

THE ELEANOR ROOSEVELT PROGRAM

August 29th, 1951

Description: In the opening segment, ER and Elliott Roosevelt respond to a listener's question about the United States' international alliances and whether or not the U.S. assumes "power is knowledge." In the interview segment, ER and author Joseph Gaer discuss the lore behind the Old Testament.

Participants: ER, Elliott Roosevelt, Joseph Gaer

[ER:] This is Eleanor Roosevelt speaking. Our program is coming to you from my living room here at the Park Sheraton Hotel in New York City. I'm very happy to have this little while with you each day and I hope you enjoy the guest we've invited to be with us today. And now for a moment I'm going to turn the program over to Elliott.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] The rich lore of the Old Testament until now has been known only to a handful of biblical scholars. Now it is the subject of a new book to be published on the sixth of September by Little Brown & Company. Its title *The Lore of the Old Testament* and its author Joseph Gaer who is with Mrs. Roosevelt today. Mrs. Roosevelt will introduce Mr. Gaer after we discuss a question from a listener. Now our announcer has some hints to good listening for us.

(Break 0:51-01:06)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] And now we come to our letter answering discussion suggested today by Mrs. Jane Kennedy of Long Island. She writes, "I was very interested in an article in *Reader's Digest* by James Reston, diplomatic correspondent of *The New York Times*. I would like you, Mrs. Roosevelt to comment on his remarks. Do you think they are true? Here are some excerpts from the article: 'The United States irritates its allies for the same reasons that rich, frisky, green young men irritate their elders. We are high spirited, we are cocky, we are flighty. We are often thoughtless. We talk too often and too big; we assume that power is knowledge and sometimes even wisdom. Every alliance since Adam and Eve has of course produced friction--'"

[ER:] Could-could we just take that first sentence-paragraph first?

[Elliott Roosevelt, laughing:] Alright, yeah.

[ER:] Um, I'm delighted that he makes the distinction between knowledge and wisdom. [Elliott Roosevelt: Yeah.] Too few people make that distinction and of course, what he says um is perfectly true. The United States sometimes lacks experience and therefore lacks wisdom, and um [ER clears throat] naturally eh people who've um perhaps had more experience don't like to have their young and um frisky and powerful uh ally making decisions which they feel um not too wise. Now there may be something on our side, but we should be prepared to discuss it and not to thrust it down our allies' throats without any um sense of there [Elliott Roosevelt: I would--] having been a meeting of minds.

[Elliott Roosevelt, overlapping with ER:] I wouldn't say for instance in uh looking at the situation in Iran that the United States Government with all of its power and all of its uh [ER: Well that's--] abilities has thrust anything down the government of Iran's throat. (3:15)

[ER:] No, I don't think it's done, as far as Iran is concerned, I don't think uh we are really in any way uh doing anything more than we tactfully can do to conciliate. Because there I think one of our most experienced and—um, um, allies that is occasionally eh uh very much annoyed with us because they feel that they have so much more experience. In that particular case their experience um went too far back.

[Elliott Roosevelt laughs] They thought they could do what they had done a great many years ago when they discovered that the world had changed. (3:59)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well in other words, in that-- uh to use that as a current example uh you wouldn't say that we're acting the part of uh "rich, frisky, green, young men?"

[ER:] No, no, no.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] "High spirited and cocky."

[ER:] But we have—we have in some cases. We have.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Alright. Now then the next uh paragraph is that "Every alliance since Adam and Eve has of course produced friction. This is because allies like husbands and wives have separate personalities, histories, interests, peculiarities, and prejudices. The current Atlantic Alliance, however, has two special problems: first, it is led by the United States of America, a comparatively inexperienced nation in a big hurry, and secondly, that nation has forced the old leaders of the western world into a secondary position. In short there is a displaced nations problem, and even if we should lead the coalition with great wisdom the British and French would be annoyed with us." (5:05)

