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THE ELUSIVE PRESENCE

Toward a New Biblical Theology

SAMUEL TERRIEN



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A religion which does not
affirm that God is hidden
is not true. *Vere tu es*
Deus absconditus!

BLAISE PASCAL

Preface

The reality of the presence of God stands at the center of biblical faith. This presence, however, is always elusive. "Verily, verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself!" The Deity of the Hebrew-Christian Scriptures escapes man's grasp and manipulation, but man is aware of the presence of that Deity in such a powerful way that he finds through it a purpose in the universe; he confers upon his own existence a historical meaning; and he attunes his selfhood to an ultimate destiny.

In order to examine the Hebraic theology of presence and its direct influence upon the birth of Christianity, one has to analyze those biblical traditions and poems which describe the encounter of God with men. Such a study will reveal the dynamics of interaction between biblical cultus and biblical faith. The patriarchal legends of epiphanic visitations; the Mosaic saga of the Sinai theophany; the psalms of the cultic presence in Zion; the confessions of the prophets on their visions; the poem of Job, together with the proclamation of Jesus as Lord; the "gospel" of Stephen in Acts; Paul's theology of eucharistic communion; the Johannine evocation of the "encamped" Logos; the triple typology of Jesus as priest, offering, and shrine in the

epistle to the Hebrews-in brief, the literature of the Bible as a whole presupposes a faith which transcends ritual without ever dispensing with cultic celebration.

The ancient Hebrews anticipated the *Day of Yahweh*. The early Christians celebrated the *Day of the Lord*. Both of them interpreted their historical existence in the light of a theology of presence which reveals at once their affinities and their differences. Moreover, the peculiarity of the biblical theology of presence distinguishes the faith of both Hebrews and Christians from the cults of Near Eastern and classical antiquity. It is the distinctiveness of the Hebraic theology of presence rather than the ideology of the covenant which provides a key to understanding the Bible. This thesis does not fully contradict recent trends in Old and New Testament scholarship, but it seeks to correct their excesses and to go beyond their apparently spent momentum.

One of the consequences of such a study might be to show that Judaism and Christianity fulfill their respective functions only to the extent that they inform the aesthetics of the mystical eye with the demands of the ethical ear. One cannot be divorced from the other. The mystical eye discerns the presence of God through the theological symbol of "glory." The ethical ear responds to the same presence through the theological symbol of "name." When the eye and the ear are separated, the former tends to foment an ethnic, esoteric, sectarian, and even racial exclusivism which promotes a static religion and a "closed" morality. The latter without the former tends to degenerate into a secular activism and an amorphous humanism which in the long run may abandon their proponents to their unfulfilling philosophies of the existential absurd.

The Hebraic theology of presence, which stands at the root of the earliest interpretations of Jesus-as distinguished from the later and eventually normative Christologies-unites the vision of the ultimate with a passion for the service of man. The

study of the biblical documents which record this unity makes possible a new approach to the problem of the relationship between religion and ethics.

This essay is a prolegomenon to a genuinely “biblical” theology which will respect historical complexity within, as well as between, the Old Testament and the New. The elements of diversity and of continuity which characterize the modes of presence from Genesis to Revelation will point to an interplay of theological fields of force at the center of Scripture. The recognition of these fields of force may warn contemporary theologians against the risk of abasing Christian faith by attempting to formulate it into intellectual beliefs that reflect only a lower common denominator. Acquiescence to opposition is not the secret of authentic tolerance. This warning may well contribute to the birth of a new foundation for the ecumenical theology of tomorrow.

Portions of these chapters in preliminary form were delivered as lectures at the Concordia Theological Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri; the Bangor Theological Seminary, Bangor, Maine; the Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas; the College of Wooster, Wooster, Ohio; Scripps College, Claremont, California; Hollins College, Hollins, Virginia; and Siena Heights College, Adrian, Michigan. To the students, faculties, presidents, and trustees of these institutions the author expresses gratitude for the warmth of their welcome and for the stimulus of their critical response.

The substance of the Introduction was presented in a lecture given under the auspices of the Women’s Committee, Union Theological Seminary, New York, and was subsequently published under the title, “Towards a New Theology of Presence,” in the *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, XXIV (1968–69), pp. 227–37. It was reprinted under the title, “The Recovery of Transcendence,” in New *Theology*, No. 7, ed. by M. E. Marty and D. G.

Peerman (New York and London, 1970), pp. 137-51. Thanks are hereby extended to the editors of these publications.

I wish to acknowledge the courteous help which Barbara Reed Robarts and other librarians of the Union Theological Seminary Library, New York, have unfailingly offered me in my research over the years. John Loudon and Dennis Lewis, of Harper & Row, deserve special mention for their expert care in the preparation of the manuscript for the printers.

A note of gratitude to Ruth Nanda Anshen, the editor of the collection in which this volume appears, fails to convey the extraordinary quality of her forbearance in the face of this long-delayed "eschatology."

For my debt to Sara, my wife, I find no adequate word.

Epiphany, 1977.

S. T.

Introduction

The study of Old Testament religion has been profoundly altered in recent decades. Students of the Bible now recognize that Israel's beliefs and cultus were largely influenced by those of the ancient Near East. At the same time, a number of scholars tend to ignore the fulcrum of these beliefs and this ceremonial. Alone in their cultural milieu, the Hebrews developed a unique theology of presence. They worshipped a God whose disclosure or proximity always had a certain quality of elusiveness. Indeed, for most generations of the biblical age, Israel prayed to a *Deus Absconditus*. *

In the celebration of her festivals, Israel commemorated the intervention of the Deity in her past, and she anticipated his manifestation in her future, at the end of history. Standing ceremonially between sacred protology and sacred eschatology, she summoned the beginning and the end of time into a liturgical present, but she could remember only a handful of ancestors, prophets, and poets who had actually perceived the

*The expression *Deus Absconditus*, although consecrated by usage, is unfortunate because it uses a passive participial adjective. The Hebrew original means "a self-concealing God" (Isa. 45: 15).

immediacy of God. The rank and file of her people experienced divine closeness by cultic procuration. Nevertheless, Israel's cultus produced a mode of communion which appears to have been unparalleled in the religions of the ancient world, for it implied a religious reality of a special character, which became semantically associated with the word "faith."

Old Testament religion differed from the religions of classical Egypt, Asia Anterior, and the Mediterranean world precisely because it manifested itself through a unique complex of interaction between cultus and faith.

I

Two main trends have appeared in Old Testament science during the past fifty years. One is represented by the *Myth-and-Ritual* school of Britain and Scandinavia, the other by the *Heilsgeschichte* or *Salvation History* school of Germany and Switzerland. The day has perhaps come when we may try to evaluate the work of both schools and so to indicate eventual developments.

On the one hand, the Myth-and-Ritual school has sharpened special issues which early pioneers in the history of comparative religions, at the dawn of the twentieth century, raised more or less at random. For example, it has called necessary attention to the numinous aspect of Hebrew psychology, the sense of corporate personality, the magical aspects of blessing and curse, the objective quality of speech as ritual, the cultic significance of sexuality, the power of royal ideology, the importance of the feasts, the function of diviners and cultic prophets, and so on. In brief, the Myth-and-Ritual school has stressed the elements of cultural continuity which tie Israel to her Semitic and Egyptian environment.

In spite of its contributions, however, the Myth-and-Ritual school has proved unable to discern those intrinsic features

which set Israel's religion apart from the ritual practices and beliefs of Asia Anterior in the Bronze and Iron Ages. It has especially failed to detect those elements which explain the survival of that religion in Judaism and Christianity. An examination of the Hebraic understanding of divine presence reveals that the claims of the Myth-and-Ritual school have to be seriously curtailed.

On the other hand, the *Heilsgeschichte* school has rightly stressed the importance of the covenant for the study of Old Testament religion. It has shown the part played in the national life by the cultic recitals of the "Mighty Acts of God"-*Gesta Dei* or *Magnalia* Yahweh-which brought Israel into historical existence and promoted in her midst a historical awareness. Yet, while the covenant was perhaps "renewed" in some festive celebrations during the twelve centuries of the biblical age, there is little, if any, evidence that covenant consciousness constituted the determinative trait of Israel's religion. It is even doubtful whether the covenant motif provides an adequate principle for the organic presentation of Israel's faith and cultus. The diversity of her responses to the sense of her destiny in the course of a thousand years can hardly be fitted within the reality of covenant consciousness. The notion of covenant is fluid; it ranges from a conditional and historical character (Sinai covenant) to an unconditional and mythical significance (Davidic covenant and priestly covenant). In addition, covenant is conspicuously absent from the wisdom literature of Israel. To explain Israel's religion in terms of covenant may well reflect an anachronistic and alien attitude.

The motif of divine presence, however, unlike that of covenant, constitutes an element of religious homogeneity which respects historical complexity without ignoring coherence and specificity. It is the peculiarly Hebraic theology of presence which explains the importance of covenant in Israel's religion, and not the converse. The motif of presence is primary, and that of covenant is secondary.

II

An inquiry into the Hebraic theology of presence will depend closely on the results of Myth-and-Ritual research, on the one hand, and *Heilsgeschichte* interpretation, on the other. Both methods have shown correctly that religious ideas are not to be understood apart from cultic practices. No historian of Hebrew religion can permit himself to relegate the themes of worship to some appendage on "institutions." Israel knew that her God was both present and elusive whenever she performed her ceremonial of adoration. Moses and individual prophets, priests, psalmists and wise men may have mediated the knowledge of God to the masses, but their activities were always directly or indirectly related to *cultus*. It may be said that in Israel there would not have been a knowledge of God without the service of God. Theology was bred in celebration. *Theologia* could not be separated from *Theolatreia*.

At the same time, ceremonial proved to be an ambiguous reality for Israel. One may speak of Hebrew *cultus* at once as the matrix of theological responsibility and religious stagnation, of ethical alertness and moral corruption, of psychological daring and regression, of sociological impetus and disintegration. Yet, *cultus* was capable of stimulating a faith which in its turn could arouse agents of reform and of renaissance in almost every generation. To recognize the centrality of the theology of presence and the integral mutuality of *cultus* and faith in ancient Israel opens up the possibility of a new approach to the study of biblical religion.

III

In the twentieth century, theologians have again stressed the relevance of the Old Testament for Christianity and thus raised once more the problem of the relationship between the Old

Testament and the New. Exploration into the interpenetrative character of *cultus* and faith in Israel may furnish not only a principle of coherence for the understanding of the Old Testament religion but also a solution to the problem of continuity and discontinuity from the Old to the New Testament. It was a new theology of presence, drawn from the Hebraic complex of *cultus* and faith, which presided over the emergence of Christianity from Judaism.

The public life of Jesus lasted only a few months, probably from the late spring of the year 28-29 to the early spring of the following year, 29-30. The church was born when the disciples of Jesus were transformed by their visions of the risen Lord. These visions included not only the appearances reported in the Synoptics (Matt. 28:1 1-20, Luke 24:13-49) or the Fourth Gospel (John 20:1-21:25) but also those reported by Paul (1 Cor. 15:4-7), culminating in his own experience on the road to Damascus (1 Cor. 15:8; cf. Acts 9:1-8).

For Christians of the first generation, divine reality was mediated no longer through the temple of Jerusalem but through a living reality—the person of the risen Lord. The ancient mode of Hebraic presence was radically transformed by the experience of the resurrection. The stories of the appearances were couched in a literary form reminiscent of that of the Hebraic theophany. Stephen and Paul developed a theology of presence in which the temple ideology was applied to the spiritual body of the risen Jesus and thus, to the church. Like the prophets and psalmists of Israel, the early Christians waited for the final epiphany conceived as the *parousia*.

It is probable that the first attempts to interpret the person of Jesus were not molded by the form and content of the Messianic prophecies. The traditional figure of the Messiah may have proved to be embarrassing to the early church since it was suggestive of political, military, and racially exclusive manifestations of power. Rather, the Christians of the first genera-

tion sought to express their remembrance of Jesus in terms which they borrowed from the Hebraic theology of presence. The Messianic imagery, when applied to Jesus, was radically transformed and interpreted by the motif of cultic presence. This process of reinterpretation appears in the structure of Mark, the synoptic traditions on the Transfiguration, the birth and infancy in Luke, the sermon of Stephen in Acts, the allusions of Paul to the New Temple, the prologue to the Fourth Gospel, and the epistle to the Hebrews.

IV

A genuinely "biblical" theology may arise from a study of the Hebraic theology of presence. It should be neither a theology of the Old Testament nor a theology of the New Testament, for it has to free itself from the historically offensive approach of many traditional Christians who have tended to regard the Old Testament merely as a manual of Messianic predictions embedded within a repository of legal requirements of a racially and ritually particularistic nature.

In both its traditional and modern forms, Christianity has too often distorted the problem of the relationship between synagogue and church. Actually, the Hebrew Bible occupies a complex position in relation to Judaism as well as to Christianity. The Old Testament is not simply a Jewish book. To be sure, it was through the agency of Judaism that the books of the Hebrew Bible were collected, edited, and preserved, but Judaism did not appear in history before the Babylonian exile. As an ethnic religion, Judaism was born when the Judahites who had survived the destruction of the kingdom of Judah in 587 B.C. were transplanted to Lower Mesopotamia and elsewhere in the Babylonian Empire. Unlike the Israelites of the Northern Kingdom, who ethnically and culturally became lost in the Assyrian

Empire after 722 B.C., the Judahites resisted sociological and religious assimilation to a polytheistic culture and thus became the Jews (in Hebrew, *Yehudim*, "men of Judah," a word which came to designate the members of the exilic community and their descendants).

While it is true that most of the books of the Hebrew Bible were written down and published by exilic and postexilic Jews, the core of most of these books was still in the form of an oral-although, fixed-tradition which went back to the early days of Israel and Judah. The bulk of what became the Hebrew Bible represents the faith which created Judaism, but it is not the product of Judaism. The Jews transmitted the Hebrew Scriptures and produced the manuscripts, but their sacred library reflects Mosaic and prophetic Yahwism far more than it reflects the ritual cultus of the Second Temple. From the standpoint of its oral tradition, the Old Testament is more a Hebraic than a Jewish document, for the core of its constituent material existed in a fixed form before the birth of Judaism (sixth century B.C.).

One of the theological issues which has not yet been squarely faced by either Jews or Christians involves the problem of the relationship which binds the Hebrew Bible and post-Maccabean, rabbinical Judaism on the one hand, and the Hebrew Bible and Christianity on the other. An inquiry into the interaction of cultus and faith in ancient Hebrew religion may throw a clearer light on the dialogue between synagogue and church.

V

In a time of rapprochement between Catholic and Protestant forms of Christianity, such a study may also contribute to the development of an ecumenical theology of the Bible. It might remind the conservative wings of the Eastern Orthodox, Ro-

man Catholic, and Anglican communions that, without the radical risk of an insecure and yet secure faith, the church is dead; and it should at the same time warn idealistic, moralistic, sentimentalist, subjectivist, and activist Protestants that faith cannot live or be maintained from generation to generation without the act of sacramental adoration.

VI

The faith of the ancient Hebrews found one of its earliest expressions in the dancing, playing, and singing of Miriam, the sister of Moses, after the passage of the Sea of Reeds (Exod. 15:21). It represents what G. van der Leeuw called "the holy play between God and man."^{*}

The popular quatrain may thus assume a significance which extends beyond its quaintness:

On Miriam's dance
And Mary's grief
Hangs all the brief
Of Christian stance.

Although they were separated by twelve centuries, the dance of Miriam and the grief of Mary were not far apart ritually and theologically; for, when the temple was empty and Jesus was a derelict on the cross, the Hebraic motif of the elusive God developed into the Hebraic motif of the pathetic God.

The cultivation and the transmission of the faith, with its inescapable discipline of articulate thinking and moral service, springs from the central element of biblical religion, which is the elusiveness of presence in the midst of liturgical fidelity.

^{*}G. van der Leeuw, *Sacred and Profane Beauty: The Holy in Art*, tr. by D. E. Green (New York, 1963), p. 265.

1

Cultus and Faith in Biblical Research

Over the past several decades, Old and New Testament scholars have stressed more than ever before the importance of **cultus** for the understanding of the birth of biblical religion. The complexity of the interaction which apparently operates between faith-with its theological, although poetic, formulation-and the ceremonies of worship has been the object of considerable attention on the part of biblical critics in modern times.

THREE REVOLUTIONS IN BIBLICAL SCIENCE

Not one but three revolutions have taken place in biblical science during the past hundred years, and these came about as a result of three related approaches to the interpretation of the text: literary criticism, form-critical analysis, and traditio-historical method. Present trends indicate an attempt to correlate these different approaches, as well as the emergence of varying emphases on what may be called “rhetorical exegesis,” “redaction criticism,” and “canonical exegesis.” The combination

of these factors points to the rise of a new form of biblical theology.

Literary Criticism

The first revolution occurred in the nineteenth century, when the use of literary criticism, born from the humanism of the Renaissance, destroyed the traditional views of a divinely dictated Scripture and conferred upon the literatures of Israel and of the early church a historical concreteness which had been largely unsuspected in earlier times.¹

In 1876-77, Julius Wellhausen published a series of articles—the culmination of two centuries of meticulous research*—on the composition of the Hexateuch, in which he maintained that the first six books of the Bible (Pentateuch and Joshua) grew slowly over a period of five or six centuries through the selective editing of four main documents.³ As a literary critic, Wellhausen successfully brought attention to the composite character of the Pentateuch and Joshua. As a religious historian, however, he reflected the Hegelian influence of W. Vatke (1835) and viewed Israel's religion in evolutionary terms, tracing its rise from primitive animism during the patriarchal period to lofty ethical monotheism during the exile in Babylon (sixth century B.C.). Wellhausen the critic should be differentiated from Wellhausen the historian.⁴

Moreover, some of Wellhausen's followers have relined the details of the documentary hypothesis so minutely⁵ and emended the Hebrew text so freely⁶ that the Wellhausen school, in all its aspects, including its literary conclusions, has fallen into disrepute. Confusion should be avoided, therefore, not only between Wellhausen the critic and Wellhausen the historian, but also between the master and the epigonists. Today, the "documentary hypothesis" in a revised form, which conjectures four strata of oral tradition rather than four written "documents." still stands.⁷

Form-Critical Analysis

The second revolution came at the beginning of the twentieth century with the use of an altered method of literary criticism known as form-critical analysis. Its principles are not basically different from those of what the French call *explication de texte*.

Modern archaeology, which had been inaugurated by Bonaparte in Egypt in 1798 and Paul-Emile Botta in Mesopotamia in 1842, brought to light from the ancient Near East thousands of literary texts as well as artifacts, but it was not until 1880 or 1890 that these texts were deciphered and published in sufficient number to have an impact on biblical interpreters.

Starting in 1895, Hermann Gunkel, followed by Alfred Jeremias, Hugo Cressmann, and others, attempted to place the Old Testament literature in its newly discovered environment.⁸ They did not reject the literary achievements of Wellhausen, but they insisted upon the need to supplement and correct at numerous points the method of literary criticism,⁹ through the study of comparative literature and comparative religion.

By investigating Israel's epic narratives and lyric poems in the light of their Egyptian and Mesopotamian parallels, Gunkel was led to pay special attention to rhetorical forms, some of which appeared to be common to Israel and her Near Eastern neighbors. More clearly than Wellhausen,¹⁰ he discerned that oral patterns, literary genres or formal types (*Gattungen*) had acquired a substantial stability long before they had reached a written stage. He sought to place every unit of oral tradition in a precise "situation in life" (*Sitz im Leben*), and he discovered that in almost every instance such a life situation was related to the cultus.¹¹

It was in the shrines of Israel and later at the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem that the oral traditions of the Patriarchs, of the Exodus, and of the Conquest of the Land were recited and gradually fixed within the tribal and national memory.¹² Gunkel

and his successors have attempted to recapture the spokenness (*Gesprochenheit*) of the biblical literature.¹³ Actually, one might even refer to the “singingness” of the literature at its origin as well as in the various phases of its oral transmission, although the cantillating melodies used by the ancient Hebrews are practically lost to modern knowledge.¹⁴ Today, various examples of the application of the method reveal that the analysis of form may not be abstractly divorced from the study of content.¹⁵ A poet’s personal intention and inspiration may no longer be brushed aside. Formal patterns do not preclude originality. Today, literary criticism and form-critical analysis are viewed as complementing and correcting each other. In addition, new interest in the dynamics of speech indicates the emergence of a method which may be called “rhetorical criticism.”¹⁶

Traditio-Historical Method

The third revolution was brought about by Scandinavian scholars, especially Sigmund Mowinckel (1922–1924), Johannes Pedersen (1926–1940), and Ivan Engnell (1941–1945) when they initiated what is now known as the traditio-historical method of exegesis.¹⁷ Like form-critical analysts, traditio-historical critics have sought to recapture the oral traditions of Israel which underlie the written text, and to rediscover the cultic situation which gave shape to these traditions.¹⁸ For example, they have tried to show that the narratives of the Exodus were based on the *muthos* or cultic *legenda* of an early form of the Passover celebration,¹⁹ while they maintained that the ethical decalogue originated as an introit ritual at the Jerusalem sanctuary.²⁰

Unlike Gunkel and his direct successors, however, a number of traditio-historical exegetes have tended to disregard the results of Pentateuchal criticism and have looked at Israel’s literature in its quasi-totality as the product of postexilic Judaism.²¹ Furthermore, their concern for comparative religion has led

them to assign primary importance to the practices and beliefs of the masses.** As a result, their picture of early Israel's religion has conformed largely to the pattern of ancient Near Eastern rituals.²³ At the same time, some traditio-historical critics made outstanding contributions to the study of the prophetic literature.²⁴ Not only the cycles of prophetic legends, from Samuel to Elisha, but also the later anthologies of prophetic discourses and poems ascribed to the so-called literary prophets were in all probability written down after years of tradition orally preserved in the shadow of a sanctuary²⁵ and for the purpose of cultic activity.²⁶ To be sure, some prophets polemicized violently against the abuse of cultus, but they always functioned within the cultic situation of a sanctuary. On the whole, both the rhetorical forms²⁷ they used and the content of their message reflected the ceremonial of the feasts in the kingdoms of Israel and especially Judah.²⁸

Thanks to the pioneering work of Gunkel²⁹ and of Mowinkel,³⁰ the Psalter is generally viewed today as an anthology, not of lyric poems and meditations on the spiritual life, but of cultic hymns and laments which correspond closely to the various moments of the ceremonial.³¹

Besides the Psalms, other books within the Hagiographa reveal an intimate affinity with cultus. The books of Chronicles, Ezra, and Nehemiah are dominated by the concerns of the Second Temple, when the splendor of the festivals in Zion became the rallying point of Judaism. It is not impossible that some of the *Megilloth*, or "Five Scrolls," which are still chanted at the feasts of modern Judaism found their oral inception in cultic activity. This appears to be the case at least for Lamentations, possibly for the Song of Songs and Ruth. Even the book of Esther, which in its present form belongs to the Hellenistic Age, probably reflects an early spring festival of the ancient Semitic world.

One may even propose that the poem of Job was first sung

and even pseudo-dramatically acted out in Babylonia during the early years of the Exile by a prophetically influenced wise man who sought to revive the faith of his fellow deportees. In an era when the autumn festival could no longer be observed ritually since temple and altar were no more, the Jobian poet experimented with a paracultic celebration in which the problem of theodicy was displaced by a theatrical representation of the New Year theophany.³³

Proverbs and Ecclesiastes alone seem to have sprung from a noncultic environment, although the former includes fragments which partake of the hymnic form.

In brief, not only the canonizing process³⁴ of the three main parts of the Hebrew Bible (Law, Prophets, and Hagiographa) but also the force which led to the editing and the publishing of most of their component books depended chiefly upon the cultic factor. Such a view of the literature of the Bible has had a profound effect upon the historians of Israel's religion. It calls for a re-emphasis on canonical exegesis which sees the growth of the authoritative collections in the context of the cultic and cultural history.³⁵

THE MYTH-AND-RITUAL SCHOOL

Biblical scholarship has been increasingly aware of the intricate mutuality of interaction which has linked cultus and faith in ancient Israel and early Judaism.³⁶ As the narratives of the dialogues between the Deity and individuals of exceptional stature like Abraham, Moses, and Jeremiah were examined in the context of the communal act of worship which preserved them, the biographical aspect of revelation through inspired men of God tended to lose its traditional significance. At the same time, two questions have continually emerged from the discussion: First, what is the origin of Hebrew cultus? Is it a sociologi-

cal phenomenon which grew anonymously over the ages, or was it indeed devised by special mediators? Second, what is the nature of Hebrew ritual? Does it assume the character of a drama endowed with objective power, as in the nature cults of the ancient Near East, or should it be viewed as a eucharistic act—a rendering of thanks?

To these two questions, which are related, conflicting answers have been offered. Traditio-historical exegetes have stressed the conformity of Israel's worship to Near Eastern patterns of "myth and ritual," whereas form critics have generally maintained that Hebrew cultus—essentially a dramatic recital of *Heilsgeschichte*, or "salvation history"—was based on the memory of distinct events which took place in the nation's past.

In their efforts to go beyond the fragmentariness of the written record, traditio-historical critics have sought to reconstruct the history of the oral traditions in the light of the cultic and cultural picture of the ancient Near East. As early as 1912, Paul Volz conjectured that the worshippers of Yahweh, not unlike the devotees of Marduk in Babylon, celebrated a New Year festival,³⁷ although no explicit reference to such a celebration could be found in the literary documents before the time of the Exile (Ezek. 40:1). On the "day of Yahweh," the starting point of the yearly cycle, Israel hailed the epiphany of her God. The "head of the year" (*rosh ha-shanah*) was cultically inserted within the myth of creation and sacramentally identified with "the beginning" (*reshith*) of time (cf. Gen. 1:1). Yahweh was exalted above all deities in a ceremony which assumed the amplitude of a cosmic drama.

In reaction to Wellhausen, who had viewed the origin of the feasts of early Israel as purely agrarian, Volz concluded that the annual festival of Yahweh was not a harvest celebration but a historical rite held in honor of Yahweh, the warrior God.³⁸

Independently of Volz, Sigmund Mowinckel formulated a strikingly similar theory a few years later.³⁹ On the day of the

New Year, the ark was brought to Zion in a solemn procession, and Yahweh was enthroned as King in his temple, just as *Marduk* was solemnly enthroned in his Babylon sanctuary.⁴⁰ Such a ritual left its traces not only in the Psalter (Ps. 132) but also in the cultic legends of Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6, 1 Kings 8).⁴¹ When the gates of the shrine opened (Ps. 24), the divine King made his royal entrance and was ceremonially ushered toward his throne. The ritual shout “Yahweh has become king!”⁴² constituted the chief response of the participants (Pss. 93, 96, 97, 99).

According to Volz and Mowinckel, the celebration of the New Year festival offers a cultic situation which explains the origin of all the myths, legends, and sagas of ancient Israel. On the occasion of “the day of Yahweh,” Israel looked at her national birth in the context of the creation of the world. The New Year festival was not only the convergence point of her cultic memory, it was also the situation which provided the source of her hope. The celebration of “the day of Yahweh” was both protological and eschatological. Its liturgy called for the recapitulation and the anticipation of Yahweh’s triumphs over his enemies—forces of evil in the universe and tyrants in history. Yahweh the creator was also Yahweh the heroic warrior in the past and the ultimate conqueror of all powers of disruption in the future, as well as the judge of all nations.⁴³

In the light of this hypothesis, Israel’s cultus should not be considered as a merely rhetorical exteriorization of a religious idea. It constitutes a technique by which an event is symbolically, hence actually, repeated, while a hope is enacted in a mimetic form ahead of its fulfillment. Cultus is a sacramental rite for the worshippers who participate in the life and power of the Deity. The worshippers receive a new existence. They are recreated.⁴⁴

Showing in detail the “primitive” character of Hebrew psychology, Johannes Pedersen pointed out many affinities which linked the Hebrew notions of soul, blessing, peace, guilt, curse, sacrifice, atonement, etc., with those of the ancient Semites in

general.⁴⁵ A few years later in Uppsala, Ivan Engnell applied a similar method to his examination of the place occupied by sacral kingship in the political and cultic life of the Western Semites,⁴⁶ especially the proto-Canaanites of Ugarit.⁴⁷

The Scandinavian trends were closely followed or paralleled by a number of British scholars who had been influenced by anthropological studies on archaic mentality and folklore, especially those of William Robertson Smith and Sir James Frazer.⁴⁸ In 1933, Samuel H. Hooke edited a collection of essays on *Myth and Ritual*. He maintained that a cultural pattern was common to all the populations of the ancient Near East, thereby implying that the religion of the Hebrews was by no means unique.⁴⁹ Further studies in the same direction have included the notable contribution of Aubrey R. Johnson, "The Role of the King in the Jerusalem Cultus."⁵⁰ The movement was reaffirmed in Hooke's subsequent collections⁵¹ and other volumes.⁵²

The hypothesis of a ritual pattern to which all the cults of Egypt and Asia Anterior conformed for centuries was attacked from several quarters, especially by Henri Frankfort, Martin Noth, and Hans-Joachim Kraus.⁵³ It seems now clear that the Scandinavian and British schools have erred in stressing the primary and, at times, exclusive importance of the nature myths in Israel's worship. More specifically, the Myth-and-Ritual scholars, fascinated with the examples of cultic syncretism which abound in the biblical record,⁵⁴ seem to have paid scant attention to the cultic traditions themselves, which kept alive, not the memory of cyclical myths of nature but the recital of distinct happenings in history.⁵⁵

The Myth-and-Ritual scholars failed to take seriously the problem created by the observable fact that Israel, unlike her Egyptian or Semitic neighbors, has always justified or explained her seasonal feasts by means of historical events, however embellished these may have become through the process of mythologizing the cultic *Zegenda*.⁵⁶

THE STORY-OF-SALVATION SCHOOL

While traditio-historical exegetes conducted their examination of Semitic syncretism as it manifested itself chiefly during the times of the Judges (thirteenth to eleventh B.C.) and of the Monarchy (eleventh to sixth centuries B.C.), the school of Gunkel went on to investigate the growth of the literary sources of the Pentateuch and the form of the oral traditions which apparently stood behind them.

In 1934, Albrecht Alt analyzed the numerous laws which are now incorporated in the Pentateuch;⁵⁷ he distinguished between two types of legal material: casuistic jurisprudence, on the one hand, which grew out of collections of judiciary precedents,⁵⁸ and apodictic law, on the other hand, which is clearly independent of trial courts and associated with sanctuary ceremonial.⁵⁹ Alt was led to identify the cultic setting of the apodictic law with the seven-year celebration of the feast of the Tabernacles (*Sukkoth*), when "all Israel"—that is, the representatives of all the tribes assembled together—renewed their covenant with Yahweh.⁶⁰

Instead of stressing, with Volz and Mowinckel, the exclusive significance of a hypothetical New Year with the rite of Yahweh's enthronement, form critics of the Alt school, particularly Gerhard von Rad⁶¹ and Martin Noth,⁶² conjectured the existence of a national ceremony during which the memories of Israel's origins were ritually reenacted, or at least recited, and were thus transformed into a liturgical present.⁶³

According to this view, it was the twelve-tribe league, periodically gathered "in the presence of Yahweh" for the celebration of the feast which provided the situation in life needed for the articulation of the clan sagas into a unified epic.

As von Rad has shown,⁶⁴ the liturgy of the harvest thanksgiving in all probability represents the earliest stage of Israel's adaptation to an agrarian culture.⁶⁵ This liturgy reveals the

Hebrew concern, not for the mythical fertility of the soil, but for the intervention of Yahweh in history:

My father was a nomadic Aramaean, exhausted from wandering and ready to perish.⁶⁶ And he went down to Egypt and sojourned there. And he became a great nation, powerful and populous. And the Egyptians dealt with us in an evil way, and they afflicted us and laid upon us hard labor. And we cried unto Yahweh, the God of our fathers, and Yahweh heard our voice, and he saw our affliction, and our toil, and our oppression; and Yahweh brought us forth out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and with an outstretched arm, and with great terribleness, and with signs, and with wonders. And he brought us into this place, and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. And now, behold, I have brought the first fruit of the soil, which thou, O Yahweh, hast given me! (Deut. 26:5–10).

The changes of pronouns in this archaic prayer reveal the most characteristic element of Hebrew cultus. The historical past is made present through the ritual act and its chanted formula (*hieros logos*). In addition, the numinous powers of the soil are not in the slightest way deified (as they were in the Canaanite cult). The motivation of the act of worship is pure gratitude. The Deity is acknowledged as the sovereign Lord of history as well as of nature.⁶⁷

It is possible that this historical credo served as a nucleus for the elaborate “salvation history” (*Heilsgeschichte*) which articulated in consecutive order several clan traditions regarding the *Gesta Dei per Hebraeos* that were recited at various shrines and feasts.⁶⁸ While von Rad concluded that the Exodus traditions were originally unrelated to those of the Sinai theophany, studies of the Hittite treaties and other legal documents from the regions of the Upper Euphrates⁶⁹ have thrown new light on the Hebraic covenant formulae.⁷⁰ They have also led to the conclusion that the Exodus narratives of deliverance from Egypt were not originally separate from the cultic *legenda* of the covenant theophany.⁷¹

According to recent research, Israel's cultus, unlike that of other nations of the Near East, was both motivated and shaped by the memory of historical events. Mythical motifs, when they appeared at all, were used only as a poetic mode of describing the events and relating their significance to a theological framework of cosmic creation. This seems to have been the case, significantly, in the *Zegendu* of the Sea of Reeds.⁷² The earliest traditions of the Pentateuch did not historicize nature myths. On the contrary, they used—and sparingly—a number of mythical features in describing historical events. From the start, nature was demythologized by a theology of transcendence over the natural elements.⁷³ The God who gave birth to Israel in history was the same Yahweh who controlled the world. His historical activity could therefore be described in terms of creative activity.⁷⁴

Form-critical exegetes of the Salvation-History school may well have been correct when they concluded that the festival of the covenant was already celebrated during the slow infiltration of the Hebrews through the high valleys of Canaan (thirteenth to twelfth centuries),⁷⁵ and that it constituted the primary force in the process of preserving, organizing, and shaping the memories of Israel's origins, beginning with the patriarchal sojourns in the land and concluding with the institution of the twelve-tribe league at Shechem.⁷⁶ Such a view implies the historicity of a cultural and cultic disruption in the time of the ancestors, at a given moment of history. It indicates that the fathers renounced, through one act or several acts of decision, the nature rites which prevailed among the Western Semites in the second millennium B.C. It calls for the reasonable assumption that the specifically Hebraic form of a "God-in-history" cultus had a historical beginning.⁷⁷ Significantly, the traditions concerning the patriarchs offer a sequence of cultic *Zegendu* which precisely depict such a cultural disruption and such a cultic innovation. More significantly still, all these cultic *Zegenda* pos-

sess two elements in common: They are anchored in stories of epiphanic visitations to the fathers, and they culminate in the traditions of Moses and of the Sinai theophany.

It would thus appear that the memories of the covenant at Sinai, important as they may have been in developing Israel's sense of historical destiny and in conferring upon her the awareness of being "a holy nation" (Exod. 19:6), were in turn dependent upon a prior reality—the impact of the "perception" of divine presence on the motivation of the fathers.

MODERN TECHNIQUES OF NEW TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION

In several ways, New Testament research has been parallel to that of the Hebrew Bible, since both of them grew out of the concern which Renaissance humanists and Protestant reformers had shown for the authenticity, origin, composition, and meaning of the biblical documents.

Literary criticism of the gospels, however, received its modern impetus chiefly in reaction to the rationalistic caricatures of Jesus.⁷⁸ The problem of the Synoptic Gospels had long been known to interpreters, but the matter of their similarities, differences, and contradictions became the object of intensive investigation.⁷⁹ Since the middle of the nineteenth century, the majority of literary critics have subscribed to the hypothesis of Mark's anteriority, of an additional common source to both Matthew and Luke and of the specific traditions peculiar to each of them.⁸⁰

As in the case of the Pentateuch, gospel criticism was at first largely confined to the search for sources, but the method of form-critical analysis, introduced fifty years ago by Martin Dibelius⁸¹ and Rudolph Bultmann,⁸² has attempted to recapture the oral tradition which linked the life of Jesus to the writing of the documents.⁸³ Investigation of other New Testament books,

especially the Johannine Gospel and the Apocalypse, has shown the determining part which synagogue and church worship has played in the growth not only of the gospels but also of most of the early Christian literature.⁸⁴

Literary criticism, form-critical analysis, and traditio-historical criticism continue to be used jointly, and the revival of interest in redaction criticism points to the continuous need for an articulate interpretation of the growth of theological thinking among the Christians of the New Testament times.

COVENANT AND PRESENCE IN THE HISTORY OF BIBLICAL RELIGION

Religion is far too complex a social and individual phenomenon to be reduced to a single principle of determining forces.⁸⁵ It is especially precarious to speak of "biblical religion." On the one hand, many rites and beliefs were inherited, although radically transformed, from the ancient Near East.⁸⁶ On the other hand, the "religion" of the Hebrews, the Israelites, the Judahites, the postexilic Jews, and the early Christians evolved significantly in the course of twelve centuries under changing conditions of economics, technology, sociology, politics, and culture in general.⁸⁷

The word "biblical" itself is ambiguous, for, although both Jews and Christians hold a common allegiance to the Hebrew Bible, they do not derive from it the same interpretation of life, of the world, or of religion. Jews have usually read the Torah, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa (*Tanak*) chiefly through the lenses of the Talmud, while Christians have traditionally approached what they call "the Old Testament" in the light of "the New Testament."

The expression "the Old Testament," which represents an abbreviation of the title, "The books of the Old Covenant," has a Christian origin of a relatively late date.⁸⁸ It was because

Christians of the first generation, perhaps following the example of the Jewish sectarians of Qumran,⁸⁹ thought of themselves as a people waiting for “the new covenant” announced by the prophet Jeremiah⁹⁰ that they came to refer to Israel as the people of the old covenant.⁹¹

While the first-century church, with the possible exception of the author of the epistle to the Hebrews,⁹² spoke of the new covenant in eschatological terms,⁹³ medieval and modern Christendom generally settled down in a mood of “realized eschatology.” The expression “the new covenant” lost the sharpness of its futurity and came to designate a *fait accompli*. The era of the new covenant was identified with the Christian dispensation of the divine economy within temporal history.⁹⁴ The era of the old covenant was therefore associated with the earlier and obsolete period of divine concern for ancient Israel. This attitude displays a certain amount of Christian presumption which is understandably offensive to modern Judaism.⁹⁵

Recent studies on the importance of the covenant in Hebrew religion have been useful, but there is now an urgent need to go beyond them. Significant as the covenant ritual certainly was for ancient Israel at critical moments in her history and for Judaism at the birth of its hierocratic structure under Ezra in the fourth century B.C., this motif alone cannot provide an adequate principle either for grasping the complexity of Israel’s cultus and faith during the centuries of their organic growth or for producing a coherent account of the emergence of Christianity.⁹⁶

1. The diversity of Israel’s responses to the sense of her historical destiny from the time of her national origin to the dawn of the church explodes the notion of the Hebrew covenant conceived as a single and homogeneous rite or ideology. There are at least two distinct and contradictory theologies of the covenant in Hebrew religion.⁹⁷

First, the Sinai covenant, mediated under Moses,⁹⁸ and renewed at Shechem under Joshua,⁹⁹ was conditional upon national behavior and was therefore historical and nonmythical. Its validity was dependent upon the cultic and ethical obedience of the people as they moved through history.¹⁰⁰ Its Deuteronomic recasting led to the reform of Josiah in Jerusalem (622 B.C.). It was the Josianic ceremony of covenant renewal (2 Kings 22:1—23:24) which sharpened the conditional character of the covenant and emphasized its historical relativity. The Sinai covenant was endowed with conditionality and historicity.¹⁰¹

Secondly, the Davidic covenant, although rooted in the Hebron traditions on Abraham,¹⁰² reflected the Canaanite ideology of divine kingship and the Jebusite myth of the navel of the earth at Jerusalem.¹⁰³ In contrast to the Sinai covenant as represented by the early traditions and the great prophets, the Davidic covenant was related to a monarch and his dynasty. It was endowed with a quality of unconditional and eternal validity and was therefore of a suprahistorical and mythical character.¹⁰⁴

In the exilic age, the Sinai covenant was reinterpreted in the light of the Davidic covenant,¹⁰⁵ and it became in its turn an unconditional, eternal, and mythical reality which extended to the people of Israel as a whole.¹⁰⁶ The self-understanding of Judaism as an eternal people is to be traced less to the Sinai covenant of the early traditions than to the Davidic covenant. It partakes of Canaanite mythology rather than Yahwistic theology.

2. While there are explicit allusions to covenant in the Hebrew Bible and in the writings of the early church, covenant consciousness did not apparently dominate the preoccupations of the religious leaders of Israel, except Joshua in the twelfth century, Josiah in the seventh, and Ezra in the fourth. Outside of Deuteronomy and a few psalms¹⁰⁷ among the many devoted to the Jerusalem cultus and the Davidic monarchy, the men-

tion of covenant is quite sporadic in the preexilic literature. The word is practically absent from Amos, Isaiah, Micah, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and Nahum, although it is found in the traditions concerning Elijah and in the poems of Hosea.¹⁰⁸ In spite of the Deuteronomic reform,¹⁰⁹ it plays a relatively minor part in Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Second Isaiah, except in an eschatological sense.¹¹⁰

Though the message of the prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries was predicated on the conviction that the Sinai covenant had been violated, and though many of their speeches reflect the structural patterns of covenant formulation, the thrust of their religious passion and the source of their interpretation of history lay elsewhere. They were grasped by the presence of Yahweh and they were animated by the dynamics of his word.¹¹¹

The sapiential literature assigned no role whatever to the ideology of the covenant. The court officials and other artists in royal wisdom at Jerusalem appeared to have taken the Davidic covenant for granted. Neither covenant thinking nor covenant ceremonial belonged to the realm of their intellectual or spiritual interests.¹¹²

The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha practically ignored the notion.¹¹³ The Dead Sea Scrolls passed it by, although the Damascus Document made limited use of it.¹¹⁴ The Rabbinical Literature hardly mentioned it.¹¹⁵ Outside of one saying that found its way into a textual tradition of the Lukan Account of the Last Supper, the covenant is entirely absent from the Synoptic traditions of the teaching of Jesus, and it plays a merely accessorial part in the preaching and writing of the early Christians.¹¹⁶

In brief, to explain Israel's religion or the birth of the church in terms of covenant is to ignore (a) its absence from a large part of the Bible, and (b) the pluralism of covenant interpretations in Israel, early Judaism, and even primitive Christianity.

3. To look at covenant as the determining factor of continuity from Hebraism to Christianity is also to confuse the means with the end, for the rite and ideology of covenant are dependent upon the prior reality of presence. The goal of Hebraic worship is to remember and to anticipate the *kairos* of the divine encounter, and the essence of the ancient feasts is to celebrate the *mo'ed* or "moment"—either past or future—of the divine manifestation of proximity. The aim of Hebrew faith is to live now on the strength of the promises made by Yahweh to the fathers and to act in full expectation of the final epiphany. At best, the ritual and legal structure of covenant offers a tool, original and effective as it may be,¹¹⁷ by which the recollection and the hope of the presence are mediated to the rank and file of the people and transmitted to posterity from generation to generation.

4. Finally, to speak of Israel's religion as that of the old covenant reflects an unconscious adherence to the patristic and medieval bias of theological anti-Semitism. To present the birth of the church as a function of the new covenant is to confuse eschatological hope with real-estate appropriation, promise with earthly possession, and vocation with presumed prerogative. It is to ignore the survival of Judaism for the past nineteen centuries and to brush aside the mystery of Israel in history.

5. To be sure, the significance of the intensive research which has taken place on the covenant motif in recent decades should not in any way be underestimated, for it was indeed in the context of covenant memorial and covenant hope that prophets and psalmists expressed their faith in the purpose of creation and formulated their theology of history.¹¹⁸ At critical moments of the nation's life, it was through the covenant renewal ceremonies of Joshua, Josiah, and Ezra that Israel, Judah, and early Judaism respectively maintained their sense of continuity. The covenant ritual enabled them to overcome un-

precedented and disruptive situations of political extremity.¹¹⁹ Nevertheless, the covenant ritual or ideology fails to explain the specificity of Israel's religion among the cults of the ancient Near East or the peculiar quality of the Christian gospel within the religious syncretism of the Mediterranean world at the dawn of the Roman empire. Although the distinctiveness of biblical religion may not be affirmed without qualification, Israel stood obstinately apart from her environment on at least one score: She entertained a unique theology of presence. She knew that her God was always free from the human techniques of ritual or moral manipulation. She conceived the presence of that God to be elusive and unpredictable. Whatever may have been the fascination of the nature cults practiced by her masses and even by her ruling classes in most periods of her history,¹²⁰ a spiritual elite in her midst always maintained a standard of faith. It was this standard of faith which distinguished Israel's religion from the religions of her neighbors.

The cults of antiquity offer many close parallels to the religion of Israel, but a basic difference stands out between them. The epiphanies of the gods in the ancient Near East and in classical antiquity imply a deification of the forces of nature, of human desires, of tribal or national needs for economic survival and political stability, and of the dynastic drive for imperial conquest. Such a process appears in Mesopotamia,* in Egypt,¹²² in Syria-Phoenicia-Canaan,¹²³ in Iran,¹²⁴ and later in Greece and Rome.¹²⁵ Cosmogonies were in effect theogonies and therefore suggested the finite character of the godhead. Either the gods and goddesses did not transcend the temporality of the natural forces or else they were identified with a universe viewed as eternal.¹²⁶ The pluralism of the deities reveals a fragmentariness of the prevailing world views or appears to have been related to some form of determinism to which the gods themselves were subject.¹²⁷

In Israel, on the contrary, while anthropocentric concerns were not altogether absent, natural space and historical time remained utterly dependent upon a free sovereign, whose transcendence was never divorced from a “pathetic” concern for the welfare of human and even animal life.¹²⁸ The knowledge of this free and sovereign God¹²⁹ informs Israel’s standard of faith. It promotes her ideal of peoplehood and is the main source of her ethics. Such knowledge stems from a single factor: the Hebraic theology of presence.¹³⁰

The religion of the Hebrews, of Israel, of postexilic Judaism, and of the early Christians is permeated by the experience, the cultic recollection, and the proleptically appropriated expectation of the presence of Yahweh among men.¹³¹ At the same time, the Hebraic traditions—and indeed the entire literature of the Bible—portray the Deity as coming to man, not man as commanding the appearance of the Deity.¹³² It is Yahweh, in the myth of the Garden, who asks man, “Where art thou?” (Gen. 3:9). Similarly, the legend of Cain and Abel introduces the abrupt question, “Where is thy brother Abel?” (Gen. 4:9). Divine intervention in human affairs is generally, if not exclusively, represented as sudden, unexpected, unwanted, unsettling, and often devastating.¹³³ The feature of divine disruption is typical of all literary genres in all periods of biblical history. It appears in the primeval *Zegenda* (e.g., Noah, Gen. 6:13), in the patriarchal saga of epiphanic visitations (e.g., Abraham, Gen. 12:1 ff.), in the national epic of theophanies to Moses (e.g., Exod. 3:1 ff.), in the visions of the great prophets (e.g., Amos, 7:15), in the psalms (e.g., Ps. 139:7), in Job’s pleas (e.g., 23:3 ff.), in the Jobian theophany from the whirlwind (Job 38:1 ff.), and in the synoptic traditions on the appearances of the risen Lord (e.g., Mark 16:11 *et par.*). Biblical man is always “surprised by God.”

Moreover, for fifteen centuries the recurrent motif of divine nearness is historically limited to a few men. The sense of pres-

ence is persistently compounded with an awareness of absence.¹³⁴ The prophets, the psalmists, and the poet of Job often allude to their sense of isolation, not only from the community of men but also from the proximity of God. Theophanies of the heroic past are not repeated.¹³⁵ Prophetic visions are few and far between. Even within the life span of special men of God, like Abraham, Moses, and the prophets, the immediacy of the Godhead is experienced only for a few fleeting instants. "The presence" as well as "the word" was rare in biblical days.

The record shows that instances of awareness of an immediate encounter with the divine reality not only were extremely brief but also appear to have been the privilege of an extremely restricted elite. What sort of access did the average Israelite or Judahite have to the presence of Deity? As a member of the cultic community, he believed in the real presence of Yahweh at a shrine, he rehearsed the memorial of Yahweh's *magnalia* during the celebration of the seasonal feasts, and he expected—nay, he experienced liturgically and proleptically—the final epiphany of history, when Yahweh would at last bring creation to fulfillment, renew the earth, and unite mankind into a family of nations. A cultic form of presence was sacramentally available. A God who remained historically absent manifested his proximity to the average man through cultic communion.

A similar development took place among the Jews who became the earliest Christians in the first century A.D. The presence of Yahweh-Adonay, *Ho Kyrios*, the Lord—became manifest for them in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, but they would not have been able to formulate this new theology of presence without the shattering impact of their faith in the risen Jesus as "Lord."¹³⁶ In the light of the teaching of their master, they radically transformed their expectation of a political messiah. They accomplished this revolution by interpreting the messianic hope in the light of the figure of the Suffering Servant in Second Isaiah. Through the mythopoetic ideology of royal,

prophetic, and priestly sonship, they evolved a new concept of messiahship. They emptied the old notion of messiah of its popular connotation as a military and thaumaturgical power, which was held especially by the Zealots, and endowed it with the virtue of universal love.¹³⁷ Thus reinterpreted, the name could be applied to the person of the crucified and risen Jesus. The Greek-speaking Jews who accepted the gospel of the living Lord were thus able to speak of “the Christ” not only in terms of their eschatological hope but also in the light of their present experience of divine communion.¹³⁸

Because the visions of the appearances of the living Lord were restricted to a few moments in the lives of a small group of men and women, and eventually ceased altogether,¹³⁹ the nascent church survived the initial crisis of divine absence through her apprehension of a new form of presence. Various motifs came into play. Some interpreted that presence in terms of “the indwelling spirit”; others spoke of “being in Christ.”¹⁴⁰ Still others borrowed the themes of personified wisdom and personified word.¹⁴¹ Nevertheless, it was the Hebraic theology of presence which dominated all the interpretations of the person of Jesus, from Mark to Revelation.

The Hebraic theology of presence provides the structure of the Markan gospel,¹⁴² the culmination of Stephen’s sermon on the temple,¹⁴³ the “*self-asseverative* formula” (“I am the Lord”) in Saul’s vision on the Damascus road,¹⁴⁴ Paul’s description of the church as the temple of God,¹⁴⁵ the Lukan *Zegenda* on the Annunciation,¹⁴⁶ the Johannine prologue on the “word encamped as in a tent”,¹⁴⁷ the typology of the epistle to the Hebrews,¹⁴⁸ and the allegory of the new Jerusalem in the book of Revelation.¹⁴⁹ It is the same theology of cultic presence, bringing together in the liturgical present the memory of the *magnalia dei* and the expectation of the day of Yahweh, which undergirds the eucharistic meal of the early church; for the memory of the last supper is bound to the awaiting of the *parousia*.¹⁵⁰

The cultic theophany of ancient Israel was thus reenacted in a new rite which brought together the figure of the historical Jesus and the proleptical experience of the final epiphany. The birth of the church lies not in the reinterpretation of the notion of messiahship but in the appropriation of the temple ideology in the context of the risen Lord.

It is the Hebraic theology of presence, not the covenant ceremonial, that constitutes the field of forces which links—across the biblical centuries—the fathers of Israel, the reforming prophets, the priests of Jerusalem, the psalmists of Zion, the Jobian poet, and the bearers of the gospel. The history of biblical religion hinges upon the growth and transformation of the Hebraic theology of presence.

THE QUEST FOR A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

In the face of the multiplicity of rituals and beliefs represented in the Bible, many scholars have restricted their endeavors to describing the religious phenomena which have received literary formulation. Recent interpreters have therefore tended to present only the history of the religion of Israel and the history of primitive Christianity. Even writers of an Old Testament theology, like Gerhard von Rad,¹⁵¹ or of a theology of the New Testament, like Rudolf Bultmann,¹⁵² have stressed the plurality of theological responses within Scripture rather than run the risk of distorting historical complexity through oversimplification.

At the same time, it is not possible to ignore the place the Bible has occupied for centuries—and still occupies today—at the heart of both Judaism and Christianity. The books of the Hebrew Bible for Judaism¹⁵³ and of both the Old Testament and the New for Christianity¹⁵⁴ exerted an inward stimulus and a power of restraint on faith long before these writings received

recognition of authority by synagogue or church. It was neither the synagogue nor the church which initially decreed that Scripture was to be the rule of faith and order or “the Word of God.”¹⁵⁵ Rather, the books of the Hebrew Bible and of the New Testament imposed themselves upon Jews and Christians as the regulating standard of their religious commitment and ethical behavior. Canon was originally not a dogmatic structure imposed from without by institutionalized collectivities but an unspoken force which grew from within the nature of Hebrew-Christian religion.¹⁵⁶ The obligations of the Sinai covenant were remembered as the “torah” of Yahweh, a growing collection of instructions which were inserted within the context of the narratives of the Sinai theophany. Thus, the cultic *anamnesis* of the event during which the divine presence disclosed itself to the people through the mediation of Moses prepared and promoted the development of the canon.¹⁵⁷ The idea of the canonicity of a “scripture” was a *fait accompli* when a written document was found in the temple of Jerusalem in 622 B.C. and led to the reform of Josiah and the renewal of the Sinai covenant (2 Kings 22:1 ff.). The “book of the law” (approximately Deut. 12:1-26:19) became the nucleus of “the Bible” (*ta biblia*, “the books”) because Huldah the prophetess found it conformed to the living word of the Deity (2 Kings 22: 13 ff.) Canonicity went back to the cultic memories of the Sinai-Horeb theophany. It is significant that the final edition of the Deuteronomic law opened with a cultic rehearsal of those memories (Deut. 1:1 ff.) in which the motif of covenant is subordinated to the story of theophanic presence (Deut. 5:2-4).

Likewise, it appears that the letters of Paul, which constituted the original nucleus of the New Testament, were circulated throughout the churches of the Mediterranean world and they were read ceremonially at the paracultic celebrations of nascent Christendom, side by side with the portions of the Law and the Prophets traditionally appointed for the sabbath service and the

festivals. Canonicity imposed itself from within, little by little, in the context of the Christian community at worship.

The inwardness of scriptural canonicity and of its growth in the course of several centuries suggests that a certain homogeneity of theological depth binds the biblical books together beneath the heterogeneity of their respective dates, provenances, styles, rhetorical forms, purposes, and contents. The search for the principle of this homogeneity which spanned a considerable period of time points to the dynamic aspect of a continuity of religious aim rather than to a static unity of doctrinal conformity.¹⁵⁸

As soon as the historian of the Hebrew-Christian religion seeks to determine the nature of this continuity, he goes beyond a merely phenomenological description of rites and beliefs. He does not disregard on that account the historical fluidity of their origin and growth, but he asks the question of the possibility, the legitimacy, and perhaps even the inevitability of biblical theology.

The disrepute in which this discipline is held in some quarters depends on several factors, one of which is the hostile attitude which many biblical theologians of the past century displayed against modern methods of literary and historical criticism. Another of these factors is related to the denominationalism which has colored not a few treatises of biblical theology in which one or another of the scriptural themes was enlisted as the ancillary justification of a dogma peculiar to an individual church, sect, or tradition.

Ironically, the idea of a "biblical theology" originated as a reaction of the Pietists against the scholastic Lutheranism of the eighteenth century.¹⁵⁹ In 1787, in an academic discourse now well-known,¹⁶⁰ Johann-Philip Gabler assigned the "new" discipline with the task of describing in historical sequence the thoughts and feelings of the sacred authors "concerning divine things." Gabler's intention was chiefly to obtain for biblical

interpreters a freedom of inquiry from the dogmatic theology of his time. The new discipline, however, fell almost immediately under the spell of the age of the enlightenment. Most treatises published in the nineteenth century under such titles as *Biblical Theology*, *Old Testament Theology*, and *New Testament Theology* were systematic presentations of the ideas of the Bible on God, man, sin, and salvation.¹⁶¹

It is now recognized that such attempts, inherited in part from Platonic conceptual thinking and Aristotelian logic, were bound to translate the sui generis thrust of biblical faith into the alien idiom of didactic exposition. Many interpreters have therefore questioned the legitimacy of the discipline of biblical theology.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, the vast majority of scholars restricted themselves to composing essays on the history of the Hebrew religion, the “life” of Jesus, and the “religious experience” of the early church, especially that of Paul. The discipline of biblical theology entered into an eclipse. The concern for *historicism*, on the one hand, and the revival of the Marcionite prejudice against the Hebrew Bible, on the other, introduced the fashion of an atomistic approach to the study of Scripture. Harnack even proposed the “removal” of the Old Testament from the Christian canon.¹⁶²

A new era began during the First World War. In 1920, Rudolf Kittel spoke of the “future of Old Testament science”¹⁶³ and urged the rediscovery of the significance of the entire Bible for the religious thinking of modern man. Quite independently of Karl Barth’s thunderous proclamation of the Bible as the “Word of God,”¹⁶⁴ a few exegetes who had been trained in the rigors of the critical method slowly assumed a new stance. While they refused to serve the interests of a particular church tradition, and retained intact their respect for the scientific approach, they moved away from a position of analytical compartmentalism and antiquarian remoteness, and they sought to restate in

modern terms the meaning of the Bible for contemporary theologians.

In 1926, Johannes Hempel published *God and Man in the Old Testament*, in which he attempted to stress those features of the faith “which came from God and led to God, and which also lead us to God.”¹⁶⁵ The same year, Otto Eissfeldt sensed the need to build a new bridge between the religious history of Israel and the theological significance of the Old Testament.¹⁶⁶ In 1929, Walther Eichrodt put squarely the question, “Does the Old Testament theology still have an independent significance within Old Testament studies?”¹⁶⁷ During the following decade, Eichrodt brought out his monumental three-volume *Old Testament Theology*,¹⁶⁸ for which he used the tools of modern research and at the same time sought to discover in the covenant the principle of coherence for the understanding of the Old Testament in its entirety.

Eichrodt’s treatment was thorough, incisive, and in many places original. It is still indispensable after a whole generation of further study. Nevertheless, a “pan-covenant” approach to Old Testament theology overlooks the multi-faceted complexity of Hebrew religion.¹⁶⁹ In the ten centuries covered by biblical literature, the importance of the covenant motif was only sporadic. In addition, the wisdom books¹⁷⁰ by and large ignore covenant ideology. This omission is the more remarkable when it is remembered that sapiential circles in Jerusalem during the monarchy were closely related to the royal court and might have been expected to pay strict attention to the theological significance of the Davidic covenant.¹⁷¹ A covenant-centered interpretation of Old Testament thinking on God and man necessarily underplays the significance of Hebrew wisdom.¹⁷²

In spite of its limitations, Eichrodt’s work proved to be the chief incentive for numerous reappraisals of the issues involved in the elaboration of an Old Testament theology.¹⁷³ In 1946, H. Wheeler Robinson laid down the principles for a new Old Tes-

tament theology which would adequately discover in the historical traditions of Israel the locus of revelation.¹⁷⁴ E. Jacob, Th. C. Vriezen, and G. E. Wright—each in his own style and with his own emphasis—have persuasively presented the dynamic aspect of the self-disclosure of Yahweh in the context of the Hebrew epic traditions.¹⁷⁵

In 1957, G. von Rad called for an abrupt change of approach. In his two-volume *Old Testament Theology*,¹⁷⁶ he undertook to discern the theological significance of the Hebrew Bible not so much in the sequential continuity of a theological theme in the history of Israel's religion as in the constant revising and reformulating of the creedal confessions in the light of historical change. Although von Rad's achievement remains to this day epoch-making, it cannot justify the title *Old Testament Theology*, for the dichotomy between the theologies of the confessional reinterpretations, on the one hand, and the theologies of the responses of the psalmists, the prophets, and the wisemen, on the other, has not been successfully overcome, nor has a principle of theological homogeneity capable of accounting for the growth of the Hebrew Bible been convincingly elucidated. Neither Eichrodt nor von Rad has discovered within Old Testament religion that organic and specific element which not only points to the gospel of Jesus and the early church but also leads inevitably to the New Testament.¹⁷⁷

While Eichrodt and von Rad were carrying out this work, intensive research was being undertaken among interpreters on the interrelation between faith and history.¹⁷⁸ G. E. Wright looked for the principle of biblical continuity in the activity of Yahweh as creator, Lord, and warrior;¹⁷⁹ B. S. Childs tended to stress the importance of the community pattern as a vehicle of divine intervention within history.¹⁸⁰ Others have discussed the purposes and methods of Old Testament theology in the light of contemporary trends;¹⁸¹ G. Fohrer, especially, has proposed that at the center of Old Testament faith lies neither the cove-

nant ideology nor the concept of community but the motif of divine presence, now and on the last day.¹⁸²

The quest for an authentically “biblical” theology is being renewed more actively than ever before,¹⁸³ and there are signs that the present generation of New Testament scholarship no longer works in isolation from Old Testament science. Like their Old Testament colleagues, New Testament critics have been interested for many years in history rather than in the theological significance of Scripture. In 1897, W. Wrede reduced the task of “the so-called New Testament Theology” to the historical description of early Christianity.¹⁸⁴ While treatments of a New Testament theology conceived as a system of doctrinal ideas continued to appear,¹⁸⁵ the discipline was no longer the concern of modern exegetes, although a few of them refused to reduce the New Testament either to a series of historical sketches or to a merely didactic exposition.

As early as 1885, A. Schlatter clearly discerned that the thought of Jesus and the apostles was inseparable from their faith and ethics.¹⁸⁶ A generation later, when the impact of the comparative history of religions convinced the students of primitive Christianity that the New Testament documents could not be interpreted in isolation from the sects and the cults of the Mediterranean world, W. Bousset assigned to the ceremonial worship of the Christian communities a major part in the formulation and the transmission of the gospel.¹⁸⁷ In the light of the subsequent discoveries made on the Hellenistic mystery cults, Gnostic groups, and especially the Jewish sectarians of Qumran, many historians of the early church have stressed the need to revise long-standing attitudes concerning the neglected discipline of New Testament theology.¹⁸⁸

In the meantime, Rudolf Bultmann drew out the theological consequences of his form-critical analysis of the gospel tradition. His *New Testament Theology*,¹⁸⁹ the culmination of many years of exegetical research, is comparable in its field to the

masterpieces of Eichrodt and von Rad in the field of Old Testament theology. The considerable achievements of Bultmann are marred by his inability to see the organic affinities which link the faith of Jesus and the early Christians to the theological thrust of Hebraism rather than the speculations of popular Judaism.

With respect to the Old Testament, Bultmann proved to be a neo-Harnackian.¹⁹⁰ In addition, he failed to appreciate the historical foundations of the Christian *muthos*. He did not ask seriously whether the faith in the resurrection of Jesus and later in his virgin birth might not be indissolubly related to, and organically dependent upon, the historical reality of his personality as well as his teaching.¹⁹¹ He relegated the sayings and the ministry of Jesus to the Jewish background of New Testament theology, as if the faith of the early church had suddenly emerged of itself as a new and particular *gnosis*. While his presentations of Paulinism and Johannism possess qualities of exceptional incisiveness, his theological understanding of the New Testament is largely reduced to anthropological and psychological concerns. Through an exegetical and philosophical *tour de force*, Bultmann has succeeded in eradicating the transcendental dimension of justification by faith.

In a laudable effort to be relevant to the cultural chaos that followed Nazism and the Second World War, Bultmann excessively reacted against the very excesses of historicism, but he undermined and almost negated the historical foundation of New Testament faith. By demythologizing the Christian kerygma, he paradoxically de-historicized the humanity of Jesus and the concreteness of the faith of the early church. Ironically, in transforming New Testament theology into an anthropology of existential self-understanding, he failed to grasp the existential involvement of the church in the political, moral, and cultural realities of history.

A powerful corrective to Bultmann's Marcionic and docetic

tendencies was provided by Oscar Cullmann's insistence on the biblical reality of time.¹⁹² For him Christian faith is centered less on an existential discovery of self-awareness than on a cultic participation in salvation history. He does not deny that faith requires an existential decision, but he maintains that such a decision is always founded upon the certainty that "a divine history" unfolds in the universe and across the generations of men.¹⁹³ Christian existence takes place between the "already" and the "not yet" of an eschatological hope which is at once past and future.¹⁹⁴ Cullmann's stress on the interpenetration of *Heilsgeschichte* and eschatological expectation has inspired intensive research concerning faith and history.¹⁹⁵

In the meantime, biblical theologians have been led to work more closely with the systematic theologians and the philosophers of language in raising the issue of hermeneutics.¹⁹⁶ The distinction between biblical theology, a historical discipline which seeks to elucidate the meaning of the Bible itself, and systematic theology, which attempts to translate biblical dynamics of faith and cultus into the contemporary idiom, needs to be carefully preserved.¹⁹⁷ Biblical theologians are increasingly aware of the relativity of historical research and of the dangers of *historicism*. They recognize the need of becoming critically explicit regarding their epistemological presuppositions, and they constantly remind themselves of their own limitations in attempting to penetrate scriptural meaning and to remain faithful to that meaning while seeking to translate it into the language of the cultural world view of the twentieth century. In addition, they know that to assume their proper responsibility toward the work of systematic theologians, they must perform the "descriptive task" of biblical theology, as it has been called,¹⁹⁸ in a way which goes beyond the mere cataloguing of the mythopoetic formulations of the biblical documents, from the Yahwist epic in the tenth century B.C. to the Johannine Apocalypse at the end of the first century A.D.

By their parallel insistence on *Heilsgeschichte*, biblical theologians like Eichrodt, Vriezen, Jacob, von Rad, Cullmann, and Wright have offered a platform for further research.¹⁹⁹ The warnings of Ebeling on the problematic character of theological coherence within each Testament deserve scrupulous attention,²⁰⁰ but the arguments that he directed against the unity of the Bible have now lost their sharpness, for contemporary discussion no longer attempts to expound biblical “ideas.” It centers on the dynamic continuity of biblical fields of force.²⁰¹ Furthermore, general agreement has been reached on Ebeling’s plea to understand Scripture in the context of the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean cultures, with special emphasis on the extracanonical literature of Judaism in Hellenistic, Hasmonean, and Roman times.²⁰²

Above all, the very use of the word “theology” in connection with the Bible requires critical scrutiny. Going beyond Ebeling’s challenge,²⁰³ the biblical theologian will refuse to apply the word *theo-logia* to the content of the Bible as if it were still overloaded with connotations that are either patristic, medieval, scholastic, or Tridentine on the one hand, or Protestant, modernist, and postexistential on the other. Instead he will seek to discover the biblical meaning of the notion which the Greek term *theo-logia* fails to convey. Plato and Aristotle employed it in the sense of “science of divine things.”²⁰⁴ Quite differently, the Hebraic expression *da’at Elohim*, “knowledge of God,” points to a reality which at once includes and transcends intellectual disquisition. It designates the involvement of man’s total personality in the presence of Yahweh through the prophetic word, the cultic celebration, and the psychological mode of communion in faith.²⁰⁵ In the Hebraic sense of “knowledge of God,” theology does not mean an objective science of divine things. Although it uses the critical faculties of the mind, it proceeds both from an inner commitment to a faith and from

a participation in the destiny of a people which transcends the national and racial particularities of the times.

Theology in this sense implies the dedication of the self, its orientation toward the demands of a specific vocation, and its acceptance of a corresponding mode of living. At its highest level, it aims at promoting a stability of faith independent of the normal fluctuations of the human character, and at facilitating a transmission of that faith to the next generation. It is based on the cultic commemoration of presence and the cultic expectancy of its renewal. It is nurtured by the celebration of presence in the midst of the community of faith which extends from the theophanic past to the epiphanic end of history.²⁰⁶

Not on account of an editorial accident of juxtaposition but through a conscious intent which reveals a theological grasp have the Deuteronomists made the *Shema* ("Hear, O Israel, Yahweh thy God, Yahweh is one") inseparable from the invitation to love God. In the words of Israel's creed (Deut. 6:6 ff.), faith in Yahweh means love of Yahweh, first with the whole of one's mind (*Zebh*), second with the whole of one's living being, its instinctual drives and its persistence in selfhood (*nephesh*), and third with the whole of one's potentiality, the abundance or "muchness" (*me'ôd*) of eros, which leads to the extension of the individual into the family, the continuation of the self into the self of one's children and the future generations of man.²⁰⁷

It is therefore not on account of a second editorial accident of juxtaposition that Israel's creed was used as a preface for the first textbook on religious education in the history of western culture: "And those words, which I command thee this day, shall remain in thy intellectual consciousness, and thou shalt teach them to thy sons by sing-song rote (*we-shin&net& lebhanekâ*)" (Deut. 6:6 ff. [Heb. 7 ff.]). The pericope concludes with the kerygmatic summary of the *Heilsgeschichte*: "Then, thou shalt say to thy son, "We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt.. ." (Deut. 6:21

[Heb. 20]). Theology is the knowledge of God, but this knowledge is love with the whole of one's mind in the context of a corporate obligation toward the past and the future.²⁰⁸ Biblical theology as the biblical knowledge of God is indeed the object of science, provided that the biblical theologian is also subject to a personal involvement in the "knowledge" of that God. Biblical theology is thus indissolubly married to biblical spirituality, which in turn remains inseparable from the continuity of the cultic celebration of presence. It is the knowledge of God which provides the clue to the mystery of the people of God, whether Israel or the Church. Such a knowledge points to what has been felicitously called "the sacramental prophetism" of the Bible in its entirety.²⁰⁹

Covenant ideology and covenant ceremonial may have played significant roles at critical moments in the history of Israel, and especially in its eschatological form at the birth of the Christian church. Nevertheless, this ideology and ceremonial proved to be chiefly the means of reform in times of corruption or cultural chaos. Covenant making constituted a rite which depended on the prior affirmation of a faith in the intervention of God in a peculiar segment of history. By contrast, the reality of divine presence proved to be the constant element of distinctiveness throughout the centuries of biblical times. It is this reality which produced the power of a "canonical" Scripture, and it is this reality which may renew this power in contemporary Christianity.

Israel maintained her historical existence as a people only in so far as she remembered and expected the manifestation of divine presence. It was the presence which created peoplehood. An individual member of that people partook of the life of the community only in so far as he shared in the presence, either through cultic celebration or by associating himself with the mediators of presence who had experienced its immediacy. When the structure of the covenant exploded, as it did during

the exile in Babylon, the people remained conscious of their peoplehood only when they improvised paracultic celebrations of the presence and thereby ritually anticipated the final epiphany.

Because it brings together the divine asseverations, "I am Yahweh," of the Hebraic theophany, and "I am the Lord," of the Christian faith in the resurrection of Jesus, the motif of presence induces a magnetic field of forces which maintains a dynamic tension, in the whole of Scripture, between divine self-disclosure and divine self-concealment.²¹⁰ The proximity of God creates a memory and an anticipation of certitude, but it always defies human appropriation. The presence remains elusive.

It is symptomatic of our age that the crisis of contemporary theology is related to the problem of authority in all domains, and that the search for the perennial authority of Scripture requires new tools of semantic interpretation.²¹¹ The problem of responding to the biblical record of the revelation of God from Abraham to Paul moves again to the forefront of the theological enterprise.²¹² The Hebraic theology of presence leads to the Christian theology of the eucharistic presence. Because it refuses to accept a separation between cultus and faith and carries at the same time the seed of corporate continuity in history, the biblical theology of presence may provide a prolegomenon to a new biblical theology that in its turn may play a central part in the birth of an authentically ecumenical theology.=+

Notes

1. On the history of literary criticism, see H.-J. Kraus, *Geschichte der historisch-kritischen Erforschung des Alten Testaments von der Reformation bis zur Gegenwart*, rev. ed.

(Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1969); N. C. Habel, *Literary Criticism of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia, 1971).

2. While the name of Wellhausen re-

mains linked with modern literary criticism, it should be remembered that his work, far from having been improvised *de novo*, was painstakingly erected upon the research of many generations of scholars, from Isaac de la Peyrère in 1655, Richard Simon in 1678, and Jean Astruc in 1753, to Eduard Reuss in 1833, Herman Hupfeld in 1853, and especially Karl von Graf in 1866. Scores of other humanists and biblical interpreters deserve to be named.

3. The Yahwist (J, initial of the German name, Jahwist), written in Judah during the ninth century B.C.; the Elohist (E), written in North Israel during the eighth century; the Deuteronomist (D), written in Judah during the seventh century; and the Priestly Code (P), written partly during the Exile in Babylon (sixth century) and partly during the postexilic period, and which gave to the whole Hexateuch its final structure from Genesis to Joshua; see J. Wellhausen, *Prolegomena to the History of Ancient Israel* (Edinburgh, 1885; paperback ed., New York, 1958).
4. A summary of the post-Wellhausenian developments may be found in J. Bright, "Modern Study of Old Testament Literature," *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, ed. by G. E. Wright (Garden City, N.Y., 1961), pp. 13-31; M. Noth, "P as Narrative an' as Literary Framework of the Pentateuch as a Whole," *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*, tr. by B. W. Anderson (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1972), pp. 8-19.
5. See, among others, C. A. Simpson, *The Early Traditions of Israel, A Critical Analysis of the Pre-deuteronomiac Narrative of the Hexateuch* (Oxford, 1948).
6. As illustrated by several commentaries of the first part of the twentieth century as well as by the textual apparatus of K. Elliger and W. Rudolph, eds., *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart, 1968-).
7. Significantly and ironically, an archaeologist and linguist like William F. Albright, who has been notoriously critical of the Wellhausen school, admits that "al-

though these fundamentalist 'higher critics' are quite wrong in their presuppositions, it does not necessarily follow that the documentary hypothesis is wrong" (New *Horizons in Biblical Research*, London, 1966, pp. 14-15). Albright is justified, however, in adding a word of caution, "But [the documentary hypothesis] does have to be treated with much more critical circumspection than has hitherto been the case" (*ibid.*). Cf. F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic, Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973), pp. 3 ff. As is well known, there are still a number of Jewish and Christian scholars who persist in totally ignoring the results of literary criticism.

8. See H. Gressmann, *Altorientalische Texte und Bilder zum Alten Testaments* (Tübingen, 1909).
9. Wellhausen himself had perceived the need to compare Israel's religious practices and beliefs to those of the pre-Islamic Arabs (see *Reste arabischen Heidentums*; Berlin, 1887), but the bulk of his biblical studies had been accomplished before the modern archaeological and comparative data were available in significant number, especially as these affected the literary texts of the ancient Near East.
10. Although Wellhausen was fully aware of the existence of an oral tradition: see *Prolegomena*, pp. 171 ff.
11. See A. Lods, *Le rôle de la tradition orale dans la formation des récits de l'Ancien Testament*, *RHR*, LXXXVII (1923): pp. 31-64; E. Fascher, *Die formgeschichtliche Methode: eine Darstellung und Kritik* (Giessen, 1924).
12. The outstanding contribution of Gunkel has been to show that literary criticism can never be independent of an aesthetic and religious appreciation of the poetic dynamics through which a written document has first come to oral birth. His exceptional sensitivity to the significance of the *Sitz im Leben* of the literature was combined with an aware-ness

of its relevance for modern Christians. See W. Klatt, *Hermann Gunkel. Zu seiner Theologie der Religionsgeschichte und zur Entstehung der formgeschichtlichen Methode* (Göttingen, 1969). While Gunkel himself was not a biblical theologian, his influence played a major part, quite independently of that of Karl Barth, in reviving among moderns a concern for the theological significance of the Hebrew Bible (see below).

13. See K. Koch, *The Meaning of Form Criticism* (New York, 1967); *id.*, *The Growth of the Biblical Tradition: The Form Critical Method* (London, 1969); M. J. Buss, "The Study of Forms," in J. H. Hayes, ed., *Old Testament Form Criticism* (San Antonio, Texas 1973), pp. 1-56.

14. See E. Werner, "The Psalmic Forms and their Evolution," *The Sacred Bridge* (Oxford, 1957-58), pp. 128-66. Further work is needed in the area of the cantillation of the rhythmic prose in which the Patriarchal saga and the national epic of the Exodus were preserved; cf. the comparative analysis of folkloric poetry in A. B. Lord, "Singers, Performance and Training," *The Singer of Tales* (New York, 1960), vv. 13-29.

15. R. Knierim, "Old Testament Form Criticism Reconsidered," *In.*, XXVII (1973): pp. 435-68.

16. See K. R. R. Gros Louis et al., eds., *Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives* (Nashville and New York, 1974).

17. S. Mowinckel, *Psalmstudien, I-IV* (Kristiana, 1921-1924), reprinted Amsterdam, 1961; J. Pedersen, "Die Auffassung vom Alten Testament," *ZAW*, XLIX (1931), pp. 161-81; *id.*, *Israel: Its Life and Culture, I-II*, and *III-IV* (London and Copenhagen, 1926-40); I. Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship* (Uppsala, 1943).

18. See D. A. Knight, *Rediscovering the Tradition of Israel: The Development of the Traditio-Historical Research of the Old Testament, with Special Consideration of Scandinavian Contributions* (Missoula, Montana, 1973); A. Haldar, "Tradition and History," *Bibli-*

otheca orientalis, XXXI (1974), 26 ff.; R. Rendtorff, *Das Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Problem des Pentateuchs* (Berlin and New York, 1977).

19. J. Pedersen, "Passahfest und Passahlegende," *ZAW*, LII (1934), pp. 161-75; *id.*, "The Crossing of the Reed Sea and the Paschal Legend," *Israel, Its Life and Culture, III-IV*, pp. 728-37; P. Laaf, *Die Pascha-Feier Israels. Eine literarkritisch und überlieferungsgeschichtliche Studie* (Bonn, 1970).

20. S. Mowinckel, "L'origine du décalogue," *RHPR*, VI (1926), pp. 409-33, 501-25; J. J. Stamm, *The Ten Commandments in Recent Research* (London, 1967); E. Nielsen, *The Ten Commandments in New Perspective: A Traditio-Historical Approach* (London, 1968).

21. Some traditio-historical critics admit that a number of documents have been written before the Exile. See G. Widengren, "Oral Tradition and Written Literature among the Hebrews in the Light of Arabic Evidence," *AO*, XXIII (1959): 261; G. W. Ahlström, "Oral and Written Transmission," *HTR*, LIX (1966): 69-81.

22. As illustrated in F. F. Hvidberg, *Weeping and Laughter in the Old Testament: A Study of Canaanite-Israelite Religion* (Lund, 1963):

23. The method has nevertheless been applied with notable results in many studies. For example, E. Nielsen, *Shechem: A Traditio-historical Investigation* (Copenhagen, 1955); R. A. Carlson, *David, the Chosen King: A Traditio-historical Approach* (Stockholm, 1964).

24. The impulse of the traditio-historical approach has produced many contributions to the interpretation of the prophets. See W. H. Schmidt, *Zukunftsgewissheit und Gegenwartskritik: Grundzüge prophetischer Verkündigung* (Neukirchen-Vluvn, 1973).

25. See A. H. J. Gunneweg, *Mündliche und schriftliche Tradition der vorexilischen Prophetenbücher als Problem der neueren Prophetenforschung* (Göttingen, 1959); J. G. Williams, "The Social Location of Israel-

- ite Prophecy," *JAAR*, XXXVII (1969); 153-65.
26. S. Mowinckel, "Kultprophetie und prophetische Psalmen," *Psalmstudien*, III (Kristiana, 1922); F. Hecht, *Eschatologie und Ritus bei den Reformpropheten. Ein Beitrag zur Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Leiden, 1971).
27. See H. E. von Waldow, *Der traditions-geschichtliche Hintergrund der prophetischen Gerichtsreden* (Berlin, 1963).
28. An important part of the activity of the prophets appears to have been related to a ceremonial which may have included an annual dedication to the covenant (see below). The prophets' intervention in the cultic ritual suggests that the prophets occupied formal offices in the sanctuary. See H. Graf Reventlow, "Propheten Amt und Mittleramt," *ZTK*, LVIII (1961): 269-84; *Das Amt des Propheten bei Amos* (Göttingen, 1962); P. Auvray, "Le prophète comme guetteur," *RB*, LXXI (1964): 191-205; J. Muilenburg, "The Office of the Prophet in Ancient Israel," in *The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, ed. by J. P. Hyatt (Nashville, 1965), pp. 74-97. Even the prophetic condemnation of the cultic abuses reveals intimate participation in the ritual of Israel.
29. See H. Gunkel and J. Begrich, *Einführung in die Psalmen* (Göttingen, 1933), pp. 397 ff., 415 ff.
30. See A. Weiser, "The Cultic Foundation of the Psalms," *The Psalms* (Philadelphia, 1962), pp. 23-24 and passim.
31. Not all the psalms, however, may be ascribed to a cultic origin. See S. Terrien, "Creation, Cultus and Faith in the Psalter," *Horizons of Theological Education: Essays in Honor of Charles L. Taylor* (Dayton, Ohio, 1966), pp. 124-28; W. Beyerlin, *Die Rettung der Bedrängten in den Feindpsalmen der Einzelnen auf institutionelle Zusammenhänge untersucht* (Göttingen, 1970), pp. 18 ff.
32. See R. North, "The Theology of the Chronicler," *JBL*, LXXXII (1963), 374-75; F. Michaeli, *Les livres des Chroniques, d'Esdras et de Néhémie* (Neuchâtel, 1967), p. 28; J. D. Newsome, Jr., "Toward a New Understanding of the Chronicler and His Purposes," *JBL*, XCIV (1975), 213.
33. See S. Terrien, Job, *commentaire* (Neuchâtel, 1963), pp. 7-8; id., "Le poème de Job: drame para-rituel du Nouvel-An?" *SVT*, XVII (1969), 220 ff.; id., "The Yahweh Speeches and Job's Responses," *Review and Expositor*, LXVIII (1971), 497 ff.
34. G. Östborn, *Cult and Canon; A Study in the Canonization of the Old Testament* (Uppsala, 1950); K. Schwarzwälder, "Probleme gegenwärtiger Theologie und das Alte Testament," in *Probleme biblischer Theologie (Festschrift G. von Rad)*, ed., H. W. Wolff (München, 1971), pp. 479-93.
35. J. A. Sanders, "A Call to Canonical Criticism," in *Torah and Canon* (Philadelphia, 1972), pp. ix-xx; "Reopening Old Questions About Scripture," *In.*, XXVIII (1974): 321-33 (on J. Barr, *The Bible and the Modern World*, New York, 1973, esp. ch. 9); "Adaptable for Life: The Nature and Function of the Canon," *Festschrift G. E. Wright* (Garden City, N.Y., 1976), "pp. 531 ff.; E. Jacob, "Principe canonique et formation de l'Ancien Testament," *SVT*, XXVIII (1975): 101 ff.
36. Before the time of Wellhausen, the work of K. W. C. F. Bähr, *Symbolik des mosaischen Cultus* (Heidelberg, 1837-39) examined Hebrew ritual as symbolic expression of religious ideas. cf. H.-J. Kraus, *Worship in Israel: A Cultic History of the Old Testament* (Richmond, Va., 1962), pp. 1 ff., 4 f. The development of Pentateuchal criticism in general and the Wellhausen's dating of the four documents in particular depended in part on a theory of the development of cultus, the evolution of the character of the festivals and the calendars, the type and nature of the sacrifices, the function of the priests, etc.
37. P. Volz, *Das Neujahrfest Jahwes . . .* (Tübingen, 1912).

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 16-23. While Babylon celebrated the New Year in the spring, Israel held "the day of Yahweh" in the autumn. There were probably in Mesopotamia and elsewhere two critical rites *de* passage, one in the spring and the other in the autumn. In the Fertile Crescent, where the rhythm of vegetation depends less on perennial irrigation than on seasonal rains, the spring festival marked the end of greenness through the onset of the summer heat and drought, and the autumnal fall of the first rains ushered in the rebirth of nature. See also D. J. A. Clines, "The Evidence for an Autumnal New Year in Pre-Exilic Israel Reconsidered," *JBL*, XCIII (1974): 22 ff.
39. S. Mowinckel, *Das Thronbesteigungsfest Jahwäs und der Ursprung der Eschatologie* (Psalmstudien, II; Kristiana, 1921).
40. H. Zimmern, *Das babylonische Neujahrsfest* (Der Alte Orient, XXV, 3: 1926); H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago, 1948), pp. 313-33.
41. See J. C. de Moor, *New Year with Canaanites and Israelites* (Kampen, 1972).
42. Mowinckel's rendering of the phrase *Yahweh malak*, traditionally translated "The Lord reigneth" (Pss. 93:1, etc.).
43. A number of scholars maintain that the New Year festival was not adopted until the postexilic period. See Kraus, *Worship in Israel*, pp. 7 ff. 15 ff.
44. S. Mowinckel, *Religion und Cultus*. . . (op. cit.) pp. 115 ff. 127 ff.
45. J. Pedersen, *Israel: Its Life and Culture* (Oxford and Copenhagen, 1926-40), I-II, pp. 99 ff., 411 ff.; III-IV, pp. 299 ff., 376 ff.
46. I. Engnell, *Studies in Divine Kingship*, I (Uppsala, 1943).
47. The Ugaritic texts have produced a considerable literature. In addition to the publication and translation of the texts themselves, see M. Dahood, "Ugaritic Studies and the Bible," *Gregorianum*, XLIII (1962): 55-79; F. M. Cross, "The Ideologies of Kingship in the Era of the Empire: Conditional Covenant and Eternal Decree," in Canaanite *Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973), pp. 219 ff.
48. W. Robertson Smith, *Lectures on the Religion of the Semites* (Edinburgh, 1889; rev. ed. by S. A. Cook, London and New York, 1927); J. Frazer, *The Golden Bough: A Study in Magic and Religion*, 12 vols. (London, 1910-15); *id.* *Folklore in the Old Testament: Studies in Comparative Religion, Legend and Law*, 3 vols. (London, 1918-23; abridged ed., New York, 1923); Th. H. Gaster, *Myth, Legend and Custom in the Old Testament* (New York, 1969).
49. S. H. Hooke, ed., *Myth and Ritual: Essays on the Myth and Ritual of the Hebrews in Relation to the Culture Pattern of the Ancient Near East* (London, 1933); S. H. Hooke, *The Origins of Early Semitic Ritual* (London, 1938).
50. S. H. Hooke, ed., *The Labyrinth* (London, 1935), pp. 71-112; cf. A. R. Johnson, *Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff, 1955).
51. S. H. Hooke, ed., *Myth, Ritual, and Kingship* (Oxford, 1958); see especially S. G. F. Brandon, "The Myth and Ritual Position Critically Considered," pp. 261-91.
52. E. O. James, *Myth and Ritual in the Ancient Near East* (London, 1958).
53. H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods* (Chicago, 1948), pp. 337-44; *id.*, *The Problem of Similarity in Ancient Near Eastern Religion* (Oxford, 1951); H. and H. Frankfort, "The Emancipation of Thought from Myth," in H. Frankfort et al., *Before Philosophy: The Intellectual Adventure of Ancient Man* (Chicago, 1946; paperback ed., Penguin Books, Baltimore, 1951), pp. 241-48; M. Noth, "God, King, and Nation in the Old Testament," *The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Essays* (Edinburgh and London, 1966), pp. 145-78; H.-J. Kraus, *Die Königsherrschaft Gottes im Alten Testament* (Tübingen, 1951). Significantly, Engnell himself expressed serious qualifications about the patternistic view in

"Methodological Aspects of Old Testament Study," *SVT*, VII (1960), pp. 19-21.

54. For example, "And the sons of Israel did evil in the sight of Yahweh, and served the Baalim, and they abandoned Yahweh, the Elohim of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt, and they followed other gods, among the gods of the peoples that were round about them" (Judg. 2:11-12).

55. G. E. Wright, "Cult and History," *In*, XIV (1962): 3-20. Ironically, it was because they repudiated the method of purely literary criticism that the Scandinavian scholars rejected Wellhausen's conclusions on the written documents of the Hexateuch and developed the method of traditio-historical criticism. Yet, some of them substantially agreed with Wellhausen through their views on the agrarian origin of Hebrew cultus. See Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, pp. 83-120.

56. While the feast of Passover inherited several features of a pastoral and agrarian celebration of the vernal equinox (new lambs, new ears of barley, etc., cf. Ps. 114), it was directly related to the cultic *legenda* of the Exodus.

57. A. Alt, "The Origins of Israelite Law" (1934), *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion*, tr. by P. A. Wilson (Oxford, 1966), pp. 79-132.

58. That is related to court decisions and describing judiciary cases in the literary form of the subordinate clause of condition, beginning with the conjunction "if" or such a formula as "whoever, etc." Such legal forms abound in the so-called Book of the Covenant (Exod. 20:22-23:10) and in the Code of Deuteronomy (chs. 12-26).

59. The apodictic law generally affects the form of a short command or prohibition which is enunciated in the name of the Deity, as in the various decalogues (Exod. 20:1-20; Deut. 5:6-21; cf. Exod. 34:17-26).

60. Deut. 27:11-26, 31:9-13; See Alt, *Israelite Law*, pp. 114 f.

61. Von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch . . .* (*op. cit.*), pp. 1 ff.

62. Noth, *The Laws in the Pentateuch*, pp. 28 ff.

63. Cf. the critical comments of A. S. Kapelrud, "Tradition and Worship: The Role of the Cult in Tradition Formation and Transmission," in D. A. Knight, ed., *Tradition and Theology in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia, 1977), p. 106.

64. The cultic formula, "Behold, this day," stressed the actuality of the liturgical recital (Deut. 5:2-3, 26:17, 30:15, etc.). See B. S. Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel* (London, 1962), pp. 74 ff.

65. Von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch*, pp. 3 ff. This view has been the object of considerable discussion. See W. Richter, "Beobachtungen zur theologischen Systembildung in der alttestamentlichen Literatur anhand des kleinen geschichtlichen 'Credo,'" *Wahrheit und Verkündigung* (Patterborn, 1967), pp. 175-212; C. Carmichael, "A New View of the Origin of the Deuteronomistic Credo," *VT*, XIX (1969), 273-289; J. Ph. Hyatt, "Were There an Ancient Historical Credo in Israel and an Independent Sinai Tradition?" *Translating and Understanding the Old Testament* (Festschrift H. G. May), ed. by H. T. Frank and W. L. Reed (Nashville, 1970), pp. 152 ff.

66. Literally, "a perishing Aramaean." The connotations of the two words permit the use of this paraphrase. M. Buber translates, "A straying Aramaean" and believes that the expression referred to Abraham (*The Prophetic Faith*, paperback ed., New York, 1949), p. 32, note 35.

67. The hymns of the Psalter make this point abundantly clear. See S. Terrien, *The Psalms and their Meaning for Today* (Indianapolis, 1952), pp. 26 ff.

68. Jos. 24:2-4; Deut. 6:20-24; cf. I Sam. 12:8; Ps. 78, 105, 136; Neh. 9:13-14. On the part played by the cult in the formulation and the transmission of the traditions, see in addition to the work of G. von Rad and M. Noth, G. E. Wright, "Cult

- and History," *In.*, XVI (1962): 3-20; A. S. Kavelrud, "The Role of the Cult in Old Israel," in I. P. Hyatt, ed., *The Bible in Modern Study* (Nashville, New York, 1965), pp. 44-56; S. Herrmann, "Kultreligion und Buchreligion: Kultische Funktionen in Israel und in Ägypten," in *Das ferne und nahe Wort. Festschrift L. Rost* (1967), pp. 94-105.
69. D. D. Luckenhill, "Hittite Treaties and Letters." *AISL.*, XXXVII (1921-22): 161-211; E. F. Weidner, *Boghazkoï-Studien* (Leipzig, 1933); V. Korošec, *Hethitische Staatsverträge* (Leipzig, 1931); Noth, "Old Testament Covenant-Making in the Light of a Text from Mari" (1955): in *The Laws in the Pentateuch*, pp. 108 ff.
70. G. E. Mendenhall, "Covenant Forms in Israelite Tradition," *BA*, XVII (1954): 50-76; cf. Law and Covenant in *Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Pittsburg, 1955); J. Muilenburg, "The Form and Structure of the Covenantal Formulations," *VT*, IX (1959): 347-65; K. Baltzer, *The Covenant Formulary in Old Testament, Jewish, and Early Writings*, tr. by D. E. Green (Philadelphia, 1970).; D. J. McCarthy, *Old Testament Covenant: A Survey of Current Opinions* (Oxford, 1972).
71. A. Weiser, *The Psalms*, (Philadelphia, 1962), pp. 23 f.; *Das Buch Hiob* (Göttingen, 1951; 5th ed., 1968), p. 11; "Zu Frage nach den Beziehungen der Psalmen zum Kult: Die Darstellung der Theophanie in den Psalmen und im Festkult," *Festschrift A. Bertholet*, ed. by W. Baumgartner et al. (Tübingen, 1950), pp. 513-31. W. Beverlin, *Origins and History of the Oldest Sinaitic Traditions*, tr. by S. Rudman (Oxford, 1965), pp. 163 f.
72. See notes 19 and 56 above.
73. B. S. Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament* (London, 1962), pp. 13 ff.; *id.*, *Memory and Tradition*, pp. 74 ff.
74. Terrien., "Creation. Cultus and Faith in the Psalter," pp. 117 f.
75. The picture of the entry of the Hebrew tribes in Canaan remains to this day a matter of debate. See G. Mendenhall, *The Tenth Generation* (Baltimore, 1973); pp. 19 ff.; S. Yeivin, *The Israelite Conquest of Canaan* (Leiden, 1971); R. de Vaux, *Histoire ancienne d'Israël* (Paris, 1971), pp. 441-54, 615-20; M. Weippert, *The Settlement of the Israelite Tribes in Palestine* (London, 1971).
76. A discussion on the relative merits of the Myth and Ritual school and the Salvation History school will be found in Kraus, *Worship in Israel*. *DD*, 16 ff.; G. E. Wright, "Cult and His&y," *In.*, XVI (1962): 3 ff.; F. M. Cross, "The Divine Warrior in Israel's Early Cult," *Biblical Motifs*, ed. by A. Altmann (Cambridge, Mass., 1966), pp. 11 ff.; *id.*, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973), pp. 82-90.
77. See J. Barr, "Story and History in Biblical Theology," *JR*, LV (1975): 348 ff. The Myth and Ritual School fails to face the problem created by this cultural disruption, because it assumes tacitly that Israel in its totality was the prey of Canaanite syncretism until the Babylonian exile and the rise of Judaism. As the biblical record itself admits, agrarian rituals represented a constant threat and became especially virulent after Solomon in the tenth century *B.C.*
78. Especially those of Samuel Reimarus, On *the Purpose of Jesus and His Disciples* -One more *Fragment* by the *Anonymous Writer of Wolfenbüttel* (published by Lessing in 1778); David Friedrich Strauss, *Leben Jesus* (1835); Ernest Renan, *Vie de Jésus* (1863).
79. Cf. G. F. C. Conybeare, *History of New Testament Criticism* (New York, 1910); S. Terrien, "History of the Interpretation of the Bible, III. Modern Period," *IB*, I (1952): 132 f.; G. E. Ladd, *The New Testament and Criticism* (Grand Rapids, 1967).
80. W. G. Kümmel, *Introduction to the New Testament*, 14th rev. ed., tr. by A. J. Mattil Jr. (Nashville and New York, 1966), pp. 33 ff.
81. M. Dibelius, *Die Formgeschichte des Euangeliums* (Tübingen, 1919; etc.), tr. by

- B. L. Woolf, *From Tradition to Gospel* (New York, 1935).
82. R. Bultmann, *Die Erforschung der synoptischer Evangelien* (Göttingen, 1925).
83. See E. V. McKnight, *What is Form-criticism?* (Philadelphia, 1969); E. Güttgemanns, *Offene Fragen zur Formgeschichte des Evangeliums* (München, 1970); J. M. Robinson and H. Koester, *Trajectories Through Early Christianity* (Philadelphia, 1971); R. S. Barbour, *Traditio-historical Criticism of the Gospels* (London, 1972).
84. See R. E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John, I-XII* (Garden City, N.Y., 1966), pp. cxi-cxiv and special bibliography on p. cxvii; D. E. Aune, *The Cultic Setting of Realized Eschatology* (Leiden, 1972).
85. This complexity arises from the difficulty of isolating the religious elements from cultural fluctuations of growth and decay in history. "The *homo religiosus* represents the 'total man'; hence the science of religions must become a total discipline" (M. Eliade, *The Quest: History and Meaning in Religion* [Chicago, 1969], p. 8; cf. pp. 12 ff.; "The History of Religions in Retrospect: 1912-1962," *JBR*, XXXI (1963): 98 ff.). The use of the word "religion" itself is open to misunderstanding, as it refers either to a phenomenological description of practices and beliefs common to a certain ethnic and cultural group over a relatively long period of history or, on the contrary, to the coherent presentation of an attitudinal continuity that is restricted to an elite of spirituality and ethics throughout many generations of ethnic and cultural existence. See I. Troeltsch, "Was heisst 'Wesen des Christentums'?" as quoted by C. J. Bleeker, "The Key-Word Religion," *The Sacred Bridge: Researches into the Nature and Structure of Religion* (Leiden, 1963), p. 37; A. Nygren, *Meaning and Method: Prolegomena to a Scientific Philosophy of Religion and a Scientific Theology*, tr. by Ph. S. Watson (Philadelphia, 1972).
86. See Th. C. Vriezen, "The Study of the Old Testament and the History of Religion," *SVT*, XVII (1969), pp. 9 f.
87. See J. D. W. Watts, *Basic Patterns in Old Testament Religion*, (New York, 1971); G. Fohrer, *History of Israelite Religion*, tr. by D. E. Green (Nashville and New York, 1972).
88. Early Christians spoke only of "The Scripture" (John 2:22; Acts 8:32; 2 Tim. 3:16; etc.), "The Scriptures" (Mark 12:24; I Cor. 15:3-4; etc.); "The Holy Scripture" (Rom. 1:2); and, like the Jews of the period, "The Book" (neuter in Gal. 3:10; feminine in Mark 12:26). Later Jews spoke commonly of *Miqra* ("What is Read").
89. See A. Jaubert, *La notion d'alliance dans le judaïsme aux abords de l'ère chrétienne* (Paris, 1963), pp. 269 ff.
90. Jer. 31:3-34; cf. W. Rudolph, *Jeremia* (Tübingen, 1968), pp. 202 ff.
91. The Pauline expression, "reading the Old Covenant" (2 Cor. 3:4) was metonymic, since verse 6 refers to the "New Covenant" and obviously not to the literature of the New Testament. Cf. Rom. 9:4; Gal. 3:15, 17; Gal. 4:24; Eph. 2:12.
92. See O. Michel, *Der Brief an die Hebräer* (Göttingen, 1966), pp. 294 f.; G. W. Buchanan, *To The Hebrews* (Garden City, N.Y., 1972), pp. xxvii ff.
93. See W. Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (Berlin, 1964), pp. 391-94; E. Käsemann, "The Pauline Doctrine of the Lord's Supper," *Essays on New Testament Themes* (London, 1964), pp. 109 ff.; H. Conzelmann, *Der Erste Brief an die Korinther* (Göttingen, 1969), pp. 235-71.
94. This idea is found as early as the second century A.D. (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, III, xi, 8) and has been widely adopted thereafter. It has especially influenced the thought of John Calvin, Johannes Cocceius, and Karl Barth. See H. H. Wolf, "Die Einheit des Bundes," *Beitrag zur Geschichte und Lehre der Reformierten Kirche*, Bd. 10 (Neukirchen, 1958); G. Schrenk, *Gottesreich und Bund im älteren Protestantismus vornehmlich bei Johannes Cocceius* (Gütersloh, 1923; reprint, 1967).

95. In the rabbinical literature, Jews were called "the sons of the covenant." References will be found in W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinical Judaism* (London, 1958), p. 261.
96. The relation between Yahweh and Israel was not expressed simply by a formula which could be traced to the Hittite treaties of vassality. No exact parallelism of form or content has been found so far between the Sinai Covenant and the political contracts of the ancient Near East. See Fohrer, *History of Israelite Religion*, p. 80. At the same time, the primitive notion of the chieftain has clearly molded the religious beliefs of the Hebrews, who viewed themselves as the "kingdom" of Yahweh. A recent survey of the evidence is found in A. E. Glock, "Early Israel as the Kingdom of Yahweh: The Influence of Archaeological Evidence on the Reconstruction of Religion in Early Israel," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, XLI (1970): 558-603. Cf. Mendenhall, "Early Israel as the Kingdom of Yahweh: Thesis and Methods," *The Tenth Generation*, pp. 1 ff.
97. See note 70 above.
98. Exod. 19:2 b-20:2 1, 23:20-24: 11, etc.
99. Jos. 8:30-35, 24:2-28: cf. Deut. 27:4 ff.; see J. L'Hour, "L'alliance à Sichem," *RB*, LXIX (1962): 5 ff., 161 ff., 350 ff.; Ch. H. Giblin, "Structural Patterns in Jos 24, 1-25," *CBQ* XXVI (1964): 50 ff.; V. Maag, "Sichembund und Vätergötter," *Hebräische Wortforschung* (Festschrift W. Baumgartner), *SVT*, XVI (1967): 205-18.
100. C. F. Whitley, "Covenant and Commandment in Israel," *JNES*, XXII (1963): 37 ff.; D. N. Freedman, "Divine Commitment and Human Obligation," *In*, XVIII (1964): 387-406; E. Gerstenberger, "Covenant and Commandment," *JBL*, XXIV (1965): 38-51; W. Eichrodt, "Covenant and Law," *In*, XX (1966): 307-21; J. L'Hour, *La morale de l'alliance* (Paris, 1966); E. Kutsch, "Gesetz und Gnade," *ZAW*, LXXIX (1967): 18-35; "Der Begriff *Berit* in vordeuteronomischer Zeit," *Das ferne und nahe Wort, Festschrift L. Rost; BZAW*, 105 (Berlin, 1967): 133-43.
101. 2 Kings 22:1-23:24. See R. Kraetschmar, *Die Bundestellung im Alten Testament*, pp. 123 ff.; M. Roberge, *Le sens de l'alliance dans le Deutéronome* (Rome, 1962); M. G. Kline, *Treaty of the Great King: The Covenant Structure of Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids, 1963); R. Frankena, "The Vassal-Treaties of Esarhaddon and the Dating of Deuteronomy," *Oudtestamentische Studiën*, XIV (1965): 122-54; M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomist School* (Oxford, 1972).
102. M. Newman, *The People of the Covenant* (New York and Nashville, 1962), pp. 152 ff., 162 ff.; R. E. Clements, *Abraham and David* (London, 1967), pp. 86 f.; cf. id., *God and Temple* (Philadelphia, 1965), pp. 52 f.
103. Terrien, "The Omphalos Myth and Hebrew Religion," pp. 332 f.
104. L. Rost, "Sinaibund und Davidsbund," *TLZ*, LXXII (1947): 129-134; id., "Die Überlieferung von der Thronnachsfolge Davids," *Das kleine Credo und andere Studien zum Alien Testament* (Heidelberg, 1965), pp. 160 ff.; G. Widengren, "King and Covenant," *JSS*, II (1957): 1-32; A. H. J. Gunneweg, "Sinaibund und Davidsbund," *VT*, X (1960): 335-111; H. Gese, "Der Davidsbund und die Zionserwählung," *ZTK*, LXI (1964): 10-26; W. Brueggemann, "The Trusted Creature," *CBQ*, XXXI (1969): 484-98; cf. F. C. Prussner, "The Covenant of David and the Problem of Unity in Old Testament Theology," in *Transitions in Biblical Scholarship*, ed. by J. C. Rylaarsdam, (Chicago, 1968), pp. 17-41; M. Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," *JAOS*, XC (1970): 184-203; Cross, "The Ideologies of Kingship in the Era of Empire: Conditional Covenant and Eternal Decree." Canaanite *Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp. 217 ff.
105. W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, tr. by J. A. Baker (Philadelphia,

1961), I, pp. 61 ff.; O. Eissfeldt, "The Promises of Grace to David in Isa. 55:1-5," in *Israel's Prophetic Heritage*, ed. by W. W. Anderson and W. Harrelson, (London and New York, 1962), pp. 196 ff.; A. Caquot, "Les 'graces de David'; à propos d'Isaïe, 55/3b," *Semitica*, XV (1965): 45-70; Zimmerli, "Sinaibund und Abrahambund," *Gottes Offenbarung* (1963), pp. 205 ff.; Clements, *Abraham and David* (1967), pp. 70 f.

