*Please provide a summary of your dissertation (up to 450 words).* [currently 447]

My dissertation, directed by Profs. Moshe Halbertal and Baruch J. Schwartz, was dedicated to the topic “Divine Anger and its Appeasement in the Pentateuch and Its Sources.” Anger is a major phenomenon in the Pentateuch; there are many stories about God’s destructive power being deployed, usually against the Israelites themselves. My dissertation questions the assumption that there is a single concept of “anger” everywhere and for all time that holds true for the Bible as well; instead, we must distinguish between a variety of phenomena, differing from each other just as they differ from modern perspectives on anger.

These distinctions apply throughout the Pentateuch. I first proposed a new charting of anger terminology, with many highly significant new distinctions between various Hebrew idioms, each of which expresses not merely a different nuance but a completely different phenomenon. Some are related to God’s jealousy, others signify an impulsive outburst, or a half-independent power escaping God’s control. This section also employed philosophical approaches to emotion, showing that certain idioms understood as “anger” terms either have nothing to do with anger or do not refer to an “emotion” in the modern sense.

Part two of the dissertation is based on the distinction between the various sources that are intertwined in the Pentateuch according to the Documentary Hypothesis — each of which has a unique theological perspective. I show how each of these sources shapes the relationship between God and Israel, and the mechanism of “divine anger,” in its own way: what causes the outburst, how it operates, how to prevent it or allay it. For example, the priestly literature warns that plague will break out if non-priests get too close to the sacred; and when something of the sort does occur, it is handled through a sort of priestly magic. In contrast, other Pentateuchal traditions focus on God’s need to earn the Israelites’ trust, explaining the calamities that He causes as a result of His fury at the fact that the Israelites are testing His abilities and do not rely on Him. According to these traditions, the methods for allaying divine wrath include appealing to Him for mercy and warning Him that He is damaging His international reputation.

In conclusion, “divine anger” is a late and perhaps even anachronistic exegetical category, which includes a wide variety of phenomena, each of which has its own internal logic; the characteristics they all share — on both the psychological and theological levels — differ from the modern perspective and challenge it. Research on divine anger in the Pentateuch therefore also involves the philosophy and history of emotions, God is depicted in the Pentateuchal sources, and the emergence of ancient Israelite religion and biblical literature.

*Please describe your planned research activities for your postdoctoral studies (up to 650 words).* [currently 633]

By the end of the current year (2019–2020) I hope to complete my planned publications based on my dissertation, as well as turning it into a book. During the proposed postdoctoral year at Yale (2020–2021), I intend to move on to my next research topic. This involves the connection between the physical embodiment of the biblical God and His personality, as it is expressed in God’s relationship with the people of Israel in Pentateuchal narrative, or more precisely: the narratives in each of the four sources of which the Pentateuch is composed according to the Documentary Hypothesis.

The topic that engages me in my research work is the various ways in which God is presented in the Bible. What especially excites me is exploring the human sides of the biblical God: on the one hand God’s physical representations, which at peak moments in narrative and prophecy appear in human form, and on the other hand His personality so full of contradictions: sometimes merciful and compassionate and sometimes jealous and vengeful.

So far, scholarship has mostly treated God’s physicality and God’s personality separately, though the Bible itself does not distinguish dualistically between body and spirit, and there is no reason to assume that God’s “self” is divided in this way. I want to connect the questions about God’s embodiment with those regarding His personality, characteristics, and feelings: In what sense does God dwell in the midst of the Israelites, and what is the significance of His presence in their midst for the relationship between them and God? What is the connection between “seeing God’s face” and creating intimacy with God, and what makes seeing God close up so problematic and dangerous? Does God change the nature of His physical presence — in fire or in cloud, in the heavens or the sanctuary — to correspond to the Israelites’ behavior?

It is impossible to answer these questions by examining the Pentateuch in its canonical form; impossible to trace precisely a plot so filled with contradictions, doublings, and narrative gaps; and most of all it is impossible to ask of such a plot the more complicated questions that depend on narrative continuity. That the Pentateuch is a compound text whose manner of creation is difficult to reconstruct, there is scholarly consensus; but debate about the correct way to attempt nonetheless to reconstruct the earlier stages of the formation of the text and be sure of their meaning has been stormy.

This study is based on the neo-documentarian approach, which agrees with the classic documentary approach in seeing the Pentateuch as a document composed of four independent sources called J, E, P, and D, but suggests an enhanced version of the hypothesis that might resolves the problems that have led some scholars to conclude that the hypothesis is entirely incorrect.

I want to proceed to the next stage, beyond any attempt to prove the validity of the hypothesis, and use it as a basis for deeper research into the phenomenology of biblical religion. I will seek to show how the four sources — once they have been precisely and convincingly untangled — present, by means of their differing narratives about God’s relationship with the Israelites, contradictory approaches with regard to the divine body and personality.

As a scholar of Bible and Jewish thought, I will base my study of the Bible’s theological, psychological, and political perspectives on philological analysis. They will be examined in comparison with the religions of Mesopotamia and Canaan that preceded the Bible and influenced it, as well as the Jewish and Christian cultures that followed it. The interweaving of these three research paths — the physical embodiment of God, the personality of God, and the neo-documentarian approach to the composition of the Pentateuch — will be able to shed new light on many of the issues at the heart of biblical thought.

*Explain, in some detail, the reasons for your choice of country, institution and academic supervisor abroad, and the connection, if any, with your present and planned future work (up to 130 words).* [currently 130]

I want to broaden my horizons beyond my Israeli training and become familiar with new methodological approaches and academic environments. Yale Divinity School is one of the world centers for my research topics, and Prof. Joel Baden is one of the most important Pentateuch scholars in the world. We met when I participated in a workshop at Yale and I am currently working on the Hebrew edition of his book *The Composition of the Pentateuch.* I am certain that I will learn a great deal under his guidance. I am also interested in meeting scholars such as Jacqueline Vayntrub, whose studies in biblical philology and semantics I’ve read and I intend to participate in the session that she is organizing at this year’s meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in San Diego.

*Please describe in one paragraph (10-12 lines)*[currently 12] *what you hope to have achieved at the conclusion of your post-doctoral studies.*

In my year at Yale, I aim to develop further as a scholar of Bible and Jewish thought. I especially want to broaden my knowledge by taking courses and meeting with scholars in fields that are relatively new to me, among them early Christianity and comparative religion. I hope to meet both senior and junior scholars who will challenge and enrich my thinking.

I intend to write the first two chapters of my proposed book about the perspectives on God of the J and the P sources. I have the year mapped into three parts. First, I intend to complete my chapter on the J source, to submit it for publication, and to present it at appropriate meetings. Then I will write the section on the P source, and for the rest of the year I intend to write an article that will compare the two sources, which current scholarship considers very different, but which in my estimation have significant points of contact. Comparing them will contribute not only to an understanding of the two sources but to broader questions about the crystallization of biblical religion and the creation of the Pentateuch.