

HEBREW BIBLE

AN ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

SOME FEATURES OF MODERN JEWISH BIBLE RESEARCH

by

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Some early origins

Modern Jewish Bible research, which has developed particularly during the first decades of the present century, has its polemic point of departure in the achievements of western "Old Testament" studies, initiated by Baruch Spinoza and reaching its peak in the work of Wellhausen and his school. But Judaism was reluctant to acknowledge it because of the impact of Christian theological tendencies inherent in it.

The study and interpretation of the Bible, however, has always been one of the major interests of Judaism. It has grown organically as a component of Jewish culture, bearing testimony to the vital bond between Jewish thought, culture and the Bible. Its beginnings are part and parcel of Midrashic and Talmudic literature, of the Apocrypha and the writings of Qumran. Later, the philological approach to the Bible developed in the course of the long and acrimonious Rabbinic-Karaite controversy, when both parties endeavoured to prove the authenticity of their positions by inferring them from the Bible text. Ever since, Bible exegesis in the proper sense has been deeply influenced by the dominating trends of Jewish culture.

So the Bible commentary of Rashi (1040-1105), who was above all others the ingenious Talmud commentator, is rooted in the world of the Talmud and Midrash; the work of Abraham Ibn Ezra, who lived in Spain (1093-1167), was deeply influenced by contemporary Hebrew and Arabic philology, by contemporary trends in philosophy and Kabbalah and by the natural sciences of his day; he makes a point of inserting occasionally some critical-historical remarks, though he conceals it behind somewhat cryptic esoteric allusions. Nachmanides' commentary on the Pentateuch (1195-1270), to give yet another example, combines a profound and sensitive literary understanding with the author's personal philosophical and Kabbalistic outlook.

The breakthrough of a purely philological approach to the text came with the comparatively concise commentaries of the "French school", which flourished in Rashi's wake in the 12th century. The achievements of all these commentators, whose personalities also made a profound impact in

other fields of Jewish studies – philosophy and Kabbalah (Nachmanides), Hebrew philology and poetry (Abraham Ibn Ezra) – were always inspired by the need of aligning Jewish thought with the spiritual problems of their times.

Similarly, we cannot fully appreciate the biblical work of Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) and his school, unless we realise that it expresses, in one sense, a phase of the emancipation; in other words, that it has its origins in the problematics of Jewish existence.

Unlike all these works, Jewish Bible research at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century appears to be primarily a reaction – polemic, or blindly admiring – to modern Old Testament studies. The original impulse which led to the development of this modern field of study came from outside rather than from within Jewish life and its problems. The first traditional Jewish scholar to set foot on this new road was the Paduan Samuel David Luzatto (1800-1860). His chief contribution to biblical studies is his commentary on the Pentateuch and Isaiah and the translation of these books into Italian. He is, as far as I know, the first modern Hebrew Bible commentator of stature to enter into extensive dialogue with Christian scholars of his time. It needs no saying that the tenor of all these discussions is apologetic and that they keep strictly to the old traditional view of the Bible and its origins as expressed in the Talmud and the Midrash. His only departure from tradition is the very moderate textual criticism which he permits himself in respect of the prophetic books; with the texts of the Pentateuch he does not meddle, for he keeps faith with the traditional tenet that the Torah is the literal result of Divine revelation.

“*Die Wissenschaft des Judentums*”

One of the most curious facts in the history of modern Jewish thinking in this respect is the reluctance of the initiators of the critical study of Judaism (*die Wissenschaft des Judentums*), particularly those who lived in the German-speaking part of the world, to relate to contemporary Bible research. Men like Zunz, Geiger, Zecharia Frankel, Steinschneider – to mention only a few of the most important names – witnessed the flourishing of German Old Testament research in their lifetimes, but they rarely took up a position on its views. The only one to concern himself with biblical problems was Graetz, with his commentaries on the Psalms, the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes; but these studies were only marginal to his main interest, and he tacitly disregarded the chief problems raised by Old Testament scholars of his time. The first two volumes of his great *History of the Jews from Ancient Times until the Present Day* were the last to appear; they saw light only after a visit to the land of Israel, which gave him his first opportunity of familiarising himself with the biblical landscape. These two vo-

lumes, which deal with the history of Israel from its beginnings until the Maccabean Revolt, do not even touch on the problem of Pentateuch criticism, which was of such central importance for Protestant Bible research – an evasion which of course did not eliminate the problem.

