A nice review by "The Kosher Bookworm"

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Alan Jay Gerber writes "The Kosher Bookworm" column for the Jewish Star of the Five Towns. He attended the Young Israel of Lawrence-Cedarhurst when Rabbi Hayyim Angel was serving as scholar-in-residence. This article, which appears in the Jewish Star of January 8, 2015, offers his comments on Rabbi Angel's presentation and on his most recent book, "Peshat Isn't So Simple."

The Kosher Bookworm
The Study of Bible Commentary--Fascinating
by Alan Jay Gerber

This past week the Young Israel of Lawrence Cedarhurst hosted one of America's leading interpreters of the Bible text and commentaries, Rabbi Hayyim Angel. Rabbi Angel's presentments that Shabbat to a total of over 700 attendees was both impressive as to their attentiveness of the listeners as well as to the comprehensiveness of the content of his message. As reflected in his literary output over the past decade Rabbi Angel's message is to parse the inner workings of the text of the holy writ, to define to "amcha" the methodology of peshat and derash, so as to enable the average layperson to better understand the basic content as well as the hidden theological message of the divine text.

This review is intended to serve as a literary followup to Rabbi Angel's message through bringing to your attention a sample of Rabbi Angel's literary works for your edification and hopeful use. This review is not intended to be an analytical study, just a "taste" of the wisdom and gifted thought of Rabbi Hayyim Angel.

Recently, Kodesh Press published Rabbi Angel's "Peshat Isn't So Simple" Essays on Developing a Religious Methodology to Bible Study", a collection of twenty one essays spanning the entire Bible dealing with some of the most interesting

chapter of Bible narrative. Within these pages are reflected Rabbi Angel's method of analysis wherein we get a first hand up front view of what constitutes real Bible commentary. Among the commentators whose commentary is given the
"Angel treatment" are Rambam, Abarbanel, Sforno,Moshe Shamah, and Leon Kass.
Rabbi Angel's method in defining parshanut envelops much of this work making for
some interesting and truly informative teachings.

From the very outset, Rabbi Angel defines for us his method for us to understand and to hopefully ultimately apply in our future study of the Bible.

Consider the following:

"Developing a religious methodology for learning Tanach requires many ingredients. Foremost, the belief in Revelation, that the sacred words of the Bible reflect G-d's word speaking directly to us, lies at the very heart of learning. Tanach shapes our religious worldview, our religious and moral behavior, and our core values and ideals."

This is as plain and as straight as one can write on a subject that has been the source of questionable theological takes among our people for over two centuries. The blunt honesty of the writer is a refreshing change of pace from those of his more liberal contemporaries who use the Bible as a whipping post for their questionable beliefs.

Further on in his introduction Rabbi Angel notes the following:

"Although peshat often is translated as the plain or simple sense of the text, there is nothing plain or simple about it when we take it seriously. Sifting through many centuries of scholarship and methodology coupled with pursuing contemporary approaches and research is a life-long endeavor, as we continue our
attempts to refine truth and approach G-d's word through our eternal sacred texts."

Among the more interesting chapters in this work that relate to the current Torah readings, you will surely find the following to be of must interest:
"Joseph's Bones: Peshat, Derash, and in Between", and "Learning From and living our History: Lessons from the Exodus in Tanach".
Both of these two essays will give you a broader understanding as well as

appreciation of the inner meanings and messages of Torah text, as well as the various nuances of Torah commentaries.

Related to these essays, in a previous work by Rabbi Angel entitled, "Revealed Texts, Hidden Meanings" [Ktav 2009] we find a short yet fascinating essay, "The Genesis-Exodus Continuum: What Happens When They Are Viewed As A Larger Unit"
that details the thematic links between the first two books of the Bible that further enhance their theological as well as literary messages. This chapter alone would make for some interesting conversation as the Seder table, indeed a warm thought for this time of year.