

speech would be a pretense that words can be adequate to reality. it is only language's acting out of its function, rather than an assertion of its essence which can provide a figure for that which differentiates man both from the other creatures and from his creator.

The Jewish hermeneutic tradition has always given high priority to language, has indeed imagined it as prior to all other aspects of reality. In this paper, we shall show how midrashic readings of the first chapters of the Book of Genesis reflect upon the role of man through the figure of a speaking creature, and through the figures of speech of the primary text.

THE ROLE OF „WISDOM” IN THE INTERPRETATION OF SCRIPTURE

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The aim of the essay is both to describe the presentation of „wisdom” in association with Solomon in the Old Testament and to draw out some hermeneutical implication for conemporary biblical interpretation. Wisdom proves to be an idiom within scripture, similar to Torah in association with Moses and prophecy linked to various named persons and biblical books. While wisdom is not „secular”, God and prayer belong to it as essential topics, it does appear to bracket out of its vocabulary other key elements necessary for Jewish Torah and prophecy, including the themes of election, the giving of the law, and Israel's salvation history. In its own unique manner, it seeks a conversation with the world and is even willing to let the world test its, alleged wisdom. For contemporary hermeneutics, such a biblical presentation of wisdom demands an openness to wisdom wherever it may be found in the world and a vulnerability to critique by others in the world regardless of religious beliefs. It, also, points to the necessary capacity of a biblical interpreter and refine the questions he or she asks of the two, and, therefore, affects the possible reception of the Word of God as found elsewhere in Scripture. So, for example, the hearing of the Torah and its semantic import for contemporary issues is partly determined by the sapiential capacity of the interpreter to ask wise rather than foolish question of the scriptural witness to the Torah and the Gospel. What constitutes a „wise” question is partly determined by a robust and self-critical extra-biblical conversation with the world about wisdom.