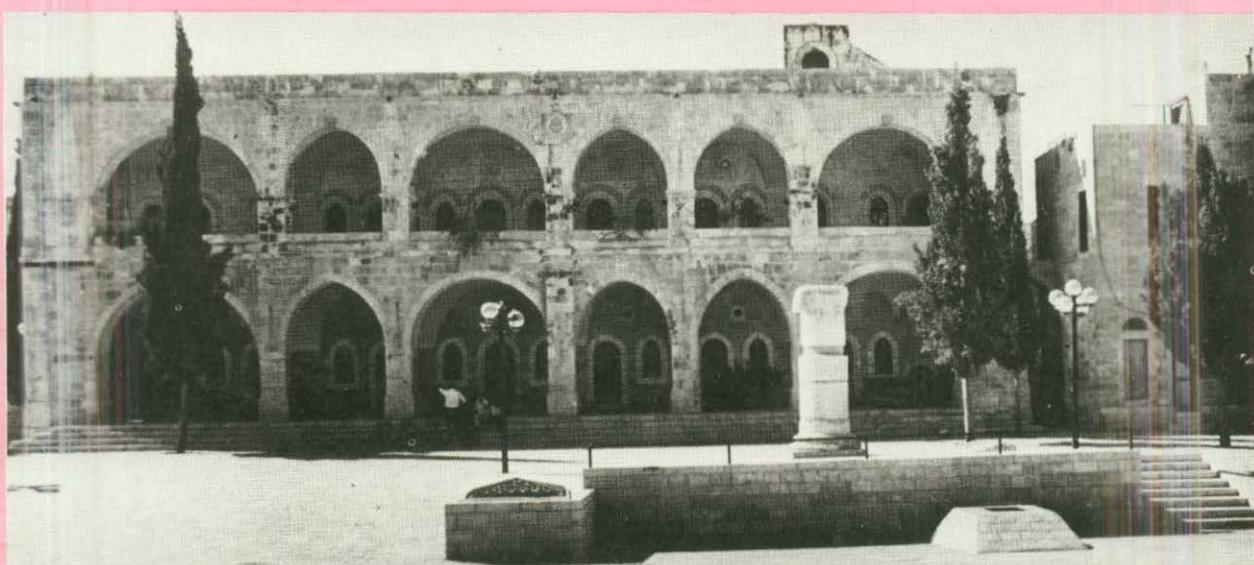


דור לדור DOR Le DOR

Our Biblical Heritage



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GYNOMORPHIC IMAGERY IN EXILIC ISAIAH (40–66)

BY LEILA LEAH BRONNER

The Bible portrays the many sided activities of a God who is concerned with human life and experience. The patriarchal character of Scripture has been well documented and described.¹ Recently studies have appeared showing that world history was primarily male orientated depicting the activities of “mankind” and not “humankind”.² Historians have recorded the activities of power elites and the institutions which have affected individuals on the social level, while relationships as marriage, the family — have remained until recent times outside the scope of historical inquiry.³ Women did not and do not feature prominently in the history of any civilisation.⁴ Women were, and to an extent still are, even in the Western world, conditioned to marriage and motherhood, their talents in other spheres remaining dormant. Man’s talents are mothered in all societies, while woman’s talents are often even today smothered.

The Biblical world was not more male orientated than most other ancient civilisations. Life in previous ages was less institutionalised than today and therefore *exceptional women* featured prominently in the Bible as in the annals of other histories.

This paper takes its impetus from recent research on the female role in the Biblical milieu, and will discuss gynomorphic imagery in the Bible with special reference to Exilic Isaiah (40–66).⁴

1. De Vaux R., *Ancient Israel*, 2 Vol. 1965; Pederson, J., *Israel, Its life and culture*, 2 Vol. 1964.
2. Minnich, E.K., *A Devastating Conceptual Error: How Can we not be Feminist Scholars?* Change, Magazine of Higher Learning, (April 1982), pp. 7–9. Howe F., *Feminist Scholarship*, *ibid.*, pp. 12–20.
3. Shoub, M., *Jewish Women's History: Development of a Critical Methodology*. Conservative Judaism Vol. XXXV. num. 2 Winter 1982, p. 33 ff. and Bibliography mentioned in this article.
4. Tribble P., *Depatriarchalising in Biblical Interpretation*. Journal of the American Academy of Religion XLI (1973), pp. 30–; Aschkenasy, N., *A non-Sexist Reading of the Bible*, Midstream, Leila L. Bronner (D. Litt.), Associate Professor, Department of Hebrew Studies, University of the Witwatersand, Johannesburg, is well known as an academic author and lecturer. She has published many books and papers on Biblical and historical subjects and has lectured at various universities and to lay audiences on Biblical and historical themes in America and Israel.

The most striking feminine imageries in exilic Isaiah are those comparing God's actions to that of a mother bearing, caring, carrying and comforting her children. Exilic Isaiah, like his predecessors, Hosea and Jeremiah, frequently refers to the Exodus experience, expressing the view that the new Exodus would be more wondrous than the former in the days of Moses. Therefore the theme of the going out from Egypt and of the wandering tradition is relevant to our theme, as in this experience God is depicted as reacting to the people's murmurings by supplying them with food and water. The type scenes at the well always depict the woman as drawing water to supply the needs of the family⁵. The alphabetic poem of the woman of valour depicts the woman as wife and mother providing the victual needs of the family. When the Children of Israel complain about the food provided for them, Moses interestingly uses feminine imagery to record their protest:

*Did I conceive this people, did I bring them forth?
that thou should say to me, carry them in your bosom
as a nurse that carries the suckling child,
to the land that thou didst swear to give to their fathers.*⁶

Num. 11:12

The picture of God as fulfilling the functions of a mother in this passage are clearly implied. The root *hārāh* (הרה) conjures up the image of pregnancy. The root *yālād* (ילד) is used for bringing forth children. Moses complains about the unbearable burden which the people are to him. He is, after all, not the mother and nurse of the people, and is therefore not obligated to fulfil maternal duties towards them. This reproach on the part of Moses to God intimates indirectly that God is the mother of the people, as is evident from the repeated stress on the pronoun "I", suggesting: "not I, but you". *The real point of this figure is that God's care is compared to that of a mother's. The picture of God as performing the functions of mother is here remarkably stringent.*⁶

June/July 1981. Vol. XXVII. No. 6, p. 51-55. Daly, M., *Beyond God the Father*, Beacon Press, Boston 1973, Radford Reuther, R., *Religion and Sexism*, Simon and Shuster, New York, 1974.

5. Alter, R., *The Art of the Biblical narrative*, Basic books, Inc. 1980, p. 51 ff.

6. Botterweck, G.J., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*. W B Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1972, Vol. 1, p. 17.

In this context it is interesting to mention Deuteronomy 32:18 which states:

You were unmindful of the rock that begat you, ילדך
and hast forgotten God who formed thee. מחוללך

The word in the first line of the parallel phrase translated “begat” is a possible translation but the word is more usually used in relation to a woman giving birth, where it means to bear or to bring forth a child. But the verb translated “who formed thee” in the second line, is a participle po‘el form from “hill” (חיל), which means to bring forth with pain, or sorrow. It is used to describe a woman giving birth. In this instance it speaks of God who brought forth Israel with difficulty, and formed them into a nation. Deuteronomy 32 presents another motherly image:

*Like an eagle that stirs up its nest
 that flutters over the young
 spreading out its wings, catching them,
 bearing them on its pinions . . .
 the Lord alone did lead him.*

Deut. 32:11 ff

The idea of motherhood, taken from life of birds, is here well preserved, though the verbs are all in masculine form. It reminds one of the tendency today to continue to speak of “mankind”, though women work in many, if not most, fields.

In Hosea, the Lord is described as the parent who teaches the child to walk, heals his wounds and feeds the hungry infant. These activities really belong to the mother, not to the father. While depicting God as a man, Israel rejected both anthropomorphisms and andromorphisms. Hosea offers a paradox of affirming yet denying anthropomorphic language in this passage. *The opposition is between God and human beings, the latter being revengeful, the former merciful. So Hosea 4:4 is used not to stress the masculine but the human personality.* This concept is dramatically conveyed by Hosea (11:1–11) stating emphatically: *For I am God (El) and not man (‘ish).*

In other words, God in ancient Israel was regarded as including in his nature both feminine and masculine attributes, both the nature and function of father

and mother; He is both parents.⁷ The limitations of language often prevent the full implication from being concretely conveyed and understood.

Trible sees a reference to God making the clothes for His people in Nehemiah 9:21 and this she correctly regards primarily as a feminine function. The writer feels that Nehemiah is not speaking about making clothes, but rather about preserving clothes. This is not a human activity but rather a divine miracle. In Genesis, God is described as making clothes for Adam and Eve and the same verb 'āsā (עשה) is used here as in the woman-of-valour poem where she makes clothes for her family (Gen. 3:21; Prov. 31:21 ff). The verb 'āsā when applied to God can have a variety of meanings. In Exilic Isaiah and Genesis 1:7, 16 etc., it is one of the verbs used together with the verbs yāšār (יצר) and bārāh (ברא) to describe God's creative activities. The verb 'āsā (עשה) occurs 2622 times in the Hebrew Bible and is thus a very general and all purpose verb, and one cannot conclude that the making of clothes was a special feminine activity.

The role of mother was the highest state a woman could achieve in relation to husband or family in the Biblical world. There were a few exceptional women here, as in other civilisations, who went beyond the home and achieved greatness but they were the exceptions and not the rule. A woman was regarded as achieving her true calling in life by bearing children and rearing them. It is interesting to note that Deborah, who was a prophetess, judge and leader in war, depicts herself as an "אם בישראל", "a mother in Israel". The writer believes that she designated herself thus because the status of the mother was highly esteemed. de Boer rejects this view and believes the word "em" (אם) connotated counsellor and had no connection with a mother in a family.

de Boer believes that the word mother could connote counsellor, and authoritative position, and that this gave rise eventually in Talmudic times to the exegetical term יש אם למקרא, "there is a mother for the reading", meaning there is authority for the reading.⁸ The phrase "mother in Israel" according to de Boer denotes one who determines the future as a counsellor. Yet one could suggest that de Boer's marshalling so many impressive facts to prove the importance of

7. Muilenberg, J., *The Interpreter's Bible*, Vol. 1, 1956, p. 301.

8. de Boer, P.A.H., *The Counsellor*, Supplements to *Vetus Testamentum* III, 1955, reprint 1969, p. 58 ff. *Fatherhood and Motherhood in Israelite and Judean Piety*, E J Brill, 1974, p. 31 ff.

the woman counsellor, could strengthen the writer's contention that the mother in the home was regarded as the counsellor of the family and played an authoritative role in the home. The woman-of-valour alphabetic poem indicates that the mother in the home was the guiding genius of the family, and as de Boer illustrates, the mother of the King called the "gevirah" (גְּבִירָה), the Lady, played a most important role at court. The image of a physical mother, active in the home, probably influenced the meaning counsellor as a guide of the people.

Whenever a feminine role is attributed to God it is always as *mother* and never as *wife*. The lack of interest in gynomorphic imagery in the past is well illustrated by the absence of articles on the word mother in most dictionaries of the Bible. The translation of Botterweck and Ringgren's 'Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament' was completed in 1977 when Feminism was aflame in the U.S.A. and yet it does not have an entry under אִמָּה mother, only under אָב, father.⁹

The experience of *birth* attracted the attention of many writers and prophets in the Bible. They mostly noted the negative aspect of this experience, the accompanying terrible pain, rather than the positive aspect – new life.

Jeremiah, the bachelor prophet, refers to this imagery most frequently.¹⁰ Jeremiah observes this phenomenon mostly from the negative aspect as a frightening ordeal or a moment when a warrior wanes weak. Jeremiah in his doom oracle states:

*Thus said the Lord, we have heard a cry of panic, of terror, no peace
Ask now and see can a man bear a child?
Why then do I see every man with his hands on his loins*

9. In this connection it might be interesting to note that in the Eumenides, by Aeschylus, Apollo puts forward the argument that only the father and not the mother is the real parent of the child. According to him, the mother is merely a nurse to the seed, the man is the source of life. Athena caps this sophistry by stating that she has no mother, only a father Zeus and therefore she is wholly for the male (Eumenides, v. 751). This is also the explanation of the ignominy attached to female barrenness. The barren woman was considered as one who killed or at least let die the living seed trusted to her by her husband (cf. Prov. 30:15, 16). Despite some works illustrating the contrary, the writer maintains that owing to exigencies of birth, the short life span, etc., women played a secondary role in all civilisations including the Bible, until the 20th century (Gould, Davis E., *The First Sex*, G.P. Putnam's Sons, N.Y. 1971).

10. Jer. 4:31; 6:24; 13:21; 22:23; 30:6; 48:41; 49:24; 50:43.

*like a woman in labour? Why has every face turned pale?
 Alas! that day is so great, there is none like it;
 it is a time of distress for Jacob.*

Jeremiah 30:5-7

Birth appears as a negative image, warrior turned woman, weak and cowardly. Often birth is used figuratively to depict the anguish and agony that gripped the people as they heard of the approach of the enemy. *Anguish has overwhelmed us, pain like that of a woman in childbirth* (Jer. 6:24).

Only Exilic Isaiah stressed the *positive side of the birth experience*. The pains and pangs of travail are employed to express unlimited pain and suffering, but more significant to show that from this experience new hope and life emerge. Isaiah depicts God as enduring the pains of childbirth.

*For a long time I have held my peace
 I have kept still and restrained myself;
 Now I will cry out like a woman in travail
 I will gasp and pant.*

Isaiah 42:14

The poet-prophet in this chapter displays a galaxy of pictures from creation to redemption, from former things to latter things. The verse immediately preceding the one under discussion speaks about God as a warrior:

*The Lord goes forth like a mighty man,
 like a man of war he stirs up his fury
 He cries out, he shouts aloud,
 he shows himself mighty against his foes.*

Isaiah 42:13

The prophet used the simile of a woman in travail to reinforce the break in God's silence and to show His readiness to take action. The image of God enduring the pains of childbirth has a dual purpose: First to illustrate how terrifying His shrieks are; the entire universe becomes alert and aware of God's changed intentions. Now, as shaken by convulsive emotions, God groans, He gasps and pants like a woman in travail. These are divine shrieks that shake the

world. Then the verse stresses another aspect of birth, its reviving quality; from the throes of these pains and pangs a new world would emerge. *God's creative power is considered through the image of a woman giving birth.* Birth becomes a creative concept. Eve's exclamation carries this tone of exhilaration: *I have begotten a man from the Lord* (Gen. 4:1). The verse under analysis is part of a salvation oracle, figuratively foretelling a new creation, the birth pangs of redemption.

God, laden with offspring, is an image often encountered in Exilic Isaiah:

Harken to me, O House of Jacob, all the remnant of Israel who have been borne by me from the womb, carried from the uterus, and until old age I am He, and to grey hairs am I carrying you. I will both bear, carry and save.

Isaiah 46:3

The participle "borne" (עמוסין) and the expression carried from the "womb" (רחם), all conjure up the gynomorphic image of God carrying and bearing a child, which is a motherly task. The verb 'amusin means to carry a load, but it is never used to depict a woman with child, yet it conjures up the image of the pregnant state effectively. The verse indicates however that the divine bearer and carrier achieves more than the human mother, for He will not only bear, carry and deliver, but will continue His concern until old age.

Particularly telling in this context is the verb va'amallet (ואמלט). It brings to mind immediately the picture presented in Isaiah 66:7-9, where the identical root is employed והמליטה (vehimliṭa).

