THE JEWISH BIBLE QUARTERLY

Vol. XXVIII:3 (111)
July - September 2000

THE JEWISH BIBLE QUARTERLY

AIMS AND SCOPE

The **Jewish Bible Quarterly** provides timely, authoritative studies on biblical themes. As the only Jewish-sponsored English-language journal devoted exclusively to the Bible, it is an essential source of information for anyone working in Bible studies. The Journal publishes original articles, translations from scholarly Hebrew journals, book reviews, a triennial calendar of Bible reading and correspondence. All viewpoints are considered: Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist, and Secular-Humanistic. The **Jewish Bible Quarterly** can be of value to every teacher and student.

The **Jewish Bible Quarterly** (ISSN 0792-3910) is published in January, April, July and October by the ***Jewish Bible Association***, POB 29002, Jerusalem, Israel, a registered nonprofit association (Israeli Registration No. 58-019-398-5). All subscriptions prepaid for complete volume year only. The subscription price for 2000 (volume 28) is $24. Our email address: info@jewishbible.org and our Internet website is: www.jewishbible.org Back issues available on microfiche. FAX: +972-2-6216344 (attn: JBQ)

Founded by Dr. Louis Katzoff, Editor 1972 - 1987
Published by the
JEWISH BIBLE ASSOCIATION

In cooperation with
THE DEPARTMENT OF JEWISH ZIONIST EDUCATION
The Jewish Agency for Israel

Cover design by Benjie Herskowitz

THE JEWISH BIBLE QUARTERLY

Vol. XXVIII, No. 3 (111) JULY - SEPTEMBER 2000

ADDRESS
THE JEWISH BIBLE QUARTERLY

MAIL
POB 29002
Jerusalem, Israel

LOCATION
Kiryat Moriah
East Talpiot, Jerusalem, Israel
Tel:+ 972-2-6216145

ARTICLES IN THE *JBQ* ARE INDEXED AND ABSTRACTED BY:
Internationale Zeitschriftenschau fur Bibelwissenschaft und Grenzgebiete
Old Testament Abstracts
Religious and Theological Abstracts
Index of Articles on Jewish Studies (Rambi)
Index to Jewish Periodicals
Religion Index One: Periodicals
Theology Digest

The Jewish Bible Quarterly is published in Jerusalem for the benefit of the English-speaking public and is directed to all those who wish to further their understanding of the Hebrew Bible

JEWISH BIBLE ASSOCIATION
העמותה היהודית להפצת ידע התנ"ך

In cooperation with the
Department of Jewish Zionist Education,
The Jewish Agency

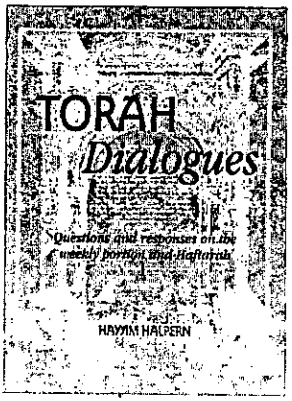
Tel: +972-2-6216145 **Registered Nonprofit Organization #58-019-398-5**
Fax: +972-2-6216344 (attn: JBQ) **POB 29002 Jerusalem, Israel**
info@jewishbible.org **http://www.jewishbible.org**

REGIONALLY ACCREDITED AMERICAN COLLEGE DEGREE IN JUDAIC STUDIES

We are proud to announce an innovative, regionally accredited American college program designed for yeshiva high school graduates. The program is rigorous, very inexpensive (total cost is under $5000 of which $1500 is an IRS tax credit), yet can be completed in as little as one summer (if the student has taken 5 Advanced Placement [A.P.] courses while in high school). The B.A. from **Regents College** or **Charter Oak State College** is in liberal arts. The high school graduate (who comes to study at a yeshiva in Israel in any case) takes our portfolio exams in Israel in Judaic Studies (general information and course syllabi in Hebrew, Bible, Talmud, Jewish Law, and Jewish Music are on our website: **www.jewishbible.org**). We have been authorized by Charter Oak and Regents to evaluate up to 90 out of the required 120 credits for the B.A.

There is an option for a **Second B.A.** in **any** field at any one of 20 leading universities and this requires only 30 [engineering: 45] credits (University of Connecticut, Univ. Maryland, CUNY: City University of New York, Univ. Wisconsin, Rutgers, Univ. Illinois at Chicago, Univ. California at Irvine (computer science), Univ. California at Berkeley (chemistry and optometry), Illinois Institute of Technology, Rochester Institute of Technology (engineering), and others. Detailed information appears on our website: **www.jewishbible.org**.

We would appreciate your help in informing potential students of our program.



JEWISH BIBLE ASSOCIATION
העמותה היהודית להפצת ידע התנ"ך

A NEW BOOK BY
RABBI HAYYIM HALPERN

TORAH DIALOGUES

AN INTERACTIVE HANDBOOK FOR RABBIS, TEACHERS AND FAMILIES

More than 400 questions and responses on all the *Sidrot* and *Haftarot*. Dialogues designed to stimulate discussion of Jewish values and observances in the synagogue, classroom and at home. Based on classic, medieval and modern sources. 208 pages.

SAMPLE QUESTIONS (RESPONSES ARE IN THE BOOK):

Parashat Ki Tissa: Why do you think the first two *aliyot* are unusually lengthy?

Haftarah of Parashat Tetzaveh: Why do you think the Prophet Ezekiel devotes so much space to detailing the future temple ?

Parashat Vayelech: Which verse here may be used as a guide to pedagogues ?

Parashat Emor: How could the rabbis interpret "an eye for an eye" (24:20) to mean monetary compensation ?

✂.....

ORDER FORM

TORAH DIALOGUES ISBN 965-555-017-6

[ ] Please enter my order for __ copies at $20/each.

[ ] I have enclosed a check ($20/copy) drawn on a US bank made payable to the **Jewish Bible Association.** Price includes surface mailing.

[ ] Those wishing to order through the Internet (AMAZON BOOKS) can order directly through our website: www.jewishbible.org where the cost is $18 plus shipping.

Name_____

Street Address _____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Country _____

Please complete this order form and return it to

JEWISH BIBLE ASSOCIATION, PO BOX 29002, JERUSALEM, ISRAEL

SHANI
HER ADVENTURES BEYOND THE SAMBATYON

by Shimon Bakon and Patricia Berlyn

Ancient legends say it is impossible to cross the River Sambatyon or reach the mysterious land beyond it. Nine-year-old Shani must carry an urgent message to Af-Bri, Prince of the Rains and Winds, who dwells in that land. So Elijah the Prophet tells her how to journey from her home in America to the River Sambatyon and a secret way to cross it.

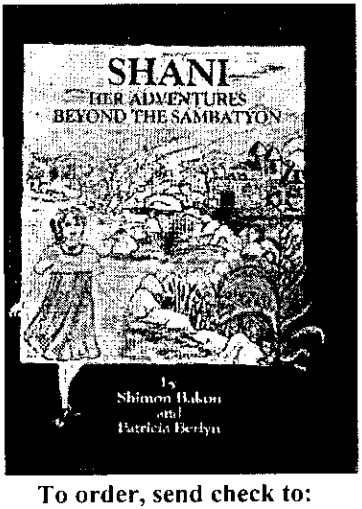
In Beyond-Sambatyon, Shani is welcomed in the palace of Queen Shabbat, and has adventures that blend entertainment and fantasy with characters and themes from Jewish history and tradition.

For ages 8-11 — Hardcover, 6.5 x 9 inches, 139 pages

16 illustrations — ISBN 965-90235-0-2

Price: $18.00 (or equivalent in local currency) includes surface mail delivery

engedi@actcom.co.il **http://israel.net/engedi**



To order, send check to:

EN-GEDI BOOKS

P.O.B. 42

ZICHRON YA'AKOV, ISRAEL

The following article has the tone of a Letter to the Editor, for it maintains that "The Book of Jonah as Allegory" by Abraham Z. Ephros [XXVII:3, July-August 1999] does not engage certain fundamental questions raised by the Book. Coincidentally, some of these questions are confronted in the next article in this issue: "The Epilogue to Jonah" by Pinchas Kahn -- Ed.

THOUGHTS ON AN ALLEGORICAL READING OF JONAH

RONALD T. HYMAN

In his analysis "The Book of Jonah as Allegory," Abraham Z. Ephros states that an allegorical reading of that Book is necessary to understand the "implicit message" concerning justice, repentance, and forgiveness (p. 148). That is to say, for Ephros, a reading of Jonah on only the surface level of the text raises questions which are not answered within the Book. He rejects the answers to these questions given by the non-allegorical analyses that he cites. These analyses are not "adequate" or "satisfactory," he says (p. 147). Therefore, he offers an allegorical reading which does provide a deeper and more powerful understanding of the story.

Ephros is correct in saying Jonah "transmits a sublime universalist message" that God's "mercy is granted to all who sincerely repent, Jew and non-Jew alike" (p.141). Indeed, that message is the basis for the rabbis' selection of Jonah as the *haftorah* for the Yom Kippur afternoon service. Ephros is perceptive in raising some probing questions that deserve the consideration of the serious reader of the Book. For example, why does Jonah, a prophet, attempt to distance himself from God? (p.141) Why does Jonah care for the gourd plant that shaded him, but not for the people of Nineveh who have repented? Does Jonah -- even after God's explanation of His behavior as contained in the Book's final verse (4.11) -- understand His point?

Ephros supports the allegorical representation of Jonah by citing Isaiah, Amos, II Kings, Deuteronomy, Jeremiah, and Nehemiah. His reader can readily accept

Ronald T. Hyman is Professor of Education at Rutgers University in New Jersey. His most recent book is Mandatory Community Service in High School: The Legal Dimension (1999).

the reading that the sailors and the people of Nineveh represent the "pagan world" (p. 148) and that Jonah represents the people of Israel. However, he does not fully develop the allegory. It seems to me that "Jonah As Allegory" does not provide the answer to the question of why Jonah/Israel attempts to distance himself from God. Nor does it answer the questions: What does the gourd plant represent? and Why does Jonah/Israel care for the gourd plant but not for the people of the pagan world? Thus, the allegorical approach does not help us to determine whether Jonah/Israel finally understands God's parting point at the end of the Book.

Let me suggest, therefore, that an allegorical reading of Jonah ought not to be justified as an approach which will provide acceptable answers to the questions unanswered in non-allegorical readings. Rather, we should use the allegorical approach as encouragement to explore answers to a whole series of questions about the relationship between justice and mercy. A philosophically-oriented reader might observe that, both on the surface level and the allegorical level, we need to ask whether justice requires retribution for evil-doing. Does justice preclude mercy? Can there be justice without mercy? Does sincere repentance merit mercy from God or from anyone who is harmed? And what, after all, constitutes "sincere repentance," and what are its visible manifestations?

From a nationalistic point of view, the Book leads us to wonder how Israel can learn and practice the attributes of God who is, according to Jonah, *gracious, compassionate, slow to anger, abounding in kindness* [*mercy*], *and forgiving of wrong-doing* (4.2). How can Israel follow the examples set by the sailors in Jonah 1.16, *who feared God, made sacrifices, and vowed vows*, and by the people of Nineveh (3.5-9), *who believed in God, fasted, called out to Him, and turned back from their evil ways*? Ephros is mistaken when he asks, "Why is [Jonah] so insensitive to the plight of the innocent sailors?" (p.146); Jonah is not. Jonah answers their question about how to calm the sea by saying, *'Heave me overboard, and the sea will calm down for you; for I know that this terrible storm came upon you on my account'* (1.12). In contrast, Jonah does display great insensitivity to the vast population of the city of Nineveh. This irony is yet another problem that needs explication.

In investigating the relation between justice and mercy, we should view the selection of Jonah/Israel to seek justice not as "illogical" (p. 147), but as logical

because it is his/their mission to seek justice. We must remember that everyone is in some measure inconsistent in behavior and unable to act according to aspired ideals. We must also keep in mind that Jonah does succeed in getting the people of Nineveh to repent so their city will not be overthrown. He was not a false prophet, though according to Ephros (p. 146) he feared to be so branded. On the contrary, Jonah was a true and successful prophet, especially considering that his prophecy predicting *Nineveh will be overthrown in forty days* (3:4) contained a conditional implication; that is, Nineveh will suffer if conditions remain the same and the people do not change their behavior.

An allegorical reading of Jonah encourages us to reflect on the deep meaning of the story involving the stubborn, impatient, ungrateful, and petulant Jonah/Israel. It encourages Jews to be one with their fellow Jews just as they are one when they recite the atonement confessional prayers on Yom Kippur in the plural rather than in the singular. An allegorical reading of Jonah can be valuable and meaningful to the extent that it offers answers to our questions and, more so, if it provokes continued thought about Jonah/Israel, as does Ephros's article. Such thought is needed today just as it was in antiquity when Jonah sought to flee over the sea.

THE EPILOGUE TO JONAH

PINCHAS KAHN

After his sea-borne adventures, Jonah, a reluctant prophet, arrives in Nineveh and proclaims the city's forthcoming destruction (Ch. 3). In response to the repentance of the city, God announces His forgiveness. It would seem that the original assignment to Jonah, with all its diversions, has been completed.

Yet, defying narratological expectations, the Book of Jonah does not end at this point. Evidently, the Narrator of Jonah has other points in mind, among them: (a) By the end of Chapter 3, God's plan regarding Nineveh has apparently been fulfilled. Why, then, does God continue to debate with Jonah? and (b) Why does the Book continue with a discussion embedded in a series of rather enigmatic events? These two questions will constitute the main focus of this paper, for understanding the Epilogue (Ch. 4) will give us a deeper understanding of the Book in its entirety.

Jonah 4:1-11 engages questions of God's rule of history, good and evil, justice and mercy, by casting the story as a symbolic demonstration that clearly is intended to recall other passages of the Tanakh, especially Genesis 1-2 and the aftermath of the sin of the golden calf. Along the way, Jonah becomes an Everyman who must be taught the responsibilities and limitations of being human.

I

We must assume that Jonah was written for an audience fully conversant with other biblical texts,[2] with an ear finely attuned to detecting similarities and differences in context and phraseology. At the very least, the readers would be able to identify and interpret the symbols and significance of language alluding to the Five Books of Moses. The way to understanding the Epilogue is through

Pinchas Kahn attended Yeshiva University, received his Ph.D. in Psychology in 1961, and was a supervisor of psychologists at the NYC Board of Education and a clinical psychologist in private practice. He received his smicha *from Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary in 1956 and was the rabbi of Young Israel of Mapleton Park, Brooklyn, NY. He made Aliyah in 1993, is retired in Jerusalem and busy learning and teaching.*

noting the implications of the echoes of the books of the Bible in the group subconscious of Jonah's readership. As a kind of foretaste of this technique, the Narrator begins using it earlier, at the central focus of the story, with Jonah's warning to the city of Nineveh. In fulfillment of God's command, Jonah proclaimed, *'Another forty days, and Nineveh shall be overturned'* (3:4).[3] The words certainly had a most dramatic effect upon the masses of Nineveh and, the Narrator probably hoped, upon his readers as well. For the latter, biblical echoes already abound. *Forty days* reminds us of the Flood in the time of Noah (Gen. 7:12), when a whole generation refused to repent and suffered total destruction. God's decision to destroy the world with the Flood is introduced with the statement: *And the earth was filled with violence* [חמס] *for all flesh had corrupted their way* [דרכו] *upon the earth* (6:11-12). These are precisely the terms that the Narrator attributed to the King of Nineveh: *'Let every one turn from his evil way* [מדרכו] *and from the violence* [חמס] *that is in their hands'* (3:8).

