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NAHUM M. SARNA

STUDIES IN BIBLICAL INTERPRETATION

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Foreword

I

The invitation to write a foreword to this collection of Nahum M. Sarna's studies was an occasion of delight for me. Ever since I studied with him at the Jewish Theological Seminary in the 1960s, I have found Prof. Sarna an inspiring model of *Torah 'im derekh 'eretz,* scholarship combined with *mentschlichkeit.* Rereading the studies that he selected for this volume was an opportunity to experience again the lucidity of his thought, the breadth and insight of his scholarship, his exegetical acumen, and his unsurpassed sensitivity to the ethical and spiritual dimensions of the Bible and its commentaries.

Nahum Sarna is a distinguished member of a small group of American and Israeli scholars who guided Jewish biblical scholarship to maturity in the second half of the twentieth century. As he notes in the preface to this volume, two of the major stimuli for the growth of modern Jewish biblical scholarship have been "research into the languages, literatures, history, religions, cultures, and archaeology of the ancient Near East" and creative research into the rich Jewish exegetical tradition. Sarna and his contemporaries united these two resources in a harmonious blend that is common, even if not universal, today. Yet, this was not always the case.

For reasons that Sarna discusses in "Abraham Geiger and Biblical Scholarship" (1975), when the Jüdische Wissenschaft movement inaugurated the academic study of Judaism in the nineteenth century, it avoided biblical studies altogether. When Jewish academic scholars did

take up the study of the Bible at the end of that century and in the first half of the twentieth century, they were largely stimulated by archaeology and Semitic studies. Although there were exceptions, most made little use of postbiblical Jewish resources in their exposition of the Bible. It was Sarna and his contemporaries, thoroughly trained in postbiblical Judaica as well as ancient Near Eastern languages and literatures, who showed how illuminating this combination of fields can be. It is not only that postbiblical learning provides a valuable resource for understanding the Bible's original meaning, though that is a very important aspect of their methodology; it is a broader vision of what Jewish biblical scholarship should embrace. Citing Gershom Scholem's observation that "Commentary on Scripture became the characteristic expression of Jewish thinking about truth," Sarna spells out this vision in his prescription for a biblical commentary:

> commentary cannot be confined solely to elucidating the text by attempting to rescue the supposed "original meaning". . . through recourse to philological research and recovery of the contemporary cultural milieu in which the works were authored. This approach is without doubt indispensable. It is the *sine qua non* and starting point of any modern interpretive endeavor. But to believe that this alone is determinative is to commit what literary critics call the "intentional fallacy." Throughout the millennia Jewish interpretation of the Hebrew Bible was informed by the abiding consciousness that it was the major source for the national language, the font of all Jewish values, ideals and hopes, and the fountainhead of inspiration for the distinctive lifestyle of the Jew. . . . The literature of Biblical interpretation itself became an essential propaedeutic discipline for the cultivated Jew. This vast, inexhaustible store of exegetical material reinforced and enhanced the study of Tanakh [Bible] as a religious obligation, a spiritual exercise, a mode of worship, and a moral training. ("Writing a Commentary" [1990])

The study of the Bible as "a spiritual exercise. . . and a moral training" is a pervasive theme in Sarna's writings. Repeatedly he shows how God's morality is inherent in the monotheistic idea and how the corollary, that "there is an intimate, in fact, inextricable connection between the sociomoral condition of a people and its ultimate fate," underlies the biblical interpretation of history (*Understanding Genesis,* p. 146). These observations underlie many of Sarna's exegetical insights. In "The Decalogue" (1982) he notes that the Ten Commandments begin with "I am the Lord your God" and conclude with "your neighbor." This framing reflects the Decalogue's interweaving of religious and sociomoral duties. Alone in the ancient world, Israelite law is not strictly secular but treats life holistically: moral offenses against others are simultaneously religious offenses because all are infractions of the divine will. The Decalogue states its injunctions and prohibitions categorically, without specific penalties for violations, because the motivation for observing the law is not—or should not be—fear of punishment but the desire to conform to God's will. Since human society is not utopian, however, the coercive power of the state is indispensable, and elsewhere in the Torah laws with specific penalties are the general rule. In connection with the Psalms he notes that Psalm 1 was placed first in the Psalter, in part because it affirms that "the lives of human beings are ultimately governed by a divinely ordained, universal moral order," an affirmation "that constitutes the ideological basis for any meaningful appeal to God" (*Songs of the Heart,* p. 29). Psalm 92, which does not mention the Sabbath but is recited on that day, must have been selected for that purpose because it interweaves allusions to two central themes of the Sabbath: the creation of the world (vv. 5–9) and justice and righteousness (vv. 8–16), themes which Sarna shows are themselves connected elsewhere in the Bible ("The Psalm for the Sabbath Day" [1962]).