*Before she was in labour she gave birth;
before her pain came upon her
she was delivered of a child. והמליטה*

Isaiah 66:7

The style is almost mysterious, and a painless birth of an unidentified woman is described. Eventually her identity is disclosed, it is Zion:

*For as soon as Zion was in labour
she brought forth her children.*

Isaiah 66:8

Zion giving birth is a unique metaphor and is meant to be understood as a miraculous birth indicative of the dawning of a new age.¹¹ The Lord identifies with the event:

Shall I bring to the birth and not cause to bring forth? says the Lord: shall I, who cause to bring forth, shut the womb? says your God.

Isaiah 66:9

Exilic Isaiah describes God's love as motherly love, and not as fatherly love.

Can a woman forget her suckling infant that she should have no compassion on the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.

Isaiah 49:15

The Book of Psalms describes God's love as fatherly love:

*As a father has compassion (כרחם) on his children
so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.*

Psalms 103:13

The Bible offers a picture and a precedent for both fatherly and motherly love. The image of the comforting mother which will be discussed below, occurs once in Isaiah (66:13). The image of the comforting father occurs once in Psalms. Exilic Isaiah used the motherly image often, yet the father's love features in later liturgies.

In Midrashic homilies, the Talmudic teachers allowed themselves considerable latitude in throwing light on the mystery of the deity by comparing Him to human beings of both sexes. The following passage quoted in the name of Shemuel bar Nahman, is most striking:

*‘It is the wont of the father to have mercy,
Like as the father has compassion upon his children
so has the Lord compassion upon them that fear Him;*

11. The DSS Isaiah omits *vehimlith*.

12. Tribble, P., *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Supplementary Volume, Abingdon Nashville, 1976, pp. 368–9. Botterick, G.J., *ibid.*, 6; Ringgren, H.V., 'abh, p. 1 ff.

and it is the wont of the mother to comfort,
as one whom his mother comforts, so will I comfort you
 God said: 'I shall do as both father and mother'.¹³

The prophet states that the deepest human love is that of a mother to her suckling child, because the infant is completely dependent on the mother for its very survival. The verse in Exilic Isaiah suggests that God's love is deeper even than this human bond of love. In spite of the above observations, the phrase about fatherly love featured prominently in religious literature, and in later Jewish prayers, and the feminine picture of motherly love was completely ignored. *This can be attributed to the authors of the prayers being male and relating to andromorphic imagery rather than gynomorphic imagery.*

Trible discusses the physical and psychic meanings of רחם womb, as a most appropriate term to describe compassion.

"Designating a place of protection and care the womb (reḥem) is a basic metaphor of divine compassion. The metaphor begins with a physical organ unique to the female and extends to psychic levels in the plural noun rahamim, mercies, in the adjectival form raḥum, merciful, and in uses of the verb ruḥam, to show mercy. It moves from the literal to the figurative, from the concrete to the abstract."¹⁴

The word rāḥūm (רחום) is often combined with the word ḥannūn (חנון) in the Bible to describe God's nature as merciful and gracious. It is possible that the word ḥannūn which is related with the noun ḥēn (חן), grace, meant originally "to long for" in the sense of the maternal instinct.¹⁵ Though only used of God, raḥūm is not the language of the father who creates by begetting but for the mother who creates by nourishing in the womb. The combined phrase of ḥannun and raḥūm occurs frequently in the Hebrew Bible to depict God's character and actions.¹⁶ In

13. Patai, R., *The Hebrew Goddess*, Avon Books, 1978, p. 115.

14. Tribble, P., *ibid.*, note 4, 12; de Boer, P.A.H., *Fatherhood and Motherhood in Israelite and Judean Piety*, E.J. Brill, 1974; *The Counsellor*, Supplements to Vetus Testamentum III, 1955, Reprint 1969, p. 58 ff.

15. Terrien, S., *Toward a Biblical Theology of Womanhood*, Religion in Life, Vol. 42, 1973, pp. 322 ff.

16. Cf. Ps. 114:4; Ps. 85:15; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2 etc.

Jeremiah the verbal form *arahēm* (אַרַחֵם) occurs in a consolation oracle replete with feminine imagery (Jer. 30:15–22). In light of the suggested origin of the word *raḥamim* from its association with the root for womb one should translate *raḥamim* (רַחֲמִים) as *motherly compassion*. Isaiah 49:15 intended to convey the physical and psychic meanings of womb as explained by Tribble and Terrien. By juxtaposing God and mother the prophet was able to express the depth of transcendent love.

The Exilic prophet employs moving maternal imagery to suggest the unfathomable love of God for his suffering people. God is depicted as a comforting mother by Isaiah, when he says: *As one whom his mother comforts so will I comfort you* (Isaiah 66:13). Most commentaries on Isaiah either paraphrase the verse or omit writing a comment explaining the gynomorphic imagery.

Targum Jonathan translates that as a man is comforted by his mother so my word will comfort you. He obviously avoids any suggestion of gynomorphic imagery, but this is in keeping with his exegetical approach which avoids anthropomorphisms. Rashi and Mezudat Zion do not comment on v. 13, while Kimchi explains it to mean that as one whom his mother comforted after he had experienced much suffering, so God will comfort Israel after their troubled exile experience. Mezudat David comments that it is characteristic of the mother rather than the father to offer comfort and consolation.

More modern commentators either ignore or paraphrase the verse following the precedent set by the medieval exegetes. Luzzatto S.D. claims that this verse unravels the mystery of the previous parable dealing with Zion as a woman suckling her child. God is the comforter and Jerusalem will be the place of comfort. Krauss' Hebrew commentary follows Luzzatto. Most commentaries consulted by the writer with the exception of Westermann and Herbert ignore the gynomorphic aspect. Westermann in his recent commentary to Isaiah makes a cogent comment in this connection:

"This is the first time in the Old Testament that the witness borne to YHWH breaks through the reserve which elsewhere it observes so strictly and associates feminine predications with him."¹⁷

17. Westermann, C., *Isaiah 40–66*, SCM Press Ltd., 1969, p. 420.

Though the writer has pointed out other instances of gynomorphic imagery, Westermann's reference is interesting as illustrating that more recent commentaries begin to take note of gynomorphic imagery.

The exegetes of the Hebrew Bible, like the writers of world history were primarily male and they perceived the world and many still do in spite of the rise of feminism, through the lens of male experience. Herbert in another recent commentary takes mother as referring to Zion and not to God.

She (Zion) is described as the mother of the people of God and therefore the earthly counterpart of God, who in a remarkable phrase is also likened to a mother comforting her children.¹⁸

Biblical scholars' inability to cope with gynomorphic imagery is illustrated by Jeremiah 51:5. Many commentators have changed the reading of the text from 'alman (אֱלִמָּן) to 'almanah, to prevent the possibility of seeing God as the widow and the people, the husband, the reverse of the usual imagery, God as husband, and Israel as wife. The commentaries who translate this verse do not even note the problem, just change the word. The writer found that Laetsch in his commentary gave the best translation. Though not indicating that the Hebrew text has 'alman, he at least translates it with an appropriate word, widowed rather than forsaken. Exilic Isaiah depicts Zion on two occasions as a forsaken woman but employs the Hebrew word עֲזוּבָה for depicting her lonely state and need for redemption by a redeemer גּוֹאֵל.¹⁹

Reuther suggests that the Old Testament rejection of female symbols for God and perhaps also of female religious leaders, except for a few prophetesses and wise women figures, had something to do with the struggle against Canaanite religion with its powerful Goddess figures. She maintains that the Old Testament intentionally suppressed the female element but some vestiges remain, especially in Exilic Isaiah which has led Reuther to suggest that influences from the exilic

18. Herbert, *Isaiah 40-66*, Cambridge Bible Commentary Cambridge University Press, 1975, p. 194.

19. Laetsch, T., *Jeremiah, Bible Commentary*, Concordia Publishing House, 1965, p. 359; cf. Isa. 54:6, 7; 60:15, 16; 62:4; for Exilic Isaiah's use of the image of the forsaken woman redeemed by her go'el, her husband, referring to the Biblical well known custom in Ancient Israel (Genesis 38; Deut. 25:1-4; Book of Ruth).

environment should be more thoroughly investigated. These theories have not so far been empirically proven and further research in the field is desirable.²⁰

In this paper we have noted the various forms of feminine imagery in the Hebrew Bible. The most striking are those which depict God's activities as a mother bearing, carrying, caring and comforting children. A significant fact to emerge from this study was to note that whereas Isaiah 1–39 employs few feminine images, Isaiah 40–66 tends to draw imagery from family and female experience. A unifying feature of chapters 40–66 is the frequent feminine forms and the featuring of female experience. The family is the centre of all this prophet's metaphors, similes and personifications. This institution was the only stable feature of life left to the exiles. The father as husband, shepherd, warrior and king feature but so does the mother and her care of the children. When the Bible recalls forebears it is usually referring to the patriarchs only. Here the prophet calls on the people to:

Look unto the rock from whence you were hewn, and unto the hole of the pit whence you were digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bore you.

Isaiah 51:2

Sarah is likewise mentioned as the ancestress of the people and not only Abraham. The matriarchs are not nearly as frequently referred to as the patriarchs but there are a few instances where the matriarchs feature as in Jeremiah where he describes Rachel weeping for her children (Jer. 31:15–17), and Micha recalls that the prophetess Miriam together with her brothers Moses and Aaron as redeeming the people from the Egyptian exile (Micah 6:4).

The family and the life cycle, birth and marriage feature prominently. Pictures of the father and mother, the suckling child, sons and daughters, bride and groom, marriage, divorce, barrenness, widowhood and their accompanying customs fill the pages. The women's world is mirrored in these chapters by imagery of the bride, the mother, the nursing woman, the barren one, the widow redeemed from her lonely state, the fruitful mother embracing her sons and daughters. This illustrates this prophet's propensity to draw upon family and female imagery to visually convey a message.

20. Reuther, R.R., *The Feminine Face of the Church*, in *Enquiry*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 1975, p. 5.

The imageries of Isaiah 1–39 are drawn primarily from urban and agricultural vistas. The metaphors and similes are drawn from the vineyard, the cucumber garden, the animal kingdom and weapons of war and peace. The city people appear as greedy for gain, exploiting the poor, the needy, the widow and the orphan. Female imageries appear occasionally as when the prophet employs the images of a woman and child to convey concretely his message that the invading armies will speedily withdraw (Isaiah 7:14, 8:1–4). The prophet condemns the extravagance of the fashionable women of Jerusalem and foretells their widowhood owing to war which will bring in its wake a scarcity of men. He castigates the pampered women of Jerusalem who live lives of luxury and warns them of the punishments that are to come upon them. While in chapter 3:16 he even catalogues all the jewellery and garments worn by these elegantly dressed women of Jerusalem, in chapter 32:9–11, he addresses the women of the countryside. These women like their menfolk are heedless of the threat of invasion which will destroy the crops, there will be no harvest festival and these women will be unable to dance and sing and supposedly, he implies, show off all their fine clothes and ornaments. Instead of dancing, they will engage in rites of mourning for the dead, who will be numerous as a result of invasion and war. The image of the bride and groom rejoicing is conspicuously absent from his prophecies.

Each prophet drew imagery from his environment and life experience. Amos was a shepherd and pruner of sycamore trees and his language reflects these experiences. Jeremiah's early prophecies are set in his home town Anatot, while his consolation oracles have some striking female overtones. Though a bachelor, he often mentions the voice of the bride and groom.²¹

Exilic Isaiah (40–66) does not draw imagery from sedentary living as he depicts a people in a flux state, in exile. The surrounding scenery is not one of vineyards and vinepress, but a desert lacking trees and water. He speaks about the shepherd, nomadic life, but not about agricultural life. *He draws his imagery from the one form of security left to an exiled people — the family, and in that sphere the women's role is most significant; and this may account for the numerous gynomorphic images found in these chapters.*

21. Compare Amos 3:1 ff., 7:14 etc., Jeremiah 7:34; 16:9, 25:10, 33:11.

OBSERVATIONS ON TA-AMAY HA-MIKRA

BY EZEKIEL N. MUSLEAH

The musical rendition of biblical verses is a very old religious exercise. The traditional view attributes it to Sinaitic law – הלכה למשה מסיני. As we know them, the *Te-ameem* (טעמים) are post-Talmudic, probably the work of the scholars of Tiberias in the seventh century. The commonly used name, *Trope*, is borrowed from a term used in Gregorian church music in the sixth century.

Already in Talmudic times the Bible was rendered in sing-song fashion, with a pleasant chant.

אמר ר' שפטיה אמר ר' יוחנן: כל הקורא בלא נעימה (ושונה בלא ומרה) עליו הכתוב
אומר: וגם אני נתתי להם חקים לא טובים (יחזקאל כ:כ"ה)
Whoever does not read the Torah with a pleasant tune (or the Mishna
without sing-song) it is as though he thinks the Torah is not good (Ezek.
20:25). Rashi illustrates "pleasant tune" by referring to the Te-ameem
(Meg. 32a).

Cantillation is more than melody. It is an elaborate commentary on the biblical text. To understand the comments of the Massorettes let us explain one of the media they use.

Each diacritical sign is placed either above or below a word. It has two functions: One, it provides accentual directions, that is, it points to the syllable that is stressed. Two, it indicates the distinctive melody of the trope. Here is an example of the accentual function:

וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָם אֶת־שָׂרַי אִשְׁתּוֹ וְאֶת־לוֹט בֶּן־אָחִיו וְאֶת־כָּל־רְכוּשָׁם אֲשֶׁר רָכְשׁוּ וְאֶת־הַנֶּפֶשׁ
אֲשֶׁר־עָשׂוּ בְּחַבְלֵי לְלֶכֶת אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן:

*Abraham took his wife Sarai and his brother's son Lot, and all the wealth
that they had amassed, and the persons that they had acquired in Haran;
and they set out for the land of Canaan, and they arrived in the land of
Canaan.*

Gen. 12:5

The word רָכְשׁוּ for instance is at a pause, so the accent of רָכְשׁוּ is changed to רָכְשׁוּ. This change is signified by the Te-ameem. Another example: *Tray*

Kadmeen (תרי קדמין) is always accentuated as penultimate, so we are told that לִלְכֶּה is stressed in the middle syllable, and so on.

The Te-ameem portray varying emotional intensities in the following descending scale:

*Ashkenazi**Sephardi*

קדמא וזלא	Kadma Ve-Azla	אזלא גריש	Azla Gereesh
גרשים	Gersha-yeem	שני גרשין	Shenay Geresheen
זקף גדול	Zakafe Gadole	זקף גדול	Zakafe Gadole
פזר	Pazayr	פזר גדול	Pazayr Gadole
תלישא גדולה	Teleesha Gedola	תלשא	Talsha
תלישא קטנה	Teleesha Ketanna	תירסא	Teer-sa
זרקא סגול	Zarka Segol	זרקא סגולתא	Zarka Say-golta
רביע	Ray-vee-a	רביע	Ra-vee-a
מהפך פשטא זקף	Mapakh Pashta Zakafe	שופר-מהפך	Shofar May-
קטון	Katone	קדמא	huppakh Kadma
		זקף קטון	Zakafe Katone
		תרי קדמין	Tray Kad-meen

When word is accented penultimate

יטיב	Yetiv	יטיב	Yay-teev
דרגא תביר	Darga Tevir	דרגא תביר	Darga Tay-vir
מרכא טפחא	Merkha Tipcha	מארין טרחא	Ma-areekh Tarha
אחנחתא	Etnachta	אחנח	Aht-nah
מרכא טפחא	Merkha Tipcha	מארין טרחא	Ma-areekh Tarha
סוף-פסוק:	Sofe Pa-sook	סוף-פסוק:	Sofe Pa-ssok
פסק	Pasake	פסק	Pasake

Rare Te-ameem:

שלשלת	Shalshaylet	שלשלת
קרני פרה	Karnay Parah	קרני פרה
מרכא כפולה	Merkha Kefulah	גרשין מהפכין
		Geresheen Mayhuppakheen

The upper Te-ameem, for the most part, express happy occasions, are favorable to Israel, and full of expectation. The lower Te-ameem are indicative of sad and mournful events, and deal with 'bad guys'.