How can one explain this attitude to Bible problems on the part of the very men who laid the foundations of the critical-historical conception of Judaism? To answer this question, we must bear in mind that the apologetic interests which prevailed at the birth of these studies created an unfavourable climate for free Bible research. Ultimately, the cause for which these men lived and worked was the emancipation of German Jewry. Their efforts were therefore aimed at correcting the false image of Judaism and freeing it from the distortions caused by deeply ingrained traditional prejudices. In this respect they have indeed done outstanding work, even if their apologetic zeal sometimes overshot the mark – for they were only too often concerned with explaining away its seamy side. Here too Graetz is a typical representative of the trend. To mention only one instance, his disquisitions on the origins of Christianity with their strong sentimental colouring are entirely a reflection of his national-religious convictions, while when he treats of other chapters of Jewish history he is guided by his boundless admiration of and veneration for the great rationalists of Jewish thought and by his vivid hatred of all irrational currents. Like contemporary scholars of Judaism, he rejected the irrational trends in Judaism as offshoots of primitive vulgar superstition – a distorted view of history which persisted until our times and was rectified only by the monumental work of Gershom Sholem. But the most fatal obstacle to the development of Bible studies was the “confessionalising” tendency of these men, whose purpose was to enable their coreligionists to take their place in the German nation as citizens holding the Mosaic faith. This tendency left them no choice but to agree tacitly with Wellhausen’s view of monotheism as the creation of the scriptural prophets. Like him, they saw the prophets as outstanding individuals, whose greatness lay in their rejection of popular pagan religion and their attainment of pure moral monotheism. A watered-down moralizing monotheism is indeed the main residual content of what these circles proclaim as the mission of Judaism which they have reduced to a “Mosaic faith”.

For what the Hebrew Bible so clearly stresses is the national character of Israel and its bond with the land, in contrast to the spiritualising Liberalist theory which sees Judaism merely as a “faith” and rejects the idea of a Jewish-national existence. Since the Bible was the only spiritual basis for the so-called Mosaic confession, there was an instinctive avoidance of any attempt to destroy this last link by scientific dissection. That is why, strangely enough, the first Jewish reaction to Wellhausen’s work came from the Orthodox camp. I am referring to a little booklet, *Die wichtigsten Instanzen gegen die Graf-Wellhausensche Hypothese*, written in 1902/3 by the

Orthodox scholar David Hoffmann of Berlin, whose main field was Bible and Talmud exegesis. Hoffmann never gained any following, but in spite of his harmonising methods and his dogmatic views, some of his objections, particularly to the late date given by Wellhausen for the Priestly Code, carry a great deal of weight, though they have been simply disregarded in scholarly circles.

The Jewish renaissance movement

The rise of modern Jewish Bible research coincides with the rise of the Jewish renaissance movement, most of whose exponents were from Eastern Europe, where Hebrew and Yiddish literature flourished to an unprecedented degree around the turn of this century. The men who created this literature were engaged in a conscious search for expressions of the Jewish popular culture. In their work, Jewish religion is usually envisaged as a function of national culture or an expression of folk spirit. The stories of Yehuda Leib Peretz and the collection of Jewish legends of Micha Josef Berdyczewski (also published in a German translation as *Die Sagen der Juden* I-V, 1912-1927, and *Der Born Judas* I-VI, 1916-1923) depict this folk element with great love. The same stress on the organic link between nation, land, culture and religion, with its markedly romantic overtones, is reflected also in Berdyczewski's theoretical essays, in the historical works of Simon Dubnow and in the early writings of Buber.

It is this trend which gave the first impulse to the study of all those movements and creations of Jewish popular religion which had been pushed aside as much by the rationalising interpretations of classical normative Judaism as by those which were inherent in the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*. The spiritualising and individualising interpretations of Judaism were rejected and thus, for the first time, the road was free for a non-theological appreciation of the Bible, which produced a man like Arnold Ehrlich (1848-1919), author of the famous *Randglossen zur hebraischen Bibel* (Vol. I-VI, 1908-1914), which was previously published in a somewhat shorter Hebrew version under the title *Mikrah ki-Pheshuto* (Vol. I-III, 1899 ff.). Ehrlich uses the entire scholarly equipment of his generation to explain the Bible text critically according to strictly philological principles. While his emendations often seem very daring, his briefly formulated remarks continue to stimulate the scholar to this day. In this connection we should also mention Abraham Cahana (1878-1946), who early in the present century became the nucleus of a group of Jewish scholars, including P. Z. Chajes, S. Krauss, M. Z. Segal and others, who proposed to publish a scholarly Bible commentary. Their work continued from 1904-1930 and was never completed. Cahana, who wrote the commentaries on Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Haggai, Zechariah, Proverbs, Job, Ruth, Ecclesiastes, Ezra and Nehemiah him-

