

Devar Torah

Parshat Miketz: The Translator

By Nehemia Polen

"They did not know that Joseph understood, for the interpreter was between them." (Gen. 42:23)

We harbor a profound ambivalence about translators and interpreters. "The translator is a traitor," so the old proverb has it. Reading poetry in translation is like attempting to embrace a loved one through a glass wall. Voltaire claimed that poetry could not be translated at all: can you translate music? Historians tell us that more than one war began as a result of mistranslation of a diplomatic message.

Jews share this ambivalence. We revere the Aramaic Bible translation, Targum Onkelos, as sacred writ, yet the rabbis had little sympathy for the Greek translation known as the Septuagint, despite the divine inspiration which, the Talmud states, assisted in its composition. *Massekhet Soferim* (1:7) states that the day the Torah was translated into Greek was as tragic for Jews as the day the Golden Calf was made. According to Rabbi Judah bar Ilai (*Kiddushin* 49a), "He who translates a biblical verse literally is a liar, while he who adds thereto is a blasphemer and a libeller."

At first glance, our Torah reading tends to reinforce our mistrust of translators. For the interpreter here (who, according to the Midrash, was none other than Joseph's own son, Menasheh) was in collusion with Joseph, helping to perpetrate a rather cruel ruse upon the brothers, making them believe that a tyrannical and capricious despot was about to deprive them of liberty.

Yet a deeper appreciation of the dynamics of our narrative suggest a far more benign role for the translator. For it is just this moment of regret and remorse which is the turning point of the story:

"They said to one another, 'Alas, we are being punished on account of our brother, because we looked on at his anguish, yet paid no heed as he pleaded with us. That is why this distress has come upon us.'" (Gen 42:41)

This moment of deep inner scrutiny and turning is facilitat-

ed precisely by the brothers' belief that they are alone with their thoughts: the vicerey is a stranger, a foreigner who does not know their language, so they feel free to disclose their innermost feelings to each other. The interpreter stood between them, serving overtly as a barrier to communication, but covertly as its catalyst.

And it is not only the brothers who reveal their regrets and their essential capacity for healing and love. Joseph too "turned away from them and wept." Two more times would Joseph weep, once when he sees Benjamin, and once at the climactic resolution, when Judah offers to substitute his own life for that of Benjamin, effectively reversing his initial role in Joseph's sale. Judah would then expose himself in complete vulnerability, eliciting a corresponding self-exposure on the part of Joseph, enabling the brothers to reunite.

At the reconciliation, Joseph says to them, "You can see for yourselves . . . that I am speaking to you directly." (45:12) The goal of all human relationship is direct, unmediated communication, a clear opening up of the heart and soul. But the truth is that such moments of redemptive clarity are rare indeed. In the messianic era, we will all be granted "a pure language . . . to serve Him with one consent." (Zephaniah 3:9) But until that time, we will always need translators and interpreters, to help disclose our inner selves to others, indeed, to explain the various and conflicting parts of ourselves to ourselves.

One day we will all begin to weep, as did Joseph and his brothers, for what was left unsaid, for what was misunderstood, for what we dared not reveal, even in the chambers of our own hearts. And that day of directness, clarity, and truth will be brought about in part because, in this as yet unredeemed world, the translator stands between us.

Nehemia Polen is rabbi of Congregation Tiferet Israel in Everett, and assistant professor of Jewish Thought at Boston's Hebrew College. He is translating the works of the Chasidic master, Rabbi Kalonymos Kalmish Shapira.

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Why? Because

By Rabbi Samuel J. Fox

QUESTION: Why is the bread which is eaten on the Sabbath called "Challah?"

ANSWER: The reason given for this name is that it would remind whoever prepares the bread for the Sabbath of the requirement mentioned in the Bible that a piece of bread is supposed to be taken off when it is being prepared. Originally the piece was given to the priest. Now, since there is no temple in existence, it is taken off and burned or put away. The name "challah" thus serves as a reminder to accomplish this requirement.