Here are some examples:

- A. וַיָּצֵב יַעֲקֹב מַצֵּבָה בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־דִּבֶּר אֵתָן מִצֵּבֶת־אֲבָן
Jacob set up a pillar at the site where He had spoken to him, a pillar of stone
(Gen. 35:14)

Jacob was celebrating his ecstasy at God's revelation by a stone marker. The Ta-am used is *azla gereesh*. However, when, a few verses later, he was rocked by the tragedy of his beloved wife, Rachel, in childbirth, he set up another marker, this time at her tomb, and the Massorah uses *darga tay-vir*.

- וַיָּצֵב יַעֲקֹב מַצֵּבָה עַל־קְבוּרֶתָהּ הִנֵּא מִצֵּבֶת קְבוּרַת־רָחֵל עַד הַיּוֹם:
Over her grave Jacob set up a pillar; it is the pillar at Rachel's grave to this day
(Gen. 35:20)

B. The superiority of human propagation over that of sea animals is expressed in the story of Creation.

- וַיְבָרֵךְ אוֹתָם אֱלֹהִים לֵאמֹר פְּרֹו וּרְבוּ וּמִלְאוּ אֶת־הַיָּמִים בַּיָּמִים
God blessed them, saying, Be fertile and increase, fill the waters in the seas . . .
(Gen. 1:22)

The blessing of sea creatures is expressed by *darga tay-vir*, while the human blessing, by *azla gereesh* and *zarka segolta*.

- וַיְבָרֵךְ אוֹתָם אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר לָהֶם אֱלֹהִים פְּרֹו וּרְבוּ וּמִלְאוּ אֶת־הָאָרֶץ וּכְבֹּשׂוּהָ
God blessed them and God said to them, "Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it . . ."
(Gen. 1:28)

C. When Pharaoh of Abraham's day was afflicted by mighty plagues on

account of taking Sarah, Abram's wife, captive, apparently by mistaken identity, and returned her to her husband, the Torah introduces the encouraging message with *zakafe gadole*.

וְעַתָּה הִנֵּה אִשְׁתְּךָ קֵחַ וְלֵךְ:

Now here is your wife; take her and be gone

(Gen. 12:19)

Later (Gen. 15:15), Abraham is being told he is to die, even though in ripe old age; *tay-vir* is used:

וְאַתָּה תָּבוֹא אֶל-אֲבוֹתֶיךָ בְּשָׁלוֹם תִּקְבְּרָה בְּשִׁיבְךָ טוֹבָה:

As for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried in ripe old age.

(Gen. 15:15)

It is still the end of life and sad to contemplate.

D. Fire from heaven consuming the altar is a sign of divine acceptance. At the dedication of the Kohaneem, *shofar may-huppakh kadma* tells of the auspicious occasion:

וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלְּפָנֵי ה' וַחֲאֵל עַל-הָעוֹלָה... וַיִּרְא קֵל-הָעַם וַיִּרְנוּ...

Fire came forth from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering... And all the people saw and shouted for joy...

(Lev. 9:24)

The occasion, however, was marred by tragedy. Divine fire also took the lives of Nadab and Abihu, two sons of Aaron, the High Priest.

וַתֵּצֵא אֵשׁ מִלְּפָנֵי ה' וַחֲאֵל כָּל אוֹתָם וַיָּמָוּוּ...

Fire came forth from the Lord and consumed them; thus they died...

(Lev. 10:2)

At this instance, *ma-areekh tay-vir* expresses their loss.

Incidentally, the prior verse gives the reason for their demise:

וַיִּקְרִיבוּ לִפְנֵי ה' אֵשׁ זָרָה אֲשֶׁר לֹא צִוָּה אֹתָם:

They offered before the Lord alien fire, which He had not enjoined upon them

(Lev. 10:1)

Inverted Geresheen under לָא, usually placed over the word is here found below it. The fire, instead of consuming the sacrifice on the altar, annihilated the miscreants for changing the mitsva from on High to suit their momentary whim (Hertz) down below on earth. The fire did not do what it was supposed to do. Fire came forth — *ma-areekh tevir* — from the Lord and consumed them for negating the word of the Lord. The Massoretic notes, too, are inverted; they are found below the word.

The set of inverted *geresheen* is only one of five in the Humash. Another, at Num. 32:42, deals with the tribe of Manasseh conquering parts of the Western bank of the Jordan and renaming their districts. *Nobah went and captured Kenath and its dependencies, renaming it Nobah after his own name.* וַיִּנְבַח הַלֵּךְ וַיִּלְכְּדוּ אֶת־קִנְתָּה וְאֶת־בְּנוֹתֶיהָ וַיִּקְרָא לָהּ נֹבַח בְּשֵׁמוֹ: The commentators note that לה is spelled without the מפי'ק, the mark of the third person feminine declension, and may thus be understood as לא. This was so, for, according to tradition, the name of the district did not remain 'Nobah' but was later changed. Thus the idea of change and transitoriness is associated with the inverted *geresheen*.

It may also have something to do with the arrogance of the conqueror who immodestly named the place for himself, and the Massorah expressed displeasure through the Te-ameem. In like manner, according to the Midrash, was the arrogance of Nadab and Abihu punished.

The other instances also indicate conduct contrary to the norm: The Patriarch Isaac, fraught with doubt about the identity of his first born, blesses Jacob who is also not convinced about the rightness of his mother's plan (Gen. 27:25). The Israelite foremen complained to Pharaoh: Why do you deal thus with your servants? No straw is issued to your servants, yet they demand of us: Make bricks! . . . when the fault is with your own people (Ex. 5:15–16). Having heard the majority report of the scouts after reconnaissance of the Land of Israel the Israelite people decided: It would be better for us to go back to Egypt! Slavery was preferred to a challenging prospect in freedom! (Num. 14:3.)

despicable creature, never taking his subservience to human beings lying down.

It should also be indicated that man and woman are equally to blame — a wrong doer and his co-conspirator are on a guilty par before the bar of justice. So, both sentences begin with a *ravee-a*. The failure to use one's discretion is the root cause of human downfall.

G. Jacob buys Esau's birthright — Gen. 25:30–34: Esau comes home from a hunting expedition. He is famished: וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו, He tells Jacob, who has just prepared some delicious lentil soup: How about giving me some of that red stuff to gulp down! Jacob, seeing possibilities, maybe *the* opportunity he was looking for says softly: וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב, You want to make a deal on your birthright? Esau, slightly taken aback: וַיֹּאמֶר עֵשָׂו, but very much down to earth: “As a matter of fact, what good *is* it to me, I'm *so* tired and hungry?” “That's what I want to hear,” Jacob says to himself. וַיֹּאמֶר יַעֲקֹב, He is encouraged. “But that's no way to register a sale. Let's record it and swear to it.” Jacob was now enthused and ecstatic: וַיִּעָקֶב, “You never tasted such delicious lentils anywhere, did you Esau? B'Te-avon!” (It is sincerely to be doubted if Esau heard his brother's recommendation and good wish . . .)

H. The first three plagues and the Egyptian magicians -- Ex. 7:8–8:15: The confrontation begins with the signs to be displayed before Pharaoh as proof of the authenticity of Moses and Aaron. Aaron tries his ability and excels: וַיִּשְׁלַח אֶת־מִטְּוֵהוֹ, Aaron cast down his staff and it becomes a serpent. Pharaoh summons his magicians who do the same with their spells: וַיַּעֲשׂוּ גַם־הֵם חֲרָטְמֵי מִצְרַיִם. With the start of the plagues the difference in prowess becomes more evident. Every trope describing the action of the Israelite leaders through the first three plagues is above the words: 7:19–20 (Blood); 8:1–2 (Frogs); 8:12–13 (Lice). Note that the Te-ameem become less intense with each successive plague, signifying that the plagues were getting progressively more difficult to administer. And the same is true for the magicians. They, however, do not receive more than a lower Ta-am: 7:22 (*tayvir*), 8:3 (*ma-areekh tarha*). In 8:14 they try their hardest — they get a *kadma* for it, but the trope does not conclude as usual with a *zakafe katone*. The Egyptian wise men fail to come up with lice of their own, and so all they get is *darga tay-vir*. When they, however, talk about the power of God by

acknowledging: This is the finger of God, their statement is introduced by *shofar may-huppakh kadma zakafe katone*.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The Asereth Ha-dibberoth, so called Ten Commandments, appear twice in the Torah, Exodus 20:1–17 and Deuteronomy 5:6–18. The Massorah gives these sections special treatment by assigning two sets of Te-ameem. The “upper” signs are used at the Torah reading during synagogue services; the other set, at any other occasion.

Not every word in each of these sections, however, has the benefit of a double trope. Apparently the exceptions have one thing in common – they seem to deal for the most part with a theological matter or another religious issue difficult to explain satisfactorily. Thus, while the first Commandment establishes the existence of God by the fact of the exodus from Egypt (the entire Commandment has double signs), the second Commandment characterizes the Deity as a jealous God and presents the hard case of reward and punishment, particularly retribution extending to descendants of sinners, and thus has only one set of signs. (It is easier, less painful to the conscience to live with recompense for undeserving descendants of the good; that phrase, *וְעוֹשֵׂה חֶסֶד לְאֱלֵפִים*, has both the upper and lower signs.)

The name of God is an ever formidable subject for theologians, and plays a significant role in Kabbala. Rabbinic tradition makes it a heinous wrong even to pronounce or erase any of the most sacred divine names. Hence, the Te-ameem have been left with one set.

The reason for the Sabbath, the Fourth Commandment, is different in Exodus and Deuteronomy. In the fifth Book of the Torah, the Sabbath is a memorial to the Exodus from Egypt which, as mentioned above, is considered an event of history. Exodus proffers the creation of the universe as the moral lesson for observing the Seventh Day, and our generation is not the first to wrestle with the intractable questions it poses to Religion.

The only major objection to our thesis would seem to be in the Fourth Commandment in Deuteronomy.

לא תעשה כל מלאכה אתה ובנך ובתך ועבדך ואמתך ושורך וחמורך וכל בהמתך וגרך אשר לא בשעריך למען ינוח עבדך ואמתך . . . על כן צוה ה' אלהיך לעשות את יום השבת לא

... חתאוה בית רעך in the Tenth. This apparent discrepancy is explained by pointing to the underscored words as unique in the Deuteronomic version and not found in Exodus. This undoubtedly gave the Massoretes trouble, and thus all take single trope. It should be said that other variations in the two versions are merely substitute words or phrases, such as שמור for זכור (Fourth); שוא for שקר (Ninth); חתאוה for חתמד (Tenth). (The real teaser to our thesis is the mention of the additional words צוך ה' אלהיך in the Fourth, which have double trope.)

The Fifth Commandment, assuring long life for filial respect of parents, has been a troublesome source for Religion. To interpret a comparatively short life by means of a full life is reading between the lines. The Massorah here recognized this uniquely thorny problem by not duplicating the signs.

The Tenth Commandment deals with envy, a failing almost impossible to monitor, and so has only one set of trope, though the Exodus and Deuteronomy versions differ widely. The Commandment legislates emotion and the Massoretes were not too comfortable with it.

INFREQUENT SIGNS

SHALSHELET

Most musical signs occur over and over. Some occur less frequently and a few, only two, three or four times. One of these rare notes is called Shalsholet, derived perhaps from the root 'chain,' a figure which reflects on the meaning the Massorah wished to convey in each of the four times it is used.

The subject is in the grips of a critical decision: Shall I or shall I not? Will my action meet with success?

Three times Shalsholet is found in Genesis. First, when Lot is ordered to leave Sodom and Gomorrah, doomed to destruction. He cannot make up his mind. It is a beautiful area: there he has his friends and his wealth. Must he leave it? The Shalsholet is placed on ויתמהמה. He delays . . . and has to be pulled away (Gen. 19:16).

Abraham's servant was sent on a mission, on whose success depended the future of his master's spiritual legacy. He had to choose a wife for Isaac. He hit upon a plan that bore a criterion to determine the kind of wife she was to be. She had to be kind and generous. But the servant was not sure, so he prayed: ויאמר

has the Shalsholet — that he might do the right thing (Gen. 24:12).

Though the biblical story of Joseph makes him unequivocal in declining the advances of Potiphar's wife, the Midrash interprets the experience as morally challenging. The temptress almost achieved her desire when, says the Midrash, Joseph saw the vision of his parents, and he refused . . . **וימאן** (with the Shalsholet). Joseph, too, had to fight his human weaknesses (Gen. 39:8).

The fourth Shalsholet does not appear until Leviticus, at the consecration of Aaron and his sons as priests (Ch. 8). Three animals were offered at the ceremony: a bull and a ram to cleanse and dedicate the altar and a second ram to consecrate the priests. The Midrash relates that Moses was acting as High Priest for the week of consecration. Aaron was watching and learning. As the last animal was killed, Moses as teacher was thinking about his teaching talents and the ability of his students: Has he taught accurately? Will they reflect well on the priesthood? Will their service justify their choice as priests? With these reservations in mind, Moses dispatched the last animal and the Shalsholet tells of the doubts of not only this instruction but of all sincere and concerned teachers: **וישחט** (Vs. 23).

KARNAY PARAH

Called 'the horns of a cow,' it occurs just once in the Five Books of Moses. The Israelite people were being instructed to assign their priests, the Levites, towns as well as pasture land around them for the cattle they own and all their other beasts. *You shall measure off two thousand cubits outside the town (on each side) . . . that shall be the pasture for their towns* (Num. 35:5). What could be more appropriate than a sign that is reminiscent of the cow! **באמה**

Incidentally, one other place utilizing the horns of the cow is in the Book of Esther (7:9). Harbonah, one of the King's advisers, recommends to Ahasuerus to hang Haman on the gallows prepared for Mordecai. 'Haman,' the word with the horns, **המן** received at human hands the same manner of death administered to beasts.

And one cannot overlook the fact that the rabbinic principle implied in carrying out Haman's sentence, "measure for measure," is the same word the Torah uses to "measure off" pasture land for beasts!

We have given some idea of a few of the subtle ways the Massoretes comment

on the biblical text. Ostensibly, they comply with the Talmudic directive to chant the Torah pleasantly, but in the process make deliberate notes on their own interpretation of the sacred text. As close attention is paid to their cadence, biblical study is endowed with greater interest from an angle heretofore insufficiently recognized.

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THE FLOOD STORY IN BIBLE AND CUNEIFORM LITERATURE

TABLET XI OF THE GILGAMESH EPIC WRONGLY INTERPRETED

BY I. RAPAPORT

I have recently had occasion to re-examine the Akkadian text of Tablet XI of the Gilgamesh Epic, which has long been looked upon as the classical tablet on the Flood in ancient Assyro-Babylon and the prototype of the Flood narrative in Genesis chapters 6–9. Various reasons had prompted me to make this effort. The most immediate one was the knowledge of the wide disagreement among Assyriologists over the rendering and interpretation of numerous features in the cuneiform narrative, and I thought that a new attempt at sorting out those differences might be worthwhile.

