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EXEGETICAL CRUCES IN GENESIS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MODERN SCHOLARSHIP AND MEDIEVAL RABBINIC BIBLICAL COMMENTARIES

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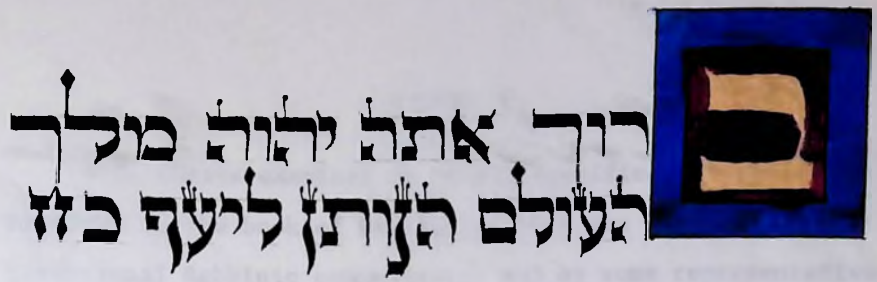

I dedicate this to my parents, grandparents, sister and brother-in-law. It is, in many ways, more theirs than mine. And to Susan, who understood.

To my Rabbi and my friend Herbert C. Brichto I give my most heart-felt thanks. It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve in your court.

DIGEST

This thesis examines in detail specific exegetical problems in the book of Genesis as they are treated in traditional Rabbinic commentaries and by some representative modern commentaries. It characterizes the differences in awareness of the problems, the nature of the tools used to solve them, and the consistency or lack of consistency in the respective approaches. This study does not focus on any specific modern or Rabbinic commentator. Taking the problem as a jumping off point recourse is had to one or another of several modern commentators as to one or another of several Rabbinic commentaries.

The author has not commented on every problem, grammatical, syntactical, or logical. Rather, the reader is provided with a representative example of both major problems and the more subtle problems presented by both modern scholarships and medieval Rabbinic commentators. Although arranged by problems, this thesis presents the problems as they appear in the biblical text.

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1. BERESHIT

A. In Modern Scholarship

The structure of the opening paragraph in Genesis has been an important topic of study among biblical scholars. E. A. Speiser, in his commentary on Genesis states that structure influences the meaning of a text and determines how we understand it.[1] As a result, Genesis 1:1-3 has been analyzed syntactically and grammatically. I will discuss the arguments of Speiser, J. Skinner, S. R. Driver, and others in the following paragraphs and compare their works with the arguments of the rabbinic commentators. The text in question reads: א בראשית ברא אלהים את השמים ואת הארץ ב והארץ
היתה תהו ובהו וחשך על פני תהום ורוח אלהים מרחפת על
פני המים ג ויאמר אלהים יהי אור ויהי אור

Most contemporary biblical scholars believe that the introductory verse to Genesis is not an independent statement, but rather a dependent clause delimiting time.[2] This conclusion is, in part, based on the traditional vocalization of בראשית . In the Masoretic text בראשית is vocalized בְּרֵאשִׁית. The presence of a she'va under the ב , according to the rules of classical Hebrew grammar, suggests that בראשית is in the construct state and is, therefore, the first of two nouns or substantives which when taken as a unit yield a possessive compound.[3] בראשית then, carries with it the force of "In the

beginning of . . ." or "When God began to . . . ."

The second element in this possessive phrase must be a substantive. However, this is not the case. The second word in the Torah ברא is vocalized by the Masorites בָּרָא "he created", a finite verb. We have a text before us which has a noun in the construct state governing a finite verb, translated "In the beginning of (God's) creating." This can only presume a change of vocalization to render בְּרוֹא as an infinitive construct.[4] Skinner and other scholars do resolve the problem by rendering בראשית as a construct and the entire remainder of the phrase as a genitive clause.[5] Speiser points out that the narrative beginning in Genesis 2:4b reads ביום עשות יהוה, showing in form the identical pattern suggested above.[6]

Skinner and the other scholars refer to passages in the Hebrew text which seem to permit a noun in the construct state to govern a finite verb (c.f. Isaiah 29:1; Hosea 2:1).[7] Although modern scholars recognize this problem in the text, their general conclusion is that the opening verse of Genesis is a dependent clause which must be translated, "When God began to create . . . ."

Skinner has proposed three possible syntactical constructions for Genesis 1:1-3: a) verse one is an independent statement: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth".[8] If verse one is an independent statement, understanding as an absolute, then, according to Skinner, two

interpretations become possible: (1) that the verse asserts the creation (ex nihilo) of the primeval chaos described in verse 2; or (2) it summarizes the content of the entire first chapter.[9] b) verse one, protasis; verse two, parenthetic; verse three, apodosis: "In the beginning of God's creating... the earth was...."[10]

It is the consensus of opinion among modern scholarship that b) is most satisfying.[11] The syntax of the opening paragraph being: When... the earth being (at that time). Skinner indicates that the third reading c) is possibly adequate; scholars have noted that the grammer of verse two militated against this reading. Verse two reads והארץ היתה "the earth being...", subject preceeding verb. If verse two were the main clause, a verb followed by the subject (ותהי הארץ The earth was...) construction would be expected. Speiser has noted that Genesis 2:4b - 7 shows the identical narrative structure: (2:4b) "When YHVH made... (5-6) as yet no plant... (7) God formed...."[12]

It should be noted that Umberto Cassuto stands in opposition to the above interpretation. He holds that the first verse of Genesis constitutes a formal introduction to the entire chapter, "and expresses at the outset, with majestic brevity, the main thought of the section... God created the heavens and the earth."[13] He argues that in order for the translation "In the beginning of God's creating... the earth being... God said...." to be

correct, verse two would have to read והארץ תהו ובהו, and the earth without form and void, omitting the verb היתה.[14] Cassuto is of the opinion that the construction of verse two והארץ היתה begins a new subject.

Completely unavailable to the rabbis is supporting evidence adduced from an extra-biblical source. Speiser shows that the Babylonian creation narrative Enuma elish presents the identical syntactical structure: lines 1-2, dependent temporal clause; lines 3-8 paranthetic clauses; line 9 main clause.[15] The biblical author may well have been using a standard rhetorical form for epic openings.

B. In Rabbinic Commentaries

Rashi first addresses the problem with a citation from the Midrash which in itself solves the grammatical perplexity. The Midrash cites Proverbs 8:22, understanding the phrase ראשית דרכו as referring to the Torah. The word בראשית then is viewed as if it were composed of two distinct and separable elements: the preposition ב and the noun ראשית. To the ב is given the meaning "for the sake of", ראשית (Torah). Thus the Midrash solves the grammatic dilemma: ב (for the sake of) ראשית (Torah) ברא אלהים (God created...).[16]

That Rashi himself was not totally satisfied with this midrashic solution is indicated by his continuing comment: "If, however, you want a straightforward answer, understand

the text in this manner: At the beginning of the creation of heaven and earth, when the earth was without form and void, and there was darkness... God said, Let there be light...."[17] Clearly Rashi understands the opening verses to Genesis in the same way as do the modern scholars just cited.

Rashi supports this interpretation with an allusion to nouns in the construct state followed by finite verbs; namely Hosea 2:1, תחילת דבר. The text must be understood as though it read, "At the beginning of God's speaking through Hosea, the Lord said...."[18]

Rashi does not presume to decide the problem once and for all. In the event that the clause is to be rendered as independent, he suggests and rejects an alternative solution, namely that of ellipses. We cite him in full.

> Should you ... insist that (the text) does actually intend to point out that these (the heaven and earth) were created first and that the meaning is, "At the beginning He created these, admitting therefor that the word בראשית is in the construct state and explaining the mission of a word signifying "everything" by saying that you have texts which are elliptical, omitting a word, as for example (Amos 12:6) "Does (he) plow with oxen", and it does not explicitly state, "Does a man plough with oxen; "you should be astonished at yourself... you needs admit that the text teaches nothing about the earlier or later sequence of the acts of creation."[19]

Conclusion

A comparison of the modern scholarly treatment of the

problem here with that of the Rabbis would indicate the following: In neither awareness of the grammatical problem, proposal of possible solutions and the philisophical or theological implications of the varying solutions were the rabbis inferior as concerns "scientific method" to the moderns. The continuing discussion will indicate whether this is an isolated phenomenon or perhaps a paradigmatic consistency.

2. TERMS FOR DIVINITY AND DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

A. In Modern Scholarship

The normative Rabbinic explanation for the presence of two Biblical appelatives for deity is that the terms Elohim and YHVH embrace different aspects of the Divine personality: YHVH being used to describe the merciful dimensions of God; Elohim, when reference is to God as supreme judge.[1] The antiquity of this position is revealed in a statement (Mishna Avoth IV:22) attributed to R. Jochanan b. Zakkai, a first generation Tana (circa. 10-80 C.E.).[2] Genesis Rabbah, considered among the oldest midrashic collections, also contains Midrashim which explain the presence of these two names in a similar manner.[3]

Rashi, in his comment on Genesis 1:2 echoes this Rabbinic response: "The Lord (the Merciful One) created, because at first God intended to create (the world) to be placed under the (rule) of strict justice, but He realized that the world could not thus endure and therefore gave precedent to Divine Mercy allying it with Divine Justice. It is to this that what is written in Genesis 2:4 alludes "In the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven."[4]

The predominant opinion among modern biblical scholars states that the Pentateuch was compiled from several independent sources, acquiring final form through a process of redaction. This position achieved notoriety in an article published by Jean Astruc, who in 1753 demonstrated

that Genesis was composed from two originally independent sources.[5] His conclusion was based on the presence of variant appelatives for the Hebrew Deity: YHVH/Elohim. This discovery, adopted and expanded, led to the development in the next century of the Documentary Hypothesis. The Documentary Hypothesis has since been refind to include other sources.[6]

Employing the methodology of documentary analysis, modern scholars agree that the use of Elohim in the opening narrative reveals the hand of the Priestly (P) writer; the use of YHVH (Elohim) in Genesis 2:4b-24 indicates Yawistic (J) authorship.[7] Skinner notes that although the E source, like the P, utilizes the appelative Elohim, the E narrative does not include a primeval history, but rather commences with Abraham.[8] It is necessary to note that implicit within the Documentary Hypothesis is a rejection of the Mosaic authoriship of Jewish Scriptures. The majority of modern biblical scholars find the conclusions adduced by documentary criticism a satisfactory answer to the problem of YHVH/Elohim.

Speiser writes that the many instances of duplication, mutual contradictions and manifest stylistic disparities become self-explanatory once viewed as the natural result of amalgamation of sources.[9] However, Cassuto views these variants as deliberate in design. Further, Cassuto argues that the use of one divine name in place of the other is

determined by the nature of the narrative.[10] Believing that the Pentateuch, as we know it, is not the result of editorial patchwork, Cassuto concludes that when the Tetragrammaton appears the text reflects an Israelite conception of God.[11] Elohim is preferred by the biblical author when the passage embraces the abstract idea of Deity "prevalent in the international circles of "wise men" -- God conceived as the Creator of the physical universe, as the Ruler of nature, as the Source of Life."[12] Cassuto utilizes certain criteria of determining when and why one appellative is used rather than another; we cite those germane to the problem here:

> The name YHVH is employed when God is presented to us in His personal character and in direct relationship to people and nature; and Elohim, when Deity is alluded to as a Transcendental Being who exists completely outside and above the physical universe.
>
> The name YHVH appears when the reference is to the God of Israel relative to His people or to their ancestors; Elohim, when He is spoken of in relation to one who is not a member of the Chosen People.
>
> YHVH is mentioned when the theme concerns Israel's tradition; Elohim, when the subject matter appertains to the universal tradition.[13]

According to Cassuto, the generic Elohim had necessarily to be used in the opening creation narrative. Deity appears there as Master of the universe to whom all creation is subject. In the narrative beginning with Genesis 2:4b,

Deity appears as the ruler of the moral world who initiates a personal relationship to creation, therefore YHVH is required.

B. In Rabbinic Commentaries

As we stated earlier, concomitant with the modern theory of a multi-source Pentateuch is the notion of a multi-authored Pentateuch. The idea that Moses did not single-handedly commit to writing all of God's words, however, was alluded to in the 12th century by Ibn Ezra. Quite covertly he cast a suspicious eye at several biblical verses, among them, Deuteronomy 1:1: "These are the words Moses spoke to all Israel beyond the Jordan." Ibn Ezra subtly questions why Moses would refer to the side of the Jordan on which he stood as "beyond the Jordan". It was obvious, at least to Ibn Ezra, that the phrase made sense only to someone writing in Israel.[14] Further aspersions are cast towards the phrase "And Moses wrote..." which begins Exodus 24:4; Numbers 33:2; Deuteronomy 31:9. The natrue of the phrase suggests that someone other than Moses did the writing. In his comment on Deuteronomy 7:2, Ibn Ezra writes: "If you understand the secret of the twelve, and of 'And Moses wrote', and of 'And the Canaanite was then in the land'.... you will discover the truth."

The truth to which Ibn Ezra alludes, is the non-Mosaic authorship of Torah.[15]

Conclusion

Neither in awareness of the problems nor in an approach to the problems does one methodology surpass that of the other. Both Rabbinic scholarship and modern scholarship supply plausable explanations for the presence of two divine appelatives. However, neither the Rabbis nor the modern scholars explain conclusively the combination YHVH/Elohim in Genesis 2:4b.

3. LIGHT BEFORE THE LUMINARIES

A. In Modern Scholarship

In the biblical account of creation light comes into existence prior to the creation of the luminaries. Julian Morgenstern, believing this to be an example of sloppy editing on the part of the biblical redactor, concludes that the presence of light before the luminaries is an anachronism.[1] Noting that the biblical author measures creation by evenings and mornings, Morgenstern writes, "it is clear that he had in mind the orderly succession of day and night, of light and darkness caused by the presence or absence of the light of the sun."[2] In a similar manner Morgenstern explains the presence of plant life prior to the creation of the sun as an example of the biblical author's paucity of scientific knowledge: "... the author of this story apparently had no knowledge of the connection between the light and heat of the sun and plant life and growth."[3] Morgenstern concludes that the framework of the story is far less important than the Jewish thought contained in the account, therefore "anachronisms like these can be readily overlooked."[4]

Neither Driver nor Skinner mention anachronism as an explanation for light prior to the luminaries. Both scholars hold that implicit in the P author's narrative is the phenomenon of dawn; with the light comes a new epoch.[5] Skinner points out that the concept is found in Greek and

Phoenician cosmogonies also.[6] In the Genesis narrative light is sharply contrasted with the darkness. Only light receives Divine approval. Skinner notes that although light and darkness are both creations of God, the idea present in the Genesis narrative is to contrast one with the other.[7] Both Skinner and Driver view the first light of creation as a metaphoric representation of the establishment of order over primeval chaos. Gradually chaos gives way to an ordered cosmos, and darkness, though not a product of divine fiat, is separated from the light and assigned a place in the ordered universe. (c.f. Job 38:19)[9]

Although Skinner and Driver view the light of Genesis 1:3 metaphorically, the scholars note that the biblical author conceives of a universe where light exists without heavenly fixtures. Driver writes: "according to the Hebrew conception, light though gathered up and concentrated in the heavenly bodies, is not confined to them...."[9] The sun and moon mark the fixed time periods, but light and darkness exist independently of them. This understanding, Skinner concludes, "allowed the Hebrew mind to accept the creation of light prior to the creation of the heavenly bodies".[10] The biblical author saw no problem with the existence of day and night and the alteration of morning and evening prior to the sun, moon, and stars. Skinner concludes that the Hebrew writer envisions not merely a temporal distinction but also a spatial distinction between light and darkness.

Cassuto responds to the problem of light before the luminaries by reminding us that we are all familiar with light that does not emanate from the heavenly bodies, e.g., lightning. Cassuto, in his comment on Genesis 1:14-15 notes that the created luminaries serve to regulate already existing light. Speiser renders Genesis 1:14-15, God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky, to distinguish between day and night; let them mark the fixed times, the days and years, (15) and serve as lights in the expanse of the sky to shine upon the earth...."[11] Speiser believes that the Hebrew לאתת ולמועדים is hendiadys, and as such, the verse enumerates three and not four functions. Cassuto too argues that the luminaries 1) separate day and night; 2) mark the fixed times; 3) provide light for the earth.[12] He notes that in the Babylonian epic the luminaries function similarly. Citing Tablet 5, lines 12-13: "He (Marduk) caused Nannoru to shine", (this corresponds to the third clause); "He set it over night", (corresponding to clause one); "He made it the adornment of the night for the fixing of the days", (corresponding to the function in the second clause).[13] Cassuto states that in order for two distinct entities to be separated, they first must exist. Thus Cassuto sees implicit within the biblical text reference to the existence of real physical light prior to the creation of the luminaries.

B. Jacob writes that the light which God called into being on the first day of creation is a reflection of God's

splendor and love filling the world. Light is the one element which most closely approaches the nature of God: "... it is a simile for the absolute clarity and purity; for the highest happiness; it is life and joy."[14]

B. In Rabbinic Commentaries

Rashi, citing Genesis Rabah III:6 explains that the light of day was one of a special nature. "When God saw that the wicked of the world were not worthy of this divine light, it was set apart by God and reserved for the righteous in the world to come."[15] Rashi, in a secondary comment and David Kimchi in his treatment of Genesis 1:3, see a reference to the created luminaries and the ordering of day and night. Both Rashi and Kimchi state that all components of creation were brought into existence on the first day of creation, beginning their service only after God's command.

