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Saint Louis seminars [Saint Louis, Mo.]. 1990-1991.

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Rabbi David Silber March 21, 1991

1

Rabbi David Silber April 11, 1991

2

Rabbi David Silber May 16, 1991

3

Rabbi David Silber June 6, 1991

4

Faculty Biographies

5



WEXNER HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Rabbi David Silber

St. Louis/ 1990 - 1991 Academic Year

DAVID THE KING

Students should read the Books of I Samuel and II Samuel in their entirety, as well as the first twelve chapters of I Kings.

Session 11: The Flight from Saul

Readings:

- Tanach, Book of I Samuel, chapter 16 through II Samuel, chapter 4. Read especially, I Samuel 20-27; I Samuel 29-30; II Samuel 1

Questions and Issues to keep in mind while reading:

1. What is the central theme of chapters 21-31?
2. How do you interpret the dialogue in 21:1-8? In 24:1-7? In 27:5-6? In 30:21-25?
3. What is the significance of Chapter 25? What is Abigail's argument?
4. Is David's lament for Saul and Jonathan authentic or staged?
5. At the end of Chapter 20, David and Jonathan speak. Why, then, is there a need for the sign of the arrows?

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Session 12: David and Absalom

Readings:

- Tanach, Book of II Samuel, chapters 13 - 14
15:1-13
- Book of Genesis, chapters 29-35
especially chapter 34
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Questions and Issues to keep in mind while reading:

1. What are the literary and thematic connections between Genesis 34 and II Samuel 13? Why is Genesis 34 included in the Book of Genesis?
2. What is the precise parable of the woman of Tekoah in chapter 14?
3. How does II Samuel portray Absalom? See also II Samuel 16:20-22 and 18:9-18.

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Session 13: Exile and Return

Readings:

-- Tanach, Book of II Samuel, chapters 15:14 - chapter 20

Questions and Issues to keep in mind while reading:

1. Evaluate David's response in chapter 15.
2. Is Shimi's curse of David justified?
3. What relation do you see between the rebellion of Absalom and the rebellion of Sheva (chapter 20)?

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Session 14: Establishing the Monarchy

Readings:

-- Tanach, Book of I Kings, chapters 1 - 3

Questions and Issues to keep in mind while reading:

1. How do you account for David's lack of concern at Adonijah's coronation?
2. In chapter 2, how does Solomon solidify the kingship of David?
3. In chapter 3, what is the point of Solomon's threatening to cut the baby in half? See also I Kings 14, I Kings 17, and II Kings 13.
4. What is the implicit attitude of the Books of Kings towards kingship?

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Employment:

Information Center Consultant
Manhattan District Attorney's Office
November, 1987 - present

Programmer/Analyst
Parnassa Software, Media, PA
September, 1986 - October, 1987

Instructor in Bible and Jewish History
Pardes Institute for Jewish Studies, Jerusalem
September, 1980 - May, 1986

Instructor in History
Pelech High School, Jerusalem
September, 1979 - June, 1980

Preceptor in Jewish History
Seminary College of Jewish Studies (J.T.S.)
January, 1977 - June, 1979

Instructor in Jewish History
Summer Institute (J.T.S.)
1977 - 1982

Instructor in Jewish History and Bible
Prozdor (J.T.S.)
September, 1972 - June, 1977

Education:

City College of New York
M.S., Information Systems
February, 1988

Jewish Theological Seminary
A.B.D., Jewish History
May, 1978

Jewish Theological Seminary
M.A., Jewish History
May, 1974

Brooklyn College
B.A., History
September, 1971

HENoch (HERBERT) MILLEN

resume

1246 Brookwood Pl.
Columbus, Ohio 43209
(614)-236-5551

Born: 3/27/39
Married, 3 children

EDUCATION:

Doctor of Hebrew Literature, 1974
Bernard Revel Graduate School of Yeshiva University

Dissertation: Bahya ben Asher: The Exegetical and
Ethical Components of His Writings

