Exegesis IX

The 20th Century: Parshanut takes on the Documentary Hypothesis

Hoffman, Hertz, Cassuto, Leibowitz, Breuer, Elitzur, Bin Nun, et al

gor up at him, his 12 One day, when his brothers had gone off to pasture their father's flocks at Shechem, 13 Israel said to Joseph, "Look, your brothers are with the flocks at Shechem. Come, let me send you to them." "I am ready," he answered. 14 "Go then," he went on, "find out how your brothers and the flocks are faring, and bring back word." With that, he sent him off from the valley of Hebron, and he made his way to Shechem.

15 A man came upon him as he was wandering in the fields. "What are you looking for?" the man asked him. 16" am look. ing for my brothers," he replied. "Could you tell me where they are pasturing?" 17 The man answered, "They have moved on from here; in fact, I heard them say, 'Let us go on to Dothan." So Joseph followed his brothers and caught up with them in

18 They noticed him from a distance; and before he got close to them they conspired to kill him. 19 They said to one another, "Here comes that dreamer! 20 Why don't we kill him now and throw him into one of the pits? We could say that a wild beast devoured him. We shall then see what came of his dreams!"

/21 When Reuben' heard this, he tried to save him from their hands. He said, "Let us not take his life! 22 Shed no blood" Reuben told them. "Just throw him into that pit, out there in the desert, but don't do away with him yourselves"-his purpose being to deliver him from their hands and restore him to his father. 23 So when Joseph reached his brothers they stripped

but let us not do away with him ownedon. After all he is our brother, our own flesh!" His brothen aprend /28 Meanwhile, Midianite traders passed by and ther polled Joseph up from the pit. / They sold Joseph to the Manager for twenty pieces of silver. / Joseph was the bies to Egypt. 29 When Reuben went back to the pit and saw that Joseph was missing, he rent his clothes 30 and returned to his bernes, co claiming, "The boy is gone! What am I to do non" 31 They took Joseph's tunic, slaughtered a kid, and depel the tunic in its blood. 32 They had the ornamented trait tales to their father, and they said, "We found this Make see whether it is your son's tunic or not." 33 He recognized it and calendary "My son's tunic! A wild beast devoured him! Joseph fell prey to

34 Jacob rent his clothes, put sackcloth on his him, and mourned his son many days. 35All his sons and despites tried to console him, but he refused to be consoled arving. No. I will go down to my son to Sheol in mourning!" Thus did he father lament him.

36 The Midianites, meanwhile, sold Joseph in Egypt to Putiphar, a courtier of Pharaoh, his chief steward.

3 MT "him,"

NOTES

David Zvi Hoffman (1843-1921) Served as professor of Bible and rector of the Orthodox Rabbinical Seminary of Berlin (Hildesheimer) and was an outspoken and implacable opponent of biblical criticism. In the introduction to his commentary on Leviticus, he outlined the responsibilities of a traditional exegete.

Every Jew who comes to interpret the Torah of Moses is obligated to consider a special condition that will necessarily influence his commentary, as though that condition dictated rules for his exegesis. The condition is: our faith in the divinity of the Jewish tradition. Authentic Judaism awards the Oral Law the same significance that the Written Law has. The Oral Law incorporates interpretations of things that are opaque in the Written Law, things that are ambivalent, as well as commandments that are not explicit in the Torah of Moses. From this we may infer that only in very few places is it dubious what God wished to command us to do, because even if the matter is not expressed clearly in the words of the Torah, it is explained in the Oral Law. Therefore, the responsibility of the exegete is solely to determine about those legislative verses why this idea was expressed specifically in this fashion or why these expressions were utilized rather than others.

• However, even in those places that the idea is not clarified by tradition, the Jewish exegete must be cautious in his commentaries not to contradict any received Halakhah. Just as the Written Law cannot contain two things that are contradictory, so it may not contradict the Oral Law which also originated at Sinai. Any interpretation that is in opposition to one that we have received through the rabbinic tradition, or that contains some concept that could reject a particular halakhah, must be considered "revealing an antinomian facet of the Torah" (*m'galeh panim baTorah shelo k'halakha*) and must be banished from the boundaries of Israel.

Joseph Hertz (1872-1946) Chief Rabbi of the United Kingdom

- Wellhausen says, "this view of Solomon's Temple is unhistorical," because no king after Solomon is left uncensored for having tolerated the continuance of the "high places" (bamot).
- It is the old familiar argument that the Law could not have existed because it can be shown that it was broken! According to such logic, there could never have been any Prohibition Law in America.

