

Narrative in the Service of Halakha:

Abraham, Prince Mastema, and the Paschal Offering in *Jubilees*

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The interest aroused by the book of *Jubilees* – the second written Torah narrated by the Angel of Presence to Moses on Mount Sinai¹ – has in recent years placed this late second century BCE Qumranic rewriting of Genesis and Exodus at the center of scholarly investigation.² One methodology employed in the scholarly attempt to explicate *Jubilees*' perplexing passages is to find evidence of literary layers.³ Two passages to which this methodology is applied are *Jub.* 17–18, where the seven-day festival celebrated by Abraham is seen as a later Qumranic addition to the main subject of the chapters – the Aqedah – and *Jub.* 32, where the shift from the first to the second tithe in the process of retelling Jacob's payment of his vow is similarly attributed to a later Qumranic hand. The present paper suggests a different approach to these enigmatic passages, proposing that they can be elucidated by viewing them within the framework of the Second Temple priestly halakha to which *Jubilees* adheres. Analysis of these episodes exemplifies the major part that halakha plays in the formation of *Jubilees*' narrative.

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¹ WERMAN, *The Torah and Teudah*, 75–103.

² For a discussion of the book's date of composition and origin, see WERMAN, *Attitude towards Gentiles*, 11–34; IDEM, *Jubilees and the Qumran Community*, 37–55. VanderKam's dating of the book to the time of Antiochus's decree was questioned by DORAN in his (much neglected) paper, "The Non-Dating of Jubilees," 1–11. Kugel, after reconsidering his long-standing opinion that *Jubilees* was composed during the beginning of the second century BCE, opts now for a later date; however only for the book's final revision. See n. 3.

³ Two prominent representatives of this documentary approach are SEGAL, *Relationship*, 203–228; IDEM, *Jubilees*; and KUGEL, *Interpolation*, 215–272.

The *Aqedah* in *Jubilees*

There are a number of significant differences between the Genesis and the *Jubilees* *Aqedah* narratives, and their examination facilitates a better understanding of *Jubilees*' treatment of the biblical story. Strikingly, as presented in chapters 17–18, *Jubilees*' version appears within a framework similar to the one in the book of Job. In *Jubilees* it is not God who wants to test Abraham, but the angel Mastema who casts doubt on Abraham's devotion to God.⁴

The figure of Mastema is already familiar to *Jubilees*' readers from earlier chapters. He makes his debut in chapter 10, where he is dubbed "Mastema, the leader [or Prince] of the spirits". This alludes both to the control Mastema exercises over the spirits of humans and reflects the fact that his aim is לְהַשְׁטִים – to make accusations against mortals before God (and to tempt them to sin). When God commands his holy angels to prevent the evil spirits – under Mastema's domination – from leading the sons of Noah astray, Mastema attests that he is also charged with executing punishments:⁵

When Mastema, the leader of the spirits, came, he said: 'Lord creator, leave some of them (the evil spirits) before me; let them listen to me and do everything that I tell them, because if none of them is left for me I shall not be able to exercise the authority of my will among mankind. For I use them as bringers-of-ruin⁶ [לְהַשְׁחִית] and to mislead while I exercise my punishment. Because the evil of mankind is great.' Then He (=God) said that a tenth of them should be left before him, while he would make nine parts descend to the place of judgment. (*Jub.* 10:8–9)

While most of humankind is destined to remain under Mastema's control until the End of Days, in *Jub.* 16, where Abraham's circumcision is retold (cf. Gen. 17), we learn that spirits rule over the other nations, but that, once they have been circumcised, Mastema's authority over Israelite males is transferred to God:

(28) Now you command the Israelites to keep the sign of this covenant throughout their history as an eternal ordinance so that they may not be uprooted from the earth ... (30) For the Lord ... made spirits rule over all [the nations and peoples] in order to lead them astray from following him. (32) *But over Israel he made no angel or spirit rule because he alone is their ruler.* He will guard them and require them for himself from his angels, his spirits, and eve-

⁴ This point is fully explored by DIMANT, *Biblical Basis*, 117–140. For an accurate (but not comprehensive) evaluation of Mastema's role in *Jubilees*, see YOSHIKO REED, *Enochic and Mosaic Traditions*, 353–368 and below.

⁵ Unless otherwise indicated, all citations of *Jubilees* in English translation come from VANDERKAM, *Book of Jubilees*.

⁶ Here VanderKam translates: they are meant for (the purposes of destroying).

ryone, and all his powers so that he may guard them and bless them and so that they may be his and he theirs from now and forever.

By the time of the Aqedah, Abraham has already been circumcised and is therefore no longer under Mastema's "jurisdiction". This, however, does not deter Mastema from attempting to harm the patriarch.

During the seventh week, in the first year during the first month – on the twelfth of this month – in this jubilee, there were voices⁷ in heaven regarding Abraham, that he was faithful in everything that he had told him, (that) the Lord loved him, and (that) in every difficulty he was faithful. Then Prince Mastema came and said before God: 'Abraham does indeed love his son Isaac and finds him more pleasing than anyone else. Tell him to offer him as a sacrifice on an altar. Then you will see whether he performs this order and will know whether he is faithful in everything through which you test him.' (*Jub.* 17:15–16)

God, we learn in verse 9, is confident in Abraham's devotion.⁸ At this point we hear the divine voice (*Jub.* 18:1–2) and the drama, so familiar to us from the Bible, begins:

The Lord said to him: 'Abraham, Abraham!' He replied: 'Yes?' He said to him: 'Take your son, your dear one whom you love – Isaac – and go to the high land.'⁹ Offer him on one of the mountains which I will show you.'

