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ZALMAN SHAZAR

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דפוס רפאל חיים הכהן בע"מ, ירושלים

The Editors of Dor le-Dor present to our readers the timely topic of Jonah in our Fall issue when this short book is read in its entirety during Mincha services on Yom Kippur.

It is our hope that analyses of this remarkable book by three different men, the late president Zalman Shazar, Prof. Sol Liptzin and Yitzhak Shalev, should stimulate thinking and discussion.

JONAH –TRANSITION FROM SEER TO PROPHET

BY ZALMAN SHAZAR

THE PROBLEM: IS JONAH A PROPHETIC BOOK

At first glance, it is difficult to understand why the book of Jonah was placed among the prophetic books. It is a book that contains no prophetic writings. There is no prophetic vision, no word of God, nor anything about prophecy, neither for Israel nor for the peoples of the world, except for one verse of five words, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (Jonah 3:4). These are the only words of prophecy. The rest is narrative, a psalm, but not prophecy. Furthermore, there is nothing in Jonah about the Jews, nothing about Israel, nor Jerusalem, nor Zion, nor about the redemption of Israel, none of the great thoughts that we regularly find in prophetic books.

My question is not how it came about that Jonah is included in Scripture, but rather why is it not included among the books of the Hagiographa ("the Writings") since it is an account of a prophet's life. That it has found its way among the prophetic books, specifically among the minor prophets, is difficult to understand. What are the books of the minor prophets? They are an anthology of prophetic statements that were preserved. The prophets might have spoken more than what has come down to us, or they might have uttered only those words that were preserved. However, if you will compare Jonah to Obadiah, Zephania or Zechariah, you will find it totally different in style, in content and theme.

It seems to me that the uniqueness and purpose of the book of Jonah, set

Zalman Shazar was the third president of the State of Israel. This was as opening address of the 19th Annual Conference of the Israel Society for Biblical Research, Jerusalem, Passover, 5731.

within the prophetic books, are not accidental but fundamental. I would call it an introduction to prophecy. It unravels for us the essential puzzle as to the function of the prophet in Israel, why prophecy was necessary in Israel, and what was its role in the development of civilization.

It is written in Amos 2:10-11: "Also I brought you up out of the land of Egypt, and led you forty years in the wilderness, to possess the land of the Amorite; and I raised up of your sons for prophets, and of your young men for Nazarites." This was the great gift God bestowed upon the people of Israel, that He took us forth from bondage in Egypt and He gave us prophets.

The problem before us is: What is the task of the prophet, and what is his mission? Where is the essence of the prophet's mission stated? This question is bound up with another, which pervades the whole of the Bible: There are true prophets and false prophets, and it is for us to distinguish between the two. What is the difference between one and the other? The book of Jeremiah abounds in comparisons of this sort, so that a man can know who is a true prophet and who is not, what his function is and what responsibility is placed upon him as a prophet in Israel. Perhaps we can find the key to the answer in the short book called Jonah.

THE "SEER"

In the Pentateuch we find the distinction between a true and a false prophet. "And if thou shalt say in thy heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord hath not spoken?' When a prophet speaketh in the name of the Lord, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord hath not spoken; the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously, thou shalt not be afraid of him" (Deuteronomy 18:21-22). This is the rule set down for us by the book of Deuteronomy. But this rule can be applied only after the fact. At the time of the event, it is impossible to know whether the matter will come to pass or not. Translating this concept into prosaic language, I would say that this criterion is not the test of a prophet; it is rather a test of one who foretells the future. He predicts what will be, and we want to know whether in truth he knows that it will happen, and how he knows it will happen, and how we can know whether to heed his voice or not. This passage, therefore, applies only to a fortuneteller or to someone who foretells something for a future time, a talent not given to ordinary mortals but to one graced with a special sense, a special endowment of the divine spirit.

The matter is simply and beautifully expressed in the first book of Samuel 9:9: "Beforetime in Israel, when a man went to inquire of God, thus he said, 'Come and let us go to the seer'; for he that is now called a prophet was beforetime called a seer." Before prophets came upon the scene of history, there were "seers" in Israel, dreamers who saw in their visions what would come about in the future or in distant places, an extra-sensory insight that ordinary persons did not possess. For example, when the donkeys of Saul's father were lost and Saul needed to know their whereabouts, he went to the seer to tell him. This the seer could envision.

The Bible wanted to distinguish clearly between the seer and the prophet. The Bible did not wish to blur the fields of endeavor of the two; it wanted to establish a clear difference between seer and prophet. The seers could see visions, foretell the future and they were identified with a sacred site, not necessarily Israelite. In every sanctuary there were men who could see and know what an ordinary person could not. They were called "seers". Samuel was a seer. He represented the period before that of the literary prophets. We now call prophets like Amos, Isaiah, and their like, literary prophets in order to distinguish them from seers, prognosticators and diviners who were identified with particular sanctuaries.

There is an event in the book of Samuel of frightening harshness which I would almost say is contrary to the prophetic concepts of the great prophets. Samuel tells Saul: "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (Samuel 15:3). Saul heeded the voice of Samuel and destroyed Amalek, but he had compassion for Agag and for the best of his sheep, and spared them. Whereupon Samuel rebuked him thus: "...for thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord hath rejected thee from being king over Israel" (ibid, v. 26). Saul, the first king in Israel, who only recently had been "head and shoulders" above the rest, beloved by his people, suddenly finds himself abhorred by the Lord and cast out of his kingdom because he did not obey this one command.

When the king begs for forgiveness and pleads before Samuel, "I have sinned; yet honor me now, I pray thee, before the elders of my people and before Israel" (ibid, v. 30) he is answered by this "seer", the elder Samuel, with directness and coldly, "the Glory of Israel will not lie nor repent, for He is not a man, that He should repent" (ibid, v. 29). Thus said the Lord, and so it shall be! Neither he, the seer, nor the first king can change the oracle. The sentence is passed, and there is

prophet who was of Gath-hepher" (II Kings 14:25). It could be that the Talmudic identification is based merely on the similarity of the name. It seems to me, however, that the matter goes much deeper. The Jonah of Jeroboam's period whose prophecy refers to the recovery of the border at the entrance of Hamath, prophesied at the time when "the Lord saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter; for there was none shut up nor left at large, neither was there any helper in Israel" (ibid, v. 26). That is to say, he appeared precisely in the period between Samuel and Amos, at the conclusion of the era of the "seer" and at the beginning of the era of Amos, the first of the great ideological literary prophets. Jonah is still standing with one foot in the period of the "seer" and with the other stepping into the period of the literary prophets, and not yet grasping what task God was placing upon him, as the author of our book tells us in his clever and satiric manner.

JONAH AND JOB

I once wrote that I see another work in the Bible, similar in literary style and form to Jonah, and that is the book of Job. The author of the book of Job plays with Job in his introduction and prologue. I am not referring to the basic issue in the book, which requires deep thought. I am referring to the literary setting of the book which puts Job in the position of a blind man who does not comprehend what is happening to him. He sees all these misfortunes falling upon him, he disputes the reasons, he cries out that he did not sin and does not deserve all this punishment. But he does not know what the reader is aware of, what you and all students of the Bible know, that in the prologue Satan appears with a special game to play, and it is decided to test Job. The reader is more knowledgeable than

the hero. The central figure does not know what the reader knows, for already in the prologue the objective of the game is expressed. The same is true of Jonah who does not know why he was sent to Nineveh, and why God had made him a target of mockery. But the reader knows that the prophet was created precisely for this task, not that God's warning might come to pass, but that man might repent and be healed.

Translated from a Hebrew article in Beth Mikra, Vol. 47, 4. September, 1971.

THE LITERARY IMPACT OF JONAH

BY SOL LIPTZIN

The Book of Jonah attracted much attention among Jewish sages and Christian theologians. It inspired numerous artists ever since the beginning of the Common Era, as is attested by the scenes from the prophet's life on ancient sarcophagi and in illustrations to manuscripts of the early Middle Ages. In literature, however, the subject was never popular until our century.

Since the Book of Jonah was read every year in the synagogues during the Afternoon Service of Yom Kippur, Jews were thoroughly familiar with its contents, which emphasized the prophecy dooming Nineveh and God's mercy extended to this city when its people repented. By recalling on the most solemn Jewish day of repentance and fasting that even the wicked inhabitants of the Assyrian capital were spared when they turned from their evil ways, worshippers were imbued with the hope that their sins too could be atoned for and that the Supreme Judge of the universe would also be merciful to them and would not carry out any harsh judgment he may have contemplated.

Christian theologians saw in the return of Jonah from the watery abyss into which he had been hurled and from the bowels of the Big Fish in which he had been entombed for three days an anticipation of the crucifixion and entombment of their Messiah and his resurrection after three days.