106. Neh. 8:1-10:39; see G. E. Mendenhall, "Covenant," *IDB*, I (1962): 721 f.; J. M. Maier, "Zur Geschichte des Bundesgedankens und zur Rolle der Leviten in der politischen und religiösen Geschichte des alten Israel," *Judaica*, XXV (1969): 222 ff.

107. Pss. 25:10, 14; 44:18; 50:5, 16; 55:20 [Heb. 21]; 74:20; 78:10, 37; 89:4, 29, 35, 40 [Heb. 5, 30, 36, 41]; 103:18; 105:8, 10; 106:45; 111:5, 9; 132:12. In most of these cases, if not in all of them, the psalmists reflect the temple ceremonies in which the Sinai covenant and the Davidic covenant have already been brought into conjunction. Cf. S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, tr. D. R. Ap-Thomas (Oxford, 1962). I, p. 130.

108. 1 Kings 19:10, 14. The absence is particularly noticeable in Isaiah of Jerusalem (cf. 28: 15, 18; 33:8/?/); See W. Eichrodt, "Prophet and Covenant: Observations on the Exegesis of Isaiah," *Proclamation and Presence: Festschrift G. Henton Davies* (Richmond, 1970), pp. 167 ff. The prophets of the eighth century did not stress the idea of the covenant and may have had little or no knowledge of Israel's covenant with Yahweh, for they conceived the people's relationship to their God as one of a human family. Cf. C. F. Whitley, "Covenant and Commandment in Israel," *JNES*, XXII (1963): 37 ff.; L. Perliitt, *Bundstheologie im Alten Testament* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1969), pp. 129 ff.

109. See H. B. Huffmon, "The Covenant Law Suit and the Prophets," *JBL*,

LXXVIII (1959): 28695; W. Brueggemann, "Amos IV, 4-13 and Israel's Covenant Worship," *VT*, XV (1965): 1-15; R. E. Clements, *Prophecy and Covenant* (London, 1965); F. L. Moriarty, "Prophet and Covenant," *Gregorianum*, XLIV (1965): 817-33; J. Wijngaards, "Death and Resurrection in Covenantal Context (Hos. VI, 2)," *VT*, XVII (1967): 22639; L. Limburg, "The Root RIB and the prophetic Lawsuit Speeches," *JBL*, LXXXVIII (1969): 291-304; J. D. Martin, "The Forensic Background to Jer. 3:1," *VT*, XIX (1969): 82-92; M. O'R. Boyle, "The Covenant Lawsuit of the Prophet Amos: III 1-IV 13," *VT*, XXI (1971): 338-62; W. Vogels, "Invitation à revenir à l'alliance et universalisme en Amos IX 7," *VT*, XXII (1972): 223-39.

110. See R. E. Clements, "Prophecy and Eschatology," in *Prophecy and Covenant* (London, 1965), pp. 103 ff.; W. Brueggemann, "Isaiah 55 and Deuteronomic Theology," *ZAW*, LXXX (1968), 191 ff.; M. H. Woudstra, "The Everlasting Covenant in Ezekiel 16:59-63," *Calvin Theological Journal*, VI (1971), 22 ff.; M. Weinfeld, "Jeremiah and the Spiritual Metamorphosis of Israel," *ZAW*, LXXXVIII (1976), 17 ff.

111. See below, Chapter IV. The interconnection of presence and word has been described recently in M.-L. Henry, *Prophet und Tradition, Versuch einer Problemstellung*, BZAW, 116 (Berlin, 1969), pp. 19 ff.; D. McCarthy, "God's Presence and the Prophetic Word," in *The Presence of God*, ed. by P. Benoit, R. Murphy, B. van Iersel, Concilium, vol. 50 (New York, 1969), pp. 21 ff.

112. The wisdom circles understood the social demands of covenant righteousness, but they viewed it in its cosmic context of world harmony. See Pedersen, *Israel. Its Life and Culture*. I-II. (1926), pp. 377 ff.; M. J. Buss, "The Covenant Theme in Historical Perspective," *VT*, XVI (1966): 503.

113. Although it appears more than forty times in 1 **Macc.** and also in Ps. Sol. **9:18**, **10:5**, and **17:17**.
114. In which it occurs about thirty times. See A. Jaubert, *La notion d'alliance aux abords de l'ère chrétienne* (Paris, 1963), pp. 181 ff.; R. F. Collins, "The Berith-Notion of the Cairo Damascus Covenant and its Comparison with the NT (*diatheke*)," *ETL*, XXXIX (1967): 555-94.
115. **Aboth** 3.15; Mekilta Exod. 12.6; Midrash Sifre on Numb. 15.3; Midrash Koh. 2.1; 11.8. Cf. H. L. Strack und P. Billerbeck, *Kommtar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* (München, 1922-28), I, p. 243; II, pp. 279 f.; note I; III, pp. 89 ff., 704, 848; J. Jocz, "The Connections Between the Old and the New Testament," *Judaica*, XVI (1960): 142 ff.
116. In addition to the works listed above, see A. Schreiber, *Der neue Bund im Spätjudentum und Christentum* (Tübingen, 1954-5); W. C. van Unnik, "La conception paulinienne de la Nouvelle Alliance," *NTS*, XXIX (1973): 174-93; R. Deichgraber, *Gotteshymnus und Christushymnus in der früher Christenheit* (Göttingen, 1967), pp. 65 ff.; U. Luz, "Der alte und der neue Bund bei Paulus und im Hebraerbrief," *Ev. Th.*, XXVII (1967): 3 18-36.
117. The periodicity and character of a covenant festival remains a matter of discussion. See C. F. Whitley, "Covenant and Commandment in Israel," *JNES*, XXII (1963): 37 ff.; G. Fohrer, "Altes Testament- 'Amphiktyonie' und 'Bund'," *Studien zur alttestamentlichen Theologie und Geschichte* (1949-66; Berlin, 1969), pp. 84-119; id., *History of Israelite Religion*, tr. by D. E. Green (Nashville, 1972), pp. 204-5; E. Kutsch, "'Bund' und Fest. Zu Gegenstand und Terminologie einer Forschungsrichtung," *Theologischer Quartalschrift*, CL (1970): 299-320.
118. R. E. Clements, *Prophecy and Covenant* (London, 1965), pp. 45 ff.; W. Brueggemann, *Tradition in Crisis: A Study in Hosea* (Richmond, 1968), pp. 13 ff.; C. Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, tr. by H. C. White (Philadelphia, 1967), pp. 159 ff.; Zimmerli, *The Law and the Prophets*, pp. 61 ff.
119. Yahweh's covenant with the people was renewed under Joshua (**Jos. 24:25**), Jehoiada (2 Kings **11:17** = 2 Chron. 23:3), Hezekiah (2 Chron. **29:10**), Josiah (2 Kings **23:3**), and Ezra (Ezr. **10:3**). The covenant with David and his dynasty is not made "with the people" (2 Sam. 7: Ps. **89:4**, 29, 34, 39, **132:12**; Jer. **33:21**).
120. See bibliography in Terrien, "The Omphalos Myth and Hebrew Religion," p. 326, note 4; Cross, "Ba'l versus Yahweh," in *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp. 190-94.
121. See E. Dhorme, *Les religions de Babylonie et d'Assyrie* (Paris, 1945), pp. 1 1-19, 45 ff.; J. Bottéro, "L'ideologie religieuse: la théologie du divin," *La religion babylonienne* (Paris, 1952), pp. 54-68; id., "La théologie de l'univers," pp. 69-87; id., "La théologie de l'homme," pp. 82-107.
122. See S. Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, tr. by A. E. Keep (London, 1973), pp. 137 ff.; F. Daumas, *Les dieux de l'Egypte* (Paris, 1965); C. J. Bleeker, *Hathor and Thoth. Two Key Figures of the Ancient Egyptian Religion* (Leiden, 1973).
123. See Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*; R. du Mesnil du Buisson, *Nouvelles études sur les dieux et mythes de Canaan*, (Leiden, 1973).
124. Although serious qualifications apply in this case, see J. Duchesne-Guillemin, *La religion de l'Iran ancien* (Paris, 1962), pp. 170 ff.; G. Gnoli, "Problems and Prospects of the Studies on Persian Religion," in U. Bianchi et al., eds., *Problems and Methods of the History of Religion* (Leiden, 1972), pp. 67 ff.
125. See A. Hus, *Greek and Roman Religion* (New York, 1962), pp. 41 ff., 66 ff., 76 ff., 126 ff., 141 ff.; C. Kerényi, "Peaks of Greek and Roman Religious Experi-

ence," *The Religion of the Greeks and Romans* (London, 1962), pp. 141-62; *idem*, "The Laughter of the Gods," pp. 192-200. Although W. F. Otto rightly argues against the utilitarian explanation of ancient rites and makes an eloquent plea for sympathetic understanding of ancient rituals by moderns, even he concludes that Greek religion at its best seeks the oneness of god and man and in effect the deification of man (*The Homeric Gods: The Spiritual Significance of Greek Religion*, New York, 1954, p. 236). See also E. des Places, *La religion grecque: dieux, cultes, rites et sentiment religieux* (Paris, 1969); A. D. Nock, "Religious Attitudes of the Ancient Greeks," in *Essays on Religion and the Ancient World* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), II, pp. 534 ff.

126. See the variety of nature hierophanies described in M. Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions* (Paris, 1949), pp. 20-26, 117-25, 114-46, 179-80, 201-03, 213-17, 243-46.

127. See M. David, *Les dieux et le destin en Babylonie* (Paris, 1949), pp. 38 ff.; C. J. Bleeker, "Die Idee des Schicksals in der altägyptischer Religion," *The Sacred Bridge* (Leiden, 1963), pp. 112-29. While B. Albrektson in *History and the Gods* (Lund, 1967) attempted to show ancient Near Eastern parallels to the Hebraic view on divine providence, several scholars have reaffirmed the distinctiveness of Israel regarding this point. See W. G. Lambert, "Destiny and Divine Intervention in Babylon and Israel," in M. A. Beek et al., *The Witness of the Tradition OTS*, xvii, (Leiden, 1972): 65-72.

128. Hebraic theology falls neither into animistic pantheism nor into deistic aloofness. In Israel, nature worship in any of its forms appears to be a violation of Yahwism. In the ancient Near East, on the contrary, *cultus* aims at the enlisting of the deified environment for the economic and political advantage of a monarch, a dynasty, or a well-defined oligarchy. See H. Frankfort, *Kingship and the Gods: A Study of Ancient Near Eastern Reli-*

gion as the Integration of Society and Nature (Chicago, 1948), pp. 51 ff., 143 ff., 251 ff.; N. C. Habel, *Yahweh Versus Baal: A Conflict of Religious Cultures* (New York, 1964), pp. 51 ff.

129. Th. C. Vriezen, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 180 f.; G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, I, tr. by D. M. G. Stalker (New York, 1962), pp. 136 ff., 227 ff.; R. C. Dentan, *The Knowledge of God in Ancient Israel* (New York, 1968); F. Gaborian, "La connaissance de Dieu dans l'Ancien Testament," *Angel&m*, XLV (1968). 145-83.

130. See especially M. Buber, "Upon Eagles' Wings," *Moses* (London, 1946), reprinted as *Moses: The Revelation and the Covenant* (New York, 1958), pp. 100 ff.; *id.*, "The Silent Question," *At the Turning* (New York, 1952), pp. 43-44; *id.*, "The Dialogue Between Heaven and Earth," *ibid.*, pp. 56-57; *id.*, "The Faith of Judaism," *Mamre: Essays in Religion* (Oxford, 1946), p. 2. See also J. C. Murray, S. J., "The Biblical Problem: The Presence of God," in *The Problem of God* (New Haven, 1964), pp. 10-11.

131. Considerable attention has been devoted to the analysis of this theme: W. W. von Baudissin, "'Gott schauen' in der alttestamentlichen Religion," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, XVIII (1915): 173-239; E. G. Gulin, "Das Antlitz Gottes im Alten Testament," *Annales Academiae Scientiarum Fennicae*, XVII (1923): 21 ff.; J. Hempel, "Die Furcht vor dem nahen Gott," *Gott und Mensch im Alten Testament: Studie zur Geschichte der Frömmigkeit* (Stuttgart, 1926), pp. 617; J. Daniélou, *Le signe du temple ou de la présence de Dieu* (Paris, 1942); G. Henton Davies, "The Presence of God in Israel," in *Studies in History and Religion presented to Dr. H. Wheeler Robinson*, ed. by E. A. Payne (London, 1942), pp. 11-29; W. J. Phythian-Adams, *The People and the Presence: A Study of the At-One-Ment* (London: 1942); L. H. Brockington, "The Presence of God, a Study of the Use of the Term 'Glory of Yahweh'," *ET*, LVII

- (1945-46): 21-25; A. R. Johnson, "Aspects of the Use of the Term *Pānim* in the Old Testament." *Festschrift O. Eissfeldt*, ed. by J. Fück (Halle a. d. S., 1947), pp. 155-59; H. J. Franken, *The Mystical Communion with IHWH in the Book of Psalms* (Leiden, 1954"); Y. M.-J. Congar, *Le mystère du temple* (Paris, 1958); E. Jacob, "Manifestations of God," *Theology of the Old Testament* (New York, 1958), pp. 73-85; G. E. Wright, "God Amidst His People: The Story of the Temple," *The Rule of God* (Garden City, N.Y., 1960), pp. 57-76; G. von Rad, "The Divine Revelation at Sinai," *Old Testament Theology*, vol. I (New York, 1962), pp. 187-279; H. Ringgren, "Manifestations of God," *Israelite Religion* (Philadelphia, 1963), pp. 89-103; R. E. Clementi, *God and Temple* (Philadelphia, 1965); W. I. Wolverson, "The Psalmists' Belief in God's Presence," *Canadian Journal of Theology*, IX (1963), pp. 82-94; J. Jeremias, *Theophanie: Die Geschichte einer alttestamentlichen Gattung* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1965); H. Renckens, "Not an Exclusive Sense of God's Distance," and "A Full Consciousness Also of God's Nearness," *The Religion of Israel* (New York, 1966), pp. 111-18; W. Eichrodt, "The Forms of God's Self-Manifestation," *Theology of the Old Testament*, vol. II (Philadelphia, 1967), pp. 15-45; J. K. Kuntz, *The Self-Revelation of God* (Philadelphia, 1967); S. Armitham, "To Be Near to and Far Away from Yahweh: The Witness of the Psalms of Lament to the Concept of the Presence of God," *Bangalore Theological Forum*, II (1968): 31-55; B. A. Levine, "On the Presence of God in Biblical Religion," J. Neusner, ed., *Religions in Antiquity: Festschrift E. R. Goodenough* (Leiden, 1968), pp. 71-87; M. Haran, "The Divine Presence in Israelite Cult and the Cultic Institutions" (Review-Article on R. A. Clements, *God and Temple*), *Biblica*, L (1969): 251-67; D. McCarthy, *The Presence of God and the Prophetic Word* (London, 1969); R. de Vaux, "The Presence and Absence of God in History According to the Old Testament," in P. Benoit et al., eds., *Concilium*, L (1969): 7 ff.; J. I. Durham, "Shalom and the Presence of God," in J. I. Durham and J. R. Porter, eds., *Proclamation and Presence: Festschrift H. Henton Davies* (Richmond, Va., 1970), pp. 272 ff.; J. Reindl, *Das Angesicht Gottes im Sprachgebrauch des Alten Testaments* (Leipzig, 1970); Th. C. Vriegen, "The Communion of God with man," *An Outline of Old Testament Theology* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 176275; P. Grelot, "Presence de Dieu et communion avec Dieu dans l'Ancien Testament," *Lectio Divina*, LXVII (1971): 167-80; H. Mölle, *Das "Erscheinen" Gottes im Pentateuch. Ein literaturwissenschaftlicher Beitrag zur alttestamentlichen Exegese* (Bern-Franfurt/M, 1973); Th. W. Mann, *Divine Presence and Guidance in Israelite Traditions: The Typology of Exaltation* (Baltimore, 1977).
132. The motif of the tree of "absolute knowledge" in the myth of the garden (Gen. 3:5; cf. vs. 22), whatever its origin and the various levels of meaning which it has assumed in the tradition might be, suggests a stringent view of man's inability to know God through his own devices. See J. Coppens, *La connaissance du bien et du mal et le péché du paradis* (Paris, 1948), pp. 73 ff, 118 f; G. W. Buchanan, "The Old Testament Meaning of the Knowledge of Good and Evil," *JBL*, LXXV (1956): 114-20. Likewise, the legendary myth of the tower of Babel may point to a similar interpretation of man's theological limitations: cf., however, A. Parrot, *The Tower of Babel*, tr. by E. Hudson (London, 1955): v. 66 ff.; G. von Rad, *Genesis*, tr. by J. H. Marks, (Philadelphia, 1961), p. 147. Echoes of the myth of religious arrogance are found elsewhere in the literature (Isa. 13:19, 14:13; Jer. 51:6 ff.; Ezek. 28:13; Job 15:7 ff.). A similar thought appears in the sapiential literature. The fragment ascribed to a foreigner, Agur ben Yakeh of Massa, may reflect a satirical attitude toward those religionists who claim direct access to a personal knowl-

edge of God. The poem is presented ironically as a "prophetic oracle (*ne'um*) of a strong man (*gebher*):"

"I have wearied myself about God,
I have wearied myself about God,
and I am exhausted.

Who has ever ascended to the heavens,
and come down again?"
(Prov. 30:1, 4.)

The translation, however, is uncertain. See C. C. Torrey, "Proverbs, Chapter 30," *JBL*, LXXIII (1954): 93-96; H. Ringgren and W. Zimmerli, *Sprüche / Prediger* (Göttingen, 1962), pp. 114 f.; G. Sauer, *Die Sprüche Agurs* (Stuttgart, 1963), pp. 97 ff.; E. Lipiński, "Peninna, Iti'el et l'Athlète," *VT*, XVII (1967): 68-75.

133. D. Daube, *The Sudden* in Scripture (Leiden, 1964); Kuntz, *The Self-Revelation of God*, pp. 65 ff.

134. H. Schrader, *Der verborgene Gott: Gottesbild und Gottesvorstellung in Israel und im alten Orient* (Stuttgart, 1949), especially pp. 128 ff., 251 ff.; K. H. Miskotte, *When the Gods are Silent*. tr. by I. W. Doberstein (New York and Evanston, 1967), pp. 24 ff., 257 ff.; L. Peritt, "Die Verborgenheit Gottes," in H. W. Wolff, ed., *Probleme biblischer Theologie: Festschrift G. von Rad* (München, 1971), pp. 367 ff.

135. The tradition on Elijah at Horeb constitutes a turning point in the history of the religion of Israel as it points out the obsolescence of the theophanic mode of revelation and opens the age of prophetic vision (1 Kings 19:11 ff.).

136. Among recent studies on the faith in the resurrection of Jesus, see G. Kegel, *Auferstehung Jesu: Aufzählung der Toten. Eine traditionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung zum Neuen Testament* (Gütersloh, 1970); W. Marxsen, *The Resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth* (Philadelphia, 1970); H. C. Snape, "After the Crucifixion of 'The Great Forty Days,'" *Numen*, XVII (1970): 188-99; U. Wilckens, *Auferstehung. Das biblische Auferstehungszeugnis historisch unter-*

sucht und erklärt (Stuttgart, 1970); R. H. Fuller, *The Formation of the Resurrection Narratives* (New York, 1971).

137. See S. G. F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots* (New York, 1967); id., "Jesus and the Zealots: Aftermath," *BJRL*, LIV (1971-72): 47-66; O. Cullmann, *Jesus and the Revolutionaries*, tr. by G. Putnam (New York, 1970); M. Hengel, *Victory Over Violence: Jesus and the Revolutionists* (Philadelphia, 1973).

138. O. Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament*, tr. by Sh. C. Guthrie and Ch. A. M. Hall (Philadelphia, 1959); E. Fuchs, *Glaube und Erfahrung; Zum christologischen Problem im Neuen Testament* (Tübingen, 1965); R. H. Fuller, *The Foundations of New Testament Christology*, (New York, 1965); J. Knox, *The Humanity and Divinity of Christ; A Study of Pattern in Christology* (Cambridge, 1967); W. Marxsen, *The Beginning of Christology: A Study of Its Problems* (Philadelphia, 1969); H. Boers, "Jesus and Christian Faith: New Testament Christology since Bousset's *Kyrios Christos*," *JBL*, LXXXIX (1970): 450-56; B. Vawter, *This Man Jesus; An Essay Toward a New Testament Christology* (Garden City, N.Y., 1973); N. Perrin, *A Modern Pilgrimage in New Testament Christology* (Philadelphia, 1974).

139. A development which apparently played a part in the formulation of the Lukan narratives on the Ascension. In addition to commentaries on Luke and Acts, in loc., see G. Lohfink, *Die Himmelfahrt Jesu: Untersuchungen zu den Himmelfahrts- und Erhöhungstexten bei Lukas* (München, 1971); F. Hahn, "Die Himmelfahrt Jesu: Ein Gespräch mit Gerhard Lohfink," *Biblica*, LV (1974): 418-26.

140. See R. C. Tannehill, *Dying and Rising with Christ: A Study in Pauline Theology* (Berlin, 1967); J. Coman, "La présence du Christ dans la nouvelle création," *RHPR*, XLVIII (1968): 125-50; J. Galot, *Être né de Die-u, Jean 1, 13* (Rome, 1969); L. B. Smedes, *All Things Made New: A Theology of Man's Union With Christ* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1970); D. E. Aune, *The Cultic Setting*

of *Realized Eschatology* in *Early Christianity* (Leiden, 1972).

141. See B. Botte, "La sagesse et les origines de la Christologie," *RSPT*, XXI (1932): 54-67; A. Feuillet, *Le Christ. Sagesse de Dieu dans les épîtres pauliniennes* (Paris, 1966); W. A. Beardslee, "The Wisdom Tradition and The Synoptic Gospels," *JAAR*, XXXV (1967): 23140; A. Feuillet, *Le Christ. Sagesse de Dieu* (Paris, 1967); F. Christ, *Jesus Sophia: Die Sophia-Christologie bei den Synoptikern* (Zurich, 1970); J. M. Robinson, "Jesus as *Sophos* and *Sophia*: Wisdom Tradition and the Gospels," in *Aspects of Wisdom in Judaism and Early Christianity* (Notre Dame, Ind., 1975), pp. 1 ff.

142. This structure appears at three turning points of the gospel kerygma: (a) The introduction, which evokes John the Baptist in terms of the prophets' expectation of the final epiphany (Mark 1:2; cf. Mal. 3:1, Isa. 40:3); (b) The transfiguration, which borrows from the theologoumena of the Sinai theophany (Mark 9:2,7; cf. Exod. 19:16,24:15); and (c) The Passion narrative, which places into prominence the motif of the temple (Mark 13:1-2,14:58,15:38).

143. Acts 7:44-50.

144. Acts 9:5.

145. 1 Cor. 3:16.

146. Luke 1:35.

147. John 1:14.

148. Hebrews 7:1-9:28.

149. Rev. 21:2-27. It is significant that the seer of the Apocalypse of John specifically notes, "And I saw no temple therein" (vs. 22a).

150. Matt. 26:29; Mark 14:25; Luke 22:18, 30; cf. 1 Cor. 11:26.

151. G. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, I-II, tr. by D. M. G. Stalker (New York, 1960-65).

152. R. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament*, I-II, tr. by K. Grobel (New York, 1951-55).

153. See J. Weingreen, *From Bible to Mishna. The Continuity of Tradition* (Manchester, 1976).

154. See A. C. Sundberg, Jr., "The 'Old Testament': A Christian Canon," *CBQ*, XXX (1968): 154-55; J. A. Sanders, "Torah and Christ," *In.*, XXIX (1975): 372 ff.; id., "Canon of the NT," *IDB, Suppl. Vol.* (1976): 136 ff.

155. The rabbinical college at Jamnia (ca. A.D. 97) did not promulgate the canon of the Hebrew Bible. It decided on the canonicity of marginal or doubtful books. Likewise, it is piquant to observe that the Western church lived for centuries without an official canon of scripture, which was formulated by the Protestant Confessions of the sixteenth century and the decrees of the Council of Trent in response to the Protestant challenge.

156. See G. E. Wright, "The Canon as Theological Problem," *The Old Testament and Theology* (New York, 1969), pp. 166 ff.

157. See above, note 100.

158. See J. Barr, *The Bible in the Modern World* (New York, 1973), p. 181; J. A. Sanders, "Reopening Old Questions About Scripture," *In.*, XXVIII (1974): 322 f.

159. The distinction between "biblical theology" and "scholastic theology" appeared in the *Pia Desideria* of Philip Spener in 1675, although the expression *theologia biblica* was first used by Wolfgang Jacob Christmann in 1624 and Henricus a Diest in 1643. A *Biblisches Theologie* was published by Carl Havmann in 1708. A. F. Büsching wrote in 1758 on the "advantages of a biblical theology over a scholastic or dogmatic theology."

160. Cf. R. Smend, "J.-Ph. Gablers Begründung der biblischen Theologie," *Ev. Th.*, (1959), pp. 345 ff.; J. D. Smart, "The Death and Rebirth of Biblical Theology," in *The Interpretation of Scripture* (Philadelphia, 1961), pp. 232"ff.; G. Ebeling, "The Meaning of 'Biblical Theology,'" *JTS*, VI (1955), pp. 210-25; *Word and Faith*, tr. by J. W. Leitch (Philadelphia, 1963), pp. 79-97.

161. See the works, among others, of C. F. Ammon (1792), G. L. Bauer (1796), W.

- M. L. de Wette (1813-16), E. W. Hengstenberg (1829-35); B. Bauer (1838-39); F. C. Baur (1847), J. C. Hoffmann (1840-44), G. F. Oehler (1873), H. Schultz (1869), A. B. Davidson (1904).
162. See A. von Harnack, *Marcion: das Evangelium vom fremden Gott, eine Monographie zur Geschichte der Grundlegung der katholischen Kirche. Neue Studien zu Marcion* (Leipzig, 1924).
163. R. Kittel, *ZAW*, XXXIX (1921): 84; cf. C. Steuernagel, "Alttestamentliche Religionsgeschichte," *ZAW*, XLIII (1925): 266-73; J. D. Smart, "The Death and Rebirth of Biblical Theology," in *The Interpretation of Scripture*, pp. 270 ff.
164. Barth was aware of the sterility of *Historismus*, but he tended to telescope the entire history of Israel into a *Christology*. Paradoxically, his reaction *against* the neo-Marcionism of Harnack led him to neglect the historical concreteness and complexity of "the people of God," either in the Hebraic period or at the birth of the church. His influence has generally been felt by systematic theologians rather than by biblical exegetes. One notable exception *is* that of W. Vischer, who, like Barth and indeed E. W. Hengstenberg (*Christologie des Alten Testaments*, 1829-33), interpreted the Old Testament as "a witness to Christ." Among the many books and articles dealing with *Barthian* hermeneutics, cf. O. Cullmann, "Les problèmes posés par la méthode exégétique de Karl Barth," *RHPR*, VIII (1928): 70-83; German tr. in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Tübingen und Zurich, 1966), pp. 90-101.
165. J. Hempel, *Gott und Mensch im Alten Testament. Studie zur Geschichte der Frömmigkeit* (Stuttgart, 1926; etc.).
166. O. Eissfeldt, "Israelitisch-jüdische Religionsgeschichte und alttestamentliche Theologie," *ZAW*, XLIV (1926): 1-12.
167. W. Eichrodt, "Hat die alttestamentliche Theologie noch selbständige Bedeutung innerhalb der alttestamentlichen Wissenschaft?" *ZAW*, XLVII (1929): 83-91.
168. *Theology of the Old Testament* (1933-39), tr. by J. A. Baker from the 6th German ed. (1959), 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1961-64; etc.).
169. See above, pp. 22-27.
170. See R. E. Murphy, "The Kerygma of the Book of Proverbs," In., XX (1966): 9 ff.; "The Interpretation of the Old Testament Wisdom Literature," In., XXII (1968): 290 ff.; B. L. Mack, "Wisdom Myth and Mythology," In., XXIV (1970): 3 ff.; R. B. Y. Scott, "The Study of the Wisdom Literature," In., XXIV (1970): 20 ff.
171. F. C. Prussner, "The Covenant of David and the Problem of Unity in Old Testament Theology," in J. C. Rylaarsdam, ed., *Transitions in Biblical Scholarship* (Chicago, 1968), pp. 174-1.
172. W. Zimmerli, "The Place and Limits of the Wisdom in the Framework of the Old Testament Theology," *SJT*, XVII (1964): 146-58; W. Brueggemann, "Scripture and an ecumenical Lifestyle," In., XXIV (1970): 3-19.
173. Cf. W. G. Most, "A Biblical Theology of Redemption in a Covenant Framework," *CBQ*, XXIX (1967): 1-19; J. Jocz, *The Covenant: A Theology of Human Destiny* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1968); G. W. Buchanan, *The Consequences of the Covenant* (Leiden, 1970); see also note 96 above. Although many essays on biblical theology are still written in the traditional framework of doctrinal ideas, they usually assign a prominent place to the soteriological complex of cultic obedience and faith, even if they present a didactic pattern. See, among others, the works of L. Köhler (1936), P. Heinisch (1940), A. Gelin (1949), P. van Imschoot (1945), and O. Procksch (posthumously published in 1956).
174. H. Wheeler Robinson, *Inspiration and Revelation* (Oxford, 1950).
175. E. Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament*, tr. by A. W. Heathcote and Ph. J. Allcock (New York, 1958); Th. C. Vriez-

- en, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1970).
176. See note 151 above.
177. Not more successful has been von Rad's effort to justify mutual complementarity of Old Testament and New Testament. To maintain that the first Christians reinterpreted the creedal confessions of Judaism in a way not unlike that of the Deuteronomists and the Chronicler with regard to the cultic traditions of ancient Israel (cf. von Rad, "The Actualization of the Old Testament in the New" and "The Old Testament's Understanding of the World and Man, and Christianity," in *Old Testament Theology*, vol. II, pp. 319-56) is possible only through the application of a form of typological exegesis which raises serious problems of hermeneutical methodology. Cf. W. Eichrodt, "Typologische Auslegung des Alten Testaments," *Ev. Th.* XII (1952): 17 ff.; H. Conzelmann, "Fragen an G. von Rad," *Ev. Th.* XXIV (1964): 113 ff., and von Rad's subsequent disquisition *Ev. Th.*, XXIV (1954), pp. 388 ff. See also Eichrodt's comments on von Rad's method and purpose in the revised edition of his *Theology of the Old Testament*, tr. by I. A. Baker (London, 1967) I, p. 34; and those of Vriezen, in "Basis: Task and Method in Old Testament Theology," *An Outline of Old Testament Theology*, pp. 118 ff.
178. See the pioneering essay of A. Weiser on "Faith and History" (1931), reprinted in *Glaube und Geschichte im Alten Testament und andere ausgewählte Schriften* (Göttingen, 1961); E. Jacob, *La tradition historique en Israël* (Montpellier, 1941); G. Östborn, *Yhwh's Word and Deeds: A Preliminary Study into the Old Testament Presentation of History* (Uppsala, 1951); J. Hempel, *Glaube, Mythos und Geschichte im Alten Testament* (Berlin, 1954); E. Speiser, "The Biblical Idea of History in its Common Near Eastern Setting," *IEJ*, VII (1959): 203; J. Barr, "Revelation Through History in the Old Testament and in Modern Theology," *In.*, XVII (1963): 193-205; H. Gese, "The Idea of History in the Ancient Near East and the Old Testament," *JTC*, I (1964): 49-64; E. Osswald, "Geschehene u. geglaubte Geschichte in der alttestamentlichen Theologie," *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift der Fried.-Schiller-Universität*, XIV (1965): 705-15; J. J. M. Roberts, "Myth Versus History: Relaying the Comparative Foundations," *CBQ*, XXXVIII (1976): 1 ff.
179. G. E. Wright, *The Old Testament and Theology* (New York, 1969), pp. 70 ff.
180. B. S. Childs, "The God of Israel and the Church," in *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (Philadelphia, 1970), pp. 201 ff.
181. I. Barr, "The Problem of Old Testament-Theology and the History of Religion," *CJT*, III (1957): 141-49; R. de Vaux, "Peut-on écrire une théologie de l'Ancien Testament?" *Bible et Orient* (Paris, 1967), pp. 59-71; E. Jacob, "La théologie de l'Ancien Testament: Etat présent et perspectives d'avenir," *De Mari à Qumran. Festschrift J. Coppens* (Geneva and Paris, 1969), pp. 259-71; H.-J. Kraus, "Geschichte als Erziehung. Biblisch-theologische Perspektiven," in *Probleme biblischer Theologie: Festschrift G. von Rad*, ed. H. W. Wolff (München, 1971), pp. 258-74; N. W. Porteous, "Magnalia Dei," *ibid.*, pp. 417-27; G. F. Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1972); W. Zimmerli, *Grundriss der alttestamentlichen Theologie* (Stuttgart, 1972).
182. G. Fohrer, *Theologische Grundstrukturen des Alten Testaments* (Berlin & New York, 1972), pp. 95 ff. A useful survey of various suggestions for the "central" concern of the Old Testament will be found in G. Hasel, *Old Testament Theology: Basic Issues in the Current Debate* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1972), pp. 49 ff.
183. See H.-J. Kraus, *Die biblische Theologie: Ihre Geschichte und Problematik* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1970), pp. 279 ff.; E. Ladd, "The Search for Perspective," *In.*, XXV (1971): 41-62.

184. W. Wrede, *Über Aufgabe und Methode der sogenannten neutestamentlichen Theologie* (Göttingen, 1897).
185. See the works of P. Feine (1913), F. Büchsel (1935), F. Stouffer (1941), H. Conzelmann (1969), W. G. Kümmel (1969), J. J. Jeremias (1971), G. E. Ladd (1974), E. Lohse (1974), L. Goppelt (1975), H. Clavier (1976).
186. A. Schlatter, *Der Glaube im Neuen Testament* (1885); id., *Theologie des Neuen Testaments* (1909-18); id., *Die Geschichte des Christus* (1921); cf. Kraus, *Die biblische Theologie* (1970), pp. 175 ff. See also the influential book of M. Kähler, *The So-Called Historical Jesus* (2nd. German ed., 1896), tr. by C. E. Braaten (Philadelphia, 1964).
187. W. Bousset, *Kyrios Christos. A History of the Belief in Christ from the Beginnings of Christianity to Irenaeus*, tr. by J. E. Steely (Nashville and New York, 1970; original German edition, 1913).
188. See N. Perrin, "The Challenge of New Testament Theology Today," in Richard Batey, ed., *New Testament Issues* (New York, 1970), pp. 15-34; E. Käsemann, "The Problem of a New Testament Theology," *NTS*, XIX (1972-73): 235-45; W. G. Kümmel, *The Theology of the New Testament According to Its Major Witnesses: Jesus-Paul-John*, tr. by J. E. Steely (Nashville, 1973); H. Conzelmann, *Theologie als Schriftauslegung: Aufsätze zum Neuen Testament* (München, 1975).
189. See note 152 above.
190. R. Bultmann, "The Significance of the Old Testament for Christian Faith," in *The Old Testament and Christian Faith*, ed. by B. W. Anderson (New York, 1963), pp. 8-35. Among the various contributions to this critical appraisal of Bultmann's position, see especially C. Michalson, "Bultmann Against Marcion," pp. 49-63, and E. Voegelin, "History and Gnosis," pp. 64-89. Cf. Bultmann's typical treatment of the Old Testament in his article on "Knowledge" in *TWNT*. The literature on Bultmann is consider-
- able. Among others, see P. Barthel, "Bultmann et l'interprétation du Nouveau Testament," *RHPR*, XXXVII (1957): 257-64; N. J. Young, *History and Existential Theology: The Role of History in the Thought of Rudolf Bultmann* (Philadelphia, 1969).
191. See note 136 above.
192. O. Cullmann, *Christ and Time: The Primitive Christian Conception of Time and History*, rev. ed., tr. by F. V. Filson (London, 1957); *Christology of the New Testament*, tr. by Sh. C. Guthrie and Ch. A. M. Hope (Philadelphia, 1959); id., *Salvation in History*, tr. by S. G. Sowers (New York, 1967); this is in effect a modern treatment of the theology of the New Testament which presupposes the theological significance of the Old Testament for Christians.
193. Cullmann, *Salvation in History*, pp. 313 ff.
194. *Ibid.*, pp. 283 ff., 289 ff.
195. See bibliography in J. M. Robinson, *A New Quest for the Historical Jesus* (London, 1959), pp. 9 ff.; E. Trocmé, "Quelques travaux récents sur le Jésus de l'histoire," *RHPR*, LII (1972): 485-98; Ch. C. Anderson, *The Historical Jesus: A Continuing Quest* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1972).
196. The problem of the interrelation of exegesis and epistemology has been revived in the past twenty-five years through the development of linguistic analysis and philosophical inquiry concerning the question of objectivity and subjectivity. See F. Bovon, et al., *Analyse structurale et exégèse biblique* (Neuchâtel, 1971); J. A. Sanders, "Hermeneutics," *IDB, Suppl. Vol.* (1976), pp. 402 ff.; id., "Adaptable for Life: The Nature and Function of the Canon," *Magnalia Dei: The Mighty Acts of God [In Memoriam G. E. Wright]* (Garden City, N.Y., 1976), pp. 531 ff.
197. In his book, *Biblical Theology in Crisis* (New York, 1969), B. S. Childs referred not to "Biblical Theology" in the historical sense of the word (p. 18, *et passim*), but

to various forms of a neoorthodox theology which appeared on the North American continent in the middle of the twentieth century and was sometimes known as "the Biblical Theology Movement." This misleading expression designates a loose group of heterogeneous trends that have been influenced by Kierkegaard, Dostoevski, Barth, Brunner, Bultmann, Tillich, R. Niebuhr, Sartre, Heidegger, and even Camus. Although several of the representatives of this theological movement have taken seriously the theological significance of the Bible, their work should not in any way be confused with "biblical theology" in the proper sense.

198. See K. Stendahl, "Biblical Theology, Contemporary," *IDB*, I (1962): 429 ff.: cf. "Method in the Study of Biblical Theology," in *The Bible in Modern Scholarship*, ed. by J. Ph. Hyatt (Nashville, 1965), p. 199.

199. See B. Albrektson, *History and the Gods: An Essay on the Idea of Historical Events as Divine Manifestations in the Ancient Near East and in Israel* (Lund, 1967); S. Amsler, "Les deux sources de la théologie de l'histoire dans l'Ancien Testament," *RTP*, XIX (1969): 235-46.

200. G. Ebeling, "The Meaning of Biblical Theology," *JTS*, VI (1955): 210-25; revised and rep. in *Word and Faith* (Philadelphia, 1963), pp. 79-97; see esp. pp. 91 f.

201. See P. R. Ackroyd, *Continuity: A Contribution to the Study of the Old Testament Religious Tradition* (Oxford, 1962). New Testament scholars generally tend to continue presenting theological themes separately, although several of them are trying to bring these themes into a single focus. See H. Thyen, *Studienzur Sündenvergebung im Neuen Testament und seinen alttestamentlichen und jüdischen Voraussetzungen* (Göttingen, 1970).

202. See J. Barr, "Le judaïsme postbiblique et la théologie de l'Ancien Testament," *RTP*, XVIII (1968): 209-17.

203. "What the Bible testifies to and strives after is not theology, but something that happens to man in God's dealings with the world" (Ebeling, *Word and Faith*, p. 93).

204. Plato, *Rep.*, 379a; Aristotle, *Meteor.*, 2, 1-2; id., *Metaph.*, 2, 4, 12; 10, 7, 7; 11, 6, 6; etc. See F. Kattenbusch, "Die Entstehung einer christlichen Theologie. Zur Geschichte der Ausdrücke *theologia*, *theologos*, *theologikos*." *ZTK*, XI (1930): 161-205; W. W. Jaeger, *Theology of the Early Greek Philosophers* (Oxford, 1947), pp. 4-5.

205. J. Hänel, *Das Erkennen Gottes bei den Schriftpropheten* (Berlin, 1923), pp. 83 ff.; S. Mowinkel, "La connaissance de Dieu chez les prophètes de l'Ancien Testament," *RHPR*, XXII (1942): 69-105; G. J. Botterweck, "Gott erkennen" im Sprachgebrauch des Alten Testaments (Bonn, 1951); J. L. McKenzie, "Knowledge of God in Hosea," *JBL*, LXXIV (1955): 22 ff.; H. W. Wolff, "Wissen um Gott bei Hosea als Urform von Theologie," *Gesammelte Studien zum Alten Testament* (Munich, 1964), pp. 182-205.

206. It is significant that in the revised edition of *An Outline of Old Testament Theology* (Oxford, 1970), Th. C. Vriezen emphasizes the reality of communion between Yahweh and his people above all other factors (see esp. pp. 150, 175).

207. See J. W. McKay, "Man's Love for God in Deuteronomy and the Father/Teacher-Son/Pupil Relationship," *VT*, XXII (1972): 426-35; S. D. McBride, Jr., "The Yoke of the Kingdom: An Exposition of Deuteronomy 6:4-5," *In.*, XXVII (1973): 273-306.

208. R. C. Dentan, *The Knowledge of God in Ancient Israel* (New York, 1968), pp. 43 ff.

209. J.-J. von Allmen, *Prophétisme sacramentel; neuf études pour le renouveau et l'unité de l'Eglise* (Neuchâtel, 1964), p. 19; cf. S. Amsler, "Le theme du procès chez les prophètes d'Israël," *RTP*, XXIV (1974): 116-31, esp. p. 130.

210. K. H. Miskotte, *When the Gods are Si-*

lent, tr. J. W. Doberstein (New York, 1967), pp. 257 ff.

211. J. Barr, "The Old Testament and the New Crisis of Biblical Authority," *In.*, XXV (1971): 24 ff. See also R. Rendtorff, "Die Entstehung der israelitischen Religion als religionsgeschichtliches and theologisches Problem," *TLZ*, LXXXVIII (1963), cols. 735-46; *id.*, "The Concept of Revelation in Ancient Israel," in W. Pannenberg, ed., *Revelation as History*, tr. D. Granskou (New York, 1968), pp. 23 ff.; U. Wilckens, "The Understanding of Revelation Within the History of Primitive Christianity," *ibid.*, pp. 55 f.

212. J. Barr, *Old and New in Interpretation* (London, 1966), pp. 149; *id.*, "The Authority of the Bible: A Study Outline," *Ecumenical Review*, XXI (1969), pp. 135-66; *id.*, "The Bible in Theology," in *The Bible in the Modern World* (London, 1973), pp. 89 ff.; *id.*, *ibid.*, "A Basis for Construction," pp. 112 ff. See also the comments of J. A. Sanders on Barr's position in "Reopening Old Questions About Scripture," *In.*, XXVIII (1974), 321-30. For a conservative appraisal of the role of Scripture for Christian thinking, see M. G. Kline, *The Structure of Biblical Authority* (Grand Rapids, 1972).

213. See a pre-Vatican II appraisal by J. K. S. Reid, "Roman Catholicism and the Bible," *In.*, XIII (1959): 71-86; cf. D. R. Jones, *Instrument of Peace: Biblical Principles of Christian Unity* (London, 1965); L. Klein, ed., *The Bible in a New Age* (New York, 1964); J. Lescrauwaet, *The Bible on Christian Unity* (London, 1965); O. Cullmann, *La Bible et le dialogue oecuménique* (Paris, 1967); see also L. J. Swidler, ed., *Scripture and Ecumenism: Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox and Jewish* (Pittsburgh and Louvain, 1965), especially the essays of M. Barth, "Sola Scriptura," pp. 75 ff., and of R. E. Murphy, "The Relevance of Old Testament Studies for Ecumenism," pp. 95 ff.; Concilium, General Secretariat, "Is Scripture Becoming Less Important?" in *The Presence of God*, ed. by P. Benoit et al., (*Concilium*, L [1969]: 157-75); W. Brueggemann, "Scripture and an Ecumenical Life-Style," *In.*, XXIV (1970): 1 ff.; R. E. Murphy, "The Role of the Bible in Roman Catholic Theology," *In.*, XXV (1971): 78-94; H. Cazelles, "Is the Old Testament Relevant to Modern Catholic Theology?" *Theological Soundings, Notre-Dame Seminary Jubilee Studies* (New Orleans, 1973), VI.

2

Epiphanic Visitations to the Patriarchs

In all ages of history, men and women have related memories of moments when they had perceived, with particular intensity, the presence of their gods. The literature of spirituality, be it Jewish, Christian, or Muslim, abounds in stories of divine appearances. In many cases, the “vision” or auditory experience which takes place is described in somewhat ambiguous terms, so that a forceful awareness of numinous proximity is expressed as if the god had “appeared” or “descended” and then “gone away.” It is therefore not possible to ascertain from such literature whether a psychological mood, precisely on account of its concreteness, points to an inward emotion of a purely subjective character or to a suprasensorial perception.

In one of his novels, Georges Bernanos writes of a priest who “with an absolute certitude knew” that “the joy he suddenly felt was a presence,” and concludes: “The feeling of this mysterious presence was so vivid that he turned his head abruptly, as if to meet the glance of a friend.”¹ In similar language, the Hebrew traditions stated long ago, “Yahweh used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.”²

Although the Pentateuch in its final form attributed to Moses

the institution of the Hebrew cultus, it also affirmed that the God who revealed himself to the leader of the Hebrew slaves in the desert of Sinai was the same Deity worshipped by their ancestors, and it insisted upon the awareness of theological continuity. Yahweh was “the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.”³ The northern (E) strand of the cultic *legenda* of Israel maintained that the intimate name of that God, “Yahweh,” had not been known before the time of Moses, since it had been revealed only to him at the scene of the Burning Bush.⁴ The southern (J) epic, however, maintained that men had already begun “to call upon the name of “Yahweh” in the pre-historic age.⁵ Thus the relation between the origins of the Hebrew cultus and the actual events of the distant past remains obscure.⁶

Since most nations allude to the beginning of their ritual ceremonies and religious beliefs in stories of divine self-disclosure to their ancestral heroes, modern historians of Israelite religion have tended to disregard the literal accuracy of the patriarchal traditions. While earlier commentators had exaggerated the influence of the great men and women of the Bible at the expense of corporate forces, twentieth-century scholarship rushed to the opposite extreme. It has been generally believed that the Hebrew cultus gradually emerged as an impersonal and sociological phenomenon in the course of many generations. In recent years, anthropologists and ethnologists have recognized that individual personalities of exceptional stature often play decisive roles in religious reforms and innovations within the collectivities to which they belong. Today, a balanced view of the interaction between individual and society is gaining ground. Attention is again being paid to the intensely personal character of Hebrew faith. It is increasingly recognized that the traits of psychological subtlety that are displayed in the patriarchal stories of divine-human encounter reflect the experiences of concrete individuals endowed with an exceptional stature.

Stress is again being put on the importance of outstanding moments of religious illumination or “epiphany” within the lives of chieftains, poets, musicians, and other tribal leaders. Even when revelation is viewed as history, or rather when history is seen as the locus of revelation,⁷ the interpretation of events as media of divine self-disclosure depends upon the consciousness, reflection, and formulation of some gifted individual.⁸

While phenomena of religious perception may involve mass psychology,⁹ the comparative history of religions tends to show that collective states are generally related to the activity of influential figures who have had a vision or some form of ecstatic trance.

Biblical Hebrew did not apparently possess an abstract word meaning “presence.”¹⁰ The expression “the face of Yahweh” or “the face of Elohim” was sometimes specifically used to designate the innermost being of God, inaccessible even to a man like Moses,¹¹ but the word *panîm*, “face,” was ordinarily used metaphorically in composite prepositions to designate a sense of immediate proximity.¹² More often than not, the storytellers merely said that God “appeared,” literally, “showed himself.”¹³

One may find it naive and uncritical to begin a study of the Hebraic theology of presence with a selective analysis of the epiphanic visitations to the patriarchs since literary documentation concerning these visitations is the result of a long process of exchange between cultic celebration and inward faith in later Israel, during the monarchic period. Nevertheless, a limited survey of these narratives constitutes a direct approach to the topic under consideration, for Israel looked at these narratives in her festive ceremonies as models of her own religious stance from generation to generation. As the fathers knew their God, so also the sons could in some way duplicate, imitate, or stimulate in themselves a receptiveness to the renewal of divine entrance into their history. Moreover, the stories of the epiphanic

visitations to the patriarchs carried with them promises and warnings for the future.¹⁴ The recital of the appearances of Yahweh to the ancestors of the special people had in effect already assumed the character of a dynamic canon: they were concrete parables of the standards of the faith, they contained the seed of a new life. The coming of God in the past meant more than a simple revelation (*Offenbarung*): its cultic recital promoted an expectation—the hope for fulfillment and the wait for the final manifestation (*Erscheinung*).¹⁵ He who came to the fathers is also He That *Cometh*. From the beginning, Israel's faith was eschatological.

THE PATRIARCHAL TRADITIONS

Archaeological discoveries have shed a great deal of light on the patriarchal age. Data on West-Semitic onomastics,¹⁶ economic and political conditions in Asia Anterior during the Middle Bronze and Late Bronze Ages, ethnic movements, legal customs,¹⁷ and technological advances such as the domestication of the Bactrian camel,¹⁸ have considerably clarified the historical milieu which is presupposed by the early traditions of Genesis regarding the Hebrew fathers.¹⁹ This new climate of knowledge, however, does not permit a demonstration of the literal historicity of the patriarchal saga.²⁰ There is no evidence that the sequence of the three figures now portrayed as individuals genealogically related—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—constitutes a factual account.²¹ It is probable that the traditions concerning Abraham and Lot, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, as well as the garland of vignettes about the twelve sons of Jacob, depict less the adventures of individuals than the tribal migrations of patronymic heroes. Nevertheless, contemporary historians have come to exercise a caution which Julius Wellhausen and recent traditio-historical critics have often ignored.

One aspect of this trend toward critical respect for the validity of the tradition concerns the religious experiences of the patriarchs, and this development assumes a particular importance for the study of the origins of the Hebraic theology of presence.

Available data interpreted in the light of the history of the ancient Near East during the second millennium B.C. allow the contemporary student to conjecture that the Hebrew ancestors formed not a single family but a group of caravan migrants and herdsmen of the seminomadic type²² who practiced seasonal commerce and agriculture in limited areas,²³ moved periodically on the highways of the Fertile Crescent,²⁴ maintained contact with diverse ethnic and political groups, yet remained rigorously distinct from their cultural environment. The distinctiveness of Israel's religion at a later age strongly suggests that a phenomenon of cultic disruption did actually take place at some given time in her past.

This cultic disruption may be considered as either the cause or the symptom of the fathers' cultural aloofness. All the traditions now preserved in Genesis, with one exception,²⁵ insist on the religious nature of the Hebrews' sociological isolation. From the start of the Yahwist's epic (Gen. 12:1 ff.), the memories of patriarchal travels point to a single motivation: the peculiar summons of a "nomadic" Deity that appears at first to have been completely independent of a localized shrine or priesthood.²⁶ This feature is the more remarkable when it is remembered that the narratives, whatever may have been their initial modes of formulation, were preserved for posterity through the festive celebrations of Israel in the sanctuaries of Canaan after the Hebrew tribes settled in the land. At the same time, one of the factors which played a decisive part in the growth of the oral tradition was related to the process of "Hebraicization" of the Canaanite shrines. The stories of the epiphanic visitations of Yahweh to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob may well have had their roots in the remote past, perhaps in the first half of the second

millenium *b.c.*, but they belong, at least in their present form, to the cultic etiology of a later age. They almost invariably tell how the ancestors built altars to commemorate and sacralize the places where they heard the summons of a strange deity, Yahweh. In the time of the Judges and the Kings, toward the end of the second millenium *b.c.*, these places became the chief sanctuaries of Israel-Shechem, Mamre, Beersheba, Bethel, Penuel, and so on.

The patriarchs may have worshipped a number of sky or mountain deities, like El Elyon, El Shadday, El Roy, El Bethel, and El Olam.²⁷ In addition, they possibly held allegiance to their clan gods, like “the Shield of Abraham” (Gen. 15:1), “the Fear (or Kinsman) of Isaac” (Gen. 31:42, 53), “the Champion of Jacob” (Gen. 49:24).²⁸ All these gods were in the course of time identified with Yahweh, the God of Moses (Exod. 3:13 ff.). At the present stage of Old Testament science, it is not possible to know with certainty whether or not Yahweh was worshipped by Abraham and the other patriarchal figures.²⁹ Nevertheless, the epiphanic visitations to the patriarchs are now presented in a Yahwistic context, and this points to a significant aspect of the Hebraic theology of presence.

THEOPHANY AND EPIPHANIC VISITATIONS

The use of the expression “epiphanic visitations” is here proposed rather than the traditional, “theophany,” because the latter is in several respects inadequate. The etymology of the word³⁰ and its early usage³¹ betray some of the characteristics of the Greek myths, in which the gods and goddesses are “seen” by human eyes.³² There is reason to believe that such a vocabulary depended, as in many other instances, upon semantic habits inherited from the Northwest Semites in proto-

Hebraic times. The "Hebrew" tongue, after all, had in all probability reached a status of philological distinctiveness within the West-Semitic languages before it became a tool for a new and specifically Hebraic formulation of religious faith.³³ Moreover, the Hebrew stories of "theophany" make use of visual features in such a way that the deity is not really seen by man. Either there is too much light, in which case the storytellers emphasize the blinding quality of the experience, or there is too little light-the experience occurs in the gloom of night or in a cloud of total darkness-and the storytellers pile up synonyms for obscurity in order to stress divine invisibility. In a Hebrew "theophany," Yahweh is not really "seen" by man, but only "heard," although there are visible signs of his presence.

The word "theophany" is also inadequate when one interprets it in the context of the patriarchal narratives, because it conveys not only the features of light and darkness but also a variety of wonders such as whirlwinds, hurricanes, storms, rain, hail, flashes of fire (especially bolts of lightning), claps of thunder, smoke, and earthquakes. These elements abound in the mythical material of the ancient Near East,³⁴ as well as in that of Greece and Rome at a later age. They also appear in the many poetical allusions to "theophanies" which are found in the hymns of the Psalter and in the prophetic literature.³⁵ Some of these are present in the various traditions concerning the Sinai theophany,³⁶ but they are lacking in the narratives of divine-human encounters in the patriarchal period.³⁷ Quite clearly, these narratives do not belong to the same literary *Gattung* or genre as those of the Sinai-Horeb theophanies.³⁸ Moreover, the many poetic allusions to the coming of Yahweh in the beginning or at the end of Israel's history, especially those in the hymns of praise for the warrior God,³⁹ and which are usually described as a literary form of theophany, likewise differ both from the Sinai-Horeb type and from the patriarchal *Gattung*. Form-critical analysis shows that they belong either to the cultic

hymn or to the cultic-prophetic oracle which liturgically enacts Yahweh's final epiphany.⁴⁰

On the one hand, a "theophany" insists on the visibility of the natural phenomena which accompany the divine appearances, but this visibility is subordinated to their *hieroi logoi*, the sacred words of revelation and command. A "theophany" also concerns an individual, but this individual is a mediator, like Moses or Elijah. The theophanic intervention, as reenacted or proleptically acted in the cultus, addresses itself to a community at worship. It subordinates the visibility of the natural wonders to the *hieros logos* ("holy word"), and the *hieros logos* to the *Heilsgeschichte* ("History of Salvation").

On the other hand, the patriarchal narratives should not be called "theophanies," for they form a *sui generis* type of divine manifestation. They concern themselves exclusively with individuals of the distant past; they are free from the display of natural *mirabilia*; and they are couched in the style of simple meetings, naively and concretely described as the sudden encounter of two strangers who were going their separate ways.⁴¹ These meetings are succinctly described, with a minimum of visual elements, and they center on a dramatic dialogue between God and man. They are suddenly begun and swiftly terminated. They are presented as normal happenings of daily existence, although they always succeed in preserving, by the use of some rhetorical or semantic device, the mystery of divine transcendence. They differ from the Sinai-Horeb theophanies,⁴² the visions of the prophets,⁴³ the "whirlwind theophany" in Job,⁴⁴ the theophanic pictures of the Psalms and other victory hymns, and the prophetic oracles on the final epiphany of history. By contrast, the patriarchal stories deal with what may be called "epiphanic visitations."⁴⁵

Form-critical analysis of the speeches of Deity which constitute the climax of these stories⁴⁶ shows that the traditions underwent a long process of development and stylization before they acquired their present form of literary expression. Several

motifs of the epiphanic discourses belong to the cultic style of Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Ugaritic, and Israelite oracles.⁴⁷

1. The opening formula of self-asseveration, “I am Yahweh,” links the patriarchal stories of epiphanic visitation⁴⁸ with the theophanies of the Mosaic age: “I am Yahweh, the god of thy fathers” (Exod. 3:6). The recital of this sort of divine self-identification during the act of worship evoked at once in the mind of the community the whole history of salvation—“I am Yahweh, thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt” (Exod. 20:2)—which in turn led to the formulation of the confessional response: “My father was an exhausted Aramaean nomad” (Deut. 26:5).⁴⁹ Likewise, the Egyptian god Harmakhis said to Thut-mose IV (1421-1413 B.C.), “I am thy father, Harmakhis-Khepri-Atum. I shall give thee my kingdom upon earth at the head of the living.”⁵⁰ In the same manner, the Mesopotamian goddess declared to Essarhaddon of Assyria (680-669 B.C.), “I am the goddess Ishtar of Arbela, who will destroy your enemies from before your feet.”⁵¹

2. The entreaty of reassurance, “Fear not,”⁵² points to the language of the *Heilsorakel* (Salvation-oracle), which was pronounced, probably at an early age, in the sanctuaries of Israel.⁵³ It finds an echo, side by side with the opening motif of self-asseveration, in the oracular proclamations of the ancient Near Eastern temples.⁵⁴

3. The promise of continuing companionship, “I will be with thee” (Gen. 26:24), provides a link with the Mosaic theophanies (Exod. 3:12, etc.). It implies a distinction between the experience of divine presence, quasi-sensorial and limited in time, and the awareness of psychological communion, which lasts beyond the brevity of the epiphanic visitation. The archaic feature of approval for the legendary Enoch, who “walked with Elohim” (Gen. 5:22), has become the cardinal element of Israel’s faith.⁵⁵ Not only the patriarchs and Moses but also the prophets and the psalmists of a later age expressed a similar

awareness (e.g., Jer. 1:8, Ps. 73:23), and the liturgical motto of the nation's eschatological hope was "Immanuel," "El-with-us" (Isa. 7:14; cf. Ps. 46:7, 11 [Heb. 8, 12]).

From the start of Israel's history, during the early days of Moses, Joshua, the judges, and the first kings, cultus and faith were inseparable. In the ceremonial commemoration of the epiphanic visitations to the patriarchs, the nation learned the purpose of her *modus vivendi* and the meaning of her *modus orandi*. Under the promise of posterity and land, which provided the unifying structure of all the patriarchal stories of epiphanic visitation, one may discern a deeper and wholly internal theme of a strictly theological character. The promise of seed and real estate, important as these may be, is subordinated to the search for identity in the context of universal meaning.⁵⁶ In ceremonially rehearsing the stories of Yahweh's manifestations to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the nation was, in effect, asking about her own place among the nations of the earth and her own purpose in the history of man. Posterity and land are conditions of historical existence, but they should not be confused with ends in themselves. Israel was animated by the vision of unity for "all the families of the earth," and she transmitted that vision in the festive recitals of the first narrative of patriarchal obedience to a call. From the start, the Hebraic theology of presence was organically bound to the Hebraic theology of history.

THE CALL OF ABRAHAM (*Gen.12:1-6*)

The Yahwist epic places the call of Abraham at the head of the history of salvation. The narrative contrasts sharply with the picture of international chaos which immediately precedes it.⁵⁷

No less than three times in the tradition on the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9) the expression appears, “scattered abroad over the face of the entire earth” (11:4*b*, 8*a*, 9*b*). Man’s attempt to obtain security in territorial terms has failed. The figure of Abraham is introduced as the embodiment of a new form of society which deliberately severs its bonds with a static past in order to experiment in time. The nomadic motif of movement through space emerges as a symbol of openness to the future. Israel has sensed that history is not merely historiography—the recording of the past. Israel treasures cultically her epic memory on account of her will to understand and to prepare her future.

The form-critical analysis of the pericope of Abraham’s call is the fruition of many scholars’ work,⁵⁸ but E. Speiser appears to have succeeded in discovering the poetic structure of the epiphanic speech:⁵⁹

- 12:1. And Yahweh said to Abram:
 “Get thee out of thy country, and of thy clan,
 Even away from thy father’s home,
 To the land I will show thee.
2. I will make thee a great nation,
 Bless thee and make thy name great:
 Be thou a blessing!
3. I will bless them who bless thee
 And curse him who curses thee:
 In thee shall bless one another
 All the families of the earth!”
4. And Abram went as Yahweh told him.

The scene is tersely staged. There is no hint of a visual setting. The pericope begins without introduction. The words “epiphany” and “theophany” are not fitting, for the Deity is not even said to appear. One uncovers here the features of the literary *Guttung* which is later used by the eighth- and seventh-

century prophets in the narratives of their calls. The epiphanic speech is couched in metrical and strophic structure: two *tricola* culminating in a rare *quadricolon*, with rhythmic stress falling on the last words, “all the families of the earth.”⁶⁰ In every generation, the people of the covenant are asked to decide, and the decision is painful and thrilling. It is painful for it is first a renunciation: “Get thee out!” The imperative *lekh-leka* is constructed with the formerly misnamed *dativous ethicus*,⁶¹ a seemingly pleonastic pronominal suffix, reading literally, “Go for thyself,” which emphasizes the tense, complex, and definitive character of the act in question; hesitation is legitimate, but when the decision is taken, there is no return. Like Abraham, Israel is uprooted,[@] and her alienation from the historical past of mankind results directly from her theology of presence.

The threefold progression moves from larger to narrower sociological allegiance—country, clan, home—and it stresses the cruel aspect of the renunciation. At the same time, the decision also has a radiant ring, for it leads to the expectation of a blessing. The word *berakah* designates far more than the pseudomagical virtue of material wealth, physiological fertility, and immediate success. It evokes well-being in a corporate sense, and it implies social responsibility.⁶³ It conveys, to be sure, the connotation of sexual potency and procreative largesse, but always in the sense of loyalty to the future generations. Blessing is that power which transforms an individual man of the static past into the historical man, *homo historicus*. While the builders of the Tower of Babel attempted vainly to make a name for themselves (Gen. 11:4), Abraham received a blessing, and therefore his name was to become great. More than this, he himself is called to become a blessing.

The imperative phrase “be a blessing!” is indeed unusual, but the Masoretic pointing is well established, and there is no valid reason to correct it (Gen. 12:2*c*). This is the mission of Abraham and of Israel: “Be a blessing!” Such a rhetorical inno-

vation fits the revolutionary character of the thought. In a time of self-satisfied nationalism, when David and perhaps also Solomon (if the Yahwist first proclaimed the ancient tradition during Solomon's reign, in the middle of the tenth century B.C.) have indeed conquered the land of Canaan but have also been insidiously corrupted by the Canaanite culture, the cultic ceremonial of Israel reminds the community of faith of its theological vocation and its existential predicament. In the Yahwist epic, God says to man, "Dust thou art!" (Gen. 3:19), and to the father of the nation, "Be a blessing!" (Gen. 12:2c).

The mission of Israel in history was to effect a reconciliation among all the families of the earth.⁶⁴ The vision of a united mankind was far too modern for ancient times, and the theme disappeared from general notice in the centuries which followed. It remained in the ceremonial of Jerusalem, however, as the hymn for the celebration of the autumn festival, perhaps even the New Year, clearly testifies:

"The princes of the earth are assembled
as the people of the God of Abraham" (Ps. 47:9[Heb.10]).

Second Isaiah, at the depth of the exile in Babylon, remembered that Israel, the seed of Abraham (Isa. 40:8), was called to be "a light unto the nations" (42:6, etc.). The intensity of Israel's search for her identity has led her to express, for the first time in history, an ideal of universalism, for which she assumed the burden of responsibility.⁶⁵

The form of the epiphanic speech in which the nation gave literary form to the sense of her mission was borrowed from her cultic life. The "blessing" of Abraham and the "blessing" which Abraham is called upon to become are the blossoming of a moment of divine proximity, and the response to the epiphanic speech constitutes the Hebraic stance of faith. All the other stories of epiphanic visitation to the patriarchs introduce the

theme of the testing of that faith. Because the fulfilment of the blessing is delayed and the self-disclosure of Yahweh remains limited to short instants of visitation, the Hebraic theology of presence at once acquires the elements of absence or at least hiddenness. From the start of the tradition regarding the history of salvation, cultus and faith are inextricably bound.

THE COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM (*Gen.15:1-21*)

The present chapter of Genesis, which describes the covenant between Yahweh and Abraham (15:1-12,17-21), combines several strands of ancient traditions, both Elohist and Yahwistic,⁶⁶ with a priestly reinterpretation (vss. 13-16).⁶⁷ As Abraham had no heir, and the promise of his vocation lost all meaning, a second epiphanic visitation appears in the narrative: "After these things, the word of Yahweh came unto Abram in a vision," (Gen. 15:1u). This is the language of the prophetic *Gattung* of a later age. It will be observed that the word "vision" suggests the realm of sight, but no visual perception is recorded. On the contrary, it is the theologoumenon of the word which claims the audience's attention. The presence of the divine manifests itself in auditory rather than in visual ways even when the "word" comes in a "vision."⁶⁸ Once again, the religious encounter is dominated by an epiphanic speech:

"Fear not, Abram!
I will be thy shield
and thy exceedingly great reward!"

(Gen. 15:1 b).

Quite naturally, the recipient of this assurance protested, since he continued to be childless (vs. 2), and the storyteller insisted:

"Behold, the word of Yahweh was to him, saying,
... He that shall come forth out of thy own loins
shall be thy heir."

(Gen. 15:4)

Presumably still in the course of the same vision, Yahweh “brought him outside” to show him the stars in the night sky as the symbol of his innumerable offspring (vs. 5). The conclusion followed: “[Abraham] had faith on Yahweh, who imputed it to him for righteousness” (Gen. 15:6).

The verb *he'emîn*, “to have faith,” is used in a theological context.⁶⁹ The semantic connotations of the root suggest solidity and firmness not only in the realm of space but also in that of time; hence it indicates durability, reliability, and endurance. Abraham took Yahweh at his word. He believed the truth of the promise made to him. He placed his entire trust in the epiphanic speech. He responded with the entirety of his being to the articulated thrust of the divine presence. He had no tangible or visible evidence; indeed, fragments of other ancient traditions woven into the final form of the narrative indicate that although his faith never wavered he made repeated attempts to receive a confirmation of his certitude. Nevertheless, he firmly maintained his acceptance of the word. This is not an intellectual assent to a propositional truth. It is the insertion of the wholeness of one’s personality into a relation of total openness toward the reality of God. Yahweh had pledged his honor in promising Abraham a son, and Abraham “had faith upon Yahweh.”

The attitude which is thus described is precisely akin to that of “righteousness,” in the Hebrew sense of the word *tseduqah*.⁷⁰ The history of this word is long and tortuous, but the Yahwist, followed by the great prophets and the psalmists, used it to indicate a dynamic and harmonious relationship between two human beings, between social groups, or again between God and man.⁷¹ The word originally had little-if anything-to do with forensic justice, although in late Judaism it came to designate “deeds of piety,” hence, “meritorious acts” and “merits.”⁷² The idea of righteousness in the context of legal judgment (cf. the Vulgate *justitia*) represents a distortion of the

ancient Hebraic view of ongoing communion between God and man. It is against this distortion that Paul laboriously developed the formulation of what became a widely misunderstood “doctrine,” that of “justification by faith” (Rom. 4:3-22, Gal. 3:6, etc.).⁷³

Abraham had no law to obey.⁷⁴ In such a context, his righteousness was not viewed as a reward for obedience. The text points to the inwardness of his attitude and to the totality of his devotion. Jesus, Paul, and the Protestant Reformers keenly sensed the importance of this Hebraic notion as an intrinsic part of a theology of presence. It is significant that both the word *faith* and the word *righteousness* became perverted as soon as they were divorced from the temporally unstable and psychologically elusive apprehension of divine presence. Faith generally became mistaken for “mere belief” as soon as righteousness was held as an abusive synonym for “merit.” The context of this narrative of epiphanic visitation shows that for the Yahwist, righteousness is not a quality or a virtue which Abraham earned by his achievement. Rather it is a way to describe man’s living under God, or, in the favorite metaphor of the Hebrew religious semantics, man’s “walking with God.” The term suggests the continuity and the duration in time of the existential trust.

The final editor of the Pentateuch has interwoven in the narrative some archaic memories concerning the rite of covenant (Gen. 15:7–12, 17-21). Significantly, the divine self-asseveration again constitutes the initial element of this epiphanic sequence: “I am Yahweh who brought thee out of Ur of the Chaldeans” (vs. 7). Abraham’s reaction to the holy was so traumatic that, just before sunset, a trancelike, hypnotic, or mantic sleep (*tardēmah*) seized him: “and behold, a dread, something like a great darkness, kept falling upon him” (vs. 12). As in the parallel tradition (vs. 1), the clear consciousness of the pa-

triarch has been altered by the revelatory process. The “vision” (*mahazeh*) took place, we are now told, in a peculiar form of “dream” which emerges in turn from a peculiar form of sleep.⁷⁵

It should be noted that the narrative includes the rite of the covenant, but that such a motif is subordinated to that of the epiphanic presence.

THE STRANGERS BY THE OAKS OF MAMRE

(*Gen. 18:1-16*)

A masterpiece of the folkloric art, this story again represents the skillful interweaving of Yahwist and Elohist strands of oral tradition.⁷⁶ Its anthropomorphic character appears more clearly than that of the other stories of epiphanic visitation, for the three strangers who stood in front of Abraham as he sat at the opening of his tent in the heat of the day (vs. 1) soon became identified directly with the Deity (vs. 13). Yet, these men accepted Abraham’s hospitality and ate as he stood by them under the trees (vs. 8). Afterward, in accordance with nomads’ etiquette, the host accompanied them on the path to set them on their way. Accounts of visits by divine beings disguised as casual strangers are found everywhere in the legends of primitive societies.⁷⁷ In some earlier stage of the tradition,⁷⁸ the motif of the terebinths or oak trees of Mamre may have assumed an animistic meaning, but the Yahwist epic has absorbed it within the theme of epiphanic visitation.

The appearance of Yahweh in the guise of three men and later in the course of the tale in the guise of one of two angels or messengers⁷⁹ did not raise any difficulty with the Hebraic mentality. It indicates the realism with which the ancient mind believed in the actuality of divine rapport with men and its directness.⁸⁰

- 18: 1. And Yahweh appeared to him
by the terebinths of Mamre,
As he sat at the door of his tent
in the heat of the day.
2. He lifted up his eyes and looked,
and behold! three men stood in front of him.
When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet
them,
and bowed himself toward the earth and said.
3. "My lord, if I have found favor in thy sight,
do not pass by thy servant.
4. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet,
and rest yourselves under the tree,
5. While I fetch a morsel of bread
that you may refresh yourselves,
And after that you may pass on—
since you have come to your servant."
6. And they said, "Do thus as thou hast spoken."

All commentators have noted the exquisite artistry with which this scene is portrayed.⁸¹ Its mythical feature of the hero who entertains gods unaware cannot detract from the specific quality of this Hebraic narrative of epiphanic visitation. The storyteller insists on the natural simplicity of the encounter between God and men of faith. At the same time, he subtly intimates the undefinable but unmistakable dimension of the holy.

At first, Abraham addressed only one of the visitors,⁸² although his expression of welcome embraced all three.⁸³ The well-known dialogue on the announcement of the birth of a son and on Sarah's laughter (vss. 9-15) introduces Yahweh alone as the divine interlocutor (vss. 10, 13). The plural reappears as the men depart (vss. 16, 22). After Yahweh's soliloquy (vss. 17-19) and Abraham's intercession on the behalf of Sodom (vss. 20-31), the story suddenly refers to "the two messengers" or "angels" (19: 1). Apparently, several strands of independent traditions have been woven together. The initial tale of the guests

of Mamre, couched in rhythmic prose, is now followed by a divine monologue and a divine-human dialogue, the form and style of which point to a different milieu and perhaps another age.⁸⁴

By such a work of juxtaposition, the Yahwist theologian deliberately inserted the promise of Abraham's posterity within the universal vision of the *Heilsgeschichte*. The nation of Abraham is viewed, once again, for the sake of "all, the nations of the earth," as a tool for the divine completion of the created universe. Promise and election may never be separated from the salvation of the entire world. Centuries before the Second Isaiah, in the Babylonian exile, Hebrew theologians discerned the religious origin of an ethic of international peace and at the same time the ethical responsibility of the religious experience. In placing the narrative of epiphanic visitation "by the terebinths of Mamre" together with a divine soliloquy on the purpose of election, the Yahwist was warning Israel, much before the time of Amos and the other great prophets, of the universal responsibility of her mission: "I have known him, so that he may teach his sons and his household after him to keep the way of Yahweh in doing righteousness and justice" (vs. 19). In all probability, the festival ceremonies, during which such a narrative was recited, aimed in part at challenging the nascent nationalism of the kingdom under David and Solomon.

THE TEST OF ABRAHAM'S FAITH (*Gen. 22:1-19*)

This independent *novella* originated with the northern traditions of the Elohist stratum.⁸⁵ It is known in Judaism as the *Akedah* or "Binding," that is, the "tying-on" of Isaac for the sacrifice. Several features of the story exhibit a keenness of psychological introspection—the father's silence, the lad's bewilderment and fear, etc.—but they should not be allowed to

detract from the theological crux of the tale. Psychology in the Hebrew epic is the intelligent handmaid of theology. The sacrifice of Isaac is simply the occasion of an epiphanic visitation.

While the narrator warns explicitly that "Elohim tested Abraham" (Gen. 22:1), he builds dramatic tension not only by stirring sympathy for the heroes, father and son, but also by eliciting from his audience a suspicion concerning the character of the Godhead. What kind of a deity is it who addresses man, his servant, indeed "his friend," and commands: "Take thy son, thy only son, him whom thou lovest, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriyyah and offer him there as a fiery sacrifice upon one of the hills I shall tell thee" (vs. 2)?

Abraham is precisely the man who had faith in God. This faith was acknowledged as the outward evidence of his inward devotion, the engagement of his total personality. Clearly the narrator wished to insist on the cruel aspect of the command, since he piled on four direct objects: "thy son, thy only son, him whom thou lovest, Isaac." He felt the pathos of the situation as deeply as the modern reader does, if not more, since memories of the horrors of child sacrifice probably lurked at the origin of the tradition and in any case haunted the mind of an ancient audience.

Whatever the cultural environment of the tale may have been, the Elohist rehearsed it in the sequence of other stories in order to convey far more than a polemic against Canaanite or Northwest-Semitic practices.⁸⁶ Like the Yahwist, he aimed at portraying the meaning of faith in the framework of an epiphanic visitation. For him, too, the command of Elohim was shocking and passed human comprehension. Not only was Isaac the child of Abraham's old age, his only son, the one whom he loved,⁸⁷ but he also represented for him and for the audience the only sign of the trustworthiness of God.

Abraham's faith was put to the test in two ways. First, the command crushed the heart of a father, and second, it shattered

in one instant the entire edifice of his hope and the whole meaning of his existence. The basis of his decision to live for the future of mankind by participating in the time of God was annihilated. As Luther observed, his prospect was his own eternal death as well as the death of his son.⁸⁸

The story insists also on the simplicity of Abraham's faith. It never vacillates. Not only did the father make himself available and receptive in his initial response, *Hinneni*, "here am I,"⁸⁹ but he also persisted in his determination. The manifold signs of his concern for his son's well-being confer on the dramatic situation an added touch of irony. As the denouement releases the emotion, the theologian has implicitly made his point. The second "here am I" (vs. 11) introduces the final word of the epiphanic speech: "Now I know that thou fearest Elohim" (vs. 12). The fear of God in the language of Hebrew religion meant supreme devotion.⁹⁰ The sign of the purity of faith was love at any cost for a God who conceals his Godhead in appearances of hostility.⁹¹

Israel rose to a sublimity of theological perception because she understood the paradox of presence in absence. She knew that God hidden is still God. She served a God who forsook her and even stood up against her as an enemy in order to teach her the selflessness of devotion.⁹² Grace in God means gratuitous love in man.⁹³ Intimacy between God and Israel is secure. The word *Akedah* means not only the binding of Isaac for the sacrifice but also the binding of Yahweh to his people. The willingness to accept an order which pushes beyond the limits of practicality—that is, to the *ab-surdum*—the mystery and the freedom of the Godhead or the devotion of man annuls the validity of all archaic forms of religion. In the context of the Hebraic theology of presence, with the absurdity of its demands, religion no longer means the ritual exchange of sacrality with a static cosmos through which man attunes himself to the life of nature but, on the contrary, the courage to face the abyss of

being, even the abyss of the being of God, and to affirm, at the risk of assuming all risks, the will to gamble away not only one's ego but even one's hope in the future of mankind.

The story of the *Akedah*, crowning as it does the narratives of epiphanic visitations to Abraham, celebrates the tempering of Hebraic faith. The fear of God is now exhibited in a man. The willingness to sacrifice one's son, that is to say, one's love, one's hope, and one's faith, has made all the static hierophanies of sun, moon, water, earth, fertility, and sexuality obsolete.⁹⁴

JACOB'S DREAM OF THE HEAVENLY STAIRWAY (*Gen. 28:10-22*)

Traditions concerning Jacob differ markedly from those concerning Abraham and Isaac, for they picture Jacob, the eponymic father of Israel, with an unrelieved realism sometimes tinged with sarcastic humor. The name "Jacob" is explained as "supplanter" or "heel-kicker" (*Gen. 25:22-26*). The hero's character emerges from a series of loosely connected anecdotes as that of an unscrupulous trickster.

Like her eponymic ancestor, however, Israel remains the bearer of a unique vocation. In spite of her blemishes and even crimes, she is still summoned to assume the honor and the burden of a special mission in history. Two narratives of epiphanic visitation express the theological ambiguity of Israel's mystery: Jacob's dream at Bethel and Jacob's fight at Peniel.

The story of Jacob's dream at Bethel (*Gen. 28:10-22*) provides far more than the foundation *legenda* of a famous shrine.⁹⁵ It reasserts the role of one nation toward all other nations. Once again, the concept of faith with its dynamic outreach is inserted at the center of cultus. The temple of Bethel is "the gate of heavens" (*vs. 17*). The God who is worshipped there is the master architect who has devised a plan for the future of man, and he has chosen Israel to fulfil it. Whatever the second-

ary elements of the narrative may be, such as its reminiscences of cultic architecture from Mesopotamia⁹⁶ and possibly Egypt,⁹⁷ the epiphanic speech reaffirms the double theme of offspring and land, but it does so in the light of a teleological concern which is almost identical with that of Abraham's call (Gen. 12: 1-3):

“By thee, and by thy descendants,
shall bless one another all the families of the earth”
(Gen. 28:14).

The setting of this epiphanic speech is that of a dream, but when the hero awakens he does not need any sensorial perception to know the reality of presence, for he says: “Surely, Yahweh is in this place!” (vs. 16). Once again, the elements which characterize the other stories of epiphanic visitation appear in the formal sequence of the *Gattung*: on the one hand, a revelatory experience, limited in time, localized in space, and aiming at the distant future; on the other, the awareness of divine proximity without any mediating intrusion—an awareness both linked to a shrine and transcending the spatial and temporal limitations of cultus.

JACOB'S FIGHT AT THE JABBOK FORD

(Gen. 32:22–32)

This tale appears to be one of the etiological *legenda* preserved at the sanctuary of Penuel,⁹⁸ but it aims at explaining through the Hebraic theology of presence the name of the covenant people, Israel.⁹⁹ With its implications concerning the stringency of the faith, the thematic thrust of this pericope is similar to that of the *Akedah*. In some ways, it may even go beyond the latter's disquisition on the folly of loving God, for it introduces the theological motif of the *agon*, not just by implication of divine hostility, as in the *Akedah*, but by explicit use

of the motif of divine aggressivity.

Once again, the Yahwist narrator has borrowed anecdotal strands from tribal memories of pre-Hebraic times. The story may well have originally sought to explain the name of the torrent “Jabbok” through the meaning of the verb *’abhaq*, “to struggle.” At the earliest layer of the tradition, one may uncover the motif-common to all folklore-of the daimon or numen of a ford, especially in mountain streams.¹⁰⁰ The spirit of the ford jealously guards the sanctity of a remote and desolate place through which travelers are compelled to pass on account of the nature of the terrain.

Jacob, the Hebrew Hercules,¹⁰¹ was endowed with legendary strength. People said that he could single-handedly roll away the stone which covered the lid of a cistern,¹⁰² while the feat ordinarily required the combined efforts of several shepherds. Why was the torrent called “*Yabboq*”? Because our ancestor Jacob “fought” (*’abhaq*) there. It may be that at some archaic stage of the growth of the tradition, it was the numen of the ford which could not overcome Jacob, for the syntax of the passage leaves the identity of the antagonists quite uncertain. Jacob, the eponymic father of Israel, was endowed with such supernatural force that he could even overcome ford daimons. The core of the tale presents itself in the form of three strophes: one tricolon and two sets of bicola:

32:24[Heb. 32:25]. And Jacob was left alone,
and there wrestled with him a man
until the lifting of dawn.

[26]. When he saw that he prevailed not against him,
he hit the hollow of his thigh,
And the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was torn
as he wrestled with him.

[27]. And he said, “Let me go,
for dawn is lifting!”

[28]. But he said, “I shall not let thee go
except thou bless me!”

The night daimon apparently could not remain after daybreak, for his sacrality required invisibility.¹⁰³ Yet, Jacob was still holding on to him: a suprahuman exploit, especially since a foul blow had injured Jacob's vital parts.¹⁰⁴

The Yahwist discerned at this point the theological import of the etiological tale. He transformed a bit of animistic folklore into a catechetic parable. He retold the anecdote by inserting it within the context of Jacob's biographical sequence of turpitude. At the climax of a recital of crafty behavior, unscrupulous ambition, disloyalty, deceit, and treachery, the story reaches a pitch of unbearable suspense. Jacob, the supplanter, has come to his existential moment.

Twenty years previously, his cowardice had prompted him to flee the avenging anger of his twin, Esau, whom he had fraudulently deprived of their father's blessing. Now he again faced the same brother, and he was overpowered by fear. His clan, his herds, his baggage, his wives, and his children descended the steep track which wound its way down the canyon of the Jabbok (now called the *Nahr ez-Zerqa*). He let the caravan pass the ford ahead of him, and he remained alone at the bottom of the gorge. High above him on the Transjordan plateau, his family encamped under the windswept sky. From where he was, that same sky looked like a narrow band sharply cut by two somber cliffs. Around him, the subtropical jungle of oleanders and creeping vines crawled with unpleasant animals, with mountain lions and snakes coming to the water's edge. "And Jacob was left alone." Did he choose to remain behind at the ford—surely a place already charged with sacrality for aeons—in order to meditate on himself and on the uncertainties of the morrow? The tale is terse. It simply sketches his being pounced upon by a stranger in the darkness and the interlocking of the two figures in mortal combat throughout the night.

For the Yahwist, the physical fight was inseparable from the psychological struggle and the spiritual transformation of the

hero. In his enemy, Jacob discovered a quality of the holy other than the animistic sacredness of a *topos*. Because he needed a renewal of his being in order to face the ordeal of the next day, he said to the mysterious foe: "I shall not let thee go except thou bless me."¹⁰⁵ The supplanter has to be made into a new man. Passing through a death of the self, he wishes for a new personality and he obtains its inception in the form of a new name.¹⁰⁶ Jacob becomes "Israel."

The Yahwist was thinking, no doubt, of the prophetic description of the nation. Like a prince (*sar*), Israel perseveres in striving, in struggling (*yisreh*), even with her God. To be sure, the etymology of the word "Israel" is uncertain,¹⁰⁷ but folkloric habits of suggesting semantic undertones play on assonantal associations. The Yahwist uses the device of popular etymology in order to proclaim a message. The intent of the narrator appears in the words of the invisible assailant, now transformed into a prophetic revealer, a mediator, and an agent of blessing:

"Thy name shall no longer be Jacob but Israel,
for thou hast striven with God and men, and prevailed!"
(Gen. 32:28[Heb. 29]).

The man who kicked his twin in the womb and supplanted him in his youth is indeed a fighter with God and men, but his titanic presumption is not altogether condemned. Israel is a princely fighter in history, as well as a supplanter. This is why his victory with God and men is always ambivalent. He is wounded at the seat of his vitality. He bears thereafter the mark of his conceit, his endurance, and his courage, and also of his defeat and renunciation. Jacob fought, and he only half-conceded the fight in begging for a benediction. The one who prevailed is also the loser: "As the sun rose upon him, he passed over a place called "The-face-of-God," but he was halting on his

thigh” (Gen. 32:31[Heb.32]). The conqueror is blessed but maimed. He struggled against his rebirth and had to surrender to the maker of his new being. But the struggle left a scar in his flesh. Here again the tradition has adapted an archaic motif from an earlier version of the tale. The word *thigh* was a euphemism for the seat of procreation, and the muscles of the thigh played a part in several sacrificial rites. The Yahwist hinted at the ambiguity of the blessing, which not only implies a reaffirmation of the promise of progeny but also carries a mysterious impediment and the curse of perennial pain.

The “man” (*ish*) who fought with Jacob at the ford is never identified explicitly with Yahweh, but the implication of the context is unmistakable. Above and beyond the objective projection of his own fears of Esau, the supplanter discerns the presence of the Godhead. His numinous assailant cannot be reduced to a depth-psychology personification of nemesis or the objectifying of guilt. To be sure, depth-psychology provides a valuable tool at the threshold of the exegetical analysis by revealing the mechanism of guilt repression which the tale dramatically portrays. Nevertheless, an authentically theological-versus a merely humanistic-frame of reference, views moral conscience as an adjunct, not as the agent, of self-discovery. The *corps-&corps* which is evoked in the night of the psyche is not just a hand-to-hand struggle between two halves of a divided self. It is the *ugon* of guilty finiteness with supramoral infinity.

Jacob is not merely struggling with the recognition of his misdeed. He is engaged in a death struggle with the giver of life who transcends his self-interest. He thought that “God would be with him,” but he did not know that the presence of the divine may be the revelation of judgment. From the protecting god of human religions to the sovereign Lord of Hebraic faith there is no easy crossing, Jacob becomes Israel only when he

perceives the presence of the Godhead. The Yahwist narrator uses the psychology of individual fear and remorse in order to provide a historical setting for his theological philosophy of Israel's mission in the world. He transfers the folkloric tale from its animistic milieu to a diagnosis of sin through self-aggrandizement, and in turn he presents his hero as the patronymic Israel. The prehistoric, proto-Hebraic *numen* of the stream becomes a Yahwistic *theologoumenon*. Existential birth for the chosen people requires an existential death. With cultic hindsight, as the story is recited at the shrines of the land after Israel has entered Canaan, the nation spells out her birth as an epiphanic combat: "I have seen God face to face."

Jacob asked for the name of his unknown antagonist. Just as the name of a man signifies his character and his destiny, so also the name of a god reveals that god's intention.¹⁰⁸ The request is denied, for the presence is elusive. The proximity of the divine is never made available at the expense of transcendence. But Jacob receives a blessing, that is to say, the vitality of his patriarchal manhood. And it is in the instant of the reception of that blessing that he learns the divine identity of that "man," his antagonist. He had striven with Elohim (vs. 29), and he had concluded exultantly and not without a mixture of awe and relief: "I saw Elohim face to face" (vs. 31).

The narrator insists upon the concreteness of Jacob's sensorial perception by using an anthropomorphic formula. At the same time, his language needs to be understood in the context of the story. The "sighting" of Elohim took place at night, at the bottom of a dark gorge. The physical implications of this "sighting" are immediately cancelled out by the total obscurity of the environment. Moreover, the expression "face to face" (*panîm 'el-panîm*), which probably belonged to the etiological *legenda* of the sanctuary of *Penuel* ("the face of El"), should not be construed as referring literally to visual perception. It is an idiom, often used with verbs of auditive rather than visual per-

ception,¹⁰⁹ and it refers simply to the direct, nonmediated (i.e., immediate) character of a manifestation of presence. It describes a “person-to-person” encounter, without the help or hindrance of an intermediary.¹¹⁰

In all probability, the story of Jacob at the Jabbok survived orally in various forms as late as the eighth century B.C.,¹¹¹ for the prophet Hosea (ca. 745-725 B.C.) quoted fragments of a hymnic poem which presented Jacob as the ambiguous symbol of the nation, always arrogant with its God and always ready to repent:

“In the womb he kicked his brother with the heel;
 in his manhood he wrestled with Elohim.
 He wrestled with the angel and prevailed;
 he wept and implored him for mercy” (Hos.12:4)

This quotation made by a prophet in later times suggests that the tradition of the Yahwist which was preserved in Genesis reveals the processes of theological reinterpretation of proto-Hebraic memories. Here again, the narrator proved himself to be an analyst of Israel’s faith, anchored as it was in the Hebraic theology of presence. He detected in that faith the endurance of the will to wait, an awareness of the risk of committing lese majesty in a life of intimacy with God, and the ability to triumph over despair by the assurance that, in the end, a God who is resisted and fought against will reaffirm life.¹¹² The wrestling with God is inseparable from the inner struggle of Israel over her national guilt, and from her obstinate prayer for mercy.¹¹³

The eponymic ancestor is viewed without illusion and without shame, since the cultic celebrations rehearsed the manifold aspects of the national life and presented the national self as bearing a blessing in darkness. Israel was able to look at the presence of Yahweh as the source of her vocation to greatness, and therefore also as the indirect occasion of her pride: the

constant threat of her sinfulness, the mirage of her self-sufficiency.

Renewed in the story of Jacob's light at the Jabbok, the blessing of Abraham is interpreted in the cultic recital with a sense of elation and agony. Through the *anamnesis* of her feasts, Israel remembered that she "prevailed" over God; but she also remembered that this triumph was a sign both of her grandeur and of her misery.

The changing of the hero's name shows clearly that the Yahwist understood the story of epiphanic visitation as a parabolic presentation of the cultic community of Israel. Drawing upon the themes already suggested by the narrator, Charles Wesley composed a hymn, now well-known, which interprets the pericope as a poetic statement on the ambivalence of man's attitude toward the presence of God:

Come, O thou, traveller unknown,
whom still I hold but cannot see!
My company before is gone,
and I am left alone with thee:

With thee all night I mean to stay,
and wrestle till the break of day.

...

My prayer hath power with God. His grace
unspeakable I now receive;
Through faith I see thee face to face—
I see thee face to face, and live!

More than an example of spirituality which bears the influence of eighteenth-century pietism, this poem constitutes an exegesis of the biblical story. In spite of its tone of religious individualism, it points to the secret life of man at the genesis of his faith. Like the *Akedah*, the story of Jacob's fight at the Jabbok delineates, within the Hebraic theology of presence, the contradictory aspect of divine communion which inspires man,

caught in the labor of his growth, with both love and hate for the Deity. "God the friend" is never far away from "God the enemy."¹¹⁴

The patriarchal stories of epiphanic visitation reveal the unique character of the Hebraic theology of presence. Although these stories were told at the shrines of Israel during the cultic celebrations of the seasonal feasts, they are not concerned with the details of the cultus. To be sure, an epiphanic disclosure led ordinarily to the erection of a commemorating altar,¹¹⁵ which later traditions inevitably associated with the great sanctuaries like Shechem, Beersheba, Hebron (Mamre), Bethel, Penuel, and so on,¹¹⁶ but the narrators of the ancient traditions, unlike the priestly reinterpreters of the exilic time,¹¹⁷ never used their material for the justification of some rite. Long before the great prophets, they were the catechists of the theology of presence. They were interested in the experience of divine immediacy as it elicited the attitude of faith.¹¹⁸

Archaeological excavations and topographical surveys have shown that the sites of the Palestinian sanctuaries were occupied for centuries before the arrival of the Hebrews in the land of Canaan during the Late Bronze Age.¹¹⁹ The stories of the patriarchal encounter with Yahweh enabled the Israelite theologians to place a distinctly Yahwistic stamp on the Canaanite shrines which they appropriated. Similar processes of cultic transfer of holy places have been widely observed by historians of religions. At the same time, the festive liturgists of Israel also pursued a theological intention when they chose to preface the recital of the *Gesta Dei per Hebraeos* with the stories of epiphanic visitation to the patriarchs. In effect, they transcended the spatial limitation of cultic topography by means of the motif of nomadism interpreted theologically.

While the Canaanite city-states worshipped deities attached to a *hieros topos* (sacred place), the patriarchs were pictured as nomads who worshipped a traveling God. Yahweh did not dwell

in shrines but he preceded the patriarchs from site to site and *spoke* to them of the future of the nation.

The content of the epiphanic speeches found in the ancient traditions of Genesis conferred upon the Hebraic theology of presence a unique character. To be sure, the style of divine self-asseveration, as Eduard Norden has shown,¹²⁰ is common to all the cultures of the ancient Near East and the Mediterranean world. Obviously, the formulators of these narratives were the heirs of a long-established pattern of epiphanic style.¹²¹ Nevertheless, they adapted this rhetorical form of discourse to what appears to be genuine memories of ecstatic experiences.¹²² The *hieros logos* of the Hebraic stories is couched in a language which is conditioned by the cultures of Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, and Egypt, but it differs strikingly at many points from the environment out of which it emerged. The chief difference is its suggestion of elusiveness in a context of sequential persistence from generation to generation, and articulated upon a teleological anticipation of a united mankind. Such language reveals a concern for the mystery of being.¹²³

The *hieros logos* of the Hebraic stories is addressed to individuals—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—for the divine-human encounter occurs at the most intimate level, of human consciousness, which is necessarily that of isolation from society; but it is without exception oriented toward the destiny of Israel in the midst of all the nations (Gen. 12:1–3). The Hebraic theology of presence preserves the freedom of the Deity from human manipulation. Its teleological thrust is without parallel in the ancient world.

The various epiphanic speeches are consequently linked together, not by the requirement of cultus, sacerdotal college, or ritual act related to sacred space, but by the principle of continuity in historical time.¹²⁴ The God who manifests his presence to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is the same God who summons Moses at Sinai.¹²⁵

It was the epiphanic mode of presence which promoted in Israel-and later in the Christian church-the psychological mode of communion. “I am girded like Abraham to go. I know not where,” said Martin Luther, “but sure of this, that God is everywhere.”¹²⁶ This knowledge, however, has remained to this day charged with ambivalence. For Israel and for the church, there has always been

“a great wind of light blowing, and sore pain.”

At the same time, the epiphanic mode of presence helped Israel and the Christian church develop and refine the notion of faith as the central theme in their interpretation of life, for they saw that their trust in a God whose presence is elusive demands, without fail, a response to a word. And they believed that this word, even when no longer heard, is to be remembered and to be expected again. The word may be hard to bear, but in the end the word is life. As Luther retold the story of the sacrifice of Isaac, he concluded: “See how divine majesty is at hand in the hour of death. We say, ‘In the midst of life we die.’ God answers, ‘Nay, in the midst of death we live.’ ”

The *anumnesis* or liturgical rehearsal of the word became the distinctive factor of Hebrew *cultus*. Faith was so closely related to the cultic community’s obedience to the word that it could survive both cultic disruption and divine hiddenness, as the exile in Babylon showed in the sixth century B.C. Faith and *cultus*, however, could not have found the dynamics of their interaction without the impact of the Exodus and the Sinai theophany.

Notes

1. G. Bernanos, *Sous le sold de Satan* (Paris, 1926), p. 104.

2. Exod. 33:11.

3. Exod. 3:15; cf. Deut. 26:7, etc.

4. Exod. 3:13 ff., 6:13 ff.
 5. Gen. 4:26.
 6. Cf. G. E. Wright, "Cult and History," In., XVI (1962): 11 ff.; B. S. Childs, *Ma-
 ory and tradition in Israel* (London, 1962),
 pp. 81 ff.; H.-J. Kraus, *Worship in Israel. A
 Cultic History of the Old Testament*, tr. by G.
 Buswell (Richmond, Va., 1965), p. 24; M.
 Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions*,
 tr. by B. W. Anderson (Englewood Cliffs,
 N. J., 1972), pp. 136 ff., 156 ff., 252 ff.
 7. W. Pannenberg, et al., *Revelation as His-
 tory*, tr. by D. Granskou (New York,
 1968), p. 8; cf. J. Barr, "Revelation
 Through History in the Old Testament
 and in Modern Theology," In., XVII
 (1963): 197;
 8. G. Fohrer, "The Personal Structure of
 Biblical Faith," *Fourth World Congress of
 Jewish Studies, Papers, I* (1967), pp. 161-66;
 R. Rendtorff, *Men of the Old Testament*, tr.
 by F. Clarke (Philadelphia, 1963); M.-L.
 Henry, "Individuelle Gottesbeziehung
 als Problem der Tradition," *Prophet und
 Tradition* (Berlin, 1969), pp. 5-10.
 9. The traditions concerning the Exodus
 (14:31) and the Sinai theophany (Exod.
 19:8; etc.) bring in the people as wit-
 nesses of the divine intervention in his-
 tory. A Midrash of the Roman times
 insisted that "even the lowliest maid-
 servant at the Red Sea saw what Isaiah,
 Ezekiel, and all the other prophets never
 saw" (*Melikta de-Rabbi Ishamel*, ed. by J. Z.
 Lauterbach [Philadelphia, 1949], 24 ff., as
 quoted in E. L. Fackenheim, *God's Presence
 in History: Jewish Affirmations and Philosoph-
 ical Reflections* [New York, 1970; paper-
 back ed., 1972], p. 4).
 10. Even the Greek word *parousia*, "pres-
 ence," was found chiefly in secular con-
 texts. (Aeschylus, *Persians*, 169;
 Sophocles, *Electra*, 948; *Ajax*, 540; Eurip-
 ides, *Alceste*, 606). It occurs most spar-
 ingly in Septuagintal Greek, although it
 becomes the well-known *terminus tech&us*
 of Christian belief in the Second Coming
 of the Lord in glory.
 11. Cf. two distinct meanings of the word
panim: in Exod. 33:14 ("presence") and
 in verse 23 ("face").
 12. Cf. the Greek *prosôpon*, "face," some-
 times the equivalent of *prosopion*,
 "mask." The Hebrew composite preposi-
 tions *liphnê*, "in the presence of," and
mippenê, "away from 'the presence of,'"
 are used hundreds of times in biblical
 Hebrew.
 13. On the metaphorical use of the
 names of parts of the human body and
 the anthropomorphic language of the
 stories, see J. Boehmer, "Gottes An-
 gesicht," *BfChTh*, XII (1908): 323-47; E.
 Dhorme, "L'emploi métaphorique des
 noms des parties du corps en hébreu et
 en akkadien, III. Le visage," *RB*, XXX
 (1921): 374-99; E. G. Gulin, *Das Antlitz
 Jahwes im Alten Testament* (Helsinki, 1923);
 F. Nötscher, "Das Angesicht Gottes schauen"
nach biblischer und babylonischer Auffassung
 (Würzburg, 1924); J. Hempel, "Die
 Grenzen des Anthropomorphismus
 Jawes im Alten Testament," *ZAW*, LVII
 (1939): 75 ff.; A. R. Johnson, "Aspects of
 the Use of the Term PANIM in the Old
 Testament," *Festschrift O. Eissfeldt* (Halle,
 1947): 155-59; Th. Boman, *Hebrew
 Thought Compared With Greek*, tr. by J. L.
 Moreau (London, 1960), pp. 106 ff.; J.
 Reindl, *Das Angesicht Gottes im Sprachge-
 brauch des Alten Testaments* (Leipzig, 1969);
 H. Mölle, *Das "Erscheinen" Gottes im Pen-
 tateuch. Ein literaturwissenschaftlicher Beitrag
 zur alttestamentlichen Exegese* (Bern &
 Frankfurt, 1973); Th. W. Mann, *Divine
 Presence and Guidance in Israelite Traditions:
 The Typology of Exaltation* (Baltimore,
 1977), pp. 252 ff.
 14. W. Pannenberg, "Appearance as the
 Arrival of the Future," tr. by D. Griffin,
JAAR, XXXV (1967): 107-18. "The
 futurity of the Reign of God became a
 power determining the present" (p. 112).
 15. H. Mottu, "Trace de Dieu: la mani-
 festation," *Bulletin du Centre Protestant
 d'Etudes*, V (1973), no. 4-5 (Septembre),
 p. 47.

