

that his premature death was his punishment for having left the Holy Land and having settled in the land of Moab.

E. G. H.

M. SEL.

**ELIPHAZ:** The first of the three visitors of Job (Job ii. 11), surnamed "the Temanite"; supposed to have come from Teman, an important city of Edom (Amos i. 12; Obad. 9; Jer. xlix. 20). Thus Eliphaz appears as the representative of the wisdom of the Edomites, which, according to Obad. 8, Jer. xlix. 7, and Baruch iii. 22, was famous in antiquity.

The name "Eliphaz" for the spokesman of Edomite wisdom may have been suggested to the author of Job by the tradition which gave this name to Esau's son, the father of Theman (Gen. xxxvi. 11; I Chron. i. 35, 36). In the arguments that pass between Job and his friends, it is Eliphaz that opens each of the three series of discussions. His one thought is that the righteous can not perish; the wicked alone suffer, and in measure as they have sinned (Job iv. 7-9). See Job.

Later tradition makes Eliphaz King of Yemen; e.g., the additions to the Arabic translation of the Book of Job (comp. Michaelis, "Einleitung in die Göttliche Schrift des Alten Testaments," p. 18).

E. K.—E. G. H.

**ELIPHELET** ("God is deliverance"): 1. The last of the eleven sons born to David in Jerusalem (II Sam. v. 16). In I Chron. iii. 6, 8; xiv. 5, 7, two sons of this name (A. V. "Elpalet" and "Eliphalet"; R. V. "Elpelet" and "Eliphelet") are mentioned, together with a son named Nogah, making the total thirteen.

2. The son of Ahasbai (II Sam. xxiii. 34), identical with Eliphaz, the son of Ur (I Chron. xi. 35), one of David's "thirty" warriors.

3. The third son of Eshek, a descendant of Jonathan (I Chron. viii. 39).

4. One of the clan of Adonikam, who returned from the Exile (Ezra viii. 13 = "Eliphalet," I Esd. viii. 39).

5. A Hashumite, married to a foreign woman (Ezra x. 33; I Esd. ix. 33).

E. G. H.

E. I. N.

**ELISEUS** or **ELISSEUS** (Ἐλισσαῖος): Learned Jew at the court of Murad I. at Brusa and Adrianople during the second half of the fourteenth century. After a time he lost favor with the sultan, and was disgraced and exiled. He is identified by Franz Delitzsch with the author of the "Græcus Venetus" (see Jew. Encyc. iii. 188). His contemporary, Gennadius, complains that he was an unbeliever (Zoroastrian), probably because of his philosophical bent. Eliseus was the teacher of Georgios Gemistus Pletho (b. 1355), the teacher of Cardinal Bessarion, who presented the manuscript of the "Græcus Venetus" to the city of Venice.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** Delitzsch, in preface to *Græcus Venetus*, ed. Gebhardt, Leipzig, 1875; Swete, *Introduction to the Septuagint*, p. 56; P. F. Frankl, in *Monatsschrift*, xxiv. 424, suggests that the author was a Christian.

G.

**ELISHA.**—**Biblical Data:** Successor to the prophet Elijah. The name (in the LXX. Ἐλισά, Ἐλισαῖ; in Luke iv. 27 Ἐλισ[σ]αῖος) seems to denote

"God is salvation," corresponding to the Sabeian אֱלִיָּהּ, and thus be in meaning identical with "Elishua" (II Sam. v. 15); though the latter name may also be interpreted as "God is opulence," which significance König prefers for "Elisha."

The son of Shaphat, a wealthy landowner in Abelmeholah, Elisha grew up on the farm until he, though not one of the "sons of the Prophets," was summoned from the plow by Elijah. Thereupon, after kissing his father and mother, and making a sacrificial feast of his oxen for the people, he followed Elijah, his "master" and "father," upon whose hands he poured water (I Kings xix. 13, 19-21; II Kings iii. 11), i.e., as a servant.

By the other followers or disciples of Elijah he was soon acknowledged as the successor of the departed master, who in fact had designated Elisha as such by leaving his mantle with him (II Kings ii. 13-15), so that his wish for "a double

**Succeeds** portion" of the older prophet's spirit **Elijah.** (ib. ii. 9), in allusion to the preference

shown the first-born son in the division of the father's estate (Deut. xxi. 17), had been fulfilled. Elisha's activity was exhibited in political matters as well as in private life, as the following facts show:

In the expedition against Mesha, King of Moab (II Kings iii. 4), the Israelitish army was saved through Elisha's advice from perishing by thirst; and Moab, mistaking, under the glare of the sun, the water in the trenches for blood, was lured to an ill-conceived attack and defeated.