Abraham departs at the crack of dawn, along with Isaac and his servants. On the third day of their journey, which is the fourteenth day of the first month, the patriarch sees the place from afar. Leaving his servants next to a well,¹⁰ he and Isaac ascend the mountain:

When he neared the place of the mountain of the Lord he built an altar and placed the wood on the altar. Then he tied up his son Isaac, placed him on the wood which was on the altar, and reached out his hands to take the knife in order to sacrifice his son Isaac. Then I (= the Angel of Presence) stood in front of Him and in front of Mastema. The Lord said: 'Tell him not to let his hand go down on the child and not to do anything to him because I know that he is one who fears the Lord'. So I called to him from heaven and said to him: 'Abraham, Abraham!' He was startled and said: 'Yes?' I said to him: Do not lay your hands on the child and do not do anything to him because I now know that you are one who fears the Lord. You have not refused me your first-born son.' The prince of Mastema was put to shame. (*Jub.* 18:7–12)

⁷ On the 'voices' motif and its roots in the biblical clause אהר הדברים האלה (Gen 22:1), see KISTER, Observations, 7–10.

⁸ KUGEL, Exegetical Notes, 79.

⁹ ארץ המורה הרמה, instead of the biblical ארץ המורה. In v. 13 the mountain is identified as Mount Zion.

¹⁰ One of the wells dug by Abraham? On wells in a different version of the Aqedah story, see KUGEL, Exegetical Notes, 85.

The episode ends thus:

Abraham went to his servants. They set out and went together to Beersheba. Abraham lived at the well of the oath. He used to celebrate this festival joyfully for seven days during all the years. He named it the festival of the Lord in accord with the seven days during which he went and returned safely. This is the way it is ordained and written on the heavenly tablets regarding Israel and his descendants: (they are) to celebrate this festival for seven days with festal happiness. (*Jub.* 18:17–19)

Those familiar with the biblical story can readily identify the additions in *Jubilees*. As noted, one outstanding addition is the introduction of the figure of Mastema. He not only plays a role in the frame story but also subsequently engages in a sort of dispute with the Angel of Presence, the narrator and principal speaker in *Jubilees*. As recounted in *Jubilees*, Mastema is humiliated when God announces through the Angel of Presence that Abraham has successfully withstood the trial. Another new feature in *Jubilees* is the fact that the story is assigned a date. Abraham heads out on the twelfth day of the first month and reaches the mountain and sacrifices the ram on the third day or the fourteenth.¹¹ Another detail in *Jubilees* that is missing from the biblical account is the weeklong festival Abraham celebrates, sometime after the fourteenth of that same month, in commemoration of his seven days of travel and safe return.

The seven-day festival whose celebration is recounted in *Jub.* 18 has aroused debate from the inception of scholarly interest in *Jubilees*. If it took Abraham three days (or less) to reach the mountain, then the entire trip should have taken only six days. If this is indeed the case, why did Abraham celebrate a seven-day festival? As noted earlier, one approach to this conundrum is to posit that the *Jubilees* narrative here consists of two different layers. Some scholars view the verses on the festival as a later, sectarian (Qumranic) addition to a pre-sectarian work.¹²

As already stated, I take a different position and see the concluding verses in this chapter not as a later addition, but rather as an integral part of the original narrative. Indeed, I suggest that the author of *Jubilees* here sought to direct his readers to grasp the Aqedah as a paradigm for the laws of the paschal offering and for pilgrimage during the Festival of Unleavened Bread (Matzot),

¹¹ As VANDERKAM correctly notes. See his ‘Aqedah’, ‘Jubilees’, and Pseudo-Jubilees, 247. Cf. DIMANT (Biblical Basis, 122) who holds that Abraham left on the thirteenth of the first month and arrived at the mountaintop on the fifteenth. On the need to differentiate between the two dates, the fourteenth (the date assigned to the paschal offering) and the fifteenth (the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread), see below.

¹² SEGAL, *Jubilees*, 198–202; KUGEL, *Interpolation*, 233–236.

constructing his Aqedah narrative in line with his grasp of the halakha for this offering and the festival pilgrimage. By so doing, the author showcased his interpretation of these two significant events in the Jewish calendar.

The Laws of the Paschal Offering in Priestly Halakha

In order to support my contention, it is first necessary to survey *Jubilees*' perspective on the paschal offering and the halakhic rulings that pertain to the pilgrimage in the first month. With this in mind, we must take a closer look at *Jub.* 49 – which treats these commandments.

I begin with the paschal offering.¹³ *Jubilees*' treatment can only be understood after consideration of the pentateuchal instructions regarding the offering of the paschal lamb. These appear in two Exodus passages found in the narrative of the departure from Egypt (12:1–14 and 12:43–50) and in Deuteronomy (16:1–9). An additional three brief references appear in Lev 23:5, Num 28:16, and 9:11–14, the last of which describes פסח שני (the Second Passover).

