



*Moshe Greenberg*

# *Tehillah le-Moshe*

Biblical and Judaic Studies  
in Honor of  
Moshe Greenberg

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## Moshe Greenberg: An Appreciation

### I

For nearly fifty years, Professor Moshe Greenberg has had an important impact on biblical scholarship through the content of his research, his teaching, and as a model of engaged scholarship. Moshe has summed up his lifelong goals as a scholar in the introduction to his *Studies in the Bible and Jewish Thought* (224). They are:

to be true to the task of the classical Jewish Bible scholar: to enhance the Bible in the eyes of the faith/cultural community by (a) seeking to set forth existential values embodied in biblical narratives, laws and rituals; (b) pointing to the continuities and transformations of the biblical materials in later Jewish creativity. At the same time . . . to be true to the task of the critical scholar in (a) using historical, linguistic, and comparative methods that seek to understand the Bible in its ancient context; (b) presenting and dealing with material uncongenial to my predilections; (c) reviewing the goals and reflecting on the assumptions underlying the procedures of criticism (224, p. xv).

These goals mirror Moshe's ideal for Jewish biblical scholarship as consisting of academic-professional scholarship accompanied by

Humility—that is, an openness to the new and the innovative, and to continuing debate that entails modesty and lack of dogmatism.

Respect for the text, expressed in a systematic search for its "truth," in the universal-human sense as well as the particularistically Jewish; for the wealth of meanings, past and present, contained in it; and for its art of expression.

Finally, and most important, a sense of responsibility toward a community whose members, the scholars' brethren, await their disclosure to them of the Scriptural message (224, p. 7).

### II

Moshe has devoted most of his scholarly attention to the phenomenology of biblical religion and law, the theory and practice of interpreting biblical

*Editors' note:* Numbers in parentheses in this appreciation refer the reader to the numbered works in the "Bibliography of the Writings of Moshe Greenberg" (in this volume, pp. xxiii–xxxviii). Wherever possible, quotations are cited from item number 224.

texts, and the role of the Bible in Jewish thought (224, p. xv). His studies in the area of biblical religion include his magisterial survey of Israelite religion in the monarchic period (135), his article on prayer ("Tēfillā") in the *Ḥenṣiq-lōpedyā Miqrāʾūt* (154), and other essays on prayer and on the book of Job. In his study on the refinement of the conception of prayer in the Bible (121), he traces the development of petition and praise away from their roots in the conception that the deity literally needs to be informed of the plight of the worshiper and propitiated by flattery into "a vehicle of humility, an expression of un-self-sufficiency, which in biblical thought, is the proper stance of humans before God." Thus, "[i]n its highest reaches, biblical prayer remains still the embodiment of the awareness of creaturehood, as much a contrast to theurgic incantation as to the self-containedness of human-centered modernism" (224, p. 104).

In his monograph on biblical prose prayers (156), Moshe shows that these prayers reflect the piety of commoners, illustrating the popular conception of God as redresser of wrongs, constant, reliable, trustworthy, and fair. He reasons that the frequency of spontaneous prayer must have sustained a constant sense of God's presence and strengthened the egalitarian tendency of Israelite religion that led to the establishment of the synagogue. The fact that prayer was conceived as analogous to a social transaction between persons fostered an emphasis on sincerity and content, rather than formulation, and may lie at the root of the classical-prophetic view of worship as a gesture whose acceptance depends on the worshiper's adherence to the values of God.

In his "Reflections on Job's Theology" (140), Moshe observes that Job's experience of God's inexplicable enmity could not wipe out his knowledge of God's benignity gained from his earlier experience, and hence he became confused instead of simply rejecting God. Accordingly, the fact that the Bible retains Job as well as Proverbs reflects the capacity of the religious sensibility to affirm both experiences:

One can see in individual as in collective life a moral causality (which the religious regard as divinely maintained . . .): evil recoils upon the evildoers . . . goodness brings blessings. At the same time, the manifestation of this causality can be so erratic or so delayed as to cast doubt on its validity as the single key to the destiny of people and nations. . . . No single key unlocks the mystery of destiny . . . but, for all that, the sober believer does not endorse nihilism. Wisdom, Torah, and Prophets continue to represent for him one aspect of causality in events which he can confirm in his own private experience. But one aspect only. The other stands beyond his moral judgment, though it is still under God: namely, the mysterious or preordained decree of God, toward which the proper attitude is "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in Him (Job 13.15, *qerē*)" (224, pp. 332–33).