Moshe David (Umberto) Cassuto (1883-1951)

The intention [of the Bible] was to create a new culture, principally and fundamentally opposed to the cultures [of the ancient Near East] while at the same time drawing upon them and receiving sustenance from them in all aspects of material day-to-day life, as well as in regard to anything that did not contradict those fundamental principles.

As Maimonides had already asserted (Guide 3:29):

• The knowledge of [pagan] attitudes and activities is a prime source for providing the rationales of *mizvot*, because the basis of our entire Torah and the axis on which it rotates is the elimination of those attitudes from [our] thoughts and of those traces from existence.

A rabbi, and historian of Italian (Florentine) Jewry, an avid scholar of the Bible and the ancient near East, Cassuto published *Torat ha-Te'udot ve-Sidduram shel Sifrei ha-Torah* (*The Documentary Hypothesis and the Composition of the Pentateuch*, 1961), which took the documentary hypothesis to task and critically examined each of its five "pillars."

With respect of the use of divine names, for example, Cassuto cited the evidence of the Shema—"ha-Shem Eloheinu"—as proof that the Torah recognizes the identical essential nature of the different names, combining the particular and universal aspects of God.

Nehama Leibowitz

(1905-1997)

A passionate educator, Zionist, and scholar. After immigrating to Israel in 1930, Leibowitz vigorously taught students in and outside of the classroom, eventually winning the prestigious Israel Prize in the field of Education in 1956. Through her teaching, Leibowitz brought numerous people, including non-Jews, to a new conception of Torah study. She refused to acknowledge that she was a revolutionary in any way, but ultimately her unique achievements changed Orthodox society's perception of a woman's capabilities and undoubtedly opened doors for the female Torah scholars who followed.

ערוכים בירי נחמה ליבוביץ יוצא לאור ע"י חו והשכלה למבוגרים ולנוער הפחדרות נכי מזרחי באפריקה פרדת בראפים (מעיה) א, פסוקים ג' דן מתקורות השצלתן היש בפסוקים אלה סבה או רפז לסבה, למת שקח ח' אל מנחת הכל ושל קדן ואל מנחתו לא שעה? פיין בפסוקים ובמפרטים, חולי המצא בהם השובה. ב. פחוק ד, יש אומרים שפסוק זה הוא הקשה ביותר בכל ספר בראשיה. 1. / מת פרום הפלים "אם חסיב -- שאת" לפי רס"י רפב"ן ראב"ע ספורנו? להבנה הרפב"ף שישו בפ מ"ם קוצי נחמה"ן שם יראפים מיה שאה. 2. / אל מי מוסב הכנוי שבמלה 'תשוקהו' וכמלה 'בו' לפי רש"י וספורנו? ב. מה קשה לרש"י בפסוקים הבאים? STUDIES IN THE WEEKLY ה. פסוק י"ב.מה ההבול בין רש"י ורמב"ן וראב"ע בפרוש המלים גדול עוני מנטא? / רמב"ן עו למלים חרפה נעורי"/. מה היא חולטת רש"י ומה היא חולשת הרמב"ן כפרוש המלים האלוו? ר. הנתיקו את פסוק מ"ו בסימני בסוק/ נקודות, פסיקים, פרכאות, סימני BASED ON THE LESSONS OF THE LESSONS OF ח. מה פרוש המלים והבכורים המובאים במפרשים: ו. פסוק ח. ברס"ד "מצה". 2. ראב"ע פסוק ח. 'וקואלים נולדו ביום סגריר". 3. פסוק י"ב ברש"י "אתה טוען"? ט. על הפסוק ט"ז "וימא קין סלפנה ה'", ישנה מחלוקח במדרש רבה: ויצא קין מהיכן יצא? ר' איבא אומר: העטיל דברים לאחוריו / הטליך דבריו של הקב"ה אחהי גוו כאום המוסיל כליו לאחוריו/ ויצא כגונב דעת העליונים". ר' חננא בר יצחק אומר: "יצא שמח... פגע בו אדם הראשון אכר לו: מה נעשה בדינך? אמר לו: עשיחי תשובה ונתפשרחי, התחיל אדם מחפח על פניו ואמר: מזמור סיה ליום המבת טוב להודות לה'." איזו מחתי התשובות האלה קרוכה יוה . - של מקרא? מי ממפרטינו בוטה בם הוא לדעה טעטה קין תסובה? West Ciers of Sokolow ייית בחורים לקוות עיל יי הטאלות ענה עד כפה שופנן ייכי ביניב. "לם עלי, הפלאט. בפונ". כחוב בכתב ברור והטער לי ביירונד החום לתקונים.

