

HEBREW BIBLE

ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTION

BIBLE TEACHING IN ISRAEL AS AN EXPRESSION OF JEWISH NATIONAL REVIVAL

by

Dr. J. (Coos) Schoneveld*

A study of the approaches to the Hebrew Bible in Israeli Educational literature reveals various characteristics of the Jewish national Renaissance, bringing to light both the aspirations and the perplexities inherent in the several currents within this movement. The Hebrew Bible, or Tanakh, is a principal source of Jewish religion and culture, and as such it was intensely drawn upon in times when the Jewish people was confronted with profound challenges to its place and identity in the modern world.

When the Jews were enclosed in the ghettos and shtetls of Europe with virtually no social or cultural contacts with the outside world, the Tanakh was completely embedded in the great body of Rabbinic tradition and literature. This was clearly reflected in Bible teaching in the *heder*, the traditional Jewish community school. All emphasis was on the Torah, which was taught together with *Rashi's* commentary, which is in fact a compendium of Rabbinical exegesis up to the 11th century. The instruction followed the weekly portions of the Pentateuch as read in the synagogue. Scant attention was given to the other parts of the Hebrew (Nevi'im and Ketuvim), except to Psalms, which played an important role in Jewish daily life in home and synagogue. Bible teaching was in keeping with the whole educational purpose of helping the pupil to find his place in the traditional Jewish communities in ghetto and shtetl and was therefore entirely subjected to the study of the *Gemara*, the real core of Jewish tradition. This close connection with Rabbinic literature is until today characteristic of orthodox Jewish Bible teaching, both in Israel and in the Diaspora.

A dramatic change occurred under the influence of the Haskalah, the Jewish Enlightenment Movement, which came in the wake of Jewish emancipation in Europe. Here the main purpose was to help the Jewish child to

* This article is based on a more comprehensive treatment of the subject in: J. Schoneveld, "The Bible in Israeli Education - A study of Approaches to the Hebrew Bible and its teaching in Israel's educational literature"; Van Gorcum, Assen/Amsterdam, 1976, 294 pp.

find his place – as a Jew! – in general European culture. Moses Mendelssohn's translation of the Pentateuch and the Psalms into literary German (written in Hebrew characters!) which marks the beginning of the Haskalah Movement, is prompted by the desire to integrate the Jew into European, especially German culture, with a view to assuring him equal participation in that culture. Bible teaching was adjusted to this aim and was consequently determined by those values which were held in high esteem in contemporary European culture: beauty and virtue. Naftali Hertz Wessely (1725-1805) who urged a change of discipline in Jewish education emphasized that "the beauty and splendour of the holy poems in the books of the Bible are unparalleled among the poems that have existed since the renowned ancient times, like those of Homer, Pindar and Horace".¹ The linguistic, aesthetic and ethical aspects of the Bible were heavily stressed. Bible teaching became detached from Talmudic studies and began to stand on its own feet. The Bible was considered as a source of universalism, since it was – via Christianity – also one of the sources of general European culture whereas the *Gemara* was a domain totally alien to enlightened Europe.

When, however, emancipation and enlightenment produced disappointing results for Jewry, since European society turned out to be far from hospitable to the Jews, and the rising nationalistic tide in Europe necessitated the Jews to seek nationalist solutions for the problem of how to carry on their identity and destiny, this state of affairs was again prominently reflected in Bible reading. The following account will concern itself especially with the response to the new challenge as it took shape in educational thought on Bible teaching in (Eretz) Israel.

In any Jewish education – and certainly in a period of national revival – the question inescapably arises: "What is the Tanakh to the Jewish people?" The divergent answers to this question express the different aspirations as well as perplexities existing within the Jewish National Movement. Already in the very beginning of Hebrew education in Eretz Israel which developed under the impact of the Zionist Movement, a confrontation took place which is still, to a large extent actual. It is the discussion between Ben-Zion Mossinson, teacher of Tanakh, and subsequently also director of the first Hebrew secondary school, the Hertzliya Gymnasium in Tel Aviv, and Ahad Ha'am, the influential Zionist ideological thinker. They represent two dialectical views in the Zionist Movement, the attitude of rebellion towards the Jewish past.² But both trends moved outside the sphere of the Halakhah: the former had rejected it, the latter had become alienated from it.