QUESTION: Why are the evening, morning, and afternoon main body of prayer ("Shmoneh Esreh") different from each other on the Sabbath?

ANSWER: Some claim that the three different texts indicate the three different historical references for the Sabbath. The evening prayer concentrates on the Sabbath being the first Saturday of creation. The morning prayer speaks of the Sabbath being the day of the revelation at Mt. Sinai. The afternoon Sabbath prayer refers to the Sabbath which will be celebrated at the coming of the

Messiah. Others give three other references to the three different prayers. They all refer to the Sabbath as being a bride and the unity of the Sabbath and its worshipers as the unity of bride and groom. Therefore, the evening prayer at the beginning of the Sabbath represents the initial act of marriage (the presentation of the ring). The morning prayer of the Sabbath indicates the additional obligations which the groom accepts as recorded in the "Ketubah" (the marriage contract). The third text represents the final unity of the marriage which is accomplished by bride and groom entering a private room to be alone together as one unity (Yichud). The Sabbath being a special day, is thus special in at least three ways.

Civil Service To Meet

The Jewish Civil Service will hold its next meeting on Sunday, Dec. 11 at 7:30 p.m. at Temple Hillel B'nai Torah, Corey Street, West Roxbury. Sheldon Chandler, tenor, will provide the musical entertainment with a program of show tunes and Chanukah songs.

15 More Synagogues Join Project Ezra

During the past week fifteen more synagogues and Jewish groups from all over Greater Boston have signed up to participate in Project Ezra, the statewide effort coordinated by the Synagogue Council of Massachusetts to supply Jewish volunteers at local feeding programs and shelters on Dec. 25, so that Christian staff members and volunteers can spend their holiday with their families.

Project coordinator Roz Garber, outreach associate for the Synagogue Council of Massachusetts, announced that since Nov. 21, the following have signed up to provide volunteers to Project Ezra: Temple Emanuel (Andover), Temple Israel (Boston), Young Women's Division of the Combined Jewish Philanthropies (Boston), Harvard Hillel Children's School (Cambridge), Temple Emanu-El (Haverhill), Temple Beth Shalom (Hull), Temple Isaiah (Lexington), Temple Emanuel of the Merrimack Valley (Lowell), Temple Tifereth Israel (Malden), Temple Shalom (Milton), Temple Beth Avodah (Newton), High School of Jewish Studies (Newton), Temple Beth Am (Randolph), Temple Israel (Sharon), and Congregation Bnai Shalom (Westboro).

This brings to 36 the number of synagogues and Jewish organizations currently committed to Project Ezra 1988. For info call a synagogue's Project Ezra coordinator or Roz Garber at the Synagogue Council.



NAMED — Benjamin Polshook of Newton has been appointed to the board of directors of Chestnut Hill Bank & Trust Company, one of the newest commercial banks in Massachusetts. Polshook is President of Continental Wingate Company.



CHANUKAH TALES is the title of a dramatic presentation to be given at Harvard-Radcliffe Hillel on Friday, Dec. 9, at 8:30 p.m. The tales will be read and interpreted by actor-director Dr. Lawrence Senelik, who is Professor of Drama and Oratory at Tufts University. It is free and open to the public. Harvard-Radcliffe Hillel is located at 74 Mt. Auburn Street in Cambridge, 1 block from Harvard square. For info call 495-4696.



APPOINTED — Dr. Andre Danesh of Brookline, has been appointed Chairman of Metropolitan Boston for the American Associates, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. Dr. Danesh is president of Allied Financial Corporation and President of Allied Properties of Boston and Los Angeles. For info about Ben-Gurion University, call 236-4390.

Beth Zion To Install Officers

Temple Beth Zion of Brookline will hold a fast and celebration in honor of the Installation of the new officers of the congregation for the new year 5749. The ceremony will also include a welcome to the new members of the Temple who have joined this year.

