

Gender Bias

(Definitely)

Crossroad at Dependence

There is a current debate about the reach of democracy, as pertains to its extension into the military. One of the things that are pushing its way into the foreground of political consideration is whether democracy must be restrained in that environment. Those who present the historical view have stated that, for a goodly part of its history, democracy was not a part of the military. This is true. It is especially true of the development of the nation of Israel, as it is recorded in the Bible. Let us take a look at that, for a moment.

In the Bible, the children of Israel were not consulted as to their participation, or not, in the military. At the first points of progress toward becoming a nation, the LORD instituted a practice that involved almost automatic drafting into the military, as we see here.

And the LORD spake unto Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the tabernacle of the congregation, on the first day of the second month, in the second year after they were come out of the land of Egypt, saying, Take ye the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, after their families, by the house of their fathers, with the number of their names, every male by their polls; From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: thou and Aaron shall number them by their armies.

(Numbers 1:1-3)

The militaristic mind set of the nation of Israel was not limited to the general population; it was also a part of the religious conduct of the priests. In a certain episode of the priests' history, they showed that they, too, were called to adopt a military attitude about the purity of their service to the LORD. There was a time in the reign of king Uzziah, when the LORD moved powerfully in the king . . .

But when he was strong, his heart was lifted up to his destruction: for he transgressed against the LORD his God, and went into the temple of the LORD to burn incense upon the altar of incense.

And Azariah the priest went in after him, and with him fourscore priests of the LORD, that were valiant men: And they withstood Uzziah the king, and said unto him, It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the LORD, but to the priests the sons of Aaron, that are consecrated to burn incense: go out of the sanctuary; for thou hast trespassed; neither shall it be for thine honour from the LORD God.

(2 Chronicles 26:16-18)

In that encounter, the LORD endorsed the boldness of the priests.

Then Uzziah was wroth, and had a censer in his hand to burn incense: and while he was wroth with the priests, the leprosy even rose up in his forehead before the priests in the house of the LORD, from beside the incense altar.

And Azariah the chief priest, and all the priests, looked upon him, and, behold, he was leprous in his forehead, and they thrust him out from thence; yea, himself hasted also to go out, because the LORD had smitten him.

And Uzziah the king was a leper unto the day of his death, and dwelt in a several house, being a leper; for he was cut off from the house of the LORD: and Jotham his son was over the king's house, judging the people of the land.

(2 Chronicles 26:19-21)

Actually, we might just as easily say that the boldness of the priests had been endorsed before times, even before they demonstrated their resolve to king Uzziah. We say this because; the recompense that came upon the king was more of a seamlessly attached consequence. The consequential nature of recompense was not a new thing. There were several prior times of consequential recompense, such as we see here, in the matter of Korah.

This is the judgment.

*And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,
Speak unto the congregation, saying, Get you up from about the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.*

And Moses rose up and went unto Dathan and Abiram; and the elders of Israel followed him. And he spake unto the congregation, saying, Depart, I pray you, from the tents of these wicked men, and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins.

So they gat up from the tabernacle of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, on every side: and Dathan and Abiram came out, and stood in the door of their tents, and their wives, and their sons, and their little children.

(Numbers 16:23-27)

The pronouncement of consequence follows judgment.

And Moses said, Hereby ye shall know that the LORD hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men; then the LORD hath not sent me. But if the LORD make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth, and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the LORD.

(Numbers 16:28-30)

Delivery of recompense follows neglect of consequence: speedy repentance can forestall, or

even eliminate, recompense, as occurred for the people of Nineveh, here.

And Jonah began to enter into the city a day's journey, and he cried, and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown.

So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them. For word came unto the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, and he laid his robe from him, and covered him with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying,

Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing: let them not feed, nor drink water: But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea, let them turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands.

Who can tell if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?

And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not.

(Jonah 3:4-10)

In the matter of Korah; speedy repentance did not happen, but, instead, recompense flowed from consequence.

And it came to pass, as he had made an end of speaking all these words, that the ground clave asunder that was under them: And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation.