Nachmamides, too, holds the opinion that the light of day one is unique: "... when He created the substance of the heavens, He said that from that substance there should come forth a shining matter called light.... The verse does not say ' and it was so' as it says on the other days, because the light did not remain in this state all the time, as did the other creations."[16]

For the Rabbis, light is the marvel of all creation prior to man; that the entire first day of creation is devoted to light underscores its specialness.[17] Jacob notes that the superior value of light, both physical light and light as a

metaphor representing order, is further demonstrated when compared to darkness. And it is for this reason, argues Jacob, that darkness remains a part of creation. Darkness and light are symbols, the former representing the blackness of premordial chaos; the latter representing the reign of order imposed on chaos by God. Thus Jacob concludes:

> The assignment of time and space as a special act of God binds him to approve them as eternal and inviolable and to allow no change... If it is possible to speak of God only allegorically, the 'day' of creation is also but a metaphor. Creation consists in establishing the works of creation, it is the first order out of chaos."[18]

Conclusion

For the rabbis, as for most of the modern commentators, Morgenstern being a noted exception, the idea of bringing order to creation is represented by light. Light is the metaphor used by the biblical author to indicate the beginning of the creation process. Both modern and medieval commentators understood it as such.

4. BREATH, WIND, OR SPIRIT - THE PROBLEM OF רוח

A. The Meaning of רוח In Modern Scholarship

A dichotomy exists among modern scholars as to the exact meaning of the Hebrew רוח אלהים (Genesis 1:2). Driver, Skinner, Cassuto and others render the phrase, "spirit of God". Speiser, Orlinsky, Meek and others argue that the term means "awesome wind/wind from God."

The position espoused by Driver and Skinner is predicated on the belief that the Spirit (of God) is the formative principle of the cosmos; the force of creation and power which gives life and sustains all existence.[1] Presence of the Divine Spirit over chaos suggests the imminent reign of order and the ascent of life where before only a watery chaos existed. Cassuto believes that this tension, the contrast between chaos and order is not a mere homily but that the idea is present in the language of verse two.[2] Assigning an adversative meaning to the last clause of verse two;ורוח אלהים מרחפת על פני המים: Cassuto translates the conjunctive ו of ורוח as but and thus renders the clause; "although the earth was without form or life, and all was steeped in darkenss, yet above the unformed matter hovered the Spirit of God...."[3]

Cassuto further rejects the idea of רוח אלהים as "wind from God" on the grounds that such an understanding does not accord with the real meaning of the text.[4] His position is founded upon the biblical text. Thus Cassuto

argues that the separation of the waters was to have taken place on the second and third days. This act was instigated solely by God's command, no intermediary agent was employed.[5]

The opposite opinion held by Speiser, Orlinsky, and Meek who understand רוח אלהים as "wind from God/awesome wind." This is based on the primary definition of the Hebrew רוח . Speiser notes that רוח as breath is a secondary definition and comes to be understood as "life force" by extension only. Speiser and Orlinsky find precedent for the translation "wind" in the Enuma elish where wind occupies a significant position in the narrative.[6] In the Babylonian narrative, the sky god Anu fathers the four winds and Marduk, the sun god, creates seven other winds.[7] These winds aid Marduk in the slaying of Tiamat and help introduce life and order to the world. Orlinsky suggests that רוח acquired the meaning of "spirit" through Philo's Platonic approach to the Bible. Consequently, says Orlinsky, wind "derived from the incorporeal essence of idea or wind, became spirit."[8]

It should be noted that Speiser understands as either possessive (a wind of/from God), or adjectively (divine, supernatural, awesome). He notes that the term is never used as a simple expression of might - "mighty."[9] When used adjectively, אלהים always describes the extraordinary, the numinous.

B. In Rabbinic Commentaries

For the rabbis, רוח אלהים is distinct and separate from God. It may eminate from Deity, but it is not synonymous with Deity. The predominant opinions held by the rabbis is that רוח is "wind" or "breath". Precedence for this opinion is found in the Babylonian Talmud Hag. 12a: Rab Judah, citing his teacher Rab states that on the first day of creation God created ten things. Among these ten initial creations was wind. Nachmanides echoes this position in his comment on Genesis 1:2. He writes that רוח (wind) was among the elements created ex nihilo.[10] It was the least substantial of all the primordial elements and only by command of God was the wind able to move over the water.[11] Ibn Ezra explains that רוח is called wind of God, "because it was God's messenger, sent to dry up the waters."[12] Rashi, likewise, views רוח אלהים as a description of God's messenger. "The throne of Divine Glory was kept aloft, hovering above chaotic waters by the movement of God's breath, even as a dove hovers over its nest."[13]

The Septuagint supplies further supporting evidence that Jewish tradition understood רוח אלהים not as spirit (Spirit) of God, but as wind from God. "Onkelos, too, understands the phrase as "a wind from before God."[14]

Conclusion

It would appear that Rabbinic tradition is quite clear on the meaning of רוח אלהים . Unlike the modern scholars

who are split over the definition, Jewish tradition teaches that רוח is an agent of God which is subject to God's authority.

5. THE MEANING OF מרחפת

A. In Modern Scholarship

מרחפת is a hapax legomenon. The Hebrew רחף appears in the piel form in Deuteronomy 32:11 where it is used to describe the motion of a doting eagle flying watch above its nestlings.

Driver and Skinner see in מרחפת an allusion to the world egg cosmogony. Skinner, embracing Driver's opinion, suggests that the Divine Spirit was figured as a bird brooding on its nest anticipating the egg of chaos to hatch and the ordered universe to emerge.[1] This cosmogony was popular among the Phonecians and Polynesians. The world egg theory relates that the organized world was hatched from the fluid chaos by a brooding bird-like deity. Both Driver and Skinner hold that this fragment of mythology is not directly connected to the main theme of the Genesis narrative, but the biblical author introduced it "for the sake of religious suggestiveness."[2] "The Hebrew writer, true to his monotheistic faith, substituted the Spirit of God and thereby transforms a crude material representation... into a beautiful and suggestive figure."[3]

Unlike Driver and Skinner, who see implicit in the term מרחפת the static process of sitting on egg, Speiser and Cassuto understand the term to describe motion.[4] The essential idea communicated by רחף is that of continual motion; the motion employed by a bird as it swoops/

soars.[5] Speiser cites the Ugaritic root as describing a form of motion as opposed to a state of rest.

B. In Rabbinic Commentaries

Rabbinically, מרחפת has been understood solely as a term describing motion. Both in Talmudic literature (Chag. 15a) and Midrashic literature (Genesis Rabbah 2:4) reference is made to the motion of a bird hovering. However, the emphasis is not on the image of the bird, but rather on the incessant motion which causes the air to move.[6] Rashi, also, uses this same metaphor in his description of the turbulence caused by God's breath.[7] The rabbinic commentators do not postulate a cosmogony. To be sure, such a venture would be contrary to their purpose.

Conclusion

Modern scholarship recognizing the various mythological cosmogonies put forth by ancient man, has perhaps created a problem where none exists. Some modern scholars, as a result, question the metaphoric nature of the term מרחפת. For the rabbis, מרחפת is understood as pure metaphor, therefore no problem is perceived because none existed for them.

6. EREV AND BOKER

A. In Modern Scholarship

Skinner writes that the clause

may at first appear as an easily understood statement.[1] There are, nevertheless, difficulties which are not resolved by assuming the traditional reckoning of the Jewish day: sunset to sunset. "The Jewish day may have begun at sunset but it did not end at sunrise; and it is impossible to take the words as meaning that the evening and morning formed the first day."[2] Skinner points out that evening can only be recognized in contrast to daylight. There could be no evening before the day on which light was created. The evening referred to in verse five, argues Skinner, is the evening and night which followed the creation of light.[3] The biblical author "purposefully worded the text in this way so as to lead the reader's mind forward to the advent of a new day, and a new display of creative power [4] Driver also holds the same notion. Rendering the Hebrew, "And evening came and morning came, one day", he suggests that the chaotic nebula is antecendent to all of creation.[5] Day one begins only after "fiat lux". Thus Driver argues that the first full day comes to a close with the sunrise of day two. Speiser, however, points out that the normal ordinal series used by Semetic languages is one, second, third, fourth, etc.[6]

B. In Rabbinic Commentaries

Rashi writes that according to the regular mode of expression, the text should have read "the first day." He explains the peculiar "one day" via the Midrash: "It is because the Holy One Blessed be He, was then the only One (Sole Being) in His universe, since the angels were not created until the second day. One day, then, means, 'the day of the One Being'.[7]

Ibn Ezra proposes a more scientific explanation to the problem. ערב ,he says, may be understood as a synonym for darkness. It acquires this meaning because shapes become indistinct at the time of ערב.[8] Here Ibn Ezra plays on ערב , applying the meaning "to mix" or "to become indistinguishable" ערב ; the time when one can not determine shapes. בוקר , he concludes, is then the exact opposite. "One day" is understood by Ibn Ezra as one complete revolution of the earth.[9] Ibn Ezra notes that when it is day on one side of the earth, it can also be night on the other side: "Thus an earth day may encompass evening and morning, while locally the evening is not part of the day."[10] While Ibn Ezra's response is based on an observation of natural science, it, like the comment of Rashi does not, in any substantial way, solve the problem of ויהי ערב ויהי בוקר יום אחד.

Conclusion

Although the rabbinic commentators recognize that the

B part of verse five poses a difficulty, their attempt at resolution does not define the time period embraced by the phrase and therefore does not solve the problem. Some modern scholars attempted to interpret יום as eon but this is not consistent with the sense of the passage. Although the concept of successive periods of creation can be found in other cosmogonies, no such concept is incorporated into Hebrew Scriptures. To introduce that idea here destroys the analogy on which the sanction of the sabbath rests. Skinner, Dillman and others, however, believe that the clause must refer to the close of the first day with the first evening and the night that followed.

7. Naming of The Luminaries: Genesis 1:14-16

A. In Modern Scholarship

The question has been asked: Why are the heavenly luminaries referred to only as "lights in the expanse of heaven" and not given proper names? Skinner, Driver and others believe the answer indicates the fundamental difference between Israelite religion and the religion of her neighborhoods. Driver notes that the biblical author had a clear religious reason for introducing the luminaries at this point in the narrative.[1] Skinner believes this religious significance marks the advance of Hebrew thought "from the heathen notion of the stars to a pure monotheism."[2] The ancients, especially the Babylonians viewed the luminaries as animated beings, attributing divine status to the largest and most prominent. In the Genesis narrative, this notion is totally eliminated. The מאורות are clearly set up as functionaries, conveyors of the already existing light.[3] It should be noted that the idea of these luminaries as animated bodies does occur in Hebrew Scriptures, but when it does occur it is purely poetic. (c.f. Judges 5:20, Isiah 40:26, Job 38-7.)[4] The luminaries serve the earth as part of natural order designed by God. Gunkel suggests that the use of the word לממשלת is a throw back to the old mythology.[5] However, Skinner counters, whereas in the Babylonian mythology the stars ruled over the affairs of mortals, here the power of luminaries is clearly

circumscribed to the alternation of day and night.[6] It is interesting to note that the luminaries are the only work of creation whose function is specifically defined.

Benno Jacob states that the creation of the luminaries and their function is indicated by the creation of light on the first day and the appearance of the firmament on day two. Jacob believes that Genesis 1:14 is both the continuation and conclusion of those creations.[7] However, light and the luminaries are purposefully separated by biblical authors. Light, אור , is the acme of creation prior to human existence. The מאורות serve as the flood gates for light: "The heavenly bodies, while deified by other peoples... are only functionaries of God for the service of earth and its inhabitants. "For this reason the heavenly lights are kindled only a little before living beings with eyes are created, beings which are awake and asleep, work and rest and need a computation of time; for to live means 'to see the light.'"[8]

B. In Rabbinic Commentaries

Like the modern scholars, both Rashi and Radak see Genesis 1:14-16 as a conclusion to the creation of light on day one. Rashi writes: "They had been created on the first day, but on the fourth He commanded them to be suspended in the firmament...."[9] Rashi also sees the function of the luminaries in verse 14. Commenting on "to cause a division

between the day and the night" he writes, "This took place after a primeval light was conserved for the righteous; but during the first seven (another reading is three) days of Creation, the primeval light and darkness functioned together both by day and night."[10]

Neither Rashi, Radak, nor Ibn Ezra deal directly with the problem of the luminaries, thus indicating, that at least for these rabbinic scholars, no problem existed. However, such is not the case, Although no specific reference is made to the fact that in the Genesis narrative the luminaries are not named, implicit in the comments of Rashi and Radak are the answers to the problem. Nachmanides writes: "It is possible that just as He endowed the earth with the power of growth in places thereof, so He placed in the firmament certain areas that are prepared and ready to receive light, and these bodies which receive the light reflect it, just as window panes and onyx stones. This is why He called them מאורות and not אורים . אורים would imply that they reflect the light they receive...."[11]

Conclusion

Clearly the rabbis recognize that the luminaries are the bearers of light. The problem of why the luminaries receive no name is alleviated once one recognizes that they have been named: מאורות ; areas in the expanse of heaven which allow the אור -- the light of day one "to give light" (להאיר) to creation. For the rabbis, light as a

creation of God offers no threat of being worshipped in place of God. The luminaries are called "the greater light" and "the lesser light" precisely to underscore their subordinate role.

8. FUNCTIONS OF THE LUMINARIES: GENESIS 1:14b

A. In Modern Scholarship

The b clause of verse 14 has been a source of controversy for modern and medieval schools alike. The Hebrew reads: והיו לאתת ולמועדים ולימים ושנים and has traditionally been rendered, "... and they shall be for signs, and for appointed seasons, and for days, and years." Speiser, commenting on this portion of verse 14 states that it is, at best, a stiff and mechanical translation.[1] Cassuto attempted to resolve the difficulty of order by assuming the first connective particle to be an explicative: "they shall serve as signs, that is for seasons, days, years."[2] However, one is forced to ask whether or not the sun and moon serve as seasonal indicators. Further, Speiser questions the remaining order. One expects day, followed by seasons, and then years. But the text still reads seasons, days, years.[3] As was stated earlier, Speiser resolves this difficulty by rendering the first phase לאתת ולמועדים as an hendiadys: "... they shall serve as signs for the fixed time periods... they shall mark the fixed times, that is, the days and the years."[4]

Skinner points out that the P author never uses מועדים to mean the natural seasons of the year.[5] Rather, the term is used to describe "a time conventionally agreed on, or fixed by some circumstance."[6] Skinner points to the "sacred season" of the ecclesiastical year as proof. At least here one of the luminaries functions as an indicator; e.g., the moon.

Skinner finds this explanation plausible due to P's predilection for matters cultic.

B. In Rabbinic Commentaries

The rabbinic commentators attempt to resolve this problem by defining each of the four components. Rashi understands אתת literally: i.e. eclipses, while Ibn Ezra regards אתת as minutes, למועדים Ibn Ezra defines as hours, but he admits here to the possibility that אתת could refer to solar and lunar eclipses as well as shooting stars. Rashi, on the other hand, defines למועדים in a religious manner. He writes, "This is written with a view to the future when Israel would receive command regarding the festivals which could be calculated from the time of the lunar conjunction."[7]

Radak understands אתת as hours and suggests that מועדים are the natural seasons of the year. His comment attempts to link halacha with the natural order of the physical year: "Just as the year is divided into four seasons (parts); Spring, fall, summer and winter. So also are the day and night divided in four sections corresponding to the four seasons."[8]

Conclusion

It is obvious that the Rabbis are as aware of the problem in Genesis 1:14b as are the modern scholars. With the exception of the explanation offered by Speiser neither the modern nor the medieval commentators resolve the problem

satisfactorily. The rabbis do make a concerted effort to fit the text into the context of human experience.

9. THE PROBLEM OF THE USE OF THE FIRST PERSON PLURAL

A. In Modern Scholarship

"Let us make man in our own image...." Skinner writes that the difficulty of the first person has always been felt;[1] surely, this may be considered an understatement. Several explanations for this construction have been offered by medieval as well as modern commentators ranging from the purely grammatical to philosophical.

Skinner notes that the most widely accepted explanation for the use of first person plural in Genesie 1:26 is that the Deity took counsel with the heavenly beings and advised them of the impending creation.[2] However, this explanation has been challenged by some moderns on the grounds that it ascribes to this unnamed heavenly entourage some share in the creation of man. But, as Skinner points, out, this notion is foreign to the creation narrative. Also, the P author never mentions the existence of angels. Cassuto suggests that the plural is used to underscore the unique acout about to take place: "Only in the case of man, (is the plural used) because of his special importance...."[3] The pinnacle of creation deserves special consideration. Therefore, we are privy to the Divine thought which preceeded the act of creation. Cassuto, too, rejects the idea of God taking council with a heavenly court. Had the biblical author intended to tell us that God took council, the text would have stated explicitly with whom God consulted.[4] (c.f. 1 Kgs 22:19, Isiah

6:2, Job 1-2.)

Speiser also reflects this notion as well as the explanation of "courtly language." He notes that the Hebrew uses the singular in verse 27 and also in Chapter 2:7. "The point at issue, therefore, is one of grammar alone, without a direct bearing on the meaning."[5] Speiser cites Genesis 20:13 and 35:7 as corroborating evidence which supports the notion that at times the noun אלהים is linked with a plural verb which, nevertheless, has a clearly singular meaning.[6]

Skinner suggests that the "ultimate explanation" may be found in a pre-Israelite tradition. In the Enuma elish we find that a discussion concerning the creation of man takes place between Marduk and Ea.[7] The P author simply replaced the Babylonian pantheon with the hosts of heaven: "that P retained the idea in spite of his silence as to the existence of angels is due to the fact that it was decidedly less anthropomorphic than the statement that man was made in the image of the one imcomparable Deity."[8]

B. In Rabbinic Commentaries

Saadia, in his Emunot Vedeot writes that the use of the plural in Genesis 1:26 is an example of a typical Hebrew idiom where the first person plural future is singular in connotation.[9] He cites Numbers 22:6 and Daniel as proof of the frequency of this construction. Ibn Ezra counters those who attempt to make נעשה into a נפעל construction:

"This explanation is stupid, for then our verse should read: "Let there be made man...."[10] He, like Rashi, explains that God consulted with angels prior to man's creation.