Sarna is a strong comparativist, using ancient Near Eastern studies in a variety of ways. This is evident in all of his books as well as the present volume. He clarifies countless passages in the Bible by reference to ancient Near Eastern literature. In "Epic Substratum in the Prose of Job" (1957) he shows that the prose narrative in the prologue and epilogue of the Book of Job shares so many stylistic, linguistic, and literary features with ancient Ugaritic poetry that it must have been based on an earlier epic poem about Job. By extensive comparison of Psalm 19 with Egyptian and Babylonian literature about the sun-god he shows that the two parts of the psalm use the standard terminology of ancient Near Eastern sun-god literature to praise God and the Torah. But Sarna insists that the point of comparing the Bible and ancient Near Eastern literature is not only to show the similarities but also the differences, which are at least as important an index of cultural configuration. Psalm 19, he argues, is an anti-sun-god polemic that reduces the sun to one of God's creations and shows that all of its attributes belong instead to God and His Torah ("Psalm XIX and the Near Eastern Sun-God Lit-

erature" [1967]). Such creative use of ancient Near Eastern motifs by the Bible is a theme that Sarna points out frequently: Scripture uses materials from ancient Israel's polytheistic neighbors willingly, but never slavishly, always adapting them to biblical beliefs and values. Frequently, as in the psalm, the Bible engages in subtle antipagan polemic, a theme explored in depth in "Paganism and Biblical Judaism" (1977). The Bible's departure from contemporary values is also reflected in its attitude toward the monarchy: Ahab's inability to simply confiscate Naboth's vineyard shows that crown rights in Israel were severely limited in comparison to those of neighboring states ("Naboth's Vineyard" [1997]), and biblical historiography criticizes the kings, rather than glorify them as did that of Egypt and Mesopotamia ("The Biblical Sources for the History of the Monarchy" [1979]). Sarna, following the Israeli scholar Yehezkel Kaufmann (see below) is convinced that, for all of its indebtedness to the ancient world, the Bible constituted a revolutionary break with its moral and spiritual values, and that therein lies its greatness and its impact on history.

Sarna's scholarship is characterized by a strong literary orientation, ferreting out the unifying compositional strategies, recurring motifs, and structure of the biblical text as he explicates it. These aims help explain his reservations about the usefulness of source criticism, the scholarly method that seeks to identify earlier literary sources used in the composition of biblical books. He has certainly recognized the validity of the method in principle. "In its general outlines, the nonunitary origin of the Pentateuch has survived as one of the finalities of biblical scholarship," and isolating the components is indispensable for appreciating the qualities produced when they were combined and harmonized. Nor does Sarna see this as a problem for religious faith. God can work through four documents as effectively as through one, unfolding His revelation in successive stages as well as in a single moment of time (he notes that even the most traditional Jew must admit that this happened in the case of the second division of the Bible, the Prophets, which developed over several centuries). Nevertheless he holds, like Franz Rosenzweig, that "source differentiation . . . alone is inadequate to the appreciation of the Bible as a religious document. . . . Things in combination possess properties and produce qualities neither carried by, nor inherent in, any of the components in isolation. . . . [T]he inspired genius at work behind the interweaving of the originally disparate elements is ultimately of greater significance," and it is only as an integrated whole that the Bible had its impact on Jewish history (*Understanding Genesis,* pp. xxiv f.; "The Bible and Judaic Studies" [1970]*, pp. 39f.). Sarna became increasingly convinced—apparently as he began writing his commentaries—that source criticism is in any case overly hypothetical and of limited value, and that what the final text says is more interesting than its history. Hence, his commentaries are not based on "dissecting a literary corpse," but are concerned with the Bible as "a living literature and a dynamic force in history" (*Genesis: The JPS Torah Commentary,* pp. xvii-xviii; Sarna applies the same approach in his articles on Psalms 19 and 89 [1967 and 1963]; see also "The Anticipatory Use of Information" [1981]).