And all Israel that were round about them fled at the cry of them: for they said, Lest the earth swallow us up also. And there came out a fire from the LORD, and consumed the two hundred and fifty men that offered incense.

(Numbers 16:31-35)

When we include the military-like actions of the Levites and priests, with Moses, the prophet of the LORD, action in such matters as Korah, as included with the call-to-action for the twenty-plus year old men of the congregation of Israel; then, we have representation from all portions of the congregation, as being in the military mindset. This does not mean that everything was dependent on a military mindset; but that mindset was (and, I believe, still is) an important part of the health of the nation of Israel

The importance of the military mindset of Israel became uncomfortably clear when they tried

to depend on other nations for their protection. In such times, they were reminded of their personal, national responsibility for the health of their nation. At such times, the LORD sent a refresher person to tell them that they needed to get back to their core value of being the burden bearer for the national standard. This is one of those times . . .

Israel was placed at a crossroad that was somewhat hidden from them. In the mind of the king, the fork in the road went to either, national surrender, or, national defeat, as they had witnessed in their neighbors.

Now it came to pass in the fourteenth year of king Hezekiah, that Sennacherib king of Assyria came up against all the defenced cities of Judah, and took them. And the king of Assyria sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem unto king Hezekiah with a great army. And he stood by the conduit of the upper pool in the highway of the fuller's field. Then came forth unto him Eliakim, Hilkiyah's son, which was over the house, and Shebna the scribe, and Joah, Asaph's son, the recorder.

(Isaiah 36:1-3)

At that time, Israel was reminded that their dependence on an old associates would provide no relief from their calamity. Thus, Israel was reminded that they needed to have a strong system of national defense. (In my mind, this is best done by relying on the LORD, first.)

And Rabshakeh said unto them, Say ye now to Hezekiah, Thus saith the great king, the king of Assyria, What confidence is this wherein thou trustest? I say, sayest thou, (but they are but vain words) I have counsel and strength for war: now on whom dost thou trust, that thou rebellest against me? Lo, thou trustest in the staff of this broken reed, on Egypt; whereon if a man lean, it will go into his hand, and pierce it: so is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all that trust in him.

But if thou say to me, We trust in the LORD our God: is it not he, whose high places and whose altars Hezekiah hath taken away, and said to Judah and to Jerusalem, Ye shall worship before this altar?

Now therefore give pledges, I pray thee, to my master the king of Assyria, and I will give thee two thousand horses, if thou be able on thy part to set riders upon them. How then wilt thou turn away the face of one captain of the least of my master's servants, and put thy trust on Egypt for chariots and for horsemen?

(Isaiah 36:4-9)

Indeed, in the revelation of the original design of the nation, a provision was inserted that gave the authorization for the office that would serve as the core of national protection. In a certain day of the developing nation of Israel, the congregation received this message from the LORD, through His servant Moses.

When thou art come unto the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee, and shalt possess it, and shalt dwell therein, and shalt say, I will set a king over me, like as all the nations that are about me; Thou shalt in any wise set him king over thee, whom the LORD thy God shall choose: one from among thy brethren shalt thou

set king over thee: thou mayest not set a stranger over thee, which is not thy brother.

(Deuteronomy 17:14-15)

Though, once again, we remind you that the LORD'S commandments have protocols that must be followed; as well as, consequences that contain portions of negative recompense. This is the pattern that pertained to the king . . .

But he shall not multiply horses to himself, nor cause the people to return to Egypt, to the end that he should multiply horses: forasmuch as the LORD hath said unto you, Ye shall henceforth return no more that way.

Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away: neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.

And it shall be, when he sitteth upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book out of that which is before the priests the Levites: And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life: that he may learn to fear the LORD his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them: That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren, and that he turn not aside from the commandment, to the right hand, or to the left: to the end that he may prolong his days in his kingdom, he, and his children, in the midst of Israel.