[ER:] Well I suppose perhaps he's diagnosing what uh is a natural feeling. That might be, I don't know. I haven't um--um I haven't met it too often but I think it would be a natural thing, but not the right way to feel because um there really is nothing else that any of them can do. They may not like it, and we may not like it but in that particular situation um we are forced to assume the leadership because we are the ones who have the wherewithal to make this coalition possible. Um [Elliott Roosevelt: But--] That's all there is. Now I should have said before that um it's not a nation or even its responsible administration and um foreign office that does the things which uh irritate and make them think of us as a "young and frisky nation." I think what really happens is that sometimes individual officials and individual representatives, some of our congressman, senators, some of our businessmen, um get a little bit annoyed and um uh don't like something that they've had found in some other country--they all enjoy sort of "blowing off" um how important we are. Um [ER clears her throat] and it is those individuals very often who are the ones who give the impression of um a young and frisky and rather selfish nation. (6:53)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mhm. But uh the point that I think is missed completely about the Atlantic Pact is that the many, many generations--uh England, and France, and Germany and uh all of the countries of Western Europe who are in the Atlantic Pact have had uh tremendous frictions and they have not gotten along very well together. This is the first time that all of them are cooperating under, admittedly, uh leadership from us, because as you say, we have the wherewithal to entice them into this agreement. Uh this is the first time they're act-acting together. I don't think that that is a sign of us being a "young and frisky and green and callow" nation. I think it means that we're coming of age. (7:52)

[ER:] Well we're growing up, and we're growing up very fast, under responsibility. We didn't um grow as fast um when we didn't have to shoulder so much responsibility. But that's so of the individual and so of the nation, now that we have to shoulder responsibility I think that we are growing up very, very quickly and I think it's largely due to our influence that there is a European council now--[Elliott

Roosevelt: Right.] And that they are trying to get--the Schumann Plan went through. [Elliott Roosevelt: All of those things have happened--] And we are trying to get a unified Europe.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] And all of those things have happened on suggestions either made directly by us or through our example of how we as separate states live together in federation. [ER: That's true.] We have been successful as a nation.

[ER:] Yes, that's true.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Alright well then further in the article he says: "Maybe if we didn't pretend that we were part of an equal alliance, things would go down a little easier. The Atlantic Alliance is not and cannot be an equal alliance and everybody here and in Europe knows it, yet we are constantly paying lip service to the principles of equality, of non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries and of joint action, when as a matter of fact we insist quite properly on the special position that goes with our special power and our special share of the burden." (9:28)

[ER:] Well, of course we have to um have more-- something um naturally has to go with greater responsibility, and we carry the greatest responsibility. And with that there does go um an inequality of sharing, but I don't think it does any harm for us to stress the fact that we want as much equality among the nations as there can possibly be, that that is our aim. [Elliott Roosevelt: Mhm.] And that we are not trying to obtain any special privileges for anybody.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Mhm. Well, Mr. Reston then goes on citing examples of what the uh uh what the terms in some cases uh--he terms in some cases "inconsistency" and even "hypocrisy" in citing sources of irritation and again I quote: "The Europeans find it difficult to be impressed by our current Soviet and German policies since we have been so positive so many different times about so many contradictory policies toward these two nations in the past five years." Mr. Reston ends the article with these remarks: "The remarkable thing on the whole is not that we do so badly, but that we do it well as we do. The British had about a hundred and fifty years in which to adjust their education, their institutions, and their mentality to the leadership of the nations. We've had about a decade which is barely long enough to acquire allies worth irritating, and incidentally someone could write a lively article on 'Why Our Allies Irritate Us.'"

[ER:] [ER laughs] That's quite true oh and uh I think Mr. Reston has written a clever article, well um, sometimes putting things cleverly it tempts us saying things that when we analyze them are not true all the way through, but um on the whole this article is an entertaining and a-a clever uh article. The um--it is quite true that England had many years in which to adjust its education, that is one of the best things he has said, because that really is what has to happen here. We've through primarily about developing our own country and not very much about what our duties would be in other countries, and suddenly now uh we have to get our young people to go out to other countries, we have to tell them they're ambassadors and uh they've got to help develop other countries which they really have very little interest or knowledge in. [Elliott Roosevelt: Right.] So um uh I-I think in the time that we have had it's been quite extraordinary how much we've been able to do, and I think we will improve. We're very adaptable and we uh learn quickly.