There are several significant discrepancies between the commandments in Exodus and in Deuteronomy.¹⁴ The primary, most conspicuous difference relates to the nature of the paschal sacrifice. As described in Exodus, the paschal offering is a familial rite, oriented to private households: the offering is “a lamb, according to their fathers’ houses, a lamb per household” (12:3). Furthermore, the Torah warns, “In one house it is to be eaten; you are not to bring out of the house any of the flesh, outside...” (12:46). In contrast, Deut 16:6 states that the offering is to be sacrificed exclusively “...at the place where the Lord your God will choose to establish his name, there alone shall you slaughter the paschal sacrifice”.

Another major discrepancy between Exodus and Deuteronomy concerns the relationship between the paschal offering and the Festival of Matzot. According to Exodus, each commandment is performed on its own date – the sacrifice is offered on the fourteenth of the month and the Festival begins on the fifteenth. Likewise, distinct rationales are offered for each of these commandments: the Festival of Matzot commemorates the exodus from Egypt

¹³ See the important discussion regarding the development of the paschal offering laws in the post-biblical period in SHEMESH, Pesah ze, 1*–17*.

¹⁴ The unique features of the paschal offering raised speculation regarding its roots and development. See HARAN, Passover Sacrifice, 86–116; WEINFELD, Deuteronomy, 216–217.

(12:17; 13:3),¹⁵ whereas the paschal offering harks back to the plagues in Egypt, when the offering that the Israelites were instructed to bring was intended to safeguard them from the scourge unleashed to kill all of the kingdom's firstborn sons ("For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when He sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the bringer-of-ruin to come in to your houses to smite you" – 12:23). Consequently, the future paschal offering that Exodus commands the Israelites to bring through the ages is connected to the offering in Egypt which spared the lives of their firstborn sons: "You shall say, 'It is a paschal sacrifice to the Lord who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when He smote the Egyptians, but spared our homes'" (12:27). Unlike Exodus, the passage in Deuteronomy draws a clear-cut link between the paschal offering and the Festival of Matzot with respect to both the commandments and their rationales. Deuteronomy makes no mention of the scourge, and the exodus from Egypt serves as the backdrop for the paschal lamb – which is sacrificed on the first evening of the festival (the fourteenth is not mentioned): "There is not to remain overnight (any) of the meat *that you slaughter at sunset* on the first day, till daybreak" (16:4) – and the Festival of Matzot. Thus, if in Exodus "the paschal offering throughout the generations" is a family-oriented ritual performed in each and every individual household on the fourteenth, in Deuteronomy it is a centralized rite which may only be conducted on the fifteenth at the chosen place.

Deuteronomy's insistence on a centralized rite was accepted by both Second Temple parties, the priests and the Pharisees, though with different nuances. *Jubilees* (as well as the *Temple Scroll* [17:1215]) stresses the obligation to slaughter the paschal lamb in the Temple:

Now you order the Israelites to prepare the paschal offering¹⁶ each year during their times, once a year on its specific day ... It is no longer to be eaten outside of the Lord's sanctuary but before the Lord's sanctuary. All the people of the Israelite congregation are to prepare it at its time. (*Jub.* 49:15–16)

¹⁵ The commandment to eat *matzah* (unleavened bread) with the paschal offering stems from the fact that the lamb is a sacrifice, for it is prohibited, according to the Bible, to place *hametz* (leavened bread) on the altar. Hence, nothing in this commandment ties the paschal offering to the Festival of Unleavened Bread; see TABORY, *Passover Ritual*, 51–59.

¹⁶ VanderKam's translation "celebrate the Passover" is not precise enough: the Passover is not a festival but a sacrifice. In the citations from *Jubilees*, I have changed his translation of the phrase throughout.

On this matter, then, *Jubilees* is consistent with Deut 16:7: "... and you are to eat it in the place that God your Lord chooses." More precisely, *Jubilees* interprets 'the place chosen by God' as the Temple itself; consequently, the paschal lamb is not only slaughtered in the Temple but must also be eaten there. According to the sages (and the Pharisees before them), the paschal offering must be sacrificed in the Temple. However, like all the "minor sacraments", it may be eaten "throughout the city (of Jerusalem)" (*m. Zebah. 5:8*).¹⁷

Accordingly, it appears that *Jubilees*, as well as the sages, adhered to the Deuteronomic perspective of the offering. However, a quick glance at rabbinic literature reveals the presence there of elements from the Exodus narrative. Thus, for example, the Mishna preserves the familial aspects of the sacrifice. *M. Zevahim 5:8* rules that the paschal offering "is not eaten except by its appointees" and the *Tosefta* reaches the same conclusion:

Even though it is said: "In one house shall it be eaten" [Exod 12:46], it is permissible to eat in in their yards and on their roofs. What is the meaning of "in one house shall it be eaten"? In one party (*Pisha 6:11*).

In accordance with the familial aspects of the paschal offering, although a group cannot be composed solely of women, slaves, or minors, the rabbis permit the latter to partake of the offering and they may even be assigned to a group.