The area of biblical law is well illuminated by Moshe's seminal studies of the postulates and social policies underlying biblical law. In his early study,

"Some Postulates of Biblical Criminal Law" (22), he argued that "the law [is] the expression of underlying postulates or values of culture" (224, p. 27) and that differences between biblical and ancient Near Eastern laws were not reflections of different stages of social development but of different underlying legal and religious principles. In "Biblical Attitudes toward Power" (202), he analyzed various economic, social, political, and religious laws in the Torah and showed that their thrust was to disperse authority and prestige throughout society and prevent the monopolization of prestige and political and economic power by narrow elite groups.

In his commentaries on the books of Exodus (70) and Ezekiel (157), and earlier studies leading up to them, Moshe has developed and exemplified his "holistic" method of exegesis. This method is beautifully explicated in the introduction to his commentary on Ezekiel. While building on the source-critical achievements of earlier scholarship, the holistic method redirects attention from the texts' "hypothetically reconstructed elements" to the biblical books as integral wholes, as the products of thoughtful and artistic design conveying messages of their own. "Details of this art . . . and design disclose themselves to the patient and receptive reader who divests himself of preconceptions regarding what an ancient prophet should have said and how he should have said it" (157, p. 26).<sup>1</sup> With this approach, Moshe has recalled scholarly attention to the "received text [which] is the only historically attested datum; it alone has had demonstrable effects; it alone is the undoubted product of Israelite creativity" (70, pp. 4–5). As Moshe showed, since midrashic and later precritical Jewish exegesis operated on the assumption of unitary authorship, they have many insights to offer the holistic commentator.

The recognition of the value of traditional Jewish sources for the holistic method is manifest in Moshe's recourse to postbiblical sources in explicating the biblical text and aspects of ancient Israelite culture. In his early study of Hebrew *sēgullā* and Akkadian *sikiltu* (3), he found the key to the meaning of both words in the Rabbinic Hebrew verb *siggel*. In other studies, he found that the release of the accidental killer from the city of refuge upon the death of the high priest is best clarified by the talmudic explanation that the priest's death constitutes a vicarious expiation of life by life (18); and he explained Ezekiel's dumbness (17) and Rachel's theft of Laban's *terāfim* (27) on the basis of striking parallels from Second Temple times found in Josephus.

On the other hand, Moshe has remained true to his early recognition that the Bible is best understood in light of its ancient Near Eastern context as well as later Jewish tradition. Beginning with his doctoral work on the *Ḥapiru* through the study of biblical law in the light of ancient Near Eastern law, and now throughout his commentary on Ezekiel, Moshe has consistently shown how careful comparative use of the rich trove of texts and artifacts from the

1. This approach was already anticipated in "Some Postulates of Biblical Criminal Law" (22; see 224, pp. 26–27).

ancient Near East can recover the lost meaning of a Hebrew phrase or bring into sharp focus a uniquely Israelite idea.

Moshe's studies of Jewish thought include a masterful survey of the intellectual achievements of medieval Jewish exegesis<sup>2</sup> as well as investigations of rabbinic reflections on defying illegal orders (77), *biḥāhōn* (224, pp. 63–74), and attitudes toward members of other religions (96, 228). He argues that a Scripture-based religion can and must avoid fundamentalism by being selective and critical in its reliance on tradition and by re-prioritizing values (see esp. 173, pp. 11–27, 49–67; 228, pp. 23–35). In his study of "Jewish Conceptions of the Human Factor in Biblical Prophecy" (196), Moshe shows that from the Talmud to the Renaissance, classical Jewish exegetes and thinkers who never doubted the divine inspiration and authorship of the Torah and other prophetic writings nevertheless acknowledged the literary evidence of human shaping of the text. They did so despite

the great temptation to absolutize the authority of Scripture and silence the incessant challenges to its integrity and validity by categorically asserting that all is simply divine dictation. To modern Jewish critics they are a model of reverence toward the source of religion that does not entail blindness to the complexity of that source or the adoption of farfetched cloaking of that complexity. The tradition of honest and sober reasoning, accommodating articles of faith to (literary) facts, stands the critics in good stead as they confront a wave of simplistic dogmatic piety that seeks to impose itself on the entire community, stifling curiosity and independence of judgment (224, p. 416).