A number of Sarna's studies, particularly in the "History" section of this volume, illustrate how the Bible functioned as a dynamic force, indeed "as a living organism that perpetually rejuvenates and transforms itself" ("Authority and Interpretation" [1987]). Building on the observation of Wilhelm Bacher, the great historian of Jewish biblical exegesis, that biblical exegesis is "the one indigenous science created and developed by Israel," Sarna shows that parts of the Bible, both legal and nonlegal, were already reinterpreted during the pre-exilic period ("Psalm 89: A Study in Inner Biblical Exegesis" [1963], a seminal article in stimulating current scholarly interest in the subject; "Zedekiah's Emancipation" [1973]). The commentators of the talmudic and medieval periods continued the process. In a typical example, the midrash transforms the enigmatic account in Genesis 21:33 about Abraham planting a tree and worshiping God beside it into an account of how he established a hospice for providing wayfarers with food and shelter. In this way the rabbis made the account exemplify man's sociomoral duties and they elevated the provision of wayfarers into a mode of worshiping God ("Genesis 21:33" [1989]). As Sarna shows in "Authority and Interpretation" [1987]), the rabbis did not shy away from criticizing the morality of biblical heroes. Implicitly they seem to have felt that the written text is not the exclusive source of religious truth, but rather the foundation upon which the edifice of moral truth may be constructed. Or, as they might have preferred to put it: no single passage, but the biblical canon as a whole, functions as normative.

> If the commentators appear to be assuming a stance outside of and over against the text, if they appear to leave room for the play of the intellect and

> the role of conscience and of moral sensibilities, then it must be appreciated that it is the Hebrew Bible itself *in its entirety* [emphasis added—J.H.T.], as a composite work, that developed and honed these faculties, and that sensitized men to the critical standards to which that same text is now being subjected. The claim is that the commentators are simply actualizing what is potentially there all along, but what is potential can be discerned only through a unitary, comprehensive, holistic approach.

Interestingly enough, medieval Jewish commentators often criticized midrashic exegesis, and some observed that the rabbis' interpretation of biblical laws did not accord with their plain meaning. These commentators were fully committed to the halakhic way of life and did not question the rabbis' rulings, only their exegetical derivation. They seemed to hold that the halakhah is an autonomous discipline, independent of exegesis, and the commentator is therefore free to investigate the Bible independently of dogmatic or traditional considerations. Their freedom and intellectual honesty point to a separation of scholarship from matters of faith and law, "a distinction that, alas, is often blurred today." In fact, says Sarna, we have no reason to assume that the medieval Jewish exegetes would necessarily have rejected the critical views of modern scholarship.

> The medieval scholars made the most of all the limited tools at their disposal. But they did not have access, naturally, to the modern sciences of literary and textual criticism and to the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, linguistics, and comparative religion. We simply do not know how they would have reacted had all this material been available to them. To assume a blind disregard of evidence on their part is as unwarranted as it is unfair. (*Understanding Genesis*, p. xxii; "Modern Study of the Bible" [1983]*, p. 27).

The pluralism of the Jewish exegetical tradition, its refusal to absolutize any single stance, is an important theme to Sarna. To him, one of the noblest expressions of rabbinic Judaism is the *Mikra'ot Gedolot*, the Great Rabbinic Bible in which

> [t]he Hebrew text is surrounded by a sea of commentaries of diverse authorship, provenance, dating and exegetical approaches, often mutually incompatible and contradictory. They coexist within the confines of a single page, all accommodated within the framework of a single tradition. ("Writing a Commentary" [1990]).