Mossinson puts the Tanakh in the centre of Hebrew education as

¹ Naftali Hertz Wessely, *Divrei Shalom ve-Emet*, Berlin, 1782, 1st Letter, ch. 7.

² Cf. the interview with Gershom Scholem in Ehud ben Ezer (ed.), *Unease in Zion*, New York - Jerusalem, 1974, pp. 263 - 296.

the "source of knowledge of the political, social and moral life of the ancient Hebrews in our land," as is stated in the annual report of the Herzliya Gymnasium for 1909 which continues: "That life must be made clearly visible to the new Hebrew, so that the Bible study becomes for him an incessant fountain of feelings of national pride, feelings of reverence for the lucid past and of hope and confidence for a shining future".³ Mossinson explicitly contrasts the Tanakh with the Talmud and Rabbinical Jewish tradition, which bear the mark of the *galut*, the abnormality of the Jewish existence in dispersion and exile. In contrast the Tanakh is lauded as representing the healthy situation of the people of Israel, when it was still a normal people living and working in its homeland. The principal goal of Bible teaching is accordingly to "renew the days of our people of old". Mossinson's aim is to build a bridge by means of the Tanakh between the children of uprooted Jewish immigrants who had come to Eretz Israel, and their distant forefathers in this land, the ancient Hebrews. They had to feel themselves as the "new Hebrews", who were taking up the thread of independent healthy national life that had been dropped two thousand years ago. The consistent use of the word "Hebrew" instead of "Jew", has a clear ring of rebellion against Jewish tradition and *galut* conditions. This "negation of the exile" is a powerful trend in Zionist ideology. Baruch Kurzweil maintained that the logical consequence of this attitude has been drawn by the movement of "Young Hebrews" or "Canaanites", who called themselves "sons of Terach" rather than "sons of Abraham" so as to stress their desire to reach back to the pre-monotheistic stage of the "Hebrew nation" which in their opinion was religiously and culturally no different from the other peoples of the Fertile Crescent between the Mediterranean and the Euphrates. Therefore in their poetry they exalted pre-Israelite pagan cults and deities, traces of which they were eager to discover in the Tanakh. They advocated severing all links with the Jewish diaspora and the Jewish tradition arguing that a new nation was in the making which should start an entirely new life.

This consequence would, no doubt, be unacceptable to Mossinson, who despite his rebellion against traditional Judaism, was still connected with many emotional and intellectual ties to the Jewish past. But his opponent in the debate, Ahad Ha'am, immediately sensed the consequence of this approach and therefore protested against the line followed by him. He strongly disputed Mossinson's negative attitude towards the "two thousand years of exile" and considered it impossible to skip over twenty centuries of history and to try to educate young people to emulate the ancient Hebrews of Isaiah's generation. "If you take from the chain of history its middle links, then its beginning and end will never fit together".

³ Report of the Hebrew Gymnasium at Jaffa for the year 5669 (1909) (Hebrew) p. 8.

Ahad Ha'am warned that grave problems of identity in the younger generation would arise when education tried to ignore the history of Judaism in exile. He was specially disturbed by Mossinson's acceptance of the results of modern West European, mainly Protestant, Bible criticism. Mossinson had made use of these scholarly findings, as in his opinion they revealed the real historical background of the Tanakh, which has been blurred by later religious reading and editing of the sources. Instead, Ahad Ha'am maintained that, from the national point of view, the Tanakh did not so much carry weight as a source book of ancient Israelite history, but much more as expression of the Jewish "Volksgeist". Just as Ahad Ha'am had declared that the historical Moses – he even speaks disdainfully about the "archaeological Moses" – did not interest him, but only that image of Moses which had worked in Jewish history as a creative force. So the Tanakh only appealed to him as the bearer of the spirit of the nation of Israel: this was the Tanakh as it had worked in Jewish history through the interpretation of the successive generations. The Tanakh was the national book of the Jewish people in the very form in which it has been transmitted through the centuries: "This is our national Tanakh".⁴ And only in that form should it be further transmitted to the coming generations. By virtue of its canonization the Tanakh had become an essential part of the national "ego" that could not be imagined without it.