self, writes in the introduction to this collective opus: "This commentary attempts to explain the scriptural text without prejudice to its original meaning, and avoids theological discussions and opinions. The commentary is based on contemporary Bible criticism and research and makes use of the old translations, Semitic philology, archaeology, etc. The scholarly commentary is intended for the non-dogmatic and educated reader who approaches the discussion of the critics with an open mind and seeks to acquire a thorough understanding of the spiritual text." Another work, composed in the same spirit, is Simon Bernfeld's Hebrew *Literary-Historical Introduction to Holy Scripture*, which appeared in Berlin in 1904.

These scholars, whose greatest and lasting achievement is the creation of a modern Hebrew scholarly style, are all products of the "haskala" (enlightenment) movement of East European Jewry. As enthusiastic admirers of modern philological and historical science, they were all fascinated by Protestant Old Testament research.

H. N. Tur-Sinai

An entirely different atmosphere characterises the writings of the prominent representatives of the next generation, who set their imprint on Jewish Bible research from the end of the 'twenties till the 'forties. Of this generation, the first who deserves mention is Prof. H. N. Torczyner (b. 1886) – now Tur-Sinai – who has essentially – though, as a professional Semitologist, on a much broader linguistic basis – carried on the trend of Arnold Ehrlich or (to mention another of the same group) Felix Perles¹. As a linguist, he was particularly interested in problems of "lower criticism" and literary questions. In his opinion, biblical literature originated in a prose framework into which such elements as groups of laws, literary parables, poetry and prophetic speeches were inserted as time went on. Thus, for instance, the story of David's life was adorned with psalm literature, while the story of Solomon was originally linked with the different sections of wisdom literature. These arguments, which so far have found but little following, are largely expounded in his commentary on Job (published in three editions, second and third edition in Hebrew in 1941 resp. 1954), which by their relentless self-criticism reflect his continuous struggle for truth. In his unreserved textual criticism he has paved the way for a free Jewish scholarly approach to the Bible. His daring emendations, which have provoked as much admiration as contradiction, have again and again had a fruitful effect on scholarly discussion. As the first decipherer of the Lakhish

¹ cf. his *Analekten zur Textkritik des alten Testaments*, I, 1895; II, 1922; *Nachtraege zu meinen Analekten I und II* (Publications of the Alexander Kohut Memorial Foundation 7, 1933, 194-203).

ostraka (*Te'udoth Lakhish*, 1940) – which are Hebrew letters from the last days of the kingdom of Judah – he has rendered outstanding services to Bible studies, Jewish history and Hebrew philology. His untiring activity during the years 1934-1954 as Editor in Chief of the excellent organ for Hebrew language research *Leshonenu*, his academic work as Professor of Hebrew Language at the Hebrew University (1933-1954), and his selfless contribution to the *Thesaurus Totius Hebraicitatis* of Eliezer Ben Yehuda (1855-1922), of which he compiled the last six volumes (X-XV) himself, are highlights of his service to Biblical studies and to the study of the Hebrew language, its revival and modernisation.

Benno Jacob and Umberto Cassuto

An entirely different spirit is evident in two works which both appeared in 1933: a commentary on Genesis by a Liberal Rabbi who wrote in German, Benno Jacob,¹ and a monograph by the Italian-Jewish scholar David Moshe (Umberto) Cassuto (1881-1950).² Both are very critical of the “source hypothesis”, refuting it as a basically unscientific method. They also agree that the final recension of Genesis should be dated no later than the early kingdom. But while Jacob contented himself with this result, Cassuto sought to establish an alternative to the source hypothesis. To that end, he resorted to Gunkel’s idea of oral folk traditions and claimed that the Torah, the Pentateuch, is a comparatively late written prose version of different, at times contradictory, folk traditions, which at first had crystallised in a great national epic. On these lines he explains the many poetical verses which are distributed arbitrarily over the biblical prose as late vestiges of this epic. Even if one cannot always follow these scholars in their at times apologetic reasoning, it cannot be denied that they have produced weighty arguments against the proliferating fanciful variations of the source hypothesis. Moreover, their work is evidence of a brilliant mastery of biblical language and biblical style. Jacob is outstanding for his subtle feeling for the internal rhythm that characterises the ancient Hebrew art of story-telling, and for his sensitiveness to the principle of repetition which had taken final shape in the biblical use of the *Leitmotif*. Thus he occasionally succeeds in approaching exegetic problems in ways which differ widely from the common source hypothesis. Cassuto has attempted to base this literary approach on the achievements of Ugarith research, with which he concerned himself inten-

¹ B. Jacob, *Das erste Buch der Tora, Genesis, uebersetzt und erklart*, 1933.