(Deuteronomy 17:16-20)

At a later time, the, almost formed, nation of Israel put the finishing touches on their march in the direction of a chartered, human protector. It is interesting to note that the impetus for their final crossover was political corruption in the priesthood. Whereas the priesthood had been the instrument for marshalling the troop to protect the nation; in time, it failed in the delivery of in that part of its assignment. One of the times when the office of the priests showed an active participation in the maintenance of the health of the nation is in the time of Samuel. It may seem to be a small part, but it was a very necessary part. The necessity of this part of the services of the priests is in the fact that they provided the motivation for the warrior to give his life, if necessary, for the sake of the nation. We see that, here.

And the word of Samuel came to all Israel. Now Israel went out against the Philistines to battle, and pitched beside Ebenezer: and the Philistines pitched in Aphek. And the Philistines put themselves in array against Israel: and when they joined battle, Israel was smitten before the Philistines: and they slew of the army in the field about four thousand men.

And when the people were come into the camp, the elders of Israel said, Wherefore hath the LORD smitten us to day before the Philistines? Let us fetch the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of Shiloh unto us, that, when it cometh among us, it may save us out of the hand of our enemies.

So the people sent to Shiloh, that they might bring from thence the ark of the

covenant of the LORD of hosts, which dwelleth between the cherubims: and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were there with the ark of the covenant of God.

And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again.

(1 Samuel 4:1-5)

This was the time of a major turning point for the children of Israel; but, not for the good. From this time, forward, the influence of the priesthood diminished. The degradation of the priesthood's power of persuasion was because of political corruption. The corruption started here.

Now the sons of Eli were sons of Belial; they knew not the LORD. And the priests' custom with the people was, that, when any man offered sacrifice, the priest's servant came, while the flesh was in seething, with a fleshhook of three teeth in his hand; And he struck it into the pan, or kettle, or caldron, or pot; all that the fleshhook brought up the priest took for himself. So they did in Shiloh, unto all the Israelites that came thither.

Also before they burnt the fat, the priest's servant came, and said to the man that sacrificed, Give flesh to roast for the priest; for he will not have sodden flesh of thee, but raw. And if any man said unto him, Let them not fail to burn the fat presently, and then take as much as thy soul desireth; then he would answer him, Nay; but thou shalt give it me now: and if not, I will take it by force.

Wherefore the sin of the young men was very great before the LORD: for men abhorred the offering of the LORD.

(1 Samuel 2:12-17)

The power of nation motivation was extracted from the priesthood, here.

And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, they said, What meaneth the noise of this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews?

And they understood that the ark of the LORD was come into the camp. And the Philistines were afraid, for they said, God is come into the camp. And they said, Woe unto us! for there hath not been such a thing heretofore. Woe unto us! who shall deliver us out of the hand of these mighty Gods? these are the Gods that smote the Egyptians with all the plagues in the wilderness. Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not servants unto the Hebrews, as they have been to you: quit yourselves like men, and fight.

And the Philistines fought, and Israel was smitten, and they fled every man into his tent: and there was a very great slaughter; for there fell of Israel thirty thousand footmen. And the ark of God was taken; and the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, were slain.

(1 Samuel 4:6-11)

Before this happened, the people of the nation did struggle with control of their political expression, as a pointer to their sincere--or, not sincere--service to the LORD. In that prior day, the people were somewhat unprepared for the challenge that they would eventually have to face as a nation. At that time, the people needed to decide on the fork in the road of dependence. The question that faced them was whether to lean fully on God, as before, or was it time for a more this-world solution.

At this time, the religious leaders had failed to keep the national mind focused on God, the KING. By their self-serving behavior, the religious leaders had moved the nation away from the LORD, and opened up a dependence void. Since they were, then, in a place that was somewhat removed from the rest in the LORD that they had enjoyed in the past; they were no longer prepared to face the national challenges, in their, then, present state. The mark of their lack of preparation is seen in the following statement about their resistance to continuation in the way of the LORD.

In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes

(Judges 17:6)

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--- NEXT IN Gender Bias, Definitely --  
Regulated Expansion

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