16. M. Noth, "Mari and Israel, eine Personnamenstudie," in *Geschichte und Altes Testament* (A. Alt Festschrift, Tübingen, 1953), pp. 127-52; "Remarks on-the Sixth Volume of the Mari Texts," *JSS*, I (1956); 322-33.
17. See R. de Vaux, "Les patriarches et le milieu oriental," *Histoire ancienne d'Israël: Des origines à l'installation en Canaan* (Paris, 1971), p. 213 ff.; G. E. Mendenhall, *The Tenth Generation: The Origins of the Biblical Tradition* (Baltimore and London, 1973), pp. 10 ff., 156 ff., 174 ff.; Th. L. Thompson, *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives: The Quest for the Historical Abraham* (1973); J. van Seters, *Abraham in History and Tradition* (New Haven, 1975), pp. 5 ff.
18. In addition to extensive bibliography in S. Terrien, *Job* (Neuchâtel, 1963), p. 56, note 3, see C. H. Gordon, "Hebrew Origins in the Light of Recent Discoveries," in A. Altmann, ed., *Biblical and Other Studies* (Cambridge; Mass., 1963), p. 10.
19. See de Vaux, (*Histoire ancienne d'Israël*, pp. 85 ff., 123 ff.
20. A number of scholars have made broad claims for the historicity of the patriarchal narratives merely because these narratives lit the Near Eastern world of the second millenium b. c. See G. E. Wright, "History and the Patriarchs," *ET*, LXXI (1959-60): 292-96; de Vaux, "Les traditions natriarcales et l'histoire." *Histoire ancienne d'Israël*, pp. 182 ff.
21. See the vigorous rejoinders of G. von Rad, "History and the Patriarchs," *ET*, LXXII (1960-61): 213-16; M. Noth, "Der Beitrag der Archiologie zur Geschichte Israels," Congress *Volume, Oxford, 1959, SVT*, VII (Leiden, 1960): pp. 262-82.
22. Although arguing at length against the "pure nomadism" of the Hebrew fathers, N. K. Gottwald admits their nomadic migrations. See "Were the Early Israelites Pastoral Nomads?" in J. J. Jackson and M. Kessler, ed., *Rhetorical Criticism* (Pittsburgh, 1974), pp. 223 ff.; van Seters, *Abraham in History*, pp. 13 ff.
23. In the traditions of Genesis, however, there is no direct evidence, that the patriarchs were more than shepherds-at first pure nomads and later seminomads in the transitional process of sedentarization.
24. Comparison has been made with some of the modern Bedouin tribes which sometimes migrate in search of new pastures under divine inspiration; see V. Maag, "Der Hirte Israels. Eine Skizze von Wesen und Bedeutung der Väterreligion," *STU*, XXVIII (1958): 2 ff.; "Malkûth JHWH," Congress *Volume, Oxford, 1959, SVT* VII (Leiden, 1960), p. 138, notes 1; cf. "Das Gottesverständnis des Alten Testaments." *NTT*, XXI (1967): 161-207.
25. Gen. 14, a late midrash-possibly containing early traditions-in which Abraham-is described as a warrior. See bibliography in S. Terrien. "The Omphalos Myth and Hebrew Religion," *VT*, XX (1970): 318, note 5; J. A. Emerton, "The Riddle of Genesis XIV," *VT*, XXI (1971): 403-39; J. G. Gammie, "Loci of the Melchizedek Tradition of Genesis 14:18-20," *JBL*, XC (1971): 385-96; de Vaux, *Histoire ancienne d'Israël*, pp. 208 ff., 336 ff.; W. Schatz, *Genesis 14: Eine Untersuchung* (Bern, 1972); F. L. Horton, *The Melchizedek Tradition: A Critical Examination of the Sources to the Fifth Century A. D. and in the Epistle to The Hebrews* (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 13 ff.
26. H. Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis*, tr. by W. H. Carruth (New York, 1901); reprinted New York, 1964), pp. 88 ff.; J. Lindblom, "Theophanies in Holy Places in Hebrew Religion." *Hebrew Union College Annual*, XXXII (1964): 91-106.
27. Gen. 14:18-22, 16:13, 17:1, 31:13; etc; see M. Haran, "The Religion of the Patriarchs. An Attempt at a Synthesis," *ASTI*, IV (1965): 30-55; H. Ringgren, *Israelite Religion*, tr. by D. E. Green (Philadelphia, 1966), pp. 21 ff. K. Koch, "Saddaj," *VT*, XXVI (1976), 299 ff.

28. See A. Alt, "The God of the Fathers," in *Essays on Old Testament History and Religion*, tr. by R. A. Wilson (Garden City, N. Y., 1968), pp. 32 ff.; D. Hillers, "Pahad Yis'haq," *JBL*, XCI (1972): 90 ff.
29. F. M. Cross, "Yahweh and the God of the Patriarchs," *HTR*, LV (1962): 225-59.
30. From the Greek, *theos*, "god," and *phanein*, "To shine, to appear, or to bring into light."
31. A *theophaneia* is the visual appearance of a god; the word is used by Herodotus (1.51) to designate the climactic moment in the festival at Delphi, during which the statues of Apollo and other deities were shown to the worshippers. At the feast of *ta theophania* (plural neuter), statues of the gods were "monstrated" publicly. An *epiphaneia* usually designates the sudden manifestation of a divine power or even a visual appearance of a deity (Plutarch, *Themistocles*, 30; Diodorus of Sicily, 1, 25). There are many stories of divine appearances in the ancient Near East and in classical antiquity. In most cases, the vision of the gods is restricted to special individuals. For example, "Not unto every one doth Apollo appear, but unto him that is good," says Callimachus, quoted by C. Kerényi, "Apollo Epiphanies," *Spirit and Nature: Papers from the Eranos Yearbooks* (Bollingen Series, XxX.1, New York, 1954), p. 60.
32. The phrase wayyera' *Yahweh* (verb "to see" in the niph'al voice) means "And Yahweh appeared," literally, "was seen" or "showed himself" (Gen. 12:7; etc.). See Mölle, *Das "Erscheinen" Gottes im Pentateuch*, pp. 5 ff.
33. W. L. Moran, "The Hebrew Language in its Northwest Semitic Background," in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East*, ed. by G. E. Wright (Garden City, N. Y., 1961), pp. 54-72.
34. See list of parallel features in J. Jeremias, *Theophanie: Die Geschichte einer alttestamentlichen Gattung* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1965), pp. 88 f.
35. *Ibid.*, pp. 16 ff.
36. *Ibid.*, pp. 100 ff.
37. Not even excepting the Yahwist account of covenant-making with Abraham in Gen. 15:1-21, although its conclusion introduces the motif of nature mirabilia: "And just as the sun had set, there was a blazing flame (LXX). and behold! a fiercely burning furnace with smoke and a flash of fire which passed by between the two-pieces [of the covenant sacrificial animal]" (vs. 17). It will be observed, however, that Abraham saw this strange fire just a few moments after "a deep trance had fallen upon him" (vs. 12). Moreover, the whole pericope breaks the formal pattern of epiphanic encounter not only in Genesis but in the Pentateuch generally, for it borrows elements from the Gattung of the prophetic vision. "The word of Yahweh came to Abraham in a vision" (vs. 11). This formula indicates contamination from the preprophetic style, ca. the end of the second millennium B.C.
38. One may therefore understand why J. Jeremias did not include the patriarchal narratives in his study on *Theophanie*, although one should add that he failed to distinguish between the genuinely theophanic form of the Sinai-Horeb type and the hymnic allusions to epiphanic intervention in the past and in the future. P. D. Hanson's methodological remarks on Jeremias' search for a theophany-Gattung in Zechariah 9 apply to other parts of this otherwise extremely valuable study. See P. D. Hanson, "Zechariah 9 and the Recapitulation of an Ancient Ritual Pattern," *JBL*, XCII (1973): 52, note 45.
39. For example, Deut. 33; Judg. 5:4-5; Isa. 30:27-33, 59:15b-20; 63:1-6; Mic. 1:3-4; Nah. 1:3b-6; Hab. 3:3-15; Zech. 8:14; Pss. 18:7-15 [Heb. 8-16], 50:1-3, 68:7-33 [Heb. 8-34], 77:16-19, 97:2-7. Cf. P. C. Craigie, "Yahweh is a Man of War," *SJT*, XXII (1969): 185 ff.; F. M. Cross, "The Divine Warrior in Israel's Early Cult," *Biblical Motifs*, ed. by A. Altmann (Cam-

- bridge, Mass., 1969), pp. 14 ff.; P. D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973).
40. C. Westermann, "The Epiphany of God," *The Praise of God in the Psalms*, tr. by K. R. Crim (Richmond, Va., 1961), pp. 93 ff.; cf. A. Weiser, "Zur Frage nach den Beziehungen der Psalmen zum Kult: Die Darstellung der Theophanie in den Psalmen und im Festkult," *Festschrift A. Bertholet* (Tübingen, 1950), pp. 513-31; The Psalms, tr. by H. Hartwell (Philadelphia, 1962), p. 38, note 2; H.-P. Müller, "Die kultische Darstellung der Theophanie," VI, XIV (1964): 183 ff.
41. See the form-critical analysis of the Gattung in J. K. Kuntz, *The Self-Revelation of God* (Philadelphia, 1967), pp. 52 ff.; however, this uncovering of the theophanic form depends exclusively on the patriarchal narratives and must be altered if it is applied to the Sinai pericopes.
42. The theophany of Elijah on Mt. Horeb (1 Kings 19:9-18) provides a transition between the Mosaic type of revelation and the era of prophetic inspiration (see below, chapter III).
43. The "theophanic" elements in the vision of Ezekiel point to the priestly understanding of cultic presence (Ezek. 1:1-3:15).
44. J. L. McKenzie, "God and Nature in the Old Testament," *CBQ*, XIV (1952), pp. 18-39, 124-45; W. Lillie, "The Religious Significance of the Theophany in the Book of Job," *ET*, LXVIII (1956-57): 355-58; S. Terrien, *Job* (Neuchâtel, 1963), p. 45, note 2, and pp. 246 ff.
45. See note 31 above. It appears that the word "epiphany," unlike its cognate "theophany," was first applied to the appearances of Greek deities, such as Apollo, Asclepius, or Dionysus. See L. Weniger, "Theophanien, altgriechische Götteradvente," *ARW*, XII (1923-24): 16 ff.; W. F. Otto, "The Myths of His Epiphany" in Dionysus: *Myth and Cult* (Bloomington, Ind., 1965), pp. 74 ff. The expression "epiphanic visitation" seems to be more fitting than "theophany" to describe the patriarchal experiences, for it suggests the concreteness, simplicity, and swiftness of the divine appearance. Cf. H. Schmid, "Gottesbild, Gottesschau und Theophanie," *Judaica*, XXXIII (1967): 24 1-54.
46. J. Muilenburg, "The Speech of Theophany," *Harvard Divinity School Bulletin*, XXVIII, 2 (Jan. 1964): 35-47; Kuntz, *The Self-Revelation of God*, pp. 104 ff.
47. The speeches of the gods constitute a literary genre in Egypt. See C. Kayatz, *Studien zu Proverbien 1-9* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1966), pp. 15 ff. Mann, "Motifs of Divine Presence in the Ancient Near East," *Divine Presence*, pp. 27 ff.
48. See the intentional lengthening of the formula from Gen. 15:7 to 26:24, 28:13, etc. W. Zimmerli, "Ich bin Jahve," *Geschichte und Altes Testament. Festschrift A. Alt* (Tübingen, 1953), pp. 179-209; K. Elliger, "Ich bin der Herr-Gott," *Festschrift K. Heim* (Hamburg, 1954), pp. 9-34; "Das Wort des göttlichen Selbsterweises (Erweiswort), eine prophetische Gattung," *Festschrift A. Robert* (Paris, 1957), pp. 155-64; R. Rendtorff, "'Offenbarung' im Alten Testament," *TLZ*, LXXXV (1960), cols. 833-38.
49. The nucleus of the early traditions was constituted by the creed of Deut. 26:5 ff. and the covenant ceremony at Shechem (Jos. 24). It is probable, however, that the traditions concerning the patriarchal epiphanic visitations originated from heterogeneous groups. Cf. von Rad, *The Problem of the Hexateuch*, pp. 8 ff., 54 f.; *id.*, *Old Testament Theology*, I, pp. 166, 170.
50. "The 'Sphinx Stela,'" tr. by J. A. Wilson, "Egyptian Oracles and Prophecies," *ANET*, p. 449.
51. * 'Akkadian Oracles and Prophecies,' tr. by R. H. Pfeiffer, *ANET*, p. 449. See other Near Eastern parallels in S. Mowinckel, "The Name of the God of Moses," *HVCA*, XXXII (1961): 123.
52. Gen. 15:1, 21:17, 26:23-24, 28:13

(LXX), 46:1-4; cf. Isa. 44:8, etc.; also Luke 1:13.

53. See H. Gressmann, "Die literarische Analyse Deuterocesajas," *ZAW*, XXXIV (1914): 254-97; L. Köhler, "Die Offenbarungsformel 'Fürchte dich nicht' im Alten Testament." *Schweizerische Theologische Zeitschrift*, XXXVI (1919): 33-39; J. Begrich, "Das priestliche Heilsorakel," *ZA W*, LII (1934): 81-92; J. Becker, *Gottesfurcht im Alten Testament* (Roma, 1965), pp. 50-55; H. M. Dion, "The Patriarchal Traditions and the Literary Form of the 'Oracle of Salvation'," *CBQ*, XXIX (1967): 198 ff.

54. "King of Assyria, fear not!" in "Oracles Concerning Esarhaddon," *ANET*, p. 450; "Fear not, O Ashurbanipal!" in "Oracle of Ninlil Concerning Ashurbanipal," *ANET*, p. 451. Cf. J. Hempel, "Die Furcht vor dem nahen Gott," *Gott und Mensch im Alten Testament* (Stuttgart, 1936), pp. 8 ff.; N. Krist, *Formkritische Untersuchung zum Zuspruch "Fürchte dich nicht!" im Alten Testament* (Dissert., Hamburg, 1968), pp. 125 ff.

55. A sense of communion between God and man dominates the religion of the Yahwist. See Th. C. Vriezen, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1970), p. 313.

56. M. Noth, "Das Thema 'Verheissung an die Erzväter,'" *Überlieferungsgeschichte*, pp. 58 f.; cf. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, p. 168.

57. G. von Rad, Genesis, *A Commentary*, tr. by J. H. Marks (Philadelphia, 1961), pp. 154 f.; Speiser, Genesis, pp. XLVIII f., 87 f.; B. Gemser, "Questions Concerning the Religion of the Patriarchs," *Adhuc Loquitur* (Leiden, 1968), pp. 56 ff.; see also R. Kilian, *Die vorpriesterlichen Abrahams Überlieferungen* (Bonn, 1966), pp. 10 ff.

58. Cf. N. C. Habel, "The Form and Significance of the Call Narratives," *ZA W*, LXXVII (1965): 297 ff.; esp. 321 f.

59. The poetic structure here reproduced is that of Speiser, *Genesis*, p. 85, but the translation is that of the author.

60. See J. Muilenburg, "Abraham and the Nations: Blessing and World History," In., XIX (1965): 387-98; cf. Gunkel, Genesis, p. 164; von Rad, Genesis, pp. 154 f.; Speiser, *Genesis*, p. 86. The theological outlook of this epiphanic speech differs from that of the other patriarchal traditions, for it emphasizes the universalism of Israel's mission in the history of mankind rather than the exclusivism of the promise of the land. Significantly, the ambivalence of the word *eres*, "land," or "earth," is used by the Yahwist with special intent. Having placed the story of the call of Abraham against the picture of an "earth-wide" chaos produced by the erection of the Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:9), the Yahwist proceeds to show that Abram has to leave his "country" (12:1) and go to a "land" for the eventual sake of all the nations of the "earth" (vs. 3). This feature is not always brought out clearly by the commentators.

61. E. Kautzsch, *Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar*, tr. by A. E. Cowley (Oxford, 1910), p. 381; C. Brockelmann, *Hebräische Syntax* (Neukirchen, 1956), pp. 100 f.; H.-P. Müller, "Imperativ und Verheissung im Alten Testament," *Ev. Th.*, XXVIII (1968): 558.

62. The awareness of being a people "dwelling alone among the nations" (Nu. 23:9) follows Israel throughout her historical existence. It is basic to the theology of the Mosaic covenant (Exod. 19:5). Even on her land, she knows herself to be only a people of "strangers and sojourners," but these strangers and sojourners are "with Yahweh" (Lev. 25:23; Ps. 39:12 [Heb. 13]). See von Rad, *Genesis*, p. 154; Gemser, "The Religion of the Patriarchs," p. 58.

63. See C. Westermann, *Der Segen in der Bibel und im Handeln der Kirche* (München, 1954), p. 54; G. Wehmeier, *Der Segen im Alten Testament* (Basel, 1970); J. Helfmeyer, "Segen und Erwählung," *BZ*, XVIII (1974): 208 ff.

64. The translation of verse 3c is uncer-

tain. The niph'al voice, *nibhrekhu*, is understood by some commentators as passive (LXX; cf. Sir. 44:21, Acts 3:25, Gal. 3:8), "will be blessed," and by others as reflexive, "will bless themselves" (cf. Gen. 18:18, 28:14). With this verb, however, the idea of the passive is commonly expressed by the pu'al, while the niph'al, like the hithpa'el (cf. Gen. 22:18, 26:4) signifies the reflexive (cf. Gen. 48:20, Jer. 29:22, etc.). In the plural, however, the niph'al and the hithpa'el may convey the idea of the reciprocal. According to this interpretation, the climactic line of the speech does not suggest that mankind "will bless itself" or "acquire blessing" (cf. J. Schreiner, "Segen für die Völker in der Verheissung an die Väter," *BZ*, N.F. VI (1962): 4 ff.; and Wolff, "The Kerygma," p. 137) by imitating Abraham or by praising, pleasing, or supporting his descendants. It rather intimates that all the nations will exchange effective signs of peace, prosperity, and growth through their mysterious association with Abraham and his descendants. It is not clear, according to several exegetes, whether the Yahwist incorporated this epiphanic speech in his Hebrew epic in order to enhance the upsurging nationalism of David and Solomon or to elicit among his contemporaries a sober emulation of the Abrahamic obedience to the vision of a united mankind. The theology of the Yahwist, however, beginning with the myth of the garden, favors the latter interpretation.

65. B. Gemser, "God in Genesis," *OTS*, XII (1958): 21; P. Altmann, *Erwählungstheologie und Universalismus im Alten Testament* (Berlin, 1964), pp. 9 ff.; R. Martin-Achard, *Israël et les nations. La perspective missionnaire de l'Ancien Testament* (Neuchâtel, 1959), pp. 32 ff.; *id.*, *Actualité d'Abraham*, pp. 71 f.

66. See A. Caquot, "L'alliance avec Abraham," *Semitica*, XII (1962): 51 ff.; H. Cazelles, "Connexions et structure de Gen. XV," *RB*, LXIX (1962): 321-49; H.

Seebas, "Zu Genesis 15," in *Wort und Dienst*, VII (1965): 132-49; cf. "Gen. 15.2b," *ZAW*, LXXX (1968): 317-19; Clements, *Abraham and David*, pp. 19 ff.; N. Lohfink, *Die Landverheissung* an Eid, *Stuttgarter Bibelstudien*, 28 (1967), pp. 85 ff.; J. Dus, "Der Jakobbund, Gen. 15.8 ff.," *ZAW*, LXXX (1968): 35-38 (who conjectures that the narrative was originally told of Jacob).

67. The second story of the covenant with Abraham (Gen. 17: 1-2) represents a slow development of the tradition among the priestly circles of Jerusalem. Its purpose is to relate to the patriarchal promise the origin of the rite of circumcision. See bibliography in W. Zimmerli, "Sinaibund und Abrahambund. Ein Beitrag zum Verständnis der Priesterschrift," *TZ*, XVI (1960): 268-86; repr. in *id.*, *Gottes-Offenbarung. Gesammelte Aufsätze* (München, 1963), pp. 205-16; S. R. Külling, *Zur Datierung der 'Genesis-P-Stücke', namentlich des Kapitels Genesis XVII.* (1964).

68. The word *mah'azeh*, "vision," is a cognate of the word *hozeh*, "seer," "man of visions," which the priest of the temple of Bethel hurled at Amos (7:12).

69. It comes from the root *'mn*, related to the word amen, the noun *'emunah*, "faith," and its doublet, *'emeth*, "truth." On the growth of the notion of faith in Hebrew religion, see P. Michalon, "La foi, rencontre de Dieu et engagement envers Dieu dans l'Ancien Testament," *NRT*, LXXV (1953): 587 ff.; H. Pfeiffer, "Glauben im Alten Testament," *ZAW*, LXXXI (1959): 158 ff.; cf. the warnings of J. Barr, "'Faith' and 'Truth'-An Examination of Some Linguistic Arguments," in *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (London, 1961), pp. 161 ff.; See also Gemser, "The Religion of the Patriarchs," p. 60; M. G. Kline, "Abram's Amen," *WTJ*, XXXI (1968): 1 ff.

70. A. Jepsen, "[*Sedeq*] und [*Sedaqah*] im Alten Testament," in *Gotteswort und Gottes Land*, H-W. Hertzberg *Festschrift*, ed. by H.

Graf Reventlow (Göttingen, 1964), pp. 78-89.

71. See von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, I, p. 155; id., "Faith Reckoned as Righteousness," *The Problem of the Hexateuch*, pp. 125-30; F. Hahn, "Genesis 15, 6 im Neuen Testament," in H.-W. Wolff, ed., *Probleme biblischer Theologie. Festschrift G. von Rad* (München, 1971), pp. 91 f.

72. E. A. Speiser renders this phrase in the light of rabbinic theology, "He put his trust in Yahweh who accounted it to his merit" (Genesis, p. 110).

73. A. Heschel, in an otherwise perceptive essay, 'Man's Quest for God (New York, 1954), pp. 107 f., misunderstands the Pauline thought because he ignores the Hebraic notion of faith. See also M. Buber, *Two Types of Faith* (New York, 1951), pp. 44 ff.; cf. J. A. Ziesler, *The Meaning of Righteousness in Paul: A Linguistic and Theological Enquiry* (Cambridge, 1972).

74. This is clear from the early JE traditions. The Priestly traditions, however, elaborated upon the early narratives at the time of the exile in order to support etiologically a number of ritual practices which became central to postexilic Judaism, especially the law of circumcision (Gen. 17:1-14).

75. See E. L. Ehrlich, *Der Traum im Alien Testament* (Berlin, 1953), pp. 35 f.; A. L. Oppenheim, *The Interpretation of Dreams in the Ancient Near East* (Philadelphia, 1956), pp. 184 ff.; A. Reach, *Der Traum im Heilsplan Gottes* (Freiburg i. B., 1964), pp. 57 ff.;

The appearance of the Deity after sunset (vs. 17) introduces into the patriarchal narratives of epiphanic visitation the element of tire, which is usually typical of the Mosaic theophanies. See G. Ch. Aalders, "The Theophanies of the Old Testament," *Free University Quarterly*, VIII (1962): 13.

76. See H. Gunkel, Genesis, pp. 193 f.

77. E.g., *Odyssey*, xvii, 485-87; see von Rad, *Genesis*, p. 200.

78. Sir James G. Frazer, *Folklore in the Old*

Testament, abridged ed. (New York, 1923), pp. 333 ff.

79. F. Stier, *Gott und sein Engel im Alien Testament* (Münster, 1934), p. 5, note 12; A. Caquot, "Anges et demons dans l'Ancien Testament," *RHR*, CLXVII (1965): 117-19.

80. J. Barr, "Theophany and Anthropomorphism in the Old Testament," *Congress Volume, Oxford, 1959, SVT*, VII (Leiden, 1960), pp. 33 ff.

81. See Gunkel, *Genesis*, pp. 163 ff.; C. Westermann, "Verheissungserzählungen. Arten der Erzählung in der *Genesis*," *Forschung am Alien Testament* (München, 1964), pp. 28, 58 ff.

82. Read *Adony*, "my lord," rather than the Masoretic anachronism, *Adonay*, "The Lord," a later euphemism for the tetragrammaton.

83. The fluctuation between singular and plural may well reflect the Hebraic theology of transcendence. Cf. A. R. Johnson, *The One and the Many in the Israelite Conception of God* (Cardiff, 1961).

84. The anthropomorphism of the detail which depicts Yahweh as waiting for man appeared too gross for Judaism in the Hellenistic age. "And the men turned away from there, and went to Sodom, but Yahweh still tarried, standing in the presence of Abraham" (vs. 22). The two names are exchanged in the Masoretic text which now reads, through one of the eighteen *Tiqqune Sopherim* ("corrections of the Scribes"), "And Abraham still tarried, standing in the presence of Yahweh" (cf. LXX).

85. See R. Kilian, "Die vorpriesterlichen Abrahams Überlieferungen," *Bonner biblische Beiträge*, XXIV (1966): 263-78; id., *Isaaks Opferung. Zur Überlieferungsgeschichte von Gen 22* (Stuttgart, 1970); H. Graf Reventlow, *Opfere deinen Sohn. Eine Auslegung von Genesis 22* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1968), esp. pp. 32 f.; G. W. Coats, "Abraham's Sacrifice of Faith," In., XXVII (1973): 389 ff.; J. Crenshaw, "Journey Into Oblivion: A Structural Analysis of Gen. 22:1-19," *Soundings*, LVIII (1975): 243 ff.; R.

- Lack, "Le sacrifice d'Isaac—Analyse structurale de la couche élohiste dans Gn 22," *Biblica*, LVI (1975): 1 ff.
86. See 2 Kings 3:27, 16:3, 17:31, 21:6; cf. Jer. 7:31, 19:5; Ezek. 16:20–21, 33:37; Isa. 57:5. The polemic against child sacrifice is present in the tradition, but it remains secondary. See R. de Vaux, *Les institutions de l'Ancien Testament*, II (Paris, 1960), pp. 328 f.
87. The triple stress aims at offending the feelings of the audience beyond the limits of endurance. The use of the so-called *dativus ethicus* with the imperative "go!" (vs. 2)—exactly as in the initial command of Gen. 12:1—indicates the enormity of the decision which is hereby requested.
88. M. Luther, Lectures on *Genesis, IV (chapters 21-25)*, tr. by J. Pelikan (St. Louis, 1964), pp. 91–117. See also, "The father raised his knife; the boy did not wince. The angel cried, 'Abraham, Abraham!'" See how divine majesty is at hand in the hour of death. We say, 'In the midst of life we die.' God answers, 'Nay, in the midst of death we live.'" (*Weimar Ausgabe*, XLIII, 220 ff.; tr. and quoted by R. H. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (New York and Nashville, 1950), p. 370.
89. A typical formula in the dialogue form between God and man in all periods of Israel's religion.
90. See B. Olivier, *La crainte de Dieu, valeur religieuse de l'Ancien Testament* (Bruxelles, 1960); S. Terrien, "Fear," In *IDB*, II (1962): 260; S. Plath, *Furcht Gottes, der Begriff YR' im Alten Testament* (Stuttgart, 1963), p. 46 ff.; J. Becker, *Gottesfurcht im Alten Testament* (Roma, 1965), p. 193 f.
91. Auerbach, *Mimesis*, pp. 6 f.
92. Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, I, p. 174; id., *Genesis*, pp. 233 f.
93. The story of the testing of Abraham's faith has inspired a rich harvest of *haggadic* and other interpretative essays in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Cf. the extensive bibliography in R. Martin-Achard, *Actualité d'Abraham* (1969), p. 75, note 57, and pp. 185–93. See also H. Westman, "The Akedah," in *The Springs of Creativity* (New York, 1961), pp. 108–12.
94. M. Eliade, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return*, paperback ed. (New York, 1959), p. 109, note 6.
95. Von Rad, *Genesis*, pp. 278 f.; Sneider, *Genesis*, p. 219. By rehearsing at a time of religious apostasy and moral corruption the tales concerning Jacob, the Elohist narrators were in effect saying to the people at worship, "You are like Jacob!" Cf. T. E. Fretheim, "The Jacob Traditions: Theology and Hermeneutic." In: XXVI (1972): 419–36, esp. p. 435. Like wise, in the eighth century the prophet Hosea used the hymnic sequences on Jacob-Israel, most likely a part of the liturgical celebration of the Autumn Feast at Bethel, in order to sharpen the incisiveness of Yahweh's judgment and at the same time the wonder of the divine grace. Cf. E. M. Good, "Hosea and the Jacob Tradition," *VT*, XVI (1966): 137–51.
96. J. Delorme, "A propos du songe de Jacob," *A la rencontre de Dieu: Mémoires A. Gelin* (Le Puy, 1961), pp. 47–54, esp. p. 48; A. de Pury, *Promesse divine et légende culturelle dans le cycle de Jacob: Genèse 28 et les traditions patriarcales*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1976).
97. J. Gwyn Griffiths, "The Celestial Ladder and the Gate of Heaven (Genesis xxviii.12 and 17)," *ET*, LXXVI (1964–65): 229 f.; C. Houtmann, "What Did Jacob See in His Dream at Bethel? (Some Remarks on Genesis xxviii 10–22)," *VT*, XXVII (1977): 336 ff.
98. See Gunkel, *Genesis*, p. 359.
99. See H. Eysing, *Formgeschichtliche Untersuchung zur Jakobserzählung der Genesis* (Emsdetter, 1939), pp. 118–37; F. van Trigt, "La signification de la lutte de Jacob près du Yabboq: Gen. xxxii 23–33," *OTS*, XII (Leiden, 1958): 280–309; J. L. McKenzie, "Jacob at Peniel: Gn. 32, 24–32," *CBQ*, -XXV (1963): 71–76; R. Martin-Achard, "L'analyse structurale d'un texte de l'Ancien Testament," in R. Barthes et al., *Analyse structurale et exégèse biblique* (Neuchâtel, 1971), pp. 41–62; R.

- Barthes, "La lutte avec l'ange; analyse textuelle de Genèse 32.23-33," *ibid.*, pp. 27-39; H.-J. Hermisson, "Jakobs Kampf am Jabbok (Gen. 32, 23-33)," *ZTK*, LXXI (1974): 239-61.
100. Sir James G. Frazer, *Folklore in the Old Testament*, abridged ed. (New York, 1923), pp. 251-58; N. Schmidt, "The Numen of Penuel," *JBL*, XLV (1926): 269.
101. J. Bewer shows how the primitive tale was incorporated into the theological epic. See his "Progressive Interpretation," *ATR*, XXIV (1942), 89 ff.
102. Gen. 29:10.
103. Gunkel, *Genesis*, p. 364.
104. There is no need to suggest, as some exegetes have done, that at some early stage of the tradition it was Jacob who used a wrestler's trick and mutilated his assailant. Some have assumed that, at a later period, when the spirit of the ford came to be identified with Yahweh, the sexual undertone of the motif was thought to be theologically unseemly. Against this view, it should be observed that the memory of Jacob's lameness was apparently ancient (see vs. 31), and that it was clearly connected with the detail of an injury inflicted on him. The etiological motif of the legal prohibition on the eating of the sciatic nerve (vs. 32), however, may well have originally been independent (see MacKenzie, "Jacob at Peniel," p. 72).
105. See Eissfeldt, "Non *Dimittam Te*, Nisi *Benedixeris Mihi*," *Mélanges bibliques*. A. Robert (Paris, 1957), p. 78.
106. In ancient religions, the name possessed a numinous quality which carried with it an objective power. See, among others, Pedersen, *Israel, Its Life and Culture, I-II*, pp. 245 ff.; J. Sainte-Fare Garnot, "Les fonctions, les pouvoirs et la nature du nom propre dans l'ancienne Egypte," *Journal de Psychologie*, XLI (1948): 463-72.
107. G. A. Danell, *Studies in the Name of Israel in the Old Testament* (Uppsala, 1946), R. Coote, "The Meaning of the Name Is-rael," *HTR*, LXV (1972): 137-46.
108. D. Piccard, "Genèse, 32123-33: 'Dis-moi, quel est ton nom?'" *Hommage à Wilhelm Vischer* (Montpellier, 1960), pp. 187 f.
109. "Yahweh spoke to Moses face to face" (Exod. 33:11; cf. Deut. 5:4; 3 John, 14). In one instance, Moses is credited with the phrase, "Thou, Yahweh, art seen face to face" (Num. 14:14), but the context shows that he is referring to the presence of the Godhead "in the midst of the people" through the theologoumenon of "the cloud."
110. P. Dhorme, "L'emploi métaphorique des noms de parties du corps en hébreu et en akkadien," *RB*, XXX (1921): 374-99; A. R. Johnson, "Aspects of the Use of the Term PNYM in the Old Testament," *Festschrift Otto Eissfeldt*, ed. by H. J. Fück (Halle an der Saale, 1947), pp. 155-59.
111. Th. C. Vriezen, "La tradition de Jacob dans Osée xii," *OTS*, I (1942): 64-78; A. Bentzen, "The Weeping of Jacob, Hos. xii 5a," *VT*, I (1951): 59; H. L. Ginsberg, "Hosea's Ephraim: More Fool than Knave. A New Interpretation of Hosea 12:1-14," *JBL*, LXXX (1961): 339-47; P. R. Ackroyd, "Hosea and Jacob," *VT*, XIII (1963): 245-59; E. M. Good, "Hosea and the Jacob Tradition," *VT*, XVI (1966): 137-51.
112. Von Rad, *Genesis*, p. 320. E. A. Speiser, who rightly warns against trying to spell out the details which the narrator himself only "glimpsed as if through a haze" (*Genesis*, p. 256), admits that Jacob was now a changed man.
113. Hosea understood the tale of Jacob at the Jabbok through a theology of grace since the hymnic fragment which he quoted stressed the hero's weeping and "begging for mercy" (*wayyithannen lô*, 12:4). See K. Elliger, "Der Jakobskampf am Jabbok, Gen. 32, 23 ss., als hermeneutisches Problem," *ZTK*, XLVIII (1951), 29.
114. S. H. Blank, "Men Against God:

- The Promethean Element in Biblical Prayer," *JBL*, LXXII (1953): 1-13; *id.*, "Some Observations Concerning Biblical Prayer," *HUCA*, XXXII (1961): 75-90.
115. den. 12:7, 13:18, 26:25, 46:1.
116. I. Lindblom. "Theophanies in Holy Place: in Hebrew Religion," *HUCA*, XXXI (1964): 91.
117. Von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, I p. 175.
118. "There can be no doubt that, though the key-word 'faith' occurs only once . . . , it is the problem of faith which lies at the back of these stories. ." (*ibid.*, p. 171).
119. See bibliography in G. E. Wright, "The Archaeology of Palestine," in *The Bible and the Ancient Near East* (Garden City, N. Y., 1961), pp. 101 ff.
120. E. Norden, *Agnostos Theos. Untersuchungen zur Formgeschichte religiöser Rede* (Leipzig/Berlin, 1913), pp. 77 ff., 207 ff.
121. M. J. Buss, "The Language of the Divine 'I'," *JBR*, XXIX (1961): 102 ff.
122. Against the opinion of J. Lindblom, "Theophanies in Holy Places." 7. 106. See the observation of Kuntz, *The Self-Revelation of God*, p. 32, note 19.
123. P. Tillich, "The Word of God," in *Language: An Inquiry Into Its Meaning and Function*, ed. by R. N. Anshen (New York, 1957), p. 123; cf. M. Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, tr. by R. Manheim (New Haven, 1959), pp. 98 ff., 132 ff.
124. Muilenburg, "The Speech of Theophany," p. 37.
125. Gen. 26:24, 28:13, 31:13, 46:3; cf. Exod. 3:6, etc.
126. Quoted by R. Bainton, *Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther* (Nashville, 1950), p. 100.
127. *Ibid.*, p. 370.

3

The Sinai Theophanies

Traditions which are now embedded in the Pentateuch contain a great deal of information about Moses, but they do not constitute the equivalent of historiographic archives. As cultic *legenda* they were couched in rhythmic prose, for they were recited musically at the celebration of the seasonal feasts at the shrines of Yahweh in the land of Canaan or among the communities of the first Jews during the exile in Babylon. The image of Moses as the great lawgiver does not belong to the earliest strata of these traditions. Although the decalogue (in its lapidary form of ten short words) may be attributed to him,¹ the historical Moses was primarily a military leader of a charismatic character.²

In or about 1275 B.C., at the height of the reign of Ramses II (1290-1224 B.C.),³ a Hebrew bearing the Egyptian name of *Moshéh* (Moses) fomented an insurrection among the labor camps of the northeastern delta of the Nile and led a group of Hebrew slaves out of Egypt across the flat marshes of the Isthmus of Suez in the vicinity of the Bitter Lakes.⁴ In the name of “the god of [their] fathers,” Moses guided these men and women, an amorphous mass of refugees, toward the Sinai wilderness, and

molded them into an organic community through the ritual of a covenant with Yahweh. Before his death, he brought their sons and daughters within sight of the land of Canaan, on the Plateau of Moab, east of the Dead Sea. The conquest of the land remained the task of his successors-Joshua, the Judges, and even David and Solomon-2-1 /2 centuries later.⁵ Within this historical framework, however, little is known about the man. Yet, the traditions are unanimous in ascribing his exceptional eminence to a complexity of religious factors: Moses was remembered as a man who “spoke face to face” with the Deity, and such “happenings” were described in spatial and temporal terms.

At a certain place, on a certain day, Moses was brought into the immediate proximity of the holy in the midst of a scene of nature in wonder (the Burning Bush) or of nature in tumult (Mount Horeb or Mount Sinai). Such experiences were told and preserved in a certain literary form which may be called “theophany.”⁶ As has been noted above, the early traditions concerning Moses present several affinities with the patriarchal narratives of epiphanic visitation. Both of the scenes just mentioned stress the immediacy of the presence, the abruptness of the way in which this presence manifests itself or vanishes, the subordination of each scene to a dialogical speech, and the specific relatedness of such a speech to the decision for man to act in history.

The Mosaic narratives, however, differ from the patriarchal stories in several aspects:

1. The patriarchal stories concern a multiplicity of places, like Shechem, Mamre, Beersheba, Moriah, Bethel, Peniel, and so on. The Mosaic traditions, on the contrary, ascribe the theophanies to a single place, the *har elohim* or “mountain of God,” and its immediate vicinity.⁷

2. The patriarchal stories tell of altars which the patriarchs

built in order to commemorate the various sites of the epiphanic visitations, and these sites were venerated at a later age as shrines of Yahweh in the land of Canaan.⁸ Moses, however, erected no topographically fixed shrine in the wilderness of Sinai,⁹ and there is no evidence of Hebrew, Israelite, or Jewish pilgrimages to “the mountain of God” during the biblical period.¹⁰ The stories of the Mosaic theophanies became the literary anchor for the clustering of most of the legislation of Israel, so much so that the final form of the Pentateuch came to be known as the *Torah*, or “Law,” and its entire composition became ascribed to Moses by fundamentalist Jews and Christians.

3. The patriarchal stories, like the narratives of prophetic vision in the age of the great prophets,¹¹ were articulated within the setting of an ordinary landscape and normal conditions of nature. Whenever the storytellers included a motif of a supernatural character, like that of the fire in the Yahwistic story of the covenant with Abraham (Gen. 15:17) or of the celestial ladder in the scene of Jacob asleep at Bethel (Gen. 28:12), they were careful to suggest by contextual juxtaposition that such elements of *mirabilia naturae* belonged to the realm of psychic vision (Gen. 15:1) or of dream (Gen. 15:12, 28:12). Such was not the case with the Sinai theophanies. Indeed, the element which sets these modes of presence apart from both the patriarchal stories of epiphanic visitation and the prophetic confessions of psychic experience is just that of natural wonder.

4. The ancient traditions concerning the Sinai theophanies differ from the modes both of epiphanic visitation to the patriarchs and of prophetic vision because they are concerned with *the theologoumenon of the name*. The first story of Sinai theophany discloses the name to Moses (Exod. 3:1—4:14); the second expounds the historical significance of that name for the people in the context of the covenant (Exod. 19:1—24:11); the third establishes a dramatic contrast between the theologoume-

non of the name and the theologoumenon of the glory (Exod. 33:12–23).

THE DISCLOSURE OF THE NAME (*Exod. 3:1–4:17*)

The scene is identified with the wilderness of the mountain of Elohim, “westward toward Horeb” (3:1). The geographical designation (“Horeb” rather than “Sinai”) is a mark of the northern (E) stratum of the traditions. The name “Horeb” is used in the directional form, *Horebah*, which implies that Moses went toward the mountain. There is no reason to believe that he ascended to its top. On the contrary, two features of the story suggest that the setting was at the foot of the rocky mass, presumably near a spring. Moses was keeping flocks of sheep and goats, and the sort of vegetation suitable for grazing animals grows in valleys and not on mountain peaks. Moreover, the presence of “a bush” indicates the proximity of water and points to a relatively low level of land.¹² In any case, the storytellers place the site in the immediate vicinity of the mountain (3:12).

The core of the narrative grew between the twelfth and the ninth centuries **B.C.** in the northern sanctuaries of Israel (the Elohist strand of tradition) and may have influenced the shaping of a new literary genre, that of the “prophetic vision of calling.”¹³ This is not surprising, since Moses was remembered as the prophet par excellence, the authentic mouthpiece of Yahweh.¹⁴

The Setting of the Theophany (Exod. 3:1–6)

As in some stories of epiphanic visitation to the patriarchs, the Godhead first “appeared,”¹⁵ literally, “was seen,” or perhaps “showed itself” in the anthropomorphic guise of the “messenger” (*mal'akh*, “angel”) of Yahweh. The feature, how-

ever, should not be taken literally since this mysterious figure is enveloped in a flame of fire and soon evanesces from the scene:

The messenger of Yahweh appeared to him in a fiery flame out of the midst of the bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush was burning with fire; yet, the bush was not consumed. And Moses said. "I must indeed turn around it, and see this great sight, why the bush does not burn itself out!" (vss. 2-4).

In the sequence of the narrative, the "messenger" makes room for "the God" (*ha-Elohim*), later called *Yahweh*. The presence of the Deity is signified to man by a kind of fire which does not correspond to empirical verification. Fire is a symbol of prompt becoming. It suggests the desire to change, to hasten time, to bring life to its beyondness. In the entire history of religions, the contemplation of fire amplifies human destiny; it relates the minor to the major, the burning bush to the life of the world, and the desire for change to the vision of renewal.¹⁶

The theophany differs from the epiphanic visitation on the one hand and from the prophetic vision on the other because it uses an element of nature in the context of tumult or of wonder as a starting point for an experience of the divine.

Moses is visually aware of the presence, but he perceives no fixed shape or form. The fire, which does not consume itself, is an eternal becoming. Formless but lasting, the visual feature is soon absorbed by the spoken word. The Hebraic theophany is more heard than seen. Divine-human dialogue, with questions and answers, objections and counter-statements, give-and-take, interacting tension between Godhead and manhood, is the primary characteristic of the speech of theophany. The scenic setting disappears at the expense of the pressing question, "Moses, Moses!" (vs. 4), which in turn elicits the response of self-availability and potential readiness, "Here am I!" At the same time, the theophanic dialogue cannot proceed without a

warning of the risk involved in the nearness of the presence. The storytellers, unable to manipulate the abstraction of philosophical discourse, are stunningly competent in conveying the ambivalence of “the holy.”

“Do not come hither!
Remove thy shoes from thy feet,
For the place (*maqôm*) wherein thou standest
is holy ground (*'admath qodhesh*)” (vs. 5).

As the guardians of northern sanctuaries, especially those of Bethel and Shechem, the Elohist theologians told that story in the context of a cultic ceremonial. The expression “holy ground,” literally, “soil of holiness,” reflects the language of the shrine in an agrarian society for which the earth acquires its special significance as the living “soil” of fertility. It is difficult to think of *'adhamah* on the rocky slopes of Mt. Sinai.

Affinity is here insinuated between “the numinous” of religious experience, which contains the portentous horror of the unknown, and “the sacred,” which is contained and delimited within the precincts of a temple esplanade. However, the context indicates that the motif of the “holy place” (*maqôm qadhôsh*), which perhaps was echoed in Jacob’s dream at Bethel (Gen. 28:17) and which was common to most religions (cf. the *hieros topos* of the Greeks) was here limited radically in duration: “the holy” obtains its significance not from geography but from the intervention of the Deity, and it is reduced to the temporal dimensions of the theophany. There is no indication that the “holy ground” remains holy after the termination of the divine appearance. The “holy” is not a permanent quality attached to topography, as at Bethel, Shechem, or Mt. Zion. It is in response to the speech of theophany that Hebrew man experiences the *mysterium tremendum* not just as the indefinite power of an animistic nature but as the manifestation of a nature-tran-

scending Godhead. "When Yahweh saw that [Moses] turned aside to see, He called him from the midst of the fire" (vs. 4a). Moses is compelled to elevate both the numinous aspect of the fire and the sacredness of a cultic structure—both common to archaic systems of worship—to the level of a personal, a-topographic "holiness." "He veiled his face for he was afraid to look upon God" (vs. 6). His desire for the sight of the divine, which is the characteristic of all forms of mysticism, is arrested by self-masking. Biblical faith does not belong to the class of mystical religions.

As in the epiphanic visitations to the patriarchs, the vision of God is prevented at the last instant by respect for the holy. Hebraic response to holiness preserves a distinction between the divine and the human realms. Finiteness is never identified with infinity. Presence is real but unseen. The invisibility of a God who yet speaks remains the cardinal tenet of a Hebraic theology of presence. For the northern theologians of the Elohist tradition, the visual faculty of man, the symbol of his sensorial and rational ability to know, is enlisted only in a preliminary way. Sight is submitted to hearing. Man never sees God, but the word is heard. The eye is closed but the ear is opened. Hebraism is a religion not of the eye but of the ear.

The Mission and the Promise of Communion (3:7–12)

Yahweh's intervention in history is motivated by his emotion of sympathy for the oppressed. He has seen the suffering of the Hebrews in Egypt. He shares the misery of his people (vss. 7, 9). Therefore, his intention is not only to deliver them from oppression but also to bring them to a land flowing with milk and honey (vs. 8). Moses is summoned "to bring forth [God's] people . . . out of Egypt" (vs. 10).

Man always shrinks from the prophetic calling. "Who am I" for such a task? The initial reaction of Moses is a refusal dic-

tated by humility and perhaps a lack of courage. Therefore, the summons lead directly to a promise of support:

I shall be with thee (*'ehyeh 'immakh*),
 And this will be for thee the sign
 That it is I, indeed, that sent thee
 To bring forth [my] people out of Egypt,
 So that [all of] you will serve God on this mountain (vs. 12).

This passage presents a number of grammatical and exegetical difficulties which explain the variety of renderings and interpretations.¹⁷ There is no syntactical objection to understanding the demonstrative pronoun (“and *this* will be the sign”) as referring to the preceding clause. Hence the meaning seems to be that the promise of continuing presence will constitute the “sign” of the authenticity of the mission.

An important development arises from this promise. The Godhead offers Moses a spiritual reality-divine companionship and help-that will outlast the temporal limits of the “appearance” at the Burning Bush. We witness a shift from one mode of presence to another. The psychological mode of presence, as distinguished from the specific experience of encounter, was already hinted at when the Yahwistic tradition said of the antediluvian hero, “Enoch walked with God” (Gen. 4:22).

It will be noted that the promise of enduring communion uses the verbal form *'ehyeh*, “I shall be,” (vs. 12a), an expression which is also found in the patriarchal narratives of epiphanic visitation¹⁸ and which constitutes the key to the understanding of the next episode in the theophany, the disclosure of the divine name (3:13–15).

The Meaning of the Name of God (3:13–15)

As the theophanic scene becomes exclusively dominated by the dialogical speech, the dynamics of the narrative articulate the unfolding of God’s self-asseveration as a gradual response

to the objections advanced by the would-be but reluctant prophet.

Apparently, an inward and spiritual promise of a lasting presence is not deemed to be sufficient: Moses projects the image of his “political” anxiety:

And Moses said to the Elohim,
 “Behold, when I come to the sons of Israel and I say to them,
 The Elohim of your fathers has sent me toward you,
 And if they say, What is his name?
 What shall I say unto them?” (3:13)

The request for the disclosure of the divine name is not made by man on his own behalf, as in the narrative of the epiphanic visitation to Jacob at the Jabbok (Gen. 32:29), but is explicitly related to the historical activity which has been outlined by the divine command. The revelation of the name is justified by a concern for a theology of history. Moses makes his request on the ground of his commission and for the sake of its success. Nevertheless, the storyteller may have been hinting at some inner conflict within his hero, for the reply of God is bewildering:

3:14 And Elohim said to Moses,
 “*Eheyeh ’asher ’eheyeh.*”
 And he said, “Thus wilt thou say to the sons of Israel,
Eheyeh has sent me to you.”
 3:15 And Elohim said again to Moses,
 “Thus wilt thou say to the sons of Israel,
Yahweh, the Elohim of your fathers,
 the Elohim of Abraham,
 the Elohim of Isaac, and
 the Elohim of Jacob,
 Has sent me to you.
 This is my name forever,
 And this is my memorial for generation of generation.”

The text bristles with exegetical problems.¹⁹

1. The “name” (*shem*) is placed parallel to the “memorial” (*zeker*) in the context of the mission of Israel. This feature alone indicates the cultic use of the passage in the shrines at a later time. The English word “memorial” is in some respects unfortunate, for it fails to convey the sacramental aspect of the original Hebrew word, which refers to memory in worship.²⁰ The *zeker* does not merely signify a recall of the past. It designates a ceremonial commemoration which summons the people to take a stand for action in view of Yahweh’s purpose in history. The climactic statement of the pericope relates the name of God to the future generations. The “memorial” corresponds in effect to an eschatological *memorandum*, a token of the not-yet which is sure to come. The name of Israel’s God, *Yahweh*, is thus presented not as a tool of cultic invocation, as in the religious folklore of mankind, but as a kerygma of hope, an affirmation of certainty in the power of the divine intention toward its fulfillment.²¹

2. The oral conflator or final redactor of the traditions here preserved places the name *Yahweh* (*vs. 15*)²² in parallel sequence to the word *’Eheyeh* (*vs. 14b*), which in turn appears immediately after, and is indeed a repeated part of, the mysterious phrase *’ehyeh ’asher ’ehyeh*, traditionally rendered “I am that I am” (*vs. 14a*). Clearly, the narrator intends to illuminate the meaning of the divine name with the help of this initial statement.

3. Although the phrase in question is known to us only through its written form in the present Masoretic text, and therefore reflects the phonetic use which prevailed among the synagogue singers of the first millenium **A.D.**, traditio-historical criticism shows that it was originally part of a cultic recital of the national epic in Israel’s formative centuries—the period of the

Judges and of the United Monarchy (thirteenth to tenth centuries B.C.).

4. If it could be demonstrated that, in its oral stage, the phrase *'ehyeh 'asher 'ehyeh* came from the time of Moses, namely, the Late Bronze Age, one would be in the position to conclude with a remarkable degree of certainty that it was not pronounced in this way. Comparative Northwest Semitics shows that the verb *hayah*, "to be," was primitively *hawah*. Consequently, the phrase of verse 14a might be restored, in keeping with the peculiarities of the verbal conjugation of such verbs (which belong to the doubly laryngeal type, as well as " 'ayin-yod," primitively " 'ayin-waw") as *'ahweh 'asher 'ahweh*. It will be observed at once that the verbal form *'ahweh*, first person singular masculine imperfect-future of the verb *hawah*, "to be," used in verse 14a twice and repeated in verse 14b as a proper name, is phonetically and morphologically very close to the tetragrammaton *Yahweh*, the third person masculine of the same verb. According to this restoration, the unexpected discrepancy in the sounds of *'ehyeh* (vs. 14 a and b) and *Yahweh* (vs. 15) disappears. Moreover, the verbal form *'ahweh*, first person singular, or *yahweh*, third person singular, is grammatically ambiguous, for it may be understood as belonging to the *Qal* voice (simple active) or to the *Hiph'il* voice (causative-factitive). It follows that the translation of verse 14a might be either "I am who I am" (possibly in the future, "I shall be who I shall be") or "I cause to be whatever I cause to be." Consequently, the name *Yahweh* might be interpreted, according to the Elohist narrative of the Burning Bush, as either "He is" or "He causes to be."

5. The "causative-factitive" interpretation of the phrase in verse 14a and of the tetragrammaton *Yahweh* in verse 15 is possible and attractive²³ but not probable.

(a) The meaning of *Yahweh* as "the Creating One," or "He who causes to be," fits the contextual sequence admirably.

When Moses offers a fourth objection to the acceptance of his prophetic task by pleading that he is not eloquent (4:10), Yahweh replies most pointedly, “Who has *made* man’s mouth? ... Is it not I, *Yahweh*?”

(b) The wide use of the tetragrammaton throughout the Hebraic literature of the entire biblical period gives semantic support to the interpretation of the divine name in the sense of creative activity.

(c) Many parallels in ancient Near Eastern onomastics (Sumerian, Egyptian, Akkadian, Amorite, and more specifically proto-Canaanite; compare also the Sinaitic inscriptions) tend to indicate that theophoric names included the idea of causative creativity, although this was never the case with the verb *hawah*, “to be” (or its Semitic cognates and equivalents). To be sure, the form *Yahwi* is found in the formation of Amorite personal names, but there is no way of discovering whether it was understood as active or as causative-factitive.

(d) The fact remains that the Hebraic literature has never understood the tetragrammaton in the creative sense.²⁴ Indeed, as early as the eighth century B.C.—at a time when the Elohist epic tradition was probably still in oral form—the prophet Hosea appeared to allude to the dialogical speech of the Burning Bush theophany when he used the verb *'ehyeh* exactly as it is found in the present Hebrew text of Exodus 3:14*a* and *b*. Speaking to unfaithful Israel, *Lô-'Ammi*, “Not-My-People,” Yahweh says, through the mouth of his prophet,

“You are not-my-people (*Lô-'Ammi*),
and I, for you, I-am-not (*Lô-'Ehyeh*)” (Hos.1:8)

The sapiential circles also used the verb *hayah* intransitively.²⁵ It is not impossible that the idea of being and nonbeing, in a proto-ontological form of speculation, was familiar to the theologians of northern Israel. The tellers of the story of the

Burning Bush suggested that the God who manifested his active presence to Moses was not to be associated with derivative forces but represented beingness par excellence.

While the most accurate translation of Exod. 3:13–15 must remain a matter of uncertainty, the foregoing discussion shows that the traditional rendering, which was already reflected in Hellenistic times by the translation of the Septuagint,²⁶ is probably correct.²⁷

6. The meaning of the tetragrammaton, however, requires further discussion. Was the verb *hayah-hawah* understood by the ancient Hebrews in the simple meaning of “being”?²⁸ The dynamics of the entire narrative indicate that the phrase of 3:14–15 should not be divorced from the context in which it is found. The exegete will recall that the promise of a lasting communion (vs. 12) was strikingly expressed in the words *'ehyeh 'immakh*, “I shall be with thee.” Likewise, after Moses’ repeated attempts to escape the responsibility of the mission given to him, Yahweh insisted, *we-'anokhi 'ehyeh 'im p'ikha*, “And I, even I, shall be with thy mouth” (4:12; cf. vs. 15). By employing the method of contextual juxtaposition, the storytellers have framed the phrase of 3:14 within the offer of divine presence.²⁹

Whatever the etymology and original meaning of the name *Yahweh* may have been, the storytellers wished to promote their own interpretation of it. To the vacillating Moses, Yahweh first gave assurance by affirming, “I shall be with thee” (3: 12). When Moses persisted by conjecturing that the sons of Israel might well demand a precise identification of the God of their fathers, he was in effect asking indirectly, on his own behalf, for a clarification of his own knowledge of the divine. He was attempting to expand the limits of that knowledge. More than intellectual curiosity was implied, for he betrayed a doubt as to the validity of his own experience.

In the light of the other strata of this ancient tradition (Exod. 4:1–17), in which Moses objected three times to his prophetic

calling, one may surmise that the request for the disclosure of the name (vs. 13) was both a symptom of man's reluctance to obey and the manifestation of a legitimate move toward theological certainty. Prophetic revelation and prophetic summons are inextricably bound in Hebraic faith. As Moses was still delaying his response, God replied, "I shall be whoever I shall be" (vs. 14). Such a reply may well represent a qualification of the promise to offer supportive presence (vs. 12). In the present redaction of the story, it sharpens the dynamics of the theophanic interchange and anticipates the divine anger which brings the dialogue to its climax (4:14).

According to this interpretation, the name indeed carries the connotation of divine presence, but it also confers upon this presence a quality of elusiveness. The God of biblical faith, even in the midst of a theophany, is at once *Deus revelatus atque absconditus*. He is known as unknown.³¹ The semantics of the phrase "I shall be whoever I shall be" prepares the syntactically similar saying of the third Sinai theophany, "I shall grace whomever I shall grace and I shall be merciful with whomever I shall be merciful" (Exod. 33:19).

Moses expressed his own anxiety, for he wrongly thought that the people would be reluctant to trust him readily and at once. This anxiety was not only of a psychological, sociological, and political nature ("Will they believe what I say?") but was also and primarily the result of a theological Angst. He wanted religious certainty. He wished to see with his own power of perception. He intended to comprehend. Yahweh's disclosure of his name was both an answer and the denial of a request.³² Such an ambivalence was to remain "forever" (vs. 15b) the mark of the Hebraic theology of presence.

The Covenant Theophany (Exod. 19:1—24:18)

Few pages in the literature of mankind compare to this awesome description of an encounter between God and man. Yet,

mountains have played a significant part in most religions. Men have seen them

in clusters swelling
mighty, and pure, and fit to make
the ramparts of a Godhead's dwelling.³³

Homer sang of Titans who piled Mount Pelion and Mount Ossa on the top of Mount Olympus in a vain attempt to scale the dwelling of the gods.³⁴ For centuries, the proto-Canaanites of Ugarit had evoked in their liturgies the storm theophany and the mountain of the north,³⁵ in strains which have inspired Hebrew poets in a later age.³⁶ There is no reason, however, for assimilating the Sinai traditions to the mythologies of ancient Near Eastern or classical antiquities. A historical event stood at the base of the Hebraic *legenda*. All available evidence leads to the conclusion that Moses and the refugees who had fled the Egyptian labor camps pitched their tents at the foot of a mountainous massif, not far from the Sea of Reeds. There, some weeks after the spring equinox, a seasonally late thunderstorm was the setting of a collective experience of the holy which became the norm of Hebrew religion.

The cluster of heterogeneous traditions, narratives, and laws, which is now found at the heart of the book of Exodus (19:1—24:18), represents the only story of “theophany” in the strict sense of the word, for it contains two elements not found elsewhere in the biblical literature: first, the constantly reiterated feature of nature in tumult; second, the participation of the people standing as a witness to a solitary man of God. In other narratives of a similar character, as in the epiphanic visitations to the patriarchs or the visions of the great prophets, nature is absent or offers only a neutral background. In the other two stories of theophany which are told of Moses (Exod. 3 and 33), where some element of scenic wonder is called into play, the people is absent.

Substantial disagreement lingers among scholars concerning the exact delineation of the ancient strata of the traditions which have been woven into the present text,³⁷ but one may reasonably maintain that two different sets of stories can be discerned behind the various repetitions, stylistic changes, and lexicographic discrepancies of the present text. In one, the Elohist theologians of northern Israel, who lived near the shrines of Shechem and Bethel in the First Iron Age during the conquest and the early monarchy (twelfth to ninth centuries B.C.), stressed the element of hearing sounds and voices and or obeying words. They were followed by the Deuteronomists (ninth to seventh centuries), who interpreted the same traditions in a similar way (Deut. 4:33 ff., etc.). In the other, the Yahwist theologians, from Judah, told their own versions in the sanctuaries of Hebron and Jerusalem and insisted on the vision of the divine glory.

More clearly than in the scene of the Burning Bush, the present text of the covenant theophany points to a tension between two different religious stances. The first thinks of divine presence according to the theologoumenon of the name, and the second conceives it in terms of visibility. The conflict between the ear and the eye persisted throughout the centuries of Hebrew religion in biblical times and appears in modified forms both in Judaism and Christianity.

The Elohist Proclamation of the Name

Northerners remembered the Horeb theophany as an event which concerned *all the people*, not just a hierarchy. The covenant played a significant part in this event, but it was initiated by the prior reality of presence. The covenant appears to be a ritual act of mutual obligation which is precisely intended to prolong in a modified form the most extraordinary, indeed a unique, perception of the holy: the self-manifestation of the creator of the universe, the possessor of the whole earth, the ruler of nature

and the liberator who is able to overcome the most powerful army in history. The covenant aims therefore at transcending the ravages of time, preventing the erosion of ancestral memories, and bringing to life for the children yet unborn the fathers' "ancient rapture." It attempts to bridge the gap between generations. It is directed toward the future actuality of a past which risks inevitable oblivion. It constitutes a deed of truly "historical" significance, for its purpose is far more embracing than the aims of imperial archives or historiography. It is to mold the Israel of tomorrow into the pattern of living with God as "a holy nation."

The following pericopes may be identified as fragments of the Elohist tradition which have been preserved in the present redaction of the Pentateuchal story:

Summons to Moses (19:2b-3)

19:2b And Israel encamped there in front of the mountain.
 3 And Moses went up to [the mountain of] Elohim (LXX)
 And Yahweh called him from the mountain and said,
 Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob
 And reveal to the sons of Israel.

This introduction to the theophany proper is phrased in an unspectacular style. It is reminiscent of the conversational tone used in the epiphanic visitations to the patriarchs and anticipates the simple intimacy with which the great prophets in a later age received divine orders. The message is directed to "the house of Jacob," a designation of Israel that is typical of the Northern theologians.

Message to the People (19:4-6)

19:4 You, yourselves (*'attem*), you have seen
 What I have done to the Egyptians

And how I carried you on wings of eagles
And I brought you to myself.

5 And now (we *'attah*), if you will obey my voice indeed
And keep my covenant,
You will be for me, out of all peoples, a peculiar treasure,
For the whole earth is mine.

6 And you, yourselves (we *'attem*), you will be for me
A priestly realm and a holy nation.

These are the words which thou shalt speak to the sons of
Israel.

The strophic structure of the poem is enhanced by the strategic location of key words which create assonance, although they are not cognates: we *'attem*, “and you,” we *'attah*, “and now.” The literary genre of the call narratives which may be discerned in this pericope indicates a long history of prophetic spirituality. Moses is the mouthpiece of the Deity. He does not act on his own behalf. He is the ambassador of the Great King.

The divine speech opens with a recital of the *Magnalia Dei*. The manifestation of Yahweh's presence on Mount Horeb is prefaced by the manifestation of Yahweh's indirect presence at the Crossing of the Sea. According to a late midrash, “even the lowliest maidservant at the Red Sea saw what Isaiah, Ezekiel, and all the other prophets never saw.”³⁸ The dialogical speech announcing the Mount Horeb theophany already played upon the human faculty of sight: “You, yourselves, you have seen!” This statement clearly intimates that divine presence can manifest itself in various ways. The Exodus and the Crossing of the Sea, however, are only the preludes to a far more significant event, the appearance of God himself on the mountain. The purpose of the Exodus is indeed the liberation from slavery, but the liberation from slavery has no meaning unless it leads to God: “I brought you toward myself!” Geography has become the *topos* for the pilgrimage of the spirit. Israel has seen the acts

of God. Now, Israel will see her own destiny as the act of God.

Presence is that which creates a people. Presence is the reality to which man must attune himself if he is to live at all, for there is no solitary life. The family and the tribe grow into a welded society. The Hebraic notion of "peoplehood" represents a new reality in the history of mankind. The technological societies of the ancient world-Mesopotamia, Egypt or the city-states of the Fertile Crescent-are hierarchic structures in which the many work for the few. As they move through an economic wilderness, the liberated slaves cannot develop into a coherent community unless they are converted into priestly agents for the sovereign of history. The Horeb theophany is to transform the uncouth mass of slaves into a united people of free men and women. Presence, after the fire is extinct and the thunders are silent, will transmute its shattering but momentary impact into a sociological cement which will create a sacerdotal realm, hence a holy nation.

Collective homogeneity means social solidarity, which in turn implies a standard of ethical behavior. The validity of the covenant depends upon the *hearing* of a voice, that is to say, the obeying of a formulated word. The covenant has to be kept, observed, preserved, maintained. It is conditional. Initiated by presence, it leads to presence. Out of all peoples, the new people will become Yahweh's "special treasure" (*segullah*).³⁹ Israel, the covenant people, is bound to a God whose sway embraces nothing less than the entire earth. The separation of Israel from all other peoples points to the idea of election, although the word is not yet used. To be the object of a unique love means "to be chosen." Election is predicated on the emotional awareness of "predilection." Israel, however, is not loved in a historical vacuum. Yahweh is not a dilettante. Israel is loved so as to become Yahweh's priestly kingdom in the history of the world. The expression "kingdom of priests," obscure as it may

be since it has no parallel in the biblical literature,⁴⁰ shows that the northern theologians have meditated in a revolutionary way upon the institution of sacerdotal mediation. The notion of priesthood, which goes back to the prehistoric shrines or at least to centuries of ancient Near Eastern life in holy places,⁴¹ is lifted out of its institutional functionalism. Priests are specialized servants of the gods in sanctuaries. Their function is to administer the sacred acts in sacred places at sacred times. They are therefore sacred persons. In the view of the theology of northern Israel, Israel in its entirety becomes “a holy nation,” because Israel’s vocation is to become the priest of the King of history. Israel, the covenant people, is to mediate the presence of Yahweh to the world. The theme is not essentially different from that of the Abrahamic call: “In thee all the nations of the earth shall be blessed and bless one another” (Gen. 12:3).

The Elohist theology of presence promotes a religion of suprasacerdotalism, in which the traditional function of priesthood is collectivized and sublimated. Consequently there can be within the exercise of this religion no distinction between clergy and laity.

The People’s Commitment (19:7–8)

- 19:7 And Moses came and summoned the elders of the people,
 And he placed before them all these words
 Which Yahweh had commanded him.
 8 And all the people answered together and said,
 All that Yahweh has spoken, we will do.
 And Moses reported to Yahweh the words of the people.

The terms of the covenantal conditions are transmitted to “all the people” by their elders. In nomadic societies, elders do not represent a political structure of external authority but emerge from within the informal nuclei of the community: family, clan,

and tribe.⁴² Stress is also laid on the unanimity of the assent: all the people “answered *together*.”

The People's Readiness to Meet God (19:1 O-1 la, 14)

19:10 And Elohim said to Moses, Go the people
 And consecrate them today and tomorrow,
 And let them wash their garments,
11a And let them be ready on the third day.
 14 And Moses went down from the mountain to the people,
 And he consecrated the people,
 And they washed their garments.

The people are bidden to prepare for the divine encounter. The proximity of the holy calls for special acts of a symbolic and, indeed, sacramental significance. Just as Moses was asked to remove his shoes at the scene of the Burning Bush, so also Moses is invited to perform a series of acts of “sanctification” which are not otherwise described. The washing of garments does not represent a specifically cultic act of ritual significance, for it is universally observed in anticipation of a solemn event. To be sure, the theophany is told within the temporal framework of cultic reenactment, but the ritual features are merely hinted at. The series of gestures or deeds which are implied by the verb “to consecrate” appear to be entirely compatible with the nomadic destitution of the wilderness.

The Storm Theophany (19:16-17, 19)

19:16 On the morning of the third day
 There were thunders and flashes of lightning,
 And a heavy cloud upon the mountain,
 And the sound of the *shophar* was exceedingly strong,
 And all the people who were in the camp trembled.
 17 And Moses brought the people out to meet Elohim,
 And they stood beneath the slope of the mountain.

19 And as the sound of the *shophar* went on,
 Growing exceedingly strong,
 Moses spoke,
 And Elohim answered him in thunder.

The day has come. The visual features include a heavy cloud (*'anan kabhed*), which presumably masked the top of the mountain, and flashes of lightning, but the Deity was not seen in any shape or in any mode. The auditive elements dominate: the thunders and the sound of the *shophar*. It is not possible to determine whether the allusion to the ram's horn is metaphorical or points to a cultic detail of the reenacted ceremonial. Likewise, the meaning of the word *qôl* (vs. 19b), used for the answer of God, is uncertain: it may refer to a thunderstroke or to an articulated voice.

The People's Refusal to Meet God (20:18-21)

20:18 And all the people saw the thunders and the lightnings
 And the sound of the *shophar* and the mountain smoke,
 And the people were afraid and they trembled
 And they stood afar off.
 19 And they said to Moses, Speak thou with us and we will
 hear,
 But let not Elohim speak with us lest we die.
 20 And Moses said to the people, Fear not
 For it is to test you that Elohim has come
 And that the fear of him may be before you
 So that you may not sin.
 21 And the people stood afar off,
 And Moses drew near to the thickdarkness where
 Elohim was.

The verb "to see" is again used, but some of the objects of this "sight" are thunders and the sound of the *shophar*. Clearly, the storytellers suggest the general faculty of perception through the senses. Smoke now envelops the mountain but does not

constitute a volcanic sign, since brush fires are generally ignited on the slopes of mountain ranges during subtropical thunderstorms.⁴³ The people, in any case, do not see God. They even fear to hear him. Moses, far from being the appointed intercessor who stands forever between God and man, is here an *ad hoc* delegate. He represents the people because they cannot muster the courage to face the holy. The nature of the divine “test” or of the human “sin” is not defined.⁴⁴ In contrast to the cowardice of the people, Moses dared “to draw near the thickdarkness (*‘araphel*) where Elohim was” (vs. 21 *b*).

This detail appears to constitute the climax of the theophany.⁴⁵ Apparently, the northern storytellers did not hesitate to localize the presence of the Godhead, but they selected a most peculiar word for designating the place of this divine spatialization. Although the word *‘araphel* points to the mythology of the storm god,⁴⁶ it designates, more specifically than the thunderhead (which is, to be sure, at the origin of this theological term) a total darkness which is the symbol both of divine presence and of divine hiddenness.⁴⁷ Unlike the other Hebrew words for obscurity, such as those which refer to night or to the gloom of the underworld, the word *‘araphel* is at once a portent of menace and a promise. It may be that, originally, the image of the thundercloud indicated destruction through lightning and life through the rain which followed. At any rate, it was a symbol of divine power in both its danger and its blessing,⁴⁸ and it came to designate the complete blackness of the innermost room in the Jerusalem sanctuary.⁴⁹

Moses dared to approach that which the people recoiled from: with eloquent succinctness, the narrator merely said, “Moses drew near the thickdarkness, where Elohim was.” The word “theophany,” with its connotation of shining brightness, is totally inadequate. Moses came into the immediate presence of the Godhead, but he, like the people, saw nothing other than “the mask of Yahweh.”⁵⁰

The Divine Recital of the Name (20:1-2)

20:1 And Elohim spoke all these words, saying:

- 2 I am Yahweh thy God who brought thee out of the land
of Egypt,
From the house of slaves.

The scene of the Burning Bush was dominated by the self-disclosure of the name. The Elohist tradition of the theophany on Mt. Horeb culminates in the divine recital of the meaning of the name.⁵¹ In both narratives, the name is linked to a theological interpretation of history. Yahweh is intervening in the life of the nations for the sake of a particular purpose. His name stands for his will to reach that purpose. It has a relational meaning and a teleological function. In effect, therefore, the recital of the name is the rehearsal of God's acts. It celebrates the presence of God in history. When Yahweh proclaims his name, he recites *ipsosfacto* his historical deeds, but he does so in view of the future, not of the past. The *Magnalia Dei* receive their significance from God's ultimate intention. Israel is brought out of slavery because Israel is elected to bear the responsibility of God's presence in history. Therefore, the proclamation of the name leads to the formulation of God's will for his chosen instrument of presence in history.⁵²

The Exodus is the prelude to the historical life of Israel, and the first manifestation of the name of God. Israel cannot become a priestly realm and a holy nation without hearing God's words and behaving according to his will. What are these words? The proclamation of the name becomes the prologue of the Ten Words. Presence is the root of *peoplehood* and the source of the *Torah*.

The Ten Words (20:3-4, 7a, 8, 12-17a)

20: 3 I. Thou shalt have no other gods in my presence.

4 II. Thou shalt not make for thyself any graven image.

- 7a III. Thou shalt not invoke the name of Yahweh thy
Elohim in vain.
8 IV. Remember the sabbath day to make it holy.
12 V. Honor thy father and thy mother.
13 IV. Thou shalt not murder.
14 VII. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
15 VIII. Thou shalt not steal.
16 IX. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy
neighbor.
17a X. Thou shalt not covet.

The sobriety of the demands fits the life-situation of a people during their formative stage. No objection may be validly raised today against the antiquity of the Ten Words, although the traditional view of a Mosaic “authorship” or “transmitting action” is not, of course, susceptible of historical demonstration.⁵³ When it is pruned of its catechetic accretions which clearly point to a later age,⁵⁴ the ethical decalogue⁵⁵ contains not a single element that might reveal an agrarian and mercantile mode of civilization. In its pithy form, the decalogue provides a key to the Hebraic understanding of the theological basis of ethics. The call for the exclusive worship of Yahweh is explicitly made in terms of the overwhelming experience of his presence.⁵⁶ The accent is that not of the legal mind but of the prophetic attunement to a living power which surrounds and penetrates the wholeness of human existence. The equally revolutionary requirement of aniconism in worship⁵⁷ indicates a bold and original thrust of theologians who know that the God of Israel transcends all forces of nature and history and yet dare to oppose the whole burden of cultic devotion which has flourished among the religionists of the Near East ever since the prehistoric age. The prohibition of idolatry is the inevitable consequence of the theological radicalism which characterizes the Elohist version of the Mount Horeb theophany. The northern theology of presence, which stresses the hearing of the

divine will, is suspicious of any finite representation of infinity. The ear, once again, prevails over the eye.

The Oath and the Covenant (24:3–6, 8)

- 24:3 Moses came and told the people all the words of Yahweh
[. . .]⁵⁸
And all the people answered with one voice and said,
All the words which Yahweh has spoken we will do.
4 And Moses wrote all the words of Yahweh,
And he rose early in the morning,
And he built an altar beneath the slope of the mountain,
And twelve pillars, according to the twelve tribes of
Israel,
5 And sent youths of the sons of Israel to offer burnt
offerings
And to sacrifice communion sacrifices to Yahweh
[. . .]⁵⁹
6 And Moses took half the blood and put it in basins,
And half the blood and threw it against the altar.
7 And Moses took the blood [from the basins] and threw it
on the people,
And he said, Behold, the blood of the covenant
Which Yahweh has made with you in accordance with
all these words.

This fragment of the Elohist tradition concludes the Mount Horeb theophany. Analysis of the present text has revealed that it bears traces of amplification, probably because it deals with a rite that had been reenacted many times in the shrines of Israel after the conquest. It is no longer possible to ascertain with any degree of historical confidence whether the ceremonial of the covenant-making here described goes back to Moses himself. What must be noted, however, is that no new vision of the Godhead is hinted at by the northern narrators. Contrasts with the details of the southern recital are notable.

The Southern Vision of the Glory

Instead of stressing the motif of obedience by “all the

people,” the southern narrators are concerned with the eternal status of Moses as the intermediary between God and man. They also play up the spatial elements of sacredness, the cultic topography, and the visual aspects of the theophany.

The Appointment of the Covenant Intercessor (19:9a)

19:9a And Yahweh said to Moses,
Behold, I am coming to thee in the thickness of the
cloud,⁶⁰
That the people may hear when I speak with thee
And may believe thee for ever.

The Elohist version had presented Moses as an ad hoc representative of the people who were afraid to approach the realm of the holy. There, Moses had been delegated by “all the people.” Here, on the contrary, we discover that Moses was appointed by God himself to the status of mediator, a status that would last “forever.” This status is probably akin to the notion of an eternal priesthood, which was nurtured in the Jerusalem temple.⁶¹

The Rite of Preparation (19:1 lb-13)

19:11b[. . .] On the third day, Yahweh will come down upon
Mount Sinai
In the sight of all the people.
12 And thou shalt set territorial lines for the people all
around,
Saying, Take heed that you do not go up to the
mountain
Or touch the edge of it.
Whoever touches the mountain shall be put to death.
13 No hand shall touch him,
But he shall be either stoned or shot,
Whether beast or man, he shall not live.
[At the sound of the ram’s horn, they shall come up to
the mountain.¹⁶²

Mount Sinai is the site of Yahweh's descent from heaven. The descent will be "in the sight of all the people." The mountain is to be prepared as a holy place, according to the traditional customs of the Semitic shrines. Boundary lines must be carefully marked, so that no man or beast shall trespass. Unlike the mountain of the northern versions ("Mount Horeb"), which received its quality of *mysterium tremendum* through the event for which it was a temporary setting, Mount Sinai possesses an intrinsic "substance" of sacredness. Here again, the exegete must observe that the Yahwist tradition contains the seed of the sacerdotal notion of topographic holiness which the priestly writers in the Babylonian exile applied to the site of Zion.

The Smoke and Fire Theophany (19:18, 20-25)

- 19:18 And Mount Sinai, all of it, [was covered] with smoke
 On account of the fact that Yahweh descended upon it
 in fire,
 And its smoke was like the smoke of a kiln,
 And the whole mountain quaked exceedingly,
 20 And Yahweh descended upon Mount Sinai, to the top of
 the mountain,
 And Yahweh called to Moses to the top of the
 mountain,
 And Moses went up.
 21 And Yahweh said to Moses, Go down and warn the
 people
 Lest they crash through toward Yahweh
 And many of them fall [dead].
 22 And even the priests, those who draw near to Yahweh,
 Let them sanctify themselves
 Lest Yahweh burst out in their midst,
 23 And Moses said to Yahweh, The people cannot come up
 to Mount Sinai,
 Since, thou, thyself, hast warned us, saying,
 Set territorial lines to the mountain and make it sacred!
 24 And Yahweh said to him, Go down and come back,
 Thou, and Aaron with thee, and the priests,

But let not the people crash through to go up toward
 Yahweh
 Lest he burst out in their midst.
 25a And Yahweh went down to the people.

Whereas the motif of the storm theophany was used at the beginning of the narrative (vs. 9a), the Yahwist narrators centered their attention on the features of smoke, fire, and earthquake. Nevertheless, one cannot conclude from this that the southern tradition has been colored by reminiscences of volcanic eruptions, for the fire descends from heaven with Yahweh rather than rises from the mountain. Earthquakes, moreover, commonly occur in Asia Anterior and are not directly related to volcanic eruptions. Once again the commentator will observe that the Yahwist emphasized the element of sacredness in the spatial sense of a sacred precinct, and the rites of purification that are proper for priestly personnel. A distinction between a sacerdotal caste, headed by Aaron, and the common people, is typical of the priestly traditions of the Pentateuch, which in turn reflect the Jerusalem temple tradition in exilic times. More than the northern story of the Mt. Horeb theophany, the southern narrative of the Mt. Sinai theophany shows the signs of a long development at the hands of a "clergy" distinct from a "laity."⁶³

The Vision of God (24:1-2, 9-11)

24:1 And he said to Moses, Come up to Yahweh,
 Thou, and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu,
 And seventy of the elders of Israel, and worship afar off.
 2 Moses alone shall come near to Yahweh,
 But the others shall not come near,
 And the people shall not come up with him.
 9 And Moses went up, and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu,
 And seventy of the elders of Israel.
 10 And they saw the God of Israel,
 And there was under his feet, as it were,

A pavement of sapphire stone,
 Like the very heaven in purity.
 11 And upon the nobles of the sons of Israel he did not lay
 his hand,
 And they beheld Elohim, and they ate and drank.

Such a story is without parallel in the Hebrew tradition. Hellenistic Jews must have found it shocking, since the Septuagint version added, “God is not seen, only the place where he stood” (vs. 10), and the phrase “they beheld God” was rendered “they appeared in the place of God” (vs. 11 b). To be sure, after his fight with a mysterious assailant at the ford of the Jabbok, Jacob was made to say, “I have seen God face to face and yet my life is preserved” (Gen. 32:30), but this phrase was apparently inspired by the need to explain the name Peniel, “the face of El,” and, in any case, the encounter had taken place in the darkness of the night. Jacob had not really “seen” the Godhead.

Again, both the prophet Micayah ben Yimlah and the prophet Isaiah, in the ninth and eighth centuries respectively, were reported to have said in almost identical terms, “I saw Yahweh sitting on his throne” (1 Kings 22:19) and “I saw Yahweh sitting on a throne” (Isa. 6:1). However, these first-person accounts make it evident that the two prophets believed themselves to have been the recipients of ecstatic experiences that did not involve the sensorial perception of their bodily eyes. The same is obvious of the confession of the prophet Ezekiel who used the phrase “I saw visions of God” (*mar’oth Elohim*; Ezek. 1:1), although he also made it clear that “the heavens were opened.”

In this narrative, on the contrary, the setting is topographically concrete, the human witnesses are many, and the visual perception of the Godhead, twice affirmed (vss. 10 and 11), is made even more explicitly sensorial by its sequential climax: “they ate and drank” (Exod. 24:11b).

Scholars are divided concerning the unity and the authorship or provenance of this passage.⁶⁴ That it belongs to the southern

tradition is doubtful, for it bears close affinities with the story of Jethro, priest of Midian (Gen. 18:1 ff.), most of which is not related to a peculiar stratum of the Jahwist tradition. Nevertheless, this narrative of the vision of God appears to have been preserved in the priestly circles of the Jerusalem temple, for it bears all the marks of their peculiar concerns: Moses is surrounded by a sacerdotal group, made up of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu;⁶⁵ the elders of the people are not simply the tribal chieftains through whom Moses communicates with the sons of Israel, as in the Elohist tradition (cf. 19:7), but they constitute a privileged class with a religious status akin to that of the priests;[@] clerical status becomes linked with the notion of territorial sacredness, as in the shrines of the ancient Near East—a prelude to the topography of worship in the Second Temple, with its various courts reserved for various groups of worshippers;⁶⁷ finally, and in a language which is more explicit than elsewhere,⁷ the theophany is presented in terms of sensorial sight.⁶⁸

To be sure, what these men saw was blurred by the dazzling light (vs. 10). Nevertheless, instead of stressing the darkness of the storm cloud, or the total obscurity of the *'araphel* (cf. 20:21), the narrators prefer the theologoumenon of blinding luminescence that is typical of the ancient Near Eastern mythology of the divine splendor.⁶⁹

It was probably not through mere coincidence that the *visio dei* in dazzling light received more and more attention among the Jerusalem priestly circles, and especially from Ezekiel, who was the son of a Jerusalem priest.⁷⁰ It appears that a continuity of thought and formulation led from the southern tradition of the Yahwist, from Hebron and Jerusalem, to the exilic priestly circles that prepared the Second Temple. The theology of presence through visual experience led from Judah to Restoration Judaism.

The Priestly Vision of the Glory (24:15–18)

- 24:15 And Moses went up to the mountain,
 And the cloud covered the mountain.
 16 The glory of Yahweh settled on Mount Sinai,
 And the cloud covered it for six days,
 And on the seventh he called Moses out of the cloud.
 17 And the appearance of the glory of Yahweh was like a
 devouring fire
 On the top of the mountain, in the sight of the sons of
 Israel,
 18 And Moses entered into the midst of the cloud and went
 up the mountain.
 And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty
 nights.

Scholarly consensus ascribes the concluding passage to the priestly tradition. It is included in this analysis of the ancient Yahwist tradition because it spells out in explicit terms the implicit and yet obvious orientation of the southern theologians, who had plainly stated that Moses and the favored group of priests and elders with him “saw” the Deity. The priestly tradition of exilic times went a step farther by stating that “the sons of Israel saw the appearance of the glory of Yahweh.” Again, the affinities of this narrative with the style of the prophet Ezekiel are evident.⁷¹ The terminology of the “cloud” was maintained (vss. 15–16), but a hitherto unknown motif was introduced, the theologoumenon of the glory (vs. 17). Once again, the storytellers are attempting to qualify the boldness of their formulation, for they carefully say “the appearance of the glory” rather than merely “the glory.” Nevertheless, a new language was tried out. A study of the story of the third theophany granted to Moses at Horeb-Sinai reveals that northerners and southerners were separated by far more than a quarrel of words. They interpreted their theological approach to the divine in two radically divergent ways: while the northerners interpreted divine presence through the theologoumenon of the

name, the southerners eventually adopted an interpretation of divine revelation through the theologoumenon of the glory. "Israel," properly speaking, led to the theology of the great prophets, while Judah, with its Yahwist fountainhead in Hebron and Jerusalem, prepared Restoration Judaism and the Second Temple.

THE NAME AND NOT THE GLORY

(Exod. 33:1a,12-23)

Several stories about the departure of Moses from Mt. Sinai-Horeb have been pieced together in the latter part of the book of Exodus. Commentators are almost unanimous in pointing out that these stories were originally independent. The link which connects them is the theme of "God's presence endangered."⁷² Although the narrative concerning the "tent of meeting" (33:7-11) also deals in part with this theme, it belongs geographically and thematically to another phase in the saga of the sons of Israel in the wilderness.⁷³ The remaining pericopes of chapter 33 (vss. 1-3, 46, 12-17, and 18-23), however, are somewhat unified, and the rhetorical structure which the Pentateuchal redactors have preserved suggests a liturgical situation. The material was probably recited at the occasion of a seasonal feast.⁷⁴ Analysis further reveals that the various pericopes belonged to the northern tradition,⁷⁵ which was preserved at the sanctuary of Shechem.

Moses is pictured in conversation with God, presumably on Mount Horeb-Sinai, and he makes three requests, each one more insistent and demanding than the preceding one. The divine answers remain wholly ambiguous. God's presence is defined in terms of the theologoumenon of the name but not of the glory.

*The First Request (33:12-14)**The Plea for the Knowledge of God (vss.12-13)*

- 33:12 And Moses said to Yahweh:
 Look! Thou art saying to me, Lead forth this people!
 Yet, thou, thyself, hast not let me know
 Whom thou wilt send with me,
 But thou, thyself, hast said,
 I know thee by name, and even thou hast found favor in
 my eyes.
- 13 But now, if I have truly found favor in thy eyes,
 Please! let me know thy ways, in order that I may know
 thee,
 That I may [indeed] find favor in thy eyes.
 And look! [I say this] because this nation is thy people.

The Divine Answer to the First Plea (vs. 14)

- 33:14 And [God] said: My presence will go,
 And I will give thee rest.

The plea of Moses is provoked by the order from Yahweh to depart from the mountain (33:1a). Moses replies with an earnestness which reveals the intensity of his feeling.⁷⁶ The repeated use of imperatives (“Look!“, vss. 12b and 13d) and of personal pronouns of address (“Thou!“, vss. 12b, c, d), the adverb “now” (vs. 13a), and the precativ particle (“Please!” vs. 13c) lead to the expostulation, “because this nation (goy; cf. 19:6) is thy people!” (Vs. 13d). Such a story is told by someone who has personally experienced the horror and fear of sensing divine separation, the drought of spiritual loneliness, and the anxiety of Godless living. Like lovers about to part, mystics are profoundly perturbed when they become aware of the end of ecstasy. Moses is less upset by the prospect of leading a people through the wilderness-although this prospect plays a part in the dynamics of this anxiety-than by the urge to know God

with a deeper certainty than the assurance which he has hitherto received: "Please, let me know thy ways in order that I may know thee."

Presence and the risk of losing its comfort combine within the human spirit to create the need for religious knowledge. Presence is the begetter of theology. The all-demanding desire of Moses is "to know" God.⁷⁷

By asking to know God's *ways* in order to know *Cod himself*, the human contender speaks as a theologian of the name. The ways of God are the signs of his purpose. They represent his creative will. They manifest his name. At this moment of the encounter, Moses discerns that the only knowledge of God that is accessible to his human finiteness is an acquaintance with divine presence in history. The inner core of the divine reality, precisely because it is divine, forever escapes man's grasp. Yet, the very fact that Moses asks to know God's ways implies that he has in mind a further dimension of knowledge. He wishes passionately to go beyond what he has already learned.

As the theme of continuing presence is abruptly grafted upon the theme of knowledge, Moses senses that God ignores his request and in effect rebukes the claims of finitude. God promises not an absolute gnosis, but rather his presence and the soothing power thereof: "My presence will go and I shall make you restful." The word *panîm*, literally, "face" or "countenance," is the anthropomorphic symbol of presence.⁷⁸ The Sinai-Horeb site of special revelation will be left behind, but God's presence will be on the move. A mode of psychological communion is thereby implied, for the phrase carries no hint of the later priestly motif of the column of fire or of the cloud which journeyed in the wilderness ahead of the people (Exod. 13:21 f., etc.). The era of theophanies may have come to an end. A new form of presence will keep Israel in the vicinity of her God wherever the people may be.⁷⁹ Temporality overcomes spatiality.

The phrase “And I will give thee rest” (vs. 14b) literally means “I will cause thee to be transformed from a fretful to a secure person.” The verb *nû^aḥ* is used here in the causative voice, and not the noun *menûḥah*, which designates “arrest from movement,” and therefore “a resting place.”⁸⁰

The Second Request (33:15–17)

The Plea for the Continuing Presence (vss. 15–16)

33:15 And [Moses] said to him:
 If thy presence will not go,
 Do not lead us forth from here!
 16 For in what way will it ever be known
 That I have found favor in thy eyes, I and thy people?
 Is it not in thy going with us
 That we may be different, I and thy people,
 From every people on the face of the earth?

The Divine Answer (vs. 17)

33:17 And Yahweh said to Moses:
 This very word which thou hast spoken I will do,
 For thou hast found favor in my eyes
 And I know thee by name.

Apparently, the discussion is leading nowhere. Moses shows by his insistence that God’s promise is not sufficient to eradicate his fear of the unknown future. How can he be certain that the promise will be fulfilled? Man again requires a confirmation. It is possible that the doubt of Moses is related to his lingering belief that the mountain of God is the only place of divine presence. A polemical intent against the cultic mode of presence in a sanctuary may have been detected by the audiences of a later age when this narrative was recited to them. Because worshippers went to a temple in order “to see Yahweh’s face,” some radical theologians of the name remembered

the lingering belief of Moses when they attacked the special virtue of a sacred place (Deut. 4:37; Isa. 63:9).⁸¹

Once again, the expression of personal uncertainty summons to mind the thought of the future of God's people. Moses develops in the second plea, therefore, what was implied in the first (cf. vs. 13d): "Is it not in thy going with us that we may be set apart, I and thy people, from every people on the face of the soil?" (Vs. 16c-e). The distinctiveness of Israel, the mark which sets the people apart from other nations is strictly theological. Israel has no ethnic meaning unless the presence of Yahweh remains with the people. The peoplehood of Israel, in contrast to all other peoples, lies in this unique relationship, failing which it vanishes.

Once more, the Godhead appears to ignore the concern of Moses for the historical purpose of Israel. The commitment which Yahweh emphatically repeats is not the promise of the land, but the comforting power of his companionship to Moses personally.⁸² Religion begins and maintains itself at the level of the lonely spirit of man, even-and especially-when it aims at social coherence and embraces vast movements in history.

The second answer does more than confirm and reiterate. It adds a significant element. The theme of the knowledge of God, which was evoked in the first request is still at the threshold of man's consciousness. Moses wants to know God in a way which surpasses his previous experience, and now God turns the relationship around. "To know God" is an anthropocentric exercise. What Moses is now learning is that he is known by God: "For thou hast found favor in my eyes, and I know thee by name."

Man's knowledge of God depends upon man's knowledge of being known by God. "I know thee by name" is the reply to the man who begs "Let me know thee, O God!" To be known by God is to be transformed into a new man. Theology is not the science of a divine object, but the knowledge of self-trans-

formation by a divine subject. Moses discovers unwillingly that theology is not to know God but to be aware of being grasped and called to do the will of God in history.⁸³ The thought is too momentous for him to conceive. His anxiety is not quelled. A third request is necessary.

The Third Request (33:18-22)

The Plea for the Vision of Glory (vs. 18)

33:18 And he said, Let me see, I pray, thy glory.

The Divine Refusal (vss. 19-20)

33:19 And he said, I, myself, will make all my goodness pass in
thy presence,
And I will proclaim the name of Yahweh in thy
presence,
And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious,
And I will show mercy to whom I will show mercy.
20 And he said, Thou **canst** not see my face,
For no man shall see me and live.

The Divine Concession (vss. 21-23)

33:21 And Yahweh said, Behold [there is] a place by me
Where thou shalt stand, upon the rock,
22 And it shall be that, as my glory passes by,
I will place thee in a cleft of the rock,
And I will cover thee with the palm of my hand until I
have passed by.
23 Then I will take away the palm of my hand,
And thou shalt see my back.
But my face shall not be seen.

This passage may have originally been independent, for the dialogical form differs from the preceding context. At the same time, it may be that the climactic aspect of the theme demanded

a hastening of the pace on the part of Moses, and a slowing down of the reply on the part of God. The first two formulas, "And he said" (vss. 19a, 20a), deal with the divine refusal, whereas the last one, "And Yahweh said" (vs. 21), introduces the partial compromise of the Deity. Moses makes a third request, but, in contrast with the first two, it is as concise as possible: "Let me see, I pray, thy glory." There is no circumlocution of language. The man of God, already standing at the edge of the infinite realm, attempts to tilt the mystery. He yields to the lure of infinity.

Prepared by the implications of the first two quests, the audience is attuned to the expectation of this heroic demand. Moses is prey to libido *theologica*, the lust for absolute knowledge. He refuses to accept historical relativity. God's ways may be discerned, but not with certainty, and they refer in any case to the periphery of his reality. Now, the challenger of divine privacy abandons his indirect approach. He no longer asks for help in his historical task. He wants more than the assurance of God's presence for the sake of Israel's distinctiveness in fulfilling her historical destiny. He goes right to the point of his egocentric desire. Bluntly comes the sharp, unadorned, indeed, arrogant, directness of the prayer: "Show me, please, thy glory!"

As often occurs in Hebrew rhetorics, the divine speech proceeds by a juxtaposition of terms in order to connote their meanings through equivalence with other meanings which are not at first sight their synonyms. God equates his glory with his face (vs. 20), just as he relates, by implication, the passing by of his goodness with the proclamation of his name (vs. 19). The anthropomorphic contrast between his face and his back (vs. 22), crude as it may sound to modern ears, is a powerful symbol of the distinction between his glory and his name. Within the framework of a theophany, the northern theologians endorsed and even exalted the theologoumenon of presence through the

name, whereas they unambiguously repudiated the theologoumenon of presence through the glory.

The symbol of *kabhod* (“glory”), and its synonyms, especially *tiph’ereth* (“splendor”) and *hōd* and *hadhar* (“majesty”), are regularly translated in Septuagintal Greek by the word *doxa*; hence, the Vulgate rendering *gloria* and the traditional versions of the Western world. It appears, however, that the semantics of the term are quite complex and that the connotations of the idea differ according to literary school, writer, and century. The etymological cognation with the idea of heaviness (*kabhed*, “heavy” and “liver”) does not seem to have played a part in the theological language, unless a comparison was made between the Deity and the royal or military figures. Applied to God, the word suggests not heaviness by human standards but the effulgence of light.⁸⁴ The two ideas may have originally been related in the proto-Hebraic stages of Northwest Semitic dialectal evolution through the cultic use, on feast days, of gold masks on the statues of the gods to reflect sunlight, or through the sacerdotal persons of kings.⁸⁵

While many studies have been devoted to the motif of divine glory in Hebrew religion,⁸⁶ it is not generally pointed out that the ancient traditions of Israel practically ignored the notion. The northern narratives and the Deuteronomists stress other symbols, such as the name. Because the southerners and the majority of the psalmists have evolved in the shadow of the Davidic monarchy and around the mythology of Zion, it was they who emphasized the significance of the term.⁸⁷ The Jerusalem priests and their descendants saw no conflict between the theologoumenon of presence through the name and the theologoumenon of presence through the glory.⁸⁸ The two terms became interchangeable in nascent Judaism during the Babylonian exile and the Persian period.

In the third theophany on Mt. Horeb, however, which has

been preserved chiefly according to the northern tradition, *glory* is made dramatically distinct from *name*, for it remains, as the inner characteristic of the transcendent Godhead, beyond the reach of even a man of God like Moses.

The pericope on the tent of meeting (Exod. 33:7–11), which now precedes the requests of Moses but editorially intrudes upon the scene of the theophany on Mt. Horeb,⁸⁹ points to the exceptional aspect of the familiarity with which the Godhead conversed with Moses: “Thus Yahweh used to speak to Moses face to face” (vs. 11). The idiom *panîm el panîm*, “face to face,” should not be taken literally, especially when it is used with a verb of speaking and hearing.⁹⁰ It means “directly” and “without intermediary.”

In the third request, Moses is denied the vision of the face, for the term is here equated with glory, the innermost secret of divinity. Moses, a hero but a mortal man, becomes at this juncture a Hebraic figure of tragedy, for he is “being halted upon a metaphysical threshold.”⁹¹

The divine denial, however, is not complete. The narrators attempt to portray the exact limit of human exposure to the openness of God, and again they favor the psychological symbol of the ear over that of the eye, even when they picture Yahweh making a sublime concession in granting his servant “the vision” of his work in history. This appears to be the most probable interpretation of an enigmatic detail which has baffled the imagination of exegetes for centuries. His eyes masked by the palm of the divine hand as the divine face passes by, Moses is permitted, from the cleft of the rock, to glimpse the divine back. This startling anthropomorphism should be plainly distinguished from the mythical representations of deities in the ancient Near Eastern or Greco-Roman pantheons. No confusion is possible between a narrative which uses a part of the human anatomy to suggest the divine ordination of historical events and the iconographic or literary representations of an

Apollo Musagetes or of an Aphrodite Kallipyge, which aim at inspiring-legitimate and even noble as this may be-aesthetic sensuousness.

When the northern theologians venture to depict Yahweh, they must do so in human terms, but they are careful, through contextual juxtaposition, to prevent any misunderstanding. The sovereign Lord of heaven and earth transcends nature, man, and sexuality. Within the context of the three requests, the back of God can have only one meaning: just as the face is identified with the glory, so also the back corresponds to the goodness which passes by and therefore also to the proclamation of the name and the unfolding of the divine ways.

The dual word *'aḥorayim*, traditionally rendered “back parts,” was used in a manner parallel to that of the plural word *panîm*, “face” or “glory.” Just as “face” is the other side of “back,” so also “glory” is the other side of “goodness.” The ideas are not antonymic, but they are distinct. Glory is the face which may not be seen. Goodness, as the back of God, can be in no way identified with glory.⁹²

To the ears of an Oriental listener, attuned to etymological assonances, the word *'aḥorayim*, “back,” suggested its cognates *'aḥarith*, “end,” and *'aḥarôn*, “last.” Expressions of time, in Hebrew as well as in most languages, are borrowed from the thought-forms of space. Both “goodness” and “back parts” pass by, and Moses is allowed to sight them. They signify the *Magnolia Dei*, past and future. This interpretation is in no way allegorical. It seeks to derive the meaning of an admittedly obscure phrase from its contextual wholeness.

Tôbhah, “goodness,” has acquired a wide range of meanings in the course of the twelve or more centuries of its biblical usage, but “the goodness of Yahweh” clearly alludes to the true benefits of his promise, the fruit of his blessing, and the consequence of fidelity to his covenant.⁹³ When the prophet Hosea evokes the renewal of the bond between Yahweh and his un-

faithful bride, he announces that the people “shall come in fear to Yahweh and to his goodness in the latter days” (Hos. 3:5). The Jeremianic school, during the exile in Babylon, expects that at the last “they shall be radiant with joy over the goodness of Yahweh” (Jer. 31:12), and Yahweh himself declares, “My people will be satisfied with my goodness” (Jer. 31:14). To see “the goodness of Yahweh in the land of the living” (Ps. 27:13) is the hope of those who have been taught “the way” of Yahweh (Ps. 27:11). “Goodness” is the manifestation of his providence toward the people of his predilection. In the passing by of the divine goodness, Moses is offered a spiritual vision of the centuries to come.⁹⁴

The northern narrative of the third theophany links the ecstatic, time-limited reality of a direct encounter with God to the knowledge of his name. By so doing, it confers on the word *panîm* a meaning which corresponds to the idea of psychological presence. When used with a verb of visual perception, the word means “face” and designates the inner being of God, or his “glory.” When used with a verb of movement, as in the phrase “My *panîm* will go with thee,” it points to an awareness of communion. The northern narrative also introduces the prophetic notion of *the word*: “And Yahweh said to Moses, This very word which thou hast spoken I will do, for thou hast found favor in my eyes, And I know thee by name” (33:17). The fulfilment of Yahweh’s word is linked with the proclamation of his name in the context of lasting communion.⁹⁵

The geographical milieu to which all the traditions of Israel have ascribed the origin of their bond with Yahweh is the mountain of Horeb-Sinai. They viewed this origin through the dramatic mode of *theophany*. The modern historian or theologian is no longer able to ascertain the precise character of these experiences. Is it possible, as many commentators have speculated, that the landscape itself provided the shape-and perhaps also the occasion-of these experiences? Possibly influenced by

the storm-theophany traditions of the Northwest Semitic nations, the theologians of the Israel shrines could not have invented *ex nihilo* such a conglomerate of stories. In contrast to the mythic poets of the neighboring cultures, they were always able to point to the transcendence of their God. Natural forces were mobilized only to manifest his presence. Or do these traditions constitute an instance of mass psychology, combining the witnessing of a mountain storm with the fresh memories of recent events--the totally unexpected deliverance from Egyptian oppression and annihilation--and the contemporary endurance of economic destitution in a wilderness? According to Martin Buber.

The representatives of Israel come to see [YHVH] on the heights of Sinai. They have presumably wandered through clinging, hanging mist before dawn; and at the very moment *they* reach their goal, the swaying darkness tears asunder (as I myself happened to witness once) and dissolves except for one cloud already transparent with the hue of the still unrisen sun. The sapphire proximity of the heavens overwhelms the aged shepherds of the Delta, who have never before tasted, who have never been given the slightest idea, of what is shown in the play of early light over the summits of the mountains. And this precisely is perceived by the representatives of the liberated tribes as that *which* lies under the feet of their enthroned *Melek* [king].⁹⁶

Of course, many migrating tribes--hungry, thirsty, and collectively insecure--have witnessed mountain storms before sunrise without seeing any deity. Whatever may have been the precise nature of the event as it was preserved in the memory of Israel, it is significant that the northern and southern interpretations thereof, while they corresponded broadly and sometimes minutely, differed markedly in ways which announced fateful developments in the history of Israel and Judah during the monarchy.