With the term *overturned* [נהפכת] in Jonah 3.4, we are perhaps being given an introduction to the theme of the Garden of Eden. An intriguing association of linguistically-rooted terms is to be found in the Bible's description of Adam's -- universal man's -- expulsion from the Garden of Eden: *So He drove out the man; and He placed at the east of the garden of Eden the cherubim, and the flaming sword which turned every way* [המתהפכת], *to keep the way to the tree of life* (Gen. 3:24). This connects the story of man's sin and expulsion from Eden with the problem of Nineveh. From Jonah's perspective, Nineveh's guilt and possible destruction are associated with original, universal man and his tragic failure. God, however, will in the Epilogue use the Garden of Eden issue to raise an opposite argument.

Nineveh turns from its evil ways, and we are told, *And God relented of the evil* [וינחם .. על הרעה], *which He said He would do unto them* [לעשות להם] *and He did not do it* (3:10) (Kahn translation). God invokes the same formula of forgiveness as applied to Israel after the sin of the golden calf: *And the Lord relented of the evil* על הרעה [וינחם] *which He said He would do to His people* [לעשות לעמו] (Ex. 32:14) (Kahn translation). The nature of the conflict between God and Jonah begins to be clarified. God's position is clear: The same

forgiveness is applicable to both Israelite and non-Israelite alike.

It is after this statement of God's forgiveness that the Narrator notes: *But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry* (4:1). Jonah's objection to God's forgiveness can be tentatively formulated as follows: In relation to the golden calf the forgiveness was appropriate, but for Nineveh it was not appropriate. Concerning the golden calf, the forgiveness was *to His people* [לעמו]; for Nineveh, the forgiveness was *to them* [להם]. Furthermore, regarding the golden calf, forgiveness was given within the context of a second set of tablets (Ex. 34:1), providing a support to the repentance of the Israelites through the affirmation of the Covenant. As to Nineveh, no similar structure existed. Moreover, Jonah is astonished by the fact that the very language used by God to forgive the children of Israel following the sin of the golden calf is now used to forgive not merely an alien people but a people who will presently destroy the Northern Kingdom of Israel! To Jonah, forgiveness under these circumstances was a tremendous error.

This tension raised immense theological issues for Jonah involving the appropriateness of justice and mercy in God's world. Torn by a concern for the threatened future of the Northern Kingdom of Israel at the hands of the very kingdom of Assyria whose capital Nineveh he was sent to save, Jonah formulates a theological position differentiating between error by the children of Israel on the one hand and forgiveness for vicious brutality by Nineveh/Assyria on the other. The potential of such evil, such as that of Nineveh/Assyria causing immense suffering to others, must be considered. Even God's mercy and forgiveness must have limitations. This, in a nutshell, is Jonah's entire argument.

II

With shocking intensity and barely contained exasperation, if not actual anger, Jonah "explains" himself. He begins his prayer with the formula, *'I pray Thee, O Lord'* (4:2), similar to the prayer of Moses to save Israel after the sin of the golden calf (Ex. 32:31). Jonah proceeds to justify his thinking and motivation in fleeing from the Lord: *'Was this not my saying, when I was yet in my own country? Therefore I fled beforehand unto Tarshish, for I knew that Thou art a gra-*

cious God, and merciful, long-suffering, and great in love, and relents of the evil' (4:2) (Kahn translation). Jonah's declaration is obviously a rephrasing of God's attributes of mercy as revealed in Exodus 34:6-7, the 13 attributes associated with God's forgiveness of Israel after the sin of the golden calf. Fearful that the forgiving attributes of God will, ironically, interfere with the destruction of Nineveh, Jonah, again like Moses (Ex. 32:32), ends his prayer with the plea, *'Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech Thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live'* (4:3) And as He did with Moses, God ignores Jonah's plea. The demonstration is not yet over.

At this point in the Epilogue, a different appellation for God is introduced. It is ה' אלהים -- the Lord-God -- Who plants the gourd (4.6). This is the only time that name is used in the Book of Jonah. Elsewhere, either the Tetragrammaton or Elohim is used. In the Midrash Genesis Rabbah 12.15 (noted by Rashi on Genesis 1:1), the term Elohim is equated with law and the attribute of דין [justice]. The Tetragrammaton, when used alone, is associated with רחמים [mercy]. The combination of both terms indicates that the world cannot exist with the application of justice alone; it must be tempered by mercy.

By using the combined appellation, the Narrator once more invokes our memory of the story of Adam. In Genesis 1:1-2.3, the Creator is called Elohim exclusively. In the second account of Creation, until the end of Chapter 3, He is called Adonai Elohim. The first chapter describes the Creation of the universe; the ensuing chapter tells of the Creation of universal man, his adventures and misadventures. It is clearly significant that the appellation of mercy is used with the advent of man. Along with freedom of choice comes the possibility, if not the probability, of error and failure, and with these the need for mercy, as the Epilogue to the Book of Jonah demonstrates.

III

From this point on to the end of the Book, a series of enigmas is presented that is actually a series of allegorical symbols derived from nature. Quite clearly, they need exegesis, reminding one of the rabbinical phrase "You must interpret me." After God's initial question, *'Is it good that thou art angry?'* (4:4) (Kahn

translation), Jonah does not answer directly, but leaves the city. He builds a סוכה [booth, shelter] and sits under its shade, *till he might see what becomes of* the *city* (4:5). Jonah wants to witness the backsliding of the city, thereby enabling him to prove the inappropriateness of the forgiveness offered Nineveh. The shelter or booth itself emphasizes this point. As a physical edifice, it recalls the Temple in Jerusalem (to which Jonah referred earlier in the belly of the fish [2:5,8], also an enclosed space). Though man-made, the booth is associated with the sheltering presence of God, as in the Temple. It is the holding frame necessary for *permanent* repentance, but according to Jonah it is absent from Nineveh.

The Narrator tells us (4:6-8) that God [ויזמן] *appointed* (Kahn translation) a gourd, then *appointed* a destroying worm, then *appointed* an easterly wind to increase Jonah's discomfort. The Narrator had used an identical term when God had *appointed* a great fish to swallow Jonah (2:1). The repetition of the term is at the very least a literary device establishing the unity of the Book. But it would appear that the repetition has conceptual significance as well. The term *appointed* is not used in God's original call to Jonah, which indicates that freedom of choice was retained by the prophet. In Chapter 4, God's appointing a plant is in opposition to Jonah's resistance. A tension rises between Divine authority and human perspective.

The temporary character of the plant is further suggestive of nature that is ever being born and dying. For Jonah, the booth is a symbol of the transience of Nineveh's repentance. For God, the gourd is a symbol to teach that *everything* is transitory. The plant represents the natural order of the universe, all of Creation. As symbolic of nature, the plant may also represent the dichotomy of creativity and potential for destruction in the Garden of Eden, perhaps even the tree in its midst. For Jonah it is unacceptable that God ordained the serpent of Eden as part of the natural universe, as He ordained the worm that destroyed the gourd that He created as a kind of tree of life. Jonah refuses to accept a world in which Eden was lost yet the corruption of Nineveh is tolerated.

God's retort to Jonah may be paraphrased as follows: "You feel that only the shelter [i.e., the Temple, or the people of Israel, or the holiness of commitment to the Covenant] can provide a protective frame for man and empower love and

mercy. I come to teach you that the entire natural universe that I have created, with its life-sustaining quality, with its cycles and discomfitures, is a manifestation of My greatness, holiness, and protection. Creation in itself is an act of love and mercy." One of the lessons that Jonah must learn is that all things are ambiguous, and variously interpreted by the beholder. Jonah accepts the argument as far as it goes. He recognizes God's Creation as an act of love and caring, and not evil. As regards the gourd, Jonah's response to the experience of God's Creation is one of שמחה גדולה [great joy] , implying, perhaps, a religious experience, a vision of God's truth.

But the question of forgiveness and mercy for Nineveh goes beyond Nineveh the city. Can Jonah's "great joy" withstand an encounter with Nineveh, the "great city" and all that it has come to stand for? For if Nineveh cannot be the recipient of mercy, then the world cannot exist. *And God appointed* רוח קדים חרישית (4: 8) which the Jewish Publication Society translates as *a vehement wind* but others, including Rashi and Ibn Ezra, translate as *a silencing wind*; perhaps with an aim of silencing Jonah, as once a voice out of a whirlwind silenced Job. It was a קדים [east] wind, previously noted when Jonah sat on the מקדם [eastern] side of the city (4:5). This also recalls the Garden of Eden, that God planted מקדם [to the east] (Gen. 2: 8). Onkelos and Targum Jonathan understand this latter verse as referring to the antiquity of the Garden. Thus, the encounter between Jonah and God goes all the way back to the very Creation of the world, to the very nature of reality. To quote J. B. Soloveitchik:

> As long as the human mind is unable to embrace creation in its entirety and to gain an insight into the very essence and purposiveness of being as such it would not succeed in its attempt to resolve the dilemma of evil. The latter is interwoven into the very fabric of reality and cannot be understood outside the total configuration.[5]

Thus, God appointed a vehement, silencing wind from the beginning of Creation, to settle the matter of the place of mercy in the scheme of the universe for every epoch.

The Narrator now refines the role of the gourd in nature, by pitting it against another natural manifestation. The allegory of the gourd versus the booth is now

paralleled by the allegory of gourd versus the searing sun. No longer are we limited to a confrontation representing man versus nature (booth versus gourd). Here we have nature versus nature, indicating that all, good and evil, emanates from God. As with the didactic wind, Jonah now experiences the full force of the hot sun on his head. Allegorically, the מדת הדין [attribute of justice] is seen in the searing sun and the powerful wind. By providing shade and protection against the hot sun, the plant comes to represent the מדת הרחמים [attribute of mercy].

What if there were no mercy to temper the application of justice to man's corruption, to support man during his exile from the Garden of Eden? Jonah, exposed now to both the merciful shade and the full blast of such justice, and not yet convinced of this new knowledge enacted for his benefit before his eyes, reiterates his previous statement, *'It is better for me to die than to live'* (4: 8).

IV

The Narrator of Jonah is not satisfied only with embedded symbols and allegory to get his point across. He constructs his text with external balances like numbers of words and symmetry of terms.

A numerical examination of the Epilogue in Jonah is indicative of its purpose.[6] Jonah's statement (4:2-3) is composed of 39 words. The next two statements (4:4,8) by God and Jonah, respectively, are composed of three words each, and the next declarations by God and Jonah (4:9) are composed of five words each. The concluding statement by God (4:10-11) contains 39 words to balance Jonah's initial statement.[7] This pattern implies that God retorts to Jonah's initial attack word for word as it were. Additionally, the symmetrical structure itself may constitute a critique of Jonah's attack. Jonah had complained that God's judgment was inherently evil, and therefore chaotic. God's response, even in literary style, demonstrates order rather than chaos.[8] Furthermore, the motif of order emerging from chaos harks back once again to the theme of God's Creation of the world.

The exchange of short statements between Jonah and God in Chapter 4 is part of an even more remarkable symmetry, based upon the repetition of significant words:

GOD	JONAH
וַיֹּאמֶר ה׳ הַהֵיטֵב חָרָה לָךְ?	כִּי טוֹב מוֹתִי מֵחַיָּי
Are you so deeply grieved? (4:4)	*I would rather die than live* (4:3)
וַיֹּאמֶר ה׳ הַהֵיטֵב חָרָה לְךָ?	טוֹב מוֹתִי מֵחַיָּי
Are you that deeply grieved? (4:9)	*I would rather die than live* (4:8)
	הֵיטֵב חָרָה לִי עַד מָוֶת
	I want to die (4:9)

Various forms of the word "good" are tossed about by both discussants. In every one of God's statements, a form of the word הֵיטֵב [*good*] is used (4:6,9). As God created the world, He had labeled each day as "good." For God in His present contention with Jonah, the goodness of His Creation is paramount. Over against this, Jonah consistently connects good and death. Every one of Jonah's statements now uses both the words טוֹב [good] and מָוֶת [death] (4:3,8,9). For him, it would seem, Creation means that death was introduced in the Garden of Eden, and man's failure to contend with the serpent established death as a factor in man's experience.[9] The paradox of God's natural order dismays Jonah unto begging for death, as it intimidated Job into silence.

V

God then responds with His final statement, a magnificent defense of the universal application of mercy.

> *And the Lord said: 'Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for which thou hast not labored, neither madest it grow, which came up in a night, and perished in a night; and should I not have pity on Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than one hundred and twenty thousand* [literally: twelve ten thousand] *persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also many animals?* (4: 10-11).

In this passage are embedded several layers of meaning. First, the term אָדָם [man] has deeper implications. Then we note the strange way of referring to the

inhabitants of Nineveh. Finally, we can detect the magical number 12 as a hidden allusion to the tribal history of Israel.

אדם refers to collective man, but not only grammatically. God uses the term to emphasize to Jonah, advocate of the Israelite world, that there is His entire world beyond and it must be taken into account. The original אדם of Creation was their progenitor, too.

Among Adam's descendants are the inhabitants of Nineveh -- 120,000 of them, who do not know right from wrong. Rashi says that this refers to young children and the innocent; perhaps Rashi is recalling Abraham's plea for saving Sodom if 10 innocents were found in that city. Nor dare we ignore the tag line that concludes the Book: *and many beasts as well.* This last shot to Jonah is meant to re-emphasize that God's mercy prevails not only for human innocents but for animals as well, an infinite universality of mercy to balance the co-existent need for justice. Without it, Nature -- Creation -- cannot exist.

On the other hand, God does hint that this concept is peculiarly Israelite. The number 120,000 appears to be hyperbolic, meant to represent a vast population. Yet, the number chosen is after all 10000 x 12, a reminder that the Israelite experience as a people in the world began with 12 tribes. True, the 12 tribes were God's instrument in offering an ethical and moral norm to the world, but Jonah ought not to forget that the offspring of 12 tribes is not the whole universe. Indeed, Abarbanel and Malbim juxtapose God's mercy for Nineveh with His decision to apply justice to a sinning Israel. It is precisely because Nineveh, and by extension universal man, is uninformed, like beasts, regarding the ethical and moral norm of Sinai, that they are less culpable than Israel. As such, less can be demanded of them than of Israel. With this concluding argument, God has completely turned Jonah's argument over onto its head. Israel is to be judged more harshly precisely because it is a covenantal community.

In the ultimate analysis, God does not reject Jonah as His prophet. Rather, He sustains His charge to him, thereby demonstrating a tolerance of Jonah's position. For the Narrator of the Book of Jonah, the continual referral to biblical texts can be seen as a culmination of the teachings of the Torah. Unlike Nineveh, Israel is a covenantal community, and thereby possesses the necessary parame-

ters of ethics and morality inherent in the Sinaitic Covenant. It is a condition of pride, no doubt, but of responsibilities hitherto unperceived by Jonah: First, accepting the appropriate application of justice, mercy and forgiveness in this world; second, understanding that Israel is to be judged more harshly *because* it is the covenantal community.