Tanakh teaching was thus considered as a major instrument to imbue the younger generation with the "national spirit", of which the Tanakh was a principal embodiment. One of the pioneer educators who went in Ahad Ha'am's trail, Joseph Azaryahu, pointed out that the traditional exegesis as it developed over the nation's history was the channel through which the Tanakh operated as the educative force to shape the personality of the pupils in that national spirit. Therefore he felt that in this traditional conception, and not in the interpretation of modern Biblical scholarship the educative force of Bible teaching resided.

But it should be kept in mind that Ahad Ha'am and his followers were no religious Jews in the traditional sense and did not feel themselves committed to the Halakhah. Ahad Ha'am tried to circumvent this difficulty by saying: "If faith can no longer provide the link between the Jew and the Holy Scriptures, then a sound national feeling will maintain this link". Religious faith in Ahad Ha'am's view is only a time-bound manifestation of the national spirit which can be left behind without impairing that spirit itself. This spirit is first and foremost characterized by high ethical principles which had come to their classical expression in the prophets. Therefore the Tanakh should also be honoured by "national Jews" who do not adhere to the Jewish faith.

⁴ Ahad Ha'am, *The Hebrew Gymnasium in Jaffa*, in "*The Complete Works of Ahad Ha'am*", Tel Aviv · Jerusalem, 1947, 1965? p. 419.

H. A. Zuta, another pioneer of Zionist Hebrew Education in Eretz Israel, demanded that not only in the orthodox schools but in the general, non-religious school system as well, the *holiness* of Scriptures be stressed and the Tanakh be read with covered head according to the traditional custom. He further condemned the use of abridged school editions of the Tanakh, because they missed the essential thing: the holiness of the Tanakh "which is that which sows in the heart of the pupils national feeling and morality". He requested awe and adoration to the "National Book, the holy book of the nation", but the source of holiness bestowed on the Tanakh is here the "spirit of the nation". The national mystique is here religion.

Even when the Tanakh is explicitly divorced from its religious significance, it is often still treated with a reverence and awe which is reminiscent of its former religious standing. It is still held in high regard as the fundamental charter of the nation, dating from its golden age, to which one reverts in the process of national and social reconstruction.

In socialist Zionist circles the ethics of the prophets are also strongly emphasized, and are often linked with pioneering, especially agricultural pioneering. In this way a biblical foundation is given for this feature of national reconstruction. The educator Jacob Banai states in the early years of Israeli statehood that in biblical times "labour in the field and in nature, in the magnificent landscape of our country, nurtured the sublime spirit of Israelite prophecy and poetry, shaped the Jewish character and engendered in the national consciousness a moral world outlook based on social justice and love of peace".⁵ The contents of the Bible are actualized in such a way that they meet the ideological needs of modern Israel, and support the striving for normalization of the Jewish people living an independent life in its ancient homeland as the precondition of national regeneration. Abraham is seen as the prototype of the Zionist pioneers who left their country and family for the Zionist-socialist ideal.

In Marxist kibbutz education the task of Bible teaching is seen to restore to the mind of the pupils what is considered the original main theme of biblical literature, namely, the belief in man and his capabilities. In the opinion of one of the representatives of this approach, Mordechai Segal, the dialectic of the cultural development of the nation has raised against the original unsophisticated adoration of man the belief in God and of divine providence and commandment. "Our culture", Segal continues, "has returned, however, on another historical level to the human thesis". The "antithesis" phase of the history of the people which is most prominently expressed in the Rabbinical literature and made, in fact, for the *Jewish* character of the people of Israel, is rejected. Segal published a collection of biblical stories

⁵ Jacob Banai, *Ideological and Didactic Principles of the Teaching of the Bible*, Tel Aviv, 1954 (Hebrew).

