



OBITUARY: DR. SHIMON BAKON ש"ת

Dr. Shimon Bakon, late editor of the *Jewish Bible Quarterly*, was born in Czechoslovakia, where he attended the Jewish high school in Brno, received private tutoring in Talmud by his father, and earned a Ph.D. in philosophy at Masaryk University. Before his own escape, he helped to organize the legal and illegal emigration of Jews from Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia. Arriving in the United States a month after the outbreak of WWII, he studied at Yeshiva Torah Vodaath in Brooklyn until March 1942, when he joined the U.S. Army, served with distinction in North Africa and Italy, and received an Honorable Discharge in 1945. Thereafter, he was awarded a post-doctoral fellowship in philosophy at Columbia University, New York, and a fellowship at Yale, going on to become director of Jewish education in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and then in Springfield, Massachusetts. While in Springfield, he was instrumental in establishing a branch of Boston Hebrew College and, for more than 10 years, served as its administrator and lecturer in Jewish Philosophy.

In 1974, he made *aliyah* with his wife and children, settled in Jerusalem, and was invited to join the World Jewish Bible Society headed by Dr. Haim Gevaryahu. His association with this journal, then known as *Dor le Dor*, began a year later (from volume 4:2), when he joined the editorial board. With the following issue he became Assistant Editor in 1976 and Associate Editor (from volume 7:1) in 1978.

After the death of Dr. Louis Katzoff, Founding Editor of the journal, Dr. Shimon Bakon was appointed his successor and then served as Editor from volume 16:2 in 1987 until his retirement in 2011 – a period of well over two decades. Together with his colleagues – all unsalaried volunteers – he transformed the *Jewish Bible Quarterly* into a prestigious journal with a worldwide distribution and many distinguished contributors. A thorough gentleman, courteous and considerate, he had the knack of gaining and encouraging new writers on a wide variety of Bible-related topics. He attended the Bible Study Group which met at the home of Prime Minister Menahem Begin and, for a time, served as the *JBQ*'s representative on the planning committee of the International Bible Contest for Jewish Youth held annually in Jerusalem on Israel Independence Day.

An observant Jew and staunch Zionist, Shimon Bakon was gifted with a breadth of knowledge that embraced European culture as well as biblical and rabbinic scholarship. Few people were aware that he and Patricia Berlyn, late Associate Editor of the *JBQ*, co-authored *Shani: Her Adventures Beyond the Sambatyon*, a collection of stories published in 2000 which combined fantasy and adventure with Jewish history and tradition. These tales were first written for the delight of Shimon's own children.

A festschrift was published in this journal (October-December 2005) to celebrate Dr. Bakon's 90th birthday. He remained Editor Emeritus until his death at the age 103 in February 2019. *His eyes were undimmed and his natural vigor unabated* (Deut. 34:7). On behalf of the Jewish Bible Association and the Editorial Board of the *Jewish Bible Quarterly*, may I record our gratitude for Shimon's long service and leadership and convey our heartfelt condolences to his family.

יהי זכרו ברוך

(Dr.) Gabriel A. Sivan