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**Our Biblical Heritage**



המרכז העולמי לתנ"ך בירושלים

THE WORLD JEWISH BIBLE CENTER

Vol. XIV No. 2 (נ"ד) WINTER 1985/86

An Affiliate of  
THE WORLD ZIONIST ORGANIZATION  
Department of Education and Culture

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OUR BIBLICAL HERITAGE

A Quarterly Published by the  
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דפוס רפאל חיים הכהן בע"מ, ירושלים

Printed by Raphael Haim Hacohen Press Ltd., Jerusalem

# THE SYNAGOGUE

## ITS ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

BY ALTER HILEWITZ

### I

It is generally accepted that the synagogue (בית כנסת) is the institution which replaced the Temple (בית המקדש) in Jerusalem. It is suggested that it was originally established by the Judean exiles who were deported from Jerusalem into Babylonia by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylonia (605–562 B.C.E.). Support for this suggestion can be found in the Talmudic interpretation on the verse *And I shall be for them a small sanctuary in the lands where they have come*<sup>1</sup> “These are the houses of assembly (בתי כנסיות) and houses of learning (בתי מדרשיות) that existed in Babylonia.”<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the synagogue is commonly known as the “Small Sanctuary.” On this basis, the Halācha determines that the synagogue is like unto the Holy Temple in holiness.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, according to the Zohar, the precept of building includes also the building of synagogues.<sup>4</sup> It is interesting to note that the historian of the Gaonic period, Rav Sherira Gaon, the author of the well-known “Epistyle,” notes in one of his responsa, that when Jechoniah, king of Judea, and his entourage were driven into exile in Babylonia, they built a synagogue there from the stones and soil brought from the site of the Temple, mentioned in the Talmud<sup>5</sup> by the name of שף יתיב. Another synagogue of that period was called כנשתא דדניאל since Daniel worshipped there.<sup>6</sup>

The main function of the Beth Haknesset was prayer, and as such, it was a replacement for the Beth Hamikdash, which was designed for worship as well as sacrifice, as evidenced by Solomon in his first prayer in the Temple, specifying it as a house of prayer for Israel and for all nations of the world.<sup>7</sup> As for the Tem-

1. Ezekiel, 11:16.

3. Responsa, R.J. Coulon, שורש קי"א

4. Zohar, רע"א מהמנא בשלח נ"ט.

6. Eruvin 21a.

2. Talmud B., Megilah 29a.

5. Talmud Rosh Hashanah 24b among others.

7. II Kings, 8.

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ple of the future, the prophet declares in the name of God: *And I shall bring them unto My holy mount and I shall make them rejoice in My house of prayer, for My house shall be meant as a house of prayer for all peoples.*<sup>8</sup> The Sages of the Talmud defined the Beth Haknesset as a house of worship, in contrast to the Beth Hamidrash (בית המדרש) as the house of the study of Torah.<sup>9</sup>

## II.

In fact, according to the Rabbinic Sages, the Beth Haknesset was a very early institution — side by side with the Beth Hamidrash — in the time of the Patriarchs, much before Israel became a nation. As for the verse *And the sons stirred themselves in (Rebekah's) womb,*<sup>10</sup> the Sages said: "When Rebekah came close to a synagogue or house of study, Jacob struggled to come out."<sup>11</sup> Yet, the Rabbis immediately raise the question: "But did synagogues and study academies exist in those days?"<sup>12</sup> Perhaps we can infer from the Talmudic statements that the synagogue did not originate as a replacement of the Temple, but as an established institution at a time when it began to fulfill a communal function.

Though the function of the Beth Haknesset was that of prayer, it was not limited to that alone. It was denoted as a house of prayer only in contrast to the Beth Hamidrash which was essentially a house of study, that is, the study of Torah exclusively. The Beth Haknesset was also a house of assembly, as its very name connotes, an institution where people gathered. It was thus called Beth Haknesset or just Knesset. And just as we find an early law — already in the days of Moses — that the Torah is to be read publicly,<sup>13</sup> it is evident that the Beth Haknesset would serve this purpose. Moreover, the reading of the Torah was broadened to include discourses on the portion read, in Halacha and Agadah, which satisfied the spiritual needs of the populace in antiquity no less than today. In this sense, the Beth Haknesset fulfilled a vital function in the life of the community.

The prophets might possibly have already been using such a public meeting place for giving their messages, as the Sages stated: "Jeremiah was one of three

8. Isaiah 56:7.

9. Talmud Megilah 27a.

10. Genesis 25:22.

11. Bereshit Rabbah 36,6.

12. viz footnote II.

13. Raba Kama 82a.

prophets who prophesied in that generation; Jeremiah in the market place, Zephaniah in the synagogue, and Hulda at gatherings of women.”<sup>14</sup> This was during the reign of Josiah.<sup>15</sup> As for the verse — applying to the reign of Zedekiah: (Nebuchadnezzar) *burned the House of the Lord and the king’s palace...and every large house*,<sup>16</sup> the Sages point to the houses of worship and of study.<sup>17</sup> And as for the *בית העם* in the verse. *And the Chaldeans burned down the king’s domicile and the community house*, (*בית העם*)<sup>18</sup> they interpret it to mean the synagogue.<sup>19</sup> In a much later period, the Rabbis strongly opposed those who would confuse the two by calling the synagogue a “house of the people” (*בית העם*).<sup>20</sup>

### III

Though the formal public prayers originated during the Second Temple period for reading in the synagogue outside of the Temple,<sup>21</sup> we may assume that the synagogue existed even before the Second Temple period, according to the Talmudic sources mentioned above. The purpose of the synagogue in that period was for the reading of the Law and its explanation, as well as the utterances of the prophets. In later periods, along with the crystallization of formal public prayers, the reading of the Torah was expanded to include the Sages’ expositions of legal (*הלכה*) discourses as well as Aggadic sermons, but mostly a combination of both. There is evidence of the existence of a synagogue on the Temple mount alongside of the Temple, as the Mishna describes the ceremony of the service on the Day of Atonement (*יום כפור*): “The Sexton takes the Scroll and hands it to the Head of the Knesset, who then transfers it to the Deputy High Priest, who in turn hands it over to the High Priest, after which the latter stands, and reads therefrom.”<sup>22</sup> Again, the Mishna describes the ceremony of the reading of the Torah by King Agrippas: “The Sexton takes the Sefer Torah and hands it to the Head of the Knesset, who then transfers it to the Deputy High Priest, who in turn hands it to the High Priest, who hands it over to the King, who receives it standing and reads it *sitting*, *המלך עומד ומקבל וקורא יושב*.”<sup>23</sup> King Agrippas

14. Pesikta Rabbati 26.

15. Sanhedrin 94b.

18. Jeremiah 39:8.

21. Berakhot 33a.

16. I Kings 25:9.

19. Rashi and Radak ad loco.

22. Mishna Yoma 7:1 etc.

17. viz footnote 8.

20. Sabbath 32b.

23. Mishnah Sotah 7:8.

received it standing and read it *standing*, and for this the Sages praised him. The "Knesset" here refers to the Beth Haknesset on the Temple Mount in the days of the Second Temple.<sup>24</sup> As stated above, the Beth Haknesset was called "Knesset" as well; and in Aramaic: 'Bay Knishta'.

And thus the institution of the synagogue developed from the beginning as a special place for the gathering of the populace for sacred practices such as reading of the Torah, interpretation of the Law, and the utterance of the prophetic word. It culminated in a fixed place of worship on the Temple Mount for the reading of the Torah and its elucidation by the Sages. Eventually, these fixed houses of prayer were found in all of Jerusalem and Eretz Yisrael.

#### IV

According to records found in Talmudic literature, there were in Jerusalem alone at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple, 480 synagogues,<sup>25</sup> and even after the destruction, in the time of the Roman Emperor Hadrian, there remained seven synagogues in Jerusalem, though there were no Jewish worshippers in any of them but one.<sup>26</sup> The same was true of all of Eretz Yisrael.<sup>27</sup>

In the Diaspora, we have already noted, the synagogue was established even before the destruction of the First Temple. In Egypt, the same took place. Some scholars think that during the Elephantine period, close to the destruction of the First Temple, there was a synagogue in the Judean army settlement in Yev. Certainly, with the passage of years, as the Jewish community in Egypt grew in numbers during the Second Temple period, they established many synagogues. One of these synagogues, in Alexandria,<sup>28</sup> was famous for its seating plan of the congregants according to their occupations: "goldsmiths, silversmiths, blacksmiths, coppersmiths, and weavers sat separately so that any guest or new-comer could easily find his occupational group for future employment;"<sup>29</sup> or according to another version: "so that any poor man could find his occupational fellow workers for assistance in making a livelihood for himself and his family."<sup>30</sup> From other sources we know of synagogues in Greece, Damascus, Cyprus, and

24. Rashi on Yoma 68b.

26. Yevin, פלחמת בר כוכבא.

28. Sec. Philo המלאכות לקיים.

25. Jerusalem Talmud Megilah 3a etc.

27. Tosefta Bikkurim 2.8.

29. Tosefta Succah 4,6.

30. ibid 51b.

other countries. In the Midrash of "Bereshit Rabbati" of Rabbi Moses Hadarshan, we read: "A Torah scroll, taken in captivity from Jerusalem and brought to Rome, was placed in the synagogue of Severus."<sup>31</sup> In every location and in every age the synagogue was the gathering place for the community, and in due time, for communal needs beyond matters of a ritual nature.<sup>32</sup>

There were synagogues in Jerusalem for people coming from the Diaspora, such as the one for Alexandrians,<sup>33</sup> or the one, the capstone of which was discovered by Weil in his archeological dig at the Ophel, with the inscription, "Theodotus, son of Vettinus Kohen and synagogue president, son of a synagogue president, grandson of a synagogue president built this synagogue for the reading of the Law and the study of the Mitzvot...,"<sup>34</sup> and many others. After the destruction of the Temple we find that there were synagogues for Diaspora Jews in other parts of Eretz Yisrael, such as "the Synagogue for Babylonians in Sephoris,"<sup>35</sup> and others like it.

At times, synagogues were the property of private builders, but usually they were community property.<sup>36</sup> In Egypt some synagogues enjoyed governmental status, like other state places of worship.<sup>37</sup>

## V

Later it was halachically determined that "wherever there are ten Israelites, a house of worship should be established which shall be called a Beth Kneset."<sup>39</sup> This followed through in all places through all times. From time immemorial until this day, the synagogue has been the primary center of Jewish communal life.

It can be said, that ever since, and even in the times of the first commonwealth, the synagogue was the fortress of Jewish spiritual independence. Jewish nationhood manifested and expressed itself in the synagogue. In the Diaspora, during the Middle Ages and later on, the synagogue was almost the only place where the Jew could express his national feelings.

31. Bereshit Rabbati, מדר' אלבק, p. 209.

32. See A. Hilevitz זמנים וזמנים, p. 30.

33. Tosephta Megilah 3.6.

34. Weill, La Cité de David (1920), p.1.

35. Jerusalem T. Yoma 7a.

36. Jerusalem T. Megilah 3.1.

37. צריקובר, היהודים במצרים בחקוקה ההלניסטית-רומית לאור המסורות הלוגיות, עמ' 102.

38. Rambam, Prayers 11,1.

We can note, that in contemporary times, in the Diaspora, the synagogue is the central place where every Jew from every walk of religious life expresses his national belonging — although when he exits from the synagogue, he may observe few, if any, of the religious commandments.





# THE REBELLION OF THE BECHORIM

BY YOSEF GREEN

In the Book of Bamidbar (Chs. 16–18) we read about the rebellion led by Korach in which two hundred and fifty prominent men were involved. Of all the reasons given for the uprising, the one I find most convincing is offered by Abraham Ibn Ezra, a Spanish commentator of the 11th century. According to Ibn Ezra the rebellion of Korach and his cohorts is out of place. According to the sequence of events, it should follow the incident involving the worshiping of the golden calf about which we read in Exodus chapter 32: זה הדבר היה במדבר סיני: כאשר נתחלפו הבכורים ונבדלו הלייים. “The rebellion led by Korach was a direct consequence of the replacement of the firstborn by the Levites”. But since there is no strict chronological order in the Biblical narrative (אין מוקדם ומאוחר בתורה), we find that parashat Korach v’adato does not appear until chapter 16 in Sefer Bamidbar. And why were Korach and his followers prepared to go to the barricades when they heard that members of the tribe of Levi would henceforth minister in the Sanctuary of the Lord כִּי חֲשַׁבּוּ יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁמֹּשֶׁה אֲדוֹנֵינוּ עָשָׂה מִדַּעְתּוֹ לַחַת לְלֵוִי מִיָּד בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלֹא מִפְּנֵי הַיְיָ. They thought that Moshe acted on his own without God’s approval and that he was motivated by tribal loyalties and family considerations. Moshe belonged to the tribe of Levi, and Aaron the first Kohen Gadol – High Priest – was his older brother. But Korach too was from the tribe of Levi and there were others from that tribe who refused to accept the switch from Bechorim – first born – to Leviim. Ibn Ezra in anticipation of this question adds: והלייים קשרו עליו בעבור היותם נתונים לאהרן ולבניו. Korach was also a Bechor and the other Leviim who railed against Moshe were likewise bechorim and they were unwilling to accept a secondary role in Temple service. They demanded the same priestly prerogatives as Aaron and his sons. This much is clear from the way in which Moshe responded to their demands לוי בני לוי שמעו נא בני לוי: *Hear me, sons of Levi. Is it not enough for you that the*

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*God of Israel has set you apart from the community of Israel by giving you access to him, to perform the duties of the Lord's Tabernacle, and to minister to the community and to serve them? Thus, (in this manner) He has advanced you and all your fellow Levites with you; ובקשחם גם כהונה yet you seek the priesthood too (Num. 16:8–10).*

Within the tribe of Levi it was the bechorim who protested. Datan and Aviram and On ben Pelet are mentioned by name among those who rose up against Moshe. Who were these men? All we are told about them is that they were בני ראובן, descendants of Reuben who was the Bechor of Jacob, Jacob's firstborn. These three men joined the rebellion for reasons which were likewise related to the birthright, the בכורה. They resented the fact that their tribe, the tribe of Reuben, was made secondary to the tribe of Joseph. Once again they accused Moshe of depriving them of their natural rights because Joshua was from the tribe of Joseph, and Moshe sought in this way to promote the tribe of the person who was to be his successor. וקשר דתן ואבירם, שהסיר הבכורה מראובן אביהם ונתנה ליוסף, אולי חשדוהו בעבור יהושע משרתו.