Although the Rabbis recognize that the presence of נעשה does create problems, they occupied themselves more with the uniqueness of man than with the peculiarities of the particular text. However, the text is controversial enough for Rashi to write: "... this use of the plural may give the heretics an occasion to rebel... as a refutation of the heretics it is written immediately after this verse ויברא אלהים and not ויבראו ."[11] Ibn Ezra, who as we stated, believes the plural to be a reference to the angels, explains that the earth and the water "brought forth the plants and all living being."[12] "Let us make man" is said so as to eliminate any confusion over who created man: we (God and the angels) will attend to him, not the water and the earth.[13] (See Ibn Ezra on Genesis 1:20, 24).

Conclusion

Both modern and rabbinic commentators are struck by the use of the first person plural in this section. However, neither school provides a convincing answer for its use. To the modern mind, it may be more comforting to see the influence of a mythological antecedent behind this problem, but such an observation does not explain why the biblical author, a demonstrably dedicated monotheist, should have included such a blatant polytheistic reference. It must be noted, how-

ever, that the passage in question may be an example of the "majestic plural". Such an explanation has been put forward by some moderns and rabbinic commentators alike.

10. WHEN DID GOD REST?

A. In Modern Scholarship

The first chapter of Genesis ends with the statement that God inspected all of the newly formed creation and at the close of the sixth day found the work to be pleasing. One is left with the feeling that with the close of the day six all the work of creation is completed. However, in the beginning of chapter two we read that God finished all the work of creation on the seventh day.

It is the opinion of many modern scholars (Wallhausen, Driver, Skinner, and others) that this section, the end of chapter one and the beginning of chapter two, represents the redactors' attempt at synthesizing two different cosmogonic sources. It should be noted that the division of eight works over a six day period is thought by some to be a peculiar Hebrew modification introduced in the interest of the Sabbath law, this idea, not being a part of the original cosmogony.[1] However, as Skinner points out, it is difficult to establish whether the pattern found in Genesis, belongs to the original cosmogony or was added later. It should be noted that the pattern of day/work is not at all present in the Enuma elis, and Skinner cautions that division of the Babylonian Epic into seven tablets has no relation to the seven days of the biblical narrative.[2] A division of creation into six stages however, does appear in the late book of the Bundehash, the

the Parsee Genesis.[3] Here the creative periods are aligned with six annual festivals and form a creative year which parallel the six days found in Genesis 1.[4] But, according to Skinner, the most remarkable cosmogonic parallel to the six day scheme is found in Etruscan literature. "Here the creation is said to have been accomplished in six periods of 1000 years, in the following order: 1. Heaven and earth; 2. The firmament; 3. Sea and Water; 4. Sun and moon; 5. Souls of animals; 6. Man.[5] However, Suidas in whose writings this is found, lived not earlier than the 10th century C.E. and it is possible that his information may be colored by knowledge of the Hebrew cosmogony."[6]

If, as many scholars believe, a Babylonian source provided the major outline for the creation narrative in Genesis, then the division of days may be understood as a distinctively Israelitish invention. Wellhausen believes this to be the case.[7] He maintains that the scheme of days is a secondary addition to the framework of the narrative. He argues that although the original had a seven day scheme it was not as detailed, and merely stated that God ended the work on the seventh day.[8] The narrative, as we now know it, came into being at the hand of the P author for the same of promulgating the idea of the Sabbath.[9]

The Septuagint, the Samaritan Bible and the Peshitta, all read, "And God finished on the sixth day.[10] Although to assume a textual error makes easy work of the problem,

Skinner warns that one must not give this solution preference. Speiser believes that problem can be resolved by understanding the verb וַיְכַל in a specific way. "Since the task of creation was finished on the sixth day, the text can hardly go on to say that God concluded it on the seventh day. It follows therefore that.... the verb carries some more particular shade of meaning."[11] Speiser gives the meaning of "brought to a gratifying close" to the verb.[12] God inspects creation and its results and finds it pleasing. Speiser finds support for this translation in the Code of Hammurabi where the Akkadian equivalent is used in reference to a craftsman inspecting his work and approving the job.[13] This same notion is found also in the story of Marduk;s birth. Skinner, too, sees this implied in the phrase and applies the same notion to the verb שַׁבָּת which he says is essentially negative: "the cessation of work, not relaxation."[14]

B. In Rabbinic Commentaries

One can find this same idea expressed in rabbinic commentaries. Thus Benno Jacob writes "God held a finishing: this is the meaning of the Hebrew word... and not that God finished his work on the seventh day which would contradict verse one."[15] The verse is a statement which declares the work to be finished and that the artisan stands opposite the finished product. "It is, then," writes Ibn Ezra, "as though the verse stated 'He did not work.' and its

explanation is: 'He completed and rested.'"[16]

Rashi approaches the problem of sixth day/seventh day via the midrash. In the first citation Rashi notes that human beings are not equipped to accurately determine the points of time that distinguish one period from another: "... but the Holy One blessed be He, who knows His times and moments, began it (the seventh day) to a very hair's breadth and it therefore appeared as though He had completed His work on that very day."[17] Rashi, before closing his comment on this problem, offers one more explanation. Here he says that only rest was left to be created: "What did the world lack? Rest! Sabbath came - Rest came and the work was thus finished and completed."[18]

This first midrash cited by Rashi attempts to explain the ב of ביום השביעי as if it read "before the seventh day". While in the second midrash it seems that Rashi understands the phrase as if it read "by means of the seventh day". "His work was not yet complete - one thing was lacking, Rest - and by means of the seventh day's Rest, His work was perfected."[19]

Conclusion

In comparing the modern scholarly treatment of the problem here with that of the Rabbis the following conclusion may be drawn: In neither awareness of the problem proposal of the possible solutions and the philosophical of theological implications of the varying solutions are

the rabbis inferior -- as concerns "scientific method" to the moderns.

11. PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE BETWEEN MAN AND ANIMALS

Genesis 1:29-30

A. In Modern Scholarship

"God further said: 'See, I give you every seed-bearing plant on earth and every tree that bears fruit; they shall be your food. And to all the animals on land, all the birds of the sky, and all the living creatures that crawl on earth (I give) all the green plants as their food'. And it was so."

And so creation closes with a divine utterance which establishes the relationship of human beings to animals and the entire animal world to the plant world. Some scholars have put forth the notion that with the prohibition against animal food, man loses the position of dominance promised in Genesis IV: 26-28. However, according to Cassuto, this is not the case. God's restriction is an attempt to structure an attitude which recognizes the sanctity of life and of all life. Human beings may certainly exercise dominion over the animal world by using the living creatures to help in the work of subsistence,[1] but man, as a created entity may not and cannot have dominion over the life-force.[2] Cassuto concludes that slaying animals for food, at this point in time, would be looked on as an act of defiance.[3] It should be noted that this caveat is to be upheld by the animal kingdom as well. Essentially the P author envisioned a world where all living creatures demonstrated a reverence

for the principle of life. Ultimately, what is being described in these verses is a 'golden age' when animals lived peacefully among themselves and co-existed tranquilly with human beings.[4] "The motives," writes Skinner, "of the belief lie deep in the human heart -- horror of bloodshed, sympathy with the lower animals, the longing for harmony in the world, and the conviction that on the whole the course of things has been from good to worse -- all have contributed their share, and no scientific teaching can rob the idea of its poetic and ethical value."[5] Thus, the first stage of world history, which receives Divine approval, is a state of peace and harmony. In other words, this section, verses 29-31, is the P author's substitute for the garden of Eden.[6]

Some modern scholars argue that because the language of verse 29 differs significantly from the preceeding sections: e.g. זרע in place of מזריע ; and העץ אשר ... עץ עשה פ' אשר instead of more elegant פרי עץ ... this section (verses 29-30) represent a later addition to the P document.[7] However, counters Skinner, our verses are "vitally connected" with Chapter 9:2ff. Genesis 1:29-30 forms the beginning of a much larger whole envisioned and penned by the Priestly writer.[8] Skinner does admit to the possibility of the story being enriched by the widespread myth of the Golden Age.[9]

B. In Rabbinic Commentaries

Nachmanides recognizes the ethical imperative implicit

in the command prohibiting the eating of flesh. He writes: "The reason for this (prohibition of eating meat) was that creatures possessing the faculty of movement... have the power of choice affecting their welfare and their food, and they flee from pain and death."[10] Only after "all flesh had corrupted its way upon the earth" (Genesis 6:12) was flesh permitted. According to Nachmanides and Radak, this permission was granted to Noah's sons not as a reward, but to demonstrate that Noah had preserved the animal kingdom: "He gave the sons of Noah permission to slaughter and eat them since their existence was for his sake."[11] Both Radak and Nachmanides see this as an extension of man's dominion over the animal kingdom. Man can control the actions of the animals but, "He did not give them permission regarding the soul thereof...."[12]

Explicit in the comments of Rashi and Ibn Ezra is the notion that man and animal alike shared the same level of existence with regard to food. "He permitted man and everything possessing a living soul to eat any herb...."[13] It should be noted that the idea of man's dominion over the animals encompasses only the use of animal labor. This can be traced to a rabbinic argument in the Talmud, Sanhedrin 59b. Here the primary thrust of the argument centers around the sanctity of life, even animal life.

Conclusion

Both the modern scholars and the rabbinic commentators

find in Genesis 1:29-30 reference to a time when peace and harmony ruled over all creation. Certainly both schools understood these verses as a statement supporting the sanctity of all life created by God. Representatives of modern scholarship, using the documentary hypothesis/source analysis tool have concluded that Genesis 1:29-30 is the P author's parallel to the Eden story. The rabbis, although recognizing that both human beings and animals co-existed peacefully at this time, do not view the section in question as a parallel to Eden.

12. A SECOND CREATION NARRATIVE

A. In Modern Scholarship

It is the opinion of most modern scholars that Genesis 2:4b introduces the creation narrative as penned by the J author. That the account before us is markedly different than the narrative in chapter one may be seen in the shift of emphasis: the former dealing with the creation of the universe, the latter being concerned specifically with the development of life on earth.[1] Further, the narrative of Genesis one tells us of the creation of "heaven and earth." Here we are given the details of the making of "earth and heaven." "This far-reaching divergence in basic philosophy," writes Speiser, "would alone be sufficient to warn the reader that two separate sources appear to be involved, one heaven-centered and the other earth centered."[2] But, this dichotomy is demonstrated further by distinct differences in language: אלהים/ה"אלהים ברא/עשה.[3] It is assumed by many modern scholars that two very closely parallel versions of the creation epic existed. One employed the term Elohim, while the other used predominantly, YHVH. The two terms were combined at the time of final redaction for the sake of harmony.

The syntax of the paragraph which begins with 2:4b also reveals the presence of a distinct narrative unit. As we saw in Genesis 1:1-3 where the structure was analyzed as a temporal clause, parenthetical clause, main clause (which

is parallel to the open structure of the Babylonian epic), here also the same syntax can be found.[4] "The construction presents the same syntatic ambiguity as 1:1-3, except, of course, that there can be no question of taking 4b as an independent sentence... 4b must therefore be joined as protasis to what follows; and the question is whether the apodosis commences at verse 5 or 7."[5] Regardless of the difference between the Hebrew sources and the Mesopotamian narrative, they are all tied together by a common tradition.[6]

It should be noted that unlike the document penned by the P author, the J source devotes a great deal of energy explaining the origin of existing facts of human nature and societal customs. Here, the J author explains the distinction of sexes, the institution of marriage and chapter 2 attempts an explanation of sin, suffering, and death. "In carrying out this purpose, it is less faithful to historical than to moral and religious truth". Driver believes that the J narrative's importance lies not as a description of historical accuracy, but as a response to the actual condition of humanity at that time.[7] As regards the problem of the two divine apellatives Speiser points out that this may possibly reflect the Mesopotamian custom of writing the personal name of the deity with a determinative for God.[8] However, the Hebrew would require the qualifier to follow the name rather than precede it.

B. In Rabbinic Commentaries

That the Rabbis were aware of a shift in emphasis from the realm of heaven to the newly created earth is made evident by Radak who says that although creation happened exactly as recounted in Genesis 1, all being the result of God's word, everything nonetheless has a specific history.[9] The purpose of the narrative is to show that all of creation had to be brought into existence and that everything which was created and that has a specific history eventually dies. Radak commenting on "these are the generation" writes: "... everything that has successive generations (descendants) dies, it is a creature but not a creator. Everything that does not have successive generations (descendants) does not die. It is not consumed and it is not a creator and it is not a creature...."[10] Radak suggests here that narrative is speaking not about fixed periods but concerns itself with the notion of descendants. "All is a chain of descendants. Heaven and earth are from the onset created in view of man and his descendants. The meaning of creation lies in man and history."[11]

The idea of the perfection of creation is alluded to in Rashi's treatment of the word טרם. Rashi informs us that טרם is to be understood as having the force of "not yet". The implication is that all things were created, all was in a state of readiness, but "not yet" in a recognizable form.[12] Rashi, in his commentary on Genesis

1 writes that every part of creation was made ready on day one to be called into physical being at God's command. Ibn Ezra shares a similar notion. He states that עשה and ברא are not synonyms. עשות , he writes, is a term which describes improvement. Thus he understands the phrase ביום עשות : On the day the Lord God put the finishing touches on creation.[13] The origin of the world is best described by using both the verb ברא and עשה - "to call into being" and "to form purposefully". For the rabbis, this is not a second creation narrative, but rather constitutes the necessary conclusion to the activities described in the first chapter.

The Rabbinic approach to the use of both Elohim and YHVH in verse 4 has been dealt with earlier in this paper. Suffice it to say that Rashi, Radak, Ramban, and Saadia all understand the use here in the traditional manner: YHVH refers to God under the attribute of mercy, while Elohim describes God as divine judge. We cite Benno Jacob: "We know from chapter one that 'God' is the creator of heaven and earth including man... Now the story of a commandment shall follow, namely the prohibition against eating from the tree of knowledge. This tests man's obedience and educates him in the fear of the Lord... For man alone exists a 'you shall' or 'you shall not'... Nature obeys God, because that is the law of its existence and action;

it cannot act otherwise. It knows no will, only necessity. Man shall be impressed thoroughly by the force of the commandment, so he who gives it faces man in his full majesty; that is the Lord God."[14]

Conclusion

Modern scholars believe that Genesis 2:4b introduces a second creation narrative which represents the tradition of the Yahwistic school. The Rabbis are sensitive to a shift in emphasis and respond to differences existing between chapter one and chapter two with an attempt at harmonizing the two texts. What is important for us, is not the success or failure of their attempt, but the fact that they, the Rabbis' perceived these textual difficulties and dealt with them.

13. THE FORMING OF MAN AND WOMAN

A. In Modern Scholarship

In Genesis 1:27 we read that God created man and woman simultaneously; their existence, the result of Divine fiat. In Genesis chapter two, God creates man first, forming him from the clay, and then woman, who is formed around a bone taken from first man.

Cassuto argues that the repitition of man's beginning, although strange to those accustomed to the Hellenistic thought process, was a common device employed by Semitic writers.[1] It is Cassuto's opinion such repitition is indicative of a stylistic principle used frequently by the biblical author. First a general statement is presented, then a fuller, detailed elaboration of the scene is provided.[2] "When the Torah made use of the two ancient poetic sagas both of which describe man's creation - one in brief general outline, as an accout of the making of one of the creatures of the material world, and the second, at length and in detail, as the story of the creation of the central being of the moral world - it had no reason to refrain from duplicating the theme."[3] Cassuto firmly believes that only after the Jewish people lost its familiarity with the Semtic form, a result of Greek influence, did they look at the narrative as being a second creation epic.

It is the opinion of the majority of modern exegetes that this account of man's creation is further evidence of a

separate, but nonetheless, related epic. The language used in the J narrative points to this as being true. The J author uses the verb יצר - to form - and presents the reader with the image of God molding and sculpting the figure soon to be man. This allusion is not to be found in the writings of P, although the notion is not foreign to ancient near-Eastern literature.[4] Skinner notes that an ancient Egyptian picture shows the god Chnum spinning out human beings on his potters wheel.[5] Although many scholars have attempted to find in verse 7 the relationship shared by the soul, the body, and the spirit, Skinner argues that no such ideas are expressed here. The salient point of the verse is found in the animation of man. God gives vitality to this creature.[6] The fact that God imparts his own breath to man underscores the difference between man and the remainder of creation. In the P narrative, man achieves preminence not by becoming an animated being, for he (they) share that instantly with the rest of "the living creatures." by virtue of their creation, but by being created "in the image of God." Man is the only living creature to be so formed. Here, in the J narrative, that same preminence is established by God breathing His own breath into inanimate man, thereby directly supplying first man with the necessary life force. This section is the J author's equivalent to the "image of God" found in the P source.[7]

B. In Rabbinic Commentaries

Had S'forno not recognized the existence of a textual problem he never would have suggested that Genesis 2:7 be understood: "Now the Lord God had already formed man...," thus rendering the verb in the pluperfect.[8] And in Rashi's comment on verse eight, we learn that Cassuto merely echoes the common rabbinic principle applied to this section: "... when a general statement of an action is followed by a detailed account of it, the latter is a particularization of the former."[9]

Conclusion

The Rabbis recognize that a problem exists. Neither S'forno's use of the pluperfect, nor Rashi's belief that biblical literature adheres to set stylistic practices, provide a better resolution to this problem than does the solution offered by those scholars embracing the documentary hypothesis. The documentary approach offers not only an explanation for the problem itself, but also provides an understanding of how these various textual discrepancies come to be included in the biblical text.

