

## Consensus

---

Volume 17  
Issue 2 *Health and Wholeness*

Article 4

---

11-1-1991

# Health and wholeness in the Old Testament

Roger W. Uitti

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholars.wlu.ca/consensus>

---

### Recommended Citation

Uitti, Roger W. (1991) "Health and wholeness in the Old Testament," *Consensus*: Vol. 17 : Iss. 2 , Article 4.  
Available at: <http://scholars.wlu.ca/consensus/vol17/iss2/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Scholars Commons @ Laurier. It has been accepted for inclusion in Consensus by an authorized editor of Scholars Commons @ Laurier. For more information, please contact [scholarscommons@wlu.ca](mailto:scholarscommons@wlu.ca).

# Health and Wholeness in the Old Testament

Roger W. Uitti

*Professor of Old Testament,  
Lutheran Theological Seminary, Saskatoon*

## Introduction

“How did the ancients de-louse themselves?” Such was the quest of a recent article in the *Biblical Archaeology Review*.<sup>1</sup> The article spelled out what a pest the lowly louse was to the ancient Egyptian, Hebrew, and Greek, how even the famous St. Francis of Assisi (A.D. 1182–1226) shared the monastic experience with his wry reference to the pesty, little, scampering creatures as “the pearls of poverty”. Having examined numerous combs and hair samples, the article’s authors found the vestigial remains of ever so many head lice in all stages of development. One particular comb from the Judean desert contained four dead lice and eighty-eight louse eggs! It turns out that combs in the ancient world were not used exclusively for cosmetic purposes.

Such was only one of the many health problems the people of Old Testament times faced. Health was daily at risk in the midst of blowing dust, domestic dirt, contaminated food, impure water, city and town sewage, refuse, and garbage. Breeding rats, noisome flies, biting insects, together with varieties of micro-organisms brought epidemic, infection, and death to many closely-huddled family units, especially to those most vulnerable of all, infants. Personal hygiene habits, the kinds of clothing worn, the patterns of cooking and preparing food, the table customs employed, and the methods used to clean cooking/eating utensils and implements also invited disease.<sup>2</sup> Although the character of the biblical data and our distance in time and place render diagnostic certitude impossible, undoubtedly afflictions such as typhoid, dysentery, malaria, leprosy, tuberculosis, smallpox, and bubonic plague made their

tragic appearance. Most common were probably diseases of the eye and ear. Then there were also the many physical disabilities that, if not congenital, came as the result of war or accident, and not infrequently as the outcome of poliomyelitis.<sup>3</sup>

Accordingly, one would expect disease and illness to be very much a part of the Old Testament narrative. Thus it is not surprising that a whole chapter is devoted to a wide range of skin problems, including possibly vitiligo and ringworm (Leviticus 13). The child of a Shunammite woman can die of some form of cerebral dysfunction (2 Kings 4:18–37). Nabal of Carmel (1 Samuel 25:36–38) reportedly expires after nine days, without gaining consciousness due to some apoplectic seizure. 1 Samuel 5–6 tells of buboes or hemorrhoids inflicted upon the Philistines as an effect of a plague apparently brought on by rats or mice (1 Samuel 6:5, 11, 18). Likewise Isaiah 10:16 anticipates the sending of “a wasting sickness” among Assyria’s stout warriors, and extra-biblical sources unequivocally claim an infestation of “field mice” as the material means for the decimation of Sennacherib’s army.<sup>4</sup> The Book of Chronicles feels constrained to share with us the ill fate of numerous Judean kings who proved unfaithful to YHWH: thus Asa succumbs to “diseased feet” (2 Chronicles 16:12–13), Uzziah to “leprosy” (26:21), and Jehoram to some “intestinal” malady (21:18–19). Notice is occasionally given even to the recognition of mental instability, such as Saul’s possible paranoid schizophrenia (1 Samuel 16:14–23; 18:10–11; 19:9–10; 20:20–34; 24:16–22; 26:21–25), Nebuchadnezzar’s comical lycanthropy (Daniel 4), and David’s own feigned madness before Achish, the king of Gath (1 Samuel 21:12–15).<sup>5</sup>

