with a translation). Finally, any translation necessarily obliterates every numerological pattern and number symbolism which may be found in the structure of the piece.

There has been a resurgence among scholars in the study of numerological patterns in literature, particularly in biblical poetry. The Bible scholar may scrutinize a section of verse and, with a change of focus, may often discern a pattern based on the symbolism of numbers and thus be rewarded with a view of yet another of the "seventy faces of the Torah."

This paper is limited to presenting a few examples of numerological structured texts with the aim of stimulating the search for other such instances in the Bible.

GEMATRIA: THE NUMBERS GAME

The order of a letter in the Hebrew alphabet determines its numerical value.[1] A letter may be combined with another to form a larger

1 Aleph through Tet comprise 1-9 inclusive; Yod through Tzade are units of 10-90 inclusive; Kuph through Tav are 100-400 inclusive. The order of the alphabet has remained unchanged for at least three thousand years.

Herbert Rand is a Doctor of Jurisprudence and a practicing New York attorney. He is the author of published articles dealing with Law, biblical archaeology, and Judaic subjects. He lives in Highland Park, New Jersey.

number but 15 may never be written as Yod-Hey, or 16 as Yod-Vav, letters included in the Tetragrammaton.[2] Instead, Tet (9) is combined with Vav (6) to make 15, and with Zayin (7) to equal 16. Diringer asserts that use of Hebrew letters as numbers is "not biblical" but dates from Maccabean times.[3] This paper expresses a contrary view.

Pirke-Avot 23:3 calls Gematria "the handmaiden of Wisdom." Rabbi Toperoff has collected examples of biblical gematria.[4] Among them are:

(a) Abraham (then Abram) won a military victory with 318 men. That number refers to his servant, Eliezer, whose name in Hebrew has the numerical value of 318.

(b) The numerical value of the first letters of the first six verses of Deuteronomy 32, the Farewell Song of Moses, when added, come to 345, the numerical equivalent of the name of Moses.

(c) Korah's followers are described as *meri* (rebellious) a word which has the numerical value of 250; and the text says: *They rose up, 250 men* (Nu. 16:2; 17:25).

(d) Deut. 5:2 states that God *karat* (cut) a covenant with the Israelites. That Hebrew word equals 620, corresponding to the 620 letters in the Ten Commandments, as well as to the 613 *mitzvot* plus the 7 Noachide laws.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE NUMBER 26

From early times, certain numbers were regarded by Israelites as having sacred or special significance and hidden meaning. Numbers, an aspect of letters, were directly related to לשון קדש the "Holy Language."

2 יהוה, The ineffable name of God – *YHVH*.

3 Diringer, D. *The Story of the Aleph Beth*, (NY 1960) p. 179.

4 Toperoff, S. *Lev Avot* (Israel 1984).

The Pythagoreans believed that the entire universe could be explained in terms of numbers (a theory which underlies modern physics); they also taught that each number was endowed with symbolic qualities. Philip of Mornay, a writer of the late 16th century stated that Pythagoras learned his mathematical theories from the Hebrews, indirectly from Moses.[5]

The Tetragrammaton, *YHVH*, has the numerical value of 26, viz: 10+5+6+5. Kabbalah teaches that the Torah has a literal meaning supplied by its letters and a mystical reading composed of the divine names of God.[6] Reading the Torah "according to the names" may not satisfy the rational but finite human intellect: it is an exercise in the esoteric. Hidden meanings in the biblical texts can often be detected from the numerical clues.

In the case of some of the writings attributed to David and Solomon, the author apparently set out to construct a poem or a book with a hidden sense and here and there inserted numerological clues to its latent meaning. It is suggested here that those patterns were intended to highlight a central theme; or to supply a relevant acrostic clue; or, in the case of alphabetic poems, to suggest completeness of the piece as a unity. Some of the writings were crafted to suggest God's presence or to glorify His name by using a literary device based on the number 26, the same number which is indicated by the Tetragrammaton. Perhaps, they used numbers as hidden meanings because of the tradition forbidding anyone other than the high priest, and then only at specified times, from pronouncing the Tetragrammaton as it is written. Rashi said, on the authority of the rabbis, that the avoidance of pronouncing the Tetragrammaton, substituting for it another word is supported by the text זה שמי לעלם (*This is My name forever*); the word לעלם is spelled defectively without the usual Vav so that the word may be understood to mean"concealed" (Ex. 3:15).