However, I seem to have found more than I had bargained for. In fact, as I am about to point out, it was not only individual features which were a source of much dispute, but the thesis itself which was originally propounded by George Smith in 1872 — that Tablet XI of the Gilgamesh Epic contained a Babylonian Flood story — began to appear based on assumptions which one was hardly entitled to make in the first instance. So that, in a sense, my statements here are an invitation to contemporary scholars to undertake a new inquiry into the theme of Tablet XI in general and into its relationship to the Flood story in Genesis 6–9 in particular.

1. One of the difficulties concerns the question of the source of the Flood, or of how it came about. In the Biblical account, the cause of the *Mabbul* is explicitly stated: The water came in massive quantities both from the “windows of heaven” and the “fountains of the deep.” But in Tablet XI the source of the cataclysm is not clearly indicated so that scholars have to speculate over it. Thus

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we find that Alexander Heidel attributes it to natural rainfall. L.W. King speaks of an inundation by the Euphrates and the Tigris which caused the Flood. Again, Friedrich Delitzsch maintains that it was due to tidal waves from the Persian Gulf, and the eminent Viennese geologist Eduard Suess says that it was the result of seismic disturbances in the Indian Ocean.¹

In our view, such a variety of opinions on one and the same upheaval shows that none of the explanations is really the correct one. Hence the question remains and, moreover, considerable doubt is raised on whether the upheaval was in fact in the form of a Flood or in some other form.

2. This doubt is made to stand out all the more boldly when, on re-examining the cuneiform tablet, one notices that the very term "water" or "rain" is not mentioned in the text even once as playing any active role in the whole progress of the upheaval. This total omission of both the element of water and that of rain from the text — to my utter amazement, unnoticed by any scholar so far — is the most puzzling aspect of Tablet XI seeing that those elements are indispensable for the production of a real Flood.

By stark contrast, the Biblical narrative has some twenty separate references to water and rain as active components of the Deluge in the days of Noah. There is water in Genesis 6–9 everywhere, covering everything, and rising from land level up to and higher than the highest mountains under the heavens. Why, then, is "water" or "rain" not referred to even once as playing any part in the alleged Flood in Tablet XI of the *Gilgamesh Epic*?

For that matter, also two other cuneiform compositions — the *Atrahasis Epic* in Old Babylonian and the *Tale of Ziusudra* in Sumerian — do not contain any mention of either of the aquatic components although we are told to regard the texts as descriptions of Flood upheavals in ancient Mesopotamia. But why is such the case? Surely, the lack of these terms in each of the Flood stories is baffling, to say the least, if not giving rise to the suspicion that there is something basically wrong in the interpretation of those stories as diluvial phenomena.

Clearly, there cannot be a Flood without water.

3. In this connection there is also another serious difficulty. When George

1. See A. Heidel, *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels*, Chicago, 1949 (repr. 1973), p. 240 f.

Smith, the British cuneiform expert, first announced his sensational discovery of "the account of the Chaldean Deluge" in 1872, he simply took the Akkadian word *adannu*, whose real meaning he did not know at the time, and rendered it by the English term Flood or Deluge.² There was no one available on that occasion to tell him that his translation was inaccurate, inasmuch as the true meaning of *adannu* was appointed time — and not Flood or Deluge.

It took a few years before the mistake was discovered and, instead of *adannu*, the Akkadian term *abūbu* was selected to signify Flood or Deluge in the cuneiform tablet.³ But also this time there was no unanimity of translation among scholars. The well-known Assyriologist C.J. Gadd of the British Museum in London, in his excellent rendering of Tablet XI, translated *abūbu* by cyclone.⁴ Similarly, the Danish scholar Jorgen Laessoe most convincingly argued that *abūbu* could not mean Flood or Deluge, and gave it the meaning of windstorm or heavy wind.⁵ It is true that these scholars, too, interpreted Tablet XI as a Flood tablet, but they did so for other reasons — reasons which cannot easily be accepted as valid.

Under the circumstances, the impartial reader is compelled as it were to put a question-mark against the generally held view that the cuneiform text is the classical Flood story of ancient Mesopotamia and also to claim that it cannot have been the thematic source of the Biblical narrative in Genesis 6–9.

4. My own view is that *abūbu* means a cyclone, as Professor C.J. Gadd has suggested, or some other type of devastating windstorm.⁶ But before I proceed to

2. George Smith, *Transactions of the Society of Biblical Archaeology*, London, 1873, p. 221 lines 82 and 85.

3. See, eg, *Chicago Assyrian Dictionary*, 1964, vol. 1, p. 77.

4. C.J. Gadd, *The Babylonian Story of the Deluge and the Epic of Gilgamesh*, London, 1929, p. 31.

5. Joergen Laessoe, *The Atrahasis Epic*, in *Bibliotheca Orientalis*, vol. 13, 1956, p. 94 f.

6. No exact English equivalents have yet been established for the various Akkadian terms signifying one type of wind or another. See also Ungnad-Gressmann, *Das Gilgamesch Epos*, p. 53, line 14, where *abūbu* is rendered Zyklon. The term *abūbu* has no etymological equivalent in any of the Semitic languages. However, in early post-Biblical Hebrew we find the word *abūb* (אבוּב) with the meaning of reed of flute. See M. Jastrow, *A Dictionary of the Targumim*, New York, 1926, p. 3. I believe that the two terms are etymologically related and that *abūbu* may originally have designated a kind of tornado which has the shape of a huge flute, widening out somewhat at its top

elaborate on this point, I find it advisable to mention that it is not only a few details here and there in Tablet XI of the Babylonian epic which make it most doubtful whether the cuneiform text could have been known to the Hebrew writer of Genesis 6–9 (some more of these details will be referred to later in this article). Indeed, the whole substance of the Babylonian tablet is of such a mythological and polytheistic nature that it is amazing to see how modern scholars could possibly have placed the monotheistic Hebrew narrative of the Flood alongside the cuneiform story with so much nonchalance as if the two had been on the same substantive and ideological wave-length. They then made their comparative analysis in an utterly superficial manner, linguistically and thematically, and concluded that the Biblical Flood narrative was dependent upon the Babylonian Flood account, or, at least, that both had drawn upon some pre-historic common tradition.⁷

Thus we know that Tablet XI describes how the great deities – including Anu, Enlil and Ea – one day decided to bring about an *abūbu*, without any reason being given for such a cruel decision. At the time, those deities lived in the city of Shuruppak, by the Euphrates, and one of them – Ea – secretly divulged the decision to Utnapishtim, one of the residents of Shuruppak, again giving no reason for this divulgence. Without going into the details of the catastrophe, which duly came along, it is interesting to know that the deities involved went almost berserk while the land was being destroyed and humanity killed, while Utnapishtim had built himself a ship which took him out to sea and enabled him to live with Ea until the upheaval on land was over after some six days and nights.

In the translation of C.J. Gadd, the upheaval is described in Tablet XI:128–132 as follows:

For six days and nights

The wind, the storm raged, and the cyclone overwhelmed the land. When end and producing a shattering sound. The post-Biblical *abūb* may thus assist in establishing linguistically that the Akkadian *abūbu* means a weather phenomenon of the tornado family. It certainly is not a Flood or Deluge, unless you are like Humpty Dumpty who can make a word mean what he chooses it to mean, “nothing more and nothing less.”

7. See, eg, J.V. Kinnier Wilson, in *Documents from Old Testament Times*, (ed. D. Winton Thomas), London, 1958, p. 24–25, end of note on line 24.

the seventh day came the cyclone ceased, the storm and battle which had fought like an army.

The sea became quiet, the grievous wind went down, the cyclone ceased.

We will presently discuss one or two details of the cuneiform story, for the better elucidation of the problem, but at this stage it will be sufficient to indicate that after it was all over, the deities came together "like flies" to the offering which Utnapishtim had made, except for Enlil whom the goddess Ishtar tried to exclude. But in the end he turned up and was very angry at finding that someone had come out alive from the catastrophe in which everyone was to have perished without exception. Then, after some harsh words from Ea, Enlil went up to the ship, took out Utnapishtim and his good lady, blessed them and had them raised to the status of deities and placed "at the mouth of the rivers" (where they are presumably alive to this day).

Such is the summary of the story of Tablet XI and inasmuch as it is beyond the scope of this article to make comparisons between this crude tale and the Biblical narrative, which could easily mirror a most serious case held in a highly civilised court of justice in our own time, we will only recall the statement by Professor Hermann Gunkel in this matter. As he wrote about the two narratives, the learned professor commented that if the Hebrew author of the Biblical Flood account had known anything about Tablet XI he would have felt a deep sense of revulsion.⁸ Our own task here is to act almost the part of the Devil's Advocate and to refute the idea that Tablet XI is a description of a Flood upheaval.

5. I have already mentioned that in my view the cuneiform text speaks of stormwinds causing the catastrophe at Shuruppak. We recall that there is no reference to the presence of water anywhere in the text of the Babylonian tablet. In the narrative, as we have just seen in the translation of C.J. Gadd which was quoted above, the catastrophe was made up by the raging of wind, storm and cyclone, and I am assured by meteorologists that the destructive power of those weather phenomena let loose upon an area is incalculable. And there need be not a single drop of rain or water accompanying those phenomena.

Thus, Tablet XI would be telling us about a "dry" upheaval which had nothing to do with a Flood or Deluge, in the ordinary meaning of the term, with the

8. Hermann Gunkel, *Genesis*, Göttingen, 1901 (Repr. 1969), p. 71 f.

further consequence that the cuneiform text in reality having nothing to do with the Flood story in Genesis chapters 6–9. And we can only add, without any qualms of conscience, that there is absolutely nothing in Tablet XI which would be contrary to this interpretation — namely, that the text describes an upheaval of a completely “dry” nature. Indeed, such a view of the text will alone resolve all the difficulties involved.

6. Thus, in the light of our new suggestion, the scene of the birds being sent out by Utnapishtim will now receive a completely satisfactory explanation. We recall that in the Biblical account there is reference to Noah sending out birds for the purpose of enabling him “to see if the waters had subsided from upon the face of the land.” Now, insofar as the episode of the birds in the cuneiform text is concerned, we find that Heidel maintains⁹ that Utnapishtim made “a mistake in logic” by sending out his birds in the sequence in which he did it. Professor Roland de Vaux holds that the bird episode in the Gilgamesh poems “has an exact parallel in the story of the Flood (Gen 8:10–123).”¹⁰ Professor W.G. Lambert refers to “the episode of sending out three birds to ascertain if the waters were subsiding” as “the closest parallel of any Mesopotamian flood story with the Book of Genesis.”¹¹ And George Smith who was the first to speak of the Bible and the cuneiform inscription agreeing that the birds were sent out “in order to ascertain if the Flood had subsided,” went on to say that “in the details of these trials there are curious differences between the narratives.”¹²

The reader will immediately notice that in the interpretation of the bird episode all the above-mentioned scholars agree that the purpose of Utnapishtim’s bird experiment was to “ascertain if the waters had subsided,” although they do not agree as to whether the episode indicates “an exact parallel” to the Biblical narrative, or only “a close parallel,” or an “agreement” between the narratives, or “a mistake in logic.” Yet, at the simplest perusal of the cuneiform text, we can all see that there is not the slightest reference in the tablet to Utnapishtim desiring to know whether “the waters had subsided” or not. The cuneiform text is

9. Heidel, *ibid.*, p. 253.

10. Roland de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, London 1961, p. 187.

11. W.G. Lambert–A.R. Millard, *Atrahasis*, Oxford, 1969, p. 12.

12. See Smith, *ibid.*, p. 231.

completely silent on the purpose of the mission of the birds, and it is only our modern scholars' desire to see a thematic identity between the Babylonian and the Biblical versions of the upheaval that induced them to say that our Utnapishtim sent out the birds to "ascertain if the waters had subsided" on the pattern of Noah's action.^{12a}

Be it as it may, the truth appears to be that Utnapishtim was interested to find out the state of the weather outside the ship in which he was esconced while the stormwinds were ravaging the mainland. The upheaval was now over, mankind had perished, stillness had set in, but was the weather quiet enough for the man of Shuruppak to leave the ship and get back to his own place? This information he wanted to obtain from the behaviour of the three different species of bird which he had sent out — the dove, the swallow and the raven. Utnapishtim was testing the weather — and not the Flood — inasmuch as the upheaval was of a dry nature only.

7. We will now also understand why the vessel in the Biblical narrative was described as an ark, while the one in the Babylonian account is described as a ship. George Smith was wrong in attributing the difference in nomenclature to the fact that the Hebrews were an inland people while the Babylonians were a maritime people, so the former had an ark, while the latter had a ship. The true explanation seems to be that Noah's ark was sufficient to keep him safe during the Flood which was ravaging the land, while Utnapishtim had to seek shelter in a ship which was to take him out to sea while the mainland was being devastated by a convergence of winds.

Hence, too, André Parrot could have avoided referring to Noah's ark as a boat,¹³ and Gordon J. Wenham could have avoided looking at Utnapishtim's

12a. It is unfortunate that Assyriological and Biblical scholars to this day continue to repeat George Smith's utterly misleading statement in the matter. It simply is not true that the Babylonian story speaks of the birds being sent out "to ascertain the subsidence of the waters." Such a statement is *sheer invention* on the part of our scholars, probably intended to lend extra credibility to the view that Tablet XI is indeed the original source of the Biblical Flood account. But it is an unhappy invention and, as such, it should be discontinued forthwith. Otherwise, it will one day come to be compared with the notorious "Piltdown Man" case, with the only difference that the latter is referred to as the greatest scientific hoax in the field of evolution, whereas the former will become known as the greatest literary hoax perpetrated in the field of the Hebrew Scriptures.

13. André Parrot, *The Flood and Noah's Ark*, London, 1955, p. 43.

ship as upon an ark.¹⁴ The two vessels served different purposes, and they were, therefore, called by different names. The two scholars were obviously misled by the view that the Babylonian and the Biblical narratives were of an identical nature which they equally obviously were not.

8. There are several more difficulties in the way of accepting that Tablet XI is a Flood tablet on the one hand, and that as such it served as a prototype for the Flood story in Genesis 6–9 on the other. I will list here only two of them.

a) Modern scientific endeavour had long tried to verify whether such upheavals had indeed taken place in historical or even pre-historical times. And seeing that according to Tablet XI the city of Shuruppak was specifically mentioned as the place where the great cataclysm was said to have occurred, various groups of archaeologists went to the area, Shuruppak being the modern Farah. Indeed, early in this century, such a group under the auspices of the reputable *Deutsche Orient Gesellschaft* excavated right down to the oldest levels of human settlement. (See also Mallowan, *Iraq*, 1964, p. 69).

Now, the results which our archaeologists arrived at were that ancient Shuruppak had in fact been destroyed — but only by a fire, and not by a Deluge. And the evidence for it they discovered in the thick layer of ashes at the lowest levels of their excavations. We will gladly accept these findings as valid as well as lending themselves to confirmation by the text of Tablet XI:103–104 where we are told about the Annunaki gods setting the land ablaze with the glare of their torches. Thereupon the savage winds came along and turned the fire into a conflagration. Shuruppak was then destroyed by a fire — and not by a Flood.

b) Finally we have the chronological argument against Tablet XI having been in a position to serve as the prototype for Genesis 6–9. It is known that of all the cuneiform texts extant in our time it is only Tablet XI which contains the episode with the birds, and as such it is the cuneiform source which could have been the source of the Biblical Flood story which, too, tells the details of a similar episode with birds being sent out and returning.