ALLEGORY OF DEATH AND REBIRTH

The story of Jonah was often interpreted as an allegory of death and rebirth. The swallowing of the prophet by the Big Fish stemmed from his disobeying God's command and thereby meriting God's severe judgment. However, when he accepted his punishment and prayed to God out of the belly of Sheol, then he was deserving of God's mercy and was liberated from his dark entombment. He was reborn as a willing messenger of God. (*See: Uwe Steffen, Das Mysterium von Tod und Auferstehung: Formen und Wandlungen des Jona-Motivs, 1963*).

Scholars have called attention to Indian and Babylonian myths that bear

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

mind of a creative writer and was embedded by him in a classic work of fiction. In 1851, the American novelist Herman Melville completed *Moby Dick*, his prose epic of American whalers and whaling. By then it was generally accepted that the Big Fish capable of swallowing and disgorging Jonah alive must have been a whale, the Leviathan of the ocean. The novelist, therefore, incorporated in his narrative of whaling a hymn and a sermon on Jonah, as well as a survey of speculations on how Jonah survived for three days within the whale. The hymn concluded with Jonah's calling upon God when in black despair and his Deliverer answering him and saving him from within the whale's maw. The sermon, delivered in the Whaleman's Chapel of New Bedford, Massachusetts, before a motley congregation of fishermen, sailors and harpoonists, reinterpreted the tale of Jonah in a manner most meaningful for a seafaring audience. The minister, Father Mapple, had himself been a sailor and an harpoonist in his youth, and he knew how to stir the hearts of his listeners. He stressed Jonah's wilful disobedience of God's command, his punishment, repentance, and joyous deliverance, after the fugitive from God accepted God's dreadful punishment as just. "And here, shipmates, is true and faithful repentance; not clamorous for pardon, but grateful for punishment."

Melville recounted in the course of his narrative several adventures that paralleled Jonah's, including those of the Greek mythological heroes and that of St. George who marched boldly up to a dragon of the sea, identifiable as a whale. To sceptics who might doubt the literal veracity of the Jonah story, the American novelist, with tongue in his cheek, devoted an entire chapter to various theories explaining Jonah's survival at sea. These ranged from Bishop Jebb's surmise that the prophet might have been lodged in the whale's open mouth rather than in the belly to the commentator who held that, when Jonah was thrown overboard, he continued swimming until he was picked up by another vessel with a whale for a figurehead. Melville ironically added to the various theories two of his own. He surmised that Jonah might have been saved by a ship called *The Whale* or by clinging to a life preserver that was inflated with air.

THE SCOPES TRIAL

Echoes of such theories resounded in an American courtroom three quarters of a century later in the course of the sensational Scopes Trial in July 1925. The Tennessee legislature had passed a law forbidding the teaching of the Darwinian

theory of evolution in the public schools of that state. John Thomas Scopes, a teacher of biology, was accused of defying this law. His trial, which drew national and international attention, climaxed in the cross-examination by Clarence Darrow, the brilliant attorney for the defense, of the Fundamentalist orator and earlier Democratic presidential candidate William Jennings Bryan. When Bryan testified as an expert on the Bible and affirmed his belief in the literal truth of everything recorded therein, he was closely questioned on Jonah's experiences within the belly of the Big Fish. Bryan's explanations exposed him to the withering satire of the incredulous Darrow and to the ridicule of the world's press, an exposure which may have hastened his death a few days after he left the witness-stand.

ROBERT NATHAN'S JONAH

It was in the wake of this trial that Robert Nathan published in 1925 his ironic novel entitled *The Son of Amittai* in the British edition and *Jonah* in the American edition. Nathan presented the prophet as a contemporary of Amos of Tekoah, as a saintly young man who beheld visions and conversed with angels but who tired of life in the desert and returned to the town of his birth. There he fell in love with Judith, the niece of Prince Ahab, but soon discovered that she would not be allowed to marry him because of his poverty and that, despite her love for him, she would readily accept the rich Phoenician merchant Hiram of Tyre, who could offer her a life of luxury. Jonah refused to go to Nineveh, because he felt that the God of Israel had no power beyond Israel's borders, even as the deities Marduk, Dagon and Ishtar could not intrude outside their territories. Jonah's exposure within the whale, however, taught him that Israel's God was everywhere, exercising command over the fish of the sea, the hosts of the air, and the creatures of the land. He then obeyed God's command and boldly prophesied Nineveh's doom, but when beautiful Nineveh was spared, he was angry at God. "All his courage was gone, his pride, his hope of glory, all gone down in the dust of God's mercy to others. To him alone God had been merciless and exacting." He would return to the desert a chastened, humiliated creature. God, looking down from the clouds, then turned to Moses and said wearily: "You Jews, you don't understand beauty. With you it is either glory or despair." And with a sigh God looked westward to the blue Aegean where the sunlight lay warm and golden over Greece.

JONAH IN POST-WAR EUROPE: GUENTER RUTENBORN

While Bonhoeffer's poem was written just before the imminent end of the Third Reich, Guenter Rutenborn's surrealist play in nine scenes, *The Sign of Jonah*, appeared in the original German a year after the war's end. It was rewritten in 1955 and the revised version was published in English in 1960.

The dramatic action is set in a theater in West Berlin. The Judge calls upon Jonah to appear before the post-war audience, but Jonah, like his biblical namesake, hesitates because he does not believe that the Germans can be converted to change their evil ways as were the Ninevites. When German cities were heaps of rubble, the people seemed different but, with their cities being rapidly rebuilt, they do not want to remember their recent past. Jonah must remind them of the days when fire and destruction rained from the skies. He must talk to their conscience. He then appears before them not in the role of the prophet Jonah who was swallowed up by a whale and survived but as himself, Jonah, the commander and sole survivor of a submarine that crashed to the sea-bottom after an attack by a bomber. Whether whale or submarine, hell is always one and the same. Having emerged from the bowels of the submarine, he is ready to present God's case against contemporary Ninevehs. Actors representing the three Archangels appear upon the scene: Gabriel, who was buried alive for ten days after the American bombardment of Dresden and was taken out alive; Michael, who carried out mass executions of inferior races in the East and who, though otherwise innocent, was punished by the Americans when they reached Dachau; Raphael, who was caught by the Russians in Pomerania and barely missed death. Jonah, as prosecuting attorney, calls attention to these German archangels who combine in their faces so much cruelty, self-righteousness and emptiness. He compels each of them to testify to additional aspects of their past. The real Michael, not the pseudo-archangel, had been a clerk in the marriage license bureau and took it upon himself to inspect documents and to certify who had a non-Aryan grandmother so that such persons could be assigned to the furnaces. Gabriel was a bombardier who dropped bombs on London, Coventry, and Rotterdam. Other unmasked characters included the Average Man who as a German tortured Poles and murdered Ukrainians, as a Pole expropriated Germans, as a Ukrainian served as a murderous partisan, as an American pulverized Dresden, as a Russian raped and pillaged; and also the Average Woman whose justification for denouncing others was that she wanted to

improve her family's circumstances and get her husband a better position. All have excuses for their monstrous deeds, which brought about the death of millions of people of another denomination in gas-chambers. Having been denazified, they do not want their past dug up. After all, not they are guilty but the Judge and Supreme Ruler of this world. The Judge accepts this verdict and condemns Himself. Jonah, God's witness to Nineveh and Berlin, voices the conclusion that, just as the guilty Judge of the Universe condemned Himself and accepted suffering as atonement for fashioning an imperfect world, so too God's human creatures must also condemn themselves and atone for their viciousness. Let them stand in awe before the chastened God, for the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Let them repent before an atomic conflagration overtakes them. Let them atone for their sins. Then they can expect to be spared as were the people of Nineveh.

STEFAN ANDRES

The contemporary relevance of the Jonah-theme, stressed by Rutenborn, also emerges from the religious novel *Der Mann im Fisch* by Stefan Andres. Like Bonhoeffer, Andres, educated in a cloister school, contemplated a theological career. During his university years, however, he discovered his literary talent and thereafter devoted himself to writing novels. These delve into the inner consciousness of modern man. His Jonah novel of 1963 reflected his long immersion in biblical studies. He found many parallels between his own generation in Germany and that of Jonah in ancient Israel and sinful Assyria.

Andres presented Jonah as a popular hero during the reign of King Jeroboam of Israel, when he correctly prophesied Israel's victory over the Syrians at Hamath. After the victory, however, he was shocked by the brutal decapitation of thousands of captives to the accompaniment of hymns of praise to God. He fled from the adulations of the court and the masses. For twenty years, he lived incognito. His son Jochanan became a follower of Amos of Tekoa, who preached that all peoples were equal in the eyes of God, that the Lord who brought Israel out of Egypt also brought the Philistines out of Caphtor and Aram out of Kir. Jonah could not accept such a doctrine. He therefore resisted the call to bring God's message to Nineveh's cruel inhabitants. Why should he cry out to the Assyrian murderers to repent and live, when they deserved to perish because of their misdeeds? He decided to flee to Tarshish. After being hurled overboard during the storm at sea, he sank into the watery abyss and was swallowed by the fish of

national group, but suffering taught him to accept his burden of being a witness of God to other nations from his old-new national home in Israel and from all the lands of the Diaspora.