5 Rostvig, M. "Structure as Prophecy". From: *Silent Poetry: Essays in Numerological Analysis*. Fowler, A. Ed.

6 *Encyl. Judaica*. Vol. 10, p. 622.

The urge to include the name, if only in veiled, arithmetical form, stems from the Israelites' need for constant reassurance of the presence of God. A central theme, repeated many times in the Pentateuch, is God's promise, "and I will be with you,"[7] and a numerical code was a deliberate art form used by the biblical writer to suggest the divine presence.

NUMERICAL DEVICES: DELIBERATE OR FORTUITOUS?

(a) Hagar fled into the desert from her mistress, Sarah, and an angel of God appeared. At the outset, he instructed her in 13 words to return to her mistress. He continued with an annunciation in 26 words that she would bear Ishmael (Gen. 16:9-10; 11-12). Since no other person was present to witness the event, the messages were delivered in 13 and 26 words respectively. Could it be to authenticate them and to lend credibility to her testimony when she recounted her mysterious experiences in the Negev?

(b) In the *akedah* episode, Abraham is deflected by an angel of God from slaying Isaac. Twice the angel called him by name (Gen. 22:11, 12). The word ויאמר at the start of verse 12 is translated as "and he said" but should read "and He said", as part of the angel's message to conform with the last word of that verse ממני ("from Me"). The message of God including the two preliminary calls of Abraham's name (v. 12) totals 26 words.

(c) In Gen. 35:11, God appeared to Jacob at Beth-el and gave him a blessing of 26 words.

(d) Rebecca was having a painful and difficult pregnancy. She went to inquire of God. The oracle, delivered in 13 words (the same number as in the instruction to Hagar), told that she was carrying twins (Gen. 25:23).

7 God to Jacob, Gen. 28:15; in Jacob's vow, Gen. 28:20; concerning Abraham, Gen. 21:22; God to Isaac, Gen. 26:3; to Moses, Ex. 3:12; 33:14; to Joshua, Deut. 31:23.

(e) Isaac's blessing of Jacob consisted of 26 words, not counting the preliminary aside in which he observed that his son, (disguised as Esau), smelled like a fertile field (Gen. 27:28, 29).

(f) Jacob's death-bed blessing and testament consists of 26 verses (Gen. 49:2-27).

(g) Hezekiah's servant was sent to Isaiah to seek a prophetic message in a time of national emergency. The prophecy was ready even before the servant arrived, 26 words of comfort predicting deliverance (II Kg. 19:6, 7).

(h) Solomon had built the temple of God. At the dedication, he stood before the altar in the presence of the congregation of Israel, and he beseeched God to be attentive to his prayer and then recited an invocation ending with the request that the good deeds of David be remembered. His words totalled 26 (II Chr. 6:41, 42). It is likely that the author was very familiar with the code system of using numbers, particularly 26, to reflect the equivalent value of the Tetragrammaton, and that it had become established as a literary form.

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

David, the sweet singer of Israel, raised the numbers device to a fully developed pattern, viz:

(a) the alphabetic poems; each with 22 verses, each verse starting with another letter of the alphabet, in their regular order.[8]

(b) the a-l-f psalm; each of them calls for a total of 21 verses (excluding the title) in which the verse beginning with Vav or Nun is omitted but an extra verse is added at the end which begins with Pay.[9] The effect of this literary form is to make Lamed the central letter of the acrostic a-l-f. Linders calls the alphabetic psalms and other acrostic pieces in the Bible "scribal exercises" which have an

8 Example; Ps. 112 and 119. The poem, A Woman of Valor, attributed to Solomon, is alphabetic. Proverbs 31:10-31.

9 Example Ps. 34.

artistic importance in addition to being a mnemonic aid in public recital.[10]

(c) The repetitive refrain as in Ps. 136; each verse consists of a principal clause with its dependent clause which says: כי לעולם חסדו (*For His mercy endures forever*). There are 26 such dependent clauses in this psalm, the numerical equivalent of the Tetragrammaton. The theme of the poem is set out in the opening words: *Give thanks unto the Lord.*

(d) Psalm 114 contains 52 words (2x26), probably to reflect the awesome power of the God of Jacob, who can overturn the natural order governing the seas, rivers, and mountains, and change hard flints into water.