² *La Questione Della Genesi*, 1934. On the assumptions of this monograph are based his commentaries on Genesis and Exodus, which appeared years later in Hebrew and were afterwards translated into English; cf. *From Abraham to Noah* (1949) and *Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (1951).

sively³. He was one of the first scholars to show how much the Hebrew prose and poetry owe to the old heritage from Canaan. In his stylistic and lexicographical studies he traces these influences in great detail. Many of the stylistic characteristics which research used to attribute to different source texts turn out, when seen in this perspective, to be literary devices, such as play on words, use of synonyms etc. One may justly say that these two scholars opened up new ways for the solution of literary and stylistic problems.

Yehezkel Kaufmann

At the same time, Yehezkel Kaufmann initiated a militant discussion with Protestant Old Testament scholars in his monumental eight-volume *Toledoth Ha'emuna Ha'yisreelith* (History of the Jewish Faith); its first volume appeared in 1937 and its last in 1956, and an abbreviated English translation somewhat later. While the arguments of Jacob and Cassuto against Protestant Bible criticism were mainly literary and linguistic, Kauffman's chief concern was to unveil its inner motivation. His main adversary, against whose views he never tires of arguing, was J. Wellhausen and his school; he rightly or wrongly accuses him of trying to explain monotheism in terms of the common evolution theory. Kaufmann, incidentally, accepts the source hypothesis as such, but with two major reservations: he dates the composition of the Priestly Code in the early kingdom, and claims that Deuteronomy was finally edited in the seventh century. In doing so, he seeks to invalidate the three-phase theory of the origin of monotheism, which he ascribed to Wellhausen relating it to the influence of the Hegelian system. According to this theory, the oldest Pentateuch sources contain remains of the pagan folk religion (first phase); the second phase is the monotheistic revolution of the prophets from Amos to Deutero-Isaiah; this was allegedly followed by the decline into legalism and narrow nationalism of later Judaism which was represented by the priests and scribes (third phase). Kaufmann's purpose was to show that the Torah sources – or the Torah literature, as he calls it – entirely reflects Jewish popular culture and is not, as the Christian tradition has it, an artifact produced by the later so-called scribes. This folk religion, according to Kaufmann, has always been monotheistic, as the Torah sources prove unanimously. Kaufmann rescues the term "folk religion", or folk belief, from the pejorative connotation which it has for Wellhausen and his school. He shows that monotheism is by no means the work of the scriptural or classical prophets who have turned away from their nation as a *massa perditionis*, as the old Christian tradition teaches; it is the original creation of the ancient Israelite folk-mind; not the result

³ See: *He'elah Anath*, 1951 (The Goddess Anath), a Hebrew translation and interpretation of a large part of these Canaanite mythological texts.

of a long and complicated evolution, but something born together with the Jewish nation and brought into existence by Moses. In order to dispose once and for all of the detested evolutionary theory, Kaufmann makes every effort to explain monotheism as resulting from the a-mythical mentality of Israel, whose writers and prophets simply no longer understood pagan anthology. The gap between these two forms of consciousness – the monotheistic and the mythological – cannot be bridged by any evolutionary theory, whatever its nature may be. Perhaps one may borrow the concept of mutation from biology in order to explain Kaufmann's views of the origin of monotheism. He describes it as the creation of a sudden outburst of popular intuition, gradually unfolding from an original nucleus. Monotheism is the formative element which shaped Israel's ancient culture: biblical literature and the old social institutions of Israel are likewise symbols, 'realisations of the idea of monotheism. In short, monotheism, created by the folk-mind of Israel, is the formative element of the culture of Israel. That, very briefly, is Kaufmann's main thesis.