OTHER TREATMENTS OF THE JONAH THEME

While the literary impact of the Jonah-theme in our century was most intense in Germany, other literatures also felt repercussions. Lawrence Housman's English Jonah-play in five scenes, included in his *Palestine Plays*, 1942, continued the irreverent, ironic approach of an earlier period. And so did the South African poet Lewis Sowden, whose long poem *Jonah*, embracing seventy-seven quatrains and included in his last lyric volume, *The Jaffa Road*, 1974, traced the career of the humble and hesitant seer whom experience taught that no prophet can stand the world for long and that neither can the world stomach him but must spew him out. On the other hand, Kadia Molodowsky's Yiddish poem *Jonah*, included in her volume *Licht fun Dornbush*, 1965, continued the Jewish approach of Ben-Chorin. Her Jonah is the symbolic Jew and her Nineveh symbolizes the non-Jewish world. Though Jonah may disguise himself, change his language, and prefer restful ease, God will ferret him out and send him on to Nineveh. Though he would rather care for his own apple-trees and date-trees, God will tear him away from his hearth and orchard, since he is chosen for pain and compassion and for purifying Ninevehs, old and new, of their sins.

The Book of Jonah continued until the present to stimulate reflections and reinterpretations in literature as well as in art, music, and theology.

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THE BOOK OF JONAH

A LESSON FOR ALL GENERATIONS

BY YITZHAK SHALEV

THE BIBLE – A LAND EPIC

The Book of Jonah, in large part is a story of a sea journey. It is refreshing to a reader of the Bible because it contains no other story like this.

In general the Bible is a collection of “dryland” stories. The Israeli of Bible days was a “land” animal who lived in the wilderness, or on the hills or, when he conquered the Canaanites, in the valleys, but very seldom as a denizen of the sea. There are a number of reasons for this. First of all a considerable part of the beach front was under foreign domination, Canaanite or Philistine. Secondly our beaches had no inlets suitable for maritime trade as were those of Syria and Lebanon or Greece.

When, in the days of King Solomon the Gulf of Eilat was developed, sea faring to distant parts had begun. However, because of the absence of a maritime tradition, these journeys were arranged with the clear help of the men of Hiram.

There are, it is true, chapters in the Bible where one can feel the breath of ancient Hebrew seamanship: Jacob’s and Moses’ blessing of Zebulun, Deborah’s reference to Dan and Asher, and description of sea life and storms in Psalms 104 and 107. As a rule, however, impressions of the sea are not as evident in the Bible as that of desert and of cultivated land areas.

Our forefathers received their nourishment mainly from the land and not from the sea, and that fact left its imprint on their literature. Where there is a detailed description of maritime trade, it refers to Tyre and not to Israel (Ezekiel 27).

It is enlightening to note that in the list of David’s civilian officers (I Chronicles, 27), not one has any relation to the sea.

BOOK OF JONAH AS A SEA ADVENTURE

The story of Jonah is unique primarily because it takes place in large part on

Yitzhak Shalev, at present Bible instructor at Yellin Teacher Training College, Jerusalem, is the author of six collections of poetry, for three of which he received the Ussishkin, Ruppin and Ramat Gan prizes respectively. He has also published three novels, the most recent of which is *The Gabriel Tirosh Affair*.

and in the sea. We have here a sea adventure story with all its classical elements: Rebellion of hero, attempted escape from a port city to distant shores, storm, reaction of crew, casting of lots, hero thrown overboard, miraculous salvation by means of a sea monster—all tried and true methods of exciting the interest of the reader. But on second thought, we must ask ourselves: Why is it in the Bible? We know of no Biblical story whose aim is merely entertainment. What is the message behind the story of Jonah? First of all, we must become aware that the author was not interested in telling us anything about the particular prophet, Jonah ben Amittai who prophesied the restoration of the Kingdom of Israel from the entrance of Hamath into the sea of the Arabah” (II Kings 14:25). The prophet in our story bears the same name, but aside from that there is nothing in common between the two.

Had our author intended to offer a biographical sketch of an event in the life of the historical Jonah he would have been more informative. As it is, we do not know what happened to Jonah before he received the “call” nor what happened to him after he fainted from the heat. Since it is evident that the author was not interested in those facts, this points to another difference between the book of Jonah and other adventure stories. In every story, the final fate of the hero is highlighted at the conclusion of the story. What finally happened to Jonah the author does not bother to answer. He ends his story with what he thought was most important—God’s admonition to Jonah. This is one of the differences between him and Homer, Shakespeare or Jules Verne to whom what finally happens to the hero is most important. In short, Jonah as a biographical sketch is very poor. It has neither beginning nor end. Just as it falls short as a history of an individual, it fails as a history of a group. Also, it does not approach the story realistically. Though he seems to relate facts as they were or might have been, it has the aura of legend, of the unbelievable, far removed from acceptable history.

JAFFA, NINEVEH AND TARSHISH

With all the realism in many of the story details, as a whole it seems devoid of historical credibility. Let us consider the three cities mentioned: Jaffa, Nineveh, and Tarshish. Jaffa, as an exit port to the world, is real enough. It is mentioned with the original settlement of the tribes, in the days of Solomon and also in the days of Zerubabel. But a Jaffa-Tarshish line? It was only through binational efforts that boats could reach distant Tarshish,—and then, once in three years!

Tarshish, to our author, was the symbol of somewhere far away, overseas, far

away from Nineveh. Jonah “buys a ticket”, which seems like a normal routine occurrence for this imaginative trip, but later we find no other passengers. There are only Jonah and the crew members each praying to his god.

Tarshish was to the author what an “Eldorado” was to later generations—a symbol of some place far, far away. And so was Nineveh. Much has been written about the Nineveh of Jonah. Kaufmann places it in the period of Elijah, but Nineveh was not yet the celebrated capital of Assyria. Most scholars, basing themselves on peculiar philologic expressions, place it after the Babylonian exile. But then Nineveh was no more the celebrated capital of an empire.

From the expression in the book that “Nineveh was an exceeding great city,” one can assume that Nineveh was no more, but, in truth the question of time is irrelevant, because the entire description is unreal for any time. The size of the city is described as a distance of “three days journey,” but archaeological discoveries have shown that at its height, Nineveh was surrounded by a wall five kilometers long and two kilometers wide or 10,000 square dunams. One can cross that distance in much less than three days!

In our Nineveh there is an anonymous king: “The King of Nineveh”. He is not called by his name, as were all the other Assyrian kings mentioned in the Bible, because there is no connection between this Nineveh and the historic city mentioned in the Books of Kings and Nahum.

How an Israeli prophet, speaking a strange tongue—Hebrew—can influence Assyrian sinners is difficult to explain. Moreover, the quick and thorough repentance of a king who descends from his throne, dons sackcloth and covers himself with ashes points to a righteous king who is not of this world. The participation of the animals in the general fasting adds nothing to the plausibility of this wonderful story.

NINEVEH A SYMBOLIC CITY

To our author Nineveh was not the powerful historic city that evoked painful memories to the Children of Israel. It was a symbolic city, a large and very sinful metropolis that should repent. It is sort of a “Sodom City” that should be dealt with compassion instead of with justice.

Actually, the act of dispatching the Jewish prophet to Nineveh is surprising. True, Elijah was sent to Damascus: “Return on thy way to the wilderness of Damascus and . . . thou shalt anoint Hazael to be king over Aram” (I Kings 19:15); Jeremiah was commanded to prophecy in Egypt: “. . . at the entry of

Pharaoh's house in Tahpanhes, in the sight of the men of Judah, and say unto them" (Jeremiah 43:9-10); Jeremiah sent Seraiah to Babylon with the message: "So shall Babylon sink and not rise again" (Jeremiah 51:64). None of these were sent to a foreign population, but to a particular person or to Jews living in a foreign land. Elijah spoke to Hazeal and Jeremiah to Jews. Jonah is the only one sent to a foreign population in a foreign country, an extraordinary request of a Jewish prophet.

Extraordinary also is the story of the "big fish" within which Jonah lived for three days and nights. Here too the author weaves the improbable into the plausible until the whole thing seems possible. Big fish capable of swallowing a man are found in the sea, but for a man to come out alive after the ordeal, borders on the impossible. In the beginning of this century there were witnesses that a certain whaler, James Barkley, was swallowed by a giant whale and was thrown out alive after one day. But this singular evidence unfortunately proved to be false.

