2 of 4

HEBREW UNION COLLEGE - JEWISH INSTITUTE OF RELIGION
New York School

I-53
75C17)

INSTRUCTIONS TO LIBRARY

Statement by Referee

The Senior Thesis of Ronie R. Herstik

Entitled: A Critical Comparison of the Midrashic Treatment of the "Tree of Knowledge Episode"

1) May (with revisions) be considered for publication ( ) (✓)
yes no

2) May be circulated ( ) ( ) ( ) (✓)
to faculty to students to alumni no restriction

3) May be consulted in Library only ( ) ( )
by faculty by students

( ) (✓)
by alumni no restriction

4/11/77 Norma J. Cohen
(date) (signature of referee)

Statement by Author

I hereby give permission to the Library to circulate my thesis
(✓) ( )
yes no

The Library may sell positive microfilm copies of my thesis
(✓) ( )
yes no

6-2-77 Ronie R. Herstik
(date) (signature of author)

Library Record

The above-named thesis was microfilmed on _____
(date)

For the Library _____
(signature of staff member)

A CRITICAL COMPARISON OF THE MIDRASHIC TREATMENT OF THE "TREE OF KNOWLEDGE EPISODE" AND "THE CAIN-ABEL ENCOUNTER" WITH PHILO'S QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON GENESIS 1:33-76: A STUDY OF PHILO'S POSSIBLE RELATIONSHIP WITH RABBINIC TRADITION

Ronie R. Herstik

Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of
Requirements for Ordination

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
New York, N. Y.

April 1977

Referee: Professor Norman Cohen

1. Qu. in Gen. 1:32

(Gen. iii. 1) Did the serpent speak in the manner of men?

First, it is likely that not even in the beginning of the world's creation were the other animals without a share in speech, but that man excelled in voice (or utterance), being more clear and distinct. Second, when some miraculous deed is prepared, God changes the inner nature. Third, because our souls are filled with many sins and deaf to all utterances except one or another tongue to which they are accustomed; but the souls of the first creatures, as being pure of evil and unmixed, were particularly keen in becoming familiar with every sound. And since they were not provided only with defective senses, such as belong to a miserable bodily frame, but were provided with a very great body and the magnitude of a giant,[1] it was necessary that they should also have more accurate senses, and what is more, philosophical sight and hearing. For not inaptly do some conjecture that they were provided with eyes with which they could see those natures and beings and actions which were in heaven, and with ears to perceive sounds of every kind.

Leḳaḥ Tov Bereshit 3:1

שנאמר ויאמר הנחש אל האשה לא מוח תמותון, ובאיזה לשון דבר הנחש עם האשה בלשון הקודש, כי כתוב בוהנחש היה ערום, והיה מהלך בקומה זקופה, והיה יודע לשון האדם ותוכל לומר בלשון שלו, כי הבהמות יש להם לשון כל מין ומין לבדו, וכשם ששם להם שמות כי היה יודע לשום שמות לכל אחד ואחד כך היה מדבר עם הנחש.[2]

Discussion

This midrash explains that the serpent spoke to Eve in Hebrew. In addition, it is explained that each species of animal, including the serpent, had a language of its own which was understood by Adam.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

For all of you who have been with me whenever I turned to you,

My Mom, Dad, and my brother Mike

My rabbi, mentor, and loving friend, Dr. Samson H. Levey

My soulmate, Soni Krasik

My dear childhood friend, Lee Leader

My angel, Shirley Lasdon

My patient teacher and devoted friend, David Bouganin

My love to you all

To Rabbi Norman Cohen, my thesis advisor and friend, you too were with me whenever I turned to you. Your patience, devotion, and friendship I shall treasure in my heart always--

Ron

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN PALESTINE AND ALEXANDRIA IN THE TANNAITIC ERA

The Alexandrian Jewish community in the Tannaitic period, especially in the early years of the Common Era, flourished in what the historian Victor Tcherikover has described as an "international atmosphere."[1] It was in this "international atmosphere" of Hellenistic culture that Jews found themselves faced with the constant threat of assimilation and, concomitantly, with hindrances to their freedom of religious practice. The individual Jew could now abandon his ancestral religion and become a Roman citizen with all of the attending rights and privileges. The exposure to Hellenistic culture meant that Jews were constantly in the process of integrating or rejecting Graeco-Roman ideas and customs, thus the community was faced with the danger of having its Jewish identity undermined by the acceptance of foreign cultural elements.

The relative tolerance extended by the Romans to "old and venerated religions" meant that the Jews could

enjoy religious and social autonomy. This ensured, for some time, the continued existence of the organized Jewish community with synagogues, communal representation, and courts of law. However, the fact that the Jewish community was a tolerated religious community allowed to practice its "ancestral laws" meant that it had to be exempt from participation in the state cult, which, by the Roman period, took on the form of the deification of the emperor. The participation in the cult was not merely a demonstration of religious devotion, but perhaps more importantly, an act of allegiance to the polis as well as to the Empire. Tcherikover expresses the Jewish dilemma well when he says:

> The God of Israel acknowledged no rivals, nor could one pray to Him and simultaneously offer sacrifices to another deity. The cult of the gods was in Jewish eyes the complete negation of Judaism. The existence of the Jewish community was therefore bound up with the exemption of the Jews by the authorities from participation in the cult of the Greek [and Roman] deities, and this was its negative condition.[2]

Under these conditions, it was inevitable that the privileges of the Jewish community became the cause as well as the pretext for anti-Jewish feelings, which were incited by some Alexandrians who pointed to the Jews as foreigners, a people unwilling to demonstrate their complete allegiance to the Empire.

Religious tolerance (which initially had been extended to the organized Jewish community by the Ptolemies), as well as the constant exposure to Hellenistic culture, gave rise in Alexandria to a Hellenistic variety of Judaism well before the Roman conquest of Egypt. But it was under Roman rule that the Jewish community of Alexandria came to full bloom.

In Palestine, Pharisaic Judaism was characterized by its claim that it was heir to the Oral Tradition which was revealed to Moses on Sinai along with the written Torah. The Torah, especially the unwritten Oral Torah in both its halakic and aggadic forms, became the preoccupation of the Palestinian sages. This Oral Tradition--consisting of a set of hermeneutical rules of Scripture, a corpus of traditional interpretations of Scripture, and case law that was not directly dependent on scriptural interpretation--made it possible for the sages to update scriptural law, and thus made it relevant for a constantly changing Jewish community in Palestine. And even though the Palestinian Jewish community disintegrated as a political entity after the Bar Kochba revolt in 135 C.E., the Oral Law, for which the Palestinian sages had become distinguished, persisted and

became the legal foundation of the Jewish community scattered throughout the world.

Palestine was the main center of Judaism during the Graeco-Roman period. The Temple cult in Jerusalem claimed the loyalty of Jews throughout the world. Likewise, the Alexandrian Jewish community also acknowledged its allegiance to the Jerusalem cult, but the precise nature of its relationship to Palestine is a matter of conjecture.

Scholarly opinion is divided about the line of development taken by the Alexandrian Jewish community.

Erwin Goodenough, for example, claims that two different Judaisms existed in the Graeco-Roman period, one Palestinian and the other Alexandrian, each developing along its own lines with little if any cultural influence by one Jewish center on the other. Alexandrian Judaism, according to Goodenough, was thoroughly Hellenized: Alexandrian Jews drew on Greek ideas and customs, and they developed a legal system based on pagan law, rather than on the Palestinian Halakah.[2] On the other hand, there are those scholars like Harry Wolfson,[3] who claim that Alexandria was dependent on Palestine for its cultural development: Alexandrian Jewry made extensive use of the Palestinian Oral Tradition, both

Halakah and Aggadah, in its religious development. In effect, claim these scholars, Alexandrian Judaism was merely a variety of Pharisaic Judaism current in Palestine. Moreover, the two centers of Judaism were in constant communication with each other, with the Palestinian center exerting much influence on Alexandria. Importantly, though, both groups of scholars base their contrasting reconstructions of the Alexandrian Jewish community on essentially one source: the writings of Philo Judaeus.

Philo: A Source for Alexandrian Literary Activity

Little is known of Philo's life. It is assumed that he was born about 25 B.C.E. and died perhaps between 45 C.E. and 50 C.E. He was a member of a wealthy Alexandrian Jewish family which enjoyed a leadership role in the community. When the Emperor Gauis provoked a pogrom against the Jews of Alexandria, Philo was chosen as the head of the Jewis delegation which pleaded the Jewish cause before the Emperor. Thus, from his own writings, Philo emerges as a loyal Jew.

What record remains of the literary activity of the Alexandrian Jewish community is to be found in the thirty-eight titles that bear Philo's name: four treatises have

little mention of Jews and Scripture and are devoted to special problems in philosophy; three treatises deal with special problems of Alexandrian Jewry, and the remaining treatises "are written in the form either of running commentary on certain books of the Pentateuch or of discourses on certain topics selected from the Pentateuch."[4]

Of all thirty-eight treatises attributed to Philo, two commentaries on the Pentateuch are generally recognized as bearing a close resemblance to Palestinian midrashim: Questions and Answers on Genesis and Questions and Answers on Exodus. The arrangement of interpretations in these two commentaries follow the order of verses in each of the two Pentateuchal books upon which they comment, with only selected verses interpreted in the form of questions and answers. Each verse is introduced with the formulaic expression, "What is the interpretation of this verse?" and then two or more interpretations are offered. Generally, one of the interpretations is literal and the other allegorical, with the former resembling the Palestinian Midrash in both form and content. It is, therefore, because of the resemblance of Questions and Answers on Genesis to the Palestinian Midrash that I have chosen sections of this work as the subject for this study.

The Thesis: Content and Method

The purpose of this study was to compare Philo's treatment of a segment of biblical text with parallel material in rabbinic literature, in an effort to (a) determine whether there is an interdependence between early rabbinic tradition and Philo, and (b) to confront the question of the overall relationship between Alexandrian Jewry and Palestine.

This study is divided into three chapters. In Chapter I, I have summarized the positions of the two scholarly views regarding Philo. Special emphasis has been placed on the position of Samuel Belkin, who has written extensively about Philo's relationship to the Palestinian Oral Tradition.

In the next two chapters, Philo's interpretations are compared to rabbinic interpretations on the same verses. Using verse indices for rabbinic literature (Hyman's Sefer Torah Ha-Ketuvah u' Mesorah, Kasher's Torah Schleimah, Epstein's Torah Tememah), thematic indices (Soncino, Midrash Rabbah, the index to the Theodor-Albeck edition of Bereshit Rabbah, Ginsberg's Legends of the Jews), and rabbinic anthologies (Yalkut Shim'oni, Midrash Ha-gadol, etc.), I located all the available rabbinic traditions regarding the two biblical passages, and from among these I then selected

traditions which I found most closely resembled Philo's interpretations. I then compared these selected rabbinic interpretations to Philo's interpretations on the same verses.

In Chapter II a comparison is made of Philo's treatment of the "Tree of Knowledge" episode (Gen. 3:1-24), as found in Qu. in Gen. 1:33-57, and the rabbinic treatment of this same story, while in Chapter III, Philo's treatment of the "Cain-Abel Encounter" (Gen. 4:1-15), as found in Que. in Gen. 1:58-76, is compared to selected rabbinic interpretations of the same verses.

I began this study of Philo with three presuppositions: the first was that whatever conclusion I would reach at the end of the study, it would be tentative at best; no study of a limited sample of an author's writings can claim anything else. Keeping this in mind, I attempted to avoid what Samuel Sandmel calls the substitution of the part for the whole.[5] My second presupposition was that just because a conclusion is reached on the basis of a limited sample, it does not mean that it is invalid, especially when the sample is relatively large. Accordingly, I chose whole sections of Questions and Answers on Genesis, which contain a relatively large number of nonallegorical interpretations, and

at the same time are commentaries on complete biblical stories. My third presupposition was that by comparing Philo's interpretations of a complete biblical story to the rabbinic interpretations of the same verses in the biblical story, I would maximize the possibility of finding similarities and parallels in the two sources. This procedure also has the advantage of not only showing similarities, but differences in the treatment of the same subject matter. After all, differences do reflect attitudes, as do similarities.

Another methodological consideration is the dating of rabbinic parallels.

Although we can fix the date of Philo's works, it is more difficult to do so with the rabbinic material. All of our early rabbinic material has come to us in sources compiled many centuries after Philo wrote his works. Generally, it is assumed that early rabbinic material existed in oral form until it was finally reduced to writing in the Mishnah Midrash and Talmud. Those traditions reported by early sages are considered to be reliable, especially if a particular tradition is found in the name of the same sage in several different places, or in the name of different sages who were contemporaries. Thus late compilations of rabbinic material are assumed to contain traditions earlier than

their dates of compilation.

My procedure for collecting the rabbinic material consisted of locating all the available rabbinic interpretations of Gen. 3:1-24 and Gen. 4:1-15 in the midrashic collections and the two Talmuds. After locating all the material, I carefully chose those interpretations which seemed most similar to Philo's interpretations. Therefore, in most cases, one rabbinic interpretation is compared to Philo's interpretation, and in some cases even two. On occasion, when I could not find what I thought was a rabbinic interpretation similar to Philo's interpretation, I noted this in the Discussion section.

In comparing the interpretations of Philo and the Rabbis, I used several criteria: (a) similarity of subject matter; (b) interpretations of the same words or phrases; and (c) similarities of exegetical techniques (play on words, analogies, use of proof-texts, use of technical terminology). Thus when all three criteria were met--which means that the two objects of comparison were for all purposes identical--the interpretations were considered parallel. However, when only one or two elements were found in common in two interpretations, this was considered merely a similarity between them and not necessarily a parallel.

I have devised the following five-part format to facilitate the comparison between Philo's interpretations and the rabbinic material.

From Philo

A full text of each of Philo's interpretations is provided from Marcus' English translation of Questions and Answers on Genesis. Each interpretation is preceded and identified by a number which corresponds to the numbering found in Marcus' book.

Discussion (of Philo's interpretation)

Whenever a discussion of Philo's interpretation is warranted--when the text is long, or unclear, or it is useful to list its salient points--it is found immediately below the translation.

Rabbinic Source

The texts of selected rabbinic interpretations are provided in Hebrew and Aramaic. If more than one interpretation is presented, then each one is designated by an upper case letter. Thus, if two interpretations are offered, the first is designated A and the second is designated B, and so on. When one rabbinic interpretation has more than one

part, each part is designated by an Arabic numeral. Thus, if midrash A has two parts, the first part is A_1 and the second part is A_2, and so on.

Discussion (of rabbinic interpretations)

Below the text of each rabbinic interpretation a discussion follows. The discussion usually involves a paraphrase and interpretation. When the text needs no discussion, a translation alone is provided.

Evaluation

This is a critical comparison between Philo's interpretation and the rabbinic interpretation.

List of Abbreviations of Primary Rabbinic Sources

AB	Agadat Bereshit
ARN	Avoth de R. Nathan
BMR	Bamidbar Rabbah
BR	Bereshit Rabbah
BRT	Bereshit Rabbati, Theodor-Albeck ed.
DR	Devarim Rabbah
ER	Ekah Rabbah, folio ed.
LT Ber.	Lekah Tov Bereshit, Buber ed.
MA Ber.	Midrash Aggadah Bereshit, Buber ed.
Mek.	Mekiltha De Rabi Ishmael
MHG. Ber.	Midrash Ha-gadol Bereshit, Margulies ed.

PRE	Pirḳe Rabbi Eliezer
PRK B.	Pesiktah de Rav Kahana, Buber ed.
Qu. in Gen.	Questions and Answers in Genesis (Philo's works cited)
SD	Siphre Devarim, Finklestein ed.
SER	Seder Eliyyahu (Rabba, Zuṭa)
SR	Shemot Rabbah
SSR	Shir Ha-shirim Rabbah
ST	Soṗer Tov, Buber ed.
Tan.	Tanḥuma
Tan. B.	Tanḥuma, Buber ed.
Tos.	Tosephta, Zuckermandel ed.
VR	Vayyikra Rabbah
YS	Yalkut Shim'oni, folio ed.
YSB	Yalkut Shim'oni Bereshit, Yizzak Shiloni ed., 2 vols. (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1973)

Notes

[1]Victor Tcherikover, Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews, trans. S. Appelbaum, a Temple Book (New York: Atheneum, 1970), p. 298

[2]Erwin R. Goodenough, An Introduction to Philo Judaeus, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Basic Blackwell, 1962).

[3]Harry Austryn Wolfson, Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, 2 vols., 4th rev. ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), p. 305.

[4]Ibid., 1:87.

[5]Samuel Sandmel, Philo's Place in Judaism: A Study of Conceptions of Abraham in Jewish Literature (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1971), p. 3.

CHAPTER I

SUMMARY OF THE TWO BASIC SCHOOLS OF INTERPRETATION OF PHILO

Philo's relationship to Judaism, especially Palestinian Judaism, has been delineated in great detail in the past forty years by several renowned scholars. Among these scholars, Erwin Goodenough and Harry Wolfson stand out for their prodigious work, so that any discussion of Philo must include a careful consideration of their points of view.

Both scholars represent a long line of scholarly interpretation which can be traced back about one hundred years, but both men reflect opposite tendencies in their assessments of Philo. Wolfson is representative of a line of interpretation whose proponents claim that Philo's Hellenism was only superficial. For Wolfson, the cult and beliefs of Philo's Judaism was merely articulated in the language of Hellenism.[1] As Wolfson explains, Philo was a loyal Jew whose Judaism "was of the same stock as Pharisaic Judaism, which flourished in Palestine" in his day.[2]

Goodenough, on the other hand, is representative of a line of interpretation whose proponents claim that Philo's Hellenism was far reaching and not merely an adaptation of Hellenistic vocabulary. Goodenough goes as far as to assert that it can be learned from Philo's works that for some Jews in the Greek Diaspora "Judaism was transformed into the greatest, and only true, Mystery."[3] For Goodenough, then, Philo is a mystic, whose roots are deeply thrust into the soil of Hellenism.

Scholars subsequent to Goodenough and Wolfson have generally aligned themselves with one or the other, thus forming two basic schools of interpretation of Philo. The survey that follows will summarize the arguments of the two schools, by examining the works of Goodenough, Wolfson, Peder Borgen, and Samuel Belkin.

Erwin Goodenough: Philo the Mystic

Erwin Goodenough "approaches Philo more from the Greek than the Jewish point of view,"[4] and is "still waiting to be informed by rabbinists" about whether Philo had "knowledge of the Oral Tradition of Jewish law as it existed in his day."[5] Philo, according to Goodenough, was a man who tried to combine the Hellenism and Judaism of his day; his loyalty

was divided. Whether he is "to be called a hellenized Jew or a judaized Hellenist" is inconsequential to Goodenough, because he finds that Hellenism and Judaism are "inextricably mixed" in Philo.[6]

Unlike Wolfson, who sees Philo as a systematic philosopher, Goodenough describes him as a mystic:

> He insists always and on every occasion that the Jewish Scriptures taught Greek mysticism in a perfect way which the Greeks themselves never approximated. To show this he had to do some amazing things with the scriptural texts. But he refused to believe that anything so sublime as Greek philosophy and mysticism could have been unsuspected by Moses and the Patriarchs.[7]

It is in Philo's allegorical interpretations of Scripture (his reading into the Torah mystical pagan religious notions, especially those of Platonism and Pythagoreanism)[8] that Goodenough believes he has found evidence of Philo's mysticism: For Philo, it was the Torah through which God revealed

> . . . himself to be the source of a great stream of Being, as the sun is of light, and made it clear that the true Judaism is fulfilled only when men recognize the nature of this deity, and ascend into ever higher participation in the Being of God thus radiated from the supreme and ultimately inaccessible One.[9]

Having adopted pagan philosophical vocabulary with which to discuss the impersonal "philosophical Deity," Philo never rejected the personal God of Judaism--both God concepts were

essential to him; nor did he attempt to synthesize these two God concepts into a "metaphysical system," although he did try to combine them in his heart.[10]

Philo's mystical Judaism was not an aberration, according to Goodenough. Rather, Philo seems to be representative of a significant minority, if not a majority, of Jews living in ancient Alexandria. Goodenough explains that Philo came out of a Jewish mystical tradition which was born about two hundred years before his advent, when Jews in the Hellenistic Diaspora first came into contact with their neighbor's religion and thought, and became "captivated" by it. Furthermore, this captivation with foreign religion and thought was made easier by the peculiar nature of Jewish monotheism in the ancient world. For, according to Goodenough, "the Jewish contribution was the belief that only the supreme God might be worshipped."[11] This meant that although Jewish monotheism consisted of the belief in one supreme God, it also in all likelihood shared with its pagan neighbors the belief in angels and demons who were superior to men. But it was only to God--the supreme principle behind all existence--to whom all prayers were addressed, and not to His lesser helpers. Moreover, Hellenism itself was gradually becoming monotheistic, so that by Philo's

lifetime "the Greek pantheon had become transcended by a single divine principle, to the point that the various gods appeared to be only personalizations of different aspects of divine rule."[12] These factors, then, must have played a role in the mysticization of Judaism in the Hellenistic world. Summing up the syncretistic process by which Hellenistic Judaism became a Mystery religion, Goodenough says:

> Since a Jew could not now simply become an initiate of Isis or Orpheus and remain a Jew as well, the amazingly clever trick was devised, we do not know when or by whom, of representing Moses as Orpheus and Hermes-Tat, and explaining that the Jewish "Wisdom" figure, by translation "Sophia," was identical with that "Female Principle in nature" which Plutarch identified as Isis! All that now needed to be done was to develop sufficient skill in allegory and the Torah could be represented as the ἱερὸς λόγος *par-excellence*, whereby Judaism was at once transformed into the greatest, the only true, Mystery. Moses became priest and hierophant as well as lawgiver. The door was wide open, and the Jews, without the slightest feeling of disloyalty, or the abandonment of their cult practices, could and did take over the esoteric ideology of the mystic philosophers about them, especially and inevitably the Pythagorean-Platonism of Alexandria. Indeed they early claimed, not that they had borrowed it from the Greeks, but that the Greeks originally had taken it from them.[13]

Thus it was the mystical element, according to Goodenough, which, above all, characterized Hellenistic Judaism in Alexandria, Egypt. Although it is impossible to trace the intermediate steps of its development, we find, says Goodenough, that the Jewish Mystery is fully developed in Philo.

The process of Hellenization that transformed Judaism into a Mystery affected every aspect of Jewish life, including the legal. In his work The Jurisprudence of the Jewish Courts in Egypt: As Described by Philo Judaeus, Goodenough undertakes to analyze Philo's legal treatise, De Specialibus Legibus. Here Goodenough concludes that it appears "at least highly probable that the laws recorded [in De Specialibus Legibus] correspond very closely to the jurisprudence of the Jewish Courts of Law in Egypt."[14]

As he does in his other treatises, Philo in De Specialibus Legibus uses the scriptural verse as a springboard for his exposition of law. Here, however, Philo only resorts to the allegorical mode of interpretation when he encounters a difficulty, such as the necessity of explaining away some of the legislation found in the Scripture which is not enforced in his courts. In addition, when justifying the inclusion of new laws having equal authority with those in the original record, or, more commonly, when defending a Jewish law still used by the Jewish courts, though the law did not square with the practice of his neighbors, Philo also uses allegory.[15]

In De Specialibus Legibus, Philo demonstrates, according to Goodenough, "profundity of legal knowledge and

training" which he used for reshaping scriptural legislation in order to make Jewish law resemble Greek and Roman law.[16] Goodenough reasons that only external necessity could have forced Philo to reshape "the practical aspects of the law . . . [in order to make it] conform to the practical penalties and processes of foreign jurisprudence. . . ."[17] Goodenough adds:

> The situation where such a practical necessity would have arisen is not far to seek, for it must have been the daily problem of the Jewish courts in Egypt, where for generations Jewish jurists had had to reconcile their loyalty to the law of Moses with the practical necessity of keeping Jews from violating the fundamental legal principles of their fellow citizens.[18]

There is no question for Goodenough that Jewish courts of law existed and functioned in Egypt. He does admit, however, that it can not be precisely determined how much jurisdiction was left to these courts by the Romans. It does seem likely, explains Goodenough, that Jewish judges were free to administer Jewish law at least in cases of minor crime. But in cases of serious crime, Jewish law had to be adjusted to conform with Greek and Roman law, if the Jewish courts hoped to retain their jurisdiction in these cases. As Goodenough explains, this adjustment of Jewish law, which began during the period of Greek rule over Egypt, was probably unnecessary in cases where Jewish law was more severe

than pagan law. The exercise of severe punishment by Jewish courts upon members of the Jewish community would not have mattered to the Gentiles. However, non-Jewish Alexandrians would have been concerned if individuals regarded by them as criminals had been allowed to go unpunished by the Jewish courts.[19]

According to Goodenough, De Specialibus Legibus was written for a practical purpose, and not merely as an academic exercise. External forces dictated that Philo shape practical Jewish law in conformity with pagan jurisprudence. Moreover, Philo's juridical activities, reasons Goodenough, must reflect the juridical activities of the Jewish courts, which were confronted with the same external forces as was Philo.[20] Goodenough concludes by saying:

> Since in the middle of his exposition he [Philo] bewails the obligation which keeps him in public office, it seems to me not a remote step for us now to take to say that the law as he expounds it must have been that law as it was understood and applied in those practical courts.[21]

For Goodenough, then, Philo's legal decisions are the decisions of the Alexandrian Jewish courts. And only those decisions which cannot be traced to Greek and Roman law are assumed by him to be Jewish. He leaves it for the "rabbinists" to determine whether these Jewish decisions are

parallel to rabbinic Halakah.

