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LITERATURE

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THE SACRIFICE OF ISAAC THEME IN YIDDISH LITERATURE

A SURVEY FROM THE OLD YIDDISH AQEDAH POEM THROUGH
LEIVICK'S AQEDAH DRAMA

BY PERCY MATENKO

*The following is a summary and condensation based on material derived from the writer's larger published study, *The Aqedath Jishaq — A Sixteenth Century Yiddish Epic with Introduction and Notes by Percy Matenko and Samuel Sloan in the former's Two Studies in Yiddish Culture, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1968.**

AQEDATH JISHAQ THEME IN YIDDISH LITERATURE

The sacrifice of Isaac theme in Yiddish literature has occupied the attention of Yiddish poets and writers for at least four hundred years. It has changed both its form and treatment in the course of this time but the persistence of the theme proves how much this subject has exercised the Jewish mind during these centuries.

Its oldest literary expression is to be found in the Old Yiddish poem called the *Aqedath Jishaq*. It is based, however, like the *Shmuel Buch*, not directly on the version as given in *Genesis XXII*, but on the Aggadah or Jewish legendary material that has grown up around it.

There exist three manuscripts of this poem and a printed version. The first, dated most probably about 1570, which belonged originally to the eminent Yiddish philologist, Judah A. Joffe, is now in the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York (Microfilm 4425, Liturgical MS. Collection); the second, dated 1574, is located in the Hamburg State and University Library; the third, dated 1579, in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris; the printed version, now located in the Bodleian Library in Oxford, England, is from the seventeenth century. None of them, however, can be called the original text, since even the earliest two versions are copies.

Dr. Matenko, Professor Emeritus of Brooklyn College, City University of New York, is the author of six books and numerous articles in the fields of German and Yiddish literature, including *Two Studies in Yiddish Culture* and an English edition of Yitzkhok Rudashevski's *The Diary of the Vilna Ghetto*, 1973. He is currently the president of the American Association of Professors of Yiddish.



A Rembrandt etching on the Aqedah Theme

While the original authorship of the four versions has not been established beyond doubt, all the evidence in our possession at present points to the fact that it may have been a certain Pinchas, the son of Yehuda Shalit. He is called a "sofer". However, this term was used also to denote not merely a scribe but the original author.

ORGANIC PART OF CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT

Whereas the source of the poem, as has been said, is derived from the Aggadah, its more immediate starting-point is not the Bible or the midrashim, but the oral tradition. This subject matter lived in the mouths of the people and was an organic part of the cultural environment in which our poet lived. On account of the great scarcity of books in the Middle Ages it was impossible for every member of the simple folk to possess a *Pentateuch* with a translation and commentary in the spoken language. The Jewish 'magidim' explained sections of Sabbath or holiday services before the assembled congregation not only according to the regular interpretation, but wove into it the Aggadic warp and woof of old Hebrew exegesis. Many elements of this magidic material were known to Jewish youth from their schoolboy years in the Jewish religious school, where the teacher would drill the Biblical text according to some definite traditional commentary.¹ Prominent among such sources were the Midrash Wayosha (Constantinople, 1519) and the Midrash Tanhuma C (Mantua, 1563). It can also be inferred, according to information furnished to the writer that the poem was probably derived from an earlier prose version of the fifteenth century. This was discovered in a codex of the library of Parma by Professor Max Weinreich and published in his *Bilder fun der yidisher literaturgeshikhte*.² According to an oral statement by Professor Weinreich, this was merely "a translation of a midrashic source". Whether the author of the poem actually used this prose version cannot be determined with certainty. In any case, the ultimate source is a midrashic one.

SATAN'S PART IN THE DRAMA

What strikes one particularly upon reading the poem are two facts. The first is its great dramatic value, particularly in the attempt made by Satan to prevent Abraham, Isaac and Sarah from carrying out the sacrifice. He disguises himself as an old man and inquires from Abraham whither he is going. Upon being told that Abraham was planning to pray, Satan replies that it is not the custom anywhere to carry along wood and fire and a slaughtering knife for purposes of prayer, and reproaches him for allowing himself to be hoodwinked by Satan into wishing to sacrifice his only child. Abraham replies that Satan himself is trying to mislead him and that he will heed only the word of God. Satan then tries to tempt Isaac. Disguising himself as a young boy, he replies to Isaac's claim that he is going to learn the Torah by stating that he is to be

1. Israel Zinberg, *Di geshikhte fun der literatur bay yidn* Vilno, 1935, VI, pp. 127-128.

2. Max Weinreich, *Bilder fun der yidisher literaturgeshikhte fun di onheybn biz Mendele Moykher Sforim* Wilno, 1928, 112f., 134-136.

sacrificed, and urges him not to cause sorrow to his mother who gave birth to him in her old age. Isaac, however, remains firm in his intention of honoring the will of God. Satan then turns to Sarah and tells her, too, that Abraham has not taken Isaac to learn the Torah but to sacrifice him. Although Sarah faints at first from the shock, she says, upon recovering, that she will submit to the will of God. Failing here too, Satan makes another attempt to prevent Abraham and Isaac from carrying out their pious purpose by transforming himself into a "great water without a bridge." Abraham fearlessly enters the stream which at first reaches barely up to his legs. Isaac enters at his father's bidding. They plan to cross the stream. However, the water gets deeper and deeper until it reaches up to their necks. Abraham appeals to God that if they drown, neither His commandment about the sacrifice nor the covenant will be fulfilled. The Lord reassures Abraham about the certain fulfillment of the covenant. In traditionally popular style, the Lord forces Satan to drink the water. This causes his stomach to swell, so that he runs about in discomfort and roars with anger like a bear.

Running through the whole of the poem is also the marked feeling of piety and religious pathos which permeates it. When Isaac hears that God has chosen him as a sacrifice, he does not resist but, on the contrary, takes up this duty with great joy. Father and son console each other in their grief and Isaac himself places the wood on the altar like a bridegroom preparing for his wedding. He bids Abraham bind him tightly, so that he do not tremble when he is sacrificed. The poem concludes with the prayer that God send the Messiah to redeem the Jews from the Diaspora for the sake of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob:

Un' in dem galuth gidenk unz zekhuth Abraham un' Jislaq un'
 Jaagobh in ali tsiit
 um uuiln der libsaft di(e) er dir bot dr stiigt
 un' los unz iin mol gilebn di(e) gros uriit
 un' sik unz masiah da mir lang oif habn gibliit.³

POPULAR VERSIONS OF THE AQEDAH

There exist four Purim play variants of the Aqedah which were published

3. The following is the English translation of the above stanza:

And may (He) remember us in exile for the sake of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob for all time on account of the love He showed you (the people of Israel, according to the preceding stanza) and may He let us live to see the great joy and send us Messiah for whom we have waited long.

by Noah Prilutzky.⁴ In each of them the Purim play begins with the speech of a jester or 'runner' or with the speech of the whole troupe. The story follows the usual, if very much abbreviated, version of the Midrash sources as they were given in the Aqedah poem, except that in the poem Isaac knows only in the middle of it what Abraham intends to do with him, whereas here Isaac knows it from the beginning. In the second variant, even Satan plays a role, although he is more a jester than a tempter. The variants come exclusively from Poland.

Two very similar popular versions, *The Kingdom of Saul and the Sacrifice of Isaac*, Wilno, 1875, and a dramatized elaboration by Hillel Klibanov, Wilno, 1912, the latter apparently a plagiarism of the former, will merely be mentioned here, since they are of relatively slighter importance.

A more interesting elaboration is that of Goldfaden's *Akedas Yitzkhok* — *Mhapekhes Sdom Vamoyroh*, *Biblische Operette in 4 Akten und 40 Bildern* (1902). Actually, only the last two acts deal with the Aqedah. The first two are concerned with the announcement of Isaac's birth and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah on account of their corruption. With the instinct of a born theater man, Goldfaden makes use of every touching moment to create the desired effect on his public. When Abraham decides to sacrifice his son, Goldfaden devotes a particularly large space to the complaints of his faithful servant Eliezer who tries to dissuade him from doing so (pp. 40–44). The departure from Sarah is described in great detail. A strongly developed motif, which is merely mentioned in the oral tradition, is that of Ishmael who envies Isaac and tries to inherit his property after his death. Here he serves as the comedian in the play, similar to the comic types in the popular Viennese comedies of Nestroy and Raimund. He is a great fool, understands only half of what goes on around him and can only speak to his donkey. Goldfaden gives only brief space to the temptations of Satan. However, he makes much of the struggle which occurs in Abraham during the sacrifice of his son, between paternal love and piety. As is the usual case with Goldfaden, there is no lack of humorous chansonnettes, and the scenes are full of vivid action and a vigorous sense of drama. Thus, for instance, the stage direction at the end of the operetta when Isaac is saved, is as follows: The heavens open — all the angels appear and sing — one takes the knife away from Abraham — one unbinds Isaac — when Eliezer, who is in the background, sees what is going on, he runs forward joyously and tenderly embraces Isaac — he drags along a ram and puts it on the altar — when Ishmael awakens and sees the commotion, he begins to whip the donkey for having wakened him. The angels and Abraham and Isaac sing till the curtain falls. "The Lord

4. Noah Prilutzky, *Zamelbikher far Yiddish Folklor*, vol. 2, pp. 64–83.

is my strength and song and may He be my salvation!" (Hebrew). The altar with the ram burns with red fire — a violet glow shines on all the angels. The curtain drops slowly.

LEIVICK'S AQEDAH DRAMA

The Jewish elaborations we have treated so far have borne a popular religious character. Very different, however, is the case with Leivick's *Aqedah* drama, published serially in the August-December numbers of the *Zukunft*, 1935. Leivick reverses the moral tone of the legend completely. In his play, Abraham is the hard man of principle who lacks, however, any finer human feelings. Satan is treated more sympathetically by the author than God. He is the merciful and suffering spirit who feels the pain of every living being. When he comes to Abraham and warns him not to carry out the Aqedah, he says:

"I have come to you with a heart full of love, full of concern and care about every bit of life. For the slightest sign of life that I find in my realm delights and inspires my heart, Lord Abraham. The smallest worm, the smallest fly is as dear to me as the largest lion and leopard. And when I find a blade of grass, I fall down to it with my lips and kiss it. So much am I enamored of life, Lord Abraham. For this reason have I come to warn you: do not go on my Mount Moriah to destroy life."⁵

Thus, too, at the end of the drama:

"And on this ground there lie scattered the gnawed-up bones of the poor little lamb. Poor, poor little lamb, no one has even thought about you. They all lay on the altar; but all of them have somehow crept off it again; — but you were really slaughtered, and burned and roasted, and were really consumed. — And only little bones have been left of you. — Poor, poor little lamb. (pause) Ishmael, my own, why do you sit so petrified? — Answer what I ask you, Ishmael: will it at least be a lesson to them? Or will they immediately forget everything and all my efforts will be in vain? All my concern and all my care for every blade of grass and pebble, for every throb of life? — I ask you, I ask you, I ask you. (Ishmael does not answer. Exit Satan. Ishmael takes out his whistle, sits down with knees outstretched and plays. He plays sadly, with thin, plaintive tones. The dawn rises.) Curtain⁶.

The attitude of Isaac is also reversed from the point of view of the traditional version of the Aqedah. Instead of willingly accepting God's wish to sacrifice

5. *Di Aqedah, Di Zukunft, The Yiddish Monthly*, New York, August, 1935, pp. 437-438.

6. *Op. cit.*, December, 1935, p. 707.

him, he protests against his treatment. After Abraham has led him to the sacrifice, Isaac turns the tables on him — a very interesting and original feature — and leads Abraham to the Aqedah, so that he should go through the same suffering as Isaac endured when he was being led to the altar. When Abraham reproaches him for this and begs mercy for his mother's sake, he answers:

"You talk about mercy? About my mother? Be silent! You witnessed my death agonies, and even pretended to pity me, but I make no pretense. I tell you openly — I have not a spark of pity left. — You wished both to satisfy your paternal heart, as it were, and to parade your piety before God. You led me to my death *for the sake of winning favor in the eyes of God* (lit. 'for the sake of a good deed'). Through *my* death *you* wanted to gain a good deed. How then could you be concerned with my lamentation and my genuine fear of death? — The greater my fear and lamentation were — the greater was your good deed. And still you have the audacity to call me a murderer? — Oh, if you had only led me to my death as a simple murderer and not as a saint! Ascend the altar."⁷

It is not Abraham, therefore, who is the hero, not the patriarch who sacrifices his paternal feelings on the altar of his piety, but Isaac. Isaac is in Leivick's interpretation the innocent victim of Abraham's piety. And Leivick asks in his drama the question: by *what* right does Abraham venture to make sacrifices on someone else's account? This profound moral question which is also reflected in Leivick's dedication of the play,⁸ demonstrates Leivick's characteristic search for justice.