In the Old Testament there are two main verb roots, with related nouns and adjectives, used to convey the concept of disease, sickness, and illness: namely, the Hebrew verb *hālā* “to be sick, diseased” (2 Chronicles 16:12) and the verb *hālā* “to be weak, sick” (1 Kings 15:23).<sup>6</sup> Now if “to be sick” in the Old Testament was intrinsically “to be weak”, then “to be healthy” was “to be whole” or *šālēm*, an adjective related to the noun *šālôm* (more popularly *shālôm*, a noun meaning “soundness, completeness, welfare, or well-being” (to be dealt with later in this paper). Between sickness and health, of course, there lies healing. The main Hebrew verb in the Old Testament utilized for physical healing is *rāpā* “to heal” (Genesis 20:17; Zechariah 11:16). This verb also has numerous cognates.<sup>7</sup>

Although the ancient Hebrews were not unaware of some connection between inward bodily functions or dysfunctions and the role of their immediate environment, all functioning life was considered under the care and direction of YHWH. YHWH as the Source and Sustainer of all life and being was not only the all-watchful Judge but also the all-merciful Healer (Exodus 15:26; Psalms 103:3). YHWH not only sent health and longevity of life to humanity as a gracious and selective gift but also sickness and hardship as retribution for disobedience,<sup>8</sup> if not also for the testing of faith. In the final analysis, healing and restoration were bound up with the dynamics of the divine/human relationship. Indeed, to consult some earthly "physician" or, *horrible dictu*, some "other god", constituted something of a grave assault upon this divine prerogative itself (2 Chronicles 16:12; 2 Kings 1:2-17). Often the prophet (2 Kings 5:3ff.; 8:8) and the priest (Genesis 25:22; 1 Samuel 1:5-18) proved to be God's agents of healing and diagnosis, with the latter especially giving rulings as to what was "clean" and "unclean" (Leviticus 13-15). Apart from a few popular remedies (Jeremiah 8:22), there remains extant no outline for the treatment or care of a specific disease in the Old Testament, if such ever existed. However, the seriousness with which some practitioners pursued the art of healing lies embedded on three skulls (late eighth century B.C.), uncovered in 1936 in a cistern at ancient Lachish. These three skulls make for three good examples of early "skull surgery" or trepanning.

Far too often health has been defined in a negative, minimalist fashion as "the absence of physical disease or pain". But such an approach is to neglect the positive side of the health equation, i.e., "wholeness". Speaking more positively, a healthy person may be described as one who lives "wholesomely" in varied relationships of wholeness and harmony. In the remaining pages of this paper I should like to focus attention on this aspect of health. To this end, I believe, three words may serve to focus some of the contours of health and wholeness within the Old Testament. Their elucidation is intended to be more descriptive of ancient Israel than normative for contemporary Christianity. The three epitomizing words that come to mind are "self", "sabbath", and "*šālôm*" (or *shālôm*).



## I. Self

The noun in the Hebrew Bible frequently translated “soul” or “person” is the Hebrew word *nepes̄*. Sometimes it is said that the ancient Hebrew did not *have* a soul but *was* a soul.<sup>9</sup> This is somewhat a misleading over-simplification.<sup>10</sup> To be sure, the ancient Hebrews did not think of the human being as a union of two disparate elements, a physical body and a spiritual soul, or even of three parts—body, soul, and spirit—but it would be more accurate to say that the ancient Hebrews employed a variety of body terms to convey their understanding of the human person as a totality, and that the word *nepes̄* was only one of many such terms.<sup>11</sup> Other words used by synecdoche to the same effect were “flesh”, “heart”, “bones”, “liver”, “breath”, “ear”, and even “tongue”. Possibly *nepes̄* did come closest to being the one special word so used because unlike the other words *nepes̄* did not have a precise physical correspondent in the body itself, as the other terms did, except for its close connection with blood (Deuteronomy 12:23; Leviticus 17:11).