Now you may ask why were these people making such an ado over the Bechora? In the first place it carried with it special privileges. The first born were given the honor of conducting the service and bringing the offerings in the sanctuaries not only in ancient Israel but in just about all the people of the ancient Near East. From the Book of Bereshit we know that a special paternal blessing was reserved for the first born in addition to which the bechor received חלק פי שנים בירושה אביו a double portion of the patrimony.

Korach and his followers found it hard to believe that the special status of the Bechor had been changed, and that henceforth it was the will of the Almighty to transfer the priestly duties to members of the tribe of Levi. Did not God grant special status to Bnai Israel, the status of Bechor among all the nations, as we read in Ex. 4:22. *Thus says Hashem: Israel is My first born son.* And does not the psalmist declare: *אף אני בכור אתנהו עליון למלכי ארץ. I will appoint him first born, highest of the kings of the earth.* Now Moshe comes along, after the Israelites worshiped the golden calf and announces that henceforth the priesthood is the privilege of the Levites and not the Bechorim. That announcement was surely greeted with shock and amazement. Did not Moshe himself teach the Torah which came down from Sinai and did it not con-

tain among its immutable laws *קדש לי כל בכור* *Every first born son shall be sanctified unto Me?* This is what, according to Ibn Ezra, the congregation of Korach meant when they combined against Moshe and Aaron and said to them: *You have gone too far: For all the community are holy, all of them.* According to Ibn Ezra they were referring only to the bechorim, to the first born: *כי כל העדה כלם קדושים — זה רמז לבכורים שהם קדושים כי כן כתוב — קדש לי כל בכורת והם היו* *כי כל העדה כלם קדושים* — זה רמז לבכורים שהם קדושים כי כן כתוב — קדש לי כל בכורת והם היו *היה עיקר כל העדה* *Ibn Ezra would not have us take the words* *כי כל העדה כלם קדושים* *literally but rather in the sense of עיקר העדה or חשובי העדה, the important ones of Congregation and who at that time were considered more חשוב, more important than the Bechorim?*

Now we can better appreciate the alacrity with which Korach and his followers accepted the challenge to be tested with the firepans filled with incense. They were sure that this trial by ordeal would prove their case and vindicate their cause. If they perceived of themselves as rebels or as disobeying God's will they would never have consented to the test. These men were neither scoffers nor sceptics; they had implicit faith not only in the efficacy of the trial but also in the ultimate outcome.

But just as Korach and Co. were certain of the outcome, even more certain was Moshe as he tells them in advance that the outcome will prove beyond any doubt: *כי ה' שלחני לעשות את כל המעשים האלה* *that Hashem sent me to do all these things*: *כלומר להעמיד את הלויים במקומם של הבכורים* *i.e. to replace the first born with members of the tribe of Levi, and to transfer zechut and superiority from the tribe of Reuben, Jacob's first born, to the tribe of Joseph, who was the firstborn of his mother Rachel but not of his father Jacob.*

At this point Ibn Ezra lets his case rest and he leaves it to his reader to let his mind and his imagination carry him wherever it will. Ibn Ezra opened a crack in the door. He leaves it to others to open it still wider. For example, Hazzal were troubled by the omission of the name of *יעקב אבינו* in the opening verse in that parasha. Korach's lineage, his yichus, is traced back as far as Levi: *ויקח קרח בן יצחק בן קהת בן לוי*. Why does not the Torah mention the fact that Levi was the son of Jacob? What makes the omission even more conspicuous is the fact that when a genealogy beginning with the son of Korah is given in Chron. 6:22–23, in connection with the Levites who were stationed for the service of song in the Temple, Jacob's name appears: *בן אביסף בן קרח בן יצחק בן קהת בן לוי בן ישראל*.

Our Sages, חז"ל, say that Jacob prayed that his name not be associated with this *machloket* in which his descendent was involved: ובקהלם אל תחד כבודי: *And with their assembly let my honor or glory not be united* (Gen. 49:6). If, as Ibn Ezra contends, it was the rights of the Bechorim which Korah was championing, then the omission of the name of Jacob has an even more profound meaning. If Korah's rebellion was based on the inviolability of the rights of the Bechorim, then Korah was in effect attacking not only Moshe but יעקב אבינו as well. You will recall that Jacob did not hesitate to "encourage" his brother Esau to sell him the Bechorah. Until then the birthright was, one might say, non-negotiable. He then broke another tradition when he withheld from his firstborn Reuben the status and rank ordinarily conferred upon a Bechor. Why? Because Jacob did not consider him worthy enough in the moral sense. The blessing which should have gone to Reuben his eldest son was given instead to Judah, Leah's younger son. His beloved son Joseph had two sons, Manasseh the elder and Ephraim the younger. When asked by Joseph to bless the boys he passes over Manasseh by crossing his hands, giving Ephraim the blessing which belonged to the firstborn.

Scholars including the late Yehezkel Kaufmann, Prof. Salo Baron and Prof. Nahum Sarna have pointed out how the Bible is a literary polemic against the polytheism of the Ancient Near East. One of the tenets of ancient polytheism was the natural superiority of the firstborn. Pure ethical monotheism, on the other hand, stresses the moral superiority of human beings. Judaism insists that it is moral excellence which makes one person greater than another. Korah failed to realize that Moshe was not only carrying out the will of the Creator but that he was following a pattern of ethical monotheism which had been started by the Patriarchs. Neither of Moshe's sons succeeded him. Leadership passed to Joshua who was not even from the same tribe as Moshe. Our Sages say that it was sheer stupidity on the part of Korah to insist that the rights of the Bechor must never be violated: קרח שפקח היה מה ראה לשטות זו? If the law of primogeniture was carried to its logical or natural conclusion then the descendants of Esau and not Jacob would be God's chosen, would be the ממלכת כהנים וגוי קדוש—a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

The Midrash must have had this in mind because they say: בקר וידע ה' — מי — שהבדיל בין בקר וערב ובין ישראל לעמים, הוא שהבדיל בין אהרן ואחרים. *God who has made a distinction between night and day, between Israel and the nations has*

*likewise made a distinction between Aaron and the others.* The others in this context can, I believe, have only one meaning: namely, Bechorim. The Korah episode is still another example of how the religion of Israel becomes more clearly defined in the chapters of the Bible, if not explicitly, then implicitly. The tragic end which Korah and Co. came to is a reminder to future generations that Judaism must remain free of anything that even smacks of idolatry.

“It has been observed that, from the very beginning, most biblical leaders were not born into power, but were said to have been endowed with it by a special act of divine grace. While biblical law following widespread oriental prototypes acknowledged the natural superiority of the first born son, biblical legend and history attached a higher importance to those younger sons whom God had called to perform a service. In the long series of biblical heroes Abel, Isaac and Jacob, Moses, David and Solomon were all younger members of their respective families who became qualified for membership in defiance of natural succession. In the ultimate supremacy of the defenseless, persecuted, suffering prophets over the mighty kings of Israel and Judah, the recognition that there exists a higher power than sheer political force found definite acceptance... The religious and ethnic power of perseverance, rather than the political power of expansion and conquest became the corner stone of Jewish belief and practice.” (Soc. and Religious History of Jews, S.W. Baron, Vol. I, pp. 22–23)



# NAMES OF SETTLEMENTS IN ISRAEL

## BIBLICAL TERMS TURNED INTO NAMES

BY ZEEV VILNAY

Many settlements in Israel are named according to passages from the Bible: They symbolize the longing of Israel for its ancient Homeland, the strivings of its sons for national liberty, and the ingathering of the exiles to the land of their forefathers. The founders of the first settlements chose verses which encouraged them in the struggle of building an awakening Homeland. Perhaps one hundred settlements have such names.

*Mikveh Yisrael* – “Hope of Israel” – is named in accordance with Jeremiah: *O Thou hope of Israel, (מִקְוֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל) the Savior thereof in time of trouble. (14:8); Thou hope of Israel, (מִקְוֵה יִשְׂרָאֵל), the Lord (17:13).*

*Petach Tikvah* – “Door of Hope” – is taken from Hosea the Prophet (2:17): *And I will give her her vineyards from thence, And the valley of 'Achor' for a door of hope (לַפְתַּח תִּקְוָה).* Originally these founders intended to build their settlement in the valley of Jericho in which the Valley of Achor, mentioned in this verse, is situated. However, when negotiations for acquiring ground in the area of Jericho collapsed, they transferred their settlement to the coastal plain, taking with them that name.

*Rishon le Zion* – “Harbinger of Zion” – is taken from Isaiah (41:27): *A harbinger unto Zion (רִאשׁוֹן לְצִיּוֹן) will I give; behold them; and to Jerusalem a messenger of good tidings.*

*Nes Ziona* – (Jeremiah 4:6): *Set up a standard toward Zion. Put yourself under covert, stay not...* It is told that on the hill where the settlement was built, the national flag was raised for the first time. This happened while the land was still under Turkish rule.

*Rechovot* – This name, meaning “room, space”, was inspired by the Patriarch Isaac (Gen. 26:22), when he exclaimed: *And he called the name of it (the well)*

*Dr. Vilnay, famous Israel geographer, author and lecturer, has been the principal guide in walking tours over the country. He has written over a score of books on Israel geography, having served as well on the Israel Government Place Names Committee.*

*rehoboth* (רחובות) *for now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.*

*Neveh Tzedek* – “The Habitation of Justice” – this term was taken from Jeremiah (50:7): *The Habitation of Justice* (נוה צדק), *the hope of their fathers.* And from Jeremiah (31:23), *The Lord bless thee, a habitation of righteousness,* נוה צדק *O mountain of holiness.*

*Rosh Pina* – “The Chief Cornerstone” – the pioneer of the settlements in the Galilee. The name is from the well known verse in Psalms (118:22-23). *The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone* (ראש פנה). *This is the Lord's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.*

*Yesud Hamaala* – “The Beginning of Going Up” – is taken from Ezra the Scribe (7:9): *On the first day of the first month, the journey up from Babylon* (יסוד המעלה) *was started.* For that matter, the group which founded Rishon le Zion, carried the same name.

*Meah Shearim* – “Hundredfold” – the well known neighborhood in Jerusalem is named after the words of the Patriarch Isaac, when he dwelled in the Negev (Gen. 26:12): *And Isaac sowed in that land, and found in that same year a hundredfold* (מאה שערים) *and the Lord blessed him.*

*Mishkenot Shaananim* – “Quiet Resting Places” – the first Jewish neighborhood outside the wall of Old Jerusalem, is named, with a small alteration, from the words of Isaiah (32:18): *And my people shall abide in a peaceable habitation* (משכנות שאננים) *and in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.*

*Yemin Moshe* – “Righthand of Moses” – is a neighborhood next to Mishkenot Shaananim. It is in memory of Sir Moses Montefiore who initiated the establishment of this community. The name was chosen from Isaiah (63:11-12): *Then His people remembered the days of old, the days of Moses... That caused His glorious arm to go, at the right hand of Moses* (ימין משה).

*Yegia Kapayim* “The Labor of thy Hands” – is the name of another neighborhood in Jerusalem. Its founders were craftsmen and is named from the verse in Psalms (128:2): *When thou eatest from the labor of thy hands* (גיעת כפים) *happy thou shalt be.*

A neighborhood close to it is called:

*Geula* – “Redemption” – and the name is taken from the Book of Leviticus (25:24): *And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a Redemption (גאולה) for the land.*

*Even Yisrael* – “Stone of Israel” – an old neighborhood in the heart of the Holy City, is named from a blessing bestowed by the Patriarch Jacob upon Joseph (Gen. 49:24): *But his bow abode firm... By the hands of the Mighty One of Jacob, from thence, from the Shepherd, the Stone of Israel (אבן ישראל).* There is an interesting story attached to the choice of such a name. The founders, who were 53 in number, picked the name אבן, since the numerical value of the three letters is 53 (50=י, 2=ב, 1=א).

*Romema* – “Exalted” – another community, built on a hill, is in accordance with Psalms (118:16), an ode which praises the Lord: *The right hand of the Lord is exalted (רוממה). The right hand of the Lord does valiantly.*

*Neveh Shaanan* – “Peaceful Habitation” – not to be confused with Mishkenot Shaananim – is taken from Isaiah (33:20): *Look upon Zion, the city of our solemn gatherings, Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a peaceful habitation (נוה שאנן).* Neighborhoods of the same name are also located in Tel Aviv and in Haifa.

*Yefeh Nof* – “Fair View” – a neighborhood in West Jerusalem, is named from Psalms (48:3): *His holy mountain – fair crested (יפה נוף), joy of all the earth, Mount Zion.*

*Talpiot* – “Turrets” – is taken from the Song of Songs (4:4): *Thy neck is like the tower of David, built with turrets (חלפיות).*

*Ramat Rachel* – “The Heights of Rachel” – on the southern border of Jerusalem, overlooking the region in which Rachel our matriarch is buried, near Bethlehem, on the way to Efrata. The name is taken from the immortal words of Jeremiah (31:14–16): *Thus saith the Lord: A voice is heard in Ramah...Rachel (רמת רחל) weeping for her children... There is hope for thy future... and thy children shall return to their own border.*

South of it is a newly established settlement, which overlooks the region of the battles of Gush Etzion, during the War of Independence in 1948. It is:

*Migdal Oz* – “Tower of Strength” – an appeal of the Psalmist to the Lord: *Hear my cry, o God...For Thou hast been a refuge for me, a tower of strength (מגדל עז) in the face of the enemy.* The name Migdal Oz could have also been



taken from Proverbs (18:10): *The name of the Lord is a tower of strength* (מגדל מנצח).

*Mat'a* – “Plant” – in the mountains of Jerusalem, is taken from Ezekiel (34:29): *And I will raise up unto them a Plantation* (מטע) *for renown, and they shall be no more consumed with hunger in the land, neither bear the shame of the nations any more.*

In the western mountain region of Jerusalem, settlements are named to symbolize the War of Liberation and the aspiration of the fighters to ensure that the Holy City would become the capital of Israel. Thus, the settlements:

*Maoz Zion* – “Strength of Zion” – is situated on Mount Castel. A decisive battle occurred there which assured the eventual liberation of Jerusalem. This name is derived from Isaiah (52:1): *Awake, awake, put on your strength*, (מצוד) *O Zion. Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the Holy City.*

*Mevasseret Yerushalayim* – “Good Tidings to Jerusalem” – a settlement close by, which name was also inspired by Isaiah (40:9): *Get thee up into the high mountain... O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem* (מבשרה ירושלים). Both of these settlements are unified in one council.

*Mevasseret Zion* – “Good Tidings to Zion” – taken from the same verse in Isaiah (40:9): *O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion* (מבשרה ציון).