Both Elohist and Yahwist circles have preserved the motif of

the divine name as the unifying theme of the three Horeb-Sinai theophanies.⁹⁷

It was the disclosure of the meaning of the name at the Burning Bush that transformed a runaway shepherd into a leader of people. It was on the mountain with fire and storm that the name was proclaimed. A folkloric symbol or archetypal origin has been used as the setting for a wholly unexpected calling into existence of a new form of society.

Fire feeds man's unconscious urge to think in terms of "prompt becoming." When fire does not consume its own fuel and survives its own death, it suggests the slow and sustained becoming of historical transformation:

Fire is the ultra-living reality. Fire is intimate and it is universal. It lives in our heart. It lives in the sky. It ascends from the depths of substance and offers itselflike love. It descends again in matter and conceals itself, latent, self-contained, like hate or revenge. Among all phenomena, it is truly the one which may receive clearly two contrary valorizations: good and evil. It shines in Paradise. It burns in Hell. It is sweetness and torture. It is cuisine and apocalypse. It is pleasure for the child who wisely sits near the hearth; it punishes however any disobedience if one plays too closely with its flames. It is well-being and it is respect. It is a tutelary and terrible god, benevolent and mean. It can contradict itself. It is therefore one of the principles of universal **explanation**.⁹⁸

Most appropriately, the secret of the name is revealed from the midst of a fire which renews itself. And it is in the word-defying grandeur of a display of fire upon the mountain that the word is given to man to live by. Fire plays a part in the sociological chemistry which transforms Hebrew man into *homo historicus*. Babylonians, Egyptians, and Canaanites are servants of dynasties or of shrines. Hebrews, whenever they hear the word and bear the honor of the name, are the servants of the Lord of history. History implies a unified view of mankind and a purpose for created nature. The God of history persists while he changes his modes of activity with seasons and times. The

people of the presence is bid to take the name in earnest, not to take the name in vain-that is to say, "in the pursuit of nothingness."⁹⁹

The name of Yahweh is not an empty sound. It bears the presence of infinity within the finite,¹⁰⁰ but it is at once revelatory and reticent. It is revelatory, because it links the presence to the peoplehood of Israel and its mission in the history of man. It is reticent because it preserves the freedom of the divine. Ultimately, it is ineffable, for it stands for the reality of a faith which cannot be pinned down, the security of a hope which cannot be demonstrated with pragmatic evidence, the sobriety of a dedication which finds its delights beyond the sensuality of agrarian luxuriousness.

T. E. Lawrence was not devoid of utopian imagination when he wrote, perhaps with starry eyes, of the Semite discovering true life in the desert. His judgment, however, may apply to Hebrew man, if the Hebrew man has been seized by the power of the name:

In his life he had air and winds, sun and light, open spaces and a great emptiness. There was no human effort, no fecundity in nature: just the heaven above, and the unspotted earth beneath. There unconsciously he came near God. God was with him not anthropomorphic, not tangible, not moral or ethical ... [Man] could not look for God within him: he was too sure he was within God.¹⁰¹

Perhaps Buber was partially right, after all, when he expatiated on the rugged landscape of the Sinai mountain as the stage for the Mosaic theophanies. The desert and its vastness and the poverty of its resources-after the onions, the leeks, and the fleshpots of even a jaillike Egypt-predisposes man to listen to the speech which comes from beyond man's self-centeredness.

In Hebraic religion, the name plays the theological role which other religions ascribe to divine images and cultic representations.¹⁰² The dynamic and worldwide demands of the name,

however, bring a unique power to Hebraic religion. The hearing of such a name and the bearing of its implications require a response different from that inherent in the contemplation of an image. The name demands active participation in the totality of life. The seeing of an image-or the cultic symbol of the glory--tends to lull the worshippers into the delights of passive spirituality and the loss of social responsibility.¹⁰³

The study of the cultic mode of presence in Israel will bring out historical developments which tend to illustrate the validity of this analysis.

Notes

1. It is also significant that Martin Buber, who explicitly claimed to repudiate most of the results of modern literary, form-critical, and traditio-historical criticism, actually used the ancient J and E traditions and not the sacerdotal reinterpretation (P) of the Jerusalem priests in exile when he wrote his essay, *Moses: The Revelation. and the Covenant* (Oxford, 1946; rev. ed., New York, 1958).
2. The extreme caution which prevailed at the beginning of the twentieth century concerning the historicity of Moses and his work has given place to a balanced attitude of critical moderation. Cf. G. Widengren, "What Do We Know About Moses?" in *Proclamation and Presence. Festschrift G. Henton Davies* (Richmond, Va., 1970), pp. 21 ff.; R. de Vaux, "La mission de Moïse," *Histoire ancienne d'Israël* (Paris, 1971), pp. 305-440; E. F. Campbell, Jr., "Moses and the Foundations of Israel," *In.*, XXIX (1975), 141-54; E. Auerbach, *Moses*, tr. by R. A. Barclay, and I. D. Lehman (Detroit, 1975); Th. W. Mann, *Divine Presence and Guidance in Israelite Traditions: The Typology of Exaltation* (Baltimore, 1977).
3. The chronology of the Exodus has been the object of protracted discussion. A few scholars favor a late-thirteenth century date (ca. 1230 B.C.); see H. H. Rowley, *From Joseph to Joshua: Biblical Traditions in the Light of Archaeology* (London, 1950), pp. 109 ff., 164. Others argue for the first part of the thirteenth century. Cf. E. Drioton, "La date de l'Exode," *RHPR*, XXXV (1955): 36-49; K. A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Chicago, 1966), pp. 57-75.
4. Exod. 14:21. The location of the Sea of Reeds (traditionally, Red Sea) is not certain. Modern historians do not appear to have paid sufficient attention to the topographical and geological survey of the region conducted by a technician of the Suez Canal administration. See C. Bourdon, "La route de l'Exode de la terre de Gessé à Mara," *RB*, XLI (1932): 370-92, 539119.
5. The conquest of the land of Canaan was not completed until after David's capture of the Jebusite fortress of Jerusalem (2 Sam. 5:6 ff.) and even the Pharaoh's transfer of the Canaanite city of Gezer to Solomon in the tenth century B.C. (1 Kings 3:1, 9:16).
6. See Jörg Jeremias, *Theophanie: Die Ge-*

schichte einer alttestamentlichen Gattung (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1965), pp. 7 ff.

7. Exod. 3:1–22, 19:1–24:8, 33:12–23. The location of Mt. Sinai-Horeb has been a matter of considerable debate. The traditional location of Djebel Musa, which did not appear before the Byzantine age (fourth century A.D.) fits the topography of the JE traditions concerning the wandering of the *Benê Israel* after the crossing of the Sea. Modern attempts to localize the sacred mount among the extinct volcanoes of the northwestern Arabian Peninsula, southeast of the Gulf of Aqaba, are based on a misinterpretation of the narratives of Exod. 19:1 ff. and 24:1 ff. The theologoumena of fire, smoke, cloud, and darkness are entirely compatible with the phenomena of the thunderstorm and the lightning-induced fires in underbrush and low forest. The references to “shaking” and “quaking” do not necessarily refer to seismic tremors, since it is well known that thunderclaps, especially in mountainous and desertic regions, give the illusion of earth quaking. Moreover, (a) there is in the narratives concerning Sinai-Horeb neither lava nor projection of fiery stones; (b) Moses could not be represented as standing on the top of a volcano in eruption; (c) the flames were not depicted as going up, but on the contrary as “coming down”; (d) the motif of volcanoes in eruption has never become a feature of the Hebrew mythopoetic formulations of the historical theophanies or of the eschatological epiphany (cf. Deut. 4:11, Judg. 5:4, 2 Sam. 22:8–14 = Ps. 18:8–14; cf. Hab. 3:3–15, etc.). Nor does the volcano motif appear, several commentators to the contrary, in the final strophe of the hymn on creative providence (Ps. 104:31–32). The traditions which are preserved in Exodus 19:1ff. do not permit a precise identification of the site. See a survey of the various views in de Vaux, *Histoire ancienne*, pp. 398–410. The north-Arabian volcano hypothesis,

defended long ago by Eduard Meyer, (“Die Mosesagen und die Lewiten,” in *Die Israeliten und ihre Nachstämme* [Halle a. S., 1906], pp. 67 ff.) has been laboriously revived by J. Koenig, “Les itinéraires sinaitiques en Arabie,” *RHR*, CLXVI (1964): 121 ff.; “Le Sinai’, montagne de feu dans un desert de ténèbres,” *RHR*, CLXVII (1966): 129–55; “Aux origines des théophanies yahvistes,” *RHR*, CLIX (1966): 1 ff.

8. Josh. 24:1 ff.; Judg. 9:6, 20:18 ff.; 1 Sam. 7:16, 8:2; 2 Sam. 2:1 ff.; 1 Kings 2:11, 12:1, 26; 1 Chron. 3:1 ff.; 2 Chron. 13:8 f.; Amos 8:14; etc.

9. The cultic objects ascribed to Moses (the ark, the ten; of meeting and/or the tabernacle) were of course portable. This matter will be discussed below in Chapter IV. It is not clear, from the early strata of the tradition, whether Mt. Sinai-Horeb was originally viewed as the topographic “abode” of Yahweh. Allusions are found in the early poetry of Israel to Yahweh’s “holy encampment,” “mountain,” “abode,” or “sanctuary,” and these were probably interpreted during the monarchic period as referring either to Mt. Garizim (northerners) or to Mt. Zion (southerners). Some scholars believe that these allusions originally applied to Mt. Sinai (Exod. 15:13, 17; Ps. 78:54; etc.). The memory of Yahweh’s sojourn in Sinai has persisted for many generations (Judg. 5:4–5, Deut. 33:2, Hab. 3:3–6) but this fact does not necessarily prove that the theologians of Israel believed in the myth of a permanent dwelling of Yahweh on the rocky top mentioned in the Mosaic theophanies. There are significant differences between the poetic language of the Hebrews and the proto-Canaanite (Ugaritic) descriptions of “the mountain of El.” See an analysis of the parallels in F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973), pp. 112–44; R. J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and in the Old Testament* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972); cf. S.

Terrien's review of this work in *Biblica*, LV (1974): 443 f.

10. The tradition on Elijah's flight to Horeb in the ninth century B.C. (1 Kings; 19:4 ff.) is no exception, since the prophet was rebuked in his undertaking, and the so-called Horeb theophany of Elijah actually forms a transition between the Mosaic mode of divine disclosure and the prophetic type of presence through vision. See below, in Chapter V.

11. See below, in Chapter V.

12. The word *seneh*, "bush," or "thorn," was associated at a later date with the name Sinai, which the southern tradition (J) favored (Exod. 16:1). The *Blessing of Moses*, which contains archaic fragments of poetry, speaks of the God "who sojourned in the bush" (Deut. 33:16), but the Exodus narratives make it clear that Yahweh's appearance was related to "the flame out of the midst of the bush" and not to the bush itself (Exod. 3:2). Moreover, it will be noted that the Deity declares explicitly, "I have come down" (vs. 8). See E. J. Young, "The Call of Moses," *WTJ*, XXIX (1967): 117-35; XXX (1968): 1-23; H. D. Preuss, "'ich will mit dir sein'," *ZAW*, LXXX (1968): 139-73; D. N. Freedman, "The Burning Bush," *Biblica*, L (1969): 245 f.; B. S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus* (Philadelphia, 1974), pp. 47 ff.

13. See J. Hempel, "Berufung und Bekehrung," *Festschrift G. Beer* (Stuttgart, 1935), pp. 41 ff.; W. Zimmerli, "Zur Form- und Traditionsgeschichte der prophetischen Berufungsgeschichte der prophetischen Berufungserzählungen," in *Ezechiel*, vol. I (Neukirchen, 1955), pp. 16 ff.; L. Rost, "Die Gottesverehrung der Patriarchen im Lichte der Pentateuchquellen," *SVT*, VII (1960): 346-59; N. Habel, "The Form and Significance of the Call Narratives," *ZAW*, LXXVII (1965): 297 ff.; R. Kilian, "Die prophetischen Berufungsberichte," *Theologie im Wandel* (München, 1967), pp. 356; W. Richter, *Die sogenannten vorprophetischen Berufungsberichte* (Göttingen, 1970); W.

Vogels, "Les récits de vocation des prophètes," *NRT*, XCV (1973): 3-24.

14. Deut. 34:10; see K. Baltzer, "Considerations Regarding the Office and Calling of the Prophet," *HTR*, LXI (1968): 567 ff.

15. Exod. 3:2; cf. Gen. 16:7,9-11, 15; etc. On the expression "appeared," see F. Schutenhaus, "Das Kommen und Erscheinen Gottes im Alten Testament," *ZAW*, LXXVI (1964): 10 ff.

16. See G. Bachelard, *La psychanalyse du feu* (Paris, 1947; reprinted, 1949), p. 35.

17. See a summary of the discussion in Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, pp. 56 ff.

18. Gen. 26:3 (Isaac), 31:3 (Jacob), 39:2 (Joseph, with the preposition *'eth*, "with"); cf. Jos. 1:5 (Joshua), Judg. 6:16a (Gideon).

19. The number of critical studies on the name "Yahweh" is too extensive for a listing. It will be observed that the matter under consideration is not that of the proto-Hebraic roots of the Yahweh cult, nor that of the possibly foreign origin of the word "Yahweh" (a liturgical shout associated with awe, hard breathing, storm wind, etc.), but rather that of the theological understanding which is proposed by the Elohist tradition in telling the story of Moses within the context of the theophany of the Burning Bush. See R. Mayer, "Der Gottesname Jahwe im Lichte der neuesten Forschung" (with bibliography), *BZ*, NF II (1958), 26-53; Childs, *The Book of Exodus* pp. 47-89; W. H. Brownlee, "The Ineffable Name of God," *BASOR*, no. 226 (April, 1977): 39 ff.

20. See Hos. 12:6, 14:8; Isa. 26:8; Ps. 135:13; Prov. 10:7; Eccl. 9:5, Cf. B. S. Childs, *Memory and Tradition in Israel* (Naperville, Ill., 1962), p. 9 (note 3), 11 f. P. A. H. de Boer, *Gedenken und Gediichtnis in der Welt des Alten Testaments* (Stuttgart, 1962); W. Schottroff, "'Gedenken' im alten Orient und im Alten Testament; die Wurzel zakar im remitischen Sprachkreis (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1964); R. Martin-Achard, "Souvenir et memorial selon l'Ancien

Testament," *RTP*, XCVIII (1965): 302-10.

21. "He who does not himself remember that God led *him* out of Egypt is no longer a Jew," M. Buber, quoted (italics added) in W. Herberg, ed., *The Writings of Martin Buber* (New York, 1956), p. 31. Cf. the religious usage of "memory" in classical Greece, where man did not attempt to grasp the past as much as to obtain a divine and everlasting truth. See J. P. Vernant, *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs; études de psychologie historique* (Paris, 1965), pp. 51-78; cf. N. A. Dahl, "Anamnesis; mémoire et commémoration dans le christianisme primitif," *Studia theologica*, I (1947): 69-95.

22. The name *Yahweh* is never found in the Masoretic Text. The tetragrammaton (four sacred consonants) is written therein with the vowels of the word *Adonay*, "my Lord," (sometimes of the word *Elohim*, "God"), hence, the misreading, "Jehovah," which was introduced by Galatinus in 1520. All available evidence (Hebrew theophoric names, Amorite onomastics, Greek transliterations in the magical papyri of the Greco-Roman period, testimony of the Church Fathers, especially Clement of Alexandria) points to an original pronunciation of "Yahweh."

23. It was apparently first proposed by P. Haupt, "Der Name Jahweh," *OLZ*, (1909), cols. 21 1-14; cf. D. N. Freedman, "The Name of the God of Moses," *JBL*, LXXIX (1960): 151 ff.; Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp. 68 ff.

24. The effort to explain the expression *Yahweh Sebaoth* (1 Sam. 4:4, 2 Sam. 6:2, etc.) as "He Who Creates the [Heavenly] Armies" requires further demonstration. See Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, p. 69.

25. Job 6:21, 7:21, etc. See S. Terrien, *Job, Poet of Existence* (Indianapolis, 1957), pp. 50 ff.; *id.*, *Job: Commentaire* (Neuchâtel, 1963), pp. 81 ff., 92.

26. LXX, *Egô eimi ho ôn*, "I am the Being One,"; cf. Vulgate, *Ego sum qui sum*.

27. See Th. C. Vriezen, "'ehje 'ašer 'ehje." *Festschrift A. Bertholet* (Tübingen, 1950), pp. 598 ff.; de Vaux, *Histoire ancienne d'Israël*, pp. 329 ff. De Vaux, however, should have been careful not to use the verb "to exist" for the Deity, for *existere* implies dependence and derivative-ness.

28. See C. H. Ratschow, *Werden und Wirken: eine Untersuchung des Wortes hajah als Beitrag zur Wirklichkeitserfassung des Alten Testaments* (Berlin, 1941); Th. Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared With Greek*, tr. by J. L. Moreau (London, 1960), pp. 38 ff.

29. This is not to say that the translation of *Ehje'eh* should be "I shall be there" (*contra*, Vriezen, Buber, et al. Cf. von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, I p. 182; B. S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, p. 69.

30. The present inquiry will not concern itself with the many conjectures which have been proposed on such problems, nor will it review the proposals concerning the proto-Hebraic worship of *Yahweh* in the ancient Near East, the so-called Kenite hypothesis, etc.

31. See J.-H. Nicolas, *Dieu connu comme inconnu: essai d'une critique de la connaissance théologique* (Paris, 1966), pp. 185 ff., 366 ff.

32. Contrast Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, p. 69 and p. 76.

33. Th. Moore, *Rhymes on the Road*, i, 26.

34. *Odyssey*, xi, 315 f.

35. Cross, "The Storm Theophany," and "The Revelation at Sinai," in *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp. 147 ff.

36. Ps. 29, Deut. 33:2 ff., Isa. 35:1-10, etc.

37. Considerable work has been done on this passage. See J. Jeremias, *Theophanie* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1965), pp. 100 ff.; O. Eissfeldt, *Die Komposition der Sinai Erzählung, Exodus 19-34* (Berlin, 1966); H.-J. Kraus, *Worship in Israel*, tr. by G. Buswell (Richmond, 1966), pp. 93 ff., 179 ff.; J. K. Kuntz, *The Self-Revelation of God*

- (Philadelphia, 1967), pp. 72 ff.; K. Baltzer, *The Covenant Formulary* in Old Testament, Jewish, and Early Christian Writings, Tr. by D. E. Green (Philadelphia, 1970); R. de Vaux, *Histoire ancienne d'Israël* (Paris, 1971), pp. 410 ff.; E. Zenger, *Die Sinaitheophanie* (Würzburg, 1971); Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, pp. 340.
38. See E. L. Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History* (New York, 1970), p. 4.
39. See M. Greenberg, "Hebrew *Segulah*: Akkadian *Sikiltu*," *JAOS*, LXXI (1951): 172 ff.; M. Dahood on the Ugaritic *sgl't* in *Biblica*, XLVI (1965): 313; XLVII (1966): 26; L (1969): 341.
40. See W. Caspari, "Das priestliche Königreich," *Theologische Blätter*, VIII (1929): 105-10; R. B. Y. Scott, "A Kingdom of Priests," *Ex* xix,6," *OST*, VIII (1950): 213-19; J. B. Bauer, "Könige und Priester, ein heiliges Volk (*Ex* 19,6)," *BZ*, II (1959): 283-6; W. L. Moran, "A Kingdom of Priests," in J. L. McKenzie, ed., *The Bible in Current Catholic Thought; Festschrift M. J. Gruenthaner* (New York, 1962), pp. 7-20; G. Fohrer, "'Priesterliches Königtum', *Ex* 19,6," *TZ*, XI (1963): 359-62, also published in *Studien zur alttestamentlichen Theologie und Geschichte* (Berlin, 1969), pp. 149-53; R. Martin-Achard, "Israel, peuple sacerdotal," *Verbum Caro*, XVIII (1964): 1-28; J. H. Elliott, *The Elect and the Holy. An Exegetical Examination of I Peter 2:4-10 and the Phrase basileion hierateuma* (Leiden, 1966); A. E. Glock, "Early Israel as the Kingdom of Yahweh" *Concordia Theological Monthly*, XLI (1970): 558 ff.
41. See H. Kees, *Das Priestertum in ägyptischen Staat vom neuen Reich bis zur Spätzeit* (Leiden, 1953); E. O. James, *The Nature and Function of Priesthood: A Comparative and Anthropological Study* (London, 1955); L. Sabourin, *Priesthood: A Comparative Study* (Leiden, 1973).
42. See J. Pedersen, *Israel, Its Life and Culture, I-II* (London and Copenhagen, 1926), pp. 36 ff.; J. van der Ploeg, "Les anciens dans l'Ancien Testament," (Lex Tua Veritas [*Festschrift H. Junker*] (Trier, 1961), pp. 175-92.
43. Contra Koenig, pp. 213 ff.; etc.; Cf. Jeremias, pp. 7 ff.
44. See M. Greenberg, *NSH* in Exodus 20:20 and the Purpose of the Sinaitic Theophany," *JBL*, LXXIX (1960): 273 ff.
45. Most commentators agree that the pericope of 20:18-21 was displaced by the Pentateuchal redactors, who had to link the decalogue to the so-called Code of the Covenant.
46. Cf. 2 Sam. 22:10 = Ps. 18:9[Heb.10] and the Ugaritic *rpt*; Ezek. 34:12; Zeph. 1:15. See Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp. 164-5. Northwest Semitic cognates suggest either "covering" or "dripping" (of dew, etc.).
47. The LXX translated *gnophos*, "thick-darkness."
48. Cf. Deut. 4:11, 5:19; Ps. 97:2; Job 22:13. Yet see Job 38:9.
49. 1 Kings 8:12, 2 Chron. 6:1.
50. G. E. Mendenhall, unfortunately, omitted the examination of this word in his chapter, "The Mask of Yahweh," *The Tenth Generation* (Baltimore, 1973), p. 62.
51. W. Zimmerli, "Ich bin Jahwe," *Geschichte und Altes Testament* (Tübingen, 1953), pp. 179 ff.; H. Graf Reventlow, *Gebot und Predigt im Dekalog* (Gütersloh, 1962), pp. 25 ff.; K. Elliger, "Ich bin der Herr, euer Gott," *Kleine Schriften zum Alten Testament* (München, 1966), pp. 211 ff.; cf. similar and different examples of formulae of divine self-asseveration in Hellenistic religions in J. Bergman, *Ich bin Isis. Studien zum memphitische Hintergrund der griechischen Isisaretologien* (Uppsala, 1968), p. 29; cf. K. Baeschlin, *Moses, der Verkündiger des "Ich bin"* (Bern, 1962); R. Knierim, "Das Erste Gebot," *ZAW*, LXXXVII (1965): 20 ff.
52. "In the speaking of the name Yahweh makes himself present, present in a way that no alternative way of speaking could perform. He is near when the name is heard and spoken. In this word his transcendence is turned to immanence, He is

'now' for Israel. So the name makes meeting possible, Yahweh is meeting his people in this unique way. In the personal address he becomes present. Israel may now belong to this God, and there can never be for her an ultimate isolation. . . . The name is historical. The self becomes historical in receiving a name. The self now enters into the-community with a name." (J. Muilenburg, "The Speech of Theophany," *Harvard Divinity Bulletin*, XXVIII, 2 [January 1964]: 40).

53. Discussion of the origin and authorship of the ethical decalogue has been lively for the past fifty years. See H. Gese, "Der Dekalog als Ganzheit betrachtet," *ZTK*, LXIV (1967): 21 ff.; A. Jepsen, "Beiträge zur Auslegung und Geschichte des Dekalogs," *ZAW*, LXXIX (1967): 277 ff.; E. Nielsen, *The Ten Commandments in New Perspective: A Traditio-Historical Approach* (London, 1968); E. Zengler, "Eine Wende in der Dekalogforschung?" *Theologische Revue*, III (1968): 189 ff.; H. Caxelles, "Les origines du decalogue," *Erev Israel*, IX (1969): 14ff.; G. Fohrer, "Das sogenannte apodiktisch formulierte Recht und der Dekalog," *Studien zur alttestamentlichen Theologie und Kirche* (Berlin, 1969): 120 ff.; A. Phillips, *Ancient Israel's Criminal Law; A New Approach to the Decalogue* (Oxford, 1970); W. H. Schmidt, "Überlieferungsgeschichtliche Erwägungen zur Komposition des Dekalogs," *SVT*, XXII (1970): 201-220; M. Les-tienne, "Les dix 'paroles' et le décalogue," *RB*, LXXIX (1972): 484 ff.; B. Reicke, *Die zehn Worte in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Tübingen, 1973); H. Haag, "Das Buch des Bundes (Ex 24 7)," in *Wort Gottes in der Zeit* (Düsseldorf, 1973), pp. 22 ff.; Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, pp. 385 ff.

54. The present form reveals catechetical accretions from the Jerusalem priestly circles and other sources. For example, the observance of the sabbath is justified as an act of sacramental celebration in participation with the Creator of the universe (Exod. 20:11); the words and the

ideas are closely akin to those of the priestly story of creation and of the cosmic sabbath in Gen. 1:1—2:4a. The text which has been preserved in northern and Deuteronomistic circles (Deut. 5:6—21), however, presents the sabbath in terms of human, not divine, rest. It appeals to the feeling of humaneness toward workers and even toward toiling animals, and it recalls the memory of the Egyptian slavery.

55. It is only by way of contrast with the "cultic" or "ritual" decalogue of the Yahwist tradition (Exod. 34:10 ff.) that the Ten Words of the Elohist school have been called "ethical." They constitute in fact a code of religious as well as moral behavior for a society which acknowledges the central importance of the individual character in the maintenance of communal solidarity and at the same time knows that integrity of character depends on a theocentric orientation.

56. The text of verse 2 literally states, "Thou shalt not have (or "there shall not be for thee") other gods besides (or "upon" or "against") my face."

57. See J. Ouellette, "Le deuxième commandement et le rôle de l'image dans la symbolique religieuse de l'Ancien Testament: Essai d'interprétation," *RB*, LXXIV (1967): 504 ff.; de Vaux, "L'interdiction des images," *Histoire ancienne d'Israël*, n. 433 ff.: cf. W. H. Schmidt, *Alttestamentlicher Glaube und seine Umwelt* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1968), pp. 68 ff.

58. The redactor added "and all the ordinances" as a link with the text of the Code of the Covenant which is now immediately preceding (Exod., chs. 21-23).

59. The mention of "bulls" is anachronistic since herds of heavy cattle could not have survived in the rocky wilderness of Sinai, or for that matter could hardly have been taken away from the land of Goshen across the Sea of Reeds.

60. The use of the expression 'abh he'anun, "the mass of the dark cloud," is different from that of 'anan kabhed, "a heavy

cloud," in the Elohist tradition (vs. 16).
61. Cf. Ps. 110:4.

62. This detail may reflect a later rite in the celebration of a feast. The *yobhel*, "ram's horn," instead of the *shophar* of the Elohist tradition, suggests a practice which led to the priestly legislation of the Jubilee (Lev. 25:13, etc.; cf. Jos. 6:4, etc.).

63. It is generally admitted that the southern narrative came to include in the course of its growth a "decatalogue" or "dodecalogue" of commands and prohibitions, which the Pentateuchal redactors have placed amid the chaotic cluster of material dealing with the breaking of the first set of stones and the granting of the second set (Exod. 34:10-26b). The Yahwist "dodecalogue" is essentially ritual and nonethical.

64. See C. Westermann, "Die Herrlichkeit Gottes in der Priesterschrift," *Wort—Gebot—Glaube [Festschrift W. Eichrodt]* (Zürich, 1970), pp. 227 ff.; Th. C. Vriezen, "The Exegesis of Exodus XXIV 9-11," *Oudt. St.*, XVII (1972): 100 ff.; E. W. Nicholson, "The Interpretation of Exodus XXIV 9-11," *VT*, XXIV (1974): 77 ff. id., "The Antiquity of the Tradition in Exodus XXIV 9-11," *VT*, XXV (1975): 69 ff. id., "The Origin of the Tradition in Exodus XXIV 9-11," *VT*, XXVI (1976): 148 ff.

65. The mention of Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, indicates that this tradition was anterior to that which describes the events of Lev. 10:1-3. Late midrashim speculated that it was the vision of God which was eventually the cause of the death of these men.

66. The strange expression "seventy from the elders of Israel" suggests the initial phase in the development of the institution of "the seventy."

67. Cf. W. F. Stinespring, "Temple, Jerusalem," *IDB*, IV, p. 556, Plate 34.

68. The juxtaposition of the verbs *ra'ah*, "to see" (vs. 10a) and *hazah*, "to gaze at" (vs. 11 b) can hardly indicate an ecstatic

trance, since the text immediately adds, "and they ate and drank" (vs. 11 b).

69. See E. Cassin, *La splendeur divine. Introduction à l'étude de la mentalité mésopotamienne* (Paris, 1968), especially pp. 23 ff.

70. "The priest Ezekiel, son of Buzi" (Ezek. 1:3).

71. Cf. the expression, "the appearance of the glory of Yahweh" (vs. 17) with Ezek. 1:16, 26, 27, 28, etc.

72. According to the felicitous phrase of Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, p. 582.

73. This pericope will be studied in the next chapter, on the cultic mode of presence.

74. See Noth, *Exodus*, pp. 253 ff.; W. Beyerslin, *Origins and History of the Oldest Sinaiic Traditions*, tr. by S. Rudman (Oxford, 1961), pp. 22 ff., 98 ff.; J. Muilenburg, "The Intercession of the Covenant Mediator (Exodus 33:1a, 12-17)," *Words and Message [Festschrift D. Winton Thomas]* (Cambridge, 1969), pp. 159 ff. The form identified by Muilenburg in verses 12-17 is modified in verses 18-23 but belongs basically to the same pattern and theme. See also A. Laurentin, "We'attah-Kainun. Formule caractéristique des textes juridiques et liturgiques (à propos de Jean 17,5)," *Biblica*, XLV (1964): 168 ff.; especially 174 f., 184.

75. The list of the nations which occupy the land of the promise (vss. 2-3) and the stylistic features ("stiff-necked people," "consume", etc.) point to the Elohist-Deuteronomistic circles.

76. See Muilenburg's rhetorical analysis in "The Covenant Mediator," p. 161 f., 171 f.

77. Traditional and modern exegetes agree in finding in this narrative a warning against metaphysical speculation on divine essence as well as against the claims of mystical perception. For a convenient survey of the history of interpretation, see Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, pp. 598 f. Paul Ricoeur has well described the dialectic of name and ethics in "Nommer

- Dieu," *Etudes théologiques et religieuses*, LII (1977): 489 ff.
78. See W. von Baudissin, "'Gott schauen' in der alttestamentlichen Religion," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, XVIII (1915): 173 ff.; G. Gulin, "Das Antlitz Jahwes im Alten Testament," *Annales Académicae Scientiarum Fennicae*, XVII (1923); F. Nötscher, "Das Angesicht Gottes schauen" *nach biblischer und babylonischer Auffassung* (Würzburg, 1924); A. R. Johnson, "Aspects of the Use of the Term PNYM in the Old Testament," *Festschrift O. Eissfeldt* (Halle, 1947), pp. 155 ff.; J. Reindl, *Das Angesicht Gottes im Sprachgebrauch des Alten Testament* (Leipzig, 1970); see also above, Chapter I, note 131.
79. See W. Beyerlin, *Origins and History of the Oldest Sinaitic Traditions*, pp. 90 ff., 101 f., 161 f.
80. However. see Deut. 3:20, 12:10, etc; cf. Ps. 132:14.
81. See Noth, *Exodus*, p. 257; R. E. Clements, *God and Temple. The Idea of Divine Presence in Israel* (Oxford, 1965), p. 27.
82. "He is offered the comfort of God" (Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, p. 594).
83. See Muilenburg, "The Covenant Mediator," p. 177, note I, who quotes E. Baumann, 'YD' und seine Derivate im Hebräischen," *ZAW*, XXVIII (1908): 30 f.; see also above, chapter I, note 205.
84. See J. Hempel, "Die Lichtsymbolik im Alten Testament," *Studium generale*, XIII (1960): 352 ff.; P. Humbert, "Le theme vet&o-testamentaire de la lumière," *RTP*, XVI (1966): 1 ff.
85. See F. Daumas, "La fonction symbolique de l'or chez les Egyptiens," *RHR*, CXLIX (1956): 1 ff.; Cassin, *La splendeur divine: Introduction à l'étude de la mentalité mésopotamienne* (Paris, 1968), pp. 83 ff., 103 ff.; Mendenhall, "The Mask of Yahweh," in *The Tenth Generation* (1973), p. 59. The storm cloud was called once 'anan kabhed, "the heavy cloud" (Exod. 19:16), and the thundering deity in the Ugaritically inspired poem is introduced as 'el kabhod, "the god of glory" (Ps. 29:3). It is probable, however, that the term originated with the royal ideology. Cf. Cross, *Canaanite Myth* (1973), p. 153 (note 30), pp. 164 ff.
86. See W. Caspari, *Die Bedeutung der Wortsippe k-b-d in Hebräischer* (Leipzig, 1908); A. H. Foster, "The Meaning of doxa in the Greek Bible," *ATR*, XII (1929-30): 311 ff.; G. R. Berry, "The Glory of Yahweh and the Temple," *JBL*, LVI (1937): 115 ff.; H. G. May, "The Departure of the Glory of Yahweh," *JBL*, LVI (1937): 309 ff.; B. Stein, *Der Begriff 'Kebod Yahweh und seine Bedeutung für die alttestamentliche Gotteserkenntnis* (Emsdetten i. W., 1939); L. H. Brockington, "The Presence of God: A Study of the Use of the Term 'Glory of Yahweh'," *ET*, LVII (1945-46): 21 ff.; "The Septuagintal Background to the New Testament use of Doxa," in D. E. Nineham, ed., *Studies in the Gospels [Festschrift R. H. Lightfoot]* (Oxford, 1955), pp. 2 ff.; E. Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament*, tr. by A. W. Heathcote and Ph. J. Allcock (New York, 1955), pp. 79 ff.; von Rad, *Old Testament Theology*, I (1962), pp. 234 ff.; G. Henton Davies, "Glory," *IDB*, II, pp. 401 ff.; J. Morgenstern, *The Fire Upon the Altar* (Chicago, 1963), pp. 90 ff.; W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, tr. by J. A. Baker, Vol. II (Philadelphia, 1967), pp. 29 ff.; R. Rendtorff, "The Concept of Revelation in Ancient Israel," in W. Pannenberg, ed., *Revelation as History*, tr. by D. Granskou (New York, 1968), pp. 39 ff.
87. See Exod. 16:7, 10; 24:16 f.; 40:34 f.; etc.
88. The priestly thinking was not moving in the direction of perceptibility versus invisibility but was influenced by the problem of sin and atonement. See J. Barr, "Theophany and Anthropomorphism," *VTS*, VII (1960): 35. See below, chapter IV.
89. This section will be analyzed in the following chapter, as it deals with the cultic mode of presence and the origin of sanctuaries.

90. See also Deut. 34: 10, "And there has not arisen since in Israel a prophet like Moses, whom Yahweh *knew* face to face."
91. H. Barzel, "Moses: Tragedy and Sublimity," in K. R. R. Gros Louis et al., eds., *Literary Interpretations of Biblical Narratives* (Nashville & New York, 1974), p. 128.
92. See H. H. Rowley, "The Good Life," in *The Faith of Israel* (London, 1955), pp. 124 ff.; J. Hempel, "Good," *IDB*, II, pp. 440 f.
93. Contra many commentators who maintain that Moses saw in the "goodness" a weak "reflection of the glory of the Lord" (J. Lindblom, "Theophanies in Holy Places in Hebrew Religion," *HUCA* XXXII[1964]: 107).
94. It is significant that in the Yahwist tradition which is parallel to this narrative (Exod. 34: 1-35), the proclamation of Yahweh's name (vs. 5) is used as a preface to the dodecalogue (vss. 14-26). At the same time, the southern theologians, in conformity with the "quasi-spatial" notion of holiness, represent Moses with a shining halo after his descent from Mt. Sinai (a feature which was misunderstood by translators as "horns") This motif is absent from the northern tradition. See J. Morgenstern, "Moses with the Shining Face," *HUCA*, II (1925): 1 ff.; J. de Fraine, "Moses 'cornuta facies' (Ex. 34, 29-35)," *Bijdragen, Tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie*, XX (1959): 28 ff.; F. Dumermuth, "Moses strahlendes Gesicht," *TZ*, XVII (1961): 241 ff.; E. G. Suhr, "The Horned Moses [Ex 34, 25-35 . . .]," *Folklore* LXXIV '63): 387 ff.
95. O. Grether, *Name und Wort Gottes im Alten Testament* (Giessen, 1934), pp. 20, 163 ff.
96. M. Buber, *Moses: The Revelation and the Covenant*, paperback ed. (New York, 1958), p. 117.
97. On the meaning of the name in Hebrew religion, see G. von Rad, "Deuteronomy's 'Name' Theology and the Priestly Documents' 'Kabod' Theology," *Studies in Deuteronomy*, tr. by D. Stalker (Chicago, 1953), pp. 37 ff.; i&cm., *Old Testament Theology*, I, pp. 179 ff.; E. Jacob, "The Name of God," *Theology of the Old Testament* (1958), pp. 82 ff.; R. Abba, "Name," *IDB*, III, pp. 500 ff.; J. Murtagh, "The Name in Egypt and in Israel." *Bible Today*, XXXVII (1968): 2585 ff.
98. G. Bachelard, *La psychanalyse du feu* (Paris, 1937; paperback ed., 1949), pp. 19 f.
99. The Hebrew word *shawe'* means "emptiness, chasm, void, nothing." Cf. Ps. 89:47 [Heb., 48], "What is the nothingness for which thou hast created the sons of man?"
100. P. Tillich, "The Divine Name," *Christianity and Crisis*, XXI (1960-61): 55.
101. T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (Garden City, N. Y., 1936), p. 40.
102. R. Tournay, "Le Psaume VIII et la doctrine biblique du nom," *RB*, LXXVIII (1971): p. 19.
103. See C. J. Bleeker, "L'oeil et l'oreille," *The Sacred Bridge: Suppl. to Numen*, VII (Leiden, 1963), pp. 52 ff.

4

Presence in the Temple

Most religions have erected temples. The notion of sacred space, which goes back to prehistoric times, is manifest in the entire ancient Near East, where the ruins of sanctuaries testify to the spread of the belief that gods and goddesses, whatever their special realms of being might be, also dwell in holy places. They are present in their own palaces, built by men—often on heavenly models.¹

Modern culture tends to dismiss hastily the notion of sacred space, and it may thereby miss a reality of religious psychology which is deeply anchored in the human psyche. Some might ask, with Siegfried Sassoon, and like him answer:

What is Stonehenge? It is a roofless past;
Man's ruinous myth; his uninterred adoring
Of the unknown in sunrise cold and red;
His quest of stars that arch his doomed exploring.²

One may be inclined to range the temple of Solomon on Mt. Zion with the glories of Nineveh and Tyre or to think of the Hebraic awareness of cultic presence as “man's ruinous myth.” Ancient Israel herself was not of one mind on this burning

issue. A grievous tension between two cultic views of the divine presence appears in the literature of Israel and Judah during the fateful centuries of the Divided Monarchy (922-722 B.C.), of the surviving kingdom of Judah (722-586 B.C.), and of the infancy of Judaism (586-397 B.C.). Here again it will be useful to distinguish between a theologoumenon of presence through space and a theologoumenon of presence through time. Such a distinction is supported by documentary evidence. It will lead to a more accurate representation of the difference, already observed in the ancient traditions, between a theology of the name and a theology of glory.

During the nomadic stage of their historical existence, the Hebrews knew of no fixed abode for Yahweh, not even Mt. Horeb-Sinai.³ At the same time, the early strata of the epic memories of Israel mentioned two cultic objects, "the ark of Yahweh" and "the tent of meeting," both related in widely different ways to a belief in the intermittent recurrence of Yahweh's presence. In addition, the priestly writers of the Babylonian exile, reflecting a long-held tradition of the Jerusalem temple, described in detail, under the name "tabernacle," their idealized picture of the sanctuary during the desert wanderings.

The ark provided a link between the memories of Moses and the erection of the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, some three hundred years after the Exodus.⁴

THE ARK OF YAHWEH

We are accustomed to speak of "the ark of the covenant," and we generally imagine it to have contained the tables of the law. This time-honored opinion, however, represents an anachronistic telescoping of the early traditions concerning Moses with the later theological interpretations which arose among the

Deuteronomists (Deut. 10:1 ff.) and the Deuteronomistic editors of the books of Samuel and Kings (1 Kings 8:9, etc.).⁵ In ancient times, the ark was called “the ark of Yahweh” or “the ark of Elohim.”⁶ The epic traditions, both in the North and in the South, are silent about its construction, its size, its shape, and its function.⁷

The Ark in Mosaic Times

From only two references in the early sources of the Pentateuch, it may be inferred that such a sacred object was a military emblem, symbol, or token of the nearness of Yahweh in battle. It belonged originally to the ideology of the Holy War.⁸

Theophanies never last long. Moses had to descend from the mountain of God. The sons of Israel—at least those tribal groups which had escaped from Egyptian slavery—had to move away, sooner or later, from the site of their national birth. Although there is no direct evidence from the text, one may surmise that the prohibition of images—a custom without real parallel in the ancient Near East—created a problem for the worshippers of Yahweh. In the absence of representations of the Deity, the sense of divine nearness could hardly survive among the people at large. The idea of the omnipresence of God is too diffuse and vague for effective awareness in daily existence, in the midst of all sorts of conditions and temperaments. The psychological experience of divine communion—let alone the ecstatic vision—may not be accessible to a large number of men and women, certainly not at all times. This is shown by the testimony of the eighth- and seventh-century prophets, as well as of the mystics of several religions.

How could the presence of Yahweh be made manifest to the rank-and-file populace that surrounded Moses? What was he to do, especially in time of existential crisis, such as warfare, when man needs particularly to be reassured of divine protection?

One has the right to speculate that Moses himself was a theologian of sacramental presence, but such a speculation is fragile, for the ancient traditions do not report that he ordered the manufacture of the ark. He may well have received it from Jethro and the Kenites (Exod. 18:1 ff.).

Moses himself might have been satisfied with the theophanic promise, "My presence shall go with thee" (Exod. 33:14). For tribal soldiers in the hour of combat, however, this promise had to be translated into a concrete center of sensorial attention.

The Hebrew word *'arôn*, "ark," designated a small chest," like that in which the bones of Joseph were preserved (Gen. 50:26), or an offering box, such as the one which was placed at later times in the entrance to the temple of Jerusalem (2 Kings 12: 10; cf. 2 Chron. 24:8). It is not impossible that the ark was originally a tribal *palladium*, similar to the *'utfah*, the *merkab*, or the *'abu-Dhûr*, which various Arabs, until modern times, used to bring to battle on camel back, and which was attended by a chief's daughter or a beautiful maiden. In the early centuries of the Christian era, and perhaps even before, pre-Islamic Arabs had a *qubbah* or tent of red leather which contained the stone gods of a tribe.¹⁰ In biblical times, the Egyptians maintained processional boats on which were displayed sacred boxes.¹¹ The Hebraic ark, however, was not conceived in the desert days as a permanent container or shelter of the divine presence. It was rather a sort of pedestal or stool from which Yahweh, so it was believed, ascended before a battle or to which he descended after a victory.

According to an archaic poem which may well have been quoted from the Scroll of *the Wars of Yahweh*, now lost but mentioned elsewhere,* the ark was carried forward at the beginning of military engagements while Moses used to sing,

"Rise up, O Yahweh! And let thine enemies be scattered!
And let them that hate thee flee before thee!" (Num.10:35).

Likewise, when the ark was put to rest, Moses used to say,

“Return, O Yahweh! Unto the many thousands of Israel!”
(Vs. 36.)

The expression “many thousands of Israel” may be archaic and hyperbolic, although it may also indicate that the Song of the Ark, in spite of its present context, belongs to the time of the Judges and the conquest.

If this poem is ancient, it would seem to identify, in the mind of Moses and his warriors, the movements of Yahweh with the motions of the ark. One should not conclude from this observation, however, that Moses is presented as addressing the ark itself as Yahweh. In the preceding context, which appears to belong, like the probable quotation from the Scroll of *the Wars of Yahweh*, to the Yahwistic tradition, the narrator depicts the carrying of the ark ahead of the tribes as they finally depart from the holy mountain, but he significantly adds, “the cloud of Yahweh was over them by day” (Numb. 10:33–34). An ambiguous tension is maintained between the sacred object and the para-theophanic manifestation of the presence through the cloud.

To be sure, the popular mind would easily tend to look at the ark as the bearer of real presence at all times, but the fragments of the tradition which have been preserved insist on the transitory character of this presence, since it was limited to periods of migration and times of battle. These two periods were of course likely to be identical, or at least overlapping, since migration into an unknown and alien area would intensify the risk of defensive attacks on the part of other nomads.¹³

The Ark During the Conquest

Under Joshua and the Judges, and during the youth of Samuel (ca. 1230-1050 B.C.), the **descendents** of the desert wanderers gradually settled in the mountain range of Canaan. While

the ark may have played a part in the crossing of the Jordan at Gilgal (Josh. 3:17, etc.) and at the fall of Jericho (Josh. 6:9 ff.), it is difficult to ascertain the reliability of the nucleus of ancient memories which is now embedded in the text.¹⁴

The narratives on the youth of Samuel (eleventh century B.C.) were written in later times and edited by the Deuteronomistic school, but they include an incidental note on the ark, which bears the mark of authenticity.

The ark was apparently kept in the temple of Shiloh, in the central mountain range of Ephraim,¹⁵ but there is no indication that it played any significant part in the life of the nation. The narrative merely states: "The lamp of Elohim had not yet gone out, and Samuel was lying down in the temple of Yahweh, where the ark of Elohim was. ." (1 Sam. 3:3). The text does not suggest that the cultic object was considered as the visible sign of the permanent presence of Yahweh in the shrine. On the contrary, the recital of the vision in which Samuel was called to a prophetic mission clearly implies that the divine manifestation was distinct from the ark: "And Yahweh came, and he stood forth, calling, Samuel! Samuel!" (vs. 10).¹⁶

Some scholars maintain that it was in the temple of Shiloh that the ark came to be understood as the footstool or the empty throne of Yahweh and that it was surrounded by carved objects known as the cherubim. The liturgical formula "Yahweh of Hosts who is enthroned upon the cherubim" is found for the first time in the stories of Samuel at Shiloh.¹⁷ There is no evidence, however, that the cherubim, twin objects of the temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, belonged to the Yahwistic iconography of the Shiloh sanctuary.¹⁸ In an early psalm of thanksgiving, the core of which may well be Davidic, Yahweh is described as going to war "riding upon a cherub"¹⁹ or on the storm cloud in fury. In all likelihood, it was the mythopoetic language of the Holy War which influenced the liturgists of Shiloh during the days of the conquest. A few generations later,

Solomon's architects from Tyre introduced carved cherubim, overlaid in gold, to the temple of Jerusalem.²⁰

During the Philistine invasions of the eleventh century B.C., the military commanders of Israel summoned the ark to battle. As the soldiers were being routed at Aphek, the elders said, "Let us bring the ark of [our God]²¹ here from Shiloh, so that he will come among us and save us from the power of our enemies" (1 Sam. 4:3). The dramatic discomfiture which followed this cultic attempt to influence divine decision was complete. The ark was captured by the enemy. In the course of the years during which these sorry events were committed to the national memory, stories were told in order to show half humorously the residual power of the cultic object in spite of its shameful failure during the battle of Aphek (1 Sam. 6:1 ff.). At last, the ancient trophy came to rest in the town of Kiriath-Jearim, where it remained in obscurity for some twenty years (1 Sam. 7:2).

The Ark in Jerusalem.

The renaissance of interest in the ark under David (ca. 1000 B.C.) was the prelude to a most important development in the Hebraic theology of presence. It contributed to the astounding development of the myth of Zion.

With the magnetism of his complex personality, David of Bethlehem in Judah succeeded in uniting the tribes of Israel. He not only expelled the Philistines from the mountain range of "Palestine" (Philistina), but he also restored on a broader basis the kingdom which Saul of Benjamin had vainly initiated a few years previously in the heart of Ephraim. His accession to the throne of a united monarchy, however, resulted in a dramatic shift of influence in the political, cultural, and religious history of the nation. Little by little, in the course of two centuries, the catalytic center of Hebraic faith moved from Israel properly speaking to the ethnically heterogeneous tribe of Judah and

thus prepared the birth of Judaism in the sixth century B.C.

The fortress of Jebus (Jerusalem), strategically located in a Canaanite enclave between Israel and Judah for nearly 2½ centuries of Hebraic infiltration in the land of Canaan, finally yielded to the military skill of David and the bravery of his warriors (2 Sam. 5:1 ff.). The triumphant king made Jerusalem his capital. This move proved to be a stroke of political genius, for it enabled him to offer a rallying point to both North and South on a neutral ground—a distant anticipation of the American “District of Columbia.”

In an effort to put the stamp of Hebraic Yahwism on Canaanite Jerusalem, David sought out the ark in its half-forgotten retreat at Kiriath-Jearim and with great pomp brought it inside the fortress of Jebus.²² The narrative of the transfer of the ark to Jerusalem is adorned with anecdotes which suggest that it was originally part of a cultic ceremonial in which the *legenda* of the ark were chanted and even enacted many times after David's reign during the festive occasions of the Davidic monarchy.²³ Apparently, the disgrace of the Philistine episodes could safely be erased from the national memory. Far from being merely a politician's ploy, David's decision was inspired by an authentic devotion to Yahweh. The presence of the ark near a stronghold which had been until then a center of Canaanite worship could be viewed not only as a symbol of Yahweh's triumph over the deities of the land but also as a link with the faith of the fathers in the wilderness. The notorious scene in which the king danced ecstatically “in the presence of Yahweh” (2 Sam. 6:13) testifies to the passionate character of his attachment to the God who had delivered him from all his enemies.²⁴

The military and nomadic characteristics of the ark in Mosaic times were profoundly altered by its transfer to Jerusalem. From its sporadic significance on the day of battle, the ark acquired the status of permanent visibility. It moved from the realm of historical time to that of cultic space. Above all other

considerations, David was probably motivated by his concern for keeping alive the old tribal confederation of Israel. The ark embodied the memories of the triumphs of Yahweh during the early days of the conquest. In Shechem (Jos. 8:30–35), possibly Bethel (Judg. 20:26 f.; cf. vs. 18 and 21:2), and finally Shiloh (1 Sam. 3:3, etc.), the ark conferred its cultic concreteness upon both dimensions of the Mosaic covenant: vertical, since it exhibited the bond which united Yahweh to Israel; and horizontal, since it cemented the solidarity of heterogeneous tribes under their common allegiance. The ark of Yahweh became known as “the ark of the covenant.”²⁵ By moving it to Jerusalem, David was in effect signifying to the whole nation that its religious as well as its political center had been transferred from Shechem to Jerusalem.²⁶

The nomadic aspect of the ark was not forgotten, however, for its original connection with the ideology of the Holy War and the sojourn in the wilderness was reenacted in the ceremonies of its procession in later times.²⁷ The fact that David sheltered it in a tent, which he had especially pitched for it, suggests that he was fully aware of its desert origin and of the nomadic implications of the theology which it represented. Nevertheless, the king’s attempt to erect “a house of cedar” for the permanent residence of the ark (2 Sam. 7:1 ff.) reveals his ambivalence and possibly his spiritual confusion.

Significantly, the story of this attempt is embedded in a narrative which articulates the nomadic theology of the ark with a sequence of dynastic oracles.²⁸ These dynastic oracles (2 Sam. 7:8–29) seek to replace the conditional, ethical, and historically contingent character of the Mosaic covenant (Exod. 19:5–6) with an unconditioned, permanent-indeed, eternal, hence *suprahistorical* and mythical-covenant, binding the God of Israel “forever” to the Davidic dynasty (vs. 16). The juxtaposition of the reference to the ark with the promise of an eternal covenant suggests that a radical change was proposed—although tem-

porarily rejected-in the theology of presence, and that this radical change entailed political consequences of a revolutionary nature. The notion of a divinely ordained and hereditary kingship was alien to the theology of a conditional covenant.²⁹ For early Israel, Yahweh was the only King.³⁰ Now, David wished to imitate the kings of all the nations.

Consulted on David's projects in sacred architecture, the prophet Nathan, answering at first on his own behalf as a court adviser, expressed his agreement (2 Sam. 7:3). Yet nocturnal vision compelled him to reverse his judgment. The oracle he had to communicate to David implies a theology of presence which is strictly compatible with the nomadic character of the ark:

Thus says Yahweh: Wouldst thou build for me a house to sit in? I have not sat in a house since the days I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been walking about in a tent and in an encampment.³¹ In all the places where I have walked about with all the people of Israel, did I speak a word with any of the judges³² of Israel whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, saying, Why have you not built for me a house of cedar? (2 Sam. 7:5-8.)

This prophetic oracle constitutes one of the most important statements of the Hebraic literature on the modes of presence, hence on the tensions between two conflicting theological interpretations of history. Under the seemingly naive anthropomorphism of the image of a sitting or walking Godhead, the text indicates a polemic against the notion of a static Deity, attached to a temple built by man, and therefore subjected to the limitations of human worship. Nathan's prophetic word defends the freedom of Yahweh.

God is near, but his presence remains elusive. He is "a walking God."

A theology of time is endorsed at the expense of a theology

of sacred space which confines “a sitting God” and subjects him to anthropocentric manipulation. The thrust of the oracle is aimed at institutional shrines which perform rituals destined to influence, curb, and in effect enslave the Deity. Nathan’s prophetic insight is a forerunner of the violent attacks which the eighth- and seventh-century prophets delivered against the national temple of Israel at Bethel (Amos and Hosea) and the national temple of Judah at Jerusalem (First Isaiah, Micah, Jeremiah).³³

The sojourn of Yahweh in a tent was compatible with his walking about in the midst of his people. His sitting in a house of cedar, built by man, was open to the clerical institutionalism common to all the religions which enlist the deified forces of nature for the benefit of a privileged class, dynasty, people, or church. In Mosaic Yahwism, divine power transcends nature and history.

It is therefore no accident that the Nathan oracle juxtaposes a nomadic view of the ark in a tent with a reference to judges who shepherd the nation. Such a nomadic view of the ark is interconnected with an elective and charismatic doctrine of national leadership that is alien to the Semitic ideology of divine kingship and hereditary monarchy. The several layers of dynastic oracles on the Davidic covenant which have agglutinated over Nathan’s message and which contradict the implications of the Mosaic covenant testify indirectly to the eventual victory of the royalist theologians who surrounded the Jerusalem monarchy.

The theologoumenon of presence through the name was being displaced by the theologoumenon of presence through the glory; such a displacement carried with it ominous consequences in the realm of political ethics.

The Ark and the Theologoumenon of Glory.

Brought to Jerusalem, the ark became a suitable vehicle for an interpretation of Yahweh’s visible presence through the

theologoumenon of glory. It will be recalled that the Yahwistic stories of the Sinai theophanies stressed the visual aspect of the divine manifestation at the expense of the hearing of the word. At the end of the monarchy and after the destruction of the temple of Jerusalem, the priestly circles retold the Sinai theophany in terms of a vision of glory (Exod. 24:15–18). The appropriation of the ark by the cultic institutions of David and Solomon marked an intermediary stage in this development.

Already in Shiloh, during the Philistine invasions, the ark had been talked about in the context of the glory of God. Upon hearing that the ark had fallen into the hands of the enemy, the daughter-in-law of Eli (the priest of Shiloh during the youth of Samuel) gave birth to a son whom she called *Ichabod*, “No glory” or “Alas-for-the-glory!”—for, she said, “the glory” (*kabod*) “has departed from Israel, because the ark of Elohim has been captured” (1 Sam. 4:20–22).

Alluding to this event, a Jerusalem hymnodist belonging to the musical guild of Asaph³⁴ explained that God

“... had delivered his power (*‘oz*) into captivity,
his splendor (*tiph’ereth*) into the hand of the foe”

(Ps. 78:61).

The association of the notion of divine power (*‘oz*) with the idea of divine splendor (*tiph’ereth*) and its synonyms, “glory” (*kabod*), “honor” or “majesty” (*hadar*), “magnificence” (*‘addereth*), and several others³⁵ appears in psalms which were sung at the autumn festival, when the Lord of nature is hailed in the storm epiphany that marks the renewal of the year. Psalm 29, “the Hymn of the Seven Thunders” (cf. Rev. 10:3), betrays the influence of the proto-Canaanite mythology of Ugarit.³⁶ It invites “the sons of the gods” to ascribe “glory and power” to Yahweh at the occasion of the “epiphany of [his] holiness.”³⁷ This event should probably be identified as the autumn feast, when the

death of nature through the drought of summer is at last ended by the return of the rain through the first thunderstorm of a new agricultural year. In their syncretistic embracing of the mythopoetic language of the ancient Near East, the Jerusalem hymnodists went so far as to attempt a reconciliation between the theologoumenon of the name and the theologoumenon of the glory, for they asked the heavenly beings to “ascribe to Yahweh the glory of his name” (vs. 2a). At any rate, the poem may be described as a distant antecedent of the *Gloria in Excelsis* which culminates with a *Pax in Terris* (vss. 1 and 10), since it begs for the blessing of Yahweh’s people with the fertility of the autumnal rain.

Some scholars conjecture that this poem brings together the ambivalence of the thunderstorm-potentially both destructive and portentous of new life-with the “monstrance” of the ark as it is borne processionally out of the temple. As mountains, cedars, and animals are stunned with dread, worshippers sing the praise of the Lord of nature:³⁸

The roaring of Yahweh causes the desert to writhe,
 Yahweh causes the desert of Kadesh to writhe in agony!
 The roaring of Yahweh makes the hinds bring forth,
 And he strips bare the forests,
 But in his temple, all say, Glory! (Vss. 8-9).

The ark and the glory are explicitly related in another hymn which hails the entrance of the ark in the sanctuary, perhaps at the conclusion of the processional rite:

Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
 And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors,
 That the King of glory may come in!
 Who is the King of glory?
 Yahweh, strong and mighty,
 Yahweh, mighty in battle!³⁹

Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
 And be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors,
 That the King of glory may come in!
 Who is this King of glory?
 Yahweh of Hosts,
 He is the King of glory! (Ps. 24:7-10).

Even if the ritual phrase "Lift up your heads, O ye gates" is not an echo of the command "Lift up your heads, O ye gods," which the *Ba'al* of the Ugaritic poetry shouts at the members of the divine council as they bow down in dread of Yam, "the Sea," there is no doubt that Psalm 24 organically articulates the ritual of the ark, as emblem of the Holy War, with the myth of creation (vss. 1-2). The cultic object is inseparable from the belief in Yahweh, the Hero of Battle, triumphant over cosmic as well as historical enemies.⁴⁰

The story of the erection of the Jerusalem temple by Solomon culminates with the scene of the ark's entrance into the innermost room of the edifice: "A cloud filled the house of Yahweh, so that the priests could not stand to minister on account of it; for the glory of Yahweh filled the house of Yahweh" (1 Kings 8:10 ff.). The pattern is well established. The ark is henceforth associated with the theologoumenon of glory.

It may have been the opposition of the North to the Jerusalem temple which brought about, at least in part, the Deuteronomic reinterpretation of the ark as the container of the tables of the law (Deut. 10:1 ff.).⁴¹ In any case, the Jerusalem priests, at least as early as the seventh century, identified the cultic object with the throne of Yahweh on earth. Soon after the destruction of the temple-and presumably of the ark also-Jeremiah spoke of the new Jerusalem in the suprahistorical times to come:

"In those days, says Yahweh, they shall say no more,
 The ark of the covenant of Yahweh!
 It shall not come to mind, or be remembered, or missed.
 It shall not be made again!" (Jer. 3:16).

Significantly, this expression of antagonism to the ark (*ca.* 587 B.C.) is prefaced by an implied criticism of the Davidic dynasty:

“And I will give you [says Yahweh] shepherds after my own heart who will feed you with knowledge and understanding” (vs. 15).

Moreover, Jeremiah is clearly condemning the Jerusalem interpretation of the ark, not the theology of presence as such, for he concludes:

“At that time, Jerusalem shall be called the throne of Yahweh, and all nations shall gather to it, in the presence of Yahweh in Jerusalem” (vs. 17).

As in the Nathan oracle against David’s intention to build a house of cedar to shelter the ark permanently, the motif of the humble and elected shepherd is juxtaposed with the theology of nomadic presence. The ark has become totally incompatible with the Mosaic notion of covenantal peoplehood, with its classless ideal of corporate solidarity. The political implications of the theologoumenon of glory are irreconcilable with those of the theologoumenon of the name.

THE TENT OF MEETING

Entirely different from the ark of Yahweh, which conveyed associations of the Holy War and possessed affinities with the theologoumenon of the glory, was another cultic object, “the tent of meeting,” which was originally related to the prophetic aspect of Yahwism and contained the seed of the theologoumenon of presence through the divine name.

The Tent in the Wilderness

While nothing is known of its appearance, form, or dimensions, one may assume that the *'ohel mo'ed*, “tent of meeting” or

“tent of reunion,”⁴² looked like any other shelter of canvas which desert nomads wove out of goat hair until modern times. The Hebrew words suggest the rendering “tent of tryst,” for *mo’ed* is a date even more than an appointed place for meeting. It later designates a festive season.⁴³

The tent was neither a military symbol nor a manufactured token of the permanence of divine nearness. Rather, it constituted a spatial vehicle for oracular communication. The tent was an empty shelter which at times could be filled with the presence, but only the presence of a God in dialogue with man. It was not in any way the container of diffuse sanctity, a sort of sacramental enclosure that is common to most religions. Rather, it sought to answer the human quest for the disclosure of the divine will on specific occasions.

More especially, the tent of meeting provided Moses with the solitariness, privacy, and isolation which have always been the mark of the encounter between God and man. The tent concealed in its darkness those moments of intimate immediacy when Yahweh and Moses, in the bold anthropomorphism of the storytellers, “spoke together face to face” (Exod. 33: 11) or even “mouth to mouth” (Num. 12:8)—that is, without obstacle, distance, or intermediary.

“*Face to Face*” (Exod. 33:7-11). The first reference to the tent is now found out of context in the sequence of episodes during which Moses, still at the foot of Mt. Sinai-Horeb, but about to depart with the sons and daughters of Israel toward the promised land, prayed for the continuation of the gift of presence as a *vade mecum* and even begged to see the glory (vss. 12-23).⁴⁴

Now Moses would take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far away from the camp, and he called it “tent of meeting” because it was outside the camp. Anyone who sought Yahweh would go out of the camp to the tent of meeting. And it came to pass that whenever Moses would go out, the entire people would rise and

present themselves, each man at the entrance of his own tent, and their eyes would intently follow Moses until he had entered the tent.

And it came to pass, as Moses entered the tent, that the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent while [Yahweh] spoke with Moses. And when the entire people would see the pillar of cloud at the entrance of the tent, the entire people would rise and worship, each man at the entrance of his own tent. And Yahweh would speak with Moses face to face as a man speaks with his neighbor.

When he would return to the camp, his attendant, Joshua the son of Nun, a lad, would not walk away from the inside of the tent (Exod. 33:7-11).

Among the many strange features of this narrative, only a few salient ones need be mentioned here:

1. Moses pitched the tent “outside the camp.” The repeated emphasis on the word “tent” indicates in all probability the narrator’s intention to differentiate this cultic object from the ark,⁴⁵ and possibly even from the “tabernacle” (*mishkan*) with which the later Jerusalem priestly tradition confused it.⁴⁶
2. The tent was not a portable sanctuary which provided an abode or a permanent residence for the divine, but a spatial setting, geographically unattached, to which both Yahweh and Moses would “go” in order to “meet.”
3. The keeper of the tent was not a priest, but a mere youth who had not even reached puberty (*na’ar*), and who served as the personal attendant of Moses.
4. Although the tent had been erected for anyone who wished to seek Yahweh,⁴⁷ the tradition tells us that the only human being who penetrated into its shadow for an oracular purpose was Moses himself.⁴⁸
5. To those who stood outside, the presence of God was made manifest by the descent of the pillar of cloud, but without the attending elements of a spectacular display of nature in

tumult as in the theophanies of Mt. Sinai-Horeb. Commentators apparently err when they associate the tent of meeting with the theologoumenon of the glory, for it is precisely in the cluster of the traditions which now surround this pericope that Moses is denied the vision of the face of Yahweh.⁴⁹ Through contextual juxtaposition, the divine face is identified with the divine glory. (vs. 18).

6. The pillar of cloud “would stand at the entrance of the tent,” namely, outside. However, it was inside the tent that Yahweh would speak with Moses “face to face” as a man speaks with his neighbor (vs. 11). There is no contradiction between the denial of the vision of the face and the speaking “face to face,” for this expression is clearly idiomatic and signifies “without intermediary.” The distinction lies in the difference between seeing and speaking. The narrator insists on the homely character of the dialogical exchange. The tone is devoid of the dramatic frills of an apotheosis or the emotional thrills of an ecstasy. The idea of a simple conversation, conducted in the form of a “chat,” places this peculiarly Mosaic mode of presence in the lineage of the stories of epiphanic visitations to the patriarchs and prepares the literary genre of the prophetic vision, as illustrated especially by Amos (ch. 7) and Jeremiah (ch. 1). The frequentative form of the verbs indicates that Moses would occasionally, and perhaps even often, go out of the camp to the tent of meeting in his search for the disclosure of God’s intentions.

7. Whenever Moses went to the tent, all the people would stand, each man outside of the entrance to his own tent. In this mediated mode of presence, they would rise and worship in ritual prostration. Moses is thus depicted as the prophet *par excellence*, mediator of the Godhead to man, a human bridge between Yahweh and the entire community of Israel, but not in any way the giver of the law, with its minute regulations on purity and impurity or licit and illicit relations and the like, nor

again as the priest before an altar, engaged in the performance of sacerdotal ceremony.

In short, while the tent must be viewed as a cultic object, since the people's response is that of a ritual of adoration in the presence of the holy, one may not construe it as the prefiguration of a shrine in which sacred acts are performed by sacred persons at sacred times. On the contrary, one should interpret the manufacture, use, and function of the tent of meeting as pointing to a nexus of religious activity and thinking which distantly anticipates the psychological mode of presence through the inward processes of communion.

The oracular purpose of this nomadic shelter of goat hair in which God and man spoke "face to face" prepares the spiritual interiority unwittingly exhibited by the great prophets, the psalmists, and the poet of Job. Since the tent, however, was a material edifice of canvas which belonged to the realm of spatiality, it related such a spiritual interiority to a concrete environment of the physical world. Its mobility, at once, kept it detached from a static *topos* and permitted the potential character of human universality. It could not be restricted to a holy land, even less to a sacred cave, spring, tree, or hilltop. It owned the whole earth.

Without reducing the complexity of historical change to a simplistic schematization, one might say that the tent of meeting favored a theology of presence that was compatible, not with the worship of Yahweh in a single temple, but with a type of cult which promoted the *beth tephillah*, "the house of intercessory prayer." In Persian times, the late sixth century B.C., an anonymous prophet of nascent Judaism categorically opposed this mode of presence to the ideology of a priestly sanctuary (Isa. 56:7). In still later times, the fourth or third centuries B.C., Hellenistic Judaism called the *beth tephillah* by the Greek word *synagôgê*, "synagogue."

“*Mouth to Mouth*” (Num.12:1-9). The tent of meeting belongs so clearly to the theology of elusive presence that it plays a significant part in another tradition of ancient origin, in which the religious phenomenon of a temporally limited disclosure of the divine will is explicitly associated with the mystery of prophetic revelation.⁵⁰ This narrative refers to Miriam’s and Aaron’s claim to have access to divine speech, in competition with Moses:

And Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses on account of the Cushite woman whom he had taken. And they said, Has Yahweh indeed spoken only through Moses? Has he not spoken also with us? And Yahweh heard it.

Now, the man Moses was very meek, above all the men who were upon the face of the earth. And Yahweh spoke suddenly to Moses, and to Aaron, and to Miriam, Come out [of the camp], the three of you, to the tent of meeting. And the three of them came out. And Yahweh came down in a pillar of cloud, and he stood at the entrance of the tent. And he called Aaron and Miriam, and both of them came out [of the tent].

And he said, Hear now my words:

If there be a prophet among you,

I, Yahweh, shall make myself known to him in a vision;

In a dream shall I speak with him.

Not so with my servant Moses!

[Alone] in all my household, he is a man of faith:

Mouth to mouth shall I speak with him,

In clear language⁵¹ and not in riddles,⁵²

And the form of Yahweh will he behold.

Now, therefore, why were you not afraid

To speak against my servant Moses? (Num.12:1-8.)

This is a unique story, which confirms the oracular use of the tent in the wilderness. Although of archaic origin, as shown by the poetic rhythm and strophic structure of Yahweh’s speech, it was probably recited in the prophetic circles during the conquest and the early monarchy (eleventh to fifth centuries B.C.),

when discussions arose on the nature of prophetic inspiration.

Moses was remembered as the model of the true prophet. A criterion was sorely needed to distinguish between the Canaanite bands of raving ecstasies (1 Sam. 10:5, etc.) that had been more or less “Yahwehized” and the authentic servants of the Hebraic faith. The story also set the status of Moses apart from that of those professional diviners who functioned at the sanctuaries of Yahweh in the land of Canaan. The mode of revelation through “vision” and “dream” was not repudiated, but four characteristics of the prophet *par excellence* were put forth—significantly, in the context of the tent of meeting.

First, Moses is the peculiar “servant” or “slave” of Yahweh, the head of a long line of messengers of the Deity who speak in his name, to whom Amos referred in the eighth century when he asked rhetorically:

Do two walk together,
 Unless they have made an appointment?⁵³
 The lion has roared,
 Who will not fear?
 The Lord Yahweh has spoken;
 Who can but prophesy? (Amos 3:3, 8.)

At the core of this poem, Amos said,

Surely, the Lord Yahweh will do nothing
 Without revealing his secret
 To his servants the prophets (vs. 7).

Like Moses in the tent of meeting, the true prophets are the slaves of the Deity, who speaks with them confidentially.

Second, the true prophet, like Moses, is different from “the entire household of Yahweh,” for he is a man of faith, therefore a faithful man who may, without reservation, be trusted with the sovereign’s secret. In him, as in Abraham, Yahweh has faith (Gen. 15:6), just as the man of faith trusts Yahweh.

Third, the true prophet converses with the Godhead in the most intimate manner, “mouth to mouth,” and the divine will is made known to him in clear language, without ambiguity.

Fourth, Moses alone, however, is allowed “to examine, to look intently, to observe,” the “form” or image of Yahweh (*temunah*). To be sure, the form is not the face (*panîm*), which Moses was not permitted to see (Exod. 33:23 b). It is therefore remarkable that the northern storytellers, who meditated on the theological significance of the Mt. Horeb-Sinai theophany and specifically stated that Israel “heard the voice of the words, but . . . saw no form (*temunah*)” (Deut. 4: 12), would grant Moses this unique privilege. While their intention may not be determined with certainty, it is probable that they sought an intermediate way of expressing visual perception. On the one hand, their phrase was commensurate with the directness of the auditive immediacy suggested by the anthropomorphism of “mouth to mouth.” On the other hand, their statement was capable of safeguarding the invisibility of Yahweh’s face, namely, his glory—the manifestation of his inner being (cf. Exod. 33:23a).

Finally, it should be noted that Aaron and Miriam were commanded to come out of the tent. Yahweh refused to offer them oracular words within the private retreat reserved for Moses alone. Intimacy of confidential presence is different from the abruptness of rebuke.⁵⁴ The tent of meeting seems to have been a locus of privileged setting, appropriate for divine converse with the true servant of Yahweh. Moses is presented by implication as the spiritual ancestor of the prophetic lineage.

The Commission of Joshua (Deut. 31:14–23). The third reference to the tent of meeting that appears in the ancient traditions regarding the wilderness confirms the interpretation that this cultic object belongs to the prophetic theology of the word. Like the other two, it favors the ear over the eye, the theologoumenon of the name rather than the theologoumenon of the glory.

Describing the last days of Moses before his death on the plateau of Moab, the editors of the book of Deuteronomy reproduced an ancient narrative which told how the responsibility of leadership was conferred upon Joshua, son of Nun (Deut. 31:14-23). The youth who had attended to the tent of meeting in its early days (Exod. 33:11) was now a mature adult. It was in the same tent of meeting that he received his commission (vss. 14, 23).

The event did not involve a ritual of priestly or royal anointing. It included neither blessing nor laying-on of hands. It consisted of hearing the prophetic word. The divine speech was at once reminiscent of the patriarchal summons and anticipatory of the prophetic calls. The tent of meeting was the locus, not of an institutional ceremony for the transmission of power from one generation to another, but of a divine intervention into the inner life of a man who was “commanded” to act:

And [Yahweh] commanded Joshua, the son of Nun, and said,
 Be strong and of good courage,
 For thou wilt indeed bring the sons of Israel
 Into the land I swore to them.
 And I will indeed be with thee (vs. 23).

The Hebrew original stressed the I-Thou relationship, for it used emphatic pronouns: “it will be *thou* who ... and I, *even I*, etc.” The charge of Joshua was a commission by command, with a promise of communion. It linked vocation to obedience and surrounded both with the psychological mode of presence. It had nothing to do with sacerdotal consecration. It prefigured prophetic ordination.

The tent of meeting in the days of the wilderness was not associated with the ark of Elohim.⁵⁵ It provided a setting for the awesome introduction of Moses and Joshua into “the goodly fellowship of the prophets.”

The Tent in the Land of Canaan.

Whether the sacred object which Moses erected in the wilderness actually survived the damage of time and the wars of the conquest cannot be known. It may have been replaced or it may have been preserved with utmost care by the chieftains of the clans related most closely to the centers of the tribal confederation, first in Shechem and later in Shiloh. In any case, its original function appears to have been blurred in the course of two hundred years of Hebrew contact with Canaanite culture. The traditions regarding Samuel's youth incidentally told of the misbehavior exhibited by the sons of Eli, the priest of the house of Yahweh at Shiloh (1 Sam. 1:7): they "lay with the women who served at the entrance of the tent of meeting" (1 Sam. 2:22).

Since the sanctuary was described as "a house" and "a temple" (1 Sam. 1:7, 3:3), it was manifestly an architectural edifice. Hence we must assume that the tent of meeting stood outside of it, within its sacral terrace or precinct. Whether Eli's sons followed the Canaanite practice of hierogamy or indulged in sexual license cannot be ascertained.

The ark of Elohim, on the contrary, was kept within the edifice (1 Sam. 3:3). The ark and the tent were thus separated as late as the eleventh century B.C.

Was the tent of meeting ever transferred to Jerusalem? The answer to this question seems to be negative. When David, a generation later than Samuel, brought the ark to his new capital, he pitched "a tent" for it (2 Sam. 6:17). Likewise, when he spoke to the prophet Nathan of his intention to build a temple for Yahweh in Jerusalem, David said, "The ark of Elohim dwells in the midst of 'a spread of canvas' (*yeri'ah*; 2 Sam. 7:2), and Nathan's oracle stated that Yahweh had always been "walking about in a tent (*'ohel*) and in a sojourning encampment" (*mishkun*). The expression "tent of meeting" was not used.

It is likely that the tent of meeting was saved from destruction

when the temple of Shiloh perished during the Philistine invasions and that it was removed to safety to the high place at **Gibeon**, a few miles to the south. The editor of the Book of Chronicles, during the Persian period (fourth century B.C.), states that Solomon went to **Gibeon** “because the tent of meeting of Elohim, which Moses the servant of Yahweh had made in the wilderness, was there” (2 Chron. 1:3; cf. 1 Chron. 21:29 f.).

If this detail is based on reliable memories, the tent of meeting was still associated, at the time of Solomon (tenth century B.C.), with oracular divination. The editors of the Book of Kings (ca. 610 B.C.) preserved the account of the pilgrimage which the young sovereign made to the ancient shrine of **Gibeon** at the time of his accession to the throne. Solomon spent the night there for a specific purpose: he conformed to the practice of oniric incubation (1 Kings 3:4).

During the centuries of the monarchy in Jerusalem (ca. 1000–587 B.C.), some of the psalmists who composed hymns for the ceremonies of Solomon’s temple sometimes used the word “tent” when they in fact were referring to the Zion sanctuary. In so doing, they kept alive the old interpretation of the tent of meeting in the wilderness. For example, a psalm of introyt apparently destined to be sung in a ritual of entrance to the shrine would ask a ritual question:

“Yahweh, who will sojourn (*gûr*) in thy tent?
Who will encamp (shaken) on thy holy mountain?

(Ps. 15:1).

The answer to this question, however, did not deal with ritual matters like sacrificial offerings, cleansing acts, or purification techniques but exclusively with standards of ethical behavior—inner integrity and social compassion (vss. 2–5).⁵⁶

In the time of the exile in Babylon (sixth century B.C.), the descendants of the Jerusalem priests, eager to offer a model for

the reconstruction of the temple, retold the story of the tent, which they confused with the tabernacle (*mishkun*). Whether a tabernacle, in addition to the ark and the tent of meeting had existed in the wilderness remains a moot question.⁵⁷ There is no doubt, however, that the theology of presence represented by the priestly stories of the tabernacle had nothing in common with that which the early traditions ascribed to the tent. The priestly tabernacle was entirely dominated by an obsessive concern for propitiation and atonement.

Originally, both the ark and the tent pointed to an intermittent and elusive presence of the Godhead.⁵⁸ They reflected a theology which respected the freedom of Yahweh and preserved it from sacerdotal manipulation. With the settlement in the land of Canaan, the appropriation of Canaanite shrines, and especially the erection of Solomon's temple, the myth of the *hagios topos* radically transformed the ancient faith. Hebraism was a nomadic religion which sacralized time. The religion of Judah, which eventually gave birth to Judaism, mythicized space by promoting the belief in the permanent presence of God in Zion.

THE TEMPLE OF SOLOMON

Of the manifold aspects of the irrational in religion, that of the holy place is one of the most enigmatic. Certain sites have become sacred for reasons which are now lost to history, reasons which were not recorded in the tribal memories or in the archives of a shrine. Some sites have been endowed with a peculiar "numinosity" on account of an awesome feature of the landscape—a mountain peak, an island, a promontory, a sea cliff, a spring, a cascade, a canyon, a rock, or a tree.⁵⁹ Others have emerged from hagiography: they are remembered as sa-

cred because they commemorate heroic deeds, epic battles, tragic events, or the religious visions of innovators.

To Oedipus at Colonus, Antigone said,

“This place is holy, to all appearance,
luxuriant with laurel, olive, and vine,”⁶⁰

but the secret of this holiness is buried in the distant past. In modern times, Maurice Barrès viewed the hill of Sion-Vaudémont in Lorraine as “one of the places where breathes the spirit . . . places which are elected from eternity to be the seat of religious emotion.”⁶¹ Many spots in both East and West have become hallowed ground for poets and religionists.

Sacred topography generally survives ethnic and cultural changes. It was not through mere *coincidence that the Hebrews* localized their stories of epiphanic visitation to the patriarchs in the vicinity of ancient sanctuaries like Shechem, Bethel, Hebron, or Beer-sheba, the sacredness of which antedated by centuries Israel’s military occupation of the land.⁶² The search for the presence of Yahweh led the descendants to worship the God of Moses in spatial identification with their ancestors in Canaan. Territorial familiarity provided a potential for a sacramental participation in “the ancient rapture.”

The site of Jerusalem was different. Its pre-Davidic sacrality, which originated in the Northwest Semitic belief in the omphalos of the earth, provoked a radical transformation of Yahwistic theology. The elusiveness of presence, which had been until then the cardinal foundation of *Hebraic* faith, slowly gave way to the myth of Zion. The universal potentiality of a theology that had been unfettered to a sacred place was now going to face the challenge of cultic Zionism.

The Pre-Davidic Sacrality of Zion

Although postexilic Judaism equated Jerusalem with Moriah in an apparent effort to relate it to the sacrifice of Isaac (2

Chron. 3:1 ff.; cf. Gen. 22:2), the early traditions preserved in the books of Joshua, Judges, and Samuel ignore this patriarchal association. Until its capture by David, the Jebusite fortress had remained in Canaanite hands.⁶³ In all likelihood, David selected it as his capital not only for strategic and political reasons but also because he was not unaware of the unique sacrality of Zion.

In all periods of history, the motivations of conquerors and kings have usually been mixed with religious concerns, whether sincere or expedient. On the one hand, David was eager to move the seat of his government to a geographically central and historically neutral ground. Jerusalem had until then belonged neither to Israel nor to Judah. It was thus susceptible of rallying the allegiance of both northerners and southerners. On the other hand, the religious significance of Canaanite Jebus could hardly have escaped the king's attention. There is valid reason to conjecture that he was eager not only to bring Israel and Judah together but also to reconcile the surviving Canaanites with the Hebrew invaders.⁶⁴

The identification of Yahweh with El Elyon, traditionally known in English as "God Most High" (Gen. 14:18, 22), reflected the desire to discover a *modus vivendi* for Israelites and Canaanites. It led to the telling of the story of Melchizedek, king of Salem, who conferred a blessing upon Abraham (Gen. 14:19).⁶⁵ The Davidic dynasty maintained its ideology of a priestly kingship "after the order of Melchizedek" (Ps. 110:4). The god Zedek belonged to the cultic pantheon of both Melchizedek, king of Salem (Gen. 14: 18) and Adonizedek, king of Jerusalem (Judg. 1:5-7),⁶⁶ while the priest of David and Solomon, Zadok, bore a name suggestive of the same cultic tradition and was probably of Jebusite origin.⁶⁷ It is not impossible that Salem was historically related to the Canaanite city of Jerusalem, and that the psalmist of a later age was preserving an authentic memory when he sang of Yahweh's hut in Salem and residence in Zion (Ps. 76:2 [Heb., 3]).

Obviously, Yahwistic theology and Canaanite mythology met halfway when Yahweh became identified with El Elyon, “the begetter of heaven and earth” (Gen. 14:19).⁶⁸ Although Canaanite culture and religion had had an influence on the Hebrew settlers long before the era of David, in the patriarchal times and during the two centuries of the conquest of Canaan,⁶⁹ it was David’s appropriation of Jerusalem as the new capital of the united kingdom which accelerated the syncretistic trend. This act of collusion with Northwest Semitic paganism profoundly affected the Hebraic theology of presence.

Just as the god El of the proto-Canaanite cult of Ugarit was thought to reside on the mythical Mt. Zaphon,⁷⁰ so also Yahweh came to dwell on Mt. Zion. Indeed, Mt. Zion and Mt. Zaphon became poetically identified (Ps. 48:2 [Heb., 3]). The presence of Yahweh among his people was no longer elusive, confined to moments of human-divine encounter. It arose from the *hugios topos*. The original nucleus of Nathan’s oracle which opposed David’s plan to erect a temple-Yahweh walks but does not sit down (2 Sam. 7:6)—was absorbed within a dynastic oracle on David’s election and his posterity forever in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 7:8–29). The choice of Zion as the permanent residence of Yahweh on earth, as well as the divine election of David and of his dynasty in Jerusalem, became indissolubly linked in ritual and narrative alike.⁷¹ Sang the Jerusalem musicians of a later age, possibly during a ceremonial procession of the ark:

Yahweh, swore to David a truthful oath
 from which he will not repent:
 “One from the fruit of thy loins
 I shall install upon thy throne.
 If thy sons keep my covenant,
 and my testimonies which I shall teach them,
 Their sons also forever
 shall sit upon thy throne.”
 For Yahweh has elected Zion,
 he has desired it for his residence:

“This is my resting place forever,
Here shall I dwell, for I have desired it” (P.S. 132:11-14).

The second oracle quoted in this psalm, “Here I shall dwell,” literally, “I shall sit down” (vs. 14), contradicts the theology of Nathan’s oracle opposing David’s intention to build “a house of cedar” for Yahweh (2 Sam. 7:1 ff.; cf. vs. 6). The Jerusalem priesthood has insidiously overcome the ancient theology of presence.⁷²

David himself could hardly have been ignorant of the religious character of his political decision to make the Canaanite fortress of Jebus the seat of his government: when he brought the ark of Elohim to Jerusalem and danced before it, he was girded in a linen ephod and he exposed his nudity to the crowd (2 Sam. 6:14, 16, 20 ff.). From available evidence, it appears that such an attire and such a display betrayed the king’s submission to the Canaanite ritual of Jebus.⁷³ No doubt, he was a sincere devotee of Yahweh, but he failed to understand the specificity of the Hebraic faith. A politician usually refrains from engaging in the theological scrutiny of his religion. Some twenty-five centuries later, Henry of Navarre, king of France, echoed such an attitude when he tried to overcome, in different but not altogether dissimilar circumstances, the opposition of fanatic religionists; he said, “Paris vaut bien une messe!”

Still more ominous was David’s purchase, from Araunah “the Jebusite,” of a high rocky terrace which dominated the city to the north (2 Sam. 24:18). He could not have been innocent of the cultic function of a Canaanite threshing floor. Like many other agrarian cultures, the Northwest Semites sacralized all the activities of farming, from ploughing and sowing to harvesting and threshing.⁷⁴ The purpose of David’s transaction was precisely to “erect an altar to Yahweh on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite” (2 Samuel 24:18).

Inasmuch as the rocky hill became the site of Solomon’s

temple a few years later, it may be inferred that David's earlier attempt to build for Yahweh "a house of cedar" remained in the back of his mind (cf. 2 Sam. 24:16–25 with 1 Chron. 21:15–22:1). Moreover, the sacrality of the rock probably proved irresistibly attractive in a unique way, for it was assimilated to the cosmic mountain—that is to say, to the navel of the earth. The examination of this particular aspect of the Jebusite myth, which explains the persistence of the magnetism of Zion for later Judaism, must await a brief analysis of the building of the temple of Solomon.

The Building of the Temple.

Modern historians of Israel's religion hold more sober views of Solomon's achievements than ancient readers have held. Milton's praise for the son of David who,

. for wealth and wisdom
Famed, the clouded ark of God,
Till then in tents wandering, shall
In a glorious temple enshrine,⁷⁵

has been superseded by a somewhat critical appraisal of the monarch's apparent motivation. In postexilic Judaism, stories were told about how, like his royal colleagues of the ancient Near East and elsewhere, Solomon obeyed a vision which revealed to him the celestial prototype of the edifice to be erected on earth.⁷⁶ Early sources are silent on this score. The fact that Solomon commissioned a Phoenician architect, Hiram of Tyre (1 Kings 7:13 f.), is sufficient to indicate the derivative and alien character of the edifice.

The sites and designs of temples have always contributed to the alteration of theological consciousness.⁷⁷ Instead of planning a sanctuary that might have expressed in visual and functional form the Hebraic theology of presence, with its

peculiarity of elusive transcendence, Solomon's appointee followed the pattern of sacred architecture that was common to Palestine and Syria at the end of the second millennium B.C.⁷⁸ In any case, how could he devise a specifically Yahwistic shrine, since the Yahwistic opposition to the building of "a house of cedar," as manifested by Nathan's oracle to David (2 Sam. 7:1 ff.), most probably persisted two decades later?⁷⁹

This is not the place for a detailed description of Solomon's temple.⁸⁰ While several aspects are still uncertain, analysis of the available data shows that its plan consisted of three rooms *enfilade*,⁸¹ precisely oriented toward sunrise at the equinox.⁸² The innermost room rested upon the sacred rock of Araunah's threshing floor—the top of which is still visible under the dome of the Mosque of the Rock, although it was cut off irregularly in the course of the centuries. It was originally called the *Debir* (not yet "the Holy of Holies" of the postexilic temple), a word probably meaning "the Oracle," and related to chthonian divination.⁸³ The decoration and ornamentation were suggestive of the Canaanite forms of the fertility cult: sculpted cherubim of gigantic size standing in the innermost room,⁸⁴ pomegranates, lions, palms, and cherubim carved in *ronde-bosse* on the walls of the middle room "like male and female in embrace" (1 Kings 7:36c),⁸⁵ three-storied balconies for side-chambers with beds.⁸⁶

The significance and function of the free-standing columns, Jachin and Boaz, which were placed on either sides of the entrance, remain to this day enigmatic,⁸⁷ but the Bronze Sea, resting in the temple court on twelve statues of bulls beside the main altar, clearly carried a cosmic symbolism.⁸⁸ All these features converge toward the same conclusion: David selected Araunah's threshing floor and Solomon built upon its rock a sanctuary for Yahweh because the Jebusites had for centuries looked at this site as the world center, the navel of the earth. This myth, which is common to many cultures, generally entails a number of recurrent practices, such as the cult of the Earth

Mother, male prostitution, ophiolatry, and sun worship.⁸⁹ It so happens that these practices, in spite of intermittent reforms,⁹⁰ persisted in the temple of Jerusalem until its destruction by the Babylonians in 587 B.C. A question must have arisen in the minds of many: was the temple erected by Solomon's Phoenician architect intended for the worship of Yahweh or for the worship of the sun-god?

The Consecration of the Temple.

That a state of confusion had been created in the popular mind by the ambiguities of the edifice may be inferred from the wording of the formula of consecration. At the end of the seventh century B.C., the Deuteronomic editors of the Book of Kings rewrote the details of the ceremony from the point of view which prevailed in their time, but they cited a poetic phrase which seems to be archaic:⁹¹

And Solomon said:

[The sun! Yahweh has set in the heavens;]⁹²

He promised that he would sojourn in the thickdarkness.

Therefore, I have built for thee an exalted house,

A place for thee to dwell in forever (1 Kings 8:12-13).

In view of the historically explosive atmosphere in which the ceremony must have taken place, one should consider the choice and order of the words. In this formula, Solomon or his advisers sought to avoid the charge of syncretistic conformism, but in fact they hastened the process by which the ancient theology of elusive presence became transformed into a theology of mythicized topography.

The sun! Such was no doubt the thought which stirred the imagination of the bystanders. In line with the agrarian mysticism of Canaan, which enabled farmers to commune in the

most profound sense with the Earth Mother, it was the deified sun, from Egypt to Mesopotamia, that exercised a truly enduring and wide-spread attraction upon the religious emotions of the populace. The new edifice presented many of the characteristics of sun worship. At once, Solomon attempted to dispel any misunderstanding.⁹³ He established a radical distinction between Yahweh and the sun, which was thereby reduced-however appreciated and even revered-to the status of a heavenly body.⁹⁴ Without implying any particular form of the creation myths, the phrase affirms that the sun-the most manifestly resplendent force of nature-is utterly dependent on Yahweh. The Hebrew Deity is the master of nature and may never be identified with it.

Thickdarkness. The syntactic sequence between the first colon and the second colon is not clear, as no conjunction binds the two phrases. Should the interpreter consider the second clause as a developing or as a corrective addition to the first? The English term "thickdarkness" represents an approximate way of rendering a difficult Hebrew word, *'araphel*, which designates total and ominous obscurity, a portent of danger but also a harbinger of life.⁹⁵ It appears in one of the narratives of the Sinai-Horeb theophany. One of the narrators spoke of lightning and of the thick cloud which attended the descent of Yahweh upon the top of the mount. He also mentioned the *'araphel* "where Elohim was" and which Moses dared to approach (Exod. 20:21). The term admirably fitted the ambiguity of the Hebraic theology of presence, for the meaning which it carried, gloom, also conveyed the symbol of the hiddenness of God at the exact moment of his proximity.

Solomon appears to have been well advised to quote this ancient line (vs. 12) in the ceremony of consecration, for the term could not fail to stress, at the very place which was obviously reminiscent of alien worship, the historical roots of Yahwism, and to bind Jerusalem to Sinai. On the one hand, the

motif of the *'araphel* preserved the sense of the numinous which was inherent in the holiness of Yahweh. On the other hand, it also suggested the promise of prosperity for the nation and the renewal of vegetation at the first thunderstorm in the autumn.

One should remember that the death of nature in the climate of the Canaan mountain range occurred during the summer drought, and that the new year began with the rebirth of greenness in the autumn. The festival of *'asiph*, “ingathering” or “harvest,” later combined with *Sukkoth*, “tabernacles,” professed the cultic moment when an agrarian population would beg the divine master of nature to manifest his presence through the gift of rain.⁹⁶ The motif of the *'araphel* provided the symbol of a double grace: that of the election of Israel as a holy nation (Exod. 19:5 ff.) and that of the yearly miracle of vegetation, when pluvial fertilization of the soil was popularly understood as the divine insemination of the earth. Indeed, it was during the autumn festival that Solomon consecrated the temple of Yahweh (1 Kings 8:1-2).

Sojourn and Dwelling. According to the second colon of the first poetic verse of the dedication formula (vs. 12), the promise of Yahweh to sojourn in the *'araphel* is not to be construed as a commitment to dwell forever in a holy place. On the contrary, the use of the nomadic term *shaken*, originally meaning “to alight for the night,” “to encamp for a time,” “to sojourn,” reiterates the traditional stance of Yahwism on the transience of divine manifestations.⁹⁷ Moreover, the verb *yashabh*, “to dwell,” literally, “to sit down,” which is used in the second verse of the poem (vs. 13b), is precisely that which Nathan’s oracle to David emphatically placed in the negative when it stated that Yahweh walks about but does not sit down (2 Sam. 7:6). It appears that Solomon purposely attempted to link the two phrases by the adverb “therefore” in order to promote a shift

of meaning toward the synonymy of the two verbs. The relation of cause and effect between Yahweh's promise and the erection of the new edifice inevitably tended to identify the *'araphel* of intermittent presence with the total obscurity of the innermost room in the temple which was being consecrated. Through contextual juxtaposition, the power of innuendo was capable of transforming the notion of a nomadic transitoriness of presence into that of a cultic permanence of proximity. Yahweh dwelt in his temple. His inaccessibility to human eyes was preserved, but the worshippers' secure feeling of his residence on the rock of Zion could not fail to be a welcome one. In the course of the following centuries, the verb "to sojourn" became synonymous with the verb "to dwell" and acquired the meaning of abiding presence.⁹⁸ The temple of Jerusalem was henceforth the residence of Yahweh on earth.

By yielding to pre-Hebraic beliefs that were deeply buried in ancestral memories, Solomon was truly completing the conquest of the land.⁹⁹ Compared with the shrines of Egypt and Mesopotamia, the Jerusalem temple was a modest achievement in size and wealth, but it could not fail to appeal to the population as well as to the princes. The Jebusite belief in the pre-Davidic sacrality of Zion exercised its power of fascination in such a thorough way that it was soon incorporated within the theology of election. Yahweh had chosen the city of Jerusalem for his residence "out of all the tribes of Israel" (1 Kings 11:32) just as he had chosen "his servant David."

During the centuries which followed, the hymnists of the temple ceremonial never tired of proclaiming their belief that Zion was Yahweh's residence:

Great is Yahweh and excellently to be praised,
 In the city of our God, his holy mountain,
 Fair in its height, the joy of the whole earth,
 Mount Zion, the extremities of Zaphon,
 The citadel of the Great King! (Ps. 48:1-2 [Heb. 2-4]).¹⁰⁰

To the edifice erected by Solomon, Melville's oft-quoted quatrain applies:

Not magnitude, not lavishness,
But form, the site;
Not innovating wilfulness
But reverence for the archetype.¹⁰¹

From the perspective of Yahwistic faith, the new theology of presence which the temple of Jerusalem displayed and taught to the Judahites, ancestors of the postexilic Jews, was "innovating wilfulness." In fact, however, it was extremely ancient, for it reverted to the mythic pattern of Neolithic and Bronze Age cultus.

The Name or the Glory?

The story of the consecration of the temple reflects a long development of theological meditation on the meaning of presence. Unlike the archaic formula of dedication (1 Kings 8: 12-13), Solomon's long prayer (vss. 22-53) incorporates the seventh-century views of the Deuteronomistic historians who edited the Book of Kings.¹⁰²

The narrative of the introit of the ark had culminated with a note of concreteness which appealed to the senses of the worshippers and implied the notion of God's lasting residence in the *hagios topos*: "A cloud filled the house of Yahweh so that the priests could not stand to minister on account of the cloud, for the glory of Yahweh filled the house of Yahweh" (vss. 10-11). Yet, Solomon's long prayer asked pointedly, "But will God indeed dwell on earth?" (Vs. 27). The prayer insists repeatedly that heaven is Yahweh's dwelling place (vss. 34, 36, 39, 43, 49). It even proclaims emphatically, "Behold, heaven and the highest heaven cannot contain thee: how much less this house!" (vs. 27b.)¹⁰³

Once again, we witness a profound tension between two op-

posite views of presence: the story of the introit of the ark objectifies the psychological awareness of presence and localizes it in a man-made structure. It seeks religious certainty by attempting to revitalize the neolithic and Bronze Age myth of sacred space. Solomon's long prayer, on the contrary, attempts to safeguard a theology of spatial transcendence: it even demythicizes "heaven" as the spatial container of divinity. At the same time it accommodates to the needs of man the belief in the elusiveness of presence and recognizes within the sacred edifice a reality which justifies its construction:

Turn to the prayer of thy servant and to his supplication, O Yahweh, my God, listening to the cry and to the prayer which thy servant prays before thee this day, that thy eyes may be open night and day toward this house, the place of which thou hast said, My name shall be there! (vss. 28-29).

Solomon does not consider "this house" as the residence of Yahweh. On the contrary, he describes it as a house for Yahweh's name. By using the theology of the name, long favored by the northern tradition, the theologians who formulated this document reflect the thinking of the Deuteronomists.¹⁰⁴

Shechem and the Theology of the Name. After the death of Solomon (922 B.C.), the tribal elders of the old confederation of Israel gathered at Shechem, in the heart of Ephraim, and revolted against the rule of the Davidic dynasty (1 Kings 12:1 ff.). Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, had to journey from Jerusalem to Shechem in order to be confirmed or even "elected" there as monarch of the United Kingdom.¹⁰⁵

It was at Shechem that the oak tree of the Moreh ("The Teacher" or "The Diviner") marked the "place" where, according to tradition, Abraham had first worshipped Yahweh in the land of Canaan (Gen. 12:6-7). It was at Shechem that Joshua, at the end of the thirteenth century, had celebrated a covenant

ceremonial which bound various ethnic and tribal groups to Yahweh, and created in effect the Israelite League (John. 24:1 ff.). It was at Shechem that Joshua erected, in witness to this covenant, a large stone “under the oak tree which is in the sanctuary of Yahweh” (vs. 26). It was at Shechem that the bones of Joseph were buried (vs. 32).¹⁰⁶ It was at Shechem during the twelfth century that Abimelech made an ill-fated attempt to establish a hereditary monarchy over Israel (Judg. 9:6). It was most likely at Shechem that the early law of covenant ceremonial, now preserved in the Code of Deuteronomy (Deut. 12:1 ff.), provided for the national cult; it did so in terms of a theology of the name:¹⁰⁷ “You will seek the place which Yahweh your Elohim has chosen from all your tribes to set his name and make it sojourn there” (Deut. 12:5). It is no accident that the Code of Deuteronomy intimately links the worship of Yahweh to a theology of the name: The cultic perception of divine presence is inseparable from the hearing of his word, which is obedience to stipulated standards of individual and social behavior, aimed at promoting the growth of the covenant people.

As is now recognized, the Book of Deuteronomy has preserved cultic, civil, and criminal legislation which originated in the old confederation of the tribes during the days of the Judges, or at least in the kingdom of Israel which Jeroboam I created in 922 after the secession from Judah.¹⁰⁸ The northern and relatively ancient provenance of this body of jurisprudence, together with the absence of any mention of Jerusalem or even any implicit reference to the capital of Judah and to its temple, in addition to many other considerations—such as the concern of Deuteronomy for Shechem and Mt. Garizim, and the affinities of its legal tradition with the Elohist traditions—converges to suggest that the theology of the name was nurtured in the old cultic center of Shechem.

It will be remembered that the Code of the Covenant, prob-

ably promulgated at Shechem, had conceived the presence as “coming” to any place where Yahweh “caused his name to be remembered” (Exod. 20:24).¹⁰⁹ This archaic law of the altar implied an understanding of communion between God and man in which the offering of a sacrifice in the context of prayer was independent from the archetypal myth of space. At the same time, the Code of the Covenant also included a law concerning the seasonal feasts, which prescribed that every Israelite male had to go up three times a year “to appear in the presence of Yahweh” (Exod. 23:17). Such a prescription implies the existence of a central shrine, perhaps an exclusive sanctuary, at an early date.

Within the same tradition of worship, the Deuteronomic law unambiguously demanded that the nation gather at a single, unnamed site, “the place which Yahweh chooses to set his name there for its sojourn” (Deut. 12:5).¹¹⁰ It thus appears that, in the North as well as in the South religionists developed a notion of cultic presence that was charged with a quality of permanence and which was also spatially limited. In the North, however, the presence of the Deity was not conceived as if it were inescapably and intrinsically bound to the realm of geographical location. It depended on the divine decision to send the divine name in such a place “for its sojourn” (vs. 5). The name stood for a religious phenomenon of considerable complexity, which blended divine initiative and human response: the word “name” appears to have been a device for designating Yahweh’s will to create a holy people within the history of mankind and at the same time Israel’s acceptance of this election.¹¹¹ It is therefore not correct to state that the divine name “verges closely upon an hypostasis,”¹¹² for the reality which the word designates implies the cultic congress and the participation of man in the perspective of time. To speak of a place where the name of Yahweh sojourns is to refer to the ceremonial of a congregation at worship. The name cannot be divorced from

the divine purpose in history nor can it be separated from the interaction which is wrought in the participants by the acts of their adoration: sacrificial meals and offerings, prayers, hymns, and recitals of the *Opus Dei*. Such an interaction also involves the renewal of the worshippers' commitment to obey the words of the covenant in their secular existence. A theology of the name implies a presence which transcends the *hagios topos*, for it involves the prolongation of the cult in a particular mode of behavior outside the shrine.

