

Introduction

1. Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook, Arpilei Tohar <http://www.daat.ac.il/daat/vl/arpiley/arpiley01.pdf>

אמונה שאין השכל מסכים לה, מעוררת היא קצף ואכזריות, מפני שהצד היותר עליון שבאדם, שהוא השכל, נעשה עלוב מחמתה. אמנם האמונה העליונה, אף על פי שהיא כמוסה מאד, ודרכי ד' נפלאים הם, יש בהם נועם גדול כל כך שהקצף המתעורר מצד כפיית השכל מתבטל מיד, ונהפך בעצמו למתיקות גדולה ולאור צה...

Faith with which the mind does not agree arouses anger and cruelty [within one's self], because the human being's higher aspect, the mind, becomes frustrated with it. However, in higher faith – although it is quite concealed – Gd's ways are marvelous, and there is such great beauty in them that the anger caused by overpowering the mind is immediately cancelled, converted into great sweetness and pure light...

2. Rabbi Saadia Gaon, Introduction to *Ha'Emunot v'haDeiot*

היודע בלא סבה הוא הבורא יתברך, וכאשר אני עתיד לבאר. אבל כל הברואים לא יתכן שיהיה מדעם בלא סבה, והיא הדרישה והעיון The One who knows without a cause is the Creator, as I will explain. But all created entities cannot know without a cause, and that cause is search and analysis.

What are the questions?

3. Vayikra 23:15-16, Devarim 16:9

וספרתם לכם ממחרת השבת מיום הביאכם את-עמר התנופה שבע שבתות תמימת תהינה: עד ממחרת השבת השביעת תספרו חמשים יום... שבעה שבעת תספר-לך מהחל חרמש בקמה תחל לספר שבעה שבעות:

And you shall count for yourselves, from the day after the Shabbat, from the day you bring the *omer* of elevation, seven complete weeks they shall be. Until the day after the seventh Shabbat you shall count fifty days...

Seven weeks you shall count, from the sickle's start in the standing grain you shall begin to count seven weeks.

4. Bereishit 36:31

ואלה המלכים אשר מלכו בארץ אדום לפני מלך-מלך לבני ישראל:

And these are the kings who reigned in the land of Edom, before a king reigned for the Children of Israel.

5. Talmud Yerushalmi Taanit 4:2

שלשה ספרים מצאו בעזרה: ספר מעוני וספר זעוטוי וספר היא. באחד מצאו כתוב "מעון אלקי קדם" ובשנים כתיב [דברים לג כז] "מענה אלקי קדם", וקיימו שנים וביטלו אחד.

They found three Torah Scrolls in the *Azarah*... In one of them it said מעון and in the other two it said מעונה, so they maintained the two and annulled the one.

6. Talmud, Kiddushin 30a

...היו אומרים וא"ו דגחון חציין של אותיות של ס"ת... בעי רב יוסף: וא"ו דגחון מהאי גיסא או מהאי גיסא? א"ל, ניתי ס"ת ואימניה!.... א"ל, אינה בקיאי בחסירות ויתרות, אנן לא בקיאינן.

The ו in גחון is the halfway point in the Torah... Rav Yosef asked: Is the ו in גחון in the first half or second half of the Torah?

They replied: Let's bring a Torah scroll and count the letters!... He replied: They were expert in missing and extra letters [that do not affect pronunciation]; we are not expert in missing and extra letters.

7. Rashi to Shemot 25:22

ואת כל אשר אצוה אותך אל בני ישראל - הרי וי"ו זו יתירה וטפלה, וכמוהו הרבה במקרא

"And all that I will instruct you, to the Children of Israel" - This ו is extra and subordinate; there are many like it in Scripture...

8. Qumran variations <http://aneapps.com/downloads/gen-deut.pdf>

9. Timothy Insoll, *Oxford Handbook of the Archeology of Ritual and Religion* pg. 107

Pork avoidance in this area, however, is generally accepted to have originated from ancient Egypt. One of the key explanations is that pig taboos became more common when Seth, a god with whom the pig was associated, lost favour and the god Horus, his rival, became more important.

