

TE'UDA

XVI-XVII

STUDIES IN JUDAICA



TE'UDA
THE CHAIM ROSENBERG SCHOOL
OF JEWISH STUDIES RESEARCH SERIES

XVI–XVII

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Moshe Dorf

(June 2, 1907 — October 5, 1987)

Moshe Dorf was born in Poland and emigrated to Belgium at an early age. Together with his brother, he founded a diamond processing enterprise. The personality of Moshe Dorf reflects the embodiment of initiative and action which received their concrete expression in the industrial enterprise that he established and continued to cultivate throughout his life. Concurrently, he possessed an intense spiritual wealth as well as an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and wisdom from the rich sources of the Jewish heritage. He was an active participant in various study groups and conferences devoted to Jewish Studies, especially in the field of biblical research, and an avid member of the Israeli Society for Biblical Research as well as the World Jewish Society for the Study of Bible.

Moshe Dorf will be remembered by friends and relations for his congeniality and amiability, his unstinted devotion to his family, and his munificent philanthropy to numerous cultural and charitable institutions in the State of Israel.

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THE UGARITIC EPIC OF KIRTA IN A WISDOM PERSPECTIVE

by Edward L. Greenstein

Published Ugaritic literature does not include wisdom texts, although the Canaanite hero Dana'ilu (Daniel), known primarily from an Ugaritic epic, is described as a 'sage' in Ezek. 28:3–5. There are, however, wisdom texts from Ugarit written in Akkadian, whose provenience is apparently Syrian. The Ugaritic scribes were clearly conversant with the wisdom genre.

Although there are problems in identifying any major biblical story as a wisdom tale proper, the so-called 'succession narrative' concerning David has been shown by Whybray to exhibit a number of wisdom features. It is shown that the Ugaritic epic of King Kirta incorporates elements of wisdom literature in a similar fashion. To a certain degree, the protagonist may be identified with the type of the righteous sufferer, who, like Job, loses his all his children at the outset. Kirta's problems are exacerbated when, instead of following divine wisdom which ideally guides the activities of a king (*cf.* Prov. 8:15–16), he departs from his god's instructions and rashly makes a vow that he forgets to fulfill, a sure violation of a major tenet of wisdom behavior, which is also expressed in an Akkadian text from Ugarit. As a result, Kirta is stricken with a deadly disease.

The fact that Kirta deviated from a god's explicit instructions is itself a blatant departure from conventional wisdom (*cf.* Qoh. 3:14). A person should allow one's self to be guided by the gods. As explicitly stated by an Akkadian wisdom text from Ugarit, Kirta's oldest son also mistakenly relied upon his own instincts, and on top of that irritated his father, the king, thus negating the advice of Prov. 30:17 and 19:12, respectively. In the

end, Kirta suffers from forgetfulness and does not seem to recognize the reason for his plight. Ignorance concerning the divine causes of suffering — a problem also addressed by numerous wisdom tracts which complain of this situation — is another feature shared by both Kirta and Job.

CONCERNING THE INTER-RELATIONSHIP OF THE
COMMENTARIES OF R. ABRAHAM IBN EZRA AND
R. SAMUEL B. MEIR TO THE PENTATEUCH: A NEW APPRAISAL

by Aaron Mondschein

The problem of the relationship of the Pentateuch Commentary of R. Abraham ibn Ezra (henceforth: RAbE) to that of R. Samuel b. Meir (henceforth RaSHbaM) has pestered scholars for some time. Both commentators were indeed contemporaries and their periods of activity completely coincide. Whatsmore, it is a well-known fact that RAbE spent several years in Northern France, the home territory of RaSHbaM. RAbE also exchanged poems with Rabbenu Tam, the brother of RaSHbaM.

However, most important of all is the common methodological approach of both rabbis, who strived towards a clear-cut distinction between the simple meaning (*peshat*) and the homiletical approach (*derash*), while making a concentrated effort to arrive at the simple meaning of Scripture. It is thus only natural that the question of the bilateral connection between these commentaries — if not on a personal level, then at least on a literary level — be raised. In truth, neither commentator mentions his counterpart in any of his writings, but this in itself is insufficient for a negative answer to the above-mentioned question, since there is every possibility that some hidden connections and indirect references do exist.

It is quite clear that the limited number of explanations in the "lengthy" version of RAbE's Commentary to Exodus, whose sole parallel is the Pentateuch Commentary of RaSHbaM, cannot serve as proof positive

that RAbe possessed a written copy of the Commentary of RaSHbaM, since it is quite possible that these were communicated to him via oral traditions. The unqualified reference of RAbe in *'Iggeret ha-Shabbat* to the unconventional interpretation of a biblical verse, which *prima facie* gives the impression of having originated in the Commentary of RaSHbaM, is also insufficient for settling the question of the inter-relationship between the Commentaries of RAbe and RaSHbaM.

A novel text of RAbe, recently published by the present author from manuscript (*Beth Mikra Quaterly*, no. 162 [April–June, 2000]), apparently enables a proper solution to this crux.

This text, an "alternative recension" of RAbe's commentary to *parashat va-Yishlakh* (Gen. 32:4 ff.) which RAbe taught his disciple, R. Joseph of London, during his final years, contains two lengthy polemical discourses aimed at anonymous explanations which appear in the Commentary of RaSHbaM.

One may thus adduce that during the period that RAbe composed his two Pentateuch commentaries — the "Short Commentary" (Italy, prior to 1145) and the "Lengthy Commentary" (France, 1153) — the Commentary of RaSHbaM was not available to him.

However, upon his emigration to England (1158), he became quite familiar (possibly due to the efforts of the above-mentioned disciple-patron?), with the Commentary of RaSHbaM. This familiarity is recognizable in the bellicose diatribes of *'Iggeret ha-Shabbat* and in the newly-discovered "third recension", which, for the time being, is limited to *parashiyot va-Yishlakh* and *va-Yehi* alone.

THE STYLE OF THE DIALOGUE IN BIBLICAL NARRATIVE

by Frank H. Polak

This study seeks to describe character speech in biblical prose narrative, in comparison with the style of the narrator's domain (exposition; action;

sequence; and evaluation). The parameters adopted for the purpose of this study are: (1) the number of sentence constituents immediately dependent on the predicate (the "arguments"); (2) the number of subordinate clauses; (3) the number of noun strings containing two nouns (or adjectives) or more. In written language (*e.g.*, Deut. 27:3; Ex. 31:18), most clauses contain two arguments or more, and a large number of lengthy noun strings, while the percentage of subordinate clauses is relatively high. On the basis of previous investigations by the author (*e.g.*, *Beit Mikra* 43 [1998], pp. 30–52, 142–160; *Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society* 26 [1999], pp. 59–105), it is argued that the characteristics of written language are regularly found in biblical narrative prose from the Persian era and the exilic/late pre-exilic period (the complex, nominal style). It is thus important to note that in pericopes belonging to these parts of the narrative corpus (*e.g.*, Ezra 10:7–14; Jer. 36: 13–15), the style of the dialogue is often less complex than that of the narrator's domain: it includes more clauses that contain less than two arguments; long noun strings are less in evidence; and hypotactic constructions are less frequent. These observations are in keeping with the findings of sociolinguistics (*e.g.*, the studies of Chafe, Tannen and Goody), which evince that the style of spoken discourse, particularly when the speakers use informal, casual language — differs in a number of respects from the formal norms of written language.