Goodenough has used his scholarly energies to explore the Greek side of Philo. In so doing, he believes that he has found in Philo a mystic and a profound jurist. However, Goodenough contends that Philo's mystical belief never displaced his loyalty to Judaism, which manifested itself in a "careful legal observance" of the Law, and by a rejection of any participation in the cultic rites of the Mystery Religions and paganism.[22] Philo, then, was a good Jew, but his Judaism was a Mystery which drew its vital waters from Hellenism rather than from Pharisaism. It was from this Hellenized Judaism, believes Goodenough, that Christianity was born.[23]

Harry Wolfson: Philo the Philosopher

In his magnum opis, Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, Harry Wolfson attempts to present Philo's thought as a coherent, unified, and original philosophy. This Wolfson claims to have accomplished by the use of the "hypothetico-deductive method of text study,"[24] which is a means of reconstructing "the latent processes of reasoning that always lie behind uttered words. . . ."[25]

Using this method, Wolfson provides what he considers to be the necessary steps in reasoning--which he claims must have also been used by Philo--with which to unify the seemingly disconnected, incoherent, and fragmented form of the philosophical problems discussed by Philo.[26]

According to Wolfson, Alexandrian Judaism and Pharisaic Jadaism in Palestine, at the time of Philo, had a common origin in the pre-Maccabean Judaism "which had been moulded by the activities of the Scribes."[27] Alexandrian Jewry held the Pentateuch to be a divinely revealed document, and they translated it into Greek about two hundred years before the Common Era. In addition to sharing a revealed Torah with their Palestinian brethren, Alexandrian Jews possessed an oral tradition and "an incipient method of scriptural interpretation," which was originally brought from Palestine and was shared in common with those who in Palestine subsequently became Pharisees.[28] And because they never lost contact with their Palestinian brethren, Alexandrian Jewry was affected by developments in Palestine. It was, however, in the Hellenistic environment, according to Wolfson, that:

> Some Alexandrian Jews came into possession of a new body of knowledge derived from Greek philosophy, and

> out of this body of knowledge they developed a new method of interpretation of Scripture, to which the name allegory was given, meaning thereby philosophic allegory exclusively.[29]

The adaptation of the allegorical method of scriptural interpretation by Philo's predecessors was facilitated, according to Wolfson, by the Jewish tradition that a Jew was not bound to take the Scripture literally. Moreover, allegorical interpretation (which essentially means that the biblical text is interpreted in terms of something else, irrespective of what that something else is) was utilized by the Palestinian rabbis before and after Philo's time, although these allegories never came to be articulated philosophically.[30] This, as Wolfson explains, was due to external circumstances:

> The Palestinian rabbis of that time, unlike Philo, happened to have no acquaintance with the literature of Greek philosophy, and consequently they did not interpret Scripture in terms of Greek philosophy; but they interpreted it in terms of something else which they did happen to know, the accumulated wisdom of ages, their own practical experience and speculative meditations, the urging necessities of changed conditions of life, the call of an ever-growing moral conscience, and undoubtedly also repercussions of all kinds of foreign lore.[31]

The allegorical method of interpretation, having gained popularity with some Alexandrian Jews, came to be used by them to the exclusion of the traditional method of

interpretation. These more extreme allegorists rejected any traditional interpretation of the legal and narrative portions of Scripture, so that in effect they no longer observed dietary and other practical laws; the practical laws were simply given a symbolic meaning and therefore there was no need to translate then into action. On the other hand, there were some Jews who completely rejected the "philosophical kind of allegory."[32] These traditionalists were completely satisfied with the traditional method of interpretation, which, by Philo's time, did not mean a literal acceptance of Scripture. Thus it is between those who rejected any literal interpretation of Scripture and those who rejected any philosophical allegorical scriptural interpretation where, according to Wolfson, Philo is to be found. "It was Philo's purpose, therefore," says Wolfson, "to combine the traditional with the allegorical method, preventing the former from becoming hostile toward the latter and guarding the latter against breaking itself loose from the former."[33]

Having thus reconstructed Philo's Alexandrian Judaism, Wolfson embarks on an extensive analysis of Philo's writings, in which he finds evidence for Philo's dependency on a "native Palestinian tradition" for matters of Aggadah

and Halakah. Accordingly, as Wolfson explains, Philo drew upon unwritten traditions that are evident in his writings, and which he refers to by various names. Parallels to these unwritten traditions, according to Wolfson, are also to be found in the Mishnah, the Midrash, and the Talmud, all of which contain oral Palestinian traditions that were committed to writing long after Philo. However, as he goes on to explain, much of the material contained in these Palestinian compilations (and sometimes even the literary formulation on this material) "must already have existed in oral form by the time of Philo."[34] Elaborating further, Wolfson accounts for the parallel traditions in Philo's writings and the writings of the Rabbis in four ways:

> First, some of them undoubtedly emanate from a common source, the traditions of early Palestinian Judaism which the Alexandrian Jews had brought with them from their home country. Second, some of them are later innovations independently arrived at by the rabbis and Philo, owing to the common method of interpretation employed by them. Third, some of them may have been borrowed by Alexandrian Jews from their contemporary Palestinian Jews through the various channels of intellectual communication that existed between them. Fourth, some of them were probably borrowed by Palestinian Jews from the works of Philo.[35]

Alongside the traditional interpretations, there also existed, according to Wolfson, oral and written philosophical scriptural interpretations in Alexandria. It is very possible that Philo also drew on these interpretations

in his own writings, although the extent cannot be determined. Nevertheless, it was Philo who brought to full development the philosophical interpretation of Scripture by his use of philosophical allegory.[36]

Wolfson goes on to explain that the external form of Philo's philosophical writings resemble the sermons that originated in Palestine and were delivered orally in synagogues.[37] That is, alongside the tradition of the public reading of the Pentateuch on Sabbath, there also grew the custom of orally interpreting selected verses of the Sabbath Pentateuchal reading. These customs--public reading of the Pentateuch on Sabbath and the oral interpretation of selected verses--were brought to Alexandria from Palestine. Thus Philo had at his disposal a ready external form for his philosophical writings, which also determined how he was going to treat philosophical problems. Elaborating on this point, Wolfson says:

> He was guided by the scriptural verses which he happened to make the pegs upon which to hang his philosophic speculations. One verse may have suggested to him a topic in the theory of ideas, another a topic in the nature of virtue, a third a topic in the nature of the soul, and so on throughout the manifold items in the various minutiae of problems of philosophy. Philosophical problems are thus invariably presented by him in fragmentary form. Never does a problem appear in its full coherent structure; never is it treated as a whole.[38]

From Philo's fragmented philosophical writings there emerges for Wolfson a Philo who is a critic of all schools of philosophy. Even though he utilizes Stoic terminology and phraseology, Philo is a critic rather than a follower of the Stoics. Likewise, according to Wolfson, Philo makes use of the vocabulary of the Greek Mystery religions in his "description of the beliefs and institutions of Judaism," though he condemns them as being licentious and effeminate.[39] For Philo, as Wolfson explains, the Law is the only mystery, and it is by the use of the allegorical method of scriptural interpretation that "the true knowledge of God and of virtue is to be extracted from the letter of the Law. . . ."[40]

In the final analysis, Wolfson's Philo is a pious scriptural Jew--one who believes in a divinely revealed Torah--and, at the same time, a "philosopher in the grand manner."[41] For Wolfson, Philo is a reconciler of faith and reason: The divine wisdom contained in Scripture and the truths discovered by philosophical reasoning are really two sides of the same coin, each having a different source and each being expressed in its own peculiar vocabulary (one is articulated in nonphilosophical language, while the other is articulated in philosophical language). Philosophy,

according to Philo, is, however, to be subordinated to Scripture, which offers the immediate and infallible knowledge of revelation; for "human knowledge is limited, and philosophy, which is based upon human knowledge, is unable to solve many problems," and is always susceptible to error.[42] Thus it was with the subordination of philosophy to Scripture, according to Wolfson, that Philo laid the pattern for medieval philosophy that was to reign for seventeen centuries until the time of Spinoza.

Peder Borgen: A Methodological Contribution

Although more modest in scope than Wolfson's Philo, Bread from Heaven, by Peder Borgen, is significant not only for its conclusions, but perhaps even more for the methodological approach utilized in it for the study of sources. Borgen proposes to "deal with central questions in Johannine and Philonic research: 1) sources and traditions, 2) form and style, and 3) origin and interpretation of ideas."[43] He proceeds with his study by analyzing in detail only a few passages in Philo (Mut. 253-263, Leg. all. 162.168, and Congr. 170. 173-174) and John (6:31-38) in which the Old Testament pericope on manna (the "bread from heaven") are expounded.[44]

Analyzing the exegetical form in Philo and the Palestinian midrash, Borgen concludes that both sources "paraphrased words from the Old Testament quotations and interwove them with fragments of haggadah about manna."[45] Moreover, Borgen claims to have isolated and identified with certainty "the main haggadic traditions" drawn upon by Philo. In addition, the homiletical pattern in Philo, according to Borgen, resembles the homiletical pattern of the Palestinian midrash; and both sources contain parallels in such details as exegetical method and terminology.[46]

Borgen arrives at several conclusions concerning Philo's use of sources: (1) "Philo related the Old Testament and haggadic words about the manna to Greek educational ideas about philosophy and encyclica . . ." and "to Stoic ideas about cosmic law, Platonic thought patterns of heaven and earth, soul and body, Greek physical terms and Greek ideas about equality and justice";[47] (2) some of the aggadic traditions utilized by Philo are to be found in the written Palestinian sources, and these traditions "seem to be written manifestations of the same story in oral form";[48] (3) Philo also used fragments from traditions not found in the written Palestinian midrashim, e.g., Wisd. 16, 20ff.[49]

In assessing Borgen's view of Philo's writings, it would seem that the main thrust of his argument is that Philo made use of midrashic methods of interpretation and Palestinian aggadic traditions. In addition to this, Borgen has carefully outlined a methodology for analyzing Philo's commentaries on the Pentateuch, which have hitherto been considered, by a prevailing scholarly opinion, unamenable to an overall source analysis.[50]

Samuel Belkin: Philo and the Palestinian Oral Tradition

Samuel Belkin, in his many scholarly writings, has expressed the view that "there existed a great dependency of thought between the Alexandrian and Palestinian Jewish communities and that we cannot regard them as two entirely separate forms of Judaism."[51] Belkin arrives at this conclusion as a result of studying Philo in relation to the Palestinian Oral Tradition.

In his book, Philo and the Oral Law: The Philonic Interpretation of Biblical Law in Relation to the Palestinian Halakah, Belkin proposes the thesis that:

> The Oral Law which originated in Palestine was not limited to the borders of Palestine, but was also known and practiced among the Jews who lived outside of Palestine, and that Philo's Halakah is based upon the Palestinian Oral Law as it was known in Alexandria.[52]

Belkin is quick to note that any attempt to examine the legal system of the Alexandrian Jewish community and its attitude toward the Oral Law can only be done indirectly, because we do not have any primary sources dealing with the Alexandrian legal system per se. What indirect information we do possess is contained in Philo's legal treatise, De Specialibus Legibus. In the four books of this legal treatise, Philo offers a detailed exposition of ritual, civil, and capital laws: the first book contains laws dealing with circumcision, the priesthood, and sacrifices; the second book deals with oaths, the Sabbath, the Sabbatical year, the Jubilee, and respect for parents; in the third book Philo discusses prohibited marriages, adultery, murder, etc.; and finally, the fourth book contains a discussion of civil laws, "dealing," as Belkin explains, "with such topics as judges, witnesses, theft, and deposits; but in part it deals also with ritual laws."[53] Belkin justifies the use of De Specialibus Legibus "as our only guide to the legal system and institution of the Alexandrian Jews,"[54] on the basis of his hypothesis that Philo derived his knowledge of law from the local Jewish courts in Egypt that followed Palestinian law, and that the legal decisions contained in De Specialibus Legibus are, on the whole, based on the decisions

of these Jewish courts.[55] Therefore, it is important to ask at this point: How does Belkin substantiate his claim for the existence of the local Jewish courts in Alexandria? Also, on the basis of what evidence does he validate his hypothesis that the local Jewish courts in Alexandria based their legal decisions on Palestinian Oral Law as it was known to them? And finally, how does Belkin show that Philo knew and used the legal decisions of these Jewish courts in his own legal writings?

The existence of the local Jewish courts in Egypt is verified for Belkin by rabbinic and extra-rabbinic sources, although he admits "that it is hardly possible to ascertain how much legal power the Alexandrian Jewish courts had."[56] "Philo," adds Belkin, "says only that the power of the government within the Jewish community was vested in a γερουσία, but he is silent about the exact nature of the Jewish courts."[57] In Pseudo-Aristeas Belkin finds "that the local community (πολίτευμα) in Alexandria was governed by elders (πρεσβύτερου) and magistrates (ἡγουμενοι)."[58] And finally, Belkin, giving Josephus' citation of Strabo's testimony, says that the Jews of Alexandria were governed by an ἐθναρχης.[59] It is on the basis of these sources, then, that Belkin concludes that Jewish courts existed in Egypt; but he

stipulates that on the basis of the evidence at hand, all we can say with certainty about them is "that they must have had power to inflict minor penalties on the members of their community."[60]

Having presented his evidence for the existence of Jewish courts in Egypt, Belkin cites examples in rabbinic literature for the early diffusion of the Tannaitic tradition into Egypt, in order to support his claim for the use of the Palestinian Oral Law by the Alexandrian Jewish courts. For example, in Sanhedrin 107b it is related that Joshua b. Perahaya migrated to Alexandria in order to escape the persecutions of John Hyrcanus. Belkin finds evidence in this story for the introduction of Palestinian Oral Law into Egypt by the second century B.C.E. Commenting on Sanhedrin 107b, Belkin claims that Joshua b. Perahaya "may possibly have introduced Palestinian law into Egypt."[61] Belkin also finds evidence for knowledge of the Oral Law by Alexandrian Jews in Niddah 69b. Here it is recorded that when R. Joshua b. Haninah visited Alexandria in the second century C.E., he was asked technical and legal questions by Alexandrian Jews. On the basis of these questions asked of R. Joshua, Belkin concludes that "it is evident that the Alexandrian Jews at that time were well acquainted with the principles

of the oral traditions."[62] From these and other rabbinic sources, Belkin believes that he has found sufficient evidence upon which to make the claim that the Palestinian Oral Tradition was well known in Egypt at an early date; therefore it is not too unlikely that the Jewish courts in Egypt could have had access to it.

Acknowledging his debt to Ritter, who originally postulated the existence of Jewish courts in Alexandria, and also giving Goodenough recognition for his work in this area, Belkin explains how his conclusions differ from the conclusions of these scholars. Ritter was the first scholar to suggest that Philo based his legal decisions on the local Jewish courts in Alexandria; however, he arrived at this conclusion after finding that Philonic Halakah had very few parallels in the Mishnah and Talmud, and therefore was forced to postulate a different source for it. This different source, concluded Ritter, must have been the Jewish courts in Alexandria.[63] Belkin says:

> [Goodenough] admits the existence of special Jewish courts in Alexandria. Philo's Halakah, according to him, is based upon the decisions of these courts. These decisions, he further maintains, had their origin in Greek and Roman law, but he admits that, since not all of them can be traced to Greek and Roman law, they must therefore have had a Jewish origin.[64]

Goodenough, continues Belkin, admits that Philo's Halakah also exhibits discernible Jewish elements. But Belkin adds that Goodenough leaves the question open as to whether these Jewish elements can ultimately be identified with Palestinian Halakah or whether they are really attributable to an independent legal development of the Alexandrian Jewish courts.

Unlike Ritter and Goodenough, who maintain that they have found little, if any, evidence of Tannaitic Halakah in Philo's writings, Belkin claims that his comparison of Tannaitic Halakah with Philo's legal decisions in De Specialibus Legibus has yielded many parallel traditions. Belkin goes even further and claims that most of Philo's legal conclusions presented in De Specialibus Legibus "agree with the principles of Tannaitic Halakah."[65] Therefore, the existence of parallel traditions, agreement in legal principles, and also evidence for the usage of several of the hermeneutical principles current in Palestine during Philo's time leads Belkin to conclude that Philo had a "very wide" knowledge of the Oral Law as it was "interpreted by the Palestinian Rabbis."[66] Moreover, Belkin reasons that Philo's one and only visit to Palestine would have been insufficient to acquaint him with Palestinian Oral Law. But, given the

contact between Palestine and Alexandria (as it is recorded in rabbinic sources) and given the existence of local Jewish courts in Egypt (which he believes were making use of Palestinian Oral Law), Belkin concludes that the source for Philo's Tannaitic Halakah was the local courts in Egypt. It was under their influence that Philo wrote De Specialibus Legibus.[67]

For Belkin, the existence of local Jewish courts in Egypt following Palestinian Oral Law, Philo's use of the legal decisions made by these courts, and the reason for Philo's composition of De Specialiabus Legibus and other treatises on Mosaic law cannot be separated from an understanding of the kind of relationship that existed between Palestine and Alexandria.

According to Belkin a strong and consistent religious and national bond existed between the two Jewish centers. It was for this reason that the Alexandrians submitted to the obligatory shekel dues which paid for the sacrifices and upkeep of the Jerusalem Temple. In addition, collections of firstfruits and tithes were made in special storehouses in Alexandria and then delivered to Jerusalem by specially elected representatives of the Alexandrian Jewish community.[68] Commenting on Philo's description of the Alexandrian

Jews' devotion to Jerusalem, Belkin says:

> . . . that the devotion of the Hellenistic Jews towards the Palestine cult was not merely a matter of loyalty, but that, in spite of all the forces of assimilation which exercised a profound influence on them, they still felt an inner urge to travel to Jerusalem in order to rededicate themselves to the God of their fathers and to reunite themselves with their brethren. Such religious experience and national unity the Diaspora Jews could find only in Jerusalem.[69]

The religious and national ties the Egyptian Jews enjoyed with Palestinian Jews can by no means be taken to suggest that the Egyptian Jewish community was monolithic in its sentiments toward Jerusalem. The diversity of the Egyptian community is well illustrated by the existence of the Onias cult at Heliopolis, whose adherents refused to recognize the Jerusalem cult as the only legitimatic cultic center of Judaism. The cult of Onias was but one of several forces that worked to fragment the Egyptian Jewish community from within.

In Alexandria itself, there existed several sects which owed their allegiance to the Jerusalem cult; each sect, however, interpreted Scripture differently. Commenting on these sects and their method of biblical interpretation, Belkin says:

> As far as we can judge from Philo, there were, however, actually three sects in Alexandria: (1) the allegorists, who interpreted the Bible allegorically in the

> sense of the Greek mysteries but remained devoted to the Jerusalem Temple and cult; (2) the literalists; (3) the sect to which he himself belonged, who remained loyal to the entire Mosaic law but who also applied some kind of allegorical method to the Pentateuch.[70]

Philo is depicted by Belkin as being critical of the literalists as well as the allegorists. The literalists were opposed to any but a literal interpretation of Scripture. The allegorists, on the other hand, only acknowledged the validity of an allegorical interpretation of Scripture. For them, the Bible was to be understood symbolically, and, as a consequence of their extreme allegorical method of interpretation, they rejected the practical biblical legislation as binding upon them. In effect, these Jews were antinomian, and it was against them that Philo reacted most strongly. Thus the Alexandrian Jewish community was faced with a sectarian struggle from within, with the various sects (the literalists, the allegorists, the devotees of the cult of Onias, and the group to which Philo belonged) competing to establish their respective interpretations of Scripture as authoritative.

The Jews were also faced with an external enemy. False accusations were brought against them by Gentile polemicists, who claimed that the Jewish community was an alien body in their midst. The Egyptian priest Manetho, for

example, argued that the Jews were descendants of lepers who had been expelled from Egypt during the time of the Exodus, and that Joseph, rather than saving Egypt, had brought it to economic ruin. The deprecation of Jewish origins was merely one type of anti-Jewish polemic. There also was a polemic based on the use of Scripture, whereby, according to Belkin, the Bible was held up to ridicule "by quoting passages in their literal sense, without regard to the meaning given them by the Jews themselves."[71] The resultant discrimination, persecution, and humiliation wrought by these polemics on the Jewish community eventually caused the Jews to mistrust pagan institutions, especially the Roman courts.[72]

Fear and mistrust, however, were not the sole reactions of the Jews to the polemics hurled against them. The various accusations brought against the Jewish community did not go by unchallenged, but were met by a line of Jewish polemicists, the foremost among them being Philo and Josephus. The responses of these Jewish polemicists usually took the form of explanations of Jewish history, law, and customs, couched in allegory and Greek philosophical concepts. Moreover, the Jewish polemics also gave an opportunity for the venting of a missionary spirit, which sought to bring the Gentiles into the fold by demonstrating the

superiority of the Jewish religion over the pagan religions.

It was in response, therefore, to the internal and external pressures to which the Jewish community of Alexandria was subjected, that De Specialibus Legibus and Philo's other treatises on Mosaic law were written. These writings served as arguments against heretical Jewish sects, though they were primarily designed for Gentile readers, who brought forth the missionary spirit in Philo.[73] It is, however, in his legal writings that Philo also shows himself to be a consummate jurist who demonstrates a wide knowledge of Jewish law as it was interpreted by the Palestinian Rabbis. Whereas Philo makes use of the allegorical method of interpretation in many of his writings as a means of explaining the higher purpose of practical law, he does so very rarely in De Specialibus Legibus and in his Questions and Answers, which are discussed below. In these writings, his method of interpretation is more akin to the hermeneutics of the Rabbis and most of the material, according to Belkin, has its origins in Palestinian sources found in Tannaitic literature.[74]

Belkin warns, however, that Philo's seemingly heavy indebtedness to the Palestinian Rabbis for much of the material in De Specialibus Legibus does not allow us to identify him with any particular sect. Although it is especially

striking, according to Belkin, that there is "agreement between Philo and the Pharisees with regard to the status of a foreign slave in Israel, the rules of the calendar, the view of immortality, the need of waiting 'till even' in the case of impurity, the laws of antenuptial unchastity, and the theory that the daily sacrifices were public offering,"[75] some of Philo's concepts of law can be identified with Sadducean and, in some cases, with Roman and Greek concepts of law. Yet, on the basis of the correspondences between Philo's legal decisions and the decisions of the Palestinian Rabbis, Belkin concludes that, in the main, Philo follows the legal principles of the Pharisees.

In matters of Aggadah, just as in matters of Halakah, Belkin believes Philo to have been dependent on a Palestinian Oral Tradition. Belkin's views--which are summarized here--are to be found in several scholarly articles in which he discusses the relationship between Philo's nonallegorical interpretations of Scripture and the Palestinian midrash.[76]

According to Belkin, Philo's nonallegorical interpretations on the Pentateuch are of the same type as those found in our Palestinian sources (the Midrash, Mishnah, and Talmud). These Philonic interpretations resemble the

Palestinian midrashim both in style and content. Like the Palestinian interpretations, Philo's nonallegorical interpretations are either literal or midrashic.

These nonallegorical interpretations are to be found in great numbers, according to Belkin, in Philo's two writings, Questions and Answers on Genesis and Questions and Answers on Exodus. Unlike some of Philo's other writings which were written by him in order to create a synthesis between Judaism and Hellenism and to present Judaism in a favorable light to the Gentile world, Questions and Answers were written for Jewish readers. Belkin concludes that these books served at least two functions: they made traditional scriptural interpretations available to pious Jews who wanted to deepen their knowledge of scriptural interpretation; and they served as source books for preachers who could draw upon the interpretations contained in them for their own sermons.[77]

The arrangement of interpretations in Questions and Answers follows the order of verses in these books of the Pentateuch. Selected verses of the Pentateuch are interpreted in the form of questions and answers; each verse is introduced with the formulaic expression, "What is the meaning of this verse?" and then two or more interpretations are

offered. Generally, one of the interpretations is literal and the other allegorical. It is to the literal interpretation, however, that Belkin draws our attention when he says that:

> [It is] without doubt the earliest Midrash of the Palestinian sages which made its way to Alexandria, Egypt. These interpretations are not strictly speaking literal, but rather non-allegorical moral interpretations and sermons, which are, in their type and structure, like the ones we commonly find in our Midrashim.[78]

The two volumes of Questions and Answers, according to Belkin, not only preserve some of the earliest Palestinian midrashim for which parallels are to be found in our sources, but also preserve the traditions that have not survived in our sources. Therefore, these works of Philo, claims Belkin, are valuable in any attempt to learn about the ancient Palestinian midrashic tradition which existed during Philo's time in an oral form; the traditions found in Philo attest to the antiquity of the Palestinian midrash. Let us, then, now examine the basis for Belkin's claim that Philo's Questions and Answers serve as sources for an early Palestinian midrashic tradition.

Belkin's case for Philo's dependence on a Palestinian Oral Tradition rests on an intricate chain of reasoning. Belkin begins with the claim that there is a paralleling of

subject matter in the interpretations found in Questions and Answers and the interpretations found in the rabbinic sources. Moreover, the question and answer form of Philo's nonallegorical interpretation corresponds, according to Belkin, to the rabbinic Yelammedenu homily form.[79] In addition, in many places both Philo and the Rabbis ask the same question on the same verse; at times, even, Philo's answer is the same as that of the Rabbis. Furthermore, since Philo's interpretations were committed to writing several centuries before our Palestinian rabbinic sources, Belkin reasons that those rabbinic interpretations that are found to be parallel to Philo's interpretations must be at least as old as Philo's interpretations (Belkin assumes that a midrashic tradition which survives in a late source is not necessarily a late creation--it may well predate the redaction of a given source). Having thus established to his satisfaction that some rabbinic traditions are at least as old as Philo's writings, Belkin reasons that the Palestinian provenience of the rabbinic traditions proves the Palestinian origin of the parallel traditions found in Questions and Answers. After all this, Belkin concludes that Philo's literal interpretations and parallel rabbinic traditions were both drawn from a common Palestinian Oral Tradition. This Palestinian Oral

Tradition, according to Belkin, made its way to the Alexandrian sages who preserved it in an oral form, and, in some cases, may have even committed it to writing. Philo, in turn, learned these traditional interpretations from his Alexandrian teachers and from sermons of the preachers in Alexandrian synagogues.

Belkin's case does not rest on a chain of reasoning alone. He has collected midrashim from various rabbinic sources and compared them to selected interpretations in Questions and Answers on Genesis and Questions and Answers on Exodus in an attempt to demonstrate the existence of parallel traditions in the two sources. The criteria Belkin uses in his comparison of sources are "style" and "content." Let us now turn to several of Belkin's examples of parallel rabbinic and Philoic traditions and examine the evidence he offers for parallelism in these sources.

Belkin compares Philo's interpretation on Gen. 3:8 (to be found in Qu. in Gen. 1:44) to the rabbinic interpretation in BR 19:8. He first presents Philo's interpretation and then the rabbinic interpretation:

> Here is another of Philo's interpretations on the verse: "And the man and his wife hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden." Philo also interprets this verse in the style of the Rabbis:

> [Qu. in Gen. 1:44] "Why did they hide themselves, not in any other place, but in the midst of the trees of Paradise? Not all things are done with reflection and wisdom by sinners; but there are times when thieves sit over the theft which they have committed, not seeing the consequence and that that which lies beside them and at their feet is already sought and hunted."
>
> This source appears in the rabbinic interpretation on, "They heard the sound of the Lord God," which is the beginning of this verse [that is, v. 8]: [BR 19:8, Soncino translation] "For wayyishme'u (and they heard) read wayyashmi'u (and they caused to hear): they heard the voice of the trees saying, 'Lo the deceiver who deceived his Creator!'"
>
> Both [sources] include the sin within the definition of theft. But for Philo they [Adam and Eve] behave like thieves, and for the Rabbis the trees announce the theft.[80]

However, does not the scriptural verse itself intimate that Adam and Eve stole the fruit and that they are thieves? If so, is it not likely that the similarity between Philo's interpretation and the rabbinic interpretation arises from the Scripture itself, rather than necessarily from a common oral tradition?