The basic meaning of *nepes̄* was “throat”, and from this meaning such other meanings for *nepes̄* as “neck”, “desire”, “soul”, “life”, and “person” were derived.<sup>12</sup> *Nepes̄* sometimes even came to be used as a substitute for the personal or reflexive pronoun. The *nepes̄* referred to what was alive and vital in a person. *Nepes̄* described the Hebrew person in his or her need, in emotive excitability and vulnerability. Thus the *nepes̄* hungered, yearned, longed for, desired, felt, loathed, hated, experienced grief and tears, rejoiced and exulted. The *nepes̄* was frightened, despaired, was exhausted, bitter, and troubled. The *nepes̄* could even die. As there was a living *nepes̄*, there was also such a thing as a dead *nepes̄*. The *nepes̄* was not some spiritual entity that entered the person at conception and then departed at death. With death the *nepes̄*, in fact, ceased to exist. Persons after death were rather described as “shades” or *řepā’im*, not as *něpāsôt*. Moreover, Sheol or the underworld was the last place any living Hebrew would ever have wanted to go because the shadowy existence continued on there was a state of lifelessness where “nothing meant anything any more”. Interestingly, the term “living *nepes̄*”, applied to the first created being in Genesis 2:7, is applied elsewhere also

to *animals* (Genesis 1:20, 24, 30; 2:19; Leviticus 24:18). The Hebrew Scriptures even speak quite often of YHWH's *Nepes* (Judges 10:16; Zechariah 11:8; Jeremiah 12:7; Amos 6:8).

The Hebrew concept of self was furthermore not a self by itself. The true self in the Hebrew mind was that of an individual who found purpose and meaningfulness in relationship to other individuals. In the Old Testament no person was understood as an island to himself or herself. Some years ago the British Old Testament scholar H. Wheeler Robinson made use of the expression "corporate personality" to characterize his observation regarding the relative ease with which an ancient Hebrew could oscillate back and forth between group and self.<sup>13</sup> Whereas in contemporary Western culture the individual tends to project his or her own separate individuality, and sometimes disturbingly and stridently so, not so in the Old Testament period. The individual Israelite self did not truly exist in isolation but only in consort with other men and women.

In our parlance, the terms "people" and "nation" are not too sharply differentiated. While admittedly there are some instances where the Hebrew words *'am* and *gôy* are used interchangeably, in the majority of occurrences the two terms are employed much more discriminately. Simply put, *'am* refers to a "people in blood kinship", whereas *gôy* designates a "state" or "nation".<sup>14</sup> A *gôy* can and must be established or founded. An *'am* or "kindred" just is. An *'am* is made up of an immediate and extended family, involving a paternal household (*bayit* or *bêt 'āb*), the broader clan (*mišpāhâ*) and the larger tribe (*šebet* or *matteh*), i.e., communities of individuals (*gēbārîm*) linked together by one blood and speech. This blood kinship is still most demonstrable in the contemporary Semitic world.

Now the word *'am*, rather than *gôy*, I believe, captures the essence of what constituted "the Old Testament people of God". As such it is not surprising to find YHWH related by covenant to Israel as her most significant kin Relative. By contrast to the many heavenly pantheons of gods and goddesses in ancient Mesopotamia, Canaan, and Egypt, Yahwism suppressed all such heavenly-horizontal, divine-pantheonic relationships in favor of an earthly-vertical modality. In Israel's normative confession YHWH understandably had no wife or son in heaven; rather Israel down on earth saw herself as YHWH's wife and son,<sup>15</sup> and it was from within this

special relationship that Israel experienced YHWH's covenant loyalty (*hesed*) time and time again and came to recognize in YHWH her most reliable and committed Kinsman or "Redeemer" (*gō'ēl*).

The Hebrew understanding of the relationship of self to community stands in sharp contrast to so much of the thinking and doing of our time. Ancient Israelites lived and died as one loving, extended family. Theirs was not our world of defiant individuality or corporate insensitivity. The one lived in and for the many. The one represented the many, and the many were present in the one. Conversely we live in a world where individuals and communities tend to live and care only for themselves, where the sick, the aged and infirm, the disadvantaged, and the poor and homeless are often shamefully marginalized and forgotten. Over against such a world one wonders whether ancient Israel does not have something to communicate about meaningful individuality, family solidarity, and community caring. To the question whether or not ancient Israel was an *'am* or a *gōy*, the answer is obviously both. The Old Testament story about Israel is the story of how an *'am* in Abraham/Sarah and Jacob/Rachel/Leah became a *gōy* under David and Solomon, with all its praiseworthy and tragic consequences. Contemporary groups, including the churches, might ask themselves whether it is better to characterize and model themselves as an *'am* (a family of related and committed persons who transcend international barriers) or as a *gōy* (a political institution proud of its distinctiveness and insistent upon maintaining lines of demarcation).