In biblical narrative, the style of a number of narratives (*e.g.*, the tales of Abraham; Jacob; Samson; Samuel; Saul and David; Elijah and Elisha) is radically different from the norms of postexilic/ exilic/late pre-exilic narratives; in these narratives most clauses contain less than two arguments (clauses containing three arguments are extremely rare) and long noun strings are scarce, while the hypotactic constructions are most infrequent. The rhythmic verbal style of these narratives seems to approximate the language of spoken discourse, and, thus, comes close to the norms of oral narrative.

In sections dominated by rhythmic verbal style, the style of the dialogue is often close to the informal casual language of private life (*e.g.*, Gen.

18:3–7: (Abraham), Judg. 14:15–16 (Samson); as well as some of the Elisha narratives (*e.g.*, 2 Kings 13:14–19), even though these tales represent different genres.

However, in many tales, the style of the dialogue is more complicated than that of the action sequence.

(a) In several biblical narratives the style of discourse is highly rhetorical, even in casual language (*e.g.*, Gen. 12:11–12, 18; 13:8–9).

(b) The discourse style often indicates the status of the speaker and his authority. The simple style employed by the commoner (Judg. 9:8, 10) represents his lowly status, in contrast with the elevated status of the olive and the wine, which is indicated by their formal elocution (vv. 9, 13). When David addresses his courtiers, he employs the formal register of the court, as do his servants when speaking to the king. But commoners are regularly addressed in casual language, even though they address the king in formal language (*e.g.*, the Tekoite woman, 2 Sam. 14). The same tendency is fleshed out in the Saul narratives (*e.g.*, 1 Sam. 23). In the Elisha narratives, the relation between the prophet and his followers is often quite similar.

(c) In many narratives, the dialogue represents the formal style of the legal register, *e.g.*, in the negotiations between Abraham and Abimelech (Gen. 21:22–26) and Jacob and Laban (Gen. 29:18–19, 27). In the tale of the sale of Esau's birthright, Jacob's conditions are also couched in the formal style (Gen. 25:31).

(d) The formal, rhetorical style is also characteristic of religious language. Prayers (1 Sam. 1:11), priestly admonitions and blessings (vv. 14, 17), as well as prophetic discourse (15:17–19, 22–23; 1 Kings 17:1, 14) which are mainly formulated in the formal style, as are the utterances of people who address them (1 Sam. 14:15–16). The formal, rhetorical style is regularly used for divine promises, decisions and instructions, since no other manner of expression seems to suit the authority of the deity (Gen. 12:1, 3; 1 Sam. 9:16–17).

The rich style of the dialogue evinced by narratives in the rhythmic verbal style seems to jibe with R. Finnegan's characterization of the

oral art of the story-teller, who often turns the representation of spoken discourse into a demonstration of his mimic skills.

MIZVOT ZEMANNIOT

by Nahem Ilan

Rabbi Israel Israeli was one of the leaders of the Jewish community of Toledo at the turn of the 13th–14th centuries. His literary legacy includes two lengthy works of great import: (1) a commentary on *Avot*, written in Judeo-Arabic and extant heretofore in manuscript only; (2) a halakhic work in Judeo-Arabic, available only in a Hebrew translation prepared by Shem Tov ibn Ardutiel during the 14th century, and entitled *Mizvot Zemanniot* (henceforth: *MZ*). Neither of these works has been published, and consequently have not been subjected to intensive scholarly inquiry.

This article has two goals:

1. A brief description of the six manuscripts of *MZ*.
2. A short characterization of the composition.

Unlike Maimonides, who did not cite his sources, R. Israel was generally careful to do so. A review of the sources cited by him reveals that he was well informed in all the categories of halakhic literature till his time. R. Israel did not simply codify the law, but presented various positions side by side or at least mentioned that there were different opinions regarding the matter under consideration. This technique is similar to the method of Rabbi Jacob ben Asher in his monumental *Arba'a Turim*, even though these two works are vastly different in scope — *MZ* does not even include all of the topics in *Tur Oraḥ Hayyim*. R. Israel based his rulings on the sages of Iraq (*Bavel*), North Africa, France and Spain.

R. Israel Israeli's *MZ* reveals three primary qualities: (1) impressive mastery of all aspects of halakhic literature; (2) readiness and courage to make a ruling regarding controversial halakhic questions; (3) use of

concise and clear language. From the combination of these three features, it is evident why *MZ* was accepted and widely disseminated among the Jews of Spain shortly after its composition.

The popularity of *MZ* was so great that when the vernacular Arabic ceased to be understood by its potential audience, it was deemed necessary to translate it into Hebrew. It is significant to note that the translation was made by R. Shem Tov ibn Arduziel, a prominent authority in the Spanish Jewish community.

At the outset, *MZ* was intended for the intellectual elite of the Jewish community of Toledo. After a few decades, copies of the composition reached a wider public, which felt the need for a halakhic manual dealing with the various precepts arranged according to the calendar — both the daily and the yearly cycles. As a matter of fact, *MZ* provides a great deal of useful information, helpful both in the synagogue and at home.

Mizvot Zemannot was written by one of the leading scholars of Toledo at a time of great flux in the history of the community, viz., the appointment of Rabbenu Asher ben Yehiel ("ha-Rosh") as chief rabbi (1306). It is quite possible that this work is an important source for the study of the history of rabbinic *halakha* and its application in the Jewish community of Toledo in particular, and in Spain in general, especially during the 14th and 15th centuries. A careful study of *MZ* will also contribute towards a proper appreciation of an aspect of R. Israel Israeli's personality that has not been sufficiently studied — his influence as a halakhic authority.

AN ADDITIONAL SOURCE FOR THE *SITZ IM LEBEN* OF MIDRASH AND AGGADA

by Uri Ehrlich

During the rabbinic period, various events connected with departures cultivated midrashic and aggadic creativity. A considerable number of

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sources attest to didactic-homiletical activity in the context of departure ceremonies, both within the narrow confines of the rabbinic coterie and in broader circles as well. This activity ranged from brief "words of wisdom" (Tos. Ber. 3:21) delivered just before parting, to extensive well-developed homilies, *e.g.*, the extended homilies delivered by seven sages taking leave of one another at the conclusion of a gathering in the Rimon Valley (PT Hag. 3:1, 78d).

This genre reached its apex in the creation of a midrashic pattern termed in Palestine *aftara* — a parting homily specifically appertaining to occasions of departure. These departure homilies were mainly used in two contexts: (1) a rabbi's leave-taking of the public that had hosted him; and (2) "dismissing the assembly" (Moed Qat. 3:7) *i.e.*, the dismissal of comforters by a mourner or his proxy, sending them to their homes in peace. This phenomenon of midrashic creativity joins a series of other witnesses to the importance attributed by the rabbis and the general public to departure ceremonies in the social milieu of the rabbinic age.