Belkin presents another example that he believes is a parallel between Philo and the Rabbis:

> "Why does He who knows all things, ask Adam 'Where art thou'" (Gen. 3:9), and why does He not also ask the woman?
>
> [Qu. in Gen. 1:45] "The things said appear to be not a question but a kind of threat and reproach: where art

> thou now, from what good hast thou removed thyself, O man!; giving up immortality and a blessed life, thou hast gone over to death and unhappiness, in which thou hast been buried. But the woman He did not consider it fitting to question, although she was the beginning of evil and led him (man) into a life of vileness."
>
> Philo's interpretation is parallel to rabbinic Midrash: [MHG Ber. 3:9] "And R. Judah said in the name of Rav: Adam was a Sadducee, for it is said in Scripture, 'The Lord God called out to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"' How was your heart turned?" [BR 19:9, Soncino translation] "'The Lord God called out to the man and said to him, "Where are you?"' [Gen. 3:9] 'How ( ) hast thou fallen! Yesterday (thou wast ruled) by My will, and now by the will of the serpent; yesterday (thou didst extend) from one end of the world to the other, whereas now (thou canst hide) AMONGST THE TREES OF THE GARDEN!'" [MHG Ber. 3:9] "'And He said to him, "Where are You?"' [3:9]. . . . Another interpretation, "Where are you?" (אַיֶּכָּה), and He bewailed him with "אֵיכָה."[81]

Both Philo and the Rabbis interpret "Where are you?" (אַיֶּכָּה) as a kind of reproach. But does not the context of the word imply as much?--God knows where Adam is to be found. Therefore, would not an astute exegete immediately seize upon the word אַיֶּכָּה? It would seem that the similarity between Philo and the Rabbis could just as well be due to coincidence, rather than necessarily being based on a common aggadic tradition.

According to Belkin, Philo's interpretation on Gen. 4:11 (the Cain-Abel encounter), found in Qu. in Gen. 1.71, has a rabbinic parallel:

> [Qu. in Gen. 1:71] "Why does he (Cain) become accursed upon the earth?"
>
> "The earth is the last of the parts of the universe. Accordingly, if this curses him, it is understandable that appropriate curses will be laid upon him by the other elements as well, namely by springs, rivers, sea, air, winds, fire, light, the sun, the moon, the stars and the whole heaven together. For inanimate and terrestrial nature opposes and revolts against wrongdoing, will not purer natures do so still more?"
>
> Here in Philo, we learn that the earth cursed Cain and withheld its produce from him. But the earth itself, however, was not cursed. And this source is also found in rabbinic literature on the interpretation of Gen. 4:12: [BR 22:10] "'If you till the soil, it shall no longer yield its strength to you' [Gen. 4:12]: R. Elazar says, 'To you it will not yield; to another it will yield.'"[82]

Philo's interpretation of Gen. 4:11 and the rabbinic interpretation of Gen. 4:12 are similar: The earth will turn against Cain by withholding its produce from him. Neither source, however, discusses the curse placed on the earth. For Belkin this is an indication that both sources have a common tradition. However, is it not just as plausible that both Philo and the Rabbis have merely chosen to focus on Cain's curse to the exclusion of the curse on the earth, especially since the curse on the earth had already been discussed in Gen. 3:17 in connection with God's curse on Adam? Moreover, Scripture itself makes it clear that the earth will withhold its produce from Cain, and therefore

there is no need to attribute the similar interpretations in Philo and the Rabbis to a common source.

Belkin claims that the passages he has culled from Philo and the rabbinic sources are parallel in both form and content. Moreover, he concludes that the existence of these parallels in Philo and the Rabbis prove that both drew on a common Palestinian Oral Tradition. For Belkin, parallelism is equated with dependence. However, a serious objection must be raised to this conclusion: Is it not just as likely that Philo and the Rabbis arrived at parallel interpretations independently of each other, especially since both were interpreting the same sacred text, the Pentateuch? And thus having the Pentateuch as a common source for interpretation, both Philo and the Rabbis were confronted by the same theological and textual problems, which could have well given rise to parallel interpretations. With this possibility for parallel interpretations, it cannot be automatically concluded that parallelism guarantees dependency by one source on another.

Notes

[1]Harry Austryn Wolfson, Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, 2 vols., 4th rev. ed. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), 1:13 (hereafter cited as Foundations of Religious Philosophy).

[2]Ibid., p. 56.

[3]Erwin R. Goodenough, By Light, Light: The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935), p. 7 (hereafter cited as By Light, Light).

[4]Idem, An Introduction to Philo Judaeus, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962), p. 90.

[5]Ibid., p. 27.

[6]Ibid., p. 26.

[7]Ibid., p. 88.

[8]Both Platonism and Pythagoreanism taught, as Goodenough says, "the supreme immaterial deity" and they also "absorbed much of the emotion and form of the mystery religions when presenting the possibility of access to God, the mystic ascent" (ibid., pp. 13-14).

[9]Ibid., p. 13.

[10]Ibid., p. 26.

[11]Ibid., p. 82.

[12]Ibid., p. 80.

[13]Idem, By Light, Light, p. 7.

[14]Idem, The Jurisprudence of the Jewish Courts in Egypt: Legal Administration by the Jews Under the Early Roman Empire as Described by Philo Judaeus (New Haven, 1929; reprint ed., Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1968), p. 10 (hereafter cited as Jurisprudence of Jewish Courts).

[15]Ibid., p. 12.

[16]Ibid., p. 13.

[17]Ibid., p. 14

[18]Ibid., p. 15.

[19]Ibid., p. 21.

[20]Ibid., p. 22.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Idem, Introduction to Philo Judaeus, p. 13.

[23]Ibid., p. 23.

[24]Wolfson, Foundations of Religious Philosophy, 1:106.

[25]Ibid., p. 107.

[26]Goodenough has severely criticized Wolfson's effort to unify Philo's thought into a coherent philosophy. He finds that Wolfson reads a unity and coherence into Philo which really is not to be found in his works (see Erwin R. Goodenough, "Wolfson's Philo," Journal of Biblical Literature 67 [1948]: 87-109).

[27]Wolfson, Foundations of Religious Philosophy, 1:56.

[28]Ibid., p. 56.

[29]Ibid., pp. 56-57.

[30]Ibid., p. 134.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid., p. 58.

[32]Ibid., p. 57.

[34]Ibid., p. 91.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid., p. 95.

[37]Wolfson's suggestion, that Philo adopted an external form for his philosophical writings which resembles the sermons that originated in Palestine and eventually made their way to Alexandria, has to be regarded critically. The sermon form, characterized by the proem (it is a "prelude to [a] homily on a certain verse by citing a verse from another source . . . and connecting it with the verse with which the homily itself begins"), is considered to be characteristic of a period later than Philo (see Encyclopaedia Judaica, 1971 ed., s.v. "Midrash," by Moshe David Herr, p. 1510). Therefore, when Wolfson suggests that the Palestinian sermon form made its way to Alexandria in time for Philo to use it, he is talking about a literary form that is found in great

numbers only several centuries after Philo. In fact, according to Herr, the proem is scarcely to be found in the Tannaitic literature (ibid.).

[38]Wolfson, Foundations of Religious Philosophy, 1:96-97.

[39]Ibid., p. 38. [40]Ibid., p. 48.

[41]Ibid., p. 114. [42]Ibid., p. 152.

[43]Peder Borgen, Bread from Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), p. ix (hereafter cited as Bread from Heaven).

[44]Ibid., p. 1. [45]Ibid.

[46]Ibid. [47]Ibid., p. 2.

[48]Ibid., p. 14. [49]Ibid., p. 17.

[50]Ibid., p. 5.

[51]Samuel Belkin, Philo and the Oral Law: The Philonic Interpretation of Biblical Law in Relation to the Palestinian Halakah, Harvard Semitic Series, vol. 11 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940), p. i (hereafter cited as Philo and the Oral Law).

[52]Ibid., p. x. [53]Ibid., p. 3.

[54]Ibid., p. 4. [55]Ibid., pp. 5-6.

[56]Ibid., p. 7. [57]Ibid. [58]Ibid.

[59]Ibid. [60]Ibid., pp. 7-8.

[61]Ibid., p. 6, n. 2. [62]Ibid.

[63]Ibid., p. viii. [64]Ibid., p. x.

[65]Ibid., p. 6.

[66]Ibid., p. 19. Goodenough admits that Belkin has found many more rabbinic parallels in Philo than he thought had existed; but in many cases Belkin's Halakic parallels in Philo also have parallels, according to Goodenough, in pagan law. Furthermore, Goodenough criticizes Belkin for approaching the whole question of parallels with a preconceived notion about the degree of closeness between Philo and the Palestinian Oral Tradition, which blinds Belkin to the pagan influences on Philo (see Erwin R. Goodenough, "Review of Philo and the Oral Law: The Philonic Interpretation of Biblical Law in Relation to the Palestinian Halakah, by Samuel Belkin," Journal of Biblical Literature 59 [1940]: 413-423).

[67]Belkin, Philo and the Oral Law, pp. 5-6.

[68]Ibid., p. 76.

[69]Ibid., p. 26.

[70]Ibid., p. 11.

[71]Ibid., p. 17.

[72]Ibid., p. 8.

[73]Ibid., p. 27.

[74]Ibid., p. 19.

[75]Ibid., p. 10.

[76]My summary is based on the following articles by Belkin on the Midrash: פילון ומסורה מדרשית ארץ ישראלית [Philo and the Midrashic Tradition of Israel], Horeb 13 (1959): 1-60; מדרש שאלות ותשובות על בראשית ושמות לפילון האלכסנדרוני ויחסו למדרש ארץ-ישראל [Philo's Questions and Answers on Genesis and Exodus: The Oldest Recorded Palestinian Midrash], Horeb 14-15 (1960): 1-74; מקור קדום למדרשי חז"ל--מדרש שר"ת על בראשית ושמות לפילון האלכסנדוני [An Ancient Source for Rabbinic Midrashim--Midrash Questions and Answers on Genesis and Exodus by Philo the Alexandrian], Abraham Weiss Jubilee Volume (New York: Abraham Weiss Jubilee Committee, 1964), pp. 579-633.

[77]Belkin, מדרש שאלות ותשובות על בראשית ושמות לפילון האלכסנדרוני ויחסו למדרש ארץ-ישראל [Philo's Questions and Answers on Genesis and Exodus . . .], pp. 5-6.

[78]Ibid., p. 3.

[79]Tanḥuma Yelammedenu is a collection of homiletical Midrashim (the printed Tanḥuma, Tanḥuma edited by Buber;

Deuteronomy Rabbah; Numbers Rabbah; Exodus Rabbah; and parts of Pesikta Rabbati; and fragments of other midrashim) which are characterized by: "(a) the frequent mention of Rabbi Tanḥuma; (b) a special method of halakhic proems which serve as an introduction to aggadic homilies" (Encyclopaedia Judaica, 1971 ed., s.v. "Tanḥuma Yelammedenu," by Moshe David Herr, p. 794). The Tanḥuma (a Midrash on the whole Pentateuch) contains much of the material generally attributed to R. Tanḥuma, and also the characteristic Yelammedenu introductory opening, "May our teacher instruct us, etc. . ." Many medieval works often cite quotations which are attributed to R. Tanḥuma and which we find in the printed Midrash. However, there are also citations of quotations from the Yelammedenu which are not contained in the printed Tanḥuma. Thus, the question arises whether the Tanḥuma and the Yelammedenu are the same work. To date, this question has not been answered satisfactorily, although several capable scholars have attempted to solve the problem (e.g., Lieberman, Urbach, et al. [ibid.]). For these reasons, the date of this Midrash (Yelammedenu) is very uncertain. Belkin, however, believes it to be an early Midrash, especially those sections that are in a question and answer form like Philo's Questions and Answers.

[80]Belkin, מדרש שאלות ותשובות על בראשית ושמות לפילון האלכסנדרני ורנני ויחסו למדרש ארץ-ישראל [Philo's Questions and Answers on Genesis and Exodus . . .], p. 48.

[81]Ibid., p. 49.

[82]Ibid., pp. 58-59.

CHAPTER II

THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE EPISODE (GEN. 3:1-24): AS INTERPRETED BY PHILO AND THE RABBIS

In the previous chapter, the positions of the two basic schools of interpretation of Philo were summarized, with special attention given to Samuel Belkin's position. Therefore let us now critically compare against this background, in this and the following chapter, Philo's treatment of a segment of biblical text with parallel material in rabbinic literature, with an eye to any similarities or parallels which may indicate an interdependence between Philo and the Rabbis.

In this chapter, a critical comparison is made between Philo's interpretation of Gen. 3:1-24 ("The Tree of Knowledge Episode"), as found in his Qu. in Gen. 1:32-57, and selected parallel material in rabbinic sources. The selection of Qu. in Gen. 1:32-57 for this critical comparison was conditioned by the relatively large number of nonallegorical interpretations it contains; these interpretations are similar to the rabbinic midrashim in form and content, and are amenable to comparison with rabbinic material.

Evaluation

Both Philo and this midrash attempt to account for for the serpent's ability to communicate with Eve. According to the midrash, only the serpent and no other animal was able to speak Hebrew, although each species of animal had its own language. Philo, however, while conceding the possibility that animals might have been able to speak at the beginning of creation, does not specify the language spoken by the serpent to Eve.

Although there is a similarity between Philo and this midrash, it is not necessarily indicative of a borrowing by one source from the other. The mere fact that the Scripture states that the serpent spoke to Eve limits the number of possible interpretations that can be made, and hence the similarity between Philo and this midrash.

2. Qu. in Gen. 1:33

> (Gen. iii. 1) Why does the serpent speak to the woman and not to the man?
>
> In order that they may be potentially mortal he deceives by trickery and artfulness. And woman is more accustomed to be deceived than man. For his judgment, like his body, is masculine and is capable of dissolving or destroying the designs of deception; but the judgment of woman is more feminine, and because of softness she easily gives way and is taken in by plausible falsehoods which resemble the truth. Accordingly, since in old age the serpent casts off his skin from the top of his head to his tail, by casting it,

he reproaches man, for he has exchanged death for immortality. From his bestial nature he is renewed and adjusts himself to different times. Seeing this, she was deceived, though she ought to have looked, as if at an example, at him who practised strategems and trickery, and to have obtained ageless and unfading life.

Discussion

Philo assumes that woman, by her very nature, is more easily deceived than man: masculinity (hardness) symbolizes the ability to penetrate and destroy deception and falsehood, whereas femininity (softness) symbolizes susceptibility to deception and falsehood. Woman's susceptibility is played upon by the serpent: he makes himself seem trustworthy to her by displaying his adaptive and regenerative powers (shedding his skin). He does this in order to deprive her and man of their immortality.[3]

Rabbinic Sources

A. Midrash Ha-gadol Bereshit 3:1

ויאמר אל האשה. דן הנחש בינו לבין עצמו ואמר אם אני הולך ואומר לאדם יודע אני שאינו שומע לי, שאין רשות לשמאל על האדם מפני שהוא קשה אין לו אלא לשרש בארץ ולהתהלך בה, אבל בינו לבין העליונים אין שם דרך. מה עשה, אמר הריני הולך ואומר לאשה, שאני יודע שהיא שומעת לי, שהנשים בשמעות רקרובות להתפתות. וכן הוא אומר אשת כסילות הומיה פתיות ובה ידע מה(משלי ט:יג).

Discussion

According to this midrash, the serpent realized that he could not deceive man because by nature he is obstinate

and difficult to persuade. Women, by contrast, are easily persuaded and seduced.[4]

B. Bereshit Rabbah 19:3

כך אמר הקב"ה כי ביום אכלך ממנו וגו'. והיא אמרה לו כן, אלא אמר אלהים לא תאכלו ממנו ולא תגעו בו כיון שראה ארור עומדת לפני העץ נסלה ודחפה עליו. אמר לה הא לא מיתת, כמה דלא מיתת בסקרביה, כולא מיתת במיכליה, אלא כי יודע אלהים כי ביום וגו'.

Discussion

Here it is explained that the serpent is able to deceive the woman by thrusting her against the Tree, thus letting her be assured that the prohibition against eating from it would not result in death either.[5]

Evaluation

Both Philo and midrash A share a low opinion of woman (i.e., she is easily deceived and thus she is the serpent's logical choice on whom to perpetrate his deception). It is not surprising, however, since this attitude was current in both the Jewish and non-Jewish world.[6] The presence of such a shared attitude in Philo's interpretation and the rabbinic interpretation cannot serve as proof that there was a borrowing by one source from the other.

Although Philo attributes the serpent's successful deception to his regenerative abilities, midrash B indicates

that the deception could have not been perpetrated had the serpent not pushed the woman against the Tree. We find, therefore, in the case of Philo and midrash B, different traditions of how the woman was deceived.

3. Qu. in Gen. 1:34

> (Gen. iii. 1) Why does the serpent lie, saying, "God said, Do not eat of any tree of Paradise"? For on the contrary, He said, "From every tree which is in Paradise you may eat except from one."
>
> It is the custom of those who fight to lie artfully in order that they may not be found out. This is what happens now. For it was commanded that every (tree) might be used except one. But he who devises evil stratagems, coming between, says, "The command was given not to eat of any." As a slippery thing and a stumbling-block to the mind, he put forward an ambiguity of words. For the expression "not to eat from all" clearly means "not even from one," which is false. And again it also means "not from every one," by which is to be understood "not from some," which is true. Thus he spoke a falsehood in a very clear manner.

Discussion

Philo elaborates on the method by which the serpent deceived the woman: he was able to perpetrate his deception by the use of ambiguous and confusing language, a technique commonly used by liars. Clearly, it can be concluded that Philo considers the serpent to be a masterful liar.

I have not found a rabbinic parallel to Philo's interpretation, where the serpent uses ambiguous and confusing language with which to deceive woman (see the Evaluation

in section 2, above, for a rabbinic interpretation on this subject).

4. Qu. in Gen. 1:35

> (Gen. iii. 3) Why, when the command was given not to eat of one particular tree, did the woman include even approaching it closely, saying, "He said, You shall not eat of that one and not come near it"?
>
> First, because taste and every sense consists generically in its contact. Second, for the severe punishment of those who have practised this. For if merely approaching was forbidden, would not those who, besides touching the tree, also ate of it and enjoyed it, adding a great wrong to a lesser one, become condemners and punishers of themselves?

Discussion

The woman's seemingly self-imposed prohibition against approaching the Tree is interpreted by Philo through his concept of perception. It was necessary to add the prohibition against touching the Tree to the prohibition against eating from its fruit, because touching is part of eating; in both cases, the senses must come into contact with sense data. In addition, Philo adds that the lesser prohibition against approaching the Tree serves as a warning against the severe punishment which will be incurred by anyone who eats its fruit.

Midrash Aggadah Bereshit 3:3

ולא תגעו בו פן תמותון. מלמד שהוסיף אדם על צוויו של הקב"ה, והוסיף על אשתו להזהירה אפילו בנגיעה, ועל זה נאמר אל תוסיף על דבריו(משלי ל:ו), שעל דבר זה מצא נחש פתחון פה ואמר לחוה לא מות תמותון, והלך נחש אל האילן והרחיעו ואמר לה כשם שאני לא מת בנגיעה, כך אתם לא תמותון באכילת פירותיו.[8]

Discussion

This midrash interprets "You shall not . . . touch it. . ." to mean that Adam imposed the prohibition against touching the Tree of Knowledge upon Eve, in order to keep her far away from the possibility of eating the forbidden fruit. Using Proverbs 30:6, "Add thou not unto His words / Lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar," as a proof text, the midrash concludes that Adam's prohibition against touching the Tree gave the serpent the opportunity to deceive Eve: he went to the Tree and shook it, thus reassuring her that the prohibition against eating from it would not result in death either.

Evaluation

An analysis and comparison of Philo and this midrash shows that each offers a different interpretation of the Scripture. This midrash, unlike Philo, does not concern itself with a discussion about perception, but endeavors to demonstrate that sometimes the creation of new prohibitions,

which aim to assure obedience to God's commands, can lead to the violation of God's commands.

None of the rabbinic sources examined parallel Philo's interpretation of Genesis 3:3.

5. Qu. in Gen. 1:36

(Gen. iii. 5) What is the meaning of the words, "You will be as gods,[9] knowing good and evil"?

Whence did the serpent know this plural noun "gods?" For the true God is one, and he now names Him for the first time. It could not have been a prescient quality that foresaw that there was to be among mankind a belief in a multitude of gods, which, as the narrative first proved, came about not through anything rational nor yet through the better irrational creatures, but through the most noxious and vile of beasts and reptiles. For these lurk in the ground, and their dens are in caves and in the hollows of the earth. And it is truly proper to a rational being to consider God to be the one truly existing being, but to a beast to create many gods, and to an irrational creature to create a god who does not exist in truth. Moreover he shows cunning in another way; for not only is there in the Deity knowledge of good and evil but also the acceptance and pursuit of good and the aversion to and rejection of evil. But these things he did not reveal, for they were useful; he included a reference only to the knowledge of both contraries, good and evil. In the second place, "as gods" in the plural was now said not without reason but in order that he might show forth the good and evil, and that these gods are of a twofold nature. Accordingly, it is fitting that particular gods should have knowledge of opposites; but the elder cause is superior (to good and evil).

Discussion

Philo is concerned with showing that the serpent's use of the term "gods" in the plural, an allusion to future

polytheism, was not due to prescience, a faculty reserved for creatures higher than the reviled serpent. For the serpent, by his very nature, intermediate between rational man and irrational creature, concludes Philo, created many gods. Moreover, adds Philo, the serpent further demonstrated his cunning by telling woman that by eating the forbidden fruit, she and man would acquire knowledge of good and evil and thus become "as gods."[10] The serpent, however, withheld from woman the fact that God only makes use of good and rejects evil. This means, according to Philo, that had the woman known that to be "as gods" also involved the rejection of evil, she might not have listened to the serpent and committed the evil of eating the forbidden fruit.

Rabbinic Sources

A. Midrash Aggadah Bereshit 3:5

[A_1] כי יודע אלהים. אמר הנחש אל האשה את יודעת מפני מה הזהיר הקב"ה אתכם שלא תאכלו ממנו, שכל אומן שרוא בני אומנתו. מן האילן הזה אכל וברא את העולם, ואתם תאכלו ממנו והייתם כאלהים שתוכלו לברות העולם כמותו. [A_2] ונפקחו עיניכם. להיות יודעים כל מה שאתם רואים. [A_3] יודעי טוב ורע. ותדעו מהו טוב ומהו רע.

Discussion

"But God knows . . ." is interpreted by A_1 to mean that the serpent lied to Eve and told her that God's prohibition against eating from the tree was the result of His

fear and jealousy that someone else would become like Him, a Creator. The serpent explained to Eve that it was from the fruit of the tree that God ate before He created the world, and, therefore, by eating the forbidden fruit, they too would become like God, creators of worlds.[11]

A_2 interprets "then your eyes shall be opened" to mean that Adam and Eve would comprehend everything that they would see.

"Knowing good and evil" is interpreted by A_3 to mean that Adam and Eve would be able to distinguish between good and evil.

B. Leḳaḥ Tov Bereshit 3:5

יודעי טוב ורע. להתבונן בצורכי העולם הזה, ולא כבהמות שנשחטים זה בפני זה ואינם מרגישים.

Discussion

Here "knowing good and evil" is interpreted to mean that they will become able to take care of their worldly needs, unlike the mindless animals who prey on each other in order to survive.

Evaluation

No hint is to be found in either midrash A or B that the serpent told Eve about the contraries of good and evil,

and withheld from her the knowledge that God rejects evil and only utilizes good. However, both Philo and *midrash* A_1 deal with the theme of the snake's promise to Eve that she and Adam will become "as gods" if they eat from the forbidden fruit. This similarity of themes is not an indication of a borrowing of interpretations by one source from another, but rather it is merely an elaboration of the theme found in the biblical story itself. Philo and the Rabbis merely define the term "as gods" because its definition is not explicit in the Scripture. In addition, neither *midrash* A nor B interprets the serpent's use of the term "gods" as a possible indication of his prescience.

From the comparison of Philo and *midrash* A and B, it is to be concluded that the interpretations in these sources are not parallel.

6. *Qu. in Gen.* 1:37

> (Gen. iii. 6) Why does the woman first touch the tree and eat of its fruit, and afterwards the man also take of it?
>
> According to the literal meaning the priority (of the woman) is mentioned with emphasis. For it was fitting that man should rule over immortality and everything good, but woman over death and everything vile. In the allegorical sense, however, woman is a symbol of sense, and man, of mind. Now of necessity sense comes into contact with the sense-perceptible; and by the participation of sense, things pass into the mind; for

sense is moved by objects, while the mind is moved by sense.

Discussion

Philo offers both a literal and an allegorical interpretation of the Scripture. The allegorical interpretation is an elaboration of Philo's concept of perception.

Bereshit Rabbah 19:5

ותקח מפריו ותאכל. אייר איבי סחטה ענבים ונחנה לו. ר' שמלאי אמר בישוב הדעת באת עליו, אמרה ליה מה אחה סבור שאני מחה וחוה אחרת נבראת לך(קהלה א:ט) אין כל חדש תחת השמש, או שמא אני מחה ואת ישוב לך הטליס-(ישעיה מה:יח) לא חהו בראה לשכת יצרה. רבנן אמרי החחילה מילחת עליו בקולה.

Discussion

This midrash offers three interpretations of "she took of its fruit and ate." The first interpretation is given in the name of R. Aibu: He assumes that the Tree was really a vine, and explains that Eve gave Adam a draught which she prepared from its fruit. The second interpretation is offered in the name of R. Simlai: Eve was able to induce Adam to eat from the forbidden fruit by anticipating any of his objections to this act; she told him that after her death he would not get another mate, nor be free of responsibilities with none to care for. The third interpretation is given in the name of the Rabbis: Eve was able to

convince Adam to eat the fruit by simply crying and weeping.

Evaluation

We find that Philo's literal interpretation is concerned with explaining why the woman was first to touch the Tree and eat of its fruit and the man second. In the midrash, however, the focus of discussion is on explaining how Eve was able to persuade Adam to eat the forbidden fruit.[12] In addition, Philo's main goal was to interpret this scriptural passage allegorically and there is no allegorical interpretation offered for it in this midrash. In fact, I have not found parallels to these types of allegorical interpretations of Philo in any of the rabbinic sources I examined.