Simcha (ordination), 1962
RIETS, Yeshiva University

M.A. Jewish Philosophy, 1962
Bernard Revel Graduate School of Yeshiva University

B.A. English, 1960 (Minor: Hebrew)
Yeshiva University

BACKGROUND:

Education

Principal for N-12 grades, responsible for all aspects
of Hebrew and English curricula, Hebrew and English
staff and for recruitment of students

Develop educational programs to serve specific needs
of students, i.e., Gifted and Talented Children's
Program, Independent Judaic Studies Program

Organize educational seminars for faculty and super-
vise classroom activities

Rabbinate

Serve as Rabbi to congregation supervising: adult
education programs, "shabbatonim" and congregational
youth activities

Function as Baal Koreh and Baal Tefillah

Other

Teach undergraduate and graduate courses in Jewish
Philosophy and Bible

Organize youth activities in the U.S. and Canada,
developing Shabbaton weekends and Torah Leadership
Seminars

CURRENT
ACTIVITIES:

Vice President of Educators Council of America, 1983-
present

Member of National Placement Committee of Educators
Council of America, 1984-present

EXPERIENCE:

- 1987-present FACULTY, WEXNER HERITAGE FOUNDATION, New York, NY
--involves intensive lecturing and teaching with leadership groups of various Jewish Federations in the United States. September, 1987-May 1988: designed and taught a ten month course to a group from the Columbus (Ohio) Federation on "The Development of the Jewish Nation and Its Leadership: Selected Studies in the Hebrew Bible."
- 1987-present Columbus Torah Academy
Columbus, Ohio
Headmaster
- 1983-1987 Westchester Day School
Mamaroneck, New York
Headmaster for N-8 school, with an enrollment of 380 students
- 1979-1983 Yeshivat Akiva/Akiva Hebrew Day School
Lathrup Village, Michigan
Principal for N-12 school, working with Executive and Education Boards
--Introduced various programs, including Cemrel Math Program
--Developed nursery school
--Oversaw increase of enrollment from 208 students in 1979 to 350 in 1982
- 1976-1979 Sholom Hartman Institute of Judaic Studies
Jerusalem, Israel
Associate Director, responsible for administration as well as for educational research and for lecturing at various educational institutions
- 1963-1976 Hamilton Hebrew Academy
Hamilton, Ontario
Vice Dean & Administrator (1970-76), organizing and instructing on-going educational seminars for teaching staff and teaching special programs in senior classes
Founding Principal (1963-69), establishing K-9 day school and developing enrollment from 14 to more than 220

- 1963-1976 Adas Israel Congregation
Hamilton, Ontario
- Rabbi, serving congregation in full-time capacity and then in part-time capacity while engaged as Vice Dean and Administrator of Hamilton Hebrew Academy
- 1963-1972 Yeshiva University Synagogue Youth
Toronto, Ontario
- Director, responsible for all aspects of programming and for administration of annual budget
- 1961-1963 Great Neck Synagogue School
Great Neck, New York
- Assistant Principal/Teacher
- 1957-1962 Yeshiva University Youth Bureau
New York, New York
- Youth Leader
- OTHER:
- 1981-1983 Regional Vice President of Educators Council of America
- 1980-1983 Member of the VAAD (Orthodox Council of Rabbis of Detroit)
- 1977-1979 Member, Board of Directors for Pelech
Jerusalem, Israel
- 1972-1974 Member, Board of Directors for Or Chaim (Bnei Akiva
Yeshiva High School)
Toronto, Ontario
- 1969-1970 Instructor, undergraduate and graduate courses in
Jewish Philosophy and Bible
Israel Torah Research Institute

CURRICULUM VITAE

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Education

1971 B.A. Yeshiva University,
1974 Ordination Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological
Seminary
1972 - 1975 Fellow in Talmud at Yeshiva University

Employment

1976 - 1978 Instructor, Lincoln Square Yeshiva
1978 - 1979 Director, Lincoln Square Yeshiva
1979 - present Founder, Director, and Instructor,
Drisha Institute for Jewish Education
1981 - present Founder and Director of Drisha Summer Institute
1984 - present Founded Drisha Fellowship Program