7. Ibid p. 705.

8. "Dedicated to the memory of all those who at any time have been innocently brought as a sacrifice on any altar whatsoever — whether the altar was a heap of stones, a plank cot of a prison, a hospital bed, or even a threshold of a house" (*op. cit.*, p. 436). Leivick, as is known, suffered from pulmonary tuberculosis and was apparently recovering from the illness in Denver, Colorado, in 1933 during the composition of his play.



THREE CHARISMATIC JUDGES AND THEIR STRATEGIES

BY ARAN RON

Lt. Yishay Ron fell near the Suez Canal in the War of Attrition in September 1970. After the first thirty days of mourning — שלושים — the parents established a bi-weekly Bible study group at their home — in memory of Yishay — which has been meeting consistently. A book was published emanating from this study group — הגות במקרא, מבחר מחוך עיוני החוג לתנ"ך לזכר ישי רון — consisting of lectures given by Biblical scholars, with a foreword by David Ben Gurion, then president of the Israel Society for Biblical Research.

We have chosen, as our first offering from this volume, the lecture given by Yishay's brother who, as Bible student and soldier, combines his knowledge in both fields to show how some of the charismatic judges, recounted in the Book of Judges, were able to lead the tribes in the defense of their land. This lecture was given before the Yom Kippur War.

STRUCTURAL STYLE OF THE BOOK JUDGES

The Book of Judges has a clear structural style. History repeats itself in a revolving movement: The people of Israel are unfaithful in their allegiance to God, whereupon He punishes them by inflicting upon them a foe who attacks them and plunders their fields. As the tribes writhe in their oppression, God calls forth a heroic figure who, in his charismatic way, delivers them from harassment. God's hand in the shaping of events is manifested in every turn of events. Even victories are part of the divine design which directs the judges in their every action vis-a-vis the enemy.

The judge is thus God's messenger. He comes from the people and leads them in war and peace. They faithfully follow him in admiration, drawn to him by his personal qualities. He is their ruler, their judge and their protector. He encompasses within himself the threefold functions of government: legislative, judicial and executive. These he exercises in times of peace, but only after he has won the affection of his people by bringing them deliverance from the harassing foe.

Aran was seventeen when he wrote a term paper for his high school, which he later delivered as a lecture at his family's Bible Study Group and which was subsequently published. He is presently a captain in Zahal, serving as a career soldier in the tank corps.

THE MILIEU OF THE JUDGES

In order to understand the milieu of the judges, we must review briefly the period preceding it. When the Israelites entered Canaan after the exodus and their forty year sojourn in the desert, they found there a continuous string of Canaanite settlements. In fact, however, the Canaanite kings dwelt in their enclaves, fortified within their own cities, with few positive contacts with neighboring cities and rulers. In the Tel el-Amarna Tablets* we have the records sent by petty vassal kings of Canaan to the king of Egypt complaining about the treachery of their neighboring counterparts and the lack of support and cooperation among them.

The Israelites, seizing upon the state of disunity among the Canaanite city kings, were able to entrench themselves and establish their own settlements. But there were many obstacles to overcome.

THE EQUIVALENT OF TANKS

The Canaanites possessed chariots — the equivalent of the tank today. The Israelites, coming from a nomadic life could not cope in the incipient stage of their conquest with such equipment. Thus the initial points of settlement were established primarily in the hills of the northern Galil and in the central highlands around Jerusalem and Hebron. The coastal sections and the lowlands remained in the hands of the Canaanites — precisely because they were easily defensible with the use of chariots.

Then again, the Canaanites dwelt in fortified walled cities, which were difficult to overcome. As a result, many Canaanite enclaves remained even after the surrounding areas were taken.

PROBLEMS OF SETTLEMENT

In addition to the military problems, the Israelites had to face the challenge of settlement, of changing from a migratory people, moving with its flocks, to a community existing on its agricultural know-how. This they slowly acquired from their Canaanite neighbors.

The most immediate and pressing problem of settlement was water. Canaanite cities were invariably located near natural springs. But where would the Israelites find their water supply, other than the natural springs? Could

* The Amarna Letters are a collection of state documents, written in cuneiform on clay tablets, which were discovered in 1887 at Tel el-Amarna in Upper Egypt. These letters constitute the state archives of the kings Amenhotep III (1411–1375 B.C.E.) and Amenhotep IV (1375–1358 B.C.E.), and are of great importance for the knowledge of political and cultural conditions in Canaan prior to the Israelite invasion.

the Israelites capture the water of the rainfall which runs off so swiftly from the hills inhabited by them? It seems that, about the time of the Israelite incursion into Canaan, the peoples of the Near East acquired the skill of constructing water-proof cisterns. By digging underground recesses and by channeling the rain water into them, they were able to preserve their water supply through the dry season, for agriculture and personal needs. (You will recall how the revived use of home cisterns in the War of Independence in 1948 helped Jerusalem hold out against the Arab siege.)

CONQUERING THE FOREST

Yet another problem stood out, one that seems minor in our modern perspective, but which loomed serious to the Israelites at the time of their conquest of Canaan. Unlike the present bare landscape of the Samaritan and Judean hills, much of the hilly country was then thickly forested. The Israelites were encouraged to clear the area needed for settlement. But they were faced with a dilemma. True, the iron age had already begun, but the new settlers, in their yet undeveloped state, had not yet learned the use of iron instruments. (See the reference in I Samuel 13:19-22 on how this deficiency held back the progress of the Israelites in meeting their agricultural and military needs.) The iron monopoly of their enemy, the Philistines, also impeded their progress in taking root in the land.

When we reach the period of the Judges, we find that each tribe had to find its own way out of the welter of constrictions which could have discouraged a less resolute people than the Israelites. Far from being unified, each tribe — singly or in confederation with several others — faced the tribulations of a small people surrounded by numerous nations bent on doing them harm.

INDIVIDUAL RESOURCEFULNESS

The disunity of the tribes put them at a disadvantage. On the other hand, their very isolation established an individual resourcefulness which moderated the severity of aloneness. In military matters, the tribes moved in suprisingly innovative ways. They were able to meet the threat of an attack with a speed that unbalanced the contending army. Let me give you a relevant example of today. Zahal has special mobile units whose efficiency depends almost solely upon its speed. They operate with jeeps and are generally way ahead of the regular army after a breakthrough. For instance, the Seventh Brigade moved ahead in the Six Day War with incredible speed and effectiveness because of its light mobile forces in the fore-front. In antiquity, the mobility of the tribe's militia was an important factor of success.

What about the use of arms when facing a foe equipped with superior

weaponry? In Judges 20:16 we read: *Of all this people seven hundred chosen men were left-handed* (alternate translation: *ambidextrous*); *every one could sling stones at a hair-breadth and not miss*. This indicates that certain units were trained for specialized tasks. We find additional references to specialized skills (see I Chronicles 12:2 and 25) in which certain tribes excelled. These distinctive disciplines were put to the test with great effectiveness.

An added dimension in morale was the phenomenon of the citizen army in the recruitment of warriors. When faced with an impending attack or with subjugation or oppression, most every able-bodied man rallied to the call of arms. It is not surprising to find at least one instance when a large percentage of the volunteers were demobilized before the warring unit moved into action (Judges 7:2–8).

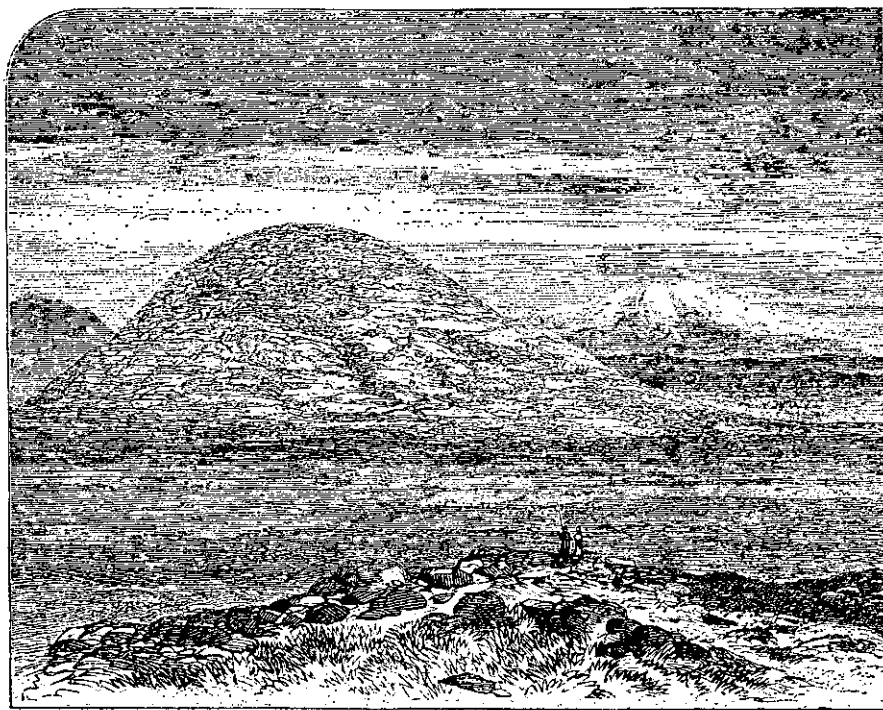
We now come to the three judges whom I would like to present, paying attention primarily to their military strategies.

DEBORAH THE PROPHETESS-JUDGE

The spectacular victory of the prophetess-judge Deborah and of her army under the command of Barak ben Avinoam is dramatically portrayed in prose and poetry in Judges Chapters 4 and 5. Analyzing the song of Deborah (5:21), most of the commentators attribute the victory to the miraculous swelling and overflowing of a very modest stream, the brook Kishon, in the Valley of Jezreel, where the battle was pitched. According to this interpretation, Deborah's call to strike (4:14) coincided with a rain storm which turned the parched land into a muddy morass, immobilizing the Canaanite chariots, finally sweeping away Sisera's army in the inundating waters of the Kishon. The great Biblical scholar, Yehezkel Kaufmann, was troubled by the problem of maneuverability in the midst of a rainstorm and flood which affected the Israelite foot soldiers as well as Sisera's charioteers. Since there is no mention of an overflowing Kishon in chapter 4, he pictures the battle as one in which Sisera's army was maneuvered into a pocket near Mount Tabor by the swift Israelite foot soldiers who first picked off the horses, thus putting the charioteers into virtual inaction, and then forced the enemy to meet them, the agile Israelite warriors, in hand-to-hand combat.

It is less important to describe the correct or plausible military action than to record the fact that, as a result of Deborah's victory, the area of settlement was greatly enlarged by the addition of the broad Jezreel Valley which, in addition, formed a land bridge between the Israelite tribes in the north and the tribes of Menasseh, Ephraim and Benjamin in the central highland. The victory of Deborah and Barak now created a continuous land settlement for the Israelites — in many spots yet sparsely inhabited — from the hills near

Jerusalem to the far north of the Galil, rounding out the conquest of Canaan begun by Joshua.



A pencil drawing of Mount Tabor, drawn over a hundred years ago by Bertram Tristram, 19th century naturalist and geographer of the Holy Land. Emek Jezreel, where the battle of Barak was fought and won, is in the foreground.