7. Qu. in Gen. 1:38

> (Gen. iii. 6) What is the meaning of the words, "And she gave to her husband with her"?
> What has just been said is stated because there is almost one and the same time of appearance--at the same time sense-perception is received from objects and the mind is impressed by sense-perception.

Discussion

Philo offers an allegorical interpretation of this scriptural text. Here, too, we find a discussion of Philo's concept of perception and its stress upon the relationship

between the senses, symbolized by woman, and the mind, symbolized by man.

Evaluation

BR 19:5 (see the above midrash) offers an interpretation on this same verse. However, as I have already stated, it is not an allegorical interpretation. Again, Philo's interpretation is not paralleled in rabbinic literature.

8. Qu. in Gen. 1:39

> (Gen. iii. 7) What is the meaning of the words, "The eyes of both were opened"?
>
> That they were not created blind is evident from the fact that even all the other beings were created perfect, both animals and plants; and should not man be endowed with the superior parts, such as eyes? Moreover, a little while before he gave earthly names to all animals, and so it is clear that he had first seen them. Or it may be that by eyes Scripture symbolically indicates the vision of the soul, through which alone are perceived all good and bad, noble and shameful things, and all opposites. But if the eye is a separate intelligence, which is called the counsellor of the understanding, there is also a special irrational eye which is called opinion.

Discussion

Two interpretations are offered--one literal and the other allegorical. In the literal interpretation it is demonstrated why the verse should not be interpreted to mean

that man and woman were blind. In the allegorical interpretation, "eyes" are interpreted in two ways: (1) the eyes are symbolic of the "vision of the soul," that is, the faculty which perceives "good and bad, noble and shameful things, and all opposites"; (2) one eye is symbolic of the rational soul and the other of the irrational soul.[13]

Rabbinic Sources

A. Midrash Ha-gadol Bereshit 3:7 (p. 96)

ותפקחנה עיני שניהם. כיון שאכלו מפירות האילן נפקחו עיניהם וקהו שניהם ושני כל הדורות הבאין אחריהן ונחגלית ערותן וידעו שהן כבהמה.

Discussion

According to this interpretation, when Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, their eyes opened and their teeth--and consequently the teeth of all future generations--stood on edge; moreover, their nakedness became revealed to them and they knew that they were like beasts (i.e., that they had sex organs).

B. Lekah Tov Bereshit 3:7

ותפקחנה עיני שניהם. וכי עורים היו, אלא הבינם בוראם, מה טובה אבוו מן העולם, כמה דורות איבדו.

Discussion

In interpreting the phrase, "The eyes of both were opened," the Rabbis stress that Adam and Eve were not blind, as one might assume if reading this Scripture uncritically. Rather, God made them understand what good they caused to cease from the world, and that they destroyed multitudes of generations that would have been born had they but remained immortal by not eating the forbidden fruit.[14]

Evaluation

Both midrash B and Philo stress that Adam and Eve were not blind, and that their eyes were "opened" figuratively only. It is not surprising that Philo and the Rabbis agree on this point, since Scripture itself makes this fairly clear. However, beyond this one point of agreement, each of the interpretations is different.

Neither midrash A nor midrash B offers an interpretation to parallel Philo's allegory on the eyes.

9. Qu. in Gen. 1:40

> (Gen. iii. 7) What is the meaning of the words, "For they knew that they were naked"?
>
> It was of this, that is, of their own nakedness that they first received knowledge by eating of the forbidden fruit. And this was opinion and the beginning of evil, for they had not used any covering, inasmuch as

the parts of the universe are immortal and incorruptible; but (now) they needed that which is made by hand and corruptible. And this knowledge was in being naked, not that it was in itself the cause of change but that now a strangeness was conceived by the mind toward the whole world.

Bereshit Rabbah 19:6

וידעו כי ערומים הם. אפי' מצוה אחת שהיתה בידן נתערטלו הימנה.

Evaluation

The main thrust of Philo's interpretation is to show that, by eating the forbidden fruit, man and woman gained the opinion that they were naked, and consequently they became psychologically estranged from the immortal and uncorruptible universe: they now needed to cover themselves with garments made by hand from corruptible material. The midrashic interpretation, however, is simply a statement that Adam and Eve stripped themselves of the one command given to them by God--not to eat the fruit.[15]

From the content of Philo's interpretation and the midrashic interpretation, it is obvious that each is concerned with a different matter.

10. Qu. in Gen. 1:41

(Gen. iii. 7) Why do they sew the leaves of the fig tree as loin-cloths?

First, because the fruit of the fig tree is sweeter and pleasant to the taste. Accordingly it symbolically indicates those who sew together and weave together many sense pleasures one with another. Wherefore they (the leaves) are girded round the place of the genitals, which are the instrument of greater things. Second, because the fruit of the fig tree is, as I have said, sweeter than that of other trees, and its leaves are rougher. Accordingly (Scripture) wishes to make clear symbolically that although the movement of pleasure seems to be somewhat slippery and smooth, nevertheless in truth it proves to be rough, and it is impossible to feel joy or pleasure without first feeling pain and again feeling additional pain. For it is always a grievous thing to feel pain in the midst of two painful states, one of them being at the beginning, and the other being added.

Discussion

The sewing of the fig leaves into loincloths is interpreted allegorically and becomes symbolic of those who combine many sense pleasures, especially sexual pleasures; for this reason the fig leaves are girded around the genitals, which are instruments of pleasure and procreation. Furthermore, the fig is symbolic of the sweetness of pleasure, and the coarseness of the fig leaf is symbolic of pain. This means, according to Philo, that pleasure must always be accompanied by pain.

Rabbinic Sources

A. Midrash Aggadah Bereshit 3:7

[A_1] ויתפרו עלה תאנה. לכסות ערותן מן הסעם הזה אמרו שאוהו העץ שאכלו ממנו היה תאנה, בו ברבר שנחקלקלו בה נחקנו,[A_2] וחפרו עלה לכסות ערותן, ולכך קרא שמה אדם חאנה, כי על ידה בקש הקדוש ברוך הוא ומצא בה חראנה, לגזור עליהם מיחה.

Discussion

A_1 interprets "and they sewed fig leaves together" to mean that the fig was the forbidden fruit which Adam and Eve ate. Moreover, it was from the leaves of the fig tree that they sewed their garments, so that the very tree through which they corrupted themselves became the tree which brought them relief from their nakedness.[16]

A_2 plays on the word תאנה(fig): Adam calls the tree a "fig tree" (תאנה) because it was through it that God found "occasion" (תואנה) to decree death upon them.[17]

B. Midrash Sober Tov, Psalm 92

ר' יהושע בן קרחה אומר מן האילן שנחבאו תחתיו לקחו עלים ותפרו, שנאמר ויתפרו עלה תאנה(בר' ג:ז).

Discussion

An interpretation is offered in the name of R. Joshua b. Korha: Adam and Eve made their loincloths from the very tree under which they took refuge, when they hid from God.[18]

Evaluation

In both Philo and midrash A_1 we find an emphasis on the dual (contrary) purpose of the fig leaf. In Philo the fig (tree leaf) is symbolic of pleasure and pain, and in

midrash A_1 the same tree (the fig) that corrupted Adam and Eve also protected them. However, aside from this one parallel point in Philo and this midrash, none of the midrashim I examined hint that the fig is symbolic of pleasure. Thus Philo's allegorical interpretation has no parallel in the rabbinic sources.

11. Qu. in Gen. 1:42

> (Gen. iii. 8) What is the meaning of the words, "The sound was heard of God's walking"? Can there be a noise of words or feet, or does God walk?
>
> Whatever sensible gods are in heaven--that is, the stars--all move in a circle and proceed in revolutions. But the highest and eldest cause is stable and immobile, as the theory of the ancients holds. For He gives an indication and impression as though He wished to give the appearance of moving; for though no voice is given forth, prophets hear through a certain power a divine voice sounding what is said to them. Accordingly, as He is heard without speaking, so also He gives the impression of walking without actually walking, indeed without moving at all. And you see that before there was any tasting of evil, (men) were stable, constant, immobile, peaceful and eternal; similarly and in the same way they believed God to be, just as He is in truth. But after they had come into association with deceit, they moved of themselves, and changed from being immobile, and beleived that there was alteration and change in Him.

Discussion

According to Philo, the Scripture is not meant to be understood literally: God does not walk. God, however, only gives the appearance of walking, and makes Himself

heard by His prophets without speaking. God is immobile and stable. Before men tasted evil, they imitated God by remaining "stable, constant, immobile, peaceful and eternal." But after they tasted evil, men became mobile, believing that God Himself had changed and become mobile.

Rabbinic Sources

A. Yalkut Shim'oni Bereshit sec. 27 (p. 95)

[A_1] וישמעו את קול יי' א' מהלך בגן. שמענו שיש הילוך לקול, הילוך לאש לא שמענו, והיכן שמענו להלן והתהלך אש ארצה(שמות ט:כג). מהלך איו כחיב כאן, אלא מתהלך מקפץ ועולה.[A_2] עיקר שכינה בתחתונים היתה, כיון שחטא אדם הראשו', נסתלקה לרקיע הראשון. עמד קין וחטא, נסתלקה לרקיע שני. עמד דור אנוש, נסתלקה לרקיע שלישי. דור המבול, נסתלקה לרקיע ד'. דור הפלגה, נסתלקה לרקיע ה'. סדומיים, נסתלקה לרקיע ו'. מצרים, נסתלקה לרקיע ז'. ועמדו ז' צדיקים והורידו אותה לארץ אברהם, יצחק, לוי, קהת, עמרם, משה, דכת' צדיקים ירשו ארץ וגו'(תהילים לז:כט). ורשעים מה פורחין באויר, אלא צדיקים ישכינו שכינה בארץ.[A_3] וישמעו. שמעו קולן של אילונות אומרי' הא גנבא דגנב דעתיה דברייה. שמע קולן של מלאכי השרת אומרים, מתהלך מה הלך לו אחו שבגן.

Discussion

A_1 interprets the Scripture to mean that God's voice (not God himself) traveled (moved) in the garden.[19]

In A_2 the interpretation turns on the form of מהלך in the Hitpa'el which is related to "leaping" and "ascending." Accordingly, the midrash explains that the Shekinah[20] was caused to "leap" and to "ascend" from its earthly abode into the heavens because of man's sin.[21]

A_3 interprets "And they heard" to mean that Adam and Eve heard the trees in the garden saying, "Lo the deceiver who deceived the Creator!"; and the ministering angels were heard to say, "The one in the garden is dead (מחהלך=מת הלך).[22]

B. Bereshit Rabbati 3:8 (p. 42)

וישמעו את קול וגו'. חבי ר' ישמעאל, עד שלא יחטא אדם נוהגין לו אימה ויראה, כיון שחטא נוחבים עליו אימה ויראה, עד שלא חטא אדהייר היה שומע בקול אימירון בנחת, כיון שחטא שומער אגרין בזעף, עד שלא חטא שומער ועומד על רגליו שנאמר וישמעו את קול ה' מחהלך, כיון שחטא היה שומע ומחתבא שנאמר ויחתבא האדם ואשתו.

Discussion

An interpretation of the Scripture is offered in the name of R. Ishmael: Before man committed the sin he inspired fear and awe in others, but after he sinned he himself was overcome by fear and terror. Similarly, before Adam sinned God's voice sounded pleasant to him, but after he sinned God's voice sounded angry and frightening; before Adam sinned he was able to hear God's voice while standing, but after he sinned he hid himself upon hearing God's voice.[23]

Evaluation

Philo explains the scriptural text by expounding a theory of an unmoved mover, who is imitated by the heavenly

host and by men; however, we find no such interpretation in either midrash A or B. Also whereas both midrash A and B use word-plays in order to interpret the Scripture, Philo makes no use of this technique in his interpretation. We do find, though, that both Philo and midrash B stress that man's perception of God was changed after he sinned: Man reacted to God differently. According to Philo, man believed that God became mobile and thus he began to move; and according to midrash B, man was unable to withstand the sound of God's voice after he sinned.

Although we find a similarity between Philo and the Midrash, this does not indicate a parallel or a borrowing of traditions by one source from the other; the subject matter and exegetic techniques are different in each source.

12. Qu. in Gen. 1:43

> (Gen. iii. 8) Why, when they hid themselves from the face of God, was not the woman, who first ate of the forbidden fruit, first mentioned, but the man; for (Scripture) says, "Adam and his wife hid themselves"?
>
> It was the more imperfect and ignoble element, the female, that made a beginning of transgression and lawlessness, while the male made the beginning of reverence and modesty and all good, since he was better and more perfect.

Evaluation

I have not found any midrash which is concerned with

the theme of the female as a "more imperfect and ignoble element" and the male as the "better and more perfect element." Moreover, the various midrashim I examined evinced no interest in why Scripture mentions Adam first, when he and Eve hid themselves from God.[24]

13. Qu. in Gen. 1:44

> (Gen. iii. 8) Why did they hide themselves, not in any other place, but in the midst of the trees of Paradise?[25]
>
> Not all things are done with reflection and wisdom by sinners; but there are times when thieves sit over the theft which they have committed, not seeing the consequence and that that which lies beside them and at their feet is already sought and hunted. So also it now befell. Whereas they ought to have fled far away from the tree whence came their transgression, in the very midst of this place he was caught, so that proof of their lawlessness was more evident and clear, and there was no fleeing. And thus (Scripture) symbolically indicates that every evil person has a refuge in evil, and every sensual person resorts to, and finds rest in, sensuality.

Bereshit Rabbah 19:8

[A_1] ויתחבא האדם ואשתו. אמר ר' איבו, גרעה קרמתר ונעשה של מאה אמה.

[A_2] בתוך עץ הגן. אמר ר' לוי, רמז לתולדותיו שיהיו נחונים בארונות של עץ.

Discussion

According to A_1, man's ability to hide in the midst of the trees of Paradise was indicative of the diminution of

his stature to a hundred cubits. At creation, according to BR 8:1, man filled the whole world.[26]

The translation of A_2 is: "'Amongst the trees (בעץ) of the garden.' R. Levey said: This was a sign for his descendents, that they would be placed within wooden (בעץ) coffins" (Soncino trans.).[27]

Evaluation

Rabbinic literature contains no parallels to either of Philo's interpretations. Our passages do not reflect Philo's literal interpretation that like thieves who remain in their place of crime to be apprehended with their loot, man and woman remained in the midst of the trees of the garden where the Tree of Knowledge was to be found. Furthermore, parallels to Philo's second interpretation, that Scripture "symbolically indicates that every evil person has refuge in evil, and every sensual person resorts to, and finds rest, in sensuality," are also not extant among rabbinic texts.

14. Qu. in Gen. 1:45

> (Gen. iii. 9) Why does He, who knows all things, ask Adam, "Where art thou?", and why does He not also ask the woman?
>
> The things said appear to be not a question but a kind of threat and reproach: where art thou now, from what good hast thou removed thyself, O man!; giving up immortality and a blessed life, thou hast gone over to death and unhappiness, in which thou hast been buried.

But the woman He did not consider it fitting to question, although she was the beginning of evil and led him (man) into a life of vileness. But this passage also has a more apt allegory. For the sovereign and ruling element in man, having reason, when it listens to anyone, introduces the vice of the female part also, that is, perception.

Rabbinic Sources

A. Midrash Aggadah Bereshit 3:9

[A_1] ויאמר לו איכה. וכי אין הקב"ה יודע היכן הוא, אלא שפתח לו הדרך אדלי ישוב, כיוצא בדבר ויאמר מי האנשים האלה עמך (במדבר כב:ט), וכי לא היה יודע הקב"ה מי היו, ועל מה באו, אלא להודיע לבלעם מי מדבר עמו, ואמר לו לא תלך עמהם (שם שם יב). [A_2] ד"א איכה. התחיל לקונן עליו.

Discussion

According to A_1, God knows where man is to be found. The question "Where are you?" is God's way of initiating a dialogue with Adam which is meant to give him an opportunity to repent for having eaten the forbidden fruit.[28] Similarly, we find that God initiates a dialogue with a question in Num. 22:9, when He asks Balaam, "Who are these people who are with you?" In both the case of Adam and of Balaam God knew the answer to His own question, but He asks the question in order to initiate a dialogue which may lead to repentance.

A_2 plays on the word אַיֶּכָּה ("Where are you?") and interprets it as אֵיכָה, a lament by God for Adam.[29]

B. Lekah Tov Bereshit 3:9

ויקרא ה' אלהים אל האדם ויאמר לו איכה. איך היה לך, איך נסה דעתך.

Discussion

B interprets איכה as a Notorikan to mean איך היה, "How has this happened to you!--How did you come to change!"[30]

Evaluation

Both Philo and midrash A are concerned with showing that God knew Adam's whereabouts. Both interpret "Where are you?" as a reproach of Adam by God; however, midrash A interprets the question as God's attempt to bring Adam to repentance. To have ignored the possible implication of Scripture--that God did not know Adam's whereabouts--would have been an implicit admission that God was not omniscient, something that neither Philo nor the Rabbis could have tolerated as a theological possibility. It is expected that exegetes would react similarly to the question of language of the text.

Midrash B, like Philo, interprets "Where are you?" as איך היה, a kind of reproach. The similarity between them, however, is probably due to the language of the Scripture, which connotes reproach, rather than a borrowing of

interpretations by one source from the other.

Beyond the similarities in Philo and midrash A and B, which I have already discussed, there is no parallel to Philo's allegorical interpretation in these midrashim or any of the other midrashim I examined.

15. Qu. in Gen. 1:46

> (Gen. iii. 12-13) Why does the man say, "The woman gave me of the tree and I ate," while the woman says, "The serpent did not give it, but deceived me, and I ate"?
>
> What is so stated (literally) contains a sentiment that is to be approved, for woman is of a nature to be deceived rather than to reflect greatly, but man is the opposite here. But according to the deeper meaning, the object of sense-perception deceives and deludes the particular senses of an imperfect being to which it comes; and sense-perception being already infected by its object, passes on the infection to the sovereign and ruling element. So then the mind receives from sense, the giver, that which the latter has suffered. And sense is deceived and deluded by a sense-percetible object, but the senses of a wise man, like the reflections of his mind, are not to be deceived.

Discussion

Philo interprets verses 12 and 13 to mean that only woman, who by nature is susceptible to deception, was deceived by the serpent, and not man, who by nature is reflective. Man merely ate what was given to him by woman. In the allegorical interpretation, Philo explains that the

mind (man) is susceptible to error when the imperfect senses (woman) provide it with erroneous sense data.

Rabbinic Sources

A. Midrash Ha-gadol Bereshit 3:12 (p. 100)

ויאמר האדם האשה אשר נתתה עמדי היא נתנה לי מן העץ ואכל. אמר אדם לפני הקב"ה רבון העולמים כשהייתי לבדי לא חסאתי לפניך וכיון שבאת אצלי האשה הזאת היא הסעתני, שבאמר היא נתנה לי מן העץ ואכל. אמר לו הקב"ה אני נתתיה עזר לך ראתה כופה טרבה ואומר היא נתנה לי, היה לך שלא לשמוע ממנה, שהיא ספלה לך ואין אתה ספל לה.

Discussion

Verse 12, "The woman You put at my side--she gave me of the tree, and I ate," is interpreted in this midrash to mean that Adam was ungrateful to God for having created Eve as his helpmate. For until she came to him, complains Adam before God, he was sinless.[31] Responding to Adam's ingratitude, God reproaches him for listening to Eve who was created to be his mate and subordinate to him.

B. Midrash Ha-gadol Bereshit 3:13 (p. 100)

ויאמר ה' אלהים לאשה מה זאת עשית. אמר הקב"ה לאשה לא דייך שחסאת אלא שהחסית את האדם. אמרה לפניו רבונו שלעולם הנחש השיאני ואכל. אמר הקב"ה כולכם בעלי עלילות, זה חולה בזה וזה חולה בזה, כולכם ראויין לדין. מיד ישב עליהם הקב"ה בדין ודן אותם. הוציא דינו שלנחש תחלה ואחר כך דינה שלאשה ואחר כך דינו שלאדם. רבי אומר בקלקלה מתחילין מן הצד ובגדולה מתחילין מן הגדול.

Discussion

This is an interpretation of verse 13, "And the Lord God said to Eve, 'What is this you have done?'" Here God reproaches Eve for not only bringing punishment upon herself, but also upon Adam whom she caused to sin. And when Eve attempts to defend herself against God's reproach by resorting to recriminations and accusations against the serpent for having deceived her into eating the forbidden fruit,[32] God, according to the interpretation, with an almost detectable impatience, brings judgment upon all three malefactors--the serpent, Eve, and Adam. The order of judgment is accounted for by citing a tradition by Rabbi: Punishment is first enjoined upon the least worthy; and honors are first accorded to the most worthy.

Evaluation

Midrash A and B are not concerned, as is Philo, with showing that only Eve, and not Adam, was deceived by the serpent. On the contrary, midrash A does imply that by listening to Eve, Adam was deceived by the serpent.

There is, however, one similarity between midrash A and Philo: both consider woman subordinate to man, but this is merely a reflection of culturally shared attitudes rather

than a borrowing of traditions by one source from the other. Otherwise, whereas Philo does give an allegorical interpretation of these verses, no such interpretation is to be found in either midrash A or B. In fact, a parallel to allegorical interpretation is not to be found in any of the rabbinic sources I examined.

16. Qu. in Gen. 1:47

(Gen. iii. 14-17) Why does He first curse the serpent, next the woman, and third the man?

The arrangement of curses follows the order of the wrongdoing. The serpent was the first to deceive. Second, the woman sinned through him, yielding to deceit. Third the man (sinned), yielding to the woman's desire rather than to the divine commands. However the order also is well suited to allegory; for the serpent is a symbol of desire, as was shown; and woman is a symbol of sense, and man of mind. So that desire becomes the evil origin of sins, and this first deceives sense, while sense takes the mind captive.

Bereshit Rabbah 20:3

ויאמר ה' אלהים אל הנחש כי עשית זאת. תני רבי חייא, בגדולה מתחילין מן הגדול, ובקלקלה מתחילין מן הקטן. בגדולה מתחילים מן הגדול, שנאמר (ויקרא י:ו) ויאמר משה אל אהרן ואל אלעזר ואל איתמר. בקלקלה מתחילין מן הקטן, שנאמר ויאמר ה' אל הנחש. ואל האשה אמר הרבה ארבה עצבונך והרונך. ולאדם אמר כי שמעת לקול אשתך. מלמד שמתחלה בחקלל נחש, ואחייכ בחקללה חוה, ואחייכ בחקלל אדם.

Discussion

An interpretation is offered in the name of R. Ḥiyya, who derives a principle from Lev. 10:6 and Gen. 3:14: Honor

is conferred by commencing with the greater and more important individual; disgrace is enjoined by commencing with the least worthy and least important individual.[33] (A parallel to this tradition is to be found in MHG Ber. 3:13, p. 100.) According to the interpretation, the first part of this principle is evident in Lev. 10:6. Here Moses is found to be addressing Aaron the High Priest concerning the laws of purity, which are considered to be matters of great honor, since it is through their observance that the priests are fit to function in their sacred role. Only after Aaron, the most important individual, is conferred with this honor are his sons Eleazar and Ithamar (who are considered less important than Aaron) addressed by Moses, and thereby also conferred with honor.

The second part of R. Ḥiyya's principle is proven on the basis of Gen. 3:14 where the serpent is cursed first, Gen. 3:16 where Eve is cursed next, and Gen. 3:17 where Adam is cursed last. However, the assumption that the serpent is the least important, and that Adam is the most important of the three is very likely derived from the order in which God initially speaks to the three. In verse 11, God first addresses man and inquires of him concerning his violation of the prohibition against eating the forbidden fruit. The

fact that God speaks to Adam first is an indication that he is being honored, and therefore he is the most important of all three. Eve, who is addressed next, is second in importance (v. 13). And, finally, the serpent is addressed and cursed at the same time (v. 14), which indicates that he is the least important of the three.[34]

Evaluation

Both Philo and this midrash explain that the order of the curses was determined by the order of wrongdoing found in the Scripture. The midrash based on these verses, however, establishes a principle of priority by which disgrace and honor are to be conferred upon individuals, whereas no such principle is to be found in Philo's interpretation.

Furthermore, no parallel to Philo's allegorical interpretation is to be found in any of the rabbinic sources I examined.

17. Qu. in Gen. 1:48

> (Gen. iii. 14-15) Why is this curse laid upon the serpent--to move upon its breast and belly, to eat dust and to have enmity toward woman?
>
> The text is plain, since we have as testimony that which we see. But according to the deeper meaning it

is to be allegorically interpreted as follows. Since the serpent is a symbol of desire, he takes the form of lovers of pleasure, for he crawls upon his breast and belly, stuffed with food and drink, and has the insatiable desire of a cormorant, and is intemperate and unbridled in eating flesh. And whatever has to do with food is altogether earthy; wherefore he is said to eat dust. And desire has a natural enmity toward sense, which (Scripture) symbolically calls woman. And notwithstanding that desires seem to be critical of the senses, they are in reality flatterers who plot evil in the manner of enemies. And it is the custom of adversaries that through that which they bestow as gifts they cause great harm, such as defectiveness of vision to the eyes, and difficulty of hearing to the ears, and bring insensibility to the other (sense organs); and they bring upon the whole body together dissolution and paralysis, taking away all its health and for no good reason newly bringing many bad sicknesses.

Yalkut Shim'oni Bereshit, sec. 29 (p. 98)

וכן מצינו בנחש הקדמוני, שנתן עינו במה שאין ראוי לו, ומה שבידו ניסל הימנו. אמ' הק' אני אמרתי יהא מלך על כל בהמה וחיה, עכשיו, ארור הוה מכל הבהמה. אני אמרתי יהלך בקומה זקופה, עכשיו, על גחונך חלך(בר' ג:יד). אני אמרתי יהא מאכלו מאכל אדם, עכשיו עפר תאכל(שם). הוא אמר אקדוג את האדם ואשא את חוה, עכשיו ואיבה אשית ביבך וביו האשה(שם, סו).[35]

Discussion

The midrash uses the curse of the snake to illustrate a principle: When one desires that which belongs to another, then everything which he already possesses is taken from him. In our passage, the serpent desired to kill Adam and take his place in the world.[36] As a result, although at

first the serpent was king over all the animals, and therefore walked upright and erect as befitted a king, after the curse he was made lower than all the animals by having to crawl on his belly. Before the curse the serpent ate food which was eaten by humans, but after the curse he ate dust. The serpent wanted to kill Adam and possess Eve, but God punished him by planting enmity between him and Eve. Thus everything was taken from him![37]

Evaluation

Both Philo and the midrash interpret the reasons for the serpent's curse. Philo, however, provides an allegorical interpretation for the Scripture, which is not paralleled in the midrash.