The *Yalkut Shimoni* (2, Remez 551) concludes its midrashic discussion of Jonah with the following:

> At that hour, [Jonah] fell on his face and said [to God], guide Your world with the attribute of mercy for it is written, *To the Lord our God belongs the mercies and forgiveness* (Dan. 9: 10).

In Daniel, appropriately, the verse is completed with, *for we have rebelled against Him.*

NOTES

1. The term "Narrator" refers to the voice presenting the text. It contains no implications regarding authorship, historicity, or holiness of the book.

2. J. Magonet, *Form and Meaning: Studies in Literary Techniques in the Book of Jonah* (Sheffield: The Almond Press, 1983) p. 68.

3. Translations are from the Jewish Publication Society 1916 edition., except where I have offered my own translations, which are designated in the text as " Kahn translation."

4. All citations to Ibn Ezra, Radak, and Rashi are from *Mikraot Gedolot* (New York: Tanakh/Shulsinger, 1935) II:1206-36 passim.

5. Unpublished letter to Dr. Dan Vogel, April 15, 1965.

6. Magonet, pp. 56-58.

7. Perhaps there is here an oblique allusion to the 39 lashes to which certain transgressors were sentenced.

8. I wish to thank Dr. Vogel for suggesting this idea.

9. The juxtaposition of "good" and "death" brings to mind the position of Rabbi Meir as noted in Midrash Rabbah (Genesis Rabbah 9:5): In the copy of Rabbi Meir's Torah was found written, "And behold it was very good, and behold, death was good." The relationship to Jonah's statements is intriguing.

DANIEL

SHIMON BAKON

INTRODUCTION

King Zedekiah paid a heavy price for not heeding the warnings of Jeremiah. Ever since his vision of the seething pot facing the north, Jeremiah had been certain that *From the north shall disaster break loose, upon all the inhabitants of the land* (Jer. 1:14) and that the danger to Judah would come from the Babylonians. Jeremiah had also warned against the growing moral and religious corruption in the land, *which they have done to provoke Me* (32:32), reaching such a low point that children were sacrificed to Molech in the valley of Hinnom.

On the ninth of Ab. 586 BCE, the fate of Judah was sealed when invading hordes of Babylonians razed Jerusalem and burned the Temple. Zedekiah, the last king of Judah, brought captive before Nebuchadnezzar, watched his sons being killed, probably the last thing he saw before he was blinded. The leadership of Judah was led captive to Babylonia, swelling the number of Judeans brought there in exile ten years earlier, to a sum of about 150,000.

Among the exiles was the lad Daniel. Living to a ripe old age, he witnessed the fall of Babylon and the coming to power of the Persians. The Book of Daniel also foretells the coming power of the Greeks, the disintegration of Alexander's empire into four kingdoms, and the oppressive tyranny of the Seleucids under Antiochus Epiphanes. Because the Book of Daniel deals with a span of 450 years, from the time of Nebuchadnezzar to that of Antiochus IV, there has been considerable controversy about the identity of the author and the date of the composition. Is the Book, wherein Chapters 1-6 and 7-12 deal with two separate subjects, actually two books?

The Talmud (Bava Batra 15a) states that the Book of Daniel was written by the Great Assembly.[1] Driver insists that Daniel was a historical person, one of the Jewish exiles in Babylon, who foretold as a seer some of the fortunes of the Chaldean and Persian empires.[2] Pfeiffer feels that neither the use of two languages (Hebrew and Aramaic), nor the absence of direct allusion to Antiochus

Shimon Bakon, Ph.D., is the editor of the Jewish Bible Quarterly.

Epiphanes in Chapters 1-6 supports the division of Daniel into two books. Whether one prefers the traditional view or that of modern critical biblical scholarship, it is the message the Book and the influence it exerted that are important, for Daniel served as one of the great architects of Jewish survival in exile and under religious oppression. He was concerned with preserving Jewish identity, after the crushing defeat and exile, and wondered how the Jews could meet the challenge of not being swallowed up by the brilliant Babylonian culture. Undoubtedly, he must have recalled the sad fate of the Lost Tribes of the Northern Kingdom of Israel. He was also aware of the rise and fall of the mighty empires of Assyria, Babylonia, Persia and Greece, and searched for a meaning behind the succession of these empires. Also, greatly influenced by Jeremiah, he was troubled by the question of "the Lord's Indignation." When would it end and the final redemption come about? In response to his questionings, he developed a religious and apocalyptic historiosophy, stressing the futility and folly of worldly power, and that it will come to an end and God's Kingdom will emerge in all its splendor.

RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIP OF GOD AND HIS FAITHFUL

After the conquest of Babylonia by Cyrus the Great of Persia, circa 538 BCE, 40,000 Jews returned from exile in response to his famous proclamation (which also restored to them the captured Temple vessels). The bulk of the Jewish population remained in Babylonia and managed, contrary to historical precedent, not only to maintain its distinctiveness but also to develop a golden age of prosperity and Jewish creativity over a period of 1,500 years. How was this double miracle accomplished? The Book of Daniel affords us insight into the phenomenon by portraying some events and personalities as models for conduct in changing and shifting circumstances.

HE PROTECTS HIS FAITHFUL

First and foremost, there is an abiding faith in God Almighty, and unquestioned loyalty to Him and His commandments. He reciprocates by protecting and promoting His faithful. Thus Daniel and his three friends, who had been singled out by Nebuchadnezzar to be trained for high administrative posts in his

expanding empire, insisted on limiting their diet to permitted food, and subsisted and "even thrived on" pulse and water. On two occasions when the faith of Daniel and his three friends was tested to the limit, they were prepared to face martyrdom.

On the first occasion, Nebuchadnezzar set up a golden idol that everyone was required to worship. When the three friends refused to commit this idolatry, they were cast into a fiery furnace from which they miraculously escaped unharmed.

The second occasion was during the reign of Darius, who had established 120 satraps throughout his kingdom, presided over by three overlords of whom Daniel was one. In a plot to depose Daniel, the following pretext was devised: *'We shall not find any occasion against this Daniel except in the matter of the law of his God'* (6:16). Darius was induced to publish an edict that, for a period of time, only he was to be worshipped. Now Daniel, whose windows faced Jerusalem, knelt three times a day to pray to God. Thus, accused of disobeying the King's edict, he was thrown into a lions' den, but was saved by an angel of the Lord.

The fact that for the sake of exclusive worship of the Lord, Daniel and his friends were willing to undergo martyrdom [קִדּוּשׁ הַשֵּׁם] needs some explanation. With the loss of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, prayer took the place of sacrifice as the legitimate communion with God. Furthermore, God is not only One and Almighty. He is also the exclusive One. In a polytheistic society, subjugated people would adopt the deities of the conquerors and so lose their own religious identity. The stress in the Book of Daniel on the worship of God exclusively may have saved the Jewish exiles from disintegration.

HE REVEALETH THE DEEP AND SECRET THINGS (2:22)

The Lord endowed Daniel with the special gift of interpreting dreams and the ability to foretell the future. In one instance, Nebuchadnezzar, who prided himself *'Is not this the Great Babylon which I here built for a royal palace of Babylon, by the might of my power and the glory of my majesty'* (4:22), had a most disturbing dream. He saw a terrible and mighty image with a head of gold, breast of silver, belly and thighs of bronze, and legs and feet part iron and part clay. Then he saw a stone smash this image to bits, and then the stone turned into

a great mountain. Only Daniel, of all the magicians and wise men, was able to interpret this weird dream, to which we shall return later.

A second instance, probably the best known in the Book of Daniel, occurs at the great feast that Belshazzar, last of the Babylonian rulers, made for 1,000 of his courtiers and concubines. In their revelry, they desecrated holy vessels from the Temple. Suddenly, much to the dismay of the onlookers, there appeared on a wall the mysterious words: *MENE MENE TEKEL UPHARSIN*. None of the King's astrologers or enchanters could decipher the meaning of this writing. Daniel, called to solve the riddle, read and interpreted:

> *'MENE -- God has numbered thy kingdom and brought it to an end; TEKEL -- thou are weighted in the balance and found wanting; PERES -- thy kingdom is divided and given to the Medes and the Persians'* (5:26-28).

That night Belshazzar was assassinated and the Babylonian empire came to an end.

GOD'S ULTIMATE PLAN

The second part of the Book of Daniel (Chapters 7-12) includes four visions in which new and significant elements are added to the vision of the stone smashing the "terrible image." They were designed to offer hope for a people living under foreign dominion.

I shall limit myself to one; the first vision that seems like a variation of the theme encountered in Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the image. Four beasts,[4] dreadful to behold, come up from the sea. One *like a lion* with eagles' wings, the second *like a bear*, the third *like a leopard with four wings*, and the fourth a undefined dreadful creature, with great iron teeth and ten horns. Among the ten horns a little horn is growing. In this vision there is also a heavenly tribunal where a fiery throne is set up for the "Ancient of Days" [עתיק יומין] attended by myriad who minister to Him.

> *The judgment was set and the books were opened* (7:10).
>
> *The dominion of beasts was taken away, yet their lives were prolonged for a season and a time* (7:12).

> *There came with the clouds of heaven, One like unto a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days . . . . And there was given him dominion and glory and kingdom. His dominion, which shall not pass away And his kingdom . . . shall not be destroyed* (7:13-14).

Disturbed and frightened, Daniel asks one of the divine attendants to reveal to him the true meaning of this vision and this is what he is told: The four beasts represent four kingdoms that will be followed by the eternal kingdom of the saints of the Most High. This kingdom, represented by the "little horn," will last a time and times and half of a time, until destroyed.

Aside from the cryptic portrayal of the four beasts, rather easily deciphered, who is *like unto the son of man*? Is he the Messiah or the symbol of the "kingdom of the saints"? (For Christianity, these verses were of special significance, for its founder identified with the son of man who came in the clouds of heaven.)

The Talmud declares it to be the Messiah:

> R. Joshua opposed two verses. And behold, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven. Whilst it is written (behold thy king cometh . . .) lowly and riding on an ass (Zech. 9:7). If they are meritorious, he will come with the clouds of heaven, if not, lowly and riding an ass (Sanhedrin 98a).

It seems that the Book of Daniel is rather vague on this issue. We only know for certain that the Messiah, or the saints of the Most High, are depicted in two figures: The stone that turns into a mountain, and one like unto the son of man, who comes with the clouds.

Much speculation has been focused on the meaning of some of the statements in the book, such as *their lives were prolonged for a season and a time*, or the kingdom of the little horn will last a *time and times and half of a time*. I shall not tire the reader by expounding on them or even add to them, but rather insist with Saadya Gaon that they remain the Lord's secret.

THE INDIGNATION OF THE LORD

In a polytheistic society, there is room for many deities. Conquered people could easily blame their own national deities for adversity and unhesitatingly adopt the seemingly more powerful deities of the conquerors. It is entirely dif-

ferent with the monotheism of Israel. The Covenant between God and Israel is one of the fundamentals of Judaism. The fury of the prophets was directed against Israel's disregard of this Covenant in both its religious and moral aspects. They warned again and again that breach of the Covenant would lead to disaster. This element of sin, that causes the Lord's indignation, needs to be appreciated fully as one of the significant factors in the remarkable Jewish persistence. It is our sins that brought about calamities that befell us. Let us hear Daniel's beautiful prayer and confessional:

> *O Lord . . . Who keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Thee and keep Thy commandment.*
>
> *We have sinned, and have dealt iniquitously . . .*
>
> *Because of our sins, and for the iniquities of our fathers, Jerusalem and Thy people are become a reproach* (9:4-5, 16).

Undeterred by the vicissitudes visited upon his people, Daniel is unshaken in his belief that, following the "end of indignation" a cataclysm will occur. The succession of empires ordained by the Lord Himself for a prescribed term will come to an end and give way to God's Kingdom. The question is: When? While Isaiah was satisfied to project the messianic era to the "end of days," Daniel speculated on a definite date leading to apocalypse.

Daniel was apparently frustrated that the prophecy of Jeremiah, *after seventy years are accomplished for Babylon I will remember you and perform My good word toward you in causing you to return to this place* (Jer. 29:10) had brought only partial succor. He approached the angel Gabriel and asked for the deeper meaning of these seventy years. This is Gabriel's answer:

> *'Seventy weeks* [seven times seventy years] *are decreed upon thy people and upon thy holy city to finish the transgression and to make an end of sin and to forgive iniquity and to bring in everlasting righteousness and to seal vision and prophet and to anoint the most holy place'* (9:24).

After this appointed time of trouble *such as never was since there was a nation even to that time*, there will be ultimate triumph of the righteous saints and many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall come awake *to everlasting life* (12:1-2).

CONCLUSION

The Book of Daniel encompasses a sweep of close to 500 years, a turbulent period of time that witnessed the successive burgeoning and collapse of mighty empires. During this period, the Jews faced major challenges: Exile, subjugation, and religious oppression. But (contrary to the rantings of Toynbee) they met them with courage and determination. The Book of Daniel, together with the pre- and post-exilic prophets, gave the Jews the necessary tools to withstand threats and to survive. These tools were a religious philosophy of history, in which God gives temporary power for a set span of time to pagan emperors, but protects His faithful and ultimately establishes His everlasting kingdom. In the Book of Daniel it is apocalyptic, with a definite date when God's anger at the sin of His people will come to an end.

This noble book, abounding in symbolism which put Kafka to shame, deserves more attention from serious readers of the Bible.

NOTES

1. This fact may account for some of the historical inaccuracies in the Book of Daniel.
2. S.R. Driver, *An Introduction To The Literature Of The Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1969) p. 150.
3. Robert H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction To The Old Testament* (NY: Harper & Brothers) p. 781.
4. The four beastlike creatures are in all likelihood Babylon, Media, Persia, and Greece. The 10 horns are apparently the 10 successors to Alexander, and the little horn may be an allusion to Antiochus of the Seleucids.

THE WARHORSE OF THE LORD

DOMINIC RUDMAN

Zechariah 10:2b
Therefore they wander like ***a flock****; they are afflicted for* ***lack of a shepherd***

Zechariah 10:3
My anger is kindled against the ***shepherd****; and the* ***he-goats***

I will ***punish****, for* ***the Lord*** *of Hosts* ***cares for*** *His flock, the house of Judah, and will make them like his* ***majestic warhorse****.*

SOURCES
...because ***my flock lacks a shepherd****, and so has become prey, and food for all the wild animals...I am against the shepherds...As for you,* ***my flock****, thus says the Lord* ***Almighty,*** *'I will judge between and sheep and sheep, rams and* ***he-goats***' (Ezek. 34:8-9, 17).

Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, about ***the shepherds who shepherd*** *my people: You have scattered* ***my flock*** *and have not* ***cared for them****, so I will* ***punish*** *you for your evil doings* (Jer. 23:2).