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Well I think that's all we can deal on this uh subject with today so that we must go on and deal with another part of the program and have our interview of today but I find that this uh article is very, very thought provoking to say the least.

[ER:] It certainly is.

(Break 12:59-13:12)

[Elliott Roosevelt:] Next to the Bible as a treasury of literature and the principles men live by comes the vast and buried lore of the Bible. Mrs. Roosevelt's guest today is an author who has taken this lore hitherto known only to a handful of scholars and presented in book form. Mother, will you continue the introduction now?

[ER:] Very gladly, Elliott. Mr. Joseph Gaer is my guest today. His book *The Lore of the Old Testament* will be published on September the sixth. I am very happy to welcome you to the program, Mr. Gaer.

[Joseph Gaer:] I'm delighted to be here.

[ER:] Well, Mr. Gaer, what caused you to write this book?

[Joseph Gaer:] Well I suppose I'm a writer, so I write books, but why I wrote this book in particular is due to the fact that I wanted to eh uh I wanted to do a book that is very affirmative in our times. There are many negative and confusing books, many learned books, and I felt that a book that is affirmative and it comes from the people themselves, as folklore usually does, and relate it to a great epic, which is found in the Bible, would be of some usefulness if it's successful.

[ER:] That's very interesting. Well why did you choose the Old Testament rather than the complete Bible or the New Testament?

[Joseph Gaer:] There are two basic reasons: first, because the Old Testament and the New Testament, as you know, are quite different in their content. The Old Testament confirms itself with a long period of the experience of the people, so that they had many frustrations, they had many hopes, many faiths, many trials and tribulations and they triumphed in the end. The New Testament revolves primarily around a founder, around Jesus and I felt that the two ideas should be separated, and one should cover this long period, presumably from Creation, according to lore four thousand and four years before our era, to about the end of the minor prophets, and it's a long enough period that their experiences are to prove something. (15:32)

[ER:] Well I should think myself, too, that the Old Testament would have a great deal more lore around-- around-- through it than would the New Testament.

[Joseph Gaer:] That is true, just as the New Testament itself is such a much larger document, also the lore is much greater and not only in amount but in variation of topic because it covers practically every conceivable human experience.

[ER:] Mm. That's true.

[Joseph Gaer:] Uh it is to a great extent true of the folklore of the Old-- of the New Testament too, but not quite so completely.

[ER:] Quite so completely, I see. Well now, in what way Mr. Gaer, does the religious lore of the Old Testament differ from all other basic religions?

[Joseph Gaer:] Well to begin with, the lore is the-is the uh the material outside of the sacred book themselves; all religions have their sacred book and they have legends pertaining to their sacred books. And basically the difference between the lores is the same as the-between the sacred books. Uh the Bible differs in some respects and not as much as most people think. One of the basic ideas I'd like to carry across and which I tried to do in the book *How the Great Religions Began* is that actually in the basic

principles all the great living religions are identical, it's the differences in the unimportant matters. (16:59)

[ER:] You know, that has struck me very often that the differences are more in ritual uh uh very often than they are in the basic beliefs.

[Joseph Gaer:] Well there is one basic concept in which the Old Testament differs from other scriptures in that they believe more that the group comes before the individual.

[ER:] They believe more what?

[Joseph Gaer:] That a group, the community [ER: Yes.] always comes before individuals. [ER: Oh really?] And all of the uh Judaic or the Old Testament teachings you find the underscoring that what is good for the group is good for the individual and not the other way around. uh An individual cannot even pray by himself effectively he has to have ten people which is considered the minimum group, the minimum community. It cannot be smaller than that, they have to form limits.

[ER:] That's very interesting that's almost um a basis for um what communist concept today, isn't it?

[Joseph Gaer:] Well, it depends on how the word is defined. The community--the concept of the community is very strong and carried over of course into the New Testament beginning with John, who lived in a community, and the community became for instance, [ER: Mhm.] all the groups that Jesus worked with in the Nazarene Church was a church of the community rather than the individual.