These very clear Exodus features – especially the obligation to be assigned to a group – are not found in the priestly-Qumranic literature. In addition, in *Jubilees*, only males who have reached the age of twenty are permitted to partake of the paschal sacrifice (49:17). Against this backdrop of distancing itself from the Exodus narrative, it is worth examining which of the Exodus commandments the author of *Jubilees* adopts.

I begin with the following passage from *Jub. 49*:

(13) They are (=the paschal offering's parts) not to boil it in water nor eat it raw but roasted on a fire, cooked with care on a fire – the head with its internal parts and its feet. They are to roast it on a fire. There will be no breaking of any bone... (15) Now you order the Israelites to prepare the paschal offerings each year during their times, once a year on its specific day. Then a pleasing memorial will come before the Lord and no bringer-of-ruin will come upon them to kill and to strike (them) during that year when they have prepared the paschal offering at its time in every respect as it was commanded.

¹⁷ This disagreement between the priests and the Pharisees regarding Jerusalem as a location for rituals is a mark of a deeper, central dispute between the two parties. See WERMAN, *Price of Mediation*.

The directive to roast the paschal offering is taken nearly word-for-word from Exod 12:9: “Do not eat any of it raw, nor sodden at all with water, but rather roasted in fire; its head along with its legs along with its innards.” The second part of the passage from *Jub.* 49 follows in the footsteps of Exod 12:46: “and you are not to break a bone of it” (an instruction that recurs in Num 9:12: “They must not leave any of it till morning or break any of its bones”). *Jubilees*’ choice of these items warrants a closer look for two reasons. The first is that the obligation to roast the offering appears to contradict Deut 16:7: “And you are to boil it and you are to eat it.” Secondly, *Jubilees* ignores other details from the relevant passages in Exodus and Numbers, especially the injunction to eat the offering with unleavened bread and bitter herbs (Exod 12:8 and Num 9:11).

With respect to the first matter, the ancient commentators saw no contradiction between the instruction in Deuteronomy – “you are to boil it (וּבִשְׁלָה) and you are to eat it” – and the explicit obligation to roast the sacrifice in Exodus. They correctly perceived the word וּבִשְׁלָה as a general term for food preparation. In other words, unlike the Exodus passage, which specifies roasting as the only permissible cooking method for the lamb, the Deuteronomy passage is not interested in how the offering is prepared.

The question of the missing details, especially the injunction to eat the offering with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, poses a greater challenge. As noted, Exod 12 contains two passages treating the paschal offering. The first describes the celebration of the ritual in Egypt on the night before the Exodus (vv. 1–20); the second presents the law of the paschal offering for the future generations (v. 43–50). An analysis of the laws in *Jubilees* indicates that the author did not consider the ritual in Egypt, described in verses 1–24, to be the model for future paschal offering. *Jubilees* accepts the annual obligation to perform the ritual as stated in Exod 12:14 – “this day shall be for you a memorial. You are to celebrate it ... throughout your generations, as a law for the ages ...” – but without necessarily adhering to the manner of its celebration as described there. For *Jubilees*, the character of the ritual to be performed by all post-Exodus generations stems entirely from “the law for the ages” as put forth in Exod 12:43–50, which consists of the following guidelines: (1) only circumcised citizens and foreigners may partake of the offering; (2) it must be eaten in a single house and the meat is to remain inside; and (3) it is forbidden to break any of the paschal lamb’s bones.

I shall now work backwards, beginning with the last injunction: *Jubilees* links the prohibition against breaking a bone of the offering with the commandment found in Exod 12:9: “Do not eat any of it raw, nor sodden at all

with water, but rather roasted in fire; its head along with its legs along with its innards.” For the author of *Jubilees*, the requirement of roasting is included in his description of the paschal offering for the generations to come, not because it appears in the description of the paschal rite in Egypt, but rather because in this method of cooking the animal remains whole and the offering then complies with the commandment for future generations: “and you are not to break a bone of it.”

As for the second guideline: according to *Jubilees*, the obligation to eat the entire lamb in the same house as well as the prohibition against taking the meat outside are to be implemented in the Temple. As mentioned above, for *Jubilees* the chosen place is the Temple. Its author therefore has no difficulty identifying the house where the paschal offering is to be consumed with the Temple: “It is no longer to be eaten outside of the Lord’s sanctuary” (*Jub.* 49:16). The first guideline in Exodus, that only circumcised citizens and *gerim* may partake of the offering, is apparently the source of the sectarian halakhic restriction of the paschal offering to adult males. It requires no great logical leap to move from the Torah’s emphatic prohibition against uncircumcised foreigners or hired laborers partaking of the paschal lamb to the conclusion that the ‘citizen’ (אזרח) who can partake of the offering, mentioned in Exod 12:48, is a circumcised male who has reached the age of twenty.