Underlying all of Moshe's scholarly contributions is the premise that scholarship is never to be viewed as an end in itself. Rather, it is a mirror of humanity's variegated intellectual and spiritual achievements, societal values, and cultural postulates, and remains incomplete and diminished unless it informs and enlightens the present reality. Moshe's most intimate and meaningful reality has always been Jewish peoplehood—a fact that not only determined his choice of academic study but that also was the decisive element in his settling in Israel. And yet his reality has never been parochial, for it encompasses all of humankind. Most telling of the humanistic outlook of his Jewish scholarship and identity is his statement in a public debate in the 1980s concerning a proposed cut in support of Israeli universities by the Ministry of Education. Departments of ancient Near Eastern studies were singled out as a luxury too expensive to maintain in a time of retrenchment. In defense of Assyriology, Moshe wrote:

Contextual study of the Bible and Talmud (and even more so, our later literature whose dependence upon its surroundings is well known)—that is, inte-

2. "The Hebrew Bible and the Jewish Heritage," presented at a conference on "The Hebrew Bible: Sacred Text and Literature," sponsored by Wayne State University (Detroit), October 30, 1988. The article is not yet published.

grated study of the cultures of Sumer, Babylonia, Assyria, Hatti, Egypt, Persia, Greece and Rome—is of major importance in clarifying the commonality between us and the rest of humanity, as well as what distinguishes us from them. And we are in need of both clarifications. What is unique—which cannot be determined without knowing what we share with the nations—we will adopt as a substantive element of our identity. Our right of existence, upon which so many cast doubt, should be clear at least to us, if only we were cognizant of the unique values we contribute to the cultural trove of mankind. Observing what we share with the nations will help build bridges between us and them. Recognition of the commonality in the past will make it easier to achieve a proper balance in our relations with the nations in the present (172, p. 22).

Moshe's steadfast dedication to biblical scholarship and Jewish thought is surpassed only by his passionate devotion to teaching. He has always taken teaching seriously. Already known as an excellent teacher from his days on the staff at the Jewish Theological Seminary's Camp Ramah and JTS's high school department, in his first year on the Penn faculty he read Gilbert Highet's *The Art of Teaching* to help him meet the new challenges of teaching in a university. Imparting knowledge to others is a joyful affirmation of his very being, his most sublime *raison d'être*, whereby he creates an existential bond between himself and his fellow human being. In the classroom setting, Moshe is the consummate pedagogue who teaches by personal example. With beguiling simplicity, he reduces complex matters into their basic components and thus exposes fundamental issues, all the while allowing his students to be keenly aware of his analytical thought processes. With great patience, he prods his students to discover the unstated postulates and hypotheses underlying various scholarly positions so as to discern the true nature of the differing argumentations. With methodological rigor, sound judgment, and common sense, he trains his students to evaluate carefully the many types of evidence bearing on the issues, thereby enabling them to mature into independent critical thinkers. But to Moshe, scholarship is only a means to an end, and he is never content to grapple with methodological issues alone. He imbues his students with the broad humanistic significance of the ancient texts in the hope of creating thoughtful and caring scholars whose intellectual work will have relevance to the present.