Dominic Rudman is Leverhulme Special Research Fellow in Early Jewish Studies at Exeter University, U.K., and the author of over twenty articles. His first book, entitled Determinism in the Book of Ecclesiastes, *is to be published by Sheffield Academic Press in Fall 2000.*

Have you given the ***horse*** *might? Have you clothed its neck with thunder? Do you make it leap like a locust? The* ***majesty*** *of his snorting is terrible...With fierceness and rage it swallows the earth and cannot stand still at the sound of the trumpet. When the trumpet sounds it says "Aha!" From a distance it smells* ***the battle*** (Job 39:19-25).

INTRODUCTION

The study of intertextuality in the Hebrew Bible -- that is to say, of the ways in which the biblical text cites or alludes to itself, is now firmly established as a scholarly discipline.[1] Few texts in the Hebrew Bible are more allusive than Zechariah 9-14, the so-called "Second Zechariah." Not only is it prophecy in its own right, it has rightly been described as a "wisdom anthology" which collects, cites and interprets older (mainly prophetic) material for the post-exilic Judean community.[2]

The observation that the opening verses of Zechariah 10 appear to allude to passages in the books of Jeremiah and Ezekiel is frequently made by commentators on Second Zechariah. However, most scholars see in these verses the work of a later editor rather than that of the prophet, agreeing that the opening verses of Zechariah 10 form a bridge between two larger blocks of "prophetic" material (9:1-17 & 10:3-12), even if they disagree on how far this bridge extends (e.g., Redditt argues for the editorial nature of 10:1-3a, whereas Larkin sees the work of an editor only in 10:1-2).[3] In either case, the image of the warhorse in verse 3b is viewed as alien to the context established at the beginning of the chapter in which the Lord's flock are left to wander without adequate guidance, and at the mercy of predators.

The purpose of this article is not to add to the already extensive material on the redactional history of Second Zechariah, but to consider 10:2b-3 from a literary perspective. Far from being a clear sign of a redactional join between fundamentally different materials, it may be argued that the appearance of the Lord's warhorse in 10:3b, hard on the heels of the depiction of the Lord's wandering flock, brings the passage to a climax that represents the radical transformation of the Judean community's fortunes. Just as the image of the flock in 10:2b-3a appeals to the authority of older prophecy, so the horse image of 10:3b derives its power from the depiction of the warhorse of Job 39.

TEXT AND CONTEXT

As noted above, the observation of a possible link between Zechariah 10:2-3 and earlier prophecy is not a new one. For Mitchell and Mason, the shepherd imagery of these verses is strongly reminiscent of similar passages in Ezekiel 34 and Jeremiah 23:1-4.[4] The statement in 10:2 that the Lord's flock is left to wander *for lack of a shepherd* [אין רעה] seems to be an echo of the flock's distress because they *lack a shepherd* [אין רעה] in Ezekiel 34:8. Apart from this, shared vocabulary in the two texts is limited to the word "flock" [צאן]. If these were the only grounds for suggesting a connection between Zechariah 10 and Ezekiel 34, they could not be said to be very promising. However, a significant link is also forged by the reference to the "he-goats" [עתודים] in Zechariah 10:3 and the context in which they appear. In Ezekiel 34, there is a movement from an attack on the bad shepherds of Israel (vv. 2-10) to the taking over of this role by the Lord, who will judge and punish members of the flock itself (vv. 11-22), specifically the "he-goats" (v. 17). This same movement from punishment of the shepherds to punishment of the he-goats is also prominent in Zechariah 10:2-3.

At the same time, the double use of the verb פקד [to punish, to care for] recalls Jeremiah 23:1-4, in which the Lord threatens Israel's shepherds with punishment for their negligence. Although the connection with this text is limited to the word "shepherd" and this verbal root, the use of the latter in both texts is also sufficiently distinctive to argue for some connection between them.[5] The verb פקד appears in both texts in its positive sense "to care for" with the accusative (the Lord's "flock" [צאן -- Jer. 23:2; עדר/צאן -- Zech. 10:3] marked

off with the object marker "את" alongside the verb used in its negative sense "to punish" with the accusative (the "shepherds" or the "he-goats" [רעים -- Jer. 23; תודים -- Zech. 10:3] delineated by means of the preposition "על."

The author/compiler of Second Zechariah, then, makes use of earlier traditions in Jeremiah and Ezekiel in order to make a statement about the circumstances of his own community in his own time. Although a concrete identification of the shepherds is impossible, it seems clear enough that they exert some kind of leadership over the people and that the prophet judges them to have failed in their duties. It also remains unclear in what sense the sheep have been left to wander. They may have been misled in religious matters, or their interests may have been neglected. Possibly the author accuses the leaders of the Judean community of turning a blind eye to the oppressed circumstances of their flock. Whatever the reason for the accusations of 10:2-3, the flock is depicted as being in the sort of straits that only dramatic intervention from God will ameliorate.

THE LORD'S WARHORSE: VERSE 3b

If those scholars who have previously suggested a connection between Zechariah 10 and Ezekiel 34 are correct, implicit in the metaphor of the wandering sheep is not simply the idea of their becoming lost, but also that of their vulnerability to predators (Ezek. 34:8). In the Ezekiel text, the wild animals who prey on the flock of Israel are to be understood as the nations by whom Israel has been subjugated. Read against this background, the transformation of Israel from helpless sheep to mighty warhorse in 10:3 becomes a perfectly explicable metaphor, which captures the dramatic reversal in Israel's fortunes expected by the writer of Second Zechariah.

This juxtaposition of the sheep- and horse-metaphors has contributed in no small measure to the scholarly perception of a redactional join in Zechariah 10:2-3. However, the statement in Verse 3b that the Lord will make Israel *like His proud warhorse* has attracted remarkably little discussion of itself.[6] The scholarly perception in general that Zechariah 9-14 is comprised of separate blocks of material linked by shorter bridging passages may be correct, as may be the specific observation that one of these transitions occurs in 10:2-3. However, this does not mean that the context provided by these shorter passages should be ignored when interpreting the larger blocks of material to which they are linked.

The nature of Israel's metamorphosis in 10:3 is in fact handled with rather more subtlety by our redactor than he is given credit for.

The statement and the content of the Zechariah 10:3ff. is usually linked by commentators to the genre of the "divine warrior hymn." Yet, elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, the Lord is represented as riding the clouds (Ps. 68:4; 104:3) or enthroned upon the cherubim (I Sam. 4:4; II Sam. 6:2; II Kg. 19:15=Isa 32:16); He is never mounted on a horse. How, then, should we interpret the phrase *like **His** proud warhorse* (lit: "like the horse of His majesty/splendor in battle")? The three key words in this phrase [כסוס הודו במלחמה] all make their appearance in the famous passage about the horse in Job 39:19-25. In this earlier passage, the author dwells at some length on the attributes with which God has endowed the horse, challenging Job to say whether he can claim to have created its like. For Habel, who dwells on the nature of the horse's depiction in Job 39 at some length, "this charger in action approximates a theophany; he is like a warrior god poised for battle."[7] The horse's quasi-divine characteristics include "might" [גבורה -- cf. Job 12:13], a neck adorned with "thunder," a snort of "majesty" [הוד -- Job 39:20, cf. Ps. 104:1; Hab. 3:3]. The horse's voice creates "terror" in its adversaries, as does the presence of God. Finally, the earthquakes associated with a theophany are suggested by the use of the verbs "quake" [רעש, v. 20] and "shake" [רגז, v. 24], as is the action of the horse "swallowing the earth." Well might an animal so gifted by its creator be termed *the warhorse of* [the Lord's] *majesty*. No longer are the people of Judea to be the put-upon sheep of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, for God will transform them into the warhorse of Job.[8] The use of this metaphor underlines the thoroughgoing nature of the change in Judea's fortunes proposed by the Lord, and links the preceding verses to the theme of war running throughout this chapter.

CONCLUSION

While Zechariah 10:1-2/3a may well serve a redactional function within Second Zechariah, the transformation of Israel from helpless sheep into proud warhorse in Zechariah 10:3 is far from being simply a sign of a redactional join. If we first recognize the references to God's scattered flock in Ezekiel and Jeremiah, and then the allusion to the depiction of the horse in Job 39, it becomes clear that the editorial activity within the book was carried out with

some subtlety. Indeed, bearing in mind the allusive nature of Second Zechariah as a whole, and of 10:2-3a in particular, it is not at all clear that the author/anthologist of Second Zechariah should not also be identified as its redactor. Hence, those elements within the text said to be the product of redactional activity should not automatically be dismissed as secondary, and indeed, should perhaps be given equal priority with the larger units.

NOTES

1. Such has not always been the case, and until fairly recently, articles and books which dealt with this subject were relatively few. For an extensive list of earlier material on this subject, see G. G. Porton, "Midrash" in *Anchor Bible Dictionary* IV, p. 819.

2. Cf. esp. B. Stade, "*Deuterosacharja: Eine kritische Studie*," *Zeitschrift für die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 1 (1881) pp. 1-96; 2 (1882) pp. 151-72, 275-309. H. G. Mitchell, *A Commentary on Haggai and Zechariah*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: Clark, 1912) p. 237, provides a useful list of verses in Second Zechariah with their intertexts, based on the work of earlier scholars, including Stade. A more recent and thorough study is K. A. Larkin, *The Eschatology of Second Zechariah: A Study of the Formation of a Mantological Wisdom Anthology*. Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 6 (Kampen: Kok Pharos, 1994).

3. P. L. Redditt, *Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995) pp. 102-3; Larkin, p. 221.

4. Mitchell, p. 237; R. A. Mason, "Some Examples of Inner-Biblical Exegesis in Zechariah IX-XIV," *Studia Evangelica* 7 (1982) pp. 344-47.

5. Mitchell *ibid.*; C.L. Meyers & E.M. Meyers, *Zechariah 9-14* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1993) p. 98.

6. Typical in many respects is D. L. Petersen, *Zechariah 9-14 & Malachi* (London: SCM, 1995) p. 74), who allows the reference to pass almost without comment except to note that horses played an important role in ancient Near Eastern military endeavors in the form of cavalry (Jer 50:42) and chariotry (Nah 3:2-3) (cf. Redditt, p. 120). Meyers & Meyers, p. 199, see the reference rather to "a future Davidide who one day will ride a powerful horse and rule from Judah in strength." None of these comments consider the implications of the possessive suffix on the term הוֹד [majesty]. Literally, the phrase in Zechariah 10:3 reads "like the horse of His majesty/splendor in battle." That is, like the horse which bears the Lord's attributes; a fine description of the theophanic horse in Job 39.

7. N. C. Habel, *The Book of Job* (Phila.: Westminster, 1985) pp. 547-48.

8. Larkin, pp. 241-47, sees a particular affinity between Second Zechariah and Job in its structural patterning, and in the matter of lexical echoes elsewhere, concluding that ". . . it is not impossible that the book of Job could have influenced the compiler of the anthology in Zechariah 9-13" (p. 247).

THE PATRIARCHAL FAMILY IN THE LIGHT OF THE MIDRASH

PART I: ABRAHAM AND SARAH

CHAIM SPRING

Modern research and scholarship have provided the Bible reader with many tools and perspectives with which to study the Holy Scriptures. One may examine the text from a literary, historical or theological point of view, or all three if one so pleases. Among the tools at hand are archeological and anthropological findings, linguistic data, and information that derives from other Middle Eastern cultures.

The approach that will be taken in this essay is different from the above. Instead, the life of Abraham and Sarah, the first of the patriarchal families depicted in the Book of Genesis, will be described from the viewpoints of the rabbinic Midrash and of Rashi.

Whoever reads the Bible as a person of faith will inevitably come to regard the patriarchal families as ordinary human beings with ordinary human virtues and frailties. They worked hard as farmers and raisers of livestock, fell in love, married and parented children. Yet for all their earthy humanity, they were also somehow more than human and could therefore establish a unique relationship to the Creator. As heroes and heroines of the spirit, even the most mundane and ordinary events in their lives assumed special significance and large meanings. Those larger meanings were rarely cited explicitly in the text, but found expression in the Midrash and in commentators such as Rashi. These sources may seem to the modern reader to be, at times, exaggerated, tendentious, overly sentimental, and only marginally related to the text. Yet the thrust of this type of analysis was not to devise metaphorical interpretations for their own sakes, but to emphasize an array of moral and religious values that those and later generations found suggested in the text.

Chaim Spring, a graduate of the Yeshivas of Mir, Ponovvezh, amd Bais Yosef, received his rabbinical ordination in 1959 and earned a B.A. from Brooklyn College. He served as a chaplain in the U.S. Army 1959-1961, director of West Coast UOJCA, and of Hapoel Hamizrachi of Chicago 1962-1967. He made aliyah in 1973.

Finding and explicating those exceptional possibilities of meaning is the way of the Midrash, Rashi, and other classical commentaries. This perspective will be the focus of this essay, which will attempt to view the life of Abraham and Sarah, the first patriarchal family, as normal human beings who are involved in the complex relationships of marriage and the rearing of children, and who are, at the same time, prophetically endowed, Divinely chosen, founders of the people of Israel.

Emphasis will be placed upon their marital relationship, rather than on their individual or public personalities. With the help of the Midrash and Rashi, we shall attempt to show that their marriage -- like every marriage -- was filled with ups and downs, joys, frustrations and disappointments, and misjudgments. Yet these down-to-earth realities did not detract from their roles as prophetic personalities and progenitors of the people of Israel.

SARAH AND ABRAHAM

The relationship of Sarah and Abraham did not begin as two strangers who had met for the first time shortly before their marriage since Sarah was Abraham's niece and thus was surely known to him (Rashi Gen. 11:29). A midrashic teaching (Meg. 14a) suggests that Abraham and Sarah had the opportunity to observe the qualities in each other that made for a successful marriage. This is hinted at in identifying Sarah with Iscah (Gen. 11:29), a name which, according to Rashi, indicates that she possessed not only beauty and a regal demeanor, but also רוח הקודש [the spirit of holiness].

To use a contemporary expression, Sarah and Abraham were a team whose life was full and busy. According to Rashi and other commentators of his era, the patriarchal couple shared a common sense of purpose: their primary life task was to bring the message of monotheism and the name of the One God of the universe to the people among whom they lived in Haran and wherever else they settled. As Rashi puts it (12:5), Abraham and Sarah worked side by side, he with the men and she with the women, to bring people to belief in the One God who is the Creator of the Universe and who continues to watch over and maintain it.

Shortly after coming to the land of Canaan, which in the future would become *Eretz Yisrael*, Abraham and Sarah were forced by a famine to go down to Egypt.

Upon approaching the Egyptian border, Abraham said to Sarah, *'Behold, now have I known that you are a woman of beautiful appearance'* (12:11). Did he not know that Sarah was a beautiful woman before their journey south? Following the Midrash Tanchuma (Lekh l'kha 5), Rashi comments that they routinely behaved towards each other with such exceptional modesty (a virtue greatly prized in other times and places) that Sarah's physical beauty was never noticed by her husband and was not an important part of their relationship. It was not until they came to Egypt, a land which in the midrashic view was a country of evildoers and low morals, that Sarah's beauty became manifest to him and a reality that had to be faced and dealt with.