It was in full agreement with the implications of this understanding of cultic presence that the Deuteronomists gave a meaning to the ark that differed dramatically from that of the Holy War tradition.¹¹³ They called the ancient palladium "the ark of the covenant," and they conceived it as a container for the tablets of the Ten Words (Deut. 10:1-5).¹¹⁴ Such a view was entirely congruent with their theology of the name, which required both hearing and obedience to a standard of ethical behavior in the secular world. It stressed the ear rather than the eye, for it promoted a faith in which man sought to translate his love for God into his own conduct as a member of society.

In Deuteronomy, the dedication of the self is immediately linked with the proclamation of the name. As the name is heard, so man loves. This at least is one of the meanings of the *Shema*:

"Hear, O Israel, Yahweh, our Elohim, Yahweh is One,
And thou shalt love Yahweh thy Elohim with thy whole mind,
 and with thy whole drive for self-preservation,
 and with the "muchness" of thy whole being" (Deut. 6:4-5).¹¹⁵

It is also on account of their theology of the name that the Deuteronomists reinterpreted the northern traditions concerning the theophany of Yahweh at Mt. Horeb. In reciting the national epic, they took great care to reserve the use of the

sense of sight for the witnessing of historical events, which in turn constituted manifestations of Yahweh's presence in history.¹¹⁶ At the same time, they deliberately denied that Moses—and a fortiori, the people—had ever been granted a vision of God himself.

It is impossible to miss the intention of the narrator when he recalls, on the one hand, “Your eyes have seen what Yahweh did at Baal-Peor” (Deut. 4:3) and when he evokes, on the other hand, the “spectacular” yet invisible descent of Yahweh upon the summit of the mountain:

You came near and you stood at the foot of the mountain while the mountain was burning with fire to the heart of heaven, yet wrapped in the darkness, in the cloud, and in the thickdarkness (*'araphel*). Then Yahweh spoke to you, out of the midst of the fire; you heard the sound of words, but you saw no form. There was only a voice. And he proclaimed to you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, that is, the ten words (Deut. 4: 1 1–13).

The theology of the name affirms the sense of hearing at the expense of the sense of seeing. When the inquiring mind confronted the problem of revelation, the Deuteronomists offered him a cultic *anamnesis* which brought into the liturgical present the historical moment of the national birth. They said that God discloses his will for man but remains inaccessible to his sight. In so far as the human faculty of cognitive reason was associated with the sense of sight, the theologians of the name affirmed that God stands close to, but not within, the grasp of man. For man, communion with God cannot mean the possibility of exercising, at will, his own power against the divine power. According to the theology of the name, man receives sufficient knowledge of God when he hears the word which he is bidden to obey in his daily life.

Such an interpretation of presence led to ethical conscious-

ness and responsibility. The laws of Deuteronomy were prefaced with the hearing of the name. In the words of Paul Tillich, “the presence of the divine in the name demands a shy and trembling heart.” The name “is never an empty sound; it is a bearer of power; it gives Spiritual Presence to the unseen.”¹¹⁸

Jerusalem and the Theology of Glory. Josiah’s Reform of the cult of Yahweh in the temple of Jerusalem under the influence of the Deuteronomic theology of the name was short lived.¹¹⁹ A long-ingrained theology of glory in Zion had prevailed ever since the foundation of the temple. The consecration ceremony had clearly promoted the notion of indwelling presence.¹²⁰ Even though the archaic formula of dedication (1 Kings 8:12–13) had affirmed the nomadic concept of sojourn, it had slanted this concept by assimilating it to that of sedentary inhabitation: Yahweh was invited to “sit forever in an exalted house.”¹²¹

In the eighth century the prophet Amos, who had worked for a while among the shepherds from Teqoa in the far south, or at least the prophetic circles of Judah which preserved his poems, took it for granted that, on the last day of history,

“Yahweh [would] roar from Zion,
from Jerusalem he [would] sound his voice” (Amos 1:2).¹²²

It was in the temple of Jerusalem a few years later that the prophet Isaiah had a vision which summoned him to a special calling (Isa. 6:1–13), but his position toward the temple was ambivalent. He exploded the priestly notion of a divine glory that dwelled within the sacred space, for he heard the seraphim sing, in the presence of Yahweh:

“The whole of the earth is filled with his glory” (vs. 3).¹²³

Furthermore, he demythicized the sacrality of the Rock. By

coining the metaphor of the living corner stone, Isaiah interiorized the notion of sacred space. Nevertheless, Zion remained important, for it was the place—the geographical location—in which God would raise the new community of the faithful:

Therefore, thus says Adonay Elohim:
Behold: I am about to lay¹²⁴ in Zion a stone,
A tested stone, the corner-stone of the splendid glory,¹²⁵
As a foundation that is solidly based:
He who has faith shall not be anxious (Isa. 28:16).

The quality of the faith in Yahweh—the dynamic attitude of trust which was inherited from the old Yahwistic tradition concerning the epiphanic visitation to Abraham (Gen. 15:6)—was reinterpreted as the constitutive element of a new society: the seat of divine presence is man.¹²⁶

At the same time, the prophet conformed to the language of his time and perhaps even maintained the ancient belief when he referred to

“Yahweh of Hosts, who dwells on Mt. Zion” (Isa. 8:18).¹²⁷

Isaiah’s hope, however, is otherworldly. He expected that, at the end of time,—beyond the historical economy of human existence—a new Jerusalem would be the rallying point for all the nations of the earth (2:2 ff. etc.).¹²⁸

The theology of real presence in the sanctuary continued to flourish in Jerusalem. According to a tradition of the Isaianic school, King Hezekiah, having received a threatening letter from the Assyrian emperor, Sennacherib, “went up to the temple [in order to] spread it *before Yahweh*” (2 Kings 19:14).

The New Jerusalem and the Theology of the Name. At the end of the seventh century, the prophet Jeremiah was compelled by his prophetic mission to announce the destruction of the temple

(Jer. 7:1 ff., 26:6 ff.), but he apparently was torn between the demands of his oracular vocation and his devotion to the temple ideology of permanent presence. The collection of his poems includes a communal lament in which he seemed to espouse the people's beliefs:

“Hast thou utterly rejected Judah?
Does thy very being loathe Zion? .
Do not despise us, for the sake of thy name,
do not dishonor the throne of thy glory!” (Jer. 14:19a, 21.)¹²⁹

It is unlikely that this psalm of complaint would have been composed by the prophet, for it isolates from any ethical consideration the ideology of “the throne” of the divine “glory,” a language that is typical of the Jerusalem priesthood. The prophet's condemnation of the temple was not only couched in the style of the Deuteronomic theology of the name but also revealed the moral sensitivity which was characteristic of his entire interpretation of life outside as well as inside the sanctuary:

“Has this house, in which my name is invoked,
become a den of robbers in your eyes?
Behold, I myself have seen it, says Yahweh” (Jer. 7:11).¹³⁰

The choice of words in the exordium of the temple sermon implies a sarcastic reversal of the notion of presence:

“Thus says Yahweh of Hosts, the Elohim of Israel,
Improve your ways and your actions,
and I shall let you dwell in this place!” (Jer. 7:3.)

The question was no longer whether Yahweh would continue to dwell (*shaken*) in the *hagiotopos*, but rather whether he would allow worshippers who are devoid of morality to remain there. Even if this document had been composed by the Deuterono-

mistic editors of the book of Jeremiah, the thought expressed corresponds to the theological sharpness of the prophet's mind and bears the formal marks of his language. Like Isaiah a century before him, Jeremiah displaced the myth of Zion from the belief in the sacrality of a rock to the belief in the holiness of presence among men. He demythologized space for the sake of time. He raised the status of sanctuary from the level of the para-magical to that of the religious. He did not deny the importance of the holy place as a stage for promoting the temporal possibility of a divine-human encounter, but he attacked the people's trust because it was misdirected to the house. He polemized not against the institution of the temple as such but against the people's confusion of the relative and the absolute. He thus contributed to the refinement of the meaning of faith, which resists man's ancestral quest for crude certainty through territorial possessiveness, sensual perception, or in other times and cultures, the finite power of reason.

Jeremiah's interpretation of presence-which finds the temple useful but not indispensable-enabled the Judahites to survive the disruption caused by the Babylonian exile and especially the trauma produced by the destruction of the temple in 587 B.C. Jeremiah was the unwitting creator of Diaspora Judaism.

After the first surrender of Jerusalem to Nebuchadnezzar in 597 B.C., the elite of the population was exiled to Lower Mesopotamia, but Jeremiah was left behind with the working classes under King Zedekiah's government, which was submissive to Babylon.¹³¹

The prophet sent a letter to those first exiles in which he advised them to settle down in the foreign and impure land.¹³² More extraordinarily still, he wrote them, in the name of Yahweh: "Seek the welfare of the city where I sent you into exile, and pray to Yahweh on its behalf. . ." (29:7a). A thousand miles from Jerusalem, Jeremiah proclaimed the thesis of the accessi-

bility of Yahweh to prayer. He proposed the formula of a religious community living and prospering in a totally alien environment (vss. 4-6). By so doing, he implicitly initiated a mode of divine presence which was independent of the temple and eventually came to fruition in the synagogue. Judaism was born. The Judahites in exile had become the Jews.

To be sure, the prophet also predicted the eventual return to Jerusalem of these first exiles: "For thus says Yahweh: When seventy years are completed in Babylon, I will visit you and fulfil my promise to you and bring you back to this place ... to give you a future and a hope" (29:10). It is clear from the context that the role of "this place" will be subjected to a prior reality: the immediacy of presence: "Then you will call on me, come and pray to me, and I will hear you. You will seek me and find me; when you seek me with the whole of your heart, I will be found of you, says Yahweh" (vss. 13-14a).

At an earlier time, Jeremiah had so clearly anticipated the annihilation of the temple that he had referred without apparent qualm to the total disappearance of the ark-that ancient palladium of the theologoumenon of glory: "In those days, says Yahweh, they shall no more say, 'The ark of the covenant of Yahweh!' It shall not come to mind, or be remembered, or missed; it shall not be made again" (3:16^{bc}). This oracle shows that the prophet's interpretation of the new mode of presence exploded the confines of an edifice to include the wholly human reality of a new society: "At that time, Jerusalem shall be called 'The Throne of Yahweh,' and all the nations shall gather to it, to the *name of Yahweh, to Jerusalem*" (3:17).¹³³ A number of commentators render the last phrase, "to the *presence of Yahweh in Jerusalem.*"

In any case, after the final catastrophe of 587 B.C., Jeremiah apparently did not announce the rebuilding of the temple, even in a suprahistorical and otherworldly economy of existence. At the end of his life, he did contemplate in the oracle of the new

covenant the prospect of a radical transformation of human nature, but he remained silent about a new temple.¹³⁴

Behold, the days are coming, says Yahweh, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, . . . I will place my law within them and I will write it upon their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be my people. And no longer shall every man teach his neighbor, every man his brother, saying, Know Yahweh! For they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says Yahweh (31:31, 33–34).

The new mode of existence implied by this prediction made all the agencies of cult superfluous. The will of Yahweh was to be imprinted upon the will of men. Presence and covenant were to coalesce in a new creation that would transcend the disobedience, disease of the will, and guilt of the historical covenant people. To know Yahweh was to mean to live in his presence—immediate, continuous, and common to all members of the new society. In the subsequent oracle on the rebuilding of the city (31:38–40), if indeed it is Jeremianic, the prophet described, within the concreteness of “this earth”, the advent of the kingdom of God upon “a new earth.” The new Jerusalem was to belong to a new nature.

The New Jerusalem and the Theology of Glory. The language and the thought of Ezekiel, Jeremiah’s younger contemporary, were different. A temple priest (Ezek. 1:1), he had been deported to Babylon with the first exiles of 597 B.C., but he received the prophetic vocation to minister to his fellow exiles in 592 B.C., five years before the destruction of Jerusalem (587 B.C.). On the one hand, Ezekiel belonged to the tradition of the great prophets, from Amos to Jeremiah, for he courageously asserted that a corrupt nation would not survive. On the other hand, he spoke as a temple priest, and he was apparently more concerned with pagan syncretism and cultic impurity than with moral abuses or

social injustice. Significantly, he thought of presence in terms of a theology of glory.

Far from Zion, the prophet saw in a trance the acts of idolatrous worship performed in the Jerusalem temple. He told of “the altar of the image of pleasure,” in all likelihood a phallic object (8:5),¹³⁵ of the ophiolatric rites (8:9–10),¹³⁶ of the ceremonial weeping for Tammuz (8:14),¹³⁷ and of the ceremonial of adoration for the sun-god (8:16).¹³⁸ He knew that “the glory of the Elohim of Israel was there” still (8:4), but he understood that “these great abominations” would soon drive away that glory from a profaned sanctuary (8:6). Thereupon, he was granted a preview of “the departure of the glory of Yahweh.”¹³⁹

The stylistic and thematic features of the account were similar to those of the narrative on the introit of the ark in the temple of Solomon (1 Kings 8:10–11). However, the word cherubim referred no longer to cultic statues standing in the innermost room. The cherubim appeared in Ezekiel as mythical beings with wings.¹⁴⁰ They carried the glory in its ascent away from the shrine. First they hovered for a moment over the east gate of the temple court, as if hesitating to leave, and then they flew eastward in the direction of the Mount of Olives (10:3 ff.)—where, it will be recalled, Christian folklore, centuries later, placed the ascension of the living Lord (Acts 1:12).

Like Jeremiah, but from a divergent perspective, Ezekiel recognized that geographical distance from Zion did not necessarily mean absence from Yahweh. Nevertheless, he was unable to speak of divine presence in a foreign land except by using a metaphorical language derived from the institution of the temple: “Thus says Adonay Yahweh, although I removed them far away among the nations, . . . yet have I been, for a little while, a sanctuary to them in the countries where they have gone” (11:16). For the priest-prophet, communing with the Deity was in effect identical with adoring Yahweh in his temple.¹⁴¹ If no

sanctuary was available, the psychological mode of presence was expressed in terms of a spiritualized shrine.

The dominant trait of Ezekiel's temperament and cultural makeup was so inescapably cultic that the promise of hope which he proclaimed to his fellow exiles culminated in the vision of a new temple (40:1—48:35). His description was so minute and elaborate that architects have been able to make models of this ideal edifice that was never built.

The people of the new presence were to be delivered from the vicissitudes of historical relativity. Ezekiel's eschatology remained in the realm of otherworldly myth, for it looked forward to a stage of human existence which would stand beyond nature as well as beyond history. The waters of grace, reminiscent of the rivers flowing from Paradise, would burst forth out of the entrance of the new temple court, cause the desert of Judah to bloom, and purify the salty sterility of the Dead Sea (47:9). The prophet himself said that the new land would be "like the garden of Eden" (36:35).

In terms that are in some ways similar to those of the Jeremiatic understanding of the new covenant (Jer. 31:31 ff.), Ezekiel discerned that the inner nature of man would need to be radically transformed. He proposed a novel principle for the correlation of divine presence with human volition by juxtaposing his prediction of God's tabernacle in the midst of men with the doctrine of the indwelling spirit of God.¹⁴²

On the one hand, Ezekiel spoke of an everlasting presence which would be concomitant with an everlasting covenant of peace:

I will make a covenant of peace with them: it shall be an everlasting covenant with them and I will make gifts to them and multiply them, and I will set my sanctuary in the midst of them forever. My tabernacle (*mishkan*) shall be in the midst of them forever. And I will be their God and they shall be my people, and the nations shall

know that I, Yahweh, will make Israel holy when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them forever (37:26–28).

On the other hand, he spiritualized the presence without rendering the temple superfluous:

A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes (*huqqim*) and to be careful to observe my ordinances (*mishpatim*). You shall dwell in the land which I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God (36:26–28).

The ethical element may not have been absent from the prophet's thought, but it was not spelled out. Moreover, the ambiguous words "statutes" and "ordinances" were likely to receive only a ritual interpretation since the announcement of the gift of the divine spirit was embedded within the promise of a lustral purification: "I will sprinkle water of purity over you and cleanse you from all your impurities" (36:25; cf. 36:29). Through a prophet of the Jeremianic type, Yahweh would have said, "I will forgive you all your iniquities" (cf. Jer. 31:34). While Jeremiah spoke of a presence through which men would "know" Yahweh, thus promoting the genuine *theologia* of Hosea (*da'at Elohim*), Ezekiel spoke of a presence through which Israel would be made holy.

It was not by coincidence that his vision of the new presence continued to be permeated with the theologoumenon of glory: "And behold, the glory of the Elohim of Israel came from the east, and the sound of his coming was like that of mighty waters, and the earth shone with his glory" (43:2). Ezekiel apparently meant that the full reality of the Godhead would inhabit the new temple. Allusions to the primeval waters¹⁴³ and to the shining brightness of the glory¹⁴⁴ show affinities with the priestly myth

of creation in Genesis (1:2-3). The motif of the effulgence which will illumine the earth may also have been associated with the shining face of Moses in the priestly narrative of his conversation with Elohim (Exod. 34:30).¹⁴⁵

At the same time, Ezekiel's insistence in comparing the vision of the return of the glory (43:3) not only with the previous vision of its departure (9:1 ff.) but also with his inaugural vision of the heavenly chariot supporting "a likeness as it were of a human form" (1:26) reinforces the thesis of his kinship with the Jerusalem priesthood.¹⁴⁶ Furthermore, he revived the mythology of the Holy War with which the theologoumenon of glory through the ark was originally connected and he adapted it to the situation of his time. How could he prevent his contemporary Judahites, decimated, buffeted, and humiliated, from falling prey to heathenish conformism?

Looking backward, the Deuteronomists in the seventh century had summoned the mythology of the Holy War to express their fears of cultic and cultural disintegration: had the populations of the land been exterminated, Israel would have been protected from their pagan superstitions.¹⁴⁷ Looking forward, Ezekiel in the sixth century summoned the mythology of the Holy War to buttress his hope that the recreated people would be forever safe from the risk of cultic and cultural contamination.

As a preface to the rebuilding of the temple—rather, to the building of an entirely new temple—Ezekiel sketched the lurid scenario of a cosmic battle against Gog, king of Magog (38:1 ff.), at the culmination of which Yahweh "would set [his] glory among the nations" (39:21).¹⁴⁸ It is in this eschatological context that one may discern an underground link in Ezekiel's thinking which united *glory* and *apartness*. He overreacted to the syncretism of Solomon's temple cultus and to the temptations of the Babylonian environment. His understanding of sin led him to stress the fear of physical contacts with sources of ritual

impurity-especially corpses and foreigners-at the expense of ethical sensitivity to social injustice and inhumanity to man.¹⁴⁹ His persistent concern-not to say his obsessiveness-with the ritual uncleanness of blood and sexual secretions played a part in the cultic degradation of womanhood in Judaism.¹⁵⁰ It was most likely in the school of Ezekiel that the descendants of the Jerusalem priests in exile edited and formalized the traditions of the Holiness Code (Lev. 17:1 ff.)¹⁵¹ as well as the priestly stories concerning the desert tabernacle-the dwelling place of glory.¹⁵²

In divergent ways, Jeremiah and Ezekiel were able to convince the deportees that, although Yahweh had left his temple desolate, his presence had not abandoned them. Hebrew faith, at the dawn of Judaism, was evolving a new theology of presence. Other factors played a part in this religious development. The confessions and sermons of the great prophets were being written and published; the songs of the temple musicians were being collected and sung; the poem of Job was being chanted as a *paracultic* drama for the New Year festival. Judaism in its infancy was discovering a new dimension of presence: the prophetic vision, the psalmodic communion, and the sapiential reflection.

Notes

1. See W. Andrae, *Das Gotteshaus und die Urformen des Bauens im Alten Orient* (Berlin, 1930); H. H. Nelson et al., "The Significance of the Temples in the Ancient Near East," *BA*, VII (1944); 41 ff.; = *The Biblical Archaeological Reader* (Garden City, N.Y., 1961), pp. 145 ff.; R. E. Clements, "Sacred Mountains, Temples and the Presence of God," *God and Temple* (1965), pp. 1 ff.; G. Barrois, "Temples," *IDB*, IV, 560 ff.:

2. Siegfried Sassoon, "The Heart's Journey, IX," *Collected Poems* (London, 1947), p. 179.

3. *Some* scholars have maintained that Mt. Sinai was to be viewed as the permanent abode of Yahweh. It is true that the poetic memory of Israel, for several centuries, alluded to the coming of Yahweh from the deep South (Judg. 5:4-5; cf. Ps. 68:8, 17 [Heb. 9, 18], Deut. 33:2, Hab. 3:3). At the same time, one has no right

to correct the Hebrew text in Deut. 33:16 to read, "The one who inhabited Sinai" (sinay) instead of "the bush" (*seneh*, an allusion to Exod. 3:2). Moreover, the Mt. Horeb theophany narrative plainly states that Yahweh "came" and "descended" upon the mountain (Exod. 19:18, 20).

4. The ark has been the object of intensive discussion. See J. Gutmann, "The History of the Ark," *ZAW*, LXX (1971): 22 ff.; J. Jeremias, "Lade und Zion. Zur Entstehung der Zion-tradition," in H.-W. Wolff, ed., *Probleme biblischer Theologie [Festschrift G. von Rad]* (München, 1971); R. Schmitt, *Zelt und Lade als Thema alttestamentlicher Theologie* (Gütersloh, 1972).

5. The Deuteronomic attempt to associate the ark with the covenant and especially with the stones of the Ten Words radically transformed the military character of the ark in ancient times. Some commentators maintain that the Deuteronomic interpretation may be faithful to an ancient practice. It is pointed out, for example, that ancient Near Eastern sanctuaries contained receptacles for the preservation of documents. In Egypt, the sixtv-fourth chapter of *The Book of the Dead* was supposedly found on a slab of alabaster under the feet of the god Thot, while a letter of Ramses II states that his treaty with a Hittite king was placed under the feet of the god Ra (See R. de Vaux, *Les institutions de l'Ancien Testament*, II [Paris, 1960], p. 132). Similar customs have been observed elsewhere. They may help to explain the origin of the Deuteronomic interpretation, but they do not demonstrate in any way the antiquity of the Deuteronomic tradition.

6. I Sam. 3:3, 6:1; 2 Sam. 6:2; I Kings 19:15; etc.

7. The Priestly writers may have preserved a kernel of accuracy when they described the ark's dimensions (54 x 27 x 27 inches) and material (accacia wood).

8. See G. von Rad, *Der heilige Krieg im alten Israel* (Zurich, 1951); P. C. Craigie, "Yahweh Is a Man of War," *SJT*, XXII (1967):

185 ff.; F. M. Cross, "The Divine Warrior in Israel's Early Cult," in A. Altmann, ed., *Biblical Motifs* (Cambridge, Mass., 1969), pp. 14 ff.; id., *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973), pp. 105 f.; 226 ff.; R. Smend, *Yahweh War & Tribal Confederation*, tr. by M. G. Rogers (Nashville, 1970), pp. 27 ff.; F. Stolz, *Jahwes und Israels Kriege: KriegsTheorien und Kriegser-Jahrungen im Glauben des alten Israel* (Zürich, 1972); P. D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (Cambridge, Mass., 1973).

9. Psychoanalytical research has shown that chests, caskets, coffins, and other boxes are to be interpreted as portable substitutes for sacred caves, or at least as indicative of the craving for the protection of the maternal womb. See A. B. Ulanov, *The Feminine in Jungian Psychology and in Christian Theology* (Evanston, Ill., 1971), pp. 157 f., and the works quoted in notes 25 and 26. Whether the ark of Yahweh was originally related to the archetypal unconscious of the chthonian feminine principle escapes present demonstration but deserves further investigation. In later times, the ark became associated in Solomon's temple with various objects and rites that suggest the worship of *Terra Mater*. See S. Terrien, "The Omphalos Myth and Hebrew Religion," *VT*, XX (1970): 315 ff.

10. See A. Musil, *The Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouins* (New York, 1928), pp. 521 ff.; H. Lammens, *L'Arabie occidentale avant l'Hégire* (Beyrouth, 1928), Po. 100 ff.; J. Morgenstern, "The Ark, the Ephod and the Tent," *HUCA*, XVII (1942-43): 207 ff.; R. de Vaux, *Les institutions de l'Ancien Testament*, II, pp. 125 ff.; cf. Hebr. *qubbah*, generally rendered "domed tent," used once 'as a synonym for the 'ohel mo'ed by the priestly writers (Num. 25:8).

11. The Egyptian god Amun, personification of the wind, was probably represented at times by an empty container, symbol of captured wind or air. See K.

Sethe, *Amun und die acht Urgötter von Hermopolis* (Berlin, 1929), pp. 60, 98 f., etc.

12. In connection with quotations of short songs which are probably as ancient as the Song of the Ark (Num. 21:14-15; cf. vss. 17-17, 27-30).

13. The only other reference to the ark in the ancient traditions of the Pentateuch (Num. 14:14) also belongs to a military context. Moses had opposed an attempt to invade the hill country against the Amalekites and the Canaanites, saying, "Yahweh will not be in your midst" (vs. 42) or "with you" (vs. 43). The text adds that neither the ark nor Moses departed from the camp on that occasion.

14. Some reliable elements of tradition have been identified within the late redaction of Joshua, chs. 3-6. See F. Langlamet, *Gilgal et les récits de la traversée du Jourdain, Jos. III-IV* (Paris, 1969), pp. 16 ff., 86 ff., 104 ff.; J. Maier, *Das altisraelitische Ladeheiligtum* (Berlin, 1965), pp. 4 ff.; J. A. Soggin, *Le livre de Josué* (Neuchâtel, 1970), pp. 45 ff.

15. See S. Holm-Nielsen, "Shiloh in the Old Testament," in M.-L. Buhl et al., *The Danish Excavations at Tall Silun* (Copenhagen, 1969), pp. 56-59, especially note 289.; cf. H. Kjaer, *The Excavations of Shilo, the Place of Eli and Samuel* (Jerusalem, 1930).

16. G. von Rad ignores the verb in the expression, "And Yahweh came." See "The Tent and the Ark." *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, tr. by E. W. Trueman Dicken (Edinburgh and London, 1965), p. 108.

17. 1 Sam. 3:3, 10; 4:4, 7; 2 Sam. 6:2; 2 Kings 19:14-15; cf. Jer. 3:16-17; Ezek. 43:7.

18. *Contra* Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, p. 69.
19. 2 Sam. 22:11-12 = Ps. 18:10-11 [Heb., 11-12].

20. 1 Kings 6:23 ff. 8:6 f.: See M. Haran, "The Ark and the Cherubim: Their Cultic Significance in Biblical Ritual," *IEJ*, IX (1959): 32 ff.; cf. W. McKane, "The Earlier History of the Ark," *Glasgow University*

Oriental Society Transactions, XXI (1965-66): 68 ff.; R. E. Clements, *Cod and Temple*, pp. 30-36; cf. H. Gressmann, "Die Kerube im Tempel Salomos überhaupt," *Die Lade Jahves* (Stuttgart, 1920), pp. 47 ff.
21. According to the reading of LXXB (*Vaticanus*): the Masoretic text reflects the anachronistic terminology of a later age, "The ark of the covenant of Yahweh."

22. 2 Sam. 6:1 ff. David apparently respected the nomadic origin of the ark for "he set it in its place, inside the tent which David had pitched for it" (2 Sam. 6:17).

23. This hypothesis is strengthened by the presence of several allusions to processional outings of the ark during the four centuries of the monarchy (ca. 950-587 B.C.). See A. Bentzen, "The Cultic Use of the Story of the Ark in Samuel," *JBL*, LVII (1948): 317 ff.; D. R. Hillers, "Ritual Procession of the Ark and Ps. 132," *CBO*, XXX (1968): 48 ff.; Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, pp. 96 ff.; 242 ff.; cf. R. A. Carlson, *David, the Chosen King: A Tradition-Historical Approach to the Second Book of Samuel* (Stockholm, 1964), pp. 62 ff.; 77 ff.; 85 ff.; E. F. Campbell, *The Ark Narrative (1 Sam. 4-6, 2 Sam. 6): A Form-Critical and Tradition-Historical Study* (Missoula, Mont., 1975), pp. 117 ff.

24. David's dancing before the ark may well have been also due to his political flair, for he must have known the significance of ritual dance for the Canaanites of Jebus. See J. Pedersen, *Israel, Its Life and Culture, III-IV* (Oxford and Copenhagen, 1940), p. 759; C. H. Gordon, "David the Dancer," *Y. Kaufmann Jubilee Volume* (Jerusalem, 1960), pp. 46 ff.; G. Ahlström, *Aspects of Syncretism in Israelite Religion* (Lund, 1963), pp. 34 ff.; J. H. Eaton, "Dancing in the Old Testament," *ET*, LXXXVI (1974-75): 1369 ff.

25. The expression, "the ark of the covenant," is never found in the early traditions. It becomes common usage only in the seventh century B.C. with the Deuteronomists (Deut. 10:8; 31:9, 25; Josh. 4:7; 6:8; 1 Sam. 4:4; etc.).

26. The king was of course aware of the central significance of the Shechem sanctuary for the tribal confederation of Israel, but he probably exploited the Jebusite myth of Zion in an attempt to make of Jerusalem the rallying point between Israel proper and the southern tribe of Judah. See S. Terrien, "The Omphalos Myth and Hebrew Religion." *VT*, XX (1970): 316 ff.

27. See W. Beyerlin, *Origins and History of the Oldest Sinaitic Traditions*, tr. by S. Rudman (Oxford, 1965), pp. 31 ff.; cf. M. Newman, *The People of the Covenant* (New York & Nashville, 1962), pp. 60 ff.; D. R. Hillers, "Ritual Procession of the Ark and Ps 132." *CBQ*, XXX (1968): 48 ff.; Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, pp. 94 ff.

28. See L. Rost, *Die Überlieferung von der Thronnachfolge* (Stuttgart, 1926), pp. 47 ff. M. Simon, "La prophétie de Nathan et le temple (Remarques sur II Sam. 7)," *RHPR*.XXXII (1952): 41 ff.; M. Noth, "David und Israel in II Sam. 7," *Melanges bibliques A. Robert* (Paris, 1957), pp. 122 ff. = "David and Israel in II Samuel VII," in *The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Studies*, tr. by D. R. Ap-Thomas (Edinburgh and London, 1966), pp. 250 ff.; G. W. Ahlström, "Der Prophet Nathan and der Tempelbau," *VT*, XI (1961): 8 ff.; H. W. Hertzberg, "House of God and House of David," *I & II Samuel: A Commentary*, tr. by J. S. Bowder (Philadelphia, 1964), pp. 281 ff.; A. Weiser, "Die Tempelbaukrise unter David," *ZAW*, LXXVII (1965): 153 ff.; cf. H. van den Bussche, "Le texte de la prophétie de Nathan sur la dynastie davidique," *ALBO*, II, 7 (1948); A. Caquot, "La prophétie de Nathan et ses échos lyriques," *SVT*, IX (1962): 213 ff.

29. G. Widengren, "King and Covenant," *JSS*, II (1957): 1 ff.; A. H. J. Gunneweg, "Sinaibund und Davidsbund." *VT*, X (1960): 335 ff.; M. Tsevat, "Studies in the Book of Samuel, III. The Steadfast House: What was David Promised in II Sam. 7: 11b-16?" *HUCA*. XXXIV (1963): 71 ff.; H. Gese, "Der Davidsbund

und die Zionserwählung," *ZTK*, LXI (1964): 10 ff.; Clements, *God and Table* pp. 40 ff.; *id.*, *Prophecy and Covenant* (London, 1965). pp. 153 ff. J. A. Soggin, *Das Königtum in Israel* (Berlin, 1967), pp. 73, 123.

30. See O. Eissfeldt, "Jahwe als König," *ZAW*, XLVI (1928): 81 ff.; G. E. Mendenhall, "Early Israel as the Kingdom of Yahweh," *The Tenth Generation: The Origins of the Biblical Tradition* (Baltimore, 1973), pp. 29 f.

31. Lit., "in a tent" (*'ohel*) "and in a sojourning camp" (*mishkan*). The latter word was used by the priestly writers to designate the "tabernacle," the model of the desert shrine as they conceived it during the Babylonian exile (possibly earlier). They knew the archaic distinction between *yashabh*, "to sit" or "to dwell," and *shaken*, "to sojourn" (hence, the synonymity of *mishkan* and *bhel* in ancient times, "tent"). Cf. A. Weiser, "Die Tempelbaukrise," p. 159, note 19; F. M. Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, pp. 245 f.

32. MT, *shibhîlê*, "tribe's"; cf. 1 Chron. 17:6, *shôphêlê*, "judges." However, see Ph. de Robert, "Juges ou tribus en 2 Samuel VII 7?" *VT*, XXI (1971): 116-18.

33. See below, chapter V: The Hebrew invaders built altars at many places in the land of Canaan, and the legislation of the time of the conquest reflects their awareness of Yahweh's presence in their midst at the moment of worship (Exod. 20:24; cf. J. J. Stamm, "Zum Altargesetz im Bundesbuch," *TZ*, I (1945): 304-06). Nevertheless, the idea of erecting a new edifice for Yahweh's abode represented a radical departure with the past. At the same time, the appropriation of the house of Baalberith in Shechem (Judg. 9:4) and of the Canaanite shrine at Shiloh—later remembered as "the temple of Yahweh" (1 Sam. 1:9) and even "the house of Yahweh" (1 Sam. 3:15; cf. Jer. 26:6)—points to a process of pagan corruption in which David participated, perhaps unconsciously.

34. M. J. Buss, "The Psalms of Asaph and Korah," *JBL*, LXXXII (1963): p. 385.
35. Cf. Pss. 71:8, 89:18, 96:8, etc.
36. See F. M. Cross. "Notes on a Canaanite Psalm in the Old Testament," *BASOR*, no. 117 (1950): 19 ff.; yet cf. B. Margulis. "The Canaanite Origin of Psalm 29 Reconsidered," *Biblica*, LI (1970): 332 ff.
37. Traditionally rendered, "in the beauty of holiness"; cf. P. R. Ackroyd, "Some Notes on the Psalms," *JTS*, XVI (1966): 392 ff.
38. See S. Terrien, *The Psalms and their Meaning for Today* (Indianapolis, 1952), pp. 41 ff.; A. Weiser, *The Psalms* (Philadelphia, 1959), pp. 263 ff.; H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen* (Neukirchen, 1959-60), pp. 238 ff.
39. Lit., "the man of war," "the war hero."
40. See Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, pp. 98 ff.
41. See T. E. Fretheim, "The Ark in Deuteronomy," *CBQ*, XXX (1968): 1 ff. It is not known whether this interpretation of the ark was ever translated into reality. Some scholars conjecture that there were several arks in the course of the centuries and that the ark containing the tables of the law was introduced in the temple of Jerusalem by King Josiah in 621 B.C. See J. Gutmann, "The History of the Ark," *ZAW*, LX (1971): 22 ff.
42. In addition to the titles on the ark, which generally deal also with the Tent of Meeting, see F. Nötscher, *'Das Angesicht Gottes schauen' nach biblischer und babylonischer Auffassung* (Würzburg, 1924); M. H. Segal, "The Tent of Meeting" (Heb., with Eng. sum.), *Tarbiz*, XXV (1955-56): 231 ff.; M. Haran, "The Nature of the 'Ohel Mo'edh in Pentateuchal Sources," *JSS*, V (1960): 50-65; R. J. Clifford, "The Tent of El and the Israelite Tent of Meeting," *CBQ*, XXXIII (1971): 221-27; R. Schmitt, *Zelt und Lade als Thema alttestamentlicher Wissenschaft* (Gütersloh, 1972); O. Eissfeldt, "Kultzelt und Temple," *Wort und Geschichte: Festschrift K. Eliger* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1973), pp. 51-56; Childs, *The Book of Exodus*, pp. 582 ff.
43. From the verb *ya'ad*, "to appoint," hence, *kdah*. "assembly." "congregation," and *mo'ed*, "season," "seasonal feast" (Hos. 9:2, etc.). The *'ohel mo'ed* cannot be understood as "the tent of the assembly" either of the gods or of the tribes from the few references in the early traditions. The fact that the word *mo'ed* may also apply to the divine assembly (Ps. 74:4) or to the mythical assembly of the gods (Isa. 14:13), like its proto-Canaanite cognate in the Ugaritic texts (fourteenth to thirteenth centuries B.C.), is not sufficient for supporting the conjecture that the Mosaic tent of meeting was borrowed from the Northwest Semitic mythology of the "tent of El," which shelters this god permanently. For a contrary view, see F. M. Cross, "The Tabernacle: A Study from an Archaeological and Historical Approach," *BA*, X (1947): 65; *Canaanite Myth*, p. 231, note 2; R. J. Clifford, "The Tent of El and the Israelite Tent of Meeting," *CBQ*, XXXIII (1971): 221-26.
44. See above, pp. 141 ff.
45. The ark stood "in the midst of the camp" (Num. 14:44). There is no valid reason for supposing that the phrase *natah-lô*, "[Moses] pitched for himself" (the tent) should be rendered "he pitched (the tent) for it" (Exod. 33:7), i.e., "for the ark." Yet, many scholars, following Wellhausen (*Die Composition des Hexateuchs* [Berlin, 1885]. p. 93). maintain that the tent of 'meeting' contained the ark. See O. Eissfeldt, "Lade und Stierbild," *ZAW*, LVIII (1940-41): 191; A. Alt, "Zelte und Hütten," *Festschrift F. Nötscher* (1950), p. 24, note 41; Cf. the contrary opinion of R. Hartmann, "Zelt und Lade," *ZAW*, XXXVII (1917-18): 213.
46. The priestly writers used the expression "tent of meeting"-more than a hundred times-synonymously with the word "tabernacle," sometimes even the conflated designation, "tabernacle of the

tent of meeting" (Exod. 39:32, etc.).

For the priestly view of the tabernacle, see Haran, "The Nature of the 'Ohel Mo'edh' in Pentateuchal Sources," *JSS*, V (1960): pp. 63 ff.; "The Complex of Ritual Acts Performed Inside the Tabernacle," *Scripta Hierosolymita*, VIII (1961): 272 ff.; "Shiloh and Jerusalem: The Origin of the Priestly Tradition in the Pentateuch," *JBL*, LXXXI (1962): 14 ff.; "The Tabernacle: A Graded Taboo of Holiness" [in Hebrew], *Festschrift M. H. Segal* (Jerusalem, 1964). pp. 33 ff.; "The Priestly Image of the Tabernacle," *HUCA*, XXXVI (1965): 191 ff.; A. Levine, "The Descriptive Tabernacle Texts of the Pentateuch," *JAOS*, LXXXV (1965): 312 ff.; V. W. Rabe, "The Identity of the Priestly Tabernacle," *JNES*, XXV (1966): 132-134.

47. The verb *biqqesh*, "to seek," was used especially for the quest of the presence of God (cf. 2 Sam. 12:16, 21:1; Hos. 3:5, 5:6, 5:15, 7:10; e t c .) .

48. Yet, cf. Num. 11:16.

49. Even M. Haran, who has correctly characterized the tent of meeting as "a prophetic-nabhi'ic institution-not a cultic (priestly) one" (see "The Nature of the 'Ohel Mo'edh' ", pp. 56 f.)—introduced an element of confusion by referring constantly to "the Cloud of Glory," although the word "glory" is absent from the early traditions.

50. Another fragment of tradition refers to the tent of meeting. It may go back to the remote past, although it is now embedded in material which bears some of the marks of the priestly writers in the exile of Babylon (sixth century B.C.). Yahweh addressed Moses as follows: "Gather for me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom you know to be the elders of the people and their officers (*shôṭṭerim*), and bring them to the tent of meeting, and let them take their stand there with thee. And I will come down and speak with thee there. I will lay aside in reserve (*'aşal*) some of the spirit which is on you and place it on them, and they will bear with

thee some of the burden of the people, so that thou wilt not, by thyself, bear it alone" (Num. 11:16-17). Although the notion of "the spirit" to be divided (note the use of the partitive), as well as several other features, point to the rehearsing style of a later period, the allusion to the tent of meeting as the place where such a transfer occurs confirms the association of the sacred object with prophetic "inspiration." Let it be added that the seventy elders quite obviously could not have been crowded inside the tent and must have stood outside. Moses alone was allowed to go inside the tent. The sequence of the narrative (Num. 11:24-25) deals with Eldad and Medad, two men who had remained in the camp and yet "were prophesying in the camp" (vss. 26-27). The report led Moses to exclaim, "Would that all the people of Yahweh were prophets, that Yahweh would place his spirit upon them!" (Vs. 29.)

51. MT reads "and a vision"; LXX and Syriac, now confirmed by two Dead Sea Scroll fragments (4QNum^a and ^b) have preserved the reading "in plain visibility." See Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, p. 204.

52. "Riddles" or "dark utterances" (*hidhōth*) were elliptical poems, usually ditties or quatrains, especially in the sapiential genre, which required considerable efforts of interpretation (Judg. 14:14, 1 Kings 10:1; cf. Hab. 2:6, Prov. 1:6, Ezek. 17:2). The complexity of divination hermeneutics (common to the ancient Near East in general and to Greece as well, as shown especially by the Delphic oracles) was superfluous with the great prophets of Israel, who were bluntly explicit in the formulation of their attacks on the society of their times.

53. From the verb *ya'ad*, which provides the root of the noun *mo'ed* in the expression "tent of meeting" (see note 43 above). The exegete will refrain, however, from suggesting that Amos was consciously aware of the etymological and semantic relations of the word.

54. It was also at the entrance of the tent of meeting that, according to a story of obscure origin, "the sons of Israel .. cried" after-one of them had brought a Midianite woman (**Num.25:6**).
55. The tent of meeting and the ark became associated in later times, when various tents were identified with the Mosaic structure: the tent of the Shiloh sanctuary (1 Sam. 2:22), perhaps the tent which David pitched for the ark in Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:17; cf. 1 **Kgs.2:28** and 2 Chron. 1:4), the tent of the Gihon shrine where Solomon was anointed (1 Kgs. 1:39), and even the tent of the Gibeon high-place, where Solomon endured his ordeal of royal initiation (2 Chron. 1:3). See M. Görg, *Das Zelt der Begegnung* (Bonn, 1967), pp. 80 ff., and cf. Cross *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, p. 243.
56. See also Pss. **27:5,61:4** (Heb. 5); cf. Ps. **78:60,91:1**.
57. See note 45 above.
58. See W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, tr. J. A. Baker (Philadelphia, 1961), I, p. 110. Eichrodt offers a perceptive analysis of the tension between the ark and the tent, "not an irreconcilable opposition" (p. 109).
59. Cf. V. Scully, "Landscape and Sanctuary," *The Earth, the Temple, and the Gods: Greek Sacred Architecture*, rev. ed. (New York, 1969), pp. 1 ff.; for a modern, psychoanalytical' interpretation, see R. L. Rubenstein. "The Cave, the Rock and the Tent: The Meaning of Place in Contemporary America," *Morality and Eros* (New York, 1970), pp. 164 ff.; cf. W. Jansen, "Geography of Faith: A Christian Perspective on the Meaning of Places," *Studies in Religion—Sciences religieuses*, III (1973-74): 166 ff. Cf. Clements. "Sacred Mountains, Temples and the Presence of God," *God and Temple*, pp. 1 ff.
60. Sophocles, *Oedipus at Colonus*, 16.
61. M. Barrès, *La colline inspirée* (Paris, 1913), p. 2.
62. R. Brinker, *The Influence of the Sanctuaries in Early Israel* (Manchester, 1946).
63. In spite of the defeat of Adonizedek, king of Jerusalem (**Jos.10:1**, 3; cf. Judg. 1:5-7; also **Jos. 18:16**, 28; Judg. 19:10-11). See Noth, "Jerusalem and the Israelite Tradition," *The Laws in the Pentateuch*, pp. 132-33. The city of *Urusalim* (Akkadian approximation of the Northwest Semitic name which was later Hebraicized into *Yerushalayim*, "Jerusalem") is mentioned in the Tell el-Amarna Letters (fourteenth century B.C.).
64. See, among others, M. Haran, "The Gibeonites, the Nethinim and the Sons of Solomon's Servants," *VT*, XI (1961): 159 ff.; cf. J. I. M. Roberts. "The Davidic Origin of the Zion Tradition," *JBL*, XCII (1973): 329 ff.; K. Rupprecht, *Der Tempel von Jerusalem: Gründung Salomos oder jebusitischer Erbe?* (Berlin and New York, 1976).
65. See above, chapter III, note 25; see also L. R. Fisher, "Abraham and His Priest King," *JBL*, LXXXI (1962): pp. 264 ff.
66. MT, "Adonibezek."
67. A. Bentzen, "Zur Geschichte der Sadokiten," *ZAW*, LI (1933): 175 ff.; H. H. Rowley, "Zadok and Nehushtan," *JBL*, LVIII (1939): 134 ff.: "Melchizedek and Zadok (**Gen. 14** and Psalm 110)," *Festschrift A. Bertholet* (Tübingen, 1950), pp. 461-72; C. E. Hauer, "Who Was Zadok?" *JBL*, LXXXI (1963): 89-94. Some scholars disagree but not on solid ground; See de Vaux, *Ancient Israel*, pp. 114, 374; Cross, (*Canaanite Myth*, pp. 207 ff.) judges that "many of the arguments for the hypothesis [of Zadok's Jebusite origin] are painfully weak" (p. 209), but the arguments he advances in defense of Zadok's Hebronite and Aaronide ancestry are even weaker.
68. See P. Humbert, "*Qânâ* en hébreu biblique," *Festschrift A. Bertholet* (Tübingen, 1950), pp. 259 ff.; cf. N. C. Habel, "Yahweh, Maker of Heaven and Earth": A Study in Tradition Criticism," *JBL*, XCI (1972): 321 ff.
69. See G. W. Ahlström, *Aspects of Syncretism in Israelite Religion* (Lund, 1963); J. A.

- Soggin, "Der offiziell geförderte Syncretismus in Israel während des 10. Jahrhunderts," *ZAW*, LXXVIII (1966): 179 ff.; S. Segert, "Surviving of Canaanite Elements in Israelite Religion," *Festschrift P. G. Rinaldi* (Genova, 1967), pp. 155 ff. "The fact remains: the Abrahamic tradition became socially functional only after the incorporation of the old Canaanite cities into the empire of David, and the result was a thorough paganization of the state and culture" (G. E. Mendenhall, *The Tenth Generation: The Origins of the Biblical Tradition*, Baltimore and London, 1973, p. 180).
70. See extensive bibliography in S. Terrien, "The Omphalos Myth and Hebrew Religion," *VT*, XX (1970): 317, note 5; see also H. Schmid, "Jahwe und die Kulttraditionen von Jerusalem," *ZAW*, LXVI (1955): 168 ff.; G. Wanke, *Die Ziontheologie der Korachiten in ihrem traditionsgeschichtlichen Zusammenhang* (Berlin, 1966); J. H. Hayes, "The Tradition of Zion's Inviolability," *JBL*, LXXXII (1963): 419 ff.; F. Stolz, *Strukturen und Figuren im Kult von Jerusalem: Studien zur altorientalischen vor- und frühisraelitischen Religion* (Berlin, 1970); E. A. S. Butterworth, *The Tree at the Navel of the Earth* (Berlin, 1970). R. de Vaux argues against the Jebusite theory in 'Jerusalem et les prophètes,' *RB*, LXXIII (1966): 495 ff.; see also J. J. M. Roberts, "The Davidic Origin of the Zion Tradition," *JBL*, XCII (1973): 329 ff.
71. The widely discussed hypothesis of a yearly ceremony of the Enthronement of Yahweh in Jerusalem is not directly relevant to this aspect of our study.
72. See J. R. Porter, "The Interpretation of II Sam. 6 and Psalm 132,," *JTS*, V (1954): 161 ff.; T. E. Fretheim, "Psalm 132: A Form-Critical Study," *JBL*, LXXXVI (1967): 289 ff.; D. R. Hillers, "Ritual Procession of the Ark and Ps 132," *CBQ*, XXX (1968): 48 ff.; Cross, *Canaanite Myth*, pp. 94 ff., 232 ff.; J. Schreiner, *Sion-Jerusalem: Jahwes Königssitz* (München, 1963), pp. 103ff.
73. Porter, "The Interpretation of II Sam. 6," p. 165; N. L. Tidwell, "The Lamen Ephod: I Sam. II 18 and 2 Sam. VI 14," *VT*, XXIV (1974): 505 ff.
74. See S. Smith, "The Threshing Floor at the City Gate," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, LXXVIII (1946): 5 ff.; G. Ahlström, "Nathan und der Tempelbau," *VT*, XI (1961): 115 ff.
75. *Paradise Lost*, XII, 340.
76. 1 Chron. 28:19 ff., amplified by oral traditions preserved in the rabbinical literature. See R. Patai, *Man and Temple* (London, 1947), pp. 130 ff.; cf. A. S. Kapelrud, "Temple Building: A Task for Gods and Kings," *Orientalia*, XXXII (1963): 56 ff.
77. V. Scully, *The Earth, the Temple and the Gods* (New Haven, 1962), pp. 214 ff.
78. See W. Andrae, *Das Gotteshaw und die Urformen des Bauens im alten Orient* (Berlin, 1930); G. E. Wright et al., "The Significance of the Temple in the Ancient Near East," *BA*, VII (1944): 41 ff.; Th. H. Busink, "Les origines du temple de Salomon," *Jaarbericht Ex Oriente Lux*, XVII (1963): 165-92; A. Kuschke, "Der Tempel Salomos und der 'syrische Tempeltypus'," *Festschrift L. Rost* (Berlin, 1967); pp. 124 ff.; H. Mayer, "Das Bauholz des Tempels Salomos," *BZ*, XI (1967): 53-66; Y. Aharoni, "Arad: Its Inscriptions and Temple," *BA*, XXXI (1968): 2 ff.; see also J. Brand, "Remarks on the Temple of Solomon," *Tarbiz*, XXXIV (1964-65): 323 ff.; the author claims that the edifice constituted a genuinely Israelite creation.
79. See V. W. Rabe, "Israelite Opposition to the Temple," *CBQ*, XXIX (1967): 227 ff.
80. See K. Möhlenbrink, *Der Tempel Salomos: Eine Untersuchung seiner Stellung in der Sakralarchitektur des alten Orients*, *B WANT*, IV 7 (1932); G. E. Wright, "Solomon's Temple Resurrected," *BA*, IV (1941): 17-31; *Biblical Archaeology* (Philadelphia, 1957), pp. 136-42; L. H. Vincent, *Jérusalem de l'Ancien Testament*, II-III (Paris, 1956), pp. 373-431; id., "Le caractère du

- temple salomonien," *Festschrift A. Robert* (Paris, 1957), pp. 137-48; Th. A. Busink, *Der Tempel Salomos (Der Tempel von Jerusalem)*, I, (Leiden, 1970); J. Gray, *I & II Kings: A Commentary*, rev. ed. (Philadelphia, 1970), pp. 149-212; H. Schmidt, "Der Tempelbau Salomos in religionsgeschichtlicher Sicht," *Festschrift K. Gallig* (Tübingen, 1970), pp. 241 ff. H. Bardtke, "Der Temple von Jerusalem," *TLZ*, XCVII (1972): 801-10 (critical review of Busink, *Der Tempel Salomos*, 1970); Y. Aharoni, "The Solomonic Temple, the Tabernacle, and the Arad Sanctuary," *Alter Orient und Altes Testament*, XXII (1973), 1 ff.; K. Rupprecht, *Der Tempel von Jerusalem: Gründung Salomos oder jebusitisches Erbe?* (Berlin and New York, 1976).
81. Like most temples of the ancient Near East.
82. L. A. Snijders, "L'orientation du temple de Jérusalem," *Oudt. St.*, XIV (1965): 214-134.
83. H. Schult, "Der Debir im solomonischen Tempel," *ZDPV*, LXXX (1964): 46-54; J. Ouellette, "The Solomonic DeBIR According to the Hebrew Text of I Kings 6," *JBL*, LXXXIX (1970): 338-43.
84. See bibliography in Terrien, "The Omphalos Myth," p. 328, note 3.
85. Hbr., kema'ar 'ish w'loyôth, following Rashi's interpretation based on *Yoma 54a*.
86. See J. Ouellette, "The *yāšia'* and the *š'la'ot*: Two Mysterious Structures in Solomon's Temple," *JNES*, XXXI (1972): 187 ff.
87. See R. B. Y. Scott, "The Pillars of Jachin and Boaz," *JBL*, LVIII (1939): 143 ff.; W. F. Albright, "Two Cressets from Marisa and the Pillars of Jachin and Boaz," *BASOR*, No. 85 (1942): 18 ff.; H. G. May, "The Two Pillars Before the Temple of Solomon," *BASOR*, No. 88 (1942): 19 ff.; W. Kornfeld, "Der Symbolismus der Tempelsäulen," *ZA W*, LXXIV (1962): 50 ff. However, J. Ouellette maintains that the columns were not freestanding: see "Le vestibule du temple de Salomon était-il un *bêt Hilāni*?" *RB*, LXXVI (1969): 365 ff.
88. See A. R. Johnson, "The Rôle of the King," in *The Labyrinth*, p. 87; C. C. Wylie, "On King Solomon's Molten Sea," *BA*, XII (1949): 86 ff.; G. Bagnai, "The Molten Sea of Solomon's Temple," in *Festschrift T. J. Meek* (Toronto, 1964), pp. 114 ff."
89. See E. A. S. Butterworth, *The Tree as the Navel of the Earth* (Berlin & New York), 1970; A. Fitzgerald, "The Mythological Background of Jerusalem as a Queen and False Worship as Adultery in the Old Testament," *CBQ*, XXXIV (1972): 403 ff.; R. J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (Cambridge, Mass. 1972).
90. Especially those of Asa (913-873 B.C.: 1 Kings 15:12), Hezekiah (ca. 715-687 B.C.: 2 Kings 18:4) and Josiah (ca. 640-609 B.C.: 2 Kings 23:1 ff.).
91. See F. J. Hollis, "The Sun-Cult and the Temple of Jerusalem," in S. H. Hooke, ed., *Myth and Ritual* (London, 1933), pp. 89 ff.; J. A. Montgomery and H. Gehman, *The Book of Kings* (I.C.C., Edinburgh, 1951), pp. 189 ff.; W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (Garden City, N.Y., 1968), p. 231; cf. E. Wirthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige. 1 Könige 1-16* (Göttingen, 1977), pp. 87 ff.
92. MT does not include the first colon, which is here rendered from the LXX of verse 53. It is not certain whether the verb *egnôrisen* ("recognized"), reflected the Hebrew *hikkîr* ("observed"), *hëkin* ("set") or even *hëphîr* ("caused to shine"), but its general meaning is sufficiently indicative of the contextual thought. The LXX added that the formula "was written in the Book of the Song" (*Sepher hash-Shir*), a probable error for the *Book of Yashar* (*Sepher hay-Yashar*), which is also quoted in Josh. 10:13 and 2 Sam. 1:18. See Noth, *Könige*, (Neukirchen, 1965-) pp. 172, 181 f.; A. van der Born, "Zum Tempelweihespruch (I K viii 12 f)," *Oudt. St.*, XIV (1965): 235 f.

93. Although Solomon's successors failed to prevent sun worship in later years: King Josiah expelled "the horses of the sun" in 622 B.C. (2 Kings 23:11) and heliolatric rites were performed in the temple a few years later (Ezek. 9:16 ff.). See H. G. May, "Some Aspects of Solar Worship at Jerusalem," *ZAW*, LV (1937): 269 ff.
94. Cf. Ps. 104:19, where the sun is treated as an obedient slave who knows when to get off the stage.
95. Cf. Deut. 4:14, 5:19, etc.; see above, p. 190.
96. See H.-J. Kraus, *Worship in Israel: A Cultic History of the Old Testament*, tr. G. Buswell (Richmond, Va., 1962), pp. 61 ff.; G. Fohrer, *History of Israelite Religion*, tr. D. E. Green (Nashville, 1972), pp. 202 ff.
97. See G. J. Thierry. "Remarks on Various Passages of the Psalms," *Oudt. St.*, IX (1951): 4, 5; Clements, *God and Temple*, 92, note 2; Noth, *Könige*, pp. 181 f.
98. Cf. Isa. 8:18; Joel 4:17, 21; Ps. 68:16 [Heb. 17], 19, 135:21; etc.
99. See W. D. Davies, *The Gospel and the Land: Early Christianity and Jewish Territorial Doctrine* (Berkeley, Cal., 1974), pp. 5 ff., 132 ff.
100. The poetic juxtaposition of Mount Zion with the extremities of Šaphôn indicates how much the Yahwists of Jerusalem had absorbed the Canaanite mythology. See A. Robinson, "Zion and Šaphôn in Psalm XLVIII 3," *VT*, XXIV (1974): 118 ff.
101. *Complete Works*, XVI (London, 1924), p. 287.
102. See L. Rost, "Sinaibund und Davidsbund," *TIZ*, LXXIV (1947): 129 ff.; J. Gray, *I&II Kings* (Philadelphia, 1970), pp. 212, also pp. 6 ff.
103. See W. Eichrodt, "Yahweh's Dwelling-Place in Heaven," *Theology of the Old Testament*, II (Philadelphia, 1967), pp. 186 ff.
104. See G. von Rad, "Deuteronomy's 'Name' Theology and the Priestly Document's 'Kabod' Theology," *Studies in Deuteronomy*, tr. D. Stalker (London and Chicago, 1953), pp. 37 ff. Following the view of W. Andrae (*Das Gotthaus und die Urformen des Bauens im Alten Orient*, Berlin, 1930, pp. 14 ff.), von Rad maintains that "the temple was Yahweh's dwelling place, yet it was so because in its worship [God] 'came' to manifest his presence there" (*Old Testament Theology*, I, p. 63). Cf. R. Hentschke, *Die Stellung der vorexilischen Schriftpropheten zum Kultus* (Berlin, 1957), pp. ii ff.
105. Like Jebus, Shechem had been a shrine before the Hebraic conquest, but it became "Hebraicized" two or more centuries before Jebus. It may have been considered by its early inhabitants as the navel of the earth. See Terrien, "The Omphalos myth," p. 33 1, and note 4; also G. R. H. Wright, "The Mythology of Pre-Israelite Shechem," *VT*, XX (1970): 75 ff.
106. See G. R. H. Wright, "Joseph's Grave Under the Tree by the Omphalos at Shechem," *VT*, XXII (1972): 476 ff.
107. R. de Vaux maintains that Deuteronomy contains no theology of the name. See "Le lieu aue Yahvé a choisi pour y établir son nom," *Festschrift L. Rost* (Berlin, 1967), pp. 219 ff. His arguments are not convincing. See M. Weinfeld, "The Concept of God and the Divine Abode," *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford, 1972), pp. 194 ff.
108. See A. Alt, "Die Heimat des Deuteronomiums," *Kleine Schriften*, II pp. 250 ff.; G. von Rad, "The Provenance of Deuteronomy," *Studies in Deuteronomy*, pp. 60 ff.; E. W. Nicholson, *Deuteronomy and Tradition* (Oxford, 1967), pp. 58 ff.; cf. F. Dumermuth, "Zur deuteronomischen Kulttheologie und ihre Voraussetzungen," *ZAW*, LXX (1958): 59 ff., who attempts to show that Bethel, rather than Shechem, was the cultic center of the Confederation.
109. See Childs, *Memory and Tradition*, pp. 12 ff.; id., *Exodus*, pp. 247, 466. There is no valid reason for correcting the MT in order to read, "see the face of Yah-

- weh" (Clements, *God and Temple*), p. 77, note 5.
110. Cf. Deut. 12:11, 21; 14:23 f.; 16:2, 6, 11; etc.
111. The complex interaction of a theology of election with the awareness of divine presence through the name has not received the attention it deserves, although considerable research has been done on both subjects. See O. Grether, *Name und Wort Gottes im Alten Testament* (Giessen, 1934), pp. 159 ff.; E. Jacob, *Théologie de l'Ancien Testament* (Neuchâtel, 1955), pp. 66 ff.; F. Dummerth, "Zur deuteronomischen Kulttheologie," pp. 69 ff.; R. E. Clements, *God's Chosen People: A Theological Interpretation of the Book of Deuteronomy* (Valley Forge, Pa., 1969), pp. 45 ff., 74 ff.; Th. C. Vriezen, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology* (Oxford, 1970), pp. 208 ff.
112. See von Rad, "Deuteronomy's 'Name' Theology," p. 38.
113. See von Rad, "Deuteronomy and the Holy War," *Studies in Deuteronomy*, pp. 45 ff.; N. K. Gottwald, "'Holy War' in Deuteronomy: Analysis and Critique," *Review and Expositor*, LXI (1964): 296 ff.
114. See T. E. Fretheim, "The Ark in Deuteronomy," *CBQ*, XXX (1968): 1 ff.
115. The words *lebhabh*, *nephesh*, and *me'odh*, traditionally rendered by "heart," "soul," and "might" respectively, designate aspects of the human person which do not correspond exactly to English notions. They refer in turn to the intellectual faculties, to the desire to persist in being, and to the corporate personality with its responsibility toward present and future communities. On the *Shema* and the love of man for God, see W. L. Moran, "The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy," *CBQ*, XXV (1963): 77 ff.; N. Lohlink, *Das Hauptgebot: Eine Untersuchung literarischer Einleitungsfragen zu m Deuteronomium 5-11*, Rome, 1963; *Höre, Israel!* (Düsseldorf, 1965); D. J. McCarthy, "Notes on the Love of God in Deuteronomy and the Father-Son Relationship Between Yahweh and Israel," *CBQ* XXVII (1965): 144 ff.; Clements, "The Worship of the Heart," *God's Chosen People*, pp. 82 ff.; S. D. McBride, Jr., "The Yoke of the Kingdom: An Exposition of Deuteronomy 6:4-5," *Int.*, XXVII (1973): 273 ff.
116. E. L. Fackenheim, in *God's Presence in History* (New York, 1970), pp. 3 f., recalls the Midrash according to which the Israelites saw God and recognized him when they passed through the Red Sea. The Midrash states that they saw what Isaiah, Ezekiel, and all the other prophets never saw (Melikta de-Rabbi Ishmael, J. Z. Lauterbach, ed. [Philadelphia, 1949], II, pp. 24 ff.; as quoted by Fackenheim, *God's Presence*, p. 31, note 1). The Midrash uses the verb "to see" in the sense of "to discern the intervention of" God in historical events, not in the sense of psychological vision.
117. See von Rad, "Endeavours to Restore the Past," *Old Testament Theology*, I, pp. 69 ff.
118. P. Tillich, "The Divine Name," *Christianity and Crisis*, XX (1960-61): 55.
119. The exact date of the reform is still in question: cf. 2 Kings 22:1 ff. with 2 Chron. 34:3. It is probable that the princes of Judah undertook cultic reforms during the minority of Josiah, live years before the discovery of "the book of the law."
120. See above, pp. 152 ff.
121. The *beth zebhul*, "exalted house," may well mean "a royal edifice," "a house lit for a king." See M. Held, "The Root ZBI/SBI in Akkadian, Ugaritic and Biblical Hebrew," *JAOS*, LXXXVIII (1968): 90.
122. Most commentators miss the eschatological character of this poetic introduction to the sermons of Amos. The roaring of Yahweh from Zion will be a part of the events of the last day, "the day of Yahweh" (Amos 5:18).
123. Such an interpretation is confirmed

by the motif of the shaking of the threshold foundations: divine reality cannot be contained within a man-made structure (Isa. 6:4).

124. MT reads perfect tense, "he has laid." but either of the two Oumran readings (QIsa^{a,b}) may be correct, for a participle denoting an imminent future is demanded by the idiom *hinneni*, "Behold, I . . ."

125. The corner-stone is that of the *yiqrat*, a word related to *yaqar*, "precious," "solendid." Cf. the "glorious full moon" in Job 31:26, and the Arabic cognate *waqara*, "to be in glory."

126. This interpretation tits the contextual sequence of the entire poem, in which the prophet polemizes against both Zion and its leaders. "Yahweh of Hosts himself," he predicts, "will be a crown of beauty and a diadem of splendor" [rather than the temple] "for the remnant of his people" (Isa. 28:5). On this controversial passage, see N. Rhodokanakis, "Omphalos und *Eben Shetiia*," *Wörter und Sachen*, V (1913): 198 ff.; K. Fullerton, "The Stone of the Foundation," *AJS*, XXXVII (1920-21): I ff.; L. Lindblom, "Der Eckstein in Jes. 28, 16." *Festschrift S. Mowinckel* (Oslo, 1955), pp. 123 ff.; O. Kaiser, *Isaiah 13-39: A Commentary*, tr. by R. A. Wilson (Philadelphia, 1974), pp. 252 f.

127. It may be presumed that by the eighth century the verb *shaken*, originally "to sojourn," had become synonymous with the verb *yashabh*, "to dwell," precisely on account of the priestly theology of the Jerusalem temple (see above, p. 195).

128. R. de Vaux fails to distinguish between the prophets' allusions to the historical Jerusalem and their prediction of the new Jerusalem after the earth will have been recreated. See "Jérusalem et les prophètes," *RB*, LXXIII (1966): 481 ff.

129. Cf. 8:19, in which Jeremiah knows that the people cry, "Is Yahweh not in Zion?" Another communal lament, or

fragment thereof, has been preserved in 17:12, where the sanctuary is called "the throne of glory, set on high from the beginning (*merishôn*)," possibly an allusion to the myth of the earth navel.

130. The Jeremianic phrase, "in which my name is invoked," differs from the Deuteronomic formula, "in which I shall cause my name to sojourn" (Deut. 12:11, etc.). The prophet stressed more clearly than Deuteronomy the factor of the invocation of the name in prayer, sacrifice, and other acts of worship. He may have been more aware than the Deuteronomists of the mystery of a presence which involves the moral quality of the worshippers. A house in which Yahweh's name was invoked by worshippers who were robbers was a contradiction in terms (7:8-9). "The temple, he says in effect, is not what men call it or imagine to be, but what by their actions they make it. It might have been the place where Yahweh's gracious presence was experienced if they had hallowed His name by lives lived in piety and righteousness" (J. Skinner, *Prophecy and Religion* [Cambridge, 1940], p. 175). Cf. A. Strobel, "Jeremias, Priester ohne Gottesdienst? Zu Jer 7, 21." *BZ*, I (1957): 214 ff.; W. Eichrodt, "A Study of Jeremiah 7:1-15," *Theology Today*, VII (1950): 15 ff.; Ph. Reymond, "Sacrifice et 'spiritualité', ou sacrifice et alliance? [Jer. 7. 22-24.]" *TZ*, XXI (1965): 314 ff.; H. Graf von Reventlow, "Gattung und Überlieferung in der Tempelrede Jeremias", Jer 7 und 26," *ZAW*, LXXXI (1969): 315 ff.

131. See P. R. Ackroyd, "The Historical Situation in the Exilic Age," *Exile and Restoration* (London, 1968), pp. 17 ff.; G. Fohrer, *History of Israelite Religion*, tr. by D. E. Green (Nashville and New York, 1972), pp. 307 ff.

132. See A. Robert, "La lettre de Jérémie," *DBS*, IV (1948): 849 ff.

133. The words, "to the name of Yahweh, to Jerusalem," are textually uncertain. It is possible that the entire passage

came from the Jeremianic school after 587 B.C. but its contents are consonant with the prophet's theology of the name. Cf. M. Weinfeld, "Jeremiah and the Spiritual Metamorphosis of Israel." *ZAW*, LXXXVIII (1976): 19 f.

134. See H. Ortmann, *Der alte und der neue Bund bei Jeremias* (Berlin, 1940); W. Lemp, *Bund und Bundeserneuerung bei Jeremias* (Tübingen, 1954-55); R. Martin-Achard, "La nouvelle alliance selon Jérémie," *RTP*, XII (1962): 82 ff.; J. Coppens, "La nouvelle alliance en Jér. 31, 31-34," *CBQ*, XXV (1963): 12 ff.; P. Buis, "La nouvelle alliance" *VT*, XVIII (1968): 1 ff.; J. Swetnam, "Why was Jeremiah's New Covenant New?" *SVT*, XXVI (1974): 111 ff.; cf. F. Hecht, *Eschatologie und Ritus bei den Reformpropheten: Ein Beitrag zur Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Leiden, 1971), pp. 29 ff., 104 ff.

135. The word *qinh*, traditionally rendered "jealousy," means "zeal" in the sense of "passionate love" and refers here to the cult of the Earth Mother. Cf. 2 Kings 21:7 with 2 Chron. 33:7; see also 2 Kings 23:6.

136. Snake worship, which had been temporarily eradicated by King Hezekiah in the eighth century B.C. (2 Kings 18:4), had apparently been reintroduced at a later date. Its occurrence has been observed together with the cult of the *Terra Mater*, male prostitution, and heliolatry in relation to the belief in the myth of the earth navel. See S. Terrien, "The Omphalos Myth," p. 320; K. R. Joines, "The Bronze Serpent in the Israelite Cult," *JB*, LXXXVII (1968): 245 ff.; id., *Serpent Symbolism in the Old Testament* (Haddonfield, NJ., 1974).

137. Cf. Isa. 1:29 ff., 10:4, 17:1. In Laments for *Dumuzi*, (Tammuz), Mesopotamian poets mourned the abasement of the sun over the horizon after the summer solstice. See J. B. Pritchard, ed., *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (Princeton, 1955), p. 109.; Th. Jacobsen, *Toward the Image of Tammuz*

(Cambridge, Mass., 1970); "Religious Drama in Ancient Mesopotamia," H. Goedicke & J. J. M. Roberts, ed., *Unity and Diversity: Essays in the History, Literature, and Religion of the Ancient Near East* (Baltimore, 1975), pp. 65 ff.

138. See Ezek. 8:17, in which sun worship appears to have been related to male cultic homosexuality. A. Bertholet, *Das Buch Hesekiel* (Freiburg i. B., 1897), p. 50; W. Zimmerli, *Ezechiel* (Neukirchen, 1956), pp. 222 f.; contra W. Eichrodt, *Ezekiel: A Commentary*, tr. by C. Quin (Philadelphia, 1970), pp. 127 ff.

139. See the hypothesis of H. G. May, "The Departure of the Glory of Yahweh," *IBL*, LVI (1937): 309 ff. Ezekiel's formulation of the divine abandon of the temple may have been influenced by the liturgy of Tammuz.

140. The prophet has kept alive the mythopoetic thinking of the theophany in which several features are bound together, such as the storm cloud (2 Sam. 22: 11 = Ps. 18:10 [Heb., 11]), and the winged mask. See H. Frankfort, *Cylinder Seals* (London, 1939), pp. 208 ff.; B. Stein, *Der Begriff Kebod Yahweh und seine Bedeutung für die alttestamentliche Gotteserkenntnis* (Emsdetten i. W., 1939), pp. 272 f., 276 ff. G. Mendenhall, "The Mask of Yahweh," in *The Tenth Generation: The Origins of the Biblical Tradition* (Baltimore and London, 1973), pp. 54 ff. See also D. Baltzer, *Ezechiel und Deuterocesaja* (Berlin, 1971), pp. 51 ff.

141. Although the expression "a sanctuary for a little while" could hardly have referred to the first synagogue (cf. A. Menès, "Tempel und Synagoge," *ZAW*, L [1932]: 268 ff.), the idea of a new form of religious assembly at worship arose among the deportees in the sixth century. See H. H. Rowley, *Worship in Ancient Israel* (Philadelphia, 1967), pp. 213 ff.; cf. Baltzer, *Ezechiel und Deuterocesaja*, pp. 34 f.

142. See Eichrodt, "The Basis and Aim of the New Divine Creation," *Ezekiel*, pp. 494 ff.

143. See H. G. May, "Some Cosmic Connotations of MAYIM RABBIM, 'Many Waters'," *JBL*, LXXIV (1955): 9 ff.
144. See H. G. May, "The Creation of Light in Genesis 1, 3-5," *JBL*, LVIII (1939): 209 ff.
145. See J. Morgenstern, "Moses with the Shining Face," *HUCA*, II (1925): 1 ff.; J. de Fraine, "Moses 'cornuta facies' (Ex. 34, 39-35)," *Bijdragen: Tijdschrift voor filosofie en theologie*, XX (1959): 28 ff.; F. Dumermuth, "Moses *strahlendes Gesicht*," *TZ*, XVII (1961): 240 ff.; also, for the observations of luminosity or "aura" among mystics of other cultures, see H. Thurston, *The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism* (Chicago, 1952), pp. 162 ff.; E. G. Suhr, "The Horned Moses," *Folklore*, LXXIV (1963): 387 ff.
146. M. Weinfeld points out the relationship between the Ezekielian imagery and the motif of the *imago* Dei in Gen. 1:26-27: see "The Concept of God and the Divine Abode," *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomical School*, pp. 200 ff.
147. See von Rad, "Deuteronomy and the Holy War," *Studies in Deuteronomy*, p. 54; C. H. Jones, "'Holy War' or 'Yahweh War'?" *VT*, XXV (1975): 642 ff., esp. 655 f.
148. See B. Erling, "Ezekiel 38-39 and the Origins of Jewish Apocalyptic," *Ex Orbe Religionum: Festschrift Geo. Widengren* (Leiden, 1972). II pp. 104 ff.
149. Ezek. 43: 7 ff.; 44: 4 ff.; etc.
150. See Terrien, "The Omphalos Myth," p. 337; "Toward a Biblical Theology of Womanhood," *Religion in Life*, XLII (1973-74): 330.
151. See Patai, "Sins and Calamities," *Man and Temple*, pp. 140 ff.; cf. W. Gispén, "The Distinction Between Clean and Unclean," *OST*, V (1948): 190 ff.; K. Elliger, "Das Gesetz Leviticus 18," *ZA W*, LXVII (1955): 1 ff. and especially p. 23; L. E. Elliott-Binns, "Some Problems in the Holiness Code," *ZAW*, LXVII (1955): 26 ff.; H. Graf Reventlow, *Das Heiligkeitsgesetz* (Berlin, 1964), pp. 192 ff.; J. G. Vink, "The Date and Origins of the Priestly Code in the Old Testament," *OST*, XV (1969): 1 ff.; J. Neusner, "The Idea of Purity in Ancient Judaism," *JAAR*, XLIII (1975): 16; cf. K. Koch, "Sühne und Sündenvergebung um die Wende von der exilischen zur nachexilischen Zeit," *Ev. Theol.* XXVI (1966): 217 ff.
152. See note 46 above.

5

The Prophetic Vision

Prophets are usually mistaken for predictors. The prophets of Israel unveiled not the future but the absolute.

Traditionally, the prophets of Israel have been viewed as the announcers of the Messiah. In fact, however, very few of their utterances were concerned with messianic hope, even when they hailed the advent of God upon a new earth.

For the past hundred years, the prophets of Israel have been presented chiefly as social reformers. In fact, however, they expected history soon to crash in a cosmic doom, after which, they hoped, God would create a new earth and a new humanity.

Recently, the prophets of Israel have come into their own as the poets of divine presence, even when they prayed to a *Deus absconditus*.

All true poets have received

... the prophet's vision,
The exultation, the divine
Insanity of noble minds.¹

The prophets of Israel were true poets. They not only cultivated all forms of rhetorical beauty and possessed a respect for the

word that provokes thinking, but they also lived in the exultation of their vision. As its burden became unbearable, they entered a kind of insanity which attuned their minds to the demands of urgency in human society. It was a divine insanity—the awful consequence of the presence—but it was an insanity which conferred upon their minds the ecstasy and the horror of nobility. In the presence, they understood that nobility is the freedom to differ, the courage to condemn, and the folly to hope. Noble minds are those who accept with diffidence and alacrity their election to speak. The prophets of Israel were the poets of an electing presence.

The Greek version of the Septuagint, which reflects the translating usage of the Alexandrian and other Hellenistic synagogues in the third and second centuries B.C., used the word *prophêtês*, “prophet,” for the Hebrew word *nabi’*. Now, the Greek *prophêtês*, like the Hebrew *nabi’*, designated a wide variety of religious functionaries, from technical soothsayers and ecstatic diviners to the poetic interpreters of glossolalic oracles.² In early Israel, dancing and raving “bands of prophets” roamed the countryside (1 Sam. 10:5), individual seers (1 Sam. 9:9) occasionally rose to positions of national leadership (1 Sam. 7:3 ff.), special prophets acted as royal advisers (2 Sam. 7:2, etc.), circles of court prophets were maintained by some kings as official consultants to the government (1 Kings 22:6), Moses himself was remembered as the prophet *par excellence* (Deut. 34:10); and then, there were a few others—whether cultic officials³ or secularly employed laymen, shepherds or farmers—who obeyed a prophetic vocation and are remembered as the great prophets of Israel.⁴

Such a wide range of functions and identities lends itself to terminological confusion. The word *nabi’* was at times a synonym of *ro’eh*, “seer,” or “*hozeh*, “extra-lucid,” but never of the various designations of astrologers and magicians. When

Amos was rebuked by the priest of the royal sanctuary of Bethel in 751 B.C. for being a *hozeh*, “a man with visions,” he objected, “I am not a *nabi*’, nor a member of the prophetic guild” (Amos 7:14). Nevertheless, he used the verb “to prophesy” (*hinnabe*’) to describe his activity (vs. 15).

Professionals of divination abounded in the ancient Near East, and many parallels have been pointed out between them and the Hebrew prophets.⁵ No Semitic equivalent to the Hebrew word, however, has yet been discovered in the extant literature. In all probability, the term *nabi*’ meant “one called [of God].”⁶ If this conjecture is correct, it is understandable that the few men who have remained known to posterity as “the great prophets” would have composed the narratives of their call to prophesy with a rhetorical artistry of exceptional sophistication.’ While their experiences may have been of an ecstatic nature,” the great prophets practiced a rigid discipline of literary expression. They recalled their emotional incandescence in intellectual tranquillity.⁹

The epiphanic visitations to the Patriarchs and the Mosaic theophanies were recounted in the epic style of community ceremonial. The visions of the great prophets, while following to a certain degree the rhetorical pattern of the epiphanic and theophanic narratives, acquired a form of their own, for they were narrated autobiographically. Moreover, they no longer invoked “nature in tumult” but echoed “the tempests of the soul.” The theophany was a happening of wonder. The prophetic vision was a confession of psychological solitariness.

The tradition of Elijah on Mt. Horeb (1 Kings 19) offers a dramatic turning point in the Hebraic theology of presence, for it closed the era of theophany and relegated it to the realm of an unrepeatable past. At the same time, it opened the era of prophetic vision, where miracles of nature became miracles of character.

FROM THEOPHANY TO VISION

The editors of the Book of Kings prefaced the scene of Elijah on Mount Horeb by the concatenation of narratives on the fire at Mount Carmel and the slaughter of the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:1 ff.).¹⁰

Elijah's Flight and Despair (1 Kings 19:1-8)

The story of the fire on Mount Carmel showed a Deity who used nature in a thaumaturgical way and who was also fiercely exclusive and even vindictive. As the fire came down from heaven and consumed not only the burnt offering and the wood but also the stones and the dust, even licking the water that was in the trench, all the people saw the wonder, fell on their faces, and cried, "Yahweh, he is God! Yahweh, he is God!" (vs. 39). The prophet immediately said to them, "Seize the prophets of Baal; let no one of them escape!" (vs. 40).

The figure of Elijah is portrayed as suprahuman. The rain falls at his command. Endowed with the physical strength of a demigod, he runs about seventeen miles ahead of the king's chariot to Jezreel. Yahweh's victory may have thrilled the imagination of the masses, but the agency of Elijah the thaumaturgist is in the end hollow. The king and the queen are not converted to a new style of conduct. Elijah, the superman, runs away for his life and flees to the Negeb, the southern wilderness. After a day's journey, he throws himself under a shrub and prays for death: "It is enough, now, O Yahweh, take away my life, for I am not better than my fathers" (1 Kings 19:1-4). The superman is merely a man.

Is it that the narrative wishes to show in parabolic form that miracles of a cosmic nature, even of the magnitude of that which elicited collective enthusiasm and conviction on Mt. Carmel for a day, do not truly transform human nature? In the end, there are only the wonders of the human person. Like Moses in the

tradition of the manna (Num. 11:10–15), the man of God is ready to give up. Why then does he sojourn at Mt. Horeb (1 Kings 19:8)? The context implies that for Elijah, in the ninth century B.C., the site of the “mount of Elohim” stands for the historical moment of two related events: the theophanic encounter between Yahweh and Moses, and the offer of the covenant to the people. The narrative which follows interweaves intimately the two motifs.¹¹

The Entrance of the Cave (1 Kings 19:9–18)

It has been noted for a long time that a certain amount of repetition overloads the theophanic speech, since the opening of the dialogue is found twice (vss. 8*b*, 9*abc*; vss. 13*bcd*). So is also the opening confessional statement of the prophet (vss. 10 and 14). Coming after the first description of Yahweh’s silence (vss. 11–12), the prophet’s reiteration of his confessional statement suggests a dramatic recital of a liturgical character. Elijah’s disciples and the schools of the prophets were exposed to the incoherence of man’s reaction to the display of divine silence after the display of divine violence through natural elements.

The story involves two distinct phases: first, the prophet is commanded to stand on the mountain before Yahweh, literally, “in the presence of Yahweh” (vs. 11). The narrator adds, in the language of the Mosaic theophany which opposed the motif of the name to the motif of the glory (Exod. 33:19), “And behold! Yahweh passed by” (1 Kings 19: 11 *b*). Three times, the negative statement dissociates the presence from the natural elements of nature in tumult, the wind, the earthquake, and the fire. It is that very force, the fire, which comes in a climactic position and inevitably recalls the victory on Mt. Carmel.

The threefold repetition, “And Yahweh was not in the wind,” “And Yahweh was not in the earthquake,” “And Yahweh was not in the fire,” constitutes a repudiation not only of the mode

of divine intervention on Mt. Carmel but also of the possibility that the Mosaic theophany on Mt. Horeb could occur again in later history. The era of theophany is now closed, and its validity is consigned to the hoary glamour of distant ages.

After three negative phrases, the positive statement provides the key to the understanding of the whole narrative: "And after the fire, the sound of utmost silence" (vs. 12b).¹² After the display of nature in violent motion, there comes the stillness which, by dramatic antithesis, may indeed be heard. It is a silence which may—so to speak—be "cut with a knife." It has nothing to do with "the still small voice" of conscience so dear to Immanuel Kant and the Protestant moralists of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Nor is it related to the notion of *nada*, characteristic of certain Spanish mystics, nor to the idea of nothingness, promoted by existential philosophers, both ancient and modern. It designates a reality that is proximate and provisional, subsequent to cosmic noise and preparatory to the awareness of presence.

The phrase which follows assumes a special function in the articulation of the story: "And when Elijah heard it [namely, the sound of utmost stillness], he wrapped his face in his mantle and he went forth and stood at the mouth of the cave" (vs. 13a). In the dynamics of this parabolic tale, this pivotal phrase binds together the two phases of the scene. Man conceals his face and especially his eyes, so as not to gaze on the Deity. The gesture is an acknowledgement of the inward certainty of the presence and, at the same time, the recognition of the *mysterium tremendum* of holiness: a theological assent of Elijah to the Mosaic acceptance of not seeing the glory (Exod. 33:23).

The second phase continues the theophanic speech but only after an entirely different mood has been established. Once again, "Behold, there came a voice to him, saying, 'What art thou doing here, Elijah?' " (vs. 13b.) The prophet repeats his previous stand (cf. vs. 10 with vs. 14). He shows a passionate

concern for Yahweh and the covenant people, but his zeal is tinged with a hint of self-pity (vs. 14). In an attempt to justify his extraordinary journey, aiming at rediscovering the creative moment of the national life, is he tempted also to become a second Moses? More specifically, does Elijah wish to recapture not only the past but also a mode of presence which might overcome his doubt concerning the future of Yahweh's experiment with Israel?

Thus, the voice of Yahweh, plain and articulate, pronounces the word of prophetic mission. The presence, from the epiphanic visitations to the patriarchs and from the Mosaic theophany to the prophetic vision of call and commission, causes the recipient of the word to become a *poète engagé*. He must act in history through other men.

First, Elijah receives a threefold command: to anoint Hazael as king of Damascus, as a retributive agent of the Lord Judge of history who summons even foreigners into his service against his own people; to anoint Jehu as king of Israel and to foment a coup *d'état* with a change of dynasty for the sake of religious reform; and to anoint Elisha as his own successor, thereby ensuring the goodly succession of faithful men across the generations.

Second, the solitary man of God receives an announcement of extraordinary significance for the later development of Hebraic faith: the seven thousand who have not bent the knee before the Baals constitute a new sociological entity which needs to be distinguished from the traditional reality of national religion. The expression "I have caused to remain [seven thousand]" (vs. 18) germinated in the following centuries into the notion of the "remnant,"¹³ a community of the faithful which could survive the destruction of the state and the annihilation of cultus, and which could potentially explode the restrictiveness of an ethnic community. Here we witness the birth of the idea of ecclesia, an assembly of those who trust their God

rather than submit to the tyranny of political or institutional conformism.

The Point of No Return

The story of Elijah on Mt. Horeb presents itself chronologically and thematically as a transition between the *legenda* of the presence in historical events and the historical sobriety of the records of the great prophets, for whom presence is individualized, interiorized, and often curtailed or adumbrated. Three points of theological significance arise:

1. The nature of the encounter between God and the prophet is that of a passing by or an approach.¹⁴ The nomadic metaphor is renewed in a situation of agrarian and technological civilization. The deities of the ancient Near East are not comparable to Yahweh. Even the cultic ideology of a temple must be submitted to the critique of prophetic experience. Yahweh is not to be closely associated with a given context, a sanctuary ritual, or a stable and localized institution. He is a God on the march. He never ceases from going and coming. In a manner of speaking, his absence is never far from his presence, and silence precedes the hearing of his word. Yahweh is neither manifest in the violent displays of nature nor present in the silence. When silence comes, however, and when man truly hears it and enters into the proper attitude of theocentric worship, God speaks.

2. The God who is coming is altogether different from the one that man expects. He is not the God whom memory, reason, or imagination anticipates, however marvelous and comforting the traditions may have been, and however satisfying the anticipation of a visionary presence might be. Byjourneying forty days and forty nights to Mt. Horeb, the site of the Mosaic theophanies, Elijah attempts to receive a testimony of theological persuasiveness, but when he witnesses the elements of thaumaturgical "evidence," he learns inwardly that Yahweh is

absent. The narrative invites a modern audience to reflect on the illusory character of man's attempts to return to an archaic past (as in biblical fundamentalism), to rely on proofs of God's existence (as in theological rationalism), or to seek sensorial perceptions of the divine (as in most forms of mysticism).

Religiously initiated and educated man is completely deceived. The unexpected comes at the core of the expected. Yet Yahweh gives a sign which does not deceive. The presence is elusive but real. Elijah receives a form of certainty which transcends his natural faculties. God preserves his incognito while making his ways known. He does not reveal his being, his inner self, or-to use the language of the Mosaic theophany-his glory (Exod. 33:18, 20), but he discloses parabolically an intention of momentous consequences for mankind. Presence does not alter nature but it changes history through the character of men.

3. The encounter between God and man does not operate in a historical vacuum. In the presence of the Hebraic God, man is not separated from his cultural context. Indeed, Elijah is dramatically rebuked for his deliberate flight from the world. Yahweh's order, "Go, return on thy journey" (vs. 15), seems to echo his twice-made query, "What art thou doing here, Elijah?" (Vss. 9, 13).¹⁵ God is not standing aloof in heaven, away from the affairs of this world. He is not involved, however, in the interests of single groups-even the special people of the covenant-without, at the same time, raising for himself in Damascus, as well as in Samaria, agents of his historical purpose. By keeping a nascent "remnant" for the sake of the purity of faith, this God stands above all political structures. The manifestation of divine presence to Elijah on Mt. Horeb links the Abrahamic ideology of "all the families of the earth" (Gen. 12:3) to the theology of Israel, the suffering servant of Yahweh chosen to be "a light to the nations" (Isa. 42:6, etc.).

The last theophany renders "old-time religion" obsolete. It

ushers in a new mode of presence, which involves men in the influence of character. When Elijah heard the silence which followed the display of the absence of God, "he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave" (vs. 13). Though he recognized the presence, he did not see God. He only heard a voice, and it was the voice of commission. Elijah was not a new Moses. He became the forerunner of Amos.

THE VISIONS OF THE CALL

When Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel described their visions, their purpose was always to proclaim their prophetic commissions. Diviners and mystics search for God and believe that they can find him.¹⁶ They depend on some institutional or technical mode of presence. Not the great prophets. Like the patriarchs, Moses, and the Judges, they were the bearers of an unexpected and generally disruptive call.¹⁷ They did not initiate: they responded.

Form-critical analysis has shown in modern times that the stories of the prophets' calling were composed according to a literary genre closely akin to that of the epiphanic visitations to the Patriarchs or to that of the Mosaic theophanies.¹⁸ The *Gattung* of the prophetic calling may also have been influenced by the Egyptian literary genre of the installation of the grand vizier at the Pharaonic courts.¹⁹ Like the lord chamberlain of the Pharaoh, the prophet was "ordained" to become the mouthpiece of the Deity.²⁰ Such a formal stylization of literary expression, however, does not in any way preclude the genuineness of the prophetic vision.

Amos and his successors were confronted with the sudden discovery of a presence. "Yahweh kidnapped me from behind

my flock,” exclaimed Amos, as if he had in mind the memory of some lamb seized by a mountain lion (Amos 7:15). Unprepared and unaware, the prophets faced the abrupt knowledge of a reality which did not spring out of cultic space or cultic time. With the possible exception of Isaiah,²¹ they received their call in a secular place and apparently not in some sacred season or during the celebration of a festival, although it was in such circumstances and surroundings that they publicly recounted the salient aspects of their experiences.

Amos of Teqoa (751 B.C.)

The prophet’s recounting of his own visions (7:1–9, 8:1–3, 9:1–4) was interrupted by his expulsion from the royal sanctuary of Bethel (7:10–17). The reason for the surprising sequence of the present text seems to be clear. The prophet’s message of doom for the kingdom of Israel provoked a challenge to his authority. It was not willingly or boastfully that he recounted the moments of intimacy which created a new consciousness in him. It was the only way he could justify the enormity and the scandalous character of his message.²²

It has long been observed that the visions of Amos do not correspond to the pattern of those of the other great prophets.²³ Amos may well have received his initial summons (7:1–15) in a previous experience which has not been recorded for posterity, but the five visions which are preserved offer a unique insight into the slow maturation process which presided over the growth of his consciousness as a prophet of doom.²⁴ These visions were apparently spread over several months, from spring to autumn.²⁵ This lapse of time may reveal the evolution of the prophet’s mind under the impact of divine prodding and the progressive acceptance of his detestable mission. The shattering effect of repeated encounters with the Deity gradually molds man’s acquiescence to the incredible prospect of national disaster.

The First Vision: The Locusts (7:1-3). April-May is the season which separates the two growths of grass in the pastures. The first growth belongs to the royal government, since fodder is needed for the king's horses. If locusts devour the second growth, cattle will starve during the summer drought.

- 7:1. Here is what my Master Yahweh caused me to see:
 He was busy creating locusts,
 When fresh green grass grows again in springtime
 After the king's mowing.
2. As they finished eating up the herb of the earth,
 I said, Forgive, I pray thee, my Master Yahweh!
 How could Jacob rise again? He is so small!
3. Yahweh grieved deeply²⁶ over this:
 It shall not be, said Yahweh.

The prophet intercedes. Man's prayer stirs God's pathos. The vision concerns only natural objects, but the presence confers upon this banality a prophetic significance. Man's freedom and God's compassion are held in tense equilibrium.²⁷

The Second Vision: The Great Abyss (7:4-6). The meaning of the trial of the great abyss by fire is not clear. In the sequence of the visions which precede and follow, the occasion for the second was likely the dog days which usually follow the summer solstice in July. During a heat wave, the bottom of the lowest canyon on earth—nearly a mile below Teqoa—the Dead Sea looks like a boiling caldron. The fear of cosmic annihilation prompts the prophet to step up the tone of his intercession. Instead of praying, “forgive,” he expostulates, “desist!” Solidarity with the poor of Jacob leads the intercessor to challenge the Deity. Presence intensifies freedom.

The Third Vision: The Plumbline (7:7-9). The form of the third vision is radically different. No longer witnessing an event in nature and its mythical environment, the prophet penetrates the realm of history. Yahweh will place a plumbline in the midst

of his people Israel and no longer pass them by (vs. 8). Since walls are rebuilt every summer around orchards and vineyards in an effort to protect maturing fruits from animal and human marauders, the seasonal setting for the third vision is July-August. The exact image of the plumbline is a matter of scholarly discussion,²⁸ but the general meaning of the symbol is clear enough. From the picture of a cosmic ordeal, the prophet's attention is steered toward the corruption of the covenant people. The prophet no longer intercedes on the behalf of the small nation: the wall crumbles from within. Presence, which cultic rite summons, maintains, or renews, has turned into the power of judgment.

The Fourth Vision: The Basket of Fruits (8:1-2). The use of a paronomasia tightens the rhetorical crispness, and the finality of the verdict emerges from the assonance as well as from the semantic association: a basket of fruits (*qayis*) signifies that the end (*qêys*) has come. The season is August-September. While olives, pomegranates, almonds, and grapes overload their branches, "ripeness is all." Maturity ushers in the finality of putrescence. The prophet no longer intercedes. He assents. A picture of chaos follows (vss. 3-14).

The Fifth Vision: "Strike the Altar!" (9:1-6). Yahweh himself is standing on the altar and orders Amos to strike its cornice. God intends to pursue all with divine fury, even to the mythical extremities of the universe. Commentators generally agree that this scene was suggested by the celebration of the autumn festival in September-October. The form of high stylization, with repetitions and significant variations, indicates once again that the power of the ecstatic image stimulates rather than impedes intellectual reflection. Vision and word are inseparable.

Presence appears at once to burst forth climactically from a long acquaintance of intimacy with the divine and to crystallize an inwardly appropriated inheritance of Yahwistic faith.²⁹ The last two visions, particularly, indicate that Amos stood squarely

within the tradition of the Mosaic theophany³⁰ as it was cultically concretized through the covenant celebration of the yearly feast.³¹ Amos reversed the popular eschatology which this tradition had produced. He expected the day of Yahweh to be a day of judgment. At the same time, the sapiential “humanism” to which Amos had been exposed broadened spectacularly his historical horizon.³³ The sweep of the divine concern for mankind included all nations and all races, the distant and different Ethiopians, even the most hated enemies of Israel—the Philistines and the Syrians (9:7).

The five visions seem to have come after years of protracted and sustained meditation upon society and the world in a peculiarly prophetic mode of presence: day-in and day-out intimacy with a traveling companion, a God-man companionship comparable to the lasting familiarity of two men walking in the wilderness together (3:2–7). They share secrets (vs. 7).³⁴ Vision and word are inseparable because vision follows communion. Far from reducing the prophet’s volition to passivity, or producing aphasia, inaction, and social withdrawal, the power of ecstasy³⁵ enhances his passion to intervene actively within the life of the nation and increases the inner strength which enables him to face social opprobrium and threats to his safety. The prophetic brand of response to presence is not through an “ecstasy of absorption” but through an “ecstasy of concentration” which heightens the faculties of critical analysis as well as the emotional drive to involve the self deliberately and perhaps wrecklessly in the historical situation.³⁶

Response to the stimulus of presence becomes the mold of theology. Ideas follow images, as “irrational” vision slowly brings forth “rational” certainty. The recital of the last visions flows into the formulation of discourses (8:4–14), and discourses in turn exteriorize and explain action (9: 1–6).³⁷ Such a phenomenon is not the mark of mystical quietism. The visions move from emotion to thought and from thought to deed. The

ardor of Yahweh the Judge reaches a climax with the frenzy of Yahweh the Executioner, and the prophet himself is bidden to act as the Executioner's assistant (9:1). The prophet is a true poet, in the etymological sense of the Greek word *poiētês*. Presence calls him to be a speaker and an actor with God, almost an actor for God. The last vision introduces the "prophetic act," by which the presence is so intense that the prophet becomes the impersonator and the living incarnator of divinity.³⁸

It is not by chance that the action of the prophet (9:1) is summoned in the context of an attack upon the localized, concentrated mode of presence in the cultus. The sword stroke upon the cornice of the altar initiates the universal broadening of the scope of presence in judgment. In a flight of rhetorical imagination, the prophet expresses as never before the cosmic sweep of the presence. He depicts Yahweh reaching out into the underworld—a motif unexpressed elsewhere in Hebraic thought, except in wisdom poetry.³⁹ He even places the myth of the sea serpent within the compass of divine omnipotence.

Hosea of Benjamin (ca. 743)

The Book of Hosea contains no story of prophetic vision nor does it record any dialogue of prophetic vocation. However, the biographical narrative of his marriage (1:2–9) and the autobiographical confession of his remarriage (3: 1–5) offer data on the most peculiar form of human response to divine presence that may be found in the religious literature of ancient Israel.⁴⁰

Outwardly, these stories describe a series of prophetic acts⁴¹ similar to those which are told in the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. In a scandalously startling manner, which was bound to compel attention, Hosea was attempting effectively to convey Yahweh's message. He married a whore "because the land had prostituted itself by abandoning Yahweh" (1:2). Inwardly, these stories throw light on the hidden process of near

identification with the divine reality by which a prophet enters into “the knowledge of God” (6:6).

The Biographical Narrative (1:2-9). There is no compelling reason for rejecting the plain meaning of the text. Hosea was already conscious of his vocation when he was told to take for himself “a handsome and promiscuous woman”⁴² as a living symbol of Israel. At the same time, one should admit that a proleptical telescoping of memory may have led the prophet years after the event to interpret his fascination for the woman he married as part of his prophetic mission.

Be that as it may, the first child of the couple was legitimate, for the text pointedly states, “and she conceived and she bore him a son” (vs. 3). Hosea named him “Jizreel” (“God sows the seed”; cf. 2:22-23 [Heb. 24-25]). The symbolism of the name was related explicitly to Jehu’s coup d’etat and bloodshed, a portent of the nation’s corruption (vs. 4). The second and third children were illegitimate, for the text omits the pronoun “to him” when it states that the woman conceived again and bore a daughter (vs. 6) and, later on, conceived once more and bore a son (vs. 8). The names of these infants reflect the prophetic consciousness of their legal father: Lo-ruhamah, “One-who-does-not-receive-motherly-love,” and Lo-ammi, “Not-my-people.” They also seem to suggest that Hosea knew the children were illegitimate. The way he spoke elsewhere of the love of Yahweh for Israel may even indicate that Hosea acted at times as a substitute mother for these bastard children, teaching them how to walk, taking them up in his arms, caressing them against his cheek,⁴³ and feeding them when they were hungry (cf. 11:3-4). The concreteness of the language unmistakably reveals personal experience.

Hosea thus endured public shame and dishonor in order to portray not only an unfaithful Israel but also a dishonored and shamed Deity. Through the performance of prophetic acts,

presence became “incarnational.” Representing God, the prophet suffered in his own life the agony of God.⁴⁴ The style of the divorce proceeding (2:1–13 [Heb. 4–15]) cannot conceal the pain of an emasculated ego. In a fit of erotic jealousy, the prophet projected his own turmoil into the divine realm. An accent of emotional authenticity permeates every line of the poem. The reader is no longer able to discern whether the rage with which the deceived husband promises himself to strip the woman naked and expose her lewdness to the world (2:3 [Heb. 5]) applies to the injured God of a covenant that has been violated or to Hosea himself, caught in the depth of his being by the very cruelty of a love which finds no response.

The Autobiographical Confession (3:1–5). The text unambiguously says, as it does in the biographical narrative of the marriage (1:2), that the prophet received and obeyed orders:

And Yahweh said to me again, Go, love [the] woman⁴⁵ who is loved of a lover and is an adulteress, even as Yahweh loves the people of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love raisin cakes.⁴⁶ So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley. And I said to her, Thou wilt dwell as mine for many days; thou wilt not play the harlot or belong to any man; so will I also be to thee (3:1–4).

The style of personal address and confession probably indicates that the prophet told this story within the intimate circle of his followers. Is it that gratuitous love—human or divine—requires the reticence of privacy? The dynamics of obedience are so enmeshed with the dynamics of experience that one cannot speculate on the anteriority of psychological introspection over theological revelation, or vice-versa.

The transition from the decision to repudiate to the intention to save is unexpected, unless one sees the autobiographical

confession in the light of the poetry of a new betrothal (2:14–23 [Heb. 16–25]). It may be that the poet's bruised *erôs* was the laboratory for the discovery of Yahweh's *agapê*. The startling order to love the adulterous woman, as Yahweh loves unfaithful Israel, implies a notion of self-giving love (*agapê*) rather than the egocentric, self-seeking "love" (*erôs*) of natural anthropology. The Greek-speaking Jews of Alexandria in the Hellenistic period did not miss the nuance, as shown by the Septuagint translation of this passage.⁴⁷ The distinction does not oppose spiritual to sexual love, as has often been maintained on the assumption of a dualistic anthropology, for the denial of sexual intimacy is only part of a temporary trial, a symbol of political, cultic, and economic restraint in the national return to "the wilderness" (vs. 5). Once again, the language intermingles the prophet's own experience and the theological word. The prophetic consciousness is inseparable from the lover's introspection.

The prophet Amos, before Hosea, had considered the faint possibility of divine grace for a remnant, but explicitly and unambiguously he tied this possibility to the previous fulfillment of several radical conditions: national repentance, the hate of evil, the love of good, and the establishment of justice in the civil and judiciary branches of the government (Amos 5:15). He apparently did not expect that such a conversion would take place, and his eschatology was one of unrelieved doom.

On the contrary, Hosea discerned in self-giving love a power of educational persuasiveness which would make repentance possible, both at the level of the man-woman relationship and in the realm of the covenant renewal:

"Therefore, behold, I will allure her,
and bring her into the wilderness,
and speak tenderly to her" (2:14 [Heb. 16]).

The psychological complexity of the prophetic act continues to penetrate the formulation of the theological hope:

“In that day, says Yahweh, thou wilt call me My Husband (*’ish*) and no longer wilt thou call me My Master” (*ba’al*; 2:16 [Heb. 18]).

The expectation of a national crisis is not, as in Amos, colored by the finality of a cosmic annihilation.⁴⁸ It is predicated upon a philosophy of suffering which unites psychology and theology and discerns in the experience of pain a process of character transformation (Hos. 3:4-5). That the prophet used his own faculties of subjective reflectiveness in order to give rhetorical shape to his theological word⁴⁹ and therefore to find in his own emotional upheaval the mirror of divine pathos is implied by many of his poetic sayings.⁵⁰ None of these is more eloquent than his oft-quoted strophe on the *agon* of hesitation which comes from the depths of his prophetic consciousness and bears at the same time the mark of a lover’s passionate quandary:

How can I give thee up, Ephraim?
How can I hand thee over, Israel?