THE PRIESTLY BENEDICTION IN THE ABBA SABRA VERSION

By Itzhak Grinfeld

In contrast with other Jewish rituals, the Beta Israel recite the priestly benediction after every public prayer.

This blessing is based on the principle that the congregants acknowledge the greatness of God: He is the God of the Patriarchs and of Moses and Aaron, of the priests and prophets, the God of first and last. This benediction also stresses complete confidence that God will watch over those who approach him with the proper words of praise and honor him.

The priestly benediction was composed (and apparently performed) at the time of Abba Sabra and his disciples, *viz.*, during the 15th century.

The benediction itself undoubtedly derives from the local monophysite church, and was composed during the course of efforts to coordinate the text in accordance with the demands of the members of the opposite faction.

It is interesting to note that the prayer itself is constructed in several languages:

- a) It is written mainly in Ge'ez, the holy tongue of the community.
- b) A smaller segment is in the Agau language, which was spoken by the members of the community during most of their stay on Ethiopian soil.
- c) The blessing also evinces a single verse in the Amharic language. It is the author's impression that this verse did not exist in the "canonical" order of the prayer, and was introduced into the text of the benediction approximately 100 years ago. It is very reasonable to assume that this addition was made by the copyist himself.

In due course, both Ge'ez and Agau ceased to be understood. On the other hand, the Amharic language has never been accepted into the prayer ritual, including the present century. A similar situation exists more or less, as far as Ge'ez and Agau are concerned, at least in written form. Regarding, the use of Amharic, this was limited to explanations only. A similar case is evident in territories inhabited by the Beta Israel who spoke Tigrinya and it is this language that was utilized for the explanations.

There does not seem to have been one constant rule which obligated all the priests. These explanations, which were more or less detailed, were given on the responsibility of the local priest alone.

In the author's estimation, the benediction was transcribed by J. Faitlovitch, the veteran Ethiopian scholar, from an oral performance during the period when the Agau language of the prayers was no longer spoken by the worshippers. In the handwritten notes, the priestly benediction does not appear in a homogeneous form. In comparison with other texts, it evinces certain changes: the Ge'ez text is constant, while variants appear in the Agau text. It should also be noted that Faitlovitch's Amharic translation of the text into Agau, is not always accurate, and certain

deviations from the Agau origin may be noted. The version of the text presented herein is one of the versions transcribed by Faitlovitch.

The priestly benediction of the Beta Israel is recited daily after every public prayer, as well as on sabbaths and festivals. It is thus repeated several times during each and every day.

LEAVENED BREAD (*HAMEZ*) BELONGING TO A GENTILE
A CHAPTER IN THE HISTORY OF THE HALAKHA

by David Henshke

This article deals with the history of one of the most fundamental laws of Passover — the non-ownership of leavened bread (*hamez*) as an indispensable requirement for avoiding the prohibition of receiving enjoyment from the *hamez* after Passover. According to the traditional view, this law was widespread in tannaitic literature.

However, an analysis of all tannaitic sources has resulted in the conclusion that the ruling *per se* is not found in tannaitic literature. Indeed, there are some *tannaim* who permitted retaining a Gentile's leavened bread within Jewish domain, just as they sanctioned *hamez* deriving from the priest's share of dough (*ḥallah*) to remain within Jewish jurisdiction during the first or last days of the Passover festival. However, in both cases, this license does not stem from the demand of Gentile ownership as a prerequisite for the prohibition, but from the fact that the Jew did not have the power or the capacity to destroy it (*bi'ur*). This allowance itself is the subject of a controversy between various *tannaim*.

It is shown that the essential tannaitic sources that permit the *hamez* of a Gentile deal with the retaining of leavened bread in the immediate domain of a Gentile who was simultaneously situated within the territory and domain of a Jew. A meticulous examination of the tannaitic source has

enabled an analysis of the amoraic layers of the Talmud. The conclusion drawn from this study is that present-day halakha enabling the sale of *hamez* to a non-Jew has its origins in the anonymous strata of the Babylonian Talmud.

THE HALAKHIC WORKS OF R. ELAEZAR OF WORMS

by Simcha Emanuel

R. Elaezar of Worms, a dominant figure among the Haside Ashkenaz at the end of the 12th and the beginning of the 13th centuries, was the author of numerous halakhic works. Among these, his *magnum opus*, *Sefer ha-Roqeah*, which was already published 500 years ago, deserves special mention.

However, R. Elaezar also composed many additional works dealing with halakhic topics which have remained unpublished or only partially published. The present article deals with three new (or partially new) works of R. Elaezar: *Ma'aseh Roqeah*; *She'arim be-Hilkhot Shehita u-Terefot* and a Passover Homily.

Although *Ma'aseh Roqeah* has already been published, numerous sections of this work are still in manuscript. The work itself is mainly based on practical halakhic questions posed to the author, his father and his mentors. Therefore, the additional material still in manuscript is of interest to the study of the history of halakha in general, as well as to the study of the economic conditions of the Rhein communities and to Jewish-Gentile relationships of the period in particular.

The treatise of R. Elaezar on *Hilkhot Terefot* has been previously printed. However, whereas the printed edition contains only 36 chapters, the author has uncovered manuscripts which contain almost the entire work, which consisted of more than 160 chapters. The 36 chapters of

the published edition apparently represent the first edition of the work, which was subsequently expanded by the author to include the additional chapters. There is also evidence of a third edition, which, in all probability, was copied by R. Elaezar of Worms himself.

The Passover Homily, which was totally unknown until now, has recently come to light in a Moscow MS. Although it begins and concludes with aggadic material, the bulk of the contents is halakhic: the laws of Passover and the holidays (Yom-Tov).

This is one of the earliest works composed by R. Elaezar, and was written at the end of the 12th century. Some time later on, the author appended some of the material to his *Ma'aseh Roqeah.*, including numerous additional halakhic discussions.

THE TRIFOLD STRUCTURE OF *SUGYOT* IN TRACTATE ERUVIN OF THE BABYLONIAN TALMUD

By Uri Tzur

The trifold structure of *sugyot* in B.T. *i.e.*, the framework of the sugya is based on a division of three, has been dealt with by Prof. Sh. Friedman in his studies.

In tractate Eruvin, this trifold structure includes: the repetition of the same sentence; terminology; the name of an amora; identical sources; specific dealings with one aspect of a controversy *et al.*

A proper recognition of the existence of this structure often provides satisfactory solutions to halakhic difficulties, problems of version, as well as difficulties in style, which previous commentators and scholars have failed to consider. It should also be added that this is the most widespread structural form of the *sugyot*.

In the present article, the author adduces examples of *sugyot* containing a trifold structure and addresses the problems involved.

THE BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIANITY AND APOCALYPTICISM

by Joshua Efron

Christianity emerged during the middle of the first century CE, several decades before the Great Revolt and the destruction of the Second Temple.

This period was marked by internal clashes and external struggles which agitated the land of Israel, while tension, unrest and violent disturbances persisted almost permanently. Deep feelings of despondency and the gloomy atmosphere of despair and frustration nurtured the growth of the new religion after successive failures and vain efforts to cast off the shackles of Roman oppression and regain freedom. As described by Josephus Flavius, these circumstances led to the appearance of numerous impostors and false prophets. These charlatans deceived the people by promising an immediate miraculous redemption, and their preaching resulted in painful disenchantment and serious calamity.