[ER:] Now how did you--how did you first hear stories of -of this lore you've been writing about? You must have heard it first from someone.

[Joseph Gaer:] Well I heard these stories from childhood, from my grandmother [ER: Oh.] who was a great folklorist, I believe, and a great storyteller. [ER: Mhm.] I believe a remarkable woman, first because she knew literally thousands of legends, not only relating to the Bible but practically to everything else from the weather to almost any conceivable belief and superstition. She told them beautifully. I don't think I have ever heard her raise her voice or cruel but she always demonstrated her principles by telling stories. And strangely enough, although she lived to be ninety three, she never learned to read and write. She knew them entirely orally. And that is a very interesting thing, that these legends, that many of the legends that I have in the book which were written down later, have existed for hundreds of years. [ER: Uh in peoples that couldn't write.] Orally. [ER: Just orally.] An-an-nd the most remarkable part, I've often been asked how accurate the oral tr-tr-traditions. [ER: Mhm.] They are more-much more accurate than the written ones because the writers who transcribed each one changed, each edited, whereas in the oral traditions it was always given exactly as it was transmitted. (19:52)

[ER:] That is extremely interesting. Well now, did you make notes of your grandmother's stories or have you remembered them all so well that you can use them without note?

[Joseph Gaer:] Well first, I-I carry them orally, just as in the tradition, but verified them in the books and uh various sources.

[ER:] In what?

[Joseph Gaer:] uh there are Various books and [unclear term] sources exist.

[ER:] Oh yes, of course, you-you followed up then--

[Joseph Gaer:] I followed up the research and all the sources where these materials exist.

[ER:] Now well that's very interesting of course because you've done the authentic research on them uh and yet learned them in the way that they'd always been learned from mouth--from generation to generation. [Joseph Gaer: That's correct.] How long has it taken you to compile all this material? (20:39)

[Joseph Gaer:] Now that is not easy to answer because I heard it since childhood, I was interested in it over a long period. I've written a couple books for youngsters on biblical lore. So writing the book, of course, took only about a year, but the compilation was over a long period of time.

[ER:] Well um what sources did you use when it came to studying the background of all this?

[Joseph Gaer:] The sources are many. I used basically, to begin with *The Apocrypha*, the book which are not included in the Bible. [ER: Mhm.] And then there are two Talmuds, two great encyclopedias called Talmuds, that contain one half uh lore. Then there are other interpretive books called Medrasheen. Then I went out for the um Arabic material. The Arabs, who are also, as you know, believers in the Bible--there are three great religions who accept the Bible, and that is the Christian, the Jewish, the Mohamman--they have amplified, mostly amplified, and some original material has been contributed, but they have amplified many of the legends and given them their own interpretations. [ER: Oh yes.] They exist in Arabic sources and then other sources. (21:57)

[ER:] Well Mr. Gaer, before I ask my next question, I would like to read a quotation from a critique of your book by Dr. B.A.[Benjamin Albert] Bopkin. "This treasury of extra-biblical myth, legend, and fable, is a monument of folk fantasy and wisdom testifying to the age old dramatic conflict between good and evil and the unending epic struggle for peace and brotherhood. By creative scholarship and skillful editing, Joseph Gaer has accomplished an equally monumental task: that of reinterpreting the Old Testament of the folk for the modern reader. The result is fascinating reading for the layman, and the contribution to the literature of folklore wording in new meanings and lessons for the ideological and spiritual conflicts of our time." Now, he uses the words "myth" and "legend" and "fable" and so on. The book itself is called "lore." The Bible itself is usually thought of as actual history, why then are we using such terms in connection with it? (23:11)

[Joseph Gaer:] The Bible itself is, by the devout, accepted as history. But the legends that have surrounded it, and not only legends, precepts, saying, proverbs, and myths, and fables, and superstitions are properly myths, and superstitions, and fables, and the people do not object to them as long as they do not claim them to be part of scriptures.