Moshe's genuine love of teaching is also predicated on his concern for the well-being of others. For this reason, his teaching has always extended beyond the confines of the university classroom, encompassing every aspect of his interrelationships with students, colleagues, acquaintances, and friends, in individual meetings or informal study circles at school and at home. His generosity with his time, the depth of his concern, and his eagerness to assist are hallmarks of his pedagogy, a pedagogy based not only on teaching a given subject matter but on offering guidance for life itself. His advice is always measured and thoughtful. Students and colleagues have benefited not only from his insights on ways to index one's dissertation prior to the advent of the computer,

on the chairing of committees and departments, and on the art of teaching, but also on the art of living in all of its complexities. All who have spoken with Moshe can attest that even the most casual conversation with him is a personally edifying experience.

To be sure, Moshe's educational mission has never been confined to his students and acquaintances but has always extended to the public at large. His commitment to bringing the results of scholarship to the public has taken many forms: from penning popular articles in American Jewish newspapers and magazines to participating in the Jewish Publication Society's committee for translating *The Writings (Ketuvim)* (1966–82) and serving as the *Encyclopaedia Judaica's* division editor for Law and Society in the Bible (1968–71); from preparing studies such as *Understanding Exodus* (1969) to assist educators in developing curricula based on the best of traditional and modern scholarship to publishing articles and lectures on teaching the Bible in schools (a subject to which no academic biblical scholar has devoted so much attention); from his efforts in his own Department of Bible at Hebrew University to train high school Bible teachers and his role as advisor to the Ministry of Education to his teaching at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and at the Seminary for Judaic Studies in Jerusalem.

### III

The experiences that Moshe has drawn upon in shaping his approach to scholarship are many and profound. Most formative was the nurturing influence of his parents and the home environment in which he was raised. He was born in Philadelphia on July 10, 1928 (22 Tammuz, 5688), to Rabbi Simon and Betty (Davis) Greenberg, who served the Conservative congregation Har Zion Temple. Their younger son, Daniel, was born in 1934. The Greenbergs' choice of Hebrew names for their sons in the English-speaking diaspora and their decision to raise them in a Hebrew-speaking home (each parent having spent time in Palestine to master spoken Hebrew) contributed greatly to Moshe's strong sense of Jewish identity. Rabbi and Mrs. Greenberg's passion for Judaic studies, Zionism, the Hebrew language, Jewish education, the ethical dimension of Judaism, and the harmony between Judaism and American democratic ideals were successfully transmitted to Moshe, and this passion formed the cornerstone of the commitments that would later manifest themselves in his activities and writings. Moshe's brother thinks of him as combining their father's philosophical depth and willingness to reexamine old conclusions with their mother's constant striving for excellence.

Moshe also benefited from the tutelage of excellent teachers who also served as advisors and mentors at important junctures in his life. The first of them was Samuel Leib Blank, a Hebrew author from Bessarabia living in Philadelphia.

Since there were no Conservative Jewish day schools in the city when Moshe was a youngster, his parents engaged Mr. Blank as a private tutor for his formal Jewish education. He came to the Greenbergs' home over a period of about eight years, twice a week, early in the morning, before Moshe left for public school. He taught Moshe Bible with Rashi, Mishna, Bialik's *Sefer hā-ʾAggādā*, essays on Jewish national thought, literature, and grammar. He required Moshe to hand in a "written lecture" for critique at every session. In his critique, Mr. Blank would delete superfluous words so as to initiate Moshe in the "secret of conciseness" of Hebrew. This practice left its impact in the concise style that characterizes Moshe's writing to this day.

The Greenbergs and other parents who were devoted to the revival of Hebrew and spoke it with their children established a circle of Hebrew-speaking youth, called *ʾAḥāvā*, so that their children would not feel isolated. This group, about a dozen strong, gathered from all parts of the city in each other's homes on Saturday nights and held discussions about culture and nationalism. In the early 1940s, Moshe as a young teenager was sent to the newly-opened summer camp "Massad," which was established for Hebrew-speaking youth. At Massad, he was exposed for the first time to hundreds of young Hebrew speakers like himself, most of them students at yeshivot in New York where their large numbers prevented them from feeling any strangeness in speaking Hebrew. There, life-long friendships were formed, many of which would be renewed later when Moshe settled in Israel, with people such as the linguist Haim Blanc, the pathologist David Meyer, and the poet T. Carmi.