(e) Ps. 15 is another 52 word poem, not counting its title and the opening word *YHVH*. For other 52 word psalms, see 129 and 130. Verses 12-18 of Ps. 115 is a blessing containing 52 words (the first 26 words ending on the central word and the second 26 words starting with the same word): it mentions *YHVH* 7 times, another sacred number. Ps. 150 is a composite form. It contains 13 (1/2 of 26) Hallelujahs and 22 other words to suggest alphabetic completeness. Another composite form is Zephania 3:8, where the words of the Lord foretell the triumphant return of Israel to its land. That verse consists of just 26 words; it also contains every one of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

(f) Ps. 121 employs the number 26 to highlight two words. If we disregard the two-word title and then count 26 words, the next word is *Israel*. Then start at the end and count back 26 words and you arrive at the word *YHVH*, making it a paired word with "Israel."

(g) Ps. 54 contains the broadest possible clue to its numerical arrangement. Verse 3 reads, *O God, save me by Thy name.* The "name" always refers to *YHVH*. The 26 words beginning with verse 3, (disregarding *selah*), include the phrase אלוהים עזר לי (*God is my*

10 Lindars, B. "The Structure of Psalm CXLV", *Vetus Testamentum* XXIX 1 (1989) pp. 23-30.

Helper). The 26 words from the end also include the same phrase. The pattern of 26 words in each direction overlaps the central phrase which is the theme of the psalm.

(h) The 23rd Psalm presents a similar pattern which highlights its central theme כי אתה עמדי *for Thou art with me*. The pronoun "Thou" refers, of course, to the Lord. That three-word theme appears 26 words from the beginning (not counting the title) and 26 words from the end.[11] This psalm, with its central theme and its pastoral setting depicting God as a shepherd may have been influenced by the vision of Nathan, the prophet, which he related to David (II Sam. 7:3-13). To summarize his message: I, (the Lord), took you from the sheepcote; I have been with you wherever you go; I cut off your enemies; my people Israel will not be disquieted; I will give them rest from their enemies; He (David) shall build a house for my name and be established forever.

CONCLUSION

When in biblical narrative, an angel or prophet conveys a message in 26 words, the messenger may be regarded as divinely authorized and his message as authentic because: *My name is within him* (it) (Ex. 23:21).

The level of abstraction which produced the biblical numbers-code resembles the thinking which produced the new technology of converting light and sound into digital bits, – a set of numbers which serve as symbols in place of wave patterns of light and sound.

11 For insight into the numerological pattern of Ps. 23, I am indebted to Bazak, J. "Numerological devices in Biblical Poetry", *Vetus Testamentum* XXXVIII 3 (1988).

ARCHEOLOGY AND THE BIBLE

ABRAHAM RUDERMAN

In his recently published book *Recent Archeological Discoveries and Biblical Research* William G. Dever provides us with considerable insight into archeology's contribution to some historical questions in the Bible as opposed to theological issues. The Bible is a veritable anthology of many types of literature, including folktales, epics, prose and poetic narratives, court annals, genealogies, cult legends, prayers, oracles and homilies.

While the Bible may be used as a source for history, Prof. Dever maintains that it cannot be relied on as an accurate historical record. For example, the stories of Genesis dealing with the Creation, the Flood and the distant origins of the family of man can not be regarded as history. Dever looks upon them as deeply moving literature with profound moral implications. So archeologists are not expected to locate the Garden of Eden or excavate for the bones of Adam and Eve or the timbers of Noah's Ark. The true meaning of these stories fall into the category of theology and are intended as an introduction to the story that follows, God's concern for His chosen people. While some history might be drawn from the later portion of Genesis and the Book of Exodus, neither biblical scholars nor archeologists have been able to document as historical any of the events of the patriarchal or Mosaic eras. Nevertheless, reliable historical sources may be found in the account of the united monarchy beginning in the 10th century B.C.E. These can be checked against contemporary records from Egypt, Assyria and Babylonia. In addition, the Prophetic books of the 8th through the 6th centuries

Rabbi Abraham Ruderman was ordained at the Jewish Institute for Religion. He served as a chaplain during W.W.II and was spiritual leader of congregations in Poughkeepsie, Elmont, Hazelton, and South Africa. He came on Aliyah in 1976, and at present is editor of the weekly bulletin of the Jerusalem Rotary.