[ER:] I see. Um I--it's a little difficult for me to have this concept because I was brought up in a conflict between the people who believed that everything in the Bible was stated exactly as it had happened at one time, and the people who just said "that's impossible, scientifically, it just couldn't happen." I can remember my grandmother assuring us when we were children that Jonah had actually been swallowed by the whale. [ER laughs] And I can remember thinking that that was utterly impossible because I was taught the size of the whale's throat. (24:18)

[Joseph Gaer:] Well that's precisely how the myths and legends arose. You see, there is a conflict. There are those who say that every word in the Bible is the word of God and it's literally meant as it is written. Now those people uh have difficulties because when they for instance say that "God made man in his image," they immediately imagine that God is a-a man with a beard and there are legends on how large his chairs are for instance, and the throne, and how many angels it requires to administer to him and so on. And then you have many legends in relation to that and develop the cause of that all through the Bible. And they are—and those are accepted as legends.

[ER:] Well now um how far back can the lore of the Old Testament be traced? (25:07)

[Joseph Gaer:] The lore can be traced back as far as the judges and if not earlier. Uh the-the oral tradition claims that some of the legends that we know today, and use today, go back easily to the days of the judges.

[ER:] That's-that's very interesting indeed. But now I see that our announcer wants to have a word, and then we'll come right back to this discussion with Mr. Gaer on his new book.

(Break 25:39-25:50)

[ER:] Now I resume my talk with Mr. Gaer who has just written a book called *How the Great Religions Began*, and it will not be published until September, but we're getting a little preview about it today, and I think it's most interesting. Now, Mr. Gaer, you say that the vastness and complexity of existing Biblical lore presents puzzling problems to one who undertakes to excerpt and glean from it a unified whole. Why is this so, and would you give us an example or two?

[Joseph Gaer:] First, the lore accumulated over a period, as I said, from the before the judges to the present day and it's still accumulating. There are areas where people are still creating Biblical lore and they are not in accord, eh for instance eh uh one legend at a given period tried to make Nimrod, a very important character in Old Testament lore, as a very wicked person. [ER:] Oh, yes.] Later on we find a legend which says that Nimrod was a very good man and he didn't want to um eh to make uh to create the um Tower of Babel and ran away and was rewarded for it. And that you find over and over again that there are these peculiar contradictions. [ER: I see--] And to select and to know which one to use, or which one to accept, every character an-and every personage treated eh we have different descriptions of them, we have different ages for them and to select which is which without offending--for instance, another instance in general conception, I think popularly, one expects Isaac to be a young boy at the time that he was sacrificed. But the lore claims he was thirty seven years old, and you have that problem [ER gasps, Joseph Gaer laughs] Is that news to you?

[ER:] Yes it is.

[Joseph Gaer:] And if you-if you put down thirty seven years, people will think it's an error and you have to make an explanation for the new lore you've given as-as practically an-a mature person in those days.

[ER: And that says--] And that happens all the way through.

[ER:] Well I see that I gave the name of one of your old books in coming back. The new one is really called the *Lore of the Old Testament* and um now I'd to ask you since you're telling me things I never knew before uh what chronology have you followed in your books?

[Joseph Gaer:] The chronology I followed is the chronology of the Bible itself. I started with Creation. There are hundreds of stories pre-Creation in the lore, but since the Bible begins with Creation, I thought of its creation and I followed to Malaki just as the Bible follows to the last of the Minor Prophets so that we have a time chronology as well as an event chronology. (28:56)

[ER:] Well now what do you call your first chapter?

[Joseph Gaer:] The first chapter's called "In the Beginning."

[ER:] And in that you-you--

[Joseph Gaer:] Deal with creation, and the creation of-of man and the fall of man.

[ER:] And-and you tell all the ideas, for instance I see eh um that there was a superstition that it's a bad omen to begin a task or an enterprise on a Monday. Would you tell us about that, because I would think it was a very good omen to begin it on a Monday?