Now, it is quite definite that Tablet XI as we now have it, and indeed it is the only one of its kind, comes from the reign of King Ashurbanipal (669–626), that is to say, in the seventh century BCE, and it was in fact discovered in the library

14. G.J. Wenham, in *Vetus Testamentum*, Leiden, 1978, p. 346 f.

of that ruler in the Assyrian city of Nineveh. And as for the Book of Genesis, even radical Bible critics have asserted that the book was composed in the tenth century BCE;¹⁵ that is to say, three centuries before the cuneiform tablet was written down. The chronological difficulty is then quite obvious, namely that we are asked by our modern Assyriologists (and Biblicists) to accept an absurdity, inasmuch as a composition of the tenth century BCE is said to have taken its material from a composition of the seventh century BCE, that is three centuries later.

As it is, some scholars were aware of this chronological absurdity, yet they have made little issue of it, or have ignored it completely. I am not prepared to share this attitude. If anything, I would rather argue for the view that the bird episode of Genesis 6–9 was somehow known to the writer of Table XI who, having been impressed by its originality, went on to adapt it for his own needs. And seeing that in the seventh century BCE there would have been some hundreds of thousands of Judeans in the Assyrian Empire, after King Sennacherib had taken so many of them into Assyrian captivity, soon after his abortive siege of Jerusalem in 701 BCE, it is more than conceivable that one or another Judean exile would have had a hand in the development of Assyro-Babylonian epics.¹⁶

9. All in all, we believe that an historic mistake was made by those who turned the cuneiform sources into the origin of the Biblical Flood story. Hence our challenge to contemporary scholars to start a reversal of this process. It will do us all a great deal of good to look up to Genesis 6–9 as a sublime narrative of literary independence and of the highest didactic value.

On our part, we are convinced that this narrative stands alone among the upheaval stories in the literatures of the world. It is a description of an event which is unique in its spiritual concept, its perfect prose, and its moral righteousness.

15. See *New Encyclopedia Britannica*, London 1974, vol. 2, p. 889.

16. See W.G. Lambert, *The Babylonian Background of Genesis*, in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, Manchester, 1965, p. 292, where such influence is regarded as “inconceivable,” although no reason is given for this tersely stated attitude. See also I. Rapaport, *The Babylonian Poem Enuma Elish and Genesis Chapter One*, 1979, where it is suggested that Marduk’s exploits are based on the early life of the Biblical Moses, in Exodus 2–15.

WAS THE HASMONEAN STATE SECULAR IN ORIENTATION?

Part I

BY BEN-ZION LURIA

When one examines events in world history, especially battles and armed conflicts, there is great difficulty in appraising them objectively. The historian is confronted with two opposing versions and evaluations. The victors wish to glorify themselves while the vanquished vent their anger at the enemy and belittle the victory.

When we approach the era of the Hasmonean Kingdom — a time when a small and humiliated people rose up against the mighty and were victorious — we have before us two opposing sources differing in their description of the events and their general evaluation of the situation. We have the sources in our ancient literature deemed by us veracious and trust-worthy, and we have sources in exterior literature, both foreign and non-canonical. Both of these must be thoroughly evaluated and scientifically validated, yet it behooves us always to view the events from our perspective.

Renowned historians such as Ernest Renan and Edward Meyer have called the Hasmonean kingdom: “A kingdom of robbers” (*‘Rauberstaat’* in the original)¹. Their perspective is that of the opposing side.

They uncritically accept the view of the ancient Greek historians, especially that of Nicholas of Damascus who greatly despised the Hasmoneans and regarded them as nothing less than robbers and tyrannical despots. Strabo writes: “This kingdom of despots engendered a general state of tyranny because the Hasmonean rebels not only plundered their own land but also that of their neighbors . . . the first one who changed the title of priest to that of king was Alexander”². In a similar vein Tacitus writes: “When they usurped the powers of

1. Quoted by I. Klausner, *Historia Shel Habayit Hasheni*, vol. III, p. 93.

2. Quoted by P. Churgin, *Mechkarim Bitkufat Bayit Sheni*, p. 74.

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government by force, they exiled their citizens, destroyed cities, murdered their own brothers, wives, and parents, and acted with the prerogative of kings, but they upheld their vain belief in their faith since they had seized the title of priesthood to strengthen their rule".^{2a}

Historians of the Second Temple Era (Second Commonwealth) are almost unanimous in their opinion that after one or two generations, the religious impetus guiding the rulers of the revolt faded away and ceased to be of importance; while the energizing motivating force for warfare was the desire for additional conquests and for expansion of their borders. Emil Schürer writes: "The policy of conquest initiated by Jonathan and continued by Simon, was intensified by Horkanus. As proof of the secular character of this policy one notes his use of non-Jewish mercenaries fighting his battles, with himself as ruler of Judea, instead of his using a Jewish regular army."³

Even the historian Klausner who was known for his fervent nationalism writes of Horkanus: "He himself went in the ways of the Greeks, whose evacuation had been the original intent of the revolt, and founded a totally secular state which even had its own army of foreign mercenaries. Truly a wide gap separates idealistic intentions from reality".⁴ Similarly, Yitzchak Bar writes: "The Hasmoneans turned a state 'governed by the sanctuary' into an autonomous state similar to the secular Hellenistic states surrounding it."⁵

In order to refute this secular view of the Hasmonean state, we will investigate the course of events of the 'conquests' of each of the Hasmonean kings, and carefully consider their mode of governing the state and the people; to check if indeed they imitated the manner of life of their neighboring Hellenistic cities or if, just the contrary, they observed the law of the Torah.⁶

2a. Cornelius Tacitus, *Chronicles*, V, 8, translated into Hebrew by Sarah Dboretsky, Mossad Bialik.

3. Emil Schürer, *Geschichte des Jüdischen Volkes im Zeitalter Jesu Christi*, I,4, S. 264.

4. Klausner, *op. cit.*, p. 83.

5. *Yisrael Beamim*, 5715, p. 26.

6. *Book of Maccabees III*. A study of the Hasmonean wars according to the Halacha is discussed in Rabbi Shlomo Goren's book *Torat Hamoadim*, pp. 164.

JUDAH THE MACCABEE

Judah Maccabee (164–161 BCE) conquered no territory and destroyed no Hellenistic cities. Yet he returned to Jerusalem and cleansed and purified the Temple. When Judah prepared to fight against Gorgeus at Emmaus, he approached the soldiers and quoted the Biblical dictum: *What man is there that has built a new house and has not dedicated it . . . And what man is there that has planted a vineyard and has not used the fruit thereof? . . . And what man is there that has betrothed a wife and has not taken her . . . let him go and return unto his house lest he die in battle . . .* (Deuteronomy 20:5–7).

Historians disregard another action of Judah that became a cornerstone in the lives of those that followed him — he restored the Torah to its former glory⁷. In Megillat Taanit we find a comprehensive listing of days on which one was forbidden to mourn or fast. (non-redacted) Mishna 10: *בְּאֶרְבָּעָה עָשָׂר בְּחֹמֶשׁ עָרְא* *קָפַר גְּזִירְתָּא דִּי לֹא לְמַקְסַד*. The usual translation of this: “On the 14th day of Tamuz, the rule of not to mourn was cancelled”. Many different explanations of this text were offered but we shall not deal with them⁸. However, for the understanding of this text one must delve into the meaning of the word ‘gezerah’; both Onkelos and Targum Jonathan translate it as law or rule and ‘ada’ as assembled. Thus their translation would be: “On the 14th day of Tamuz the Scrolls of the Law (Torah) were assembled” (and on this day it is forbidden to fast). One of the main goals of the Hasmoneans was fulfilled. Antiochus Epiphanes had desired to uproot the Jewish way of life and one of his methods was to physically destroy the Torah scrolls^{9,10}. We refer to this in the prayer ‘Al Hanissim’ on Chanukah. The Torah scrolls that the king’s messengers found were torn and burned. Shortly after the Hasmonean victory, the leaders went out to find undamaged Torah scrolls, assemble them and check their fitness, especially of those scrolls in the possession of the Hellenizers to see if they hadn’t altered the texts. Then these corrected scrolls had to be copied and distributed

7. Ezra, Hillel, and Shimon ben Shetach also received this accolade for their up-to-date commentaries. Judah Maccabee received the accolade for his actual upholding of the Torah.

8. See my commentary to *Megillat Taanit*, p. 130.

9. *Book of Maccabees*, I, 1, 49.

10. *ibid.*, I, 56, 57.

among the people. It is related of the Jews of Egypt that "Judah has assembled all the scrolls that were scattered because of the war; they are with us. If you need some, send some messengers and they may bring them unto you"¹¹.

With this, Judah Maccabee set the foundation for the return to the Torah way of life for Jews in Judea and in the Diaspora.

JONATHAN (161–143 BCE)

In the Book of Maccabees I, 11:30–34 we read: "The king Demetrius to Jonathan — Peace be with you! And now we have established the border of Judah and the three subdistricts — Ofra (Ephraim), Lod, and Ramataim — have been linked with Judah."

Here we are not dealing with conquest but with annexation done with the permission of the king of Antiochia who had the whole of Judea under his control and dominion. The three subdistricts were in the past on the border of the tribe of Benjamin and Ephraim, and certainly Jews had settled there before the time of Jonathan. No Hellenistic city had existed there. This annexation to Judea was only administrative and it came about as a result of the recognition that Jews who had lived there for many generations had the right to link up with Jerusalem in order to keep their way of life viable.

In the struggle between Antiochus and Demetrius, Jonathan sided with Antiochus. He participated in a number of wars as a vassal and ally of Antiochus, and in this context Josephus writes: "Antiochus gave him permission to raise an army from Syria and Phoenicia to fight Demetrius. Jonathan went to the cities, and even though they treated him with respect, they didn't provide him with soldiers"¹². A strange passage! No names of cities are mentioned nor why they refused his wish. In any case, these are actions he did for the sake of the king, without any connection with the struggle for Judean freedom and independence. As reward for his activities toward the king, he received the area of Ekron¹³. But one shouldn't see this as conquest or expansion.

Regarding his internal policies, it must be said that Jonathan did not usurp

11. *op. cit.*, II, 14–15.

12. *Antiquities* XIII, chapter 5, verse 5.

13. *ibid.*, 4, 5.

power. Rather, he was elected the head of the Jewish army¹⁴ and he ruled as the head of a council of elders and priests¹⁵. When he took over his office, there were still many Hellenizers in the land. As soon as he overpowered Bacchides and set up his power base at Michmash, he set out to uproot the Hellenizers: "He punished the wicked and cleansed the people from them".¹⁶

During his service to the king, Jonathan proved once again his faithfulness to the Torah. He conquered Ashdod, and in accordance with the precepts of the Maccabees, he uprooted and destroyed idol worship and burned the temple of Dagan in the city¹⁷.

The main charge against the Hasmonean dynasty, according to its detractors, was that it used foreign mercenaries in its wars. This is an unfortunate misunderstanding of the text. The first one to raise a mercenary army was Jonathan. In the beginning of his rule, when he was pursued by Bacchides, he found refuge at Beit-Hogla, a small town on the Jordan River, near the Dead Sea. He left his brother Simon in town to continue fighting. He himself fled the country, and after he assembled a large battalion from among his followers, he attacked Bacchides' camp at night. Josephus (read: Nicholas of Damascus) brings solid evidence that this battalion was made up of foreign *Jews* who lived outside of Judea.

SIMON (142-135 BCE)

We read in Josephus' *Antiquities* XIII, chapter 6, verse 7: "Simon conquered the cities of Gezer, Jaffa, and Yavne and captured the Chakra (building) in Jerusalem and razed it to the ground."

On the events leading up to the conquest of Gezer it is told: "And Simon accepted the petition of the people of Gezer and did not fight with them; and he expelled them from the city and purified the houses, and he removed all impurity, and Torah observing Jews came in to populate the city."¹⁸

14. *ibid.*, 1,1.

15. He also addresses his allies the Ashpartites thusly. See *Antiq.* XIII, 5, 8.

16. *ibid.*, 1,6.

17. *Book of Maccabees*, X,84; IV,4.

18. *ibid.*, XIII, 47-48. In *Maccabees* II, 10, 32-38, a longer description of the battle of Gezer is given, but the negotiations are not described.

On the surface, this episode seems like the dispossessing of a people and a conquest. But pay attention to the reply of Simon to Antiochus Sidest who demands the return of Gezer and Jaffa: "We have not taken a foreign land nor have we taken foreign possessions, but have taken back an inheritance of our fathers which was taken from us unjustly. You speak of Jaffa and Gezer — they have done a great wickedness to our people and our land".¹⁹ Gezer lies in a fertile area in the center of the country on the crossroads on the way to Jerusalem. It seems that during a certain period of Hellenistic rule, Gezer became a center of foreigners and idol-worship. Idols were present not only in their temple but in every house. According to the tenets of the Maccabees, idol worship defiled the land and it was morally imperative to uproot it. We must emphasize here that the war on Gezer was neither for the purpose of conquest nor for expansion of borders, but rather for the purification and holiness of the land by uprooting idolatry.

Simon accomplished this without the shedding of blood. The inhabitants of Gezer realized that they could not stand up against his army, and they entreated him for their lives. Simon suggested that they themselves evacuate and go to another country. In their stead he settled there Torah-observing Jews. In the following sections, we shall learn that this was the method of the Hasmoneans in their treatment of all foreign idol worshipers in every place they captured.

THE CONQUEST OF JAFFA

Jaffa was conquered for the third time in a short period. It was one of the cities of the Decapolis, and its inhabitants were a conglomeration of Phillistines, Syrians, and Greeks. Their hatred of the Jews united them. After the outbreak of the revolt, the inhabitants of Jaffa saw a perfect opportunity to destroy the Jewish minority living there. With great cunning, the inhabitants drew all of the Jewish men, women and children out for a 'cruise' on unseaworthy ships, and while the Jews were out at sea, the ships were sunk.

Judah Maccabee came to avenge their death. He attacked the port at night, burned the ships and killed many of the murderers.²⁰ After the death of Judah,

19. *Maccabees* I, 15, 33–38.

20. *ibid.*, II, 12, 3–5.

Jaffa became free. Jonathan had to subdue the inhabitants a second time, and Simon had to do so a third time.

THE CONQUEST OF YAVNE

“When Judah saw that the inhabitants of Yavne planned to do to their Jewish minority as had the residents of Jaffa to their Jewish population, he attacked Yavne at night and burned down the beach area and the boats in the harbor until the pillar of fire could be seen in Jerusalem”.

Even after this punishment, the attitude of the residents of Yavne was unchanged. So Simon had to reconquer it. The historian Cherikover assumes that many of its residents voluntarily converted to Judaism. Eventually the majority of its citizens were Jews.²¹

Regarding his internal policies: The author of the Book of Maccabees reiterates the religious function of the chosen leader a number of times. The people praise Simon and his brothers: “They endangered their own lives in fighting the enemy in order to preserve and maintain the sanctuary and the Torah”²². Another reference states that the leader must “continue and maintain the sanctuary”²³. In a panegyric to Simon it is said: “He upheld the Torah and strengthened those who supported it.”²⁴

The Temple Mount area at a 743 meter elevation was not the highest area in the vicinity; there were areas of higher elevation nearby. In order to protect the Temple area from the north, two fortified towers were erected in the time of the First Temple: the Hananel Tower on the northeast, and the Tower of the Hundred on the northwest.

After Appolonius conquered Jerusalem and destroyed its exterior walls, he strengthened the two fortress towers and placed a military garrison in them. This military guard desecrated Jerusalem and especially the Temple area. This was the ‘source of all evil’ in the eyes of the devoted. In a dirge on the humiliating

21. A. Cherikover, *Hayehudim Vehayevanim Betkufa Hahellenistit*, p. 35. It is doubtful if it has any basis. It seems to me that Simon expelled the foreigners and in their stead placed Jews.