The character of Jesus Christ, as delineated in the Gospels, was essentially of a completely different type. He did not stir up tumults, nor did he lead an aggressive national movement of insurrection and liberation. He did not aim at a social upheaval, or at any political reform in this world, but rather proclaimed a transcendent Kingdom of God. His crucifixion and suffering, which were in full accord with his predictions, assured an individual universal salvation in the heavenly paradise of a New Jerusalem, above and beyond the material world, to all faithful believers and followers in his path. According to the teachings of Jesus, no aggressive action was necessary, but only submission to the will of God, obedience to secular authorities, passive endurance in times of distress and

unceasing hope for a blissful distant future. Such theological and ethical principles were unknown in Ancient Judaism, although they seem to be partially rooted and apparently based on a selection of sacred Scriptures. Thus, images of God's suffering servant in Isaiah, and the triumphant Son of Man in Daniel, which obviously represent Israel, became personified as characteristic and exclusive attributes of Jesus.

These metaphorical, allegorical and symbolical interpretations abound in early Christian writings. The New Testament, expressing the one-sided will of Christ, was construed quite seemingly, a direct continuation and perfect completion of the misconceived Old Covenant which was now termed the "Old" Testament. Ancient biblical figures, notions, beliefs, precepts, holy days and festivals (*e.g.*, Passover) were fundamentally transformed. Termination of political subjection was declared to be the end of the world while national deliverance was interpreted as individual human salvation. Israel was transformed into the Christian church and the defeat of real enemies was viewed as the downfall of Satan and the Antichrist, together with all his hosts. Famous historical leaders and forefathers, (*e.g.*, Joshua and David), were portrayed as Christian prototypes by the process of prefiguration. The old Torah was pronounced valid only until the completion of the New Testament, which, followed in the wake of Christ's sacrifice and resurrection. Even though they announced and advanced the new Gospel, Jesus and his disciples still lived "under the Law", before it was declared "obsolete"; they, nevertheless, appear and behave as faithful and observant Jews.

However, this period was not limited to ostensible Christian sermons and writings, and a rather rich and widespread pseudepigraphic literature was created. These mainly included apocalyptic visions and compositions, which applied the same method in the strengthening of faith, as well as the dissemination and the implantation of Gospel verities among all nations. Disguised biblical personalities (Adam, Enoch, Moses, Isaiah, Elijah *etc.*) are thus depicted as wearing an archaic Israelitish garb. They are placed against a suitable background, which is actually veiled, and are portrayed as uttering christological ideas, (*e.g.*, the divine Messiah against

Satan or Antichrist; a new creation *etc.*). This literature also employed typical Christian terminology (*e.g.*, Sons of Light, Beliar *etc.*) carefully concealed by an artificial and picturesque quasi-Hebrew translated into the vernacular. The Qumran Scrolls belong to the same category. However, the Book of Daniel lacks these main features and should not be classified as apocalyptic. No pre-Christian apocalypticism as well as no pre-Christian Gnosticism have been discovered and properly identified in ancient Judaism. Consequently Christianity is the first, original, unique and sole messianic movement, born during the Second Temple era.

All these topics and intertwined problems require a fresh outlook and a novel methodological approach. The article published herein represents only one of the introductory chapters to an extensive all-inclusive research project, still in progress.

THE ALTAR OF THE COVENANT AT MOUNT SINAI (EXODUS 24:4–5)

by Yoram Erder

According to Ex. 24: 4–5, an altar was erected at the foot of Mount Sinai. The present article deals with several issues concerning this altar, according to early Karaite exegesis. Our Sages have also dealt with these issues, although the difference between the two traditions is most conspicuous. It is important to note that R. Abraham Ibn Ezra decided to adopt the Karaite approach in many issues. The conclusions of the Karaite sages were:

a) The Altar of the Covenant was built after the proclamation of the Decalogue.

b) The Altar of the Covenant should be identified with the "Earth Altar", mentioned in Ex. 20:21.

c) The sacrifices offered on the altar were voluntary offerings and not obligatory ones.

Another issue discussed here is the sacrifices offered by Jethro, according to Ex. 18:12. As in the previous discussion, the Karaite exegetes concluded that Jethro offered his offerings after the proclamation of the Decalogue. Their arguments are given in detail. According to the Karaites, Jethro's sacrifices were offered on the altar that was in the tabernacle. The simple meaning of 'on the morrow' (Ex. 18:13) refers to the morrow after Jethro's sacrifices had been offered. It was on that day that Moses advised Jethro how to structure the judicial system.

Fundamental differences between the Karaite approach and that of the Sages in other issues concerning Jethro are also noted.

"THOU SHALT SURELY OPEN THY HAND UNTO THY POOR AND
NEEDY BROTHER": LETTERS REQUESTING FINANCIAL AID
FROM THE GENIZA

by Elinoar Bareket

Charitable institutions, whose task is to attend to the needy and the poor of the community, are a well known facet of Jewish communal life. Geniza fragments provide documentary evidence attesting to the fact that during the Geonic period, the Jewish *heqdes* assumed the responsibility of meeting the requirements of the needy.

The activities of the Jewish *heqdes* were undoubtedly influenced by the Muslim *waqf*.

In this article, the authoress publishes nine different fragments, some in Hebrew and others in Judeo-Arabic, which contain requests for help to the needy, addressed to private individuals.

These documents bear evidence concerning both the applicants and

the addressees. Among the numerous reasons behind the requests for assistance, one may enumerate the following: merchants who lost all their capital due to ships lost at sea or raided by pirates; foreigners who were recent arrivals to the communities, including proselytes deriving from Europe. Most of the petitioners were communal leaders, while the persons approached included well-to-do Jewish authorities who maintained close ties with the courts of local potentates, as well as pious Jewish women.

As in many other instances, these Geniza documents furnish important information concerning the social structure of the Jews during the Geonic period and in a similar vein, reveal the humane aspect, which in this case relates to unfortunate individuals at the time of their distress.

"EGO SALATHIEL QUI ET EZRAS"

by Edna Israeli

The expression: *"Ego Salathiel qui et Ezras"* which means: "I Salathiel who am (also) Ezra" appears in the opening passage of the apocalypse entitled "Fourth Ezra" (Ezra 4). It is generally accepted that there is no historic justification for this strange identification, nor can it be explained away as the result of faulty historical knowledge. However, previous attempts to offer a logical explanation for this usage have not produced convincing results and, to this very day, the problem remains unsolved.

Two previous efforts to arrive at a solution were based on source criticism, *i.e.*, by separating the name "Salathiel" from "Ezra" and assigning these epithets to diverse sources and to different authors, which were supposedly pieced together by a redactor, or by ascribing both names to a single biblical personality, via speculative usage of scripture (*viz.*, Chron. 3: 17).

Scholars have rejected these proposals as illogical or as being based on

insufficient evidence, and/or the lack of an etymological foundation, as well as some other difficulties. Additional suggestions have also proved unacceptable due to their failure to overcome the various pitfalls and present a conclusive and coherent solution.