The same is true of the gourd which is interwoven with such natural elements as the "hut", the "worm" the "east wind", all of which lend realism to the strange gourd. The numbers: *three* days in the fish, *three* days journey through Nineveh, *one* night growth of the gourd, *forty* days to Nineveh's destruction—are mythological magic numbers not to be questioned.

HOW A PROPHET SHOULD NOT BEHAVE

It is clear that the book is not an ordinary sea tale, nor an event in the life of a particular prophet, nor a prophetic book in the accepted sense, for it contains no prophecies. To understand the book, we have to remove the upper story layer and discover what is underneath. It now becomes clear that what we have here is not a true story, but is a story that may happen in every generation, to any prophet that may be sent on a particular mission, and to warn us against letting it happen again.

The book of Jonah demonstrates to us, in a story and picturesque form, how a prophet should not behave. It is a story of the failure of a prophet, and through his shortcomings we learn about the qualities of one whom God deems worthy to speak in His name.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF GOD

Jonah's shortcomings were threefold. First of all he has no clear conception of

the universality of his God. In his mind, he still sees His powers limited to territory, an idea the author ridicules by implication. Jonah considers God's powers limited to dry land and to the East, so he tries to escape by sea and to the West. The author brings us the storm at sea to point out his foolish error.

Jonah realized that even the gentiles, each of whom had his own nationality and his own god, feared God; and that even sea animals do His bidding. At this he begins to admit his error by saying, "I fear the Lord, God of *Heaven*, who made the *sea* and *dryland*" (Jonah 1:9) and probably thinks that had he known this in Jaffa he would not have attempted to escape.

The idea of the universality of God is brought into relief by the facts that even non-Jewish Nineveh fears Him, that both east and west winds obey Him, and that large (whale) and small (worm) animals, and even plants (gourd) do His bidding. His glory is universal and His power controls everything.

TRUE REPENTANCE AVERTS THE SEVERE DECREE

A second idea Jonah does not quite comprehend is that true repentance should void the punishment for sins committed. He does not understand as Jeremiah, who said: "At one instant I may speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up and to break down and to destroy it; but if that nation turn from their evil, because of which I have spoken against it, I repent of the evil that I thought to do unto it" (Jeremiah 18:4-8). Moreover, he even saw a fault in the fact that God is long suffering, compassionate and ready to "repent the evil." His mind still retains the ancient dictum: "He shall not clear the guilty" (Exodus 34:7).

YOU HAD PITY ON THE GOURD

His third, and perhaps his greatest, fault is his egoism. Except for Gehazi, who loved money and who was a disciple of a prophet but never attained prophecy for himself, there is no trace of egoism in the entire roster of prophets similar to Jonah's.

Prophets like Moses, Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah would pray to God to annul the evil decree; but Jonah would have been happy had God destroyed the city as long as his prophecy would have been fulfilled. One gets the feeling that it is not strict justice that motivated him, but his egoism. He feared that were Nineveh saved he would be held up to ridicule. The destruction of 120,000 people bothered him less than his own reputation.

It seems that the height of his egoism is reflected in the verse: "And Jonah went out of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he would see what would become of the city" (4:5). A hope still flickered in his heart that God may still decide to destroy the city, and that would be a sight worth seeing. Therefore he built himself a booth so that he may be in the shade and watch the scene comfortably.

The words of God: "You had pity on the gourd . . . and should not I have pity on Nineveh . . ." (4:10-11) strike right at the heart of that egoism. God rejects the idea that personal comfort (the gourd that brings him shade) should supersede love of man. The antithesis of that is the book of Jonah: God loves all that He created. The gentiles are presented in a very favorable light; the ship's crew is compassionate and makes every attempt not to throw Jonah in the sea; the people in Nineveh do full repentance. This not only emphasizes the universal God. It also points out his selfishness to Jonah: See, Jonah, how all people, everyone in his way tries to do what is good, but you, what will be accomplished by your vengeance?

DANGERS THAT LURK IN THE INNER SOUL

The Book of Jonah is not a story of dangers lurking in the sea, but of dangers that lurk in the inner soul of the prophet. Incomplete comprehension of God's ways and placing self esteem above consideration for human life, these are the dangers that lie in wait for a prophet. The real sea that a prophet must brave is the Sea of Ignorance, Vengeance, and Selfishness.

We began with the sea and let us return to the sea. The ship in Jaffa that seemed to us laden with merchandise we now find is laden with ideas. Perhaps the most enlightening idea of all is that all men are brothers, and that if they will all join together to serve the Lord, they can overcome all storms of fate and all rapacious fish that seek to prey on others.

Translated from הים במקרא by Chaim Abramowitz.

THE ORIGIN OF THE SYNAGOGUE

BY S. JOSHUA KOHN

It is generally assumed that the synagogue originated in Babylonia during the captivity of the exiles. It would be more correct to say that there were many factors and customs that contributed throughout many centuries to the formation of the synagogue. The sources of the synagogue are to be found in the Bible. It is impossible to pin-point any one historical date for its origin. The synagogue was already well-known as the established, central institution in Jewish life as early as the first century of the common era. It was then a well-developed, functioning institution throughout the Diaspora as a house of prayer—*ביה תפלה*—a house of study—*בית מדרש*—and a house of assembly—*בית כנסת*. Archaeological remains in Israel confirm the fact that synagogues existed in the Holy Land as early as the second century of the common era. In fact, even earlier, we find that there was a synagogue within the precincts of the Second Temple. It would therefore be helpful to study the Biblical sources and the evolutionary process that helped to form the synagogue. Tradition even attributes the origin of the synagogue to Moses.

The word "synagogue" is of Greek origin, meaning a place of gathering. The Hebrew word in the Talmud is *בית כנסת*, its Aramaic version is *ביה כנישתא*. Targum Jonathan on the Torah, parts of which date to the first century, translates and interprets the verse in Exodus 18:20 *והודע להם את הדרך ילכו בה*:

"And thou (Moses) make known to them the way they are to go" as follows:

ותהודע להון ית צלותא די יצלון בבית כנישתהון

"And thou (Moses) make known to them the prayer that they should recite in their synagogues."

Flavius Josephus (Apion 2;175) considers Moses the originator. These references attest that in the first century the synagogue was a well-known institution in the Diaspora as it was in the Holy Land.

Rabbi Kohn, now residing in Jerusalem, was the spiritual leader of Utica, New York, and Trenton, New Jersey. He is the author of *The Jewish Community of Utica, 1847-1948* and *The Synagogue in Jewish Life*. He has written as well for the Jewish Quarterly Review on historical Jewish personalities and families in the United States.

The three functions of the synagogue could not have developed suddenly nor at one point in our history. Certainly, not all in the time of Moses. Therefore let us try to reconstruct the various elements and the time processes that eventually fashioned the remarkable institution—the synagogue.

FORERUNNERS OF THE SYNAGOGUE – SACRIFICE AND PRAYER

Man's early—if not the earliest—method of religious expression was the offering of sacrifices to God, with or without verbal expression. Sacrifice to God embodied the ideas of thankfulness for the gifts of nature or life itself; requests for aid against the enemy; or against the terror of nature. These sacrifices were usually performed on an altar or high place (bamah—במה). These 'high places' eventually became sanctified institutions for idolatrous or religious worship.

The great revolution which Moses introduced in religious worship was the elimination of the multiplicity of gods, of idolatry, and centralizing worship in one place. He created the 'mishkan', משכן, the portable sanctuary in the desert of Sinai for the Children of Israel during their forty years of wandering. This was to be the forerunner of the Holy Temple, the בית המקדש, the permanent Temple that was later to be established in Jerusalem by Solomon.

Then there shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall you bring offerings and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offerings of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the Lord.

Deuteronomy 12:11

The Temple of Solomon combined the institution of sacrifice and that of prayer. The sacrificial system served mainly for atonement and thanksgiving. But the idea of prayer was elevated by Solomon and the prophets to a universal ideal.

Moreover concerning the stranger that is not of your people Israel, but cometh from a far country, for thy name's sake, . . . and he shall come and pray toward this house. Hear thou in heaven thy dwelling place, and do according to all that the stranger calleth to thee, that all the people of the earth may know thy name to fear thee, as do thy people Israel; and that they may know that this house, which I have built, is called by thy name.

I Kings 8:41-43

Israel's outstanding prophet, Isaiah, echoed eloquently the ideal of a universal

prayer house for all mankind combining sacrifice and prayer in the Temple of Jerusalem.

והביאותים אל הר קדשי ושמחתים בבית תפלתי
עולחיהם וזבחייהם לרצון על מזבחי כי ביתי בית תפלה יקרא לכל העמים

Even them will I bring to My holy mountain, And make them joyful in My house of prayer; Their burnt-offerings and their sacrifices shall be acceptable upon Mine altar; For My house shall be called A house of prayer for all peoples.