It would be impossible in the space available to call attention to the contents or highlights of all twenty-seven articles presented in this volume. Let me briefly call attention to a few more of my favorites. The first two papers in the "Psalms" section, surveying the history of research on the Psalms and identifying the groups of musicians who composed and preserved them, are important companion pieces to Sarna's magnificent *Songs of the Heart* (as is his *Encyclopaedia Judaica* article "Psalms" [1972]*). In "Ezekiel 8:17" (1964) Sarna proposes that the puzzling word *zemorah* refers to bands of thugs hired by the rich to dispossess the poor; this calls attention to a "Wild West" aspect of life in ancient Israel. Comments in "Biblical Sources" (1979) and elsewhere discuss the relationship between historicity and the message of the Bible (see also *Understanding Genesis*, p. 52 and, in connection with the fantastic life spans in Genesis, pp. 81–85). "Ancient Libraries and the Ordering of the Biblical Books" (1989), concerning the order prescribed in the Babylonian Talmud for the books of the Bible, discusses the meaning of order in a period when the books of the Bible were written on separate scrolls. "Authority and Interpretation" (1987), cited above, explains why Jewish Bibles place the Book of Chronicles last whereas Malachi comes last in the "Old Testament" of Christian Bibles. One of the most valuable articles is Sarna's magisterial study of "Hebrew and Bible Studies in Medieval Spain" (1971). It shows that even such basic facts as the triliteral character of Hebrew roots were not discovered until the Middle Ages. On the other hand, various linguistic and literary phenomena that were discovered by modern scholarship were already recognized by the medievals (see also "The Interchange of the Prepositions *Beth* and *Min*" [1959]*). The fascinating study "Jewish Bible Scholarship and Translations in the United States" (1988), co-authored with Sarna's son Jonathan, a distinguished historian of American Jewry, explains, among other things, why it was necessary for Jews to produce their own English translations of the Bible. And, finally, there is Sarna's retelling, at the end of the last chapter of this book, of Immanuel of Rome's visionary tour of Heaven and Hell and his discovery of the fate awaiting biblical scholars!

II

Prof. Sarna's approach to scholarship is a distillation of educational experiences that began as far back as he can remember. He was born in

London on March 27, 1923 (10 Nisan, 5683) to Jacob and Millie (née Horonzick) Sarna. His father, a learned Jewish book dealer who knew the German classics as well as Jewish literature, filled his home with books. Sarna was born there, fittingly, in a book-lined room and was taught Bible stories from a young age. His father was also a Zionist leader (Sarna's middle name, Mattityahu, the Hebrew equivalent of Theodor, was chosen in honor of Theodor Herzl). As a youngster Sarna met Jewish leaders and scholars, such as Chaim Weizmann, Vladimir Jabotinsky, Moses Gaster, and Benjamin Maisler (Mazar), who visited his home.

While in elementary school Sarna also attended an intensive Talmud Torah (after-hours Hebrew school) for some thirteen hours a week. He later attended London's all-day Jewish Secondary School which taught both Jewish and secular studies, and he spent an additional two hours a day studying Talmud at a yeshiva. At age sixteen he matriculated at the University of London, having already learned Latin and the English classics and read Edward Gibbon's *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. At the University he studied Rabbinics and Semitics, Bible at Jews' College (London's rabbinical seminary, then a part of the University), general studies at University College, and medieval Hebrew and Arabic in the School of Oriental and African Studies. He received his B.A. with first class honors in 1944, his M.A. in Rabbinic Literature and Languages from the University of London in 1946, and his ordination from Jews' College in 1947. His teachers included Isidore Epstein, Arthur Marmorstein, and Cecil Roth. It was in those years that he discovered Yehezkel Kaufmann, whose writings he found in his father's library after hearing about them from an Orthodox rabbi (though Kaufmann's views are decidedly un-Orthodox). Reading Kaufmann's *Toledot ha-Emunah ha-Yisre'elit (The History of Israelite Religion* opened Sarna's eyes to modern biblical scholarship and exercised a profound influence on him (see "From Wellhausen to Kaufmann" [1961]* and "Ruminations" [1988]*).

Nineteen forty-seven was also the year Sarna married Helen Horowitz, whom he met when the two were teenagers in a religious Zionist youth movement. He was her first Hebrew teacher, and she went on to become a learned Hebraist and Judaica librarian and to maintain an active involvement in all of Sarna's work. The Sarnas' sons David and Jonathan were born, respectively, in 1949 and 1955.

During his student years Sarna's main field was rabbinic literature, and he had a particular interest in the Geonic literature of the post-talmudic period. But after receiving his B.A. and being appointed Instructor (later Lecturer) of Hebrew and Bible at University College, he began to realize that one could not do justice to the Bible without a firsthand knowledge of the literatures and cultures of biblical Israel's ancient Near Eastern neighbors. Hoping to study these subjects, he went to Israel in 1949, but conditions at the Hebrew University immediately after the War of Independence made this impossible. Eventually, in 1951, he came to the United States to continue his studies at Philadelphia's Dropsie College. There he studied Bible and Semitic languages, primarily under the tutelage of Cyrus H. Gordon, who was then in the heyday of his work on Ugaritic, a Semitic language rediscovered in 1929 that shed much light on biblical Hebrew. Sarna wrote his doctoral thesis on "Studies in the Language of Job" and received his Ph.D. in 1955. Several of his early publications, particularly "Epic Substratum in the Prose of Job" (1957), grew out of his doctoral studies.