In the opinion of the present writer, the weakness of the different theories dealing with the specific issue, as well as with the entire research concerning Fourth Ezra, lies in the basic presupposition of modern scholars. The usual point of departure has been the assumption that this work was written by a Jewish writer affected by the disaster following the destruction of the Temple and the misery of the Jewish people under the yoke of Rome. In spite of the fact that this assumption does not lead to a proper understanding of either the ideas or the purpose of Fourth Ezra, it has not been questioned or challenged. It should also be noted that the issue raised herein is only one example of numerous "inconsistencies" scattered throughout the book. Due to their complete subjection to the prevalent point of departure, modern scholars have not succeeded in compromising these "inconsistencies" and have also failed to solve cardinal questions related to Fourth Ezra, which are essential to the proper historical research of this work.

Several earlier savants who portrayed the apocalypse as a Christian composition are not even mentioned in modern research.

In the present article, the writer has revived this early hypothesis and attempts to treat the problem from this novel point of view, which regards Fourth Ezra as a work of Christian authorship. In her opinion, this approach sheds light not only on the perplexing combination of Salathiel and Ezra, but may also possibly elucidate the provenance of the author as well as his identity.

At the outset one must stress that, apart from the chronological difficulty of approximately one century which separates between the two personalities, a most significant difference in their descent should also be noted; while Salathiel was a descendant of the House of David, Ezra was of priestly descent. From a purely Jewish standpoint, such a combination was clearly impossible.

On the other hand, a study of Christian sources reveals that the two ancestries were united in the personage of Jesus as well as in the entire corporate Christian community. This union conforms to the dialectics of Christian theology from its very outset, and has explicit and implicit utterances in the New Testament. According to this approach, the skilled author of Fourth Ezra clearly intended to allude to this identical combination of kingship and priesthood by joining the two names, while utilizing numerous other ideas and images characteristic to Christian writings and theology as well.

It is this writer's firm belief that a novel approach and examination of Fourth Ezra as a Christian text may not only enable a clarification of the topic discussed above, but will also shed light on other baffling "contradictions" as well.

CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS IN THE SYRIAC APOCALYPSE OF BARUCH

by Rivka Nir

The author of the apocalyptic book, the "Syriac Apocalypse of Baruch" reveals his eschatological concept in three main visions: (1) the description of the appearance of the Messiah (Chapters 24–30); (2) the vision of the cedar, the vine and the spring (Chapters 36–40); and (3) the vision of the cloud with the bright water and the black water (Chapters 53, 56–64).

These visions describe the apocalyptic drama which will take place at the end of time; the evil periods that will precede it; the appearance of the Messiah; and the redemption which he will bring to his followers. However, the symbolism of the Messianic feast, the manna, the vine and the spring, and the bright and black water are also intended to arouse associations to two of the ancient and major sacraments of the

Christian Church: the Eucharist and baptism, both of which have distinct eschatological significance.

The first vision describes the revelation of the Messiah which is designed to launch a new era which will be designated by the eschatological feast. This messianic feast which is scheduled to take place in paradise is actually the Eucharist, for which the Behemoth and the Leviathan were preserved. The Eucharist is symbolized by the profusion of grain, grapes and manna, which will once more drop down from Heaven. The grain is a symbol of Jesus' body, as is the manna (which is the "bread of life") and the grapes, or wine, which symbolize his blood, and it is clear that both elements are the focus of the sacramental Eucharist.

The second vision which describes the forest, the cedar, the vine and the spring, denotes another facet of the coming of the Messiah — his struggle with the Antichrist and his victory over him. Here too, as in the first vision, the *parousia* is described via these two main Christian sacraments. The vine and the spring, clearly refer to the Messiah. As stated in Christian literature, Jesus is the "true vine", but he is also a flowing spring, a source of living water. The combination of the vine and the spring alludes to the Eucharist and to baptism; the blood is the vine, and the water of baptism is the spring.

In the third vision, the author chooses to portray the sacrament of baptism by means of the bright water and the black water. Bright water in Christian sources is a symbol for baptism; those who are baptized are said to see the light. The bright water and the black water, which are interpreted as historical periods, are actually the doctrine of the "two ways" presented to baptismal candidates: the way of light, or life, which is the belief in Jesus, "the Light of the World" and those who follow him "will have the light of life and will never walk in darkness" (*John* 8:12). On the other hand, the way of darkness represents Satan, and is followed by those who do not believe in Jesus. The alternation of the bright and the black water symbolizes the eternal struggle between these two ways,

which will terminate in the end of time, when the Messiah will defeat Satan and the forces of darkness.

WHO WAS THE COMPILER OF THE
SAMARITAN HEBREW-ARABIC DICTIONARY, *HA-MELIZ*?

by Ali Watad

In the present article, the author attempts to shed new light on the problem of identifying the author of *ha-Meliz*, the bilingual Samaritan Hebrew-Arabic dictionary of Pinkhas ha-Kohen. After solving various enigmas in the eight extant manuscripts of the dictionary, he arrives at the conclusion that the work should be attributed to Pinkhas ha-Kohen ha-Rabban, who flourished during the fourteenth century.

Previous scholarly inquiry into this problem failed to utilize all the extant manuscripts and thus yielded two conflicting scholarly opinions.

Ben-Hayyim concluded that the author of *ha-Meliz* was indeed the 14th century sage (Pinkhas V), whereas L.V. Vilsker attributed this work to Pinkhas IV, who was active towards the end of the ninth century.

A brief survey of the manuscripts and their inter-relationship, as well as their major characteristics (alphabetical order; cross-references to entries; several explanations to a single entry; special terminology) opens the discussion.

The arguments adduced by the author for his conclusion include the following:

- (1) The author of *ha-Meliz* enunciated the inter-dental consonants d t;
- (2) he adhered closely to the Arabic translation, which was formulated between the 11th–13th centuries; (3) he utilized the Arabic column of *ha-Meliz*, which was composed between the 11th–14th centuries; (4) he explained Arabic personal names, a practice most likely initiated towards

the end of tenth and the beginning of the eleventh centuries; (5) The lacking first radical and the mute first radical of verbs are conjugated according to the mute second radical of verbs, apparently a relatively late phenomenon, both in Aramaic and Samaritan. To all these, one might add the fact that the autographical comment of the earliest reader of MS A dates from 1670 CE.

Basing himself on all the above findings, especially on the first one, the author has concluded that *ha-Meliz* was compiled between the fourteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century. Since the only known Pinkhas during this period was Pinkhas V, who was famous as an active leader of the Samaritan community, the present writer has attributed the authorship of *ha-Meliz* to him.

NOUNS CONTAINING THE PREFIX *TAU*(ת) IN TANNAITIC
HEBREW:
THE DECLENSIONS TIF'ELET; TIF'OLET AND TEFULA

by Chaim E. Cohen

This article deals with three declensions in tannaitic Hebrew preceded by the prefix *tau*(ת) in the feminine: **tif'elet** (תִּפְעֻלֶת); **tif'olet** (תִּפְעֻלָּה) and **tefula** (תִּפְעֻלָּה). The common denominator of these declensions is their novel dissemination in the Hebrew of the rabbis, compared to their dissemination in the Bible. This innovation cannot be fleshed out be a mere listing of the nouns together with their declensions and a close study of each and every entry *per se*, as well as a broad over-all summary, are a necessity. A morphological and semantic portrayal of the three declensions and their novel developments in tannaitic Hebrew is presented herein.