18. Qu. in Gen. 1:49

> (Gen. iii. 16) Why does the curse on the woman consist of an increase in sorrow and lamentation and in giving birth in pain and in turning to her husband and being under his rule?
>
> This experience comes to every woman who lives together with a man. It is (meant) not as a curse but as a necessity. But symbolically the senses of man have difficult labours and suffering, being treated badly and scourged by domestic ills. And these are the offspring of sense: seeing, of the organ of sight; hearing, of the organ of hearing; smelling, of the nostrils; tasting, of the organ of taste; contact, of the organ of touch. And since the life of the worthless and evil man is sorrowful and necessitous, it is necessary that whatever is

acted upon by sense should be mixed with fear and suffering. But according to the deeper meaning, there takes place a turning of sense to the man, not as to a helper, for it is a subject of no worth, but as to a master, since it prizes force more than righteousness.

Discussion

In his literal interpretation Philo merely states that it is an existential fact that a woman suffers pain during childbirth, and that she desires to be dominated by her husband. Philo also presents an allegorical interpretation in which he explains that the senses (woman) are constantly subjected to pain and suffering when they come into contact with sense data. The result of these sufferings, however, is sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste. And elaborating further, Philo states that the senses (woman) need to be disciplined and dominated by man (mind).

Midrash Ha-gadol Bereshit 3:16 (p. 104)

אל האשה אמר. הרציא דיבה שלאשה תשע קללות ומיתה. ואלו הן [A_1]הרבה ארבה, אלו שתי רביעיות נוספות שלדם, אחת דם צער נדה ואחת צער בתולים. [A_2]עצבונך, זה צער גידול בנים.[A_3] והרנך, זה צער העיבור.[A_4] בעצב תלדי בנים, זה צער לידה כמשמעו.[A_5] ואל אישך תשוקתך, מלמד שהאשה משתוקקת על בעלה בשעה שיוצא לדרך.[A_6] והוא ימשל בך, שהאיש חרב בפה והיא חרבעת בלב. עסופה כאבל וחבושה בבית האסורים ואזניה רצועות ואיבה באמנת לעדות ואחר כל אלו מות.

Discussion

Genesis 3:16 states: "And to the woman He said, 'I

will make most severe / Your pangs in childbearing; / In pain shall you bear children. / Yet your urge shall be for your husband, / And he shall rule over you.'" The midrash interprets the verse to mean that Eve was cursed with nine curses and finally with death.[38] In A_1 הרבה ארבה is interpreted to mean the blood of menstruation and the blood of virginity; in A_2 עצבונך is interpreted to mean the sufferings brought on by raising children; in A_3 והרונך is taken to mean the pain of conception; in A_4 בעצב חלדי בנים is self-explanatory, that is, the pain of childbearing; in A_5 ואל אשך תשוקתך is interpreted to mean the desire of a woman for her husband when he is away from her. In A_6 והוא ימשול בך is interpreted to mean that a man gratifies himself verbally and a woman gratifies herself emotionally. And not only this, but a woman is attired like a mourner and is imprisoned in her own home, and even her testimony is not valid in court. In addition to all these curses, she is destined to die.

Evaluation

One similarity emerges from Philo's interpretation and the midrashic interpretation: It is woman's fate to be dominated by man because he is less emotional than she. The senses/emotions (woman) must be disciplined by the mind

(man), according to Philo. This is similarly implied by the midrash whn it says that a man is characterized by the verbal-intellectual (חרבע בפה) and woman by emotions (חרבעת לה); and because of this, woman is to be dominated by man. This similarity between Philo and the midrash, again, is an expression of a culturally shared attitude rather than a borrowing of traditions by one source from the other.

Otherwise, it is evident that the midrash does not share Philo's goals. It interprets Scripture by giving a detailed description of the curses woman came to suffer, whereas Philo interprets the Scripture allegorically and elaborates on his concept of perception.

19. Qu. in Gen. 1:50

> (Gen. iii. 17) Why does He curse the serpent and the woman by referring directly to them and not do so similarly to the man, instead of placing it on the earth, saying, "Cursed be the earth for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat it; thistles and thorns it shall grow for thee, and thou shalt eat the grass of the field; in the sweat of thy brow shalt thou eat thy bread"?
>
> Since the mind is a divine inbreathing, He does not deem it right to curse it, but He turns the curse against the earth and its cultivation. And the earth is of the same nature as the body of man, of which the mind is the cultivator. When the cultivator is virtuous and worthy, the body also bears its fruits, namely health, keenness of sense, power and beauty. But when he is cruel, the opposite is brought to pass, for his body is cursed, receiving as its cultivator a

> mind undisciplined and imprudent. And its fruit consists of nothing useful but only of thistles and thorns, sorrow and fear and other ills, while thoughts strike the mind and shoot arrows at it. And the "grass" is symbolically food, for he changes from a rational being to an irrational creature, overlooking the divine foods; these are those which are granted by philosophy through principles and voluntary laws.

Discussion

According to the literal interpretation, man is not directly cursed because his mind was infused with divinity at creation.[39] Therefore, he is cursed indirectly through the curse on the earth, so that whenever he attempts to grow food he meets with hardship and toil. In the allegorical interpretation, the land symbolizes the body, and the cultivator symbolizes the mind; accordingly, when the mind is undisciplined and imprudent, the body suffers illness and infirmity. When, however, the mind is virtuous and worthy, the body bears the fruits of "health, keenness of sense, power and beauty." Furthermore, the Scripture's use of the word "grass," man's new food, according to this allegorical interpretation, is an indication that man had changed from a rational being to an irrational creature.

Rabbinic Sources

A. Midrash Ha-gadol Bereshit 3:17 (p. 106)

ארורה האדמה בעבורך. אם אדם חסא אדן מה חסאת, לפי שלא נבראת אלא בשבילו שלאדם, חסא אדם ונחקלל נחקללה עמו כדי שלא ימצא בה נחת רוח, ולא עוד אלא כשבני אדם חוסאין בעבירות חמורות הן נידונין בגופן, חסאו בעבירות קלות האדן מחקללת ופירותיה מתמעטין, כדי להצריכן לשאת עיניהן לאביהם שבשמים.

Discussion

In A_1: "Cursed be the ground because of you" is interpreted to mean that inasmuch as the earth was originally created for man's benefit, it would now only bring him hardship and toil. Additionally, in A_2, this Scripture comes to teach that when men commit serious transgressions they are punished bodily, i.e., with illness, etc., but when they only commit less serious transgressions, the land is cursed and produces poor crops. This is done by God so that men will lift their eyes to Him.[40]

B. Midrash Aggadah Bereshit 3:17

[B1] ולאדם אמר. אחה עברה על צוויי ושמעח לקול אשחך, שנחנה לך מפרי העץ ואכלח, לכך ארורה האדמה בעבורך, שחעלה לך דברים ארורים פרעושים ורמשים [B2] בעצבון חאכלנה. שלא חאכל ממנה שום דבר עד שחיגע וחחעצב.

Discussion

B_1 interprets the curse on the land to mean that it

will produce flies and creeping things for man. In B_2, the midrash interprets the phrase "by toil shall you eat of it" to mean that the land will not yield its produce to man until he exerts painstaking labor and becomes grieved by the toil.[41]

Evaluation

In Philo's literal interpretation, the curse on the land is explained as a necessary result of man's partial divinity. However, neither midrash A nor B offers a similar interpretation.

The similarity between midrash A's interpretation, where men are afflicted bodily when they commit serious transgressions, and Philo's allegorical interpretation, where an undisciplined and imprudent mind brings illness upon the body, is very likely coincidental. This is shown by the fact that midrash A does not develop its interpretation from an analogy between the mind and the body, on one hand, and land and its cultivation on the other. Bodily affliction is the result of a transgression against God, according to the midrash, whereas there is no such concept present in Philo's interpretation. We find, therefore, that neither midrash A nor B hint at Philo's allegorical interpretation.

20. Qu. in Gen. 1:51

(Gen. iii. 19) What is the meaning of the words, "Until thou return to the earth from which thou wast taken"? For man was moulded not only from the earth but also from the divine spirit.

First, it is evident that the earth-born creature was compounded out of earth and heaven. And because he did not remain uncorrupted but made light of the commands of God, turning away from the best and most excellent part, namely heaven, he gave himself wholly over to the earth, the denser and heavier element. Second, if he had been desirous of virtue, which makes the soul immortal, he would certainly have obtained heaven as his lot. Since he was zealous for pleasure, through which spiritual death is brought about, he again gives himself back to earth; accordingly Scripture says, "Dust thou art, wherefore to dust shalt thou return." Thus earth is the beginning and end of the evil and vile man, but heaven of the virtuous man.

Discussion

According to this interpretation, man is compounded from the heavenly as well as the earthly element. However, at death he completely returns to the corruptible earth (the denser, heavier element), since he corrupted himself by rejecting God's command. But had man obeyed God and not eaten the forbidden fruit, adds Philo, his soul would have remained immortal and resided in heaven.[42]

Rabbinic Sources

A. Midrash Ha-gadol Bereshit 3:17 (p. 108)[43]

כי עפר אתה ואל עפר תשוב. [A_1]וכי לעפר בלבד הוא חוזר והלא לארבעה יסודות הוא חוזר, אלא לפי שרוב בנינו מן העפר לכך חוזר רובו אל העפר. [A_2] ד"א ואל עפר תשוב, לימדנו כל דבר המשתנה שאינו חוזר ליסודו מיד, אלא בתחלה משתנה לדבר אחר ודבר אחר לדבר אחר וסוף הכל יחזור כל דבר ליסודו

בסביבה ותחלת שינוי הוא העפר, לכך נאמר ואל עפר תשוב.

Discussion

"For dust you are / And to dust shall you return" prompts midrash A_1 to inquire: Why does the major part of man's body only return to the earth, even though he is also composed of fire, air, and water? The major part of man's body, it is explained, is composed of earth--that is, the heaviest part of man, bone, is composed of the earth element --therefore it is this element to which the majority of the body returns.[44]

According to midrash A_2, the Scripture teaches that an object does not immediately revert back to its original element, rather, metamorphosing into several other elements beforehand. The change into the earth element was the first stage of the decaying process for Adam.

B. Bereshit Rabbah 20:10

כי עפר אתה ואל עפר תשוב. אי"ר שמעון בן יוחאי, מכאן רמז לתחיית המתים מן התורה כי עפר אתה ואל עפר תלך לא באמר, אלא תשוב.

Discussion

R. Simeon b. Johai interprets "For dust you are / And to dust you shall return" as a hint at resurrection.

The word "return" (תשוב) in the imperfect tense is interpreted to mean that there is only a temporary return to the dust, and then, at a future time, there will be a return to life--resurrection.[45]

Evaluation

Both Philo and midrash A inquire for the reasons why man's body returns to the earth, when, in fact, it is also composed of other elements. Each answers the question differently: In A_1, the majority of man's body returns to the earth element because its predominant element is earth, but in Philo's interpretation, man's body returns to the corrupt earth because man corrupted himself by eating the forbidden fruit.

We also find similarities between Philo's interpretation and midrash B: Philo hints at the immortality of the soul,[46] and the midrash speaks of physical resurrection. It is, however, important to recognize that the midrash does not limit the resurrection to the soul only, rather the soul and body are to be resurrected together. Philo, on the other hand, does not mention resurrection of the body, and he limits himself to the immortality of the soul.

Philo's interpretation is similar to the midrash

in that he also takes the opportunity to discuss the decaying process of the human body and immortality. This similarity is, however, prompted by a commonly held belief in immortality which both sources read into the scriptural text.

Aside from the similarities I have already pointed out between Philo and these midrashim, I have not found parallels to Philo's interpretations in any of the other rabbinic sources I have examined.

21. Qu. in Gen. 1:53

> (Gen. iii. 20) Why does the earth-born man call his wife "Life" and exclaim, "Thou art the mother of all living things"?
>
> First, he gave the name of Life, which was most suitable to the first created woman, because she was to be the source of all the generations that were to come after them. Second, perhaps because she took the substance of her being not from the earth but from a living being, and from one part of the man, the rib, was given bodily form as a woman, she was called Life; for from a living being she first came into being, and because the first rational creatures were born to her. However it is also possible to understand this metaphorically; for is not sense, which is symbolically woman, rightly called Life? For the living is distinguished from the non-living by sense, through which impressions and impulses come to us, since sense is the cause of these. And in truth sense is the mother of all living things; just as nothing is born without a mother, so there is no living creature without sense.

Discussion

Woman was called "Life" because she was the source of all future human life. Additionally, perhaps woman was called "Life" because she was created from a living being, rather than from inanimate matter. In the allegorical interpretation, woman symbolizes sense--the characteristic distinguishing living creatures from nonliving objects. Inasmuch as sense gives rise to life--"there is no living creature without sense"--it is appropriately called "the mother of all living things."

Midrash Ha-gadol Bereshit 3:20 (p. 108)

ויקרא האדם שם אשתו חוה. על שמה כי היא היתה אם כל חי, שהיא אמן שלכל בני אדם החיים.

Discussion

Eve (חוה) is understood to mean the "mother of all humanity," for all human beings trace their beginnings to her.[47]

Evaluation

Both Philo and the midrash interpret the name "Eve" ("Life") in accordance with the implicit scriptural definition: Woman was to become the mother of all the human race, and therefore she is called "Life." Philo, however, adds

that perhaps she is called "Life" because she was created from a living being. We find no such explanation in the midrash. Moreover, Philo's allegorical interpretation has no parallel in the rabbinic sources I examined.

22. Qu. in Gen. 1:53

(Gen. iii. 21) Why does God make tunics of skin for Adam and his wife and clothe them?

Some may ridicule the text when they consider the cheapness of the apparel of tunics, as being unworthy of the touch of such a Creator. But a man who has tasted of wisdom and virtue will surely consider this work suitable to God for the wise instruction of those who labour idly and care little about providing necessities but are mad for wretched glory and give themselves up to amusement, and despise wisdom and virtue. Instead, they love a life of luxury and the skill of the artificer and that which is hostile to the good. And the wretches do not know that contentment with little, which is in need of nothing, is like a relative and a neighbour, but luxury is like an enemy, to be driven away and made to live far off. Accordingly, the tunics of skin, if we judge truly, are to be considered a more precious possession than varicoloured dies and purple stuffs. So much, then, for the literal meaning. But according to the deeper meaning, the tunic of skin is symbolically the natural skin of the body. For when God formed the first mind, He called it Adam; then he formed the sense, which He called Life; in the third place, of necessity He made his body also, calling it symbolically a tunic of skin, for it was proper that the mind and sense should be clothed in the body as in a tunic of skin, in order that His handiwork might first appear worthy of the divine power. And could the apparel of the human body be better or more fittingly made by any other power than God? Wherefore, having made their apparel, He straightway clothed them. For in the case of human clothing, there are some who make it and others who put it on. But this natural tunic, that is,

the body, was the work of Him who had also made it, and having made it, also clothed them in it.

Discussion

An object lesson is to be learned from the Scripture: God clothed man and woman in a garment of skin, a seemingly simple "garment," in order to instruct those who strive after luxury that it is preferable to seek out the mere necessities of life. For material goods, luxury, and amusement distract from the search for wisdom and the practice of virtue, and ultimately lead to evil.[48] According to the allegorical interpretation, the tunic of skin is symbolic of the body, which is a garment worthy of clothing the mind (man) and the senses (woman), because it too reflects the divine power of God.

Rabbinic Sources

A. Bereshit Rabbah 20:12

מעור. אמר רבי לוי, למדתך תורה דרך ארץ, לפום חילך אכול ופרא מן מה דאת לביש ויתיר ממה דאת שרי. לפום חילך אכול, מכל עץ הגן אכול תאכל. ופרא מן מה דאת לביש, ויעש ה' אלהים לאדם ולאשתו. ויתיר ממה דאת שרי, שהרי שנים היו שרוין בכל העולם כולו.

Discussion

An interpretation is provided in the name of R. Levy, who deduces the following lesson from Scripture:

One should spend according to his means for food; less than one can afford on clothing; and more than one can afford on a dwelling.[49]

B. Midrash Aggadah Bereshit 3:21

ויעש ה' אלהים לאדם ולאשתו. לפי שראה אותם הקב"ה ערומים, והיו מצטערים כחגורה של עלה תאנה, ואעפ"כ שהם חטאים עשה להם לבושים שיהיה הנאה לעורן והלבישן.

Discussion

"And the Lord made garments of skins for Adam and his wife . . ." is interpreted to mean that when God saw that they had donned fig-leaf loincloths, He took pity on them, even though they had transgressed his command, and made them garments of skin, which were pleasant for their own skins.

Evaluation

Both Philo and midrash A extrapolate from Scripture an object lesson. Philo, however, suggests that one should live an austere existence, whereas the midrash merely suggests that clothing be given a lower priority than food and dwelling. And in neither midrash A nor B do we find a parallel to Philo's allegorical interpretation.

23. Qu. in Gen. 1:54

(Gen. iii. 22) To whom does He say, "Behold, Adam is as one of us, to know good and evil"?

"One of us" indicates plurality. But it must not be thought that He spoke with His powers, which He used as instruments in making the whole universe. Now the word "as" is indicative of an example and likeness and comparison not of a dissimilarity. For the intelligible and sense-perceptible good is known by God in one way and by man in another way. For to the extent that the natures of those who inquire and comprehend differ, as do those things which are accurately grasped and comprehended, to that extent is man's power able to comprehend. And all these things are likenesses and forms and images in man. But in God they are archetypes and models and very brilliant examples of dark things. And the unbegotten and uncreated One and Father mingles and associates with no one. He hold out to sight the glory of His powers.

Discussion

"One of us" does not mean that God was speaking to anyone else, e.g., the Demiurge. Furthermore, "as" indicates "an example and likeness and comparison," not an identity of natures. Man and God are only similar to the degree that man perceives a mere reflection, form, of God's archetypes. Yet, in contrast, man's knowledge consists of the senses coming into contact and participating with the forms, while God's knowledge is not dependent upon His contact and participation with the archetypes. God, "the unbegotten and uncreated . . . mingles and associates with no one."

Bereshit Rabbah 21:5

הן האדם וגו'. דרש ר' פפייס הן האדם היה כאחד ממנו כאחד ממלאכי השרת, אמר לו ר' עקיבה דייך פפייס, אמר לו מה את מקיים ממנו, אמר לו שנתן לו הקב"ה מלפניו שתי דרכים חיים ומות וברר לו דרך אחרת.

Discussion

Interpretations are offered in the names of R. Pappyas and R. Akiba. R. Pappyas interprets "has become one of use" to mean that man had become like the ministering angels.[50] R. Akiba rejects this idea and interprets the word מִמֶּנּוּ to mean מִמֶּנּוּ "of himself (as third person masculine singular);[51] that is, good and evil, life and death were set before man, and "of himself," of his own free will, he chose evil and death.

Evaluation

From Philo's and R. Pappyas' interpretations it is apparent that both believed in some type of intermediate agency between God and man, that is, angels, Demiurge, etc. However, Philo's main interpretation is an exposition of the differences between God's knowledge and man's knowledge, whereas the interpretation given in R. Akiba's name deals with man's ability to choose between good and evil of his own free will. These two interpretations are obviously different from each other.

Although there are similarities between Philo and the midrash, the differences are even greater. Also, I have not found a parallel to Philo's main interpretation in any of the rabbinic sources I examined.

24. Qu. in Gen. 1:55

(Gen. iii. 22) What is the meaning of the words "Lest perchance he put forth his hand and take of the tree of life and eat and live forever"? For there is neither doubt nor envy in God.

It is true that the Deity neither doubts nor envies. However, (Scripture) often uses ambiguous terms and names, according as it indicates a principle as if addressed to man. For the highest principles, as I have said, are two: one, that God is not like man; and the other, that just as a man disciplines his son, so the Lord God disciplines you. Accordingly, the first principle is a matter of authority, while the second is one of discipline and the first step in training, in order that one may be quite voluntarily and gradually led into it. For the words "lest perchance" are not a sign of doubt in God but an indication of man's being a doubter by nature, and a manifestation of the affection that exists in him. For whenever there comes to someone an appearance of something, there immediately follows an impulse toward the appearance, of which the appearance is the cause. And (so comes) the second uncertainty of one who is in doubt and is drawn here and there in spirit, whether (the appearance) is to be received or not. It is this second "lest perchance" that these words indicate. The Deity, however, is without part in any evil and is not envious of immortality or anything else whatever in the case of the good man. And a sure sign of this is that without being urged by anyone, He created the world as a benefactor, making contentious, disordered, confused and passive substance into something gracious and lovingly mild with a great and harmonious order and array of good things. And the truly

> existent One planted the tree of life by His lucid understanding. Moreover, He did not use any intermediary to urge Him or exhort Him to give others a share of incorruptibility. Now while (man's) mind was pure and received no impression of any evil deed or word, he had secure enjoyment of that which led him to piety, which is unquestioned and true immortality. But after he began to turn to wickedness and to hurl himself down thereto, desiring mortal life, he failed to obtain immortality, for it is unseemly to immortalize evil, and it is unprofitable for him to whom it happens. For the longer the evil and wicked man lives, the more wretched he is and the more greatly harmful both to himself and to others.

Discussion

Scripture does not indicate that there is any doubt or envy in God, rather it is making a statement about man's nature: Man is a creature susceptible to doubt. Since man, by nature, is a doubter, he needs to be trained to recognize and accept God's authority; thus discipline is the beginning of the training that leads man to voluntarily accept God's authority.

"Lest perchance" indicates that there are times when man experiences ambivalence toward the things he perceives: he wants that which he perceives, and at the same time he does not want the object of his perception.

God, unlike man, does no evil and is not envious of immortality or of anything else in the case of a good man.

The very creation of an orderly and harmonious world, filled with an "array of good things," makes it evident that all was created for the benefit of the inhabitants of this world. God willingly, without any urging, gave man a share in immortality (that is, immortality of the soul)[52] by planting the tree of life. So long as man obeyed God he was pious and his mind was free from evil, and thus he was assured of immortality. When, however, man disobeyed God, his mind became impressed with evil, and therefore he became unworthy of immortality.

Rabbinic Sources

A. Lekah Tov Bereshit 3:22

פן ישלח ידו. לא ישלח ידו, כמו פן תאמר בלבבך(דבר' ז:יז), ולא שהוא מי שמפחד פן ישלך ידו אלא דברברור הוא, לא ישלח ידו לאכול מעץ החיים להיות חי לעולם.

Discussion

means "not," so that the Scripture should be read "he will not put out his hand" (italics mine). Furthermore, God is not fearful or uncertain about man's actions, for He knows that man will not eat of the fruit and become immortal.[53]

B. Midrash Ha-gadol Bereshit 3:22 (p. 109)

ועתה פן ישלח ידו. אמר הקב"ה הואיל וחטא ברצונו ומדעתו ראוי ליסרו וליגעו ולהורידו מגדולתו כדי שירגיש במה שהפסיד על עצמו ואם ישוב הוא במקומו בגן עדן שמא יחזור בו, מיד ולקח גם מעץ החיים ואכל וחי לעולם. וכבר נתחייב למגעו ממנו עד לאחד זמן ואין זה דינו אלא משנה פניו ותשלחהו(איוב יד:כ). מיד שיבה עליו זיוו והוציאו מגן עדן, הדא הוא דכתיב....

Discussion

Because man sinned of his own free will, it was only appropriate that God punish him by diminishing his greatness, so that man would feel the loss he had brought down upon himself.[54] Moreover, had man been allowed to remain in Paradise he would have put his hand to the "Tree of Life" and eaten its fruit and become immortal. To prevent this and in order to punish man for his deed (i.e., eating the Forbidden Fruit), God immediately passed judgment upon him and decreased his luster and exiled him from Paradise.

Evaluation

There are points of similarity between Philo and midrash A and B. Philo and midrash A deny the possibility that God "fears" or is "uncertain" about what man will do: God, according to both sources, knows what man will do. This is not surprising, since both Philo and the Rabbis believed in an omnipotent and omniscient Deity. In addition,

both Philo and midrash A discuss man's nature and the need for disciplining him.

It is significant, however, for our evaluation that the conclusions reached by the Rabbis and Philo are different. According to Philo, man by nature is a doubter, while in the Midrash, it is free will that is characteristic of man's nature: man has the ability to choose between good and evil.

In the midrashim I examined, the Rabbis were not concerned with discussing man's "doubting" nature. They were far more concerned with discussing man's free will.

25. Qu. in Gen. 1:56

> (Gen. iii. 23) Why does He now call Paradise "delight," when He drives man out of it to till the earth, from which he was taken?
>
> The difference in agriculture is clear. When he was cultivating wisdom in Paradise, he took care of the cultivation of wisdom as if of trees, nourishing himself on its immortal and beneficial fruits, through which he became immortal. And when he was driven out of the place of wisdom, he was to practise the opposite, (namely) works of ignorance, through which his body is polluted, and his mind is blinded, and being starved of his own food, he wastes away and suffers a miserable death. Wherefore now indeed as a reproach to the foolish man He called Paradise "pleasure" as the antithesis of a painful and terrible life. For in truth a life of wisdom is a delight of spacious joy and an enjoyment most suitable to the rational soul. But a life without wisdom is harsh and terrible. For even though one is completely deceived by sense-pleasures, both before and after (them) comes suffering.

Midrash Ha-gadol Bereshit 3:23 (p. 109)

וישלחהו ה' אלהים מגן עדן. בר וראה כמה החסא גורם, חסייה אחת חסא אדם הראשון נתקצר בה קומתו, נתמעט בה זיוו, נשתנה עליו מאכלו, נעשה נע ונד בארץ וקנס לו מיתה ולדורותיו ולדורות דורותיו עד סוף כל הדורות.

Discussion

Adam was not only exiled from Eden, but his stature was decreased (previously he filled the whole world, and now he was reduced to a hundred cubits in height);[55] his luster was reduced; his food was changed; he became a wanderer; and he brought the penalty of death upon himself and upon all future generations.[56]

Evaluation

Both Philo and the midrash are concerned with what man was like "before" and "after" his exile from Paradise. However, whereas Philo's interpretation is allegorical and centers on the cultivation of wisdom in Eden and the cultivation of ignorance outside of Eden, there is no discussion in the midrash about man's loss of wisdom.