Abraham, obviously, was not innocent in matters concerning feminine beauty and temptation. He knew that being married to a beautiful woman could place her husband's life in jeopardy. He devised a plan and gained Sarah's perhaps reluctant agreement. If the need arose, Sarah would be presented as Abraham's sister, so as not to endanger him should Sarah's feminine attributes make her desired by some powerful Egyptian who would be willing to kill or maim in order to win her for himself. The commentaries on this passage (12:10-20) underscore characteristics such as modesty, sexual propriety and impropriety, and the complexities of marital loyalty that are only suggested in the text.

A basic, underlying theme in the story is Sarah's barrenness, something that undoubtedly weighed heavily upon her (11:30). Her unfulfilled aspirations for motherhood were a constant and bitter source of disappointment to both Sarah and Abraham. (In the talmudic era, 1500 years later, 10 years of barrenness were regarded as legitimate grounds for divorce.) A decade after arriving in Canaan, the still barren Sarah told Abraham to take Hagar, her maidservant, as a second wife or concubine (16:2) in the hope that she would bear a son to Abraham.

Rashi, following the Midrash (Bereshit Rabbah, 3:45), explains that Sarah's decision to offer this arrangement to her husband was not a simple matter on her part, but rather an act of "spirit of holiness." Abraham recognized the inner turmoil that Sarah must have experienced in reaching this decision, and that in this selfless act she revealed the majesty of her character and that her words were, in fact, Divinely inspired. Sarah's desire that Abraham should father a son and an heir exceeded her jealousy that a strange woman would share her husband's bed.

In fact, she tells Hagar how fortunate she is to have relations with a man whose very body was holy (Rashi 16:2). As the Bible recognizes, polygamous marriages although allowed were filled with tensions (Deut. 21:15-17), yet Sarah willingly made this personal sacrifice and, as has been noted, even made an effort to convince Hagar to become Abraham's wife (Rashi 16:3). Recent studies have shed light on the ancient arrangement whereby a secondary wife bore a child who became, as it were, the legal offspring of the major wife (16:2, 30:3, 9).

Hagar became pregnant almost immediately and, so it is said, taunted Sarah, saying that she obviously was more righteous than Sarah who was childless after so many years of marriage. Sarah thereupon complained to Abraham, '*My injustice is upon you. I gave you my handmaiden unto your bosom, and when she saw that she had conceived I became despised in her eyes. Let God judge between me and you*' (16:5). Nachalat Yaakov (based on Ber. Rabbah 6:45) commented that Sarah prayed for Abraham to be punished for not supporting her against the insults of Hagar. Realizing the anguish he had caused. Abraham said to Sarah, '*Here is your maidservant, do unto her as you like*' (16:6). It is noteworthy that Abraham referred to Hagar as a maidservant and not as his wife. He did not try to defend Hagar but, sensing Sarah's pain, acquiesced to her. As a husband, he understood that his first and primary loyalty was to his wife. Still, one is surprised that Abraham neither openly defended Sarah nor chastised Hagar for her overweening pride and Sarah for her mistreatment of her handmaid. Nachmanides, a century after Rashi, observed that both Sarah and Abraham transgressed in their treatment of Hagar; Sarah for afflicting her maidservant, and Abraham for permitting it.

Years later, God promised Abraham that he and Sarah, despite their advanced age, will become the parents of a son, whereupon *Abraham fell down and laughed* (17:17), because he was already 100 years old and Sarah just 10 years younger. Rashi, attempting to explain and excuse Abraham's amused reaction to the Divine promise, explains this to mean the laughter of joy. Although he is obviously happy for himself, the fact is that he already has a son and an heir, Ishmael. Thus his joyous laughter must be for Sarah, whose hopes and prayers for her own child finally will be fulfilled. Also, God has long since informed Abra-

ham that only the son of Sarah will become the ancestor of the future people of Israel. Abraham never told Sarah of this prophecy. Perhaps, he reasoned that Sarah would not take kindly to such a prediction, for she too had reached an advanced age. Possibly, Abraham reasoned that since God had chosen not to reveal this to Sarah, he did not have the option of revealing it.

Sarah's next appearance occurred in the story of the three angels who showed up at Abraham's tent after the circumcision of Abraham, Ishmael and the men of his household (17:24-27). The angels, disguised as desert nomads or commercial travelers, asked for Sarah and Abraham replied, *'She is in the tent'* (18:9). Rashi and other sources explain Sarah's inaccessibility to her husband's guests as an expression of her modesty, a quality that, as we have seen, made her especially beloved to her husband (R. Br. Rabbah 1:87, Bava Mezia 87a).

As Abraham hurried about to prepare a meal for his angelic guests, he went first to Sarah's tent to inform her about what was needed (18:6). As in most things, they worked together in the effort to prepare the food for the visitors. As Abraham attended to his guests, Sarah overheard the angels tell him that in a year she would give birth to a son (18:11-12). Her immediate response was disbelief, and quiet, inaudible laughter. After all, both she and her husband were old, and she herself had passed through menopause (Br. Rabbah 18:48, Bava Meziah 87a). How could she possibly have a child? Abraham, of course, believed the prophecy because the promise has already been given him directly by God. Also, Abraham, unlike Sarah who had remained in the tent and had not met the visitors, may have recognized them as Divine beings whose prophecies were reliable and true.

God, taking note of Sarah's response to the overheard prophecy, asked Abraham whether Sarah was laughing because of her advanced years? Does not she know that nothing is beyond My powers? Rashi's interesting comment is that God apparently chose not to reveal to Abraham Sarah's explicit remark that conception would be impossible because he, Abraham, was old (18:12). God's purpose in not informing Abraham of Sarah's reaction, Rashi suggests, was in order not to disturb the harmony between husband and wife (Rashi 18:13). Abraham was already an aged man, but it is the way of the world that husbands do not like to think of themselves as being old and impotent, especially when this is pointed

out by their wives. Divine wisdom thus chose to avoid the topic in the interests of marital harmony. Abraham, or perhaps God, did face Sarah about her laughing (18:15) but she denied it, perhaps because of fear (18:15). In any case, the subject of Sarah's laughter ends at this point and is not pursued further. The Torah thus may be teaching indirectly that confrontations ought to be avoided whenever possible, especially when the contenders are husband and wife.

A year passed between the promise of a son and his actual birth. During that year, the aged couple traveled to the land of the Philistines. Once again Abraham used the ploy of referring to Sarah as his sister but in this case (20:2) he did not ask Sarah's permission (20:11). Rashi seems to suggest that Abraham did not request Sarah's assent because the situation arose very quickly and there was no time to discuss the matter with her. He bases his reasoning on: *'I see that there is no fear of the Lord in this place'* (20:11), which means that lawlessness prevailed. Men would kill in order to acquire a desirable woman. Later, when Abimelech complained, *'How could you have done this to me?'* Abraham explains (Rashi 20:11): I came to purchase food and you asked me about my wife. I saw immediately that your intentions were not honorable and when you asked me if she is my wife or my sister I answered that she is my sister. Thus Abraham had not planned to do this until he was suddenly confronted by Abimelech's query concerning Sarah. Realizing the danger he was in, he replied, hurriedly, that Sarah was his sister and trusted that she would go along with this ploy a second time. Maybe he thought that the previous incident in Egypt gave him the right to repeat it.

According to Rashi, Abraham did not have such carte blanche from Sarah to present himself as her brother whenever and wherever they traveled (R.20:2). Sarah, no doubt, understood the wife-sister arrangement as a one-time ruse used earlier in Egypt. This seems to be Rashi's analysis as he explains that Abraham did not have such an agreement or permission to do so with Abimelech. Unfortunately, Sarah's own reactions and feelings are not available to the reader, for she is silent throughout the entire episode. But the story ends happily with no harm being done and the patriarchal family restored. The experience with Abimelech may have had a positive purpose: its happy ending emphasized that harmonious marital relations continued between Abraham and Sarah even as

they advanced in age, and even as they underwent this severe test of their marriage. Only in this way could the Divine promise of Sarah giving birth to a son be realized.

Sarah conceived and bore a son, *who was born unto him* [Abraham]. It is obvious that the son was Abraham's, so why does the narrative mention it twice (21:2,3)? Perhaps to emphasize the closeness of Sarah and Abraham to each other. Sarah and Abraham were supremely happy with their new-born son and with each other. And further, as Rashi states, all the world benefited and rejoiced with them (Rashi 21:6). for on the day of the child's birth, many barren women conceived and many sick persons were healed. And not only that, but Sarah gladly acknowledged God's intervention in her family's life, and the grand miracle which enabled Sarah and Abraham, despite their advanced age, to parent a child. This recognition on Sarah's part further cemented the close relationship between this long-married couple, Abraham and Sarah.

Several years after Isaac's birth, Sarah began to realize that that Ishmael was a bad influence on Isaac, and might even endanger his life. Rashi describes Ishmael as a scoffer and a dabbler in idolatry (Rashi 21:9). Sarah thereupon demanded that Abraham expel Ishmael from their home. Obviously, this caused great tension and distress to Abraham, who found himself in a quandary concerning what to do. Shall he heed his wife? Both boys, after all, were his legitimate sons and he loved them both. God, however, intervened and told Abraham (21:12) to listen to Sarah's voice: *'even though you have two sons, it is Isaac who will inherit from you and who will be considered your seed. Yet I will make Ishmael into a great nation because he is your son also'* (21/13).

This revelation from God ended Abraham's terrible dilemma. Sarah's will must be respected. The next morning, Abraham told Hagar of his decision; she and Ishmael must leave. He provided them with food and water for the journey, but not with money. Rashi notes that he did not give Hagar silver or gold because Abraham detested Ishmael's evil behavior (Rashi 21:14). Thus, in Rashi's midrashic perspective, Abraham not only listened to God who told him to heed Sarah, but apparently also re-examined his relationship with Ishmael and especially Ishmael's character. It appears that Abraham came to the same conclusion as Sarah; that Ishmael was a corrupting influence upon the younger Isaac. Thus

the Midrash and Rashi extrapolate a reason that justifies Abraham's action towards Hagar and Ishmael: the only possible solution, hard and painful as it was to Abraham who still loved his son despite his waywardness, was that they must leave his home. Only thus could the integrity of the Abrahamic family and its future be maintained.

The final episode occurs after the sudden death of Sarah which is announced soon after the harsh and heart-rending episode of the *Akedah*. In the text it is clear that Sarah had no role in the *Akedah* nor any clear knowledge of it beforehand. Based on a midrashic source, some of the commentaries state that she had been informed of the *Akedah* and the shock of what Abraham intended to do to her only and beloved son was the immediate cause of her death. In any case, the closing chapter of the Abraham and Sarah narrative is about the selection of and negotiation for her burial place (23:1-20). Abraham's concern for an honorable and suitable burial site for Sarah is described in considerable detail. According to the Midrash, the Cave of the Machpelah where Sarah was buried was also the burial site of Adam and Eve, and would be used again by the other patriarchal families of the near future. Also, it must be noted that the purchase of the plot was accomplished in a most scrupulous fashion, in order that no question could ever arise in the future about the legality of its ownership. Thus, Abraham, in his final act for his beloved Sarah, demonstrated again the spirit of devotion that had always marked their life together (Kiddushin 2a).

The picture of Abraham and Sarah, the first of the three patriarchal couples, described in this brief essay, is not quite the same as the man and woman depicted in the biblical text itself. In the above paragraphs, Abraham and Sarah, in their life together, have been described through the interpretation of Rashi and the ancient Midrash. The patriarchs and matriarchs, with all their indisputable human frailties, were also paragons of the highest human virtues and thus models for the people, young and old, who cherished the patriarchal stories and read and learned from them over and over.

KORAH AND HIS ASPIRATIONS

BENJAMIN GOODNICK

Today there is an increasingly widening fascination with Midrash. Reading midrashic tales may offer us a warm, satisfying feeling of studying religious works, enlightening our spirits and broadening our picture of biblical and extra-biblical characters. However, the material in these tales are not part of the biblical text and do not directly aid in grasping and interpreting it. Often, they become fanciful and go off at a tangent, not returning to their supposed original sources. Many biblical personalities are subjects of such divergence between text and Midrash, and among those is Korah.

On the whole, Midrash seems to transform him into a most evil person who despised and ridiculed Moses, attempted to usurp his position and instigate a widespread revolt that involved the tribe of Reuben. For example, the Midrash of R. Tanchuma attempts to explain that the biblical statement that Korah *betook himself* (Num. 16:1) means that he separated himself from the rest of the congregation of Israel. If read carefully, the text would seem to imply the opposite; that he joined together with many others in order to stir up a "revolt."

According to the Midrash, one reason for Korah's challenge to Moses is that he was envious of the "princely dignity" accorded to Elzaphon ben-Uziel, a prince over the sons of Kehat. While such an assumption is conceivable, there is no such direct intimation in the biblical text.

It is my contention that close attention to the actual words of the text (Num. 16) presents quite a different picture. Indeed, only by focusing directly on the continuity of the biblical account can we appreciate fully the nature of the events surrounding Korah's strongly voiced demands.

Let us note the actual words of Korah. Nowhere does he challenge the authority of Moses or Aaron. In fact, all he seeks is a share in the leadership of this holy people. He says:

Benjamin Goodnick, Ph.D., is a diplomate of the American Board of Professional Psychology in private practice in the Greater Philadelphia area. He is a consultant to government agencies and private religious schools. His articles have appeared in Jewish and professional journals.

רב לכם כי כל העדה כלם קדשים ובתוכם ה' ומדוע תתנשאו על קהל ה'

'You have gone too far. For the whole community, all of them are holy and the Lord is in their midst. Why then do you raise yourselves above the Lord's congregation?' (v. 3).

By contrast, it appears that some of the leaders of the tribe of Reuben reject the leadership of Moses and accuse him of wronging and betraying the Israelites by taking them out of Egypt, saying they were satisfied with the living conditions there.

לא נעלה: המעט כי העליתנו מארץ זבת חלב ודבש להמיתנו במדבר... כי תשתרר עלינו גם השתרר: אף לא אל ארץ זבת חלב ודבש הביאתנו ותתן לנו נחלת שדה וכרם העיני האנשים ההם תנקר לא נעלה:

'We will not come. Is it not enough that you brought us from a land flowing with milk and honey to have us die in the wilderness that you would also lord it over us? Even if you had brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey and given us possession of fields and vineyards, should you gouge out those men's eyes? We will not come' (vv. 12-14).

Their deep resentment of Moses is evident, as is their mockery of his words about taking the Israelites to *a land flowing with milk and honey.* Of course, the purpose of Moses in approaching the latter was his hope of "dividing the opposition," for he realized that their reason for joining with Korah was not religious fervor or aspirations but, rather, stemmed from another cause. And, sadly, he found out that the Reubenites were more intransigent and negative than Korah himself.

In view of this difference in attitude, it would seem more likely -- contrary to the traditional understanding and the views expressed in the midrashim -- that the princes of Reuben, long disappointed over the rejection of their tribe as national leader, cast their influence over Korah, an outstanding Levite whom they used as a front. After all, as Moses points out, Korah had little to gain:

המעט מכם כי הבדיל אלהי ישראל אתכם מעדת ישראל להקריב אתכם אליו לעבד את עבדת משכן ה' ולעמד לפני העדה לשרתם. ויקרב אתך ואת כל אחיך בני לוי אתך ובקשתם גם כהנה. לכן אתה וכל עדתך הנעדים על ה' ואהרן מה הוא כי תלינו עליו.