Isaiah 56:7

מקראי קדש — HOLY ASSEMBLIES

Another likely forerunner of the synagogue was the “holy assemblies”, or the holy convocations. In the Torah there are frequent references to “holy assemblies”.

And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying: Speak unto the Children of Israel and say unto them: The appointed seasons of the Lord, which ye shall proclaim to be holy convocations, these are My appointed seasons.

Leviticus 23:1-2

These sacred occasions (convocations) refer to the Sabbath, Passover, Shavuoth, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Sukkoth. In the prophetic books these references to מקראי קדש seem to suggest religious gatherings for the purpose of worship, perhaps even outside of the Temple area. But certainly the Three Pilgrim Festivals—Pesach, Shavuoth and Sukkoth were celebrated in the Temple in Jerusalem with sacrifices, song and prayer.

PRAYER MEETINGS

There is a clear indication in the Bible that prayer meetings were conducted by the prophets in their homes or habitations outside of the Temple. Thus when the Shunamite woman was going in haste to Elisha, the prophet, because of the sudden tragic death of her son, her husband addressed her as follows:

Wherefore wilt thou go to him today, seeing that it is neither New Moon or Sabbath.

II Kings 4:23

While the Bystanders מעמד observed the sacrificial service, they participated actively in the prayers, in reciting the Torah portion (Story of Creation) and in fasting. The ma'amaa people at home gathered in their חצרות, in their 'public squares' and did likewise. In fact, in time, the חצרות, the public squares became 'open-air synagogues', used by the pilgrims when going to Jerusalem to celebrate the holidays or by those who were bringing the first fruits—bikkurim—to the Temple in Jerusalem. The public squares were also used on days of public fasting where they gathered and where they arranged public prayers.

THE GROWING SIGNIFICANCE OF THE MA'AMADOTH

According to tradition, even in the days of the first Temple, the priests not only blessed the people but they also recited the Shema, the first three and the last three blessings of the Amidah and the Ten Commandments. These they evidently taught the Bystanders (the ma'amad) to recite. During the Second Temple the representatives of the people, the Bystanders, were present at the service while the 'mishmar' of the priests and levites of their district officiated in the Temple. The remaining members of the ma'amad, who stayed at home and did not accompany the members of the משמר to Jerusalem, gathered in their "hatzeroth", their open-air synagogues for prayer and fasting. (Ta'anit 4:2.)

With the destruction of the Second Temple and the cessation of the sacrifices the influence of the ma'amadoth was enhanced and assumed greater proportions. The people loved the Temple ceremonies—the sacrifices, the music, the prayers and the biblical recitations and especially their personal participation. The ma'amadoth organized of their own accord in every city a חבר עיר, a town organization, who arranged the public prayers for all occasions of sorrow, distress or fasting.

The Beraita in Taanit mentions the other prayers that they recited for rain, for those travelling on the seas or in the desert, for those who are ill, for pregnant women and for small children.

At the end of their prayers, the people were blessed by the priests with the יברכך priestly blessing.

Rav Asi, of the second generation of Palestinian Amoraim, evaluated the importance of the institution of the ma'amadoth in the following words:

Were it not for the ma'amadoth heaven and earth would not continue to exist, threfore we read the Story of Creation. — מעשה בראשית

The ma'amad finished its weekly service on the sixth day (Friday) with the reading of the Story of Creation. Therefore Rav, the great sage in Babylonia added the paragraph of ויכולו 'Vayechulu' to the evening service of the Sabbath since it relates to the Sabbath. This custom has been adopted in all our prayer books throughout the Jewish world.

MA'AMADOTH IN THE LITURGY

The institution of the ma'amad was instrumental in creating the special prayers called ma'amadoth which were recited daily from Monday to Thursday and became part of the liturgy for a long time, thus memorializing the sacrificial service in the Temple. In fact, to this day some of the prayer books still retain these prayers. Therefore the institution of the ma'amad, the open-air synagogues, and the gatherings of the people for fast-days and other public occasions were instrumental in the permanent formation of the synagogue and the structure of our



Remnants of an ancient Synagogue In Chorazin

prayer service which was later expanded by the Men of the Great Assembly. Thus we have the elements of prayer, study and assembly form the three-fold aspects of the synagogue—Tefillah, Midrash and Keneseth.

THE SYNAGOGUE, THE CENTRAL INSTITUTION IN JEWISH LIFE

The Rabbis commented on the verse, "*And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them*" (Exodus 25:8.) as follows: Wherever you go, build Me a house in which I shall dwell among you. This ideal—the synagogue—has become the central and fundamental institution in Jewish life as early as the first century down to our own day. According to accounts in the Talmud the number of synagogues in Jerusalem which Vespasian destroyed in 70 C.E. were 394 and some accounts raise it to 460 and even 480.

R.T. Herford characterizes the synagogue in the following words:

In all their long history, the Jewish people have done scarcely anything more wonderful than to create the synagogue. No human institution has a longer continuous history, and none has done more for the uplifting of the human race.

TO THE EDITOR:

Words cannot express my enjoyment of your publication, Dor le Dor. I find each issue to be quite fascinating, increasing my love and interest of the Bible. Dor le Dor supplies me with many fresh ideas for my sermons and study groups here at my congregation on Long Island.

There is a growing interest in the congregation for the Bible, as a source of our people's roots, historically, culturally, religiously. We now have a growing Bible Study Group which began with the book

of Exodus. I have also distributed copies of the Society's three-year calender of bible readings, which everyone finds to be most valuable.

Both my congregants and I look forward to future publications of the Society. I wish you the best of luck in your work to spread a knowledge and familiarity with the Bible to the people of the Book.

Rabbi Steven A. Moss
Bnai Israel Reform Temple
Oakdale, New York

“Kotel” before dawn. From the light of day until evening there are always some of our brethren there; men and women who recite the Psalms or who study, especially so in time of stress and trouble. All day long the sound of prayer and supplication reverberates in this place. Men and women stand there in prayer both for themselves and for our brethren who are dispersed in the Diaspora until God will look down upon us and take pity upon us speedily and in our own days. When the evening shadows begin to gather, all the God-fearing Jews in the City gather at the Wall for Mincha and Maariv [afternoon and evening prayers]. In summertime there are sometimes as many as 200 people there. Some are not deterred even by the rains and storms of the winter from coming to recite the Mincha and Maariv prayers there. After the Maariv prayer each worshipper turns to the Holy Wall and recites a short prayer for himself, his household and the whole congregation of Israel, and for his relatives abroad.

KABBALAT SHABBATH

From midday and onwards on the eve of the holy Sabbath, men and women make their way to the Western Wall in their Sabbath attire in order to recite the Song of Songs, or to study some chapters of the Mishnah. The women return to their homes to light the Sabbath candles, and many women go to the Wall after lighting the candles.

The Sephardim come to the Wall in considerable numbers in order to recite the Mincha and the Kabbalat Shabbath [inauguration of the Sabbath prayers] in their own tunes, which are so pleasant to the ear, and sing the ‘L’cha Dodi’ [Beloved, Come and Meet the Bride, a glorification of the Sabbath] to their own special tune. It is their custom to hurry through their prayers, and they generally finish Mincha, Kabbalat Shabbat and Maariv prayers while it is still light, so that they recite the ‘Shema’ later on in their homes when the time for its recitation arrives, because they are God-fearing men and among them there are many Zaddikim [righteous people]. But the Hassidim and the men of good deeds among the Ashkenazim take a long time over their prayers on the night of the Holy Sabbath; most of them, shrouded in their tallith [prayer shawl], pray slowly and at ease, with awe and reverence. In summertime there are sometimes as many as one thousand or fifteen hundred men, women and children at the Wall on the eve of the holy Sabbath. How beautiful and pleasant it is then to share in the delight and gratification of the Chosen People. One stands there with love and awe, women at one end and men at the other, praying with feelings of joy, and

welcoming the Holy Sabbath with passionate affection and in a loud voice emanating from the depth of their hearts. The Kabbalat Shabbat is always concluded before the stars appear. When the stars become visible the congregation begins reciting the evening prayers, and at its conclusion they greet one another with the customary 'Gut Shabbes' in an air of joy and gladness, while the Sephardim, in their own language, use the greeting 'Shabbat Shalom', and every man goes his own way. At daybreak on the holy Sabbath, men and women are already to be seen there reciting prayers and supplications before the commencement of the statutory morning service. They betake themselves to the Wall also after prayers in the synagogue. But the Hassidim and men of good deeds repair thither to recite the Mussaf prayer in public and to make mention at the Western Wall of the 'additional offering for the Sabbath in due form.' At times several 'Minyanim' [quorums for prayer] begin reciting the Mussaf there. How pleasing to the ear are the many K'dusha recitations that one hears at the Wall, by which the congregations revere and sanctify the Holy One, Blessed be He, in the course of the Mussaf prayer, while the Kohanim [Jews of priestly descent] pronounce the priestly benedictions. After the Mussaf prayer many of our brethren remain behind at the Wall in prayer and supplication, or in order to recite the Psalms or to study, each according to his own abilities. Likewise for the Mussaf prayer on the New Moon . . . when they gather to pray at the place where the Shechina reposes, that the Holy One may take us up in gladness into our own land and plant us once more within our own boundaries.