GIDEON THE NIGHT FIGHTER

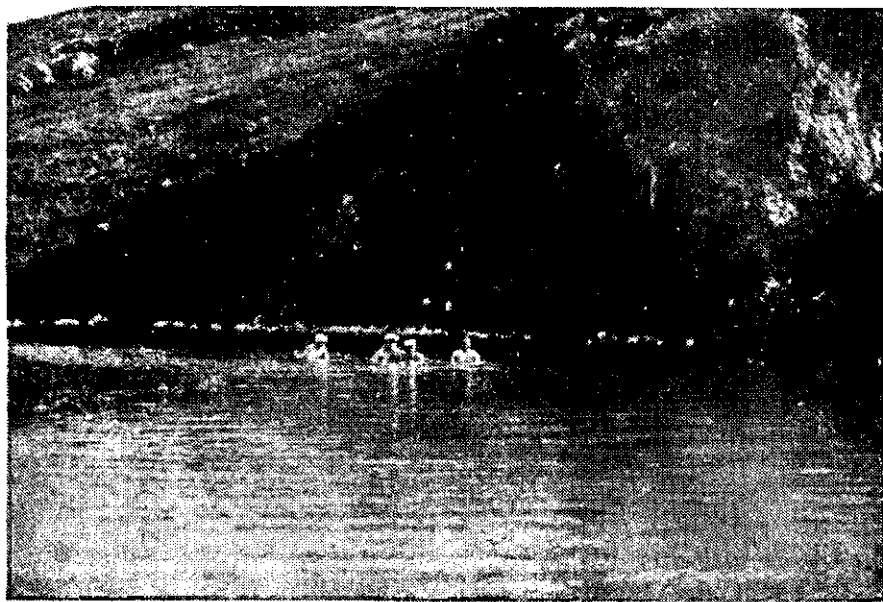
Gideon was the tactician of the night attack. Paradoxically, Gideon's war with the Midianites was brought about in the wake of the earlier victory over the Canaanites. While the latter were still in control, they manned fortifications along the Jordan River, which, because of such reinforcement, was an effective barrier against marauders from the east. With the settlement of the Israelites upon the land, the Jordan passes were neglected, enabling the Midianites to infiltrate and plunder the rich grain valleys of the Emek and Beth Shean.

The Midianites were not an organized army. They were a band of roving raiders who pillaged the countryside with the use of a new and dreadful weapon — the camel. The terrified villagers built caves to save their

grain and to gain a measure of personal protection, but with little and uncomfortable success.

To put an end to these attacks, Gideon, a newly discovered leader, chose the tactic of surprise and night attack. Actually, too many civilian warriors gathered at his call to arms. Of the more than thirty thousand streaming in from the tribes of Menashe, Asher, Zevulun, Naftali and Ephraim, he ultimately picked only three hundred.

Why did he call up so many soldiers, and why afterward did he choose so few to achieve his purpose? From the reading of the biblical text, it is evident that the Almighty directed the strategy from its beginning to its successful conclusion. Human considerations, however, may be imagined as well. At first he accepted all the volunteers who mustered to his call — from all the neighboring tribes, incurring no ill feeling among them through any form of discrimination. His strategy called for an elite troop who could execute the specific tactic of a night attack with the greatest of precision and effective-



The natural pond, fed by the Spring of Ein Harod from within the grotto, as it looked for thousands of years. This picture was taken sixty years ago and appears in the collection of scenes of the Holy Land published by Gustaf Dalman. The area today has been converted into a national park.

ness. How should he remove the expendables? The Bible relates a method of elimination which seems rather strange to the reader. He chose three hundred soldiers who, in drinking from the well of Ein Harod, lapped up the water with their hands without first kneeling to reach the water level directly. Some commentators take the kneeling as a genuflection indicative of idol worship. Gideon wanted to reject those whose loyalties to God's cause might be doubted. Others explain the manner of drinking as a test of zeal and alertness.

As a soldier in the ranks of Zahal, I would tend to favor the second explanation. A good soldier is often recognized by two traits: his alertness to everything about him and his power of self-discipline under stress. From personal experience, I have seen varying behavior of soldiers at the end of a long and arduous march in the heat of the field or desert, how they seize the chance of a drink at a brook or a spring. It is only the well-disciplined soldier who, despite his thirst, will not throw off his weapon at the first sight of water but, with care in keeping the gun close to him — army regulation — and guarding it against wetness, will drink the water in an exemplary manner. It seems to me that Gideon wished to test his men through these two indicators: in lapping up the water, were they alert in what was going on about them, and were they careful about their weapons?

Before launching his night attack, Gideon personally made an intelligence survey of the enemy's camp. He learned one very important fact about the foe: their morale was low, probably as a result of the reports of Israelite mobilization. Not suspecting a night attack, the camp would probably not be carefully guarded. His plan of attack was kept most secretly — even from his own men — until close to the time of execution. As he explained the three dimensional plan to his men, he infused in them both a purpose and a zest for victory, exclaiming: *Arise, for the Lord hath delivered into your hand the host of Midian* (Judges 7:15).

The attack was planned and executed most meticulously. The communication system in any army is of crucial importance. How Gideon's forces, divided in three parts of one hundred men each, poised in the north, south and west of the large enemy camp — the eastern end was deliberately left open as an escape route for the Midianites after a possible rout — coordinated their attack, exercising the maximum surprise at the crucial moment from all three sides, is told dramatically in Judges chapter 7.

JEPHTAH'S DIPLOMACY

After the tribes in the fertile valleys of Jezreel and Beth Shean were freed from the oppression of the marauders from across the Jordan, it was the turn of the two and a half tribes on the eastern side of the Jordan to feel the

enmity of their neighboring people, the Ammonites. Threatened with the loss of their independence as the result of the incursion of the Ammonites, the tribes of Gilead recalled Jephtah. He earlier had been banished from the



A Gustav Doré drawing depicting the following verse: And Jephtah came to Mizpah unto his house, and, behold, his daughter came out to meet him with timbrels and with dances (Judges 11:34).

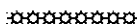
city of his birth and had turned into a brigand, leader of a group of lawless men who sustained themselves by raiding the countryside. Would he, renowned by now for his guerilla exploits, return to lead his people against the Ammonites? After some recriminating words with the elders of Gilead, he consented to head the tribes in their confrontation with their new oppressors.

The Bible gives no account of his military strategy, but interestingly, we read here of an attempt to reconcile animosities by a diplomatic exchange of claims and counter-claims. The Ammonites contend that their territory was forcibly taken from them by the Israelites after their departure from Egypt. Jephtah, in turn, reviews in detail the historic circumstances leading to the rightful occupation of the land of Gilead — how reminiscent of today's barrage of claims and counterclaims between Israel and its neighboring countries, though unfortunately without accessibility of a direct exchange between the contending parties.

It sounds so modern. Diplomacy did not work, and the warring nations met on the battlefield. Jephtah emerged victorious — but with what a personal tragedy in the loss of his daughter (Judges 11:30-40).

In talking about the military strategies of the three charismatic figures of the Book of Judges, I have not covered many important aspects of their leadership. As a member of a Bible reading family, I chose to treat what I know best, the strategy that I have learned as a soldier in the ranks to keep our nation secure.

Translated from the Hebrew by L. K.



WELCOME DR. GEVARYAHU

Dr. Haim Gevaryahu, Chairman of the World Jewish Bible Society, arrived in Israel after a Sabbatical year at Dropsie University in Philadelphia. He will spend the summer in Jerusalem prior to his return to Dropsie University for another year of teaching Bible. On his way there, Professor Gevaryahu will lecture in Buenos Aires as guest of the Argentine Chapter of the WJBS. He was also invited to attend a founders' council meeting of a new WJBS chapter in Johannesburg. His first public appearance in Jerusalem was at the President's Bible Study Group which he addressed on the subject, בני חבורות של יראי ה', בני נביאים עמים וצדיקים בימי המקרא.

A NATION WITHOUT A STATE

BY MENDELL LEWITTES

Part II

In our previous issue of Dor le-Dor, we presented the first of two articles by Dr. Lewittes, comprising the Biblical section of his forthcoming book, "The Foundations of the Jewish State." This dealt with the evolving positions and leadership of the prophet, the king and the High Priest during the period of the First Temple. In the present article, the writer takes up the important role of the prophet in fashioning the destiny of the Jewish people after it lost its homeland.

KING, HIGH PRIEST AND PROPHET

During the entire period of the First Temple, the three types of leadership in Israel which were delineated in the previous article — king, high priest, prophet — continued to function simultaneously, each within their respective realms. However, with the conquest of Jerusalem in 586 B.C.E. by Nebuchadnezer, the Jewish people became bereft of two of their three leaders. Both King Zidkiyahu and High Priest Saraiah were exiled to Babylon (II Kings 25:6, 18–20). Fortunately, the leadership of the prophet remained; and it was this leadership which made it possible for the defeated people to preserve their sense of identity as a distinct nation even though deprived of their independent government and of their homeland.

Jeremiah, who had forewarned of the destruction of the Temple and the Exile (*hurban* and *golah*), was spared any harm upon the specific instructions of Nebuchadnezer (Jer. 39:12). He was given the option of either accompanying the exiles to Babylon, or remaining with *the poor of the people who had nothing* and were permitted to remain in the land of Judah (*ibid.* 39:10, 34:4). Jeremiah chose to remain in Judea and continue to serve as the prophet of the Lord. He urged the remnant also to remain, bringing to them at their own request the divine message: *If you will still abide in this land, then will I build you and not destroy, and I will plant you and not uproot, for I repent of the evil that I have done unto you* (*ibid.* 42:10). This message was part of the process of instilling in the people the realization that the Exile was not going to be permanent; on the contrary, the attachment of the people of Israel to the land of Israel was to be indissoluble. Unfortunately, the leaders among the remnant refused

Dr. Lewittes, a prominent American rabbi now residing in Israel, is the author of *The Book of Temple Service* (Yale Judaica Series); *Nature and History of Jewish Law* (Yeshiva Univ. Studies in Judaism Series); *The Light of Redemption* (essays on contemporary Jewish problems); and *Beyond the Moon* (sermons).

to heed this message, and they left Judea for Egypt. Jeremiah accompanied them and continued to preach to them in Egypt (*ibid.* chaps. 43-44).

EXILE IS NOT PERMANENT

Two other messages had been delivered by Jeremiah with the identical purpose of planting in the hearts and minds of a defeated people the conviction that their defeat was only temporary, that the God of Israel had by no means abandoned His chosen people. The prophet of impending disaster was transformed by the dire events of the *hurban* to a prophet of impending restoration and glory. Eleven years before the destruction of the Temple, at the time of the exile of King Jehoiachin (597 B.C.E.), Jeremiah had sent a scroll *from Jerusalem to the remnant of the elders of the Exile, and to the priests, and to the prophets, and to all the people that Nebuchadnezer had exiled from Jerusalem to Babylon* (*ibid.* 29:1). In the name of the Lord he advised them to establish themselves in the land of their exile: *Build homes and plant gardens, take wives who will give birth to sons and daughters* (*ibid.* 5-6). This advice was by no means given so that they would establish themselves in Babylon permanently and thus abandon hope of ever returning to their homeland. On the contrary, the purpose was to encourage the exiles to avoid assimilation with the people of the host country and to retain their separate identity through building their own communities and institutions. So doing, they would be ready to return to their homeland at the appointed time. *For thus said the Lord, "After seventy years will have passed for Babylon I will remember you, and I will fulfil for you My good word to bring you back to this place"* (*ibid.* 10).

Four years later, Jeremiah had occasion to dispatch to the exiles in Babylon a further message, reinforcing the earlier one. He provided them with a detailed description of the disaster which was bound to befall Babylon, an event which would signal the time for the return to Zion. *In those days and in that time, says the Lord, the children of Israel together with the children of Judah ... will seek the Lord their God. They shall inquire concerning Zion. Their Redeemer is mighty, the Lord of Hosts is His name* (*ibid.* 50:4-5, 34). Again Jeremiah assures the people that *neither Israel nor Judah is widowed of its God*; and he bids them: *Remember the Lord from afar, and let Jerusalem enter into your mind* (*ibid.* 51:5, 50).

PROMISE OF THE RETURN OF THE EXPATRIATES

Among the Jews exiled to Babylon with Jehoiachin was an inspired visionary by the name of Ezekiel, son of Buzi the priest. He dwelt in the city of Tel Aviv in Babylon, a place where most of the Jewish exiles settled. He was moved to prophesy to his fellow expatriates not long after the foregoing message of Jeremiah was delivered; and he echoed his senior colleague in the most forceful

and vivid terms imaginable. Like Jeremiah, before the *hurban* he thundered against Israel's iniquities which were bound to bring about the destruction of the Holy City; but after the *hurban* he not only prophesied the return of the dispersed of Israel to their Homeland, he also foretold the restoration of the House of David, whose scion would once again rule over the reunited House of Israel. The restoration would not only be a material one, a resettling of cities and rebuilding of ruins, a replanting of waste places and an abundant yielding of fruit; it would bring with it a spiritual renaissance as well. *I will sprinkle pure water upon you, and you will be purified; I will purify you from all your uncleannesses and from your abominations. I will give you a new heart and a new spirit in your midst; I will remove the heart of stone from your body and give you a heart of flesh* (Ezek. 36:25-26).