Martin Buber

From the philosophical, though not from the chronological, viewpoint Martin Buber's biblical work is the critical response to Kaufmann's. In contrast to the rationalism which Kaufmann had inherited from Hermann Cohen and the *Wissenschaft des Judentums*, Buber, even in his young days, always sought the monotheistic *myth* – a search which Kaufmann would call self-contradictory, since myth is for him by definition pagan. In his "*Königtum Gottes*" (1936), Buber describes this myth with a masterly hand; the essence of monotheism is to him not the intellectual recognition of the fact of God's transcendence, but the absolute duty of fulfilling the will of the Divine King. The exclusive and total surrender which the Divine King demands from Man is the idea underlying the legend of the sacrifice of Isaac. The ancient Israelite conception of the Kingdom of God which excludes all human government has raised this idea to the status of community-shaping postulate. In his late philosophical writings, Buber was particularly concerned to develop his ideas on the subject of myth and its relation to monotheism even further, and to defend them against neo-rationalistic tendencies prevalent in modern Protestant theology through the impact of Bultmann and his school. Buber's second great contribution is his German translation of the Bible. Whatever one may think of this highly controversial work of genius, one thing is clear: Buber teaches us to take the Bible text, stripped from the thousands of distorting arbitrary emendations and conjectures, seriously without the necessity of making a dogmatic commitment. In his treatises and those of his friend and sometime collaborator, Franz Rosenzweig, the concept of "oral translation" borrowed by Bible research from modern anth-

rology is reinterpreted in a striking way. Biblical literature, we are told, is basically not a written but a spoken literature, and it has been shaped by the spoken word in a much more profound way than any literature since then. Buber made it his task to break through the deposits of two thousand years of Bible study and reach the word as it had been spoken – a very daring enterprise indeed. Nevertheless, his discussions of Bible stylistics are highly stimulating and bear witness of a great sensitivity to the ancient Hebrew art of story-telling.

Some common characteristics

I should like to draw attention briefly to two characteristics which Buber, for all the differences, shares with men like Cassuto, Benno Jacob and Kaufmann. One is their mastery of Hebrew as a living language. To these scholars, Hebrew is not a dead language which they had to learn by rote at the university. All of them knew it from childhood as a living vehicle of speech. Their knowledge is not confined to the biblical Hebrew which is the almost exclusive concern of the Hebrew scholars of the European universities. Moreover, it embraces the post-biblical strata in all their variety. This intimate familiarity with Hebrew is one of the basic experiences of this generation of Jewish scholars; after all, they have personally contributed to the revival and modernisation of the Hebrew language. It is no mere chance that a Bible scholar like M. Z. Segal, who taught from 1927 until his retirement at the Hebrew University, started his career with the still unsurpassed work, *A Grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew* (Oxford, 1927), in which he presented the first comparison of the morphological peculiarities of so-called new Hebrew with biblical Hebrew. As we have seen, Tur-Sinai was for decades actively involved in the development of Hebrew. Though Kaufmann was no linguist, the scholarly Hebrew style which he developed in his work has guided an entire generation. Their intimate understanding of the Hebrew language enabled these scholars to gain a deeper insight into the language and style of the Bible, as their commentaries and monographs show again and again. They are much more sparing with emendations than their Protestant colleagues, who often make virtue of necessity and again and again seek refuge in conjectures and emendations instead of probing the language and style of the transmitted text.

As may be concluded from my earlier remarks, the second common characteristic of this generation is its polemic attitude to “Old Testament” research. Its philological and historical standards were of course valid also for Jewish Bible research. However, its prejudice in treating the Hebrew Bible merely as the “Old Testament”, that is to say, as a preliminary to the New Testament, seemed to Jewish scholars to block the way to a true understanding of the Bible, which should be measured by its own criteria

as Torah, i. e. as an autonomous doctrine of life claiming absolute validity, and not by foreign standards imposed from outside.

If the historian is indeed entitled to judge biblical literature not only from its contemporary historical setting but also with regard to its influence on posterity, Jewish Bible research does just that with a view to later Judaism, and values the Bible as the first historical phase of Jewish culture and Hebrew language. Therefore it may not be without importance that most of the Jewish scholars to whom we have referred took up Bible studies as mature men who had already achieved their own understanding of Judaism. Cassuto was originally a historian and the author of a famous monograph on the history of the Jews of Florence. Kaufmann started his career with his brilliant sociological analysis *Golah ve-Nekhar* ("Diaspora and Foreign Lands" – Hebrew pp I, II, 1929, 1930). Buber had already gained a reputation as a philosopher and student of Chassidism when he turned to the Bible. It is thus hardly surprising that the historical view of these scholars was inevitably directed to post-biblical Jewish culture culminating in the modern Jewish renaissance movement. In their opinion, the New Testament should be understood in the context of the conflicting spiritual trends of the Second Temple era, and therefore as an integral part of Jewish studies, as is exemplified in the two monographs of Joseph Klausner on Jesus and Paul.