Exodus 12:43–49, the passage that contains the instructions for the paschal offering in future generations, makes no note of the designated time for performing the ritual. Faced with the question of specifying a time for the offering, *Jubilees* derives the juncture for slaughtering and eating the offering from the expression בין הערבִיִּים in Lev 23. *Jubilees* interprets this expression literally, as meaning ‘between the two evenings’, a time slot that occurs between the end of the day and the beginning of the night: the first evening is the final third of the fourteenth day of the first month and is the time frame in which the paschal offering is slaughtered; the second evening is the first third of the night of the fifteenth – the time period in which the lamb is eaten:

The Israelites are to come and prepare the paschal offering on its specific day – on the fourteenth of the first month – between the evenings, from the third part of the day until the third part of the night. For two parts of the day have been given for light and its third part for the evening. This is what the Lord commanded you – to celebrate it between the evenings. (49:10–11)

This understanding of the laws in Exod 12:43–50 as the primary source of *Jubilees*’ description of the eternal law for the paschal offering explains why the author ignored the commandment of eating the paschal offering with unleavened bread and bitter herbs. Mentioned twice – in Exod 12:8 and in Num 9:11

– this injunction is absent from the laws in Exod 12:43–49 (and Deuteronomy) and is therefore not included in *Jubilees* (or the *Temple Scroll*).

The clear distinction between the paschal offering made in Egypt and the future one, to be performed yearly, enables *Jubilees* to ignore the decentralized, home-based ceremony of smearing the blood of the paschal lamb on the doorposts and lintel. More importantly, the distinction also enables *Jubilees* to designate a *different* role for the yearly ritual than the one attributed to the paschal offering in Egypt.

That said, *Jubilees* does in fact draw an analogy between the two rituals. On the eve of the plague of the firstborn, the offering and sign of blood were clearly apotropaic in nature: to protect the Israelites from the scourge that swept through Egypt. In an interesting exegetical move *Jubilees* identifies the biblical מַשְׁחִית, bringer-of-ruin (Exod 12:23), with the evil spirits who are ordinarily under Mastema's dominion and function as bringers of ruin (לְהַשְׁחִית, see the citation of *Jub.* 10:8 above). The annihilation of the firstborn sons in Egypt was carried out by the evil spirits. Because Mastema was bound and locked up (48:15), they became emissaries of God on that fateful night.¹⁸ Under the divine command, those who performed the paschal offering ritual were not to be harmed by the evil spirits:

For on this night – it was the beginning of the festival and the beginning of joy – you were eating the paschal offering in Egypt when all the forces of Mastema were sent to kill every first-born in the land of Egypt – from the Pharaoh's first-born to the first-born of the captive slave-girl at the millstone and to the cattle as well. (3) This is that which the Lord gave them: into each house on whose door they saw the blood of a year-old lamb, they were not to enter that house to kill but were to pass over (it) in order to save all who were in the house because the sign of the blood was on its door. (*Jub.* 49:2–3)

There is in *Jubilees* no full analogy between the paschal offering performed in Egypt and the one to be performed yearly. Fulfillment of the annual commandment of the paschal offering does not, according to *Jubilees*, safeguard against a specific threat at the time of the sacrifice itself. However, its performance does secure divine protection from the bringers-of-ruin for the year to come:

Now you order the Israelites to prepare the paschal offering each year during their times, once a year on its specific day. Then a pleasing memorial will come before the Lord and *no*

¹⁸ Most scholars, including YOSHIKO REED (Enochic and Mosaic Traditions), fail to note the evil spirits' independent status. Claiming that Mastema is active in the tenth plague, KUGEL sees this part as an additional proof that *Jub.* 49 stems from 'the redactor' (Interpolation, 220).

bringer-of-ruin (משחית) will come upon them to kill and to strike (them) *during that year* when they have performed the paschal offering at its time in every respect as it was commanded. (49:15)

Performing the paschal-offering ritual thus guarantees divine good will and that “no bringer-of-ruin will come upon them to kill and strike” the Israelites “during that year”. This ambiguous language, which fits the harsh biblical message that those who fail to bring the offering will be punished by excision (Num 9:13), implies that it was not the intention of the author to suggest that God himself will punish those who refrain from offering the sacrifice, but that another force, most probably Mastema – aided by the evil spirits – would carry out this task.

It bears noting that *Jubilees* did not operate in a vacuum. Rabbinic literature contains a similar explanation for the bringing of the paschal offering: one of the rabbis also attributes an ongoing function to the paschal offering and does not consider the ritual as commemorating the plague, much less the exodus from Egypt. The *derasha* (homily) in *Mekhilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*, apparently R. Eliezer’s interpretation,¹⁹ asserts that the night of the 15th Nisan is a perennially ill-fated date and accordingly the people of Israel must take special care on this day each and every year:

“It is a night of keeping-watch for YHWH ... a keeping-watch of all the Children of Israel, throughout their generations” [Exod 12:42]. This tells that all the Israelites need watchful protection on that night. (*Pisha* 14; Lauterbach, 2004 ed., 1:80, slightly revised)

In my opinion, R. Eliezer’s homily alludes to views that were prevalent during the Second Temple period, namely, that demonic forces were abroad on the fourteenth day of the first month and that this required the offering of an apotropaic sacrifice. It is essential to recognize the distinction between *Jubilees* and R. Eliezer regarding the function of the paschal offering: R. Eliezer portrays a capricious executioner that causes damage without judicial process or justification, whereas *Jubilees* refers to a force – Mastema and his band of assistants – that operates on God’s behalf. Moreover, R. Eliezer’s interpretation refers only to a scourge active on a specific night, whereas in *Jubilees* the function of the paschal offering is linked to the fact that this ritual falls at the beginning of the year. A person’s actions on that particular day impact on the entire year, as the offering protects its bringer from Mastema’s destructive forces. The argument can thus be made that the author of *Jubilees* refined ex-

¹⁹ SHEMESH, Pesah ze.

isting tradition, formulating a structured theology that draws on popular beliefs.