## II. Sabbath

The second concept from the world of the Old Testament which may contribute to our delineation of health and wholeness is the Old Testament "sabbath". While, for some, the sabbath as an institution may still conjure up painful memories of religious polemic, legalism, exclusiveness, and intolerance, for me, the opportunity to re-examine the sabbath of the Old Testament has resulted in a fresh appreciation of the sabbath as a venerable agent for health, renewal, and freedom.<sup>16</sup>

That the sabbath was intended by YHWH, not as a confining encumbrance, but rather as a wholesome resource for



blessing to ancient Israel is evident from its prominent place in Israel's own covenant tradition of laws and commandments.<sup>17</sup> It is noteworthy that the sabbath is the only festival of ancient Israel held significant enough to be included in the classic series of apodictic commands known today as the Decalogue or the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:2-17; Deuteronomy 5:6-21). Like any one of the other Commandments, the sabbath is part of what was considered constitutional and basic to Israel's continued life and well-being. The violation of the sabbath, as with most of the rest of the Ten Commandments, was to result in the death penalty, at least in theory (Exodus 31:14-15; Numbers 15:32-36). Such was the seriousness with which ancient Israel confronted all that endangered her ongoing life and relationship with YHWH.

The sabbath command, moreover, related the past to the present. Just as Israel acknowledged YHWH's true ownership of the land in the institutions of the sabbatical year (when the land was to lie fallow for a year) and the seven sabbatical years plus one, the fiftieth year of jubilee (when all property was ideally to revert to its original owners), so through the sabbath Israel had opportunity to acknowledge YHWH's lordship and ownership of her continued being, time, and livelihood on a weekly basis. "Six days you shall work but on the seventh day you shall rest; in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest" (Exodus 34:21). As the sabbath motive clause in Exodus 20:11 put it, the sabbath was instituted to call into remembrance the fact that YHWH had once rested on the seventh day after six days of creative activity. Just as YHWH had worked six days and had rested on Saturday, so Israel was henceforth to work six days and rest on Saturday, in restful imitation. Thus the sabbath celebrated YHWH's own former and continuing creative work.

The deep significance of the sabbath to Israel is clear, from the beginning, in the further observation that the sabbath (Genesis 2:1-3), not the creation of humanity (1:26-31), constitutes the real climactic outcome of the opening chapter(s) of the Hebrew Bible. In the priestly mind, YHWH's primal sabbath rest both provided insight into and anticipated the very goal the Creator set for the ongoing creation. Paradigmatically the sabbath embodied an unremitting, latent eschatological promise of rest and wholeness for the whole of creation. The Sabbath pointed also to the future.



What is more, the sabbath stood as an agent of restoration, health, and wholeness for Hebrew society as a whole. Thus we read: "... in it you shall not work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates" (Exodus 20:10b). Such a thrust is evident in the strong social humanitarian themes which further came to be attached to the sabbath commands in the course of time. Thus in Exodus 23:12b we note this motivation: "that your ox and your ass may have rest, and the son of your bondmaid, and the alien, may be refreshed." In the same vein, in its rewording of the sabbath command and motive clause represented in Exodus 20:8-11, Deuteronomy 5:12-14b is aptly supplied with this equally humanitarian motive clause: "that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out thence with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day" (Deuteronomy 5:14c-15). The sabbath as an institution thus held up to Israel Israel's own former servitude and liberation out of Egypt as a heartfelt incentive henceforth not to exploit others in similar straits. The same humanitarian themes and spirit also occur in the motive clauses linked up with the sister institutions of the sabbatical year (Exodus 23:10-11; Leviticus 25:3-7) and the year of jubilee (Leviticus 25:13ff.).