Teaching Interests

Bible - especially narrative portions
Talmud - a conceptual approach
Prayer - the philosophy of prayer
Topics involving the intersection of Jewish law and
ethical/philosophical concerns (i.e. privacy, truth-telling,
self-interest and social concern)

WEXNER HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Professor Regina Stein

St. Louis/ 1990 - 1991 Academic Year

A Study of the Bible: The Stories of Genesis and Jonah

The Bible is the repository of Jewish memory and imagination. It tells us who we are as people and as Jews. It explores our identity and our relationships with God and each other. It makes claims about the meaning of history, the nature of free will, responsibility, sexuality, good and evil, sin and punishment.

We will begin with a session on the Book of Jonah and explore the questions of universalism versus particularism, sin and punishment, and the nature of prophecy. Does God have a double standard in responding to the sins of Jews and non-Jews?

Most of the Bible is devoted to the relationship between God and the Jewish people, yet the first eleven chapters of Genesis are completely universal. Why? How do we explain the shift? Does it reflect the same double standard?

After briefly reviewing the Creation chapter, we will study the Garden of Eden story which is a powerful and enduring influence on the Western world's understanding of sin, human sexuality, and gender roles. Does it give divine sanction to the subordination of women? Are people sinful by nature?

Then we will explore the Flood narrative and ask why a God who perceived earthly creations as "very good" would choose to destroy them. What might prevent God from ever destroying them again? Are people any different after the flood?

The final episode preceding God's covenantal call to Abraham is the Tower of Babel story. What motivates the people to build? Isn't God over-reacting here? Does the punishment fit the crime? How does this story serve as the bridge between the universal themes of Genesis and the rest of the Bible?

A session on the women of Genesis will give us an opportunity to paint in broader strokes as we look at the matriarchs, Hagar, and Dinah. Do these women have stories of their own or are they secondary characters, marginal to the primary focus of the Biblical story-teller?

Finally, we will take a look at some of the characters who are excluded from the covenantal relationship between God and Israel. Is this God's doing or theirs? What determines who is included and who is excluded from the covenant?

Note: Text assignments for some sessions will overlap, but your emphasis and perspective should make each reading experience unique.

Session 1: The Book of Jonah

Readings:

-- Tanach, Book of Jonah, complete

Questions and Issues to keep in mind while reading:

1. Why does Jonah refuse to prophesy the destruction of Nineveh?
2. Compare the actions of Jonah to those of the sailors and the king of Nineveh. Who is the hero of the story? Why?
3. Why do we read the story of Jonah on Yom Kippur?



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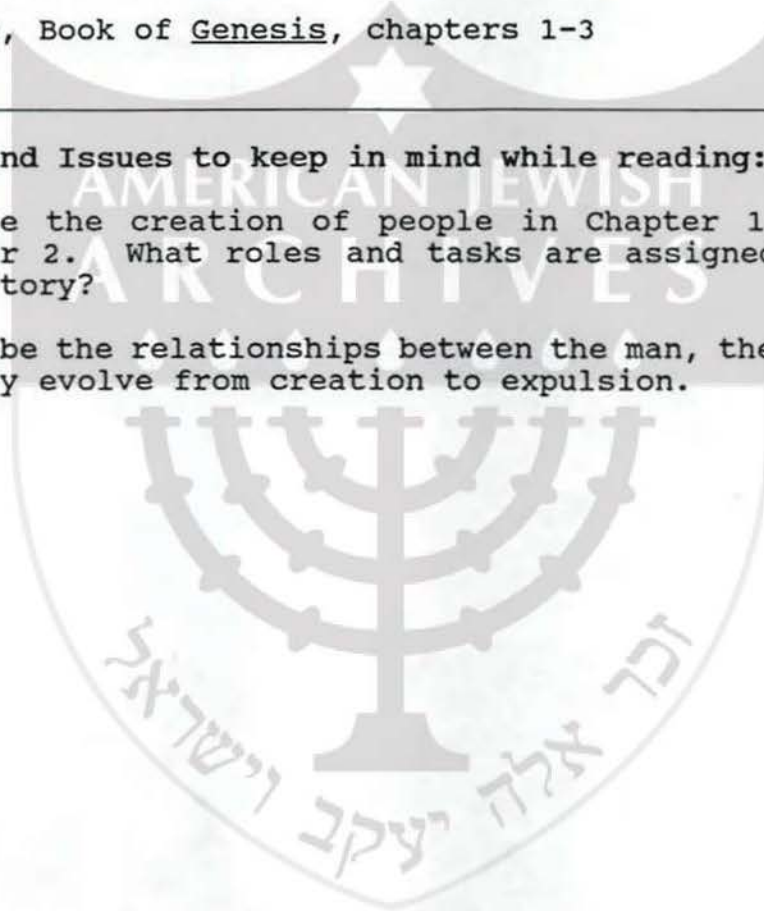
Session 2: Man and Woman in the Garden