Almost single-handedly, Leibowitz restored the Jewish tradition of parshanut ha-mikra to a central place among Israeli Bible scholars. For David Ben-Gurion and other secular Zionists, traditional commentators lacked the insight that living in the land of Israel and participating in a state afforded. Many of Ben-Gurion's secular contemporaries, shared his lukewarm attitude toward rabbinic commentary as a guide to the Bible. Although a grudging acknowledgment might have been awarded to the medieval pashtanim as scholarly precursors, Leibowitz treated the early midrashim/aggadot with equal respect. First and foremost, Leibowitz made it impossible to ignore this indigenously Jewish exegetical tradition. Only in the last 150 years with the development of the literary historical approach do we find this type of explanation being advanced. Cassuto, for instance, explains the recapitulation in terms of the narrative conventions of the ancient east. It is usual for an account of the execution of a certain series of acts previously outlined to repeat verbatim the acts that were executed and not to report merely that they were repeated. The difference between Ralbag and modern scholars is that the latter based their findings on actual records discovered in their days. Ralbag on the other hand, merely suggested this might be so without having any independent data on which to base it.15

שמות פרק לה, פסוקים א - לה

ג. שבת ומשכן - שאלות ברש"י

<u>פסוק ב'</u>

יישַׁשֶׁת יָמִים תֵּעָשֶׂה מְלָאכָה וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי יִהְיָה לָכֶם קֹדֶשׁ שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹן לַהייי

<u>רש"י:</u>

ד"ה ששת ימים: הקדים להם אזהרת שבת לציווי מלאכת המשכן, לומר שאינו דוחה שבת.

השווה לדברי <u>רש"י</u> אלה את דבריו <u>בויקרא י"ט ג'</u>:

ייאִישׁ אָמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ וְאֶת שַׁבְּּתֹתֵי תִּשְׁמֹרוּיי

ד"ה ואת שבתותי תשמורו: סמך שבת למורא אב לומר אף על פי שהזהרתיך על מורא אב, אם יאמר לך: "חלל את השבת" – אל תשמע לו, וכן בשאר כל המצוות.

- 1. לכאורה דברי רש"י פה ושם סותרים אלה את אלה. מהי הסתירה?
 - 2. כיצד תוכל ליישב את הסתירה?

ָוְאַתָּה דַבַּר אֶל־בְּגַי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאפֹר אָך אֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמְרוּ כִּי אוֹת הִוא בֵינַי וּבֵינֵיכֶם (בי) לְדֹרְתֵיכֶּם לְדַּעַת כֵּי אֲגִי יִהֹוָה מִקִּדִּשְׁבֵם:

"Speak to the Children of Israel, saying, 'Most certainly you shall keep my Sabbaths, for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that you may know that I am Hashem who sanctifies you.

רלבייג תועלות

ואולם התועלות המגיעות משמירת שבת כבר זכרנום במה שקדם ובזה המקום.

ואתה דבר וגו' – צריך לדעת אומרו ואתה מה שאינו רגיל לומר בשאר מצות, גם תוספת וא"ו, עוד למה כפל לומר דבר אל בני ישראל לאמר, והגם שפירשתי בתחלת פרשת תרומה כי צריך לומר דבר ולא תספיק לאמר לבד, כאן הוסיף לומר תיבת לאמר פ"ב מלבד לאמר ראשונה, עוד צריך לדעת אומרו אך, ואומרו שבתותי לשון רבים, ורבותינו ז"ל דרשו בפרק כלל גדול (שבת ס"ט.) שבא ליתן שמירה אחת לשבתות הרבה יע"ש, ובמקום אחר (מכילתא) דרשו שבתותי להביא דברים שהם משום מקבילות במקרא

[ביאור לפסוק זה כלול בביאור פסוק יב

תרגום ירושלמי (יונתן)

ואנת תמליל עם בני ישראל למימר ברם ית יומי שביא דילי תינטרון ארום את הוא בין מימרי וביניכון {לדריכון} אוד ארום אנא הוא י״י מקדישכון.