14. THE SERPENT: GENESIS 3:1

A. In Modern Scholarship

The figure of the serpent has long been a source of controversy among biblical exegets; modern and rabbinic alike. All commentators have asked the questions: how could the serpent talk, and did the serpent enjoy a relationship with human beings that was never permitted to the rest of the animal kingdom? Some modern scholars note that the ancients viewed the serpent as a creature possessing the capabilities of a god. It had the ability to wield both demonic and/or divine power.[1] Thus, the acription of powers and abilities not characteristic of the animal world to the serpent comes as no surprise. Skinner believes, however, that the biblical author makes it perfectly clear that the serpent belongs to the category of "beasts of the field" and as such is another creature of God. The biblical author, drawing from a vast mythological storehouse, has presented us with a re-working of a myth which represented the "snake god" as a being hostile to God but friendly to woman. Through the snake, woman -- and so ultimately all humanity -- learns of the truth which God has withheld.[2] Skinner understands this entire passage metaphorically and notes that behind the sober description of the serpent as a mere creature of God, lurks a trace of an earlier pagan legend:

> The Jewish and Christian doctrine

> is a natural and legitimate extension of the teaching of Genesis 3, when the problem of evil came to the apprehended in its real magnitude, but it is foreign to the thought of the writer, although it cannot be denied that it may have some affinity with the mythological background of his narrative. The religious teaching of the passage knows nothing of an evil principle external to the serpent, but regards (the serpent) as the subject of whatever occult powers (it) displays: (the serpent) is simply a creature of Yahive distinguished from the rest by his superior subtlety. The Yahwistic author does not speculate on the ultimate origin of evil; it was enough for his purpose to have so analyzed the process of temptation that the beginning of sin could be assigned to a source which is neither in the nature of man nor in God....[3]

Cassuto writes that in order to understand the problem posed by the presence of evil emenating from the serpent, it is necessary to understand the mythological antecedents which show themselves in the Hebrew narrative. Here Cassuto refers to an ancient epic poem which told of the sea prince's rebellion against God; aided by Leviathan the fleeting serpent, Leviathan the twisting serpent, and dragons.[4] Once Israel incorporated this mythos into its own legends, Israel instituted variations: "not only were the pagan elements blurred, but new ideas were associated with it, in conformity with the conscience and ethos of

the Israelites."[5] Cassuto argues that the serpent of Eden was chosen specifically because of its relation to the giant serpents of the original myth. It is linked with the already well known symbol of evil: ".... since in popular thought and language the concept of evil was strongly associated with that of the serpent, it was possible for Torah, without changing its attitude to the ancient poetic tradition, to use the accepted folk ideas and phraseology that were a product of that tradition, and hence it chose specifically the serpent...."[6] Cassuto believes that the description "beast of the field" attributed to the serpent...."[6] Cassuto believes that the description "beast of the field" attributed to the serpent is proof that it was only a symbol and the entire story is allegory. The special cunning ascribed to the serpent is merely an allusion to the craftiness found in man.[7]

Benno Jacob also understands the narrative as allegory. He states that the Serpent is neither the Devil, nor the personification of evil. However, he argues that no better animal could have been chosen. The serpent is imperceptible, torturous, twisting, and the image of crookedness, "... harmless yet equipped with a terrible weapon...."[8] One need not assume ethical allegory, says Jacob, the serpent may be taken concretely.

Here Jacob alludes to the Christian concept of sin which is inextricably linked with the serpent and Eden.

Man and woman, created in the image of God exist on a level above that occupied by the animals. The serpent is the animal world's representative sent to topple man from his lofty position. "The fact that the serpent speaks, only serves to put the seduction into words. The greedy thoughts of man are put into the mouth of an animal as they come from the beast in man."[9]

B. In Rabbinic Commentaries

Ibn Ezra writes: "In my opinion, the serpent spoke and walked upright, and He who endows man with knowledge endowed him too. The verse testifies that he was more subtle than all the beasts of the field, but not like man."[10] Although Ibn Ezra here subscribes to a rather liberal interpretation of the text, he does allude to the allegorical nature of the entire passage. He implies that there is a hidden meaning to the story and states that the knowledge acquired through the fruit is sexual knowledge.

Ramban in his comment on Genesis 2:9 cites Sanhedrin 108a: "Three stated the truth and perished: the serpent, the spies, and Doeg the Edomite." Ramban holds the opinion that the serpent was a sagacious creature who related to woman the reality of the situation.[11] Rashi, on the other hand, views the serpent as the ultimate enticer. His view is more in keeping with a tradition which sees the serpent as the personification of evil. The serpent is the ultimate seducer and as such, this wily purveyor of insinuation

exaggerated the truth and trapped his victim: "... the words of the serpent appealed to her and pleased her that she believed him."[12]

Conclusion

Both modern scholars and the Rabbis understand this passage as allegory and both have come to interpret the figure of the serpent as a metaphor representing evil. However, Skinner noted that for the biblical author, who adopted a pagan myth to suit his needs, the serpent was not evil incarnate but a purveyor of the truth which had been withheld from man. (The notion of the serpent as the Satan's mouth-piece comes into Jewish thought with wisdom literature - long after the composition of this narrative.) Ramban, in his explication of the serpent, also describes it as a creature of God who stated the truth. Ramban, like Skinner and other moderns, suggests that the serpent is something other than an evil force; he is a manipulator as the word עָרוּם indicates.

15. THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE & THE TREE OF LIFE

A. In Modern Scholarship

The major problem investigated by modern scholarship is the nature of the knowledge ingested by first man and woman. In the course of analyzing this section, some modern scholars have questioned whether the Eden narrative constitutes a single authored literary unit or whether it bears the markings of a composite narrative. Skinner argues that the narrative does not constitute a literary unit. Brichto and Speiser, on the other hand, view the narrative as a whole unit, all components forming a tightly structural and consistent story.

Skinner holds the opinion that the Eden interlude bears the markings of multiple sources.[1] A major difficulty in this section, according to his understanding, centers around th tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. (Genesis 2:9b) In verse 9 we read that these two trees grew in close proximity to each other. In verse 17 mention is made only of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The story now centers around this tree and the divine proscription placed on man concerning it. This tree of the knowledge of good and evil becomes the test for man's obedience to God. With the exception of 3:22,24 the tree of life is not mentioned again. "The tree of life plays no part in the story except in 3:22,24 and its sudden introduction there only creates fresh embarrassment; for if this tree also

was forbidden, the writer's silence about it in 2:17, 3:3 is inexplicable; and if it was not forbidden, can we suppose that in the author's intention the boon of immortality was placed freely within man's reach during the period of his prohibition?"[2] Skinner concludes that the tree of life is irrelevant to the main thrust of the story; for when the tree of life again appears in the narrative the redactor's hand and dual authorship become immediately apparent.[3] Skinner suggests that although 3:22,24 "clearly hangs together; 3:20, 21 are as clearly out of their proper position; hence 23 may have been the original continuation of 19, to which it forms natural sequel."[4] Based on this, Skinner concludes that the tree of life is not a part of the main narrative.[5]

Some modern scholars, Brichto, Speiser and Cassuto, stand in opposition to the argument voiced by Skinner and see this narrative not as a poorly edited piecemeal account, but a supremely subtle and sophisticated narrative which constitutes a well structured literary unit. Dillman writes that to assume the tree of life as merely a secondary addition, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil being originally the only tree mentioned specifically, "robs the narrative of one of its most essential thoughts, namely that in the garden of God... there awaited man the blessing of enduring life...."[6] The argument put forth by those who support this idea may be summarized as follows: Genesis 2:9 reports that in the center of the garden two unique trees grew; the fruit of the first

gives continued longevity, the fruit of the second provided the "knowledge of good and evil." The tree of life does not come into play again in the Eden narrative until the end of the story 3:22,24. Genesis 2:17 mentions only the tree of knowledge of good and evil -- this is the tree which now becomes central to the story. God warns man not to eat from the fruit produced by the tree of knowledge of good and evil -- under penalty of death. The text implies that man was free to eat the fruit from the tree of life, since no proscription was placed on it. Thus, we may assume that man had access to this source of immortality. Cassuto writes that the meaning of 2:17 must be arrived at with the above idea in mind: "when you eat of the tree of knowledge it shall be decreed against you never to be able to eat of the tree of life, that is, you will be unable to achieve eternal life and you will be compelled one day to succumb to death; you shall die, in actual fact."[7] The continuing narrative describes how first man and woman break the Divine injunction concerning the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Once the punishment is decreed and banishment is certain Genesis 3:22,24 becomes intelligible. They no longer have access to the tree which insures eternal life. In the last two verses of chapter three, clear and poignant contrast is made between Adam and Eve's original status and the status in which they now exist.

All modern scholars that have been cited, recognize the

mythological parallels employed by the J author. The magic tree(s), the serpent, the utopian garden, the acquisition of sexual knowledge are all elements of pagan narratives extent prior to Genesis. Speiser points out that all of these motifs are found jointly in a single passage of the Gilgamesh Epic.[8] The story tells of Enkidu's seduction and his consequent repudiation by the world J nature: "...but he now had wisdom, broader understanding... you are wise Enkidu, you are like a god." Thereupon he receives clothing as a sign of his newly achieved status. Speiser writes that to dismiss so much corresponding detail as mere coincidence is foolish. Recognizing these common elements is important because in the opinion of some modern scholars, Skinner, Brichto, and Speiser, the Genesis narrative cannot be fully understood and appreciated unless it is read against its pagan counterpart.[9] "Gilgamesh, whose central question is "why must man die... the gods, selfish and arbitrary kept life for themselves, death to man alloting. This...is the central question to which the genius of J addresses itself. If God is good, if God cares, why death --- the ultimate evil?"[10]

Although the majority of scholars reviewed, believe that sexual knowledge was gained by man when the fruit was eaten, Skinner and Driver both suggested that the Eden story depicts man's first encounter with the feeedom of choice. To be sure, his initial exposure to this freedom comes as the

result of the cunning manipulations of the serpent. (The serpent is the agent responsible for abruptly catapulting man from the tranquility of the garden.) The ability to distinguish between good and evil and the power to exercise choice is what man gains when he bites into the fruit. Brichto writes: "The freedom of man to choose is the sine qua non condition of man's supreme dignity, of his becoming in Deity's own words, 'one of us'."[11] Benno Jacob writes: "First man reaches this knowledge by his experience with the prohibition. As he trespasses, he will afterwards know that he has chosen 'the evil' and will recognize the difference from 'the good'... The tree is a touchstone for the distinction between the prohibited and the permitted, between good and evil, life and death... Man is given the prohibition that he may know he is not God...."[12] Speiser's statement that J has evoked the childhood of mankind now becomes even clearer.[13]

The Eden narrative, for Speiser, Brichto, Jacob, Skinner and others is the biblical author's attempt at presenting the childhood of humankind. It stands as a metaphor embracing the development of human beings from the inquisitive childlike state to the budding of maturity.

B. In Rabbinic Scholarship

For the majority of Rabbinic scholars, as with the moderns, the acquisition of sexual knowledge constitutes the main point of the Eden narrative. Rashi, Ibn Ezra, and Radah all offer this as their explanation.

Rashi writes, "... the couple did not understand the meaning of modesty until the evil inclination became an active principle with them...."[14] Ibn Ezra points out that Adam was fully intelligent,"for would God command one without intelligence? Only the knowledge of good and evil (sex) was missing."[15] Radak posits that the fruit was an aphrodisiac causing those who tasted it to desire sexual intercourse.

Ramban stands in opposition to his collegues' opinion. He argues that sexual knowledge was not gained as a result of eating the fruit. The "Elohim,"he argues, have no sexual passions. (Ramban interprets the statement "and you will be like Elohim knowing good and evil" in the same way Radak does; here Elohim means angels.) He writes that the proper interpretation appears to be that man's original nature was such that he did whatever was proper for him to do naturally: "Now at that time sexual intercourse between Adam and his wife was not a matter of desire; instead, at the time of begetting offspring they came together and propagated. If first man had no sexual knowledge, the command to 'be fruitful and multiply' which had already been issued makes no

sense. Therefore all the organs were in their eyes as the face and hands, and they were not ashamed of them. But after he ate of the fruit... he posed the power of choice; he could now willingly do evil or good to himself or to others. This... is a godlike attribute."[16]

Ramban, in his comment to verse 22, anticipates the interpretation by Dillmann and Cassuto. There Ramban suggests that Adam and Eve were forced to leave the garden so as not to have any approach whatsoever to the tree of life. Ramban argues that if Adam and Eve did eat the fruit of life, they would be able to nullify God's decree of death and restore themselves to their original position of immortality. Knowledge of choice and immortality made first man and woman like "one of us", therefore, to prevent them from becoming like divine beings, they were banished from Eden.

Conclusion

The rabbinic commentators not only detected the specific problems in the text but anticipated the solutions espoused by the moderns. Ramban in his explication of the Eden story presents the text as a complete and tightly structured unit, with all the necessary details being given. This approach not only explains why the tree of life is mentioned only at the beginning and the end of the story, but also underscores how subtle the narrative is. It is clear that the Rabbis not only recognized the major difficulties in this section, but present solutions which are as sound and well founded as

those offered by modern scholars. Neither approach is inherently better than the other. Both schools define the problems and deal with them adequately.

16. THE PROBLEM OF "CURSE"

Genesis 3:14,17 אָרוּר

It is the opinion of some modern scholars that the English "curse" does not accurately describe the punishment meted out to the serpent for its actions in Eden. Such common translations as "... thou art cursed above all..." (KJV) or "... most cursed of..." (American Translation) merely cloud the issue and add to the uncertainty. What is implicit in these translations is the assumption that all the animals had been cursed, and the snake, was the most cursed of them all.[1] It must be noted that the biblical text at no time reports of such a curse being directed against all animals. Brichto points out that the biblical narrative does indeed cite a distinction between the snake and the rest of the animal kingdom:[2] "Whereas all other species have legs for locomotion and feed on vegetation, the serpent is deprived of his limbs and sentenced to eat earth."[3] Speiser notes that the presence of the preposition מִן (here and in verse 17) makes the above understanding totally out of place: "cursed from the ground" only serves to misdirect."[4] The basic meaning of אָרוּר, in Speiser's opinion is, "to restrain by magic, bind by a spell."[5] When אָרוּר is taken with the preposition מִן the verb takes on the meaning "to anathematize, ban."[6] Thus the meaning of the Hebrew is "you are banned from animals." This same notion holds true for אָרוּר in verse 17 also.

Speiser argues that the meaning here is "condemned: "ארור is the earth on account of you."[7] Brichto writes: "Precisely speaking, the earth cannot... be banned... it certainly is not 'cursed'. The only sense which can apply to the term ארור ... is 'to lie under a spell or ban.'"[8] The soil was placed under a spell, it would not respond to man's attempts at cultivation. Man was barred by reason of this "hex", from enjoying the earth's fertility.[9]

B. In Rabbinic Commentaries

The rabbis, not having the advantage of comparative Semitics understood verse 14 in a rather literal manner. Both Rashi and Ramban cite Bekoroth 8a which relates that the gestation period for snakes was seven years. "If it was cursed more than the cattle whose period of gestation is longer than that of beasts does it not necessarily follow that it was cursed more than the beasts?"

The same method holds true for the rabbinic understanding of verse 17. The ground, according to the rabbis, is a recipient of the curse. Ibn Ezra writes that the curse may be seen in the fact that the ground will not produce a great yield and, "in toil you will eat its produce."[10]

It appears that Rashi sees a difficulty in this verse. In his response to verse 17 he attempts to explain why the earth should be cursed as well as attempting to define what the curse was: "It will produce for you cursed objects such

as flies, fleas and ants; it may be compared to the case of one who gets into depraved ways, and people curse the breasts at which he was suckled."[11] Since Scripture reported that man came from the ground, the earth, at least for Rashi, shares in the punishment.

Conclusion

With regard to the problem of "curse", it appears that modern scholarship has, in this case, a superior awareness of and solution to the problem. The important point is, nonetheless, that the Rabbis did respond to the problem.

17. CAIN

A. In Modern Scholarship

In chapter four we are confronted with the problems of genealogy; specifically, the Cainite genealogy and the fragmented Selhite genealogy. They are presented by the biblical author as a consecutive hsitory of antediluvian mankind. However, according to Skinner and others, the chapter is a composite and the superficial continuity conceals a series of critical problems.

Skinner points our that there is an obvious incongruity between the Cain who is condemned to lead the life of a fugitive, eviled and unsettled, and the Cain on the genealogy which has him a builder of cities, thus practicing a stable life style.[1] Skinner, and others, suggest that the Cain of 4:1-16 attempts to depict the Hebrew attitude toward nomadism: "The narrative embodies the old Hebrew conception of the lawlessness of nomadic life, where only the bloodfued prevents the wanderer from falling victim to the first man he meets."[2] The Kenite hypothesis is an attempt at explaining the difference in approaches to the Cain narrative. Skinner, Brichto, and others feel undue importance is placed on this notion. However, it represents an attempt to understanding the basic nature of the narrative.