As an undergraduate at the University of Pennsylvania, Moshe began a long association with one of the great biblical and ancient Near Eastern scholars of the generation, Ephraim Avigdor Speiser, who was to have a profound influence on Moshe's scholarly direction. During his final years of high school and his first years at Penn (which he entered in 1945), Moshe had become enamored of Spanish and Portuguese. He spent the summer of 1947 studying in Mexico to perfect his Spanish and roomed in the home of a Jewish woman. At her request, Moshe taught her son, who was approaching Bar Mitzvah age, the basic elements of Judaism. Upon Moshe's return to Penn in the fall, he consulted with Prof. George Seiver, Chair of the Romance Languages Department, seeking advice about majoring in Spanish. When Seiver asked why he wanted to do so, Moshe was taken by surprise; it was a question he had never thought through. So he improvised an answer based on his recent experience in Mexico: "Maybe one day I'll teach in a Hebrew school in South America." Prof. Seiver, surprised at the answer, asked Moshe to tell him something about his background. When he learned that Moshe spoke Hebrew fluently, he suggested that Moshe contact Penn's Department of Oriental Studies. He met with the chair of the department, Speiser, who described the department's offerings in the history of Hebrew, philological-historical study of the Bible, Akkadian, Sumerian, and Arabic—with every field presided over by a noted scholar:

besides Speiser, there were Zellig S. Harris in Hebrew linguistics, S. N. Kramer in Sumerian, and Giorgio Levi Della Vida in Arabic. Speiser's description of the programs of study opened new horizons before Moshe's eyes and he was captivated. He registered in the department and so returned to his Hebrew roots.

Speiser became Moshe's primary instructor. Moshe would later cite him as one of "the two men who most profoundly shaped my understanding of the task and method of biblical scholarship . . . His pedagogy tempered rigorous discipline with unstinting consideration for his students, and set a standard for lifelong emulation" (157, p. ix).

Moshe's other scholarly model was the Hebrew University's Prof. Yehezkel Kaufmann. Kaufmann's tutelage was via his writings. While an undergraduate at Penn, Moshe came upon the first volume of Kaufmann's *Tôledôt hă-<sup>2</sup>Emûnâ ha-Yisrē'êlîit* in his father's library. He was enthralled by Kaufmann's conceptual, critical, and polemical power. When he realized that Kaufmann's work was unknown to the non-Hebrew world of biblical scholarship, he decided to make it known, starting with Speiser. He wrote his senior thesis on Kaufmann's treatment of the history of the Israelite priesthood, showing the superiority of Kaufmann's views over the views of others. Eventually, with Speiser's prodding and aided by Mr. Blank's earlier lessons in conciseness, he published a condensed version of his thesis as an article in *The Journal of the American Oriental Society* in 1950 (1). This was Moshe's first scholarly article and the first appearance of Kaufmann's views in English.

Moshe sent a letter with an offprint of the article to Kaufmann in Jerusalem and thus began a correspondence that continued until Kaufmann's death in 1963.<sup>3</sup> Kaufmann expressed the hope that all of his *Tôledôt* would be translated into English. Moshe accepted the challenge, convinced that Kaufmann had advanced biblical scholarship but that as long as non-Hebrew-reading scholars were unfamiliar with the totality of his views and their rationale it would be necessary to present them repeatedly. He began by translating Kaufmann's article "The Bible and Mythological Polytheism" for the *Journal of Biblical Literature* (2) and his chapter "The Biblical Age" for Leo W. Schwarz's *Great Ages and Ideas of the Jewish People* (11) and eventually published his English abridgement of the first seven volumes of *Tôledôt* as *The Religion of Israel: From Its Beginnings to the Babylonian Exile*, in 1960 (21).<sup>4</sup> When Moshe finally met Kaufmann in person in 1954, he was struck by the contrast between the intellectual power and polemical sharpness of Kaufmann the writer and his personal humility.

In 1949, Moshe received his B.A. from Pennsylvania (he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa a year earlier) and married his high-school sweetheart, Evelyn

3. Highlights of the correspondence are presented in Moshe's lecture "Yehezkel Kaufmann: Personal Impressions" (211, pp. 4-6).