During the Syrian war (ib. vi. 8 *et seq.*), Elisha's counsel defeated the strategy of the hostile king, who, desirous to capture the prophet, sent out horse and foot against him, only to find that the would-be captors were themselves tricked to accompany their expected captive into Samaria.

Samaria, besieged by the Syrians and in dire distress from famine, was cheered by his prediction of the raising of the siege (ib. vii. 1-2). Elisha, by announcing to Hazael his impending succession to the throne, was perhaps the innocent cause of Benhadad's assassination (ib. viii. 7 *et seq.*). By his direction one of the sons of the prophets anointed Jehu as king, with the purpose of dethroning Joram and of destroying Ahab's dynasty. His last act was his prediction to King Joash, who visited him when on his deathbed, that he would be victorious over the Syrians (ib. xiii. 14-19).

Of miracles which he performed by virtue of his prophetic power, the following are recorded:

The healing of the waters at Jericho (ib. ii. 19); the cursing of the little children at Beth-el because they had mockingly called after him "Baldhead!" whereupon two

**Miracles.** she-ears fell upon the little ones and tore forty-two of them (ib. ii. 23); the filling of the poor widow's vessels with oil (ib. iv. 4); the reviving of the Shunammite woman's son whose birth he had predicted as a reward for her hospitality to him (ib. iv. 8); the rendering innocuous of the wild gourds (ib. iv. 38); the feeding of a multitude on an insufficient quantity of food, much being left over after their hunger had been satisfied (ib. iv. 42); the healing of Naaman, the Syrian captain, of leprosy (ib. v.); the punishing of Gehazi for covetousness; and the raising of the iron ax which had fallen into the water (ib. vi. 1-7). After his death the very touch of his bones revived a man buried by accident in the prophet's sepulcher (II Kings xiii. 20, 21; compare Ecclesiasticus [Sirach] xlviii. 13-15).

Elisha resided for the most part in Samaria, paying Jericho and Bethel, where the prophetic settlements were, an occasional visit (ib. ii. 25, v. 3).

—**In Rabbinical Literature:** Elisha having received a double portion of the prophetic spirit, is held to have worked twice as many miracles (16) as Elijah (Kimḥi to II Kings ii. 14). While Elijah

restored one person from death, Elisha restored two—the son of the Shunammite woman, and Naaman, who, being a leper, was considered as one dead (Hul. 7b; Sanh. 46a). From the incidents of Elisha's life a number of halakic precepts are derived. Indeed, both Elijah and Elisha are considered great rabbinical masters. Thus, on their last journey together they held converse, according to one rabbi, on the Shema'; according to another rabbi, on the consolations for Jerusalem. Others assert that their conversation concerned the mysteries of creation; the majority maintain that they were discussing the mysteries of the chariot (Yer. Ber. 8d; comp. Soṭah 49a). This was in due observance of the rabbinical dictum that "two students who walk together without discussing the Torah deserve to be burned" (Soṭah 49a). Indeed, an angel had been sent to destroy master and pupil, but finding them occupied in the study of the Torah, the Prophets, the Hagiographa, the Mishnah, the Halakah, and the Haggadah, he lost his mastery over them (Tanna debe Eliyahu, v).

Anger deprives a prophet of his divine gift, as Elisha experienced (II Kings iii. 14, 15). God's spirit rests only upon those who are in a peaceful and joyful mood (Pes. 66a, 117a; Yer. Suk. 55a, bottom). The harp that induced Elisha's inspiration played, it would seem, without the touch of the musician (Pesik. R., ed. Friedmann, p. 86a). From Elisha's refusal to receive the King of Israel it is deduced that one should not look upon the face of a wicked man (Yalk. to II Kings iii.; Meg. 28b). His having "poured water upon Elijah's hands" is made the text for enlarging on the benefits derived by disciples from ministering to great masters (Ber. 7b). The hospitality of the Shunammite woman is referred to as typical (Cant. R. ii. 5), and as showing that a woman always knows the character of a guest better than a man does (Ber. 10b). The Rabbis take pains to account for his calling the bears to devour the children, by ascribing the coming of the bears and the appearance of the woods which had not been seen before to his miracle-working power (Soṭah 46b, 47a, Yalk. to II Kings ii. 21). The offenders were not children, but were called so ("ne'arin") because they lacked ("meno'arin") all religion (Soṭah 46b). The number (42) rent by the bears corresponds to the number of the sacrifices (42) offered by Balak. Had the Bethlehemites shown him due courtesy by sending him on his way attended in a manner befitting his dignity, this incident would not have occurred (Soṭah 46a). Yet Elisha was punished for this act as well as for his rude treatment of Gehazi (Sanh. 107b). The man whom he revived from death, according to some, did not live for more than one hour; this was to show that the wicked should not be buried with the righteous (Sanh. 47b; Pirke R. El. xxxiii.). Shalom ben Tikvah was the name of the man revived by Elisha's bones; according to some he did not die immediately after, but lived (II Kings xxii. 14) and begot a son, Hanameel (Jer. xxii. 7). Elisha was a prophet for over sixty years, according to Seder 'Olam xix. and Yalk. to II Kings xiii. 20.