The Kenite hypothesis is the theory which asserts that the original purpose of the Cain and Abel story was to explain the

causes underlying the destiny and mode of life of the Kenite tribe. Basically, the theory is as follows: Cain is not an individual, but rather represents the tribe designated by the name Kenite. This name appears in several passages: Genesis 15:19, Numbers 24:21, Exodus 2:16-21, 18:1 and more. Kenities were nomads who roamed the Negev and earned a living, as their name indicates, through metal working.[4] It would appear that this tribe was relatively weak because at times it is associated with Israel and at other times with Asmalik or Midian; thus indicating its inability to maintain independence.[5] The Story of Cain and Abel, according to this notion, reflects the contempt of the cultivators of the soil, or of the aristocratic cattle owners for this tribe of wandering smiths.[6] According to the Kenite hypothesis the story attempts to explain the lowly status of this people as a result of the curse placed upon its progenitor as a result of an atrocity he had committed. The apotropaic symbol (Genesis 4:15) is unique to the entire tribe of Kenites and obligates all the clansmen to avenge the blood of any of their brethren who may be killed.[7]

Skinner, Speiser, and Cassuto all point out that, קָנָה and קָנַן, the two cognate stems represent two divergent developments from one archaic root. Both Cassuto and Skinner believe the ancient Hebrew author did not grasp the fine linguistic distinction and viewed them both as the same stem.[8] As a result, the verse has traditionally been understood as either: 1) to acquire; 2) to create, to produce, to bear;

exhibiting the two possible connotations of the stem קנה.[9] Skinner prefers the rendering of "to acquire" in this context. However, when taken in conjunction with the last two words of the sentence, את יהוה , a forced construction is produced.[10]

As regards the problem of את in the b part of verse 1, Skinner and Cassuto offer the following solutions: a) It may be assumed that the text as we have it is in error; the text having once read מאת יהוה. b) The Text may be rendered as "with the help of God". c) I is possible to understand את as the sign of the accusative. Thus Eve would have given birth to the Divine seed mentioned in 3:15.[11] Skinner is quick to point out that this third option is nothing but "antiquated dogmatic exegesis."[12]

The second meaning of קנה,"to create"--"to bear" provides a perfectly natural construction.[13] There are several places in Ugaritic literature, Cassuto notes, where this Semitic stem has the same force.[14] Skinner points out that the language used here by the J author may reflect an older Babylonian myth which tells of man's creation as the result of the union of a creator deity and the supreme deity.[15] The Babylonian text reads: Aruru, together with him (Marduk) created the seed of mankind."[16]

Speiser, although recognizing the relationship of קנה with its Semitic cognates, believes the use here in 4:1 to be another example of sound symbolism so often employed by the

biblical author.[17] Speiser further notes, in Akkadian literature, it is not uncommon to find the element "with" affixed to personal names.[18]

It should be noted that some scholars see in this narrative the historic conflict between farmer and husbandman.[19] In response to this we quote H. C. Brichto:

> ....to root the story in such a conflict is to impute to the biblical author the assumption that the Deity either favored the pastoral way of life over the agricultural or vegetable offerings over animal sacrifice; in which case one is left with the anomaly that God tolerates the annihilation of the favored shepherd at the hands of the aggressor agriculturist who, in turn, is apparently driven to nomadism--to the resultant destruction of both ways of life. That the husbandman turned noman-outcast then becomes the city-founder culture hero (v. 17) is an incongruity hardly eased by such an interpretation.[20]

All the rabbinic commentators; Rashi, Ramban, Ibn Ezra, and Radak, note the linguistic relationship of קָנִיתִי to קָנִיתִי. Of the four, Ibn Ezra and Ramban apply the meaning of "acquire" to the verb and explains: "The correct interpretation appears to me to be that she said: 'This son will be for me an acquisition for the Eternal, for when we shall die he will exist in our stead to worship his Creator.'"[21] Ibn Ezra sees this same reference to the continuation of the species in his comment also. All the rabbinic commentators understand אֵת יְהוָה as if it read "with the help of God."[22]

Conclusion

Although modern scholarship has attempted to explain the Cain epic as the history of a tribe called the Kenites, and modern scholarship has underscored the mythological elements contributing to the Hebrew narrative, as well as highlighting the common linguistic elements shared by Semitic languages, it does not in any significant or conclusive way, better explain the problems in Genesis 4:1 then do the Rabbis. To be sure, the Rabbis do not approach the text with the same breadth as do the moderns, nevertheless, they are as discerning and as critical as the moderns.

18. GENESIS 4:3-7: THE NATURE OF CAIN'S CRIME

A. In Modern Scholarship

Scholars have debated at length as to why Cain's sacrifices finds no favor with God. The biblical passage, consisting of Genesis 4:3-7, provides little if any real information which sheds light on this problem. Due to the paucity of evidence regarding this matter, scholars have asked questions which attempt to reconstruct the narrative based on what the biblical text applies. Did Cain actually do something wrong so as to offend Deity, or was the Divine rejection an act of capriciousness? Some modern scholars, Skinner, Cassuto and others, find the answer to the question, what did Cain do/or not do in the difference between verses 3 and 4: "In the course of time Cain brought an offering to Yahweh of the fruit of the soil For his part, Abel brought the finest of the firstlings of his flock."[1] The fact that Scripture speaks of Abel's offering as "the finest of the firstlings" and states only that Cain brought "fruit of the ground," provides the scholars with sufficient evidence to deduce that Cain's sacrifice was of poorer quality than that of his brother. He did not go out of his way to select the best of his personal possessions.

Although some scholars find this to be an adequate resolution to the problem, there are other modern scholars who suggest that the text reveals a subtle difference not in the quality of the sacrifice but in the petitioners' attitude.

Skinner argues that Cain's offering is analogous to the "first-fruits (בכורים) and it is arbitrary to suppose that his fault lay in not selecting the choicest of harvest.[2] Cassuto expresses the idea of the existing attitudinal differences this way: "... it must be noted that although there is a distinction, there is no contrast. Apparently the Bible wished to convey that whilst Abel was concerned to choose the finest thing in his possession, Cain was indifferent. In other words: Abel endeavored to perform his religious duties ideally, whereas Cain was content merely to discharge this duty."[3]

The plot of the story now thickens when God tells the crestfallen Cain that he himself has the power to amelliorate the situation. Cain can change his attitude, "he is free to make amends and achieve restoration and favor; he is warned, however, that his freedom of will makes him vulnerable to the demonic temptation of wrongdoing."[4] Thus the implication behind verse 7: "Surely, if you act right, it should mean exaltation. But, if you do not, sin is the demon at the door, whose urge is toward you; yet you can be his master."[5]

Verse 7 has been an enigma for centuries. The Talmud Yoma 52a-b classifies it as one of several biblical verses that have defied explanation because of the doubt in regard to the syntactic relationship of the word שאת . Speiser, whose translation we cited above, has provided an elucidating explanation to the problem of syntax and com-

prehension of verse 7. Speiser notes that חטאת רבץ has generally been interpreted as "sin couches" in spite of the feminine form which would normally require a predicate whose ending is also feminine. Speiser rejects the idea of dittography on the basis that the two possessive suffixes in the sequel should likewise have feminine endings: "The only way that the present reading can be grammatically correct is in a predicative phrase: 'sin is a rbṣ,' with the following possessives referring to rbṣ, a masculine form."[6]

Although rbṣ in Hebrew has the meaning "to couch", its Akkadian cognate is a term for demon.[7] Speiser reports that these demons, according to legends, often hid in doorways and went lurking at entrances of buildings seeking benevolent as well as malevolent ends. Thus, concludes Speiser, it is the rbṣ whose "urge" is toward Cain.[8] "The abstract infinitive שאת ... is in purposeful (and long assumed) contrast to the fallen countenance in the preceeding verse. The whole would then be a 'wisdom motif' suitably applied to the case in question. The consonantal text... is well attested... The ultimate culprit was apparently the above robēṣ, a malevolent demon in more ways than one."[9]

B. In Rabbinic Commentary

Rashi and Radak, responding to the problem of the nature of Cain's offense state that Cain angered God by nor presenting Deity with a sacrifice taken from the finest produce. Indeed, Rashi tells us that Cain offered nothing more than linseed which Rashi considers to be "the worst of fruits."[10]

Responding to the grammatical problems surrounding the term שאת found in Genesis 4:7, Ibn Ezra writes that although many commentators assume that שאת carries with it the meaning, "your sins will be forgiven:" "in my opinion, it means lifting up one's face, for it is written previously, 'and his face fell,' which expresses shame."[11] Ibn Ezra understands the verse in question in much the same way as Speiser. Ramban sees this narrative as a Divine warning to Cain prior to his crime. It is deity's attempt at cautioning man to the potential of evil which lurks continually ready to overtake man. Man, in this case Cain, has the freedom to succumb or defeat temptation: "... if you so desire... you may mend your ways and remove it from you. Thus He taught Cain concerning repentance, that it lies within his power to return anytime... and He will forgive him."[12]

Conclusion

It is evident that the Rabbis were as sensitive to the problem of Cain's crime as are the moderns. They, as do the modern scholars, clearly demonstrate that the Deity did not act out of caprice, but (in keeping with the Eden narrative)

gave Cain the opportunity to exercise the newly acquired freedom of choice. In the Rabbis response we also find the rabbinic attitude toward sacrifice: sacrifices are acceptable only if an acceptable spirit accompanies them.

As regards the problem of verse 7, modern scholarship, utilizing the tool of comparative Semitics has solved what was thought to have been an insoluble problem. However, in spite of the unscrambling, the moderns do not show a greater understanding of the essential problem then do the Rabbis.

19. THE MARK OF CAIN: GENESIS 4:13-16

A. In Modern Scholarship

As has been noted, chapter 4 of Genesis contains a multiplicity of textual difficulties. To the problems already discussed we may add the sign of Cain and its function; Genesis 13-16.

Skinner, Stade, Dillmann, and others see the hand of the redactor(s) in this paragraph. The biblical author utilized portions of ancient epics shaping and molding them to fit his purpose: "Evidently in Genesis 4, these old stories are not told for their own sake. The incompleteness and the difficulties left unsolved (verses 14, 16f), which subsequently the inventive Haggadic writers sought... to overcome by additions, do not allow this assumption to be made. They form simply the material foundation, to which higher ideas and doctrines are attached."[1] Skinner believes that in the last part of this paragraph, Cain no longer represents an individual but becomes the historical ancestor of a particular clan.[2] Verse 14 presupposes that the earth is, to some degree, populated, and the clause כל הרג קין, notes Skinner, has frequentative force.[3] The implication being that the act might be repeated many times on members of this "tribe of Kayin."[4] It is worth noting that Dillmann believes this portion of the narrative to be out of place: "as it was originally conceived, (it) was not intended to be placed so far forward at the head of human history."[5]

It is the opinion of other scholars, Cassuto, Brichto, and others, that the J author sees Cain as the last remaining heir of the first couple. If he dies so ends the human race. The punishment has been decreed, he is to be an endless wanderer banned from the protection of society.[6] God does not want the Divine punishment usurped by blood revenge, thus he grants Cain's petition and provides protection against the avengers. The apotropaic mark serves as a warning to those who would slay him and is the mark of his protection given by God.[7] What that sign is, is not related to us. Dillmann and Speiser believe it to be something constantly accompanying him and therefore attached to his person.[8] Others believe the sign to be a tribal mark. Such an emblem was worn by all members of a specific clan, usually on his person (presumably a tattoo of sorts) and without which the ancient form of blood - revenge could not have been carried out. This idea is countered by Dillmann, at least with regard to Cain: "... Cain's sign was not intended to mark him as a murderer, but to serve as his protection from murder."[10]

B. In Rabbinic Literature

Rashi is aware of the difficulty surrounding verse 15; though his comment responds to the problem of who is there on earth to kill Cain. The potential avengers, according to Rashi, are the beasts of the field: "Whoever will find

me will slay me: this refers to cattle and beasts since there were then no human beings in the world of whom he might be afraid except his father and mother, and, of course, he did not fear that they would slay him... because of my sin the animals will no longer fear and will kill me. God immediately set a sign for Cain. He again made the animals be in fear of him." Rashi, it should be noted, believes that this mark was for the purpose of protection and that it was a physical sign: "He inscribed on his forehead a letter of his Divine name." Rashi understands the first part of verse 15 as an incomplete statement: If anyone kills Cain: "expresses a threat, suggesting a consequence... "but the text does not provide the specific details."[11]

Conclusion

It appears that modern scholarship has a better overall handle on Genesis 4:1-16. Aided by comparative Semitics, archeology, and form analysis, modern scholarship has more convincingly explained the difficulties contained in this paragraph. This is not to say that the Rabbis were unaware of the problems; for they were indeed aware of them. However in this instance, modern scholarship has been successful in clearing up many of the difficulties left unsolved by the Rabbis.

20. GENESIS 4:17-26: PROBLEM OF GENEALOGY

A. In Modern Scholarship

All modern exegetes agree that Genesis 4:17-26 is a highly problematic section. The reader is introduced to Cain's descendent (17-24) and then beginning in verse 25, we are provided with the beginnings of a Sethite genealogy. The Sethite genealogy is then listed in much fuller detail in chapter five. Modern scholars believe the duplication of names in the Cainite and Sethite genealogies indicate two separate traditions that ultimately were derived from the same very ancient source.[1] Speiser believes that the departures may have been the result of a long period of oral transmission. Dillmann writes that the similarity in the six middle names of the respective genealogies is no accident. He suggests that the narrative before us is an attempt at explaining the origin of the most important human occupation: "The notices about the first city, about polygamy, about tent and pastoral life, about smith work and music (verses 17, 19-22) point decidedly to such a construction of the cycle of legend from which chapter 4:17ff was drawn".[2] Dillmann offers as supporting evidence for this position, a Phoenician legend in which various occupations were linked with a series of the oldest generations of gods and men.[3] Dillmann also cites a Babylonian myth which relates that the ten ante-diluvian rulers taught the rest of humanity their science, religion and civil ordinances.[4]

Speiser believes that the genealogy of chapter five is representative of the P author, while the paragraph before us (4:17-26) represents the J author. Speiser contends that the J writer, "perhaps unconsciously," telescoped the lines of Cain and Seth.[5] He too, cites the similarities with the Mesopotamian traditions pertaining to the ante-diluvians and concludes that the genealogies before they reached the Hebrew source "had gone through a secondary center of dissemination, where they were transformed in accordance with local needs and conditions...."[6] Speiser mentioned that the Biblical author sought to bridge the gap between Adam and Noah with this information; the details following the birth announcements, (the cultural details) were merely incidental.[7] "While the Cainite line is singled out here as the vehicle for mankind's technological progress, it is evident that the account was not conceived as a summary of cultrual achievements. It is derivative in every respect, repeating what tradition managed to hand down. And since some of the sources go back to the third millennium B.C., the scientific prespective is often archaic."[8]

Grammatical Problems Found in 4:17-26

To this point, we have been dealing with themeatic problems found in the Genesis narrative. Now let us turn our attention to grammatical difficulties contained in chapter 4:17-26. Verse 17b of chapter 4 reads: ויהי בנה עיר
ויקרא שם העיר כשם בנו חנוך׃

Scholars have long been puzzled as to who exactly is the subject of the verb ויהי The biblical narrator does not make clear who this city builder is: Cain or Enoch. Usually in biblical Hebrew, the subject can be determined by position; the subject being the most recently mentioned noun or pronoun after the verb, which in this case is Enoch.[9] Thus Enoch and not Cain would be the first city builder. If this be the case, the first city would be named after Enoch's son Irad. Some modern critics, Cassuto, Hallo, Wilson, and others, find a striking similarity between Irad and the antediluvian city of Eridu.[10] Robert Wilson, in his excellent discussion of the problems posed by biblical genealogies, Genealogy and History in the Biblical World, points out, that to assign a second occupation to Cain, that of city builder "seems a bit strange."[11] Skinner and others suggest that the presence of Enoch's name at the end of verse 17 is a gloss. This, argues Skinner, removes the problem of Cain being both first farmer and first builder and, "it satisfied a natural expectation that after the mention of Enoch we should hear what he became, not what his father became after his birth...."[12] But, the difficulty and major objection with assuming the presence of Enoch to be a gloss, is not that the first city was built by a murderer, but that it was built by someone condemned to be an endless wanderer.[13]

Speiser, Skinner, Cassuto, Wilson and others agree that

the Song of the Sword, (23f.) finds its way into the narrative by virtue of its containing the names of Cain, Adeh, and Zillah.[14] Wilson notes that the archaic poetic form of the song indicates its antiquity.[15] This, taken with the fact that it interrupts J's genealogical narrative indicates to some of these scholars that the passage existed in a form outside the biblical narrative and was used by the Redactor as a linking element. It is important to point out Speiser's comment on Genesis 4:25. He notes that the Hebrew כי appears here in two of its several connotations. The first use has an explanatory "for:" "it explains the personal name in question, but is not itself part of the gloss...."[16] This corresponds to its use in verse 23 where it functions much like a colon.[17] Its use in verse twenty-five however, is an emphatic "because." Speiser says that this use supplements תחת . Thus the phrase may be rendered: "in place of Abel, since Cain killed him."[18]

Genesis 4:26 poses, as Speiser says, an acute problem: "it was then that the name YHVH began to be envoked." Immediately one must pit this against the statement found in Exodus 6:3 and 3:14. It also seems to contradict Genesis 4:4, which implies that Cain and Abel worshipped YHVH.[19] Wilson suggests that this statement appended to preceeding verses of the Cainite genealogy.[20] Although some scholars have tried to solve the problem by attributing this section to the P author, Speiser, Wilson and others agree that this is the

conclusion of J's Sethite genealogy.[21]

B. In Rabbinic Commentaries

Rashi obviously feels the ambiguity in verse 17b for in his comment he defines the subject of the verb Rashi holds the opinion that Cain is the subject and states emphatically: "not Enoch."[22] Ramban, likewise, sees Cain as the first city builder. Ramban in his comment on verse 17 attempts to deal with the problem of Cain being doomed to wander and the fact that here the text reports him building a city: "But because he himself was cursed and his works would not prosper, he called the city 'Enoch', thus proclaiming that he did not build it for himself since he has no city or dwelling place in the land because he was a fugitive and wanderer; rather, the building would be for Enoch, and it is as if Enoch had built if for himself."[23]

Ramban, here, also comments on the difference between Cain's descendant and Seth's genealogy found in chapter 5. In his comment, Ramban makes a special point of Seth being Adam's third son. This seems to be in response to the fact that Cain and Abel are not mentioed in the genealogy of chapter five. As to the difference in the number of generations which one mentioned, Ramban notes: "it would appear that Cain's descendants consisted of only six generations until the flood, while among the descendants of 'Seth', the third son of Adam, there were an additional two generations before the flood. It may be that Cain's de-

scendents consisted of more than six generations before the flood, but Scripture had no need to relate anything concerning them. It recorded only the names of those who began the buildings of cities, the grazing of sheep, the art of music, and the skill of working with metals."[24] Ramban not only recognizes a problem with the genealogies, but attempts to explain it in a most rational and plausible way.