At the foot of the Jerusalem mountains is:

*Mesilat Zion* – “A Highway to Zion” – adopted from the renowned ode to Jerusalem by Isaiah (62:1–11) which expresses hope for the future in the following terms:

*For Zion's sake will I not hold My peace*

*And for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest...*

*Until triumph go forth as brightness...*

*And till He make Jerusalem a praise in the earth...*

*Clear the way for the people, build up, build up a highway* (מסילה)

*Remove the stones, lift up an ensign over the peoples.*

*Mesilat Zion* is situated near the “Burma Road”, through which Israeli fighters were able to break through and bring help to besieged Jerusalem. Parallel to the “Burma Road”, the K'vish Hagevurah – “Road of Heroism” – was built, to commemorate the heroism of the Israeli soldiers in that region.

Two settlements are nearby: *Taoz* – “Strong” – and *Tarum* – “Exalted” –



both names taken from the same verse of the Psalms (89:14): *Thine is the arm of might (חַזָּקוֹת), Strong is Thy hand, and Exalted (תְּרוּםָה) thy right hand.*

South of these two communities is:

*Yish'i* – “My Salvation” – also from Psalms (27:1): *The Lord is my light and my Salvation (יִשְׁעִי) whom shall I fear?* This settlement is also in the region where severe battles were fought during the War of Liberation. Nearby, on a mountain is:

*Nes Harim* – “Ensign of the Mountains” – inspired by Isaiah (18:3):

*All inhabitants of the world and dwellers on the earth,*

*When an ensign (נֹסֵף) is lifted up on the mountains (הַרִים) see ye*

*And when the horn is blown, hear ye!*

Here also, a major victory was won by the inexperienced Israeli fighters over their enemy.

In the vicinity of Ramleh is a kibbutz *Netzer Sereni* – “Twig of Sereni” – and nearby, *Hoter* – “A Shoot” – in the area near Beer-Jacob. Both names were taken from the same prophetic verse in Isaiah (11:1): *And there shall come forth a shoot (חֹטֵר) out of the stock of Jesse, and a twig (נֹצֵר) shall grow forth out of his roots.*

The name *Sereni* is attached to the word *Netzer* – “twig”. Sereni was a paratrooper, who volunteered for a daring drop into Nazi-occupied territory during World War Two and there perished.

(Translated from the Hebrew by Shimon Bakon)



# NOAHIDE LAWS FROM GENESIS TO GENIZAH

BY AARON LICHTENSTEIN

*Then the Lord blessed Noah and his sons saying to them: Procreate, multiply, and fill the land. The fear and fright of you shall be on all the beasts of the field and on all the birds of the sky; all that creeps the ground and all the fish of the sea are under your power. Every living animal is yours to eat. And still, I shall avenge your life's blood, from the hand of man; from the hand of man for his brother shall I avenge human life. One who sheds the blood of man will have his blood shed by man, for the human was created in the image of the Lord (Genesis 9).*

Two of these explicit prohibitions (murder and eating live meat) are the scriptural roots of a system of law named for Noah: The Laws of the Children of Noah. Five additional laws are ascribed to Noah, who is seen here as the new father of all humanity after the flood. As preserved in Jewish tradition, the following comprise the Noahide law:

1. Justice: (An imperative to pursue social justice, and a prohibition of any miscarriage of justice).
2. Blasphemy: (Prohibits a curse directed at the Supreme Being).
3. Idolatry: (Prohibits the worship of idols and planets).
4. Illicit Intercourse: (Prohibits adultery, incest, sodomy and bestiality).
5. Homicide: (Prohibits the wrongful taking of another's goods).
7. Limb of a Living Creature: (Prohibits the eating of animal parts which were severed from a living animal).

The early sources reveal that there existed among the Tanaim a divergence of opinion on whether or not the number "seven" is basic to the structure of Noahide Law. Nonetheless, an attentive reading of these early sources leads one to the understanding that, in spite of the objections raised here and there in Tanaitic literature, the concept of there being seven laws of Noah was able to

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muster such a clear, authentic tradition in its support that it was accepted by the Amoraim and subsequent writers as the only correct view. This will be demonstrated in the paragraphs that follow.

The Braitha of *Sanhedrin* 57, and the Tosefta at the end of *Abodah Zarah* records what are probably the earliest explicit mentions of the Noahide laws as being seven in number. Each of these sources begins with the statement: "Seven precepts were the sons of Noah commanded". The standard seven laws are then enumerated, with the Limb of a Living Creature being cited last. At this point Rabbi Hanania be Gamaliel is quoted as also prohibiting the consumption of the blood of a living creature, thereby constituting an eighth precept for Rabbi Hanania ben Gamaliel. It is possible that his intent was to compile eight laws. Still, no clear position to this effect was expressed.

The next opinion quoted is that of Rabbi Hidka, who adds the prohibition against castration. Castration has no counterpart in the standard seven laws, and surely Rabbi Hidka was introducing castration as a new and separate item. However, as weighty a phrase as "the Eight Laws of Noah" is still conspicuously missing. The same observation holds true for the ensuing opinion of Rabbi Simeon, who adds sorcery; of Rabbi Jose, who adds all the sorcery-linked restrictions; and of Rabbi Eleazar, who adds crossbreeding. For none of these opinions is a tabulation made. Thus, one may affirm that nowhere in the aforementioned Braitha and Tosefta does there exist a clear statement of contradiction to the view that the number seven is the key to the organizational structure of Noahism.

Due scrutiny of yet another tanaic pronouncement, that of the Tana Debe Menashe in *Sanhedrin* 56, will serve to further illustrate the strength of the tradition which supports the concept of there being exactly seven Noahide laws. The Tana Debe Menashe strikes Blasphemy and Justice from the standard seven listing, and replaces these two items with the prohibitions against castration and against crossbreeding. Thus, the total remains at seven. Accordingly, the stated opinion of the Tana Debe Menashe begins with the phrase, "The sons of Noah were given seven precepts". It is significant that even here, where the composition of the Seven Laws is subject to dispute, the fact of there being only seven laws is indisputable. The unmistakable impression results that the tradition which supports the seven law concept is more secure than that of any of the individual laws. The seven law concept emerges as the solid central theme, surrounded by a

number of variations. As is usual in such instances, the variations serve to underscore the theme with definiteness.

Still another tanaïtic variation on this theme is to be found in the *Midrash Rabbah* on Genesis 16:6 There Rabbi Levi introduces the discussion with the remark that Adam was given "six precepts". Six of the standard seven laws are then cited and derived exegetically. The missing seventh is the Limb of a Living Creature law. Rabbi Jacob of Kefar Hanan provides an immediate exegetical derivation for the Limb of a Living Creature as well, aimed at the apparent conclusion that even Adam was the possessor of seven laws. This is not to say that Rabbi Levi was in opposition to the concept of there being seven Noahide commandments. Obviously, he is limiting Adam to six, but would attribute the full seven to Noah. Such a view puts Rabbi Levi in harmony with the following position, expressed elsewhere in the *Midrash Rabbah*:

*Adam, who was not permitted to dine on flesh, needed no prohibition concerning a limb severed from an animal, but Noah, who was permitted to dine on flesh, received such a prohibition (Genesis 34:13).*

Thus, differing views of Rabbi Levi and Rabbi Jacob of Kefar Hanan emerge as new variations on the theme of seven Noahide commands. They differ in that Rabbi Jacob sees all seven laws as Adamic in origin. However, both corroborate the tradition that the organizational structure of the Noahic system is rooted in seven divisions.

It is no wonder then that the Amoraim, the immediate heirs to the tanaïtic learning, accepted as final the stand which attributes seven laws to the Noahic system, brushing aside any nebulous, inarticulate view to the contrary.

There is, however, one jarring note amid the aforesaid Amoraic harmony. This singular note is sounded in tractate *Hullin* 92a, with the mention of "the thirty laws of the Noahites". Just which thirty laws are meant goes undisclosed. The phrase, "the thirty laws of the Noahites", has no apparent basis in the earlier, tanaïtic sources. Just what does it purport?

The rediscovery in the Cairo Genizah of a biblical commentary by Samuel ben Hophni Gaon, endows us with a significant statement on the Thirty Laws of the Sons of Noah.<sup>1</sup> Father-in-law to the better remembered Hai Gaon, Samuel ben

1. Aaron Greenbaum, *The Biblical Commentary of Rav Samuel ben Hofni Gaon*. Jerusalem: Harav Kook Institute, 1978, pp. 52-56 (Hebrew and Arabic). The Hebrew title page adds:

Hophni was head of the academy at Sura, southern Babylonia, in the year 1000. His comment reads as follows for the Genesis 34:12 verse: *Demand of me much bride price and marriage gifts; I shall give whatever you ask of me; but let me have the girl (Dinah) for my wife:*

This demonstrates that even prior to the giving of the Torah they made use of bride price and marriage gifts, these constituting one of the imperatives incumbent on all the peoples – quite apart from Father Abraham’s progeny. Thus our Rabbis state. “The children of Noah were commanded thirty commandments.”

Samuel ben Hophni goes on to compose a list of these thirty commands. Rashi, explicating the Talmud (*Hullin* 92) remarked that the thirty laws are nowhere identified. It was this gap that the Gaon was undertaking to fill. The Gaon also provided each of his laws with a Pentateuchal proof text, and as a result we are in a better position to fathom the meaning and nature of each. They are, in order:

- 1 – The singularity of God, (that is, to believe in God).
- 2 – No idolatry.    3 – No blasphemy.    4 – To pray.    5 – No false oaths.
- 6 – No suicide.    7 – No murder.
- 8 – No adultery.    9 – Formal marriages via bride price and marriage gifts.
- 10 – No incest with a sister.    11 – No homosexuality.    12 – No bestiality.
- 13 – No castration.    14 – Not to eat an animal that died naturally.
- 15 – Not to eat a limb of a living creature.
- 16 – Not to eat or drink blood.    17 – Not to crossbreed animals.
- 18 – [Justice].<sup>2</sup>    19 – To offer ritual sacrifices.    20 – No theft.
- 21 – To respect father and mother.    22 – No Moloch worship
- 23 – No witchcraft.    24 – No soothsayers.
- 25 – No conjurers.    26 – No sorcerers.

Published according to the Leningrad manuscript, compared and completed with other Genizah manuscripts; with notes, source citations, parallels, glosses, introduction, and index.

2. Justice, the eighteenth item, does not actually appear in the Genizah manuscripts, but was supplied as likely. That is, each surviving manuscript is defective between the seventeenth and nineteenth positions, but since Justice is the only one of the basic seven Laws of Noah which would otherwise be absent from the Gaon’s thirty, and since we have every reason to expect that the Gaon recognized the basic seven, Justice must have originally featured in the eighteenth position.

27 – No ghost meeting. 28 – No consulting devil-spirits.

29 – No wizardry. 30 – No consulting the dead.

During the course of literary history, one other writer took pains to flesh out the Talmud's allusion to thirty Noahide dicta. Menahem Azariah da Fano (1548–1620), compiled such a list in his *Asara Maamaroth*.<sup>3</sup> Rama MiPano, as he is also called, writes without a hint of awareness that an authoritative Gaon (Hophni) accomplished the task six centuries earlier. Either the Babylonian Gaon's commentary was unknown in Italy and Europe, or it was relegated to the obscurity of the Genizah before 1600. In any event, Da Fano composed his list apart from Samuel ben Hophni's.

But the more fascinating difference between the two calculations is Hophni Gaon's neglect of three quizzical laws cited in the same talmudic text that tells of thirty – not seven – Noahide commandments. Da Fano naturally counts in the three items from the Talmud's *Hullin* 92a-b which reads:

Rav Yehuda says: This verse (Zacharia 11:13)<sup>4</sup> refers to the thirty righteous persons among the nations of the world.

Ulla said: This verse refers to the thirty commandments which the Noahites have accepted. But they keep only these three of them. One, they do not draw up marriage contracts for homosexuals. (Rashi – Although they may countenance homosexual matches, they shrink from recognizing them officially). Two, they do not merchandize (human) flesh in the marketplace. Three, they do have respect for the Torah (and for Torah scholars).

Why would Samuel ben Hophni dismiss these three contributions of the Talmud?

To begin with, we must consider the possibility that the Gaon's early talmudic text was incomplete, reading only "Ulla said: This refers to the thirty commandments which the Noahites have accepted", but not continuing with, "but they keep only these three of them...". Be it as it may, perhaps Ulla wished to object to the ramifications of the Noahide thirty laws. For if suddenly there are thirty laws,

3. *Asara Maamaroth*, page 66 of the Amsterdam edition (1649), page 108 in the Lemberg edition of 1858, which has been reissued at Jerusalem in 1970. The first printing was in 1597 at Venice.

4. Zecharia 11:13 — *And I took the thirty shekels and deposited it in the treasury in the House of the Lord.*



not a puny seven, then the Noahites have a significant code and they represent a respectable civilization. Indeed, Rav Yehuda's prior remark tended likewise to elevate Noahism to a posture matching Hebraism, which also provides a quota of righteous men for the world's survival. Would such a tone not invite a retort to defend the uniqueness of the Hebrew who, after all, is chosen with 613 Mitzvah imperatives — but chosen too with a mere Ten commandments? So, by way of retort, Noahites are said to keep only three.

Which three? And who ever heard of such strange formulations?

The answer may be that these Noahide three are meant to correspond, in number and in substance, to the three Cardinal Sins, those requiring martyrdom. They are Murder, Adultery-Illicit Intercourse, and Idolatry. Thus the purpose of the triparted retort in *Hullin 92*'s late layer may be to put down Noahide culture by saying: Noahite observance is pitiful. For although Ulla has ascribed thirty laws to them, they transgress even the three Cardinal Sins: Murder is rampant, although not to the extent that murdered bodies are marketed for meat. Illicit intercourse is rampant, although not to the extent that homosexual arrangements receive public sanction. Idolatry is rampant, but at least Noahites simultaneously honor the true divinity, His Torah, and teachers of His Torah.

But what if Samuel ben Hophni's Talmud already had the full text, and he still interpreted it as just interpreted above, would he not be correct in omitting what Da Fano considered three new Noahide laws emerging from *Hullin 92*? Indeed, we have here no new laws, but a description of a poor observance of basic laws concerning Illicit Intercourse, Homicide, and Idolatry.

Our interpretation hopefully takes on meaning because it gives the *Hullin 92* text a solid cyclical structure, which ultimately returns to its starting point. What begins with an objection to the seeming elevation of the Noahite, culminates in the idea that the Noahite himself esteems the Israelite talmudist as a propounder of the Torah.