The present state of Bible research in Israel

In conclusion, a few short remarks on the present state of Bible research in Israel. I would not venture to deal here with all the present developments in Israel in the different fields of Bible study, much less would I dare to pronounce judgment. I only want to dwell briefly on some common characteristics. Firstly, it should be stressed that there is no "Israeli school" in the sense of the Scandinavian school, the German historical-philological, the school of Form Criticism or that of "History of Tradition" nor is there the slightest prospect of such a school emerging in the foreseeable future. Ideological and methodological pluralism is still far too diverse to be reduced to a common denominator. But one may say that the present generation, in contrast to those which have been described above, has generally abandoned the polemical or sometimes apologetical positions in which men like Cassuto or Kaufmann entrenched themselves. The interest in militant polemics has waned, largely because there is no longer any daily contact with the Christian world. Closely related is the comparatively minor interest taken in theological and philosophical questions connected with the Bible, at least on the part of professional Bible scholars; curiously enough, this interest is much more pronounced among philosophers, educationalists and others who take the living meaning of the Bible to heart.

When Bible scholars rejected theology, they threw out the baby with

the bath-water because they believed, mistakenly, that theology was identical with dogmatic thinking. On the other hand, the intimate contact of this generation with the Land of Israel – an interest which is intensified in breadth and depth by the present historical and political conditions – has already produced a lively concern with the historical, archaeological, geographical and other tangible aspects of Bible research. One of the advantages which this generation has is specialisation in all these fields, including oriental studies. One of the Christian scholars who deeply influenced the younger generation was the great archaeologist and orientalist, W. F. Albright, initiator of the Archaeology of the Land of Israel. Also deserving of note is the influence of the Alt school, though this has been far less pronounced.

In the very near future, the Tel Aviv University Press is due to publish a comprehensive scholarly memorial volume in memory of a friend who died at an early age, Jacob Liver. This work, *Bible and Jewish History*, expresses, I venture to say, the present trends prevailing in Israel. In order to give the reader some idea of the nature of this intellectual atmosphere, I would like to mention an important feature of the *Encyclopedia Miqra'it* (the Biblical Encyclopedia), initiated by scholars of the last generation, but mainly written and edited by the present generation. So far, six substantial volumes have appeared; another two are still to come. A comparison shows that the article *Architecture* (second volume) covers 89 columns, while the article *Prophecy* (fifth volume) accounts for only 41 columns: clear evidence that the main interest of this compendium, which may presumably be regarded as the acme of the collective effort of Israel's young scholars, is not in theology but in the tangible problems of Bible history.¹

Yet this dry, matter-of-fact presentation is by no means to be explained in terms of an antiquarianising tendency, but it conceals the deep experience of the first generation to grow up in this country which is the concrete setting of the Bible. It studied the historical and archaeological aspects of the Bible with great enthusiasm. At the same time, this generation continued and continues the philological research begun by the previous generation. The special contribution is a clearer and sharper definition of the different historical stratifications of biblical and post-biblical Hebrew. If, to mention only one instance, one glances through the many volumes of *Le-shonenu*, the Quarterly for the research of Hebrew language, one may gain an impression of the enormous work done, especially under the influence of modern Ugaritic and Accadian studies. Close to this is the systematic textual research of the Bible which has been proceeding for years, and the intensive work done, and still continuing, on the writings of Qumran.

¹ One of the forthcoming issues of this publication will contain an extensive assessment of the Encyclopedia.

As against all these trends, it should be stressed that the interest in the theological problematics of the Bible is still at its beginnings, as mentioned above. The present writer made his contribution to the study of Prophetic experience, of the historical conception of Prophecy, and began to deal again from an unrationalistic viewpoint with relation between monotheism and mythological thought. These beginnings of a new biblical theology coincide with a new interest in literary problems to which the writings of Buber and Rosenzweig give testimony. This literary school which is slowly growing, attempts to apply, within certain limits, the criteria of wider literary criticism to Bible study. Inevitably the influence of modern trends in philosophy, theology and the arts will be conspicuous in any future attempt to analyse the artistic and spiritual characteristics of the Bible.