4. Moshe describes the procedures he followed in abridging *Tôledôt* in the preface to his English abridgement, *The Religion of Israel* (21).

Gelber. He continued in the Department of Oriental Studies as a doctoral student, working closely with Speiser. He devoted his dissertation to the subject of the Hapiru (or Habiru), combining his interests in Bible, Assyriology, and Semitics. His fellow students included the Assyriologist J. J. Finkelstein, with whom Moshe would later edit a volume of Speiser's essays.

Since Moshe's studies at Penn covered the Bible only in the context of the ancient Near East, he decided in 1950 to enroll simultaneously at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (where his father was then professor of education and would later become Vice-Chancellor) in New York, so as to satisfy the other half of his ambition, to study what later developed out of the Bible: the impression that it made on Jewish and world culture. The Chancellor of JTS, Louis Finkelstein, had foreseen that the post-World War II wave of sympathy for Judaism would lead to the establishment of chairs in Judaica in American universities. To prepare scholars qualified to occupy them, he created a program of special studies for students who were engaged in doctoral programs in pertinent fields at other institutions. At JTS they would receive intensive training in classical Judaica and be exempt from practical rabbinical courses. Moshe and his fellow students (Arthur Hyman, Fritz Rothschild, David Winston, and Arthur Cohen) studied Bible with H. L. Ginsberg, liturgy with Shalom Spiegel, Jewish thought with A. J. Heschel, and Talmud with Shraga Abramson and Saul Lieberman.

Moshe completed both programs in 1954, receiving his Ph.D. from Penn and rabbinical ordination from JTS. The Seminary offered him a stipend for postdoctoral research in Talmud, and Speiser offered him an appointment at the University of Pennsylvania to teach Hebrew of all periods. Drawn to the teaching of languages, Moshe chose Penn, and thus his academic career began. As the first Jewish biblical scholar appointed to a position in a secular university after World War II, his appointment was an important milestone in the development of Jewish Studies in American universities and in the realization of Louis Finkelstein's vision.

In the summer of 1954, Moshe visited Israel for the first time. He was invited to lecture in Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv about the Hapiru and the Hebrews and was astonished by the huge crowds that attended; he recognized for the first time the difference between the community of those interested in the Bible and its world in Israel and the community in America. The experiences of that summer planted the seed that eventuated, sixteen years later, in the Greenbergs' settling in Israel and Moshe's joining the faculty of the Hebrew University.

Moshe recalls his years on the faculty at Penn (1954-70), especially the first decade, as a period of "professional maturation and widening of horizons in the exotic and peaceful hothouse of the Oriental Studies Department."<sup>5</sup> He taught Hebrew language, Bible and biblical history, epigraphy, courses in

5. This comment is from Moshe's remarks at the Hebrew University's reception honoring him on the occasion of his retirement, June 6, 1996.

Judaica such as *ṭaggādā*, and tannaitic texts, and Jewish history. He began to publish articles, worked on his translation of Kaufmann, and wrote his innovative biblical Hebrew textbook, *Introduction to Hebrew*, that was published in 1965 (58). He edited the Journal of Biblical Literature Monograph Series from 1959 to 1966. The department attracted increasing numbers of graduate students, and Moshe exercised a profound personal as well as scholarly influence on many of them. The department's weekly faculty seminar on "Interconnections of Oriental Civilizations" and the Philadelphia Oriental Club, drawing together scholars of the Near East, India, and the Far East were an ongoing stimulus to intellectual breadth. Speiser fostered an atmosphere of intellectual independence to such an extent that when Moshe presented a paper dissenting from one of Speiser's cherished theories, it never occurred to Moshe to suppress his disagreement, and Speiser proudly cited this to students as a testimony to the freedom of expression that characterized the department (224, p. 270, note).