Pirke R. El. (l.c.) reports, in the name of R. Joshua ben Kariyah, that any woman who saw Elisha would

die. The Shunammite was the sister of Abishag, the wife of Iddo, the prophet. When she repaired to Mount Carmel to seek the intervention of the prophet in behalf of her son, Gehazi, struck by her beauty, took undue liberties with her. Elisha sent his servant with his staff bidding him not to speak with any one; but Gehazi, being a skeptic and a scoffer, disobeyed the injunction.

s. s.

E. G. H.

—**Critical View:** As in the case of Elijah, the critical school holds that the account of Elisha's life and activity is taken from an old cycle of Elisha stories current in various versions before incorporated into the Books of Samuel-Kings. The contents are characteristic not of a book of history, but of one of legends, miracles being the main preoccupation of the prophet. The purpose of some of the accounts is clearly that of exalting the authority of the prophetic order and of inculcating obedience to and respect for it. The Elisha cycle is a clear imitation of the Elijah book. The miracles performed by Elisha have the appearance of being duplicates of those which are credited to his master, with obvious efforts at heightening them. Of this kind are the widow's oil, the revival of the child, and the anointing of Hazael and Jehu. Even from a literary point of view the Elisha biography reveals the hands of imitators. Each of the prophets is ostentatiously designated as the "man of God"; the names of the kings are mentioned only incidentally; and in the few cases where they are found, it is probable that they were inserted later. This is characteristic of legends: names are always secondary considerations. The Elisha cycle is a bundle of anecdotes loosely strung together. Contradictions therefore occur, as might be expected; e.g., II Kings v. 1 contradicts ib. vi. 8. Peace is said to be between Israel and Damascus in the former, war in the latter passage; v. 27 makes Gehazi a leper; nevertheless in viii. 1 he appears without any further ado before the king. The shifting of Elisha's places of residence points in the

same direction, and so does the circumstance that Gehazi is now a very important personage (iv. 8, viii. 1), and now of little consequence (iv. 8, v. 1). Again, some of the stories are altogether without historical material,

while others, notwithstanding their legendary character, give historical notes of value (iii. 1, vi. 24, viii. 7, ix. 1). This Elisha cycle, therefore, can not be considered as a coherent production of one author. Such anecdotes arise spontaneously among the people, and are later compiled, without great care to harmonize the discrepancies. Further, the redactor of Kings may have drawn from two or more versions of Elisha's doings.

To regard them as historical is chronologically impossible also. The events almost all take place under Joram. But between II Kings iv. 16 and iv. 18 an interval of at least seven to eight years is presupposed; then follows the famine, continuing for another seven years. Joram, however, reigned only twelve years (iii. 1). To distribute the happenings over the reigns of Joram, Jehu, Jehoahaz, and Joash might be admissible, but the story itself nowhere gives a definite clue as to time, legend being as

indifferent to accuracy in dates as it is to definiteness of places and names.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** The commentaries of Klostermann, Thenius, and Binger; the histories of Ewald, Kittel, and Stade; the Bible dictionaries by Cheyne, Hastings, Schenkel, Riehm, and Vigouroux; Herzog-Hauck, *Real-Encyc.* s.v.; the Introductions and Einleitungen by Driver, De Wette, Schrader, Strack, Zöckler, König, Baudissin, Bleek-Wellhausen, and Cornill; P. Cassel, *Der Prophet Elisha*, Berlin, 1860.

E. K.—E. G. H.

**ELISHA BEN ABRAHAM:** Hebraist and Talmudist; flourished at the end of the fifteenth century. He was the author of "Magen Dawid," a vindication of David Kimhi's grammar against the strictures of Efodi and David ben Yahya (Constantinople, 1517). The book is prefaced by an acrostic poem, giving the author's name.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** Michael, *Or ha-Hayyim*, p. 222; Steinschneider, *Cat. Bodl.* col. 963; Dukes, in *Orient*, viii. 482.

L. G.

M. SEL.

**ELISHA BEN ABRAHAM BEN JUDAH:** Russian rabbi; died at Grodno July 1, 1749. He was rabbi and chief of the yeshibah of Luciez, Volhynia, Russia. Elisha was the author of "Kab we-Naki," a short commentary on the Mishnah (Amsterdam, 1697), and he annotated and published, under the title "Pi Shenayim" (Altona, 1735), Asheri's commentary on the Mishnah of Zera'im. According to Benjacob ("Ozar ha-Sefarim," p. 382, No. 2489), the first edition of the "Kab we-Naki" was published in 1664; from this fact it may be concluded that Elisha lived to be more than a hundred years old.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:** Nepi-Ghirondi, *Toledot Gedole Yisrael*, p. 7; Steinschneider, *Cat. Bodl.* col. 967; Fürst, *Bibl. Jud.* i. 239.

