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SUMMARIES

INHERITANCE OF THE LAND–PRIVILEGE VERSUS OBLIGATION: The Concept of ‘The Promise of the Land’ in the Sources of the First and Second Temple Periods

by M. Weinfeld (pp. 115–137)

The Land of Israel was always considered a great gift bestowed by God upon the people of Israel; hence the importance of the ‘Promise of the Land’ in the faith of Israel. The Israelites deemed the inheritance of their land a privilege for which they must be worthy. Should they fail in this, the land would be taken away from them as it was from the Canaanites before them. All of Biblical historiography, in fact, revolves around this belief. The history of Israel from Abraham to Joshua hinges upon the ‘Promise of the Land’ and its realization, just as the history from the settlement to the Exile constitutes a constant struggle over control of the land and the right to maintain it. The danger of exile, to which Israel became exposed following the rise of the Assyrian empire in the eighth century BCE, opened up a process of national self-examination and led to the recognition that maintaining the land was contingent upon the fulfillment of God’s will and His commandments. This recognition served as an impetus for the development of the historiography of ancient Israel as presented in the books of Joshua and Kings. The exile of Northern Israel as well as of Judah was explained in these works as the result of the sins of the people. An intense feeling of guilt which prevailed among the people in exile caused them to return to God with all their heart. Their target was not the renewed conquest of the land but rather the renewal of the religious center in Jerusalem. The Temple and its sanctity, as well as the observance of the Torah, were set up as the primary objective for the people who returned from exile, and for this cause they were prepared to give their life. Thus ‘the Land’ became the means to an end and not the end itself. Even when required to proclaim war on their neighbors, the motivation was not a need to conquer portions of the promised land, but stemmed rather from a devotion to God, His temple and His law. Furthermore, towards the end of the Second Temple period there developed a process of spiritualization of the concept of ‘the Land’, corresponding to a similar development regarding the concept of Jerusalem. ‘Inheritance of the Land’ was interpreted as inheriting a share in ‘the world to come’ (חלק בעולם הבא), just as Jerusalem, the city, acquired the meaning of heavenly Jerusalem. However, in contradistinction to the prevailing tendency in Christianity to strip ‘the Land’ and Jerusalem of their realistic, earthly meanings and to see them merely as symbols, in Judaism the real land and physical Jerusalem were always retained as the basis for the spiritual values and symbols mounted upon them. Without the real Land and the earthly city, Messianic redemption was inconceivable in Judaism.

FAIRS IN THE LAND OF ISRAEL
IN THE MISHNA AND TALMUD PERIOD

by Z. Safrai (pp. 139–158)

Fairs were among the major centers of commercial activity in the Roman Empire. The fair was composed of market days in specially designated areas exempted from commercial taxes. These exemptions were dedicated to the God under whose patronage the fair was conducted. Such market days were organized in Eretz Israel as well, and the common designation for them in Talmudic literature is *יריד*. The fairs took on the character of a pagan holiday, and therefore sages forbade all participation in them. This prohibition was established during the Usha generation following the Bar Kokhba revolt, but in subsequent generations it was modified and a series of exceptions was instituted, thereby enabling almost complete participation in the fairs. According to Talmudic sources only the Fair of Botna (*יריד בוטנה*) (*אלוני ממרא*) was forbidden. Christian sources, however, attest to Jewish participation not only in the commercial fair at that site but in the religious holiday there as well, until this was forbidden by Constantine.

In the fairs of Eretz Israel it was primarily special and expensive merchandise that was sold, but testimony describing small commerce also exists. Travelling merchants participated in this activity, moving about between the various fairs and commercial cities. The fairs, however, did not serve as regular outlets for the sale of imports and exports in the land.