In the sabbath as a holy festival Israel also had opportunity to experience time itself as sacral. The sabbath day was understood to be a "holy day, a day set apart from all other days of the week". It was to be "kept holy" and not to be profaned. It was a day given or consecrated to YHWH, a time for holy convocation, a time "to be re-created". The festival of sabbath permitted Israel in a sense to return one day each week to primeval beginnings, to the sacred realm of original time and being, much like the thrust of the sabbatical year and year of jubilee noted above. The observance of the sabbath thus bound the creation and the Creator most closely together and renewingly invited Hebrew society to respond in joyful worship and praise.

In the Priestly mind, the sabbath anticipated the most vital of all relationships, the Sinaitic covenant relationship between

YHWH and Israel. Just as the creation sabbath brought to perfect completion the first week of creation, so the Sinai Mosaic covenant and sabbath brought closure to the earlier signs and covenants made with Noah (Genesis 9) and Abraham (Genesis 17). The climactic particularity of the relationship inaugurated at Sinai still stands solemnized in these words of YHWH to Israel: "You shall keep my sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I, the LORD, sanctify you...It is a sign for ever between me and the people of Israel..." (Exodus 31:13, 17; cf. also Ezekiel 20:12, 18-20). In the light of this pronouncement, it is understandable why the sabbath, together with the rite of circumcision, should become a *status confessionis* for Israel throughout her subsequent history.

The Old Testament sabbath remains a helpful symbol. The broader principles underlying the sabbath are not unrelated to the challenges facing contemporary health and wholeness. Above all, the sabbath raises vital questions about our relationship with God as well as to God's world. The sabbath command motivates us to look more closely at ourselves and our relationship to others less fortunate. As a valued ancient institution the sabbath continues to upbraid our preoccupation with work and may help us to reflect upon the sheer senselessness of uninterrupted work. The sabbath motivations engender earnest introspection and circumspection and will continue to stand opposed and unsettling to any individual or group that finds itself slavishly committed to materialistic gain or social exploitation or oppression of those more dependent or less well off in society. While Muslims may honor Friday, or Christians may choose to refrain from labour on a Sunday instead of a Saturday,<sup>19</sup> the opportunity for wholesome "re-creation" remains the same. Why do we work, work, work? Why do we not discipline ourselves to take the God-given "time" to acknowledge our Creator and Redeemer, and at least one day a week enjoy the myriad of good gifts our God showers upon us before it is too late? What are we working for anyway? Is it not to have the time and opportunity to enjoy the children, the spouse, relatives and friends, the arts, and the invigorating, living environment around us? The sabbath was indeed made for the good of man and woman; man and woman were not made for the sabbath (Mark 2:27).

### III. *Šālôm* (*Shālôm*)

We turn now to the third and final word in our presentation on Old Testament health and wholeness, the concept entailed in the Hebrew word *šālôm*. The noun *šālôm* may be said to embody the warmest and most comprehensive vision of health and wholeness in the Old Testament.

The Hebrew word *šālôm* occurs 237 times in the Hebrew Bible. It is found in three different senses there. Its most frequent sense is that of "material well-being and prosperity". Thus when Joseph was sent by his father Jacob to check out the *šālôm* of his brothers and cattle, Joseph was asked to learn about their health, their physical well-being, i.e., whether or not they were all okay. Next in usage is its use with reference to social or political relationships. *Šālôm* used here typically refers to the character of a relationship, such as that between Tyre and Israel (1 Kings 5:12E) or between a king like Zedekiah and his supposed friends (Jeremiah 38:22). The third and least used sense in the Hebrew Bible is its moral sense of "integrity" or "straightforwardness". It is in this sense that the Psalmist would instruct us: "Mark the blameless man, and behold the upright, for there is posterity for the man of *šālôm* (Psalms 37:37).<sup>19</sup>

An important common denominator underlies all three of these meanings of *šālôm*. *Šālôm* defines how people, situations, things, should be, i.e., how such entities are to be healthy and wholesome. *Šālôm* is thus the perfection to which the creation longs to return, that world of being in which every individual and people are full and complete, free of injustice, oppression, pain, and sickness, that world where social relationships no longer exploit or are exploited for personal or corporate gain, but rather are enriched and enhanced. *Šālôm* is that place and state where God, humanity, and environment are one in harmony and peace.