In addition to the Sunday Morning Lecture Series and the Adult Education Programs, which are being directed by Dr. David Neiman, rabbi of the Temple, there is a Religious School-Talmud Torah program which was recently opened for children of the membership.

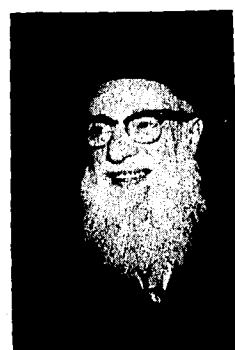
To reserve call the Temple at 566-8171 or 566-8158.

Guest Speaker Named For Chai Odom Dinner

Co-chairmen Eli Dovek and Judge David Knight have announced that Rabbi Henschel Leibowitz, Rosh Hayeshiva of Chofetz Chaim, will be the guest speaker at the dinner honoring Rabbi and Mrs. Shloma Margolis for their 40 years of service to the Congregation Chai Odom and the Greater Boston Jewish Community.

The event will be held Dec. 18 at Congregation Beth El-Atereth Israel in Newton.

Rabbi Leibowitz has headed the Yeshiva Chofetz Chaim since 1941 when his father, Horav Hagoan Rav David Leibowitz, passed away. Under the Rosh Hayeshiva's leadership, the Yeshiva has pioneered an international network of affiliates.



Rabbi H. Leibowitz which have helped many Jewish communities grow and become Torah centers. For info call 734-6359.

Yiddish Culture Club Presents Lecture

The Boston Yiddish Culture Club in cooperation with the Workman's Circle and the Leventhal-Sidman J.C.C. are presenting the third lecture of the season, Sunday, Dec. 18, at 2:30 p.m. at Leventhal-Sidman J.C. Center, 50 Sutherland Rd. Brookline.

The lecturer will be the distinguished writer from the *Jewish Forward* Avrom Shulman. His topic will be "The Tragedy of Children from Great Parents." All are invited.

Voice of The Turtle

The new Culture and Performing Arts Committee of Temple Isaiah, 55 Lincoln Street, Lexington, will present an evening of Sephardic music featuring "The Voice of the Turtle" on Friday, December 16 at 8:15 p.m. at Sabbath services.

where Jews lived after their expulsion from Spain and Portugal in 1492 and 1497. The music represents a cultural fusion of new homeland and past "Golden Age" Iberian heritage.

The musician will participate in the service with a variety of instruments, singing in Hebrew and in Judeo-Spanish of the period. They will also give a concert of Sephardic wedding songs.



CALLING FOR CASH — Leaders of the Greater Boston Israel Bond Organization participated in a special cash mobilization meeting at the Bond office last week. The purpose of the telephone session was to accelerate payment of unfulfilled Bond commitments. Additional phone-a-thons are scheduled in order to marshal as much cash for Israel as possible before the end of the year. (Standing, left to right) Harriett Kaplan; Susan Brusilow, Boston executive director; Andrew Norman; Natalie Schnipper; Marla Richmond; (seated left to right) David Franklin; Ralph Kaplan, New England Region chairman; John Mitchell, New Leadership Winter Ball chairman; Milton Locke; Cy Feingold.

Temple Emeth Activities

Temple Emeth, Chestnut Hill, announced the schedule of events for members and friends through February 1989.

On Saturday evening, Dec. 17, the Brotherhood and Sisterhood will sponsor an art auction. Patrons and sponsors will be invited to a champagne reception and preview prior to the auction.

A square dance will be held on Saturday, Jan. 7 at 7:30 p.m. A professional caller will be present.

The Temple Emeth Brotherhood, in conjunction with the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs, is having a Torah service workshop on Saturday, Jan. 14, from 10 to 11:30 a.m. The workshop will take participants step-by-step through the Torah service. No particular literacy level is necessary, and men and women are both welcome.

Rabbi Alan Turetzki will lead an Israel Family Festival during school vacation February 15 to 26. The five 5-star deluxe accommodations and a family-oriented itinerary, with specially-selected Israeli guide, will be featured.