SHALOSH REGALIM – PILGRIMAGE FESTIVALS

All male adults among the residents of the Holy City are present there for the Mussaf prayers on the three pilgrimage festivals, in order to stand before our Holy Wall. Also from all other cities in our Holy Land and from countries abroad many people come to Jerusalem in order to undertake the pilgrimage and visit the Lord God in His holy dwelling place. For that reason there is such a great crush for the Mussaf prayer at the Western Wall that there is no room there to turn either right or left. At times there are as many as several thousand people there at one and the same time. There is a coming and going at the Wall throughout the day on the festivals. On the eve of the Passover, not even a thousand sheets of paper would suffice to describe the wonderful sight that one beholds at this holy place, for every man in whose heart there is a fear of God

comes to recite the Order of the Paschal sacrifice in this place which is holy to God, in memory of the paschal sacrifice that was offered in this holy place in days of yore. On that occasion tears flow like water when every man calls to his mind's eye the great crowds and tumult that was here in the time when the Temple was in existence, when thousands upon thousands of the multitudes of Israel gathered there with their families to sacrifice the paschal lamb; when the priests were at their appointed service and the Levites at their song and the Israelites stood by their Paschal offerings reciting the 'Hallel'—when Israel went out of Egypt from slavery to freedom. But now, on account of our sins, the glory has departed from the house of our life and the grandeur of our Holy Temple has vanished. At this time we stand at the site of our Holy Temple, but we have no priests at their service nor Levites standing at their rostrum, nor paschal and whole-burnt offerings; all that is left to us is the bitterness of exile. How, therefore, can one help pouring out one's heart like water? Surely the ear of every Jew must be grieved at all this . . .

THE DAY OF ATONEMENT

On the day before the Day of Atonement from morning until evening the scene is a thousandfold more impressive. Even small children are taken on the shoulders of their parents to see and behold our Holy Wall. At a distance of several hundred yards on the way leading to the Kotel stand the poor and destitute, and every man, even if he be the poorest of the poor, distributes charity on his way to the Kotel on this holy and awe-inspiring day, in order to redeem his soul and to make atonement for himself and his household. It is impossible to describe the pressure and crush in this place on this day before Yom Kippur. Only with great effort is it possible for one to draw near to kiss the holy stones, because it is most difficult to approach the Holy Wall on account of the thousands of people who stand there in prayer and in confession of their sins throughout the year, and in order to make supplication for themselves and their relatives and for all our brethren in the Diaspora, for life, peace and well-being. The tears flow from the eyes of the congregation in torrents. And every man wishes his fellow, whether he knows him or not, from the bottom of his heart, a good year, a year of peace and contentment, and that our prayers on the following day of holiness and awe may be accepted, and that he may be inscribed in the book of life, sustenance and bounty. When evening arrives each man makes his

way to his own synagogue for the Kol Nidre and Maariv prayers. Most of the people are awake all night at the Western Wall, reciting hymns and songs of praise. Others repair to the Wall at daybreak in order to recite psalms and prayers, and afterwards hurry back to their synagogues for the statutory Day of Atonement prayers. But about 50 or 60 people remain behind to pray at the Western Wall throughout this holy day, until evening.

TISHA B'AV

How awe-inspiring and reverential is the scene on the 9th day of the month of Ab, on which our glory departed through the burning of the dwelling places of our God, the First and Second Temples. On the eve of the 9th of Ab comparatively few Jews, only about 30 or 40 of the Ashkenazim and Hassidim, come there to recite the evening prayer, in fear and trembling. An awe inspiring silence pervades the holy place. After the Maariv prayer they all sit on the ground and one of them begins to read from the Book of Lamentations in a low voice, while all the time the eyes are strained on the Western Wall. Tears flow from all eyes and all hearts melt away in sorrow, and even the Gentiles who dwell in the vicinity tremble at the sound of the weeping. The gloom and darkness that pervade the whole of the area around instil terror into the hearts of everyone who stands there and listens to the mourning of these beloved sons of Zion and who sees them prostrating themselves to the ground and bemoaning the Destruction at the Wall. When the Lamentations are over they ask one another: 'How much longer shall there be mourning and weeping in Zion, dear brother? How long will the Shechinah be in exile?' Then once again they break out in unceasing wailing and lament. And they say: 'Come and let us return unto the Lord who will perchance behold our suffering and return unto us that which has been taken to exile.'

Then old men and women begin arriving at the Wall from all sides. They sit on the ground and with lowered heads begin reciting the midnight prayers and the prayers for the three watches of the night. The ground almost trembles with the weeping and sobbing, and everyone says: 'Indeed, it is fitting that I should weep, for whoever did not witness the rebuilding of the Temple in his own days, it is accounted unto him as though he witnessed its destruction. It is on account of our sins that the Holy Temple has not been rebuilt in my time. Woe is me! It is as though I see it in its destruction at this very moment. It is as though I witness the

Gentile entering the Holy Shrine and burning the Holy Temple before our own eyes.' In this way everyone weeps and mourns, tears rolling down their cheeks. They lie on the ground, their arms and legs stretched out, sick at heart. The moaning and weeping and mourning for Jewry dispersed among the nations and given no peace rises to high heaven.

HOW DOTHTHE CITY SIT SOLITARY

Groups come and go and the procedure is repeated. They sit on the ground, sprinkle dust on their heads and cry out: 'Woe to the eyes that beheld the stones of the Wall of our Holy Temple in its ruin and desolation.'

This takes place throughout the night. In the morning, when the prayers and lamentations in the synagogues are over, the congregations again betake themselves to the Western Wall where they sit on the ground, the men and women apart, and again begin to recite the Book of Lamentations: 'How doth the city sit solitary,' with much weeping. The women read the Book of Lamentations in the language that they understand, in such plaintive tones and with so much weeping that even a heart of stone must melt at the sight.

And even though the sun beats down mercilessly upon the heads of the worshippers, no one so much as feels the oppressive heat—so deep is the mourning and sorrow.

Among the Sages of Jerusalem there were those who regarded prayer at the Western Wall as the be-all and end-all. It is related of the saintly Rabbi Rachamim Antebi that throughout his life he was in the habit of conducting himself like all mourners in Zion. He never wore shoes but only wooden-soled sandals on his stockingless feet, nor did he ever partake of meat and wine. He was in the habit of going to the Western Wall at midnight every day of the year, summer and winter, in order to recite the "Hatzot" prayers and to weep for the destruction of the Temple, up to the day of his death. The Moslems, too, respected him and never molested him. He was known to both Jews and Moslems as the "Sheikh of Mercy."

THE LAWS OF SABBATH

BIBLICAL SOURCES

BY HYMAN ROUTTENBERG

PART V

According to the Sifre the Torah refers to the Sabbath as 'a day of gladness'. Thus on the verse in Numbers 10:10, "Also in the day of your gladness, and in your appointed seasons, and in your new moons, ye shall blow with the trumpets" the Sifre comments: "in the day of your gladness," this refers to the Sabbaths.

— Sifre, 77

There is also evidence from Hosea that the Sabbath is a day of joy. The prophet warns, however, that this joy will cease when the people go into exile. "I will cause all her mirth to cease, her feasts, her new moons and her sabbaths, and all her appointed seasons."

— Hosea 2:13

Because the Sabbath is a day of joy there is to be no mourning on that day. This the Yerushalmi derives from Proverbs 10:22, "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich"—this is the blessing of the Sabbath; "and He addeth no sorrow, therewith"—this is mourning.

— Yerushalmi, Moed Katan 3, 5

"וביום שמחתכם ובמועדיכם

"ובראשי חדשכם

(כמדבר י', י')

"וביום שמחתכם" — אלו

שבתות.

ספרי ע"ז

והשבתי כל משושה, חגה,

חדשה ושבתה וכל מועדה.

הושע ב', י"ג

אין אבל בשבת דכתיב

"ברכת ה' היא תעשיר" זו

ברכת שבת; "ולא יוסיף

עצב עמה", זו אבלות (משלי

י', כ"ב).

ירושלמי מועד קטן ג', ה'.

Dr. Routtenberg, ordained rabbi from Yeshiva University, Ph.D. from Boston University, had a distinguished career in the U.S. rabbinate before retiring in Israel. He is the author of *Amos of Tekoa* in which he explored the rabbinic interpretations of the prophet.

The Sabbath is to be honored not only when it is ushered in but also when it is ushered out.