'Is it not enough that the God of Israel has set you apart from the com-

munity of Israel by giving you access to Him, to perform the duties of the Lord's Tabernacle and to minister to the community and serve them? Thus, he has advanced you and all your fellow Levites with you; yet you seek the priesthood, too. Truly it is against the Lord that you and your company have banded together. For what is Aaron that you should rail against him?' (vv. 9-11).

Moreover, throughout this whole episode Korah openly accepts the sanctity of the Israelite people, the centrality of the Holy Tabernacle, and the directives of Moses and Aaron. Indeed, it is evident from the text that Korah was a very believing person, a man of faith, whose household must have been pervaded with holiness. It is probably this type of atmosphere that resulted in his having two worthy sons who did not die in the catastrophe and, supposedly, had the merit to be honored in the Book of Psalms.

After all, where in the whole course of human history do we find any leader of a alleged revolt accepting the authority and terms of his opponent, of the person he is presumably trying to depose or overthrow? Nowhere does Korah say to Moses, "I don't accept your method or suggestion. I want it done my way." Nor does he personally criticize Moses' leadership of the people. As stated above, Korah appears to have had profound religious feeling: all he said and sought was to proclaim that all the people of Israel were holy (which Moses himself also stated). He never sensed that any decree would be leveled against him for making such a legitimate claim. In this respect, unfortunately, he was short-sighted. He did not realize the likely consequences of his proposed action and he did not fully appreciate that a people, especially under the conditions of their travels and their needs, required the firm hand of one foremost leader.

Obviously, Korah was also deceived by others who played on his deep religious devotion. We do not find mention of any other Levites joining him in his vehement protests. All we read states that those who stood opposed to Moses were Reubenites, mentioned by name, who were gathered behind the religious functionary they seemed to have chosen as spokesman. It is most significant that not one other Levite joined Korah in his protest. If Korah was the instigator, then it would be extraordinary that he was unable to persuade any of his extended family or tribe to join him.

Moreover, if we analyze the text carefully, we note that within the tribe of

Reuben only the leaders mentioned by name were involved in the revolt, not large numbers of that tribe. Thus, in the swallowing up, only the families of these two leaders of Reuben are mentioned (vv. 27-32).

The multitude of those who revolted, the 250 men who offered incense, while men of stature and repute, chieftains, appear to be frustrated individuals, scattered among the people and seeking attention and yearning to be recognized leaders. These people, the text informs us, were consumed by fire, individually, perhaps while holding their burning censers, near the entrance to the Tabernacle. This is in contrast to the descendants of Reuben whose families were entombed in the earth at the site of their tents. Thus, the next day's widespread surge of railing against Moses (17:6) is understandable, since the consumed leaders were spread throughout the nation and not limited to one section thereof.

Following this analysis of the text, we now find a three-tiered "revolt." A large group of ambitious, unfulfilled individuals get together, select for their leaders two outstanding Reubenites, descendants of the firstborn son of Jacob, and apparently convince them that the masses of Israel, whom they appear to represent, are behind them. These aspiring secular leaders, realizing that for true acceptance a religious functionary is required, in turn choose Korah, a respected, highly- placed Levite, who could challenge the existing leadership.

It is most revealing and significant, in a careful reading of the text, that the more highly-placed leaders -- Korah, Dathan and Abiram -- did not participate in the presentation of firepans with incense, despite Moses' invitation. This is probably because of their basic, profound respect for the Holy of Holies. Rather, as Numbers 16 states, only the large group of minor Israelite leaders, who initially fomented the revolt, yearning for power, were willing to seize this offered opportunity to become associated with the Holy Tabernacle.

Of course, like any group of rebels, they did not expect that their mission would fail miserably. It is noteworthy that this pattern of an attempted revolt confirms the principle that the slaves -- or the oppressed masses -- are often not the ones who initiate a revolt. Such determined action often comes from individuals of recognized position, leaders, princes, or chiefs. Note that even Moses had acknowledged authority among the Israelites as well as the Egyptians because he was an Egyptian prince and also a member of the priestly class.

Observe further that when Moses reviews Israel's hardships (Deut. 11:6), stub-

bornness and rebelliousness during the 40 years in the wilderness, he only mentions the Reubenites as being destroyed in the disaster that followed their "revolt." Nothing is said regarding Korah. It would appear, then, that the Reubenites played the central role in this revolt and that the nature of their complaint seems to confirm this assumption. If there are lessons to be learned from this whole tragic event, they seem to be the dangers of pursuing unrealistic goals, the ease of being deceived by sycophants, and the pitfalls that accompany efforts to enhance oneself in the eyes of one's fellow men.

עשה תורתך קבע
THE TRIENNIAL BIBLE READING CALENDAR

DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
CHAIM ABRAMOWITZ

2000

July	I Chronicles 11-29
August	II Chronicles 1- 12
September	II Chronicles 13 -25
October	II Chronicles 26 – 36

BY THE END OF OCTOBER YOU WILL HAVE COMPLETED THE THREE-YEAR CYCLE OF READING THE BIBLE

NAHUM: THE LITTLE-KNOWN PROPHET

HAROLD KAMSLER

"The Twelve" is the title of the collection of the books of so-called minor prophets; minor only because their preserved writings are relatively sparse and meager. Among them is the Book of Nahum, which has only three chapters. Of the background and origin of the Prophet Nahum himself, we are told only that he came from Elkosh, a city which is unknown in any other sources. An Arab tradition places both Elkosh and Nahum's burial place near the modern city of Mosul, which is identified with the ancient Nineveh. Jerome, the Fourth-Century Church Father who revised the Latin translation of the Scriptures (the Vulgate), looked for Elkosh in the Galilee.

Even the name Nahum is a subject of doubt. Was it actually a personal name or was it an appellation derived from the verb "to comfort" [נחם], for a prophet who attempted to bring comfort or solace to his people by predicting the downfall of cruel Assyria, which was noted for its savage and merciless treatment of the peoples whom it conquered.

When did Nahum offer his prophecies? This also is conjecture. From internal evidence we may conclude that the *terminus ad quem* is the year 663 BCE, when the Egyptian city of No-Amon fell: *Are you better than No-Amon who dwelt among the rivers, who had the water round about her, whose rampart was the sea, and the sea her wall?* (Nah. 3:8). This must have been written before the fall of Nineveh, which sets the *terminus ad quo* at about 608 BCE.

What about the era in which Nahum preached or wrote? It is not surprising that this age of growing insecurity, when the very foundations of life were trembling, should give rise to an earnest effort to find a cure for the increasing malaise of the social organism. Under such circumstances, spirits turn with nostalgia to the past and endeavor to recapture the vital element underlying former prosperity and stability. So the men of Judah turned back to the Mosaic tradition,

Harold Kamsler is rabbi emeritus of Congregations Tiferet Israel and Bnai Jacob in Pennsylvania and taught in the Department of Sociology at New York University. He is now living in Ra'anana, Israel.

endeavoring to recover it as fully as possible and especially to reorganize the religion of the state on as pure a Mosaic basis as possible.[1]

The first of the three chapters of the Book of Nahum notes God's protection for those who place their trust in Him, and His anger against those who provoke Him. The second gives the reader a picture, as perceived in the mind's eye of the prophet, of the forthcoming destruction of Nineveh and the Assyrians. The third deals with the punishment to be meted out to the Assyrians. This prophet thus pursued but a single theme:

> Nahum is one of the few prophets who have confined themselves to one theme: the destruction of the cruel Assyrians. Nowhere is punishment of the Israelites mentioned for any of their sins nor is there mention of the sins of any other people but the Assyrians.[2]

For brillliance of literary style and vocabulary, few biblical writers surpass Nahum, and his presentation is both vivid and forceful. It has been proposed that parts of Chapters 1 and 2 may derive from an ancient psalm: "The Book of Nahum opens with a portion of a psalm which extends from 1:2 to 2:1, and originally formed an alphabetic acrostic. It has however suffered badly in the course of transmission"[3] It has also been proposed that the first chapter (of which 2:2 must be part) is a later composition, much deranged, originally in acrostic form."[4]

After quoting from Chapter 1 of Nahum, Theodor H. Gaster writes:

> These verses occur in an alphabetical hymn which forms a kind of prologue to the oracle of Nahum against Nineveh. From the fact that wherever the name 'Lord' occurs (e.g., vv. 2,3,7,9,11) it is hypermetrical or else (as in v. 3) the result of manifest interpolation. It is possible that the hymn was originally addressed to some other Canaanite god such as Baal, lord of the storm. In it, allusion was made not only to his prowess and might in general, but also to his conquest of the Dragon in particular, since this provided an excellent "object lesson" against Nineveh.[5]

Here there was perhaps an allusion to the ancient Assyrian-Babylonian creation myth "E-numa Elish," in which Marduk, the chief Babylonian deity, slays the monster-goddess Tiamat. In the Assyrian version, the chief national god Ashur is substituted for Marduk.[6] The myth was as well-known in Israel as it was

in the entire region. "The reference to plotting against the god is admirably illustrated from the Assyrio-Babylonian version, which states expressly that the rebel coterie of Tiamat 'plotted' [*kapdu*] against the supreme deity" (E-numa Elish 1:110).[7]

This writer believes that Nahum used certain of the ideas found in the Assyrio-Babylonian Creation epic to ironically present the forthcoming fall of the Assyrian empire and that modern scholarship is not necessarily correct when it looks for an outside source to depict the ideas in Chapter 1.

Thus, for example, according to the Creation poem, before the onset of the New Year, the world is in a state of suspended animation wherein everything is dried up and facing destruction. Nahum uses this image as an allusion to what will befall Nineveh.

The entire Book contains just 47 verses. One of the greatest poets among the prophets, Nahum's words cut like a knife and his anger at the cruelty of the Assyrians towards his people justifies his prophecy about the forthcoming punishment that God will surely visit upon that evil kingdom.

NOTES:

1. William Foxwell Albright. *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. 1940) p. 240.
2. *Ibid.*
3. W. Oesterly and T.H. Robinson. *An Introduction to the Books of the Old Testament.* Living Age Books No. 23 (NY: Meridan Books, 1958) p. 383.
4. George Foote Moore. *The Literature of the Old Testament.* (NY: Henry Holt and Co., 1913) p. 202.
5. Theodor H. Gaster. *Thespis* (NY: Schuman. 1950) p. 148
6. For this text. see: James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1969) p.62.
7. Gaster. *op. cit.*

A FRESH LOOK AT NEBUCHADNEZZAR

JOSIAH DERBY

Nebuchadnezzar[1] King of Babylonia (605-562 BCE) is considered one of the major villains in Jewish history, and for good reason. After all, it was he who ordered the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem, the demolition of the city's walls, and the creation of the first Jewish Diaspora by exiling tens of thousands of Judeans to Babylonia[2] in 586 BCE. He tortured Zedekiah, the last King of Judah, after slaying the King's sons before his eyes, and took him in chains to die in Babylonia. No wonder the Talmud dubs him a *rasha*, a wicked one.[3]

But Jewish folklore goes further, ridiculing him and hurling contempt upon him, as does the author of the Book of Daniel when he tells us that Nebuchadnezzar behaved like a beast of the field and ate grass (4:33).[4] In other sources we are told that he forced the Judean captives to march naked on their trek to Babylonia, and inflicted other indignities upon them.[5]

However, if we set aside the bias against the King engendered by these traditions and study the biblical text more carefully, as well as the Babylonian records, we might arrive at a different opinion of Nebuchadnezzar.

To begin with, there are a number of texts from which we can infer that the exiles were not treated like prisoners of war, interned in camps or even worse. Rather, they were settled at various sites where it was expected that they would build homes and communities. Among these were Tel-aviv (Ezek. 1:1, 3:15), Tel-melah, Tel-harshah, Cherub, Addan and Immar (Ezra 2:59). This could not have been done without explicit orders from Nebuchadnezzar. Jeremiah must have been aware of this benevolent treatment of the exiles. Otherwise, he would not have sent them the famous letter urging them to build homes and communities and live a normal life (Jer 29:1-7), even though he also prophesied that they were to be brought back home after only seventy years (29:10).

Josiah Derby has B.S. and M.A. degrees in mathematics from Harvard University, and was ordained at the Jewish Theological Seminary. He was the rabbi of Rego Park Jewish Center, NY for 42 years, and is now rabbi emeritus.

The exiles took Jeremiah's advice and not only built homes but schools as well. How else can we explain the phenomenon of the great Babylonian prophet called by modern scholars Deutero-Isaiah, the author of Chapters 40-55 of the Book of Isaiah? They probably developed the institution of the synagogue as well.

Ezekiel was the spiritual head of the exilic community and undoubtedly its driving force during the early years. The elders of the community came to his home perhaps on a regular basis to receive instruction from him (Ezek. 9:1). One cannot escape the impression that we see here a community living in peace and prosperity.

By the time Cyrus, King of the Persians and the Medes, marched into Babylon in 539 BCE., less than 50 years after the second deportation of Judeans to Babylonia, there already existed a flourishing, probably affluent and influential Jewish community in Babylon. Thus, the exiles were probably in a social and political position not only to participate in the peaceful revolution that opened the gates of Babylon to Cyrus but also to be received by the conqueror and to hope he would respond favorably to their appeal that he grant permission to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem and the exiles to return to their homeland.[6]

Further testimony of the benign treatment of the Judeans by Nebuchadnezzar is the well-known Psalm 137:

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and wept as we thought of Zion. There on poplars we hung our lyres. As our captors said to us: 'Sing for us songs of Zion'. How can we sing the songs of the Lord on foreign soil.

These lines reflect a situation of tranquillity and peacefulness. They could hang up their harps and not fulfill the request; there was no coercion.

Nebuchadnezzar's character and policies are perhaps best illustrated by the story of King Jehoiachin. In 598 BCE, King Jehoiakim died in Jerusalem after an 11- year reign, during the last three of which he refused to pay the annual tribute to Nebuchadnezzar. His son Jehoiachin was 18 years old when he succeeded his father on the throne in Jerusalem. Then, Nebuchadnezzar sent his army to lay siege to the city.

Jehoiachin was apparently well-schooled in the history of his people and in the geopolitical situation of the times. He may have feared that continued opposition to Nebuchadnezzar might result in disaster for the nation and for Jerusalem.

When, three months into the siege, Nebuchadnezzar himself came to Jerusalem to take control of the war, Jehoiachin made a fateful decision. He opened the city to Nebuchadnezzar and surrendered himself, his family and the court to the Babylonian King in the hope that the city and the people would be spared. This act of self-sacrifice and courage paid off. Nebuchadnezzar looted the Temple and the King's palace, and deported to Babylonia the royal family and its entourage and other high-ranking families of Jerusalem, and also 1,000 smiths and other craftsmen; a total of some 10,000 people (II Kg. 24:8 ff.). However, the city and the Temple were not destroyed. Nebuchadnezzar replaced Jehoiachin with his young uncle Zedekiah as vassal-king of Judah.