Readings:

-- Tanach, Book of Genesis, chapters 1-3

Questions and Issues to keep in mind while reading:

1. Compare the creation of people in Chapter 1 with that in Chapter 2. What roles and tasks are assigned to humans in each story?
2. Describe the relationships between the man, the woman and God as they evolve from creation to expulsion.



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Session 3: The Flood and the Tower

Readings:

-- Tanach, Book of Genesis, chapter 6:5 - 11:9

Questions and Issues to keep in mind while reading:

1. What is the purpose of the prohibition against eating blood? Why does it appear only after the flood?
2. What is the point of the Tower of Babel story?



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Session 4: The Women of Genesis

A. SARAH AND HAGAR

Readings:

- Tanach, Book of Genesis, chapters 12:10-20
16
17:15-22
18:1-15
21:1-21

B. REBECCA

Readings:

- Tanach, Book of Genesis, chapters 24
26:34 - 27:17
27:41-46

C. RACHEL & LEAH

Readings:

- Tanach, Book of Genesis, chapters 29
30:1-24

D. DINAH

Readings:

- Tanach, Book of Genesis, chapter 34

Questions and Issues to keep in mind while reading:

1. In general, how do you see the role of women in the Book of Genesis? What is their relationship to the covenant?
2. For each of the women mentioned, describe her personality or character in one sentence. What does she contribute to the story?

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Session 5: The Ins and Outs of the Book of Genesis

A. LOT

Readings:

- Tanach, Book of Genesis, chapters 11:26-32
12:1-9
13:1-18
19

B. ISHMAEL

Readings:

- Tanach, Book of Genesis, chapters 16:7-16
17:9-27
21:9-21
25:1-18

C. ESAU

Readings:

- Tanach, Book of Genesis, chapters 25:21-34
27
28:6-9
32:4-17
35:27-29
36:1-9

D. LABAN

Readings:

- Tanach, Book of Genesis, chapters 28:1-5
29:1-30
30:25 - 32:1

Questions and Issues to keep in mind while reading:

1. Though born into the covenantal family of Abraham, each of these characters is excluded from the covenant. Why? Is it a function of their actions, of geography, of the characters with whom they interact?
2. Describe each of these characters in one sentence.



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Rabbi Henoch Millen

St. Louis/ 1990-1991 Academic Year

BIBLICAL NARRATIVE FROM EXODUS TO NUMBERS

In the five sessions spent learning together, we will examine some of the crucial biblical narratives in our development as a nation: Our shared suffering and redemption; the receiving of the law; the ups and downs of the desert experience; and the challenges to Moses' leadership.

Our concentration will be on a careful reading of the text as we will hone in on specific verses and passages. I would suggest that in your preparation you note the difficult passages or questions that arise as you read the text. Also, it would be helpful to read the material at least twice. Your own critical analysis of the text constitutes one of the major commentaries to be used during class. Other talmudic, midrashic and philosophical material will be handed out by me at the beginning of each session.

The text to be used is The Living Torah, a translation based on traditional Jewish sources with notes, introduction, maps, charts, (etc.) by Aryeh Kaplan.