— Shabbath 119b

The table is to be set and all other preparations are to be made on Friday in honor of the Sabbath. If one is on the road on Friday, he should return home early enough to make the necessary preparations for the Sabbath. All of these laws are derived from Isaiah 58:13: "And call the Sabbath a delight . . . and thou shalt honor it."

—Succah 44b

To sum up, we see from the rabbinic interpretations of Isaiah 58:13 that the prophet Isaiah has added new dimensions to the concept of the Sabbath. He is the only one among the prophets who declared that there are positive aspects to its observance. The Sabbath is not only a day on which we abstain from work, but a day to be honored and a day of delight. It was Isaiah who clarified for us the uniqueness and special character of the day. Because the Lord rested on the Sabbath, this day is to be honored above all other days of the week. Because the Lord blessed the Sabbath and sanctified it, we are to observe it as a day of rest and a day of delight. It is to be a festive day, a day of joy, as well as a day of spiritual regeneration. We are to honor the day and call it a delight by wearing special garments, by making our meals festive, and by devoting a part of the day to the study of Torah. Thus Isaiah has made an invaluable contribution to our understanding and appreciation of the true nature and spirit of the Sabbath.

אמר ר' אלעזר: לעולם יסדר
אדם שלחנו בע"ש אע"פ
שאינו צריך אלא לכזית.

ואמר ר' חנינא: לעולם יסדר
אדם שלחנו במוצאי שבת
אע"פ שאינו צריך אלא
לכזית.

שבת קי"ט ע"ב

במוצ"ש — נמי כבוד שבת
ללוות ביציאתו דרך כבוד
כאדם המלוה את המלך
בצאתו מן העיר — רש"י.

אמר אייבו משום רבי אלעזר
בר צדוק: אל יהלך אדם
בערבי שבתות יותר מג'
פרסאות.

סוכה מ"ד ע"ב

לא יהלך וכו' — אלא
ישבות לו בעוד יום גדול
ויכין לו סעודה שבת —
רש"י.

BOOK REVIEW

ARCHEOLOGY OF THE BIBLE: BOOK BY BOOK

BY

GAALYAH CORNFELD

AND DAVID NOEL FREEDMAN (Consulting Editor)

Harper and Row, Publisher, 1976

Of the many popular intellectual pastimes, archeology is probably at the top of the list. In Israel this is doubly so, since it is the land of the Bible and so much can be understood about it from the findings of archeology. Furthermore, since wide areas for exploration have been opened up since the Six-Day War in 1967, exciting discoveries have been made which keep the media busy with stimulating news and the scholars occupied with their interpretations. For young people the world over, a personal experience of participation in a dig during their school vacations, and often longer, has lent an additional dimension to its continuing and growing popularity. For the lover of Bible, archeology is certainly a fascinating pursuit.

Numerous histories have been written which have brought a greater understanding of the Bible through archeological illustrations. These volumes have been primarily systematic histories or overviews of archeology, containing many allusions to biblical interpretations. Many hitherto strange biblical passages have been illuminated by the discoveries of parallel customs and legal practices of neighboring countries. The one common denominator of all these many valuable treatises is the central treatment of history or

archeology per se, with biblical references discussed as they fit into the structural sequence of the respective themes. "Archeology of the Bible: Book by Book" by Gaalyah Cornfeld, as the title clearly indicates, is structured along the sequence of the Biblical books. Its uniqueness consists in the fact that it is a book-by-book interpretation of the Bible from the vantage point of archeology. Presenting the latest findings of biblical archeology, it is the first archeological commentary of the Bible. It discusses the relevant archeological discoveries as they reflect on the Bible's historical and social backgrounds. With the Bible in hand, readers will find this volume valuable in gaining greater insights into the biblical text.

One of the difficulties for the non-specialists interested in the Bible, for whom this volume is intended (as stated in its book flap), is that as a commentary it lacks a cohesiveness and comprehensiveness which other books dealing with biblical history or archeology possess. As a commentary, it is restricted to specific chapters or biblical incidents rather than to more comprehensive themes which can be developed through numerous enriching biblical cross-references. This shortcoming is mostly overcome by the comfortable succession

of themes as they appear in the order of the biblical chapters. Yet the reader might have preferred a more cohesive development of the book's themes.

Another problem for the non-specialist is the lack of clarity in the treatment of the varying opinions of archeologists. True enough, in a rapidly developing science like archeology, unanimity among scholars is not possible, nor is it desirable. Yet a balance among various schools of thought could have been maintained. A case in point is the dating of the patriarchs. Most archeologists would favor Albright's dating—the 18th or 17th century BCE. The author of our volume prefers Binyamin Mazar's much later dating. As one reads the book, he searches in vain for a balanced treatment. For this reviewer, the picture

becomes more complicated ever since the Ebla findings. No less a scholar than David Noel Freedman, the consulting editor of our volume, gave these Ebla discoveries great prominence in the recent press.

If the Ebla findings reflect the "sitz im leben" of Abraham's family, shall we put his life in the period antedating the Mazar theory by a thousand years? Though Ebla is mentioned by the author, its impact apparently had not struck deeply enough before publication of the book to favor it with more than a discursive allusion.

Notwithstanding these reservations, the book is an important contribution for biblical background and will be enjoyed by students of Bible.

Louis Katzoff

BIBLE TRANSLATIONS AND MISTRANSLATIONS

BY CHAIM ABRAMOWITZ

The Bible has been translated in every language, and almost in every "non-language" in the world. In addition it has been translated and retranslated many times in any one particular major language. Since a translation becomes in effect a commentary by reflecting a particular point of view, a new translation will be undertaken by one who disagrees with the previous translator. The Jewish Publication Society version, for instance, was intended to offset the christological allusions of the Revised Version.

However, there are Bible editions

which have a different purpose other than a new translation. Some of these are:

The Readers Bible printed the Revised Version in a chapter and paragraph form rather than in the traditional chapter and verse.

The Polyglot Bible printed in four parallel columns the original Hebrew, the Greek Septuagint, the Latin Vulgate and the German Luther translation.

The Polychrome Bible printed the Hebrew in which the E,J,P, and D codes are each in a different color.

The Good News Bible converted all weights and measurements into modern terminology.

The Liberation Bible is a Spanish edition illustrated with communist and leftist ideological pictures as, for instance, a picture of N.Y. City with the pseudo biblical phrase: "Come, I will show you a big city. It is full of prostitutes." There are also pictures of Martin Luther King and leftist Bishop Helder Camara among the Old Testament's prophets.

MISTRANSLATIONS

There are other Bible additions which have won fame because of typographical errors. Among these are:

The Sinner's Bible:

Due to the accidental omission of the word "not", the seventh commandment reads: Thou shalt commit adultery.

The Fool's Bible:

Omitting the word "no", Psalm 14:1 reads: The fool hath said in his heart there is a God.

The Funny Bible:

Substituting "camels" for damsels, Genesis 24:61 tells us that: Rebecca arose with her camels.

The Idle Bible:

Wishing to use the Authorized Version's "idol sheperd" instead of "worthless shepherd" preferred by the British and American versions, and mis-

spelling "idol", it has Zecharia (11:17) exclaim: Woe to the idle shepherd.

The Printers Bible:

Confusing "princes" with "printers", it has the psalmist (119:161) bemoan: Printers have persecuted me without cause.

The Breeches Bible:

Not being satisfied with ordinary fig leaves, Genesis 3:7 reads: and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves breeches.

The Fishes Bible:

Putting "fishes" in place of "fishers" Ezekiel 47:10 reads: and it shall come to pass that the fishes shall stand upon it.

The Lions Bible:

Writing "Lions" for "loins", I Kings 8:19 reads: but thy son shall come out of thy lions. In the same edition it had the murderer in Numbers 35:16 "put together" instead of "put to death."

And what may be called the "Sex-Confused Bible" one tells that Ruth—"he went unto the city" and another that "A man may not marry his grandmother's wife (instead of "father's wife"—Lev. 20:11). All these misprint editions are out of circulation and remain collectors' items.

Now we can appreciate the (masorettes) attempt to keep the Hebrew version of the Bible free of errors.

FIFTEENTH WORLD YOUTH BIBLE CONTEST

This year's fifteenth World Youth Bible Contest, which took place on Israel's 30th anniversary in Jerusalem at the Jerusalem Theater, was most symbolic. There were thirty contestants. The first four places were swept by a strong Israeli "team". The final questions were to find three verses in Scripture where "Peace" and "Truth" are found in close association.

The thirty finalists represented more than 60,000 youth from twelve countries around the world, who participated in local, regional and national contests. Hosted by the Gadna Youth Corps, the pre-military youth division of the Israeli Army, this group went through three additional phases of tests before the final contest. Still they found time for tours and visits, culminating in a reception tendered in the Beth Hanasi, where Prof. Ephraim Katzir, President of the State of Israel, presented medallions to all the contestants.