B.C.E., including the Wisdom Literature, provide us with invaluable social and political commentary.

Prof. Dever explains that the Bible is not solely concerned with factual records describing what actually happened. The Bible is more concerned with the larger question: "What does it mean?" It is interpretation of certain happenings as seen through the eyes of faith. Concrete events in the Bible, according to Prof. Dever, are important insofar as they illustrate God's actions and their consequences for people here and now. It speaks of the dramatic public actions of kings, priests, prophets and reformers. The Bible is concerned with political history and little with social and economic history. Nowhere in the Bible is there mention of what people looked like, what they wore or ate, what kind of houses they lived in and how they were furnished. It has little to say about what went on in the streets, in the plazas of the average town, how trade and agriculture were conducted, how people entertained themselves, how they lived, what they died of, and how they were buried. All these data are supplied by archeology.

The Bible describes public life and the world of the spirit. Archeology supplies a knowledge of everyday life and culture. It sheds light on ancient town-planning and administration, kinds of defenses and weapons, daily utensils of the home, royal and domestic architecture, sanctuaries, cult tombs, pottery, artistically executed ivories and seals of many potsherds with inscriptions. Archeology may not prove the historical existence of certain Bible personalities, such as Abraham or Moses, nevertheless it has demolished the notion that the Bible is pure mythology. The Bible is about real flesh and blood people in a particular time and place, whose experiences inspired a vision never known in antiquity.

Archeology has also exposed Israel's neighboring, ancient, near eastern cultures. These have provided us with a context whereby we can study Israel's culture comparatively and appreciate the similarities and differences with other peoples. Israel can thus be seen as a secular society, a view made possible not by the information from

the Bible but by the evidence of archeology. Archeology has shed light on the identification of various deities and rituals in ancient Israel. Chief among the Canaanite fertility gods were the mother goddess Asherah and her consort Baal, the storm god. Until the exile this pagan religion which stresses the integration of life with the life-giving forces of nature, was a potent rival of the religion of YHWH which demanded austere and exalted ethical standards. Archeology confirms what the Bible suggests that in the early pre-monarchic period Israelites worshipped one God; but there was a large measure of syncretism in which they conceded the possibility of the existence of other gods. This is confirmed by archeological finds which even antedate most of the biblical texts. They also reveal that worship was a localized affair, with open-air sanctuaries of simple household shrines serving the people. There was no temple or centralized worship. Any individual could officiate in worship. Anyone could build an altar, plant a sacred tree or offer a sacrifice. Public festivals were also influenced by the Canaanites and followed the Canaanite year. In the spring the people celebrated the pastoral feast accompanied by the slaughter of lambs. In the early summer there was an agricultural feast, and in the fall there was a festival when whole families camped in booths in the fields to celebrate the harvest. Then came the winter rains and the beginning of the New Year, followed by Yom Kippur. All these festivals had been demythologized in keeping with Israel's teachings, but there is evidence pointing to a Canaanite origin.

Later on in the monarchy the Israelite religion was more highly centralized and institutionalized by the Jerusalem priesthood. But archeology has revealed that local shrines and rival temples continued in use after Solomon and that Baal and Asherah were worshipped to the end of the monarchy. Uncompromised monotheistic Judaism was a product of the exile, but until then the ancient fertility cults of Canaan held powerful sway.

While archeology sheds light on the historicity of biblical events, answering such questions as: When did it occur? How did it

happen?, archeology is unable to answer the question: Why did it happen? This calls for a theological judgment which archeology does not really seek to argue for one side or another. The Bible is not history primarily, but an account of God's intervention in human history, and we should not expect archeology to find proof of principles of faith. In the final analysis, even if archeology one day will be able to demonstrate that all the events of the Bible did or did not take place, it would not matter since claims for trust of a higher order are essentially matters of belief.

ELLIOT A. GREEN *continued from p. 42*

the people. Others stayed behind. It is likely that persons knowledgeable about the prophetic teachings widespread in the former kingdoms of both Israel and Judah were still active and in the country when Pythagoras was a young man.