The diffusion of the nouns under the declension **tif'elet** in both

biblical and tannaitic Hebrew is rather scant although their patterns of dissemination differ. Tannaitic Hebrew contains only four definite examples for this declension: **tiglahat** (תגלחת); **tosefet** (תוספת); **totevet** (תותבת); **tif'eret** (תפארת). The first three are indeed innovations of tannaitic Hebrew (one of these — **totevet** — even represents a novel root, shaped according to the Aramaic), while the usage of the fourth item in tannaitic Hebrew — **tif'eret**, which is actually of biblical origin — is limited to texts which assume an archaic garb.

The declension **tif'olet** itself represents an innovation of tannaitic Hebrew, as only one item under this declension is found in the Bible (**tilboshet**-תלבושת). Among the six nouns of **tif'olet** in tannaitic Hebrew, three are abstract nouns (**tar'omet**-תרעומת; **tishkhoret**-תשחורת; **tikhboset**-תכבוסת (= *nomen actionis*) — while two of them are the results of actions, *i.e.*, concrete nouns which have revolved from *nomens actionis* (**ta'aroret**-תערובת; **tiqrovvet**-תקרובת). The sixth item (**tisporret**-תספורת) is a concrete noun *par excellence* (=an implement).

The declension **tefula** is supposedly the richest declension of the three dealt with herein, since tannaitic Hebrew was found to contain no less than ten such items: **tevu'a**; **tevusa**; **temura**; **tenufa**; **tequfa**; **teruma**; **teru'a**; **tesomet** [yad]; **teshuva**; **teshu'a**. However, a careful study of these nouns and their usage reveals that **tefula** is not a viable declension of tannaitic Hebrew; an overwhelming majority of the nouns under this declension are actually biblical words which have been transformed into technical terms in tannaitic Hebrew. The only **tefula** noun representing spoken tannaitic Hebrew is **tevusa**. Even though this noun appears in the Bible (*hapex legomenon!*), the connection between the biblical noun and the usage to which it has been put in the teachings of the rabbis is most obscure. For all intents and purposes it is safe to say that, as far as tannaitic Hebrew is concerned, this is indeed a novel word.

"THE AGENT OF AN ACTION", "THE STIMULANT OF A STATE"
AND "THE INSTRUMENT" REALIZED BY THE PREPOSITIONAL
PHRASES 'AL-YEDE+NP, MIN+NP AND BE+NP

by Hava Repen

This article deals with the occurrences of the prepositions *min* (מִן/מֵ), *'al-yede* (עַל-יְדֵי) and *be* (בְּ) preceding verb complements which realize different influences on the action or state signified by the verb.

It is claimed that the occurrences of either *'al-yede* or *min*, both of which mark the "performance" domain, while not realized in the grammatical subject position, are conditioned by the governing constituent. When the verb indicates an action, the complement is preceded by *'al-yede*, e.g., *ha-yeled hufhad 'al-yede 'ahiv* ("the boy was frightened by his brother"). However, when it indicates a state (or coming into a state) the complement is preceded by *min*, e.g., *ha-yeled nivhal me-ha-re'amim* ("the boy was frightened by the thunder.")

Thus, *'al-yede+NP* marks "the agent of an action", while *min+NP* marks "the stimulant of a state".

Furthermore, occurrences of a *be+NP* adjunct are also being dealt with, due to the fact that there is a common semantic basis for this adjunct and the *min+NP* complements. Nevertheless, based on syntactical and distributional properties, it is shown that this adjunct constitutes a distinct category, which has been titled: "the instrument".

"THE ENTIRE EXILE TRANSPIRED BECAUSE OF KOSHER MEAT"

By Menachem Ben-Shalom

S. Y. Agnon's novel, *Shira*, includes a significant discussion of the meaning and the essence of restraint, which are expressed both explicitly

and implicitly. This overt, though incidental, discussion, makes its first appearance in connection with Taglicht's cognizance of the fact that Tamara Herbst has joined the *porshim* [those who formed the splinter terrorist groups that broke off from the *Hagana*] and is involved in a terrorist act. However, his reprimanding talk with Tamara falls on deaf ears, thereby ending the novel's explicit discussion of this topic. Notwithstanding, the narrator of *Shira* transfers the overt, incidental discussion on restraint to an indirect yet central facet of his literary and cultural exposition. This indirect discussion involves the tension aroused by the clash between the culture of the new secular Israeli, whose roots lie in gentile culture, and the old traditional way of life which is, in his opinion, the *bona fide* culture of Israel.

Tamara and Taglicht represent two opposing cultural archetypes. The *sabra* archetype, represented by Tamara, is the generation born into the nascent culture of *Eretz Israel*. This "new" and "normal" Jew, the product of Eretz-Israeli education, ultimately takes on qualities of narrow-mindedness, ethnocentrism, aggressiveness and colonialism. In contrast with Tamara, Taglicht represents the pioneers of the first generation who embraced the old culture, integrating it with scientific pursuit based on a broad humanistic world view.

The covert discussion on restraint (pp. 305–308 of the Hebrew edition), takes the form of an introduction — a discussion of the laws of *kashrut* — and two internal episodes introduced into the narrative as "a story within a story".

The introductions to both of these stories expand the discussion on the laws of forbidden foods and focus on the laws of ritual slaughter, specifically the question of taking a soul and the limits of power.

In the first story, Tamara relates an episode dealing with a Hannuka celebration sponsored by the Revisionist movement, at which a young observant Jew from the underground refused to eat the traditional potato pancakes served there, since their preparation involved the use of the oil of geese, that had not been ritually slaughtered. One of the participants at that celebration is a physician from the Caucasus mountains, an area

wherein the Jews always defended themselves and were thus spared the sufferings of exile. He argues that Jews of other regions were unable to engage in self-defense since the laws of ritual slaughter limited contact with blood to only a small, specially-trained portion of the population. The Caucasian summarizes the views of the activist secular right-wing, using anthropological and sociological reasons to explain the passive position of Diaspora Jewry.

In contrast with the Caucasian doctor, Taglicht opines that the laws of ritual slaughter in Jewish culture were created in order to limit the cruelty and bestiality inherent in the act of taking an animal's soul, which are characteristic of the Gentiles. In order to stress this point, Taglicht relates a story that he once heard from Hemdat. In his youth, Hemdat resided in the Templar neighborhood of Jaffa. He admired the Templars and their culture, with which he was familiar, through the works of German writers and poets.