Eli Saroussi, a seventeen year old Israeli youth, reaping a perfect score, was the unquestioned "Hatan Hatanakh". As Prime Minister Menahem Begin presented the prizes, he planted a kiss on the winner's brow. In a moving closing address, Begin stressed the two central events which took place on Israel's Independence Day: the display of military power and the Bible contest, symbolic of the military and spiritual renewal of Israel.

The Bible contest was organized by the World Jewish Bible Society in co-operation with the Gadna Youth Corps, under the command of Col. Hillel Ben-Meir, and co-ordinated by Major (Rabbi) Mordecai Abramovski.

Rhona Levine, a student of the Bialik Hebrew Day School in Toronto, Canada, and Yitzhak Mauas, a student of the Beth-Joseph Karo school in Buenos Aires in Argentina, came in fifth and sixth, respectively.

WORLD JEWISH BIBLE SOCIETY

MEMBERSHIP (Tax deductible in USA) \$10

WORLD JEWISH BIBLE SOCIETY
18 Abarbanel St., P.O.B. 7024
Jerusalem, Israel

Remittance for membership is enclosed

Name
Street
City State Zip

PARTICIPATING IN THE CONTEST:

Argentina

Sergio Sygal
Yitzhak Mauas

Australia

Ben Davis

Belgim

Marcel Gotlib
Elie Holzer

Chile

Simon Gurovich

Canada

Ziv Gamliel
Rhona Levine

England

Tova Hofmann

France

Emmanuel Picard
Gary Temstett
Shalom Bettan

Israel

Zvi Bazak
Elazar Tannenbaum
Elie Saroussi
Mordecai Biton

Mexico

Joseph Tawil
Louis Befeler
Eli Auadi

South Africa

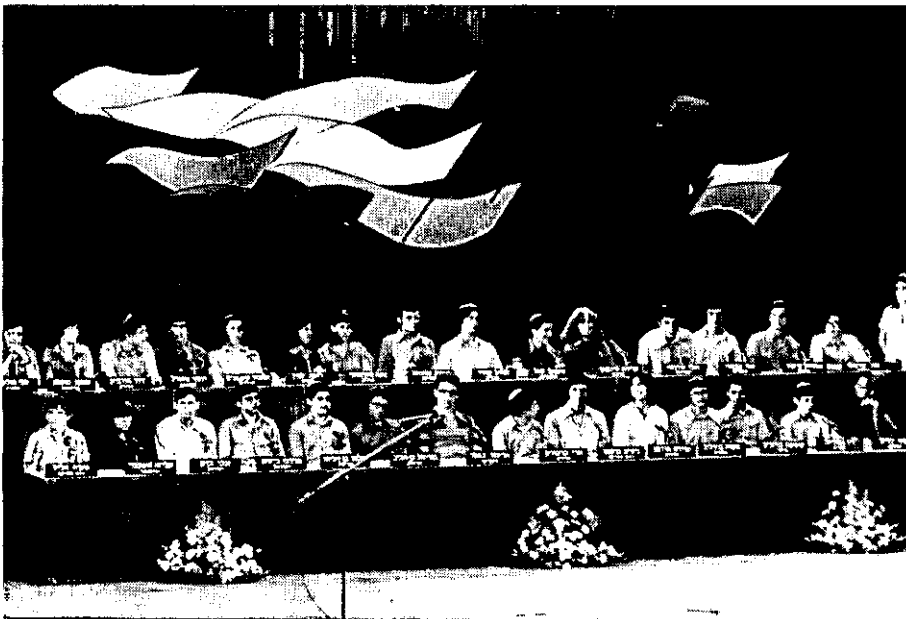
Moshe Ellis
Neville Berkman

Uruguay

Alice Eskenazi

U.S.A.

David Kranzler
Ari Bergwerk
Joseph Davis
Daniel Meyer
Shira Goodman
Hana Lukinski
David Horowitz
Shira Sincoff



Thirty Finalists of the Fifteenth World Jewish Youth Bible Contest

TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

With these pages we are introducing the third 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.

October 1978	תשרי חשל"ט	November 1978	חשוון חשל"ט
M 2 ראש השנה	א	W 1 Joshua 14	א
T 3 ראש השנה	ב	Th 2 Joshua 15	ב
W 4 Joshua 1	ג צום גדליה	F 3 Isaiah 54-55:5	ג
Th 5 Joshua 2	ד	Sa 4 נח	ד
F 6 Hosea 14:2-10	ה	Su 5 Joshua 16	ה
Sa 7 וילך	ו שבת שירה	M 6 Joshua 17	ו
Su 8 Joshua 3	ז	T 7 Joshua 18	ז
M 9 Joshua 4	ח	W 8 Joshua 19	ח
T 10 ערב יום כפור	ט	Th 9 Joshua 20	ט
W 11 יום כפור	י	F 10 Isaiah 40:27-41:16	י
Th 12 Joshua 5	יא	Sa 11 לך לך	יא
F 13 II Samuel 22	יב	Su 12 Joshua 21	יב
Sa 14 האזינו	יג	M 13 Joshua 22	יג
Su 15 Joshua 6	יד ערב סוכות	T 14 Joshua 23	יד
M 16 סוכות	טו	W 15 Joshua 24	טו
T 17 סוכות	טז	Th 16 Judges 1	טז
W 18 Joshua 7	יז חול המועד סוכות	F 17 II Kings 4:1-37	יז
Th 19 Joshua 8	יח חול המועד סוכות	Sa 18 וירא	יח
F 20	יט חול המועד סוכות	Su 19 Judges 2	יט
Sa 21	כ שבת חול המועד סוכות	M 20 Judges 3	כ
Su 22 הושענא רבה	כא	T 21 Judges 4	כא
M 23 שמיני עצרת	כב	W 22 Judges 5	כב
T 24 שמחת תורה	כג	Th 23 Judges 6	כג
W 25 Joshua 9	כד	F 24 I Kings 1:1-31	כד
Th 26 Joshua 10	כה	Sa 25 חיי שרה	כה
F 27 Isaiah 42:5-43:10	כו	Su 26 Judges 7	כו
Sa 28 בראשית	כז	M 27 Judges 8	כז
Su 29 Joshua 11	כח	T 28 Judges 10	כט
M 30 Joshua 12	כט	W 29 Judges 10	כט
T 31 Joshua 13	ל	Th 30 Judges 11	ל

December 1978		כסלו תשל"ט	December 1978	טבת תשל"ט			
F	1	Malachi 1-2:7	Su	31	I Samuel 11	א	חנוכה
Sa	2	תולדות	January 1979				
Su	3	Judges 12	M	1	I Samuel 12	ב	חנוכה
M	4	Judges 13	T	2	I Samuel 13	ג	
T	5	Judges 14	W	3	I Samuel 14	ד	
W	6	Judges 15	Th	4	I Samuel 15	ה	
Th	7	Judges 16	F	5	Ezekiel 37:15-28	ו	
F	8	Hosea 12:13-14:10	Sa	6	ויגש	ז	
Sa	9	ויצא	Su	7	I Samuel 16	ח	
Su	10	Judges 17	M	8	I Samuel 17	ט	
M	11	Judges 18	T	9	I Samuel 18	י	צום י' טבת
T	12	Judges 19	W	10	I Samuel 19	יא	
W	13	Judges 20	Th	11	I Samuel 20	יב	
Th	14	Judges 21	F	12	I Kings 2:1-12	יג	
F	15	Hosea 11:7-12:12	Sa	13	ויחי	יד	
Sa	16	וישלח	Su	14	I Samuel 21	טו	
Su	17	I Samuel 1	M	15	I Samuel 22	טז	
M	18	I Samuel 2	T	16	I Samuel 23	יז	
T	19	I Samuel 3	W	17	I Samuel 24	יח	
W	20	I Samuel 4	Th	18	I Samuel 25	יט	
Th	21	I Samuel 5	F	19	Isaiah 22:6-28:13	כ	
F	22	Amos 2:6-3:8	Sa	20	שמות	כא	
Sa	23	וישב	Su	21	I Samuel 26	כב	
Su	24	I Samuel 6	M	22	I Samuel 27	כג	
M	25	I Samuel 7	T	23	I Samuel 28	כד	
T	26	I Samuel 8	W	24	I Samuel 29	כה	
W	27	I Samuel 9	Th	25	I Samuel 30	כו	
Th	28	I Samuel 10	F	26	Ezekiel 28:25-29:21	כז	
F	29	Zechariah 2:14-4:7	Sa	27	וארא	כח	
Sa	30	מקץ	Su	28	I Samuel 31	כט	
		שבח חנוכה					

עשה תורתך קבע

If you wish to receive copies of our complete Triennial Bible Reading Calendar for yourself or your friends please write to: Editor, World Jewish Bible Society, P.O.B. 7024, Jerusalem, Israel.

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