For details of all these events, call 469-9400.

Knitting at TOS

At the December 14 social hour at 12:30, Temple Ohabei Shalom's Sisterhood will provide coffee, dessert, and yarn for anyone wishing to knit winter hats. Proceeds from the sale of the hats will be donated to the Brooklyn Food Cupboard. Non-knitters are also invited to join. Call 277-6610 for info.

Chanukah Greetings

from the Solomont Family and all of us at Willow Manor.

May the festival lights brighten your home with good health and happiness.



Willow Manor

RETIREMENT & NURSING HOME
Strictly Kosher Meals (508) 454-8086
30 Princeton Boulevard, Lowell, MA 01851

Serving the needs of the Jewish community as the Merrimack Valley's only kosher nursing home.
Free transportation service available for visitors from Metropolitan Boston.



temple ohabei shalom

1187 Beacon Street, Brookline

Albert S. Goldstein, Emeritus
Emily A. Lipof, Rabbi
Neil Kominsky, Assoc. Rabbi
Alex Zimmer, Cantor

277-6610

Friday, December 9
Erev Shabbat at 8:15 p.m.
Erev Shabbat Music Service in
Celebration of Hanukah
at 8:15 p.m.

Saturday, December 10
at 10:15 a.m.
Shabbat Service

ALL ARE WELCOME

DAILY MINYAN
8:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M.
Sunday and Holidays
9:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M.

CONGREGATION KEHILLATH ISRAEL

384 HARVARD ST., BROOKLINE

Dr. Shalom Stern, Rabbi
Dr. Emanuel Saltzman, Rabbi Emeritus
Rev. Felix Kahn, Sexton

KABALAT SHABBAT
Friday, December 9
at 4:00 P.M.

Saturday, December 10
at 8:45 A.M.
Visiting Cantor Moshe Schulhof
Mincha at 4:00 P.M.
Maariv at 4:30 P.M.

Sunday, December 11
at 8:00 A.M.
Mincha at 4:00 P.M.
Maariv at 4:30 P.M.

Daily Services

7:00 & 8:00 A.M.
Mincha at 4:00 P.M.
Maariv at 4:30 P.M.

ALL ARE WELCOME

TEMPLE EMETH

194 Grove Street, Chestnut Hill

Rabbi Alan Turetzki
Rabbi Emeritus, Zavi K. Nelson
Cantor Simon Kantor
Ritual Director Alan Alpert

Friday, December 9
Kabbalat Shabbat
at 4:00 P.M.

Shabbat Chanukah
Saturday, December 10
at 9:30 A.M.

Junior Cong. (Grades 1-7)
at 10:00 A.M.
Parochim (Ages 3-8)
at 10:30 A.M.

Sunday, December 11
at 8:30 A.M.
Daily Services at 7:00
Mincha and Maariv at 4:00 P.M.
Mon.-Thurs.
Late Maariv at 7:00 P.M.

ALL ARE WELCOME

TEMPLE EMANUEL

385 Ward Street
Newton Centre
Tel. 332-5770

Rabbi Samuel Chiel
Rabbi Seth H. Frisch, Assistant Rabbi
Charles D. Osborne, Cantor
Gabriel Hochberg, Cantor Emeritus
Martha Segal, Ritual Director

KABALAT SHABBAT
Friday, December 9
at 8:30 P.M.

SHABBAT MORNING
Saturday, December 10
at 8:45 A.M. & 9:30 A.M.
Mincha at 4:05 P.M.

Sunday, December 11
at 8:00 A.M.

Daily Services
Monday, December 12
Thru Friday, December 16
at 7:00 A.M.

Evenings at 7:30 P.M.
Friday, December 9
at 8:00 P.M.

Guest Speaker:
Dr. David M. Gordis
ALL ARE WELCOME

TEMPLE ISRAEL

Longwood Ave., and Riverway,
Boston

Shabbat Service
Friday, December 9
at 5:30 P.M.