III

While studying at Dropsie, Sarna taught at Philadelphia's Gratz College and also became the first of several distinguished Scholars-in-Residence at Har Zion Temple. In 1957 his broad knowledge of Jewish literature led to his simultaneous appointments as a member of the Bible Department and as librarian at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York, where he was associated with such giants as H. L. Ginsberg and Saul Lieberman. In 1965 he accepted an appointment at Brandeis University, where he served as the Dora Golding Professor of Bible until his retirement in 1985. Over the years he also served as a visiting professor at Columbia University, Andover-Newton Theological School, Dropsie College, and Yale University. After his retirement he served for several years as the academic consultant of The Jewish Publication Society. Following a move to Boca Raton, Florida, both Sarnas were called out of retirement to help develop Florida Atlantic University's Judaic Studies Program, he as professor and acting director of the program and she as manager of the Judaica collections at the university's library.

Throughout his teaching career Sarna stimulated and inspired students, and many leading scholars of Judaica today, in the United States and Israel, were his pupils. His classes were characterized by pedagogically sophisticated syllabi as well as the qualities one finds in his publications: lucidity, careful organization, breadth of knowledge, and insights based on newly recognized evidence or new angles of vision. All of this

was seasoned with wit and humor. Notwithstanding his imposing learning, Sarna was always ready to discuss students' own ideas and would frequently credit particular students by name for insights offered in class in previous years. Students remember him with great affection as a stimulating and caring mentor.**

Ever the pedagogue, one of the most important aspects of Sarna's scholarly career has been his devotion to scholarly projects that serve Jewish communal needs. All of his books have been written with lay as well as scholarly readers in mind. *Understanding Genesis* (1966), originally published by the Jewish Theological Seminary's Melton Research Center for Jewish Education, was written to inform Bible teachers about modern scholarship on Genesis. Its appeal turned out to be much broader, leading to its republication by Schocken and setting the pattern for *Exploring Exodus* (1986) and the more recent *Songs of the Heart: An Introduction to the Book of Psalms* (1993; reprinted as *On the Book of Psalms* [1995]). From 1966 to 1981 Sarna served, along with Moshe Greenberg, and Jonas C. Greenfield, on the committee that translated the Writings (*Ketuvim*) for The Jewish Publication Society's *Tanakh: The Holy Scriptures* (1982). In 1973, Sarna and Chaim Potok initiated the JPS Bible commentary project, the first stage of which culminated in the five volume *JPS Torah Commentary* (1989–96) for which Sarna served as the scholarly editor and author of the commentaries on Genesis and Exodus. It is a fitting twist of history that this series succeeds the venerable *Pentateuch and Haftorahs* (1929–36), edited by Joseph H. Hertz. Sarna was brought up on Hertz's commentary, and Hertz was the chief rabbi of the British Empire and president of Jews College when Sarna was a student there. (An abridged version of the Torah commentary is soon to be published as part of the Conservative movement's one-volume Torah commentary that will replace Hertz's in synagogue pews.) No scholar has done as much as Sarna to educate English-speaking Jewry about the Bible, and he has done so in the conviction that intelligent readers prefer serious scholarship lucidly presented over popularizing simplifications. The response to his books has proven him correct.

Notwithstanding his commitment to inform American Jews, Sarna's scholarship is far from parochial. Biblical scholarship today is largely an interfaith enterprise in which Jews, Christians, and secular scholars participate with the shared goal of advancing knowledge. Sarna has been active in the major scholarly societies and publishes many of his articles

in nondenominational journals. One of the reasons his work is so widely appreciated in those contexts is his expertise in Jewish exegetical resources in which non-Jewish scholars are generally not schooled.