(from Exodus until Judges) in which the biblical language is retained more or less intact, but with the important distinction that any religious elements, including most references to God, have been deleted. The rationale for this was that an important aim of Bible teaching in the Hebrew school was to bring the pupils into contact with original Hebrew folklore as an indispensable element for the formation of a new Hebrew culture. The main characteristic of biblical folklore is, in Segal's opinion, its human pathos, which is, however, impaired by the divine element of the stories as told in the Bible. "If one has an ancient artifact, to which later generations have made an addition that was not of the original style – is it then forbidden to try to bring the original to light?", Segal asks. But it should be added, that this collection of Bible stories "without God" has been rejected by Segal's own people. Those of his way of thinking did not consider this a valid solution to the problem which they have with God and the religious contents in the Bible.

Although this issue was often ignored, it nevertheless continued to exist as a major difficulty for Bible teaching in the largely secularized Jewish society of modern Israel. It is remarkable to see how this problem was side-stepped in the Bible curriculum of 1954-55 for the general state school. Here one discerns a remarkable silence about the religious aspects of the Bible, but all the greater is the focus on the Israelite nation in its homeland and on the high moral standards of the people. For instance, with regard to the Exodus story practically no mention is made of God's redeeming acts, but the misery of the people of Israel and its perseverance as well as the personality and leadership of Moses is put at the centre.

Others, however, have pointed out, that ignoring this problem was not solving it. The educator Yizhak Daniel (Schweizer) has charged that many teachers give instruction in the Tanakh, as he puts it, "without the Tanakh", concentrating in a given passage on details which are not really relevant; e. g. in the story of the creation, they do not fix upon the essence of the biblical idea of creation, but give information on ancient Near-Eastern cosmologies and mythologies. With regard to the story of Achan's defiance of the ban on Jericho and the subsequent defeat at Ai (Joshua 7), Daniel has charged that the attention is directed to matters of war strategy rather than to the main concern of the Book of Joshua itself: the name and honour of God, the sin of the people and the breach of the covenant. From the point of view of educational psychology Abraham Minkovitz has pointed out that the lack of clarity on this fundamental issue cannot continue indefinitely, but that the bridging of the gap between the biblical religious atmosphere and the secular¹ climate of modern Israel is a precondition for a meaningful educational activity connected with the teaching of the Bible. Aharon F. Kleinberger has stated the fundamental question as follows: "Can

a young generation of Israelis steeped in scientific beliefs and secular views preserve any continuity with a heritage that is wholly religious in character”?

Theoretically there are various possibilities. The first is to affirm or at least accept secularism as a given fact and to make attempts to interpret Jewish heritage in a non-religious, secular way. In that context it had been attempted to interpret the religious elements of the Tanakh as time-bound expressions of the national spirit and particularity. The struggle between YHWH and Ba'al is then presented as a conflict between the “national ideology” and foreign influences. Israel’s uniqueness is then seen not to be based on God’s act of electing Israel, but on this people’s decision to opt for such an enlightened idea as ethical monotheism. David Ben-Gurion, who was a passionate Bible student and promoter of Bible-study in Israel, valued the Tanakh very highly as the “identity card” of the Jewish people; which – with Israel’s independence in its homeland, after its long exile – declares again the glory of Israel, rather than the glory of God. But as such interpretation so clearly distorts the biblical contents, it cannot be considered to come to grips with the difficulty of interpreting in a secular way the religious heritage contained in the Bible.