My own heart recoils against me,
My grief and my compassion⁵¹ are kindled together:
I will not execute the rage of my wrath,
I will not return to destroy Ephraim!
For I am God and not man,
The Holy One in the midst of thee,
And I will not come in anger⁵² (Hos. 11:8-9).

Repentance is the response to gratuitous love, not its condition. The new marriage will be founded not only upon respect for justice and right but also upon the more subtle realities of fidelity and mercy, and its aim will be the immediacy of knowledge between God and man:

I will betroth thee to me forever,
 I will betroth thee to me in justice and in right,
 In loyalty and in tender compassion,
 I will betroth thee to me in faith,
 And thou wilt know Yahweh

(Hos. 2:19-20 [Heb. 20-21])

The response “My God” (2:23 [Heb. 25]) will seal the renewal of the covenant relationship.⁵³

The prophet has been invaded and permeated by the presence of Yahweh in such a way that he has become a living monstrosity of the divine reality. Yet one should not understand this near-identification of God and man as a fusion, either mystical or mythical, for the tension between transcendence and immanence is never abrogated. Yahweh may be “in the midst of” Israel as he manifests his being “within” Hosea, but he is also the Holy One. The use of the name *Hag-qadosh*, “the Holy One,” shows that for Hosea the Godhead remains charged with the terror of the “wholly other.” Yahweh is God and not man. This is precisely why, unlike man, he is moved by the self-giving quality of a love that is centered upon the good of its object. Hosea learns from the Holy One that a certain kind of love possesses the virtue of healing, saving, and life-renewing. *Da’at Elohim*, “the knowledge of God” (Hos. 6:6),⁵⁴ discloses to the prophet that *agapê* constitutes the core of holiness.

Isaiah of Jerusalem (ca. 742-683 B.C.)

The paradox of holiness which Hosea perceived in the power of love also dominated the thinking of his southern disciple, Isaiah of Jerusalem; but it produced a different form of hope, since it reduced the salvation of the people to a converted remnant.

The Vision in the Temple (Isa. 6:1-13). Isaiah was probably a cultic prophet attached to the temple of Jerusalem.⁵⁵ He presumably

received a vision while prostrate in the middle room (*hēkal*) of the edifice. Nevertheless, presence did not mean for him the inviolability of Zion.⁵⁶ Analysis of the narrative shows that “the house” which elsewhere always designates an earthly sanctuary, was only the setting of a suprasensorial perception of the heavenly temple.⁵⁷

1. The divine manifestation.

In the year of King Uzziah’s death, I saw Adonay sitting on an exalted throne and his royal robes filled the middle room of the sanctuary. Seraphim stood above him. Each of them had six wings, two for covering their faces, two for covering their feet,⁵⁸ and two for flying. And they alternated their acclamations, saying,
 Holy, holy, holy, Yahweh of Hosts,
 the whole earth is filled with his glory.
 The hinges of the doors vibrated at the voice of those who made the acclamations. and the house was filled with smoke.

2. The prophet’s reaction

And I said,
 Woe is me! I am utterly lost,
 for I am a man of impure lips,
 and I dwell in the midst of a people of impure lips,
 yet my eyes have seen the King, Yahweh of Hosts!

3. The purification

And one of the seraphim flew toward me. He had in his hand
 a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar.
 And he touched my mouth, saying,
 Behold, this has touched thy lips,
 thy guilt is removed, and thy sin atoned for.

4. The vocation

And I heard the voice of Adonay saying,
 Whom shall I send and who will go for us?

And I said,
Here am I, send me.

5. The commission

And he said,
Go and say to this people,
Hear continually, but do not understand,
See and go on seeing, but do not know ...
Lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears,
and turn and be healed.

6. The question

Then I said,
How long, Adonay?

7. The reply

And he said,
Until the cities lie in waste without inhabitants,
and houses without men,
And the land is utterly desolate ...
Although a tenth still remain,
it will be burnt,
Like a terebinth or an oak,
of which only a stump remains when it is felled;
this trunk is the seed of the Holy One.⁵⁹

This majestic scene, told with solemnity and stylistic restraint, has received innumerable commentaries over the centuries. Historians of comparative religions have pointed out cultic and mythic features which Isaiah appears to have borrowed from the ancient Near East. Form-critical and tradition-historical exegetes have shown the affinities which link this narrative with the literary *Gattungen* of the epiphanic visitation to the patriarchs (especially the Abrahamic dialogue), the Mosaic theophany (especially the scene of the Burning Bush), and the council of Yahweh (especially the vision of Micayah ben Yim-

lah).⁶⁰ Nevertheless, an Isaian distinctiveness sharply delineates itself within the traditional pattern:

1. The royal majesty of God stands above historical kingship: "In the year of the death of King Uzziah ... my eyes have seen the King."⁶¹

2. The holiness of Yahweh transcends cultic edifices, for his glory fills the earth in its entirety instead of being confined to a sanctuary.⁶²

3. The prophet's guilt-consciousness arises both from his sense of social solidarity as member of a corrupt people and from his vision of the holy God. The quality of the presence is so overwhelming that the prophet, certainly not a moral or legal delinquent, feels by contrast the guilt of his finiteness. Yet, awareness of sin comes only to those who stand at the verge of reconciliation. Despair over the self grows from a sense of unworthiness, but it cannot annihilate the personality of the prophet. Within holiness, the disciple of Hosea discerns the healing quality of love: he is purified and accepted.

4. Purification and atonement are cultic rites, but they are performed by the seraphim, heavenly beings of the flame, who belong to the realm of divine holiness. The prophet's vision transcends the sacerdotal system, for it is God who initiates and fulfils the institutional deed.

5. The prophet's surrender to the holy presence precedes and prepares the readiness of his answer to the call. Form-critical analysts are compelled to recognize that the pattern of human hesitation, refusal, or even revolt is here broken. When Isaiah becomes aware of Yahweh's summons and of his search for a messenger at a given moment of history, he knows only one response, direct, unswerving, unqualified, unhesitating: "Here am I, send me."

6. The negative character of the commission does not prevent the prophet's decision to obey the call. Prospects of prag-

matic success or failure do not affect Isaiah's motivation. The question "How long, Adonay?" should not be interpreted as part of the form-critical structure of "objection," nor should the divine reply be construed as the traditional motif of "reassurance."⁶³ Rather, the plaintive interjection of the ancient Near Eastern prayer of supplication indicates that he stood for a moment, like Amos, as an intercessor on behalf of the doomed people.⁶⁴ Thereupon, as a diplomatic attache, loyal to the Great King, he stood by his orders.⁶⁵ There was no hope for the kingdom of Judah, but a remnant, a seed of the Holy One, would eventually usher in the era of peace.

The Deus Absconditus (8:16-18). The moment before God is swiftly spent, even for a prophet, and it may never return. Isaiah appears to have lived most of his adult years on the strength of his initial appointment as a prophet. Soon after his unsuccessful intervention with King Ahaz, during the Syro-Ephraimitic War (735-734 B.C.) and his prediction of the birth of the mysterious Immanuel (7:14), he announced before witnesses the birth of his own son, Maher-shalal-hash-baz (8:1-4). Thereupon, he seems to have retired from public life, perhaps in imitation of God's own withdrawal from the history of the covenant people. For many years, he apparently confined his energies to the training of "prophetic seminarians," preparing for the next generation.

Such is probably the significance of a somewhat enigmatic statement, now inserted in the series of the Immanuel oracles (7:1—9:7 [Heb. 6]):

Bind up the testimony,
 Seal the teaching among my disciples:
 I will wait for Yahweh
 who hides⁶⁶ his face from the house of Jacob,
 And I will hope in him.

Behold, I and the children whom Yahweh has given me
are signs and portents in Israel,
from Yahweh who dwells on Mount Zion.⁶⁷

(Isa. 8:16-18)

This short passage brings together in a surprising way a number of motifs which are not apparently related: the establishment of a prophetic school, the silent testimony of the prophet and of his children endowed with symbolic names, and the declaration of hope in the *Deus absconditus*.

As is well known, the latter theme was destined to become exceptionally popular among religious thinkers of Judaism and Christianity. The passive latinity of the expression *Deus absconditus*, "the hidden God," may fail to convey the meaning of active and sustained determination which the Hebrew original carries.⁶⁸ For the prophet, there is no doubt that the God who hides his face is very much alive. During the eclipse of God, the man of faith formulates a theology of hope; and he is able to wait creatively,⁶⁹ for he remembers the power of his prophetic vision. The presence which conceals itself is not an absence.⁷⁰

In his inner being, the prophet nurtured the awareness of a presence which was anchored both in the past and the future. He remembered and he waited. In the meantime, his own children became signs and portents. Like the offspring of the Hosea household, Isaiah's children carried names which proclaimed insistently and even stridently the word he received during the vision of his call, not only Maher-shalal-hash-baz, "Hurry-to-the-spoil-hasten-to-loom," but also Shear-yashub, "A-Remnant-shall-be-converted." Even the name of the wonder-child, Immanuel, who may or may not have been his own,⁷¹ carried a prophetic warning regarding the ambiguity of the divine nearness, "God-with-us," an ambiguity which was similar to that of Hosea's oracle on the Holy One in the midst of Israel.⁷²

Both the children and the disciples of Isaiah may represent

his participation in the remnant—a historical link or bridge destined to connect the doomed economy of historical existence with the reign of universal peace at the advent of the Prince of peace.⁷³ Like his predecessors, Amos and Hosea, the prophet who saw Yahweh dwelling on Mount Zion no longer believed in the historical continuity of political and cultic institutions. The knowledge of the dynamic power of holiness which he received in his prophetic vision prompted him to discern the ambivalence of the holy place. It was no accident that his enigmatic statement on the *Deus absconditus* is now prefaced by an appeal to transcend the sanctuary:

Yahweh of Hosts, him shall you hold as holy!
 Let him be your fear, and even your terror,
 And he will become a sanctuary,
 And a stone of offense, and a rock of stumbling ...
 A trap and a snare . . .

(Isa. 8:13–14)

The prophet has become a theologian of the unfettered, uncontrollable holy. What Rudolf Otto wrote of Martin Luther may be applied to the Hebrew prophet who first grasped the rapport between holiness and self-concealing presence: “That before which his soul quails again and again in awe is not merely the stern Judge demanding righteousness ... but rather at the same time God in his ‘unrevealedness,’ in the awful majesty of his very Godhead: He before whom trembles not simply the transgressor of the law, but the creature, as such, in his ‘uncovered’ creaturehood.”⁷⁴

Between the memory of his vision of holiness and the waiting for Yahweh, the prophet lived by faith. It was apparently he who revived the Abrahamic motif of *'emunah*, “faith,”⁷⁵ and gave it theological currency. He had experienced the staying power of the *Amen*: “No faith, no staith,” was perhaps his motto.⁷⁶ His faith was the ground of his hope.

Jeremiah of Anathoth (cu. 626-580 B.C.)

The prophet Jeremiah belonged to a sacerdotal family living in Anathoth, a few miles north of Jerusalem, in the old territory of Benjamin (Jer. 1:1). It was there that Solomon, in the tenth century B.C., had banished Abiathar, the priest of David, who had opposed Solomon's illegal seizure of the throne (1 Kings 2:26-27). Jeremiah may therefore have been brought up in a family tradition of opposition to the Solomonic style of kingship and especially to the Zadokite priesthood of Jerusalem.

The story of Jeremiah's vision and call is told in three parts, each one presented as a distinctive coming of Yahweh's word to him.⁷⁷ In fact, however, it records neither a vision nor, strictly speaking, a call. To be sure, it contains traditional elements, such as the prophetic protest of the Mosaic type, or the seeing of trivial objects as in Amos.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, the structure of the scene is original and defies the ingenuity of form-critical analysis.⁷⁹ Most significantly, Jeremiah was not invited to become a prophet. Rather Yahweh informed him in a unique way that he had been brought into being specifically to be a prophet.⁸⁰

Born to Be a Prophet (1:4-10). Amos had thought that one day in time-Yahweh had seized him from behind his flock (7:14-15); Hosea had received the order-one day in time-to marry a promiscuous woman (1:2); and Isaiah had seen-one day in time-the royal splendor of Yahweh (6:1 ff.). All three, like Moses, could remember the exact day they had become prophets. In a similar way, Jeremiah could remember the day he had experienced an immediate encounter with the Godhead. Unlike his predecessors, however, Jeremiah was not made a prophet by that day in time. Instead, it disclosed to him a most peculiar conviction-he had come into being for the purpose of proclaiming the prophetic word:

“Before I formed thee in the womb I knew thee;
And before thou camest forth I made thee holy;
A prophet to the nations I ordained thee” (vs. 5).

Commentators who discern here a notion of divine fore-knowledge or of predestination-doctrines of a later age which are generally mistaken for a form of philosophical determinism -seem to miss the warmth of the self-awareness which the prophet experienced at the moment of this disclosure. He learned that he was surrounded spatially and temporally by the divine mind. He discovered that he himself had been created for a divinely defined purpose. Poets of the Jeremianic school have applied to new situations the prophet’s sense of creatureliness.⁸¹

The prophetic consciousness of Jeremiah was inseparable from his ontological awareness. He was not a man called to prophethood. He had been born to be a prophet. His existential selfhood belonged to the *telos* of the Creator. Presence preceded his being brought into existence. His finiteness was shored up by the intention of God.

Jeremiah also learned that Yahweh had not only known and appointed him but had also “consecrated” him, literally, made him “holy.” This is an unexpected and in fact unique claim for a great prophet of Israel. Translators and commentators are apparently so surprised by the expression that they soften or even ignore its importance. Many render the Hebrew verb *hiq-dashtika*, “I have made thee holy,” by the rather neutral and secular phrase “I have set thee apart.” The notion of holiness, however, did not apply to objects or to persons other than divine, except among priestly circles.⁸² Jeremiah thought of himself as entirely “devoted” to Yahweh by Yahweh himself, and he therefore shared in some mythopoetic fashion in the holiness of Yahweh. Presence of the holy threw Isaiah into the terror of self-hate and self-destruction. Presence of the holy

embraced Jeremiah and drew him into an awesome involvement with the divine. "A priest is holy to his God" (Lev. 21:7) was the motto of the sacerdotal collegium which survived the exile from Jerusalem. A theological gulf, however, separated the priests from Jeremiah. To them the Holiness Code admonished, "Consecrate yourselves, and be ye holy, for I am Yahweh your God" (Lev. 20:7). Ritual manipulated the holy. To Jeremiah, Yahweh himself said, "I have consecrated thee." Presence of the holy made him holy.

The theocentricity of Jeremiah's introspective insight into his own identity—even if this insight emerged from a shattering moment of trance—left him with no freedom to refuse. He was not invited to answer a call. He was informed that he was born to be a prophet. Nevertheless, he dared to respond, not with a protest of refusal, but with a plea for mercy that was based on his youth and his inability to speak (vs. 6). Yahweh promised him the assurance of a continuous presence, according to the Mosaic pattern of vocation:

"I shall be with thee to succor thee" (vs. 8).

Jeremiah heard no seraphic *Sanctus*. He shared in the "apartness" of the holy. He was not overwhelmed by a sense of guilt. He did not need a purification of the lips. Instead, he received the visual, tactile, and auditory sensation of Yahweh's hand touching his mouth and of the divine voice saying,

"Behold, I have put my words in thy mouth" (vs. 9).⁸³

The prophet understood that he was more than a bearer of the word⁸⁴ who faithfully repeated a message. He had been transformed into the mouthpiece of the Deity. Mythopoetic thinking even led him in later years to develop his own interpretation of the presence of the word in the startlingly concrete terms of a

quasi-sacramental absorption. He said to his God in a prayer: "As soon as thy words came to me, I ate them, and thy word was for me cheerfulness and joy" (15: 16).⁸⁵ The process of prophetic revelation was fully interiorized. The word had been "inwardly digested." As is well known, this image appealed to the imagination of Jewish and Christian mystics and became especially popular with Protestant divines after the Reformation.

For Jeremiah, presence of the holy produced a sense of participation in the word which was akin to physical nourishment.

Wakeful Over the Word (1:11-12). As the first "vision" climaxed with the ingestion of the divine word, the second followed hard upon it:

And the word of Yahweh came to me, saying:

What seest thou, Jeremiah?

And I said, I see a branch of almond-tree in blossom;

And Yahweh said to me, Thou hast well seen,

For I am wakeful over my word to fulfill it.

The consonantal alliteration of "almond-tree" (*shaqed*) and "wakeful" (*shoqed*) stressed through playful etymology the urgency of speaking the divine word.⁸⁶ On the hillside below Anathoth, the almond trees bloom ahead of other trees. Their white and rose flowers, with fragile stems, are soon blown away by the January winds. Etymological association suggests wakefulness at the earliest season and ephemerality under duress, thereby justifying inner strength as well as hard determination. Yahweh watches over his word as he watches over the life of nature. The prophet of the word is implicitly invited to enter into the *imitatio Dei*.

The Heated Crucible (1:13-19). The third part of the "vision" of the call, like the second, interprets the sighting of a seemingly neutral object. A crucible heated on a fire that has been "blown

upon” (*naphû^{ah}*) by the wind⁸⁷ is tilted away from the north: a marvellously ambivalent image which ushers in both an oracle of judgment and a promise of reassurance:

“From the north disaster shall flare up⁸⁸
 against all the inhabitants of the land,
 For, behold! I am about to summon all the nations
 and all the kingdoms of the north, said Yahweh” (vs.14).

The art of metallurgy, which is evoked by the sight of the heated crucible, is lifted out of its original connotation of the military-industrial complex and is now used to introduce the motif of presence which makes strength:⁸⁹

“But thou! Tighten thy champion’s girdle!
 Behold! I make thee this day a fortified city,
 a pillar of iron, a battlement of bronze
 Against the whole land, the kings and princes of Judah,
 the priests and the common people:
 They will wage war against thee but not prevail,
 for I am with thee to succour thee, Oracle of Yahweh!”
 (vss. 17-19)

The presence of Yahweh had revealed to Jeremiah that he was born to be a prophet to the nations (vs. 4). The sight of almond blossoms invited him to watch with Yahweh over the word. The sight of a heated crucible brought to his mind the signal of his conversion from irresponsible timidity to stalwart adulthood. Although later in life he found himself prey to mockery, persecution, mistreatment, and the dread of death, he was able to endure. He knew the tortures of ostracism and solitary confinement, but he outlived five kings as well as the kingdom. Presence had turned a weakling into a metal-girded fortress.

Ezekiel of Tel-Aviv (ca. 593 B.C.)

Strikingly different from the narratives of his predecessors

was the story of Ezekiel's vocation (1:1—3:15).⁹⁰ The son of a Jerusalem priest, Ezekiel presumably belonged to the Zadokite family. After the first siege of Jerusalem (597 B.C.), he was deported with the elite of the city to the marshes of southern Mesopotamia. Four years later, in the torrid torpidity of a summer day, as he sat amid the giant reeds near the water-edge of the "river Chebar,"⁹¹ he "saw visions of Elohim" (1:1). The bizarre description of his experience has colored the accounts of many apocalypticists and mystics ever since.⁹²

The Fiery Chariot (1:4-21). No prophet before Ezekiel had claimed that "the heavens were opened" for him. This specific aspect of his ecstasy may have been inspired by his sacerdotal upbringing. As the member of a priestly family, the young deportee had doubtless believed that Yahweh dwelt in Zion. He could not expect that Yahweh would manifest his presence in a remote and totally alien land except through some shattering of the cosmic order.

The prolixity of the style of this account contrasts sharply with the elliptical crispness of Amos or with the stateliness of Isaiah's picture of the holy. Later in his career, however, Ezekiel used parables, dirges, and satires, which reveal his mastery of many poetic idioms. If he told the story of his call with lexicographic and syntactic ponderousness, he may have been obeying a valid impulse: the visions were ineffable. How could he convey in spatial and necessarily static terms the dynamic motility and the fluid effulgence of the divine glory? Thus he relied on strange comparisons which risked misunderstanding and required qualifying correction. By a repetitive accumulation of synonyms, he sought to guard against the betrayal of similes.

Through such impossible incongruities as wheels with eyes, Ezekiel discerned and conveyed his perception of divine omniscience. The four living beings in the midst of fire evoked the

four corners of the universe, but they were not immersed in nature. Their anthropomorphic and zoomorphic features would not permit a confusion with the human or animal realm, for he presented them only as an adumbration of the corporateness of the divine personality. The alternation of feminine and masculine genders for the pronouns referring to these beings merely stressed the beyondness of the Godhead over the finitude of human sexuality.⁹³ God was distinct, and at the same time near.

The Likeness of the Glory (1:22-28). As the record of the visions proceeded to penetrate closer to the core of mystery, the accumulation of mutually exclusive elements helped to build up the awareness of transcendence. Sound and sight were intermingled. The “awesome crystal” evoked the ice of the mythical north (cf. Job 37:22). The blue sapphire designated not the firmament but its likeness (cf. Exod. 24:10). Sounds were compared in rapid succession to the rush of primal waters, the thunder of the Mosaic theophany, and the tumult of marching hosts. Noises piled up and canceled one another out. There was light, brightness, flame, and dazzling effulgence. “Seated above the likeness of a throne was a likeness as it were of a human form” (vs. 26). Did then the prophet perceive the fullness of the divine reality? Not at all. He saw only “the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Yahweh” (vs. 28). Clearly, this theologian of “the mystical vision” was most careful in his use of words.

While considerably emphasized, the visual elements did not amount to an accurate photograph of the Deity. Perhaps one might say in all seriousness that Ezekiel’s film was overexposed. Unlike Jacob in the midnight gloom at the bottom of the Jabbok canyon or Isaiah prostrate in the latticed dimness of a temple hall filled with smoke, Ezekiel saw God in a blinding light-as effective a mask of the Deity as darkness. The *essentia* of God

eluded him, just as it had eluded Moses. Only the fleeting presence of a moment was granted to his prophetic humanity.

The Prophetic Send-Off (2:1—3:11). Traditional features of the literary genre of “commission,” such as a message to the people and a promise of reassurance, appear in the balance of the narrative, but they are couched in a novel form:

And [God] said to me: Son of man, stand up on thy feet, that I may speak to thee. Then the Spirit entered into me when he spoke to me. And he said to me, Son of man, I will send thee to the house of Israel, to the rebellious people.. .. Be not afraid of them! . [even] if you must live among scorpions (vss. 1-6).

As the vision is about to fade, presence continues to impart its power to man under the mode of “the Spirit.” From Amos to Jeremiah, the great prophets had avoided the use of this motif,⁹⁴ but Ezekiel favored it above all other means of indicating the force which at once compelled him and confirmed him as the Deity’s envoy.⁹⁵ The spirit of Yahweh was held as the initiator and the sustainer of life.⁹⁶ It did not designate a divine attribute but pointed to the transmission of bio-energy, the persistence of being, and the fight against death. Applied to the psychic process of “prophetic inspiration,” the word was related to the psychic motion through which the will of the Deity was learned by man.

Likewise, borrowing another expression, which this time had been used by some of the prophets, Ezekiel thought that the hand of Yahweh had fallen upon him.⁹⁷ Quasi-physically he perceived on himself the sign of an outside intervention, which he interpreted not only as divine mastery but also as appointment and trust.

So concrete was his consciousness of having received a message which he was commanded to deliver that he remembered having eaten a scroll that bore “words of laments, sighs, and

woes" (2:10) on both sides. His revulsion against speaking such words was overcome by the sublimity of his vision of glory. The scroll tasted as sweet as honey (3:1-2).⁹⁸ It is not possible to infer from the text whether Ezekiel was recounting as best he could the memory of a trancelike state or was using the language of mystical metaphor.⁹⁹ He believed, in any case, that his entire personality had been altered by his vision of the fiery chariot. God himself, on the marshy banks of the river Chebar, had summoned him to the prophetic task. Ezekiel's commission was confirmed by the hand of Yahweh and empowered by the spirit of Yahweh. In addition, the prophet had "incorporated" the word of Yahweh. The "bad taste" of pronouncing oracles of horror to people who feverishly clung to their illusions was now sublimated into a "good taste." With "a forehead as hard as diamond" (3:8), he could henceforth dare to confront in Tel-aviv the hostility, unbelief, and rebelliousness of his fellow deportees.

In modern times, students of the great prophets have tended to look sociologically at these few giants of the faith, as if they had been chiefly, if not exclusively, the product of an institutional office.¹⁰⁰ To be sure, the poems of Amos and his successors show the influence of festal liturgies, and the accounts of their visions may well follow the structure of the installation ceremonies for cultic officials. At the same time, the diversity of these accounts and their accent of personal emotion point to the genuineness of the experience. Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel were prophets of the presence. Their visions are alive with shattering memories of glimpses of infinity, while the aesthetic quality of their individual styles points to the interpenetrative process by which poetic expression was initiated and sustained.¹⁰¹ The burden of the great prophets' "office" was the burden of the word which had privately been forced upon them. They subordinated their entire lives to the intrusion of the presence.¹⁰²

FROM VISION TO FAITH

Elijah understood that the era of theophany was closed. His successors, the great prophets, knew their God in secret moments of ecstasy, the prophetic vision.¹⁰³ The precise nature of such an encounter may not be susceptible of analysis by modern psychology,¹⁰⁴ but the relationship between the prophets' specific experiences of divine nearness and their knowledge of God's purpose for history can hardly be doubted. Kierkegaard rejected as pagan the claims of mystical vision,¹⁰⁵ but his outburst represented an extreme reaction to the sensualism of religious sentimentalism. The great prophets were not pagan when they testified to their own awareness of divine immediacy in particular instances of encounter with the holy. This very obedience to the prophetic vision went against their national allegiance and their religious upbringing. It enabled the nation to survive the state.

Presence in Judgment.

The cultic rehearsal of Yahweh's saving acts in history had conditioned the covenant people to such an extent that political disaster was bound to entail religious disintegration. After the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C., it would have been useless to maintain that "even the lowliest maidservant at the Red Sea saw what Isaiah, Ezekiel, and all the prophets never saw."¹⁰⁶ It was the prophetic vision, not the belief in the presence of Yahweh in history or in a shrine, which explains the birth of Judaism. After the Babylonian "holocaust," the surviving Judahites became the Jews instead of assimilating themselves to their pagan environment, because Jeremiah and Ezekiel "saw" in the catastrophe, not the sign of Yahweh's absence, but, on the contrary, the manifestation of his presence in judgment. This interpretation was the direct outgrowth of their knowledge of God

(*da'at Elohim*). In turn, this knowledge encompassed a far more inclusive realm than that of intellectual information. Not only Jeremiah, but all the great prophets, were aware of being “known” by Yahweh (Jer.1:5). Their knowledge of God was one aspect of an intrinsic experience of mutuality. It was crystallized and deepened by the prophetic vision, but it exceeded the temporal limits of a chronological memory. It affected the psychological mode of a presence which amounted to a revelatory discipline.

Epistemological Communion.

Moments of rapture never last. The prophetic vision always fades. After the unexpected ascent to the inward summit, the prophets descended, no doubt sensing a loss of the kind which prompted countless mystical poets after them to confide:

Ah, now it fades! it fades! and I must pine
 Again for that dread country crystalline,
 Where the blank field and the still-standing tree
 Were bright and fearful presences to me.¹⁰⁷

The prophets, however, did not seek to renew or to prolong those times of “bright and fearful presences,” for they shared, before and after, what might be called “a traveling mateship” with the Godhead. The ancient ideal of “walking with God,” associated with the antediluvian figure of Enoch (Gen. 4:24), was revived by Amos: “Will two men walk together [in the wilderness] unless they have agreed to do so?” (3:3.) The textual alternative, “unless they know one another,” which represents the reading of Greek-speaking Jewry in the Hellenistic period,¹⁰⁸ provides an insight into the inner workings of a daily spirituality inseparable from the function and possibility of theology. Because God and prophet were comparable to traveling

companions in the desert, Amos and Jeremiah mythopoetically believed they shared in the secret of the divine council.¹⁰⁹ In addition to the prophetic vision, day-in and day-out communion was the milieu of their theological epistemology.¹¹⁰

Long-sustained acquaintance with this companionship, however, never deteriorated into casual familiarity. The God-prophet relation could not become a mere “fellowship,” as if the Deity were reduced to the finite status of a “fellow being.” The psychological mode of presence never cancels out the element of awe and even terror which is inherent in the proximity of holiness. Yet, the “diplomatic attache” of Yahweh did not find holiness repellent. Its *mysterium tremendum* was transformed into a delight, for selfhood was appointed to greatness although never absorbed into infinity. The prophetic vision and the prophetic communion were compatible with happiness.

Jonathan Edwards, belying his reputation for one-sidedness in his presentation of a fearful God, was able to write in a mood which reflected the spiritual pleasure of the prophets: “Holiness ... appeared to me to be of a sweet, pleasant, charming, serene, calm nature, which brought an inexpressible purity, brightness, peacefulness, and ravishment to the soul ..., like a field or garden of God, with all manner of pleasant flowers.”¹¹¹ In a way similar to that of prophetic vision, prophetic communion itself could and did fade, and the prophet would then experience the void of spiritual isolation. In moments of urgency, he would call out, petition, or even challenge, but to no avail. Prophetic prayer took the form of an act of defiance (Jer. 32:16–25), the question of a doubter (Jer. 12:1–2), or even the bitter reproach of a deceived lover (Jer. 15: 17 f. 20:7). When Yahweh was silent, the prophet prayed but he could never compel. Here lies the central element which distinguishes prophetic faith from anthropocentric religion.¹¹²

The elusiveness of presence gave birth to the prophetic prayer and the poetry of spiritual agony.¹¹³

Divine Self-Abasement

The prophets interpreted Yahweh's absence from history as the sign of his presence in judgment. It may well be that their experience of Yahweh's absence from their own lives in moments of need led them to understand a new dimension of divinity: the self-abasement of God. Communion had been for them an epistemological channel through which they had learned the obligation of divine righteousness: Yahweh must convict his own people. Alienation revealed to the prophets an even deeper dimension of divinity: the creator of the universe and the sovereign of the nations humbles himself for the sake of his own people. He suffers as he convicts. He wounds himself as he destroys. The kenotic theology of a later age¹¹⁴ may well find its roots in the prophetic sense of the divine absence.

The elusiveness of presence thus fulfilled a double function. It not only pointed to the transcendence of God's freedom over nature and man, but it also became a symbol of God's self-imposed weakness as a model for human power.

When in the eleventh century B.C. the ark had been captured by the Philistines (1 Sam. 4: 1-1), the sacramental monstrosity of presence appeared lost, but a prophetic poet of the presence discerned in the event the evidence of Yahweh's judgment: God rejected the people who had first rejected him:

When Elohim heard, he was enraged,
 And he utterly rejected Israel.
 He forsook his tabernacle in Shiloh,
 The tent where he had sojourned among men,
 And he delivered his power to captivity,
 His magnificence into the hand of the foe.

(Ps. 78:59-61)

Presence in judgment meant absence in history, but the divine decision meant a divine humiliation. Yahweh surrendered his sovereignty to the shame of alien imprisonment. He voluntarily

relinquished his royal magnificence (*tiph'ereth*) to the power of the enemy. The prophetic singer of the *Magnalia Dei* celebrated the reduction of divine magnitude to divine servitude.¹¹⁵

The motif of the self-abasing God reappeared in the eighth century B.C., when the prophet Hosea acted out in his own life God's self-exposure to the mockery of man. The symbolic representation of Israel as a whore entailed the blasphemous implication that Yahweh had to be compared to a betrayed husband, whose honor had been impugned. As the lover of unfaithful Israel, however, Yahweh was represented not as yielding to the dishonorable weakness of laissez-faire tolerance but as assuming the inner form of an affirmation whose aim was to rehabilitate rather than to annihilate.¹¹⁶

A few years later, in the prophetic underground which kept alive the teachings of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah, during the days of Manasseh's capitulation to the Assyrian forces, the prophet Micah or a disciple inverted the liturgy of the covenant lawsuit (Mic. 6:1-8).¹¹⁷ As modern form-critical analysis has shown, in all probability the autumn festival included a ceremony of covenant renewal. In the course of the ritual, a cultic prophet pronounced in the name of Yahweh a series of invectives against the people (Deut. 32:1 ff., Isa. 1:2, etc.).¹¹⁸ In this reversal of the traditional pattern, Yahweh was no longer the accuser but the defendant:

"O my people, what have I done to thee?
In what have I wearied thee? Answer me!"

(Mic. 6:3.)

The questions were those of a wistful partner, eager to find out in what area of his conduct he might have failed. The review of the history of "the saving acts of Yahweh" (vs. 5) became in effect a pathetic appeal to recognize the patience, the open grace, and the humility of God. Yahweh is the incomparable

Deity who “bears (*nasa*) the guilt and passes over the transgression, on the behalf of the remnant of his inheritance” (Mic. 7:18).

At the beginning of the sixth century B.C., the end came. Did the prophet Ezekiel go a step further in delineating a kenotic theology? The answer may be inferred from one of the most dramatic enactments of prophetic symbolism ever performed. Analysis of the Song of the Sword (Ezek. 21:8–17 [Heb. 14–22]) indicates that the prophet acted out a sword dance at the same time as he sang the words of a poem:¹¹⁹

“Let the sword double over! Let it [fall] a third time!
It is the sword of the slain,
The sword of the great one who is pierced,
[the sword] which will cut around them ...” (vs.14 [Heb. 19])

The dance of the sword involved a mimetic portrayal of the Deity. The choreographic stance interpreted visually and kines-thetically the prophetic oracle couched in the first person singular: God himself was dancing through the prophet. Ezekiel acted as a stand-in for the divine Actor. Sword dances always involve the perilous art of juggling with a blade. They regularly include the self-inflicting of body wounds, and sometimes end with the artful faking of self-emasculation.¹²⁰

As the Deity and the prophet entered into a rapport of mystical empathy through the emotional intensity of the singing, dancing, and self-mutilating, the dance of death revealed that Yahweh, the executioner of his own people, was also taking upon himself the risk of self-immolation.

The word *theonomy* has been used to indicate the theocentricity of the prophets’ worldview. Israel could not live, they believed, apart from its center. Humanistic autonomy is a manifestation of self-destructive heteronomy. Prophetic theonomy, on the contrary, points to the distinctiveness of He-

braic faith, which radically alters the anthropocentric concerns both of the ancient Semitic rituals and of modern religiosity. Even when hidden, the presence enters into the human predicament. Beyond a theology of pathos, so well outlined by Abraham Heschel,¹²¹ one should speak of a theology of self-immolation. The prophets understood the language of the divine “I”¹²² less as demand than as gift. Their theology was a divine anthropology.¹²³

When the presence left the temple and the prophetic vision faded, Jeremiah and Ezekiel lived with a new intensity through the inwardness of their faith. They extolled the presence in its mode of prophetic vision, but they could survive the awareness of absence for they knew how to wait for the final epiphany. “The day of the Lord” was more important to them than “the house of the Lord.”¹²⁴ Thanks to them, the sabbath, sacrality in time, could be observed as a substitute for the temple, sacrality in space. The celebration of the sabbath, a sacramental participation in the first day (Exod. 20:11), could become a sacramental anticipation of the last day. Once again, the ear prevailed over the eye, since the survivors’ faith could renounce space for the sake of time.

The prophetic vision was short-lived, but there may have been in its loss a grace in disguise. “Les contacts de l’éternel dans le temps sont affreusement éphémères.”¹²⁵ Mystical poets have often noted that human beings are unable to bear the burden of prolonged rapports with “visible” presence.¹²⁶ Periods of spiritual wilderness in the absence of presence may be a disguised freedom from the joy and terror of revelation.

Like the prophets deprived of vision, the temple musicians bereft of the temple reached a *modus orandi et adorandi*. The presence, which in the end eluded them, modified itself in such a way that they could clothe their faith in aesthetic splendor: they mediated to new generations their own brand of presence as they composed the Psalms.

Notes

1. H. W. Longfellow, *Kéramos* (Boston, 1878), p. 9.
2. See K. Köhler, *Der Prophet der Hebräer und die Mantik der Griechen in ihrem gegenseitigen Verhältnis* (Darmstadt, 1860); E. Fascher, *PROPHETES. Eine sprach- und religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (Giessen, 1927), pp. 4 ff.
3. See A. R. Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet in Ancient Israel* (Cardiff, 1944); J. Jeremias, *Kultprophetie und Gerichtsverkündigung in der späten Königszeit Israels* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1970). Even if some of the great prophets have been cultic officials (for example, Isaiah of Jerusalem), they polemicized fiercely against the duplicity of the ceremonial performed by immoralists. See G. W. Ahlström, "Some Remarks on Prophets and Cult," in C. J. Rylaarsdam, ed., *Transitions in Biblical Scholarship* (Chicago, 1968), pp. 113 ff.; M. Sekine, "Das Problem der Kultpolemik bei den Propheten," *Ev. Th.*, XXVIII (1968): 605 ff.
4. It will be remembered that the few great prophets were among the so-called literary prophets. This expression, however, refers not to writers but to poets whose words have been preserved orally by disciples and later on recorded in manuscripts. The prophets themselves, with the possible exception of the Second Isaiah and the First and the Second Zechariah (*Zech.*, chs. 1-8: 9-14), were not writers. The traditional distinction between "major" and "minor" prophets referred to the relative length of the books which bear their names.
5. See A. Lods, "Quelques remarques sur les poèmes mythologiques de Ras-Shamra et leurs rapports avec l'Ancien Testament," *RHPR.* XVI (1936): 122 ff.; W. I. Moran, "New Evidence from Mari on the History of Prophecy," *Biblica*, I (1969): 15 ff.; J.-C. Heintz, "Oracles prophétiques et 'guerre sainte' selon les archives royales de Mari et l'Ancien Testament," *SVT*, XVII (1970): 112 ff.; J. S. Holladay, Jr., "Assyrian Statecraft and the Prophets of Israel," *HTR*, LXIII (1970): 29 ff.; J. F. Ross, "Prophecy in Hamath, Israel, and Mari," *HTR*, LXIII (1970): 1 ff.; S. D. Walters, "Prophecy in Mari and Israel," *JBL*, LXXXIX (1970): 78 ff.; J. G. Heintz, "Prophetic in Mari and Israel" (review article of F. Ellermeier's book), *Biblica*, III (1971): 543 ff.; J. F. Craghan, "Mari and its Prophets," *Biblical Theology Bulletin*, V (1975): 32 ff.
6. Proposed by H. Torczyner (Tur-Sinai); see W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (Garden City, N.Y., 1968), pp. 208 ff.
7. They followed literary forms but they adapted them to their particular needs in highly original ways. See H. J. Boeker, "Anklagereden und Verteidigungsreden im Alten Testament," *Ev. Th.* XX (1960): 398 ff.; J. Blenkinsopp, "The Prophetic Reproach," *JBL*, XC (1971): 267 ff.; C. Westermann, *Basic Forms of Prophetic Speech*, tr. by H. C. White (Philadelphia, 1967). G. Fohrer has pointed out the freedom with which the prophets used rhetorical patterns to suit their inspiration: See "Tradition und Interpretation im Alten Testament," *ZAW*, LXXIII (1961): 1 ff.; "Remarks on Modern Interpretation of the Prophets," *JBL*, LXXX (1961): 313.
8. See S. Mowinckel, "Ecstatic Experience and Rational Elaboration in Old Testament Prophecy," *Acta Orientalia*, XIII (1935): 264 ff.; J. Lindblom, *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 47 ff.; D. R. Hillers, "A Convention in Hebrew Literature: The Reaction to Bad News," *ZAW*, LXXVII (1965): 86 ff.
9. A. Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York, 1962), p. 389.
10. See J. Gray, *I & II Kings: A Commentary* (Philadelphia, 1970), pp. 405 ff.
11. See G. Fohrer, *Elia* (Zürich, 1957), pp. 48 f., 87 ff.; R. M. Frank, "A Note on

I Kings 19.10, 14," *CBQ*, XXV (1963): 410 ff.; J. Jeremias, *Theophanie. Die Geschichte eine alttestamentlichen Gattung* (Neukirchen, 1965), pp. 113 ff.; J. J. Stamm, "Elia am Horeb," *Festschrift Th. C. Vriezen* (Wageningen, 1966), pp. 327 ff.; O. H. Steck, *Überlieferung und Zeitgeschichte in den Elia-Erzählungen* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1968), pp. 20 ff., 90 ff., especially 109-125; R. A. Carlson, "Elie à l'Horeb," *VT*, XIX (1969): 4-16 ff.; E. Würthwein, "Elijah at Horeb-Reflections on I Kings 19.9-18," *Festschrift G. Henton Davies* (Richmond, Va., 1970), pp. 152 ff.; K. Seybold, "Elia am Gottesberg," *Ev. Th.*, XXXIII (1973): 13 ff.

12. The phrase *qôl demamah daqqah* has been traditionally rendered "a still small voice." The word *qôl* means voice, noise, or sound, depending on the context. Thus, it may designate human or divine speech, but also the cry of animals, the bleating of sheep, the neighing of horses, the roaring of lions, the lowing of cattle. It applies to the voice of Yahweh in the immediate context (vs. 13), just as elsewhere to the voice of angels, or to the cries of the seraphim in Isaiah's vision (Isa. 6:4). It refers to the timbre of musical instruments; the peal of thunder; the stamping of hooves; the sound of the steps of runners, of wheels, of the sea, of whips, of the thump of a fall; the deep rumbling of an earthquake; the din of war or of multitudes; the rustling of wings; the roar of flames; the crackling of thorns; the grinding of millstones; etc. It seems that the idea of voice is not inevitable. When the word is followed by the word *demamah* (from the root *d.m.m.*, "to be silent"; cf. Job 4:16, Ps. 107:29) and especially with the qualifying epithet *daqqah* (from the root *d.q.q.*, "to crush," "to pulverize," or "to be thin"), the phrase evokes the utter quiet and even the audible vacuity which may be perceived after the ear-splitting forces of nature which have been unleashed. See G. G. Mollegen, *Elijah on Mount Horeb: A Form-critical*

and Exegetical Study of I Kings 19.8b-19a (typescript, Columbia University, New York, 1968), pp. 98 ff. Cf. J. Lust, "A Gentle Breeze or a Roaring Thunderous Sound? Elijah at Horeb: I-Kings 19:12," *VT*, XXV (1975): 110 ff. Lust proposes "a crushing *and* roaring sound" but ignores the absence of the repetition, "And Yahweh was not in [i]t." Cf. R. Davidson, "Some Aspects of the Theological Significance of Doubt in the Old Testament," *ASTI*, VII (1970): 48.

13. The noun *sh'e'ar*, "remnant," derives from the verb *sha'ar*, "to remain." On the development of this theological motif, see B. F. Meyer, "Jesus and the Remnant of Israel," *JBL*, LXXXIV (1965): 123 ff.; G. F. Hasel, *The Remnant Idea from Genesis to Isaiah* (Berrien Springs, Mich., 1972).

14. Cf. the expression "And behold, Yahweh passed by" (I Kings 19:11) with the characteristic feature of the Mosaic theophany concerning the name and the glory, "I will make my goodness pass before thee" (Exod. 33:19), and "When my glory passes by . . . until I have passed by" (vs. 22).

15. See Johnson, *The Cultic Prophet*, p. 27.

16. A. Neher, *L'essence du prophétisme* (Paris, 1955), p. 98.

17. See H. Graf Reventlow, *Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia* (Gütersloh, 1963), pp. 24 ff., 77 ff.; N. C. Habel, "The Form and Significance of the Call Narratives," *ZAW*, LXXVII (1965): 297 ff.; R. Kilian, "Die prophetischen Berufungsberichte," *Theologie im Wandel, Tübinger theologische Reihe*, I (München, 1967): 356 ff.; B. O. Long, "Prophetic Call Traditions and Reports of Visions," *ZAW*, LXXXIV (1972): 494 ff.; W. Vogels, "Les récits de vocation des prophètes," *NRT*, xcv (1973): 3 ff.

18. See Habel, "The Form and Significance," pp. 320 ff.

19. See K. Baltzer, "Considerations Regarding the Office and Calling of the Prophet," *HTR*, LXI (1968): 567 ff.

20. See J. F. Ross, "The Prophet as Yahweh's Messenger," in Israel's **Prophetic Heritage** [Festschrift J. Muilenburg] (New York, 1964), pp. 98 ff.; S. H. Blank, "'Of a Truth the Lord Hath Sent Me': An Inquiry into the Sources of the Prophet's Authority," Interpreting **the Prophetic Tradition** (Cincinnati, 1969), pp. 1 ff.
21. It is not certain whether the temple of which Isaiah spoke was the edifice of worship in Jerusalem, built by Solomon, or "the heavenly temple" to which the prophet was permitted to have visionary access. The 'theme of the "Council of Yahweh" which influenced a northern prophet like Micavah ben Imlah (1 Kings 22:19-23) also appears in Isaiah's vision. See M. M. Kaplan, "Isaiah 6.1-11." *JBL*, XIV (1926): 251 ff.; I. Engnell, **The Call of Isaiah. An Exegetical and Comparative Study** (Uppsala, 1949), pp. 28 ff. See also H. Wheeler Robinson, "The Council of Yahweh," *JTS*, XLV (1944): 151 ff.; F. M. Cross, "The Council of Yahweh in Second Isaiah," *JNES*, XII (1953): 274 ff.; *id.*, **Canaanite Myth and the Hebrew Epic** (Cambridge, Mass., 1973), pp. 186 ff.; E. C. Kingsbury, "The Prophets and the Council of Yahweh," *JBL*, LXXXIII (1964): 279 ff.
22. Cf. von Rad, **Old Testament Theology**, II, p. 55. It is probably that the first three visions were recounted at the sanctuary, while the last two, which followed the prophet's expulsion, may have been spoken confidentially to his followers, among whom may well have been Hosea and the young Isaiah.
23. On the basis of form-critical analysis. N. Habel maintains that these visions do not constitute narratives of the call ("The Form and Significance," pp. 305 f.). Diversity among prophets prevails over conformity, however, and there are at least four types of such narratives. Cf. Vogels, "Les récits de vocation," pp. 6 ff.
24. See H. W. Wolff, **Dodekapropheten II: Joel-Amos** (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1969), pp. 337 ff.; G. M. Tucker, "Prophetic Authenticity: A Form-Critical Study of Amos 7:10-17," *In.*, XXVII (1973): 423 ff.
25. See S. Talmon, "The Gezer Calendar and Seasonal Cycle of Ancient Canaan," *JAOS*, LXXXIII (1963): 184.
26. The verb *nīham* means "to be afflicted," "to suffer grief," "to have compassion," as in Jer. 15:6, Ps. 90:13; cf. Job 42:6, etc. It is the verb *shūbh*, which means "to return," "to repent."
27. See A. Heschel, "The Theology of Pathos," **The Prophets** (New York, 1962), pp. 221 ff.; von Rad, **Old Testament Theology**, II, pp. 70 ff.
28. For a different interpretation, see G. Brunet, "La vision de l'étain," *VT*, XVI (1966): 387 ff.
29. This trait appears throughout the discourses, and especially in the quotations from ancient psalmodic expressions of praise. See J. D. Watts, "An Old Hymn Preserved in the Book of Amos," **Vision and Prophecy in Amos** (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1958), pp. 51 ff.; cf. R. Vuilleumier-Bessard, "La présence actuelle de Dieu." *La tradition culturelle d'Israël dans la prophétie d'Amos et d'Osée* (Neuchâtel, 1960), pp. 16 ff.
30. J. L. Crenshaw, "Amos and the Theophanic Tradition," *ZAW*, LXXX (1968): 203 ff.
31. C. van Leeuwen, "The Prophecy of the YOM YHWH in Amos V 18-20," *OTS*, XIX (1974): pp. 113 ff.; cf. Vuilleumier-Bessard, "Les manifestations de Dieu dans l'avenir," *La tradition culturelle*, pp. 22 ff.
32. W. Brueggemann, "Amos IV 4-13 and Israel's Covenant Worship," *VT*, XV (1965): 1 ff.; W. Vogels, "Invitation à revenir à l'alliance en Amos IX 7," *VT*, XXII (1972): 223 ff.
33. S. Terrien, "Amos and Wisdom," *Israel's Prophetic Heritage* (Festschrift J. Muilenburg, New York, 1962), pp. 108 ff.; H. W. Wolff, **Amos the Prophet: The Man and His Background**, tr. by F. R. McCurley (Philadelphia, 1973), pp. 6 ff., 88 ff.; contra J. L. Crenshaw, "The Influence of the

Wise upon Amos. The 'Doxologies of Amos' and Job 5, 9-16; 9:5-10," *ZAW*, LXXIX (1967); 42 ff.

34. On the word *sôdh*, "secret" and "secret council." cf. Amos 3:7; Prov. 11:13, 20:19, 25:9 with Jer. 23:18, 22; Ps. 35:14, 89:8.

35. See note 17 above. After years of a rational emphasis on the psychology of the prophets, modern psycho-analytical study and comparative history of religion have revived interest in the study of the phenomena of ecstasy in conjunction with the source of the prophets' message. See C. W. Williams. Ecstasism in Hebrew Prophecy and Christian Glossolalia." *Studies in Religion/Sciences religieuses*, III (1973-74): 320 ff.

36. Cf. L.-P. Horst, "L'extase chez les prophètes d'Israël d'après les travaux de Hölscher et de Gunkel." *RHPR*, II (1922): 337 ff.; H.-W. Hertzberg, *Propheten und Gott* (Gütersloh, 1928); J. Lindblom, "Die Religion der Propheten und die Mystik," *ZAW*, XLII (1939): 54 f.; id., "Einige Grundfragen der alttestamentlicher Wissenschaft," *Festschrift A. Bertholet* (Tübingen, 1950): 325 ff.; id., *Prophecy in Ancient Israel* (Oxford, 1962), pp. 122 ff.

37. Neher, *Amos*, pp. 133 ff., 137 ff.

38. Since the text does not state that the order to strike was carried out, the fifth vision constitutes only an anticipation of the symbolic act which prophets later than Amos performed in obedience to divine command.

39. Amos 9:2; see Ps. 139:8; cf. Prov. 15:11, Job 26:6.

40. See A. Allwohn. *Die Ehe des Propheten Hosea in psycho-analytischer Beleuchtung* (Berlin, 1926); F. S. North, "Solution of Hosea's Marital Problems by Critical Analysis," *JNES*, XVI (1957): 128 ff.; J. M. Ward. *Hosea: A Theological Commentary* (New York, 1966), pp. 3 ff.; J. L. Mays, *Hosea: A Commentary* (Philadelphia, 1969), pp. 22 ff.; H. W. Wolff, *Hosea: A Commentary on the Book of Hosea*, tr. by G. Stansell (Philadelphia, 1974), pp. 8 ff., 56 ff., 67 f.

41. G. Fohrer, "Die Gattung der Berichte über symbolische Handlungen der Propheten," *Studien zur alttestamentlichen Prophetie (1949-63)* (Berlin, 1967), pp. 92 ff.; E. R. Fraser, "Symbolic Acts of the Prophets," *Studia biblica et theologica*, IV (1974): 45 ff.

42. The expression *bath diblayim* is usually translated "daughter of Diblayim," although such a proper name is not known elsewhere and the last word affects the dual form. One Arabic cognate means "large goblet" or "mouthful of delight," and appears in erotic poetry. It may have designated "two fig cakes" used in Canaanite ritual (cf. *debhâlah*, "lump of pressed figs," and *dibhlathayim*, geographical name; cf. also *'ashishê'ana-bhim*, "raisin cakes" (Hos. 3:1). The words *'esheth zenunim*, literally, "a woman of prostitutions," probably designate not "a prostitute," but "a woman prone to prostitution." Cf. similar uses of the word "woman of" constructed with abstractions (Prov. 6:24, 9:13, etc.).

43. Vocalizing the Hebrew Consonantal text *'ul*, "infant," instead of *'ol*, "voke" (vs. 4). The traditional reading, "lifting a yoke from the jaw [of a heifer]," abruptly changes the imagery of the child. Moreover, a yoke is never lifted from the jaw or cheek of an animal. It is raised from the nape of its neck.

44. See Heschel, *The Prophets*, pp. 47 ff.

45. The absence of the definite article does not impose the traditional rendering, "a woman." On the contrary, it may indicate a stress on the person or object in question. Cf. 2 Sam. 6:2, Amos 5:17, Isa. 10:6, etc.

46. Probable allusion to hierogamic rites (cf. Song of Sol., 2:5), or the worship of the Mother goddess (cf. the *kawwanim*, "cakes" in Jer. 7:18, 44:19). This indictment of Israel does not necessarily imply that the woman was a cultic prostitute or a temple slave. She may have fallen into secular prostitution or slavery. Hence the need to "purchase" her for a price which

- may be computed as that of a slave (cf. Exod. 21:32, Zech. 11:13).
47. The phonetic distinction between the active and the stative conjugation of the verb "to love" (*'ahabh* and *'ahabh*, respectively) was not possible in all forms, but it appears here. The Masoretic Text reads *'chabh* (stative) rather than *hhobh* (active imperative). The LXX translated the active use of the verb in 1 Kings 11:1 ("King Solomon loved [active] many foreign women") by the noun *philogunês*, "a womanizer," whereas they rendered the command to Hosea (stative) by using the verb *agapaô*, "to love unselfishly and devotedly." Cf. other uses of the stative conjugation in Hos. 11:1, 14:5; Ps. 4:2 [Heb., 3], 119:167; Prov. 1:22, 3:12, 4:6, 8:17; Mal. 1:2; etc.
48. The last verses of the book of Amos (9:9c-15) belong to the canonical growth of the prophetic literature.
49. See W. Brueggemann, "Hosea as Bearer of the Word," *Tradition in Crisis: A Study in Hosea* (Richmond, Va., 1968), p. 106.
50. See J. L. McKenzie, "Divine Passion in Osee," *CBQ*, XVII (1955): 167 ff.
51. The plural noun *nihamim*, "grief," "sorrow," and "compassion," is derived from the verb *niham*, "to be afflicted" (see note 26 above). As used in the present context, the noun indicates a violent struggle between conflicting emotions and should therefore be rendered by two different English nouns, placed in contradicting juxtaposition.
52. The obscure *b'ir*, "in a city" or "in [the] city," probably conceals a word derived from the root *ir* or *ur*, "to excite," "to arouse." Cf. Jer. 15:8, where the word *ir* probably means "anguish," "terror."
53. See O. Eissfeldt, "'Mein Gott' im Alten Testament," *ZAW*, LX (1945): 8.
54. See H. W. Wolff, "'Wissen um Gott' bei Hosea als Urform von Theologie," *Ev. Th.*, XII (19:52): 533 ff.; id., "Erkenntnis Gottes im Alten Testament," XV (1955): 426 ff.; J. L. McKenzie, "Knowledge of God in Hosea," *JBL*, LXXIV (1955): 22 ff.; E. Baumann, "'Wissen um Gott' bei Hosea als Urform der Theologie?" *Ev. Th.*, XV (1955): 416 ff.; W. Eichrodt, "The Holy One in Your Midst: The Theology of Hosea," *In.*, XV (1961): 259 ff.; cf. F. Buck, *Die Liebe Gottes beim Propheten Osee* (Rome, 1953).
55. Cf. M. Schmidt, *Prophet und Tempel* (Zurich, 1948), pp. 32 ff.; and A. H. J. Gunneweg, *Mündliche und schriftliche Tradition der vorexilischen Prophetenbücher* (Göttingen, 1959), p. 103.
56. See above, pp. 196 f.
57. Cf. Ps. 11:4, 18:6 [Heb., 7]; Mic. 1:2; Hab. 2:20; etc. See note 21 above.
58. Euphemism for genitalia (cf. Isa. 7:20; Exod. 4:25; etc.). The seraphim are mentioned only here. They seem to be celestial beings akin to the cherubim who serve as attendants to the Deity. They veil themselves in the presence of holiness. See E. Lacheman, "The Seraphim of Isaiah 6," *JQR*, LVIII (1967-8): 71 f.; S. Terrien, "The Omphalos Myth . . ." (*op. cit.*): 328 f.
59. Text uncertain. Probably read *haqqadosh*, "the holy one," with the definite article (see the Qumran variant).
60. See M. M. Kaplan, "Isaiah 6 1-11," *JBL*, XLV (1926): 251 ff.; A. Vaccari, "Visio Isaiae (6)," *VD*, X (1930): 100 ff.; V. Hertrich, "Die Berufung des Jesajas," *MPT*, XXV (1939): 158 ff.; I. Engnell, *The Call of Isaiah* (Uppsala, 1949); E. Jenni, "Jesajas Berufung in der neueren Forschung," *TZ*, XV (1959): 321 ff.; H. Wildberger, "Theophanie und Sendungsauftrag (6 1-13)," *Jesaja* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1968), pp. 230 ff.
61. See O. Eissfeldt, "Yahweh als König," *ZAW*, (1928): 81 ff.
62. See above, chapter IV, note 123.
63. *Contra* Habel, "The Form and Significance," p. 312.
64. See S. Blank, "Traces of Prophetic Agony in Isaiah," *HUCA*, XXVII (1956): 81 ff.

65. See Baltzer, "Considerations Regarding the Office," p. 575.
66. When it is applied to Yahweh, the expression means not only "to withdraw favor from" but also "to conceal marks and manifestations of presence from." Cf. Jer. 33:5 with Ps. 13:1 [Heb., 2], etc. The suggestion to understand the *hiph'il histir* (from the stem *s.t.r.*), "to hide," as a Ugaritic fixed t-form derived from the stem *sûr*, "to turn away from" is not likely, since the verb *histir*, "to hide," occurs many times with the direct object *panim*, "face," but without an indirect object. Cf. Deut. 3:18, Job 3:24, etc. Contra J. A. Thompson, "A Proposed Translation of Isaiah 8 17," *ET*, LXXXIII (1971-72): 376.
67. See above, chapter IV, note 127.
68. See Mic. 3:4, where Yahweh's decision to hide his face arises from his refusal to answer the cry of those who do evil deeds. Cf. Deut. 31:17, 32:20, etc.
69. The intensive voice (*pi'el*) of the verb *hikkah*, "to wait," refers to an active attitude of looking for the future with a passionate longing, desire, or aspiration: Cf. Isa. 30:18, 64:3; Hab. 2:3; Zeoh. 3:8; Ps. 33:20. The synonym *qiwwah*, "to hope," also in the intensive voice, carries the image of twisting or stretching into tension, as in the making of a rope.
70. See E. L. Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History: Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Reflections* (New York, 1970), p. 29.
71. The problem of the birth of Immanuel has been the object of considerable discussion from which no consensus has emerged, for the uncertainty and the obscurity of the text has led to contradictory interpretations. See, among others, E. Hammershaimb, "The Immanuel Sign," *Studia theologica*, III (1949): 124 ff.; N. Gottwald, "Immanuel as the Prophet's Son," *VT*, VIII (1958): 36 ff.; R. Kilian, *Die Verheissung Immanuel's*, *Jes. 7. 14* (1968); J. Lust, *The Immanuel Figure. A Charismatic Judge-Leader* (Leiden, 1971); H. W. Wolff, "A Solution to the Immanuel Prophecy in Isaiah 7 14-8 22," *JBL*, XCI (1972): 449 ff.
72. Cf. Hos. 11:9 with Isa. 8:8, 10.
73. See Hasel, *The Remnant*, pp. 282 ff.
74. R. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*. tr. by J. W. Harvey (London, 1928), p. 98.
75. See above, p. 77. In his warning to Ahaz and the princes, the young prophet had played on the two meanings of the verb *amen*: "If you do not have faith (*ta'amînu*), surely you will not endure (*te'amenû*, Isa. 7:9).
76. See H. Blank, "The Meanings of Faith" in *Prophetic Faith in Isaiah* (New York, 1958), pp. 34 ff.; cf. A. Weiser, "The Old Testament Concept [of Faith]." G. Friedrich, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, tr. by G. W. Bromley, VI, pp. 182 ff.
77. Literally, "the word of Yahweh 'was' (*hayah*) toward him" (vss. 4, 11, 13). See C. H. Ratschow, *Werden and Wirken. Eine Untersuchung des Wortes hajah als Beitrag zur Wirklichkeitserfassung des Alten Testaments* (Berlin, 1941), p. 34 ff.
78. See F. Horst, "Die Visionsschilderungen der alttestamentlichen Propheten," *Ev. Theol.*, XX (1960): 200 f.
79. See Habel, "The Form and Significance," pp. 297 ff.; cf. J. MacL. Berridge, *Prophet, People, and the Word of Yahweh: An Examination of Form and Content in the Proclamation of the Prophet Jeremiah* (Zurich, 1970), pp. 26 ff.
80. See J. S. Skinner, "Predestination and Vocation," in *Prophecy and Religion: Studies in the Life of Jeremiah* (Cambridge, 1922), pp. 18 ff.; M. Gilula, "An Egyptian Parallel to Jeremiah I 4-5," *VT*, XVII (1976): 114; W. Rudolph, *Jeremia* (Tübingen, 1968), pp. 4 ff.; Berridge, *Prophet*, pp. 26 ff.
81. Cf. Job 10:8 ff., Ps. 139:13.
82. See Exod. 28:28; Lev. 22:2, etc.; Num. 3:13; etc. Cf. Th. J. Meek, "Was Jeremiah a Priest?" *The Expositor*, XXV (1923): 215 ff.
83. See Lindblom, *Prophecy*, pp. 14 ff., 111 ff., 190; K. Gouders, "'Siehe, ich lege

meine Worte in deinen Mund'. Die Berufung des Propheten Jeremia (Jer. 1 4-10)," *Bibel und Leben, XII (1971): 162 ff.*

84. See F. L. Moriarty, "The Prophets: Bearers of the Word," *The Bridge*, III (New York, 1958), pp. 54 ff.; cf. H. W. Hertzberg, "Jeremias Stellung zum 'Wort'," in *Prophet und Gott: Eine Studie zur Religiosität des vorexilischen Prophetums* (Gütersloh, 1923), pp. 83 ff.

85. Cf. Ezek. 3:1-3.

86. See note 76 above; see also P. S. Wood, "Jeremiah's Figure of the Almond Rod," *JBL*, LXI (1942): 199 ff.

87. For other interpretations, see W. A. Irwin, "The Face of the Pot, Jeremiah 1:13b," *AJS*, XLVII (1931): 288 ff.; H. Graf Reventlow, *Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia* (Gütersloh, 1963), pp. 210 ff.; H. Lamparter, *Prophet wider Willen, der Prophet Jeremia* (Stuttgart, 1964), p. 155.

88. Read *tuppah*, from *naphah*, "to blow upon," instead of *tippathah*, "it will be opened." Graphically, the two Hebrew words are almost identical.

89. See H.-W. Jüngling, "Ich machedich zu einer ehernen Mauer: Literarische Überlegungen zum Verhältnis von Jer 1, 18-19 zu Jer 15, 20-21," *Biblica*, LIV (1973): 1 ff. The traditional rendering, "a boiling pot" or "a seething cauldron," is not impossible, for the word *sîr* designates a container such as a jar for liquids (water, oil, wine, etc.; see 2 Kings 4:38, Exod. 27:3, etc.). However, the qualifying passive participle *naphûah*, "blown upon," indicates the idea of forced and excessive heat, of the kind needed by a smith for melting metals (cf. Akkadian *naphû*, "to set on fire," and *nappahu*, "smith"; cf. Ezek. 22:20, Job 20:26, and see "a furnace blown upon" in Sir. 43:4). The rendering "a heated crucible" reveals the rhetorical movement from the oracle of judgment to the oracle of reassurance as it prepares the comparison of Jeremiah's newly endowed steadfastness to "a pillar of iron, a battlement of bronze" (vs. 18).

90. See L. Dürr, *Ezechiel's Vision der Erscheinung Gottes [Ez. c. 1 u. 10] im Lichte der vorderasiatischen Altertumskunde* (Münster i. W., 1917), pp. 8 ff.; G. A. Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* (Edinburg, 1936), p. 3 ff.; G. Fohrer, *Ezekiel* (Tübingen, 1955), pp. 5 ff.; W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, tr. by C. Quin (Philadelphia, 1970), pp. 51 ff.

91. See P. A. Ackroyd, *Exile and Restoration* (London, 1968), pp. 31 ff.; for a modern description of the *region*, see W. Thesiger, *The Marsh Arabs* (London, 1964), pp. 5 ff., 58 ff.

92. Cf. 3 Macc. 6:18; Test. of Levi 2-3; Matt. 3:16 ff.; Mark 1:10 f; Luke 3:22 f.; John 1:51; Acts 7:56, 10:10-16; Rev. 4:1, 19:11.

93. *Contra* E. Höhne, *Die Thronwagenvision Hezekiels* (Dissertation, Erlangen, 1953-54), pp. 80 f.

94. The *rûah*, "breath" or "spirit," of the Deity was, according to the ancient storytellers, the source of the power and wisdom of the exceptional heroes (see Gen. 41:38; Num. 11:29, 24:2; Judg. 13:25; etc.). The word also helped to describe the prophetic bands at the time of the Canaanite syncretism (1 Sam. 10:6; cf. 16:14 f.). Hosea probably reflected the language of his enemies when he said, "The prophet is a fool, the man of the spirit is mad" (Hos. 9:7). Isaiah reserved the term for designating God (Isa. 31:3) or the virtues of his agent at the end of time (Isa. 11:2, etc.). Micah may have applied the term to his own experience (Mic. 3:8; cf. Isa. 30:1).

95. See D. Lys, *Rûach: Le souffle dans l'Ancien Testament: Enquête anthropologique à travers 1 'histoire théologique d'Israël* (Paris, 1962), p. 121 ff.; Lindblom, *Prophecy*, pp. 176 ff.; K. W. Curley, *Ezekiel Among the Prophets: A Study of Ezekiel's Place in Prophetic Tradition* (London, 1975), pp. 23 ff.

96. See Ps. 104:30; cf. Gen. 1:2.

97. See Ezek. 1:3, 3:14, 3:22, etc., cf. Isa. 8:11, Jer. 15:17.

98. See Lindblom, *Prophecy*, p. 111; Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, pp. 64 f.
99. For similar experiences among mystics of other cultures, see G. Widengren, *Literary and Psychological Aspects of the Hebrew Prophets* (Uppsala, 1948), pp. 100 ff.
100. See K. Baltzer, "Considerations Regarding the Office and Calling of the Prophet," *HTR*, LXI (1968): 567 ff.; H. Graf Reventlow, *Wächter über Israel: Ezechiel und seine Tradition* (Berlin, 1962); id., *Das Amt des Propheten Amos* (Göttingen, 1962); id., *Liturgie und prophetisches Ich bei Jeremia* (Gütersloh, 1963); E. Gerstenberger, "Jeremiah's Complaints: Observations on Jer. 15.10-21," *JBL*, LXXXII (1963): 393 ff.; Cf. W. L. Holladay, "The Background of Jeremiah's Self-Understanding: Moses, Samuel, and Psalm 22," *JBL*, LXXXIII (1964): 153 ff.
101. See Brueggemann, *Tradition in Crisis*, p. 107; J. Bright, "Jeremiah's Complaints: Liturgy, or -Expressions of Personal Distress?" in *Proclamation and Presence* (Festschrift G. Henton Davies, Richmond, Va., 1970), pp. 189 ff.; Berridge, *Prophet*, pp. 26 ff.; Curley, *Ezekiel Among the Prophets*, pp. 74 ff., 86 (note 27).
102. W. Zimmerli, "The Special Form and Traditio-Historical character of Ezekiel's Prophecy," *VT*, XV (1965): 516; cf. id., *Ezekiel*, p. 31; also, id., *Ezekiel: Gestalt und Botschaft* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1972), pp. 22 ff.
103. "The prophets *have* a secret . . . , a certain inward experience which cannot be understood by the uninitiated observer," in H. Gunkel, "The Secret Experiences of the Prophets," *The Expositor*, I (1924): 356; cf. E. Benz, *Die Vision. Erfahrungsformen und Bilderwelt* (Stuttgart, 1969), pp. 143 f.
104. See notes 35 and 36 above.
105. See comments of R. G. Smith, *Secular Christianity* (New York, 1966), p. 63. It is clear that the Hebrew prophets, in spite of the immediacy of their experiences of encounter with the divine, were not mystics in the absorption-type of identifica-
- tion with infinity common to various forms of pantheism. See F. Heiler, "General Characteristics of Mysticism and Prophetic Religion," in *Prayer: A Study in the History and Psychology of Religion*, tr. by S. McComb (London, 1932), pp. 135 ff.; cf. S. Mowinckel, "Ecstatic Experience and Rational Elaboration in Old Testament Prophecy," *Acta Orientalia*, XII (1934): 264 ff.
106. "R. Eliezer says: Whence can you say that a maidservant saw at the [Red] sea what Isaiah, Ezekiel, and all the prophets never saw?" J. Z. Lauterbach, ed., *Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael*. II (Philadelphia, 1933), p. 24 (*Tractate Shirata*, III, 30); paraphrased by E. L. Fackenheim, *God's Presence in History* (New York, 1970), pp. 4 ff.
107. Edwin Muir, "Horses," *Collected Poems 1921-1951* (New York, 1957), p. 19.
108. MT: *nô'adû*, "they have agreed; LXX implies metathetic reading of *nôda'û*, "they know one another" (Amos 3:3).
109. Amos 3:17, Jer. 23:22.
110. "The fundamental conviction common to them all is, that their thoughts are from God himself. The prophet did not find them. 'They were found' (Jer. 23:16)," in H. Gunkel, "The Secret Experiences of the Prophets," *The Expositor*. II (1924): 29. Cf. S. Mowinckel, *Die Erkenntnis Gottes bei den alttestamentlichen Propheten* (Oslo, 1941), pp. 6 f., 54 ff.
111. Jonathan Edwards, "Extracts from his Private Writings," *Works*, I (London, 1817), pp. 33-34.
112. Sacerdotal rites and diviners' techniques, of course, were not granted total credence in the ancient Near Eastern cults. Cf. J. J. M. Roberts, "Divine Freedom and Cultic Manipulation in Israel and Mesopotamia," in H. Goedicke and J. J. M. Roberts, eds., *Unity and Diversity: Essays in the History, Literature, and Religion of the Ancient Near East* (Baltimore and London, 1975), pp. 181 ff.
113. See H. Blank, "The Confessions of Jeremiah and the Meaning of Prayer,"

HVCA, XXI (1948): 331 ff.; id., "Men Against God: The Promethean Element in Biblical Prayer." *IBL*, LXXI (1953): 1 ff.; id., "Some Observations Concerning Biblical Prayer." **HVCA**, XXXI (1961): 75 ff.; id., "The Prophet as Paradigm." *Festschrift J. Ph. Hyatt* (New York, 1974), pp. 111 ff. | R. Bach, *Die Aufforderungen zur Flucht und zum Kampf in alttestamentlichen Prophetenspruch* (Neukirchen, 1962); H. J. Stoebe, "Seelsorge und Mitleiden bei Jeremia," *Wort und Dienst*, IV (1955): 116 ff.; id., "Jeremiah. Prophet und Seelsorger," *TZ*, XX (1964): 385 ff., especially 401 ff.

114. Paul described as a kenosis, "self-emptying," the mystery of the incarnation of Jesus (Phil. 2:7): see D. G. Dawe. *The Form of a Servant: A Historical Analysis of the Kenotic Motif* (Philadelphia, 1963); J. Coppens, "Phil., II, 7 et Is., LIII, 12. le problème de la 'Kénose'," *ALBO*, I V (1965), No. 21; R. P. Martin, *Carmen Christi: Philippians ii. 5-11 in Recent Interpretation and in the Setting of Early Christian Worship* (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 165 ff.

115. However, see above, chapter IV, p. 167. Cf. Deut. 32:19-20. 23 ff., 29 f. See A. F. Campbell, *The Ark Narrative (1 Sam 4-5; 2 Sam 6): A Form-Critical and Tradition-Historical Study* (Missoula, Montana, 1975), p. 210.

116. See above, pp. 242 ff.

117. G. W. Anderson, "A Study of Micah 6:1-8," *SJT*, IV (1951): 193 ff.; Th. Les-cow, "Redaktionsgeschichtliche Analyse von Micha 6-7," *ZAW*, LXXXIV (1972): 182 ff.

118. See M. Delcor, "Les attaches littéraires, l'origine et la signification de l'expression biblique 'Prendre à témoin le ciel et la terre'." *VT*, XVI (1966): 8-25.

119. See Cooke; "The Sword of Yahweh," *The Book of Ezekiel*, pp. 226 ff.; O. Eissfeldt, "Schwerter Schlagene bei

Hesekiel," *Studies in Old Testament Prophecy [Festschrift Th. H. Robinson]* (Edinburgh, 1950), pp. 73 ff.; W. Zimmerli, "Das Schwert," *Ezekiel*, pp. 469 ff.

A. van der Born (*Ezechiel*, Roermond en Maaseik, 1954, pp. 134 ff.) has pointed out that the words of the Sword-Song implied an actual dance. J. Steinman (*Le prophète Ezkhiel* [Paris, 1953], p. 46) noted that this barbarous poem was meant to be danced, and he called it "La danse de la mort." Cf. Eichrodt, *Ezekiel*, p. 293.

120. Compare the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel who not only skipped but also "cried and cut themselves after their custom with swords and lances, until the blood gushed out upon them" (1 Kings, 18:28), and the eighty men from Shechem, Shiloh, and Samaria who came with "their bodies gashed" (Jer. 41:4); cf. Zech. 13:6?

121. See *The Prophets*, pp. 221 ff. Heschel might have strengthened his analysis of oaths had he not omitted Ezekiel from his formal treatment (although he included a number of isolated quotations and references).

122. See M. J. Buss, "The Language of the Divine 'I,'" *JBR*, XXIX (1961): 102 ff.

123. In a slightly different sense, but with similar implications, a Jewish philosopher like Rabbi Heschel could write: "The Bible is not man's theology, but God's anthropology" (Man is Not Alone, New York, 1951, p. 129).

124. See A. Heschel, *The Sabbath* (New York, 1951), p. 79.

125. "Contacts with eternity within time are woefully ephemeral." G. Thibon. in Simone Weil, *La pesanteur et la grâce* (Paris, 1948), p. vi.

126. M. Hamburger, commenting on Hölderlin's *Patmos* and *Der Rhein*, in *Reason and Energy: Studies in German Literature* (New York, 1957), p. 57.

6

The Psalmody of Presence

Modern study has shown that the Psalter reached its final form after several centuries of editing and compiling. The temple musicians who composed most of the 150 psalms now found in the canonical collection lived between the time of David in the tenth century B.C. and the Persian restoration in the fifth and perhaps even fourth centuries.¹

Preserving as it does a selection of 700 years of psalmody, such an anthology is bound to reflect a wide diversity of styles and attitudes. This diversity helps to explain why the Psalms are the only book of spirituality that has remained common to the entire spectrum of Jewry and Christendom, from Hassidic rabbis and Mt. Athos monks to American Quakers and the Salvation Army. At the same time, the Psalms constitute far more than a manual of devotion. Like the poetic discourses of the great prophets, they represent theological thinking at its keenest and deepest. They mirror both the uniqueness and the universality of the Hebraic theology of presence. They produce fields of force which maintain on the one hand the tension and the ease of an equilibrium between emotional contemplation within the confines of cultic space, and ethical passion for the

world outside, on the other. Such an equilibrium led the psalmists to transcend racial and ritual particularity in spite of the fact that the shelter of a shrine, the enjoyment of a closed brotherhood, and the delights of liturgical aesthetics might have led them to indulge in a socially irresponsible pietism.

For the psalmists, Yahweh's presence was not only made manifest in Zion. It reached men and women over the entire earth. It was this conviction which stirred them to face risks anywhere and to welcome the future anytime. Not restricted to sacred space or to a political structure, the sense of Yahweh's presence survived the annihilation of the temple and the fall of the state in 587 B.C.² Elusive but real, it feared no geographical uprooting and no historical disruption.

Most of the early hymnists belonged to the musical guilds of David and Solomon. Commissioned choristers and instrumentalists of the ceremonial, they extolled the nearness of God in Zion. Their successors, however, betrayed a certain ambivalence toward the cultus, alert to its corruptibility. Some of them developed a mode of presence which transcended the myth of the divine residence in a shrine. In interaction with the prophets, they conferred upon Hebraic faith its quality of inwardness and breadth, which saved Yahwism from the obsolescence of temporality and territoriality.³ Away from Jerusalem, they still lived in the proximity of God. Poets of the interior quest, they were not satisfied with mere intimations of the ultimate, but they never committed the clerical sin of reducing the ultimate to the proximate. Having faced the void in history and in their personal lives, they knew the absence of God even within the temple esplanade and festivities. The inwardness of their spirituality, bred by the temple, rendered the temple superfluous. In the end they became the theologians of the ear, not of the eye. They sang the name while expecting the glory. Functionaries of the cultus, they sensed the supracultic dimension of the presence. Artists nurtured in the sanctuary, they

could demythologize Zion by lending substance to the vision of a heavenly Jerusalem. The myth of time enabled them to renounce the myth of space. Landless, they

... looked at that prophetic land
 Where, manifested by their powers,
Presences perfected stand
 Whom night and day no more command
 Within shine and shadow of earthly hours.⁴

Although the guilds of the temple musicians were trained in the formal patterns of ancient Near Eastern hymnody,⁵ many of the psalmists displayed a theological originality which set them apart from the religious poets of Egypt, Canaan, and Mesopotamia.⁶ By sensing the relativity of cultic ceremonial and by experiencing spiritual alienation, they affirmed in effect the freedom of Yahweh from the techniques of ritual and the resources of institutionalized religion.⁷ Even the *Royal Psalms*,⁸ composed by kings or for their use, revealed the religious paradox which characterizes, *par excellence*, the ancient Hebrews: intimacy with the Godhead tempered by the dread of divine abandon.

ROYAL COMMUNION

The story of David testifies at once to the grandeur and the misery of the warrior king. The Court Diary which is now embedded in the Second Book of Samuel does not conceal the contradictions and conflicts which wrenched the character of this extraordinary man.⁹ Shepherd and musician, David was physically brave and aesthetically sensitive. Guerrilla leader, he elicited uncommon loyalties but he would on occasion deal treacherously with his most devoted servants. Astute diplomat, he reconciled factions, secured alliances, and conquered an

empire, but he did not foresee the deleterious effects of military conquest and colonial expansion. Consummate politician, he served the nation more than himself and he was ridiculously weak with his own family. At once magnanimous and cruel, he resorted to murder for *raison d'état* or if driven by erotic passion, but he also preserved a keen sense of social justice. Above all, he exhibited in his own life the ambiguities of religion.

It has often been suggested that David's decision to bring the ark to Jerusalem in the presence of "all the elite warriors of Israel" (2 Sam. 6:1) indicates the acuity of his political flair. To be sure, the king probably saw in the cultic object of the ancient tribal confederation a rallying force that was attractive to both northerners and southerners. Beyond its Philistine fiasco, the ark summoned to the popular mind the memories of the Holy Warrior in Sinai and Edom as well as the *Magnalia Dei* in the conquest of Canaan.¹⁰ David's act was probably meant to unite under Yahweh the tribesmen of Israel properly speaking with the brash young heroes of Judah as well as the keepers of the Yahwist tradition in the southern shrine of Hebron. There is no evidence, however, that his move was solely dictated by political opportunism.

The notorious scene of the procession of the ark to Jerusalem, in which the king danced ecstatically "in the presence of Yahweh" (2 Sam. 6:13), reveals the overpowering nature of his fervor. It is not legitimate to infer from the story that he exposed himself deliberately in conformity with a Canaanite ceremonial which involved ritual nudity. Rather, his carefree deportment seems to indicate the abandon of a soldier to his piety.¹¹ Captains and politicians sometimes conceal within the intensity of their religion an urge to search for the plenitude of their being. This is one of the reasons religion partakes of the more ambiguous elements of the human psyche and may be thoroughly self-deceiving. Dancing before the ark in neglect of decorum perhaps indicated the frustration of a genius whose

deeper cravings remained unfulfilled by military prowess and political achievement.

David's devotion to Yahweh appears elsewhere in the record. It was in all likelihood on account of his faith that he had on occasion freed himself from the dread of ritual breach. At the shrine of Nob he had violated the sacrality of the "Bread of Presence" by demanding its requisition for the use of his famished companions.¹² He knew that humaneness prevailed over legal prohibition. He may have dimly sensed that divine presence in battle was more precious than sacramental presence at an altar.

The purity of David's faith assumed a quality of elegance which has often gone unnoticed in modern times. When his son Absalom revolted against his rule, the aging monarch was compelled to flee Jerusalem. As the cultic personnel carried the ark out to follow him in his exile, David said to Zadok the priest:

Take the ark back to the city: if I find grace in the eyes of Yahweh, he will bring me again and he will show me the ark and its abode, but if he says, "I take no delight in thee," behold! Let him do to me as it seems good in his eyes! (**2 Sam.** 15:25-26).

It was on the ascent to the Mount of Olives that the king revealed his faith with such candor. Ten centuries later, in the garden of Gethsemane, on the slopes of the same Mount of Olives, Jesus similarly pinned his trust upon the will of his God, even when he knew that it demanded rather than delivered (Mark 14:36 et par.). He waited there for his arrest instead of attempting an easy escape "over the hill" at the edge of the desert.

David anticipated by a whole millenium the prayer of Jesus. He refrained from ascertaining the good or the evil of his situation. He did not claim right for his own cause. He prefigured implicitly the psalmists' concern for the *summum bonum*.¹³ "He

found it sufficient to identify goodness with the will of God, even at mortal risk: *Deo non pareo*, said Seneca, *assentior*. “God I do not obey-1 acquiesce.”¹⁴ The immediacy of presence attuned the human ego to the divine purpose and therefore took precedence over the sacramental ideology of presence associated with the ark. There is little doubt that the king was endowed with a theological perspicuity that placed him in the lineage of Moses and Samuel.

If one considers, in addition, that his spiritual alertness was matched by a most unusual talent for turning a poetic verse with exquisite diction and also vigor,¹⁵ one can easily accept the validity of a tradition which saw in the Bethlehem shepherd who attained the crown a poet and a musician who initiated the psalmody of Zion.

Presence as “The Rock”

In early Israel, as in most young nations, chieftains usually came to the limelight through military exploit. It was generally thought that physical prowess and the magnetism of command were related to a psychic quality of a religious nature. Captains were deemed to have been endowed with the power of the numinous. The “Judges” of the conquest of Canaan were charismatic in the sense that most of them had been the favored recipients of special hierophanies. They were changed into new beings by the rushing of the spirit of Yahweh upon them. One tradition presented Saul’s rise to kingship as the result of his being anointed by Samuel and grasped by the spirit (1 Sam. 10:1, 6); another as the result of his victory over foreign invaders (1 Sam. 11:15). David’s ascent from a shepherd’s hut to a king’s mansion passed through many an outlaw’s cave. The crown fell upon him after he had lived many deaths in many battles. It was a soldier’s sense of divine presence in the midst of peril which inspired his *Psalm of Thanksgiving* (2 Sam. 22 = Ps. 18).¹⁶

This poem shows various marks of amplification, for it was

probably used by David's successors when they ascended the throne of Judah in Jerusalem or when they celebrated their own victories.¹⁷ There is no valid argument, however, for doubting the Davidic authorship of the psalm in an original form,¹⁸ or the accuracy of its introductory note: "Then David spoke to Yahweh the words of this song on the day when Yahweh delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul" (vs. 1). The opening strophe is couched in a wild language which betrays the accent of a fighter who has survived mortal engagements and who knows presence as protection:

P s. 18:1[Heb. 2] I am in love with thee, Yahweh, my strength!
 2 13] Yahweh, my rock, my fortress, my rescuer!
 My God, my cliff, to whom I make my escape!
 My shield, the horn of my deliverance, my
 retreat on the heights!
 3[4] Praised be he! I will cry out to Yahweh, my
 stronghold!
 I have been saved from my enemies!

The verbal expostulation which starts the song is unique in Hebrew literature. The verb *rachem*, "to love," of which the noun *rechem*, "uterus," or "womb," is a derivative, evokes the visceral passion of a mother for her child.¹⁹ That a military hero like David would use such a word has surprised many commentators, both Jewish and Christian.²⁰ Elsewhere in the religious poetry of ancient Israel, this verb is applied directly to the love of Yahweh for human beings,²¹ never to the love of human beings for Yahweh.²² It is not impossible, however, that a seasoned guerrilla leader would have quite naturally formulated his explosion of gratitude with vernacular force, however coarse a connotation the word might have evoked in some ears.²³

The importance of this psalm for the study of the Hebraic theology of presence is manifest. It brings into convergence

three aspects of Yahwistic faith: the elemental experience of divine nearness, the liturgical anamnesis of the Sinai theophany, and the behavioral implications of loyalty to the presence.

The Elemental Experience of Divine Nearness. God had stood at the side of David through a thousand deaths. Again and again, the hovering presence had preceded him to safety. A crag or a precipitous bluff had become for him the very symbol of the Godhead. Even if the term “Rock” was traditionally used as an appellation of Yahweh,²⁴ the warrior poet renewed the live imagery through the juxtaposition of half a dozen other allusions to defensive warfare in mountainous terrain. As a battle-scarred veteran, he would know the full impact of comparing divine protection to natural shelters. His deliverance from mortal peril was associated with a mode of presence that he was not likely to forget. In breathless sequence, he piled up as many as nine metaphors which pinpointed his memory of having “effleuré l’abîme,” and been saved by “his” most personal God.²⁵

Long before the modern aphorism “There’s no atheist in a foxhole,” soldiers had been aware of a sudden armor screening them from finality. When it overcomes man’s dread of imminent death, presence is grasped and recollected with the total simplicity of awe. The memory of communion in distress is recalled with a quality of naïveté which is the mark of ultimate knowledge. Pure religion, as distinguished from magic or any ritual that verges on the manipulation of the holy, begins with the raw emotion of thankfulness.

Hebraic faith was the response, *par excellence*, of relief from the terror of annihilation. Countless times, David had been saved in extremis. Safety was for him inseparable from presence. When at last he was delivered from his enemies, he sang a psalm of gratitude to Yahweh, the ever-present Deity. This man had therefore penetrated to the center of being. Presence meant for him the power of life over death, and it produced-in him the

power of love. Overpowered by this love, he cried out, "I am in love with thee, Yahweh, my strength!" He told it "like it is," with a touch of semantic vulgarity.

The Liturgical Anamnesis of the Sinai Theophany. After this outburst of personal witness to the most intimate "science" of divine nearness independent from sacred space and time, the psalmist continued his eulogy of the ever-present God in the language of the *Heilsgeschichte*:

"[Yahweh] bent the heavens and he came down,
and thickdarkness was under his feet" (ps.18:9 [Heb. 10]).

The word *'araphel*, "thickdarkness," summoned to mind the motif of invisible presence in the thunderstorm (Exod. 20:21; cf. 1 Kings 8: 12).²⁶ Instead of continuing to develop the theme of royal communion as in the first strophe, the poet borrowed the liturgical form of the theophany from the national epic of the Exodus and of Sinai. In the language of Canaanite mythology, he pictured Yahweh coming down to fight for him on the clouds of the storm.²⁷ A man of war, he knew the Holy Warrior.²⁸ Like many other psalms thereafter,²⁹ David's *Song of Thanksgiving* celebrated the advent of Yahweh in the midst of his people at worship. Even in the early days, this ceremonial act had most likely taken place during the autumn festival, the highest moment of the sacred calendar.

As Yahweh "bent the heavens and descended," not only did his "anointed one" (*mashîah*, royal messiah) escape death, but he did so as the result of a divine intervention similar to the Sinai theophany. The people did not die but lived. David did not die but lived. The king became the cultic incarnation of Israel. The recipient of the presence as an individual, he was the single focus and justification of God's descent upon earth: the king was poetically and ritually associated with the covenant people.

The Behavioral Implication of Loyalty to the Presence. Because David linked his own apprehension of the presence as a refuge (vss. 1-5 [Heb. 2-6]) with the recital of a theophany patterned on the anamnesis of the national epic (vss. 6-19 [Heb. 7-20]), he provided insight into the interaction between the elusiveness of presence and the conditional character of the Sinai covenant.

Brought up on the Yahwism of Judah in Bethlehem and Hebron, David was later exposed to the “catechism” of covenant loyalty to Yahweh. His “righteousness” (vs. 24 [Heb. 25]), however, should not be interpreted as the self-righteousness acquired by legal scrupulousness as a technique of merit. As is well known, obedience to the law in a later age could be interpreted as an attempt to force the divine favor and thereby to limit the freedom of God. In the context of the psalm, the word “righteousness” alludes to the dynamic harmony which flows from the habit of living in the presence. The key to the understanding of the so-called-and misnamed-profession of moral purity (vss. 20 ff. [Heb. 21 ff.]) is to be found in the final word of the theophany:

“He rescued me because he delighted in me” (vs. 19b[Heb.20b]).

The verb “to delight in” (*chaphes*) and its cognates mean “to be eagerly mindful” and “to desire to give protection.”³⁰ David sensed that the safety he had enjoyed in war was the perceptible facet of God’s pleasure toward him. He wanted to respond in all aspects of his behavior to this mark of divine delight in him. He was a *chasid* in the early sense of the word: the leal lover of God. In all circumstances, he remained “intensely loyal” to the God who cultivated “with” him such an “intense loyalty” (vs. 25a [Heb. 26a]).³¹ Likewise, as a “man of noble stature” who was completely and undividedly “devoted to Yahweh,” he received the grace of wholeheartedness:³²

“With the man of soundness and integrity,
 thou showest and conferrest soundness and integrity”
 (vs. 256 [Heb. 26b]).

Response to presence in the awareness of love is the foundation of ethics. Behavior is not motivated by obedience to “ordinances” and “statutes.” Rather, it is the response to presence which determines this obedience (vs. 22 [Heb. 23]).³³ The will to behave is conditioned by the desire to love.

Man’s loyalty to God’s loyalty not only effects an ethical style, it also entails psychosomatic consequences. Homer’s Greek adage generally known in its Latin form, *mens sana in corpore sano*, as well as the word “psycho-somatic,” betrays an anthropological dualism which was foreign to ancient Hebraic thinking. David’s integrity manifested itself in a form of moral conduct which was inseparable from his superb physique.³⁴

“For it is thou, O Yahweh, who gives light to my lamp,
 thou, O my God, who illumines my darkness.
 For by thee I can outrun an armed band
 and by my God I can leap over a wall!”
 (vss. 28–29 [Heb. 29–30].)

The athlete might have boasted of his own discipline in training, but he ascribed the origin of his muscular prowess to Yahweh’s delight in him. The three motifs of the psalm are thus blended in a strophic reprise: Yahweh’s presence, the warrior’s *askesis*, and the chasid’s fidelity:

For who is God, except Yahweh?
 And who is “the Rock,” except our God?
 The God who girded me with strength
 and gave me the wholeness of my way,
 Who made my feet as swift as hinds’ feet
 and enabled me to stand upon the heights,³⁵

Who trained my hands for war
and my arms to bend a bow of bronze.³⁶

(Vss. 33-35 [Heb. 34-36])³⁶

David knew presence as *the Rock*. Yahweh wields supreme power in the universe. At the same time, the young king may have grasped a theological truth which captured the attention of prophets in later centuries: the self-imposed abasement of the omnipotent Deity for the sake of man:

“Thy right hand supported me
and thy humility made me great” (vs. 35 [Heb. 36]).

The spatial imagery of God’s “descent” in the theophany (vs. 9 [Heb. 10]) underscores the specific character of Hebraic theology. The presence of the transcendent Being means his willingness to accept self-limitation. The verse does not formulate a logical antithesis between divine lowliness and human greatness. It seeks to express in anthropomorphic language the power of love which wears the appearance of weakness. If the traditional Hebrew text is correct,³⁷ David’s *Song of Thanksgiving* contains one of the most startling examples of the preprophetic understanding of divine pathos.³⁸

To the self-abasement of Yahweh, the king responds with a liturgical acclamation which may well have unconsciously echoed the proto-Canaanite liturgy of the dying and rising god of vegetation?

“May Yahweh live!⁴⁰ Blessed be my Rock!
May he rise, the God of my deliverance!”

(vs. 46 [Heb. 47].)

To say “May Yahweh live!” in the context of the theme of the divine self-abasement and immediately before the wish “May he

rise!” indicates perhaps an attempt to stress once more through poetic analogy the cost of the divine “descent.”

A soldier who sings the presence with such intensity of feeling and radiates his borrowed strength with such magnetic power of leadership becomes in effect a mediator of the holy. David unwittingly promoted a quasi-incarnational mode of presence, which did not totally contradict the Near Eastern mythology of the divine king and which was ritually carried on by his descendants on the throne of Judah.⁴¹ Like Moses and Samuel, he became at once a priestly and a prophetic figure.⁴² The traditional triad of Priest-Prophet-King which later Judaism and Christianity associated with the eschatological “Messiah” found its roots in the awareness of divine presence which permeated the character and the achievements of the Bethlehem shepherd.

It will be noted that nothing of this *Song of Thanksgiving* indicates that David himself was aware of a so-called Davidic covenant. He had been brought up in the Sinai covenant tradition and knew its conditional character. Not only was he conscious of Yahweh’s “ordinances” and “statutes,”⁴³ but he also hailed the harmonious reciprocity-which bound him in intimate communion with his God-as an elusive reality which could be ruptured.⁴⁴ After him, his dynasty dreamed of a covenant which would last forever.⁴⁵ Instead of a covenant which was historical and relative because it depended in part upon man’s response, the Davidic dynasty promoted a covenant which was supposed to transcend the vicissitudes and corruption of man. The so-called Davidic covenant was viewed as eternal, and therefore as suprahistorical and mythical. For David himself, however, presence conceived as deliverance respected the freedom of God and thus remained in the theology of the Sinai covenant. For David’s successors, presence was conceived as an adoption into divine sonship, and it became institutional. Instead of “presence as the Rock,” the mode of royal communion which eventually prevailed must be called “presence as the Crown.”

Presence as "The Crown"

The awe produced by the military prowess and apparent immunity from danger which set David apart from ordinary mortals was not necessarily transferable to his progeny. The principle of hereditary monarchy had to entail some ritual through which the new monarch received the power of sacrality. Dynastic princes who ascended the throne by right of birth, unlike charismatic "Judges" and prophets, participated in the holy through a series of sacral acts: the ceremonies of anointing, enthronement, and coronation. The mythical ideology of the ancient Near East concerning divine kingship penetrated the mentality of the Davidic dynasty, albeit in a limited and somewhat modified form.⁴⁶

The Farewell Psalm of David (2 Sam. 23:1-7), generally known as *The Last Words of David* or his *Hymnic Testament*,⁴⁷ probably originated with the coronation feast of his successors. With high lyricism, the poet expatiates on the oracular function of the king as Yahweh's prophetic mediator:

"The oracle of David, the son of Jesse,
the oracle of the man who was raised on high,⁴⁸
The anointed of the God of Jacob
and the darling of the singers of Israel"

(vs. 1).⁴⁹

Through the device of juxtaposition, the psalmist hints that a theological bond unites prophetic oracularity and the aesthetics of sacred music. For him, David's artistic inspiration was correlated with his prophetic inspiration. He composed and he modulated while speaking on behalf of the Deity. The musician, the poet, and the prophet were one.

In the four strophes which follow the introduction, the ideal monarch is indirectly portrayed. The word "anointed" is on the way to acquiring the connotation of finality which was centuries

later attached to the word “Messiah” as a terminus *technicus*.

I

23:2 The spirit of Yahweh speaks by me,
and his word is upon my tongue.
3 The God of Jacob has spoken,
the Rock of Israel has said to me:

II

“When one rules justly over men,
ruling in the fear of God,
4 He is like the morning light at sunrise,
like the dawn of a cloudless day.
[Shining with] brightness after the autumn rain
the new grass will sprout from the earth.”

III

5 Is not thus my house in communion with God?
For he has set for me an eternal covenant,
well-ordered in all things, and well-kept.
Thus he is my whole salvation and my whole delight:
will he not make my descendants spring forth?

IV

6 As for men of nought, they are wind-tossed thorns
One cannot take them by hand.
The man who will smite them
arms himself with iron
and the staff of a spear.
They will be burnt by fire,
utterly consumed in flames.

The cōming of Yahweh’s spirit to the sovereign marks him as the mediator of presence for the nation and for the land. First, he speaks the divine word (vss. 2–3*ab*). Second, royal communion manifests itself in a just rule of government (vs. 3*cd*).

Third, the immediate consequence of the king's intimacy with his God is the fertility of nature at the renewal of the year, when grass "sparkles" under the autumn rains (vs. 4). Finally, royal communion is not confined to the individual founder of the dynasty. It continues to unite forever the house of David with Yahweh through "an eternal covenant" (vs. 5).

In contrast with the conditional covenant of the early Sinai traditions,⁵⁰ the Zion-Davidic theology of presence introduced into Hebrew religion a factor which vitiated the concept of divine freedom. Moreover, a suprahistorical myth of unconditioned protection for the kings of Judah inevitably undermined the ethical demands of official Yahwism. To be sure, the epithets which qualified this eternal covenant as "well ordered in all things and well kept" implied a critical concern for the moral character of the monarch and the social fairness of his administration, but the exact sense of these words remained ambiguous (vs. 5). If the fulmination of the last strophe against "men of nought" (vs. 6) refers to corrupt kings, one may conclude that this "eternal covenant" was after all only temporal and the expression should be ascribed to court language with the hyperbolic overtones of New Year's wishes. It seems, however, that the expression "men of nought" designates the enemies of the kings rather than the sons of David themselves.

In effect, the Coronation *Hymn* (now preserved as Ps. 2) stresses even more than the *Last Words of David* the sacralty of the ruler.⁵¹ It implies a royal intimacy with God in terms of filial adoption:⁵²

"[Yahweh] said to me, Thou art my son!
This day, I have begotten thee!"

(Ps. 2:7.)

The idea expressed in this verse went beyond the similar notion which court prophets developed after David's reign within the

framework of Nathan's oracle.⁵³ In that theological charter of the Judahite monarchy, on the day when a new king was enthroned, Yahweh was made to declare, "I shall be a father to him, and he will be to me a son" (2 Sam. 7:14). Here, the language is more graphic. While the statement of God's begetting did not refer to an act of biological procreation either through the rite of hierogamy or through a mythical belief in supranatural conception,⁵⁴ it was nevertheless something other than a simple metaphor.

The ancient Near Eastern mentality concerning divine kingship inevitably insinuated itself into the royal circles of Jerusalem. The survival of the Jebusites, on the one hand, and the presence of foreign queens and diplomats, on the other, promoted the habit of ambiguous adulation for "the chief of state" -a collective delusion which has persisted throughout the history of mankind, including the Western democracies of today. As the unbroken line of Davidic succession lengthened over several generations in spite of wars and domestic upheavals,⁵⁵ the aura of legend which surrounded the founder of the dynasty was bound to reflect upon the sons. A coronation hymn which included the oracle "Today, I have begotten thee" tended to separate the anointed monarch from other human beings not only socially but also ontologically. The notion of sacred sonship, even viewed as the result of a ritual adoption, tended to blur the sharp distinction which Mosaic Yahwism had maintained between the human and divine realms. A "mystical bond" was deemed to unite Yahweh and the incumbent of David's throne. As the adopted son of the Godhead, the king could do no wrong, and autocratic caprice easily trespassed the limits of Yahwistic ethics. Presence as royal adoption represented a deterioration of the Hebraic theology of presence. It was corrupted by the notion of a "hierarchy," or "sacred rule," especially as it became associated with the myth of Zion. Such an association appears not only in Psalm 132,⁵⁶ but also

and especially in another coronation hymn now preserved in Psalm 110.57

This poem provides a further example of the ambivalence which some court circles entertained vis-a-vis the majesty of the royal person. While it does not erase the Hebraic distinction between divinity and humanity, it ascribes to the sovereign a number of attributes which definitely set him apart from the rest of humanity as one living in the presence, in the intimacy, and by the power of Yahweh. The psalm presents itself in the form of an oracle of God himself addressed to the king as “my Lord” (*Adonî*). One can easily imagine why Psalm 110 received sustained attention among the first Christians of the New Testament.⁵⁸

PS. 110:1 Oracle of Yahweh to my Lord:

- Sit down at my right hand
till I make thy enemies thy footstool.
- 2 Let Yahweh stretch forth from Zion the scepter of thy power:
Rule in the midst of thy enemies!
- 3 Thy people will offer themselves freely
on the day of thy battle.⁵⁹
Through the splendor of holiness,⁶⁰ from the womb
of dawn,
to thee [belongs] the dew of thy young men.⁶¹
- 4 Yahweh has sworn and will not repent:
Thou art priest for ever
According to the order of Melchisedek!”

The above translation attempts to respect the Masoretic text but must remain highly tentative. In spite of several uncertainties and obscurities of meaning, four elements appear to be relatively clear. First, on the day of his coronation the new king was ritually introduced to the heavenly council as one of the sons of God. It is not obvious from the text that the new monarch was officially enthroned in the Jerusalem sanctuary, at the right side (south) of the ark. If the original wording of the

poem, now lost in the Masoretic text, is correctly preserved in the Greek version of the Septuagint,⁶² divine sonship lay in the mind of the psalmist as he expressed poetically the myth of the king's procreation by the Deity. Even the allusions to "womb," "dawn," and "dew," which appear in the textual tradition of the medieval synagogue, call to mind the myth of a cosmic procreation, not unlike that of the personified figure of wisdom (Prov. 8:22 ff.).

Second, the new monarch received the promise of military allegiance in words which summon to memory the prowess of David and the selfless sacrifice of his young heroes.

Third, this pledge of a supreme freewill-offering in death was consecrated by the temple ideology. The divine Lord of Zion himself handled the king's scepter. Secular power represents a manifestation of the cultic presence of Yahweh in the sanctuary.

Fourth, the new monarch was endowed "forever" with a priestly status and function related to the legendary figure of Melchisedek, priest of El Elyon and king of Salem (Gen. 14:18-20).⁶³ An effort may be discerned here to bind the Davidic House not only to an institutionalized presence related to the Zion mythology-through the implied identification of Jerusalem with Salem-but also to the Abrahamic promises and the *Heilsgeschichte* of the national epic.