22. *ibid.*, XIV, 29.

23. *ibid.*, 42.

24. *ibid.*, 14.

situation of Jerusalem before the Maccabean revolt, it is stated: "A sinning nation has fortified itself in the tower and dwells there. And there they have stored weapons and food, and the spoils of Jerusalem. They have been like a snare and have been an ambush to the House of the Lord and an evil adversary to Israel. They have spilled innocent blood around the Temple and have defiled the Sanctuary. The dwellers of Jerusalem have fled from before them, and it has become the abode of strangers."²⁵

For over 33 years the Chakra area was a 'thorn in the side' of the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The expulsion of those who lived in the Chakra area and the removal of those in the tower areas by Simon signified the final liberation of Judea. This day of total liberation was made a day of national celebration: "On the 23rd day of Iyar those who dwelt in Chakra left Jerusalem."²⁶ "And Simon purified the tower fortresses from their abominations and fortified the Temple Mount next to the fortresses. He and those with him dwelt there."²⁷

How this act was done is related in depth by Josephus: "After he levelled the fortress, he came to the conclusion that it would be wise to lower the level of the hill upon which the Chakra stood, in order for the Temple Mount to be at a higher elevation. He called the people to a meeting and prodded them to accomplish this task. He reminded them of all their tribulations under the military guard and the Jewish hellenizers, and what they might suffer in the future if a foreigner were to reconquer the area and garrison troops there. The people hearkened unto him and spent three years laboriously toiling day and night levelling the hill until the Temple Mount was at a higher elevation."²⁸ And finally, let us discuss the issue of the mercenary army. The people's declaration to Simon that 'he be their leader and high priest forever until there arose a true prophet' also proclaims his noble deeds: "Thus arose Simon and fought for his people; . . . And he armed his troops *from his own people*, and paid them well". Thus, not foreign mercenaries, but Jewish soldiers volunteered for his army, whom he himself paid for their upkeep.

25. *Maccabees*, I, 1, 32-35.

26. Translation: On the 23rd day (of Iyar) the Chakraites left Jerusalem, *Megillat Taanit*, Mishnah 5.

27. *Maccabees* I, 13, 53.

28. *Antiquities* XIII, 6, 7.

THE LAST OF THE MACCABEES

BY M. HERSCHEL LEVINE

IN MEMORY
of my father MAX H. LEVINE
and
of my brother Rabbi Prof. HOWARD I. LEVINE
יהי זכרם לברכה

Like the Last of the Mohicans, the Last of the Maccabees, an unusually valiant and capable woman, met her death as a result of a fall. Perhaps the only female military commander in Jewish history, a Hasmonean princess (whose name is unfortunately unknown) held off the forces of the despotic Herod for five years. When she realized that defeat was inevitable, she ascended one of the towers of Hyrcania, the last stronghold of the group that she led, proclaimed her hatred of the tyrant and derided his lowly origins, then hurled herself to her death below.

The anonymous heroine was the sister of Antigonus, the last Maccabean ruler of Judea. Her brother battled the combined forces of the Romans and Herod for several months. However, Antigonus was compelled to surrender Jerusalem in 37 B.C.E. and was himself led away as a captive to the noted Antony in Antioch, Syria.

As Herod was afraid that, if taken to Rome, Antigonus could appear before the Senate and persuade it to recognize his claim to the throne of Judea, he bribed Antony to kill the Hasmonean in Syria. The Roman leader, according to a classical historian,¹ had Antigonus tied to a cross and then scourged and beheaded, a humiliating execution "which no other kind had suffered at the hands of the Romans".²

1. Dio Cassius. Quoted in *Rise and Fall of the Judean State*, Vol. I, by Solomon Zeitlin (Philadelphia, 1968), p. 411.

2. *Josephus. Antiquities of the Jews*, Book XV, 1, 1. Hebrew Tr. by Abraham Schalit (Jerusalem, 1973), Vol. III, p. 163.

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To avenge the harsh treatment of her brother, his sister managed to mobilize sufficient supporters of the Maccabean cause to conduct a guerrilla war against Herod for five years. Her men would escape capture by superior forces of Herod by concealing themselves in the numerous caves of the Judean desert, sallying forth to attack the enemy in daring surprise raids. Somehow, the troops led by the Jewish Joan to Arc gained control of an important fortress, Hyrcania, originally built during the reign of John Hyrcanus (134–104 B.C.E.), but later reconstructed by Herod. The nearly impregnable stronghold near the Dead Sea, about eight miles southeast of Jerusalem, served as a center of the resistance to the rule of Herod. But eventually it fell after the onslaught of that cruel monarch, who even had several members of his immediate family killed.

While Josephus, our main source of second temple history, devotes only a few lines to our anonymous heroine, many fascinating details of her defiance of Herod can be gleaned from the Talmud. "On the outbreak of the war of Actium, Herod prepared to join forces with Antony; for he was now rid of disturbances in Judea and had captured the Fortress of Hyrcania, hitherto held by the sister of Antigonus."³

The sages of the Talmud relate a strange but revealing anecdote about Herod and the Last of the Maccabees:

Herod, a servant of the Hasmonean family, was strongly attracted to a young woman of that royal line. One day he heard a supernatural voice cry out: "Any servant who rebels at this time will succeed in his attempt."

Herod then rose up and killed all of his masters except that woman. However, when the maiden learned that Herod was determined to marry her, she climbed up to the palace roof and proclaimed in a loud voice: "Anyone who hereafter claims to be a Hasmonean is actually only a slave" . . . thereupon she flung herself from the parapet to the ground far below.

Herod preserved her body in honey for seven years. Some say that he had relations with the corpse, but others deny this.

(T.B. Baba Bathra 3a)

3. In Josephus, *The Jewish War*, Tr. H.St. J. Thackeray and Ralph Marcus, ed. and Abridged Moses F. Finley (1, XIX, 1) (New York, 1968), pp. 122, 123.

While most scholars maintain that the woman referred to in this Talmudic account is Mariamne, a Maccabean princess married to Herod, B.Z. Luria,⁴ a noted Jérusalem scholar, has convincingly shown that the female character is actually the heroine-sister of Antigonus. Luria points out that in the rabbinic episode the woman is unmarried, whereas we know that Mariamne was wedded to the cruel half-Edomite ruler for thirteen years and bore him four children.

Moreover, Mariamne did not take her own life but was executed by Herod. While Luria's theory about the woman's identity seems to be refuted by the fact that Antigonus' sister was not technically the Last of the Maccabees, as she was survived by Mariamne and her mother, Alexandra, and by the children the former had by Herod, the Israeli scholar resolves this seeming difficulty. As the sister of Antigonus hated Herod vehemently, she regarded the erstwhile Maccabees married or related to him by ties of marriage or blood as renegades. Hence, she rightfully considered herself the last scion of the Hasmonean dynasty.

The gruesome Talmudic portrayal of the preservation of the body of the Maccabean princess and Herod's necrophilia have also been clarified by Luria. To avenge her insult to him and to make her serve as an example to would-be opponents, Herod had the corpse of the anonymous heroine embalmed and publicly displayed. As Herod's perverse sexual appetites with his ten official wives and numerous male and female lovers was well known, the legend arose that he had unnatural relations with a dead woman.

It is rather ironic that the history of the Maccabees which began so gloriously with the epic struggle of Mattathias and his five valiant sons for religious freedom ended some thirteen decades later with the ignominious slaying of Antigonus and the tragic suicide of his noble sister.

4. *From Yannai to Herod*, (Hebrew) (Jerusalem, 1974), pp. 242-251.

A GUIDE TO ISAIAH – CHAPTER IV AND V

BY CHAIM PEARL

The introduction to the Book and the earlier chapters can be read in the Spring, Summer and Fall issues of Dor le Dor.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. Because of the heavy casualties in war there will be such a shortage of men that many women will be willing to become wed to a single man so that he might give them his name and the respectability of marriage. In the ancient Middle East it was a disgrace for a woman to be unmarried.

Seven women Not specifically seven. In biblical literature the figure seven is symbolic of a full or complete number (e.g. seven days of Creation; seven branches on the Candelabrum). Here it signifies "many".

The verse matches 3:6, where the people grab hold of anyone with a roof over his head to make him their leader.

* * *

2-6. These verses describe the time when, after the devastation, the survivors will be established in Jerusalem. They will live in the land blessed with fruitfulness and will enjoy the blessings of security under Divine protection.

2. *The growth of the Lord* is best taken quite literally, to mean – the produce of the land.

Every one that is written unto life in Jerusalem: The meaning is that every survivor was destined by God to live.

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

A cloud and smoke by day and the shining of a flaming fire by night is symbolic of God's constant protection and direction. When the Children of Israel travelled in the Wilderness, a pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night protected them and led them on the way.

CHAPTER FIVE

The chapter begins with the parable of the vineyard, one of the many beautiful and moving passages in the Book of Isaiah. In extended metaphor, the prophet emphasises the following teachings: Israel is God's chosen people. God, so to speak, works hard to make Israel worthy of that choice. Like every farmer who invests time, labour and love in his work, God hoped for good results; but the vineyard, which is Israel, produced sour grapes.

God, the owner of the vineyard, then asks the people, "What shall be done to the disappointing vineyard?" The answer is that it will be pulled up and destroyed. So, says the prophet, God will punish Israel for its rebelliousness.

1. *Let me sing of my well beloved* The speaker is Isaiah the prophet. "My well beloved" is God, the owner of the vineyard.

3. *Judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard* The question is asked by God Himself.

5. *I will take away the hedge . . . I will break down the fence* A precious vineyard would be protected by two barriers against trespass — a hedge made of thorns and a stronger inner fence of stones.

7. The prophet now makes the meaning of the parable explicit by applying it to the House of Israel and Judah.

House of Israel This literally refers to the northern kingdom of Israel, and in that case it would be one of several places where Isaiah the preacher from Jerusalem, addressed the northern tribes who were destroyed in 721 B.C.E. However it is more probable that the term "House of Israel" is here synonymous with the following phrase "men of Judah".

He looked for justice, but behold violence; for righteousness but behold a

cry Note the parallelism with the story of the vineyard, v. 2., *He looked that it should bring forth grapes . . .* The Hebrew phrase has a remarkable assonance “mishpat”, justice is pushed aside by “mispach”, violence; and “tsedakah”, righteousness is overrun by “tseakah”, a cry.

For this point the prophet is more specific as he turns his criticism to particular areas of the social life of the people.

8-10. First, he denounces the take-over of houses and land by the rich.

8. *Till there be no room*, for anyone else, since the rich land owners are taking over all the property.

And ye be made do dwell alone in the midst of the land “Ye” means the wealthy owners. Having dispossessed the poor they are the only ones left in ownership of all the surrounding houses and land.

9. *In mine ears said the Lord of Hosts.* This is equivalent to something like “The Lord said to me personally”.

10. *Ten acres shall yield one bath* Ten acres is a very sizeable vineyard. One bath is a very small quantity, about six gallons. This would be a disastrously poor yield from such a large area.

The seed of a homer shall yield an ephah An ephah is a tenth of a homer, so that the impoverished land will produce only a fraction of what is actually sown.

* * *

11-17. The second criticism against the people is on account of their dissolute drunkenness. Because of their licentiousness the land will be laid desolate and they will be driven into exile.

12. *But they regard not the work of the Lord* The verse is very expressive. From early morning till late at night these drunkards are so besotted, that they are never exposed to see the beauties of the world outside.

13. *My people are gone into captivity* Either the people of the northern kingdom is meant; destroyed in 721 B.C.E., or if Isaiah concentrates, as he usually does, on the southern kingdom of Judah and Jerusalem, destroyed much

later in 586 B.C.E., then the verb 'are gone' is the prophetic perfect.

Although the event will take place in the future, it is so certain to happen that it is described as having already happened.

For want of knowledge – of God and the wonderful world He created. This goes back to the previous verse.

Their honorable men . . . their multitude Leaders and people will die of hunger and thirst.

* * *

15–16. These two verses seem to be a digression from the main theme which is the destruction of land and people. Yet they can be connected, since the downfall of the Jewish State is due to the irresistible force of justice which requires that ultimately evil will be destroyed. Ultimately, "God the Holy One is sanctified through righteousness".

* * *

17. This verse reverts to the main theme. The prophet concludes the section with the warning that animals and bedouin will roam over the desolate land.

The description of the sinner is of one who deliberately draws to himself all opportunity of evil doing. In contrast to the man who sins inadvertently, unwillfully or on the chance occasion, the picture given here is of deliberate and consistent evil doing. The metaphor of one pulling iniquity and sin toward himself "as it were with a cart rope" is most expressive.

Cords of vanity The prophet gets in a second accusation by identifying the cords of vanity as the pulling force of sin.

Iniquity . . . sin The accepted difference in the meaning of the two terms is that "iniquity" is the deliberate evil, usually connected with social offences. "Sin" is the lesser of the evils often associated with ritual misdemeanours, mostly unwitting. Isaiah may be using both terms synonymously.

19. The people are cynical and sceptical of the prophet's warning. They seem to say, "So let God do His best and lets see what happens".

* * *

20. The next accusation is against the false values of the people where good and evil are completely confused.

* * *

21. This is followed by Isaiah's denunciation against false pride and insolent conceit.

* * *

22. Criticism against drunkards again, the same theme as in verses 11–12. Except that here, Isaiah mocks them. There must have been many such people in Jerusalem in his day.

23. *That justify the wicked for a reward* The leaders take bribes to rule in favour of the guilty.

24. In vivid simile the prophet describes the certain destruction which will follow.

25. The prophetic perfect lends even greater certainty to the prophecy. It is as though it has already taken place.

26–30. God in history uses individuals and nations to do His purpose. In this context He will call on an enemy nation from afar to wreak vengeance upon the people of Israel. The nation is probably Assyria.

26. *And will hiss unto them* Meaning that God will call them, literally, "whistle" for them.

FAMOUS AND NOTEWORTHY PHRASES TO MEMORISE

1. אשירה נא לידידי שירח דודי לכרמו כרם היה לידידי בקרן בן שמן
*Let me sing of my well-beloved, a song of my beloved touching his vineyard.
 My beloved had a vineyard in a very fruitful hill.*

The opening verse gives the theme. It is a beautiful and vivid parable. Bible

lovers would like to identify its source, the beginning of Isaiah, chapter 5. The first four verses of the chapter were set to music by the Israeli composer, Yehudah Shertock.

7. ויקו למשפט והנה משפח
לצדקה והנה צעקה
And he looked for justice, but behold violence; for righteousness, but behold a cry.

This phrase is a summary of the tragic gap between the hopes and ideals for the Jewish people and the grim realities of their moral situation. The Hebrew is a striking example of the use of assonance.

13. לכך גלה עמי מבלי דעה
Therefore My people are gone into captivity for want of knowledge.

This is an eloquent text on the central importance of education.

16. ויגבה ה' צבאות במשפט
והאל הקדוש נקדש בצדקה
But the Lord of Hosts is exalted through justice, and God the Holy One is sanctified through righteousness.

Justice is basic in the Jewish value system. Without it the world would return to chaos. The emphasis on justice elevates the concept to an attribute of God Himself who is frequently described as the God of justice.