The ancient manuscripts have presented us with a Gaon's original list of thirty Noahide Laws, and a bonus too. They also have brought to mind a striking reading of *Hullin 92*, a reading probably missed by many a student of the Talmud during the thousand years from the time Samuel ben Hophni wrote his commentary until its present recovery from the Genizah.

# MUSIC AND PROPHECY

BY DAVID WEINTRAUB

“It appears from many passages in Scripture” – says Burney<sup>1</sup> – “that music was as nearly allied to prophecy as to poetry”. It is interesting to note that *vates*, in Latin, signifies prophet, poet and musician at the same time.

“Hebrew has no name for poet – strictly speaking. Indeed there were no professional poets. Lawgiver and troubadour were united in one and the same person. This combination lasted with Israel longer than with any other people since poetry and song were in the service of the Lord and therefore not in danger of being used for unethical purposes. Moses, Miriam, Saul, David, Solomon belonged to that category of servants of the Lord. After Solomon idolatry was on the increase, assigning to poet, singer and prophet a more private existenc. Since the all-powerful God was the object of their songs, the poetic and musical character became largely subordinated to the religious one. That’s why the name of a troubadour became completely lost in the title of prophet of the Most High”<sup>2</sup>

Leo Meyer, in his Handbook of Greek Etymology<sup>3</sup> says that Music comes from the root *man*, which originally signified, after Roscher’s Mythologisches Lexikon,<sup>4</sup> the inspiration necessary for the *oidos* for his presentation.

In English, this etymology is still recognizable in our expression *mantic*, defined as “relating to divination, soothsaying, or the supposed inspired condition of a soothsayer; prophetic, as mantic frenzy”<sup>5</sup>.

In the Bible, the expression *nibba*, *n’vi’im* (נְבִיאִים, נְבִיא) denotes prophesying,

1. C. Burney *A General History of Music*, London, 1789 Vol. 1 p. 228
2. P.G: Schneider *Biblich Geschichtliche Darstellung der Hebräischen Musik*, Bonn, 1834, p. 35.
3. Leo Meyer *Handbuch der Griechischen Ethymologie*, Leipzig 1902, IV, p. 361
4. W.H. Roscher *Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie*, s.v. Musen.
5. Funk & Wagnall Dictionary.

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prophets. But if we look at 1 Chron. 25:1 we find the word applied to the Levitical singers in the sense of *musicians*: *Moreover David and the captains of the host assigned to the service of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman and Jeduthun "who made music" 'הנביאים' – ha'n'viim.*

Further, in 25:2 *Of the sons of Asaph, Zaccur and Joseph and Nethaniah and Asarelah, the sons of Asaph; under the hands of Asaph, which made music – hanibbo (הַנְּבִיאִים) – according to the order of the King.*

In II Chron. 20:14 we read: *Then upon Jahaziel, the son of Zechariah, the son of Benaiah... a Levite of the sons of Asaph came the spirit of the Lord in the midst of the congregation.*

Heyman, Asaph and Eytan or Yeduthun and their families are counted as *singers*<sup>6</sup> והמשוררים הימן אסף ואיתן. The singers received still another great title when Scripture calls them *Chozeh-seer* another synonym for prophet. "All these were the sons of Heman (the chief singer) the King's *seer* in the words of God" חזה המלך בדברי האלקים.<sup>7</sup>

The difference between the singer and the seer, according to Gressman,<sup>8</sup> is as follows:

Whereas the singer pours out his sentiments in the harmony of sound, the seer communicates his vision in words. But these words do not lack rhythm or melody either. For in such a state of vision no seer... uses colloquial everyday language. He speaks in poetry – like the arabic *Kahin* in his *Sag* – i.e. rhymed prose – an expression etymologically related to the state the prophet finds himself when he prophesies: *M'shugah* משגע.

The term "*M'shuga*" is used in Jer. 29:26 with the connotation of prophesying: *For every man that is "M'shuga" and prophesies* משגע המחנבא. It is true that the connotation of "*M'shuga*" here and in other verses is not exactly flattering – but it appears to be an ingredient of prophecy – though the preponderance of the state of "*M'shuga*" seems to detract from the ponderability of the prophecy.

The specific word used for the singing of the Levites—Prophets—Singers—Seers is *Massa* – *Song* משא.

6. I Chronicles 15:19.

7. *ibid.* 25:5.

8. Gressman, *op. cit.* p. 16.

How do we know that this word, which usually denotes burden, also reflects the activity of the appointed elite of the Levitical singers?

We read in Numbers 7:9: *But unto the sons of Kehath he gave none — because the service of the sanctuary belonging to them was that they should bear upon their shoulders*’ — “Yissa’u יִשְׂאוּ”.

The Talmud asks: “Since the expression ‘upon their shoulders’ is used — is it then not obvious that the inference be that they carry it? — But the word “yissa’u” teaches us that “singing” is meant.”<sup>9</sup>

Gressman interprets the Levitical procedure of “*Massa*” as follows: “*Sar Hamassa*” is the conductor; the expression “*Massa*” not only signifies the lifting of the burden, but the burden itself. It also implies the lifting of the head to a stately rhythmical anaphonesis with song, dirge, prayer — and finally synonymous with *song* itself”.<sup>10</sup>

This is the Biblical text: *And Chananiah, chief of the Levites, was designated for song; he was a teacher of singing, because he was a master* הוא מביין הוא (I Chron. 15:22). In Hebrew the rendering of the last word “meyvin” — מבין is commonly translated; “he understands”, but we see from the polarity of meanings in I Chron. 25:8 that ‘Master’ would be the more appropriate translation. The text reads here: *And they cast lots, ward against ward, as well the small as the great, master as well as pupil* עם הלמיד מביין”.

Rashi, similarly commenting on the above quoted verse in I Chron. 15:22 has this to say:

“We have proof of levitical singing mentioned in the Bible on account of the expression *yassor b’massa* יסר במשא — not to be read with an ‘S’ but with a ‘SH’ — *yashor b’massa* — ישר that is the *lifting of the voice in song*”.

To impress the people with the sacred calling of the Levites, Solomon dressed them opulently:

*The Levites, who were the singers, all of them of Asaph, of Heyman, of Jeduthun with their sons and their brethren were dressed up in white linen* (II Chron. 5:12). Solomon took his cue from Exodus 28:15 *And thou shalt make the breastplate of Judgment with artistic work, like the work of the Ephod thou shalt*

9. Talmud Arachin 11.

10. Gressman op. cit.

*make it: of gold, of blue of purple and of scarlet and of fine twined linen thou shalt make it.* And, a few sentences further, in Verse 31:

*And thou shalt make the robe of the ephod all blue כליל חכלת.* King David also wears linen while officiating in the processional of the Ark moving to Jerusalem:

*And David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that carried the Ark and the singers and Chananiah the maestro of the song of the singers – David had also upon him an Ephod of fine linen דודו מכרבל במעיל בוץ* (1 Chron. 15:27).

The first inkling of an association of prophecy with music we get from the creation account in Genesis.<sup>11</sup> Through the medium of a musical voice – God's voice, Adam sees the vision of God and can communicate with the Eternal: *And they heard the voice of the Lord God וישמעו את קול ה' resounding in the garden of Eden in the cool of the day.*

This state of affairs is reversed later when man learned to make the musical sounds that predispose to the attainment of the prophetic state.

The prophet Samuel gives the following prescription for prophecy to Saul:<sup>12</sup>

*After that you shall come to the hill of God where there is the garrison of the Philistines. And it shall come to pass when thou art come thither to the city that thou shalt meet a company of prophets coming down from the high place with a psaltery and a timbrel and a pipe and a harp before them and they shall prophesy and the spirit of God will come upon thee and thou shalt prophesy with them and shalt be turned into another man.*

The next account of music used as an ancillary to prophecy we find in the story of the prophet Elisha. He was being consulted in an oracular fashion about the outcome of a proposed war against *Mesha* the king of Moab.

Elisha apparently was not quite in the mood to prophesy at that time. This is what he said:

*As the Lord of hosts lives, before whom I stand, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah – I would not look at you nor see you. But now – bring me a minstrel רעתה קחו לי מנגן.* And it came to pass when the minstrel played that the hand of the Lord came upon him and he said: *Thus saith the Lord...*<sup>13</sup>

11. Gen. 3:8-9.

12. I Samuel 10:5.

13. II Kings 3:14 ff.

E. Werner and I. Sonne, in their scholarly article in two parts on the Theory and Philosophy of Music in Judaeo Arabic Literature, make a difference between the allopathic and homoeopathic use of music and song in connection with prophecy.<sup>14</sup>

The allopathic use would reduce whatever feeling stands in the way to bring the mood in line with the concentration necessary for prophecy — whereas the homoeopathic use would increase the excitement already present in the prophet and thus exaggerate and heighten the prophetic manifestations.

Gressman makes a sweeping statement, quoting Aristotle:

“While enthusiasm manifests itself with the true prophets seemingly out of nowhere — without being sought — it has to be coaxed out of others with artificial means. This is done, aside from feasts, dances, honey and intoxicating beverages through music — in itself a child born out of enthusiasm”.<sup>15</sup> (In this connection it may be noted that the word “enthusiasm” comes from the Greek ‘with God’).

It seems that a certain state of “God intoxication” accompanied all prophecies and prophets, except the prophecy of Moses. Rabbi Elazar says in the name of Rabbi Josi be Simra “All prophets prophesied without knowing *what* they prophesied — except Moses and Isaiah. Moses said: *My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew* (Deut. 32:2). Isaiah declares: *Behold I and the children whom the Lord has given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts* (Isaiah 8:18).

Rabbi Joshua went further and said that even Isaiah was not aware that he prophesied, for it is written in Job: *My lips start to speak clearly* דעה שפתי ברור מללו (Job 33:3) or another possible translation: *I should like to know what my lips speak by themselves.*

Even the father of the prophets Samuel was ignorant of what he prophesied, for does he not say “and the Lord sent Jerubaal and Bedan and Jephtah and Samuel” (Samuel 12:11); it does not say he sent *me*, but it says he sent Samuel — which means that he was just an *instrument* in God’s hands — that is God spoke *through* Samuel.

14. Eric Werner and I. Sonne, *Theory and Philosophy of Music in Judaeo-Arabic Literature*, in *HUCA* XVI, (1941) and XVII (1943)

15. Gressman, op. cit. p. 16, quoting Aristotle *Politeia*.

16. Midrash T’hillim *SHOCHERTOV* 90.

In the prophecies of Isaiah *song* is connected with prophecy on many different occasions. We shall only refer to the actual terminology dealing with song.

In Isaiah Ch. 12 the following expressions occur strewn throughout the chapter: *The Lord God is my strength and my song* **כי עזי וזמרת יה**

*Sing unto the Lord for he has done excellent things* **ומרו לה** *Sing and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion.*

In Ch. 25:9 *This is the Lord for whom we have waited; let us sing and be happy in his salvation* **בישועתו נגילה ונשמחה**

In Ch. 26:1 *In that day the song shall be sung in the land of Judah* **ביום הזה יושר יהודה** **השיר הזה**.

In 48:20: *Go forth with a voice of singing* **בקול רנה צאו** *declare ye, utter it, even to the end of the earth. Say ye that the Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob.*

In Ch. 52:8: *Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice, with the voice together they shall sing...break forth into joy, sing together...* **יחדו ירננו**.

The prophet Nahum calls his prophecy *Massa* – a song (Nahum 1:1) **משא נינוה** **ספר חזון נחום**.

**Habakkuk** calls his prophecy *Massa* – a song. In Chapter 3 he exclaims (Hab. 3:18) *I will rejoice in the Lord* **בה' אעלה** *of my salvation. In verse 1:9* **למנצח בנגינותי** *To the chief singer of my melodies* –

The above quotes connecting music and singing with prophecy are but samples of the vast array of implicit or hidden connections of prophecy with song.

In conclusion, I should like to allude to an interesting interpretation on a verse in Genesis (43:11), rendered by a famous Hassidic leader known for his predilection for Jewish song, the Modzitsers Rebbe:

*And Israel (Jacob) said to them (his sons): If it must be so now, do this: Take of the best fruits in the land in your vessels and carry down the man a present – a little balm and a little honey, spices and myrrh, nuts and almonds* (Gen. 43:11).

Rashi interprets the expression *the best fruits* **מומרת הארץ** (in Hebrew: *Zimra*) as follows: “Take from the best of the land, the fruit which everybody sings praises to when it appears”. And now the Modzitsers Rebbe’s comment:

Jacob said to his sons: Take with you the *Zimra*, the *song*, the *Niggun* from Israel to my son Joseph – in particular the *Zimras Shabbos* – the Sabbath song. Specifically the *Psalm a song for the Sabbath Day* (Psalm 92) because that will

make Joseph feel good and lift him up on a spiritually higher plane in the strange land Egypt.

The Modzitsker Rebbe also offers an alternate comment: "Take with you" – said Jacob to his sons – the *art of music* which is so necessary for serving the Maker properly. For just as the *tunes* used in the Temple during sacrifices had different levels – (referring to the Song of Ascents and connecting it with different modes) so love of God also has different levels<sup>17</sup> מעלין בקודש. In holy matters, ascend always to greater holiness.

17. Talmud Berachot 28.

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# SERVICE OF THE LIPS

BY LOUIS KATZOFF

There is a passage in our daily prayer book which goes as follows: רבן וכי העולמים אתה צויתנו להקריב חמיד במועדו... וכו' "Lord of the Universe, Thou hast commanded us to sacrifice the daily offering at its proper time with כהנים officiating, with לויים singing, and with representatives of ישראלים attending במעמד the Temple service. But now, through our sins, the Temple is destroyed, the daily offering is abolished, and we have neither כהנים officiating, לויים singing, nor ישראלים attending the Temple service במעמד. However, Thou hast declared that we may substitute the prayer of our lips for the sacrifice of bullocks, as in the words of the prophet: ונשלמה פרים שפתינו. Therefore, may it be Thy will, our God, and God of our fathers, that the prayer of our lips be favorably regarded and accepted by Thee as if we offered the daily sacrifices at its proper time and manner".

The phrase ונשלמה פרים שפתינו, uttered by the prophet הושע did not infer the rejection of the cultic rites of the בית המקדש and its system of animal sacrifices. It did signify, however, that animal offerings were not sufficient for true repentance, which constitutes the essence of Chapter 14 of the Book of Hosea. As the medieval commentator, David Kimchi (רד"ק) points out, God desires the confession of our lips more than our sacrifices, since the latter are of no avail without the former. The Psalmist seems to have the same thought: אהללה שם אלהים בשיר. *I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving. And it shall please the Lord better than a bullock, that hath horns and hoofs* (Ps. 69:31-2).