Now if our line of reasoning is valid, then there are implications in the various accounts of Pythagoras for biblical studies as well as for the history of philosophy. If Pythagoras had imbibed wisdom from the prophets of Israel on Mount Carmel and if he were influenced by the religion of Israel to the point where he based his Pythagorean brotherhood partly on the Nazirite rules, then some of his mathematical, musical, and moral teachings may have derived from the same source. Hence, this would shed light on the knowledge possessed and transmitted by the prophetic schools. More research should be done on the issues we have raised here. We have hardly touched the subject.

"VETERAN" IMMIGRANT FROM U.S. WINS THE ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL BIBLE CONTEST

SUSAN TOURKIN-KOMET

Adina Luber, an 11th grader at the Jerusalem Horev Girls' High School, beat 44 other contestants representing more than 20 countries, to become this year's International Bible Contest champion.

Luber's victory is especially impressive as this year's Yom Ha'atzmauth theme celebrated immigration and absorption, and Adina was born in the U.S. and immigrated to Israel just seven years ago. Her parents are Dr. and Mrs. Joel Luber. Her father is a dentist and is native to Philadelphia and her mother is a native of Memphis, Tenn.

The runners-up were 2 more girls, Liat Zivi and Merav Herzberg, and a boy, Shai Sharabi, all of them native Israelis.

For the first time in the contest's 28-year history, the Soviet Union was represented, by Eliyahu Yochovitz, age 15, from Riga. For the time being he studies the Bible only in Russian as he does not yet know Hebrew. He recently became a follower of Chabad-Lubavitcher Hassidism. His mother is an architect and his father is an engineer.

A separate contest is held each year for the Diaspora contestants only (this year it was held in Ashdod), before the final contest on Independence Day. The winner was Lenny (Arieh) Nasmias, from Mexico, son of Roberto and Rebeca Rochman-Nasmias. He studies in the Colegio Israelita de Mexico, is an eleventh grader, and would love to come back to Israel to study at the Weizman Institute in Rechovot. He spoke English as if he were from southern California, besides Spanish and Hebrew.

The runner up in the Diaspora contest was Daniel Genak, age 16, from Manhattan, N.Y. His parents are Ahuva, a lawyer, and Azriel, a physicist. He too is an 11th grader. He would like to study

for a year in Israel at a yeshiva, before attending Yeshiva University of New York. One of his special interests is karate.

Daniel Sharon, from Johannesburg, South Africa, came third. He is 17 and is already a first year student at the Univ. of Witwatersrand. His parents, Isaac and Rachel are both teachers. Daniel's hobbies include music, collecting stamps, coins, and travelling, hiking, and skydiving. He wants to return to Israel for his second university degree.

Shmuel Stohl, from Los Angeles, is the youngest of the top Diaspora winners and finished number four in the Diaspora contest. He is 14 and attends the Yeshiva University High School of Los Angeles. His father William is a medical researcher and his mother Aviva is an actuary. He too would like to come to Israel to study after he completes high school.

Last, but not least, David Silverberg, was placed fifth in the Diaspora contest. However, in the final rounds, in the televised International Contest, he came out as the top contestant after the 4 Israelis. He is almost 19, graduated from the Frish Yeshiva High School in Paramus, N.J., and now attends the Har Etzion Yeshiva in Alon Shvut. His parents are Benjamin and Tammy, and the Silverbergs live in Teaneck, N.J. David's "hobby" is studying Torah. He hopes to attend Yeshiva University of New York.

Special speakers at the annual reception at the President's Mansion included Professor Branover, famous Russian Jewish "refusenik" now almost 20 years in Israel, and Yosef Burg, who was, until his retirement the longest serving member in the Israeli Knesset (Parliament). Each of them spoke eloquently to the young contestants from all over the world, especially on this year's theme of aliyah and immigrant absorption.

As in recent years, there were contestants form countries which in previous years were not able to send participants, but are now free to do so. These were Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Turkey, Bulgaria, and Morocco.

continued on back page

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

I have enjoyed reading the *Jewish Bible Quarterly* and especially appreciated the article by David Faiman on MacBible version 2.0 in Vol. XIX-1 (73) Fall 1990.

The article inspired me to purchase the software and I have found it a magnificent tool for Bible research.

One of the letters to the editor in *JBQ* Vol. XIX-3 (75), Spring 1991 asks for some information about the publisher and price of the Macintosh program.