As regards to problem of Genesis 4:26 it is interesting to note that Ramban chose not to comment. Rashi and Ibn Ezra, on the other hand, do attempt explanations. Both Rashi and Ibn Ezra are aware that 22 verses earlier Scripture reports of Cain and Abel's sacrifices to YHVH, yet here the same Scripture notes that only in the time of Seth did humanity begin calling on YHVH. Rashi, following the pattern established by Onkelos, states that חוחל is related to the vern חלל to profane, to desecrate. Rashi explains that people were "calling the names of men and the names of idols after the names of the Holy One... making them the object of idolatous worship and calling them Deities."[25]

Ibn Ezra does not expect the midrashic interpretation offered by Rashi. He rejects Rashi's explanation on grammatical grounds and states that the word in question is related to the Hebrew תחלה "meaning that they began to pray." If it were related to חלול God's name would be next to the word"[26]

Conclusion

It is clear that modern scholarship has a better overall understanding of the problems contained in this section. The application of source criticism and analysis presents us, at least in this instance, with a very plausible solution to these difficult problems. It must be noted, however, that the Rabbis are sensitive to the textual ambiguities as was shown in the above citations, and, in this case also they do demonstrate their critical acumen.

21. CONTINUING PROBLEMS OF GENEALOGY; GENESIS 5

A. In Modern Scholarship

Chapter five of Genesis is the Priestly author's attempt at tracing the line of humanity from Adam to Noah; the opening... זה ספר תולדות is a characteristic of the P author. We noted earlier that the similarities existing between the two accounts is indicative of a common source which Speiser and others believe to be Mesopotamian.[1] Both J and P attempt to connect the last named person in the genealogy with the earliest ancestor, by so doing the last entry establishes his power and status.[2] Wilson holds the opinion that the view of mankind presented by the P author is at variance with the view of the J author.[3] We paraphrase Wilson's argument: The genealogy of P begins with the creation of humanity. Man is commanded to be fruitful and multiply, by exercising his creative powers man is likened to Deity. Man's fulfillment of the command is stated in 5:3 which tells us that Adam fathered a son in his own image, after his likeness.[4] The language of this entire section echoes that used in P's creation epic. "In the process of exercising his procreative powers, Adam genealogically transmits the divine image and the blessing to his son. The entire linear genealogy thus deals with the transmission of the divine image and the blessing through a series of first born sons. The genealogy thus has a theological function."[5]

Thus, according to the P author, at least a portion of

early mankind was blessed from the beginning.[6] The J author, in contrast, represents the growth and development of the antediluvian generations as the history of the development of sin and evil in human society. Wilson concludes that this difference in approach to the human condition is the reason not only for the similarities in the two narratives, but accounts also for the differences.

When the Priestly writer outlined the transmission of the divine image and blessing from Adam to Noah, the J author's position offered three possibilities.[7] First: the blessing could have been passed onto and continued through Abel. However, his death made it impossible. Second: The blessing could have been traced through Cain, the firstborn of Man. "This option was rejected for theological reasons, for J clearly connects the Cainite line with the growth of evil. According to J, Cain is cursed and this fact discouraged P from tracing the blessing through him."[8] Seth is, for P, the only possible and acceptable candidate to receive the blessing and transmit it. "The Priestly Writer therefore added his genealogical material to the brief Sethite genealogy found in 4:25-26. Because P was interested only in the line through which the blessing was transmitted, he omitted names not connected with that line, and because he viewed the blessing as transmitted through firstborn sons, he was required to portray Seth as Adam's firstborn[9]

Skinner notes that the P author knew nothing of man's fall

and never attempts an explanation of the evil introduced into the world.[10] Skinner questions the theory of a progressive deterioration of the race and notes the salient fact to be that the fall was of little importance to the P writer.[11] It must be mentioned however, that some modern scholars view the name מתושלח (which has been understood as "man of violence") as a varient of the name מתושאל. The name, according to Budde, was manipulated in order to suggest the evil of the later generations before the flood.[12]

Our discussion would be less than complete if we failed to mention the relationship between this chapter and the Sumarian King List. In both the SKL and the Ten Antediluvian Kings mentioned in Berossus the number ten plays a key role. In many mythologies, (Babylonian, Persian, Indian, Egyptian, Chinese)a tradition exists which describes the reign of ten kings who ruled in a mythical age prior to the dawn of history.[13] Although the names of these kings as they appear in Berossus are in no way related to the Babylonian, Skinner notes that similarities in meaning do connect three of the names: 1)אנוש, Man; קינן, workman. Enoch, which is the seventh name in P's list, has been linked to the seventh name on the Babylonian list, recorded by Berossus as Evedoranchus. Most scholars see this as a corruption of Enmeduranki - king of Sippar.[14] "It has long been surmised that the duration of his (Enoch) life (365 years) is connected with the solar year; and the conjecture has been remarkably verified by the Babylonian

parallel...."[15] The Babylonian narrative implies that Enmeduranki enjoyed a special relationship with the sun-god. Skinner notes that Enmeduranki is referred to as "favorite of Anv" and was privy to the mysteries of heaven and was instructed assumedly by the gods, in certain arts of divination which he then transmitted to his sons.[16] Modern scholars have suggested that the Hebrew text suggests this same notion of intimacy through the phrase "walked with God; thus demonstrating yet another correlation between the SKL and Genesis. It is interesting to note that Enoch is represented in apocalyptic literature as the patron of esoteric knowledge.[17] Also, the last name on each list turns out to be the hero of the flood story. "When we have two parallel lists of equal length, each terminating with the hero of the Flood, each having the name for 'man' in the third palce and a special favorite of the gods in the seventh, it is too much to ask us to dismiss the correspondence as fortuitous."[18]

B. In Rabbinic Commentary

Rashi and Ibn Ezra do not comment on the problem of the similarities of names in the genealogy of chapter five. Unlike the rabbis of the Midrash, who take great pains to demonstrate that two names infact refers to one person, the medieval commentators are more concerned with the absence of Cain and Abel from the list in chapter 5. Ramban, Ibn Ezra, and Radak all recognize that Cain and Abel are absent from the genealogy in chapter 5 and explain the omission in a

logical manner. The rabbis assume that Seth was the third son of Adam and humanity traces its history through him because Seth was the only worthy son of Adam. This is Ramban's explanation of "in his own likeness, after his image: It is known that all who are born free from the living are in the likeness and in the image of those who gave birth to them. However, because Adam was elevated in his likeness and image in that Scripture said of him, 'In the likeness of God He made him', Scripture did not state this concerning Cain and Abel for it did not want to prolong the discussion of them."[19]

For some of the Rabbis the extraordinary life spans of the forefathers were a major concern. Tamban attempts to explain this phenomenon as does Radak. Ramban explains that the first human beings lived for hundreds of years; that was the normal life span created by God. Only after the flood did God limit the years a person may live.

The Rabbis are quick to recognize the uniqueness of the phrase "walked with God" in relationship to Enoch. Rashi approaches this phrase via the Midrash and explains that Enoch was righteous but easily led astray. Rashi explains the peculiar phrase, "and he was not, for God took him", by saying that God caused Enoch to leave the earthly realm prematurely so as not to fall prey to the forces of evil.[20] Rashi, citing B.R. 28, attempts an etymological explanation of Noah's name. He connects נֹחַ with the root נחם meaning "he will comfort us". "He will ease from off us the toil of our hands.

For until Noah came, people had no agricultural instruments and he prepared such for them".[21]

Conclusion

The paucity of rabbinic commentary to this chapter leads us to one of the following conclusions: a) The Rabbis saw no major problems in the text and therefore did not comment at great length on this section. b) The problems in this section were so confounding that the Rabbis chose not to comment on them. The second option, (b), is more than likely the case. We have demonstrated that the rabbinic mind is both perceptive and accurate, the Rabbis have real insight into Scripture and the problems contained therein. At times, we have discovered one Rabbi may choose not to deal with a problem (for whatever reason) only to find other commentators responding to that same problem. Therefore, it is my conclusion that the problem posed by the different genealogies was so overwhelming to the rabbis that they chose not to deal with the complexities. That the writings of the Midrash ask questions as to why Scripture makes reference to certain names and then never mentions them again; and the fact that there is an attempt to harmonize certain names in one genealogy with those found in the other, indicates that the Rabbis of the Midrash were not unaware of the problem. In Genesis Rabbah, chapters 25 and 26 (especially), the Rabbis attempt to link the names contained in the genealogies. Although the answers arrived at are all forced, the salient fact re-

mains that the Rabbis of the Midrash were not only aware of the inconsistencies, but quite perplexed by their presence. As to why the medieval commentators do not comment, is a question which goes beyond the scope of this paper. This is not to say that the Rabbis were blind to the textual problems in the respective chapters -- certainly they were not. It is to say, however, that in approach to the similarities and dissimilarities found in chapters 4 and 5 they offer no explanation whatsoever.

22. PRELUDE TO THE FLOOD?

Genesis 6:1-4

The opening paragraph of chapter six, so highly mythological in content and so peculiar to the biblical narrative by virtue of the blatant paganism retained by the author, provides J with his introduction to the Flood story.[1] The problem argued by modern scholars is whether J utilizing a truncated version, a popular myth-cycle, considers this as the background and cause for the flood.[2] Speiser believes that the biblical account has its roots in a Hurrian original which dates back to the middle of the second millennium B.C.E.[3] Here again is another instance where the J author incorporated a well known legend and utilized it as a vehicle for his own purpose. It was not the goal of the biblical author to provide an etiology for the antediluvian titans, but rather to further represent human beings as creatures who continually overstep their boundaries and strive to usurp divine perogatives.[4] This short episode provides the background and establishes the mood for mankind and must be read in conjunction with verses 5-8. The all to near destruction comes as the result of a moral indictment leveled by God against mankind. "It is evident... from the tenor of the Hebrew account that its author is highly critical of the subject matter. It makes little difference whether J took the contents at face value or, as is more likely, viewed the whole as the product of man's morbid imagination. The mere popularity of

of the story would have been sufficient to fill him with horror at the depravity that it reflected. A world that could entertain such notions deserved to be wiped out."[5] It must be noted that Skinner questions whether this passage does indeed form the introduction to the flood. He argues, unlike Speiser and Vawter, that the passage contains nothing to suggest the flood as its sequel. Skinner maintains that although many exegetes view the 120 years of verse three as probationary, the account of the Flood makes no mention of it at all.[6] Skinner concludes that this section 6:1-4 belongs to a stratum of J which knows nothing of a Flood narrative. According to Skinner and others, this further demonstrates that the J tradition was in itself a harmonizing of at least two separate traditions.[7] It must be noted that the figure 120 is used by the biblical author in several places and represents a "round figure."[8]

The term בני אלהים has been the source of problems for biblical exegetes. However, it is clear from the context that the בני אלהים are to be understood as divine beings. Such an understanding is consistent with the goal of the J writer who attempts a moral point through the use of this myth. These divine beings find their way into biblical narrative in several places: Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7, Psalm 89:6 and others. Speiser notes that J uses the phrase in question to distinguish between morals and immortals.[9] Vawter sees verse three as an insert noting that verse four was probably

the original point of the myth.[10] Verse three, which contains the Divine comment on the entire situation, is also a statement of Divine judgement. Skinner maintains that no sin is imputed to mankind or to their daughters as a result of these relations. The guilt rests on the בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים. Skinner views the fact that no charge of "sinning" was made as further proof that J did not use this as a prelude to the Flood.

The term יָדוֹן found in 6:3a provides modern exegetes with a focus for discussion. Speiser translates the term as "to shield" linking it to an Akkadian cognate which means "substitute, surrogate."[11] Cassuto, although recognizing the above mentioned root, argues that the term is related to the Hebrew דָּנַן in the stated sense of to remain, or exist perpetually in a given place.[12] Although it appears only in a secondary conjugation which may be considered a denominative form it is found in a Qal conjugation in Talmudic Aramaic.[13] Cassuto also relates the term in question to the noun which, he says, refers to a jar with a sharp bottom rim that once shoved into the ground will stay permanently.[14] Based on this, Cassuto renders the phrase: "My spirit shall not abide...."

"Since he is but flesh..." is Speiser's translation of the phrase בְּשַׁגַּם הוּא בָשָׂר.[15] Speiser and most modern exegetes with him, agree that the confusing בְּשַׁגַּם is a mispointed shortened form for the Hebrew בַּאֲשֶׁר גַּם הוּא.[16]

Cassuto believes that this form occurs here for poetic and systlistic reasons. It is interesting to note that Wellhausen sees this phrase in contrast to God's : " is the divine substance to YHVH and the angels, in contrast to which is the element proper to human nature."[17] The sexual union between divine beings and humans results in the disorder of creation which the Creator cannot tolerate.

B. In Rabbinic Commentaries

It is not necessary to ask if the Rabbis were conscious of the problems housed in Genesis 6:1-14. They recognized the blatant pagan mythology in this section and responded to all of the problems in a manner which shows just how much consternation this passage caused.

Responding to the question of whether Genesis 6:1-14 serves as a prologue, Ibn Ezra writes that "He gave man a deadline -- just as: 'Yet forty days' (Jonah 3:4) if they would repent, they would escape, but if they would not repent, they would die."[18] Ramban writes: "When Scripture mentioned Noah and his sons and wanted to begin the account of the flood, it said that as soon as men began to multiply they began to sin, and they continued their sinful ways for many years...."[19] Both Ibn Ezra and Ramban note that the dates and ages of Noah and the flood do not correspond. Ibn Ezra writes: "Do not pay attention to the number given in, 'Noah was 500 years old' (Genesis 5:32), for the Torah is not in chronological order."[20] Here the commentators make note of the fact that tradition reports Noah as

being 620 years old at the time of the flood while in Genesis 7:1 it states that Noah was 600 years old.

Rashi likewise sees this section as an account of the happenings of humanity prior to the flood. His comment on verse 3 shows another interesting and sight approach to the text: "My Spirit shall not be in a state of discontent and shall not strive with Myself because of man for a long time. Behold, My Spirit has been contending within Me whether to destroy or whether to show mercy such contending shall not be forever... For 120 years I will be longsuffering with them, and if they repent not I shall bring a flood upon them...."[21] Thus Rashi understand the 120 years as a period of not only probation, but also a period when Deity "thought long and hard" about the impending catastrophe. It must be noted that Rashi also makes mention of the inconsistent chronology. He reminds his readers אין מוקדם ואין מאוחר בתורה.[22] The fact that he views the 120 years as probationary is further substantiated by his comment on Genesis 6:14.

In the above comment penned by Rashi, we find his solution to the problem of ידון רוחי. He relates the term ידון to the Hebrew דין and depicts God entering into a process of self deliberation with Himself. Ibn Ezra supports Rashi's understanding.

As to the problem of בשגם : Rashi, Radak, Ramban, and Ibn Ezra all understand the problem as one of grammar. Although the Rabbis differ in their interpretation of בשגם

they recognize the basic problem: "...Similarly we find עַ for עָ (Judges 5:7) שַׁקַּמְתִּי, where it is the same as שָׁקַמְתִּי."[23]

The problem caused by the term בני אלהים must have been a constant source of embarassment for the Rabbis. They do all they possible can to demythologize this term. Rashi posits that the בני אלהים were sons of princes and rulers; arriving at this conclusion by understanding אלהים as a term meaning authority. Rashi also provides the midrashic interpretations which explains בני אלהים as regal angels who came as messengers from God.[24] Ibn Ezra explains that the term embraces those men who are well versed in the study of atrology: "... they chose for themselves women whose planetary configuration was individually matched to their own, as was their augury, and therefore they issued from them mighty men. It is possible that they took the women even by force."[25]

Conclusion

To be sure, this section is puzzling and controversial to both modern and Rabbinic scholars alike. It must be pointed out that the Rabbis are aware of the major problems and in some instances, they have anticipated the conclusions arrived at by modern scholarship. Modern scholarship does not provide a more insightful approach to these problems than do the Rabbis.

23. THE FLOOD

A. In Modern Scholarship

For those who embrace the Documentary Hypothesis, the Flood narrative (Genesis 6-9) is a veritable cornucopia. Skinner writes that this section provides the critical reader with the first example in Genesis of a truly composite narrative containing clearly recognizable interwoven units.[1] According to the documentary theory, the biblical author utilized a patchwork method preserving many duplications and left unaltered a multiplicity of striking differences in language as well as detail. Little attempt was made to blend facts or harmonize these discrepancies, nor were the accounts of the flood presented in separate but connected versions, as was done with the Creation narratives.

What follows is an outline of the replications and discrepancies found in Genesis 6:5-9 as determined by modern scholarship; the principle duplications are:

1) J:Genesis 6:5 P:Genesis 6:12

In both verses the Deity cites the reprehensible practices of man and declares the end is at hand.

2) J:Genesis 6:7 P:Genesis 6:13

Announcement of impending doom;

3) J:Genesis 7:4 P:Genesis 6:17

Announcement of the flood;

4) J:Genesis 7:1-3 P:Genesis 6:18-20

Permission to enter the ark is given twice;

5) J:Genesis 7:5 P:Genesis 6:22

Noah obeys twice;

6) J:Genesis 7:7 P:Genesis 7:13

Twice, Noah enters the ark;

7) J:Genesis 7:12 P:Genesis 7:11

Two accounts of the waters beginning;

8) J:Genesis 7:17 P:Genesis 7:18ff

Twice the waters increase and support the ark;

9) J:Genesis 7:22 P:Genesis 7:21

All living creatures die;

10) J:Genesis 8:1 P:Genesis 8:3a

The waters begin to decrease;

11) J:Genesis 8:20-22 P:Genesis 9:8-17

God promises no more destruction.