[Joseph Gaer:] Well Monday was the second day of creation, again, according to the lore. Uh on that day we are told in the Bible God separated the waters: the waters of the sky from the waters of the Earth, and the waters of the Earth began to complain, they-they said that they also wanted to be near to God up in heaven, and they became quarrelsome and God had to really scold them, and of course that was the first event in Creation that did not go quite peacefully, and since it was querulous, uh the waters were querulous, God say--God did not say "and it was good," for that day. [ER: Mhm.] Also on that day God created Hell, and of course you wouldn't say that was a very good thing, and neither did God. God didn't say "it was good," and because on Monday God did not say for his creations that "and it was good,"—

[ER: That's why you mustn't begin things on Monday.] That is--that is considered a bad omen. (30:21)

[ER:] Well now what-what is the reason that-that it is considered lucky to begin anything on a Tuesday?

[Joseph Gaer:] Well there again Tuesday is very symbolic like all lore, there are many symbolisms. Tuesday is the third day of Creation. Three is always a lucky number in practically every religious lore, and it is so in-in Jewish lore and in-and in Christian lore. The symbol of three, first of all is associated with God, both by the Jews and by the Christians strangely enough. The third commandment says "thou shalt not proclaim the name of God." That was the third commandment. And the name of God is associated with the universe and with God itself, as in all lore, the name becomes terribly important. In fact, it is said that a man commits a crime and he can uh absolve himself in some form or other if he repents, but there is no repentance for the proclamation of the name. Only by death can one absolve himself. Now that is one reason. The other reason is that the three patriarch: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the number three and for them it is said God created the world, and in the Christian religion there is the trinity. And one can go on. The number three becomes terrifically important as a good omen, it's always related with something good, either with God, or with good people, or with good acts. And that is why Tuesday is supposed to be a very lucky day. (31:49)

[ER:] Well now this letter-uh legend that I think is particularly nice--what about the man in the moon?

[Joseph Gaer:] There are indeed many legends about the man in the moon. The-the question about the man in the sun which is supposed to be the face of Moses, and then there is the question of the man in the moon and there are many stories about the man in the moon which in some instances is supposed to be Joshua or the people who are next to Elijah or the messiah. The uh general lore describes the man in the moon as being-as representing a man who was foolish, a man who was supposed to reproduce something and repent it. And we have several legends, of which I only used one because I had to select some three hundred out of some eight thousand legends. [ER and Joseph Gaer laugh]

[ER:] How difficult to select from so many. Well now there's one character that all of us, I think, are interested in an-and that is Job in the Bible. Now there's a legend about him isn't there?

[Joseph Gaer:] There are a number of legends in-in about Job, and it is remarkable how the lore treats Job and also how he's treated in the Bible. Job, as you know, was not a Jew according to the record, and according to the lore. He was the prophet of the gentiles, and yet he is treated with the greatest of reverence and he is considered one of the great prophets among the Jews, which I think is a very remarkable approach to him. And he's also supposed to be one of the few men who lived without sin and

great things are attributed to him. And in the end we have the in the many stories in the Arabic lore about Job's relatives and all of them are very wise simply because they were related to a good man. (33:48)

[ER:] To a good man. Isn't that interesting? Um How did you get to these legends from writings in Old Testament? How did you find them?

[Joseph Gaer:] Well the Talmud is uh, which I can read with fluency, is uh a huge encyclopedia. It's a matter of dating. Then there are also these--all the other--I read several languages, and the others we simply search [Joseph Gaer laughs].

[ER:] Well um I understand that you found one conflict and that was in the creation of Adam and Eve. Could you tell me something about the difference in that legend?

[Joseph Gaer:] Well, there are--as you know--there are two stories of creation and in the Bible itself and it repeats itself as the first chapter and the second chapter. And there are--first there's a question whether Adam and Eve are not a twin, like a Siamese twin, originally [ER: Oh.] and then separated. That's one story. And it's only after Eve, and she was not called "Eve," she was called "woman," became disobedient is that God created me at the same time as he created you and would not obey him, and she was driven out of paradise and Eve was created. The uh Arabs call her "Karina." The uh other conflict is that when God found that Adam became very lonely even though he was in the Garden of Eden and saw many beautiful females, but not "woman," uh he decided to make a mate for him. But he had a difficulty. He wanted a mate that would be obedient to her husband. He wouldn't make her out of the head because the she would be too proud, the heart because she would be too desirous, and so on. On and on and on. And then he created "woman." But alas even the Lord was a little disappointed because "woman" proved to be all of these things that he didn't want them to be in there.