10. Meir Ekstein, *Rabbi Mordechai Breuer and Modern Orthodox Biblical Commentary*, Tradition 33:3 (1999)

The most controversial aspect of Rav Breuer's exegesis is his engagement with biblical criticism. Contrary to most such attempts from religious quarters, and in an astonishing about face, he accepts their arguments in toto but none of their conclusions. He believes that the Torah is consistently written with parallel, overlapping and conflicting narratives. Instead of accepting a historical documentary hypothesis, he reads the different narratives as representing different perspectives which are all encompassed by the infinity of G-d. As limited humans, we cannot simultaneously entertain different perspectives, and they therefore appear to us as contradictions.

On the one hand this notion is not novel. For example, Rashi on the first verse in the Torah explains the different names of G-d as representing the different divine modes and characteristics of mercy and justice. Rabbi Soloveitchik zt"l takes a related approach to biblical criticism in his article "The Lonely Man of Faith", although it is not framed there as a response to Higher Criticism but as a philosophical midrash. He sees the two accounts of man's creation as displaying different facets of man and his relation to G-d. However, these attempts are occasional and isolated. Rav Breuer's systematic application of these differences and inconsistencies to every section of the Torah, his cutting and pasting verses to match different *middot*, and his simultaneous acceptance and rejection of the documentary hypothesis is a bold, novel and provocative move.

11. Prof. Naftali Herz Tur-Sinai, *Peshuto shel Mikra* 1:1

בראשית ברא אלקים את השמים ואת הארץ
כוונת הכותב הראשון לא הייתה אלא: 'בראשית ברא אלקים את המים ואת הארץ', ועל כן המשיך (פס' ב) 'והארץ היתה תהו ובהו וחשך על פני תהום ורוח אלקים מרחפת על פני המים'. השמים (פס' ח) נבראו אך אחר כך. ואמנם הגרסה 'השמים', שנולדה בהשפעת מקומות אחרים הרבה במקרא ושהפכה להיות הקדמה לכל מעשה הבריאה, כבר הייתה לפני כל המתרגמים.

The intent of the first author was only: "In the beginning, Gd created the *mayim* and the earth." Thus it continued (1:2), "And the earth was *tohu* and *bohu*, and darkness on the face of the depths, and the spirit of Gd floated on the face of the *mayim*." *Shamayim* were created only later (1:8). And in truth, the text *shamayim*, which was born of the influence of many other places in Scripture, and which became an introduction to the entire act of Creation, was already present for all of the [Aramaic] translators.

12. Carol Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations*, page 161

The presence of these words in Job's mouth seems to many commentators so out of place that they propose that the third cycle of speeches has been disturbed, either through accident or by a pious scribe who wished to mute Job's heterodoxy by giving him some "proper" sentiments. According to many versions of this theory, the material in 24:18-25 and 27:12-23 originally formed part of the speeches of Bildad and Zophar. The difficulty, however, is that no textual evidence exists to support such a theory. It is simply a desperate gesture in response to an interpretive embarrassment. As scholars have become more reticent about rewriting the text before interpreting it, there has been an increased tendency to interpret these portions of the text as Job's own words...

Our traditional bias

13. Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra to Shemot 14:27 (extended commentary)

ישתחקו עצמות חוי הכלבי, שאמר כי משה ידע את מיעוט הים ברדתו, ועת רבותו בעלותו בהמשכו, והוא העביר עמו במיעוט המים כמשפטו, ופרעה לא ידע מנהג הים על כן טבע.

The bones of Chivi the Kalbi should be ground up, for he said that Moshe knew the diminution of the sea in its descent, and the time when it would increase, rising in its flow, and he brought his nation across at the diminution of the water according to its normal order. Pharaoh did not know the way of the sea, and so he drowned.