ואתה דבר אל בני ישראל – ואתה, אף על פי שהפקדתיך לצוותם על 🔂 מלאכת המשכן, אל יקל בעיניך לדחות את השבת מפני אותה מלאכה. אך את שבתותי תשמרו – אף על פי שתהיו רדופין בזריזות המלאכה, שבת אל תדחה מפניה. כל אכין ורקין מיעוטין הן, למעט שבת ממלאכת המשכז.

If by virtue of the freedom of choice given to students regarding commentaries, the words of the Bible will be endeared to them—something of which I am certain—then there can be no greater respect for scholars; namely, that the words of Torah will be endeared to students thanks to them. The main thing is that they should study Torah from every angle: search it well, choose or reject interpretations; providing they are engrossed in Torah study out of love.

Yehudah Elitzur

(1911-1997)

• A contemporary exegete is required, of course, to examine things in the light of contemporary knowledge.... If he does so, then he is following in the footsteps of the ancients even if he disagrees with them in a thousand details. However, one who only copies the ancients, shutting his eyes to newly discovered facts and knowledge, is abandoning the ways of the ancients and is rebelling against them

ספר שופטים

מסורש בידי

יהודה אליצור



הוצאת מוסד הרב קוק ירושלי

Mordechai Breuer

(1921-2007)

Of all the Orthodox approaches to biblical criticism and all the potential theological ramifications of the documentary hypothesis, the most unusual and controversial approach is that which he called "Shitat ha-Behinot," the Theory of Aspects, i.e., of multiple perspectives. Starting with the premise that the documentary hypothesis persists in spite of all previous attempts at its refutation, Breuer argues that it is not essentially inimical to Orthodox belief.

What connection is there between all these [critical] arguments, which are demonstrable, legitimate, and well-founded, and the authentic Jewish belief that the Torah comes from heaven and that it preceded Creation by 974 generations? For even if the accuracy of biblical criticism were to be proven, its conclusions do not affect the pure Jewish faith even one iota. Moreover, the scientific conclusions of biblical criticism not only are harmless to faith but are essential and mandatory for anyone who seeks to interpret the Bible—according to its *peshat* as well as its derash.

• מה לכל הטענות האלה, שהן מוכחות, מוצדקות ומבוססות – ולאמונה היהודית האמיתית שתורה היא משמים והיא קדמה לבריאת העולם תתקע"ד דור? שהרי אפילו תוכח צדקתו של ביקורת המקרא, הרי אין בטענותיה של זו גם נגיעה קלה באמונת ישראל הטהורה. יתר על כן: המסקנות המדעיות של ביקורת המקרא, לא רק שאין הן פוגעות באמונה, אלא הן נחוצות והכרחיות, לכל הרוצה לפרש את המקרא – כפשוטו וגם מדרשו!

Of everyone who read my article, there was barely anyone who understood that I accepted from the Bible critics only the discovery that the Torah has multiple sources, which can be proven scientifically. At the same time, I do not accept their opinion that these sources were written by multiple authors. Rather, I instead offer the Jewish belief that they were indeed authored by God, for this question depends solely on faith; science can offer no opinion on this.

Cited by Elyashev Reichner: *By Faith Alone; The Story of Rabbi Yehudah Amital* (Jerusalem: Maggid, 2011), pp. 134–135. Rabbi Amital invited Rabbi Breuer to teach Tanakh in Yeshivat Har Etzion, which he did for thirty-five years until his death in 2007.

Anyone who seeks to understand the Torah according to its simplest meaning (*peshat*), has to explain why the giver of the Torah saw fit to include in His Torah numerous contradictions, and to edit it in different styles to the extent that it appears—to one who rejects Torah's divine origin—as though it was written by several authors.

Why did He not give Moses at Sinai a uniform book without contradictions in content and without divergent styles? Had He done so, even those who reject Torah's divine origin would have to acknowledge that it was written by one person.

גישת התמורות: שיטה חדשה בפרשנות התורה The T'murot Approach is a new method of studying the Torah, which suggests a new interpretive model for solving the question of contradictions in biblical law. The approach accepts the claim that there are real contradictions in the Torah and suggests that the contradictions are the result of 'Tmurot', changes that have occurred in the law for various reasons.

The Torah is divine, but addressed to humans; therefore, it sensitively deals with changes in reality, with moral developments and with changes in the spiritual conditions of the Jewish people. Therefore, God sometimes gave a renewed command that updates the previous command.



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