Another attempt radically rejects the religious contents of the Bible, considering them to be results of later editing of the sources. Thus Job is seen by the leftist kibbutz educator, Benyamin Halevi, as the rebel, the tragic hero and moral man, who discovers a new truth: justice is no attribute of God, and therefore no moral order exists in the world. Job thus has, in Halevi’s words, “eradicated morality from God and reserved it for the children of man”. The final chapters of the Book of Job which speak of Job’s submission are rejected by Halevi as unauthentic, the handiwork of theologians designed to make the “heretic Job” acceptable. Mordechai Segal considers the various biblical statements about God as projections of the various aspects of the human psyche: there are, in fact, two gods in the Bible. One is the god of love and justice, the god of the prophets, reflecting the moral conscience of man, his super-ego, the other is the jealous and avenging deity, the “God of Hosts”, the god of the priests demanding sacrifices – who mirrors the instinctive nature of man and is the projection of all that man forbids himself! As in this approach many sections of the Bible are rejected as unauthentic or as irrelevant for the present, it falls far short of a real secular interpretation of the religious contents of the Bible, but can only make use of a limited selection from the biblical literature.

A third attempt has been made by Shlomo Dov Goitein, himself a religious person, who considered it as the utmost importance that the Bible would remain the spiritual property of all sections of the nation, whether secular or religious. He compared the Tanakh with the vessels of the Temple which were taken by the people of Israel into the Babylonian exile and were brought back when they returned to Zion, and thus served the purpose of

the national and spiritual reconstruction after the Exile in the Second Commonwealth. Thus in the Third Commonwealth the Tanakh is considered by Goitein as the condition for spiritual renewal of the people. But for this it is necessary that the Tanakh would be able to speak to all sections of the nation including those who did not believe in God. This induces Goitein to wrestle with the problem of how to bring the central concept of the Bible, the image of God, near to secular people. His thesis is that, even if people cannot be united regarding the belief in God, they can at least be united regarding the significance of the ideals and the values implied in the biblical image of God, which, he feels, can be expressed in non-religious terms. Goitein distinguishes four aspects of the biblical image of God: 1. The God of the individual; 2. the God of the nation; 3. the God of nature and the universe; 4. the God of love and justice. To the God of the individual corresponds the value of basic trust in life; to the God of the nation – a concept which Goitein tries to explain to the non-religious as designating the embodiment of the nation, its genius – corresponds a commitment to the nation's unity and special mission and destiny; to the God of nature and the universe corresponds the value of contact with nature and enjoying life. To the fourth aspect of the biblical God corresponds the value of dedication to mercy and justice. Looking more carefully into the matter, it is doubtful whether this attempt constitutes a real solution to the problem of how to translate the religious core of Jewish heritage into non-religious terms. For here it is only the ramifications and implications of this core that are communicated and not the core itself, which ties this set of values together and gives them their significance. This becomes clear with regard to the value of the unity and the special mission and destiny of the Jewish people, for it is unclear why one should be committed to these matters if one does not recognize a higher authority which bestows on the Jewish people such mission and destiny. Nevertheless, Goitein has done much to build bridges between the Tanakh's religious contents and the non-religious pupil's world.

If it is not possible to arrive at a satisfactory secular interpretation of the religious heritage of the Bible, then the alternative theoretical possibility is to discover a way back to a religious point of view. From established orthodox religious education, which is very much closed in and screened off from the non-religious sections of the population, very few impulses emanated for a possible back-to-religion movement, as here by and large a defensive and apologetic position has been assumed. An exception is Nehama Leibowitz's work, whose method of Bible teaching based on traditional Jewish commentaries has had considerable influence outside the religious school system. An important attempt has been made within the general school system by Joseph Schächter. His aim is to work for the emergence of a religious experience in the pupils and to contribute to a religious revival among the new generation. But this is only feasible after the pupil has undergone