MOSES THE INARTICULATE

BY LOUIS I. RABINOWITZ

The reluctance of Moses to assume the Divine mission entrusted to him, to deliver the Children of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, given to him in the burning bush is patent to the most superficial reader of the relevant chapter of the Bible (Exodus 4). He brings forward every possible drawback, his personal unfitness for the mission (v. 11), his ignorance of what to say to his fellow Israelites in order to convince them that he is indeed a messenger from God (v. 13); his conviction that they will reject the message (4:1). And after all these objections are met and answered Moses adduces his last plea, "O Lord, I am not a man of words, neither heretofore, nor since Thou hast spoken unto Thy servant, for I am heavy of speech and heavy of tongue" (4:11). He maintains that he suffers from a permanent impediment in speech ("neither heretofore") but this plea, unlike the previous ones, is not rejected out of hand. True that God answers him with a promise of divine aid to overcome it, "I will be with thy mouth to teach thee what thou shalt speak" (v. 12) but when Moses still demurs, although it results in Divine anger, the plea is, at least partly, conceded. Aaron his brother does not possess this physical disability, on the contrary, "he speaketh well" (v. 14) and Moses is explicitly told that he is to transmit to him the Divine message, "and thou shalt speak unto him and put the words in his mouth . . . and *he* shall be thy spokesman unto the people, (not only to Pharaoh) and it shall come to pass that he shall be to thee for a mouth and thou shalt be to him in God's stead" (vv. 15 and 16).

It seems obvious from this passage that Moses' plea of inarticulateness was not, as the others may have been, a last desperate attempt to extricate himself from an unwelcome mission, but reflects a genuine physical disability in speech on his part, as indeed the words *k'vad peh* and *k'vad lashon* indicate, and it is

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borne out by a careful examination of the succeeding narrative. When Moses and Aaron met in the wilderness, it is stated that after Moses conveyed to his brother all the words of the Lord, "Moses and Aaron went and gathered together the elders of the Children of Israel, and *Aaron* spoke all the words, etc" (vv. 28-30). Aaron is referred to subsequently on a number of occasions as accompanying him, obviously for this purpose, and even when it is not explicitly stated it is to be understood.

The most striking evidence, however appears in chapters 6:30-7:2. For a second time Moses pleads his inarticulateness, "behold I am uncircumcised of lips and how shall Pharaoh hearken unto me", but instead of being rebuked, the plea is accepted and he is told, "Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet (i.e. thy spokesman), and explicitly it continues, "Thou shalt speak all that I command thee, and Aaron thy brother shall speak unto Pharaoh that he let the Children of Israel go out of the land". Clearly Moses' role was to convey personally to Aaron the Divine message and it was the latter who was to formulate it in acceptable form. Thus "And Moses *and Aaron* did so, as the Lord had commanded them, so did they" (7:6) – Moses as the transmitter but Aaron as the spokesman.

It is hard to conceive of Moses the Lawgiver as stumbling and inarticulate in speech, even suffering from an impediment, but that the Torah maintains it, is beyond doubt.

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

For potential writers, we recommend the following:

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

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

THE HEBREW ELEMENT IN EVERYDAY ENGLISH — 7

BY GABRIEL SIVAN

This is the final installment of a series of eight Kol Yisrael radio talks. The earlier ones can be read in the Spring, Summer and Fall issues of Dor le Dor

WORDS THAT TELL A STORY

In this series of essays, I have so far dealt with various aspects of everyday English vocabulary, but the words we shall consider here have a special interest for us because they play a part in some intriguing story — or, as the Psalmist phrases it, in “a tale that is told” (Ps. 90:9).

Readers will be aware of the important, if mainly negative, role of the Babylonian empires in Israel’s ancient history. The name *Babel* or *Babylon* (from the Akkadian *bab-ilu*, “gate of the god”) recalls the attempt to storm heaven in man’s first skyscraper, a scheme that God foiled by “confounding” the language of mankind (Gen. 11:1–9). Popular Biblical etymology ironically associates *Bavel* (בבל) with the Hebrew root *balal* (בלל), meaning “to mix or confuse”, and so from the Tanakh we derive *babel*, “a noisy assembly” or “scene of confusion”; and, perhaps also, the imitative verb “to babble” suggesting babyish or incoherent chatter.¹

In Hebrew, *shibbolet* (שבולת) means both “a current of water” and “an ear of corn”. According to the Book of Judges (12:5–6), the Ephraimites gave themselves away by mispronouncing this word as *sibbolet* when challenged by Jephthah and his followers at the fords of the Jordan.² A *shibboleth* now signifies any test word or opinion that betrays a person’s true allegiance, and this term has also acquired the sense of “an outmoded doctrine”.

1. Similarly, *bedlam* (“a scene of uproar, madhouse”) ultimately derives from *Bet-lehem* (בית לחם), since the London hospital of St. Mary of Bethlehem gained notoriety as a lunatic asylum after 1547!

2. This speech peculiarity can also be found among some Jews of Lithuanian origin (“Litvaks”) even today.

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

The Apocryphal story of Hannah and her Seven Sons (2 Macc. 7), who all preferred martyrdom to apostasy, is linked with the Maccabean struggle against Syrian paganism and with our Ḥanukkah festival. A Church cult of the Middle Ages honored the Seven Maccabee Martyrs, and for this reason anything reminiscent of a gruesome death was termed *Macchabée* or *Macabré* in medieval French. The eerie *Danse Macabre* emerged from this milieu, together with our borrowed adjective *macabre*, which means “ghastly” or “horrific”.

In the sense of “tradition”, *Qabbalah* (קבלה) originally designated all Jewish oral teaching, but this term later became synonymous with the esoteric, mystical stream within Judaism. The word *Kabbalah*³ was absorbed by 16th-century English, which gave it the additional sense of “any occult matter, secret doctrine or mysterious art”. Strangely enough, Charles II’s Privy Council now makes its appearance in this story. Among the ministers of state who signed an unpopular Treaty of Alliance with France in 1672 were five — Clifford, Arlington, Buckingham, Ashley and Lauderdale — whose surnames provided the initials spelling C-A-B-A-L! A new term was thus coined to designate “any sinister intrigue” or “those persons or parties involved in such a conspiracy”, as well as the verb “to cabal”.

My last tale concerns the *Pelishtim* (פלשתיים) or *Philistines*, idolatrous oppressors of Israel who vanished from history some 2,500 years ago. At the funeral of a student who had been killed in a brawl with a townsman of Jena in 1624, the officiating German pastor sardonically quoted the traitress Delilah’s cry, “The Philistines be upon thee, Samson!” (Judges 16:9). From that time onward, *Philistine* became synonymous with “materialistic, bourgeois and lacking in culture”. *Palaestina* (or *Philistia*), the vindictive Roman name for *Eretz Yisra’el*, has unfortunately stuck to this land of ours, and not long ago I had to publish an article overseas refuting the preposterous claim by a journalist from the *Christian Science Monitor* that the “Palestinian” Arabs of today are descended from the ancient Philistines.⁴ That anyone should rejoice in such a name is odd indeed!

3. Also spelled “Cabala”, “Cabbala”, etc. “Kabbalism” and “Kabbalist” are standard derivatives.

4. “The ‘Palestine’ Plot”, a feature article in *The Star*, Johannesburg (January 19, 1977), answering F.H. Russell’s forged “evidence” in *The Star* (November 10, 1976).

THE HEBREW ELEMENT IN EVERYDAY ENGLISH — 8

CONCLUSION: SOME RECENT INFLUENCES

Since Puritan times, when John Sadler published his *Rights of the Kingdom* (1649), many wild and unsubstantiated claims have been made in favor of the so-called Anglo-Israel theory, which maintains that the English and their ethnic kinfolk throughout the world are descended from the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel. This belief, still cherished by “British Israelites”, rests on a hotch potch of linguistic and theological assumptions: that the name “Saxons”, for example, means “Isaac’s Sons” and that “British” derives from *Berit-Ish* (ברית-איש), “Covenant Man”, a non-existent Hebrew term! Much is also made of various like-sounding words in Hebrew and English — *qol* (קול), “a voice”, and “call”; *dumah* (דומה), “silence”, and “dumb”; *avel* (עול), “wickedness”, and “evil”; *sekhel* (שכל), “intelligence”, and “skill” — but such conjectures, intriguing though they may be, have absolutely no basis in objective philology.

With slight modification, a number of Hebrew terms *have* found their way into colloquial English through Yiddish and the pervasive influence of our mass media. Yiddish, once the lingua franca of Ashkenazi Jewry, was dealt a lethal blow by the Nazi practitioners of genocide, but remains the second language of many Jews in Israel, the U.S.A. and Latin America. Its wealth of Hebraic expression continues to inspire new words and coinages from Leicester Square to Broadway. A Gentile may readily describe himself as a *goy* (גוי), call some dishonest competitor a *ganef* (or *gonoph*; Heb. *ganav*: גנב, “thief”), complain about his “nerve” or *chutzpah* (חוצפה) and insist that a particular business deal is not “strictly *kosher*” (כשר; i.e. “respectable” and “above board”). He may deride a chump or bungler as a *schlemiel* (שלומיאל),⁵ hint that a mutual acquaintance is *meshugga* (משוגע; “crazy”), and even call a policeman or detective a *shamus* (*shammes*) without having the least idea that the term stems from the Hebrew *shammash* (שמש), meaning “attendant” or “beadle of a synagogue”! To quote the popular phrase, “you don’t have to be Jewish” to savor Hebrew’s indirect impact — through Yiddish — on modern English colloquialisms and slang.

5. Popular tradition derives *schlemiel* from the name of an Israelite notable, Shelumiel ben Zurishaddai (Num. 1:6, 2:12, etc.), although other possible Hebrew derivations have been suggested.

A different type of contribution has been made by Zionism and the State of Israel in the term *kibbutz* (קבוץ), a “collective” agricultural settlement that has been imitated in several other countries. Friends of mine “Down Under” also believe that the Australian word “cobber”, meaning “buddy” or “pal”, derives from the Yiddish *khover* — a modification of *haver* (חבר), “partner” or “comrade” in Hebrew.

To conclude, I should like to offer a few thoughts on the contemporary impact of our *Tanakh*. There have been profound changes in outlook since Winston Churchill attained rare heights of Biblicism in his wartime speeches, and political considerations have latterly made a ludicrous intrusion in the Biblical sphere. Thus, in 1969, Handel’s *Israel In Egypt* was performed as “The Song of Moses” (*Cantique de Moïse*) at Strasbourg, for fear that the composer’s own title might offend Arab susceptibilities. A new setting of Psalm 121, commissioned by the U.N., “accidentally” omitted the 4th verse: “Behold, the Guardian of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps” (הנה לא־יִנּוּם ולא יִשָּׁן שׁוֹמֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל). And, more recently still, that celebrated prophecy of a time when “nation shall not lift up sword against nation” (Isa. 2:4; cf. Micah 4:3), inscribed on a plaza wall at the United Nations building in New York, was credited to Isaiah only after strenuous representations by a private American citizen who offered to pay for the cost involved!

Meanwhile, new Bible translations also sacrifice the *King James* idiom in their pursuit of greater “relevance” and faithfulness to the original text. As Prime Minister Begin, President Carter and even President Sadat demonstrated, however, at the signing of the Israel–Egypt Peace Treaty in Washington, the language of the Book of Books remains an indelible part of man’s psychology and mode of expression. To translate pious words into positive action, both parents and teachers must not only imbue children with a love and knowledge of the Bible but *live* by the Book as well.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I thought you might be interested in my "disagreement" with Mrs. Katzoff's excellent article: Samuel and Saul — The Psychological Dimension (Summer 1983, XI:4) Keep up the good work!

Adina Katzoff's analysis of Samuel and Saul and her interpretation of "the psychological dimension" misses the mark. There is a tendency to ascribe general and common motives and motivations which, in context, are not applicable to specific acts. Similar acts and actions are not necessarily cast from the same psychic mold. Samuel's actions and feelings toward Saul probably sprang from simpler reasons that Mrs. Katzoff infers.

What was Samuel mourning? He compassionately mourned the fall of a simple and honorable man whom he was forced to elevate to a fatal height. Samuel was a prophet (after Moses the first . . . before him there were "seers" — 10:9) and also foresaw the fate of his people Israel. He mourned for Israel, too. He mourned *about* Saul and the results of his reign as well as *for* Saul, the doomed human.

Samuel was not the only . . . or first . . . prophet forced by divine command to act and speak against his will. (Cf. Moses, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Jonah, et al.) A sensitive prophet, unwilling instrument of a divinely ordained tragedy which he struggles to avert, could not help but mourn over the events he so closely orchestrated. There is no need to dig up four psychological stages of loss.

Samuel presaged the very basic human emotion of fear later prophets (and Moses before) experienced: not only fear for his people but fear of people. It was unwillingly and with fear that he anointed David, and he did so only because he was so commanded. It was as a divine agent, not as a rebel that Samuel acted to supplant Saul. Should not a just and moral man mourn over a forced "double cross" and the inevitable personal and national tragedy it would cause?

Let's examine the "dual authority" Mrs. Katzoff mentions. There was to be but *one* authority in Israel . . . God. He spoke to the king *through* the prophet, who was to instruct and guide the King. Indeed, David had his prophet, his seer, and his dream diviner. When the king disobeyed the prophet, i.e., the voice of God, and followed human paths of logic, luxury, or lewdness, ill resulted for the nation and king.

Now Saul, the first king, disobeyed Samuel, the first prophet, and, like future kings he acted in a logical human way. He spared Agag, he took loot. When the priest was late, Saul usurped his function and performed the sacrifice himself . . . a logical but disobedient and disruptive act. "Kodesh" is set aside, in function as in functionary. As Moses, who for a

trifling disobedience incurred draconian punishment, so did Saul suffer greatly. We learn again that a leader of the people cannot expect the same leniency for a slip the Judge might overlook or punish lightly if committed by a common man. Samuel chastised Saul "mittat ha din." Samuel was first of the prophets who realized that for Israel, God . . . not history, directs fate. Obedience to Divine direction, not human logic or passion, secures welfare. How could a king, honest and innocent as he may be, exemplify otherwise?

Samuel mourned. He was probably the first to realize that "all things are foreseen but man can change things". Although he vigorously warned the people of their fate, he established the prophetic tradition and held out hope. He showed compassion for king and subjects (12:14). He foretold the evil future of the monarchy and showed the nation how to avoid it. When the inevitable failure occurred, what man could not but mourn about Saul?

Let's hear again Samuel's valedictory. He was a proud man and spoke of the passing of an era. Well aware of his sons' failure, having lived with Eli's tragedy, would he have bragged about sons? Of course not. By "sons" could Samuel not have meant "prophets" or "disciples"? "Sons of prophets"? We know there were "bands" of prophets. Eli had called Samuel "son" (2:16). Samuel established a tradition of prophecy. Remember, before him there were "seers". If you prefer to take his mention of sons

literally, then take the whole passage in its simple meaning: a dignified summary of what a judge should be, not "gevas" of a bitter old man.

Mrs. Katzoff reads too much into 11:14-15. Saul was anointed and became king before the public ceremony. Just as a president can take an oath of office and have inauguration ceremonies later, so with Saul. Celebrations and ratification of office only emphasize the authority of the office holder. At Gilgal, a symbolic place, Samuel with sacrifices (holy and symbolic acts) publicly affirmed (renewed) the monarchy. He did not deny it, he did not try to assuage his own misgivings, but emphasized the choice of God and the nation "before all the people". Later when he saw what he had foreseen, Samuel mourned for Saul.

One could go on. Let's not. Except for one poignant reason more that Samuel, stern and sensitive, would mourn. Did the prophet see the final ruin of a simple man? Not only did God remove his spirit from an innocent farmer he made king. He installed an evil spirit to drive him mad. I must now, like Mrs. Katzoff get psychological. I like to think that Samuel had a grievance against his Master's cruel decree. Well might Samuel mourn for the victim he was forced to "set up".