Thus, in fourfold fashion-as the adopted son of God, as the recipient of a freewill sacrifice in war, as the regent of the Lord of Zion, and as the Melchisedekian type of eternal Priest-King—the Judahite monarchs became, at least in the minds of members of their entourage, the instruments of Yahweh in all spheres of human existence, including the destiny of peoples spread over the "widest earth."⁶⁴

When confined to David, presence as "the Rock" was viewed as the gift of grace. When linked by ritual to the Davidic dynasty, presence as "the Crown" became a mythic ideology of cultic nationalism which attempted to ignore the relativity of history,

with its human vicissitudes and even royal criminality. The former respected the freedom of Yahweh. The latter tended to enlist divine power into "the texture of time." The former let God be God. The latter was on its way to making a god in man's image.

Presence as "The Scepter"

Biblical records themselves have mercilessly depicted the sorry deeds of the Judahite kings-not only the many interlopers, treacherous captains, and other murderers who ruled the Northern Kingdom of Israel proper (922-722 B.C.) but also those princes who belonged to the hallowed line of David. With the exception of a few reformers among them,⁶⁵ the kings of Judah followed the example of worldly tolerance which Solomon had set. David's immediate successor, it will be remembered, had tolerated within the palace grounds the foreign worship familiar to his queens, and the Phoenician architecture of his temple courted the mysterious attractiveness of the nature cults.

Direct and indirect evidence indicates that in most of the decades over a period of four centuries (975-587 B.C.), the worship of Yahweh was dubiously and laboriously maintained in rival accommodation to that of the Earth-Mother goddess, with such religious practices as idolatry in various forms, necromancy, witchcraft, hierogamy, male prostitution, heliolatry, ophiolatry, and-at least during the reigns of Manasseh and Amon in the seventh century-the worship of the official pantheon of Assyria.⁶⁶

It is difficult to reconcile the relative loftiness of the psalmists' theology with this polytheistic syncretism, unless one conjectures, as most scholars do, that the psalmody of the first temple was effectively censored through the process of oblivion. It is probable that objectionable hymns and laments were merely dropped from the hymnals of the Second Temple.

A lack of documentation on the inner life of the kings⁶⁷ makes it precarious to speculate on their response to the mode of presence which was ceremonially imparted to them at their coronation. Nevertheless, Psalm 89 provides at least one exception to this literary dearth.

In this complex poem,⁶⁸ probably composed for a national day of mourning and fast, the king is fully aware of the status of divine sonship. He is compelled to recognize, however, that the presence of Yahweh through ritual adoption has failed to provide him with divine protection. Presence as “the Crown” has become Presence as “the Scepter of Judgment.”

Intricately knit within a strophic structure which shows its unity of form and thought in spite of the diversity of its poetic genres,⁶⁹ Psalm 89 consists of three parts framed by a liturgical invocation and a thematic *inclusio*. The invocation (vss. 14 [Heb. 2–5]) recalls the “loyal deeds of Yahweh,” equating his faithfulness as the creator of a harmonious cosmos with his faithfulness as the protector of the Davidic throne. The first part (vss. 5–18 [Heb. 6–19]) is a hymn developing the first theme of the invocation. It exalts Yahweh’s power over the arrogance of the Sea and his triumph against Rahab, the mythical monster of chaos.⁷⁰ The second part (vss. 19–37 [Heb. 20–38]) is an *oracle* which expounds the second theme of the invocation: it recalls two sets of Yahweh’s promises, those to David (vss. 19–27 [Heb. 20–28]) and those to his posterity (vss. 28–37 [Heb. 29–38]). The third part is a *lament* (vss. 38–51 [Heb. 39–52]), lexicographically and thematically related to the first two.

Yahweh spoke once in a vision to David. He promised to make him—“a stripling”—into “a hero” (*gibbôr*), his “first-born son,” “the highest of the kings of the earth.” In gratitude, David replied, “Thou art my Father, my God, my Rock, my Savior” (vss. 19–27 [Heb. 20–28]). Furthermore, Yahweh swore that David’s seed would endure forever and that his throne would be

“as the days of heaven” (vss. 29 [Heb. 30]). The promise, however, was qualified. If some of David’s sons violated Yahweh’s “law,” “ordinances,” “statutes,” and “commandments,” their transgressions would be punished “with the rod” and their guilt “with stripes” (vss. 30-32 [Heb. 31-33]). No ancient singer of the psalm could have missed the irony: the word for “rod” (*shébbet*) is the same as the word for “royal scepter,” now turned against its holder. The very symbol of kingship has become the symbol of judgment.

The oracle concluded in reiterating the promise. The throne of David would remain forever, “like the sun and the moon, a faithful witness in the heavens” (vss. 33-37 [Heb. 34-38]). The theology of the Davidic covenant has been incorporated into the theology of creation. In the midst of the Fertile Crescent, where dynasties rose and fell, the throne of Judah was secure, for it drew the same divine concern as the natural order. At the same time, the rigorous attention which Yahwism had always paid to social justice, communal ethics, and integrity in government could not allow the immorality or the political and religious irresponsibility of individual monarchs to go unchecked. Royal status meant divine sonship but not immunity against punishment for lawlessness. The king’s scepter may be hurled against him as the rod of retribution.

As a criterion for the understanding of history, and as a ground for hope in the future of the nation, the David *legenda* gained admittance in the religion of Yahweh. More than Nathan’s oracle (2 Sam. 7) or the Psalm of the Ark (Ps. 132), however, the oracle of Psalm 89 shows that safeguards have been erected against the oriental myth of the divinity of kings. Even as an adopted son of God, the chief of state is not above the law. The lamenter in Psalm 89 ignored the stipulation of the oracle. He protested his misfortunes as if Yahweh himself had violated his own covenant:

Yet, thou! Thou hast spurned and rejected thy anointed,
 Thou hast become enraged against him,
 Thou hast denounced thy covenant with thy servant,
 Thou hast profaned his crown in the dust,

Thou hast brought his luster to an end,
 Thou hast hurled his throne to the ground!

(vss. **38-44** [Heb. 39-45])

True to the Hebraic style of brusqueness in prayer, the remonstrance goes so far as to accuse Yahweh. The oracle had unambiguously stated that the covenant with David and his seed did not exclude moral retribution for individual occupants of the throne, but the language of the complaint shows no sign of penitence, not even an awareness of wrongdoing. Indeed, the tone suggests the mentality of a prince who has “inhaled” for too long the adulation of his courtiers. In the face of adversity, he merely felt betrayed by his God. He did not deny God’s presence. He charged that the presence had become a scourge -without cause.

By providing a clause for the punishment of individual kings, the oracle had in effect undermined the ancient notion of collective personality.⁷¹ The lamenter attempted to seek shelter under the Davidic dynasty, which he conceived as a sacrosanct corporateness transcending time and generations.

Tyrants are notorious for their fear of treason. They tend to misconstrue expressions of dissent as acts of lese majesty. If they believe in the myth of their divine right, they may find a solace for their anxieties:

“There’s such divinity doth hedge a king
 That treason can but peep to what it would,
 Acts little of his will.”⁷²

But if they interpret adversity as a sign that God himself conspires against them, what becomes of the myth of their near-divinity?

As if he had sensed the force of this irony, the psalmist altered his stance. No longer arrogant he begged:

“How long, O Yahweh, wilt thou hide thyself forever?
Will thy wrath continue to burn like a fire?”

(vs. 46 [Heb. 47].)

The poets and the prophets of Mosaic Yahwism had said that God averted his face and concealed himself from human crimes.⁷³ The motif of the *Deus absconditus* may have hinted in the psalm at an ethical dimension, but the explicit confession of wrongdoing is missing. Still, hidden presence is not absence, and the king’s faith, though shaken, was not shattered. His plea to Yahweh persisted, more urgent than before:

“Remember! [Here] I [am], ... What is a life-span?⁷⁴
For what kind of emptiness hast thou created the sons of
man?
What man of stature shall live and not see death?
Will he escape the power of Sheol?”

(vss. 47-48 [Heb. 48-49].)

The rhetorical movement is theologically significant: no longer defiant, the king has become human. He has asked the existential question. He has discovered his solidarity with the human race.

The thought of mortality, far more than the experience of national calamity, has pierced the royal illusion of super-humanity. The son of David, after all, was less the adopted son of God than the created son of man. The word for “man,” *Adam*, may have been pointedly chosen as a veiled allusion to the myth of the garden. Even for a “man of noble stature” (*gebher*) destined to royal splendor, the end is death. Perpetuation of the self in the underworld was viewed as under the image of sleep or at best as a semiexistence, bleak and impassive, which was contrary to life,⁷⁵ and whose goal could be described only

through the image of vacuity, an emptiness devoid of substance or meaning.

What is the purpose of creation? Is there at the origin or in the sustenance of the cosmos the evidence of an intelligent and benevolent Doer? Why should man praise the Lord of nature and the creator of universal harmonies if the *telos* of life is death? What is the meaning of an existence whose ultimate destiny is nothingness? These questions were asked by the inquiring minds of the wisdom movement. The sapiential world transcended frontiers, dynasties, languages, cultic rites, and nationalities. Diplomats, officers of the foreign services of the oriental courts, multilingual public servants, and “the wise” all faced philosophical issues. They anticipated the flowering of classical philosophy. The royal hymnist of Psalm 89, who turned royal plaintiff, eventually spoke as if he belonged to the circles of royal wisdom. His intellectual voyage reflected the itinerary of his spiritual travail. His query showed that he still responded to a presence, now veiled as a great Unknown.

Deprived of martial success, he never experienced the presence as “the Rock.” Heir to a noble lineage and ritually hallowed, he felt the presence not as “the Crown” but as “the Rod of Judgment.” Unaware of presence as rescue, he hoped that presence as adoption would mean victory and happiness. It proved to be presence as censure. In the end, God remained near him, hiding behind an impenetrable mask. Yet from it he learned the humility and universality of the human condition. He also acquired a thirst for ultimate knowledge.

Whether Psalm 89 was composed for an enthronement ceremony or a New Year festival that included a rite of royal abasement and restoration cannot be ascertained in the light of present research. What is important for the study of the Hebraic theology of presence, however, is the fact that such a complex piece of psalmody found its way into the hymnal of the temple. With its critique of the monarchy, this poem prepared the na-

tion to maintain the Yahwist ideal of justice through tribal solidarity in the context of divine presence.

Searching for a principle of political stability, the prophetic circles of Judah, no doubt in concert with the sapiential circles of the court, never dismissed the Davidic monarchy, although they condemned the Davidic kings. The dynastic oracles and the coronation hymns became perhaps the most important factors in the shaping of the messianic hope.

Backing away from the weak and corrupt princelings who sat on the throne of David, the prophet Isaiah postponed till the end of time his hope for a righteous ruler. In a programmatic poem (Isa. 11:1-5), which may be called a manifesto for sane government, he envisaged the growth of "a shoot from the [cut-off] tree of Jesse"-thereby expecting historical discontinuity from the dynasty but ideological continuity from the Davidic model-upon whom "the spirit of Yahweh" would "alight like a bird"-thereby stressing the element of theological disruption and wonder. The prophet understood that living in the intimacy of Yahweh was the *sine qua non* of integrity and wisdom in government.⁷⁶ In another age, he might have insisted on the principle of separation between church and state, but, in any case, he would have wanted the chief of state to be a genuine man of God. In addition, by linking the sevenfold spirit to seven aspects of the art of kingship, he intimated that familiarity with the presence was less a virtue of military valor than a skill of administration.

Isaiah's attempt to integrate the concepts of wisdom and presence into a viable formula for political leadership was influential in bringing about the expectation of the eschatological Messiah.

Whatever may have been the specific occasions for which they were composed or used, the royal psalms were poems on the mystery of royal communion. During the four centuries of the monarchy, these poems evolved from the evocation of a sol-

dier's amazement at protection from peril to the frustration of a crowned functionary whose mystical status was no longer believable but whose questioning faith remained so dynamic that he faced the enigma of life and death without renouncing hope. His last word was therefore the request of a common man, even if he still begged for relief from shame as Yahweh's anointed (Ps. 89:51 [Heb. 52]).⁷⁷

Because they showed individuals in prosperity and distress, the royal psalms, by their form and content, influenced the psalmody of many temple musicians.

As members of the liturgical guilds, most of the psalmists learned from the royal psalms how to express in melody and verse their own enjoyment or deprivation of the divine presence. The hymnology of the First Temple was on the whole a psalmody of presence. The spiritual longings which it exhibited remained in many ways unfulfilled. For this reason, much of the psalmody of presence deserves to be called a psalmody of the mystical quest.

MYSTICAL QUEST

It has been maintained that the Hebraic spirit was not "mystical." The word "mysticism" usually describes the religious attitude which loses subject-object awareness, overcomes the differences between the human and the divine, negates the boundary between finiteness and infinity, claims to reach in trance or in ecstasy an awareness of identification with the Godhead, and fuses the proximate with the ultimate. As a consequence of such an attitude, the human self is absorbed into divinity. Defined along these lines, the word "mysticism" is not appropriate for describing Hebraic faith in general or the inner life of the psalmists in particular.⁷⁸

The insistence of Mosaic faith on making a radical distinction between God and man reflected a reaction against the fascination which the ancient Near Eastern cults exercised on Israel. The storytellers of the epic age and the great prophets during the monarchy waged an uncompromising polemic against practices which tended to promote a mystical union with the numinous forces of nature. Canaanite syncretism sought to attune human beings to the feminine principle of the deified earth. The sacerdotal status of the queens of Judah, snake and sun worship, the recurring presence of male prostitutes in the Jerusalem temple, and several other data⁷⁹ indicate that a religious eroticism related to agrarian and animal fertility was constantly alluring court and masses alike. Through the extreme stimulation of all their senses, worshippers attained that marginal twilight between life and death which appears to transcend time and space. Such states of awareness have been described in the language of spiritualized sexuality by mystics of many cultures.⁸⁰

When some scholars speak of the mysticism of the prophets⁸¹ and of the psalmists,⁸² they refer not to the *unio mystica* reached in a sexual or sublimated form but to a sense of elusive communion with Yahweh. Communion does not lead to the fusion of divine and human identities. Whenever the psalmists used poetic metaphors to evoke the immediacy of communion, they also referred, contextually, to its relativity. Even when they used a vocabulary which was later appropriated by Jewish and Christian mystics, they alluded, in effect, to spiritual longings which remained unfulfilled. The psalmists were not mystics, although some of them may have engaged in a mystical quest.

Guests of the Sanctuary

Since most of the psalmists belonged to the musical guilds of the Jerusalem temple, they participated in the celebration of the feasts and in the national services of thanksgiving. For these

public ceremonies, they composed and sang hymns of praise for the sovereign of nature and history.⁸³ That the Lord of heaven and earth manifested his presence in the sanctuary during such cultic events was the basic assumption of the hymnology. More especially, it is probable that the culmination of the festive ceremonial was marked by a symbolic and, in effect, “sacramental” theophany—the anticipation of the victory of Yahweh at the end of history.⁸⁴

The details of the cultic theophany are not known. While the theophany did not include the “monstrance” of a statue of the Deity, as in Egypt and Mesopotamia or later in Greece, a number of inferences in the Psalter and elsewhere suggest that, at the highest moment of worship, a dramatic apotheosis was made perceptible to the senses of the worshipers through a convergence of liturgical devices:

“Elohim has ascended at the ritual shout!
 Yahweh, with the sound of the *shophar!*
 Play ye the harps for Elohim, play ye the harps!
 Play ye the harps for our King, play ye the harps!”⁸⁵

The symbolic event—which corresponded in the believers’ minds not to a mere sign but to a sensuous token of reality—has survived, through modified forms, in the synagogue as the bringing out of the Torah scrolls and in the church as the consecration of the eucharistic elements.

The psalmists believed so thoroughly in the concreteness of the cultic advent as the effective prefiguration of the final epiphany that they expatiated on the theme of universal harmony, when “the princes of the peoples are gathered as the people of Abraham.”⁸⁶ It was the ideology of the cultic advent in the temple of Jerusalem which prepared in large measure the rise of Jewish and Christian eschatology, with the beliefs in the last judgment and the fulfillment of creation.⁸⁷

“Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
Elohim is shining forth.
Our Elohim will come, he will not keep silent.”⁸⁸

The psalmists were so thoroughly inspired by the realism of the cultic advent of Yahweh during the act of ceremonial worship that for them, also, divine presence lingered in the temple, even without the conjunction of sacerdotal and congregational activity. In Zion, the psalmists were at home as the guests of Yahweh. It is therefore to be expected that an overwhelming sense of divine nearness permeated their personal prayers.

Some of the individual laments were probably commissioned by temple officials for the use of private worshippers who sought pastoral comfort, ritual cleansing, and judiciary asylum in the sacred precincts. Special psalms were sung when individuals were indicted for crimes, impaired by disease, pursued by enemies, or otherwise buffeted by adversity. It is even possible, although not demonstrated, that a few of these poems were chanted in rites of exorcism or of protection from witchcraft.⁸⁹ Others may have been recited during legal procedures, not merely as protests of innocence but also as ritual devices for the testing of veracity.⁹⁰

In any case, the poets who composed the individual laments showed a depth of theological perceptiveness which points to the authenticity of their encounter with the divine. Nowhere in the collection of personal prayers is the complexity of the interaction between the theology of Zion and the inwardness of faith more graphically expressed than in Psalm 27.

Some exegetes in modern times have missed the purpose of the poet by failing to recognize the literary homogeneity of the psalm.⁹¹ Observing a change of rhythm and of mood between verses 1-6 and verses 7-14, they have hastily concluded that it represents an editorial conflation of two independent pieces. On the contrary, an analysis of the structure and of the articula-

tion of the key words with the themes suggests a unity of composition.

In the *first strophe* (vss. 1–3), the psalmist links his certitude of deliverance to his ability to overcome fear:

- ps. 27:1. My light is Yahweh, and also my safety!
 whom shall I fear?
 The fortress of my life:
 of whom shall I be in dread?
 2. When evildoers close in on me
 to devour my flesh,
 My foes and my enemies themselves
 will stumble and fall.
 3. Though a whole army would encamp against me,
 my heart will not fear,
 Even if a whole battle were waged against me,
 at that very moment I shall trust.

This creedal confession does not smooth over the gravity of the crisis. The sense of trust is itself prompted by the urgency of the situation. Reminiscences of David's *Song of Thanksgiving*⁹² suggest that temple musicians were the spiritual as well as artistic heirs to the legendary warrior king. Like David, they were pursued by enemies, and their perils only intensified their conviction of God's nearness. Like David, they compared Yahweh to a fortress, to a lamp, or to light. Unlike David, however, a temple musician could avail himself of the institutional means of sacramental grace. Yahweh was present in his sanctuary.

In the *second strophe* (vss. 4–6), therefore, the psalmist expressed his religious desire on two levels at once. He sought in the sacred precinct an asylum from secular harassment and also a locus for engaging in a mystical quest:

- Ps. 27:4. A single wish I ask of Yahweh,
 this alone I earnestly seek,
 To dwell in the house of Yahweh
 all the days of my life
 That I may see the beauty of Yahweh
 and have a vision in the sanctuary.

5. He will indeed conceal me in his canopy
 on the evil day.
 He will shelter me in the shelter of his tent,
 he will set me on high upon a rock.
6. Soon he will raise my head
 above my enemies on every side
 And I shall share in his tent
 communion meals with shouts of joy.

A single wish monopolized this man's psyche. It eliminated all his other aspirations. His only desire was to become a permanent resident in the temple. This request contained a deeper craving. He wanted, in a trance, to behold the beauty of Yahweh. Such a strange expression (vs. 4c) may have been inherited from the cultic language of Egypt, where, on feast days, priests would unveil the statue of the god and present it for the adoration of the worshippers.⁹³ The Hebrew psalmist referred not to a cultic object, however, but to a psychological experience of inner sight.⁹⁴ The word *no'am*, inadequately rendered as "beauty," implies a response of wonder akin to the delights of love⁹⁵ and possibly even a relational exchange between the "seer" and the "seen." Cognates of the same word apply to physical charm, erotic and aesthetic enjoyment, the various emotions of friendship,⁹⁶ the thrill of learning, and the holy pleasure of liturgical singing.⁹⁷ Because the two *cola* of the poetic line are synonymously parallel, "to see the beauty of Yahweh" means "to have a vision in the sanctuary" (vs. 4c).⁹⁸ Dwelling in the temple of Zion provides the opportunity for a flight into the divine realm of being. Sacramental presence is a means for ecstasy.

The "canopy" and the "tent" call to mind the mythic world of the cultic theophany.⁹⁹ Sacrifices will be offered in the sanctuary, but they are transfigured into communion meals in the heavenly home of God. The beauty of Yahweh is not only seen but also tasted and "inwardly digested." Nevertheless, the entire prospect belongs only to the poet's imagination. He did not

say that his cravings were fulfilled. On the contrary, he continued his appeal in a *third* strophe (vss. 7-10), which introduced a different mood:

- PS. 27:7. Hear, O Yahweh, my voice! I cry!
 Be gracious unto me and answer me!
 8. My heart remembers thy word:¹⁰⁰
 "Seek ye my face!"
 Thy face, O Yahweh, I seek.
 9. Hide not thy face from me,
 Repel not in anger thy servant:
 Thou hast always been my help.¹⁶¹
 Reject me not, abandon me not,
 God of my safety!¹⁰²
 10. If my father and mother were to abandon me,
 Yahweh would gather me up [unto himself].

A prayer for grace conceals an appeal to the maternal side of divinity.¹⁰³ It does not necessarily imply a sense of guilt. Rather it arises from the renunciation of all claims, right, or merit. It represents a determination to act in a *situation-Zimite*, "where no helper is." The petitioner persists in asking for a vision of Yahweh, for he remembers the liturgical invitation which was extended repeatedly in the cultic ceremonial: "Seek ye my face!" (Vs. 8.)¹⁰⁴ Deprived of a *prima facie* ecstasy, this religious sensualist at last surrenders to his existential finitude.

In post-Kantian philosophy, no cogent evidence of God's being satisfies the thinker. *Mutatis mutandis*, in Hebraic theology, no sensual perception of the Godhead gratifies the worshipper.

Will the psalmist transfer his expectation to the moment of his death? The final certitude, "Yahweh will gather me [unto himself]" (vs. 10b), might be understood as an allusion to eternal bliss, but the exceptional use of the verb "to gather up" does not permit exegetical opinion.¹⁰⁵

Ambiguity remains attached to the metaphor of the divine face. Presence is an absence and even an abandon when it is hidden, but this absence has the power to bring forth the most peculiar ingredient of Hebraic theology: faith as an instrument of knowledge as well as a *modus vivendi*.

Hölderlin's paradox may illustrate the unexpected aftermath of mystical deprivation. "It is no longer the presence of God," he wrote, "but his absence that reassures man." The psalmist's position of strength argues against the validity of modern theologies of experience and feeling. In his determination to hold firm to his faith, the psalmist closed as he began. He reaffirmed his trust in the God of his safety (vss. 1, 3*b*, 9*b*). This reaffirmation, however, was offered in a new context. With a quasi-serene obstinacy, he simply stated that divine love never fails (vs. 10). The ground of man's fidelity is God's fidelity. Hidden from the mystical quest, Yahweh will yet protect. Parental love provides a completely inadequate comparison.

An unquenched desire has promoted a new stance. The psalmist continued to sing in the temple. He still believed in the cultic mode of presence, but he "experienced" God by absence and want, as one who knows water by thirst. His unquenched desire was also the source of a hitherto undetected self-awareness. Some reality was lacking in his own character. Hence a *fourth* and final strophe (vss. 11-14):

- ps. 27:11 Teach me, O Yahweh, thy way
and lead me on the even path
on account of my adversaries.
12 Give me not up to the lust of my foes!
False witnesses have risen against me
and they breathe violence.
13 I believe¹⁶⁶ I shall see the goodness of Yahweh
in the land of the living.
14 Wait in hope for Yahweh, be brave,
and he will strengthen thy heart.
Wait in hope for Yahweh!

Literary critics who fail to discern the unity of the composition of Psalm 27 miss the poet's purpose, which was to translate abroad the power of communion. The mystical quest had come to a dead end. The search for a mode of behavior in the midst of a hostile society became the petitioner's primary concern. He no longer hoped "to see the beauty of Yahweh," but he still waited to be taught "the way of Yahweh." Hebraic spirituality is never divorced from ethics, and ethics can have no other root than divine nurture. The comparison of Yahweh to a teacher reflects a newly gained humility on the psalmist's part. He wants to be nursed, as a plant is, to his maturity.¹⁰⁷ When a man asks his God, "teach me" and "lead me," he shows that his passion for ecstasy has been replaced by a passion for the art of living within the vicissitudes of history.

Like Moses, who was denied the vision of the face but had seen the goodness of Yahweh pass by (Exod. 33:19 f.),¹⁰⁸ the poet of Psalm 27 was satisfied "to see the goodness of Yahweh in the land of the living" (vs. 13).¹⁰⁹ Once again, the theology of the name has overcome the theology of the glory. The prophet Isaiah waited with his disciples for the God who veiled his face (Isa. 8:17).¹¹⁰ In the same vein, the psalmist concluded his prayer of supplication with an exhortation to "wait in hope for Yahweh" (vs. 14).¹¹¹ Hope is the edge of trust which begets inward power and conquers time.

The Superfluity of Zion

It can hardly be doubted that the psalmists obtained their spiritual acuity from their Zion-centered theology. The temple musicians received all the benefits of institutional worship. The *askesis* of the cultic calendar, with its rhythm of feasts and fasts, molded and refined their sense of divine nearness. Participation in the rites of the ceremonial assemblies, the brotherly congeniality of the musical guilds, the catechetical power of the chants, and above all the awesome certainty that Yahweh had

permitted his presence to reside in the darkness of the edifice—all these factors combined to maintain a greenhouse form of environment conducive to exceptional fervor and exceptional perceptivity. *Cultus* as an institution could serve as a ferment for revelational knowledge. The psalmists learned theological subtleties through a constant intimacy with the holy that never seemed to erode into secular callousness. Even when they appropriated the ritual inwardly, it was primarily on account of the myth of Zion that they felt “at home” with Yahweh.

At the same time, it is not generally recognized that the psalmody of presence, born of *cultus*, could in effect transcend it. Away from the holy hill—perhaps exiled and detained, certainly uprooted and “excommunicated” from congregational worship since they were unable to go to Jerusalem—psalmists like the poet of Psalm 84 sang their cultic nostalgia and discovered unwittingly that in their cultic homelessness they were still in communion with their God.¹¹²

The key to understanding Psalm 84 is in the sequence of three refrains which articulate the strophes (vss. 4, 5, 12) and mark a progression of theological thinking. Not surprisingly, these three refrains are “beatitudes” or rather “macarisms,” exclamations of wishes for happiness which have apparently risen among wisdom circles¹¹³ and differ markedly from the priestly blessings.¹¹⁴

First, a man of religious passion, whose “whole being longs, yes, faints for the courts of Yahweh” (vs. 2 [Heb. 3]), pities his homelessness and is so much overcome by emotion at the memory of Zion that he cries out, unsyntactically, “Thy altars! . . . O Yahweh of Hosts, my king and my God!” (vs. 3 [Heb. 4]). Of course, he extols the happiness of the temple residents who can continually praise the Lord of Zion (vs. 4 [Heb. 5]). The first macarism hails the cultic mode of presence.

The second macarism immediately follows the first, since it opens rather than closes the second strophe (vs. 5 [Heb. 6]).

The psalmist is now introducing an element of movement. No longer does his attention center upon those who dwell in Zion. His imagination pictures those who are on the way to Zion (vss. 6-9 [Heb. 7-10]), and his poetic mind shifts toward a new concern. He now wishes happiness for the men whose inner strength is in Yahweh (vs. 5 [Heb. 6]).

In the climactic strophe, the psalmist contrasts “uneasy tenseness at the threshold of the house of [his] God”¹¹⁵ with the “indolent and secure lounging”¹¹⁶ that he may have indulged in as he sojourned “in the tents of the wicked” (vss. 10-11 [Heb. 11-12]). A new theme has been ushered in. Although the poet still prefers critical uncertainty at the edge of his spiritual home to comfortable insouciance achieved at the price of ethical compromise in the secular world, his concern is no longer the joy which emerges from an idealistic memory of the temple community but the realistic suspicion that life at the sanctuary presents problems. The horizon of the poet has broadened to include the open spaces. The *hagios topos* has been replaced by the wide world. This homeless worshiper is now interested in the enlightenment and protection which Yahweh offers to those “who walk in integrity” (vs. 12 [Heb. 13]). It is as if this man had left the sacristy for the market place. The realm of moral conduct takes precedence over the aesthetics of the sacred. Yahweh is “a sun” and “a shield” for those who behave with wholeness from day to day; that is to say, he provides a light and a guideline in the ethics of decision. Even the strictly theological reality of “glory,” hitherto confined to the inaccessible core of the divine Being, has become, with “grace,” a gift from above by which man can see “goodness,” the virtue of social coherence:

“For Yahweh is a sun and a shield:
 he will give grace and glory;
 Goodness Yahweh will not withhold
 from them that walk in integrity

(vs. 11 [Heb.12]).”

The final macarism transforms a cloistered cultist into a man of the street whose trust in God enables him to overcome the pain of topographical distance and perhaps even institutional excommunication. The refrain is no longer “Happy the ceremonialist” or even “the pilgrim,” but

“Happy is the man who places his confidence in thee”
(vs. 12 [Heb. 13]).”

A temple musician who was cultically homeless could still be with his God. The man who walked tête-à-tête with Yahweh learned to celebrate life away from the *hagios topos*. He has been liberated from a theology of space. He received through Zion a faith which taught him the superfluity of Zion.

Of course, when a sacramentalist is deprived of the “real presence,” he runs the risk of spiritual sloth and of accommodation to what Alice Meynell, taunting Protestants, called “real absence.” On the other side, the peril that is built into the structures of institutional worship leads to the smugness of self-comfort. “Faith that does not perpetually expose itself to the possibility of unfaith is no faith but merely a convenience.”¹¹⁷

Not unlike the poet of Psalms 42 and 43, who was apparently banished to northern Galilee at the high waters of the Jordan, the singer of Psalm 84 was an uprooted alien, whose heart was pulsing beyond the fear of nothingness. He gave up the lure of sight to accept the hazard of faith.

For the would-be mystics of Zion, faith was “the earnest of things unseen.” They nursed a divine truth which clamored to be fleshed in a human personality.

Beyond Death

Form-critical analysis has failed objectively to identify literary criteria for the genre of “the sapiential psalm.” Nevertheless,

exegetes admit that many laments and didactic poems of the psalter show close affinities with the wisdom circles.¹¹⁸ It appears that temple musicians were acquainted with the intelligentsia of the court. In all probability, they discussed problems of human existence with princes, public officials, and foreign diplomats in a para-philosophical way. Intellectuality met with spirituality, and it is significant that one of these musicians-the poet of Psalm 73-began a song on the issue of theodicy and ended it as a credo on the eternal presence.¹¹⁹

The psalmist did not offer any intellectual solution to the problem of evil, but it was the intellectual consideration of this problem which stirred his religious consciousness and led him to receive the dispensation of a new truth. Nothing can separate him-not even death-from the divine embrace.

The bold thinker must have entertained some heterodox or even outrageously blasphemous doubts on divine justice, but his faith prevented him from publishing them abroad.

If I had said, I will speak thus and so,
 behold! I would have betrayed the assembly of thy sons.¹²⁰
 And when I considered the best way to grasp this matter,
 it was too hard for me
 Until I went to the sanctuary of God¹²¹
 and imagined the eventual destiny [of the wicked].

(Vss. 15-1')

An inquisitive essay has become a prayer. The skeptic, who pondered intellectual answers to difficult questions, suddenly addressed the Deity as "Thou." He inserted his doubt into the context of his adoration. His dutiful reaffirmation of the traditional dogma of retribution *à retardement* did not suffice to remove the stumbling block (vss. 18-20). Therefore, he no longer pursued his trend of thinking within the confines of his autonomous self, but pursued it instead in the presence of the Godhead. At once, the poet became aware of his existential

finitude. Yet the discovery of his intellectual limitations did not push him either to revolt or to despair:

“Thus, my mind was embittered,
but I continued to pine inwardly;¹²²
I was like a brute, unable to know,
really a monstrous beast¹²³ in thy presence”

(vss. 21-22).

At the very core of his *Anfechtung*, the thinker found out that his cosmic solitude was an illusion. He was not alone. All along, though without knowing it, he had been in the immediate company of Yahweh. Perhaps he stressed the *Z-with-Thee* formula (vss. 22b, 23a, 25a) to show that his egocentric endeavor had been unwittingly oriented **Godward**.¹²⁴ In any case, he was now raised to a new level of knowledge. He received the epistemology of faith:

“Nevertheless, I am continually with thee,
thou holdest me by my right hand,
Thou guidest me by thy purpose,
and afterwards thou wilt take me to glory”

(vss. 23-24)

The horrors of human existence, with its painful collection of cosmic, biological, and psychological riddles, may continue to torment the questioner, but his future is no longer comparable to an isolated groping in obscurity. This man knows that an intelligent and benevolent transcendence is guiding his steps. The boulders remain ahead of him, but they are no longer *skandala*, “rocks of stumbling.” His right hand is held by another hand which directs him to his goal while his mind remains in a state of agnostic suspense. He has not, however, settled into a state of unrelieved ignorance, for the purpose of his life is sure.

God’s “purpose” (*‘eṣah*) is also his “counsel,” analogous to

the expert opinion of government advisers who collect the evidence needed for eventually reaching a decision.¹²⁵ Divine companionship is divine guidance, but divine guidance respects a man's freedom of choice. The holding of man's right hand means manacled him with flowers, not with irons. The man of faith is eager to accept "by touch" the sense of his orientation.

Death itself becomes a mode of access to a new form of being, when *unio mystica* will at last be consummated:

"And afterwards thou wilt take me to glory"

(vs. 246)

The meaning of this phrase has been the object of much disputation.¹²⁶ The force of the expression "thou wilt take me" should not be underestimated, for it reminded the poet's audience of the legend of Enoch, who "walked with God and he was not, for God took him" (Gen. 5:24), or of the legend of Elijah, who was "taken away" in a chariot of fire (2 Kings 2:3, 5). These reminiscences, however, did not suggest that the psalmist expected a metaphysical "translation" of his body into heaven. Rather, he was properly reticent about the mode of his ultimate destiny. He merely affirmed that death was neither extinction nor alienation from divinity, as the traditional expressions of "sleeping with one's ancestors" or "descending into Sheol" implied.¹²⁷ Presence gained the intensity of an eternal dimension.

Furthermore, the psalmist did not espouse the foreign myth of the resurrection of the flesh, which later forms of Judaism bequeathed to Christianity. Even less did his statement prefigure the Hellenistic idea of the immortality of the soul, with its implication of an arrogant claim to eternal life by virtue of a natural birthright. He was merely convinced that nothing could interrupt his present intimacy with God. The startling

character of the psalmist's discovery lay in his glimpse of a new theology of presence: no longer elusive as it now seemed to be, it would some day surround him and hold him forever. The menace of

“Life's profound disorder,
Ephemerality,”*28

has already retreated from his horizon. The perpetuality of presence prompts him to think of death not as a descent but as an ascent. “Afterwards,” God will “abduct him into glory.” The image subsumed by this phrase belonged, of course, to the realm of mythopoetic thinking, but the myth it summoned was free from egomaniac presumptuousness.

In this phrase, the word “glory” continues to designate the inner being of divinity, inaccessible to finite creatures. At the end of his mortal existence, the psalmist expected to be taken into the very realm of divinity. Such an eschatological perspective necessarily involved a transformation of human nature.

Later poets and prophets depicted this transformation under the figure of a new creation. This figure did not mean what the vagabond Vladimir calls, in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*,

“Astride of a grave and a difficult birth.”

The psalmist did not evoke the laborious rites on moralistic deeds which religionists of all cultures have performed in order to earn, merit, or *achieve* immortality. He did not believe that

“Down in
the hole, lingeringly, the grave-digger puts on the
forceps,”*129

as if the birth of the new being was “worked out” by human technology, cultic or secular. With enormous simplicity he held

to the conviction that God himself would take him to glory.

His contemporaries may have sought to assuage their fear of extinction by worshipping *Môl*, “deified death,” the Canaanite god who moved down into the underworld and rose up with his own minions.¹³⁰ His faith in Yahweh monopolized all his concerns, desires, and ambitions. He rested content to wait with nonchalance for the divine rapture:

“Whom have I in heaven but thee?
 There is none upon earth I desire beside thee.
 My flesh and my heart may fail:
 God is the rock of my heart and my lot forever”

(vss. 26–27).

The rock, image of military defense, has been interiorized, and so also the earthly “plot” or “portion,” the territorial dream of any nomad. As a musician of the temple, the psalmist was in all probability a Levite, therefore landless. His religious wealth delivered him from the greed of real estate. His “lot” was neither earthly nor heavenly, for it did not belong to the category of space. God himself had become for him an eternal acre.

The mystical quest had been blocked by the existential boundaries of creatureliness. Identification between finite creature and infinite Creator could only be a mocking fancy, but the mystical quest persisted among all the hymnologists of presence. They transferred it beyond their own death.

PRESENCE IN ABSENCE

As the kingdom of David crumbled from within and eventually fell to Babylonian imperialism, the temple psalmodists continued to praise Yahweh as the lord of Zion, the sovereign of nature, and the judge of history. With candor, they also confessed their own agonies. Although they sometimes borrowed

hackneyed formulas which went back to Sumerian laments, they also gave poetic shape to their original insights into the crucible of religious discovery. As lyrical poets of sickness, harassment, doubt, and guilt, a few became channels of divine revelation. Some of the psalmodic theologians labored under the plight of their spiritual isolation. They sang the hidden God. Others were tortured by an obsession for God. They sang the hauntingness of presence. A few reached a plateau of confident serenity. They sang the sufficient grace.

The Hidden God

When the prophet Isaiah of Jerusalem observed that “Yahweh concealed his face” (Isa. 8:17) or the Second Isaiah in Exile mourned the absence of Yahweh from the fate of his own people, saying,

“Verily, verily, thou art a God that hidest thyself”

(Isa. 45:15),

their complaint amounted in effect to a confession of faith. To be aware of divine hiddenness is to remember a presence and to yearn for its return. The presence of an absence denies its negativity.

The poet who composed Psalm 22 was a theologian of **dere-
liction**.¹³¹ His cry, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?“, has been echoed by legions who have been tormented by cosmic solitude. In a sense, the psalmist showed that he had been a poet of cultic presence, but he ignored the myth of holy space. He substituted for the category of the sanctuary the living reality of the act of praise offered by the whole community-past, present, and future-of the people of God:

“... Thou art holy,
enthroned upon the praises of Israel”

(vs. 3 [Heb. 4]).

It is only through exegetical legerdemain that commentators discern in this phrase an allusion to the ark upon which Yahweh of Hosts was believed by some to have been ceremonially seated. The psalmist used a spatial verb with an auditive object that belonged to the realm of humanity. The ear triumphed over the eye. The mystery of divine nearness depended less on the *hagios topos* than upon the social reality of adoration.

Now, the lamenter has been cut off from the source of his life. Not only has he been deprived of the protection he expected from the Lord of history, but he has also been dispossessed of his divine filiality.

“... Thou art he who took me from my mother’s womb,
 Thou caused me to feel safe on my mother’s breasts,
 Upon thee was I cast from my mother’s womb,
 And from my mother’s belly thou hast been my God!”
 (vss. 9-10 [Heb. 10-11].)

These ritual gestures of paternal adoption may indicate that the lament was intended to be intoned by the king at the ceremonial of the New Year, if indeed such a drama of royal humiliation, torture, and execution did take place at any time in the temple of Jerusalem (vss. 19-21 [Heb. 20-22]).¹³² Unfortunately, the Hebrew text of the critical lines is obscure and probably corrupt. In any case, in mid-course the lament becomes a hymn of praise, as if the hero has been raised from symbolic death to a new life (vss. 22-30 [Heb. 23-31]).

From dereliction, the perspective of the psalmist broadened its scope to include “all the families of the nations.” In a reminiscence of the Abrahamic promise (Gen. 12:1-3), the reborn hero hailed Yahweh’s kingdom “to the extremities of the earth.” His horizon has now transcended the categories of time. Both the dead and the generations yet to be born are invited either to eat at the heavenly banquet or to hear the good news of the *Opus Dei*. 133

Inasmuch as the motif of divine hiddenness in Psalm 22 was unrelated to any sense of sin—a most unusual omission in Near Eastern and Hebraic laments—and on account of the universalism of its eschatology, the early Christians appropriated this extraordinary poem of presence lost and regained to describe the passion of Jesus, his death in forsakenness, and his triumph over mortality and time in the life of his followers.¹³⁴

Psalm 22 constitutes an exception in the psalmody of presence. Other laments which complained of the veiling of the Deity were confessions of sin. In Hebraic theology, Yahweh concealed his face from human criminality. If the hero of the poem was not a king but a single member of the community, his plight must have been the more intolerable, for he had no answer to the question “why” and he found neither justification nor meaning in his spiritual, as well as physical, agony. After his ordeal, however, he was ushered into the future. Looking back, he understood that absence was presence deferred. His dereliction had been the prelude to what Kierkegaard many centuries later called “the moment before God.” The cruelty of his trial proved to be as disproportionate as the magnitude of his eventual mission.¹³⁵

The appeal from dereliction to communion is heard in the psalter especially when laments are confessions of sins. When a guilty man asks for forgiveness and rehabilitation, he *begs at the same time for the renewal of presence*. The penitential psalm *par excellence*, known as the *Miserere* or Psalm 51, exhibits the intricacy of the theological transition which links the request for mercy with the request for presence.¹³⁶

In an unexpected way, the psalmist at first used the motif of hiddenness in a reversed form. He begged the Deity to hide from his sins:

“Hide thy face from my sins
and blot out my guilt!”

(vs. 9 [Heb. 11].)

The exact nature of the petitioner's lawlessness is unknown. Since the worshippers of the Second Temple during the Persian centuries ascribed some thirteen psalms to specific events in the life of David, it is quite understandable that this poignant confession of criminality would have been related to the king's notorious murder of Uriah, Bathsheba's husband (Ps. 51:1; cf. 2 Sam. 12:14 ff.). The horror of the deed and the total incapacity of its perpetrator to make amends led the poet to ask in effect for the death of his inward self and for his rebirth under the mythical trope of a cosmic creation:

Create in me a pure heart, O God,
 and make new within me a steadfast spirit,
 Cast me not away from thy presence,
 and take not the spirit of thy holiness away from me.
 Restore unto me the mirth of thy rescue
 and let the spirit of nobility uphold me

(Vss.10-11 [Heb. 12-14]).

God comes only to those who are pure of heart, but how can the heart of man be pure? God alone is able to cleanse an enormous guilt (*'awônôth*, a superlative). No ritual will suffice,¹³⁷ for man is utterly depraved.¹³⁸ More than ceremonial ablutions or characterial amelioration are needed. Nothing less than a radical innovation is required. The psalmist borrowed the verb *bara'*, "to create," from the cosmogonies of the sapiential circles,¹³⁹ and he dared to apply it to his own, minuscule, situation. As God creates a world, so also can he create a man.

The idea of the new being was articulated within the theology of presence. The poet reflected on his estrangement, no longer in terms of God's hiddenness, but according to the image of his own expulsion: "Cast me not away from thy presence!" He also developed his hope of communion through the triple use of the word "spirit." First, the newly created being needs the power

of survival, or the gift of self-maintenance. He therefore must be able to resist temptation and to overcome self-doubt: "Make new within me a steady, firmly attached, coherent spring of moral behavior!" Second, estrangement must be enduringly bridged. The power which will permanently heal the poet's alienation from God will be so penetrating that holiness itself will flow from God to him. "Do not take away from me the spirit of thy holiness!"¹⁴⁰

Since the ancient notion of holiness connoted the dread of "the wholly other," the psalmist's prayer was unprecedented. He viewed the holy no longer as the *mysterium fascinans atque tremendum*, forever exterior to man as the numinous force which attracts and repels him at the same time, but as the source of vitality which sharpens conscience, activates the will to shun evil, and stirs the imagination to do the good. A world is aborning also within man. Creation may be microcosmic as well as macrocosmic. Presence and spirit coalesce to animate the new being.

Third, the slave of egocentricity discovers freedom from the self. "Let the spirit of nobility uphold me!" A noble man is one who assumes his obligation of social responsibility. A knight is not a knave. He helps and respects others with the ease, elegance, and style of a prince. The new being is a moral aristocrat, not of birth but of service. Freedom to be oneself implies the power to serve willingly. A fresh innocence will obliterate the murderous past. The poet has joined those

"who were so dark of heart they might not speak,
a little innocence will make them sing."¹⁴¹

The psalmists exhibited theological maturity because they were forced to a recognition of their true selves vis-a-vis their God, even when that God was hiding from their plight. By evading

their pleas, that God became more and more manifest to them, even when he seemed to

“... adjourn, adjourn ...
To that farther side of the skies.”¹⁴²

It was that very hiding which disclosed to them not only the meaning of their existence but also the intrinsic quality of divinity. The God of the psalmists made them live in this world, and they lived without using him. It is when man tries to grasp him that God veils himself. The *Deus revelatus* is the *Deus absconditus*.

The Haunting God

Some of the psalmists were constantly begging for God's presence. Others tried to flee from it. The laments and supplications of the psalter include prayers of search and prayers of escape. Taken together, however, they do not constitute a thematic antithesis, but they point to the theological specificity of Hebraism, in which the relationship between God and man remains ambiguous. Even starved for transcendence, most of the pious were in dread of divine nearness. Even begging for a respite, they were in fact asking for a deeper communion. Psalm 139 is a case in point.¹⁴³ It is in appearance both a praise of presence and an expression of its dread, but the poetic *inclusio* which frames the whole piece (vss. 1 and 23-24) reveals the poet's unexpressed concern. He fears God's love, but he asks for more.

It may be that Psalm 139 was composed for a particular situation of ritual jurisprudence as a protest of innocence to be intoned by a defendant indicted for idol worship. Some exegetes believe that the poet asks his God to test him in order to demonstrate to the congregation of the faithful that he is not guilty of any apostasy. The ramifications of the psalm, however,

extend far beyond the limits of a juridical ordeal.

Strophe 1

- ps.139:1 O Yahweh, thou searchest me and thou knowest.
 2 Thou knowest my sitting down and my rising;
 Thou comprehendest my secret thoughts from afar;
 3 Thou winnowest my path and my lying down
 and art acquainted with all my ways.
 4 There is not a word on my tongue
 but lo, O Yahweh, thou knowest it altogether.
- 5 Thou hast beset me behind and before
 and laid the palm of thy hand upon me.
 6 Such knowledge is too much of a wonder for me;
 it is far too high, I cannot attain it.

The link which ties this man to his God is intimate and somewhat painful. The verb *ḥaqar*, “to search,” “to examine,” means literally “to dig,” as if one looked in the earth for a treasure or probed in the depths. God’s testing of man is not an easy or pleasant adventure. Like Job, the poet knows that he is being tried by God himself far *more than* by *men*.¹⁴⁴ He does not suffer from spiritual vacuity or cosmic solitude. On the contrary, he feels that God is too much with him. He *is* the victim of a divine attention which he cannot endure. A scalpel probes his innermost being. God knows him in his existential totality.

The text does not say: “Thou knowest me.” Rather, the object of the verb is left purposely unspoken: “Thou knowest.” God knows the poet’s character as well as every instant of his waking life. He also watches him from evening to morning: on the one hand probing his dreams, on the other watching him during insomnia, at the very threshold of consciousness. Before one of the psalmist’s secret thoughts can find articulation, God seizes it in its entirety.

The verb *zarah*, “to winnow,” means “to cut to pieces,” “to dissect,” “to hack away.” God “winnows” the poet’s “path” and

his “couch,” just as a nomad investigates tracks in the sand to reconstruct in astonishing detail the behavior of those who have passed there. Again, like Job (3:11), the poet is fenced in as if he were a beast or a criminal. The image suggests less the embrace of love and the enclosure of protection than the stockade of detention. Not just God’s hand but “the palm” of God’s hand lies upon him. Haunted by presence, man experiences *la pesanteur de la grâce*. No wonder he wants to escape.

Strophe II

- ps.139:7 Whither shall I go from thy spirit,
 or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
 8 If I ascend into heaven, thou art there;
 if I make my bed in Sheol, behold, thou!
 9 If I take the wings of the dawn
 and sojourn at the uttermost parts of the sea,
 10 Even there shall thy hand lead me,
 and thy right hand shall hold me.
- 11 If I say, surely, darkness shall cover me
 and night shall encompass me about,
 12 Even darkness darkens not from thee
 but the night shines as the day:
 darkness and light are both alike to thee.

Why should any pious Yahwist wish to go away from the spirit of Yahweh? Although this is not a penitential prayer and the poet does not display any sense of guilt, the implication of his attempts to establish a cosmic distance between that presence and himself suggests that he is afraid of the all-seeing eye. Like “the man” in the myth of the garden who hid himself in the thickest thicket “from the presence of Yahweh Elohim” (Gen. 3:8), the psalmist must have had a reason when he fancifully thought of fleeing to inaccessible places.¹⁴⁵

His attitude toward the haunting God, nevertheless, is not altogether one of dread. An undertone of admiration and perhaps a hint of praise are audible in the strains of his complaint. The wonder of divine knowledge at the end of the first strophe (vs. 6) is echoed by the discovery at the end of the second (vs. 12) of divine creativity. The lamenter becomes a hymnist as he almost intones a doxology.¹⁴⁶ The God who owns darkness and light has also created him.

Strophe III

PS. 139:13 Yes, it is thou who hast made my innermost being!
 Thou didst weave me in my mother's womb.
 14 I will praise thee for I was made in awesome wonder!
 Marvellous are thy works,
 and my very self knows it right well.
 15 My bones were not hid from thee
 when I was fashioned in secret,
 embroidered in the depths of the earth.
 16 Thy eyes did see my embryo,
 and in thy book all my days were written
 when as yet there was none of them.

17 How precious, for me, are thy secret thoughts, O God!
 How great is the sum of them!
 18 If I should count them, they are more numerous than
 the sand!
 When I awake, I am still with thee!

Like Job again (10:8–12), the poet turns from the theme of his frustration at being cornered to the moment of exhilaration over the miracle of his embryological growth. His body is an *objet d'art* fashioned before his birth by the master artist. The sense of aesthetic appreciation is blended with a scientific curiosity concerning embryology which points to the sapiential circles. From the mood of wonder, the poet soon passes to the consideration of God's foreknowledge of his own days. The

word “predestination” has often been used to describe the notion of the divine transcendence of time, but it is misleading, for the psalmist never accepted the ancient Near Eastern idea of fate or destiny. Through the contemplation of his origin, his coming forth out of the hands of his maker, he slowly reconciles his previous apprehensiveness with the welcome of Yahweh’s surrounding presence.

While the text is obscure and the translation of several words is hypothetical, it appears that the psalmist at last awakens from either a trancelike meditation or the depths of religious reverie, only to find out—apparently with relief—that the companionship of his creator had never been interrupted.

Strophe IV

ps. 139:19 Surely, thou wilt slay the wicked, O God!
 Depart from me, therefore, you, murderers!
 20 (For they speak against thee in malicious tone,
 and thy enemies take thy name in vain.)
 21 Do I not hate them, O Yahweh, that hate thee?
 Am I not grieved with those that rise up against thee?
 22 I hate them with perfect hatred,
 and I count them as my own enemies.

23 Search me, O God, and know my heart,
 test me and know my doubts,
 24 And see if there is any idolatrous way in me,
 and lead me in the everlasting way!

The modern mind is easily repelled by such an expression of religious hatred. It will be observed, however, that the words may have belonged to a ritual of self-defense in a trial for apostasy. Suspected of cultural compromise, the defendant bowed to the prescribed text in order to protest his innocence. It is also possible that he was actually threatened by a murderous plot. In addition, as a member of the sapiential circles he was perturbed by the scandal of historical evil. The intellectual

problem of theodicy was for him aggravated by his experience of divine presence in its universality and its individuality.

The actual situation in which the poet lived remains unknown. In the end, he appeared to question the validity of his attitude as he begged for a continuation of the trial to which God had submitted him. He had already been tested (vs. 1). Now, he willingly sought further testing (vs. 23*a*). He even asked the ever-present sovereign of his life to know his “doubts” (vs. 23*b*).¹⁴⁷ For a man of cosmopolitan culture, “the way of idolatry” (vs. 24) was not a simple matter of clear-cut refusal. Anyone who maintained social contacts with foreign officials was bound to discern the relativity of national beliefs and cultic practices. The exclusive demands of Yahwism placed a unique burden on the Hebraic man of the world. A subtle compromise in his allegiance to Yahweh reflected temptations from which he may not have been entirely free. He was candid enough to admit his doubts before the awesome majesty of his God.

Presence, hitherto unendurable, at last became the opening of “the way” which transcended temporality and perhaps even mortality. By attempting to fly away from the spirit of Yahweh, the psalmist learned that he was also wasting his own selfhood. The mention of his “doubts” may have been an elliptical allusion to his fear of extinction, in a mood not entirely dissimilar to that expressed by Aeschylus:

... Whither can I fly?
 In all this Apian land is there no lair
 Hid deep from every eye?
 I'd be a wisp of smoke, up-curved
 To the soft clouds above the world,
 Up, without wings, in the bright day,
 Like dust, in dying streamers whirled
 To pass in nothingness away.¹⁴⁸

No longer anguished by the divine pursuit, the psalmist was ready to welcome the presence which is sufficient.

The Sufficient God

Among the many psalms which arose from situations of extremity, a few stand out in which a state of spiritual equilibrium and of satisfaction without smugness points to the unwavering, unruffled steadiness of complete trust. In no other song does the sense of the sufficient God,¹⁴⁹ who neither hides nor haunts, appear with better simplicity in form or thought than in Psalm 23.¹⁵⁰

Like most hymns and laments composed for the worship of Yahweh in the temple, Psalm 23 reflects the tradition of Zion, but it has internalized and universalized "the house of faith."¹⁵¹ This best-known of all psalms is built with an economy of words and a sophistication of rhythm on a pyramidal structure of three strophes. Each strophe contains an increasing number of double or triple lines (two, three, and four *bicola* or *tricola*) with a corresponding growth of amplitude (from two to six metrical stresses). The effect is a crescendo in breadth which brings forth an increasing elation as the theme of never-failing presence reaches its climactic moment.

I

ps. 23:1 My shepherd is Yahweh.

I shall not want.

2 In green pastures he gives me rest.

To pools of tranquility he leads me.

3 He revives my inner self.

II

He leads me on reliable paths
for the sake of his name.

4 Even if I walk in glens of mortal gloom,

I fear no evil

for thou art with me.

Thy rod and thy staff,

it is they that comfort me.

III

- 5 Thou preparest ahead of me the pasture
 against my adversaries;
 Thou anointest my head with oil;
 my cup is inebriating.
- 6 Only goodness and love will pursue me
 all the days of my life,
 And I shall reside in the house of Yahweh
 for the length of [my] days.

This is a testimony of religious completeness and humility. The comparison of Yahweh to a skillful and conscientious shepherd¹⁵² implies that man is an irresponsible and guileless being, for the sheep is that “most silly and foolish animal” (Aristotle). A confession of solidarity in human sin is also implied by the admission of a need for discipline which lingers behind the expression of total confidence in Yahweh, the provider, leader, and protector. A shepherd carries a rod for defense against mountain lions and other wild animals; he also leans over his crook as he patiently moves along with the grazing sheep. Occasionally, he will use both rod and crook against the wayward members of the flock who stay behind or stray from the right path. Thus, the psalmist is probably conscious of the ambiguity of the image. He is comforted by the symbols of divine protection and correction. He indulges in no illusion concerning the frailty of human nature.

The harsh realities of the outside world are not ignored. Travel through valleys of deep darkness in which death always lurks¹⁵³ cannot be avoided, but Yahweh’s presence overrules fear. The poet’s memory of narrow escapes sharpens the intensity of his emotion so acutely that he passes without transition from the third-person style of meditation about God to the second-person form of address in prayer: “Thou art with me.” It is the “Thou-with-me” rather than the “I-Thou” formula which characterizes the language of theocentric Yahwism.

As traditionally rendered, the text of verse 5 imposes an abrupt change of imagery, from shepherd to host of human travelers. Aesthetic canons of poetic unity, in Near Eastern as well as in western rhetorics, would suggest a compositional flaw, especially for such a short piece as Psalm 23. How else could one explain the table in the presence of enemies, or the overflowing cup of sociability, or again the anointing of the head with oil? The difficulty vanishes when it is remembered that words acquire new meanings in new environments, especially when a language passes from a nomadic to a sedentary mode of culture.

Half a century ago, Lebanese and Syrian shepherds still used the Arabic equivalent of the Hebrew expression *'arakh shulḥan*, "to set a table," when they described their task of surveying the pasture ahead of their flock. They would, uproot thorns and poisonous weeds, pour hot fat in scorpions' nests and vipers' holes, and generally make sure that the sheep's natural enemies, vegetal or animal, would for a while be neutralized. In spite of the shepherd's preventive care, accidents would still happen. Every traveler to sheep-grazing regions has witnessed the evening ritual of the "rodding" of the sheep, when the shepherd singles out each animal with his rod as the flock rushes to enter the fold. He shoves aside the wounded, which will be later anointed with oil (cf. Luke 10:34), and the exhausted, which will later receive the lift of a medicinal cocktail in a wooden cup.¹⁵⁴ Thus, Psalm 23 maintains the image of the shepherd throughout.

Yahweh is compared to a shepherd because his presence embraces all facets of existence. He is the feeder, the guide, the protector, and the physician. The psalmist assures himself, in still another comparison to the plight of the sheep, that divine "goodness and love"—not ravenous beasts—will pursue him all the rest of his life, and that he will reside¹⁵⁵ in the house of Yahweh for the length of his days.¹⁵⁶

Critics do not agree concerning the date and milieu in which this song originated, although they generally recognize that it breaks literary precedents and has its own, unique style. The poet's hope of spending old age in "the house of Yahweh" has prompted many scholars to stress the cultic and more particularly the Zionistic flavor of the poem. Some have even related its imagery to the ceremony of the royal coronation, but such interpretations are far fetched. The comparison of Yahweh to a shepherd entails a view of human life spent within the theater of secular history.

As for other prayers which reveal the spirituality of temple musicians and depict an exquisite sense of communion on a day-by-day basis away from the sanctuary, one should readily admit that the theology of presence which is here disclosed makes ritual worship secondary. It is even probable that the poet refers in the last line, not to the temple as the receptacle of presence, since divine nearness and care accompany him everywhere, but to the household of faith.¹⁵⁷

Like Moses, who "could be trusted anywhere within [Yahweh's] household" (Num. 12:7), the psalmist appears to have used figurative language throughout the poem. When he alludes to the theology of the name (vs. 3*b*), he refers to far more than a shepherd's honor and reputation, for "the name" summons to the mind of his audience the Hebraic notion of God's activity in history—from the call of Israel to the healing of the nations. The shepherd is the shepherd of Israel,¹⁵⁸ a people uniquely entrusted to fulfill a universal mission. Psalm 23 does not deal with an easy return to the sacramental womb, nor does it support pietistic individualism. It spiritualizes and interiorizes presence for the sake of the Opus *Dei* across the centuries.

The psalmody of presence has evolved from royal communion to the inner life of the common man. To be sure, the Yahwism of Moses had already promoted the universality of

prophethood (Num. 11:29), but the rise of the monarchy, the erection of Solomon's temple, and the concomitant growth of a ruling class in the religious as well as in the secular realm threatened democratic access to Yahweh. The cultic musicians shared their faith with everyone. They shifted the stress of religion from the ritual acts to the humanity of the worshippers. "The house of Yahweh" became in effect "the household of God's children."

At the same time, the psalmists did not promote an esoteric club of mystics who would escape from worldly concerns by fusion with an infinite reality. They remained attentive to the problems of society. Their response to presence became the springboard of their ethics. Like the great prophets, they interiorized the cultus and helped to prepare the birth of Judaism after the destruction of the temple in 587 B.C.

During the cultic vacuum of the exile in Babylon, the surviving Judahites became the first Jews when they celebrated the feasts in some paracultic form and discovered the proximity of Yahweh in a foreign land. Destitute and displaced, they could still sing:

How precious is thy steadfast love, O God!
 The children of men take refuge in the shadow of thy wings.
 They feast on the abundance of thy house;
 Thou givest them drink from the rivers of thy delights;
 For with thee is the fountain of life,
 in thy light do we see light"

(Ps. 36:7-9 [Heb. 8-10]).

Each of these words implies a theology of holy pleasure. The "rivers of thy delights" brings immediately to the poetic mind the streams of the garden of Eden.¹⁵⁹ The enjoyment of Yahweh's presence telescopes into the existential moment nostalgia for an ideal humanhood and the expectation of a new

creation. Protology meets eschatology in the sublimated hedonism of communion.

By expressing their faith through poetic idiom, the psalmists conferred upon the theological enterprise an intrinsic quality which conventional Judaism and institutional Christendom in a later age have generally ignored. A creed is to be sung as a doxology, not signed as a didactic or legal document.¹⁶⁰ The professional artists of the Zion ceremonies were authentic theologians, for they refused to separate the sense of wonder from their intellectual reflection. They adored their God with the aesthetics of the rational and the emotion of the mind.¹⁶¹ They were therefore able to bring together a belief in the purpose of life in the world and their trust in a personal creator. The link between the Yahweh of their cosmogony and the Yahweh of their self-integration resulted directly from their theology of presence. Their savior was their creator. Trust empowered them to articulate their curiosity for truth together with their sense of well-being. They understood that “faith is the state of being grasped by the Spiritual Presence and opened to the transcendent unity of unambiguous life.”¹⁶²

The psalmists’ refusal to divorce their intellect from their spirituality, as well as their determination to contemplate the elusiveness of presence with artistic creativity, made them, along with the prophets, the instruments of revelation. In addition, the more daring among them showed evidence of an affinity with the sapiential circles.¹⁶³ Beyond a dissimilarity of function, “the psalmody of presence” was theologically bound to “the play of wisdom.”

Notes

1. On the literary genres of the Psalms, their cultic origin and setting, the problems of their authorship, date, compila-

tion, textual preservation, etc., see, among others, S. Mowinckel, *Psalmstudien, I-VI* (Oslo, 1921-24); H.-J. Kraus,

Psalmen, I (Neukirchen, 1960), pp. xxxvii ff.

2. In addition to the titles mentioned in note 1 above, see A. C. Welch, *The Psalter in Life, Worship and History* (Oxford, 1926); H. Gunkel, "The Religion of the Psalms," in *What Remains of the Old Testament and Other Essays*, tr. by A. K. Dallas (London, 1938), pp. 69 ff.; S. Terrien, *The Psalms and their Meaning for Today* (Indianapolis & New York, 1952); P. E. Bonnard, *Le Psautier selon Jérémie: influence littéraire et spirituelle de Jérémie sur trente-trois psaumes* (Paris, 1960); H. Ringgren, *The Faith of the Psalmists* (Philadelphia, 1963); W. I. Wolverson, "The Psalmists' Belief in God's Presence," Canadian *Journal of Theology*, IX (1963): 82 ff.; J. Thévenet, *La confiance en Dieu dans les Psaumes* (Paris, 1965); H. H. Guthrie, *Israel's Sacred Songs: a Study of Dominant Themes* (New York, 1966); L. Jaquet, *Les Psaumes et le cœur de l'homme*, I (n. p., 1975); E. Gerstenberger, "Zur Interpretation der Psalmen," *Verkündigung und Forschung*, XIX (1974): 22 ff.

3. Cf. Terrien, *The Psalms*, pp. xii ff.

4. Siegfried Sassoon, "Presences Perfected," in *Modern British Poetry*, ed. by L. Untermeyer (New York, 1950), p. 318.

5. See R. T. Callaghan, "Echoes of Canaanite Literature in the Psalms," *VT*, IV (1954): 164 ff.; A. Barucq, *L'expression de la louange divine et de la prière dans la Bible et en Egypte* (Le Caire, 1962). M. Dahood has produced a highly original translation of the Psalms by dividing and repointing many Hebrew words of the Masoretic Text on the basis of Ugaritic (*Psalms, I-III* [Garden City, N.Y., 1966-70]). While his suggestions are sometimes valid, his contribution to the understanding of the Psalter remains conjectural. See S. Terrien, in Union Seminary *Quarterly Review*, XXIII (1967-68): 389 ff.; *ibid.*, XXVI (1970-71): 431 ff.; C. Brekelmans, "Some Considerations on the Translation of the Psalms, I, by M. Dahood," *Ugarit Forschung*, I (1969): 5 ff.; J. Greenfield, in

JAOS, LXXXIX (1969): 174 ff.; cf. H. Donner, "Ugaritismen in der Psalmenforschung," *ZAW*, LXXXIX (1967): 322 ff.; P. H. J. Houwink ten Cate, "Hittite Royal Prayers," *Numen*, XVI (1969): 81 ff.

6. See S. Mowinckel, "Traditionalism and Personality in the Psalms," *HUCA*, XXII (1950-51): 205 ff.; cf. *id.*, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, tr. by D. R. Ap-Thomas, 2 vols. (New York and Nashville, 1962), pp. 216 ff.

7. They did so in a way which defies exact parallel in the ancient Near East. Cf. the attempts of several historians of comparative religion who deny the specificity of Hebraism: B. Albrektson, *History and the Gods: An Essay on the Idea of Historical Events as Divine Manifestations in the Ancient Near East and in Israel* (Lund, 1967), pp. 11 ff.; J. M. Roberts, "Divine Freedom and Cultic Manipulation in Israel and Mesopotamia," in H. Goedicke and J. J. M. Roberts, eds., *Unity and Diversity* (Baltimore, 1975), pp. 181 ff.; "Myth Versus History: Relaying the Comparative Foundations," *CBQ*, XXXVIII (1976): 1 ff.

8. H. Gunkel classified under this rubric a number of heterogeneous poems which do not actually present a single literary form but generally deal with the king, the events of his life, and his cultic as well as national functions (Pss. 2, 18, 20-21, 45, 72, 101, 110, 132, 144). There are both direct and indirect allusions to the monarch in other psalms. See G. B. Gray, "The References to the 'King' in the Psalter, in their Bearing on Questions of Date and Messianic Beliefs," *JQR*, VII (1894): 658 ff.; K. R. Crim, *The Royal Psalms* (Richmond, Va., 1962); S. Mowinckel, "What are 'Royal Psalms'?" *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, pp. 46 ff.; N. Poulssen, "Die Königspsalmen (Ps 2 und 110)," *König und Tempel im Glaubenszeugnis des Alten Testaments* (Stuttgart, 1967), pp. 55 ff.

9. See L. Rost, *Die Überlieferung von der Thronnachfolge Davids* (Stuttgart, 1926); cf. R. A. Carlson, *David, the Chosen King: A Traditio-Historical Approach to the Second*

- Book of Samuel**, tr. by I. J. Sharpe and S. Rudman (Stockholm, 1964), especially pp. 131 ff.; J. A. Soggin, "David—König von Juda," *Das Königtum in Israel* (Berlin, 1967), pp. 63 ff.; J. W. Flanagan, "Court History or Succession Document? A Study of 2 Samuel 9-20 and 1 Kings 1-2," *IBL*, XCI (1972): 172 ff.; G. E. Mendenhall; "The Monarchy," *In.*, XXIX (1975): 155 ff.; R. N. Whybray, *The Succession Narrative: A Study of II Samuel 9-20; I Kings 1-2* (London, 1968); but cf. D. M. Gunn, "Traditional Composition in the 'Succession Narrative,'" *VT*, XXVI (1976): 214 ff.
10. See above, chapter IV, pp. 164 ff.
11. The king's attitude was compatible with a priestly function, as shown by his wearing "a linen ephod" (cf. 1 Sam. 2:18, 22:18). It will be observed that at that early date in the history of the religion of Israel, live centuries before the birth of Judaism, priests were hardly more than sanctuary keepers and formed no sacerdotal class. There was no distinction between "clergy" and "laity" as in the Second Temple restoration. On the incident of David's dance before the ark, see W. O. E. Oesterley, *The Sacred Dance: A Study in Comparative Folklore* (Cambridge, 1923), p. 36; G. W. Ahlström, *Aspects of Syncretism in Israelite Religion* (Lund, 1963), pp. 34 ff.; C. H. Gordon, "David the Dancer," *Festschrift Y. Kaufmann* (Jerusalem, 1960), pp. 46 ff.; S. Amsler, *David, roi et messie* (Neuchâtel, 1963), pp. 22 ff.; H. W. Hertzberg, I & II Samuel: *A Commentary*, tr. by J. S. Bowden (Philadelphia, 1974), pp. 280 ff.; A. Phillips, "David's Linen Ephod," *VT*, XIX (1969): 485 ff.; cf. N. L. Tidwell, "The Linen Ephod: 1 Sam. II 18 and 2 Sam. VI 14," *VT*, XXIV (1974): 505 ff.
12. 2 Sam. 21:1-6 (Heb. vss. 2-7). While the exact nature of the ritual violation is not known (cf. Mark 2:25 ff. et *par.*), David clearly brushed aside the distinction between the sacred and the profane. See Hertzberg, I & II *Samuel* (1964), p. 180; cf. P. A. H. de Boer, "An Aspect of Sacrifice. I. Divine Bread: Some Remarks on the Meaning of לֶחֶם HPPNYM," *SVT*, XXVIII (Leiden, 1972): 29.
13. See Ps. 73:28.
14. Cited by J.-P. Bonnes, *David et les Psaumes* (Paris, 1957), D. 69.
15. As shown by *The Dirge Over the Death of Saul and Jonathan*, also known as *The Song of the Bow* (2 Sam. 1:19-27); see S. Gevirtz, "David's Lament over Saul and Jonathan," *Early Poetry of Israel* (Chicago, 1963), pp. 72 ff.; Cross, Canaanite *Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp. 122 ff.; W. H. Shea, "David's Lament," *BASOR*, no. 221 (February, 1976), pp. 141 ff.
16. See E. Baumann, "Struktur-Untersuchungen im Psalter I," *ZAW*, LXI (1945-48): 131 ff.; F. M. Cross and D. N. Freedman, "A Royal Song of Thanksgiving," *JBL*, LXXII (1953): 16 ff.; cf. id., *Studies in Ancient Yahwistic Poetry* (Missoula, Mont., 1959), pp. 136 ff.; H.-L. Kraus, *Psalmen*, I (Neukirchen, 1960), pp. 136 ff.; Hertzberg, I & II Samuel, pp. 388 ff.; Carlson, *David the Chosen King*, pp. 246 ff.; F. Crisemann, *Studien zur Formgeschichte von Hymnus und Danklied in Israel* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1969), pp. 254 ff.; G. Schmuttermayr, *Psalm 18 und 2 Samuel 22: Studien zu einem Doppeltext* (München, 1971); D. Eichhorn, *Gott als Fels, Burg und Zuflucht: Eine Untersuchung zum Gebet des Mittlers in den Psalmen* (Bern and Frankfurt, 1971).
17. Cross and Freedman, "A Royal Song," p. 125.
18. The MT vocalizes *sha'ûl*, "Saul," but the reading *she'ôl*, "the Underworld," is possible in view of the references to death in vss. 4-7. See M. Dahood, *Psalms* I, p. 104.
19. See S. Terrien, "Toward a Biblical Theology of Womanhood," *Religion in Life*, XLII (1973-74): 328.
20. Instead of the powerful reading in the MT *krchameka*, "I am in love with thee," these commentators and translators gratuitously emend it to read the tame and rather hackneyed verb which is

found in some liturgical prayers of thanksgiving, ^ʾ*ʾrīmka* or ^ʾ*ʾrēmka*, “I exalt thee.” The *hiphʿil* of this verb, however, is used of Yahweh as subject. (cf. 1 Kings, 14:7; Pss. 75:7 [Heb. 8], 89:19 [Heb. 20]). It is the *poʿel* that is required (cf. Pss. 30:1 [Heb. 2], 145:1; Isa. 25:1), but this correction would entail further consonantal alteration. If the verb “to exalt” had been original, why should it have disappeared from the text of Ps. 18:2 as well as from the LXX of both 2 Sam. 22 and Ps. 18? Moreover, how could one explain the scribal intrusion of the *lectio difficilior*, “I am in love with thee”?

21. Cf. the name of Hosea’s daughter, the prophetic symbol of Israel: *Lô-Ruchamah*, “Not-loved” (Hos. 1:6). Also, the plural of majesty of the noun for “womb,” *rachmim*, “motherly compassion,” “tender mercies” (Ps. 51:1 [Heb. 3], etc.).

22. See “I love Yahweh” (Ps. 116:1), in which the common verb ^ʾ*ʾahabh* (LXX, *agapao*) is used. David might have consciously avoided this word because it had a connotation of covenantal obligation, loyalty, service, and obedience. See W. L. Moran, “The Ancient Near Eastern Background of the Love of God in Deuteronomy,” *CBQ*, XXV (1963): 82 f. Such a connotation would not have been appropriate for expressing an extemporaneous paroxysm of religious passion.

23. The semantic overtones of the verb varied widely. It is difficult to ascertain its exact meaning in tenth-century Hebrew. Cf. G. Schmuttermayr, “*RHM*—Eine lexikalische Studie,” *Biblica*, LI (1970): 501 f. and note 3 (bibliography).

24. See H. Franken, *The Mystical Communion With JHWH in the Book of Psalms* (Leiden, 1954). p. 26; cf. D. Eichhorn, *Gott als Fels, Burg und Zuflucht. Eine Untersuchung zum Gebet des Mitilers in den Psalmen* (Frankfurt, 1971).

25. One will notice the repetition of the personal pronoun “of me” (rendered in English by the possessive adjective

“my”), especially, in the expression “my El.” See O. Eissfeldt, “‘Mein Gott’ im Alten Testament,” *ZAW*, LXI (1945–48): 3 ff.; H. Cazelles, “El et le dieu personnel, in ‘Le pouvoir de la divinité à Ugarit et en Israël,’” *Ugaritica*, VI (Paris, 1969): 36 ff.; H. Vorländer, *Mein Gott. Die Vorstellungen vom persönlichen Gott im alten Orient und im Alten Testament* (Kevelav, 1975).

26. See above, chapter III, pp. 128, 136, and chapter IV, p. 194.

27. See Cross, Canaanite *Myth and Hebrew Epic*, pp. 158 ff.

28. See above, chapter IV, pp. 164 f.

29. Many other psalms (see especially Pss. 29, 50, and 97) have been composed as hymns for the celebration of the yearly feast of the Autumn; they contain evocations of the theophany. See J. Jeremias, *Theophanie* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1965), pp. 101, 105 ff.; A. Weiser, “Zur Frage nach den Beziehungen der Psalmen zum Kult: Die Darstellung der Theophanie in den Psalmen und im Festkult,” *Festschrift A. Bertholet* (Tübingen, 1950), pp. 513 ff.; H.-P. Müller, “Die kultische Darstellung der Theophanie,” *VT*, XIV (1964): 183 ff.

30. Cf. the Arabic *hafiza*, “to be attentive to,” “to keep,” “to protect.”

31. The Hebrew phrase defies English translation, since the verb and the noun represent the same root: “He *loyals* the loyal one.” The preposition *im*, “with,” implies immediate and sustained communion, as in the phrase which miniaturized the Yahwistic ideal of living, “Enoch walked with God” (Gen. 5:24).

32. The expression *im gebhar tamin titammam*, “he completes the man of completeness,” employs the verb in the *hithpaʿel* voice (a *hapax legomenon*) probably to indicate the complex mutuality of total devotion between Yahweh and his chosen servant. The Hebraic notion of “integrity” (*tummah* and cognates) implies social and psychological “integration” as well as ethical honesty and unimpaired soundness. See J. Pedersen,

Israel: Its Life and Culture, I-II (London & Copenhagen, 1926), pp. 336 f.

33. It has often been maintained that this profession of moral integrity indicates the later hand of the seventh-century Deuteronomists. This view is superfluous, for neither the vocabulary nor the ideology of this passage is other than that of the ancient traditions of the national epic. What is strikingly pre-Deuteronomistic and true to the northern theology of the name is the stress on the devotion of man's entire personality, without duplicity and compromise. Obedience to Yahweh's "ordinances" (*mishpatim*) and "statutes" (*huqqim*) was a condition of the Sinai covenant (vs. 22 [Heb. 23]; cf. Exod. 15:25, Jos. 24:25).

34. The word *gebher*, "man," used in vs. 25 (Heb. 26), designates the superior male, sexually vigorous, socially responsible, religiously dedicated, and potentially a hero (*gibbôr*). Cf. the name of the angel "Gabriel." See H. Kosmala, "The Term *Geber* in the Old Testament and in the Scrolls," *SVT*, XVII (1969): 159 ff.; S. Terrien, "Le poème de Job: drame paratituel du Nouvel-An?" *Ibid.* p. 226.

35. Allusions to foot fighting: the scaling of cliffs, and other feats of physical stamina (vss. 29, 33, 37 [Heb. 30, 34, 38]) point to a date which is earlier than the reigns of Solomon and his successors who fought in horse-drawn chariots. The traits mentioned here appear to be strictly Davidic.

36. This detail is found in the legends and myths of several cultures in the ancient Near East and classical Greece. For example, it was the god Seth who taught the Pharaoh to use a bow. See H. Gunkel, *Die Psalmen* (Tübingen, 1926), p. 65; cf. B. Couroyer, "L'arc d'airain," *RB*, LXXI (1965): 508 ff. The poet may well have alluded to his own experience.

37. The word *'anawah*, "humility," "poverty," "affliction," "weakness" (cf. the *'anawim* among the psalmists of a later time) is nowhere else applied to God in

the Hebraic literature (cf. Zeph. 2:3, Prov. 15:33, etc.). The Samuel recension of Ps. 18 reads *'anoth'kha*, "thy answer" (from *'anah I*; cf. "*Dein Zuspruch*," favored by H.-I. Kraus. *Die Psalmen* . . . p. 139). The LXX rendered "thy discipline" (cf. Vulg. *disciplina tua*). Traditional English versions have respected the *lectio difficilior* of the MT but have also softened the meaning of the Hebrew word into "gentleness," "meekness," etc. Several emendations are implied by most modern translations. A. Weiser has well seen the paradoxical character of the thought suggested by the MT: "The king owes his rise to greatness to the 'condescension' of God, a statement which is unique in the language of the Old Testament" (*The Psalms*, tr. by H. Hartwell [Philadelphia, 1962], p. 195).

38. See above, chapter V, pp. 245, 268.

39. In a Ugaritic liturgy of the spring festival, the celebrant repeats: "I know that he lives (*hy*) the powerful Ba'al" (I AB. III, 3, 8, 20). See C. H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Handbook* (Rome, 1947), p. 138; H. L. Ginsberg, "Ugaritic Myths, Epics and Legends," *ANET*, p. 140. Cf. Job 19:25, where the affirmation "he lives" is coupled with the "he will rise" (*yaqûm*), as in Ps. 18:46 (Heb. 47).

40. M. Dahood correctly endorses Ewald's interpretation of this phrase "as an archaic formula of precative type" (*Psalms I*, p. 118; citing H. Ewald, *Ausführliches Lehrbuch der hebräischen Sprache*, 6th ed. [Leipzig, 1855], p. 501). Cf. E. Rosenstock-Huussy, "*Vivit Deus*," *In Memoriam Ernst Lohmeyer* (Stuttgart, 1951), pp. 178 ff.; G. Widengren, *Sakrales Königtum im Alten Testament und in Judentum* (Stuttgart, 1955), p. 69.

41. A comparison with a late Royal Hymn of Victory (Ps. 144:1-15) shows at once the difference between original and derivative poetry. Psalm 144 clearly depends on Ps. 18.

42. See the cultic aspect of the mon-

arch's office from the time of Solomon onward (1 Kings 8:1 ff., etc.).

43. Vs. 22 (Heb. 23); See above, p. 129.

44. Vss. 26 f. (Heb. 27 f.).

45. The idea appears in the last line of Ps. 18 (vs. 50 [Heb. 51]), which, according to modern consensus, reflects its liturgical use by the David dynasty and is not a part of the original poem. It will be noted that David is here referred to in the third person. Considerable attention has been given to the complex relation between the Sinai and the Davidic covenants. See L. Rost, "Sinaibund Davidsbund," *TLZ*, LXX11 (1947): 129 ff.; G. Widengren, "King and Covenant," *JSS*, 11 (1957): 17 ff.; A. H. J. Gunneweg, "Sinaibund und Davidsbund," *VT*, X (1960): 335 ff.; W. Zimmerli, "Sinaibund und Davidsbund," *TZ*, XVI (1960): 268 ff.; H. Gese, "Der Davidsbund und die Zionserwählung," *ZTK*, LX1 (1964): 10 ff.; A. D. Mayer, "The Covenant on Sinai and the Covenant with David," *Hermathena*, LX (1970): 37 ff.; M. Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," *JAOs*, XC (1970): 184 ff.; R. de Vaux, *Histoire ancienne d'Israël* (Paris, 1971), pp. 389 ff.

46. Extensive research has been undertaken on this controversial issue over the past several decades. See a summary of the discussion in J. Gray, "Sacral Kingship in Ugarit," *Ugaritica*, VI (1969): 289 ff.

47. See O. Procksch, "Die letzten Worte Davids," *Festschrift R. Kittel* (Leipzig, 1913), pp. 113 ff.; S. Mowinckel, "Die letzten Worte Davids," *ZAW*, XLV (1927): 30 ff.; P. A. H. de Boer, "Texte et traduction des paroles attribuées à David en 2 Samuel xxiii 1-7," *SVT*, IV (1957): 47 ff.; H. W. Hertzberg, I & II Samuel, pp. 398 ff.; H. N. Richardson, "The Last Words of David: Some Notes on 11 Samuel 23:1-7," *JBL*, XC (1971): 257 ff.; cf. D. N. Freedman, "11 Samuel 23:4," *ibid.*, pp. 329 ff.

48. The wording (*ne'um hag-gebher*, "ora-

cle of the he-man") is similar to that of the oracle of Balaam (Num. 24:4) and of the sayings of Agur (Prov. 30:1 ff.).

49. Meaning uncertain. Literally, "[Most] delightful [with respect to] the songs of Israel."

50. Exod. 19:5; See above, pp. 119 ff., 129 f.

51. See J. A. Soggin, "Zum zweiter Psalm," *Festschrift W. Eichrodt* (Zürich, 1970): 191 ff.; H. J. Boecker, "Anmerkungen zur Adoption im Alten Testament," *ZAW*, LXXXVI (1974): 86 ff.

52. See G. Cooke, "The Israelite King as Son of God," *ZAW*, LXX111 (1961): 202 ff.; I. H. Eaton, "The King as God's Wit-&G," *ASTI*, VII (1970): 27.

53. 2 Sam. 7:4-17, followed by a prayer of David (vss. 18-29). See L. Rost, *Die Überlieferung von der Thronnachfolge Davids* (1926), pp. 47 ff. (= *Die kleine Credo und andere Studien zum Alten Testament* (Heidelberg, 1965), pp. 160 ff.

54. See the cautious attitude of M. Noth, "God, King, and Nation in the Old Testament," *The Laws in the Pentateuch and Other Studies*, tr. by D. R. Ap-Thomas (Edinburgh and London, 1966), p. 173.

55. Although Queen Athaliah usurped the throne for a short time in the ninth century, the young Davidic prince Joash was duly anointed king by the people at the time of her downfall (2 Kings, 11:12).

56. See above, p. 294.

57. See K. Homburg, "Psalm 110, im Rahmen des jüdischen Krönungszeremoniells," *ZAW*, LXXXIV (1972): 243 ff.

58. See D. M. Hay, *Glory at the Right Hand: Psalm 110 in Early Christianity* (Nashville, 1973).

59. The LXX reads, "With thee [is] the government in the day of thy power."

60. Or, "[Thou art clothed] with holy majesty from the day of thy birth." See A. Caquot, "In *splendoribus sanctorum*," *Syria*, XXX111 (1956): 36 ff.: "Remarques sur le Psaume CX," *Semitica*, VI (1956): 33 ff. The LXX reads, "In the splendor of the holy ones from the womb."

61. The "dew," "night mist," or "light rain," was the mythical symbol of fertility. It is not impossible that this royal psalm was used in connection with the seasonal cycle of feasts, especially after the autumnal rains had failed. See J. G. Gammie, "A New Setting for Psalm 110," *ATR*, LI (1969): 4 ff. The word *yalduth*, "childhood," "youth," may also refer to "young men" collectively. The traditional rendering, "To thee belongs the dew of thy youth," yields a circular meaning. The LXX reads, "Before the day star I have begotten thee."

62. See note 61 above.

63. See above, chapter II, note 25.

64. Vs. 6, *'ereš rabbah*.

65. Especially *Asa*, Hezekiah, and Josiah. See 1 Kings 15:3; 22:46; 2 Kings 18:4, 23:7 ff.

66. See discussion and extensive bibliography in S. Terrien, "The Omphalos Myth and Hebrew Religion," *VT*, XX (1970): 3-15 ff.; R. J. Clifford, S.J., *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972); cf. E. A. S. Butterworth, *The Tree at the Navel of the Earth* (Berlin-New York, 1970); F. Stolz, *Strukturen und Figuren im Kult von Jerusalem: Studien zur altorientalischen vor- und frühisraelitischen Religion* (Berlin, 1970), pp. 226 ff.

67. Notable exceptions are the prophetic *legenda* of the Isaianic school concerning Hezekiah (2 Kings, 18:13 ff.; cf. Isa. 36:1 ff.) and the Deuteronomic account of Josiah's Reformation (2 Kings 22:1 ff.).

68. See J. M. Ward, "The Literary Form and Liturgical Background of Psalm LXXXIX," *VT*, XI (1961): 321 ff.; G. W. Ahlström, *Psalm 89. Eine Liturgie aus dem Ritual des leidenden Königs* (Lund, 1959); J. Neusner, "The 89th Psalm: Paradigm of Israel's Faith," *Judaism*, VIII (1959): 226 ff.; L. Dequeker, "Les *q'dōšim* du Psaume 89 à la lumière des croyances sémitiques," *ETL*, XXXIX (1963): 469 ff.; N. M. Sarna, "Psalm 89: A Study of Inner Biblical Exegesis," in *Biblical and Other Studies*, ed. by A. Altmann (Studies and

Texts, I, Cambridge, Mass., 1963), pp. 29 ff.; O. Eissfeldt, "Psalm 80 und Psalm 89," *Die Welt des Orients*, III (Göttingen, 1964), 27 ff.; J. T. Milik, "Fragment d'une source du Psautier (4Q Ps89)," *RB*, LXXIII (1966): 94 ff.; E. Lipiński, *Le poème royal du Psaume LXXXIX 1-5. 20-38* (Paris, 1967); J.-B. Dumortier, "Un rituel d'intronisation: Le Psaume LXXXIX 2-38," *VT*, XXII (1972): 176 ff.

69. As cogently demonstrated by Ward, "The Literary Form," pp. 321 ff.; supported in part by Dumortier. "Un rituel d'intronisation," pp. 176 ff. The problem of unity of structure has been rendered even more complex by the discovery of a scroll fragment from Qumran which contains vss. 1-5 and 20-38. See J. T. Milik, "Fragments d'une source du psautier (4QP89) et fragments des Jubilés, du Document de Damas, d'un phylactère dans la grotte 4 de Qumran," *RB*, LXXIII (1966): 94 ff. Unfortunately, Dumortier did not concern himself with vss. 39-52.

70. Cf. Job 9:13, Isa. 51:9.

71. See H. Wheeler Robinson, "The Hebrew Conception of Corporate Personality," *Werden und Wesen des Alten Testaments*, ed. by P. Volz, F. Stummer u. J. Hempel (Berlin, 1936), pp. 49 ff.; A. R. Johnson, *The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel* (Cardiff, 1949); J. de Fraine, "Individu et société dans la religion de l'Ancien Testament," *Biblica*, XXXIII (1952): 324 ff., 445 ff.; G. E. Mendenhall, "The Relation of the Individual to Political Society in Ancient Israel," *Festschrift H. C. Alleman* (Locust Valley, N.Y., 1960), pp. 108 ff.; H. G. May, "Individual Responsibility, and Retribution," *HUCA*, XXXII (1961): 105 ff.

72. Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, IV, v. 122-4.

73. Deut. 31:17, 32:20; Isa. 8:17; Mic. 3:4; Pss. 13:2; etc. See above, pp. 251 ff.

74. The word *heledh* means "limited duration." Cf. Ps. 17:14, Job 11:17, etc.

75. See C. Barth, *Die Erretung vom Tode in den individuellen Klage- und Dankliedern des Alten Testaments* (Zollikon, 1947); L.

- Wächter, *Der Tod im Alten Testament* (Stuttgart, 1967). N. J. Tromp, in *Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Netherworld in the Old Testament* (Rome, 1969) has unsuccessfully attempted to revise the traditional view of Sheol; cf. *RHR*, CLXXVIII (1970): 206 ff.; and *RB*, LXVIII (1971): 292 f.
76. Isa. 1 1:1-5. See R. Koch, "La théologie de l'esprit de Yahve dans le livre d'Isaïe," *Sacra pagina* (Gembloux, 1959), I, 419 ff.; H. Wildberger, *Jesaja 1-12* (Neukirchen, 1972), pp. 436 ff.
77. The benediction of vs. 52 [Heb. 53] is not a part of Ps. 89 but marks the end of one of the "books" which now constitute the Psalter.
78. See L. Köhler, *Theology of the Old Testament*, tr. by A. S. Todd (Philadelphia, 1957), pp. 115, 125, 183; W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament*, tr. by J. A. Baker (Philadelphia, 1961-67), I, p. 312 (note 4), pp. 317 f., 365 f., II, pp. 48 f., 64 f., 79 ff., 354 f.; H. Ringgren, *The Faith of the Psalmists* (Philadelphia, 1963), pp. 56 ff.; *Israelite Religion*, tr. by D. E. Green (Philadelphia, 1966), p. 130.
79. See Terrien, "The Omphalos Myth," pp. 328, 330.
80. See A. Neher, *L'essence du prophétisme* (Paris, 1955), pp. 71, 99 f.
81. See J. Tyciak, *Prophetie und Mystik. Eine Deutung des Propheten Isaïas* (Düsseldorf, 1953); U. Simon, "The Mysticism of Jeremiah," *Church Quarterly Review*, CLXI (1960): 270 ff.; cf. R. Kittel, *Die hellenistische Mysterienreligion und das Alte Testament* (Stuttgart, 1924), pp. 64 ff.
82. See C. G. Montefiore, "Mystic Passages in the Psalms," *JQR*, I (1889): 143 ff.; F. Heiler, "Die Kontemplation in der christlichen Mystik," *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, I (1933): 249 ff.; H. J. Franken, *The Mystical Communion with JHWH in the Book of Psalms* (Leiden, 1954), p. 70; M. Smith, *An Introduction to the History of Mysticism from the Oldest Elements in the Old Testament* (Amsterdam, 1973), pp. 13 ff. It will be observed that E. Müller introduces the
- History of Jewish Mysticism* (Oxford, 1946) with a chapter on "Mystical Aspects of the Bible" (pp. 13 ff.), but he traces the first manifestations of actual mysticism in the postbiblical period (pp. 27 ff.). See also G. G. Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (New York, 1954), pp. 40 ff.
83. See C. Westerman, *The Praise of God in the Psalms*, tr. by K. R. Crim (Richmond, Va., 1961); F. Crieemann, *Studien zur Formgeschichte von Hymnus und Danklied in Israel* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1969); J. Becker, *Wege der Psalmenexegese* (Stuttgart, 1975).
84. See Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Praise*, I, pp. 94 ff., 109 ff., 118 ff.; Weiser, *The Psalms*, pp. 23 ff.; J. K. Kuntz, "Theophany and the Book of Psalms," *The Self-Revelation of God* (Philadelphia, 1967), pp. 169 ff.
85. Ps. 47:5 f. (Heb. 6 f.). See J. Muilenburg, "Psalm 47," *JBL*, LXIII (1944): 235 ff.; A. Caquot, "ie psaume 47 et la rovaute de Yahve." *RHPR*, XXXIX (1959): 311 ff.; J. H. Kroeze, *Psalm 47* (The Hague, 1966); J. J. M. Roberts, "The Religio-Political Setting of Psalm 47," *BASOR*, no. 221 (Feb. 1976): 129 ff.
86. Ps. 47:9 (Heb. 10). The proposed reading of the MT 'am, "people," as 'im, "to," "toward" on the basis of the Ugaritic (see Roberts, "Psalm 47": 131, note 12) is ingenious but not probable since such a meaning of the preposition 'im is not attested elsewhere in biblical Hebrew and the *lectio difficilior* of the MT remains to be explained.
87. See H.-P. Müller, *Ursbrünge und Strukturen alttestamentlicher Eschatologie* (Berlin, 1969).
88. Ps. 50:2 f. See E. Beaucamp, "La théophanie du Psaume 50 (49)," *NRT*, LXXXI (1959): 897 ff.; N. H. Ridderbos, "Die Theophanie in Ps. 1 1-6," *OTS*, XV (1969): 213 ff.; I. Schreiner, *Sion-Jerusalem: Jahwes Königssitz* (München, 1963), pp. 288 ff.
89. According to the widely discussed hypothesis of S. Mowinckel on the phrase

po^ole'awen, traditionally rendered "the workers of iniquity" (see *'Awän und die individuellen Klagpsalmen. Psalmenstudien I.* 90. On the Sitz im *Leben* of the individual psalms and on the discussion concerning their judiciary use, see H. Schmidt, *Das Gebet der Angeklagten im Alten Testament* (Giessen, 1928); W. Beyerlin, "Die *tôda* der Heilsvergegenwartigung in den Klageliedern des Einzelnen," *ZA W*, LXXXIX (1967): 208 ff.; L. Delekat, *Asylie und Schutzorakel am Zionsheiligtum. Eine Untersuchung zu den privaten Feindpsalmen* (Leiden, 1967), pp. 270 ff.; cf. W. Beyerlin, *Die Rettung der Bedrängten der Einzelnen auf institution&e Zusammenhänge untersucht* (Göttingen, 1970), esp. pp. 43 ff., 139 ff. 91. See H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen*, I (Neukirchen, 1949), pp. 220 ff.; Weiser, *The Psalms*, pp. 244 ff.; Delekat, *Asylie*, pp. 194 ff.; W. Beyerlin, *Die Rettung*, pp. 122 ff.; A. H. van Zyl, "The Unity of Psalm 27," *Festschrift A. van Selms* (Leiden, 1971), pp. 233 ff.; cf. D. J. McCarthy, "An Installation Genre?" *JBL*, XC (1971): pp. 40 f. 92. Ps. 18 = 2 Sam. 22; See above, pp. 283 f. 93. S. Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, tr. by A. E. Keep (Ithaca, N.Y., 1973), pp. 88 ff.; cf. A. Moret, *Le rituel du culte divinjournalier en Egypte* (Paris, 1902), esp. p. 7. 94. The verb *hazah* means "to gaze in a vision" (*hazon*) analogous to that of a "seer" (*hozeh*) who practiced psychic divination. 95. See Song of Sol. 7:7, Prov. 9:17. The syntactic construction, with a proposition, implies intensity of beholding and a participatory exchange between the beholder and the "beheld." Cf. Mic. 4:11, Job 36:25, Isa. 47:13, Song 7:1. 96. Cf. 2 Sam. 1:26 (used by David to describe Jonathan's love), Song of Sol. 1:16, Ezek. 32:19. 97. Prov. 2:10, 2 Sam. 23:1, Ps. 135:3, etc. 98. 2 Kings 16:15. Cf. the Arabic *baqara*, "to see in depth," "to probe," and *baqara*, "to rise up early at dawn." Dahood

renders the verb here, "awaking each dawn" (*Psalms*, I, p. 167). The notion may have been associated with the ritual of incubation and oniromancy.

99. Cf. Ps. 18:11 (Heb. 12), Job 36:29.

100. Literally, "My heart [used of the intellectual process of memory] said to thee [quoting God's own saying?]." Ancient versions reflect the exegetical difficulty.

101. The exceptional emphasis introduced by the verb *havitha*. "thou art" or "thou hast been," implies the completeness and the constancy of the divine help.

102. Same word as in the opening statement (vs. 1).

103. Literally, "grace me," "let the compassions of thy womb be moved toward me."

104. See Ps. 105:4.

105. The verb appears in the expression "to gather [someone] to one's fathers." Cf. 2 Kings 22:20.

106. The MT *lu le'i* is uncertain. Literally, "If I did not believe . ." The phrase may be elliptical, with the apodosis left unexpressed. Cf. Exod. 32:32, etc.

107. The verb *horah*, "to teach" is a cognate of *moreh*, "teacher," or "autumn rain."

108. The poet may well allude consciously to the Mosaic theophany.

109. "The land of the living" always refers to a this-worldly economy of historical existence. Cf. Isa. 38:11, 53:8; Ps. 52:5 (Heb. 7); Job 28:13; etc. Contra M. Dahood, *Psalms*, I, p. 170.

110. The psalmist appears to be aware of the theme of the *Deus absconditus*.

111. The motif of hope in the psalmody of presence, which connotes the image of stretching and tensing, is often related to the theme of the way. Cf. Ps. 25:3, etc.

112. See E. Lipiński, "Le psaume 84. La visite au Seigneur dans sa maison," *Assemblées du Seigneur*, LIV (Bruges, 1966), 16 ff.; Delekat, *Asylie und Schutzorakel am Zionsheiligtum*, pp. 241 ff.

113. See E. Lipiński, "Macarismes et

psaumes de congratulation," *RB*, LXXV (1968): 321 ff.; W₃ lanzen. "'AŠRÊ in the bld Testament," *HTR*, LVIII (1965): 215 ff.; J. Dupont, "'Beatiudes' égyptiennes," *Biblica*, XLVII (1966): 155 ff.; W. Käser, "Beobachtungen zum alttestamentlichen Makarismus," *ZAW*, LXXXII (1970): 225 ff.; C. Westermann, "Der Gebrauch von 'SHRY im Alten Testament," *Forschung im Alten Testament*, II (München, 1974), 197 ff.

114. The Latinity of the word "beatitude" is appropriate for the static quality of the sacerdotal blessing, since "*beatus*," "blessed," corresponds to a passive participle, *barukh*. On the contrary, the dynamic sense of the exclamation '*ashrê*, "O the ongoingness of. . .," defies English rendering, with connotations of "stepping ahead along the way toward a goal."

115. The word *histopheph* is usually translated "to be a doorkeeper." The construct infinitive of a verb in the *hithpo'lel* voice which is apparently related to the noun *saph*, "threshold," this *hapax legomenon* does not designate a profession. With its connotation of oscillation, or back-and-forth movement, it probably suggests uncertainty and tenseness at the entrance.

116. The verb *dûr*, "to dwell" (cf. Arabic *da'ra*), originally meant "to move in a circle" [of tents 'which were pitched together in an encampment for security reasons]. Cf. the Akkadian *dûru*, "fortress."

117. M. Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, tr. by R. Manheim (New Haven, 1959), p. 7.

118. See P. A. Munch, "Die jüdischen 'Weisheits-Psalmen' und ihre Platz im Leben," *Acta orientalia*, XV (1937): 112 ff.; S. Mowinckel, "Psalms and Wisdom," *VTS*, III (1955): 205 ff.; R. Murphy, "A Consideration of the Classification 'Wisdom Psalms,'" *VTS*, IX (1963): 156 ff.; J. K. Kuntz, "The Canonical Wisdom Psalms: Their Rhetorical, Thematic and

Formal Dimensions," in J. J. Jackson and M. Kessler, eds., *Rhetorical Criticism* (Pittsburgh, 1974), pp. 186 ff.

119. See A. Caquot, "Le psaume LXXIII," *Saitica*, XXI (1971): 29 ff.; M. Mannati, "Sur le quadruple *avec toi* de Ps. LXXIII 21-26," *VT*, XXI (1971): 59 ff.; id., "Les adorateurs de Môt dans le Psaume LXXIII," *VT*, XXII (1972): 420 ff.; A. Schmitt, *Entrückung-Aufnahme-Himmelfahrt* (Stuttgart, 1973).

120. The word *dôr*, "generation," originally meant "community," "assembly," and may have referred to the heavenly council. See F. Neuberger, "An Unrecognized Meaning of Hebrew *Dôr*," *JNES*, IX (1950): 216.

121. Literally, "until I went to the sacred places of El." On the basis of the late text of *Wisd. of Sol. 2:22*, many translate, "until I entered the mysteries of God," but the word *miqdash*, "sanctuary," may be used in the plural, probably referring to the terraces, esplanades, and open courts of the sacred edifice. Cf. *Jer. 51:51*.

122. Literally "I was pricked in my reins [the seat of desire and fear]."

123. Literally. "Behemoth." mythological animal, counterpart of Leviathan. Cf. *Job 40:15* ff.

124. See Mannati, "'Avec toi' de Ps. LXXIII 21-26," p. 63.

125. See P. A. H. de Boer, "The Counselor," *SVT*, III (Leiden, 1955): 42 ff.

126. The syntactic construction is not as difficult as many claim. The verb *laqah*, "to take," is used with two objects, the pronoun "me" and the noun "toward glory" (without the need of a Hebrew preposition, in the sense of a directional goal). Some prefer to take the word '*ahar* as a' preposition introducing the word *kabhod*, "glory," and translate it, "behind glory" (cf. *Zech. 2:12*; see H. Ringgren, "Einige Bemerkungen zum 73. Psalms," *VT*, III [1953]: 270), but the meaning remains obscure.

127. See G. W. Coats, "Death and Dy-

ing in Old Testament Tradition." *Lexington Theological Quarterly*, I (1975): 9 ff.

128. K. S. Alling, Kingdom of *Diagonals* (Bloomington, Ind., 1954), p. 19.

129. Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot: A Tragicomedy in Two Acts* (New York, 1954), p. 58.

130. See M. Mannati, "Les adorateurs de Môt," pp. 420 ff.

131. See R. Martin-Achard, "Notes bibliques: Remarques sur le Psaume 22," *Verbum Caro*, XVII (1963): 119 ff.; N. H. Ridderbos, "The Psalms: Style, Figures, and Structures . . ." *OTS*, XIII (Leiden, 1963): 43 ff.; L. R. Fisher, "Betrayed by Friends. An Expository Study of Psalm 22," In., XVIII (1964): 20 ff.; R. Kilian, "Ps 22 und das priesterliche Heilsorakel," *BZ*, XII (1968): 172 ff.; H. Schmid, "Mein Gott, mein Gott, warum hast du mich verlassen?" *Wort und Dienst*, NF, XI (1971): 119 ff.