The discrepancies, which according to the documentary approach, reveal the divergent sources as follows:

1) P:Genesis 6:19-20 and 7:15-16; the animals taken aboard the ark are on pair of each species;

J:Genesis 7:2; a distinction is made between the clean (seven pairs) and the unclean (one pair) animals;

2) P: 7:11, 8:2; "the fountains of the great deep burst forth and the slucies in the sky opened;"

J: 7:4,12; 8:2b; the flood is caused by rain;

3) P:Genesis 8:5; the mountains appear;

J:Genesis 8:9; the waters are still covering the earth;

4) P:Genesis 8:14-16; Noah receives permission to leave the ark;

J:Genesis 8:6,13,13b; Noah learns of the floods end as a result of the birds sent out from the ark.

5) P:Genesis 7:24, 8:2a,3b; the flood persists 150 days before the water begins to subside.

J:Genesis 7:4,12; the rain lasts forty days and forty nights; the flood taking a total of sixty one days from beginning to end.

It must be noted that the P document contains elements which neither parallel nor contradict the account of the J author, these passages are: Genesis 6:14-22; details concerning the building of the ark; 7:11; the exact date (according to the P source) of the flood's beginning; Genesis 8:13; the exact date of the flood's end.

For Cassuto and Jacob, two modern exegetes who do not employ the documentary methods, the flood is not a patchwork compilation poorly dewed together, but the last episode in the history of humanity prior to the flood. Cassuto, who by and large, adheres to the classical rabbinic approach to biblical criticism writes "If we examine... the Flood (narrative)... and pay heed to its finished structure... it becomes apparent that the section in its present from cannot possibly be the

outcome of the synthesis of fragments culled from various sources, for from such a process there could not have emerged a work so beautiful and harmonious...."[2] Both Cassuto and Jacob argue that the duplications and discrepancies which modern critical scholarship outlines, comes as a result of the pre-determined position supported by these critics.[3] Cassuto points out that repetition and verbal parallelism was a common feature of the literary style of the ancient Near East. Further he argues that the repetitions were included purposefully demonstrating the principle that whenever the text repeats itself, the repetition comes to teach something new about the subject.[4] We have seen from Rashi's comments on repetitions found in the Creation narrative that this represents the normative rabbinic approach to the problem of biblical repetition. We shall see, in our discussion of some of the specific repetitions and discrepancies, that Cassuto and Jacob take the classical rabbinic approach to the problems of the Flood narrative.

24. REASONS FOR THE FLOOD

A. In Modern Scholarship

Skinner, Speiser, Dillmann, and others who accept the documentary approach to text analysis agree that two separate reasons for the Flood can be found at the beginning of the epic; one penned by the J author, the other, by the P author. The reason as reported by J is found in Genesis 6:5-7:

> 5) When YHVH saw how great was man's wickedness on earth, and how every scheme that his mind devised was nothing but evil all the time 6) YHVH regretted that He had made man on earth, and there was sorrow in his heart. 7) And YHVH said, "I will blot out from the earth the men that I created, man and beast, the creeping things, and the birds of the sky; for I am sorry that I made them.

The J author here provides us with God's reaction to the entire course of human history. This pessimistic description of human conduct is a statement of the moral development of mankind; from the disobedience in Eden to the antics of the sons of gods with the daughters of men.[1]

The P author's explanation for the Flood comes in Genesis 6:1-13.

> 11) The earth was corrupt in the view of God, and it was full of lawlessness. 12) And God saw how corrupt the earth was, for all flesh had corrupted their ways on earth. 13) Then God said to Noah, "I have

> decided to put an end to
> all flesh, for the earth is
> filled with lawlessness because
> of them. So I am about to
> destroy them and the earth.

The divinely appointed order of creation had been violated, if not totally abandoned. The Golden Age of creation where human beings and animals co-existed in harmony, disappeared.[2] The noble idea of the sanctity of life and the sanctity of all living beings, the prominent idea behind creation, was no longer respected. Animals and men were engaged in the act of killing, both themselves and each other: "According to P, initially the restriction to behaviousness rendered any taking of life, for any prupose, illicit. The broad general violation of this norm brought on the flood."[3] This position is underscored in the P document by the fact that the author introduces the taking of life, either for food or sacrifice, only after the Flood, where Deity grants Noah permission to eat flesh: "Every creature that is alive shall be yours to eat; I give them all to you as I did with the grasses of the field." (Genesis 9:3). It is at this point that the P author introduces the possibility of sacrifice into his narrative. This is an excellent example of consistency within separate sources, and further proof of the divergent strata housed under the rubric "Flood Narrative."

Cassuto, who rejects the documentary approach to biblical criticism, sees Genesis 6:5-8 as the conclusion to Genesis 6:1-4 and not one of two separate accounts of the

reasons behind the flood. Applying his theory of literary parallelism he concludes: "...there is no reason to regard it as later interpolation, as do many of the modern expositors, who attribute these verses to source J...."[4] Cassuto, not enamoured of the documentary hypothesis and therefore not obligated to operate within its pre-determined borders, does not find two distinct reasons for the flood. The crime, according to Cassuto, was universal; touching both the kingdoms of man and animal. However, the animal kingdom suffers on account of the actions of man. Cassuto argues that the total disregard for the moral order established by God on the part of humanity was the reason for the deluge.[5] He writes, "...the starting point is the wickedness of man, and on account of it the Lord decides to bring a deluge on the earth... An inevitable consequence of the Flood would be that together with man the other living creatures on earth would also perish... the other living creatures as well as man were overwhelmed...."[6]

B. In Rabbinic Commentaries

The Rabbis, needless to say, do not perceive in this section (Genesis 6:5-13) two separate reasons for the Flood. For the medieval commentator, the Flood comes as a result of a long history of man and animal disregarding the moral order established by God. Humanity and animals alike, in the opinion of the Rabbis, had established a pattern of moral decay. Radak in his comment on Genesis 6:5 alludes to this pattern of decay: "In spite of the fact that God gave all humanity 120 years to improve (the moral condition of life) He saw that His (creation) did not improve their behavior; rather (their behavior) became increasingly worse, as the text says: '...and every though was only evil continually.'"[7]

Rashi, commenting on the continuing moral decline of the world, explains all the earth was corrupt due to the indiscriminate sexual practices of both man and animals. For Rashi, the "wickedness" of creation (6:5) was miscegenation: "...even cattle and beasts and fowl did not consort with their own kind."[8] But, according to Rashi, the final blow to existence was the lawlessness alluded to in Genesis 6:11-13. This, Rashi, explains as robbery; crimes performed by man against his fellow man.[9] Thus Rashi says; "Their fate was sealed on account of the sin of robbery."[10] Rashi explains that, what may appear to the modern critic as two distinct accounts, is in fact different but related offenses perpetrated

against man, animal, and ultimately God. Rashi treats the problem of "reasons for the flood" as a complete, uninterrupted unit in which several crimes are described; the crimes being, miscegenation, lewdness, robbery, and idolatry.[11] Rashi states that whenever a society is engulfed in corruption, "punishment of an indiscriminate character comes upon the world killing good and bad alike."[12] Rashi presents Genesis 6:5-7 and 6:11-13 as continuing examples of the deprevity of creation. His commentary describes constant misconduct not only on the part of humans but animals as well. All creation is guilty--all creation must be punished. Rashi's treatment of these two sections provides a classic example of how the Rabbis treated the "duplications" in the Flood narrative. Utilizing only the information provided in the biblical narrative Rashi explains a) what were the crimes committed by mankind; b) the crimes committed by the animal kingdom; c) why all creation must perish. We saw in the rabbinic treatment of the Creation narratives that the Rabbis find one story only -- the emphasis of subject changing between Genesis 1:1-2:4a and Genesis 2:4b. Here too, we find the same principle being applied: whenever the Torah reintroduces a subject it comes to teach something new.

This same idea is applied by the Rabbis to the problem of the number of animals taken on board the ark. All the rabbinic commentators (Rashi, Radak, Ramban) explain that

seven pairs of clean animals had to be taken on board the Ark in order to ensure the continuation of the species. Of the animals which are not considered ritually clean, two of each was sufficient. (Genesis 7:2) Rashi, in his comment on verse 2 indicates his awareness of a glearing anachronism. In this comment, Rashi asks how Noah could have known that a distinction was made between clean and unclean animals; these laws being given to Israel long after the generation of Noah and the Flood. The classification of animals permitted to Israel is found in Leviticus 11 ff Rashi resolves this dilemma by resorting to the Talmud, where in Erubin 26a we read: "Clean -- It means the cattle which will in the future be permitted to Israel as clean, we thus learn that Noah studied Torah."[13]

The principle applied to duplications is again applied by Rashi to the problem centering around Noah's taking the animals on board. No fewer than five times does the biblical text state that Noah is commanded to bring animals on board the ark: Genesis 6:19,20; 7:2,8,9,15,16. Rashi explains that whenever the text speaks of the single pair of animals it uses the verb בוא when it speaks of the seven pair the verb לקח is used. Thus, Rashi concludes, this teaches us that there were animals who felt compelled to come to Noah on their own accord: "but only those (fitting) did Noah allow to enter the ark." Rashi utilizes the variety of language found in the biblical narrative to explain the

"subtle" distinctions which exist between these verses.

Conclusion

The Rabbis view the Flood narrative as a complete literary unit. For them, it marks the end of a human history engaged in consumed by transgression. The Rabbis are aware of the problems of duplication and contradiction. They resolve (if resolve is the correct term) these discrepancies as we have seen, by referring to the older midrashic tradition which "explains away" many of the difficulties. Although the Rabbis attempt to blend and harmonize the problems, they, like the moderns, do not to any significance resolve the problems once and for all.

25. CHRONOLOGY OF THE FLOOD

A. In Modern Scholarship

If one applies the tools provided by documentary analysis to the problem of the flood chronology, it becomes clear that within the biblical text two versio s stemming from an ancient source have been preserved by the redactor. Briefly, the major discrepancy lies in the fact that according to the J author, the flood results from a torrential rain. This rain, which lasts for forty days and completely engulfs the earth, begins seven days after Noah receives the command to enter the ark. The flood waters begin to subside at the end of this forty day period. It should be noted that the J narrative contains no account of the building of the Ark. Many modern scholars believe that the redactor retained that information in the more elaborate P account.[1] The verses comprising the J account are as follows: Genesis 6:5-8; 7:1-5; 7:7-10,12,16b,17b; 7:22-23; 8:2b-3a; 8:6-12; 8:13b; 8:20-22, and when read consecutively, it is clear that we have a complete narrative.

The P narrative, unlike the J account, provides much more detail. Vawter believes that the redactor utilized the J account as supplementary material to the P document.[2] The P author, being true to form, supplies facts, figures, and dates. The flood, for P, begins on the seventeenth day of the second month in the six hundredth year of Noah's life.

In this account the waters which inundate the earth result from unplugging of both the "great deep fountains" and the "sluices in the sky." After a continual outpouring of 150 days, the waters crest and begin to subside. By the end of the seventeenth day of the seventh month, the water has subsided enough to ground the Ark on Mt. Ararat. Three months later, the tenth month, first day, the mountain tops become visible. By the second month, on the 27th day of the month, the earth was dry; Noah and the entourage with him are commanded to leave the ark. For the P author, the flood lasts 150 days and the waters cover the earth for an entire year. The P author presents his details in a very formal and precise manner; the exact measurements of the ark, the number of people, the classification of animals, the exact duration of the flood in its various stages. The P account is as follows: Genesis 6:9-22; 7:6,11 13-16a,17a,18-21,24; Genesis 8:1-2a; 3b-5, 13a, 14-19. Skinner writes:

> The success of the critical process is due to the care and skill with which the Redactor has performed his task. His object evidently was to produce a synthetic history of the Flood without sacrificing a scrap of information that could with any plausibility be utilized for his narrative. The sequence of P he appears to have preserved intact, allowing neither omissions nor transposition. Of J he has preserved quite enough to show it was originally a complete and independent narrative; but it was naturally impracticable to handle it as carefully as the main document.[3]

Before approaching the Rabbinic position, let us investigate the solution offered by Cassuto. Cassuto argues that to separate the information contained in the flood narrative neither elucidates the subject nor does such an approach untangle the complexities contained within the text itself.[4] He responds to the problem of the chronology of the flood in the following manner; we summarize his position: Noah receives the first of several divine communications in Genesis 6:13. Following the tradition established in the Talmud, Rosh Hashana 11b, Cassuto dates this revelation on the first day of the first month. Noah then sets out to build the ark; a task which takes 40 days to complete. Noah's second discussion with God, Genesis 7:1, Cassuto dates the tenth day of the second month; forty days after the initial encounter. In Genesis 7:11 we are informed that the flood began in the seventeenth day of the second month, seven days after the second communication between Noah and God. Genesis 7:10, for Cassuto confirms that the flood began seven days after the second communication; the seventeenth day of the second month. Cassuto understands the phrase ...ויאברו not as action. "The waters prevailed upon the earth one hundred and fifty days." Cassuto holds that the forty days of rain are included in the one hundred and fifty days. He bases this assumption on a comparison of dates, 7:11 and 8:4. Cassuto maintains that with, in the initial period of 40 days the fountains of the deep were opened and that the sluices

in the sky is synonymous with the rain already mentioned. Thus when the text reports that the rain stopped after forty days, according to Cassuto's argument this means also that the fountains of the deep and the sluices of the sky were also stopped.[5] Cassuto posits that although five lunar months comprise 147 days, the biblical author chose to speak in round figures. Thus the art runs aground on Mt. Ararat on the seventeenth day of the seventh month; this first mention of the water's abatement (Genesis 8:4). Two months later, first day of the tenth month, the flood waters decreased sufficiently to allow the mountain tops to be seen.

> "It was not till five months after the commencement of the Flood that the first sign of the decline of the layer of water was discernible... . Thereafter, the waters continued to decrease, and when the first day of the tenth month arrived the tops of the mountains (v111 5) became visible."[6]

On the tenth day of the eleventh month, forty days after the mountain tops became visible, Noah releases the raven. Seven days later, a dove was sent out. Cassuto believes that several days elapsed between the birds' first and second excursion.[7] Noah sent out the dove on the seventh day of the eleventh month, "four months precisely after the ark stopped, nine months exactly after the beginning of the Flood -- a clear example of harmonious parallelism."[8]

Cassuto assumes that the dove's first mission lasted only one day. After waiting another seven days, Noah sends out the dove again (8:10). The bird returns to the ark with an olive branch in its beak. This is dated, according to Cassuto, the twenty forth day of the eleventh month. After yet another seven days, Noah sends out the bird again (8:12). Thus, on the first day of the twelfth month, the third time the dove is sent from the ark, it does not return to the ark. On the first day of the first month of the six hundredth and first year of Noah's life, Noah opened the hatch and saw dry land (8:13). Twenty six days later, the land had become totally dry (8:14). Thus on the 27th day of the second month in the 601st year of Noah's life, eleven lunar months after the end of the Flood; an entire solar year of 365 days, Noah disembarked.[9]

Cassuto concludes that the details contained with the Flood narrative create an inner parallelism, each point corresponding perfectly to the next: "Not only do they not conflict, nor give any evidence of composite sources, but on the contrary they indicate the concordant unity of the section."[10] Cassuto presents a very plausible harmonization of facts which when looked at objectively presents as good an answer to the problem of Chronology in the Flood as does the documentary approach. But, as we shall see, Cassuto's approach to the discrepancies in the text is basically a re-working of the rabbinic approach utilized by the Rabbis.

B. In Rabbinic Commentaries

Let us now investigate Rashi's approach to this problem. That he is sensitive to the problems within the text becomes clear from his commentary. Regarding the problem of וַיִּגְבְּרוּ Rashi says: "And the waters prevailed, by themselves (without any external aid)."[11] Here Rashi alludes to the fact that in 8:3 we are told of the water's abating after 150 days counting from the time when the rain stopped falling. Thus Rashi assumes that during these 150 days the water maintained a constant depth over the face of the earth although no rain fell. Rashi includes the 40 days of rain in the one hundred and fifty days (c.f. Rashi on verse 8:4-6). Rashi, attempts to work out the precise chronology of the flood. It is not unlike the schema which Cassuto presented, differing in that Rashi names the months. Rashi, unlike Cassuto, arranges the dates and number of days so that at the end of his calculations he arrives at 150 days. He plays with the full and lacking months, the number of days the rain fell, the amount of time the waters prevailed, and the period of time between flights of the raven and dove. The flood, nevertheless, constitutes one full year. His answer may or may not be satisfying. But what is important, is the fact that he recognized that there were inconsistencies and discrepancies in the biblical narrative.

Rashi shows that he is as sensitive to the problems concerning the flood's end as he is to its beginning. He responds to the problem contained in 8:13 by describing the condition of the earth's surface. The biblical text reports that in the six hundredth and first year, "the waters dried up from off the face of the earth, and Noah removed the covering of the ark and saw that the surface of the ground was drying up." Rashi explains that prior to the moment Noah removed the hatch, the earth resembled a giant mud puddle. At the point when Noah opens the cover, the earth begins to have a solid crust again. "It had become like clay, for now its surface had become somewhat hardened."[12] Rashi's use of the phrase "somewhat hardened" reveals his awareness of the problem posed in verse 14 where it states again "the earth was dry." Rashi, noting that no mention is made of the waters evaporating writes that the earth "became hard as its normal condition."[13]

As regards the problem concerning the water's stopping, 8:1-2, Rashi again uses the biblical text to help resolve the difficulty. We are told in 8:1 that God remembered Noah and caused a wind to sweep across the earth thereby causing the waters to subside. Verse two then reports that the fountains and sluices were stopped up and the rain was held back. Rashi responds to the problem of the waters subsiding before we are told of the closing of the flood gates in the following way: When we are first told of their opening, the text reads "all

the fountains...." Rashi notes that in 8:2 the word all is not found, thus he concludes: "When they were opened it was stated that all the fountains were opened...while here the word is omitted: the reason is that such of them as were essential to the world were left unstopped, such as the hot springs of Tiberas... ."[14]

Conclusion

As we have seen, in the majority of instances the rabbinic commentators were aware of textual discrepancies and dealt with them in their unique manner. Here too, the Rabbis again demonstrate an awareness of the problems. Although the harmonization attempted by the rabbinical approach is plausible, the solution offered by modern scholarship seems to me to be a better explanation of the textual discrepancies.