a psychological preparation for the encounter with the transcendent, i. e. after the bond between a person and his unconscious and subconscious has been restored. Selections from Tolstoy, Lagerlöf, Kierkegaard and other creations of world literature, as well as from works on primitive religions describing the sense of unity or harmony between man and cosmos, and C. G. Jung's psychological writings are used as a means to break through the walls of man's rational ego and to what Schächter describes as coming nearer to the divine. Accordingly, revelation is defined by him as the process of unconscious' forces becoming conscious in the individual or in the community. One gets an impression of Schächter's approach to the Tanakh by looking at his selection of the 75 Bible chapters which he considers the most important for education. His choices show strict limitations on the historical and prophetic parts of the Bible, whereas legal and cultic aspects (such as the building of the tabernacle) receive relatively great attention. But the main emphasis is on Psalms and Job. While usually these chapters are chosen which testify to the link between the people and the land, Schächter stresses the life in the desert as the ideal life of the Israelite community, because it was then – says Schächter – really oriented towards the inner life or the transcendent. One might wonder whether this strong predilection for the mythical and mystical does not run counter to a basic element in the Tanakh itself. It seems, therefore, that the pupils are not so much brought closer to the religious outlook of the Tanakh, the cornerstone of later Jewish tradition, as rather to a mystical and comprehensive type of religion which is common to Eastern religions, however true it may be that there exist a mystical undercurrent in Jewish tradition, which has surfaced in the Kabbalah and Hassidism.

It seems that both theoretical options which were revised to bridge the gap between the secular outlook on the world and life and the Jewish religious heritage founded in the Tanakh, namely, either interpreting the religious contents of the Bible in secular terms, or bringing modern youth to a biblical-religious viewpoint, have so far failed to yield satisfactory results. Therefore it is appropriate to pay attention to the attitude of those who refrain from making a choice in either direction, but decide to bear the tension between secularism and religion, refusing to resolve it in any of the ways mentioned before. This attitude is adopted in the humanistic approach to the Bible, of which Zvi Adar is the most articulate spokesman. Education has an important task to bring the young person into contact with great human culture, among other things by exposing him to great classical literature. The Tanakh is great classical literature and as it is at the same time the foundation stone of the national culture, it is the ideal type of literature for Jewish humanist education to draw upon for bringing the pupil into contact with great human culture, with which he has to wrestle in order to crystallize his self-understanding and his values. Here

an empathetic attitude is expected from the pupil when he studies the biblical literature in order to penetrate into its inner sense and understand it from within. Biblical religious life is presented as a central human experience, which may draw the pupil's attention to the dimension of depth in man's existence. "Great religious literature as the Bible renders a great vision of man and life and can thus rescue us from the meanness and petty materialism of modern man". In this confrontation between Bible and modern man the pupil is called upon to examine critically the biblical contents and to decide what to accept and what to reject – either in whole or in part. Man takes here an autonomous position with regard to the Bible. The guiding principle is to approach more closely "true human culture". In this respect mankind is continually learning and always on its way to the full expression of the "idea of man" without completely achieving it. The classical works of human culture are of great importance, in so far as they exemplify the height of true human culture, no matter from what historical, national or cultural background they have emerged. But as education takes place in the framework of a particular society, it is only natural that in education towards the "true values of man" great attention is given to a pupil's own national culture. The ideal situation for the humanist exists when he can educate towards the values of man via the national values of a society, so that in his own culture one may obtain his specific "spiritual portion of the general culture". In Adar's opinion the Israeli humanistic educator finds himself in this fortunate situation certainly as far as the teaching of the Bible is concerned, since it is "one of the greatest treasures of human culture".

A difficulty here is that in studying the Bible the student is easily caught between current contemporary moral values and philosophical outlooks on the one hand and biblical views, beliefs and ideas on the other, which are presented to him in an empathetic way, without the provision of guidance in how to resolve eventual conflicts between these two spiritual worlds. A further problem exists from the viewpoint of maintaining continuity with *Jewish* heritage and accepting and affirming Jewishness as a thing full of intrinsic meaning. The idea of man does not contain a principle in whose name one should keep to his Jewishness. It may inspire someone who happens to be Jewish to strive to become truly humane, but in itself it cannot inspire one to become truly Jewish. The unanswerable question is here: On what account can one accept his Jewishness positively – in a manner that transcends taking it up as an incomprehensible fate?.