To conclude this part of the discussion, *Jubilees* distances the paschal offering for the post-exodus generations from the historical events in Egypt. All the features of the sacrifice as offered in Egypt (including the eating of unleavened bread and bitter herbs) are missing from the *Jubilees*' commandment for the coming generations, which constitutes a mandatory ritual for every adult male. For *Jubilees*, the purpose of the yearly paschal offering is to ensure freedom from attack by the "bringers-of-ruin" in the coming year. Needless to say, this outlook corresponds with the Qumran calendar in which the year begins in the first month. Yet there is nonetheless an analogy between the paschal offering brought in Egypt and the one to be brought by the Israelites in the years to come: both protect their bringers from destructive forces. During the exodus, the destructive forces, under God's command, eradicated the firstborn Egyptians and those Israelites who did not perform the ritual. According to *Jubilees*, this force, now returned to Mastema's control, is destined to lash out against every Israelite male who refuses to express his commitment to God by bringing the paschal offering. This requires refinement of a statement made at the outset of this paper. Israelite males who are circumcised are protected from the rule of Mastema on one condition: the yearly bringing of the paschal offering.

I now return to a point made earlier regarding *Jubilees*' construction of the Aqedah as a paradigm for the paschal offering.²⁰ Both the story and the law introduce Mastema into the narrative, as we have seen. Moreover, to recall, both the Aqedah and the paschal sacrifice take place on the same date, at the beginning of the Qumranic year. This is the time of year when Mastema and his forces begin to hunt those who neglect to declare their commitment to God by offering a paschal sacrifice.

There is a distinct possibility that there were versions of the Aqedah current during the Temple period that portrayed the story as a struggle between the

²⁰ The paschal offering and *not* the Exodus. Many scholars fail to distinguish between the two. Note, for example, DIMANT (Biblical Basis, 125), who tries to point to the analogy between the Aqedah and the Exodus, and KUGEL (Interpolation, 235), who perceives the 15th as a significant day for the original narrative. Confusion is also found in HUIZENGA, Battle of Isaac, 33–59. SEGAL (*Jubilees*, 191–198) noted the connection between the Aqedah and the annual paschal offering but did not correctly interpret Mastema's role in the two events.

angel of Isaac and the angel of Ishmael.²¹ Moreover, it stands to reason that the author of *Jubilees* was familiar with these traditions. However, from *Jubilees*' perspective, the struggle was between Mastema and Abraham, and all Jews face this same foe each and every year. It is also worth noting that Isaac was neither a penitential nor an absolution offering. The soteriological power of Isaac's being bound is vested not in blood and death, but in Abraham's loyalty to God and willingness to sacrifice his son. This emphasis on the inner motivation behind the sacrifice, rather than the offering itself, is familiar from Qumran literature.²² And, after Isaac's dramatic rescue, Abraham sacrifices a ram – a one-year old lamb – on Mount Zion, probably as set forth in Lev 23:5: on the fourteenth of the month “between the evenings”.²³ Accordingly, in *Jubilees*' halakhic framework, the paschal offering is the first sacrifice of the year by individuals – to be performed by every twenty-year-old male in the Temple – and serves an apotropaic function for the entire year.

The Festival of Matzot and Pilgrimage in *Jubilees*

I now turn to Abraham's celebration of a seven-day holiday. *Jubilees*' construction of Isaac's Aqedah as falling on the date of the paschal offering indicates that Abraham's seven-day holiday is the Festival of Matzot. Note that *Jub* 49 makes a clear distinction between the paschal offering and the Festival of Matzot, as the latter is concerned with commemorating the exodus from Egypt. More specifically, the “Jubilean” version of the Festival of Matzot marks the Israelites' seven days of wandering in the immediate aftermath of the exodus (49:22–23). By means of this reinterpretation, he explains why the biblical commandment of חג המצות requires seven days.

However, the *Jubilees* Aqedah narrative tells of a six-day trek – three days there and three days back – which began on the twelfth of the first month. How is this to be reconciled with Abraham's seven-day holiday that prefigures the Festival of Matzot, which starts on the fifteenth day of the first month?

This apparent inconsistency between *Jub* 18 and *Jub* 49 exists only on the surface, for nowhere in the book does it state that Abraham's holiday started

²¹ See for example Pseudo-Jubilees: מלאכי קדש עומדים ובוכים...ומלאכי מ[שטמה]...שמחים (“And the holy angels were standing weeping ... and the angels of Mastema being happy and saying”) (4Q225 ii 5–6, *DJD* 13:149, 151).

²² See WERMAN, *Appointed Times*, 89–119.