26. Qu. in Gen. 1:57

(Gen. iii. 24) Why did He place over against Paradise the cherubim and the fiery sword, which was turning, to guard the way to the tree of life?

The cherubim are symbols of the two primary attributes of God, namely the creative and the kingly, of

which one is called God, and the other, the kingly one, is called Lord. And the form of the creative attribute is a benevolent and friendly and beneficent power. But that of the kingly attribute is legislative and punitive. Moreover "fiery sword" is a symbolical name for heaven, for the ether is flamelike and turns round the world. And as all these have undertaken the guarding of Paradise, it is evident that they are overseers of wisdom, like a mirror. For in a certain sense the wisdom of the world was a mirror of the powers of God, in accordance with which it became perfect and this universe is governed and managed. But the road to wisdom is called philosophy, for the creative power is a lover of wisdom; so also the kingly power is a lover of wisdom, and the world too is a lover of wisdom. But there are some who say that the fiery sword is the sun, since by its revolution and turning it reveals the yearly seasons, as if it were the guardian of life and of whatever leads to the life of all things.

Discussion

Philo explains the placement of the cherubim and the fiery sword at the entrance of Paradise allegorically. The cherubim are symbolic of God's creative and kingly attributes, respectively, and the sword is symbolic of heaven. All three are the overseers of wisdom--wisdom being, in a certain sense, a mirror of God's powers. It is through this wisdom that the universe is governed. "The road to wisdom," according to Philo, is philosophy.

Rabbinic Sources

A. Midrash Ha-gadol Bereshit 3:24 (p. 112)

לשמור את דרך עץ החיים. אותו העץ שהיה כל האוכל ממנו וחי הסתירו הקב"ה ונתן לנו תורתו היא עץ החיים, שנאמר עץ חיים היא למחזיקים בה (משלי ג:יח). אדם מסתכל בה ורואה ממנה חכמתו שלהקב"ה וסדר בראשית

וסדורו שלעולם ומוצאיו ומובאיו וכל מנהגותיו ורואה בה מצותיו שלהקב"ה וחקיו ומשפטיו הצדיקים והישרים ומיד הוא חוזר לדעתו ומתעסק בהן וקונה לעצמו חיי העולם הזה והעולם הבא.

Discussion

"To guard the way to the tree of life" is interpreted to mean that God hid from man the tree which brought immortality to all who ate of its fruit, and, in its stead, God gave man His Torah, which is a tree of life to all who hold fast to it.[57] Thus when man looks into the Torah, according to this interpretation, he finds in it God's wisdom: the laws of nature, customs, and righteous statutes and judgments. When man busies himself with Torah and follows God's wisdom, then he acquires life in this world and in the world to come.

B. Tanḥuma Buber Bereshit 3:24 (10b)

לשמר את דרך עץ החיים(בראי ג:כד). אמר ר'שמואל בר נחמן לשמור את דרך ואחר כך עץ חיים, א"ל הקב"ה אני הנחתיך בגן עדן , שתהא יגע בתורה, ותאכל מעץ החיים, ועכשיו שחטאת מה אתה עושה כאן, צא, ויגרש את האדם, א"ל הקב"ה הייתי צריך לומר לפני שירות על מה שבראתי אותך, ועל מה שעשיתי עמך, ולא אמרת, הרי אני אומר לעצמי, שנאמר אשירה נא לידידי וגו'(ישעיה ה:א), מה עשה הקב"ה, טרדו מן העולם הזה, שנאמר תשטף ספיחיה עפר ארץ(איוב יד:יט).

Discussion

An interpretation of "to guard the way to the tree of life" is offered in the name of R. Samuel b. Naḥman.

According to this interpretation "to guard the way" is to be understood to mean that God placed man in Eden in order that man busy himself with the study of Torah. And as a reward for his diligence in the study of Torah, man would be allowed to eat from "the tree of life." But because man sinned, God exiled him from Eden. Furthermore, man was required to praise God for all the benefactions bestowed upon him by God, but having failed to do this, man was punished with death.

C. Midrash Aggadah Bereshit 3:24

וישכן מקדם לגן עדן את הכרובים ואת להט החרב המתהפכת. כרובים מלאכים, שיהיו שומרים את הדרך שלא יסעה אדם ללכת שם, והניח להט החרב המתהפכת, וכשיראה אדם הלהט יפחד ויחזור לו.

Discussion

"He . . . stationed east of the garden of Eden the Cherubim and the fiery ever-turning sword. . . ." The cherubim, according to the interpretation, are angels. They are placed east of Eden in order to guard the way into the garden, lest man enter it.[58] And the sword is the instrument with which the angels frighten away man.

Evaluation

Philo offers an allegorical interpretation of Paradise, the cherubim, and the sword; however, no such interpretation is to be found in midrash A, B, or C, or, in fact, in any other rabbinic source I examined.

For Philo, the two cherubim are symbolic of God's attributes. One cherubim is symbolic of the Deity's kingly attribute (called Lord) and the other is symbolic of the creative attribute (called God). "The form of the creative attribute is benevolent and friendly and beneficent power"; "the kingly attribute is legislative and punitive." This is precisely the opposite of how the Rabbis identify the Deity's attribute of justice and mercy. In rabbinic literature the attribute of justice (מדת הדין) is identified with God (אלהים) and the attribute of mercy (מדת הרחמים) is identified with Lord (אדנ'י).[59]

Because of the reversal, the significance of this similarity in terminology between Philo and the Rabbis is difficult to assess: Did Alexandrian Jewry borrow from the Rabbis, or did the Rabbis borrow from Alexandrian Jewry? And if there was a borrowing in one direction or the other, why is there a reversal of the Deity's names and the attributes to which they are applied?

What is significant, however, is the fact that all the rabbinic sources I examined never identify the cherubim with God's attributes (although in the rabbinic tradition the ministering angels are identified with God's attributes: Michael with the Attribute of Mercy and Gabriel with the Attribute of Justice). We can assume that if there was extensive borrowing by one Jewish center from the other, that at least one of the midrashim I examined would identify the cherubim with God's attributes. In midrash C, however, as well as the other midrashim that I examined, with little variation the cherubim serve the somewhat prosaic function of guarding the entrance into Eden.

In midrash A and B, Paradise is associated with Torah, which for the Rabbis is Wisdom (as in BR 1:1). There is, however, no hint in these midrashim that Paradise symbolizes Wisdom, and that the study of philosophy is the means by which Torah (Wisdom) is to be acquired, as it is indicated in Philo's interpretation.

It is to be conceded that similarities exist between Philo's interpretation and the midrashim that were here here examined. These similarities, however, may well be the result of the dissemination of Hellenistic ideas into

Palestine rather than a borrowing of interpretations by one source from the other. The material at hand permits nothing more than conjecture.

Summary

In this chapter a total of twenty-six of Philo's scriptural interpretations have been analyzed and compared with parallel rabbinic material. The majority of Philo's interpretations are allegorical and are generally linked by one theme: the relationship between the senses (woman) and the mind (man). In contrast, the rabbinic interpretations are nonallegorical and are not linked by a common theme. Moreover, many similarities have emerged between Philo and the Rabbis in which interpretations are made on the same word or pharase and discussions are held on the same subject, e.g., God's imniscience, woman's susceptibility to deceit, etc. In each case, however, these similarities have been explainable by a theological or textual problem suggested by the biblical text. Thus, no paralle l traditions have been found in these sources in the course of this analysis.

Notes

[1]We find several midrashim in which Adam is depicted as a giant, but nowhere did I find the animals of Eden depicted as giants. For Adam as a giant, cf. BMR 13:12; LT Ber. 3:21; MGH Ber. 3:8 (p. 98); PRK B. Piska-5 (45a); SSR 3:7.5; YS Mishdatim, sec. 363; YS Ruth, sec. 609; YSB, sec. 17 (p. 57).

[2]For more on the serpent as an upright walking creature; see BRT 3:1 (p. 41); MA Ber. 3:1; Tos Sot 4:4; YSB, sec. 24 (p. 89). None of these traditions, however, attribute to the serpent the ability to speak Hebrew.

[3]According to Wolfson's interpretation, only the righteous become immortal:

> ". . . it logically follows that the soul by virtue of its having been created, must by its own nature be mortal, and that, if the soul of the righteous is immortal at all, it is so only by the providence of God as a reward for righteous conduct. Consequently, since it is only by the providence of God that the soul of the righteous ceases to be mortal, it is quite reasonable to assume that the soul of the wicked never ceases to be mortal and never acquires immortality" (Harry Austryn Wolfson, Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, 2 vols., 4th rev. ed. [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968], 1:410).

[4]Other passages which stress how the woman is easily deceived include: ARN, chap. 1 (p. 4); LT Ber. 3:1; MA Ber. 3:3; MGH Ber. 3:1; YS Gen. sec. 25; ibid., Ps., sec. 613.

[5]For traditions of the serpent thrusting Eve against the Tree, see note 4 above.

[6]Concerning Philo's attitude toward women, Goodenough says:

> "Philo lays great stress upon the sanctity of the family, but displays a low opinion of women throughout. In this he shows his popular rather than Greek philosophical background for Plato and the Stoics alike had been

emphasizing the equal value of women. His remarks about the conduct of women reflect the restrictions of contemporary society. Women are to be kept in the interior parts of the house, allowed out only under the most favorable conditions. They are supreme in the matters of household management, and only there. 'In nature men take precedence over women' [33 Spec., II, 124]. 'The female is incomplete and in subjection, and belongs to the category of the passive rather than the active' [34 Spec., I, 200]. . . . Philo throughout identifies women with weakness, incompleteness, and actual sin" (Erwin R. Goodenough, An Introduction to Philo Judaeus, 2nd ed. [Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962], pp. 126-127).

[7]The following midrashim stress that Adam commanded Even ot to touch the Tree: ARN, chap. 1 (p. 4); BR 19:3; LT Ber. 3:1; MA Ber. 3:3; MGH Ber. 3:3; YSB, sec. 24 (p. 91).

[8]See note 7 above for midrashim dealing with Adam's prohibition against touching the Tree.

[9]Philo's exegesis rests on the interpretation of the word "gods" in the plural. In the Hebrew, , although in the plural form, is understood in the singular, "God."

[10]In VR 11:1, verse 3:5 is interpreted to mean that Adam and Eve were designated divinities by God up until the time of their fall from Eden.

[11]For God as the jealous Creator of the world, see BR 19:4; Tan. Gen.-8; Tan. Mezorah-2; Tan. B. Mezorah-24a; YS Tazrea, sec. 358.

[12]The method by which Eve is able to induce Adam to eat from the forbidden fruit is also to be found in: BRT Noaḥ 9:21; MHG Ber. 3:6 (pp. 9-94); PRE, chap. 13 (p. 43); Tan Noaḥ-1; Tan Tazrea-8; YSB, sec. 27 (p. 92).

[13]I interpret Philo's statement "if the eye is a separate intelligence, which is called the counselor or the understanding, there is also a special irrational eye which is called opinion" as a reference to the rational and

irrational soul on the basis of my reading of Wolfson's discussion on the soul (see Wolfson, Foundations of Religious Philosophy, pp. 385-395).

[14]Other midrashim on the future generations that Adam and Eve destroyed by eating the forbidden fruit include BR 19:6; BRT Bereshit 3:7; YSB, sec. 27 (p. 93).

[15]Additional passages containing the interpretation that Adam and Eve strip themselves of the one command given to them by God are: BR 19:6; BRT Bereshit 3:7; LT Ber. 3:10; YSB, sec. 27 (p. 93).

[16]The fig tree is the tree from which Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit and it is also the tree which gave of its leaves for their loincloths. For parallels, see Berahot 40a; MHG Ber. 3:7 (pp. 96-97); PRK B. Piska-20 (142b); Sanhedrin 70b.

[17]The eating of the fig occasions death in the world. See MHG Ber. 37 (pp. 96-97; PRK B. Piska-20 (142); YSB, sec. 21 (p. 73); YSB, sec. 27 (p. 93).

[18]For another tradition about Adam and Eve making their loincloths from the leaves of the tree under which they hide, see MHG Ber. 3:8 (p. 97).

[19]The traveling of God's voice was heard in the garden is also discussed in BR 19:7.

[20]Max Kadushin, in his The Rabbinic Mind, states that "in sum, the use of the word shekinah by the Rabbis . . . indicates that it stands for God himself" (for full details, see Max Kadushin, The Rabbinic Mind, appendix by Simon Greenberg [New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1972], p. 225).

[21]For traditions of the shekinah departing from its earthly abode on account of man's sin, see: ARN, chap. 34; BMR 13:2; BR 19:7; LT Ber. 3:8; Tan. Nasa-16 and 20; Tan. Pekuday-6; Tan. B. 19a; YS Nasa, sec y11; YS Mishpatim, sec. 636; YS Tehilli, sec. 732.

[22]The trees of Paradise and the ministering angels reproach man for having eaten the forbidden fruit. See BR 19:8; BRT Bereshit 2:7 (p. 33); MA Ber. 3:8.

[23]For more on man as the object and subject of fear in this verse, see BMR 11:3; MHG Ber. 3:8 (p. 98); PRK B. Piska-5; SSR 3:75.

[24]For the rabbinic attitude toward women, see note 4 above.

[25]Philo assumes that Adam and Eve hid themselves near the tree itself, because the tree was also in the "midst" of the garden: ". . . with the tree of life in midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and bad" (Gen. 2:9).

[26]Man's stature is decreased. See BMR 13:12; LT Ber. 3:21; MHB Ber. 3:8 (p. 98); PRK B. Piska-5 (45a); SSR 2:7.5; YS Mishdatim, sec. 363; YS Ruth, sec. 609; YSB, sec. 17 (p. 57).

[27]The same traditions about man being destined to be placed in wooden coffins is found in LT Ber. 3:8.

[28]For traditions about God's desire to give man an opportunity for repentance, see ER 1:1.1; Tan. B. Tazrea-20.

[29]More traditions about God's lament over man's fall are to be found in BR 19:9; MHG Ber. 3:9 (p. 98); PRK B. Piska-14 (119b); YS Hosea, sec. 523.

[30]For traditions of God's reproof of man for having eaten the forbidden fruit, see BR 19:9; ER 1:1.1; Sanhedrin 38b; YSB, sec. 28 (p. 97).

[31]Here are more traditions about man blaming woman for his fall; cf. AB, chap. 62; ER 3:34-39.9; LT Ber. 3:12; MA Ber. 3:12; PRK B. Piska-17 (131a); SD, chap. 1:1; ST Ps. 100; Tan. Tazrea-9; Tan. B. Tazrea-20a; Hukot, sec. 764; YS Isaiah, sec. 470; YSB, sec. 62 (p. 223).

[32]For other traditions about woman's response to God's reproach, see LT Bre 3:13; YSB, sec. 28 (p. 98).

[33]There are several more traditions of the order in which Adam, Eve, and the serpent were cursed. See BR 20:3; LT Ber. 3:14; MHG Ber. 3:13 (p. 100); YS Sheminie, sec. 526; YSB, sec 29 (p. 99).

[34]Moshe Mirkin, Midrash Rabbah (Tel Aviv: Yavneh Publishing House, 1968), 1:145-146, n. 3 (for bibliographical reference, see Selected Hebrew Bibliography).

[35]For more traditions about the curse upon the serpent and the attributes that are removed from by God, see ARN, chap. 1 (p. 5); BR 21:5, LT Ber. 3:14; MHG Ber. 3:13 (p. 101); Sota 9b; Tos. Sota 4:4, YS Nasa, sec. 708; YS Isaiah, sec. 509; YSB, sec. 29 (p. 98).

[36]Mirkin, Midrash Rabbah, 148, note on " אני עשיתיך מלך רבו'."

[37]See note 35 above.

[38]For more traditions about the nine curses with which Eve was cursed, see BR 20:6; LT Ber. 3:16; Erubin 100b; YSB, sec. 30 (pp. 103-104); YSC, sec. 31 (p. 105).

[39]Wolfson, Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy, 1:394, explains Philo's use of the term "breath" which, I believe, is identical with "divine inbreathing": . . . the 'breath of life' which God breathed into Adam was not air in motion, but a certain impression and character of divine power, which divine power Moses calles by an appropriate name image,' that is to say, it is an image of the idea of mind which is itself called image."

[40]For traditions about the curse on the land, see BR 5:9; BR 20:8; BRT Bereshit 3:17-18 (p. 51); LT B. 3:17; PRE, chap. 14; Tan. B. K'doshim-38a.

[41]For more traditions about the difficulty man has in growing food, see note 40 above.

[42]Philo, I assume, is alluding to the corruptibility and mortality of the irrational soul, and the incorruptibility and immortality of the rational soul (see Wolfson, Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy, 1:397-398).

Immortality is only granted to the righteous soul as a reward for its righteousness (ibid., p. 410).

[43]According to Margulies "דכי לעפר בלבד" is an editorial interpolation (Mordecai Margulies, Midrash Haggadol on the Pentateuch: Genesis (Jerusalem: Mosad Haran Kook Publishing, 1967), p. 108, n. 5 (for bibliographical reference, see Selected Hebrew Bibliography).

[44]This useful examination for why the body reverts back to the earth element first is given by Asher Weiser:

77 כיון שהאדם נברא מארבעה יסודות--שרשים: אש, רוח, מים ועפר, " למה הוא עומד רק על העפר. והתשובה היא שבעיקר הכוונה לעצמות, שהן מעפר. ולכן הן כבדות ומשמשות יסודות לגוף. בשיטה האחרת הוא כותב: כי עפר אתה--על העצמות שהם מוסדי הגוף. הרמב"ם(יסודי התורה ד:ד) אומר: הואיל וכל נפסד יפרד ליסודות אלו, למה נאמר לאדם ואל עפר תשוב-- לפי שקרוב בנינו מן העפר. 78 העצמות שהן מעפר מחזיקות מעמד יותר משאר חלקי הגוף.

(Eban Ezra, Commentary on the Torah: Genesis, with critical apparatus and commentary by Asher Weiser [Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1976], p. 29, nn. 76-78. (For bibliographical reference, see Selected Hebrew Bibliography.)

[45]Other midrashim which treat man's return to the dust of the earth include: Shabbat 152b; YS Ezekiel, sec. 376; YS Ecclesiastes, sec. 979; YSB, sec. 33.

[46]According to Wolfson: "Philo, reechoing the words of Plato, says that those which 'soar upwards back to the place whence they came' are 'the souls of those who have given themselves to genuine philosophy (Gig. 3, 13-14)' and that 'immortal life' awaits 'pious men (Post. 11, 39)'" (Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy, 1:406-407). We find a similar attitude in rabbinic literature, where the righteous will be resurrected; however, this is a physical resurrection, unlike Philo's immortality of the soul; see YS Ezekiel, sec. 376.

[47]These midrashim also discuss the theme of Eve as the mother of humanity and demons: BR 20:1; YSC, sec. 33 (pp. 111-112).

[48]Wolfson, Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy, 1:271-272.

[49]Cf. Pesaḥim 114a; Ḥullin 84b.

[50]For traditions about man's free will, see Mek. Beshllaḥ 7.73 (Lauterbach ed.); SSR 1:9.2; YSB, sec. 34 (p. 115).

[51]S. Freedman and Maurice Simon, eds., Midrash Rabbah, 10 vols. (London: Soncino Press, 1966), 1:175, n. 1.

[52]For Philo, only the soul can become immortal. See note 3 above.

[53]For other traditions where "פן" is changed to "not," see BR 21:6; BMR 13:3.

[54]For traditions which discuss man's free will, see note 50 above.

[55]Mirkin, Midrash Rabbah, 1:84, n. 6.

[56]For more on the qualities (luster, stature, etc.) that man forfeited because of his sin, cf. BR 12:6; BR 19:8; MHG Ber. 3:17 (p. 106).

[57]Other midrashim which depict the Torah as a "Tree of Life" are found in Berahot 32b; PRE, chap. 12; SER, chap. 1 (end); YS B'Ḥukoti, sec. 670; YSB, sec. 22 (p. 77); YSB, sec. 36 (p. 118).

[58]For more traditions about the cherubim who guard the way to Paradise, see BR 21:9; LT Ber. 3:24; Tan. B. Bereshit-9b; YSB, sec. 36 (p. 118).

[59]Kadushin, The Rabbinic Mind, pp. 216-217.

CHAPTER III

THE CAIN-ABEL ENCOUNTER (GEN. 4:1-15): AS INTERPRETED BY PHILO AND THE RABBIS

In this chapter a critical comparison is made between Philo's interpretation of Gen. 4:1-15 ("The Cain-Abel Encounter"), as found in Questions and Answers on Genesis (1:58-76), and selected parallel material found in the rabbinic sources.

Philo's interpretation of "The Cain-Abel Encounter" has been chosen for analysis because it contains only a few allegorical interpretations. All of his interpretations in this section are "midrashic," and thus well suited for comparison with rabbinic midrashim.

1. Qu. in Gen. 1:58

> (Gen. 4:1) Was it correctly said about Cain, "I have acquired a man through God"?
>
> (Concerning acquisition) a distinction is made between "by someone" or "from someone" and "through something" or "from something," that is, from matter. "Through someone" means through a cause, and "through something" means through an instrument. But the father and creator of the universe is not an instrument but a cause. Accordingly, he errs against correct thinking who says that things come into being not by the agency of God but through God.

Midrash Ha-gadol Bereshit 4:1 (p. 112)

ותאמר קניתי איש את ה'. כלומר מאת ה'.[1]

Discussion

Do not read "I have acquired a person, God," but rather read the verse to mean "I have acquired [begotten] a person from מאת [that is, "with the help of"] God."

Evaluation

Philo believes the "through God" is an inappropriate term, because it implies that God is only an instrument. God, however, according to Philo, is not an instrument, but the cause, the creator, of that which comes into existence.

The midrash, in contrast, is concerned with showing that the biblical verse should not be understood to mean "I have acquired [begotten] a person, God," as it could easily be mistranslated because of its peculiar grammatical construction. (We would normally expect "from" (מאת), that is, "with the help of," rather than just the object particle את alone.) Therefore, the midrash supplies the proper grammatical form of the preposition מאת ("from").

We conclude that the midrash, unlike Philo, is not concerned with the distinction between instrumentality and causality, but is concerned with showing that Eve gave birth

to a person (with the help of God) and that she did not "acquire God." Furthermore, I did not find a concern with Philo's distinction between instrumentality and causality in any of the other midrashim that I examined.

2. Qu. in Gen. 1:59

> (Gen. iv. 2) Why does (Scripture) first describe the work of the younger man Abel, saying, "He became a shepherd of flocks, and Cain tilled the ground"?
>
> Even though the righteous man was younger in time than the wicked one, still he was older in activity. Wherefore now, when their activities are appraised, he is placed first in order. For one of them labours and takes care of living beings even though they are irrational, gladly undertaking the pastoral work which is preparatory to rulership and kingship. But the other occupies himself with earthly and inanimate things.

Midrash Ha-gadol Bereshit 4:2 (p. 113)

ויהי הבל רעה צאן וקין היה עבד אדמה. היה קין איש אוהב אדמה לזרוע והבל היה איש אוהב לרעות צאן וזה צריך לזה וזה צריך לזה, אלא שבעל אדמה נוצח. הכל צריכין למרי תסיא. וכן הוא אומר ויתרון ארץ בכל היא מלך לשדה נעבד(קהלת ה,ח), אפלו מלך משתעבד הוא לשדה. ולמה, שמזנה מזון הכל והיה רפואה לכל.[2]

Discussion

"Abel became a keeper of sheep, and Cain became a tiller of the soil" because, according to this interpretation, Cain loved to sow the land and Abel loved to shepherd a flock. Although the husbandman and the shepherd need each other, the husbandman is more vital: everyone needs wheat,

because the basic staple for all people is bread. And even a king is subjugated to the field, because from it comes food as well as healing (medicine) for everyone.

Evaluation

Philo and the midrash seem to agree that both Cain and Abel took up their respective vocations voluntarily. Philo, however, concludes that the order in which the brothers are mentioned in Scripture is significant: Abel is mentioned first because pastoral work preceded husbandry temporally. In addition, pastoral work takes precedence over husbandry because it is preparatory to rulership and kingship.

Unlike Philo, the midrash is not concerned with the order in which the brothers are mentioned in the Scripture. Rather, the Rabbis make a very practical observation about the vocation of each brother: The husbandman and the shepherd need each other, but the husbandman is more vital, because everyone needs the bread which he produces. Here, unlike Philo's interpretations, there is neither a disparagement of the husbandman or an indication that pastoral work predisposes men to rulership. In fact, I found no parallel to Philo's interpretation in any of the midrashim I examined.

3. Qu. in Gen. 1:60

(Gen. iv. 3-4) Why did Cain after some days offer firstfruits of offerings, while Abel (brought an offering) from the first-born and fat ones, not after some days?"

Scripture manifests a distinction between the lover of self and the lover of God. For one of them took for himself the fruit of the firstfruits and impiously thought God worthy (only) of the second fruits. For the words "after some days" instead of "immediately" and "from the offerings" instead of "from the firstfruits" indicate great wickedness. But the other offered the first-born and elder animals without any delay at all or rejection by his Father.

Rabbinic Sources

A. Leḳaḥ Tov Bereshit 4:3 (p. 29)

ויהי מקץ **ימים** ויבא קין מפרי האדמה מנחה להי. לא אמר מראשית פרי האדמה, מלמד שהיה אוכל את הבכורות ומכבד למלך בסיפוח.[3]

Discussion (Translation)

AFTER SOME TIME, CAIN BROUGHT AN OFFERING TO THE LORD FROM THE FRUIT OF THE SOIL. . . . Scripture does not say from the firstfruits of the soil, but from the fruit of the soil. This comes to teach that he ate the firstfruits and honoured the King with the last fruits.

B. Yalḳut Shim'oni Bereshit sec. 36 (p. 121)

הגיע ליל י"ט של פסח. קרא אדם לבניו, אמ' עתידין ישראל להקריב קרבנות פסחיהן גם אתם הקריבו לפני בוראכם. והביא קין מרוחר מאכלו קליות זרע פשתן. והבל הביא מבכורות צאנו, כבשים שלא נגזזו.[4]

Discussion (Translation)

Passover eve had arrived. Adam called his sons and said to them: "Israel is destined at a future time

> to offer their Pascal sacrifices, and now you also offer a sacrifice to your Creator." And Cain brought [for sacrifice] his leftover food, parched flax seeds, and Abel brought [for sacrifice] from the first-born of his flock, sheep that had never been sheared.