A number of fairs are known in Eretz Israel. The most important of these was the 'Fair at Botna', which served primarily for transit commerce. The fairs of Ashkelon, Gaza, Acre, Tyre, Hamat-Gader, Bet-Guvrin and Bet-Shean are also known. Some of these existed within the city, others took place beyond the city-walls, and yet others in the villages. These fairs were preceded by regional markets that operated, even before the destruction of the Second Temple, on Mondays and Thursdays. As they did not always bear the character of pagan gatherings, participation in them was not forbidden. Regional markets were active in the first century CE and until the Bar Kokhba war, while fairs are known in the Land only after the revolt, when Roman activity took on a decidedly pagan character openly provoking the Jewish population.

In the Roman period a highly developed commercial network existed in the Land and throughout the Empire, and the fairs did not fulfill a major economic role in this context. It was primarily an artificial economic institution, and became a central one only in the wake of the imperial policy of taxation. At certain fairs the holiday was the major component, and the economic element was of secondary importance.

THE JEWISH ENTREPRENEURS IN BERLIN
AND THE “CIVIL IMPROVEMENT OF THE JEWS”
IN THE 1780’S AND 1790’S

by M. Bodian (pp. 159–184)

This study examines the relationship between the economic role of the leading Jewish entrepreneurs in 18th-century Prussia and a fundamental shift in their collective allegiance, reflected in their response to public pressure for the naturalization of the Jews in the latter part of the century. On the basis of official documents, the author surveys the entrepreneurs’ activity in three areas: in the context of the machinery of the absolutist state, in the sphere of labor recruitment for industry, and within the Jewish community (where their supervisory role was closely linked to their economic role). In all of these areas, the success of the entrepreneurs was contingent on adherence to principles of behavior imposed by the state. A critical reading of official and other sources indicates that these Jews tended to adopt the principles to which they were forced to comply. The author suggests that the entrepreneurs’ efforts in their capacity as industrialists to “productivize” previously idle persons, together with the responsibility imposed on them to eliminate “non-productive” elements in the Jewish community, prepared the way for their support of projects for the social and economic reform of the Jews in the 1780’s. The habit of submitting to norms set by the state also guided their general response when the political and moral ideas of the *Aufklärung* led to a public demand for the naturalization of the Jews. Unlike Mendelssohn, who challenged a notion of citizenship which required the relinquishment of a distinctive Jewish existence, the entrepreneurs accepted the conditions for naturalization posed by German public figures and bureaucrats, both in principle and in deed. In their writings and petitions of the 1790’s, they reveal an almost total acceptance of the prevailing ethic of citizenship and the critique of Jewish life as incompatible with the latter.

THE INFLUENCE OF BENJAMIN FRANKLIN ON THE
SYSTEM OF SELF-IMPROVEMENT IN
MENAHEM MENDEL LEPIN’S ‘*HESHBON HA-NEFESH*’

by D. Shahar (pp. 185–192)

In 1808 R. Menahem Mendel Lepin, a Jewish intellectual influenced by the European Haskalah, published a book called ‘*Heshbon Ha-Nefesh*’. The work suggests a system for the reshaping of tendencies and ingrained natural traits that play a role in recurrent behavioral patterns provoked by various stimuli. The system is based on self-improvement, with the goal of achieving maximum self-control over one’s behavior. The uniqueness of the work is in its reliance on psychological concepts and ideas prevalent in late 17th and 18th century European behavioral studies.

Scholars are divided over the degree of influence exerted by the ideas of Benjamin Franklin –

the statesman, philosopher and inventor whose works were widely circulated in Europe – in the shaping of the system of self-improvement embodied in *'Heshbon Ha-Nefesh'*. The present article compares Franklin's system with that of Lepin. This comparison leaves no room for doubt regarding the overwhelming contribution of Franklin's work to the ideas put forward by Lepin. The latter's proposal is, in effect, a copy of the former's system.

The results of this study thus furnish us with evidence of the degree to which European Jewish Maskilim embraced the moral, esthetic and intellectual ideals of the bourgeoisie. The relationship of Lepin to an American puritanic thinker sheds much light on aspects of the Jewish Haskalah movement.