Shabbat Chanukah Service
Saturday, December 10
9:30 A.M. — Torah Study
10:30 A.M. — Shabbat Service

Rabbi Bernard H. Moshman
Rabbi William L. Berkowitz
Cantor Roy B. Elshor
Rabbi Renee Friedman
Temple Educator
Rabbi B. Gittelson, Rabbi Emeritus

ALL ARE WELCOME

TEMPLE SHALOM OF MILTON

180 Blue Hill Avenue
Milton, MA 02168

Rabbi Jerome Wolpert, D. Min., D.D.
Josh Perlman, Cantor
Sylvia Pincus, Music Director
Cantorial Soloist:
Barbara Stoller

SERVICE SCHEDULE
Friday Evenings at 8:00 P.M.
Shabbat at 9:30 A.M.
Mincha at 12:15 P.M.

DAILY
Mon. and Thurs.
Torah Reading
at 8:45 A.M.
Tues., Wed. and Fri.
at 7:00 A.M.

Sun. thru Thurs. Evenings
at 7:00 P.M.
Sun. and Holidays
at 8:30 A.M.

ALL ARE WELCOME

MISHKAN TEFILA

300 Hammond Pond Pkwy.
Chestnut Hill

Kabbalat Shabbat Service
Friday, December 9
at 8:15 P.M.

Saturday, December 10
at 9:30 A.M.
Mincha at 4:00 P.M.

DAILY SERVICES
Sunday and Holiday Mornings
at 8:00 A.M.
Mincha at 4:00 P.M.
Weekdays — 7:00 A.M. and
7:00 P.M.

ALL ARE WELCOME

Rabbi Richard M. Yaffe
Cantor Aryeh Fleinstein
Dr. Israel J. Kaza, Rabbi Emeritus
Gregor Sholom, Cantor Emeritus
Rev. Michael Domb, Sexton

TEMPLE BNAI MOSHE

1845 Comm. Ave., Brighton

A Conservative Congregation
Ephraim J. Greenberg, Rabbi
Theodore Schneider, Cantor
Beryl Chazlet, Sexton

Friday, December 9
at 4:00 P.M.
Saturday, December 10
at 8:45 A.M.

Community Kiddush followed by
Rabbi's Study group
Shabbos Mincha
at 4:00 P.M.

DAILY SERVICES
Mornings at 8:45 A.M.
Sunday Morning at 8:30 A.M.
Mincha at 4:00 P.M.

ALL ARE WELCOME



TEMPLE REYIM

1860 Washington St.
Newton

Late Service
Friday Eve., December 9
8:15 P.M.

Saturday, December 10
at 9:30 A.M.

Daily Minyan at 7:00 A.M.
Sunday at 9:00 A.M.

Rabbi Scott Rosenberg
Dr. Philip Kieval, Rabbi Emeritus
Cantor Murray E. Simon

ALL ARE WELCOME

TEMPLE BETH ZION

1566 Beacon Street
Brookline, MA 02146
Dr. David Neiman, Rabbi

Friday, December 9
Services at 8:30 P.M.

Saturday, December 10
Shabbat Service at
8:45 A.M.

ALL ARE WELCOME

Young Israel of Brookline

62 Green St., Brookline, MA
734-0276

Shabbat Miketz
Friday, December 9
Evening Services
at 4:00 P.M.

Saturday, December 10
Shacharis
at 7:00 & 8:30 A.M.

Mincha at 3:45 P.M.
Weekday Mornings
Monday & Thursday
at 6:20 A.M.

Tues., Wed., & Fri.
at 6:30 A.M.
Sunday at 7:15 A.M.

Weekday Afternoons
Mincha at 4:05 P.M.

Rabbi Gershon C. Gewirtz
Rev. Myer L. Lokatch
ALL ARE WELCOME
—Bruchim Habaim—

Sabbath Candle
Lighting Time:
December 9
3:51 p.m.
December 16
3:52 p.m.