Jehoiachin and his family lived in Babylonia, where they were supported from the royal treasury.[7] For some part of that time, Jehoiachin was held in prison, but when Nebuchadnezzar's son Evil-Merodach became King in 562 BCE, he released Jehoiachin and restored him to a position of dignity (II Kg. 25: 27-30).[8] It may be that there were other kings whom Nebuchadnezzar had taken into captivity and whom-Evil-Merodach released.

We can readily understand the reason for Nebuchadnezzar's deportation of the King, his ministers and the Judean gentry as an act of punishment for defying the imperial authority, but why did he also take back to Babylonia about a 1,000 craftsmen? If he expected to continue to receive tribute from Jerusalem, would it not have been more logical and practical to have left the craftsmen at their work so that they could continue to contribute to the Judean economy and its wealth?

One plausible answer is that denial of their craftsmanship to Judah might inhibit future military ventures. It is also possible that Nebuchadnezzar needed these workers for his own building projects. On his visit to Jerusalem, he must have been impressed by the beauty of the city and its wealth. His was determined to enhance his own capital of Babylon with works of beauty and did so -- perhaps with the help of Judean artisans.[9]

I might also suggest that Evil-Merodach's release of Jehoiachin from prison may have been in response to an appeal from the Judean exiles who, in the 35 years since their arrival in Babylonia, had become an important element in Babylonian society. Evil-Merodach's gesture may have been an expression of gratitude to the exiles for their contribution to the welfare and development of the country. (Have not Jews done this in all the lands of their dispersion?)

Perhaps most revealing about the social and economic condition of the exiles and Nebuchadnezzar's attitude towards them is the contention by most scholars that Ezekiel 20 implies that the Elders of the Exile come to Ezekiel in the seventh year of their exile to suggest that they build a Temple and re-institute the sacrificial cult (see especially v. 40:10a). Ezekiel responds with a long historical survey of the past, concluding with a rejection of their plans, prophesying that only on God's holy mountain will He be worshipped. That the Elders were even considering such a project testifies not only to their financial capacity but also to the approval they must have obtained from Nebuchadnezzar.

Returning to Nebuchadnezzar's destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple and his savaging of King Zedekiah and his family: While these acts are neither condoned nor forgiven, they should be viewed in their historical perspective. We learn from the Cyrus Cylinder[10] that Nebuchadnezzar had demolished the temples in other recalcitrant cities and had taken their gods back with him to Babylon. This was undoubtedly known to Zedekiah and his counselors. Zedekiah was not unaware of the terrible consequences of failure but was persuaded by Egyptian promises to take the gamble in spite of Jeremiah's warnings.

Severe retribution for rebellion was necessary in order to maintain his imperial authority. But this was a far cry from the tyrannical genocide practiced by such Assyrian Kings as Ashurnasirpal II, Shalmaneser III, Tiglath-pileser III and Sargon II. The last carried out this program when he conquered the city of Samaria and destroyed the Northern Kingdom of Israel in 721 BCE.

Thus, we suggest that, in contrast, the survival of the Jewish people and of Judaism is due to Nebuchadnezzar's reversal of Assyrian policies toward subjugated peoples. The exiles were permitted to flourish and prosper in his domain, and many of them or their offspring ultimately returned to Jerusalem and Judea to rebuild the Temple and the country for the continuation of history. It should be remembered that it was not Nebuchadnezzar's intent to do more violence to the Judeans than was imperialistically necessary, as evidenced by the fact that after he destroyed the Temple and instituted the second deportation he appointed a high-ranking Jerusalem court official Gedaliah ben-Ahikam, to govern the Judean who remained in their land (II Kg. 25:22).

NOTES

1. Also written Nebuchadrezzar in the Bible. This is the form of the King's name found in the Babylonian Chronicle, a collection of clay tablets inscribed in Akkadian cuneiform. They record military campaigns of Nebuchadnezzar, his father, Nabopolassar, and his son Evil-Merodach, with the regnal year, month and day that the troops were called out. For photographs of some of these tablets, transcription and English translation see: D.J. Wiseman, *Chronicles of the Chaldean Kings* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1956). Regrettably, the part of the tablet that probably covered Nebuchadnezzar's exploits from his eleventh year onward, is missing.

2. In 721 BCE, Sargon II, King of Assyria, sacked Samaria, then the capital of the Kingdom of Israel, and exiled a large segment of the population (the legendary Ten Lost Tribes of Israel). Because those exiles did not survive as a community, we cannot call them a Diaspora.

3. B. Megillah 11a.

4. Most modern scholars believe that the Book of Daniel is a product of the Maccabean period, and the author is referring to Antiochus IV. The story may have been prompted by the memory that Nabonidus, the last King of Babylonia, had been thought to be mad.

5. L. Ginzberg, *Legends of the Jews* Vol. IV (Phila.: Jewish Publication Society, 1942) p.314.

6. See my article "Isaiah and Cyrus," JBQ XXIV:3 (July-September 1996) pp. 173 ff.

7. *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. III (Nashville: Abington Press, 1962) p. 530.

8. Ibid., a corroboration of the biblical record.

9. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon -- one of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world -- were a gift to his queen so that she, a princess from the hilly country of the Medes, might feel at home in flat Babylon.

10. The Cyrus Cylinder is a large barrel-shaped chunk of clay that was found in 1879 at Omran, Iraq, near the tel of ancient Babylon and is now in the British Museum. Inscribed upon it in Akkadian cuneiform is Cyrus' decree. For a translation and analysis of this inscription see A. Kuhrt, "the Cyrus Cylinder and Achaemenid Imperial Policy," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, No.25 (1983) pp.83-94. See also J.B. Prichard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton: Princeton Universiaty Press, 1969) pp.315-16.

SEPTUAGINT VOCABULARY IN THE GOSPELS AND ACTS

LAWRENCE BRISKIN

In an earlier article,[1] we pointed out how many of the ideas used by the gospel writers to create a life of Jesus were borrowed from the Tanakh without regard to context. As one example: Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey (Mt. 21:5, Mk. 11:7), mimicking *Rejoice greatly, Fair Zion; Raise a shout, Fair Jerusalem, Lo, your king is coming to you. He is victorious, triumphant, yet riding on a donkey foaled by a she-ass.* (Zech. 9:9). As another example: The infamous "Judas kiss" is a reworking of an incident in the revolt of Absalom against King David: *Joab said to Amasa, 'How are you, brother?' and with his right hand Joab took hold of Amasa's beard as if to kiss him.* Joab killed Amasa. (II Sam. 20:9). Many of the miracle stories are reworkings of material from the Elijah/Elisha cycles.

However, the gospel-writers did more than build on ideas borrowed from the Tanakh. They actually copied phrases. There are about 600 passages in the gospels that can be traced back to the Tanakh.[2] They probably didn't use the original Hebrew text, but rather the Septuagint; the translation of the Hebrew into Greek, done by Jews for the Jews of Alexandria between the years 300 and 100 BCE. Here we will show not only that the ideas were borrowed, but also the very words of the Tanakh in its Septuagint version.[3]

It is believed that the early Christians used books of testimonies, lists of ideas and phrases that could be interpreted as applying to Jesus. They may have used these as prooftexts. Fragments of a Fourth-Century papyrus have survived that include Genesis 26:13-14; Deuteronomy. 28:8, 11; Isaiah 42:3-4, 52:15, 53:1-3, 6-7, 11-12, and 66:18-19; and II Chronicles 1:12. Of this document, it has been said:

> [C.H.] Roberts published together with the photograph of the Rylands papyrus the text of both Rylands and Oslo fragments . . . and the editors of the Oslo papyri write that "Isaiah combined with Genesis suggests that the book was meant for liturgical use."

Lawrence Briskin, a retired engineer, is a resident of Dayton, Ohio. His longtime interest in the gospels led to the research for this article.

> But since the verses from Isaiah include parts of the famous Servant passages from chapters 52-3, while all the other extracts in this papyrus if not "messianic" in character, can be related to the history of Christ or of Christianity, Roberts suggested that we have a part of a Book of Testimonies in these fragments.[4,5]

Christians were confident that in order to find out about Jesus, they did not need to engage in historical research or consult witnesses (in our understanding of these two approaches); they found detailed history in the Tanakh/Septuagint, read as a book about Jesus. The existence of books of testimonies explains how it was possible for the gospel writers to locate and use the hundreds of direct and indirect references to the Tanakh/Septuagint.

GOSPEL TEXTS AND SEPTUAGINT PARALLELS

1). Acts 2:29: . . .[re David] that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne, he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of Christ.

(*Acts of the Apostles* purports to be a history of the early church. It is believed to have been written by the same author as Luke. The writer is telling us that Psalm 16 has become a prophecy.)

2). Acts 2:30: [David] being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne, he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption.
Ps. 16:10: *For You will not abandon me to Sheol, or let Your faithful one see the Pit.*

3). Acts 10:11: . . . and he [the Apostle Peter] saw the heaven opened **[ten oranon anecogmenon]**, and something descending, like a great sheet, let down by four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air. And there came a voice to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat **[phage]**: But

Peter said, "No, Lord **[Medamos, Kyrie]**; for I have never eaten anything that is common and unclean **[akatharton]**."

Ezekiel 1:1: . . . *the heavens opened* **[enoichthesan hoi ouranoi]** *and I saw visions of God.*

Ezekiel 3:2: *He said to me, "Mortal, eat what is offered you; eat* **[phage]** *this scroll, and go speak to the House of Israel.*

Ezekiel 4:14: *Then I said, 'Ah, Lord God* **[Medamos Kyrie]** *my person was never defiled; nor have I eaten anything that died of itself* **[akatharsia]** *or was torn by beasts from my youth until now, nor has foul flesh entered my mouth.*

4). Mark 1:6: Now John was clothed with camel's hair and had a leather girdle **[zonen dermatinen]**, around his waist **[peri ten osphyn autou]** and ate locusts and wild honey.

(This is a description of John the Baptist, who is a "reincarnation" of Elijah.)

II Kings 1:8: '*A hairy man,' they replied 'with a leather belt* **[zonen dermatinen]** *tied around his waist* **[ten osphyn autou]**.'

(This is the Tanakh description of Elijah.)

5). Acts 13:32-33: God, who made the promise to the fathers, has fulfilled it for the children by raising Jesus from the dead, as indeed it stands written in the second psalm: You are my son; this day I have begotten you.

(Statement that the writers deliberately turned the Tanakh into a book prophesying Jesus, here a resurrection prophesy.)

Psalm 2:7: *Let me tell of the decree: the Lord said to me, You are My son, I have fathered you this day.*

6). Matthew 2:2: Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the east **[ton astera en te anotole]**, and have come to worship him.

Numbers 24:17: *What I behold will not be soon: A star rises* **[anatelei astron]** *from Jacob, a Meteor comes forth from Israel; It smashes the brow of Moab.*

7). Luke 2:6: And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger **[phatne]**, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Isaiah 1:3: *An ox knows its owner, an ass its master's crib* **[phatne]**; *Israel does not know, My people takes no thought.*

8). Matthew 2:20: 'Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead **[tethnekasin gar hoi zetountes ten psychen tou paidiou]**.'

(An angel of the Lord instructs Joseph to return to Israel. Herod, who sought to have the young Jesus killed, is now dead.)

Exodus 4:19: *The Lord said to Moses in Midian, 'Go back to Egypt, for all the men who sought to kill you are* dead **[tethnekasi gar pantes hoi zetountes sou ten psychen]**.'

9). Matthew 11:4: Go and tell John what you hear and see: the blind receive their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them **[evaggeliasthai ptochois]**.

Isaiah 61:1: *The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, Because the Lord has anointed me; He as sent me as a herald of joy to the humble* **[ptochoi evaggelizontai]**.

10). Mark 14:32: And they went to a place which was called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, 'Sit here while I pray.' And he took with him Peter and James and John, and began to be greatly distressed and troubled. And he said to them, 'My soul is very sorrowful, even to death **[perilupos estin he psyche mou heos thanatou]**; remain here and watch.'

Jonah 4:1: *This displeased Jonah greatly, and he was grieved.*

Jonah 4:9: *Then God said to Jonah, 'Are you so deeply grieved about the plant?' 'Yes,' he replied, 'so deeply that I want to die* **[sphodra leluppemai ego heos thanatou]**.'

Psalm 42:6: *Why so downcast, my soul, why disquieted within me* **[perilupos ei he psyche mou]**?

Psalm 42:12: *Why so downcast, my soul, why disquieted within me?*

Psalm 43:5: *Why so downcast, my soul, why disquieted within me?*

11). Mark 14:55: Now the chief priests and the whole council sought [**ezetoun**] testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none [**ouch heuriskon**].

Daniel 6:5 (JPS): *The ministers and satraps looked for some fault in Daniel's conduct in matters of state, but they could find neither fault nor corruption, in as much as he was trustworthy, and no negligence or corruption was to be found in him.*

Daniel 6:5 (RSV): Then the presidents and the satraps sought [**ezetoun**] to find [**heurein**] a ground for complaint against Daniel with regard to the kingdom; but they could find no ground for complaint or any fault, because he was faithful, and no error or fault was found in him.

12). Mark 14:56: For many bore false witness against him, and their witness did not agree. And some stood up [**anastantes**] and bore false witness [**epseudomarturoun**] against him saying., 'We heard him, saying, "I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands." ' . . . . And the high priest stood up [**anastas**] in the midst, and asked [**eperotese**] Jesus . . . .

Psalm 27:12: *Do not subject me to the will of my foes, for false witnesses* [**martures adikoi**] *and unjust accusers have appeared against me.*

Psalm 27:12 (Helms trans.): Unjust witnesses [**martures adikoi**] have stood up [**epanestesan**] against me, and injustice has lied [**epseusato**] within herself.

Psalm 35:11: *Malicious witnesses appear* [**anastantes martures adikoi**] *who question* [**eperoton**] *me about things I do not know.*

13). Mark 14:65: And some began to spit [**emptuein**] on him, and to cover his face, and to strike him [**hrapismasin**], saying to him, 'Prophesy!'

Isaiah 50:6 (JPS): *I offered my back to the floggers, and my cheeks to those who tore out my hair. I did not hide my face from insult and spittle.*

Isaiah 50:6 (RSV): I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard; I hide not my face from shame and spitting.

Isaiah 50:6 (Helms): I gave my back to scourges, and my cheeks to blows [**hrapismata**]; and I turned not away my face from the shame of spitting [**emptusmaton**].

14). Matthew 27:34: . . . they offered [**edokan**] him wine to drink, mingled with gall [**cholen**]; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it.
Mark 14:23: And they offered him wine mingled with myrrh; but he did not take it.
Luke 23:36: The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him vinegar [**oxos**].
John 19:28-29: After this Jesus, knowing that all was finished, said (to fulfill the scripture), 'I thirst.' A bowl full of vinegar [**oxous**] stood there; so they put a sponge full of the vinegar on hyssop [**hussopo**] and held it to his mouth.