No, Samuel was not a jealous old man mourning for the inevitable loss he must personally cede. He was a sage and humane man who acted and grieved as a prophet in Israel.

David Mack
Tenafly, New Jersey

In Reply to Mr. Mack's Comment

It is evident that Mr. David Mack's orientation is rooted in a different frame of reference than my article on the "Psychological Dimension" in the relationship between the Prophet Samuel and King Saul.

It would be out of place for me to engage in a polemic on the points raised by Mr. Mack which are essentially in the realm of theology.

Suffice it to say that the psychological approach is a valid tool for giving added meaning and dimension to the understanding of the Bible.

It is flattering to know that Mr. Mack spent time and effort relating to my article.

Adina Katzoff

Sir,

I was impressed by Prof. L.I. Rabinowitz's introduction to "Moses — The Tragedy of His Personal Life" (Vol. XI, No. 3) in which he stated that this subject has never received adequate treatment. The same evaluation was the cause of writing my Moses-trilogy, i.e. to understand the human side of this unique man, Moses. — If one inquires in a non-fictional way about the personal life of Moses it may be advisable to come as near as possible to the source material and pay less attention to Midrashim or later interpretations.

Prof. Rabinowitz's points that the abnormal upbringing of Moses is one of the reasons the tragedy of Moses' life

should find attention. We have however to be fully conscious of what this implies for our understanding of the personal tragedy. All the advantages of Moses, developed in his formative years turn into points of tension between him and the people. We have to conclude (Ex. 1:10,11) that Moses was an educated, literate man, with the autocratic manner of his early surroundings and in contact with the power which ruled the world at this period. When he returns from Midian almost unknown to his people and by God's Mighty Arm, leads the Hebrews used in generations of serfdom, into freedom, they follow him out of necessity. They may stand before him in awe but he does not earn their love. We learn of their distrust or hate, and even the next to him do not fully understand him or his belief (Ex. 32, Lev. 10, Num. 12).

The tragedy of Moses' personal life is that he lives and dies a lonely man. He never had a friend. So outstanding are his capabilities — which reach out to the heavens — that the gulf cannot be bridged between him and other men. Against his autocratic Egyptian approach to deal with men stands his non-Egyptian teaching that life on earth and not death in an afterworld is the goal of man and God.

Heinz Weissenberg
"Moses, Mann des Weges". — Member
P.E.N. Centre, London.

BOOK REVIEWS

THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA BIBLICA, vol. 1-8, Jerusalem, Bialik Institute, 1950-1982

REVIEWED BY ARYE BEN-YOSEF

(Dedicated to the memory of Lea Fraenkel, Dr. Arye Tvig, and Dr. Rafel Weiss, young Bible scholars, who died in the prime of life.)

Lately the eighth volume of the Encyclopaedia Biblica was published, containing the last items in alphabetical order, the letters ן and ן, thus completing the gigantic task of putting in order the vast store of knowledge of the Bible and its period. It is therefore fitting that this undertaking should now be reviewed, with both its achievements and its faults, so that they can be put right in future editions.

It began in that terrible year in our history, 1942. At first, five volumes were planned, and its editors, the late Professors A.L. Sukenik and M.D. Cassuto, thought of finishing it in five years. But their intention to go deeply and intensively in their research led to its completion only 40 years later.

The Encyclopaedia is the fruit of the research of Biblical scholars living in Israel and working at the universities of Israel. It makes use of the non-Jewish literature of the past century, not only on the books of the Bible, but also of the peoples of the time. Naturally, much of it is now out of date, and could have been omitted, if the editors had troubled less to bring its facts from a distance and tried

more to make use of the fruit of the research of scholars living in the Land of Israel, whose contributions in the field of Jewish Religion and Bible are world famous, such as Professors M. Weiss, R.I.Z. Werblowsky, Y. Elitzur, Nehama Leibowitz, E. Simon, and others.

A good encyclopaedia in every area, general and particular, in Jewish and Biblical studies, should be distinguished in all its articles, and we shall examine whether this is so in our encyclopaedia.

It has many excellent articles which shed light on the Bible and fulfil its principal purpose. I wish I could say that these articles represent all the research included in the 8 volumes, but I am sorry to say that I cannot. Many of the articles not only do not shed light on the Bible itself, but actually falsify its image. Because many of the writers are more concerned to show their knowledge of the critical schools about J. E. D. and P. documents, and think that the more they stress the documentary theories and the myths of the ancient peoples about the Bible, so much the better.

One of the most important articles is on ארץ ישראל (The Land of Israel), of

Dr. Arye Ben-Yosef received his B.A. in Jewish History and Bible, and his M.A. in Jewish History from Bar-Ilan University, and his Ph.D. in Jewish History from Dropsie University, Philadelphia, U.S.A.

which the larger part — that on its history — was written by Prof. B. Mazar (in vol. 1). In it we have a survey of the history of the Land from the Stone Age until the end of Persian rule, passing over to the Hellenistic period. Prof. Mazar makes use of his expert knowledge in the areas, history and archaeology, with excellent results in the main. His conclusions are sometimes faulty, especially when he prefers the opinions of the critics rather than of the Hebrew sources. An example is on the article Ashkelon (vol. 1, columns 769–777; cf. also the article: “Abde’l”, *ibid.* col. 90).

In the section on the Holiness of the Land, by Prof. M.H. Ben-Shammai (vol. 1, columns 741–742) it is emphasised that the idea of holiness is expressed not only through the commandments in the Torah, but all the Biblical sources to the deep personal relationship between the people and the Land — a holy people on a holy land. It is important that this should be stressed, so that we may dismiss false ideas that the concept of holiness of our land is not an integral part of our religion.

One of the most important articles, well written and with full knowledge of the subject is that on Amarna (by Prof. P. Arzi, vol. 6, columns 242–254), which gives us a picture of the ancient East in general and of the Land in particular. Prof. Arzi is one of the outstanding scholars on the subject of the Tel-el-Amarna Tablets, and is shortly publishing the first Hebrew edition of the Tablets, in connection with his work in

the Assyrian Dept. of Bar-Ilan University, where he and his disciples Prof. Jacob Klein and Dr. Amnon Altman are the chief scholars.

In his article on Canaan (vol. 4, columns 196–202) it is a pity that Prof. Albright does not mention the area of the land of Canaan in the light of the Tel-el-Amarna tablets. One can learn from them that particularly in the period precedent to the Israelite conquest under Joshua, it included the whole of Syria, as well as the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, Tyre and Sidon, the Amorite land in Mount Lebanon, as well as Ugarit. And from the documents it is certain that the principal representative of Pharaoh over all the lands of Syria was called the prince of Canaan, or the king's agent in the land of Canaan.

The article on Job (by Prof. N.H. Tur-Sinai, vol. 1, columns 241–257) is very important. The writer points out in his book on Job that it is an outstanding work, though also vague. But this article is vague, and not even outstanding. A notable Bible scholar in our generation, Prof. Fullerton, says that one of Tur-Sinai's explanation on Job shows deep thought in the wrong direction (cf. *American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature* 55, 1933, p. 265). This comment is an exact description of the whole of Tur-Sinai's article in the *Encyclopaedia*. I personally would like to add that I am sorry that Job, who suffered such a lot and was finally saved from all of them, has now an additional trouble in the research about him in the

Encyclopaedia Biblica.

A very important article is that on Mesha (by Prof. M. Mazar, vol. , columns 921-929). Mazar dates the Stone at 850 B.C.E., but, according to the research of Y. Elitzur, it seems that the date is very much earlier (cf. Y. Elitzur, *The Moab prophecy and the Moabite Stone*, in *Bar-Ilan Annual*, vol. 1, pp. 58-65).

The editorial board, in both vols. 1 and 8, stress that the *Encyclopaedia Biblica* reflects the renaissance of Israel in its

Land. But, as Prof. G.R. Driver says (on Amos 7:14, in *Expository Times* 67 (1955-56), pp. 91-92, and 68 (1956-57), p. 302) Bible scholars need to go out of their ivory tower of dry study and impregnate themselves with the spirit of the air of the mountains of Judah. Only when the scholars who write the articles in the *Encyclopaedia* fulfil these conditions will their research and efforts reflect the true renaissance of Israel in its Land.

Translated and adapted by
Joseph Halpern

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Excerpts from the

TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

DECEMBER 1983-JANUARY 1984

טבת תשמ"ד

W	Jeremiah 52	חנוכה ירמיה נב	7	א
Th	Ezekiel 1	חנוכה יחזקאל א	8	ב
F	Genesis 44:18-47:27	ויגש	9	ג
שבת	Haftarah Ezekiel 37:15-28	הפטרה יחזקאל ל"ז, טו-כח	10	ד
S	Ezekiel 2	יחזקאל ב	11	ה
M	Ezekiel 3	יחזקאל ג	12	ו
T	Ezekiel 4	יחזקאל ד	13	ז
W	Ezekiel 5	יחזקאל ה	14	ח
Th	Ezekiel 6	יחזקאל ו	15	ט
F	Genesis 47:28-50	ויחי	16	י
שבת	Haftarah I Kings 2:1-12	הפטרה מלכים א ב', א-יב	17	יא
S	Ezekiel 7	יחזקאל ז	18	יב
M	Ezekiel 8	יחזקאל ח	19	יג
T	Ezekiel 9	יחזקאל ט	20	יד
W	Ezekiel 10	יחזקאל י	21	טו
Th	Ezekiel 11	יחזקאל יא	22	טז
F	Exodus 1-6:1	שמות	23	יז
שבת	Haftarah Isaiah 27:6-28:13	הפטרה ישעיה כ"ז, ו-כ"ח, יג	24	יח
S	Ezekiel 12	יחזקאל יב	25	יט
M	Ezekiel 13	יחזקאל יג	26	כ
T	Ezekiel 14	יחזקאל יד	27	כא
W	Ezekiel 15	יחזקאל טו	28	כב
Th	Ezekiel 16	יחזקאל טז	29	כג
F	Exodus 6:2-9	וארא	30	כד
שבת	Haftarah Ezekiel 28:25-29:21	הפטרה יחזקאל כ"ח, כה-כ"ט, כא	31	כה
January				
S	Ezekiel 17	יחזקאל יז	1	כו
M	Ezekiel 18	יחזקאל יח	2	כז
T	Ezekiel 19	יחזקאל יט	3	כח
W	Ezekiel 20	יחזקאל כ	4	כט

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1984

שבט תשמ"ד

Th	Ezekiel 21	יחזקאל כא	5	א
F	Exodus 10-13:16	בא	6	ב
שבח	Haftarah: Jeremiah 46:13-28	הפטרה: ירמיה מ"ו, יג-כח	7	ג
S	Ezekiel 22	יחזקאל כב	8	ד
M	Ezekiel 23	יחזקאל כג	9	ה
T	Ezekiel 24	יחזקאל כד	10	ו
W	Ezekiel 25	יחזקאל כה	11	ז
Th	Ezekiel 26	יחזקאל כו	12	ח
F	Exodus 13:17-17	ושלח שופטים	13	ט
שבח	Haftarah: Judges 4:4-5:31	הפטרה: שופטים ד', ד-ה'. לא	14	י
S	Ezekiel 27	יחזקאל כז	15	יא
M	Ezekiel 28	יחזקאל כח	16	יב
T	Ezekiel 29	יחזקאל כט	17	יג
W	Ezekiel 30	יחזקאל ל	18	יד
Th	Ezekiel 31	ט"ו בשבט יחזקאל לא	19	טו
F	Exodus 18-20	יתרו	20	טז
שבח	Haftarah: Isaiah 6-7:10	הפטרה: ישעיה ו'-ז', י	21	יז
S	Ezekiel 32	יחזקאל לב	22	יח
M	Ezekiel 33	יחזקאל לג	23	יט
T	Ezekiel 34	יחזקאל לד	24	כ
W	Ezekiel 35	יחזקאל לה	25	כא
Th	Ezekiel 36	יחזקאל לו	26	כב
F	Exodus 21-24	משפטים	27	כג
שבח	Haftarah: Jeremiah 34:8-22	הפטרה: ירמיה ל"ד, ח-כ"ב	28	כד
S	Ezekiel 37	יחזקאל לז	29	כה
M	Ezekiel 38	יחזקאל לח	30	כו
T	Ezekiel 39	יחזקאל לט	31	כז
		February		
W	Ezekiel 40	יחזקאל מ	1	כח
Th	Ezekiel 41	יחזקאל מא	2	כט
F	Exodus 25:1-27:14	תרומה	3	ל

שבת	Haftarah: Isaiah 66	הפטרה: ישעיה ס"ו	4	א
S	Ezekiel 42	יחזקאל מב	5	ב
M	Ezekiel 43	יחזקאל מג	6	ג
T	Ezekiel 44	יחזקאל מד	7	ד
W	Ezekiel 45	יחזקאל מה	8	ה
Th	Ezekiel 46	יחזקאל מו	9	ו
F	Exodus 27:20-30:10	חצוה	10	ז
שבת	Haftarah: Ezekiel 43:10-27	הפטרה: יחזקאל מ"ג-ר,כו	11	ח
S	Ezekiel 47	יחזקאל מז	12	ט
M	Ezekiel 48	יחזקאל מח	13	י
T	Hosea 1	הושע א	14	יא
W	Hosea 2	הושע ב	15	יב
Th	Hosea 3	הושע ג	16	יג
F	Exodus 30:11-34	כי תשא	17	יד
שבת	Haftarah: I Kings 18:1-39	הפטרה: מלכים א י"ח, א-ל"ט	18	טו
S	Hosea 4	הושע ד	19	טז
M	Hosea 5	הושע ה	20	יז
T	Hosea 6	הושע ו	21	יח
W	Hosea 7	הושע ז	22	יט
Th	Hosea 8	הושע ח	23	כ
F	Exodus 35-38:20	ויקהל	24	כא
שבת	Haftarah I Kings 7:40-8:21	הפטרה: מלכים א ז', מ-ח', כא	25	כב
S	Hosea 9	הושע ט	26	כג
M	Hosea 10	הושע י	27	כד
T	Hosea 11	הושע יא	28	כה
W	Hosea 12	הושע יב	29	כו
March				
Th	Hosea 13	הושע יג	1	כז
F	Exodus 38:21-40	פקודי שקלים	2	כח
שבת	Haftarah: I Kings 11:17-12:17	הפטרה: מלכים א י"א, יז-י"ב, יז	3	כט
S	Hosea 14	הושע יד	4	ל

דף יומי

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

א' בטבת ממשיכים מס' פסחים נ"ו

ח' באדר א' מתחילים מס' שקלים

כ"ט באדר א' מתחילים מס' ראש השנה

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OUR BIBLICAL HERITAGE

Vol. XII, No. 2 (מ"ו)

Winter 1983/1984

GYNOMORPHIC IMAGERY IN EXILIC ISAIAH	<i>Leila Leah Bronner</i>	71
OBSERVATIONS ON TA-AMAY HAMIKRA	<i>Ezekiel N. Musleah</i>	84
THE FLOOD STORY IN BIBLE AND CUNEIFORM LITERATURE	<i>I. Rapaport</i>	95
WAS THE HASMONEAN STATE SECULAR-I	<i>B.Z. Luria</i>	104
THE LAST OF THE MACCABEES	<i>M. Herschel Levine</i>	112
A GUIDE TO ISAIAH – IV, V	<i>Chaim Pearl</i>	115
MOSES THE INARTICULATE	<i>Louis I. Rabinowitz</i>	121
THE HEBREW ELEMENT IN EVERYDAY ENGLISH-VII, VIII	<i>Gabriel Sivan</i>	123
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR		127
BOOK REVIEWS		130
TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR		133

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