It was not a simple matter for the prophet to instil such hope in the exiled people. They were saying, *Our bones are dried up and our hope is lost; we are cut off* (37:11). It was not only "political realism" which led to this feeling of despair — who would dare predict the downfall of Nebuchadnezer's mighty empire! The exiles were plagued by a feeling of guilt and rejection, saying, *Our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we waste away in them; how then can we live* (33:10). They even felt condemned because of the sins of their fathers, and repeated the parable already voiced in the land of Israel: *The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are set on edge*. As did Jeremiah before him (Jer. 31:28), Ezekiel reaffirmed the basic principle of God's justice and mercy; namely, *each man dies only for his own sin and not for the sin of his father; but if the wicked man turns from his evil ways, he will live* (18:20-21).

Furthermore, the prophet told them that it was not for their sake that God would redeem them, but for the sake of His holy name which they had profaned and which now, as a result of the miracle of Israel's redemption, would be sanctified among all the nations. The sanctification of God's name would be further enhanced after the ingathering of the exiles, when a mighty nation — indeed, a concert of nations — would invade the land of Israel in order to deny to the ingathered the fruits of the redemption; namely, peace, security and prosperity. These enemies of Israel will suffer total defeat in the Holy Land: *And thus I will become exalted and hallowed — והתגדלתי והתקדשתי — and I will become known in the eyes of many nations, and they shall know that I am the Lord* (38:23). (These words have become the classic expression of the hope for the final and ultimate redemption of Israel, intoned in Israel's most hallowed prayer, the *Kaddish*.)

THE PROMISED RESTORATION OF ZION

To make the promised restoration of Zion more tangible in the eyes of the

exiles, Ezekiel envisioned for them a detailed description of the future Temple and the sacrificial service that would be conducted therein (chaps. 40–46). He provides a central place in the Temple service for the *Nasi*, no doubt referring to the future High Priest. This is a reflection of the situation which prevailed in Judea after the days of Ezra, when the *Kohen Gadol* was the political as well as the religious leader of the Jewish people. In addition, Ezekiel assigns to the priests who will minister in the future Temple the task of teaching the people *the difference between the holy and the profane ... And in a controversy they shall act as judge; according to My judgements shall they judge* (44:23–24). Thus he followed closely the divine instruction given to Aaron concerning the functions of the priesthood (Lev. 10:12).

Continuing to follow the example of Moses, who transmitted to the children of Israel God's instructions concerning the boundaries of the Promised Land (Num. chap. 34), Ezekiel transmits to the exiles the word of the Lord: *This shall be the border whereby you shall divide the land for inheritance according to the twelve tribes of Israel* (47:13). And he adds a description of the Holy City, concluding, *And the name of the city from that day shall be "The Lord is there"* (48:35).

Even though Ezekiel had been warned that the exiles, being brazen and defiant, would probably not listen to him (2:17), his words — added to the messages received from Jeremiah — made a profound impression upon the exiled community. The elders recognized him as the bearer of God's word, going to his home in order *to inquire of the Lord* (20:1). On two other occasions we find them sitting before him in anticipation of a divinely inspired message (8:1, 14:1). Ezekiel assured them that God is with them in their exile, that even though they are scattered among the nations, God has been for them even there a *Mikdash me'at*, — מקדש מעט — a little sanctuary. And they are the ones — and not those who were left in Jerusalem — who will be redeemed from exile and return to the land of their fathers (11:14–16).

GOD IS WITH HIS PEOPLE IN EXILE

This assurance that God is with them in their exile even after the destruction of His Sanctuary was crucial for the religious loyalty of the exiled community. Among ancient peoples, exile to a foreign land implied their adoption of the god of the country to which they had been exiled. Thus the peoples exiled by the king of Assyria from various eastern provinces and settled by him in Samaria were concerned because *they knew not the law of the God of the land*; namely, the God of Israel. Whereupon, the king of Assyria sent back to Samaria one of the Israeli priests who had been exiled in order to teach the new settlers *how to fear the Lord* (II Kings 17:24–41). It was otherwise with the Judean

exiles. The vigorous preachments of Jeremiah and Ezekiel had finally made them realize that it was precisely because they had adopted the native Canaanite gods and modes of worship that they had suffered *hurban* and *golah*; and it would be folly for them now to worship the god of Babel.

Furthermore, the exiles adjusted their mode of worship to their new situation; namely, the absence of the central Sanctuary in Jerusalem, and the consequent inability to offer sacrifice therein. The prophet Hosea had already said: *Take with you words and return unto the Lord ... So will we render in place of bullocks the offering of our lips* (14:3). Undoubtedly, the denunciation of the prophets against those who brought sacrifices while committing injustice denigrated their value as a means of appeasing the Lord. Isaiah proclaimed: *Thus said the Lord, "The heaven is My throne and the earth is My footstool; so of what significance is the house that you build for Me, and where is the place of My dwelling?"* (66:1). And Jeremiah, after inveighing against them who *steal, murder, commit adultery, swear falsely ... then come before Me in this house ... and say, "We are delivered"* (Jer. 7:9-10), asserts, *For I have not spoken unto your fathers, nor have I commanded them on the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, concerning burnt-offerings and sacrifices* (ibid. 7:22). And though the yearning for the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem was an integral part of Israel's prayers during the long period of its ruin, prayer as such became the essential mode of the worship of the God of Israel.

THE WEARY ARE SUSTAINED

Many Biblical scholars postulate the existence of a third prophet in this period of the Babylonian exile (6th cent. B.C.E.). We know nothing of his whereabouts, even his name escapes us; but since prophecies are attached to the Book of Isaiah (chaps. 40-66), he is called "Deutero (Second) Isaiah." His messages, brilliant in their oratory, constituted for the depressed exiles an additional source of encouragement and hope. Again and again he calls upon the people to arouse themselves from their despair in anticipation of the coming of their Redeemer: *The Holy One of Israel, the Lord of Hosts, for My salvation is near to come* (56:1). He exhorts them to rejoice, *for the day of vengeance is in My heart, and the year of My redemption is coming* (63:4). (Beginning with the consoling call, *Be comforted, be comforted, My people* (40:1). his words of solace are so compelling, that seven chapters of them have been instituted as the prophetic readings in the synagogue (the *haftarot*) for the seven Sabbaths following the Ninth of Ab, the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple. And no doubt it is to them that we refer repeatedly in our daily prayers as we recite the *Kaddish* and say, "May the name of the Holy One, blessed be He,

be praised above all *nehemata*, all words of comfort.”) Verily could Isaiah assert, *the Lord God has given me an educated tongue, to know how to sustain with words the weary one* (50:4).

This Isaiah — if indeed there was a second one — added a new dimension to Israel’s experience of *hirban* and *golah*. Whereas the other prophets attributed these disasters solely to divine retribution for Israel’s iniquities, Isaiah introduced the concept of “the suffering servant.” Using himself as a symbol of his suffering people, he exclaims: *I gave my back to the smiters and my cheeks to pluckers of hair; I hid not my face from shame and spittle. God will help me, therefore I have not been ashamed* (Is. 50:6–7). Israel’s faith in their Redeemer, despite their being *despised and forsaken of men, a man of pains and knowing sickness*, will finally make their persecutors realize that *he* (Israel) *was wounded because of our* (the Gentiles) *transgressions; he was oppressed because of our iniquities. The Lord afflicted him with the sin of all of us*. And as compensation for enduring this vicarious suffering, *Israel will live to see posterity, enjoy long life, and God’s purpose will prosper through him* (chap. 53).

DISTINCTIVE CHARACTER MAINTAINED

Thus did the prophets of Israel lay the foundation for two and a half millenia of subsequent Jewish history, a history unique and unparalleled in the annals of any other nation or people. Dispersed to the four corners of the earth and without a state of their own, they clung tenaciously and stubbornly to two fundamental imperatives: Maintain your separate and distinctive character by preserving through the generations your peculiar faith and cultural heritage; and maintain through the generations your faith in God’s promise of Redemption, namely, the Return to your ancestral land Zion.

The first experience of Exile became the model for all subsequent exiles. In the first exile it could be truthfully — though maliciously — said of them, *and their laws are different from all other people* (Esther 3:8). Four young Jewish men, though members of the royal household of Nebuchadnezer, king of Babylon, refused to violate the dietary laws of the Torah. Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah spurned the king’s food and drink, and subsisted on a vegetarian diet (Daniel chap. 1). Later, when the decree went forth in Babylon that all peoples fall down and worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezer had erected, these four stalwart Jews were adamant in their refusal to comply, even at the pain of death (chap. 3). It was this example of *kiddush hashem*, the sanctification of God’s name by readiness to give up one’s very life rather than abandon faith in Him, that inspired the countless Jewish martyrs whose heroic sacrifices make glorious chapters in our millennial history. And it was this same Daniel who scrupulously observed the newly

insituted practice of the exiles to pray to God three times a day with the face turned towards the Holy City of Jerusalem (6:11).

INFLUENCES OF THE EXILE

It should not be assumed that the first exiles — or for that matter, any other subsequent exiles — were immune to the influences of their non-Jewish environment. On the contrary, as far as extrinsic practices are concerned, Diaspora Jews assimilated the ways of their neighbors and adopted them in their daily life. Though in the beginning it was the local official who gave Babylonian names to the Jewish youths who bore Hebrew names (*ibid.* 1:7), in the course of time the Jews themselves adopted non-Jewish names, either translating into the local tongue their Hebrew names, or even assuming Gentile names that had no relationship to their Hebrew origin. Quite readily, Jews learned to speak the language of the land in which they had settled, employing it as well in their marriage and business contracts. Nay more, when the Babylonian exiles returned to Judea upon the decree of Cyrus, they brought back with them the Babylonian names of the months of the year, replacing the ancient Biblical names. Later, Ezra the Scribe, anxious to spread the knowledge of the Torah amongst the people at large, found it necessary to substitute in the sacred scroll of the Torah the popularly known square characters of the Assyrian script in place of the ancient Canaanite script. All these changes were accepted, as long as they did not affect the basic principles and practices of Judaism.

Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel were by no means spokesmen of a new religion, or bearers of a revolutionary message. Nor did they coin the phrase, let alone the idea of “the ingathering of the dispersed of Israel” — *מקבץ נדחי ישראל* (Is. 56:8). What they did was to affirm that the era predicted by the Torah had now arrived. *When all these things befall you — the blessing and the curse that I have set before you — and you take them to heart amidst the various nations to which the Lord your God has banished you, you will return to the Lord your God and hearken to His voice, you and your children. Then the Lord your God will return your captivity and gather you from all the nations to which He has scattered you. Even if your dispersed is at the end of heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you. And He will bring you to the land which your fathers occupied, and you shall occupy it* (Deut. 30:1–5).

The remarkable thing was that now, for the first time in Jewish history, the words of the prophets penetrated the hearts and minds of the people, and made possible, after the seeming deathblow of the *hurban*, the renaissance of Jewish life. The people returned to the Lord their God, abandoning the idolatry which had been so widespread during the days of the First Temple. Israel had learned its lesson, and the time was now ripe for the Return to Zion. □ □

BIBLICAL SOURCES RELATING TO PRAYER

BY HYMAN ROUTTENBERG

Part III

This is the third part of Dr. Routtenberg's series of articles on Rabbinic interpretations of Biblical verses relating to prayer.

There was a difference of opinion among the sages of the Talmud in regard to the relative importance of prayer and study. The Talmud relates that when Raba saw R. Hamnuna prolonging his prayers, he said, "They forsake eternal life and occupy themselves with temporal life" (i.e., they spend time in prayer which might be more usefully employed in study). R. Humnuna, however, held that the times for prayer and study of the Torah are distinct from each other.

Shabbat 10a

In the same vein the Talmud relates that R. Jeremiah was sitting before R. Zera engaged in study, and as it was growing late for the service, R. Jeremiah hastened to adjourn. Whereupon R. Zera applied to him the verse, "He that turneth away from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination" (Proverbs 28:9).

Shabbat 10a

רבא חזייה לרב המנונא דקא
מאריך בצלותיה. אמר: מניחין
חיי עולם ועוסקים בחיי שעה;
והוא סבר זמן תפלה לחוד וזמן
תורה לחוד.
שבת י'.

ר' ירמיה הוה יתיב קמיה דר'
זירא והוה עסקי בשמעתא, נגה
לצלויי והוה קא מסרהב ר'
ירמיה, קרי עליה ר' זירא
"מסיר אזנו משמוע תורה גם
תפלתו תועבה" (משלי כ"ח,
ט).