This admiration for the Templars increased considerably when an attractive young woman from Stuttgart, whom he identified with the young female characters in German literature, came to stay at his neighbors' house. However, his illusion of German culture, of which he possessed intimate knowledge, dissipated the very moment he saw her cruelly striking the head of a chicken, that she wished to cook. In the wake of the chicken's shrill piercing cry, Hemdat's attraction to the magic of this foreign culture was transformed into hatred for its transparent cruelty and senselessness. Badly shaken by this traumatic experience, he wandered aimlessly in the streets and alleys of Jaffa, ultimately arriving at a synagogue. Hemdat chanced upon a study group under the guidance of a pious *shochet* [ritual slaughterer] known for his great compassion, who had not even the slightest sign of cruelty on his face.

The blond girl from Stuttgart in this tale is suggestive of Frederick Nietzsche's "blond beast", an image symbolizing the animalistic dionysian incursion into Western Apollonian Culture, in the writings of the German philosopher. On the other hand, Hemdat's betrayal of Hebrew culture,

through his attraction to a foreign one, is apparently based on the talmudic sources that deal with the pursuit of foreign gods and idol worship.

The narrator uses the image of the *shochet* and Jewish ritual slaughter in order to portray Jewish culture as compassionate. The archetypal image of Tamara, representing the most revolutionary and extreme Revisionist Zionist ideology, presents the culture of Israeli Zionist youth as aggressive and cruel, thereby suggesting that the potential for cruelty of those who were once compassionate, is far greater than among those who are cruel from birth.

THE CHARIOT OF EZEKIEL: AN UNKNOWN ZOHARIC COMMENTARY

by Ronit Meroz

This article deals with a hitherto unknown Zoharic commentary on the first chapter of Ezekiel.

Two ideas of special interest should be mentioned here. First, the identification of the *tehi* — the celestial "weaver's beam", around which the heavenly bodies revolve — with the divine Sephirot; and second, the possible allusion to a group of kabbalists — "the craftsmen and the artisans" — to which the author may have belonged. This group was probably interested in the mystical and the magical aspects of the tabernacle.

Three of the stylistic features of this commentary are known to be characteristic of early Zoharic texts: the use of literal and homeletical methods alongside symbolic methods; the use of an admixture of Hebrew and Aramaic; and the lack of any reference to the literary fiction concerning R. Shim'on bar-Yohai and his disciples. This text also reveals theoretical affinities to early Zoharic texts such as Midrash ha-Ne'elam

and Sitre Tora. It is therefore concluded that this text must have been written at about the same time, namely, before the beginning of the 1280s.

FROM *BET NETIVOT* TO *TAḤANAT SADOT*: A COMPREHENSIVE
STUDY OF THREE POEMS BY AVRAHAM SHLONSKY AND A
THREEFOLD POEM BY NATAN ALTERMAN

by Boaz Arpali

The present article is mainly devoted to a comparison of three successive poems from the cycle *Mas'a*, which opens *'Avne Bohu*, published by Avraham Shlonsky in 1933, and a single poem, *Taḥanat Sadot* of Natan Alterman, which is, in itself, a somewhat triparted composition, as it is actually a combination of three poems. The latter made its initial appearance in the second section ("Love Songs") of Alterman's *Kokhavim ba-Huz*, published in 1938.

This comparison between these poems is part of a more extensive comparative study undertaken by the present writer (Arpali 1983; 1989) aimed to demonstrate how Alterman's *Kokhavim ba-Huz* — a work which granted him a pivotal role in the realm of Modern Hebrew Literature — actually developed from *'Avne Bohu*, the magnum opus of Avraham Shlonsky, his mentor in Hebrew poetry.

This process of development evinced the absorption of influence, confrontation and intensification regarding variegated poetic and thematic observations.

The common denominator of these poetic groupings is their mutual usage of linguistic and material realities related to or referring to "the railway train" and its accessories.

The major aim of this comparison is to describe the differences in the existential patterns of these materials: their functional methods; their

attributed and derived meanings; as well as the different modes of such attributions or derivations in each poetic grouping.

As a result, it will be possible to evince some broad general poetic observations which differentiate between both poets. For instance, in the poems of Shlonsky, these materials are construed as elements of a familiar reality, possessing an "internal" and "external" autobiographic – realistic status as well as an inclusive and characteristic reality. On the other hand, in the poems of Alterman, these materials appear as elements of an imaginary – poetical world, which does not have a separate individualized existence, before the advent of the poem itself. Consequently, the task of the reader is to build and reconstruct this virtual world via the text itself. In the poems of Shlonsky, the above-mentioned materials are "typical" and generalized in relation to the contextual parameters within whose confines they appear. In contrast, these very same materials frequent the poetry of Alterman in non-typical more incidental contexts, or to some extent, even oppose the consensual literary contents within whose confines their appearance is expected (*e.g.*, Shlonsky described the central rail station in a port city whereas Alterman's poem deals with an isolated station situated among the fields, in the middle of the Negev). In Shlonsky's poem, these materials appear in the "forefront" and are clearly identified, while in Alterman's work they are dragged into the poem by way of incidental observations, by virtue of their synecdochic and metonymic details.

According to their function in the poetry of Shlonsky, these details represent nigh explicit symbols signifying the plight of man in the modern world; in Alterman's poem, these details serve as components of a personal love story to which they lead via evasive back-roads.

As a result of all these factors, as well as several other additional insights, the relationship between the general meanings of the poem and the concrete quasi- realistic ones evident in *Taḥanat Sadot* is much more complicated and their methods of fomentation are immeasurably refined in comparison with those which characterize Shlonsky's *Bet Netivot*.

In the general comparative context — between the works and the

poetics that they embody — the specific comparison of the two poems strengthens, among others, the following general observations:

(1) While Shlonsky stands stunned by the modern world personified by the big city, both attracted to it and threatened by it at one and the same time, Alterman gives the appearance of a person to whom the city has long ago become part of his recognized milieu and his attitude to it and to the phenomena connected with it is one of closeness and intimacy; (2) Alterman's confrontation with modernism transpires during the course of its integration within the thematics and the romantic — or neo-romantic — problematics. (3) Regarding the didactic-rationalistic dimensions and the hyperboic-pathetic tone which characterize the poems of Shlonsky's *'Avne Bohu*, it is interesting to note that many of the poems in Alterman's *Kokhavim ba-Huz* excel in their structural and thematic complexity. These poems are frequently polyvalent and ambiguous, even to the point of contradicting one another. As a result, they are not easily interpreted, and their pathos is generally restrained, notwithstanding the third section of this work. (4) *Inter alia*, *Tahanat Sadot* is symptomatic of Alterman's attachment to symbolism in the spirit of Mallarmé, whereas Shlonsky exhibits a closer tendency to such poets as Baudlaire and Rimbaud.

"IN FRONT OF THE BOOKSHELF" — BETWEEN THE SACRED
SCROLLS AND THE SHAKESPEAREAN QUARTOES

by Ziva Shamir

H. N. Bialik composed his well-known poem *Lifne 'Aron ha-Sefarim* ("In Front of the Bookshelf") in 1910 following the publication of his major scholarly project *Sefer ha-Aggada*, an annotated anthology of ancient Jewish legendary traditions edited by the poet in collaboration with Y. H. Ravnitsky. This seemingly classical poem dealing with the return to the

threshold of the old house of learning was completed just after Bialik's return from distant lands to home and family in Odessa. That period was marked by a stay of six years in Warsaw where he served as the literary editor of *ha-Shiloach*, the most prominent Hebrew periodical at the turn of the century, and a short voyage to Eretz Israel where the pioneers expected him to express his immediate admiration for their achievements.