Although I purchased the Hebrew Bible from the publisher Zondervan Electronic Publishing at list price, I recently discovered that a company called CBD (Christian Book Distributors, Box 6000, Peabody, MA 01961, tel. 508-977-4500) is selling computer software including the MacBible program at discounted prices. The list price for the Hebrew Bible is $174.95 but CBD is selling it for $129.95 plus shipping. Other versions of MacBible are also available including a Greek NT text, a NIV text, NRSV text, NRSV Apocrypha text, KJV text, and RSV text. Unfortunately, no JPS or NJPS text is available. Perhaps, hopefully, someday . . . !

By the way, Davka Corporation in Chicago (800-621-8227) which is one of the largest producers of Judaica software is also selling the same MacBible Hebrew text program. The price listed in their most recent catalogue is $179 which includes a special manual (I'm not sure how this manual differs from the one Zondervan supplies.)

More articles on useful Bible software for the Macintosh would be gratefully appreciated!

I hope this information proves useful to your readers.

Rabbi Gordon Papert
Kings Park, N.Y.

עשה תורתך קבע

THE TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
CHAIM ABRAMOWITZ

October 1991			November 1991		
1	T	Joshua 1	1	F	Genesis 6:9 - 7:24
2	W	Joshua 2			
3	Th	Joshua 3	3	S	Joshua 24
4	F	Genesis 1:1 - 2:3	4	M	Judges 1
			5	T	Judges 2
6	S	Joshua 4	6	W	Judges 3
7	M	Joshua 5	7	Th	Judges 4
8	T	Joshua 6	8	F	Genesis 8:1 - 8:14
9	W	Joshua 7			
10	Th	Joshua 8	10	S	Judges 5
11	F	Genesis 2:4 - 3:24	11	M	Judges 6
			12	T	Judges 7
13	S	Joshua 9	13	W	Judges 8
14	M	Joshua 10	14	Th	Judges 9
15	T	Joshua 11	15	F	Genesis 8:15 - 9:17
16	W	Joshua 12			
17	Th	Joshua 13	17	S	Judges 10
18	F	Genesis 4:1 - 4:26	18	M	Judges 11
			19	T	Judges 12
20	S	Joshua 14	20	W	Judges 13
21	M	Joshua 15	21	Th	Judges 14
22	T	Joshua 16	22	F	Genesis 9:18 - 10:32
23	W	Joshua 17			
24	Th	Joshua 18	24	S	Judges 15
25	F	Genesis 5:1 - 6:8	25	M	Judges 16
			26	T	Judges 17
27	S	Joshua 19	27	W	Judges 18
28	M	Joshua 20	28	Th	Judges 19
29	T	Joshua 21	29	F	Genesis 11:1 - 11:32
30	W	Joshua 22			
31	Th	Joshua 23			

December 1991

1	S	Judges 20
2	M	Judges 21
3	T	Judges 22
4	W	Judges 23
5	Th	Judges 24
6	F	Genesis 12:1 - 13:18
8	S	I Samuel 1
9	M	I Samuel 2
10	T	I Samuel 3
11	W	I Samuel 4
12	Th	I Samuel 5
13	F	Genesis 14:1 - 14:24
15	S	I Samuel 6

December 1991

16	M	I Samuel 7
17	T	I Samuel 8
18	W	I Samuel 9
19	Th	I Samuel 10
20	F	Genesis 15:1 - 15:21
22	S	I Samuel 11
23	M	I Samuel 12
24	T	I Samuel 13
25	W	I Samuel 14
26	Th	I Samuel 15
27	F	Genesis 16:1 - 17:27
29	S	I Samuel 16
30	M	I Samuel 17
31	T	I Samuel 18

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE CONTEST *continued from p. 62*

We are proud that this contest is now an established program for the Israeli nation on Independence Day. It is also noteworthy that the official Israeli army photographer at the President's Mansion was a soldier, Yaacov Gatu, an Ethiopian Jew, here for the past 7 years. He recently made front-page news, when his parents and 7 other siblings made aliyah during the Gulf War — his family being given gas masks upon their arrival at Ben Gurion airport. He hopes to attend the Hebrew University of Jerusalem after he completes his army service. His presence strongly symbolized this year's theme of immigration and absorption.

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