שבת י'.

Dr. Routtenberg, ordained rabbi from Yeshiva University and Ph. D. degree from Boston University, presently resides in Israel. He is the author of *Amos of Tekoa* in which he explored the Rabbinic sources interpreting the message of the prophet.

R. Hanin said in the name or R. Hanina: If one prays long, his prayer does not pass unheeded. The Talmud questions this statement and asks: But is that so? Has not R. Hiyya b. Abba said in the name of R. Johanan: If one prays long and looks for the fulfillment of his prayer, in the end he will have vexation of heart, as it says, "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick" (Proverbs 13:12)? The Talmud then explains that there is really no contradiction. One statement speaks of a man who prays long and looks for the fulfillment of his prayer, the other statement speaks of a man who prays long without looking for the fulfillment of his prayer. R. Hama son of R. Hanina said: If a man sees that he prays and is not answered, he should pray again, as it says, "Wait for the Lord, be strong and let thy heart take courage; Yea, wait thou for the Lord" (Psalm 27:14).

Berakhot 32b

R. Simon ben Halafta said in the name or R. Meir: "And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the Lord" (I Samuel 1:12); we learn from this verse that whoever continues to pray will be answered. R. Levi said: "Yea, when ye make many prayers" (Isaiah 1:15), from which verse we learn that whoever enlarges upon his prayers will be answered.

Yerushalmi Berakhot 4:1

R. Hana said in the name of R. Simeon the Pious: He who prays should regard himself (i.e., behave) as if the Shechinah were before him, as it is written, "I have set God always before me" (Psalms 16:8).

Sanhedrin 22a

אמר ר' חנין א"ר חנינא: כל המאריך בתפלתו אין תפלתו חוזרת ריקם... איני והאמר ר' חייא כל המאריך בתפלתו ומעיין בה סוף בא לידי כאב לב שנאמר "תוחלת ממושכה מחלה לב" (משלי י"ג, יב)... לא קשיא, הא דמאריך ולא מעיין בה... אמר ר' חמא ב"ר חנינא: אם ראה אדם שהתפלל ולא נענה, יחזור ויתפלל שנאמר "קוה אל ה' חזק ויאמץ לבך וקוה אל ה'" (תהלים כ"ז, יד).

ברכות ל"ב:

אמר רבי שמעון בר חלפתא אמר רבי מאיר "והיה כי הרבתה להתפלל לפני ה' (שמואל א' א', יב)" מכאן שכל המרבה בתפלה נענה. לוי אמר: "גם כי תרבו תפלה אינני שומע" (ישעיה א', טו): מכאן שכל המרבה בתפלה, נענה.

ירושלמי ברכות ד' א.

אמר ר' חנה אמר ר' שמעון חסידא: המתפלל צריך שיראה את עצמו כאילו שכינה כנגדו שנאמר "שויית ה' לנגדי תמיד" (תהלים ס"ז, ח). סנהדרין כ"ב.

Our Rabbis taught: When a man prays, he should direct his heart to heaven. Abba Saul says: A reminder of this is the text, "Thou wilt direct their heart, Thou wilt cause Thine ear to attend," (i.e., if the heart is directed to heaven, then God will attend) (Psalm 10:17).

Berakhot 31a

When one prays, he should concentrate on his prayers and not permit any distraction. R. Elazar Hisma said concerning him who, whilst reading the Shema, blinks with his eyes, gesticulates with his lips or points with his fingers, Scripture has said, "Thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob" (Isaiah 43:22).

Yoma 19b

To avoid distractions, our sages also advise that we turn our face to the wall when we pray. Rab Judah said in the name of Rab: How do you know that, when one prays, there should be nothing interposing between him and the wall? Because it says: "Then Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed (Isaiah 38:2).

Berakhot 5b

R. Jose son of R. Hanina said in the name of R. Eliezer b. Jacob: A man should not stand on a high place when he prays, but he should pray in a low place, as it says, "Out of the depths have I called Thee, O Lord" (Psalm 130:1). In a similar passage the sages say that a man should not stand on a chair or a footstool, or on a high place to pray, since there is no loftiness before the Lord, as it is said, "Out of the depths have I called Thee, O Lord." However, if he is old or ill, he is permitted.

Berakhot 10b

ח"ר המתפלל צריך שיכוון את לבו לשמים. אבא שאול אומר: סימן לדבר "תכון לבם תקשיב אזנך" (תהלים י'). ברכות ל"א.

רבי אלעזר חסמא אומר: הקורא את שמע ומרמו בעיניו ומקרץ בשפתותיו ומראה באצבעו, עליו הכתוב אומר "ולא אותי קראת יעקב" (ישעיה מ"ג, כב'). יומא י"ט:

אמר רב יהודה אמר רב: מנין למתפלל שלא יהא דבר חוצץ בינו לבין הקיר שנאמר "ויסב חזקיהו פניו אל הקיר ויתפלל אל ה'" (ישעיה ל"ח). ברכות ה'.

אמר ר' יוסי ב"ר חנינא משום רבי אליעזר בן יעקב: אל יעמוד אדם במקום גבוה ויתפלל אלא במקום נמוך ויתפלל שנאמר "ממעמקים קראתיך ה'" (תהלים ק"ל, א). חנינא נמי הכי: לא יעמוד אדם לא על גבי כסא ולא על גבי שרפוף ולא במקום גבוה ויתפלל אלא במקום נמוך ויתפלל לפי שאין גבהות לפני המקום. ברכות י'.

R. Jose son of R. Hanina also said in the name of R. Eliezer b. Jacob: When one prays, he should place his feet in proper position (i.e., close together and level), as it says, "And their feet were straight" (Ezekiel 1:7).

Berakhot 10b

One is not permitted to eat and drink before he recites his prayers. It has been said in the name of R. Eliezer b. Jacob: If one eats and drinks and then says his prayers, of him the Scripture says, "And thou has cast Me behind thy back." Do not read "thy back" but "thy pride". Says the Holy One, blessed be He: After this one has exalted himself, he comes and accepts the kingdom of heaven (i.e., he reads the Shema).

Berakhot 10b

ואמר ר' יוסי בר' חנינא משום ראב"י: המתפלל צריך שיכוין את רגליו שנאמר "ורגליהם רגל ישרה (יחזקאל א', ז).

ברכות י"ז:

ואמר ר' יוסי ב"ר חנינא משום ראב"י: כל האוכל ושותה ואח"כ מתפלל, עליו הכתוב אומר "ואותי השלכת אחרי גיידך" (מלכים א' י"ד, ט), אל תקרא גיידך אלא גאווה; אמר הקב"ה לאחר שנתגאה זה, קבל עליו מלכות שמים.

ברכות י"ז:

FORMATION OF BERGEN COUNTY JEWISH BIBLE STUDY GROUP

On Shushan Purim a group of Jewish Bible enthusiasts came together at the Jewish Community Center in Teaneck, New Jersey, to hear Dr. Haim Gevaryahu, Chairman of the World Jewish Bible Society of Jerusalem. The Bible scholar chose as his topic, "The Boundaries of Israel According to the Book of Joshua." The talk was not limited to this subject but ranged over the contents of this first book of the former prophets, Joshua's relationship with Moses, and Ben Gurion's attitudes toward this Biblical book.

Rabbi Harold D. Halpern, of New Milford, N.J., acted as Chairman, and Dr. Max Rothschild, of River Edge, N.J., introduced the speaker. People from Teaneck, New Milford, River Edge and Oradell were in attendance.

The assembly decided to form a Jewish Bible study group for Bergen County. After some discussion, it was resolved that the group would meet once a month and that while it would read the Bible text in Hebrew, the language of discussion would be English. Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Fisch of Teaneck and Mrs. Barbara Epstein of New Milford volunteered to act as coordinators for future meetings.

OUR BIBLE QUIZ FOR YOUTH

JOSHUA JUDGES SAMUEL

The books of the Tenakh that follow right after the Torah, often called "Former Prophets", are rich in narrative and adventure. Colorful characters, battle scenes, intrigue and heroism fill the pages of Joshua, Judges and Samuel upon which this quiz is based.

Much of our quiz on these books is based upon questions asked during past National Youth Bible Contests and qualifying exams. If you can answer half correctly, you've done well. You should become a contestant yourself if you knew 15 of the answers. Since the questions are difficult and the area covered extensive, use your Bible in looking for the answers. The answers are found on the following page.

QUESTIONS

1. The king's daughter was promised in marriage for killing the man who "defied Israel." Who was he and who killed him?
2. Who came down to earth and sat under an oak tree? Who ended up between heaven and earth under an oak tree?
3. Can you recall other instances where trees are prominently mentioned in these books?
4. Who dwelt in the land of Tob and in which battle did the people of Tob support the Ammonites?
5. How did the Phillistines weaken the ability of the Israelites to make war?
6. Name two military leaders who organized their armies into three units.
7. Where is it indicated that sheep-shearing time was a festival in Israel?
8. Which three men killed lions, one of them in the snow?
9. Passages in Joshua and Judges lead us to believe that there were two cities named Bethlehem. Can you find them?
10. Who smote his enemies "hip and thigh?"
11. Who was given the sage advice not to judge a man by his outer appearance?
12. Who ascended a Jerusalem hill with dancing and joy and later ascended the Mount of Olives barefoot and weeping?
13. In Judges, stinging insects dwell in a most unusual place, and in Joshua other stingers chase people from their land. Can you identify these friends of Israel?
14. In I Samuel, in two separate stories, emotional changes are described by physical transformations in a woman and man. Who are they and what happened to them?

15. Can you identify at least two of these men described in the Books of Samuel?
 - a) No man in Israel as handsome (or stalwart) as he.
 - b) Ruddy, with beautiful eyes and handsome.
 - c) Chief of Saul's herdsman.
 - d) Swift as a wild gazelle.
 - e) He smote Philistines until his arm tired and his hand cleaved to his sword.
16. A prophet and a king girded themselves with linen ephods (worn for participation in sacred activities). Who were they?
17. In Samuel, water libations before God are described in two separate instances. Can you recall one of them?
18. Two men hid on a roof and two others hid in a well. What were the situations?
19. What basis is there for calling a kibbutz in Northern Israel Dan and an area near Tel Aviv by the same name?
20. The Jews are often referred to as chosen by God. Where does it say that Israel chose God?
21. When did a "game" lead to death?
22. Women have caused men to desert or to fight. Who did the former because he was angered about a woman, and who did the latter for the woman he desired?
23. Even in the Book of Samuel, sons sometimes bring shame upon respected fathers. Can you name the fathers who had no "nahat" from their pairs of sons?

ANSWERS

1. Goliath, the Philistine champion. David was the hero of Israel who did him in with a stone sling (I Sam. 17).
2. The angel who visited Gideon (Jud. 6:11); Absalom who was caught by his hair in the tree branches (II Sam. 18:9).
3. Abimelech is anointed king at an oak (Jud. 9:6). He is compared to a bramble in the tree allegory of Jotham (Jud. 9). A diviner's oak is mentioned in the same chapter, v. 37. Saul and his sons were buried under a tamarisk (I Sam. 31:13). Deborah sat under a palm (Jud. 4:5).
4. Jephtah (Jud. 11:3). In Joab's battle against Ammon (II Sam. 10:8).
5. They didn't permit them any smiths who could make arms (I Sam. 13:19).
6. Gideon (Jud. 7:16), Abimelech (Jud. 9:43) and David (II Sam. 18:2).
7. David's encounter with Nabal (I Sam. 25:7). Absalom invites the princes to the sheep-shearing at Baal Hazor (II Sam. 13:23).
8. Samson (Jud. 14:5), David (I Sam. 17:35) and Benaiah ben Jehoiada (II Sam. 23:20).
9. In Joshua 19:15, Bethlehem is located in the north. In Judges 19:2 it is in Judea, Southern Israel.