²³ I disagree with Amaru who claims that the ram's sacrifice must be made at night. See below.

on the twelfth of the month. Moreover, nothing contradicts the assumption that Abraham only began to celebrate once he experienced the relief of knowing that the trek would not end in the death of his favourite son. In other words, it stands to reason that Abraham's holiday began on the fifteenth day of the first month. Now, all we have to do is explain how three plus three equals seven.

Let us return to some of our previous insights in hopes of solving this riddle. As we have seen from the addition of the following details to the narrative, *Jubilees* modeled the Aqedah on the paschal ritual: the ram was slaughtered on Mount Zion, that is the Temple Mount, probably "between the evenings" on the fourteenth. Since the paschal offering is a peace offering we can postulate that Abraham and Isaac partook of its meat.

The prevailing view in rabbinic literature is that it is permissible to eat the paschal offering until morning. Rabbi Eliezer, who, as noted, viewed the sacrifice as a protective ritual and not only a memorial to the past, posited that it must be eaten by midnight – the hour at which the executioner completed his rampage against the firstborn.²⁴ As we have seen, *Jubilees*, which deems the paschal ritual an ahistorical offering, shortens the timeframe for eating the lamb to the first third of the night. The night in question – the one following the fourteenth day of the first month – is already the first day of the Festival of Matzot, a day when travel was forbidden. Even according to *Jubilees*, those who perform the paschal ritual are required to stay in Jerusalem until the end of the Festival of Matzot's opening day.

The following then is the schedule for Abraham to which *Jubilees* alludes, as I understand it. The journey to Zion took less than three days and Abraham offered the sacrifice during the second half of the third day. Abraham remained on the mountain not only for the day the ram was slaughtered, but the entire next day as well. In spending the fourth day on the mountain the patriarch adhered to the customs of pilgrimage. At that day's end, Abraham embarked on the three-day journey home.²⁵ All told then, the entire trip lasted

²⁴ SHEMESH, Pesah ze.

²⁵ This conclusion brings me to reject HALPERN-AMARU's calculation (Note on Isaac, 127–33). Halpern-Amaru assumes that, in *Jubilees*, Abraham's trip to the mountain took three complete days. However, there is no clear indication from *Jubilees*' wording that that is what the author had in mind (all he states is: "on the third day," as in Genesis). Moreover, Amaru assumes that in *Jubilees* Abraham stayed on the mountain overnight, leaving the next morning, thus arriving home on the seventh day after completing a full six-day journey. According to her, Abraham's binding of Isaac, his firstborn, as a consequence of Mastema's interference, is meant to symbolize Mastema's striking of the firstborn in Egypt. To intensify the

seven days. Accordingly, the festival Abraham celebrated started on the fifteenth of the first month, the day he spent on the mountain, and lasted seven days altogether, six of them either en route or at home.

As outlined above, Abraham's journey corresponds with the biblical commands regarding pilgrimage (and most probably with Second Temple reality), which consider the paschal-Matzot pilgrimage a brief one.²⁶ In concluding paschal ritual law, Deuteronomy itself states: "in the morning you may start back on your journey home" (16:7). Similarly, the Bible refrains from using the word שמחה (festive occasion) in the context of the Festival of Matzot, even though it refers to it as חג שמחה. חג שמחה is reserved for the main pilgrimage holiday, Sukkot, the Festival of Tabernacles, over the course of which the participants remain in Jerusalem for seven days.

Indeed, it is in the context of the Festival of Tabernacles (and not Matzot) that the author of *Jubilees* presents the halakha concerning the pilgrim's obligations. *Jubilees* 32 recounts the visit by Jacob and his family to Bethel in the middle of the seventh month. While engaged in fulfilling his vow to tithe all that God will give him – made before his departure to Haran – Jacob and his family celebrate a seven-day festival, that is, the Festival of Tabernacles. This chapter serves as another example of the failure to understand the extent to which halakha influences the narrative in *Jubilees*. Here too an apparent lack of coherence was attributed to a later sectarian layer:²⁷ on the face of things, the beginning of the chapter deals with the apportioning of the first tithe, before unexpectedly turning to the topic of the second tithe.

But this lack of coherence is only in appearance. The opening of *Jub.* 32 tells of Jacob's fulfillment of the vow he made to tithe his property (vv. 2–5; 8). It is important to stress here that the text is concerned not with first tithe, but rather with the fulfillment of a vow. Jacob gave to the Lord his tenth child (Levi, who becomes a priest), one-tenth of his cattle (to be sacrificed as a burnt offering), one-tenth of his servants (to be given to Levi), one-tenth of the unclean beasts (to be given to Levi) and one-tenth of his clothing and

analogy, Isaac's Aqedah had to take place in the middle of the night as the tenth plague did. However, we saw above that, according to *Jubilees*, Mastema did not strike the first-born in Egypt – God did, aided by the evil spirits. Moreover, as I have shown above, *Jubilees*' intention in retelling the Aqedah was to set a paradigm for the annual paschal offering free of any features of the event in Egypt.

²⁶ See HENSHKE, *Festive Joy*, 100–102.