Thus Isaiah 65:17-25 anticipates a new creation in which infant mortality will be at an end, in which people will live in the houses they have built and will eat of the vineyards in which they have labored, a world where wolf and lamb shall feed together. Such reassuring words are very close to the equally beautiful vision of Isaiah 11:6-9, where wolf and lamb, child, and calf are depicted as dwelling one day side by side in tranquillity. Amos 9 speaks of days coming in which the plowman



will overtake the reaper and the treader of grapes the sower, when mountains and hills shall drip and flow with sweet wine (9:13). Isaiah 32:16-17 goes on to associate *šālôm* with justice, righteousness, quietness, and trust. Most picturesquely and dramatically, Isaiah 2:2-4/Micah 4:1-5 envisions many nations going up to Jerusalem, beating their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks, with nation no longer warring against nation, and the people at last enjoying the return of a Solomon-like prosperity (1 Kings 4:25E). Such is the beatific vision of *šālôm*.

Some may reject the Old Testament here as hopelessly utopian. Others may wish to work still with such a vision under God. Why must our world ever be at war? Why must our environment, plant life, and animal life be sacrificed for profit? Why must our relationships be exploitative and violent? Why must people starve to death in a world of plenty? As fellow creatures on God's good earth, regardless of who we are or what we are, surely we and our children were intended by God to enjoy the benefits of a common theology of terrestrial and temporal blessing, if not also God's gracious present and eternal gift of divine/human reconciliation in Christ!

## Close

By way of summary: we have examined but three selected concepts of the Old Testament, which, we believe, encapsulate something of what the Old Testament has to say on the subject of health and wholeness. The concept of the Hebrew self bespeaks an insight into the totality and indivisibility of individual and corporate being. The impetus behind the sabbath as an institution hopefully may inspire us to find renewed motivation and timely opportunities for contemporary periodic re-creative release from all that encroaches upon us and limits our present wholesomeness. And finally, the rich concept of *šālôm* may awaken in us a longing for and a working toward the most tender vision of all. The three concepts of "self", "sabbath", and "*šālôm*" are but a beginning. In them there are present our vital relationships: to self, to others, to God (our most vital relationship of all), and to our world and environment.

Surely much more could be said, especially from the perspective of Christian *discontinuities* with the Old Testament.



In recent years a growing number of social anthropologists have attempted to penetrate and decode the complexities of Israel's broader symbolic world order.<sup>20</sup> Mary Douglas, for example, has argued for *wholeness* as the key to Israel's entire symbolic system.<sup>21</sup> Certain animals, she contends, were considered whole and therefore clean if they were equipped with the characteristics and means of locomotion thought appropriate to one of three basic environments (air, earth, and water). Hence, water creatures without fins and scales were judged anomalous, not whole, and therefore held to be unclean. However, the Christian will find it most disturbing when the same symbolic system treats *people* in much the same way. Thus persons with bodily malformations, skin disorders, blemishes, or those subject to abnormal bleedings or emissions, or those in recent contact with the dead, were all understood to lack wholeness and were made to experience various degrees of societal discrimination and exclusion. The line of ordained delimitation extended well across Hebrew society, involving bond and free, male and female, native and foreigner, sacral and secular. Perhaps under the stimuli of the many catalytic insights of such contemporary social anthropologists more time and space could result in a quite sobering but realistic appraisal of the numerous systemic principles undergirding the Old Testament's symbolic world of cult and social reality as a whole,<sup>22</sup> but something must be left for another place and another time.

I should like to close this paper with a picture. It is the familiar painting called *The Peaceable Kingdom* by Edward Hicks (1780-1849). Hicks was entirely self taught, and the only book he really knew well was the Bible. He was thoroughly preoccupied with the theme of Isaiah 11:6-9, as he painted the same scene about twenty-five times, each time delightfully different in background detail. In one version, dated between 1832 and 1834, he shares his artistic interpretation of the new world in which all of God's creatures live in perfect harmony.<sup>23</sup> In the immediate foreground we see fearsome predators, domestic animals, and innocent small children all dwelling together in peace and tranquillity. In the far distance we discern white men and aboriginals making peace. Here is truly a vision for our world and especially for our own land and time, longing to be fulfilled.

May YHWH bless and keep us.

May YHWH's face shine upon us and be gracious to us.