Yet this statement of the prophet Hosea was a watershed for new ideas in Judaism which became a reality hundreds of years later.

Let us try to trace how the idea developed — i.e., that the meditation of the heart and the prayers of the lips took the place of animal sacrifices.

BY THE RIVERS OF BABYLON

The Judeans were driven out of their land as their Holy Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BCE. In their exile, crushed as they were, they yet held together, gathering bits of solace from their very togetherness.

גם בכינו בזכרנו את ציון — שם ישבנו — על נהרות בבל *By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and wept as we remembered Zion* (Psalms 137:1). The memory of Zion would not vanish, though some were saying: Our Holy Temple is gone, so is our God, for this was the customary response of all ancient nations after total defeat. The god vanishes as the nation is dissolved. No people, no sanctuary, no God.

There were others who were saying: We had a **בית המקדש** in Jerusalem. Why can't we establish a new sanctuary in Babylon? Did not the Judeans, in exile in the land of Egypt, build a sanctuary in a place called Yev (the Aramaic name) or Elephantine (the Greek name) and did they not bring their animal offerings upon their altar, duplicating the cultic ceremonies of the Jerusalem Temple? No, said the exiles of Babylon. A new **בית המקדש** we may not build. This would be blasphemy. But, then, what shall we do?

True, the **בית המקדש** is no more, but we can gather in groups and keep the memory of Zion alive. **אם אשכחך ירושלים תשכח ימיני** *If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither, let my tongue stick to my palate, if I cease to think of you* (Psalms 137:5-6).

Where did the Judeans gather as they relived their memories of Zion? Probably at the edge of the rivers and streams of Babylon — **על נהרות בבל**. Between the Tigris and Euphrates there were numerous canals and rivers.

A number of times the river **כבר** is mentioned as the location where the prophet of the exile, Ezekiel, uttered his prophecies. Why the riverside for the nostalgic meetings of the Judeans? We can speculate: Maybe, to be alone, away from the city and the people of the land. Perhaps — too — the emphasis on **טהרה** — on spiritual cleansing, which is so pronounced in the Book of Ezekiel, could best be expressed near a body of water. Perhaps, they went through ablutions in the waters of the streams as the ritualistic side of spiritual cleansing.

Why the riverside? Perhaps they saw in the river stream the symbolic meaning of rejuvenation of **עם ישראל** — through the purification in **מים חיים** — the living waters that spelled revival and renewed strength.

As they came together at the river edge, they probably recalled some of the psalms the Levites would sing in the **בית המקדש** as the daily sacrifices were brought — and especially the liturgical psalms sung during festival pilgrimages.

They assembled in order to find mutual fellowship — in being together — which

is really the meaning of the name **בית הכנסת** -- denoting a house of gathering, but prayer and psalms were the spiritual leaven that gave meaning to their togetherness.

And then a new idea was promulgated by none other than the prophet Ezekiel, You can have a **מקדש** -- even when it is not a **בית המקדש**. You can have a **מקדש** לכן אמור -- כה אמר ה' אלקים -- כי הרחקתם בגויים -- בארצות אשר באו שם *Thus said the Lord God -- I have indeed spread them far among the nations and have scattered them among the countries and I have become a small sanctuary -- מקדש מעט -- in the countries to which they have gone* (Ezekiel 11:16).

Now, a **מקדש מעט** is not a place for cultic animal sacrifices. It is **עבודה שבלב**, the prayers that we say in our hearts and with our lips. This then was the actualization of what Hosea prophesied: **ונשלמה פרים שפתינו**. *Instead of animals we will give forth the offering of our lips.*

A half millenium passed by between the age of Ezekiel and the period when the Second Temple reached its zenith as the spiritual center of world Jewry. By that time, the synagogue had already developed into a permanent institution, with a structured set of prayers. What is most surprising is that the synagogue was rooted in the **ארץ ישראל** landscape, even while the Temple, as the central sanctuary carried on an elaborate cultic practice of **קרבנות** -- animal sacrifices.

The primacy of the Temple was never questioned, but it was already evident that the synagogue was an adjunct to the **בית המקדש**. Even the sacrifices on the **מזבח** were accompanied by prayers and psalms.

From **מ' פסחים (5:5)** we learn that the Pesach offerings were synchronized with the singing of the **הלל** by the Levites. The accompaniment of the **משמרות** and **מעמדות** at the Temple sacrifices and, correspondingly, in the home communities served as a catalyst in developing the idea of congregational worship, even as the ritual of the Temple offerings was carried on fully.\*

The Talmud relates that there were 480 synagogues in Jerusalem alone.

\* אלו הן המעמדות? לפי שנאמר "צו את בני ישראל ואמרת אליהם את קרבני לחמי": וכי היאך קרבנו של אדם קרב והוא אינו עומד על גביו? החקינו הנביאים הראשונים עשרים וארבעה משמרות. על כל משמר ומשמר היה מעמד בירושלים של כהנים של לויים ושל ישראלים. הגיע זמן המשמר לעלות כהניו ולחיו עולים לירושלים וישראל שבאותו המשמר מתכנסין לעריהן וקוראין במעשה בראשית (מס' עניית 4:2).

Though an ancient Jerusalem synagogue is yet to be found by archeologists, it is evident from our sources that two synagogues were located right within the Temple area. The High Priest actually read the Torah in the synagogue as part of the Yom Kippur ritual and sacrifices.

An interesting inscription on stone was discovered 70 years ago which came from a synagogue of the 1st century CE. This inscription is recorded in the name of Theodotus, son of Vettenu, apparently Jews from Rome, whose grandfather built the synagogue:

Theodotus, son of Vettenu, Kohen and synagogue president, son of a synagogue president, grandson of a synagogue president, built this synagogue for the reading of the Law and the study of the Mitzvot, and (he built) the hostelry, the chambers and the cisterns of waters in order to provide lodgings for those from abroad who need them; which (the synagogue) his fathers had founded (in cooperation) with the elders and Simonides.

When the calamity of the destruction of the Second Temple hit Jerusalem in the year 70 CE, the Jews did not go through the same crisis as did the exiles in Babylonia 500 years earlier. וְנִשְׁלַמָּה פְּרִים שֶׁפָּחְנוּ was so thoroughly rooted in the consciousness of the Jewish people, and the synagogue had already become so widespread in ארץ ישראל and the diaspora – that Jewish existence was firmly assured for the ensuing centuries up to our own day.

הוֹשֵׁעַ was not aware that his statement, "Instead of animal sacrifice we will pay the offering of our lips", would lead to the establishment of the institutionalized synagogue, but indeed, it was a seed planted in the hearts of a people who somehow knew how to utilize its import, both at the moment of crisis and as a vade mecum through the halls of history for the Jew in Israel and in the whole wide world.

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# WHO WAS SHAMGAR BEN ANATH

BY BEN ZION LURIA

Little is known about the heroic deeds of Shamgar Ben-Anath, one of the Judges in the early period after the conquest of Canaan by Joshua. We are told that he smote 600 Philistines. The weapons he used were not swords nor spears but "ox-goad". Nor do we know if this was a one-time encounter, an organized battle of a troupe headed by Shamgar, or whether the number 600 was the total slain in numerous clashes over a period of time. It is interesting to note that the usual formula in the Book of Judges, i.e. *And the land was quiet for forty years*, is absent after verse 3:31. In the Song of Deborah it is said: *In the days of Shamgar, the son of Anath... the highways ceased, and the travellers walked through byways (Judges 5:6), and it was so because of the Philistines who controlled the roads.*

Shamgar was the first to open war against the Philistines.

In about the year 1188 BCE, the Philistines penetrated the southern coastal plain, bringing to nought the conquests of the tribe of Judah. As stated in the Book of Judges, Chapter 1:18: *Judah conquered (from the Canaanites) Aza and its borders, Ashkelon and its borders, and Ekron and its borders.* The Philistines then succeeded in deepening their penetration into Judea, advancing to Seif Sela Etam, to Bethlehem, and to Emek Refaim, south of Jerusalem. The Judaites were subdued and did not dare to oppose them. This we note from what they said to Samson: *But you surely know that the Philistines rule over us (Judges 15:11).*

After they had completed the conquest of Judah, the Philistines turned northwards toward the territory of the tribe of Dan and Benjamin. There resistance arose, with Shamgar ben-Anath at its head.

Biblical scholars have difficulties with this episode. They are not sure who this Shamgar is, or the city and tribe from which he emanated. Gesenius finds the source of this name in the Hittite language, in which there was a king or hero by the name of Sangar. Benjamin Mazar maintains that "Shamgar" is the Horite "Simigari", known from the Nuzi Tablets.<sup>1</sup> Of course the question can be raised: How did the

1. *Encyclopaedia Biblica*, Bialik Institute, Jerusalem, 1950.

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hero from the land of the Hittites, or from distant Nuzi, arrive in the Land of Israel and begin concerning himself with the defense of Israel? For this, the scholars have no answers, and they always seem to look for foreign cultures when dealing with any matter concerning Israel.

From the specific name "Shamgar" one cannot learn anything about the origin of the savior of his tribe. However, one can learn from his second name: ben-Anath. It is quite certain that Shamgar was not the son of a priestess of the idol "Anath". We know of a city by the name of Beth-anath in the land of Naftali. However, the tribe of Naftali was not subjugated by the Philistines. Thus, it was not from their midst that Shamgar originated. After linking "shamgar" to "beth-anath" in the Galil, scholars decided that he warred against the "Peoples of the Sea" (who had penetrated from the north, of whom one of their leaders was Sisera). Another theory was raised: that the Philistines, smitten by Shamgar, were a company of Egyptian soldiers stationed in Beth-shean. All these are assumptions, placed on thin evidence, and are insufficient in explaining the simple meaning of Scripture.

Another city, with a similar sounding name is Beth-anoth in the heart of Judea. But since we know that the Judeans did not fight the Philistines until the time of David, and that they bore the yoke of the Philistines without resistance, we cannot state that the savior emanated from that city.

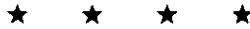
As for this verse, *and the children of Reuben built Nebo and Baal-meon — their names being changed.*<sup>2</sup> Rashi comments: "Nebo and Baal-meon were names of idols; the Emorites used to call their cities by the names of their idols; now the sons of Reuben changed their names — this being the meaning of שם מוסכרו, that is, Nebo and Baal-meon were changed to different names". To our regret the new names were not preserved, but this "name-changing" will aid us in solving the question of Anath".

Although the Talmud insists that there is no tribe that did not raise a Judge from its midst, the Talmud did not preserve any tradition regarding Shamgar ben-Anath. We propose, on the basis of Rashi, that Shamgar is named after his city *Anath*, a city well known in the territory of Benjamin, namely *Anathoth*, near Jerusalem, where Jeremiah the prophet was born. Thence came Shamgar, and he was forced to save the land of his tribe, at a time when the Philistines began to attack the Ben-

2. Numbers 32:38.

jaminites. "Anath" being the name of an idol, as mentioned before, thus being abhorrent to the spirit of Israel, was then changed to "Anathoth". And in order to remove any hint of idol worship from it, God's name was added to it. In I Chronicles it is called "Anathotiah".

Here, in the heart of the land of Benjamin, resistance to the Philistines began. Despite the few records left to us of the battles during the era of Shamgar, we have fuller records of Saul's war against the Philistines. It is worth noting that both Shamgar and Saul were Benjaminites, and that they were the first to rise up against the Philistines.



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# THE CAMEL IN THE BIBLE AND TALMUD

BY S. P. TOPEROFF

The Hebrew name for camel is "Gamal" – (גמל). The closeness of this noun to the verb "gomel" – גומל, which in Biblical Hebrew means to "repay" good or evil, suggests the nature of the animal in its loyalty and helpfulness to its master. Thus the camel will kneel to receive its rider and get into the same position during loading and unloading, for the camel is used both for riding and carrying burdens, and the kneeling of the beast was essential as the average height of the animal was about 6 to 7 feet. Furthermore the camel senses when a sandstorm is about to erupt and will quicken its pace in order to reach a place of refuge quickly so that its master is not caught in the storm.

Indeed, the camel is of service to mankind in a variety of ways. Its hair was used for the making of clothes as reported in Menahot 39b and in Shabbat 27a where it is alluded to as "the wool of camels", and we are reminded that this was not to be mixed with sheep's wool (Kilayim 9:1). The hair was also used for the manufacture of tents, saddle-bags and saddles because it was durable. In addition, sal-ammonia is produced from its urine and its dung is used for fuel among the Bedouin.

The Talmud teaches that at the time of mating, the camel can be ferocious and even attack another animal and kill it: "In the case of a camel which 'covers' among other camels and a dead camel was found at its side, it is obvious that the one killed the other" (Baba Bathra 93a). In another instance we learn that "if among camels there is a lustful one and a camel is found killed by its side it is certain that this one killed it" (Sanhedrin 37b).

Incidentally, the "gimel" which is the third letter of the Hebrew alphabet is perhaps so called because the shape of the letter in the ancient West-Semitic script bears a resemblance to the neck of the camel (Jewish Encyclopaedia, Vol. 5 p. 669).

The camel is primarily a beast of burden and is specially suited for desert country. Though it is a large and heavy animal, it can cover 30 miles a day with a load weighing nearly half a ton. Nature provides the camel with feet that are covered with a tough sponge-like substance which makes it possible for the camel to traverse the

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burning sands of the desert, and this has earned for it the name "the ship of the desert".

Another distinctive feature with which the Almighty has blessed the camel is the possession of a fifth stomach which serves as a reservoir of water. Such is the bodily construction of the camel that the water is kept pure and sweet for journeys lasting 8 to 10 days. When the camel is thirsty it automatically compresses the stomach and forces the water into the upper stomach and so satisfies its thirst.

By nature the camel is patient and gentle and is different from other animals in as much as it is satisfied with a poor diet; it subsists on thorns and thistles, and these prickly plants do not cause it pain as nature again comes to its assistance as its lips, tongue and palate are covered with hard thick skin. Furthermore, nature has provided the camel with a long neck proportionate to the length of its thighs so that it is able to pick up its food easily (Albo, Ikkarim IV:1 p. 92)

In biblical times camels were considered a valuable possession. Thus Abraham included camels among his stock (Genesis 12:16). Of the Midianites and Amalekites the Bible says: *Their camels were without number, as the sand which is upon the sea-shore for multitude* (Judges 7:12). Job was blessed in the latter end of his life with good camels (Job 42:12), and in Ezra there is a reference to 435 camels (2:64). In war, camels were included in the spoil (I Samuel 27:9); and the Chaldeans *...fell upon the camels and took them away* (Job 1:17).