132. See discussion in G. Fohrer, *History of Israelite Religion*, tr. by D. E. Green (Nashville and New York, 1972), pp. 142 ff.

133. See C. Krahmalkov, "Psalm 22, 28-32," *Biblica*, L (1969): 389 ff.; E. Lipiński, "L'hymne à Yahwé Roi au Psaume 22, 28-32," *Biblica*, L (1969): 153 ff.; O. Keel-Leu, "Nochmals Psalm 22, 28-32," *Biblica*, LI (1970): 405 ff.

134. See A. Rose, "L'influence des Psaumes sur les annonces et les récits de la Passion et de la Resurrection dans les Evangiles," in R. de Langhe, ed., *Le Psautier* (1962), pp. 297 ff.; H. Gese, "Psalm 22 und das Neue Testament," *ZTK*, LXV (1968): 1 ff.; H. D. Lange, "The Relation Between Psalm 22 and the Passion Narrative," *Concordia Theological Monthly*, XLIII (1972): 610 ff.; J. A. Soggin, "Notes for Christian Exegesis of the First Part of Psalm 22," in *Old Testament and Oriental Studies* (Rome, 1975), pp. 152 ff.; J. H. P. Reumann, "Psalm 22 at the Cross: Lament and Thanksgiving for Jesus Christ," In., XXVIII (1974): 39 ff.

135. The MT merely reads, "that Yah-

weh did" (vs. 30b). Modern translators err when they supply the pronoun "it" as a direct object. The verb is used intransitively in an absolute sense. The psalm ends on the evocation of the act of God in the history of the world.

136. Among the many monographs on Ps. 51, see especially those which deal with vss. 10-12 (Heb., 12-14): R. Press, "Die eschatologische Ausrichtung des 51. Psalms," *TZ*, XI (1955): 241 ff.; P. Bonnard, "Le psaume de penitence d'un disciple de Jérémie," *Bible et vie chrétienne*, XVII (1957): 59 ff.; *id.*, "Le vocabulaire du Miserere," *Festschrift A. Gelin* (Paris, 1961): 145 ff.; E. R. Dalglish, *Psalm Fifty-One in the Light of Ancient Near Eastern Paterternism* (Leiden, 1962); L. Neve, "Realized Eschatology in Ps 51," *ET*; LXXX (1968-69): 264 ff.; P. Auffret, "Note sur la structure littéraire de Ps LI 1-19," *VT*, XXVI (1976): 142.

137. Cf. A. Caquot, "Ablution et sacrifice selon le Ps 51," *Proceedings of the XIth International Congress of History of Religion*, II (Leiden, 1968), pp. 75 ff.

138. Cf. Job 14:1 with Ps. 51:7 [Heb. 9]. See I. K. Zink, "Uncleanness and Sin. A Study of Job XIV and Psalm LI 7," *VT*, XVII (1967): 354 ff. The statement of Ps. 51:7 (Heb. 9) does not refer to the sinfulness of sexuality but implies the universality of sin and the solidarity of the human race from generation to generation.

139. The story of creation in Gen. 1:1-2:4a represents ancient traditions which have affinities with wisdom poetry. See G. M. Landes, "Creation Tradition in Proverbs 8:22-31 and Genesis 1," *Festschrift J. M. Myers* (Philadelphia, 1974), pp. 279 ff.

140. The traditional rendering, "thy holy spirit," risks anachronistic connotations with the Jewish and Christian hypostasis. Moreover, the context shows that the word *ruah* is used three times in the sense of "virtue" as energy. Although it is unlikely, the psalmist may have referred to

“the angel of the presence,” an expression which appeared after the Babylonian exile in parallel with the spirit of God’s holiness (Isa. 63:9; cf. vss. 10–11).

141. e. e. Cummings, *XAIPE*, no. 51, in *Poems 1923-1954* (New York, 1954), p. 456.

142. Peter Viereck, “Incantation at Assisi,” *The First Morning: New Poems* (New York, 1952), p. 39.

143. See R. Kilian, “In Gott geboren. Eine Auslegung des Psalms 139,” *Bibel und Kirche*, XXVI (1971): 97 ff.; R. La-pointe, “La nuit est ma lumière,” *CBQ*, XXXIII (1971): 397 ff.; M. Mannati, “Psaume 14-16,” *ZAW*, LXXXIII (1971): 257 ff.; H. Schüngel-Strautmänn, “Zur Gattung und Theologie des 139. Psalms,” *BZ*, XVII (1973): 39 ff.

144. Thematic, stylistic, and linguistic affinities between Ps. 139 and the wisdom literature are numerous. More especially, a dozen words or expressions appear only in this psalm and in the poem of Job. For a long time it has been suggested that both literary pieces derive from the same poet or at least the same poetic school. See M. Buttenwieser, *The Psalms* (Chicago, 1938), pp. 541 ff.

145. Allusions to cosmic travel seem to be rhetorical devices of the poetic imagination. Hyperbole stresses the inescapability of the presence. It is not impossible, however, that vss. 7-10 allude to the parapsychological experiences of initiates in mystery cults. See T. H. Gaster, “A Canaanite Ritual Drama,” *JAOS*, LXVI (1949): 69 ff.; H.-J. Kraus, *Psalmen II*, p. 919.

146. Cf. Amos 5:8, 4:13; Job 9:8 ff.; etc.

147. This seems to be the meaning of the word *sar appim* (also spelled *sa appim*; cf. Ps. 94:19; Job 4:13, 20:2; and the cognate “doubters” in Ps. 119:13). The root of the word means “to cleave,” “to divide,” “to branch out.” Elijah used another word of the same family when he asked the people of Israel, “How long will you

go on limping on two divided opinions?” (see *appim*; 1 Kings 18:21.)

148. Aeschylus, *Suppliant Women*, (tr. Gilbert Murray, London, 1930), 781 ff.

149. Although the phrase “a sufficient God” is not found in the Hebrew Bible, the Greek-speaking Jews of the Hellenistic times translated the divine name “Shadday” as *Ho Hikanos*, “The Sufficient One” (Job 21:15, 31:2, 39:32; Ruth 2:20, 21). The apostle Paul may have echoed this usage when he wrote, “Our sufficiency comes from God” (2 Cor. 3:5).

150. See A. L. Merrill, “Psalms XXIII and the Jerusalem Tradition,” *VT*, XV (1965): 354 ff.; O. Eissfeldt, “Bleiben im Hause Jahwes [Ps 23 . . .],” *Festschrift P. Althelm* (Berlin, 1969), pp. 76 ff.; G. Schwartz, “. . . ‘Einen Tisch angesichts meiner Feinde’? Eine Emendation [zu Ps 23,5 . . .],” *VT*, XX (1970): 118 ff.; A. von Rohr Sauer, “Fact and Image in the Shepherd Psalm,” *Concordia Theological Monthly*, XLII (1971): 488 ff.; R. von Ungern-Sternberg, “Das ‘Wohnen in Hause Gottes’, Eine terminologische Psalmen-Studie,” *Kerygma u. Dogma*, XVII (1971): 209 ff.; D. N. Freedman, “The Twenty-third Psalm,” *Michigan Oriental Studies: Festschrift G. G. Cameron* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1976), pp. 139 ff.

151. A. R. Johnson, “Psalm 23 and the Household of Faith,” in *Festschrift G. Henton Davies* (Richmond, Va., 1970), pp. 255 ff.; cf. P. Milne, “Ps. 23: Echoes of the Exodus,” *Studies in Religion/Sciences religieuses*, IV (1974-75): 237 ff.

152. The motif of the divine shepherd was not necessarily borrowed from the figure of the shepherd king of the Egyptian eschatology, for the image is common to the ancient Near Eastern literature in general. The designation of Yahweh as the “shepherd” or “feeder” of Israel had appeared in archaic poetry and later became traditional. See Gen. 49:24; Ps. 28:9, 79:13, 80:1 [Heb. 2]; Hos. 4:16; 1 Kings 22:17; Ezek. 34:11 ff.; Isa. 40:11,

49:9,63:14; cf. John 10:15. On the theological implications of the expression, see Ph. de Robert, *Le berger d'Israël. Essai sur le thème pastoral dans l'Ancien Testament* (Neuchâtel, 1968); cf. J. G. S. S. Thomson, "The Shepherd-Ruler Concept in the Old Testament and its Applications in the New Testament," *SJT*, VIII (1955): 406 ff.; O. Kiefer, *Die Hirtenrede. Analyse und Deutung von Joh 10.1-18* (Stuttgart, 1967); A. J. Simonis, *Die Hirtenrede im Johannes Evangelium* (Rome, 1967).

153. The MT reads two words *šal maweth*, "the shadow of death." instead of the single word *šalmuth*, "deep shadow." The semantic overtone of the idea of death was obvious, since narrow gorges shelter potential enemies, animal or human.

154. The word *rewayah* does not mean "overflows," although its cognates may refer to the saturation of well-irrigated fields. The meaning is that of "intoxication" either by drinking (Isa. 34:5) or through sexual passion (Prov. 5:19, 7:18). Therapeutic potions given to ailing sheep in the Middle East are generally made of fermented hemp or barley with medicinal herbs and honey.

155. The MT reads *shabhti*, "return," but the LXX reads *shibhti*, "reside," which seems to be correct in view of the element of circumstantial duration implied by the expression "for the length of [my] days."

156. A formula which refers to old age (Job 12:12; cf. Deut. 30:20; Prov. 3:2, 16).

157. See A. R. Johnson, "Ps. 23," pp. 264 ff.

158. See note 152 above.

159. Gen. 2:10 ff. Cf. "Eden" (sing.) and "delights" (*'adhanim*, pl.), two forms of the same word in biblical Hebrew, although they may have originally come from two different Semitic roots.

160. See G. W. Anderson, "Israel's Creed: Sung, Not Signed," *S'T*, XVI (1963): 21 ff.

161. See F. Stoop, "Le sens de Dieu dans les Psaumes," *Schweizerische Zeitschrift für Geschichte*, XIX (1969): 32 ff.

162. P. Tillich, "The Spiritual Presence," *Systematic Theology*, III (Chicago, 1963), p. 13 l. On the meaning of life and fulfillment in the Psalms, see von Rad, "'Righteous' and 'Life' in the Cultic Language of the Psalms," *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, tr. by E. W. Trueman Dicken (Edinburgh and London, 1966), pp. 253 ff.; J. I. Durham, "Shalom and the Presence of God," *Festschrift C. Henton Davies* (Richmond, Va., 1970), pp. 281 ff.

163. See S. Mowinkel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship*, II, pp. 104 ff.; *id.*, "Psalms and Wisdom," *VTS*, III (1955): pp. 205 ff.

7

The Play of Wisdom

In the Sistine capella fresco of the creation of man, Michelangelo has painted the figure of a hauntingly beautiful woman. Half-hidden among the angels in the mantle of God, she stares with astonishment at the birth of human life.¹ Her enlarged eyes reveal her anxiety. Wisdom, who had played in the presence of Yahweh at the creation of the world (Prov. 8:30), now looks at nascent humanity with foreboding. Can it be that her “delights” are now with the sons of men (vs. 30c)? The play of Wisdom includes a tragic tinge. “Brooding over the mysteries of Being,”² Wisdom at play is deadly serious, for play “pre-empts the future.”³

DAUGHTER OF GOD-LOVER OF MEN

The meaning of “wisdom” in ancient Israel is open to scholarly debate.⁴ No objective criterion from literary form or content has been agreed upon as determinative of the *Gattung* that is traditionally known as “sapiential.” The books of Job, Proverbs, and Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes) in the Hebrew Bible, along

with the Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach (Ecclesiasticus) and the Wisdom of Solomon in the Apocrypha, are ranged in the category of wisdom literature, but the word *hokmah*, "wisdom," escapes precise definition, for it covers a wide range of usages.⁵ It designates not just the virtue of sagacity but also an aesthetic reflection on human life,⁶ and it attempts to express this reflection in the epigrammatic succinctness of proverbs, in teasing riddles, or in enigmatic fables and parables. As a rhetorical mode, wisdom is a playful form of social exchange which borders on aesthetic entertainment. As a personified figure, wisdom belongs to the realm of divinity.

Wisdom Personified

The origins of wisdom in Israel are obscure, for the sapiential tradition remained oral for centuries. Some of it has a folk flavor and partakes of the egalitarianism of Mosaic faith, with its stress on social justice.⁷ It is chiefly this kind of wisdom which influenced the legislators, prophets, and psalmists.⁸ A large number of proverbs, however, deal with kingship and the art of government. These proverbs reflect a litterateur's flair as well as a cosmopolite's culture. They probably emerged from the international intelligentsia with which the royal courts of Israel and Judah came in contact from the time of Solomon and especially Hezekiah.⁹ Devoid of cultic and national particularism, Hebrew wisdom displayed a broad view of human nature and society. It generally affirmed the success of a prudential savoir-faire, but its hopeful humanism was also colored by a touch of skepticism and toned down by a note of pessimism.¹⁰

Canaanite, Mesopotamian, and Egyptian wisdom left deep marks on the sapiential circles of the Jerusalem court.¹¹ Extensive sections of the *Instruction of Amen-em-Ope*—a second-millennium Pharaonic scribe—were quoted indirectly in the book of Proverbs.¹² It was most likely under foreign influences that the Jerusalem sages came to think of wisdom not only as a human

virtue but also as a divine quality and perhaps even as a semiautonomous attribute.

The Hebraic figure of personified wisdom may have originated in Canaanite mythology, which included a goddess of wisdom,¹³ but its literary formulation presents verbal affinities with the Egyptian goddess Isis¹⁴ and also with the Egyptian goddess Maat, “Truth-as-cosmic-and-social-order.” Maat was represented as a divine child who was caressed and kissed by her father, the sun-god of the Heliopolis pantheon.¹⁵ In addition, the erotic overtones of Wisdom’s delights with both God and men echoed the liturgies of Ishtar, Queen of Heaven, the Mesopotamian goddess of love and wisdom.¹⁶

The hymns on wisdom which have been preserved from various ages¹⁷ are couched in ambiguous language. Was their feminine personification of wisdom a prosopopeia or a hypostasis? Scholars are divided on this question, which may never be answered satisfactorily.¹⁸ The imagination of poets and philosophers is able to view an abstraction as concretely as a living being. The mythopoetic mind does not need to choose between a figure of speech and reality, especially when the object of its concern is the enigma of the cosmos and the ultimate meaning of life. More important than a precise interpretation of these hymns is the light which they throw upon the nature of faith among the sages.¹⁹

Unlike the prophets, prone to vision, or the psalmists, bent on the mystical quest, the wise reflected by themselves and among themselves. This does not necessarily mean that their humanism was strictly anthropocentric. In comparing wisdom to a woman, they expressed in their own way their theology of presence.

Elusive Wisdom (Job 28:1-28)

The Book of Job includes in its finished form a hymn on wisdom which was probably intended as a musical interlude—

similar to the Greek chorus-between the poetic discussion (3:1—27:23) and the hero's peroration (29:1—31:40). This hymn was probably quoted from an oral tradition of ancient origin.²⁰ Its refrain wistfully affirms that neither *homofuber*, with his superb technique (vss. 1–11), nor *homo religiosus*, with his lavish rites (vss. 14–19), knows the path to wisdom. Human knowledge and human power are astounding,

“But where shall Wisdom be found,
and where is the lode of intelligence?
Mortal man is ignorant of her way:
she is not to be found in the land of the living”
(vss. 12–13).²¹

While the Abyss (*Tehom*) and the Sea (*Yam*) deny that Wisdom resides among them (vs. 14), Utter Depths (*Abaddôn*) and Death (*Môth*) admit that they heard of her fame (vs. 22). The point of this distinction is now lost. In any case, the hymn proclaims that

“God alone is aware of her way;
It is he who knows the place of her dwelling”
(vs. 23).

The poet does not say that God created her. Yet, the third strophe implies that the creator and the sustainer of nature would not act without her presence. Significantly, the cosmic elements that are mentioned-wind, watery deep, rain, and flashes of lightning-suggest the autumn storms, which announce the renewal of fertility. As the divine sovereign presides over the initiation of a new year, he activates or restrains the powers of life and destruction. Without transition, the hymn concludes:

“Then, he sees [Wisdom] and measures her,
he sets her up and he sounds her out”
(vs. 27)

The meaning of this climactic line is by no means certain. The ambiguity of its verbs may well have been understood, in the context of the autumn feast, in an erotic sense:

“Then, he sees her and he celebrates her,
he embraces her and he penetrates her.”**

If this is the case, the imagery may have evoked a cosmogonic myth which pictured the creation of the world as a divine act of love play. A radical difference, however, would separate the theology of this hymn from that of the agrarian cults. No sexual rite of hierogamy, involving the fertilization of the earth-goddess, would be implied. Wisdom, sublimated lover of the Creator, transcends the created order.²³

The incorporation of this hymn into the poem of Job shows particular insight into the theology of presence. The last verse of the chapter (vs. 28) provides a contextual link which indicates the *raison d'être* of the hymn at the end of the poetic discussion and before the hero's protest of innocence:

“Then [God] said to man,
Behold, the fear of Adonay is wisdom,
to shun evil, this is intelligence.”

Commentators generally dismiss this line as an editorial addition, but if the Jobian poet himself quoted the hymn on wisdom, he may well have introduced this poetic transition in order to obtain a specific effect on the audience which heard the chanting of the entire poem. Through the device of impressionistic juxtaposition, he ascribed to wisdom a new fluidity of meaning and function. Man cannot acquire nor possess wisdom through effort. Job is the lonely, abandoned sufferer. God and man are estranged. Yet the hero will be surprised by the voice from the whirlwind (chs. 38 ff.). In anticipation of this moment, as well as an “interlude” between “acts,” the poet may well have

directed that a chorus should sing the hymn on wisdom, with its affirmation of the greatness of the creator, the wonder of wisdom, and the need for man to recognize his own finitude.

While divine wisdom remains elusive to the natural faculties of *homo jaber*, *homo religiosus*, and *homo moralis*, she makes herself available to Job under the mode of “the fear of the Lord.”²⁴ Wisdom assumes, in effect, the role of the mediatrix of presence.

Wisdom’s Delight (Prov. 8:22–31)

The function of Wisdom as the instrument of rapprochement between God and man is delineated more sharply in another hymn (Prov. 8:22–31),²⁵ which contains a lyrical self-appraisal of Wisdom playing in the divine presence:

I

- 8:22. It was Yahweh who begot me,²⁶ first fruit of his power,*7
prelude of his masterpieces of old.
23. From all times I was consecrated,*8
from the beginning, from the first days of the earth.

II

24. I was conceived when the abysses were not yet,
even before the fountains of the deep came to exist.²⁹
25. Before the mountains had been planted in their bases,
ahead of the hills, I was brought forth.
26. [It was] at a time when he had not yet made the earth or
space,
or even the first of the cosmic dust.

III

27. I was there when he prepared the heavens,
When he drew a circle on the face of the abyss,
28. When he condensed the clouds for the waters of above,
and the springs of the abyss gushed forth,

29. When he assigned an engraved limit to the sea
 that its waters should not trespass [the word of] his
 mouth,
 and when he traced the foundations of the earth.³¹

IV

30. Then I was at his side, [his] darling child!³²
 Then I was [his] delight day after day,
 31. Playing and dancing³³ in the whole span of the earth!
 And [now] my delight is with the sons of men!³⁴
 32. Thus, my sons, listen to me!
 Happy are those who keep my ways!

Centuries before the christological speculations of the Church Fathers, the Jerusalem wise men boldly asserted that Wisdom was “begotten, not made.”³⁵ In addition to the temporal prepositions and other syntactic devices which indicate the preexistence of Wisdom to the created world, the poet has placed a threefold stress on the mode by which Wisdom, unlike nature, came into being. Wisdom sings: “Yahweh begot me” (vs. 22*a*), “I was conceived” (vs. 24*a*), and “I was brought forth” (vs. 25*b*). Wisdom is a member of the family of God. Like the psalmists and the prophets, who freely alluded to the sons of El and the council of Yahweh, the wise men did not find in their theology any objection to using a mythopoetic language in order to convey their ideas concerning the many-sided corporate-ness of divinity.

The context of Proverbs 1—9, in which Wisdom appears on earth as hostess, entertainer, and educator,³⁶ does not in any way jar with the implications of the hymn on the transcendence of Wisdom. On the contrary, the structural finale of the poem points to her dual role. She is at once the delight of the creator and the companion of human beings. Her own delight is “with the sons of men” (vs. 31 *b*). Unlike the Jobian hymn, in which wisdom was viewed solely as a reality of the divine realm (Job

28: 1-27) and received its anthropological orientation through the impressionistic device of contextual juxtaposition (vs. 28), this poem builds up suspense by expatiating on the heavenly playfulness of Wisdom, only to throw in, at the last instant, the unexpected climax:

“And [now] my delight is with the sons of men!”

(vs. 31 *b*.)

The delight which Wisdom induces in the Deity (vs 30*b*) is akin to the delight she experiences in the society of mankind (vs. 31 *b*). The objective delight of Wisdom with God becomes the subjective delight of Wisdom with men. The delight she gives the creator is the delight she receives from the creature. Playful Wisdom is the mediatrix of presence.

Not unlike the psalmist who ridiculed the dread of cosmic evil by saying that Yahweh made “*that* Leviathan ... to play with him” (Ps. 104:26), the Jobian hymnist exalted the goodness of creation by evoking the play of Wisdom in the presence of the Creator, thereby offering a rare glimpse of “pleasure in heaven” (cf. Luke 15:7). Pictured on the model of human corporateness, God enjoyed “*en famille*” the wonders of universal harmonies

“when the morning stars sang together³⁷
and the sons of El shouted for joy”

(Job 38:7)

It is Wisdom, at once divine and human, who reveals to man the meaning of the universe, with its origin and its end. One should not speak of the “self-revelation of creation.”³⁸ By using the figure of personified wisdom, at once the entertainer of divinity and the educator of humanity, the hymnist hinted at a similarity, perhaps an actual kinship, between the human thirst for knowledge and the childlike freedom of the Godhead. Science, philos-

ophy, art, and the knowledge of God are united in the celebration of play.³⁹

The Embrace of Wisdom

While the prophets compared the life of communion between Yahweh and Israel to a marriage of love, and while the psalmists discovered a mode of presence which depended on *cultus* and also went beyond its public ceremonial, the sapiential circles spoke of access to presence through the love of wisdom. They meant in appearance a man-initiated enterprise but in depth a human response to a transcendental call.

Men are enjoined to seek Wisdom and “to acquire” her, only because Wisdom herself waits for them and invites them to come toward her (Prov. 2:4, 3:13, etc.). In sapiential humanism, as well as in prophetic and psalmodic Yahwism, the initiative is always divine. Whoever finds Wisdom finds life, but life is interpreted in the context of Israel’s faith. The fear of Yahweh and the knowledge of God are the fruits of Wisdom (Prov. 2:5 ff.).

Wisdom is the feminine vehicle of spirituality through which Yahweh bestows his presence and its benefits.

Do not abandon her, and she will keep thee safe.

Love her, and she will stand guard over thee.

Cherish her,⁴⁰ and she will lift thee up.

She will honor thee whenever thou wilt embrace her,

She will place a garland of grace on thy head,

and crown thee with magnificence

(Pm. 4:4-8)

Man is pressed to welcome a reality which responds to his embrace because this reality initiates it. The analogy of love between woman and man rather than between man and woman corrects the implication of “male chauvinism,” for it makes woman preeminent. Theologically, it introduces a dialectic of

mutuality which makes any theory of salvation by work totally irrelevant.

The invitation of Wisdom is extended to all men, not just to a privileged class of court officials or intellectuals. Transposing -almost wrecklessly-the appeals of the goddess Ishtar to human beings,⁴¹ the sapiential circles did not recoil from picturing Wisdom waiting at street corners and on hilltops (Prov. 8:2, etc.). As the sublime counterpart of the prostitutes in the mystery cults of the ancient Semitic world, Wisdom attempted to allure all those who passed by. Her call was addressed to the whole of humanity (Prov. 8:4). The universalism of the prophets and of the psalmists projected its own fulfillment to the end of history, but the universalism of the wise aimed at the present time. In her house, enigmatically built on seven pillars (Prov. 9: 1 ff.),⁴² Wisdom offers a sacramental meal of bread and wine that her guests may live (Prov. 9:5-6).

The theme of Wisdom's embrace persisted in the Hellenistic age. In *The Wisdom of Jesus ben Sirach (Ecclesiasticus)*, *hokhmah* (wisdom) and *torah* (law) became explicitly identified (Sir. 24: 1 ff.).⁴³ Nevertheless, even in the Siracide, Wisdom still extended her invitation to all: "Come to me, you who desire me, and eat your fill of my fruits" (Sir. 24:19). In the Hellenistic era of cultural openness, and before the Maccabean time of cultural withdrawal, Jewish teachers of wisdom were apparently eager to reach out toward the intellectuals of the cosmopolitan centers like Antioch and Alexandria.

The fragmentary Hebrew text of *The Acrostic Poem on Wisdom* which was discovered at Qumran⁴⁴ presents a strikingly different phrasing from that of the familiar Greek translation of *Ecclesiasticus* (Sir. 51:13-19). The Qumran recension (col. xxi, lines 11-17) contains an accumulation of sexual imagery which is quite devoid of reticence. Ben Sirach was not only a keen observer of the created world but also a passionate lover of wisdom. His love for wisdom was akin to a quasi-mystical im-

mersion in the realm of divinity. He did not separate his reflective search for truth from a surrender to a presence which overwhelmed and possessed him. He sought wisdom, but it preceded him. He activated his search through his power of decision, but the initiative transcended his volitive faculties.

By comparing wisdom not just to a teacher and a suckling nurse but to a lover, Ben Sirach used the analogy of the feminine in humanity to describe the most pleasing and demanding element in divinity. Like Hosea and other prophets, he understood that the knowledge of God went far beyond doctrinal assent or the acquisition of information. To know is to be, and to be is to give oneself to another in a totality of devotion which knows no compromise and involves a surrender. Philosophical reflection grows from communion with transcendence, and this communion is comparable to an embrace with the feminine personification of the Godhead.

Almost two centuries later, the author of the *Wisdom of Solomon*⁴⁵ pursued a similar theme. As an emanation, mirror, and reflection of the high God, Wisdom makes herself visible to those who love her. To love Wisdom is to keep her laws, and to keep her laws is to be assured of incorruptibility. It is this incorruptibility which brings man near to his God (6:12 ff.)

The personification of wisdom as the daughter of God and the lover of men elicited an atmosphere of happiness which strangely ignored the tragic fate of Israel, although some sages had warned against the wiles of Dame Folly (Prov. 9:13 ff.). Poets of the sapiential circles, among whom may be included the Jobian rhapsodist, deliberately faced the enigma of suffering. Human evil and human misfortune, without apparent cause in history or character, prompted them to investigate the riddle of divine silence in the face of human agony.

It was in her garb of the mediatrix of presence that Wisdom influenced the early Christians in their attempt to articulate their new faith. They were convinced that Jesus, a human being

born of a woman, was comparable to divine wisdom, the bearer of a divine presence in a human personality (Rom. 1:20 ff., Col. 1:12, Heb. 1:2 ff., etc.).⁴⁶

A MASQUE OF REVOLT

Jewish and Christian tradition has placed the Book of Job in the wisdom literature, but this unique document escapes strict classification, for it presents a bewildering diversity of literary genres: folktale, proverbial sayings, lament, hymn, invective, prophetic confession, legal controversy, juridical oath, *onomastica*, and theophany. In all probability, the poem of Job and his comforters (3:1—42:6) was composed by a Jerusalem sage deported into Lower Mesopotamia,⁴⁷ who had been profoundly influenced by Jeremiah, Habakkuk, and the psalmists at the turn of the sixth century B.C.

From the time of David and Solomon, the story of the pious man from the land of Uz, a foreigner, had been told at campfires and in wisdom schools. A poet of singular genius borrowed the tale with its *dramatis personae* as a setting for a discussion of spirituality under duress. He presented in effect a paracultic drama, which was acted out and chanted with musical accompaniment before it was later written out by scribes.

The occasion for this *masque of revolt*⁴⁸ cannot be determined with certainty, but it may have been the informal observance of the autumn festival "by the rivers of Babel."⁴⁹

Through the grimness of disaster, someone may have thought that "the play of wisdom must go on," and that the *danse macabre* of history might yet be transfigured by the contemplation of a creator who "gives songs in the night" (Job 35:10).

The hero had asked in the story: "Since we accept happiness as a gift of God, why should we not accept hardship also?" (1:10), but in the poem he lamented:

“Why did I not die in my mother’s womb?”

(3:11.)

By using a dialogue form, which sages of Mesopotamia and Egypt had long favored to air unconventional ideas,⁵⁰ the poet found a way to go beyond the scandal of unexplicable pain and to probe an essentially theological problem. Does man dare to judge Deity?

In pursuing this question, the poet did not become a philosopher formulating a theodicy, but he made a contribution to the theology of presence. It is the theology of presence, not the problem of suffering, which lies at the core of the poem.

From the opening lament (3:1 ff.) to the closing confession (42:5–6), the argument moves on three levels. Presence is first beyond grasp and second beyond time. When it unexpectedly rushes in as “the voice from the whirlwind” (38:1 ff.), its obtrusiveness shatters man’s imagination of God. Beyond grasp and beyond time, it now stands, most shockingly, “beyond honor.”

Presence Beyond Grasp

Destitute, bereaved, excommunicated, the erstwhile paragon of selflessness in devotion to his God lost his composure and “cursed his day” (3:1). In a dozen soliloquies, the deterioration of the hero’s faith was astutely depicted. The poison of pain may have at times vitiated his judgment, but his mind could also show clear thinking in the midst of frenzy, “la lucidité dans le délire.”

In the prologue, Job had blessed God (1:21). In the poem, he accused God of caprice and sadistic cruelty:

“I was at ease when he broke me;
 he seized me by the neck and dislocated [my spine];
 Then he set me up for target practice;
 his arrows fly all around me ...”

(16:12–13).

Prophets and psalmists before Job had protested sickness, persecution, and ostracism. They had often turned their prayers of lament into prayers of bewilderment:

“Why dost thou stand at a distance, O Yahweh?
Why dost thou hide thyself in time of trouble?”

(Ps.10:1.)

But they had not detected malevolence and irresponsibility at the heart of God. They had felt the dread of a silent God and an absent God but not an enemy God. Like Jacob at the Jabbok, they had fought in prayer,⁵¹ but the *agon* motif was swiftly resolved into a new grace. For Job, on the contrary, divine hostility persisted night after night with no other prospect than the eventuality of his death. He was even deprived of hope in a resurrection (14:10–12). To die was for him better than to live, but he loved life fiercely and he refused the void without vindication.

The point at which his revolt exceeded the impatience of the prophets and the psalmists may be seen in a touch of black humor, when he played on the sound of his own name, “Job,” and asked God:

“Wherefore hidest thou thy face
and holdest me for thy enemy?”

(13.24.)

The word *'Iyyob* ('.y.b.), “Job,” may have been a cognate of the word *'Oyeb* ('.y.b.), “enemy.”

Never did the tormented man allude to a mythic power of evil distinct from the Godhead.⁵² His monotheism was so stringent that it intensified the dilemma of his situation: “There is no God but God!” At the same time, he obstinately maintained that he was entirely in the right. Although he acknowledged peccadilloes of adolescence (13:26), he repeatedly proclaimed his

innocence of any crime. Since he also persisted in believing that the divine power was neither divided nor limited, he was forced to conclude:

“It is God who has taken away my right”

(27:2)

An awful misunderstanding kept them apart. Beyond the loss of his children and his health, Job was racked by the experience of a metaphysical solitude. His long familiarity with an ever-present God had vanished. Starvation for the solace of God’s nearness led him to expand his self-respect into the pride of a legendary giant and to ascribe to that God the most sordid intentions.

Two centuries before Plato, but in a quite different mood, this nonconformist Hebrew poet charged that man was but “a plaything in the hand of God.”⁵³ He did not mean, as Plato did, that “this is the best thing about him.” Rather, with the sarcasm of a deceived lover, Job anticipated the now hackneyed ranting:

“As flies to wanton boys are we to the gods:
They kill us for their sport.”⁵⁴

In a contradiction persistent throughout the poem, he hurled his charges at the *Deus ludens* of his nightmares, but he still appealed to the just Deity of his former faith:

“If only there were between us an umpire
who might lay his hand upon us both!”

(9:33)

The appearance of God at a fair trial cannot be forced, and his presence is beyond the grasp of man. Again and again demanding an audience in order to argue his case directly (13:-3) and to defend his ways to God’s face even at the cost of his

own life (13: 15),⁵⁵ the challenger had to fall back on the recognition of both his impotence and his loneliness:

Oh that I knew where I might find him,
 that I might come even to his throne!
 I would order my cause before him,
 and fill my mouth with arguments.
 I would know the words which he would answer me,
 and listen with care to what he would say to me . . .
 If I go to the east, he is not there;
 to the west, I cannot perceive him;
 To the north, where he works,⁵⁶ I have no vision of him;
 to the south, where he hides himself, I cannot see him
 (23:3-5, 8-9).

In man's extremity, God's presence is elusive and cannot be ordained, yet Job's ancient trust remained the underground source of his hope. He still expected that at some unspecified future an intervention from above would not fail him.

Presence Beyond Time

A glimmer of this expectation may be caught in Job's use of irony. Alluding to the myth of the cosmic fight by which the god of order triumphed over deified chaos, he taunted the creator:

"Am I the Sea, or the Ocean Monster,
 that thou placest a watch over me?"
 (7:12).

In the Babylonian liturgy of the New Year, the god Marduk brought Tiamat down and posted a watch over her. Is then God playing with Job as if He were aping Marduk, or does a sick man on his pile of refuse pose a threat to "the mover of the world and all the stars"? The broad satire is not devoid of grandeur. By allowing himself to doubt both divine omnipotence and human finitude, Job reaffirmed in a perverted way his bond to the

Deity. It was his lingering faith which made him oscillate on the verge of blasphemy.

The element of play reappeared a few lines later when the sufferer reiterated his belief that God would someday come to his senses and relent-but too late. Like a mischievous child, Job said to the Most High, "You'll be sorry." Since he understood death as nonbeing, he turned his fear of annihilation into a jest at the expense of God:

"For now shall I sleep in the dust,
and thou wilt seek me, groping in the gloom before dawn,
but I shall not be!"

(7:21).

God himself will have to face the great void. A procrastinating Deity will be offered the spectacle of nothingness.

Once again, the hero basked in a pleasant reverie. The silent God will not ignore him forever. In a lyrical meditation on human mortality, a mortality which is far more drastic than the ephemerality of trees (14:1 ff.), he borrowed the language of oriental love poetry:

If thou wouldst hide me in Sheol,
shelter me there until thy wrath would ease,
and make a date with me to remember me!
If a strong man, once dead, could live again,
all the days of my forced labor would I wait
until the time of my relief!
Thou wouldst call, and I would answer;
thou wouldst desire the work of thy hands!

(14:13-14.)

Abrupt return to the bleakness of reality (vss. 16 ff.) chased this phantasm, but the hope of a love call from God was implanted in the patient's mind. Presence was delayed, but it would surely come, even beyond time.

After Job's death, an unidentified "witness" will defend him against his divine murderer at a session of the heavenly council (16:21).⁵⁷ Far more extraordinary still is Job's certitude that the redeemer of his blood⁵⁸ will rise on the dust of his grave and vindicate his honor (19:25). The textual uncertainty of this pericope, typical of the manuscript corruptions which impair most of the so-called messianic passages, prevents a definite interpretation. Nevertheless, with the exception of the line which immediately follows (vs. 26a), a fairly safe rendering may be proposed:

And after this skin which is mine [?] is thus destroyed [?],
 within my flesh shall I see God!
 It will be I, myself, who will contemplate him;
 my eyes will perceive him, and not a stranger;
 my desire burns within me

19:26-27)

The quadruple emphasis on the identity of the beholder, even after his death, but "within [his] flesh,"⁵⁹ may well represent a turning point in Israel's traditional ignorance of an afterlife for the individual. In a post-mortem mode of being-perhaps brief, perhaps eternal-Job will at last see his God. By using the expression "within my flesh," he affirmed the concreteness and the fullness of his identity. This unambiguous credo, "And I know that my redeemer lives," followed by the unabashed announcement of the divine vision, played its part in the growth of the later belief in the resurrection of the dead. The mythic form of the belief polemized against the alien idea of the immortality of the soul-a disincarnate breath, a mere shadow of the human personality. Job waited, secure, without indulging in any doubt, for the rebirth beyond time of his corporeal personality. An anthropological realism of a similar kind inspired the Pauline formula of "a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:44).

Until the end of the poetic dialogue, Job never weakened in his expectation of seeing God, but he expected that this rapprochement would take place on his own terms, and he concluded his oath of innocence with an anticipation of assurance expressed in court style:

Who will make sure that God hear me?
 Here is my signed statement: Let the Almighty answer me!
 If my opponent has written a bill of charge,
 I shall carry it on my shoulder,
 adorn my head with it as with a crown!
 I shall reveal the sum of my steps!
 As a prince I shall approach him!

(31:35-37).

The royal majesty of the complainant was still intact. Throughout his quest for the presence, he asked only for the recognition of his rectitude. Unlike the poets of the Sumerian, Akkadian, and Hebrew laments, he never confessed any sin, begged for pardon, or even asked for healing. All he ever demanded, with unbent pride, was a verdict of acquittal.

Presence at last crashed in with the thunders, and the stance vanished. Job was invited to look at the world from the perspective of God.

Presence Beyond Honor

When the poet introduced the voice from the whirlwind, in a setting which echoed the theophanies of Moses and Elijah (38:1 ff.), no answer was ever given to the human questioner. On the contrary, it was the Deity's turn to ask questions,⁶⁰ not without irony.⁶¹

Was Job present at creation? At the end of the cosmic display, God insisted:

“Bind up thy champion’s belt!
 I shall ask, and thou wilt instruct me.
 Wilt thou void my righteousness
 and call me evil to justify thyself?”

(40:8)

This question penetrated to the heart of the debate. Job had sought the presence for an egocentric aim. While his friends were engaged in rehearsing a purely didactic theodicy based on the traditional dogma of individual retribution, he had insisted on his rights to happiness. God was bound to respect these rights. The course of self-justification on which he had embarked inevitably entailed God’s condemnation.

Orthodox wisdom practiced an intellectual form of idolatry, for the theodicy which it upheld was based on man’s imagination of divine justice. The heterodox revolt of Job fell into a similar trap, although suffering rendered his error understandable. However perverted by the claims of his moralism, his faith carried him through the ordeal of a hell on earth. While the poet clearly showed that Job had not “feared God for nought” (1:9), he also succeeded in exhibiting a man who risked his whole being for the sake of a selfless gain: by passionately seeking the recognition of his moral integrity, he wanted to know, beyond religiosity, the divinity of God. From the vortex of the storm, he learned that God was God only when God was free from a man-made image. The Jobian poet anticipated Voltaire’s witticism: “Dieu fit l’homme à son image, mais l’homme le lui a bien rendu.”

By probing the theology of presence, the poet not only hinted at the insidiousness of intellectual idolatry but also exposed the corruptibility of the covenant theology. Like Job, whose inner greatness exceeded that of “all the sons of the East” (1:3), the people of Israel-elected by Yahweh for a unique mission in the history of the world-had tragically fooled themselves into assuming that they had acquired rights upon the Almighty.

Significantly, the Jobian poet used the same verb as Jeremiah’s when he had Yahweh ask the question:

“Woudst thou void (*tapher*) my righteousness?”

(40%).

In the Jeremianic indictment of Israel and Judah, Yahweh said:

“Their fathers ... have made my covenant void (*hepheru*)”

(Jer. 31:31).

Throughout the discussion between Job and his friends, the poet had showed himself to be an intimate follower of Jeremianic thought. Not only did he restate in a style of high lyricism Jeremiah's confession (Jer. 20:14 ff.) when he composed the opening soliloquy on the cursing of Job's birth (Job 3: 1 ff.), but he also transposed many Jeremianic cries of despair, of doubt, and of remonstrance throughout the poetic controversy. Indeed, the prophet had engaged in a controversy (*ribh*) with Yahweh (Jer. 12:1 ff.) before Job had.

The darkness of the theophany was a symbol of divine presence behind a mask.⁶² While the evocation of Behemoth and Leviathans³ did not offer a solution to the problem of evil,⁶⁴ the poet bypassed the enigma of suffering when he had the creator of the universe unveil for the lonely man the wonders of cosmic life and perhaps also confide in him some of his own perplexity in the face of cosmic evil.

To Jeremiah who had questioned his righteousness, Yahweh replied: “I have abandoned my own house, left my inheritance. I have delivered the darling of my being into the hands of her enemies” (Jer. 12:7). To Job who had questioned his governing of the world, Yahweh replied:

“Behold, I pray, Behemoth! I have made him as I have made thee!”

(40:15).

At the moment when history became meaningless for Israel,

Job was invited, almost tenderly, to contemplate the Creator at work.

At the rebirth of greenness with the autumn thunders, when dust that has been parched by the death *of nature* in the summer heat again became the soil of fertility (38:38), the bounty of the Creator transcended all forms of mercantilism in religion and in the destiny of man.

Although the poem *of Job* cannot be interpreted as a detailed allegory of the first Jews in exile,⁶⁵ its allusion to their theological plight cannot be missed.⁶⁶ The rise and fall of empires are the tainted fruit of political give-and-take. In the presence of a God who endows nature with both penury and luxury, the poem of Job views historical upheavals in their proper perspective.

The freedom of God was celebrated in Proverbs by the play of wisdom at creation. The freedom of God was celebrated in Job by the display of munificence in the cosmos, with a glance at the mythic monsters of evil. There is no place for anthropocentricity in nature, with its hint of holy waste. Rain falls on land “where no man is” (38:26).

In disclosing his labors in creating and maintaining the universe, Yahweh truly “answered Job” (38:1). He inclined himself toward a single creature whom history had rejected and with whom he shared the marvels of his act.

While the words “love” and “grace” are absent from the discourses of Yahweh, the realities which they represent should not be missed. In the presence of the holy, Job desisted, but his silence should not be interpreted merely as the submission of finitude to infinity. Modern critics who discern on his part an abject surrender show they do not understand the depth of the holy

“I had hitherto known thee by hearsay.
Now, my eyes have seen thee”

(42:5).

Job's honor no longer mattered. He was ushered for a moment into the realm of divinity. Presence beyond honor offered the solitary man an all-sufficient gift: the immediacy of God himself.

Of what crime, then, did he *repent*? He did not "repent."

"Therefore I sink into the abyss and I grieve
On dust and ashes"

(42:6).⁶⁷

Job encountered the holiness of God in its fullness, without intermediary and without a protective armor. He reacted to the shattering power of the holy as the prophet Isaiah had, with the "woe is me" of human response to the *mysterium tremendum* (Isa. 6:5). In addition, Job's final word implies far more than the awareness of solidarity in guilt which seized the prophet. Job did not come to this moment in a spiritual vacuum. With the proud conscience of moral man, he had demanded an audience. He now discovered sinfulness not as moral transgression but as the pride of self-deification.

In his persistent claims for the vindication of his honor, the man from Uz had not spoken as a moral man aware of his finitude but as a moral man who had turned his morality into a lever for securing ultimate autonomy. He had unwittingly acted as a divine being associated with the creative activity of the sapiential myth (Prov. 8:22 ff.). Eliphaz of Teman had correctly detected in him this evidence of flirtation with the role of the *Ur-mensch* (15:7). Job had assumed the attributes of an infinite and eternal being. His bid for theodicy had led him to deny his humanity.

From the whirlwind, Yahweh reminded him of the irony of human finitude that plays with the illusion of infinity:

"Put on majesty and grandeur!
Deck yourself with splendor and glory! ..."

Then, I myself will worship thee,
For thy right hand will have saved thee!

(40:10, 14.)

The confession of Job the sinner assumes, therefore, a most peculiar quality. He was not stained by a guilt which resulted from a rupture of the moral order in human society, nor had he violated any moral code. He had transgressed the limits of his creatureliness because he had passed judgment on the character of his Creator.

The poet did not have at his disposal a vocabulary suitable for the formulation of a theological hamartiology, but he succeeded in poetically communicating his intention. If Job had possessed the infinity of a divine being, Yahweh himself would have paid homage to him. Job did not "repent." He did not acknowledge moral turpitude. He, the moral man *par excellence*, grieved over his mythical pride—the pride which he had erected upon his morality.

Could it be that the poet intimated a further thought—that not only anthropodicy but even the noblest theodicy amounts to the most heinous of theological crimes? In any case, the Jobian theophany constitutes a scathing critique of religious subjectivism in all its manifestations, of egocentric flattery, either through the lull of ritual or the busyness of moral activism. In spite of darkness, presence induced illumination.

The *Masque of Job* began in revolt, but it ended in faith, without the old illusion about the self and with a new lucidity about God.

"MODEST DOUBT"

Many readers of the Bible have wondered why the Book of Qoheleth (Ecclesiastes), which reflects the mind of not so gentle a cynic,⁶⁸ has been included in the canon of the Hebrew Bible.⁶⁹ Part of the answer may be that it pierces the traditional

delusions of religionists. In addition, by living through his modest doubt, Qoheleth developed a *modus credendi* which paradoxically maintained a sense of God's presence within the signs of God's absence.

The Threat of the Unknown

The name "Qoheleth" was a pseudonym⁷⁰ which concealed the identity of a Jerusalem sage⁷¹ in early Hellenistic times (late fourth century B.C.).⁷² The literary form of the book recalls the Egyptian genre of "royal testament," with its observations of the human scene. Its language is late Hebrew seasoned with Aramaisms and also bearing the marks of Phoenician.⁷³ There is no agreement on its structure;⁷⁴ although contemporary scholars increasingly recognize an inner unity which binds together its various parts.⁷⁵

Seemingly skeptical; Qoheleth was a man of profound conviction. Like Job (42:5a), he doubted the validity of inherited beliefs, but the modesty of his doubt covered a deep attachment to some unshakable certainty. Qoheleth's doubt was modest, for he did not presume to corner the whole truth, nor did he arrogate to his mind the capacity to dissect, without also learning with his whole person the meaning of existence. Because he doubted, he looked at both sides of truth and was able to suspend his judgment in order to investigate the meaning of existence "under the sun." He thought without fear, ready to take on the threat of the unknown. For him, doubt was not only the *sine qua non* of science and philosophy but also the indispensable ingredient of religion. He loved both life and knowledge, even when he proclaimed that he hated life and that knowledge was inseparable from the willingness to question life and to confront the void. He understood that when faith refuses to look at death, it is unable to respond to life. It was as if he had known that

“modest doubt is call’d
The beacon of the wise, the tent that searches
To the bottom of the worst.”⁷⁶

In Elizabethan English, “tent” or “tint” was the lint with which surgeons probed a wound, cleaned it, and removed from it any impurities, a necessary procedure prior to healing.

Qoheleth probed historical events and human nature “to the bottom of the worst,” until he could discard the self-deceptive props of religion. He accepted the seeming immutability of phenomena in the universe. As a sage, he even admitted the futility of wisdom or at least the pain of awareness (1:18) and the illusion of pleasure (2:1),⁷⁷ if this awareness and this pleasure merely left man at the center of his world. He discerned the intricacy of the relationship between desire and mortality long before anyone had sketched the *eros-thanatos* syndrome, but he never gave up the quest for the supreme good in the midst of transitoriness. His recurrent theme was not the emptiness of all things, although he repeated more than a score of times, “Futility of all futilities, all is futility.” Under a persiflage which never concealed the bruises or even the ravages of evil upon his being, his thought sprang from a cardinal belief, the theocentricity of all life.

The Theocentricity of All Life

The disabused approach of Ecclesiastes to the world has not led him to despair or rebellion. Unlike the Job of the poetic dialogue, he never tried to argue with the Deity. It would be wrong, however, to conclude that he was simply submissive to an impersonal fate. His many references to “times” and to “decrees” belong to the theocentric perspective of the entire book. Again and again he recognized God’s activity behind every phenomenon of nature or every historical event.⁷⁸ He

rejected orthodox wisdom with its traditional dogma of retribution,⁷⁹ but it cannot successfully be argued that this rejection led him to ascribe caprice and irresponsibility to God, as the Jobian hero had done in the controversy with his comforters. Like the Jobian poet of the theophany, he refused to think theologically in terms of human concepts of justice, which inevitably reflect the bounds of created finitude and historical relativity. He purged religion from the intellectual idolatry through which human ideals of ethics are blown up to the dimensions of infinity. He fought simplistic equations between destiny and character, but he could not be accused of reducing providence to blind necessity. He knew that life lay entirely within the hands of God, although he respected the freedom of man as much as the freedom of God. Implicitly, he suggested that the vicissitudes and even the horrors of human existence could not be ascribed to a malevolent creator: “[God] has made everything beautiful in its own time. Also, he has placed [the thought of] eternity in the mind of [men], but they have not discovered [the meaning of] the work which God accomplishes from beginning to end” (3:10–11). This passage comes close to the spiritual core of Qoheleth’s thinking. Unfortunately, its interpretation is uncertain.⁸⁰ The Jerusalem sage seems to have maintained a dialectic between the benevolence of God’s purpose in creation and the ignorance of man to discern it and to live by its implications. At the same time, Qoheleth reserved judgment about the source of this ignorance. He refrained from saying that man was responsible for his finitude and also from impugning the motives and the responsibility of the Creator.

“God has made everything beautiful in its own time.” The word *yapheh*, “fair,” “beautiful,” acquired in late Hebrew a moral connotation not dissimilar to the Hellenistic overtones of *kalos kagathos*.⁸¹ Every cosmic phenomenon or historical event (cf. 3: 1–8) has its own appropriate time.⁸² The whole of creation carries an appeal to which man might have responded with

wonder, elation, and profit, had he seized the opportunity “at the proper moment” (*kairos*, as the LXX pointedly translated, vs. 10a).

For Qoheleth, the world was not the impersonal theater of human life. As the heir to the sapiential tradition of early Yahwism, and as a teacher of Jewish wisdom in the early Hellenistic era, he had been nurtured on the Torah and assumed that his auditors knew the creation stories. “And Elohim saw all that he had made. And behold, it was very good” (Gen. 1:30). For a reason which Qoheleth left unexpressed, man’s epistemological faculties are so limited that he is unable to decipher the theological purpose of the universe or indeed to interact with nature in a dynamic relationship.

Qoheleth’s dialectic between creation and mankind is further compounded by a tension within man. The contradiction between God’s infinity and man’s finitude is not foreign to human consciousness. God has placed in man’s imagination the thought of eternity. Nevertheless (*mibbēli*), man does not discover the intention of the Creator (vs. 11 b).

The traditional rendering of the word *’ōlām*, “eternity,” has been generally repudiated by modern scholars. To be sure, the word carried a wide range of meaning, from “antiquity” to “continuous existence” (on earth), “future duration,” and “the wholeness of time.”⁸³ When it is applied to Yahweh or to Yahweh’s activity, however, the word *’ōlām* always means “eternity” in the sense of a mode of being that transcends existential temporality.⁸⁴ Yahweh is the living God who stands beyond the risk of mortality.⁸⁵ Qoheleth did not state that man was created eternal. He had simply maintained that the creator had placed in the mind of men the thought of eternity.⁸⁶ While Qoheleth probably alluded to the theme of the *imago Dei* (Gen. 1:27) and to the motif of man’s failure to obtain absolute knowledge (Gen. 3:5, etc.),⁸⁷ he carefully abstained from blaming anyone, God or man. Moreover, he did not believe that God in heaven and man

on earth were totally and irremediably separated. He discerned in creation the veiled presence of God.

A Modus Credendi

Although the wise man who concealed his identity behind a *nom de plume* manifested no warmth of interest in ecstatic visions, the comforts of cultic presence, or even the emotional travails of prayer, he did not really rule God out of his existence as “the Great Absentee,” for he was neither a determinist nor a deist. On the contrary, he was eager to discern God’s gift to man in the enjoyment of existence and found a justification for man’s devotion in awe before the face of God himself.

God’s bounty in man’s daily life is a manifestation of God’s presence.

I know that there is nothing good for [man] except to enjoy himself and to be happy as long as he lives. Moreover, when any man eats and drinks and finds happiness in his work, this is a gift of God. I know that all that God accomplishes will last forever. There is nothing to add to it or to subtract from it. And God has made it so that man shall be in awe *before him* (italics added; 3:12-14).

One is not permitted to infer from Qoheleth’s rejection of the traditional doctrine of retribution or from his aloofness from historical evidence of divine revelation that the fear of God differs from the fear of Yahweh. There is no ground for stating that religious fear in Qoheleth represents sheer dread of the unknown or unadulterated terror.⁸⁸ As elsewhere in Hebraic faith, the fear of Elohim represents man’s ambivalent reaction to the nearness of the holy.⁸⁹ It may be an impulse of withdrawal from God’s displeasure or pleasure (cf. 8:12,13), just as for the psalmist it may be the fear of divine forgiveness (Ps. 130:4).

In a period of cultural transition, when old values are eroded and new realities beg for birth, traditional formulas of the faith lose their power and new expressions of theological certitude are wanting. Qoheleth found the inherited beliefs ineffectual,

for they had ceased to ignite the faith he had received from his fathers. Nevertheless, he maintained in his somber way a definite *modus credendi*, which waited for a renewal of vitality in the words of his creed. His rude honesty was matched by his courage to survive, without hope, in the face of death. No commentator should hastily dismiss the religious stance of Qoheleth. In an age of the death of the gods, he was able to affirm God's presence in silence. His parting word may well have been: "Light is sweet, and it is pleasant for the eyes to behold the sun" (11:7).

Melville was more perspicacious than many biblical critics when he called the Book of Ecclesiastes "the fine hammered steel of woe."⁹⁰ With obstinacy, the old observer of the human scene and of his own depths held on to the strength of his faith—not a blind escape from reality but the power to face mortality as extinction and to fear God in his presence.⁹¹ The vacuum of his cultural environment compelled him to reject easy affirmations. He would have admitted that

"There are, as in philosophy, so in divinity,
Sturdy doubts and boisterous objections
Wherewith the unhappiness of our knowledge
Too nearly acquainteth us ..."⁹²

In the end, Qoheleth's "modest doubt" strangely coalesced with his "sturdy doubts" and it became what Marianne Moore named

the resolute doubt, —
dumbly calling, deafly listening—that
in misfortune, even death,
 encourages others
 and in its defeat, stirs
the soul to be strong".⁹³

The play of Wisdom in the presence of the creator was never

free from the riddle of the human condition. No less than the Poem of Job or the Book of Ecclesiastes, the Book of Proverbs struck a note of threat. Wisdom called men in vain:

“Since I have called you but you refused [to come],
 I extended my hand, but no one noticed it.
 You rejected all my counsels,
 and you would not [accept] my reproof.
 It will be my turn to laugh at your calamity,
 and to mock when terror falls upon you. [. . .]
 Then, they will call but I shall not answer;
 they will search for me groping, without finding me,
 Because they have hated knowledge
 and they have not chosen the fear of Yahweh”
 (Prov.1:24–26, 28-29)

Wisdom danced and played (*saḥeq*) in the presence of Yahweh at the birth of the world. Wisdom will now laugh (*saḥaq*) at those who use their “free will”⁹⁴ in order to divorce themselves from “knowledge” and “the fear of Yahweh.”

There were no *Magnalia Dei* at the Babylonian seizure of Zion in 587 B.C., but the first Jews saw a new form of the *Opus Dei* in their own lives. God was absent from history although he had been present for the fathers at the Sea of Reeds. The sages espoused the theological rigor of the prophets, but they went further. Although Amos and his successors had hailed Yahweh as the creator of heaven and earth, the sages shifted their attention from history—a stage now empty of God—to the theater of the universe, where they detected his presence.

Notes

1. Kenneth Clark interprets this figure as Eve about to be created in God’s imagination (Civilization [New York, 1969], p.

129). The matter is more complex. By the time of the Renaissance, the Hebraic figure of Cosmic Wisdom had been incor-

porated into medieval Mariology as "the New Eve." See J. Klaczko, *Rome et la Renaissance* (Paris, 1898), p. 328; Ch. de Tolnay, *Michelangelo, II. The Sistine Chapel* (Princeton, 1969), p. 136. cf. the not altogether convincing refutation of H. Thode, *Michelangelo. Kritische Untersuchungen über seine Werke*, I (Berlin, 1908), p. 311 f.

2. J. Huizinga, *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play-Element in Culture*, paperback ed. (Boston, 1955), p. 107.

3. H. Rahner, *Man at Play*, tr. by B. Battershaw and E. Quinn (New York, 1967), p. 65.

4. W. Zimmerli, "Zur Struktur der alttestamentlichen Weisheit," *ZAW*, LI (1933): 177 ff.; J. Schmidt, *Studien zur Stylistik der alttestamentlichen Spruchliteratur. Alttestamentliche Abhandlungen*, XII (1936); R. E. Murphy, "The Concept of Wisdom Literature," *The Bible in Current Catholic Thought* (New York, 1962), pp. 46 ff.; *id.*, "Assumptions and Problems in Old Testament 'Wisdom Research,'" *CBQ*, XXIX (1967): 101 ff.; *id.*, "Form Criticism and Wisdom Literature," *CBQ*, XXXI (1969): 475 ff.; J. L. Crenshaw, "Method in Determining Wisdom Influence Upon 'Historical' Writing," *JBL*, LXXXVIII (1969): 129 ff.; G. von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, tr. by J. D. Martin (Nashville, 1972), pp. 15 ff.; R. B. Y. Scott, "The Study of the Wisdom Literature," *In.*, XXIV (1970): 20 ff.; R. N. Whybray, *The Intellectual Tradition in the Old Testament* (Berlin, New York, 1974), pp. 2 ff.

5. See B. Gemser, "The Spiritual Structure of Biblical Aphoristic Wisdom," *Adhuc Loquitur* ([Collected Essays], Leiden, 1968), pp. 168 ff.; G. Fohrer, "Die Weisheit im Alten Testament," *Studien zur alttestamentlichen Theologie* (Berlin, 1969), pp. 242 ff.; von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, especially pp. 113 ff.; Whybray, *The Intellectual Tradition*, pp. 31 ff., 123 ff.

6. E. Schmitt, *Leben in den Weisheitsbüchern Job, Sprüche und Jesus Sirach* (Freiburg, 1954); W. Brueggemann, *In Man We*

Trust: The Neglected Side of Biblical Faith (Richmond, Va., 1972), pp. 13 ff.

7. See A. Drubbel, "Le conflit entre la sagesse profane et la sagesse religieuse," *Biblica*, XVII (1936): 45 ff., 407 ff.; E. Gerstenberger, *Wesen und Herkunft des "apodiktischen Rechts"* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1965); W. Richter, *Recht und Ethos* (München, 1966); H. Duesberg et I. Franssen, *Les scribes inspirés*, 2d ed. (Maredsous, 1966); H. D. Preuss, "Das Gottesbild der älteren Weisheit Israels," *SVT*, XXIII (1972): pp. 117 ff.

8. See extended bibliographies in S. Terrien, "Amos and Wisdom," *Festschrift J. Muilenburg* (New York, 1962), pp. 108 ff.; Brueggemann, *In Man We Trust*, pp. 132 ff.; J. L. Crenshaw, ed., "Wisdom in the OT," *IDB, Suppl. Vol.* (Nashville, 1976), pp. 952 ff.

9. See N. Porteous, "Royal Wisdom," *SVT*, III (1955): 247 ff.; R. B. Y. Scott, "Solomon and the Beginnings of Wisdom in Israel," *ibid.*, pp. 262 ff.; W. McKane, *Prophets and Wise Men* (London, 1965), pp. 15 ff.; H.-J. Hermisson, *Studien zur israelitischen Spruchweisheit* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1968), pp. 97 ff.; "Weisheit und Geschichte," *Festschrift G. von Rad* (München, 1971), pp. 136 ff.; C. Bauer-Kayatz, *Einführung in die alttestamentliche Weisheit* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1969), pp. 13 ff.

10. See J. F. Priest, "Humanism, Skepticism, and Pessimism in Israel," *JAAR*, XXXIV (1968): 311 ff.; H. D. Preuss, "Erwägungen zum theologischen Ort alttestamentlicher Weisheitsliteratur," *Ev. Th.*, xxx (1970): 393 ff.

11. See A. Lods, "Le monothéisme israélien a-t-il eu des précurseurs parmi les 'sages' de l'Ancien Orient?" *RHPR*, XIV (1934): 197 ff.; B. Couroyer, "L'idéal sapientiel en Israël et en Égypte," *RB*, LVII (1950): 174 ff.; W. F. Albright, "Some Canaanite-Phoenician Sources of Hebrew Wisdom," *SVT*, III (1955): I ff.; G. Couturier, "Sagesse babylonienne et sagesse israélienne," *Sciences ecclésiastiques*, XIV (1962): 293 ff.; S. Morenz, "Ägypt-

tologische Beiträge zur Erforschung der Weisheitsliteratur Israels," *Les sagesses du Proche-Orient ancien* (Paris, 1963), pp. 63 ff.

12. See W. B. Couroyer, "L'origine égyptienne de la Sagesse d'Amemopé," *RB*, LXX (1963): 208 ff.

13. See W. F. Albright, "The Goddess of Life and Wisdom," *AJSL*, XXXVI (1919-20): 258 ff.; id., *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (Baltimore, 1940), pp. 283 ff.; idem, "Some Canaanite-Phoenician Sources of Hebrew Wisdom," *SVT*, III (1955): 8; C. I. K. Story, "The Book of Proverbs and North-West Semitic Literature," *JBL*, LXIV (1945): 319 ff.; cf. critical observations of R. N. Whybray, *Wisdom in Proverbs* (London, 1965), pp. 83 ff.

14. See H. Conzelmann, "Die Mutter der Weisheit," *Festschrift R. Bultmann* (Tübingen, 1964), pp. 225 ff.

15. See H. Brunner, "Ägyptologie," *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, Vol. I-II (1952), p. 93; S. Morenz, *Egyptian Religion*, tr. by A. E. Keep (Ithaca, N. Y., 1973), pp. 113 ff.

16. See J. Plessis, *Étude sur les textes concernant Ištar-Astarté* (Paris, 1921), p. 57; G. Boström, *Proverbiastudien. Die Weisheit und das fremde Weib in Spr. 1-9* (Lund, 1935), pp. 156 ff.; Whybray, *Wisdom in Proverbs*, pp. 89 ff.

17. Job 28:1-28; Prov. 8:22-31; Sir. 7:1-20, 24:1-34, 51:13-14; *Wisd. of Sol.* 1:6-7, 7:22-30.

18. See W. Schencke, *Die Chokma (Sophia) in der jüdischen Hypostasenspekulation* (Christiana, 1913), pp. 78 ff.; H. Ringgren, *Word and Wisdom: Studies in the Hypostization of Divine Qualities and Functions in the Ancient Near East* (Lund, 1947); Whybray, *Wisdom in Proverbs*, pp. 78 ff.; M. Hengel, *Palestinian Judaism and the Hellenistic Age* (Philadelphia, 1974), pp. 153 ff.

19. See von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, p. 144.

20. For the wide variety of views on this point, see M. Löhr, "Hiob c. 28," *Festschrift P. Haupt* (1926), pp. 67 ff.; S. Terri-

en, *Job, Commentaire* (Neuchâtel, 1963), pp. 191 ff.; G. Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob* (Gütersloh, 1963), pp. 389 ff.; M. Pope, *Job, The Anchor Bible* (Garden City, N. Y., 1973), p. xxvii.

21. Cf. vs. 20-21, with their progression of thought, in which Wisdom conceals herself from every living being. For the prophets, the self-concealing God shows thereby his disapproval of evil. For the wise, the hiddenness of Wisdom may help to explain or at least to point out human finitude.

22. The erotic overtones of the verbs, while absent from their literal meaning, were congruent with the imagery of Wisdom as a lover. The verb *saphar* in the *pi'el* means "to measure," "to count," "to recount liturgically," and "to celebrate" (Ps. 19:2, etc.). The verb *kin* in the *hiphil* means "to prepare," "to make ready," and the verb *haqar*, "to dig," "to excavate," "to search," "to penetrate."

23. Contra von Rad, who maintains that this wisdom is not a divine personification but simply the something implanted in creation "to be found somewhere in the world" (*Wisdom in Israel*, p. 148). The poem states specifically that wisdom cannot be found anywhere in the created cosmos, including the underworld and the primeval ocean.

24. "The fear of Adonay" (spelled out in most MSS of the MT rather than the tetragrammaton "Yahweh") designates the intimacy of living in the presence and is inseparable from love and knowledge. Both the fear of the Lord and the knowledge of the Lord are gifts of Wisdom (see Prov. 2:5 ff., etc.).

25. See R. N. Whybray, "Proverbs VIII 22-31 and Its Supposed Prototypes," *VT*, XV (1965): 504 ff.; C. Kayatz, *Studien zu Proverbien 1-9. Eine form- und motivgeschichtliche Untersuchung unter Einbeziehung ägyptischer Vergleichsmaterials* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1966); R. Stecher, "Die persönliche Weisheit in den Proverbien Kap. 8," *ZKT*, LXXXIII (1967): 95 ff.; M. Dahood,

“Proverbs 8, 22–31—Translation and Commentary,” *CBQ*, XXX (1968): 512 ff.; Ch. Bauer-Kayatz, “Die Weisheitsrede (Prov. 8),” in *Einführung in die alttestamentliche Weisheit* (Neukirchen-Vluvn, 1969), pp. 70 ff.; J. de Saignac, “Interpretation de Proverbes VIII 22–23,” *SVT*, XVII (1969): 196 ff.; cf. id., “La sagesse en Prov. 8, 22–31,” *VT*, XII (1962): 211 ff.; N. C. Habel, “The Symbolism of Wisdom in Proverbs 1–9,” In., XXVI (1972): 131 ff.; G. M. Landes, “Creation Tradition in Proverbs 8:22–31 and Genesis 1,” *Festschrift J. M. Myers* (Philadelphia, 1974), pp. 279 ff.; B. Lang, *Frau Weisheit. Deutung einer biblischen Gestalt* (Dusseldorf, 1975).

26. The verb *qanuh* means “to possess,” “to acquire,” “to beget.” It did not originally mean “to create,” although it obtained such a sense in the Hellenistic period. Cf. the Greek translation of Sir. 1:4, 9; 24:8–9. Modern commentators who interpret the phrase “Yahweh created me,” do so anachronistically and ignore the verbs of the context (vss. 24 f.) as well as its repeated emphasis on the preexistence of wisdom over the created world. On the complex range of scholarly opinion, see P. Humbert, “‘Qānā’ en hébreu biblique,” *Festschrift A. Bertholet* (Tübingen, 1950), pp. 259 ff.; C. F. Kraft, “Poetic Structure and Meaning in Prov. 8, 22–31,” *JBL*, LXXI (1953): 7 ff.; W. F. Albright, “Notes on Psalms 68 and 134,” *Festschrift S. Mowinkel* (Oslo, 1955), pp. 7 ff.; P. Katz, “The Meaning of the Root *qnh*,” *JJS*, VI (1955): 126 ff.; H. Cazelles, “L’enfantement de la sagesse en Prov., VIII,” *Sacra Pagina* (Gembloux, 1959), I, M. 511 ff.; W. A. Irwin, “Where Shall Wisdom Be Found?” *JBL*, LXXX (1961): 133 ff.; R. N. Whybray, *Wisdom in Proverbs*, pp. 150 f.; D. H. Weiss, “The Use of QNH in Connection with Marriage,” *HTR*, LVII (1966): 244 ff.

27. Like Behemoth, in the later poem of Job 40 (vs. 19), Wisdom occupies a position of preeminence vis-a-vis the created cosmos. Unlike Behemoth and Levia-

than, however, she is a divine daughter, “begotten, not made.” She calls herself “first fruit of [God’s] power,” which may include procreation as well as creation (cf. the Ugaritic *d.r.k.t.*, “power in act”), but refers to a precreation achievement, since the parallel expression, “prelude of his works of old,” unmistakably and perhaps polemically states that the coming of Wisdom into being preceded Yahweh’s handiworks (*qedhem mippē ‘alayw me’az*). Cf. de Saignac, “La sagesse en Prov. 8”: pp. 222 ff.; id., “Encore une fois Proverbes VIII 22,” *VT*, VIII (1958): 90 ff.

28. The hapax legomenon *nissakhtī* is usually rendered, “I was set up” (from *nasakh III*; cf. Akkad. *nassaku*, “to install,” or “I was fashioned” (from *nasakh II*; cf. Arabic *nasaka*, “to weave”), or again “I was poured out” (from *nasakh I*, “to make a libation”). Some modern commentators favor the third interpretation because Near Eastern myths of “creation” through divine exudation (of tears, sweat, blood, or semen) were not uncommon. The meaning of *nasakh I*, however, argues against this exegesis, for it implies the actual flowing of water, wine, or oil. The niph’al of the verb probably indicates a passive voice in the sense of an impersonal act that is performed on the subject: hence, not “I was poured out,” but “[someone] poured [something] on me.” In all probability, the verb alludes to royal lustration or even unction. Cf. “I have consecrated (rather than “installed”) my king on Zion” (Ps. 2:6); also the noun *n’sikhim*, “princes” (Jos. 13:21, Ps. 83:11 [Heb. 12], Mic. 5:4, Ezek. 32:30). If Wisdom displays a royal consciousness (cf. Prov. 8:15), the conjecture of an influence of the Isis myth, with its stress on “the Queen of Heaven,” receives further support.

29. Literally, “In the nothingness of the fountains loaded with the burden of water.”

30. Literally, "the dusts (pl.) of the universe."

31. Literary reminiscences of ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies in which a demiurge conquers and restrains the forces of chaos. Here, the abysses and the fountains of the deep are not preexistent (vss. 24, 28). There is no hint of even a qualified dualism (cf. Gen. 1:1, 2).

32. The haoax *legomenon 'amôn* has generally been read *'amman*, "master-workman," "architect," "artisan," "artificer" (cf. Song 7:2; from *'aman I*, "to confirm," "to support" [e.g., "pillars"]; cf. Akkad. *ummanu*, "craftsman"; thus, LXX, Syr., et al., including many moderns). This meaning, however, does not fit the context in which Wisdom is a woman who plays and dances in the presence of Yahweh but takes no part in the planning or execution of his work. It is preferable to follow the rendering of Aquila, *tithênoumenê*, "darling daughter," "nursling," "foster-child," which respects the masoretic pointing (*'amôn*, also from *'aman I*, "to support," in the sense of "to nurse," "to nourish"; cf. *'omen*, "foster-father," and *'omeneth*, "nurse": 'see Num. 11:12; Isa. 49:23; 2 Sam. 4:4; 2 Kings 10:1, 5; Ruth 4:16; etc.).

33. The participle *pi'el m'saheqeth* means "playing:" "making merry," "singing," "playing musical instruments," "making sport," "dancing," (2 Sam. 6:21; cf. the form *m'saheq*, masc., used for the love-play of Isaac with Rebekah, Gen. 26:8). In Hellenistic times, the playing and dancing of Wisdom in the presence of Yahweh were interpreted as the celebration of a liturgy: *eleitourgesa*, "I officiated" (Sir. 24:10a). See O. Keel, "Die Weisheit spielt vor Gott. Ein ikonographischer Beitrag zur Deutung des *m'sahâqât* in Spr 8, 30 f.," *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, XXI (1974): 1 ff.

34. A time differentiation is implied between Wisdom's playing at -creation and Wisdom's enjoying delight with the sons of men. Some translate, "And

my delight was to be with the sons of men." The noun *sha'ashu'im* (pl. of "intensity") reflects the palpel voice of the verb *sha'a'* II, "to sport." "to take pleasure," with a rhythmic connotation of carress, dance, and love-play.

35. Nicene Creed.

36. Prov. 8:1-11, 12-20, 32-36; 9:1-12; 1:20-33; 2:1-9; etc.

37. The stars of Ursa Minor ("The Little Dipper") were known in classical antiquity as "The Dancers" or "The Players" (Hyginus, *Poetica astronomica*, III, 1, and Germanicus, Scholia *strozziana*, according to H. Rahner, *Man at Play* [New York, 1967], p. 72, note 3).

38. Unless one were to explain that the word "creation" means "the creator as revealed in the created world." G. von Rad used the expression in an ambiguous way. See *Wisdom in Israel*, pp. 144 ff. On the one hand, von Rad looks at wisdom in Job, Proverbs, and Sirach as a quality immanent in creation, not a quality of God, a mysterious element through which the cosmic order turns itself toward man and enables him to live in an harmonious environment. On the other hand, von Rad admits that wisdom, immanent in creation, was differentiated from the "real" world of creation (p. 171). Since there is "an ontological separation of the phenomena within creation," one should also recognize that wisdom partakes of the divine realm.

39. The personification of wisdom as a woman was revolutionary. See E. Jacob, "Principe canonique et formation de l'Ancien Testament," *SVT*, XXVIII (Leiden, 1975), p. 17.

40. From *salat I*, in the pilpel, "to titillate," "to embrace," "to hug."

41. See Boström, *Proverbiastudien*, pp. 15 ff.; P. Humbert, "La femme étrangère du livre des Proverbes," *RES*, XXVII (1937): 49 ff.; *id.*, "Les adjectifs *zar* et *nokri* et la femme étrangère des Proverbes bibliques," *Mélanges syriens (Festschrift R. Dus-saud)*, I (Paris, 1939), pp. 259 ff.

42. None of the many interpretations of this phrase has rallied a consensus.
43. See R. Smend, *Die Weisheit des Jesus Sirach* (Berlin, 1906), pp. 216 ff.; J. Hadot, "La 'volonté' dans Ben Sira: Son lien avec la Sagesse," in *Penchant mauvais et volonté libre dans la Sagesse de Ben Sira (L'Éclésiastique)* (Bruxelles, 1970), pp. 201 ff.; J. Marböck, *Weisheit im Wandel. Untersuchungen zur Weisheitstheologie bei Ben Sirach* (Bonn, 1971), pp. 34 ff.; *id.*, "Gesetz und Weisheit. Zum Verständnis des Gesetzes bei Jesus ben Sira," *BZ*, XX (1976): 1 ff. Hengel, "Ben Sira and the Controversy with Hellenistic Liberalism in Jerusalem," in *Palestinian Judaism and the Hellenistic Age*, pp. 157 ff.
44. See J. A. Sanders, *The Psalms Scroll of Qumrân Cave 11 (11QPs^a), Discoveries in the Judaean Desert of Jordan*, Vol. IV (Oxford, 1965), pp. 79 ff.; *id.*, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scroll* (Ithaca, N. Y., 1967), pp. 114 f.; *id.*, "The Sirach 51 Acrostic," *Festschrift A. DuPont-Somer* (Paris, 1971), pp. 429 ff.; M. Delcor, "Le texte hébreu du Cantique de Siracide LI, 13 et ss. et les anciennes versions," *Textus; Annual of the Hebrew University Bible Project*, VI (1968), 39 ff.; Marböck, *Weisheit im Wandel*, pp. 121 ff.
45. See J. Fichtner, *Weisheit Salomos* (Tübingen, 1938), pp. 25 ff.; G. Ziener, *Die theologische Begriffssprache im Buche der Weisheit* (Bonn, 1956), pp. 109 ff.; C. Larcher, *Études sur le Livre de la Sagesse* (Paris, 1969), pp. 179 ff.; J. M. Reese, *He & n-istic Influence on the Book of Wisdom and Its Consequences* (Rome, 1970), pp. 36 ff.
46. See below, Chapter X.
47. Recent commentators tend to place the origin of the poem before the restoration of the Second Temple. The date of the folktale is still an object of debate. See S. Terrien. "Introduction and Exegesis, The Book of Job," *IB*, III (1954): 877 ff.; *id.*, *Job: Commentaire* (Neuchâtel, 1963); *id.*, "Quelques remarques sur les affinités de Job avec le Deutéro-Esaïe," *SVT*, XV (1966): 295 ff. G. Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob* (Gütersloh, 1963); R. Gordis, *The*

- Book of God and Man: A Study of Job* (Chicago, 1965), pp. 209 ff.; J. Levêque, *Job et son Dieu: Essai d'exégèse et de théologie biblique*. I (Paris, 1970), pp. 128 ff.; M. H. Pope, *Job: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 2d Ed. (The Anchor Bible, Garden City, N. Y., 1973), pp. xxxii ff.
48. Cf. R. Frost, *A Masque of Reason* (New York, 1945).
49. The dates of religious feasts are usually observed in some way by inmates and deportees. How could the earliest Jews in exile keep the autumn feast, crown of the year? The poem was probably acted out with chant and musical instruments as part of a paracultic celebration of Tabernacles (Succoth) or even one of the first observances of the New Year (Rosh-Hashanah). Commentators have until recently missed the many allusions of the hero to himself as a mistreated king or royal figure. Like the monarch in the New Year ritual in Babylon, Job is divested of all honor and symbolically put to death. The poem evokes several times and especially in the climactic speech of Yahweh the autumn thunderstorms which are associated with the renewal of nature and the creation of the world (28:25-26, 36:26-37:22, 38:31-38), while the autumn constellations rise over the horizon (9:9; cf. 38:31). Even in the folktale the heavenly council meets "at the turn" of the seasonal cycle (1:6; cf. vs. 5). See S. Terrien, "Le poème de Job: drame para-culturel du Nouvel-An?" *SVT*, XVII (1969), pp. 220 ff.; *id.*, "The Yahweh Speeches and Job's Responses," *Review and Expositor*, LXVIII (1971): 497 ff.; *id.*, "Introduction au livre de Job," *Traduction oecuménique de la Bible: Ancien Testament* (Paris, 1975), pp. 1553 ff.
50. See "The Akkadian Acrostic on Theodicy" in W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford, 1960), pp. 63 ff., and "The Egyptian Dialogue of the Man Weary of Life" in A. Scharff, *Der Bericht über das Streitgespräch eines Lebensmüden mit seiner Seele* (München, 1937); also J.

A. Wilson, "A Dispute Over Suicide," *ANET*, pp. 405 ff.

51. Gen 32:30 ff.; cf. Hos. 12:5, etc. See *above*, pp. 85 ff.

52. Even in the folktale; Job was unaware of the mythical scenes in heaven (1:5 ff., 2:1 ff.) in which evil was instigated by "one of the sons of El," not "Satan" as in the traditional translations. The common noun, with the definite article, *has-satan*, "the prosecuting attorney," should not be confused with the anarthrous proper name, "Satan," of later Judaism and Christianity (cf. 1 Chron. 21:1 with 2 Sam. 24:1). In the poem, neither Job nor his friends allude to demonic forces in their search for an explanation of misfortune on earth.

53. Plato, *Laws*, 803 b, c; cf. 644 d, e.

54. Shakespeare, *King Lear*, iv, 1, 38.

55. The traditional rendering, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him," results from one of the eighteen corrections of the scribes (*tiqqune sopherim*). The oral form of the text understood the negative *lo'*, "not," rather than the personal pronoun *lo*, "to him." The meaning of the phrase was either "I have not any hope" or "I shall not tremble," which reflects an attitude of despair or defiance consonant with the immediate context. Synagogue and church piety preferred a reading which supported the image of a patient Job.

56. See R. J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (Cambridge, Mass., 1972), pp. 57 ff.

57. The indefinite pronoun in vs. 21 refers to the witness of vs. 19. It is difficult to identify the "He" with God in the phrase "He will defend man against God."

58. The *go'el*, "vindicator," "avenger," "redeemer," designates the next-of-kin whose obligation is to avenge the honor of a victim of foul play, or "to redeem—purchase-his blood" (2 Sam. 14:14). It may also refer to the closest relative of a dead man who has the right to acquire his property (Ruth 2:20, etc.). *Mutatis mutan-*

dis, Yahweh has been for centuries called "the redeemer of Israel," by allusion to the freeing of the slaves from Egypt (Exod. 6:6, etc.), or the redeemer from oppression, death, or moral evil. Job's redeemer is neither human nor divine. His brethren, retainers, and tribesmen have rejected him (19:13 ff.). The context of 19:25–26 suggests that the redeemer is not God, since he will make the vision of God possible. The figure of the redeemer, like that of the witness (16:19), may have been borrowed from the mythology of the heavenly council. Cf. the "angel" of the later speeches of Elihu (33:23; and vs. 26.). See Terrien, *Job, commentaire*, pp. 149 ff. and notes.

59. *Contra* many moderns who translate "without my flesh," disregarding the syntax of the preposition *min*, which always means "from within" rather than "away from" when it is used with a verb of perception (cf. Ps. 33:13 f.; Song of Sol. 2:9). See Th. H. Meek, "Job XIX, 25-27," *VT*, VI (1956): 100 ff.

60. See M. Burrows, "The Voice from the Whirlwind," *JBL*, XLVII (1928): 117 ff.; W. Lillie, "The Religious Significance of the Theophany in the Book of Job," *ET*, LXVIII (1956-57): 355 ff.; R. A. F. MacKenzie, "The Purpose of the Yahweh Speeches in the Book of Job," *Biblica*, XL (1959): 435 ff.; S. Terrien, "The Yahweh Speeches and Job's Responses," *Review and Expositor*, LXVIII (1971): 497 ff.

61. See R. Voetzel, "Ironie biblique à l'égard de l'homme," *Foi et Vie*, LI (1953): 214 ff.; E. M. Good, *Irony in the Old Testament* (Philadelphia, 1965), pp. 234 ff.

62. See A. Dupont-Sommer, "Nubes tenebrosa et illuminans noctem," *RHR*, CXXV (1942): 66 f.; E. Beaucamp, "Orage et nuée, signes de la présence de Dieu dans l'histoire," *Bible et Vie chrétienne*, III (1953): 33 f.

63. See C. H. Gordon, "Leviathan, Symbol of Evil," in *Biblical Motifs*, ed. by A. Altman (Cambridge, Mass. 1966), pp. 1 ff.

64. Behemoth and Leviathan are earth and sea monsters, respectively, borrowed from the Northwest Semitic mythology. They do not suggest that me-existent forces of evil limit divine omnipotence because they have been created (Job 40:19; Ps. 104:26). The poet reveals an attitude of sober agnosticism concerning the destructive aspects of nature. See Terrien, *Job, commentaire*, pp. 262 f.

65. Cf. E. E. Kellet, " 'Job': An Allegory?" *ET*, LI (1939-40): 250 ff.; M. Susman, *Das Buch Hiob and das Schicksal des jüdischen Volkes* (Zurich, 1946).

66. The conjecture which interprets the Jobian poem as a paracultic drama performed as "a masque" during the celebration of the autumn festival in exile should not be confused with others which view Job as a late imitation of a Greek tragedy. See H. M. Kallen, *The Book of Job as a Greek Tragedy, Restored* (New York, 1918).

67. The exact meaning of the verb *'em'as*, "I sink into the abyss" (vs. 6a), is uncertain. Many translators render it by "I retract [my words]." "I repudiate [what I have said]," or "I despise [myself]." It is unlikely that we have here the common verb *ma'as*, "to despise," for elsewhere it is transitive, whereas it carries in this phrase no direct object. Most probably, this word is a variant of the intransitive verb *masas*, "to melt," "to dissolve" (cf. Job 7:5, 16; Ps. 58:8). The LXX attempted an approximation when it rendered *ephaulisa emauton kai etaken*, "I count myself as a vile man and I faint," while Symmachus on his own has rendered *kategnon emautou*, "I am reduced to fragments." E. Dhorme appears to be right when he translates, "Je m'abime," "I-sink into the abyss" (*La Bible. Bibliothèque la Pléiade, L'Ancien Testament*, II [Paris, 1959], p. 1346). The verb *nihamti*, "I grieve" (vs. 6a), should not be translated, "I repent" as if it were *shabhti*, with its inevitable connotation of ethical behavior. Rather, the poet points to the intensity of grief,

the devastating sense of sorrow which undoes the self, for he uses the verb *niham* in the niph'al (cf. Judg. 21:6; Ps. 90:13, 106:45; Jer. 20:16; Joel 2:14; Zech. 8:12).

68. M. Jastrow, *A Gentle Cynic* (Philadelphia, 1919).

69. On the unity, date, composition, and canonicity of Qoheleth. see G. Barton, *Ecclesiastes* (I. C. C., Edinburgh, 1908); E. Pödechard, *L'Ecclesiaste* (Paris, 1912); A. Allgeier, *Das Buch Prediger* (Bonn, 1925); G. Kuhn, *Erklärung des Buches Koheleth* (Giessen, 1926); R. Gordis, *Koheleth-The Man and His World* (New York, 1951); J. Steinmann, *Ainsi parlait Qohélet* (Paris, 1955); O. S. Rankin, "Ecclesiastes, Introduction and Exegesis," *IB*, V (1956), pp. 3 ff.; H. W. Hertzberg, *Der Prediger* (Gütersloh, 1961); W. Zimmerli, *Das Buch des Predigers Salomo* (Göttingen, 1962); R. B. Y. Scott, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes* (Garden City, N. Y., 1965), pp. 191 ff.; A. Strobel, *Das Buch des Predigers* (Düsseldorf, 1967); A. Barucq, *Ecclesiaste—Qohélet*. Traduction et commentaire (Paris, 1968).

70. The name "Qoheleth" appears to be a feminine present participle *qal* of the verb *qahal*, "to assemble" (?), hence the LXX rendering *Ecclesiastes*, "Addresser of the Assembly." A possible allusion to Solomon (1 Kings 3:8; cf. 1 Kings 8:2, 14). See R. Tournay, review of A. Barucq, *Ecclesiaste*, in *RB*, LXXVI (1969): 454.

71. See H. W. Hertzberg, "Palastinische Bezüge im Buch Koheleth," *ZDPV*, LXXIII (1957): 113 ff.

72. The question of the affinities between Qoheleth and popular Greek and Hellenistic philosophy is still a matter of debate. See R. Braun, *Kohelet und die frühellenistische Popularphilosophie* (Berlin, 1973); cf. E. Horton, "Koheleth's Concept of Opposites as Compared to Samples of Greek Philosophy and Near and Far Eastern Wisdom *Classics," *Numen*, XIX (1972): 1 ff.; M. Hengel, *Hellenism and Judaism*, tr. by J. Owen (Philadelphia, 1974), pp. 115 ff.

73. See F. Zimmermann, "The Aramaic

- Provenance of Qoheleth," *JQR*, XXXVI (1945): 17 ff.; id., "The Question of Hebrew in Qoheleth," *JQR*, XL (1949-50): 79 ff.; R. Gordis, "The Original Language of Qoheleth," *JQR*, XXXVII (1946): 67 ff.; id., "Qoheleth-Hebrew or Aramaic?" *IBL*, LXXI (1952): 93 ff.; id., "Was Koheleth a Phoenician?" *JBL*, LXXIV (1955): 103 ff.; id., "Qoheleth and Qumran-A Study of Style," *Biblica*, XLI (1960): 395 ff.; M. Dahood, "The Language of Qoheleth," *CBQ*, XIV (1952): 227 ff.; id., "Canaanite-Phoenician Influence on Qoheleth," *Biblica*, XXXIII (1952): 30 ff.; id., "Qoheleth and Recent Discoveries," *ibid.*, XLIII (1962): 349 ff.; id., "The 'Phoenician Background of Qoheleth," *ibid.*, XLVII (1966): 264 ff.; H. L. Ginsberg, "Supplementary Studies in Koheleth," *Proceedings for the American Academy of Jewish Research*, XXI (1952): 35 ff.
74. See H. L. Ginsberg, "The Structure and Contents of the Book of Koheleth," *SVT*, III (1955): 138 ff.; cf. G. Loretz, *Qohelet und das alte Orient* (Freiburg, 1964), D D. 212 ff.: see also G. Castellino, "Qoheleth and His Wisdom," *CBQ*, XXX (1968): 15 ff.; A. G. Wright, "The Riddle of the Sphinx: The Structure of the Book of Qoheleth," *ibid.*, pp. 313 ff.
75. H. H. Blieffert, *Weltanschauung und Gottesglaube in Buche Koheleth* (Rostock, 1938); B. Hessler, "Kohelet: The Veiled God," *The Bridge*, I (1955), pp. 191 ff.; H.-P. Müller, "Wie Sprach Qohälät von Gott?" *VT*, XVIII (1968): 567 ff.; L. Gorssen, "La coherence de la conception de Dieu dans l'Écclésiaste," *ETS*, XLVI (1970): 287 ff.; G. von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, tr. J. D. Martin (Nashville and New York, 1972), pp. 226 ff.; H. N. Bream, "Life Without Resurrection: Two Perspectives from Qoheleth," *Festschrift J. M. Myers* (Philadelphia, 1974), pp. 45 ff.; T. Polk, "The Wisdom of Irony: A Study of *Hebel* and Its Relation to Joy and the Fear of God in Ecclesiastes," *Studia biblica et theologica*, vi (1976): 3 ff.
76. Shakespeare, *Troilus and Cressida*, ii, 2, 15 ff.
77. See E. Glasser, *Le procès du bonheur par Qohélet* (Paris, 1970).
78. Eccl. 2:24 ff., etc. On the expression, "the work of God," see G. von Rad, "Das Werk Jahwes," *Festschrift Th. C. Vriezen* (Weigeningen, 1970), pp. 260 ff. Against the view of many moderns, von Rad insists on the positive aspect of Qoheleth's attitude. See *Wisdom in Israel*, pp. 229 ff.
79. See J. Pedersen, "Scepticisme israélite," *RHPR*, X (1930): 317 ff.; *ibid.*, XI (1931), 42 ff.; A. Lauha, "Die Krise der religiösen Glaubens bei Kohelet," *SVT*, III (1955): 183 ff.
80. 'For the many interpretations of this verse, see in addition to the commentaries K. Galling, "Das Rätsel der Zeit im Urteil Kohelets (Koh. 3:1-15)," *ZTK*, LVIII (1961): 1 ff.; J. L. Crenshaw, "The Eternal Gospel (Eccl. 3:11)," *Festschrift J. Ph. Hyatt* (New York, 1974), pp. 23 ff.
81. Cf. Eccl. 5:17; Sir. 14:16, 32:15; Mishnah, *Zabim* 2:2, 3:1; etc.
82. The Greek ideal of "beautiful-and-good" appears in ancient Israel, with moral and aesthetic differences. See T. Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared With Greek*, tr. by J. L. Moreau (London, 1960), pp. 84 ff.
83. See E. Jenni, *Das Wort 'olam im Alten Testament* (Berlin, 1953); R. Martin-Achard, "La signification du temps dans l'Ancien Testament," *RTP*, IV (1954): 137 ff.; S. J. DeVries, *Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: Time and History in the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich., 1975), pp. 31 f.
84. See Gen. 21:33, Isa. 40:28, etc.
85. See Deut. 5:28, etc.
86. The expression "to place in the heart of," "to give a feeling to," "to suggest a certain course of action." Cf. Ps. 4:8, Exod. 35:34, Ezr. 7:27, Neh. 2:12. In all these passages, God is the subject.
87. Such appears to be the meaning of the expression, "to know good and evil."

This idiom, found thirteen times in Biblical Hebrew, alludes not to moral conscience but to the knowledge of the whole spectrum of possibilities. See J Bottéro, "L'Écclésiaste et le problème du mal," *Nouvelle Cléo*, VII-IX (1955-57): 133 ff.; C. C. Forman, "Kohleth's Use of Genesis," *JSS*, V (1960): 256 ff.

88. Cf. J. Fichtner, *Die altorientalische Weisheit in ihrer israelitisch-jüdischen Ausprägung* (Berlin, 1933), pp. 52 ff.; E. Pfeiffer, "Die Gottesfurcht im Buche Kohelet," *Festschrift H. W. Hertzberg* (1965), pp. 133 ff.

89. Cf. G. Nagel, "Crainte et amour de Dieu dans l'Ancien Testament," *RTP*, XXXIII (1945): 175 ff.; S. Plath, *Furcht Gottes. Der Begriff jr'im im Alten Testament* (Stuttgart, 1963); L. Derousseaux, *La crainte de Dieu dans l'Ancien Testament* (Paris, 1970); B. Olivier, *La crainte de Dieu comme valeur religieuse de l'Ancien Testament*

(Bruxelles, 1960); T. Polk, "The Wisdom of Irony: A Study of *Hebel* and Its Relation to Joy and the Fear of God in *Ecclésiastes*," *Studia biblica et theologica*, VI (1976): 3 ff.; G. T. Sheppard, "The Epilogue to Qohleth as Theological Commentary," *CBQ*, xxxix (1977): 182 ff.
90. H. Melville, *Moby Dick*, ch. 96.

91. See E. Wölfel, *Luther und die Skepsis. Eine Studie zur Kohelet-Exegese Luthers* (München, 1958).

92. Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*.

93. Marianne Moore, "What Are Years?" *Collected Poems* (London, n.d.), p. 99.

94. Observe the rare occurrence of the verb "to will," in the negative (vs. 26), and the stress on the refusal to choose (vs. 29). See Zimmerli, "Struktur": 187; Kayatz, *Studien zu Proverben 1-9*, pp. 120 ff.; W. McKane, *Proverbs: A New Approach* (Philadelphia, 1970), p. 275; von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, p. 161.

8

The Final Epiphany

When Babylon crushed Jerusalem a second time, in 587 B.C., the kingdom of Judah died but Judaism was born. Instead of disintegrating among alien cultures, the Judahites (an ethnic and political group) became the Jews (an ethnic and religious society),⁷ because they lived every day in anticipation of the final epiphany.

Hebraism had been founded on divine presence. Judaism arose from divine absence. The fathers had seen the *Magnalia Dei*. The sons knew only national dereliction. During the exodus, Yahweh had parted the Sea and thundered on the Mount. During the exile, the heavens were closed, but the first Jews still prayed to the *Deus absconditus* (Isa. 45:15), and the future only was their inheritance, their prerogative, and their passion. Deprived of sacred space, they discovered the sacrality of time. They transfigured the present by keeping weekly the day of the Sabbath. They erased the past by observing yearly the day of the Atonement. They lived in the future by expecting at any moment the day of the Lord.

The Day of the Sabbath

The origins of the day of the Sabbath are obscure.* Was it at first the day of the full moon observed by nomads in addition to the day of the new moon?³ Or was it a day of rest from agricultural labor? Did it belong from the beginning to a weekly cycle-an hebdomad? Documentary evidence is fragmentary and conflicting.⁴ During the exile, in any case, the day of the Sabbath assumed an unprecedented importance.⁵

The prophet Ezekiel in Babylon interpreted the hallowing of the Sabbath as a sign of communion between Yahweh and his people (Ezek. 20:12). The northern (E) tradition of the Mosaic decalogue had justified its observance on the ground of social ethics and humaneness toward slaves and animals of burden.⁶ The descendants of the Jerusalem priests who moved in the Ezekielian orbit related the day of rest to the myth of creation (Exod. 20:8-11).

In effect, the priestly circles of Judah, undoubtedly influenced by the sages of the Jerusalem court,⁷ presented the keeping of the Sabbath as an *Zmitatio Dei*. Cessation from work on the seventh day amounted to a rite of communion with the cosmic creator. By setting the Sabbath apart and making it "holy," the worshippers of Yahweh participated in the divine rest that occurred when creation was completed (Gen. 2:1-4a).

Divine holiness and human repose were brought together in a ritual alchemy of interpenetration. Like Job, invited to share in the wondrous perspective of God's creative act, the average Jew was transformed from within as he articulated his life in relation to the rhythm of divine time. Finite attuning to the infinite actor inserted both human labor and human leisure into the *telos* of creativity. Like wisdom playing and dancing before the cosmic poet, the keeper of the Sabbath was making holy his labor and his rest.

The descendants of the Jerusalem priests went even further

than the liturgists, who recited the myth of cosmic creation (Gen. 1:1—2:4a). They spelled out Ezekiel's emphasis on the divine-human encounter that the Sabbath dramatically enacted every seven days. Like the prehistoric practice of circumcision,⁸ the Sabbath became the sign of "an eternal covenant" (Exod. 31:16).⁹

The ceremonial evocation of the "genesis" of the universe (Gen. 1:1—2:4a) was told, not as a cosmogony destined to satisfy para-scientific curiosity, but as a proclamation of the holiness of the Sabbath within the creative act of God.¹⁰ The story of the genesis of the universe does not belong to didactic or epic literature. It constitutes the opening of a living *Torah*. Because it climactically leads to the divine pronouncement of the sacrality of time, it ushers in a new mode of presence. The creator may seem to be absent from history, but he is present in the cosmos and offers man a means of participating in divine creativity. The Sabbath, whatever its prehistoric origins, became for the first Jews a sacrament of presence.

With the destruction of the temple, sacred space became obsolete. By keeping the Sabbath, the first Jews entered into an active "con-templation" of the *Opus Dei*. The Sabbath was now their temple, and became in effect a source of revelation. It was as if they had heard their God, absent from history, say to them on the Sabbath: "When two or three are gathered in my name, I am in the midst of them."¹¹ The prophetic theology of the name allied itself in exile with the sapiential theology of creation and radically transformed the priestly theology of cultic presence. The uniqueness of the holy place, through the Sabbath, became an interior and universal reality. The awareness of the sacrality of time enabled the first Jews to create the *synagogue*.¹²

Ancient Semitic cosmogonies had concluded in temple building. The proto-Canaanite liturgy of Baal,¹³ as well as the Babylonian epic of *Enu-ma elish*,¹⁴ conforms to this pattern. The

priestly story of cosmic creation led not to the erection of a sanctuary but to the consecration of the Sabbath. Although the Jerusalem priests of the Ezekielian circle were immersed in the myth of Zion, they dared the most remarkable innovation when they substituted the Sabbath for the temple ideology.¹⁵

In spite of differences in terminology, the motif of divine rest (*shabbath*) called to mind that of Yahweh's "rest" (*menuḥah*), which designated the Jerusalem sanctuary (Ps. 132:8, 14, etc.). It is quite probable that the myth tellers presented the Sabbath as the climax of creation at a time when the temple lay in ruins. Consciously or not, they transferred to the Sabbath the element of dynamic vitality that was originally inherent in the theology of cultic presence. Yahweh's residence in the *hagios topos* was transfigured into Yahweh's presence in the *hagios kairos*.

Clearly, the notion of divine rest did not suggest a connotation of lethargic passivity anticipatory of philosophical deism. The faith of the fathers and of the prophets had always pictured Yahweh as a doer. Even if historical events precipitated a mood of national despair, the sixth-century Jews were not affected by a sense of cosmic solitude. Absent from history, Yahweh was present in the universe. A suspense of judgment maintained a cautious agnosticism vis-à-vis the *Gesta Dei* among nations, but the celebration of the Sabbath enabled the uprooted Jews to participate in the *Opus Dei*. Isaiah had compared the God of Israel to a vintner tirelessly tending his vineyard (Isa. 5:2). Those who rehearsed the myth of creation communed with the spirit of Elohim, striving over the face of the waters (Gen. 1:2). They also celebrated his rest (Gen. 2:1 ff.).

The seventh day did not call for a withdrawal of activity but for a renewal of vitality. "And the seventh day he rested and renewed his being" (*wayyinnaphash*; Exod. 3 1: 17).¹⁶ By comparison with the context of the six days, the seventh day alone was "open ended." It stood without an evening and without a morning (cf. Gen. 1:31 with 2:2-3). Linked to the completion of the

universe, the Sabbath pointed to the *eschaton*, the final epiphany. Creation fulfilled is the new creation expected by the prophets and the psalmists. The Sabbath of God is recreation in both senses of the word. Wisdom dances and plays in the presence of the creator, and mankind celebrates the Sabbath in anticipation of the fulfillment of time.

By observing the Sabbath, man becomes “present to reality”¹⁷ Not only his work but also his rest is transfigured into “an act of presence,”¹⁸ which is the basis of all worship.¹⁹

When the second or third generation of the Jerusalem priesthood in exile pursued the task of revising and editing the legal traditions it had inherited from the era of the monarchy, it incorporated the Sabbath observance into the end of its description of the wilderness tabernacle—the exilic blueprint for a new theology of presence.²⁰ By a paradoxical twist of religious fluctuation, the Sabbath, which a few years previously had received a cultic meaning in the cultic vacuum of the Exile, now assumed a new significance within the ceremonial observances of the Second Temple. Associated with the ideology of “the rest of the people of God,”²¹ it eventually lost the universal scope of its setting within the epic of creation. Inclusive and open, it became exclusive and closed, the restrictive “sign of an eternal covenant with Israel” (Exod. 3 1: 17a).

The Day of the Atonement

The Jerusalem priesthood in exile prepared for an eventual return to the land of Judah. In his mature years (ca. 573 B.C.) the sacerdotal prophet Ezekiel initiated a ritualistic movement** which led to the codification of many ancient practices. Eventually, the laws of the Code of Holiness (in the Book of Leviticus) and the Priestly Code (especially in the Books of Exodus and Numbers)²³ took precedence over the ancient legislation.

After Cyrus of Persia conquered Babylon and allowed the repatriation of the deportees to their homelands (539-38 B.C.),

priestly families and a comparatively small number of Jews—no doubt of a ritualistic persuasion—returned to Jerusalem.²⁴ Many remained abroad and eventually prospered under the relatively enlightened policies of the Persian empire.²⁵ A tension inevitably developed between the economically and culturally successful Diaspora and the sacerdotal community which built the Second Temple.²⁶

As early as 549 **b.c.**, Second Isaiah had foreseen a return to Zion, but he pictured such an event as a new exodus in the context of a new creation. A *via sacra* across a blossoming desert would lead directly from Babylon to Jerusalem, and the rebuilding of the sanctuary would usher in the final epiphany:

“The glory of Yahweh shall be revealed,
and the whole of mankind shall see it”

(Isa. 40:5)

The old theology of glory was invoked, but only within the myth of a suprahistorical economy of human existence.²⁷

The return did take place, but the hoped-for eschatology was delayed. In 520-19 **b.c.**, the prophet Haggai sounded a note of urgency:²⁸

“... build the house,
that I may delight in it and appear in my glory, says Yahweh”

(Hag. 1:8).

At about the same time, the prophet Zechariah announced the imminence of Yahweh’s advent²⁹ in a language reminiscent of the priestly description of the wilderness tabernacle.³⁰

“Sing and rejoice, O daughter Zion,
For, behold! I am about to come
And I will sojourn in the midst of you, says Yahweh”

(Zech. 2:10 [Heb. 14])