10. Samson (Jud. 15:8).
11. Samuel was told by God (concerning Eliab, brother of David): "Do not look at his appearance or at his tall stature... man looks at the outer appearance but the Lord looks at the heart (I Sam. 16:7)".
12. King David, when he brought the Ark up to Jerusalem (II Sam. 6:12-15). Later, fleeing Absalom's rebellion, his mood was very much the opposite (II Sam. 15:30).
13. The honey bees dwelt in the carcass of a lion in the Samson episode (Jud. 14:14). Hornets drove out the two kings of the Amomnites (Josh. 24:12).
14. The woman was Hannah of whom it is said that "her face was no longer sad" (I Sam. 1:18). The heart of Nabal "died within him and he became as a stone" (I Sam. 25:37).
15. a. Saul (I Sam. 9:2)
b. David (I Sam. 16:12)
c. Doeg the Edomite (I Sam. 21:8)
d. Asahel (II Sam. 2:18)
e. Eliezer ben Dodo, David's lieutenant (II Sam. 23:10)
16. Samuel wears the linen ephod as a trainee under Eli (I Sam. 2:18). David wears one when he brings the Ark up to Jerusalem (II Sam. 6:14). See also I Samuel 22:18 where the priests of Nob are thus attired.
17. a) The Israelites gathered at Mizpah under Samuel's direction and drewpoured water before God and fasted (I Sam. 7:6).
b) Three heroes brought David water from Bethlehem while it was occupied by the Philistines. He did not drink it but "poured it out before the Lord." (II Sam. 23:16).
18. The two spies who came to Jericho were hidden on the roof by Rahab (Josh. 2). Jonathan and Ahimaaz hid from Absalom in a well (II Sam. 17:17 ff.).
19. See Judges 18:29 for northern Dan. Originally the tribe of Dan was given land near the southern coast of Israel (Josh. 19:40 f.).
20. Joshua said to Israel: "You are witnesses that you have chosen the Lord to serve him." (Josh. 24:22). An old ditty says:
"How odd of God, to choose the Jews.
It's not so odd, the Jews chose God."
21. In II Samuel 2:16, the battle between Abner and Joab at Gibeon (today's El Jib, north of Jerusalem).
22. Abner left Ishboshet over a quarrel concerning Rizpah (II Sam. 3:7). David fought the Philistines in order to marry Merab, daughter of Saul (I Sam. 18:17).
23. Eli (I Sam. 2:12 f.) and Samuel, whose sons accepted bribes (I Sam. 8:2).

Prepared by Haim Halpern

THE FAMILY CORNER

THE BOOK OF BERESHIT — GENESIS

BY PHILIP L. LIPIS AND LOUIS KATZOFF

In the past two years we presented questions and answers on the Sidra of the Week that were suited for very young children and for elementary school children respectively. With this issue we start the final year of the three-year cycle with questions and comments for youth and adults, aimed primarily to stimulate further thought and enlarge information.

BERESHIT

October 4, 1975

The Torah (J.P.S. Edition) pp. 3-12

Hertz Pentateuch pp. 2-20

Question: Doesn't the story of a seven day creation clash with the teachings of evolution?

Answer: Yes. The Bible is interested in teaching that the world was created by God. It is not interested in teaching us *how* He created it. See the essay on "The Creation Chapter" in Hertz's Pentateuch, pages 193-195, for a fuller discussion of this.

Question: What are the great truths underlying the creation story?

Answer: There are four in number:

- (a) One supreme, invisible, eternal, just and merciful God created the universe.
- (b) Man, who is cousin to the ape, is distinguished from the ape by having a reasoning mind and moral conscience that make him only little lower than the angels, the goal and crown of creation.
- (c) Judaism is a religion of optimism and says that the world that God created is basically good, come what may in life.
- (d) The Sabbath, observed one day out of seven, makes man's work on the other six days meaningful and sacred, and lifts a man's life out of the ordinary and petty and places it in a dimension of holiness. (See the same Hertz essay referred to above.)

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Question: What is the religious meaning in man's sin by eating from the forbidden fruit?

Answer: Man is born with the power of free moral choice. He may choose to disobey God, resist God, rebel against Him and God will not stop him because he is free. But when man disobeys God's will, he causes himself to be driven from the Garden of Eden into the tortured world of misery.

Question: What is the religious meaning of making woman out of the side of man?

Answer: She was to be neither his superior nor his inferior but his equal. She was to be ever by his side in loyalty as well as in love. He, in turn, was to be her ever loving protector and shield.

Question: What is the religious lesson in the Cain and Abel story?

Answer: It is twofold — One is that a gift-offering for a worthy cause should be generous and ungrudging. The second is that every man is his brother's keeper and must show social responsibility and concern for the well-being of his fellowman.

NOAH

October 11, 1975

The Torah (J.P.S. Edition) pp. 12-20

Hertz Pentateuch pp. 36-40

Question: After the Flood, mankind was given *seven* commandments to obey. Later on, Jews were given 613 commandments. What inferences can you derive from this difference in the following areas of thought:

- a. Does the Bible grant *all* people salvation in the world-to-come?
- b. Why did God make it more difficult for Jews to gain the world-to-come?
- c. Was God concerned about cultic practices of pagans, or only about their moral behavior?
- d. Conversely, was God concerned about the ritual practices of Jews as well as their moral behavior?
- e. What is the difference between "Natural Religion" and Judaism?

Answer: See Hertz's comment on ch. 9:1. For further reading on this subject, refer to the index and text of "Religion of Israel" by Yehezkel Kaufmann.

Question: In the verse (ch. 9:27), "may God enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem." Japheth refers to the Jews. Could you relate this to and can you accept the statement by Max Dimont in his preface on "Jews, God and History", as follows:

The real history of the Jews has not yet been written. It took Europe sixteen hundred years after the decline of Greece to realize that her literature, science, and architecture had their roots in Grecian civilization. It may take another few hundred years to establish that the spiritual, moral, ethical, and ideological roots of Western civilization are embedded in Judaism. To put it differently — the furniture in the Western world is Grecian, but the house in which Western man dwells is Jewish. This is a viewpoint which is beginning to appear more and more in the writings of both churchmen and secular scholars.

Question: The prohibition of the barbaric practice of “cutting a limb from a live animal”, common among primitive races, is the basis of most of the rules of the Jewish slaughter of animals (Shechitah) and of the preparation (koshering) of meats, which have been observed by Jews from time immemorial. What spiritual implications can you infer for modern man?

Answer: See Hertz comment on ch. 9:4–6. For further reading, refer to “The Jewish Dietary Laws” by Samuel H. Dresner.

LEKH-LEKHA

October 18, 1975

The Torah (J.P.S. Edition) pp. 20–28

Hertz Pentateuch pp. 45–60

Question: How is the Bible distinguished from the classics of Greek and Roman thought?

Answer: One way is that the Greek and Roman teachers began with abstract principles and through the processes of speculation and deductive reasoning, attempted to reach logical conclusions.

The Bible, contrariwise, tells stories, incidents and experiences in the life of its heroes and indicates in this way how the lessons of life are to be drawn.

Question: How does Abraham demonstrate himself to be a man of faith? Did he know where he was going? Were the promises given him fulfilled in his lifetime? Did his faith in God bring him ease of body and mind and freedom from affliction and disappointment?

Question: We say Abraham was a man of faith. Was he a man of doubt? Can a man be a *true* believer without being a doubter? Is doubt the enemy of faith or its twin?

Answer: Isn't the fact that he left his native land and father's house a sign that he questioned the values of the civilization he forsook, and doubted the wisdom of the idolatrous ways of his father?

The Torah (J.P.S. Edition) pp. 28-37

Hertz Pentateuch pp. 63-76

Question: The intercession of Abraham on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah is one of the noblest expressions in all of literature. How would you explain that Jewish tradition allows man to "argue" even with God in behalf of justice. Can you trace this tendency in Jewish history?

Comment: The famous Yiddish song, "A Din Torah mit Gott", of the Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev might be a good starting point.

Question: Hertz interprets the phrase in ch. 18:19, "For I have known Him" to mean that God regarded and chose Abraham to be His elect. It reminds us of the phrase in Amos 3:2, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth" referring to the Israelites as a chosen people. What, in your opinion, does chosenness connote? Chosenness for what?

Comment: What do you think of the following interpretation of Hertz on the verse in Amos (p. 153):

Therefore: The most famous "therefore" in history. Israel is the chosen of God. Therefore, God demands higher, not lower, standards of goodness from Israel, and will punish lapses more severely. The higher the privilege, the graver the responsibility. The greater the opportunity, the more inexcusable the failure to use it.

Question: How would you compare the avoidance of child sacrifice in the Akedah story (ch. 21) with the description of the pagan practice of Moloch worship as portrayed in Michener's "The Source" in the chapter "Of Death and Life".

Answer: See the Hertz note on the Akedah on page 201.

Question: The Akedah is the Scriptural reading for the second day of Rosh Hashana. What is its significance?

Comment: See the interpretation of Arzt in *Justice and Mercy*, p. 140: It was in rabbinic times, when child sacrifice was no longer practiced even among the pagan neighbors of Israel, that the theme of the Akedah proved to be particularly significant. Out of a sense of utter humility before God, a contrast was drawn between the self-sacrificing devotion of Abraham and Isaac, and the inconstancy of the faith and practice of the average person. It was from this impulse that the doctrine of Zkhut

Avot (Merit of the Fathers) was developed to encourage the people in the expectation that their prayers would be heard in spite of their deficiency. The doctrine avowed that while the descendants of Abraham and Isaac may have fallen short of what God demands of them, they can invoke His mercy and secure His forgiveness because of the "merit" established for them by Abraham and Isaac in having met the test of the Akedah. Indeed, the Akedah is so dominant a theme in the liturgy of Rosh Hashanah that Rabbi Abbahu makes the observation that when, on Rosh Hashanah, we blow the ram's horn, reminiscent of the ram that Abraham used as a substitute for Isaac (Gen. 22:13), God accounts it as if each worshipper had actually bound himself on the altar as a willing martyr to God.

HAYYE SARA

November 1, 1975

The Torah (J.P.S. Edition) pp. 37-43

Hertz Pentateuch pp. 80-89

Question: What do the concepts of Meth Mitzvah — מת מצוה — and Kever Israel — קבר ישראל — mean?

Answer: See footnote 4, p. 80 in Hertz and discuss cremation and why it is frowned upon in Judaism. See p. 84 (Hertz) on ch. 21:23 and footnote.

Problem: Eliezer is the first matchmaker in human history. The role of the professional matchmaker has largely disappeared. Has society gained or lost by it? Is there matchmaking still going on even without the benefit of a professional matchmaker? Give examples of cases you know. Have they worked out well? Poorly?

Problem: It has been said, "Matches are made in heaven." Is this poetry or is it true to life?

Question: When Isaac married Rebekah, we are told, "he was comforted for his mother." What can a wife do for her husband to soften his grief on the loss of his mother?

Answer: See the suggestive footnote 67 at bottom of page 87 (Hertz).

TOLEDOT

November 8, 1975

The Torah (J.P.S. Edition) pp. 43-49

Hertz Pentateuch pp. 93-101

Question: Can we infer from the verse, ch. 25:27 that hunting was not looked upon with favor by Jewish tradition?

Comment: Killing an animal for the sake of food is regarded by Jewish tradition as a concession to human physical needs and cravings. However, to kill animals for the “fun of it” is abhorrent to the Jewish spirit. It goes against the ideals of mercy and kindness due to all God’s creatures. This has become a *cultural trait* of the Jew to shun violence, for the sport of shooting animals has a tendency to make callous the person’s conscience and may be translated into brutality toward men. In recent times a re-evaluation of this cultural trait has taken place, specifically in the realm of self-defense. Heroism in fighting for independence or in self-defense is a worthy trait, but constant vigilance must be exercised lest it deteriorates to sheer brutality even if it is manifested only in the sport of hunting.

Question: Can we perceive a Jewish cultural trait in the same verse (ch. 25:27), “and Jacob was a quiet man dwelling in tents”?

Answer: The Midrash explains “tents” to mean “schools of religious study”. This interpretation has been translated as a profound interest in study, fashioned by the way of life of the Jew. This 3500 year tradition, reinforced by constant exhortations through Jewish history for acquisition of knowledge, may be the underlying reason for the large proportion of Jewish students at universities. Jewish tradition takes the verse “the voice is the voice of Jacob” (ch. 27:22) to reiterate the importance of study, the “voice” symbolizing the pursuit of learning, in contrast to “the hands of Essau” which represents the aspect of physical prowess.

Comment: In verse ch. 26:5, God holds forth a bright future for Isaac because Abraham hearkened to His voice and kept His *commandments*, His *laws*, and His *teachings*. These italicized words represent, according to the commentaries, the three types of Jewish law:

- a. מצוות are the precepts that are known by man’s natural moral sense, such as crimes of robbery, bloodshed, etc.
- b. חקתי are the laws ordained by God which we are obliged to observe although reason cannot find an explanation, such as the Kosher laws.
- c. חורתי refers to the “Oral Law”, contained in the Talmud, which is as sacred as the “Written Law” pronounced at Mount Sinai. The meaning of these interpretations is indicative of the Jews’ obedience to God’s commandments, which whether understood by reason or not, are binding and are observed by the faithful Jew as part of his “way of life.”