14. In the name of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, Likutei Moharan Tinyana, Torah 19

עיקר התכלית והשלימות הוא רק לעבוד ד' בתמימות גמור בלי שום חכמות כלל. כי יש מחקרים שאומרים שעיקר התכלית והעוה"ב הוא רק לדעת כל דבר כמו שהוא, כגון לידע הכוכב כמו שהיא, לידע מהותו ומפני מה עומד במקום ההוא... והם מבליים ימיהם על זה בעולם הזה לחקור ולהשיג המושכלות שזהו תכלית אצלם, וזהו בעצמו העוה"ב לדעתם, רק שבעוה"ז שמלובשין בגוף אין להם תענוג כל כך מן החקירות ובעולם הבא שיתפשטו מהגוף יתענוגו מאד מזה. ולדעתם הרעה עיקר השגת התכלית הוא על ידי חקירות וחכמות חיצוניות שלהם. אבל באמת אצלינו עיקר השגת התכלית הוא רק על ידי אמונה ומצוות מעשיות לעבוד ד' ע"פ התורה בתמימות ובפשיטות... ותדע שאין הדבר כדעתם ח"ו כי א"כ לא ישיגו התכלית רק מתי מעט מעט מאד, דהיינו הבעלי שכל פילוסופים! ומה יעשו קטני הערך שאין להם שכל כזה... וזהו "סוף דבר הכל נשמע את האלקים ירא ואת מצוותיו שמור כי זה כל האדם"... ובאמת הוא איסור גדול מאד להיות מחקר ח"ו וללמוד ספרי החכמות ח"ו. רק הצדיק הגדול מאד הוא יכול להכניס עצמו בזה ללמוד השבע חכמות. כי מי שנכנס בתוך החכמות הללו ח"ו יכול ליפול שם...

The essential goal and completeness is in serving Gd in total simplicity, without any wisdoms at all. For there are investigators who say that the essential goal, and Olam haBa, are in knowing a thing's nature, such as knowing a star – its essence, and why it occupies its location... And they waste their days in this world on this subject, investigating and grasping ideas which are, to them, the goal. This is Olam haBa, in their view; in this world they are clothed in a body and so they do not experience such great pleasure from their investigations, but in Olam haBa, when they are freed of the body, then they will experience great pleasure from it. Within their deficient understanding, the essential achievement of the goal is via their investigations and external wisdoms. But in truth, for us, the essential achievement of the goal is only via belief and practical mitzvot, serving Gd according to the Torah in simplicity... Know that it is not as they think, Gd forbid, for then very few people – intellectual elites, philosophers – could achieve the goal! What should those of lesser value, who lack this intellect, do?... This is the meaning of, "At the end of the matter, all has been heard. Revere Gd, and guard His mitzvot, for this is the entire person."

In truth, investigation, Gd forbid, and learning the books of wisdoms, Gd forbid, is strongly prohibited. Only an extremely great *tzaddik* can introduce himself to this study of the seven wisdoms, for who enters these wisdoms, Gd forbid, could fall there...

15. Talmud, Bava Batra 15a

עד כאן הקב"ה אומר ומשה אומר וכותב, מכאן ואילך הקב"ה אומר ומשה כותב בדמע

Until here HaShem spoke and Moshe wrote; from here on, HaShem spoke and Moshe wrote with tears.

16. Rambam, Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Teshuvah 3:8

שלשה הן הכופרים בתורה: האומר שאין התורה מעם ה' אפילו פסוק אחד אפילו תיבה אחת אם אמר משה אמרו מפי עצמו הרי זה כופר בתורה, וכן ...

There are three who deny the Torah: One who says that Torah is not from Gd, even one sentence or even one word. If he says that Moshe said this on his own, he denies the Torah. And also...

17. Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra to Bereishit 12:6

והכנעני אז בארץ יתכן שארץ כנען תפשה כנען מיד אחר. ואם איננו כן יש לו סוד. והמשכיל ידום:

"And the Canaanites were then in the land" – Perhaps the land of Canaan was taken by the Canaanites from others. And if it is not so, there is a secret. And the one with insight will be silent.

18. Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra to Bereishit 3:24

מקדם פ' ממזרח. ודע כי כל מה שמצאנו כתוב הוא אמת, וכן היה ואין בו ספק, ויש לו סוד, כי מאור השכל יצא החפץ, ומהשני העולה למעלה, כי תנועת החפץ לפנים הוא גם עלה תאנה לאות, ונקרא השלישי בשם הבחינה, כי בתחלה יש כח בלי מפעל. והמבין זה הסוד יבין איך יפרד הנהר. וזה סוד גן עדן, וכתנות העור, גם יורה זה הסוד שיש יכולת באדם שיחיה לעולם, והמשכיל יבין כי זה כל האדם:

19. Rabbi Avraham Ibn Ezra to Bereishit 36:31

ואלה המלכים י"א כי בדרך נבואה נכתבה זאת הפרשה.