Recently educators coming from the non-religious (i. e. non-orthodox) sector of the educational system have tried to tackle this question by pointing out, that the whole tendency of laying the main emphasis on the Tanakh, at the expense of the Talmud, has reached a dead end. Eliezer Schweid passed even the harsh verdict that "the large amount of time de-

voted to the Tanakh in the elementary and secondary school is basically squandered on the void" – at least from the point of view of concern for the strengthening of the Jewish identity. In Schweid's opinion, the Tanakh is often lauded as the *source* of Israel's culture, being as it the historical evidence of the beginning of the nation, the testimony of the bond with the land, a treasury of the Hebrew language and a sublime literary creation. But, Schweid remarks, the essentials are missing from this enumeration. Among the most fundamental characteristics of the Tanakh is the fact that it is an authoritative religious document intended to be binding. In its capacity of a source the Tanakh is essentially *Torah* in the sense of showing the right way of life. This characteristic necessitated a complicated process of ongoing reinterpretation of the Bible in order to maintain both its revelatory authority and its applicability to changing circumstances. Taking the Bible seriously as a source means further, in Schweid's opinion, paying attention to the ways the biblical content is reflected in Jewish interpretation from post-biblical times onwards. Relating to a source means, in his view, being aware of the permanent presence of this source document in steadily renewed spiritual creativity throughout history. Consequently, the educational aim of the teaching of the Tanakh as the principal source of Israel's culture cannot be achieved when only the Tanakh is taught while its reflection and interpretation in all the vast subsequent Jewish literature are practically excluded from instruction. Therefore he recommends that the *Torah she-be-al-peh* (Oral Torah), i.e. the Jewish tradition which developed after the biblical period, should be elevated to playing the integrating role in the curriculum of Jewish studies, and the status of the Tanakh should be lowered. The strong emphasis on the Tanakh as it developed in general education is in Schweid's view not an asset but an impediment to the development of a sound Jewish destiny.

But even so, Kleinberger's question remains: "How can a young generation of Israelis steeped in scientific beliefs and secular views preserve any continuity with a heritage that is wholly religious in character?" Schweid answers, that the modern Jew is a person faced with the existential need to come to terms with his Jewish identity and is therefore compelled to take the source of Jewish history and culture seriously. He trusts that in this process of grappling with one's Jewish identity, of which the study of the sources is one expression, the hidden spark of faith concealed in every man may be kindled and come into the open, thus enabling him to approach the sources truly as *Torah*, as life-giving divine guidance.

But one wonders whether this trust on the illumination by the spirit is sufficient answer to Kleinberger's question. It might be necessary to embark on a search for an image of man which would do justice to the biblical and subsequent Judaic sources and at the same time be meaningful to secular-minded people. Focussing first on the Tanakh, this would entail no

less than a concerted effort towards a Jewish biblically inspired philosophy, a systematic hermeneutical process of interpreting the fundamental concepts of the biblical outlook with a view to discovering their relevance for modern man. To put it in a schematizing way, Bible scholars might concentrate on a systematic presentation of biblical images, concepts, modes of thought and belief, which are essential to the understanding of the biblical outlook on life. Philosophers could relate the insights gained by Bible scholars to fundamental categories and structures of human existence, while educators might examine those findings according to their educational feasibility. Such concerted effort may give an impetus to the emergence of a new vision of man, world and God out of the confrontation with the Tanakh – a vision which would be meaningful for modern man. It seems that on this depends to a considerable extent whether the Bible can serve as a source of new life for the Jewish people in the process of national survival in modern Israel.

Dr. Coos Schoneveld, editorial secretary of this bulletin, is theological adviser in Jerusalem to the Netherlands Reformed Church, and executive secretary of the Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity in Israel.