[ER:] She proved to be them all! That is rather hard on her!

[Joseph Gaer:] Yes, and also interesting how the people agree that lore can often chide the creator. I mean there's a sort of a-a peculiar uh manifestation they-to show the Lord in his wisdom chose to do certain things but they didn't quite come off.

[ER:] They didn't turn out just the way he supposed.

[Joseph Gaer:] I think that happens with parent-- with the parents occasionally.

[ER:] I think that's very amusing. Well I'd like to digress from the material in your book um and in your research how would you define happenings in the times of the Old Testament in connection with today's world. Does history repeat itself, do you think? (36:20)

[Joseph Gaer:] Well I deal with lore not history, but I should say that it does repeat itself. If the lore has any value, and if the reading of this lore has any value, it is precisely any indication that people survive all kinds of difficulties if they have faith and understanding and that also, this is also a very important factor in the lore, that if people have one basic faith, and that is survival, in spite of their difficulties and whatever the leaders may think, they know that they will survive. And that is a very important factor in the lore.

[ER:] What do you think is the most interesting and significant legend you unearthed here?

[Joseph Gaer:] I should imagine the most interesting legend in this book would be the legend on--the legend on Joseph and his marriage, just purely as a-as a folktale and as literature finding Dinah's daughter uh in Egypt. And purely as literature I think that's one of the most beautiful legends.

[ER:] Well I think it's impossible to ask you to give us everything in an interview so we'll have to say to our readers, read this interesting book. And I'll have to thank you as our time has come to a close. Thank you very much Mr. Gaer [Joseph Gaer: Thank you.] For being with us today.

(Break 37:44-37:53)

[Ben Grauer:] This has been the *Eleanor Roosevelt Program* recorded in Mrs. Roosevelt's living room in the Park Sheraton Hotel on the corner of Fifty Fifth Street and Seventh Avenue in New York City. Today Mrs. Roosevelt's guest was the author of the volume *The Lore of the Old Testament*, Mr. Joseph Gaer. Before we look at the guest list for tomorrow I'd like to bring you this announcement from our government: "Joe says systematic exercise builds a strong body, so does systematic saving build a strong future. Save systematically for your future and for your country's future with United States Defense Bonds. Defense Bonds are series E bonds. Safe, sure, and profitable. The systematic easy way to buy defense bonds is through the payroll savings plan where you work. Simply tell your employer how much you want to save every payday and some is put aside for you from your paycheck then defense bonds are purchased in your name and given to you. It's easy, it's automatic and there's no safer investment in the world. Defense bonds are guaranteed by your government. If they're lost, stolen, or destroyed, the government will replace your bonds without cost. So for the defense of your future, for the defense of your country's future, buy your full share regularly, systematically of United States Defense Bonds." (39:11) Tomorrow, Thursday, Mrs. Roosevelt's guest will be James Beard [1903-1985] the former Broadway actor, and now a well-known cooking expert. And on Friday, August thirty first, a very special program, Mrs. Roosevelt in lieu of interviews, will be interview herself by her son Elliott Roosevelt. Mrs. Roosevelt and Elliott Roosevelt will be with you again tomorrow with James Beard as guest, and everyday, Monday through Friday, from 12:30 to 1:15pm. 'Til tomorrow then, this is Ben Grauer bidding you good afternoon.