ויצחקי אמר בספרו כי בימי יהושפט נכתבה זאת הפרשה, ופירש הדורות כרצונו. הכי קרא שמו יצחק, כל השומע יצחק לו, כי אמר כי הדד הוא הדד האדומי, ואמר כי מהיטבאל אחות תחפנחס. וחלילה חלילה שהדבר כמו שדבר על ימי יהושפט, וספרו ראוי להשרף. ולמה תמה על שמונה מלכים שמלכו שהם רבים. והנה מלכי ישראל כפלים במספר, ושני אלה המלכים קרובים לשני מלכי ישראל, גם מלכי יהודה רבים הם ממלכי אדום עד ימי משה. והאמת שפירוש לפני מלך על משה מלך ישראל, וכן כתוב ויהי בישראל מלך (דבר' לג, ה):

"And these were the kings" – Some say this section was written prophetically.

And Yitzchaki said in his book that this section was written in the days of Yehoshaphat, and [Yitzchaki] explained the generations as he wished. For this is he named Yitzchak, for all who hear will laugh at him, for he said that Hadad is the Edomite Hadad, and Meheitavel is the sister of Tachpanches. *Chalilah, chalilah*, for it to be about Yehoshaphat's day as he said! His book should be burned. Why did he express shock at the eight kings who reigned, that they are many? There were double the kings in Yisrael, and these two kings were close to two kings in Yisrael, and there were also more kings in Yehudah than in Edom before the time of Moshe.

In truth, "before a king reigned" refers to Moshe, King of Israel, as Devarim 33:5 says, "And there was a king in Yeshurun."

20. Rabbi David Zvi Hoffmann, Introduction to Vayikra, as cited by Ellenson and Jacobs, *Scholarship and Faith: David Hoffmann and his relationship to Wissenschaft des Judentums*, Modern Judaism 8(1): 27-40

I willingly agree that, in consequence of the foundation of my belief, I am unable to arrive at the conclusion that the Pentateuch was written by anyone other than Moses... We believe that the whole Bible is true, holy, and of divine origin...

21. Professor Umberto Cassuto, *The Documentary Hypothesis and the Composition of the Pentateuch*, trans. by Israel Abrahams, pp. 101-102

I have not shown that it was possible to solve the problems in a different way from that of the documentary theory. I have shown that one must necessarily solve them otherwise and that it is impossible to solve them according to this system. I did not prove that the pillars are weak or that none of them is decisive. I have proved that they are not pillars at all, that they are non-existent and imaginary. Hence, I have arrived at the conclusion that the complete negation of the theory of documents is justified.

22. Rabbi Chaim Heller, as cited by Professor Nathan Lopes Cardozo, *Between Silence and Speech*

But perhaps the most devastating blow to these critical theories was delivered by Rabbi Chaim Heller (1878-1960). Not only had he mastered the Oral Torah to the extent that he was one of the greatest talmudic scholars of his time, but he also knew every extant ancient Bible translation in its original target language, whether Aramaic, Greek, Latin, or Syriac. In his *Untersuchungen ueber die Peschitta* (1911), he took issue with those who concluded that apparent divergences from the Torah in their possession were due to *variae lectiones* in the ancient texts. Not so, he asserted. Every translation is a commentary, and the variations result from the translator preferring one explanation in the Oral Torah to another. Thus, the differences were exegetical rather than textual. He further showed that all the apparent differences stemmed from the thirty-two exegetical rules of biblical interpretation enumerated by Rabbi Elazar ben Rabbi Shimon. In the above-mentioned study he gives examples showing how the translator employed each rule in his version.

23. Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik, Letter published in *Community, Covenant and Commitment*, pg. 147

Either one believes in *Torah min ha-Shamayim*, and one accepts the Halakhah, in its totality, or one does not believe in this basic principle, and rejects it entirely.