May YHWH look upon us with favor and grant us *šālôm!*

(Numbers 6:24-26)



Edward Hick's "Peaceable Kingdom" – The Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Center, Williamsburg, Va.

## Notes

- 1 Kostas Y. Mumcuoglu and Joseph Zias, "How the Ancients De-loused Themselves," *Biblical Archaeology Review*, 15/6 (November/December 1989) 66-69.
- 2 See Edward Neufeld, "Hygiene Conditions in Ancient Israel (Iron Age)," *The Biblical Archaeologist*, 34/2 (May 1971) 42-66.
- 3 On the whole discussion of disease in the Old Testament, see R.K. Harrison, "Disease," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 1 (A-D), ed. by G.A. Buttrick et al. (New York-Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962) 847-854.
- 4 Besides 2 Kings 19:35; Isaiah 37:36; 2 Chronicles 32:21, see Herodotus, 11, 141; Josephus, *Antiquities*, X, 1; Sennacherib's annals (third campaign).
- 5 See R.H. Harrison, "Madness," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 3 (K-Q), ed. by G.A. Buttrick et al. (New York-Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962) 220-221.
- 6 Cf. the noun *ḥōlî* "sickness" (2 Kings 1:2; 8:8-9) and related nouns *maḥāleh* "sickness, disease" (2 Chronicles 21:15), *maḥālā* "sickness, disease" (Exodus 23:25; 1 Kings 8:37; 2 Chronicles 6:28), *maḥalūy/im* "sickness, suffering (caused by wounds)" (2 Kings 8:29; 2 Chronicles 24:25) and *tahālu'im* "diseases" (Jeremiah 14:18; Deuteronomy 29:21H; 2 Chronicles 21:19). There is also use of the words *'ānaš* "to be weak, sick" (2 Samuel 12:15) and *dāwā* "to be ill, unwell, menstruous" (Leviticus 12:2) and its family of words, the adjective *dāweh* "faint, unwell, menstruous" (Lamentations 5:17; Leviticus 15:33) and *dawwāy* "faint" (Isaiah 1:5; Jeremiah 8:18) and nouns *dēway* "illness" (Psalms 41:4; Job 6:7) and *madweh* "sickness" (Deuteronomy 7:15; 28:60). There is also the enigmatic expression *dēbar-bēḥya'al* "deadly, wicked thing" (Psalms 41:9H).
- 7 Cognates related to the verb *rāpā'* are *marpē'* "health, healing, cure" (Jeremiah 14:19), *rip'ūt* "healing" (Proverbs 3:8), and *repu'ā* "remedy, medicine" (Ezekiel 30:21; Proverbs 4:22; Jeremiah 30:13). There also occurs the use of the verb *ḥābaš* "to bind up" (Isaiah 3:7) and the nouns *tē'ālā* "healing of skin" (Jeremiah 30:13; 46:11), and *kēhā* "dimming, lessening, alleviation" (Nahum 3:19). Other Hebrew words related to the concept of health in the Old Testament are the nouns *'ārūkā* "lengthening, healing of a wound, restoration" (Isaiah 58:6; Jeremiah 8:22; 30:17; 33:6) and *yēsū'ā* "salvation, safety" (Psalms 42:11; 43:5).
- 8 See R.K. Harrison, "Healing, health," *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. 2 (E-J), ed. by G.A. Buttrick et al. (New York-Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1962) 541-548.
- 9 Robert Laurin, "The Concept of Man as a Soul," *Expository Times*, 72 (1961) 131-134.
- 10 W. David Stacey, "Man as a Soul," *Expository Times*, 72 (1961) 349-350; Peter Addinall, "The Soul in Pedersen's *Israel*," *Expository Times*, 92 (1981) 299-303.