Recognition came to Moshe quickly. He became a full professor by 1961. The same year he was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship and served as a visiting lecturer at the Hebrew University, where he found the intellectual collegiality to be both stimulating and rewarding. In 1965 he succeeded Speiser as A. M. Ellis Professor of Hebrew and Semitic Languages and Literatures. In the next few years, he served as Visiting Professor of Bible once a week at JTS (1966–70), was elected to membership in the Biblical Colloquium, and was elected a Fellow of the American Academy for Jewish Research. In 1968, he was a recipient of the Danforth Foundation's E. H. Harbison Award for Gifted Teaching, an award based on the teacher's concern for the student as an individual and his grasp of the art of teaching; it was presented to him in Washington, D.C., where the recipients were also received at the White House by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Following Speiser's death in 1965, Moshe became increasingly involved in academic leadership and public affairs. He became the chairman of the department and the first director of Penn's Near East Center. He lectured and published articles, based on Jewish primary sources, addressing the great issues of the day: civil rights and the Vietnam War. He soon realized that his feelings of obligation to accept roles of academic leadership and to address the great issues that embroiled university campuses and the public at large had become a permanent feature of his life. He concluded that he would be more personally fulfilled if he could devote his energies and use these impulses on behalf of the Jewish people. To do so, he felt, he ought to accept a full-time position at JTS or at the Hebrew University. Following a year as Visiting Professor of Bible at the Hebrew University in 1968–69, Moshe and Evy decided that Israel was where their future and that of their family lay. In 1970, they settled in Israel.

In Jerusalem Moshe joined the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's distinguished Bible Department and set about trying to help advance the study of Bible within a society in which it is the most fundamental cultural asset, part

of the curriculum in public as well as private schools, and the focus of ongoing public debate. He exercised a substantial influence on the department both through his personal example and in his capacity as chairman for four years (1972–76), introducing new courses in such areas as biblical thought and theology and postbiblical Jewish exegesis. He made a concerted effort to train and encourage young students to enter the field of biblical scholarship and to prepare graduates well for teaching the Bible in high schools.

Outside the university Moshe served as an advisor to the Ministry of Education from 1971 to 1981, helping to bring the results of modern scholarship into the teaching of the Bible in public schools. Since 1984, he has served part-time as Professor of Bible at the Masorti (Conservative) Movement's Beit Midrash Seminary for Judaic Studies, which trains rabbis and educators for the non-Orthodox community in Israel. He also served as a member of the academic councils of the seminary (since 1983) and of the Israel Open University (1982–87) and as a member of the directorate of the World Union of Jewish Studies (1990–93). He chaired the Israel Academy of Sciences' committee for evaluating basic research in Bible (1986; see 182). As he did when he was in the United States, he has expressed himself forthrightly on burning public issues in Israel, always careful to base his positions on his scholarly understanding of Jewish values.

In his most far-reaching undertaking, since 1985, Moshe has been coediting (with Shmuel Ahituv) *Miqra' lē-Yisra'el*, an Israeli commentary series on the Bible conceived in response to the fact that, for all of its distinction in modern biblical scholarship, Israel had rarely produced fully modern commentaries. *Miqra' lē-Yisra'el* is designed to fill that lacuna by presenting scholars, teachers, educated readers, and high school and university students with a Hebrew commentary, written in an accessible style, that draws on all of the resources of modern biblical scholarship in addition to traditional Jewish sources and also presents the Bible's reverberations in later Jewish and general culture.

Alongside all of his public service, Moshe's scholarship has continued unabated and has continued to attract admiration and recognition. The first part of his commentary on Ezekiel in the Anchor Bible series was published in 1983 (157) and received the Biblical Archeology Society Publication Award for "the best commentary on a book of the Old Testament." Moshe received an honorary degree from the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in 1986, was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1987, and spent a year as a Fellow at the Hebrew University's Institute of Advanced Studies in 1988–89. He served as visiting professor at Berkeley (1981–82), Yale (1986–87), and the Russian State University of the Humanities (Moscow, 1991). In 1994, the State of Israel awarded him the Israel Prize in Bible, the highest prize awarded in Israel in recognition of personal achievement and public service. In recognition of his distinguished contributions to Jewish Studies when he was a member of the Penn faculty and since then, he was awarded a Moses

Aaron Dropsie Fellowship at the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Judaic Studies in 1994–95, and an honorary degree in 1996. In 1996, he was also awarded the Hebrew University's Samuel Rothberg Prize for Jewish Education, a prize that his father had received many years earlier. A Hebrew collection of his essays, *On the Bible and Judaism*, edited by Avraham Shapira, was published in 1984 (167), and an English collection, *Studies in the Bible and Jewish Thought*, was published in 1995 (224) by the Jewish Publication Society in its prestigious Scholar of Distinction Series.