Session #6: Israel's Enslavement In Egypt
 The Fulfillment of the Divine Promise

Readings:

-- Exodus, Chapters 1-6

Questions and Issues to keep in mind while reading:

1. In what ways are the books of Genesis and Exodus similar? Different?
2. What events in Genesis foreshadow the Egyptian experience?
3. How do you view the exile and enslavement of the Jews? As punitive or as educational?

4. What were the factors which motivated Egypt's persecution and enslavement of Israel? Pay particular attention to Exodus, 1:9-10
5. What is the importance in relating the Moses episodes in Exodus, 2:11-22?
6. What is significant in God's revelation to Moses from a thornbush? Exodus, 3:2-4
7. Considering Moses penchant for justice and the downtrodden, how do you understand his refusal to accept God's mission to be a leader of Israel? Exodus, 3:11-16; 4:1-17
8. How do you understand the episode of God's wanting to kill Moses at the inn? Exodus, 4:24-26



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Rabbi Henoeh Millen

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Session #7: The Process of Redemption and
Its Moral Implications

Readings:

-- Exodus, Chapters 6-12
Chapter 34

Questions and Issues to keep in mind while reading:

1. What was the purpose of the plagues? What theme is consistently emphasized? What other motives are given for specific plagues?
2. What is the purpose of miracles? Are they convincing? Provide proofs for your answer.
3. What was the idea of God in commanding the Israelites to request valuables from the Egyptians before their departure from Egypt? (Exodus, Chapters 3:21-22; 11:2-12; 35; 36)
4. What connection does Shabbat have with the Exodus?
5. What universal lessons does the enslavement in Egypt and our redemption have for us as a people?

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Rabbi Hensch Millen

St. Louis/ 1990-1991 Academic Year

Session #8: Post Redemption Problems and Adjustments

Readings:

- Exodus, Chapter 13:17-21
Chapter 14:1-31
Chapter 15:20-27
Chapter 16
Chapter 17
-

Questions and Issues to keep in mind while reading:

1. Why did God choose the circuitous route for the people? What prompted Egypt's pursuit of the Jews after they had realized the injustice they caused to the Jews?
2. How do you account for the attitude of the Israelites at the Red Sea?
3. What lessons can be learned from the Marah incident?
4. How do you view the miracle of the Manna? Is it a regimen of austerity or affluence?
5. Is Amalek a particular or a universal problem for us as Jews? For mankind as a whole?

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Rabbi Henoeh Millen

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Session #9: The Sin of the Golden Calf and its Aftermath
The Breaking of the Tablets

Readings:

-- Exodus, Chapter 32
Chapter 33
Chapter 34:27-34

Questions and Issues to keep in mind while reading:

1. Who was responsible for building of the golden calf?
What was Aaron's idea and role in the entire incident? Isn't it a bit incongruous for a people who had the high of the divine revelation to sink to such lows?
2. How does Moses react to the people, to Aaron and to God in this episode?
3. Do you think Moses breaking of the tablets was a spontaneous or premeditated action? Was it an act of indignation or a sort of "shock treatment" for the nation?
4. What was the meaning or symbolism of the phenomenon of Moses' radiance and the veil? Where did Michelangelo go wrong?

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Rabbi Henoeh Millen

St. Louis/ 1990-1991 Academic Year

Session #10: Crises and Rebellions:
The Process and Struggle to Become a Nation

Readings:

-- Numbers, Chapters 11-17
Chapter 20:1-13

Questions and Issues to keep in mind while reading:

1. What were the causes of the people's complaints and unhappiness? (Numbers, 11:1-11) How do you understand God's response in his promise of meat?
2. Eldad and Medad, rebels or true prophets? How do you understand Joshua's plea to Moses and Moses' response?
3. What was Miriam's complaint against Moses? Wasn't she correct and doesn't her punishment seem overly severe?
4. Where did the spies go wrong?
5. Was the decree of God upon the people overkill? To what extent was Moses successful in his intervention on behalf of the people?
6. What do you think motivated Korach in his rebellion against Moses and Aaron?
7. How do you understand Moses and Aaron's sin at the Rock (Numbers, 20:1-13) and God's subsequent punishment?