Evaluation

According to Philo, the Scripture teaches us that Cain was a "lover of self." He delayed and did not bring his sacrifice to God immediately, and, instead of bringing "from the firstfruits," he merely brought "offerings," leaving the best for himself. This indicates, according to Philo, "great wickedness." However, Abel, in contrast to Cain, "offered the first-born and elder animals without any delay at all."

Both Philo and midrash A similarly conclude that Cain kept the firstfruits for himself, rather than offering them to God. This similarity in conclusions, however, is probably due to the language of the biblical text itself, rather than to a borrowing of interpretations by one source from the other: Scripture indicates that Cain only brought "an offering" to God, while Abel brought the "first-born" of his flock. Therefore, it is logical to conclude that had Cain brought "firstfruits" as a sacrifice to God, Scripture would have stated this explicitly.

When a closer examination is made of Philo's interpretation and midrash A and B, differences between them become manifest. Neither midrash A nor B indicates, as does Philo, that Cain delayed his sacrifice to God; and neither midrash explicitly states that Cain was a "lover of self" while Abel was a "lover of God." Also, neither midrash concludes that Cain's actions, as Philo says, "indicate great wickedness." Both midrashim, at least for the moment, are satisfied with simply stating that Cain brought firstfruit offerings to God, while Abel brought the first-born of his flock. It is left to the reader to draw conclusions about the character of each brother from the actions attributed to him by the scriptural text.

It is significant that I did not find the "lover of God" and the "lover of self" distinction in any of the other midrashim I examined, for this merely confirms that whatever similarities exist between Philo and midrash A are due to the language of the Scripture itself, rather than to any kind of borrowing.

4. Qu. in Gen. 1:61

> (Gen. iv. 4-5) Why does (Scripture), having begun by first mentioning Cain, (now) mention him in second place, for it says, "God looked upon Abel and his offerings," but of Cain and his sacrifice "He did not approve"?

> First, (Scripture) does not mean that he is first by nature who happens to be the first to be perceived, but he who comes in his time and with sound morals. Second, as there were two persons, good and evil, He turned toward the good man, looking upon him because He is a lover of goodness and virtue, and first seeing him to be more inclined toward that side in the order of nature, He deprecates and turns away from the evil man. Accordingly, most excellently (Scripture) says not that God saw the offerings but that He first saw those who were offering gifts before the gifts themselves, for men look at the quantity of gifts and approve them; but God looks at the truth of the soul, turning aside from arrogance and flattery.

Discussion

Scripture mentions Abel first, according to Philo, because "he [is] who comes in his time [he offered his sacrifice immediately, without delay] and with sound morals." Furthermore, God turned to the good man, because "He is a lover of goodness and virtue," and having seen Cain first and perceiving that he inclined, by nature, toward evil, God turned from him and refused his sacrifice. Accordingly, this indicates that God first looked at the "truth of the soul" of each man who offered a sacrifice, and only then did God look at the gift offered by him.

Bereshit Rabbah 22:6

[A_1] וישע ה' אל הבל ואל מנחתו (בראשית ד:ד): נחפיס ממנו.

[A_2] ואל קין ואל מנחתו לא שעה (שם ד:ה): לא נחפיס ממנו.[5]

Discussion

We find that the midrash interprets verses 4 and 5 to mean that God had to first satisfy himself with each brother's character (nature) before he would become satisfied with his offering. Accordingly, the character of each man emerges with the quality of offering he makes to God: Abel, on the one hand, brings "the choicest of the firstlings of his flock" (Gen. 4:4); while Cain, on the other hand, merely brings "from the fruit of the soil" (Gen. 4:3). Thus, one man brings the best he has to God, while the other withholds the best he has from God. We find, therefore, that God acts accordingly: in A_1, having been satisfied with Abel's character, God was also satisfied with his offering; and in A_2, having been dissatisfied with Cain's character, God was also dissatisfied with his offering.

Evaluation

We find that Philo and the midrash similarly interpret the scriptural text to mean that God had to first be satisfied with each brother's character before He would be satisfied with his offering. This similarity in interpretations can, however, be easily accounted for by the structures of verses 4 and 5, which, for exegetical purposes, seem to

be divided into two parts by both Philo and the Rabbis. The two parts of verse 4 are: "The Lord paid heed to Abel [this is the first part of the verse, in which God is satisfied with Abel] and his offering [this is the second part of the verse, in which God, having been satisfied with Abel, now is also satisfied with his offering]." Further, the two parts of verse 5 are: ". . . but to Cain [this is the first part of the verse, in which God finds no satisfaction in Cain] and his offering He paid no heed [this is the second part of the verse, in which God, having found no satisfaction with Cain, now also finds no satisfaction with Cain's offering]." It would seem, then, that the similarity in interpretations is most probably due to the arrangement of the biblical verses, rather than to a borrowing of interpretations by one source from the other.

No other similarity, aside from the one already discussed above, is to be found in Philo and the midrash. Moreover, I found no midrash that evinced a concern for interpreting the order in which the brothers are mentioned in Scripture, which, according to Philo, is determined by Cain's "evil" nature and by Abel's "virtuous soul."

5. Qu. in Gen. 1:62

(Gen. iv. 4-5) What difference is there between a gift and a sacrifice?

He who slaughters a sacrifice, after dividing it, pours the blood on the altar and takes the flesh home. But he who offers something as a gift offers the whole of it, it seems, to him who receives it. And the lover of self is a divider, as was Cain, while the lover of God is a giver, as was Abel.

Evaluation

I found no discussion concerned with the distinction between a sacrifice and a gift, and "lover of self" and "lover of God" in any of the rabbinic sources that deal with Cain and Abel.

6. Qu. in Gen. 1:63

(Gen. iv. 6) Whence did Cain know that his sacrifice was not pleasing?

Perhaps his difficulty was resolved through the cause mentioned in the addition; for he was grieved and his countenance fell. He therefore took this grief as a sign of having sacrificed something not pleasing. For joy and gladness ought to come to him who sacrifices something purely and blamelessly.

Midrash Ha-gadol Bereshit 4:5 (p. 114

ואל קין ואל מנחתו לא שעה. מלמד שנרתיח מנחתו של קין ולא ירדה עליה אש מן השמים והיה מתבזה בעיניו שנתקבל קרבן אחיו והוא לא נתקבל קרבנו, שנאמר ויחר לקין מאד ויפלו פניו.[6]

Discussion (Translation)

> BUT TO CAIN AND HIS OFFERING HE PAID NO HEED. This teaches that Cain's offering was rejected and a fire from heaven did not descend upon it [to consume it]; And it was despised in his eyes that his brother's sacrifice was acceptable [to God], but his own sacrifice was not acceptable [to God], for as it says in Scripture, CAIN WAS MUCH DISTRESSED AND HIS FACE FELL.

Evaluation

Both Philo and the midrash explain how Cain learned that his offering was not acceptable to God. Philo interprets the second part of verse 5, "For he was grieved and his countenance fell," to mean Cain's own "grief" was the very indication that God had not accepted his offering. The midrash, however, unlike Philo, does not explain the verse psychologically, but rather it concludes that Cain's offering was not consumed by the heavenly flame which, apparently, consumed Abel's sacrifice (the consuming flame being an indication that the sacrifice was acceptable).

As is expected, the midrash contains nothing of Philo's psychological insight into the biblical story.

7. Qu. in Gen 1:64

> (Gen. iv. 7) What is the meaning of the words, "Not that thou doest not offer rightly, but that thou dost not divide rightly"?
>
> First of all, correct division and incorrect division are nothing else than order. And through order

> equally are made the whole world and its parts. Wherefore the creator of the world, when He began to order refractory and unordered and passive substance, made use of cutting and division. For in the midst of the universe, He placed the heavy things and those that naturally bear downwards, (namely) earth and water; but air and fire He placed above, for they ascend through their lightness. But He separated and marked off the pure nature, (namely) heaven, and surrounded and enclosed the universe by it, that it might be invisible to all, containing within itself all things equally. But the fact that animals and plants come into being from moist and dry seeds--what else is this than a cutting and separative division? Accordingly it is necessary to imitate this order in all things in the world and especially in returning thanks for those things for which we are required to make a corresponding return to him who gives them to us. In the second place, to give thanks to God is right in itself specifically, but it is blameworthy that He should not first receive them nor receive the first of the new products. For it is not proper to offer the best things to that which is created, namely oneself, and the second best to the All-wise. This is a reprehensible and blameworthy division, showing a certain disorderliness of order.

Discussion

According to Philo, Scripture indicates that Cain did not imitate universal order--proper division--when he offered his sacrifice to God. For in accordance with universal order it is proper to separate (divide) the first of the "new products" and offer them to God, before one takes of them for himself. To do otherwise "is a reprehensible and blameworthy division, showing a certain disorderliness of order."

I did not find the notion that one must imitate universal order when making a sacrifice dealt with in any extant rabbinic sources.

8. Qu. in Gen. 1:65

(Gen. iv. 7) What is the meaning of the words, "Thou hast sinned, be quiet"?

The oracle utters something very useful. For not to sin at all is the greatest good. But he who sins and is abashed and ashamed is kin to this man and, as one might say, is the younger beside the elder. For there are some who rejoice over sins as if over good deeds, thus having a disease that is difficult to cure or rather is incurable.

Evaluation

This discussion is not paralleled in any of the midrashim.

9. Qu. in Gen. 1:66

(Gen. iv. 7) Why does He seem to give the good man into the hand of the evil man, saying, "To thee is his return"?

He does not give him into his hand, but the sense is quite the contrary, for He speaks not of the pious man but of an act already done. And He says to him, "the return and reference of this impiety is to thee. Do not therefore blame necessity, but thine own character, so that in this place He represents it as voluntary. But the words, 'thou shalt rule over him,' again have reference to an act." In the first place thou didst begin to act impiously, and then another wrong follows a great and impious lawlessness. And so He considers and proves that this is the beginning of every voluntary wrongdoing.

Discussion

Here Philo interprets a scriptural text that he had misread (or perhaps he had in his possession a text different from our text). His reading for our Hebrew ואליך תשוקתו--usually rendered, "Its [sins] desire is upon you"--is "To thee is his return."

Accordingly, Philo explains that "To thee is his return" should not be understood to mean that God had given Abel into Cain's power, but rather, this statement indicates that Cain's impious act of withholding the firstfruit offerings from God was a voluntary act, for which Cain was responsible. Furthermore, "Thou shalt rule over him" is interpreted as a reference to a voluntary deed of wickedness--Cain's murder of Abel--which would follow from Cain's first impious act. Accordingly, Philo deduces a principle from the Scripture: "Every voluntary wrongdoing" (e.g., Cain's murder of Abel) begins with a voluntary impious act (e.g., Cain's withholding of the firstfruit offerings from God).

Midrash Aggadah Bereshit 4:7

[A_1] הלא אם תטיב שאת. אם תטיב מעשיך אשא לך עונך, ואם לא תטיב מעשיך ליום הדין תטאחיך יהיה שמור.[A_2] ואליך תשוקתו. הרי יודע שיצר הרע יהיה מתאוה לחטאתך, ואעפ"כ הוא מסור בידיך ואין אתא מסור בידו.[A_3] ואתה תמשול בו. שאם אין אתא חפץ לשמוע אליו אינו יכול להחטיאך, ולכך אתה מחייב בעולם.[7]

Discussion (Translation)

> SURELY, IF YOU DO RIGHT, IT SHALL BE LIFTED UP. If you improve your deeds, I will forgive your iniquity; and if you do not improve your deeds, your sins will be preserved till the day of judgement [A_1]. ITS DESIRE IS UPON YOU. Know [Cain] that the evil inclination will be desirous of your sins, nevertheless it is under your power and you are not under its power [A_2]. YET YOU CAN BE ITS MASTER. If you do not desire to listen to it [the evil inclination], it cannot cause you to sin, and therefore you are thus responsible [for your actions] in the world [A_3].

Evaluation

A similarity of ideas emerges from both Philo and the midrash: Cain, according to these interpretations, has the power to determine his own actions--for good or for evil. Philo characterizes Cain's "impious deed" as voluntary, while the midrash declares that Cain has control over his evil inclination. This similarity of ideas, however, is probably the result of similar theological points of view rather than a borrowing of interpretations by one source of the other. The objective of each interpretation, in the final analysis, is different. Philo's intent, on one hand, is to show that the Scripture endeavors to impart a principle of "voluntary wrongdoing," whereas the intent of the midrash (especially sections A_2 and A_3) is to show that Cain's fate lies in his own hands.

10. Qu. in Gen. 1:67

(Gen. iv. 8) Why does he (Cain) kill his brother in the field?"

In order that when once again it sown or planted, infertility and unfruitfulness may altogether come upon its fruits, and by bringing the murder to mind, may reveal its foulness. For the ground was not to be the same after being forced to drink human blood unnaturally so as also to grow food for him who polluted it with the blood of a foul deed.

Bereshit Rabbah 22:7

[A_1] ויאמר קין אל הבל אחיו ויהי בהיותם וגו'. על מה היו מדיינים. אמרו בואו ונחלוק את העולם אחד נטל הקרקעות ואחד נטל את המטלטלין. דין אמר ארעא דאת קאים עליה דידי. ודין אמר מה דאת לביש דידי. דין אמר חלוץ. ודין אמר פרת. מחוך כך ויקם קין אל הבל אחיו ויהרגהו.[A_2] רבי יהושע דסכנין בשם רבי לוי אמר שניהם נטלו את הקרקעות. ושניהן נטלו את המטלטלין. ועל מה היו מדיינין. אלא זה אומר בחומתי בהמ"ק נבנה. וזה אומר בחומתי בהמ"ק נבנה. שנא' ויהי בהיותם בשדה. ואין שדה אלא בהמ"ק. היך מה דאת אמר(סיכה ג:יב) צירון שדה תחרש. ומחוך כך(בר' ד:ח) ויקם קין אל הבל אחיו וגו'. [A_3] יהודה בר אמי אמר על חוה הראשונה היו מדיינין. אמר רבי איבו חוה הראשונה חזרה לעפרה ועל מה היו מדיינין אמר רבי הונה תאומה יתירה נולדה עם הבל זה אומר אני נוטלה שאני בכור. וזה אומר אני נוטלה שנולדה עמי. ומחוך כך ויקם קין.[8]

Discussion

The midrash attributes Cain's murder of Abel to three causes, which also exemplify for the Rabbis why strife is to be found in the world.

In A_1 a struggle over material possessions is depicted: The brothers have divided the world between themselves; one brother possesses all movable property, while the other possesses the land. However, neither one of them

allows the other to make use of his possession and, as a result, a quarrel ensues in which Abel is murdered by Cain.

In A_2 a religious struggle is depicted: Each one of the brothers wants the Temple to built on his land, and in the resulting quarrel Cain murders Abel.

In A_3 the cause of the quarrel is attributed to sexuality: Each brother wants to possess the same woman, and when neither one gives up his claim over her, a struggle ensues in which Abel is murdered by Cain.

Evaluation

Philo and the Rabbis have a different goal in interpreting verse 8. Philo is concerned with the reasons why Abel was murdered in the field: The murderer would thus be perpetually reminded of his crime by the ground that would be forced to drink his brother's blood; it would only yield him "infertility and unfruitfulness." The midrash, on the other hand, is concerned with explaining Cain's reasons for murdering Abel: The brothers fell into an argument over material possessions, the location of the Temple, and a woman. This is all interpreted by the Rabbis from the word "field." There is, however, no indication in the midrash that the land would become infertile and unfruitful as a

result of the fratricide.

11. Qu. in Gen. 1:68

(Gen. iv. 9) Why does He who knows all ask the fratricide, "Where is Abel, thy brother?"?

He wishes that man himself of his own will shall confess, in order that he may not pretend that all things seem to come about through necessity. For he who killed through necessity would confess that he acted unwillingly; for that which is not in our power is not to be blamed. But he who sins of his own free will denies it, for sinners are obliged to repent. Accordingly he (Moses) inserts in all parts of his legislation that the Deity is not the cause of evil.

Midrash Aggadah Bereshit 4:9

ויאמר ה' אל קין אי הבל אחיך, לפי שהקב"ה חפץ בתשובתם של רשעים, והיה צריך לומר רבונו של עולם אחה יודע כל הנסתרות אני הרגתיו והיה הקב"ה מוחל לו, והוא לא עשה כן, וכיון ששמע הקב"ה שאלו אי הבל אחיך חשש בלבו כי עבים סחר לו ואינו רואה מעשה בני אדם, והחחיל לכזב לפניו ולאמר לא ידעתי. 9

Discussion (Translation)

THE LORD SAID TO CAIN, "WHERE IS YOUR BROTHER ABEL?" because the Holy One, blessed be He, is desirous for the repentance of the wicked. He [Cain] should have said, "Master of the Universe, You know all the secrets; I killed him [Abel] and I have sinned," and then the Holy One, blessed be He, would have forgiven him. But he did not do this, for when he heard the Holy One, blessed be He, ask him, "Where is your brother Abel?" he determined in his heart that thick clouds prevented Him [God] from seeing the deeds of man; and he began to lie and said to God, "I DO NOT KNOW" (Gen. 4:9).

Evaluation

Both Philo and the midrash develop similar themes

in their interpretations of the Scripture: God is omniscient and He requires confession and repentance from sinners.

In his interpretation, Philo assumes from the outset that God is omniscient, for he states as much in his question, "Why does He who knows all ask the fratricide [murderer] . . . ?"--God knows where Abel is to be found. The main thrust of the interpretation, however, is to show that God requires confession and repentance from the murderer. Philo explains the necessity for these by distinguishing between a free-will killing (murder) and a killing that is committed unwillingly. In the case of a murder, it is necessary for the malefactor to offer a confession before God, so that he does not deceive himself into believing that his crime was born out of necessity. And after his confession, explains Philo, the murderer is required to repent before God. In the case of a killing committed unwillingly, however, there is no culpability, and consequently no repentance is necessary. By making this distinction between a free-will killing and a killing committed unwillingly, Philo removes the possibility of God having any part in evil; for it is man with his free will who chooses between good and evil.

The midrash interprets the Scripture to mean that God desires the confession of the wicked. Therefore, had Cain confessed his sin to God, God would have forgiven him. However, the main thrust of the interpretation is to show that nothing can be hidden from God--He is omniscient--and therefore Cain's attempt to deceive God about Abel's fate was futile.

Although the similarities between Philo and the midrash are striking, they can be easily accounted for by the structure of the scriptural text and the common belief in God's omniscience held by the Rabbis and Philo. "'Where is your brother Abel?'" is interpreted as a question which is meant to elicit a confession, for God, since He is omniscient, must know where Abel is to be found. Neither the Rabbis nor Philo can tolerate a theology that admits to anything less than an omniscient God. The difference between Philo and the midrash is one of emphasis: Philo's main concern is to show that confession and repentance are desired by God, whereas the main concern in the midrash is to show that nothing can be hidden from God.

12. Qu. in Gen. 1:69

> (Gen. iv. 9) Why does he (Cain) reply as if to a man, saying, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" It is an atheistic belief not to hold that the

divine eye penetrates all things and sees all things at one time, not only what is visible but also what is in recesses, depths and abysses. "Why dost thou not know where thy brother is?" someone will say. "And how shouldst thou not know this, being the fourth man in the world together with thy two parents and thine only brother?" But the reply, "I am not my brother's keeper" is a fine defence! And of whom else rather than thy brother shouldst thou have been a keeper and protector? Thou didst show so much care for violence, injustice, treachery and homicide, which is a great abomination and accursed deed, but didst show contempt for thy brother's safety, as though it were something superfluous.

Midrash Ha-gadol 4:9 (p. 119)

ויאמר לא ידעתי השומר אחי אנכי. אתה הוא שומר כל הבריות ואתה מבקשו ממני. למה הדבר דומה, לגנב שגנב כלים בלילה ולא נתפש. לבקר תפשהשומר. אמר לו למה גנבת את הכלים. אמר לו אני גנב לא הנחתי אומנותי. אתה אומנותך בשער לשמור למה הנחת אומנותך ועכשו אתה אומר לי כך. וכך אמר קין רבונו שלעולם אם אני הרגתי אותו אתה בראת בי יצר הרע. אתא שומר לו ולי ולכל העולם, למה הנחת אותי להרגו. אתה הן שהרגתו, שנקראת אנכי, שאלו קיבלת קרבני כמותו לא הייתי מחקנא בו.[10]

Discussion (Translation)

AND HE SAID, "I DO NOT KNOW. AM I MY [אנכי] BROTHER'S KEEPER?" You [God] are the one who watches over all the creatures, and You ask this of me? To what may this be compared?--to a thief who steals utensils during the night and is not caught. But in the morning the watchman catches him. He says to him, "Why did you steal the utensils?" He replies to him, "I stole and I did not desist from my job, but why did you desist from your job of guarding the gate, and now accuse me thus?! And thus Cain said to the Holy One, Blessed be He, "I killed him, but You created an evil inclination within me. You are his [Abel's] guardian and my guardian, and the guardian of the whole world. Why did You let me kill him? You are the one who killed him, for You are called Anoḳe [אנכי], for if You had accepted my sacrifice as You had accepted his, I would have not become jealous of him."

Evaluation

The midrash and Philo are similar in that they both interpret "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" as an attempt by Cain to evade the responsibility for Abel's murder. However, upon close examination of the interpretations, we find that the similarity is superficial.

In the midrash Cain accuses God of bearing the responsibility for Abel's murder. God, according to Cain, is, after all, the guardian (שומר) of all the world and all its creatures, and He should have, therefore, watched over Abel. This interpretation is achieved by playing on the word "I am" (Anoḳe = אנכי), which is an appellative for God, thus: "Anoḳe [God] is my brother's keeper." In Philo's interpretation, Cain merely pleads ignorance when asked by God about his brother's fate. There is no attempt to shift the responsibility of the murder to God in the Questions and Answers.

Moreover, the exegetical form of the midrash differs from that of Philo: Philo accomplishes his interpretation by merely stating Cain's responsibility for Abel's welfare, whereas the midrash interprets the text by the use of analogy. Additionally, Philo's interpretation also includes a brief discussion of God's omniscience, but no such discussion

is to be found in the midrash.

The exegetical form, as well as the content, is different in Philo and in the midrash. In addition, the similarity in themes between these two interpretations emerges from the Scripture itself, which, according to its literal meaning, indicates Cain's attempt to evade the responsibility for Abel's murder.

13. Qu. in Gen. 1:70

> (Gen. iv. 10) What is the meaning of the words, "The voice of thy brother calls to me from the earth"?
> This is most exemplary, for the Deity hears the deserving even though they are dead, knowing that they live an incorporeal life. But from the prayers of evil men He turns away His face even though they enjoy the prime of life, considering that they are dead to true life and bear their body with them like a tomb that they may bury their unhappy soul in it.

Discussion

I found no parallel to Philo's interpretation in any of the rabbinic literature I examined. However, by way of contrast, it is worthwhile to give one example of how the Rabbis treat verse 10. In BR 22:9 the Rabbis interpret "your brother's blood" in the plural, that is, "your brother's bloods." On the basis of the Hebrew plural form of the word "blood" (דמי), the verse is interpreted to mean that Cain not only murdered Abel, but also all those of Abel's

blood who were yet unborn and would never be born, all his descendants.[11]

14. Qu. in Gen. 1:71

(Gen. iv. 11) Why does he (Cain) become accursed upon the earth?

The earth is the last of the parts of the universe. Accordingly, if this curses him, it is understandable that appropriate curses will be laid upon him by the other elements as well, namely by springs, rivers, sea, air, winds, fire, light, the sun, the moon, the stars and the whole heaven together. For if inanimate and terrestrial nature opposes and revolts against wrong-doing, will not purer natures do so still more? But he with whom the parts of the universe wage war--what hope of salvation will he any longer have? I do not know.

Midrash Aggadah Bereshit 4:11

ועתה ארור אתה מן האדמה. לפי שנברא גופו ממנה, ולפי שפצתה לקחת את דמי אחיך, וגם קללו כי תעבוד את האדמה וגו'. שלא תוציא לך כלום ממה שתזרע בה.[12]

Discussion (Translation)

THEREFORE, YOU SHALL BE MORE CURSED THAN THE GROUND. . . . Because his body was created from it [the ground], and because it opened to take your brother's blood, and He [God] also cursed him, "If you till the soil [it shall no longer yield its strength to you]" [Gen. 4:12]--that it should bring forth nothing of what you sow in it.

Evaluation

According to Philo's interpretation, "the earth is the last of the parts of the universe." And since it cursed Cain, deduces Philo, then all of the other elements

and creatures must have done so already. Thus Cain has no place and no thing which is hospitable to him. In the midrash, however, only the earth curses Cain by not giving forth anything he sows in it. Moreover, the midrash also implies that the earth itself is cursed because it opened itself to receive Abel's blood.

I found no parallel to Philo's interpretation in any of the rabbinic literature I examined.

15. Qu. in Gen. 1:72

> (Gen. iv. 12) What is the meaning of the words, "Groaning and trembling shalt thou be upon the earth"?
> This too is a universal principle. For every evil-doer has something which immediately awaits him and is to come. For things to come already bring fears, and that which is immediately present causes grief.

Evaluation

Philo's interpretation, "groaning and trembling," in verse 12, does not accord with the Hebrew נע ונד, which is usually translated, "ceaseless wanderer." Philo either misread the passage, or he possibly had a biblical text with a reading different from our text. There is no parallel to Philo's "psychology of fear" in any of the extant rabbinic sources.

16. Qu. in Gen. 1:73

(Gen. iv. 13) What is the meaning of the words, "Too great is my guilt to let me go"?

Indeed there is no misfortune of greater hopelessness than God's leaving and abandoning one. For the lack of a ruler is terrible and difficult for depraved men. But to overlooked by a great king and to be cast out and rejected by the chief authority is an indescribable misfortune.

Midrash Aggadah Bereshit 4:13

ויאמר קין אל ה' גדול עוני מנשוא. עוני גדול מששים רבוא שעתידים לעשות עגל ראתה נושא להם ועוני לא תשא ואהיה נע ונד לפניך.[13]

Discussion (Translation)

CAIN SAID TO THE LORD, "MY PUNISHMENT IS TOO GREAT TO BEAR! Is my crime greater than that of the sixty myriads who are destined to make a golden calf!? But You will forgive them, and my crime You will not forgive, so that I will become a restless wanderer before You?"

Evaluation

I found the feeling and tone similar in both Philo and the midrash, but the exegesis is different in each. Philo interprets "Too great is my guilt to let me go" (we have a different reading of the passage in Hebrew, which is usually translated as: "My punishment is too great to bear!") as Cain's resignation to desolation and hopelessness, because he fears God will abandon him. However, the midrash sees

the text as a plea by Cain to God for His forgiveness. Nevertheless, in both cases Cain is pictured as very vulnerable.