#### IV

On a personal level, in addition to his parents' influence, the most profound influence in Moshe's life has been his lifelong companion and soulmate, Evy, and the wonderful family that they created. From the very outset of Moshe's academic life, Evy has been ever present as a sounding board, advisor, comforter, and constant source of encouragement. With her, he has shared his hopes and dreams, his frustrations and doubts, his joys and successes. Evy has devoted her life to Moshe and the accomplishment of his scholarly mission, sparing him many responsibilities so that his work could continue unabated. Over the years, she has graciously opened home and heart to Moshe's many students and colleagues, encouraging the meeting in their home of study groups and learning circles in which she often actively participates. Their sons, Joel, Raphael, and Eitan (born in 1955, 1958, and 1962, respectively) have always been a source of delight and wonder to their parents. Together Moshe and Evy created an environment for their family that would imbue their children with the values and ideals that they both hold dear. Evy supported Moshe's desire to raise their children speaking Hebrew and shared his exhilaration at living as a family in Israel. As their children grew, Moshe took an active role in their intellectual development, always learning with them and from them. Even when they were young, he considered their opinions seriously, and their insightful comments were always appreciated. Upon moving to Israel, as with every immigrant generation, the children began to take a more active part in educating Moshe and Evy about Israeli life. Through them they vicariously "grew up" in Israel, appreciating the forces and influences that shape Israeli youth, thus gaining insight and perspective on the nature of Israeli society. They are rightfully proud of the accomplishments of Joel, the journalist, Rafi, the archaeologist, and Eitan, the musician, and grateful for all they have shared with them.

#### V

In June of 1996, Moshe retired from full-time teaching at the Hebrew University. He continues to teach there and at the Seminary for Judaic Studies part-time. The second part of his commentary on Ezekiel (232), covering chapters

21–37, has just appeared in August, 1997, and he is now at work on the final volume. His retirement will also allow him vigorously to pursue his important editorial work on *Miqra' le-Yisra'el*.

One appropriate way to characterize Moshe Greenberg's achievements would be to point out how well what he has written about Yehezkel Kaufmann applies to him: he has "elevated the discussion of biblical thought above ecclesiastical dogma and partisanship into the realm of the eternally significant ideas" (224, pp. 187–88). Further, he "embodie[s] a passionate commitment to grand ideas, combining the philosopher's power of analysis and generalization with the attention to detail of the philological exegete. His life-work is a demonstration that the study of ancient texts does not necessitate losing contact with the vital currents of the spirit and the intellect" (157, p. ix). To this we may add the following statement from the citation accompanying Moshe's Israel Prize: Moshe's "superb studies show that personal engagement, when controlled by a rigorous ability to criticize one's own theories, not only does not compromise scholarly research but, on the contrary, fructifies it."<sup>6</sup>

As Moshe continues to complete his current projects and to undertake new ones, we join together with all of his students, colleagues, friends, and admirers in wishing him many more years of scholarly creativity in good health and happiness, surrounded by all of his loved ones.<sup>7</sup>

6. *Pirsa le-Yisra'el* (Israel Ministry of Science and Arts / Ministry of Education, Culture, and Sports, 1994) 7.

7. In addition to the sources cited, parts of the preceding are based on Moshe's autobiographical reflections at the Hebrew University's reception honoring him on the occasion of his retirement, June 6, 1996, on information kindly provided by Daniel and Hanna Greenberg, Judah Goldin, Shalom M. Paul, Emanuel Tov, and Yair Zakovitch, and on remarks Moshe has made to the editors over the years.