The Torah (J.P.S. Edition) pp. 49-58

Hertz Pentateuch pp. 106-107

Problem: The fear of a marriage outside the faith as evidenced by Rebecca is a fear that Jews have had throughout their history and is growing in our generation. Why?

Suggested Thoughts: Jews, who are only five and a half million out of the nearly 200 million Americans, and only 13 million out of two and a half billion people in the world, would disappear in one generation if intermarriage were practiced freely. Sociologists tell us that most of the children of religious intermarriage are lost to the Jewish community. To paraphrase Winston Churchill, we must not be "the generation that presides over the liquidation of the Jewish people." Besides, marriage through which a couple gambles for happiness and fulfillment, becomes an increased risk against success because of difference in religious traditions, however far removed each partner feels he or she may be from them.

Comment: Many meanings have been given to the dream that Jacob had at Beth El. Some of these are:

- (a) God is everywhere and is not limited to one place; He is beyond the world but not wholly removed from it. He is concerned with man but is not bound by the limits of the universe.
- (b) The evidence of God is all around us but man is not always *aware* of His presence.
- (c) The picture of the ladder, rooted in the ground with its top in heaven, is intended to suggest that a man build his life on a happy combination of realism with idealism, practicality with soaring vision.
- (d) The ladder suggests the Jewish concept of an ethical course that does not deny the body for the sake of the soul nor deify the body by denying the soul, but seeks to hallow the body, its needs, desires and appetites by directing them toward heavenly purpose.
- (e) What ideas does Jacob's vision generate in your mind?

Problem: Does Jacob's behavior towards Laban lend comfort to the doctrine that the end justifies the means? Why is this a dangerous concept? Is there ever a just war? If there is, are the means just? If not, how do you deal with those who would bring tears and torture, shame and dishonor, slavery and oppression upon their victims? Were the methods used by advocates of civil liberties always just? If not, how else might they have achieved their purpose? On November 29, 28 years ago, the United Nations declared that Palestine shall be partitioned and a Jewish State shall arise out of a part of the land.

The Arab world tried to prevent the state from being born by resorting to arms. Do you justify the means used by the Jews in Palestine and their friends all over the world in defending the United Nations resolution? If not, how else could Israel have come into being?

VAYYISHLAH

November 22, 1975

The Torah (J.P.S. Edition) pp. 58–67

Hertz Pentateuch pp. 122–134

Question: The letters in the word גרתי (ch. 32:5) correspond to the numerals denoting the 613 Mitzvoth (תרי"ג מצות). What is the Midrashic point made by the rabbis which has relevance to our own day.

Answer: See Hertz's comment on ch. 32:5.

Question: Reviewing the life of Jacob, how would you evaluate his growth toward spiritual maturity.

Answer: See Hertz's comment on ch. 32:10.

Question: How would you evaluate Isaac's role as a patriarch in contrast to his father Abraham and his son Jacob.

Answer: See Hertz's comment on ch. 35:29.

Question: The passage from ch. 32:23 to 32:33 represents a crisis in Jacob's spiritual history. It records his meeting with a Heavenly Being, the change of his name to Israel, the blessing of the Being that wrestled with him and the consequent transformation of his character. Many commentators regarded this contest as symbolic. How would you interpret this episode as the inner struggle that goes on within everyman?

Answer: See Hertz's comment introducing the passage, page 123.

Question: What is the derivation of the word Shalom?

Answer: On the verse ch. 33:18 ויבא יעקב שלם עיר שכם, the meaning of "Shalom" can be *peace* or *complete*. Rashi, basing the meaning on whole-ness, comments that Jacob arrived at his destination, *whole* in body since he was recovered from his wound in his encounter with the angel and *perfect* in his knowledge of Torah which he had not forgotten during his stay with Laban.

Comment: Rachel's Tomb looms large in the consciousness of the Jew throughout our history. It became the symbol of hope for the restoration of the people of Israel to their homeland. In the Haftarah of the second day of Rosh Hashanah, the prophet Jeremiah, who beheld the destruction of the First Temple, portrays mother Rachel, buried at Ramah, weeping disconsolately for her homeless children who are being driven into exile. God bids her to

dry her tears, for she would yet see her children return to their homeland by the very road through which they went into captivity. The pathos and the promise of the passage in Jeremiah 31:14-16 can be felt in the actual words of the prophet:

Thus saith the Lord: Hark, a voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children. She refuseth to be comforted for her children, because they are exiled. Thus saith the Lord: Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall come back from the land of the enemy. And there is hope for thy future, saith the Lord; and thy children shall return to their own border.

VAYESHEV

November 29, 1975

The Torah (J.P.S. Edition) pp. 67-74

Hertz Pentateuch pp. 141-151

Problem: If, as Hertz says (see footnote 2, page 141), the Joseph story seeks to tell us that through the interaction of human motives there runs the sense of an overruling Divine Providence realizing His purpose, how does that leave room for freedom of choice for human beings?

Problem: Joseph is rebuked for being a tale-bearer. When one observes others doing or saying evil things, what shall he do? If he is silent, he is encouraging wrongdoing. If he speaks out against it, he is a squealer. If silence is shameful and speaking out is rebuked, how shall a person act when confronted with evil deeds or evil speech?

Problem: Every human being is faced with strong temptations in life. Oscar Wilde used to say cynically, "I can resist everything but temptation." How shall temptation be confronted? Can we run away from it? Where can we get the strength to face it, overcome it, and become better human beings for having wrestled successfully with it? (See footnote 9, Hertz, p. 148).

Problem: It has been said that people dream about those things they find themselves unable to do in real life. Dreams give them the power real life denies them. Are there other kinds of dreams? What dreams have you had lately and what meaning do you find in them?

MIQQUEZ (Hanukka)

December 6, 1975

The Torah (J.P.S. Edition) pp. 74-83

Hertz Pentateuch pp. 155-166

Question: What is the value of dream interpretation (oneirocriticism) in the Bible.

Answer: The following is an explanation of the Biblical scholar, Yehezkel Kaufmann, in his book *The Religion of Israel*, page 93-94:

The general belief of antiquity in the prophetic value of dreams is shared by the Bible. That God reveals himself and His will to man through dream is one of the foundations of Israelite prophecy.

Two broad categories of dream-revelation are known to the ancient world: the symbolic and the prophetic. The first consists of a symbolic enigmatic vision whose meaning is veiled; in the second the deity reveals himself and speaks directly to man. The symbol requires interpretation, prophecy does not. The prophetic dream accords better with the spirit of Israelite inquiry of God, as we have come to know it, inasmuch as its message is explicit and direct. The enigmatic symbolic dream, on the other hand, involves, like the rest of pagan divination, a science of interpretation; dream-interpretation is part of pagan wisdom. And since not all dreams originate with the gods, the mantic value of the dream is not necessarily dependent upon them; basically it is magical.

In spite of the belief in the value of the symbolic dream, a *science* of dream interpretation failed to develop in Israel. The biblical period feels this science to be fundamentally un-Israelite. This is nowhere explicitly stated, but the Bible obliquely attests to this feeling in an unmistakable manner. We find no reference to oneirocritics (interpreters of dreams), or to a literature of dream-interpretation such as we find, say, in Babylonia. No Israelite seer or man of God interprets dreams. Even the superlatively wise Solomon, expert in judgment and accomplished in parables and riddles, is not said to have been an oneirocritic. Solomon's dream (I Kings 9) is characteristically Israelite; YHWH reveals himself and speaks with him. The dream related in the story of Gideon (Judg. 7:15ff.) is an interesting testimony to Israelite feeling. Gideon learns of his coming victory over Midian from a symbolic dream. But it is a Midianite who dreams the dream and another Midianite who interprets it. The Midianites and other eastern peoples — whose wisdom was proverbial — of course have a science of oneirocriticism, but not Israel.

We hear of two Hebrew oneirocritics, Joseph and Daniel. Both belong to the court of heathen kings; the former among Egyptian magicians, the latter among Chaldean astrologers. But, true to its nature, the Bible assimilates their oneirocriticism to prophecy or, at the very least, to the word of God. In the case of Joseph it is emphasized that not through his wisdom was he able to solve the puzzle of Pharaoh's dream, but God revealed its meaning to him (Gen. 40:8, 41:16, 38f.). Daniel is reckoned among the sages and astrologers of Babylon, but as a Hebrew he works through divine inspiration. God reveals to him in a vision the enigmatic dream of Nebuchadnezzar with its solution (Dan. 2:17ff.). Instructed by the spirit of God, he reads and interprets the puzzling handwriting on the wall (5:11-14).

Biblical religion preferred that form of dream and vision which suited best its aspiration to set God above all. It is YHWH who causes dreams, and it is He who provides an explanation of their meaning.

VAYYIGASH

December 13, 1975

The Torah (J.P.S. Edition) pp. 83-90

Hertz Pentateuch pp. 169-177

Question: Is it possible to say just when Joseph was in Egypt?

Answer: A common theory dates Joseph in the days of Hyksos ("Middle Kingdom"). A post biblical Jewish historian, Josephus, had already linked the entry of Jacob's clan to the time of the Hyksos, who built their capital at Avaris (in the "plain of Tanis" or Goshen) about 1720-1700 B.C.E. The biblical chronology maintains that the Hebrews stayed 430 (Ex. 12:40) or 400 (Gen. 15:13) years in Egypt. This would also fit their entry during the Hyksos period and their exit in the 13th century. The Hyksos included many Semites, and conditions were right for the sympathetic welcome of Jacob's clan and for Joseph's rise to power. Moreover, Hebrew names like Yakub and Hur appear in the Hyksos lists of nobles. Thus the political change and the beginning of the bondage mentioned in Exodus 11:8, "there rose up a new king over Egypt, who knew not Joseph," would refer to As-Mose (Amasis I), who drove out the Hyksos from Egypt (1570 B.C.E.), destroyed their capital, Avaris, and made Thebes his southern capital.

Such a theory may explain the mention of Hebrews being "an abomination unto the Egyptians" (43:32, 46:34). However, since the biblical account depicts a peaceful migration to Egypt, the Hebrew settlement could not have been a part of the Hyksos movement itself, which was a conquest. Moreover, there was still feudalism during the Hyksos period and the national economy was not based on royal ownership of the lands as in the days of Joseph.

That is why some scholars argue in favour of another theory identifying Joseph's Pharaoh with a period two centuries later than the invasion of the Hyksos, or the first half of the 14th century, namely the "New Kingdom", that of Ikhnaton (Amenhotep IV), one of the most remarkable men of ancient history. This sensitive idealist suppressed the worship of the god, Amon, and of all other gods associated with him, and declared that there was a universal god, Re of Heliopolis, symbolized by the sun disc. He changed the divinity's name to Aton. He was "sole god, like whom there is none other." He changed his own name from Amenophis (Amenhotep) to Ikhnaton, and moved his capital and called it Akhtaton. This is the Tel Amarna of today, where the clay tablets, or the records of the Egyptian foreign office were discovered. This capital is many days travel from Goshen where the Hebrews had settled.

It has been suggested that the record of Gen. 41:43 telling of Joseph's rise to power, seems to repeat Egyptian words which may instead mean "abrekhe-naton" or "the friend of Ikhnaton". This would lend weight to the theory dating Joseph to the time of that famous king.

In view of the complexity of the picture, it is not surprising that historians differ in assessing the evidence presented in the biblical account, and in comparing it with various Egyptian records of times when similar customs prevailed. None of the hints advanced by any theory gives certainty. A similar problem arises again in connection with the date of the Exodus, which it is generally agreed, took place under the 19th dynasty. (Adam to Daniel", edited by G. Cornfeld, assisted by Bible Scholars, Historians and Archeologists in Israel, page 111-115.)

Question: Is there any evidence outside the Bible that would reflect on the historicity of the Egyptian bondage and exodus.

Answer: There can really be little doubt that ancestors of Israel had been slaves in Egypt and had escaped in some marvelous way. Almost no one today would question it. Although there is no direct witness in Egyptian records to Israel's presence in Egypt, the Biblical tradition a priori demands belief; it is not the sort of tradition any people would invent. Here is no heroic epic of migration, but the recollection of shameful servitude from which only the power of God brought deliverance. A number of factors lend objective support. Egyptian names prevalent in early Israel, especially in the tribe of Levi, certainly argue for a connection with Egypt. Among these are those of Moses himself, Hophni, Phinehas, Merari, and possibly Aaron and others. Attempts to discount this evidence are extraordinarily unconvincing. ("A History of Israel" by John Bright, page 110.)