The blend of hope and despair that can be detected in *Lifne 'Aron ha-Sefarim* is a direct reflection of the poet's personal mood at that particular stage of his literary career. During this period, Bialik was torn apart by contradictory forces, being attracted by both East and West, by Odessa and by Warsaw, by Europe and by Eretz Israel, by Hebrew and by Yiddish. However this poem is also the epitomé of a collective disorientation, a reflection of the contemporary national scene after the Uganda crisis, following the death of Herzl and the Chernoviz conference, where the superiority of Yiddish as a national language had been staunchly advocated. Jewish Odessa, the home of Bialik and his family from 1900, was under a rapid process of evacuation after the abortive revolution of 1905. Like the great masses of East European Jewry, Bialik also hesitated whether to immigrate to Palestine, to Western Europe (where his patron Ahad Ha'am was staying at the time) or to America (where Scholem Aleichem and his family were attempting to settle down).

The above-mentioned state of confusion and disorientation is expressed throughout "In Front of the Bookshelf" with the aid of an intertextual relationship with the famous soliloquy delivered by Lady Macbeth ("Come thick night / And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell [...] / Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark / To cry: hold hold!"). In fact this particular Shakespearean monologue played a major role in Hebrew Haskala poetry (*viz.*, the dramatic and poetic works of Joseph Ha'efrati and Y. M. Lebbensohn [Michal]). Bialik utilized this monologue with the knowledge that the West (and the revolutionary ideas fostered by its philosophers that had also enhanced the ideas of the Hebrew Haskala movement) had implanted great expectations in many Jewish hearts, but had also disappointed them causing bitter despair.

The speaker in Bialik's poem is a vagrant bard (a modern transformation of the "Wandering Jew") who has forsaken the holy scrolls and does not find any adequate alternative to replace them. After a tiring quest, the poem concludes with the speaker's plea to the golden eyes of the stars that they shed new light upon him. This is a rather ambiguous ending since the golden eye is a symbol of both hope and deceit. In "In Front of the Bookshelf", the last of Bialik's bet ha-midrash poems, the poet expresses his fears in a suggestive symbolistic manner. These fears presumably arise from the terrible vacuum awaiting him as a modern Jew who has given up his national heritage but has not yet created a secular culture that may serve as a worthy alternative to bygone cultural values.

HOLISTIC SYSTEMS IN TWENTIETH CENTURY JEWISH
THOUGHT: BUBER AND GORDON — BETWEEN PARALLELISM
AND SUPPOSED INFLUENCE

by Avraham Shapira

Martin Buber and Aaron David Gordon are among the pivotal authorities of contemporary Jewish thought. Both of them possess a unique position among the giants of the Jewish genius during the twentieth century. However, while Buber has been recognized as a universal personality — his writings have been translated into twenty-four different languages in four continents and he is widely renowned in several cultural spheres — Gordon's reclaim and influence are limited to the sphere of Hebrew culture. Till the present, most of Gordon's writings have not even been translated into English. Major portions of his thought which reveal a poignant and renewed actuality for the complicated and problematic world of the second millenium are still waiting their redemption.

Martin Buber is mainly identified with the dialogical philosophy that

he developed and introduced beginning with the second decade of the twentieth century, in all the venues of his spiritual thought and literary endeavors. The work which publicized his ideological treatise — *I and Thou* — ripened and was sent to the publisher in 1922, the very year that Gordon died.

Only a few of the disciples of Buber and scholars who have engaged in the study of his multi-faceted and ramified intellectual enterprise are aware of the close relationship that exists between the thought of Buber and that of Gordon. The present article is designed to illuminate mutual dimensions in their teachings as well as the patterns of influence that the writings of A. D. Gordon exerted over M. Buber.

Aaron David Gordon (Trojano 1856–Degania 1922) and Martin Buber (Vienna 1878–Jerusalem 1965) are the offspring and products of the *fin de siècle*. Both absorbed their childhood memories from the East-European Jewish experience, including the "worlds" and the leadership of the courts of the Hassidic *Zaddiqim*.

Both Buber and Gordon developed and introduced systems of thought which were designed to encompass the relationships or the attitude of the individual to the human world, to the universe (or to the cosmos) and to his belief in the God of Israel. An interesting parallel between the central foci and the broad outlines of both these systems should be noted. Moreover, there is also great affinity between their modes of thought. Both savants engaged in organic thinking, which should be distinguished from systematic philosophic thinking. The organic method is a basic characteristic of both the Buberian and the Gordonian System of thought.

Ever since the third decade of the twentieth century, and to be more exact, ever since the appearance of Buber's first anthropological-philosophic treatise, *The Problem of Man*, the above-mentioned signs of identity of organic thinking apply to his writings. In many respects, these observations also hold true for the literary corpus of A.D. Gordon. Reciprocity and even mutual stipulative connections with the teachings of Buber exist among the various components of his web of thought (books; articles; rejoinders; personal correspondence).

Gordon actually deals with an organic concept: the life of the individual; the authorities of human life (community; nation; the family of man in general) as well as the cycles of the cosmos.

In summation, the three central hubs of the Gordonian universe are:

- (1) the individual and his introspection; the paths of his self-fulfillment;
- (2) the individual as a part of his affiliative circuit: family; community; nation; and the family of man in general;
- (3) man's relationship to the cosmos; man and God.

The philosophy of Buber is also based on three main axes and he refers to them as "the three spheres of the world of relation" The axes made their initial appearance only with the birth of Buber's system of dialogical thinking in his singular programmatic work: *I and Thou*.

The three Buberian axes represent the three basic categories of man's contacts- confluences with his world:

- (1) life with nature (the inanimate and the animate);
- (2) life with man;
- (3) life with spiritual beings (*i.e.*, the attachments of the human being to the transcendent and the meta-human world.

Gordon emphasized the affiliation of the individual to "communal life", and consequently the formative power of historical national culture, which is stamped "in the roots of the soul of each individual".

Buber offers an interesting parallel to this, following his national view, which is surprisingly similar to that of Gordon. He believed that the relation of the individual to one's nation is not an institutional or organizational fact, but an immanent one: "the human person belongs, whether he wants to acknowledge it and take it seriously or not, to the community in which he was born or to the one which he has chanced to enter." Buber asserted that the human soul, at the moment of creation, is imprinted with a "communal" element. The national views of Buber and Gordon are similar in that they were based on the duality of the personal and communal element in the soul, and on the belief in national universalism. However, as a rule, one cannot speak decisively concerning the influence of Gordon over Buber. On the other hand, Buber was directly

influenced by the national view of Gordon embodied in his "people-man" value-concept, even to the point of adopting it and assimilating it into his view of Zionism.

The "people-man" concept is one of the foundations of Jewish humanism and national universality in the teachings of Gordon and Buber. Both these savants grappled with the existential and the historical crisis within the realities facing the Jewish nation, while at the same time, attuning themselves to the utopic horizon, and striving to achieve the vision of "putting the world aright" (תיקון העולם).