THE LIBERATING PATH
OF THE HEBREW PROPHETS

Then and Now

NAHUM WARD-LEV

ORBIS BOOKS
Maryknoll, New York 10545
Founded in 1970, Orbis Books endeavors to publish works that enlighten the mind, nourish the spirit, and challenge the conscience. The publishing arm of the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Orbis seeks to explore the global dimensions of the Christian faith and mission, to invite dialogue with diverse cultures and religious traditions, and to serve the cause of reconciliation and peace. The books published reflect the views of their authors and do not represent the official position of the Maryknoll Society. To learn more about Maryknoll and Orbis Books, please visit our website at www.maryknollsociety.org.

Copyright © 2019 by Nahum Ward-Lev

Published by Orbis Books, Box 302, Maryknoll, NY 10545-0302.

All rights reserved.

With the noted exceptions, translations of biblical verses are used with permission from the Soncino Classics Collection on CD-ROM. In those verses in the Soncino Collection where the term “the Lord” appears, the author, with permission, has substituted the term “the Living Presence.”

Permission for use of translations from the Davka CD-ROM containing the Soncino Bible and permission to substitute “the Living Presence” for “the Lord” in that translation granted by David Mandel.

“Beginners” by Denise Levertov, from Candles in Babylon, copyright © 1982 by Denise Levertov. Reprinted by permission of New Directions Publishing Corp. World Rights including Canada, excluding British Commonwealth.


No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without prior permission in writing from the publisher.

Queries regarding rights and permissions should be addressed to: Orbis Books, P.O. Box 302, Maryknoll, NY 10545-0302.

Manufactured in the United States of America
Contents

Foreword by Walter Brueggemann ......................... xi
Acknowledgments ...................................... xv
A Note on Translation .................................. xix
Introduction: A Stream Runs through It ................ xxı

Part One
Prophetic Wisdom for Societal Transformation

1. A Journey in Love ........................................ 3
2. The Prophets and Deuteronomy: A Societal Revolution .... 13
3. The Liberation Journey ................................... 19
4. The Way of Relationship ................................. 31
5. Telling the Essential Story throughout Time ............... 39
6. Headwaters: The Prophetic Stream in Creation ............ 45
7. Journey Partners: God and Abraham ...................... 55
8. Rivalry and Resolution in Genesis ........................ 65
9. Exodus: A Women’s Liberation ............................ 79
10. Force and Transformation ................................. 87
11. The Reluctant Prophet and the Unprepared People ....... 93
13. A Scribal Tradition ........................................ 107
Part Two
Contemporary Reflections on Prophetic Wisdom

15. A Listening Lineage ............................................ 133
16. We Make the Road by Walking: Life as Journey .......... 137
17. Dialogue Is the Way ............................................. 145
18. Dialogue against Oppression ................................. 155
19. The World Is Built with Love (Ps 89:3) ...................... 163
20. Enacting a Love Ethic ............................................ 169
21. The Exquisite Lightness of Being ............................ 179
22. The Art of Stars and Stones ................................. 183
23. The Love That Binds Us ......................................... 199

Appendix A. Spiritual Practices for Prophetic Action .......... 205
Appendix B. Chapter Reflections ................................. 213
Selected Readings ..................................................... 221
Index ................................................................. 227