²⁷ Segal and Kugel rely here on Kister who points to some inconsistencies in *Jub.* 32. See KISTER, *Aspects of Qumranic Halakhah*, 571–588.

utensils (to be given to Levi). The sacrifices – burnt offerings – comprised of the cattle tithe are part of the seven-day celebration.²⁸

In what is not patently clear at first glance, *Jubilees* adds to the narrative another kind of sacrifice: peace offerings (v. 6). From a later verse we understand their halakhic significance. They were purchased by Jacob with the monetary equivalent of the second tithe allotted from his crops (vv. 9–10. In *Jubilees* seven years pass between Jacob's crossing of the Jordan and the visit to Bethel [29:14, 30:1]; during this period he also engaged in agriculture). It is at this point that the author of *Jubilees* offers his interpretation of the halakha of the second tithe, followed by his interpretation of the law of tithing livestock (v. 15): the second tithe must be eaten by the owner in the Temple on a very strict timetable; the livestock tithe is given to the priests.

It is the final detail, the livestock tithe, that seems to be out of context. It is this detail, however, that points to the biblical chapter *Jubilees* is here reworking. The inclusion of the livestock tithe in chapter 32 indicates that the chapter is structured in line with Lev 27, which treats the dedication of property to God:

| <i>Leviticus 27</i> | <i>Jubilees 32</i> |
|--|--|
| (1–8) Vow-offering in your assessed-equivalent of persons... | (2) Jacob got up early in the morning on the fourteenth day of this month and gave a tithe of everything which had come to him – from people... (3) At that time that Rachel became pregnant with her son Benjamin. Jacob counted his <i>sons</i> from him. He went up (the list), and it came down on Levi in the Lord's share. His father put priestly clothes on him and ordained him. (8) He gave his son Levi... all the persons of the men. |

²⁸ Both SCHIFFMAN (*Sacrificial System*, 217–233) and VANDERKAM (*Temple Scroll*, 211–226) attempt to solve the riddle of why the number of burnt offerings that Jacob brings on the holiday which serves as a paradigm of the Feast of Tabernacles does not fit the number of burnt offerings to be brought on this occasion according to biblical law. The riddle however is based on a wrong assumption; *Jubilees* deals not with public obligations but with the obligations of the individual pilgrim.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>(9) If it concerns an animal from which they bring offering to God...</p> | <p>(8) He tithed all the clean animals and made an offering of them. (4) On the fifteenth of this month he brought to the altar 14 young bulls from the cattle, 28 rams, 49 sheep, 7 kids, and 21 goats – as a burnt offering on the altar and as a pleasing offering for a pleasant aroma before God. (5) This was his gift because of the vow which he had made that he would give a tithe along with their sacrifices and their libations.</p> |
| <p>(11) If it (concerns) any unclean beast...</p> | <p>(8) He gave his son Levi the unclean animals.</p> |
| <p>(14) Now a man when he hallows his house as holy-property to God...; (16) If from the field of his holding...</p> | <p>(2)...from money to all utensils and clothing.</p> |
| <p>(30) And every tithe of the land, whether from the seed of the land, or from the fruit of the tree, for God it is, a holy-portion for God.</p> | <p>(6) When the fire had consumed it, he would burn incense on the fire above it; and as a peace offering two young bulls, four rams, four sheep, four he-goats, two year-old sheep, and two goats. This is what he would do daily for the seven days. (9) In this way he again gave a tithe to the Lord. He sanctified it, and it became holy. (10) For this reason it is ordained as a law on the heavenly tablets to tithe a second time, to eat it before the Lord – year by year – in the place which has been chosen (as the site) where his name will reside.</p> |
| <p>(32) And every tithe of herb or flock, from all that passes under the rod, each tenth one is to be a holy-portion for God.</p> | <p>(15) The entire tithe of cattle and sheep is holy to the Lord, and is to belong to his priests who will eat (it) before him year by year, because this is the way it is ordained and inscribed on the heavenly tablets regarding the tithe.</p> |

Jubilees' use of Lev 27 in its portrait of the Festival of Tabernacles pilgrimage attests to the interpretation of the Leviticus chapter as a text on the assorted obligations of the pilgrim during the Second Temple period.²⁹ *Jubilees'* basic premise is that the pilgrim brings to the Temple the accumulated obligations for the year: vows and donations, second tithe, and the livestock tithe. This perception of Lev 27 as the guideline for pilgrims is probably the outcome of a close reading of Deut 16, where the obligation of pilgrimage is outlined: "Three times a year – on the Feast of Unleavened Bread, on the Feast of Weeks, and on the Feast of Tabernacles – all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place that He will choose. They shall not appear before the Lord empty-handed, rather each man according to the giving-capacity of his hand, according to the blessing that the Lord your God has bestowed upon you" (vv. 16–17). "Each man according to the giving-capacity of his hand" refers to vows and donations while "according to the blessing that the Lord your God has bestowed upon you" refers to the second and the livestock tithes. From this perspective, *Jub.* 32 must be viewed as a unit.

What makes *Jubilees* especially fascinating is the discourse between law and narrative conducted throughout its pages. I have tried to demonstrate that *Jubilees* cannot be understood without taking into account the decisive influence of halakha on both its narrative and content. I argue that the study of halakha should be an integral part of *Jubilees* scholarship; only this can guarantee an accurate, full understanding of the book.

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²⁹ On the gap between Second Temple and rabbinic halakha regarding the pilgrim's obligations, see WERMAN, *Holidays*.

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