[Break: 39:43-39:51]

[Ben Grauer:] Friends! This is Ben Grauer speaking. "Soup's on!" is a simple, homespun, and always welcome expression that means "come and get it!" and when steaming, fragrant bowls of Habitant vegetable soup are on the menu, little time is lost in accepting this invitation to good eating. The marvelous flavor and perfectly seasoned richness of heavenly tasting Habitant vegetable soup makes snacks, lunches, and dinners ever so much better. Only garden fresh vegetables, plump, juicy, and top grade, are used in Habitant vegetable soup, and you can readily taste the difference with the first sip. And for sensational variety be sure to serve genuine Quebec style Habitant pea soup and tantalizing Habitant onion soup. There's a heap of economy in each can of Habitant soup too, so rich and so hearty, and no diluting necessary. Just open, heat and serve, just as is, speedy, easy and so delicious. Your grocer has Habitant vegetable soup, Habitant onion soup, and Habitant pea soup in easy to recognize yellow cans. Try them soon. Now here is Elliott to start our letter answering discussion.

[Break: 41:06-41:12]

[Ben Grauer:] Now before Elliott introduces Mrs. Roosevelt's uh interesting guest for today, I'd like to take my usual glimpse at the uh line up for listening on station WNBC for tonight. It's a varied and interesting list with comedy and drama uh detective mysteries and delightful music. At 8:00 comes *Pete Kelly's Blues*, that-that drama you know, of the speakeasy days, recreating the era of F. Scott Fitzgerald and John Hale Jr. with jazz of the era, starring Jack Webb. At 8:30 comes *The Falcon*. A suspected

murderer is cleared by Mike Reardon played by Les Damon in the case of the Beautiful Bait. At 9:00 *It Pays to be Ignorant*, and then there is the quiz master Tom Howard suffer again as George Shelton, Lulu McConnell and Harry McNaughton fail in their delightfully moronic ways to answer simple questions. One of radio's crime favorites comes up on the dial at 9:30, *Mr. District Attorney*. Uh, the case before Mr. D.A. , that's Mr. Jay Justin, of course is "The Revolving Worm." Always interesting listening with uh the D.A. and his assistant Vicky Bowling. At 10:00, *The Big Story*, the true experience of reporter Harry Naer of the Bridgeport Connecticut Herald. As you know, Big Story each week takes us behind the scenes in a true, thoroughly documented experience of one of America's newsmen, who went out got the facts, got behind the story, and uh in doing so brought uh justice to a criminal. 10:00 *Big Story* and at 10:30, *Meredith Wilson's Music Room*. The orchestra leader and composer is disk jockey and host to famous stars of the music and theatrical world. Well there's the lineup for listening, tonight, Wednesday, on WNBC. Fine range of programs which we warmly recommend to you. And now to tell you about today's guest with Mrs. Roosevelt, here is Elliott.

[Break 43:18-43:27]

[Ben Grauer:] Yes, Mrs. Roosevelt. We'll use this brief pause in your interview with Mr. Gaer to give our regular station identification. This is WNBC AM and FM New York, and you're listening to the *Eleanor Roosevelt Program* recorded in Mrs. Roosevelt's living room in the Park Sheraton Hotel in New York City. Today Mrs. Roosevelt's guest is the author of the volume *The Lore of the Old Testament*, Joseph Gaer. Before we return to Mrs. Roosevelt and her guest, I'd like to bring the young ladies in our audience a message from the Women's Army Corps. The Women's Army Corps offers many fine careers to women who can meet the high standards of qualification. The Fourteenth Army Band is coming to New York and you're cordially invited to attend the concerts that are to be given in the metropolitan area at eight thirty pm on the evening of August twenty ninth, in other words tonight. The All-WAC Band will play a concert in the North Ballroom of the New Yorker Hotel. And again, two days later, on Friday, August thirty first at 8:30, Warrant Officer Kay Allen will once again direct a thirty two piece band in the concert of classical, semi-classical, and popular music. Integrated into this wonderful organization, this is a WAC organization, is a dance band, a Dixie-land combination, a small group calling themselves the Flea-boppers and the Four and Penny Two Boys Choir. This is a musical experience that you will truly enjoy, and everyone that is listening in the metropolitan area is invited to this uh Fourteenth Army Band concert at 8:30 o'clock this evening, an all-black band concert in the North Ballroom in the New Yorker Hotel. Make it a date to come here these fine concerts you're cordially invited to attend. Now to continue our interview, here again is Mrs. Roosevelt.

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