(Here the author uses the words "to fulfill the scripture," intending them to document his description of the events. However they do the opposite. They reveal that the descriptions are borrowed from the Tanakh, and are an indication that the event did not happen. These formula words tend to disprove, rather than prove, contrary to the author's objective. Other formula words which tend to disprove rather than prove are, "spoken by the prophet," and "as it is written." They occur in all the gospels, but most frequently in Matthew.)
Psalm 69:22: *They gave* [**edokan**] *me gall* [**cholen**] *for food, vinegar* [**oxos**] *to quench my thirst.*
Psalm 51:7: *Purge me with hyssop* [**hussopo**] *till I am pure; wash me till I am whiter than snow.*

15). Mark 15:24: And they crucified him, and divided [**diamerizontai**] his garments [**himatia**] among them, casting lots [**ballontes kleron**] for them, to decide what each should take.
Psalm 22:19: *They divide my clothes* [**diemerisanto ta himatia mou**] *among themselves, casting lots* [**ebalon kleron**] *for my garments.*

16). Mark 15:29, Matthew 27:39: So the chief priests with the scribes and elders, mocked him . . . . He trusts in God; let God deliver [**hrusastho**] him now, if he desired him [**thelei auto**]; for he said, 'I am the Son of God.'
Psalm 22:8 (JPS): *All who see me mock me; they curl their lips, they shake their heads. 'Let him commit himself to the Lord; let Him rescue* [**hrsuasatho auton**] *him, let Him save him, for He is pleased with him.'*

Psalms 22:8 (Helms): He hoped in the Lord: let him deliver him **[hrsuasatho auton]**, let him save him, because he wants him **[thelei auton]**.

17. Matthew 28:3: His [angel's] appearance was like lightning **[en de he eidea autou hos astrape]**, and his raiment white as snow **[to enduma auto leukon hos chion]**.

(The angel has come to tell the women who came to inspect Jesus's tomb, now empty, not to fear, for he has risen.)

Daniel 7:9: *And the Ancient of Days took His seat. His garment was like white snow* ***[to enduma auto leukon hosei chion]***.

Daniel 10:6: *His body was like beryl, his face had the appearance of lightning* ***[en de he eidea autou hos he horasis astrapes]*** *his eyes were like flaming torches . . . .*

18). Matthew 28:20: . . . . I am with you always to the close of the age **[hemeras heos tes sunteleias tou aionos]**.

Daniel 12:12: *But you, go on to the end; you shall rest, and arise to your destiny at the end of the days* **[sunteleian hemeron]**.

Because so much of the gospels are reworkings of events taken from the Tanakh/Septuagint, little remains of the life of Jesus. A few items can be gleaned. Paul stated: "For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed, took bread" (I Corinthians 11:23). Thus, as early as 50 CE, when Paul wrote his epistles, he already tells us that Jesus was betrayed in connection with a meal. It would be glib to consider this early statement an anachronism. The other critical events are the Roman trial and the crucifixion. The betrayal in connection with a meal, the Roman trial, and the crucifixion alone have a high probability of historical reality. The heavy dependence of the gospels on the Tanakh/Septuagint undercuts any claim to historical or biographical reality of the remainder. Rather than history or biography as we understand those words, they are religious works for Christians.

The gospels were written between 70 and 100 CE. The Temple had fallen. The early Christians were in the process of breaking away from Judaism. The animosity toward the scribes, Pharisees, Jews and Judaism probably is an expression of early religious conflicts rather than the statements of Jesus. Unless

documents similar to the Dead Sea Scrolls are discovered, we shall probably never know more.

NOTES

1. Lawrence Briskin, "Parallelisms Between the Tanakh and the Gospels," *Jewish Bible Quarterly*, Vol. XXVII:1 (Jan.-Mar. 1999).

2. I have prepared a book containing the 600 parallel passages relating material in the Gospels to the Tanakh. It is available from the author for the cost of reproduction, $16 US postage paid; 880 Fernshire Dr., Dayton OH 45459, USA.

3. I claim no expertise in either Hebrew or Greek. The examples cited came from Randal Helms (see Note 4), which is also the source for the Greek vocabulary.

Unless otherwise noted, quotations from the Tanakh are from the Jewish Publication Society, and quotations from the Gospels are from the Christian Revised Standard Version. These translations generally proved adequate, but on occasion Helms' translations of the Septuagint or the Gospels is also used.

4. Randal Helms, *Gospel Fictions* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1988).

5. Joseph A. Fitzmeyer, *Essays on the Semitic Background of the New Testament*,(London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1971), p. 77.

DARSHANUT

Darshanut, *derived from the Hebrew root* darash *[explicate, expound], presents the expository, homiletic interpretation of the Bible. Its origins are as old as the most ancient aggadic and midrashic teachings and as new as the sermon or* D'var Torah *delivered on the most recent Shabbat. The intent is a challenge to relate the Bible to the problems, issues and goals of daily living.*

We encourage our readers to contribute to Darshanut. *The submission should be based on the Bible, no more than 750 words in length, and as relevant and current as you would like to make it. For more information on submissions, see the inside back cover.*

MOTHERS AND SONS: IN DEFENSE OF LOT'S WIFE

TZIPORA NE'EMAN

The context of this Dvar Torah goes back to 1994, when I was in Toronto and about to celebrate my Bat-Mitzvah at a mature age. My Israeli son was flying home to share in the event. He had been in the army during the Gulf War and served in Lebanon and I looked forward to his visit with anticipation and great joy.

My Bat-Mitzvah portion was Vayera (Gen.18:1-22:24), a powerful passage studded with weighty events: The Divine promise to Abraham and Sarah that despite their advanced ages, they would have a son; Abraham's bargaining with God to save the righteous citizens of Sodom and Gemorrah; the destruction of the wicked cities and the events surrounding Abraham's nephew Lot and his family; the birth of Isaac and the banishing of Hagar and Ishmael; and, finally, the Akedah, the Binding of Isaac, an event of huge significance for Jewish history.

The Haftarah or prophetic portion (II Kings 4:1-37) is equally eventful. It relates two stories: First, the tale of an impoverished widow, her two sons, and the

Tzipora Ne'eman is a Canadian who made aliyah several years ago and is a resident of Jerusalem. This Darshanut is derived for a Dvar Torah she delivered at Kehilat Beit Knesset Moreshet Yisrael in October 1999.

prophet Elisha's miraculous solution to their predicament. This is followed by another miracle story about a woman from Shunem who, like Sarah, is childless and married to an elderly man. Elisha, a family friend, takes note of her longing for a son and informs her that God will answer her prayers. A son is born to the Shunamite woman but the boy is taken ill. Again, the prophet touches her life by healing the child.

Many strands of meaning run through these stories, but both the Torah and Haftarah passages have a common thread: mothers and sons. In fact, five mothers and their sons. The number increases to seven if we include Lot's daughters, who became mothers by their father following the destruction of Sodom and Gemorrah.

First is Hagar who, as arranged by Sarah, bears Abraham's son, Ishmael. The next mother is Sarah who, at age 90, gives birth to Isaac. Lot's wife is the mother of sons and daughters and her daughters bear sons who will become the fathers of two nations.

In the Haftarah, we have the widow with two sons and the Shunamite woman with her long prayed-for son.

What might be a link between these mothers and their sons?

The Akedah passage seizes one's attention. God tests Abraham's devotion to Him by demanding that he sacrifice his beloved son Isaac. Midrashic tradition teaches that this was the tenth and ultimate test of Abraham's faith. The formal notion of a test was used only in relation to Abraham, but it is apparent that each of the mothers were tested as well.

Hagar and Ishmael were the first. Banished to the desert at Sarah's demand, Hagar soon runs out of water and must listen to her son cry as he thirsts in the blazing sun. She cries for his life and the Lord harkens to her, sending a Divine messenger who will direct her to a nearby well. She had not prayed to God, but He took note of her woe and helped her. Just as Abraham lifts his eyes and sees a ram to sacrifice in place of Isaac, so Hagar lifted her eyes to see a life-saving well. Perhaps the lifting of her eyes was a kind of spiritual seeing, an awareness of her own strengths that, as a subservient handmaid, had to be subdued. God promises her that her son will live and become the ancestor of a nation.

Sarah, the next to be tested, was a strong-willed mother. When she demanded the seemingly heartless banishment of Hagar and Ishmael, she was exerting legal

rights that were fully compatible with her Mesopotamian background; she wanted to ensure her son's status as Abraham's heir.

The literature has much to say about the presence or absence of her role at the time when Abraham was preparing to sacrifice their son. Did she know what Abraham intended to do? What might she have done had she known? Can we imagine the exchange between Sarah and her husband if he had informed her of the Divine command regarding Isaac? A Midrash says that she died during or soon after the Akedah. Was learning the reason for Abraham and Isaac's journey the cause of her death? According to that Midrash, Sarah never saw her son again. She too was a mother whose child was at risk.

Lot's wife is a nameless woman. In the Midrash she is blamed for having informed on her husband when he welcomed visitors into his home, an act forbidden in Sodom. The Midrash also tells us that Lot's wife had four daughters, two married and two unmarried.This means she later left behind children and possibly grandchildren. Was she consulted when her husband offered their two unmarried daughters to the angry and aggressive townsmen attacking their house? After she fled Sodom and looked back at the destruction, was she grieving for her children and grandchildren left behind in the conflagration instead of grieving a lost, unacceptable lifestyle, as traditionally indicated? Is it not likely that she was shedding bitter tears of salt for her children? Is it possible that she disobeyed the command not to turn and look back out of her feelings as a mother?

Some texts seem to regard Lot's wife as a weak or fatuous character. Yet she is the grandmother of two nations. If she was as selfish and foolish as so often portrayed, and she knew it would be dangerous to look back, why would she have risked her life if not for a significant reason?

In the prophetic portion we meet another nameless woman, the widow left penniless by a husband who was a follower of the prophet Elisha; a good man who gave so much to others that he left his own family in dire straits when he died. The widow, out of concern for her sons who, in their poverty, were destined to be indentured bondsmen, took the steps needed to save them. She sought out Elisha who responded to her desperate request through the miracle of the saleable jars of oil.

Lastly, the Shunamite woman took it into her own hands to race for help to save her son. He had fallen ill while out with his father, but it was his mother

who took control and sought help from the only source available, Elisha the prophet. The boy's life was saved.

These mothers, Hagar, Sarah, the widow, the Shunamite woman and possibly Lot's wife, all fought, prayed and sorrowed for the life and well-being of their children. The tenacity and courage of motherhood is confirmed in these stories.

Psalm 11:5 tells us that God tests only the righteous. One of the purposes of such tests would seem to be for the benefit of the one being tested. Latent qualities of faith, wisdom and courage can be realized in the course of the test. Abraham's test was to climb a mountain and be ready to give up what was most precious to him in order to demonstrate his faith. In the stories we have examined, each mother had, if not a real, then a metaphorical, mountain to climb. In every case, their childrens' lives were at risk. The mothers had to draw on both their inner spiritual resources and their external strengths to climb and descend the mountain successfully.

The word *nisah* [test] is used only once in reference to Abraham, at the beginning of the Akedah story. However, it reflects the experience of all the mothers, as well as Abraham. They too should be remembered for their strength, courage and resilience in the face of their trials.

We mourn the loss of Rabbi Yaakov Rosenberg ז"ל former Chairman of the ***Jewish Bible Association*** and member of the Editorial Board, 1987-2000. We dedicate this issue in his memory.

יהי זכרו ברוך

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir,

Three items were of particular interest to me in the issue of October-December 1999 *JBQ* (XXVII:4).

In *The Book of Job: A Prelude to Prophecy*, Fred Blumenthal tries to find the origin of the name Job in relation to letters from the names of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I understand the figure of Job to be similar to the sick and humilated figure of Judah exiled to Babylon (Isaiah 53). Exiled Judah was finally restored to Zion. Job 42:10 records that God finally *shav et shevut Iyov*, reversed the captivity of Iyov [Job], almost exactly in the words of Psalm 126:1 about reversing the captivity of Zion.

In my view (Levin, "Code Words: Liturgy and Script," Midstream 40:24 (Aug-Sept 1994) Iyov is an acronym for "i" (oi, See Num. 21:29; Jer. 13:27; Lam. 5:16) being the first letter aleph of Iyov, followed by *yod-vav* to be interpreted as *yordei*, going down (into exile) and *bet*, the first letter of Bavel, Babylon. Iyov is thus a code word for: *I-Yordei-Bavel*: woe unto those who have gone down to suffer in exile in Babylon.

Then there is the matter of Moses' face shining when he descended Mount Sinai (Maxine Blendis, *The Horns of Moses*). The fact is that human faces do not shine with rays of light. But the scalp and face can be horned if an animal pelt is worn, the pelt of the Egyptian Apis, the calf-bull god. Jerome (late Fourth Century C.E.) was correct in translating *karan* as horned, and Michelangelo was partly correct in sculpting a horned Moses. The Hebrew text states not that *karan panav*, his *panav* [face] was horned, but *karan or panav*, the pelt or on his face was horned (Ex. 34:29). In any event, if it shone, the expected word would be *ya'er* (Num. 6:25). The text even includes the hint that Moses had a *masveh* (Ex. 34:34), a hide, mask, pelt, the pelt of the god Apis, holy to the *erev rav*, the mixed multitude of Egyptian fugitives following the failed coup d'etat against the elderly Ramses II and his co-regent Khaemwast. This interpretation ties up with Aaron's making a statue of Apis the golden bull calf, to cater for the needs of the *erev rav*. Perhaps, this enraged Moses whose intention, it seems, was to show the *erev rav* not only the Apis pelt but the alternative option of choosing the Ten

Commandments in stone instead of continuing to revere the Aaron-mode totem of Apis.

Finally, there is the engaging letter by Josiah Derby on numerology, with significant letters adding up to 196. My favorite number is 324 and this is why: The Big Bang is *Pitzutz HaGadol*. In terms of kabbalistic gematria, numerology, the numerical sum of these Hebrew letters is 324. Now the numerical value of *vayehi or* [and let there be light [Gen. 1:3]), a Big Bang, is 238. But this phenomenon cannot stand in isolation; it is inconceivable without God, and the God of this verse is *Elohim* with a gematria of 86. Now add 86 to 238 and the sum is 324, precisely that of *Pitzutz HaGadol*, the Big Bang. QED.

Schneir Levin
Johnnesburg, South Africa

Sir,

Time Magazine (May 8, 2000) reported "that Ohio's 41-year old state motto, 'With God, all things are possible' was declared unconstitutional because it quotes Jesus." Readers may recall my article "Parallelism Between the Tanakh and the Gospels" (January - March 1999). In it I stated that there are over 300 parallelisms between the Gospels and the Tanakh. This is one example. The actual quotation is "With men this impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26). Versions appear in Mark. 10:27, 14:36, Luke 1:37, and 18:27.

These quotations actually have their source in the Tanakh. "Is anything too wondrous for the Lord?" (Gen. 18:14). "I know that You can do everything, That nothing you propose is impossible for You (Job 42:2). "Nothing is too wondrous for You" (Jer. 32:17).

Lawrence Briskin
Centerville, OH

JEWISH BIBLE QUARTERLY
P.O.B. 29002
JERUSALEM, ISRAEL

ירושלים
YEROUSHALAYIM
P.P. - שולם
אישור מס' 1357

PRINTED MATTER