K.

M. SEL.

**ELISHA BEN ABUYAH** (called also by the Rabbis **Aher**, "the other"): Born in Jerusalem before 70; flourished in Palestine at the end of the first century and the beginning of the second. At one time the Rabbis were proud to recognize him as of their number; but later their opposition to him grew so intense that they even refrained from pronouncing his name, and referred to him in terms used to designate some vile object ("dabar aher," lit. "another thing"). For this reason it is almost impossible to derive from rabbinical sources a clear picture of his personality, and modern historians have differed greatly in their estimate of him. According to Grätz, he was a Karpotian Gnostic; according to Siegfried, a follower of Philo; according to Dubsch, a Christian; according to Smolenskin and Weiss, a victim of the inquisitor Akiba.

Of Elisha's youth and of his activity as a teacher of the Law very little is known. He was the son of an esteemed and rich citizen of Jerusalem, and was trained for the career of a scholar. His praise of this method of education is the only saying that the Mishnah has found worth perpetuating. According to Abot iv. 25, his favorite saying was, "Learning in youth is like

**Youth and Activity.** writing upon new paper, but learning in old age is like writing upon paper which has already been used." Elisha was a student of Greek; as the Talmud expresses it, "Aher's tongue was never tired of singing Greek songs" (Yer. Meg. i. 9), which, according to some, caused his apostasy (Hag. 16b, below). Bacher has very properly re-

marked that the similes which Elisha is reported to have used (Ab. R. N. xxix.) show that he was a man of the world, acquainted with wine, horses, and architecture. He must have acquired a reputation as an authority in questions of religious practise, since in Mo'ed Kaṭan 20b one of his halakic decisions is recorded—the only one in his name, though there may be others under the names of different teachers. The Babylonian Talmud asserts that Elisha, while a teacher in the bet ha-midrash, kept forbidden books ("sifre minim") hidden in his clothes. This statement is not found in the Jerusalem Talmud, and if at all historical, may possibly mean that he also studied the writings of the Sadducees, who, owing to changes made by the censors, are sometimes called "minim."

The oldest and most striking reference to the views of Elisha is found in the following baraita (Hag. 14b; Yer. ii. 1):

"Four [sages] entered paradise—Ben 'Azzai, Ben Zoma, Aher, and Akiba. Ben 'Azzai looked and died; Ben Zoma went mad; Aher destroyed the plants; Akiba alone came out unhurt."

There can be no doubt that the journey of the "four" to paradise, like the ascension of Enoch (in the pre-Christian books of Enoch) and of so many other pious men, is to be taken literally and not allegorically. This conception of the baraita is supported by the use of the phrase נכנס לפרדס

("entered paradise"), since נכנס לנ"ע

**The Four Who Entered Paradise.** ("entered the Garden of Eden"=paradise) was a common expression (Derek Erez Zuṭa i.; Ab. R. N. xxv.). It means that Elisha, like Paul, in a moment of ecstasy beheld the interior of

heaven—in the former's case, however, with the effect that he destroyed the plants of the heavenly garden.

The Talmud gives two different interpretations of this last phrase. The Babylonian Talmud says:

"What is the meaning of 'Aher destroyed the plants'? Scripture refers to him (Eccl. v. 5 [A. V. 6]) when it says: 'Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin.' What does this signify? In heaven Aher saw Metatron seated while he wrote down the merits of Israel. Whereupon Aher said: 'We have been taught to believe that no one sits in heaven, . . . or are there perhaps two supreme powers?' Then a heavenly voice was heard: 'Turn, O backsliding children (Jer. iii. 14), with the exception of Aher.'"

The dualism with which the Talmud charges him has led some scholars to see here Persian, Gnostic, or even Philonian dualism. They forget that the reference here to Metatron—a specifically

**The Talmudic Explanation.** Babylonian idea, which would probably be unknown to Palestinian rabbis even five hundred years after Elisha—robs the passage of all historical worth. The story is of late origin, as is seen from the introductory words, which stand in no connection with the context, as they do in the parallel passage in the Jerusalem Talmud. This latter makes no mention of Elisha's dualism; but it relates that in the critical period following the rebellion of Bar Kokba, Elisha visited the schools and attempted to entice the students from the study of the Torah, in order to direct their energies to some more practical occupation; and it is to him, therefore, that the verse "Suffer not thy mouth to cause thy flesh to sin" (Eccl. v. 5) is to be applied. In connection with this the Biblical quotation is quite