Sarna has been honored in many ways for his contributions to scholarship. *Understanding Genesis* won the 1967 Jewish Book Council Award for the best book on Jewish Thought. He has received a senior fellowship from the American Council of Learned Societies and was a fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. He was elected a fellow of the American Academy for Jewish Research and of the Royal Asiatic Society, and was president of the Association for Jewish Studies. He has received honorary doctorates from Gratz College, Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Boston Hebrew College, and Baltimore Hebrew University, and was named a Moses Aaron Dropsie fellow by the University of Pennsylvania's Center for Judaic Studies, the successor to Dropsie College. In 1988 he received the interdenominational Layman's National Bible Association Citation of Appreciation for his life of service as an educator, writer, and editor, particularly for his role in the *JPS Torah Commentary*. In 1994 he received the National Foundation for Jewish Culture's Scholarship Award for Literary Studies.

IV

Much of what Nahum Sarna values in biblical scholarship he finds already precedented in medieval Sephardic biblical exegesis:

> Jewish biblical studies reached their apogee in Moslem Spain. . . . The Spanish-Jewish achievement . . . had about it a uniqueness and originality, a vitality and pioneering quality that set it apart from anything that came before or after. It was in biblical studies, in all their ramifications, that the intellectual history of Spanish Jewry found its most fundamental and concrete articulation. . . . Unlike the experience of the Jews of Christian Europe, the study of the Scriptures in Spain did not become the consolidation of past learning. To be sure, antiquity and authority were cherished sufficiently to warrant preservation and transmission. But to the Spanish Jews, tradition was revered in not so rigid and inordinate a manner as to become static and decadent. An element of contention and controversy was allowed to penetrate, and a considerable admixture of critical independence and intellectual daring imparted a quality of excitement to biblical

> studies. The diversity and multiplicity of approach, the acute sensitivity to difficulties, the forging of the essential tools of scholarship, and the extraordinary degree of sophistication—all these characterized the Sephardi contribution to biblical scholarship and led to a remarkable and unparalleled efflorescence in this field. ("Hebrew and Bible Studies in Medieval Spain" [1971])

Jewish biblical scholarship is enjoying a similar efflorescence today, and Nahum Sarna occupies an honored place among those who brought it about.

Jeffrey H. Tigay
Erev Hanukkah, 5760

*Articles marked by an asterisk and, of course, Prof. Sarna's books, are not reprinted here; see bibliography for full information.

**Prof. Sarna's advice and assistance were indispensable to me when I was his student at the Jewish Theological Seminary. The Sarnas' warm family life and their devotion to learning also set a meaningful example. Helen Sarna was studying at the Seminary and Columbia while their sons were still young (I met her when we both took a course with Columbia's formidable professor of ancient history Morton Smith), and their sons were learning Mishnah by heart and reciting it for the Seminary's great Talmudist Saul Lieberman. I still remember vividly what a sense of loss I felt the day I heard that the Sarnas were leaving for Brandeis, and I was very gratified when the *JPS Torah Commentary* later provided the opportunity to renew our close contact.

Preface

Times have changed greatly since the advent of the movement of the *Wissenschaft des Jüdentums* in the second decade of the nineteenth century when its founding father and architect, Leopold Zunz, published his path-breaking pamphlet *Etwas über die rabbinische Literatur* (1818). The very title excluded, not unintentionally, biblical studies. With few exceptions, the first generation of scholars in the field of Judaic studies avoided the subject. Was it considered to be too sensitive to deal with, too controversial in the light of the newly developing critical approaches of German academicians with their "documentary hypotheses," and as a result, regarded as being too hazardous to the spiritual health of their co-religionists? At any rate, it was also felt that whereas biblical studies were being well taken care of by Christian scholars, the rich lode of rabbinic texts remained largely unknown, unorganized, and inchoate, as far as the world of learning was concerned, and was deplorably neglected. In fact, such has continued to be the case down to the present time in the yeshiva world in which disregard of the study of the biblical text and ancillary subjects is well-nigh total.

With the establishment of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and subsequently of similar institutions in the State of Israel, this lamentable situation has undergone a radical change. The serious inclusion of biblical studies into the curriculum of universities, as well as instruction and research into the languages, literatures, history, religions, cultures, and archaeology of the ancient Near East, the faculty appointments of outstanding scholars of the highest excellence--all this has reclaimed the field for Jews. Not only in Israel but in the United States too, mostly under the influence of developments in Israel, Jewish biblical scholarship has flourished. Moreover, in both countries, the thousands of years