24. Rabbi Menachem Leibtag and Dr. James Kugel <https://thinkjudaism.wordpress.com/2013/05/07/is-modern-biblical-scholarship-a-danger-to-traditional-belief-part-1/>

25. Talmud, Menachot 110a, with Rashi

א"ר שמעון בן עזאי בוא וראה מה כתיב בפרשת קרבנות שלא נאמר בהן לא א-ל ולא אלקים אלא ד' שלא ליתן פתחון פה לבעל דין לחלוק רש"י: לבעל הדין - לאומרים רשויות הרבה הן, והדבר מוכיח שזה ששמו כך ציום להקריב לו מנחה [וזה] ששמו כך ציום להקריב לו פרים וזה אילים, לכך נאמר בכולם "ריח ניחוח לד".

Rabbi Shimon ben Azzai said: Come and see what is written regarding the korbanot; it does not say *Kel* or *Elokim*, but only HaShem, so as not to leave an opening for the litigant to argue.

Rashi: "For the litigant" – For those who say there are many gods, as demonstrated by the fact that the one with this name told them to bring a flour offering, and the one with this name told them to bring bulls, and this one rams. This it says for all of them, "A pleasing aroma for G-d."

26. Tosafot, Bava Metzia 60b

למה חלקם הכתוב לעבור עליו בשני לאוין - וא"ת ולמה שינה בלשון לכתוב כספך לא תתן בנשך ובנשך לא תתן אכלך ויש לומר כיון שהוצרך שני לאוין אורחא דקרא לכתוב לשון משונה שהוא נאה יותר.

Why did the Torah change its language, instead of saying "Don't give your money for *neshech* and don't give your food for *neshech*?" Perhaps, since the Torah required two separate prohibitions it was also normal to use an altered text, which would be more appealing.

27. Talmud, Yevamot 3b-4a

לא תעשה גרידא מנלן דדחי? דכתיב: +דברים כ"ב+ לא תלבש שעטנז, גדילים תעשה לך...
ואמר רב ששת אמר ר' אלעזר משום רבי אלעזר בן עזריה: מנין ליבמה שנפלה לפני מוכה שחין, שאין חוסמין אותה? שנאמר: +דברים כ"ה+ לא תחסום שור בדישו, וסמך ליה: כי ישבו אחים יחדיו;
ואמר רב יוסף: אפילו למאן דלא דריש סמוכים בעלמא, במשנה תורה דריש, דהא ר' יהודה בעלמא לא דריש, ובמשנה תורה דריש... ובמשנה תורה מאי טעמא דדריש? איבעית אימא: משום דמוכח, ואיבעית אימא: משום דמופני.

How do we know that a commandment overrides a normal prohibition? It is written, "Do not wear *shaatnez*; make strings for yourself."...

And Rav Sheshet said, citing Rabbi Elazar in the name of Rabbi Elazar ben Azaryah: How do we know that if a *yevamah* falls to a man with boils, we do not force her to marry him? "Do not muzzle an ox when it threshes" is juxtaposed with, "When brothers dwell together..."

Rav Yosef said: Even one who does not ordinarily analyze juxtapositions, does so for Mishneh Torah. Rabbi Yehudah did not ordinarily analyze them, but for Mishneh Torah he did... Why? Either because it is demonstrably so, or because there is available text.

28. Meir Ekstein, *Rabbi Mordechai Breuer and Modern Orthodox Biblical Commentary*, Tradition 33:3 (1999)

Rav Breuer asserts that the various dates are indeed contradictions, but instead of representing different authors they signify different facets of the holidays which are fused together. He sees the holidays as deriving their sanctity from two separate sources. One source is the agricultural cycles, in which the holiday serves as an expression of our joy and thanks to G-d for His gifts. This aspect of Shavuot is rooted in our earthly labors. Were this the only reason for holiday observance, the festival would have been celebrated variably, depending on when we actually reap the agricultural benefits. Furthermore, the holiday would be expressed solely by its joyous character. The other source stems from the sanctity of time and its cycles, which derives its holiness from G-d. Were this the only source for the holiday, Shavuot would have a fixed annual date, and the holiday would be expressed solely in its prohibitions. Rav Breuer argues that the Oral Law combines these sources, which represent different aspects of the holiday. The holidays as we celebrate them are an amalgam of these origins and contain aspects of each one.