There are two kinds of camels, the Persian and the Arabian, and they are distinguished by the thickness of the neck (Baba Kama 55a). In Ketubot 67a we learn that Arabian camels could be seized in settlement of a wife's ketubah (marriage contract).

The dromedary is known in the Talmud as the flying camel ("gamal parcha") and Isaiah refers to the "swift beasts" (66:20). In the Talmud the flying camel figures prominently in an interesting discussion regarding two sets of witnesses who contradict each other in a criminal law suit. The ruling of the court revolves around the feasibility of the witnesses to travel from Sura to Nehardea, a distance of more than 20 parasangs in one day. If they travelled on flying camels, the distance could be covered in one day and their evidence could be accepted, otherwise the witnesses are not telling the truth (Makkot 5a). A similar case is reported in Yevamot 116a.

The Encyclopaedia Britannica, s.v. camel, affirms that "the fleeting camels will carry their rider and a bag of water for 15 miles a day without a drink".

The name "Flying Camel" was first given to the Palestine Flying Club founded in Tel Aviv in 1933; one of the main activities of this club was gliding and one of its aims was to turn its members into instructors.

Reckless and impatient drivers on the road should heed the advice offered by our Sages of old who cautioned camel-drivers and even laid down guide-lines governing correct behaviour on the road: Two camels attempted to ascend Beth Horon, a dangerous road which cut through rock: "If they both ascend at the same time, they will tumble down into the valley below. If they ascend after each other, both can go up safely. How should they act? If one is laden and the other unladen, the latter should give way to the former. If one is nearer to its destination than the other, the former should give way to the latter. If both are equally near to or far from their destination, make a compromise between them. The one which is to go forward compensates the other which has to give way" (Sanhedrin 32b).

An interesting story regarding a camel is reported in the Talmud. It once happened that two Jews were taken captive on Mount Carmel and their captor was walking behind them. One of them said to the other, "The camel walking in front of us is blind in one eye and is laden with two barrels, one of wine and the other of oil, and of the two men leading it one is a Jew and the other a heathen". Their captor said to them: "You stiff-necked people, whence do you know this?". They replied: "Because the camel is eating of the herbs before it only on the side where it can see, but not on the other, where it cannot see. It is laden with two barrels, one of wine and the other of oil, because wine drips and is absorbed into the earth, while oil drips and rests on the surface. And of the two men leading it one is a Jew and the other a heathen, because the heathen obeys the call of nature in the roadway while a Jew turns aside". "...He danced before them and exclaimed: 'Blessed be He who chose Abraham's seed and imparted to them of His wisdom'. He then liberated them (Sanhedrin 104a).

The Sassover Rabbi expounded on a statement in the Talmud as follows: The Rabbis did not know the meaning of the verse: *Cast your burden upon the Lord and He will sustain you* (Psalm 55:23) until a travelling merchant told them (Megillah 18a). The Rabbi explained: The Sages did not know whether the verse permits a man in need of a helping hand to combine his trust in the Lord with a request for help from the people. Without being asked for the favour, the merchant said: "Throw your burden on my camel", at the very moment they were discussing the verse.

They received it as an omen that the verse implies that the man should not ask for the favours of mortals but petition the Almighty alone.

#### PROVERBIAL SAYINGS

In Media a camel can dance on a bushel-basket — meaning that everything is possible (Yebamot 45a).

The camel asked to have horns, so his ears were cut short (Sanhedrin 106a).

In order to indicate the large number of homiletical expositions on a verse in the Book of Chronicles ( I Chronicles 8:38—9:44), a Talmudic sage said: “Between Azel and Azel they were laden with 400 camels of exegetical interpretations”. In this instance the camel is carrying not a physical but a spiritual burden (Pesahim 62b).

In Arabia they allow thistles to grow as fodder for their camels (Baba Batra 156b).

If one kills vermin on the Sabbath it is as though he killed a camel (Shabbat 12a).

On the Sabbath a camel may go forth with a bit and a white female camel (neakah) with its nose-ring (Shabbat 51b).

Why is a camel’s tail short? Because it eats thorns, (a long tail would become entangled in the thorns) (Shabbat 77b).

Many an old camel is laden with the hides of younger ones (The old may survive the young) (Sanhedrin 52a).

One does not say; examine the camel, only examine the lamb. (Hagigah 9b).

Of the camel, the ear is valuable (Shevuot 11b).

The fat hump of the camel that has not carried burdens is like the meat itself (Hullin 122a).

The camel is subject to rabies (Berachot 56a).

As the camel, so is the burden (Sotah 13b). The foregoing can be interpreted in a variety of ways: The more eminent a person, the greater is his responsibility. In another context the simile of the camel is used in regard to charity. A rich man who does not dispense charity commensurate with his wealth, of him it is said: In accordance with the camel is the burden — the richer the person, the more is expected of him.

# AKEDAH, THE BINDING OF ISAAC

BY HIRSCH PATCAS

*Dedicated to my grandchildren Muriel, David, Yael, Raphael, Emanuel and Naomi בני עטרה וקנים בני*  
בנים (Proverbs 17:6)

The approach of the High Holy Days always conjures up to my mind the terrifying scene depicting the patriarch Abraham brandishing a knife, about to sacrifice his son Isaac, an event known as the *Akedah*, the *Binding of Isaac*.

*...And God tested Abraham (נסה את אברהם)... and said: Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest, even Isaac, and get thee into the land of Moriah and offer (והעלהו שם לעולה) him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.*

Gen. 22:1-2

I vividly recall how my late father took me along with him to his synagogue in Zizmaria. Zizmaria was an insignificant town in Lithuania as regards to size, but towered above other cities through its talmudic giants. Not to be learned in the Torah was considered shameful.

Whenever I read about the *Akedah*, my young being was haunted by many unanswered questions. What sin did the young lad Isaac commit to deserve to be offered up as a sacrifice?

I was already familiar with the Ten Commandments. The greatest sin anyone could commit was to break the injunction: *Thou Shalt Not Kill!* Wasn't it criminal to sacrifice one's own child?

The Midrash relates that Abraham's wife Sarah sank lifeless to the ground when she discovered that Abraham was readying himself to immolate their beloved son. According to Ibn Ezra, the great medieval commentator, Isaac was thirteen years old at the time of the *Akedah*.

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Abraham tied his son Isaac to the altar. When Isaac inquired: *Where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?* Abraham countered: *God will provide Himself the lamb for a burnt-offering, my son* (Gen. 22:8). This *Akedah* episode has always struck me as incomprehensible.

Upon reaching eighteen and just about to finish my high school studies, a startling incident occurred. The instructor of Flemish averred in a course on rhetoric that all the peoples of the Middle East were in the habit of sacrificing their son to the god Moloch. Offended, I rose and queried: "And what about the Hebrews? Did they also sacrifice their firstborn to Moloch?" Mr. Kempeneers categorically answered: "Certainly. Wasn't Abraham ready to immolate Isaac?"

This answer struck me like thunder and kept reverberating in my mind and heart. Indeed, the *Akedah* and its mystery surrounded me with a knotty enigma that I could not unravel. The main claim of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel rests on their *not* following in the ways of the Amorites, Canaanites, Perizites, Hivites and Jebusites *that they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods, and so ye sin against the Lord your God* (Deut. 20:18).

The sacrificial tale of the *Akedah* leads up to just such an abomination, even though averted at the last moment.

How can one fathom that the Almighty, described as a merciful God, (Deut. 4:31) would put our patriarch to such a test?

It would seem to me that Abraham, mere mortal that he was after all, misunderstood the message God conveyed to him.

We are informed in Gen. 22:1 that God tried Abraham. *Nissa* (נסה) means tried, tested. But it can also be translated as *Ness* (נס) — *Banner* from which it is etymologically derived. This is, in effect, the considered opinion of the Zohar, the holy mystical *Book of Splendor*. There we find Rabbi Yehudah commenting on the passage: *Nissa* signifies to *unfurl an object for all to see, to uplift a banner*. Thus the passage would read: "And God uplifted Abraham by the *Akedah* story which is to follow". Similarly in the Amidah (the prayer recited in silent devotion) we also entreat God to *raise a banner, (נס אש) to gather our exiles*.

As to the command: *v"Haaleyhoo" (והעלהו)* usually translated: *Offer him as a sacrifice of burnt offering* should be translated according to Rashi: *Make him ascend the mountain* (Rashi ad loco). To quote Rashi: The Lord did not say to him: 'Slaughter him', because the Holy One did not desire to slaughter him, only to bring him up...

Since the Torah does not specify exactly the meaning of *Olah* — usually translated as burnt-offering — in our *Akedah* story, Rashi, the commentator par excellence, feels justified to punctuate *Olah* (burnt-offering) as *Oleh-ascending*, a re-punctuation requiring no letter change in Hebrew. Then the passage would read: “merely ask Abraham to *make him* (i.e. Isaac) *ascend the mountain*”, and *not offer him as a sacrificial burnt-offering!*



Gustave Dorée — Genesis 22:6-8

# BOOK REVIEW

BY SOL LIPTZIN

*Creation in the Old Testament*, Edited by Bernhard W, Anderson, Philadelphia, Fortress press, 1984. pp. 178.

How did the universe come into being and order emerge out of chaos? How did the various species come to populate the earth, the air and the waters? And what was man's place in the cosmos?

For these and other questions related to Creation and the origin of life and humanity, persons who grew up under the spell of the Bible found answers in the opening chapters of *Genesis*. The traditional view held that the story so vividly narrated there was factual and truthful, an accurate account of actual events.

This view was increasingly challenged as ever new discoveries were made by astronomers, geologists, archeologists and biologists, especially since the mid-nineteenth century when Darwinian evolutionary theories began to be widely accepted. The challenge was reinforced in the second half of the century by historians of religion who discovered in Mesopotamian myths of creation important pre-biblical accounts similar to the account in *Genesis*. In our century, as Ugaritic myths paralleling and preceding *Genesis* were deciphered, theologians had to devise ever more complex explanations and reinterpretations of the biblical text if they wished to uphold the traditional view or else they had to accept the opening chapters of the Bible as an imaginative, poetic, Israelite version based upon older Canaanite myths, which in turn went back to still earlier Assyrian, Babylonian, Akkadian, Sumerian and pre-historic mid-Eastern strata.

The latter view dominates in Walter Beltz's book, *Gott und die Götter*, 1975, which appeared in an English translation by Peter Heinegg in 1983. Beltz is an archeologist and historian of religion at the University of Halle in the German Democratic Republic and echoes the Marxist attitude toward religion which the dominant Communist regime would countenance but from which pious souls would shy away. For Beltz, *Genesis* is to the largest extent a collection of stories derived from the treasury of Eastern mythology.

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

The former approach is more common among Christian theologians of the non-Communist world. Bernard W. Anderson of Princeton's Theological Seminary, the eminent author of *Creation versus Chaos*, 1967, has now assembled in a single volume of the series *Issues in Religion and Theology* nine significant contributions to the subject of Creation in the Bible.

As editor, Anderson introduces the volume with an essay on "Mythopoeic and Theological Dimensions of Biblical Creation Faith", in which he surveys the discussions and controversies that scholars engaged in for nine decades since the appearance of the seminal book *Creation and Chaos*, 1895, by Hermann Gunkel, the German pioneer of biblical form criticism. Anderson begins his volume with long extracts from Gunkel's observations on the influence of Babylonian mythology upon the biblical Creation story.

Gunkel analyzes meticulously the relationship between the biblical and the Babylonian accounts of the world's origin. He attempts with great acumen to prove that the cosmogony of *Genesis* had a prehistory, that it had grown out of a mythological tradition handed down for many centuries, that it was blended together from ancient strands, of which the most important was the Babylonian. From this strand was derived the biblical concept that at the beginning chaos reigned, *tohu vabohu*, darkness and abysmal waters. Then divine intervention set in, creating light and separating the waters into an upper heavenly layer and a lower earthly layer.

Gunkel views the entire first chapter of the Bible as a myth transformed into narrative. He points out that in this narrative are embedded remnants of primordial traditions, a mingling of ancient Canaanite and still more ancient Babylonian concepts which even the final biblical redaction failed to excise. In the Babylonian story of the world's origin, Marduk, the god of the sun, conquered Tiamat, the goddess of the great watery deep (Hebrew: *tehom*) and split her carcass unto the waters above and the waters below.

While Gunkel, writing before the sensational mid-Eastern discoveries of our century, emphasized the Babylonian strand, Dennis J. McCarthy of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome made greater use of the Canaanite strand in an essay he updated shortly before his death in 1983, entitled "Creation Motifs in Ancient Hebrew Poetry".

This Canaanite strand, taken over by the Israelites when they came into contact



with Canaanite tribes, is more prominent in the second chapter of *Genesis* than in the first and can be deduced from the Ugaritic evidence deciphered during the past half century. The stress is not on the origin of the world but on its ordering, the watering of the earth by rain, the growing of trees pleasant to the sight and good for food, the role of man as a tiller of the soil. Analyzing references to Creation scattered throughout the Bible, McCarthy seeks to prove that Israelites were interested more in historical than in cosmic origins, more in the coming into being of the social order than in abstract beginnings, more in their own political emergence as God's unique people. The biblical seers and psalmists did indeed make use of mythic themes from Babylonia, Canaan, and Egypt but only as source material to describe God's proper ordering of humankind and of their own people whom He chose as His people.

Claus Westermann of the University of Heidelberg recognizes that in the Bible there are not merely two accounts of Creation, a primitive one in chapter 2 of *Genesis* and a more advanced version in chapter 1. The older account depicts God as acting, forming man from clay and woman from the rib of the man, while the younger account has God merely speaking, not acting, and through his words everything happens. Both versions, however, are but the final stages of a long series of previous traditions, of which traces can still be recognized not only in *Genesis* but also in Psalms, Job, Isaiah and the Wisdom literature. These traditions were shared to a greater or lesser extent by the various peoples who preceded Israel by centuries and even millennia or who bordered on Israel.

Westermann goes still further. He finds striking parallels in the Creation stories of the Greeks. He finds the motif of Creation through the word in Egyptian temple texts from Memphis. Greater vistas also open up to him. Not only among the Mediterranean cultures do the Creation traditions have roots resembling the biblical versions. Similar traditions are dispersed throughout the globe. The motifs of Creation and the Flood are found in the stories of early times among peoples on all continents. These stories of primeval times cannot have been derived from a single common source but must have arisen independently. They are the result of parallel patterns of thought common to civilizations, peoples, and religious groups, common to our human species. They were the reflections of threatened man in a threatened world. Out of these reflections arose the question about the beginning

and the end, about man's coming into being and man's ceasing to exist, a question common to all humankind and to all faiths.