CONCLUSION

The medieval commentators recognized the same problems to which the modern biblical scholars respond. But, as we have seen, the two schools utilize totally divergent approaches to the text. The Rabbis view the Bible as a complete unit, the word of God given to Moses on Siani. If they detected a logical inconsistency, discrepancy, or repitition in the text, they sought the resolution to the problem from within the text. Thus, Rashi explains the reiteration of man's moral condition at the beginning of the Flood narrative, not as repititions but as referring to different kinds of crimes. This same process allows Sforno to translate the verb in Genesis 2:7 as pluperfect, thereby offering a solution to the problem of the two narratives dealing with the creation of human beings. The Rabbis also make frequent use of the Rabbinic tradition, Talmud and Midrash, for explanatory interpretation. They resort to the Midrash most often in situations where a potential threat to the normative Jewish position on God and Torah existed. For example, the commentators explain the presence of two names for God, YHVH and Elohim, via the midrash. When the Tetragrammaton is used, the Midrash explains that the text refers to the merciful dimension of God's personality. When Elohim is used, it refers to God as supreme judge. We have seen also that, at times, the Rabbis gloss over problems and even disregard

problems. A prime example of this is the lack of rabbinic commentary dealing with the names in the Sethite and Cainite genealogies. Certainly the medieval rabbinic commentators were aware that the Midrash takes great pain to harmonize the names in one list with the names found in the other.

The medieval Rabbis present a consistent commentary which deals with the major textual, grammatical, and logical discrepancies in Genesis as well as with the more subtle problems housed in the biblical narrative. The Rabbis are as aware of these problems as are the modern scholars and in no way is their approach to or understanding of these problems less sophisticated than the modern scholars.

Modern scholars who apply the documentary hypothesis to the biblical narrative present a most satisfying solution to many of the difficulties encountered in the text. But, as convincing as this theory is, it is not the panacea some scholars believe it to be. While it does resolve the problem of the two creation epics in a more convincing manner than do the Rabbis, the modern approach to Flood narrative is no more insightful than the approach taken by the Rabbis. While the Rabbis have managed to harmonize the problems in the Flood narrative, modern scholarship, has, at times, added to the confusion by "sourcing" us to death. Herein lies the rub, for the documentary approach as it continues to be practiced demonstrates that nor every verse in Scripture can be classified as belonging to J or P or E or D or R. Assigning

sub-sources (J_1 J_2 etc.) merely confuses the issue and demonstrates the highly theoretical nature of the documentary hypothesis.

While modern scholarship enjoys the advantages provided by comparative linguistics and archeological discoveries, it has not shown the classical commentators to be any less aware of the discrepancies in the biblical narrative. A comparison of the two systems indicates that while they are divergent, neither system is in all respects of logic or plausibility superior to the other. Both systems provide insight into the biblical narrative and, while approaching the text from different positions often arrive at similar conclusions.

NOTES

1. BERESHIT

[1]E. A. Speiser, Genesis, (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1964), pp. 11-12.

[2]Ibid., p. 12.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]John Skinner, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary On Genesis, 2nd ed. (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1976), p. 13.

[6]Speiser, p. 12.

[7]Skinner, p. 12.

[8]Ibid., p. 13

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid.

[11]S. R. Driver, in his commentary on Genesis, embraces the view that verse one is an independent statement.

[12]Speiser, p. 12.

[13]U. Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, part 1: "From Adam to Noah", (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1966), p. 20.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Speiser, p. 12.

[16]Pentateuch with Targum Onkelos, Haphtaroth and Rashi's Commentary, vol. 1: "Genesis," Translated by M. Rosenbaum and A. M. Silbermann (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company), p. 2.

[17]Rashi, p. 2.

[18]Ibid.

[19]IBid.

NOTES

2. TERMS FOR DIVINITY & DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

[1]Rashi, p. 3.

[2]Herbert Danby, The Mishna, (London, Oxford Press, 1966), p. 455.

[3]Middrash Rabbah, trans. I, Epstein, vol. 1 "Genesis," (London: Soncine Press, 1961), p. 4.

[4]Rashi, p. 3.

[5]Skinner, p. xliii

[6]Ibid., pp. xliii - xlv

[7]This is so common a notion that no one author need be cited. All modern scholars who adhere to the documentary hypothesis hold this opinion.

[8]Skinner, p. xlv

[9]Speiser, pp. 9-11.

[10]U. Cassuto, The Documentary Hypothesis and Composition of the Pentateuch, (Jerusalem, The Magnes Press, 1961), pp. 17-18.

[11]Ibid., p. 18.

[12]Ibid., p. 31.

[13]Ibid., p. 31-32.

[14]Louis Jacobs, Jewish Biblical Exegesis, (New York, Behrman House, 1973), p. 20.

[15]Ibid., p. 21.

NOTES

3. LIGHT BEFORE THE LUMINARIES

[1]Julian Morgenstern, The Book of Genesis, (Cincinnati, U.A.H.C., 1919), p. 44.

[2]Ibid., p. 43.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid., p. 44

[5]S. R. Driver, The Book of Genesis with Introduction and Notes, (London, Methuen & Company, 1904), p. 5.

[6]Skinner, pp. 48-49.

[7]Ibid., p. 19.

[8]Ibid., p. 20.

[9]Driver, p. 6.

[10]Skinner, p. 20.

[11]We have cited Speiser's translation, pp. 3-4.

[12]Speiser, p. 6.

[13]Cassuto, p. 43.

[14]B. Jacob, Genesis, trans. E. I. and W. Jacob, (New York, Ktav, 1974), p. 3.

[15]Rashi, p. 3.

[16]Moshe ben Nachman, Commentary on the Torah, trans. Charles B. Chavel, vol. 1, (New York, Shils Publishing House, Inc., 1971), p. 42.

[17]Jacob, p. 3.

[18]Ibid.

NOTES

4. BREATH, WIND OR SPIRIT -- THE PROBLEM OF רוח

[1]Skinner, p. 19.

[2]Cassuto, p. 24.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Harry M. Orlinsky, Notes on the New Translation of The Torah, (Philadelphia, J.P.S., 1970), p. 53.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid, p. 54.

[9]Speiser, p. 5.

[10]Chavel, p. 25.

[11]Ibid., p. 27. c.f. Genesis Rabbah 3:11 where "the wind" takes part in the creation of earth.

[12]Ibn Ezra, Commentary on the Book of Genesis, trans. M. A. Oles, (Cincinnati, Hebrew Union College, 1958), p. 23.

[13]Rashi, p. 3.

[14]Rashi, p. 2.

NOTES

5. THE MEANING OF מרחפת

[1]Skinner, p. 18.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Speiser, p. 5; Cassuto, p. 25.

[5]Cassuto, p. 25.

[6]The author of the midrash (Genesis Rabbah 2:4) understands the phrase as a "wind from God" constantly moving over the earth.

[7]Rashi, p. 3.

NOTES

6. EREV AND BOKER

[1]Skinner, p. 20.

[2]Ibid., p. 21

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Driver, p. 8.

[6]Speiser, p. 6.

[7]Rashi, p. 3.

[8]Ibn Ezra, p. 24.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid., p. 34.

NOTES

7. NAMING OF THE LUMINARIES

[1]Driver, p. 10.

[2]Skinner, p. 25.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., p. 26.

[6]Ibid., p. 25.

[7]Jacob, p. 7.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Rashi, p. 5.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Chavel, p. 42.

NOTES

8. FUNCTIONS OF THE LUMINARIES

[1]Speiser, p. 6.

[2]Cassuto, p. 44.

[3]Speiser, p. 6.

[4]Ibid., p. 6.

[5]Skinner, p. 26.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Rashi, p. 5.

[8]ר"דוד קמחי פירוש על התורה, (פרעסבורג, תר"ב), ע' ב.

NOTES

9. THE PROBLEM OF THE USE OF THE FIRST PERSON PLURAL

[1]Skinner, p. 30.

[2]Ibid., p. 31.

[3]Cassuto, p. 55.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Speiser, p. 7.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Skinner, p. 31.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibn Ezra, p. 29.

[10]Ibid., pp. 29-30.

[11]Rashi, p. 6.

[12]Ibn Ezra, p. 30.

[13]Ibid.

NOTES

10. WHEN DID GOD REST?

[1]Skinner, pp. 38-39.

[2]Skinner, p. 38.

[3]Skinner, p. 50.

[4]Ibid., See also Skinner's statement of cosmogonies which parallel that of Genesis, pp. 41-50.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Skinner, p. 37.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Speiser, p. 7.

[12]Ibid., p. 8.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Skinner, p. 37.

[15]Jacob, p. 12.

[16]Ibn Ezra, p. 39.

[17]Rashi, p. 8.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid.

NOTES

11. PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE BETWEEN MAN AND ANIMALS

[1]Cassuto, p. 58.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid., p. 59.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Skinner, p. 35.

[6]Ibid., p. 34.

[7]Ibid., p. 35.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Chavel, p. 57.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid., p. 58

[13]Rashi, p. 7.

NOTES

12. A SECOND CREATION NARRATIVE

[1]Speiser, p. 18.

[2]Ibid., p. 19

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Skinner, p. 54.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Driver, p. 36.

[8]Speiser, p. 16.

9 רד"ק, ט"ז

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Rashi, p. 9.

[13]Ibn Ezra, p. 40.

[14]Jacob, pp. 14-15.

NOTES

13. THE FORMING OF MAN AND WOMAN

[1]Cassuto, p. 90.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Skinner, p. 56.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid., p. 57.

[7]Driver, p. 38.

[8]S'forno's commentary on Genesis, מקראות גדולות (Villna, 1921), p. 37.

[9]Rashi, p. 10. See his comment to Genesis 2:8.

NOTES

14. THE SERPENT

[1]Skinner, p. 71.

[2]Ibid., p. 72.

[3]Ibid., p. 73.

[4]Cassuto, pp. 141-142.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid., p. 141

[7]Ibid., p. 142.

[8]Jacob, p. 22.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibn Ezra, p. 52.

[11]Chavel, p. 72.

[12]Rashi, p. 13.

NOTES

15. THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE TREE OF LIFE

[1]Skinner, p. 52ff.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., p. 52-53.

[6]A. Dillmann, Genesis, vol. 1, (Edinburgh, T. & T. Clark, 1897), p. 122.

[7]Cassuto, p. 125.

[8]Speiser, p. 26.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Herbert C. Brichto, "Prometheus, Faust and Eden" delivered March 4, 1967, Hebrew Union College, Jewish Institute of Religion, Cincinnati, Ohio.

[11]

[12]Jacob, p. 19.

[13]Speiser, p. 25.

[14]Rashi, p. 12.

[15]Ibn Ezra

[16]Ramban, pp. 71-73.

NOTES

16. THE PROBLEM OF CURSE

[1]Herbert C. Brichto, The Problem of "Curse" In The Hebrew Bible, (Pennsylvania, 1963), p. 83.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Speiser, p. 24.

[5]Ibid.

[6]JAOS, Vol. 80, No. 3 (July-Sept. 1960), p. 198.

[7]Speiser, Genesis, p. 24.

[8]Brichto, p. 86.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibn Ezra, p. 56.

[11]Rashi, p. 15.

NOTES

17. CAIN

[1]Skinner, p. 98.

[2]Ibid., p. 111

[3]Skinner, pp. 111-115.

[4]Skinner, p. 113.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Skinner, p. 102; Cassuto, pp. 199-201.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Skinner, p. 102.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Cassuto, p. 200.

[15]Skinner, pp. 102-103.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Speiser, p. 30.

[18]Ibid., see also Skinner, p. 100.

[19]This has been pointed out in our treatment of Skinner's approach to the narrative, and also in our discussion of the Kenite theory.

[20]Herbert C. Brichto, "Cain and Abel," The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, Supplementary volume, (Nashville: Abingdon, 1976), p. 121.

[21]Ibn Ezra, p. 65.

[22]Ibid.

NOTES

18. GENESIS 4:3-7 THE NATURE OF CAIN'S CRIME

[1]We cite Speiser's translation, p. 29.

[2]Skinner, p. 104.

[3]Cassuto, p. 205.

[4]Brichto, "Cain and Abel," I.D.B., p. 121

[5]We cite Speiser's translation, p. 29.

[6]Speiser, p. 33.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Rashi, p. 17.

[11]Ibn Ezra, p. 66.

[12]Chavel, p. 88.

NOTES

19. THE MARK OF CAIN

[1]Dillmann, p. 174.

[2]Skinner, p. 110.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Dillmann, p. 175.

[6]Brichto, "Cain and Abel," I.D.B., p. 121.

[7]Dillmann, p. 195.

[8]E. A. Speiser, "An Angelic Curse: Exodus 14:20," JAOS, vol. 80, 1960, p. 198-200.

[9]Skinner, p. 112.

[10]Dillmann, p. 196.

[11]Rashi, p. 19.

NOTES

20. PROBLEM OF GENEALOGY

[1]Speiser, p. 36; see also Robert Wilson, Genealogy and History in the Biblical World for a complete analysis of the relationship between Genesis and corresponding Ancient Near East literature.

[2]Dillmann, p. 177.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Speiser, p. 36.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Robert Wilson, Genealogy and History in The Biblical World, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), p. 139.

[10]Wilson, p. 139; Cassuto, p. 229 ff.

[11]Wilson, p. 140.

[12]Skinner, p. 116.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Speiser, p. 37; Wilson, p. 145; Skinner, p. 121.

[15]Wilson, p. 144.

[16]Speiser, p. 35.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Wilson, p. 145.

[20]Wilson, p. 146; For a detailed study of this problem see Samual Sandmel's article in HUCA vol. 32, 1961, pp. 19-21.

[21]Speiser, p. 37.

[22]Rashi, p. 19.

[23]Chavel, p. 92.

[24]Ibid., p. 93.

[25]Rashi, p. 21.

[26]Ibn Ezra, p. 70.

NOTES

21. CONTINUING PROBLEMS OF GENEALOGY: GENESIS 5

[1]Speiser, p. 41.

[2]Wilson, p. 164.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid., p. 165.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Wilson, p. 165; Skinner, p. 129.

[10]Skinner, p. 129.

[11]Ibid.

[12]Ibid, pp. 132-133.

[13]Skinner, p. 137; Wilson, p. 166.

[14]Skinner, p. 132.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid., p. 137.

[19]Chavel, p. 98.

[20]Rashi, p. 23; commenting on Genesis 5:22.

[21]Rashi, p. 24; commenting on Genesis 5:29.

NOTES

22. PRELUDE TO THE FLOOD? GENESIS 6:1-4

[1]Bruce Vawter, On Genesis: A New Reading, (New York: Doubleday, 1977), p. 110; Speiser, p. 46.

[2]Speiser, p. 47.

[3]Ibid., p. 46. The Hurrian cycle finds its way into Hittite legend and is assumed to be for the Uranid cycle. c.f. Skinner, p. 140 on the etiological nature of these legends.

[4]Vawter, p. 111.

[5]Speiser, p. 46.

[6]Skinner, p. 141.

[7]Ibid.

[8]The weight of the gold plate used in the Tabernacle was 120 shekels; 120 trumpeters are said to have been present at the deication of the Temple.

[9]Speiser, p. 44.

[10]Vawter, p. 111.

[11]Speiser, p. 44.

[12]Cassuto, p. 296.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Genesis 6:3a; Speiser, p. 44.

[16]Cassuto, pp. 296-297.

[17]Skinner, p. 145.

[18]Ibn Ezra, p. 145.

[19]Chavel, p. 100.

[20]Ibn Ezra, p. 78.

[21]Rashi, p. 25.

[22]That Rashi views the 120 years as probationary is further substantiated in his comment on Genesis 6:14.

[23]Rashi, p. 25.

[24]Rashi, p. 25. Ramban and Radak also share this opinion.

[25]Ibn Ezra, p. 77.

NOTES

23. THE FLOOD

[1]Skinner, p. 147. "The resolution of the compound narrative into its constituent elements...is reckoned amongst the most brilliant achievements of purely literal criticism and affords a particularly instructive lesson in the art of documentary analysis."

[2]U. Cassuto, A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, vol. 2. (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1974), p. 34.

[3]Jacob, p. 59.

[4]Cassuto, vol. 2, pp. 38-47.

NOTES

24. REASONS FOR THE FLOOD

[1]Skinner, p. 150.

[2]Ibid., p. 159.

[3]Herbert C. Brichto, "On Slaughter & Sacrifice & Atonement," HUCA. (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press), p. 3.

[4]Cassuto, vol. 2, p. 305.

[5]Ibid.,p. 306.

[6]Ibid.

[7]

[8]Rashi, pp. 27-28.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Ibid., p. 28.

[12]Ibid., p. 28.

[13]Ibid., p. 29.

NOTES

25. CHRONOLOGY OF THE FLOOD

[1]Skinner, p. 125.

[2]Vawter, p. 122.

[3]Skinner, p. 149.

[4]Cassuto, vol. 2, p. 43.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid., p. 44.

[7]Ibid., p. 110.

[8]Ibid., p. 44.

[9]Ibid., p. 45.

[10]Ibid.

[11]Rashi, p. 32.

[12]Rashi, p. 35.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Rashi, p. 33.

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