17. Qu. in Gen. 1:74

(Gen. iv. 14) What is the meaning of the words, "Every one who finds me will kill me," inasmuch as there were no other people but his parents?

First of all, he was likely to suffer harm from the parts of the world, which were made for the use and participation of good men but none the less exact punishment from the wicked. Second, because he feared the attacks of beasts and reptiles, for nature produced these for the punishment of unjust men. Third, perhaps one may think of his parents, to whom he first brought new grief and their first misfortune, as they had not known what death is.

Midrash Ha-gadol Bereshit 4:14 (p. 120)

נע ונד תהיה בארץ. כיון שנגזר עליו נע ונד כל מקום שהיה הולך היתה הארץ מזדעזעת מתחתיו והיו חיות ובהמות מזדעזעות ואומרות זו לזו זה הוא קין שנגזר עליו הקב"ה נע ונד תהיה והן אומרות נלך אצלו ונאכלנו והיו מתכנסין ובאין אצלו. בארחה שעה זלגו עיניו דמעות ואמר אנה אלך מרוחך ואנה מפניך אברח. אם אסק שמים שם אתה ואציעה שאול הנך. אשא כנפי שחר אשכנה באחרית ים גם שם ידך תנחני ותאחזני ימינך(תהלים קלט ז-י). ובא לו בפלילה על הקב"ה שנאמר, ויאמר קין אל ה' גדול עוני מנשא(בראי ד:יג).[14]

Discussion (Translation)

YOU SHALL BECOME A CEASELESS WANDERER ON EARTH [Gen. 4:12]. When it was decreed upon him to become a ceaseless wanderer, wherever he went the earth would tremble beneath him, and the wild and domesticated beasts would become agitated and say to each other, "That is Cain, upon whom the Holy One, blessed be He, decreed, 'You shall become a ceaseless wanderer.'" And they said, "Let us go to him and devour him"; and they gathered and approached him. At that moment his eyes filled with tears and he said, "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit? / Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence?

> If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there; If I make my bed in the netherworld, behold, Thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, / And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; Even there would Thy hand lead me, / And Thy right hand would hold me. . . ." [Ps. 139:7-10]. And he came to the Holy One, blessed be He, with a plea, as it said in Scripture, "CAIN SAID TO THE LORD, 'MY PUNISHMENT IS TOO GREAT TO BEAR!'" [Gen. 4:13].

Evaluation

The only point of similarity between Philo and the midrash is in the theme of the animals which are prepared to harm Cain for his crime.

It is very likely, however, that the similarity in interpretations was forced upon Philo and the Rabbis because the biblical narrative does not tell of any other creatures upon the earth that could threaten harm to Cain. In the midrash, unlike Philo's interpretation, these animals are not specifically "produced for the punishment of unjust men." In fact, they are forbidden to harm Cain. Furthermore, unlike the midrash, Philo in his interpretation does not state that the earth trembled beneath Cain wherever he went; he is satisfied with merely making a general statement about the harm that might come upon Cain from those "parts of the world, which were made for the use and participation of good men but none the less exact punishment from the wicked." It is unlikely therefore, that the similarity in

interpretations is an indication of a direct borrowing by one source from the other.

18. Qu. in Gen. 1:75

(Gen. iv. 15) Why shall everyone who slays Cain suffer seven punishments?

Our soul is made and constituted of eight parts: of the rational part, which permits of no division, and of the irrational part, which is naturally divided into seven parts--the five senses, the organ of speech and the organ of reproduction. And these seven parts are the causes of wickedness and are brought to judgment. And death is acceptable to the chief ruler (i.e. the mind) in whom evil is. Accordingly whoever kills the mind by mixing in folly instead of sense will cause the dissolution and breaking up of the seven irrational parts. For just as the chief ruler is disposed toward virtue, so also are disposed the parts which are subordinate to him.

Discussion

Philo uses the Scripture as a point of departure from which to discuss the eight parts of the soul. Philo distinguishes between the rational soul which is indivisible and the irrational soul which consists of seven organs. Moreover, he discusses the relationship between the mind and the irrational soul. I found no parallel to Philo's interpretation in any of the rabbinic sources I examined.

19. Qu. in Gen. 1:76

(Gen. iv. 15) Why is a sign placed upon the fratricide in order that any who finds him may not kill him,

when it was fitting to do the opposite and give him into the hands (of another) for destruction?

First, one kind of death is the change of nature of the living. But continuous sorrows, unmixed with joy and violent fears, empty of good hope, bring on many grave and manifold deaths, which are caused by sense. Second, immediately at the outset (Scripture) wishes to describe the law of the incorruptibility of the soul and to refute the false belief of those who think that this bodily life alone is blessed. For behold one of the two (brothers) is guilty of the greatest evils, namely impiety and fratricide, and yet is alive and begets children and founds cities. But he who gave evidence of piety is destroyed by cunning. Not only does the divine word clearly proclaim that it is not the life of sense which is good and that death is not an evil, but also that the life of the body is not even realted (to life). But there is another (life) unaging and immortal, which incorporeal souls receive as their lot. For that which was said by the poet about Scylla, "She is not a mortal but an immortal evil," was said more appropriately about him who lives evilly and enjoys many years of life. Third, although Cain in the first place committed a great fratricide, He offers him an amnesty, imposing a benevolent and kindly law concerning the first (crime) on all judges, not that they may not destroy evil men, but that by hesitating a little and showing patience, they may cleave to mercy rather than to cruelty. But He most wisely prescribed a canon of gentleness and understanding concerning the first sinner, not killing the homicide but destroying him in another manner. For He did not permit him to be numbered with his father's family, but announces that he is proscribed not only by his parents but also by the whole human race, counting him a genus peculiar and separate from the rational species, like one driven out and a fugitive, and one transformed into the nature of beasts.

Rabbinic Sources

A. Bereshit Rabbah 22:12

אומר כל הורג קין וגו'. ר' נחמיא א' לא כדינן שלרוצחניין דין קין, קין הרג ולא היה ממי ללמוד, מיכן ואילך כל הורג יהרג.[15]

Discussion (Translation)

WHOSOEVER SLAYETH CAIN, etc. R. Nehemiah interpreted: Cain's judgment shall not be as the judgment of other murderers. Cain slew, but had none from whom to learn [the enormity of his crime], but henceforth, All who slay shall be slain. (Soncino translation)

B. Bereshit Rabbah 97, Vayechi

מיד עמד ונשחטה לבקש רחמים מלפני הקב"ה שנאמר גדול ערני מנשוא (בר' ד:יג), אמר לפניו רבונו שלעולם לא יהא עוני גדול מאותן ששים רבוא, שהן עתידין להבעיס לפניך במדבר וכיון שאמר נושא עון(במדבר יד:יח) מיד מחלתה להן שנאמר ויאמר ייי סלחתי כדברך(שם שם כ), בארתה שעה אמר הקב"ה אם אינני מוחל לקין אני נועל דלח בפני כל בעלי תשובה, מיד מחל לו הקב"ה מחצה, ולפי שלא עשה תשובה שלימה לא מחל לו על כל עוונותיו, ומניין שמחל לו הק', שמתחילה אמר לו נע ונד תהיה בארץ(בר' ד:יב), ולאחר שעשה תשובה מה כתיב ביה וישב בארץ נוד קדמת עדן(שם שם סז).[16]

Discussion

According to the midrash, God treated Cain leniently for his crime of murder, because he pleaded for forgiveness. Cain thus becomes for the Rabbis a prototypical penitent who is forgiven by God in order to show all future generations the power of penitence and atonement. Furthermore, the midrash teaches that no sinner, no matter how great his sin, can be deprived of his right to plead before God's mercy.

Evaluation

Both Philo and midrash A are in agreement that Cain was spared from death because he was the first person to commit the crime of murder, and hence he could not know the consequences of his deed.

A closer examination of the interpretations, however, reveals important differences between them. It is to be learned from Cain's crime, according to midrash A, that murder is punishable by death, and henceforth, "All who slay shall be slain." But for Philo, the leniency demonstrated to Cain by God is to serve as an example of mercy for all judges (although Philo certainly does not advocate abolition of capital punishment). In addition, though Cain is spared from death, he is punished, according to Philo, by being cast out from his family and the whole human race: He is counted as "a genus peculiar and separate from the rational species, like one driven out and a fugitive, and one transformed into the nature of beast."

The similarity between Philo and midrash A is conditioned by the necessity to explain why a murderer is spared from death. It is obvious that leniency has to be extended to Cain because he had never seen death, and he did not know that murder was punishable by death. Furthermore, the idea presented in midrash B, that Cain is the prototypical penitent, and that he must be forgiven in order to set an example for humanity, is not found in Philo.

Summary

Of the nineteen Philonic scriptural interpretations analyzed in this chapter and compared to parallel rabbinic material, none are allegorical. The style of these interpretations is much more akin to that of the rabbinic Midrash both in exegetical technique and in the lack of an overall theme. Both Philo and the Rabbis discuss, for example, how Cain was able to determine that his sacrifice was not acceptable to God, although each source provides a different reason for his knowledge. However, where similarities have been found in the two sources they were (as in the interpretation of the "Tree of Knowledge Episode") explainable by a theological or textual problem suggested by the biblical text. Here, too, no parallal traditions were found in the two sources.

Notes

[1]For traditions of Eve having given birth to Cain with God's help, see MA Ber. 4:1; YS Gen., sec. 35.

[2]There are some traditions in which disapproval of Cain's agricultural profession is expressed; see BR 22:3; ibid., 31:3; LT Gen. 4:2; MA Ber. 4:2; YSB, sec. 36 (p. 120); Tan. Noah-13.

[3]Other passages where Cain and Abel bring their sacrifices to God are to be found in BR 22:5; LT Ber. 4:3; MA Ber. 4:4; Tan. Gen.-9.

[4]Cain and Abel bring their sacrifices to God on Passover; cf. MA Ber. 4:3; HMG Ber. 4:3 (pp. 113-114); YSB, sec. 36 (p. 121).

[5]The theme that God does not accept Cain's sacrifice is also to be found in MA Ber. 4:5; ibid., 4:8; MHG Ber. 4:4 (p. 114); PRE, chap. 14; YSB, sec. 36.

[6]For traditions of how Cain learns that his sacrifice was unacceptable to God, see note 5.

[7]For God's warning to Cain that he has control over the "Evil Inclination," cf. LT Ber. 4:7; MHG Ber. 4:7 (pp. 114-115); YS Re'eh, sec. 876; YSB, sec. 36 (p. 123).

[8]For other traditions concerning the argument between Cain and Abel about the "field," see MA Ber. 4:8; MHG Ber. 4:8 (p. 118); PRE, chap. 20; Tan. Gen.-9.

[9]For other traditions of God's desire for Cain's repentance, cf. BR 20:6; ibid., 97-Vayehi; Tan. B. Gen. 10a.

[10]For other traditions of Cain's accusations of God for not guarding Abel, see BR 97-Vayehi; BRT 4:9 (p. 55); Tan. Gen.-9, YSB, sec. 159 (p. 838).

[11]There are several interpretations of Abel's "blood" as "bloods," in the plural; cf. LT Ber. 4:10; MHG Ber. 4:10; San. 37a; YSB, sec. 38 (p. 128).

[12]For traditions of the land's unproductivity for Cain, see MHG Ber. 4:11 (p. 120); ibid., 4:12 (p. 120); YSB, sec. 38 (p. 129).

[13]Other passages in which Cain pleads for God's forgiveness are to be found in BR 22:12; DR 8:1; LT Ber. 4:12; MHG Ber. 4:13 (p. 120); PRK B. 160a; Tan. B. 10a; San. 101b; YSB, sec. 38.

[14]For traditions which take up the themes of animals that threaten to kill Cain, see BR 22:12; MHG 4:12 (p. 120); YSB, sec. 38.

[15]For traditions where God shows leniency to the first murderer, cf. VR 10:5; YSB, sec. 38.

[16]For a tradition that discusses the theme of Cain the prototypical penitent, see YSB, sec. 159 (p. 839).

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

A total of forty-five of Philo's "questions and answers" have been analyzed and compared with parallel rabbinic material. Although many similarities in subject matter were found between Philo's interpretations and the rabbinic interpretations, no parallel traditions were found. None of Philo's interpretations were found to be identical to the rabbinic interpretations with respect to three criteria: subject matter, interpretations of the same words or phrases, and similarities in exegetical techniques. Whenever a similarity was found between Philo and the Rabbis, it was explainable by the very nature of the scriptural text: The biblical verse suggested certain theological and textual problems, which could have well given rise to similar or parallel interpretations in both sources.

It is, therefore, concluded that the findings of this study do not substantiate Samuel Belkin's claim that Philo's Questions and Answers contain early Palestinian midrashim and that Philo was dependent on a Palestinian Oral

Tradition for his interpretations of Scripture. At best, it can be concluded on the basis of these findings that similarities in content, and sometimes in exegetical techniques do exist in Philo's nonallegorical interpretations in Questions and Answers on Genesis and parallel material in rabbinic literature. The nature of the interpretations are such that no dependence by one source can be proved.

The similarity between Philo's interpretations and the rabbinic interpretations of Scripture does allow us to conclude that both sources had similar theological and exegetic interests. We may infer from these similarities in interests that there was probably contact between Alexandria and Palestine, although there does not seem to be a great dependence by Philo on Palestine. His interpretations suggest that he was not dependent on the Palestinian Midrash.

The conclusions reached on the basis of this study must remain tentative at best. This is due to the limited amount of material utilized for comparison. A larger sampling would provide more conclusive answers. And in this light, the comparison of the whole Questions and Answers on Genesis and also Questions and Answers on Exodus with rabbinic material is much desired.

SELECTED ENGLISH BIBLIOGRAPHY

Baer, Richard A., Jr. Philo's Use of the Categories Male and Female. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1970.

Bamberger, Bernard J. "The Dating of Aggadic Materials." Journal of Biblical Literature 68 (1949): 115-123.

Baron, Salo Wittmayer. A Social and Religious History of the Jews. 2nd ed., rev. Vol. 1: Ancient Times, pt. 1. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1952.

_____. A Social and Religious History of the Jews. 2nd ed., rev. Vol. 2: Ancient Times, pt. 2. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1952.

Belkin, Samuel. The Alexandrian Halakah in Apologetic Literature of the First Century C.E. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, n.d.

_____. מקור קדום למדרשי חז"ל--מדרש שו"ת על בראשית ושמות לפילון האלכסנדרוני [An Ancient Source for Rabbinic Midrashim--Midrash Questions and Answers on Genesis and Exodus by Philo the Alexandrian]. Abraham Weiss Jubilee Volume. New York: Abraham Weiss Jubilee Committee, 1964.

_____. מדרש השמות בפילון [The Onomastic Midrash in Philo]. Horeb 12 (1956): 1-61.

_____. פילון ומסורה מדרשית ארץ ישראלית [Philo and the Midrashic Tradition of Israel]. Horeb 13 (1959): 1-60.

_____. Philo and the Oral Law: The Philonic Interpretation of Biblical Law in Relation to the Palestinian Halakah. Harvard Semitic Series, vol. 11. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1940.

_____. מדרש שאלות ותשובות על בראשית ושמות לפילון האלכסנדרוני דיתסר למדרש הארץ-ישראלי [Philo's Questions and Answers on Genesis and Exodus: The Oldest Recorded Palestinian Midrash]. Horeb 14-15 (1960): 1-74.

Belkin, Samuel. מדרשי פילון האלכסנדרוני לאור מדרשי ארץ ישראל [The Philonic Exposition of the Torah in Light of Ancient Rabbinic Midrash]. Sura 4 (1960): 1-69.

Borgen, Peder. Bread from Heaven: An Exegetical Study of the Concept of Manna in the Gospel of John and the Writings of Philo. Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965.

Daube, David. "Rabbinic Methods of Interpretation and Hellenistic Rhetoric." Hebrew Union College Annual 22 (1949): 239-264.

Davis, S. Race-Relations in Ancient Egypt: Greek, Egyptian, Hebrew, Roman. London: Methuen & Co., 1951.

Drummond, James. Philo Judaeus, or the Jewish-Alexandrian Philosophy in Its Development and Completion. Vol. 1. Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1969.

Encyclopaedia Judaica, 1971 ed. S.v. "Tanhuma Yelammedenu," by Moshe David Herr.

Encyclopaedia Judaica, 1971 ed. S.v. "Midrash," by Moshe David Herr.

Feldman, Louis H. Scholarship on Philo and Josephus (1937-1962). Studies in Judaica. New York: Yeshiva University, n.d.

Freedman, S., and Simon, Maurice, eds. Midrash Rabbah. 10 vols. London: Soncino Press, 1966.

Ginsburg, Louis. "Allegorical Interpretation of Scripture." In On Jewish Law and Lore, pp. 127-149. A Temple Book. New York: Antheneum, 1970.

_____. The Legends of the Jews. Translated by Henrietta Szold. 7 vols. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1968.

Goodenough, Erwin R. By Light, Light: The Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935.

_____. An Introduction to Philo Judaeus. 2nd ed. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1962.

Goodenough, Erwin R. The Jurisprudence of the Jewish Courts in Egypt: Legal Administration by the Jews Under the Early Roman Empire as Described by Philo Judaeus. New Haven, 1929; reprint ed., Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1968.

_____. "Review of Philo and the Oral Law: The Philonic Interpretation of Biblical Law in Relation to the Palestinian Halakah, by Samuel Belkin." Journal of Biblical Literature 59 (1940): 413-423.

_____. "Wolfson's Philo." Journal of Biblical Literature 67 (1948): 87-109.

Hadas, Moses. Ancilla to Classical Reading. New York: Columbia University Press, Columbia Paperback, 1961.

Kadushin, Max. The Rabbinic Mind. Appendix by Simon Greenberg. New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1972.

Kaplan, Mordecai M. "Philo and the Midrash (Review)." The Jewish Quarterly Review 23 (1932-1933): 285-291.

Lieberman, Saul. Hellenism in Jewish Palestine: Studies in the Literary Transmission Beliefs and Manners of Palestine in the I Century B.C.E.-IV Century C.E. Texts and Studies of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, vol. 18. New York: The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1962.

Marcus, Ralph. "The Hellenistic Age." In Great Ages and Ideas of the Jewish People, pp. 95-142. Edited and with an Introduction by Leo W. Schwartz. The Modern Library. New York: Random House, 1956.

Margolis, Max L., and Marx, Alexander. A History of the Jewish People. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1927.

Mekilta De-Rabbi Ishmael. Translated by Jacob Z. Lauterbach. 3 vols. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, Paperback ed., 1976.

Mielziner, Moses. Introduction to the Talmud. With a new Bibliography, 1925-1967, by Alexander Guttman. 4th ed. New York: Bloch Publishing Co., 1968.

Moore, George Foot. Judaism in the First Centuries of the Christian Era: The Age of the Tannaim. 2 vols. New York: Schocken Books, 1971.

Pesikta de-Rab Kahana: R. Kahana's Compilation of Discourses for Sabbaths and Festal Days. Translated from Hebrew and Aramaic by William G. (Gershon Zev) Braude and Israel J. Kapstein. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1975.

Pesikta Rabbati: Discourses for Feasts, Fasts, and Special Sabbaths. Translated from Hebrew by William G. Braude. 2 vols. Yale Judaica Series, no. 18. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968.

Philo. With an English translation by F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker. 10 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann Ltd. First printed 1929; reprinted 1971.

Philo. Supplement I. Translated by R. Marcus. Loeb Classical Library. Questions and Answers on Genesis. Translated from the ancient Armenian version of the original Greek by R. Marcus. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann. First printed 1953; reprinted 1961, 1971.

Philo. Supplement II. Translated by R. Marcus. Loeb Classical Library. Questions and Answers on Exodus. Translated from the ancient Armenian version of the original Greek by R. Marcus. Cambridge: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann. First printed 1953; reprinted 1961, 1971.

Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer [The Chapters of Rabbi Eliezer the Great]. Translated and annotated with Introduction and Indices by Gerald Friedlander. New York: Hermon Press, 1965.

Rivkin, Ellis. The Shaping of Jewish History: A Radical New Interpretation. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971.

Sandmel, Samuel. Philo's Place in Judaism: A Study of Conceptions of Abraham in Jewish Literature. New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1971.

Schechter, Solomon. Aspects of Rabbinic Theology. Introduction to new edition by Louis Finkelstein. 3rd printing. New York: Schocken Books, 1969.

Schürer, Emil. The Literature of the Jewish People in the Times of Jesus. Edited and Introduction by Nahum N. Glaztzer. Translated by Rev. Peter Christie and Sophia Taylor. New York: Schocken Books, 1972.

Speiser, E. A., translator, Introduction, and Notes. Genesis. Vol. 1. Edited by William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freeman. New York: Doubleday & Co., 1964.

Strack, Hermann L. Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash. 2nd printing. A Temple Book. New York: Atheneum, 1972.

Tcherikover, Victor. Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews. Translated by S. Appelbaum. A Temple Book. New York: Atheneum, 1970.

Wolfson, Harry Austryn. Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. 2 vols. 4th rev. ed. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968.

Zeitlin, Solomon. The Rise and Fall of the Judaean State: A Political, Social and Religious History of the Second Commonwealth. 2 vols. Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1967.

SELECTED HEBREW BIBLIOGRAPHY

אבן עזרא, פירושי התורה לרבינו אברהם אבן עזרא, על פי כ"י ודפוסים ראשונים עם מבוא, ביאורים, ציוני מקומות ומקבילות מאת אשר וייזר, ג' כרכים, ירושלים, הוצאת מוסד הרב קוק, תשל"ו.

אבות דרבי נתן, בשתי נוסחאות, מאת שניאור זלמן שעכטר, מהדורת שלישית מתוקנת, ניו-יורק, הוצאת פעלדהיים, תשכ"ז.

אגדת בראשית, ערוך ומסודר מאת שלמה באבער, קראקא, תרס"ג, נדפס ומסודר בעי"ה ירושלים, תשל"ג.

ילקוט שמעוני: מדרש תורה נביאים וכתובים, ב' כרכים, ירושלים, הוצאת ספרים "לוין-אפשטין", תשכ"ז.

ילקוט שמעוני לרבנו שמעון הדרשן: ספר בראשית, השלם וערך הרב יצחק שילוני, ב' כרכים, ירושלים, הוצאת מוסד הרב קוק, תשל"ב.

מדרש אגדה: על חמשה חומשי תורה, זה נוסח השער הדפוס ראשון אשר הוציא לאור שלמה באבער בעיר וויען, נדפס מחדש בירושלים, דפוס "העשור", תשכ"א.

מדרש בראשית רבא, על פי כתיב-יד בבריסיש מוזיאום עם שינויי נוסחאות משמונה כתבי יד אחרים ומדפוסים ראשונים ופירוש מנחת יהודה מאת יהודה חיאודור וחנוך אלבק, הדפסה שניה, ג' כרכים, ירושלים, ספרי ואהרמן, תשכ"ה.

מדרש בראשית רבתי, מאת חנוך אלבעק, ירושלים, מקיצי נרדמים, תשכ"ז.

מדרש הגדול: ספר בראשית, יוצא לאור על פי כתבי יד עם חילופי נוסחות והערות מאת מרדכי מרגליות, כרך א', ירושלים, מוסד הרב קוק, תשכ"ז.

מדרש לקח טוב (פסיקתא זוטרתא): על חמשה חושי תורה, מאת שלמה באבער, ב' כרכים, צולם ונדפס מחדש בעי"ד ירושלים, תש"ך.

מדרש פסיקתא רבתי, מאת מאיר איש שלום, נדפס מחדש בתל-אביב, תשכ"ג.

מדרש רבה, יוצא לאור על-יד פאר כמו שנדפס בדפוס והוצאות האלמנה והאחים ראם, ב' כרכים, ירושלים, 5730.

מדרש רבה, מפורש פירוש מדעי חדש בצירוף "עין הדרש"- מראה מקומות לכל מאמרי המדרש מאת משה אריה מירקין, י"א כרכים, תל-אביב, הוצאת יבנה, תשכ"ח.

מדרש שמואל, מאת שלמה באבער, קראקא, בדפוסו של יוסף פישער, תרנ"ג, נדפס מחדש, ירושלים, תשכ"ה.

מדרש תהילים(שוחר טוב), מאת שלמה באבער, וילנא, בדפוס והוצאות האלמנה והאחים ראם, 5651, נדפס מחדש,ירושלים, תשכ"ו.

מדרש חנחומא:על חמשה חומשי תורה, עם הפירושים המפורסמים עץ יוסף וענף יוסף, מאת חנוך זנדל, ירושלים, הוצאת האחים לוין-אפשטיין, תשל"ג.

מדרש תנחומה: הקדום והישן מיוחס לרבי תנחומא ברבי אבא על חמשה חומשי תורה, מאת שלמה באבער, וילנא, בדפוס והוצאות האלמנה והאחים ראם, 5645.

מכילתא דרבי ישמעאל, עם חלופי גרסאות והערות מאת חיים שאול האראוויץ, ואחרי פטירתו נערכו והשלמו על ידי ישראל אברהם רבין, מהדורה שניה, ירושלים, ספרי ואהרמן, תשי"ל.

סדר אליהו רבה וסדר אליהו זוטא(חנא דרבי אליהו), נספחים לסדר אליהו זוטא מאת מאיר איש שלום, הדפסה שלישית, ירושלים, ספרי ואהרמן, תשכ"ס.

ספרי על ספר דברים, עם חלופי גרסאות והערות מאת אליעזר אריי פינקלשטין, בהשתמשות עזבונו של חיים שאול האראוויטז, ניו-יורק, בית המדרש לרבנים באמריקה, תשכ"ס.

פסיקתא דרב כהנא, מאת שלמה באבער, נדפס מחדש בעיהי"ק ירושלים, תשכ"ג.

פסיקתא דרב כהנא, על פי כתב אקספורד ושנויי נוסחאות מכל כתבי היד ושדידי הגניזה עם פירוש ומבוא מאת דוב בייר יעקב ישראל מנדלבוים. בי כרכים,נויארק, הוצאה בית המדרש לרבנים שבאמריקה, תשכ"ב.

פרקי רבי אליעזר, עם באור הבית הגדול מאת אברהם אהרן, ירושלים, הוצאת ספרים אשכול, תשל"ג.

תוספתא, על פי כתבי יד מראה מקורות וחלופי גרסאות ומפתחות מאת הרב משה שמואל צוקרמנדל, עם "תשלום תוספתא" מאת הרב שאול ליברמן, ירושלים, ספרי ואהרמן, תשי"ל.