VAYHI

December 20, 1975

The Torah (J.P.S. Edition) pp. 90-96

Hertz Pentateuch pp. 180-191

Question: How would we view Jacob's career, as we read about his final days.

Answer: From the introduction to this Sidra by Hertz, page 180: In this concluding Sidra of Genesis, we see the sunset of Jacob's career. We behold this storm-tossed soul on his death-bed, blessing his children. He is not afraid to die: 'I will sleep with my fathers,' he says. He is at peace with God. 'I wait for Thy salvation O Lord,' are among the last words he utters. He knows that he can never travel beyond God's care. He is at peace with man. Esau, Dinah, Joseph — what a world of strife and suffering and anguish did each of these tragedies bring — and yet he dies blessing. Though starting as a 'plain man

dwelling in tents,' his is no cloistered virtue, and he certainly is no sinless being. But he possesses the rare art of extracting good from every buffeting of Destiny. He errs and he stumbles, but he ever rises again; and on the anvil of affliction his soul is forged.

Question: Quoted by Rashi, the famous commentator: Why is this Sidra closed? (If you will look into a Sefer Torah or the "Ktav" Tikun, you will find that this Sidra, beginning with the word Vayechi, follows on the same line with the final words of the previous Sidra Vayigash. This is most unusual, for all other Sidrot are begun on a new line or with an open space wide enough to contain nine letters.)

Answer: Quoted by Rashi from the Midrash:

- a. Because, comprising as it does an account of the death of Jacob, as soon as father Jacob departed from this life, the eyes and the hearts of Israel were closed (i.e. their hearts were troubled) as a result of the suffering in bondage which was imposed upon them by the Egyptians.
- b. Another reason: because Jacob wanted to reveal to his sons the nature of the end of days but the vision was suddenly concealed (closed) from him.

Question: Verse 20 in ch. 48, "God make thee as Ephraim and Manassah" — **יְשִׁמְךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּאֶפְרַיִם וּכְמָנָשָׁה** — has become for Jewish fathers the formula for blessing their sons before the Friday evening Kiddush and Sabbath dinner. The blessing for the daughters is **יְשִׁמְךָ אֱלֹהִים כְּשָׂרָה רַבֵּקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה**, "God make thee as Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel and Leah". What is the significance of this blessing in our day?

Answer: See the comment in Hertz on ch. 48:20.

Question: What place does the Book of Genesis hold within the entire Pentateuch.

Answer: Comment of Hertz in the introduction to the Book of Genesis: If the Pentateuch (which is a Greek word meaning the five books of Moses) were merely a code of civil and religious laws, it would have opened with the twelfth chapter of Exodus, which contains the earliest specific commandment given to Israel (Rashi). But it is far more than a code of law: it is the Torah, i.e. the Divine Teachings given to Israel, and the Message of Israel to mankind. Therefore, it describes the origins of the Jewish people, traces its kinship to the other portions of the human family — all being of one blood and offspring of one common stock; and goes back to the creation of the world, which it declares to be the work of One Almighty and Beneficent God. □ □

FOURTEEN COUNTRIES REPRESENTED IN TWELFTH WORLD YOUTH BIBLE CONTEST

SOUTH AFRICAN GIRL TIES FOR THIRD

GIRL FROM ARGENTINA TAKES FOURTH

What has become a tradition of Israel Independence Day, the twelfth Jewish Youth Bible Contest was again the focal feature in the celebration of Israel's 27th birthday. Viewed by millions on the national T.V., twenty four contestants, from fourteen countries, competed for top honors in their knowledge of Bible. The international contest is the annual culmination of numerous local, regional and national contests in the participating countries, in which scores of thousands take on a special study of Tenakh in addition to whatever Biblical studies they pursue in their Hebrew schools.

Unlike the two previous years, the Israeli participants won the top three honors: Efraim Korngut, Jacob Hildesheim and Samuel Toledano. Tied with third was Heidi Welcher from South Africa, while Susana Bokler, from Argentina, came in fourth.

Susana was chosen to represent the group in thanking the President of Israel, Ephraim Katzir, for the reception tendered by him on the day following Yom Ha-atzmaut. In her



Efraim Korngut, winner of the Youth Bible Contest, receiving congratulations from the President of Israel, Ephraim Katzir, as Aluf Mishneh (Colonel) Isaiah Tadmor, Commander of the Gadna Youth Corps, looks on.



Winners of the Youth Bible Contest (from left): Samuel Toledano (Israel) and Heidi Welcher (South Africa), third place; Efraim Korngut (Israel), winner of contest; Jacob Hildesheim (Israel), second place; Susana Bokler (Argentina), fourth place.

As remarks, Susana told of the rich cultural experience she and her fellow contestants had touring the country as guests of Gadna, especially the historic ancient sites which were only academically known to them heretofore through their knowledge of Bible.

The contest was held in the new Jerusalem Theater, amidst an inspiringly elegant stage setting. The ceremony opened with the call of army trumpets and the entrance of the contestants upon the stage. The program began with a series of liturgical and popular folk tunes, rendered by a combined choral group consisting of the choir of the army chaplaincy and children's choirs from Ramat Gan, Maalot and Shlomi. The participation of the children from Maalot and Shlomi symbolized the unity of the Israeli people in a year of atrocity in which these two cities were targets of terrorist attacks resulting in a tragic toll of children's lives.

Greetings were given by Aluf Mishneh (Colonel) Isaiah Tadmor, Commander of the Gadna Youth Corps, the pre-military youth division of the Israeli army, and by Minister of Interior Yosef Burg, Chairman of the Judges' Panel. Prizes and gifts were distributed at the end of the contest by Aharon Yadlin, Minister of Education. The coordinator of the Bible Contest was Seren (Major) Yosef Winograd, specially assigned to the Gadna Youth Corps, under whose direction the contest was conducted.

PARTICIPANTS IN YOUTH BIBLE CONTEST

<i>Argentina</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>Italy</i>
Susana Bokler	Elie Cohen	Benny Finzi
<i>Australia</i>	Albert Danino	<i>South Africa</i>
Daniel Mond	Israel ben Simon	Heidi Welcher
<i>Belgium</i>	<i>Iran</i>	<i>Sweden</i>
Chaim Hutterer	Emanuel Cohen Sedegh	Erwin Pavel
<i>Canada</i>	<i>Ireland</i>	<i>United States</i>
Mindi Wenner	Mervyn Smullen	David Cedor
Noach Witty	<i>Israel</i>	Smadar Eliach
<i>England</i>	Jacob Hildesheim	David Glatt
Alan Deitch	Efraim Korngut	Steven Low
Nehama Domb	Samuel Toledano	Naomi Suberi
		Bernard Wise

Winner of the Bible Contest: Efraim Korngut

Second Place: Jacob Hildesheim

Tie for Third Place: Heidi Welcher and Samuel Toledano

Fourth Place: Susana Bokler

PHILADELPHIA CONGREGATION ORGANIZES BIBLE STUDY GROUP

Temple Beth Zion Beth Israel in Philadelphia is the newest Bible study group organized under the auspices of the World Jewish Bible Society. Congregational leaders and others joined the study group, formed by Dr. Haim Gevaryahu, Chairman of the World Jewish Bible Society and Visiting Professor of Bible at Dropsie University. During the present academic year, the group is studying the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, under the direction of Dr. Gevaryahu. Greetings were read at the 23rd Israel National Bible Conference in Jerusalem, held in the spring, from a cable sent by the newly formed group.

TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

With these pages we are introducing the second triennial Bible reading calendar, beginning with the first chapter of Joshua and concluding with the Book of Chronicles at the end of the third year. The sequence of the daily chapters is interrupted in order to allow for the readings connected with the Sidra of the Week and the holidays.

Sept-Oct 1975				Oct-Nov 1975			
תשרי תשל"ו				חשוון תשל"ו			
Sa	6	ראש השנה	א	M	6	Joshua 13	א
Su	7	ראש השנה	ב	T	7	Joshua 14	ב
M	8	Joshua 1	ג	W	8	Joshua 15	ג
T	9	Joshua 2	ד	Th	9	Joshua 16	ד
W	10	Joshua 3	ה	F	10	נח	ה
Th	11	Joshua 4	ו	Sa	11	נח	ו
F	12	האזינו	ז	Su	12	Joshua 17	ז
Sa	13	שבת שובה	ח	M	13	Joshua 18	ח
Su	14	ערב יום כפור	ט	T	14	Joshua 19	ט
M	15	יום כפור	י	W	15	Joshua 20	י
T	16	Joshua 5	יא	Th	16	Joshua 21	יא
W	17	Joshua 6	יב	F	17	לך לך	יב
Th	18	Joshua 7	יג	Sa	18	לך לך	יג
F	19	ערב סוכות	יד	Su	19	Joshua 22	יד
Sa	20	סוכות	טו	M	20	Joshua 23	טו
Su	21	סוכות	טז	T	21	Joshua 24	טז
M	22	חול המועד סוכות	יז	W	22	Judges 1	יז
T	23	חול המועד סוכות	יח	Th	23	Judges 2	יח
W	24	חול המועד סוכות	יט	F	24	וירא	יט
Th	25	חול המועד סוכות	כ	Sa	25	וירא	כ
F	26	הושענא רבה	כא	Su	26	Judges 3	כא
Sa	27	שמיני עצרת	כב	M	27	Judges 4	כב
Su	28	שמחת תורה	כג	T	28	Judges 5	כג
M	29	Joshua 8	כד	W	29	Judges 6	כד
T	30	Joshua 9	כה	Th	30	Judges 7	כה
W	1	Joshua 10	כו	F	31	חיי שרה	כו
Th	2	Joshua 11	כז	Sa	1	חיי שרה	כז
F	3	בראשית	כח	Su	2	Judges 8	כח
Sa	4	בראשית	כט	M	3	Judges 9	כט
Su	5	Joshua 12	ל	T	4	Judges 10	ל

TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

Dec-Jan 1975-6				Jan-Feb 1976			
		כסלו תשל"ו				חב"ת תשל"ו	
W	5	Judges 11	א	F	5	מקץ	א חנוכה
Th	6	Judges 12	ב	Sa	6	זאת חנוכה	ב מקץ
F	7	תולדות	ג	Su	7	I Samuel 12	ג
Sa	8	תולדות	ד	M	8	I Samuel 13	ד
Su	9	Judges 13	ה	T	9	I Samuel 14	ה
M	10	Judges 14	ו	W	10	I Samuel 15	ו
T	11	Judges 15	ז	Th	11	I Samuel 16	ז
W	12	Judges 16	ח	F	12	ויגש	ח
Th	13	Judges 17	ט	Sa	13	ויגש	ט
F	14	ויצא	י	Su	14	I Samuel 17 בטבת	י צום י' בטבת
Sa	15	ויצא	יא	M	15	I Samuel 18	יא
Su	16	Judges 18	יב	T	16	I Samuel 19	יב
M	17	Judges 19	יג	W	17	I Samuel 20	יג
T	18	Judges 20	יד	Th	18	I Samuel 21	יד
W	19	Judges 21	טו	F	19	ויחי	טו
Th	20	I Samuel 1	טז	Sa	20	ויחי	טז
F	21	וישלח	יז	Su	21	I Samuel 22	יז
Sa	22	וישלח	יח	M	22	I Samuel 23	יח
Su	23	I Samuel 2	יט	T	23	I Samuel 24	יט
M	24	I Samuel 3	כ	W	24	I Samuel 25	כ
T	25	I Samuel 4	כא	Th	25	I Samuel 26	כא
W	26	I Samuel 5	כב	F	26	שמות	כב
Th	27	I Samuel 6	כג	Sa	27	שמות	כג
F	28	וישב	כד	Su	28	I Samuel 27	כד
Sa	29	שבת חנוכה וישב	כה	M	29	I Samuel 28	כה
Su	30	I Samuel 7 חנוכה	כו	T	30	I Samuel 29	כו
M	1	I Samuel 8 חנוכה	כז	W	31	I Samuel 30	כז
T	2	I Samuel 9 חנוכה	כח	Th	1	I Samuel 31	כח
W	3	I Samuel 10 חנוכה	כט	F	2	וארא	כט
Th	4	I Samuel 11 חנוכה	ל				

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