The uniqueness of the biblical version lies primarily in the answer to this questioning by the only species that asks questions. It lies in the moral conclusions drawn from the material accumulated from the treasury of religious speculation available to Israel. When Israel took shape as a community of faith, it accepted and assimilated some religious elements from the surrounding world, it rejected others, and it evolved new original beliefs on the basis of its historic experiences.

Anderson's anthology of prominent twentieth century interpreters of biblical Creation doctrines includes the views of Gerhard von Rad of the University of Heidelberg, Walther Eichrodt of the University of Basel, H.H. Schmid of the University of Zürich, J.J. Jeremison of the University of Tübingen, and George M. Landes of Union Theological Seminary. He concludes the volume with his own essay on "Creation and Ecology". He would have enriched his anthology considerably if he had also added the contributions of prominent, influential Jewish scholars of the past few decades, such as Yekhezkel Kaufmann, Umberto Cassuto, Franz Rosenzweig and Martin Buber.



*Jewish life in Art & Tradition*

# JERUSALEM IN THE BIBLE AND TALMUD

## PART I

BY HYMAN ROUTTENBERG

As we peruse the pages of Bible, we are soon impressed with the significance and uniqueness of the city of Jerusalem. It is interesting to note that whereas in the Koran, Jerusalem is not mentioned even once, in our Bible it is mentioned hundreds of times. And as we examine the references to Jerusalem, we find that it is inextricably tied up with the Jewish people.

NT = ca. 744

It was due to David's genius that he selected Jerusalem as the capital of a United Israel, more than 3,000 years ago. First, being a Jebusite fortress, it was like a thorn in the side of Israel. second, its special position, being neither part of Judah nor of Benjamin, provided it with the opportunity to being for Israel what Washington was to become for the United States. And finally, bringing the Ark of the Lord to Jerusalem and laying the groundwork for the building of a permanent Temple, gave Jerusalem its unique character — both as the national and religious center of Israel. It is the only city in the world that is portrayed in the Bible as the seat of the Almighty.

After Solomon had built the Temple and dedicated it, "the Lord said unto him: I have hallowed this home, which Thou hast built to put My name there forever; and Mine eyes and My heart shall be there perpetually" (I Kings 9:3).

It is not merely the quality of sanctity conferred on Jerusalem, there is the dimension of that merger of particularism and universalism peculiar to Judaism. Thus Solomon in his grand dedication speech has this to say:

*But will God in very truth dwell on earth? Behold heaven and heaven of heavens cannot contain you — how much less this house that I have built. ...Yet have respect unto the prayer of Thy servant;... and of Thy people Israel... Concerning the stranger that is not of Thy people Israel... when he shall come and pray toward this house...hear Thou in heaven...and do according to all that the stranger calleth to Thee... (Kings 8:27-41).*

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

This sentiment is echoed in the great words of Isaiah (56:6-7), when he speaks of the stranger:

✓ *Even them will I bring to My holy Mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer. For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.*

As the seat of the Almighty, Jerusalem of necessity also assumes other spiritual qualities, such as Peace and Truth.

#### CITY OF PEACE

Beloved is peace, for God has given it to Zion, as it is said: *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem* (Psalms 122:6).

Great is peace, for God announceth to Jerusalem that they (Israel) will be redeemed only through peace, as it is said: *That announceth peace* (Isaiah 52:7).

גדול השלום שאין הקב"ה  
מבשר את ירושלים שיהיו  
נגאלים אלא בשלום שנאמר  
מבשר משמיע שלום

*Peace be within thy walls, and security within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions' sakes, I will now say: 'Peace be with thee'"* (Psalms, 122:7-8).

יהי שלום בחילך שלוח  
בארמנותיך. למען אחי ורעי  
אדברה נא שלום בך

#### CITY OF TRUTH AND HOLINESS

*Thus saith the Lord:*

✓ *I return unto Zion, and I will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem; and Jerusalem shall be called the city of truth; and the mountain of the Lord of hosts the holy mountain* (Zechariah 8:3).

שבתי אל ציון ושכנתי בתוך  
ירושלים ונקראה ירושלים  
עיר האמת והר ה' צבאות הר  
הקדש.

#### A LAMP TO THE NATIONS

Jerusalem will one day be a lamp to the nations of the world and they will walk by its light, as it is said:

*And nations shall walk at thy light* (Isaiah 60:3).

והלכו גוים לאורך

Already Solomon had been warned: *If you shall turn away from following Me... and not keep My commandments... then I will cut off Israel... and this house which I have hallowed for My name* (1 Kings 9:6). In spite of warnings by

prophets, and especially Jeremiah, people felt secure in Jerusalem. After all, the Temple, the seat of the Almighty, is inviolate. Then tragedy struck. And yet the same prophets who had warned about dire consequences and destruction, true to their calling, also comforted the people and predicted reconstruction of Jerusalem and return of its exiles.

*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Bid Jerusalem take heart, and proclaim unto her that her time of service (the sufferings in exile) is accomplished (Isaiah 40:1-2).*

נחמו נחמו עמי יאמר  
אלהיכם דברו על לב  
ירושלים וקראו אליה כי  
מלאה צבאה

Thus the city of Jerusalem is emblematic of the people of Israel.

Isaiah also announces the speedy return of the exiled community to Zion, the rebuilding of the city's ruins, and the increase of its inhabitants:

*But Zion said:*

*'The Lord hath forsaken me, and the Lord hath forgotten me'. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, these may forget, yet I will not forget thee. Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands; thy walls are continually before me (Isaiah 49:14-16).*

הן על כפים חקותיך חומתיך  
נגדי תמיד.

*The prophet Isaiah describes the return to Zion of the Babylonian exiles in the following words:*

*And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come with singing unto Zion, and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads; they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away (Isaiah 51:11).*

ופדויי ה' ישובון ובאו ציון  
ברנה ושמחת עולם על ראשם  
ששון ושמחה ישיגו ונסו יגון  
ואנחה.

The day will come when the Almighty will return to His Temple in Jerusalem:

*And the word of the Lord of hosts came, saying: Thus saith the Lord of hosts: I am jealous for Zion with great jealousy, and I am jealous for her with great fury. Thus saith the Lord: I return unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem (Zechariah 8:2-3).*

כה אמר ה': שבתני אל ציון  
ושכנתי בחוך ירושלים.

And when He returns, He will be the great purifier, and cleanse His people of her sins:

*Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall clear the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to His Temple... And He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver... Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in ancient years (Malachi 3: 1, 3, 4).*

הגני שולח מלאכי ופנה דרך  
לפני ופתאם יבוא אל היכלו.

Jerusalem will be repopulated by returning Exiles:  
*Again will I build thee, and thou shalt be built, O virgin of Israel... For there shall be a day, that the watchmen shall call upon the mount Ephraim: Arise ye, and let us go up to Zion, unto the Lord our God (Jeremiah 31:3-5).*

כי יש יום קראו נצרים בהר  
אפרים: קומו ונעלה ציון, אל  
ה' אלוהנו.

Jerusalem will once again be inhabited by young and old and life will become normal:

*Thus saith the Lord of hosts:*

*There shall yet old men and old women sit in the broad places of Jerusalem... And the broad places of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the broad places thereof (Zechariah 8:4-5).*

עוד ישבו זקנים וקנות  
ברחובות ירושלים ורחובות  
העיר ימלאו ילדים וילדות  
משחקים ברחבתיה.

The prophet Joel concludes his prophecy with the assurance that:  
*Judah shall be inhabited forever and Jerusalem from generation to generation while the Lord dwelleth in Zion (Joel 4:20, 21).*

ויהודה לעולם תשב  
וירושלים לדור דור ה' שוכן  
בציון.

A brilliant future is predicted for Jerusalem in Days to Come. Not only shall she be the center of Religion and Morality, but people will gravitate to her:

*And it shall come to pass in the end of days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow*

*unto it. And many peoples shall go and say: 'Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths, for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2-4).*

לכו ונעלה אל הר ה' אל בית  
אלהי יעקב ויורנו מדרכיו  
ונלכה באורחותיו כי מציון  
תצא תורה ודבר ה'  
מירושלים.

In a similar vein the prophet Jeremiah refers to Jerusalem as the center of God's kingdom:

*At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord; and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of the Lord, to Jerusalem (Jeremiah 3:17).*

בעת ההיא יקראו לירושלים  
כסא ה'.

The crowning achievement of Jerusalem in Days to Come will be that the Mountain of the Lord's house will turn into the emblem of permanent international peace.

*And He shall judge between the nations.  
And they shall beat their swords into plowshares  
And their spears into pruning hooks  
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation  
Neither shall they learn war anymore (Isaiah 2:4)*

ושפט בין הגוים  
וכחתו חרבותם לאתים  
וחניתותיהם למומרות  
לא ישא גוי אל גוי חרב  
ולא ילמדו עוד מלחמה.



*A congregation or Bible study group may wish to honor one of its members by sponsoring a special issue of Dor le Dor. We shall be happy to dedicate such an issue to the honoree. Please write to the Editor, Dor le Dor, for further details.*

# REFLECTIONS OF READERS

## REBECCA'S ENCOUNTER WITH ABRAHAM'S SERVANT

by I. Irving Ziderman

*He made the camels kneel down by the well outside the city, at evening time, the time when women come out to draw water* (Genesis 24:11).

Why does this verse give redundantly two separate designations of the time of day – “evening” and “when the women... draw water”? Moreover, it belabors the point by using the identical word “time” twice! No additional definition of the occasion is given by this duplication of the description. What is the import of adding the information that the event occurs “when women come out to draw water”?

*...Let the maiden to whom I say, 'Please, lower your jar that I may drink'...* (verse 14).

Why did Eliezer and his men not draw the water themselves? After an exhausting trek across the desert, was it not their first duty at the well to water their camels, without postponing this elementary kindness in order to practice such an inappropriate stratagem? And then to make this the subject of a supplication to God! Why pray for help if they could more easily and naturally have helped themselves?

*Drink, my lord, she said, and quickly... let him drink... and she drew for all his camels* (verses 18 and 20).

Why did Rebecca show no annoyance or embarrassment at Eliezer's misuse of her goodwill? She actually complies with his request with alacrity, and then even overreaches herself by watering all this camels

*I will not eat until I have told my tale* (verse 33).

How is it that Eliezer was not too embarrassed to relate his inconsiderate

*Dr. Yisrael I. Ziderman is a Senior Research Scientist at the Israel Fiber Institute in Jerusalem. Dr. Ziderman has identified the long-lost hilazon snail of the Talmud, used for dyeing the tekhelet. He is National Chairman of the Research Workers Union.*



stratagem to Rebecca's family? Does it reflect favorably on Abraham's wisdom in sending such a simpleton on this mission to them? Moreover, doesn't Rebecca's compliance indicate the fault of simple-mindedness rather than the virtue of benevolence?

On a baking hot June day in 1968, we set out on our first trip from Jerusalem — my home — to the newly accessible ruins of the city of Samaria. My excited anticipation of seeing for the first time — on the way — the twin mounts of Ebal and Gerizim, embracing the city of Shechem, grew steadily while the bus sped northward, and it welled to a flush of exhilaration as we passed between those two awesome peaks.

A few miles on, we stopped for refreshment at the village of Sebastia. As I descended the steps of the bus, my glance fell on a small structure by the roadside. On approaching, I read the following notice:

"MEN FORBIDDEN TO ENTER WHEN WOMEN ARE INSIDE!" ✓

The doorway opened onto a staircase that descended into the darkness, where the village well was situated below. This was obviously a precaution to prevent promiscuity in the dark, where the women would also probably be bathing. ✓

This oriental norm of female modesty, so strongly enforced by their menfolk, dismisses all our misgivings regarding the enigmatic behavior of Eliezer and Rebecca. Furthermore, it reveals Eliezer's true motivation in requiring Divine intervention in order to obtain water. ✓

Subterranean water-sources in the Levant are off-limits to males at the evening hour when the village maidens descend into the darkness to draw water. Eliezer's conduct is thus exemplary, and fully justified in the context of his cultural environment. He and his men were prohibited from drawing the water themselves.

*...And she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and went up (verse 16).*

Other enigmatic scriptural passages also focus on the unique geography of water-supply systems in the arid setting of the biblical narrative. As examples, we may mention Jacob's encounter with the shepherds and Rachel at the well (Genesis 29), and the water-pipe penetrated by King David's men (I Samuel 5:8). Hopefully, events such as these may also be clarified by ethnographic observations in the Middle East.

# BIBLE TRIVIA

## BY CHAIM ABRAMOWITZ

“Trivia”, as a modern word, and as the name of the popular Trivia games now on the market, does not mean trivial, non-consequential, unimportant, as defined in the older dictionaries. The modern “trivia” is the plural of “trivium”, a term reserved for the lower order of the liberal arts, such as grammar, rhetoric, etc. By Bible Trivia we mean the same as *פרפראות לחכמה*, the periphery of wisdom in reference to Bible study.

Letters and numbers, and their interrelationship have intrigued mankind ever since it learned to count and to read. It is not surprising that they served as a vehicle of diversion, speculation and the search for hidden meaning among Bible scholars and students for many generations. The many ingenious “gematriot” of the Baal Haturim,<sup>1</sup> for example, and many others, have delighted the fancy of scholars and laymen alike. The interplay of letters and numbers have even affected our prayers and way of life.

For instance:

The three chapters of the “Shma” contain a total of 245 words. According to the Talmud, the human body contains *רמ"ח אברים*, 248 parts. Since there is a mystical relationship between numbers and words and things, an effort was made to increase the “Shma” to two hundred and forty eight words so that there would be a word for each human part. This was accomplished by having the cantor repeat only the last two words and the first of the following prayer.<sup>2</sup> The congregation is urged to say it quietly with the cantor. When one prays alone he adds the three words *אל מלך נאמן* in the beginning.<sup>3</sup> This is done in the hope that each of the two hundred and forty-eight words will have a beneficial effect on the different parts of our body.

*From time to time we will bring different types of Biblical “Trivia” to the attention of our readers.*

1. Rabbi Yaakov bar Asher – 17th Century.
2. Orach Chayim 61:3.
3. Instead of saying “I am the Lord your God”, he says “The Lord your God is true”.