- 11 Likewise today we can connect certain activities or feelings with certain individual parts of the body as we speak of the whole person—thus we associate a nose with curiosity, a heart with love, an eye with envy, a tongue with gossip, and a foot with transgression.
- 12 Hans W. Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1974) 10–25.
- 13 H. Wheeler Robinson, *Corporate Personality in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1964).
- 14 Unlike 'am, *gôy* significantly is never used possessively with the name YHWH, whereas 'am is. 'am appears as an element in many Hebrew personal names, but *gôy* never does. The companion noun to *gôy* is 'ādām, "the earthling, the mortal, the commoner, the statistic". In biblical Hebrew there is no plural for 'ādām. On the other hand, 'am's correspondent is 'îš, "a man, an individual", a noun often serving as a determinative prefacing a profession, such as "a man of war = a warrior" or "a man of God = a prophet". Cf. E.A. Speiser, "'People' and 'Nation' of Israel," *The Journal of Biblical Literature*, 79 (1960) 157–163; Laurence Kutler, "A Structural Semantic Approach to Israelite Communal Terminology," *The Journal of the Ancient Near Eastern Society of Columbia University*, 14 (1982) 69–77.
- 15 Claus Westermann, *Praise and Lament in the Psalms* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981) 42, 50–51; G. Ernest Wright, "The Manner of Israel and the Manner of Canaan," in *Biblical Archaeology* (rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962) 99–120.
- 16 I am especially indebted for such an appreciation to the article of Niels-Erik Andreasen, "Recent Studies of the Old Testament Sabbath: Some Observations," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 86 (1974) 453–469. See Hans W. Wolff, "The Day of Rest in the Old Testament," *Currents in Theology and Mission*, 43 (1972) 498–506. Cf. also the claim of Gnana Robinson in the article "The Idea of Rest in the Old Testament and the Search for the Basic Character of the Sabbath," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 92 (1980) 32–42, that the "rest" motif was not central to pre-exilic Israelite thinking about the sabbath.
- 17 For an informative discussion of law and commandment in Ancient Israel, see Claus Westermann, *Elements of Old Testament Theology*, tr. by D.W. Stott (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1982) 175–187; Shalom M. Paul, *Studies in the Book of the Covenant in the Light of Cuneiform and Biblical Law*, SVT 18 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970) 112–124; Dale Patrick, *Old Testament Law* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1985); Walter Harrelson, *The Ten Commandments and Human Rights* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980); Anthony Phillips, *Ancient Israel's Criminal Law: A New Approach to the Decalogue* (New York: Schocken Books, 1970); and Rifat Sonsino, *Motive Clauses in Hebrew Law: Biblical Forms and Near Eastern Parallels*, Dissertation Series 45 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1980).



- 19 The reason for the shift by Christians from Saturday to Sunday as a day of rest is a complex issue. At one extreme the reason given for the choice of Sunday is that Christ rose from the dead on Easter Sunday. At the other extreme is the suggestion that Christians were spurred to change from Saturday to Sunday worship because of their desire to disassociate themselves from Jews, thereby avoiding the repressive Roman measures directed against Judaism following the first and second Jewish revolts. For this suggestion, see Samuele Bacchiocchi, "How It Came About: From Saturday to Sunday," *Biblical Archaeology Review*, 4/3 (September/October 1978) 32-40.
- 20 This simple, three-fold definition of *šālôm* is derived from Perry B. Yoder's monograph *Shalom: The Bible's Word for Salvation, Justice, and Peace* (Newton, Kansas: Faith and Life Press, 1987) 10-23. See also John I. Durham, "Shalom and the Presence of God," in *Old Testament Essays in Honour of G.H. Davies: Proclamation and Presence*, ed. by J.I. Durham and J.R. Porter (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1970) 272-293; and Walter Brueggemann, *Living toward a Vision: Biblical Reflections on Shalom* (New York: United Church Press, 1982).
- 20 See the helpful cursory article by Philip J. Budd, "Holiness and Cult," in *The World of Ancient Israel: Sociological, Anthropological and Political Perspectives*, ed. by R.E. Clements (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 185-202. Budd comments on the recent work of such social anthropologists as Mary Douglas, B.J. Malina, and Michael Carroll.
- 21 Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger. An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970).
- 22 Here one may wish to consult Fernando Belo, "The Symbolic Order of Ancient Israel," in *A Materialist Reading of the Gospel of Mark*, tr. by M.J. O'Connell (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1981) 37-59.
- 23 *The Peaceable Kingdom*, from Abby Aldrich Rockefeller's original collection. This particular oil painting is now located at the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Center, Williamsburg, Virginia. Black and White reproduction used by permission.