29. Professor Barry L. Eichler, *Study of the Bible in Light of our Knowledge of the Ancient Near East*, pp. 82-83 <http://intro.teachtorah.org/09%20Eichler%20ANE.pdf>

At the very onset, we should bear in mind that the use of such disciplines as comparative Semitic linguistics, ancient cultures, and even archaeology, for the study of the Bible is neither foreign nor really new to traditional Jewish scholarship. Throughout the long history of Jewish biblical exegesis, many of our Rishonim utilized these disciplines in their attempt to fathom the plain sense of the biblical texts and to interpret the message of Scripture. We need pause only to mention a few examples: Rabbi Saadya Gaon of the early tenth century is considered by many to be the father and founder of Hebrew philological science. His treatises in the field of Hebrew grammar and lexicography make use of his knowledge of other Semitic languages, chiefly Arabic. To Rabbi Saadya, Hebrew philology was the necessary scientific apparatus for the main objective of interpreting Scripture. Subsequent Spanish Jewish grammarians and exegetes further refined this discipline.

Maimonides in the twelfth century was one of the first to advocate the study of ancient cultures for a deeper appreciation of biblical truths. In Part III of his *Moreh Nebuchim*, in his discussion of the Divine Commandments, the Rambam utilized the ancient chronicles of the idolatrous tribes known as the Sabeans, which were extant in Arabic translations, in order to gain insights into biblical precepts. Maimonides believed that many of the laws of the Torah were given to cure mankind of idolatrous practices. Thus, for example, the Rambam sought to comprehend the Torah's injunction against the eating of blood (Leviticus 17:10) by referring to the Sabeian practice of eating blood in order to commune with the spirits...

30. Code of Hammurabi 131-132

131. If a man bring a charge against one's wife, but she is not surprised with another man, she must take an oath and then may return to her house.

132. If the "finger is pointed" at a man's wife about another man, but she is not caught sleeping with the other man, she shall jump into the river for her husband.

31. Rambam, *Moreh haNevuchim* 3:46

ואומר כי כבר אמרה התורה כפי מה שפירש אונקלוס שהמצריים היו עובדים מזל טלה, מפני זה היו אוסרים לשחוט הצאן, והיו מואסים רועי צאן, אמר הן נזבח את תועבת מצרים. וכן היו כתות מן הצאב"ה עובדים לשדים, והיו חושבים שהם ישובו בצורת העזים... שחיתת הבקר כמעט שהיו מואסים אותו רוב עובדי ע"ז, וכלם היו מגדילים זה המין מאד, ולזה תמצא אנשי הודו עד היום לא ישחטו הבקר כלל, ואפילו בארצות אשר ישחטו שאר מיני בעלי חיים. ובעבור שימחה זכר אלו הדעות אשר אינם אמתיות, צונו להקריב אלו השלשה מינים לבד, מן הבהמה מן הבקר ומן הצאן תקריבו את קרבנכם, עד שיהיה המעשה אשר חשבוהו תכלית המרי, בו יתקרבו אל השם, ובמעשה ההוא יכופרו העוונות.

The Torah has told us, as explained by Onkelos, that the Egyptians worshipped the constellation of the lamb, which was why they prohibited slaughtering sheep, and they abhorred herders of sheep, as it said, "Shall we slaughter the *toevah* of Egypt." And groups of the Sabeans [Yemenites] worshipped demons and thought they took the form of goats... and slaughtering cattle was abhorred by most idolaters, and they raised this species in great numbers, and so you find that people from India will not slaughter cattle even today, even in lands where they slaughter other living creatures. And to eradicate these false views, He commanded us to bring only these three species... so that the deed that they considered the ultimate rebellion would be used to draw closer to Gd, and would be used to atone for sins...

32. Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, *Criticism and Kitvei haKodesh*

Quite simply, I propose that we strive to apply literary criticism to *kitvei ha-kodesh* — that we master its categories, familiarize ourselves with its canons, and bring these to bear upon our reading, understanding, and appreciation of Tanakh. In short, I propose, first, that we discover — or rather, rediscover — *kitvei ha-kodesh* as literature; and second, that in order to deepen our appreciation of them as such, we seek to approach them critically...