*Chaim Abramowitz served as Educational Director of Temple Hillel in Valley Stream, New York. He came on Aliya in 1973. He is Assistant Editor of Dor le-Dor.*

# ABSTRACTS FROM BETH MIKRA

Published by the *Israel Society for Biblical Research*  
by Mordecai Sochen

Luria, B.Z.: Amaziah, King of Judah and the Gods of Edom, *Beth Mikra*, 102(3), April-June 1985, pp. 353-361.

This article deals with a case of King of Judah, considered as having done "what was right in the eyes of the Lord" (II Kings 14:3), who worshipped the gods of Edom.

The King was Amaziah (798-769 BCE) who, after defeating the Edomites, "brought the gods of the children of Seir, and set them up with his gods, and prostrated himself before them, and offered unto them" (II Chronicles 25:14).

Why did Amaziah do this? The answer, according to the author, lies in the nature of the religion of the ancient Edomites.

Quoting other scholars (Rudolph '55 and Meyers '65, II Chronicles, p. 145) he mentions another possible explanation: the practice of Babylonian and Persian kings to include the gods of conquered people into their own Pantheon in order to find favor in the eyes of the conquered nations. This, however, is the only case where a king of Judah or Israel did such a thing.

Luria wonders why the Book of Kings does not even mention this incident, and, aside from the facts that the books of Kings and Chronicles were written by different editors, and in different periods, asks if the act of Amaziah was not considered idolatry at all. He points out that in many places in the Bible, God is mentioned as having come from the *south*: "The Lord came from *Sinai* and shone from *Seir*" (Deut. 33:2); "Lord, Thou didst come forth from *Seir*, when Thou didst march out of the fields of *Edom*" (Judges 5:4-5); "God comes from *Teman*, the Holy One from *Mount Paran*" (Habakkuk 3:3); "The Lord will blow the horn, and will march with the *whirlwinds of the south*" (Zechariah 9:14). Luria

*Dr. Sochen is a member of the Dor le Dor Editorial Board. He is also Chairman of the Bible Study group of the American Jewish educators in Israel.*

mentions that, on the basis of these expressions, Erlich (in מקרא כפשוטו, Deut. 33) thought that the belief in one god temporarily prevailed in Edom.

Further understanding of the religion of the Edomites can be gained from the literature of Edom, especially the book of Job, where Job and his friends express their belief in God as the creator of the world. Luria finds support of the idea about the belief in one God in Edom in an article by Ben Shamai (Beth Mikra '71, Number 48, p. 74).

The reason the Book of Kings completely ignores the act of Amaziah may have something to do with the tradition of monotheism in Edom.

\* \* \* \*

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Dr. Katzoff,

I read with interest Dr. Joel Klein's article on *Habakuk 3.13 – a Problematic verse* (Dor le Dor XIII:2 winter 84/85).

The entire point of the Massorah is to sort out the variant readings and give us what is considered the proper reading. Obviously the geniza reading is one of the variants of this verse.

I had the impression in reading the article that Dr. Klein seems to be accusing the Massorah scholars of inserting a distinct Christological reference into the Tanach. Such a deed is unthinkable, considering their character and intelligence, and the devotion of these people to Judaism and Jewish tradition. If one thinks of the persecutions of that time, such a reference would add "fat to the fire". Such a reference would have been rejected by other scholars of the times.

I feel that other explanations have to be worked, instead of implying a conspiracy by an ongoing group of scholars.

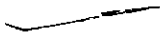
*Respectfully,  
Naphtali Gutstein, M.D.  
Chicago, Il.*

In reply to Dr. Gutstein's letter, I want to raise some issues regarding the Masoretic Text of the Bible.

I want to bring to the attention of the reader that the Dead Sea Scrolls and other Geniza finds remind us that we have no "original" text of any Biblical book, and some books had been circulated in more than one version almost from the beginning of their existence as written texts.

Here I want to refer to the theory that speculates that the text of some of the books emerged in three distinct versions between the fifth and the first centuries B.C.E. among the Jews of Palestine, Egypt, and Babylonia. Even later when ancient Jewish and Christian authorities defined the extent of the Biblical canon, they did not fix the precise text of each individual book.

Furthermore, all the Biblical texts suffered from textual corruption as an inevitable by-product of two to three thousand years of manuscript copying and recopying. While those copying scribes felt obligated to copy the received text as



accurately as possible, without making any changes or adjustments, virtually everyone of them perpetuated the errors of the previous copiers and introduced a few of their own. Compounding the problem was the occasional scribe who made a conscious alteration in the text either for ideological reasons or because of the sincere desire to correct someone else's mistake. Subsequently, the Massorettes had a text in front of them that offered a tremendous challenge to decide which to canonize of the existing readings or versions.

At this point, considering Dr. Gutstein's remarks, I find it difficult to think that all members of that "body of experts" were of the same mind, thoughts and persuasion.

Even if we keep in mind all the above, it is easy to imagine that not every sentence and every "chapter" had an alternate version for those scholars to examine and consider. Therefore, at times, they had no choice, and in order to establish the text, they did not face any dilemma what to add or which one to eliminate of the existing sources.

Yet, as it has been pointed out in my writing, it is of great significance that the Dead Sea Scrolls Habakkuk Commentary does not have more than the two chapters to the Book. It suggests that the third chapter was not part of the text at the time when these devoted men copied them.

As another point for consideration, I offered to look at the word סלה as a mark of insertion which in this case would indicate by an editorial remark that this part of the text has been known to be not a part of the text generally known. To continue this line of thinking, I am also reminded how committees work. At times, a suggestion offered by one member is accepted without having been realized by the other members that the motion might have carried thoughts contrary to the conviction of the whole body.

May I just fleetingly mention here, without even suggesting any possible connection with the topic presently discussed, that all sects, including the Qumran and other — not yet thoroughly researched "Northern-Israel" sects — considered themselves devotees to "Judaism and Jewish tradition". For these very reasons, they removed themselves from the communities they considered errant and doomed to extinction. At their time, all their beliefs, thoughts, and teachings were distinctly Hebrew (as distinguished from Jewish). As history evidenced, these thoughts were considered alien to Jewish thought, at a much later period only.

I believe it is important to keep in mind that the Geniza text is the shorter, unaltered version of the third chapter of Habakkuk that might have originated and preserved away from the Palestinian soil where the fervor of Messianic thought was not as acute as there.

Obviously we all agree that “the entire point of the Massorah is to sort out the variant readings and give us what is considered the proper reading”.

The Massoretes worked to preserve and safeguard what they believed to be the definitive text of the Bible. The same pious motives led them to suppress all competing textual traditions.

I therefore did not intend to accuse the Massorah scholars with inserting a distinct Christological reference into the Tanach.

By presenting my solution to a difficult text, I suggested and showed that the author of the Habakkuk text represented one point of view in the total body of our people. The parts of the body are all distinct and separate, yet all together form the living organism.

*Joel T. Klein, Ph. D.*



*Dear Editor,*

Whenever I come to the 11th verse of Psalm 34 I have problems with the “Young Lions”. *The young lions lack and suffer hunger; but they who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing* (Koren Bible, Jerusalem 83). כפירים רשו ורעבו חרשי ה' לא יחסרו כל טוב.

The reading “they lack” in the translation of the word רשו which the Yediot Acharonot edition annotated as נחלששו “they become impoverished”, makes little sense. They suffer hunger? This idea is equally absurd. Young lions as well as old ones, in fact all animals are frequently hungry. This is not some kind of divine retribution as the Psalmist in this reading seems to imply. This is the way the world was created.

Furthermore, it seems unwarranted to contrast young lions with those who seek the Lord. Even in the End of Days no more is expected of them than that they leave other animals alone.

A slight change in the vowels offers a possible solution to our problem: כופרים (unbelievers) instead of כפירים (lions).

The proposed translation would then be: *Unbelievers lack and suffer hunger, but they who seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.*

So, the young lions are disposed off and in their place comes an old friend, the Rasha, הכופר בעיקר, of the Pessach Hagada.

*Alfred Weinberg  
Wilmette Il.*

★ ★ ★ ★

*Dear Editor:*

The last issue of Dor le Dor was one of the best which always are eagerly awaited and are very stimulating. The Index of all the years to the "Bar Mitzvah" is so welcomed and complete. It is an issue deserving to be the Bar Mitzvah edition.

*Eva Alter  
Waukegan Il.*

★ ★ ★ ★

*Dear Editor:*

In your Fall issue of 1985 you described this year's Youth World Bible Contest runner-up as the first woman to attain that honor. However, I believe this distinction belongs to Lisa Szubin, who placed second in the 20th (1983) Youth World Bible Contest. Please set the record straight and give Lisa her due.

*Jeremy Kahan  
Brookline, Mass.*

*Dear Mr. Kahan:*

Thank you for calling this fact to our attention.

*The Editors*

★ ★ ★

We are very low on the following issues  
Vol. I,1; Vol. II,4; Vol. III,4

If you can spare them we will very much appreciate receiving them from  
you



**עשה תורתך קבע**  
**TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR**

**November-December 1985**

**כסלו תשמ"ו**

Th	Judges 6	שופטים ו'	14	א
F	Genesis 25:19-28:9	תולדות	15	ב
	<b>שבת</b> Haftarah: Malachi 1:11-2:3	הפטרה: מלאכי א', יא"ב, ג	16	ג
S	Judges 7	שופטים ז'	17	ד
M	Judges 8	שופטים ח'	18	ה
T	Judges 9	שופטים ט'	19	ו
W	Judges 10	שופטים י'	20	ז
Th	Judges 11	שופטים י"א	21	ח
F	Genesis 28:10-32:3	ריצא	22	ט
	<b>שבת</b> Haftarah: Hoseah 12:13-14:10 (A)	הפטרה: הושע י"ב, יג י"ד, י"א (א)	23	י
	Hoseah 11:7-12:12 (S)	הושע י"א, די"ב יב (ס)		
S	Judges 12	שופטים י"ב	24	יא
M	Judges 13	שופטים י"ג	25	יב
T	Judges 14	שופטים י"ד	26	יג
W	Judges 15	שופטים ט"ו	27	יד
Th	Judges 16	שופטים ט"ז	28	טו
F	Genesis 32:4-36	וישלה	29	טז
	<b>שבת</b> Haftarah: Hoseah 11:7-12:12 (A)	הפטרה: הושע י"א, די"ב, יב (א)	30	יז
	Obadiah (S)	עובדיה (ס)		
<b>December</b>				
S	Judges 17	שופטים י"ז	1	יח
M	Judges 18	שופטים י"ח	2	יט
T	Judges 19	שופטים י"ט	3	כ
W	Judges 20	שופטים כ'	4	כא
Th	Judges 21	שופטים כ"א	5	כב
F	Genesis 37-40	וישב	6	כג
	<b>שבת</b> Haftarah: Zechariah 2:14-4:7	הפטרה: זכריה ב', יד-ד, ז	7	כד
S	1 Samuel 1	חנוכה שמואל א א'	8	כה
M	1 Samuel 2	חנוכה שמואל א ב'	9	כו
	1 Samuel 3	חנוכה שמואל א ג'	10	כז
	1 Samuel 4	חנוכה שמואל א ד'	11	כח
rh	1 Samuel 5	חנוכה שמואל א ה'	12	כט

December 1985-January 1986

טבת תשמ"ו

F	Genesis 41-44:17	מקץ חנוכה	13	א
	<b>שבת</b> Haftarah: 1 Kings 7:40-50	הפטרת חנוכה: מלכים א ו', מ"ג	14	ב
S	1 Samuel 6	שמואל א ו'	15	ג
M	1 Samuel 7	שמואל א ו'	16	ד
T	1 Samuel 8	שמואל א ח'	17	ה
W	1 Samuel 9	שמואל א ט'	18	ו
Th	1 Samuel 10	שמואל א י'	19	ז
F	Genesis 44:18-47:27	ויגש	20	ח
	<b>שבת</b> Haftarah: Ezekiel 37:15-28	הפטרה: יחזקאל ל"ז, טרכח	21	ט
S	1 Samuel 11	צום י' טבת שמואל א י"א	22	י
M	1 Samuel 12	שמואל א י"ב	23	יא
T	1 Samuel 13	שמואל א י"ג	24	יב
W	1 Samuel 14	שמואל א י"ד	25	יג
Th	1 Samuel 15	שמואל א ט"ו	26	יד
F	Genesis 47:28-50	ויחי	27	טו
	<b>שבת</b> Haftarah: 1 Kings 2:1-12	הפטרה: מלכים א ב', אי"ב	28	טז
S	1 Samuel 16	שמואל א ט"ז	29	יז
M	1 Samuel 17	שמואל א י"ז	30	יח
T	1 Samuel 18	שמואל א י"ח	31	יט
January				
W	1 Samuel 19	שמואל א י"ט	1	כ
Th	1 Samuel 20	שמואל א כ'	2	כא
F	Exodus 1-6:1	שמות	3	כב
	<b>שבת</b> Haftarah: Isaiah 27:6-28:13	הפטרה: ישעיה כ"ז, ו"כ"ח, יג	4	כג
S	1 Samuel 21	שמואל א כ"א	5	כד
M	1 Samuel 22	שמואל א כ"ב	6	כה
T	1 Samuel 23	שמואל א כ"ג	7	כו
W	1 Samuel 24	שמואל א כ"ד	8	כז
Th	1 Samuel 25	שמואל א כ"ה	9	כח
F	Exodus 6:2-9	וּאָרָא	10	כט

December 1985-January 1986

טבת תשמ"ו

F	Genesis 41-44:17	מקץ חנוכה	13	א
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S	1 Samuel 21	שמואל א' כ"א	5	כד
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W	1 Samuel 24	שמואל א' כ"ד	8	כז
Th	1 Samuel 25	שמואל א' כ"ה	9	כח
F	Exodus 6:2-9	וּאָרָא	10	כט

DOR le DOR

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*I. ABSTRACTS OF ARTICLES IN DOR le DOR APPEAR IN:*

1. *Religious and Theological Abstracts* 121 S. College Street, P.O. Box 215 Myerstown, PA 17067
2. *Internationale Zeitschriftenschau Für Bibelwissenschaft und Grenzgebiete* Habichtweg 14, 7400 Tübingen
3. *Old Testament Abstracts* The Catholic University of America, Washington DC 20064

WORLD JEWISH BIBLE SOCIETY,  
29A Keren Hayesod St. 94188 Jerusalem

החברה היהודית העולמית לתנ"ך  
-02-245751

Dor le Dor is published in Jerusalem for the benefit of the English speaking public and is directed to knowledgeable Jews who wish to further their understanding of Jewish Scripture.

Bryte Bawois